

Analysis of English Public Signs Translation Strategy of Chengdu Scenic Spots from Cultural Communication

Zeng Renli

Abstract: Chengdu is the cultural intersection center of Southwest China, where the Ba Shu culture of China meets, attracting countless tourists around the world. As one of the platforms for cultural outreach, English public notices show the local customs of China. As a kind of non-verbal communication, the translation of public signs has a promotion effect on cross-cultural communication and dissemination of Chinese culture. In this paper, some of the English public signs of Chengdu scenic spots as the research object are taken as examples to discuss the translation strategies frequently used in the process of translating, and explore the requirements of public signs translation for translators, hoping to illustrate the significance of standardization of bilingual tourism public signs in the cultural communication between China and other countries in the world.

Key words: cross-cultural communication; translation; Chengdu scenic spots; public signs

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I. Introduction

China, one of the five ancient civilizations, has a splendid civilization history of more than 5000 years, with a wide range of land and materials, and many beautiful scenic spots lined up, attracting countless Chinese and foreign tourists. The bilingual public sign language of scenic spots briefly introduces the spots to the global visitors and promotes the city image, which is important in the cultural communication between China and foreign countries, and the quality and efficiency of its translation are closely related to the service level and quality of the tourism industry, so the standardization of its translation is especially important. How to reduce the attractions public sign language translation errors and improve the translation quality and translation level under the cross-cultural communication perspective has been the key concern of domestic attractions, and also provides a public platform for tourism research development (Jack-Phipps, & Arriaga, 2020). The government and all sectors of society should innovate the translation of attractions' Public signs, and translators should vividly tell China's story and shape a good city image through the translation of English public signs, so that the attractions' Public signs can become a city business card. Let more tourists know more about the attractions, the city and China through the Public signs of the attractions.

1. Study of Public signs and Their English Translation

English is a world language; it is spoken by over 1.5 billion people (Crystal, 2018). English plays a vital role in international tourism. BruyelOlmedo & Juan Garau assert that tourism and English are inextricably linked (BruyelOlmedo & Juan Garau, 2019). Translation of public signs has evolved along with the global tourism industry and plays an important function, Landry & Bourhis state that signs in public spaces have both informational and symbolic functions, the former informs, guides or directs the public, while the latter demonstrates the dominance, marginalization or power of language in the public space (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). The translation of Public signs of attractions under the perspective of cross-cultural communication is more complicated, and translators not only need to consider the deeper cultural meanings behind the language, but also need to enhance the transformation of the two cultures between different languages during the translation process, so as to create a more accurate language translation mode and facilitate better understanding by readers of the target language. In recent years, more and more researches focus on the meaning of language display in public space, i.e., the study of Linguistic Landscape in public space, so as to reveal the linguistic choices and functions of public signs. (Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Hasan Amara, & Trumper-Hecht, 2006) Linguistic choices can be monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual to provide informational and symbolic functions. These functions convey important information, such as giving directions to customers. At the same time, they symbolize cultural values and social norms that contribute to the visual landscape. The materials analyzed in this paper come from some scenic spots in Chengdu, and through careful analysis of the materials, it is concluded that the English translation strategy of Chengdu scenic spots' Public signs mainly adopts naturalization as the main strategy, supplemented by alienation strategy.

1.1 Definition of Translation Strategies-Domestication and Foreignization

Naturalization and alienation of translation were proposed by the American scholar Lawrence Venuti in 1995, while the term was mentioned by the German scholar Scheiemaecher in a paper published in 1813. Scheiemaecher emphasized the inseparable relationship between translation and comprehension, pointing out that there are two kinds of translation, one is to bring the reader close to the writer, and the other is to bring the writer close to the reader. If the reader is brought close to the author's context, he will be able to feel the exotic mood. According to the above two translation situations, Schleiermacher (Scheiemaecher) proposed the author-centered translation and reader-centered translation, which broke through the traditional boundaries of direct translation and Italian translation, and had a great influence on later scholars, Venuti's view of alienation and naturalization is undoubtedly influenced by the author and reader-centered translation, and the reader can feel the foreign mood if the reader is close to the author's context. Venuti's view of alienation and naturalization was undoubtedly inspired by Scheiemaecher's theory. However, while Scheiemaecher's theory is based on German hermeneutics, Venuti examines Scheiemaecher's arguments in a postcolonial context, thus arriving at the translation claim of alienation.

Naturalized translation is "adhering to the current mainstream values of the target language and culture, blatantly adopting conservative assimilation of the original text to make it cater to the local codes, publishing trends and political needs" (Venuti, 2001); naturalized translation can make the translated text closer to the reading habits of the target language readers so that the readers of the translated text can understand the meaning of the original text more easily and the meaning of the translated text can be better understood by the readers. This is in line with the translation standard of "attainment". The use of the naturalization method can deal with the problems of meaning expression and language conventions that may arise in translation. When it is difficult to translate the original text directly or the direct translation will cause problems in understanding the meaning, the naturalized translation method can be considered. Alienation translation, on the other hand, "deviates from the dominant local values and preserves the linguistic and cultural differences of the original text (Venuti, 2001). Differentiated translation focuses on the expression of the original text, focuses on the expression habits of the original text and the cultural differences conveyed by the original text, and emphasizes the "differences" between the two languages and cultures. In the context of cross-cultural communication nowadays, differentiated translation undoubtedly plays an important role in the communication between various cultures. Wang Dongfeng mentioned in his article "Naturalization and Alienation: The Crossing of Spears and Shields" that "alienation and naturalization can be regarded as an extension of the concepts of direct translation and Italian translation, but they are not exactly the same as direct translation and Italian translation. If translation and paraphrase are discussions at the linguistic level, then alienation and naturalization are discussions at the linguistic level upgraded to the cultural, poetic and political level. That is to say, the bull's-eye of the dispute between direct translation and paraphrase is the gain or loss of meaning and form, while the bull's-eye of the dispute between alienation and naturalization is the gain or loss of cultural identity, literacy, and even discourse rights in the vortex of the gain or loss of meaning and form." The two concepts of alienation and naturalization, and direct translation and interpretation, each have their own value of existence.

1.2 The Application of Domestication for Public signs in Chengdu Scenic Spots

The naturalized translation strategy emphasizes the localization of the source language, takes the target language or the readers of the translated text as the final guide of translation, favors the cultural environment in which the readers of the target language live, and conveys the content of the original text in the way that the readers of the target language are accustomed to express themselves. Naturalized translation requires the translator to approach the readers of the target language, and the translator should be like the author of his own country, recreate the translation, and the translation conforms to the reading habits and aesthetic interests of the readers of the target language. Through comparative analysis, the English translation of Chengdu scenic area Public signs is inclined to use the naturalization strategy, with the alienation strategy as an auxiliary, and mainly adopts the methods of Italian translation, borrowing, re-translation and provincial translation under the guidance of naturalization strategy. The naturalization strategy tends to take care of the target language readers, which helps the target language readers understand the translated text better, enhances the readability and appreciation of the translated text, and promotes multilateral cross-cultural communication.

1.2.1 Free translation

Translators can retain the core meaning of the original text by adopting the Italian translation, ensure that the features of simplicity are achieved in the public sign language, emphasize the faithfulness of the translation, convey accurate tourism information to the readers, and promote cultural exchanges.

Original text: 望帝陵是四川地区保存最大最古老的陵墓。

Translated text: The Wangdi Mausoleum is so far the oldest and largest imperial mausoleum in Sichuan.

Original text: 陵前立“古望帝之陵”石碑,落款民国八年五月吉立熊克武敬立但懋辛敬书。 Translated text:

The inscriptions on the stele read 'Mausoleum of King Wangdi', and show that it was dedicated to the memory of King Wangdi by Xiong Kewu in the May of the eighth year of the foundation of the Republic of China.

The above case is from Chengdu Wangcongci. It is always known that Chinese belongs to a language of meaning and English of form. In Chinese. The logic of the text is often not easy to be seen. Therefore, considering the difference in the lines between them is necessary. While in English, the translator should pay attention to the potential logic of the discourse and add necessary contents to reflect the logic of the translated text. In the translation of public signs, words that express the logic of the public sign should be added to the translation. In the example mentioned above, “望帝陵是迄今为止四川最古老、最大的皇家陵墓。” The addition of “so far” enhances the logic of the text, makes it coherent and readable, and makes it easier for readers to understand the information conveyed. “吉立” and “敬書” were translated as “it was dedicated to the memory of King Wangdi by Xiong Kewu”. The translator combines the meanings of the two Chinese words “吉立” and “敬書”, and expresses their meanings in an explanatory and complementary way on the basis of respecting the cultural differences between the China and other cultures, so that the translation is complete and logical. In this way, the target readers can have the same feeling as the original readers. It enhances the coherence of meaning between sentences. It retains the meaning and style of the original text while ensuring the accuracy of the translation. It meets the needs of the readers and conveys the ideas of the original text. It avoids misunderstandings by tourists and allows public signs to convey a great deal of information in simple language, effectively facilitating communication between tourists with different cultural backgrounds on both sides.

1.2.2 Borrowing

The activity of translating Chinese-English Public signs also belongs to a kind of cross-cultural communication behavior, therefore, the translator takes into full consideration the differences between Chinese and Western cultural customs and habits of thinking when translating. Generally speaking, Chinese people speak euphemistically, while Westerners speak frankly. In the process of translating Public signs of scenic spots, translators usually borrow idiomatic expressions to deal with the original text. This makes it easier for the target readers to understand the information and facilitates smooth cross-cultural communication between the two language speakers.

Example(1): 禁止吸烟 Translation: No Smoking

Example(2): 禁止拍照 Translation: No Photography

For example, in the translation of “禁止吸烟”, the translator translates it as “No Smoking”, using the gerund of the verb smoke after “No”. This is an idiomatic expression. Visitors are clearly reminded that smoking is not allowed in the area. If it is translated as "Forbidden smoking", the tone is too forceful, which will be offensive to people, not conducive to the development of the tourism industry, and cannot show the open and tolerant style of our country as a great nation. Similarly, according to the sentence pattern of No + noun, “禁止拍照” is translated as " No Photography", which aims at restricting tourists from taking pictures. The above phenomenon shows that some common public signs have conventional expressions in English despite different cultures and customs. There is no doubt that the translator adheres to the principle that translation is an activity with purpose. Guided by the principle of purpose, more attention is paid to the target readers' expressions. In translation, translators directly imitate similar expressions that they are familiar with in their own countries. Of course, the target texts can help visitors read and understand these source texts more easily and avoid unnecessary misunderstandings.

The “No + gerund/noun” construction plays a pivotal role in English, particularly when expressing the prohibition or disallowance of certain behaviors. This sentence structure is concise and straightforward, beginning with “No” and directly followed by a gerund or noun, forming a potent negative statement. Its significance lies in clearly indicating that a particular behavior is unacceptable, thereby regulating and guiding public conduct.

In the English context, the expression “No + gerund” is widely used in public prohibitory and warning signs. The advantage of this sentence structure is its simplicity, directly highlighting the core content of the prohibition without the need for excessive modification or explanation, enabling it to convey a clear message swiftly. This aligns well with the pursuit of conciseness and clarity in Chinese public signs, making this sentence structure easier to understand and accept in cross-cultural communication.

More importantly, the expression “No + gerund” is not only concise but also idiomatic. It originates from the everyday speech habits of English-speaking countries, representing a natural and smooth way of expression formed over time. Therefore, when this sentence structure is used in public signs, it can quickly resonate with visitors, enabling them to understand and accept the conveyed message within a short period. This is particularly crucial for tourists from around the world who may not be familiar with the local language and culture. However, the universally recognized expression of “No + gerund” helps them quickly capture key

information, thereby avoiding unnecessary misunderstandings and conflicts.

Furthermore, the application of the “No+gerund/noun” construction in public signs also demonstrates the function of social norm and guidance. By explicitly prohibiting certain behaviors, this sentence structure not only protects public interests and safety but also guides the public to form good behavioral habits. It silently communicates societal values and moral norms, prompting people to consciously abide by and uphold these norms in their daily lives.

In summary, the use of the “No + gerund/noun” construction in English public signs holds profound significance. With its concise, clear, and idiomatic expression, it swiftly conveys the message of prohibiting or disallowing certain behaviors, facilitating cross-cultural communication. Simultaneously, it embodies the function of social norm and guidance, providing robust support for public self-discipline and the maintenance of public interests.

1.2.3 Retranslation

Through the use of adapted translation techniques, the translator can get rid of the constraints of the original form and faithfully convey the meaning of the original text, making the translation of public signs simple and less difficult for the readers of the target language to comprehend, and facilitating the interaction between the two cultures.

Example(9): 小草微微笑, 请您绕一绕

Translation: Please Keep Off the Grass

Chinese texts tend to favor vivid rhetoric to give life to the text, making it more vivid and imaginative, and Chinese readers can easily empathize with it and generate positive reactions accordingly. For example, "The grass is smiling slightly, please go around", Chinese readers know that it means to pay attention to one's footsteps and avoid stepping on flowers and grass. It is not difficult to find that rhetorical devices are widely used in public signs. However, due to the geographical environment and other reasons, there is a great difference in the way of thinking between Chinese and Westerners, and this kind of descriptive language cannot be understood by the target readers. Therefore, translating "小草微微笑, 请您绕一绕" to "Please Keep Off the Grass" conveys the meaning of the original text in simple words and removes the metaphorical meaning of Chinese. It enables the target language readers to understand the meaning and makes the target text readable, which is necessary for effective cross-cultural communication.

1.2.4 Provincial translation

By using elliptical translation, the translator can ensure the simplicity of the translation, which is in line with the simplicity of the public sign language, avoid the cumbersome meaning of the lines caused by cultural differences, convey useful tourism information to the readers, and promote cultural exchange.

Example (5):

Original text: 白沙岗逶迤千里, 嶙峋的白云岩, 银光闪烁。

Translated text: While Sand Hillock zigzags for about one thousand meters with jagged dolomite and shining light.

Original text: 一边是晴空万里, 湛湛蓝天; 一边是云蒸雾涌, 朦胧世界。

Translated text: At one side the weather is clear and fine but at the other side it is cloudy and foggy.

Original text: Complementing each other creates a beautiful landscape.

Translated text: The two climates intertwine here and produce a beautiful picture

The example analyzed above is from the Xiling Snow Mountain in Chengdu - the “yin and yang realm”. The Chinese text is full of “literary flavor” and conforms to the aesthetics”, “晴空万里”、“湛湛蓝天”、“云蒸雾涌”and so on. The purpose of these modifiers are to attract tourists. In the translation, taking into account the differences between the English and Chinese ways of thinking, based on the reader-centered, cultural exchange for the purpose, the translator appropriately deleted the descriptive content of the translation, the “银光闪烁” translated as “shining light”, did not translate as “silver lighting” has not been translated. The phrase “绝美的风景线” was translated as “a beautiful picture”. Instead of being translated as “absolutely beautiful scenery line” in word by word way, the meaning of “绝对” is omitted in the target language text. The words “湛湛蓝天” and “云蒸雾涌” have been translated as “the weather is clear and fine” and “it is cloudy and foggy”, omitting the facial meaning “湛湛” and “蒸涌”, the translator gets rid of the constraints of the original text to convey the core message without being bound by the original text, and takes into account the target readers’ existing knowledge and cultural background, reducing the difficulty of cross-cultural communication, and avoiding word-for-word translation, which results in a bloated translation. The translation also reflects the concise features of Public signs, which can effectively play the function of prompting Public signs in scenic spots and achieve the purpose of cross-cultural communication between readers with different cultural backgrounds and customs.

Example(6).

Original text: 花径不曾缘客扫

Translated text: The path has never been cleared for the visit of a guest

Original text: 旁栽满花木的小路通向草堂

Translated text: There must be a path shaded by flowers and trees leading the thatched cottage

This section is a depiction of the flower path of Du Fu's Cao Tang. Scriptures and poems have always been quoted by the Chinese in order to cater to the literary interests pursued by Chinese readers. The signage quotes Du Fu's poem, "花径不曾缘客扫". However, for the target readers, it is difficult to understand the meaning of the word "缘客". The translator has fully considered this cultural meaning with Chinese characteristics and translated "缘客" as "the visit of a guest", without translating the meaning of "缘". The fidelity of the translation is adjusted so that the target readers can understand its meaning immediately after reading. In China, some descriptive adverbs, adjectives and some rhetorical devices are often used to introduce places of interest in public signs, which is in line with the aesthetic taste and psychology of Chinese people. "旁栽满花木的小路通向草堂", in which "栽满" is a rhetorical expression of exaggeration. However, Western tourists tend to think in a more direct way and prefer substantive descriptions, so if these public signs were translated word by word, it would be uncomfortable in tourists' eyes. Therefore, the translator directly deleted the metaphorical meaning of the them and kept the core meaning of the them. The translation faithfully conveys the message of the original text and serves the purpose rule of achieving cross-cultural communication purposes among readers with different cultural backgrounds and knowledge. In the process of translating public signs, words and phrases with no real meaning are often deleted, and only the key information is presented. The translation is concise, logical and faithful to the original text, which satisfies the readers' aesthetics and achieves good intercultural communication results.

1.3 The application of English translation foreignization for Chengdu scenic spots public signs

Foreignization is "the translator's attempt to leave the author alone as much as possible and to bring the reader closer to the author" (Venuti, 1995). In translation, it means accommodating the linguistic characteristics of the foreign culture, absorbing the foreign language expressions, and requiring the translator to move closer to the author and adopt the source language expressions corresponding to those used by the author to convey the content of the original text, i.e., to take the culture of the source language as the final destination. The purpose of using the alienation strategy is to take into account the differences between different cultures in the world, to preserve and reflect the exotic national characteristics and linguistic style features, and to keep the exotic flavor of the text for the readers of the translated text. In translation

The use of augmented translations can effectively achieve the purpose of preserving the flavor of the original work, and promote the contact and absorption of culture by people in cross-cultural activities.

Under the guidance of augmented translation, the translator explains and supplements the meanings of words with Chinese characteristics to make the meaning of the translated text more coherent and help readers understand the message accurately.

Original text: 莫不是当年女娲补天所遗之石

Translated text: making people think it is a stone left by Nvwa (the faming in legend)

According to different ways of thinking and cultural customs between China and western sides. When translating, it is necessary to explain the cultural terms of Chinese characteristics, which is more conducive to showing our cultural confidence. As in the example of Xiling Snow Mountain, the target readers do not quite understand the story of Nvwa, one of the famous goddesses in Chinese mythology. Therefore, the translator explains Nvwa (the faming in legend) in the notes. This not only supplements the information in the original text, but also reflects the translator's consideration of the target readers' different cultural backgrounds in intercultural communication, explains the cultural meaning of the source language, makes the translation more readable, and facilitates cultural exchanges. The Public signs are also a good channel for spreading culture to the outside world, and foreign tourists can have a glimpse of the splendid culture of China through the Public signs.

1. Requirements for Translators of Public signs

First of all, strengthen the deep cognition and understanding of the cultural carrier. Language carries culture, in the process of translating the public sign language of attractions, we should ensure the accuracy and simplicity of the public sign language, enhance politeness and internationality, try to convey the deep information behind the language, and choose the suitable translation strategy based on the needs of the target language readers, which can effectively strengthen the external publicity work, and ensure that the target language readers can strengthen the deep cognition and understanding of the attractions. Secondly, improve the translation mode. Although China's attractions public sign language translation mode and translation ideas

continue to innovate and optimize, based on the cross-cultural communication perspective, strengthen the analysis of attractions public sign language translation mode, found that there are still some problems. Part of the public sign language of attractions has grammatical or spelling errors, which requires translators to strictly require the consolidation and strengthening of their professional knowledge, and constantly learn to absorb new knowledge and carry out innovative development. The translation of public sign language is of great significance for the export of Chinese culture, therefore, the attractions should strengthen the cultural analysis to ensure that the language becomes a powerful carrier of culture, and based on the habits of readers of the target language to innovate the way of expression, it is important to improve the translation mode to reduce the phenomenon of grammatical or spelling errors due to cultural differences. The translation effect of the public sign language of attractions is related to the image of the city and the image of the country. Strengthening the attention and concern for the translation mode of the public sign language of attractions and strengthening the innovative expression based on the cross-cultural communication perspective can really promote the internationalization of Chinese attractions in the language translation, so as to attract more international friends and promote the prosperous development of China's tourism industry. Once again, cross-cultural communication is realized with the help of public sign language translation. In the process of translating the public sign language of attractions, strengthening the in-depth analysis and understanding of the cultural connotation behind, can avoid language barriers in the translation process, and effectively strengthen the foreign propaganda. Language translation is equivalent to cultural translation, and the translation of attractions public sign is the re-expression of the culture behind the language. Under the global cross-cultural communication, the translator's cross-cultural communication ability should be improved in the process of public sign translation, not only in the cross-cultural communication to effectively convey information, but also in the cultural output.

II. Conclusion

With the rapid advancement of global integration, international cities are witnessing increasingly frequent economic and trade cooperation, tourism, and cultural exchange activities. Public signs, as vital windows for a city's external communication, directly reflect its level of internationalization and profoundly impact foreign friends' cognitive experiences and the harmonious atmosphere of cultural integration.

In this context, the principles of "functional equivalence, contextual similarity, audience consistency, clear objectives, and corresponding transformation," put forward by scholars Dai Zongxian and LvHefa in 2005, provide a scientific and practical guidance framework for the Chinese-to-English translation of public signs in a globalized context. This principle emphasizes the need to ensure information functional equivalence, accurately conveying the intended message of the source language in the target language. At the same time, it is crucial to fully consider the specific context in which the public signs are located, ensuring that the translated content aligns with the cultural background and cognitive habits of the target audience, thereby avoiding cultural barriers and misunderstandings. Furthermore, the translation must have clear objectives, whether it is for guidance, warning, or promotion, to maximize the effectiveness of the translation. Finally, corresponding transformation requires translators to make appropriate choices in vocabulary, sentence structure, and other aspects, both faithful to the original meaning and conforming to English expression habits for natural fluency.

The translation of public signs is not only an art of language conversion but also a bridge for cross-cultural communication. Following the principles of functional equivalence, contextual similarity, audience consistency, clear objectives, and corresponding transformation, combined with the theory and practice of cross-cultural communication, and continuously enhancing the cross-cultural communicative competence of translators and the general public are crucial for improving the quality of public sign translation and promoting friendly international exchanges.

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