

## Translating Urban Tourist Icons across Cultures: An English-Malay Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Urban tourist icons such as Paris, Istanbul or Sydney are major pull factors of a destination and are often represented in tourist promotional texts (TPTs) to persuade potential tourists to visit a destination. The use of the ‘iconic advertising approach’ (Litvin & Mouri, 2009), which capitalises on the iconicity of tourist icons, is one of the most effective advertising approaches in affecting a destination image. The strength of this approach lies in its key function of representing easily recognisable and positive images that reinforce or simply recall the audience’s previously held perceptions about the destination. However, the ways in which urban tourist icons are represented and perceived differ from one audience to another, for it is based on the cultural background of the audience. The differences in how these icons are represented and perceived pose a key challenge for translators of TPTs, whose role is to produce an effective translation in the target language and culture in order to persuade potential tourists in that language and culture. This paper discusses some of the cultural issues involved in translating tourist icons and analyses how a particular ‘tourist icon’ is represented in a published English TPT (source text) for an Anglo audience and how it has been translated into the Malay language for a Malay audience. The translation (target text) is analysed in terms of its functionality and effectiveness within the cultural context of the target audience. The discourse analysis of the source and target texts is complemented by findings derived from focus group discussions and an analysis of authentic TPTs in Malay (parallel texts). Based on the analysis, a functionally adequate translation which takes into consideration the cultural differences, hence preserving the iconicity of the destination, is proposed.

**Keywords:** translation; culture; tourism promotional texts; tourist icons; functional approach

### INTRODUCTION

Tourist icons assume a vital role in today’s fast-growing tourism industry. Tourism economies around the world have always capitalised on tourist icons to attract the attention of potential tourists (Becken, 2005). These icons are typically the key tourist attractions of a destination. They are “natural or built assets that are widely accepted by visitors as important tourist attractions or experiences” (Western Australian Tourism Commission, 2002). They are landmarks that are instantly recognisable and are “famous because they are famous” (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Furthermore, these icons are used to position a destination in the target market and to evoke specific feelings such as awe and admiration (Becken, 2005).

Urban tourist icons include both ‘city icons’, such as the Eiffel Tower in France, and ‘cities as icons’ such as Paris or Sydney. For many tourists, memories of the country or city reside in these icons, without which the country or city is no longer deemed special. Urban tourist icons which have become known throughout the world represent and embody a range of ideas and meanings. Paris, for example, represents Europe, France, high fashion, classicism, intellectualism, elegance, glamour, beauty and romance, and by extension, the Eiffel Tower represents Paris, Frenchness, modernity, etc.

The creation of tourist icons is diffused through a long-term process, involving different modes of dissemination ranging from word-of-mouth to mass-media advertising. The repetition and sedimentation of word-of-mouth travel stories and verbal/visual conventions in tourism promotional materials are what forges the iconicity of these icons (Wilson, 2006). In other words, the ‘icon’ status is induced by the various media and modes of tourism language to which the audiences are repeatedly exposed. Tourism marketers, in particular, showcase these icons in tourism promotional materials, such as tourist brochures, to attract the attention of potential customers. Tourists who instantly recognise these ‘icons’ are more likely to purchase the product or experience (Jenkins, 2003).

However, the fact that the iconicity of tourist icons depends on how famous and recognisable they are means that these ‘icons’ are only icons if and when they are deemed to be so by tourists. Thus, tourist icons are not iconic in themselves, but emerge as such in the mind of the beholder. This means that what might be construed as iconic by one audience might not be construed as such by another audience. Furthermore, even if different audiences and consumers recognise a tourist attraction as an icon, the way they would construe these icons might differ significantly. Such differences in perceiving the iconicity of tourist attractions would depend greatly on the audience’s cultural background, world knowledge, the tourism promotional content to which they have been exposed and the way these ‘icons’ have been represented to them through various media.

Since the iconicity of tourist icons depends largely on the how these ‘icons’ are represented and perceived in different cultures, translating such icons effectively is unlikely to involve a straight forward translation process. Instead, their translation would require the consideration of various cultural aspects. This paper examines how an urban tourist ‘icon’ in an English tourism promotional text (source text) is represented as an icon, and how it has been translated into Malay for a Malay audience, with the main questions being: “What do readers recognise in the tourist icon in question?”; “What does the tourist icon represent to the audience?”; “Is the ‘tourist icon’ iconic in the way it has been translated for the target audience?” and “If not, how should it be re-represented?” These questions will provide insights for the formulation of appropriate translation strategies, which I argue is essential.

## **TOURIST PROMOTIONAL TEXTS, DESTINATION IMAGE AND TOURIST ICONS**

The whole idea of tourist promotional texts (TPTs), such as tourist brochures and promotional websites, is to create a desirable and appealing image of the destination in the mind of the readers with the hope that this image will persuade them to travel to the destination as tourists. The destination image is constructed and negotiated with the utmost care, taking many aspects into consideration (e.g., motivations, preferences, needs, expectations and cultural backgrounds of target readers) and employing various verbal and visual strategies. One of the most effective advertising approaches in affecting a destination image, as suggested in the literature on tourism, is indeed the use of the ‘iconic advertising approach’ (Litvin & Mouri, 2009) which capitalises on the iconicity of tourist icons. The strength of this approach lies in its key function of depicting “easily recognizable, well-known, and attractive images that reinforce, enhance, or simply recall consumers’ previously held perceptions about the destination” (Litvin & Mouri, 2009).

### **THE CURRENT SCENARIO OF TRANSLATED TPTs**

The various aspects of tourism promotion in a monolingual context have always been given due attention by the tourism industry. Major players in the industry invest large sums of

money to persuade potential consumers and turn them into actual customers by producing high quality and effective TPTs. However, the same could not be said about tourism promotion in a multilingual context, that is, when the TPT is a translation. Translated TPTs have frequently been the subject of criticism and the fact that they are not given the professional attention now taken for granted in the production of their original has been acknowledged within the field of translation studies (Hickey, 2004; Kelly, 1998; Pierini, 2007; Pinazo, 2007; Snell-Hornby, 1999; Sumberg, 2004). In fact, a survey carried out by Sumberg (2004) suggests that there is agreement among key translation scholars/academics at British universities that the translation standard of not only TPTs but promotional brochures in general is deplorable throughout the world.

The reasons behind the failure of TPT translations are discussed by Sumberg (2004). Sumberg suggests that the poor standard of translated TPTs is attributable to the translation approach adopted (2004). She claims that the adoption of a linguistic rather than a functional approach suggests that translators are unwilling or unable to leave Smith and Klein-Braley's "safe haven of a 'straight translation'" (1997). This view is supported by Hickey (2004), whose discussion stems from the perspective of pragmatics, claiming that the problem lies in the fact that translators aim for 'semantic equivalence' instead of 'perlocutionary equivalence'. Put differently, translators tend to focus on the micro (linguistic) level of the language of tourism promotion leaving the macro (cultural) level largely ignored. This is despite the fact that the creation of TPTs involves a dual-level process, in which the macro level is the determining factor which shapes and guides the construction of the micro level. The importance of this macro level with regard to the language of tourism promotion has been rightly acknowledged by Dann (1996) who, in describing the purpose of the language of tourism promotion, stresses that in order to be able to convince potential tourists to become actual tourists, their needs and motivations—which are deeply rooted in culture—must be addressed:

[T]he language of tourism attempts to persuade, lure, woo and seduce millions of human beings, and in so doing, convert them from potential into actual clients. By addressing them in terms of their culturally predicated needs and motivations it hopes to push them out of the armchair and onto the plane – to turn them into tourists.

(Dann, 1996, p. 2)

The statement implies that it is the cultural level of the language of tourism promotion which shapes the micro level and determines the linguistic elements to be used in TPTs. Furthermore, given the fact that tourism is a cross-cultural phenomenon at its very core (Fodde & Denti, 2005), the notion of cultural differences is one which is of paramount importance in tourism promotion. In order to achieve the communicative purpose and overall intended function of TPTs—that is, rousing the burning desire in the reader's mind to travel to a tourist destination—the question of cultural differences must be dealt with adequately (Safarnejad, Imran Ho Abdullah, & Norsimah Mat Awal, 2013). The importance of the target culture, which we have described as representing the macro level of the language of tourism, lies in the fact that it is this level that defines and profiles the target audience and gives answers to the question: "For whom is the TPT created?" It is this level that determines the most effective strategies and techniques to be used, that is, those that are consistent with the profile of the target audience. In their analysis of TPTs, Haneefors and Larsoson (1993) concluded that the micro devices used, such as keywords, are "not so much those which refer to the attributes of the destination, but rather those which corresponds to the requirements of the potential tourist" (Dann, 1996).

## **A FUNCTIONAL APPROACH TO TRANSLATE TPT EFFECTIVELY**

In the field of TPT translation, where the ultimate purpose is to persuade the target audience to take a form of action (travel to a particular tourist destination), the function of the target text (TT) is central. What becomes more important than fidelity to the source text (ST) is the requirement that the TT must function optimally in the target culture. Translating promotional texts such as TPTs requires the translator to take into consideration factors that will influence the performance and reception of the TT. In other words, producing effective TPTs is an overriding condition which justifies the translation methods and strategies deemed necessary. These strategies might include, in the most extreme case of liberty, a complete rewriting or adaptation of a concept if the original concept is deemed unfeasible in the target culture. On the other hand, it may also include literal strategies such as cultural borrowing if the purpose is, for example, to acquaint the reader with the source culture or to provide exotic flavour and colour. On the whole, an effective approach for the translation of TPTs is one which is able to recreate an appealing image in the mind of the TT audience. This strategy is undeniably essential to ensure the functionality of the TT in the target culture. Such an approach is adopted by the ‘functional’ school of Translation Studies. The main idea advocated by this school of thought is that the translation process, and hence the translation product, are not determined by the effect of the ST on the source reader, nor the function assigned to the ST by the author, as advocated by equivalence-based translation theories. On the contrary, the determining factor, according to this approach, is the prospective function or purpose of the TT, as determined by the client’s needs which are largely constrained by the target context (text receiver’s needs, expectations, situation, culture, etc.) (Schaffner, 2009).

This approach, which emphasises the TTs function in the recipient’s culture above all, has far-reaching implications. Under such an approach, the source text is “no longer the first and foremost criterion for the translator’s decisions”, as it becomes only “one of the sources of information used by the translator” (Nord, 1997) to produce a functioning text in the target culture. Other information would include the translator’s assumptions about the interests, needs, expectations, knowledge and situational constraints of the target text addressees (extra-textual-factors) (Nord, 1997). Such assumptions will vary from one culture to another, hence the translator will not offer the same amount and/or kind of information as the ST author (1997). Under this approach, the concepts of fidelity and equivalence are no longer central, unless they are part of the specified job brief of a given translation assignment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Using the functional approach, a promotional passage from Tourism Australia’s consumer website ([www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com)) in English (ST) which employs the ‘iconic advertising approach’ to promote urban tourism was analysed. The website was selected as it was the only website of a National Tourism Organisation of an Anglophone country which has been translated into Malay and published on the internet ([www.australia.com/my](http://www.australia.com/my)) at the time of research. The analysis of the ST examined the way the iconicity of an urban tourist icon is represented to the ST audience (Anglophone readers) based on their cultural characteristics. This is followed by an analysis of the published Malay translation (TT) of the said passage. The analysis of the TT examined the way the iconicity of the urban icon in question is translated and whether the approach adopted is effective.

The effectiveness of the TT in creating an appealing image for potential Malay tourists was tested on five focus groups each comprising 7 to 8 native Malay speakers. The focus groups were shown the TT and their responses were examined so as to deduce the

effects of the TT on them. The causes of such effects were then examined in the light of the cultural traits of the Malay society.

The ST and TT analyses are followed by a parallel text (PT) analysis. Parallel text means relevant, authentic, non-translated Malay texts. These include authentic Malay texts of equal genre to the ST (i.e. Malay texts promoting the tourist urban icon in question), and other authentic Malay texts which reflect how the urban tourist icon in question is represented in the Malay culture for a Malay audience. Analysing the textual practices of the PTs and comparing them with the ST and TT is instrumental in determining the differences that exist in how the icon is represented for the ST audience and how it is represented for and perceived by the Malay society. The extra-textual, cultural knowledge derived from the PT analysis is crucial for the formulation of effective translation strategies (Schaffner, 1998). Based on the findings derived from the ST, TT and PT analyses, I propose a Malay version of the ST which is functionally adequate: that is, a translation which is able to create the intended effects on the reader.

### SOURCE TEXT ANALYSIS

Urban icons represent one of the many tourist attractions used in *australia.com* to promote Australia as a holiday destination. Among Australia's main city 'icons' promoted are the Sydney Opera House, the Harbour Bridge in Sydney and the Federal Parliament House in Canberra, while the most 'iconic' cities are Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast. For the purpose of this paper I have selected the following promotional passage (ST1), which represents the Gold Coast as an iconic urban destination. The Gold Coast, in particular, was selected given the fact that it is a popular tourist destination among Malaysians.

#### ST1

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##### **3. Get a touch of glamour on the Gold Coast, Queensland**

This iconic holiday destination offers 70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches, World Heritage-listed rainforests, theme parks and non-stop shopping and nightlife. Meet dolphins and polar bears at theme parks, ride rolling surf or do a day trip to an island. Party all night then explore the lush, subtropical hinterland. On Australia's 'coast with the most' life is all about having fun.

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Source: [http://www.australia.com/things\\_to\\_do/beaches.aspx](http://www.australia.com/things_to_do/beaches.aspx)

The iconicity of the Gold Coast in ST1 is built on a number of themes: sunshine (70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches), nature (beaches; a day-trip to an island; World-Heritage-listed rainforest; and lush, subtropical hinterland), family entertainment (theme parks; meet dolphins and polar bears at theme parks), shopping (non-stop shopping), hedonism (a touch of glamour; non-stop nightlife; party all night; life is all about having fun), and adventure (ride rolling surf; a day trip to an island; explore the lush, subtropical hinterland). These themes are employed on the basis that it is presupposed that these are some of the main themes which constitute the make-up of the iconicity of the Gold Coast in the mind of the reader. In other words, it is presupposed that, for the target audience, the Gold Coast as an urban icon represents the six themes identified above. However, it is apparent that of all six themes, the hedonism theme is the one which dominates the discourse. This is reflected in all three major components of the copy: the headline itself ("Get a touch of glamour on the Gold Coast, Queensland"), the body copy ("non-stop [...] nightlife"; "party all night"), and the end-line ("On Australia's 'coast with the most' life is all about having fun"). The theme of hedonism is evoked using keywords such as "glamour", "nightlife", "party", "non-stop", "all night", and "fun".

Although the number of occurrences of the nature theme (5 occurrences: beach, rainforest, wildlife, islands, hinterland) exceeds that of the hedonism theme (4 occurrences:

touch of glamour, non-stop nightlife, party all night, life is all about having fun), the hedonistic feature of the headline sets the tone for the entire copy. The hedonistic tone of the discourse is further consolidated by its end-line, which employs a powerful hedonistic slogan. The representation of the Gold Coast as a hedonistic playground is based on its fame as the party and glamour capital of Australia. It has also been portrayed as a ‘city of sin’ (Pace, 2008), equivalent to Las Vegas which is nicknamed ‘Sin City’. Such allegories imply that these destinations can fulfil adult fantasies and desires. For many tourists, the iconicity of the Gold Coast indeed lies in its reputation as a hub for night clubs, pubs, bars and adult entertainment. The representation of the Gold Coast within the framework of hedonism for Anglophone tourists is consistent with certain characteristics of the Anglo-Australian culture: individualism and indulgence (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Hedonism is a key feature of individualistic and indulgent cultures. Individualistic cultures emphasise, among other things, individual goals, rights, needs, concerns, happiness, freedom, challenge, autonomy, activity, and pleasure (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Cultures high on indulgence allow hedonistic behaviour and encourage pleasure, enjoyment, spending, consumption, sexual gratification, and general merriment (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

### TARGET TEXT ANALYSIS

In the Malay translation of the English copy (TT1), three out of the four elements relating to the hedonism theme were translated literally (a touch of glamour; party all night; life is all about having fun). As for the translation of the fourth hedonistic element “non-stop nightlife”, a freer approach was employed. This phrase was translated as “*gaya hidup malam yang menarik*” (attractive night lifestyle).

#### TT1

Source Text (ST)	Target Text (TT)	Back-Translation (BT)
<p><b>3. Get a touch of glamour on the Gold Coast, Queensland</b>                      This iconic holiday destination offers 70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches, World Heritage-listed rainforests, theme parks and non-stop shopping and nightlife. Meet dolphins and polar bears at theme parks, ride rolling surf or do a day trip to an island. Party all night then explore the lush, subtropical hinterland. On Australia’s ‘coast with the most’ life is all about having fun.</p>	<p><b>3. Kecapi dunia glamor seketika di Gold Coast, Queensland</b>  <i>Destinasi percutian ikonik ini menawarkan 70 kilometer pantai yang disinari mentari, hutan hujan yang tersenarai dalam Warisan Dunia, taman tema dan tempat beli belah tanpa henti dan gaya hidup malam yang menarik. Temui ikan lelua dan beruang kutub di taman tema, tunggangi ombak besar atau lakukan perjalanan sehari ke sebuah pulau. Berparti sepanjang malam, dan setelah itu terokai pedalaman sub tropika di sini. Di “pantai yang paling meriah” di Australia bergembira adalah segala-galanya dalam kehidupan.</i></p>	<p><b>3. Experience the world of glamour for a moment on the Gold Coast, Queensland</b>                      This iconic holiday destination offers 70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches, World Heritage-listed rainforests, theme parks and places for non-stop shopping and attractive night lifestyle. Meet dolphins and polar bears at theme parks, ride huge waves or do a day trip to an island. Party all night, then explore the, subtropical hinterland here. On Australia’s “most fun-filled beaches” life is all about having fun.</p>

Source of ST: [http://www.australia.com/things\\_to\\_do/beaches.aspx](http://www.australia.com/things_to_do/beaches.aspx)

Source of TT: [http://www.australia.com/my/things\\_to\\_do/beaches.aspx](http://www.australia.com/my/things_to_do/beaches.aspx)

Source of BT: My own translation.

The idea of over-indulgence in pleasure marked by the expression “non-stop” was reduced to “attractive”. “Nightlife” was not translated to the Malay meaning suggested by Dewan Bahasa’s English-Malay dictionary (2012) *hiburan malam hari* (night entertainment). Instead, it was rendered as “night lifestyle” which does not necessarily represent nightclubs, pubs, bars and adult entertainment. Although the “attractive night lifestyle” rendering is less hedonistic and therefore is aimed in the right direction in relating to Malay cultural

expectations (as we will see in the following paragraphs), the overall tone of the discourse remains hedonistic, owing to the other hedonistic elements which were rendered literally. Subsequently, the image of the Gold Coast portrayed in the TT remains one which is overshadowed by the notion of hedonism.

The preservation of this hedonistic tone in the TT is indeed questionable as it is not likely to evoke appealing images in the mind of Malay readers. Apart from the hedonistic theme, the remaining themes—sunshine, nature, family entertainment, shopping, and adventure—were all reproduced literally in the TT. While the literal translation of the family, shopping, adventure and nature themes does not seem to raise any problems at the macro level, adopting a literal approach in translating the sunshine theme does raise questions about the functionality of the TT in promoting the destination to Malay tourists.

The effect of the TT in TT1 was tested on the participants of the focus groups. Their overall response to the text was that it was not appealing to them. The main reason for this was the hedonistic tone of the discourse. They stressed that all elements relating to the hedonism theme (a touch of glamour; non-stop nightlife; party all night; life is all about having fun) were, in their view, inappropriate. According to the group, the notion of “glamour” in the Malay context is associated with celebrities, high fashion and elegance. Therefore its use in promoting the Gold Coast, which they perceive as a ‘family destination’, is peculiar.

The notion of ‘unrestricted enjoyment’ and ‘unbridled pursuit of pleasure’ (party all night; life is all about having fun) is also problematic to them on two levels. First, it contradicts the Malay way of life, which is constrained by and organized according to the *adat resam* (Malay customs and traditions) and the religious teachings of Islam, which require members of society to observe certain boundaries and limits. In Malay culture and therefore the Malay language, *berparti sepanjang malam* (party all night) carries negative connotations and would be associated with acts which are deemed indecent culturally and religiously. Excessive indulgence in pleasure and ‘reckless’ enjoyment are considered inappropriate in the Malay culture. Fun and enjoyment are to be experienced moderately and within cultural and religious boundaries. Second, it contradicts their image and expectation of the Gold Coast as a family holiday destination. The focus groups’ response towards the hedonism theme can be attributed to the cultural dimensions of collectivism and restraint of Malay society (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Cultures which are highly collectivistic, such as the Malay society (Al-Shboul, Maros, & Yasin, 2012) emphasise familial needs, goals and values. The Malay culture is known for its strong family orientation and places the needs of the family members above the needs of individuals. People behave as members of a family (Asma & Lim, 2001) and regard family prosperity as an important mission in life. To attain happiness and a meaningful life, family welfare is given utmost importance (Hassan, Dollard, & Winefield, 2010). Furthermore, time spent with family is seen as a dominant value.

The focus groups also expressed their dislike of the sunshine theme, asserting that the theme is repellent and that they prefer cool environments. They said that “there is enough sunshine in tropical Malaysia” and that Malay tourists want to escape the sun in search of cooler environments and the effects of seasonal climates—which do not exist in their home country—such as autumn, winter and spring. To them, “70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches” projects an image of a vast area of intense heat and discomfort. They further elaborated that Malays prefer shady beaches. This demonstrates a clear distinction between the different images of beaches which appeal to each culture: Malays prefer shady beaches while many Anglo-Australians prefer sunny beaches. They also pointed out that they do not associate the beach with sun but with family and beauty.

The response of the focus groups indicates that Malay tourists, like many other tourists, construe the Gold Coast as an iconic Australian city. Nevertheless, the way they perceive its iconicity is different from how other tourists might perceive it. While it may evoke the notion of hedonism for many tourists, particularly tourists from Anglo societies, it does not evoke a similar notion in the mind of Malay tourists in general. The first and perhaps only image of the Gold Coast which comes to the mind of Malay tourists is one which is familial in nature. In the eyes of Malay tourists, the Gold Coast is an international capital for family entertainment with exciting theme parks and various forms of entertainment for the entire family, especially the children. Therefore, the portrayal of the Gold Coast as a hedonistic destination will likely come as a surprise to Malay tourists who have different expectations and perceptions of the destination.

### PARALLEL TEXT ANALYSIS

The iconicity of urban tourist icons as perceived by tourists in general, as discussed earlier, is shaped by the various media representational practices to which these tourists are exposed. These include media such as print (e.g., travel books, newspaper accounts, magazine articles, advertisements and brochures); television (e.g., TV series, films and advertisements); and the internet (e.g., websites). Hence, the reason why the Gold Coast is associated with family entertainment among Malay tourists has much to do with how the city is being and has been portrayed by the various media of tourism promotion in Malaysia. The following promotional articles taken from a leading Malay newspaper (PT1) and a Malaysian entertainment website (PT2) are representative of how the Gold Coast is portrayed and promoted in Malay language media.

#### PT1

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*Apabila menyentuh tentang pelancongan di sini pastinya kebanyakan pelancong memilih Gold Coast sebagai destinasi utama. Bandar ini terkenal dengan pantainya yang berombak-ombak, taman tema yang dipenuhi roller coaster, Studio Warner Bros selain koala dan kanggaru.* (Hamid, 2011)

[When talking about the tourism here (in Australia), there is no doubt that most tourists would choose the Gold Coast as their main destination. This city is **famous** for its beaches with endless waves, rollercoaster-filled theme parks, Warner Bros Studio as well as koalas and kangaroos.] (My own translation)

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#### PT2

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*Apabila menyebut tentang Gold Coast, antara perkara pertama terbayang di fikiran kita adalah pantainya yang berombak-ombak, taman tema yang dipenuhi roller coaster, Studio Warner Bros serta haiwan trademark Australia iaitu koala dan kanggaru.* (Roslen Fadzil, 2008)

[When Gold Coast is mentioned, **one of the first things that comes to our mind** are its beaches with endless waves theme parks full of roller coasters, Warner Bros Studio and Australia's trademark animals, i.e. the koala bear and the kangaroo.] (My own translation)

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The iconicity of the Gold Coast is indicated through the use of the keyword *terkenal* (famous) in PT1 and the expression “one of the first things that comes to our mind” in PT2. PT1 describes the Gold Coast as an Australian city which most Malay tourist would choose over other Australian destinations, due to its iconicity as a family-oriented holiday destination, with attractions which appeal to the Malay family. Such a make-up of the iconicity of the Gold Coast is also highlighted in PT2. Echoing similar representations of the Gold Coast's iconicity, a more detailed promotional article (PT3), describes Queensland as an ideal destination for the Malay family, mainly due to its theme parks (which are located on the Gold Coast).



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**PT3**

*Adakah anda sedang merancang percutian untuk seisi keluarga? Buntu memikirkan destinasi yang ingin dikunjungi, apa kata kalau anda melancong ke daerah kedua terbesar di Australia iaitu Queensland!*

*Queensland adalah lokasi menarik yang sangat sesuai dikunjungi bersama seisi keluarga kerana keistimewaan taman temanya. Seseengah pelancong merujuk daerah itu sebagai 'Bandar Taman Tema Permainan Australia' berikutan ia mempunyai sekurang-kurangnya empat taman tema permainan berbaloi di kunjungi. (Berita Harian, 2012)*

[Are you planning for a holiday for your family? Are you out of ideas for destinations to be visited? How about visiting the second largest state in Australia, i.e. Queensland!

Queensland is an interesting location very suitable to be visited with your family due to its special theme parks. Some tourists refer to this state as 'Australia's Theme Park City' because it has at least four theme parks which are worth visiting.] (My own translation)

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In its subsequent paragraphs, the article describes in more detail the make-up of the iconicity of the Gold Coast as a family destination in the mind of the reader: *pantai keemasan yang hebat* (great golden beaches), *taman tema permainan yang bertaraf dunia* (world-class theme parks) and lastly *taman hidupan liar* (wild life parks), where Malay tourists will have the opportunity to see Australia's iconic animals. In all of the above PTs which represent the typical Malay view of the Gold Coast as an icon, the familial attractions of the Gold Coast are described without making any reference to the hedonistic side of the city. Thus, it is not surprising that the only side of the Gold Coast known to Malays is its familial side. There is a very good reason for this: the Gold Coast is promoted to Malays by Malays using attractions that are believed to appeal to Malay tourists. As stressed by Reisinger and Turner (1997) in their study on cross-cultural difference in tourism, Australian tourism advertising should be directed at Malay family members rather than the individual tourist. Furthermore, activities for Malay tourists should involve and appeal to all family members. Along similar lines, a study by Kim and Lee (2000) also found that tourists from individualistic cultures were more likely to seek novelty, whereas the motivation of the tourists from collectivistic cultures is primarily to be with the family.

While the formal media of tourism promotion, such as newspapers, constitute part of the basic foundation to the formation of tourism icons in the mind of Malay tourists, they are not necessarily the major force behind their formation. Research has shown that informal media, such as the word-of-mouth of peers and family is a key inspirational channel for destination messages to be communicated to Malaysians (Visit Britain, 2010) and is therefore very influential in reinforcing the groundwork laid down by main stream media for inducing the iconicity of urban tourism icons (if not the other way round). The results of the focus group discussions conducted also reaffirmed this point. Participants of the focus groups defined urban tourist icons as famous landmarks which they have been informed about through word-of-mouth and mass media.

The importance of word-of-mouth to Malay tourists can be explained by referring to two main cultural dimensions: collectivism and power distance. The Malay society is collectivistic and depends to a high degree on a close network of friends and relatives that bind them together. Therefore, word of mouth is one of the most important sources of information for Malay tourists. The Malay culture is also characterised as a high power distance culture, which places considerable importance on clear recognition of status difference (Asma Abdullah & Lim, 2001). Since travel has become a status symbol among the new Malay middle-class (Embong, 2002), the word-of-mouth of peers, friends and relatives represents a strong source of inspiration, or rather a source of challenge, which prompts Malays to travel in order to preserve their status and remain on par with their peers, friends and relatives who have told them about their travel experiences.

In terms of the Malay word-of-mouth about the Gold Coast, the focus groups reported that the Gold Coast is represented in Malay word-of-mouth as a familial destination with an emphasis on children's entertainment. Thanks to the electronic version of 'word-of-mouth' ('word-of-mouse'), we are also able to get first-hand accounts of Malay word-of-mouth promoting the Gold Coast. These first-hand accounts are easily available on blogs, forums and social networking sites, which according to the focus groups are currently popular sources of word-of-mouth for Malay tourists. Like the formal media, the informal media of word-of-mouse is also found to create a familial image of the Gold Coast. For example, in a Malay blog entry titled *Australia Bumi Kangaru & Koala* (Australia, the land of Kangaroos and Koalas), the blogger's account of her experience in the Gold Coast, represents the Gold Coast as a theme park city (PT4).

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**PT4**

*Dari Sydney, kami ke Brisbane dan melawat sekali Gold Coast (main rides la apa lagi!).* (Wanie, 2008)

[From Sydney, we headed to Brisbane and also visited Gold Coast (what else should one do? Enjoy the rides!)] (My own translation)

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Similarly, in a comment left by a visitor of a blog article on Gold Coast, only the familial side of the Gold Coast is talked about (PT5).

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**PT5**

*Gold coast gi mn? Last time masa igi sanagi diorg punya movie world, dream world & sea world..Mmg best diorg punya theme park arrangement. Ihari mmg x cukup utk 1 theme park.* (Anonymous, 2011)

[Where to go in the Gold Coast? The last time I went there, I went to their Movie World, Dream World and Sea World. Their theme park arrangements are indeed excellent. One day is not even enough for one theme park. (My own translation)]

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The findings derived from the analysis of the above examples of PTs taken from the print and electronic media supports the result of the focus group analysis. In other words, the representational practices adopted by the various media of tourism promotion to which Malays are exposed has repeatedly forged the Gold Coast as an iconic family holiday destination known for its familial qualities and not a hedonistic holiday destination known for its non-stop partying. Thus, the Gold Coast is indeed an icon in the eyes of Malay tourists but not in the way it is represented in the ST and reproduced in the TT. Having ascertained this point, the way in which the iconicity of the Gold Coast is represented calls for reconsideration.

## A FUNCTIONALLY ADEQUATE TRANSLATION

In order to preserve the functionality of the ST, i.e. "to persuade, lure, woo and seduce" (Dann, 1996), it is imperative that the Malay translation addresses its audience in terms of their own culturally predicated expectations, needs and motivations (Dann, 1996). This means that how the Malays perceive the iconicity of a destination or attraction must be recognised and built on. In order to achieve this, a dual-level strategy combining the macro and micro level must be adopted. At the macro level, the overall tone of hedonism must be reduced to one which fulfils the expectations, needs and motivations of the target audience. At the micro level, linguistic elements which are not consistent with these expectations, needs and motivations must be dealt with in a manner that will serve the intended overall function. The functionally adequate translation (FT) illustrated in FT1 demonstrates how this strategy may be executed.

FT1

Source Text (ST)	Functionally Adequate Translation (FT)	Back-Translation (BT)
<p><b>3. Get a touch of glamour on the Gold Coast, Queensland</b>                      This iconic holiday destination offers 70 kilometres of sun-drenched beaches, World Heritage-listed rainforests, theme parks and non-stop shopping and nightlife. Meet dolphins and polar bears at theme parks, ride rolling surf or do a day trip to an island. Party all night then explore the lush, subtropical hinterland. On Australia's 'coast with the most' life is all about having fun.</p>	<p><b>3. Nikmati suasana penuh keceriaan di Gold Coast, Queensland</b>                      Destinasi percutian yang cukup terkenal ini menawarkan 70 kilometer pantai berpasir putih bersih, hutan yang tersenarai dalam Warisan Dunia, taman tema, pengalaman membeli-belah dan aktiviti keluarga yang menyeronokkan. Anda boleh memerhati aksi-aksi menarik ikan lumba-lumba dan beruang kutub di taman tema atau belajar meluncur di atas ombak. Anda juga boleh mengunjungi salah sebuah pulau atau menerokai kawasan pinggir bandar yang indah menghijau. Alamilah suasana riang bersama keluarga tersayang di kota ria Australia.</p>	<p><b>3. Enjoy the fun-filled atmosphere of Gold Coast, Queensland</b>                      This famous holiday destination offers 70 kilometres of clean white sandy beaches, World Heritage-listed forests, theme parks and amusing shopping experiences and family activities. You can watch the interesting actions of dolphins and polar bears at theme parks or learn how to surf the waves. You can also make a trip to an island or explore the lush and beautiful countryside. Experience a joyful atmosphere with your beloved family at Australia's fun city.</p>

Source of ST: [www.australia.com](http://www.australia.com)

Source of FT: my own translation

Source of BT: my own translation

The FT takes into consideration the iconicity of the destination as perceived by the target audience, i.e. a family holiday destination. In order to achieve this, the hedonistic dimension of the destination is replaced by its familial dimension. This is reflected in all three parts of the copy: the headline, body copy and end-line. In the headline, the notion of glamour is replaced by the more familial idea of *ceria*. In Malay, the word *keceriaan* (fun, joy, happiness) is very much associated with family and children. "Non-stop night life" in the body copy is replaced by "*aktiviti keluarga yang menyeronokkan*" (amusing family activities). The end-line "On Australia's 'coast with the most' life is all about having fun" is replaced by "*Alamilah suasana riang bersama keluarga tersayang di kota ria Australia*" (Experience a joyful atmosphere with your beloved family in Australia's fun city). It is important to note that the function of the end-line is to sum up and encapsulate the advertising message using effective words, and leave the target audience with a clear thought about the icon being promoted (Wateridge & Donaghey, 2011). Thus, it is important that the translation carries out this function. Not only was the intended effect of the end-line lost in the original Malay translation (see TT1), on the contrary it created an unfavourable image of the destination for the target audience. The FT rectifies this by underlining the expected features of the Gold Coast icon which, to a large extent, already exists in the mind of the target audience.

Furthermore, the ST employs poetic devices, namely consonance and assonance (coast with the most) in the end-line. The use of alliteration here is consistent with the function of the end-line to create an enduring image in the mind of the reader. In tourism promotion, such poetic devices are used as "a tool of emphasis to arrest the reader's attention and aid their subsequent recall of the product" (George, 2010). It increases "the appeal and memorability" of the destination (Djafarova & Andersen, 2008). In other words, it seeks to imprint the message on the mind of the reader.

In the original translation, the phrase "coast with the most" was misinterpreted or at least mistranslated as "*pantai yang paling meriah*" (most fun-filled beaches). This is because

“coast with the most” does not refer to the beaches of the Gold Coast in particular. It in fact refers to the whole coastal city of the Gold Coast, which was branded as such in 2000 (Jones, 2001). The use of the word “coast” to refer to the coastal city of the Gold Coast is a figure of speech known as metonymy. In other words, in this phrase consonance and assonance are used in combination with metonymy. This mix of trope and scheme creates a stronger effect on the reader (Djafarova & Andersen, 2008). However, whether it was a misinterpretation or a mistranslation on the part of the translator, the fact is that the outcome of the translation shifts the reference from the Gold Coast (the intended referent) to the beaches of the Gold Coast (unintended referent), causing difficulties in its comprehension.

The poetic effect of the ST is reproduced in the FT by employing poetic devices as well. Although it was quite impossible to retain the metonymy of “coast with the most”, the consonance and assonance were successfully preserved to convey an image of familial excitement and enjoyment. The phrase “coast with the most” was rendered as “*kota ria Australia*” (Australia’s fun city), with each of the three nouns ending in a repeating ‘ah’ sound (assonance). The metonymy, on the other hand, was replaced by another figurative device, namely wordplay (pun). The phrase *kota ria* activates two meanings at the same time. The obvious usual meaning is *kota raya* (big city), while the less obvious, more unusual meaning is *kota ria* (fun city). The FT preserves the function of the ST, and thus the presumed iconicity of the destination. This is achieved by shifting the focus from hedonism to familial while maintaining the use of figurative devices to heighten the illocutionary power of the end-line (Lefevere, 1994). The second part of the end-line “life is all about fun” was also rendered using these poetic devices: “*Alamilah suasana riang bersama keluarga tersayang*” (Experience a joyful atmosphere with your beloved family in Australia’s fun city), with the repetition of the *yang* sound which conveys an image of familial love and happiness.

In addition to the above, several other steps were also taken to render the text more appealing to the Malay reader. The unappealing sun theme (sun-drenched beaches) is replaced by the more appealing “clean white sandy beaches”. The notion of over-indulgence in shopping (non-stop shopping) is toned down to “amusing shopping experience”. The intimidating invitation to “ride rolling surf” is softened to “you can learn how to surf the waves”. This is because, surfing is not a familiar sport in the Malay culture. Most Malays have never tried surfing and are likely to feel embarrassed about making mistakes due to not having the necessary athletic skills. Malays are acutely self-conscious about how they may look in the eyes of others. They are deeply concerned that if they do not possess the necessary sporting skills and perform well they may lose face and this will bring about shame and humiliation. Fear of losing face and embarrassment may lead to their reluctance to try activities for which they do not possess adequate skills. The concept of shame and losing face are key characteristics of collectivistic societies (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

The adventurous idea of exploring “the lush, subtropical hinterland”, which was originally translated as “*terokai pedalaman sub tropika*” (explore the subtropical hinterland), was modified to “*menerokai kawasan pinggir bandar yang indah menghijau*” (explore the lush and beautiful countryside). The Malay word *pedalaman* (hinterland) evokes an image for the Malay reader which emphasises inaccessibility and the lack of facilities and infrastructures. While such an image may be appealing to Anglo tourists nowadays, who are known to prefer active and dynamic holidays which involve physically challenging and adventurous activities (Middleton, Fyall, & Morgan, 2009; Pizam & Jeong, 1996), it is unlikely to appeal to Malay tourists who are generally sightseers and do not appreciate challenging adventures and activities. What would appeal to them is easy, novice-friendly, safe, comfortable and relaxing adventure. In fact, a study that confirmed the lack of interest among Malaysian tourists in some of Australia’s adventure tourism activities proposed that

these activities require “careful packaging for the Malaysian market” and should be incorporated into “comfortable adventure/entertainment products” (Mohsen & Ryan, 1999). Thus, translating “hinterland” to “*kawasan pinggir bandar*” (countryside) sounds more appealing, bearing in mind that the Gold Coast’s hinterland is indeed its countryside, located minutes away from the city with magnificent facilities and tourist attractions including farmland, vineyards, quaint villages, sprawling national parks and rainforest reserves.

## CONCLUSION

The difference in how tourist icons are perceived by different audiences is ultimately dictated by cultural values which underlie the language of tourism promotion. TPTs promote tourist destinations by projecting a desirable destination image to the audience. The language of tourism promotion creates this image by addressing the cultural values of the audience. The repetition and sedimentation of the destination image through various media and modes of tourism language forge the iconicity of these icons in the mind of the reader. The different images of the icons projected to different audiences result in the icons being perceived differently.

This paper has shown how the ‘iconic’ Gold Coast is promoted and represented within the framework of hedonism for an Anglophone audience and how the same ‘icon’ is promoted in parallel Malay texts, albeit within the framework of familial entertainment. Despite these two different ‘cultural strategies’, translators often approach translation at the linguistic level ignoring the more crucial cultural level hence leading to a ‘weak’ translation. Thus, in order to translate TPTs across cultures effectively, the cultural level of the language of tourism promotion must be addressed adequately. The different perceptions of tourist icons by different audiences must be taken into consideration. Producing functionally adequate translations which are more likely to have the intended effect on the TT audience may require tourist icons to be re-represented and repositioned consistent with the cultural needs, preferences and expectations of the audience.

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