



A Study on English Translation of Culture-Loaded Words in Tourism Texts From the Perspective of Eco-Translatology

LIU Wenting^{[a],*}; MENG Hongmiao^[a]

^[a]School of Foreign Languages, Shanxi Datong University, Datong, China.

*Corresponding author.

Supported by “Shanxi Datong University Science Foundation for Youth” (2015Q24).

Received 16 April 2018, accepted 12 July 2018
 Published online 26 August 2018

Abstract

As a medium of cultural transmission and communication, tourism text is the important link to promote the sustainable development of tourism industry, and the treatment of culture-loaded words in which determines whether English texts can play a corresponding role in cross-cultural communication. This article analyzes the English translation of culture-loaded words in tourism texts from the perspective of Eco-translatology with the case study of Yungang Grottoes, aims to testify that it is of great importance for translators to adopt to translation strategies and methods from the cultural dimension, the linguistic dimension, and the communicative dimension of Eco-translatology, hoping to provide some references for culture-enrichment tourism text translation in China.

Key words: Eco-translatology; Tourism text; Culture-loaded words; Yungang Grottoes

Liu, W. T., & Meng H. M. (2018). A Study on English Translation of Culture-loaded Words in Tourism Texts From the Perspective of Eco-translatology. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 17(1), 105-108. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/10509>
 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10509>

INTRODUCTION

Yungang Grottoes has been rated as one of the first “National 5A Level Tourist Attractions” by the National Tourism Administration. As the core essential factor,

the tourism district has made great contributions to economic development. But the growth of tourism economy is often benefited by the effectiveness of cultural propaganda, one effective mean of which is the English translation of tourism texts. As an informative text, the tourism text mainly aimed at the accurate expression of information. Due to the differences in regional culture, the communication of cultural information is often the difficulty of this kind of type of text translation. The author tries to discuss the strategies and methods of culture-loaded words in tourism texts from the perspective of Eco-translatology with the case study of Yungang Grottoes.

1. CONCEPTS OF ECO-TRANSLATOLOGY

Eco-translatology is firstly proposed by Chinese scholar Hu Gengshen, which based on Adaptation and Selection of Darwin’s biological theory of evolution, focused on the translation of the integrity of the ecosystem and made the new description and interpretation to the nature, procedures, standards, principles and methods as well as translation phenomena from the perspective of Eco-translatology, in the narrative way of Eco-translatology.

The basic principles include: a) translation involves the orderly correlation, multi-dimensional transformation and overall interaction among various factors, with the core concept of “translator as the center”, which highlights the status and initiative of translators, and uses the law of “translator survival” restricts “translator-centeredness”; b) the translation activities should do “multi-dimensional adaptation and adaptation selection” from the linguistic dimension, cultural dimension and communicative dimension, and the best translation is the one with the highest degree of integration and adaptation selection; c) translators’ translation activities are subject to the constraints of “prior prevention” and “follow-up punishment”. d) translation is a kind of interdisciplinary

“interrelated interaction”, Eco-translatology takes ecology as the foundation, carrying out interdisciplinary comprehensive integration of all related disciplines of translation.

2. CULTURE-LOADED WORDS

Language is an indispensable part of culture, which reflects, records and disseminates culture. Similarly, culture influences and enriches language. Language contains the expression of certain cultural factors. For example, vocabulary is called culture-loaded words. Culture-loaded words, as typical cultural connotation words, involve many aspects of specific cultural factors. According to the classification of culture by translation theorist Nida (2001), culture-loaded words can be divided into material culture-loaded words, social culture-loaded words, religious culture-loaded words, ecological culture-loaded words and language culture-loaded words. Due to its specific cultural attribute, culture-loaded words often are the difficulty of translation of target language. For example, Nida once pointed out that “the most serious mistakes in translation are not caused by improper expression of words, but by wrong cultural assumptions.” The paper references the classification of culture-loaded words from Nida, takes the English translation of culture-loaded words in tourism texts of Yungang Grottoes as the research object, probing into its Eco-translatology strategies and methods.

3. ECO-TRANSLATOLOGY STRATEGIES AND METHODS TO THE CULTURE-LOADED WORDS

3.1 Strategies and Methods From the Cultural Dimension

Transformation from the cultural dimension concerns with the cultural connotations both in the source and the target text. Like human activities, translation is also influenced by culture. The cultural dimension requires translators to reconstruct the culture in an appropriate way which can bridge the cultural disparity caused by different languages.

3.1.1 Social Culture-Loaded Words

Example: 窟内平面呈长方形，平顶，中央方塔上下两层，仿木构屋顶塔檐。塔顶处蛟龙盘绕，须弥山逶迤。北壁主像为交脚弥勒菩萨。

The pattern of the cave is rectangle, flat ceiling, the central square column has two levels, imitate the eaves of wooden tower roof. The primary image on north wall is crossing feet Maitreya.

“蛟龙”---“Jiao Long” is one of the aquatic animals with dragon blood existing in ancient Chinese tales and legends. They are fictional creatures made up by ancient people and not physically real. “须弥山”---This word

comes from Sumeru and is a kind of Buddhist language. Mount Meru is the sacred five-peaked mountain of Hindu, Jian and Buddhist cosmology and is considered to be the center of all the physical, spiritual and metaphysical universes.

In this case, “蛟龙” and “须弥山” are too profound and complicated to explain to foreign tourists. Even though these two words are familiar expressions to Chinese, it is nonsense to the Westerners unless the translator gives a comprehensive explanation. But it's not wise for translators to only pursue the surface equivalence of sentence structure. In the process of adaptive selection, addition, restructuring and omission are commonly seen as choices for translators. Therefore, omission of the whole sentence is the best choice in this case.

3.1.2 Religious Culture-Loaded Words

Example: 北壁为交脚弥勒菩萨。东壁下层浮雕“睺子本生”故事。

The primary image on north wall is crossing feet Maitreya. On bottom of east wall depicted a Jataka story of Samaka in relief.

According to Buddhist art, Maitreya is a bodhisattva who will come on earth in the future. The translator employed literal translation method to translate “弥勒菩萨” into its equivalence “Maitreya” rather than into “Buddha” which Westerners may recognize. So the translator used “Maitreya” to create some imaginary space for the target readers and save the cultural connotation to achieve effective cultural communication.

Similarly, due to the lack of Buddhism information, Westerners may not have a clue about what Samaka Jataka is. So the translator used free translation method by making a little linguistic adjustment to translate “Samaka Jataka” into “Jataka story of Samaka” to make it more appreciable.

These little adjustments in translation process fully intended the flexibility of English translation and the effectiveness of culture exchange in the cultural dimension of Eco-translatology.

3.2 Strategies and Methods From the Linguistic Dimension

Transformation from the linguistic dimension is the process of selecting linguistic forms of target text by translator's adaptation to eco-environment of the source text. It focuses on the transmission of the linguistic elements, expressions and systems and also the aesthetic and rhetoric of the language form.

3.2.1 Eco-logical Culture-Loaded Words

Example: 该窟地下有泉水涌出，旧名“寒泉洞”。

The spring effuses from the ground of the cave, so named “Han Quan Dong” in the past.

When translating the geographic name “寒泉洞”, the translator used transliteration to transmit its name which better keeps features of traditional Chinese geographical culture and does not interrupt the target readers. Due to

the differences of cultural tradition and comprehension between Chinese and westerners, there existing differences in naming places, names and other things and so on. In this case, a complex transition of the name of the place would cause confusion and distort understanding which is needless, so the transliteration in the linguistic dimension was the best way for translators to translate the items.

3.2.2 Linguistic Culture-Loaded Words

Example1: 六身高发髻供养天半跪相对, 端静秀丽, 风姿绰约, 素有“云冈六美人”之誉, 是西域造像融入东方元素的上乘之作。

Six offering celestials half on their knees, which be called “the six beauties at Yungang”, charming and elegant, are excellent works of the sculptures from western regions mixed oriental elements.

Example2: 窟门西侧雕骑乘孔雀的鸠摩罗天, 五头六臂, 颜若童子, 蹉发喜笑, 手中或托举日月。

Kumara is sitting on a peacock on the western side of the door with 6 arms, kid's face, curling hair and a smile, holding the sun and the moon.

The cultural and idealistic distinction between Chinese and westerners can often be seen in linguistics, such as the apparent disparity between the construction of Chinese language and that of western countries. For example, Chinese put more emphasis on parataxis while English pay attention to hypotaxis and forms. So it often requires information reconstruction when translating Chinese text into English. And in China, Four-character phrases are the major component of language and culture which stand for the broad wisdom of Chinese. Here are some four-character phrases exerted from above text.

Table 1
Four-Character Phrases Exerted From Above Text

Source Text	Target text	Translation method
端静秀丽	Elegant	Free translation
风姿绰约	Charming	Free translation
颜若童子	Kid's face	Free translation
蹉发喜笑	Curling hair and a smile	Literal translation

From the above chart, we can see that four-character phrases have simple form from the content, balance and regular in structure, smooth and catchy in sound but they are strong in meaning and emotion. However Westerners usually express directly and freely on whatever subject they are working on and they do not have the four-character style. Therefore, during the process of translating four-character phrases into English, translators often employ literal translation and free translation to convey its meaning to adapt to the Westerners' style and to attract readers' interest especially in tourism texts without deducting its cultural meaning and connotation.

3.3 Strategies and Methods From the Communicative Dimension

Transformation from the communicative dimension lays emphasis on the achievement of the communicative

intention and effectiveness. The translator needs to make selective adaptations and adaptive selection accordingly to ensure that the communicative intention was smoothly transmitted and obtained by different communicative communities.

3.3.1 Material Culture-Loaded Words

Example: 前室北壁最上层天宫伎乐十四身, 分别演奏吹指、齐鼓、排箫、琵琶、横笛、琴、五弦、箜篌、腰鼓、义嘴笛、法螺等乐器。

The top section of the north wall are carved with 14 celestial musicians, whistling, beating drums, playing panpipe, lute, flute, harp, zither, harp, waist drum, conch and other musical instruments respectively.

There are many traditional musical instruments from China in ancient times with very difficult names which are hard to recognize even for most Chinese people, such as “吹指”, “排箫”, “横笛”, “五弦” and “箜篌”. In order to avoid the repugnance from the target readers and to bridge the cultural difference, the translator employed domestication strategy and substitution method to translate them into “whistling”, “flute”, “zither”, “harp” and “conch” respectively. In this way, westerners do not get too much confused when they see the tourism text so as to keep their concentration and obtain interests.

“齐鼓”, “排箫”, “琵琶”, “竖琴”, “腰鼓”, was translated by using the literal translation method into “playing drums”, “playing panpipe”, “lute”, “harp” and “waist drums”. Because these musical instruments have equivalent target translation in English, based on the adaptation and selection strategy of Eco-translatology, literal translation method was the best choice to transform the information in this case.

CONCLUSION

This paper tentatively discusses translation strategies of culture-loaded words in tourism texts of Yungang Grottoes from the perspective of Eco-translatology, which aims to find some reasonable, diversity of translation strategies and methods for translation of the culture-loaded words in tourism texts. Through the analysis of specific examples, the author also finds that the translation strategies and methods from the perspective of Eco-translatology can provide references for the English translation of culture-loaded words in tourism texts.

REFERENCES

- Aixela, J. F. (1996). *Culture-specific items in translation*. In R. Alvarez & M. C. Vidal (Eds.). Translation.
 Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A course book on translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
 Fang, M. (2011). On translation eco-environment. *Shanghai Journal of Translation*, (1), 1-5.
 Guo, J. (2000). *Culture and translation*. Beijing: China Translation and Publishing Corporation.

- Hu, G. (2004). *An approach to translation as adaptation and selection*. Hubei Education Press.
- Hu, G. (2006). Exemplifying the translation principle and translation methods of "Adaptation and selection theory". *Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, 49-52.
- Hu, G. (2008). Interpreting the theory through its terminologies: An overview of the adaptation and selection theory. *Shanghai Journal of Translators*,(2), 1-5.
- Hu, G. (2014). An eco-translatological perspective on the supersession of "Translator-centeredness" by "Translator's responsibility". *Chinese Translators Journal*, (1), 29-35.
- Nida, E. A. (1993). *Language and culture and translation: Contexts*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Nida, E. A. (2001). *Language and culture: contexts in translation*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.