

Research on English Translation Strategies for Haikou Promotional Documents in the Context of Hainan Free Trade Port

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the English translation strategies for Haikou promotional documents in the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port. By analyzing specific translation challenges, it provides a theoretical basis and practical guidance for enhancing translation quality. Utilizing literature review and comparative analysis, the research first outlines relevant translation theories while considering the linguistic characteristics of Haikou's promotional materials to propose corresponding translation strategies. the study encompasses precise vocabulary translation with an emphasis on terminology usage, flexible handling of grammar and sentence structures, and clear planning of article structure. the findings suggest that translation strategies should be adjusted based on the cultural backgrounds and cognitive habits of target readers to ensure effective information delivery. Additionally, developing a local terminology database will enhance the professionalism and accuracy of translations, thereby better achieving Haikou's promotional and cultural exchange objectives as a free trade port.

Keywords: Hainan Free Trade Port; Haikou Promotional Documents; English Translation; Translation Strategies; Technical Terminology

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The construction of the Hainan Free Trade Port is a significant national initiative focused on international and domestic development. Since its inception, Hainan has implemented various innovative measures in trade, investment, and

finance, attracting global attention. Haikou, as the provincial capital, is a central area of this initiative, playing a crucial role in external promotion and communication. A vast amount of promotional material from Haikou is directed at international audiences, covering fields such as economy, culture, and tourism. the quality of English translations of these documents significantly influences external perceptions of Haikou and the Hainan Free Trade Port. In the context of globalization, accurate and appropriate English translation serves as an essential bridge for Haikou to connect internationally, attract foreign investment and talent, and promote cultural exchange.

1.2 Research Significance

From a practical perspective, high-quality English translations of Haikou's promotional documents precisely convey the city's policy advantages, development opportunities, and urban appeal within the Free Trade Port framework, aiding in attracting international investment, tourism resources, and high-end talent, thus promoting economic development and international cooperation. Theoretically, there is a lack of research on translation strategies for promotional documents in the context of specific regions within Free Trade Ports. This study aims to enrich the application of translation theory in regional economic and cultural promotion, providing insights for similar translations in other regions.

1.3 Literature Review

Internationally, research on promotional document translation largely focuses on translation strategies from a cross-cultural communication perspective, emphasizing the impact of cultural differences and the effective transmission of culture through translation.

There is limited research specifically on Free Trade Port promotional document translations for particular regions. Domestically, as China's openness continues to deepen, studies on promotional document translation have increased, with some scholars focusing on strategies for translating tourism materials and government documents, highlighting language norms, cultural transmission, and audience reception. However, systematic research on translation strategies for Haikou's promotional documents within the Hainan Free Trade Port context remains inadequate, particularly regarding in-depth analysis that incorporates local characteristics and Free Trade Port policy backgrounds.

2. Policy Background Analysis of Hainan Free Trade Port

2.1 Policy Evolution of Hainan Free Trade Port

The policy development for Hainan Free Trade Port has undergone gradual exploration and evolution. Initially, Hainan established an economic zone, implementing a series of reform attempts in trade and investment, laying the groundwork for subsequent Free Trade Port development. As time progressed, national open policies regarding Hainan continually evolved, from constructing an international tourism island to advancing Free Trade Zone initiatives, ultimately officially proposing the establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port, thereby expanding the breadth and depth of policies. The Free Trade Port has introduced a series of groundbreaking policies promoting trade and investment liberalization and facilitating cross-border capital flows. For instance, the "zero tariff, low tax rate, and simplified tax system" policy exempts certain goods that meet specified criteria from import duties when entering the mainland, reflecting the national strategic positioning of Hainan's development and presenting unprecedented opportunities for Haikou.

2.2 Impact of the Free Trade Port on Economic Development

The establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Port has positively affected economic development in various ways. In trade, its policies have attracted numerous domestic and foreign enterprises, promoting rapid growth in

both goods and service trade. For example, Haikou has experienced significant increases in port throughput and trade volume in recent years. In terms of investment, relaxed investment regulations and a favorable business environment have drawn substantial capital across various sectors, including finance, technology, and tourism. Statistics show a year-on-year increase in newly established foreign enterprises in Haikou since the inception of the Free Trade Port, alongside expanding actual foreign capital utilization. Additionally, the Free Trade Port initiative has stimulated synergistic development in related industries, such as the deep integration of tourism and modern services, driving consumption upgrades and optimizing Haikou's economic structure.

3. Functions and Roles of Haikou's Promotional Documents

3.1 Types of Promotional Documents

Haikou's promotional documents are diverse. Content-wise, they encompass economic promotional materials, such as development plans and investment policies for industrial parks aimed at attracting domestic and foreign investment; cultural documents showcasing Haikou's historical and cultural heritage to foster cultural exchange; and tourism materials promoting local attractions and unique travel products to draw visitors. Form-wise, these include government-issued documents, brochures and advertisements produced by enterprises, as well as promotional articles and videos on online platforms. These varied types of documents work together to comprehensively present Haikou's image and advantages.

3.2 Role of Promotional Documents in Economic Development

Promotional documents play a vital role in Haikou's economic development. They serve as a key window for showcasing the city's strengths and development opportunities to the outside world. Through precise and engaging promotion, these documents enable the international community to better understand Haikou's industrial potential and investment advantages under the Free Trade Port policies, thereby attracting potential investors and partners. For instance, effectively translated

promotional materials for the Haikou Jiangdong New District exhibit its development plans and policy support, drawing numerous enterprises. Furthermore, high-quality cultural and tourism materials enhance Haikou's urban image and recognition, attracting more tourists and stimulating tourism consumption, thereby fostering the development of related services. A positive urban image also aids in attracting high-end talent, offering intellectual support for Haikou's economic growth.

4. Current Status of English Translation of Haikou Promotional Documents

4.1 Challenges in Current English Translation

The English translation of Haikou promotional documents faces several challenges. From a linguistic perspective, the accurate translation of technical terms is a significant hurdle. The construction of Hainan Free Trade Port involves numerous emerging fields and unique policies, generating a vast array of specialized vocabulary. Terms such as "offshore trade" and "bonded processing" not only require precise English equivalents but also consideration of subtle contextual differences. Inaccurate translations can distort information delivery and impede international audiences' comprehension of policies.

Cultural differences further complicate translation efforts. Haikou has a distinctive regional culture, including the traditional seafaring culture of fishermen in Qionghai and the Nanyang culture reflected in Haikou's historic Qilou Old Street, which contains many culturally specific terms and expressions. For instance, (Gongqi), a unique Hainanese folk ritual, lacks a direct English counterpart, and a literal translation could lead to misunderstandings about its cultural significance.

Additionally, there are notable differences between Chinese and English in sentence structure and expression habits. Chinese promotional documents often utilize long, complex sentences, while English favors concise and clear expressions. Accurately converting long Chinese sentences into grammatically correct English that adheres to cultural norms demands high linguistic proficiency and cross-cultural adaptability

from translators.

4.2 Current Use of Translation Strategies

Currently, some translation strategies have been applied in translating Haikou promotional documents, but there are still deficiencies. For common technical terms, translators can refer to authoritative materials for accurate translations. However, for culturally rich terms, the translation approach tends to be simplistic, often relying on literal translation without adequately considering cultural transfer and international audience comprehension.

In terms of grammar and sentence structure, while some translators recognize the need to adjust structures to align with English norms, issues of Chinglish still persist. For example, phrases like "under the principle of..." are often used, failing to comply fully with English grammar rules.

From a textual structure perspective, some translations do not adequately consider English readers' reading habits and information needs regarding titles, paragraph divisions, and information organization. Titles may be overly lengthy or unclear, and the logical connections between paragraphs may lack fluidity, adversely affecting the overall quality and dissemination of the translation.

5. Research on English Translation Strategies for Haikou Promotional Documents

5.1 Lexical, Syntactic and Sentence Structure, and Textual Level Improvement Strategies

From lexical level, Haikou's promotional content often involves specialized fields such as free trade port development, tropical agriculture, and ecological tourism. Precise translation of technical terms ensures professionalism and credibility. For example, to avoid ambiguous phrases like "Characteristic Chinese Free Trade Port," it should be translated as "China's Free Trade Port with Chinese Characteristics", maintaining both technical accuracy and semantic clarity. In addition, region-specific vocabulary should be properly converted. Terms unique to Haikou, such as Qilou Old Street,

accompanied by a note like “a historical street lined with arcade buildings typical of southern Chinese coastal cities” to aid understanding. Finally, culturally-loaded terms should be flexibly translated. Cultural expressions such as “offer prayers for blessings”, while “temple fair” with added background information to ensure cultural transmission beyond mere word-for-word translation.

From syntactic and sentence structure level, firstly, flexibly convert between active and passive voice to align with English stylistic preferences and improve clarity. While Chinese often uses impersonal or passive constructions for objectivity, English favors active voice. For instance, “In recent years, Haikou has significantly enhanced its urban image,” using active voice for a more direct and dynamic tone. Secondly, break and restructure long Chinese sentences. Chinese commonly uses long sentences connected by commas to express complex ideas, whereas English prefers clear and logically structured sentences. For example, “Haikou has been continuously optimizing its business environment. The city is advancing the construction of the free trade port and accelerating industrial upgrading.” This separation enhances clarity and readability. Lastly, correctly utilize English tense and voice. Appropriate tense and voice help convey the right time frame and level of objectivity. Achievements should be expressed in the past tense, such as: “In 2023, Haikou hosted over 50 international conferences.” In contrast, goals and ongoing efforts should use the present or future tense, e.g., “Haikou aims to become a key international hub.”

From textual level, Titles in English should avoid redundancy and literal translation. Instead, they should be succinct and focused. For example, “Advancing Core Area Development of the Free Trade Port,” preserving the core message in a reader-friendly format. Secondly, English writing emphasizes logical flow and clear

paragraph breaks. When restructuring Chinese texts, it is important to use transition words to guide the reader. For example, moving from background information to specific achievements may require connectors like “With this foundation,” or “As a result,” to ensure cohesion. Lastly, An effective English version should spotlight the main message rather than treating all content equally. For example, when promoting tourism, the text should first emphasize core attractions — “sunshine, beaches, and volcanic landscapes”-before elaborating on supplementary details. An introductory sentence might read: “Haikou’s tropical charm lies in its year-round sunshine, lush coconut groves, and unique volcanic coastlines.”

5.2 Functional Equivalence Translation Strategy

The functional equivalence translation strategy emphasizes the alignment of the translated text with the original in terms of linguistic function, information delivery, and reader response. Applying this strategy in translating Haikou promotional documents ensures the accurate transmission of information. For instance, in economic promotional documents, key information regarding policy provisions and investment returns must maintain semantic and functional alignment with the original text, enabling international investors to grasp the document's content accurately for informed decision-making. In cultural promotional document translation, functional equivalence manifests as culturally relevant transmission. For example, when translating content related to Haikou's folk culture, it is crucial to provide international audiences with a similar cultural experience as that of Chinese readers, rather than a mere superficial translation. Appropriate translation techniques, such as annotations and paraphrasing, can bridge cultural gaps and achieve functional equivalence.

5.3 Cross-Cultural Adaptation Translation

Strategy

The cross-cultural adaptation translation strategy requires translators to consider the differences between source and target cultures, ensuring that the translation is suitable for the target cultural context. For culturally loaded terms in Haikou promotional documents, a combination of transliteration and explanation can be employed. For example, (Li Brocade) can be translated as "Li Brocade, a traditional and unique textile art of the Li ethnic group in Hainan, " preserving cultural specificity while providing context for international audiences.

When addressing content involving values and thought processes, translators should adapt expressions from the perspective of the international audience. For example, if a Chinese promotional document emphasizes urban development achievements under a collectivist value system, the translation should present this in a manner easily understood by international audiences, avoiding potential misunderstandings due to cultural differences, thus facilitating cultural exchange and understanding.

5.4 Register and Genre Analysis

Register analysis considers the context of language use, audience, and purpose. Haikou promotional documents cover various genres, such as government documents, corporate brochures, and travel guides, each with specific register requirements. Government documents require formal and rigorous language, necessitating the use of formal and standardized vocabulary and structures to ensure the translation's seriousness and authority. Conversely, travel guides should be more vivid and engaging, employing lively language to attract tourists.

Through genre analysis, translators can clarify the structural characteristics and information organization of different types of promotional documents. For instance, corporate brochures typically begin with an introduction to the company, followed by highlighting product advantages and growth prospects. the translation should follow this logical structure to allow international audiences to quickly grasp key information.

6. Conclusion

This study thoroughly examines the current state of English translation of Haikou

promotional documents in the context of the Hainan Free Trade Port, identifying challenges related to language, culture, and sentence structure. It analyzes the application of existing translation strategies and proposes functional equivalence, cross-cultural adaptation, and register and genre analysis as practical strategies. Specific case studies validate the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing the quality of English translations of Haikou promotional documents.

Regarding policy recommendations, relevant departments should strengthen the regulation and guidance of Haikou promotional document translation, formulate unified translation standards, and establish a professional review mechanism to ensure translation quality. Simultaneously, increasing the cultivation and recruitment of translation talents, providing more professional training and exchange opportunities will enhance translators' expertise and cross-cultural capabilities.

Future research could delve deeper into translation strategies for emerging fields and unique cultures within the Free Trade Port context, such as financial innovation policies and marine culture in Hainan. Additionally, exploring hybrid models of machine and human translation, leveraging artificial intelligence technology, could improve translation efficiency and quality.

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