

A Study on the Translation of Film Subtitles from the Perspective of Skopos Theory: A Case Study of *The Legend of 1900*

Yang Yang^{1*}, Ying Tian¹

¹ College of Foreign Language, Shaoxing University, Shaoxing, China

Email Address

2516895721@qq.com (Yang Yang)

*Correspondence: 2516895721@qq.com

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Abstract:

This paper explores issues related to movie subtitle translation under the guidance of Skopos Theory. This paper takes the classic English film *The Legend of 1900* directed by Italian director Giuseppe Tornatore as the sample for analysis, focusing on the specific strategies and techniques of movie subtitle translation under the guidance of Skopos Theory. By combining specific cases, this paper systematically demonstrates how translators can choose different translation strategies under the drive of different translation purposes. It also summarizes the translation strategies adopted by translators to achieve specific translation goals, providing operational references for movie subtitle translation practice. The paper first provides an overview of the core content of subtitle translation and Skopos Theory and its historical evolution. Then, by comparing and analyzing the Chinese and English versions of movie subtitles, it selects some appropriate translation cases and discusses the translation techniques adopted by translators to achieve specific translation goals. Finally, the paper points out that the translators' choice of translation strategies is somewhat reasonable, and the expected goals of the translated text are realized in a way. It was found that the application of Skopos Theory to the study of subtitle translation in the movie *The Legend of 1900* not only provides empirical support for the practicality and universality of Skopos Theory, but also offers a new perspective on the study of this movie.

Keywords:

Subtitle Translation, Skopos Theory, Translation Strategies, *The Legend of 1900*

1. Introduction

As a bridge of cross-cultural communication, translation has played an indispensable role in human society since ancient times. Whether it is books, music, TV programs or movies, translation is involved in all of them, providing great

convenience for people's cross-cultural communication. With the continuous development of translation practice, various translation theories have emerged.

1.1. Origin of the Study

In the 1970s, functionalist translation theory came into the view of translation scholars, bringing a new perspective to translation research. In particular, Vermeer's Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose of translation and the needs of the target audience, provides a new guiding principle for translation practice. Under the background of globalization, movie translation has become an important means to promote communication between different cultures. With the opening of China's market and the increase of internationalization, the dissemination of foreign films in China and the international promotion of Chinese films require high-quality subtitle translation.

In movie subtitle translation, how to choose appropriate translation strategies according to different cultural backgrounds and audience needs to achieve the best communication effect has become a difficult problem for many translators to think about. Gradually, Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose of translation and audience needs, coincides with movie subtitling, which emphasizes the target language audience's better understanding of the plot, and the former provides a solid theoretical support for the study of the latter.

After reading a large number of papers on Skopos Theory and film subtitle translation, the author found that there are almost no papers taking the classic film *The Legend of 1900* as the research object. So, this paper takes Skopos Theory as the theoretical basis to explore the purpose and strategy selection in movie subtitle translation, and takes the movie *The legend of 1900* as an example for case study.

1.2. Structure of the Thesis

The paper is organized into four parts. The first part is the literature review, in which the definition and characteristics of subtitle and subtitle translation are introduced. Meanwhile, the current status of subtitle translation research at home and abroad are showed, and the results of previous subtitle translation research are summarized to determine the significance of this study. In addition, the four stages of the development of Skopos Theory and its reception in China are introduced.

The second part is theoretical framework. The author introduces the core three rules and some key concepts of Skopos Theory and explains to the reader the applicability of applying Skopos Theory to the study of movie subtitle translation.

After that, the author briefly introduces the movie *The legend of 1900*. At the same time, a detailed comparison is made between the English subtitled version and the Chinese subtitled version of the movie, and representative translation examples are selected. Then the translation strategies employed and the purposes they need to achieve are analyzed.

Finally, it is concluded that the translator has done a good job in translating the subtitles of this movie and achieved the intended purpose of the target text. The author hopes that this paper will not only provide an example study to prove the universality of Skopos Theory in the field of movie subtitle research, but also provide some help for actual movie subtitle translation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. An Overview of Subtitle and Subtitle Translation

Subtitles are the non-image content of film and television works displayed in text form, such as dialogues. Unlike verbal and aural languages, subtitles can eliminate language barriers and other objective factors causing dissemination obstacles in works like television and films [1]. All the information we see during a movie, such as text, titles, dialogues, and related characters, locations, years, can be referred to as subtitles [2]. Subtitle translation is divided into intralingual subtitling and interlingual subtitling. The term “subtitle translation” as commonly understood refers to interlingual subtitling, which is the process of “translating the source language into the target language while preserving the original audio of the film or television, with the translated text superimposed at the bottom of the screen” [3].

Qian [4], the pioneer in China's translation field, summarized that film and television language has five major characteristics: auditory, comprehensive, instantaneous, popular, and annotation-free. If someone further refines film and television language to film subtitles, he must consider that subtitle translation is a special type of language transformation, condensing the original spoken language into written language [5]. Consequently, some scholars have concluded that subtitle translation should possess popularity, instantaneousness, spatial limitation, and cross-cultural nature [6].

The American sound film *The Jazz Singer*, which was screened in Paris in January 1929, marked the birth of subtitle translation. With the prevalence of televisions and other electronic products, subtitle translation has gradually become a new carrier of information, and therefore made great progress. Since the reform and opening up, with a large number of audiovisual works entering China, people have gradually realized the importance of subtitles for a better viewing experience. People's desire and demand for high-quality movie subtitles have led more people to devote themselves to the research of film subtitle translation. As a result, there has been a blowout development of subtitle translation. Even so, subtitling is still a completely new discipline, and the research in this field is still in its infancy, and there is a lot of room for development.

2.2. Relevant Studies on Subtitle Translation

2.2.1. Studies on Subtitle Translation Abroad

The study of subtitle translation first began in Europe. And European scholars have been very active in this field and have achieved a large number of results so far.

In the 1960s and 1970s, subtitle translation research officially came into the public eye. Caillé (1960) published the article *Cinéma et Traduction Le Traducteur devant l'Ecran* and outlined the difficulties of subtitle translation [7]. Dollerup (1974) conducted a detailed analysis of the different types of errors that occurred in the translation of English television programs in his article *On Subtitles in Television Programs* [8]. Compared with Caillé, Dollerup explored the educational role of subtitles, such as aiding in foreign language learning. At the same time, another scholar, Fodor (1976), studied dubbing translation from multiple perspectives including linguistics and semiotics in his work, and proposed three types of synchronization in the translation of audiovisual works: voice synchronization,

character synchronization, and content synchronization [9]. These studies provided a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent film and television translation.

In the 1990s, scholars began to shift their focus to subtitle translation strategies and integrated them with various fields, such as digital technology and linguistics. Ivarsson (1992) introduced technological advancements in subtitle translation in his work *Subtitling for the Media: A Handbook of an Art* [10]. Six years later, Ivarsson and Carroll (1998) co-authored the second edition, discussing subtitle translation strategies under new technological conditions like digital technology [11]. Concurrently, Gottlieb (1994) categorized subtitle translation from a linguistic perspective into intralingual subtitling and interlingual subtitling, and introduced a series of subtitle translation strategies including “diagonal translation” [12].

Additionally, Western scholars have recognized the importance of different cultural backgrounds in subtitle translation research. Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2014) emphasized in *Audiovisual Translation, Subtitling* that the goal of subtitle translation is to enable viewers to understand the content of the film [13]. Therefore, translation methods and strategies should be adjusted according to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the audience.

Over the past decade, scholars have focused more on the quality of subtitle translation and conducted targeted research in various fields, such as technology, culture, and teaching practices. In terms of technology, scholars have used a variety of technology to achieve semi-automatic subtitling or automatic subtitling [14,15]. In terms of culture, scholars have researched targeted translation strategies for culturally significant terms based on different cultural backgrounds [16,17]. In terms of teaching practices, scholars have studied the feasibility of subtitle translation in education [18,19].

Meanwhile, some Western countries have also established film and television associations like the European Film and Television Translation Association, which also hold some conferences on film and television translation research, mainly on subtitle translation. For example, in February 2004, London hosted an international conference on *Language Transformation on the Screen*, and in 2013, Wuhan held a symposium on translation and cross-cultural communication, which creatively promoted research in the field of film and television translation.

In summary, Western scholars have shifted their focus from an emphasis on translation theory and strategy research to a diversification of translation studies. Currently, the emphasis has moved from diversification towards refinement, from breadth to depth, with a greater focus on translation efficiency, translation quality, and the resolution of specific issues.

2.2.2. Studies on Subtitle Translation at Home

Compared to international counterparts, the study of subtitle translation in China began relatively late and is not yet fully mature. In the 1950s, China successfully introduced and translated the Soviet film *Private Aleksandr Matrosov* for the first time, marking the beginning of the translation of foreign films and TV dramas in China [20]. Since the reform and opening up, with the influx of a large number of audiovisual works, subtitle translation has developed rapidly, especially in the field of film subtitle translation. Research on film subtitle translation has increasingly come into the public eye, and many domestic scholars have conducted research on subtitle translation.

In the 1990s and the early years of this century, domestic scholars' research on subtitle translation mainly focused on translation strategies. Ma in the paper *On the Basic Principles of Audiovisual Translation* pointed out that in the translation process, in addition to achieving faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance, attention should also be paid to the rhythmic consistency between the source language and the target language, as well as the consistency between sound and image [21]. Qian in the paper *Film Translation—a Field of Growing Importance in Translation* clearly pointed out the importance and urgency of the development of audiovisual translation, and summarized the five characteristics of film texts and seven strategies for subtitle translation [4]. Li analyzed the characteristics of subtitle translation in detail and, combining temporal and spatial limitations, information function, and cultural factors, proposed corresponding translation strategies [3]. Since then, subtitle translation research has entered a new chapter and has gradually attracted the attention of scholars as an independent field.

Since the 21st century, domestic scholars have paid great attention to the integration of subtitle translation and culture. Zhu proposed that translation should be based on an understanding of both the source and target languages, focusing on introducing the Chinese elements in the movie *Kung Fu Panda II* and proposing corresponding translation strategies [22]. Xiao suggested that in translation, vocabulary, syntax, culture, and style should all strive to be consistent with the source language, allowing domestic audiences to fully understand the plot through watching subtitles and obtain an aesthetic experience roughly similar to that of the original audience [23].

At present, subtitle translation research is mainly based on case study, that is, under the guidance of specific theories, subtitle translation research is carried out on a specific case, and then universal principles are summarized from the case to summarize the subtitle translation strategies. For example, Yan points out in his thesis that compared with other types of translated texts, subtitle translation has both commonalities and its own distinctive features, such as immediacy, condensation, popularity and cross-culturalism [24]. Especially in the past two years, the research focus of subtitle translation is gradually tilted towards words with cultural characteristics in domestic movies and documentaries. For example, Wu pointed out in his thesis that culture-loaded word not only contains linguistic information, but also conveys cultural connotations, which helps the global dissemination and identification of Chinese culture [25].

At the same time, subtitle translation is gradually becoming popularized, with more and more people participating in subtitle translation research. Regarding theoretical research, the mainstream includes Skopos Theory, Functional Equivalence Theory, Ecological Translation Theory, Relevance Theory, Adaptation Theory, Cognitive Translatology, and others. In addition to research from a theoretical perspective, some articles directly start with translation strategies and methods, such as domestication and foreignization translation strategies, as well as literal translation and omission translation methods. Regarding subtitle translators, it has evolved from early professional film studios or television stations to translation teams specializing in film and television subtitle translation, also known as Fansub groups [26]. Although subtitle translation is becoming more popularized, due to the varying levels of translators in subtitle groups and the different standards and specifications for translation, there is an urgent need to improve the quality of subtitle translation.

In summary, as research on subtitle translation deepens step by step, domestic scholars have transitioned from translating based on experience to summarizing translation strategies, and under the influence of Western translation theories, from scattered and one-sided research to diversified and comprehensive research, and from theoretical research to targeted case studies. However, there are still many issues that domestic scholars need to address, such as the lack of a mature and systematic guiding theory and unified standard subtitle translation criteria.

2.3. Skopos Theory Development

In general, there are four stages in the development of Skopos Theory.

2.3.1. Four-Stage Evolution

The first stage is represented by Katharina Reiss.

Reiss first introduced the concept of functionalist theory in her 1971 publication, *Translation Criticism- Potentials and Limitations: Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment* proposing the embryonic form of functionalist theory [27].

Early on, Reiss emphasized that translation should maintain as much consistency with the original text as possible, including content, form, and communicative functions, and expanded the scope of equivalence from the sentence level to the discourse level. However, later practice proved that maintaining complete consistency between the target text and the original text was not feasible. Thus, she no longer regarded equivalence as the sole criterion for translation, and as a result, text type analysis was no longer the primary reference for translation strategies. Subsequently, she pointed out that the translator should first consider the functional characteristics of the target text, rather than simple word-for-word equivalence. It is this view that laid the foundation for the emergence of translation Skopos theory.

The second stage is represented by Reiss's student, Hans Vermeer.

Building on Reiss's theory, Vermeer established Skopos Theory. This theory is the core of functionalist translation theory, breaking free from the previous "text-centered" approach, emphasizing that translation should focus on the translator's purpose and the situation of the target audience, and selectively translate the original work.

In Vermeer's Skopos framework, the most pivotal influencing factor in the translation process is the purpose of the entire act of translation. The purpose that the translation act aims to achieve determines the entire process and outcome of the translation act.

In addition, Vermeer proposed the three principles of Skopos Theory: the principle of skopos, the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity [28]. The three interlocking theoretical principles are hierarchical. Among these three principles, the principle of coherence and the principle of fidelity are subordinate to the principle of purpose, and the principle of fidelity is subordinate to the principle of coherence [29]. That is, in Skopos Theory, the principle of purpose is in the primary position. Purpose determines whether to do, how to do, and what to do [30]. It refers to the purpose of the translation act determining the entire process of the translation act, that is, the result determines the method [31].

Therefore, for the debate between domestication and foreignization in the history of Chinese and Western translation, as well as the extensive discussion on formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence in the translation community for nearly twenty or thirty years, Skopos Theory gives its answer: domestication or foreignization depends on the purpose of the translation.

The third stage is represented by Justa Holz-Mänttari.

She proposed the translation action theory, further developing and enriching functionalist translation theory. This theory looks upon translation as an activity between people driven by purpose and oriented towards the translation result. Her greatest contribution in the field of translation is that she distinguishes between translation and translation action. She directly defines translation as translation purposive action, that is, translation is a complex activity that is carried out for a specific purpose. Hence, translation is usually a selective translation by the translator from the many pieces of information provided by the original work. Accordingly, Skopos Theory puts the importance of the translator in an important place, which is often neglected in other translation theories.

The fourth stage is represented by Nord. Nord sorted out and integrated various functionalist theories and summarized them in her book *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained* [32]. It is also the first book to introduce and explain the theory in English, which is of great help to the English-speaking world. She also proposed that translators should follow the “function plus loyalty” guiding theory, further perfecting Skopos Theory.

After going through the above four stages, Skopos Theory has become increasingly refined and mature, widely used, and highly influential.

2.3.2 Reception in China

However, the development of translation in China lags behind the Western world as a whole. It was not until 1987, with the introduction of German functionalist translation theory to China, that the development of Chinese translation theory began to flourish. It was only at this point that Skopos Theory in the field of linguistics came into the view of Chinese translation scholars.

In 1987, Chinese scholar Gui Qianyuan published the first article introducing German functionalist translation theory in China, *Notes on Three Translators in the Federal Republic of Germany* [33]. The article mainly introduced several outstanding translators and focused on discussing Vermeer’s translation ideas, which prioritize the purpose of translation. This view was very novel in China at the time, but Gui’s article did not attract much attention from the translation community at that time.

It was not until the early 21st century that articles discussing and researching Skopos Theory emerged like mushrooms after rain. At the same time, Skopos Theory, as the core of functionalist translation theory, frequently appeared in the main journals, papers, online searches, literary translations, and translation conferences of that period [34].

With the continuous spread of functionalist translation theory in China, its connection with Chinese translation practice has become increasingly close. The purpose plays a leading role in the translation process. Therefore, many translators consider what the original purpose of the source text is when doing translation work.

That is to say, their translation tasks are all carried out under the guidance of Skopos Theory [34].

Since the birth of Skopos Theory in the 1970s, it has undergone decades of development through the efforts of several generations of scholars. Translation practice over the years has proved that Skopos Theory is a very valuable theory worthy of study.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 An Overview of Skopos Theory

As one of the most influential and representative translation theories today, Skopos Theory originated in Germany in the 1970s. The term “Skopos” comes from Greek, meaning “purpose.” As the mainstream functionalist translation theory, Skopos Theory did not form overnight; it is the crystallization of the wisdom of predecessors. It is a deconstructive theoretical model for translation studies from the perspective of the target text, focusing on the practicality of translation [35].

3.2. Three Rules of Skopos Theory

Skopos Theory puts forward three major rules, which require the translator to ensure that the purpose of translation accurately reflects the intention of the translator and the reader under the guidance of the three major rules — the Skopos Rule, the Coherence Rule and the Fidelity Rule. What’s more, the translated text should be read and understood by the target language readers, and that the interlanguage coherence and consistency between the original text and the translated text should be ensured to achieve the expected function of the translated text in the translated language situation.

3.2.1. The Skopos Rule

The Skopos Rule is the core criterion of Skopos Theory, in which “skopos” is a Greek word meaning purpose. That is to say, the purpose to be achieved in the act of translation determines the whole process of the act of translation. In other words, the result determines the method. The choice of translation strategy also depends on the purpose of translation and the intended function of the translated text. Therefore, translators should first understand the purpose of the text and the needs of the client before choosing appropriate translation strategies. As a result, the translated text will be meaningful and comprehensible to the target culture and target group, thus helping them to better understand the deeper meaning of the original text. Complex terminology, as in science fiction films, needs to be simplified, while poetic lines in literary films can be kept literary.

3.2.2. The Coherence Rule

The Coherence Rule refers to the need to follow the criterion of intra-textual coherence. Intra-textual coherence means that the translated text can exist and be understood independently in the target language and has meaning in the culture of the language into which it is translated and in the communicative context in which it is used. Then it can realize intra-textual coherence and maintain coherence with the communicative situation of the recipients of the translated text, so as to be understood by the recipients of the translated text. In other words, the translated text should conform to the expression habits of the target language so that it can ensure easy

reading within a limited time, take into account the expression habits and acceptance ability of the target language readers, and ensure that the discourse is smooth and standardized and fluent. Thus, it can realize the accurate transmission of information in the source language. For example, long sentences in English need to be split.

3.2.3. The Fidelity Rule

The Fidelity Rule, which emphasizes the coherence of the translated text with the original aiming at inter-textual coherence, has similarities with the fidelity to the original referred to in other translation theories. However, the degree and form of such fidelity are not fixed, but depend on the purpose of translation. Therefore, under the premise of faithfulness to the purpose of translation, translators should accurately convey the basic meaning and connotation of the source language and ensure inter-textual coherence between the translated text and the original text. Moreover, translators should convert the source language into the target language in an appropriate way, minimize the loss of information, and then realize the effective communication purpose. That is to say, under technical constraints, the translator needs to prioritize the delivery of key information. For example, redundant exclamations are omitted, but characterization markers, such as dialect, are retained.

3.3. Key Concepts in Skopos Theory

In addition to the three rules mentioned above, there are a number of other key concepts in Skopos Theory.

The first is translation action. Translation is an act with specific purposes. Skopos Theory holds that translation is done by the translator and used for communication, which shows that translation action refers to the translator's behavior in translation. Translation is not only language conversion, but also a purposeful communicative activity. Therefore, it can be seen that translation is a kind of purposeful intercultural communication behavior based on the original text.

The second is client. A client is the initiator of a translation. Usually, the client will state his needs in as much detail as possible, like the purpose of the translation and the expected result, and specify constraints such as time. The translator is entrusted by the client to start the translation, so the translated work should fulfill the client's purpose.

The third is translation commission. A translation commission specifies what kind of translation is required. In addition to the purpose of the translation, the translation commission also includes the delivery date and the translator's salary, which indirectly affect the quality and level of the translation. It can be seen that the realization of the purpose of translation needs to take into account a variety of factors.

The fourth is function plus loyalty principle. The function plus loyalty principle mainly targets the translation of literary texts. Here, "loyalty" refers to the translator's practice of making reasonable adjustments to the translation while respecting the original meaning, thereby effectively bridging cultural differences and accurately expressing the author's intent. This principle requires the translator to take into account the differences between the two cultures involved in the translation process and their specific translation theories. At the same time, the theory also guides the translator to infer and respect the communicative intent of the message sender. In short, Nord's function plus loyalty theory requires the translator to balance the intent of the original work with the needs of the audience, for example, by retaining the Halloween elements but adding cultural notes.

3.4. Applicability of Skopos Theory in Subtitling Translation

In the process of translating movie subtitles, there are a lot of aspects to be taken into account and problems to be solved, so it is necessary to choose the most appropriate translation theory to guide the translation process. Only in this way can translators provide the target language audience with the most suitable translation to help them understand the emotion and content of the source text. Skopos Theory is the right choice for movie subtitle translation.

For one thing, Skopos Theory emphasizes that translators should start from the target readers, and let the purpose of translation determine the translation process, making a breakthrough to put the target readers in a more important position in translation. Similarly, the purpose of subtitles of movie is precisely to let the target audience understand the contents better instead of reproducing the lines word by word. On this point, the two coincide with each other.

For another thing, due to the special characteristics of subtitles, which are limited by the discourse time and screen space, it is difficult to perfectly and precisely reproduce the original sentences in translation and presentation. Therefore, subtitles can only be translated with some trade-offs. The core of translation is the key content of the original text, that is the purpose of the original text. And Skopos Theory can precisely compress, rewrite or even omit the non-core content of the source text according to the purpose of the original text to ensure the efficiency of information transmission.

To sum up, the three rules of Skopos Theory are conducive to realizing the purpose of source text translation, and have unique advantages and high adaptability in subtitle translation.

4. The Application of Skopos Theory into Subtitle Translation of *The Legend of 1900*

In this section, the movie *The legend of 1900* is briefly introduced, while the translation techniques it employs are analyzed. In the course of this elaboration, this thesis attempts to analyze how translators follow the rules of Skopos Theory in the translation process.

4.1. An Introduction to *The Legend of 1900*

The movie *The legend of 1900* has won a number of awards, including the 1999 Italian Film Awards and the 1999 European Film Awards. The movie mainly tells how a young pianist interprets his own unique life on board the Virginia, which travels between Europe and the United States. The leading actor is a highly accomplished pianist, but inwardly simple, full of uneasiness and trepidation about the materialistic world, he has always lived in his own simple world. In the end, he prefers to guard the Virginia and die with happiness in the blasting, rather than lose his inner soul and go to the real destruction like all the city people living in the streets. The movie is full of philosophical meaning, and it contains great dialogues that make the world audience begin to examine their own lives.

4.2. Subtitling Translation Techniques of *The Legend of 1900*

The foreign subtitle translators of this movie have contributed a lot to its great influence in China. After examining the dialogues of the characters in the movie and

carefully savoring the Chinese subtitles, the author found that the subtitles of the Chinese translation of the movie are on the whole very concise and fluent, in line with the expression habits of the target language. The subtitle translators of the movie actually used a combination of translation strategies and methods of practical value under the guidance of the Skopos Theory and according to the characteristics of subtitle translation. It should be emphasized that in 2019, the movie was introduced to the Chinese market by the government, so the author chose the version on iqiwi.com, currently the only platform with genuine copyright and bilingual subtitles, as the source text corpus.

4.2.1. The Skopos Rule

The Skopos rule emphasizes that the choice of translation strategies depends on the purpose of translation. In the movie *The Legend of 1900*, there are many expressions with unique Western characteristics, so the subtitle translation adopts the foreignization including transliteration and literal translation, so that the translated text can be closer to the Western authentic expressions and retain the Western cultural characteristics. Thus, the target language audience can better appreciate the emotions and contents of the movie.

4.2.1.1. Transliteration

When foreign movies are introduced into China, transliteration is a very common translation technique, which is often used for the translation of personal names, place names, brand names and other specialized nouns. Because of the difference in languages, the pronunciation of these terms is retained in the source language and replaced by similar pronunciation in the target language, so as to maximize the retention of their unique meaning and exotic flavor. Therefore, it can be said that transliteration is in line with the Skopos rule of Skopos Theory.

(1) Danny Boodman

丹尼·布德曼

In example 1, the translator transliterates the name, retaining the English pronunciation and cultural connotation of the name, so that the Chinese audience can feel the original style of the name.

(2) Conn

康恩

In example 2, the translator directly transliterates the brand name of the trumpet that Max uses. It is also worth noting that the Conn here does not only refer to the Conn trumpet, but also to the fact that when 1900 and Max did not know each other, because Max used the Conn trumpet, 1900 called him “Conn”, which is a pun that echoes back and forth.

4.2.1.2. Literal Translation

Literal translation, as a technique in translation that is applicable in many situations, ensures that the translation is concise and in line with Chinese expression. It requires the translator to faithfully convey the meaning of the original sentence without adding superfluous words or modifications, and to maintain the structure and vocabulary of the original text as much as possible, so as to maintain the accuracy, consistency and formality of the original text. There are some examples of this technique being used in

the movie. Therefore, it can be said that literal translation is in line with the Skopos rule of Skopos Theory.

(3) It's destiny.

这是命运。

In example 3, the translator adopts the translation technique of literal translation, retaining and translating the words and order of the English sentences as they are, reproducing the actor's tone of voice and style of speech, "It is an unquestionable fate", which is a good representation of Max's calmness and knowingness when he was speaking at that time.

(4) I was born on this ship.

我出生在这艘船上。

In example 4, the translator follows the linguistic order in English and translates it directly into Chinese without adding additional modifications. This allows for a more direct retention of the connotations and emotions of the source text to ensure that the emotions of the original movie can be conveyed completely and unmistakably. Such a straightforward translation is very much in line with 1900's light and transcendent heart at that time.

In conclusion, in the process of translation, literal translation is a very indispensable part. Often most of the translations will adopt this method.

4.2.2. The Coherence Rule

The coherence rule holds that the translated text must conform to the principle of intra-textual coherence, which emphasizes that the translated text must meet the following two requirements: first, the internal logic of the text is self-consistent, and second, it is compatible with the cultural background of the target language. The acceptability and readability of the translated text should ensure that the audience can clearly understand the translated text, and at the same time, it has practical significance in the target language's cultural background and practical application scenarios. Based on this rule, translators need to take the target audience's cultural cognition as the foothold, and realize the effective transmission of source text information under the premise of following the target language expression norms. Therefore, omission and addition can be adopted to make the translation closer to the target language culture.

4.2.2.1. Omission

A movie consists of instant visual images that are fleeting on the screen so that it cannot be read and savored repeatedly like a literary work. Due to its limitation and transience, it needs to be appropriately omitted in subtitle translation. On the one hand, omission is used for non-linguistic contents, such as repetitions and intonations or interjections without substantive meaning, like "you know", "see", "I mean", "uh", 'oh'. At this point, even if these words are omitted, the textual information is not lost. Hence, it can be said that omission is in line with the coherence rule of Skopos Theory.

(5) Then he'd just stand there.

他看呆了。

(6) And don't be thinking it's an accident.

这绝不是什么巧合。

In example 5 and example 6, the translator adopts the translation strategy of omission. In the Chinese subtitles, the translator omits the translation of the connectives “then” and “and”, which not only does not affect the audience's understanding of the plot, but also makes the language more condensed. These two lines appear in Max's memories at the beginning of the movie. Combined with the plot, the omitted Chinese subtitles are more reminiscent, like the narration of a person who has experienced it himself, and the language is concise and clear. At the same time, it echoes with the next sentence that he saw the Statue of Liberty, and the pause after the omission of the conjunction here echoes well with the later episode that his feet felt like roots and his heart was beating wildly.

4.2.2.2. Addition

Although omission is essential in subtitle translation, due to the unique audio-visual effect of the movie, the translator should also take care to consider the consistency, and omission may break the meaning of the original text. Therefore, in some cases, translators also use the addition to add some information appropriately, as a way to retain the connotation of the original text and convey the meaning of the text more accurately and vividly. Addition means that in the process of translation, in order to make the expression in the target language more fluent or to conform to the grammatical habits of the target language, some words not found in the original text are added, so as to make the translated language more fluent and to conform to the linguistic habits of the target language. Hence, it can be said that addition is in line with the coherence rule of Skopos Theory.

(7) It's the music you were just playing.

这就是你吹的那段音乐。

In example 7, the translator adopts addition to translate “the music” as “那段音乐”, which is more in line with the language habits of the target audience and gives the audience a greater sense of immersion.

(8) The ocean was his home.

大海就是他的家。

In example 8, the translator adds the word “就” to enhance the sense of belonging that the ocean brings to 1900. By adding one more word, the speaker's tone is greatly strengthened, so that the source text is more vividly and accurately conveyed to the target audience.

(9) the fog slides in, a milky barrier.

浓雾悄悄降临，像乳白色的纱。

In example 9, the translator adds the adverb “悄悄” and the preposition “像”. Three simple words make the language more vivid, the picture more beautiful and moving, not only in line with the Chinese audience's language habits, but also greatly increase the sense of the picture, making the audience feel immersed in the scene.

(10) I can't help it.

我也忍不住。

In example 10, the translator has added the word “也” when translating into Chinese. This sentence comes from the conversation between 1900 and Max during the competition between 1900 and Jelly. 1900 said that he heard Jelly's performance and, like others present, he was overwhelmed by emotion and could not hold back his tears. The use of the word 也 here skillfully conveys that Jelly's performance triggered emotional resonance in the audience, proving from the side the superiority of his skills. And such a master piano player, the founder of jazz, still lost to 1900, highlighting the high talent of 1900 on the piano.

From the above analysis, it is found that the dialogues, as an important part of the movie, not only need to be accurate and concise, but also need to be vivid and evocative enough. In order to help the audience feel the plot, the translator not only has to convey the textual information accurately, but also has to choose the appropriate linguistic style for the characters' dialogues in accordance with the background of the story and the characters' personalities, which is consistent with the general style of the text.

4.2.3. The Fidelity Rule

The fidelity rule emphasizes that the translator should take the information in the original text as the basis, but the degree of emphasis on the original text and the way of treatment should be combined with the translation objective and the translator's interpretation perspective. In the practice of subtitle translation, the translator should deeply analyze the content of the source text and complete the transmission of information in a form of expression that meets the cultural cognition of the target audience. Therefore, domestication such as free translation can be used for translation.

4.2.3.1. Paraphrase

Free translation is not a word-for-word translation of the original text, nor is it created at will, but it allows the translator to freely translate the original text according to the cultural background and expression habits of the target language, instead of word-for-word. When the translator wants to emphasize the overall meaning and spirit of the original text in the process of translation. At this time translators can use free translation to reduce the misunderstanding caused by cultural differences. Thus, it can be said that free translation is in line with the fidelity rule of Skopos Theory. Paraphrase is one of the methods of free translation, which is often used when the target language lacks idioms or fixed sayings that exactly match the original language. At this time, the original meaning is conveyed through rephrasing, supplementation or cultural adaptation, or by transforming ambiguity or metaphor into concrete imagery.

(11) If you just want to feel something more solid beneath your feet.

只要你怀念脚踏实地的感觉。

In example 11, the translator translates “something more solid beneath your feet” as “脚踏实地”, which is a translation technique of paraphrase. The translator turns abstraction into concreteness by making “something” concrete as “陆地”, and “more solid” compared to ocean is “陆地”. After that, the translator further translates the feeling of stepping on land into “脚踏实地”, which is more familiar to the Chinese audience, and is more authentic and in line with the Chinese audience's habit of expression.

(12) Where do you get it?

你是怎么想到的？

In example 12, the plot here is that max asks 1900 where his inspiration for composing music comes from. Combined with the context, the translator chooses the translation technique of paraphrase, giving up the word-by-word translation, turning the naturally expressed surface meaning into the deeper meaning. So the translator transforms the place “where” into the way “how”, and “get” into “think”, which avoids the direct translation of “你是怎么得到的” and causes the Chinese audience’s incomprehension, which is more conducive to the target audience’s immersion.

(13) They say he plays a hot piano!

人们都说他钢琴弹得挺好！

In example 13, if “a hot piano” is directly translated as “一架很热的钢琴”, it will make the Chinese audience feel unimaginable. In fact, it means that 1900’s piano skills are exquisite. So, the translator here translates it as “弹得挺好” through the paraphrase, instead of translating it into other highly praised words, which fits the speaker’s contemptuous attitude, not only accurately conveying the meaning of the original text, but also skillfully reflecting Jelly’s inner activities and tone at that time. At the same time, the word “hot” also lays the groundwork for the fact that the temperature of the strings after 1900’s playing can light up a cigarette.

4.2.3.2. Substitution

Substitution is a type of free translation which is the replacement of an original text with an equivalent expression existing in the target culture. It is often used to deal with comprehension problems caused by cultural factors. When it is difficult to interpret the information in the source language text, the translator can replace the source language expression with cultural images and expressions that are compatible with the target language, thus reducing the gap caused by cultural differences. Thus, the target language audience can obtain a similar understanding as the source language audience within a limited time. Thus, it can be said that substitution is in line with the fidelity rule of Skopos Theory.

(14) Hey, Conn. What's the matter? You lose your sea legs?

康恩，你怎么了？晕船了吗？

In example 14, if “sea legs” is directly translated as “海的腿”, the Chinese audience will be puzzled as to why. In this case, substitution is used: sea legs is a nautical term that refers to the ability to walk smoothly on a bumpy boat without getting seasick. Later, it was used as a metaphor for “adapting to a new environment”. So “lose your sea legs” means getting seasick. Here, the translator translates it as seasickness to make it easier for Chinese audiences to understand this slang.

(15) You're pulling my leg?

你开玩笑吧？

In example 15, if “pull my leg” is directly translated as “拽我的腿”, the Chinese audience will certainly be puzzled as to why pull someone’s leg. In fact, “pull one’s leg” originally refers to intentionally tripping others to tease or cajole them, and later gradually evolved into a joke. In this case, the translator can use substitution to replace this expression, which is unfamiliar to the Chinese audience, with “开玩笑”,

which is already found in Chinese culture. In this way, it is more conducive to the Chinese audience's understanding of the movie plot.

In summary, guided by the principles, all these strategies applied to the subtitle translation of *The Legend of 1900* well reflects the purpose of this translation, recreates the emotions and themes embedded in the original text, and carefully considers the factors affecting the quality of the translation as mentioned in Skopos Theory. It is important to note, however, that the examples given in this paper are not absolute. In other words, it is not the case that an example under one translation technique can only reflect what one principle is intended to achieve. The three principles of Skopos Theory are in an interactive and dynamically equivalent relationship with each other. All in all, as a bridge between the receiver of the target text and the source text, the translator did a pretty good job.

5. Conclusions

In this paper, the author introduces the Skopos Theory and takes the movie *The legend of 1900* as an example to study movie subtitle translation under the guidance of this theory.

First of all, Skopos Theory can be used as a guiding theory for movie subtitle translation. In the process of translating movie subtitles, the translator's main task is to make the target language audience better understand the content of the movie. In this regard, the characteristics of Skopos Theory coincide with it, which means that the principle of Skopos Theory is to put the target language audience in a more important position. Whether a movie is popular in other countries depends largely on whether the translator can accurately convey the ideas of the source language, and at the same time allow the audience to accurately understand the content conveyed by the movie. Therefore, Skopos Theory can provide a new perspective and possibility for movie subtitle translation.

In addition, translators can also use other classical translation methods, such as literal translation, omission, addition, free translation and so on in the process of translation. Especially for movies with rich emotions and deep cultural backgrounds, like *The legend of 1900*, the free translation is of indispensable importance because of its unique characteristics that can arouse the resonance of the target group.

As one of the key methods of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication, subtitle translation is an indispensable link in the cross-cultural communication of movies. It can not only help people better appreciate foreign movie and come into contact with foreign cultures, but also plays an increasingly important role in the transmission and communication of information between people of different cultures. Skopos Theory, as one of the most widely used translation strategies, is of great significance in guiding subtitle translation.

However, due to insufficient time and resources, the limitations of this thesis are inevitable. First, the collection of source data is limited. The examples given in this paper are all from the movie *The legend of 1900*. Secondly, because this thesis is a qualitative study, no survey was conducted on the audience of the target movie. Although the methodology used in this thesis is based on the assumption of common sense of most viewers, it cannot cover all viewers. Thirdly, this thesis has selected only some major strategies and methods to draw some conclusions based on the research objectives and does not cover all the research methods. Fourthly, this thesis

has limited examples and more powerful examples are needed for more convincing research.

With the rapid development of domestic movies in recent years, movie subtitle translation has also seen a booming development. Therefore, research in this field will be of great significance to cultural communication. Under favorable conditions, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in further research. In addition, in order to improve the effectiveness of subtitle translation research, surveys can be conducted among the audience of some target movies. Moreover, the establishment of systematic principles is indispensable in the study of movie subtitle translation. With the joint efforts, the author believes that Chinese movie subtitle translation will achieve long-term development in the future. Even though this thesis has some limitations, the author hopes that this thesis can provide a different research perspective for the future discussion and research on Chinese movie subtitle translation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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