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Problems and ways of translating the information on the signs of cities in Kazakhstan

(on the example of the city of Turkistan)

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Abstract

The absence of translation or mistranslation of the information on the public signs in the city of Turkistan is a crucial problem. Research has shown that the problem with translation can negatively affect the tourists' experience. This paper aims to identify the common mistakes in the translation of public signs in the Turkistan city, determine the impact on tourists, and suggest the right ways to adapt the solution to the problem. To investigate the problem, the signs in the city were analyzed to categorize their mistakes; online and offline surveys and interviews were conducted with people connected to tourism. Analysis of the responses demonstrated that problems with translation complicate the navigation through the city. The paper suggests ways to avoid the problems with the misunderstanding of signs. The research work contributes to decreasing translation mistakes and improving tourism from the signs' aspect.

Key words: translation, signs, tourist, mistakes.

Абстракт

Отсутствие перевода или неправильный перевод информации на указателях-табличках города Туркестан является серьезной проблемой. Исследования показали, что проблема с переводом может отрицательно повлиять на впечатления туристов. Цель данной статьи - выявить распространенные ошибки в переводе общественных знаков в городе Туркестан, определить влияние знаков на туристов и предложить правильные пути адаптации решения проблемы. В ходе исследования знаки города Туркестан были проанализированы, чтобы классифицировать ошибки; были проведены онлайн и офлайн-опросы и интервью с людьми, работающими в сфере туризма. Анализ ответов показал, что проблемы, возникающие во время перевода, затрудняют передвижение по городу. В статье предлагаются способы решения проблем с непониманием знаков. Исследовательская работа способствует уменьшению ошибок в переводе и улучшению туризма с точки зрения указателей и табличек.

Ключевые слова: перевод табличек, знаки, туристы, ошибки.

Абстракт

Түркістан қаласының көрсеткіш-тақтайшаларында аударманың болмауы немесе ақпараттың дұрыс аударылмауы елеулі мәселе болып табылады. Зерттеулер аударма мәселесі туристердің тәжірибесіне теріс әсер етуі мүмкін екенін көрсетті. Бұл зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты - Түркістан қаласындағы белгілерді аударуда жиі кездесетін қателерді анықтау, белгілердің туристерге әсерін зерттеу және мәселені шешуге бейімделудің дұрыс жолдарын ұсыну. Зерттеу барысында қателерді жіктеу үшін Түркістан қаласының белгілері талданды; туризм саласында жұмыс істейтін адамдармен онлайн және офлайн сауалнамалар мен сұхбаттар өткізілді. Жауаптардың анализі аударма кезінде туындайтын проблемалар қала бойынша жүруді қиындататынын көрсетті. Зерттеуде белгілерді түсінбеу мәселелерін шешу жолдары ұсынылған. Зерттеу жұмысы аудармадағы қателіктерді азайтуға және көрсеткіштер мен белгілер тұрғысынан туризмді жақсартуға көмектеседі.

Түйін сөздер: белгілер аудармасы, көрсеткіш-тақтайшалар, турист, қателер.

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Introduction

Turkistan is the administrative center of the Turkistan region. It is located in the south of Kazakhstan. Recently, this city is expeditiously changing in a good way. Lately, it was awarded the title of the capital of the Turkic countries. According to official data, annually Turkistan is visited by more than one and a half million people, of which 30% are tourists coming from other countries, and the remaining 70% are tourists from different cities of Kazakhstan (A. Iskakov, personal communication, April 15, 2021). They come to see the sights of the city of Turkistan, visit sacred places, and the beautiful nature of Kazakhstan. It once again proves that this city is interesting for tourists. On this basis, certain measures should be observed in Turkistan to make it easier for tourists to move around the city, such as the availability of high-quality translation for public signs.

According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, *a sign* is a thing made of plastic or metal with information in words or drawings. It informs about something, warns, or instructs. Public signs can be met everywhere around a city. They direct people and give brief information or warning. Cities that are popular for tourists are believed to have bilingual or multilingual signs (Al-Athwary, 2014, p. 141). It means that the information on public signs is translated into a language that is understandable for most foreigners.

Translation of signs is becoming a trendy field of study in many countries. The reason for that is a large number of problems and mistakes that occur in translation. There is a growing body of literature that recognizes the importance of identifying errors and finding ways to solve them. According to previous studies conducted in this field, translation problems arise in grammatical, lexical, and cultural levels (Guo, 2012). These incorrectly translated signs are assumed to have a negative impact on the reputation of a country. Moreover, the lack of understanding of the signs can threaten the safety of tourists. Consequently, the analysis of signs and their translation is highly crucial.

Since English is the first international language worldwide, the translation of public signs into this language is inevitable (Ghosh, 2020, para. 3). Thus, it is extremely important to work more on the translation of public signs and try to advance the quality of all three language signs in Kazakhstan: Kazakh, Russian and English. This study focuses on all the aspects of translating public signs to increase the number of tourists visiting this city and meet their needs while sightseeing. In addition, the research work tries to distinguish the main issues in the translation of public signs in the city of Turkistan, explain its impact on tourists, and suggest ways to solve the existing problems.

The problem

As this paper states, there are numerous examples of wrong translations of signs or even a full absence of them in certain districts of the region. The point of a problem is a high need of making public signs as understandable as it is possible; eliminate all errors on the lexical and cultural levels and omissions. Especially at the time of significant growth of popularity of our country among foreign people, making Kazakhstan more foreign-friendly by dealing with public signs' problems is essential.

Statement of purpose and research questions

The purpose of this research is to identify the common mistakes in the translation of public signs in Kazakhstan on the example of the city of Turkistan, such as grammatical errors, lack of translation, wrong translation, etc. In addition, another purpose is to suggest the right ways to adapt the solution to the problem in the current program of translation of public signs. Investigating the problems of translating public signs into English will help us find out the shortcomings of existing translations. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the causes of incorrect translations, their impact on the experience of tourists in our country, and the possibility of improving them. The final analysis shows us

the weaknesses and strengths of the current translation in the territory of Turkistan and the ways of their possible improvement.

To investigate the problem, three research questions were posed:

1. What are the most common mistakes in the translation of public signs?
2. What impact do the problems with translation have on foreign tourists' experience?
3. What is the possible solution to increase tourist's understanding of signs?

The objectives are:

- to analyze the signs in the city of Turkistan;
- to find out whether all tourists understand the translation of the signs in the city;
- to find out whether the translation of signs affect the experience of tourists;
- to identify inconvenient things to navigate in the city based on the words and experience of travel industry professionals and tourists;
- to find out whether tourists approve the idea of integration of technological advances.

Rationale and significance

The study aims to contribute to the fast-growing area of tourism in Turkistan city, in particular, and in Kazakhstan, in general. Moreover, it affects translation studies. The work helps to understand the grasped meaning behind public signs translation and the significance of them. Also, it might have a positive impact on the tourists' experience in the future. With this understanding, everyone who is willing to make a certain city more foreign-friendly or to find ways in enhancing the translation of public signs will benefit from this work.

Literature review

Turkistan is a tourist city and people come from all over the world there (A. Iskakov, personal communication, April 15, 2021). Especially recently the city has started to develop rapidly and, consequently, even more tourists will visit it (Mazorenko, 2021, para. 1). This means that some measures must be followed in Turkistan, such as translating the signs into English so that tourists can easily navigate around the city. According to Qiannan (2012), public signs are the words and signs used together in public areas, such as transports, streets, and touristic spots (p. 168). And as stated by the Cambridge Dictionary, translation is the change of words in the source language to words in the target language with the same meaning. Accordingly, translation of the signs is a big process that has its own difficulties. This literature review examines the problems of translating the public signs in other countries. In addition, the review demonstrates suggestions to solve them from authors of the works connected to this research area.

The information on public signs is being translated into English in big cities; however, the quality of translation is believed to be low in many cases. Many reviewed works tend to have an idea to classify the errors in translation into two big aspects: linguistic and cultural. This view is supported by Amenador and Wang (2020), Guo (2012), and Al-Athwary (2014). The authors then divide the linguistic aspect into the following categories: grammatical, lexical errors, and misspelling of words. For instance, the sign *Baby House* was translated as *Baby Hause* in Sana'a, Yemen (Al-Athwary, 2014, p. 145). Another example is the word *Jewelry* was translated as *Gewelry*. This case given by Guo (2012) shows the spelling error on the indicator board in Changchun, China (p. 1216). The cultural aspect in translation is a deeper problem. As maintained by Ko (2010), it can seriously affect the tourist's behavior and attitude to the country (p. 111). Similarly, this idea is stated by Guo (2012) with their example of using the word *God* in translation,

meaning that someone should go first and has privileges (p. 1218). This word, however, is thought to have a religious tone for the westerners. That is why this cultural error might have a negative impact on the country's reputation. In contrast to the aforementioned authors, Elahi et al. (2010) and Aprianti et al. (2019) categorize all the problems in translating the signs as miscellaneous and unnatural, correspondingly (p. 46; p. 326).

There are several techniques that can be used in order to avoid serious mistakes in the translation of public signs. According to the book *Theory of Translation* by Proshina (2008), translators should not use literal translation to transfer the information from one language to another (p. 23). The literal translation has different types, such as sound, syntactic, and semantic level. In addition, the author gives advice not to translate, but transliterate the street names on public signs. The same idea is noticed in the work of Tussupbekova (2016), who analyzed the translation of signs in the capital of Kazakhstan. Another way to better translate the signs is to know the features of the target language. Wang and Liu (2020) and Qiannan (2012) emphasize that English signs mainly use nouns because they are believed to be more succinct and show specific content (p. 94; p. 169). For instance, the sign *Food & Beverage*.

As a solution to these problems, after conducting a survey among the population of Korea, Tan (2019) suggested strengthening government intervention, as well as formulas and guidelines which will actively promote the Yunnan region's tourism resources (p. 239). The same idea is noticed in the work of Amenador and Wang (2020). Another proposed solution by Tan (2019) was to develop an awareness of cross-cultural translation, namely translators should not only translate signs into the linguistic meaning of one nation but also look for existing designations in another language, thus concerning the culture and language of both nations (p. 240). In addition, they suggest improving the professionalism of the translator, since the norms for translation are always in the process of changing.

According to Tan (2019) and Amenador and Wang (2020), translators should spend more time in the field of work and take tests on their suitability as a translator on a regular basis. Likewise, there is a recommendation to avoid thinking in one language, pay attention to language communication and adaptability, and use less frequently a literal translation that distorts the true meaning.

The research works connected to the translation of public signs have been conducted in many countries. One of those countries is Indonesia that has problems with bilingual signs in the streets and tourist spots. According to Parthama et al. (2018), all the public signs in Bali should be bilingual, as the city is known to be touristic (p. 126). However, the problem is that not all the signs are translated, or the information translated into the source language is redundant. The same results are highlighted in the work of Cheng (2018) who analyzed the signs in Binzhou city, China. Other signs are stated to have a literal and adaptive translation. As a result, Parthama et al. (2018) suggest using adaptation to make a foreign-friendly environment (p. 129). Similarly, according to Cheng (2018), adaptation or dynamic equivalence conveys the meaning of public signs in a better way (p. 13).

This review of literature has observed many sources concerning public signs and problems connected with their translation into English. By reviewing the literature, we now have an idea of how signs are translated in different countries. The errors appear to be at the linguistic and cultural level. They are called unnatural in other works, as well. In addition, this literature review has demonstrated some methods for more accurate translation. Reducing literal translation, using transliteration, and considering the peculiarities of a language can lead to having better results. Moreover, several solutions to this problem have been found while reviewing sources. This relates to the idea that it is necessary to improve the professionalism of the translators themselves and to increase the

responsibility of the government. Likewise to use the correct lexicology, thanks to which there will be naturalness of a language. Naturalness encourages the reader to grasp the idea and understand the meaning of the sign. Although the topic is relatively new, this is a great opportunity for further study of the issue.

Methodology

Research design

This paper tries to let people gain more understanding about the importance of translation of public signs, relying on a concurrent triangulation mixed research method design, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are used at the same time in order to gain a perspective from multiple points of view to ensure a better understanding of the subject. The usage of both quantitative and qualitative methods would provide enough variety of data that could be gained through various means such as interviews which are there to understand a personal experience, survey - to compile some sort of data to analyze, a study of the literature related to translation and previously done works on similar topics to understand the trends that are happening around the world and acquisition of several dozen of photos of public signs to analyze them and find some differences, mistakes, and inconsistencies. The importance of the topic is ever increasing due to the current trend of Kazakhstan trying to set up cities like Turkistan as a favorable tourist destination which means the signs being part of the infrastructure of the city would have to be on a serviceable level to satisfy the needs of different types of tourists.

Research site

The research site here would be the Turkistan city, to be more specific, streets, popular tourist destinations, hotels, and public transportation hubs, such as airports and train stations. Streets and popular tourist destinations are chosen to check simple directional public signs and their quality while hotels and public transportation hubs are

there to check whether more detailed signs that may give instructions of something similar are of good quality.

Sample

The sample size of the participant in the survey was 68. All of which were chosen based on the volunteer sampling choice due to the lack of available opportunities to gather required people.

A sample for the interviews consists of people involved within the tourism industry in addition to several tourists which brings the number of interview participants to 10. Concerning anonymity which is an important thing that should be tolerated with due diligence. All of the participants granted their vocal permission for their opinions to be used in this research in an oral agreement. All information gathered from the participants of the survey would be distributed in a safe manner and the questions do not reveal any personal information besides the country of origin and native language which ensures the protection of the identity of the participants.

Concerning the interviews, participants that are representing the common people or to be more precise tourists and local citizens are handled in the same way as participants of the survey only revealing the country of origin while the participants of the interviews that are connected to the tourism industry would also stay anonymous and may only disclose their specialty to ensure the credibility of their opinions on the matter which would be agreed upon before the interviews would be taken. In addition, the requirement of stating personal information for the tourism industry workers was completely voluntary. Participation in the research should not carry any risks for the participants in any way since questions do not carry sensitive nature and just observational facts.

Data collecting instruments and materials

First, there is a literature study of existing documents concerning the topics to provide background in the matter and evaluating the similar occurrences happening throughout the world to ensure that the study carries the weight and can be part of a bigger picture. For that reason, there was the study of cases happening in the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Republic of Yemen. In addition, there was a study of the theory of translation to ensure that the methods of translation of public signs have been done in accordance with international standards.

Additionally, visual materials such as photos were used to record the data about the public signs and what they look like in general to see whether there are some inconsistencies in them and to check their grammaticalness from the students of the translation studies major point of view.

Then there is a survey of local citizens and tourists questioning the ease of walking around the city while lacking knowledge in a certain language. Questions were divided into three parts: information about participants (primary language and country of origin), quality of public signs, and changes in technology. Questions were designed in a way to test a directional hypothesis that states “Are public signs easy to understand and access?” Most of the questions asked gave the nominal variables which were directly asking *yes* or *no*, and some produced ordinal to grade positively or negatively. The aforementioned instruments and materials would answer questions of the quantitative part of the research.

For the qualitative research interviews were conducted in person and via the internet. The interviews followed the semi-structured format to ensure that the interviewee would be able to add something that may be of use for the research. Questions for the interview were designed to gather the experience of people in a more personalized manner

so that the data would be more conclusive and wide and there would be room for interpretation to conclude whether there are issues and if there are to discuss in which way.

Procedures

During the time spent on this work, there was a study of 12 different articles which were thoroughly inspected and notes from them were taken. In addition, two books on the theory of translation were read from which notes were also taken. After that group revision of notes has taken place to ensure that the notes are appropriate for the research.

The survey took place in early April. The survey was distributed on a voluntary basis between people at the time staying in Turkistan city. Upon receiving the results descriptive analysis has taken the place to check whether trends that are noticed from the previously mentioned articles have taken place.

Interviews were conducted at the same time as surveys. Interviewees were introduced to the general concept of the research and asked their permission for participation. Shortly after the interviews were recorded they were translated into the English language and transcribed. The transcription of the interviews was later organized and the results were interpreted in accordance with thematic analysis which means first axial coding was determined so they could be grouped up into thematic coding which in turn would be interpreted into useful information.

Findings

Common mistakes

Initially, in order to get more detailed information about the city and its signs, our research group took a trip to Turkistan city. To find the problems in the translation of the signs in the Turkistan city, we analyzed as many signs as possible. Signs in the streets, train stations, airports, hotels, and mainly in the city center were taken into consideration because they are mostly visited by tourists.

The collected data were first analyzed to identify the number of incorrectly translated and untranslated signs. One of main problems is the full absence of translation of the information on signs in the periphery of the city. Table i shows that 25.6% of signs were found to be incorrectly translated; 35.9% were recorded to have no translation into English.

Table i: Number of signs.

Signs	Number of signs	Percentage
Signs without errors	45	38.5%
Signs with errors	30	25.6%
Signs with no translation	42	35.9%
Total	117	100%

As it can be noticed from Table i, most of the signs of the city of Turkistan are translated without errors (38.5%). However, the number of signs with no English translation is slightly less. This problem was noticed on the warning and directing signs. The absence of translation on public signs can be dangerous for foreigners. For example, safety signs telling about the possibility of a fall of weight or fire were not translated. English-speaking tourists can probably get into a difficult situation unless the problem is solved.

Secondly, the incorrectly translated signs were studied in order to find types of mistakes and categorize them. Through analyzing the errors found in the translation, we could find four common types of mistakes. Table ii shows the categories and percentage of signs with errors.

Table ii: The categories of errors.

Categories	Percentage
Redundant	50%
Non-standardized	30%
Punctuation	13.3%
Lexical	6.7%

Table ii demonstrates that the majority (50%) of errors occur due to the use of too many words in the translation. We named this category *redundant*. According to previous studies, the information on the signs in English should be brief and clear. As stated by Qiannan (2012), English public signs are known to use nouns more frequently than verbs. Using succinct translation is likely to be more accurate and familiar to English speakers. The redundant translation can be illustrated by the following examples:

1. A translation on a public sign: Entrance without a mask is forbidden.

Our suggestion: No entry without a mask.

2. A translation on a public sign: Do not shake hands.

Our suggestion: No handshaking

These examples reveal the redundancy of words in translation. Instead, we suggest replacing verbs with nouns: entrance is forbidden – no entry; do not – no; shake hands – handshaking. These suggestions are taken from the previously conducted research works.

The second category in Table ii is named as non-standardized. On many signs the information is translated correctly; however, there is a tendency that different words are used for the same information in different places in one city. The problem is that there is no unified translation system for signs. For example, on the warning sign “в случае пожара не пользуйтесь лифтом”, the word “лифт” is translated as *lift*. However, on the directing

sign, the translation of the same word is *elevator*. Another example of a non-standardized translation in Turkistan is a differently transliterated name: in a mausoleum, the name of a Turkic poet is transliterated as *Khodja Ahmet Yasawi* on one informative sign, and on another sign, it is *Khodja Ahmed Yasawi*. The difference is in the ending, using *d* and *t* (Ahmet-Ahmed).

The next category in Table ii is *punctuation*. Surprisingly, punctuation errors are not a common problem, but they do occur. A probable explanation for this problem is the inattention of the translators. This shows that editing after translation plays a significant role. The punctuation errors are evident in the following cases:

1. The mausoleum of Khodja Ahmet Yasawiwas built...
2. Wear amask

In the above examples, there is no space between some words: *Yasawi was* and *a mask*. Such inconsiderable mistakes might have a negative impact on the city's reputation.

The last category that the current study found out is named as *lexical*. By lexical we mean the wrong choice of words in the translation into English. For example, the information “берегите ближнего” is translated as *be kind to your relative*. The information on the sign is about being cautious during the pandemic, and consequently, the word *kind* is not suitable in this context. We suggest the following translation: take care of your fellow man. This suggestion is given according to the advice taken from the literature review.

One interesting finding is that this type of error occurs very often in other countries, according to the works we reviewed. However, this problem is not so widespread in Turkistan, which is very encouraging.

Descriptive analysis

To get a deeper understanding of whether the signs have an impact on tourists' experience, the survey was conducted among people from different cities of Kazakhstan and countries that we met in Turkistan city. As a result, 68 people have taken part in the survey. Out of them 19.2% was from Turkey (13 people), 5.8% from Norway (four people), 10.3% from Russia (seven people), the remaining 64.7% from Kazakhstan (44 people), to be more precise, 27.9% came from South Kazakhstan (19 people) 11.8% from Northern Kazakhstan (eight people) and 11.8% from Western Kazakhstan (eight people), 13.2% from Eastern Kazakhstan (nine people). 51.5% of them find the Russian language is the most comfortable language to travel to; however, 25% (tourists from Norway and Turkey) consider that the English language is the best one; the other 23.5% state that the Kazakh language is the most convenient one. Russian and Kazakh-speaking tourists found public signs as much as understandable, while English-speaking tourists struggled with that.

In terms of percentage, it goes like:

1. 25% (19.2% Turkey and 5.8% Norway) claim that there is no information on the information signs in English. Especially on the territory of the Mausoleum and the city center. On the index cards, the translation is not always present.
2. 75% (10.3% Russia and 64.7% Kazakhstan) claim that the signs played a big role in the orientation of the city. Everything was very clear and understandable.

According to the given information that tourists from Norway and Turkey didn't understand a thing from public signs, we decided to ask the next question. The question was "Have you ever encountered a complete misunderstanding of these very signs or the inability of guides to explain certain information to you? And did you need the help of the

visit-center of Turkistan?” 100% of english-speaking tourists told us that only in visit-center they could find English-speaking people who could help them.

These people also said that they had not seen any public signs for the disabled. 42 out of 68 respondents were sure that there are no public signs for the disabled people. This is 61.8%, the remaining 38.2% were not sure whether they exist or not (26 people).

The next key question we asked was “Have you ever come across incorrectly composed public signs, for example, grammatically?” 54.4% of asked people said that they didn’t see errors in public signs. 41.2% weren’t sure if they saw or not, while 5.8% said that they saw incorrectly composed public signs. Based on these answers, the following question was posed: “In your opinion, is the translation of these signs into English and Russian simple and understandable for you?” (The question was asked about those signs with translations into all three languages). For 94.2% the translations were very clear, the other 5.8% had difficulties with understanding them.

The last two questions were posed to get a personal opinion from the tourists about the importance of QR-codes and the fact that the Kazakh language will complete the transition from Cyrillic to Latin. All 68 people surveyed were confident that the integration of QR-codes into the system of translation public signs will only be beneficial. And more surprisingly, 100% of the people surveyed were in favor of a complete transition from Cyrillic to Latin.

Cross-tabulation 1

Table iii

Cross-tabulation "Have you come across incorrectly composed signs, for example, grammatically?" * "Have you encountered a complete misunderstanding of these very plates, or the inability of guides, tour guides to explain certain information to you? And did you need help from the visit centre of Turkistan?"					
			<i>"Have you encountered a complete misunderstanding of these very plates, or the inability of guides, tour guides to explain certain information to you? And did you need help from the visit centre of Turkistan?"</i>		
			<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>In total</i>
<i>"Have you come across incorrectly composed signs, for example, grammatically?"</i>	<i>1</i>	count	3	1	4
		expected	1,0	3,0	4,0
	<i>2</i>	count	8	29	37
		expected	9,3	27,7	37,0
	<i>3</i>	count	6	21	27
		expected	6,8	20,3	27,0
<i>In total</i>		count	17	51	68
		expected	17,0	51,0	68,0

(Note: In the question "Have you come across incorrectly composed tablets, for example, grammatically?" - 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Not sure; In the question "Have you encountered a complete misunderstanding of these very plates, or the inability of guides, tour guides to explain certain information to you? And did you need help visiting the centre of Turkistan?" - 1 = Yes, 2 = No)

Table iv

Chi-square test			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig (2-)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	5,670a	2	,059
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	4,741	2	,093
<i>N. of valid cases</i>	68		
a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,00.			

To check whether there are any connections between incorrectly translated signs and misunderstanding of their meaning the cross-tabulation has been concluded (See Table iii). After that, a Chi-square test was conducted to check if the relationship is significant or not. The results show that $X^2(2, N=68)=5,670.p=0,59$ (See table iv) which indicates that a null hypothesis, in this case, should be reflected and there are no connections in that regard.

Cross-tabulation 2

Table v

Cross-tabulation "What language do you speak, or what language is comfortable for you to travel?" * "Have you come across incorrectly composed signs, for example, grammatically?"						
			"Have you come across incorrectly composed signs, for example, grammatically?"			In total
			1	2	3	
"What language do you speak, or what language is comfortable for you to travel?"	1	count	1	17	15	33
		expected	1,9	18,0	13,1	33,0
	2	count	0	12	6	18
		expected	1,1	9,8	7,1	18,0
	3	count	3	8	6	17
		expected	1,0	9,3	6,8	17,0
In total		count	4	37	27	68
		expected	4	37,0	27,0	68,0

(Note: In the question "What language do you speak, or what language is comfortable for you to travel?" - 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Not sure; in the question "Have you come across incorrectly composed tablets, for example, grammatically?" - 1 = Yes, 2 = No, 3 = Not sure).

Table vi

Chi-square test			
	Value	d	Asymp. Sig (2-)
Pearson Chi-Square	6,774a	4	,148
Likelihood Ratio	6,501	4	,165
N. of valid cases	68		

a. 3 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,00.

To find out whether there are any connections between incorrectly translated signs and language the cross-tabulation has been concluded (See Table v). After that, a Chi-square test was conducted to check if the relationship is significant or not. The results show that

$\chi^2(4, N=68)=6,774.p=0,148$ (See table vi) which indicates that a null hypothesis, in this case, should be reflected and there are no connections in that regard.

Cross-tabulation 3

Table vii

Cross-tabulation "Where did you come from to the city of Turkistan?" * "In your opinion, is the translation of these signs into English and Russian simple and understandable for you?"					
		<i>"In your opinion, is the translation of these signs into English and Russian simple and understandable for you?"</i>			<i>In total</i>
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>		
<i>"Where did you come from to the city of Turkistan?"</i>	<i>1</i>	count	2	11	13
		expected	,8	12,2	13,0
	<i>2</i>	count	2	2	4
		expected	,2	3,8	4,0
	<i>3</i>	count	0	7	7
		expected	,4	6,6	7,0
	<i>4</i>	count	0	44	44
		expected	2,6	41,4	44,0
<i>In total</i>		count	4	64	68
		expected	4,0	64,0	68,0

(Note: In the question "From where did you come to the city of Turkistan?" - 1 = Turkey, 2 = Norway, 3 = Russia, 4 = Kazakhstan; In the question "In your opinion, is the translation of these signs into English and Russian simple and understandable for you?" - 1 = No, 2 = Yes).

Table viii

Chi-square test			
	<i>Value</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>Asymp. Sig (2-)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	19,370a	3	<,001
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	13,718	3	,003
<i>N. of valid cases</i>	68		
a. 5 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 24.			

To find out whether there are any connections between the ability to easily understand signs and country of origin the cross-tabulation has been concluded (See Table viii). The table suggests that there are more than the expected number of people from western countries that are struggling with understanding. After that, a Chi-square test was conducted to check if the relationship is significant or not. The results show that $X^2(3, N=68)=19,370, p=<0,001$ (See table viii) indicates that the relationship is significant. To check the strength of the relationship phi value was checked and it showed that it is 0,53 which indicates that it is moderate.

Overall cross-tabulation suggests that the issue that is present in those signs across the city of Turkistan is that they are hard to understand for Western tourists due to them being most likely culturally bound since the grammar was not an issue.

Thematic analysis

Since interviews were conducted with two groups of people, tourists and tourism industry professionals, the analysis will be divided into two. The themes that had been deducted from interviews with tourists are convenience, uniqueness, and technology.

The tourists had divided their opinions on the matter of public signs in two ways in a sense that people attending foreign countries may want to sacrifice the convenience of understanding their surroundings for sake of indulging themselves in the local culture, therefore the availability of English language in their surroundings including public signs might ruin their immersion. As one of the tourists stated: “In my opinion, it is more

authentic when everything is in its native language, or if it fits good or not too outstanding from the likes of authentic culture or architecture, you could have some translated signs, but all in all I'm for the local language..." This situation creates a challenge for people working towards adaptation of the surroundings of the city which may, in turn, lead to oversaturation of English language in the city which would make the city not to stand out on its own and feel like a more generic city, therefore, the absence of public signs provides a more unique experience.

On the other side, there is the problem of convenience for people attending the city and significant places that some of them are lacking in terms of translation into English and most of which are only available in Russian and Kazakh languages. This leads to the fact that unless a person has a guide or a person that speaks one of those languages leads to their satisfying stay. As one of them said: "It was hard for me to read the information inside the mausoleum because it was in Russian and Kazakh but in some places, it was in English, so it would be better if it was more in English for foreign tourists." This can be correlated to the bad translations which would ruin tourists' experience in the same manner. As one of them stated: "It would help to improve especially the information signs because people come back to their countries and tell their friends, we were here but we did not understand anything"

The last theme concerns the use of technology as a balance for preserving culture and making it more convenient to visit the city. One of the interviewees said: "... maybe some integration of some mobile app...". This may imply that there is a need for additional complementary technologies for the city to strike a better balance to satisfy the tourists.

The interviews with the tourism specialists had two major themes overarching throughout all interviews and it is the development of the technologies and need to reach international standards. As of right now most of the directional signs are in good condition

as one of the interviewees stated: “We have had public signs in English for a long time because this is Turkistan, it is a well-known tourist city. Even before the proclamation of it being the regional center, before that, we had public signs in English. They are in three languages Kazakh, English, and Russian.” But the thing is that there's always room for improvement and one of the things that are under development is the use of QR codes. A person working on these things stated: “We are currently negotiating with big companies to implement QR-codes and a city map”. It means that QR-codes are in place to combat some misunderstandings via the usage of the technologies.

The other part is that there is a need to reach international standards. As a few people noted that Turkistan city is lacking in terms of the variety of available tools for people to navigate around the city and that public signs are just a part of a whole group of things that may be rendered useless unless there is a system in place. And as one of the interviewees said: “You need to put some public signs everywhere, pedestrian signs, and it should be based on the experience of people who know how to do this”. This leaves the fact that the problem of public signs should be also studied beyond just the scope of translation studies to tackle the problem with more precision.

Discussion

As shown in the findings section, which answers the research question (What are the most common mistakes in the translation of public signs?), there is a notable amount of signs that are subjected to mistakes such as redundancy, non-standardization, punctuation, and lexical problems. This draws a parallel to the situations that are happening in the other parts of the world where similar mistakes are also prevalent when translating into the English language (Al-Athwary, 2014). This indicates that the issue at hand is not a single occurrence but rather a global issue that should gain more relevance since signs are an

important part of basic navigation and are important for people's ability to understand their surroundings.

This speaks of the importance of qualification of the person translating and at the same time about the thorough need for checking the final product since this is a common occurrence throughout the world. The qualification of the translators refers not only to their ability to produce an easily comprehensible translation but also their ability to produce a translation that would be appropriate for the occasion. The issue in this sense is the fact that translators are working with the limited amount of space given to them which is dependent on the size of the sign that the text is put upon. As mentioned before, there is a problem with redundant text which directly correlates to this issue which leads to the fact that the text would have to be packed into a small space which would disrupt the font size where the issues that may occur is that one part is bigger than the other or they are both too small which hurts the readability of the given sign. The second issue that is also connected with this problem and that is the fact that if the source text is in the Russian language and the target text is in the English language that would generally lead to the uneven amount of text present in both texts where the Russian one would edge out the English translation in terms of size which is also of concern for people trying to prepare a perfectly sized text.

But even taking into account those two factors, there is an issue of the aforementioned unification of general translation of signs which may lead to two perfectly viable translations existing at the same time while creating a commotion where it may confuse people whether there are talking about the same things or not since there are many peculiarities within a lot of languages. For instance, even depending on a regional basis, the same objects may be referred to by different names. It may spur a discussion whether unification is even possible since for the general usage there would have to be a choice

whether to choose a certain dialect over the other since those may be equally prevalent around the world like British English and American English.

This leads to the fact that cross-tabulation, which is used to answer the second research question (What impact do the problems with translation have on foreign tourists' experience?), states that despite the fact that tourists did not notice the grammatically incorrect signs they still did not fully grasp their meaning. This implies that the translation of them would be too foreignized and the best way to understand them would be to be fully aware of local culture and language which means that the challenge for translators is the fact that they do not domesticate the translation.

This transits into an issue concerning the financial situation where the cost of a mistake may lead to the expense of both money and time. If the person were to translate the same things there may be a list of ongoing mistakes that may leak into the production of those signs which would have to be fully replaced. The financial issue is also a problem in a sense as mentioned before about the redundancy where the text requires being of a versatile size to be used in standard-sized signs. It means that if the translation calls for a longer text to be put on a sign where the shortening of it would damage its meaning that would require the budget to accompany it since the sign would need to be of appropriate size for the text to fit in without hurting the font size that is good enough for people to read it. And the increase of the size would require the people in charge of outing them to produce or order several or more signs to be suitable for the text. It would mean that the translator would need to have perfect communication with the people in charge of it which creates an extra difficulty that is not directly related to the process of translation.

After interviewing tourists, as well as residents and the administration of the city of Turkistan, our team realized that one of the problems that currently exist and prevent tourists from moving around the city, learning more about the history of this sacred place,

averting them from exploring the sights is the lack of signs that have a translation into English. During the survey, several of the surveyed tourists answered that they are not satisfied with the translation and they encountered grammatical errors. Further, during the interview, the Deputy Director of the *Visit-Center of Turkistan* and the deputy director of the tour company *Shymkent* and the Senior Administrator of the *Hilton Hotel* in Turkistan confirmed that the number of tourists will increase with the elimination of this problem because information and impressions of the country are further posted on the Internet and people interested in traveling will draw conclusions before arrival, therefore, fewer tourists will have a desire to visit Turkistan. Based on this, our team came to the decision that for the best understanding of the public signs, as well as their improvement, more public signs should be translated into English. As an answer to the third research question (What is the possible solution to increase tourist's understanding of signs?), the possible solution, which was also liked by the 68 of the surveyed tourists and the administration after we provided it to them, would be to install QR-codes on most public signs in the popular places of Turkistan, where there is a large concentration of tourists.

Most importantly, we want to offer these QR-codes to be installed only in the most interesting places of Turkistan, where a huge number of tourists gather. For example, in the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmet Yassawi, in the Mausoleum of Arystan Baba and in other sights of the city. It will work very simply, when pointing a cell phone or other gadget at it, it will show not only the translation, but also all the useful information related to this place, as well as tips on how to get to another attraction and will set the route to this location.

Public signs with installed QR-codes have been around for a long time and in many countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, and others, and this provided an opportunity for tourists to safely move around these cities without worrying that they may not understand where they are and what the public signs mean (Zaman, 2013, para. 1). The

most important advantages that Turkistan will get after installing this feature are: it will keep the public aware of the meaning of the descriptions of attractions; likewise, it will be a new way to discover the city, because not all people, namely tourists like to approach guides and interact with them.

In addition, it will be available to a wide range of users, since now a large number of people use cell phones and other gadgets, and most importantly it will create a more digital and modern city, which will be happy to welcome tourists from different countries.

Conclusion

The translation of information on city signs is important both for tourists and for the city itself. In order to identify the problems that arise during the translation of signs and their consequences, this research paper conducted a study in the city of Turkistan. The aim of the present research was to examine the mistakes and impact that they have on understanding from the point of view of tourists and, moreover, try to find ways to improve the quality of translation and eliminate the problem. The paper used qualitative and quantitative research methods in order to deeper investigate the problem.

The research paper raised three research questions. The first result of the investigation shows that there are four common types of mistakes: redundant translation, non-standardized, punctuation, and lexical errors. The major finding was that the city lacks signs containing information in English. The second result is that the information from the surveys conducted with tourists from different cities of Kazakhstan and from other countries confirmed that public signs were essential in getting information about the city and the improvement of the translation on them would lead to an easier navigation in the city. A possible way to solve the problem of untranslated or incorrectly translated signs, as

the third result, is the integrating technological advances in the infrastructure of the city, such as QR-codes that contain the information in different languages.

Taken together, these results suggest that the problem of translation of signs is now relevant. The research work lays the groundwork for future research in the field of translation of signs in the city of Turkistan. The work is believed to be helpful for the tourism industry of the Turkistan city and, in addition, for translators, as the work shows all the possible mistakes in the translation of public signs. Moreover, other cities becoming popular tourist spots can benefit from this research. Further research could be conducted to determine the effectiveness of technological advances and whether it is convenient in use in navigation through the city.

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Appendices

The survey questions:

1. Where did you come from to Turkistan city?
2. What language do you speak, or what language is comfortable for you when traveling?
3. How did you navigate in the city?
4. Did the public signs or information signs help you navigate around the city?
5. Have you ever come across signs for people with special needs? Did you notice the translation of these signs?
6. Have you ever come across incorrectly composed signs, for example, with grammar errors?
7. Have you ever encountered a complete misunderstanding of the signs, or the inability of guides to explain certain information to you? And did you need help from the visit-center of Turkistan?
8. In your opinion, is the translation of the signs into English and Russian easy and understandable for you?
9. Do you approve of a complete transition from Cyrillic to Latin?
10. How do you feel about the possibility of integrating QR-codes into index and information signs to get complete information about the translation and location of the given sign?