

Exploring Cultural Losses in the Tourism Website Translation: A Case Study of Trip.com

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Abstract—The relentless growth of the tourism sector is fostering an increasingly pronounced demand for the translation of tourism websites. Nevertheless, the translation quality of tourism websites has garnered criticism attributed to inaccuracies in translating cultural references, leading to potential cultural losses in conveying cultural references. Despite the growing demand for accurate translation, a lack of research exists to address cultural losses and in the translation of Chinese cultural references into English. This study investigates the categories of cultural losses in the cultural references' translation on tourism websites; specifically, Trip.com was selected as the case. Moreover, this study examines how the overall translation method, at a macro-level, is influenced by the specific translation strategies identified at a micro-level and how this, in turn, impacts cultural nuances and potential losses. The current study adopted a qualitative approach and unveiled five distinct categories of cultural losses encompassing historical background, rhetorical devices, local customs, religion, and aesthetic images. The findings revealed that foreignization emerged as the prevailing macro-level translation method, significantly influencing the incurred cultural losses within the context of cultural references. This study's findings emphasized the necessity of addressing cultural losses in cultural references' translation on tourism websites. The identified cultural losses and the dominance of foreignization highlight the imperative for nuanced translation strategies. This study shed light on the equilibrium between cultural preservation and effective communication. By striking this equilibrium, the tourism industry can effectively accomplish its objective of nurturing profound cross-cultural interactions that resonate with a diverse global audience.

Index Terms—cultural references, cultural loss, translation method, tourism translation, tourism website

I. INTRODUCTION

The growth of China's tourism sector and the expansion of global communication have increased the need for top-notch English translations of Chinese tourism-related materials. Tourism promotional channels have evolved significantly because of scientific and technological advancements, shifting from conventional printed materials such as posters, brochures, and travel guides to more modern digital platforms such as tourism websites (Wu, 2018; He & Su, 2022). Moreover, there have been significant changes in how tourists obtain information about their destinations. He and Su (2022) found a significant proportion of potential international travellers to China relied on online channels for information gathering. Websites dedicated to tourism provide a portal for promoting and marketing as well as essential tourist information. They serve as a promotional tool for tourist destinations and a glimpse into the city's transformation where the attractions are located (Chen et al., 2023).

The rise of websites as a platform for tourism promotion and publicity has increased opportunities for tourism development but also introduced several complexities, such as being multi-linguistic and multi-cultural, thereby posing challenges to translation practices. Some scholars, such as Hogg et al. (2014), Agorni (2016), and Turzynski-Azimi (2021), stated that the genre of tourism promotional materials is slightly marginal in the translation discipline.

Prior researchers have generally agreed that the most important function of tourism promotional materials is to accomplish their communicative function of providing information and compelling the intended audience (Mason, 2004; Federici, 2007; Agorni, 2012; Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018; Chen et al., 2023), reflecting the critical financial character performed by the translation of material fostering tourist destinations. Cultural references are a prominent feature of

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tourism materials relevant for communicative purposes (Turzynski-Azimi, 2021).

Despite the prevalence of tourism promotional materials translation, this genre has been commonly criticised (Chen et al., 2023). The conventional forms of communication have already attracted academic consideration (Wu, 2018). The poor standard of tourism website translation stands as an area of debate for researchers, with existing literature on the subject revealing that the English translation provided on travel websites is not of sufficient quality (Pierini, 2007; He & Tao, 2010; Sulaiman, 2013, Chen et al., 2023).

Prior translation quality studies typically included the analysis of translation mistakes and the proposed corresponding strategies and methods. Existing studies have demonstrated numerous tourism website translations have not been gratifying for linguistic aspects (Pierini, 2007; He & Tao, 2010; Narváez & Zambrana, 2014; Li & Yao, 2018; Majhut, 2021). Most importantly, there exist issues with cultural references translation decreasing their anticipated communicative and informative functions (Pierini, 2007; Zhang, 2012; Zhang Meifang, 2012; Narváez & Zambrana, 2014; Yuan, 2018; Majhut, 2021).

Many investigations have linked the inadequate translation standard to the improper handling of cultural references, which resulted in cultural losses in the translation of travel websites. Pierini (2007), for instance, discovered that differences in cultural backgrounds between source and target languages pose insufficient translation and confuse target audiences. According to Rezaei and Kuhi (2014), translating cultural references found on travel websites is potentially difficult, especially when the source and target languages have distinct cultural backgrounds. Tourism embodies an intercultural phenomenon wherein one of the principal motivations compelling tourists to embark on journeys is the pursuit of diverse cultural experiences (Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018). It is essential to faithfully translate cultural references from the source texts into the target texts with the minimum losses possible (Katan, 2012).

Other studies focused on exploring the micro-level translation strategies compensating for cultural-related losses (Mansor, 2012; Zhang et al., 2013; Fuadi, 2016; Lin, 2021; Li et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2023) and investigating the macro-level two poles of domestication and foreignization in the translation of cultural references (Mansor, 2012; Rezaei & Kuhi, 2014; Chung, 2021; Turzynski-Azimi, 2021; Zheng, 2021). The prior studies proved the necessity of minimizing cultural losses by translating cultural references. However, these studies did not meticulously explore the various categories of cultural losses in translation or examine the macro-level impact of the identified micro-level strategies on cultural losses.

Considering the gaps in the literature and the necessity of research on cultural losses, the current research seeks to highlight the cultural losses in the cultural references' translation on the tourism-related website. Specifically, the present study chose Trip.com, a quickly expanding international internet tourism agency, as the case. The following two research questions are addressed in the current study:

1. What are the categories of cultural losses in translating Chinese cultural references on the tourism website?
2. How did the macro-level translation method impact the identified micro-level translation strategies on the cultural losses?

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The classification of cultural references from Newmark (1988) is the foundation of this investigation. Nababan et al.'s (2012) translation quality assessment (readability and acceptability) and Venuti's (1995) foreignization and domestication are also employed in the current study.

A. Cultural Words Classification

A model for recognising and classifying cultural references is provided by Newmark (1988). The data for this study were located using Newmark's (1988) classification (Table 1). Using Newmark's (1988) model as a foundation ensures the reliability of a thorough analysis of cultural references (Turzynski-Azimi, 2021; Chen et al., 2023).

TABLE 1
NEWMARK'S (1988) CULTURAL REFERENCES

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Ecology | Geographical and environmental concepts |
| Material Culture | Food; clothes; house; transport |
| Social Culture | Work and leisure |
| Gestures and Habits | |
| Organizations | Political, administrative, artistic, and religious items |

B. Translation Quality Assessment

Nababan et al.'s (2012) translation quality assessment (readability and acceptability) serves as the model for assessing cultural references. Less acceptable, not acceptable, medium readable, and low readable cultural references are included in the analysis.

C. Domestication and Foreignization

Venuti's (1995) differentiation between domesticated and foreignized translations involves the reduction of elements of strangeness in the former while covering the foreign in a veil of familiarity for the culture that is receiving it and the

retention or even accentuation of tokens of difference in the latter, thus encouraging readers to actively engage with the unfamiliar, is widely recognized within the translation studies. The tension between these opposing forces is notably pronounced within tourism materials (Turzynski-Azimi, 2021). The inherent essence of tourism materials lies in their ability to accentuate the foreign in a manner that remains palatable and comprehensible to the reader (Fuadi, 2016; Lin, 2021; Li et al., 2022). On the one hand, a foreignized translation approach risks disrupting effective communication (Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018). Such a translation might make it more difficult for the reader to learn about obscure subjects or impede the text's persuasion capacity. On the other hand, excessive domestication of foreign elements within the text may lead to a loss of the very essence of novelty. This quality entices the reader to depart from their routine existence and embark on a tourist's journey.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Translations of tourism-related materials are concerned with “the transfer of those cultural markers which represent destinations in their specific historical, geographic, social, and cultural aspects” (Agorni, 2012, p. 7). In the broader translation studies literature, these cultural markers are referred to as “culture-specific items” (Aixelà, 1996, p. 56), “realia” (Leppihalme, 2001, p. 139), and “cultural references” (Olk, 2013, p. 345). According to Newmark (1981, p. 7), translation is a skilful endeavour to “replace a written message in one language by the same message in another language”. Cultural references frequently make this impossible because the meanings beyond these expressions are almost always deeply connected to a particular cultural context.

A. Cultural Losses

Baker (1992, p. 21) believed that cultural references “relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food,” reflecting the language's culture. According to Aixelà (1996, p. 14), cultural references were defined as “elements of the text that are connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture (history, art, literature) which might be unknown to the readers of the target text”. Some studies used the translation quality assessment proposed by Nababan et al. (2012) to explore the efficiency of cultural references' translation. For example, a study of the accuracy of cultural references in tourism promotion text that was translated from Indonesian to English was conducted by Pratama et al. in 2021. The findings unveiled a prevalence of less accurate (40%) and inaccurate translations (22%). More recently, Putri et al. (2022) researched the Medan City Tourism webpages based on Nababan et al.'s (2012) model to analyse persuasive and communicative functions. The findings elucidated a prevalence of less acceptable (48%), not acceptable (19%), medium readability (55%), low readability (9%), less accurate (24%), and inaccurate (3%).

Even though these prior studies proved the feasibility of Nababan et al.'s (2012) translation quality assessment in the context of tourism materials, they did not develop a systematic analysis for the less acceptable, not acceptable, medium readability, low readability, less accurate, and inaccurate translation.

Furthermore, AmirDabbaghian (2014) stated that rhetorical devices such as metaphor and allusion were often used to express implied meanings and cultural backgrounds in cuisine-related cultural references, which created difficulties for tourism materials translation. In addition, Vandepitte et al. (2015) and Shair Ali et al. (2021) found the cultural loss of metonymy in the translation of cultural references hindered the comprehension of the target audience. In a more recent study, Turzynski-Azimi (2021) analysed the Japanese translation of cultural references on tourism websites and found that the translation lost the salient architectural features, cuisine, and historical eras embedded in cultural references. Moreover, the surprising finding was the frequent occurrence of cultural losses in cultural references denoting food. In other words, the prominence of cultural references related to food in creating the destination image in tourism materials implies that cultural specificity is being lost. In the same vein, Marco (2019, p. 23) agreed that cuisine is “the most sensitive and important expression of national culture”. Besides that, Tymoczko (2012) stated that when the target audience shared different cultures, specific customs and historical context were lost in translation.

B. Micro-Level Translation Strategies and Macro-Level Two Poles

Many taxonomies of strategies for translating cultural references exist in the literature (e.g., Ivir, 1987; Nedergaard-Larsen, 1993; Aixelà, 1996; Kwieciski, 2001; Leppihalme, 2001; Pedersen, 2011; Olk, 2013; Marco, 2019). The overall arrangement of the multiple taxonomies suggested in the literature illustrates the grouping of strategies for cultural reference translation along a line between the original text and target text orientation (Ramière, 2016; Turzynski-Azimi, 2021; Chen et al., 2023).

Given the “cultural load implied in the language of tourism” (Gandin, 2013, p. 327), Venuti's (1995, p. 67) statements that “translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” has an impact on materials promoting tourism. Cultural references are essential variables of cultural specificity that must be dealt with when selecting translation strategies for informing and persuading potential tourists. The translator must bridge cultural gaps by selecting translation procedures that draw focus to or mask cultural content to various extents (Ivir, 1987, p. 45). When confronted with these distinctive lexical features of tourism texts, the micro-level strategies employed by translators have a macro-level impact, influencing the image of the source language nation as a destination for travellers. Prior studies focused on the macro-level translation methods identified in the macro-level translation strategies. However, their effects on cultural losses were underexplored.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present investigation employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the cultural losses resulting from translating cultural references on a tourism website. A qualitative case study is used as the research design to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue in question.

A. Data Source

The selection of Trip.com as a case study for investigating the translation of cultural references in tourism website, with a specific focus on Hangzhou as the data source, was guided by several rationale considerations rooted in translation studies.

Firstly, Hangzhou, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance, offers many cultural references embedded within its attractions, events, and local customs. This inherent cultural depth makes Hangzhou an ideal data source for exploring how such references are translated and presented in the context of a tourism website like Trip.com. Secondly, Trip.com is one of the largest and most influential online platforms for travel services in China (Jiang, 2022). As a platform catering to a diverse audience, its approach to translating cultural references for a global readership can offer valuable insights into how the delicate balance between cultural authenticity and target audience comprehension is achieved.

Moreover, Hangzhou's global appeal as a popular tourist destination enhances the applicability and relevance of the study's findings. The translation of its cultural references on Trip.com holds practical significance, as it directly contributes to the experience of international travelers seeking to understand and engage with the local culture. Investigating the translation of Hangzhou's cultural references aligns with the broader objective of enhancing cross-cultural communication and promoting a deeper understanding of the host culture.

B. Data Collection

The data collection for this study involved the utilization of a Web Crawler to systematically gather relevant textual content from tourism attraction webpages on Trip.com. The Web Crawler was programmed to automatically access and extract introductory sections from the Chinese and English versions of each tourism attraction's webpage on Trip.com. These introductory sections were deemed integral for capturing the initial presentation of the attractions, containing cultural references that elucidate the site's historical, traditional, and social aspects. The web link for each webpage was meticulously recorded to ensure traceability and facilitate further analysis.

The collected data, encompassing the introductory content in both languages and the corresponding webpage links, were methodically organized within a Microsoft Excel file designated "Web Crawler data." This structured storage enabled efficient data management and was the foundation for subsequent analytical procedures. Subsequently, the research identified the cultural references within the "Web Crawler data", drawing upon Newmark's (1988) classification. Newmark's taxonomy provides a comprehensive framework for identifying cultural references. By applying this classification, the research aimed to categorize cultural references as they appeared in Chinese and English versions of the tourism attraction introductions. The identified cultural references were manually recorded in another Microsoft Excel file named "cultural references".

C. Data Analysis

The present study assessed the cultural references' translation quality based on readability and acceptability parameters proposed by Nababan et al. (2012). To refine the scope of the analysis, the study excluded cultural references that exhibited a high level of acceptability and readability. These references, deemed seamlessly integrated and effectively rendered in translation, were excluded for further examination. Instead, the research focused on cultural references characterized by varying degrees of acceptability and readability, spanning the spectrum from less acceptable to unacceptable and encompassing moderate and low readability. Moreover, cultural references embedded with cultural losses were investigated from Venuti's (1995) domestication and foreignization, exploring the macro-level impact of the identified micro-level translation strategies on cultural losses.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, addressing the first research question, revealed a comprehensive exploration of the intricate cultural losses inherent in the translations of cultural references. As seen in Figure 1, the present study found 434 cultural references embedded with cultural losses. The analysis illuminated five categories of cultural losses, collectively amounting to 591 instances.

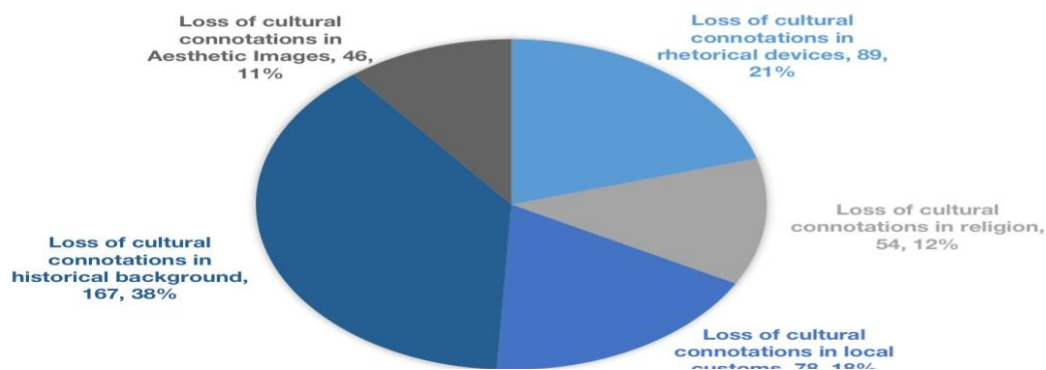


Figure 1. The Categories of Cultural Losses

The identified categories of cultural losses encompassed a spectrum of facets that engender translation complexities. Cultural loss in historical background emerged as a prominent category with 167 instances, underscoring the difficulties in capturing historical nuances that underpin cultural references. This category of loss included the chronological backdrop of events encompassing the inception of dynasties and the introduction of historical notables across diverse attractions. This finding was congruent with Pan's (2015) study. According to Pan (2015), the cultural loss in the historical background impacted the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information provided to foreign tourists and its implications for preserving a rich cultural legacy (Bassnett, 2011). Example 1 detailed the cultural losses in the chronology of historical notables and dynasties.

EXAMPLE 1

| | |
|----------------|---|
| SL | 苏堤贯穿西湖南北，是苏东坡在杭州做官时所建，也叫“苏公堤”。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Sū dī guān chuān xī hú nán běi , shì sū dōng pō zài háng zhōu zuò guān shí suǒ jiàn , yě jiào “sū gōng dī”。 |
| TL | Sudi runs through the north and south of West Lake. It was built when Su Dongpo was an official in Hangzhou and is also known as the “ Su Gong Dyke ”. |

As seen in Example 1, 苏东坡 was transliterated as *Su Dongpo* without explanation, resulting in a cultural loss related to this historical notable. 苏东坡, also known as *Su Shi* (苏轼), was a prominent poet and calligrapher in the Song dynasty (960-1279). His contributions to Chinese literature and culture are widely recognized and celebrated. In Hangzhou, where 苏东坡 spent several years of his life, he was considered a cultural icon, and his legacy was an important part of the city's historical and cultural heritage. Therefore, simply translating his name without providing any context or explanation of his significance resulted in the cultural loss related to his contributions to Hangzhou's history and culture.

In addition, *Su Dongpo* also demonstrated the cultural loss in the chronology context. The corresponding years should have been added in brackets, such as “Su Dongpo (1037-1101)”. This finding highlighted the time concepts in the original language should be accurately translated into cross-cultural communication. The finding was aligned with Yang's (2010) statement. According to Yang (2010), every era has its style and characteristics of the time in China, and the loss of time concepts is one of the most typical problems that arise while translating cultural references.

The second predominant category was the cultural loss in rhetorical devices recorded in 89 instances. Tourism and rhetorical devices have long been interwoven to convey inferred meanings and cultural backgrounds (Bahrami, 2012). Rhetorical devices are often utilized to describe attractions' most noteworthy features and spectacular landscapes accurately and eloquently, such as metaphor, allusion, metonymy, and personification. A metaphor is a creative idea that describes a thing by mentioning another thing that is similar in some way. Example 2 indicated such a category of loss in detail.

EXAMPLE 2

| | |
|----------------|--|
| SL | 作为西湖三大名泉之一，玉泉历来就是品茗赏景的名胜。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Zuò wéi xī hú sān dà míng quán zhī yī , yù quán lì lái jiù shì pǐn míng shǎng jǐng de míng shèng。 |
| TL | As one of the three famous springs of the West Lake, Yuquan has always been a famous place for drinking tea and enjoying the scenery. |

In Example 2, the cultural loss in metaphor occurred in transliterating 玉泉 as *Yuquan*. In the case of 玉泉, its name represented the metaphorical comparison between the spring's clarity and purity and jade's preciousness and transparency. The loss can be compensated using literal translation, such as *Jade Spring*. This finding is congruent with Al-Amer et al.'s (2016) views on using literal translation in translating metaphorical expressions.

Moreover, in literature, an allusion is an implicit or hidden regard to an individual, incident, item, or element in a different text. The allusion is a common linguistic phenomenon in Chinese, prevalent in tourism materials. However, the

cultural losses in allusion translation were identified on the website. Example 3 illustrated this specific category of loss.

EXAMPLE 3

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| SL | 很多人的“雷峰塔情结”源于白娘子传说。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Hěn duō rén de “léi fēng tǎ qíng jié” yuán yú bái niáng zǐ chuán shuō. |
| TL | Many people's sentimental feelings towards Leifeng Pagoda originate from the legend of Bai Niangzi . |

In Example 3, the 白娘子传说 were translated as *the legend of Bai Niangzi*, revealing a cultural loss in allusion. The translator failed to provide a detailed explanation of the legend. The present study found that the explanations of allusions were necessary for the target audience. According to Bahrami (2012), allusion translation mainly disregards the allusive language and its connotations in the source language. Moreover, Leppihalme (1997) proposed constructive strategies for translating allusions, including adding extra-allusive guidance to include supplementary information via footnotes and endnotes.

Furthermore, an expression or phrase is substituted by another similarly situated within a figure of speech, known as a metonymy. Example 4 illustrated metonymy's cultural losses in translating cultural references.

EXAMPLE 4

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| SL | 瑶琳国家森林公园...素有“小庐山”美称。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Yáo lín guó jiā sēn lín gōng yuán... sù yǒu “xiǎo lú shān” měi chēng. |
| TL | Yaolin National Forest Park... Locals call it "xiao lu shan". |

小庐山 means small Lushan Mountain, which refers to the small mountain peak within the park that resembles the famous Lushan Mountain in Jiangxi Province, China. 庐山 (Lushan Mountain) is known for its natural beauty, cultural significance, and historical landmarks. It has been a popular tourist destination for centuries and is considered one of China's most scenic spots. However, the translation failed to convey the metonymic meanings to the intended audience since the translator only used transliteration. This argument is consistent with other findings regarding metonymy translation, such as those of Shair Ali et al. (2021), who argued metonymy can be mirrored using constructive translation strategies.

Personification refers to imbuing inanimate things, ideas, or locations with human attributes (Gu, 2020). However, the cultural loss of personification was identified on the tourism website. Example 5 indicated such a type of loss.

EXAMPLE 5

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| SL | 孤山是西湖北面的天然岛屿。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Gū shān shì xī hú běi miàn de tiān rán dǎo yǔ. |
| TL | Gushan is situated in the West Lake between the lake and the external lake, thus the name Gushan. |

孤山 was transliterated into *Gushan*, which lost some of the connotations associated with the original Chinese culture. 孤 is an adjective that describes a solitary or lonely living being who spends a lot of time alone, and this connotation is lost in the transliteration *Gushan*. The translation departed from the faithfulness and accuracy of the source language.

Additionally, cultural loss in local customs was identified in cultural references translation. Experiencing exotic customs has been a primary motivation for overseas tourism (Chang, 2006; Sulaiman & Wilson, 2018). However, the present study found cultural losses in the customs-related cultural references translation. A detailed illustration is shown in Example 6.

EXAMPLE 6

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| SL | 西湖十景中，唯一以佛教寺庙中的法器作为一个景观的，就是净慈寺里的“南屏晚钟”...每逢除夕之夜，许多市民和游客还会聚集在净慈寺钟楼内外，举行新年撞钟除旧迎新活动。当第一百零八声钟声响，正好是新年伊始之时。这一象征着祥和、欢乐、安定、团结的活动，为古老的南屏晚钟注入了新的涵义和魅力。 |
| Chinese Pinyin | Xī hú shí jǐng zhōng, jiù shì jìng cí sì lǐ de “nán píng wǎn zhōng”... Měi féng chú xī zhī yè , xǔ duō shì mǐn hé yóu kè hái huì jù jí zài jìng cí sì zhōng lóu nèi wài , jǔ xīn nián zhuàng zhōng chú jiù yíng xīn huó dòng 。 Dāng dì yī bǎi líng bā shēng zhōng shēng xiǎng , zhèng hǎo shì xīn nián yī shǐ zhī shí 。 Zhè yī xiàng zhēng zhe xiá hé 、 huān lè 、 ān dìng 、 tuán jié de huó dòng , wéi gǔ lǎo de nán píng wǎn zhōng zhù rù le xīn de hán yì hé mèi lì 。 |
| TL | The only one in the 10 scenic spots of the West Lake that uses the musical instrument in the Buddhist temple is the “Evening Bell at Nanping Hill” in Jingci Temple. In ancient times, the bronze bell was rung and the sound was loud. The mountain and valley echoed. “Evening Bell at Nanping Hill” was thus famous. |

In Example 6, the Chinese New Year-related customs were lost in translation, and the festival's cultural and symbolic significance were neglected. The translation failed to express the entire richness and diversity of Chinese customs. In

addition, the translation did not account for the increasing number of foreign tourists attending the “New Year's bell-striking ceremony” in Jingci Temple (Chen, 2006), nor did it adequately convey the festival’s cultural relevance and impact on the local community and tourism sector.

Moreover, cultural loss in religion occurred in the translation of cultural references. Religion is a cornerstone of cultural identity and heritage for many destinations (Zeng, 2019; Li et al., 2022). The potential for cultural loss is particularly pronounced when translating cultural references related to religious aspects. Investigating how these references are translated is crucial for preserving the authenticity and reverence associated with religious sites and practices. Example 7 illustrated this type of loss in detail.

| EXAMPLE 7 | |
|-----------|--|
| SL | 茅家埠...这里也是知名“上香古道”的起点，是杭州香客从城里去天竺进香的必经之路 ... 有百年历史的上香古道将西湖与这一带的村落相连... |
| Chinese | Máo jiā bù ... zhè lǐ yě shì zhī míng “shàng xiāng gǔ dào” de qǐ diǎn , shì háng zhōu xiāng kè cóng chéng lǐ qù tiān zhú jìn xiāng de bī jīng zhī lù 。 yǒu bǎi nián lì shǐ de shàng xiāng gǔ dào jiāng xī hú yǔ zhè yī dài de cūn luò xiāng lián ... |
| Pinyin | |
| TL | Maojiabu...The century-old Shangxiang Ancient Road connects the West Lake with the villages in this area. |

In Example 7, Buddhism-related cultural loss occurred in translating 上香古道 as *Shangxiang Ancient Road*. 上香 refers to burning incense as an offering to the Buddha or other deities. 上香古道, therefore, refers to the ancient pilgrimage paths that Buddhist pilgrims used to travel to holy sites and burn incense as an act of devotion. The translation failed to convey the connotations embedded in the cultural reference. Prior studies, such as Zeng (2019) and Li et al. (2022), have advocated mitigating the cultural loss in the Buddhism-related cultural references’ translation. Similarly, the present study supported their view and found the necessity for presenting foreign tourists with an accurate and meaningful portrayal of Buddhist culture.

In addition, aesthetic images are crucial foundations for tourism. Tan et al. (2021) underscored that the landscapes’ aesthetic images and values might cause translation problems since they are frequently grounded on the source language’s cultural context. Cultural loss in aesthetic images occurred in translating Hangzhou attractions. Example 8 indicated this category of loss in detail.

| EXAMPLE 8 | |
|-----------|--|
| SL | 曲院风荷位于岳王庙对面... |
| Chinese | Qǔ yuàn fēng hé wèi yú yuē wáng miào duì miàn... |
| Pinyin | |
| TL | Quyuan Fenghe is located ... on the front side of the Yuemiao Temple, |

曲院风荷 was transliterated as *Quyuan Fenghe* and the cultural loss in aesthetic images occurred. This translation failed to consider the acceptability of tourism information for foreign tourists (Wang & Jiang, 2020). 曲院风荷 is one of the ten scenic views of Hangzhou. It should have been translated into “Breeze-ruffled Lotus at Quyuan Garden.” The loss may confuse prospective visitors. Mauro (2022) also agreed with presenting the original language’s intended meaning in an approachable manner rather than transliterating.

With respect to the second research question, the present study analysed the macro-level translation method and the micro-level translation strategies (see Table 2) on the cultural references embedded with cultural losses. The findings unveiled micro-level translation strategies, encompassing transliteration, literal translation, and a combination of transliteration with literal translation being predominant. Particularly, the prevalence of foreignization reached a significant proportion at 84.33%, signifying its dominant role in the translation of cultural losses associated with cultural references.

TABLE 2
THE IDENTIFIED MICRO-LEVEL TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

| Micro-Level | Macro-Level | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Transliteration | Foreignization | 434 | 100% |
| Transliteration+Literal | Foreignization | 178 | 41.01% |
| Literal Translation | Foreignization | 118 | 27.19% |
| Deletion | Domestication | 70 | 16.13% |
| Transliteration+Explanation | Foreignization+Domestication | 43 | 9.91% |
| | | 25 | 5.76% |

Foreignization, characterized by the intentional retention of source language elements in the target language translation, notably influences the cultural losses encountered in the English translation of Chinese cultural references. This impact can be delineated through various dimensions, highlighting both advantages and challenges associated with the foreignization approach.

Firstly, foreignization contributes to a heightened retention of cultural nuances inherent in Chinese cultural references. By preserving linguistic elements that bear cultural significance, foreignization seeks to maintain the unique distinctiveness of the source culture, thus mitigating the risk of cultural losses that might occur through excessive domestication or adaptation. This approach, though, may also highlight some cultural losses. While foreignization aims

to maintain authenticity, it may cause semantic ambiguity or reader confusion when cultural references are complex and difficult to understand for those from the target culture. It may be more difficult to communicate the intended meaning to an English-speaking audience because of the potential cultural differences between the source and target languages.

Furthermore, foreignization might influence the readability and accessibility of translated content. Cultural references directly translated from the source language might not connect with the target audience, limiting their engagement and comprehension. It could decrease the entire translation quality and impair the interaction of cultural nuances. However, the influence of foreignization on cultural losses varies based on a range of circumstances, such as the nature of the connections to other cultures, the target audience's knowledge of the source culture, and the translator's interpretive choices. It is essential to strike a balance among the requirements for authenticity, clarity, and accessibility.

Foreignization has a complex and multidimensional effect on cultural losses in English translations of Chinese cultural references. It assists in preserving cultural characteristics but at the expense of clarity, readability, and reader comprehension. The decision to utilize foreignization should be founded on an in-depth analysis of the cultural references' complexity, the grasp of culture by the target audience, and the overall goals of effective cross-cultural communication.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

This study's focus was the English translation of Chinese cultural references found on travel website. Significant insights have been gained through an in-depth investigation of the data and a thorough analysis, shedding light on the complicated cultural losses in translation and the effects of identified micro-level translation strategies on macro-level translation methods on cultural losses. It is essential to notice the limitations of this investigation, though. The investigation was limited to a single travel website, which may have limited the applicability of findings in other situations. In addition, the analysis tended to focus on textual material, possibly omitting the influence of visual components on cultural losses.

Despite these limitations, this study holds significant implications. For translation practice, the insights acquired provide valuable guidance for translators in effectively addressing cultural losses, particularly in tourism websites. The study also underscores the importance of considering macro-level impact when selecting micro-level translation strategies, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that aligns with the desired cultural representation and rhetorical impact.

In terms of contributions, this research enriches the scholarship in translation studies by providing a comprehensive examination of cultural losses and their interaction with translation strategies in a digital context, such as tourism websites. The findings could enhance cross-cultural communication and guide industry practices in conveying cultural nuances accurately while maintaining effective rhetorical devices. In conclusion, this study's insights into the types of cultural losses, the interplay of micro-level strategies, and their macro-level impact deepen the understanding of translation challenges and strategies in the digital era. By addressing the research questions and considering their implications and limitations, this study adds to the ongoing discourse in translation studies. It offers practical insights for enhancing cross-cultural communication on tourism websites.

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