

RELIGIOUS TERMS IN TOURIST TEXTS TRANSLATION: CROSS-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

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The **purpose** of the study is to indicate the translation strategies and techniques that could be opted for while translating religion-related tourist promotional texts so that the target audience would get interested in the tourist objects.

Methods. The analysis is based on the linguacultural approach which presupposes equal attention to linguistic presentation of the translation and its cross-cultural appropriateness. Specifically, we scrutinized the relevance of the equivalents on the textual level (lexical and grammatical correctness), the discourse level (conformity to the tourist discourse standards) and communicative level (maintenance of interactive relationship with the target audience). The method applied in the study is comparative analysis of the Ukrainian-English translation pairs.

The **results** of the study testify to the strong tendency of translation adaptation which seems reasonable while the promotion of the destination is on the agenda. The data show that translation of religion-bound units in tourism promotional materials is predominantly based on the domestication approach, such as cultural adaptation of the religious terms through neutralization, generalization, reduction/compression, etc., and adaptation with explanation, particularly when dealing with specific theological concepts or historical church personalities. The foreignization approach which is implemented in literal translation of some religious terms without explanation is aimed at emphasizing the cultural singularity of the tourist object.

Conclusions. Since the translation of religion-related tourist promotional texts is mostly expected to be target-recipient-oriented and transparent, it is cultural adaptation that should be opted for as the dominant strategy whereas the local strategy of preservation (literal or loan translation of religious terms) should be employed in a very sensitive and sensible manner after considering the extra-linguistic and linguistic factors, otherwise the overuse of literal translation will impede effective cross-cultural communication.

Key words: strategy, promotional text, source text, target recipient, religion.

РЕЛІГІЙНІ ТЕРМІНИ В ПЕРЕКЛАДІ ТУРИСТИЧНИХ ТЕКСТІВ: МІЖКУЛЬТУРНІ ВИМІРИ

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Мета роботи – визначити перекладацькі стратегії і техніки, якими доцільно послуговуватись під час перекладу туристичних промоційних текстів релігійного спрямування задля того, щоб викликати інтерес цільової аудиторії до туристичних об'єктів.

Методи. Лінгвокультурний підхід, на якому ґрунтується аналіз, передбачає рівноцінне урахування як мовного оформлення перекладу, так і його міжкультурної відповідності. Зокрема, досліджено релевантність еквівалентів на текстовому рівні (лексико-граматична коректність), дискурсивному рівні (відповідність стандартам туристичного дискурсу) та комунікативному рівні (підтримка інтерактивного зв'язку з цільовою аудиторією). У роботі застосовано порівняльний аналіз українсько-англійських пар перекладу.

Результати роботи засвідчують стійку тенденцію адаптації перекладу, що і є досить очікуваним у туристичному дискурсі. Отримані дані вказують, що переклад релігійно-специфічних одиниць у туристичних промоційних текстах загалом ґрунтується на одомашнювальному підході, зокрема культурній адаптації релігійних термінів шляхом нейтралізації, генералізації, редукції/компресії, тощо, а також адаптації з поясненням, якщо йдеться про специфічні теологічні поняття та історичні церковні особистості. Очужувальний підхід, який реалізується при буквальному перекладі окремих релігійних термінів без пояснення, спрямований на підкреслення культурної унікальності туристичного об'єкта.

Висновки. Оскільки переклад туристичних промоційних текстів релігійного спрямування має бути насамперед орієнтованим на цільового реципієнта та зрозумілим, слід послуговуватись саме культурною адаптацією як домінуючою перекладацькою стратегією, в той час як локальну стратегію збереження форми оригіналу (буквальний переклад чи калькування релігійних термінів) варто застосовувати з особливою обережністю, беручи до уваги усі лінгвістичні та екстралінгвістичні фактори, інакше надмірне використання літературного перекладу перешкоджатиме ефективній міжкультурній комунікації.

Ключові слова: стратегія, промоційний текст, вихідний текст, цільовий реципієнт, релігія.

1. Introduction

Translation as a tool of cross-cultural communication plays a significant role in mediating between nations and shaping new grounds of multicultural understanding and cooperation. From this perspective translation of tourist material could be seen as a powerful medium of cross-cultural information exchange as well as fostering international tourism worldwide.

Undoubtedly, the success of the current functioning and further development of tourism to a large extent depends on the quality of translation of tourist promotional materials which involves a wide range of cultural issues, from lexical items and syntactic structures to conceptual adjustment and culture-specific mode of thinking. Since cultural dimensions of tourist translation involve various components of culture, such as social customs and traditions, behavior patterns, values, religious beliefs, history, social structure, models of thinking and perceiving life, the ways of their adequate rendering should be examined thoroughly. To date there is a growing body of research books and papers examining cultural dimensions of translation (Alwazna, 2014; Feng, 2018; Glodjović, 2010; House, 2015; 2016; Ma & Song, 2011; Newmark, 1988; Nida & Taber, 1982; Sulaiman, 2014; Venuti, 1998; Wiersema, 2004; Xiao, 2018; Yan & Huang, 2014; Pamies, 2017; Jing Feng, 2018; Sabbagh, 2020 and others). However, the religious component of tourist translation has not yet been sufficiently explored. We believe that the successful outcome of cross-cultural communication in the field of international tourism calls for negotiation of various cultural differences, including the religion-related ones. Therefore, the present study is focused on the ways of handling the religious elements in translation of culture-sensitive tourist promotional texts.

The **purpose** of the research is to specify the strategies and techniques for translating religion-related tourist promotional texts so that the target reader would get interested in the tourist objects. The **tasks** are as follows: 1) to outline the functions of tourist promotional material translation; 2) to specify the challenges of religion-related tourist text translation 3) to point out the translation strategies and techniques that could be favored when dealing with the religion-related units in tourist translation.

Methods and sources

The material of the study is made of Ukrainian and English e-texts published on Volyn Icon Museum sites and the Ukrainian-English promotional book “Волинська ікона/Volyn Icons” (102 pages). The analysis is based on the linguacultural approach which presupposes equal attention to linguistic presentation of the translation and its cross-cultural appropriateness. Specifically, we scrutinize the relevance of the equivalents on the textual level (lexical and grammatical correctness), the discourse level (conformity to the tourist discourse standards) and communicative level (maintenance of interactive relationship with the target audience). The sentences containing religion-related units are highlighted and their translation is suggested and discussed. That makes it possible to identify the translation strategies and techniques that actually are and could be used in translation. The method applied in the study is comparative analysis of the Ukrainian-English translation pairs.

2. Tourism discourse translation

The discourse of tourism encompasses promotional texts (other terms are info-promotional texts, tourism-related texts, destination promotion texts, tourist texts, tourism-oriented materials) that are designed to describe, inform, or otherwise promote travel product through print or web-based media (O. Skibitska, 2015). The tourism discourse is viewed as a specialized type of discourse (N. Morgan & A. Pritchard, 2000; M. Gotti, 2006; M. G. Nigro, 2006; R. Mocini, 2005; 2010; L. Merkaj, 2013; M. Sulaiman, 2014) characterized by specific linguistic features and a high degree of pragmatic force which makes it similar to advertising. Consequently, it is primarily aimed at attracting potential visitors to the region and persuading them to buy the tourist products that are being promoted (Dann, 1996). The tourist promotional texts are referred to as pragmatic (Delisle, 1984: 22-25) or consumer-oriented. It seems evident that the sales of tourist products depend on their high-performance verbal presentation in English which calls for readable, transparent, comprehensible and persuasive translation. Specifically, it is expected to be adjusted to the English conversational norms and the target audience’s cultural background. (O. Skibitska, 2013). The authors claim that the purpose of tourist translation, in addition to communicating the source text message to the multicultural audience, is to establish a cooperative or interactive relationship with the target audience (Nord, 1997; Mirna Sabbagh, 2020; Valdeon, 2009; Ma & Song, 2011; Novriyanto Napu, 2016; Jing Feng, 2018) which can be achieved by negotiating the differences between the source and the target cultures.

3. The challenges of religion-related tourist material translation

The specificity of religion-related text translation, particularly into English, is constrained by the fuzzy image or too much generalized framing of the target recipient. In the age of globalization English, as lingua franca of international communication, is being equally used by native English speakers as well as by those who belong to different cultural communities, not necessarily to the British/Western-American culture. Furthermore, they are likely to profess different faiths, thus having different religious outlooks (Christians, Muslims, Judaists, Buddhists, Hinduists, Shintoists, etc.). Consequently, the new lingua franca status of English entails risks of losing its culture reference. It means that when translating into English translators are faced with the problem of cultural identification of the target recipient. This may be a serious challenge while dealing with culture-sensitive materials, including the tourist promotional texts containing religion-related elements. Translators have to take into consideration that such texts, besides the semantic content, also communicate the sacral information which may be implicitly conveyed, even if not explicitly expressed. “The subject matter of religious texts implies the existence of a spiritual world that is not fictive, but has its own external realities and truths” (Dickins, Hervey & and Higgins, 2016: 178).

Tourist texts promoting icon museums are abundant in cultural-religious information-bearing units, called culture-markers (Nord, 1997; Vermeer, 1996; Even-Zohar, 1998; Poyatos, 2002; Ganoshenko, 2015) whose contents can be recognized only by a certain group of readers. Though they may be opaque, the culture markers (or culturemes) constitute a shared knowledge, generating implicit allusions to customs, prejudices, religion, mythology, superstitions, historical facts, famous characters (real or fictional), agriculture, hunting, fishing, livestock, trade, folk medicine, colors, fine arts, literature, songs, gastronomy, clothing, artistic creations, games, sports, etc. (Pamies, 2017).

The terms with religious reference are the language units that convey an implicit religious worldview embedded in their meaning and thus having an extra-linguistic symbolic function. They include important theological categories, such as the notions of the Trinity, the Mystery of the Incarnation of God, the Immaculate Conception, the Eucharist, the Holy Communion, etc., which the multicultural recipients of disparate religious background may be unfamiliar with. Additionally, some religion-related terms are dependent on the local culture (for example, *свячений хліб, преподобний, Стрітення, Великдень, Медовий/Яблучний Спас, Івана Купала, громовиця, крашанка, писанка, паска, поминальні дні, щедрівка, коливо, Маковій, Покрова, вертеп*, etc.) and pertain to the national customs and traditions. Because of the linguistic and cultural asymmetry these units have no direct counterparts in the target language and culture, and therefore it is crucial for translators to maintain culture-sensitive quality standards of their work.

4. Results and Discussion

J. Catford (1996), P. Newmark (1988) and A. Cruse (2000) suggest a set of strategies and techniques to be employed when dealing with culture-bound items, such as the strategies of domestication or foreignization, oblique or direct translation, etc., and the techniques of transference, neutralization, generalization, cultural/functional/descriptive equivalents, loan translation, modulation, recognized translation, implicitation, explicitation, compensation, componential analysis, paraphrase, etc.

Translating the icon museum tourist material calls for the balanced application of the techniques mentioned above. For example, “Образ Христа набув невластивого давньому українському мистецтву суворого, навіть грізного виразу. Ці особливості ікони виявляються також у різкому контрасті висвітлених та затемнених партій **лику** і одягу. Зокрема привертає увагу рідкісне для українського **малярства** співставлення темно-вишневого з рожевим висвітленням **хітону** й зеленого **гіматію**, яке виводиться від давніх традицій монументального малярства. – *Its stern, rigorous appearance, unusual for that period of Ukrainian art, emanates from the simplified forms – particularly **the face** of Christ, with its sharp contrasts of light and dark – and the juxtaposition of the dark-red, pink-highlighted **chiton** and the green **himation**.*

The adopted translation strategy is cultural adaptation that results in re-contextualization of the Ukrainian fragment. This approach seems to be justified for a promotional text as it enables to avoid culture-specific details that might overload the resulted translation and, thus impede its understanding by the multicultural target recipient. The Ukrainian term *лик* often used in the religious discourse to refer to the elated or solemn style is neutralized in the translation by employing the word *face*. The religious terms *хітон* and *гіматію* meaning the parts of church attire are translated literally as *chiton* (a long woolen tunic worn in ancient Greece) and *himation* (an outer garment worn by the ancient Greeks over the left shoulder and under the right). These options do help to preserve the source text culture-religious flavor in the translation; however, they may be unknown to the non-Christian target readership. Therefore, the translation neutralization technique of *хітон* as *tunic* and *гіматію* as *outer garment* could also be a possible solution.

Specifically, the names of the biblical characters are translated using cultural equivalents (*свѣта Варвара – Saint Barbara; свѣтий Хома – Saint Thomas; апостол Варфоломій – Apostol Bartholomew; апостол Матвій – Apostle Mathew*). The name *Свѣтий Юрій* is either translated as *Saint George* or transliterated as *Yuriy* in order to engage the target recipient into the source culture context. However, sometimes explication following the translated name is needed to provide

the cultural context, for example, *святий Онуфрій* – **Venerable Onuphrius**, *one of the Desert Fathers who lived as a hermit in the desert of Upper Egypt in the 4th or 5th centuries*.

The names of the Ukrainian icons are sooner to be explicated since literal translation may not be sufficient for the target recipient to figure out the difference between the holy images as the objects of the comparative class. For example, *Богородиця Одигітрія* – **Virgin Hodegetria**, *an iconographic depiction of Virgin Mary holding the Child Jesus at her side while pointing to him as the source of salvation for humankind*.

The Ukrainian icons' names are handled through neutralization, generalization or reduction. For example, *Христос Вседержитель* – **Christ the Almighty**, rather than *Christ the Pantocrator*, which is used as a specific term of Eastern Orthodoxy and is largely unknown even to most Protestants, not to mention the representatives of non-Christian beliefs; *Позн'яття з пристоаячими* – **Crucifixion**, while the religious marker *пристоаячі* is omitted in translation in order to avoid intercultural constraints, thus the icon name is reduced to the recognizable term.

The Ukrainian religious terms may require descriptive translation as the theological concepts behind them are unfamiliar to the representatives of non-Christian religious traditions, for example, *Преображення* – **Transfiguration**, *the occasion upon which Jesus was transfigured, his face and clothes becoming dazzlingly bright*.

The Ukrainian terms denoting the church rituals or biblical scenes are to be either neutralized or shortly explicated since literal translation or using Greek orthodox terms may result in producing a tourist target text that needs too much cognitive effort on the part of the multicultural reader. For example, *моління* is handled through the words **supplication** or **prayer** rather than **deesis** which is used specifically in the Eastern Orthodox religious discourse. The religion-related word *Євхаристія* is translated into English as **Eucharist** followed by the explanation of the term such as *the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a rite in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed in symbolic union with Christ*. In translation of the Ukrainian unit *Свята Варвара з життям* the word *життя* (life) indicating the solemn church style is rendered by employing neutralization technique **Saint Barbara with scenes from her life** which results in intercultural adaptation.

It is noteworthy that the same religious term may be used in different meanings, such as relating to religious feasts, or deeds, or scenes, or names of churches, etc. This necessitates a thorough analysis of the situational context that should result in a relevant translation option. For example, *Зішестя Святого Духа* in reference to the religious feast is translated as **Pentecost**; when it occurs in the context to denote a biblical scene the term **Descent** (*the Descent of the Holy Spirit*) is used. Both terms are likely to be familiar to the multicultural audience. The term *Покрова Богородиці* is translated as **Saint Mary the Protectress** (the name of the icon), or **the Holy Protectress** (the name of the church), or **the Intercession of the Holy Virgin** (the religious feast).

The results of the analysis demonstrate a high degree of cultural adaptation in the religion-related promotional materials translation. As W. Koller claims, ad-hoc cases of adaptation have to be regarded as text-producing elements in the translation process; they may be appropriate, or even inevitable, in order to make the translation reach its audience, i.e. from the point of view of pragmatic equivalence (Koller, 1992: 235).

The cases of literal translation of religion-related units may speak to the translator's intention to provide the transmitted text with some cultural aura and appeal to the potential other-culture-oriented visitors who particularly seek for new cultural experience. Obviously, in order to ensure the functional identification of the target text the two strategies, namely those of adaptation and reproduction, can possibly work out as complementary rather than mutually exclusive. However, concerning the cultural aspects of tourist e-text translation O. Skibitska (2013) claims that the pragmatic and communicative purpose of web promotional texts prevails over the semantic and cultural requirements and this prevalence should be preserved in the process of transformation into the target text. Specifically,

the Internet target readers usually scan the text more superficially than traditional text readers, they easily switch pages, and leave the complex and difficult to read texts behind while surfing the Web.

Summing up the abovementioned claims, we can suggest that in order to meet the discursive and communicative standards of tourist translation the alternative compensational strategies should be proactively applied throughout the texts while taking into account the imagined target recipient's cultural context.

5. Conclusions

Translation of tourist promotional texts with religion-related elements should be regarded as bicultural or multicultural practice which calls for translating mediators trained to choose the appropriate strategy to be adopted in the translation process. The results of the study testify to the strong tendency of translation adaptation (neutralization, generalization, compression, discursive creation, etc.) which is likely to be the mainstream of the tourist religion-bound translation. Besides, transference of the source text religious elements through transcription, transliteration, literal translation may add some "exotic taste" to the target texts and serve as attention-getters appealing to initiated readers. This implies the possibility of a sound combination of strategies in translating culture-specific tourist material since it helps to remove the cultural barriers and encourages cross-cultural interaction and cooperation.

Further research is needed to explore more instances of religious dimensions of translation of the city guides that promote temples, churches, cathedrals, religious holidays, festivals, etc. in order to work out an integrated culture-acceptable approach to tourist translation.

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