

A Study on Domestication and Foreignization in English Song Title Translation from the Perspective of Memetics

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Abstract

Based on memetic theory, the present study is mainly a qualitative research in which a relatively overall analysis on domestication and foreignization in the translation of English song titles is carried out. Besides, the factors which influence the choice of domestication and foreignization would be presented as well. From the research, it can be found that no matter which kind of strategies is applied, the essence of the English song title translation is the transmission of successful memes through four stages. In the early stage of the communication between English culture and Chinese culture, domestication is more often adopted in English song title translation, while with the frequent and deep communication between these two cultures, there are more application of foreignization in the song title translation. The present research, to a certain degree, demonstrates that memetics as a relatively new theory could be applied into translation fields. The findings of this study would be of significance for the translators in their translating practice. Moreover, this study would be also helpful for the song title translation.

Key words: song title translation, Domestication, Foreignization, Memetics

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Nowadays, culture communications among countries develop quickly with the globalization. As a part of the cultures in English countries, English song plays a significant role in culture exchange. The song title is the eyes of a song. Whether the song is appealing or not, the name is one and the first deciding factor, for it is often the first that comes into the potential viewer's attention. If the name is ear-pleasing and curiosity-stimulating, the song is half successful. However, because of the regional difference, there are cultural hindrances in English song. For the English song lovers and fans, song title will help them grasp the essence of a song. In this sense, song title translation is necessary.

The process of translation is not only the process and practice of exchanging and transmitting languages, but also the spread of culture. English song title translation can promote the cultural communication between the western and eastern world, and at the same time has a big impact on those youths who are fond of English songs. There are many translated versions of English songs enjoyed by Chinese people and regarded as classic songs. Since the song is a kind of ways to enhance cultural communication, the translation techniques rooted in culture should be used in song title translation, i.e., domestication and foreignization in order to let people easily understand the western culture and make communication develop smoothly. These two strategies are frequently applied when cultural translation is concerned. However, what the role these two translation strategies play separately in English song title translating remains further discussion.

Memetics refers to an evolution theory for culture, focusing on the study of the cultural transmitting models. The core concept of Memetics is meme, the basic unit for culture imitation and transmission. In the sense of culture, the theory of Memetics has the possibility and capability

of interpreting the application of domestication and foreignization in English song title translation. The thesis aims at making an analysis on the application of domestication and foreignization from this relatively new perspective to figure out the appropriateness of these two strategies in English song title translation.

1.2 Significance of the research

There is a saying that music is beyond the boundaries, and with the increasing communication between China and western countries, English songs are popular with Chinese people, especially young people. Most of them now prefer original lyrics in English, for they take it as a fashionable entertainment with no need to understand the whole song semantically, so the title of English song plays a vital role to attract young people's attention to a certain song. A successful song title translation will help young people get the meaning of an English song without understanding every word of lyric.

There are many researches on title translation, most of which study on the title of film, of literature work and of brand, however, the research on song title translation is rare and far between. Among the limited song title studies, the theory of Eugene A. Nida's Functional Equivalence is overwhelmingly used to explore the methods of translating song title. As two useful cultural translation strategies, domestication and foreignization have been studied, discussed and applied to many fields, but by far has never been studied on song title translation. In recent years some people have explored the domestication and foreignization from the perspective of Memetics, which is just discussed in a general way rather than focuses on a certain object. The research of song title translation has never been done from the perspective of Memetics, which is still a relatively new theory in Chinese academic circle. The theory of Memetics mentions the concept of memes, as the unit of cultural transmission, which makes it possible to explain cultural phenomenon, including the English song title translation. The author will study on the translating approaches of domestication and foreignization in song title translation in term of Memetics point of view.

2. Literature review

2.1 Song titles

Nowadays, English songs enjoy great popularity among Chinese young people. Accordingly, the translation of English songs is attracting more and more attention. However, English song translation is a unique field of translation practice. Regretfully, the Chinese version of an English song receives inadequate study, let alone English song title translation. In recent years, many people have studied on song title translation, but most of them only explore or analyze the methods and skills of song title translation rather than study it systematically and thoroughly.

Mao Ning (2008) listed five methods of song translation-- transliteration, literal translation, free translation, compilation and expansion. Jia Jingyi (2005) points out three features of the song titles (informative, aesthetic and vocative) and discusses translation methods concerning how to remain the simplicity of the original song title (use of abbreviations, use of Chinese auxiliary

“之”and use of four-character Chinese phraseologies). Zhan Hongjuan (2009) is one of those who study the song title translation on the basis of certain theories. She applies Eugene A. Nida's Functional Equivalence into the translation of song title translation, proposing that song title translation should achieve semantic equivalence and sound equivalence. Luo Hui (2005) mentioned the song name translation in her master dissertation. She analyzed the proper methods and principles of English songs translation based on Skopos theory.

From the previous song title studies which mentioned above, it can be easily found that only two theories have been used to study the song title translation by far (Functional Equivalence and Skopos theory) and the limited studies mainly focused on exploring the methods of translating song title. Because of the regional difference, there are cultural hindrances in English song, the author holds the view translator should take cultural factors into consideration when translating song title rather than just pursue the relative equivalence in form. Since the song is a kind of ways to enhance cultural communication, the translation techniques rooted in culture should be used in song title translation, i.e., domestication and foreignization in order to let people easily understand the western culture and make communication develop smoothly. However, these two cultural translation strategies by far have never been given enough attention when it comes to the study of song title translation. In the field of translation, the role of these two translation strategies plays separately in translating texts remains discussion. The author of the thesis will make effort to analyze the role of domestication and foreignization from a relatively new perspective—Memetics, which is an evolution theory for culture, focusing on the study of the cultural transmitting models.

2.2 Translation strategies: domestication and foreignization

Translation is closely related with culture, so it is necessary to discuss how to deal with the cultural factor when translators come cross the texts, where there is big difference between the source language and that of the target language. When it comes to the issue of dealing with cultural difference, two translation strategies are commonly suggested: domestication and foreignization.

In 1995, Lawrence Venuti, an American translation theorist first put forward the two terms of domestication and foreignization in his book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. According to Venuti, domestication refers to “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, which bring the author back home” while foreignization is “an ethno-deviant pressure on those cultural values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.” (Venuti 1995:20). Wikipedia defines the two terms in this way: Domestication and foreignization are strategies in translation, regarding the degree to which translators make a text conform to the target culture. Domestication is the strategy of making text closely conform to the culture of the language being translated to, which may involve the loss of information from the source text. Foreignization is the strategy of retaining information from the source text, which involves deliberately breaking the conventions of the target language to preserve its meaning.

From the above, we can draw a conclusion that domestication is target-culture -oriented while foreignization is source-culture-oriented.

It seems that domestication and foreignization are in contradiction. However, in translation practice, the two strategies are applied alternatively. When it comes to language forms, in order to make the source texts easily understood and accepted by target readers, domestication should be adopted as the main translating method; when it comes to culture, foreignization should be applied in translating practice to promote the cultural communication and transmission. In other words, domestication, a target-oriented translation method puts more emphasis on making the translated text fluent, elegant and easy for the target readers through the application of some historical and cultural information from the target language, which, as a result, may result in the loss of some cultural implied the source text. Foreignization, a source culture-oriented translation method, is focused on the transference of the source language and its culture into the target one so as to best preserve the culture in the source text.

Nowadays, with the development of the globalization, people from different places communicate with each other more frequently via various kinds of methods, so people have more chances to be exposed to the different culture, which also makes people more curious about the foreign culture. In this case, foreignization seems to follow the trend and could be considered to be the suitable and proper method in the song title translation. Foreignization maintains the cultural elements of the source text so that the exotic flavor of the original text can be transmitted to the target reader.

All in all, when it concerns to which strategy should be chosen in the translation of the song titles, besides the culture and demands of readers, the communication in the different cultural context as well as the status of target language in the whole language environment should also be taken into consideration.

2.3 Memetics

2.3.1 Definition of meme, memetics and memplexes.

In 1976, Richard Dawkin first introduced the term “meme” in his book *The Selfish Gene*. He explains how he wanted a term which would be parallel to “gene” to describe the evolution of cultural phenomena. In the book, Dawkin claimed that:

“A meme is a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation. “Mimeme” comes from a suitable Greek root, but I want a monosyllable that sounds a bit like “gene”.”

Examples of memes are tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or building arches. Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperm or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation.”

Susan Blackmore has made contributions to the field of memetics. She actually developed the theory of meme. She used the term ‘meme’ to refer to memetic information in any of its many forms, including ideas, the brain structure that instantiates those ideas and the behaviors these brain

structures produce, and their versions in books, recipes, maps, and written music, as long as that information can be copied by a process we may broadly call 'imitation'. (Blackmore, 1999:65).

According to Wikipedia, Memetics is a theory of mental content based on an analogy with Darwinian evolution, originating from the popularization of Richard Dawkins' 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*. Proponents describe memetics as an approach to evolutionary models of cultural information transfer. The meme, analogous to a gene, was conceived as a "unit of culture" (an idea, belief, pattern of behavior, etc.) which is "hosted" in the minds of one or more individuals, and which can reproduce itself, thereby jumping from mind to mind. Thus, what would otherwise be regarded as one individual influencing another to adopt a belief is seen as an idea-replicator reproducing itself in a new host.

Since memes don't always work alone, a group of memes can work together and be transferred together to strengthen each other. Dawkins calls such a group of memes "co-adapted meme complexes", and Blackmore calls it Memeplexes. (Blackmore, 1999:176). Blackmore argues that languages, theories, political ideologies, religions, belief systems, etc., all of them can be seen as Memeplexes which can spread widely and last for a long time (Blackmore, 1999:158).

2.3.2 Host and vector

Host and vector is a pair of notion in Memetics. Henrik Bjarneskans, Bjarne Gronnevik, and Anders Sandberg (2000) proposed that "A host must be able to possess at least the potential capacity to elaborate on the memes that we normally refer to as 'understanding'. This means that only humans can be hosts, at least until the development of artificial intelligence reaches further." Hosts have the ability to think about the meme, make careful consideration of it and reflect on it.

Being the opposite term to host, a vector could be anything that transmits the meme between hosts without the ability to reflect on the meme. A vector is a medium, method, or vehicle for the transmission of memes. Almost any communication medium can be memetic vector. Vectors are various in its form, since books, emails, CDs and other items can carry a certain message, they all could be regarded as vectors.

2.3.3 Features of memes

Dawkins (1976) listed three features of memes. They are copying-fidelity, fecundity and longevity. Any successful meme or replicator is characterized by these three features.

Copying-fidelity: "the more faithful the copy is, the more will remain of the initial pattern after several rounds of copying." it can be explained the quality that the degree of the faithfulness of the copy will determine the copying effect.

Fecundity: "the higher rate of the copying, the more the replicator will spread". Many factors influence the rate of copying, such as the transmitting media, the engaged people and the difficulty level of imitation. At present, internet enables memes to transmit to the whole world overnight and replicate thousands of copies.

Longevity: “the longer any instance of the replicating pattern survives, the more copies can be made of it.” A lot of materials, such as books, photos and CD could carry and store memes for a long time due to the remarkable permanence of those materials.

2.3.4 The lifecycle of memes

In order to find the working mechanism of memes, the lifecycle of the memes is worth mention. The lifecycle of the memes is proposed by Swedish memeticists Henrik Bjarneskans, Bjarne Gronnevik and Anders Sandberg in their article "The Lifecycle of the Memes (2000)". According to them, a meme will experience four stages in its lifecycle. They are transmission, decoding, infection and coding.

In the transmission stage, the meme embodied in a vector is needed to be encoded. If the meme is keeping existing in the vector and nothing happens, it could be understood as a hereditary process.

The second stage is decoding. When a potential host reads or hears some information and is interested in exploring the information carried by the meme, he may then form his own mental pattern of meme. If the encoded form of the meme fails to be comprehended or absorbed, it could not move to the next stage, infection.

The infection refers to the stage in which the meme has been a part of the host's behavior on some way to stimulate its transmission. Only the person who can memorize the meme and whose behavior is also influenced can be called a real host who can transfer the meme to others. In a general way, if the information in a meme is familiar or similar to the host, the meme is easier to be absorbed by the host.

After being infected, the host begins to reconstruct the memes and ensure them being spread. This is the last stage, coding.

The above mentioned 4 stages can be adopted to analyze the process of English song title translation.

The original English song title in the source culture is the source meme, which can be regarded as memeplex carrying the song writer's idea, emotion and some other cultural information. It is thought to be in the transmission stage. When the host, namely the translator, absorbs the original English song title meme and puts his own thought into it, and becomes the meme's host. After the translator translates it into the target language, the meme's replication finishes, and the source memes change into a new form which can be seen as target memes. Lastly, the reader (new host) will read the translated title (target memes) through the process of coding. This process will go on and on until more and more readers are infected to read the translated version. The ideal translation should be a process in which the new vectors of source meme could make the host decode these memes successfully with target language and ensure source meme keeping on being spread. The last stage in memes spreading should be the most important process. If the source meme decoded by translators could not be accepted by readers, these memes would not be spread because they fail to infect their new host. Therefore, the focus of translation activity should be

adopting a proper method by which translators could decode the source meme, replicate them as much as possible and make them being accepted by their new hosts.

2.4 The relationship among culture, language and translation

Translation is the process and the practice of exchanging and transmitting culture elements and languages between different countries. However, the essence of translation is not languages but cultural factors behind the language. From the perspective of the cross-cultural communication, the main function of translation is to transmit more culture to another. In other words, translation is the medium for culture transmission.

2.4.1 Culture and language

Culture and language have closed relationship with each other. Edward Sapir (1884–1939), an American anthropologist-linguist, is the first person who put forward the adoption of their relationship. He claims that the relationship of the culture and language is so close-knit that we cannot understand each of them fully without enough knowledge of the other. Generally speaking, language belongs to the domain of culture and is shaped and affected by culture without any doubt. To some extent, language represents all culture, history, people's thinking mode and life style as well. Different cultural contexts can lead to the production of a certain vocabulary in certain area. For example, Eskimos are much more familiar to the various words concerning snow than other people from other areas in the world and create many terms related to snow. It is true that the learner can master the target language better if he comprehends the culture there. Language is a key component of culture. It is the primary medium for transmitting much of culture. Without language, culture would not be possible. Cultural differences are the most serious areas causing misunderstanding, unpleasantness and even conflict in cross-cultural communication.

2.4.2 Culture and translation

As a process of the exchange and transmission between the source language and the target language, translation involves the spread of culture as well, thus when translators work on it, the cultural context should be carefully considered. Since language is a part of culture, translators have to master sufficient knowledge of the two cultures of the involved countries when translating one language into another one. The effectiveness of the translation has to be achieved with the consideration of cultural elements. It is generally accepted that translation is considered to be the best way to exchange cultural information from one to another despite the limitation caused by cultural elements. Mutual and better understanding of different culture can be promoted if a successful translation is achieved. In the process of the reproduction of the source language, cultural elements are so indispensable that qualified translators should know relevant knowledge of culture involved, the linguistic knowledge and translating skills.

Memes as replicators of culture could be manifested in language, and language is the mirror of culture. In the sense, meme is really bound up with language. Language itself is meme, and memes are mainly rooted in language. Language is a mirror of one culture whose units of transmission are memes. Besides, the use of language could be helpful in meme replication and transmission. During the use of language, a set of old memes could combine with some new memes or just be reunited to form a new set of memes or memplexes.

Memes would be inevitably spread and replicated in the process of translation. Therefore, translation, to some extent, means to spread memes from one place to another and meanwhile to assure these memes overstep the cultural boundaries safely. That is, the process of translation is the spreading of memes.

The language in song title needs to be not only brief but also straightforward, which happens to meet the demand of copying-fidelity. Although the language in the song title is brief, it has to express the main idea of songs. The more faithfully the title express the theme of song, the more likely the songs are going to be accepted by the audiences. Only those songs with appropriate and attractive titles could be first noticed by the audience, then favored and spread thereafter. This just matches the second feature of meme, fecundity. Once a song title meets linguistic, aesthetic and cultural features well, it could exist for a long time. In one word, song titles would be regarded as memes, for they meet the features of memes in an excellent way.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Sample collection

All song titles listed in the thesis are selected from reliable sources. The main song titles are selected from four books published in the year of 1992, 2004, 2007 and 2011 respectively. Besides, some translated versions of song titles are from the TV shows, online CD introduction or some websites. The above-mentioned sources are mainly published books with a wide coverage of all kinds of songs in various ages, which make the samples more scientific, representative, and authoritative.

3.2 Sample analysis

The process of the research involves both qualitative methods and quantitative analysis. In the process of sorting out the song titles from the selected books, it is found out that as time goes by, the ratios between the two strategies—domestication and foreignization employed in the song title translations began to change. And also, for some English song titles, they are literally translated into Chinese without the application of the two strategies. Therefore, the author first removed those song titles with the literal translations and then selected 30 song titles from each of the two published books randomly—one was published in 1992, the other in 2011 in order to explore the different role played by domestication and foreignization in song title translation over different times. Then, according to the definition of domestication and foreignization mentioned in chapter two, the selected samples were classified into domestication, foreignization and the combined

strategy (domestication plus foreignization), which is shown in the table1 and table2 according to the publication time.

Table 1 Song title translation in 1992 version

Translation strategy	domestication	foreignization	the combined strategy	Total
Number	12	8	10	30
Percentage	40%	27%	33%	100%

Table 2 Song title translation in 2011version

Translation strategy	domestication	foreignization	the combined strategy	Total
Number	10	13	7	30
Percentage	33.3%	43.3%	23.3%	100%

From the two tables above, it can be concluded that in English song book published in 1992, the domestication strategy is dominant in song title translation, which takes up 40% while in English song book published in 2011, the foreignization takes up 43.3%. In the following section, case analysis will be carried out to explore factors which influence the choice of domestication or foreignization in English song title translation in different time from Memetics perspective. Besides, contrastive analysis will be also adopted in this thesis to find out the relationship between domestication and foreignization strategies in song title translation.

4. Analysis on domestication and foreignization in song title translation with Memetics

The realization of a certain culture's development and improvement is always through the replication and imitation of its own memes, so in this sense the song title translation is a process of replicating and imitating the foreign culture memes to our own country through language. Hence, the concept of memes and Memetics can be adopted to analyze the application of domestication and foreignization in English song title translation.

4.1 Application of domestication in English song title translation from the perspective of Memetics

Adopting domestication, the translator endeavors to make the foreign culture close to the reader in the target language, and in this way the original text will be easier for readers to understand. Based on Memetics theory, human beings are effective and useful vehicles for meme transmission, which can be seen as a way of culture transformation from the source language to the target language. In the early stage of the communication between China and western countries, the cultural differences cause difficulty for the Chinese audience to decode the foreign memes. They might not be infected by the foreign memes because of the unfamiliarity with the newly-contacted

language and culture. In this situation, translators tend to use domestication strategy when translating the English song title, aiming to make the target readers understand the essence of meme in the original English song title fully.

The theme song of the movie *Pretty Women* share the same translated version -- «风月俏佳人»(1990), which can be regarded as domestication strategy to cater to Chinese audience. When hearing this song, even we have never seen the film, we can picture a beautiful lady walking down the street. The movie, *Pretty Women* issued in 1990, talks about a fairytale in modern time: a charming, handsome and wealthy tycoon falling in love with a young and pretty prostitute and finally being together, realizing the dream of prince and Cinderella. When the beautiful leading lady is walking in the street happily and gracefully, this song starts. The translated version shows the main character in the song vividly, which may remind people of that scene in the film. If it is just translated into «漂亮女人», the original meme could not be understood and absorbed by Chinese audience.

As an important component, aesthetic standard varies between Chinese culture and western. In order to convey more beauty and artistic conception in cultural elements to Chinese people, domestication strategy can be used in English song translation in order to provide the audience with an easily-accepted meme in the target language. For example, the translated version for the song *Right Here Waiting* (1989) is «此情可待», which comes from the first part of the last line in the poem *The Zither* by a well-known poet Li Shangyin: 此情可待成追忆, (meaning that such beautiful feelings await future memory recalls). The literal meaning of the song title here is an expectation or a hope in the love. The lyric “Wherever you go, whatever you do, I will be right here waiting for you” shows the singer’s constant love for his beloved. The translator encoded the original English song title and reconstructed it by cutting out one phrase from a famous Chinese ancient poem, the meme of which is familiar to Chinese audience, satisfies their aesthetical expectation.

Since four-character expressions are a kind of special language forms in Chinese, in translating English song titles, translators often reconstruct the original English text into four-character structures, whose meme are transmitted and able to infect target readers widely and quickly. Four-character phrases are idiomatic and easily to be understood and remembered. It could convey more information than a sentence or a passage could do and also arouse audiences’ interest and curiosity. For example, *let it be*(1970) is translated into «顺其自然», *the river of no return*(1954) into Chinese version is «大江东去», and *my heart will go on* into «我心永恒»(1998), others like *I feel for you*«多情为你», *Someday*«有朝一日», *The way we were* «往日情怀», *Where had all the flower gone* «花落何方» etc. All these translation versions are easy to pronounce, and convenient to spread.

What’s more, some idioms and slangs are involved in the English song title, which make the title itself full of cultural color and it is often hard for the target reader to comprehend its cultural implication through language alone. Thus, domestication strategy will be adopted to convey the cultural concept and avoid misunderstanding between different countries. *Song sung blue* (1972) «

唱首忧郁的歌 Sung a melancholy song », “blue”, here as an adverbial, is often used to describe one’s bad mood in English, which is very likely to be misunderstood by Chinese reader as the color of blue, for this cultural information is not so familiar to ordinary Chinese. The meme of the original English title is changed into a new meme-- “忧郁的”, which means melancholy in Chinese which is known to most readers. *Sugar sugar* (1969) is a song which conveyed the singer’s love for his beloved girl. When listening, people can feel the sweetness of the love. Here sugar means sweetheart or honey, which refers to a person you love very much. So «亲爱的»(literally means sweetheart) is a successful Chinese version, in which the domestication strategy is applied to transmit the core meme. But if it is translated into «糖»(candy/sugar), the target reader will not be infected by the original meme.

From all the song title translation examples above, we can see that when translating English song title in Chinese with domestication strategy, translators lay much emphasis on adapting to the language and culture of Chinese. Some expressions that Chinese people often use or the structure which they are familiar with are preferred by the translator in the process of translation. Through domestication, the target language readers (Chinese readers) are able to comprehend the translated work more easily and fully. Figure1 shows the steps in the analysis of domestication applied in the song title translation in terms of Memetics.

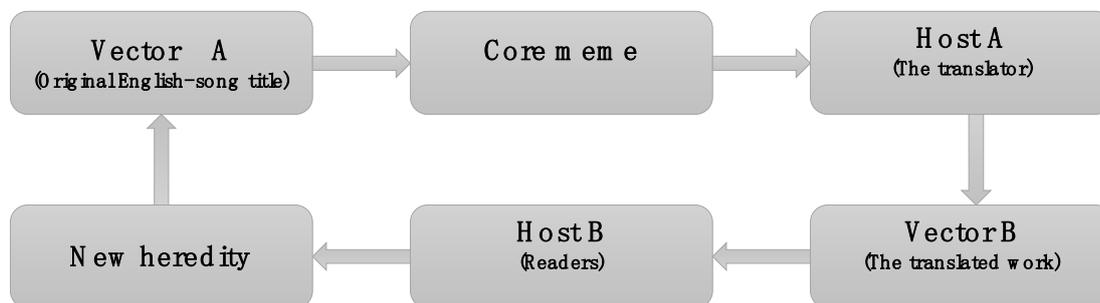


Figure 1: The process of memes transmission in domestication of English song title

As figure1 shows, vector A stands for the original English song title, core meme refers to the idea that the original author wants to express. From core meme to host A, this process can be regarded as infection, and in this process, memes will be transmitted into host A, namely the translator. Then vector B is the translated work (Chinese version of English song title), and the arrow from host A to vector B means the translator’s coding and decoding the meme. Next, comes to host B, the reader who is infected by the translated work. Finally, through coding and decoding, the new heredity begins, which circulates and repeats over and over again until this version is accepted by all.

Translator (host A) uses domestication to transmit the core meme embodied the idea of the original author in order to get a meaning equivalence or relative equal production between the two languages--English and Chinese, so that the Chinese reader can comprehend English culture easily.

That is to say, the domestication strategy concentrates on choosing the familiar memes of the target language culture to produce the same effect as the source memes have on the source language readers.

In the early stage of the communication between English and Chinese, Chinese readers are not familiar with English and its culture due to the big difference and remote distance between these two countries. Therefore, it is not easy for the Chinese reader to be infected by the memes of English culture because of their incapability of decoding. With the purpose of transmitting the core meme of the original English song title, domestication strategy is often applied by translators despite the fact that some other memes will be missing in the process.

4.2 Application of foreignization in English song title translation from the perspective of Memetics

Foreignization endeavors to keep the original flavors of the source language to provide the target language readers with a translated text with “foreignness”. Foreignization strategy demands the translator to transfer the original work as loyal as possible, which means, translators try to maintain the original flavor to the most degree and make the target reader accept those unfamiliar or even strange expressions. In the process of foreignization, the translator tries to use the same expressions as the original work and make the readers come closer to the original work.

As for some English song titles, they are named after the names of key characters or places appearing in the lyric or the theme. Such memes are unique for the source language culture and usually translated according to their pronunciations, that is the transliteration technique. For example: the song *Casablanca* is translated into «卡萨布兰卡». This song is welcomed by many people since it conveys the feelings for those who reluctantly leave their lovers and the song is misunderstood as the theme song of the film *Casablanca* because it reflects the main theme of the film. Actually, it was composed after the song writer had seen the film. the translated version «卡萨布兰卡» keeps the original meme of the English song title for Chinese audience to get some knowledge and information about this place or remind those people who have seen the film of its main theme. The narrative folk song *Hazard* can be easily translated into «危险 Danger», while *Hazard* in this song is actually a small town in Sherman in the state of Nebraska. The background of this song is in the trip to Nebraska, a town named Hazard inspired the singer Marx and then he invented this narrative song with suspense to express his prejudice and bias. Therefore the *Hazard* should be translated into «危险镇 Hazard town» otherwise the target audience will misunderstand the original lyrics and cannot get the core memes.

Besides transliteration, literal translation is also usually adopted to show the distinctiveness of song title translation meme. Literal translation means word-to-word translation which is aiming to represent the original version in form regardless the distinction between the source language and the target language. To apply this technique, the target language audiences would understand the content or main idea of the original song more easily. It is the lingual similarity in both languages that makes the technique possible and realistic.

In English songs, there are a lot of titles concerning religious, for religious belief has become a part of people's life. In translating this kind of song titles, foreignization strategies are often adopted. Such as:

The song *My sweet lord* is translated into «我甜蜜的上帝». There are many meanings of the word "lord", but from the lyrics of the song, it can be known that here lord is used as a religious term which refers to a title of deference for various gods or deities. Harrison wrote "My Sweet Lord" in praise of the Hindu god Krishna while at the same time intending the lyrics to serve as a call to abandon religious sectarianism. The translator decodes the source meme and use foreignization to let audience be exposed to a foreign culture.

It can be noticed that all of these song titles listed above are good examples of foreignization by means of word-for-word translation. Furthermore, the translated version is not difficult to be understood by using foreignization strategy, even to some extent, easier for Chinese readers to accept owing to its freshness and convenience to remember. The form and the meaning of the original English song title can be maintained by the translator through conveying the original images, which can be called imitation. Since a language often has some special and unique methods in expressing certain concept or meaning and it is not easy to find a corresponding way in the target language and culture, translators often imitate the original images to present the source meaning. But it can be inferred that it is a good way to imitate the form of the source expression if the target language reader can understand the meaning of the translated text in the imitated form. Figure2 shows the relationship between Memetics and the foreignization of English song titles.

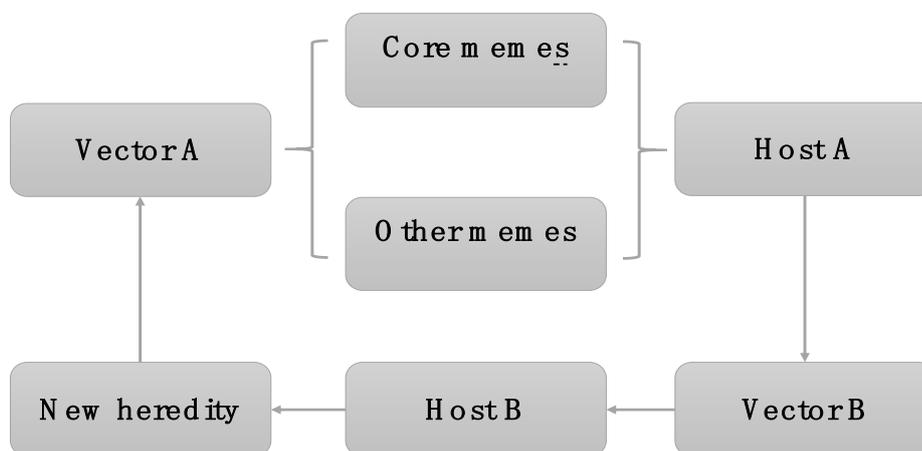


Figure 2 The process of memes transmission in foreignization of English song title

It can be seen that there is a minor difference between the process of memes transmission in foreignization and in domestication of English song titles. When foreignization strategy is applied, memes of culture, history and society are also stressed in addition to the core meme. The best and most appropriate alternative for English song title translation is to transmit not only the meme of the content and meaning of the English song title but also convey its relevant background in culture,

society, history, customs and even its writing style, and this is also the goal of foreignization strategy.

With the fast development of cultural communication, foreignization strategy will do a better job in meeting target language readers' expectation and curiosity of foreignness and freshness from the diverse culture. In other words, readers are more used to the source language culture and more able to decode other memes of the culture in the source language. As a result, the target audience will be not content to decode the foreign memes by the version which is close to their own culture. Under this circumstance, translators will be willing to choose foreignization strategy to reproduce more memes of the original English text.

To sum up, domestication strategy and foreignization strategy in the translation of English song title are both essentially responsible for the transmission of the successful memes from the perspective of Memetics. Domestication translation would help the target language audience understand the core memes embodied in the original English song title. The translation versions by application of domestication are necessary and vital in the early stage of cultural communication in that the initial task of core memes is seeking the chance of survival in the target language culture. Even though these versions could bridge the cultural gap between different countries in that these versions are familiar to the target language audiences, they are no longer the original memes of source language but the similar memes of the target language because the foreignness of the original titles are lost. From the perspective of memetics, such memes could not fulfill the ultimate goal of memes spreading. Therefore, foreignization as the irreplaceable strategy would not be absent in the practice of song title translation. It pays great attention to other memes of the original English song title as well as the core meme, trying to provide the Chinese audience with the original meaning of the English song title, thus promoting the communication between people in different culture.

5. Conclusion

From the perspective of memetics, this thesis analyzes the domestication and foreignization in song title translation. Based on the analysis, the factors which would influence the choice between the two strategies is also mentioned.

The fact that song titles are memes which has been proved by exploring the functions and features of song titles in term of memetics, is of importance for the analysis. As a special form of language, the functions of song titles meet the demands of those of memes, which would make the analysis scientific and reasonable to utilize the theory of memetics. This would be one of the foundations for the application of memetics in this thesis. According to the analysis and statement in the previous sections, some conclusions have been made as follows:

First, now that the song titles are memes, translating them is actually a process to spread song title memes from the source language culture to the target language culture. Since the culture elements play important roles in translation practice, two translation strategies of domestication and foreignization are usually adopted.

Second, there is no need to argue whether domestication strategy or foreignization strategy is better in English song title translation, for they are equally effective in introducing English songs and culture into China. These two strategies are in essence the transmission of successful memes through four stages. Therefore, the choice of domestication or foreignization is determined by many factors like the target audiences' social or cultural background, their knowledge and educational level, their need and the purpose of the translation, etc.

Third, the domestication and foreignization could be co-existed in the song title translation practice. They are not exclusive but mutually complementary in term of time and space factors. Domestication translation could be inevitable for the existence of universal cultural diversities while foreignization is irreplaceable in that it complies with the nature of spreading memes--the self-replication. Foreignization is necessary in keeping the foreignness and particularities of different languages. The judgment of foreignization and domestication is undergoing a dynamic process. Thus, these two strategies can supplement each other.

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