



Analysis on E-C Subtitle Translation of “The Art of Simple Language” in *Frozen II*

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Abstract

With the development of children’s literature, the child-oriented concept of translation is also on the rise. The concept of “the Art of Simple Language” proposed by Lin Liang profoundly explains the essential characteristics of children’s literature and gives full respect and appreciation to children’s simple language. However, there are not many studies on the art of simple language at present, and the study of children’s language translation is also an academic land to be reclaimed. This paper gives a brief introduction to Lin Liang’s “the Art of Simple Language” and related research. In view of the main characteristics of simple language, the phenomenon of simple language in *Frozen II* is studied, and the artistic restoration degree of *Frozen II* E-C subtitle translation for the art simplicity is analyzed from the aspects of language style representation, harmony between artistic style and subtitle translation, emotional meaning and philosophical transmission. Combined with the additional effects of film and television, the art of simple language flashes a charming light in subtitle translation.

Key words: Subtitle translation; “The Art of Simple Language”; *Frozen II*

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INTRODUCTION

Children’s literature itself is still not a universally accepted concept, but considered as a language construction which is under continuous development. In the process of constructing the concept of children’s literature, Lin Liang has undoubtedly provided the theoretical construction and practice of children’s literature with his unique views and long-term creation practice (Xu, 2015, p.256). Contrast to the value of Li Liang’s view, there is little academic research on “the art of simple language”, only five papers on CNKI as of the first half of 2021, showing a lack of attention to the importance of children’s language. Up to now, even no research has done on how to translate “the art of shallow language”. For the Disney Animated film *Frozen II*, the main characters all express themselves in simple language and explain important and profound propositions with gentle easy-to-understand language. The expression in E-C subtitle translation full of simple language forms the great tension of the ultimate artistic effect, which can be seen as a glimpse of light of the children’s language, and a fire for the subtitle translation for children.

1. LIN LIANG AND “THE ART OF SIMPLE LANGUAGE”

Lin Liang, honored as the “patriarch” of children’s literature in Taiwan, takes children’s literature as his career for life and dedicated to research on prose writing published under the pseudonym of “Zi Min” (子敏 in Chinese). Lin is a representative writer in the modern history of children’s literature in Taiwan. His main contributions are not limited to Chinese children’s prose, children’s songs and poems, as well as the introduction of classic world literature to Chinese children. In terms of his writing, developed from vernacular prose tradition of the May 4th Movement, Lin Liang has gradually established

an aesthetic system with his own texture on children’s literature.

In his book *The Art of Simple Language* (2000), Lin Liang argues that children’s literature is artistic expression of “浅语”. In fact, translating “浅语” to “Simple language” is hasty because the meaning of “浅” in Chinese context is much profound than “simple”. Although in a simple and even shallow form, the philosophy behind “浅语” could be poetic, profound and penetrating. In this paper, the author use “Simple Language” as English translation of “浅语” in order to comply with other scholars sets feet on this area as there is still no standard version yet. As for the definition of “浅语”, Lin points out that children’s language may be simple but definitely not shallow. In another words, children’s language is in depth philosophically though in a simple and smooth way. Besides, Lin Liang (2000, p.65) holds that children’s literature writing is simmering thoughts into feelings, entering the world of feeling. He stressed that literature without feeling are not pure literature.

Little Sun (2006), Lin Liang’s masterpiece of children’s prose, is his practice applying “the art of simple language” in children’s literature. In this collection, Liliang and his daughters’ life anecdotes are collected carefully by recording children’s daily life. Observing the world from rather tiny perspective, Lin tries to explain the wisdom and philosophy of life in harmony and serenity, the value of growth through trivial things in life (Jiang, 2013. p,14). By eliminating discussion on the social ambition of children, Lin presents the true appearance of childhood with the figurative and humorous “art of simple language”, so as to convey his life wisdom with love in the core (Zhang, 2013, p.11). Children-orientation advocates Xu Derong and Yang Andong make a detailed summary of connotation of Lin’s “the art of simple language”, and analyze the way to realize this idea from Lin Liang’s practice (2015, pp.118-123). In children’s literature, the word “浅” contains the deepest content and the most superb skills, which means no matter how great a writer is, he has to learn to write for children.

2. FEATURES OF “SIMPLE LANGUAGE” AND *FROZEN II*

“The art of simple language” itself puts emphasis on the central word is “art” with “simple language” as a modifier, which can be interpreted as art created by using simple language. Children’s literature should be artistic in essence, and simplicity language is the carrier of art (Xu &Yang, 2015, p.108). “The art of simple language” based on characteristics of children’s language. Simple language has the following features:

First of all, simple language should be humorous and unconventional. While ordinary language is clear and plain, while literary language is simple but full of

meaning. Humor makes the simple language tasteful to read. By using a variety of rhetoric devices, simple language maximizes children’s imagination flexibly to open a spiritual journey with great interest. Thus, using figures of speech intelligently is the second feature of simple language. Thirdly, in term of contents, sincere and touching affection is a necessary condition to the art of simple language. By virtue of simplicity and delicacy of children’s language, deep emotional meaning and profound philosophical meaning give full play to “the art of simple language”.

With the enchanting flavor and invigorating aura that made *Frozen* (2013) a classic for the new generation, Walt Disney Animation Studios produced the sequel *Frozen II* which set 3 years after the first film. After lifting the dreadful curse of the eternal winter, Queen Elsa of kingdom of Arendelle with ice magic power, enjoys a happy life with her sister, Princess Anna. However, a melodious voice inviting Elsa to the mystical enchanted forest, promising to reveal the truth about ice magic and unveil the mysterious truth that threatens her kingdom. Elsa and Anna summon up their courage into the unknown, intent on finding answers in the perpetually misty realm in the woods to better protect their family and her kingdom. The film attracts a lot of children to watch the strong of Ice Queen. With photorealistic animation, catchy songs and flawless story, the “simple language” used by the characters strikes a heartfelt chord among children audiences.

3. TRANSLATION OF “THE ART OF SIMPLE LANGUAGE”

It can be said that most of the great and enduring literary works are basically written in “simple language”. In terms of literary connotation, children’s literature is similar to poetry, both of which appreciate the sincere and deep emotions conveyed in concise language. The subtitle in *Frozen II* contains a lot of poetry written for children, which is also a highlight of “the art of language”. Here the art of simple language of *Frozen II* is analyzed from its simple but profound language, children-oriented design and enlightening theme.

3.1 Language: Simple but Profound

Talking about a story’s value, no one would care how long it is but what language style it features and what information it carries. To realize the art of simple language, one thing need to be mentioned, that is what language is “Simple Language”. The feeling of “Simple Language” is usually described as fresh, lively, rhythmic, and full of interest.

Example 1:

Elsa: I don’t think Olaf should get to rearrange.

Anna: Doesn’t matter. This is gonna be a cinch.

艾莎：雪宝变形也太赖皮了吧！

安娜：没关系，我们姐妹的默契也很厉害

The original dialogue is taken place as Elsa, Anna, Kristoff, and Olaf play charade, where Olaf takes advantage of his mobility to transform himself into different characters. The sisters are expressing their displeasure with Olaf's behavior, questioning his unfair way of playing the game. Free translation is used in the translation to describe Olaf's violation of rules as “赖皮”，and the subject of the sentence is changed from “I” to “雪宝” (Olaf), which makes the dialogue more colloquial. In the original line, “a cinch” is used by Anna to express her confidence. When translating Anna's line, the translator emphasizes Anna's confidence on her bond with Elsa rather the game itself, changing the subject back to “我们姐妹” (We two), using “厉害” to modify the tacit mutual understanding between the sisters in a quite cute tone.

Example 2:

Two sisters, one mind.

心有灵犀一点通。

Example 2 is a conclusion of the intimate relationship between Elsa and Anna. The flavor of “Simple Language” is light but tasteful. The translation applies the Chinese proverb “心有灵犀一点通” to reproduce the conciseness and deep meaning of the original. From my point of view, another Chinese proverb “姐妹同心，其利断金” could function in the same way, accurately expressing the meaning of the original text..

Example 3:

Kissing won't save the Forest.

亲亲可不能拯救森林。

Example 4:

Far away... as north as we can go stood a very old and very enchanted forest.

在很远很远的地方，在世界的最北方，有一座很古老的魔法森林。

Example 3 is a line of Elsa in her childhood. “Kissing” is translated as “亲亲” to show the characteristics of children's language by using reiterative as one stunning tool for equivalent transmission of “the art of simple language”. The repeated occurrence of words and sentences is more likely to invoke emotions of the audience. It is also easy to cause the sense of auditory rhythm and fixed visual stimulation.

In example 4, King Agnarr is telling his daughters the story of the enchanted forest at the beginning of *Frozen II*. “Far away...” is translated as “很久很久以前”. The reduplication of words leads the audience into the story, immersing in the plot slowly. Reduplication of words in children's literature has a unique taste, which is frequently used in the subtitle translation for children.

Example 5:

Anna: Help me up!

Kristoff: We'll meet you around!

安娜：推我上去！

克里斯托夫：我们绕过去找你。

Example 6:

I just didn't realize there was so much of it.

我都不知道天空这么辽阔。

In example 5, the dialogue between Anna and Kristoff happened when they are chased and attacked by angry earth spirits. Reindeer Sven drives them to a rock wall to hide. Anna is saying “Help me up” when she was lifted, so its translation uses “推” instead of “帮” to deliver the meaning of action. In Kristoff's line, “meet you around” is translated to “绕”，which expresses Kristoff's next route in a colloquial and dynamic way. In example 6, the Northuldra tribe are enjoying the clear sky when the moist curse is broken. For the first time, they could feel the complete sky in their own eyes. The adjective “辽阔” is added in the translated text to show the vastness which boggles the mind of the tribe. Specification and depth of simple words are realized simultaneously.

3.2 Design: Children-Oriented and Artistic

The film for children is of great significance to the growth of children. Under the children-oriented perspective, the creation of film for children requires fully understanding, respect and passion of children through plot designing, character image shaping, atmosphere building and other aspects of the film (Jiang & Xu, 2012, p.168). This design of film need to coincide with the essence of “the art of simple language”, embellishing humanity and shaping character for children.

3.2.1 The Design of Plot

The design of plot is of great importance for the creation of children's films, which should be reasonable and conform to the emotions and rationality of the audience, giving a positive psychological impact on children, focusing on themes including growth, love, respect and the role of individual efforts.

Example 7

The wind blows a little bit colder, and you all look a little bit older.

风中凉意渐添，大家都越发成熟。

As the overall pictures of *Frozen II* is painted by autumnal palette, the sequel is about two sisters beginning to mature. In the original text of example 7, the two lines rhyme in the end. Different from the source language, the translation uses more adult language, highlighting the loneliness of inevitable growth and melancholy when enforced to say goodbye to the blissful past. In my opinion, example 7 could be translated to “秋风萧瑟秋意浓，如今心境已不同”，in which rhyme is retained as well as the sense of maturation.

Example 8:

Glaciers are rivers of ice. Ahtohallan is frozen.

冰川是冰雪组成的河，阿塔霍兰是冰雪之河。

Example 8 is the first line Elsa says when she sees Ahtohallan, the mysterious place hides the origin of Elsa's magic. It has been mentioned several times in *Frozen II*

that water has a memory so as ice. Ahtohallan appears in the shape of glaciers, full of memory of the past. The second sentence of example 8 uses “frozen” to describe Ahtohallan, which is a pun here. “Frozen” is the film title refers to Elsa. “Ahtohallan is frozen” implies that Elsa herself is the fifth spirit of nature she looks for. As for the translation of example 8, the translator noticed the pun and transmitted it perfectly. As the Chinese official title of *Frozen* “冰雪奇缘”, so the translation use “冰雪” to modify Ahtohallan. The repetition of “冰雪” deepens children’s impression on the rivers.

3.2.2 The Design of Character

As far as the design of characters is concerned, the translator should pay attention to the richness of human nature and the fullness of image in the art of simple language. Whatever the style of films, as the most basic production process, the design of character is the precondition of children’s films. Good characters are helpful to interpret producers’ ideals to convey feelings, enrich films’ emotional expression from the perspective of children-orientation.

Example 9:

Kristoff: I’m here. What do you need?

Anna: To get to the dam.

Kristoff: You got it.

克里斯托夫: 我来了! 您有什么吩咐?

安娜: 去水坝。

克里斯托福: 遵命。

Example 10:

My love is not that fragile.

我的爱没那么不堪一击。

The dialogue is between Kristoff and Anna during their adventurous journey. In *Frozen II*, Anna becomes one independent and decisive women who don’t need to be protected by any princes. Kristoff is her partner who adores her, In example 9, the translator uses “吩咐” and “遵命”, both of which connote the superior and the subordinate relations, to show that Kristoff takes Anna very seriously and Anna is growing to a rescuer rather than to be rescued by others. As for example 10, Kristoff believes that love will not be defeated. “fragile”, meaning weakness and easy to be destroyed, is translated to “不堪一击”, a Chinese four-character idiom which makes its meaning more profound and highlights the emotion. Kristoff’s real feelings and trust for Anna and great loyalty of love.

Example 11:

Olaf: You look different. Did you cut your hair or something?

Elsa: Or something.

雪宝: 你看起来变了。你换了发型还是做了别的?

艾莎: 做了别的。

Every change in the image is a reflection of growth in the character. In the climax of the film, Elsa becomes an integral part of nature spirits and sings “Show Yourself”

while changing herself a new look in a flowing elegant dress, showing that she finally gets rid of the shackles of power, status and responsibility. Elsa finds a home for her soul and feels real freedom. In example 11, when asked why she looks different, Elsa didn’t answer directly, because everything is self-evident and nothing need to be proved, which also reflects Elsa’s personality. In my view, it can be translated as “懂得, 都懂” in a cuter tone.

3.2.3 The Design of Atmosphere

As a sequel of musical, children could enjoy 11 songs with 7 origins in *Frozen II*, each of which depicts the emotion of the protagonist and reveals the plot to come. The combination of language hints in musical comes to a unique and important source of motivation for the plot development in the film.

Example 12:

Show Yourself.

T.1 你是谁?

T.2: 看自己。

T.3: 我存在。

On the way approaching Ahtohallan, Elsa rides Nokk, the water spirit in horse shape, to the magical palace where she finally finds the truth, she starts saying “Show yourself!”. In this song Show Yourself (《现出真的你》 official translation in Chinese), the lyrics “show yourself” appears 9 times in total. However, the meaning of “show yourself” is keeping changing with the plot. It is a pun on the situation. On the one hand, it is a call from Elsa to the spirits who have been hiding to come out to meet her; On the other side, it is a call to Elsa’s own inner voice: to be the person you want to be rather than being the person you have to be. The repeated “show yourself” can deliver strong emotions and feelings just like another famous song came from *Frozen* Let It Go. Because of the multi-lateral meaning “show yourself”, there are three versions in its Chinese translation. T. 1 is the translation of the first 4 “show yourself” in the film as “你是谁” is obviously a question asked to the spirits. As Elsa enters Ahtohallan, she gradually senses the connection between her magic power with the spirits. So the fifth to eighth “show yourself” is translated as T. 2, which means “looking at myself” literally. Truth hidden in Ahtohallan is going to be unveiled while Elsa is going to find the reason she was born. As for the last “show yourself”, the translator sublimates it to “我存在”, meaning “I am found”. When Elsa discovers that she was the fifth spirit she is waiting for, she realizes that her existence is never a burden, but a gift from nature. Going step by step, the multi-layer translation is closer to meaning of the original text. However, it loses the stunning effect brought by repetition, so it is difficult to strike a chord with children.

3.3 Theme: Emotional and Enlightening

Good stories for children need the writer to have wisdom. As for translation for children, the translator not only

needs the wisdom of children's literature and "the art of simple language" but also the ability to convey the truth of life to children in an attractive way. In *Frozen II*, Anna & Elsa's arc remains captivating and the sisterhood bond is strong and intense as ever.

Example 13:

Elsa: What would I do without you?

Anna: You'll always have me.

艾莎: 如果没有了你, 我该怎么办?

安娜: 我会一直陪着你。

Example 14

Elsa: You can't just follow me into fire.

Anna: Then don't run fire!

艾莎: 你不能跟着我冲进火里。

安娜: 那你自己就别往火里冲!

Echoed a similar message from *Frozen* (2013), the sequel develops the sisterly bond between Elsa and Anna with darker adventures and deeper themes. In example 13, although empowered from the beginning, Elsa still needs Anna's support and inner strength when facing difficulties. The translator uses verb "陪" to translate "have" as the verb "陪" means "companion from heart and soul", which could give people a feeling of warmth and comfort fearful and sorrowful hearts. Syntactically, the translator switches the subject and object of the sentence, showing that these two sisters who have each other's back no matter what happens. In the original text of example 14, there's no subject in Anna's words. The translator adds "你自己" to highlight Anna's concern on Elsa. The love between two sisters keeps every audience intrigued throughout in the art of simple language.

Example 15

Olaf: I'm flurrying away.

I just thought of one thing that's permanent.

Anna: What's that?

Olaf: Love.

雪宝: 我要变成雪消失了。我想到了一个永恒不变的东西。

安娜: 什么?

雪宝: 爱。

Olaf is a magical snowman loves to cuddle friends. At the beginning of *Frozen II*, he keeps asking Anna what thing is permanent and his journey with Elsa and Anna is an exploration of love. The dialogue in example 15 goes when the magic in Olaf is fading and he is going to be evaporated. As a witness of the two sisters' growth, he sees sacrifice and dedication, trust and courage in them. From the perspective of onlooker, Olaf speaks out the theme of *Frozen II* loudly: love is permanent and some people are worth melting for. In translation of "I'm flurrying away", I think it could be translated as "飘飘欲仙". Originally, "飘飘欲仙", which means treading upon clouds and feeling like a fairy in paradise, should be used to describe delight and enjoyment. With another meaning

of floating flakes, "飘飘" endows the translation with vitality and makes Olaf more vivid by showing the grief story beautifully and the theme of love profoundly.

In *Frozen II*, the word "love" appears 26 times in total, which can be said to be throughout the storyline including the love between Anna and Elsa, the love between Kristoff and Anna, Elsa's love for the spirits of nature, for the country and people of Arendelle and so on. All these expressions of love are united in the art of simple language, and then transmitted to children watching the film.

CONCLUSION

Children's literature cannot stop its pursuit for "the art of simple language". Profound in a simple way, "浅语" would never forgive its light but tasteful flavor to meet the need of changing aesthetic for Children. As a new kind of literature, children's film is taking its position practicing "the art of simple language". Children are the main audience of animated films, and the proper translation of "simple language" in film subtitles is a vital prerequisite to realize the artistic value of simple language. Creation and translation of "simple language" is the field of children's literary writers and translators to show their talents from the perspective of children-orientation. In the process of subtitle translation, the translator should keep the child-oriented view of translation and try to be as close as possible to represent the features of "simple language", so as to advance a harmonious and unified state of film design and subtitle translation, conveying enlightening ideas to children.

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