

Research on the Necessity and Countermeasures for Improving the Translation of English Public Signs in 4A Scenic Areas in the Aksu Prefecture under the Background of Ecotourism

LI Xuelian^{[a],*}

^[a] Key Research Base for Humanities and Social Sciences in Ordinary Universities of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (Xinjiang Institute of Technology “Two Mountains” Theory and Southern Xinjiang High Quality Green Development Research Center), Aksu, Xinjiang, China.

* Corresponding author.

Supported by 2022 Key Research Base for Humanities and Social Sciences in Ordinary Universities of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (“Two Mountains” Theory and South Xinjiang High Quality Green Development Research Center) Fund Project (Project Number: JDYB202208).

Received 25 March 2023; accepted 8 May 2023
Published online 26 June 2023

Abstract

The Aksu Prefecture is located in the southern of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. With a profound cultural heritage, unique natural scenery, and brilliant folk culture, it is known as the “Jiangnan beyond the Great Wall”. In recent years, the Aksu Prefecture has vigorously developed ecological tourism, and the tourism industry has achieved leapfrog development. The popularity and reputation of the unique tourism brand “Silk Road Ancient Qiuci Magical Aksu” are constantly improving, and more and more tourists are coming to Aksu for tourism. Public signs mainly refer to text and image information used to achieve communication purposes in public places, serving as a reminder to the public. Scenic area public signs are the main window for tourism publicity (Xu, 2016), while the translation of English public signs in the 4A scenic areas of the Aksu Prefecture is not satisfactory in terms of writing and translation standards. If there are problems with the English translation of public signs, it not only brings inconvenience to foreign tourists but also damages the brand image of the scenic areas. This article first provides an overview of research on the translation of public signs, and then lists the problems in the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu

Prefecture. It analyzes the necessities of improving the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture under the background of ecotourism, and finally proposes corresponding countermeasures for the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture.

Key words: Ecotourism; 4A scenic areas in Aksu prefecture; Translation of English public signs

Li, X. L. (2023). Research on the Necessity and Countermeasures for Improving the Translation of English Public Signs in 4A Scenic Areas in the Aksu Prefecture under the Background of Ecotourism. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 26(3), 45-49. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/13022>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/13022>

1. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH ON TRANSLATION OF PUBLIC SIGNS

Since the 1990s, the translation of public signs has attracted the attention of domestic scholars. Since entering the new century, the research on public sign translation by domestic scholars has become increasingly extensive and in-depth. In 2002, Beijing International Studies University founded the Public Sign Translation Research Center and established the “Chinese English Public Sign Translation Research” project (Tan, 2011). The National Public Sign Translation Seminar, sponsored by the China Translation Association and co-organized by teaching and research institutions such as Beijing International Studies University (2005 and 2014), School of Foreign Languages Tongji University (2007), Nanjing Agricultural University (2017), and Xi’an Foreign Studies University (2020), has been held for five times. Nowadays, the translation of public signs has become a hot topic of concern for experts, scholars, and the entire society in China. The definition of public signs issued

by Dai Zongxian and Lv Hefa (2005) is “public signs - written and graphical information open and facing the public related to the public’s life, production, life, ecology, and livelihood, including notices, instructions, reminders, displays, warnings, and signs”. This definition has been recognized by most experts and scholars and can be used as the authoritative definition of “public signs” (Li, 2013). At present, the research on the translation of public signs in China covers multiple foreign languages, various regions and industry fields across the country. The research results of English public sign translation mainly include the definition of public signs, the language characteristics and functions of English public signs, the translation principles and methods of English public signs, the theoretical basis of English public sign translation, and the study of mistranslation in English public sign translation.

With the flourishing development of China’s tourism industry, more and more experts and scholars have turned their attention to the research field of translating English public signs in scenic areas (Dai, 2017). In recent years, the research on the translation of English public signs in scenic areas has mainly focused on five aspects: (1) Research on errors in the translation of English public signs in scenic areas. The vast majority of research will involve the study of translation errors, including the description, classification, cause analysis, translation methods, correction of errors, creative translation, etc. (Tan & Su, 2020); (2) Theoretical research on the translation of English public signs in scenic areas. Through literature search, theories used to guide research include functional theory, ecological translation theory, teleology, cross-cultural communication, and relevance theory; (3) Research on methods and strategies for translating English public signs in scenic areas. Various methods and strategies, such as borrowing, free translation, omission, transliteration, and creative translation, have been used in the translation of English public signs in scenic areas. Dai Xiaobing and Liu Ying (2019) pointed out that the selection of translation methods and the adjustment of translation strategies require appropriate handling of cultural information according to the time and environment (Dai & Liu, 2019); (4) Research on strategies and suggestions for the translation of English public signs in scenic areas. Generally speaking, researchers mainly propose strategies and suggestions from three aspects: the quality and level of translators, government department management, and the cultivation of translation talents (Mo, 2022); (5) Research on translation and teaching of English public signs in scenic areas. Translation of English public signs in scenic areas is introduced into English classroom teaching, but overall, there is still a lack of articles on this aspect (Tan & Su, 2020).

2. THE PROBLEMS IN THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH PUBLIC SIGNS IN 4A SCENIC AREA OF THE AKSU PREFECTURE

Regarding the problems in the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture, this article lists errors from two aspects: non-standard writing and non-standard translation.

i Non-standard writing

1. Improper capitalization

保护环境 人人有责 protect environment - sourced from Shenmu Garden (Wensu County)

失物招领 Lost And Found - sourced from Kizilgaha Beacon Tower World Cultural Heritage Park (Kuqa County)

王府文物陈列馆 The Cultural Relics Exhibition Hall Of Kings Residence - sourced from the Kuqa King’s Palace (Kuqa County)

2. Spelling error

导游服务 TOURGUIDESERVICE - sourced from the Dolan Tribe (Awati County)

小心地滑 CAUTIONL SLIPPERY - sourced from the Yanquan Mountain Scenic Area (Wushi County)

3. Pinyin substitution

南门游客中心 NAN MEN YOU KE ZHONG XIN - sourced from the National Wetland Park Scenic Area (Aksu City)

锦绣公园应急避难场所 Jin Xiu Gong Yuan Ying Ji Bi Nan Chang Suo - sourced from the Duolang River Scenic Area (Aksu City)

4. Space issue

龟兹钱币馆 Quici ancientcoin hall - sourced from the Kuqa King’s Palace (Kuqa County)

克孜尔尕哈烽燧景区 Kizilgaha beacon to wer scenic area - sourced from the Kizilgaha Beacon Tower World Cultural Heritage Park (Kuqa County)

ii Non-standard Translation

1. Inappropriate choice of words

出口 export - sourced from the Shenmu Garden (Wensu County)

入口ENTER - sourced from the Desert Scenic Area of Flower Ocean (Xinhe County)

2. Problem of inconsistent names

神木园 Numinous Wood Gardens、SHEN MU YUAN、Wonder Woods - sourced from the Shenmu Garden (Wensu County)

3. Literal and random translation

小心地滑 Slip carefully - sourced from the National Wetland Park Scenic Area (Aksu City)

请勿随地吐痰 NO ESCUPIR EN EL SUELO - sourced from the Kuqa King’s Palace (Kuqa County)

3. THE NECESSITIES FOR IMPROVING THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH PUBLIC SIGNS IN 4A SCENIC AREAS OF THE AKSU PREFECTURE

3.1 Publicize the Qiuci Culture and the Duolang Culture to the Outside World

Aksu, the Uyghur language for “white water”, is located in the middle of southern Xinjiang, at the northwest edge of the Taklimakan Desert, and at the upper reaches of the Tarim River. The Aksu River (the river with the largest amount of water in the tributary of the Tarim River) flows through the territory. With a large number of white sand grains in the river, the water is milky white, so Aksu is named “white water” because of the water. Aksu City is also called “white water city”. Aksu is the north south fortress and the joint points of the east west connection in Xinjiang. During the Qin and Han dynasties, as the territories of the Gumo Kingdom and the Wensu Kingdom among the 36 Kingdoms of the Western Regions, it was an important post on the ancient Silk Road. The interaction and integration of ancient Chinese Han Tang culture and foreign ancient Indian culture, combined with the unique cultural features of Qiuci people, nurtured unique regional characteristics of the Qiuci culture and the Duolang culture, forming inclusive cultural properties, including ancient Buddhist culture, cave mural culture, music and dance culture, poetry culture, traditional Chinese opera culture, relics culture, etc (Mo, 2022). Improving the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture is helpful for publicity of the Qiuci culture and the Duolang culture in the Aksu Prefecture.

3.2 Govern and Improve the Language Environment of 4A Scenic Areas in the Aksu Prefecture

In the list of 4A scenic areas in Xinjiang issued by the Department of Culture and Tourism of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (by January 10, 2022), there are 18 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture, respectively located in Aksu City and 7 counties in the Aksu Prefecture, including the Duolang River Scenic Area (Aksu City), the National Wetland Park Scenic Area (Aksu City), the Aksu Prefecture Museum (Aksu City), the Kuqa King’s Palace (Kuqa County), the Tianshan Mysterious Grand Canyon (Kuqa County), the Kizilgaha Beacon Tower World Cultural Heritage Park (Kuqa County), the Shayanzhou Scenic Area (Shaya County), the Desert Scenic Area of Flower Ocean (Xinhe County), the Jiayi Village Scenic Area (Xinhe County), the Kizil Grottoes (Baicheng County), the Kangqi Wetland (Baicheng County), the Shenmu Garden (Wensu County), the Tomur Grand Canyon Scenic Area (Wensu County), the Kekeya Memorial Hall (Wensu County), the Tianshan Tomur Scenic Area · Tower Village (Wensu County), the Dolan

Tribe (Awati County), the Seabuckthorn Forest Tourist Attraction (Wushi County), the Yanquan Mountain Scenic Area (Wushi County). Standardizing the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture is good at the governance and improvement of the language environment in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture.

3.3 Promote the Development of Ecotourism in the Aksu Prefecture

Lu Xiaoli and Wu Chunyou (2006) extracted the eight major standards involved in most discussions on ecotourism concepts: “Based on natural ecological resources, environmental protection, local community benefits, environmental tourism, conservation education, ethics and responsibility, sustainable development, tourism experience and culture” (Lu & Wu, 2006). In recent years, relying on the rich ecological resources of the region, the Aksu Prefecture has vigorously developed ecotourism and further created the regional cultural tourism center. One of the important standards for developing ecotourism is to enhance the cultural tourism experience of tourists. With the unique regional characteristics of the Qiuci culture and Duolang culture, the Aksu Prefecture has vigorously created the “Silk Road Ancient Qiuci · Magical Aksu” unique cultural tourism brand. It is precisely the practice and pursuit of the concept and goals of ecotourism. Standardizing and improving the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture can help enhance tourists’ cultural tourism experience, promote the development of ecological tourism in the Aksu Prefecture, and lay the foundation for international trade, economic development, and internationalization in the Aksu Prefecture.

3.4 Promote the Development of Tourism Economy in the Aksu Prefecture

As the bridgehead of the “the Belt and Road”, Aksu has the second largest number of 4A level scenic areas in Xinjiang. Since 2009, it has actively built ecotourism boutiques focusing on green ecotourism and leisure experience tourism. On August 3, 2022, the Aksu Prefectural Government issued the “Reward and Support Measures for Further Accelerating the Development of Tourism in the Aksu Prefecture”, comprehensively enhancing the influence of the “Silk Road Ancient Qiuci · Magical Aksu” distinctive tourism brand, promoting high-quality development of the tourism industry, and continuously releasing new momentum in the tourism industry. Aksu, as a desirable “poetry and distance”, especially after the epidemic, pushing the charm of Aksu’s cultural tourism to the world, stimulating overseas tourism consumption markets, and promoting the rapid development of prefectural tourism economy, become an important task for the development of Aksu’s tourism. Whether the translation of public signs is

standardized or not is related to the service quality of scenic areas, the external publicity of local culture, and the tourism experience of tourists and thus improving and standardizing the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas of Aksu Prefecture can help promote the development of local tourism economy.

4. THE COUNTERMEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE TRANSLATION OF ENGLISH PUBLIC SIGNS IN 4A SCENIC AREAS OF THE AKSU PREFECTURE

4.1 Follow the National Standard to Standardize Translation

There are capitalization errors, spelling errors, pinyin substitution, and literal translation errors and so forth in the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture, which not only brings inconvenience to tourists but also damages the image of 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture to a certain extent. Therefore, standardizing the translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture is of great significance. On November 20, 2017, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) and Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of China jointly released a series of national standards called "Standards for English Translation and Writing in the Field of Public Services". As the first series of national standards in China on how to standardize the use of foreign languages in China, the aim is to ensure the quality of English translation and writing in the field of public services, especially GB/T30240.3-2017, which specifies the relevant terms and definitions, translation methods and requirements, and writing requirements for English translation and writing in the field of tourism services¹. By strictly referring to the national standard, standardizing translation rules such as capitalization, pinyin substitution, space, etc., as well as the translation of some commonly used fixed expressions will certainly reduce some unnecessary translation errors of public signs in 4A scenic areas of Aksu Prefecture.

4.2 Strengthen Supervision and Management by Relevant Government Departments

With the vigorous development of ecological tourism in the Aksu Prefecture and the implementation of the spirit of the 20th National Congress, the high-quality tourism

resources and rich historical and cultural heritage of the Aksu Prefecture will attract a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. To achieve the high-quality development of Aksu's ecotourism industry, the government plays a key role. The government needs to be aware of the impact of English public signs translation in the 4A scenic areas of the Aksu Prefecture on scenic area publicity, and to regulate and manage the chaotic translation market, unify the production of scenic area signs, have clear relevant departments responsible for the translation and production of scenic area signs, and clearly stipulate that English translation of scenic area public signs should strictly follow the national standard. An expert group should be established to guide and correct the English translation of scenic area public signs and scenic area public signs can only be used after passing a review of the expert group. The government should advocate for the participation of all people in the civilized construction of scenic area public signs. If wrong public signs and translations are found, people have the awareness to timely contact relevant departments to correct them to further improve the English translation of public signs in 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture.

4.3 Improve the Quality and Sense of Responsibility of Translators and Establish an Expert Review Mechanism

The quality of translation of public signs in scenic areas is directly related to the quality and sense of responsibility of translators, which directly affects the external image of the scenic areas. Therefore, translators should cultivate their solid translation skills and strong sense of responsibility, master the functions, characteristics, translation principles and methods of public signs, proficiently command the requirements and standards of national standard, and also know about international common expressions, conduct in-depth research on the cultural background and connotation of the translated public signs. For some cultural public signs with regional characteristics, accurate translation should be achieved while taking into account the audience's impression and understanding. Translators should complete the translation work with a serious and responsible attitude, avoid the problem of mistranslation, reduce translation errors, and achieve the best translation effect. By collaborating with industry experts and strengthening cooperation with universities, an expert guidance group should be established and form a mechanism to evaluate the translation of public signs in scenic areas. The translation of public signs and the completed signs should be proofread, reviewed and checked to ensure that the scenic areas present high-quality translations of public signs to comprehensively improve the translation quality of public signs in 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture.

¹ General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China/Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of China GB/T 30240.3-2017 Standards for English Translation in the Field of Public Services - Part 3: Tourism. Beijing: China Standards Publishing House, 2017.

4.4 Build a Translation Corpus of English Public Signs for 4A Scenic Areas in the Aksu Prefecture

The translation of English public signs in 4A scenic areas of Aksu Prefecture involves the translation of regional culture in ethnic minority areas, which will bring certain challenges to translators. In order to achieve the expected translation goals, translators need to persist in consulting relevant literature during the translation to make the translation convey public sign information appropriately and accurately. Especially for some diverse and inconsistent translations of public signs, it is necessary to form a standardized and unified translation form, and build a translation corpus of English public signs, and continuously update and supplement the translation corpus to standardize and unify the English translation of public signs for 4A scenic areas in Aksu Prefecture. Tourism information platforms can be utilized to promote standardized translation, reduce and change the phenomenon of inconsistent translation of public signs in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture, and further enhance the brand influence of 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture.

5. CONCLUSION

Any non-standard translation of public signs will limit tourists' sensory experience and affect the external image of the scenic areas and even the whole prefecture. The translation of public signs in scenic areas is closely related to the quality of translators. As the only application-oriented undergraduate college located in the Aksu Prefecture, Xinjiang Institute of Technology is committed to promoting the leapfrog development of prefectural economy and society. It should give full play to the talent cultivation, scientific research and social service functions of colleges and universities to provide talent support for the standardization of English public sign translation in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture by relying on the Aksu Prefecture Tourism Foreign Language Translation Service Center jointly established by the Prefectural Culture and Tourism Group and Xinjiang Institute of Technology on June 25, 2021 to enhance the quality of English public sign translation in 4A scenic areas in the Aksu Prefecture, facilitate the improvement of ecological tourism quality

in the Aksu Prefecture, boost the rapid development of prefectural tourism economy and promote the external publicity of the Qiuci and the Duolang cultures.

REFERENCES

- Dai, X. B. (2017). *A review of research on the translation of public signs in tourist attraction*. *Journal of Liaoning University of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, (06), 75-77.
- Dai, X. B., & Liu, Y. (2019). Ten years of translation of public signs in tourist attraction. *Tourism Overview (Second Half of the Month)*, (14), 26-27.
- General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China/Standardization Administration of the People's Republic of China GB/T 30240.3-2017 *Standards for English Translation in the Field of Public Services - Part 3: Tourism*. Beijing: China Standards Publishing House, 2017.
- Li, Z. Y. (2013). A review of research on the English translation of public signs in China over the past twenty years. *Journal of Central South University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 19 (02), 237-242.
- Lu, X. L., & Wu, C. Y. (2006) *Identification and Comparative Study of Ecotourism Concepts: A Quantitative Analysis of 40 Ecotourism Concepts at Home and Abroad*. *Journal of Tourism*, (02), 56-61.
- Mo, Y. Y. (2022). A review of the research on the English translation of public signs in tourist attraction in China in the last decade. *Journal of Hubei Open Vocational College*, 35 (03), 190-191.
- Tan, B. H. (2011). A review of the current status of translation research on public signs in the new century in China. *Journal of Changsha Communication Vocational and Technical College*, 10 (01), 101-104.
- Tan, L. Y., & Su, W. Q. (2020). Review of research on public signs in tourist attraction and research on hot issues. *Tourism Overview (The second half of the month)*, 2020 (06): 40-42.
- The Qiuci Culture, the Duolang Culture [EB/OL]. Chinese Archaeological Network, <http://www.kaogu.cn/cn/kaoguyuandi/kaogubaike/2013/1025/34012.html>.
- Xu, Y. M. (2016). *Current situation and countermeasures of translation of public signs in scenic areas*. *Cultural and Educational Materials*, (26), 19-20.