

Analysis and Research of Taoist Cultural Tourism Translation from the Perspective of Communicative Translation Theory

-- A Case Study of Mount Lao Taoist Culture

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Abstract: Traditional Chinese culture is an important resource for the inheritance and development of Chinese culture, and it is an essential spiritual guarantee for national rejuvenation and rise. With the rapid development of the Internet, people often browse relevant websites to learn about their destinations before traveling and tourism. Therefore, in the international tourism field, the translated information on destination official websites plays a crucial role in the external publicity and promotion of tourist destinations. The basis of tourism translation lies in the historical and cultural connotations of the destination, and the cultural differences between Chinese and English pose a major challenge in tourism translation. In order to increase the readability and attractiveness of tourism translation, translators must be able to reproduce the feelings of the original language readers for the target language readers. When conducting translation work, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of the connotations and characteristics of Taoist culture, accurately grasp its core ideas and values, in order to maintain an authentic expression in the translation process. Therefore, this paper discusses the issues and translation strategies of Taoist cultural tourism translation through the analysis of Peter Newmark's theory of communicative translation and the description of the characteristics of Taoist cultural texts, combined with the example of the official English website of Mount Lao. These issues include language difficulty, cultural differences, and translation style. The research in this paper is of great significance for promoting the international dissemination and understanding of Taoist cultural tourism. By applying the theory of communicative translation, we can better achieve the accurate transmission of Taoist cultural tourism information and the understanding and resonance of target readers. At the same time, this research also provides reference and inspiration for other cultural tourism translations, making positive contributions to cross-cultural communication and integration.

Keywords: Communicative Translation Theory, Taoism, Taoism Culture Translation, Mount Lao.

1. Introduction

The international dissemination of Chinese culture is an essential task in the current era. As China's global economic and social status continues to rise, it becomes an urgent challenge to showcase an authentic, diverse, and comprehensive China to the world. Taoist culture, as an integral part of traditional Chinese culture, still holds profound influence in today's society. Against this backdrop, this study selects Taoist culture as the research object, using the Chinese and English texts from the classic route "Taiqing - Seeking Truth and Enlightenment, Cultural Journey" on the official tourism website of Mount Lao as samples. Through in-depth analysis of the translation of Taoist culture, the aim is to actively respond to the call for "telling the Chinese story well" and promote the international dissemination of Chinese traditional culture. With the booming development of the tourism industry, the in-depth exploration and promotion of Taoist culture have become important tasks. The purpose of tourism translation is to provide foreign tourists with information about China, stimulate their desire to travel and visit China, and promote Chinese culture to other parts of the world (Li, 2013). Translation, as a bridge for cross-cultural communication, plays a crucial role in this process. Taking Mount Lao Taoist culture as an example, this paper will delve into the relevant issues of Taoist cultural tourism translation from the perspective of communicative translation theory. In

this process, translation not only needs to accurately convey cultural connotations but also consider the level of acceptance and cultural background of tourists, enabling Taoist culture to be inherited and developed in cross-cultural communication.

2. Research Significance and Research Object

2.1. Research Significance

Since the reform and opening-up, especially in the new era, with the development of China's economy and society as well as its rising global status, it has become an increasingly pressing task to showcase the real, comprehensive and multi-faceted China to the world and tell the Chinese story well. "The world influence of Chinese culture is fundamentally linked to the reshaping of the world order after China's rise, and is linked to China's national destiny. A nation's decline coincides with a decline in its culture, while a nation's strength coincides with the strength of its culture, this is an eternal truth." (Zhang, 2018) "All human cultures begin with religion, and each revolves around religion." (Liang, 2011). Human religious beliefs have given rise to cultures and also determined the nature and development of human society. Traditional Chinese culture is composed of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, which complement and integrate with each other.

Among them, Taoism, as a native religion of China, is not

only one of the oldest faith traditions in China but also incorporates other faith contents in its historical evolution, forming a unique view of the universe's creation and advocating a concept of respecting nature and seeking tranquility, injecting unique spiritual connotations into Chinese culture. In this context, translating Taoist culture is of vital significance. By actively responding to the call for telling the Chinese story well, we can showcase the real and diverse Chinese culture to the world and promote international society's in-depth understanding of Chinese traditional culture. As an object of translation, Taoist culture can convey China's ancient and profound cultural traditions and present the Chinese people's pursuit of natural reverence and inner peace, helping to build a more comprehensive and multi-dimensional image of China on the international stage and contribute to promoting China's soft power.

2.2. Research Object

This study takes Mount Lao in Qingdao as the research object, specifically selecting the Chinese and English versions of the official tourist website of Mount Lao. The classic route "Taiqing - Seeking Truth and Enlightenment, Cultural Journey" in the "Travel in Mount Lao" section is chosen as the sample for text analysis. Since becoming a national key scenic spot in 1982, Mount Lao, as a fairy mountain on the sea, has made significant achievements in improving the ecological environment, protecting historical heritage, and inheriting traditional culture. At the same time, as one of the important birthplaces of Chinese Taoism, Mount Lao has rich Taoist historical and cultural accumulation and is known as the "second forest of Quanzhen Taoism in the world" (<https://qdlaoshan.cn/New-Index-laoshan.html>).

The selection of the research object is not only because of the important position of Mount Lao in Chinese traditional culture but also because of its rich connotation in Taoist culture. Mount Lao not only has the glorious situation of "nine palaces, eight views, and seventy-two temples" but also carries the history of famous Taoist practice from the Spring and Autumn Period to the Qin and Han dynasties (Liu, Yuan, 2004). Due to its profound cultural background, the description of scenic spots on the official tourist website of Mount Lao often uses ancient language, classical Chinese, ancient poetry, and other difficult and profound expressions. Therefore, by conducting an in-depth analysis of the translation of Mount Lao's Taoist culture, we can better understand the connotation and value of Chinese traditional culture and provide more accurate and profound presentations for its international dissemination. When approving key scenic spots, the country has recognized the characteristics of the coexistence of natural and cultural resources, such as "mountain-sea wonders and Taoist culture" in Mount Lao Scenic Area in Qingdao, which also provides a pioneer for the development and research of Mount Lao's culture. Therefore, we can say that the connotation of Mount Lao's culture is no longer a limited regional culture but an important part of the Chinese cultural system, and its cultural characteristics reflect the development of Chinese Taoist culture (Sun, 2000).

In the following research, the author will explore the translation strategies of Taoist culture by comparing and analyzing the Chinese and English versions of the official tourist website of Mount Lao, in order to provide useful references and inspirations for telling the story of China well and spreading Chinese traditional culture.

3. Literature Review

3.1. Current Research Status in China

The research on Taoism and Daoism has always been of great interest to scholars. Wang Fan from the School of Literature at Shandong Normal University interprets in his work "Gao Luopei's Perspective on Taoist Culture: Centered on the Taoist Writings in 'The Case of Di Gong in the Tang Dynasty'" the intrinsic cognitive process of Gao Luopei towards Taoist culture and his attitude towards the promotion of Chinese traditional culture represented by Taoist culture. He Li Fang from the School of Foreign Languages at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, and Li Sibe from the School of Foreign Languages and International Education at Chengdu Technological University, conducted a study on the translation and introduction of Taoism by Italian sinologist Xuan Ying, focusing on the English translation of "Wuzhen Pian". Sun Jingxian discussed the translation exploration of Taoist divine titles in his work "Exploration of the Translation of Taoist Divine Titles," which explores the cultural heterogeneity in the connotation and form of Taoist divine titles and the necessity of adopting a translation strategy that prioritizes foreignization with domestication as a supplement.

3.2. Current Research Status Overseas

Regarding biographies of Taoism, significant translation work has been done by scholars outside of China. For example, European scholar Comte-Montricher translated "Lie Xian Zhuan" (Biographies of Divine Transcendents), British scholar Waley translated "Changchun Zhenren Xiyouji" (The Journey to the West by the True Man of Eternal Spring), American scholar Kohn translated "Yongcheng Jixianlu" (Records of the Assembled Immortals of Yongcheng), and Kang Rubo translated "Shenxian Zhuan" (Biographies of Divine Immortals). Shi Zhouren provided annotated translation for "Han Wudi Neizhuan" (Inner Biography of Emperor Wu of Han), analyzing in detail the Taoist concepts presented in the preface of the text. Barrett evaluated the translation of "Zhouyi Chan Zhen" (Elucidating the Truth in the Book of Changes) in Taoist scriptures, stating that "the translator successfully integrated the original text's ambiguous language into smooth and readable American West Coast prose, but it was done at the cost of destroying the allusions in the original text" (Timothy, 1989). Chinese-American scholar Yao Daozhong commented on the translation of "Wuzhen Pian" (Awakening to Reality), pointing out some factual errors about the history of Quanzhen Taoism in the preface of the translated text. In the conclusion of his book review, Yao Daozhong (Yao, 1990) noted that this translation opened the door for English readers to understand the internal alchemy of Taoism and made significant contributions to Taoist studies in the English-speaking world.

4. Taoist Tourism Translation from The Perspective of Communicative Translation

4.1. Overview of Communication Translation Theory

Newmark believes that translation is a process of converting text into another text, and therefore the accuracy

of the text is the first consideration in the translation process. Newmark's language function theory divides text into informative, expressive, and appellative, which is the same as Blum's three-fold theory. Newmark proposed this theory in 1981, emphasizing that different types of texts require different translation methods, and divided them into communicative translation and semantic translation (Newmark, 1981).

The focus of communicative translation is on the reader of the translated text. Communicative translation strives to achieve the most easily accepted effect by the translator in the translated text. To achieve this goal, we must completely eliminate the limitations of the original text and change all words and expressions that are different from the translated text to authentic translations, so as not to cause difficulties for readers. In the translation process, translators should fully consider the cultural background of the language and the acceptance of the reader, and continuously adjust the expression and rhetorical techniques of the original text (Newmark, 1991).

In the process of communicative translation, first, the translator should strive to be concise, clear, and highlight the content; second, to fully understand the translator's general knowledge, intellectual status, and perceptual ability. The most important issue in communicative translation is its intuitiveness, which is the translator's response to the translated text.

4.2. Characteristics of Taoist Cultural Texts

Taoism is a unique indigenous religion in China, rooted in the wisdom of Chinese traditional culture and has undergone thousands of years of evolution. Due to its geographical and historical uniqueness, it has significant differences from the development process of Western thought. Therefore, understanding Taoist culture becomes extremely difficult for foreigners, and there may be risks of cultural misunderstanding in the translation process (Guo Xing, 2016). Although cultural misunderstandings are inevitable, through clever translation strategies and techniques, it is possible to guide and alleviate this phenomenon, maximize the effectiveness of tourism translation texts, attract foreign tourists, and allow them to truly experience the charm of Taoist culture in tourist attractions.

4.2.1. Metaphoricity

Taoist cultural texts often tend to express implicit and elusive thoughts, allowing readers to interpret the deeper meanings through symbolic language and imagery (He, Li, 2017). In the Taoist religious system, one of the core beliefs is to achieve enlightenment and immortality through cultivation. This process of cultivation is not only a religious experience but also profoundly influences the cognitive subject, as practitioners record their experiences through analogical thinking. Taoist practitioners tend to understand and express their experiences in a way that goes beyond conventional thinking. From the perspective of the cognitive subject, practitioners use sensory, imagery, and intuitive conceptual symbols to express the abstract meanings they experience during cultivation. This expressive method aims to help readers better understand the spiritual journey of the practitioners through insight and analogy. Practitioners often use analogies between phenomena in the physical world and spiritual realms to convey their insights and experiences in cultivation. This use of analogy and symbolism becomes an important means of expression in Taoist texts, allowing

profound and enlightening ideas to be conveyed through metaphors. The language used in Taoism is rich in metaphors, which helps transcend the limitations of language and eloquently describe spiritual realms beyond words. Therefore, Taoism tends to use metaphorical expressions to convey its thoughts.

4.2.2. Ambiguity

As an important part of traditional Chinese culture, Taoism's language is characterized by ambiguity due to its mysterious nature, especially in the uncertainty of its conceptual meanings. The phenomenon of polysemy in Taoist terminology makes it crucial to find corresponding vocabulary in the target language to cover the multiple meanings of the original words during translation. In practice, this situation is not uncommon and often requires multiple corresponding translation methods (He, 2013). The ambiguity of Taoist language stems from its pursuit of implicit and obscure ways of expressing thoughts. The essence of Tao culture is inclined to convey profound ideas through symbolic language and imagery, making understanding and interpretation more complex. The uncertainty in Taoist terminology often reflects the spiritual realm of practitioners in their pursuit of enlightenment and immortality, which emphasizes the need to pay more attention to retaining the multiple connotations of the original words during translation. Taoist practitioners often use unconventional thinking to record their experiences of cultivation. At the level of cognitive subjects, practitioners use sensory, figurative, and intuitive concept symbols to express the abstract meanings experienced during their cultivation process. The ambiguity of this expression makes Taoist terminology more polysemous, requiring the flexible use of multiple corresponding vocabulary during translation. Therefore, the translation process requires translators to deeply understand Taoist culture and its philosophical connotations to ensure that the translation results accurately convey the original meaning and inspire readers to think deeply in the target language.

4.2.3. Conciseness

Concise and profound language expression is a notable feature of Taoist cultural texts. Due to the long history of Taoism, many ancient classics and literature have been preserved. These texts can express profound connotations in just a few words with precise wording. When translating Taoist texts, efforts must be made to maintain this language style and avoid using excessively cumbersome or lengthy expressions. The language traits of Tao culture embody its emphasis on concise and insightful ways of expression. The language in Taoist classics is very concise, with each word carefully chosen to make the entire text full of depth and philosophy. This concise way of expression is designed to help readers easily comprehend its profound connotations and guide their thinking through the use of succinct language. When translating Taoist texts, it is necessary to maintain awe of the conciseness of the original text and strive to restore its profound connotations in the target language. Overly cumbersome or lengthy expressions may weaken the inspiring and profound nature of the original text. Gentzler believes that "the intermediary role of translators has gone beyond cross-cultural synchronic semantic transformation and authors have also played a diachronic intermediary role in many historical traditions" (Gentzler, 1993). Translators should pay attention to maintaining the rhythm and language characteristics of the original work, making the translation not

only conform to the spirit of Tao culture but also provide readers with profound insights.

4.3. Case Study

In this study, we will analyze the Chinese version and English version of the official tourism website of Mount Lao, using the "Touring Mount Lao" section as an example. Specifically, we will focus on the analysis of the classic route titled "Taiqing - Seeking Truth and Enlightenment, Cultural Journey."

Example

1: 明霞洞: 由巨石叠加而成。是金山派的开山祖庭。丘处机、郝太古、孙不二、张三丰、孙玄清都在此修炼过。

Website Version: Mingxia Cave: A cave built of boulders. It is the founding place of the Jinshan Sect. Masters such as Qiu Chuji, Hao Taigu, Sun Bu-er, Zhang Sanfeng and Sun Xuanqing studied here.

This paragraph introduces a scenic spot called "Mingxia Cave" on the "Taiqing Palace" tourism route in Mount Lao. The English translation reflects the surface meaning of the Chinese introduction, but there are also some issues. Firstly, "built of" only means "constructed from," and does not convey the idea of "stacked." Additionally, translating "修炼" as "studied" changes the original meaning in Chinese and diminishes the religious connotations of Mount Lao as the birthplace of Taoism. In cross-cultural communication, "direct translation can sometimes create difficulties in understanding for the target language audience due to cultural differences, so it is necessary to use expressions that are similar in meaning and have their own cultural context to naturalize the source text in the target language" (Xia, 2013). Therefore, a naturalization method should be used in translation, and the "transparent, fluent, and invisible translation style" should be adopted to minimize the foreignness of the target language (Munday, Jeremy, 2010). In this context, it would be more appropriate to translate "修炼" as "practice."

Example

2: 龙潭瀑由八条溪流汇成八水河, 河水从高悬崖陡壁奔腾而下, 形成了瀑布。崖高水急, 瀑布冲出峭壁外, 在空中飞舞, 像一条白龙从云中腾起, 泄入潭中, 故名为“龙潭瀑”。

Website Version: Longtan Waterfall: Eight streams converge into the Bashui River (eight waters) that rushes down from high cliffs and steep walls, forming a waterfall. The cliff is high and the river flows fast, so, the waterfall rushes out of the cliff and flies in the air and, like a white dragon rising from the clouds, crushes into the pool, giving itself the name "Longtan Waterfall".

This translation adopts the method of semantic translation, which translates the original text according to its meaning, ensuring accuracy and fluency. The semantic translation strategy emphasizes faithfulness to the source text, trying to retain its semantic and syntactic structures, but ignores the purpose and effect of translation. This results in loose structure and cumbersome expression in the translated text, failing to convey the visual sense described in the original text. Furthermore, this passage employs many metaphorical images. There are many similar metaphorical concepts between different cultures, because humans share similar physiological mechanisms and thinking patterns. The interaction between humans and nature generates similar

experiences. However, due to the uneven development of history, culture, customs, economy, and technology among different ethnic groups, there are differences in thinking. This also gives rise to some vocabulary existing in specific cultures, reflecting the inequality between two language symbols and two cultures. This inequality manifests as a mismatch in the semantic values between the source words and target words, partial equivalence, or the lack of corresponding relationships with equivalent things. This is not only the "untranslatable" problem that has always been concerned in the field of translation, but also a significant challenge that is difficult to avoid in bilingual dictionary definitions (Li, 2002:150).

Example

3: 元代道士邱处机居此, 留有题刻, 其中《青玉案》词一阙、七绝诗10首最为著名。宫内主殿供奉玉皇大帝, 称为“玉皇殿”。宫前半里许有邱处机衣冠冢, 旧名邱祖坟。

Website Version: In the Yuan Dynasty, Taoist priest Qiu Chuji lived here and left his inscriptions. Among them, his one Song poetry and 10 four-line poems are the most famous. The main hall in the palace is dedicated to the Jade Emperor, which is called the Jade Emperor's Hall. About 250 meters in front of the palace, lay Qiu's cenotaph, formerly known as the Qiu's ancestral grave.

In terms of vocabulary, "《青玉案》词一阙" is translated as "one Song poetry" using omission translation method, without translating "青玉案". This is non-essential information and whether it is translated or not has little impact on the reading comprehension of the target language readers. In this sentence, the translator needs to understand some cultural usages, such as "一阙词" and "七绝诗". "一阙词" refers to a type of poem. The translation renders "七绝诗" as "four-line poems" using addition translation method, providing a simple explanation for quatrains. Quatrains are a unique form of traditional Chinese poetry consisting of four lines, with seven characters per line (Pan, 2011).

Moreover, the translation of "供奉" as "dedicate" is not very accurate. According to Collins Dictionary, the verb "dedicate" means "to give a lot of time and effort to something because it is important" and "to mention someone's name as a way of showing affection or respect when dedicating a book, play, or piece of music". Clearly, using "dedicate" in this context is inappropriate. For "半里" (half a li) and "旧名" (formerly known as), the communicative translation method is employed to express them according to the conventions of the target language readers. Since one li is equivalent to 500 meters and half a li is 250 meters, there is rarely an expression like "half of 500 meters" in English, so it can be directly translated as "250 meters". Similarly, "旧名" (formerly known as) has a similar concept, where English often uses passive voice while Chinese often uses active voice. It cannot be directly translated as "its older name", but "formerly known as" is more appropriate.

Example

4: 崂山风景区旅游价值最高的宗教建筑三官殿、三清殿、三皇殿, 生灵神奇的古树汉柏、唐榆、绛雪, 仙道传奇中崂山道士穿墙的影壁、踏雪无痕的逢仙桥、蒲松龄著书亭等等均荟萃于此。游客慕名而来, 寻古访幽、寻真悟道, 文脉源远流长、历史弥盛。

Website Version: It has the most valuable religious buildings in Laoshan Scenic Spot including the Sanguan Hall, Sanqing Hall and Sanhuang Hall as well as ancient and

magical trees such as Han cypress, Tang elm and Jiangxue. There are also the walls through which Taoist priests has been crossing in the legends, the Fengxian Bridge priests has been crossing without traces and the study Pu Songling wrote his master piece. Tourists come to visit this ancient and secluded place seeking truth and enlightenment and in turn enriched its history.

The preferred translation method for tourist attraction names often combines transliteration and semantic translation. For example, "三官殿" is translated as "Sanguan Hall," "三清殿" is translated as "Sanqing Hall," and "三皇殿" is translated as "Sanhang Hall." This also applies to the translation of ancient tree names such as "汉柏" (Han Cypress), "唐榆" (Tang Elm), and "绛雪" (Crimson Snow). By employing this approach, the translated text ensures that readers do not misunderstand and helps them understand and develop an interest in the attractions. Such translations, which incorporate annotations based on transliteration or literal translation, are often referred to as "Chinese English" in the translation field. Native English speakers may not initially understand the meaning of these terms, but with the provided explanations, they can easily comprehend them (Ge, 1980).

5. Conclusion

The translation of Taoist culture involves not only the literal meaning but also the transmission of cultural connotations. It involves an understanding of communication and interpretation in different cultural contexts, requiring translators to grasp the background and symbolic meaning of Taoist culture and convey it accurately to readers. In the translation process, historical factors and cultural clashes must be taken into consideration to restore the historical context as much as possible. Tourism promotional translation has its unique characteristics. Translators need to understand the cultural differences between China and the West, consult relevant materials, master knowledge of Chinese traditional culture, and match appropriate words better. The meaning of words can only be reflected in the cultural context in which they exist. Foreign tourists are more interested in experiencing different cultures and customs during their trips. Therefore, translators should add specific cultural backgrounds into the translation process to reduce language barriers and help foreign readers better understand China's long history.

Secondly, communication translation strategies should be employed to enhance the readability and attractiveness of the translated text. As technology advances and China's influence on the international stage expands, more and more foreign tourists choose to travel to China. Website construction is essential for these tourists. The English version of tourism attraction websites should not only be a simple direct translation. In the translation process, translators should consider cultural factors more, making the foreign language website a business card of our external publicity efforts.

Annotation

① The entire Chinese text quoted and analyzed in this article is taken from the official website of Laoshan Scenic Area in Chinese version: [https://qdlaoshan.cn/New-Jing-info-](https://qdlaoshan.cn/New-Jing-info-jid-494.html)

[jid-494.html](https://qdlaoshan.cn/New-English-jinfo-jid-616.html).

② The entire English text quoted and analyzed in this article is taken from the official website of Laoshan Scenic Area in English version: <https://qdlaoshan.cn/New-English-jinfo-jid-616.html>.

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