

# Barriers to Cross-Cultural Dissemination of the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Intangible Heritage Terminology in the Global Context

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to identify multi-layer obstacles hindering the global communication of the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi intangible heritage terminology. Adopting literature review and textual comparison under Skopos, Cultural Default and Cultural Schema Theories, this study summarizes four interrelated dissemination barriers: linguistic non-equivalence, vacant cultural schemata among overseas audiences, missing unified translation standards and biased global media. Targeted classification translation and multimodal communication strategies are proposed to reduce cross-cultural misunderstandings. As a theoretical qualitative analysis without empirical data, this paper constructs a dedicated analytical framework and enriches cross-cultural communication research on Chinese ethnic cultural terminology.

**Keywords:** intangible heritage terminology, cross-cultural dissemination, the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Corridor, cultural default, translation barrier

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Global cultural exchange has entered a multidimensional dialogue era, and the “Chinese Culture Going Global” initiative puts forward higher requirements for standardized, readable translations of ethnic cultural symbols. As a vital multi-ethnic cultural convergence zone in western China, the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Corridor boasts abundant intangible cultural heritage such as Qiang embroidery, Yi Bimo culture and Tibetan Thangka, whose specialized cultural terms lack direct English lexical equivalents. In cross-border publicity, inconsistent transliteration and literal translation versions frequently appear in tourism brochures, academic papers and exhibition materials. Literal translation without cultural annotations distorts ritual and folk connotations and undermines cross-cultural communication efficiency. Although UNESCO has built a global glossary for intangible cultural heritage, it excludes China’s distinctive plateau ethnic terms.

### 1.2 Research Significance

Theoretically, this study builds a four-dimensional barrier framework and expands the application scope of Cultural Schema Theory in ethnic translation studies. Practically, its classified translation strategies offer references for translators and cultural institutions, supporting the compilation of unified bilingual terminology glossaries to eliminate confusion caused by inconsistent term renderings.

### 1.3 Literature Review

#### 1.3.1 Overseas research

Smith and Akagawa constructed global intangible cultural heritage (ICH) terminology management frameworks[1]. Western scholars put forward annotation and transliteration compensation to resolve lexical and cultural gaps. However, few overseas studies target Chinese Tibetan, Qiang and Yi heritage terms, staying at general East Asian communication analysis.

#### 1.3.2 Domestic research

Domestic ethnic intangible heritage translation research mainly adopts eco-translatology and functional equivalence as analytical frameworks. Tang collected Tibetan and Qiang heritage vocabularies from Aba Prefecture through fieldwork and summarized localized translation dilemmas of plateau ethnic cultural terms[2]. Taking Yi cultural projects in Chuxiong as research samples, Xia analyzed how eco-translatology adapts to minority cultural text translation[3]. Zeng interpreted the formation and transformation rules of Tibetan heritage concepts based on local ethnic writing systems, offering targeted regional theoretical support[4]. Most existing studies merely focus on textual translation strategies while ignoring the complete cross-cultural dissemination chain of heritage terminology.

Current research separates translation and communication analysis and neglects multi-dimensional barriers, forming an obvious research gap worthy of in-depth discussion.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Definition of Core Concepts**

the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi Corridor intangible cultural heritage terminology refers to culture-specific naming systems covering local ethnic crafts, rituals and religious belief symbols. Cross-cultural dissemination of terminology describes the whole process of transmitting ethnic cultural concepts to English-speaking audiences, while cross-cultural dissemination barriers denote all factors triggering cultural information loss and misunderstanding in cross-linguistic exchange.

### **2.2 Supporting Theoretical Basis**

Skopos Theory clarifies that translation purpose governs all translation decision-making, which can guide targeted translation oriented to overseas recognition[5]. Cultural Default Theory explains cognitive gaps caused by missing ethnic folk experience among Western readers[6]. Cultural Schema Theory further illustrates that lacking matching cultural frameworks reduces foreign audiences' comprehension of unique Tibetan, Qiang and Yi heritage terms. The three theories jointly lay a theoretical foundation for analyzing linguistic, cognitive and institutional barriers of ethnic heritage terminology dissemination in the subsequent chapters.

## **3. Multi-dimensional Barriers to Cross-Cultural Dissemination**

Four interlocking layers of dissemination barriers restrict the global circulation of the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi heritage terminology, covering linguistic, cognitive, institutional and external communication dimensions respectively.

### **3.1 Linguistic Barriers at Text Level**

English lacks equivalent vocabulary for unique ethnic rituals and crafts such as Bimo and Qiang water worship. Simplified free translation abandons religious and folk connotations, causing incomplete cultural transmission. In addition, no unified translation norms exist for corridor heritage terms. Versions like multiple renderings of Reba Dance confuse overseas readers and prevent stable cultural symbol recognition. Pure literal translation further strips symbolic meanings; a literal "Qiang stone house" only describes architecture while ignoring its totem and disaster-prevention culture.

### **3.2 Cognitive Cultural Barriers at Audience Level**

Western cognitive systems lack matching schemata for Yi shamanism, Qiang mountain worship and Tibetan folk Buddhism. Foreign readers cannot form complete associations when encountering relevant terms, leading to fragmented comprehension. Divergent value standards also make Western audiences label ethnic rituals as mysterious folklore and overlook their ecological and educational functions. Most translations only retain craft information and discard spiritual symbols, weakening cultural appeal.

### **3.3 Institutional and Standardization Barriers**

No official standardized glossary has been issued for regional heritage terms. Translators rely on scattered papers without unified transliteration and annotation rules, sustaining long-term translation chaos. Meanwhile, UNESCO's global term bank only covers universal concepts and excludes China's plateau ethnic items, disconnecting local ethnic discourse from international heritage expression systems.

### **3.4 External Barriers of Global Communication Carriers**

Current dissemination overly relies on printed texts without multimodal auxiliary explanations. Stable international release channels are scarce, and Western mainstream media tend to exoticize minority culture, deliberately amplifying mysterious ritual elements and distorting the original connotation of translated terms.

## **4. Theoretical Strategies to Mitigate Cross-Cultural Dissemination Barriers**

### **4.1 Standardized Classification Translation for Heritage Terminology**

Three targeted translation modes are designed for different types of terms. Core belief-related words use transliteration plus cultural annotations to fill Western readers' cognitive gaps. Ethnic craft terms adopt transliteration plus general category nouns for quick identification. Folk activity words apply concise free translation with brief folk background supplements. This classified model balances cultural fidelity and overseas readability, solving lexical non-equivalence and confusing renderings. Meanwhile, cultural institutions should compile a unified bilingual glossary aligned with UNESCO's global terminology standards to fix the lack of uniform translation norms.

## 4.2 Optimized Multimodal Cross-Cultural Dissemination Path

Conceptual interpretation transformation and diversified multimodal channels are designed to eliminate cognitive deficits and biased external communication barriers. Translators need to shift from single text conversion to concept-oriented interpretation, attaching standardized explanatory notes to convey both material craft and spiritual symbolic meanings. In terms of communication carriers, break reliance on printed materials and match translated terms with online exhibitions, bilingual documentaries and academic forums. Diversified channels can weaken Western media's exoticizing bias and build sustained international transmission routes for regional ethnic cultural terms.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on theoretical deduction and textual comparison, this paper identifies four interrelated barriers hindering the overseas communication of the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi intangible heritage terms: linguistic non-equivalence, vacant cultural schemata, missing unified translation standards and biased global media. Cognitive blank instead of linguistic differences constitutes the core obstacle. Drawing on Skopos Theory, Cultural Default Theory and Cultural Schema Theory, this study proposes classified translation rules, standardized glossary construction and multimodal communication schemes to ease cross-cultural misunderstanding. Distinct from prior single-ethnic translation studies, this paper constructs an integrated four-dimensional barrier system exclusive to the Tibetan-Qiang-Yi cross-ethnic terminology, which marks its core theoretical innovation. Restricted to theoretical analysis without audience surveys, this research leaves room for follow-up empirical verification and complete bilingual glossary compilation.

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