

Original Paper

An Analysis on the English Translation Strategies for the Publicity Texts of Guilin Red Tourism Culture from the Perspective of Eco-translatology

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the international communication needs of Guilin red tourism culture in the context of globalization. Taking the theory of Eco-translatology, it deeply analyzes the practical dilemmas and optimization strategies for the English translation of the publicity texts of Guilin red tourism culture. The English translation of its publicity materials is hindered by problems in the dimensions of language, culture, and communication. On the one hand, red culture is highly local and historical, and traditional translation methods find it difficult to balance the requirements of language, culture, and communication. On the other hand, Guilin's red tourism texts have difficulties in vocabulary, sentence patterns, and grammar. There is insufficient interpretation of cultural connotations, weak presentation of regional characteristics, vague audience positioning, and a lack of interactivity. Eco-translatology likens translation to an ecosystem, with the core of dynamic adaptive selection and transformation, which brings ideas for solving these problems. Emphasizing dynamic adaptive selection and transformation in translation, this paper accordingly puts forward optimization suggestions for English translation from the linguistic dimension, cultural dimension, and communicative dimension, striving to improve the quality of the English translation of Guilin red tourism culture publicity texts and facilitating its cross-cultural dissemination and inheritance.

Keywords

Eco-translatology, Red Tourism Culture, Publicity Texts, English Translation Strategies

1. Introduction

In the contemporary society, red tourism is booming. Relying on its unique red resources, Guilin is committed to creating characteristic red tourism routes and scenic spots, attracting a large number of

domestic tourists to follow the revolutionary footprints and draw spiritual strength. At the same time, the international tourism market demand for cultural tourism with Chinese characteristics is increasingly strong, and more and more foreign tourists are eager to have a deep understanding of the history of the Chinese revolution and feel the charm of Oriental red culture. In this context, the publicity work of Guilin red tourism culture is very important, and the English translation of the publicity text is the key link between Guilin red tourism and the international audience. However, at the present, the English translation of Guilin red tourism culture publicity text is facing many difficulties. On the one hand, red culture is highly local and historical, containing a large number of characteristic vocabularies, complex sentence structures and symbolic elements with profound cultural connotations, making the translation extremely challenging. On the other hand, traditional translation methods can hardly fully meet the requirements of language expression, cultural transmission and communicative interaction. It often leads to problems such as misinterpretation of words, loss of culture and weak audience orientation in the translated texts, which fail to effectively attract international tourists and hinder the global dissemination of Guilin's red tourism culture. As an emerging translation theory, Eco-translatology emphasizes the translator's adaptation and selection of the translation ecological environment. It provides new ideas for translation practice from multiple perspectives such as language, culture and communication, bringing hope for solving the problems in the English translation of Guilin's red tourism culture publicity texts.

2. Theoretical Basis

Ecological translation (Eco-translatology) is proposed by a famous professor at Tsinghua University, Hu Gengshen. This pioneering theory ingeniously analogizes translation activities to an organic ecosystem, skillfully incorporating key elements such as the source text, the translator, and the target audience, making them interrelated and influencing each other to jointly construct the ecological pattern of translation. The core concept of Eco-translatology emphasizes the dynamic adaptive selection and transformation in the translation process. During this process, translators need to select translation strategies that are suitable for the differences or changes in the translation ecological environment and continuously make adaptive selections during translation. This means that the translator should not only pay attention to the content and meaning of the original text, but also consider the culture and social background of the target language and the needs and expectations of the readers, so as to realize the best adaptability of the translation.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

- 1) What are the specific difficulties in the English translation of the publicity texts of Guilin red tourism culture?
- 2) How does the ecological translation theory provide new ideas for the English translation of Guilin

red tourism culture publicity text?

3.2 Research Objects

The official publicity materials of various red tourism scenic spots in Guilin, including scenic spot introduction brochures, tour guide scripts, and the English versions of website content. These texts serve as a window for directly spreading red tourism culture to international tourists and reflect the actual level of current English translations.

The tourist feedback information collected from on-site visits to red tourism scenic spots in Guilin, covering the on-site evaluations of international tourists, English comments on online travel platforms, and the results of questionnaires. By understanding the actual feelings of tourists, the problems in the communicative effects of the English-translated texts can be accurately grasped.

4. Results and Discussions

The English translation of the publicity of Guilin's red tourism culture faces numerous difficulties, which are mainly reflected in the language level, the cultural level and the communicative level.

4.1 At the Vocabulary Level

Firstly, in terms of the language level, the main issue is the rich and complex characteristic vocabulary. Texts of Guilin's red tourism are filled with a large number of words with distinct characteristics of the era and region. Besides common professional military and political terms, for example, “桂北民团”, which is associated with the organizational structure, personnel composition of local armed forces in a specific period and their complex roles in the revolutionary situation. Simply translating it as “Guibei Militia” is far from sufficient to convey these in-depth information. There are also words reflecting the folk life and production modes at that time. For instance, “互助组”, if directly translated as “Mutual Aid Group”, foreign readers would have no idea that this was a self-organized mutual assistance organization formed by farmers during the Agrarian Revolution period to overcome production difficulties and resist foreign enemies, embodying the united spirit of the people. Another example is “桂北抗日义勇军”, if merely translated as “Guibei Anti-Japanese Volunteer Army”, it would be very difficult for foreign tourists to understand its formation background, personnel composition and the heroic deeds of fighting against the Japanese invaders in the Guibei region, and the information transmission would be greatly reduced. Secondly, many words have unique polysemous and metaphorical meanings in the red cultural context. For example, the word “火种” usually means something that can start a fire in a general sense. However, in the red culture, it often metaphorically refers to the spark of revolution. For instance, in the phrase “播撒革命的火种”, if it is translated as “spread the fire seeds of revolution”, it not only sounds stiff but also loses the sense of hope and strength carried by the metaphor. The correct translation requires a deep understanding of the context to convey the precise meaning. Similarly, the word “堡垒” means a military defense work in a general sense. But when it is used to describe Party organizations or revolutionary base areas, it implies firmness and reliability. For example, for the phrase “红色堡垒村”, when translating, one needs to

make a clever choice based on the context to avoid ambiguity.

4.2 At the Sentence Level

Chinese red tourism materials often contain long and difficult sentences with multiple layers of modification and complex logical nesting. For example, the sentence “在那场决定生死存亡的湘江战役中，英勇无畏的红军战士们，在枪林弹雨下，凭借着顽强的斗志和对革命的忠诚，冲破了敌人精心布置的多重封锁线，为后续部队开辟了一条血路，谱写了一曲可歌可泣的英雄赞歌” is directly translated as “In the life-and-death Battle of Xiangjiang River, the brave Red Army soldiers, under the hail of bullets, with tenacious fighting spirit and loyalty to the revolution, broke through the multiple blockades carefully arranged by the enemy, opened up a bloody path for the following troops and composed a heroic and moving ode”. This translation is long and wordy, drowning the key actions and logical relationships, making it difficult for readers to quickly clarify the battle process and the connections between various elements. It should be adjusted to “In the life-and-death Battle of Xiangjiang River, under the hail of bullets, the brave Red Army soldiers, driven by their tenacious fighting spirit and loyalty to the revolution, managed to break through the enemy’s elaborate blockades. This cleared the way for the following troops and led to the creation of a heroic and moving ode”. Through reasonable splitting and recombination, the core actions and causal relationships are highlighted, making the translation logically clear and conforming to English reading habits. At the same time, influenced by Chinese expression habits, red tourism texts often contain run-on sentences. Short sentences rely on semantic associations and lack explicit conjunctions. For example, the sentence “战士们翻过了一座又一座大山，渡过了一条又一条河流，克服了饥饿、寒冷与伤病，终于到达了目的地” is translated as “Soldiers climbed over one mountain after another, crossed one river after another, overcame hunger, cold and injuries, and finally reached the destination”. This English translation lacks coherence when read. It should be optimized to “Soldiers climbed over one mountain after another and crossed one river after another. Despite hunger, cold and injuries, they finally reached the destination”. By adding conjunctions to enhance coherence, it becomes easier for readers to understand the action logic.

4.3 At the Cultural Level

In the publicity of Guilin’s red tourism, many heroic deeds and revolutionary spirits often fail to have their connotations deeply explored during English translation. Take the example of “陈光烈士狱中坚贞不屈”. If it is only translated as “Martyr Chen Guang remained unyielding in prison”, foreign audiences would have no idea about the background of the brutal torture, coercion and bribery in the prison at that time, and it would be difficult for them to appreciate the great spirit of the martyr who adhered to his beliefs and faced death unflinchingly. Supplementary details are needed, such as “Martyr Chen Guang, in the face of brutal torture and alluring bribes in prison, remained unyielding, sticking firmly to his beliefs and showing no fear of death”. Let the spiritual power penetrate through the text. Similarly, for “湘江战役”, merely translating it as “Battle of Xiangjiang River” is far from enough. It was a crucial turning point in the history of the Chinese revolution. The battle was extremely tragic,

and the Red Army soldiers demonstrated earth-shattering and soul-stirring heroic spirit. If these in-depth information are not incorporated into the translation through annotations or detailed background introductions, foreign tourists simply cannot appreciate its significant historical value. That is because that red culture frequently quotes historical allusions. For example, the phrase “破釜沉舟” is used to depict the Red Army’s combat determination. If it is directly translated as “break the cauldrons and sink the boats” without any further explanation, Western readers will struggle to understand that it originated from the ancient Chinese Battle of Julu and conveys the meaning of cutting off all retreats and forging ahead bravely. Therefore, annotations about the background of this allusion should be added to facilitate better understanding.

Besides the connotations above, there exist rigid integration of natural landscapes and revolutionary history. Guilin is renowned for its magnificent mountains and waters, and many local red scenic spots interact harmoniously with the natural landscape. However, when translating publicity texts, the mountains and waters are often merely mentioned, without deeply integrating the natural beauty with the revolutionary history. For instance, the sentence “在风景秀丽的猫儿山，红军战士曾在此休整” is translated as “On the beautiful Mao’er Mountain, Red Army soldiers once rested here”. This translation fails to portray the unique features of Mao’er Mountain, such as its grotesque peaks and rocks and the sea of clouds, preventing foreign tourists from perceiving the profound significance behind the Red Army’s choice to rest there, like harmonious coexistence with nature and taking advantage of the terrain. Thus, more detailed descriptions of the natural landscape should be incorporated to strengthen the sense of integration. Another example is “在桂林如画的山水间，隐藏着多处红色战斗遗址” which, if translated as “Many red battle sites are hidden in the picturesque scenery of Guilin”, fails to showcase the unique karst landform beauty of Guilin’s mountains and waters. Geographical feature descriptions need to be added to revive the charm of the regional culture. Lastly, the folk customs of ethnic minorities in Guilin are rich and colorful, and they interact frequently with the red culture. For example, the Grand Songs of the Dong ethnic group were used to boost morale and transmit information. If the English translation only mentions “Dong ethnic group’s songs helped the Red Army” without introducing the characteristics of the Dong ethnic group’s Grand Songs, such as multi-voice chorus, being unaccompanied, the implied meanings of the lyrics, and how they played a unique role during the breaks of battles, the charm of the folk culture will be greatly diminished. It is necessary to provide detailed explanations to showcase the beauty of the intertwined multiple cultures. Another example is the sentence “每逢春节，桂林百姓就会按照习俗，为红军战士送上自家制作的美食”，which is translated as “Every Spring Festival, the people in Guilin would send homemade food to the Red Army soldiers according to the custom”. Further explanations about the content of the custom are needed to display the folk customs and prevent cultural discount. As for “桂林彩调”, when describing its combination with red propaganda, if it is translated as “Guilin Caidiao was combined with red propaganda”, foreign tourists will neither know what Caidiao is nor understand the unique charm of this combination. It is essential to supplement the artistic form, performance style of Caidiao

and its role in boosting morale and uniting people at that time.

4.4 At the Communicative Level

From the perspective aspects of audience positioning, tourists of different age groups have diverse expectations for Guilin's red tourism. Young tourists pursue dynamic and highly technological experiences, hoping to learn about revolutionary stories through virtual reality and interactive games. Middle-aged and elderly tourists, on the other hand, are more inclined towards traditional explanations and on-site commemorative activities to explore historical details in depth. If the English-translated publicity texts are generalized and do not optimize the content according to age differences, for example, uniformly adopting a text-intensive and solemn narrative style, young tourists are likely to find it boring, while middle-aged and elderly tourists may feel that the information is superficial and unable to meet their needs.

From the perspective aspects of cultural background differences, international tourists come from different cultural circles and have significantly different levels of acceptance and ways of understanding red culture. European and American tourists, influenced by individualistic and pragmatic cultures, require more guidance to understand the spirit of collectivist sacrifice and revolutionary ideals and beliefs. Although tourists from neighboring Asian countries share certain cultural commonalities, there are still differences in historical cognition and ideology. If the English-translated texts do not adapt to local conditions, for example, directly applying domestic publicity routines to European and American tourists, misunderstandings are likely to occur, reducing the attractiveness.

From the perspective aspects of information transmission, most of the English-translated publicity materials for Guilin's red tourism are static texts that unidirectionally introduce scenic spots and deeds to tourists, lacking interactive elements. For example, when introducing a certain memorial hall, only the exhibited items and historical events are listed, without setting up question-asking and thinking-guiding sections. For instance, "Do you know the thrilling story hidden behind this cultural relic? Come and explore in the hall". Tourists passively receive information with low participation, making it difficult to arouse their curiosity and desire for exploration, thus hindering the improvement of the international dissemination effect of Guilin's red tourism culture.

From the perspective aspects of social communication, in the era of social media, the English translation of external publicity has not fully utilized the characteristics of social platforms. The published content is mostly simple pictures and texts, without encouraging users to comment, share, and participate in topic discussions. For example, "Embark on a Guilin red tour to experience a different kind of historical shock. Come and experience it", without mentioning "Share your travel photos and insights to let more people feel the charm of Chinese red culture", which is not conducive to word-of-mouth communication and topic fermentation, limiting the expansion of international influence.

5. Conclusion

In the current context of globalization and increasingly frequent cultural exchanges, Guilin's red tourism culture, as the bearer of China's unique historical memories and spiritual symbols, has an urgent need to enter the international market and attract global tourists. The quality of the English translation of its publicity texts directly affects the dissemination effect. Eco-translatology provides a comprehensive and in-depth guiding framework for the English translation of Guilin's red tourism culture publicity texts. By precisely overcoming the difficulties in the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions and optimizing the translation strategies, it is expected that Guilin's red tourism culture will shine brightly on the international stage, attracting more global attention and achieving in-depth cross-cultural exchanges and inheritance.

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