

# Study on the Integration of Cross-Cultural Narrative Competence into Tourism Translation Teaching in the Greater Bay Area

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**Abstract:** This study explores the integration of cross-cultural narrative competence (CCNC) in tourism translation teaching in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Using a qualitative research approach (primarily semi-structured interviews), this study selects four university English teachers, four translation students from different grades, and four tourism industry practitioners in the GBA as research participants to systematically examine the current status and integration pathways of CCNC in tourism translation teaching. The findings reveal that current tourism translation teaching remains dominated by linguistic skill training with an overemphasis on language equivalence, while CCNC has yet to be systematically incorporated into the curriculum. Respondents demonstrate insufficient cognitive clarity regarding CCNC but show high recognition of its value, widely acknowledging its core role in tourism translation. In authentic tourism contexts, translation transcends mere linguistic conversion and serves as a medium for cultural meaning construction and dissemination. Furthermore, students exhibit a notable deficiency in cultural expression ability alongside prominent practical needs, with a unanimous demand for practice-oriented and situational teaching. On this basis, this study put forward three feasible integration pathways of CCNC in tourism translation teaching, such as task-driven situational teaching, cultural reconstruction and expression training, and the integration of local cultural resources in the GBA. These teaching integration pathways for CCNC provide practical references for the innovation of tourism translation teaching in the GBA.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural narrative competence (CCNC); Tourism translation teaching; Greater Bay Area (GBA); Integration pathways

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## 1. Introduction

Amid the ongoing deepening of globalization and regional integration, tourism has emerged as a vital vehicle for cross-cultural exchange. Tourism translation leaves an ever-significant impact on cultural communication.

Endowed with diverse cultural integration and high internationalization, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) serves as a vital gateway for China's opening-up, which thereby sets higher standards for tourism translation. Nevertheless, current tourism translation teaching still focuses primarily on linguistic conversion, overemphasizing "accuracy and equivalence" while neglecting cultural meaning construction and narrative expression<sup>[1]</sup>, making it hard to meet communication demands in real-life contexts. As a matter of fact, tourism translation is far more than linguistic transfer, it is essentially a process of cultural reconstruction and meaning reproduction<sup>[2]</sup>.

In this context, cross-cultural narrative competence (CCNC) has grown into a crucial factor in boosting the quality of tourism translation. This competence emphasizes the understanding, reorganization, and expression of cultural content in cross-cultural contexts<sup>[3]</sup>, so as to make the information more accessible and acceptable to the target audience. Integrating it into teaching helps promote the transformation of translation competence from a language-oriented model to a narrative-oriented one. Thus, against the background of the GBA, this study adopts the interview method to explore the current situation and integration paths of CCNC in tourism translation teaching, aiming to provide references for the reform of relevant courses.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. International studies on cross-cultural communication, translation, and narrative**

In the fields of cross-cultural communication and translation studies, the international academic community has established a relatively systematic theoretical foundation. Among them, although the self-efficacy theory proposed by Albert Bandura is mainly applied in learning psychology research<sup>[4]</sup>, its perspective on "an individual's belief in their own capabilities" is of enlightening significance for understanding translators' performance in cross-cultural expression. At the cross-cultural level, the theory of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) centers on the integration of linguistic competence and cultural competence<sup>[5]</sup>, providing an important framework for translation research. In terms of narrative research, Mona Baker proposed "translation as re-narration," pointing out that translation is not only a linguistic conversion but also a reconstruction of the original narrative<sup>[6]</sup>. This view provides an important angle for understanding cultural expression in tourism translation. In addition, international tourism translation research has gradually focused on cultural adaptation and audience orientation<sup>[7,8]</sup>, emphasizing that translators need to reorganize information according to the cultural background of target readers to improve communication effects. Generally speaking, foreign research has shifted from "linguistic equivalence" to "meaning construction," and has gradually introduced the narrative perspective into translation research, providing an important theoretical foundation for this study.

### **2.2. Domestic studies on tourism translation and translation teaching**

As for the research on tourism translation in China started relatively late but has developed rapidly in recent years. Existing studies mainly focus on translation strategies, text type analysis, and the handling of culture-loaded words, focusing on the application of methods such as literal translation, free translation, and functional equivalence<sup>[9-11]</sup>. However, most studies still remain at the linguistic level, with insufficient attention paid to cultural reconstruction and narrative expression in the translation process. Concerning translation teaching, Chinese scholars generally concentrate on the cultivation of practical abilities and curriculum reform<sup>[12-14]</sup>. They have proposed teaching models such as task-based teaching and project-based

learning to improve students' application abilities. At the same time, the cultivation of ICC has gradually attracted attention. However, most of these studies focus on the communicative level, while the discussion on "narrative competence" is still limited. In recent years, with the advancement of the cultural "Going Global" strategy, some studies have begun to highlight how to tell Chinese stories well through translation. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of a systematic theoretical framework and empirical support overall.

### 2.3. Research gaps

Undoubtedly, although existing studies have achieved certain results in the fields of intercultural communication and tourism translation, there are still the following deficiencies. First, at the theoretical level, there is insufficient research that systematically introduces "narrative competence" into tourism translation teaching. Second, at the methodological level, most studies focus on theoretical analysis and lack empirical research based on real contexts. Third, at the regional level, research targeting the special context of the GBA is still finite. In light of these deficiencies, this study takes CCNC as the core perspective and adopts qualitative interview methods, explores the current situation and integration paths of CCNC in tourism translation teaching from three dimensions: teachers, students, and industry practitioners, aiming to optimize the existing research and provide new ideas for teaching practice.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research design

This study adopts qualitative research methods (mainly semi-structured interviews) for data collection and explores the current situation, existing problems, and integration paths of CCNC in tourism translation teaching in the GBA. Compared with quantitative research, qualitative research places greater emphasis on in-depth understanding of individuals' experiences and perceptions<sup>[15]</sup>. It can effectively reveal the real feelings and internal logic of different subjects in teaching and practice. Simultaneously, guided by the analytical framework of "cognition-dilemma-path," this study collects multi-dimensional data through multi-subject interviews, with a view to constructing a teaching improvement framework that has practical guiding significance.

### 3.2. Participants

This study employs purposive sampling, selecting 12 respondents from different fields in the GBA. These respondents cover three dimensions: teaching, learning, and industry practice, so as to enhance the diversity and representativeness of the research (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of respondents ( $n = 12$ )

Participant ID	Group	Role/Position	Gender	Grade/Experience level
T1	Teacher	Associate Professor	Male	12 years teaching
T2	Teacher	Lecturer	Female	6 years teaching
T3	Teacher	Professor	Male	20 years teaching
T4	Teacher	Associate Professor	Female	10 years teaching
S1	Student	English Major	Female	Year 1 (Freshman)
S2	Student	Translation Major	Male	Year 2 (Sophomore)

S3	Student	Translation Major	Male	Year 3 (Junior)
S4	Student	Translation Major	Female	Year 4 (Senior)
P1	Practitioner	Tour Guide	Male	10 years of experience
P2	Practitioner	Scenic Area Interpreter	Female	5 years of experience
P3	Practitioner	Tourism Translator	Male	8 years of experience
P4	Practitioner	Cultural Tourism Planner	Female	6 years of experience

Specifically, they are composed as follows:

- (1) Four university teachers: They are from English or translation majors of universities in the GBA, including 2 males and 2 females, all of whom have teaching experience in tourism translation or related courses.
- (2) Four translation majors: One student is selected from each grade from freshman to senior year, with 2 males and 2 females, in order to reflect the differences among different learning stages.
- (3) Four tourism industry practitioners: They include tour guides, scenic spot narrators, tourism translators, and cultural tourism planners, with 2 males and 2 females each, all of whom have practical cross-cultural communication experience.

This sample size is consistent with the “Data Saturation” principle in qualitative research, which can comprehensively reflect the cognition and needs of different subjects regarding cross-cultural narrative competence.

### 3.3. Data collection

Conducting data collection through semi-structured interviews, the research designs the interview outline centering on the following five core dimensions: (1) Basic Information and Background; (2) Current Status of Tourism Translation Teaching and Practice; (3) Understanding and Perception of CCNC; (4) Practical Problems and Competency Gaps; and (5) Suggestions on Teaching Improvement Paths. Taking place from April 28 to May 9, 2026, interviews were carried out in a dual form: online via Tencent Meeting and offline in face-to-face settings. Each session lasted roughly 35 to 45 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded on the premise of participants’ full informed consent, followed by verbatim transcription into textual materials for subsequent analytical use. To ensure the credibility and comprehensiveness of research data, flexible iterative probing was applied during the interview process. Targeted follow-up inquiries were made in light of interviewees’ responses so as to dig out more in-depth underlying information.

### 3.4. Data analysis

Thematic analysis is utilized in this study to systematically process interview data. The detailed procedures are presented below: (1) Familiarization: Repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to grasp the overall content of the data; (2) Open coding: Preliminarily mark and code statements of research significance in the transcripts; (3) Axial coding: Relevant codes are categorized to form several thematic categories; (4) Selective coding: Extract core themes and establish the analytical framework; and (5) Theme development: Form systematic research findings centered on the logical thread of cognitive status—problem manifestation—pathway construction. Through the above procedures, several key themes are ultimately summarized, which lay a foundation for subsequent discussion and pathway construction.

### **3.5. Reliability and validity**

To ensure the credibility and scientific rigor of the research findings, this study adopts the following measures: (1) Triangulation: Cross-verifying data collected from three groups, namely teachers, students and industry practitioners, to enhance the reliability of research conclusions; (2) Member checking: Submitting part of the interview results to the participants for confirmation so as to guarantee the accuracy of information interpretation; (3) Researcher reflexivity: Continuous reflection is made throughout the analysis on the impact of the researcher's subjective biases on the research results; and (4) Audit trail: The entire process of interviewing, transcription and coding is fully documented to enhance research transparency.

### **3.6. Ethical considerations**

This study strictly abides by academic ethical norms. Prior to the interviews, the research purpose was clarified to all participants, and their informed consent was obtained. Anonymization was adopted throughout the interview process, and all participants were referred to by pseudonyms such as T1, S1, and P1 to protect their personal privacy. Meanwhile, all research data are only used for academic purposes and will not be applied to any commercial activities.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Overemphasis on linguistic orientation in tourism translation teaching**

The interview results show that there is a prevalent tendency of “valuing language over culture” in current tourism translation teaching. Most teachers (3 out of 4) still take vocabulary, syntax, and textual equivalence as the main teaching objectives in curriculum design, while paying insufficient attention to cultural meaning construction and narrative expression.

For example, Teacher T1 pointed out: *“At present, the class still focuses on language conversion, but I think this is far from enough.”* Teacher T2 also mentioned: *“We are more focused on training students’ translation skills, with little involvement in cultural expression.”* This indicates that in the existing teaching system, tourism translation is still regarded as a part of language skill training, and its cultural communication attribute has not been fully reflected.

In the meantime, student interviews further confirm this phenomenon. S1 stated: *“The translation class mainly shows solicitude for learning how to translate sentences, and rarely covers how to introduce culture.”* S2 also proposed that *“We do more literal translation exercises, and there are few training sessions on rewriting or expression.”* This reflects that students lack systematic guidance on cross-cultural expression in the learning process.

Therefore, the language-oriented teaching model has, to a certain extent, restricted the development of students’ cross-cultural narrative competence.

### **4.2. Insufficient cognition but high recognition of CCNC**

Although most respondents lack a systematic understanding of the concept of CCNC, they generally show a high degree of recognition after its connotation is elaborated.

Teachers (75%) widely acknowledge the great value of this competence. Teacher T3 related: *“Tourism translation is not merely linguistic conversion, but more essentially storytelling.”* Teacher T4 also stated: *“If students are unable to interpret cultural connotations, accurate language alone can hardly achieve*

*effective cultural communication.*” This mirrors that teachers have recognized the significance of narrative competence in practical teaching.

As for students, freshmen and sophomores are largely unfamiliar with the concept, while senior undergraduates have formed a preliminary understanding. Student S3 commented: *“To me, CCNC means enabling foreigners to comprehend Chinese culture.”* Drawing on internship experience, Student S4 noted: *“In real-life scenarios, we need to interpret cultural content coherently instead of resorting to simple literal translation.”*

What is more, industry practitioners hold a clearer perception of this narrative competence. Practitioner P1 emphasized: *“Tourists prefer engaging stories over rigid literal translation.”* Practitioner P3 further argued: *“Translation is in essence a process of cultural repackaging.”* It is evident that narrative competence has been regarded as one of the core capabilities in professional practice.

In other words, despite disparities in their cognitive levels, all three groups recognize the importance of CCNC.

### **4.3. Deficiency in cultural expression ability and prominent practical needs**

Interview data reveal that students (3 out of 4) generally have obvious deficiencies in cultural expression, mainly reflected in rigid wording, inadequate flexibility, and inability to accomplish cultural conversion.

Teacher T1 remarked that *“the content translated by students is usually accurate in meaning but sounds unnatural.”* Teacher T4 observed that *“students fail to adjust their expressions for different audiences.”* Student S2 commented that *“he understands the original implication but struggles to deliver it in a more natural way.”* Student S4, from his internship experience, noted that *“literal translation rarely works well and that language reorganization is often required.”*

Industry practitioners feel this problem more acutely. Practitioner P2 stated that *“most students adopt a highly written expression style, which is not suitable for practical on-site interpretation.”* Practitioner P1 alleged that *“students cannot tailor their expression content according to tourists’ backgrounds.”* These reflections suggest that students presently lack sufficient cross-cultural expression competence in real communicative contexts.

At the same time, all respondents (100%) stress the importance of practice. Students hope to have more situational simulations and authentic practical tasks, while teachers and industry practitioners all propose to strengthen practical teaching, which indicates that the prominent demand for practical training has reached a broad consensus.

### **4.4. Initial emergence of teaching integration pathways for CCNC**

In the interviews, respondents from the three groups put forward a variety of suggestions on how to improve CNCC, which can be summarized into the following three aspects.

- (1) Task-driven and situational teaching: Teachers generally recommend integrating teaching content into real-life contexts through a task-driven approach. T3 proposed: *“Scenic spot presentation projects can be designed to engage students in role-playing.”* Students also voiced similar expectations. S1 expressed the hope that *“more exercises simulating authentic scenarios could be arranged.”*
- (2) Cultural reconstruction and expression training: Industry practitioners highlight the necessity of strengthening the cultivation of cultural re-expression ability. P3 commented: *“Translation is not rigid copying, but the reorganization of cultural content.”* Meanwhile, Teacher T1 advocates *“setting up more*

*rewriting and reconstructive training sessions, so as to equip students with the ability to express ideas from the perspective of target audiences.”*

- (3) Integration and utilization of local resources in the GBA: Most respondents (10 out of 12) hold the view that the abundant cultural resources in the GBA lay a solid foundation for teaching. T2 suggested that *“teaching practice could be integrated with local scenic spots.”* P4 argues for *“exploring story resources that embody the integration of Chinese and Western cultures.”* This offers a viable direction for the localization of teaching content.

## **5. Discussion**

### **5.1. From linguistic competence to CCNC: The paradigm shift in tourism translation teaching**

This study finds that current tourism translation teaching still centers on linguistic conversion, while CCNC has not yet been systematically incorporated into teaching objectives. This finding confirms the problem of the skill-oriented tendency in translation teaching identified in previous studies, and further reveals the limitations of the traditional language-oriented paradigm in the context of global communication. Theoretically, tourism translation is inherently an activity of cross-cultural meaning construction, rather than a mere pursuit of linguistic equivalence. CCNC emphasizes the reorganization and re-expression of cultural content, which is highly consistent with the core viewpoint of Narrative Theory that “meaning is constructed through narration.” Accordingly, integrating this competence into the translation teaching framework helps promote the transformation of the teaching paradigm from linguistic representation to meaning construction. This paradigm shift not only expands the connotation of translation competence but also provides new theoretical support for tourism translation teaching. It redefines translators as cultural narrators rather than mere linguistic converters. Such role reconstruction is of great significance for cultivating interdisciplinary talents with international communication capabilities.

### **5.2. Structural reconstruction and teaching positioning of CCNC**

Based on the interview results, this study argues that CCNC can be interpreted from three dimensions: (1) Cultural comprehension competence: in-depth cognition of source-language culture; (2) Narrative reconstruction competence: transforming cultural content into expressions intelligible to target audiences; and (3) Situational adaptability competence: adjusting expressive strategies according to audience backgrounds and communicative contexts. This structure complements previous models of ICC and further highlights the importance of expression and reconstruction. Compared with traditional translation competence models, CCNC lays greater emphasis on dynamism and situational flexibility, which conforms to the experience-oriented communication characteristics inherent in tourism contexts. In terms of teaching positioning, CCNC ought to be regarded as one of the core competencies in tourism translation courses rather than a marginalized supplementary skill. This implies that curriculum objectives should be extended from mere linguistic accuracy to clear and vivid cultural narration, thereby realizing the dual transformation of language and culture.

### **5.3. Optimization of teaching paths: From knowledge imparting to situational practice**

The interview results indicate that students’ deficiencies in cultural expression are closely associated with

the lack of in-class practical opportunities. Thus, the teaching path needs to shift from knowledge imparting dominance to situational practice orientation. Specifically, optimization can be carried out in the following three aspects:

- (1) Introducing task-based and project-based learning: By designing authentic or simulated tourism translation tasks such as scenic spot guidance and cultural interpretation, students can improve their narrative competence through practice. This approach helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-life communication contexts.
- (2) Strengthening training in cultural reconstruction: Teachers should guide students to reinterpret the original text from the perspective of target audiences instead of adopting mechanical translation. For instance, comparing expressive patterns across different cultural backgrounds can enhance students' cross-cultural sensitivity and expressive flexibility.
- (3) Integrating multimodal teaching resources: Tourism communication generally relies on the comprehensive presentation of images, videos, and language. Therefore, the introduction of multimodal teaching materials helps enhance students' narrative performance and communication awareness.

#### **5.4. Practical significance of localization in the context of the GBA**

This study takes the GBA as the research background and finds that its unique regional characteristics provide abundant resources for the cultivation of CCNC. As an important region where Chinese and Western cultures converge, the GBA features a multilingual environment including Mandarin, Cantonese, and English, as well as diverse cultural resources, creating a natural contextual foundation for tourism translation teaching. First, the cultural diversity of the GBA helps students understand cross-cultural differences and thereby enhances their cultural sensitivity. Second, the region's abundant tourism resources, including historical and cultural heritage as well as modern urban landscapes, offer authentic materials for narrative teaching. Third, the high level of regional internationalization enables students to gain easier access to real cross-cultural communication scenarios. Therefore, integrating the local cultural resources of the GBA into teaching not only improves the practicality and pertinence of instruction but also provides a practical pathway for constructing a translation teaching model with distinctive regional features.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Summary of major findings**

Based on interview data collected from university teachers, translation majors, and tourism practitioners in the GBA, this study systematically explores the current situation of CCNC in tourism translation teaching and its integration pathways into curriculum instruction. The findings reveal that contemporary tourism translation teaching remains dominated by the training of linguistic skills, showing a prominent tendency to value language over culture, while CCNC has not yet been systematically incorporated into the curriculum system. Meanwhile, despite disparities in the understanding of CCNC among different groups, all respondents (100%) recognize its core role in tourism translation. Especially in real tourism contexts, translation is no longer confined to linguistic conversion, but shifts toward the construction and dissemination of cultural meanings. In addition, students commonly show deficiencies in cultural expression and situational adaptation, and demonstrate a highly consistent demand for practical and contextualized teaching. On this basis, this study summarizes three feasible teaching integration pathways, such as task-driven and situational

teaching, cultural reconstruction and expressive training, and the integration and utilization of local cultural resources in the GBA. These pathways provide practical references for the reform of tourism translation teaching.

## **6.2. Practical implications**

At the practical level, this study offers several implications for tourism translation teaching in colleges and universities. First, colleges and universities need to clarify the core position of CCNC in the curriculum system and incorporate it into teaching objectives and evaluation criteria. Second, it is necessary to optimize the teaching model and improve students' practical expressive ability through task-driven teaching, project-based learning, and situational simulation. Third, colleges and universities should strengthen school-enterprise cooperation, introduce real tourism contexts and industry resources, and enhance the practicality and pertinence of teaching. Fourth, full advantage should be taken of the cultural resource strengths of the GBA, hence integrating regional characteristics into teaching content to strengthen students' cultural identity and cross-cultural communication competence.

## **6.3. Research limitations and future research directions**

Although this study adopts a systematic design in data collection and analysis, it still has certain limitations. Firstly, the research sample size is relatively small, covering only 12 interviewees. Though it has met the data saturation requirement for qualitative research, the sample lacks representativeness in breadth. Secondly, this study mainly relies on interview data without the support of quantitative data, thus the research results are subjectively biased to a certain extent. In addition, the research is confined to the context of the GBA, and the applicability of its conclusions to other regions remains to be further verified.

In view of the above limitations, future research can be further expanded from the following aspects. First, mixed research methods can be adopted by combining questionnaire surveys with experimental studies to enhance the generalizability and explanatory power of the research. Second, teaching intervention research can be carried out to empirically test the actual effect of integrating CCNC into the curriculum. Third, the research scope can be expanded to conduct comparative studies on universities in different regions and of different types so as to enrich research perspectives. Finally, further exploration can be made into the application paths of digital technologies (such as artificial intelligence) in the cultivation of CCNC.

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