

Study on the Current Situation of Japanese Translation of Public Signs in Tourist Attractions

-- Take the 5A Scenic Spot in Zhenjiang City, Jiangsu Province as an Example

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Abstract

The public signs of scenic spots are the name cards of scenic spots and play an important role in promoting the international image of cities. This paper takes the Japanese public signs in the scenic spots of Zhenjiang City, Jiangsu Province as an example, through the collection and analysis of the public signs in the scenic spots, studies the standardization and accuracy of their translation, and probes into the development maturity of Zhenjiang scenic spots. The survey results show that there are three problems in the Japanese public signs in the above survey scenic spots: First, the Japanese public signs are missing. Second, the translation is not standardized enough. Third, the translation lacks accuracy. In view of the above problems, the corresponding solutions are proposed.

Keywords

Japanese Public Signs; Scenic Spots; Standardization.

1. Introduction

With the development of economic globalization, world tourism has promoted exchanges and cooperation, and played an important role in promoting the economy. According to the statistical yearbook of Chinese cultural relics and tourism 2020 compiled by the Ministry of culture and tourism of the people's Republic of China, China received 2.6763 million inbound tourists from Japan in 2019. It accounts for 5.4% of the total number of inbound tourists, and becomes the fifth largest source of inbound tourists in China [1]. Public signs in scenic spots have improved the overall service level and international image, and play an important role in foreign cultural communication. It is increasingly important to improve the standardization and accuracy of the translation of public signs in scenic spots. In the aspect of Japanese public signs, the national level has paid more and more attention. On December 29, 2017, the General Administration of quality supervision, inspection and Quarantine of the people's Republic of China and the National Standards Commission issued the Japanese translation specification in the public service field, which was officially implemented on July 1, 2018. This specification has played a guiding role in the daily translation of public signs. This paper takes the Japanese public signs in the scenic spots of Zhenjiang City, Jiangsu Province as an example, through the collection and analysis of the public signs in the scenic spots, studies the standardization and accuracy of their translation, and probes into the development maturity of Zhenjiang scenic spots.

2. Definition of Public Signs and Research Object

2.1. Definition and Classification of Public Signs

The word "public signs" was first proposed by Beizhu Shan Aimin [2]. With the holding of the Beijing Olympic Games, the study of public signs in China has reached a climax. Many scholars have defined "public signs" from their own perspectives. Dai Zongxian and LV Hefa believe that public signs are written and graphic information. It is open to the public, such as notices, instructions, prompts, displays, warnings, and signs. That are closely related to their life, production, life, ecology, and industry [3]. Xiong renfang believes that public signs are written information that is displayed to people in public places and has certain communication functions[4]. Peng Dandan believes that public signs are words that give the public a prompt, guidance and warning role through simple and clear words, colors, shapes, patterns and other methods [5]. The definition believes by Dai Zongxian and LV Hefa is generally recognized, which has been cited 957 times and downloaded 10956 times on China HowNet.

LV Hefa believes that public signs have four prominent application functions in practical application: indicative, suggestive, restrictive and mandatory [6]. Luo electorate and Li Shiwang believe that public signs mainly have three functions: prompt, instruction and reference [7]. Ke Jinsong and Bi Chunling added "propaganda and call" on the basis of LV Hefa's thought [8]. Su Yaying and Xue Huaming believe that public signs in Nanjing can be divided into three categories: indication, attention and explanation. Referring to the previous research results, the paper divides the public signs in the scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang into five categories: indication, prompt, instruction, publicity call, and explanation. The indication public signs reflect thoughtful information services, without any restriction or mandatory meaning. For example: Tourist service center, Ticket office, Name of scenic spot. The prompt public signs have no special meaning, only play the role of suggestive. For example: Be careful of drowning and take valuables with you. The instruction public signs have a very obvious coercive effect. The words are concise and powerful, and the words with negative meanings are often used. For example: No smoking, No climbing. The explanation public signs explain things through the whole paragraph of the article, and promote the public's understanding of the formation of the scenic spot, the connotation of the exhibits, and the use of the facilities. For example: Introduction to scenic spots and collection items. The publicity call public signs play the role of public welfare publicity, calling or reminding the public to pay attention to their own behavior or make certain behavior. For example: Be careful all the way out, Safe civilization is gold.

2.2. Research Object and Research Method

The paper takes nine scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang City, Jiangsu Province as the research object (refer to the official documents of Zhenjiang Culture and Tourism Bureau). The nine scenic spots include: Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot, Jurong Maoshan scenic spot, Baohua Mountain National Forest Park, Zhenjiang Museum, Nanshan scenic spot, Xijindu historical and cultural block, China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum, China MiFu calligraphy Park, and Jiangsu Tea Expo Park. This paper mainly uses investigation and analysis as research methods. Firstly, we use the survey method to collect specific examples of public signs in nine scenic spots and classify the specific examples. Secondly, we search the literature, analyze the examples and the existing problems from two aspects: the standardization of translation and the accuracy of translation. Finally, we summarize the causes of the problems and put forward the corresponding countermeasures.

3. A Survey on the Japanese Translation of Public Signs in 5A Scenic Spots of Zhenjiang

According to the survey, Japanese public signs have been set up in 9 scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang City, indicating that Japanese public signs have been paid attention to. However, these scenic spots do not set up Japanese public signs on all signboards. Most of the signboards only have Chinese and English public signs. There is a lack of Japanese public signs. In addition, the survey finds that the translation of Japanese public signs is not standardized and accurate in scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang city. This paper divides the problems of public signs in 9 scenic spots into three aspects. The first is the lack of Japanese public signs, that is, the coverage of Japanese public signs in the scenic area is insufficient. The second is the standardization of translation, including the mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters, paragraph format and punctuation errors, and inconsistent translation. The third is the accuracy of translation, including that the translation does not conform to the Japanese translation and writing standards in the public service field, the translation does not correspond to the original, and the grammar is wrong.

3.1. The Lack of Japanese Public Signs

Table 1 shows the settings of Japanese public signs in the nine scenic spots. Zhenjiang Museum has only three signs of tourist center, entrance and exit with Japanese translation. The Japanese public signs are seriously missing. It is not included in the later research. Among the nine scenic spots, Jurong Maoshan scenic spot has a relatively sufficient Japanese coverage. Most of the public signs in the scenic area are accompanied by English, Japanese and Korean translations, but there are still a few public signs with only Chinese English translation (such as the prompt public signs on the sightseeing bus).

Table 1. Japanese public signs in 9 scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang City (Note: ○ means yes, × Indicates no)

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class	Publicity call class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	○	○	×	×	×
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	○	○	○	○	○
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	○	○	○	○	○
Zhenjiang Museum	○	×	×	×	×
Nanshan scenic spot	○	×	○	○	×
Xijindu historical and cultural block	○	○	×	○	×
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	○	○	○	○	×
China MiFu calligraphy Park	○	○	×	○	×
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	○	○	○	○	×

It can be seen from Table 1 that all the nine scenic spots have set up Japanese public signs of indication type, and the Japanese public signs of prompt type, instruction type and explanation type are missing. The coverage of Japanese public signs of propaganda and call type is obviously insufficient. The lack of Japanese public signs will affect the tourist experience of Japanese tourists and lower the standards of 5A and 4A scenic spots.

3.2. The Standardization of Translation

The normative problems in the translation of Japanese public signs in scenic spots above 4A level of Zhenjiang city include the mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters, the errors of paragraph format and punctuation marks, and the inconsistent translation.

The mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters refers to the direct substitution of Chinese characters for Japanese characters. For example, replace "所" with "所" and "写真" with "写真". According to the investigation, there are 23 errors in scenic spots above 4A level of Zhenjiang city. The types of scenic spots and public signs involved are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Types of scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	6	0	0	0
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	3	1	1	0
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	3	0	0	3
Nanshan scenic spot	0	0	0	0
Xijindu historical and cultural block	0	0	0	0
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	0	0	0	1
China MiFu calligraphy Park	2	0	0	3
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	0	0	0	0

It can be seen from Table 2 that there are 5 errors in scenic spots, of which Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot of Zhenjiang City has the largest number of errors, followed by Jurong Maoshan scenic spot in Zhenjiang city. Among the 23 errors of mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters, indicative public signs account for the largest proportion, with a total of 14, accounting for about 61%.

3.3. Paragraph Formatting and Punctuation Errors

Table 3. Paragraph format and punctuation errors of scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Chinese sign	Japanese sign	Amendments	Type of public signs
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	宝华山国家森林公园位于江苏省句容市以北, 处312国道南侧、沪宁高速公路以北, 距南京、镇江、句容各30公里。	宝華山国家森林公园は江蘇省句容市の北、312国道の南、沪寧高速道路の北に、南京、鎮江、句容から30キロメートル離れる所に位置しています。	A blank space at the beginning of the paragraph	Explanation class
Xijindu historical and cultural block	西津渡始成于三国, 历代以来一直是我国南北水上交通漕运的枢纽, 在此发生过众多的重大历史事件。	西津渡は三国時代に始まり、歴史上において南北水上交通の要であり、多くの重大な歴史事件が起こっている。	A blank space at the beginning of the paragraph	Explanation class
China MiFu calligraphy Park	古邑丹徒秦时置县, 区域山水风情卓具.....	古い国丹徒が秦の時代に県を設置し、エリア内に山水風情が揃っていた.....	A blank space at the beginning of the paragraph	Explanation class
China MiFu calligraphy Park	创造了骏迈潇洒的书法与“米氏云山”画法。	あか抜けしている書道及び“米氏雲山”画法を作った。	あか抜けしている書道及び「米氏雲山」画法を作った。	Explanation class

Paragraph format error refers to that the beginning of a paragraph is not blank, or some paragraphs are blank with two or even three spaces when translating Japanese paragraphs. Punctuation error mainly refers to the error of quotation marks. In Japanese, quotation marks should use 「 」。 Through field investigation, the errors in paragraph format and punctuation are concentrated in the explanatory public signs, totaling 4. Specific errors and modification suggestions are shown in Table 3.

3.4. Non-uniform Translation

The non-uniform translation means that there are two or more Japanese translations of the same Chinese public signs in scenic spot. For example, in the Jiangsu Tea Expo park scenic area, the same Chinese "toilet" is translated into 「お手洗い」 and 「手洗い」 respectively in different places. The former translation is obviously more solemn and polite, and takes into account the impression of Japanese tourists. It is suggested to translate it uniformly. According to the field survey, there are 12 errors in scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang city. The types of scenic spots and public signs involved are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The non-uniform translation of scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	2	0	0	0
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	1	1	0	0
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	1	0	0	0
Nanshan scenic spot	0	0	0	0
Xijindu historical and cultural block	1	0	0	0
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	0	2	0	1
China MiFu calligraphy Park	4	0	0	0
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	0	0	0	0

It can be seen from Table 4 that there are 5 errors in scenic spots, and China MiFu calligraphy park has the largest number of errors, with 4, accounting for about 33% of the total. Only indicative public signs and suggestive public signs involve errors, of which indicative public signs account for the largest proportion, with a total of 9, accounting for 75% of the total.

3.5. Accuracy of Translation

The accuracy of the translation of Japanese public signs in scenic spots above grade 4A in Zhenjiang city includes: the translation does not conform to the Japanese translation and writing standards in the public service field, the translation does not correspond to the original, and the grammar is wrong.

The translation does not conform to the Japanese translation and writing norms in the public service field, which means that the translation does not conform to the Japanese translation and writing norms in the public service field approved and officially released by the General Administration of quality supervision, inspection and quarantine and the National Standardization Administration in December 2017. The translation is unofficial and does not reflect the standards of 4A and 5A scenic spots. For example, Jurong Maoshan scenic area translates "don't make a noise" as 「静かにしてください」, and the example standard given in the Japanese translation and writing standard in the public service field is 「静粛にしてください」. Nanshan scenic area translates "mother and baby room" into 「母子室」, and the

example standard given in the Japanese translation specification for public service field is 「授乳室」. If some public signs in the scenic area exist in the example of Japanese translation and writing norms in the public service field, the scenic should follow the official standards to translate more accurately. According to the field survey, there are 65 errors in scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang city. The types of scenic spots and public signs involved are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The inconformity requirements of translation for scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	4	0	0	0
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	4	2	6	0
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	12	2	3	0
Nanshan scenic spot	2	0	0	0
Xijindu historical and cultural block	4	0	0	0
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	1	2	1	0
China MiFu calligraphy Park	10	1	0	0
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	6	5	0	0

It can be seen from Table 5 that the errors occur in 8 scenic spots, and Baohua mountain scenic spot has the largest number of errors, with 15, accounting for about 23% of the total. There are many errors in indicator class public signs, 43 in total, accounting for 66% of the total number of errors.

The incompatibility between the translation and the original refers to the incompleteness of the translation or the inconsistency between the translation and the original. For example, Jurong Maoshan scenic spot translates "be careful of incense and keep away from it" as "「花火に気を付けて近づけないでください」. 「花火」 means fireworks in Japanese, which is completely inconsistent with the original meaning. It is more appropriate to change 「花火」 to 「線香」. According to the survey, there are fewer errors in scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang City, with a total of 10. The types of scenic spots and public signs involved are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The translation does not correspond to the original of scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	0	0	0	0
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	1	1	1	0
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	0	0	2	1
Nanshan scenic spot	0	0	0	0
Xijindu historical and cultural block	0	0	0	0
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	0	0	0	1
China MiFu calligraphy Park	1	0	0	1
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	0	0	0	1

It can be seen from Table 6 that there are 5 errors in scenic spots, of which Baohua mountain scenic spot has the largest number of errors, with 3, accounting for 30% of the total.

The grammatical errors include the errors of pause, the misuse of altruistic verbs and the misuse of auxiliary words. For example, the China MiFu calligraphy Park translates the "landscape style" into 「山水風情が揃えていた」, and 「揃える」 is his verb. It is more appropriate to change 「が」 into 「を」. According to the survey, there are 12 errors in scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang city. The types of scenic spots and public signs involved are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. The grammatical errors of scenic spots and public signs

scenic spots	Indicator class	Prompt class	Instruction class	Explanation class
Jinshan·Jiaoshan·Beigu mountain tourist scenic spot	0	0	0	0
Jurong Maoshan scenic spot	0	1	0	0
Baohua Mountain National Forest Park	0	0	0	0
Nanshan scenic spot	0	0	0	1
Xijindu historical and cultural block	0	0	0	1
China Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum	0	2	0	2
China MiFu calligraphy Park	0	0	0	2
Jiangsu Tea Expo Park	0	1	0	2

It can be seen from Table 7 that there are 6 errors in scenic spots, of which Zhenjiang vinegar Culture Museum has the largest number of errors, with 4, accounting for about 33% of the total.

4. Reasons for Mistranslation and Translation Strategies

4.1. Reasons for Mistranslation of Public Signs

Through the analysis of Japanese public signs in scenic spots, the paper sorts out and classifies three types of mistranslation of public signs: The first is the lack of Japanese public signs. The second is the standardization of translation, including the mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters, paragraph format and punctuation errors, and inconsistent translation. The third is the accuracy of the translation, including the translation does not conform to the Japanese translation and writing norms in the public service field, the translation does not correspond to the original, and grammar errors. According to the types of mistranslation of these public signs, the paper analyzes and explores the causes of mistranslation of Japanese public signs, which can be divided into the attitude of the staff and the lack of language ability of the translator.

In terms of the attitude of the lack of Japanese public signs, the scenic spot does not pay enough attention to it. The scenic spots think it is dispensable, which leads to a serious lack of coverage of Japanese public signs in scenic spots. The production unit lacks communication with the translator, and neglects the subtle differences between Japanese and Chinese characters without understanding the characteristics of Japanese language. It results in the mixed use of Japanese and Chinese characters. When the translation is completed, the staff do not carefully proofread the translation. It may easily lead to the above-mentioned printing errors, and lead to two or more Japanese translations of the same Chinese public signs in a scenic spot. In terms of the attitude of language ability of the translator, it means that the translator's Japanese Foundation is not solid enough. The use of Japanese grammar and vocabulary is not accurate

and flexible, the understanding of Japanese society and culture is not enough, and even the understanding of Chinese is not in place. These are the direct reasons why the translation of Japanese public signs is not accurate enough.

4.2. Translation Strategies of Public Signs

Through investigation and reference to previous studies, this paper finds that the phenomenon of mistranslation of public signs in Japanese translation is relatively common. This paper tries to put forward the following four suggestions:

Firstly, a municipal Japanese expert group needs to be established. The government should play a role in setting up a municipal Japanese expert group to determine the minimum coverage rate of Japanese public signs in scenic area and let experts control the quality of public signs translation. The expert group plays a leading role in the whole signboard production process, assigns and implements various specific tasks, reviews the contents translated by the translator, and conducts acceptance and proofreading after the signboard production is completed to ensure the "zero error" of the translation.

Secondly, excellent translators need to be selected to form a translation team. The expert group may, according to the Japanese translation and writing norms in the field of public services or the public signs of Japanese scenic spots, give the translators questions for written tests, and select several top translators to form a translation team to translate the public signs of the scenic spots in Japanese. The translator should also improve his professional level, consult and refer to the materials on the Japanese translation of public signs, familiarize himself with relevant professional terms in advance, master the skills of public signs translation, and ensure the completion of the translation task.

Thirdly, we need to select the responsible production unit. The scenic spot shall select the responsible production unit to produce the signboard, strictly require the printing standard of the signboard, and ensure the successful production of the signboard containing Japanese public signs.

Finally, We need to establish a multi-party coordination and communication mechanism. The Japanese expert group, translation team and production unit shall actively communicate to avoid unnecessary translation errors and printing errors

5. Conclusion

Through the investigation, the Japanese public signs of 9 scenic spots above 4A level in Zhenjiang City are sorted out and divided into five categories according to their functions. The survey results show that there are three problems in the Japanese public signs in the above survey scenic spots: First, the Japanese public signs are missing. Second, the translation is not standardized enough. Third, the translation lacks accuracy. In view of the above problems, the corresponding solutions are proposed.

Ethical Approval

This article does not contain any studies with animals performed by any of the authors.

Ethical Approval

This article does not contain any studies with human participants or animals performed by any of the authors.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

No data were used to support this study.

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