

The Dilemma and Countermeasures of Domestic Animation "Going Abroad" Under Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract: In recent years, China has increasingly diversified its methods of foreign exchange and paid more attention to the inheritance and transmission of traditional Chinese culture as it has experienced rapid development in many fields as a result of the rapid improvement of its economic strength and the continuous improvement of its overall national strength. Film and television productions, which have the advantages of having big audiences, quick communication, impressively good effects, and long-lasting impacts, have emerged as one of the key modes of cross-cultural communication in a range of media. However, due to the profound cultural differences between East and West societies and the influence of subtitle translation in intercultural communication, the export of home-grown animated films is still hindered. This paper discusses the significance and current issues of subtitle translation for Chinese animation's "going abroad" and finds workable translation strategies to encourage Chinese animation to leave the country and travel the globe through the dilemma of domestic animation communication against the backdrop of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Domestic Animation; Cross-Cultural Communication; Subtitle Translation; Translation Strategies

Introduction

“Strengthening cultural confidence and telling good Chinese stories” has been the focus of attention in recent years, and is also the core meaning of developing the current Chinese film industry. As China's cultural industry has boomed, a number of classic animation works have emerged, such as *Monkey King: Hero Is Back*, *Big Fish & Begonia* and *Ne Zha: I am the Destiny*, which have achieved good box office results and scores. It is a pity, however, that these excellent productions are very limited in terms of overseas distribution and international impact, and are still blocked from going abroad. A data survey named "International Research and Communication of Chinese film Culture" shows that in the journey of domestic animation to the world, in addition to the "cultural differences" between countries, the main factor that severely affects and hinders foreign audiences from watching, recognizing and receiving domestic animation is subtitle translation. Therefore, this paper discusses the subtitle translation of domestic animation through the dilemma of domestic animation communication under the background of cross-cultural communication, so as to maintain the inherent subjectivity and nationality of animation works, so that domestic animation can truly "go abroad" and be recognized, loved and accepted by overseas audiences.

1. The Importance of Subtitle Translation in Intercultural Communication

Now that mass media is increasingly globalized and information communication technology is rapidly developing, the function of translation is gradually shifting from literal interpretation to cultural interpretation, which is important to effectively dispel misunderstandings and estrangements and improve international relations.

Subtitled translations of foreign films not only serve as a bridge for cultural exchange and communication between different countries, but also have a direct impact on the box office and reputation of the film. Based on this effect and function, the translation of animated subtitles has received increasing attention from most translators and producers, as well as from most audiences.

2. The Dilemma of Subtitle Translation of Domestic Animation

According to the Chinese Journal Full-text Database, the research on the subtitle translation of animated films in the field of Chinese film and television translation began in 2009, and there have been few academic papers specifically on the subtitle translation of animated films, which shows that the English subtitle translation of excellent and classic Chinese animation works is seriously lacking. To some extent, this also hinders the promotion of good domestic classic animation works in the international market, and makes it more difficult for Chinese culture to export and communicate with other countries. For example, the key reason why *Ne Zha: I Am the Destiny* failed to win an Oscar was due to cross-cultural barriers: First, most Westerners do not understand the Chinese fairy tale; Secondly, they have little understanding of the cultural connotation of the rich culture-loaded words in this film, such as "Yuan Shi Tian Zun" and "Ling Zhu"; Third, the core of Chinese ethics, morality and Confucianism cannot be understood in this story.

3. The Countermeasures of Subtitle Translation of Domestic Animations

3.1 Proficiency in Both Chinese and Foreign Languages and Cultures

Professor Qian Shaochang of Shanghai International Studies University, the leading figure in film and television translation in our country, believes that "expressiveness" among the three principles of "faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance" is the most important when doing film and television translation.^[1] However, due to the differences between Chinese and English language cultures, it is not easy to accurately convey the connotations of the original work and perfectly show the themes and culture of the original. As Professor Wang Zuoliang pointed out in his article *Cultural Comparison in Translation*, "The translator must be a cultural person in the real sense."^[2] Therefore, it requires translators not only to have profound Chinese cultural deposits, but also to have a deep understanding of Western culture. Translators should fully consider the foreign audience's linguistic habits and cultural attributes, adjust the use of various words and sentences, reduce the differences in expression between Chinese and English after translation, and make the translation strive to reproduce the semantic information of Chinese, as complete as possible to reproduce the original theme style and cultural connotation of the work.

3.2 Feasible Translation Strategies

The translation strategies of domestication and foreignization were put forward by Lawrence Venuti, a famous American translator, in *The Translator's Invisibility* in 1995. His concept is derived from the German philosopher and translation theorist Schleiermacher. In his paper *On Different Approaches to Translation*, Schleiermacher notes that "the translator either tries not to disturb the original author and keeps the reader close to the author; Or try not to disturb the reader and keep the author close to the reader"^[3]. Venuti believed that domestication is to "decomposition the original text according to the cultural values of the target language, so that readers can get the narcissistic experience of identifying with the local culture from the cultural others"^[4]. In the process of translation, it is necessary to perform domestication if some foreign texts are unfamiliar and may be difficult to understand and accept in the recipient's context, or even easy to misunderstand in the recipient's context. For example, there are many terms with Buddhism and Taoism in *Ne zha: I Am The Destiny*, such as "Yuanshi Tianzun". The adoption of domestication in the translation can avoid the difficulty of foreign recipients to absorb many of the cultural connotations in the animation, given their lack of cultural background in Taoism and Buddhism. However, in the context of economic globalization, cultural exchanges and integration have become more frequent, and people have accordingly become more open and inclusive to foreign cultures.^[5] Venuti defined the foreignization translation he advocated as "deviating from the local mainstream values and retaining the linguistic and cultural differences of the original text"^[6]. The foreignization strategy helps to maintain the unique cultural elements of the source language and make the target language audience understand the elegance and ideology of the foreign culture. In the translation of animation subtitle, foreignization enables the target audience to face the foreign cultural context, and enables the audience to see its unique language and cultural characteristics from the first glance of animation subtitle translation. It should be noted that in subtitle translation, the premise of foreignization is that there is no misunderstanding in the cultural context of the target language as well as there is no

conflict between the source language and the target language. Otherwise, foreignization will not only fail to inject foreign culture, but also generate opposition in the target language audience.

If all words with cultural connotations are translated through foreignization strategy in the process of subtitle translation in order to spread Chinese culture, it may lead to long and cumbersome subtitles and bring reading burden to the audience. Therefore, the combination and supplement of domestication and foreignization can be adopted to avoid aesthetic fatigue and movie-watching burden caused by all foreignization, and to avoid cultural loss caused by all domestication. For example, when translating the proper terms "Qian Kun Quan" and "Tian Jie Zhou", some translators suggest using the transliteration method (This method is often used to translate some proper nouns and place names, and can also avoid the burden of watching movies caused by too long subtitles) to translate them into "Qiankun hoop" and "Tianjie curse". In order to enable foreign audiences to absorb more essence of Chinese culture in the process of watching the film, when the key figures, places and things in domestic animations appear for the first time, a string of text marks can be displayed next to the objects, and these marks adopt the strategy of foreignization. For example, the above examples can be translated as "hoop of heaven and earth" and "curse of heavenly tribulation". Through such a combination of foreignization and domestication, the subtitles will not be too long to affect the viewing effect, and the true meaning of these culture-loaded words can be revealed to be understood.

Conclusion

In the context of information, cultural, and economic globalization, it is the obligation of domestic animation works to enable Chinese culture to "go abroad." To make domestic animation, a communication medium with more than 100 years of vitality, coruscate new vitality, translators must be fluent in Chinese and other languages, understand foreign cultures and their differences, and use practical translation techniques, such as the combination of domestication and foreignization. Only in this way can the world learn about Chinese culture, which has 5,000 years of deeply ingrained cultural deposits, through the finest classic animation translated masterpieces from our nation.

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