

Application of Communication Theory in Translating Names of Scenic Spots

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Abstract. Translation is a form of communication. That is to say, in such aspects as purposes, functions, and principles, translation and communication have a lot of similarities. This paper aims to use communication theory as guidance for scenic spots name translation; so we can improve the quality of translation, find more effective translation strategies, and the translation can play a more important role in cross-cultural communication.

Introduction

Since reforming and opening up, China has made remarkable achievements. With the rapid development of China's economy and increasing international status, more and more countries and regions showed great concern about China. Therefore, in order to appeal more people from different nations and regions to have a better understanding of China, translation has played an increasingly important role in the communication. The translation of scenic spots name (Chinese- English translation) just like an English business cards handed out to foreign tourists; it plays an important role in introducing the scenery places to tourists. Translation quality will not only reflect the translator's level directly, but also affect the tourists to choose this scenery place as the object of sightseeing. Therefore, translating the name of scenic spots is very important.

Communication is the study of all human communicative behaviors, occurrence and development of communication process, and the relationship among communication, human and society. Communication is also a study of social information system and its operation rules. From the perspective of communication, the essence of translation is actually the transmission of information.

This paper aims to use communication theory as guidance for scenic spots name translation; so we can improve the quality of translation, find more effective translation strategies, and the translation can play a more important role in cross-cultural communication.

The Communication Theory

Elements of Communication

Communication process has seven basic elements: gatekeeper, source, channel, receiver, purpose, occasion and feedback. In this thesis, I would like to introduce 3 of them in detail: gatekeeper (communicator), channel (media), and receiver (audience).

Communicators, also known as the source, referring to the initiator of the communicative actions, in a message issued by way of a proactive role in others people. In social communication, the communicator can be either an individual, organization or group may be.

Audience also called the sink, which is the recipient and reflector of the information; meanwhile, the role of objects of communicators. It does not mean that the role of those who pass the object is a passive presence; on the contrary, he can influence communicators through feedback activities. Audience can also be an individual, organization or group may be.

Communicators and audiences are not fixed roles in general outreach activities, both of which can convert or alternate roles.

Media, also known as the communication channels, means or tools. Media are carrying attendant of information, and will spread all sorts of factors in the process of connecting link between each

other. The media in real life is varied; the postal system, mass communication system, Internet system, wired and wireless telephone systems are commonly used modern medium.

No matter what kind of translation it is, how translators translate the text or what kind of translation strategy the translators use, the process of translation is a process of transferring information. The essence of translation is communication. The translation process includes the following 7 elements: translator, content, channel, receiver, purpose, place and effect. All these elements are similar to the elements of communication

So we choose three elements of the translation process to analysis, too: translator (communicator), receiver (audience), and channel (media).

According to Roger T. Bell, "any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance." (Yang Juan 101)

From the communicative perspective, we can consider the nature of the translator as a gatekeeper; the external constraints that the gatekeeper is subjected to, and the characteristics of the audience's message reception both will influence the gatekeeper. The concept of "gatekeeper" has been frequently used as a reference of any action, which involved selecting or rejecting some potential projects. The gatekeeper plays an important role in certain strategic areas in the information channel. They have the rights to decide what message or pieces of information can go through the particular gates and continue their journey. They also decide the information go through in what form, and what can not go through.

As a gatekeeper, the translator occupies a position in the channel from which he can compare and convert from the source culture into the target culture - a never fixed and "comfortable" area (because of the evolution of the two cultures and the translating system). Though he may seek a middle ground in the two cultures to be a neutral gatekeeper, he is always "anchored" to a great or less extent, in one culture, usually in the target culture. This means his gatekeeping process, including reading and interpreting the source text and writing and sending the target text, is a culture-bound activity which is carried out in the perspective of the target culture. For example, when reading, he often views cultural elements as the ground of a potential difference, distinction, or tension in the target culture.

In a word, as a gatekeeper with the target culture perspective, the translator mediates, between the two cultures and regulates the, conflicting forces by selecting proper messages and sending them in proper ways.

An individual audience or receptor owns the natural qualities of activeness(能动性)and acceptance(受动性)because he is a consumer of information products, decoder, participant, and feedback giver. Traditionally the audience for mass communication has been defined as large(众多性);mass communication addresses massive audiences. This means that the audience is made up of so many people that it would be impossible for them to meet and interact face-to face. Traditionally, the members of the audience are also anonymous(隐匿性);that is, audience members know others are watching, listening, or reading, but they do not know just who they are. Note that the mass audience is thus the opposite of a group, which is defined as a small number of people who can meet and talk face-to face, who come to know one another, and who develop attachments to one another. Finally, the mass audience is heterogeneous; it is made up of all sorts of people. Kathleen Hall Jamieson and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell said that the mass audience varied because nearly everyone has access to these media-- you can read, watch, listen, or go online whether you are old or young, educated or uneducated, in a city, suburb, or town.

Purpose of Communication

The fundamental purpose of communication is to transfer information between people, between people and society. It's an activity to deliver, accept and feedback information through meaningful symbols in general. Translation is also true that only in the translation process to ensure that the translation accurately reflects the original information in order to achieve the desired effect of translation, which is the translation of the premise to achieve the purpose of communication. Therefore, it requires the translator must properly understand the original, only the correct understanding of the original, can translate correct translation.

Generally speaking, translation is a Cross-culture activity. It shares the nature of communication. No matter whether it is interpretation, written translation or machine translation, etc., their tasks are almost the same, which is communication.

As a matter of fact, at the very beginning, it is the purpose of translation that fundamentally inhibited the whole process, thus it is also one significant objective that should be studied. In some measure, the purpose determines the translation methods and skills. For instance, if its purpose is aimed at transmitting the exotic culture and particular customs, then foreignization is the better strategy. However, if the translation work is only for entertaining the audience, then the domestication is a better choice, which can guide the audience to the accurate and active flavor of the original one. In our scenic spots name translation, the translator should bear in mind his translation purpose, which is to attract the audience and deliver the culture and customs of the scenery, so that visitors can understand the cultural and historical value.

Effects of Communication

"This is a special concept in the field of human communication;" according to Berlo, "It names a special aspect of receiver reaction. It names the use which the source can make of this reaction in determining its own success." (John Reinard 35)

In human communication, feedback is used to tell whether the message that is sent out by the source is effective or not. We can utilize it to a much greater extent. If a source receives a kind of message that is as effective as it has expected, the source will continue to produce the same kind of message. However, when the source gets ineffective feedback, it will change its way of communication and try to reach its expected effect. So during this course, one will be involved in different kinds of communication situations. If the senders can not be aware of the receivers's response, zero-feedback is possible.

When applied to translation, feedback here refers to various kinds of translation criticism, such as readers' letters etc. All these can let the translators know how the readers receive their information and whether they need to modify their translation style to suit the reception situation of the readers.

The standard for judging an effective translation version is the effectiveness of the information. Nida said:

It would be wrong to think, however, that the response of the receptors in the second language is merely in terms of comprehension of the information, for communication is not merely informative, it must be expressive and imperative if it is to serve the principle purposes of communication. (Nida Eugene 28)

Especially when cultural information is concerned, the requirement for effectiveness is even higher. The purpose of cultural information transference is to let readers acquire what culture can bring to them. In the first place, they should understand it, which is the precondition for the next step. Secondly, they should enjoy the process of reading and gain satisfaction from it, because the translation has left them certain room to imagine and therefore they participate in the reading actively.

Finally, as the touchstone of communicative activities, the effect is one of the most indispensable parts within translation study. It is not only represented in the receiver's cognition and value changes, but also in guiding their behaviors. Obviously, things without effects are often unnecessary to do, in the same way, if the translation can't live up to the expected prospect; the effect will be terribly inferior, and fail and even be discarded. So in some sense, whether a translation work is good or bad mainly depends on the feedbacks of the readers of the translated one and on relevant social and economic effects the translated work has had, so do the effects requested in scenic spots name translation.

In detail, we can find following kinds of effects:

The Scenery Spots Name Translation

Features of Scenery Spots Name Translation

Scenic spots name translation is a kind of pragmatic translation, or, practical/applied translation, so it has the common characteristics of pragmatic translation. First is informatively, which means that the translation emphasizes the transmission of objective information and phenomena in the real world. To convey the information properly, the translator can change the form of the source text when it is necessary. Second is persuasiveness. The translation pays attention to the effects and the response of the readers. And the translation of the scenic spot name is more interested in whether the translation is effective in attracting tourists than whether it is factually correct. Last one is anonymity, which means that the translator of the scenic spot name is in most cases anonymous. In these cases, the function of the source language is to give a convenient help for composing a receptor language text.

Apart from the general features, scenery spots name translation has its special characteristics in language and culture. In language, English texts are more straightforward and rational, tidy in formation of sentence structures, logical in organization, concise and natural in diction, while their Chinese counterparts are parallel in structures, flowery in language, and well-proportioned and rhythmical in effect. In culture, scenery spots name translation involves a large amount of cultural information like history, religions, cuisine, custom, psychology, ideology, etc.

Translation Principals

Scenic spot name translation mainly lay particular stress on the understanding of cultural connotation, and of course must be combined with the expression of language. Scenic spot name is a special kind of places name, they often contain abundant natural and cultural information, if only use the single common place name transliteration method, it must not reach the equivalent information transfer translation purpose, it can not meet the tourists desire to understand a foreign culture. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should consider cultural differences as far as possible, as much as possible to adopt different translation methods, and try to maximize the transmission of cultural information, to avoid culture shock or culture missing situations. In addition, the names of the many attractions are filled with poetic, leaving visitors a rich imagination. Therefore, in the translation process, we should pay attention to the mood of attraction, attraction to tourists to show authenticity, beauty and vividness.

On the basis of the analysis of the communication process, the relevant factors and the function of tourism translation, we intend to put forward two principles here: reception oriented and Chinese culture oriented.

By reception oriented principle we mean that tourism translation should be focused on the reader's reception, and comply with the ways of thinking and expression in English, especially information arrangement and language style. In the translation process, the translator first reads the Chinese name, and then proceeds to offer the foreign tourists such information. The translator should consider various factors like the tourists' needs, expectations, previous knowledge and potential noise, which are quite different from those of Chinese tourists. So the translator cannot offer the same amount and type of information as the Chinese name producer. What the translator does is to offer another kind of information in another form, and adjust the content and the structure of the original Chinese attractions name so that foreign tourists can easily obtain the needed Chinese tourism information and develop an interest in traveling in China. Thus the successful communication of tourism translation is realized.

The Chinese culture oriented principle refers to retaining Chinese cultural information and making efforts to publicize Chinese culture. Foreign tourists are eager to understand Chinese culture, and there are a lot of specific cultural terms like place names in tourism texts which are strange to foreign tourists. It's quite necessary to retain the Chinese culture to the extent that foreign tourists can accept the tourism information with ease and interest. In this way tourism translation can serve the purpose ----to arouse the interests of foreigners to visit China.

Existing Problems in Translating Scenic Spots Name

In our country all kinds of errors in translation of public signs, translation errors of tourist attractions names can be a typical performance. These errors are detrimental to the image of the

attractions. In this thesis, the author would analyze this phenomenon combined with some real examples.

(1) Cultural mistranslation (文化误译)

Some attractions names are derived from historical stories or legends, some Chinese words have profound meanings, during the evolution, without a certain cultural and historical knowledge, it is easy to take the words too literally, and lead to cultural mistranslation.

For example, in Tiger Park(虎跑公园), 虎跑泉 was translated as Tiger Running Spring. Such errors were created just because translator was not familiar with the legend. Tiger Spring is a two-foot square of spring, crystal clear spring water, from a lot of mountain rocks between gurgling, spring back wall engraved with three characters "Tiger Running Spring". According to legend, before Tang Dynasty, there was neither spring nor large temples, Emperor Xian Zong in Yuan he years, a monk named Xing Kong decided to habitat here for Zen. However, after further investigation, he found a lack of drinking water source. One day, two strong brothers came and wanted to be monk's apprentice. They decided to move the spring, the guardian of the spring said: "This spring is a god spring; human beings can not carry it. But if you both are willing and refined into a tiger, this spring can be moved." Brothers immediately answered. Thus, the sprites whisked switch grass, sprinkled spunk. Suddenly, I saw the smoke out of the two gorgeous Tigers. And two tigers moved the spring immediately, whirled back in time. This is widely circulated "Tiger shift spring" legend. Night, Monk Xing Kong was meditation vaguely and saw two abnormal thirst Tiger in the Buddhist temple outside the dig for the temple, the monk suddenly woke up, opened the door, no tiger, there is a shares springs gush from between cliffs. Monk understood that Tigers shift the spring. So, it named Tiger Dig Spring. Later, the monk find the name of this space was hard to pronounce, so it was renamed Tiger Running Springs. So here is "running" means "plane", that animal livestock with claws or hooves dig instead of "running", it should be translated as Tiger Dug Spring, or Tiger-pawed Spring.

(2) Preposition (介词)

苏堤春晓 was translated as Spring Dawn at the Su Causeway. In this translation, the preposition "at" should be pay more attention. Because Su Causeway is a long beach and its total length is nearly three kilometers. Preposition "at" often referred to as a point in space, or the place for event. Is preposition "along" a little more appropriate? "Along" means parallel with something, such as along the street. The author thinks that "Spring Dawn along the Su Causeway" can better reflect the charming scenery.

(3) One name has different translations (一名多译)

For example: 花港观鱼 can be translated as Viewing Fish at Flower Harbor, also can named as Viewing Fish and Lotus Ponds at Flower Harbor.

Foreign tourists can easily think they refer to different points of interest, resulting in distortion of information and difficulties to understand. A name with a variety of translation may be because the formation time is not the same: the subsequent translation without reference to the original translation or no translation of the original non-standard for timely changes. There is also likely to be different translators and did not take a unified standard.

Translation of Scenic Spots Name From the Perspective of Communication

A large number of historical and cultural sights in China had been a favorite of many foreign tourists. Thus, better translation of attractions name is really important. A good translation can attract more visitors and have deep historical and cultural value. Scenic spots name translation is just like a name card to foreign visitors. Bad translation will decrease the amount of visitors and reduce attraction of the interests. So we should find better way to translate the name of scenic spots.

Translation Strategies from Elements of Communication

The translation is for foreigner to understand our culture, so we should try to translate the name from audience perspective. Owing to this perspective, we can find a broaden view for translation.

1. Transliteration (音译)

Transliteration means some rather distinctive Chinese words into the English vocabulary by

borrowing pinyin or spelling manner. For example, 西皮 (Xipi), 乐府 (yuefu), 雷峰塔 (Lei Feng Pagoda) .

This method can be completely reserved Chinese phonetic form; it is possible to retain the original characteristics of traditional Chinese culture. This method retained the cultural color in both source language and target language; audience can feel a new style named exotic. In attractions name translation, transliteration can reproduce the original expression, not only enrich and improve the expressive power of translation, but also give people a better understanding of other cultures by reading translations and traveling an exotic tour, so that they can truly understand a foreign country, greatly promote cultural exchange to realize the nature of translation.

For instance: 南屏晚钟 Evening Bell at Nanping Hill

雷峰夕照 Sunset Glow at Leifeng Pagoda

However, the full transliteration translation method should not be excessive; otherwise alphabet will cause dyslexia to foreign readers. The use of the transliteration reflects that many Chinese traditional customs and cultural life were widely spread and recognition in the world.

Free translation (意译)

East-West cultural differences show directly on the differences between modern Chinese and English. A large number of culture-loaded words increase the difficulty of translation and communication. Use free translation can retain the original characteristics of the language in form and content, so we can convey the cultural connotations better.

Free translation is more accurate. It can better reflect the meaning contained in the places and attractions name, so that visitors can have an overview of this landscape with who, what about, to convey the maximum amount of cultural information.

For instance: 平湖秋月 Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake

曲苑风荷 Lotus in the Breeze at Crooked Courtyard.

Please remember; always check your translation when you use the free translation. If don't, it will be easy to lead to tourists have cultural misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Translation Strategies from Purposes of Communication

The purpose of communication is to transfer information. Scenic spot name also can reflect some cultural information. It even can be regarded as the most direct information to show attraction of the interests.

For the attractions name, people not only want to know what it's called, but also want to know what it is, what's the specific meaning. Therefore, in the name translation we should pay more attention on meaning. Translation work should maintain a cultural identity, cultural balancing effect, and as a basis and foundation, translated history, culture and traditions.

To achieve the purpose of communication, we can use literal translation (直译). Literal translation (直译)

The so-called literal translation means in line with the target language under standardized conditions while maintaining its original ideological content, without changing the original forms of expression Translation. Here is the example: 黄龙洞 we translate it into Yellow Dragon Cave, where "黄" corresponds to "yellow", "龙" corresponding to the "dragon", "洞" corresponding to the "cave".

Literal translation will neither misleading readers nor produce noise in the dissemination of information, but will make the reader feel the information is adequate. In this way not only to retain the original flavor and express the original national culture based on keeping language features and characteristics, but also make the translation to be understood easily, so that Sino-British cultural exchange and blending is much easier.

Here is the example: 迎客松 Greeting Pine

西湖 West Lake

Translation Strategies from the Effects of Communication

In communication process, the audience have feedback is the expected effect. So is attraction name translation. We try to find a better way just because we want to get more feedback from the visitors. If the translation attract more visitor, or help more foreigner to understand the Chinese

culture and history, that is the result we want.

In order to expense the positive effect, we can use annotation (加注) .

Encountering meaning vacancy phenomenon in translation is very normal. Under normal circumstances, the annotation is often used to make up for filling vacancies. Here is the example: 岳坟“the Tomb of Yue Fei”, with the annotation“ Yue Fei was a famous Chinese national hero”. So foreigners can understand why this guy’s tomb would be a scenic spot.

Sometimes a simple literal translation or transliteration will make the foreign readers feel difficult to understand. That is because foreigners know little about the cultural background of the source language. Translator can use this method to translate the primitive words directly into the target language, So readers can obtain more complete information in source language from target language, so as to deepen understanding of cultural backgrounds, to promote cultural exchange and integration. With this translation of tourism materials Cultural loaded Words can make foreign visitors feel unique culture, tourism and generate interest.

Annotation can be divided into two types, transliteration annotation and literal translation annotation.

For instance: 白堤“the White Causeway”, added with anotation “In 882 AD, great poet Bai Juyi, magistrate of Hangzhou city, had the causeway built, so people took his surname ‘Bai’ as the title of the causeway in memory of his bounties.”

Another example: 玄奘法师--Master Xuan Zang(Monk Tripitaka)

Conclusion

Translation Tourist Attractions related to tourism practice, the translator can not be complacent on paper, we should do more field trips; learn more about the actual situation of interest, especially the cultural implication attractions name. We should try to avoid fabled mistranslation. The translator must not only have strong language skills, but also consider the practical effect of interest name translation conduction after considering the target language audience and their cultural background. In this article author only talk about some personal opinion, in order to initiate, hope to better integrate the country's tourist attractions to the world.

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