

Eco-Translatology-Based Analysis of Chinese Yao Ethnic Group's Costumes in Foreign Publicity Translation—A Case Study of Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

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Keywords: foreign publicity translation; Yao ethnic group; ethnic costumes; eco-translatology

Abstract: As a key window for foreign tourists to understand the history and culture of the Chinese Yao ethnic group, the standardization of Publicity Translation in Yao ethnic Museum appears especially important. By applying the eco-translatology, the entire translation ecological environment of the museum has been considered in the Chinese-English translation of the museum in this paper. Based on a case study of Jinxiu Yao ethnic museum, it is found that different translation methods should be adopted for different dimensions. From language dimension, the translation methods of transliteration, literal translation, and transliteration and annotation can be adopted in the foreign publicity translation. From cultural dimension, the translation methods of domestication, foreignization, and cultural mediation can be adopted in it. The methods of structural adaptation and contextual adaptation can be adjusted according to actual communication scenarios to help foreign tourists to better understand the costume culture of Chinese Yao ethnic group for promoting the spread of Chinese culture around the world.

1. Introduction

Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum is the first museum of Yao ethnic minority built in China. The museum collects almost all types and styles of Yao costumes in different regions and cultures of various countries. The importance of the quality of its foreign publicity and translation is self-evident. Through field research, the author's team found that there are still problems in the English translation of Yao costumes in this museum. Based on this, this article will analyze the problems and countermeasures in the English translation of Yao costumes in this museum from the perspective of eco-translatology according to the characteristics of Yao costumes and the culture embodied in Yao costumes. Some translation modes and strategies are proposed in order to provide reference for the translation of the names of ethnic minority costumes in the future and promote the transmission of ethnic minority culture at home and abroad.

2. Review of the Translation of Yao Ethnic Costumes

At present, there is still a relatively lack of research on the English translation of Yao costumes. Searching with the keywords “English translation of Yao costumes” and “Foreign Publicity Translation of Yao costumes” in Web of Science, there are no related result. And in CNKI, there are

2 results and 1 result respectively. It can be seen that the field of English translation of Yao costumes still needs further research, and the research on the translation of Yao costumes from the perspective of ecological translation is still blank. From the perspective of eco-translatology, this paper studies the translation of Yao costume names collected through field research based on the three dimensions of eco-translatology, and tries to propose practical translation optimization strategies.

3. Analysis of Inaccurate Translation of Yao Ethnic Costume Names

In the translation of Yao ethnic costume names, inaccuracy frequently occurs, which is related to inconsistent translations, mistranslation, improper handling of modifiers. Here are some examples.

Table 1: Examples of ST, OT and RT of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

No	Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
1	茶山瑶男服	Tea mountain Yao man's clothing	Men's costumes of Chashan Yao
2	红头盘瑶女服	Red dish yao woman dress	Women's costumes of Hongtou Pan Yao, a Branch of Yao Ethnic Group
3	尖头盘瑶女服	Pointy plate yao woman's dress	Women's Costume of Jiantou Pan Yao, a Branch of Pan Yao in Jinxiu County
4	广西金秀县岭六段茶山瑶女服	Jinxiu County, Guangxi sixduan Chashan Yao Woman's dress	Woman's dress of Chashan Yao in Liudian Village, Jinxiu County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

3.1 Inconsistent Translations

The phenomenon of inconsistency occurs frequently in the English translation of ethnic minority costumes.

In Table 1, Tea mountain Yao and Chashan Yao refers to the same ethnic group. In fact, this ethnic group is an important branch of Yao ethnic group among the five main branches of Yao ethnic group in Jinxiu Yao Autonomous County, and is named after its residence. The meaning implied in the name of this branch of the Yao ethnic group is people who live on the mountain. Therefore, translating it as Chashan Yao is understandable, but translating it as Tea Mountain Yao may cause ambiguity. It can be seen that the standardization and unification of Yao costumes is imperative.

3.2 Mistranslation

The names of Yao costumes contains the characteristic cultural information of the Yao ethnic group, which is the embodiment of the culture of the Yao ethnic group. In translation, due to cultural misunderstandings, there may be mistranslation.



Figure 1: The sample costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

In Table 1, the source text 2 is translated as “Red dish yao woman dress”. As is shown in figure 1, the headdress of this costume is composed of three pieces, which are head-cover, red brocade belt and plaid fabrics. And the color of its brocade is red. Therefore, “red” should refer to the color of its headdress. There is an error in the translation.

Here is another example. In Table 1, the source text 3 is translated as “Pointy plate yao woman’s dress”. As is shown in figure 1, the author found that the headdress of the costume is shaped like a large bamboo shoot, hence the name. The translation is wrong. It can be seen that the translator must know more about the cultural information in the source language, so as to achieve the purpose of spreading the ethnic culture.

3.3 Improper Handling of Modifiers

In addition to the central word, the names of ethnic costumes is generally composed of the following components: material, shape, usage, applicable gender, applicable group, pattern, decoration, ethnicity, dynasty, meaning, etc. The central word refers to the component modified by the modifier.

After field research, the author found that the introduction mode of Yao ethnic costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum is basically as follows: 1. region + gender + ethnic group + central word; 2. ethnic group + material + central word. It can be seen that these introductions are basically in the form of attributive + central word. In Chinese, attributives are generally placed before the central word, but in English, attributives can be placed before or after the central word. Therefore, the translator needs to adjust the position of the modifier according to the language expression habits, and deal with the position of modification between these components.[1] The description of the names of ethnic costumes in the museum is relatively detailed, which leads to the result that there are many modifiers before the central words, so it is easy to have the problem of improper handling of modifiers in the process of the English translation.

For example, in Table 1, the source text 4 is translated into English as “Jinxiu County, Guangxi sixduan Chashan Yao Woman’s dress”. In Chinese, the central word is often placed behind. In the original translation, the village name is translated as “sixduan (unintelligible) and placed before the central word”. The more appropriate translation should be “Woman’s dress of Chashan Yao in Liudian Village, Jinxiu County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region”.

4. Translation Strategies of Yao Ethnic Costumes Based on Eco-translatology

4.1 Conversion in Language Dimension

In eco-translatology, language dimension refers to the translator’s adaptive transformation of language forms during the translation process, that is, emphasizing the structure and form of language. The translator should refer to the vocabulary, semantics, expression habits, etc. of the source language to make an adaptive selection and transformation of the language form.[2] Through the research on the English translation of the costume names in the Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum, this paper finds that translation optimization methods such as transliteration, literal translation, and transliteration and annotation can be adopted in language dimension.

4.1.1 Transliteration

Due to the cultural differences between English and Chinese, some words have no correspondence or similar expressions at all. This phenomenon is generally called the phenomenon of complete cultural vacancy. In this case, the use of transliteration is more appropriate.

Table 2: Examples of ST, OT and RT of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

No	Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
1	六巷花篮瑶女盛装	Six lane basket yao women dress up	Women's Dress of Hualan Yao in Liuxiang Village
2	金秀盘瑶婚礼服	Kim Xiupan yao Wedding dress	Wedding costumes of Pan Yao in Jinxiu County
3	茶山瑶男服	Tea mountain Yao man's clothing	Men's costumes of Chashan Yao
4	花篮瑶女童服	Flower basket Yao girl's dress	Girl's costumes of Hualan Yao
5	山子瑶女童服	Yamasaki Yao Girl's dress	Girl's costumes of Shanzi Yao

In Table 2, the four branches of the Yao ethnic group in the source text have no corresponding translations in English. With the deepening of cultural exchanges between China and the West, as the main branches of the Yao nationality, the meanings embodied in the names of these branches of the Yao ethnic group will gradually become familiar to Western people. Therefore, in the revised translation, the transliteration method is used to translate these major branches, which not only streamlines but also retains the characteristics of the source language culture.

4.1.2 Literal translation

Taking the source text, the original translation of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum and the revised translation listed in Table 2 as examples, the categories of these costumes in the source text can be translated as “Women’s Dress”, “Wedding Costume”, “Men’s Costume” and “Girl’s Costume” rather than “Wedding dress”, “women dress up”, “man’s clothing” and “girl’s dress”. Through literal translation, the translation can retain the language characteristics of the source language to the greatest extent, and it is also easy to be accepted by the target language readers.[3]

4.1.3 Transliteration+Annotation Method

In the English translation of Yao costumes, there are words with profound Chinese cultural connotations. If the transliteration method or literal translation method is used, it will still cause difficulties for Western readers to understand. Then the transliteration+annotation method can be applied.

Table 3: Examples of ST, OT and RT of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

No	Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
1	红头盘瑶女服	Red dish yao woman dress	Women's costumes of Hongtou Pan Yao, a Branch of Yao Ethnic Group
2	广西凌云县	Lingyun County, Guangxi Backlong Yao women's clothing	Women's costumes of Beilong Yao, a Branch of Yao Ethnic Group, in Lingyun
3	广西凤山县	Fengshan County, Guangxi Golden teeth Yao female dress	Women's costumes of Jinya Yao, a Branch of Yao Ethnic Group, in Fengshan
4	巴马蓝靛瑶女服	Bama indigo Violent dress	Women's costumes of Landian Yao, a Branch of Yao Ethnic Group, in Bama County

In table3, the branches of the Yao ethnic group are named after one of their characteristics. Taking the branches of the Yao ethnic group in source text 1 as an example, during the translation process, if it is only transliterated as “Hongtou Pan Yao”, English readers may be confused. But if it is translated literally as “Red Head Pan Yao”, English readers may be confused to think that maybe their heads are red. So the use of transliteration and annotation can help English readers better understand the connotation of these costumes.

4.2 Coordination in Cultural Dimension

The selection and transformation in cultural dimension requires the translator to adapt to the

entire cultural system to which the language belongs—that is, the cultural ecology, and pay attention to the transmission of cultural connotations during the translation process.

The cultural dimension focuses on the cultural factors displayed by the source language, and there are obvious cultural characteristics and cultural symbols in cultural dimension. In this dimension, there are two main processing methods in the process of translation. One is to find the cultural counterpart in the target language, and the other is to explain the cultural elements in the target language in the form of annotations.

Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator should give a specific explanation of the source language on the basis of understanding the cultural background. The paper finds that translation optimization methods such as domestication, foreignization and cultural mediation can be adopted in cultural dimension. Here are some examples.

Table 4: Examples of ST, OT and RT of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

No	Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
1	广西金秀县岭六段 茶山瑶女服	Guangxi Liudian County Chashan Yao Woman's dress	Women's Dress of Chashan Yao in Liudian Village, Jinxiu County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region
2	尖头盘瑶女服	Pointy plate yao woman's dress	Women's Costume of Jiantou Pan Yao, a Branch of Pan Yao in Jinxiu County
3	花篮瑶女童服	Flower basket Yao girl's dress	Girl's costumess of Hualan Yao
4	坳瑶男服	Col yao male clothing	Men's costumess of Ao Yao
5	山子瑶女童服	Yamasaki Yao Girl's dress	Girl's costumess of Shanzi Yao

4.2.1 Domestication

In the process of translation, domestication strategies focus on bringing the cultural connotations contained in the source language to the target language. The differences in social environment, customs and other aspects of English and Chinese cultures lead to differences in their language habits. Therefore, these differences need to be reasonably converted in translation.[4] In the names of Yao costumes, many place names appear. These place names are used as attributives in Chinese, but in English, they are generally used as adverbial words.

In Table 4, if the source text 1 is translated as “Guangxi Liudian County Chashan Yao Woman’s dress”, this does not conform to the English expression habits. But if it is domesticated as “Women’s dress of Chashan Yao in Liudian Village, Jinxiu County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region”, the original attributive is changed into an adverbial of location and placed behind, which is more in line with English expression habits.

4.2.2 Foreignization

In the process of translation, foreignization focus on inclining the cultural connotation contained in the source language to the source language.[5] In the names of Yao costumes, many words that can represent the characteristics of the Yao ethnic group appear.

In Table 4, the original translation of the source text 2 is “Pointy plate yao woman’s dress”. If foreign readers read it, they may mistakenly think that this branch of Yao ethnic group has a pointed plate on its head. It is neither in line with the reason for the name, nor conducive to the spread of Yao culture. After referring to the relevant material, the author find that it is a branch of Pan Yao, and the shape of its headdress is pointy. But if all these underlined meanings are translated, the translation will be very lengthy. So it can be translated as “Women’s Costume of Jiantou Pan Yao, a Branch of Pan Yao in Jinxiu County”, and pictures can also be added. In this way, foreign readers can clearly understand the clothing features of this branch of the Yao ethnic group and the reason

for its name.

4.2.3 Cultural Mediation

The Yao costumes contain many characteristic cultures of the Yao ethnic group. In some cases, domestication and foreignization cannot solve the problems of cultural differences. In this case, cultural mediation can be applied to appropriately omit certain cultural factors to make the translation more readable.[6]

In table 4, the names of the branches of Yao ethnic group in source text 3, source text 4 and source text 5 can be translated as “Hualan Yao”, “Ao Yao”, and “Shanzi Yao” respectively rather than “Flower basket Yao”, “Col yao”, “Yamasaki Yao” or “Shanziyao” respectively. Since these branches of Yao ethnic groups have no corresponding expressions in English, it would be more appropriate to omit some cultural factors appropriately by adopting cultural mediation method.

4.3 Adaptation in Communication Dimension

The communicative dimension refers to the translator’s communicative processing of the source language in the process of translation. During translation, the translator should also pay attention to whether the communicative intention of the original text can be effectively conveyed in the translated text, that is, if the translated text can conform to the cognitive habits and the grammatical knowledge of the target language readers, the target language readers can understand it more easily. It can also faithfully convey the original author’s communicative intention. Such a communicative transformation is ideal.[7] In translation, the literal and deep meaning of the source language needs to be accurately understood by the translator. Deep meaning refers to the pragmatic meaning under certain contextual conditions. In communication dimension, this paper finds that translation optimization methods such as language structure adaptation, contextual adaptation can be adopted. The followings are some examples.

Table 5: Examples of ST, OT and RT of Yao costumes in Jinxiu Yao Ethnic Museum

No	Source Text	Original Translation	Revised Translation
1	六巷花篮瑶	Six lane basket yao women dress up	Women’s Dress of Hualan Yao in Liuxiang Village
2	花篮瑶男童服	Flower basket Yao boy’s dress	Boy’s costumes of Hualan Yao
3	山子瑶女童服	Yamasaki Yao Girl’s dress	Girl’s costumes of Shanzi Yao
4	山子瑶男童服	Shanziyao boy’s dress	Boy’s costumes of Shanzi Yao
5	广西富川县平地瑶女服	Guangxi Fuchuan County flat Yao women dress	Women’s Costume of Pingdi Yao, a Branch of Yao Nationality, in Fuchuan County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

4.3.1 Language Structure Adaptation

In order to adapt to the language structure, the language must be selected from many aspects, such as language, code, style and discourse construction elements. In the process of translating Yao costumes, the translator should choose the appropriate language structure, language style and expression method.

The translation of Yao costume names, with the the characteristics of simplicity and standardization, should conform to the English language structure. The English translation of the names of Yao costumes should reflect the characteristics of Yao costumes. Some information cannot only be translated literally, otherwise readers may not be able to understand them correctly, which is not conducive to the spread of Chinese culture.

In table 5, the names of the branches of the Yao ethnic group in source text 1, source text 2,

source text 3 and source text 4 are two of the five main branches of the Yao ethnic group. Because the costumes in source text 1 and source text 2 are embroidered with exquisite patterns, colorful and extremely gorgeous, hence the name. Being literally translated as “Basket Yao” will result in mistranslation. The branch of the Yao ethnic group in source text 3 and source text 4 plough in the mountains for a living, hence the name. According to the adaptation of the language structure, they are translated into “Hualan Yao” and “Shanzi Yao” respectively, which are concise and standardized and can convey the characteristics of the Yao ethnic group, which is conducive to the transmission of Chinese culture.

4.3.2 Contextual Adaptation

Cultural context generally refers to the environment in which authors and certain groups of people are located, and the cultural contexts of different language communities are not synchronized. In the process of translating Yao costumes from Chinese to English, the translator should realize that the target culture is the context of communication, and also needs to adapt to the contextual elements.

First of all, in Chinese, the central information is usually at the end of the sentence. While in English, the important information is usually stated first. In table 5, the central information in the source text 5 is at the end of the source text. While in original translation, it is still placed at the end. The translation can be revised by changing the position of the central information. It is more in line with English habits to exchange the position of the information. The prepositional attribute in Chinese can be translated as a postpositional attribute in English. And the attribute describing the location can be translated as an adverbial of place, which is also in line with English expression habits. Besides, the costumes of each branch of the Yao ethnic group in China is unique to China, and English readers have no pre-set background knowledge about the name of the costumes, so the translator can also add explanations in the translation, and adjust the translation in full consideration of the social and cultural background of the readers in the target language, so as to achieve the purpose of accurately conveying information and make the translation easy to understand. So the translation of the source text 5 can be revised as “Women’s Costume of Pingdi Yao, a Branch of Yao Nationality, in Fuchuan County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region”.

5. Conclusion

By exploring the English translation of Yao costumes for foreign publicity from language dimension, cultural dimension and communication dimension, this paper finds that in the process of translating the names of Yao costumes into English, in order to maximize the transmission of the original information, the translator should pay attention to the following three aspects. Firstly, in language dimension, translators can use translation methods such as literal translation, transliteration and annotation. Secondly, in cultural dimension, translators can use translation strategies such as domestication, foreignization, and cultural mediation. Thirdly, in communicative dimension, translators can use translation methods such as Language structure adaptation, context adaptation and other strategies.

To sum up, in the process of translating the names of Yao costumes, the translation cannot be carried out only based on pure theory, nor can it simply be carried out in a certain dimension. The translator needs to comprehensively consider the three dimensions, which are language dimension, cultural dimension and communication dimension, so that the translation effect can be achieved to the full extent.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported in part by the Guangxi Border Ethnic Culture Translation and Communication Research Program of China (Grant No. GXKSKYPT2021003), and Scientific and Technological Funds for Young Scientists of Guangxi (Grant No. 2021KY0845).

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