

Problems and Strategies: A Case Study of Translation of the Introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU

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The present paper takes the English translation of the introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU as an example to explore the translation problems of proper nouns and differences in English and Chinese language expressions in the construction of English introductions in Chinese institutions of higher education with the intention to propose corresponding solutions. It is hoped that this paper will provide some tips for the English translation of international publicity materials for other institutions of higher education.

Keywords: A brief introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU, translation problems, translation strategies

I. Introduction

College publicity materials, the materials used by institutions of higher education for international publicity, mainly include campus website information, and campus news, of which the introduction of the corresponding institution of higher education is of vital importance. The purpose of the introduction of a college or university is to introduce the basic situation of the college or university to the outside world, promote the achievements of the college or university, and create a good image. In recent years, with China opening to the world, communication between Chinese institutions of higher education and their international counterparts has increased accordingly. As one of the promotional materials, English websites have become a window for international people to understand Chinese institutions of higher education, and the English profiles of Chinese institutions of higher education also exert a greater or lesser impact on international students' first impressions of Chinese institutions of higher education. Therefore, the importance of its translation is self-evident. This present article aims to sum up how the authors locate and solve relevant English translation problems in the translation of the introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU, in the hope to provide some tips for the translation of the introductions of other institutions of higher education to the outside world.

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An Analysis of the English version of Chinese College Websites

As an important component of international publicity materials, the English translation of a college website not only must follow the principles of “faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance” proposed by Yan Fu, but also must be familiar with and apply “the Three Principles of publicity-oriented C-E translation (namely, adhere to the facts of China, satisfy international audiences’ needs for Chinese information, and follow the thinking habits of international audiences)” (Huang, 2004, p. 27). This means that when translating a school’s English introduction, the translator(s) should not follow the original text rigidly. Instead, they should take international audiences’ thinking habits into consideration, and render the original text into sentences suited to English readers’ reading habits. When translating expressions with Chinese characteristics, appropriate additions or annotations can be made to avoid misunderstandings.

Inexperienced translators mainly adopt literal translation method from beginning to end. Due to the fact that they often translate entirely based on their own understanding of the original text and do not refer to parallel texts of English websites of other institutions of higher education, even rookie mistakes or improper expressions may arise. As a result, the authors of the present will address the above two aspects in the translation of the introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU.

Translation of Proper Nouns

When translating the English introduction of a school website, it is unavoidable to encounter the translation of some proper nouns such as “学院”. Usually, when doing translation, translators often take it for granted to render “学院” into “college” or “school”. Yet, from a normative perspective, at least in terms of names, there are different levels of “学院”: an independent institution of higher education, a second-level or a third-level teaching unit within an institution of higher education. Therefore, it is preferable for translation to follow the principle of respecting the fact and adopt the method of direct borrowing (Zhang & Yang, 2016, p. 13). As is known to us all, an institution of higher education in China usually has its own translated version for a given proper noun, so when we are doing translation, what we only need to do is just to locate it, as there is no need to create a new name. The translation of secondary colleges in universities is like this, for example, “外国语学院” of Xianda College may have several possible translated versions, such as the School of Foreign Studies, the School of Foreign Languages, the School of International Studies, the College of Foreign Studies, the College of Foreign Languages, the College of International Studies, the Faculty of Foreign Studies, the Faculty of Foreign Languages, and the Faculty of International Studies. However, if we survey its official website, we can easily find out its own version and pick it up: the School of Foreign Languages as the naming method does not conflict with its superordinate in Xianda College of Economics and Humanities.

Translation of Key Expressions

When handling key expressions, we should pay special attention. For instance, the translation of a school motto is just a case in point. Xianda College’s school motto “贤者惟德、达者善事” is a hard nut to crack.

In English speaking countries, the number of mottoes is the largest in sentences; the second largest number of mottoes is in nouns or noun phrases; whereas the numbers of school mottoes in infinitives and prepositions come third and fourth. For example, the school motto of New York University is “To persist and to Excel”, while

London School of Economics and Political Science's motto "To Understand the Causes of Things" (Zhang & Elliott, 2021, p. 44)

According to the original meaning of "贤者惟德、达者善事", different translators have come up with different versions, "The Virtuous for integrity, the Worthy for Prosperity", "To excel in virtue and to serve with competence", "Virtue & Competence", "Excel in virtue and good deeds" and "To excel in virtue and to serve with excellence."

In the authors' eyes, ideally maybe the last one is the best whereas "Virtue & Competence" is also acceptable since in the native English-speaking countries nouns or noun phrases are very popular.

Chinese Emphasizes Parataxis While English Emphasizes Hypotaxis

Nord (2001, p. 74) points out that if the purpose of translation is to achieve a certain function that serves the translation expectations and readers, then any translation method or result that hinders the achievement of the translation purpose is a translation error. This means that the translated text should not fail to meet the reader's expectations. For the translation of publicity texts such as campus websites, the purpose of translation is to effectively convey the information of the given school to English readers, enable them to understand the original information correctly, so any translation that fails to achieve this goal is considered a translation error (Zhu & Zhang, 2021, p. 145). Therefore, before translation, the translator(s) should read some parallel texts, such as the campus English websites of the London School of Economics, Dartmouth College, the College of William and Mary, London University College London, King's College London, and Imperial College London, and then translate the source text into English with confidence. Below, the author(s) will analyze the English translation of the introduction of Xiangda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU.

Example (1)

ST: 自建校以来, 学校坚持以服务学生发展为中心, 弘扬“贤者惟德、达者善事”的校训, 积极探索“英语+”“信息技术+”复合型人才培养模式, 逐步建设起了以外国语言文学、经济与管理类学科为优势学科, 以艺术设计学为特色学科, 法学、教育学等学科专业协调发展的学科专业体系, 现已有10大学院、1个中心26个本科专业, 全日制本科在校生超万人。

TT1: Centering on the development of students, Xianda adheres to the promotion of "the Virtuous for integrity, the Worthy for Prosperity" and has actively explored the training model of cultivating inter disciplinary talents with good command of English language skills and information technology, building a disciplinary system featured by dominant disciplines of foreign language and literature, economics and management, distinctive disciplines of art and design, and coordinated development of law, education, and other disciplines. Currently, our college offers 26 undergraduate programs from 9 houses and 1 center with more than 10,000 full-time undergraduate students.

TT2: Ever since its establishment, Xianda, under the guidance of its motto of "To Excel in Virtue and to Serve with Excellence," remains committed to placing student growth at the center of its efforts and has proactively explored innovative training models that cultivate interdisciplinary talents through such programs as "English+" and "Information Technology+".

Over time, Xianda has gradually developed a professional, disciplinary system featured by dominant disciplines in foreign languages and literature, economics and management, and distinctive disciplines in art and education. Additionally, it has achieved coordinated development in law, education, and other disciplines. Currently, Xianda offers 26 undergraduate programs within 9 major schools and 1 center. Currently, it provides education to over 10,000 undergraduate students on its two campuses located in Hongkou and Chongming respectively.

Analysis: English is a hypotaxis language, while Chinese is a parataxis one. Therefore, when translating Chinese into English, appropriate additions (such as subjects like “Xianda” and pronouns like “its” in the first line) and even some background knowledge should be added during translation. Sometimes it is necessary to adjust the word order and reconstruct the original sentences, instead of simply translating the original text word by word.

TT1 reconstructs the 9 small sentences in the original text into 2 long sentences, but the meaning still differs significantly from the original text while TT2 reorganizes the 9 small sentences in the original text into 3 long sentences, with three chronological words or phrases (every since its establishment, over time, and currently) as antecedents, making the translated text (TT) more logical.

Example (2)

ST: 学校正以其崭新的办学模式、丰富的办学资源和发展潜力，不忘初心，走国际化教育之路，坚持非营利性办学。积极创建特色鲜明的，多科性、国际化、高水平的应用技术型大学。

TT1: Xianda is now stepping forward with its new system of education, rich teaching resources and development potential, internationalizing its educational system and insisting in its original aspiration of non-profit education, actively endeavoring to build itself into a high-level international university of applied technology with distinctive characters and multiple disciplines.

TT2: Xianda is now **forging ahead** with its brand new education system, rich **school** resources and significant development potential. It **remains steadfast** in its original mission of non-profit education while working towards internationalizing its educational system. Xianda is actively dedicated to becoming a high-level international university with a focus on applied technology, **characterized by** distinctive features and a wide range of disciplines.

Analysis: The original text consists of several small sentences. TT1 processes this paragraph into a coordinate sentence containing four participle phrases, while Feng Qi, the current dean of the School of Foreign Languages polishes TT1 into three independent sentences, using three more distinctive predicate verbs: “is advancing ahead”, “remains steadfast”, and “is actively dedicated to.” The final translated version highly readable.

Conclusion

This paper compares the initial translation and revision of the introduction of Xianda College of Economics and Humanities, SISU in the construction of its English website, and identifies some problems that translators come across when translating publicity materials on the school website. From this, the authors have drawn some

inspiration when translating similar documents: firstly, relevant proper nouns such as the English names of secondary colleges can be searched online, and if there already exist corresponding expressions, they can be directly borrowed. Secondly, when translating a college's English website, the first step is to search online for English websites from similar domestic and foreign universities of the same type, and establish parallel corpora for reference. Only in this way the speed of the translation process will become faster and the translation effect better.

After the translation is completed, it is ideal to find an authoritative person, especially an native English teacher to proof read it, so as to avoid some low-level errors and come up with the final translation. It is not an easy task to faithfully translate the original text. It is hoped that this study will provide some tips to those who are interested in translation.

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