

Translation Error Analysis and Improvement in Xinjiang Tourism Texts: A Corpus-based Study

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Abstract: This study investigates translation errors and proposes improvement strategies in tourism texts promoting Xinjiang tourist attractions. Through analysis of a specialized bilingual parallel corpus, the research compiled data from posters, online videos, and media content. Utilizing the American Translators Association (ATA) error classification framework, this study conducts an in-depth analysis of translation inaccuracies in tourism texts. The findings identify five primary error types: grammatical, syntactic, spelling, punctuation, and terminological inaccuracies. In response to these issues, this paper suggests three targeted improvement strategies: specialized translator training, development of a specialized corpus, and the establishment of an optimized translation project management framework. These measures are intended to enhance the accuracy and cultural resonance of future tourism translations, effectively conveying Xinjiang's unique appeal to a global audience.

Keywords: Translation errors; Xinjiang tourism texts; Improvement strategies; Corpus-based Study

1. Introduction

Promotional slogans are crucial for promotion of tourist attractions; whether in plain language or elegant ones, their core purpose is to attract tourists and attract them to the sites. Thus, the quality of these slogans often significantly influences the image of the attractions. Through field visits, it was found that English translations of promotional texts from some tourist attractions sites contain major translation errors, deviating from their intended purpose of attracting tourists and, in some cases, leaving readers confused and even leading to negative impacts upon tourist sites.

To address this issue, this study explores major translation errors of Xinjiang's tourism texts through a self-built parallel corpus and proposes useful improvement strategies to solve problems may emerge in future translation process. This research, therefore, aims to address the following two research questions:

- (1) What are typical translation errors in Xinjiang's tourism texts in our corpus?
- (2) How can these errors be avoided in future translation practices?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Causes of Translation Errors

When analyzing translation errors (TE), Pym has categorized them into two types: binary and non-binary. Binary errors occur when the translation fails to produce the only correct version, whereas non-binary errors encompass other variations [1]. This classification simplifies error analysis and benefits translation pedagogy in a large scale for such a binary categorization can provide instructors with quick solutions to quality assessment for trainees' renditions; however, such coarse-grained results also offer limited utility for practical translation work for such black-or-white criteria may confuse translators and may provide little direct reference for their workflow. Nord has challenged this binary framework and argued that translation errors cannot be simplified in this manner. She defined translation errors as instances where the translator fails to follow given instructions or adequately address translation challenges [2]. From a functionalist perspective, she also identified four categories of errors: pragmatic, cultural, linguistic, and context specific [2]. Her classification established a functionalist approach to error analysis, providing a comprehensive framework that guides practical translation work. In contrast,

the American Translators Association (ATA), focusing on translation quality assessment, developed a standardized framework categorizing translation errors into three main groups: language rule violations, meaning transfer issues, and writing quality problems. These categories are further subdivided into grammatical, lexical, spelling, punctuation, and cohesion errors [3]. This framework not only guides English translation practices but also aids translators in recognizing common pitfalls, helping them to meet linguistic standards across various text types.

Significant progress has also been made in research on translation errors in China. Scholars have investigated mistranslations in public signage [4], advertisements, technical terminology, learner errors, and translations in construction and engineering contexts [5]. Through an in-depth analysis of learner errors in translation pedagogy, Yang proposed effective strategies for skill development in future translator instruction [6]. Featuring categorized common errors in public sign translation, Wang has proved that errors such as spelling, semantic, and pragmatic issues through case analysis [7]. He has reiterated the importance of addressing these errors in practical translation settings. While other scholars have stressed that error categorization like that may become useful and valuable tools for in the process of translator training. Based on the PACTE translation model, Chen has examined error types and suggested that teaching strategies that emphasize cultural background knowledge and the application of translation technology [8]. After analyzing different error types, Yan has highlighted the importance of precision and professionalism in translating technical terms, underscoring the need for a solid linguistic foundation among translators [9].

In sum, translation errors can arise from multiple causes, including a lack of deep understanding of source and target language culture, insufficient professional knowledge, and inadequate proficiency with translation tools and techniques. Addressing these issues requires relevant agencies to enforce quality control measures, while translators should enhance their competencies through targeted training and interdisciplinary learning to improve translation quality.

2.2. Research on the Translation of Xinjiang Tourism Texts

Research on the translation of tourism texts for Xinjiang's attractions remains limited, with most studies focusing on strategies, effectiveness, and potential issues. In translation strategies, scholars have examined approaches for translating Xinjiang's tourism texts. He, for example, has analyzed translation methods for culturally loaded terms, identifying common errors in place and artifact names [10]. Other researchers have considered tourism slogan translation through the lenses of national policy, translation theory, and aesthetics, adopting strategies that emphasize aesthetic alignment [11]. In addressing translator competency, Liu proposed targeted solutions, including talent development, outsourced translation quality improvement, and paying special attention to Xinjiang's cultural uniqueness to better equip translators with relevant skills [12]. Overall, most studies are theoretical and qualitative, focusing on the framework and model construction with limited empirical research. Corpus-based studies on Xinjiang tourism text translation are especially scarce, and often limited to individual sites. This study, through a bilingual parallel corpus, examines typical cases in Xinjiang's tourism promotional texts translation, aiming to provide practical insights for future research and translation practice.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Corpus Construction

To ensure representativeness, this study has collected diverse data from multiple sources, including on-site posters, promotional slogans, online videos, and content from official media and websites. This diversity can ensure comprehensiveness and depth of collected data. Additionally, to guarantee authenticity, we also collected tourism texts on Xinjiang targeting international audiences from overseas media and websites. Despite limited resources, the research team endeavored to collect relevant materials, and the corpus has reached approximately 85,000 words (tokens) with part-of-speech (POS) tags and translation errors tagged respectively. The study aims to reveal linguistic characteristics and typical errors in the English translation of Xinjiang tourism promotion texts, providing insights for future translation practices and intercultural communication.

3.2. Data Collection and Coding Process

Following the construction of the corpus, two experienced translators were invited to independently

annotate and identify translation errors within the data set. Using the American Translators Association (ATA) error classification system [3], the translators conducted a detailed analysis and systematic classification of errors related to target language rules, meaning transfer and writing quality. The two translators conducted a joint annotation session prior to their independent annotations to establish a basic consensus on the coding process. To assess inter-rater reliability, an Intra-class Correlation Coefficient (ICC) was calculated, resulting in an ICC of 0.82 (95% CI, 0.75–0.89), indicating a high level of agreement between the translators in identifying translation errors. Based on their detailed annotations, the frequency and distribution of each error type were determined. Additionally, an analysis was conducted to identify the underlying causes of these errors, including deficiencies in linguistic knowledge, cultural understanding, translation skills, and tool usage etc. Drawing on the error analysis, this study proposes a series of measures aimed at enhancing translation quality in future practice.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Category of Translation Errors

Through analyzing the corpus, we identified and classified three major types of translation errors. The types of errors and related codes (capitalized letter in brackets below), also observed frequencies in the parallel corpus, and descriptions are as follows (see Table 1):

1) Target Language Rule Errors: A total of 368 errors were identified in this category. Grammar errors (G), with 107 cases, include missing components, incorrect verb forms, and noun/pronoun declensions. Capitalization (C) errors amount to 96 cases. Syntactic errors (SYN), totaling 83 cases, primarily involve issues with parallel structure, sentence organization, and modification. Spelling (SP) and punctuation (P) errors add 82 cases, impacting the text's professionalism.

2) Meaning Transfer Errors: This category comprises 512 errors. Ambiguity (IND) errors are the most frequent, with 166 cases, often due to multiple translation options. Fidelity (F) and cohesion (COH) errors total 153 cases, disrupting logic and altering meaning. Addition (A) and omission (O) errors contribute 71 cases, causing incomplete information. Terminology misuse (T) due to cultural/geographic unfamiliarity adds 69 cases and verb form errors (VF) are 53 cases, mainly tense-related.

3) Writing Quality Issues: 160 writing quality errors were found in this parallel corpus. Usage (U) errors, including awkward phrasing and incorrect terminology in sentences, make up 151 cases. Text type (TT) and register (R) errors, totaling 9 cases, reflect overly rigid or literal translation that fail to meet audience expectations.

Table 1: The Category and Frequency of Translation Errors.

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Description
Target Language Related Errors	Grammar (G)	107	wrong grammar usage that does not meet target language rules
	Capitalization (C)	96	use wrong upper and lower-case in capital letter or proper nouns
	Syntax (SYN)	83	fail to follow syntactic rules in Target language
	Punctuation (P)	71	wrong usage of punctuations like commas, periods etc.
	Spelling (SP)	11	incorrect spelling or usage of letters or characters in target language
Meaning Transfer Errors	Indecision (IND)	166	different translation for the same text or term in target language
	Faithfulness (F)	119	unfaithful for the meaning of the source text in one's translation
	Verb Form (VF)	69	incorrect usage of tense, gender, mood and aspect etc.
	Terminology (T)	53	wrong usage of terms in target language
	Omission (O)	53	omit meaning or information of source language in translation
	Cohesion (COH)	34	lack of cohesion or failure of using related cohesive devices
Writing Quality	Addition (A)	18	add unnecessary terms, words or meaning into one's translation
	Usage (U)	151	failure of following typical target language conventions in translation
	Register (R)	9	too formal or too causal usage of target language that does not conform to the context

These findings underscore the importance of attention to details in translation and identifying key areas for enhancing translation trainees' linguistic skills, cultural knowledge, and writing style. Continuous training, practice, and rigorous review can substantially improve translation quality,

supporting Xinjiang's international tourism promotion in a more effective manner.

4.2. Causes of Translation Errors

Translation errors can be classified into three major categories: target language rule errors, meaning transfer errors, and writing quality issues. Below is a detailed analysis of these errors.

Target language rule errors typically arise from a translator's insufficient understanding of grammar, syntax, spelling, and punctuation rules in the target language, often stemming from inadequate linguistic proficiency. Furthermore, a lack of cross-cultural awareness may lead translators to overlook cultural context and idiomatic expressions, resulting in translations that appear unnatural or inaccurate. Limited familiarity with translation technology is also one factor that may lead to mistranslation; insufficient proficiency with translation tools and computer-assisted translation (CAT) technologies can impede effective resource utilization, thereby compromising translation quality. Meaning transfer errors pertain to the accurate comprehension and conveyance of source text content. Such errors may result from a superficial understanding of the source text's content, context, or cultural nuances, leading to deviations from the intended meaning. Misapplication of terminology, particularly in specialized contexts, can cause conceptual confusion or misinterpretation, leading to mistranslations.

An excessive reliance on literal translation methods often disregards the conventions of the target language and the expectations of its readers, resulting in translations that are awkward or difficult to understand. Additionally, writing quality issues concern the overall coherence, style, and appropriateness of the translated text. Such issues may arise from limited writing experience in the target language, leading to translations that fail to meet stylistic norms and register conventions. Audience needs may also be overlooked when translators insufficiently consider the cultural background and preferences of the target audience, producing translations that do not engage or satisfy readers' expectations. Inconsistencies in translator style further contribute to disorganization, with variations in stylistic choices or inappropriate register leading to a lack of cohesion. Collectively, these factors highlight challenges within the translation process related to linguistic knowledge, cultural understanding, translation skills, and writing proficiency. Identifying these underlying causes enables translators to adopt strategies that enhance translation quality.

4.3. Strategies to Address Translation Errors

4.3.1. Translator Training and Knowledge Update

To enhance translation competencies in tourism texts, targeted training should be provided not only to translators responsible for these materials but also to national institutions and relevant personnel. Such training aims to strengthen an audience-oriented perspective, encouraging translators to use idiomatic language that conveys the original meaning naturally and aligns with the cultural expectations of the target audience. A well-rounded skill set is essential for achieving both accuracy and fluency in tourism translations, which can facilitate effective cross-cultural communication. Recognizing the importance of tourism text translation is critical for translators, as it fosters a heightened sense of responsibility. This awareness can help mitigate common errors, such as spelling and grammatical inaccuracies, that compromise the professionalism of tourism texts. In cases of uncertainty, translators should seek timely consultation and verification to ensure content accuracy. These approaches underscore the comprehensive qualities required of translators in this field, highlighting the need for not only technical expertise but also a high level of dedication and a commitment to excellence.

Secondly, knowledge of foreign languages and culturally loaded elements will be continually updated and reinforced for those who work in the translation process. Translators should not only understand the characteristics of tourism texts but also know more about cultural connotation behind these texts. In fact, translating for foreign audiences involves a thorough grasp of the target culture, making it necessary to decode and transfer important cultural information through translation. Translators in this field should cultivate a habit of reading, writing and speaking in their foreign language and purposefully accumulate specialized terms and vocabulary in the tourism industry. This approach fosters an ability to think in the target language and develop a strong linguistic sense, with benefits in expression, cultural knowledge, and other areas.

4.3.2. Building Specified Tourism Promotion Text Corpus

To enhance translation accuracy and consistency, a corpus of tourism promotional materials can be developed in collaboration with local governments, professional organizations, or universities. Such a

corpus can assist translators in avoiding overly literal translations by providing them with a flexible, context-sensitive resource. By consulting this corpus, translators can collect and analyze commonly used words, phrases, and sentence structures, exploring equivalent forms and effective translation techniques for key terms, phrases, and even larger text segments. This resource not only offers translation norms but also improves translation proficiency when encountering similar materials.

The corpus would extend beyond simple vocabulary equivalents to include reference materials on critical vocabulary, sentence structures, and textual organization, thus creating a comprehensive terminology database. Tourism promotion texts are distinct in their integration of cultural elements, including natural landscapes, historical events, allusions, and legends in Xinjiang. Therefore, categorizing this information systematically within the corpus is essential, which can give translators a quick access to accurate language equivalents. This approach saves time and effort, streamlines translation practices, and promotes standardized translation outcomes.

4.3.3. Establishing a Rigorous Translation Project Management Workflow

As with any complex task, an excellent translation results from a combination of multiple factors. It relies not only on the source language's quality but also on the translator's linguistic proficiency, dedication, project management abilities, and the reader's comprehension and expectations. Together, these factors shape the final translation. Achieving high-quality translation therefore requires coordinated teamwork, effective management, and clear communication, rather than simply dividing tasks and exchanging assignments between client and translator. It is not a formulaic process that can be easily replicated. Each translation projects may pose unique challenges to translators involved in translation tasks, which requires translators and project managers to have a flexible and adaptive approach to manage. Therefore, the implementation of a meticulous translation project management system is poised to further optimize translation quality. The translation project management framework proposed by the author is as follows (see *Figure 1*):

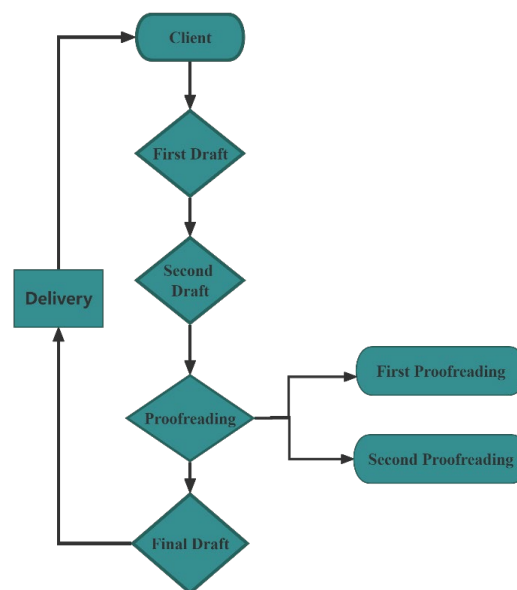


Figure 1: Translation Project Management Workflow.

5. Conclusion

Through a comprehensive analysis of a corpus containing translations of Xinjiang tourism promotion texts, this study systematically identified multiple types of translation errors and offered targeted recommendations for improvement. These errors not only disrupt the accurate transmission of information but also compromise the overall quality of the translated materials and diminish the reading experience of the intended audience. The findings reveal that the causes of mistranslations are multifaceted, encompassing issues related to linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, translation competence, and writing skill. To enhance the quality of tourism translations, it is essential for translators to pay meticulous attention to target language norms, accurately convey intended meanings, and ensure the naturalness and fluency of the final text. Additionally, it is recommended that relevant governmental

and tourism authorities strengthen oversight and quality assessment of translation outputs to ensure that translated content effectively attracts and engages international audiences.

This study suggests several measures to improve translation outcomes, including regular translator training, continual knowledge updates, the establishment of a comprehensive corpus dedicated to external promotional materials, and the development of a structured translation project management system. Such initiatives have the potential to amplify the international influence of Xinjiang's tourism industry, fostering greater cultural exchange and supporting tourism growth. The insights and recommendations presented in this study serve as a valuable resource for future translation practices concerning Xinjiang tourism slogans and offer a useful framework for addressing similar translation challenges in other regions.

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