

# Translation Studies on Intangible Cultural Heritage in Qilu Culture in the New Media Era

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**Abstract:** This study aims to address the theoretical and practical gaps in the translation of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in Qilu Culture amid the New Media Era, where the rapid development of digital platforms has created both opportunities and challenges for the cross-cultural dissemination of Qilu ICH—yet existing translation practices lack systematic adaptation to new media characteristics and cross-cultural communication needs. Employing a multi-methodological approach integrating literature review, textual analysis, and theoretical deduction, the research first combs through domestic and international studies on ICH translation and new media communication to clarify the current research landscape and unresolved issues. It then analyzes the unique attributes of new media (e.g., interactivity, accessibility, and multi-modality) and their impacts on the translation goals, standards, and forms of Qilu ICH, followed by an exploration of core translation dilemmas such as the handling of culture-specific terms, the balance between cultural authenticity and audience acceptability, and the mismatch between translation outputs and new media dissemination formats. Finally, the study constructs a targeted translation strategy system for Qilu ICH in the New Media Era, which includes semantic adaptation strategies for cultural terms based on functional translation theory, multi-modal presentation strategies aligned with new media communication features, and audience-oriented optimization strategies grounded in cross-cultural communication theory. The findings indicate that the constructed strategy system can effectively enhance the accuracy, readability, and dissemination efficiency of Qilu ICH translations in new media contexts, providing theoretical references and practical guidance for the high-quality cross-cultural dissemination of regional ICH in China.

**Keywords:** Qilu Culture; Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH); Translation Studies; New Media; Cross-cultural Communication

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background and Significance

The proliferation of digital technologies has reshaped the landscape of cross-cultural communication, with new media platforms emerging as pivotal channels for the global dissemination of intangible cultural heritage (ICH). Qilu Culture, a core component of Chinese traditional culture, encompasses a rich array of ICH items that embody the historical memory, values, and artistic expressions of the region. In the new media era, these ICH items—ranging from folk performances to traditional craftsmanship—gain unprecedented access to international audiences through social media, short-video platforms, and digital cultural repositories. However, the translation of such ICH remains a critical bottleneck: existing practices often fail to align with the unique attributes of new media or address the cultural differences between source and target audiences, leading to distorted cultural messages, limited audience engagement, and inefficient dissemination. This research holds dual significance: theoretically, it fills the gap in studies that integrate new media characteristics with regional ICH translation, enriching the interdisciplinary framework of translation studies and cultural communication; practically, it provides actionable strategies to enhance the accuracy and reach of Qilu ICH translations, supporting China's initiative to promote cultural soft power and facilitate the global recognition of regional cultural heritage.

### 1.2 Review of Domestic and International Research Status

International scholarship on ICH translation has primarily focused on the balance between cultural authenticity and target-language

readability, with studies exploring how translation can mitigate cultural barriers in global dissemination. Researchers have emphasized the role of context adaptation in translating culture-specific elements, yet few have systematically examined the impact of new media's interactivity and multi-modality on translation practices. Domestic studies, by contrast, have concentrated on the protection and inheritance of Qilu ICH, with a growing number of works addressing translation issues—but these studies often adopt a traditional text-centric approach, overlooking the need to tailor translations to new media platforms' technical and communicative features. A notable gap exists in both domestic and international research: the lack of a targeted theoretical and practical framework for translating regional ICH in the new media context. This research seeks to bridge this gap by integrating insights from translation theory, new media studies, and cultural studies to address the specific challenges of Qilu ICH translation.

## **2. Core Concepts and Theoretical Foundations**

### **2.1 Definition and Characteristics of New Media**

New media refers to digital, interactive communication platforms that rely on internet and mobile technologies to transmit information through multiple formats. Unlike traditional media, new media is defined by three key characteristics: multi-modality, which combines text, audio, video, and interactive elements to convey messages; real-time interactivity, enabling immediate feedback between content producers and audiences through comments, shares, and likes; and user-generated content (UGC), which allows audiences to participate in content creation and dissemination. These characteristics have transformed cultural communication: short-video platforms, for instance, enable the concise presentation of ICH practices, while social media facilitates viral spread of translated content. Understanding these features is essential for designing translations that leverage new media's strengths to enhance ICH visibility.

### **2.2 Scope and Value of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Qilu Culture**

The ICH of Qilu Culture encompasses four

primary categories: folk literature (e.g., myths and legends associated with Confucianism), traditional performing arts (e.g., Lü Opera and Jiaodong Dagou), traditional craftsmanship (e.g., Zibo ceramics and Weifang kites), and folk customs (e.g., the Confucian Memorial Ceremony). These items hold profound cultural value: they serve as carriers of Qilu's historical identity, reflecting the region's emphasis on harmony, ethics, and craftsmanship. Their international dissemination is vital for promoting a nuanced understanding of Chinese culture beyond stereotypes. Moreover, the translation of Qilu ICH contributes to cultural diversity, as it allows global audiences to engage with unique regional traditions that complement broader narratives of Chinese culture.

### **2.3 Theories Related to Translation Studies**

Two theoretical frameworks guide this research: functional translation theory and cross-cultural communication theory. Functional translation theory, rooted in the work of scholars such as Hans Vermeer, posits that the purpose of translation (Skopos) determines the translation strategies, prioritizing the effectiveness of the translated text in the target context over formal equivalence. This is particularly relevant for Qilu ICH translation, where the goal of cultural dissemination requires adapting culture-specific terms to ensure audience comprehension. Cross-cultural communication theory, meanwhile, examines how cultural differences influence message reception, emphasizing the need to consider audience cultural backgrounds in translation. This theory helps address challenges such as differing value systems or cultural references, ensuring that translated ICH content resonates with international audiences while preserving core cultural meanings.

## **3. Current Status and Problems of Intangible Cultural Heritage Translation in Qilu Culture in the New Media Era**

### **3.1 Dissemination Status of Qilu ICH Translation in the New Media Context**

In recent years, local cultural institutions and media platforms have launched initiatives to translate Qilu ICH for international audiences. Official digital repositories, for example, provide English translations of ICH item introductions, while short-video platforms host translated clips of folk performances. Some cultural

organizations have also collaborated with international influencers to create translated content, aiming to expand reach. However, the dissemination of these translations faces notable limitations: content is often fragmented, with inconsistent update frequencies across platforms; translations are concentrated on well-known ICH items (e.g., Weifang kites), leaving less prominent but equally valuable items underrepresented; and engagement metrics (e.g., comment rates, share rates) indicate low audience interaction, suggesting that translated content fails to capture audience interest. These issues highlight the need to reevaluate how Qilu ICH translations are designed and distributed in new media environments.

### 3.2 Core Problems in Qilu ICH Translation

Three core problems undermine the effectiveness of Qilu ICH translation in the new media era. First, the translation of culture-specific terms lacks systematicity. Many translations rely on literal rendering, which fails to convey cultural connotations—for example, translating “Confucian Memorial Ceremony” as “Confucius Worship Ceremony” oversimplifies the ritual’s historical and ethical significance, leading to misunderstandings. Second, translations are poorly adapted to new media’s multi-modal features. Most translated content remains text-dominant, neglecting opportunities to integrate visual or audio elements that could clarify complex cultural concepts; for instance, a translation of Zibo ceramics craftsmanship without accompanying video demonstrations fails to convey the technical nuances of the craft. Third, translations lack audience orientation. Few studies have been conducted to understand the cultural backgrounds and information needs of international audiences, resulting in content that either oversimplifies cultural details (alienating knowledgeable audiences) or includes excessive jargon (discouraging casual viewers). These problems collectively limit the ability of Qilu ICH translations to achieve effective cross-cultural dissemination.

## 4. Construction of Translation Strategies for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Qilu Culture in the New Media Era

### 4.1 Translation Strategies for Culture-Specific Terms Based on Functional Translation Theory

Drawing on functional translation theory, this research proposes three strategies for translating culture-specific terms in Qilu ICH. The first is transliteration with contextual annotation: for terms with no direct equivalents (e.g., “Jiaodong Dagū”), transliteration preserves the original pronunciation, while brief annotations explain the term’s cultural context (e.g., “a traditional folk percussion art from the Jiaodong Peninsula, characterized by rhythmic drumming and storytelling”). The second is adaptive paraphrasing: when literal translation would confuse audiences, paraphrasing is used to convey core meanings—for example, translating “Confucian Memorial Ceremony” as “a ritual honoring Confucius that reflects Qilu’s traditional emphasis on respect for ancestors and ethical values.” The third is cultural substitution: for terms tied to unique cultural practices, substituting familiar cultural references (with clear disclaimers) enhances comprehension—for instance, comparing the structure of Lü Opera to Western operetta to help audiences grasp its performance style. These strategies prioritize the Skopos of cultural dissemination, ensuring accuracy while improving readability.

### 4.2 Translation Presentation Strategies Adapting to New Media Communication Characteristics

To leverage new media’s strengths, translation presentation strategies must integrate multi-modality and interactivity. For text-based platforms (e.g., cultural blogs), translations should adopt concise, scannable structures—using short paragraphs and bullet points to present key information about ICH items, with hyperlinks to additional resources (e.g., audio clips of folk music). For video platforms, translations should synchronize text with visual elements: subtitles should be concise to avoid overwhelming viewers, while on-screen graphics (e.g., timelines of craftsmanship processes) can complement translated narration. For interactive platforms (e.g., social media), translations should include prompt questions or calls to action—for example, ending a translated post about Weifang kites with “What traditional crafts are celebrated in your culture?” to encourage audience engagement. These strategies ensure that translations align with new media’s communicative logic, enhancing both reach and impact.

### 4.3 Audience-Oriented Translation Optimization Strategies

Rooted in cross-cultural communication theory, audience-oriented strategies begin with audience segmentation: international audiences are divided into groups such as cultural enthusiasts, students, and casual viewers, each with distinct information needs. For cultural enthusiasts, translations include detailed historical and cultural context (e.g., the evolution of Zibo ceramics techniques); for students, translations integrate educational elements (e.g., key terms and their explanations); for casual viewers, translations prioritize brevity and visual appeal (e.g., short captions paired with high-quality images). Second, pre-translation audience surveys are conducted to identify potential cultural barriers—for example, if audiences are unfamiliar with Confucian rituals, translations include simplified background explanations. Third, post-translation feedback loops are established, using platform analytics and audience comments to refine translations over time. For instance, if comments indicate confusion about a specific term, the translation is revised to include additional context. These strategies ensure that translations are tailored to audience needs, maximizing their effectiveness in promoting cross-cultural understanding.

### 5. Conclusion

This research systematically explores the translation of Qilu Culture's intangible cultural heritage in the new media era, addressing gaps in existing scholarship by integrating new media characteristics with translation theory. By analyzing the current status and core problems of Qilu ICH translation, the research constructs a targeted strategy system encompassing culture-specific term translation, new media-adapted presentation, and audience-oriented optimization. These strategies are grounded in functional translation theory and cross-cultural communication theory, ensuring both theoretical rigor and practical applicability. The findings demonstrate that effective Qilu ICH translation in the new media era requires moving beyond traditional text-centric approaches to embrace multi-modality, interactivity, and audience adaptation. This research contributes to the theoretical framework of regional ICH translation and provides practical guidance for cultural institutions, translators, and media platforms engaged in the global dissemination of

Chinese regional culture. Future research could expand the scope to include comparative studies of ICH translation from other Chinese regions, further enriching the understanding of regional cultural communication in the new media context.

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