



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Navigating Translation Quality Assessment in Public Signs of Tourism: A Comparative Analysis of House's Model and GB/T 19682-2005 in Xuzhou

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Public signs in tourism in urban environments like Xuzhou not only facilitate navigation but also serve as cultural representatives, making their accurate translation pivotal for international tourists' comprehension and cultural appreciation. This study undertakes a comparative analysis of the translation quality of these signs, employing House's model and the GB/T 19682-2005 standard. While House's model provides a solid theoretical foundation, its complexity poses challenges for practical application. On the contrary, the GB/T 19682-2005 standard, though practical, lacks flexibility in different cultural contexts. Our analysis reveals significant discrepancies from the GB/T 19682-2005 standards in the current translations, emphasizing the urgent need for improved linguistic precision and cultural sensitivity. We advocate for a hybrid approach that marries House's model's theoretical rigor with the GB/T 19682-2005's practicality, aiming to refine translation practices. This strategy promises to improve the cultural resonance of tourism signage, thereby enriching the experience of international visitors to Xuzhou.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public signs, symbolizing support and service within societal spaces, play a pivotal role in directing, informing, and managing community behavior. These signs, embodying a distinct genre of language use, communicative function, and cultural identity (Li & Yu, 2008), engage audiences without direct interaction, leveraging the principles of speech act theory to persuade and regulate social behavior effectively (Baktir, 2013). In the realm of public communication, signage operates as a one-way communicative tool, targeting a broad audience to enforce, instruct, or restrict actions, thus maintaining order and facilitating navigation across diverse public settings.

The translation of public signs, especially from Chinese to English, has garnered significant attention, underlined by China's issuance of the English Translation and Writing Standards for Public Services in 2017 (Zhang & Wu, 2019). This focus reflects the critical need for clear and accurate translations within the tourism sector, a major economic activity and a focal point of cultural exchange (Thurlow, 2010; Reisinger & Dimanche, 2010; Larsen, 2014). Effective translation of tourism-related signage not only aids in conveying essential information to international visitors but also enhances their overall experience, underscoring the importance of linguistic precision and cultural sensitivity in public sign translations.

The translation of public tourism signs in China reflects broader concerns about cultural representation and impacts the international image. Despite national guidelines like the "Guidelines For The Use Of English In Public Areas," there's a notable gap in their implementation at the local level, particularly in essential areas like airports and train stations, where errors detrimentally affect the city's image (Lin & Wang, 2010; Lin, 2015). This issue underscores a systemic problem within the regulatory framework, indicating a need for stronger enforcement mechanisms and regular updates to ensure compliance. Scholarly research on this topic often lacks broad-based analysis, focusing on

anecdotal evidence rather than systemic investigation. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of linguistic and cultural nuances, especially in cities with significant historical contexts like Xuzhou, where translations must respect historical and cultural intricacies (Liu & Li, 2019). Improving translation practices involves more than linguistic accuracy; it requires a comprehensive approach that includes standardized guidelines, enhanced translator training, and involvement of cultural and historical experts, aiming to improve the international image of Chinese cities and promote a richer understanding of Chinese culture among tourists.

This paper aims to examine the translation quality of public signs in tourism via two models: House's model of translation quality assessment (TQA) and the GB/T 19682-2005. This objective is critical, as these translations are not merely linguistic conversions but cultural representations that significantly impact tourists' perceptions and experiences. The researcher plans to assess various factors contributing to translation quality, such as linguistic accuracy, cultural relevance, clarity, and effectiveness in conveying intended messages. This assessment will involve a detailed analysis of a diverse range of tourist destinations to capture the breadth of translation practices, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Tools and frameworks for translation quality assessment and linguistic analysis will be employed to ensure a thorough and methodical evaluation. Our exploration seeks not only to map the contours of this gap but also to stitch a narrative that bridges theoretical paradigms with practical exigencies, paving the way for a nuanced understanding and actionable insights into elevating the translation quality of public tourism signs.

2. Past Study on the translation of public signs

The origins of public signs date back to ancient civilizations like the Egyptians and Romans, using stone carvings and inscriptions for traveler guidance and landmark information. With societal evolution, the role and presence of public signs have grown. In foreign countries, the public signs of translation have a long history. With the growing interest in public signage research, numerous publications in various language combinations have emerged. Renowned works include books edited by LL scholars such as Güven et al. (2016), Laskurain-Ibarluzea (2020), Shohamy and Gorter (2009), and Shohamy et al. (2010), as well as monographs on specific countries. Connor thinks that public signs provide a particular group with attention, aiming to complete a specific communication purpose (Connor et al., 2020). These works span diverse research areas, such as the role of minority languages in the market and the visibility's equivalence to prestige, function, and symbolism. Notably, while these studies focus on translated signs, they tend to lean more towards sociolinguistics, overlooking aspects within landscapes like the quality of translated language in public spaces, errors in sign translations, and strategies for public sign translation, all of which require a translation-oriented analytical approach (Amenador & Wang, 2022).

The exploration of public signage from a translation perspective dates back to 1995 by Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) in their work "Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation." They analyzed parallel texts of French-English road signs in Canada, expressing disappointment over inconsistencies in the English translations of French road signs. Similarly, Snell-Hornby (1988) investigated English-German public sign translations, concluding that context is crucial in translating public signs, highlighting the cross-cultural nature of public sign translation. Radtke's (2007) work "Chinglish in Translation" aimed to prepare travelers for language and cultural shocks in China, showcasing photos of poorly translated Chinese language signs (public signs). He argued that poor translations lead to Chinglish, causing comprehension issues. He noted that the translation problems found were not due to language errors but a lack of understanding of the cultural context of translation. Tufi and Blackwood (2016) collected photos of linguistic signs on their blog, showcasing mistranslations incomprehensible to foreigners. He highlighted an airport sign in Chinese and English cautioning "Mountain landslide" instead of "Caution! Wet/Slippery Floor," creating confusion. Other scholars (Edelman, 2010; Reh, 2004) explored phenomena related to translation in LL research, introducing classifications for multilingual writing translation strategies. Edelman (2010) expanded Reh's classification, subdividing repetitive translation strategies into "free" and "literal" translations, naming fragmented translation as "partial translation," and introduced the "no translation" category, annotating it as complete multilingual writing (Koskinen, 2012). However, this categorization was criticized in translation studies for being overly simplistic. Therefore, to master various strategies, a more detailed understanding of the translators' available choices is required (ibid., p. 80). Koskinen (2012) argued that any classification of multilingual

writing strategies must be adjusted for the target readers and the language pair studied (*ibid.*). With this in mind, Bilá et al. (2020) analyzed the dissemination of Slovak tourism notices, focusing on translation modifications considering target readers from different "language cultures." They suggested that translation texts present in the linguistic landscape should be targeted. Therefore, a communicative translation strategy should be adopted, and any necessary translation modifications should be made to provide information to readers. Despite the abundance of LL research, studies that cross the field of translation research are relatively scarce in the West. We also agree with Koskinen (2012), who claimed that while Reh's (2004) strategy classification has been proven helpful in LL research, it also seems necessary to consider functions, features, and issues related to public sign texts, which can only be explained by examining the indicative components in translation. Therefore, this paper focuses on the translation of public signs.

In contrast to Western countries, China has a rich array of public sign research in the field of translation studies. At the end of the 1980s, Chinese scholars were beginning the research of public sign translation. At that time, the name Public Sign was not used. For instance, Zhenqi Ding published *The Translation of Enterprise Name* in 1989, the first domestic attempt (Ding, 1989). Pioneering works include Zeng Shiyang's discussion on place name translation and standardization, with publications in 1987 and 1989 (Zeng, 1987, 1989, as cited in Li, 2018). Xiang Yang's work on standardizing Chinese to English translations, especially of street names, also contributed significantly (Xiang, 1994, as cited in Zhang & Wang, 2018). Ni and Liu's (1998) article on public sign translation principles marks an early attempt at theoretical research in this area in China. The difficulty in defining the appropriate tone and humor, as these are subjective and cultural, is noted. In addition, the research on the translation of public signs was just starting at that time and had not yet attracted the attention of scholars in the field of translation (Zhang & Wang, 2018).

Because the definition of public sign in China was still vague, Hefa Lü (2005) first gave the first comprehensive definition. He also says that the report should cover the audience's characteristics in the globalized world and provide more information services. According to their functions, Dai Zongxian classifies public signs and believes that public signs can be divided into static and dynamic signs and have such application functions as directive, suggestive, restore, and mandatory (Lü & Dai, 2005). Wang and Chen (2004) analyzed some translation errors and put forward that convention is a principle that cannot be ignored in Translation. After analyzing some public signs' characteristics, Li (2009) proposed some translation models from a practical perspective. Their ideas indeed solved translation problems by giving principles and strategies. Public sign translation research gained significant attention after the 2005 National Seminar on Public Sign Language Translation in Beijing, drawing many Chinese scholars to publish works in this area (Koskinen, 2012; Yang, 2009).

According to the statistics of Zou Yanqun et al. (2011), 2008-2010 was the decade with the largest number of public sign translation papers in the first decade of this century, with more than 100 papers per year. In the past ten years, the number of papers on public sign translation has increased significantly, with more than 200 academic papers per year and even more than 300 in 2014. The large increase in the number of papers indicates a significant increase in the attention and importance of this research. From 2011 to 2020, the attention paid to the translation of public signs was significantly higher than 10 years ago. Statistics show that there are still some shortcomings in the translation of public signs. For example, the research mainly focuses on the analysis and solution of the mistranslation of public signs, and the content is often repeated with uneven levels. The use of terms is not unified nor standardized. Scholars were still confined to summarizing experiences and expressing feelings instead of being supported by theory (Mo & Jin, 2008). In 2020, Liu (2020) summarized the Russian Translation of Hainan Island, which only points out the exact questions instead of providing a straightforward method to solve them. At present, most of the research is about English translation, and other languages are less involved. The regional development of translation research of public signs is unbalanced, and some areas are weak in translation research of public signs. There is still little research on public signs' translation in some fields or topics (Ye & Hu, 2021).

As reported by Amenador and Wang (2022), research on Chinese-to-English (C-E) public sign translations has continually garnered academic attention. A general trend observed from 2005 to 2012 shows a rising academic interest and a corresponding increase in publications. This surge, as

Koskinen (2013) notes, is linked to China hosting major international events, necessitating enhanced public sign translations and language environment sanitization for foreign participants and tourists. Post-2013 saw a slight dip in research publications, peaking in 2014, followed by fluctuations in publication numbers and focus on public sign translations from 2015 to 2020.

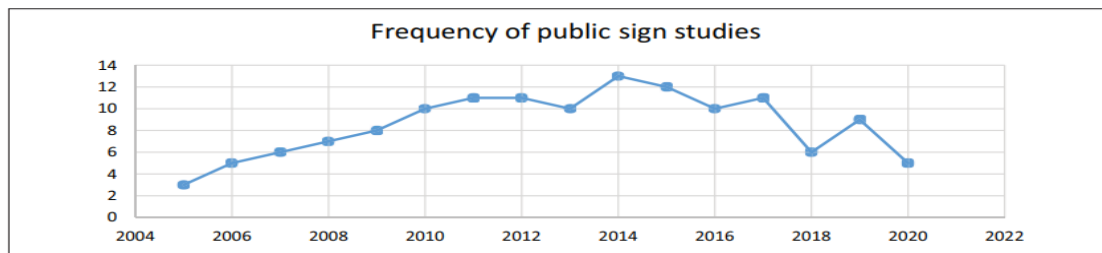


Figure 1: Frequency diagram of the selected articles (Amenador & Wang, 2022)

Content analysis of the study period reveals most public sign research encompasses four main themes: linguistic features of public signs, their functional aspects, translation issues, and solutions for PS translation challenges. This trend analysis indicates a growing scholarly focus on C-E public sign translation research, with an upward trend in the number of studies covering various themes within the research period (Amenador & Wang, 2022).

In 2002, Beijing International Studies University established the Research Center for Translation of Public Signs. The project was funded, which meant the name of the public sign was officially used. In recent years, the issues of public sign translation have attracted much attention in several big cities. Large-scale sports or international cultural activities have promulgated and implemented the local English translation standards for bilingual signs in public places. On December 1, 2017, the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) and the National Standards Administration jointly released the national standard for English translation and writing in the field of public services. It proposed that translation and writing in public should follow the principles of legality, standardization, and usefulness and should conform to Chinese laws and regulations on language. The translation should also conform to the standard of English usage and stylistic requirements of English public signs rather than the original text's literal translation. The unprecedented attention paid to public signs indicates that China's translation of public signs has entered a new development stage.

3. METHODS

In the specific context of this investigation, a blended research design combining both qualitative (House's Model) and quantitative (GB/T 19682-2005) methodologies was selected to meticulously examine the translation quality of public signs in the domain of tourism. Based on the Xuzhou Tourism Administration's statistics, the research targets the most visited among nearly a hundred tourist spots, identified for their significant tourist influx and listed on the Xuzhou Cultural Tourism Website. This narrowed focus aims at streamlining the study towards prominent attractions likely to feature dual-language public signs. The methodology includes photographing public signs along primary tourist routes at these sites, with some locations omitted due to factors like renovations or lack of translation elements. After filtering out non-cultural or untranslated samples, 77 photo samples were retained for analysis, exploring the extent and quality of bilingual signage in Xuzhou's key tourist locations.

3.1 Settings

Xuzhou, an ancient city in eastern China, boasts a history spanning over 3,000 years and is a metropolis with over 8 million people. It is the birthplace of Emperor Gaozu of Han, who founded the Han Dynasty, marking an era that rivaled Rome's grandeur. Today, Xuzhou is a cultural hub, preserving Chinese heritage and showcasing the richness of Han culture through iconic sites like the Terra-cotta Warriors, Han tombs, and stone statues. With a diverse array of attractions, from historical landmarks to natural landscapes, Xuzhou aims to be a global symbol of Han culture's preservation and advancement, offering visitors a unique blend of ancient traditions and modern vitality. This paper focuses on culturally significant sites that reflect Xuzhou's historical depth and cultural identity, exploring its potential as a captivating destination for cultural exploration.

3.2 Data collection

The research meticulously collected data over two months, focusing on significant tourist spots in the city identified through the local official website. This selection process ensured spots were popular, accessible, and officially recognized, enhancing data relevance. Fieldwork involved on-site visits for photographic data collection, emphasizing sign clarity and context to understand their physical and cultural placement. Each tourism spot recommended by local authorities was visited for a comprehensive dataset. Post-fieldwork, data organization, and analysis began, with photographs cataloged in an Excel document detailing location, photography date, and sign features (Table 1).

Table 1: Information of samples collected.

Location	Type of Tourism Spot	Number of Photos Taken
Yunlong Mountain	Mountain	8
Xuzhou Museum	Museum	24
Yaowan Ancient Town	Ancient Town	11
Guishan Tomb of the Han Dynasty	Old Tomb	14
Memorial of Huaiai Battle	Battle memorial	2
Tourism area in Jiawang District	Nature view (culture or history contained)	10
Cornel Temple	Temple of Buddhism	8

3.3 Ethical consideration

For ethical considerations, consent from the respondents and translators is necessary. All data used for this research only. (P & C)

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 The analysis of house's model

In this study, House's Model is applied to analyze the translation of public signs in tourism, focusing on several key components: field, tenor, mode, genre, and function. Field analysis delves into the subject matter and social action of signs, especially those related to historical landmarks, combining educational content with guidance for tourists. The tenor analysis examines the signage's formal and authoritative tone, aiming for clear, respectful communication that's culturally sensitive to a global audience. Mode analysis tackles the challenge of presenting messages in a visually and textually accessible manner, ensuring comprehension across diverse linguistic backgrounds while facilitating indirect cognitive engagement. Genre focuses on informational signs, aiming to educate tourists on the historical context and cultural significance of sites, thereby enriching their visit. This comprehensive approach ensures translations not only convey information but also enhance the overall tourist experience by respecting cultural nuances and facilitating effective communication.

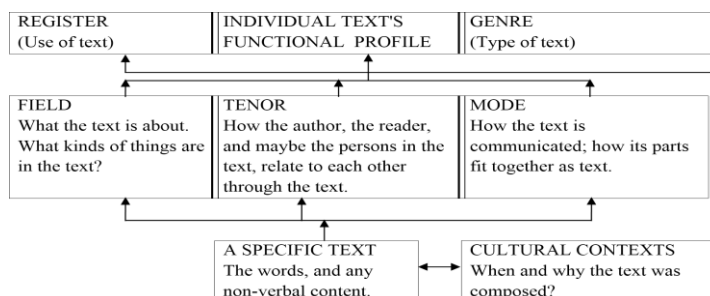


Figure 2: The analysis process of house's model

In conducting a detailed comparison of the translation quality of public tourism signs, our analysis spans several key dimensions, including Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Function, revealing both strengths and nuances that merit attention for optimized translation practices (Table 2).

Table 2: Comparative results of ST and TT.

			ST	TT
Register	Field	Subject Matter	Historical Landmark Information	Historical & Cultural Landmark Information
		Social Action	Guiding and Informing Tourists	Guiding and Informing Tourists
	Tenor	Translator's Provenance and Stance	Municipal Authority's Official Position	General Translator
		Social Role Relationship	Asymmetrical	Informal Authority
		Social Attitude	Formal and Directive	Inconsistent
	Mode	Medium	Complex	Complex
		Participation	Somewhat Complex	Complex
Genre			Informational Signage	Informational Signage
Function			transactional and informational	transactional and informational

The analysis within the Field component reveals an impressive consistency between the Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT), particularly in effectively conveying "Historical Landmark Information." This congruence underscores the translations' success in preserving the cultural and historical essence of landmarks, which is pivotal in guiding tourists and enriching their understanding of the sites. Such parity between the TT and ST indicates that the translation process meticulously maintained the integrity of the original information and intent, thereby ensuring a seamless and enriching informational experience for the tourists.

However, the Tenor comparison highlighted significant disparities, especially in aspects like the Translator's Provenance and Stance, Social Role Relationship, and Social Attitudes. These differences largely stem from the varied backgrounds and expertise of the translators involved. While the ST reflects a professional and formal approach characteristic of municipal authority communications, the TT, rendered by a "General Translator," lacks this formal training or official capacity. This discrepancy likely influences the translation's tone and accuracy, as a general translator may not possess the specialized knowledge or formal language proficiency typically employed in municipal communications.

Moreover, our Mode analysis suggests similarities in the Medium used by both the ST and TT, pointing to the inherent complexity due to the amalgamation of textual and visual elements in public signs. This complexity is essential for effective communication with a diverse, international audience. However, the participation aspect is deemed "Somewhat Complex" in the ST and "Complex" in the TT. The ST's balanced engagement likely stems from professionals adept at crafting public signage, while the TT's increased complexity could be attributed to the translator's potential lack of specific expertise in public sign creation. This might introduce language use or phraseology complexities, making the signs more challenging for tourists to interpret.

Despite these areas of concern, the Genre and Function analysis confirms close alignment between the ST and TT, categorizing both as "Informational Signage" with "Transactional" and "Informational" functions. This uniformity is essential, reflecting the primary objective of public signs to inform tourists about various location aspects. The dual function of these signs facilitates specific actions from tourists, such as navigating to a particular location, while also providing background knowledge to enhance their visit.

This comprehensive comparison accentuates the importance of not only ensuring linguistic accuracy but also maintaining contextual appropriateness and cultural sensitivity in translating public signs for tourism. Addressing the identified disparities, especially in Tenor and Mode, is crucial for ensuring that translated signs are as effective and accessible as the originals, thereby enriching the tourist experience through clear and culturally resonant communication.

Defining overt errors

The delineation of seven sub-types of overt errors within the framework of translation studies offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in the translation process. These subtypes include not translated, slight change in meaning, significant change in meaning, distortion of meaning, breach of the language system, creative translation, and cultural filtering. Each category underscores a specific type of deviation or adaptation that occurs when transferring content from a source language to a target language. These sub-types of overt errors, therefore, provide critical insights into the challenges and considerations that translators navigate to achieve effective and meaningful translations. (Table. 3):

Table 3: Seven types of overt errors.

Type	Explanation
Not Translated	Parts left untranslated, possibly for cultural references, brand names, idioms.
Slight Change in Meaning	Minor alterations due to nuances or interpretation.
Significant Change in Meaning	Substantial alterations due to misinterpretation, no equivalent expressions, or cultural differences.
Distortion of Meaning	Severe alteration/misrepresentation due to errors or cultural misunderstandings.
Breach of the Language System	Violations of grammatical, syntactical, or idiomatic norms, resulting in awkward translations.
Creative Translation	Translator's creative liberty to convey essence, tone, or style, often in literary translations or idioms.
Cultural Filtering	Adapting cultural references to be understandable/relevant to the target culture, possibly by replacing references or adding explanations.

The evaluation of 77 samples utilizing House's model for overt translation demonstrates a focused effort to preserve the original texts' integrity and essence while ensuring relevance and accessibility for the target audience. A majority, 59 samples, show slight changes in meaning, reflecting translators' attempts to retain the original message amidst linguistic and cultural differences. This signifies a skilled balance between maintaining coherence for the new audience and honoring the source's nuances. Additionally, creative translation and cultural filtering, seen in 66 and 74 samples, respectively, highlight efforts to bridge cultural gaps and align content with the target culture's norms and expectations. The analysis suggests a high fidelity to the original texts, with minimal significant changes or distortions in meaning, barring a single instance of language system breach. This approach underscores a commitment to creating translations that are content-accurate, culturally resonant, and linguistically adept, adhering closely to House's model of overt translation for functional equivalence and contextual appropriateness.

Table 4: Type of overt translation among the 77 samples

Type	Number
Not Translated	15
Slight Change in Meaning	59
Significant Change in Meaning	0
Distortion of Meaning	0
Breach of the Language System	1
Creative Translation	66
Cultural Filtering:	74

The evaluation of public sign translations in tourism, utilizing House's model, offers significant insights into the complexities of translation, underscoring the balance between preserving the original text's essence and adapting it for the target audience's cultural and linguistic context. Covert translations focus on maintaining the original's informational content and utility, ensuring the adaptation suits the target audience's tone, formality, and engagement level. This requires careful handling of tenor and mode to prevent any loss in message clarity or intent. Overt translations, with

their range of errors from untranslated elements to significant meaning changes and cultural adjustments, highlight the varied challenges in translation work. These aspects demonstrate the intricate decision-making required to bridge linguistic and cultural gaps effectively. The combined findings from covert and overt analysis reveal the nuanced role of translators in not only transferring information but also facilitating cross-cultural communication, which is essential for enriching the global travel experience. Addressing these challenges ensures translated signs are as impactful as their originals, emphasizing the need for linguistic precision, cultural sensitivity, and contextual relevance in translation practices within tourism.

4.1. Analysis based on GB/T 19682-2005

This section presents the results of the analysis conducted on public signs in tourism, grounded in the standards set forth by GB/T 19682-2005. As a pivotal standard in the field of translation quality assessment, GB/T 19682-2005 offers a comprehensive framework that emphasizes accuracy, clarity, cultural appropriateness, and readability in translations.

By the national translation standard GB/T 19682-2005, the acceptable error rate for a translation to be considered qualified is set at a maximum of 1.5‰. To assess the translations of our sample public signs, we employed the Rate of General Mistakes equation:

$$Result = KCA * (CI * DI + C II * D II + C III * D III + C IV * D IV) / W * 1000‰$$

This formula takes into account the weighted impact of different categories of errors (C), their respective degree of severity (D), and the total word count (W), multiplied by a constant factor (KCA) to normalize the results.

After evaluating public sign translations for tourism against GB/T 19682-2005 standards, 13 translations scored between 0 and 1.5‰, indicating high quality. However, 64 translations failed to meet these standards, highlighting a need for significant improvement due to issues ranging from linguistic inaccuracies to cultural and contextual misunderstandings.

Table 5: The overall translation quality

Translation Quality Range	Number (Percentage)	Results
From 0 to 1.5‰	13 (16.88%)	pass
Over 1.5‰	64 (81.11%)	fail

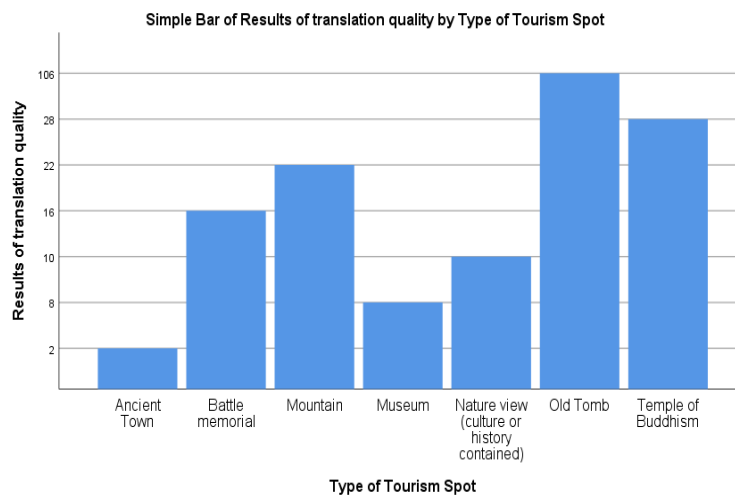
After a comprehensive analysis based on the GB/T 19682-2005 criteria, notable disparities were identified in the translation quality of public signs at various tourist spots. All seven assessed tourism types failed to meet the national standard, with old tombs exhibiting a mistake rate exceeding the standard by over seventy times, highlighting a significant need for improvement across the board. The analysis identified seven error types, aligning with national standards issues, including key term translation inaccuracies, missing sentence translations, and grammatical errors, without notable incorrect translations of measurements, symbols, or abbreviations. Grammar mistakes emerged as a significant concern, affecting the clarity and coherence of the information presented. This analysis underscores the urgent need for enhanced translation practices to ensure clarity, accuracy, and cultural appropriateness across all tourist sites, highlighting the varying levels of translation quality and attention given to different site types.

Table 6: The results of translation quality for each tourism spot

Type of Tourism Spot	Results of translation quality
Ancient Town	1.55‰
Museum	7.74‰
Nature view (culture or history contained)	10.25‰
Battle memorial	15.98‰

Mountain	22.23‰
Temple of Buddhism	28.11‰
Old Tomb	106.16‰

Table 7: The simple bar of results of translation quality for each tourism spot.



The bar chart presented offers a striking visual representation of the varying translation error rates across different types of tourist attractions. At one end of the spectrum, old tombs exhibit the highest error rate at an alarming 106‰. This figure is not just a quantitative measure but a reflection of significant lapses in translation quality. Such a high error rate suggests a range of issues, from misinterpretation of the original text to possibly even inadequate translation skills or lack of proper quality control mechanisms. Given the cultural and historical significance of old tombs, this high error rate is particularly concerning as it can lead to misinformation and a diminished experience for tourists seeking to understand these heritage sites.

In stark contrast, ancient towns have managed to maintain a remarkably low error rate of 2‰. This suggests a more effective translation process, potentially indicative of better resources, skilled translators, or more rigorous quality checks. The low error rate in ancient towns points to a higher standard of care in preserving the accuracy and integrity of the information conveyed to visitors, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of these historically rich sites.

The remaining five tourist attractions exhibit error rates that range from 8‰ to 28‰. While not as high as old tombs, these rates still highlight areas for improvement. The middle range suggests a moderate level of translation accuracy, but it also points to inconsistencies in the translation process. These variations could be attributed to factors like the complexity of the content being translated, the attention given to different types of tourist spots, or the variability in the expertise of translators tasked with each site.

This analysis, illustrated by the bar chart, underscores the necessity for a more standardized and quality-focused approach to translation in tourism settings. The significant differences in error rates across tourist attractions call for a reassessment of translation practices, ensuring that all visitors, regardless of their language, can have equal access to accurate and reliable information. Improving translation quality across the board will not only enhance the tourist experience but also contribute to the preservation and accurate representation of cultural and historical heritage.

The main type of error for all scenic spots

The analysis, based on data from seven distinct types of tourist locations, shows no missing values, ensuring a robust dataset for evaluation. The average word count per sample is 1,448 words, but this figure spans a wide range from 181 to 3,047 words, reflecting the diverse nature of the documents under scrutiny (Table 8).

Table 8: The specific numbers and types of errors.

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean		Std. Deviation	Variance
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Statistic
Words	7	181	3047	10136	1448.00	333.210	881.590	777200.333
Error type I	7	0	26	50	7.14	3.888	10.286	105.810
Error type II	7	1	24	68	9.71	3.183	8.420	70.905
Error type III	7	0	8	21	3.00	1.327	3.512	12.333
Error type IV	7	1	35	77	11.00	4.477	11.846	140.333
Valid N (listwise)	7							
Statistics								
		Type of Tourism spots	Words	Error type I	Error type II	Error type III	Error type IV	
N	Valid	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean			1448.00	7.14	9.71	3.00	11.00	
Std. Error of Mean			333.210	3.888	3.183	1.327	4.477	
Median			1490.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	9.00	
Mode			181 ^a	0 ^a	4	0	1	
Std. Deviation			881.590	10.286	8.420	3.512	11.846	
Variance			777200.333	105.810	70.905	12.333	140.333	
Range			2866	26	23	8	34	
Minimum			181	0	1	0	1	
Maximum			3047	26	24	8	35	
Sum			10136	50	68	21	77	

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

The average frequencies of error types I through IV - 7.14, 9.71, 3.00, and 11.00, respectively - reveal differing levels of prevalence. Error type III shows the least variability, indicated by the smallest standard error of the mean (1.327), whereas error type IV, with the largest standard error (4.477), demonstrates significant inconsistency across the samples. The range of these error types further emphasizes this inconsistency, especially the considerable spread in error type IV (from 1 to 35).

Looking closely at specific types of tourist spots, we find distinct patterns in translation errors. In mountainous area scenic spots, errors are mainly concentrated in types I and IV. Notably, a significant portion of type I errors arises from the incorrect translation of a single keyword, suggesting a targeted area for improvement. In contrast, museum translations show a different distribution, with a notable absence of type I errors but an average of nearly three errors per sample, indicating prevalent issues in other error categories. Ancient towns display a better translation quality, with half of the samples being error-free and most other errors falling into type IV. However, it's noteworthy that the errors in type II, while minor and not affecting readability, still point to issues like tense misuse or typographical errors.

The most alarming situation is observed in old tombs, where translation issues are the most severe. Here, the frequency of errors in types II, III, and IV is not as high, but almost every translation exhibits missed sentences. Given the brevity of public signage content, the omission of entire sentences is a significant concern, with the most extreme case being a sample that missed five sentences.

This analysis demonstrates the need for a more standardized and rigorous approach to translation across tourist spots. The variance in error types and their frequencies across different locations underscores the need for tailored translation strategies. Addressing these identified inconsistencies and specific error patterns is crucial for enhancing translation quality ensuring clarity, accuracy, and cultural appropriateness in public signage to improve the international tourist experience.

4.3 Conclusion

Applying the GB/T 19682-2005 model to assess the translation quality of public signs in tourism across Xuzhou has yielded insightful results, highlighting key areas of strength and weakness in current practices. This model, with its structured approach to categorizing and quantifying translation errors, has been instrumental in providing a clear, objective evaluation of translation accuracy and effectiveness.

However, a concerning observation was that none of the assessed tourist spots in Xuzhou met the translation quality standards set by GB/T 19682-2005. This highlights a gap between current translation practices and the national standards, underscoring an urgent need for improvement. The findings suggest a necessity for more standardized, consistent, and rigorous translation practices to enhance the overall quality of public signs in tourism.

In summary, while there are areas of effective translation practices in Xuzhou's tourist spots, the application of the GB/T 19682-2005 model has revealed significant room for improvement. Addressing the identified issues is imperative for aligning with national standards and providing high-quality, reliable information to tourists, ultimately contributing to a more positive and enriching experience in Xuzhou's rich cultural and historical landscape.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Overview of each model

House's model, developed by Juliane House, is a comprehensive framework for assessing translation quality based on functionalist theories. It differentiates between overt and covert translations, emphasizing the importance of the text's function in its target culture. House's model assesses translation quality through a detailed analysis of textual features within a source text (ST) and its target text (TT), focusing on pragmatic equivalence, register, genre, and cultural context. The model is particularly notable for its emphasis on the translation's ability to meet its communicative purpose in the target culture, making it highly relevant for texts that require a nuanced understanding of cultural and contextual factors.

GB/T 19682-2005 is a Chinese national standard specifically designed for the translation of public signs. This standard provides clear, actionable guidelines aimed at ensuring the accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness of translated signs in public spaces. It covers a range of factors, including linguistic precision, terminological consistency, and cultural appropriateness, offering a structured approach to translation that is directly applicable to the practical needs of translating public signs for tourism. The standard is grounded in the practicalities of translation work, providing a checklist of criteria that translations must meet to be considered effective.

While House's model offers a theoretical, functionalist approach that deeply considers the cultural and communicative context of translations, GB/T 19682-2005 provides a pragmatic, standards-based framework tailored to the specific needs of translating public signs. House's model is broad and adaptable to various text types, focusing on achieving functional equivalence and cultural appropriateness. In contrast, GB/T 19682-2005 is prescriptive and focused, offering specific guidelines that ensure translations of public signs are clear, accurate, and useful for their intended audience. The two models thus complement each other, with House's providing the theoretical foundation and GB/T 19682-2005 offering practical application guidelines, particularly relevant to the domain of tourism and public signage.

5.2. Comparison of approaches

House's model approaches translation evaluation with a focus on pragmatic equivalence and the functionalist perspective, considering the text's purpose and its reception by the target audience. It evaluates translations by examining linguistic accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and the functionality of the text within its sociocultural context. House's criteria are qualitative, requiring in-depth analysis of the source and target texts to assess their equivalence in terms of register, genre, and cultural elements. The model's emphasis on covert and overt translations highlights its adaptability to different translation scenarios, including the translation of tourism public signs, by insisting on translations that fulfill the intended communicative function in the target culture. However, its application to tourism public signs may require adaptation to focus on the specific needs of sign translation, such as clarity, brevity, and the immediate comprehensibility necessary for effective wayfinding and information dissemination in a multicultural and multilingual tourism environment.

In contrast, GB/T 19682-2005 adopts a more prescriptive and pragmatic approach, providing specific criteria and guidelines for translating public signs. It emphasizes linguistic precision, terminological consistency, and cultural appropriateness, with a clear aim to produce translations that are immediately understandable and relevant to an international audience. This standard is specifically designed with the practicalities of public sign translation in mind, making it highly applicable to tourism public signs. Its criteria are focused on ensuring that translated signs are accurate, clear, and free of cultural misunderstandings or ambiguities that could mislead or confuse tourists. The direct applicability of GB/T 19682-2005 to tourism public signs lies in its straightforward, checklist-style evaluation, which can be easily applied by translators or translation reviewers working in the tourism sector.

The primary difference between the two models lies in their approach to translation evaluation. House's model is more theoretical and flexible, focusing on the translation's effectiveness in achieving its communicative purpose within a cultural and functional context. It requires a nuanced understanding of both the source and target cultures, making it suitable for a wide range of texts but potentially complex to apply to the specific context of tourism public signs without adaptation. On the other hand, GB/T 19682-2005 is practical and straightforward, offering clear guidelines for the translation of public signs that prioritize immediate clarity and cultural appropriateness. While House's model provides a broad theoretical foundation for assessing translation quality, GB/T 19682-2005 offers a targeted, practical framework specifically designed for the challenges of translating tourism public signs, ensuring they are effective and accessible to an international audience.

5.3. Limitations of each model

House's model provides a detailed framework for assessing translation quality but is not without its limitations. Its theoretical complexity can make it less accessible for practical translation tasks, such as the straightforward translation of tourism public signs. The model's lack of prescriptiveness, with its emphasis on detailed functional and cultural analysis, requires expertise that may not always be readily available. Additionally, the resource-intensive nature of its comprehensive analysis might not suit the high-volume, time-sensitive tasks often required in translating public signs for tourism. While its analytical depth is an asset for deep cultural understanding, it can limit the model's practical applicability in scenarios where clarity and immediacy are paramount.

Conversely, the GB/T 19682-2005 standard is tailored for practicality, specifically designed for translating public signs in China. However, its prescriptive nature and focus on specific guidelines may not accommodate the wide spectrum of cultural nuances and linguistic challenges present in translation practice. The standard's emphasis on linguistic accuracy and terminological consistency, while important, can sometimes overshadow the communicative function, which is crucial for engaging international tourists. Additionally, being developed within the context of China's tourism industry, its applicability might not extend seamlessly to other cultural or linguistic settings, potentially requiring modifications to address such limitations.

6. CONCLUSION

This study's comprehensive analysis, through the prisms of House's Model and the GB/T 19682-2005 standards, illuminates the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in the realm of public tourism sign translations in Xuzhou. Our findings reveal a notable divergence from the national standards prescribed by GB/T 19682-2005, underscoring a pervasive need for strategic enhancements in translation practices. Crucially, the integration of House's Model's theoretical insights with the actionable frameworks of GB/T 19682-2005 emerges as a potent approach for elevating translation quality. This synergy not only aligns with national standards but also enriches the cultural and linguistic resonance of public signs, thus significantly augmenting the tourist experience.

For stakeholders in the tourism industry, this research offers a blueprint for refining translation strategies that cater to the nuanced demands of cultural representation and international comprehension. Implementing the study's recommendations could lead to more engaging and informative signage, fostering a more inclusive and immersive experience for international visitors. Ultimately, our work highlights the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation in translation practices, ensuring that public signs serve as bridges of understanding in the rich tapestry of global tourism.

Scope and limitations

This research delves into evaluating the translation quality of public signs in tourist spots across China, especially focusing on urban centers like Xuzhou, to understand the accuracy, cultural appropriateness, and clarity of these translations. By adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods, it aims to shed light on the existing standards of translation quality and its effects on cultural representation and the tourism experience, further examining how these practices influence policy and regulatory frameworks. The study's geographical concentration on certain regions aims to reflect broader trends within China's tourism sector, yet it acknowledges the diversity across the entire country might not be fully represented.

Despite its comprehensive approach, the research faces limitations such as the subjective interpretation of qualitative data and the dynamic nature of language and culture that might affect the findings' relevance over time. Additionally, it does not encompass the full spectrum of external factors, like political or economic influences, that could impact translation practices in tourism. These constraints suggest the results may not be universally applicable across all of China's tourism industry, highlighting the need for caution in generalizing the findings.

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