

# A Critical Analysis of Tourism Translation Excerpt from Lonely Planet

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**Abstract:** The Lonely Planet series showcases the rich tapestry of global cultures through detailed accounts and translations. These texts not only provide practical information for travelers but also serve as cultural ambassadors, bridging linguistic and cultural divides. The series' meticulous translations reflect the complexities and subtleties of each destination, shedding light on local customs, traditions, and ways of life. Its translations also contribute to a more inclusive understanding of different cultures, fostering mutual respect and understanding among travelers and locals. This paper classifies the types of tourist texts according to their characteristics, address the issues that arise when translating travel guides.

**Keywords:** Tourism; Travel Guide; Cultural Specificity; Appealing Function

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## Introduction

The study begins with an introduction to the background of the source text, which originates from Lonely Planet, the world's largest private travel guide publisher. By utilising the Fitzroy neighbourhood of Melbourne, Australia, as its birthplace, Tony Wheeler and Maureen Wheeler founded Lonely Planet in 1972. This highly regarded organisation is currently the leading private publisher of travel guides<sup>[1]</sup>. The "Lonely Planet" series, which has offices in London, Auckland, New Delhi, and Beijing, has a rich history and was the first to exclusively cater to backpackers and travellers, so it is highly praised by backpackers and other low-cost tourists<sup>[2]</sup>.

Regarding specialization and linguistic attributes, it is noteworthy that the document features a paucity of specialized lexicon and technical terminology. Instead, it predominantly assumes the form of a "traveling" discourse, designed to be consumed by tourists during their leisurely excursions. Its primary functions are characterized by descriptiveness and the provision of pragmatic information. The travel guidebook represents an authentic literary endeavor, surpassing the length of any other literary production in the realm of travel. Its scope spans across diverse informational dimensions, affording readers an in-depth comprehension of the historical and cultural facets of the destination. Furthermore, it offers readers invaluable insights and practical recommendations. Notably, travel guides typically exhibit a higher degree of subjectivity compared to conventional tourist literature, with the author's role bearing pronounced recognition within its narrative framework<sup>[3]</sup>. In terms of layout and visual presentation, this travel guide employs a format that incorporates both textual and pictorial elements. Notably, each featured location or scenic spot is accompanied by a corresponding image positioned above the descriptive text. Each paragraph in the text is concise and has a clear focus.

## Critical Analysis

Based on the aforementioned text type, it is evident that the primary purpose of a travel guide is to furnish tourists with destination-specific information and entice them to visit. According to Reiss's Text Types and Translation Methods, the text in question can be classified as belonging to the categories of informative function and operative function. This text exhibits prominent themes, and the contents of the introduction are both straightforward and intricate. Based on its inherent characteristics and functional distribution, it can be categorised into primary-level theme, secondary-level theme, and tertiary-level theme, thereby facilitating the achievement of its referential purpose. Furthermore, the text exhibits the qualities of visual representations and eloquent language, thereby facilitating the realisation of its conative function.

This paper classifies the types of tourist texts according to their characteristics, and analyzes the problems that should be paid attention to English translation from the functions of informative texts and vocative texts. First of all, from the perspective of cultural specificity, this study will pay attention to the cultural specific item of the source text and the described country, including cultural attributes and historical

sites, description of art and architecture, geographical features and cultural convention, etc<sup>[4][5]</sup>. This part mainly embodies the translation strategy that informational texts should be centered on the culture of the country where the source text is located. The second part mainly focuses on the appealing function of this travel guide translation and analyzes the rhetorical methods in communicative translation. It includes simile, metaphor, repetition and so on. Generally speaking, this paper aims to guide the translation strategies of the culture and the text itself according to the characteristics of tourist guides.

Based on the proposal outlined, the intention to introduce Lonely Planet in China was realised in 2003, resulting in the publication of the Chinese edition by China Cartographic Publishing House. Lonely Planet made its initial foray into the Chinese market in 2006, with its publication facilitated by SDX Joint Publishing Company. In August 2012, a magazine series was published in China, with an introduction by Fujian Strait Bookstore Publishing. In June 2013, the book guide was substituted by China Cartographic Publishing House. As of December 2021, a total of 25 guidebooks focused on China and 95 guidebooks with an international scope had been published, garnering significant popularity among domestic travellers.

Based on the information given in the source text, it is evident that tourist texts serve as valuable resources for travellers, enabling them to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural customs, historical significance, and architectural styles associated with various tourist destinations, and help make the travel easier<sup>[6]</sup>. Consequently, it is imperative that translated texts possess similar functionalities, adhering to the informative and expressive nature of the source text. From a disciplinary standpoint, this subject can be classified within the domain of tourism English in the context of commercial translation. From a distinctive standpoint, this translation exhibits a reader-centric approach, employing a reduced usage of technical terminology, utilizing articulate and flowing language, and evoking vivid imagery. The arrangement of elements should replicate the visual content depicted in the book, thereby serving as a harmonious counterpart.

According to above analysis, the translation need to fulfill the informative function and vocative function, which is the same to the original text. As Newmark mentioned about the communicative translation, the effect of translation on target readers should be similar to that of source text on source text readers. This asks the translator not only convey the literal meaning of the text, but also consider the intention, emotion and cultural background behind the source text and transform it into the context of the target culture. Finally, the target audience of the translation should be Chinese native speakers<sup>[7]</sup>.

## Conclusion

During the initial process of translating this text, my focus was solely on the linguistic aspects of the source text, which in this case was English. During the subsequent stages of the translation process, I encountered a multitude of expressions encompassing place names, scenic spot names, and event names. This led me to the realisation that despite the source language being English, the original culture associated with the text did not originate from an English-speaking country. Hence, it is imperative to bridge two disparities during the process of information transmission. This prompts an examination of the initial aspect I intend to investigate, namely, cultural specificity. Of the various aspects to consider, I find the selection of culturally specific items particularly daunting. Based on Newmark's text type theory, it is imperative for this section to effectively communicate cultural information to the readers in the target language<sup>[8]</sup>. During the process of translating between English and Chinese, I have also observed a significant cultural connection. This section primarily evaluates the translation approach employed for cultural information, such as literal translation or free translation, by examining various English-Chinese travel guides available in the market.

In order to address the issues that arise when translating travel guides, this essay employs communicative translation techniques. A number of translation issues have been resolved by examining the cultural specificities of tourist texts and rhetorical elements in communicative translation. Fan<sup>[9]</sup> asserts that tourism information can only be spiritual and evoke particular cultural feelings in visitors if it has cultural overtones. Tourist guides serve as a form of publicity that contributes to fostering intercultural understanding and communication<sup>[10]</sup>. In order to lessen barriers to cross-cultural communication and safeguard cultural diversity, translators should be aware of and deeply understand the gap between non-native English speakers and native English speakers as well as the differences between Chinese and western ways of thinking and culture.

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