Adaptation and Selection: Translating Tourism Texts from the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

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Abstract: Complexity of tourism texts and its corresponding linguistic features, complexity of communication motivations and purposes and complexity of engrained tourist destination culture and target tourist cognitive potential brings about difficulties for translators. Through the case study, this thesis has found out that three-dimension transformation strategies in the eco-translatology are instructive in translating tourism texts. To be specific, cultural dimension transformation can be employed to supplement the information so that readers are able to absorb the general and historical knowledge; linguistic dimension transformation can be used to improve the adaptability of the language form; in addition, communicative dimension transformation can enhance the building of a bridge between readers and the author to better serve the communicative purpose of tourism texts.

1. Introduction

Language exists everywhere in our society, however, in different forms. The role of language in tourism, one of the most influential industries in the world, is beyond doubt. It is a tool for tourism publicity and for practitioners to communicate with each other. It also reflects the distinctive local culture of these tourist destinations. Tourist flow brings about the convergence of various languages and cultural integration of tourist destinations while the linguistic conditions of tourist areas may affect their experience and satisfaction. Therefore, quality multi-linguistic environment construction is the premise to creating quality tourist destination image in the process of all-for-one tourism development.

In China, the languages used in tourist destinations are mainly Chinese and English. In some regions Japanese and Korean are incorporated. Tourism texts designed in minority areas appear in local ethnic languages. However, the tourism texts at present are mainly designed by tourism practitioners. Therefore, a large number of multilingual tourism texts are to some extents with "language errors, content distortion, cultural incompatibility, or aesthetic loss," reflecting the problems and limitations in the construction of multilingual tourism environment in China. To solve the above problems through effective strategies and tell Chinese stories well is the obligation of tourism translators.

2. Tourism Texts: Functions and Features

Tourism texts can be divided into written and oral by the media employed. The former includes travel literature, travel guide, itinerary, contract, advertisement, public signs, etc. The tour commentaries, face-to-face communications, negotiations and consultations between tour guides and tourists all apparently possess textual features of spoken discourse. Different text types and their linguistic features result in the complexity of genre types of tourism texts, but some common linguistic structures and discourse strategies also exist among different genres. This homogeneity and heterogeneity is the primary problem to be overcome in the translation of tourism texts.

Newmark (1980) divided text into three types according to the functions of language, namely expressive, informative and vocative. Tourism texts provide information about tourism destinations, directions for tourists, tour schedules, or function as contracts to guarantee the rights and interests of both parts. Due to the complexity of the tourism industry, which involves various fields such as

catering, housing, transportation and entertainment, most tourism texts are informative and descriptive, focusing on presenting local traditional culture and exotic folk customs. In the meanwhile, due to the communicative and marketing purpose of "arousing readers to tourist destinations", they are also "persuasive". The realization of this persuasive function must be based on sufficient information. Therefore, tourism texts are both informative and persuasive, with information as the premise and persuasion as the ultimate goal.

"When tourism texts are translated to promote tourism resources to Western audiences, it becomes a cross-language, cross-social, trans-time, cross-cultural and cross-psychological communication activities." Different communication goals correspond to different genres and communication strategies. For example, tourism contract, a contractual text, is used to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the subject of the act, with words formal, standardized, accurate, stylized, commonly employing compound sentences and the third person. The commentaries are colloquial, and their lexical, semantic and textual features should conform to the characteristics of oral texts.
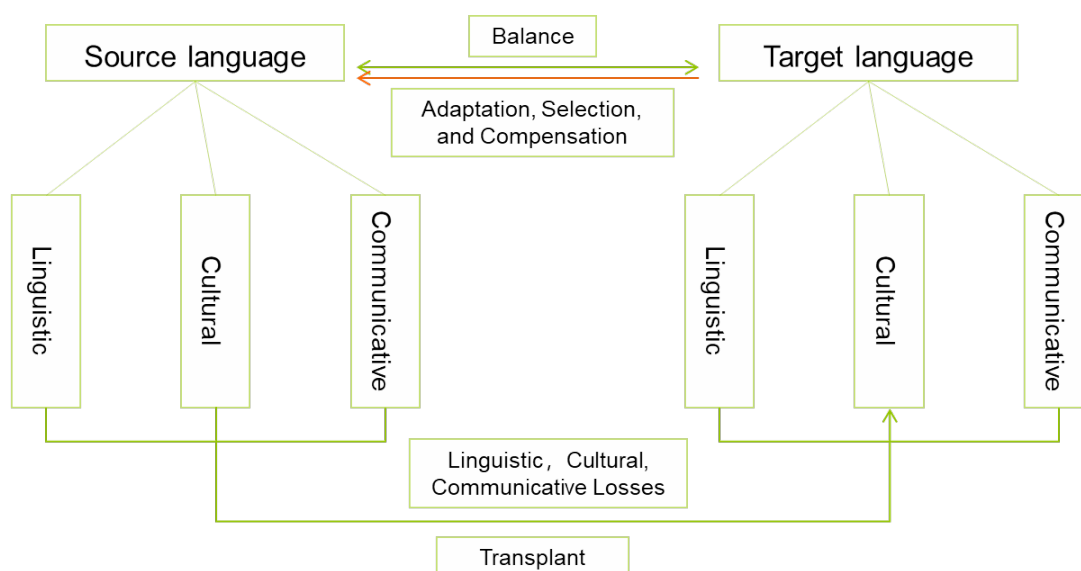
Tourism is essentially a cultural experience. The difference between the tourist's own source culture and the destination culture will inevitably lead to cultural gap and even cultural collision, which will be manifested as information loss in communication. Therefore effective communication must be sensitive to cultural sensibilities. This requires the translator to have rich knowledge of source culture and destination culture, to accurately interpret the large number of culture-loaded words embedded in tourism texts, and also to test the translator's ability to predict the cognitive potential of target readers.

The complexity of discourse genres, the accuracy of communication objectives, and the diversity of tourism culture are important factors affecting the practice of tourism translation, which are also the direct causes of low-quality translation in the construction of multilingual tourism environment in China. Aiming at the above three dimensions, namely linguistic, communicative and cultural, we discuss how to transform between target language and source language through effective adaptation and selection, tell the story of tourist destination well, and realize the communicative goal of tourist text.

3. Translation: Adaptation and Selection

Eco-translatology (Hu Weishen, 2004) is based on Darwin's theory of biological evolution, "the choice of things, the survival of the fittest". The source language and target language are seen as two intrinsically-balanced ecosystems. The linguistic, communicative and cultural elements within each ecosystem are in harmonious coexistence. Translators carry out translation activities through adaptation and choice of appropriate strategies in order to maintain linguistic, communicative and cultural balance between the two systems and coordinate the relationships between translators, readers and industries.

Translation from one language to another is actually the process of eco-reconstruction, in which the differences between source and target languages will inevitably lead to ecological imbalance. In order to keep the consistency, translators needs to selectively adapt to the target language through the three dimension transformations, and translators are in fact making efforts to compensate, reconstruct and perfect the target ecosystem, so that the source text and translation can be ecologically balanced (Geng Xiuping, 2017:127).

Source language ⟷ Target language

Balance

Adaptation, Selection, and Compensation

| Linguistic | Cultural | Communicative | | Linguistic | Cultural | Communicative |

Linguistic, Cultural, Communicative Losses

Transplant

3.1 Transplant: Linguistic Compensation

Different thinking patterns between Chinese and English result in different writing habits. Therefore, in the process of transplant from the source language to the target language, if the text is translated directly according to the literal meaning, text order and rhetorical characteristics, the balance within the target language ecosystem will be damaged. The information intended to be conveyed in source language cannot survive in target language. Then information loss is inevitable. Therefore, Hu Gengshen, founder of eco-translation, points out that good publicity texts should maintain the balance between "source and target languages in terms of vocabulary, syntax, style and even rhythm and tone" (Hu Gengshen, 2013:205).

The following parallel texts are about Chinese and English winery. According to German scholar Werlich (1982: 150), texts consist of five basic elements, namely opening, sequence, text structure, text units and ending.　We'll make a brief comparative analysis of the following texts.

Case in Chinese: "烟台张裕卡斯特酒庄位于烟台产区,于 2002 年百年张裕与法国卡斯特公司合作建成,是中国专业化国际酒庄.酒庄集葡萄酒酿造,旅游观光,休闲娱乐等多功能于一体.酒庄严格遵循国际高端酒庄建设的 3S 原则--大海(SEA),沙滩(SAND)和阳光(SUN),严格遵循法国传统工艺酿造高端酒庄酒."

Case in English:*Welcome to the home of the original English whisky. St George's is home to the English Whisky Co. This beautiful distillery was designed and built by the Nelstrop family for the specific purpose of producing the very finest English single malt whisky. Now the oldest whisky distillery in England, St George's Distillery is still family owned and run. We draw the purest, cleanest water from the Breckland aquifer deep beneath our distillery. Our whisky is batch made by our hand with no computers, filled into casks and then left to sleep until our distillers consider it perfect for bottling, which of course we do by hand – one bottle at a time."*

The above cases are both from the winery travel guide, the same genre. The contents are similar, which are mainly about geographical location, development history, specialty products and brewing techniques of the winery. As for communication functions, both is intended to stimulate travel behavior. "Topical order" is adopted in the above two texts to enhance the discourse development, to achieve coherence and cohesion. Throughout the Chinese text name of the winery or "酒庄 (winery)" the word is used to introduce the winery, creating a formal, professional, or even news-report-like tone. To avoid monotony, the English text highlights the use of words or phrases of the same semantic field, "St George's, this beautiful distillery, the oldest whisky distillery, St George's Distillery, We, Our whisky", using "synonymous sequence forms". This rhetorical technique, that is, "elegant variation", is often used in English discourse to avoid duplication and achieve coherence. St. George's text begins with a colloquial welcome opening and uses a large number of the most advanced and explicit phrases, such as original, very finest, oldest, purest,

cleanest, perfect, etc. The description is more subjective and persuasive, trying to shorten the social distance with tourists, but also has the characteristics of advertising discourse.

Therefore, in translation from Chinese to English, the translators should fully consider the linguistic features, rhetorical features, text order, text units and other elements of the English travel guide, so that the translation conforms to the reading and cognitive habits of English readers. For instance, appropriate slogans can be added in the beginning as needed. Sentence structure can be adjusted, using more simple sentences and parallel structures, less compound sentences and obscure words. Avoid using the word "Chateau" again and again throughout the text, and avoid subject repetition by using the upper and lower meaning words of the same semantic field by "elegant variation". The adaptive selection and selective adaptation of translators according to the linguistic features of English travel guide in the process of ecological reconstruction of the target text can make the translation conform to the reading habits of the target language readers, transmit the information more accurately, maintain linguistic balance of the target text, and finally achieve "survival of the best and the survival of the fittest".

3.2 Elaboration: Cultural Adaptation

Language reflects culture and is the medium of cultural exchange and communication. Tourism activities are the process of experiencing destination culture, and tourism translation as a bridge of communication is a premise for the realization of this cultural experience. Tourism text is rich in culture, forming an inherent harmonious cultural ecosystem. However, simple cultural elements for native tourists transplanted into the target language become an obstacle to target tourists. Therefore, in translation, translators should consider the loss of cultural meaning, and "pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations".

For example, with regard to the translation of Liang *Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai*, Shi Yanhua, an English expert at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, mentioned in a lecture on "Sixty Years of Diplomatic Translation" in 2009, the story was translated as *The Story of Romeo and Juliet in China*" following the instructions of Premier Zhou Enlai. By analogy with the familiar literary stories of foreign tourists, familiar cultural factors in the target language are selected to replace the term so that the target readers quickly understand the connotation of this legendary story, which is an effective strategy to solve the communication barrier caused by cultural differences.

In addition to analogy, translators can explain these cultural factors reasonably according to different contexts to solve the cultural losses caused by text transplant. For example, Chinese cuisine translation. Chinese cuisine has always been popular with tourists from all over the world. Chinese cuisine is an important part of Chinese culture. The English translation of dishes is mainly practical.

Owing to the far-reaching international influence of China, some traditional cuisines have become well known to foreigners, such as Kungpo Chicken, Jiaozi and Tofu. For some dishes with rich historical connotations, literal translation are commonly used with implied meaning elaborated, such as the famous dish in Tai'an "Three Beauty" Tofu. The origin of the dish is related to ancient Chinese legends. Translation can be adapted to specific contexts. "Three beauties" are the three local specialties in Tai'an, "Chinese cabbage, tofu, water". If permitted, the translator, especially the tour guide can tell the folk stories to tourists. Thus, through "elaboration", culture is conveyed.

3.3 Empathy: Communicative Selection

In essence, tourism translation is a cross-language, cross-cultural communicative activity. Through translation, information and culture is transmitted, the communicative intention realized. The target readers are supposed to get similar experience and feeling as native readers. In short, the translator should give full consideration to the communicative intention of the source language in the process of translation, paying attention to whether the communicative intentions in the source language is effectively transmitted and embodied in the translated text.

When it comes to the successful case of communicative balance in translation, we have to mention the tourism slogan of Guilin, "桂林山水甲天下"(The landscape in Guilin is the best in the

world.). Speaking of genre, slogans are tourism advertising texts. In advertising texts, "The subject of discourse influences the object of communication to form a certain attitude and take certain actions through the choice of discourse and to obtain the success of communication (Yue Zhongsheng, 2013:72)". Professor Wu Weixiong's translation, "East or West, Guilin Landscape is best", has been acknowledged by Guilin Municipal Government and many translators. Wu Weixiong (2007:2) said of his translation experience: "What inspired me is the English proverb 'East or West, home is best'."

"天下(in the world)" is commonly used in travel texts, such as "天下第一泉(NO 1 spring in the world)", "天下第一楼(NO 1 Pavilion in the world)" and so on. The exact meaning of "天下", whether it refers to China or the world, depends on specific circumstances. The choice of "East or west" avoids geographical limitations, and subsequently avoids cognitive differences and cultural conflicts. In the meanwhile the communicative intention of constructing beautiful destination image of Guilin is realized. Replacing "home" in the English proverb with "Guilin Landscape", English-speaking readers may associate the slogan with the warmth of "home" and social distance with tourists are thus shortened by empathy.

4. Conclusion

In view of the linguistic, cultural and communicative complexity of tourism text, in order to achieve the goal of communication, the translator makes adaptive and selective transformation in the text, rebuilds an ecological environment suitable for the source language in the target language ecosystem and adapts the tourism text to the new ecological environment. Tourism translation is still in the stage of continuous improvement and development. With the increasing demand for tourism translation, the ecological translation studies will continue to guide the practice of tourism translation, optimize tourism expressions, and ultimately enhance the attraction of tourist destinations to foreign tourists, to help construct tourist destination brand image and promote regional economic development.

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