International Publicity Translation of Tourism Culture in Central China from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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Abstract

International publicity translation is a key approach to realize the information dissemination of tourism culture, which conforms to the language and cultural practice of target language users from the perspective of Skopos theory. This paper analyses the similarities and differences in terms of language option, information structure, and linguistic features between the two tourism websites. The comparative results reveal that international publicity translation of tourism culture corresponds to the principles of Skopos theory in terms of information expression styles and linguistic features. This paper argues that the intended purposes of target readers should be satisfied to eliminate language and culture barriers for the function realization of information exchange in the practice of international publicity translation of tourism culture in Central China.

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1. Introduction

The Central-plains Culture is required to further strengthen and advance international communication and exchange with highly cultural confidence due to "the Belt and Road" Initiative. "Great efforts should be put into developing logistics, culture, tourism, finance, and other modern service industries. Tourism resources should be integrated with other featured products to drive the integrative development. Rural tourism projects to enrich villagers should be implemented. Moreover, a batch of key tourist attractions and excellent tourist routes, such as historical and cultural tourism zones in Central China, Yellow River cultural tourism belt, ecological-cultural tourism on the middle line of the south-to-north water-transfer project are explicitly indicated in development target of service industry specified in Plan for Central China Economic Region officially issued by the Chinese government. The Central China Economic Region is located in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River, which is the core cradle of the Chinese nation and Chinese civilization. The Central China tourism has abundant humanistic cultures, such as Dengfeng Shaolin Temple in Zhengzhou City, Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang City, Yin Dynasty ruins in Anyang City that is well known with the historical and cultural background. They constitute a route, which perfectly integrates the cultural landscape with the natural landscape. International publicity work for tourism culture is significant to complete information dissemination of tourism culture for publicity. As a new-type mass communication channel, the Internet is accepted

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by an increasing number of people for its convenience and fast speed. The English website of tourist attractions serves as a platform for international publicity; its main function is to exempt foreign tourists or tourism workers from the limitation of language or culture barriers. Suggestions are proposed in the paper to improve the international publicity translation of tourism culture in Central China through a comparative analysis of "*Official website of Henan Tourism Administration*" and "*Official website of London Tourism Administration*" from the perspective of Skopos theory. This paper analyses the similarities and differences the two tourism websites in terms of language selection, information structure, and linguistic features between the two tourism websites.

2. Skopos theory and international publicity translation of tourism culture

Skopos theory of German functionalism theory derives from the thoughts of Aristotle, a philosopher in ancient Greek. All conscious behaviors are believed to be purposeful, which indicates that all behaviors of human beings are to pursue certain purpose or target (Vermeer, 1996). Translation activities are conscious behaviors of human beings. In order to reach the goal of translation, the translator should adopt proper translation strategies and methods.

The foothold of translation activities should be put on target readers and consignors of translation tasks, especially on cultural function of the target text. The function is decided by requirements of translation initiator (client and consignor). There is no doubt that the purpose required by client or consignor is, largely, limited by the target texts (Tan Zaixi, 2004). In other words, the result, "translation version," of translation action is to serve the intentions of target readers.

Tourism translation refers to translation practice for tourism activities and tourism specialty and industry (Chen Gang, 2004), which is a cross-linguistic, cross-social, cross-spatial, and cross-psychological communication activity. Service targets of tourism translation are tourists, including Taiwan compatriots, Hongkong and Macao compatriots, overseas Chinese, Chinese of foreign nationalities, and foreigners. Tourism is a psychological industry, which dedicates to satisfy psychological requirements of tourists. Therefore, the key of tourism translation is to research on and satisfy psychological requirements of tourists (Chen Xiaowei, 2011). In case there are sufficient resources and accurate self-positioning in development publicity and translation of tourism resources, the function of information dissemination can be realized.

As a dominant and comprehensive industry, tourism dedicates to realizing modernization, including modernization of tourism product, tourism environment, tourism management, and tourism publicity (including modernization in publicity method, publicity equipment, publicity concept, publicity efficiency, and aspects) (Chen Gang, 2004). In comparison with western countries, international publicity of Chinese tourism is still under development.

The construction of English tourism websites has made an important contribution to tourism publicity. Information translation in international publicity translation includes scenic spot introduction, folk custom, tour route, trip mode, hotel reservation. In recent years, tourism administrations and travel agents successively established English websites or English web pages to attract more foreign tourists knowing English, to make them know Chinese humanistic culture, natural landscape, historical site, and to promote the development of tourism culture. Text types on tourism website belong to informative and operative texts according to the theory proposed by Reiss (1989). The informative function is to spread relevant information known about human history and natural landscape at sightseeing place to potential tourists; operational function refers to take a tour as a commodity to recommend tourism product and to improve fame of tourist attraction for reaching intended function of the target group.

3. Results of the comparative analysis

As an important channel for international publicity, constructing the English tourism websites plays an important role in the development and international publicity of tourism and cultural exchange and construction with other countries. Some problems were found through the comparative analysis of official website of Henan Tourism Administration *http://en.hnta.cn/* and London Tourism Administration *http://www.visitlondon.com/*, such as "formalism" in English version on the website and insufficient information quantity, which cannot truly satisfy requirements of potential tourists. In addition, the format of Chinese version is basically applied to the English version, which does not take habits of tourists who are potential "clients or consignors" from the UK and the U.S.A. Thus it is hard to fulfill the fundamental task of translation. In order to solve the problems mentioned above, a comparative analysis was directly conducted on tourism websites of English-speaking countries; moreover, structure and content of English version for Chinese tourism website were compared. The key is to put the foothold on "target readers and consignors of translation tasks." In addition, the choice of methods and strategies in translation practice is in accordance with the functions undertaken in target texts (Huang Youyi, 2008) so that the intentions of target users can be realized

on English tourism websites. A comparative analysis was conducted below in aspects of language selection, information structure, and linguistic features.

3.1. Language option

In terms of language options, six languages are available on the official website of London Tourism Administration, including English, French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Dutch (shown in Fig. 1). There are only three available languages on the official website of Henan Tourism Administration, including Chinese, English, and Japanese. Selection of service languages on the official website of Henan Tourism Administration is obviously less than that on the official website of London Tourism Administration through analysis from the perspective of target language users. Thus potential client group is narrowed in China. In addition, a potential factor is that there is a difference in target group of tourism service. More international target groups are served on the official website of London Tourism Administration, while the international degree served on the official website of Henan Tourism Administration is limited. However, with the constant improvement of international and regional exchange, languages on the tourism website should be diversified.
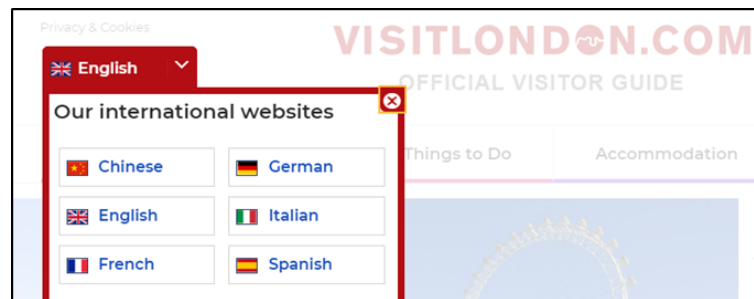
Fig. 1 Language Option on Official Website of London Tourism Administration

3.2. Information structure

As for information structure, Songshan Shaolin Temple is taken as an example. Firstly, there is a summative introduction on the official website of Henan Tourism Administration:

Chinese Kungfu originates from Shaolin Temple which is famous in China. Songshan Shaolin Temple is located in the west foot of Songshan Mountain which is one of the five highest mountains in China, Dengfeng city, Henan Province. It is in the face of Shaoshi Mountain and is backed by Wuru Peak. According to historical records: Buddhabhadra, an Indian Buddhist, came to China from ancient India was worshiped by Xiaowen Emperor who believed in Buddhism in the 19th Taihe year (in 495 AD) of Xiaowen Emperor in the Northern Wei Dynasty (368-534). As Buddhabhadra liked to live at a quiet place, Xiaowen Emperor created a temple in the deep forest under Shaoshi Mountain for him. Thus the temple is called "Shaolin Temperor," because it is located in the deep forest of Shaoshi Mountain. Bodhidharma, the 28th Buddhist, took three years to Shaolin Temple in the 3rd Xiaochang year in the Northern Wei Dynasty (368-534). He firstly preached Zen in China with great significance. Therefore, Shaolin Temple is collectively called "Forefathers of Zen" in global Buddhist circle. Shaolin Temple was highly valued in Tang Dynasty after Li Shimin, the second Emperor in Tang Dynasty, was saved by 13 Kungfu monks. Moreover, it won a good reputation of "the First Temple in China." The national tourism administration rates Shaolin Temple as the highest grade of Class 5A tourist attraction in China at present.

Then, the detailed part about "history of Songshan Shaolin Temple" and scenic spots in Shaolin Temple are introduced, including introduction to history and scenic spots of Shanmen Hall, Tianwang Hall, the Great Main Shrine Hall, the Tripitaka Sutra Pavilion, House of the Buddhist Abbot, Lixue Pavilion, Thousand Buddha Hall, Dizang Hall, Ancestor's Monastery, Second Ancestor's Monastery, Pagoda Forest, and other places. Picture information of relevant scenic spots is illustrated.

In addition, relevant links of the route to scenic spots, strategies used in scenic spots, transportation guide, accommodation in scenic spots, purchase for specialty, electronic maps are on the upper page. Thus tourists can search detailed information. Important information in the scenic spots, including the ticket in the scenic spots, opening hours, and service hotline, and relevant links about the best visiting time in the scenic spots and local food, local tourism shopping, and local tourist entertainment surrounding the scenic spots are on the right page.

In general, tourists can search for a series of introductions to the scenic spots on the Chinese webpage with comprehensive information. Therefore, the aim to serve tourists is achieved on the Chinese webpage with highlighted informative function and proper operational function.

Introduction to Shaolin Temple is on the English webpage of the website:

The Shaolin Temple

Name: The Shaolin Temple

Class: AAAAA

Area: Zhengzhou

Tel:Tel:0086-400-666-0166 Email：henantour@gmail.com Skype：karenzheng2004

Lying at the foot of the Wuru Peak of the Shaoshi Mountain to the north-west of Dengfeng County of Henan Province, the world famous Shaolin Temple is favored by nature with circling springs, flourishing forests, competing hills and sights of quietness and elegance. The Shaolin Temple is regarded as the origin of Zen while Dharma is considered the founder of Zen in Chinese Buddhism. The name "Shaolin" is closely related to its location, meaning "Temple in the forest of the Shaoshi Mountain."

First built in 495 A.D in the Northern Wei Dynasty, Shaolin Temple has a long history. In 527 A. D., Dharma, a famous master monk from India, came here to spread the theory of Zen. Since then, the temple started its expansion, the number of monks in the temple began to increase, and Shaolin Temple became more influential. Shaolin Temple is regarded as the origin of Zen while Dharma was considered the founder of Zen in Chinese Buddhism. Since the cultivation of Zen requires sitting still facing the wall in a pose of tailor-fashion, which is apt to lead to weariness, monks practice martial arts to drive the fatigue away. Legend has it that it was Dharma who created the Shaolin Martial Arts.

Stepping into the Shaolin Temple, tourists will find themselves in a world of selected antiques and historic sites with artistic buildings, sculptures, frescos, bells as well as elegant handrails, inscriptions, stone steps and pagodas which have earned great fame for this temple and won visitors both at home and abroad. Next, the introduction to some scenic spots in Shaolin Temple shows up below, including Chuzu Hut (Progenitor Hut), Forest of Steles, Daxiong Hall, Qianfo Hall (Hall of One Thousand Buddhas), Pagoda Forest, Yugong Pagoda, and Dharma Cave.

Names of scenic spots have been clarified on the top of the webpage for "Shaolin Temple"; then, there is information about "Name: The Shaolin Temple" which is redundant, especially the word "Name." Next, there is a column about "Class: AAAAA." Firstly, international tourists do not know the class classification of tourist attractions in China, and they do not understand the real meaning of "AAAAA." Thus, it can be omitted. The column of "Area: Zhengzhou" is ambiguous; the detailed address should be given. Moreover, in terms of the column "Tel: 0086-400-666-0166", "Tel" is unnecessary.

In terms of scenic introduction, although the content on the Chinese website is not completely applied to the English version, the basic structure is consistent. Geographic position, nature with circling springs, flourishing forests, competing hills and sights of quietness and elegance, history of Shaolin Temple, and all specific scenic spots are emphatically introduced. The font size on the whole webpage is consistent with 13 paragraphs and more than 1,300 words. Two pictures about Shaolin Temple are illustrated. There is no other mark. It is hard for tourists to seize the key issue and to find relevant information on the English webpage. There is no other information concerned about by tourists, such as route, thicket, supporting facilities. On the English webpage except for the scenic introduction, thus neither the aim to serve tourists and to satisfy purposes of "target readers" nor "function undertaken in target text in target culture" can be realized.

Introduction to a scenic spot-Tower of London on the official website of London Tourism Administration is compared.

HM Tower of London

Overview

Despite the Tower of London's grim reputation as a place of torture and death, within these walls, you will also discover the history of a royal palace, an armory, and a powerful fortress. Don't miss Royal Beasts and learn about the wild and wonderous animals that have inhabited the Tower, making it the first London Zoo. Discover the priceless Crown Jewels newly displayed in 2012, join an iconic Beefeater on tour and hear their bloody tales, stand where famous heads have rolled, learn the legend of the Tower's ravens, storm the battlements and get to grips with swords and armor and much more!

The two paragraphs of introduction to Tower of London are reader-oriented and visualized with concise language in a lively style and highlighted informative and persuasive function. Thus tourists can have a visualized understanding to "Tower of London." There are ten verbs in you will also discover ... Don't miss…and learn about …Discover …

join …and hear … stand …learn… storm …and get to … and much more!", thus tourists have at least 10 kinds of experience and their desires to visit can be aroused. Use of the word "you" can shorten the distance between the website and tourists, which makes tourists feel comfortable. However, in the similar cases, "tourists will find" are used on the English website of Shaolin Temple, which is excessively calm and objective.

The two words of "Practical Information" are highlighted in visualized form (shown in Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 Introduction to Scenic Spots on the Official Website of London Tourism Administration

The information is practical and important, which is the problem concerned about by "target readers." Meanwhile, the information mentioned above appears in the form of a table, which is clear at a glance. In terms of the item "price," the detailed information (shown in Fig. 3) is given on the website in the form of a table. Moreover, the conditions are fully explained to avoid misunderstandings and unnecessary troubles.

Fig. 3 Price information on the Official Website of London Tourism Administration

In addition, the great difference between the websites is that the detailed introduction to "supporting facilities" in scenic spots is shown in the form of a table (shown in Fig. 4), including toilet, venue facilities, communication facilities, reservation equipment, dining facilities, and payment facilities. Most facilities are provided for the disabled, including the blind and the deaf-mute who are provided with convenient service facilities. These facilities are not provided on the Chinese tourism website in Chinese or English version, which indicates that the aim to "serve tourists" on British tourism website is more explicit that on the Chinese tourism website.

Facilities	
Accessible Bathroom Facilities	Designated wheelchair accessible public toilet
	Some toilets with handrails
Accessible Venue Facilities	Level access, ramp or lift to restaurant or cafe
	Level access, ramp or lift to the shop
Accessible Communication Facilities	Audible alarm system
	Hearing loop system
	Information available in audio format
	Information available in braille
	Sign language used
Accessible Venue Facilities	Assistance dogs welcome
	Emergency evacuation procedures for guests with disabilities
	Special dietary requirements catered for
	Staff available to assist
	Staff disability awareness trained
	Wheelchairs available free of charge
Additional Accessible Facilities	Level access, ramp or lift to information point
	Level access, ramp or lift to ticket issuing point
	Portable chip and pin machines
Accessible Parking Facilities	Drop-off point for guests available outside main entrance

Fig. 4 Introduction to Facilities on the Official Website of London Tourism Administration

The purpose of international publicity translation for tourism is explicit with obvious commercial intention, which is to cater for the expectation of "target readers." According to the principle of "Skopos theory," environment, cultural background, cognitive competence, and mental feelings of target readers should be fully considered in tourism translation. Advantages of target text should be fully developed to make it more infectious by correctly and faithfully conveying meanings of source text on the principle of readers first from the perspective of vocative function in tourism style. In comparison with information structure on Sino-British tourism website, in addition to conveying information, the largest feature of British website is that it has a strong "operational" function, which attracts readers and makes them take actions. The fatal flaw of English version for Chinese tourism website is that there is the only introduction to scenic spots without any other information, which lacks "vocative" function.

3.3 Linguistic features
Linguistic features of the following two paragraphs of introduction to "Scenic Zone on Yuntai Mountain" in Chinese version and Royal Botanic Gardens in the English version are compared below.

Yuntai Mountain is famous for mountains and water, which ranks No. 1 due to the profound historical and cultural accumulation. It has four distinct seasons with different scenery. Ice and snow melt in the spring while everything comes back to life; water flows in the brook; mountain flowers are in full bloom. Yuntai Mountain is the best place to go for a spring outing, to admire the beauty of flowers, and to take relax. Peculiarity and magnificence of Yuntai Mountain are created due to the verdant original secondary forest in the summer and abundant and unique waterfall. As Yuntai Mountain has beautiful landscape and scenery, it is a yearning summer resort for people. Trees are dressed in red in the autumn. Red leaves look like fire on the top of mountains. Visitors can observe scenery in the autumn on Yuntai Mountain, wear cornel, and appreciate red leaves to distract their attention. Yuntai Mountain is covered with snow as clean as ice and as pure as jade in the winter. However, mountains are luxuriant, grey, vigorous, and odd. Thus visitor can appreciate magnificent and beautiful northern scenery without coming to the northeast.

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Explore a World Heritage Site at Kew Gardens – the world's most famous garden. Stroll a soaring walkway amid tree canopies and wander through extensive gardens under glass reaching up to 27°C. Enjoy a day out with four cafes and restaurants, art galleries, a serene lake and waterlily ponds.

Glasshouses provide hours of undercover discovery for visitors of all ages. Be amazed by giant lily pads in the Waterlily House, delve into an exotic rainforest in the Palm House, and travel through 10 climatic zones in the Princess of Wales Conservatory. Step inside Kew Palace to explore a beautiful royal retreat comprising princesses' bedrooms, an intimate dining room, and the Royal Kitchens.

As shown above, the Chinese language has a cultural connotation, which is rhetoric with luxuriant voice and emotion, and elegant words. Four-character structure, parataxis, parallelism, and rhetorical devices are widely used. In addition to conveying information, it has highlighted the aesthetic function. There are 239 words in the Chinese part with 32 times of four-character structure, which indicates a high frequency of using four-character structure. However, the introduction of the scenery on English website has a rational beauty, which is simple and concise. Landscape

description is reader-oriented; moreover, linguistic discourse composition, syntactic structures and expression styles conform to the habit of English readers. The possible explanation is that the different cultural backgrounds, values, and thinking modes result in different linguistic features and styles.

4. Discussion

The results mentioned in the previous section reveal that there is a significant feature in terms of translation strategies in international publicity translation process of tourism culture, which is reflected in information expression styles and language sentences and text structures. Information expression style refers to cognitive habits and aesthetics views of the target group, while language sentence and text structure refer to the language habit of the target group. Two aspects of translation process influence the final information dissemination effect of tourism culture.

Firstly, the acceptability of target language should be considered as the standard in the aspect of information expression style. As analyzed above, the scenery introduction on English website is natural, true, simple, and concise. Landscape description is reader-oriented, which focuses on pure information dissemination in aspects of the geographical environment, service facilities, advantages, and disadvantages in a scenic spot. Moreover, the information is accurate and abundant with highlighted informative and persuasive functions. Therefore, the cognitive competence and mental feelings of "target readers" should be abided by at the time of conducting international publicity translation for tourism culture in Chinese version (Nord, 2001). The information shall be emphatically introduced to realize the purpose of international publicity.

Secondly, target language should be taken as the standard for language sentence and text structure. The analysis shows that the design of Chinese website conforms to the cultural characteristics and mindsets of Han nationality. However, the mindsets and aesthetic views of English speakers should be considered in the translation process. Meanwhile, the Chinese expression has many modifiers with flowery words, while English expression is simple and concise with clear logic. In terms of language expression, conventional translation strategies in Chinese source texts should be avoided as much as possible in translation process; the principles close to habits of target language audiences should be selected (Reiss, 2000) to approach the mindset and aesthetic views of audiences. Deletion, reconstitution, and other strategies should be properly selected to achieve the purpose for smooth expression of meaning in the source text and to attain the purpose of international publicity translation for tourism eventually.

5. Conclusion

The information dissemination function of tourism culture and the intended purpose of the target language can be realized with the application of Skopos Theory in translation practice. The tourism website translation is the realization approach to spread Central China Culture as well as an important means for Central China Culture to be accepted by target language readers. According to the principles of Skopos Theory, the selection of translation methods and strategies should stay in line with the international publicity purposes(Vermeer, 1996). The experience of tourism website for English-speaking readers should be used as a reference in construction and translation process for tourism websites to satisfy intended purposes of "target readers" and to eliminate language and culture barriers as much as possible for the realization of expectation information and exchange function of international publicity translation for tourism culture in Central China.

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