

# A Translation Ethics Perspective Exploration of the C-E Translation of Jiangxi Scenic Spots

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**Abstract:** The English translation of Chinese scenic spots is an important way to promote Chinese culture. Poor translation will give foreigners bad impression of China, and consequently influences the development of inbound tourism. To the contrary, canonical translation of Chinese scenic spots reflects the degree of civilization in a region. Translation ethics is a key factor in regulating translator's behavior. This paper tries to discuss the principle of the translation of Chinese scenic sites from the five kinds of ethical pattern of Chesterman's translation ethics. The translator should stick to the translation ethics and provide complete and accurate translation. Then, foreign tourists can not only enjoy Chinese places of interest, but also appreciate the profound Chinese traditional culture.

## Introduction

Translation is a special means of information conversion from one language to another, which requires translators stick to professional ethics and deal with all kinds of relationships properly in the process of understanding the original text, converting text information and expressing the translation. As a social practice, translation is restricted by ethics, so many translators and translation theorists in China pay increasing attention to the ethical norms in translation. "Translation is a kind of subjective activity which is controlled by human consciousness for the realization of specified purpose and intention. It involves the relationship between the translator and the author, the reader, the reviewer, and the sponsor. Therefore, the translation activities are ethical."(Luo Xianfeng,2009). "In the process of translation, the translator is the subject of this complex activity. He is required to deal with the relationship between the ontology and the other, who thus should be guided and restricted by a series of ethical norms. The study of translation from the perspective of ethics is of great significance to translation practice and translation studies.

## Translation Ethics and Its Development

Antoine Berman, a French translation theorist and philosopher, first put forward the concept of "translation ethics" in 1980s and held that the study of translation ethics is an important perspective in translation studies. Anthony Pym, an early responder to Mr Behrman's call for a study of translation ethics, published an important book on the study of translation ethics in 1997, that is, *On Translators Ethics*, and clearly raised ethical principles of translators (Pym, 1997). In 2001, Chesterman, a scholar in Finland, put forward five kinds of ethical pattern of translation: ethics of representation、ethics of service、ethics of communication、norm—based ethics and ethics of commitment (Chesterman, 2001:139-154).

With the rise of the study of western translation ethics, Chinese translation circles have paid more and more attention to the study of translation ethics. Wu Huizhen and Zhou Wei(2012) summed up the current situation and development trend of domestic translation ethics research;

Chen Shunyi(2015), Chen Zhijie(2011) and other scholars introduced Chesterman's thought on translation ethics and put forward their own unique insights; Liu Yunhong (2014) analyzed the functionalism and pragmatism behind Pym's "translator ethics"; Bian Lihong (2010) described the connotation of the ethical relations in metaphorical translation and the law of translation in the categories of relation; Liu Jia (2015) adopted the perspective of narrative ethics to analyze the narrative construction and dissect the resultant translation ethics; Huang Dexian, Du Xiaojun (2010)

and other scholars analyzed the importance of translation ethics from the perspective of translation professionalization.

Nowadays, translation ethics has gradually become the focus of attention in the field of domestic translation circles, but it is still not a good combination between foreign translation ethics and China's national conditions.

### **Requirements and Problems of Scenic Spots Translation**

The translation of scenic spots is an important way to promote Chinese culture to foreign countries and the quality of translation will affect the development of inbound tourism. Therefore, translators should have a strong cross-cultural awareness, solid skills of translation and comprehensive knowledge of tourism. Meanwhile, the translation of scenic spots should highlight the characteristics of intercultural communication and deliver the profound cultural heritage of our country to foreign tourists. Foreign tourists is more than interested in the famous temples and exotic flowers and rare herbs, and they prefer Chinese thousands of years of cultural accumulation contained in various historical sites.

At present, the translation quality of scenic spots in China is uneven and various translation problems are common. Firstly, the Chinese scenic spots commentary contains rich information, but the amount of information before and after the English translation is quite different and it's peppered with errors and omission. Secondly, in the official website, many of the scenic spots are only introduced in Chinese, which seriously affects high quality tourism resources' external propaganda. Moreover, the names of many scenic spots have rich historical connotation, but in the process of translation, the use of transliteration or the literal meaning leads to the lost of the original historical allusions and passes false information. In addition, there is no uniform English translation of some tourist attractions, which leads to different translation of travel agencies and brings confusion to foreign tourists. Even in different places of the same scenic spots, the same attractions' name translation is not the same. That seems extremely imprecise. Of course, there are still many other issues that can't be ignored. For example, they don't pay attention to the differences between the two cultures, use imprecise words and so on. This series of problems will inevitably bring negative impact on the development of inbound tourism in China.

### **The Translation of Tourist Attractions in Jiangxi – Based on Chesterman's of Translation Ethics Models**

In some scholars' eyes, "The connotation of translation ethics is very rich and there are different characteristics in the different researchers' perspectives whose nationality, identity and philosophy of translation are various" (Liu Yunhong, 2014:48). In 2001, Chesterman put forward five kinds of ethical pattern of translation, that is , ethics of representation, ethics of service, ethics of communication, norm—based ethics and ethics of commitment. Here, based on Chesterman's five ethical models of translation, we'll discuss the translation of scenic spots in Jiangxi Province.

Based on Chesterman's Ethics of Representation, the translator should be faithful to the original text. Therefore, C-E translation of scenic spots should be as close as possible with Chinese materials to the content, style and effects. However, the phenomenon of random deletion to English translation of scenic spots materials is very serious. Such as, the English translation of the Flower Path (One of LuShan Mountain's important attractions) is as follows (<http://www.china-lushan.com/en/detail.php?act=scenic&id=2>) :

*It was commonly believed that flowers were withered under the mountain, while in full bloom at the top of the mountain on the contrary. You can enjoy all kinds of rare flowers and amazing Violin-like lake at the same time.*

However, its Chinese language content is very rich. It mentioned in the Tang Dynasty, poet Bai Juyi was demoted to Jiangzhou (Jiujiang), and in 816, he went sightseeing here. It was the late spring, and at the foot of the hill, peach blossom had faded, but here, it was still in blossom. Such a special phenomenon stimulated Bai Juyi's strong feeling, and he wrote the famous poem *Dalin*

*Temple Peach Blossoms*. In the Flower Diameter Pavilion, the two words “Flower Path” were engraved in a stone and words said that the two words were written by Bai Juyi. Based on such a special historical allusion, we got the present name--the Flower Path. So, we can see that the introduction of Chinese highlights the cultural heritage of the site. However, English translation has lost its rich cultural connotation and national characteristics.

Chesterman's Ethics of Service regards translation as a commercial behavior serving customers, so translators are required to provide excellent service to customers. In addition to translation standard, the translation of scenic spots should also highlight the characteristics, excavate the cultural heritage and publicize the eye-catching points. The first English sentence that introduces “the Flower Path” of Lu Shan Mountain is as follows:

*“It was commonly believed that flowers were withered under the mountain, while in full bloom at the top of the mountain on the contrary.”*

Seeing from the content, it should be the imitation to Bai Juyi’s following verses:

*“In Fourth Moon the fragrance of flowers leaves the mundane world,  
At this mountain temple the peach has barely begun to bloom.”*

But there is no such artistic conception and aesthetic feeling in the English introduction.

Chesterman's Ethics of Communication emphasizes communication and cooperation with others to achieve the purpose of cultural exchange. “Communication Overview”, an English column of Mount Sanqingshan, explains the geographical location and ways to arrive this scenic spot. Judged from the content, it should be “Arrival Strategy”, but not so –called “Communication Overview”. Otherwise, we failed to deliver real and efficient information to foreign tourists.

Chesterman's Norm –based Ethics requires that translation is to comply with the specific language and cultural norms of the target language and can be accepted by their country and society. In different columns of the official website (<http://www.china-lushan.com/en/index.php>) of Lushan Mountain, the name of this scenic spot are translated into “Lushan”, “Lushan mountain”, and “Mountain Lu” casually. In the official website, the name of such a famous scenic spot should have three different versions of English translation, so there is indeed a lack of norms.

From the moral and spiritual aspects, Chesterman's Ethics of Commitment mainly emphasizes the translator's professional ethics (Chen Shunyi,2015:111).In the official website (<http://sqs.sqs.gov.cn/>) of Mount Sanqingshan, Jiangxi, “National 5A Class Scenic Spot” is translated into “National Tourist Attraction”, and “5A” is deleted at will, so how can the foreign tourists realize it’s a 5A level scenic spot? It is thus clear that translation of scenic spots should be standardized.

## Conclusion

Translation ethics is one of the most important factors to restrict the translator's behavior, and the translation of scenic spots should not only transmit the tourism information, but also transfer the history and culture related to the scenic spots to the target audience. This requires that translators adhere to the ethics of translation, and provide the foreign tourists complete and accurate translation materials. Only by this way, can foreign tourists enjoy Chinese places of interest, and meanwhile, appreciate the profound Chinese traditional culture.

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