

Study on the English Translation of Ningbo Tourism Texts from the Perspective of Cognitive Construal

-- A Case Study of the English Version of *Ningbo Tour*

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Abstract

At present, there are few studies on Chinese and English tourism texts from the perspective of cognitive construal. This paper takes the Chinese-English translation text of *Ningbo Tour* as the research object, and tries to apply it to the translation of tourism materials with the help of different levels of cognitive construal, such as perspective, selection, prominence, dynamicity, imagination, so as to explore the embodiment of cognition in the translation of tourism texts, prove the practicability and uniqueness of cognitive construal theory in the English translation of tourism materials, and help the effective output of Ningbo culture and Chinese culture.

Keywords

Cognitive Construal, *Ningbo Tour*, English Translation of Tourism Text.

1. Introduction

The report of the twentieth National Congress of the Communist Party of China pointed out that, "We will accelerate the development of China's discourse and narrative systems, better tell China's stories, make China's voice heard, and present a China that is credible, appealing, and respectable." The correct dissemination of diverse city images is the basis of shaping the image of China as a responsible major country. Ningbo is a port city along the southeast coast of China and the economic center of the southern part of the Yangtze River Delta. It has a long history, a splendid culture and many famous scenic spots. It is also one of the five cities co-hosted by the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou. Therefore, enhancing the attractiveness and voice of Ningbo in domestic and international development and competition is conducive to promoting Ningbo to build a good international image.

The external publicity of a region is mainly reflected in its tourism text. In recent years, most scholars have analyzed the translation strategies of publicity materials from the perspective of Functionalist Translation Theory, such as Skopos Theory, and relevance theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson and so on. However, if the theme of "cognitive construal" is searched in CNKI, it can be found that there are 112 relevant Chinese academic journals, 96 academic papers (Doctor 9, Master 18) and one academia in domestic conference as well as 12 foreign academic journals, 7 conferences; most of them use the study of metaphorical cognitive translation to make a deep analysis of the translation of literary works or poems, the analysis of national image discourse construction and the analysis of political publicity materials. However, there are few studies on tourism publicity materials from the perspective of cognitive construal.

This paper will use the five construal methods in the theory of "cognitive construal" in cognitive translology to explore the English translation strategies of Ningbo tourism publicity materials based on some texts in *Ningbo Tour*, so as to provide some ideas for the Chinese-English translation of Ningbo tourism publicity materials, attract more international friends to visit,

promote the international development of coastal port city tourism, and have some inspiration for the translation and dissemination of Ningbo culture.

2. Cognitive Construal

“Construal” refers to the ability of people to conceive and portray the same situation in alternate ways. (Langacker 1987: 138). Cognitive construal refers to the subject needs to perform a series of analytical operations on the received information in the human brain in order to carry out purposeful activities.

Initially, Langacker defined the above ability as “image” rather than “construal”. Later, in order to distinguish the term “image” in cognitive psychology, Langacker first introduced the term “construal” in 1987, focusing on the individual’s subjective initiative, emphasizing that people observe the situation or explain the content in different ways in order to achieve the purpose of thinking and expression, rather than simply the abstract representation formed in the process of people’s perception and experience (Shan Weilong, 2017). Later, Langacker proposed five dimensions of cognitive construal in 2008, they are specificity, scope, background, perspective and salience. When people translate, they can use several ways to explain the scene and carry out translation research, such as adjusting the details, selecting the scope, determining the perspective, and highlighting the focus. However, due to the large scope of division, Langacker redefined the five dimensions of construal in 2019, they are perspective, selection, prominence, dynamicity, imagination, making up for the previous five old dimensions of cognitive construal. The dimensions seem to be independent of each other, but in fact they are mutually inclusive.

Based on Langacker’s five newly proposed construal methods in 2019, this paper will explore the translator’s understanding of the text about *Ningbo Tour* and the construal angle of Ningbo scenic spot introduction.

3. Text Analysis

(1) Perspective

Perspective refers to the space-time position angle and the attitude and direction of people’s observation and understanding of things (Wen and Xiao, 2019). In *Ningbo Tour*, due to the particularity of the function of publicity materials, the influence of time and space on the translation of English tourism texts is less operable. Therefore, this paper will focus on the attitude and direction of position. Wang Yin (2013) points out that domestication and foreignization strategies in translation can be regarded as selecting different perspectives, one is based on the source language perspective (source-language-orientedness), and the other is based on the target language perspective (target-language-orientedness). The choice of perspective is also closely related to the purpose of translation. For example, the conventional translation of “饺子”, based on the perspective of the source language, the Chinese people naturally think that the white skin is wrapped in various fillings, while based on the perspective of the target language, the foreigners associate with “汤团 (a small ball of dough)” when they think of “dumpling”, which causes the semantic asymmetry between the two languages. The purpose of translating publicity materials is to promote the unique culture of each place. Therefore, when there are translation obstacles caused by semantic vacancy or semantic dislocation, in order to facilitate foreign readers to better understand the local culture contained in the text, the perspective will be switched to translation. Similarly, the shift of perspective is also reflected in the English translation of Ningbo tourism publicity materials, such as :

The original text : 溪口因剡溪之水而得名, 剡溪发源于剡界岭的大湖山,由新昌入奉化境, 由西向东流过全镇..

Version: Xikou, or literally the Mouth of the River, its name from the Shanxi River, a river that lies in the Dahu Mountain of Shanjieling Range. from which it winds its way through Xinchang County to Fenghua, wherein it runs across Fenghua Town from west to east..

Xikou Town belongs to Fenghua District, Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province. Therefore, the translator translates the whole town into “Fenghua Town” rather than “the whole town”, taking into account the differences between the source language readers and the target language readers in the process of “construal” in their mind respectively. The original text of Ningbo Tour is written from the perspective of Chinese people. Based on the context of mother tongue, readers of source language can quickly understand that “全镇” is “Fenghua District”. However, due to the following interference of place names such as “Shanjieling range” and “Xinchang County”, it is difficult for the target language readers to quickly understand the specific town names they refer to. In order to prevent the target language readers from failing to construe the word “全镇”, the translator has construed it at least three times. The first time is from “全镇” to “溪口镇”, the second time is from “溪口镇” to “奉化区”, and the third time is from “奉化区” to “Fenghua Town”, which maximizes the construal equivalence between the source language and the target language. Therefore, when translating tourism publicity materials, the translator should switch the perspective and translate the text from the perspective of the target language readers, which is conducive to the readers to fully grasp the geographical location and cultural background of Xikou, attract foreign readers to travel in Ningbo, and enhance the local image of sub-provincial cities and even their municipal districts.

The original text: 溪口即是弥勒菩萨的道场, 也是我国近代历史人物蒋介石、蒋经国父子的家乡。

Version: It is the place where Maritretya Buddha practiced his Buddhist rites and also the hometown of Mr. Chiang Kai-Shek and his son Chiang Ching-Kuo---two important historical figures in the modern history of China.

In Chinese-English translation, the translator should take the initiative to switch the perspective and translate from the perspective of the target language readers, find out the real subject or implicit subject existing in the original text, understand more information as much as possible, further improve the readability of the version of the texts, reduce the cognitive load of the target language readers on the original text, and achieve equivalence at the cognitive level to a certain extent. In this case, the translator should translate from the perspective of countries and regions where English is the main language, so that foreign readers can better understand the basic content of the text, fully understand the city of Ningbo, attract foreign tourists with interesting history, and establish a pluralistic image of the city, which is conducive to shaping the image of China as a great power. If the English translation still adheres to the original text, to put it another way, to translate from the perspective of the Chinese people, from “我国” to “our country”, it will lead English readers to realize the failure of cognitive construal of the original text and they will also carry the question whether their own country has this history when they were reading the Ningbo Tour. Therefore, the translator should translate the tourism text from the perspective of the target readers, that is, to indicate the implied effective subject to the readers.

(2) Selection

Selection means that people can observe and express a thing or scene from different aspects. (Langacker 2019). The manipulation of selection can be achieved through adjustment of specificity and so on. This article will focus on the analysis of the adoption of specificity. Specificity refers to the translator could adopt translating method for detailedness or ellipsis

when translating different types of texts according to the potential needs of the target language readers. Detailedness refers to the translation skills that add and explain the differences between Chinese culture and other cultures or the rest that help the target language readers to better obtain the cultural information in the text. Ellipsis is to translate from the perspective of the target language readers by means of omission. In Ningbo Tour, the method of adjusting the degree of specificity is widely used to construe the article, such as:

The original text: 溪口因剡溪之水而得名, 剡溪发源于剡界岭的大湖山,由新昌入奉化境...

Version: Xikou, or literally the Mouth of the River, derives its name from the Shanxi River, a river that originates in the Dahu Mountain of Shanjieling Range, from which it winds its way through Xinchang County to Fenghua...

Here, the translator adopts the combination of transliteration and annotation amplification. When translating place names, only adopt one method of transliteration cannot make foreign readers fully understand the original meaning of place names. On the contrary, it will confuse the target language readers and cause the failure of understanding the text. Therefore, according to the understanding of the source language from the perspective of the target language, the words "or literally the Mouth of the River" are added to the translation to supplement the essential connotation of the word "Xikou", so that the translation is more conducive to the understanding of the target language readers and better spread the Ningbo story to other countries.

The original version: 为何取名丰镐房呢? 原来蒋介石系蒋氏家族第二十八代子孙, 属周字辈(谱名周泰,乳名瑞元),而丰(邑)、镐(京)又分别是西周文王和武王所建都城, 后来,蒋介石给两个儿子蒋经国取名建丰、蒋纬国取名建镐, 也是寓自于此。

Version: Chiang Kai-Shek is the lineal 28th descendent, or Zhou generation, of the Chiang's clan (his genealogical name is Zhoutai and his pet name Ruiyuan). The name Fenggao comes from the names two ancient capital cities: Feng, the Capital City erected by King of Wen; and Gao, the Capital City by King of Wu in the West Zhou Dynasty (B. C.11th century ~ 771 B.C.). To his two sons Chiang Ching-Kuo and Chang Wei-Kuo, Chiang Kai-Shek gave them courtesy names Jian-Feng and Jian. Gao respectively, after the house name. The moral of the names is that Chiang expected that his sons could be great men like the great kings in ancient China.

In this case, the translator creatively construes the differences between the cultural context of the source language and the cultural context of the target language. In the first place, the original text is concise and clear, directly pointing out the background of the "Western Zhou" era. If the translator directly transplants the culture of the source language without changing the original text into "the King of Wu", the target language readers will be difficult to understand because of the lack of background knowledge and history in the cultural context of the source language. It will be difficult to understand which emperor Wu Wang was in power for five thousand years in China. Therefore, the translator adopts the translation technique of annotation: "King of Wu in the West Zhou Dynasty (B. C.11th century ~ 771 B. C.)." to supplement the cultural factors missing in the original text and specify the object.

Second, Chinese emphasizes parataxis and English emphasizes hypotaxis. The logic of the author of the original text is: the origin of Fenghao House-the historical origin of the Western Zhou Dynasty - Chiang Kai-shek named his son Jianfeng and Jianhao. According to this logic, the source language readers can quickly understand that the Chinese word "寓自于此" refers to the things which was already referred to in the previous text, but the target language readers can not, but will wonder whether there is a connection or logic between these sentences. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator adjusts the degree of "specificity" and adds a lot of additional content to the predicative clause, which can not only understand the origin of Fenghao House, but also make a further specific description of the origin of Fenghao House. At the same time, it also clarifies the reasons for Jiang Jianfeng and Jiang Jianhao, the two sons of

Chiang Kai-shek, "from this meaning that his two children can become as good as King Wen and King Wu of the Western Zhou Dynasty", so as to help the target language readers better understand the word "Fenghao".

In view of the culture of the target language and the conflict between the source language and the target language, or the cultural image that the target language readers cannot understand after literal translation, the translator first construes the text, and then translates it by adding annotations, explanations, domestication and other translation methods to increase the target language readers' cognition of the translated text.

(3) Prominence

Prominence, just as the name implies, highlights. The language structure, grammar and syntax of the in-coming translation of language and the out-going translation of target language are different, and even the understanding and exertion of the target language by different translators affect the presentation of the final translation. Each translator will highlight what he wants to emphasize to the target readers. Therefore, it can be seen that prominence is a subjective way of text construal translation. Ningbo Tour also reflects the translator's highlighting operation of text translation in many places, such as :

The original text : 第一室介绍了奉化的历史沿革, 土特名产, 展出出土文物, 有新石器时代石犁、石斧、西周印纹硬陶、东汉青瓷罐等;

Version: Here in Exhibition Hall One, visitors can see collections of local and special products and learn about the history of Fenghua City through the unearthed articles including stone ploughs, stone axes of the New Stone Age, potteries with carved lines of the Western Zhou Dynasty (B. C. 11th century ~ 771 B. C.)

In this case, the translator does not translate it literally into: Exhibition Hall One introduces the history of Fenghua City and the collections of local and special products... Instead, it switches prominence and elaborates from the perspective of tourists rather than the exhibition room of Xikou Museum, which is more in line with the thinking mode of the target language readers. In addition, the logic between the sentences in the translation of target language is more closely related than that in the translation of source language. The translator highlights the content of "local and special products" and places the content of "local and special products" in front of "the history of Fenghua City" in order to highlight the logical relationship between the two. The translator first construes the content of the original text: First, tourists enter the exhibition room one, where are many native products. Secondly, they learn the history of Fenghua from the unearthed cultural relics, and then use the preposition "through" to lead to the specific unearthed cultural relics. When translating, the translator then highlights the structure of the key content, which lessen the burden of target reader's cognitive construal.

The original text: 蒋母墓道, 它主要包括石牌坊、跨路亭(又叫下桥亭)、八角亭、墓庐、坟墓等建筑。石牌坊有三个门: 中门和左右边门, 因石牌坊中门刻有“蒋母墓地”四字, 故从入口至坟墓统称“蒋母墓道”。从石牌坊到坟墓, 是一条长668米的卵石路, 夹在松林之中。

Version: Along the Passage to the Tomb of Chiang Kai-Shek's Mother are such places of interest as the Memorial Gateway, the Kualu Pavilion and others. At the entrance to the passage is the Memorial Gateway, a stone structure which has three gates, the middle gate, the left gate and the right gate. Over the middle gate is inscribed "Passage to the Tomb of Chiang Kai-Shek's Mother". The passage is a 668-meter-long pebble-paved path which runs through the woods of pine trees.

In this example, the translator highlights the status of the word "passage" and takes "passage" as the starting point of the thematic discourse in this text. When describing the "Tomb of Chiang Kai-Shek's Mother", "Memorial Gateway" and "pebble-paved path", the translator takes passage as the theme, and then makes a concrete description of these three places. The translator did

not pay too much attention to the structure of the original text, and translated the original text word by word. For example, in order to ensure the coherence of the post-translation text, the translator chose not to translate “从入口至坟墓” and “从石牌坊到坟墓”. Instead, use the word “passage” to concatenate the whole passage.

As far as the language structure of the target language is concerned, although this way of construal deviates from the structure of the original text, the translator’s translation is more easily accepted by the readers. The translation according to the parallel propulsion mode is more in line with the logic of the target language readers’ thinking, giving full play to the translator’s subjectivity, and exporting Ningbo’s regional characteristics and traditional culture in the form that the target language readers like to read in their usual way.

(4) Dynamicity

Dynamicity refers to the process of psychological scanning of the text scene in advance, including two sub-dimensions: time dimension and space dimension.

Langacker proposed to cut in from the perspective of time dimension in 2019, and mental scanning can be divided into sequential scanning and summary scanning. Sequential scanning means that the translator processes the text scene in a certain order, but each part of the event is not cumulative after activation. Summary scanning means that the translator deals with a whole scene from a holistic perspective, and the scanning content is cumulative and holistic. In Ningbo Tour, the translator adopts a certain dynamic operation both from the time dimension and space dimension.

From the time dimension, for example :

The original text: 蒋介石为了能登高远眺，1929年出资拆除旧武岭庵，挖低山岭，拓宽道路，建仿古城楼，飞檐翘瓴，巍峨庄严，并取名“武岭”。

Version: In 1929, Chiang Kai-Shek, at his own expenses, had the old Wuling Temple removed, the hill lowered, the path broadened out, and had a gate tower built over the site of the removed Wuling Temple. This gateway is a pseudo-classic building, magnificent and stately with its upturned eaves and curling up roofs. Chiang Kai-Shek named this gate tower “Wuling” or “Valiance Hill”.

In this case, the translator uses two scanning methods : sequential scanning and summary scanning. The sequential scanning is reflected in the translator’s understanding of the origin of the Wulinmen’s construction, and activates each event step by step. First, “had the old Wuling Temple removed”, and then “the hill lowered”, and “the path broadened out”, and finally “had a gate tower” ; the general description is reflected in the general description of the built scene. Through the Chiang Kai-Shek “at his own expenses”, it summarizes the facts and covers several things that Chiang Kai-shek did in building the Wulin Gate. The gradual description and the general description are connected with each other, and finally a relatively complete scene is presented. When translating, the translator chooses the scanning method of the author of the target language to achieve the principle of “faithfulness”, which is also in line with the psychological expectations of the target language readers.

The space dimension of mental scanning is divided into “up-down”, “left-right”, “far-near” and other different directions for mental scanning, such as : 1) The first row of 10 people, from left to right number 5 is Xiao Ming. 2) There are 10 people in the first row, and the sixth from right to left is Xiao Ming. The mental scanning mode of case 1 is from left to right, while case 2 is from right to left. It can be seen that different translators can adopt different psychological scanning paths when construing the same scene, and the resulting translations also have different effects. From the space dimension, for example :

The Original text:跨进前厅，迎面即可望见屋顶正中的堆塑，中间是“福禄寿三星高照”，两边是“双龙戏珠”。报本堂走廊两端壁上有两幅彩画，东首是“八仙过海”，西首是“姜太公钓鱼”……

Version:In the antechamber, what immediately come into one's view are a group of wooden carvings in relief right on the horizontal beam. In the middle is a sculpture called *Three Constellations of Happiness, Fortune and Longevity*, and on the left and right is the figure of "Two Dragons Playing a Pearl" . On the walls at the east and west ends of the corridor of Bao Ben Tang, are two paintings: the one on the east is called "the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea" (in the legend), and the one on the west is called "Jiang Taigong At Angling" (Jiang Taigong, also named Jiang Ziya, a marquis in the Zhou Dynasty, who assisted King Wen and King Wu of the Zhou Kingdoms)

When describing the architectural structure of the whole Fenghao room, the translator starts from the perspective of tourists when step into the lobby, scan and reinterpret the whole space from near to far. First, the translator describe the heap of plastic in the middle of the roof which can be easily seen by tourists when they raise their heads. Secondly, he describe the two ends of far away corridor of the newspaper hall. Thirdly, the psychological operation path from east to west is carried out at both ends by the translator, that is clarifying the placement of colored paintings respectively in the East and West.

Here, the translator carries out translation activities according to the spatial structure described by the target language, that is, the translator select the scanning method of the author of the source language. This scanning method allows the target language readers to follow the perspective of the book to visit the Fenghao Room, which is in line with the human's cognitive order of new things. The information projected in the eyes is processed in a timely manner, and the geographical location, design situation, and characteristics of objective things are quickly grasped. Although the source language and target language are different, the "dynamic psychological scanning process" of the cognitive world is very similar, which also provides the possibility for the smooth and faithful translation of the language.

(5) Imagination

Due to the distinctive history and customs between different languages combined with the limitation of the translator's own level, there is a certain cultural inequality between the source language and the target language. Therefore, the translator needs to process the related concepts of events and objects in his mind at multiple levels (Langacker 2019) in order to produce a translation that conforms to the cognitive characteristics and expression habits of the target language readers. The translator has carried out imaginative cognitive operation in some parts of Ningbo Tour. For example:

The original text:1939年 12 月12日日机轰炸深口，她（毛福梅）逃向糜河殿(祖庙)时被炸死于后门短墙下。蒋经国得知后马上从江西赶回，愤书“以血洗血”四字。

Version:At the news of his mother's death, Chiang Ching-Kuo rushed home and with bitter hatred towards the Japanese enemy, he wrote "Eye for Eye and Tooth for Tooth" ...

The mistranslation of "Washing Blood with Blood" into "Wash Blood with Blood" or "Blood for Blood" is likely to cause cultural mistranslation. The mistranslation of the former is confined to the framework of the original text, without considering that the word-to-word translation with unequal structure cannot convey the correct information to the readers. The mistranslation of the latter does not take into account the phenomenon of cultural loss. Here, the translator uses imaginative cognitive operation, according to the context, "Washing Blood with Blood" means to wash the blood of the enemy with the blood of the enemy, referring to Chiang Ching-kuo's determination to kill the enemy and revenge for his mother Mao Fumei. Therefore, the translator has experienced at least two imaginative construals in the translation. The first is to analyze the source and understanding of "washing blood with blood", and the second is to find

the common language similar to the psychological expectation of the target language. The specific event of “revenge” is abstracted, and “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” in the target language is selected, so as to be faithful to the target language and also conform to the description of similar events in the target language.

4. Conclusion

This study will take the five dimensions of Langacker’s new cognitive construal perspective in 2019 as the theoretical basis, aiming at the construal methods adopted in the translation of Chinese-English tourism text materials of *Ningbo Tour*, and combining with specific examples. The translator makes multiple construals of the text before translation, gives full play to his subjective initiative, and actively compensates for the internal cognitive differences between the source language and the target language to achieve the equivalence of translation as much as possible. It proves the uniqueness and practicability of the theory of cognitive construal in the translation of tourism texts and publicity materials, further promotes the interdisciplinary research of cognitive translation and tourism translation research, and provides new ideas for how to correctly translate local tourism texts and publicity materials and disseminate urban culture.

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