

# Research on Zhang Jian Spirit Under Translation Compensation Theory in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative

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**Abstract:** Zhang Jian, an industrialist in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, was a prominent figure in the cultural landscape of Nantong and a pioneer in China's modern national industry. He is renowned as the "Father of Chinese Industry." In the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, the significance of the international dissemination of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit has become increasingly prominent. As an outstanding representative of Chinese national entrepreneurship, the international dissemination of Zhang Jian's cultural legacy holds extraordinary importance. Based on the theory of translation compensation and the communicative characteristics of international publicity translation, this paper proposes methods of compensating for phonetic, discourse, and sociocultural aspects to provide references and insights for relevant translation practices.

**Keywords:** Belt and Road Initiative; translation compensation; Zhang Jian; Nantong culture.

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## 1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the Belt and Road Initiative, social and economic exchanges between China and the world have become increasingly interconnected, attracting widespread attention to the internationalization of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit. Zhang Jian, as a modern industrialist and philanthropist, embodies not only the essence of Nantong culture but also represents the national spirit of Chinese entrepreneurs. The international dissemination of Zhang Jian's spirit not only contributes to the promotion of economic and trade cooperation within the Belt and Road framework but also helps to promote the spirit and cultural heritage of Chinese entrepreneurs.

Translation is a cross-cultural communicative activity, and during the process of translation, "cultural gaps" between heterogeneous cultures are inevitable [1]. In order to overcome readers' reading barriers and faithfully convey the original meaning in a smooth manner, it is necessary to employ appropriate means of translation compensation [2-4].

Taking the translation of Zhang Jian's spirit as a case study and using the English Wikipedia entry on "Zhang Jian" as a corpus, this paper analyzes the available methods of translation compensation within the context of international publicity translation. Based on the theory of translation compensation, the aim is to provide valuable references and insights for the overseas dissemination of the Chinese entrepreneurial spirit and culture.

## 2. Literature Review

Since the "cultural turn" in the field of translation studies, there has been rapid development in translation theory research, with increasing attention paid to translation compensation phenomena [5]. German translation theorist Wolfram Wills conducted research on translation compensation within the framework of linguistics, emphasizing the study of words, sentences, and discourse

while also introducing interdisciplinary concepts. Hatim and Mason (1990) emphasized the social, cultural, and communicative values of translation and proposed a compensation theory centered around communicative discourse.

Research on translation compensation in China began in the late 1980s, focusing on compensating for losses caused by cultural differences. Chinese scholar Xia Tingde published the monograph "Research on Translation Compensation" in 2006, establishing a systematic theoretical framework for translation compensation. In 2012, Wang Dalai discussed specific compensation principles from the perspectives of cultural gaps and translation compensation, promoting further development of the theory in his book "Research on Cultural Gaps in Translation."

In general, translation compensation emphasizes "supplementation." Without a deficiency, there is no need for compensation, and compensation serves the purpose of communication. Common methods of translation compensation include intra-textual/extra-textual compensation, explicit/implicit compensation, and congruent/non-congruent compensation. According to the practical needs of international publicity translation and the communicative functional of compensation, this paper categorizes them into three layers: internal phonetic compensation, intermediate discourse compensation, and external sociocultural compensation.

## 3. Methods of Translation Compensation

International Publicity Translation refers to "disseminate targeting the international community," and therefore, communication is of greater importance in translation for international communication. Due to differences in social customs, literary and artistic techniques, local customs and traditions, and ancient cultural relics, there exists varying degrees of "cultural loss of speech." Therefore, it is necessary to employ methods of translation compensation to enhance

the readability, communicability, and appreciation of the translated text [6].

In this paper, based on communicative functions, the methods of translation compensation are divided into three layers: phonetic, discourse, and sociocultural. Phonetics pertains to the micro-level of the target text, discourse refers to the macro-level of the target text, and sociocultural context encompasses the cross-cultural extension of the target text (see Figure 1).

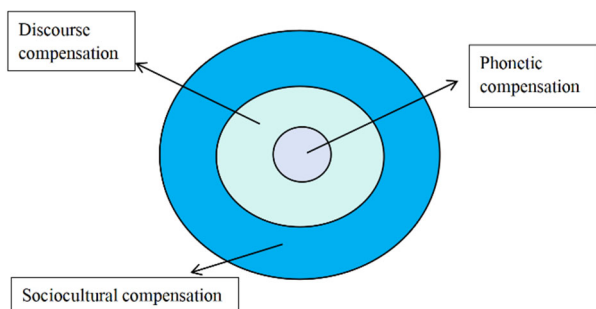


Figure 1: Three Aspects of Translation Compensation Theory

### 3.1. Phonetic compensation

Example 1:

The Source Text	The Target Text
张謇	Zhang Jian (pinyin: Zhāng Jiǎn; Wade-Giles: Chang Chien)

Take the English Wikipedia entry for "Zhang Jian" for example, in addition to the Latin alphabet based on the Chinese pronunciation, the written form of the Chinese Pinyin and the Wade-Giles are also provided. This phonetic compensation in the translation is of significant importance in facilitating cross-cultural communication. The key point is that in cross-cultural communication, the recognition of pronunciation is more urgent than the recognition of written forms. For example, of heterogeneous cultural factors such as subway platforms or tourist attraction names, the communicative purpose can be achieved solely through the recognition of pronunciation. In cultural dissemination, especially in the dissemination of personal names, phonetic compensation contributes to the construction of the source culture's context and facilitates the improvement of the quality and connotation of international publicity translation.

### 3.2. Discourse compensation

Example 2:

Further Reading

[1] Claypool, Lisa. Zhang Jian and China's First Museum. *Journal of Asian Studies* 64, 3 (2005): 567–604.

[2] Chu, Samuel C. . *Reformer in Modern China: Chang Chien, 1853–1926*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1965.

Discourse refers to a language entity composed of consecutive paragraphs, and discourse analysis focuses on the actual use of language in specific contexts. In the context of international publicity translation, particular attention should be given to the communicative nature of discourse. For the Western world, the Zhang Jian spirit represents a foreign and heterogeneous culture. To introduce this heterogeneous culture to target language readers, it is necessary to expand the cultural context of the source discourse.

The English Wikipedia entry for "Zhang Jian" is not a word-for-word correspondence with the Chinese entry. Instead, after providing a biography of Zhang Jian, there is a section titled "Further Reading." In this section, relevant reference books are provided for interested readers to delve deeper into the topic. These two books, from the perspectives of sociocultural aspects and modern Chinese reforms, elucidate Zhang Jian's positive contributions of modern Chinese history. This not only enriches the portrayal of the individual but also enhances the depth of Chinese culture international dissemination.

### 3.3. Sociocultural compensation

Example 3:

The institutes founded or funded by Zhang Jian

[1] Nantong University (1902)

[2] Fudan University (1905)

[3] Nantong Middle School of Jiangsu Province (1909)

[4] Shanghai Ocean University (1912)

[5] Hohai University (1915)

International publicity translation involves cross-cultural communication, and sociocultural factors play a significant role. Sociocultural factors influence the quality, effectiveness, and innovativeness of international dissemination. Translating for dissemination involves not only the form but also the cultural connotations. Therefore, sociocultural compensation is an essential extension in this aspect.

To highlight Zhang Jian's contributions to Chinese education, the English Wikipedia entry has listed the schools established and sponsored by Zhang Jian. These include Nantong University (1902), Fudan University (1905), [3] Nantong Middle School of Jiangsu Province (1909), Shanghai Ocean University (1912), and Hohai University (1915). The use of a list provides clear and concise information, effectively constructing a cultural image for target language readers regarding Zhang Jian's dedication to the field of education.

Apart from the educational aspect, sociocultural compensation can also be reflected in various areas such as politics, economy, and customs. This is just one example to illustrate that international publicity translation can appropriately employ methods of sociocultural compensation method.

## 4. Conclusion

Grounded in the theoretical framework of translation compensation, this paper proposes three levels of translation compensation: phonetic compensation, discourse compensation, and sociocultural compensation. The objective is to make a modest contribution to the international dissemination of Nantong's culture, while providing scholarly insights and methodologies to propel the global outreach of Chinese culture and lending support to the advancement of the Belt and Road Initiative.

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