

Study of Subtitle Translation Strategies in Shit My Dad Says from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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Abstract: Nowadays, with more and more American TV series and TV programs flooding into China, the subtitle translation of those works has been attached great importance by Chinese scholars in translation. In the process of selecting typical examples in Shit My Dad Says, the author was greatly impressed with subtitle translation. Therefore, taking Shit My Dad Says as an example, this paper aims to analyze the various strategies applied in the subtitle translation from the perspective of Skopos Theory, including the strategies of Skopos rule, Coherence rule, fidelity rule, amplification, domestication and dissimilation. Skopos theory just makes people know clearly about what they want to deliver and express. Finally, it is social value that helps audiences learn the native way of speakers and local cultural customs.

1. Introduction

With the increasing development of information technology and cultural communication, more and more American TV series, Hollywood movies, and various TV programs have been imported into China. Those works have gradually become a part of people's life and brought great influence on every respect of people's life. In the meanwhile, higher education has paid great attention to the foreign film works for the utilization of active language resources to boost economy, policy, culture and custom directly. Subtitle translation aims at helping audiences understand easily and correctly [1]. The writer have collected some data about subtitle translation. China had exported 48 domestic films to 65 countries and regions in 2009. After three years, the number of exported works has risen up to 80 in more than 75 countries and regions. That has demonstrated the importance of subtitle translation. With the limitation of time and space, subtitle translation conveys the most efficient information to the audiences with the specific culture background, and help them understand and enjoy the films. Thus this thesis aims to describe the features of subtitle translation and analyze the strategies of subtitle translation applied in Shit My Dad Says from the perspective of Skopos Theory, including the strategies of reduction, implication, domestication, and dissimilation. Finally, it is social value that helps audiences learn the native way of speakers and local cultural customs [2].

2. Basic Concepts of Skopos Theory

The Skopos Theory is an approach to translation which was put forward by Hans Vemeer and developed in Germany in the late 1970s and which oriented a more functionally and socio-culturally concept of translation. Translation is not considered as a process of translation, but as a specific form of human action. In our mind, translation has a purpose and the word "Skopos" was from Greek [3]. It's used as the technical term for the purpose of the translation. It includes Skopos Rule, Coherence Rule and Fidelity Rule, and the Skopos Theory is the core rule. Any translation is decided by translation target. In a word, goals of translation hold the manner of translation. People recognize that, mixed with the purposes of translators, communication goals and some special goals are achieved by translation strategy [4].

Speech communication is a purposeful activities which delivers speaker's intention for taking into account speech meaning. Thus translators have to consider communicative occasions, background knowledge of listeners and attitude. Speaking for translation, it is equal to three

relations among authors, translators and readers. At the process of translation, translators have to infer author's intention and meaning through the context which aims at achieving the common sense with author. Then translator take the first communication bridge. And then translators transfer the meaning and information about author which understand themselves to readers, And they finished the second communication bridge. All above steps formed cross-cultural language communication among the three party. The Skopos Theory think that as long as the achievement of translation goals, it's possible to take the literal translation for original text as well as free translation, or any translation strategies between them.

Thus it can be seen that the core of Skopos Theory:translation manner and strategy is decided by intended purpose and function. Skopos theory is a breakthrough study on structuralist equivalence in Translation. It proposed that the nature of translation is not language transformation solely, but different cultural communication in linguistic form. That enlarged the study field on translation theory.

3. Analysis of Subtitle Translation Strategies in *Shit My Dad Says* from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

3.1 Three Rules of Skopos Theory Applied in Subtile Translation

| Skopos Rule | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 1 | --No no no no no no no no no no --No no no no no no --No no no no no no no~ |
| Example 2 | --Bon appe-teets! |
| Example 3 | --Dude, I'm just a internet guy. --Dude, you're a bid dude! |
| Example 4 | He make me laugh every time. Oh!oh!oh!oh! Look at her. |

“Skopos Rule” is the most crucial one in Skopos Theory. Action of translation decided the process of translation. It means that the result chooses the methods. Thus translation has various purposes, which can be divided into three types. The first one is the basic goal of translation. The second one is communication goal. The third one is some special goal achieved by translation manners. However, generally speaking, “Skopos” means the communication goals. In another words, it is communicative function of the target text to the target readers in the target language in the social cultural context. Therefore, the translator should make its specific purpose clearly in a given translation context, and in accordance with the objective to determine translation manner between literal translation and free translation or between other translation methods. There are a lot of examples adopting skopos rule and we can see as following:

In Example 1, that's kind of song “No” sung by Ed. For the answer of his son, rejection of the installment of internet is at home. That is song of “no”. But if translation with “不” solely , which could make audience confused. In other way, it also can describe father Ed's funny and determination.

In Example 2 &3, Yaoming is a famous man all over the world. The biggest feature is that he is too tall! Thus a big dude could be understood by “Yaoming” well.

Coherence rule means that translation has to coincide the standards in the intra-textual coherence. Readability and acceptability can make senses to translation in contextual communication and help reader to understand. In the subtitle translation, it makes it easy for audiences to accept.

| Coherence Rule | |
|----------------|--|
| Example 1 | --I guarantee if you actually took him up on the offer; they're freak. --You're wrong. --They wouldn't know what to say. It would just be gibberish coming out of their mouths. --You don't know what you're talking about. |
| Example 2 | --I got a mattress delivery. --Wrong house! --An Ed Godson doesn't live here? --Very common name. -- “Edison Milford Godson III” ? |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | --A somewhat common name.This is getting very eerie. |
| Example 3 | --Where? -- L.A. --When? --Now. --Why? --Because --I see... |
| Example 4 | --For what? --To sleep --Where? --Upstairs --When? --Tonight --Why? --Because --I see... |

In Example 1, Ed and his son were quarreling. Ed's elder son Vince asked his Dad to move with them. And Henry told his father the truth. Because this dialogue is kind of argument. So we should pay attention to the fluency of translation. Translation strategy of this dialogue has both coherence rule and domestication.

In the above examples, Ed bought a present for his son Henry, and let him live with him. But he is not good at expressing his motion, while Henry didn't know that before and planed to move out. Just at this moment, the delivery arrived, so Ed pretended that he didn't know what happened. It can be seen that the subtitle translation creates a sense of humor, which makes audiences burst into laugh. Bying doing so, it shows that Ed was very embarrassed. It increases the readability and coherence of translation.

Fidelity rule created by Node has resolved the problem between cultural deficits and translation works. Fidelity rule means the source context and translation has consistent in inter-textual coherence. Compared with other loyalty principle, degree and form for fidelity is decided by the purpose of translation and understanding for readers.

| Fidelity Rule | |
|---------------|--|
| Example 1 | --You are love to be needed, dad. But when someone actually need you, you lose respect for them. |
| Example 2 | --If you gonna kiss my ass for money, at least put on a nice shade of lipsticks. |
| Example 3 | --You're gonna go, go! |

Translation for all these examples above could directly describe the intention and meaning of speakers. It followed the loyalty principle.

3.2 Subtitle Translation Strategies Applied in Shit My Dad Says

Domestication means localization of source language which take the target language or the target text reader as the destination, taking the target language reader's habitual expression way to deliver the original text content. Domestication requests the translator to have a better understanding of the target language readers. And translators have to speak like native speaker in source language country. If the translator aims to contact with audiences directly without any misunderstandings, subtitles should be translated as kind of native language. Domestication is beneficial for the audience to understand and increases the readability and admiration of translation. There are a lot of examples adopting translation strategy of domestication applied in this case as followings:

| Domestication | |
|---------------|---|
| Example 1 | --He hasn't change. |
| Example 2 | --Your skin's too pasty. |
| Example 3 | --What are we doing here, playing let's make a deal? |
| Example 4 | --Why are you walking around lime you're in your third trimester? |
| Example 5 | --There's still hope for you. |
| Example 6 | --I have to move to higher around. |
| Example 7 | --Come on. Don't say no. --Okay. Nyet. |
| Example 8 | --This is so weird. |
| Example 9 | --You're unbelievable. |
| Example 10 | --If one girl doesn't like me, I'll find another girl. |
| Example 11 | --Because you're devil. |
| Example 12 | --I was put on this earth for one reason and one reason only. |

All these examples have showed how different the Chinese and foreign culture are.

Domestication can make people understand and study various foreign cultures. Perhaps, it is the most common manner in translation strategy.

Dissimilation means that translation doesn't bother the author as much as they can and readers need to put themselves to the original context. In subtitle translation, translators have to obey the language features of foreign culture, and the utilization of source language expression has been delivered to the audience. Dissimilation takes the target language as its destination. Considering the difference of ethic cultures, dissimilation aims at the reservation and reflection of ethical features and language styles for audience. Here are some examples:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Dissimilation | |
| Example 1 | --"H" to the "enry"? This is "L" To the "Ame" |
| Example 2 | --But every one has his own thing. |
| Example 3 | --Bravo, you're an 11 year-old man. |
| Example 4 | --fine, will. Jesus Louise. |
| Example 5 | --Good gracious. |

For being coherent and understandable, the annotation is a favorable and useful way to the most of translators. It is really helpful to make the target audience understand the meaning by the way of adding the extra information on the screen. As a result, the strategy of amplification of is frequently-used, which helps make subtitle translation understandable. So here are some of examples used in the translation of subtitles in the TV Series, and the author offers the analysis.

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Amplification | |
| Example 1 | --Oh! my god. That's awful! -Is that so? |
| Example 2 | --I told you, dad, That's Snooki. |
| Example 3 | --Poor Jennifer Aniston |
| Example 4 | --It's an embarrassment. |
| Example 5 | --I guess if I had done better.. |

4. Conclusion

In the process of selecting typical examples in *Shit My Dad Says*, the author was greatly impressed with subtitle translation and felt like reading the articles written by herself. In the process of translation, Skopos theory just makes people know clearly about what they want to deliver and express. What should be done further with different translation strategies is to make translation better. Although there are a large number of differences about the culture, customs and characteristics, a good translation should be the special vehicle of mutual communication. Therefore, it is suggested that people should learn and make the best of those translation strategies in translating subtitles.

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