

Study on Translation Strategies of Tourism Text--Take Shaoxing Stone Bridge as an Example

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the translation strategies of tourism texts, with Shaoxing stone bridges as the research object. It deeply analyzes the current situation of the translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts, explores their cultural connotations and language features. By drawing on relevant theories such as reception aesthetics, functional translation theory, and ecological translation theory, this paper proposes translation strategies such as amplification with explanation, reduction, rearrangement, combination, language form conversion, and "three-dimensional transformation", and elaborates on their applications with examples. The aim is to improve the translation quality of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts, promote the international dissemination of Shaoxing stone bridge culture, and enhance its cultural influence in the global tourism market.

Keywords

Tourism text translation; Shaoxing stone bridges; Translation strategies; Cultural connotation.

1. Introduction

In the accelerating process of globalization, international tourism exchanges are becoming more and more frequent. Tourism texts, as important media for spreading local culture and attracting tourists, their translation quality is of great significance. Shaoxing, known as the "City of Ten Thousand Bridge", is rich in stone bridges. These bridges are not only practical transportation facilities but also treasures carrying rich historical and cultural connotations. However, currently, there are many problems in the translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts in international dissemination, which limits the external display of their cultural value. In-depth research on the translation strategies of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts is of great practical significance for promoting Shaoxing culture to the world and enhancing its international popularity.

From a theoretical perspective, many scholars have conducted research on the translation of tourism texts. The reception aesthetics theory emphasizes putting readers at the center and paying attention to readers' acceptance of translations [1]; the functional translation theory focuses on the purpose of translation, text types, and functional equivalence [2]; the ecological translation theory pays attention to the "three-dimensional transformation" in the translation process, that is, the adaptive selection and transformation of the linguistic dimension, cultural dimension, and communicative dimension. These theories provide diverse perspectives and methods for the translation of tourism texts.

In terms of practice, existing studies have explored the translation of tourism texts in different regions, such as research on the translation of tourism texts of Li Hongzhang's Former Residence and Lei Feng Memorial Hall [3]. Problems were identified and corresponding countermeasures were proposed. However, research on the translation of tourism texts with unique regional cultural characteristics like Shaoxing stone bridges is still insufficient. This

paper will draw on existing research results and deeply explore the translation strategies of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts to fill this gap.

2. Analysis of Shaoxing Stone Bridge Tourism Texts

2.1. Cultural Connotations

Shaoxing stone bridges carry profound historical and cultural deposits. Each bridge has its unique story and cultural value. For example, Bazi Bridge was built before the Jiatai period (1201-1204) of the Southern Song Dynasty. The two bridges are opposite and slanted, looking like the Chinese character “八” (eight), so it got its name. It is one of the symbols of Shaoxing’s history and culture. Its simple structure and stable construction reflect the maturity of bridge-building technology in Shaoxing during the Southern Song Dynasty and are important physical examples for studying bridge-building technology in the Song Dynasty and the history of Chinese bridges. Guangxiang Bridge was named after the former Guangxiang Temple beside it. It was built in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. Its magnificent shape and stable structure, with some components retaining the features before the Song Dynasty, carry rich religious and historical memories. Guangning Bridge is said to have been built by local villagers raising funds, benefiting the people who came and went. It is not only a transportation bridge but also reflects the local humanistic spirit and tradition of mutual assistance. If these cultural connotations cannot be accurately conveyed in translation, foreign tourists will find it difficult to understand the unique charm of Shaoxing stone bridges.

2.2. Language Features

The language of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts is rich and unique. When describing the architectural features of the bridges, vivid words such as “unique in shape”, “exquisitely carved”, and “simple and vigorous” are often used to showcase the aesthetic value of the bridges. When introducing the historical background of the bridges, words and expressions with a sense of history such as “originally built in”, “rebuilt in”, and “legend has it” are used to create a strong historical atmosphere. However, these characteristic languages face challenges in translation. Due to the differences in language structures, expression habits, and cultural backgrounds between Chinese and English, it is a key issue in the translation process to accurately transform these language features into English while retaining their cultural flavor.

3. Translation Strategies Based on Different Theories

3.1. Variation Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics

The reception aesthetics theory emphasizes the importance of readers in the translation process, believing that translation should meet the readers' horizon of expectations and make the translated text easy to be accepted by readers. Based on this theory, variation translation strategies such as amplification with explanation, reduction, rearrangement, and combination can be adopted in the translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts.

The method of amplification with explanation involves adding explanatory content to the translated text to help readers understand the cultural connotations of the original text. For example, when translating “八字桥” (Bazi Bridge), it can be translated as “Bazi Bridge (a bridge with a unique structure where two bridges are opposite and slanted, looking like the Chinese character ‘八’ (eight), which was built before the Jiatai period (1201-1204) of the Southern Song Dynasty. It is an important symbol of Shaoxing’s history and culture and a key physical example for studying bridge construction technology in the Song Dynasty)”. This translation not only retains the original pronunciation of the bridge name but also explains its origin, construction

date, and important historical and cultural values in detail, enabling foreign readers to better understand the uniqueness of this bridge. This is consistent with the view that in the translation of tourism texts, appropriate explanatory information should be added to words with unique cultural connotations to meet the readers' curiosity and horizon of expectations.

The reduction method is suitable for some text content that is long-winded and contains too much secondary information. For instance, when describing the surrounding environment of some stone bridges, if there are a large number of modifying sentences in the original text that have little effect on expressing the core cultural value, they can be appropriately streamlined. Take the introduction of a certain stone bridge: "This stone bridge is located in a quiet town, surrounded by lush trees. There is also an antique small pavilion beside it. The morning sun shines on the bridge deck, reflecting a golden light.." as an example. In translation, it can be reduced to "This stone bridge is located in a quiet town, surrounded by trees and a small pavilion. It exudes a unique charm.", highlighting the core information of the stone bridge and avoiding overwhelming the readers with excessive details, which is in line with the requirement of reception aesthetics to avoid making the translated text long-winded and complex to maintain readers' reading interest.

The rearrangement method is to reorganize and rearrange the structure and content of the original text. For some complex paragraphs organized according to Chinese thinking logic, adjustments can be made according to English expression habits during translation. For example, when introducing the historical changes and architectural features of a stone bridge, Chinese may first describe the historical background and then elaborate on the architectural features, while in English translation, the architectural features can be highlighted first, and then the historical information can be supplemented, making the translated text more in line with the reading habits of English-speaking readers and enhancing the readability of the text.

The combination method is applicable to the integrated translation of some closely related information. For example, when introducing multiple stone bridges, if some bridges are closely related in geographical location or historical origin, the relevant descriptions can be combined to make the translated text more concise and clear. For example, "东双桥位于浙江省绍兴市东街东段。据南宋嘉泰《会稽志》：‘在府城东。’民国《绍兴县志资料》：‘东双桥位于城东镇，在纺车桥、八字桥两桥中间。’" can be translated as "Dongshuang Bridge, located in the eastern section of Dongjie Street, Shaoxing urban area, Zhejiang Province, is recorded in both the 'Huiji Annals' of the Southern Song Dynasty and the 'Shaoxing County Annals Data' of the Republic of China as being in the east of the city and between Fangche Bridge and Bazi Bridge." By combining the information, repeated expressions are avoided, allowing readers to obtain key content more clearly.

3.2. Translation Strategies Guided by the Functional Translation Theory

The functional translation theory holds that the purpose of translation determines the translation method, and different types of texts have different functions. Translation should achieve functional equivalence. Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts have informative, aesthetic, and imperative functions. Therefore, appropriate strategies should be selected according to these functions during translation.

For the informative function, it is necessary to ensure the accurate transmission of relevant information about the stone bridges, such as names, locations, histories, and architectural features. For example, "光相桥，位于绍兴市老城区西北部，环城公路（104国道）越王桥西侧，横跨古运河，始建于东晋，因桥畔原有光相寺而得名。" should be translated as "Guangxiang Bridge is located in the northwest of the old urban area of Shaoxing City, on the west side of Yuewang Bridge along the Ring Road (National Highway 104). It spans the ancient canal and was originally built in the Eastern Jin Dynasty. It got its name from the former

Guangxiang Temple beside the bridge.” This accurately conveys the geographical location, construction age, and naming origin of Guangxiang Bridge, enabling readers to obtain basic facts about this bridge. This is consistent with the emphasis on accurate information transfer in the functional translation theory.

Regarding the aesthetic function, for the words and sentences in the original text that describe the beautiful scenery and unique charm of the stone bridges, efforts should be made to retain their aesthetic feeling in the translation. For example, for the description of Tishan Bridge: “题扇桥的桥拱为纵联分节并列砌筑，弧型桥栏较为少见，桥上原有石灯杆，为路人照明，现桥边仅存灯杆石插座一个，从该桥的风化程度可定其为宋朝以前桥梁。” When translating, for professional and aesthetic-rich descriptions such as “纵联分节并列砌筑” and “弧型桥栏”, they can be translated as “built with longitudinally jointed and sectional arches” and “arc-shaped balustrades” respectively. Through the accurate selection of words, the aesthetic feeling of the original text is retained to a certain extent, allowing readers to feel the unique architectural charm of Tishan Bridge, which is in line with the emphasis on the aesthetic function in the functional translation theory.

To achieve the imperative function, the language style can be appropriately adjusted during translation, and more infectious words and expressions can be used to attract readers. For example, “快来感受八字桥的独特魅力，体验穿越历史的奇妙之旅！” can be translated as “Come and experience the unique charm of Bazi Bridge, and embark on a fascinating journey through history!” Expressions such as “come and experience” and “fascinating journey” are more appealing and can better stimulate readers’ interest, prompting them to visit and achieving the purpose of tourism texts to attract tourists.

3.3. “Three-Dimensional Transformation” Strategies under the Ecological Translation Theory

The ecological translation theory emphasizes the “three-dimensional transformation” in the translation process, that is, the adaptive selection and transformation of the linguistic dimension, cultural dimension, and communicative dimension. This theory has important guiding significance for the translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts.

On the linguistic dimension, attention should be paid to the differences in language forms and expression habits between Chinese and English for transformation. For example, Chinese often uses short sentences and parallel structures, while English tends to use long sentences and subordinate-complex sentences. “接渡桥是由中间三孔马蹄型拱桥与两边两孔石梁桥组成的7孔拱梁结合石桥。全长55.45米，3孔拱桥桥身长22.50米，三孔跨径分别为6.20米、7.00米、6.20米，高分别为3.90米、4.20米、3.90米。” can be translated as “Jiedu Bridge is a 7-hole arch-beam combined stone bridge, consisting of a three-hole horseshoe-shaped arch bridge in the middle and two-hole stone beam bridges on both sides. It has a total length of 55.45 meters. The length of the three-hole arch bridge is 22.50 meters, and the spans of the three holes are 6.20 meters, 7.00 meters, and 6.20 meters respectively, with heights of 3.90 meters, 4.20 meters, and 3.90 meters respectively.” By adjusting the sentence structure, the translation is more in line with English expression habits.

The transformation of the cultural dimension requires translators to pay attention to cultural differences and avoid cultural misunderstandings. For example, when translating content related to historical stories, the cultural background knowledge should be properly processed. For instance, “题扇桥因王羲之在此为老姬题扇而得名” can be translated as “Tishan Bridge got its name from the story that Wang Xizhi, a famous calligrapher in the Eastern Jin Dynasty, inscribed on an old woman’s fan here.” Adding the introduction of Wang Xizhi’s identity helps foreign readers better understand the background of this cultural allusion and avoid misunderstandings caused by cultural gaps.

In terms of the transformation of the communicative dimension, translators need to ensure effective information transfer and communication in cross-cultural communication. For example, when translating sentences containing culturally-specific words, the cognitive level and acceptance ability of the target-language readers should be considered. For the sentence “九狮桥位于丰惠镇西南500米。又称等慈寺桥。元至正三年（1343年）重建。单孔石拱桥，南北向，跨街河。”，if it is simply translated as “Jiushi Bridge is located 500 meters southwest of Fenghui Town. It is also called Dengci Temple Bridge. It was rebuilt in 1343 (the 3rd year of the Zhizheng reign of the Yuan Dynasty). It is a single-hole stone arch bridge, running from north to south and spanning the Jie River.”, foreign readers may be confused by the Chinese ancient chronological method of “the 3rd year of the Zhizheng reign of the Yuan Dynasty”. Therefore, it can be further explained as “Jiushi Bridge is located 500 meters southwest of Fenghui Town. It is also called Dengci Temple Bridge. It was rebuilt in 1343, during the Yuan Dynasty. In the Yuan Dynasty, the reign of Emperor Huizong was divided into several periods, and this bridge was rebuilt in the 3rd year of the Zhizheng reign. It is a single-hole stone arch bridge, running from north to south and spanning the Jie River.” By supplementing the background information about “the Zhizheng reign of the Yuan Dynasty”, readers can better understand the meaning of the sentence and promote the smooth progress of cross-cultural communication.

4. Case Analysis of the Application of Translation Strategies

Take Shaoxing Taiping Bridge as an example. “绍兴太平桥位于浙江省绍兴县阮社，该桥由一座半圆拱桥与八孔高低石梁桥组成。该桥现为省级重点文物保护单位。此桥在《中国科学技术史》（桥梁卷）有载。” In translation, by combining multiple strategies mentioned above, it can be translated as “Taiping Bridge in Shaoxing is located in Ruanshe, Shaoxing County, Zhejiang Province. It is composed of a semi-circular arch bridge and an eight-hole stone beam bridge with varying heights. Currently, it is a provincial-level key cultural relic under protection and is recorded in ‘The History of Chinese Science and Technology (Bridge Volume)’. (Note: This bridge not only showcases the unique architectural style of Shaoxing’s ancient bridges but also holds important historical and scientific value, being an essential part of the local cultural heritage.) ” Here, the method of amplification with explanation is used. By adding annotation content after the translation, the value of Taiping Bridge is further explained, meeting the information needs of readers, which is in line with the reception aesthetics theory. From the perspective of the functional translation theory, it accurately conveys the location, structure, protection level, and historical record information of Taiping Bridge, achieving the informative function. At the same time, through the supplementary explanation of its value, it also realizes the aesthetic and imperative functions to a certain extent, attracting readers' attention. From the perspective of the “three-dimensional transformation” of the ecological translation theory, on the linguistic dimension, the sentence structure is adjusted; on the cultural dimension, although there are no complex cultural allusions, the annotation emphasizes its status as a cultural heritage, enhancing the transmission of cultural connotations; on the communicative dimension, the added annotation helps readers understand, promoting cross-cultural communication.

Another example is the introduction of Guangning Bridge: “广宁桥，位于浙江省绍兴市区广宁桥直街东端，南北向，单孔拱形石桥、横跨漕河，相传此处本无桥。乡人集资建桥，来往百姓，广受其惠，故名广宁桥。” It can be translated as “Guangning Bridge is located at the eastern end of Guangningqiao Straight Street in Shaoxing urban area, Zhejiang Province. It runs from north to south and is a single-hole arched stone bridge spanning the Cao River. Legend has it that there was no bridge here originally. Local villagers raised funds to build the bridge,

and since then, the people coming and going have greatly benefited from it. That's why it is named Guangning Bridge, which implies 'broadly bringing peace and benefits'. (In ancient China, the act of villagers raising funds to build infrastructure like this bridge reflected the local spirit of unity and mutual assistance. This cultural connotation is also an important part of the bridge's charm.) ". This translation uses the method of amplification with explanation, interpreting the meaning of the bridge's name and supplementing the cultural background, which is in line with the reception aesthetics theory. From the perspective of the functional translation theory, it not only accurately conveys the basic information of Guangning Bridge but also realizes the aesthetic and imperative functions through the interpretation of the bridge's name and cultural background. This enables readers to feel its cultural charm and arouses their longing. From the perspective of the "three-dimensional transformation" of the ecological translation theory, the word order has been adjusted on the linguistic dimension; the cultural connotations have been deeply explored and transmitted on the cultural dimension; and on the communicative dimension, effective communication with readers has been promoted by supplementing information.

5. Conclusion

The translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts plays a crucial role in spreading Shaoxing's history and culture and promoting the international development of local tourism. Through in-depth analysis of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts, we find that they contain rich cultural connotations and have distinct language features. In the translation process, based on the reception aesthetics, functional translation theory, and ecological translation theory, we have proposed and applied multiple translation strategies, such as amplification with explanation, reduction, rearrangement, combination, language form conversion, and "three-dimensional transformation". These strategies have their unique advantages and application scopes when dealing with different types of information and cultural elements.

As can be seen from the case analysis, the comprehensive application of these translation strategies can effectively improve the quality of translations. It not only accurately conveys the basic information of the stone bridges but also fully demonstrates the cultural values behind them. At the same time, it enhances the attractiveness of the text to foreign readers and promotes cross-cultural communication. However, translation work is not once-and-for-all. With the development of the times and the increasing frequency of cultural exchanges, we need to continuously pay attention to the new development of translation theories, combine the characteristics and changes of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts, and continuously optimize translation strategies.

Future research can further expand the research scope of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts to cover more types of texts, such as tour guides' scripts, brochures, and online promotion copies. At the same time, it can strengthen the investigation and evaluation of the practical application effects of translation strategies. By collecting feedback from foreign tourists, we can deeply understand their understanding and acceptance of translations, so as to more accurately adjust and improve translation strategies. In addition, we can explore how to use modern technical means, such as artificial intelligence-assisted translation tools and multimodal translation, to improve translation efficiency and quality, enabling the translated texts of Shaoxing stone bridges to better adapt to different communication channels and audience needs. This will make Shaoxing stone bridge culture shine more brightly on the international stage, attract more tourists to appreciate its unique charm, and promote the prosperity and development of Shaoxing's cultural tourism industry.

In the context of globalization, the translation of Shaoxing stone bridge tourism texts is not only a language transformation but also a cultural dissemination and exchange. We should give full

play to the bridging role of translation to let Shaoxing stone bridges, a unique cultural treasure, go global and contribute to enriching global cultural diversity. At the same time, this also provides useful reference and inspiration for the translation of cultural tourism texts with regional characteristics, promoting the in-depth development of cross-cultural communication in a wider range.

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