



Constructing a Discourse System for the English Translation of Jiangxi Red Culture and Its Integration into College English Teaching

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Abstract: The international dissemination of Jiangxi red culture faces several persistent problems, including inconsistent terminology, inadequate cross-cultural adaptation of narratives, and the absence of a sustainable mechanism for producing communication materials. This study examines how college English teaching can be connected with the construction of a discourse system for the English translation of Jiangxi red culture. It conceptualizes the discourse system through three dimensions: conceptual standardization, narrative adaptation, and carrier-based reproduction. On this basis, it proposes an instructional integration framework consisting of “standardized input, practical output, and feedback-based revision.” College English teaching can serve not only as a channel for disseminating existing translations of red culture, but also as a source of candidate translations, evidence of comprehension difficulties, and narrative alternatives through translation, writing, and oral communication activities. This study seeks to provide theoretical reference for the development of English-language resources on Jiangxi red culture and for the integration of red culture into college English courses as part of curriculum-based ideological and political education.

Keywords: English translation of red culture; discourse system; college English teaching; integration pathway

Introduction

Jiangxi is home to red-cultural resources of considerable historical significance, including Jinggangshan, Nanchang, and Ruijin. How these resources can be accurately and effectively transformed into English expressions that are broadly intelligible and acceptable to international audiences concerns not only the overseas dissemination of local red culture, but also international perceptions of China’s revolutionary history, revolutionary spirit, and contemporary significance. In recent years, the international communication of red culture has attracted sustained attention from policymakers and scholars. However, existing studies have focused primarily on the translation of individual texts and on communication strategies. Systematic research on conceptual standardization, narrative organization, coordination among relevant actors, and feedback mechanisms remains relatively limited.

This problem is particularly evident in the English translation of Jiangxi red culture. Previous studies have pointed out that the international dissemination of Jiangxi red culture continues to face problems such as insufficient translation accuracy, inadequate cross-cultural interpretation, and relatively limited communication channels and modes. For example, several English forms of “井冈山精神” can be found in relevant materials, including Jinggangshan Spirit, Jinggang Mountain Spirit, and the Spirit of Jinggangshan. Some terminology resources also use the spirit of Jinggang Mountains. Similarly, different English expressions have been used for “苏区” and related historical concepts, including Soviet Area and Soviet Region.

These alternative translations do not necessarily constitute a simple opposition between right and wrong. Some differences may result from variations in semantic scope, historical context, and communicative situation. Nevertheless, if core terms lack clearly defined fields of application, stable rules of use, and necessary contextual explanations over an extended period, conceptual reference may become unclear and translation practices may become inconsistent. This can subsequently affect the retrieval, citation, and discussion of Jiangxi red culture after it enters international academic and public communication contexts.

Against this background, the relationship between college English teaching and the English translation of red culture requires reconsideration. Existing studies generally understand the relationship as one between content and application context: red culture is introduced into English classrooms as material for curriculum-based ideological and political education, or translation exercises are used to expose students to relevant texts. Within this model, translated materials on red culture are normally treated as already-established teaching resources, while classroom teaching mainly performs the functions of reception, explanation, and dissemination.

However, the discourse system for the English translation of Jiangxi red culture is still developing. Its terminology, narrative practices, and mechanisms of audience adaptation need to be continuously tested and revised through practical use. College English teaching should therefore not be regarded merely as the terminal through which existing discourse resources are disseminated. Given its extensive curricular coverage, large student population, and continuous language practice, it can also serve as a site for producing candidate translations, identifying problems, and collecting evidence concerning communicative effectiveness.

This study is conceptual rather than empirical. It proposes that teachers and students can generate candidate translations, problem lists, and audience-comprehension feedback through terminology analysis, text translation, narrative rewriting,



and cross-cultural interpretation. Following expert review and ongoing revision, these materials can provide auxiliary support for the construction of the discourse system. The study first defines the basic connotations of the discourse system for the English translation of Jiangxi red culture and analyzes it from the perspectives of conceptual standardization, narrative adaptation, and carrier linkage. It then proposes a framework of “teaching-driven discourse reproduction” and discusses the actors, procedures, and feedback mechanisms involved in college English teaching’s participation in the construction of this discourse system. Finally, it examines the theoretical value, practical boundaries, and possible limitations of the framework in light of its conditions of application.

Key Concepts

Discourse system

In this article, a discourse system refers to a revisable and institutionally organized set of terms, narrative conventions, explanatory practices, and communication channels through which a subject is represented and interpreted in a particular language. The concept is informed by discourse studies, which examine how language choices are shaped by social contexts and contribute to the organization of meaning. It is also informed by translation studies, which treat translation as a context-sensitive activity involving choices about purpose, readership, and textual function.

Discourse reproduction

Discourse reproduction refers to the process through which discourse is repeatedly interpreted, retold, used, and revised in specific contexts of practice. Through this process, its core meaning remains relatively stable while its form is renewed and its meaning reaffirmed. In the context of constructing an English-language discourse system for Jiangxi red culture, discourse reproduction specifically refers to the process through which learners reinterpret and re-express core terms and narratives of red culture, generating variations through instructional activities such as translation practice, writing, and oral production.

A Three-Dimensional Deconstruction of the Discourse System: An Analytical Framework

“Discourse system” has become a frequently used concept in recent research on red culture, but its analytical meaning remains insufficiently clear. In the existing literature, the term has been used to refer variously to a “system for terminology standardization,” a “set of narrative strategies,” or a “network of communication channels.” This conceptual diffuseness can reduce the construction of a discourse system to a slogan and makes it difficult to translate the concept into a workable research agenda. This section divides the discourse system for the English translation of Jiangxi red culture into three interrelated dimensions: conceptual standardization, narrative adaptation, and carrier linkage.

The conceptual dimension

The conceptual dimension concerns the commensurability and communicability of core terms. Key concepts in the English translation of red culture, such as “Jinggangshan Spirit,” “the Nanchang Uprising of August 1,” and “the Central Soviet Area,” carry specific historical meanings and political connotations. Their translation requires a balance between fidelity and intelligibility. At present, however, English translations of these concepts lack sufficiently authoritative standards, and different forms appear across different texts.

Previous studies have identified insufficient attention to readers as a major limitation in research on the translation of red tourism materials for international communication. Researchers tend to focus on the source and target texts, while seldom asking how target-language readers respond to the translations. This suggests that the standardization of the conceptual dimension cannot rely solely on translators’ strategic choices. It also requires a cyclical mechanism of production, testing, feedback, and revision.

The narrative dimension

The narrative dimension concerns the cross-cultural acceptability of stories about red culture. The spiritual core of red culture includes sacrifice, dedication, collectivism, and commitment to ideals and beliefs. These values may evoke very different emotional responses in different cultural contexts. Scholars studying the international communication of Yan’an red culture have argued that local experiences and specific historical details need to be transformed into compelling and communicable cultural symbols so that “Chinese experiences” can become “shared human experiences.”

This argument is equally applicable to Jiangxi. The story of Zhu De’s shoulder pole, for example, embodies the spirit of sharing hardship with ordinary soldiers. How this spirit can be conveyed in English so that audiences without a background in Chinese revolutionary history can develop an emotional connection involves a choice of narrative framework. Should the story be presented primarily as a historical account of the revolution, or should it be embedded in more widely accessible narratives of leadership and equality?

The carrier dimension

The carrier dimension concerns the channels through which discourse is materialized and the settings in which it is reproduced. The products of the English translation of red culture ultimately need to reach audiences through concrete carriers, including tourism commentary, museum texts, media content, academic articles, and teaching materials.

Existing studies have noted that the channels and modes of communication are relatively limited. This indicates that the carrier dimension remains comparatively weak and requires attention to how translations are organized, stored, retrieved, used, and updated. College English classrooms possess relatively stable teaching staff, regular class hours, systematic production of student texts, and a high degree of repeatability. Every translation exercise, oral presentation, and writing task constitutes an event of discourse reproduction. If these events can be incorporated into a standardized process of corpus collection and feedback, the college English classroom can become a continuously functioning site of discourse production.

The analytical value of this three-dimensional framework lies in its transformation of discourse-system construction from

a broad objective into three problem areas that can be diagnosed and addressed separately. Table 1 presents the logical structure of the framework.

Table 1. A Three-Dimensional Analytical Framework for the Discourse System of the English Translation of Jiangxi Red Culture

Dimension	Core question	Current gap	Possible instructional intervention
Conceptual	How can core terms achieve semantic commensurability and communicability?	Divergent translations and insufficient standardization	Candidate translations produced through translation practice can be screened and incorporated into a corpus
Narrative	How can stories about red culture achieve cross-cultural acceptability?	Limited narrative strategies and a mismatch with audience knowledge	Audience awareness can be developed through oral and writing tasks
Carrier	Through which channels can discourse be materialized and reproduced?	Narrow communication channels and the absence of a sustainable production mechanism	The classroom can serve as an institutionalized setting for production and preliminary testing

From “Integration” to “Production”: Repositioning the Role of College English Teaching

The conventional notion of “integration” presents the relationship between red culture and college English teaching in relatively direct terms. College English teaching is understood as the setting in which content is delivered, while red culture is viewed as content introduced into the curriculum. Within this framework, research tends to focus on how red culture can be integrated, including instructional strategies, integration pathways, and classroom design.

From the perspective of discourse-system construction, college English teaching may be understood as a potential participant in the production and preliminary examination of discourse resources, rather than merely as a setting in which established content is transmitted. This role must be understood in a limited and conditional sense. Classroom activities may generate candidate expressions, reveal learner difficulties, and support initial comparison, but they cannot independently establish authoritative translation standards. In this study, reproducibility does not refer to the simple repetition of discourse content. Rather, it refers to the capacity of relevant expressions to be continuously used, transmitted, cited, tested, and revised across different texts and communicative situations, thereby forming a relatively stable but open set of communicative resources. From this perspective, college English teaching can not only carry content related to red culture, but can also participate in the generation, testing, and improvement of its English-language expressions. This argument can be developed in three respects.

First, the formation of standardized terminology for red culture depends on continuous translation, comparison, and review. College English teaching can provide a relatively stable setting for this process. Proper names and historical concepts in red culture often have specific historical contexts and value connotations. Their translation involves not only lexical equivalence, but also conceptual boundaries, semantic emphasis, and target-language conventions. Terminological standards therefore cannot generally be established through a single translation or solely on the basis of a translator’s individual experience. They need to develop gradually through comparisons among alternative translations, observation of their use, and professional review.

The incorporation of carefully selected materials on red culture into translation instruction can allow student translations to function as candidate expressions and can help identify problems concerning terminology comprehension, semantic correspondence, and target-language usage. Teachers can organize discussions of the accuracy, intelligibility, and appropriateness of different translations, while documenting representative translations and the processes through which they are revised. After teacher screening, peer discussion, and expert review, translations with reference value and records of their revision can be used in corpus development and terminology-database construction. This would establish a process linking teaching practice, corpus organization, and feedback on terminology standards.

Existing studies have begun to construct bilingual parallel corpora for red tourism. However, such corpora are often drawn from relatively stable texts intended for external communication, while less attention has been paid to translations continuously generated in teaching contexts.

Second, the effectiveness of cross-cultural narratives of red stories needs to be examined through audience feedback, and the college English classroom can serve as a site for preliminary observation and testing. Cross-cultural expression of red stories is not merely a matter of transferring Chinese content into another language. It also involves selecting historical background information, explaining cultural images, arranging the order of the narrative, and connecting different bodies of assumed knowledge.

When students use English to explain the Jinggangshan Spirit or write an introduction to a red-cultural site, they may

encounter difficulties in deciding which background information to include, finding target-language expressions for cultural images, or explaining key concepts. These difficulties reflect students' language abilities and cultural knowledge, but they may also indicate that existing narratives require adjustment in terms of information organization, explanatory approaches, or target-language expression.

The translation and rewriting process in the classroom can therefore function not only as language training, but also as a window through which researchers can observe how cultural content is understood, retold, and reorganized. Students are not international audiences, and classroom feedback cannot directly represent the understanding or acceptance of overseas audiences. Nevertheless, students possess a certain degree of knowledge of local culture and experience in English expression. Their translation practices and responses can provide limited evidence concerning learners' interpretation, linguistic choices, and difficulties in reorganizing cultural information. Such evidence may support a preliminary diagnosis of instructional and drafting problems, but it cannot be treated as direct evidence of overseas audiences' understanding, acceptance, or emotional response.

For example, when students encounter difficulties in translating the metaphor "A single spark can start a prairie fire," this may prompt translators to examine further how metaphors should be transformed and how much contextual explanation should be provided. Uncertainty about whether the metaphor should be retained or supplemented with background information indicates a possible comprehension threshold in cross-cultural retelling. Instructional activities can guide students to compare literal, free, and explanatory translations and to analyze how different options affect historical meaning, imagery, and reader comprehension.

Third, the continuing development of English-language discourse resources for red culture requires relatively stable practical mechanisms and the participation of diverse actors. If such work relies for an extended period on only a small number of experts or short-term projects, corpus updating, translation validation, and dissemination may be constrained by project cycles and the size of the participating group. College English courses, by contrast, cover a broad population and provide regular opportunities for translation and communication practice. They therefore offer conditions for accumulating discourse resources.

Through sustained instructional activities, the sources of candidate expressions can be expanded, and the problems that different learners encounter when understanding and expressing red culture can be documented. These materials can then support the organization of terminology and the improvement of narrative practices.

In summary, the function of college English teaching in constructing a discourse system for red culture can be expanded from that of a simple "communication terminal" to that of a "production front end" involved in generating, testing, and revising discourse resources. This repositioning also draws attention to the implementation mechanism of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Red culture is not transmitted only through classroom explanation; it is also transformed into discussable and revisable communicative resources through students' processes of understanding, retelling, and translation.

Whether instructional activities can make a sustained contribution to discourse-system construction depends on whether classroom output can enter a standardized, traceable process of organization and professional review.

A Linkage Mechanism: Designing a Closed-Loop Process

To establish an effective connection between college English teaching and the development of English-language discourse resources for red culture, this study proposes a framework of "standardized input, practical output, and feedback-based revision." The framework clarifies how standardized materials on red culture can enter teaching, how classroom output can be assessed, and how reviewed feedback can be used to update teaching resources.

First, standardized input provides operational materials for instruction. The term "standardized" here does not necessarily refer to a completely finalized version. It may refer to terminology and narrative guidelines whose sources are documented, which have undergone preliminary review, and which remain open to revision. Such materials can provide a point of reference for classroom tasks while also presenting alternative translations and the controversies surrounding them.

For example, instructional materials may provide a recommended translation of "Jinggangshan Spirit" together with alternative translations and their appropriate contexts of use. Students can then be guided to compare the communicative effects of these forms. Standardization should not be understood as a static list. It is a reference system that is gradually refined through use and testing.

Second, practical output generated through translation, writing, and oral communication tasks can be organized into three categories: candidate translations proposed by students; narrative expressions designed for different communicative situations; and recurring difficulties in comprehension or expression. The first two categories reveal the strategies adopted by students, while recurring difficulties may indicate that the explanation of a term, the teaching materials, or the mode of expression requires further examination.

For example, if several students translate "red gene" literally as red gene, this pattern may provide a useful starting point for discussing terminological comprehension and the need for instructional explanation. However, it cannot by itself determine whether the recommended translation is effective, nor can it replace testing with target audiences.

Finally, feedback-based revision involves screening, professional review, and archiving. Teachers should first classify classroom output, distinguishing ordinary language errors from candidate expressions with potential reference value and recurring difficulties in comprehension. English teachers, translation specialists, and scholars of red culture can then evaluate the materials collaboratively, with relevant historical facts and concepts verified when necessary.

Reviewed translations, explanations, and statements of contextual applicability can be used to supplement teaching

corpora or update terminology references. Student translations that have not undergone professional review should be clearly distinguished from standardized expressions. In this way, a cycle of standardized input, practical testing, feedback-based revision, and renewed input can be established.

The operation of this linkage mechanism requires teacher collaboration and a clear division of responsibilities. English teachers should organize instructional practice, record representative classroom output, and conduct preliminary screening. Judgments concerning terminology, historical facts, and cultural meanings should be made jointly by translation specialists and researchers in relevant fields.

Universities in Jiangxi and research institutions concerned with red culture can strengthen cooperation in resource sharing, expert consultation, and corpus organization. On this basis, they can gradually establish a regional collaborative mechanism connecting red-culture resources with English teaching and define standards for corpus collection, review, and use.

Overall, the proposed framework does not place student translations directly into the system of standardized discourse. Instead, it establishes a stable channel between classroom practice and professional review. Only when the responsibilities and quality requirements of each stage are clearly defined can instructional output be transformed into traceable and verifiable discourse resources that continuously support both the English translation of red culture and college English teaching.

Illustrative Example: “Jinggangshan Spirit”

A classroom on translating “井冈山精神” illustrates the framework in practice. The instructor first hands out a sheet offering Jinggangshan Spirit only as a provisional form, open to revision by publication or institutional context, and asks students to compare it with circulating variants such as Jinggang Mountain Spirit in context rather than assume one is simply correct. The sheet also separates naming a concept from explaining it: the name may stay in transliteration, with a brief gloss for readers lacking the background. From the same material students then draft two texts — a museum label for visitors with little prior knowledge and a longer piece for an educational website — noting the terms chosen, background added, and omissions made, and compare versions on historical accuracy, clarity, coherence, and genre fit instead of ranking them in the abstract. Their drafts, revision notes, and answers about unclear references are collected as evidence of the learning process; since these responses pass through students’ proficiency and prior familiarity, they say nothing reliable about overseas reception. Teachers next screen the output for language and task fit, after which specialists check the linguistic quality and historians verify the historical claims, neither replacing the other. If a text is meant for international use, a final stage tests it with readers closer to the target audience.

Discussion: Theoretical Contributions and Boundary Conditions

The central theoretical contribution of this study lies in transforming the discourse system from a descriptive concept into an operational framework and, on that basis, repositioning the function of college English teaching in the international communication of red culture. Although existing studies frequently use the term “discourse system,” they generally treat it as a broad objective rather than as an analytical tool. By deconstructing the discourse system into three separately diagnosable dimensions—concepts, narratives, and carriers—and by developing a mechanism model of “teaching-driven discourse reproduction,” this study attempts to establish an operable pathway from theory to practice.

The significance of this framework can be considered from the perspectives of translation studies and language-education research. In translation studies, the framework responds to methodological criticisms of research on the translation of red culture for international communication, particularly the insufficient attention to readers and the weak connection between theoretical discussion and analysis of translated texts. Students are treated as preliminary observers with particular knowledge backgrounds. Their translation performance and comprehension difficulties can provide material for identifying problems, but they cannot replace testing with target audiences.

In language-education research, the framework extends the teaching of red culture beyond the integration of content toward the practical generation of discourse resources. It suggests that curriculum-based ideological and political education concerns not only teaching content and methods, but also the ways in which knowledge is understood, retold, and organized through curricular practice.

The scope of application of this framework also needs to be specified. First, instructional output can serve only as a source of candidate translations and indications of possible problems; it cannot replace professional translation agencies or formal terminology-approval mechanisms. Second, implementation of the framework depends on teacher training, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional review. Without adequate screening and quality control, classroom output cannot readily be transformed into reliable reference resources.

Third, this study proposes a conditional judgment. If the construction of a discourse system requires the continuous production and testing of resources, and if teaching settings possess appropriate mechanisms of organization and professional review, college English teaching can become a practical component of that process. This claim does not mean that college English courses are inherently responsible for establishing authoritative standards.

From a broader perspective, developing discourse resources for the international communication of red culture involves not only translation techniques and communication strategies, but also mechanisms for the continuous production, testing, and revision of discourse products. College English teaching has broad institutional coverage, a stable operating cycle, and a large number of participating actors. It therefore possesses the potential to participate in this mechanism.

To transform this potential into an effective contribution, the essential task is not simply to add more content related to red culture. More importantly, it is necessary to improve processes of corpus collection, professional review, and feedback so

that classroom practice can provide continuous support for discourse-resource development under appropriate quality controls.

Conclusion

The central challenge in constructing a discourse system for the English translation of Jiangxi red culture lies not only in whether translations are accurate. It also lies in whether translation resources can be produced continuously, whether communicative effectiveness can be tested systematically, and whether feedback can be used effectively for subsequent revision. Existing studies have often regarded college English teaching as a setting in which red culture is integrated into the curriculum. As a result, they have not fully recognized its institutional potential for producing discourse resources and testing their communicative effects.

This study therefore repositions college English teaching as a grassroots producer and preliminary evaluator of the effectiveness of the discourse system for the English translation of red culture. It proposes a closed-loop mechanism of “standardized input, practical output, and feedback-based revision” as a possible pathway connecting instructional practice with discourse-system construction.

The effective operation of this mechanism depends on institutional conditions, including teacher training, professional review, interdisciplinary collaboration, and feedback procedures. Its basic theoretical logic is that a discourse system requires not only standards, but also continuous reproduction, testing, and revision. The college English classroom is a practical setting that has long been overlooked in this regard, but one that possesses considerable potential to support a sustained mechanism of discourse production.

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