

A study on ecological translation of tourism texts from the perspective of relevance theory— English translation of major tourist attractions in Huizhou

Yejie Luo, Yimei Zhang, Dong Su, Ying Lu*

Huizhou University, Huizhou, China

*Corresponding Author. Email: 20202137@hzu.edu.cn

Abstract. Drawing on an integrated perspective combining Relevance Theory with Eco-Translatology, this study examines English translations of texts on major tourist attractions in Huizhou. It investigates three core issues: the multidimensional features of different types of tourism texts; how optimal relevance is achieved in the translated versions; and the implications of these findings for translation practices in China's international tourism publicity. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research builds a specialized corpus through fieldwork, conducts quantitative linguistic analysis using Python and other technical tools, and complements these findings with qualitative textual analysis. The results confirm that effective translations achieve optimal relevance for target readers by means of adaptive transformation across three dimensions. The study provides both theoretical support and practical guidance for improving the quality of tourism translation and enhancing the international communication of Chinese culture.

Keywords: tourism translation, relevance theory, eco-translatology

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of promoting the global dissemination of Chinese culture, tourism texts have become essential vehicles for cultural communication and exchange. As a key component in advancing the sustainable development of the tourism industry, the translation of tourism texts plays an increasingly prominent role in enhancing the communicative power and global influence of Chinese culture. As a highly practical and functional genre, tourism promotional texts are characterized by strong applicability, interdisciplinarity, and distinct cross-cultural features [1]. The quality of English translations of tourist attractions not only reflects a city's level of openness and achievements in cultural exchange, but also serves as an important indicator of its cultural soft power. The Cultural and Tourism Development Plan for the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area [2] explicitly proposes building a culturally influential and leisure-oriented bay area. Situated on the eastern coast of the Greater Bay Area, Huizhou is a historic city famed for its mountains, rivers, lakes, and islands. The renowned poet Su Dongpo, who lived in Huizhou for three years, left behind remarkable literary achievements and enduring local traditions. A core challenge in translating Huizhou's tourism texts lies in ensuring clarity for international readers while preserving the city's distinctive historical and cultural identity.

Relevance Theory in translation [3] views translation as an interlingual communicative activity in which achieving optimal relevance is the ultimate goal. Relevance depends on the balance between processing effort and contextual effects. Therefore, translators must infer the author's intended meaning and enable target readers to attain maximum contextual effects with minimal processing effort, thus achieving optimal relevance. Research on Relevance Theory in China began with Lin Kenan's 1994 article, which sparked a wave of studies on relevance-based translation [4]. Both domestic and international scholarship has applied Relevance Theory across various domains to guide translation practice, with increasing attention to pragmatic and functional genres [5]. Given its emphasis on the communicative function of texts, Relevance Theory aligns closely with the purpose of tourism translation. However, its theoretical framework is often considered too broad and overly focused on communicative intention, making it insufficient for explaining cultural implicatures—thereby tending to favor domestication strategies [4]. Since tourism materials inevitably involve culturally specific content, especially aspects unique to Chinese culture, translations should not simply cater to the target audience. Eco-Translatology and its theory of three-dimensional adaptive transformation effectively compensate for these cultural limitations. Hu Gengshen [6] proposed that its core principle is adaptive

selection, a translator-centered approach involving adaptation and selection at three dimensions: linguistic, cultural, and communicative. Empirical studies applying Eco-Translatology to tourism translation generally fall into the following categories: translation of public signs [7], English translations of scenic-spot texts [8], and analyses of strategies for cultural tourism publicity [9], all of which provide valuable guidance for translation practice.

Therefore, this study adopts a synthesized framework integrating Relevance Theory and Eco-Translatology. Taking the English translations of major tourist attractions in Huizhou as case studies, it employs a corpus-based methodology supported by digital tools to examine linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. By constructing a model that merges Eco-Translatology with Relevance Theory and combining quantitative and qualitative analyses of Chinese–English translation practices, the study aims to offer a fresh perspective for research and practice in tourism text translation.

2. Research design and methods

This study constructs a model that integrates Eco-Translatology with Relevance Theory from a synthesized perspective. The model comprises three steps: (1) the translator infers the author's original communicative intention; (2) the translator carries out the translation process, taking into account adaptations across three dimensions—linguistic, cultural, and communicative; and (3) the translator produces a target text for readers. Through these three steps the translator acts as a bridge, striving to achieve optimal relevance between author and reader by enabling target readers to obtain maximum contextual effects with minimal processing effort. The present study selects texts for major tourist attractions in Huizhou as its research objects and builds a dedicated corpus and database totaling 164,305 characters. The corpus composition is as follows: Dongpo Shrine (17,110 characters), Donghu Inn (15,324 characters), Huizhou West Lake (22,403 characters), Dongpo Memorial Hall (23,936 characters), Ting Ye Memorial Hall (17,289 characters), Huizhou City Museum (6,364 characters), Ge Hong Museum (5,223 characters), Dongjiang Column Memorial Hall (27,179 characters), Medicinal Herb Cultural Promenade (14,611 characters), Luofu Mountain (10,131 characters), and Nankun Mountain (4,735 characters).

According to tourism function, Huizhou tourism texts can be classified into three categories: historical-cultural sites, natural scenic sites, and comprehensive cultural sites. Based on Reiss's text-type theory, tourism texts can further be categorized as informative, expressive, or vocative (operational) texts. Informative texts convey factual information objectively to readers; expressive texts communicate viewpoints or emotions; vocative texts primarily aim to evoke emotion and call readers to action [10]. Although tourism materials generally serve a composite outward-facing promotional purpose—conveying site information, expressing sentiment, and attracting visitors—different tourism texts tend to emphasize different functions [11]. In this corpus, Huizhou City Museum, Ge Hong Museum, and the Medicinal Herb Cultural Promenade are primarily Informative texts focused on knowledge dissemination and public education. By contrast, humanistic and historical sites such as Dongpo Shrine, Dongpo Memorial Hall, and Donghu Inn not only convey information but also memorialize the past, express reverence for predecessors, and highlight Dongpo Su's cultural achievements, thus leaning toward expressive texts. Natural attractions such as Nankun Mountain, Huizhou West Lake, and Luofu Mountain are mainly vocative in function, aiming to entice visitors to view and experience the scenery.

This study aims to answer three core research questions systematically: First, what distinguishing features do informative, expressive, and vocative tourism texts exhibit across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions? Second, do translations of these text types achieve optimal relevance for target readers through adaptive transformations in the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions? Third, what concrete theoretical and practical implications do the study's conclusions hold for translation in tourism publicity? To comprehensively address these questions, the research adopts a mixed-methods design that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches. Fieldwork was conducted to collect original Chinese texts and their English renditions for Huizhou's principal tourist sites, forming the specialized corpus that underpins subsequent analyses. On this basis, technical tools such as Python were employed to perform quantitative statistical analyses of lexical and syntactic features. Complementing these quantitative measures, qualitative textual analysis was used to probe the cultural transmission and the realization of communicative intentions, thereby critically examining the translation strategies applied to different text types and evaluating their effectiveness within a Relevance Theory framework. In this way the study verifies the relationship between three-dimensional adaptive transformation and the achievement of optimal relevance.

3. Research findings and analysis

This section examines Huizhou tourism translations from the three major dimensions of Eco-Translatology—linguistic, cultural, and communicative—across different text types (informative, expressive, and vocative). Supported by quantitative data and qualitative analysis, it explores how these dimensions work together to achieve optimal relevance as defined in Relevance Theory.

3.1. Linguistic dimension

In Eco-Translatology, adaptation and selection at the linguistic level constitute the most direct and fundamental operations of the translator. Choices regarding vocabulary, syntax, and morphological structure directly determine the processing effort required of target readers. Data analysis shows that translators employed differentiated linguistic strategies for different text types. The following discussion analyzes lexical complexity and diversity, syntactic complexity and stylistic features, as well as statistical significance tests to reveal distinctions across the three text types.

3.1.1. Lexical complexity and diversity

Table 1. Lexical complexity and diversity

Text Type	Scenic Spot	Characters	Types	Tokens	Type/Token Ratio	Lexical Density	Content Words	Function Words
Informative	Huizhou Museum	6,364	517	1,372	0.377	0.605	791	581
	Ge Hong Museum	5,223	476	1,180	0.403	0.619	731	449
	Baicao Cultural Corridor	14,611	807	3,040	0.265	0.613	1,862	1,178
Appealing	Nankun Mountain	4,735	430	1,044	0.412	0.607	634	410
	Huizhou West Lake	22,403	1,381	4,827	0.286	0.629	3,035	1,792
	Luofu Mountain	10,131	821	2,195	0.374	0.601	1,319	876
	Dongpo Temple	17,110	1,003	3,829	0.262	0.618	2,368	1,461
	Donghu Hotel	15,324	867	3,310	0.262	0.576	1,905	1,405
Expressive	Ye Ting Memorial	17,289	1,085	3,676	0.295	0.605	2,225	1,451
	Dongpo Memorial	23,936	1,173	5,432	0.216	0.587	3,189	2,243
	Dongjiang Column Memorial	27,179	1,056	5,576	0.189	0.579	3,231	2,345

From the perspective of lexical complexity and diversity, all three types of texts maintain high lexical density, exceeding 0.57 (Table 1), reflecting a high information load and concise content. Translators generally forgo redundant literary embellishments, prioritizing the efficient transmission of practical information. Informative texts exhibit a moderately high Type-Token Ratio (TTR), indicating wide lexical variation and low repetition. High-density technical terms, such as Alchemy and Taoist, appear alongside frequently used complex function words. The moderate TTR maintains the cognitive breadth of the professional domain while avoiding excessive repetition of terminology, enabling readers to acquire rich domain-specific knowledge with a moderate processing effort. Appealing texts show relatively high TTR values. By employing densely packed concrete nouns and infrequently occurring simple function words, translators create fresh and vivid mental imagery for readers. This continuous contextual effect sustains reader interest; although it slightly increases cognitive processing effort, the immersive experience effectively motivates readers to explore and engage with the site. Expressive texts, in contrast, display relatively low TTR values, indicating higher lexical repetition and a more concentrated range of vocabulary. Translators use high-density emotional nouns and a moderate number of function words, such as heroic and brave, to reduce the cognitive load of processing unfamiliar information, thereby achieving strong emotional resonance and a highly effective contextual impact.

3.1.2. Syntactic complexity and stylistic features

Table 2. Syntactic complexity and stylistic features

Text Type	Attraction	Avg. Sentence Length	Passive Voice	Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Prepositions	Conjunctions	Pronouns	Articles
Informative	Huizhou Museum	40.353	2	452	141	171	27	160	73	2	160
	Ge Hong Museum	24.604	4	428	156	115	32	158	35	1	97
	Baicao Cultural Corridor	33.043	15	1,010	417	335	100	377	124	3	338
Appealing	Nankun Mountain	18.000	1	320	167	102	45	131	35	0	115
	Huizhou West Lake	20.987	17	1,663	687	557	128	599	178	3	361
	Luofu Mountain	19.775	2	758	256	241	64	251	88	1	169
	Dongpo Temple	24.234	28	1,318	529	408	113	498	121	6	299
Expressive	Donghu Hotel	29.035	23	1,054	364	418	69	438	139	8	376
	Ye Ting Memorial	23.119	25	1,219	509	419	78	429	134	1	358
	Dongpo Memorial	39.941	10	2,042	486	584	77	887	158	18	369
	Dongjiang Column Memorial	35.291	26	1,754	607	769	101	773	217	9	686

The data (Table 2) show clear distinctions in syntactic complexity across the three text types. Informative texts employ extremely long sentences—for example, 40.353 words per sentence in Huizhou Museum—combined with abundant prepositions and conjunctions to establish attributes, causal relationships, and other logical structures, while using passive voice where appropriate for objective description, thus deeply packaging the information. Although readers must invest relatively high cognitive effort to process these sentences, such structures ensure rigor and clarity in the knowledge system, avoiding semantic ambiguity and achieving a systematic, complete, and interconnected knowledge-context effect. Persuasive texts feature the shortest sentences (e.g., 18 words per sentence in Nankun Mountain), using simple syntactic structures dominated by active voice and with minimal conjunctions. Information is often presented in parallel structures, enabling tourists to access instant information while moving through the sites without complex inference. By minimizing processing effort, these texts maximize immediate relevance, stimulating interest and prompting action. Expressive texts have moderately long sentences, maintaining narrative coherence and historical weight while avoiding the overly academic and challenging style of Informative texts. Frequent passive constructions position historical figures or events as recipients of actions, directing reader attention to their experiences and destinies and thereby strengthening emotional resonance. These features aim to sustain readers' emotional immersion, reducing the affective distance from historical events and achieving strong emotional-context effects with moderate processing effort.

Lexical distribution directly reflects stylistic function. All three text types exhibit high noun frequency, but their functional emphasis varies. Informative texts use highly conceptualized and technical nouns. For instance, the word cloud of Ge Hong Museum contains specialized terms such as Alchemy, Taoist, Immortality, and Medicine, forming a structured semantic field of professional knowledge. Translators densely deploy nouns to construct a structured knowledge framework for readers, who must invest effort to understand these concepts, thereby achieving a clear, systematic cognitive-context effect and deep knowledge transmission. Persuasive texts rely on highly concrete and sensory nouns. In Nankun Mountain, words like Forest, Mountain, Waterfall, and Trail directly refer to perceivable physical entities, representing immediate sensory experiences. These nouns enable readers to quickly construct vivid mental imagery, achieving instant relevance for behavioral engagement with minimal inferential effort. Expressive texts' nouns serve character portrayal and value expression. At the Dongjiang Column Memorial Hall, the word cloud includes abstract nouns such as Hero, Sacrifice, Spirit, alongside proper nouns like Ye Ting and Dongjiang Column. Translators pair these nouns with strong adjectives (e.g., heroic sacrifice) to guide readers toward specific emotional responses, constructing an affective contextual effect.

Verbs and adjectives serve as the most salient markers of stylistic distinction. Informative texts use verbs and adjectives conservatively. Verbs mainly describe states or present factual information (e.g., showcase, demonstrate, is made of), while adjectives describe objective properties (e.g., historical, cultural). This strategy ensures objectivity and accuracy, concentrating reader processing effort on noun-based knowledge construction. Persuasive texts employ the most active verbs. Words such as

Hiking, Explore, Relax, and Enjoy call readers to action, creating a lively, dynamic textual atmosphere. Coupled with descriptive adjectives like Beautiful and Scenic, these verbs generate an enjoyable, participatory experience context, minimizing decision-making effort. Expressive texts exhibit the highest adjective frequency. At the Dongjiang Column Memorial Hall, there are 769 adjectives, including high-frequency terms such as Heroic, Brave, and Solemn, forming a strong emotional semantic field. Adjectives function as efficient emotional cues, allowing readers to perceive intense affective coloring with minimal cognitive effort. Verbs remain moderately active, driving the narrative of historical events and reinforcing emotional immersion.

Overall, Informative texts are noun-dominated, aiming to construct a knowledge framework, requiring the highest reader effort for deep understanding; persuasive texts are verb-dominated, aiming to prompt immediate action with minimal effort and immediate experiential payoff; expressive texts are adjective-dominated, focusing on emotional rendering, requiring moderate effort for affective resonance. Successful tourism translation is a reader-centered, creative process that precisely aligns linguistic strategies with communicative functions. Translators select content words according to the cognitive pathways of their target audience, shaping distinct stylistic features for each text type. By manipulating the linguistic dimension, translators serve broader communicative goals and reader expectations, achieving adaptive transfer from linguistic form to successful communication, in line with ecological translation principles.

3.1.3. Tests of statistical significance

Table 3. Statistical significance tests

	Informative			Appealing				Expressive			
	Huizhou Museum	Ge Hong Museum	Baicao Cultural Corridor	Nankun Mountain	West Lake (Huizhou)	Luofu Mountain	Dongpo Shrine	Donghu Inn	Ye Ting Memorial Hall	Dongpo Memorial Hall	Huizhou Museum
Chi-square	1,171.666	1,244.450	2,581.410	799.711	4,627.849	2,118.530	3,674.744	2,709.547	3,298.166	6,482.758	4,531.120
<i>p</i> -value	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The data (Table 3) show that the chi-square values for all sites are far above conventional significance thresholds. For example, within the informative category, the Ge Hong Museum reaches a chi-square value of 1,244.45; in the appealing category, Luofu Mountain reaches 2,118.53; and in the expressive category, the West Lake–Dongpo Memorial Hall pair reaches as high as 6,482.76. Such exceptionally large chi-square values indicate that the classification of Huizhou tourism texts into informative, appealing, and expressive types is not arbitrary. Rather, it reflects objective, systematic differences in their linguistic forms and is supported by solid linguistic evidence. The *p*-values for all samples are reported as “0” in the statistical output. This means that the probability of the observed differences arising from random variation or sampling error is effectively zero. In other words, the translator did not apply a uniform or random strategy across all text types; instead, the linguistic choices are intentional and systematically differentiated. For instance, informative texts display a markedly high density of nouns, appealing texts consistently contain more verbs and shorter sentence lengths, while expressive texts commonly feature abundant adjectives and a high frequency of passive constructions. These patterns are not accidental—they reflect deliberate, function-oriented decisions made by the translator.

The results therefore demonstrate that the informative, appealing, and expressive categories of tourism texts differ in essential and non-random ways in terms of their lexical distribution and other linguistic features. Translation activity, in this context, emerges as a highly conscious and strategically motivated process closely tied to text type. Ultimately, the translator seeks effective paths to achieving optimal relevance for target readers within diverse “translation ecologies,” taking into account text functions, audience expectations, and communicative goals.

3.2. Cultural dimension

In Ecological Translation Studies, the cultural dimension focuses on how translators negotiate the transmission and interpretation of culturally loaded elements, aiming to overcome communicative barriers caused by cultural differences. In tourism translation, the handling of culture-specific items is both the core challenge and the primary site of translational value. Based on Relevance Theory, this section examines how translators employ adaptive strategies at the cultural level to help target readers construct essential contextual assumptions, thereby generating adequate contextual effects and achieving optimal relevance in cross-cultural communication.

For informative texts, the treatment of cultural-specific items prioritizes accuracy and terminological professionalism. In key concepts—such as Alchemy and Taoist in the Ge Hong Museum—the translator adopts semantic translation strategies that

directly anchor the terms within the academic semantic field of English, facilitating conceptual categorization by target readers. Proper names such as Ge Hong and Luofu Mountain are transliterated to retain cultural identity markers. However, the translation of “娱江亭” and “松风亭” into Yanju Palace is erroneous. This mistranslation not only causes referential confusion but also provides misleading explicit cues, hindering the reader’s ability to construct appropriate mental representations. As a result, processing effort is wasted, contextual effects cannot be correctly produced, and optimal relevance fails to be achieved.

Example 1:

ST: 宋绍圣三年 (1096) 在白鹤峰筑居以作终老之所, 新居落成并入住三个月后, 苏东坡被再贬海南.

TT: In 1096 Su built a dwelling house in Baihe Mountain... however, in less than two months after he moved..., Su was further banished to Hainan.

The conversion of the Chinese reign title “绍圣三年” into the Gregorian year “1096” is an appropriate cultural adaptation that reduces the reader’s cognitive load. Nonetheless, the mistranslation of “三个月” as “less than two months” distorts a key piece of historical information. This cultural inaccuracy disrupts contextual effects and undermines relevance.

Expressive texts emphasize the transmission of social relationships and emotional values embedded in culture-specific items. For instance, “翟夫子” is translated as Scholar Zhai rather than a literal rendition of “夫子.” The term Scholar is a functional equivalent expressing erudition and respect familiar to English readers. This domestication strategy successfully recreates the intended social status in the target culture, enabling immediate comprehension with minimal processing effort while preserving the original attitudinal stance. By contrast, translating “义井” as righteous well results in cultural dilution. The Chinese term “义” carries rich connotations—community harmony, benevolence, and moral reciprocity—whereas “righteous” in English foregrounds justice but fails to convey the deeper layers of culturally specific meaning. Thus, contextual effects are weakened.

Example 2

ST: 取孔子: “诗三百, 一言以蔽之, 曰思无邪” 语而得名.

TT: It is named after Confucius’s words: “All the three hundred poems in The Book of Songs are, in a word, inclusive of nothing but pure thoughts.”

Here, the cultural dimension is handled with notable success. An explicit foreignizing strategy retains the imagery of “诗三百,” while explication—“*The Book of Songs*”—clarifies the cultural reference for target readers. The philosophical notion “思无邪” is rendered through a creative paraphrase (inclusive of nothing but pure thoughts), which preserves core ideas while maintaining accessibility.

Example 3

ST: 峰头白鹤已飞去, 山下长江日夜流.

TT: The white cranes at the mountain peak have disappeared, while the water of the Yangtze River continues to flow day and night.

The translator adopts a fully foreignizing strategy, retaining major Chinese cultural images such as “white cranes,” “mountain peak,” and “Yangtze River.” Although poetic rhythm is somewhat compromised, scenic imagery and cultural symbolism are effectively preserved, achieving strong relevance through vivid contextual effects.

Example 4

ST: 年丰米贱, 林婆之酒可赊.

TT: Rice is cheap in the bumper harvest year, but Linpo wine can be bought on credit.

Through amplification, the translation makes explicit the implicit contrast between harvest abundance and credit-based purchasing. This adaptation clarifies culturally embedded economic logic for English readers, enabling accurate contextual inference.

Appealing texts predominantly rely on universally accessible aesthetic vocabulary such as scenic, famous, and peaceful. Culture-specific elements are often generalized or reduced; this avoids imposing heavy cultural interpretive burdens on international tourists. By bypassing culturally dense background information, these translations appeal directly to shared human appreciation for natural beauty and leisure, generating pleasant contextual effects with minimal processing effort.

3.3. Communicative dimension

In Ecological Translation Studies, the communicative dimension is the ultimate level of adaptation, integrating linguistic and cultural choices to ensure that the translation fulfills its intended communicative purpose in the target culture. Drawing on Relevance Theory, this section analyzes how translations of the three types of tourism texts realize—or fail to realize—their communicative intentions.

The primary communicative intention of informative texts is to convey factual information in a precise and complete manner. Any omission, distortion, or ambiguity directly results in communicative failure.

Example 5

ST: 开放时间: 上午9点~下午18点 (东坡纪念馆外围园区晚上21点关闭)

TT: (omitted)

As public signage, the core communicative function of the message is to enable visitors to plan their trip according to the opening hours. The complete omission of this information prevents target readers from obtaining essential temporal instructions, thereby nullifying the communicative function. Foreign visitors lose the ability to perform the basic operation of itinerary planning, resulting in total communicative breakdown. Information such as “opening hours” is a non-negotiable component of informative texts and must be fully presented.

The success of expressive texts depends on whether the translation can accurately transmit the emotional tone, aesthetic value, and philosophical implications of the original, eliciting resonance from the target audience.

Example 6

ST: ...庶几玉局遗徽不至致漫无所考耳

TT: ...so maybe it's not impractical to research the owner's moral excellence.

The translator converts the obscure allusion “玉局遗徽” into the more accessible “the owner's moral excellence.” While this approach simplifies the cultural symbolism, it effectively conveys the central sentiment—an act of commemoration and moral admiration. Despite the cultural condensation, the communicative intention is successfully realized, enabling the target reader to grasp the emotional purpose with minimal processing effort.

In appealing texts, communicative intention typically aims at persuasion, suggestion, or behavior regulation. Translators need to choose forms that most efficiently achieve the desired behavioral effect within the target language and cultural norms. For instance, the Chinese expression “小草微微笑 请你绕一绕” is translated as Keep Off the Grass. While the source text is an indirect, personified request, the English version adopts a conventional direct imperative. The translator correctly identifies that the communicative intention is to regulate behavior, and thus selects the most effective target-language form that achieves this aim with minimal processing effort. By contrast, mistranslating “悬崖危险 注意安全” as The Current Is Swift. Please Do Not Swim fails to convey the actual threat, producing incorrect risk information. Such an error may result in dangerous consequences and constitutes a severe violation of communicative intention.

Example 7

ST: 酗酒闹事, 拾荒, 赌博, 斗殴, 卖艺, 乞讨, 野炊, 随意躺卧, 衣衫不整, 逗留过夜; 从事封建迷信和色情活动; 使用公共音响。

TT: Alcohol abuse, scavenging, gambling, fighting, performing arts, begging, picnicking, lying down at will, disheveled clothes, staying overnight; engaging in feudal superstition and pornography; using public audio.

Within the regulatory context of park rules, “卖艺” carries a mildly negative tone and signals prohibited behavior. Translating it as performing arts neutralizes this evaluative meaning and weakens the prohibitive force of the original. A more accurate rendering would be street performing, which restores the intended discouraging tone and aligns with the communicative purpose of behavior regulation.

Example 8

ST: 希望您及朋友获得愉快的参观体验。

TT: Thank u and wish u a great visit.

The source text expresses a formal and sincere goodwill. The use of informal texting language (“u”) significantly diminishes the sense of courtesy and professionalism in English, generating an unintended tone of casualness. A more appropriate version—We wish you and your friends a pleasant visit—maintains the formal, respectful register required to achieve the original communicative intention.

Overall, the translation practices in Huizhou's tourism texts demonstrate that linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions of adaptation operate in an interconnected and dynamic manner. Translators do not apply strategies in isolation; rather, they adjust them according to the functional distinctions among informative, expressive, and appealing texts. Across all three dimensions, the shared objective is to achieve optimal relevance for target readers, ensuring that processing effort is justified by adequate contextual effects and communicative intentions are successfully fulfilled.

4. Conclusion and reflection

Drawing on the collection and organization of texts from major tourist attractions in Huizhou, this study constructed a bilingual parallel corpus and applied Python-based text mining and data analysis to examine information-oriented, expressive, and appellative tourism texts from the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions. The study explored their salient features and the pathways through which optimal relevance can be achieved. The findings show that the three types of tourism texts display distinct characteristics across the three dimensions. Linguistically, information-oriented texts pursue accuracy and standardized terminology; expressive texts privilege linguistic forms with aesthetic value; and appellative texts emphasize accessibility and communicative effectiveness. Culturally, information-oriented texts require faithful transmission of culturally specific items; expressive texts focus on in-depth interpretation of cultural connotations; and appellative texts tend toward universalized cultural appeals. Communicatively, information-oriented texts hinge on complete and accurate information transfer; expressive texts seek to evoke emotional resonance; and appellative texts aim for effective behavioral guidance.

Successful translations achieve optimal relevance for target readers through adaptive transformation across all three dimensions. In information-oriented texts, accurate conversion of culture-specific items and the standardized use of technical terms help build a clear knowledge framework for readers. In expressive texts, creative reproduction of cultural imagery and effective transmission of aesthetic value allow for deep emotional resonance. In appellative texts, the universalization of cultural appeals and the accurate rendering of communicative intent ensure effective behavioral guidance. These adaptive choices all rest upon the cognitive environment of the target audience and aim to generate adequate contextual effects, thereby achieving genuine optimal relevance.

The conclusions of this study offer several implications for both the theory and practice of tourism translation for international communication. At the theoretical level, the findings confirm the applicability and explanatory power of Eco-Translatology's "three-dimensional" transformation theory in tourism translation studies, especially the overarching role of the communicative dimension as the ultimate criterion. The study also demonstrates the effectiveness of applying Relevance Theory's principle of optimal relevance to translation quality assessment, providing a fresh theoretical perspective and methodological support.

At the practical level, this study proposes the following recommendations. First, translators should develop clear awareness of text types and adopt targeted translation strategies accordingly. For information-oriented texts, accuracy and professionalism in conveying cultural information are essential; for expressive texts, the deep transmission of cultural meaning and the effective recreation of aesthetic value are crucial; for appellative texts, the primary focus should be on the precise realization of communicative intent and effective behavioral guidance. Second, relevant departments should strengthen the review of key information. As shown by cases of omission or mistranslation such as missing opening hours, establishing a professional terminology database and standardized proofreading procedures can help prevent such issues. Finally, translators should continually enhance their intercultural competence. A thorough understanding of source-culture connotations, combined with sensitivity to the target audience's cognitive environment and expectations, enables appropriate cultural mediation and genuinely effective cross-cultural communication.

Nonetheless, this study has certain limitations. The corpus sources are relatively limited, and future research could expand to more diverse types of tourism texts and broader cultural contexts. In addition, empirical research on audience reception would be a valuable direction, using questionnaires and interviews to directly assess how translations are perceived by target readers and further refine translation quality assessment systems. In sum, successful translation is the result of precise adaptation and informed choices across the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions within the translation ecology. Only when translators accurately grasp text-type characteristics and coordinate transformations across the three dimensions can optimal relevance be achieved, thereby effectively promoting the dissemination of Chinese culture and enhancing international communication.

Funding projects

Huizhou Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project: "An Eco-Translatological Study of Tourism Texts from the Perspective of Relevance Theory—A Case Study of English Translations of Major Tourist Attractions in Huizhou" (HZ2023GJ189);

Huizhou University 2024 Industry College Special Construction Project: Interpreting Course (Document No. Huiyuanfa [2024] 173);

Huizhou University 2023 Higher Education Teaching Reform Program for Young Teachers: "Course Ideology and Politics Practice in A Multi-Interactive Teaching Model for Practical Translation" (Document No. Huiyuanfa [2023] 158);

Huizhou University 2022 Higher Education Teaching Reform Project: "Exploring and Practicing Teaching Reform in Comprehensive English Based on the Concept of Course Ideology and Politics" (Document No. Huiyuanfa [2022] 163)

References

- [1] Zou, J. L. (2013). A review of tourism translation studies from 1998 to 2012: Based on the corpus of core humanities journals. *China Science & Technology Translators Journal*, 26(4), 48–51, 60.
- [2] Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China. (2020). National cultural and tourism development plan. https://zwgk.mct.gov.cn/zfxgkml/ghjh/202012/t20201230_920403.html
- [3] Gutt, E. A. (2001). Pragmatic aspects of translation: Some relevance theory observations. In L. Hickey (Ed.), *The pragmatics of translation*. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [4] Wang, J. G. (2005). A review and prospect of relevance translation theory studies. *Chinese Translators Journal*, (4), 21–26.
- [5] Li, Z. X. (2023). Advances in pragmatic translation studies at home and abroad (2011–2020). *Shanghai Journal of Translators*, 169(2), 8–13.
- [6] Hu, G. S. (2010). Eco-translatology: Background and foundation of its development. *Foreign Language Research*, 122(4), 62–67.

- [7] Xue, H. G. (2022). English translation of scenic-spot public signs from the perspective of eco-translatology. *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, 30(4), 97–100. <https://doi.org/10.16362/j.cnki.cn61-1457/h.2022.04.022>
- [8] Dai, G. Y., & Cai, Y. (2018). Ecological translation of tourism texts from the perspective of cognitive schema theory: A case study on the C-E translation of Guangzhou tourist attractions. *Journal of Xi'an International Studies University*, 26(4), 92–97, 107.
- [9] Hao, L. Y., & Yan, Y. L. (2023). A study on external publicity translation from the perspective of eco-translatology: A case study of the English translation of publicity materials for the 2022 Winter Olympics. *Journal of Hebei University of Science and Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*, 23(2), 65–72.
- [10] Zhou, H. (2017). Text typology and its implications for the English translation of tourism publicity materials. *Journal of Hubei University of Economics (Humanities and Social Sciences)*, 14(10), 95–97.
- [11] Tan, L. P., Liu, Y. L., & Li, X. J. (2013). English translation of Chinese tourism texts from the perspective of text typology. *Journal of Hebei United University (Social Science Edition)*, 13(5), 130–133.