

# *Problems and Improvement Strategies of Tourism English Translation under Cultural Differences*

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**Abstract:** As English for special purposes, tourism English plays a very important role in China's tourism industry. However, in the process of real tourism service, due to the great differences between English speaking tourists and Chinese people in the aspects of thinking mode, cultural tradition, religious belief, aesthetic taste and so on, the English introduction of tourist attractions can not accurately convey tourism information. Therefore, according to the stylistic functions of tourism materials, translators should flexibly apply correct and appropriate translation strategies.

## 1. Introduction

In today's international society, China and other countries in the world are getting closer and closer, and the fields of communication are more and more extensive. People urgently want to understand each other more deeply. As a result, along with the international exchanges and exchanges gradually close, tourism English began to emerge. What kind of form can make the excellent cultural tradition of the Chinese nation be recognized by the world, and make the poems, allusions and classic legends with profound cultural deposits be accepted in a limited time. This requires a well-known expression language, namely, tourism English translation in cross-cultural communication. Due to the historical and cultural differences between different regions, the role of translation in the common development of human civilization can not be underestimated<sup>[1]</sup>. Therefore, we should try our best to promote the development of tourism English, that is, should we try our best to domesticate it or keep it westernized? In view of this problem, we should first know what is the essential attribute of translation. To put it simply, translation means that the sender of a culture expresses his own cultural content through language or other forms, so as to transmit it effectively to the greatest extent, and to be accepted by the recipients of other cultures. Translation is a kind of cross language and cross-cultural communication. Therefore, we should translate the original culture into different languages. The other side can understand it according to its own cultural level and fully appreciate its charm. Tourism English is also a language with this function.

## 2. Current Situation of Tourism English Translation

China is an ancient cultural country with a long history. The five thousand years of historical and

cultural accumulation has left us rich tourism resources, attracting a large number of foreign tourists to visit China every year. With the successful holding of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing and the successful exhibition of the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, China's tourism market has been further expanded. According to the prediction of the world tourism organization, by 2020, China will become the world's largest tourist destination, and 13.7 billion people will visit, visit and visit China. China is rich in tourism resources, but its international popularity is not ideal. Most foreigners know little about China's tourist attractions. In recent years, China's major tourist cities and famous scenic spots have published Chinese and English tourist guides, CD-ROM: the government websites of major cities have also set up tourism English special pages, with more detailed contents. However, at present, there is a lack of specialized personnel in this field, and the English level of tour guides in various scenic spots is not uniform, which leads to errors in written and oral translation of tourism English. Therefore, improving the overall level of tourism English translation and improving the translation of the introduction of Chinese tourist attractions and surrounding tourism environment will greatly promote the development of China's tourism industry<sup>[2]</sup>.

### **3. Problems in Tourism English Translation from the Perspective of Cultural Differences**

#### **3.1 On the Color Difference of Words and Expressions**

In Chinese culture, the cultural color of some images is just, but sometimes it is the opposite in western culture. Therefore, in the translation of tourist introduction words, there are often problems in the translation of tour guides because of the different emotional colors in the Chinese and Western cultural background. For example, “dog” has derogatory meanings in Chinese, such as “dog supporting others”, “dog rushing to jump over the wall” and “chicken flying and dog jumping”. However, in western culture, the expression of “dog” is generally commendatory, such as “love me”, Love my dog “and” lucky dog “, so if you don't pay attention to them in the process of translation, it is likely that the foreign tourists can't understand the meaning of the tour guide because of these different emotional words in Chinese and Western cultures<sup>[3]</sup>.

#### **3.2 On the Habit of Chinese and English Expression**

Recently, there is a phenomenon of Chinglish in English learning in China. Although many translated English have the same meaning on the surface, they do not conform to the expression habits in English. This phenomenon is also very common in Tourism English translation. This trend of English translation makes it more difficult for foreign tourists who have little knowledge of Chinese culture to understand and enrich Chinese culture The scenic spots and historic sites<sup>[4]</sup>.

### **4. Tourism English Translation Strategies**

#### **4.1 Transliteration**

Transliteration, also known as literal translation, is mainly aimed at words without profound connotation and cultural background. Some names of people and places are often translated in this way. For example, “Sun Yat Sen” is directly translated into “Sun Zhongshan”, and the place name “Jiangsu” is directly translated into “Jiang Su”. Another way is to use pinyin instead of translation when there is no corresponding word in the target language and foreign tourists are familiar with this cultural phenomenon, such as kongfu and Fengshui<sup>[5]</sup>.

## 4.2 Combination of Transliteration and Free Translation

For some unfamiliar words, we can use transliteration and free translation. For example, Tiananmen Square can be directly translated into “Tian An Men Guang Chang”. However, foreign tourists who are not familiar with the word “square” will not know whether Tiananmen Square is a square or a park. If the free translation method is adopted to translate it into “naturally peace square”, it will be completely westernized, which can not convey the specific information of the scenic spot, and tourists will also doubt the meaning of it. So at this time, the combination of transliteration and free translation is adopted to translate it into “Tian anmen Square”. In this way, foreign tourists can not only understand the essence of the scenic spot, but also know the name of the scenic spot itself and other information, which is the cultural sustenance for foreign tourists to better understand the scenic spots in China. China's ancient fable is also suitable for the combination of transliteration and free translation, because the names of ancient fable mostly condensed the essence of the story, but it is not a problem for Chinese people who are familiar with China's culture. But if there is no additional explanation for foreign tourists, it is totally incomprehensible. For example, when a translator tells the fable of “Yugong moving mountains”, it is easy for foreign tourists to misunderstand him. If he transliterates directly, it is easy for foreign tourists to regard Yugong as a real fool. Therefore, when translating, we should not only translate Yugong Yishan, but also add some explanatory sentences. “Yu Gong, the little old man who moved the mountain in a Chinese fault, is a symbol of persistence”<sup>[6]</sup>.

## 4.3 Addition Method

Chinese culture is extensive and profound, and Chinese has a long history and contains profound cultural implications. The names and explanations of cultural relics in tourist attractions are highly concise, which contains more profound meanings. Literal translation alone can not make people fully understand. At this time, we need to add some words to explain them. For example, “up above there is heaven; down below there are Suzhou and Hangzhou”, which literally translates as “up above there is heaven; down below there are Suzhou and Hangzhou”. Such translation can only make foreign tourists understand the degree of “heaven in heaven, Suzhou and Hangzhou on earth”, but can not understand why Suzhou and Hangzhou on earth can be equivalent to heaven<sup>[7]</sup>.

## 4.4 Subtractive

Some Chinese tourist introductions are rich in rhetoric and complex in format, and they are used in antithesis, rhyme and even parallel prose. If such tourist introduction words are translated into English, if they are translated word by word, the translated English tourist words will be delayed, lengthy and difficult to understand. In this case, the deletion method should be adopted to delete some unnecessary modifications and tourism publicity irrelevant to the theme, so as to restore all the information in the tourism introduction as succinctly as possible. For example, in a Chinese introduction, Confucius is introduced in this way: “when Confucius is mentioned in China, from the old man with white hair to the naive urchin, no one knows. In order to commemorate him, people have built temples to worship him in many places, Tianjin is no exception.” In this Chinese introduction, the words “white haired old man”, “naive urchin” and “no one knows, nobody knows” are very troublesome and complicated to translate into English, and they will also make the guests and guests dominate the country, so that foreign tourists can not find the key point of the introduction. If we adopt the method of deletion, we can find everywhere in China and Tianjin is No In this way, the repeated sentences in the introduction of Chinese are deleted, and the “white haired old man” and “naive urchin” are simplified, and the information to be expressed is taken into

account, which makes it easier for foreign tourists to understand<sup>[8]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

In a word, tourism English translation, as a kind of cross-cultural communication activity, contains rich cultural factors and embodies the characteristics of cross-cultural communication. In the process of tourism English translation, it is necessary to pay attention to and deeply understand the differences between Chinese and Western ways of thinking and culture, not only to interpret the source language symbols, but also to use appropriate strategies to decipher the source language non-verbal symbols, that is, the cultural connotation. The reasonable treatment of cultural differences can not only accurately transmit the cultural information in tourism materials to overseas tourists, but also help Chinese culture to expand its influence in the world, so as to achieve the goal of cross-cultural communication, and lay a solid foundation to build China into a “strong tourism country in the world”.

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