

Research on Translation of Luling Cultural Tourism under Skopos Theory

Risheng Chen, Jingjing Wu

School of Foreign Languages, Guilin University of Technology, Guilin, Guangxi, 541000, China

Abstract: Originating from Jiangxi, the Lu-Ling culture stands as a treasure among the diverse folk cultures in China. The burgeoning global outreach of Lu-Ling cultural tourism poses the challenge of effectively conveying culturally distinctive site descriptions to target language readers. This paper commences by presenting an overview of Lu-Ling culture and its related cultural tourism, furnishing readers with a comprehensive understanding of this cultural. Subsequently, it expounds upon the content of functionalist Skopos theory, laying the groundwork for subsequent investigations. Lastly, rooted in site description texts, it delves into the translation strategies for Lu-Ling cultural tourism within the framework of functionalist Skopos theory. This research not only facilitates deeper comprehension of Lu-Ling culture domestically and internationally but also furnishes practical guidance for promoting the translation dissemination of cultural tourism, thereby fostering cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Skopos Theory; Lu-Ling Culture; Tourism.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

With the development of economic globalization and cultural integration, there has been a significant collision of economic and cultural forces between China and other nations. The establishment of multinational corporations and the increasing cross-border trade have led to a rise in the mobility of foreign populations and a noticeable influx of international tourists into China. Concurrently, China has actively strengthened the construction of ecological civilization, comprehensively promoting the harmonious coexistence of humans and nature to achieve Chinese-style modernization. This not only improved the environment but also enhanced the global recognition of Chinese tourism, attracting a considerable number of foreign visitors.

Travel, as a means of relaxation during leisure time, not only brings joy but also satisfies people's curiosity to explore the unknown world. However, the tourism industry is highly susceptible to external factors such as economic and political climates, and natural disasters. (Zhang, 2023) In recent years, the tourism sector has faced downward pressure both domestically and internationally due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in sluggish economic growth. After the pandemic, with substantial support from the government and the implementation of visa-free policies for many countries, people's willingness to travel has surged, leading to the booming development of China's tourism industry. The influx of international tourists has increased the demand for tourism translation. At the same time, we have identified some urgent pain points in the process of translating tourism English: the current methods of tourism English translation are immature, such as failing to consider the reader's perspective and translations being too simple or complex; insufficient professional translators with rich knowledge of tourism; (Hu, 2019) and a lack of related system supervision and unified standards to ensure the competence of translators and the quality of translations.

As people's sense of happiness elevates, there's a

continuous elevation in their pursuit of spiritual aspects and standards, imbuing travel with new contemporary connotations. People are no longer content with mere sightseeing. Instead, they seek travel experiences filled with local characteristics, historical charm, and cultural heritage. (Tu, 2022) Therefore, translating tourism texts that carry the unique cultural features of China is a challenging aspect of translation work. Translators need to be familiar with their own local culture and act as cultural ambassadors in cross-cultural communication, conveying culture in elegant sentences that are both culturally rich and easy to understand.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Exploring the best strategies and techniques applicable to tourism text translation to enhance translation quality and efficiency is of great importance for the development of both the tourism industry and the translation field. Tourism translation is a crucial link in the external dissemination of our national culture and a crucial part of improving the quality of the tourism industry. As a pillar and happiness industry of our nation, tourism plays an indispensable role in national economic development and the well-being of the people. (Tian, 2023) Supporting the high-quality development of tourism is conducive to accelerating the construction of a new development pattern, reinforcing national cultural confidence, aiding rural revitalization, and achieving common prosperity.

Jiangxi Province enjoys a favorable geographical location and is rich in tourism resources, with many national scenic areas. However, Jiangxi has traditionally had a low profile in China, with some people even unaware that Nanchang is its capital, and the surrounding areas of the province is humorously referred to by netizens as the "Economic Belt around Jiangxi". Ji'an City in Jiangxi is the site of the Jinggangshan revolution and the birthplace of Luling culture. Due to a lack of promotion, it has not gained significant recognition within the domestic tourism industry and struggles to attract international tourists. This situation arises from the inadequate development of Jiangxi's tourism resources and a complete industry chain is yet to be formed. Despite its wealth of tourism resources, Jiangxi has not fully

utilized them, particularly in terms of cultural resources, which lack depth in exploration and development. (Tu, 2022) Therefore, effective translation of Luling culture and related tourism texts is imperative. This not only aids in the deep exploration of its cultural connotations and enhances the domestic recognition of Luling cultural tourism, adding vitality to Chinese cultural tourism but also facilitates its global expansion, providing foreign tourists with more diverse choices.

2. Overview of Luling Culture and Luling Cultural Tourism

2.1. Lu-Ling Culture and Its Core Ideology

Luling, the ancient name for what is now Ji'an City in Jiangxi Province, also known as Jizhou, is a region with an advantageous geographical position, thriving culture, and a long history, which has nurtured generations of renowned scholars and nobles. Due to its unique advantages, ancient Luling was hailed as the "esteemed prefecture in Jiangnan (regions south of the Yangtze River)." (Huang, 2022) The emergence of Luling culture was neither a coincidence nor an overnight occurrence. It has undergone historical trials and tribulations, thus acquiring its unique characteristics and profoundly influencing the region's future development. Luling culture originated from the ancient Luling Prefecture, which can be considered the cultural embodiment of what is now referred to as Luling culture. (Long, 1995) Luling culture encompasses a wide variety of elements, including but not limited to humanities, academies, bronze, ceramics, Buddhism, and Taoism. (Lv, 2001) Notable examples, the renowned Jizhou Kiln, the religiously significant Wugong Mountain, and the picturesque Diaoyuan Ancient Village all bear witness to the transmission and development of Luling culture. The core philosophy of Luling culture is to "pursue excellence and uphold integrity."

"Pursue excellence" means not being satisfied with the status quo but striving to excel in various fields. Luling people's pursuit of excellence over hundreds of years can be summarized in three aspects. First, personal excellence: Luling scholars understood the importance of diligent study and harbored aspirations for the governance and well-being of the nation, leading to a prevailing scholarly atmosphere. From the Tang to the Qing dynasties, Luling produced nearly three thousand imperial scholars, ranking it among the nation's top. Second, literary excellence: With a tradition of literacy, Luling residents not only achieved official ranks but also left behind many literary works. Third, product excellence: The Jizhou Kiln, established during the Tang Dynasty and reaching its zenith in the Southern Song, became a nationally renowned center for porcelain production, with its exquisite products widely acclaimed and exported.

"Uphold integrity" refers to maintaining noble character and virtue. The principles of Luling's people in their interactions with others reflect the imprint of Confucian thought. Prioritizing the interests of the nation and its people over personal gains, their thoughts and actions influence those around them, gradually shaping the inherent character of the people of Luling. The people of Luling place particular emphasis on integrity, manifested in three specific aspects. Firstly, the defense of national integrity is evident in their deep patriotic sentiments, as illustrated by the famous saying, "Rather die standing than live kneeling." In times of national crisis, when the country and its people face imminent peril,

they are always willing to stand up and sacrifice their lives for the nation and its people. Figures such as Ouyang Xiu and Wen Tianxiang from Luling serve as exemplary defenders of national integrity. Secondly, they uphold unyielding righteousness, known for their resilience and a sense of justice encapsulated in the saying, "Prefer to be shattered like jade than intact like tiles." This righteous disposition has given rise to numerous national heroes who, in defense of justice, dared to confront evil forces, even at the cost of sacrificing their precious lives. Thirdly, the cultivation of valuable character virtues is emphasized. In the developmental trajectory of Luling culture, it has also drawn upon the achievements of other excellent ideological cultures. The teachings regarding the cultivation of personal character from Confucianism were absorbed and integrated into Luling culture, gradually becoming their distinctive understanding and evolving into the noble virtues guiding their official duties and interpersonal relationships.

2.2. Manifestations of Luling Culture

Luling culture exhibits itself through five distinct forms: a broad vision, a reverence for education, emphasis on familial teachings, Unity and cooperation, and dedication to the country and the people.

A broad vision is the core of Luling culture's manifestations. The broad vision of the people of Luling is mainly demonstrated in several aspects: First, they harbor grand ambitions and strive for official ranks and honors. The motto "He who excels in learning can be an official" encourages them to strive for excellence. Aside from personal effort, a favorable academic atmosphere is key to their success. Hence, the region has historically produced numerous talents, with individuals from Luling consistently holding prominent positions in the imperial court. Historical achievements, as expressed in the verse "Three thousand jinshi (imperial scholars) crown China," highlight the outstanding performance of Luling in imperial examinations. Second, they have a broad literary perspective, producing works that align with societal and historical developments, helping them excel in imperial examinations. Third, they possess an expansive vision for wealth, seeking benefits beyond their local confines, making ancient Luling a land of prosperity.

Valuing education emphasizes Luling culture's focus on learning and enlightenment. Studying is a prevalent practice in Luling, enhancing people's quality and making it possible for individuals from humble backgrounds to rise in status.

Family education plays a crucial role in one's development, not only imparting knowledge but also cultivating morals, personality, and social behavior. Luling people have a unique understanding of family teaching, with exemplary family traditions and teachings passed down through generations, adding to the culture's richness.

Unity and cooperation refer to the harmonious and supportive community spirit among Luling people. They work together with one heart, forming a powerful force for regional development.

Dedication to the country and the people reflects the selfless qualities of Luling's ancestors. They were deeply concerned about the nation and its people, with generations of loyalists sacrificing themselves for the country, aiming to better serve the people and the state.

2.3. Luling Cultural Tourism

Ji'an, as the cradle of Luling culture, boasts not only

abundant but also diverse tourism resources. Luling cultural tourism primarily features "red" (revolutionary), "green" (natural), and "ancient" resources. (Tu, 2022) Major sites include Jinggangshan, the cradle of the Chinese revolution; Yusi Mountain, known for flourishing Taoist culture; Qingyuan Mountain, rich in Buddhist culture; the picturesque Wugong Mountain; and Bailu Zhou, known for its lush grasslands. Additionally, there are cultural and historical sites like Lujiashou Ancient Village, Jizhou Kiln Site, Xingan Shang Dynasty Bronze Museum, Diaoyuan Ancient Village, Xiyang Palace, Ouyang Xiu Memorial Hall, Longtan Pond, Wen Tianxiang Memorial Hall, Meibei Ancient Village, the Wu tomb relics of the Three Kingdoms, Huangyangjie, Tang Lake and others, showcasing the distinctive cultural features of Luling.

3. Overview of Functionalist Skopos Theory

3.1. Theoretical Background

In the 20th century, linguistic schools of translation were extremely popular. Many translation theorists integrated translation theory deeply with semantics and syntactic functions, exploring translation issues from the perspective of language usage skills. They believed that the goal of translation is to create a target text equivalent in meaning to the source text, and endeavored to articulate how equivalence in meaning could be achieved through vocabulary and grammar. For instance, Roman Jakobson's semiotic translation theory in the mid-20th century, Eugene Nida's dynamic equivalence theory in the 1960s, and Catford's theory of translation equivalence and shift in the 1960s.

As time moved into the 1970s, the functionalist school of translation theory emerged in Germany. Unlike other theories, it emphasizes the importance of the translator's purpose. Combining with behaviorist theories and cross-cultural communication theories, it opened new pathways for the research and development of translation theory. Katharina Reiss, a well-known German translation theorist, took this opportunity to systematically articulate the ideas of functionalist theory in her works. Influenced by Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer conducted extensive research in linguistics and translation and first proposed the Skopos theory in his works. (Li, 2023) Later, Vermeer and Reiss co-authored "Foundations for a General Theory of Translation" in 1984, detailing three principles of the Skopos theory.

3.2. Theoretical Content

Vermeer's Skopos theory emphasizes translation as a communicative act aimed at fulfilling specific communicative needs. This theory highlights the purposiveness, strategic nature, and situational dependency of translation activities. Vermeer argued that translation is not merely the mechanical conversion of words from the source language to the target language but a purposeful action tailored to specific goals and influenced by particular situations and requirements. He emphasized the concept of "functional equivalence," meaning the aim of translation is to convey a communication function similar to that of the source text in a specific communicative situation, rather than mechanically replacing words or structures. In Vermeer's Skopos theory, the role of the translator is crucial. They must make translation decisions based on the specific communicative situation and requirements to achieve the best

functional equivalence. This theory underscores the flexibility and adaptability of translation activities, viewing translation as a dynamic communicative act that should flexibly utilize language and cultural knowledge according to different situations and purposes.

Vermeer's Skopos theory is based on three principles: the Skopos principle (or purpose principle), the coherence principle, and the fidelity principle. (Katharina Reiss & Hans J. Vermeer, 2014) The Skopos rule emphasizes that the primary goal of translation is to achieve a specific communicative purpose or function. The quality of a translation depends not just on a faithful transfer of the source text but on ensuring that the translation achieves the intended effect in a particular communicative situation. The purpose of a translation depends on factors such as the commissioner's intent, the target audience, and the usage environment. Translators need to consider these factors to decide how to translate and adjust the translation to achieve the best communicative effect. The coherence rule states that translations need to maintain internal coherence and consistency. The translation should be coherent in language and logic so that readers can understand and accept it. Additionally, the translation should conform to specific stylistic and cultural requirements to ensure fluency in the given context, including consistency in grammar, style, and cultural conventions. The fidelity rule focuses on the fidelity of the translation to the original text. Although Vermeer's Skopos theory does not emphasize word-for-word equivalence, it still stresses that the translation should respect the original text's meaning. Translators need to understand the original text's intent and context and strive to convey the core meaning while maintaining the natural fluency of the target language. These three principles together form the core framework of Vermeer's Skopos theory, emphasizing the purposiveness, coherence, and respect and understanding of the original text in translation activities.

4. Translation Strategies for Lu-Ling Cultural Tourism under Functionalist Skopos Theory

4.1. Translation of Attraction Names

The translation of attraction names is crucial for international tourists. Incorrect or obscure translations can cause confusion or even unnecessary misunderstanding. Under the guidance of functionalist Skopos theory, following the "purpose principle," the aim of translating attraction names is to ensure tourists understand and receive accurate information. In the texts introducing Luling cultural tourism, there are numerous attraction names. Here, only ten are listed for analysis: 宰相府、致用阁、醉翁亭、天王殿、大雄宝殿、七祖塔、待日桥、五指峰、双马石、荆竹。

These names can be divided into two parts: specific names and category names. For example, "宰相" in "宰相府," "醉翁" in "醉翁亭" and "荆竹" in "荆竹山" are specific names, while "府," "亭," and "山" are category names distinguishing the type of attraction. When translating names combining specific and category names, it's appropriate to use free translation, transliteration plus free translation, or a combination of transliteration and free translation, generally avoiding full transliteration. For example, translating "宰相府" as Zaixiangfu wouldn't convey its meaning or category to tourists, not meeting the "purpose principle."

Among the listed attractions, "宰相府" is translated as "Prime Minister Mansion," "醉翁亭" as "Old Tippler's Pavilion," "天王殿" as "King Hall," "大雄宝殿" as "Mahavira Hall," employing the method of free translation. "致用阁" is translated as "Zhi Yong Court," "七组塔" as "Qizu Tower," "待日桥" as "Dairi Bridge," "双马石" as "Shuang Ma Stone," "荆竹山" as "Jing Zhu Mountain," using the method of transliteration plus free translation. "五指峰" is translated as "Wu Zhi Peak (Shaped as five fingers)," using the method of combining transliteration with free translation. Through the translation of these attraction names, we can find that the translation methods though varied, all achieve the goal of cross-cultural communication and information conveyance, aligning with the "purpose principle" of functionalist Skopos theory.

4.2. Translation of Attraction Introductions

Due to differences in language habits and ways of thinking, there are clear distinctions between Chinese and Western language characteristics. Chinese emphasizes parataxis, where the logical relationships between sentences are conveyed through context. Additionally, Chinese is rich in expressions, requiring a deeper understanding to grasp the inherent meanings. In contrast, English focuses on hypotaxis, using conjunctions to show logical relationships between sentences. English is straightforward and often places important information and intended emotions at the beginning of sentences. For example, the Chinese sentence "你没能来参加聚会, 真遗憾!" translates to "It's a pity that you didn't come to the party!" in English, where the emotional expression "真遗憾" is placed at the beginning to fit English language conventions. Therefore, in tourism translation, it's essential to consider cultural differences between English and Chinese, skillfully integrating cultural and scenic features into the translation (Zuo, 2021), and enhancing accuracy and readability under the guidance of Skopos theory. Below are some examples from Luling cultural attraction texts and an analysis of translation strategies under the three principles of Skopos theory.

4.2.1. Literal Translation

Example 1: 此殿为二层楼阁, 红柱黄瓦, 挑角飞檐; 底层中央为文天祥塑像。

Translation: It is a two-story building with red bars, yellow tiles, prick corners and overhanging eaves, and with Wen Tianxiang's statue standing in the central part of the first floor.

Analysis: In this sentence, the challenge lies in translating the four-character phrases "红柱黄瓦, 挑角飞檐." The translation breaks these phrases into four parts and finds corresponding English expressions, fully presenting the content described in the original, embodying the "fidelity principle" of functionalist Skopos theory.

Example 2: 三国东吴古墓遗址坐落在吉水县郊的三碗斋, 是1991年8月京九铁路施工中发现的。考古专家们称为"江南第一墓"。

Translation: The Three Kingdoms Wu tomb relics, located in the three bowl of Jishui County, is found in the Construction of the Beijing Kowloon Railway in August of 1991. Archaeological experts called as the "first tomb in Jiang Nan".

Analysis: Here, the translation of "三碗斋" is inappropriate. "三碗斋" is actually the name of a small ridge, and translating it directly as "three bowl" might cause the readers'

misunderstanding. Similarly, "江南第一墓" translated as "first tomb in Jiang Nan" might confuse readers unfamiliar with "Jiang Nan" about its ranking in China. These translations fail to accurately convey the intended information and should be cautioned against in tourism text translations.

4.2.2. Free Translation

Example 3: 仰观五瀑, 潭潭无俗水, 瀑瀑似神女, 随景畅想曲, 千姿心中意。

Translation: When you look up the Five Ponds, the clear water and the fairy waterfalls will make you think freely and you will feel happy from your heart.

Analysis: The original sentence is well-formed and beautifully expressed. The translation, aiming for clarity and ease of understanding, simplifies the message. In the former part of the sentence, "无俗水" actually expresses the clarity of the water, and "似神女" describes the spectacular beauty of the waterfalls. The latter part expresses the emotions elicited by the scene. Through free translation, the translation succinctly represents the original message, aligning with the "purpose principle" of functionalist Skopos theory.

Example 4: 进门后, 一对方石柱上刻有一副对联: "亮节失青春, 叹离莺苦唱, 别鹤凄吟, 五夜枪神深渗澹"、"恩伦褒丹陛, 忆弋雁失群, 丸熊课读, 卅年回首尚辛酸"

Translation: Entering the door, we can see a couplet inscribed in a pair of stone pillars. It reads that "In order to keep her virtue, my mother sacrifice her golden time in her life to educate me despite of the loneliness after my father's death. When recalling my mother's efforts to give me a good education, I still feel very sad".

Analysis: The challenge here is translating the ancient text. The translator must decide whether to translate faithfully to the original or to convey the meaning only. A faithful translation provides more information but can easily lead to obscure translations. Hence, a free translation is evidently a better choice here, more in line with the "purpose principle."

4.2.3. Amplification Method

Example 5: 右侧是泷冈书院, 左侧是欧阳文忠公祠, 以及《泷冈阡表》碑亭。

Translation: On the right is the Longgang Study. On the left are a temple for remembering Ouyang Xiu and a pavilion preserving "Long Gang Qian Biao" (a funeral oration written by Ouyang Xiu to remember his dead parents).

Analysis: In this sentence, "泷冈阡表" lacks a direct English equivalent and a fixed translation, hence the translator chooses transliteration followed by an explanatory addition. This achieves communicative purposes, adhering to the "purpose principle" of functionalist Skopos theory.

Example 6: 主要建筑物有青原山祖关、大庙、七祖塔、待日桥、钓台石、五笑亭等, 以大庙最为壮观, 正门上镌刻文天祥手书"青原山"三字。

Translation: The main buildings including a stele which was craved two Chinese characters "Zu Guan", Da Miao Temple, Qizu Tower, Dairi Bridge, Diaotai Stone, Wu Xiaoting Pavilion and so on. Among them, Da Miao Temple is the most magnificent. There are three Chinese characters "Qing Yuan Shan" caved in the main door, which were written by Wen Tianxiang who was a famous litterateur in Nan Song Dynasty.

Analysis: The translation excels by adding two critical pieces of information. First, it explains "Zu Guan" as "a stele which was craved two Chinese characters 'Zu Guan'",

helping readers understand its architectural type. Secondly, it adds information about Wen Tianxiang, sparking reader interest and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

4.2.4. Omission Method

Example 7: 宋淳祐元年 (1241年), 吉州太守江万里在此创办白鹭洲书院, 集吉州八邑俊秀攻读其间。

Translation: In 1241, Bailu Zhou College was founded by the mayor of Ji'an Jiang Wanli, absorbing talents to study here.

Analysis: "淳祐" is the reign title of Emperor Lizong of Song in the Southern Song period. Due to cultural differences and distinct histories, foreign visitors might struggle to understand its meaning, so the translation retains the specific year without translating "宋淳祐元年." Additionally, the translation omits the mention of "吉州八邑," reducing unnecessary information to avoid complexity and redundancy, aligning with the "coherence principle" of functionalist Skopos theory.

5. Conclusion

Jiangxi Province, the cradle of the Chinese revolution, boasts a prime location and rich tourism resources but lags economically compared to surrounding areas. Currently, tourism holds a significant position in China's national economy, creating many jobs and significantly contributing to the development of less industrialized regions. Ji'an, with its Luling culture, should seize opportunities and turn cultural advantages into development opportunities. This paper has analyzed and interpreted translation strategies for Luling cultural tourism texts under the guidance of Skopos theory, aiming to help foreign friends understand Luling culture and promote its international development.

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