

The Problems and Solutions of Stress Application in Museum Interpretation

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Abstract: Museums are important places for cultural inheritance, and their interpretation services play a key role in visitors' understanding and appreciation of exhibits. In the museum interpretation, the use of stress directly affects the effect of information transmission and visitors' visiting experience. Through an in-depth analysis of the problems existing in the use of stress in museum interpretation, this paper puts forward targeted solutions, aiming at improving the quality of museum interpretation service and enhancing tourists' cultural experience.

Keywords: Museum interpretation; Stress application; Information transfer; Visiting experience

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1. Introduction

With the rise of cultural tourism, museums have become destinations for more and more tourists. In museums, interpretation service is an important bridge connecting exhibits and visitors, and stress, as an important skill in speech explanation, has a significant impact on improving the effect of interpretation. However, in practice, many interpreters have problems with the use of stress, which leads to unclear information transmission or poor visitor experience^[1]. Therefore, this article will discuss the existing problems and effective solutions from the angle of the use of stress in museum interpretation.

2. Importance of stress in museum interpretation

In museum interpretation, the use of stress has many important meanings. First of all, through the rational use of stress, the docents can effectively highlight the key points of the interpretation and help visitors quickly capture the key information. Among the numerous exhibits in the museum, each one has its own unique historical background, cultural connotation, and artistic value. However, it is often difficult for visitors to fully and deeply understand every detail in the limited time available. Through the reasonable use of emphasis, the docents can effectively screen out the most important information and highlight the core characteristics and values of the

exhibits to the visitors ^[2]. The proper use of stress can help visitors capture the essence of the exhibits in a short time, thus improving the efficiency of visiting and the quality of experience.

Secondly, the change of stress can enhance the vividness and rhythm of the interpretation, so that visitors can maintain interest in the process of listening. The exhibits in the museum are dazzling, and it is easy for visitors to feel dazzled and even tired during the visit. At this time, the use of accent by the docents is like a guiding light, which can guide the visitors' attention and stimulate their interest. By emphasizing different information points, the docents can help visitors keep continuous attention on the exhibits and enhance their enthusiasm for visiting ^[3].

Finally, by emphasizing the emotions, the docents can lead visitors to empathize with the exhibits and deepen their understanding of the exhibits and culture. Each exhibit in the museum carries a wealth of historical and cultural information, which is often associated with specific emotions and values. Through the use of emphasis, docents can better convey these emotions and values and guide visitors to resonate, which not only enhances visitors' visit experience, but also helps deepen their understanding and identification with the culture.

3. Analysis of the current situation of the use of stress in museum interpretation

3.1. Overall situation of the use of stress in museum interpretation

In museum interpretation, how to effectively improve the audience's listening experience is a problem that every docent needs to constantly think about. Highlighting the emphasis on the interpretation can play a key role in improving the effect of the interpretation and enhancing the audience's understanding and memory. At present, in the assessment of museum docents, the frequency and distribution of stress is one of the important indicators to evaluate the expositor's teaching level. In excellent explanation, the use of stress is not always better, too much stress will affect the audience's visiting experience. Instead, stress should be used reasonably in key information according to the key points and difficulties of the content of interpretation. This will not only make the audience feel too abrupt, but also enable the audience to grasp the main points of explanation quickly ^[4]. In museum interpretation, the distribution of stress should match the structure and level of the content. For example, when explaining the cause, course, and effect of a historical event, the docent can use stress at the beginning or end of each section to emphasize the importance of that section ^[5]. In addition, nowadays museum docents can recognize the importance of stress in the explanation. However, in practice, different docents pay different attention to stress. Some interpreters can master the use of stress skills, and closely combine them with the content of interpretation, so as to make the interpretation more vivid. However, some interpreters may overuse stress sometimes due to less experience in explaining or environmental factors. In this regard, museums should pay more attention to the use of stress and strengthen the professional skills training of docents.

3.2. Specific performance of the use of stress in museum interpretation

In the actual museum interpretation, the specific manifestations of the use of stress mainly include the following: First, the docents usually emphasize the key information such as the name, age, and material of the cultural relic ^[6]. For example, when introducing a bronze vessel, the docents may say, "This is a bronze ritual vessel of the late Shang Dynasty—Houmu Wu Ding." Here, keywords such as "late Shang Dynasty," "bronze ritual vessel," and "Houmu Wu Ding" are emphasized. By highlighting the keywords, the docent is able to guide the audience to focus on the core information of the cultural relic while creating a sense of rhythm and hierarchy of the explanation ^[7]. Second, the emphasis is used to represent contrast and juxtaposition to help the audience better understand the relationship and differences between the exhibits. For example, when explaining porcelain from different historical eras, the

docents can highlight the differences in styles and techniques between different pieces of porcelain through the emphasis. Third, it is used to express strong emotions. This is used more often when explaining red cultural relics. For example, when explaining red cultural relics, the docents will emphasize the historical value and significance of the cultural relics to express their admiration and respect for the exhibits ^[8]. In addition, stress is not just a simple heightening of the tone, but can be expressed in a variety of ways. For example, the common practice of increasing the volume of your voice and pronouncing keywords harder and louder; or, when explaining complex and delicate content, the narrator can reduce the volume as a way to bring the important information to light; or they may pause for emphasis. Pausing before explaining key information can increase the emphasis.

3.3. Feedback from the audience on the use of stress in museum interpretation

The audience's satisfaction with the interpretation effect is one of the important criteria to measure the success of museum interpretation. The audience's feedback on the use of stress is both positive and negative. Therefore, the narrator should continue to promote the positive and actively correct the negative. On the one hand, when the docents properly use emphasis to highlight key information in their explanations, the audience generally reports that they can understand the highlights of cultural relics more quickly and deepen their memories. At the same time, in the explanation of "heavy instruments," a large amount of background information is usually involved. The use of emphasis by the docents helps to focus the audience's attention and enhance their interest in the content of the explanation. On the other hand, if the emphasis is not used properly, it will make the explanation work twice the effort. For example, some interpreters may misplace their stress when the environment is too noisy. This can make the audience feel confused about what is being explained ^[9]. In addition, the use of excessive stress will also make the audience experience auditory fatigue, thus reducing their attention to the content of interpretation, which easily causes the audience to miss important information and fail to resonate with the cultural relics. In this regard, interpreters should accurately grasp the frequency and position of stress in the use of stress, and adjust it according to the audience's on-site feedback, so as to improve the interpretation effect.

4. Problems in the use of stress in museum interpretation

Although stress plays an important role in museum interpretation, there are still many problems in practice.

4.1. Improper use of stress

In museum interpretation, some docents may overemphasize certain non-critical information or lack enough emphasis on key information. For example, when explaining an ancient painting, the guide said: "This painting Along the River during Qingming Festival is a masterpiece by Song Dynasty painter Zhang Zeduan, which depicts the bustling scene of Bianjing, the capital of the Northern Song Dynasty." ^[10] If the heavy emphasis is placed only on "Zhang Zeduan" and the key message of "the bustling scene in Bianjing, the capital city of Northern Song" is ignored, visitors may be impressed by the painter's name while ignoring the artistic value and historical background of the painting, leading to an imbalance in information transmission.

Docents explaining an ancient building may say, "This temple was built in the Ming Dynasty and has a long history and unique architectural style." If the docents use emphasis on both "built" and "Ming dynasty," while weakening "long history" and "unique architectural style," then visitors may misinterpret the guide as wanting to emphasize only the time when the temple was built, while ignoring its more important historical and architectural features ^[11].

When introducing a bronze piece, say: “This is a bronze piece from the Shang Dynasty, engraved with exquisite ornamentals.” If the docent overuses the emphasis on “Shang dynasty” and neglects the description of “exquisite ornamentation,” then the visitor may only remember that it is a bronze piece of the Shang dynasty and fail to deeply appreciate its artistic value.

4.2. Single intonation of stress

The use of stress by some interpreters in the course of interpretation is too simple and lacks variation. They may use the same stress patterns and intonation throughout the presentation, making it monotonous and boring. This problem is especially evident when introducing multiple exhibition areas or exhibits, and the lack of hierarchy and changing emphasis can dull visitors ^[12]. For example: “This section displays ancient pottery, and that section displays ancient jade...” This lack of variation in tone can leave visitors feeling bored and unable to create a unique impression of each section.

When introducing a complex historical event or cultural phenomenon, if the narrator always uses an accent pattern, such as: “During the Spring and Autumn Period, vassals fought for power, a hundred schools of thought contused, and various schools of thought were in full bloom...,” the absence of changes in accent to highlight key information will make the explanation seem lengthy and difficult to understand ^[13].

4.3. Insufficient expression of emotion

Stress is not only a tool of information transmission, but also an important means of emotional transmission. However, some interpreters pay too much attention to the accuracy of information while neglecting the expression of emotion. When narrating a historical relic with tragic color, some only objectively describe the relic itself, without accentuating key emotional words, such as: “This porcelain was excavated in the XXX war, it bears witness to the suffering of that era.” If words such as “war” and “suffering” are not properly stressed, the explanation, although correct in content, lacks appeal and is difficult to arouse the resonance of tourists ^[14].

When describing a cultural relic of great historical significance, the interpreter simply lists its characteristics and value without emphasizing its importance through accent, such as: “This jade is a ritual instrument used by the emperor and represents a symbol of imperial power.” The visitors may not be able to deeply feel the historical status and significance of the relic.

5. Strategies of stress application in museum interpretation

In view of the above problems, this paper puts forward the following solutions to improve the use of stress in museum interpretation.

5.1. Improving the accuracy of the use of stress

First, an in-depth study of exhibits can help visitors accurately grasp the key points. Based on the research of the exhibits, the docents ensure that the key information is highlighted by properly distributing the emphasis. For example, when introducing the famous Mona Lisa painting, key information such as the historical background of the painting, the author’s life, and painting techniques should be researched in advance. For example: “The Mona Lisa is a masterpiece of Da Vinci, and its mysterious smile and light and shadow treatment are classics in the history of painting,” the emphasis should be placed on “Da Vinci” and the key information painting technique “light and shadow treatment.”

Second, docents should adjust the use of stress in real time according to the feedback of tourists to meet the needs of different tourists. In the course of interpreting, the docent can observe the reaction of tourists, and if it is found that tourists are particularly interested in a certain part, the tone of the part can be appropriately increased to attract their attention. For example, when introducing the “Lushan flower-glazed waist Drum of the Tang Dynasty” in the Forbidden City, if the tourists show strong interest, the docents can emphasize the tone: “This porcelain is flower-glazed porcelain of the Tang Dynasty. The glaze color and shape of the porcelain are extremely rare, showing the extraordinary skills of ancient craftsmen.”^[15]. The emphasis on “flower glaze porcelain,” “glaze color,” and “shape” highlights the exhibits why they are considered to be world-class rare and unique characteristics of craftsmanship.

5.2. Enriching the changes and layers of stress

With rich accent changes and layers, personalized explanations are made in combination with the unique features of the exhibits, so that each exhibit has its own unique “sound label.”

5.3. Paying attention to emotional transmission and resonance

The interpreter should pay attention to the expression of emotions in the course of explaining. Through the rational use of accent combined with vivid language descriptions, the behind story and emotional connotation of the exhibits are conveyed to the visitors. At the same time, docents should pay attention to the reaction of tourists, timely adjusting the explanation method and stress application strategy to stimulate the resonance of tourists.

6. Conclusion

Stress, as an important skill in museum interpretation, is of great significance to improve visitors’ experience. Aiming at the existing problems of stress use, this paper put forward the corresponding solutions, including improving the accuracy of stress use, enriching the variation of stress, and paying attention to the transfer of emotion. The implementation of these strategies will help the docents to better use the stress skills to bring visitors a more vivid and interesting trip to the museum. Through the continuous optimization of explanation services, we can make the cultural charm of the museum more fully displayed, and attract more visitors to the museum to experience the profound history and cultural beauty.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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