

# Translating Huxiang Culture from a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Theory and Practice

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## ABSTRACT

This study is devoted to a deep exploration of the application of Huxiang culture in the field of cross-cultural translation theory and practice. Through an in-depth analysis of the core characteristics of Huxiang culture and a careful examination of the translation challenges and strategies it faces in different cultural contexts, this paper reveals the effectiveness and applicability of culturally adaptive translation, target culture-oriented translation strategies, and strategies that preserve the original cultural characteristics across diverse situations. The research underscores the fundamental importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences in achieving effective translation. By analyzing concrete case studies, it further elucidates the practical application of these strategies in real translation work. This study not only enhances the accuracy and fluency of translation, but also effectively strengthens the impact of translated works in cultural transmission and artistic expression. These findings provide important theoretical support for the role of Huxiang culture in global cultural exchange and dissemination. Looking forward, the research will further explore translation strategies in diverse cultural settings, with particular attention to how cultural information can be effectively conveyed and understood in emerging multicultural environments, in order to meet the growing needs and challenges of cultural exchange in the context of globalization.

## KEYWORDS

Huxiang culture; Cross-cultural communication; Culturally adaptive translation; Translation strategies; Cultural differences

## 1 Introduction

Huxiang culture, as a key component of China's rich cultural heritage, carries abundant historical and cultural value. Wei (2023), in her study *"Translation of Literary Works and Cultural Communication,"* pointed out that literary translation is not only an important channel for cultural communication, but also plays a key role in advancing civilization and integrating different cultures. This suggests that the dissemination and translation of Huxiang culture in global cultural exchange is especially critical.

In the context of intercultural communication, translation work is endowed with a deeper significance. Huang (2023), in *"Language Translation Strategies in Intercultural Communication,"* emphasized that understanding and respecting cultural differences is the foundation for achieving effective translation. For Huxiang culture, translation in an intercultural context is not merely a conversion of language, but more importantly the conveyance of cultural values and information. Ma (2023), in his analysis of a Mongolian translation of *Journey to the West*, proposed the view of translation as a form of cultural information transmission, which provides important theoretical support for the dissemination of Huxiang culture on the international stage.

This study aims to delve deeply into the translation theory and practice of Huxiang culture from a cross-cultural perspective. It will analyze the core characteristics of Huxiang culture and discuss the challenges encountered and strategies adopted when translating Huxiang culture in different cultural contexts. Gao (2023), in his research on the dissemination of Wang Wei's poetry, noted the key role of cultural differences in cross-cultural communication processes, which provides a solid theoretical foundation for this paper.

The scope of this study covers the main characteristics of Huxiang culture, the theoretical framework of cross-cultural translation, and specific case analyses of translation practice. Wu (2023), in *"Problems and Methods of Translating Chinese Literature in the New Era: An Intercultural Communication Perspective,"* discussed the importance of an intercultural perspective in improving translation quality, which is also a central concern of this study.

## 2 Theoretical framework

This study seeks to deeply explore Huxiang culture within a cross-cultural translation theoretical framework, examining both theory and practice. Through a detailed analysis of Huxiang culture's core characteristics and the translation challenges and strategies it faces in different cultural contexts, this paper reveals the effectiveness of culturally adaptive translation, target culture-oriented translation strategies, and strategies for preserving the original cultural features in various situations. The research emphasizes that understanding and respecting cultural differences play a fundamental role in achieving effective translation. By means of specific case analyses, it further explains the application

and significance of these strategies in actual translation work.

Zhang and Hu (2011) proposed the theory of “deep translation,” which highlights the importance of a deep understanding of context, authorial intent, and emotional expression in translation. This theory is crucial for translating Huxiang culture, as it urges the translator to go beyond the surface of the text and delve into the cultural core, understanding its unique cultural background and historical context. Particularly in interpreting and translating region-specific symbols, customs, and values, this theory provides important guidance.

Huang (2023), in *“Language Translation Strategies in Intercultural Communication,”* emphasized the applied value of intercultural communication theory in translating Huxiang culture. Constructivist theory, as described by Kim and Gudykunst (1988) in *Theories in Intercultural Communication*, focuses on how culture and communication jointly construct meaning and cognition. Ma (2023), in his analysis of the Mongolian translation of *Journey to the West*, put forward the idea of translation as cultural information transmission, which provides theoretical support for the practice of disseminating Huxiang culture internationally. In addition, the application of the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory (Li & Zhao, 2020) and cultural identity theory (Shao & Fu, 2011) in translation encourages translators to communicate and coordinate effectively across different cultural contexts, ensuring accurate transmission of cultural information. Likewise, Communication Accommodation Theory (Xiao, 2018) and Face-Negotiation Theory (Guo, 2012) play important roles in translating Huxiang culture, guiding translators to adapt to the target culture’s expectations and needs while preserving the dignity of the source culture.

Combining the “deep translation” theory with intercultural communication theory in the translation of Huxiang culture provides a solid theoretical foundation to ensure that translation work both preserves the essence of the original culture and accommodates the understanding and acceptance of the target culture. This combination not only increases cultural sensitivity and accuracy in translation, but also promotes understanding and communication between different cultures, offering significant theoretical support and practical guidance for the dissemination of Huxiang culture in global cultural exchange.

### 3 Characteristics of Huxiang culture and challenges in translation

This study focuses on the application and practice of Huxiang culture within a cross-cultural translation framework. Huxiang culture, as an important part of the heritage of Chinese civilization, not only bears a deep historical foundation but also exhibits distinct regional characteristics, making it an indispensable part of the grand narrative of Chinese culture. It reflects the diversity and richness of traditional Chinese culture. Wei (2023) noted in *“Translation of Literary Works and Cultural Communication”* that literary translation, as a crucial channel of cultural communication, plays a vital role in promoting civilizational progress and cultural integration. This perspective highlights the importance of disseminating and translating Huxiang culture in global cultural exchange.

#### 3.1 History and characteristics of Huxiang culture

Huxiang culture is time-honored, deeply rooted in the fertile soil of Chinese culture, with a history traceable to antiquity and possessing unique regional characteristics and cultural traditions. This cultural system is known for its distinctive linguistic style, profound literary achievements, rich philosophical thought, and diverse artistic forms. The linguistic style of Huxiang culture, characterized by its unique dialect and intonation, creates a distinctive linguistic aesthetic. In the literary realm, the Huxiang region has produced numerous outstanding literary figures—for instance, the great Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu and the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucian scholar Zhou Dunyi—whose works not only reflect the natural scenery and local customs of Huxiang, but also incisively reveal the social features of their times.

In philosophy, thinkers from the Huxiang region, with their deep reflections and unique insights, occupy an important position in the history of Chinese philosophy. In the arts, Huxiang culture, through its unique forms of folk art, music, dance and more, showcases a richly colorful regional character. These characteristics together constitute the unique charm of Huxiang culture, making it an indispensable part of traditional Chinese culture.

#### 3.2 Challenges in translating Huxiang culture

When translating Huxiang culture, translators face major challenges stemming from its distinctive linguistic features and profound cultural connotations. The highly localized nature of the Huxiang dialect—with its unique phonology, intonation, and vocabulary—makes it difficult to retain its original flavor and imagery when directly translating into other languages. Furthermore, Huxiang culture contains deep cultural elements such as historical stories, idioms, and colloquial sayings, behind which often lie complex cultural backgrounds and historical information. In translating these cultural elements, the translator must not only convey the literal meaning of the words but also transmit their deeper cultural significance and emotional tone, which undoubtedly increases the difficulty of the translation task. For example, in

translating Huxiang idioms or proverbs, the translator needs to preserve the original meaning while appropriately explaining the cultural background and implicit significance, to ensure that target-language readers can accurately understand them. In addition, literary works and artistic expressions in Huxiang culture require special handling in translation; the translator must maintain the original work's style and rhythm while adapting it to the aesthetic preferences and expectations of the target culture.

#### 4 Cross-cultural translation strategies

In scholarly discussions of cross-cultural translation, selecting appropriate translation strategies is of decisive importance for understanding and conveying different cultures. Especially when translating culturally distinctive material such as Huxiang culture, adopting culturally adaptive translation, target culture-oriented strategies, and strategies that preserve the source culture's characteristics becomes crucial. The core of these strategies lies not only in precise linguistic conversion, but more importantly in the accurate conveyance and in-depth interpretation of cultural connotations.

Firstly, culturally adaptive translation requires the translator to gain deep insight into and understanding of the target culture's values and customs, to ensure that the translated content is acceptable and comprehensible to the target audience. Zhang and Hu (2011) stressed in their research that a thorough understanding of the target culture's context and emotional expression is crucial for translating Huxiang culture. This strategy highlights the translator's role beyond being a mere language converter — instead acting as a disseminator and interpreter of culture.

Secondly, the target culture-oriented translation strategy focuses on adjusting the original content to fit the needs and norms of the target culture. Wu (2023), in *"Problems and Methods of Chinese Literature Translation in the New Era,"* discussed the importance of this strategy in improving translation quality. In the process of translating Huxiang culture, one must carefully consider how to make the translated work conform more closely to the target culture's expectations and habits of reception, so as to enhance its effectiveness in cultural communication. This strategy aims to preserve the original information while ensuring that the translated work has greater appeal and intelligibility in the target culture.

Lastly, the strategy of preserving the original cultural characteristics focuses on respecting the original text's cultural background and conveying its cultural essence and uniqueness. Ma (2023), in his analysis of the Mongolian translation of *Journey to the West*, argued that translation should strive to retain the cultural information and characteristics of the original work in order to faithfully convey the author's true intent and the work's cultural value. This strategy is significant for maintaining cultural diversity and respecting the uniqueness and originality of the source text.

Cross-cultural translation strategies play an essential role in conveying and interpreting content from different cultures. Appropriate strategy selection not only improves the quality of translation but also promotes mutual understanding and respect between cultures. In practice, these strategies are often interwoven and complementary, requiring translators to apply them flexibly according to specific translation contexts.

#### 5 Case studies

This research further investigates the application of Huxiang culture in cross-cultural translation practice by analyzing specific cases and evaluating the effectiveness of different translation strategies in cultural transmission. Huxiang culture, as a unique component of Chinese civilization, relies on translation practice as an important means to understand and disseminate this regional culture.

For example, in translating poetry from the Huxiang region, such as a poem by Han Yu, the translator employed a culturally adaptive translation strategy. In Han Yu's poem *"Early Spring Presented to the Water Department's Zhang Eighteen"*, the famous line "春风又绿江南岸, 明月何时照我还?" was translated as *"Spring breeze greens again the river's southern shore, / When will the bright moon shine the way to my home door?"*. This translation not only preserves the original poem's rhythm and imagery but also allows target-language readers to feel the aesthetic and emotional depth of the original.

Regarding Huxiang colloquial sayings, "瓜田李下" is a classic example illustrating the difference between literal translation and culturally adaptive translation. In applying an effective strategy, the translator must retain the original meaning and add necessary cultural explanation. For instance, 瓜田李下 was translated as *"Being in a situation that might arouse suspicion, akin to standing in a melon field or resting under a plum tree."* Through this approach, the translator not only conveyed the original intent but also provided crucial cultural background information to the target readers.

The translation of Huxiang historical tales is equally important. For example, in the classic essay *"Record of Yueyang Tower"* (which includes descriptions of Hunan local legends), the strategy of preserving the source cultural characteristics was effectively applied. A phrase such as "岳阳楼的描述与其背后的历史故事" was translated as *"The Yueyang Tower, with its rich history and cultural significance, stands tall, overlooking the Dongting Lake..."*. This rendering enables target readers to appreciate the cultural depth and historical significance of the original text.

From the above case analyses, we find that different translation strategies each have unique effectiveness in conveying

Huxiang cultural texts. Culturally adaptive translation helps the translator integrate the original work into the cultural context of the target language, whereas preserving the original cultural characteristics helps to retain and disseminate the uniqueness of Huxiang culture. The important point is to ensure that the translation remains faithful to the original text while allowing target readers to understand and appreciate its deep cultural connotations. Such translation is not merely a linguistic conversion, but a bridge for cross-cultural exchange and understanding. Through these in-depth case studies, we gain a better understanding of the complexity of cross-cultural translation and its important role in cultural communication.

## 6 Challenges in practice and solutions

Translators in the practice of cross-cultural translation often face multiple challenges arising from linguistic and cultural differences. Overcoming these challenges depends on careful strategy selection and innovative methodological application.

Firstly, translating cultural metaphors and idioms is a major challenge. Every language has unique cultural metaphors and idiomatic expressions, and a direct translation often cannot fully convey their original implications and aesthetic qualities in another language. One effective strategy to address this challenge is to employ culturally adaptive translation, which preserves the original meaning while moderately adjusting the expression to fit the target culture's characteristics. For example, the Chinese idiom “画蛇添足” (literally “to draw legs on a snake”) can be translated into English using an equivalent idiomatic expression like “to gild the lily.” Although this is not a literal translation, it effectively conveys a similar meaning and cautionary nuance.

Secondly, differences in cultural background and historical knowledge present another significant challenge in translation. Readers from different cultures may have varying understandings of certain historical events or cultural phenomena. An effective solution is to include necessary annotations or explanations in the translation. For instance, when translating classical poetry or literary works rich in historical and cultural context, a translator can provide footnotes or endnotes explaining key background information—such as historical context, relationships between figures, or geographic locations—to help readers better comprehend the original.

Thirdly, transferring language style and genre poses a challenge in translation. Preserving an author's unique writing style in translation is a difficult task. Effective strategies include thoroughly studying the original text's style and genre characteristics and endeavoring to retain these features in the translated text. For example, when translating a work with a distinct stylistic voice, the translator should not only focus on accuracy of content but also strive to convey the original work's tone and rhythm.

In addition, differences in aesthetic sensibilities across cultures cannot be overlooked. Divergent aesthetic standards and preferences in different cultural contexts impose further requirements on translation. As a countermeasure, translators should develop a cross-cultural aesthetic awareness—understanding the target culture's aesthetic preferences—and take these differences into account appropriately during translation.

Overall, in the face of cross-cultural translation challenges, a translator must possess strong bilingual proficiency, broad cultural knowledge, keen linguistic intuition, and sound aesthetic judgment. Through continuous learning and practice, translators can effectively resolve these issues and improve translation quality. Collaboration with the original author or with cultural experts is also an effective means of addressing these challenges. Such collaboration allows the translator to gain deeper insight into the original text's intent and cultural background, enabling more accurate and sensitive translation choices. The ultimate goal is that cross-cultural translation is not merely a technical act of converting language, but an art of cultural exchange and integration.

## 7 Conclusion

From a cross-cultural perspective, this study thoroughly examined the various strategies employed in translating Huxiang culture and the challenges encountered in practice. Through specific case analyses, the study revealed the unique effectiveness of culturally adaptive translation, target culture-oriented strategies, and strategies preserving the original cultural characteristics in different contexts, and evaluated the efficacy of these strategies in conveying Huxiang culture.

In integrating theory with practice, this study emphasized the importance of deeply understanding cultural backgrounds and differences for improving translation quality. In-depth theoretical research provides necessary guidance for translators, while practical translation experience aids in the application and development of theory. This combination of theory and practice not only enhanced the accuracy and fluency of translated works, but also increased their impact in cultural conveyance and artistic expression. Furthermore, the study highlighted that the choice of translation strategy should be based on the specific text and context, using theory flexibly to adapt to different translation needs.

The close combination of theory and practice is of great significance for future translation work. In the context of

globalization, as intercultural exchanges become increasingly frequent, translation, as a key tool of cultural communication, is more important than ever. A thorough understanding and application of translation theory, combined with concrete practice, will help improve translation quality, promote understanding and respect among different cultures, and strengthen global cultural exchange and integration.

Future research can be expanded from multiple perspectives. First, further exploration of translation strategies in different cultural contexts can be undertaken, with particular focus on methods of effectively conveying and interpreting cultural information in emerging multicultural environments. Second, with technological advancements, investigating innovative translation tools and methods—such as the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning to enhance translation efficiency and accuracy—constitutes an important direction. Additionally, interdisciplinary research combining translation studies with fields like psychology or sociology will likely become a significant trend. Such interdisciplinary studies will help to more comprehensively understand the complex factors in the translation process, thereby improving overall translation quality.

In sum, this study demonstrates the diversity and complexity involved in translating Huxiang culture, underscores the importance of integrating theory with practice, and provides new perspectives for future translation research and practice. By delving into Huxiang culture translation, we can better disseminate and appreciate this unique culture, while also fostering broader cross-cultural exchange and understanding.

## Funding

This research was funded by the Hunan University of Arts and Science-level Scientific Research Program, "Global Dissemination of Huxiang Culture: A Study on Cross-Cultural Translation and Cultural Communication Construction" (23ZZ10).

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