

Translating Destination Images as a Re-presentation of Multiple Identities: comparing the Chinese-to-English translations of four tourism websites

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ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that website translations can be taken as a form of social control striving to achieve certain political or economic ends by the website owners from a self-representation perspective. Studying the Chinese-to-English translations of the destination sections in four tourism websites, this study aims to derive interpretations as to how the act of translating formulates multiple self-representations, which may be seen as ideological attempts to influence the perceptions of target-text audiences.

This thesis has two main parts. The first, Chapters 1 and 2, outlines the research objectives, background information and the conceptualization of the four cases, and a two-stage comparative method working within an integrated theoretical framework. The second part, Chapters 3 to 5, comprises the empirical findings, discussing how features of discourses hypothetically prominent in a particular dimension of the website context may come to manifest different identities of the website owners. The translation strategies for these features are examined to identify the aspects of these identities changed in the self-representation contexts.

Chapter 3 hypothesizes that the common context of the websites is dominated by tourism discourse and other associated discourses. The translation strategies for discourse features expressing a set of shared identities of the website owners suggest that the concepts of consumerism and commodity advertising are re-formulated in the translations. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss further identities of the owners manifested in the diverging sub-contexts of the websites, and underline aspects of these identities foregrounded in the translations. Chapter 4 highlights the diverging organizational identities of the official and corporate websites. The translation strategies for certain organizational features show that different organizational stances, different beneficiaries and different business rivals of the two categories of websites are emphasized in the translations. Studying the identity of being 'Chinese people' formulated by certain re-presented features of local discourse, Chapter 5 points to the differences between the national images re-presented by the China websites and the regional images foregrounded by the HK websites in their translations. Finally, the conclusions summarize various notions relating to the multiple identities re-formulated in the self-representation context, as well as their economic and political implications.

KEYWORDS: context of situation, critical discourse analysis, China, identity, self-representation, tourism, website translation.

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