

English Translation Analysis of Linguistic Landscape of Laoshan Scenic Spot in Qingdao from the Perspective of Ecological Translation

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Abstract

From the perspective of ecological translation, this study focuses on the linguistic landscape of Laoshan scenic area in Qingdao. Combining the three-dimensional transformation theory, the author analyzes the research object from three dimensions of language, culture and communication respectively, and gives modified translation, analyzes the causes of translation inaccuracies, and finally proposes countermeasures to improve the translation quality. The author intends to improve the translation quality of Qingdao scenic spots and promote the development of scenic tourism as well as the foreign dissemination of Chinese culture.

Keywords

Ecological translation; Three-dimensional Transformation; The Translation of Linguistic Landscape.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the convening of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit and the implementation of China's Belt and Road Initiative, Qingdao has gradually become an important window for global trade and China's opening up to the outside world. At the same time, Qingdao, as a tourist city, receives many foreign tourists every year. Laoshan is the highest peak of China's coastline, known as the "No.1 mountain" on the sea, and is an important tourist attraction in Qingdao. The linguistic landscape of scenic spot is related to all aspects of travel. In this paper, the author analyzes the English translation of the Linguistic Landscape from the perspective of Ecological Translation in order to promote the development of the Laoshan scenic spot and the spread of Chinese culture to the outside world.

2. An Overview of Ecological Translation

The theory of ecological translation was put forward by Professor Hu Gengshen of Tsinghua University. Based on the theory of adaptive selection in Darwin's theory of bio-evolution, it regards translation as a selective activity of adapting translator to the ecological environment of translation, and provides a new perspective for the study of translation theory. It combines translatology with ecology, which is an interdisciplinary translation research method. Hu Gengshen (2008) argues that ecological translation is a new perspective in translation studies from the perspective of the whole translation ecosystem.

2.1. Generation and Development of Ecological Translation

In 2001, Hu Gengshin presented a paper on t presented a paper on Introduction to Translation Adaptation and Selection Theory at the Third Asian Translation Forum of the International Translation Union. He explained the process and methods of translation from the new angle of adaptive selection theory, and put forward the view that translators should adapt to the translation environment and make choices during translating. Since then, Hu Gengshen has

continued his efforts to deepen and expand his theory, and has published papers in major academic journals successively, which provides the theoretical basis and research direction for the development of ecological translation.

In addition to Professor Hu Gengshen's exploration, the applied research of ecological translation is also carried out in many fields, such as literature translation, philosophy and social sciences translation, commercial law translation, interpretation and so on. More and more papers on ecological translation have been published by university scholars. Another important sign of the translation community's interest in ecological translation, especially the progress of ecological translation, is that more than 60 universities and colleges in China can use the core theory of ecological translation to write master's and doctoral theses.

2.2. Main viewpoints of Ecological Translation

Based on the internal relationship between translation and nature, the study of ecological translation has made a new interpretation of the essence and process of translation from a macro perspective. The core point of ecological translation is Hu GengShen's translation adaptation theory.

Ecological translationists believe that the ecological environment of translation and the adaptability of translators are two important aspects of translation. Translation ecological environment is the combination of material and spiritual environment, which includes the influence of language, society, culture, history, author, reader and translator on translation. In the process of translation, translators should adapt to the ecological environment of translation and optimize translation. Therefore, translation is not only a simple language transformation, but also is inextricably linked with its diverse ecological environment, which means that translation cannot be separated from its ecological environment.

From the perspective of ecological translation, translators should follow the translation adaptation selection theory. The core idea is "translator centered", that is, translators are the subject and core of translation. Translators should adapt to the ecological environment of translation and choose the most suitable translation according to the ecological environment. Based to the principle of "three-dimensional transformation", translators choose suitable translation and transform adaptively from three dimensions: "language dimension", "communication dimension" and "culture dimension".

3. Language Landscape Overview

Language landscape is an important symbol of a society, a region and a city. The language landscape in scenic spot is the embodiment of a city or country culture image. Appropriate language landscape will not only provide convenience for tourists, but also enable tourists to better understand the historical and cultural deposits of the scenic spot, which plays a very important role in the dissemination of culture. Therefore, improving the quality of English translation of linguistic landscape is a necessary condition for improving the service of English translation of linguistic landscape, as well as an significant way for Chinese culture to spread to the outside world.

3.1. Definition of Language Landscape

Landry&Bourhis (1997) first gave the definition of the linguistic landscape: "The language used in street signs, billboards, street signs, place names, shop names in public places and government agency symbols constituted the linguistic landscape of a specific area, region or city group, and later posters, banners, slogans, LED display screens, electronic advertisements, etc. were also the subjects of the linguistic landscape researchers (Gorter, 2006).

3.2. Development of Language Landscape

In 1997, Landry and Bourhis published "Linguistic Landscape and Ethnolinguistic Vitality: An Empirical Study" in the *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, and put forward the definition of linguistic landscape, which was the first time people really pay attention to linguistic landscape. In 2003, Scollon R and Scollon S W published their monograph, *Place Discourse Research: Language in the Material World*, which further enriched the theory of linguistic landscape.

However, the study of linguistic landscape in China is much later than that in other countries. The earliest concept of the linguistic landscape in China was in 2009. Sun Li believes that Chinese scholars rarely use the term "linguistic landscape" when studying public signs, and briefly introduces the concept of linguistic landscape and its international research results. While analyzing the present situation of Wenzhou linguistic landscape and its problems, Sun Li still equates the linguistic landscape with public signs (Sun Li, 2009). The scholars who really introduced the linguistic landscape, a popular field of Western social linguistics research, to the country are Shang Guowen and Zhao Shouhui. In 2014, they published two articles, "The Perspective, Theory and Methods of Linguistic Landscape Research" and "Analysis Dimensions and Theoretical Construction of Linguistic Landscape", which formally introduced the concept, function, theory, research methods, the epistemological foundation and theoretical construction of the linguistic landscape (Shang & Zhao, 2014).

3.3. Importance of English Translation of Linguistic Landscape

In cross-border tourism, the linguistic landscape is first and foremost a beautiful scenery which can not be ignored in tourism (Wu Bihu, 2017), or the linguistic landscape is an important part of tourist experience (Shang Guowen, 2018). For foreign tourists, the translation of linguistic landscape directly affects their impression of scenic spots, regions and even countries. Therefore, the English translation of linguistic landscape not only shows the internationalization level of China, but also represents the image and culture of China. The translation of linguistic landscape plays an important role in the international dissemination of Chinese culture and the internationalization of China.

4. Three-Dimensional Translation of Linguistic Landscape

According to the scholars of ecological translation, only the translator adapts to a specific ecological environment and realizes the selection and transformation of at least the three dimensions (language, culture and communication) in the process of translation, can a suitable translation be produced (Liu Yanfang, 2009). In the process of translation, translators should try their best to realize linguistic equivalence, cultural transmission and communication intention.

4.1. Adaptive Transformation of Language Dimensions

Adaptive transformation of language dimensions refers to the adaptive transformation of language forms by translators in the process of translation. Because Chinese and English have different origins and culture, there are great differences in vocabulary, syntactic structure and language style between the two languages.

For example, in terms of vocabulary, verbs are mostly used in Chinese sentences, while nouns are mostly used in English sentences. In terms of language structure, Chinese is a parataxis language and its structure is relatively free. English is a hypotactic language, in which syntactic integrity and rationality are often emphasized. Morphological changes, non-predicate verbs and clauses are also used to express various grammatical relations, and their structures are compact and rigorous. In language style, Chinese rhetoric is gorgeous and the writing is graceful.

Many forms of expression such as four-character structure, parallel and dual are often found in Chinese sentences. English is concise and accurate.

Example 1: 上清宫，又称“上宫”，始建于宋代，至宋末已废圮，元代大德元年（1297）重修。

The original translation: Shangqing Palace, also named “Upper Palace”, founded in the Song Dynasty, dilapidated at the end of the Dynasty. Rebuilt in the first year of Dade in the Yuan Dynasty (1297 Ad).

The modified translation: Shangqing Palace, also named “Upper Palace”, was founded in the Song Dynasty, dilapidated at the end of the Dynasty and rebuilt in the first year of Dade in the Yuan Dynasty (1297 Ad).

There are obvious grammatical errors in the original translation: first of all, the translator did not clarify the subject-passive relationship between the subject of the sentence and the predicate verb. In the original sentence, the three predicate verbs “建于”, “废圮” and “重修” are all in a passive relationship with the main clause, so the Chinese sentence should be translated as a passive sentence. Besides, there is no subject in the second sentence. Since the three predicate verbs in the original sentence are coordinated, the translator can translate the three verbs in one sentence, and there is no need to separate them into two sentences.

Example 2: 65周岁以上老人持有效证件免票

The original translation: People over 65 years old valid certificates and free ticket.

The modified translation: Free for people aged 65 and above with valid certificate.

The original sentence looks like a simple declarative sentence, but after analyzing the sentence, it can be found that there are obvious conditional relationships in the sentence: Only those aged 65 and above with valid certificates are eligible for free entry. The original English translation does not translate the conditional relationship, but directly translates the original sentence into a general declarative sentence, which not only fails to convey the meaning of the original linguistic landscape, but also disturbs visitors. In the modified translation, the author used the prepositional phrase caused by “with” to add conditional information of “people aged 65 and above”, making the condition of free admission very clear and easier for visitors to understand.

4.2. Adaptive Transformation of Cultural Dimension

Basnett (1990), a British scholar and representative of cultural translation, believes that translation is the communication and within culture and between different cultures. The “adaptive transformation of cultural dimensions” means that the translator needs to pay attention to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations during the translation process. The cultural dimension adaptive selection focuses on the conversion of the source and target languages in terms of cultural transmission to prevent the bias in understanding the original language caused by considering the problem solely from the cultural perspective of the target language (Kuai Lu, 2014). Translation does not mean the simple conversion of two language forms, but rather the exchange and integration between two cultures.

Example 1: 老人优先

The original translation: Old People First

The modified translation: Seniors First

Respect for the elderly has always been a traditional virtue of the Chinese nation. Therefore, the word “老” in China not only represents old age, but also means seniority and respect. In foreign cultures, however, the word “old” means no longer young and useless. Translating “老人” into “old people” not only does not display our traditional virtues, but also gives them the illusion that we do not respect the senior. Therefore, it is more appropriate to translate it into “Seniors First”.

Example 2: 闲人免进

The original translation: Loiterers keep away

The modified translation: Authorized person only

In English, "loiterer" means "people who stand or wait somewhere, especially in a public place, without any clear reason". The "闲人" in the original linguistic landscape refers to people other than the staff. Translating "闲人" into "loiterer" will misinterpret the meaning of the original linguistic landscape and will also make foreign visitors are confused about Chinese culture. If translate "闲人免进" into "Authorized person only", foreign visitors can easily understand the meaning of the linguistic landscape.

When translating linguistic landscape, translators cannot translate the surface meaning of text directly. It is significant to convey the unique Chinese cultural connotation represented by the linguistic landscape, and to effectively realize the cultural communication and transmission in translation.

Today, under the influence of the globalization trend, English has become a common language widely used in countries all over the world. When translating the linguistic landscape, the translator should pay attention to the cultural differences between the source language and the translated language, and adapt to the different cultural backgrounds of the world, because the translation of the linguistic landscape is aimed at visitors from all countries with different cultural backgrounds. When a language is internationalized, it should not only be attached to one culture, but to a multi-culture with internationalized character. Therefore, the transformation of cultural dimension should also extend the translation cultural context to the global cultural context.

4.3. Adaptive Transformation of Communicative Dimension

Tourism translation in the context of globalization is ultimately a communicative activity across languages, cultures, and societies (Xing Yan, 2013). The "adaptive transformation of communicative dimension" means that the translator pays attention to the transformation of the adaptive choice of bilingual communicative intentions when translate. On the basis of adapting to the ecological environment of the source language, translators should pay attention to adapting to the target language culture and make choices according to readers' habits so as to achieve the purpose of communication. In addition to adapting to the ecological environment of the source language, the translator should focus on adapting to the culture of the translated language and making choices according to the habits of the readers in order to achieve the communicative purpose. While ensuring the transmission of information, the translator should also focus on the acceptability and effectiveness from the perspective of foreign visitors. Nida also pointed out that "when there is a conflict between the content and the effect of information, the translator should focus on effect rather than content."

Example 1: 办公区域，游客止步。

The original translation: Office area tourist stop.

The modified translation: Staff Only.

The communication intention of the original linguistic landscape is to remind visitors that this is an office area, only the relevant personnel can enter. In the original translation, the translator only translates Chinese sentence according to the word order, but ignores the convey of communication intention. The word "stop" in the original translation would give visitors a sense of "warning" and does not accurately convey the communicative intent of "reminding". When communicate with others, we should pay attention to the mood and ways, so as one of the means of communication between scenic spots and tourists, the translation of linguistic landscape should pay attention to conveying the correct communication intention. The linguistic landscape in the scenic area serves the visitors, so first, it must show courtesy and

friendliness to tourists. The word “stop” in the original translation has a tougher tone and is not easy for visitors to accept, so the translator should combine the intent of the original Chinese text in the translation process and appropriately express the meaning of the original text. The word “staff only” in the modified translation not only conveys the meaning that only staff members are allowed to enter this area, but also does not give visitors a bad impression because of the tone.

Example 2: 卫生间

The original translation: Restroom/Toilet

The modified translation: Toilet

There are two versions of the translation of “卫生间” in the same scenic spot, some of which are translated into “restroom” and some into “toilet”. The basic criterion for landscape language translation is to be consistent in the translation of the same linguistic landscape. Ununified translation of names will cause confusion for visitors, and thus affect the communicative function of the linguistic landscape. Therefore, in a scenic area, it is better for the translator to choose a uniform translation for the same linguistic landscape in order to be able to better communicate with visitors. And when choosing the translation name, the translator should choose the international universal translation of “卫生间”, namely “toilet”. In this way, the communicative function of the linguistic landscape can be realized in the maximum extent.

5. Problems and Countermeasures in Translation

From the above analysis, we can see that the translation of the linguistic landscape of Qingdao Laoshan scenic area still has a lot of room for improvement. Since translators play a leading role in the translation process, we should also start from the perspective of translators when analyzing the reasons behind these problems. Under the guidance of the theory of ecological translation, the author summarizes the causes of this problem, and puts forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions for different reasons.

First, the professional skills and quality of the translators themselves need to be improved. In the above examples, we can find many low-level translation errors in the linguistic landscape, such as the wrong use of vocabulary, grammatical errors in sentences, and literal translation without considering the context of the sentences. This reflects that some translators not only lack professional knowledge and cultural background, but also lack professional quality. Translators should have proficient language skills and rich knowledge storage. Therefore, translators should not only master the necessary translation methods and techniques, but also continuously improve their professional abilities, strictly require themselves to cultivate a sense of responsibility and professionalism. Be responsible for the translation and the target audience.

Secondly, for colleges and universities, teachers should cultivate qualified and excellent translators for national translation work. At present, most of the graduates have acquired good knowledge of books, but is deficient in practice. Therefore, while teaching theoretical knowledge, colleges and universities should change the concept of education, pay attention to improving students' practical ability, strengthen practical training for students, and provide practical opportunities for students to flexibly apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned. Only by attaching importance to the combination of theoretical knowledge and practice can excellent translators be cultivated.

Finally, the failure of the relevant government departments to formulate sound policy guidance programmes and monitoring mechanisms is the indirect cause of these problems. This shows that the Qingdao government is not strict enough in supervising the translation of the language landscape in Laoshan scenic area. For example, different translations appear in the same

linguistic landscape in the same scenic spot. Therefore, relevant government departments should formulate complete policy guidelines and set up standardized monitoring and review mechanism. On the one hand, the relevant local administrative departments in Qingdao should pay attention to the requirements of national policies for translation and timely communicate them to the relevant departments so that the translation of the language landscape of various scenic spots meets the requirements of the state. On the other hand, relevant departments should perform their duties and strictly control the qualifications of translators in the translation market.

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