

# A Study on the Translation of the Promotional Video for Quanzhou's Application for World Heritage from the Perspective of Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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## Abstract:

As an important medium for displaying city image, culture and characteristics, the translation of city promotional videos has become a key link in promoting city image to the international stage. However, in the past, most of the methods used in the study of translation of promotional videos were functional equivalence theory, purposiveness theory, cultural adaptation theory, which resulted in a lack of comprehensive and systematic research into the translation of promotional videos. In order to solve this problem, based on the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis, this paper adopts the method of textual analysis to conduct the translation study on the promotional videos of Quanzhou's heritage application, and puts forward the translation strategy of city promotional videos. The theory of multimodal discourse analysis helps to promote the study on translation of city promotional videos, which can improve the translation accuracy, deal with the problem of cultural differences, optimize the communication effect, and provide new study perspectives of the method. In the process of translation, reasonable translation strategies should be adopted appropriately to maximize the translation effect of city promotional videos and expand the publicity effect of the international influence of city promotional videos.

**Keywords:** multimodal discourse analysis; city promotional videos; translation strategies.

## 1. Introduction

With the development of the economy, the rise of the tourism industry and the innovation of communication technology, there are a lot of people known as the "southern small potatoes" who have ventured into the Northeast, as well as the phenomenon of Quanzhou wear flowers in their hair go viral. The local cultural tourism starts the involution, using a variety of measures to attract clout and fancy tricks to attract guests. As a special form of media, city promotional video shows the charm and characteristics of the city to the audience through visual and auditory modes. How to translate these videos into different languages accurately so that they can be disseminated in different cultural contexts has become a topic worth studying in the context of globalization. The translation of city promotional videos has been studied in various aspects, but there are very few studies based on the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis. However,

Delu Zhang further explores the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis based on the theories of Kress and Van Leeuwen [1], who are representative scholars in the field of multimodal discourse analysis. Adopting the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis to study the translation of city propaganda films helps to understand the multimodal messages in the films more comprehensively and improve the effectiveness of the translated works in conveying the city's image, culture, and characteristics. This study compares the Chinese version and the English version of the Promotional Video for Quanzhou's application for world heritage. Based on the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis, the study analyzes the application of multimodal discourse analysis theory in the city's promotional video in terms of the cultural aspect, the contextual aspect, the content aspect, and the expression aspect. Meanwhile, it reveals the translation strategies of the promotional video from the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis.

## 2. Organization of the Text

### 2.1 Method

The corpus selected for this study is Quanzhou Application for World Heritage (quan zhou: song yuan zhong guo de shi jie hai yang shang mao zhong xin) and Quanzhou: Emporium of the World in Song-Yuan China. Aiming at the multimodal text, adopting the method of textual analysis, and based on the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis, this study reveals the translation strategy of this city promotional video.

The theory of multimodal discourse analysis is an emerging linguistic theory, which breaks through the limitation of traditional discourse analysis focusing only on language and text, and regards language communication as a multimodal process. Zhang Delu pointed out that multimodal discourse is a phenomenon that works together in communication to realize the conveyance of meaning, which uses multiple senses such as hearing, vision, touch, and multiple means and symbolic resources such as language, image, sound, and movement. The theoretical model of multimodal discourse is the theory of systemic functional linguistics. In terms of analytical framework, the theory of multimodal discourse analysis involves four dimensions: culture, context, content, and expression [2]. These dimensions are interrelated and together constitute a complete system of analysis, which helps to understand the complexity and diversity of discourse in a comprehensive and in-depth way.

Applying multimodal discourse analysis theory to translation research means that researchers need to look at the translation process from a broader perspective than just language-level conversion. Translation is not only the conversion of words, but also involves the transmission of culture, vision, hearing, and other levels. This study combines well with the theory of multimodal discourse analysis, which is aptly applied to study the translation of propaganda films in depth and thoroughly. In the translation of linguistic modality, in addition to focusing on the accurate conveyance of the text, the adaptability of the cultural context and the acceptance of the target language audience are also taken into consideration. At the same time, for non-linguistic modalities such as visual and auditory, the possibilities and strategies of their translation are studied to better convey the message and create the atmosphere.

### 2.2 Results

Translation Strategies for Quanzhou's Application for World Heritage in the Perspective of Multimodal Discourse Analysis.

#### 2.2.1 The cultural aspect

The cultural aspect is the key aspect that makes multimodal communication possible, determining the traditions, forms and techniques of communication. Without this aspect, situational contexts have no ability to explain. At this aspect are the modes of thinking, the philosophies of dealing with the world, the habits of life, and the social subterfuges, as well as the communicative procedures or structural potentials that make it possible to realize this ideology in a concrete way [2]. Therefore, in the translation of city promotional videos, the translator needs to fully recognize the cultural differences between the source language and the target language and convey the cultural characteristics accurately in the city promotional videos.

##### (1) Example 1

Original text: 而敬畏神明恰好是行业自律的某种规范 [3].

Translated text: Revering the sea gods was a way for the people to regulate industry and it ensured that commercial regulations were respected and upheld [4].

Considering the fact that most of the audience groups of the English promotional video are Westerners, the translator translated the word "God" in this promotional video as "神明." In Western culture, "God" is usually used to denote the supreme god, i.e. the greatest and most sublime power in the universe, which is more consistent with the image of Chinese gods.

##### (2) Example 2

Original text: 一个远离中原的边陲之地，为什么会成为世界海洋贸易的中心 [3] ?

Translated text: What allowed this place, once a frontier settlement far from the heart of China, to ultimately become a major hub of global maritime commerce[4]?

The term "中原" refers to the center of China and is often used to indicate the core of Chinese civilization, which is a characteristic Chinese red cultural term, so the translator should pay attention to translation skills when translating. The phrase "the heart of China" is used in the translation, which not only gives the audience a clear understanding but also conveys the content well.

##### (3) Example 3

Original text: 九日山上的祈风石刻，则是当年国家力量倡导海洋商贸活动的实证 [3].

Translated text: Jiuri Mountain was a designated site for government officials to conduct religious ceremonies to pray for fair weather before sailors set out to sea. As for maritime trade, the imperial Court's promotion of folk religion complemented the will of the state [4].

"九日山上的祈风石" is a group of cliff carvings that recorded the prayers for the wind held by state commis-

sioners, magistrates, and members of the royal family in charge of the management of overseas trade in Quanzhou during the Song Dynasty for the benefit of overseas traders and ships. Since foreign audiences know little about Quanzhou culture, the use of additional translation can help foreign audiences better understand its meaning.

### 2.2.2 The contextual aspect

In specific contexts, communication is subject to the constraints of contextual factors, including the contextual factors determined by the scope of discourse, the tone of discourse, and the way of discourse [2]. Translators should have a deeper understanding of the details and cultural characteristics of the city promotional video, familiarize themselves with the cultural background and usage of the target language, and adapt the words and phrases of the target language to the audience's language habits.

#### (1) Example 1

Original text: 可谓涨海声中万国商 [3].

Translated text: Was this brilliant orchestration of such a large territory something that happened organically, or was it planned out intentionally [4]?

“涨海声中万国商” This line is from a poem by Li Bing, a poet of the Song Dynasty, depicting the spectacular scene of Quanzhou, the starting point of the Maritime Silk Road at that time, where merchants from all over the world gathered against the backdrop of the rising and falling tides. The original sentence is a verse, and the translator should understand the background and other information of this verse to realize the real meaning. The direct translation method is not appropriate in this case, and this translation will enable the audience viewers to have a better understanding.

#### (2) Example 2

Original text: 世界最长的跨海大桥安平桥，直到今天依然保持着全球纪录 [3].

Translated text: Anping bridge in southwest Quanzhou, retains the title of the worlds longest flat-beam cross-see stone bridge [4].

Due to the cultural differences of the audience groups, their thinking patterns are different, resulting in different language habits. Because their cultural information is processed differently, the description of the same objective fact has a different language expression order [5]. In order to fit the English thinking, translators usually use the method of language order adjustment.

#### (3) Example 3

Original text: 一个远离中原的边陲之地，为什么会成为世界海洋贸易的中心 [3]？

Translated text: What allowed this place once a frontier settlement far from the heart of China to ultimately be-

come a major hub of global maritime commerce. This seaport, which is located in neither the Yellow River nor the Yangtze River valley, achieved astonishing levels of prosperity between the 10th and 14th centuries, unequaled anywhere else around the world, turning it into a legend of the East [4].

When translating a city promotional video, the translator needs to consider the context of the communication, linguistic context, etc. At the same time, the social context of the sentence is a factor that the translator must take into account in the translation process [6]. It is obviously inappropriate if a translation that simply writes, “What allowed this place once a frontier settlement far from the heart of China to ultimately become a major hub of global maritime trade?”. Such writing is not conducive to the understanding of foreign audiences. Translators should consider the method of augmenting translations with contextualization, adding contextualization appropriately to promote understanding, convey the correct content, and make the translation readable [7]. For example, add some detailed information about geographical location, social and cultural background and so on.

### 2.2.3 The content aspect

In the theoretical framework of multimodal discourse analysis, the content level can be divided into the meaning aspect and the form aspect. The meaning aspect is discourse meaning. The aspect of discourse meaning can be subdivided into conceptual meaning, interpersonal meaning, and schematic meaning, which are all constrained by contextual factors. In the formal aspect, the formal features of different modalities are interrelated and jointly reflect discourse meaning [2]. Studying the content aspect helps the translator to better convey the purpose of information, thoughts, and feelings in the city promotional video and, to a large extent, to realize the promotional effect of the city promotional video.

#### (1) Example 1

Original text: 城里，天后宫每天都会迎来虔诚的香客 [3].

Translated text: In the city Tianhou Temple welcomed devout pilgrims every day [4].

This sentence uses the rhetorical device of anthropomorphism to give the “Tianhou Temple” a human image, making the expression more vivid and graphic. The use of “welcome” conveys the temple's openness to pious visitors, and the translation retains the original meaning very well.

#### (2) Example 2

Original text: 这是一个庞大的水陆转运系统 [3].

Translated text: However, what real astonishes researchers

is that when you line up the directions indicated by each of these bridges, what you get is a massive land and water transportation network[4].

The use of the second person draws in the distance between the city promotional video and the audience and enhances the sense of intimacy. This method facilitates emotional communication and direct lyricism, mobilizes the audience's emotions [8], and allows the audience to integrate into the environment created by the promo. It also reflects the warmth and friendliness of the people of Quanzhou.

### (3) Example 3

Original text: 可谓涨海声中万国商 [3].

Translated text: Was this brilliant orchestration of such a large territory something that happened organically, or was planned out intentionally [4]?

The original text is a declarative sentence, and the translation is a question sentence. This sentence shows the prosperous scene of Quanzhou from the side. In addition, the question sentence can better arouse the interest and curiosity of the audience [9], stimulate their desire to explore, and attract them to visit the place.

### 2.2.4 The expression aspect

The expression aspect includes linguistic and non-linguistic aspects, i.e., purely linguistic and accompanying linguistic aspects and physical and non-physical aspects [2]. This aspect embodies the application of multimodal discourse analysis theory in city promotional videos. Various modal symbols are able to interact with each other and express meaning together. It also enhances the audience's visual and auditory effects.

#### (1) Example 1

Original text: 刺桐花，年年红，船出海，海茫茫（闽南语）。这首无从考证的童谣，讲述的是一个城与海的故事 [3].

Translated text: This verse from a nursery rhyme, passed down orally from generation to generation, describes the story of the city and the sea [4].

The original text uses dialect and conveys dialectal features. the translation takes into account the fact that the audience group knows less about the culture of southern Fujian and directly uses the generalization method to translate, summarizing the main content of this southern Fujian nursery rhyme and conveying dialectal features in the target language.

#### (2) Example 2

When the promotional video introduces the Luoyang Bridge, the actual scenes of the bridge are presented on the screen. These images are designed with appropriate transitions to make the language more effective. It not

only conveys the message adequately but also improves the viewing value (It can be seen in figure 1).



**Fig. 1 Screenshot of the promotional video**

### (3) Example 3

The voice of the voice actor is strong and atmospheric, which can deepen the audience's knowledge and love of the destination through the power of sound. The soundtrack is also reasonable and appropriate, conducive to the expression of feelings. The background music of this promotional video adopts orchestral music with a sense of the epic, which can create a classical and mysterious atmosphere, letting the tourists feel the precipitation of history and cultural accumulation.

## 2.3 Discussion

### 2.3.1 Reasons

City promotional videos can show the main features and cultural connotations of a city, while translations help to shape the city's international image and can help to spread the city's characteristics to a wider audience. The promotional video for Quanzhou's application for World Heritage extends the audience to all people who can communicate in English. The video conveys information about the history, culture, economy and social development of Quanzhou and promotes communication and cooperation between the city and the outside world. Besides, it also builds the city's image, raises its profile, enhances its international influence, and attracts more investment and tourism [10].

### 2.3.2 Suggestions

In the process of translation, translators need to recognize the differences between different cultures on the basis of retaining the language style and cultural characteristics of the original video and at the same time, accurately conveying the real meaning of the original video. With regard to the characteristics and customary usage of different languages, translators need to make appropriate language conversions to make the translation more in line with the expression habits of the target audience so that it can improve the translation quality of the promotional video. In addition, as a multimodal language piece conveying important information about a city, a city promotional video



needs to make full use of and integrate various symbolic resources, such as text, images, sound, etc., so as to enhance the audience's understanding.

### 2.3.3 Limitations

It should be noted that there are still limitations in the process of translating this city promotional video.

(1) First of all, in the process of translating from Chinese to English, due to the cultural differences of the audience groups, the translation mostly adopts the method of augmentation, which makes the promo too long. Although it can enhance the audience's understanding, it may also consume the audience's interest.

(2) Secondly, in the process of translation, the translator may omit or distort the information due to language conversion or understanding deviation. For example, although the translation expands on the reasons for the construction of the Luoyang Bridge, it does not directly translate the words Luoyang Bridge. The Luoyang Bridge is a representative heritage element that embodies the transportation network of the world's maritime trade center, and this representative ancient site should be translated in the promotional video for the World Heritage application.

## 3. Conclusion

This study proposes a translation strategy for city promotional video under the perspective of multimodal discourse analysis by applying the method of multimodal discourse analysis. This method provides a new perspective for the translation of city propaganda films, i.e., when translating city promotional video, the translator should not only pay attention to the translation of words, but also give full consideration to the translation of other modalities such as images and sounds. This requires the translator to have not only solid language skills, but also rich visual aesthetic and auditory perception ability in the process of translation. Only in this way can it be ensured that the translated city promotional video can convey the same information and emotion as the original in different cultural backgrounds. And it also can improve the translation quality of the propaganda film and better exaggerate the influence of Chinese culture. It is obvious that the theory of multimodal discourse analysis occupies an important position in the study of city promotional video translation. After this study, it can reflect the complexity and challenge of

translation work, and it also shows that translators need to improve their translation ability and cross-cultural communication ability. In the future, translators should pay more attention to the application of multimodal discourse analysis theory in city promotional video, deeply master the translation strategy, and contribute to the better dissemination of Chinese culture.

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