

Study of Subtitle Translation from Multimodal Perspective in W.E.

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Abstract

This paper is based on the integrated theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis proposed by Professor Zhang Delu , analyzing the subtitle translation of the English film W.E. from four levels of culture, context, content and expression. The relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic modes in the text has also been discussed. It has been shown that subtitle translation is a multimodal blend of text,speech and images that together form the central meaning of the film discourse and deliver effective information to the target language audience.

Keywords

Multimodal Discourse Analysis; Subtitle Translation; W.E.

1. Multimodal Discourse Analysis and Subtitle Translation

With the development of multimedia technology, multimodal discourse analysis emerged in the West in the 1990s. The theory argues that symbol systems other than language also have ideational functions. On the basis of language, which is a single modality as a means of expressing meaning, multimodal features such as pictures, sounds and actions have emerged. Multimodal discourse refers to the phenomenon of using multiple senses such as hearing, seeing and touching to communicate through a variety of means and symbolic resources such as language, images, sound and movement. Multimodal discourse analysis has gained popularity as a multimodal mode of communication that integrates text, speech and images. At present, research on multimodal discourse analysis at home and abroad has focused mostly on static discourse, and relatively little research has been conducted on dynamic discourse. The film is a typical multimodal discourse, including language, scene setting, background music, color scheme and other multimodal aspects of film production. The film is a typical multimodal discourse, and W.E. has been carefully prepared in terms of language, scene setting, background music, color scheme and other multimodal aspects.

In recent years, the film industry has flourished and a large number of foreign-language films have entered the domestic market, with subtitle translation playing an increasingly important role in the dissemination of culture between countries. *W.E.* was Madonna's second directorial film after *Indecency and Wisdom* in 2008. It was first screened at the Venice Film Festival in Italy on September 1, 2011. She paid for the film almost out of her own pocket. The casting and the costume were excellent, the actress who played Mrs. Simpson looked extremely like Mrs. Simpson. Based on the life of Wallis Simpson, the story told the story of Edward, duke of Windsor, who gave up the throne for her. The film adopts the perspective of two female protagonists and tells the story in parallel time and space. It consists of two main lines, one is the story of Wallis Simpson and the other is the story of Wally, a woman in modern society.

2. Subtitle Translation of *W.E.* from Multimodal Perspective

2.1. Culture Level

The cultural level, which includes ideology and genre, is the key level that makes multimodal communication possible; communicative traditions, forms and techniques are all determined by this level[1]. Set in 1940s London, *W.E.* spans more than half a century and is textured in retro tones, the film's setting, color palette, soundtrack and the dressing of the characters all reflect a strong sense of the period. Wallis's delicate and elegant clothes depicting her life. From the perspective of culture, subtitle translation should respect the cultural characteristics of the source language and use the strategy of dissimilation. For example, the letter which Wallis wrote to her aunt said: "He used me to escape his prison only to incarcerate me in my own prison". Here the translator has translated the subtitles as "他利用我逃离了自己的监狱，但把我关了进去". Wallis and Edward were at the period of World War II, and the rule of law was very important. Given the social and cultural background of that period, the literal translation of prison is more appropriate.

2.2. Context Level

Context factor is the collection of discourse scope, keynote and mode. In different contexts, communication is also affected by different factors [1]. In the film, after Edward and Wallis' husband Ernest reached a reconciliation, he took Wallis to the beach, where they run hand in hand towards the sea and freedom in their cool swimming costumes. On the beach, Edward deliberately dropped something while playing in the water, and when Wallis scrambled to pick it up, she found it is a jewel, and her face shows her surprise and happiness. Edward said: "I think this belongs to you." The translator has translated this as "这个送给你". If literal translation for this sentence "我认为这个属于你". While retaining the connotation of the primitive, but that is not as good as the former, because this jewel was carefully crafted by Edward's finest craftsmen. By this time Wallis and Edward were so intimate that Wallis also changed his address to Edward from Your Majesty to David, only closest relatives called him David. The translation here better reflects the intimacy of them. Edward knew the heart of a woman who loved to receive gifts from the man she adored. The translation is accompanied by images of embracing, affectionate eyes, tender tones and alternating slow and stirring music that speaks of their intense love for each other.

At Edward's birthday party, although Wallis was not the main character, she still received a gift carefully prepared by Edward. Wallis said, "Oh, it's not my birthday." At the same time, without hesitation, she opened the box and saw another jewel. She was happy and surprised, and attached a card with the words "All for love and the world well lost, happy birthday W.E." W is short for Wallis, E is short for Edward, and W.E. meant "us". Edward regarded Wallis as more important, which could be seen from the fact that he put W in front of E. The translator has translated the phrase as "爱江山不爱美人" also foreshadowed Edward's giving up the throne for Wallis. Aesthetically pleasing, while taking into account the context of the story and reflecting the main theme of the film, this translation is highly context-dependent and not only brings the audience into the situation, but also links the plot and helps to build the overall meaning of the film.

2.3. Content Level

The content level includes the meaning level and the form level of the discourse. The discursive level of meaning includes the conceptual, interpersonal and stylistic meanings that are governed by the scope, tone and manner of discourse. conceptual meaning, interpersonal meaning and schematic meaning. The formal level refers to the different formal systems for realizing meaning, including the lexico-grammatical system of language, the visual ideographic

and visual grammatical systems, auditory ideographic and auditory grammatical systems, etc. [1].

After Wallis and Edward's romantic trip to the Mediterranean, Edward was more popular with the British people for his debauchery, but Wallis was met with cold stares and abuse from all of them. She is dressed in elegant clothes and makeup, and calmly took the newspaper from the disdainful eyes of the newspaper vendor. Time and space crossed, Wallis and Wally met, and Wallis said to Wally "Get a life" firmly and then opened a door hard and went in. The translator has translated this as "振作起来". This was a scene that Wallis did not anticipate, she was so absorbed in her love affair with Edward that she did not consider that things would eventually come back to reality. She knew that a storm awaited her and that she must pull herself together in order to fight it. The scene gave a close-up of Wallis' face, her smile gradually faded, her eyes panicked and her mouth tightly closed, the audience was made to fully appreciate Wallis's pain, helplessness and bravery.

Edward gave up his throne for Wallis and they were married in France eventually, but due to the domestic violence of her first husband, Wallis lost her fertility and was unable to bear Edward a child. They had little left to live for but each other. In a letter to his aunt, Wallis said: "You have no idea how hard it is to live out the greatest romance of the century. I have to be with him always, and always and always". The translator has translated this as: "你无法想象, 活在本世纪最伟大的爱情故事里有多么的艰难。而现在, 我要与他生死相许, 不能离弃, 无处可逃". The scene shows Wallis in tears as she reads the letter, tears staining her mascara, and the soundtrack adds to the poignant atmosphere. The translation, combined with Wallis's pained look, once again implied that this greatest love of the 21st century was endlessly painful.

2.4. Expression Level

The expression level consists mainly of verbal and non-verbal media as vehicles for the transmission of meaning. The former consists mainly of sounds and characters, but also of accompanying linguistic media, i.e. sound, sound size, pitch, frequency, accent, tone of voice, as well as the shape, size and spatial layout of fonts; the latter consists mainly of the communicator's body movements and the non-verbal means used, such as tools, environment, etc[1]. In the film, the subtitles are presented at the bottom of the screen, Chinese at the top and English at the bottom, neither of which is more than one line long, and both stay on the screen for long enough for the viewer to read the entire message[2]. What makes the film stand out is not only the actors' lines, but also the non-verbal messages presented by the protagonists. At a high society party, Edward asked Wallis to come on stage and danced for him, accompanied by sensual music. The sound of the music was offset by the laughter of the celebrities on stage, and the final image was silent, the relationship between the two being a non-complementary offsetting phenomenon of overlapping phenomena. The background music then eased in, making the picture more coherent and allowing the audience to feel the extravagant life of Edward and Wallis. The setting of the characters was reflected and drove the plot forward.

None of the royal family was present at the wedding of Wallis and Edward. The film is shot in close with a fixed camera, giving close-ups of face, and as the narrator, Wallis, read the letter, the viewer could clearly see the change of emotion coming over Wallis' heart. The sunlight on half of her face made the blue eyes clearer and revealed the complexity of Wallis's emotions. The music was like flowing water, creating a romantic and tragic atmosphere, allowing the audience to feel the great and tragic love [3]. Films are typically multimodal discourses in which the auditory and visual modalities are equally important.

3. Conclusion

This paper uses a multimodal discourse analysis framework to analyze the translation of the subtitles of *Love in a Country* from four perspectives: culture, context, content and expression, looking forward to providing a new reference for audiences to enjoy film. *W.E.* presents the audience with the greatest love of the 21st century. As a romance film from a female perspective, the subtitle translation must highlight female consciousness. The role of subtitle translation in such films and how it fits in with other modalities should be further explored in future research.

References

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