

On Translation of Scenic Spots' Introduction Under Functional Translation Theory—A Case Study of Yellow River Delta*

XIANG Chun-yan

English Department of Binzhou University, Binzhou, P.R.China

German functional translation theory liberates the translator from the barrier of original paper, which emphasizes the communicative function of translation in the target language culture. Tourism texts have vocative function, informational function, and expressive function. As long as the translator spares no effort to make a good translation text, it is of great significance for the scenic spots. In this paper, on the basis of predecessors' research and the German functional translation theory, the author did some systematic researches of the C-E translation of scenic spots, taking the translation of scenic spots in the Yellow River Delta for instance. Through the field trip and a lot of case analysis, the author proposes that the translator in the translation process of scenic spots can use literal translation, free translation, and compiled translation, etc. To standardize and improve the scenic spots of C-E translation, it is necessary to pay attention to improving the quality of the translator and the sense of responsibility.

Keywords: functional translation theory, tourism translation, Yellow River Delta

Introduction

Functional translation theory is the very important theory in series of translation theories and the Skopos theory is the core of the Western functionalist translation theory. It breaks the "equivalent" translation theory of structuralism and the traditional one-way translation studies. But the tourism translation is not used widely and well under the functional translation theory, for example, the translation of Yellow River Delta. Yellow River Delta tourism resources have unique superiority of geographic conditions and other advantages. However, the cultural translation of Yellow River Delta has not attracted people's attention. The study will appeal to more people to give more attention to Yellow River Delta tourism culture with the method of field trip and case analysis, and further flourish tourism economy of the Yellow River Delta. Meanwhile, this paper aims to take the opportunity to introduce advanced foreign translation theories, such as the functional translation theory, integrating with the reality of China, to improve and promote the Chinese characteristic translation, especially on tourism translation.

An Overview of Functionalist Approach

With the development of human cognitive abilities, some kinds of translation theories come up. The twentieth century is a period that witnessed the prosperous and striking development of translation theory. The

* **Acknowledgements:** Supported by Scientific Research Project of Binzhou University (Bzxyrw1110).
XIANG Chun-yan, lecturer, M.A., English Department of Binzhou University, Binzhou, P.R.China.

linguistic approach to translation was the dominant one, most probably because the linguistics was the dominant humanistic discipline of the 1950s and 1960s. The functional translation theory appeared at the time when equivalence-based theories were prevailing. The functional translation theory which was originated in Germany in the 1970s was founded by Katharina Reiss (1971), developed by Hans Vermeer (1987) and Christiane Nord (1996).

In 1971, Katharina Reiss introduced a functional category into her “objective approach to translation criticism”. In her book *Possibilities and Limitation in Translation Criticism*, Reiss pointed out that the translation criticism was based on the functional relationship between source and target texts (pp. 93-94).

Hans J. Vermeer, who was Reiss’s student, has gone further the theory. He broke the limitation of equivalence-based theory and considered the translation (including interpreting) to be a type of transfer where communicative verbal and non-verbal signs were transferred from one language into another (other types would include the transfer from pictures to music, or from a blue print to a building). Vermeer (1987) defined human action as intentional and purposeful behavior that took place in a given situation; it was part of the situation at the same time as it modified the situation (p. 25). Vermeer used Skopos as the technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation. The functional translation theory, a theory of purposeful action, then came into being. It was the most important theory of the functionalists.

Nord, a German professor of applied linguistics and translation studies, who has made tremendous contributions to the development of functionalist theory. In early 1990s, Nord improved functional translation theory. In Nord’s view, there could be no process of “translation” without a source text.

According to my concept of translation, which is doubtless conditioned by the conventional concept of translation I have grown up with, a TT production that is based on, or bound to, a given source text (whatever the specification of this being “based on” or “bound to” may be) cannot be called a “translation”, even though the conditions under which the text is produced may be similar to a translating situation. (Nord, 1996, pp. 43-44)

Skopos theory has been developed as the base and core of the functional translation theory, which involves the concepts of Skopos, coherence, and culture. Skopos is a Greek word for “purpose”. According to Skopos theory, the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (Skopos) of the overall translational action. The top-ranking rule for any translation is thus the “Skopos rule”. The “Skopos rule” thus reads as follows: Translate/interpret/speak/write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation in which it is used and with the people who wants to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function (Nord, 1996). Besides this rule, the more specific aspect of Skopos theory is the relationship between the source and target texts within a functionalist framework, that is, inter-textual and intra-textual coherence. Coherence rule refers to that “the target-text should conform to the standard of intra-textual coherence” (Vermeer, 1987, p. 29). Coherence rule specified that a translation should be acceptable in the sense that it is coherent with the receiver’s situation, that is, the target-text receivers should be able to understand the target Scenic Spots text as being sufficiently coherent with their own communicative situation and culture. On the basis of Skopos theory by Hans J. Vermeer, Nord summarized other academic thought and criticism to the functional translation theory. She put forward the loyalty rule, which is the supplement to Skopos theory. By “loyalty”, Nord (1996) means “the translator is committed bilaterally to the source text as well as to the target text situation, and is responsible to both the ST sender and the TT recipient” (p. 45).

Two Tourism Translation

General View of Tourism Translation

The tourism translation is defined by many scholars:

Tourism translation should be for tourism activities, tourism and industry of translation practice, belonging to the professional translation. In a nutshell, tourism translation is communicative activity involved in language, society, culture, and the mind. Tourism translation has the direct performance in culture and mind (Schaffner, 1998).

Tourism translation is to introduce and advocate the beautiful scenery to the foreigners and the quality of translation directly influences the tourism, especially the inbound tourism. Because the foreign friends often read, listen, and understand the tourism translation, they will choose to visit the scenic spots. So a precise and vivid tourism translation is very important for the development of tourism.

Categorization of Tourism Translation

Tourism Translation involves guide translation, interpreting (including sight translation, consecutive interpretation, simultaneous interpretation), written translation and machine translation, professional translation (translation of science and technology, translation of law), general translation (practical writing, social intercourse translation of daily life), and literary translation (poems, couplets, prose translation).

Characteristics of Tourism Translation

Tourism English includes rich cultural connotation of language. Culture is one of the main factors for the tourism. People can make a comprehension towards the local landscape and the local culture through the tourism. For every tourist, tourism is not only the enjoyment and appreciation of the local landscape, but a perception of local folk customs. Therefore, In addition to the professional term, the tourism translation also includes some of the culture of language material. The translators need to have a deeper understanding and awareness of the cultural connotation in order to accurately describe out to tourists and let visitors experience the deep culture and history really (Dann, 1996).

Tourism translation has the aesthetic features of language. Tourism translation, which is on the basis of local culture and refines the relevant elements of aesthetics, can express more unique cultural content. With the unique characteristics of their local conditions and customs, handicrafts and many delicious food, the beautiful scenery and historical culture form a unique tourism culture through the clever combination. Tourism translation is an important media to publicize the Chinese culture and attract tourists sightseeing tourism, so that it can carry forward traditional culture of our country.

Industry terminology of tourism translation, as a separate industry sector, is very strong with its own characteristics. Tourism translation can also use a large number of English words or idioms about tourism industry being similar to that of economy, math, music, and the term called tourism. For example, on a plane to carry items, we called hand or carry-on luggage.

Functions of Tourism Translation

With the development of international tourism, tourism translation becomes very important. It plays an important role in the tourism industry. Although foreign visitors have come to China or are coming to China in different educational levels and interests, they have one thing in common: They are intrigued with Chinese culture and Chinese scenery, but know little about China. It is true that some foreign people are fond of China and

have gone out of their way to learn about China's history, culture, customs, politics, etc. But they are few in number. Most Western tourists usually get their first-hand knowledge about China by reading brochures offered by travel agencies and tourist information put on the Internet by private travel agencies or local tourism administrative bureaus. Therefore, in order to attract more foreign people to visit China, large quantities of Chinese tourist texts have been translated into English so as to appeal their interests in China and provide them with the information about how to get to the destination, how much it costs, where to stay and what to eat, etc. We can say that international tourism calls for the need of tourism translation, while tourism translation helps promote international tourism.

The function of tourism translation is to broaden visitors' horizon with a brief introduction to China, arouse their interest in a trip to certain destinations in China, and provide necessary traveling information for them. With the same function, tourism translation may be targeted with different audience, for tourists are from different social classes. They may be heads of state, scholars, as well as the general public. There may be millions of readers of the tourist material. If the translation is accurate, fluent, and appropriate, it is enjoyable and appealing to readers. However, if the translation is ungrammatical, illogical, and incomprehensible, it will help little to promote a certain destination as the readers may have a bad impression on it and assume that the traveling service provided is bad as well. Worse still, it may cause misunderstandings and damage to China's international image. We know that the competition in the tourism industry among different countries is fierce and each country is making great efforts to attract more foreign visitors. Therefore, tourism translation of good quality and in large quantities should be done by translators for the competitiveness of China's international tourism industry.

C-E Translation of Scenic Spots of Yellow River Delta

In order to make a clear understanding for the C-E translation errors of Yellow River Delta, it is necessary to do a careful survey there. I carried on this task at April 1-2, 2013 with my friend Miss YANG (from Binzhou City—Du Shoutian's Former Residence—Family Wei's Manor—Mountain Jieshi—Fangong Memorial Temple—Dongying City—Shengli Oilfield Technology Exhibition Center—New Century Square—The Wind Lake Park—Yellow River Estuary Wetland Museum, etc.). Some errors which are listed here are found.

C-E Translation Errors of Scenic Spots of Yellow River Delta

(1) Grammatical errors

For example:

好客山东 (Friendly Shan Dong)

For example:

自然保护区分为南北两个区域, 南部区域位于现行黄河入海口, 面积1045平方公里; 北部区域位于1976年改道后的黄河故道入海口, 面积485平方公里 (Yellow River Estuary Wetland Museum)。

The reserve was divided into two parts: the south part located at the current estuary of Yellow River with a total area of 104,500 mu, and the north part lies in the former estuary with total area of 48,500 ha, which was formed in 1976.

The correct translation: *The reserve was divided into two parts: the south part is located at the current estuary of Yellow River with a total area of 104,500 mu, and the north part lies in the former estuary with total area of 48,500 ha, which was formed in 1976.*

Inserting the “is”, we can keep the balance of the two sentences and make the whole sentence be read and understood easily.

For example:

滨州是黄河三角洲高效生态经济区面积最大、人口最多的行政区, 黄河三角洲高效生态经济开发区建设的主战场和核心区域, 山东半岛蓝色经济区与天津滨海新区两大经济区的结合部, 环渤海经济圈、省会城市群经济圈、黄河三角洲高效生态经济区的叠加地带, 对接天津“滨海新区”的“桥头堡”, 山东的北大门。

Lying in the joint part of Shandong Peninsula city group and Tianjin Binhai New Area and the intersection of Around-Bohai Sea Economic Area and Cities Circle around Jinan as well as sthe Yellow River Delta, Binzhou becomes the bridgehead of Binhai New Area in Tianjin and the north gate of Shandong Province.

The correct translation: *Lying in the joint part of Shandong Peninsula city group and Tianjin Binhai New Area and the intersection of Around-Bohai Sea Economic Area, Cities Circle Around Jinan and the Yellow River Delta, Binzhou becomes the bridgehead of Binhai New Area in Tianjin and the north gate of Shandong Province.*

The coordinative constituents of the sentence should be connected by the “and”. In the translation, it not only uses “and”, but also “as well as”, so this expression is wrong.

(2) Pragmatic errors

For example:

黄河水城欢迎您

Welcome to Huang He Shui Cheng Tourism

“Huang He Shui Cheng” is Chinese Pinyin, not English; so many foreign visitors could not understand the meaning of “Huang He Shui Cheng”.

The better translation: *Welcome to Yellow River Water City.*

For example:

孙子故里, 生态滨州

粮丰林茂, 北国江南

HOMETOWN OF SUN ZI, ECOLOGICAL BINZHOU

ABUNDANT GRAIN AND FOREST, SOUTH OF THE CHANGJIANG RIVER IN THE NORTH

“SUN ZI” and “SOUTH OF THE CHANGJIANG RIVER IN THE NORTH” is Chinese translation and sometimes it is difficult to get the meaning of the translation of scenic spots.

(3) Lexical errors

When we do some translations for the scenic spots, the lexical errors should also be given attention:

For example:

东营市黄河口生态旅游区管理委员会

Dongying Yellow River Esyuary Ecological Tourism Management Committee

The correct translation: *Dongying Yellow River Estuary Ecological Tourism Committee*

The translator should try their best to avoid the lexical errors; such in the above sentence, “esyuary” is a wrong word.

For example:

Bearing the concept of “Comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development”, employing abundant

resources and experience in the past 40 years, Befar has created globally advanced quipment, technology, and qualified human resources reservoi r. Befar's main products consist of PO, TCE, Additives and Caustic Soda, and the business profit is increasing steadily.

The correct translation: *Bearing the concept of "Comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development", employing abundant resources and experience in the past 40 years, Befar has created globally advanced equipment, technology, and qualified human resources reservoir. Befar's main products consist of PO, TCE, Additives and Caustic Soda, and the business profit is increasing steadily.*

This example is the actual translation case on the website of Shangdong Bin Chemical Group. The word of "Comprehensive" is used by the capital form, in fact, we should use the lower case; the word "quipment" loses the letter "e" and it should be written as "equipment"; the word "reservoi r" has one more space and "reservoir" is right.

The translation of scenic spots is rather important for conveying the meaning of scenery and sometimes a little wrong word could make the visitor misunderstand the scenery's meaning that the translator wants to express, so the translator should pay attention to the point.

Strategies of C-E Translation of Scenic Spots of Yellow River Delta Under the Functional Translation Theory

National culture difference is objective existence. Some tourism English translators must fully understand foreign geographical and cultural background, combining with their own culture, to find a relevant point. From the perspective of cultural factors, the translator should respect for national culture and must have a certain degree of cultural sensitivity. The translator should try to find a relevant point between Chinese and Western culture, looking for the equivalence between Chinese and Western culture in the expression language, thus effectively avoiding using the same simple language and covering up the localization of voice.

(1) Transliteration

Scenic spots' name is the first scenery that tourists come into contact with and also the first image of the landscape itself. A good translation is very important to attract tourist's attention and improve their interest in visiting. Transliteration is directly marked by Chinese in translation. For example, *Chu Tian Tai*, *Lan Feng Hui Lu*, *San Tan Yin Yue*, *Ying Zui Yan*. However, transliteration cannot convey any real information to foreign tourists, so visitors could not comprehend the connotation of the scenic spot name. Therefore, it needs to adopt the method of sound and meaning translation. For example, *Tian 'anmen Square*, *the Badaling Great Wall*, *Chengde Summer Resort*, etc. Such translation not only deepens the understanding of Western visitors, but passes China's regional culture and better information. When you use this way, you cannot just think what it means, you should pay more attention to the deep meaning of the name. Taking the scenic spots's translation of Yellow River Delta for instance.

For example:

杜受田故居 *Du Shoutian's Former Residence*; 孙子 (孙武) *Sun Tzu*; 《孙子兵法》 *The Art of War*; 魏氏庄园 *Family Wei's Manor*; 碣石山 *Mt. Jieshi*; 范公祠 *Fangong Memorial Temple*

For example:

魏桥创业集团 *Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd.*

鲁北集团 Shandong Lubei Enterprise Group General Company

山东西王集团 *Shandong Xiwang Group*

山东滨州盟威集团 *Shandong Binzhou Movever Group*

华纺股份有限公司 *Huafang Co., LTD.*

山东省滨州市亚光纺织集团企业 *Shandong Binzhou Loftex Industries Ltd.*

愉悦家纺 *YuYue Home Textile Co., LTD.*

(2) Amplification

Amplification refers to giving an appropriate interpretation for the original article with the important information of the culture and history background and even note in order to make the original article clear. First of all, amplification is to convey semantic translation and add to the understanding of the original content relevant background information without changing the cultural connotation to give visitors a prompt action. The traditional culture of Chinese ethnic minority is various. For example, the Water-Sprinkling festival is the Dai people in Yunnan province to send old orientation of traditional festivals, which has thousands of years of history. If we translate it as *Water-Sprinkling festival*, foreign visitors can feel the meaning of water while the origin of the festival cannot be understood. If we add a translation “A big festival for the Dai nationality to wish everyone happiness by splashing water to one another”, the China’s special background information of nationalities to foreign tourists lets them understand the background of Chinese national culture thoughts in common. Amplification is a useful way to correct the errors in translation of Yellow River Delta:

For example:

“好客山东” (Friendly Shan Dong). It is not enough to use the word “friendly” to explain hospitality of Shan Dong people, we can correct it as “Friendly and Hospital Shang Dong”, which not only expresses Shan Dong people’s friendship, but that of hospitality.

For example:

孙子故里, 生态滨州

粮丰林茂, 北国江南

The Jiang Nan in North does not mean the south of the Changjiang River in the North, just meaning that Binzhou is very beautiful like in south of Yangtze River.

The better translation: *HOMETOWN OF SUN TZU, ECOLOGICAL BINZHOU*

HOME OF ABUNDANT GRAIN AND FOREST, LIKE IN SOUTH OF YANGTZE RIVER (the south of Yangtze River is very beautiful).

(3) Omission

Omission is the expression habits in omitting translation, whose theory is based on two kinds of language differences in expressing habits and rhetoric ways. If it is literally translated into English directly for travel information about China’s traditional culture characteristic of the product, it is not very helpful for understanding the original. Because foreign tourists simply could not understand the meaning of the translation due to the translation of the expression habits, so it shall be properly cut.

For example:

The original translation: *Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd is located at the southern end of Lubei plain, closely adjoining Jiaozhou-Jinan Railway and Jinan-Qingdao Expressway. With the total capital*

fund of CNY 38 billion, the AAA credit class of bank, the AA credit class of customs and the A paying tax class, the group is one super is one group super grand multiple-producing factory combining spinning, weaving, weaving, dying-finishing, apparel, home-textile, thermoelectricity and aluminum industry. With its first-class tech-equipment, productive capacity and the economic benefit, it ranks the first place in the same trade of China for 9 years in succession. It is the most competitive among the national cotton-chemical textile meatpacking industry and the universally biggest cotton-textile factory. And in 2006, it rank 81st among the "China Top 500 Industry Enterprise". 34th of the "China Manufacturing Enterprise", and 91st of "China Impex Enterprise" and 9th of "China Top 500 of competition". In January 2007 to November, the company realized a sales revenue as high as 6045942.2 Million CNY, an 33.78-percent increase over that in the same period last year; Total profits and taxes 734503.1 Million CNY, an 36.32-percent increase over that in the same period last year; Profits of 519039.6 Million CNY, a 68.58-percent increase over that in the same period last year; and the total amount of foreign currency earned through exportation reaching 95423.0 Million USD, a 20.15-percent increase over that in the same period last year (<http://www.weiqiaocy.com/cn/profile.aspx>).

The introduction of Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd is extremely much and the whole article is much too long. Generally, it is used less than 250 English words to describe an enterprise, so the translator should do a brief introduction to let the visitor understand the Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd easily.

The better translation: *Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd is the biggest cotton weaving enterprise in the world engaging in cotton weaving, dyeing & finishing, garments, household textile, thermal power and aluminum industry. The production scale and economic profit rank firs in China's cotton weaving industry for 12 years running. As the most competitive enterprise in cotton & chemical fiber textile processing industry in China and the biggest cotton weaving factory in the whole world, Weiqiao Group has been reputed as The Top 500 Renowned Brands in the world.*

Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd is built from two big holding companies of Weiqiao Textile Co., Ltd and Weiqiao Aluminum and Power Co., Ltd. It has developed into such an industrial structure of "based on cotton textiles, associated with thermoelectricity, complemented by each other between thermoelectricity, aluminum and textiles".

This introduction gives us a brief introduction of Shandong Weiqiao Pioneering Group Co., Ltd about the nature, scale, founding base, business area, etc. Its description is objective, natural, and not fustian.

Conclusion

Nowadays, tourism becomes a popular tendency at home and abroad. Beautiful sceneries not only broaden visitors' horizon, but enrich people's spirit. The author first did a research for the study of functional translation theory and the tourism translation at home and abroad, and then went to the Yellow River Delta to do field research with friends. It is found that the tourism translation in Yellow River Delta has some problems, such as grammatical errors, pragmatic errors, lexical errors, etc., so the author adopts to some strategies, like transliteration, amplification, omission, and so on, to correct the errors of tourism translation in Yellow River Delta. Certainly, this paper did not do all the survey for the tourism translation of Yellow River Delta due to some actual conditions, like the surveying time, the cost, and the personal resource, so the survey of tourism translation

of Yellow River Delta under functional translation theory needs to be conducted continuously. For example, many scenic spots in Yellow River Delta have not been translated, hoping the following researchers provide more and better translation for the sceneries of Yellow River Delta with appropriate translation strategies under the functional translation theory.

References

Company website: <http://www.weiqiaocy.com/cn/profile.aspx>

Dann, G. (1996). *The language of tourism: A sociolinguistic perspective*. Beijing: Science Press.

Nord, C. (1996). Translating as a purposeful activity, functionalist approaches. *Chinese Library Learning Paper*, 2, 43-45.

Reiss, K. (1971). *Possibilities and limitation in translation criticism*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.

Schaffner, C. (1998). *Introducing translation studies*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Vermeer, H. J. (1987). Skopos and commission in translational action. In A. Chesterman (Trans.); M. Lawrence Venti (Ed.), *The translation studies reader*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Researching Press.