

Toponyms Translation: The Case of Hue's Citadel Place Names

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Abstract: Translation and Interpretation are two complicated but interesting works in Linguistic research. Especially in the case of translating toponym (place names) from language to language. It requires an interdisciplinary theory of toponym, nomination and translation. This study aims to discuss and consider logical ways to translate place names of buildings and construction within Hue Imperial Citadel System from Vietnamese to English with highly equivalent in language meaning and sense. In this paper, the “Skopos” Theory is going to be looked into to discuss our issue. Names of constructions belong to Hue citadel will be taken into consideration for this study. This paper will make a precise translation for those place names then make a basic contribution to nominate constructions inside Hue Citadel in English. As a result, foreign people will understand more precise about place names and their meaning during visiting Hue Citadel Complex.

Introduction about Translation Toponym

Studying toponym in Vietnam is an interesting major which are now being instructed popularly in universities and other institutes. There are lots of researches about toponym in Vietnam as well as foreign countries. Besides, translation and interpretation are two sophisticated domains in studying and researching linguistic. Nonetheless, the study or research papers of these two majors are so scarce. In details, there are few authors that make a mixed study between toponym and translation to discuss perspectives to approach those so that they can create a framework for translating toponym from language to language. That leads to the fact that this paper is making an effort to discuss and explore new points relating to toponym translation, particularly the case of Hue citadel (A World Cultural Heritage Complex)

Brief Overview about Toponym

Toponym is a subject that studies about toponym. It requires candidates' logical background knowledge for Linguistics, Etymology, Phonology and even Semantics... Until now, there has been a numerical of researches about toponym and its definition with different perspectives. Kadmon at his book, stated that “*Toponym or topographic name, is a proper name that shows topographic features, on the Earth, or heavenly body such as moon, planets or one of its satellites*” (Kadmon, 2000). It can be inferred that he is trying to approach toponym definition with geographical aspect. He then also view and study about toponym by using theories and features of geography. Vietnam is a country with ancient, special history and culture. Undoubtedly speaking, there is a mixture in culture and language during our past with Chinese, French and even American. Therefore, the study of toponym would be interesting but not simple. Mentioning about origin of toponym (Etymology), we ought to trace the origin of language systems which have been existed in Vietnam from the ancient time. They are French, ancient Cambodian, Austronesian, Tai – Kadai, Mon – Khmer... Furthermore, there are some definition of Vietnamese experts with a similar perspective to show that toponym belong to concepts as “Location”, “Proper Name”, “Toponym type” and “Area”: Truong (1996), Au (2008), Hoa (2018). Especially with Truong (1996), he mentioned “*Toponym types as constructions which were built from the old time such as temple, pagoda, shrine...*”. Also, he defined that “*Toponym are natural or artificial objects...*” (Truong, N. K, 1996). We highly agree with this point because they are also located at a particular place and their location has been settled steadily. Thus, we shall take a glimpse at Hue citadel with their constructions' names. In addition, about ways of classifying toponym as nominating formula, there are some points made by numerical of researchers. However, we mostly accept with classifying perspective of Tent as he divides toponym into 7 types from to his criteria of naming places: Descriptive, Associative, Occurrence, Evaluative, Shift, Indigenous, and Eponymous. (Tent, 2015)

Translation Issue Review

Beside toponym, we also investigate whether theories of translation applied in this paper. Until now, there are lots of studies and researches which clarify some theories of translation. “Skopos” is somehow a suitable theory for specialized translation. This theory was first introduced by Vermeer in 1978 at Germany. He explained “*Every action has a purpose and translation is an action, therefore, it has to have a purpose....*” (Vermeer, 1978). It can be inferred from this statement that when we start to do a translation with a word, phrase, sentence or a paragraph, we should consider purpose and goal after finishing our task. Also, for non-

linguistic aspect, he stated “*Linguistics alone won’t help us. First, because translating is not merely and not even primarily a linguistic process. Secondly, because linguistics has not yet formulated the right questions to tackle our problems.*” (Vermeer, 1987). This can be comprehended as beside linguistic knowledge, we should apply our background knowledge which are concerning to what we are going to translate. Regarding to our circumstance here, we translate toponym in Hue’s citadel complex toponym. This mission requires us with cultural and historical knowledge to fulfill due to the fact that those constructions belong to the historical and cultural events of “Nguyen” dynasty, the last dynasty of Vietnam feudalism age in the history.

Furthermore, our purpose is to translate name of toponym from Vietnamese to English. Our target text is English and our audiences are those who are English native speakers. Thus, foreign tourist especially those who are native speakers of English, they can understand what is explained here regarding to their basic knowledge about culture and history. This is a problem of intercultural communication. Because we are transferring from Vietnamese culture to English culture by using translation tools “Skopos”.

A Brief introduction of Hue Citadel complex

Hue is an ancient and used to be an old capital of Vietnam during “Nguyen” dynasty from 1802 until 1945. After 1945, Hue were took over by Vietnam communist party led by Ho Chi Minh. Until 1993, it was recognized by UNESCO as “World cultural heritage”. There are now more than 160 sites and constructions left in the citadel. In this paper, 16 sites would be chosen as special features of citadel to be looked into. After collecting and analyzing those sites, we have made a chart with names and their function in Vietnamese as Table 1:

No	Name of Construction	Function of Construction
1.	NGỘ MÔN	A main gate for King to enter the enclosure of a citadel
2.	ĐIÊN THÁI HÒA	A palace, court where Kings held big conference
3.	ĐIÊN CÀN CHÁNH	A palace, court where Kings held a subordinate meeting and formal banquet
4.	ĐIÊN CÀN THÀNH	A palace, regarded as King’s main office
5.	ĐIÊN KIÊN TRUNG	A palace that King lives
6.	ĐIÊN PHỤNG TIÊN	A worship place of “Nguyen” dynasty, especially for women in Palace
7.	CUNG KHÔN THÁI	A palace for King’s first concubine to live
8.	CUNG TRƯỜNG SANH	A palace that Kings’ mother lives
9.	CUNG DIỄN THỌ	A palace that Kings’ grandma lives
10.	HÙNG MIẾU	A worship place of “Nguyễn Phúc Ánh’s parents”
11.	THÈ MIẾU	A worship place of 13 Kings of “Nguyen” dynasty
12.	TRIỆU MIẾU	The worship place for Sir “Nguyen Kim” the ancestor of “Nguyen” dynasty and his wife
13.	THÁI MIẾU	The worship place for the nine “Nguyen” Lords
14.	HIỂN LÂM CÁC	A tower which worship all high ranking mandarins of “Nguyen” dynasty
15.	VƯỜN CỜ HẠ	A garden where Kings read books and studied
16.	PHỦ NỘI VỤ	A warehouse which keeps properties, stuff of all court in “Nguyen” dynasty

Table 1: Vietnamese name of Hue citadel’s constructions

Regarding to this table, we can initially observe that most names of constructions above can be divided into 2 elements as linguistic components: General elements and Specified elements. The main components indicate the sort or form of toponyms as Gate, Palace, Court, Tower or worship place. Behind general elements are specified elements, they show the name of these constructions or buildings. In addition, these toponym and type of toponym are originally from ancient Chinese. Because at that time, we had been nearly millennium dominated by Chinese, so we used Chinese as our official language including written and spoken in our society from A.D until 10th century (Giap, 2008). Later on, we reconstructed Chinese to create a new language called “Han-Viet” (Sino – Vietnamese), we used that kind of language and “Nom” (A kind of Chinese variables) until the appearance of official Vietnamese in 16th century (1651) (Giáp, 2008). This type of language born with a combination of Chinese and ancient Vietnamese. That’s the reason why all names mentioned in Table 1 are Sino – Vietnamese.

To begin discussing about toponym nomination structure, the Skopos theory also mention the term “Culture”. According to this theory, translation is to transfer the culture in source text to reach the comprehension of culture that is implied in target text. In other words, the purpose of Skopos theory is to make target receivers those who are at different culture understand the translation products. Thus, investigating culture feature of target is also one of our task during translating process. Particularly in this case, constructions are

named by Kings, and the nomination mainly comes from the traditional culture of Vietnam at that time, a country organized by feudalism.

The next step, we will keep an eye on the table 1 and we can classify sorts of toponyms as: Gate, Palace, and worship place, Tower, Garden and Warehouse. Those name of sort are simple and visible to understand and imagine. In the other way, the nomination for those sorts or forms of toponym are easy and understandable in both Vietnamese and English. We don't have any cases that cannot explain in English due to the lack of lexicons. As we know that in lexicology, we have terms of "Word Value". It can be understood as with some sets of objects, this language can have equivalent term to express but other language cannot. For example: In Vietnamese, we have words to describe similar constructions but slightly different in concepts. "Đình, đền, miếu miếu, am". Those terms describe construction with somehow similar in architecture but quite different in worship person. "Đình" is a place where they worship God of particular area, "Miếu" means temple, "Miếu" is a place where we worship person who passed away right at special moment as midnight or midday. "Am" is a small place where worship Buddha, made individually by a person. We can see in English, there are two or three cultural terms to indicate those religious constructions as: Temple, Shrine, Pagoda (Buddhism) Church (Christian), Tower (Other religion), and Mosque (Islam)... Thus, there are some objects that have Vietnamese terms but nor in English or other language.

Thirdly, we are going to examine specified elements of those toponyms. As shown in table 1, to analyze their meanings, we recommend that those names can be divided into 3 groups: 1) Name with meaning related to construction's nomination type; 2) Name with meaning doesn't relate to construction's nomination type; 3) Name with vague meaning.

Name of Construction	Meaning of Name	Type
NGO	Horse, An element in Feng-shui that shows the relation between direction and two zodiac animals (Tý – Mouse and Ngọ - Horse). That is North and South direction.	1
THÁI HÒA	Thái: Smooth, Hòa: A successful mix or cooperation	1
CÀN CHÁNH	Càn: Affair, works, task; Chánh: connected to key or crucial affair of a country	1
CÀN THÀNH	Càn: King, special human; Thành: Finished, Citadel, Wall	3
KIẾN TRUNG	Kiến: meet, see; Trung: Middle, loyalty	2
PHỤNG TIÊN	Phụng: Phoenix, Taking care of; Tiên: Fairy, first, ancestry	1
KHÔN THÁI	Khôn: Heaven, Thái: peaceful, settlement	3
TRƯỜNG SANH	Trường: Long, long time; Sanh: To live, to exist in this life	1
DIÊN THỌ	Diên: to enlarge, to prolong; Thọ: Longevity	1
HÙNG	An element includes in reign's name of Gia Long King's father	1
THỂ	An element includes in reign's name of Gia Long King	1
TRIỆU	An element includes in reign's name of Sir "Nguyen Kim" mandarin. The ancestor of "Nguyen" dynasty	1
THÁI	An element includes in reign's name of first of 9 "Nguyen" Lord	1
HIỀN LÂM	Hiền: visible, transparent; Lâm: pleasure with attendance	1
CỐ HẠ	Cố: National affair, mission; Hạ: Relax, Ease, Not too stressed	1
NỘI VỤ	Nội: Inner, Inside something; Vụ: Affair, Task, Work	2

Table 2: Meaning of elements in Construction name

As Table 2 mentioned, there are 12 names that belong to type 1; 2 names belong to type 2; 3 names belong to type 3. It can be understood that there are two main criteria which are affected when naming construction. An expectation to all best things in the future and name of special person that concern with constructions. Regarding to this results, we can come to create next table with some suggestions on suitable names in English to secure the equivalence in meaning between two names.

Name of Construction	Equivalent Term
NGO MÔN	South Gate
ĐIÊN THÁI HÒA	National Affair Palace
ĐIÊN CÀN CHÁNH	Reception and Banquet Palace
ĐIÊN CÀN THÀNH	King's Office
ĐIÊN KIẾN TRUNG	King's Court

ĐIÊN PHỤNG TIỀN	Ancestor's Shrine
CUNG KHÔN THÁI	Concubine's Court
CUNG TRƯỜNG SANH	Lifelong Court
CUNG DIÊN THỌ	Longevity Court
HÙNG MIẾU	Temple of Gia Long king's parents
THỂ MIẾU	Temple of "Nguyen" dynasty's Kings
TRIỆU MIẾU	Temple of "Nguyen" dynasty's ancestor
THÁI MIẾU	Temple of "Nguyen" dynasty's Lord
HIỀN LÂM CÁC	"Nguyen" Mandarins Tower
VƯỜN CỎ HẠ	Tranquil (Peaceful) garden
PHỦ NỘI VỤ	National household Office

Table 3: Equivalent Name suggested in English for Constructions

Conclusion

After analyzing meaning and transferring some names of constructions in Hue citadel's construction. Some points needed to be stated as:

1. Toponym in Vietnam in general and Hue in particular, are interesting domain of study. The way it is named is various and copious. Some are named based on their special feature, characteristic and even using eponym. Particularly in Hue citadel, their names are mostly not decided by elements of their names. It was called after a cultural or historical story or event.
2. Due to the reason that most of the names are originally come from "Sino – Vietnamese", so lexicography must be applied to make it clearer in analyzing meaning of elements in each name. Thus, real meaning or inference that are hidden inside each word of the name.
3. When translating cultural term from source text into target text, it is crucial to have background culture or history knowledge to understand real meaning, stories behind those names then find out equivalent terms or objects to transfer. The target text also has to be clear and adjacent to the target audience to that they can comprehend it easily and clearly.
4. For eponym name, it is reasonable to keep an original name of that construction or building because we cannot translate proper name from source text to the target text. Proper name are nominated on purpose but proper names themselves, lexical, some have meaning and some are meaningless.
5. Unless some toponym using eponym, it is advised that we should use English equivalent terms to make tourists easy to understand our explanation through analyzing elements of toponym structure

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