



# The International Publicity Translation of Culture-Loaded Words from the Perspective of Cultural Translation Theory

Zhenying Li <sup>a</sup> and Yang Yi <sup>a\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Foreign Languages, Guangxi Minzu Normal University, Chongzuo City, China.

## **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

With the development of globalization, economic and political competition has become more and more fierce, and the collision of diverse cultures is equally intense. Film and television works play a vital role in exchanging diverse cultures of the world. Based on Basnett's cultural translation theory, this article combines the corpus of the documentary *Every Treasure Tells a Story* and the Huashan Rock Art tourism propaganda texts. It studies the translation strategies and methods used in translating culture-loaded words for international publicity in order to attract more translators (including students majoring in translation) into the field of cultural heritage translation and help Chinese culture "going global". Meanwhile, it is beneficial to promote the development of local tourism and social economy with high quality.

**Keywords:** *International publicity translation; corpus method; documentary; Huashan Rock Art; Luoyue culture.*

\*Corresponding author: E-mail: 2402329983@qq.com;

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There is authenticity of science documentaries compared to film and television works. The documentary adopts artistic filming techniques to introduce the knowledge, which is both educative and interesting. Furthermore, the documentary is the most direct and objective way of spreading Chinese culture to the world. Based on Basnett's cultural translation theory, this article studies the international publicity translation of culture-loaded words in the corpus involving documentary and tourism propaganda texts. Through studies the translation strategies and translation methods used (such as, a combination of domestication and foreignization) in culture-loaded words, in order to provide reference for the scholar in the future.

### 1.1 Background of the Study

With the increasing globalization, the world is becoming more and more interconnected. Since the introduction of film and television technology in the 1890s, countless film works have been created. A good film or TV production is not only closely related to the context and economic situation of the time, but also to the culture of the time. It is not only a part of daily entertainment, but also an important way for a country to promote its culture to the rest of the world and to shape the country's image.

In the 1990s, a large number of Western films and television productions were introduced into China, creating a fictitious image of Western power to teenagers and causing the youth to form wrong values [1]. The youth are the future of the country. It is clear that culture is a double-edged sword, and in the hands of hegemony it becomes a sharp edge of invasion.

Today, China is getting stronger and stronger, and the stronger a country is the more responsibility it needs to take on in the world. Nevertheless, some countries still have misconceptions about China due to the smear campaign of the Western hegemonic powers. We urgently need to change the situation. We need to make use of various channels to spread our country's excellent culture accurately and widely, and to shape the image of a peace-loving country.

Documentaries produced are all based on real life, recording a real event and then processing it artistically to present it to the audience. Unlike the fiction of TV series and movies, its core lies

in authenticity. Because of its authenticity, it can enable the audience to have the most direct understanding of a country's history, culture, political and economic status in a short time, break the cultural exchange barriers most directly, help the audience to conduct cultural exchange, and have irreplaceable value in shaping the image of the country.

*Every Treasure Tells a Story*, as an excellent documentary on historical relics produced by CCTV (China Central Television), makes the relics come alive through unique narrative perspective and beautiful words, showing the creativity of the ancients and China's unique aesthetic sensibility, which contains rich traditional Chinese culture; through beautiful words it arouses the audience's emotional resonance and achieves the purpose of cultural identity. The documentary has received widely praise on domestic and foreign social media. Therefore, studying the translation strategies and methods of documentary subtitles applied to international publicity materials is of great value for the future international publicity translation of similar texts, spreading excellent culture and shaping a good national image.

### 1.2 Objective and Significance of the Study

This article investigates the translation of culture-loaded words in the documentary *Every Treasure Tells a Story*, and analyzes the translation strategies and translation methods used when culture-loaded words are applied to international publicity guided by the theory of cultural translation view.

First of all, as a part of highlighting the country's cultural soft power, the translation of cultural relics is an important international publicity material, which is of great significance to Chinese cultural spread. As a special medium of cultural exchange, cultural relics include a large number of culture-loaded words with cultural heritage. Since each historical period produces new culture-loaded words with cultural markers of the time, how to translate cultural load words is a big challenge for translators. When translators translate culture-loaded words, most of them aim at conveying information, and the translation loses the flavor of Chinese culture. Secondly, domestic and foreign studies on translation strategies of culture-loaded words mainly focus on literature and film works,

and there are still relatively few studies on subtitle translation strategies of documentary films.

The present study provides new translation ideas and techniques for subtitle translation enthusiasts, attracts more translators to study the translation of cultural relics, and enriches relevant materials for future scholars to study the translation of similar international publicity texts for reference. In addition, the documentary can spread the excellent Chinese traditional culture and the unique aesthetic sensibility of Chinese people, and attract more and more international friends to be interested in Chinese traditional culture. Meanwhile, it can help the world establish a correct perception of China, and promote international cultural exchanges.

### 1.3 Methodology of the Study

#### 1.3.1 Research questions

This paper is centered on these two questions.

- a. What translation strategies and specific translation methods are used to make translators translate well in the translation of culture-loaded words?
- b. What role does the study of international publicity translation of culture-loaded words play in the development of the tourism economy?

#### 1.3.2 Research methods

Based on Basnett's theory of cultural translation view, this paper adopts literature research and the comparative research method.

The literature research method is a research method based on the collection and organization of relevant literature in the research field, and the study of literature to develop new understanding. In this study, based on the website of Bing and CNKI databases, relevant literature home and abroad are reviewed and collected, and the existing translation research findings on culture-loaded words are initially understood, and the translation strategies and methods adopted in the translation of culture-loaded words in the corpus are further analyzed.

The comparative research method refers to one of the basic theoretical methods in scientific research. The comparison can concretely understand the similarities and differences

between things, and provide an objective basis for further classification. It summarizes the similarities of multiple cases and the differences of the individual cases in this study, and finally comes up with specific translation strategies and methods that can be efficiently and widely applied to similar texts.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Previous Studies on Cultural Translation

In the long history of translation in the West, translation research has been moving forward. In 1969, Nida proposed "functional equivalence". In order to explain it, Nida also put forward "reader response theory". This theory believes that it is difficult for readers from different cultures to read and appreciate each other's unfamiliar cultures, so he uses naturalization strategies in translation to minimize readers' reading barriers. Nida's series of translation theory works have played a great role in the development of the field of translation. Until the 1990s, Basnett proposed the cultural translation theory, which inherited Nida's "reader response theory", but differs from the reader response theory in that the cultural translation theory requires that cultural factors should be paid attention to in the translation process and cultural differences should be preserved as much as possible. In contrast, Basnett's cultural translation theory is more responsive to the development of the times, and is extremely vital and innovative, promoting new research in the field of translation.

#### 2.1.1 Previous studies on cultural translation abroad

Basnett and Lefevere [2] proposed the "cultural turn". As translation studies entered the new period, cultural translation theory came into being. According to cultural translation theory, translation focuses on cultural communication. The central focus of the theory is to achieve cultural functional equivalence which depends on the subjective motivation of translators.

Nida published *Language and Culture-Contexts in Translating* in 2001. And he put forward the theory of "functional equivalence" which refers to "the idea that translations should not seek a rigid correspondence between words, but rather a functional equivalence between two languages." Nida's definition of translation specifies that translation is not only the dynamic equivalent of

lexical meaning, semantics, style and literary form, but also the translation conveys both superficial literal information and deep cultural information. In addition, Nida discusses the relationship between language, culture and translation in the context of his own translation practice and translational experience. Translators should have cultural awareness to improve the quality of translations. This is a manifestation of the translator's subjective initiative. It is worth mentioning that Nida's innovation in this new book is to point out that translators need to analyze the close connection between language and culture from different perspectives, and then place the original text in a cultural context to solve complex relationships and problems in translation. It is a further development of the research on cultural translation in the field of translation after Basnett's cultural translation theory was proposed.

Gentzler [3] in his monograph *Contemporary Translation Theories*, gives a detailed introduction to the cultural translation view of Basnett, the leader of the cultural translation school. In addition, the main contents of the book include the following parts: an exploration of the translation theories that have been influential in Western history, a concise introduction to the translation theoretical ideas of the main representatives of each translation school, and a critical comparison of the ideas of some major translation theorists. On the one hand, the book summarizes and reviews the existing translation theory, and on the other, it makes some prospects for the future development of Western translation theories. The book is well suited for readers studying translation studies to read in depth.

The scholar Timko [4] specializes in analyzing the results of research on translation according to cultural orientation in the last 11 years. By summarizing and comparing them, she reveals the main ways of studying the strategy of translation and proposes some keyword theory. The present study draws on his approach, summarizing and comparing the translation results of scholars who have previously conducted research in this field of translation and then summarizing them to draw new conclusions.

### **2.1.2 Previous studies on cultural translation at home**

Since the 1980s, the "cultural turn" in the field of translation research in the West has had a

profound impact on the translation theory research in China. The theory of "cultural translation" was introduced to China in the early 1980s, and the article *Translation and Culture* published by scholar Liu Shan in 1982 was the earliest article studying translation from the perspective of culture in China. Since the introduction of the "cultural translation theory" into China, scholars no longer confine themselves to the linguistic level when discussing translation issues, but place translation in a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural context.

Professor Wang [5] published *Chinese Translation*, in which "Cultural Comparison in Translation" points out that a translator can be called a "cultural person" only if he has the following talents. First, he has mastered two languages and understands the cultures of the society in the two languages. Second, in addition to a deep understanding of foreign culture, he must also understand his own culture. Last, in translation, he also needs to compare the two cultures constantly. For true reciprocity is to be equal in terms of the meaning, role, and emotional color of the respective cultures.

Scholars Zhu and Qingmin [6] summarize the relationship between the cultural translation theory and the translator's subjectivity by comparing the English translation by Hawks, which focuses on the "communicative function" of the text and aims to adapt to the reading habits and cultural background of Western readers. And the English translation by Yang Xianyi and his wife is based on the cultural translation theory and they are dedicated to spread Chinese culture. The relationship between the cultural translation theory and the subjectivity of the translator is summarized. It is emphasized that it is because the cultural translation view attaches importance to cultural factors and believes that translation should put cultural communication in the first place that translators are able to give full play to their subjective initiative when they carry out translation work, so that their translations can achieve the role of cross-cultural communication.

To sum up, after the cultural translation theory was proposed, many scholars in China and the West began to conduct translation research from the perspective of cultural translation viewpoint, but the research on translation strategies of translators at home and abroad mainly focused

on literary works and film works, etc. However, the research on subtitle translation strategies of documentary films is still relatively rare. In addition, historical relics, as a special cultural communication medium, have different backgrounds and cultural connotations of the times, which require high subjective initiative and translation thinking of translators, proving that translation research of relics has practical significance and is worthy of translators' consideration. At the same time, the special nature of cultural relics determines that the cultural translation theory has a scientific guiding role in the field of translation of cultural relics.

## **2.2 Previous Studies on Culture-Loaded Words**

### **2.2.1 Previous studies on culture-loaded words abroad**

In 1993, Nida explored in *Language, Culture and Translation* that the cultural factors to be considered in translation include the five major categories of translation: ecological culture, linguistic culture, religious culture, material culture and social culture. After that, translators conducted further in-depth research and finally put forward the theory of culture-loaded words.

Although there are more studies on culture-loaded words at home and abroad, translators still need to continuously enrich the examples of culture-loaded words and keep pushing forward the translation research.

### **2.2.2 Previous studies on culture-loaded words at home**

The first scholar who proposed the theory of "culture-loaded words" in China is Xu (1980), but did not give a clear definition. Liao (2002) defines culture-loaded words in *Explorations in Contemporary Western Translation Theory*: "Culture-loaded words are words that refer to things specific to a certain culture. These words reflect the unique ways of activity of the nation that have gradually accumulated over a long historical process and are distinct from other nations." Therefore, culture-load words are greatly represented in cultural relics. Most of the translation strategies for studying culture-loaded words are based on the international publicity translations of museum artifacts as a model for translation.

Scholar Zhang [7] proposes that the translation of museum relics is an important bridge for spreading Chinese culture, and the comprehensive use of various translation methods to present the cultural information contained in the relics as accurately as possible can make Chinese culture truly go out. It is confirmed that the translation of cultural relics, as a part of highlighting the country's cultural soft power, is an important international publicity material and is of great significance to the country's cultural going global.

Scholar Sun [8] focuses on the translation strategies of culture-loaded words in the English translation of *the Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Major Achievements and Historical Experiences of the Party's Centennial Struggle* in the context of the English translation. Culture-loaded words are widely found in various types of international publicity text materials, and summarizing the translation methods applicable to culture-loaded words is conducive to improving the quality of international publicity translations and promoting international cultural exchanges. It can be seen that the cultural translation viewpoint fits with the purpose of China's cultural communication to the outside world.

In conclusion, as globalization continues to deepen and the world gradually becomes more and more interconnected, international publicity translation is becoming more and more important for the construction of a country's image. The translation of publicity materials requires high quality for the translation. In addition, different historical periods produce different culture-loaded words, which is a constant challenge for translators. By continuously enriching the translation examples of culture-loaded words, translators can be a reference value for future scholars and translators' research.

## **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **3.1 Susan Bassnett's Cultural Translation Theory**

#### **3.1.1 Formation and development of Bassnett's theory**

The history of Western translation is mainly divided into two main lines of development, namely linguistic translation and literary translation. Before the 20th century, the school of literary translation dominated the translation

community. Since the middle of the 20th century, with the emergence of modern linguistics, the influence of linguistics on translation became increasingly strong. Subsequently, after the 1980s, a new trend of translation theory emerged. Translation starts to penetrate a variety of disciplines in different fields. The cultural translation theory was proposed in *Translation, History and Culture* by Basnett and co-writers, marking the “cultural turn” in translation studies. Cultural translation theory overturns the traditional translation theory that translations must be faithful to the original text, and believes that translations should not be limited to the inherent translation standard, nor should be judged by a certain type of standard. Rather, translation cases should be evaluated in the context of the time in which they occur. Since then, scholars of the cultural school of translation, represented by Basnett, have begun to pay attention to factors other than linguistic structure, such as culture, ideology, poetry, philosophy, history and translator’s subjective motivation in the process of translation. They put the translation object in a cultural context and pay more attention to the cultural function of translation.

### 3.1.2 Main contents of Basnett’s theory

In *Translation, History and Culture*, published in 1990 with Lefebvre. Basnett described the main contents of the cultural theory of translation.

- a. Translation takes culture as the unit of translation, thus dividing translation activities into intra cultural translation and extra-cultural translation.
- b. Translation cannot be simply understood as language transformation; it is essentially an act of cultural communication.
- c. Translation should not be just a simple description of the source text, but should pay more attention to the equivalent of cultural functions in the translation process.
- d. The goal of translation is to satisfy the needs of the culture or even the different community within the culture.

## 3.2 The International Publicity Translation

### 3.2.1 Definition and information of international publicity translation

What is international publicity translation? In his book *International Publicity and Translation in the*

*New Era* published in 2022, Zhang Jian defines “international publicity” as “international communication”, and for China, “international publicity” means telling China’s story to the world, spreading China’s voice, and enhancing the country’s cultural soft power. In short, international publicity is the translation of international publicity materials. It is the translation of international publicity materials into other countries’ languages, so as to introduce and promote our country to other countries, spread excellent culture and promote cultural exchanges. “The characteristics of international publicity translation are to translate a large amount of information about China from Chinese into foreign languages, and to publish and disseminate it through books, periodicals, newspapers, radio, television, the Internet and other media, as well as international conferences” (Huang, 2004: 27).

Today, every country attaches great importance to international publicity work. So far as China is concerned, she is facing the best era ever for international publicity of the country; on the other hand, there are still misunderstandings about our country in some countries internationally. So, presenting China to the world comprehensively and objectively is the primary task for the further development of the country. In short, the goal of China’s international publicity work is to build a peace-loving national image of China. A good national image can enhance the cultural confidence of the nation internally and form a strong national cohesion; externally, it can enhance the attractiveness of the country internationally, promote international exchanges and cooperation, and let the world understand China more deeply. In addition, the purpose of international publicity translation is that the audience of the translation can understand the message conveyed by the translation clearly and unambiguously, and in order to achieve this purpose, the translator needs to solve the problem of cross-cultural communication barriers caused by the huge differences in logic and style between the original text and the translated text. At the same time, the translation quality of international publicity materials also directly affects the country’s external image.

### 3.2.2 Principles of international publicity translation

According to the actual situation of China’s current international publicity and the outstanding characteristics of international publicity

translation, Huang (2004) points out international publicity translation work not only follows Yan Fu's "Faithfulness, Expressiveness, Elegance" standard, but also requires translators to adhere to the "three close principles of international publicity". The three closes to international publicity translation refer to "close to the actual development of China, close to the needs of foreign audiences for Chinese information, and close to the thinking habits of foreign audiences."

First, close to the reality of China's development. Generally speaking, the materials chosen for international publicity are in line with the actual situation of national development and close to the actual needs of foreign audiences. From the response of the documentary on mainstream social media platforms and media at home and abroad, the documentary is an excellent short video on the popularization of China's national treasures, which is valuable for shaping the image of China as a cultural power with a long history and spreading excellent knowledge of Chinese history and cultural relics. In addition, against the backdrop of the "Chinese culture fever" that is continuing to rise, the documentary has done a good job of understanding the needs of foreign audiences and arousing their interest in Chinese history and culture, allowing them to take the initiative to learn about this excellent culture that deserves to be promoted, and has played a great role in bringing Chinese culture to the world.

Second, close to the thinking habits of foreign audiences. Compared with the former, the thinking habits of the translated audience are the most important and difficult thing for translators to pay attention to in the translation process. Because people's thinking habits, behavior logic and values are closely related to the education they received from childhood and their cultural background in daily life. A high-quality translation is not a word-for-word translation, but rather translators pay more attention to the process of pre-translating the text according to the thinking habits of the foreign audience before they start translating it. Therefore, the translation of international publicity materials requires translators to flexibly use different translation strategies and methods to achieve the goal that the text information can be accurately and effectively delivered to the audience to make the translation achieve the purpose of outreach.

## **4. ANALYSES OF CULTURE-LOADED WORDS TRANSLATION IN EVERY TREASURE TELLS A STORY**

### **4.1 Definition of Culture-Loaded Words**

Historically, there have been many discussions on the definition of culture-loaded words, and they can be simply defined as words with rich cultural information. In translation, culture-loaded words often appear as "cultural gaps" that are common knowledge about our cultural background but may never appear in other cultures. This makes culture-loaded words a constant problem in cross-cultural translation. It is because of this specificity that research on culture-loaded words translation has never stopped.

### **4.2 Analyses of Translating Strategies and Methods of Culture-loaded Words**

Due to the colloquial characteristic of documentary, the subtitles are mainly presented in the form of dialogues. The language of the translation is required to be easy to understand and concise, so the documentary has a wide distribution of culture-loaded words. In this article, the scattered culture-loaded words were summarized and classified and then analyzed as follows.

#### **4.2.1 Translation study of heritage names**

Each national treasure has its unique name, and the name of a cultural object covers the basic information such as shape, process, color, material, use, age, and excavation address and they belong to the culture-loaded words.

In summary, the above table shows that the names of cultural relics contain rich cultural information. A combination of domestication and foreignization translation strategies is adopted in the translation of culture-loaded words in the names of cultural relics. For example, culture-loaded words with strong cultural uniqueness, such as names of people, places, and production processes, are mostly used in documentaries using the transliteration method to preserve cultural characteristics, but there are still barriers to understanding for audiences in cross-cultural communication. The usage, material, shape, and category of cultural relics in the name of the documentary use the literal translation + free translation methods. For example, "鸚尊" is

known to be made in the animal image of “鸮”, but “尊” is a unique wine vessel in ancient China, which does not exist in Western culture. Therefore, we need to use the free translation method, choosing words that can be properly explained in English to achieve the purpose of message transmission. As a translator, one needs to be flexible in handling the information in culture-loaded words. The translation needs to preserve our cultural characteristics, but it also needs to be readable and appreciated by the audience. It is clear that translating cultural relics is extremely challenging.

#### 4.2.2 A study on the translation of culture-loaded words in documentary dialogue

While watching the documentary, the narrator tells the legendary story of each national treasure, presenting an exquisite picture of Chinese history in front of the audience’s eyes.

First of all, as a popular science documentary, the narrator needs to concisely explain all the knowledge points about the story of the cultural relics in a very short period of time. This means that the narration contains information that is culturally inaccessible to foreign audiences, which is not conducive to cultural exchange. A

good translator plays an important role as a bridge in this context.

##### a. Source text:

狸猫纹漆食盘上有三个字：“君幸食”，翻译成现代语言就是“吃好喝好。”

##### Target text:

This Lacquer Dish bares three characters: Jun Xing Shi. If translated into modern Chinese, it means “eat well, drink well”.

**Analysis:** The term “君幸食” is obviously a characteristic word with ancient Chinese style. As a large country with a long history of population and agriculture, China has a long tradition of “Food is the most basic necessity of the people” for generations. Therefore, the phrase “君幸食” is also the best wishes of China. In the dialogue, the translator uses the method of transliteration + interpretive method to preserve the phonetic beauty of the ancient Chinese language on the one hand, and use the simplest and most accurate modern style language to explain it on the other. Although history has passed away, today’s domestic and foreign audiences can still feel the simplest folk customs of that era when they read these words. This is the charm of language and translation.

**Table 1a. Heritage name = personal name + usage**

越王勾践剑	The Sword of King Gou Jian of Yue	战国商鞅方升	Rectangular Measuring Vessel of Shang Yang
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**Table 1b. Heritage name = place name + usage**

长信宫灯	Changxin Palace Lamp	古滇国贮贝器	Shell containers of the ancient Dian Kingdom
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**Table 1c. Heritage name = shape + usage**

人头壶	Human-headed Jar	鸮尊	Owl-shaped Wine Vessel
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**Table 1d. Heritage name = place name + material +category**

红山玉龙	Hongshan Jade Dragon	熹平石经	Xiping Stone Classics
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**Table 1e. Heritage name = production process + shape +usage**

唐彩绘十二生肖俑	Painted Figurines of the 12 Animals of the Chinese Zodiac Tang Dynasty	三彩载乐骆驼俑	Sancai Camel with Musicians
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b. Source text:

“见日之光，天下大阳，服者圣王，千秋万岁，长毋相忘。”

Target text:

In the light of day, under heavens bright sun, even serving the great master in all of time will never forget each other.

**Analysis:**The source text is classical Chinese. The translator adopted the literal translation method. The first step is to translate the language into modern Chinese, and then translate it directly. The translation meets the standard of “Faithfulness”. Moreover, “In the light of day, under heavens bright sun” is catchy and fits the rhythm of English poetry. It achieves the effect of “Expressiveness”. In the process of translating classical Chinese, the translator needs to deliberate more on the words, fully understand the beauty of the language art expressed in classical Chinese and master the cultural context of English. Furthermore, the translator can appropriately use the allusions in English that are similar to the ancient texts, so that the final translation can achieve the translation standard of “Faithfulness, Expressiveness, Elegance”. All these requirements are a test of the translator’s own cultural literacy.

c. Source text:

你会帮主人梳妆，敷铅粉，抹胭脂，染额黄；画黛眉，点面靥，描斜红，涂唇脂，最后戴发饰。

Target text:

You’d help her ladyship apply makeup, powder her face, rouge her cheeks, gild her forehead with a floral design; trace eyebrows, dot the sides of her lips, paint presents on her temples, rouge her lips, and finally the crowning glory accessorizes her hair.

**Analysis:** While introducing Court Lady Figures of the Tang Dynasty, the documentary uses a second-person perspective and lively text to introduce their colorful daily life. The documentary cleverly quotes the steps of women’s makeup in the poem of Yuan Zhen, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, to explain the makeup

of Tang Dynasty women. Meanwhile, corresponding makeup steps are shown to the audience simultaneously on the faces of the court lady figures in the video. Thus, the documentary is both intellectual and artistic. In this case, the translator adopts the literal translation method. What is worth learning is that the translator has a solid understanding of Chinese and foreign cultures. This is also the basis for the success of the literal translation method. For example, “铅粉” was a unique make-up material in ancient time. What’s more, “染额黄”、“点面靥”、“描斜红” are special make-up steps in ancient time, and even as a Chinese person who has no knowledge of this aspect, he cannot tell the meaning of these steps accurately. The translation, however, makes it possible for the audience to understand the meaning of these steps at a glance. It is evident that the translator not only has knowledge of ancient Chinese makeup steps, but also has knowledge of western makeup ingredients and steps.

d. Source text:

四神就是四方的象征和守护者。青龙又称苍龙，是东方的神，颜色为青，五行属木。

Target text:

It is said the four symbols guard the world, defending our world from the four directions. The azure dragon is the symbol of the east. In the traditional Chinese concept of the five phases, it belongs to wood.

**Analysis:**The text involves the knowledge of ancient Chinese astronomy and the unique Chinese culture of “五行”. The four gods are the products of ancient astrological cult. The Azure dragon, White Tiger, Black Tortoise and Vermilion Bird are named after “the five elements + the directions”. The ancient people imagined the shape of the astrological constellations connected to the directions as animals, making them the symbols and guardians of the four directions. The translator adopted the literal translation + omission translation method. The color azure is a unique color in ancient China, which has an extremely important meaning in ancient society. The translator’s translation omits the repetitive description of the color as green, making the translation conform to the principle of concise documentary subtitles. In terms of translating the five elements, the translator translating “五行” as “five phase” instead of “Wu Xing”. The translator’s translation only makes

sense in a literal sense, but it is not based on the needs of traditional Chinese culture. The five elements are valuable treasures that have been inherited from ancient China and are still influential today. We should adopt the transliteration method to create a new vocabulary and give that vocabulary a rich cultural meaning of the five elements. Such a translation becomes a symbol of Chinese five elements culture on the one hand, and can help Chinese traditional culture to go global on the other.

e. Source text:

流传至今的谚语“不怕夜猫子叫，就怕夜猫子笑。”

Target text:

Popular sayings like “Fear not the owl’s hoot, but beware of its laughs.”

**Analysis:** In the case of this Chinese proverb, the translator adopted the literal translation method. The translator knows that the culturally specific “夜猫子” is the Chinese name for “owl” with the premise of having common cultural knowledge. This means that a good translator not only needs to have a deep understanding of foreign cultures, but also needs to know his or her own culture well. In addition, in the process of translation, the translator accumulates relevant knowledge by constantly comparing the similarities and differences between the two cultures to enhance ability.

#### 4.2.3 A study on the translation of culture-loaded words in Huashan Rock Art tourism propaganda text

Through watching the documentary, we find that most of the national treasures are bronze vessels used for sacrificial activities. Inscriptions on the bronzes have an important historical value for generations to study that era. Moreover, we think of culture as a whole. As the representative of Luoyue Culture, the Huashan Rock Art, in the Zuojiang River basin of Guangxi depicts solemn and joyful sacrificial activities, and it also plays a vital role in our study of Luoyue Culture in Guangxi. The following will quote Huashan Rock Art tourism propaganda text for translation case analysis.

a. Source text:

左江花山岩画以“蹲式人形”为基础符号，以记录祭祀活动为统一主题，展现了一套独创的，内涵丰富的图像表达系统。

Target text (Draft) :

Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art shows an original and rich image expression system, with “squatting figure” as the basic symbol and recording sacrificial activities as the unified theme.

Target text (Revision) :

Zuojiang Huashan Rock Art takes “squatting figure” as the basic symbol and takes recording sacrificial activities as the unified theme, showing a set of original and rich image expression system. (Squatting figure refers to the posture with legs down and arms rise.)

**Analysis:** In this case, we compare the two versions of the translation, and it is obvious that the second translation is more appropriate. The translator adopted the literal translation+interpretive method to deal with the ambiguous information in the source text and to maximize the purpose of information exchange.

b. Source text:

羊角钮钟、环首刀、短剑，这些当地骆越人进入铜器时代的标志性器物，在岩画中得到了大量的体现。

Target text (Draft) :

The horn button clock, the ring knife and the dagger, which are the symbolic objects of the local Luoyue people entering the Bronze Age, have been reflected in a large number of Rock Art.

Target text (Revision) :

The sheep-horn Bronze Bell, Huanshoudao and the dagger, which are the symbolic objects of the local Luoyue people entering the Bronze Age, have been reflected in a large number of Rock Art. (Huanshoudao refers to the ring head knife with a metal ring at the end of the handle.)

**Analysis:** In the revision, we can see that the translator has improved the translation of two proper nouns “羊角钮钟” and “环首刀”. The source text simply translates these two proper nouns, without taking into account the translation requirement of accurate transmission of

information in tourism promotional texts. Thus, the translation is likely to cause confusion and misunderstanding among readers. The revised version used the literal translation method for the first proper noun and the transliteration + interpretive method for the second proper noun. For texts with similar expressions in the English context, the translator adopts the literal translation method, which enables cross-cultural communication while achieving a translation that is faithful to the source text. On the contrary, for such proper nouns as “环首刀” and “骆越人”, for which no appropriate words can be found in other contexts [9]. The translators adopt the method of transliteration and interpretive to preserve its cultural characteristics on the one hand, and the basic information can be understood by readers on the other.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Language and translation are both the most complex activities in the world. In the background of increasingly close cultural exchanges in the world, there are still misconceptions about China from some countries. They regard China as a hypothetical enemy and consider its rapid development as a threat and hidden danger for them. As translators in a new era, we need to take the initiative to improve our own translation ability, use translation technology to spread our excellent culture to the world through various media and channels, and build a peace-loving national image.

Xu [10] argues that foreign translators with weak comprehension skills but strong expressive abilities are unable to translate Chinese poetry effectively. In the process of promoting Chinese culture internationally, Chinese translators have an advantage over their foreign counterparts in understanding the original text, enabling them to convey cultural essence that may go unnoticed by foreign translators. This helps present a complete and accurate image of their own country and nation to the world. Cognitive translation studies do not consider cultural translation as an abstract cross-cultural activity. In the new theoretical framework, the process of cultural translation is seen as a cross-cultural practice in which translators engage based on individual and collective practices of cultural cognitive representation patterns. It involves evaluating and reconciling conflicts within the conceptual-emotional schemas and behavioral frameworks of cultural creators, as well as re-categorizing and reinterpreting phenomena

related to self and others' cultures. This cognitive construction process also entails inheriting and generating cultural knowledge [11]. By basing it on schema-exemplar levels and diverse interpretations, a more comprehensive interactive constructivist view of cultural translation can be formed, facilitating the production of new knowledge and the development of more constructive models for cultural translation [12]. Based on the cultural translation perspective, the culture-loaded words studied in this paper are sourced from the documentary *Every Treasure Tells a Story* and the Huashan Rock Art tourism propaganda texts. The translator adopts a highly flexible translation strategy combining domestication and foreignization. Comparing the translation methods and the resulting translation effects in the different cases, the most appropriate translation method for translating culture-loaded words is transliteration + interpretive method. In cases where no corresponding cultural barriers to interpretation can be found, this method of translation is used to preserve cultural characteristics while achieving information transfer and cultural exchange. Culture is both a whole and diverse. In this paper, we have collected translation research findings of culture-loaded words from scholars on various websites such as CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure), and then specifically combined them with translation examples in this paper. It is concluded that translators mostly use one of the methods of literal translation, free translation, transliteration and interpretive method when translating culture-loaded words. However, the translation effect is not good. We should flexibly combine translation methods to achieve the goal of satisfying readers' needs and the unity of information transmission and cultural exchange. Applying appropriate translation methods and strategies to tourism propaganda texts and Chinese cultural documentary subtitles is beneficial to spreading our culture to the world. Excellent translations with cultural characteristics can attract readers' interest, thus driving the economic development of tourist destinations and expanding China's influence, playing a positive role as a great power.

However, there are also many deficiencies in the study of culture-loaded words in this paper. Firstly, due to the limited time of the documentary, translators chose the omitted translation method to translate some culture-loaded words in the documentary. Secondly, for the names of ancient raw materials and

production processes related to cultural relics, translators still have great shortcomings in translation. Thirdly, the research results are superficial and not profound enough due to the author's ability and lack of understanding. Lastly, there is no systematic translation research on the documentary subtitle and Huashan Rock Art tourism propaganda corpus, but only some specific texts are selected for analysis. Since the research of this paper still has some limitations, subsequent scholars can start from the shortcomings of the study of this paper.

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### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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