

# Present Situation and Countermeasures of the C-E Translation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication: Taking Foshan City as an Example

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doi:10.56397/SSSH.2022.12.07

## Abstract

The Intangible cultural heritage is the witness of China's historical development and a living culture with rich connotation and extraordinary value. To develop and spread it, the C-E translation of intangible cultural heritage is essential. This paper comprehensively analyzes the present situation and the existing problems of C-E translation of Foshan intangible cultural heritage, explores the reasons for its formation, and puts forward practical solutions from the perspective of relevant government departments and translators.

**Keywords:** intangible cultural heritage, C-E translation for global communication, Foshan

## 1. Introduction

In March 2017, the Chinese government launched the Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area to enhance the status and functions of the country's economic development and opening-up. In the Development Planning Outline of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, it is clearly pointed out that we should build a cultural bay area and promote the inheritance and development of traditional culture. Foshan's intangible cultural heritage is an important part of Lingnan culture. In the context of the construction of the Greater Bay Area, in order to make Foshan's intangible cultural heritage go out, the C-E translation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication is playing an increasingly prominent role. However, due to the differences in concepts and languages between China and the West, as well as the profound foundation of Foshan's intangible cultural heritage, the communication and dissemination of Foshan's intangible cultural heritage is facing huge obstacles.

This paper attempts to investigate the present situation of the C-E translation of the Foshan's Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication, analyze the existing problems and the reasons for its formation, and then put forward some practical strategies.

## 2. Intangible Cultural Heritage of Foshan

In recent years, the Foshan government attaches great importance to the protection of cultural heritage. Up to now, Foshan has 14 national intangible cultural heritage projects (see Table 1 for details), 47 provincial intangible cultural heritage projects and 131 municipal intangible cultural heritage projects. It involves folk literature, traditional music, dance, drama, folk art, sports, traditional handicrafts, traditional medicine, folk customs, and other fields, including many intangible cultural heritage inheritance bases, workshops, special museums or celebrity memorials, which contain profound economic, cultural, historical and social values.

Table 1. Foshan National Intangible Cultural Heritage Catalogue

Traditional Music	Shi Fan Music (a folk music played by an emsemble with ten traditional percussion instruments); Gongs and Drums Art
Traditional Dance	Lion Dance, Dragon Dance
Traditional Drama	Yue Opera (originated from and popular in Guangdong province)
Folk art form (Quyi)	Dragon Boat Talking and Singing
Traditional Art	Foshan Woodcut New Year Picture, Paper Cutting (Guangdong Paper Cutting), Foshan Coloured Lanterns, Foshan Lion Head (a traditional artifact)
Traditional Skill	Shiwan Pottery-making Art, Gambiered Guangdong Guaze Dyeing and Manufacturing Art
Folk Custom	Foshan Qiuse (a public folk parade), Foshan Ancestral Temple Fair

### 3. The Necessity of the C-E Translation of the Foshan's Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication

#### 3.1 To Create Opportunities for Economic Development

The C-E translation of the Foshan's Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication is a way to promote Foshan culture to the outside world, which can accelerate the spread of Foshan intangible cultural heritage, let more people and countries know about Foshan, and win development opportunities for themselves. At present, with the accelerating process of world multi-polarization and economic and cultural globalization, the in-depth development of the Construction of the Greater Bay Area has brought an opportunity for Foshan's intangible cultural heritage to go out and created new opportunities for economic development.

#### 3.2 To Protect National Culture and Enhance Cultural Confidence

The intangible cultural heritage is not only the unique culture of a certain nation, but also the common wealth of all mankind. The C-E translation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage can lead the culture of intangible cultural heritage to go abroad, so that more people can know about it, which is more conducive to their own protection and development, in line with the needs of social economic and cultural development and promote the excellent culture of the Chinese nation to go abroad.

### 4. The Present Situation of the C-E Translation of the Foshan's Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication

In sharp contrast to the protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, the C-E Translation of the Foshan's Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication is still in its infancy. After investigation and field visit, the author found the following problems in the translation of intangible cultural heritage in Foshan.

#### 4.1 Incomplete and Incorrect Translation Materials

On one hand, the names of the Intangible cultural heritage list are not translated uniformly and accurately. Many terms have the phenomenon of multiple translations of one word, which reflects the diversity of publicity translation. However, what kind of translation can not only convey the cultural connotation of the terms but also make Westerners understand them better is an urgent problem to be solved. On the other hand, the names of some intangible cultural heritages are translated word for word, and the cultural background of the target language recipients was not taken into account, which hindered the international promotion of intangible cultural heritage in Foshan.

#### 4.2 Few Theoretical Studies on the Translation of Foshan Intangible Cultural Heritage

According to the statistics of the journal papers on CNKI, there are more than 18000 journal papers on intangible cultural heritage at present. However, most of them are studies on the inheritance and development of intangible cultural heritage, the archival mechanism, and the research enlightenment. There are few research papers on the translation of intangible cultural heritage into English. See Table 2 for details. According to the survey, 19 of the 44 research papers on the translation of intangible cultural heritage into English are on the translation skills or the current situation of intangible cultural heritage into English, while the rest are on the translation of intangible cultural heritage in Guizhou, Yangzhou, Fujian, and ethnic minority areas. The research on the translation of intangible cultural heritage in Foshan is almost zero. It can be seen that the English translation of Foshan intangible cultural heritage has not kept pace with the times, and the English translation research has not been paid attention to. In order to keep up with the pace of social and national development and better carry out international cultural exchanges, the translation of Foshan intangible cultural heritage has become a major

problem that needs to be solved.

Table 2. Retrieval statistics of intangible cultural heritage CNKI journals

Year Theme	Before 2009	2010-2015	2016-2020	Total
Protection and Inheritance	3078	9462	3165	15885
Development and Utilization	383	1595	551	2529
Survey and Analysis	117	592	234	943
English Translation Studies	0	17	27	44

## 5. An Analysis of the Problems in the Translation of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Foshan

### 5.1 No Enough Attention Paid to the C-E Translation of Foshan Intangible Cultural Heritage

Although Foshan municipal government attaches great importance to intangible cultural heritage, the focus of social attention to intangible cultural heritage is still on the excavation, protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage, and less attention is paid to the English translation of intangible cultural heritage.

### 5.2 Lack of Professional Intangible Cultural Heritage Translation Corpus

Throughout the country, the C-E Translation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication started late and developed slowly. There are not many materials for reference. Translation is a long and arduous work, and the results of translation need time accumulation. In the short term, it is difficult to build a comprehensive, systematic, and standardized intangible cultural heritage translation corpus.

### 5.3 Lack of Professional Intangible Cultural Heritage Translation Talents

Colleges and universities in Foshan have trained a number of excellent translation professionals for the society. Their language skills are excellent, but their professional translation skills cannot meet the needs of practical jobs. The translation of intangible cultural heritage is very challenging. Translators must be extremely proficient in the historical information and cultural essence contained in intangible cultural heritage, as well as mastering excellent English language skills and superb translation skills. However, at present, translators mainly come from the professional direction of business translation. There are no trained translators of intangible cultural heritage.

### 5.4 Cultural Differences Between China and the West

China is an ancient country with a civilization of 5000 years, and has a profound traditional culture. The connotations of Chinese and Western languages are correspondingly very different. The intangible cultural heritage is time-dependent and contains rich historical and ancient Chinese vocabulary. It is difficult to obtain equivalent words in English. Moreover, the different cultural differences between China and the West and different ways of thinking are also reflected in language.

## 6. Countermeasures of the C-E Translation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage for Global Communication

### 6.1 Adhering to the Principle of Translation: Respecting the Consciousness of the Audience While Preserving the Cultural Connotation of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The intangible cultural heritage is a cultural concept with strong national and local characteristics. In foreign translation, it is necessary to consider not only the audience consciousness of the target audience, but also the cultural particularity of intangible cultural heritage. The translation should properly retain the original content and cultural appearance of the original text and highlight foreign characteristics.

### 6.2 Selecting the Best Translation Method

English translation of intangible cultural heritage requires the translator to consider the audience consciousness, cultural heterogeneity and other factors, and adopt different translation strategies and methods according to the characteristics and differences of the text. The translators can adopt the following methods, such as a compromise method by combining sound and meaning; the method of transliteration and annotation; the method of combining sound and meaning with annotation and so on.

### 6.3 Giving Play to the Leading Role of the Government

First of all, the government should vigorously promote the practice and research of intangible cultural heritage translation, and actively create a strong atmosphere for academic research on intangible cultural heritage

translation. Secondly, a special intangible cultural heritage translation department should be set up to strengthen the supervision and management of translation quality. The government can organize specialists to collect and sort out the existing English or Chinese-English reference materials of intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the government can also employ high-end Chinese translation talents through relevant platforms to join the intangible cultural heritage translation team and improve the quality of the English translation of intangible cultural heritage.

#### *6.4 Cultivating Intangible Cultural Heritage Translation Talents*

First of all, according to the current situation of intangible cultural heritage in Foshan, universities can cooperate with the government and scientific research institutions to hold intangible cultural heritage translation practice activities, talent training activities and subject research projects. Secondly, in terms of the curriculum setting of the master's degree in translation, the course of intangible cultural heritage translation can be set up to train specialized intangible cultural heritage translation talents. Postgraduates should not only acquire translation skills, but also pay attention to the study of intangible cultural heritage and practice of intangible cultural heritage translation. In addition, *Foshan Translators Association* can carry out translation research and academic exchanges on intangible cultural heritage, discuss how to strengthen the training of intangible cultural heritage translation talents and the construction of translation team, and further explore specific intangible cultural heritage translation strategies and norms.

#### *6.5 Building a C-E Bilingual Intangible Cultural Heritage Network Platform in Foshan*

The trend of Internet plus is gradually affecting all fields. Foshan's intangible cultural heritage translation work should be combined with its own reality, and the municipal government departments should cooperate with universities and scientific research institutions to jointly build an English or C-E bilingual website of Foshan's intangible cultural heritage. The existing English materials of intangible cultural heritage on the website, publicity materials of tourist attractions and interpretation materials of exhibition venues should be integrated. Improper translations that affect the dissemination of local culture should be rectified. The construction of C-E bilingual intangible cultural heritage network platform can increase the update speed of intangible cultural heritage information, expand the awareness of readers, and play an important role in the effective promotion of its globalization.

#### *6.6 Accelerating the Construction of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Translation Corpus*

According to the authoritative literature, the mature corpus involves public signs, exhibition halls, traditional Chinese medicine, literature, industry and other aspects. Due to the late start and scattered translation of intangible cultural heritage, no normative system has been formed. The translation community should assume the responsibility of the construction of the intangible cultural heritage translation corpus and help Foshan intangible cultural heritage to reach the world.

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