Chinese-English Translation of Culture-loaded Words in Tourism Text from the Perspective of Eco-translatology——A Case Study of Yungang Grottoes in Datong City

Kexin Pan

University of Leeds, Britain LS2 9JT

Abstract: The surging tourism leads to the importance of the analysis of the culture-loaded words in the tourism texts. Eco-translatology, as a theory characterized by its inter-displinary features by emphasizing on selection and adaptation in the translation process, can be applied to the translation of tourism texts. This essay is intended to analyze the translation of culture-loaded words in the tourism text from the scenic spot of Datong Yungang Grottoes.

Keywords: Tourism text; Eco-translatology; Culture-loaded words; Yungang grottoes

1 Introduction

As the world economic integration trends have been strengthening further, cross-cultural tourism, the miniature of a social culture, between Chinese and western cultures are continually getting deeper. However, the biggest difficulty that translation meets lies in cultural differences due to disparities in religious belief, cultural tradition and value recognition. This also makes some words carrying rich cultural information difficult to understand and not easy to find equivalent words or phrases in target language.

Eco-translatology broke ice in 2001 by Hu Gengshen, which regards translation as a kind of translator's selective adaptation and adaptive selection to the translational eco-environment[1]. Translator, as the central and dominant element, adapts the translational eco-environment and selects the target text actively and creatively.   The thesis intends to put forward some positive solutions about Eco-translatology by analyzing and processing culture-loaded words in the tourism text of Yungang Grottoes from the perspective of multi-dimensional adaptation and selection.

2 Eco-translatology and translation

Eco-translatology is a matter of application of ecological holism and Darwin's theory of evolution in translation studies, in an attempt to study translation problems with the theory of Natural science[2] Although the ecological terms has been applied to translation studies early before, the theory was not established until the paper *Understanding Eco-translatology* was read by its initiator, the Chinese scholar Hu Gengshen, who has explained that translational eco-environment is a significant factor which determines translation adaptation and selection. In any translating, translators have not only to select on the basis of the ecological principle, but also to make the version adaptive to the translational environment. The purpose of adaptation is to survive, while the means of adaptation is to select, and hence the translator is always located at the "center" and takes on the "central, leading, initiative and subversive" role in the process of translation activity.

Theoretically, there are three dimensions of Eco-Translation, namely the linguistic, cultural and communicative approach. Transformation from the cultural dimension concerns with the cultural connotations both in the source and the target text, which requires translator to reconstruct the culture in an appropriate way which can bridge the cultural disparity caused by different languages .[3] Linguistic transformation focuses on the transformations of the linguistic factors, the linguistic meanings and systems and also the rhetoric and aesthetic of the language form. Transformation from the communicative dimension lays emphasis on the achievement of the communicative intention and effectiveness conveyed and obtained by different communities .[4]

3 Eco-translatology strategies and methods to the culture-loaded words in Yungang Grottoes tourism text from three dimensions

3.1 Strategies and methods from the cultural dimension

3.1.1 塔顶处蛟龙盘绕，须弥山逶迤。

The primary image on north wall is crossing feet Maitreya.

"蛟龙"—"Jiao Long" is one of the aquatic animals existing in ancient Chinese tales and legends. "须弥山"—This word comes from Sumeru and is a kind of Buddhist language. In this case, "蛟龙" and "须弥山" are too complicated to explain to foreign tourists. One can not handle translating and educating at the same time, and it is impossible to add the whole background information of the

legend and the Buddhism information to the target text since it would be against the eventual purpose of the tourism text, which is to inform the westerners important messages. In the process of adaptive selection, addition, omission and information restructuring are all commonly seen choices for translators, so omission of the whole sentence under domestication was the best choice.

3.1.2 北壁为交脚弥勒菩萨。

The primary image on north wall is crossing feet Maitreya.

Maitreya is a Bodhisattva who will appear on earth in the future to achieve complete enlightenment. Here in the text, the translator used literal translation method to translate "弥勒菩萨" into its equivalence "Maitreya" rather than into "Buddha". That's because, Buddhism is the main component of Chinese religious culture, but it is not in Western countries. Foreigners are not familiar either with "Buddha" or with "Maitreya", so the translator used foreignization strategy of employing "Maitreya" to create some imaginary space for the target readers and save the cultural connotation to achieve effective cultural communication [5]

3.2 Strategies and methods from the linguistic dimension

3.2.1 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 to better keep features of traditional Chinese geographical culture and does not interrupt the target readers. Here, a complex transition of the name of the place would cause confusion and distort understanding which are not necessary, so the transliteration in the linguistic dimension was the best way for the translator to translate the term.

3.2.2 五头六臂，颜若童子，蹙发喜笑，手中或托举日月，或执弓箭，左下手当胸持斑鸠

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 differences between the structure of Chinese language and that of western countries. For example, Chinese pay more attention to parataxis while English hypotaxis and forms. So it often requires information reconstruction when translating Chinese text into English. Except for adding information, in the adaptive selection, translators often use omission method to flexibly delete some expressions that not suitable for the language habits and expressions of the target language so as to avoid repetition and put more emphasis on the key points.

Four-character phrases in Chinese are the major component of Chinese society and culture which stands for the broad and extensive wisdom and language of Chinese. Here are some four-character phrases exerted from above text.

Table

Source Text	Target text	Translation method
端静秀丽	Elegant	Free
风姿绰约	Charming	Free
上乘之作	Excellent works	Free
三头六臂	3 heads, 8 arms	Literal
面型圆润	Round faces	Literal
手托日月	Holding the sun and the moon	Literal
因施善教	Kindness and teaching	Free
降服外道	Conquering of unbuhddist	Free

From the above chart, we can see that four-character phrases have strong meaning but simple form from the content, balance and regular in structure, smooth and catchy in sound. Westerners usually express directly and freely on whatever subject they are working on and they do not have the four-character style. So when translating four-character phrases into English, translators usually use free translation and literal translation to express its meaning to adapt to the Westerners' style and to attract readers' interest especially in tourism texts without deducting its cultural meaning and connotation [6].

4 Conclusion

This thesis makes detailed analysis of C-E translation of tourism text of Yungang Grottoes with a theoretical framework of Eco-translatology given from the following two aspects: the mainstays of the theory and its three-dimensional transformation method which highlights translator's central position and dominant function in translating activities through his/her selective adaptation and adaptive selection under the translational eco-environment. So Eco-translatology is an excellent choice when it comes to the translation of rich culture-loaded information tourism texts which can not only give a better translation of the source text but can also bring tourism texts' attraction and interests into full play so as to please the visiting tourists and also to attract the potential tourists who are on their way.

Reference：

[1] Hu Gengshen, 2004, "Theories of Translation Adaptation and Selection" [M], Hubei Education Press.

[2] Hu Gengshen, 2010, Translation Ecology VS Natural Ecology: Relevance, Similarity, Isomorphism [J], Shanghai Translator, Issue 1 1-5.

[3] Guo Jianzhong, 2000, "Culture and Translation" [M], North: China Foreign Translation and Publishing Corporation.

[4] Geng Shen, 2009, Eco-Translation Studies: "Cross-Interdisciplinary Integration" of Translation Studies [J], "Shanghai Translator", Issue 2 3-8.

[5] Guo Jianzhong, 1998, Cultural Factors in Translation: Foreignization and Domestication [J], Foreign Languages, Issue 2, 12-18.

[6] Eugene Nida A. (1993). Language and culture and Translation: Contexts [M].Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.