Embodiment of Flexibility in Fighting Plots—Taking Chinese Version of Marvel Novels as Examples

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Abstract

As Marvel films gain overwhelming popularity around the world, Marvel novels have been popular with millions of fans in film market all over the world. The culture and values behind them have exerted significant impact on Chinese people. The quality of translation of novel texts, as a carrier to convey knowledge and cultural connotation, affects the accuracy of the information afforded to targeted readers. The fighting plots are one of the attractive highlights of Marvel novels, showing the hero’s courage and determination as well as his national passion for adventure. This article centers on the analysis of embodiment of flexibility in fighting plots from the perspective of linguistic, literary and cultural features of Chinese version of Marvel novels to involve readers experience dynamic and fierce fighting scenes in movies vividly and personally, demonstrating the heroic traits and promoting further understanding of ideology and spirits readers have accepted behind Marvel novels so as to make people know how to properly treat the culture and values disseminated by America.

Keywords

Marvel Novels, Fighting Plots, Heroic, Culture and Value

1. Introduction

With Marvel films increasingly in vogue, Marvel novels have become one of the bestsellers in the worldwide film industry. The fighting plots, as the most attractive and highlighting cores, appeal a huge range of fans and followers for its splendid scenes, coherent plots and extraordinary visual sensation. What’s more, beyond the motion picture itself, the spirit of heroic courage and determination and their national passion for adventure, the culture and values behind them have had implications for folks in China. With Marvel growing powerful, the translation pertaining to it has become increasingly important, the linguistic, literary and cultural features embodied in the Chinese version of Marvel novels skillfully and subtly illustrate the ideology and spirits of American that need to be inherited and thrust forward by readers and fans all around the world.

2. The Analysis of Flexibility in Fighting Plots of Iron Man and Spider Man: Homecoming

2.1 Linguistic Features of Fighting Plots

2.1.1 Vocabulary

These two novels mainly focus on action, so here is a brief introduction of the linguistic features before and during the fighting plots.
For example, “Iron Man had a shotgun and Thor a pistol” and “would you like me to engage Enhanced Combat Mode?” In this example, Spider Man was ready to combat against the robbers, so he must pick up the gun to attack his rivals. “Had a shotgun” is of static feature to make his preparations for this upcoming fierce fighting plot. In the second example, using a question tone can prepare for the next fierce fighting scenes and be of static characteristic. However, in a real battle, such verbs as “shoot across”, “kick” and “go after” as well as “explode” are used to demonstrate the vehement fighting spots and reflect the characteristics of novels. What’s more, in two novels, there are many verbs about explosion such as blast, go off, blow up and explode. Even more, there are some verbs with judgment of movement direction, such as smash through, slide across and slam into. These reflect the agile ability of main characters and make readers feel dynamic fighting plots (Baker, Mona, 1992). Therefore, these verbs showing strong actions can demonstrate the prowess of combating and ferocious fighting spots as there are several differences between Marvel novels and films with audio-visual tools.

By comparison, when paving the way for fighting plots, the fighting words are more inclined to be static while those words during the fighting plots are characterized by instantaneous position shift, power explosion and judgment of movement direction. This combination of static and dynamic words can make the vehement fighting plots stand out.

2.1.2 Syntactics
The two novels are characterized by the fighting plots. When the protagonists pay attention to battle, they will use such short sentences as colloquial, non-subject or imperative sentences to express the intense and tense atmosphere so that the ferocious fighting spots can be well shown.

Colloquial sentences are very common in two novels since they focus on fighting. During this period, colloquial sentences are used to express the key information in such a tense situation. For instance, “It’s gonna explode”, “No, I don’t wanna kill anyone” and “If you gotta shoot at someone, shoot at me”. These examples show that the easy and concise sentences are used to convey the exact meaning in the intense battle. Too long sentences can make other cooperators not receive the exact information and even more miss the opportunities for the heroes to attack their foes (Landers, Clifford E, 2008). Therefore, colloquial sentences are essential to the fighting plots.

Imperative or non-subject sentences are also ubiquitous in two novels. “Enhanced Combat Mode?”, “Activate Instant Kill” and “target inbound” belong to imperative sentences. The fighting plot involves main characters, AI, weapons and partners or assistants. So the tone of order can demonstrate the vehement fighting plots as main characters need this enhanced combat when their power has been used up or inadequate. And this kind of sentences can also create a tense aura because enhanced power means continuing to fight (Steiner, George, 2001).

So from the perspective of syntactics, imperative and colloquial sentences are well demonstrated in two novels. They mirror not only the fierce fighting scenes, but also intense atmosphere.

2.2 Literary Features of Fighting Plots

2.2.1 Plot Depiction
Iron Man tells the story of Tony Stark who improves the function of his armor and becomes Iron Man to protect the world peace as a vigilant policeman. In this novel, its highlights are the fighting scene of the hero, and it has two typical fighting plots. One fighting plot is that Iron Man was determined to protect those victims in Gulmira City and settled some scores on Yisen’s behalf when triumphant Ten Rings separatists ran rampant there. It is a truism that Tony Stark aims at protecting peace and American interests with the advanced technology. So Tony inevitably impersonated the Iron Man to protect those in need as Ten Rings rebels did harm to them. Another fighting plot is that there was a fierce fighting between Iron Man and Iron Monger. The Iron Monger is created by Obadiah Stane who was the business part of Tony Stark and a good friend of his father as he failed to assassinate Tony. In this plot, the most touching part is that Iron Man tried his best to save Iron Monger even though he did not have much strength. Such description in this book is that using every bit of strength he possessed, he forced his armor to move, reaching out to save his enemy. However, Iron Monger still ignored his own risk of losing his life to continue to attack the Iron Man. When the enemy had the risk of losing his life, Iron Man chose to give him a hand instead of overlooking the danger. By contrast, the personality of the hero is demonstrated unsparingly in this fierce fighting.

Spider Man: Homecoming revolves around Peter Parker who is a young Spider Man and fights the ultimate villain-Vulture with the help of the Iron Man. There are many fighting scenes in this novel. The Spider Man is to fight
against street crime. One street crime is that four guys disguised as Avengers robbed the ATM. Then this was the moment Spider Man should announce his presence. And the fighting fell on four bogus Avengers and him. This fighting hit him that being a superhero was more difficult than Peter had anticipated. Every fighting makes Peter deeply understand the significance of the superhero. What excited us is that there was a fighting between Spider Man and the Vulture in the last half part of the novel when they met each other due to Liz’s recommendation. In this fighting plot, the enemy is struck in the firestorm, and Spider Man confronted the peril of the life being claimed. He risked his life to plunge in and staggered to a safe distance from the crash site, laying Toomes in the sand. And then Toomes, bloodied and defeated, locked eyes with Peter and said that he should let him die. Peter replied simply that I couldn’t let you die and that’s not who I am. This also demonstrates the good virtue of being a hero.

2.2.2 Character Portrait

In two novels, the heroes boast lots of virtues reflected in fighting plots. When their foes who only wanted them to disappear in this world were struck in dangers, they would desperately save their lives with magnanimity. And they would fight for curbing the misdeeds that hurt innocent people. So these reflect the kindness and magnanimity of the heroes. But as an ordinary man, they possess their own personalities. Tony Stark, also called Iron Man, is a playboy and willful person. In an award ceremony many people admire most, he was reluctant to show up. Instead, he was in a casino, and asked a beautiful woman for his help and had an affair with his personal assistant. Peter Parker, dubbed Spider Man, was less confident than Iron Man and at a loss. At the very beginning, when fighting crimes, he always was subject to Iron Man. In the several fights, Iron Man saved his life. He can’t have so many thoughts that his Spider suit would be gone back. So he, as a hero, did not know what to do. Eventually, he understood how to be a hero after suffering so much.

Although there are many similarities between heroes, they have many differences in terms of personality as it is a truism that everyone has their own personality features.

2.3 Cultural Features of Marvel Novels

2.3.1 Special Generation Culture

The special generation refers to a group of people who face the shattering of American Dream. Here is a brief introduction about the American Dream and its shattering.

The pursuit of liberty, equality and democracy are the core of American Dream. Today, over millions of people become citizens of the U.S each year. However, as a matter of fact, America embraced the dawn of “Golden Age” after World War I. That period had witnessed an unprecedented economic boom and material abundance. At the same time, people’s values and morals had collapsed and the traditional struggle of virtue crumpled (Chen Yuzhe, 2017). At that time, American society was filled with moral decadence and prevalent hedonism as well as relentless pursuit of money and wealth. Many people tried his best to gain wealth with morals and laws completely ignored by them. During that period, the nature of American Dream was greedy, selfish, cruel and mean, eroding its connotation. At that age, many people held the belief that only when they made lots of efforts could they achieve their own dream in America. Whereas, after the nature of American Dream altered, the dream began to shatter. In a novel-The Great Gatsby-, Gatsby failed to achieve his dream while succeeding in his aim at pursuing the fortune and entering the American upper class by unscrupulous means including illegal trading. In that case, the American Dream had inevitably shattered. At that time, the disparity between the poor and the rich had been widened. During the period, the American society was rife with racial discrimination, so black men were not possible to achieve their goal in America. Until now, the black men are treated very badly in America. Thus no matter how hard the black try, they will never succeed. As a result, the chaos and turbulence penetrated throughout the whole society in the U.S. Therefore that generation was called “The Lost Generation”.

When the American Dream shattered, people there were at a loss. So they hoped to find their own values to pursue their ultimate goal and realize their dream from the heroism and the roles of league of legends.

2.3.2 Heroic Complex

America is a country that admires superheroes and this kind of movie has a long history. In terms of its cultural characteristics, the United States lacks profound historical and cultural deposits, and the shaping of the nation and national spirit lacks historical support. Therefore, the creation of modern myths is a road suitable for the characteristics of the American times. It has become an important part of American society and culture to interpret the current reality through the shaping of superheroes.
Marvel’s forerunner may exist since the 1940s, but it was in the early 1960s that Marvel really set its course and began to develop, and that people awakened from the American Dream that pursues liberty, equality and democracy and began to shatter it. The American society fell into the chaos and turbulence and the Lost Generation appeared after American Dream shattered. Hence Marvel is characterized by realistic in line with the situation of the American society. More than 80 percent of its stories take place in New York City and its heroes are the outcasts. Marvel’s heroes are not perfect. They show us the flaws of our world: media exaggeration, government irresponsibility and the conflicts of class and race-epitomized by the X-Men. This group of discriminated heroes breaks the rules. Spider Man has always been a thorn in the media’s side and a killer in the opinion of the police. They live in a cruel world and have to do their best to survive and fight against evil. Marvel, due to its magic, space adventures and ninjas, is more realistic in that it is rooted in an ugly and grubby reality.

3. Effects of the Flexibility of Fighting Plots in Iron Man and Spider Man: Homecoming

Fighting plots are highlights of Marvel novels, containing rich connotations of cultures and values in the U.S. Only through translation can target readers have a deep understanding of the heroic complex and American social spirits and ideology. Here is a brief introduction about the effect of the flexibility of fighting plots in translation of Iron Man and Spider Man: Homecoming to promote further understanding of the culture and values in America so as to make people properly absorb them.

3.1 Revelation of the Theme of Marvel Novels

In Marvel novels, the common characteristics of the heroes are that they take up responsibility of saving the world at the risk of sacrificing himself. Every story, however, is different from others, but they are incarnated the hero to save the whole world when facing the crises (Shi Yingjuan, 2013). In Spider Man: Homecoming, Spider Man, for example, fought against the crimes through the amazing Spider-like abilities. But he changed his mind to become a hero that still helped people in his neighborhood under the guidance of the Iron Man because the people the Avengers could not help because they were too busy saving the world. In addition, the “routine” of the plot Marvel has often showcased its main characters’ luxurious lifestyles and cool technology through novels.

Marvel movies, as one of the main forms of American hero movies, have captured eyes of a large number of Chinese audiences with popular and high-quality consumer cultural elements such as wonderful plots, intense and exciting fighting scenes as well as dazzling special effects. These characteristics make it a powerful tool for the U.S to promote cultural imperialism in the context of globalization. American values such as universalism, individualism, crisis consciousness, conservatism, and white supremacy, are reflected in Marvel films and novels through translation. Spreading cultural and values behind Marvel novels and films through translation also conveys the political stance of the U.S towards China in order to achieve the aim of cultural assimilation.

3.2 Highlighting the American Social Spirits and Ideology

Translation enables people to touch different cultures and is a carrier to cultural exchanges. Translation equivalence includes not only lexical, syntactic and rhetorical equivalence, but also cultural equivalence that helps target readers to understand culture and values in line with the culture and customs of source language (Luo Yongzhou, 2017). The American values such as universalism, individualism and crisis consciousness are manifested in the translated text. American universalism is deeply rooted in Europe and gradually formed its own unique characteristics after a long period of development and evolution. Marvel movies and novels convey the universalism by endowing heroes with virtues that can be universally recognized by human beings. In two translated texts, Iron Man and Spider Man are heroes that are kind-hearted, courageous and magnanimous. Individualism lays emphasis on personal interest that is the most important factor in determining one’s behavior. Although the U.S is a sole superpower around the globe, its sense of crisis has been embedded in the memory since the Sept. 11 attacked. In recent years, as the comprehensive national strength and influence have been on the wane, this sense of crisis has become more intense.

4. Conclusion

As language reflects the culture and translation is a carrier to spreading culture, through translation people can know the main characters and culture and values behind Marvel novels well. Marvel Studios has brought main-
stream American values and political positions to China through films that entertain the masses and have had an impact on Chinese culture. The use of Chinese elements in the films and novels also conveys the political stance of the U.S towards China in order to achieve the aim of cultural assimilation. So all Chinese people do not blindly eulogize the heroic complex that actually contains rich connotations of cultures and values spread by the U.S. Chinese people should absorb their merits and see the purpose behind cultural output. Meanwhile they are supposed to inherit and promote the traditional Chinese culture to the entire world.

**References**


