

# A Review of Foreign Publicity Translation Research on Chinese Brand Names in the Past Decade

Yifan Yang\*

School of Foreign Languages, Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University, Laibin, China  
\*Corresponding author: yangyifan@gxstnu.edu.cn

**Abstract:** With the high-quality development of “One Belt, One Road” in China, the trade activities of countries along the route have been deepened. In this context, many domestic enterprises choose to “go global”, and qualified brand translations play an extremely important role in developing overseas markets. At present, the naming of brand name has received wide attention, but the research on the foreign translation of the brand name has not been paid enough attention. Taking 145 articles about brand foreign publicity translation published on China Knowledge Network in the past ten years from 2013 to 2022 as the statistical source, the author makes statistical analysis on the research situation, research focus, research difficulties of brand name translation, and put forward suggestions such as increasing the collation and summarization of source language text, increasing quantitative research, serving the development of “brand” which provide some theoretical reference for foreign publicity translation of domestic brand.

**Keywords:** Foreign translation; Chinese Brand

## 1. Introduction

With the development of China’s “One Belt, One Road” construction, China’s brand influence is growing day by day, and Chinese enterprises are constantly revitalized in cross-border integration. In order to increase the global market share, many “national products” choose to go abroad to expand their brand influence. Brand name is the list of brands for customers to call. High-quality and readable translations play an important role in developing overseas markets and stimulating consumers' desire to buy. Since there are different degrees of cultural differences, historical development differences, social ideological differences, etc. between each country, the English translation of the names of national products must adopt a flexible approach (Lu Bo, 2020).<sup>[1]</sup> Brand name foreign publicity refers to introducing Chinese brands to other countries through translation so that more foreigners can understand Chinese products, which is of positive significance to enhance the national cultural soft power and national image, as well as to the development of our enterprises themselves. Based on this, the author makes a statistical analysis of the research on brand name foreign publicity translation in the past ten years from 2013 to 2022 on China Knowledge Network and proposes relevant countermeasures so as to provide a favorable reference for the subsequent research.

## 2. Research on Brand Foreign Publicity Translation

At present, China has a rich variety of brands, which provides a rich corpus for brand translation research. In China National Knowledge Infrastructure(CNKI), the author searched the keywords “brand name” in CNKI for the past ten years from 2013 to 2022, and obtained 3604 related papers. This indicates that domestic scholars have paid more attention to brand names in recent years, and the results are quite fruitful. However, searching with “brand name translation” as the keyword, only 34 master's theses, 0 doctoral theses, 2 conference papers and 78 journal papers were obtained.

Compared with the huge number of researches on brand name, the researches on translation of brand names started late, the number is small. Most of the journals published are mainly provincial journals, and the proportion of core journals is small. The author uses 145 papers queried above as statistical samples for in-depth analysis, and the results are as follows.

### 2.1. The Continuously Growing Hotness of Brand Name Translation

The brand name translation enthusiasm shows a continuous growth trend. The number of papers published on brand name translation has shown a stable and continuous growth trend in the past decade (Figure 1). From 2013 to 2019, the average annual number of articles published in the study of brand name translation was more than 15. From 2020 to 2022, the number of articles published has a decreasing trend, but it's because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on import and export trade. So it can be concluded that the period of 2013-2022 is a more mature stage of brand name translation. The reason for this is related to the national policy of building the “New Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”, which has promoted frequent cultural exchanges and communication between countries and regions, prompting experts and scholars to study brand name translation, making brand name translation a major research focus in the academic field. Any text or figures outside the aforementioned margins will not be printed.

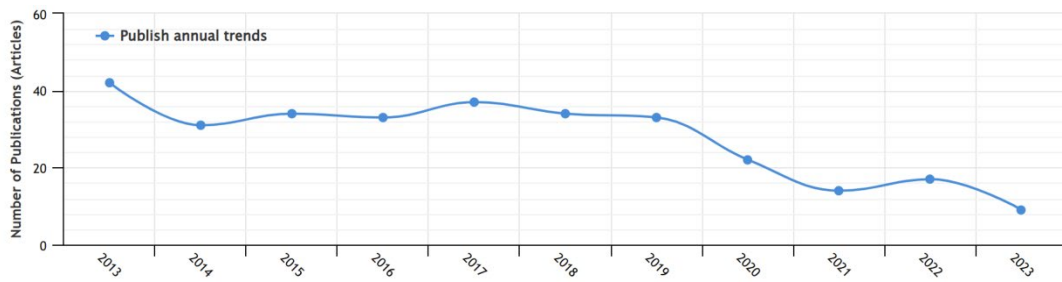


Figure 1 General trend analysis

### 2.2. The Continuously Growing Research on Brand Translation Based on Project

The number of project-based research on the topic (Figure 2) has been increasing. A statistical analysis of the 145 papers mentioned above revealed that 18 papers were supported by relevant funds, accounting for 6% of the total number of papers issued. The NSSF support appeared for the first time in 2015. Overall, as shown in Figure 2, a total of 11 provincial and municipal level projects were established, accounting for 61% of the total number of projects. This is much higher than the national and Ministry of Education projects, but the level and quality of the projects are lower.

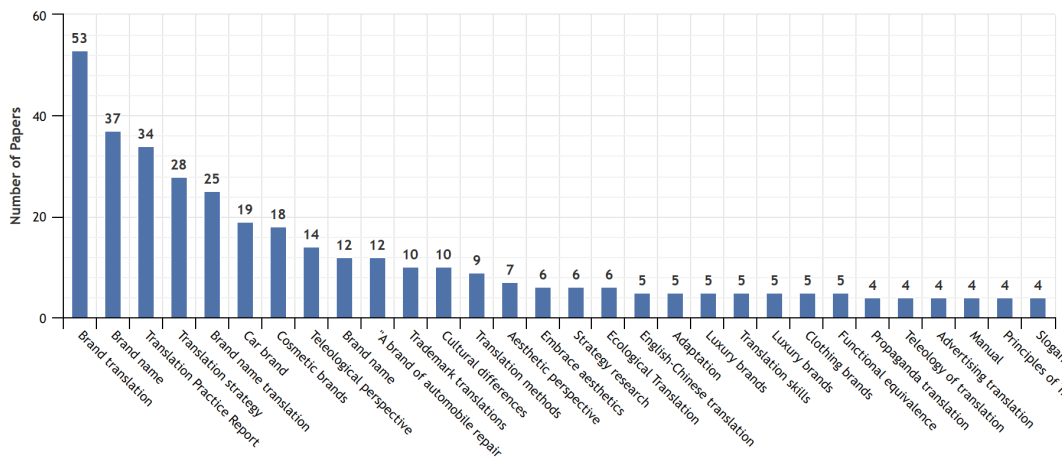


Figure 2 The number of project-based research on the topic

### 2.3. The Continuously Growing Research on Brand Translation Based on Project

The combination of qualitative and quantitative research is an important principle of social science research. In the literature on brand foreign publicity translation research in the past decade, it can be found that “qualitative” research is more common than “quantitative” research. For example, Zhu Jianing and Gao Yan (2022) studied the English translation of Chinese brands in the context of internationalization, taking into account the connotation and characteristics of the brands themselves, and analyzed the successful cases of translation of major well-known brands. Lu Yuntao (2022), in his paper “Brand name translation based on correlation theory and psychological distance”, explores the principles

of brand translation and the psychological mechanism of brand name acceptance from the perspective of Relevance Theory, proposes to translate brand names in a way that achieves the best correlation in phonology, semantics and morphology, and achieves the best correlation through appropriate brand name translation to minimize the psychological distance from brand. In addition, most of the other literature also adopts qualitative research methods to translate brand publicity translation with the help of relevant translation theories or conduct translation case studies on brand publicity translation text.

#### 2.4. The Continuously Growing Research on Brand Translation Based on Project

Lasswell proposed the five elements of communication, namely, the subject of communication (who), the object of communication (what), the channel of communication (in which channel), the object of communication (to whom), and the effect of communication (with what), in which the effect of communication is to test the success of communication. The communication effect is the litmus test for the success of communication. In essence, brand outreach translation is the external communication of corporate culture. Therefore, the acceptance of brand translation by target audiences should also be included in the study. Looking at the research results in this decade, we can see that there is still a gap in the research on the effectiveness of brand translation and the acceptance of the target audience. The translation strategies and translation principles analyzed by researchers have not been tested by the target audiences, and their validity is still worthy of speculation and questioning.

### 3. Perspectives and Difficulties of Previous Research

#### 3.1. Perspectives of Previous Research

As can be seen from Table 1, Skopos theory has been a popular research perspective for brand name translation from 2013 to 2022. For example, Yan, Chunjing & Huang Zuoja (2022) studied the translation of cross-border e-commerce product titles from the perspective of Skopos theory, pointed out the problems in the translation of cross-border e-commerce product titles, and proposed corresponding translation strategies.<sup>[2]</sup>

Table 1: Research perspectives and number of papers in the past 10 years

Year	Research perspectives and number of papers
2013	Skopos Theory (3); Adaptation Theory (3); Functional Equivalence Theory (1)
2014	Skopos Theory (2); Eco-translatology (2); Functional Equivalence Theory (2); Association Theory Perspective (1);
2015	Correspondence Theory (2); Cross-cultural Perspective (2); Functional Equivalence Theory (2); Adaptation Theory (2); Skopos Theory (1);
2016	Reception Aesthetics (2); Cultural Perspective (2); Eco-translatology (1);
2017	Cultural Capital Theory (1); International perspective (1);
2018	Skopos Theory (2); Functional Equivalence Theory (1); Cultural Schema Theory(1); Adaptation Theory (1); Reception Aesthetics (1);
2019	Skopos Theory (2); Reception Aesthetics (1); Aesthetics of Translation (1); Skopos Theory (1); Communication Perspective (1);
2020	Eco-translatology (2); Skopos Theory (1); Functional Equivalence Theory (1); Cross-cultural Perspective (1);
2021	Skopos Theory (2); Functional Equivalence Theory(1);
2022	Skopos Theory (3)

In addition, functional equivalence theory is also a popular research perspective on brand name translation. For example, Xiang Rong (2019) analyzed and studied the problems in the English translation of enterprise websites in Huangshi region from the perspective of functional equivalence theory and put forward the corresponding strategies.<sup>[3]</sup>

In addition to Skopos theory and functional equivalence theory, there are also researches from other perspectives, such as Adaptation Theory, Reception Aesthetics Theory and cross-cultural perspective. For example, Zhang Ling (2018) studied the English translation of domestic clothing brand names from the perspective of Adaptation Theory.<sup>[4]</sup> Wang Wei (2020) studied the English translation of Chinese export brand advertisements from the perspective of eco-translatology and proposed that under the perspective of eco-translatology, the translators of advertisements should pay attention to the in-depth understanding of language differences, cultural traditions, values and communication styles of each

country, fully consider the acceptance effect of the translations in the foreign cultural ecology, and make adaptive choices for the translation of advertisements in the linguistic, cultural and communicative dimensions.<sup>[5]</sup> Generally speaking, the research on the translation of “brand names” is still mainly based on experience summaries and skill discussions, and there is a lack of translation theories or interdisciplinary theories to guide the research results.

### ***3.2. Difficulties and Countermeasures of Brand Foreign Publicity Translation Research***

Some scholars take the difficulty of “brand translation” as a breakthrough point in their research and propose some translation strategies accordingly. For example, Yue Hong (2023) based on the concept of communication, analyzed and sorted out the current problems in the translation of Chinese herbal medicine in Longxi County from the perspective of the professionalism and accuracy of the subject and cross-cultural communication, and put forward the corresponding solutions.<sup>[6]</sup> Wang Baochuan (2017) analyzed the purpose and current situation of tea brand foreign promotion translation and proposed the relevant strategies of tea brand translation: 1) flexible use of translation methods; 2) focus on learning the background knowledge of tea culture; 3) pay attention to the acceptance and understanding of readers.<sup>[7]</sup>

### ***3.3. Research with Unique Local Characteristics***

Looking at the research literature in the past ten years, it is found that most of the research on “brand” translation is aimed at serving local “economic development”. Most of the researchers take the translation of local “brand names” as the research object, write a survey report on the translation of “brand names”, propose “retranslation” for the translation of “brand names”, project names and introduction texts, or try to translate “brand name” that currently have no uniform translation. According to the statistics, the universities in the Pearl River Delta and Yangtze River Delta regions are in the leading position in terms of the number of articles published and the results are fruitful, which is closely related to the rapid development of foreign trade exports in these regions in recent years.

## **4. Countermeasures for Brand Translation**

### ***4.1. Increasing the Collation and Summarization of Source Language Text***

There are various kinds of brands in China, some of which reflect the local humanities, history and customs, and some of which carry the cultural accumulation of enterprises. The Chinese name text of these brands is the source language and the carrier of foreign translation, but there is a lack of systematic text collation. Therefore, increasing the collation and summarization of the source language brand name text is the first step in brand name translation, and it is also one of the focal points that the government and academia should pay attention to.

### ***4.2. Increasing Quantitative Research***

Translation research cannot be separated from the guidance of theory. The study of foreign translation is a combination of translation and communication. In addition to translation theory, the study of “brand name” foreign publicity translation can also be done from the perspective of communication science, rhetoric, cross-cultural communication and other disciplines, not only to study how to translate “brand name” items well, but also to pay attention to the cross-cultural communication of “brand name” translations, and to take into account the acceptance of the translations in the target language readers. At the same time, the quantitative research on the translation of “brand names” should be increased and a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze the translation and dissemination of “brand names” with the help of “corpus” should be adopted. Besides, through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the translation and communication of “brand names” can be analyzed with the help of “corpus” to improve the validity of the research.

### ***4.3. Serving the Development of “Brand”***

The ultimate goal of the research on the foreign translation of “brand names” is to serve the development of “brand”. Therefore, it is better to “detail” the research object of the foreign translation study of “brand names”, to locate the local “brand” project, and to adopt the way of field research and

examination to understand the cultural connotation of “brand names”. The researcher can also make the findings of the study more detailed. At the same time, the researcher can provide the research findings to the local “brand” enterprises as a theoretical basis and reference for the international communication of the “brand”.

## 5. Conclusion

The foreign translation of brand names is an important way for China's product to go out, and an important element to enhance the country's economic strength. The author takes the papers on the translation of brand names published on China Knowledge Network in the past ten years from 2013 to 2022 as a statistical source, and discusses the current situation, research focus and difficulties of the translation of brand names. It is easy to find that there are a series of problems in the translation of brand names. In the context of the strategy of “going abroad” of Chinese culture, the research on the translation of “brand names” should not stop at fragmentary experience, but be conducted with the help of corpus and other research tools. Rather, it is necessary to build a good bridge for foreign communication and integration of “brand names” with the help of research tools such as corpus and in the context of translation theory and interdisciplinary research, so that Chinese “brand names” can really “go out” and “make their own voice” in the diversified world cultural stage.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported in part by the Guangxi Border Ethnic Culture Translation and Communication Research Program of China (Grant No. GXKSKYPT2021003) and Scientific and Technological Funds for Young Scientists of Guangxi Science & Technology Normal University (Grant No. GXKS2021QN007).

## References

- [1] Zhu Jianing, & Gao, Yan. *A Study on the translation of Chinese brand names in the context of internationalization*[J]. *Overseas English*, 2022, (07),49-50.
- [2] Lu Yuntao. *Brand name translation based on relevance theory and psychological distance*[D]. Shanghai: Shanghai international studies university, 2020.
- [3] Yan Chunjing. & Huang, Roujia. *A study on the translation of cross-border e-commerce commodity titles from the perspective of Skopos Theory*[J]. *Foreign Trade and Economics*, 2022, (08),123-126.
- [4] Zhang Ling. *Under the perspective of adaptation of domestic clothing brand name translation studies*[D]. Beijing: Central China normal university, 2018.
- [5] Wang Wei. *Strategies for the English translation of Chinese export brand Advertisements from the perspective of ecological transliteration*[J]. *Journal of Hefei University of Technology (Social Sciences Edition)*, 2020,82-87.
- [6] Yue Hong. *Strategy research on external publicity translation of Chinese medicinal materials in Longxi County from the perspective of brand communication*[J]. *Gansu Agriculture*, 2023, (04),62-67.
- [7] Wang Baochuan. *Research on the translation strategy of tea brand publicity*[J]. *Fujian Tea*, 2017. (01),50-51.