

Reconstruction of Translation Strategies from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Communication Studies: Theory Integration and Practical Approaches

Liyuan Zhang^{1*}

¹ School of Foreign Languages, Guilin University of Technology, Guilin, China

*Correspondence: Liyuan Zhang

Received: 22 May 2026; Accepted: 29 June 2026; Published: 26 July 2026

Abstract:

The “cultural turn” in translation studies has prompted the academic community to continuously explore the possibility of interdisciplinary integration. This article, from the perspective of cross-cultural communication studies, attempts to systematically reconstruct the theoretical basis of translation strategies. Firstly, it reviews the internal tensions and common concerns between translation studies and cross-cultural communication studies, and points out that there is a deep academic alignment in core issues such as symbol flow, cultural interaction, and meaning negotiation; then, it introduces core models of cross-cultural communication studies such as Hall's encoding-decoding theory, high-low context theory, and cultural dimension theory, and analyzes their theoretical reconstruction significance for the selection of translation strategies; on this basis, combined with specific research cases such as news translation and hot word translation, it explores the feasible path for the transformation of the theoretical framework into translation practice, and proposes an integrated translation evaluation framework covering three dimensions: text fidelity, cultural adaptation, and communication effectiveness; finally, it reflects on the applicable boundaries and methodological risks of interdisciplinary integration. The article holds that cross-cultural communication studies not only provide theoretical tools that can be referred to in translation studies, but also offer a systematic problem awareness that reduces translation behavior to its communication context, which is conducive to deepening the explanatory power and practical guiding value of translation studies in the new academic context.

Keywords:

Cross-cultural communication, Translation Theory, Translation Strategy, Encoding - Decoding, Cultural Context, Interdisciplinary Integration

1. Introduction

There exists an intriguing tension between translation studies and cross-cultural communication studies: both focus on the flow of meaning of symbols in cross-cultural contexts, but present significant differences in their research focuses. Translation studies have long concentrated on the “transformation” process of

symbols - how to achieve equivalence or correspondence between the source language and the target language; while communication studies pay more attention to the “feedback” mechanism triggered after the symbols are received, that is, how the audience interprets the information and constructs meaning in a specific cultural context. This difference is not a barrier between the disciplines; rather, it constitutes the basis for their complementarity.

Hall's encoding-decoding theory [6] provides an effective analytical framework for understanding this complementary relationship. During the process of communication, the information producer encodes the content based on specific cultural assumptions, while the audience decodes it within their own cultural context - this process may result in three distinct interpretive outcomes: dominant, negotiated, or confrontational. Introducing this framework into translation studies has profound implications: the translator is not merely a “transit station”, but assumes dual roles - being both the decoder of the source text and the encoder of the target text. [2] The dislocation between these two cultural transformations is the deep-rooted cause of numerous mistranslations and cultural distortions. Venuti's discussion on “alienation” and “domestication” shares a rather similar internal logic with Hall's diversity of audience interpretation: whether retaining traces of the source culture or aligning with the target culture, each choice made by the translator implicitly presupposes and intervenes in the interpretation method of the target audience. [9]

At the same time, there are also significant intersections between the two disciplines in terms of a critical perspective. Edward Said's “Orientalism” theory reveals how the Western discourse system systematically constructs the East through knowledge production; [7] the post-colonial criticism in translation studies also focuses on the power structure behind translation behavior - which texts are translated, by whom, and how - all of which are subject to specific ideological contexts. The cultural hegemony theory in communication studies provides a macro framework for critical analysis of power inequality in translation, enabling researchers to go beyond the micro-analysis within the text and inquire about deeper cultural political issues. [1] [2]

2. Theoretical Reconstruction of Translation Strategies Based on Cross-cultural Communication Models

Within the current theoretical framework of translation, Nida's functional equivalence theory by Eugene Nida and Newmark's communicative translation theory by Peter Newmark represent two major approaches. Both of these theories do, to some extent, focus on the reception effect of the target audience. However, the common limitation of these theoretical models lies in the fact that they mainly operate at the linguistic level and lack systematic integration of the dynamic aspects of communication - especially cultural context differences and audience heterogeneity. The several core models provided by cross-cultural communication studies are expected to fill this gap.

The high-low context theory proposed by Edward T. Hall [8] is one of the most valuable frameworks for translation operations. In high-context cultures (such as China and Japan), information is largely implicit within the relationship network, non-verbal symbols, and historical background; the words themselves are merely the tip of the iceberg. In contrast, low-context cultures (such as the United States and Germany) rely on explicit and clear language expressions to convey information. This difference poses real and specific challenges in translation practice: the Chinese proverb

“Adding feet to a snake” literally refers to an action related to a snake, but its cultural connotation (the admonition of “doing something unnecessary”) is almost impossible for English readers without relevant cultural background to grasp. Simple direct translation not only fails to convey the original meaning but may even create comprehension obstacles. In such cases, the communication theory-based “contextual compensation” strategy - through annotations, rewriting, or additional translation to supplement background information - becomes a necessary translation intervention measure.

The reverse translation direction also faces similar challenges. In English texts, highly explicit logical connectors (such as “however”, “furthermore”, “consequently”, etc.) when translated into Chinese, if each one is retained, often result in redundancy and even disrupt the implicit rhythm of the Chinese text. This is not merely a matter of style; it reflects the fundamental differences in information encoding methods between the two cultures. On the translation of foreign English news, translators need to dynamically adjust the information density according to the cultural context of the target audience in order to achieve effective cross-cultural communication. This observation directly corresponds to Hall's context theory. [4]

The Cultural Dimensions Theory (Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions) provides another theoretical basis for audience analysis. Hofstede classified cultural differences into several dimensions such as power distance, individualism/collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance. [10] These dimensions are not abstract concepts but actually have a concrete impact on how readers receive the text. Taking the Disney animated film “Mulan” as an example, the differences in emphasis between the Chinese and Western versions regarding “filial piety” and “individual heroism” are precisely the strategic adjustments made by the producers for different cultural dimension audiences. This case suggests to translation researchers: The translation strategies for “loyal audiences” (such as deep cultural enthusiasts) and for “general audiences” should be differentiated. The former can adopt an alienation strategy to retain the source culture's characteristics, while the latter needs to use a domestication strategy to lower the comprehension threshold. [2]

3. From Communication Effect to Translation Evaluation: The Practical Path of Framework Integration

The introduction of the aforementioned theoretical resources undoubtedly holds significant inspiration. However, the core challenge of this research lies in how to transform them into practical translation guidelines that can be implemented. This transformation requires addressing a fundamental contradiction: the theoretical models of cross-cultural communication studies are mostly macroscopic frameworks, while translation practice demands micro-level text manipulation. There is a clear scale gap between the two.

A study on the translation and dissemination effect of news buzzwords was carried out from the perspective of innovation diffusion theory, offering a valuable comprehensive case reference. [3] The innovation diffusion theory was originally used to analyze the dissemination process of new technologies or new ideas in social systems. This theory has been introduced into translation studies to examine how lexical terms gain acceptance, achieve dissemination, and become entrenched in target language cultures. A typical example is the global standardization of translating “coronavirus pneumonia” as “COVID-19”, a process influenced by multiple factors

including authoritative endorsement, dissemination speed, and audience acceptance inertia. [3] The value of this research approach lies in: it shifts the focus of translation evaluation from the internal fidelity of the text to the actual dissemination efficacy of the text in the target culture, thereby enabling the organic connection of the macroscopic perspective of communication studies and the micro-level concerns of translation studies.

A systematic study on foreign news translation from the perspective of cross-cultural communication further reveals that communication channels and media platforms impose restrictions on translation strategies. [5] The inherent requirements of social media platforms for information length, format, and style make the traditional translation norms for print media difficult to directly apply; the cultural background differences of the target audience also require translators to conduct targeted “cultural filtering” when dealing with politically sensitive content or local emotional elements. These observations collectively point to a conclusion: The selection of translation strategies must take into account the communication context - including media characteristics, audience composition, and cultural ecology - in a systematic manner, rather than making decisions solely based on the internal language features of the source text.

Based on the above analysis, it is necessary for the researchers to propose a more integrated translation evaluation framework. This framework should at least include three evaluation dimensions: first, text fidelity (the degree to which the source text’s intention is retained); second, cultural adaptability (the comprehensibility and acceptability in the target cultural context); third, communication effectiveness (the actual meaning transmission effect of the translation in the target audience). These three aspects do not have a linear priority relationship; instead, they form a tension structure that needs to be dynamically balanced in specific translation contexts. It can be conceptualized as a “Cross-cultural Translation Communication Effect Index”, comprehensively measuring the performance of the translation in these three dimensions, providing a more systematic and more operational evaluation basis for translation practice.

4. Boundary of Theoretical Integration and Methodological Reflection

It is worth noting that the value of interdisciplinary research lies in deepening the awareness of problems, rather than simply expanding the theoretical territory. The effectiveness of the integration of translation studies and cross-cultural communication studies depends on whether researchers can accurately identify the true “fitting points” between the two disciplines - that is, the core issues of common concern, rather than artificial conceptual correspondences. Symbolic transmission, cultural interaction and meaning negotiation constitute the solid foundation of this integration; however, when the audience commodification theory or innovation diffusion theory of communication studies is directly transplanted to translation research, researchers must maintain sufficient methodological consciousness and carefully evaluate the applicable boundaries of the theoretical transplantation and the possible conceptual distortions it may cause.

In discussing the practical basis of interdisciplinary research on translation and communication, studies on contemporary translation demonstrate that modern translation research calls for not only theoretical interdisciplinary integration but also

active responses to specific social and cultural practices. Relevant issues, including national image communication, the external translation of cultural classics, and the cross-cultural reproduction of international news, are providing increasingly diverse research scenarios for the in-depth integration of translation and communication disciplines. [1] In these scenarios, the micro-textual operational skills of translation studies and the macro-mode analysis of communication studies precisely constitute a complementary rather than competitive relationship: the former answers “how to translate”, while the latter answers “for whom to translate, in what cultural ecosystem to translate, and what kind of meaning effect will be produced after translation”.

5. Conclusions

Translation, in the final analysis, is a practice of meaning-making within the tension field of cultural differences. Cross-cultural communication studies provide translation research with not only several applicable theoretical tools, but also a more systematic problem consciousness - by reducing translation behavior to the communication context in which it is embedded, and re-understanding the translator's subjectivity, the rationality of strategic choices, and the social and cultural value of the translation product in the dynamic cultural interaction and meaning negotiation process. This expansion of the theoretical perspective may be precisely the key to the continuous deepening of the explanatory power of translation research in the new academic context.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

References

- [1] Li, J.P. On the Rationale and Practical Foundation of Interdisciplinary Research on Translation and Communication in the New Era. *Journal of China University of Political Science and Law*, 2023.
- [2] Xiong, W. Translation Studies from the Perspective of the “Model” of Cross-cultural Communication Theory - Also on the Interdisciplinarity of Translation Studies. *Foreign Languages*, Wuhan University of Foreign Languages, 2019.
- [3] Lin, Q. Research on the Translation and Communication Effect of News Hotwords from the Perspective of Innovation Diffusion Theory. *Journal of Minjiang University*, 2022.
- [4] Tang, C.F. Research on Innovative Strategies for Foreign English News Translation and Communication. *Journal of Journalism and Communication*, 2021.
- [5] Lv, X.X. Research on Foreign News Translation and Dissemination from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Communication. *University of International Business and Economics*, 2020.

- [6] Hall, E.T. *The Silent Language*; Doubleday: New York, USA, 1959.
- [7] Said, E.W. *Orientalism*, 1st ed.; Pantheon Books: New York, USA, 1978; pp. 0394428145.
- [8] Hall, S. *Encoding/Decoding*. In *Culture, Media, Language*; Hutchinson: London, UK, 1980; pp. 128–138.
- [9] Venuti, L. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*; Routledge: London, UK, 1995.
- [10] Hofstede, G. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*, 2nd ed.; Sage: Thousand Oaks, USA, 2001.



© 2026 by the author(s); licensee International Technology and Science Publications (ITS), this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)