Original Paper

English to Malay Translation of Culture-Specific Items in Selected Penang Tourist Brochures

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Abstract

Translation of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) is one of the challenges translators face in choosing the appropriate strategies and finding solutions to the translation problems. In this descriptive study four tourist brochures that promoted the UNESCO-heritage Penang Island in Malaysia were analysed. The texts were selected purposefully from Malaysian tourist websites. Based on Newmark's (1988) model, the CSIs were categorised, and the problems in translation process were described after employing Venuti's domestication and foreignisation strategies for translating the items. Overall, 76 CSIs were identified in the four brochures among which the most frequent items were Material Culture (65%) with the subcategories of House/City (39%), Food (10%), Transport (15%), and Traditional Weapons (1%). Ecology category built up 13% of the whole items where 5% were related to Fauna and Geographical features, 3% to Flora and 5% to Geographical location. CSIs related to the subcategory of Artistic Thing and Craft formed 8% of the total items. The CSIs related to Social Culture consisted of 13%, including Work (11%), Names and Terms of Address (1%), and Kinship (1%). One outstanding problem during the translation process was finding dynamic equivalence for the words or phrases in the target language (Malay). The findings revealed that domestication strategy and formal equivalence is more appropriate for translating the tourist brochures from English to Malay, which may enhance understanding of linguistically accurate and culturally interesting translation.

Keywords

culture-specific items, Penang, foreignisation, domestication, translation strategies, tourist brochures

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the vibrant industries in the world which has progressively been boosting Asian economies and impacts other facets of social life (Skibitska, 2015). It is a multifaceted phenomenon with psychological, sociological and cultural scopes (Urry, 2002) and a "multi-sectorial activity that requires inputs of an economic, social, cultural and environmental natures" (Mosbah & Al Khuja, 2014). Tourism, as one of the most important active and global industries, affects different facets of social life, such as language and translation. Travel and tourism texts could conceptually impact and lead "perception, ideas, values, and actions" (Francesconi, 2014, p. 3) which are related to culture. Culture is described as the life style and its manifestations specific to a community that uses a language as a means of expression (Newmark, 1988).

Tourism generates employment directly and indirectly with the growth in other related industries and contributes tremendously to the multicultural Malaysia's economy and Malaysians from different ethnicities are in constant engagements with foreigners who come to the country for different purposes, such as work, and visit. For example, the five top tourist activities in Penang were experiencing local food (46.3%), Sightseeing in the city (36.4%), visiting historical sites (23.1%), shopping (15.6%), and visiting museum/art gallery (12.6%) (*Penang Tourist Survey*, 2016).

Language and translation could play crucial role in promoting the communication between and within cultures. Translation facilitates cross-cultural communication where translators and interpreters are the mediators of communication between cultures. Translation is a communicative process in which a message is conveyed across linguistic and cultural borders (Duff, 1989). Moreover, one of the communication platforms in tourism is the tourist texts, such as brochures, guides, manuals. Since most tourist brochures are bilingual or multilingual, the intercultural aspects of translation process in tourist brochures could enable translators to solve translation problems that they might encounter during translation, such as words that carry specific certain culture specific terms which require understanding (Nord, 1991). The significance of an interdisciplinary research in translation of tourist texts should not be overlooked considering the rapid growth of international tourism as communication is a key factor in tourism growth and the different parties, such as tourism professionals, tourists and local population "tourees" play an important role in the professional development of tourism communication (Dann, 2012).

Tourism industry is extensively associated with persuasive linguistic practices, particularly in aiming at the general public (Maci, 2010). In this regard, print and online social media and advertisements that include tourist brochures support tourism to promote a location as a tourist hub. Tourist brochures not only include information about a location, sites, accommodations, but also provide cultural information such as costumes and traditions as every cultural community have multi-level moral values, hierarchisations, and conventions, ceremonies (Rezaei & Kuhi, 2014). Therefore, tourist guidebooks and brochures should be user friendly and easily understandable in terms of language and content.

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According to Luonua (2013) a tourist brochure should attract the visitors, specifically foreign visitors to the region and support the livelihood of local people.

Penang tourist brochures are mostly in English, as English language has a historically prestigious status in Penang and has been used in Malaysia for centuries. Through translation, besides identifying the cultural features and items in a text, a translator interprets the text to facilitate understanding the cultural differences. One of the dimensions in translation research that has been less explored is the translation and analysis of the translated tourist texts such as brochures that reflect various cultural backgrounds.

1.1 Language of Tourism

Dann (2012) argues that raising awareness on the opportunities for exploring dialogue and trialogue in "the language of tourism", and constituting the important theoretical basis of those opportunities, are crucial factors in implementing a successive series of three models to cover the "transition from monologue to more open forms of communication" (p. 62).

Table 1. The Language of Tourism as Monologue (Dann, 2012, p. 62)

ADDRESSEE	S E N D E R INDUSTRY	TOURISTS	TOUREES
INDUSTRY	(1) In-house training sessions; Standardised tourism degree programmes	(2) Complaints; Guest questionnaires; Servqual inquiries	(3) Local newspapers and magazines; Local radio and television
TOURISTS	(4) Traditional media of the language of tourism: e.g., brochures, guidebooks, travelogues	(5) Lectures; Slide shows	(6) Unofficial notices; Graffiti
TOUREES	(7) A priori surveys	(8) Orders	(9) Instructions

As illustrated by Dan (2012) the distinction between dialogue and monologue is in the collective role that the three main players have in tourism play (Table 2). In other words, tourist and touree, are no longer independent and deemed as either senders or addressees, and they have accumulative roles happening at the same time or one after another.

Table 2. The Language of Tourism as Dialogue (Dann, 2012, p. 64)

SENDER AND ADDRESSEE	S E N D E R AND A D D R E S S E E		
	INDUSTRY	TOURISTS	TOUREES
INDUSTRY	(1) Advertising/Brain storming; In-house discussion of analysed data	(2) As (4)	As (7)
TOURISTS	(4) Telephone; Letter; Internet feedback sites; Online guidebook forums; Communication with holiday reps; TV consumer programmes	(5) Conversations; Consultations; Word-of-Web: overheards; confessions; blogs; emails; word-of-mouth accounts of experiences; Virtual tourist communities	(6) As (8)
TOUREES	(7) Focus groups; Local print media; Local radio and TV with responses; A posteriori survey	(8) Home-stays; Tribal TV; Jungle tours; Marginal people, e.g., beachboys	(9) Children's essays; Children's drawings

Table 3 shows the Language of Tourism as Trialogue and the relationship between senders and addressee, industry, tourists, and tourees.

Table 3. The Language of Tourism as Trialogue (Dann, 2012, p. 67)

SENDER AND ADDRESSEE	S E N D E R AND A D D R E S S E E I N I T I A T O R		
	INDUSTRY	TOURIST	TOUREE
INDUSTRY TOURISTS TOUREES	(1) Meet the people	(2) Volunteer tourism	(3) Grass route tours; Tsunami; Community informatics

1.2 Translation of Tourist Texts

Several studies were carried out on translation of tourist texts. Duff (1981), Newmark (1993), and Snell-Hornby (1999) investigated the quality of translation in the tourism sector of economy and concluded that the overall quality of the translations was not satisfactory. Cappelli (2006), Gotti (2006), Mocini (2005), and Nigro (2006) showed that the language of tourism can be the expert discourse. Pierini

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(2007) studied the quality of translation of online tourist texts. Sanning (2010) proposed neutralizing strategy, versus domesticating and foreignizing strategies. Skibitska (2013) concluded that adequate translation favours complete translation with pragmatic adaptation while partial translation lowers the efficiency the translation. In 2015, Skibitska found no correlation between the examples of proper translation and mistakes as the average ratio of translation mistakes in tourist texts were related to mistranslations (37.6%), Misinterpretations (19.2%), Nontranslations (grave) (22.5%), Nontranslations (easy) (20.7%).

1.3 Translation of Culture-Specific Items

Translators attempt to categorise cultural items to reduce the problems of translating Culture-Specific Items (CSIs). This can provide a guideline to classify the information more efficiently (Yaqubi, Tahir, & Amini, 2018).

Translation and culture are related in terms of text, culture and person. CSIs model looks into the translation strategies in translating CSIs in cultural texts (Newmark, 1988). Narváez and Zambrana's (2014) study on CSIs in tourist promotion campaigns highlighted the similar challenges in translating CSIs, where in addition to objects, concepts were found problematic. Newmark (1988) categorised the CSIs into five types: 1) ecology, which contains fauna, flora, and geographical features; 2) material culture, which contains clothes, food, house/city, transports, and traditional weapons; 3) social culture, which contains work, leisure, names and terms of address and kinship; 4) social organisation, which consists of social administration, religion, artistic thing, craft; and 5) habits and gestures. Newmark's classification could be used to identify and solve the problems that translators face in term of language and culture. Translators can choose different approaches and methods for translation. For example, Nida and Taber (1969) believed that "translating consists of reproducing in the near natural equivalent receptor language of the source-language message, first in meaning and second in terms of style" (p. 12). In other words, a translator needs to select the closest meaning and style when translating a text.

Since tourist brochures are mainly concerned with cultural aspects and the target audience is the key actor, translators need to choose suitable strategies to fill in the cultural gaps considering different types of problems encountered in the text. For instance, Bryce, MacLaren, and O'Gorman (2013) found that in translating tourist brochures literal translation is preferred when translating cultural items. However, only a few studies are dedicated to translation strategies used in tourism texts and tourism material in translation research (Zahir, Sadeghi, & Maleki, 2015).

Translation of cultural items could be a sensitive matter in which the sense of respect should be reflected in the translations (Ryan & Gu, 2010). According to Terestyényi (2011) translating tourist brochures requires the translator to be aware of the structural and conceptual delicacies and be courteous in choosing the strategies to deliver the meaning. However, few researchers have addressed the issue of translation of CSIs in tourist texts, such as tourist brochures. The current research is an attempt to identify the CSIs in tourist brochures, apply Venuti's domestication and foreignisation strategies in

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translating tourist brochures from English to Malay, and to describe problems in translating the brochures.

1.4 Foreignisation and Domestication

Based on this classification and for the objectives of the present study, the domestication and foreignisation translation strategies were applied. Domestication strategy refers to "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bring the author back home" (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). In domestication strategy, the strangeness of foreign text is minimised by adjusting the source text culture in the target text culture. In contrast, foreignisation strategy is "an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti, 1995, p. 20).

These strategies could provide cultural and linguistic guidance (Yang, 2010). Domestication establishes a translation strategy using a clear, effortless style to create a TT that is entirely free of foreign words or statements, whereas foreignisation encourages the foreignness of the SL and disrupts the core of the TL and target culture. Venuti formed his views on Schleiermacher's ideas of the diverse methods of translation in which the translator moves either or the author towards him. As an advocate of foreignisation, Venuti believes that foreignisation can change how translation is viewed and produced (Obeidat & Abu-Melhim, 2017). Despite being an advocate of foreignisation, Venuti notes the cons of this strategy as neither the ST writer nor translator is able to deliver the precise idea about human nature to the TL reader. Hence, Therefore, one of the ways to investigate foreignisation and domestication could be from Venutian invisibility perspective, i.e., either making the translator invisible if the TT is put together by a native writer or making the translator visible so that his assiduous hard work in translation are not neglected (Venuti, 1995).

2. Methodology

In this study, four selected tourist brochures were selected and then translated from English into Malay to investigate the types of CSIs, explore Venuti' two translation strategies, and describe the problems in the translation process. A descriptive approach was used to analyse the tourist brochures text by reading and identifying, noting down, classifying the CSIs into Newmark's (1988) categorisation, and finally translating the CSIs based on the type of strategy. The CSIs in tourism brochures were identified in different linguistics levels, such as word, phrase and clause levels. The tourism brochures used in this study are all related to tourism sector of Penang Island in Malaysia. The brochures were obtained from Penang tourism websites. The four analysed brochures are entitled "Penang Hill-The hill Resort of choice in Penang", "Street Art in Georgetown", "A taste of Penang—a special food expedition to Malaysia", and "George-Town Penang".

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3. Results

This work offers a linguistic analysis of CSIs and describing the way they are translated from English to Malay. In total, 77 CSIs were identified and extracted from the four Penang tourism brochures. The CIs was categorised according to Newmark's (1988) categorisation of cultural items.

Table 4 illustrates CSIs related to Ecology consisting of Fauna, Flora, and Geographical feature. Ten items (12.97%) were identified and their Malay translations were provided. Out of 10, four items were identified for each of the Fauna (5.19%) and Geographical subcategories (5.19%). Two items (2.59%) were related to Flora.

Table 4. Ecology: Fauna, Flora, and Geographical Feature

Category	English
Fauna	Sumatran pony
	the giant black squirrel
	Dusky leaf monkey
	Parakeet
Flora	Monkey Cup
	Slipper Orchid
Geographical feature	Penang hill
	Penang island
	Georgetown
	Prangin river

Table 5 summarises CSIs related to Material culture. Fifty items (64.93%) were identified for the four subcategories of Food, House/city, Transports, and Traditional weapons. Out of 50 items, 30 items (38.96%) were related to the House/City category, 11 items (14.28%) to Transport, 8 items (10.38%) to Food, and 1 item (1.29%) to Traditional weapons.

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Table 5. Material Culture: Food, House/City, Transports, Traditional Weapons

Category	English
Food	Char Kway Teow
	Har Mee prawn noodle soup
	Assam Laksa
	Kendar Rice
	Pulled tea
	Benggali Bread
	Yu Char Kuih
	Tau Sa Piah
House/City	Bungalows
	Convalescent Bungalows
	China House
	Landmark & places of interest
	Sky-deck
	Penang Hill Mosque
	Bel retiro gate house
	Astaka – cliff café
	Penang hill kacang putih
	Henna art & SPA
	Jail
	Penang Peranakan Mansion
	Penang Botanical Gardens
	Fort Cornwallis
	Spice Garden
	Heritage clan Jetties
	Street arts
	street food corner
	street of harmony
	Tropical Spice Garden
	Anglo-Indian Bungalow
	Early Shophouses
	Early Electicism Shophouse,
	Sino-Anglo Bungalow
	Buddhist temple
	Kuan Yin Temple

	Churches
	Indian Temples
	Mosque
	Nagore Shrine
Transport	Funicular Railway
	Texi
	Car
	Rapid bus
	Skywalk
	Second generation train couch
	Boat
	Motorcycle
	Bicycle
	Trishaw
	Rickshaw
Traditional weapons	32 pounder cannon

Table 6 summarises the number of CSIs for the category of Social organisation: artistic thing and craft. Six CSIs (7.79%) were identified for the subcategory of Artistic thing and craft.

Table 6. Social Organisation: Artistic Thing and Craft

Category	English
	Chair
	Palladian Style
	Early Transitional Style
Artistic thing and craft	Neo Classical Style
	art Deco Style
	Late Modern Style

As illustrated in Table 7, the CSIs related to social culture consisted of work, leisure, names and terms of address. Ten CSIs (12.98%) were identified and their Malay translations were provided. Out of 10 items for this category, eight items (10.38) were related to Work, one item (1.29%) was about Names and terms of address, and one item (1.29%) was associated with Kinship.

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Table 7. Social Culture: Work, Leisure, Names and Terms of Address

Category	English
	Artist
	Animator
	Photographer
Work	Filmaker
	Mr. five foot way
	Trishaw man
	Shoe designer
	Howker food
Name and terms of address	Captain Francis Light
	Love Lane
Kinship	Straits

Despite Venuti's advocacy of foreignisation strategy, in this study and from the analysis of the four tourist brochures it was found that domestication is more suitable than foreignisation in translating the selected tourist brochures from English to Malay. For example, "Har Mee Prawn noodle soup" was translated to "sup mee udang" which shows the domestication is a better choice in this context considering the locals' knowledge about the food item. In Food subcategory, the spelling is mostly maintained with a change of a letter to fit into the pronunciation of words in Malay language. For instance "Char Kway Teow" was changed to "Char Keow Teow", where the word "Kway" is replaced with "Keow" to represent the item in Malay culture. Likewise, "Assam Laksa" was translated to "Asam Laksa", where the word "Assam" is replaced with "Asam", and the famous "pulled tea" was domesticated into "Teh tarik". This makes the items "sound" Malay and familiarises the spelling to the Malay speakers and Malay culture. In Place subcategory of the CSIs, "Penang hill kacang putih" was translated into "gerai kacang putih bendera". "Bukit bendera" means "flag-hill" in Malay language, and the name has a cultural background. Some direct translations could make no sense. For example, "Penang hill" in the brochure was translated to "bukit bendera" rather than "flag-hill". Although domestication could confuse the tourists, it seems more suitable in this context compared to foreignisation as it facilitates understanding.

Foreignisation was used throughout the translation process as well. For example, "Love lane" was translated to "Lebuh Love" where it retains the word "love" instead of using the Malay "cinta" which might sound unnatural. "Skywalk" was loaned from English to Malay to maintain the status of having higher life standard. Another example for foreignisation of a CSI was "animator" which also remained the same word in the Malay translation. The word is borrowed from English and used frequently in Malay, assimilating the pronunciation.

During the translation process of CSIs, one of the difficulties was finding the equivalence of the item in the target culture. Literal translation was slightly useful to maintain the idiosyncrasy of the local culture. For example, in "pulled tea" when translated to "teh tarik", and "trishaw man" translated to "tukang kaki lima". Overall, it seemed more economic and easier to borrow than to come up with a totally new word.

4. Discussion

Tourist brochures could represent the cultural image of nations and cultures. The content of the brochures and effective translation of the content, particularly in translation of the cultural items could be challenging. In Malaysia, even though English is widely used, and Malaysians use English as a second language, the national language of Malaysia is Malay and there are other ethnic languages that are taught at schools and used at home. Malay language has been officially used by different ethnicities in most formal contexts in Malaysia. Although most reasons for the misleading information in tourist guidebooks could be related to language proficiency level of the producers in either one of the languages because of the lexico-grammatical and structural mistakes or errors, the use of inappropriate translation strategies could be as effective. In this study domestication was found to be more suitable than foreignising in translating the brochures from English to Malay language.

Identifying and solving these problems in translation of tourist guides that can create misunderstandings or conflicts in the recipient culture, may result in positive thinking about touristic activities. In addition, resolving the uninteresting, misleading, or controversial cultural problems in texts by providing practical solutions may contribute to the quality of translation through promoting linguistically accurate, and culturally interesting translations to approach a "good" quality of translation which meets the tourists' expectations, as by prioritising the end users or the "customers" of the translation (Amini, Ibrahim-González, & Ayob, 2012), more tourists may be attracted to know "what is actually there". This understanding may eventually increase the number of tourists.

Translators of the tourist texts confront restrictions in the translation process which needs to be professionalised in tourism sector (Kelly, 1997). The present study provided a sample of translation strategies of CSIs and can add to the future process of achieving standards and norms for using, creating and translating tourism terminology. It may help to attain commonly recognised criteria for generating and expanding CSIs in tourist texts.

Future research can shed light on representative conversational and semiotic aspects of tourism communication, such as those used by professionals to boost imminence, impression and communicative efficacy in promoting objects or places. Future studies could also address a larger corpus and use other methods to validate the findings by taking another step in making a profile of this type of translation, particularly on Malaysian tourist hubs (Amini, Amini, Alavi, & Esfandiari, 2017), such as Penang. Finally, more research could be conducted on tourism translation expectations in Malaysia. Tourists as the "users" or the customers of translation should be given priority. In this regard,

Dann emphasised how the language of tourism helps to "convert…(tourists) from potential into actual clients" (Dann, 1996, p. 2). Users' expectations in translation could help researchers have a comprehensive list of translation weaknesses and strengths which could eventually contribute to the improvement of language learning through language learning tasks (Amini & Amini, 2017) and translation quality (Amini, Amini, & Esfandiari, 2016).

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