

# A Study on the External Publicity Translation of Sichuan Baijiu Culture from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

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**Abstract:** *This paper systematically reviews the existing research progress on the external publicity translation of Sichuan Baijiu culture. It focuses on three core issues: the chaos in translating core terminologies, deviations in the translation of culturally loaded terms, and systemic translation failures in practical texts, thereby deeply analyzing the current practical dilemmas in the external publicity translation of Sichuan Baijiu culture. Guided by the theoretical framework of Skopos Theory, this paper proposes new strategies centered on text type adaptation, standardization of professional terminologies, and in-depth translation of cultural keywords. Based on that, it further explores specific paths to enhance the effectiveness of external publicity translation through optimizing the construction of external publicity websites for Sichuan Baijiu enterprises and establishing a collaborative mechanism involving “translation experts, cultural consultants, and industry mentors.” These efforts aim to provide theoretical support and practical references for the deepening of subsequent research and the practical application of translation in Sichuan Baijiu culture.*

**Keywords:** Sichuan Baijiu culture, Skopos Theory, External publicity translation.

## 1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of intensified global economic and trade competition and the deepening implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, Sichuan Liquor, leveraging the economic, resource, and development needs of countries along the routes, facilitates economic and trade exchanges within the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle and radiates nationwide. It has thus become a “Sichuan Economic Business Card” that showcases regional economic vitality. As a benchmark of Chinese liquor culture, it deeply embodies the ethnic cultural genes and historical heritage of Sichuan. Endowed with deeper connotations in the new era, it is hailed as a typical carrier of the “Sichuan Cultural Business Card.”

Currently, the international communication of Sichuan Liquor Culture has achieved remarkable results, but the mediating role of translation in its “going global” process still needs to be strengthened. Language is the carrier of culture, culture is the soil of language, and translation is the cross-cultural bridge connecting the two (Guo, 1999). Scientific translation strategies are key to promoting the international communication of Sichuan Liquor Culture: On one hand, accurate cultural translation can strengthen overseas recognition and identification of traditional Chinese culture, enhance cultural soft power, and promote civilizational integration. On the other hand, the cultural decoding function of translation can enhance overseas understanding of the value of Chinese Baijiu (represented by Sichuan Liquor), elevate its international status and market influence, facilitate the international marketing of the Baijiu industry, and boost international economic and trade cooperation.

## 2. Current Research Status of Publicity Translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture

The international communication of Sichuan Liquor Culture has attracted academic attention, as its development not only helps increase market share but also enhances cultural soft

power and global influence. As “cultural exchange relies on translation” (Guo, 1999), relevant research has emerged alongside the demand of Sichuan Liquor’s “going global” strategy, showing a situation where achievements and problems coexist.

In terms of research subjects, universities dominate (e.g., Yibin University, Sichuan University of Science and Engineering, Sichuan University, etc.), but inter-institutional communication is limited, research forces are scattered, and each focuses on their own specialized areas (Chen, 2017; Li & Liu, 2021).

In terms of author composition, most studies fall into the category of international cultural communication. Scholars specifically focusing on Sichuan Liquor translation are scarce, with few publications, weak influence, and a lack of core leaders.

In terms of distribution of research outputs, papers are concentrated in humanities and social science journals (e.g., Liquor-Making Science & Technology, Forum on Chinese Culture, etc.). Data from CNKI over the past five years shows that a total of 55 papers discuss Chinese liquor culture, 9 focus on Baijiu translation (emphasizing language and publicity), and only 6 on Sichuan Liquor translation.

In terms of the evolution of research hotspots, early studies focused on English translation techniques for cultural words and artistic conceptions (Tian & Fan, 2015). Later, they shifted to eco-translatology, exploring translators, texts, and cross-cultural communication (Tian, 2015). In recent years, relevance theory has been introduced to study paths to promote internationalization, such as improving translation quality and building multilingual platforms (Chen, 2019).

In summary, the research on publicity translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture still has deficiencies. In the future, it is necessary to deepen university-enterprise cooperation, increase investment, improve translation quality, broaden

perspectives, and encourage more professionals to participate in research and practice.

### 3. Problems in Publicity Translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture

Although Sichuan Liquor has significant advantages in craftsmanship, raw materials, and styles and leads the domestic market, its performance in the international market remains weak. According to the 2023–2028 Sichuan Baijiu Market Report, in 2021, Sichuan Liquor generated revenue of 284.97 billion yuan, but its export volume was less than 500 million yuan (accounting for only 0.0018% of total revenue). Moreover, exports mainly rely on consumption by overseas Chinese, with low recognition among international consumers. Insufficient publicity translation is identified as a key constraint (Tao, 2023).

A survey of official websites of mainstream Sichuan Liquor brands reveals significant disparities in the quality of publicity translation: the top-tier “Six Golden Flowers” (Wuliangye, Luzhou Laojiao, Shuijingfang) have the most complete content and accurate translations; second-tier brands like Tuopai and Langjiu have slightly inferior content; and even industry leader Jiannanchun has not established an English-language official website.

As the saying goes, “A good wine still fears a deep alley.” To enhance the international reputation of Sichuan Liquor, publicity translation must be integrated into strategic planning—combining quality standards, market dynamics, and consumer needs to continuously optimize translations on official websites. Through comparative research, this paper reveals the specific problems in current publicity translation.

#### 3.1 Confusion in Translated Names of Core Terms

The unique craftsmanship of Baijiu poses challenges of terminology standardization for publicity translation. As a representative of Chinese Baijiu, Sichuan Liquor faces a particularly prominent terminology issue. Taking the core term “Baijiu” as an example, Sichuan Liquor official websites surprisingly use four different translated names: Baijiu, liquor, spirits, and wine. Among these, liquor emphasizes the “smooth taste” characteristic (e.g., whisky), which does not match the quality of Sichuan Liquor; spirits is a general term for distilled spirits with an overly broad scope; and wine specifically refers to fruit wine, constituting an obvious mistranslation (Tao, 2023). Although the 2021 Import and Export Tariff clearly stipulates that the legal translated name for “Baijiu” is Chinese Baijiu, only the official websites of Luzhou Laojiao and Wuliangye adopt it, while most brands still fail to unify the name.

Translated names of other craft-related terms are similarly chaotic: “发酵池” (fermentation pit) is translated as cellar, pit, etc.; “浓香型白酒” (strong-aroma Baijiu) has versions such as Luzhou flavor and rich-fragrance flavor. Such translated names lack both accuracy and unified standards, urgently requiring enterprises to attach importance, organize translators to conduct in-depth research, and resolve terminology barriers one by one.

#### 3.2 Mistranslation of Culture-Loaded Words

The English introduction of Chinese liquor culture on Sichuan Liquor official websites is key to promoting its “going global,” but the quality of translations directly affects communication effectiveness. Ignoring cultural differences and blindly pursuing literal correspondence not only fails to achieve publicity goals but may also lead to cultural misunderstandings (Guo, 1999; Huang, 2004).

Taking the Jiannanchun official website’s translation of the proverb “姜还是老的辣，酒还是陈的香” (literally “Old ginger is spicier, aged liquor is more fragrant”) as an example, its rendering “Old ginger and aged liquor are the best” contains dual misinterpretations. First, there is a lack of cultural imagery: In Western dietary culture, the unique flavor value of old ginger is not widely recognized (while ginger is used in the West, the functional differences between young and old ginger are rarely distinguished), making the metaphor difficult to resonate. Second, there is conceptual confusion: “Aged liquor” generally refers to “vintage liquor” in Western contexts, but most distilled spirits (e.g., American whiskey) do not emphasize aging after bottling—instead, they only indicate the minimum storage time of the base spirit (e.g., “12 years”). In contrast, the “aging process” (陈酿) of Chinese Baijiu involves continuous microbial action in containers to enhance quality, which is fundamentally different. This translation fails to convey the cultural connotation of the original proverb and the characteristics of Baijiu, resulting in counterproductive communication effects.

Such issues are not isolated cases: “酒王” (King of Liquor) is mistranslated as “Wine King” (“wine” specifically refers to grape wine, which does not align with the category of Baijiu); “胡润百富” (a well-known wealth ranking list) is merely transliterated as “Hurun Baifu” without conveying its core information of “a renowned wealth ranking.” These mistranslations commonly suffer from word-for-word literal translation, neglect of cultural background and target context, lack of translation skills, and failure to convey the cultural values and brand messages behind the words.

#### 3.3 Systematic Irregularities in Practical Texts

The translation problems on Sichuan Liquor official websites are not limited to mistranslations of terms and culture-loaded words; they are more widespread in practical texts such as promotional copy, tasting notes, and column names. These issues are prominently characterized by inaccurate and inconsistent translations, or the neglect of artistic appeal and rigid language. The confusion in the brand name translation of Shui Jing Fang serves as a typical example: its main distillery website translates “水井坊” as SWELLFUN, while the official website of its museum uses the direct pinyin transliteration SHUIJINGFANG. The inconsistent translation of the core brand name by the same enterprise directly reflects an attitude of neglect towards publicity translation.

### 4. Strategies for Publicity Translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

#### 4.1 Analyzing Text Types of Sichuan Liquor and Dynamically Adjusting Publicity Translation Strategies

Diverse text types require flexible adaptation of translation strategies. Given the significant differences between Chinese and English languages and cultures, translation should pay attention to wording, word order, cultural backgrounds, and expression habits. Text typology theory provides a key framework for evaluating translation quality (Huang, 2004), and the two complement each other. Translation practice should avoid rigid standards, maintain openness and communicative essence, and thereby optimize communication effects. Sichuan Liquor has a profound cultural heritage, and its publicity texts mainly fall into three categories, requiring targeted strategies:

**Table 1:** Text Types of Sichuan Liquor and Their Translation Strategies

| Text Type  | Core Objective  | Translation Strategy   |
|--|---|--|
| Brochures/Advertising Slogans (Expressive Texts) | To evoke emotional resonance and willingness to act among the audience. | Cultural Adaptation—Adapting to target language culture and audience psychology. |
| Craft Guide Manuals (Informative Texts)          | To accurately convey instructive/conceptual information.                | Conceptual Explication—Ensuring unambiguous information.                         |
| Poetic Texts (Appellative Texts)                 | To reproduce the aesthetic and artistic qualities of the original text. | Functional Equivalence—Following the original author's perspective and emotion.  |

##### 4.1.1 Brochures/Advertising Slogans (Expressive Texts)

Such texts need to balance creativity, faithfulness, and rhythmic beauty (Tao, 2023). Translators should integrate the target language cultural background and audience acceptance to convey the creative thinking, cultural connotations, and brand value of the advertisement (Zhang & Zhao, 2009).

Case: Tuopai Shede advertising slogan “智慧人生，品味舍得” (Wisdom of Life, Taste the Philosophy of “Shede”).

Translation: “No pains, no gains. The wisdom of life.”

The translator adopted the “Cultural Adaptation” strategy, using the English proverb “No pains, no gains” (which means “一份耕耘，一分收获”—“no effort, no reward”) to connect with the Chinese philosophical connotation of “舍得” (the dialectical idea of “letting go to gain”). By adjusting the word order to align with the English “effect-first, cause-second” thinking pattern, the translation retains the original meaning while evoking resonance. This effectively serves the brand's international communication.

##### 4.1.2 Craft Guide Manuals (Informative Texts)

The core principle of translating informative texts (such as publicity information about Sichuan Liquor) is to ensure the authenticity of information, requiring the translation to accurately convey the original content. At the same time, the translator must take into account the target audience's comprehension and acceptance, which means they should not mechanically copy the original text but instead adopt the conceptual explication strategy, flexibly using amplification and omission for adaptive adjustments: First, amplification —

supplementing necessary explanations or clarifications for concepts or backgrounds in the original text that may cause comprehension obstacles for target readers. Second, omission — deleting or simplifying redundant or distracting secondary information for the target audience (Nord, 2001).

Case 1: Description of the impact of sorghum components on Baijiu quality in Luzhou Laojiao's craft guide manual

Original Text: “高粱原料中脂肪含量需 $\leq 4\%$ ，单宁含量宜控制在0.5%-1.5%区间，此成分比例有利于提升白酒品质。脂肪与单宁比例约为2.5:1，且单宁含量相对较高时，更利于酿造优质白酒。”

Translation: “Lower fat content ( $\leq 4\%$ ) and certain tannin content (0.5%-1.5%) are good for improving the Baijiu quality. The ratio of fat to tannin is roughly 2.5:1, and relatively high content is conducive to good-quality Baijiu.”

The translator adopted the explication strategy, adding “lower” and “certain” (amplification)—this treatment is reasonable and necessary. Target readers may not understand the impact of the proportion (high or low) of “fat content” and “tannin content” on Baijiu quality, and this supplementation effectively enhances information transparency and awareness of component proportions. However, the translator also adopted the explication strategy by omitting “sorghum raw material” and “tannin” (omission)—this treatment is debatable: target readers may find it difficult to identify Luzhou Laojiao's key raw material and the components affecting Baijiu quality, and retaining this information (“sorghum grain” and “tannin”) could more fully convey the impact of sorghum components on Baijiu quality.

For additions and deletions in informative texts, the ultimate goal must be to maximize the target audience's clear understanding of key information and perception of its value, avoiding the loss of core value due to excessive simplification.

##### 4.1.3 Poetic Texts (Appellative Texts)

Appellative Texts (Vocative Text) in the publicity of Sichuan Liquor mainly refer to public promotional materials aimed at shaping brand image, conveying craft value, and cultural connotations. Their core function is to stimulate the audience's willingness to purchase and prompt action. Guided by Skopos Theory, translators should adopt the functional equivalence strategy, prioritizing the target audience's comprehension and acceptance to ensure the translation effectively achieves the original communicative intent. Such texts primarily include tasting notes and cultural background slogans (Liu, 2021).

Case 1: From Du Fu's poem Three Poems Playfully Addressed to Prince Han Zhong, the line “蜀酒浓无敌，江鱼美可求” (Shu liquor is unrivaled in richness; river fish are delicious and attainable) highly praises the excellence of Sichuan liquor and cuisine. If the character “浓” (rich) were literally translated as “high alcohol content,” combined with the historical fact that high-proof Baijiu originated in the Yuan Dynasty, it could easily cause historical

misunderstanding. Thus, translating it as “Sichuan Spirit are unmatched in flavor” is better—it precisely conveys the core artistic conception of “unparalleled aroma” and avoids literal misguidance.

Case 2: Tasting notes for Jiannanchun Baijiu: “芳香浓郁、纯正典雅” (Aromatic and rich, pure and elegant).

Original Text: “芳香浓郁、纯正典雅”

Translation: strongly fragrant pure and elegant

“Aromatic and rich” highlights the strong olfactory characteristics of Sichuan Liquor (especially strong-aroma Baijiu). “Pure and elegant” emphasizes the purity and harmony of the taste experience (the smoothness derived from mature craftsmanship). This translation has three flaws: First, semantic contradiction: “strongly” (intense) conflicts with “elegant” (harmonious) in sensory description (intensity is often associated with “abruptness,” undermining the elegant artistic conception). Second, information loss: It fails to convey the core connection between “pure” (mature craftsmanship) and “elegant” (smooth taste). Third, functional failure: The contradictory expression confuses readers and weakens the original communicative purpose of arousing purchase desire.

Translating appellative texts is by no means literal correspondence; it must reconstruct language based on Skopos Theory principles, accurately restoring sensory experiences and brand value in the target context to effectively drive consumer behavior.

#### 4.2 Aligning with Cutting-Edge Technical Standards and Unifying the Translation of Professional Baijiu Terminology

In recent years, the standardization of Baijiu terminology translation has received attention: internal consistency within individual journals has improved and errors have decreased. However, cross-journal unification still requires collaborative mechanisms to promote the integration of global discourse. As Sichuan Liquor takes Baijiu as its core category, the key to its internationalization lies in constructing a globally shared discourse system, which demands precise and unified terminology norms to eliminate communication barriers.

Previously, the Terminology of Baijiu Industry (GB/T 15109-2008) lacked sufficient authority, and terminology translations in three major domestic brewing journals still largely deviated from the national standard. This standard contained controversial translations: e.g., “排轮” (pailun, batch rotation) was translated as “cycle” (failing to reflect the “batch rotation” craft); “黄水” (huangshui, fermentation liquid) as “huang shui fluid” (a redundant literal translation that loses the characteristics of fermentation liquid); “蒸馏釜” (distillation kettle) as “still” (a general term for distillation apparatus without distinguishing the equipment); and “固态法白酒” (solid-state Baijiu) as “traditional fermentation” (vague and general, losing the core “solid-state” aspect). These made it difficult to accurately convey the connotation of terms and prone to semantic misleading.

The 2021 GB/T 15109—2021 Terminology of Baijiu Industry systematically revised core terminology and was accompanied by related standards. Take “大曲” (daqu, large koji) as an example: the 2008 version translated it as “daqu starter” (positioned as a saccharifying and fermenting agent), while the 2021 version revised it to “daqu” (removing “starter”). This adjustment was made because Chinese Baijiu uses compound microbial “酒曲” (jiuqu, koji) as the core fermentation medium (distinguished from the single yeast in foreign liquors), and the new version strengthens the identifiability of Chinese characteristic craft through independent naming.

However, after the revision of the standard, Sichuan Liquor’s external publicity still widely uses old translations (e.g., “daqu starter”), and the lag in terminology related to “qu” (koji) is prominent (the 2021 version has adjusted the translations of 14 types of jiuqu, such as “高温曲→high-temperature qu” and “中温曲→medium-temperature qu”). Therefore, enterprises need to comprehensively update their external publicity texts in accordance with the new standard to avoid communication distortion.

#### 4.3 Studying and Translating Cultural Keywords to Disseminate the Brand Value of Sichuan Liquor

Cultural keywords are core symbols for decoding national culture, and there are often no exact equivalents in the target language. Applying ordinary translation strategies may easily lead to “explanation dislocation” and “explanation deficit” (Guo, 1999). To address this, the “Research-Translation Method” can be adopted, which involves dual operations: “translation” (fixing the name through transliteration/literal translation) and “annotation” (building a cognitive framework via precise notes).

In the dissemination of Sichuan Liquor culture, keywords must carry historical context, quality characteristics, and innovative genes. Take “qu” (koji) and aroma-type terms as examples:

Translation of “Qu”: Traditional translations (e.g., “Starter,” “Koji”) either weaken the core of the craft (“Starter” merely refers to a fermenting agent) or confuse Sino-Japanese differences (“Koji” specifically denotes Japanese rice koji). The optimized Research-Translation approach uses the transliteration “qu” with an annotation: “Qu, a fermented grain culture unique to Chinese Baijiu, serves as the core saccharifying and fermenting agent driving flavor development.”

Translation of Aroma-Type Terms: Traditional translations (e.g., “Luzhou-flavor liquor,” “Maotai-flavor liquor”) use liquor names to represent aroma types, blurring craft characteristics. The optimized Research-Translation approach supplements the translated names with annotations of taste features, such as “Luzhou-flavor liquor, noted for intense floral aroma and mellow sweetness” and “Maotai-flavor liquor, characterized by savory umami notes and silky texture.”

The accuracy of translating cultural keywords determines the depth of cultural value dissemination. It is essential to

systematically apply the “Research-Translation Method” to achieve the global transmission of the essence of Sichuan Liquor culture.

## 5. Pathways to Enhance Publicity Translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

### 5.1 Optimizing the Construction of External Publicity Websites for Sichuan Liquor Enterprises

Against the backdrop of the deep integration of the digital economy and globalization, online platforms have become the core arena for corporate marketing, with their communication effectiveness increasingly prominent. For Sichuan Liquor enterprises, building English/multilingual official websites that meet international standards is not only a key strategy for expanding overseas markets but also a necessary path for global brand layout.

Surveys show significant disparities in the construction of external publicity websites among current Sichuan Liquor enterprises: Luzhou Laojiao and Wuliangye have established multi-dimensional English official websites (covering products, craftsmanship, and culture), while Tuopai Shede and Jiannanchun only maintain basic information pages. This lag directly impacts international communication effectiveness, leading to low overseas user reach and insufficient brand awareness, thereby constraining market expansion.

Optimization needs to advance from three aspects: Address infrastructure gaps: Leading liquor enterprises should complete the standardized construction of independent English official websites, while small and medium-sized enterprises can jointly build multilingual platforms through industry alliances to share translation resources and traffic entry points. Deepen content adaptation: Design information hierarchically based on the needs of overseas consumers, dynamically optimize presentation formats such as image-text ratios and video durations, and enhance information reach efficiency. Strengthen ecological linkage: Connect official websites with overseas social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) and e-commerce platforms (e.g., TikTok Shop) via data interfaces, building a closed loop of “content traffic generation—user interaction—data feedback” to promote the transition from one-way communication to two-way value co-creation.

In summary, the construction of external publicity websites has transcended the basic function of “information display” and become the core carrier for cross-border brand value transmission of Sichuan Liquor. Systematic optimization will help Sichuan Liquor break through geographical boundaries and achieve a strategic leap from “regional famous liquor” to “global brand.”

### 5.2 Building a “Three-Instructor Collaborative System” for Sichuan Liquor Translation Teams

The core contradiction in the current publicity translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture is the scarcity of professional translators, especially a shortage of high-caliber talent.

Against the backdrop of the Belt and Road Initiative promoting cultural export, forming specialized translation teams has become a strategic necessity. Such teams must transcend the traditional role of “language converters” and transform into intermediaries for cultural translation, requiring translators to possess threefold competencies: bilingual conversion ability, cross-cultural interpretation ability, and a sense of mission for cultural dissemination.

The essence of translating Sichuan Liquor Culture lies in cross-cultural meaning reproduction rather than superficial symbol substitution. Its core task is to achieve the cultural vitality transplantation of Sichuan Liquor’s cultural genes into the target language, facilitate a deep dialogue between Chinese brewing wisdom and the international liquor discourse system, and construct a dynamic balance between the “readability of Sichuan Liquor Culture” and the “acceptance of international audiences” (Tian, 2025).

To realize this transformation, Sichuan Liquor enterprises can collaborate with universities to establish translation micro-majors, with course modules covering brewing technology, intercultural communication, and terminology management, innovating talent cultivation mechanisms. They can also reference the “immersive cellar translation workshop” of the Wuliangye-Sichuan International Studies University Joint Laboratory to create industry-academia-research training bases. 2023 Google Analytics data shows that after Luzhou Laojiao’s International Communication Department adopted the “Three-Instructor Collaborative System,” the mistranslation rate of culture-loaded words on its English official website decreased by 62%, and overseas user dwell time increased by 3.2 times.

Sichuan Liquor translation teams can adopt a “Three-Instructor Collaborative System” model: Brewing Technology Mentor: Proficient in food engineering and traditional brewing techniques, responsible for calibrating technical concepts. Cultural Translation Specialist: Equipped with comparative culturology and semiotics communication theories, tasked with recreating cultural imagery. Terminology Management Engineer: Mastering computational linguistics database technology, in charge of maintaining multilingual terminology databases (Zhou, 2024). Through triangular collaboration among “brewing experts + cultural scholars + professional translators,” this system ultimately enables a qualitative transformation of Sichuan Liquor Culture from “translation going global” to “value being embraced.”

## 6. Conclusion

Sichuan Liquor Culture is an important part of traditional Chinese culture, conveying the emotional memories of the people of Sichuan in diverse forms and with a profound heritage, and showcasing the charm of national culture. Against the backdrop of the deepening implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, its “going global” has ushered in a historic opportunity. Skopos Theory provides guidance for publicity translation: translators need to faithfully convey information, with the needs of overseas consumers at the core, and accurately translate the brand’s connotation to stimulate interest and disseminate cultural values. Promoting the “going

global” of Sichuan Liquor products and brands, conducting effective international communication, and creating cultural symbols are the strategic goals of Sichuan Liquor enterprises and also the important responsibilities of translators.

However, currently, the publicity translation of Sichuan Liquor Culture has long been marginalized in cultural communication, facing challenges such as confusion in translated names of core terms, mistranslations of culture-loaded words, and systematic irregularities in practical texts. This paper proposes to construct a translation model of “text type + terminology standardization + cultural adaptation,” optimize the construction of enterprises’ external publicity websites, build “three-instructor collaborative system” translation teams, and open up new pathways for its international communication.

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