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A Study on English Subtitle Translation of Chinese Documentaries from the Three-dimensional Transformation Perspective of Eco-translatology: *A Case Study on China Before China*

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Abstract

The development of Internet technology makes film and television works become an important channel to meet people's spiritual and cultural needs. Documentary, with its unique form and true content, has become an important carrier for countries to spread their traditional culture, and subtitle translation plays an indispensable role in the publicity of documentary. In 2017, the documentary China Before China was released which showed people the excellent traditional Chinese culture. Based on the three-dimensional perspective of eco-translatology, this thesis analyzed the English translation subtitle of the documentary which explored the translator's adaptation and selection in the translation process. It was concluded that the translation of the documentary's subtitle has achieved multi-dimensional adaptation. The subtitle translation adapts to the linguistic expression habits of the target language in terms of word formation, word order and voice from the linguistic dimension; it adapts to the cultural system of the target language and improves the readability of the text through literal translation and free translation from the cultural dimension; and it expresses the real communicative intention, which plays an important role in the dissemination of Chinese culture from the communicative dimension. Translators should implement the ecological concept and adapt to the eco-environment in the translation process.

Keywords

Eco-translatology; Three-dimensional transformation; China Before China; Subtitle translation

1. Introduction

As the Internet and new media technologies evolve, an increasing amount of data is disseminated to the public through micro-videos. Audio-visual media, surpassing conventional media like newspapers, magazines and radios, emerge as the quickest

and most user-friendly way for accessing information and entertainment. Documentaries play the role as cultural disseminators, which can let the world know more about China, establish a positive national image, and enhance China's cultural soft power. In the process of documentary transmission, foreign audiences can better understand the content of the documentary through subtitles.

This thesis analyzed the English translation of the documentary China Before China from a three-dimensional perspective of eco-translatology so as to promote the enrichment, innovation and development of eco-translatology, enhance the translators' ecological awareness and promote the construction of ecological civilization. Meanwhile, the thesis was designed to help foreign audiences have a proper understanding of Chinese documentaries, promote the external publicity of Chinese culture, and enhance China's cultural confidence and international influence.

2. Literature Review

2.1. An Overview of Eco-translatology

The field of eco-translatology has completely integrated concepts of adaptation and selection, both domestically and internationally, with a particular focus on ecological resources in China. As development progresses, an increasing number of academics have taken notice of it. What follows is previous research in eco-translatology at home and abroad.

Research on eco-translatology abroad is scarce, yet numerous international academics have offered their perspectives on the link between translation and ecology. Kerridge (1998) pointed out that the impact of environmentalism has extended from science, geography, and social sciences to the humanities. Focusing on the ecological context of translation established the groundwork for the emergence of eco-translatology. Cronin (2003) also introduced the concept of focusing on the "translation ecology" within the realm of languages in his book. Meanwhile, the translation of different languages is also advocated to achieve a "healthy balance". Dollerup (2010) explained the difference between eco-translatology and other theories such as skopos theory, arguing that translation is closely related to its environment and source language, and eco-translatology has a prosperous future. Dollerup (2013) introduced eco-translatology again, and explained the reason why the theory was not paid attention to in other countries and regions besides China. Scott (2015) discussed the translation of poetry from the perspective of eco-translatology and pointed out that eco-translatology does not mean to translate some ecological texts identified by ecocriticism, but to enhance readers' ecological awareness when translating any text. Aksoy (2020) believed that the translation process should be transferred to other languages and cultural media to form the ecological environment of the text. Diamanti (2022) analyzed and integrated the studies and viewpoints of many scholars on ecological translation, and concluded that eco-transaltology can avoid the transformation of the traditional language and

culture of the source language into the language of the receiving culture while retaining the structural density and emphasis of the source language metonymy. Shread (2023) mentioned that eco-translatology regards translation as a life form rather than a task which expresses the connotations of original text. It closely links translation with ecology.

Eco-translatology is a local theory in China. Hu (2001) first put forward the theory of eco-translatology, which combines natural and selection theory with translation, emphasizes the importance of ecological environment, and promotes the improvement of translation quality. Meanwhile, in the process of the development and enrichment of the theory, Professor Hu also made a series of further studies and published related papers and monographs. As for the background of eco-translatology, Hu (2010) mentioned that the emergence of the theory has global and Chinese factors, natural factors and human factors. It has both contingency and inevitability. Hu (2014) explained to us the differences and innovations between eco-translatology and other translation research approaches, namely, the theoretical perspective, philosophical rationale, focus, research methods, matching terms, discourse system and translation ethics. Ecological translation studies are developing steadily, but there is confusion and no innovation between translation adaptation and selection theory and ecological translation studies. Therefore, Hu and Liu (2016) made a distinction between the two and expounded the new orientation of ecological translation studies. Hu (2021) mentioned that since the 21st century, the theoretical discourse system of eco-translaology originated in China has continued to develop and its influence has continued to increase. Its two major highlights lie in theoretical innovation and international development. Its theoretical innovations include: creating “relational order chain”, revealing “ecological paradigm” and initiating “new ecologism”. The study also provided an example for the international development of other theories. In the context of the accelerating international development of this theory, Hu and Li (2022) conducted a comparative study on the discourse of eco-translatology and western translation theories, and concluded that eco-translatology has its uniqueness in many aspects. But at the same time, translators should also pay attention to open up and blend with western theories, and accept excellent ideas, so as to improve the international acceptance and influence of eco-translatology discourse system. From a philosophical point of view, Liu (2022) put forward three philosophical value functions of eco-translatology, namely, ecological cosmology of translation, ecological theory of knowledge of translation and ecological ethics of translation, which is conducive to the translation circle to rethink the relationship between man, nature and society. From the perspective of sociology, Fu (2023) regarded eco-translatology as a self-consistent system of subjective construction and objective existence so as to provide a sociological perspective for the establishment, development and “objective existence” of eco-translatology.

Many domestic scholars have also studied texts in various fields based on this theory. Xue (2022) analyzed translation errors and improper translation cases in public signs of tourist attractions from the perspective of three-dimensional transformation of eco-translatology, and proposed improvement measures. Sun and Han (2021) analyzed the translation effects of culture-loaded words in the English translation of Beijing Folding from the perspective of ecological transliteration, aiming to provide inspiration for translation strategies in the process of translating Chinese science fiction works into English.

To sum up, many foreign scholars have discussed translation from the perspective of ecology, which has gradually been accepted and recognized by scholars in the translation field. But relatively little attention has been paid to eco-translatology. In China, eco-translatology has developed steadily since it was proposed, and has been integrated with other disciplines. However, as a new theory, it still needs to be continuously enriched and developed. Although more and more scholars have begun to study eco-translatology, most of them are theoretical analysis, and there is a lack of substantive research on eco-translatology. This thesis analyzed the English translation of the documentary China Before China from the three-dimensional transformation perspective of eco-translatology, and analyzed the translator's adaptive selection and transformation of the eco-environment in the translation process based on the adaptation of the original translation eco-environment.

2.2. Studies on Subtitle Translation

Subtitle translation originates from the age of film in the last century. At that time, Western movies were introduced to Chinese market, but audiences often struggle to fully grasp the contents of movies completely. A solution to this issue involves translating English subtitle into Chinese and then displaying them on the screen. After that the concept of subtitle came into being.

Compared with China, the study of film and television translation in the West has developed rapidly. Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997) defined subtitle translation as "the process of providing simultaneous explanations for dialogue in film and television." Cintas & Remael (2014) analyzed the sticky challenges of subtitle translation. And it needed as much information as possible within the limited conditions. He held that translator should grapple with many constraints and few opportunities of the audiovisual medium. Nowadays, the advancement of technology changes the way of subtitle translation from human translation to machine translation to automatic translation. Recent developments in neural machine translation, and especially speech translation, are gradually but firmly entering the field of audiovisual translation (Karakanta, 2022).

In China, prior to the reform and opening up, local and Western films and television works were scarce, and people did not pay much attention to subtitle translation. Later, people gradually realized the importance of translation of movies and

television plays. Li (2001) explained that there are two types of subtitles: intralingual subtitles and interlingual subtitles. Interlingual subtitles is the text that is translated from the source language to the target language and printed at the bottom of the screen while retaining the original sound, which is usually called subtitle translation. In 1995, film and television translation was identified as an independent research field.

Qian (2000) pointed that the impact of film and television translation on society is by no means inferior to that of literary translation. However, on the contrary, the translation circle paid less attention to film translation than literary translation. Consequently, he urged the translation community to pay more attention to this phenomenon. At the same time, after the 21st century, more scholars pay attention to the field of subtitle translation. Li (2001) proposed that the vision of translation research should be expanded, and each type of translation has its own unique translation strategies and methods. Different from translation and interpretation, subtitle translation needs to undergo the transformation from spoken language to written language. Li and Bo (2005) believed that subtitle translation is the only form of translation in which the source text and the target text appear at the same time, and mass media translation must be examined in a broader dynamic cross-cultural context. Pan and Lu (2006) analyzed the reasons why Chinese mainland films were not mature in the international market, and finally concluded that in addition to the economic, technical and physical reasons, the quality of Chinese English translation is also a major factor. From this, it can be confirmed that the quality of English translation can also affect the export of Chinese culture and its cultural influence. Since Western subtitle translation started earlier and produced more research results, Dong (2007) reviewed the progress and current situation of Western subtitle translation research, introduced its diversified research perspectives and academic trends, and further promoted the research on subtitle translation in China. Ji and Song (2007) analyzed the English subtitles of Hero, an internationally influential Chinese work, and studied its translation strategies. Since then, the research on subtitle translation of film and television works has begun to increase. Zhu (2017) made use of ecological transliteration to study film subtitle translation, offering fresh insights into the cross-language and cross-border transmission of Chinese culture.

Compared with Western countries, China's research on film and television translation started later. Not only are there fewer researchers engaged in this research, but the articles published in academic journals are extremely limited, and most of which lack academic influence. And the scope of domestic research is also scattered and one-sided, and no systematic and comprehensive theoretical research has been conducted on it, nor has a systematic theory emerged. Most domestic subtitle translation studies focus on the discussion of skills, and the study of subtitle translation technology is not paid enough attention to. Thus, it is evident that despite the increasing prosperity and adaptability of subtitle translation, various issues still

persist, which are related to the importance attached to subtitle translation and the starting time in China.

3. Theoretical Foundation

3.1. The Origin and Development of Eco-translatology

Hu (2001) delivered a speech and borrowed two fundamental concepts: natural selection as well as adaptation and selection to the translation studies and discussed their feasibility. Since then, the studies on eco-translatology have gradually initiated in China.

Eco-translatology combines ecology and translatology, involving multiple interdisciplinary studies. It covers various perspectives, including "adaptation and selection", "translator-centredness", "three-dimensional transformation", "ecological paradigm" and so on, which focuses on the life of text, translators' survival and translation ecology. Eco-translatology studies the relation between translators and eco-environment of translation. Translators are the sum of all contradictions (Hu, 2004). Translation process is the translators' acts of selection in adapting to the translational eco-environment. The concept of translator subjectivity and translator-centredness are significant ideas. Grounded in the previous achievements, the theoretical framework of eco-translatology was basically formed in 2009, and in-depth theoretical and empirical research is being carried out.

3.2. Three-dimensional Transformation

The three-dimensional transformation refers to the adaptive selection transformation of linguistic dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension.

The adaptive selection transformation of linguistic dimension focuses on language forms which is carried out in different aspects and levels. The adaptive selection transformation of cultural dimension means that translators pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations in the translation process. It lies in cultural differences in nature and content between the two languages, avoiding misinterpretation of the original text from the perspective of the target language culture. And the adaptive selection transformation of communicative dimension means that translators attach importance to bilingual communicative intention in the process of translation which requires translators to lay emphasis on the communicative level and whether the communicative intention of the source language is reflected in the target language.

4. Analysis of Subtitle Translation in China Before China from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

4.1. Brief Introduction to China Before China

The China Before China was created by the China Internet News Center, a short video

as the leading, multi-language communication of the media program, and was broadcasted in 2017. The documentary aims to cultivate foreigners' interest in China through the program, attract them to have an appropriate perception of China, and ultimately make them understand Chinese culture.

The documentary selects the most representative elements, including categories such as humanities and arts, cultural heritage, national memory and character stories, pointing to China's cultural contributions, national concepts and spiritual beliefs. Through the contemporary transformation of cultural topics with traditional connotations, it connects the ancient and the modern, re-constructs and emphasizes the spiritual map of the Chinese people, enhances national pride, and lets the world understand the national spirit and cultural resources in the development of contemporary China from a new perspective.

4.2. Analysis from Linguistic Dimension

The translation of linguistic dimension means that the translators select the translation in different levels and aspects of linguistic form. English and Chinese belong to different language families, and there are great differences in the language level. For example, Chinese emphasizes parataxis, and prefers verbs and active voice, while English emphasizes hypotaxis, and prefers nouns and passive voice. The existence of these objective differences requires the translator to make adaptive selection and conversion between the source language and the target language, and adopt appropriate conversion methods, such as part of speech conversion, active and passive conversion, and word order conversion, in order to achieve the ideal translation effect.

4.2.1. Word Formation

The differences between English and Chinese languages often require translators to take part of speech conversion in translation, to convert some parts of speech in the source language into another part of speech in the target language, so as to make the translation conform to the ecological environment of the target language.

Example 1: 唱念做打要配合得天衣无缝。(This example was extracted from the episode 9 Chinese Shadow Puppetry which introducing a popular opera art among Chinese people including the unique material and masterful technique.)

Translation: The singing, the talking, the movements and the stage fighting have to work seamlessly for the show to be perfect.

Chinese attaches importance to verbs, while English pays attention to nouns. In order to match the characteristics of English writing, the translators here used the method of parts-of-speech conversion to translate "唱念做打" into a noun phrase. Here, the translators adapted the dynamic and static differences between the source language and the target language by transforming the parts of speech, and realized the "adaptive selection of linguistic dimension".

Example 2: 后来，玉集实用性、审美性、象征性于一体，发展成为王侯权力的符号、

君子品性的表征以及文人把玩的对象。 (The example was from the episode 7 The Beauty of Jade Carving which introduces history and craft of jade in China.)

Translation: Due to the practical, aesthetic and symbolic value of jade, it gradually became a symbol of royal power and lofty virtue as well as a favourite toy "among the scholars in the ancient times.

"实用性,审美性,象征性" are all nouns. In the translation, "value" was added, and these three nouns were converted into adjectives, which was more in line with the thinking habits of foreigners and easier to understand its content.

Example 3: 文人书斋中的插花也与焚香、品茗、挂画一同成为四件雅事。(This sentence was excerpted from the episode 12 Chinese Flower Arrangement which describes the evolution and popularity of flower arrangement.)

Translation: Flower arrangement is one of the four most elegant things to do for man of letters and other three are incense burning, tea tasting as well as painting hanging.

In this example, "插花，焚香，品茗，挂画" are all verbs. Translating them into nouns is more in line with the linguistic habit of English. And this kind of translation is simpler and briefer.

4.2.2. Active and Passive Voices

Example 4: 比如那把最著名的 Y 椅 (Y Chair),便是从中国的圈椅改造而成。(This example was extracted from the episode 11 Traditional Chinese Furniture which briefly introduces the beauty and features of Chinese furniture.)

Translation: The most famous Y Chair, for example, was designed after a Chinese circular chair.

Chinese expression is more active, but English expression is more passive. In the example sentence, "便是从中国的圈椅改造而成" is an active form, but it contains passive meaning. Therefore, in the translation process, it should be converted to passive form, which is in line with the English writing habit. The translators adapted the voice difference between the source language and the target language through the method of active and passive conversion, and realized the "adaptive choice of linguistic dimension".

Example 5: 每到元宵佳节，中国各地都会张灯结彩，花灯竞放。 (The example was excerpted from the episode 10 Chinese Lanterns which introduces the development and functions of Chinese lanterns.)

Translation: Every year on the Lantern Festival, all kinds of lanterns are put up everywhere in China.

The expression of Chinese is direct and concise so active voice is often used in Chinese. In this example, "各地都会张灯结彩" is in an active voice, while the translators transformed it into passive voice which conformed to the reading habit of Westerners.

4.2.3. Readjustment of Word Order

As two different languages, English and Chinese often have different word orders in

sentences. Due to the differences in thinking habits and expression modes between English and Chinese, changing word order and reorganizing structure have become a common method in English-Chinese translation. In translation, the differences between English and Chinese should be taken into account and the word order should be adjusted so that readers can grasp the logic of the text.

Example 6: 外圆内方的集庆楼，长方形的绳庆楼，微型圆楼如升楼。(The example listing several types of buildings was extracted from the episode 15 Fujian Tulou which introduces the origin and characteristics of Fujian Tulou.)

Translation: Jiqing Building which is round on the outside and square on the inside, the rectangle shaped Shengqing House and mini-round tower Rusheng House.

English thinking is used to put the conclusion first and the cause second, while Chinese often discusses in the logical order of cause-effect. In the example sentence, "外圆内方" belongs to the modification of "集庆楼", so in the translation, the modified part was placed at the back of "集庆楼" to form a clause.

Example 7: 红山文化的玉猪龙雕琢精细，造型古朴雄浑，神秘悠远。(This example was extracted from the episode 7 The Beauty of Jade Carving which introduces the connotation and features of jade in China.)

Translation: The jade pig-like dragon, unearthed at the site of Hongshan Culture features finely carved details, a pristine shape, as well as a mysterious and ancient appeal.

In this sentence, "玉猪龙" is the most important information which should be placed in the subject position of the sentence in English. "红山文化" is the modification of "玉猪龙" which should be placed after the subject. The arrangement conformed to the linguistic habit of English.

4.3. Analysis from Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimension requires the translators to be familiar with the cultural connotations of the source language. Consideration must also be given to public responsiveness and adaptation to subtitles. Using an appropriate translation strategy allows viewers to maximize their understanding of the culture of the source language. Since the documentaries themselves also have non-verbal information, such as images and sounds, it is also possible to retain some characteristics of Chinese culture and improve national features in the translation process. As for contents with sophisticated meaning, the way of paraffin can be used to guarantee the fluidity of viewing the documentary.

Example 8: 民族复兴，衣冠先行，始于衣冠，达于博远。(This example showing the importance of clothing was extracted from the episode 5 Traditional Chinese Costume which introduces features and connotations of traditional Chinese costume.)

Translation: The renaissance of an ethnic group starts with costume; Traditional Chinese costume is just the starting point; one day, the profoundness of Chinese

culture will be comprehensively revived.

There are various cultural-loaded words in Chinese. “衣冠” is a specific and traditional Chinese word, which means costume and contains profound Chinese traditional etiquette culture. The example sentence is short and concise, and when translated into English, the free translation method could make the foreign audiences better understand its meaning.

Example 9: 庆嘉节，当三五，列华灯，千门万户。(The verse written by a famous poet Liu Yong is in the episode 10 Chinese Lanterns.)

Translation: The fifteenth day of Chinese New Year is the best festival in every household comes a lantern carnival.

When translating this sentence, the translators did not choose to translate it word by word, but sorted out the example sentence and translated it out, which would not be cumbersome and could allow readers to quickly understand its meaning.

Example 10: 德化白瓷在千锤百炼中更融入了国人精益求精、一丝不苟的工匠精神。(The sentence was extracted from the episode 19 Dehua Porcelain which shows influence and achievements of Dehua porcelain.)

Translation: Dehua porcelain is thousands of procedures in one object which embodies the craftsmanship of the Chinese people who would not miss one single detail nor stop trying to be better.

Idioms and four-character phrases are often used in Chinese, which are short and concise, and reflect unique features and charm of Chinese. However, there are no similar structures or forms in English. In this example, “千锤百炼” “精益求精，一丝不苟” are Chinese idiom, so the translators used the way of free translation to express the meaning, which could help audiences understand the craftsmanship of Chinese.

Example 11: 琢玉艺人巧思妙想。因材施艺，巧夺天工，琢制出一个个寓意美好的作品，让人叹为观止，爱不释手。(This example was extracted from the episode 7 The Beauty of Jade Carving.)

Translation: With their ingenious creativity and exceptional skills, Jade carvers shape materials into marvelous jadewares that conveys good wishes.

“巧思妙想,因材施艺,巧夺天工,叹为观止,爱不释手” are some four-character phrases in Chinese. Due to the limitation of subtitle translation, these phrases were translated through the way of free translation which can be understood directly and quickly.

Example 12: 古人认为漆“坚牢其质，光彩其文”。(This sentence was extracted from the episode 13 The Art of Chinese Lacquer which introducing the quality and technique of Chinese Lacquer.)

Translation: Ancient Chinese used to consider lacquer “solid in nature, brilliant in color.”

In Chinese culture, classical Chinese plays a vital role, which is concise, focuses on allusions, and has neat rhythm. But classical Chinese is hardly understood by foreigners so we should adopt some strategies to translate. In this sentence, “坚牢其

质,光彩其外” belongs to classical Chinese, which means that lacquer has superior quality and brilliant patterns. And the translators adopted free translation with neat antithesis which kept characteristics of Chinese culture.

4.4. Analysis from Communicative Dimension

The adaptive selection transformation of communicative dimensions involved in the translation process plays a crucial role in connecting translators and readers. The so-called “adaptive selection transformation of communicative dimensions” refers to the translators’ adaptive selection transformation of bilingual communicative intention in the translation process (Hu, 2011). Eco-translatology holds a concept that translation is “the translator’s choice to adapt to the ecological environment of translation” (Hu, 2004), emphasizing the translator’s subjectivity and “central position” in the translation process. Therefore, translators should not be confined to the language habits and forms of the source language, but should exercise initiative and creativity to understand the audiences’ cognitive background and optimize their viewing experience. In eco-translatology, it is worth noting whether the communicative intention of the original text can be reflected in the translation.

Example 13: “陶情适性、乐乐陶陶、遣兴陶情”，君子也常借陶怀释意兴，陶冶情操，修炼心性,沉淀“厚德载物”的品格。(The example was excerpted from the episode 18 Life of Pottery which describes the functions and development of pottery.)

Translation: Pottery also called Tao in Mandarin, is applied in many Chinese idioms, such as Taoqing Shixing (make people happy), Lele Taotao (feel happy and contented) and Qianxing Taoqing (express feelings and cultivate temperament). Gentleman often makes use of pottery to release emotions, cultivate moral characters, and enhance self-discipline and social commitment.

This sentence first explains that “陶” is “pottery”, so that readers have a concept of “陶”, and then the way of pinyin and annotation of each short sentence is simple and easy to understand. In the context of subtitle translation, due to the timely characteristics of subtitle, the audiences need to see the basic understanding. Therefore, in a special translation environment, the needs of the audience should be considered first, so that the audiences can receive the main information of the video immediately.

Example 14: 姑苏城里，有小桥流水。(This sentence was extracted from the episode 17 Suzhou Embroidery which shows us the charm and origin of Suzhou Embroidery.)

Translation: In the time-honored Suzhou, there is water under the petite bridge.

“姑苏城” refers to the ancient Suzhou. In this sentence, the translators did not use the literal translation as other cities, but chose “time-honored” as the attribute of Suzhou, which reflects the characteristics of Suzhou with a long history. In addition, for the latter sentence “有小桥流水”, the translators did not translate it into a simple superposition of nouns, but into a prepositional phrase, highlighting the picture

sense of the sentence.

Example 15: 配合艺人的巧手镂刻，刀法多样，线条丰富。(This example was excerpted from the episode 9 Chinese Shadow Puppetry which introduces the exquisite materials and wonderful techniques of Chinese shadow puppetry.)

Translation: the amazing hands of artists create such a rich variety of carving patterns and lines.

"巧手" means that a person's skills are very exquisite, or his hands are very dexterous. The translators used "amazing modifying hands" here, which not only retains the feeling of the original text, but also makes people marvel at his skills.

Example 16: 玉除了比德、比容外，琢制后的作品还蕴含着吉祥寓意，从而表达人们对美好理想的追求，如美玉良缘、事事如意、玉成其美等等。(This example introducing the good wishes of jade was extracted from the episode 7 The Beauty of Jade Carving.)

Translation: In addition, jade also symbolizes auspiciousness and conveys good wishes.

Due to the limitation of length and time of subtitle, there are definite requirements for subtitle translation. In this example, if "美玉良缘,事事如意,玉成其美" were translated respectively, the subtitle can not be presented well. In Chinese, these nouns have the meaning of good wishes, so the translators not only expressed the main idea, but also considered the limitation of subtitle translation.

Example 17: 交领代表"地方"，做人要有规矩，没有规矩不成方圆。(This example showing the meaning of the specific part of hanfu was excerpted from the episode 5 Traditional Chinese Costume.)

Translation: Cross collars represent "earth" which conducted people to follow discipline.

"没有规矩不成方圆" is an idiom in Chinese. It means that only by following discipline can we achieve our goals smoothly. In order to help audiences get the main idea, "做人要有规矩,没有规矩不成方圆" were combined together to present this sentence in simple and concise way.

Example 18: 玉本身就被赋予了拟人化的品德，成为君子的象征；"有女如玉"则以玉来比喻女子肌肤如玉，光泽动人之美感。(This sentence describing symbolic meaning of jade was also extracted from the episode 7 The Beauty of Jade Carving.)

Translation: Jade is not only personified as a man of moral integrity and is often used to describe the beauty of a lady.

"有女如玉,肌肤如玉,光泽动人" belong to Chinese four-character phrases, all of which have similar meaning in this example. English subtitle translation are usually much longer, so the translators simplified these idioms and translate them into the beauty of a lady which expresses proper intention and also adapts the communicative environment. The attention of translation was put on the communicative dimension.

5. Conclusion

This thesis studied the English subtitle translation of Chinese documentaries from the perspective of transliteration. It analyzed the subtitle translation strategies from linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions, and explored how translators adapted to the eco-environment of the target language.

Firstly, in terms of linguistic dimension, the strategies of subtitle translation can be generalized from words formation, voice and word order. Chinese is more inclined to verbs and active voice, and puts the important information at the end of a sentence. In view of these constraints of language, the translators mainly chose conversion to approach the target language which meets the reading habits of foreign audiences. Besides, in terms of cultural dimension, this thesis mainly analyzed the translation of some words which were rich in Chinese cultural connotation. These words were transformed through literal translation or liberal translation. Finally, in terms of communicative dimension, some Chinese expression is obscure and implicit. In order to convey the real intention of the documentary and adapt to the time and space limitation of the subtitle, the translators adopted the way of simplification and annotation to help the audience receive the real intention more intuitively. Translators need to be aware of differences between the two languages, so as to make the translation conform to the expression habits of the target language, and take into account the thinking differences brought by various historical and cultural backgrounds to accurately convey the connotation of Chinese culture.

This thesis contains some limitations which are reflected in that the perspectives and analysis about foreign studies on this topic in recent years is not enough. Consequently, the study is not comprehensive and cannot show the international development of this theory in documentary subtitle translation. In the future, translators should better practice ecological concepts in translation.

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