
	Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences			
	ISSN: 2583-2034			
	Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci			
	Frequency: Monthly			
	Published By GSAR Publishers			
Journal Homepage Link: https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/				
Volume - 4	Issue - 3	March 2024	Total pages 191-195	DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.10807482

Accessibility in the Scenic Spots' Translation

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Abstract

The name of scenic spots is a branch of place names. It reflects the characteristic of local culture, geography, history and tradition, thinking patterns, and so on. All these features have the magic power of attracting people not only from her own country but also from foreign countries. To some extent, to pioneer tourism is a means to publicize a country's culture, which is also called local custom. When the translator decodes the names, he should strive for the balance between the principles of translation and the spread of culture, which will help tourists attain the purpose of comprehension of culture through their tours. In the translation of scenic spots, incorrect and unsuitable ones can be seen everywhere which seems funny. The transformed messages are often not standardize, which will make the reader confused. Moreover, because of the differences between China and western countries, translations related to tourism also expose some weak points. These phenomena not only have a bad effect on the tourism development of famous scenic spots but also do damage to China's international image. Translation of scenic spots plays an essential process in the communication of tourism, therefore; it can be applied into practice only under the condition of full consideration of without causing misunderstanding. For this reason, it is no doubt that importance of the translators' task can not be ignored, for it will directly effect the development of China's tourism. A good translation of scenic spots can not only explain the local characteristic but also reduce the difficulty of comprehension so as to enhance the accessibility of translation.

Key words: scenic spots; cultural differences; information transmission; accessibility

Article History

Received: 01- 03- 2024
Accepted: 09- 03- 2024
Published: 11- 03- 2024
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Introduction

In the tourism activities, accessibility refers firstly to the understanding that tour participants hold towards the foreign translation of local scenic text, an understanding that tourists hold towards the scenic names in psychological, cultural, and linguistic view; secondly, it is also a recognition that foreign tourists get towards to the scenic spots translations; and meanwhile a psychological reaction that foreign tourists hold and finally it could attain the purpose of tours.

As a standard to evaluate the quality of scenic spots translation, accessibility is the norm to decide whether the foreign tourists could comprehend the inner local characteristic and whose role is like the key to a door. Accessibility directly affects the image of local development. The very sight of scenic spots translation plays an important role for foreigners in understanding the information. Although differences lie in culture between China and Western

countries really bring big difficulties in transforming two cultures. Acclaimed as cross-linguistic, cross-cultural, and cross-social activities, the function of scenic spots translation is to introduce the reader, also tourists', the tour destination's geographical-history background, and cultural-characteristics and to draw tourists' interests of visiting, finally get the fruits of publicity of local culture. Therefore, in other words, the standard of accessibility is really making foreigners understand the translation, even the inner local custom.

I. Three Factors Hampering Proper Understanding of Tourist Translation

For the most part, the root of mistakes is the translator's neglect of linguistic and cultural difference between Chinese and English and neglect of the target readers' cultural psychology and esthetics. When a Chinese language translator turns a blind eye to the



thinking and aesthetics requirements imposed on English translation, it will naturally cause English readers' dislocation on the aesthetic sense. When this phenomenon is reflected in the form of language, the mistakes, including Chinglish, poor choice of words, language cumbersome, and culture blindness, can not be avoided. To solve the problem, we must have a clear idea regarding the factors that hamper proper understanding of translated tourist scenic spots.

The Han people's aesthetics is the fruits of Han people's particular social history and cultural tradition, memories of deep cultural psychology in the long living experience, both of which reflect the Chinese humanity thought and art aesthetic. On the contrary, in western history of esthetic, Aristotle, originator of philosophy, marked that the highest realm of aesthetics is that things should be replicated according to its original shape^[1]. Moreover, in the western literature, realism, romanticism, and naturalism were debated from this theory. Most ethnic esthetics find expression in drawing, westerners' inclination is to paint and their protagonists were naked men or women, especially, during the Renaissance Period. From the Western view, the naked creatures are pure and innocent, without a little sin. Even in modern times, most European women like to resort the measure of naked to against some government policies. However, in ancient China, most drawings were Chinese landscape paintings. For Chinese, a place mountains and rivers may have the atmosphere of divinity. This results in esthetic differences. Therefore, when these two complete different aesthetics come to be implied in the translation of scenic spots readers are bound to get the result of misunderstanding in the eyes of foreigners.

Firstly, the different background of Chinese and English culture produce two different types of linguistic style in the tourism text. Generally, English tourism texts are simplified and pragmatic in style; easy but well-illuminated in word choosing; which gives the readers a sense of accessibility. However, the Chinese emphasize neat contrast and beautiful wording. Now that the readers of English translation of scenic spots are foreigners, the major aim of translation is to make the foreigners have a deeper understanding to the related local features of nature, geography, culture, and customs. So, when one tries to translate scenic spots, he should pay attention to the translation's practicability and characteristics. Only based on the Chinese customs in Chinese to English translation, can the translation seem reasonable and do not violate the English people's esthetic standard and psychology. Besides, the long-formed stream of consciousness has effects on figuring out the true meaning of scenic spots. Western people are more romantic than Han people, which depict vividly the ceremony of marriage and honeymoon. Take the big cities, Shanghai and Suzhou as an example, many foreign scholars like to call them "Oriental Paris" and "Oriental Venice" separately. And Paris in France and Venice in Italy are famous for their art and romance.

There also exist many differences in the religious belief between Western countries and China, which are due to the different geographical features and living habits. Westerners go to the church just for confession, whereas Chinese go to the temple to

pray. Because we hold a desire and want it come true. To buy some incenses and fruits, and put them before the gods' portraits, then we pray our wishes with eyes closed and keep silence. For Westerners, to go to the church is to relieve themselves from spiritual sufferings, while Chinese people go to the temple for solving the sufferings in reality life. The church is built in center place of cities. The temple is located in woods and on mountains. From a broad perspective, the ultimate spiritual pursuit is completely different. So, foreigners feel confused when they come to visit our famous mountains and find a temple there. For example, Mt. Zhenwu (真武山) has been a famous Taoist mountain of southern Sichuan since ancient times. It gets its name from Zhenwu Temple on the mountains and attracts many inbound tourists every year. But the reason why those temples are located on mountains is not figured out easily by foreigners. This implies another requirement, namely, translators have a duty of decoding the Chinese traditional religious beliefs in the situation of one-to-one interpretation.

From the view of thinking pattern, the two cultures have two types. Western traditional philosophy stresses on the analytical thought, abstract thought, and rational thought. To handle the relationship between subjective and objective, westerners more often adopt the inclination of imitation and reproduction. We can safely draw the conclusion that the thinking patterns of Western traditional philosophy lay particular stress on the abstract reasoning and individual character. And, when patterns are shifted to the language, the following items, strict structure, logical and rational writing, concise and natural word choosing are the result of English. On the other side, the Chinese classic literature emphasizes on the delivering of state of mind and mood, preferring to describe one's mental state. These features make the Chinese expression more dexterous and give it a hazy beauty. There is a famous scenic spot in Nanjing, by the name of "Wuyi Alley"(乌衣巷). A household poem was announced here by Liu Yuxi, a Tang dynasty poet. "旧时王谢堂前燕，飞入寻常百姓家". Not only do foreigners feel confused about this couplet, but modern Chinese people have difficulty understanding the meaning of them. Wuyi Alley is a place where Liu once visited, and to his disappointment, he saw the gorgeous market had gone, and the royal families had ceased to exist; therefore, a feeling of sadness and lost born in poet's mind. This pattern is evidence that shows the transmission of two different thinking patterns should be given prominence to in the process of translation of scenic spots.

II. Necessity of Accessibility in Scenic Spots' Translation

Now that the purpose of accessibility is to help the tourists have a better recognition of scenic spots translation and it is translator's task to take into consideration the target readers' horizon of expectation, the language habits, cultural acceptability, and aesthetic characteristics. Accessibility is like a ladder that westerners could climb to achieve true understanding of Chinese customs. So, translator's role is like a carpenter's who is to make the ladder much nice and practical. Without this communicative



ladder, foreigners can not get the fruit of touring and China's tourism can not have a violent progress either. From this consideration, the influence of good translation can not be underestimated. With a deeper understanding of the nature of cultural differences, it is advisable that we put emphasis on accessibility in the translation of tourism scenic spots.

The splendid Chinese culture is embodied in rich and long-historical tour resources. Every day, a larger number of foreigners come to visit this old and civilized country and experience the exotic customs. The aim of introducing the scenic spots is to exhibit the local exquisite nature sceneries and outstanding artificial scenery to those potential tourists and to evoke readers' curiosity so as to spread culture and to promote the development of tourism industry. Besides, as is discussed in Chapter One, scenic spots translation is a cross-cultural communication. So, this type of communication should take the tourists' acceptance state into consideration. Because the various gaps between Chinese and foreigners, including differences in ethnic esthetics, culture, religious belief, and thinking patterns could not be handled easily by tourism translators. We are aware of the difficulty in the translation of scenic spots, and what we should do is to translate Chinese in a more proper way based on consideration of reader's standpoint. And, first of all, translator should make sense of the cognitive psychology of tourists. It is not a simple process of transmission but the spread of a nation's culture and the collision between communications and acceptance. The second one is the translation of language habits. In order to make the cross-cultural communication come to practice, translator should not only decode the tour information correctly but sketch out the translation more appealingly and convincingly. The third one is translation of aesthetic taste. Han people's aesthetic thought is formed on the basis of Han people's social condition and traditional culture is a mirror of Han people's humanity and art theory. So, the translator should interpret this inner meaning to tourists. The fourth one is translation of the cultural psychology. Chengang pointed out that translator must focus on the readers' acceptance and set the target language or target culture as direction.^[2] This standard is applied in many tourism translations whose purpose is to make tourists understand at the first sight. Only well-explained and reorganized English translation has the magic power of enlightening the tourists. Those four points are methods for attaining the aesthetics reception in the tourism scenic spots translation and reception the Chinese ancient war stories, poems, and other tourism sources. This is called the reader-centered theory of translation of tourist texts. The translation of scenic spot is extremely important. Wherever tourists visit, the first sight and feeling to a certain scenic spot are the signs' design and translation. The quality of a piece of translation will have an effect on the image of the scenic spot and the tourists' leisure mood. From this point of view, the work of translators is to attract the potential tourists.

The high-speed development of China's economy occupies the essential role in up forwarding the development of tourism. One of the efficient ways of advocating China's tour sources is the English translation of Chinese scenic spots names. Reasonably, the quality

of translation will directly affect the inbound tourists' understanding of China, and even the publicity of China's particular culture. Therefore, the other necessity of accessibility is to motivate the publicity of tourism. A good publicity of tourism calls for a good design and policy support. Although as a developing country, China attracts many inbound tourists every year and this tendency will go well in future. This is the attribution of the reform and opening up policy. On the other hand, the local government in provinces carries out many benefit designs to put the local characteristic tour forward. Among those hardware facilities, a good English translation is essential to foreigners.

Present and future travelers and tourists are different from the past; because they are seeking more advanced tourists' sites which better exemplifies the value of their money. They will not just be satisfied with vacation, or the appreciation of natural scenery, but expect to get the spirit of tourism activities and cultural edification baptism. Thus, if a tourist destination wants to compete in the international tourism market, start its own brands, and stand firm in the fierce competition, it must take the cultural values of the tourist destination as the core publicity factor to overseas tourists. Tourism translation should not just switch between languages, but should be the interpretation of cultural dimensions. To give readers a unique culture of the exotic infinitely fascinating phenomenon, and to stimulate their travel motivation, both of which should be born in translators' mind. The main purpose of Chinese-to-English translation is to show the Chinese local culture and to make China and China's culture understood by the people from other countries; and finally, to attain international communication. Besides, to improve the translation quality of tourism is an effective way to show accurate dissemination of Chinese culture and also a way to lift the cultural soft power.

III. Methods of Attaining Accessibility

Honestly speaking, there have been many methods proposed to search the suitable translation of scenic spots names. Some of them are valuable of being adopted and studied. Because the cross-cultural translation and publicity is not just a simple transmission between pure language, but the publicity and communication of cultural esthetics and values between source language and target language. It is incontestable that translators should consider the different points on bilingual translation. On the direction of full consideration of China culture's inner meaning and inbound tourists' acceptance habits, the translator could probably attain the effect of introducing the final purpose of tour. Name of scenic spots translation in tourist translation is a branch of tourist translation, which should be obeyed as a principle. Except for the main principle of tourist translation, alienation, and adaptation are two factors which encourage translators to make the transmission more acceptable. Besides, the three basic ways, abjection, literal translation with annotation, and literal translation plus free translation should not be underestimated.

Domesticating translation and foreignizing translation were issued in 1995 by an American scholar, L. Venuti. And these two terminologies were directly remarked in 1813 by a German

scholar, Schleirmacher who had discussed the unseparated relation between translating and understanding and had pointed out that there were two types, one to lead the reader close to the author, the other to lead the author close to the reader. ^[1] This version broke out the traditional boundaries of literal translation and free translation, having a significant impact on the later scholars.

Adaptation refers to setting the source language as a destination and, requiring the translator to move closer to the target language readers, to take the target language readers' accustomed expression to express the original content. ^[3] The approach is not good for the application of other countries' language, while with the high-speed development of global economy, countries have a more frequent communication in various fields. However, the disadvantage of adaptation is that it do harm to the source language and lost its original meaning and style. Adaptation is good for foreigners having a better acceptance psychology. As the influence of Britain and US on international affairs is increasing, mutual compatibility between different cultures is also growing. So, in order to keep up with the tide of globalization and international integration, in many cases, we apply the translation model of adaptation. Moreover, the adaptation sometimes gives reader a feeling of "exotic custom". For example, the female god in Buddhism, Guanyin(观音), whose sculpture is found in every Chinese temples, is translated into Guanyin keeping its original pronunciation.

Alienation refers to setting the target language as a destination and requiring the translator to get closer to the target language readers to take the target language readers' accustomed expression to express the original content. ^[3] Through the way of increasing the exotic cultural terms, and increasing the understanding of the target language readers to exotic culture, the acceptance of Chinese culture will go well. Alienation is good for keeping the original meaning of source language, which makes communication smoother. However, for those readers who are not familiar with source language and its cultures and there are some difficulties in understanding. Alienation translation model can limit largely the alien culture's assimilation and aggression on Chinese culture. This is a translation approach putting the reader at the center, which will help readers understand and accept exotic culture; it also is a process of localization.

Between two kinds of languages, there are many existing translating principles, but those rules can not solve all the problems in the process of transforming two languages. At this moment, translator should shift his attention to considering the flexibility in order to get a good understanding by inbound tourists. Firstly, based on the principles of "faithfulness, correctness, elegance", the situation of context should be accounted. Take the Nanjing Yuhua Stones for example, Yuhua Stones(雨花石) is a kind of smooth stones, with beautiful colors and lines produced in the area of Yuhuatai(雨花台) located in Nanjing. From this historical origin, the translation of "Rain Flower Stone" is obviously wrong. Then, the Yuhua stones have many shapes, except for round ones. The English word "pebble" means a small stone, and round by the action of water which is turned do not match Yuhua stones'

Chinese origin. Therefore, taking the history and geography factors into account, the most suitable word is "Yuhua Stones". Secondly, how to choose a suitable word is another subject. The Chinese words, Tingtai Louge(亭台楼阁) are seen at many places in China architecture. Pavilion is a light, sometimes ornamental roofed structure, used for amusement or shelter, such as Cuiguang Pavilion, situated at Mt Qingcheng. Colonnade(榭) is a structure composed of columns placed at regular intervals. The biggest difference between Ting and Xie is that the former one can provide shelter from rain, while the latter one can not. The third one is to try to transform the bicultural information. In some cases, translators not only need to think the surface's language transform, but also consider the convey message. Like the utterances of Wang Shuhuai, the translation can be divided into three levels. They are surface level, middle level and senior level.

Those principles above can be searched in many magazines and journals. They are like a guide route book for tourists also a book for translator not getting lost in the field of translating. Thus, it is safely to say that those big ones are essential but we need more detail ones when we are facing the practice of translation. Detail items should bear in our mind so as to make translations more standard and esthetic.

The first item is abjections. Qin Terra-lotta Warriors and Hourse Figurines situate in Xi'an, Shanxi province, and was built in the period of Qin Shihuang. But, foreigners do not make sense of Qin Shihuang. So, we translate it into English according to its Chinese meaning, and adding a short phrase to explain it. That is, Qin Shihuang, the first official emperor in Chinese history who unified China in 221BC. The second is literal translation with annotation. There are many samples to this item. Daguanyuan(Grand View Garden), Jiuzhaigou(Nine Village Gully), Baidicheng(White King City), and Xiangbishan(the Elephant trunk Hill). The last item is literal translation plus free translation. West lake (西湖) is a famous scenic spot in Hangzhou. "In heaven there is a paradise, on earth there are Suzhou and Hangzhou", these two lines of poems are the best representation of Hangzhou. And the West Lake has another name, which is Xizi which also originated from an ancient poem. Combining those factors, the more suitable translation of this lake is The Xizi Lake.

Conclusion

The poor quality of translation of scenic spots will make the transmission of information inaccurate, incomplete, or even wrong, which will bring a negative impact on tourism development and damage their images, reducing its attractiveness to tourists. And therefore it can not effectively spread Chinese culture. On the contrary, a good tourist English translation would serve to arouse the minds of foreign tourists and the yearning for beauty and help them enjoy the mellow charm of Chinese civilization through the ages. Moreover, this is another way of increasing our nation's cultural soft power. From a perspective of translator, the duty of them is to analyze the differences of Chinese and Western culture, flexibly using the various translation techniques to properly translate the tourist information, and focus on language and

cultural differences. And, with the continuing integration of Chinese and Western cultures, tourists travel ideas and knowledge structure are also constantly updating. Therefore, the guide must use a variety of ways to meet the tastes of foreign tourists, so that they truly feel the value of traveling. The goal of accessibility is to make tourism translators bear in mind that duty of rubbing wrong using, so as to meet the individual requirements of tourists, as well as to attain the purpose of tourism translation. The final goal is to pave the way for the Chinese tourism industry to head towards the international market.

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