

A Study on Functional Equivalence Theory and Translation of American

Si yu Yang Fang Li

No.7 Middle School Fuxi Experimental School, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, Xuzhou, Jiangsu Province, 221011;

Abstract: In recent years, as an important cultural media, the translation of film titles is particularly important, which not only reflects the content and style of the work, but also maintains the cultural information and is accepted by the audience of the translation. As one of the most important translation theories, more and more scholars combine the theory of functional equivalence with the translation of film titles to find the most appropriate translation methods. On the basis of functional equivalence theory, this paper divides translation strategies and translation methods, and analyzes and summarizes translation methods in each translation strategy.

Key words: functional equivalence theory; film title; translation strategy; translation method

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With the increasing influence of economic globalization on countries and cultural exchanges, film, as an important medium of cultural communication, plays a very important role in the exchange of different cultures in various countries. The development of Chinese films is much later than that of the West, but in recent years, the Chinese film market has gradually become the center of the international film market, so the western countries pay more and more attention to the Chinese film market. But different languages are another obstacle.

As the first impression, film title plays a particularly important role in translation. The translation of film title should reflect the style of the work, not only to make the audience easy to understand, but also to have beauty. Many scholars have studied translation methods and strategies for better translation. As one of the famous translation theories abroad, many scholars have studied many fields, such as advertising, science and technology English, film subtitles and so on. The functional equivalence theory pursues more equivalence in meaning and takes into account formal equivalence, which has a new idea for those who only pursue equivalence in meaning or form. But many scholars are more concerned with the translation of film subtitles, but ignore the translation of film titles, let alone in the field of American film titles. So this paper studies the translation of the title of the American film field.

1.2 The Structure of the Thesis

This paper is divided into three parts in total. In the second section, this paper first summarizes the research of film title translation from other theories, and mainly selects Skopos theory and memetics. Then it summarizes the current scholars' research on film title translation under functional equivalence theory, and finally discusses the research on functional equivalence theory.

In the third section of this paper, we study the translation of American film titles under the theory of functional equivalence. This paper is divided into three translation strategies: culture, information and structure, and then summarizes the translation methods on each translation strategy, for example, in the cultural translation strategy, the translation methods are divided into literal translation, free translation and supplementary translation. The translation strategies and translation methods are summarized separately, which is more detailed than the previous research.

In the last section, this paper is summarized. First, it summarizes the content of this paper and the advantages of this paper. Finally, it summarizes the shortcomings of this paper and hopes to improve in the future research.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Film Titles Translation

Among many famous translation theories abroad, I give specific examples of Skopos Theory and Memetics in film title translation.

Skopos theory was first put forward by German scholar Hans J. Vermeer in his book *The theoretical framework of general translation* published in 1978. The first rule of translation is Skopos rule: "the purpose of translation determines the whole process of translation." Fermi defined translation as "translation is a kind of transformation, in which communicative linguistic symbols or non-verbal symbols (or both) are formed from one language to another". He emphasized that translation is a kind of communication behavior of transformation between two different cultures, rather than a text transformation between pure languages. The other two principles of teleology are coherence rule and fidelity principle. (Christiane Nord, 2001) Skopos theory holds that the primary principle of all transformation activity is "Skopos principle", that is, Translation should be able to function in the context and culture of the target language in the way protected by the target language recovery. (Venuti: 2001) Translation methods can be summarized as translation, legal translation, free translation and live translation. (Wang Ying, 2016)

The term meme was first used by Dawkins, a professor at Oxford University, in the book *The selfish gene*. In the book, the word meme is created creatively by imitating the word gene. It is translated as "what is imitated" and used to refer to the genetic unit "gene" of human cultural thought. Just as the genetic information of organism is transmitted through gene generation by generation, human cultural thoughts can also be transmitted from one person to another through imitation, whose carrier is meme. (Dawkins, Richard, 1989) The first British scholar to introduce memes into translation studies was Chesterman. In his book *— Memes of Translation: The Spread of Ideas in Translation Theory*, published in 1997, he regarded translation research as a branch of memes, and collectively referred to the concepts or viewpoints about translation itself and translation theory as translation memes, just like the theoretical concepts, norms, strategies and values of translation, attempts to use memetics to explain various problems in translation. (Chesterman). Andrew, (2012) Based on memetics, the following translation strategies are proposed for Film Titles: Direct introduction of target Memes, Transform target Memes, copying memes of the source language.

2.1.1. Direct introduction of target memes

This strategy means that there is no cultural gap between different countries in the translation of English and Chinese film titles. For example, *Lolita* 《one tree pear flower pressure begonia

2.1.2. Transforming target memes

Transforming target memes refers to according to the inherent cultural image in the target language, the translator imitates the intention of the film to attract the audience's attention. For example, *Waterloo Bridge* 《broken blue bridge.

2.1.3. Copying memes of the source language

Copying memes of the source language refers to that in the translation of English and Chinese film titles, the translator has to adopt the "fetch doctrine" because of the cultural differences of the target language. For example, *Seven* 《Seven Crimes. The film is based on seven deadly sins: lust, pride, jealousy, rage, gluttony, greed and laziness. Therefore, the Chinese title is translated into seven sins to make up for the lack of our culture.

2.2. Previous Studies on Film Titles Translation from Functional Equivalence Theory

The translation of film titles should not only truly reflect the content and style of the work, but also maintain cultural information, and be accepted by the audience of the translation. In the theory of functional equivalence, translators are required to pursue more meaning equivalence rather than formal equivalence in the process of translation. In the translation of English film names, it is precisely the translation task of reproducing the original information in the translated language. It is not only a pure language conversion process, but also a process of reproducing the original information in the closest natural equivalence value. The effective theoretical guidance and translation methods for the Chinese translation of film titles. The title of the film translated by functional theory is in line with the writing habit, which will not make people feel obscure and difficult to understand, but give people a kind of feeling. Common translation methods are:

(1) Literal translation: The sour of music 《 The Voice of Green Music, Best picture of the 45th Academy Awards : The Godfather 《 Godfather, Pearl Harbor, Harbor Pearl 《.

(2) Transliteration : Casablanca 《 Casablanca, Hamlet 《 Hamlet, etc.

(3) Free translation : Gone With The Wind 《 beauty in troubled times ", Ghost 《 people have no ghost feelings ".
(Lu Jingjing ,2011)

The above method is a direct translation method based on the characteristics of film titles, but there is little research on the translation method of Chinese film titles based on the theory of functional equivalence. The so-called translation method under the theory of functional equivalence requires that in the process of translation, translation should correspond to a certain function of the title. In recent years, the research in this field only grasps the significance of functional equivalence theory, that is, the pursuit of equivalence in the sense. However, the research has not subdivided and summarized the function of movie titles. Different from the studies in recent years, this paper summarizes translation strategies by subdividing the functions displayed in foreign film titles, and divides the application of functional equivalence into cultural function, information function and structural function. For example, in terms of cultural functions, this paper summarizes translation methods from four aspects of culture - religion, values, social customs and Ecology - free translation, literal translation, addition and deletion translation, etc. because of the obvious differences between countries in the four aspects of culture, the translation of film titles is also different, so the summary of translation methods is more understandable. At the same time, we also understand the theory of functional equivalence to a certain extent. Compared with previous studies, this paper is closer to translation under functional equivalence theory, and different from other studies that directly summarize translation methods. This paper regards translation strategies and translation methods as two aspects, and summarizes translation methods on the basis of translation strategies.

2.3 Previous Studies on Functional Equivalence Theory

Nida thinks, "any mature translation method takes semiotics as its basic rule of symbol encoding and decoding." (Eugene A. Nida, 1993) "The most interesting contribution of modern Linguistics to translation, I'm afraid, is that the translators from the shackles of the previous generation's assumptions and conjectures in philology." (Jan De Ward, 1986) The Functional Equivalence Theory was logically assigned "dynamic equivalence". Later Nida put forward the concept of "functional equivalence" in his book "From One Language to Another Language". From the perspective of information theory, Nida's definition of translation is: "translation is to find the natural equivalent discourse that is as close as possible to the source language information in the receiver language. The equivalence in meaning is the first, then the equivalence in style." (Eugene, 2000) Two forms of equivalence are reflected in its "functional equivalence" theory - formal equivalence and functional equivalence. (Nida, 2004) Nida says due diligence translators seek the most natural equivalence " (Eugene A., 1982). Its essence is to make the source language equivalent in both meaning and form. This means that the translator should give more attention to the equivalence of form and style while expressing the source language information truly and accurately. (Junye Li) Pinglan Zhang, (2019) It emphasizes that the translator should try to reproduce the content and essence of the source language in a proper and natural way, as to show the information of the source language to the readers. (Sun Xin, 2014) Nida's translation theory has four basic requirements: first, speaking is reasoning; second, conveying the spirit of the original text; third, expressing naturally and smoothly; fourth, being able to resonate. Equivalence can be divided into four levels: lexical level, syntactic level, text level and stylistic level. (Yan Yuehe, 2019)

However, Nida's theory of functional equivalence has its defects in the process of translation. Nida puts forward the translation methods of formal equivalence and functional equivalence for Bible translation, which have the special intention of religious propaganda and only apply to the special text category. Peter Newmark, a famous English translator, translation theorist and linguist, also points out four situations in which the translation can not achieve the same effect as the original in his book "Approaches to Translation": "first, the special elements of the language, such as puns, jokes, mistakes in speech, etc.; second, they are familiar to the source language readers rather than the target language readers. Familiar cultural phenomena; third, literary works with strong local color and special historical and cultural

background;fourth,literary works with strong creativity and the author's feeling rather than for the readers."(Gong Wenlei. 2018) Therefore,we should treat the theory of "functional equivalence" dialectically .W e should admit the synchronicity of several standards with a tolerant attitude,and realize that they are a standard system with specific functions and complementary each other .(Koo Zhengkun ,2003).

3 The Application of Functional Equivalence in American Film Titles Translation

3.1 Cultural Equivalence in American Film Titles Translation

As the media of broadcasting culture,film reflects the culture of different countries.Therefore,the translation of film titles needs to pay special attention to cultural factors,so this paper summarizes cultural translation strategies.The cultures of different countries include values,living habits,local customs and aesthetic tastes.There are great differences between American local culture and Chinese culture.Americans pay more attention to directness and cheerfulness when they get along with others.On the contrary,China pays more attention to euphemism and etiquette.The film'It Happened One Night'——" one night wind flow ", translated into 《 one night wind flow "not only takes care of the euphemism of Chinese culture,but also reveals the story.There has been romanticism in Chinese culture since ancient times,and all kinds of poems and articles have been deeply influenced.For example,Waterloo Bridge As the media of broadcasting culture,film reflects the culture of different countries.Therefore,the translation of film titles needs to pay special attention to cultural factors,so this paper summarizes cultural translation strategies.The cultures of different countries include values,living habits,local customs and aesthetic tastes.There are great differences between American local culture and Chinese culture.Americans pay more attention to directness and cheerfulness when they get along with others.On the contrary,China pays more attention to euphemism and etiquette.The film'It Happened One Night'——" soul broken blue bridge ". The literal translation is 《 Waterloo Bridge. makes the film's titles show a sad atmosphere,which closely links the atmosphere and theme of the film,makes Chinese audiences more curious to see the title of the film,and also lets the audience understand in advance that the tone of the film is sad. It's too bland for China,but the translation of 《 Blue Bridge

Although Chinese culture is so,we can't make the movie title too Chinese.After all,it's American movie.We should also respect other countries'culture,and we need to learn and draw lessons from going straight to the theme.The film' Lord of the Rin g'—— Lord of the Rings, s ome people also translated the movie into 《 Lord of the Rings, which highlights the magic color of the movie.But I think that the direct translation of "Lord of the rings" itself has the color of science fiction,and does not need to abandon the direct for a little magic..

3.1.1 Translation Methods: Free Translation

According to cultural translation strategy,the most typical translation method is free translation.The culture of each region is different,so in order to match the culture of China,most American films have to give up the original literal title.Forexample1.Amadeus —— Mozart, When I saw the English film title,I was puzzled why it was translated into'Amadeus'.. M ost people don't understand it and they think the English film title should be Mozart.But in foreign culture,a person's last name is put at the end,and his first name is put before his last name,so Mozart is just his last name.Original name of Mozart is Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart(Wolfgang Amadois Mozart) In American culture,the custom is called Amadeus,and then according to our understanding of Mozart in Chinese culture,we can translate it into 《 The biography of Mozart.2.Lolita——" a tree pear flower pressure begonia "The film is based on the famous novel'Lolita',which describes the story of an older university professor falling in love with Lolita,a 12-year-old girl.The title of the translated film is a poem by Sushi "18 bride 80 Lang, white hair to red makeup, mandarin duck quilt to red makeup, a tree pear flower pressure begonia ." White hair is used to describe the old man with grey hair,and Begonia is used to describe the young girl with young age.In a word,this poem means that the old cow eats the young grass,which coincides with the plot of the movie.So this translation is based on the understanding of the whole movie and the Chinese culture.3.Hercules —— Hercules, the literal translation of the film is translated into Heracles.Herakles is the greatest hero in ancient Greek mythology.He is the son of Zeus and Alcmena.He is extremely brave and powerful.After his death,he ascended to Olympus and became Hercules.Combined with foreign culture,I learned that Hercules became Hercules after his death,so I translated it into Hercules.

3.1.2 Translation Methods: Literal Translation

Chinese culture and American culture are overlapped in some places. In the process of learning, Chinese people will also understand the general history of the United States. We also know some important historical events in the United States. At this time, we usually use literal translation, which is not only a respect for American culture, but also a test for translators.

1. Pearl Harbor ——— Pearl Harbor This movie is based on the historical event that Japan attacked the Pearl Harbor of the United States during World War II, which is also known to China as a historical knowledge, so it's no problem to translate it directly into 《 Pearl Harbor.

2. Hamlet ——— Hamlet this film is adapted from a play written by Shakespeare. This play is also excerpted into Chinese textbooks. Therefore, most Chinese people understand this play. The film is adapted from the play, and the title can be translated directly. Similar examples include The Shawshank Redemption ——— Shawshank's Redemption, Schindler's List this film is adapted from a play written by Shakespeare. This play is also excerpted into Chinese textbooks. Therefore, most Chinese people understand this play. The film is adapted from the play, and the title can be translated directly. Similar examples include The Shawshank Redemption ——— Schindler's List.

3.1.3 Translation Methods: Amplification

For the translation of American movie titles, we can also increase or decrease the original titles on the basis of keeping the original titles, which is the amplification.

1. movie Seven ——— Seven Sin this film takes the serial murders of the criminal John Du as the clue, takes the 'seven crimes' in Catholic doctrine as the purpose, and carries on the story of "seven crimes" series murders. If it's just a "seven", Chinese audiences can't understand the culture when they haven't seen the movie. Catholicism calls seven sins, or seven major sins or seven original sins. The crimes are arrogance, jealousy, rage, laziness, greed, gluttony and lust in order of severity. In order to better convey the culture, the translator uses the additional translation method to translate the title of the film into 《 Seven Sin.

Philadelphia ——— Philadelphia Story the original title of the film translated as "Philadelphia" is a place name. If only translated into this way, it is very obscure for Chinese audiences. It is likely that the film records the scenery and culture of Philadelphia like a documentary. The film involves a lot of sensitive words in American society, such as AIDS, black people. Around these sensitive words, the film tells about the unfairness and discrimination against AIDS and black people in American society. Finally, what the film wants to express is to let people put down their prejudice and treat people equally. The translator adds the word "story", which not only narrows the scope of the film, but also makes the film more cultural. There are some similar films that Elizabeth Philadelphia ——— Queen Elizabeth, L.A. Confidential Philadelphia ——— Los Angeles Secrets and so on.

3.2 Information Equivalence in American Film Titles Translation

The title of each American film contains a lot of information, perhaps the background, plot or character of the film. This requires us to take care of the vocabulary and meaning of our own American film title in the process of translation, and to translate the film title after understanding the complete film. After taking care of the vocabulary and meaning of the title itself, it does not represent the end of the whole translation. To extract the effective information of the whole film and to extract the information of its own film name is the translation strategy that really achieves the information function.

Film Bathing Beauty ——— " Water Hibiscus ", about a pop music composer Steve to the beautiful university swimming teacher Caroline love at first sight. The title of the film "bathing' represents the career of the heroine, " beauty' also let people know that the heroine is a very beautiful woman. bathing'," hibiscus is not only a metaphor for the natural gorgeous woman in Chinese history, but also a good free translation of the free translation of the beauty', to extract the information of its own film name, and there is no error in understanding the information of the whole film. Another movie Being John Malkovich ——— " Puppet Life ", which simply extracts information from the title itself, will translate into "Become John Markovich ", but after extracting information from the entire film, we will learn that the male owner is a puppet artist, good at manipulating puppets, a chance to find that the male owner can control John Markovic's eyes, so the male owner is ready to use this discovery for a big business. So the male owner took John Markovich as his puppet, and to become John Markovic was to become a puppet, so he translated it into a puppet life. So in the process of translation, we should not only extract the information of the title itself, but also combine the information in the film, so that we can

translate the title of the film more accurately, make the title full of beauty, and finally attract but more audience.

3.2.1 Translation Methods: Literal Translation

In the information function peer-to-peer translation strategy, when adopting the literal translation method, more is the commercial film. Such as Iron man —— Iron Man, Star Wars Iron man —— Star Wars, Spider-Man and Harry Potter Iron man —— Harry Potter. The commercial film adopts the literal translation method because the commercial film more caters to the popular taste and the appreciation level, is full of the sensational scene and the popular laugh material, does not consider the deep level content, therefore the straightforward literal translation method makes the most suitable.

But there are other films in the information function of the peer-to-peer translation strategy is a literal translation method. For example, the film The silence of the lambs —— "the silent lamb ", which makes a plot or thriller, the title itself is full of mystery, enough to attract the curiosity of the audience, and fully extract the effective information, so the literal translation method, retained the original title. Other types of movies use literal translation, such as The first blood —— first drop of blood, Titanic The first blood —— Titanic, The Shawshank Redemption The first blood —— Shawshank's Redemption and The Princess Diaries The first blood —— Princess Diary.

3.2.2 Translation Methods: Amplification

Some American films also have valid information on the original title, but it is not enough to generalize the effective information of the whole film, at this time we need to use the addition translation method to carry on the more complete translation. 1. Passengers —— " Space Passenger ", if it is a literal translation called " Passenger ", this makes the Chinese audience confused. Translators add the word "space" because the film itself is a science fiction film and is an event that occurs in space, which complements the effective information of the film and retains the information of the original title.

Sully —— original title of " Captain Sally ", " Sully " is the name of the protagonist of the film, adding the word " captain " to point out the identity of the protagonist, but also let the audience know the characters in advance, and arouse the curiosity of the audience.

Hacksaw Ridge —— " Blood War Hacksaw Ridge , " the original title translated directly into " Hacksaw Ridge , " if but watching this title will let viewers misunderstand that the film is a documentary recording the mountain. The translator's addition of the word " blood war " clearly shows that the theme of the film is war film, but also reveals the cruelty and intensity of war. Therefore, on the basis of information function equivalence translation strategy, flexible translation with incremental translation is also an effective translation method.

3.3 Structure Equivalence in American Film Titles Translation

Every sentence in English has its own structure, from words to phrases, from phrases to sentences, and finally from sentences to an article, so we should also pay attention to the structure of the title itself when translating American film titles. The most common names in American films are nouns, but they contain verbs, prepositions, etc. There are parallel or other structures in the titles. For example, the film Fast & Furious —— " speed and passion ", the title of the film has a symbol "&", translated into Chinese is "and, and , " is a juxtaposition structure, so translated into " speed and passion ". Film Schindler's List —— " Schindler's List ", here we notice that there are noun possessive cases in the title, so we first need to know that the translated title should have "...", combined with all the nouns, and finally translated as " Schindler's List ". Film How the Grinch Stole Christmas! —— " Greenwich steals Christmas ", the film itself is structured as an exclamatory sentence, is a tone of wonder, and has no special meaning, so translated as " Greenwich steals Christmas ".

3.3.1 Translation Methods: Literal Translation

In the strategy of structural equivalence translation, the common translation method is literal translation because we should pay attention to structural equivalence. 1. first of all, for the American film when the verb appeared in the title of the translation, the film Saving Private Ryan —— " Save the Great Soldier Ryan , "" the original meaning of the 'save' is "save ", combined with the meaning of the following noun, so the literal translation of " Save the Great Soldier Ryan ". Similar translations of American movie titles include Fight Club —— fight club, Singing in the Rain Fight Club —— in the rain and To Kill a Mockingbird Fight Club —— kill a robin.

There are also some prepositions in American film titles, and we should also pay attention to these preposition

divided into three parts, namely, cultural reciprocal translation strategies, information reciprocal translation strategies and structural reciprocal translation strategies. Then this paper summarizes the translation methods from the basis of each translation strategy, such as literal translation, free translation, additional translation and so on. Different from the previous studies, most of the previous studies simply summarize the translation methods, and this paper combines translation strategies and translation methods, which makes the translated title more accurate, and also provides a new method for the subsequent translation of American film titles.

Good film titles can better promote the film itself, attract more audience, there are no lack of films because of the lack of good translation of film titles, and let people miss some good films. So every translator should translate every film title seriously and become a better cultural communicator.

4.2 Limitations of the Thesis

Although this paper combines translation strategies with translation methods, which makes a breakthrough in the translation of American film titles, this paper still has some shortcomings in the translation of American film titles. In this paper, translation strategies are divided into three parts: cultural translation strategies, information translation strategies and structural translation strategies. It is impossible to generalize how to translate all the titles of American films from these three angles. The film market has been improving and new films are coming on the market.

This paper is based on functional equivalence theory summed up the translation strategy, but functional equivalence theory itself is also defective, so we can not blindly pursue functional equivalence theory, but also have their own ideas to explore better translation theory. In order to better translate the title of American film, translators should constantly strengthen their English skills, constantly enrich their own cultural knowledge, as well as rich imagination, and finally I think the most important thing is to be always passionate about their profession.

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