

การวิเคราะห์กลวิธีการแปลบทภาพยนตร์จากภาษาจีนเป็นภาษาอังกฤษ
กรณีศึกษาภาพยนตร์เรื่อง The Empresses in the Palace (ราชวงศ์เงินฮ่วน)

An Analysis of Chinese-English Subtitling Translation:

A Case Study of Subtitling the Empresses in the Palace (The Legend of ZhenHuan)

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาวิชาครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์กลวิธีการแปลบทภาพยนตร์เรื่อง Empresses in the Palace (ราชวงศ์เงินฮ่วน) การศึกษาครั้งนี้เป็นการศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้การวิเคราะห์เนื้อหาเพื่อศึกษากลวิธีการแปลที่ใช้ในภาพยนตร์เรื่อง The Empresses in the Palace (ราชวงศ์เงินฮ่วน) นำเสนอโดย Bruno Wu, Zheng Xiaolong, Arthur M. Sarkissian, Dun Yong และ Feng YA ผู้อำนวยการผลิตโดย Fred Milstein และ Cao Ping ผู้สร้างภาพยนตร์โดย Bruno Wu, Arthur M. Sarkissian และ Cao Ping ผู้ถ่ายทำโดย Danielle Woodrow และ Avis Zhu ในการศึกษาบทบาทของตัวละครโดยใช้ทฤษฎีกลวิธีการแปลของ New Mark's (1981) เป็นเครื่องมือในการศึกษาความไม่สมดุลของปัจจัยด้านภาษาศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรม

ผลการศึกษาพบว่าตามวิธีการแปลของ New Mark's (1988:7) มี 8 ชนิดที่นำมาใช้ในบทภาพยนตร์เรื่อง The Empresses in the Palace โดยกลวิธีการแปลที่พบมากที่สุดคือ semantic translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 45.71 รองลงมา communicative translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 13.46 faithful translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 12.99 literal translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 6.96 adaptation translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 2.55 และ idiomatic translation คิดเป็นร้อยละ 1.16 ผลของการศึกษาทำให้ผู้แปลสามารถใช้กลวิธีการแปลในการปรับแก้ปัญหาด้านการแปลเนื้อหาที่มีความแตกต่างด้านภาษาศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรมของภาษาต้นทางและปลายทาง

คำสำคัญ: กลวิธีการแปล กลยุทธ์การแปล ภาษาต้นทาง ภาษาปลายทาง

Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyze translation methods used in The Empresses in the Palace. This study was based on qualitative research using content analysis as a tool to study translation methods used in "The Empresses in the Palace", presented by Bruno Wu, Zheng Xiaolong, Arthur M. Sarkissian, Dun Yong and Feng Ya; executively produced by Fred Milstein and Cao Ping; distributed by Bruno Wu, Arthur M. Sarkissian and Cao Ping; produced by Danielle Woodrow and Avis Zhu. The character of this study was descriptive analysis, based on New Mark's (1981) translation methods which used as a tool to study in equivalence of linguistic factors and cultural factors.

The study found eight of New Mark's (1988: 7) translation methods being applied to *The Empresses in the Palace*. The most frequently used method was semantic translation (45.71%), followed by communicative translation (13.46%), faithful translation (12.99%), literal translation (9.51%), free translation (7.66%), word-for-word translation (6.96%), adaptation translation (2.55%) and idiomatic translation (1.16%). The findings could help interested translators to apply translation methods in adjustment of translation problems because of linguistically and culturally differences between the source language and target language.

Keywords: Subtitling Translation, Translation Methods, Source Language, Target Language

Introduction

The Chinese Qing dynasty drama the legend of ZhenHuan, is selected as a case study for the following reasons. Firstly, the legend of ZhenHuan became one of the most-watched shows in china. The best-received TV not only swept the Chinese mainland, Taiwan and some Asian countries including Singapore, Malaysia and North Korea. Secondly, HBO decided to cut this 76 episode drama into a 6 episode miniseries. The legend of ZhenHuan was the first serious instance of a Chinese TV drama broadcasted by mainstream U.S. TV station. Thirdly, many poems have been used in the drama. "That's the point we are all considering, but now it is a secret." Cao Ping said. The translating work is done by the U.S. team, and we promise to keep the classical Chinese culture and make American viewers understand. Netizens also translated the name as "Empresses in the Palace" on YouTube. The results of this study will show that the techniques that are frequently used when translating drama from Chinese into English. The results will also show the linguistic and cultural factors that influenced the translator to use each translating technique. The story is based on a novel "Zhen Huan" by mainland Chinese novelist, Liu Lianzi. The main protagonist Zhen Huan (Betty Sun Li) is a concubine of the fourth Qing emperor Yongzhen. Upon admission into the Forbidden City, she finds herself thrown into a treacherous world of court life where jealous rivals and power mongers are willing to poison and even kill if necessary to be in a favored position. Aside from the beautiful scenery, lavish costumes, and lessons in court etiquette and classical poetry, fans are also being drawn to this show for its many plots of court women usurping one another. The Legend of Zhen Huan is spread across the 13 years rule of emperor Yongzhen. The story is inter-woven between facts and fiction during his reign. In the story, Yongzhen is portrayed as a philanderer and a ruthless emperor. He will not hesitate to imprison or kill those that opposed him including his own brothers. Historians have recorded Yongzhen as otherwise. In history, Yongzhen has been considered as the most hardworking of all the Qing emperors. His reign sandwiched between two of Qing's greatest emperors; his father Kangxi and his son Qianlong was among the most prosperous and peaceful periods of Qing China.

Objectives

To identify and classify methods used in translating the Qing dynasty drama, *The Empresses in the Palace* from Chinese to English. And to investigate cultural factors that influenced the translator to use these methods when translating the Qing dynasty drama, *The Empresses in the Palace*, based on the comparison of the source language and target language scripts.

Methodology

This study was based on qualitative research using content analysis as a tool to study translation techniques used in “The Empresses in the Palace”, presented by Bruno Wu, ZhengXiaolong, Arthur M. Sarkissian, Dun Yong and FengYa; executive produced by Fred Milstein and Cao Ping; distributed by Bruno Wu, Arthur M. Sarkissian and Cao Ping; produced by Danielle Woodrow and Avis Zhu. The character of this study is descriptive analysis, based on Newmark’s (1981) translation methods used as a tool to study inequivalence of linguistic factors and cultural factors.

The data was obtained from the Chinese-English subtitle of “The Empresses in the Palace” shown on YouTube. The drama was first aired in China in 2011, broadcasted on South Korea's CHINGTV and split into three parts for its Japanese broadcast. In Japan, after just one week, “The Empresses in the Palace” amassed more than 39 million Japanese viewers. In Taiwan, the drama achieved high ratings. In April 2015, the series was added to US region of Netflix. It was edited down to six episodes, each with a ninety-minute duration. The original audio was kept intact with the addition of closed captions in English.

The texts are limited to the subtitled lines of actor of Zhen Huan in Episode 1 and Episode 2 of the list “The Empresses in the Palace” on You Tube. Each episode is ninety minutes.

For this study the researcher divided data collection in two parts: assembling data, Classification and analysis of data.

Firstly, the researcher studied translation methods, linguistic factors, and cultural factors that related to this study from Nida (1964 : 130-199) and Newmark (1988 : 7) etc, and collected data from articles, books and related research. Then read through the Chinese-English subtitle text then collected data for presenting translation strategies, linguistic factors and cultural factors. Thirdly, examined collected data from Newmark (1988 : 7) about translation methods, examined collected data from Baker’s (1992 : 26-42) translation strategies, and examined data from Nida (1964 : 130) about cultural terms. Analyzed the translation methods used by the translator by taking into account cultural words and their meaning in the Chinese-English subtitling translation based on Peter Newmark’s theory.

The researcher used methodologies mainly focusing on content analysis descriptive analysis to analyze the data acquired from examining translation methods used in “The Empresses in the Palace”.

Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication messages. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Berelson, 1952 : 74; GAO. 1996 : 20; Krippendorff, 1980 : 51; and Weber, 1990 : 37). It is also known as a method of analyzing documents. Holsti (1969 : 14) offers a broad definition of content analysis as, “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”. The most common notion of qualitative research is that a content analysis simply means doing a word frequency count (Suwanmongkol, 2011 : 38). The analysis processes are as follows steps: firstly, selecting contents for analysis. Secondly, preparing contents for analysis. Thirdly, establish the coding categories. Fourthly, code all the units of analysis. Then, tabulate the categories. Finally, analyze the results.

After studying the Chinese-English subtitling translation of “The Empresses in the Palace”, the results of the analysis are shown in the form of tables. The results produced by the analysis illustrate the most used translation method and translation

strategy discovered in the Chinese-English subtitling translation of “The Empresses in the Palace”. The frequency of appearance of each translation method is shown as a percentage (adapted from Boontum, 2000 : 18), as follows:

$$X = (N1 * 100) / N$$

N1 is the number of a same translation method/strategy

N is the number of the total translation methods/strategies

X is the percentage of the total translation methods/strategies

Finally, the results were included in chapter IV, illustrating the most used translation method and translation strategy in the Chinese-English subtitling translation of “The Empresses in the Palace”.

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to apply Newmark (1988 : 7) theoretical framework of translation methods with a focus on sentences of the lines of Zhen Huan from Chinese-English subtitle of The Empresses in the Palace. The study aimed to find the frequency of each translation method used in translating The Empresses in the Palace. Plausible explanations for the methods used in translation the text were given.

This study was conducted to investigate cultural factors that influenced the translator to use these methods when translating the Qing dynasty drama, the Empresses in the Palace, based on the comparison of the source language and target language scripts. To respond to all the research questions the research was planned and designed according to the following steps: Firstly, there were eight methods employed to translate the text: word-for-word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, semantic translation, adaptation translation, free translation, idiomatic translation, communicative translation. Each of Newmark’s (1988 : 7) translation strategies were investigate. Secondly, there were seven strategies employed to translate the text: translation by the use of more general words, the use of more neutral/less expressive words, cultural substitution, loan words/loan words plus explanation, paraphrase using related words, paraphrase using unrelated words, and omission. Each of Baker’s (1992 : 26-42) translation strategies were investigate. Thirdly, the cultural terms and their translation were divided into four categories of Nida’s (1964 : 91) : ecological culture, material culture, social culture and religious culture.

The next step was to study the frequently of each translation methods used in translating sentences of the lines of Zhen Huan from The Empresses in the Palace. The results showed that the most frequently used method was semantic translation (45.71%), followed by communicative translation (13.46%), faithful translation (12.99%), literal translation (9.51%), free translation (7.66%), word-for-word translation (6.96%), adaptation translation (2.55%) and idiomatic translation (1.16%).

The frequently of each of the translation strategies used in translating words of the lines of Zhen Huan from The Empresses in the Palace was also studied. The results showed that the most frequently used method was translation by a more general word (41.36%), followed by translation by a more neutral word/less expressive word (17.28%), translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation (12.62%), translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word (11.30%), translation by paraphrase using a related word (7.14%), translation by omission (5.81%), translation by cultural substitution (4.49%). The strategy of translation by illustration was not found in the study.

The last objective of this study was to give plausible explanations for the strategies that the translators used in translating the text.

Discussion

In general, the translators of this study used various translation methods and strategies in translating texts in order to give the equivalent. To produce a well translated work, not only should methods and strategies be combined, but also cultural factors.

The results of the study showed that the translators used various methods and strategies to translate the texts. The differences in culture and language structure between the source language and the target language caused some in equivalence in translating, and the translators had to find appropriate translation methods and strategies to conquering translation problems.

Recommendations

The results of this study can be used as guidelines for novice translators in translation when facing similar problems and difficulties. The findings also help interested translators take notice of translation problems since there are many differences between the source language and target language when translating a text, both linguistics and cultures.

In this study, the translation methods, translation strategies and cultural terms were analyzed independently, therefore, other studies should be analyzed in combination with each of them.

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