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## **On Chinese to English Translation of Zhejiang Red Tourism From the Perspective of Cultural Awareness**

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### **Abstract**

As a special tourism and cultural product, Red Tourism has distinct Chinese characteristics and cultural features. Translation, as an important carrier of Red culture, needs a high degree of cultural awareness which is one of the theoretical achievements of sociology. Only when we are fully aware of our own culture and are full of confidence can we better spread the Red culture. Based on the current research of Zhejiang Red Tourism translation, this paper analyzes the translation problems and causes of these problems from the perspective of cultural awareness. The findings suggest that the translation of Red Tourism should be based on the self-awakening, self-reflection and self-creation of Red culture. This study aims to put forward some strategies to interpret and translate cultural terms and translate without damaging the spirit of Red culture. The proposed strategies can promote the overseas communication of Chinese Red culture, especially Zhejiang Red culture.

*Keywords: Chinese to English Translation; Zhejiang Red Tourism;  
Cultural Awareness; Translation Problems*

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## **Introduction**

Red tourism mainly refers to the theme tourism activities, which take the memorial sites and landmarks formed by the great people under the leadership of the Communist Party of China during the revolutionary and war period as the carrier, and the revolutionary history, revolutionary deeds and revolutionary spirit carried by them as the connotation. It is organized for tourists to carry out memorial study. It is a new type of theme tourism that combines the red cultural landscape with the green natural landscape, and combines the traditional cultural education with the promotion of tourism. As a special tourism and cultural product, Red Tourism has distinct Chinese characteristics and cultural features. According to the data of the Resource Development Division of Zhejiang Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, the number of inbound tourists reached 4.671 million in 2019, of which about 11% participated in the Red Tourism. Many travel agencies also included Red tourist attractions in the inbound tourist routes, which made the international publicity translation an important carrier of Red culture communication.

With the acceleration of the internationalization of China's Red Tourism, the translation of Red Tourism publicity has become very important in China. Researchers have begun to pay attention to many problems in this field, mainly focusing on the Red Tourism translation problems and countermeasures. Many researchers have studied Red Tourism publicity translation from different perspectives. Xiao Qun (2010) makes a systematic analysis of the characteristics, errors and translation standards of Red Tourism texts under functional translation theory. Yao Guangjin (2017) introduced Relevance Theory and Linguistic Adaptation Theory into Red Tourism publicity translation. Liu Ying (2015) discussed translators, readers, information, channels and feedbacks from the perspective of Communication Studies. Most researchers, such as Liao Hongzhong (2002) and Tian Ling (2016), have made critical studies on the translation of specific words and sentences in Red Tourism publicity in Jiangxi and Shanxi Provinces. Researchers believe that the quality of Red Tourism translation is poor at present, and the problems of language and culture such as spelling errors, grammatical errors, Chinglish, omission, semantic distortion and cultural loss are common. The countermeasure studies mainly include macro factors such as talent cultivation, government support and technical specifications, and micro factors such as translation strategies and principles. Peng Duanying (2008) pointed out the necessity of cultivating foreign language talents in Red Tourism. Wang Yan (2015) discussed the specific teaching mode of Red Tourism translation. Xu Rui (2017) proposed that the government should strengthen resource construction, increase investment and integrate available resources to improve Red Tourism translation. Different from the macro level, micro factors focus on the translation skills which may affect translation quality. For example, Xiao Yonghe (2013) proposed literal translation, free translation and variant

translation and Xiao Qun (2013) believes that imitation, adaptation and reduction can improve the quality of translation. Liu Yanshi (2011) put forward the translation principle of “foreign-tourist oriented”.

After reviewing the previous studies, there are more in-depth researches on translation problems and countermeasures, but still with some deficiencies. The current researches generally have few samples, only analyzing the texts of specific Red tourist attractions, and lack the studies of core vocabulary of Red Tourism. For research methods, the vast majority of researches are mainly based on case studies. Statistical analysis and quantitative research are rarely used, so the objectivity of the description remains to be discussed. And the studies conducted in the literature are limited to translatology and linguistic perspectives.

From the perspective of cultural awareness, one of the theoretical achievements of sociology, this paper studies the translation problems, causes of translation problems and countermeasures for solving those problems of Red Tourism publicity in Zhejiang Province, so as to attract more overseas tourists to learn about the Red culture. It can promote the cultural exchanges between China and the West, and enhance the acceptance of Red culture by overseas tourists.

### **Cultural Awareness and Red Tourism Translation**

Cultural awareness was put forward by Fei Xiaotong, a famous sociologist in China, at the second advanced sociological seminar of Peking University in 1997 which plays a very important role in sociology. It means that people living in a certain cultural circle have self-knowledge of their own culture, and have a good understanding of its development process and future. Cultural awareness includes three parts: firstly, it is based on the search and inheritance of “root”; secondly, it is based on the criticism and development of “truth”; thirdly, it is to guide the development trend continuously. In other words, it is the self-awakening, self-reflection and self-creation of culture. Under the background of globalization, to achieve cultural awareness means to reject both “cultural hegemonism” and “ethnocentrism”. Only by understanding its origin, formation and development, can we enhance the ability of inheriting our own culture. (Fei Xiaotong, 2003)

Since Bassnett and Lefevere put forward the “Cultural Turn” in the 1990s, translation studies have gradually shifted away from the linguistics to the perspectives of culture, society and rights. In the process of translation, cultural awareness emphasizes the translator’s cultural awareness, which requires the translator to understand the differences between Chinese and Western cultures in social system, ideology, thinking habits and norms. Red Tourism translation includes not only the introduction of Red tourist attractions, but also the poems, revolutionary documents and historical events. There are a lot of cultural differences in these materials. Therefore, the cultural awareness of Red Tourism

translation refers to understand different cultural values and thinking patterns of China and the West, and interpret in the most appropriate way without damaging the essence of Chinese red culture, so as to promote cultural exchange between China and the West and meet the needs of overseas tourists.

### **Translation Problems of Red Tourism in Zhejiang Province**

As the birthplace of the Communist Party of China, Zhejiang Province is an economically strong province on the east coast with unique resource where attracts many overseas tourists. However, there are many problems in the translation of Red Tourism in Zhejiang province, such as mistranslations, using Chinese Pinyin instead of foreign languages, and even no translations in some tourist attractions. The nonstandard use of foreign language has weakened the effectiveness of external publicity. So far, few domestic researchers have studied the translation problems and countermeasures of Red Tourism in Zhejiang Province. Based on the investigation of more than 10 popular and major red tourist attractions in Zhejiang Province, this paper studies the publicity texts such as scenic spot introductions, tourism guides, commentaries and slogans, and finds out three major problems in the translations, namely, the inconsistent translated terms, political and cultural differences, and the acceptability of the translations.

#### *Inconsistent Translated Terms*

The problem of inconsistent translated terms refers to the translation of proper names, such as person names, organization names and place names, are not fixed, and usually there are some different versions. That is because different translation companies or organizations provide different translations. For example, “南湖革命纪念馆” is translated into “Nanhu revolution memorial museum” in its tourism brochure. Here “南湖” is translated into “Nanhu” by transliteration, but “南湖” is translated into “South Lake” in the tourist guide map by literal translation. Also the translation of “红船” in the scenic spot is “red boat” by foreignization, but it is translated into “revolutionary boat” by domestication in the Revolutionary Memorial Hall of Jiaxing. Another example is “方谷园” in Hangzhou, which is translated as “Fang Gu Yuan” in the Hangzhou Group Memorial Hall while it is translated into “Fangguyuan” in former residence of Qian Xuesen.

The inconsistent translated terms will inevitably cause confusion to foreign tourists, and even directly affect China’s international image. The main reason is that the red tourist attractions in Zhejiang province did not ask experts to review the translations provided by translation companies, nor did they improve the translations. Moreover, the provincial tourism authorities still lack normative guidance and standardized translation system for red tourism translation. At present, there is no Red Tourism translation management department in Zhejiang

province, so it is impossible to solve the problem of translation errors and management problems of adding, adjusting and canceling some translations. The author has pointed out some translation errors to the relevant persons in charge of Red tourist attractions in Zhejiang Province. They said that it would take a certain amount of resources to replace the exhibition boards or tourism brochures in the exhibition hall, so currently they don't plan to replace them.

### *Political and Cultural Differences*

The problem of political and cultural differences refers to the problems caused by different political systems, ideology, thinking habits and cultural norms between China and the West. Red Tourism materials are highly narrative with many political elements and rich cultural connotations. For example, the word “红” in “红色旅游” represents that the modern Chinese revolution is a red history. “红色旅游” is directly translated into “Chinese Revolutionary Sites Tour” by domestication. However, due to the historical significance of it, this Chinese word has a strong political character, so the translation needs to reflect the political position and attitude of our Chinese Party. The translated version of “Red Tourism” by foreignization does not seem to translate the connotation of it, but retains the cultural characteristics of the source language. Translating in a Chinese way is strongly suggestive and informative. “Red” in Western culture stands for bloody and brutality which is different from the connotation of red in traditional Chinese culture. In order to reproduce the Red culture in its original sense, it is necessary to retain the word “Red” to make overseas tourists understand the cultural meaning of “Chinese Red” and to accept and appreciate the unique charm of Red culture.

Another example is the translation of “抗日战争”, which was translated into “Anti-Japanese War” at the Nanhu Revolutionary Memorial Hall in Jiaying. This translated version does not express the meaning of China being invaded by Japan. For foreign tourists who do not have the knowledge of this war may misunderstand it as a war against Japan. The former site of the South Zhejiang Anti-Japanese Base in Wenzhou is translated as “Second Sino-Japanese War”. This translated version only indicates that China and Japan are warring parties, and does not specify who the aggressor is and who the resister is, which further obliterating Japan's unjust position. Whereas, in Ningbo, the former site of the East Zhejiang Anti-Japanese Base is translated into “War of Resistance against Japanese aggression”. In this way, foreign tourists can clearly understand which side is the aggressor and which side is the justice one. The proper translation of the term “抗日战争” directly affects China's diplomatic and political propaganda, and reflects the justice of the Chinese people's resistance to Japanese aggression. Therefore, translators should be clear about their cultural identity and China's position, and maintain a high degree of political acumen during translating.

The translation of Red Tourism publicity involves many national terms. Due to the differences in political systems, ideologies, thinking habits and cultural norms, it is inevitable to encounter cultural barriers in the translation. According to the survey, most of the translations of introductions, commentaries and tourist guides of red tourist attractions in Zhejiang Province are translated by some translation companies. Most of the translators are engaged in general translation, and there are few professionals specialized in Red Tourism publicity translation. Those translators lack knowledge of Chinese revolutionary history, and do not have a deep understanding of the origin and characteristics of Chinese red culture. Sometimes it is easy for them to seek translation strategies from their own cultural values, languages and customs. Especially when the translators choose a certain meaning from a polysemous word, they tend to choose the negative meaning to vilify the country in opposition to China or tend to take into account the feelings of their own nation to achieve their political goals (Feng Qinghua, Gong Fen, 2011). Such translations are easy to misunderstand and even dislike by foreign readers.

#### *The Acceptability of Translations*

The acceptability of translation refers to whether the translation conforms to the habits of the target language readers and whether the feelings of the target language readers are the same as those of the source language readers. Although some translations seem to be faithful, expressive and smooth, they do not consider the communicative function expected to be achieved in the target language and the reception psychology of the target readers, so it is difficult to get the recognition of foreign tourists. For example, at the site of The Surrender Ceremony of the Invading Japanese Army in Zhejiang, here is a paragraph: “在这里，你可以感悟到半个世纪以前领袖的音容；在这里，你可以倾听伟人们共商大计的声音，在这里，你可以看到那铸造历史的精神光辉。” Its translation is: “Here, you can feel the voice and appearance of leaders half a century ago; here, you can listen to the voice of great people discussing important plans; here, you can see the spiritual brilliance of creating history.” This text expresses the admiration for Chairman Mao. It can be understood by Chinese people, but it is difficult for foreign tourists to understand this feeling. The target readers of Red Tourism are overseas tourists. The purpose of their tour is to understand the life, work and history of the Communist Party of China during the revolution, but not to receive patriotic education. Therefore, the translation should be simplified: “Here, we can cherish the memory of Chairman Mao and other revolutionary leaders.”

We translate the Red Tourism for foreign tourists, but there is no research on its acceptance among Western tourists. The current translations lack awareness of internal and external differences, and do not take into account the common thinking, psychological habits, information needs, language forms, and also the

extent to which the information makes foreign tourists convinced. Based on the investigation and studies of more than 10 red tourist attractions in Zhejiang Province, the author finds that, except for low-level errors such as spelling and grammar, many translation errors go beyond the pure language. The translators often treat foreign tourists with the same propagandistic tone used for Chinese tourists. The Chinese red culture is too heavy in ideology to arouse tourists' interest. Not to mention those who have prejudices about China's red revolution, even those who do not have an aversion to China are not interested either. In order to arouse the resonance of foreign tourists, translators should consider the acceptance of translation, and make appropriate adjustments without changing the original meaning, so as to achieve the purpose of cross-cultural communication. (Sun Yifeng, 2016)

### **Countermeasures for Red Tourism Translation from the Perspective of Cultural Awareness**

*Red Tourism Translation under Self-awakening—Getting Familiar with Chinese Revolutionary History and Unifying Translated Terms*

Chinese Red culture carries the spiritual connotation of China's excellent traditional culture. A comprehensive understanding of Chinese Red culture is conducive to further enhancing cultural awareness and cultural confidence. The biggest obstacle to cultural awareness is ethnocentrism which exists in different ways in any country and nation. If we don't think about the cultural differences between the two countries seriously, then our translation will hinder the spread of Chinese culture in the West. Translators should not only have bilingual skills, translation skills and a high sense of responsibility, but also should get familiar with our revolutionary history and translate with political sensitivity. For words with Chinese characteristics, if there is no equivalent in English, then translators need to unify those translated terms by repeated discussion.

*Red Tourism Translation under Self-reflection —Considering the Needs of Foreign Tourists, Improving the Acceptability of Translation*

Who is Red Tourism translation for? If it is for us, the purpose of cultural communication will not be achieved. If it is shown to foreign tourists, then we have to figure out how to translate it smoothly so that foreign tourists can truly appreciate the essence of Red culture. In order to make the Red Tourism translation acceptable to foreign tourists, it is necessary to consider the needs of foreign tourists, and make them feel that the translation can provide them with useful information. Liu Yameng (2009) mentioned that "The best translation is to select the information from the essence of culture which is conducive to arousing the interest of foreign tourists, and adopt the translation methods which are closest to the foreign tourists' expression habits and norms." Only by understanding the

intention of the original text, can we know what should be translated, what should not be translated, what need to be strengthened, what can be weakened, and what is in line with the national conditions and what can be accepted by foreign tourists. The acceptability of Red culture is studied by collecting feedback from target readers. For example, the translation of “抗日战争” is adjusted by analyzing various translated versions and foreign tourists’ responses to the translations.

*Red Tourism Translation under Self-creation —Establishing Corpus, Talent Pool and Translation Management System*

First of all, at the translators level, it is necessary to speed up the establishment of a multilingual -corpus for Zhejiang Red Tourism translation to solve the problem of inconsistent translated terms, and to cultivate the awareness of terminology standardization. We should accelerate the establishment of a talent pool for Red Tourism translation which focuses on the training of teachers and students of translation majors in colleges and universities of Zhejiang because they have a deep understanding of the Red culture. We should also hire more discrete translators to improve the acceptability of the translation because they have the discrete experience of western culture and they can translate directly from the perspective of cross-cultural communication.

Secondly, at the red tourist attractions level, it is necessary to invite experts and scholars in translatology to review the final version. We should open the channel of error correction, and regularly rectify the translation errors that have been found in foreign publicity. The multilingual brochures are produced for overseas tourists, which can be consulted at any time when they visit exhibition halls. Visitors can learn more about the history of Zhejiang revolution within a limited time, and truly spread the Red culture to friends around them.

Finally, at the government administrations level, it is necessary to set up relevant administrative departments for Red Tourism, formulate the translation management system, and conduct regular inspections of Red Tourism translations in various regions and corresponding accountability measures. We should lay down guidelines and review procedures for Red Tourism translation standards. The translated text can only be publicized after it is approved. We should also strengthen the training of relevant personnel to improve their language skill and cultural knowledge. Through the cooperation with universities and translation institutes, we can also improve the quality of Red Tourism translation.

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### **Conclusion**

The publicity of Red Tourism in Zhejiang Province is not only the translation of language, but also a process of displaying Zhejiang Red culture to the world. This paper studies the translation of Red Tourism from the perspective of cultural awareness which is one of the theoretical achievements of sociology. It analyzes three main problems in the translation of Red Tourism in Zhejiang Province, namely, the inconsistent translated terms, political and cultural differences and the acceptability of the translation, and proposes some countermeasures from translators, red tourist attractions, and government administrations to improve translation, such as getting familiar with Chinese revolutionary history and unifying translated terms, considering the needs of foreign tourists and improving the acceptability of translation, establishing corpus, talent pool and translation management system, etc. It suggests that the translation of Red Tourism should be based on the self-awakening, self-reflection and self-creation of Red culture. This paper tries to put forward the most appropriate way to interpret and translate without damaging the spirit of Red culture, so as to improve the acceptance of foreign tourists. It is hoped that the research results can provide references for relevant departments' decision-making and for better translation of Zhejiang Red Tourism, and enhance the international influence of Zhejiang Red culture and China's cultural soft power to realize the idea of "beauty in each, beauty in common, and harmony in the world" put forward by Mr. Fei Xiaotong.

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