

A Survey of Readers' Responses toward Mistakes in Chinese-English Tourism Translation and Its Implications

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Abstract

In this paper, the authors investigated and found that there were many mistakes in the current translated English tourism materials in China. Analysis of foreign tourists' responses toward different types of mistakes discovered in those materials, with the aim of offering tentative suggestions on how to improve the quality of tourism translation was conducted. To achieve this, the authors conducted a survey by interviewing 34 foreign tourists in Chongqing, China about their responses and attitude toward the mistakes in 21 translated English tickets and tourist maps (i.e. whether they think those mistakes are acceptable, misunderstanding or incomprehensible). Such errors include spelling mistakes, missing words, grammar mistakes, Chinglish, inappropriate words, expression mistakes, excessive wordiness, cultural misinterpretation etc. The results indicate that spelling mistakes, missing words, grammar mistakes, Chinglish and cultural misinterpretation are considered to be more serious as most interviewees (above 60%) feel they result in varying degrees of misunderstanding, or even lack of comprehension. As for the other two mistakes (inappropriate words and excessive wordiness), the interviewees hold a higher degrees of acceptance (20% and 50% respectively). Therefore, this paper proposes that translators in the field of tourism translation must persevere in improving their competence in terms of language levels and translation skills, while the government and local authorities should employ professional tourism translators with reasonable and satisfactory remuneration, and professional native English speakers are also needed to help proofread the translated texts. To conclude, this paper may serve as a reference for practitioners and researchers in the field of tourism to avoid translation mistakes and improve the quality of translation.

Keywords: mistakes, readers' response, tentative suggestions, tourism translation in China