

Original Research Article

## Research on the International Publicity and Translation of Foshan Dragon Boat Culture

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**Abstract:** Foshan dragon boat culture is an intangible cultural heritage project with rich cultural deposits but also seriously lack of its international publicity and translation. The international translation of Foshan Dragon Boat culture can try to take the guidance of translation theory to carry out diversified research on dragon boat culture publicity translation, make use of the leading role of the government to collect and sort the text and audio materials, give full play to the scientific research advantages of local universities, and pay attention to the professional training of intangible cultural heritage translators. By studying the current situation of Foshan dragon boat culture publicity translation, exploring the feasible path of Foshan dragon boat culture publicity translation, this paper provides reference ideas for solving the problem of dragon boat culture connotation in cross-cultural communication.

**Keywords:** Dragon boat culture; Publicity and translation; Intangible cultural heritage

### 1. Introduction

As a part of Chinese excellent traditional culture, intangible cultural heritage communication plays a significant role to the protection of intangible heritage, promoting cultural diversity and innovation, enhancing national emotion and identity, and promoting the international civilization mutual learning. Therefore, we should attach great importance to the intangible communication work, actively build communication platform, promote the intangible cultural heritage to the world. At present, China has the largest list of intangible cultural heritage in the world. How to translate these intangible cultural heritage is of national strategic significance.

The dragon boat culture in Foshan, Guangdong province has a long history. And the dragon boat games are flourishing. However, the international publicity and translation of Foshan dragon boat culture is seriously scarce. Foshan Nanhai District and Shunde District have been awarded the titles of “Hometown of Chinese Dragon Boat Sports” and “Hometown of National Dragon Boat” in 2002 and 2005 respectively. Since the implementation of intangible cultural heritage protection, more than 10 dragon boat culture projects with “dragon boat” as the core spirit in Foshan have been listed in the intangible cultural heritage list at all levels<sup>[1]</sup>. However, the international publicity and translation of the dragon boat culture is still rare. This paper believes that the research on the publicity and translation of Foshan dragon boat culture can promote the research of Foshan national intangible cultural heritage, fill the gap in the research of Foshan intangible cultural heritage, help tell the dragon boat story and strengthen the international communication power of Foshan dragon boat culture.

### 2. The Present Status of International Publicity and Translation of Foshan Dragon Boat Culture

#### 2.1. The Dragon Boat Culture Text Materials are not Detailed.

Dragon boat culture belongs to the intangible culture. Its existence and expression forms are diversified,

and its inheritance form also has the characteristics of the immaterial and intangible. Dragon boat culture includes dragon boat competition, dragon boat rap, dragon boat production, etc. Most of which focuses on the performance and display of skills, so the introduction of written materials is relatively scarce. Most of the existing written materials are simple lists of the purpose of intangible names, but lack of detailed written materials. There are also some brief introduction of techniques and steps, but there is no complete system of written materials. This undoubtedly brings great challenges and difficulties to the publicity translators.

## **2.2. The English Translation Materials are Neither Complete Nor Systematic.**

At present, the publicity and translation materials of Foshan Dragon Boat culture are relatively complete in the book *Foshan Dragon Boat Culture*<sup>[2]</sup>, which systematically describes the history, manufacturing, decoration, activity procedures and ceremonies of Foshan dragon boat culture by English and Chinese comparison. However, compared with the inheritance and external exchange of a long history and profound folk culture, the introduction of this book is only the beginning, and Foshan is generally short of foreign language translation materials of dragon boat culture. At present, there is no special dragon boat intangible cultural heritage English website. At present, the content related to the dragon boat culture is mainly to introduce the dragon boat activities, study the inheritance and protection of the dragon boat culture, or organize the dragon boat competitions. There are few active and systematic publicity and translation of the dragon boat culture, and it is difficult to achieve the effect of external communication.

## **2.3. Insufficient Research on Dragon Boat Publicity and Translation.**

The result of searching for Foshan dragon boat culture is thought-provoking. With “Foshan Dragon Boat” as the keyword, there is a total of 25 searching results (journal 15, dissertation 2, conference 1, newspaper 7), of which 14 (more than 50%) were published since 2016. With “Foshan dragon boat”, “publicity translation”, or “translation” and other keywords to search, the searching result is 0. Using “dragon boat” and “publicity” as the key words, the searching results were 11, of which 5 (nearly 50%) were published since 2020. According to the searching results, the academic circle of Foshan has paid more attention to the study of dragon boat culture in recent years; although the translation of dragon boat culture has been emphasized in China, Foshan is in a blank state and needs to be supplemented.

## **3. Diversified Dragon Boat Culture International Publicity and Translation**

With the deepening of international publicity and translation research, scholars have studied the translation of intangible cultural heritage under the guidance of various theories. And they have different researching achievements. For example, Liu Hao discussed the publicity and translation of dragon boat racing culture from the perspective of intercultural communication theory<sup>[3]</sup>; Yang Juan discussed the study on the publicity of Zhuang sports from the perspective of communication<sup>[4]</sup>; Wu Mengjie discussed the publicity and translation of intangible cultural heritage tourism from the perspective of ecological translation<sup>[5]</sup>. Many scholars have studied the translation of intangible cultural heritage from the perspective of cognition, pragmatic and aesthetic perspectives, and have achieved certain results. This paper holds that the dragon boat culture, as an intangible cultural heritage with unique Chinese color, the translation of Foshan dragon boat culture should be theoretically conducted from multiple perspectives and multiple perspectives.

### **3.1. To Pay Attention to the Adaptive Selection and Transformation of Language form from the Language Dimension.**

Due to the influence of cultural traditions, thinking modes, geographical environment, religious beliefs and other differences, the texts of Chinese and British cultural propaganda are quite different in words. The Chinese text is rich in literary style, with many four-character structures and neat sentence patterns, which is pretty catchy. And Foshan dragon boat culture has a strong regional characteristics, and a strong local cultural color. When translating the text, the translator should consider the audience of the target language and adjust the text appropriately, so as to make the translated expression clear, easy to understand and readable, and to realize the effective conversion between the two languages. This is a fundamental rule in translation. If the translator fails to do so, the translation cannot meet the purpose of international publicity translation.

### **3.2. To Pay Attention to the Transmission and Interpretation of Bilingual Cultural Connotation From the Cultural Dimension.**

Foshan dragon boat culture is expressed in various forms, including multiple cultural connotations such as dragon boat competition, dragon boat rap and dragon boat production, with most of them passed down from generation to generation through oral instruction and on-site guidance. The language expressions used in dragon boat activities have strong local cultural characteristics of Foshan. Translators should attach great importance to cultural differences in translation, in the context of cross cultural efforts to break through cultural barriers, and on the premise of recognition and respect cultural differences. They should also translate according to the different situation to appropriate content or the increase of cultural background knowledge, thus arouse the resonance of foreign readers, and achieve the purpose of heralded translation.

### **3.3. To Pay Attention to the Adaptive Choice and Transformation of Bilingual Communicative Intention from the Communicative Dimension.**

Mr. Huang Youyi believes that international publicity translation should follow the principle of “three close”. That is, the international publicity translation should close to China’s current development reality, close to the actual needs of foreign audiences for Chinese information, and close to the thinking and language habits of foreign audiences<sup>[6]</sup>. With the guidance of this principle, for the international publicity and translation of Foshan dragon boat culture, the principle of “three close” can be adjusted to be close to the reality of the protection, inheritance and development of the current dragon boat culture in Foshan, close to the interest and understanding of the dragon boat culture of foreign audiences, and close to the cultural thinking and language habits of foreign audiences. Therefore, according to the characteristics of Foshan dragon boat culture, the international publicity and translation of Foshan dragon boat culture should be attached with flexible processing, by both retaining the unique characteristics of source language, and achieving the purpose of communication, so as to realize the purpose of folk culture heralded, help Foshan intangible culture to “go out”, and let more overseas friends understand the excellent folk culture of Foshan.

## **4. To Give Full Play to the Advantages of Universities in External Publicity and Translation with the Government as the Leading Role .**

### **4.1. The Government Plays the Leading Role in Collecting and Sorting out Text and Audio-Visual Materials.**

Mr. Huang Youyi believes international publicity translation “is basically Chinese translation, that is, a

large amount of information about China from Chinese into foreign languages”<sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, to have a complete system of written materials, is the prerequisite for external publicity and translation work. The record form of Foshan dragon boat culture is mainly the record of folk oral narration, as well as some audio and visual materials. The English translation of these forms of cultural records is lacking. In view of the relatively few and unsystematic translated materials of dragon boat culture, Foshan municipal government should provide support in terms of policy, capital and manpower. First of all, the government should vigorously advocate and support the practice and research of publicity translation, and actively create a strong atmosphere of academic publicity translation. Secondly, a special publicity and translation department should be set up to strengthen the supervision and management of translation quality. Moreover, the government should increase the integration of high-end Chinese and foreign talent resources. Overseas Chinese translators, Chinese sinologists and other professional translators are all important translation forces.

#### **4.2. To Give Full Play to the Scientific Research Advantages of Local Universities, and Attach Importance to the Professional Training of Intangible Cultural Heritage Translators.**

It’s necessary to promote the dragon boat project to enter the campus, give full play to the advantages of English teachers and students in local universities, and pay attention to the professional training of dragon boat culture publicity translators in the cultural activities such as dragon boat competition. The teachers and students of college English majors have a language foundation and can build the local dragon boat culture publicity research center, and can combine the training of foreign language translation talents with the needs of regional economic development. At the same time, the cultural department can organize some college English teachers to train the translation of dragon boat culture. A research platform of “experts, teachers and students” integrating teaching, scientific research and translation should be established in a planned way, so as to better serve the external publicity and translation work.

### **5. The Practice of International Publicity and Translation of Foshan Dragon Boat Culture**

#### **5.1. To Correct the Defects in the Existing Translation of The Dragon Boat Culture.**

To translate the dragon boat culture, first of all, it is necessary to find out the existing English translation situation related to the dragon boat culture, sort out its defects and deficiencies, and take them as the basis for correction and translation. Foshan dragon boat culture carries the distinctive folk culture elements. How to translate these characteristic elements, is a major difficulty. The existing translation materials of dragon boat culture are defective in the translation of many terms and deserve deliberation. In the translation practice of dragon boat culture, it is necessary to constantly sort out the lack of these language expression and cultural inheritance, and try to translate its cultural connotation, so that people in the translated countries can understand the real dragon boat culture and really play a role in promoting the dragon boat culture.

For example, “Qi Long” in Chinese means to remove the dragon boat from the storage pond. The current English translation is “lifting the dragon boat”, but it is not as good as “Inviting the dragon boat”, which can show more respect for the dragon boat.

#### **5.2. To take the Transmission of Cultural Connotation as the Goal of Translation.**

In the specific translation activities, the translators will face the difference between the cultural connotation of the two languages. How to translate the cultural connotation of the intangible cultural heritage is a common

problem faced by the publicity of the intangible cultural heritage. Translators should attach great importance to the cultural differences between the two languages during the process of translation, try to break through cultural barriers in the context of cross cultural, and give full play to the role of translator subjectivity on the premise of recognizing and respect cultural differences. Translators should pay attention to not only the acceptance of the readers, but also the source authors' "cultural self". Therefore, the translator can properly cut the content or increase the cultural background knowledge according to different situations, so as to maximize the adaptive selection and transformation of cultural dimension, and to arouse the interest of foreign tourists and achieve the purpose of cultural publicity.

In the translation practice of dragon boat culture, combining with the regional characteristics of dragon boat culture, folk culture characteristics, the translators deal with the translation of texts by fully consider the translation audience. By combing the core terms related to dragon boat culture, with literal translation, semantic translation, and transliteration, and other forms of English translation practice, the translation can reflect the profound cultural connotation, and meanwhile be understandable and readable. For example, Li xioyan expains in her wrok that the process of Foshan dragon boat activity includes dragon lifting, picking green gathering, recruiting scenery, visiting relatives, welcoming dragon, dragon boat event, washing (drinking) dragon boat water, eating dragon boat meal, scattered dragon and hiding dragon, etc.<sup>[2]</sup>. Each step in it has a profound cultural connotation. It is a combined translation of transliteration and annotated translation example.

Here are some examples of translations which can show how the distinctive elements of the Foshan dragon boat culture are accurately and attractively delivered by translators to an international audience.

Example 1. "Long Zhou"

"Long zhou" in Chinese means the basic image of dragon boat culture. It is translated directly as "Dragon Boat" which is simple and clear, and with the global cultural exchange, western readers have gradually understood the meaning of good luck and power represented by the Chinese dragon.

Example 2. "Long Zhou Sai"

"Long Zhou Sai" in Chinese is the race held with people boating in the river. It is translated as "Dragon Boat Racing", which is a semantic translation. It not only retains the core element of "dragon boat", but also clearly conveys the nature of the race.

Example 3. "Foshan Long Zhou Wen Hua"

"Foshan Long Zhou Wen Hua" is a general concept used to describe the culture of dragon boat in Foshan .It is translated as "Foshan Dragon Boat Culture". It is a combination of the name of the place Foshan and the culture of this place which can directly highlight the cultural regional characteristics and facilitate the international audience to understand.

Example 4. "Long Zhou Zhi Xiang"

"Long Zhou Zhi Xiang" means the hometown of the Dragon Boat. "Long Zhou Zhi Xiang" can be translated as "Cradle of Dragon Boats". This translation not only explains that Foshan is the birthplace of dragon boat culture, but also is full of poetry and imagination.

Example 5. "Long Zhou Fan"

"Long Zhou Fan" means the customs of people eating a speacial meal while have a boat race. Eating dragon boat meal is an important custom in Foshan dragon boat culture. And " 龙舟饭 " can be literally translated as "Dragon Boat Meal", which conveys this cultural characteristic simply and clearly.

Example 6. “Long Zhou Piao Yi”

“Long Zhou Piao Yi” is a special race which the racers displays special skills of drifting. It can be translated as “Dragon Boat Drifting”. Diejiao Dragon Boat Race in Nanhai, Foshan is famous for its breathtaking drift track. The translation of “Dragon Boat Drifting” not only retains the core element of “dragon boat”, but also highlights the unique competition system of “drift” in the race.

Example 7. “Shi Jie Long Zhou Kan Zhong Guo, Zhong Guo Long Zhou Kan Foshan”

“Shi Jie Long Zhou Kan Zhong Guo, Zhong Guo Long Zhou Kan Foshan” is a propaganda language translation. To translate it literally, it can be “The world’s dragon boat see China, the Chinese dragon boat see Foshan”. This slogan is better translated as “The world’s best dragon boat race, see China; the best Chinese dragon boat race, see Foshan.” This translation not only highlights China’s position in the world dragon boat culture, but also emphasizes Foshan’s leading position in Chinese dragon boat culture.

## Funding

This work is supported by the Philosophy and Social Science Project of Foshan city (No.: 2024-GJ022; title: Research on the International Publicity and Translation of Foshan Dragon Boat Culture).

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