Adaptive Translation Analysis of Jiangxi's Ancient Academy Culture: Strategies, Challenges, and Cultural Heritage

Xiaohui Cao

Jiangxi University of Technology, Nanchang 330098, Jiangxi, China

Abstract: *Jiangxi ancient academies hold a significant position in Chinese history, serving as centers for academic research, educational dissemination, and cultural heritage. However, with the advancement of globalization, the English translation and dissemination of academy culture face numerous challenges, including cultural differences and language barriers. This study explores the application of adaptive translation strategies in translating the culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi, focusing on language-level conversion, cultural-level transmission, and reader-level acceptance. It also analyzes the challenges encountered during translation and proposes corresponding solutions. The study emphasizes that English translation is not merely a linguistic conversion but also a process of cultural exchange and inheritance, which is crucial for enhancing China's cultural soft power.*

Keywords: Adaptive Translation; Ancient Academy Culture of Jiangxi; Challenges; Cultural Heritage.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the increasing global cultural exchange, translating and sharing of the ancient academy culture of Jiangxi—a significant aspect of China's heritage—in English is essential for fostering mutual cultural respect and understanding. Historical academies such as the White Deer Cave Academy and Goose Lake Academy not only serve as models of higher education in ancient China but also play a crucial role in the inheritance of Confucian culture. Their educational philosophy of "cultivating illustrious virtue to achieve perfect goodness" and the academic tradition of "free debate" continue to offer valuable insights today (Zhu Xiaoke, 2019). However, due to the differences between Chinese and Western cultural cognitive systems and linguistic expressions, the dissemination of academy culture encounters the challenges related to terminology conversion and the potential loss of cultural imagery (Larry A. Samovar & Richard E. Porter, 2004).

This study aims to explore adaptive translation strategies for conveying the culture of Jiangxi's ancient academies in China into English. It analyzes the challenges encountered during the translation process, particularly the specific manifestations of cultural differences and linguistic barriers, as well as the corresponding coping strategies. The study emphasizes the core value of preserving cultural heritage within translation, serving as a significant cultural carrier and discourse resource to effectively communicate China's stories, present an authentic of China, and convey its voice.

2. OVERVIEW OF JIANGXI'S ANCIENT ACADEMY CULTURE

2.1 The History of Ancient Academies

The development of ancient academies in Jiangxi can be traced back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279) in China. As the imperial examination system gradually improved, academies emerged in Jiangxi, becoming significant centers for academic research and educational dissemination during that period (Li Hongqi, 2002). During the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1227), the rulers promoted a culture of literature and emphasized education and talent cultivation, creating a favorable policy environment for the growth of these academies. Notable institutions, such as the White Deer Cave Academy and the Goose Lake Academy, attracted numerous scholars with their distinctive academic atmospheres and educational philosophies, contributing to the cultural prosperity of Jiangxi and, indeed, all of China. In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1276), with the rise of scientific inquiry, these academies evolved into centers for scientific dissemination and research, further elevating their social status.

From the Ming to Qing dynasties in ancient China (1368-1840), the Jiangxi academies developed sustainably, reaching a peak in both number and scale, and becoming an integral part of the educational system of that era.

According to statistics, the number of Jiangxi academies during the Ming and Qing dynasties accounted for nearly one-fifth of the total number of academies in China, and the quality of their education and cultural heritage held a pivotal position in the country (Wang Bingzhao, Guo Qijia, 2010). During this period, Jiangxi academies not only served as an important venues for imperial examinations but also cultivated numerous outstanding talents, making significant contributions to the prosperity and stability of China.

2.2 Characteristics of Academic Culture

Jiangxi's ancient academies are renowned for their distinctive educational philosophy, academic atmosphere, architectural style, and environmental layout. In terms of educational philosophy, these academies emphasize knowledge through practice, the integration of theory and practice while fostering critical thinking and innovative spirit among students (Deng Hongbo, 2004). This educational approach aligns with the modern concept of quality-oriented education and underscores the progressive and contemporary essence of the academies' culture.

In terms of the academic atmosphere, the system of "discussion or debate" was established to promote academic freedom and encourage controversy. The academic debates exemplified by the Gehu Academy embodied the spirit of academia characterized by "harmony without uniformity" (Li Jinting, 2007). Regarding architectural style and environmental layout, the spatial philosophy of "Harmonization of Nature and Humanity" was developed. Most academies were constructed in the mountainous areas or alongside rivers, featuring a symmetrical centered around a central axis. This design seamlessly integrates the natural landscape with humanistic architecture, reflecting the philosophical concept of "the law of nature" (Shen Zhongliang, 2010).

2.3 The Contemporary Significance of Academic Culture

The ancient academy culture of Jiangxi offers significant insights for the advancement of contemporary education. First, its educational philosophy of moral education provides a historical reference for today's quality-oriented educational practices. The academy's focus on cultivating "character before scholarship" is closely aligns with the current educational principle of "fostering virtue through education" (Hu, 2020). Secondly, the academy's tradition of free and open academic discourse provides a model for modern academic innovation. The seminar method of doubts and meanings by the academy holds valuable lessons for establishing of a contemporary academic community (Carly Dodd, 2007). Finally, the ecological wisdom embedded in the academy culture offers resources for education aimed at sustainable development. The concept of harmonious coexistence between academic buildings and nature serves as an inspiration for the creation of green campuses (Larry A. Samovar & Richard E. Porter, 2004).

3. ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES FOR THE C-E TRANSLATION OF JIANGXI ANCIENT ACADEMIES CULTURE

In the Chinese-English translation of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture, the application of adaptive translation strategies is essential. This is primarily evident in three aspects: language, culture, and target reader.

3.1 Adaptive Translation at the Linguistic Level

First, the accuracy and authenticity of vocabulary selection form the foundation of translation at the linguistic level. During the translation process, it is essential to thoroughly understand each word in the original text and select terms that align with English expression habits and context (Baker, 2018). Additionally, in order to ensure the authenticity of the translation, relevant English can be utilized to prevent semantic confusion or cultural misunderstanding that may arise from literal translations. For instance, translating "书院" as "academy" rather than the literal "college" more effectively captures its essence as institution for academic research and the dissemination of education.

Secondly, the adjusting and optimizing of sentence structure is a crucial aspect of translation at the linguistic level. Due to the differences in sentence structure between Chinese and English, translation must appropriately modify the original text's structure in order to align with English expression conventions (Nida, 2003). For instance, translations can become more fluent and natural by altering the arrangement of the subject, predicate, and object within a sentence, or by adding or omitting certain components. This may involve a lengthy Chinese sentence into a concise English phrase or combining multiple Chinese phrases into a single English compound sentence.

In addition, the transmission and conversion of cultural imagery are crucial to translation at the linguistic level. The culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi is rich in cultural imagery, such as "白鹿洞" (Bailu Cave) and "鹅湖" (Ehu Lake), which must be appropriately conveyed and adapted in translation. These images should be accurately transmitted and transformed for the target audience. By employing methods such as literal translation with annotations, free translation, or calque, the cultural elements in the source text can be made comprehensible to the target readers. For instance, "白鹿洞" can be translated as "Bailu Cave (White Deer Cave, a renowned academy)", which not only preserves the original name, but also provides the reader with an understanding of its original meaning through the explanatory note in parentheses.

3.2 Adaptive Translation at the Cultural Level

At the cultural level, addressing cultural differences, preserving cultural characteristics, and constructing cultural identity are essential tasks in translation (Nida, 2003). The culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi possesses unique connotations and characteristics, such as an emphasis on academic research, educational inheritance, and the promotion of a free and open academic atmosphere. During the translation process, it is crucial to fully understand and respect these cultural differences, ensuring that target readers comprehend and appreciate them through appropriate explanations and additions.

In order to preserve and emphasize the characteristics of the ancient academy culture in Jiangxi, translations must prioritize the retention and interpretation of cultural elements. For instance, proper nouns and historical allusions specific to the academy can be translated using methods such as transliteration with annotations or free translation to maintain their cultural significance. For example, "鹅湖之会" can be translated as "The Gehu Debate (A Significant Academic Exchange in the Southern Song Dynasty)," which not only retains the original name but also provides an explanation through annotation. The Gehu Debate, a notable academic exchange during the Southern Song Dynasty（1127-1279） in ancient China, preserves the original name while elucidating its historical context through the annotation.

In addition, constructing cultural identity is one of the important goals of translation. Through translation, the unique charm and value of the ancient academy culture in Jiangxi can be conveyed to target readers, enhancing their sense of identity and belonging to this culture (Wang Kefei, 2019). For example, when translating the educational philosophy of the academy, its commonalities with modern education can be highlighted, thereby evoking readers' empathy.

3.3 Adaptive Translation for Target Readers

Translation's core elements for the reader include identifying the target readers, enhancing text readability, and promoting cross-cultural understanding (Reiss, 2000). First, it is essential to clarify the characteristics and needs of the target readers, such as their cultural background, knowledge level, and reading habits. Based on the needs of the target readers, the appropriate translation style and language should be selected to align with the readers' reading preferences and aesthetic expectations.

Secondly, enhancing the readability of the text is a crucial aspect of reader-based translation. Translations can be made more comprehensible and engaging by simplifying sentence structures, incorporating explanatory notes, and employing vivid language (Baker, 2018). Additionally, we can utilize illustrations, charts, and other supplementary materials to further improve the readability and appeal of the text.

Finally, promoting cross-cultural communication is the ultimate goal of reader-level translation (Wang, 2019). Translation can bridge the gap between different cultures, fostering mutual understanding and dialogue. Effective translation requires careful attention to conveying and adapting cultural elements, as well as explaining cultural differences, so that target readers can understand and appreciate the unique charm of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture.

4. C-E TRANSLATION CHALLENGES OF JIANGXI ANCIENT ACADEMY CULTURE

In the process of translating of Jiangxi ancient academy culture into English, translators encounter various

challenges. These challenges arise not only from linguistic barriers, but also from cultural differences, translation quality, dissemination effectiveness, copyright protection, and cultural security.

4.1 Linguistic Barriers and Cultural Differences

First and foremost, there are significant differences in expression between Chinese and English, which pose a major challenge in the translation process. Chinese emphasizes meaning, characterized by subtlety, implicit coherence, and poetic resonance, while English focuses more on form, exhibiting a direct and logical expression (Nida, 2003). This disparity in linguistic characteristics necessitates a thorough consideration of the differences between the two languages when translating the culture of Jiangxi's ancient academies to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the translation. For instance, when addressing culturally loaded terms such as "学院", which embodies distinct Chinese cultural attributes, a direct translation to as "academy" conveys the basic meaning but fails to capture its unique connotation as a center for ancient academic research and educational dissemination. Therefore, using terms like "Chinese ancient academy" or providing supplementary explanatory information, such as "Chinese ancient academy (a center for academic research and education in ancient China)," can enhance the translation's accuracy and cultural conveyance (Baker, 2018).

In addition, the culture of Jiangxi Academy possesses a unique regional and historical background, with rich and complex cultural connotations. Accurately understanding and conveying these distinctive cultural elements during the translation process presents another significant challenge. For instance, proper nouns, historical allusions, and educational philosophies within the Chinese academy must be handled and interpreted appropriately in translation to prevent cultural misunderstandings and semantic confusion (Reiss, 2000). Specifically, methods such as transliteration with annotations and free translation that incorporate cultural background introductions can be employed to ensure that target readers accurately grasp the cultural nuances of the source text.

4.2 Translation Quality and Communication Effectiveness

Translation quality and communication effectiveness are key indicators for evaluating the success of a translation. During the translation process, the translator must ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining its fluency and readability. This necessitates that translators possess not only a strong command of linguistic principles but also a deep understanding of the culture of surrounding Jiangxi's ancient academies (Chesterman, 2017). Additionally,the Dynamic Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) is employed to comprehensively evaluate translations from multiple dimensions, including accuracy, fluency, and cultural adaptability, ensuring that the quality of the translations is optimized.

Meanwhile, the acceptance and impact of translations within the target culture is an issue that cannot be overlooked. Due to cultural differences, translations may require appropriate adjustments and optimizations to align with the reading habits and aesthetic preferences of local audiences (Nord, 2018). Furthermore, translators must consider strategies to promote the target text to a broader audience through effective communication channels, such as social media and international academic conferences, to maximize its cultural and social value.

4.3 Copyright Protection and Cultural Safety

In the process of translating and disseminating the culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi, it is essential to pay close attention to copyright protection and cultural safety. As a cultural treasure of the Chinese nation, the protection and utilization of the academy's cultural resources must adhere to relevant laws, regulations, and ethical standards. During the translation process, translators must ensure the originality and legitimacy of the translated text to avoid infringing on the copyright interests of the original author. Specifically, the legitimacy of a translation can be ensured by obtaining formal authorization and properly citing the source of the original text.

At the same time, translations must also enhance copyright protection during the dissemination process to prevent malicious plagiarism or misuse. Additionally, translators should prioritize cultural security to ensure that the translated text does not compromise the country's cultural sovereignty and integrity. This necessitates that translators maintain a strong sense of cultural self-awareness and confidence throughout the translation and dissemination process, while actively promoting positive narratives and outstanding cultural achievements (UNESCO, 2017).

5. CULTURAL INHERITANCE IN THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF JIANGXI ANCIENT ACADEMY CULTURE

In the Chinese-English translation of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture, the preservation of cultural heritage plays a crucial role. This is evident not only in the retention and promotion of traditional cultural elements, but also in the breadth and depth of cross-cultural communication and cultural dissemination.

5.1 Preservation and Inheritance of Traditional Cultural Elements

First, the inheritance of the spirit and educational philosophy of the academy is central to the English translation of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture. These principles and philosophies, such as "understanding principles and putting them into practice", "cultivating erudition through literature while refining character through rites", are the essence of the academy's culture. During the translation process, it is essential to ensure that these spirits and concepts are conveyed accurately and vividly to stimulate readers' empathy and critical thinking. According to the theory of functional equivalence, translation should not only convey the literal meaning, but also capture the cultural connotations and emotional values behind the text(Nida, 2003). For instance, "明理躬行" can be translated as "understanding principles and putting them into practice", which not only retains the original meaning but also aligns with the English expression.

Secondly, the reproduction of the architecture and environmental culture of the academy is a crucial aspect of cultural heritage. In Jiangxi, most ancient academies are situated in the mountains areas and alongside rivers, characterized by simple yet elegant architectural styles and serene, pleasant surroundings. In English translations, in addition to capturing the unique style and atmospheric qualities of the academy's architecture of the academy through descriptive language and illustrations, virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) technology can be employed to recreate the academy's environment on a digital platform. This approach provides an immersive experience, allowing readers to appreciate the allure of academy culture in a captivating setting (Pym, 2016).

In addition, fostering the friendship between students and teachers at the academy, along with upholding academic traditions, is an essential aspect of cultural heritage. By translating letters, notes, and lectures from teachers and students, and by analyzing specific historical cases, we can illuminate the profound friendship and academic endeavors that exist between them, thereby enhancing the essence of the academy's culture (Bassnett, 2014). For instance, the correspondence exchanged between teachers and students at a particular academy reflects a steadfast commitment to learning and a deep respect for the master. These sentiments should be thoroughly conveyed in the translation.

5.2 Cross-cultural Communication and Cultural Dissemination

The presentation of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture on the international stage serves as a vital means of cross-cultural communication and cultural dissemination. Through Chinese-English translation, the culture of Jiangxi's ancient academies can transcend borders, reach a global audience, and engage in dialogue and exchange with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This not only enhances the international community's understanding and appreciation of Jiangxi academy culture but also fosters the development of cultural diversity (Apter, 2013).

Meanwhile, the role of translation in promoting cultural diversity cannot be overlooked. Through translation, the unique elements and values of the Jiangxi Academy's culture can be disseminated to broader audiences, contributing to the enrichment and development of global cultural diversity. When combined with contemporary social media and international cultural exchange activities, such as cultural festivals and online lectures, translation can be even more effective in promoting the culture of the ancient Jiangxi academy and enhancing its international influence (Cronin, 2020).

In conclusion, the cultural heritage reflected in the English translation of Jiangxi's ancient academy culture encompasses not only the preservation and promotion of traditional cultural elements, but also the deepening and expansion of cross-cultural communication and cultural dissemination. This process enhances the international influence of Jiangxi Academy's culture and positively contributes to the prosperity and development of global cultural diversity.

6. CASE ANALYSIS OF C-E TRANSLATION OF TYPICAL ACADEMY CULTURE

6.1 Criteria and Basis for Case Selection

When selecting representative English translation cases of academic culture, we primarily rely on the following criteria: whether the cases are representative and can fully reflect the essence of ancient academic culture in Jiangxi Province; whether the translations are of high quality, can accurately and fluently convey the cultural connotations of the original text; and whether the cases provide abundant information about the cultural background, which can help readers gain a deeper understanding of academic culture. Additionally, we refer to the theories of intercultural communication and translation adaptation to ensure that the selected cases possess analytical value at both theoretical and practical levels (Vermeer, 1989; Hu Wenzhong, 1999).

6.2 Case Analysis and Evaluation

原文1："白鹭洲书院，位于吉安赣江之畔，以其优美的自然风光和浓厚的学术氛围著称。"

Translation1: "Bailuzhou Academy, situated alongside the Gan River in Ji'an, is renowned for its stunning natural scenery and vibrant academic environment."

Analysis: In the translation process, the translator skillfully employs the phrase "situated alongside" to describe the geographic location of the academy. This choice not only preserves the imagery of the original text, but also aligns with English expression conventions, adhering to the principles of functional equivalence (Nida, 2003). Additionally, the term "stunning" effectively captures the beauty of the natural scenery surrounding Bailuzhou Academy, while the phrase "vibrant academic environment" aptly reflects its vibrant scholarly environment. This translation strategy successfully conveys the cultural nuances of the original text while ensuring the fluency and readability of the translation.

原文2："豫章书院，作为江西四大书院之一，曾培养出众多文人墨客，是江西文化的重要象征。"

Translation 2: "Yuzhang Academy, one of the Four Great Academies of Jiangxi, has nurtured numerous scholars and poets, serving as a significant symbol of Jiangxi culture."

Analysis: This translation of "江西四大书院" as "Four Great Academies of Jiangxi" not only accurately conveys the original term but also intentionally employs the word "Great" to highlight their historical significance. This approach aligns with the Skopos rule of Skopos theory (Vermeer, 1989), which posits that translations should meet the expectations of the target readers. Additionally, the term "nurtured" effectively illustrates the cultivation of talent at the Yuzhang Academy, while "serving as" underscores its role as a symbol of Jiangxi culture. This translation strategy not only preserves the cultural connotations of the original text, but also enhances the expressive power of the translation.

原文3："白鹭洲书院的藏书楼，藏书丰富，是古代学子求知的重要场所。"

Translation 3: "The library of Bailuzhou Academy, rich in books, served as a significant place for ancient scholars to pursue knowledge."

Analysis: In this translation, "rich in books" succinctly captures the abundance of the library, while "served as a significant place for..." accurately conveys its role as a place of knowledge for ancient scholars. This approach to translation not only preserves the information from the original text but also aligns with common English expressions, reflecting the principle of adaptability in the Translation-Adaptation Selection Theory (Hu Gengshen, 2004). By employing free translation and restructuring, the translator effectively communicates the cultural connotations of the original text.

原文4："鹅湖之会，是南宋理学史上的一次重要辩论，鹅湖书院因此成为了理学交流的中心。"

Translation 4: "The Gehu Debate, a pivotal event in the history of Neo-Confucianism during the Southern Song Dynasty(1127-1279), established Gehu Academy as a hub for Neo-Confucian exchanges."

Analysis: In the translation process, the translator highlights the significance of the Gehu Debate in the history of

Southern Song science through the phrase of "a pivotal event in the history of...," which aligns with the translation strategy for informational texts in text typology (Reiss, 2000). Additionally, the phrase "established Gehu Academy as a hub for...", clearly conveys that Gehu Academy subsequently became a hub for scientific exchange. This approach to translation is both precise and engaging, enhancing readers' understanding of the historical importance and cultural value of Gehu Academy.

To summarize, the translation process of these example sentences effectively showcases the translator's expertise in preserving the information from the original text while adhering to English expression conventions and conveying the cultural essence of the academy. Through meticulous translation and the skillful application of strategies, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the rich connotations of the ancient academy's culture in Jiangxi.

6.3 Insights and Lessons from the Case Analysis

In the process of translating the culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi, we can summarize the following successful strategies: First, a faithful conveyance of cultural essence. During the translation process, it is essential to retain the uniqueness and connotations of the academy's culture while accurately conveying the cultural information of the original text through appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure. Second, linguistic fluency. The translation should align with the reading habits of English readers, avoiding literal translations to ensure that the language is fluent and natural. Third, contextual supplementation. Appropriately adding cultural background information in the translation aids readers in better understanding the historical context and cultural connotation of the academy's culture.

At the same time, certain shortcomings require improvements. First, addressing cultural misinterpretation: During the translation process, it is crucial to fully consider cultural differences to avoid cultural conflicts or misunderstandings arising from literal translation or misinterpretation. Second, enhancing translation quality: in-depth research on academic culture is essential for improving scholarly rigor and accuracy, ensuring a comprehensive and faithful representation of its philosophical essence. Third, collecting reader feedback: Future research should gather feedback from target-language readers to evaluate the effectiveness of translation strategies .

7. CONCLUSION

This paper provides an in-depth discussion of the English translation strategies employed for the culture of ancient academies in Jiangxi, with a particular focus on the efforts made to adapt to the reading habits and cultural backgrounds of English readers. Through a comprehensive analysis of the historical context, educational philosophy, architectural features, and academic achievements of Jiangxi's ancient academies, this study adopts a translation strategy that integrates both domestication and foreignization. This approach aims to preserve the essence of the academy's culture while making the translated text more accessible and comprehensible for English readers. The findings of this study indicate that this strategy effectively enhances the readability and cultural dissemination of the translated text, thereby promoting the international communication and appreciation of Jiangxi Academy's culture.

This study underscores the vital role of translation in cultural transmission. Translation serves not merely as a linguistic conversion but as a conduit for cultural exchange, bridging cultural divides through precise rendering to foster cross-cultural understanding and respect. Our translation practices have successfully conveyed the philosophical essence of Jiangxi's academy culture to international audiences, cultivating their appreciation for this distinctive heritage. This not only enhances the international influence of Chinese culture but also provides a valuable reference for global cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

[1]   Baker, M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation[M]. London & New York: Routledge, 2018.

[2]   Bassnett, S. Translation Studies[M]. Routledge, 2014.

[3]   Chesterman, A. Memes of Translation: The spread of ideas in translation theory[M]. John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2017.

[4]   Carly Dodd: Dynamics of Intercultural Communication (5th Ed.)[M]. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2007.

[5]   Cronin, M. Translation in the Digital Age[M]. Routledge, 2020.

[6]   Emily Apter. The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature[M]. Princeton University Press, 2013.

[7]   Larry A. Samovar & Richard E. Porter: Communication between Cultures (5th Ed.), Peking University Press, 2004.

[8]   Nida, E. A. Language, Culture, and Translating[M]. Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2003.

[9]   Nord, C. Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained[M]. Routledge, 2018.

[10] Pym, A. Exploring Translation Theories[M]. Routledge, 2016.

[11] Reiss, K. Translation Criticism: The Potentials & Limitations[M]. Routledge, 2000.

[12] UNESCO. Recommendation concerning the Protection and Promotion of Museums and Collections, their Diversity and their Role in Society[R]. UNESCO General Conference, 2017.

[13] Vermeer, H. J. Skopos and Commission in Translational Action[C]. Chesterman, A. Readings in Translation Theory. Finland: Oy Finn Lectura Ab, 1989.