

Analysis on the Tourism Translation in Regional Culture Transmission

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Abstract. This paper mainly analyzes mistranslation cases of scenic spots in the Greater Bay Area of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao and elaborates the influences of tourism translation on the Greater Bay Area from three aspects: foreign tourists, regional image and regional culture transmission technology. The research aims to draw more attention to the effect of tourism translation on the transmission and development of the regional culture, and on the establishment of regional image and reputation.

Introduction

As a project of building a world-class city cluster in China, Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area consists of its diverse regional cultures, such as the famous Guangfu culture, Hakka culture, Chaoshan culture, Hong Kong's and Macao's cultures, etc. Regional characteristics shown in these tourist attractions in a three-dimensional way draw global attention and international visitors. As a way of spreading regional cultures, the translation of the scenic spots plays a non-negligible part.

This paper analyses the influences of scenic spots translation on regional cultural transmission and explores to improve the language environment by comparing and analyzing the translation of public signs, tourist briefs and brochures as well as introductory information on the official websites of scenic spots and tourism in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. By efforts to optimize bi-linguistic quality of those tourist information in Greater Bay area, this research attaches significance to the inheritance and development of the regional cultural essence, and further promotes its international image and reputation.

Analysis on the Tourism Translation in the Greater Bay Area

Translation of scenic spots plays an important role in disseminating cultures of regional history, customs, traditions, etc. In the process of relevant corpus collection, comparison and analysis of Chinese original texts and English translation, mistranslation cases are found on the linguistic and cultural levels in some famous tourist attractions of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It will be analyzed and elaborated in this paper from three aspects including linguistic errors, confusion of titles, and mistranslation of historical events.

Linguistic Errors. The errors in translation of scenic spots are mainly reflected in four aspects: spelling errors, grammatical mistakes, improper use of words, and misrepresentation.

Spelling errors are frequently seen in those public signs and tourist brochures, which are likely to arouse misunderstanding and leave negative impression on foreign visitors. For example, in the floor index of the Shunde Museum, the word “时间隧道” is misinterpreted as “Time Tunel”, whose correct form is “Tunnel”. In the Painting and Calligraphy hall, “Calligraphy” is mistranslated to “Colligrarhy”. Some phrases like “spoken highly” in the introduction leaflet of scenic spots are easy to be misprinted as “spoken higly”. In the sentence of “Gold and sliver wares were valued as rteasures all the time in ancient times” in the introduction of ancient money, the wrong word “rteasures” should be corrected as “treasures”.

Spelling errors mostly caused by careless proofreading can be defined as a kind of work attitude

and can be avoided, while grammatical mistakes in those introductory material may reveal the degree of literacy and expertise. An example “建于清道光二十八年（1848）” is translated into “is build in the 28th year of the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty.” In this sentence, the word “建于” should be expressed with the past participle “built”. In an introduction of the wetland park in Daya Bay, the sentence “the park have become the citizens and tourists favorite place” violates the grammatical rule “subject-verb agreement” should be transferred to “the park has become the citizens and tourists favorite place”.

In addition, improper use of words may lead to foreign tourists’ miscomprehension and confusion to some extent. In the Chen Clan Ancestral Hall, “后西斋” is translated into “East Lounge, Back Row”. Besides, “导览手册” is translated to “promotional material” in some places. Originally, the word “promotional” is connected with advertising and means increasing the sales of a product, but in this context, it is not the suitable word to convey its pragmatic function. An acceptable translation of the word “导览手册” is “brochures” or “brochures for free”, which are provided in most tourist attractions for visitors’ convenience. Another example in a sentence “两广、福建等地有分布” is translated as “is cultivated in Guangxi, Guangxi and Fujian”. It is well known that “两广” means “Guangdong” and “Guangxi”, but in the translation, “Guangdong” is mistakenly translated into double “Guangxi” instead.

As to misrepresentation in the tourism translation, there are also some improper expressions with a ridiculous and embarrassing effect. A “Notice to Visitors” in Chen Clan Ancestral Hall, there is a word “清场” which is translated to “clear the galleries”. For most public people, it should be understood as the time to leave when it nearly comes to the closing time of some spots. However, this kind of literal translation of “clear the galleries” can not express the implied meaning of “清场”, as a result of which foreign tourists may still fall in the mist of closing time and miss the time. And also, in an introduction of “Ginkgo biloba” which means “白果” in Chinese, it is translated as “white fruit”. It is no doubt that this kind of “word-for-word translation” fails to express the original referential meaning, which possibly arouses confusion of denomination.

In this part, first two aspects of spelling errors and grammatical mistakes are mainly and probably caused by the attitude of carelessness and profession. If there are so many similar errors in the printing texts, the most difficulty for foreign tourists is to understand the translation of regional cultures. Therefore, it’s necessary to pay more attentions to rechecking the texts after translation and edit. In addition, it’s better to have those mistakes revised in time as soon as they are found. The another two aspects of improper use of words and misrepresentation are generally resulted from the translators’ misunderstanding of the specific information or their inadequate translation ability. Sometimes, the translators’ ambiguous awareness on the difference between Chinese and English may also incur similar mistakes.

Confusion of Proper Names. Polysemy and multiple expressions of sentences are very common phenomena in English. However, most foreign tourists are insufficient of knowledge about Chinese culture, diverse translation of a title with the same meaning in scenic spots is evidenced not to be an ideal and effective way for foreign visitors to familiarize themselves around in short time. Instead, It may become an obstacle for them to understand local cultures rather than play a flexible expression’s role.

Take the name of “顺德祠堂历史陈列展厅” as an example, it is translated into “Shunde Ancestral Hall History” in the floor index, and “Exhibition Hall of History” on the signboard, while in the entrance of the exhibition hall, it is translated into “Shunde Ancestral Temple History Exhibition Hall”. The same place with many different names confuses and misleads foreign tourists. In Guangzhou Guangxiao Temple, a word “瘞发塔” is translated to “The hair-inhumed pagoda”, but another translation “Hair Burying Tower” can also be found in a travel network. Those who are not familiar with this place and related culture are probably inclined to regard it as two irrelevant different places.

As a tool of information conveyance, translation should provide more convenience and guidance for public in the scenic spots. This kind of “flexible principle” of multiple versions for the same

titles is tantamount to “no principle”. For foreign tourists, the inconsistency of the translation of specific proper names only results in confusion of understanding. A unified translation for the same place name should be a basic principle for the translation of the specific names in scenic spots[1].

Mistranslation of Historical Event. The culture of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is also reflected in its historical events. History is solemn embodiment of a nation’s spirit, which needs to be carefully considered during translating.

China as a main field of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, many museums in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao area hold related memorial exhibition, but as to this war, its translation in most exhibition areas is presented as “anti-Japanese”. However, “anti-Japanese” refers to “against Japan” or “opposing Japanese”, which is not the point to meaning of “invasion”[2]. What’s more, the prefix “anti-” means “against” and “opposing” in English[3], and it is mostly used to oppose a certain system, a way, a group of people or events. When prefix “anti-” is used to make compounds, which is followed by nation or people, it often collocates with irrational, emotional events or behaviors, such as “anti- flag burning” and so on.

There are two kinds of translation methods of “抗日” for reference: “resistance against Japanese aggression” or “counter-Japanese”[2]. “Resistance” is defined as “an attack consists of fighting back against the people who have attacked you” in *Collins Dictionary*, That is, it has a connotation that the Japanese offended and Chinese resisted. In some official websites, such as XINHUANET and the Chinese Embassy, the word “resistance” is commonly adopted in most of English expressions when describing a war.

In the second translation, prefix “counter-” in *Collins Dictionary* is defined as “it is used to form words which refer to actions or activities that are intended to prevent other actions or activities or that respond to them”. This prefix also reflects that it is a legitimate defense, a legitimate counterattack in its own behavior, such as a word “counterattack”, it means “attack against”, “make an attack in return”[3]. Except for the translation of War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, other wars also need to be stated accurately and unbiasedly.

Influences of Tourism Translation on Regional Culture Transmission

Tourist translation is used as a tool for foreign visitors to understand the connotation of regional culture. In addition, along with the progress of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the propaganda translation of scenic spots sheds great influences on the regional cultural image, regional development and the progress of internationalization. The major influence falls in three aspects covering foreign tourists, regional image and regional culture transmission technology

The Influences on Foreign Tourists. It is a cross-cultural communication that foreigners travel to the Greater Bay Area, translation of scenic spots is beneficial to them. When they visit various scenic spots, they will experience the unique cultural style of exotic regions and increase the cognition of vitality of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Different scenic spots present dimensional cultural vision which means a visitor can know about a place of interest by its natural landscape, social construction and all kinds of exhibitions from different periods and fields. Take the regional museums as an example, it is a general outline of the region where foreign visitors can learn about the historical events, development history, regional customs and unique treasures in different periods.

In ancestral hall, foreign tourists can know about its developmental process through the translation of different architectural style. In the martyrs parks and memorial halls, distinct regional spirit is demonstrated like local people’s courage, perseverance and assiduousness in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

In some parks where the citizens often do exercises and sports, such as in Yuexiu Park and Liwan Lake Park, there are quite a lot of introductory boards written both in Chinese and English. At the same time, there are a great number of foreign visitors here in the parks. It can be seen that the translation of these scenic spots offer much convenience for foreign tourists to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the Greater Bay Area.

Whether it is a public notice, a guidebook or a website in English, all of these can help foreign visitors learn about the cultural characteristics of the Greater Bay Area. Through translation, foreign tourists can smoothly get knowledge about local history, taste the cultural essence of local cuisine, experience local customs and appreciate local natural scenery. And then they can recognize the unique charm of the Greater Bay Area, reshape the regional image in their mind and reevaluate its international place.

The Influences on Regional Image. Through the analysis of mistranslations of tourist attractions in the Greater Bay Area, it can be seen that these mistranslations undoubtedly cause incomprehensible inconvenience to foreign tourists. Inaccurate translation different from the original meaning in Chinese not only makes visitors misinterpret the original text, but also puts negative effects on the regional image.

“Foreigners’ impression on China relies on their knowledge and perceptions, especially their experience in a certain place in China”.[4] So does the image of China in their eyes. Thus, translation shows an indispensable effect on spreading the culture of the region.

The seemingly inadvertent mistranslations shed a certain negative impact on the regional image. A stereotypical impression may be formed in foreign travelers’ mind that the cultural development and education level keep inferior to other regions or countries. Therefore, efforts on careful edit and modification of those errors and mistakes at linguistic, syntactic and cultural levels have to be focused to improve visitors’ feelings and experience.

Besides, the translation of scenic spots is conducive to enhance the atmosphere of English learning and to promote the spread of regional culture. The citizens can introduce their regional culture to people from all around the world at schools, seminars, work places or other areas by collecting the translation from scenic spots or websites in which they are interested. Through this way, they can share and convey the connotation of regional culture, and even stimulate the enthusiasm in promoting the communication between the Greater Bay Area and the world, forge a positive regional image in international community.

The Influences on Regional Cultural Transmission Technology. To know about a regional culture, the function of tourism translation has always been demonstrated obviously and constantly. With the increasing number of tools and methods, it is an inevitable trend to introduce advanced scientific technology and devices in modern society such as smart-phones and portable transducers.

Nowadays, except for traditional guidebooks and introduction boards in scenic spots, electronic tour guide equipment with multilingual function (such as Mandarin, Cantonese, English, French, Japanese, Korean, etc.), tourist official website, automatic inquiry machines are available. All of these cutting-edge devices are offered for foreign tourists to obtain more information in scenic spots. What’s more, the QR code appear in a large number of scenic spots which is attached next to introduction board or in the brochures so that visitors can acquire more details about the regional cultures by scanning the code with their phones. Although QR code scanning greatly facilitates visitors to acquire guiding information and understand the regional culture, the quantity and quality of translated information provided are actually limited, which still affects traveling experience.

These new technologies have gradually appeared in many tourist attractions and change the way visitors acquire information and guidance. New technologies and devices changes travelling way and lead a self-service travelling trend, which particularly emphasizes the quality of tourism translation embedded in these softwares and devices.

Conclusion

Tourist translation plays a critical role in the regional culture transmission. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid the “arbitrariness” in the process of translation, and especially focus on “consistency” when translating a text about regional culture.

In addition, the translator must clearly understand that translation should not be simply satisfied to “beautify the language”, and obey the impulse to express “one’s own mind” and “one’s own voice”. It is essential to investigate foreign visitors, to understand their requirements and expectations, and then strive to help them understand China better.[5]

Translation has to keep pace with advanced times, thus correspondingly it is necessary to continuously modify the translation of the scenic spots in the cultural metropolis of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. It is a way to map its colorful regional culture to the world through various channels. It also offers a way for the visitors to gain more cultural information of the Greater Bay Area more intuitively and conveniently as well as feast them with the unique charm of the regional culture in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

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