

# Application of Functionalist Theory to the C-E Translation of Dalian Tourism Texts

Limei Yang<sup>1,a,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>English department/Dalian Neusoft University of Information, Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

<sup>a</sup>yanglimei@neusoft.edu.cn

\*correspondence author

**Keywords:** Functionalist Translation Theory, Tourism Texts, Intended Function, Translation Method and Strategy

**Abstract:** With the development of international tourism in China and the globalization around the whole world, China is expected to receive an increasing number of tourists from home and abroad. Therefore, C-E tourism translation has become increasingly important. Therefore, properly translated tourism texts are not only the way to advertise China, but also a good channel to attract more tourists to come to China. It is important that people attach great importance to translation of tourism texts. In this thesis, the author tries to analyze the translation of Dalian tourism texts from the perspective of functionalist translation theory. In order to find out the problems existing in translation of tourism texts, the author takes Dalian tourism texts as the example. After analyzing the problems, the author puts forward several feasible methods and strategies for translation of tourism texts. Finally, the author draws a conclusion that the functionalist translation theory can guide the translation of tourism texts and make it more comprehensible and acceptable to tourists.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism has become an important industry which has brought considerable benefit to all countries. Tourism has a great impact on the growth of economy in every country. With the development of international tourism, the translation of tourism texts has become critically significant. Every country has its own unique landscapes and human resorts and so does China. In recent years, China has attracted more and more foreign tourists to travel to different cities of China, Dalian, as a seaside city, is one of the most important tourism cities. Amongst Dalian's top tourist attractions, the city's coastline and beaches are the most attractive to the visitors. All of these tourist attractions and famous events attracted a lot of visitors from different cultures to come to visit Dalian. There is no doubt that translation of tourism texts is of great importance. However, there are a lot of problems existing in C-E translation which has confused the foreign visitors and failed to make them understand the history and culture of Dalian. Therefore it is in urgent need that some efforts should be made to improve the translation of C-E tourism materials.

Today, the translation of Chinese tourism texts has drawn a lot of scholars' attention. Most of them presented their ideas with theory-based rules and specific examples. Some of them even put forward some feasible instructions. However, some of the ideas can not fully satisfy the requirements of tourism texts translation. So in order to make the translation of tourism texts more adequate and acceptable to the foreign visitors, functionalist approach is employed in this essay.

## 2. The Research and Roles of Functionalist Translation Theory

### 2.1. Research and Application of Functionalist Theory

Functionalist translation theory was introduced into China in 1990s. Many Chinese scholars have done many researches in this field.

Su Liqin<sup>[1]</sup> wrote an article entitled "*Functionalist Theory Applied to the Translation of Tourism Texts*" in 2001 in which she made a systematic introduction to German School of Functionalist

Translation Theory. In the following years, Su began to do some researches on the basis of the theory and applied it to translation successfully.

Another important scholar is Wei Fang<sup>[2]</sup> who published one article in 2018. She clearly explained what skopos theory is from her viewpoint.

Functionalist translation theory aroused a lot of scholars' interest in studying its application. Chen Xiaowei<sup>[3]</sup> once points out that "the concept has provide a theoretical basis for some translation practice used to be considered against the existing criterion of translation methods, such as abridgment and adaptation in her article "*Reflection and Certain Methods of Translation Based on the Functional Concept of Translation*".

Chinese scholars applied the functionalist theory to a lot of fields, such as the translation of tourism texts. In terms of TT, some scholars have done a lot of researches. For example, Zhang Chunbai once pointed out that the purpose of Tourism texts is to introduce a different culture to the target readers and the transference of culture is of great importance. Jin Huikang advised the translators of tourism texts to translate texts from intercultural perspective. One the basis of Peter Newmark' s<sup>[4]</sup> theory, Su Liqin argued that the translators can adopt the procedures such as supplement, explanation, analogy, deletion and restructure so as to achieve the functional equivalence in tourist translation.

All the above examples show that the research is of great help for the translation of tourism texts.

## **2.2. The Roles of Functionalist Translation Theory**

Functionalist theory provides a systematic translation framework for the translation. It plays a crucial role in the translation of all fields.

Functionalist translation theory emphasizes the importance of communicative function. It mentions that the target text should be taken into account when translating. Culture is another aspect that the translator should put emphasis on. Functionalist provides a theoretical basis for how to overcome the cultural barriers and how to render the target text flexibly. Therefore, the translation from mere linguistic view can't not meet the requirements the translation of tourism texts in some situations. Moreover, the functionalist translation theory is function-oriented. It advocates that the translated texts should serve the role of intended function in the target culture which prevents a pure imitation of the source text.

## **3. Functionalist Translation Theory's Application into Dalian Tourism Texts' Translation**

### **3.1. Translation Theory and Tourism Texts' Translation**

German functionalist translation theory regards translation as an intentional interaction and communicative acting, the intention and communicative functions of the target text are mentioned in the theory. What's more, German functionalist translation theory also considers translating as intercultural actions. German functionalist translation theory encourages translators to overcome cultural differences to fulfill intercultural functions.

Different tourism texts may be translated on different basis of theories in order to reach different goals. It is commonly known that tourism texts serve the purpose of introducing tourism resources and attracting foreign visitors to visit China. Thus the reader's expectation and response play dominant roles in evaluating the translation's effect.

This thesis approaches the assessment of C-E translation of tourism texts from a functionalist perspective. As a matter of fact, we can easily find the criteria for assessing the translation in Reiss's books named "The Potentials and Limitations" which was published in 1971. This book is regarded as one of the two monographs ever devoted to translation quality assessment. Another book which contributes a lot to translation quality assessment is written by House named "*A Model of Translation Quality Assessment*" in 1977.

Next, the author will take Dalian tourism texts as examples to make a theoretical analysis of the criteria of translation. The problems in translating tourism texts and finally puts forward some practical translation methods for translating tourism texts.

### **3.2. C-E Translation Errors**

By analyzing the translation of some tourism texts, the author easily find some problems in translating. The problems may be caused by the translator's incompetence in language, the cultural barriers and the carelessness of people involved.

In general, the problems can be classified into three categories: linguistic errors, pragmatic errors and cultural errors.

#### **3.2.1. Pragmatic Translation Errors**

The pragmatic errors mean if the translators ignore the shift of the social and cultural situations, the transferring of pragmatic rules from his native language to the target language which leads to various pragmatic failures or errors during the inter-cultural communication.

Example:

大连具有三城五代的显著特征，成为中外朋友投资的理想宝地。

Original translation:

Dalian enjoys a reputation for "being three cities" and "five advantages". This city has become an ideal promising land for investors, domestic as well as international.

After reading the translation, the readers may ask what the three cities are and what the five advantages are. Due to differences between the two different cultures, literal translation of the Chinese system would make the target readers fail to understand the meaning of the source language and cannot fulfill the role of attracting investors.

Improved version:

With a reputation of being a famous city in terms of culture, tourism, industry and featuring superior characteristics in environment, resources, policy, service and benefit, this city has become an ideal promising land for investors, domestic and international.

#### **3.2.2. Cultural Translation Errors**

"Translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions". As this statement implies, translations are permanently faced with the process of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in a source text and of finding the most appropriate technique of successfully conveying these aspects in the target language.

It is commonly known that Chinese writers get used to making descriptions with luxurious words and rhetorical devices and abundant literary citations.

Example:

大连地区温泉资源丰富，瓦房店龙门汤有 500 多年的温泉洗浴历史。

Original translation:

Dalian is well known for its hot spring. WaFangdian's "Dragon door soup" has more than 500 years' history.

After reading this translation, foreign readers who lack of cultural background information of Chinese history must be puzzled and surprised at "Dragon door soup". They may have difficulties in relating hot spring with "dragon door soup". In order to make it easier for the foreign readers to understand, the author suggests that revised version should be:

Improved version:

Dalian is well known for its hot spring. Among which WaFangdian's "Longmen hot spring" has more than 500 years' history (Hot spring is called "tang" in Japan).

After the explanation, the foreign readers have a clear understanding of what "tang" is.

#### **3.2.3. Linguistic Errors**

Linguistic errors refer to the spelling mistakes, the subjective misuse, subject verb disagreement and so on. Linguistic errors are usually caused by the linguistic incompetence, because each text is not purely a linguistic phenomenon, but as it was said by Snell-Hornby<sup>[5]</sup> "must be seen in terms of communication function as a unit embedded in a given situation and as a part of a broader socio-culture background".

Example:

大连清南子弹库。

Original translation:

Qingnan Bullet Store.

By reading this translation, we may guess that there is a store where bullets are sold. The translation is so far from the original meaning. The prison originally means that there is a storehouse named Qingnan in Dalian where stores a lot of bullets.

Improved version:

Qingnan Bullet Storeroom (which was founded in Qing Dynasty)

#### 4. Conclusion

This thesis attempts to find proper translation methods for Dalian tourism texts within the framework of functionalist translation theory. Functionalist translation theory contributes a lot to the translation field.

Many scholars have done a lot of researches in translation field and they have put forward a lot of translation strategies and methods. Each theory has its own advantages and disadvantages, but not all the theories are applicable for tourist material's translation. Among them, functionalist translation theory can be applied to tourist material's translation. Since tourist material has three features which are being informative, being expressive and being persuasive, among the three features, being informative is the top one. Therefore, it is obvious that the fundamental purpose of tourist material is to provide exact information for the tourists both at home and abroad and to motivate them to visit the certain place. In order to fulfill the role of tourism texts, the author has to adopt appropriate translation strategies and methods.

#### References

- [1] Su Liqin, "Functionalism Theory Applied to the Translation of Tourism Texts", Shang Yao Journal.2001.
- [2] Wei Fang, "Study on the Applied Translation under Functionalism Skopos Theory", Proceedings of 2018 3rd International Social Sciences and Education Conference.2018.
- [3] Chen Xiaowei, "The enlightenment of Functionalism Theory", Chinese Translators Journal. 2010.
- [4] Newmark, "A text book of translation", Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press. 2001.
- [5] Snell, H, "An integrated approach", Translation studies. 1995.