



# A Study on the Translation Quality of Chuanzheng Cultural Tourism Texts from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics

Wenhua Lin\*, Xiaomei Zhang

Foreign Language Department, Fuzhou Institute of Technology, Fuzhou 350500, Fujian, China.

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\*Corresponding author: Wenhua Lin, Foreign Language Department, Fuzhou Institute of Technology, Fuzhou 350500, Fujian, China.

## Abstract

This study scrutinizes the translation quality of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts using reception aesthetics, focusing on readers' roles in textual interpretation. Through questionnaires and case analyses, it identifies issues in current translations, including linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic facets. It proposes strategies to enhance translation quality, aiming to foster an international appreciation of Chuanzheng culture. The findings reveal that translations often struggle with inappropriate word choices, syntactic mismatches, and the failure to convey cultural nuances and aesthetic connotations. This hinders target readers' comprehension and appreciation of cultural tourism texts' translation. The study advocates for a reader-centered translation approach, emphasizing cultural understanding, strategic translation methods, and consideration of target readers' expectations. By addressing these issues, this research contributes to improved translation practices in cultural tourism, promoting global understanding and appreciation of Chuanzheng culture. It underscores the importance of translation in fostering cross-cultural communication and cultural exchange.

## Keywords

Reception Aesthetics; Chuanzheng Culture; Tourism Translation

## 1. Introduction

Chuanzheng culture in Fuzhou embodies the glorious history of China's modern navy and industry, forming an integral part of Fuzhou's cultural heritage and playing an irreplaceable role in boosting the local cultural tourism industry. In the era of globalization and increasing international exchanges, introducing this local cultural treasure to the world has become an important task. As essential carriers of cultural communication, tourism texts play a significant role. The quality of translation directly impacts the efficiency of cultural dissemination. Improving the translation quality of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts not only enhances tourists' experiences but also effectively spreads and promotes this cultural heritage.

Drawing on reception aesthetics theory, this study focuses on the English translation quality of tourism texts at Fujian's Chuanzheng cultural attractions. Through questionnaire surveys and case analyses, it aims to identify problems encountered in the translation process and propose targeted suggestions to enhance translation quality, enabling the unique charm of Chuanzheng culture to shine on the international stage.

## 2. Research Objectives and Significance

This study collects and analyzes specific issues in the current translation of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts,

proposing translation strategies guided by reception aesthetics theory to improve the overall quality of translation. It aims to provide practical guidance and suggestions for translators, cultural tourism managers, and academic researchers, jointly promoting the international dissemination of Chuansheng culture and enhancing understanding and appreciation of this unique cultural heritage.

### **3. Reception Aesthetics Theory**

Reception aesthetics, also known as reception theory, has emerged as an important branch of literary studies since its inception in the late 1960s. The core of this theory lies in exploring how readers interact with texts and how this interaction influences the construction of textual meaning. Pioneers of reception aesthetics, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, emphasize the central role of readers in textual interpretation (2017). Iser focuses on readers' subjective responses to texts, while Jauss examines how readers' horizons of expectation influence text reception. The three core elements of reception aesthetics include the centrality of readers, horizons of expectation, and fusion of horizons. These elements collectively form the theoretical basis for the interaction between readers and texts (Sun, 2021). In translation studies, reception aesthetics offers a new perspective, emphasizing that translators should consider target readers' expectations and cultural backgrounds to achieve more effective cross-cultural communication. Unlike traditional text-centered theories, reception aesthetics places readers' initiative and creativity at the forefront, providing new theoretical guidance and methodologies for translation practice.

### **4. Integration of Reception Aesthetics Theory and Tourism Text Translation**

Tourism texts are not only carriers of information but also mediators of culture and communication. They are typically aimed at a broad audience of potential tourists, introducing tourism resources, products, and practical travel information. Due to their purposefulness and specific audience, these texts possess unique structures and functions. The translation quality of tourism texts is closely related to the effectiveness of cultural dissemination (Chen et al., 2018; Dai et al., 2018; Deng et al., 2020).

Reception aesthetics theory provides a new perspective for the translation of tourism texts (Liang, 2024). It emphasizes readers' horizons of expectation and subjective interpretation of texts, prompting translators to transcend the literal meaning of the original text and consider target readers' acceptance and cultural backgrounds (Wang, 2022). Applying reception aesthetics theory to tourism text translation means that translators need to deeply understand target readers' expectations and preferences and how they interact with texts. This requires translators to convey not only information but also emotional and cultural values during the translation process to achieve effective communication with readers. Based on reception aesthetics theory, translators should adopt more flexible and innovative strategies, such as appropriate cultural annotations, free translation, and transliteration, to adapt to readers' reception abilities in different cultural contexts. This enhances the attractiveness and readability of tourism texts while reducing cultural barriers (Xu et al., 2021). In summary, reception aesthetics theory provides profound theoretical support for tourism text translation. By incorporating the reader's reception process into translation strategies, the translation quality can be improved, making tourism texts more vivid and interesting, thereby better serving cultural exchanges and tourism promotion.

## **5. Questionnaire Design and Results**

### **5.1 Text Sources**

This study selects texts from tourism attractions related to Chuansheng culture in Fuzhou as the analysis objects. These attractions are not only important witnesses of China's modern history but also the cradle of China's modern industry and navy development. Specific research texts include introductory materials for "Two Parks, One Museum, and One Street" (i.e., the Chuansheng Cultural Theme Park, the China Chuansheng Culture Museum, Luoxing Tower Cultural Park, and Chuansheng Ancient Street). These texts not only contain rich historical and cultural information but are also important media for disseminating Chuansheng culture. The research team selects representative cases from these texts and includes them in the questionnaire to assess tourists' feedback on translation quality.

### **5.2 Questionnaire Design**

Reception aesthetics theory emphasizes readers' subjectivity and the text reception process. It requires a deep understanding of the target readers' horizons of expectation, including their cultural backgrounds, knowledge levels, and

aesthetic preferences, when exploring the translation quality of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts (Cao, 2020). As an important heritage of China's modern naval and industrial development, Chuanzheng cultural tourism text translations must not only accurately convey information but also stimulate readers' interest and emotional resonance.

Therefore, respondents are reminded to focus on the following aspects during translation quality evaluation: firstly, the fidelity between the translation and the original text, which should accurately convey the original semantics; secondly, reader response, referring to the target readers' acceptance of the translated text, including whether it can evoke readers' resonance and identification; thirdly, language quality, involving the fluency, idiomaticity, and stylistic consistency of the translated text; fourthly, aesthetic value, assessing whether the translated text can convey the original's aesthetic characteristics, including style, rhythm, and emotional color; and finally, acceptability, examining whether the translated text conforms to the norms of the target language and readers' expectations.

### 5.3 Data Analysis

This project employs questionnaire surveys and case analyses. The questionnaire was administered in June 2024, with 100 questionnaires distributed and 91 valid questionnaires collected on-site at the aforementioned Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions. The questionnaire content primarily includes tourists' understanding of Chuanzheng culture, their opinions on the English translation of related terms, evaluations of the international dissemination effect of Chuanzheng culture, and suggestions for improving international dissemination.

Survey results indicate that visitors to Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions have a relatively good understanding of Chuanzheng culture (59% of respondents have a good understanding), and they expect the written information at attractions to accurately convey the essence of Chuanzheng culture. They also have high expectations for the English translations, believing they should precisely convey Chuanzheng culture. A majority (66%) of respondents are not optimistic about the international dissemination effect of Chuanzheng culture, believing that its cultural dissemination has not reached abroad and requires increased promotional efforts. Regarding specific translation cases, over half (52%) of respondents believe there are obvious problems with the translation of tourism texts at Chuanzheng cultural attractions. Specifically, 65% of respondents perceive gaps in translation efforts, with important content lacking English translations, which hinders cultural dissemination. Nearly half of the respondents pointed out that Chinglish significantly affects their understanding of text content, while missing information and inappropriate word choices also affected the tour experience of 53.85% and 38.46% of respondents, respectively.

## 6. Discussion on Translation Quality of Chuanzheng Cultural Tourism Texts

Based on the above survey results, translation issues in Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts objectively exist and cannot be ignored. As a showcase for cultural heritage, the quality of English-Chinese translations at Fuzhou Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions directly influences international tourists' understanding and experience. Exploring the translation quality of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts from the perspective of reception aesthetics requires attention to readers' subjectivity, in-depth analysis of the cultural connotation and aesthetic characteristics of the original and translated texts, and seeking effective transmission and reconstruction of cultural meaning during the translation process. This reader-centered translation practice helps improve translation quality and promotes the widespread dissemination and in-depth understanding of Chuanzheng culture. Therefore, this study collects Chinese-English materials such as inscriptions, signage, commentaries, and attraction introductions related to Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions. It focuses on in-depth analysis of translation cases with concentrated feedback from respondents in the questionnaire, compares original and translated texts, evaluates the effectiveness of translation strategies from linguistic, cultural, and aesthetic perspectives, and discusses translation issues in cases and their impact on tourists' understanding. The following summarizes the issues in the English-Chinese translation of Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions:

### 6.1 Linguistic Aspect

Language serves as a bridge for communication, and the primary task of translation is to ensure accurate information transmission. In the translation practice of Chuanzheng cultural tourism attractions, linguistic issues mainly manifest in the following aspects:

#### 6.1.1 Lexical Expression

Inappropriate word choice refers to the use of vocabulary in translation that fails to accurately convey the original

meaning or appears incongruous in the target language. This typically occurs when the translator lacks sufficient understanding of the original text's cultural background or context. For example, translating "Chuanzheng" directly as "ship politics" fails to accurately convey its specific historical period and cultural connotation. The correct translation should consider that "Chuanzheng" refers to a series of government actions and policies related to shipbuilding and naval construction in modern Chinese history. Therefore, a more appropriate translation might be "naval affairs" or "shipbuilding administration." Of course, using the transliteration "Chuanzheng" better showcases cultural confidence and facilitates cultural dissemination (Chen, 2015). Additionally, inappropriate word choice may manifest in the misuse of technical terminology. For instance, translating "Duo shou" as "steersman" rather than "helmsman," although both relate to steering, differentiates in usage across cultures and contexts.

### 6.1.2 Sentence Structure

The study did not find significant grammatical errors in translations but noted that due to syntactic differences between Chinese and English, translators must carefully adjust sentence structures to natural expressions in the target language (Xie, 2022).

For example, in the preface to the Chuanzheng Culture Museum, there was a translation—"Chuanzheng established China's first modernized navy fleet, which was the cradle of modern Chinese navy and had a profound influence on the development of modern Chinese navy."

The English translation simplifies the parallel verb-object structures in the Chinese original into a single attributive clause, reducing the richness of the original text. The translation does not explicitly express the parallel achievements of "establishing the earliest fleets, cultivating the most talent, and achieving the most remarkable results" in the original text, which are crucial for understanding Chuanzheng's comprehensive contributions. Additionally, the historical phenomenon "no Fujian, no army" is not reflected in the translation, potentially preventing English readers from capturing the regional characteristics and historical significance conveyed in the original text. Furthermore, the translation adopts a relatively concise sentence structure, clearly conveying one of Chuanzheng's main achievements but failing to fully present the depth and complexity of the original text. Overall, while the English translation has a concise sentence structure, it falls short in conveying the rich information and deep meaning of the original text. To improve translation quality, the translation can further enrich sentence structures, supplement omitted information, and preserve the original text's rhetorical features and cultural color as much as possible.

Lexical and syntactic issues are common in translation processes, significantly affecting translation quality and readers' understanding. To enhance translation quality, translators need to deeply understand the original text's cultural and contextual background, master the target language's vocabulary and grammatical rules, and continuously hone translation skills through practice. Additionally, using dictionaries, grammar checking tools, and peer reviews can effectively reduce the occurrence of such errors. Through these methods, translators can better bridge the gap between the source and target languages, providing accurate and fluent translated texts.

## 6.2 Cultural Aspect

Reception aesthetics emphasizes the reader's reception process and the co-construction of textual meaning, requiring the translation of Chuanzheng cultural tourism texts not only to convey information but also to consider target readers' cultural backgrounds and aesthetic expectations. In this process, the translation of culture-loaded words and the handling of cultural differences become crucial.

Culture-loaded words carry profound cultural significance and emotional color, requiring translations that transcend literal meanings and deeply explore cultural connotations. For terms with rich cultural backgrounds, such as "Zuo Shen Gong Xiang" (Joint Efforts of Zuo Zongtang and Shen Baozhen in Founding the Shipyard), appropriate annotations or explanations should be provided to help foreign tourists understand their historical and cultural significance.

Differences in values, beliefs, and customs across cultural backgrounds pose challenges for tourism text translation. Translators must identify and properly handle cultural differences to avoid cultural misunderstandings or conflicts. For example, the translation of "Luo Xing Ta" is disputed between "Luoxing Pagoda" and "Luoxing Tower." Given Luoxing Tower's multiple cultural attributes, choosing "Luoxing Pagoda" better reflects its historical and cultural value as a Buddhist pagoda (Shen, 2018). Furthermore, translating concepts like the "self-improvement" spirit and "defense of maritime rights" in Chuanzheng culture into expressions that resonate with target readers facilitates cross-cultural emotional and value transmission.

### 6.3 Aesthetic Aspect

In the Chuanzheng Culture Museum, an exhibition hall introduces ship names from the wooden-framed ship era, such as "Yang Wu," "Fei Yun," "Zhen Hai," and "An Lan". These Chinese names are not only identifiers for ships but also carry rich cultural connotations and aesthetic value. For instance, "Zhen Hai" evokes a magnificent and imposing atmosphere, while "Fei Yun" suggests lightness and freedom. However, in the museum's translation, these names are simply transliterated as their corresponding Pinyin which fails to convey their deep cultural and aesthetic meanings, ignores the aesthetic characteristics and cultural connotations of the names, and does not meet non-native English speakers' aesthetic expectations and understanding needs.

From the perspective of reception aesthetics, translation involves more than linguistic conversion; it is also the transmission of cultural and aesthetic experiences. The translation should consider target readers' "horizons of expectation," their pre-existing expectations and understandings of the text. In this context, target readers may expect to gain an in-depth understanding of the cultural and aesthetic features of the wooden-framed ship era through ship names. However, transliteration fails to stimulate target readers' aesthetic experiences or evoke their aesthetic associations with ships from that era.

To enhance the aesthetic quality of translation, it is recommended to adopt more explanatory and aesthetically pleasing translation strategies. For instance, after transliterating "Fei Yun," an annotation like "Soaring Clouds" can be added. Such translations better convey the aesthetic appeal of ship naming during that period.

Additionally, as shown in the preface to the Chuanzheng Culture Museum—"China's modern navy, which started from Chuanzheng, has gone through twists and turns in its road of development. It has always held the belief of being loyal to the motherland..." Firstly, the original text's "jian xin kan ke" and "shi zhi bu yu" convey profound emotional colors, expressing the tenacious spirit of China's modern navy in continuously struggling and upholding patriotic sentiment amidst difficulties. While the translation conveys this historical fact, it may lack sufficient emotional depth and rendering. Secondly, the original text employs literary language with a sense of rhythm and aesthetic beauty. The translation, however, is relatively straightforward, potentially failing to fully replicate the original text's aesthetic style. Therefore, from the perspective of reception aesthetics, there is significant room for improvement in this translation. It is suggested to attempt more poetic and rhythmic sentence structures and vocabulary while maintaining the original meaning to better reproduce the original text's aesthetic characteristics. For example, "has gone through twists and turns" can be replaced with "brazenly forging ahead despite a history fraught with challenges" to enhance the translation's aesthetic transmission and increase readers' resonance and identification.

As reception aesthetics advocates, the concept of "fusion of horizons" requires translators to consider how to integrate the source culture's horizon with the target culture's horizon of expectation during the translation process. This involves not only linguistic conversion but also cultural meaning reconstruction. Translators should strive to identify commonalities and differences across cultures, employing creative translation techniques to ensure the translation is both faithful to the original text and acceptable and appreciated by target readers. Therefore, in translation practice, translators must deeply explore the original text's cultural connotation and aesthetic characteristics, avoiding mere linguistic form conversion.

For unique concepts and historical events in Chuanzheng culture, translators should select appropriate strategies, such as transliteration, free translation, or annotation, to ensure the accurate transmission of culture-loaded words and the preservation of cultural characteristics. Additionally, the translated text's language should be fluent and natural, conforming to the target language's expression habits and adapting to readers' aesthetic preferences, thereby enhancing text readability and attractiveness.

## 7. Suggestions for Improving Translation Quality

### 7.1 Deepening Cultural Insight and Translation Sensitivity

As translators, we must first cultivate profound insights into both the source and target cultures. We should conduct detailed research on the rich historical and cultural elements embodied in Chuanzheng culture to ensure accurate capture and transmission of their deep meanings during the translation process. Additionally, we must pay attention to the target culture's linguistic habits and values to ensure the translation is both faithful to the original text and aligns with the target readers' horizons of expectation.

## 7.2 Flexibly Applying Diverse Translation Strategies

In translation practice, we should flexibly apply various translation strategies based on the text content and characteristics of the target readers. For vocabulary with specific cultural significance, transliteration, free translation, or mixed translation methods can all be considered. The key lies in finding an expression that not only conveys the cultural features of the original text but is also acceptable to the target readers. For instance, transliteration can preserve the cultural identity of a place or personal name, while annotations provide necessary cultural backgrounds. For abstract concepts, free translation better captures the emotions and spirit of the original text. Through the flexible use of these strategies, we can enhance the readability and impact of the translation, making it a bridge for cross-cultural communication.

## 7.3 Valuing Readers' Feedback for Continuous Optimization

Reception aesthetics reminds us that reader feedback is crucial in translation practice. We should actively collect feedback from target readers on the translation through surveys, interviews, and other means. These valuable insights will guide us in making detailed revisions and optimizations to the translation. Additionally, maintaining an open mindset and continuously evaluating and improving the translation is essential to meet the diverse needs of readers and enhance the translation's adaptability and acceptance.

## 8. Conclusion

Based on reception aesthetics theory, this study conducted an in-depth analysis of the translation practice of maritime cultural tourism texts, revealing linguistic and cultural issues and proposing innovative translation strategies. Through case studies, the research emphasized the importance of considering the expectations and cultural backgrounds of target readers in the translation process to ensure accurate and vivid conveyance of the deep meanings and unique values of maritime culture.

The study found that improving translation quality requires not only precise mastery of the source and target languages but also sensitivity to cultural differences and a profound understanding of reader responses. The choice of vocabulary and adjustment of syntactic structures are particularly crucial for cross-cultural communication, while the appropriate handling of culture-loaded words directly impacts the acceptance and influence of the translated text. The application of reception aesthetics provides a new perspective for this study, highlighting the central role of readers in the translation process and emphasizing the innovation of translation strategies. Through methods such as transliteration, free translation, and annotations, this study demonstrated how to enhance the readability of translations and the accuracy of cultural transmission. Furthermore, the study pointed out the importance of continuous improvement. Translation is a dynamic and evolving process that requires constant optimization and adjustment based on reader feedback. Therefore, establishing a systematic feedback and revision mechanism is vital for improving translation quality.

Looking ahead, this study aims to inspire more academic discussions on the translation of tourism texts and cross-cultural communication, providing practical guidance and insights for translation education, the translation industry, and cultural exchange activities. By deepening cultural insights, flexibly applying diverse translation strategies, and valuing and responding to reader feedback, we can significantly improve the quality of translation work and promote the widespread dissemination and in-depth understanding of maritime culture.

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**Appendix: Source Text, Target Text, and Annotations**

Paragraph Serial Number	Source Text	Target Text	Annotations
	船政	Chuanzheng	naval affairs or shipbuilding administration.
	船政是中国近代海军的摇篮，编舰队最早、育人才最众、获成效最著，开时代风气之先，形成了“无闽不成军”的独特历史现象。	Chuanzheng established China's first modernized navy fleet, which was the cradle of modern Chinese navy and had a profound influence on the development of modern Chinese navy.	
	肇始于船政的中国近代海军，发展之路虽艰辛坎坷，爱国之心则矢志不渝……	China's modern navy, which started from Chuanzheng, has gone through twists and turns in its road of development. It has always held the belief of being loyal to the motherland...	
	左沈共襄	Zuo Shen Gong Xiang	Joint Efforts of Zuo Zongtang and Shen Baozhen in Founding the Shipyard
	罗星塔	Luo Xing Ta	Luoxing Tower
	杨武	Yang Wu	To show nation's strength
	飞云	Fei Yun	Soaring clouds
	镇海	Zhen Hai	To suppress ocean's power
	安澜	An Lan	(of seas) calm; peaceful
	艰辛坎坷	jian xin kan ke	brazenly forging ahead despite a history fraught with challenges
	矢志不渝	shi zhi bu yu	unswerving, permanent faith