

A Study of Subtitle Translation in *A Frozen Rage* from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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Abstract: *A Frozen Rage* has attracted widespread attention for its unique Northeastern Chinese flavor, humorous elements, and emotional depth. Its subtitle translation needs to balance linguistic conversion, cultural transmission, and emotional expression. The paper first outlines the basic concepts and core ideas of ecological translation theory, emphasizing that translation is an ecosystem of adaptation and selection. Then, it analyzes the adaptive selection and transformation of ecological translation theory in the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, drawing on specific subtitle translation examples from *A Frozen Rage*. The paper finds that through flexible use of translation strategies, the translator successfully achieves accuracy, fluency, and cultural adaptability in subtitle translation, enhancing the viewing experience and cultural identity of the target audience. This paper not only enriches the application cases of ecological translation theory but also provides valuable insights for improving the quality of film subtitle translation and cultural transmission.

Keywords: Eco-Translatology; *A Frozen Rage*; Subtitle Translation

1. Introduction

With the international influence of Chinese culture increasingly enhancing, films, as an important medium for cultural dissemination, play a crucial role in promoting exchanges and understanding among different cultures. *A Frozen Rage* is one that integrates dramatic, comedic, and criminal elements, telling a story of revenge by small-time characters in a northeastern Chinese town. The film begins with a car accident fifteen years ago, in which the protagonist, known as Lao Da, failed to stop a hit-and-run driver due to cowardice, resulting in his younger brother becoming permanently

disabled. This guilt and regret became an indelible shadow in his heart. Fifteen years later, when the truth gradually emerged, Lao Da decided not to remain silent, vowing to seek justice for his brother. The film has attracted the attention of numerous domestic and international audiences with its unique northeastern charm, humorous elements, and emotional depth.

Analyzing the characteristics of film subtitle translation, it is not difficult to find that its colloquialism, instantaneity, and spatiality are particularly prominent. Colloquialism requires subtitle translation to be close to the characters' daily dialogue, maintaining the natural fluency of language; instantaneity means that subtitles need to be presented to the audience within a very short period of time, which requires the translation to be both accurate and concise; spatiality limits the length and number of lines of subtitles, making it necessary for translators to convey complete information within a limited range. At the same time, film subtitle translation also faces many challenges. Cultural differences are a major problem, and how to retain the cultural characteristics of the original text while allowing the target audience to understand and accept it is a question that translators need to deeply consider. Differences in language habits are also a major challenge, as the ways of expression and idiomatic expressions in different languages vary greatly, requiring translators to make appropriate adjustments and conversions during translation. Moreover, emotional conveyance is also a major difficulty in subtitle translation. It undoubtedly poses a formidable challenge for translators to accurately convey the emotional changes of characters solely through text without the aid of sound and facial expressions. As a crucial link in the cross-cultural dissemination of films, the quality of subtitle translation directly affects viewer's understanding and acceptance of the film. The subtitle translation of the movie *A Frozen Rage*

not only needs to accurately convey the semantic content of the dialogue, but also needs to take into account the characteristics of Northeast dialects, the transmission of cultural connotations, and the fidelity of emotional expression. At the same time, subtitle translation is also constrained by multiple factors such as time and space, requiring precise and fluent language conversion within the limited subtitle space.

2. Overview of Eco-Translatology

Ecological translation studies, as an innovative translation concept, is deeply rooted in the fertile soil of translation theory and practice. This theory was founded by Professor Hu Gengshen of Tsinghua University, who ingeniously combined traditional translation theory with natural ecology, opening up a brand-new perspective for translation research. Ecological translation studies not only inherits and develops traditional translation theory but also provides a profound revelation of the essence of translation activities.

In the theoretical framework of eco-translatology, three-dimensional transformation is a crucial concept. The three-dimensional transformation refers to the adaptive selection and transformation in the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. Linguistic dimension transformation requires the translator to accurately understand the language characteristics of the source language during the translation process and choose appropriate expressions in the target language to achieve precise language conversion. Cultural dimension transformation emphasizes that the translator needs to bridge cultural differences, understand and convey the cultural connotations in the original text, ensuring the acceptability of the translation in the target language culture and the accurate transmission of cultural information. Communicative dimension transformation requires the translator to focus on the communicative intention and effect of the original text and achieve equivalence in communicative function between the original text and the translation through translation.

3. Subtitle Translation of *A Frozen Rage* Under the Guidance of Eco-Translatology

A Frozen Rage, with its thrilling plot, profound

themes, and vivid character portrayal, has attracted widespread attention from audiences worldwide. However, for viewers who do not speak the original language, the quality of subtitle translation is directly related to their ability to fully and deeply understand the film's content. In this context, ecological translation theory provides a new perspective and method for subtitle translation of *A Frozen Rage*. Below, we will delve into the specific application of ecological translation theory in the subtitle translation of *A Frozen Rage* from three aspects: linguistic dimension transformation, cultural dimension transformation, and communicative dimension transformation.

3.1 Linguistic Dimension Transformation

In the subtitle translation of *A Frozen Rage*, linguistic dimension transformation is a fundamental and crucial aspect. The translator needs to accurately understand the vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure of the source language while considering the language characteristics, expression habits, and cultural background of the target language. For example, when translating film dialogue, the translator should flexibly use synonyms, near-synonyms, and phrases in the target language to conform to the language habits and expressions of the target audience. At the same time, since film dialogue often has colloquial and instantaneous characteristics, the translator also needs to focus on the conciseness, clarity, and fluency of the language in the translation process to ensure the accuracy and readability of the subtitles.

Example column 1: rì zi yī tiān tiān guò dé xī suì. Wǒ yào bú shì kàn zhe yī máo yī yǐ qián jiù guò nǐ, wǒ lì kè wǒ gēn nǐ shuō wǒ jiù bào jǐng.
Example text 1: Look at the bullshit we deal with everyday. If Ten Cents hadn't saved your life, I'd call the cops right then and there.

The expression "xī suì" is a typical colloquial term in Chinese, used to describe situations that are messy, chaotic, or unsatisfactory. In translation, this expression is converted to "bullshit," an informal word in English used to denote something meaningless, false, or unpleasant. This conversion reflects a lexical shift from Chinese colloquialism to English colloquialism. The tone of the original text is quite strong, carrying a certain level of threat and dissatisfaction. In the translation, this tone is well-preserved. The original text contains

several colloquial expressions, such as “Wǒ yào bú shì...” and “wǒ lì kè...”. In the translation, these expressions are simplified, which not only retains the original meaning but also makes the sentence more compact and powerful. The “yī máo yī” in the original text is a nickname for a specific character, which is translated as “Ten Cents” in the translation. In subtitle translation, due to the limitations of time and space, a balance sometimes needs to be struck between maintaining the basic meaning and conveying emotions.

Example column 2: nǐ dì shé tou bù hǎo shǐ, juē gè dà dīng gē nà tōu wǒ yóu. Tōu tǐng lì suǒ ya, gū gū zài nà ér zuō xiǎo zuǐ.

Example text 2: You idiot brother, is out here stealing my oil. He’s real good at it, huh? Sucking that hose like a pro.

This sentence demonstrates a rich use of local dialects and slang, making the interactions between the characters very vivid and realistic. Since the younger brother in the movie has a mental issue, the direct use of “idiot brother” here points out his defect. By introducing the metaphor “sucking that hose like a pro,” the translator cleverly enhances the humor. This expression is not only vivid but also lighthearted, allowing viewers to form images in their minds while avoiding the vulgarity of a direct description in the original sentence. This kind of linguistic transformation shows the translator’s grasp of humor and also reflects sensitivity to cultural differences.

3.2 Cultural Dimension Transformation

A Frozen Rage, rich in cultural connotations and specific historical backgrounds, poses challenges for subtitle translation. Guided by ecological translation theory, translators must bridge cultural differences, understand, and convey the cultural content of the original text to ensure acceptability and accurate cultural information transmission in the target language. By deeply exploring and interpreting the cultural connotations of the original text, translators can preserve its cultural charm and emotional color during translation, enhancing the viewing experience and cultural identity of the target audience beyond conveying semantic information.

Example column 3: wǒ zhè bù yě shì zuì měi bù guò xī yáng hóng.

Example text 3: I age like fine wine.

In Chinese culture, “xī yáng hóng” is often used

to describe the later years of life of the elderly, especially those filled with vitality and happiness. This metaphor contains praise and respect for the life of the elderly. In English, there is no direct cultural metaphor corresponding to “xī yáng hóng”. However, the translator chose the expression “I age like fine wine.” This is similar to the imagery of “becoming more beautiful over time” expressed by “xī yáng hóng” in Chinese.

Example column 4: xián dì, yǎ, zhèng.

Example text 4: Dear brother, I humbly ask that you graciously accept this.

This line is what Huang Tiansheng wrote when signing his name. “yǎ” usually refers to elegance and refinement, and is also used to express humility when asking for someone else’s correction or appreciation. “zhèng” here means to ask for someone else’s correction, and when used together with “yǎ”, it emphasizes a humble request. The words “humbly” and “graciously” in the translation indeed convey the emotions of humility and respect, which are consistent with the term “xián dì” and the overall humble attitude in the original text.

3.3 Communicative Dimension Transformation

Film subtitle translation is not only a linguistic conversion but also a transmission of communicative functions. In *A Frozen Rage*, dialogues and monologues carry important information such as the characters’ emotional changes, personality traits, and story development. Guided by the ecological translation theory, translators need to focus on the communicative intent and effect of the original text, achieving equivalence in communicative functions between the original and the translation through translation. This requires translators to accurately understand the characters’ emotional changes and the context of the dialogue during the translation process, utilizing appropriate tone, intonation, punctuation, and other means to make the subtitles concise and clear while also being rich in appeal and expressive power. By emphasizing the conversion of the communicative dimension, translators can successfully convey the emotional exchanges and story development in the film to the target audience, enabling them to fully and deeply understand the film’s content.

Example column 5:- nǐ gǎn jǐn shàng lù ba, rén

dōu děng zhe nǐ ne.

Example text 5: -You need to get moving. People are waiting.

Example column 6: -wǒ hái shàng lù, xiǎng nòng sǐ wǒ shì ma?

Example text 6: -Get going? You really want me dead?

In the first sentence, “shàng lù” refers to Ten Cents urging Si Liangzi to hurry up and fetch the oil. The translator chose the expression “get moving,” which in English means “start acting” or “hurry up,” effectively conveying the urgency implied by “shàng lù” in the original text. In the second sentence, “shàng lù” carries a threatening or warning tone, as Si Liangzi believes that Ten Cents is threatening him, implying “asking me to leave (this world) means taking my life.” The translator chose the expression “Get going?” which, although typically means “Are you ready to leave?” or “Can we go now?” in English, here, combined with the strong rhetorical question “You really want me dead?” that follows, allows for the inference of a sarcastic and warning context, thereby conveying the threatening implication of “shàng lù” in the original text. When translating these two dialogues, the translator not only accurately conveyed the meaning of “shàng lù” in different contexts, but also achieved a communicative dimension transformation by adapting to the expression habits and cultural background of the target language.

Example column 6: shǒu gè jīn fàn wǎn hái yào fàn chī ne.

Example text 6: Barely making ends meet with all this land.

“jīn fàn wǎn” in Chinese generally refers to a stable and lucrative job or asset. However, in this context, combined with the analysis of the lines before and after, as well as the characters involved, it can be understood as a character who possesses abundant land resources yet still lives in hardship. Therefore, “land,” as a symbol of real estate, conveys the asset concept implicit in the original Chinese phrase “jīn fàn wǎn.” When the Lao Da says this line, he expresses a sentiment of irony and helplessness, referring to the paradox rich oil resources below the land yet still living in poverty. In the translation of this line, the translator successfully conveys the communicative intention and emotional tone of the original text by selecting appropriate vocabulary and

sentence structures.

4. Conclusion

In the research on subtitle translation for “*A Frozen Rage*,” the eco-translatology theory is adopted, viewing translation as an ecosystem of adaptation and selection. When confronted with dialects, slang, and cultural symbols in the film, translators cleverly integrate domestication and foreignization strategies, preserving cultural characteristics while facilitating audience understanding, thereby achieving precise cultural transmission and emotional resonance. Eco-translatology offers a new perspective for subtitle translation of “*Redemption*,” enhancing translation quality and the depth of cultural transmission. In the future, with the intensifying cross-cultural exchanges and technological advancements, film subtitle translation will encounter more challenges and opportunities. It is imperative to deepen research on eco-translatology in the field of subtitle translation, exploring effective strategies and methods to promote the continuous development and innovation of subtitle translation endeavors.

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