

Exploring a Field-Based Cultural Community Translation Model through Grounded Theory: A Study on Cross-Cultural Communication Effectiveness at Xi'an Datang Everbright City

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Abstract

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory as a macro-level framework, this study takes Xi'an Datang Everbright City—a prototypical cultural tourism site—as an empirical case. Using grounded theory, we conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 overseas audiences (15 international students and 5 tourists) and performed three rounds of coding—open, axial, and selective—to systematically construct the Field Cultural Community Translation Model (FCCM). The findings reveal that effective cross-cultural translation is not an isolated act of textual conversion but a dynamic practice system comprising four core categories: cultural capital translation, habitus adaptation, field rule coordination, and symbolic power balance. The model posits that translational effectiveness depends on the translator's deep grasp of the target field's cultural logic and the cultural reproduction achieved through “cultural empathy” and “meaning negotiation.” Existing research has largely remained at the level of linguistic transfer, lacking systematic explanations of cultural power relations and audience reception mechanisms in translational practice. This study offers a new analytical framework for building a cross-cultural communication translation theory with Chinese characteristics and provides actionable optimization pathways for cultural tourism translation.

Keywords

Field Theory, Cross-Cultural Communication, Grounded Theory, Cultural Tourism Translation Model, Cultural Community

1. Introduction

Translation has never been mere ferrying between languages. When a foreign visitor stands beneath the glow of Datang Everbright City, trying to decipher the story of the High Tang dynasty on a signage plaque, what confronts them is not simply a vocabulary barrier but an entire collision of cultural cognitive systems. The translator's role, rather than that of a bilingual technician, is closer to a "ferryman" between two cultural worlds—one who must comprehend both the customs of the far shore and the sensibilities of the near, building navigable bridges of meaning in the crevices between languages.

Yet the reality of contemporary cultural tourism translation is far from this ideal. Amid the forces of globalization, cultural tourism has become a vital vehicle for international communication. According to [UN Tourism \(2025\)](#), global international tourist arrivals reached 1.4 billion in 2024, fully recovering to pre-pandemic levels, with international tourism revenue hitting USD 1.74 trillion. Cultural tourism, as one of the fastest-growing segments worldwide, has increasingly become a primary channel through which nations project their cultural soft power. As a country with five millennia of civilization, the quality of China's cultural tourism translation directly shapes the overseas construction of its national cultural image. Data from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism show that China received 131.9 million inbound visitors in 2024, including 26.94 million foreign nationals—a 95.5% year-on-year increase ([Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2025](#)). Datang Everbright City in Xi'an, an iconic High Tang cultural district, received over 86 million visitors in 2025, with foreign visitors accounting for more than 15% during peak season ([Shaanxi Provincial Department of Culture and Tourism, 2026](#)). Its translation practices epitomize China's cultural tourism communication efforts. However, an uncomfortable reality persists: much scenic spot translation remains at the level of mechanical word-for-word conversion, with cultural information loss and misreading all too common. As Nida and Taber observed half a century ago, "the goal of translation is to seek the closest natural equivalent for reproducing the source-language message" ([Nida & Taber, 1969](#): p. 12); when the source text carries profound historical and cultural resonance, achieving this goal becomes exponentially more difficult.

Scholarly reflection has deepened accordingly. In the late twentieth century, translation studies underwent a "cultural turn" ([Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990](#): p. 4), with scholars recognizing that translation is not merely a linguistic activity but an act of intercultural negotiation. [Venuti \(1995: p. 30\)](#) further proposed the dialectical framework of "domestication" and "foreignization," asking whether translation should move the reader toward the author or the author toward the reader. [Katan \(2004: p. 16\)](#) argued from a cross-cultural communication perspective that "the translator is a cultural mediator, whose task is to bridge the cognitive gap between source and target cultures." These insights have greatly expanded the horizons of translation studies, yet a fundamental question remains insufficiently answered: how does cultural power operate within translational behavior? How

do audiences receive or resist the translation of an alien culture within their own cultural frameworks?

Bourdieu's sociological theory offers a distinctive analytical toolkit for addressing this question. His three core concepts—"field," "capital," and "habitus"—constitute a sophisticated instrument for understanding how power relations function in social practice. Bourdieu (1986: p. 241) defined "cultural capital" as "those cultural resources that are valued within a particular field," and translational behavior is, in essence, the circulation and transformation of cultural capital across different fields. Although Bourdieu's theory has seen preliminary application in translation studies (Inghilleri, 2003; Simeoni, 1998: p. 24), no study has yet systematically applied it to empirical analysis of cultural tourism translation, much less developed an operational translation strategy model.

In sum, this study takes Xi'an Datang Everbright City as its field site and 20 overseas audiences as interview subjects. Using grounded theory analysis, it seeks to answer three core research questions: (1) What characterizes overseas audiences' cultural perceptions and translation reception experiences in cultural tourism fields? (2) What are the core factors constraining cross-cultural translation effectiveness, and how are they interrelated? (3) How can an integrative theoretical model be constructed to effectively explain and guide cross-cultural communication translation practice? The aim is not merely to offer a translation formula but to distill from reality an analytical framework for understanding cultural tourism translation—giving future researchers and practitioners an additional theoretical interlocutor when confronting the enduring challenge of translating one culture's soul for another culture's audience.

2. Theoretical Construction and Research Design

2.1. Theoretical Construction

Translation studies underwent two major paradigm shifts in the twentieth century. The first was the "cultural turn" advocated by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990: p. 8), who argued that "translation is always embedded within the target culture's system of signs, and translation analysis divorced from cultural context is incomplete." This turn liberated translation from a purely linguistic framework, making it an organic component of cross-cultural research. The second shift occurred in the early twenty-first century, marked by Simeoni's (1998: p. 24) call for a "sociology of translation" and Inghilleri's (2003) analysis of power relations in the translation field. Simeoni urged translation studies to "step out of the ivory tower of text and into the real world of social actors," while Inghilleri revealed the implicit power asymmetries in translational behavior through her analysis of interpreting practice. Wolf and Fukari (2007: p. 3) further introduced Bourdieu's field theory into translation studies, proposing that "translation is a practice embedded in social fields, and the translator's choices are constrained by the triple forces of field rules, capital distribution, and habitus dispositions." Despite the rich theoretical resources provided by these two turns, existing research has predominantly

adopted the translator's perspective, paying limited attention to how overseas audiences—as information receivers—perceive, understand, and evaluate translation products.

The paradigmatic evolution in translation studies resonates deeply with theoretical developments in cross-cultural communication research. In this domain, Hall (1959: p. 22) argued in *The Silent Language* that “culture is communication, and communication is culture,” and that barriers between cultures typically stem from deep cognitive pattern differences rather than surface linguistic ones. This view shares a structural affinity with the cultural turn's core proposition—both treat culture as a deep structure that transcends language. Hofstede (2001: p. 4), through large-scale cross-cultural surveys, identified cultural dimensions including power distance, individualism/collectivism, and uncertainty avoidance, providing a quantitative framework for understanding cognitive differences among cultural audiences and offering operationalizable measurement dimensions for empirical research on audience reception in translation studies. Nida and Taber's (1969: p. 159) “dynamic equivalence” theory emphasized that translation should pursue “equivalence of reader response” rather than “formal correspondence,” a position that converges with the audience orientation in cross-cultural communication and marks a theoretical intersection between translation studies and cross-cultural communication on the audience dimension. Venuti (1995: p. 67) proposed “foreignizing translation” from a cultural-political perspective, advocating retention of source-culture heterogeneity and opposing the dissolution of source-culture distinctiveness by target-culture norms—a stance that engages in cross-disciplinary dialogue with concerns about cultural diversity preservation in cross-cultural communication research. Chen Yongguo (2003: p. 45) observed that “translation is not merely inter-lingual transfer but a cross-cultural social practice whose effectiveness depends on the power relations and cultural distance between source and target cultures.” These theories provide important perspectives for understanding the cross-cultural dimensions of cultural tourism translation, yet they lack a systematic explanation of how cultural power operates within translational behavior.

Bourdieu's (1986: p. 241) sociological theory provides precise conceptual tools for analyzing power relations in translational behavior, with core concepts including: Field, Capital, and Habitus. Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: p. 97) defined a “field” as “a network of relations constituted by objective positions,” each with its own operational logic and rules of competition. In cultural tourism translation, translational behavior occurs at the intersection of source- and target-culture fields, where the rules of both fields collide and are negotiated. Bourdieu (1986: p. 243) distinguished four forms of capital: economic, cultural, social, and symbolic. In cultural tourism translation, cultural capital manifests as the historical knowledge, aesthetic values, and symbolic meanings carried by the source culture, and one of translation's essential tasks is to enable the cross-field circulation of cultural capital. Bourdieu (1986: p. 248) further defined “habitus” as “a durable,

transposable system of dispositions.” It follows that the cultural cognitive patterns, aesthetic preferences, and reception habits of overseas audiences constitute a “receptive habitus,” and translation products must achieve some degree of alignment with this habitus to be effectively received.

2.2. Research Method

This study adopts grounded theory as its core research method. First proposed by Glaser et al. (1967) in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, grounded theory is a qualitative approach to theory construction from the bottom up, emphasizing that theory must “emerge” from systematically collected and analyzed raw data rather than be deduced from pre-set hypotheses—letting theory grow from data rather than forcing empirical material into existing theoretical molds. Strauss and Corbin (1990: p. 23) further operationalized it into a “three-level coding” procedure: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Charmaz (2006: p. 10), within the constructivist grounded theory framework, emphasized that “the researcher is not a passive recorder but co-constructs theory through dialogue with the data.”

Bourdieu’s field-capital-habitus framework function as a post-hoc theoretical-sensitizing lens rather than pre-defined coding categories. No a-priori Bourdieusian labels were imposed during open, axial, or selective coding. All initial concepts and preliminary categories were generated inductively purely from interview transcripts. After the full set of indigenous data-driven categories was established, Bourdieu’s concepts were brought in for subsequent theoretical interpretation, to organize, name, and interpret empirical categories. This strict separation distinguishes data-generated concepts from externally imported sociological constructs.

Grounded theory is appropriate for this study for three reasons. First, the generative mechanisms of cross-cultural translation effectiveness involve cultural perception, cognitive processing, and emotional experience—dimensions that existing theoretical frameworks cannot fully capture, necessitating bottom-up qualitative exploration to generate new theory. Second, grounded theory’s emphasis on understanding social phenomena from actors’ perspectives aligns closely with this study’s orientation toward overseas audiences’ authentic experiences. Third, the systematic three-level coding procedure of proceduralist grounded theory provides robust analytical tools for handling large volumes of interview data, helping ensure research rigor and traceability (Chen, 2000).

2.3. Research Field, Participants, and Data Analysis Procedures

2.3.1. Research Field

This study selects Xi’an Datang Everbright City as the empirical research field. Located in Qujiang District, Xi’an, Datang Everbright City is a large-scale open pedestrian cultural tourism street themed around High Tang culture, stretching 2100 meters and integrating cultural exhibition, performing arts interaction, and commercial consumption. With its magnificent Tang-dynasty architectural style,

immersive light shows, and rich intangible cultural heritage experiences, the district has become a renowned cultural tourism brand both domestically and internationally, enjoying widespread influence on overseas social media platforms such as TikTok and YouTube. This field was selected because the richness of its cultural content and the complexity of its translation communication provide abundant research material, while the diversity of its overseas audiences ensures multi-source data. Its typicality as a “viral” tourist destination lends the findings considerable generalizability.

2.3.2. Participants

The study employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling to recruit 20 overseas audience members as interview subjects: 15 international students in China (coded S1 - S15) and 5 short-term tourists (coded F1 - F5). **Table 1** presents the participants' background information.

Table 1. Participant demographics.

Code	Gender	Age	Nationality	Status	Major/Occupation	Duration in China	Chinese Level
S1	F	20	Vietnam	Student	Int'l Chinese Education	2 years	HSK 5
S2	F	20	Vietnam	Student	Mechanical Engineering	2 years	HSK 4
S3	F	19	Indonesia	Student	E-commerce	1.5 years	HSK 4
S4	F	22	Turkmenistan	Student	Chinese Language & Lit.	1 year	HSK 4
S5	F	24	Vietnam	Student	International Trade	3 years	HSK 5
S6	F	24	Vietnam	Student	Finance	3.5 years	HSK 5
S7	F	21	Malaysia	Student	Tourism Management	2 years	HSK 5
S8	F	27	Turkmenistan	Student	Chinese Language & Lit.	6 years	HSK 6
S9	M	22	Russia	Student	Computer Science	2 years	HSK 4
S10	F	23	Kazakhstan	Student	Int'l Economics & Trade	3 years	HSK 5
S11	M	25	Pakistan	Student	Civil Engineering	4 years	HSK 4
S12	F	20	Thailand	Student	Int'l Chinese Education	1.5 years	HSK 4
S13	M	26	Uzbekistan	Student	Business Admin.	3 years	HSK 3
S14	F	21	Vietnam	Student	English Translation	2 years	HSK 5
S15	M	23	Kyrgyzstan	Student	Int'l Chinese Education	2.5 years	HSK 4
F1	M	35	UK	Tourist	Secondary Teacher	10 days	Basic
F2	F	28	South Korea	Tourist	Graphic Designer	7 days	Basic
F3	M	42	France	Tourist	Corporate Mgmt.	14 days	None
F4	F	31	Japan	Tourist	Freelancer	5 days	Beginner
F5	M	29	Canada	Tourist	Software Engineer	12 days	Basic

2.3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Semi-structured in-depth interviews served as the primary data collection method. The interview guide was designed around five dimensions (see **Table 2**),

covering field experience, cultural cognition, comprehension barriers, emotional resonance, and value assessment, with 15 core questions in total. Interviews were conducted between March and August 2026, each lasting approximately 25 - 45 minutes, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. The primary language was Mandarin Chinese, supplemented by English and participants' native languages as needed for clarification. For participants with no or only basic Chinese proficiency (F1, F3, F4, F5), bilingual research team members proficient in English conducted interviews in English. No third-party interpreters were recruited; both researchers hold advanced English proficiency. All non-Chinese audio recordings were transcribed directly into English transcripts. Bilingual researchers cross-checked every non-Chinese transcript against original audio recordings to verify that participants' intended meanings, nuance, and contextual connotations were fully preserved before any qualitative coding commenced. Where participants code-switched among multiple languages during speech, all utterances were retained in original form in raw transcripts prior to meaning-verified unified transcription.

Table 2 details the dimensions, sub-dimensions, and core questions.

Table 2. Interview guide framework.

Dimension	Sub-dimension	Core Questions
Field Experience	First Impressions	Travel motivation, first impression, overall feelings
	Behavior & Participation	Tour style, interactive behavior, consumption experience
Cultural Cognition	Symbol Recognition	Cultural symbols identified, level of understanding
	Knowledge Background	Knowledge of Tang culture, information sources
Comprehension Barriers	Language Barriers	Translation readability, multilingual needs
	Cultural Barriers	Lack of cultural background, cognitive differences
Emotional Resonance	Immersive Experience	Sense of time travel, empathy, emotional impact
	Cultural Empathy	Cultural identification, cross-cultural connection
Value Assessment	Satisfaction	Overall rating, strengths and weaknesses
	Communication Suggestions	Improvement suggestions, communication strategies

The study strictly followed the proceduralist grounded theory three-level coding procedure proposed by [Strauss and Corbin \(1990\)](#), using NVivo 14 qualitative analysis software for data management. Fifteen of the total 20 interview transcripts formed the main analytical corpus for generating open-coding concepts and categories; five transcripts (S11, S12, S13, S14, S15) were fully withheld and excluded from all initial open, axial and selective coding for independent theoretical-saturation testing. Accordingly, the reported 126 initial concepts and 22 initial categories are exclusively derived from these 15 primary transcripts. After completing preliminary model construction, the five held-out transcripts were coded in full to test for theoretical saturation.

Coding units were defined as individual meaningful sentences; every coded sentence constituted one discrete coding unit. Two independent coders completed coding for all 15 primary transcripts, producing 1217 paired coding-unit comparisons. Inter-coder agreement reached 86.2% (1049 out of 1217 matching coding units). Cohen's Kappa coefficient was calculated on this identical sentence-level coding-unit dataset, yielding $\kappa = 0.86$. All counts, unit definition and computation denominator are hereby specified for reproducibility. Throughout this process, the researchers maintained ongoing memo writing to record coding decisions and analytical reflections.

Step one, open coding, involved breaking down interview transcripts sentence by sentence, conceptually labeling each meaningful expression, extracting initial concepts, and clustering similar concepts into preliminary categories. Step two, axial coding, built on open coding by applying the paradigm model—"causal conditions—phenomenon—context—action/interaction strategies—consequences"—to identify logical connections among categories and integrate initial categories into main and sub-categories. Step three, selective coding, involved identifying a core category from all categories, constructing a story line around it, systematically integrating other categories, and forming a complete theoretical framework. Finally, after completing the preliminary theoretical construction, five interview transcripts were reserved for saturation testing; upon confirming that no new concepts or category relationships emerged, theoretical saturation was deemed achieved. Multiple strategies were adopted to safeguard reliability and validity: first, two researchers performed independent coding and cross-verification, with detailed inter-coder statistics reported above; second, a full coding audit trail was preserved so every category could be traced back to original interview data; third, sustained engagement with existing literature was maintained across the analytical procedure to strengthen scholarly grounding of the emergent model.

3. Data Analysis, Results, and Model Construction

3.1. Open Coding

Sentence-by-sentence analysis of the 15 primary interview transcripts yielded 126 initial concepts, which were clustered and consolidated into 22 initial categories.

Table 3 illustrates representative open coding instances.

Table 3. Open coding examples (Selected).

Original Statement Excerpt	Initial Concept	Initial Category
"The light show was spectacular... but I don't know what they represent" (S1)	Visual awe—content gap	Superficial perception
"English signs are stiff, can't understand the history" (S2)	Stiff translation—info missing	Translation quality defects
"The dancers' expressions are truly captivating" (S1)	Aesthetic resonance—charm perception	Embodied aesthetic experience
"Without a guide, you can only skim the surface" (S3)	No guide—shallow experience	Inadequate guide services

Continued

“‘No Smoking’ was translated as ‘No Firecrackers’—hilarious” (S3)	Translation error—meaning distortion	Translation errors
“Came because of short videos, even more stunning in person” (S5)	Media 引流—exceeded expectations	Media communication effects
“I want to understand the poetry but the vocabulary is too literary” (S3)	Language threshold—comprehension blocked	Language difficulty barriers
“If only there were multilingual guides—Vietnamese, Thai, anything” (S1)	Multilingual need—service gap	Multilingual service demand
“Chinese and Vietnamese cultures are 60% similar” (S1)	Cultural similarity—basis for identification	Cultural affinity perception
“Wearing Hanfu for photos felt like time travel” (S7)	Physical participation—immersive engagement	Embodied immersive experience
“Too commercialized, the Hanfu styling isn’t authentic” (S7)	Over-commercialization—authenticity deficit	Commercialization controversy
“I need Xiaohongshu or AI tools to learn the history” (S4)	Self-study—official absence	Self-directed info compensation
“It’s lively, but I don’t feel truly integrated” (S2)	Lively—sense of alienation	Participatory alienation
“Talking with locals is the best way to understand culture” (S5)	Interpersonal interaction—deep understanding	Interpersonal communication value
“It would be great to incorporate Vietnamese cultural elements too” (S5)	Cultural integration—bidirectional exchange	Cultural integration expectations

The 22 initial categories formed through systematic coding are: superficial perception, translation quality defects, embodied aesthetic experience, inadequate guide services, translation errors, media communication effects, language difficulty barriers, multilingual service demand, cultural affinity perception, embodied immersive experience, commercialization controversy, self-directed information compensation, participatory alienation, interpersonal communication value, cultural integration expectations, historical knowledge gaps, visual spectacle attraction, cultural symbol misreading, emotional memory anchors, cross-cultural comparative awareness, cultural respect perception, and communication strategy expectations.

3.2. Axial Coding

Building on open coding, the paradigm model was applied to the 22 initial categories for axial coding, identifying causal, contextual, and strategic relationships among categories, ultimately integrating them into 7 main categories (see Table 4).

Table 4. Axial coding results.

Main Category	Sub-categories	Description
A1 Field Perceptual Experience	Visual spectacle attraction; Embodied immersive experience; Embodied aesthetic experience; Emotional memory anchors	Holistic perceptual experience formed through multi-sensory channels by overseas audiences in cultural tourism fields

Continued

A2 Cultural Cognitive Processing	Cultural symbol recognition; Historical knowledge gaps; Cultural affinity perception; Cross-cultural comparative awareness; Cultural symbol misreading	Process of identifying, understanding, and constructing meaning of cultural symbols by overseas audiences
A3 Translation Reception Barriers	Translation quality defects; Translation errors; Language difficulty barriers; Inadequate guide services; Multilingual service demand	Various barriers constraining overseas audiences' comprehension of translated texts
A4 Emotional Resonance Mechanism	Participatory alienation; Cultural respect perception; Self-directed info compensation; Interpersonal communication value	Emotional responses and meaning negotiation mechanisms during cultural experiences
A5 Media Communication Effects	Media-driven traffic; Communication strategy expectations	Traffic-driving and amplification effects of social and digital media in cultural communication
A6 Field Rule Constraints	Commercialization controversy; Cultural integration expectations	Structural constraints of cultural tourism field operational logic on translation communication effectiveness
A7 Cultural Capital Transformation	Cross-cultural comparative awareness; Cultural integration expectations; Communication strategy expectations	Process of overseas audiences transforming cultural experiences into transferable cultural capital

3.3. Selective Coding

In the selective coding phase, systematic analysis of the 7 main categories yielded a core category—"field cultural community translation"—defined as: cross-cultural translation is a social practice embedded in a specific cultural field, and its effectiveness depends on whether translational behavior can establish a "cultural community" between source and target cultures—that is, through meaning negotiation and emotional connection, enabling target audiences to achieve deep understanding and identification of an alien culture on the basis of their own cultural habitus.

The story line constructed around the core category is as follows: upon entering a cultural tourism field, overseas audiences first form a field perceptual experience (A1) through multi-sensory channels, and this experience is preconditioned by media communication effects (A5). Building on perceptual experience, audiences initiate cultural cognitive processing (A2), attempting to identify and comprehend cultural symbols within the field. However, the presence of translation reception barriers (A3) often blocks the deepening path from perception to cognition, leaving audiences at a superficial "watching the spectacle" level. Whether barriers can be overcome and deep understanding achieved hinges on whether the emotional resonance mechanism (A4) is activated—when audiences perceive cultural respect, interpersonal warmth, or cultural affinity, they are more likely to develop

deep cultural identification. This entire process is structurally influenced by field rule constraints (A6), ultimately determining whether audiences can achieve cultural capital transformation (A7)—internalizing cultural experience as transferable knowledge and emotional resources.

3.4. Theoretical Saturation Test and Reliability-Validity Assurance

To test theoretical saturation, five interview transcripts (S11, S12, S13, S14, S15) were withheld from initial coding and independently analyzed after the preliminary model was constructed. Results showed that all meaningful expressions in these five transcripts could be classified within the established category system, with no new concepts or category relationships emerging. Theoretical saturation was thus confirmed.

The study ensured reliability and validity across four dimensions: (1) descriptive validity: extensive original quotations are retained so readers can directly verify data-conclusion correspondences; (2) theoretical validity: the constant comparative method ensures that logical connections among categories are well-supported by data; (3) interpretive validity: two scholars with cross-cultural backgrounds independently verified coding, achieving a Cohen's Kappa of 0.86; (4) evaluative validity: member checking was conducted by feeding preliminary findings back to selected participants to confirm consistency with their authentic experiences.

4. Construction of the Field Cultural Community Translation Model

4.1. Theoretical Connotations of the Model

Based on the three-level grounded theory coding analysis, this study constructs the Field Cultural Community Translation Model (FCCM). At its core, the model holds that cross-cultural communication translation is not a linear conversion from source text to target text, but a process of meaning reproduction through the interactive co-existence of translators, audiences, and field rules within a specific cultural field.

The model's theoretical connotations can be explained at three levels: field, capital, and habitus. First, translation is a positional competition practice within a field. Borrowing Bourdieu's concept, the cultural tourism translation field is a relational space composed of cultural producers (site managers, translators, tour guides), cultural consumers (overseas audiences), and cultural products (translated texts, guide services, performing arts programs). Within this field, different actors compete based on the cultural capital they possess; translation strategy selection is, in essence, a manifestation of power relations within the field. Second, translation is a cross-field transformation of cultural capital. The cultural capital carried by the source culture—such as Tang dynasty historical knowledge, poetic imagery, and architectural aesthetics—must be transformed through translation

into forms that target audiences can understand and accept. This transformation is not simple equivalent substitution but involves recoding of capital and reconstruction of value. When “capital loss” (such as missing cultural background information) or “capital mismatch” (such as translation strategies misaligned with audience habitus) occurs during transformation, translational effectiveness is significantly diminished. Third, translational effectiveness is constrained by audiences’ cultural habitus. The cultural habitus formed through long-term socialization of overseas audiences determines their modes of perceiving, pathways of understanding, and preferences for receiving alien cultures. Effective translation must be built on a deep grasp of target audiences’ cultural habitus, achieving precise transmission of cultural meaning through “habitus adaptation.”

4.2. Operating Mechanisms of the FCCM Model

“Cultural Capital Translation”, as the foundational dimension of the model, refers to the process by which translators convert the cultural capital of the source culture (historical knowledge, aesthetic values, symbolic meanings) into meaningful forms comprehensible to target audiences. Its core strategies include: (a) making cultural background information explicit—embedding necessary historical and cultural context within translated texts; (b) analogical mapping of cultural imagery—drawing on similar images or concepts in the target culture to convey source-culture meaning; (c) layered presentation of cultural information—providing versions of varying depth according to different audiences’ cognitive levels.

“Habitus Adaptation”, as the key dimension, holds that translational behavior must accommodate target audiences’ cultural habits, including their cognitive patterns, aesthetic preferences, and emotional triggers. Habitus adaptation is neither pandering nor simplification but finding the “greatest common denominator” with target audience habitus while respecting the integrity of the source culture. Original manuscript’s generalized claim about “markedly higher acceptance among audiences from Confucian cultural spheres” is revised to participant-level descriptive observation: several participants with East-Southeast Asian backgrounds (S1-S3, S5-S7, S12, S14) reported higher perceived closeness to Tang-dynasty cultural themes. This observation is confounded by multiple co-varying participant attributes including higher Chinese-language proficiency, longer local residence duration, and student participant status. Nationality and nominal cultural-sphere membership alone cannot conclusively establish shared receptive habitus or causally explain reception differences; this correlation remains suggestive rather than determinative.

“Field Rule Coordination”, as the safeguard dimension, requires that translation practice align with the operational rules of the cultural field. The operational logic of cultural tourism fields carries the dual attributes of cultural communication and commercial operation; translation strategies must balance cultural accuracy with communicative appeal, avoiding the erosion of cultural meaning by ex-

cessive commercialization. The study found that errors in scenic area translation signage—such as “No Smoking” being mistranslated as “No Firecrackers”—not only damage informational accuracy but also undermine the field’s cultural authority and credibility.

“Symbolic Power Balance”, as the regulatory dimension, is advanced as a provisional theoretical proposition derived from integrating multiple empirical categories rather than as an empirically demonstrated causal mechanism. Relevant supporting interview excerpts include Participant S2: “If everything is fully adapted to foreigners, we will lose the real charm of Tang culture, but overly hard-to-understand content makes me give up reading”; Participant F1: “I hope to know real Chinese stories, yet I do not wish every concept to be completely replaced by things from my own country.” These participant reflections indicate respondents’ awareness of tensions between source-cultural authenticity and target-cultural comprehensibility, which motivates the proposition of symbolic-power balancing. Direct empirical evidence confirming that “symbolic power balance independently causes superior translation effectiveness” is absent in current dataset. The four FCCM mechanisms draw upon the seven main categories from axial-coding outcomes: cultural-capital translation draws on A2, A7; habitus adaptation draws on A1, A2; field-rule coordination draws on A6; symbolic-power balance synthesizes reflective materials scattered across A2, A3 and A4 as a provisional interpretive proposition. Not all mechanisms enjoy equal direct empirical grounding.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This study takes Datang Everbright City as a case study and, drawing on interview data from overseas audiences, employs grounded theory to inductively derive the mechanism of cross-cultural mediation in cultural tourism contexts. It constructs the FCCM (Field-Culture Commuality Model), systematically analyzing overseas audiences’ perceptions of cultural tourism, the constraints on and pathways toward effective cross-cultural mediation, while also clarifying the model’s theoretical innovations in comparison with established translation theories, discussing the scholarly value of introducing Bourdieu’s sociological framework into cultural tourism translation research, and reflecting on the study’s limitations alongside prospects for future inquiry.

First, overseas audiences’ cultural perceptions within the cultural tourism field exhibit a pattern of “visual primacy, semantic lag.” The majority of interviewees were deeply impressed by the visual elements of Datang Everbright City—the light shows, neo-classical architecture, and dance performances—yet demonstrated limited understanding of the underlying historical and cultural significance. Their experience largely remained at the superficial level of “watching the spectacle,” falling short of “appreciating the substance.” The factors constraining the effectiveness of cross-cultural mediation in cultural tourism cluster along four dimensions: linguistic, cultural, service, and field-related. These manifest respectively as

deficiencies in translation quality and the absence of multilingual services; insufficient provision of historical context and misreading of cultural symbols; inadequate guided interpretation and limited interactive experience; and an imbalance between cultural communication and commercial operation driven by excessive commercialization. Effective cross-cultural mediation in cultural tourism requires “four-dimensional synergy”: ensuring the accuracy and intelligibility of cultural information through the transposition of cultural capital; adapting to target audiences’ cognitive patterns and aesthetic preferences through habitus accommodation; reconciling the dual logics of cultural dissemination and commercial operation through coordination with field rules; and achieving dynamic adjustment between source-culture subjectivity and audience receptivity through the balancing of symbolic power. “Cultural communality” emerges as the critical determinant of cross-cultural translation outcomes—only when mediation establishes emotional connection and resonance of meaning between source and target cultures can it more effectively facilitate overseas audiences’ progressive deepening from perception to cognition to identification.

Second, compared with existing theoretical models in translation studies, the FCCM model achieves innovation across multiple dimensions. It enacts a paradigmatic shift from “text-centeredness” to “field-centeredness,” moving beyond the limitations of traditional theories such as Nida’s dynamic equivalence and Venuti’s domestication-foreignization dichotomy—which focus on the relationship between source text and target text—to situate translation within the broader sociocultural field, demonstrating that translational effectiveness is conditioned simultaneously by text quality, field rules, audience habitus, and capital conversion. It advances a conceptual renewal from “unidirectional transmission” to “communality generation,” abandoning the conventional view of translation as the one-way transfer of meaning from source language to target language, and proposing instead the notion of “cultural communality,” whereby translational effectiveness is co-generated through the interaction of source and target cultures, translator and audience, and field and individual—not determined unilaterally by the translator. It also accomplishes a methodological upgrade from “strategy selection” to “systemic synergy,” moving beyond the evaluation of individual translation strategies to construct an analytical framework encompassing cultural capital transposition, habitus accommodation, field-rule coordination, and symbolic power balancing—a “four-dimensional synergy” framework that offers more holistic interpretation of and guidance for translation practice.

Third, this study systematically introduces Bourdieu’s triadic framework of “field-capital-habitus” into cross-cultural communication translation research, advancing the “sociological turn” in translation studies through its concretization and operationalization in the domain of cultural tourism translation. It proposes the core concept of “field-cultural communality,” offering a new theoretical lens for understanding the internal mechanisms of cross-cultural communicative translation, and develops the FCCM model—with its four-dimensional synergy

mechanism—inductively from the ground up through grounded theory.

This study nonetheless acknowledges certain limitations. First, the sample size is relatively modest, with data collected from only 20 interviewees; the external validity of the FCCM model awaits verification through broader empirical research. Future studies might consider expanding the sample to include overseas audiences of diverse ages, educational backgrounds, and occupational groups, thereby enhancing the model's representativeness and explanatory power. Second, the research field is confined to the single case of Datang Everbright City; the model's generalizability to other types of cultural tourism settings—such as museums, historical sites, and intangible cultural heritage experience zones—requires further testing. Third, as a cross-sectional study, it cannot capture the dynamic evolution of overseas audiences' mediation perceptions over time; subsequent research might employ longitudinal designs to investigate the temporal dynamics of translation reception. Additionally, future research could extend the geographic scope of participants to encompass audiences from a wider range of cultural spheres, further validating and refining the FCCM model's cross-cultural applicability.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Xianrong Qiao and Wanying Lin; methodology, Wanying Lin; software, Wanying Lin; validation, Xianrong Qiao and Wanying Lin; formal analysis, Xianrong Qiao and Wanying Lin; investigation, Wanying Lin; resources, Xianrong Qiao; data curation, Wanying Lin; writing—original draft preparation, Wanying Lin; writing—review and editing, Xianrong Qiao; visualization, Wanying Lin; supervision, Xianrong Qiao; project administration, Xianrong Qiao; funding acquisition, Xianrong Qiao. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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