

A Study on the Chinese Translation of English Film Titles from the Perspective of Domestication and Foreignization Theory

—A Case Study of Hollywood Films in the Past Five Years

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Abstract: In today's continuous development of society, movies as a means of mass entertainment and a medium of cultural communication have been continuously integrated into people's lives. The translation of movie titles is the finishing touch, and it plays an important role in the dissemination of movie culture. This article mainly starts from the two translation strategies of "domestication" and "foreignization", combines theory with practice, discusses the application of "domestication" and "foreignization" in film Chinese translation, and analyzes the cultural dominance behind it.

Keywords: Cross-cultural translation, domestication, foreignization, English movie titles

1. INTRODUCTION:

As the process of world globalization is accelerating, the ties between countries have also become closer, and people are gradually seeking spiritual beauty and wealth. As an important carrier and media of cultural communication, film plays an important role in cross-cultural communication. The title of a movie can be said to be people's "first impression" of the movie. It concisely condenses the connotation of the movie, reveals the theme of the movie succinctly, and determines to a large extent whether a movie is attractive enough or even affects the audience's psychological expectations for it. However, the Chinese translation of movie titles must not only start from the theory, but also combine the content and the theme of the movie to carry out a horizontal comparative analysis. Therefore, it is very important to translate foreign films into Chinese reasonably and appropriately, and the problems of film Chinese translation are also endless. Nowadays, the Chinese translation of some movie titles only stays at the level of "literal translation" and "free translation", and there are even random translations and excessive translations. This has led to contradictions and stagnation between the development of different cultures. This article aims to start with the connotation of the theories of "domestication" and "foreignization", combining Hollywood movie titles in recent years as examples of Chinese translation, and discussing the application of translation theories in practice, so as to better carry out Chinese-English translation of movie titles to help achieve the purpose of cultural exchanges.

2. CURRENT RESEARCH STATUS IN CHINA AND RELATED THEORIES OF "DOMESTICATION" AND "FOREIGNIZATION"

Compared with western countries, China has big gaps and deficiencies both in film translation theory and translation practice. First, the internal contradictions between domestication and foreignization in China have hindered the pace of translation studies in China for more than ten years. The disputes between "domestication" and

“foreignization” are also endless, lacking theoretical height. Whether in terms of definitions, attitudes, applications, strategies, or methods, scholars from all walks of life hold different attitudes. The theories of “domestication” and “foreignization” originated from the West, and China has not unified their definition standards. This has also led to the lack of scientific research on related theories, and foreign theories that cannot match local research well. Second, with the continuous integration and development of cultures of various countries, more and more foreign films are flowing into the Chinese market. At a time when the research on film title translation in my country was not thorough enough and standardized, a large number of foreign films also exacerbated the contradiction between the current translation research results of our country and the translation needs of foreign films, resulting in the quality of the final results and the difficulty of deliberation on the language.

Domestication and foreignization are the means and strategies in the translation process, and they cannot be used as an outcome to measure a translation work. The choice of domestication and foreignization depends to a certain extent on the translator’s translation purpose, and the translator’s translation purpose is also based on the understanding of the work, and the understanding is bred in a certain context and a larger social background with a distinctive brand of the times. Therefore, in the course of different social times, readers’ understanding and tolerance of domestication and foreignization are also very different, and they are constantly floating with the changes of the times.

3.KEY POINTS OF ENGLISH MOVIE TITLE TRANSLATION

3.1Basis for Selection of Materials.

With the continuous development and progress of the times, movies have become one of the most popular entertainment methods. From mobile phones and TVs at home to movie theaters, they all show the status of movies in people’s lives today. A good movie can make people have endless aftertastes, and even stimulate resonance from the bottom of the heart, which has profound educational significance. As more and more European and American movies are imported into China, Hollywood movies have gradually become people’s best choice. “Hollywood” is located in Los Angeles, California. Since many famous American film companies are established here, “Hollywood” is gradually connected with the film industry. Therefore, “Hollywood” often refers to the American film industry.^[1]

As the center of the global film industry, Hollywood has nurtured many film tycoons, leading the continuous development of the global film level. At the same time, because of the excellent production, superb special effects and unique narrative aesthetics of Hollywood movies, they are deeply loved by the audience and are active in every corner of the world.

3.2 Key Points of Film Title Translation

3.2.1.The Principle of Cultural Reproduction.

The principle of cultural reproduction mainly includes two aspects: reproduction of source language cultural information and reproduction of source language cultural characteristics. First of all, translation is not the correspondence between words of language, but a kind of cultural transmission. In the process of film title translation, the translated film title should be presented based on the understanding of film information and culture. And what is different from the translation of the article is that it is not necessary to be too constrained to the form of the target language, but to express concisely and concisely the connotation and theme of the film. Second, in the translation process, the original title and the film itself must be faithful, and the national cultural features of the source language must not be arbitrarily obliterated or changed, and the national cultural characteristics of the source language must be reproduced. ^[2]In English films, many film translations have adopted the translation strategy of domestication. The Chinese translation of the film title opened the first door for the film itself. At the same time, it condensed the most important things of the film and presented it to the audience with the word “Fairstar” which is very characteristic of our country. It has achieved the unique artistic beauty of both Chinese and British film titles.

3.2.2. The Principle of Convention.

In the translation process of domestication and foreignization, special attention should be paid to the translation of some proper nouns, which must conform to the form and connotation of different languages in different cultural backgrounds. In Chinese, there are idioms, allegorical expressions, and proper nouns in politics, economy, science, etc., which have gradually become definite, difficult to change, and established by conventions.

3.3.3. The Principle of Cultural Compliance.

Language carries the unique culture of the nation. If a language is divorced from its own national culture, then there is no way to talk about domestication and foreignization, which is similar to the previous two views. Therefore, in the process of translation, it is necessary to be flexible and not excessively resist the input of foreign culture. On the contrary, appropriate blending of foreign cultures and using them will better reflect the national characteristics of the source language.

4.THE APPLICATION OF THE THEORY OF DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION IN THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH MOVIE TITLES

4.1.Analysis of the Theory of Domestication and Foreignization

American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti proposed two translation strategies, “domestication” and “foreignization”. Domestication translation strategy refers to the use of language expressions and cultural traditions that conform to the target language to please the target language audience, while foreignization translation strategies completely ignore the ready-made expressions of the target language and proceed in accordance with the language forms, habits and cultural traditions of the source language.

4.2. Domestication Translation of Title

The cultural differences between the East and the West have brought about different orientations of film title translation. Western thinking is a logical straight line thinking, advocating the individual, focusing on analysis and details, focusing on local details, emphasizing that the door is clear, specific, accurate, and straightforward. Reflected in the movie, the specific people, objects, events, and locations in the storyline are often used as the film titles. The Chinese emphasize commonality and re-induction. They are endowed with the characteristic of curvilinear thinking that is the unity of nature and man, emphasizing subtlety, twists and turns. This aesthetic psychology has a huge impact on Chinese. Chinese audiences are accustomed to accepting titles that summarize the overall content of the film. Therefore, the short, concise, harmonious, concise and lively four-character pattern is favored because of its beauty of text and endless aftertaste of phonology.^[3]

The naturalized translation of movie titles in the process of Chinese translation uses four-character idioms, frequently used four-character structures with a sense of rhythm and expressiveness, Chinese traditional cultural allusions, and does not adhere to the correspondence in the form of the title, but uses a rich artistic conception and generalization. The content of the film, the language full of beauty and interest, concretize and implicitly express the meaning of the film title.

4.3. Foreignization Translation of Film Titles

There are more domestication translations of movie titles than foreignization translations, but this does not deny the feasibility of foreignization translation theory. The process of world economic integration is accelerating, cultural exchanges between various ethnic groups have become more frequent, and people’s ability to accept foreign cultures has continued to increase, making the existence of foreignized translation possible. Domestication and foreignization translation are interrelated and mutually complementary contradictory communities, not opposed to each other, but

dialectically unified. Foreignization translation advocates retaining the style, characteristics and cultural differences of the source language and avoiding the expression of the target language.^[4] Pursue novel and exotic languages, and convey the original foreign cultural characteristics in an original way, so that the audience can appreciate the exotic customs.

From a cultural perspective, translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication. Translation cannot simply stay at the level of language or symbol transplantation. Its purpose is to promote the spread and exchange of a culture in foreign languages. Common foreignization strategies are transliteration and literal translation. English film titles are mostly based on the elements that promote the development of the story, such as the location of the characters.

4.4. Combination of Domestication and Foreignization-the Trend of Film Title Translation Methods

Movies are a window of language and culture. They have played an important role in enriching people's lives and broadening their cultural horizons. The title of the movie is the finishing touch. In the process of translating film titles, translators should combine the different cultural characteristics of China and the West, use domestication and foreignization translation methods flexibly and rationally, show their own unique artistic charm, convey the theme content, provide aesthetic pleasure, stimulate the enthusiasm of the audience, and gain the audience of the target language. Domestication and foreignization in film title translation are not contradictory, but complementary and dialectically unified. It is impossible to use a single translation theory and method for the Chinese translation of any best film title. It is only biased and proportional to the theoretical choice of foreignization and domestication, providing a more convenient choice of Chinese translation. In addition to focusing on one of the theories, the other theory can also be supplemented accordingly. At the same time, the combination of film content and clues and other non-translated content also plays an important role in the influence of the film name. Therefore, in translation practice, we should avoid simply adopting a certain strategy as much as possible. Instead, we should use it flexibly according to the specific content and context, and give full play to the advantages of each strategy to complete its own mission.^[5]

5. ANALYSIS AND REASONS OF THE APPLICATION TREND OF THE THEORY OF DOMESTICATION AND FOREIGNIZATION IN THE CHINESE TRANSLATION OF HOLLYWOOD MOVIES

Domestication and foreignization strategies have their own strengths, and they are unique in the translation of movie titles. In order to understand the application trend of the two translation strategies in the market, the author collected the original English names of 135 Hollywood movies from 2015 to 2019 and the official translated names of mainland China, and analyzed the translation strategies of all the movie titles that were consulted, and obtained the following picture . It can be seen that the translation of Hollywood movie titles in the past five years has been mainly based on foreignization, and the application of foreignization has been on the rise year by year. In 2018, the proportion of film titles translated using foreignization strategies reached 80%, the largest in the five-year period. Although the application of domestication is generally declining, in 2019, domestication translation strategies have begun to show an upward trend.

Why is there such a trend in the translation strategy of Hollywood movie titles? This is related to market demand and the aesthetic orientation of the audience. When it comes to "Hollywood blockbusters", it is easy to think of "big productions". Top special effects, music, unique backgrounds and narrative methods all attract people's attention, save the world, superheroes, magic science fiction and other uncommon domestic themes For domestic audiences, it is a kind of cultural shock, and they can get a different viewing experience. Therefore, people who take time to relax in their busy lives and pursue the ultimate visual and auditory effects will look for brands similar to "Hollywood". If the name of a movie makes people know that it is a foreign blockbuster, it also meets the audience's expectations for entertainment. Under such market demand, it is most profitable to adopt the foreignization strategy for movie titles, which also explains

why the foreignization strategy dominates the Hollywood movie title translation.[6]

With the improvement of the domestic film manufacturing level, domestic films have received more and more praise from the Chinese people in recent years. The effects that Hollywood films can achieve are not inferior to domestic films, such as the science fiction film “Wandering Earth” in 2019, which is well-made and has a box office. Up to 4.654 billion yuan. The improvement of the quality of domestic films, coupled with the enhancement of people’s cultural confidence, makes foreign films less attractive than before. Under the background of globalization and the popularity of English, the degree of “novelty” in British and American culture has also declined. Movie titles no longer blindly pursue “foreign flavors” and develop in the direction of naturalization to meet market needs.

In the process of Hollywood movie title translation, the application of translation strategy reflects the needs of the times and aesthetic orientation behind the movie. Whether domestication or foreignization is adopted, it is a choice that conforms to the expectations of the audience and the development of the market.

6.CONCLUSION:

As a part of popular life, movies have an influential role in cross-cultural communication, and movie titles have unique significance as the “signature” of movies. Some methods of random translation and abusive translation of film titles are not advisable. During the translation process, the film art must be respected, and the use of domestication, foreignization, or a combination of the two must be seriously considered under the condition of fully understanding the content of the film and the market demand. The translation strategy is to correctly treat the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, comprehensively consider the artistic and commercial nature, and meet the humanistic demands and public aesthetics of domestic moviegoers. In recent years, although foreignization strategies have been more widely used in film title translation, the application of domestication strategies has also been on the rise, which is consistent with the development direction of the times. The above are the conclusions drawn by the author on the analysis of Hollywood movie title translation strategies from 2015 to 2019, and we look forward to more scholars’ research to supplement.

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