



On the English Translation of Publicity Materials of Ancient Villages From the Perspective of the Science of Communication

SHEN Zhaowen^{[a].*}

^[a]Foreign Language Department, Binzhou University, Binzhou, China.
 *Corresponding author.

Received 27 September 2017; accepted 2 January 2018
 Published online 26 March 2018

Abstract

Ancient villages bear obvious characteristics of traditional culture and constitute an important means to promote the international image of local areas. Proper and appropriate translation of Publicity Materials plays an important role in the process of external communication and transmission of ancient villages. Basing on theories of the science of Communication and translation, this paper aims to analyze the characteristics of ancient villages from the perspective of tourism and explores the English translation strategies of publicity materials of ancient villages from the perspective of Communication.

Key words: Ancient village; Communication; Translation of tourism publicity materials

Shen, Z. W. (2018). On the English Translation of Publicity Materials of Ancient Villages From the Perspective of the Science of Communication. *Cross-Cultural Communication*, 14(1), 75-80. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ccc/article/view/10246>
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10246>

1. A SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCHING STATUS OF ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF ANCIENT VILLAGES' PUBLICITY MATERIALS

The current research on the ancient villages mainly focused on the following aspects: Firstly, there are studies of the protection and inheritance of the ancient villages. Zhou Junyu, a member of the CPPCC National Committee, published an article in *People's Daily* in

2011, *the Protection of Ancient Villages From the View of the Historical and Cultural Heritage in China*, in which he pointed out that ancient villages have been destructed in the process of urbanization, and then put forward some suggestions on the protection of ancient villages, such as: The reconstruction under the cooperation of expert teams and the respect of the villagers' autonomy. Secondly, there are studies of cultural interpretation and interpretation of ancient villages (Zhou, 2011). Zhu (2010) made a study of shaping the cultural interpretation of ancient villages and cultural images; Zhao (2016) made a study of ancient village architecture and cultural spirit and concluded that the ancient villages, with ethnic value and the spirit of the people, are the heart and nostalgia of persons, who are far away from home. Thirdly, there are studies of the cultural development and cultivation of the cultural industry of ancient villages. Xiao (2011) in his article *Research on the Development of Cultural Industries in Ancient Villages—Taking Shandong Zhujiayu as a Case*, proposed the form, characteristics and value of cultural resources of ancient villages as well as put forward suggestions on how to realize the sustainable development of social resources and economy of ancient villages under the guiding concept of sustainable development.

In recent years, with the increasing international exchanges in political, economic and military fields, Chinese language translation is no longer confined to the output of literary works. Tourism, especially the rapid development of cultural tourism, has become an important way to spread our national and local excellent traditional culture, as well as enhance international influence and national "soft power".

With the rapid development of tourism, researches on translation of tourism materials also spring as mushrooms in China. The author believes that the translation of the tourist publicity materials of the ancient villages can

be subordinate to the category of tourism translation. In the academic field, some experts have studied the translation status of different regions and scenic spots from the perspective of translation methods, translation theories and cross-cultural studies. Some did researches on the translation techniques and strategies of the tourism materials, such as some scholars summarized some translation skills and strategies from translation practices on the basis of the characteristics of tourism texts and put forward some translation techniques with regard to the translation of the names of scenic spots, place names, slogans, festivals, folk culture dishes, etc. Jia (2012) pointed out there was an internal connection and regularity between text types and translation strategies in translation guided by the theory of “alienation” and “domestication”, which can attract the potential of foreigners’ curiosity in Chinese culture. Secondly, some experts made studies on translation tourism publicity materials from the perspective of tourism ecology. Hou (2013) pointed out many mistakes in the ecological environment of tourism translation in Shanxi, and put forward the adaptation and multidimensional coping strategies of translators when they deal with the relationship between the environment of tourism culture translation and the their interior elements guided by the theory of eco-translatology. Guo (2012) pointed out that the existence of mistakes in tourism translation influences the development of tourism in Henan, and made an evaluation of Henan tourism translation from the perspective of linguistics, culture and ecology, and proposed that the solution of the problems of tourism translation requires interaction between translation education and translation market and management. Thirdly, some experts made studies on the translation errors of tourism translation under the guidance of different translation theories. Ding and Huang (2011), from the view of Skopostheory, made research of Anhui tourism translation and summarized the existing mistakes in four categories: functional translation errors and cultural translation errors, linguistic translation errors and text specific translation errors. Fang and Zong (2014) followed Ding Lifu’s research method, made an investigation into translation errors of Huizhou culture and summarized four kinds of translation errors of Huizhou culture and analyzed causes of translation errors.

2. THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND TRANSLATION

Communication, whose most basic elements are symbols, including linguistic symbols and nonverbal symbols, is a universal phenomenon, activity or behavior in human society. Its essence is demonstrated by the sharing, communication and dissemination of information. The noumenon of translation is a linguistic symbol,

which realizes the communication and dissemination of information through the transformation of two different languages. Translation research is also inseparable from the attention of language, rules of language use and users of language. Communication and translation share a common nature, that is, the processing and communication of information. Propaganda translation, the essential word is translation, obviously possesses the characteristics of communication. Lü (1997) puts forward that translation is an activity of cross-cultural communication and exchanges, whose essence is communication. The aim of any kind of translation, including oral translation, written translation, machine translation, translation of literary works, and translation of science and technology materials, is to achieve the communication of various information (such as natural information, biological information, social and cultural information or technology information). Yang (2010), in her doctoral thesis *The Publicity Translation From the Perspective of Communication*, probed into the nature, features and principles of the translation of publicity materials from the perspective of communication in a macro perspective, and analyzed the translating examples selected from *China Daily*.

In summary, there have been some achievements of researches with regards to ancient villages, including the researches of village culture, heritage protection, and translation of tourist texts; however the studies concerning the publicity translation of ancient village tourism are still in small number and category. The translation of ancient village spots is not only for literal translation, but also for how to convey the culture of ancient villages to western countries, that is to say, to balance the relationship between conveying meaning and conveying culture. Therefore, how to improve the popularity of ancient villages, how to translate the publicity materials of ancient villages, and to promote the development of ancient village tourism and external communication are becoming an important research topic in different fields.

3. THE STUDY OF ANCIENT VILLAGES’ CULTURES

The ancient village, a gem of Chinese culture, which is composed by the characteristics of architecture, folklore, culture, environment and ecological civilization, possess the attributes of historical culture, folk customs, artistic aesthetics, recreation and leisure, and scientific research. They are excellent examples in the history of human development with their good ecological environment, harmonious living environment and simple folk customs, and the protection and inheritance of their culture is the important foundation for promoting the development of beautiful countryside and new urbanization in

China. Therefore, it has strong theoretical and practical significance for the development of ancient village cultural tourism, the construction and inheritance of a harmonious natural and residential tourism system, as well as the exploration of the dynamic mechanism and development mode of sustainable development of ancient village culture and tourism.

The ancient village, the epitome of Chinese history, is a valuable cultural heritage left by Chinese traditional culture and farming civilization. Since 1980s, scholars have made researches and great achievements in the studies of the connotation, category, characteristics and driving mechanism of ancient village cultures from different angles. Some made researches in the aspect of the cultural connotation and scope of ancient villages, such as, Lu and Tong (1993) proposed that village culture can be defined as the sum total of the spiritual production and spiritual life of the village community in a narrow sense. Chen and Liu (2005) pointed out that the culture of ancient villages can be divided into the general cultural and the specific culture, that is, the general culture is a kind of institutional culture which is represented by ancient villages, while the specific culture is a kind of culture which is formed in the development of ancient villages, demonstrated by their special characteristics like environmental culture and art culture. He (2007) pointed out that the ancient villages contains rich and profound heritage in history and culture, such as architectural culture, sacrificial culture, folk culture and folk art. Zhang (2009) expounded the concept of "Village Cultural Landscape" (VCL) for the first time in the International Symposium on the protection and sustainable utilization of villages and landscapes in Guizhou, China, which was held in Guiyang in 2008. He proposed that the ancient village, a kind of human historical memory constructed by farming civilization and nature and a sign of regional locality, could accumulate the history of regional social development.

In addition, many domestic research centers for the study of Chinese ancient village culture and institutions have been established in China. As an important part of Chinese traditional culture, the industrialization of ancient village culture also becomes the focus of academic attention, such as the development of ancient village culture industry, the research of ancient village culture, creative industries and clusters. Scholars have summarized and discussed the rich and colorful cultural connotation and characteristics of ancient villages, and formed a series of research achievements, such as the cultural value and cultural protection mode of ancient villages, the development and utilization of village cultural landscapes, and the cultural industry of ancient villages. The cultural and natural protection of the ancient villages is integrated into the economic and social development of the village.

4. THE IMPROVING STATUS OF THE ANCIENT VILLAGES' CULTURAL TOURISM AND FUNDS INVESTMENT INTO THE ANCIENT VILLAGES' CONSTRUCTION

Since twenty-first Century, national and regional governments, civil organizations and institutions have gradually paid attention to the protection of ancient villages. The first and foremost reason is that the ancient villages are the crystallization of the farming civilization in China, whose remains, such as architecture, folklore, culture and ecology, are the rare cultural heritage of Chinese nation. The second reason is that the ancient villages in China are mostly located in remote mountainous areas or backward villages, whose economic development is a major problem that plagued the local government. The development and utilization of the cultural tourism resources of the ancient villages can bring unexpected opportunities and benefits for the local people. The third reason is that with the economic growth and people's disposable income increases, tourists have higher demands for tourism activities. Then, the traditional tourism style cannot meet the needs of tourists by simple sightseeing or touring. Under such conditions, the ancient village tourism with its unique beauty in landscape and harmonious atmosphere will definitely attract a lot of tourists.

5. THE TRANSLATION STRATEGIES OF ANCIENT VILLAGES' PUBLICITY MATERIALS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE SCIENCE OF COMMUNICATION

5.1 The Study of Translation From the Perspective of the Science of Communication

Professor Lü Jun, a pioneer of the study of the translation from the perspective of the science of communication in China, published an article *Translatology, a Special Field of Communication in Foreign Language* in 1997, in which he put forward the theory of translatology could be categorized in the science of Communication for the first time (Lü, 1997, pp.39-44). He hold the opinion that translation, whose essence is communication, can be defined as an activity of intercultural information exchanges and communication no matter whether it is a sort of interpretation, written translation, or Machine Translation, or it is a sort of literary translation or scientific and technological translation. The aim of the translation is to accomplish the widespread of information.

Translation embodies the basic feature of Communication, that is a transmission of information which is manifested as a series of relations between

the communicators (the senders of information), communication channels and the receivers; and it is also a dynamic and structured information transmission process composed by communicating relative factors; and it is also a social activity which reflects the characteristics of social relations. The difference between translation and Communication is that translation is involved in the exchanges among different cultures, in which the manipulators no longer adopt the same and original symbol system, and cultural transferring codes are also manifested. However, in essence, the principles in translation are in the same with that in Communication.

The science of Communication can enable people to view an open and dynamic system of translation, and make it possible for us to make systematic researches in various aspects, like the noumenon, the subject, the object, the carrier, the receptor of translation, and is beneficial to the development and establishment of translatology.

5.2 The Translation Principles of Tourism Text

5.2.1 The Principle of Information Fidelity

Translation, in essence, is a kind of communication and transmission of information. The first and foremost task of the translation of tourism materials is to ensure that accurate and sufficient information can be effectively transmitted. The accuracy of the information refers to the fidelity the translation should transmit the meaning of original text with appropriate quality and quantity. If translation is regarded as a kind of cross-cultural communication, the most important yardstick of the pros and cons of the translation should be evaluated by how much information has been disseminated (Zhang, 1998, p.29).

As for the quality of the translation, it entails the meaning that the translation should transmit the information and intention of the original text accurately. This involves two important essences, one of which is the accurate understanding of the original text by the translator, that is, the accuracy of the content; the other is the expression and transmission of the original text on the behalf of the translator, that is, the accuracy of the expression.

As for the quantity of the information, it entails the meaning that the translation should convey the information of the original text sufficiently. The essence of the sufficiency lies not in the great quantity of the translation but in the appropriate information of the translation. It is worth noting that the original text more often than ever provides complex and various information rather than simple and single superficial information. The task of translation is to transmit the whole information of the original text as fully as possible. It is worth noting that the quality of translation shouldn't be simply equal to quantity, that is, in most cases, the high quantity cannot ensure good quality. Since great differences exist between

language features and cultures of Chinese and English, the means of transmit of information also differentiate from each other.

Edward Hole, an American anthropologist, has divided the world cultures into two types: High context cultures and low context cultures on the basis of the extent how communication is influenced by environment or context when he made the study of cultural value dimensions (Liao, 2008, p.103). In the field of specific communication, the communication of high context entails that the vast majority of information lies in substantial context or is internalized into a person, and only a rare of information exists in the message that is clearly transmitted in encoded information. On the contrary, the messages are usually transparently transmitted by encoded information in the low context information, that is, they are conveyed transmitted through external language.

5.2.2 The Principle of the Effectiveness of Information

The effectiveness, also called the effect and effectiveness, refers to the reactions and effects of information in foreign readers when the information is transmitted.

According to the theory of communication, to ensure the effectiveness of information, noise should be minimized or decreased in the process of message transmission. Any kind of obstacles and appendages which do not belong to the original sources of information can be categorized as noise.

The process of translation is the process of information transmission, in which noise refers to any factors, including language factors, cultural factors or cognitive factors, that affect the understanding, expressing and receiving of information. Translators should make great efforts to decrease these noise in order to ensure that the original information can be delivered to the maximum accuracy of the target language.

Moreover, translators should be at least guarantee the readability and acceptability of the translation so that the expected goal of the translation can be achieved.

5.3 The Translating Techniques of Ancient Villages' Publicity Materials

5.3.1 The Detestation and the Alienation

The most fundamental purpose of translation is to make the tourists understand the publicity materials maximizedly and accurately. In order to accomplish this purpose, it demands that the translators should always bear in mind that the basic and essential task they should do is to remove all the obstacles the tourists or readers may encounter because of the differences of languages, cultures, or thinking styles; and they also should increase the readability and acceptability of the translation materials, and finally guarantee to achieve the goal of the translation of publicity materials and the expected effect.

In translation, it is required a rational combination of double translation strategies, namely, the alienation

strategy on the cultural level and the domestication strategy on the discourse level. Though the Domestication can afford readers to appreciate the fun of the coincidence of different cultures, as well as decrease the difficulty of readers, it is a means of the transference of the heterogeneous composition of one culture into a content of another culture which is familiar to the readers at the expense of large amount of appended information. On the other hand, the Alienation is different, for it can make it possible that the information of one language and culture can be demonstrated by another different culture and language by the maintenance of its original form. The advantages of Alienation lie in that by the introduction of new ingredients to the target language and the influx of these ingredients in the target language, which will eventually lead to the fundamental changes in target language. Fatherly, the integration of nations and national cultures will also be greatly promoted (Tan, 1999, p.45).

5.3.2 Other Translating Techniques

Due to the genre diversity and content variety of publicity materials of ancient villages, whose content may include the introduction of the basic information, the explanation of attractive folk customs, the elaboration of history and culture, and the expression of poetry couplets etc., it requires that different strategies should be adopted in view of the different contents of scenic spots.

(a) Literal Translation

Some of the scenic spots which introduce the facts or real events can take a literal translation, which can not only display the basic information completely, but also retain the characteristics of the original language.

(b) Annotation

Due to the cultural and history differences between China and foreign countries, foreign tourists have less or are lack of Chinese historical knowledge. In the process of translation, if translators translate materials literally, it is difficult and impossible for foreign tourists to comprehend the meaning of these knowledge, and fatherly results in the damage to the “information function” and “influence function” of translation. Therefore, in the process of translation, the translator can adopt the method of annotation to make up for the cultural background knowledge that doesn't exist in the cognition of foreign tourists.

For example, if “TAI SHI DI” is translated into “Taishi mansion”, it will definitely arouse the confusion of tourist, since it is quite possible for them to take “Taishi” as some famous figures in history. Actually, “Taishi” is an official title in ancient Chin, and “Taishidi” is a newly-built inhabitation for a successful candidate in the highest imperial examination. Therefore, the translation of “Taishidi” should adopt the method of Annotation, and is appropriately translated into “Taishi means the candidates who pass the imperial examination and become the capital officials. Taishi mansion is the new house for the Taishi”.

Another example is the translation of “the flagpole holder stone”. The flagstone is the product of the imperial examination in ancient China. Only those who had been a successful candidate in the imperial examinations can be awarded the privilege to pitch a flagpole, which is also the honor of the village and a sort of inspiration for other village candidates to strive and win good fame. If it is literally translated into “flagpole holder stone”, the implication of cultural connotation cannot be manifested. Only by adopting the annotation, can be the cultural connotation it embodies be completely conveyed. And the complete and acceptable translation should be “To honor the candidates who were successful in the imperial examinations, their families erected flagpoles at their ancestral temples for visitors to pay their respect”.

(c) Simplification

Due to cultural differences, it is quite possible in the process of translation that some sentences unconfortable to the thinking habits or the expression of the target language are to be produced. In order to avoid “information function” of the translation by wordy information, the Simplification can be adopted.

(d) Adaptation

In order to achieve the expected purpose of the translation, the translator should possess the ability of conforming to the formal norms and stylistic conventions of the target language. In the process of translation, translators can take the means of deletion or modification to deal with the original text so as to arouse a kind of affection or other influence on the receivers of the target language.

CONCLUSION

There exists the common features between the translation and the science of Communication. The study of translation from the perspective Communication can broaden the category and further researches in translation. With the development of Chinese tourism, ancient villages have aroused wide attraction and attention from various institutions owing to their unique and traditional characteristics. However, the present status of publicity materials translation, both in quality and quantity, can't meet the needs of current situation. Then, it is quite necessary for translators and scholars in this field to make great efforts to make progress in translation. Adopting communication theories in translation can definitely bring a trend of new blow in translation fields.

REFERENCES

- Chen, Y. L., & Liu, P. L. (2005). A research of interactive development of ancient villages' culture and its carriers. *Chuan Shan Journal*, (3), 179-181.

- Ding, L. F., & Huang, B. (2011). A research of translation errors of tourist materials in Anhui Province. *Journal of Jiaozuo University*, 1, 130.
- Fang, M., & Zong Z. R. (2014). Error analysis on C-E Translation of Huizhou cultural tourism texts. *Journal of Hunan University of Technology Social Science Edition*, (4), 142-146.
- Guo, Y. Z. (2012). News English translation from the perspective of eco-translatology. *Chinese Science Technology Translators Journal*, 2, 244-246.
- He, J. Z. (2007). The historical and modern contribution of collections of ancient villages. *Beijing Observation*, (7), 62-63.
- Hou, M. (2013). A study and solution to the translation of Shanxi tourist culture form the perspective of eco-translatology. *Journal of Language and Literature Studies*, 7, 33-35.
- Huang, C. L. (2000). The preliminary studies on cultural landscape of Huizhou. *Geographical Research*, 3, 257-263.
- Jia, W. B. (2002). Source text intention and translation strategy. *Chinese Translators Journal*, 4, 30-33.
- Jin, H. K. (2004). *Translation of cross-cultural communication—Book series of translation theories and practice*. Beijing: China Translation Corporation.
- Liao, L. F. (2008). A brief introduction of high context and low context of hole in intercultural communication. *Xiangchao*, (03), 103.
- Liu, P. L. (1991). *Ancient villages—An urgent issue of country-related cultural subject* (p.2). Hangyang College.
- Lu, R. X., & Tong, H. B. (1993). Characteristics and historical revolution of ancient villages. *Socialism Research*, (1), 58-61.
- Lü, J. (1997). Translatology—a special field of the science of communication. *Foreign Languages*, 39-44.
- Tan, H. J. (1999). On the domestation and alienation of translation from the perspective of cultural differences. *China Translation*, 1, 45-47.
- Xiao, L. (2011). *Research on the development of cultural industries in ancient villages—Taking Shandong Zhujiayu as a case*. Chinese Master's Theses Full-text Database. Shandong University.
- Yang, X. L. (2010). *The publicity translation from the perspective of communication*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Languages University.
- Zhang, C. Y. (2009). Protection and lasting usage of ancient villages' sights. *International Academic Developments*, (3), 10-11.
- Zhang, Z. Q. (1998). On the information quantity and cultural transference. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*, 29.
- Zhao, J. (2016). The architectural form and cultural spirit of ancient villages. *Journal of Guangxi Teachers Education University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 5, 89-93.
- Zhou, J. Y. (2011). The protection of ancient villages from the view of the historical and cultural heritage in China. *People's Daily*.
- Zhu, C. X. (2010). Cultural interpretation of ancient villages and the cultural image mold. *Shanxi Architecture*, (19), 40.