

Analysis of Errors in English Translation of Public Signs in Nanjing Red Tourist Attractions and their Countermeasures—Take Yuhuatai Scenic Spot as an Example

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Abstract: Accurate and proper English translation of public signs in Nanjing red tourist attractions is crucial to the dissemination of Chinese red culture. This paper firstly expounds definitions of public signs, red tourism and red tourism translation; then it points out errors in English translation of public signs in Nanjing Yuhuatai scenic spot, mainly including grammatical and spelling errors, inaccurate translation, inappropriate wording, inconsistent translations on different signs, etc., and analyzes possible reasons: complexity of language, cultural differences and context; finally, it puts forward some countermeasures for English translation of public signs in red scenic spots.

Keywords: Nanjing red tourism, Yuhuatai scenic spot, public signs, English translation errors; countermeasure

1. Introduction

Nanjing is not only a popular tourist city in China, but also the first choice for many foreign tourists. They visit Nanjing not only to enjoy China's magnificent mountains and rivers, but also to understand China's local culture and customs. With the vigorous development of tourism in Nanjing, red tourism gradually become a new wave in tourism. How to better publicize red culture and achieve easy-to-understand translation and communication has undoubtedly become the topic of research and discussion by countless well-known scholars.

Public signs refer to written and graphic information in the form of notices, instructions, displays, warnings, signs and so on, which are open to the public and closely related to the public's daily life and work. Public signs play an important guiding role in tourists' trip. Accurate translation of public signs helps to improve city image and promote cultural communication and exchange. However, mistranslation and omission of public signs will cause misunderstanding, which is not conducive to cultural construction of the city and damages city image^[1]. Nanjing has many red tourism resources, attracting countless foreign visitors. Therefore, accurate translation of public signs will have a direct influence on foreign tourists. This paper investigates English translation of public signs in Nanjing Yuhuatai scenic spot, analyzes the existing problems, and puts forward some countermeasures.

Yuhuatai is a memorial shrine of the new democratic revolution, with a memorial cemetery. It is located 1km away from Zhonghua Gate, Yuhuatai District, Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, covering an area of 153.7 hectares, with a green space coverage rate of more than 90%. It is a national unique memorial scenic spot among natural mountains and forests, featured by red tourism.

2. Definition of red tourism and its translation

2.1 Definition of red tourism

As for definition of red tourism, it was clearly pointed out in *The Outline of the National Red Tourism Development Plan for 2004-2010* issued by the general office of the CPC Central Committee and the general office of the State Council as early as December 2004, "Red tourism mainly takes the memorial sites and symbols formed by the great achievements made by the people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China during the revolution and war as the carrier, and takes the revolutionary history, revolutionary deeds and revolutionary spirit as the connotation to organize and

receive tourists to carry out themed tourism activities of remembrance, study and visit".

2.2 Definition of red tourism translation

With the improvement of the popularity of Chinese culture, red tourism, as a part of Chinese tourism cultural activities, has become the first choice for foreign tourists to understand China's red stories. It not only undertakes the dissemination of China's revolutionary history and revolutionary deeds, but also carries forward China's revolutionary spirit. Therefore, as a form of interpreting red tourism culture, red tourism translation comes into being. Red tourism translation takes language as the carrier, takes foreign tourists as the leading object, and uses another language form to help them better understand Chinese revolutionary culture^[2]. Obviously, red tourism translation is aimed at spreading and carrying forward China's red tourism culture. Through English translation, China's red tourism culture will "go out", and help foreigners understand China's red stories, carry out memorial study and visit China's red tourism landscape, so as to better understand the history of China's red revolution. Although the English translation of red tourism is particularly important in the dissemination of Chinese revolutionary culture, there exist some error in English translation of red tourism. The translation of public signs in red scenic spots is a part of red tourism translation. Accurate public sign translation can not only help foreign tourists understand how to use facilities and equipment in the scenic spots, but also help foreign tourists better understand the meanings of the red scenic spots.

3. Errors in English translation of public signs in red scenic spots

With the emergence of red tourism translation, bilingual or even multilingual explanations or translations have been set up in all red tourist attractions to facilitate foreign tourists to understand China's revolutionary cultural undertakings. At the same time, in order to better carry out publicity of red tourism culture, bilingual or even multilingual public signs have been set up in each red tourism scenic spot^[3]. Most importantly, in order to better spread Chinese culture to foreign tourists through red tourism, some places have specially trained bilingual or multilingual language skills of tour guides and commentators. There are four types of errors in English translation of public signs in Yuhuatai scenic spot.

3.1 Grammatical and spelling errors

Nanjing Yuhuatai scenic spot has a large number of tourist signs in both Chinese and English. However, it is found that there are many grammatical and spelling errors in these translations. For example, the "婴儿车"(Baby Cart) on the glass wall at the tourist center of the South Gate of the scenic spot is translated into "Bady Carriage", "请勿乱扔垃圾" (No Littering) on the first large sign from the south gate is translated into "No Litter", the sign on the parking lot on the east side of the martyr cemetery is translated into "Parking", and the first sentence in the introduction of Yuhuatai scenic spot is translated into "Yuhuatai Scenic Area, covering 1.5 square kilometers, located in Nanjing's Yuhua District...".

It must be pointed out that most of these errors are not caused by the low level of translation, but by the carelessness of the staff of the scenic spot in the process of proofreading. The existence of a large number of such basic errors is bound to make foreign readers question English translation quality of tourism signs in Nanjing scenic spots, and may even have a negative impression on Nanjing.

3.2 Inaccurate translation

Yuhuatai scenic spot has set up several washrooms with mother and baby rooms to facilitate the use of mothers with babies. However, it is only translated into "Washrooms" and does not express functions of mother and baby rooms. For foreign tourists, functions of mother and baby rooms are unknown, which will bring inconvenience to tourists in need. Yuhuatai scenic spot has a temple called Gao Zuo Temple, but it is translated into "Gao Zuo Temple Ruins" in English, which is not completely equivalent to the Chinese information. There is a sign that says "烈士纪念碑"(The Monument of Revolutionary Martyrs), but the English is "Monument Square", and the translation is not accurate at all. There are several "小心台阶" (Mind the Step) and they are translated into "Step carefully". The English translation of the Martyrs' Monument and the Memorial Corridor is not completely consistent with the Chinese version, and many important information has been omitted, including the three important

works engraved on the monument: *The Declaration of the Communist Party*, *The Three Sources and Three Components of Marxism* and *The Theory of New Democracy*.

3.3 Inappropriate wording

The red tourism text is mainly about the true exposition of the Chinese revolutionary cause, involving the real time, place, characters and events, and the text often contains a large number of words representing the cultural characteristics of the Chinese revolutionary spirit, such as "the Communist Party of China", "bloody struggle", "bravery", "selfless dedication" and so on. Due to the different cultural backgrounds of foreign readers, if the translator uses proper wording of words with Chinese cultural characteristics in English translation, it will directly affect foreign tourists' understanding and evaluation of history and misunderstand Chinese revolutionary culture.

In the introduction of Yongquan Square, it is mentioned that the name of Yongquan Square is the grace of dripping water, and Yongquan means to repay each other, symbolizing determination to inherit legacy of martyrs forever and work bravely for generations. The English translation uses "ancestor" instead of "martyr", which is not appropriate.

In the introduction of Everlasting Lamp, it is mentioned that it was lit on September 28, 2009, symbolizing the spirit of martyrs "passing on from generation to generation". It is translated as "This implies the precious lives and the ever lasting spirits of the martyrs", in which the understanding and English wording of "薪火相传，代代不息" are not very appropriate.

3.4 Inconsistent translations on different signs

In the survey of Yuhuatai scenic spot, it is found that English translations of some public signs are inconsistent. Take "请勿乱扔垃圾" as an example, there are three translations: Do Not Throw Rubbish, No Litter and No Littering. "丁香园" and "丁香路" have been translated into "Clove Road" and "Dingxiang Garden" respectively. "烈士纪念碑" has been translated into "Monument Square" and "The Monument of Revolutionary Martyrs".

The reason for this kind of error is that the translator does not carefully check or refer to the existing translation in the translation process, and there are errors caused by carelessness in the post-production process.

4. Analysis of causes of English translation errors in Nanjing red tourist attractions

Red tourism is not only the carrier of Chinese revolutionary culture, but also a part of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, telling Chinese red stories. Therefore, accurate English translation of red tourism is essential for accurate dissemination of Chinese culture. Therefore, current situation of English translation errors mentioned above are a major obstacle in English translation of red tourism public posts. Therefore, in order to better improve the quality of English translation of red tourism, many well-known scholars have done some in-depth research. The causes of English translation errors include language complexity, cultural differences and context complexity.

4.1 Complexity of language

Translation involves transformation from one language to another. It belongs to cross-cultural communication between two languages and cultures. English translation of public signs is to convert the source language in Chinese into the target language in English. In simple terms, due to different cultural backgrounds and differences between the two languages, translators are prone to spelling mistakes in English translation. From a macro perspective, spelling errors lie in translator's carelessness in English translation. However, from a micro perspective, spelling errors are more due to complexity of language.

4.2 Cultural differences

Public signs in red tourist attractions contains a large number of professional words representing characteristics of Chinese culture, involving many objective and real narrative plots and real time, place,

characters and events. Therefore, when translating these kind of information into English, translators sometimes make grammatical errors in pragmatic failure, which will directly affect foreign tourists' understanding of China's revolutionary cultural cause and easily lead to cultural misunderstanding. There are two main reasons for pragmatic failure: first, translators do not master vocabulary with cultural characteristics; Second, translators do not fully understand the implicit meaning of words in cultural background. If translators can't understand the specific information well, cultural misunderstanding might occur. It is precisely because English translation of red tourism is a cross-cultural communication activity, involving two different languages and cultures. From a cultural perspective, the root cause of grammatical errors lies in cultural differences. Because cultural differences are not only reflected in differences of cultural background, values and thinking modes, but also in differences of stylistic characteristics and styles between Chinese language and western language^[4]. Therefore, in English translation, translators should have a deep understanding and mastery of two different languages and cultures.

4.3 Complexity of context

Newmark (2011) believes that context is the most important factor in translation. According to different contexts, it is necessary to use reasonable wording to make the target text achieve the same connotation and effect as the source text does. Improper wording will directly lead to cultural mistakes and make foreign tourists' misinterpret Chinese revolutionary culture. Therefore, when translating public signs in red tourist attractions into English, translators should consider complexity of context and choose reasonable wording, which will enable foreign tourists to better understand China's red culture and revolutionary cause.

5. Countermeasures

Nanjing has a large number of red tourist attractions, and tourism is one of its pillar industries. Public signs, as a cultural medium, play a role as a cultural window. On the one hand, we must cultivate translators with cultural cultivation and bilingual ability. As translation involves transformation between two languages, translators' bilingual ability is very important for English translation of public signs. In addition, in translation of public signs, if we can not fully understand their cultural information contained in the text, it is impossible to accurately complete the transformation from the source language to the target language^[5]. Therefore, improving translators' bilingual ability and cultural cultivation is the key factor to improve quality of public sign translation.

According to the existing types of English translation errors, it is particularly important for translators to improve their professional knowledge and skills. At the same time, in the process of English translation, as a cultural communicator, translators should not only avoid grammatical and spelling errors, but also adopt reasonable translation strategies from a cross-cultural perspective to effectively avoid improper wording and ensure accurate dissemination of red tourism culture. Therefore, in order to improve translation quality of red tourism English translation, many well-known scholars have put forward common translation strategies from the perspective of translation strategies, such as literal translation, free translation, additional translation, translation and transliteration.

6. Conclusion

In a word, by investigating translation of public signs of Yuhuatai scenic spot in Nanjing, this paper points out that there are still many translation errors in English translation of red tourism in Nanjing, mainly including grammatical and spelling errors, inaccurate translation, inappropriate wording and inconsistent translation, and puts forward some countermeasures to improve English translation of public signs. This not only affects cultural tourism experience of foreign tourists, but also is not conducive to dissemination of Chinese red culture. Through the above analysis of current situation of English translation of red tourism in Nanjing, this paper summarizes four types of errors and analyzes causes of them, hoping to provide some practical basis for study of English translation of red tourism. The quality of English translation of public signs directly reflects degree of urban internationalization and overall quality of a city. Standardizing English translation of public signs is of great significance not only to improve city image of Nanjing, but also to English translation of public signs in other cities.

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