

A Brief Analysis of the English Translation on Chinese Official Tourism Website——Take Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan Tourism Official Website as an Example

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Abstract: Zhangjiajie National Forest Park is one of the famous international tourist attractions in China. However, the English website of Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan Tourism has many problems and the quality of translation is worrying. By analyzing the Chinese to English translation of tourism texts on this website, this paper identifies some common problems and suggests, aiming to make the English texts in the website more concise and informative for foreign tourists, and also to play a role in driving the development of inbound tourism in the Wulingyuan Scenic Area, thus helping to bring Chinese tourism to go broad.

Keywords: Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan official tourism website; Translation of tourism texts; Problems and suggestions

1. Chapter1 Current Situation of English Translation on Chinese Official Tourism Website

1.1 The Difficulties of English Translation for Tourism in China

The translation of tourism English has a strong professionalism, and the translator must have a strong command of English, a deep knowledge of the laws of translation. However, the current managers have not aware of the significance of translating English for tourism, which leads to poor translations and has a negative impact on tourism. Some translated texts are even directly translated by machine, with extremely incoherent language, or directly in Chinese.

Moreover, due to China's long history and culture, as well as its linguistic habit of presenting attractions in a flamboyant way, many tourist texts can cause a lot of misunderstanding or confusion to foreign visitors if literal translated. It is therefore crucial that translations of tourist attractions are introduced to visitors according to the characteristics of the foreign culture, so that target readers can understand Chinese culture.

1.2 Importance of English Translation of Tourism Text on Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan Tourism Official Website

Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan Scenic Area is China's first National Forest Park, and the first Class 5A tourist attractions. The Wulingyuan Scenic Area is located in the north-western part of Hunan Province in central China.

In the post-epidemic era, with the economy in full swing and tourism recovering from stagnation, Zhangjiajie Forest Park is set to welcome a new wave of visitors home and abroad. At this juncture, the confusing foreign language information on the official tourist website of Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan and the worrying quality of the translations have created a huge obstacle to the restoration and promotion of tourism industry in Zhangjiajie. This also shows that there is still much space for improvement in the English translation of domestic tourism websites.

2. Translation Problems of the English Website of Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan Tourism

After analyzing the English translation of the official tourism website of Zhangjiajie-Wulingyuan, the author believes that there are mainly problems in the following aspects.

2.1 Lack of English Translated Text

In the English version of the website,when browser click on the links for further information,the descriptions are placed directly in Chinese texts,with no English translation at all.The entire website is divided into 10 sections.They are“Home”,“Overview”,“Dynamic”,“Attraction”,“Consumption”,“Stay”,“Traffic”,“Activity”,“Complaints”and“Wisdom Wulingyuan”.Among them,“Overview”and“Dynamic”sections are complete in English translation.“Attraction”section only has a complete English translation of“Zhangjiajie Forest Park”branching part,while the rest of the attraction descriptions are almost directly in Chinese.In the“Consumption”section,the introduction of the food and crafts is a perfect opportunity to promote western Hunan culture and ethical culture of China,but the lack of translation is really distressing.Not only does it hinder the spread and exchange of culture,it also creates certain barriers for foreign tourists.Many foreign tourists have taboos,so it is therefore important that we specifically introduce the ingredients used in our cuisine. In addition,two of the most important aspects of travel,accommodation and traffic,are missing in English.

2.2 Grammatical Errors

Due to the problems of machine translation mentioned earlier,coupled with the lack of calibration,it is easy to make grammatical errors.

Example 1

Original text: dàn fǎn xīhuān lǚxíng de rén, jīhūddōu suàn de shàng shì“chīhuò”, chībiàn dàjiāng nán běi, suàn de shàng shìyīduàn zhíde kuāyào de jīng lì.

Translation: Whenever the people like traveling,almost always is“Version”,The great river north and south,eating is a proud experience;

First of all,there is also a lack of sentence breaks throughout the passage,with neither a conjunction nor a subordinate clause structure.Then the phrase“dàn fǎn xīhuān lǚxíng de rén, jīhūddōu suàn de shàng shì“chīhuò””is translated as“Whenever the people like traveling,almost always is‘Version’”.This sentence has no subject at all,and the use of“whenever”to connect the sentences is inappropriate.Moreover,the translation of“chīhuò”into“version”is not correct.It should be translated as:“Anyone who likes to travel is almost always a‘foodie’”.The second sentence is translated as“Large bowl to drink,Large pieces of meat,also be one of those real pleasure in life”.There is also a serious grammatical error:there is no conjunction between the two subjects and the form of the tense verb is incorrect.It could be translated as“Drinking and eating in large bowls is one of the pleasures of life.”In addition to the grammatical error,the capitalization of the word after the first comma in this sentence is also a typical punctuation error.

2.3 Inconsistent Translation of Proper Nouns

The translation is different when the same proper nouns are mentioned in different places on the website,and the inconsistent translation may confuse foreign visitors.Therefore,the translator should choose the most appropriate version of the translation to unify.

Here are two examples of inconsistent translation of proper nouns:First,in the subheading“tiān zǐ shān”is transliterated as“Tianzishan”,but in the introduction to the Wulingyuan scenic area,“tiān zǐ shān”is translated as“Tianzi Mountain”.The author believe that“Tianzi Mountain”can lead a better understanding of the main scenery of this scenic area and is more semantic and clear;Secondly,there are two translations of“huáng shízhài”in the website:“Huang shi zhai”and“Huangshi Village”.Since“huáng shízhài”is actually a village, it is more appropriate to translate it as“Huangshi Village”.

2.4 Misuse of Pinyin

Many translation of scenic spots in the website use Pinyin.The over-reliance on pinyin and the lack of explanations can make it difficult for tourists to understand its true meaning,and in fact such transliteration do not serve the purpose of translation at all.

For example,“máo yán hépiāo liú”is translated as“Maoyanhe Drift”,which is inappropriate because“máo yán hé”is a river and it is difficult to understand the name of the river by directly translating it in Pinyin.This is inappropriate because it is difficult to understand that it is the name of a river by translating it phonetically.Therefore,the author think it should be translated as“Maoyan River Drift”.

Even some words that have an English equivalent are translated directly in pinyin,which is completely unnecessary.

Example 2

Original text: shùyìqiān jìde shífēng shishishàng dúyīwùèr de fēng lín jǐng guān,gěi rén yīqishipáng bó、 hóng dàzhuàng kuòde měi de xiǎng shòu.

Original Translation: Thousands of Shi Feng,is unique in the world,the peak forest landscape,to enjoy the magnificent,magnificent beauty.

The translation of the word“shífēng”into“Shi Feng”is not quite appropriate and may easily make foreign readers think that it is a proper noun.According to the context of the sentence,it is obvious that“shùyìwàn jìde shífēng”does not refer to a specific stone peak or a proper noun,so it can be translated as“tens of thousands of stone peaks”.

In short,the original transliteration makes foreign tourists only know the sound but not the meaning,and they cannot perceive the historical origin and cultural allusions of the tourist attractions.

2.5 The lack of Cultural Dimension

Chinese culture is profound and has a long history,so if the cultural connotations are not checked before translating,it is easy to cause misunderstandings and deficiencies in the cultural dimension.When translating the name of an attraction it is important to check the origin of the name,otherwise literal translation may lead to misunderstandings.For example,“wūlóng zhài”is translated on the website as“Oolong Walled Terrace”.This attraction is a mountain fortress where bandits gather in a dangerous terrain.However,the translation of“oolong”could easily lead people to think that the history of the site is related to oolong tea.In this case,the author believes that a combination of phonetic and semantic translation can be used,translating it as“Wulong Stockaded Village”

3. Suggestions and Methods to Improve the Translation

The corresponding modifications have been given in the previous section,and the author’s suggested translation version is also given.This section therefore focuses on the translation methods that can be adopted.

3.1 Adequate Understanding of the Historical and Cultural Connotations of the Source Text

The Chinese texts introducing Chinese tourist attractions contain a long cultural background and connotations.If translators do not have sufficient knowledge of history and culture,they will not fully understand the background connotations of the tourist attraction,which may lead to mistranslations.For example,the translation of“Oolong Walled Terrance”reflects the translator’s lack of understanding of the history and culture of“wūlóng zhài”.

3.2 Moderate Abridgement

There are huge differences between Chinese and foreign cultures.Many Chinese cultural characteristics can appear very complicated and cumbersome in English translations.Therefore,the content of the original text can be appropriately abridged and modified to remove some unnecessary parts.The translated texts will be clearer,more intuitive and easier for foreigners to understand.

3.3 Combined Phonetic and Semantic Translation

When travelling,the name of the attraction is the first thing that attracts the tourists’attention and is the first sight,so a good translation can play a great role in attracting their attention and increasing their interest.The most common translation in English is the phonetic translation,which means that the name is directly marked in Pinyin.But this does not attract the interest of foreigners who have cultural differences with us,and does not convey any practical information,so visitors will not be able to appreciate the connotations and beauty of the attraction.If a combination of phonetic and semantic translation is used,it can deepen the understanding of Western visitors and better convey the meaning.For example:tiān mén shān (Tian Men Mountain)、 tiān zi shān (Tianzi Mountian)、 huáng shízhài (Huangshi Village).

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