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From Theory to Practice: A PBL Course Design and Effectiveness Analysis on Brand Name Translation for Cultivating Interdisciplinary Talents

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of globalization and brand internationalization, the cross-cultural translation of brand names has become a crucial bridge connecting markets and consumers, creating an urgent demand for relevant talent cultivation. Based on a successful short-term elective short-term course entitled "Cross-Cultural Translation Practice of Brand Names: From Coca-Cola to BMW", this study adopts a case study approach to systematically explore how structured course design can effectively cultivate learners' cross-cultural translation competence and creative thinking. The paper first constructs a guiding framework integrating theories of intercultural communication, functionalist translation studies, and semiotics. It then elaborates on the course's four-stage teaching model: Cognitive Construction – Competence Enhancement – Practical Application – Integrated Output. This model integrates project-based learning, output-oriented approach, and case-based teaching, blending theoretical instruction, cultural adaptation strategy analysis, linguistic-symbolic manipulation, and creative practice into a cohesive whole. Through the analysis of three rounds of course implementation and evaluation (including student work, questionnaires, and interviews), the study finds that this course model significantly enhances students' cross-cultural awareness, equips them with full-process brand translation skills from strategy selection to creative generation, and successfully stimulates their learning autonomy and creativity. This research provides a valuable and effective paradigm for the development of applied, interdisciplinary courses that integrate language, culture, and business practice, offering insights for translation pedagogy reform and intercultural talent cultivation.

Keywords: *Brand Name Translation; Intercultural Communication; Course Design; Project-Based Learning; Translation Pedagogy; Case Study*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

In today's intertwining tide of globalization and the digital economy, the cross-border journey of brands has become a norm in the business world. When a brand enters a new linguistic and cultural context, its name often plays a critical role as both a "first impression" and a "cultural ambassador". A successful brand name translation is far more than a simple linguistic conversion; it is a sophisticated strategic practice of cross-cultural communication. It not only overcomes language barriers but also penetrates cultural cognition, planting the seed of brand identification in the minds of target market consumers. From the household name "Coca-Cola"—a classic example that simulates the original sound while conveying a sense of pleasure—to "BMW", which seamlessly integrates German automotive aesthetics with the prestige of ancient Chinese royal carriages, these successful cases all demonstrate that an excellent brand name translation is a vital element in gaining cultural recognition, building emotional connections, and even determining commercial success in international markets.

However, in contrast to these exemplary cases, traditional foreign language and translation education often suffers from a gap between theory and practice. While students may be proficient in grammatical rules and translation techniques, they may struggle to apply this knowledge in real-world scenarios that demand dynamism, creativity, and cultural sensitivity. Brand name translation, situated at the intersection of linguistics, translation studies, intercultural communication, and marketing, imposes high demands on learners' comprehensive abilities. It requires not only bilingual proficiency, but also intercultural awareness, business insight, and creative thinking. Therefore, how to systematically impart this complex skill set through effective course design has become a pressing issue worthy of in-depth exploration in the fields of applied linguistics and translation education.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

Based on the above background, this study aims to explore the following core questions through the presentation of the design, implementation, and reflection on a short-term elective course during a mini-semester, entitled *"Cross-Cultural Translation Practice of Brand Names: From Coca-Cola to BMW"*:

a) How can a short-term course be systematically designed to effectively integrate the theories, strategies, and practices of brand name translation?

b) To what extent does this course model enhance students' intercultural communication competence, creative translation ability, and capacity to apply theory to practice?

c) What transferable insights and experiences can this teaching practice offer for translation pedagogy and the cultivation of intercultural communication talents in a broader sense?

The purpose of this study is not only to document and showcase a well-received course, but also to present it as a representative case that demonstrates the feasibility and advantages of a teaching model characterized by "real-world problem orientation, project-based practice, and intercultural competence as its core" in cultivating application-oriented language professionals for the new era.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Core Theoretical Foundation: Intercultural Communication Theory

The cross-cultural translation of brand names is, in essence, not a mere interlingual conversion, but a profound process of cultural adaptation and recreation. Therefore, intercultural communication theory provides the most fundamental lens for this study. The design and implementation of this course are primarily grounded in two classical theoretical frameworks, which together address the fundamental questions of *why* transformation is necessary and *how* it should be carried out in brand name translation (Chen & Starosta, 2005; Hall, 1976).

2.1.1 Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory offers a systematic and quantifiable tool for understanding cultural differences across countries. These dimensions serve as the "deep codes" of culture, profoundly influencing consumers' values, cognitive patterns, and aesthetic preferences, and thereby determining the strategic choices in brand name translation (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede et al., 2010). This course guides students to apply the following key dimensions to deconstruct brand name cases:

a) **Individualism vs. Collectivism:**
Theoretical Core: Individualistic cultures (e.g., the United States, Western Europe) emphasize self-identity, personal achievement, and uniqueness; collectivist cultures (e.g., China, Japan, South Korea), on the other hand, value group harmony, family orientation, and social relationships (Hofstede, 2001).

Application in Brand Translation: This dimension directly influences the emotional appeal of brand names. For collectivist markets, successful translations often embed concepts such as family, friendship, and shared joy. For example, the character "喜" in the Chinese translation of *Heineken* ("喜力") evokes scenes of festivals and gatherings, resonating with collective celebration. Similarly, "家乐福" (Carrefour) cleverly integrates notions of "family", "happiness" and "blessing", precisely aligning with the core appeal of family well-being in traditional Chinese culture (Zhou & Wang, 2012). In contrast, brand names in individualistic cultures may be more inclined to highlight personality, strength, and independence.

b) **Power Distance:**
Theoretical Core: This dimension refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of a society accept unequal power distribution. High power distance cultures (e.g., China, Malaysia) accept hierarchy and respect authority, whereas low power distance cultures (e.g., Nordic countries, Austria) pursue equality (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Application in Brand Translation: In high power distance cultures, brand names often convey prestige, nobility, and authority through lexical choices. For instance, the term "宝马" (BMW) in Chinese refers to the noble steeds of ancient royalty and high officials, symbolizing status and power; "奔驰" (Mercedes-Benz) evokes an elite image of "galloping across the world and mastering the winds and clouds." Even local brands like "霸王" (Bawang, a shampoo brand) directly employ words denoting absolute power. These translations cater to the psychological desire of consumers in the target market to attain social identity and recognition through brand consumption (Fan, 2006).

c) Uncertainty Avoidance:

Theoretical Core: This dimension refers to the extent to which members of a culture tolerate uncertainty and ambiguous situations. High uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g., Japan, Germany) tend to rely on clear rules, rituals, and professional expertise to mitigate risk; low uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g., Singapore, Jamaica) are more tolerant and open to the unknown (Hofstede, 2001).

Application in Brand Translation: For brands originating from high uncertainty avoidance cultures (such as German technology and automotive brands), their translated names need to convey reliability, safety, and professionalism. For example, in "保时捷" (Porsche), the characters "保" and "捷" together create a sense of guaranteed speed and trustworthy performance; "捷豹" (Jaguar), although named after an animal, uses the character "捷" to imply certainty in superior performance. A positive and steady translated name helps reduce consumers' concerns about uncertainty in product performance and quality (Zhou & Wang, 2012).

2.1.2 Edward Hall's Theory of High-Context and Low-Context Cultures

From the perspective of communication styles, Hall classifies cultures into high-context and low-context types. This theory provides a powerful explanation for the phenomenon of "information compensation" in brand name translation.

a) Theoretical Core:

High-context cultures: In communication, most information is embedded in the physical context or internalized within individuals, with only a small portion transmitted through explicitly coded language. Communication is implicit and nuanced, relying on "reading between the lines" (Hall, 1976). East Asian cultures such as China and Japan are typical examples of high-context cultures (Hall & Hall, 1990).

Low-context cultures: In communication, information is mainly conveyed through clear and direct verbal expression. Communication is explicit and overt, emphasizing "telling" (Hall, 1976). Western cultures such as the United States, Germany, and Switzerland are representative of low-context cultures (Hall & Hall, 1990).

b) Application in Brand Translation:

From Low-Context to High-Context Conversion (English to Chinese):

A brand name created in a low-context culture—often relatively straightforward in meaning or even semantically empty (e.g., founder names, place names such as *Coca-Cola*, *BMW*, *Nike*)—faces an "information vacuum" when entering a high-context culture (Hall & Hall, 1990). A purely phonetic translation (e.g., Coca-Cola's early Chinese rendering "蝌蚪啃蜡") fails to meet high-context audiences' deep-seated expectations for a name to be "meaningful" and "rich in connotation" (Li, 2020; Pan, 2015).

Therefore, the most successful translation strategy is "contextual enrichment"—injecting culturally favored imagery such as auspiciousness, joy, wealth, or beauty into the phonetic or semantic rendering (Fan & Wang, 2019; Li, 2020). This is the cultural rationale behind the evolution of *Coca-Cola* into "可口可乐" (tasty and joyful), *BMW* into "宝马" (precious horse, symbolizing a legendary steed), and *Nike* into "耐克" (endurance and victory). The choice of Chinese characters is by no means arbitrary; rather, it constructs a high-context aura rich in positive associations for the original brand name within the target culture.

2.1.3 Theoretical Integration and Course Alignment

In summary, Hofstede's "Cultural Dimensions" and Hall's "Contextual Culture" theory together construct a dual framework for analyzing brand name translation within this course. The Cultural Dimensions Theory explains *what* a brand name should convey—that is, the values to be communicated in order to align with deep-seated cultural psychology; whereas the Contextual Culture Theory explains *how* a brand name should be expressed—that is, the mode of information encoding appropriate to local communication norms (De Mooij, 2021; Hall, 1976; Hofstede et al., 2010).

In the first and third sessions of the course, students systematically study these theories and apply them to deconstruct classic cases (such as Coca-Cola and BMW) as well as to analyze failed examples. This ensures that students' translation practices are no longer instinctive "word games", but strategic cultural decisions grounded in theory and methodology (Fan & Wang, 2019; Li, 2020). As a result, they undergo a genuine transformation from "translation technicians" to "intercultural communication specialists" (Katan, 2014).

2.2 The Compass Guiding Practice: Translation Theories

If intercultural communication theory provides the strategic direction for *why* brand names need to be transformed, then translation theory offers the tactical means and legitimacy for *how* this transformation should occur. This course does not treat translation as a mechanical linguistic correspondence, but instead guides students to apply and move beyond the traditional dichotomy of "literal" versus "free" translation, depending on text type and functional purpose (Nord, 2018). The following three theoretical approaches constitute the core guiding principles for translation practice in this course.

2.2.1 Skopos Theory

Skopos theory liberates translation studies from the constraint of "loyalty" to the source text, emphasizing that the purpose of the translation act is the ultimate determining factor in the translation process (Vermeer, 1989/2000). This holds fundamental instructional significance for the purpose-driven nature of brand translation.

a) Theoretical Core:

The purpose of the translation act determines the translation methods and strategies (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014). The central principle of this theory is: the function of the translated text takes precedence over formal fidelity to the source text. Translation must function in the target cultural context in a way that meets the expectations of the target audience (Nord, 1997).

b) Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:

In this course, we begin by clarifying that the ultimate goal of brand translation is not to find equivalent words in a dictionary, but to successfully construct a brand image and stimulate consumer desire in the target market. Therefore, the choice of any translation strategy—be it transliteration, semantic translation, or transcreation—must serve this overriding goal.

c) Case Analysis:

By applying Skopos theory, students are able to deepen their understanding of classic cases. **"奔驰" (Mercedes-Benz):** If one

were to adhere rigidly to form, Mercedes-Benz (a given name and surname) would be nearly untranslatable. However, considering its brand positioning as a luxury car and its core selling point of "superior performance", the translation "奔驰" (meaning "to gallop" or "to speed") perfectly achieves the functional goal of conveying "high speed and excellent driving performance" in the Chinese cultural context, far surpassing any phonetic transliteration.

"赛百味" (Subway): The original meaning of "Subway" is "underground railway", which would cause cultural confusion if literally translated. The Chinese name "赛百味" (meaning "surpassing a hundred flavors") redefines its functional purpose as "offering rich and delicious choices". Although completely detached from the original literal meaning, it precisely aligns with the brand's fast-food market positioning.

Through the lens of Skopos theory, students come to realize that the success of brand name translation lies not in being "faithful", but in being "effective".

2.2.2 Creative Treason
The concept of "creative treason" provides theoretical legitimacy for the boldest and most imaginative practices in brand translation, and serves as a key theoretical tool in this course for stimulating student creativity (Xie, 2020).

a) Theoretical Core:
Creative treason refers to the translator's deliberate and imaginative deviation from, or even "betrayal" of, the literal form of the source text in order to achieve a higher artistic effect or more effective communicative purpose (Xie, 2020, p. 45). This results in unexpected yet positive outcomes within the target language context (Li, 2019).

b) Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:
This course elevates "creative treason" as an advanced strategy in brand translation. It is not only permitted, but often necessary. It requires translators to act as "co-creators" of the brand.

c) Case Analysis:
"露华浓" (Revlon): This name originates from Li Bai's classical poem *Qing Ping Diao*: "Clouds think of robes, flowers think of beauty; spring breeze brushes the balustrade, dew shines richly." For the brand *Revlon* (from the founder's name Revson), this translation not only approximates the original pronunciation but also associates cosmetics with the poetic elegance and feminine beauty of a Tang dynasty imperial consort. It achieves a splendid transformation from a personal name to a brand imbued with Eastern aesthetic poetry—a model case of creative treason.

"I used to drink 'Piao' (飘), now I drink 'Shuang' (爽)": In the course, playful examples like this (hypothetically translating Pepsi as "Shuang" and Coca-Cola as "Piao") are used to show students how creative treason can even redefine a brand's emotional resonance within the target culture.

In several sessions, students are encouraged to practice creative treason by boldly and imaginatively renaming familiar brands, thereby liberating their thinking and cultivating their cultural transcreation skills.

2.2.3 Domestication and Foreignization Strategies
Domestication and foreignization represent a pair of core concepts in translation strategy selection, offering a more nuanced theoretical perspective to the frequently debated issue of "semantic vs. phonetic translation" in this course (Venuti, 1995/2008).

a) Theoretical Core:
Domestication: This strategy employs a transparent and fluent style to minimize the foreignness of the source text, making the translation appear as if it were an original work in the target culture. Its aim is to align with the cultural values of the target audience (Venuti, 1995/2008).

Foreignization: This strategy deliberately preserves certain heterogeneous elements of the source language, disrupting the conventions of the target language so that readers can experience a sense of "foreignness". Its goal is to enrich the target culture and its modes of expression (Venuti, 1995/2008).

b) Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:
This course guides students to understand that domestication and foreignization are not binary opposites but exist along a dynamic continuum. Brand translation often involves a skillful combination of both strategies.

Continuum Analysis:
Highly Domesticated: *"宝马" (BMW)* represents domestication at its extreme. It transforms a cold letter combination into a symbol rich with Chinese cultural imagery and values, making the brand's "German origin" almost imperceptible in its name.

Primarily Domesticated with Elements of Foreignization: *"可口可乐" (Coca-Cola)* is highly domesticated in meaning (tasty, joyful), yet retains the rhythm of the foreign language in its pronunciation, subtly signaling its foreign origin.

Primarily Foreignized: *"赛百味" (Subway)* and *"星巴克" (Starbucks)* fall into this category. Through transliteration, they create Chinese expressions that carry a hint of exoticism while still conveying positive meanings. The cultural origin of the brands (American fast food, coffee culture) is part of their appeal.

Highly Foreignized: The direct use of acronyms (e.g., *IBM*, *CNN*) or purely phonetic translations without appealing semantics (e.g., the early translation of *Mercedes* as "默赛德斯") is sometimes adopted in the technology or high-end luxury sectors to emphasize global consistency or the prestige of origin.

In the course, students are required to position their chosen translation strategies along the domestication–foreignization continuum based on brand positioning (i.e., whether the brand seeks local affinity or emphasizes its international heritage), thereby making more strategic decisions.

2.2.4 Theoretical Integration and Course Design
Within the instructional framework of this course, the three major translation theories are not treated as isolated constructs, but rather interwoven with intercultural communication theories to form a robust guiding network.

Skopos Theory serves as the overarching principle, defining the ultimate evaluative standard for brand name translation. **Creative Treason** functions as the most incisive tool for achieving specific functional purposes such as aesthetic enhancement or cultural adaptation.

Domestication and Foreignization offer concrete strategic pathways for realizing functional goals at the tactical level.

For example, when naming a brand that seeks to project "high-tech German quality" (functional purpose), the translator may choose a predominantly foreignizing strategy to retain its German imprint. At the same time, creative treason may be employed in lexical choices to craft a name like "保时捷" (Porsche), which both echoes the German pronunciation and conveys the positive connotation of "guaranteed speed", thereby aligning with the high uncertainty avoidance characteristic of the Chinese market (cultural dimension).

Through this multi-layered, theory-integrated pedagogy, students do not merely acquire fragmented translation techniques; rather, they develop a systematic cognitive toolkit capable of analyzing, strategizing, and executing intercultural brand naming tasks.

2.3 Deconstructing the Microworld of Symbols: Linguistic and Semiotic Theories

As a highly condensed symbol, a brand name's cross-cultural transformation is not only rooted in macro-level cultural strategies but also deeply embedded in the material properties of language and the signifying system of semiotics. Linguistic and semiotic theories provide this course with the precise surgical tools for dissecting the "flesh" of brand names, enabling students to understand and manipulate the micro-level processes of translation—from phonetics, lexis, and semantics to the deeper relationship between signifier and signified.

2.3.1 Linguistic Theories: Manipulating the Material of Language

a) Phonetics and Phonology:

a1. Theoretical Core: These disciplines study the acoustic properties of language (phonetics) and their function in distinguishing meaning within a particular language (phonology) (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015). In brand name translation, this directly relates to the science and art of transliteration (Li, 2020).

a2. Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:

Principle of Phonetic Proximity: The course emphasizes that transliteration is not a mere imitation, but a process of "optimal matching." Translators must identify the closest and most euphonic phonetic combinations in the target language (Chinese) that approximate the source name's pronunciation (Fan & Wang, 2019). For example, *Coca-Cola* is rendered as 可口可乐 (*kě kǒu kě lè*), using open vowels in Mandarin that are resonant, fluid, and easy to disseminate.

Avoidance of Negative Phonetic Associations: This is both a critical and challenging point in the instruction. Through failed cases, the course alerts students to meticulously examine whether the selected Chinese character combinations might evoke undesirable, negative, or humorous associations in the target language (Pan, 2015). For instance, transliterating *Pizza Hut* as "披萨哈特" may weaken the brand's impact due to the ambiguous articulation of "哈特", whereas the established translation 必胜客 achieves a harmonious blend of sound, meaning, and emotional appeal.

Activity Design: In the "Art of Transliteration" module, students engage in a "Transliteration Battle", creating multiple transliteration proposals for an English brand name and conducting peer evaluations, with a focus on phonetic fluidity and the avoidance of negative connotations (Li, 2020).

b) Lexical Semantics:

b1. Theoretical Core: This field studies the meanings, structures, and interrelationships of words.

b2. Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:

Analysis of the Chinese Brand Name "Character Bank":
The core content of Session Five is grounded in this theory. Students are guided to construct a semantic field database of high-frequency Chinese characters, analyzing why and how these characters have become favored choices in brand naming:

"乐" (lè): Represents happiness and joy; used in 可口可乐 (Coca-Cola), 百事可乐 (Pepsi), and 雀巢 (Nestlé), directly conveying the emotional value brought by the product.

"福 / 富" (fú/fù): Symbolize fortune and wealth; used in 家乐福 (Carrefour), aligning with collectivist cultural values that emphasize family well-being.

"宝" (bǎo): Conveys value and preciousness; used in 宝马 (BMW), instantly enhancing the perceived value of the product.

"捷" (jié): Denotes quickness and agility; used in 捷豹 (Jaguar) and 保时捷 (Porsche), accurately reflecting performance-related brand attributes.

"斯" (sī): A commonly used transliteration character with no concrete meaning, yet evokes a Westernized and elegant tone, as in 劳斯莱斯 (Rolls-Royce).

Semantic Selection and Creation:
Through this module, students learn that every Chinese character selected in a brand name is a semantic investment. Successful translated names combine a limited set of "premium lexical items" to generate unlimited positive semantic associations, thereby securing a favorable position in the consumer's mental space.

2.3.2 Semiotic Theory: Signifier, Signified, and Brand Myth

Semiotics regards brand names as complete signs, and their translation as a process of reconstructing meaning within cross-cultural contexts (Chandler, 2017; Danesi, 2021).

a) Theoretical Core:

Saussure divided signs into two components: the *signifier* (sound/image) and the *signified* (concept) (Saussure, 1916/2011). Roland Barthes extended this by proposing that, beyond the first-order signification (e.g., "rose" signifies a type of flower), signs can also operate at a second level to construct *myths*—culturally embedded, ideologically shaped meanings (e.g., "rose" signifying "romantic love" in Western cultures) (Barthes, 1957/2012).

b) Application in Brand Translation and Course Integration:

First Level: Transformation of Signifier and Signified
Brand name translation begins with the obligatory transformation at the level of the *signifier*. The brand name "BMW" carries the signifier of the three-letter acronym in sound and visual form; its signified is "Bayerische Motoren Werke" and its automotive products. The translator's task is to find a new signifier in Chinese for this "product".

Second Level: Construction of Brand Myth
This is the true essence of brand name translation. The new Chinese signifier 宝马 (bǎo mǎ), at the first level, signifies "a treasured horse." However, through translation, it is endowed with a second-level mythical meaning: speed, grace, status, and success (as in the phrase "香车宝马" [luxury cars and fine horses]). This myth constructed by the Chinese symbol is far more resonant with Chinese consumer desires than the original German "engineering myth" associated with "BMW".

Comparative Case Study:
The course guides students through semiotic comparative analysis:

Mercedes-Benz → 奔驰:

The signifier shifts from a personal name to a term meaning "gallop" or "dash". The myth transitions from "European elegance and heritage" to "mastery of life's journey through power and freedom."

Nestlé → 雀巢:

The signifier shifts from the German word for "little bird's nest" to the Chinese characters for "sparrow's nest." The myth evolves from "home, warmth, and care" (Western nest imagery) to an intensified meaning of "tenderness, safety, and natural nurturing", aligning seamlessly with the original logo of a mother bird feeding her young.

These examples demonstrate how the mythic dimension of a translated brand name often determines its cultural acceptance and emotional appeal in the target market.

2.3.3 Final Integration of the Theoretical Framework
At this point, we can outline the complete, multi-layered theoretical ecosystem that underpins this course:

a) **Strategic Level (Intercultural Communication Theory):**
Answers the question of *"why change is necessary"*, defining the strategic orientation of translation from the perspective of macro-level cultural dimensions and communication styles (Hall, 1976; Hofstede et al., 2010; De Mooij, 2021).

b) **Principle Level (Translation Studies Theories):**
Answers the question of *"on what basis change occurs"*, offering guiding principles for practice such as functional purpose (Nord, 2018; Reiss & Vermeer, 2014), creative latitude (Xie, 2020), and a spectrum of strategic options (Venuti, 1995/2008).

c) **Operational Level (Linguistic and Semiotic Theories):**
Answers the question of *"how to effect change"*, providing concrete methodologies for manipulating linguistic materials (sound, form, meaning) (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2015) and reconstructing symbolic meaning (signifier, signified, myth) (Barthes, 1957/2012; Saussure, 1916/2011; Chandler, 2017).

Within this framework, when students face a brand translation task, their cognitive process follows this trajectory:

First, conduct an intercultural diagnosis (What are the cultural characteristics of the target market?);

Then, define the functional purpose (What effect should the translation achieve?);

Next, choose a macro strategy (Domestication or foreignization?);

Finally, employ linguistic and semiotic tools (Which characters to select? How to combine sound, form, and meaning? What kind of brand myth to construct?) to execute the translation with precision.

This systematic theoretical empowerment ensures that the course is not only capable of cultivating translators with ingenuity, but more importantly, intercultural brand communication experts who possess theory, methodology, and depth.

2.4 The Pedagogical Bedrock: Educational Theories Supporting Instruction
The success of a course lies not only in the richness and relevance of its content but also in the scientific design and implementation of its instruction. The course "From Coca-Cola to BMW" is deeply rooted in contemporary educational theories that emphasize learner agency, knowledge construction, and the social nature of learning. These theories collectively form the underlying logic of the course's pedagogical practice and ensure the maximization of learning outcomes.

2.4.1 Constructivist Learning Theory
Constructivism is the core educational philosophy of this course. It fundamentally transforms the role of the teacher and the method of knowledge transmission in the classroom (Brooks & Brooks, 1999; Liu & Matthews, 2005).

a) **Theoretical Core:**
Knowledge is not passively received but actively constructed by learners through interaction with their environment. Learners process and interpret new information based on their existing knowledge and experiences, thus forming new understandings (Fosnot & Perry, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978).

b) **Manifestation in Course Design:**
Activating Prior Knowledge: At the beginning of the course (Session 1), familiar brands such as "Coca-Cola" and "Nike" are introduced to tap into students' existing brand perceptions and linguistic intuitions as consumers. These serve as "anchors" for constructing new, systematized knowledge about brand translation.

Creating Authentic Learning Contexts: All cases, discussions, and projects in the course are situated in highly simulated real-world contexts. For instance, in the workshop (Session 7), students take on the role of "brand consultants" rather than "students". Their task is to solve naming problems for real (or closely simulated) brands. This contextualization gives learning real-world relevance and drives students to actively explore and integrate knowledge.

Social Construction: Constructivism emphasizes the social dimension of learning. The course extensively employs group discussions, collaborative projects, and peer evaluations. In defending their translation proposals or critiquing others', students must articulate their reasoning, engage with diverse perspectives, and collaboratively revise and deepen their understanding through interaction (social construction). For example, in the debate on "Literal Translation or Transliteration?", there is no single correct answer—only increasingly comprehensive understandings formed through the clash and integration of viewpoints.

2.4.2 Project-Based Learning (PBL)
PBL serves as the overarching organizational framework of this course, integrating fragmented learning activities into a coherent educational journey marked by purpose and tangible outcomes (Larmer et al., 2015; Thomas, 2000).

a) Theoretical Core:

Students acquire and apply key knowledge and skills by engaging in an extended, real-world, complex, and challenging project. The learning process is structured around this project and culminates in a concrete product or deliverable (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006; Larmer & Mergendoller, 2010).

b) Manifestation in Course Design:

Driving Task: The "ultimate project" of this course—**a complete brand naming and promotional strategy** (Session 8)—is presented to students at the very beginning. This complex, open-ended task acts as a "North Star", guiding the entire course. It provides clear purpose to each session and every exercise. Students are aware that learning theories, analyzing cases, and participating in workshops are all in service of successfully completing this final project.

Backward Design: The course content is reverse-engineered based on the competencies required to complete the final project. To develop an effective naming strategy, students need theoretical tools (intercultural and translation studies), strategic analysis skills (cultural adaptation, domestication and foreignization), and creative execution abilities (linguistics and semiotics)—all of which are precisely addressed in the first seven course modules. PBL ensures the focus and efficiency of course content.

2.4.3 Output-Oriented Approach (OOA)

The OOA theory, especially its Chinese variant, perfectly aligns with the nature of this course as a language application discipline, providing a concrete pathway to address the "separation of learning and use" issue (Wen, 2018).

a) Theoretical Core:

The OOA framework consists of three core stages: "driving", "facilitating" and "evaluating". Teaching begins with a real communicative task that students need to accomplish (driving). The instructor then provides and guides students in selecting necessary input materials (facilitating). Finally, students' output is assessed immediately and effectively (evaluating) (Wen, 2016, 2018).

b) Manifestation in Course Design:

Output-Driven: Each session starts with a challenging "small output" task. For example, at the beginning of Session 2, the instructor might pose: "Assuming Subway is entering the Chinese market, please quickly draft a Chinese name for the brand in your groups." This task immediately exposes students' current limitations, greatly motivating their intrinsic interest in learning about the "art of phonetic and semantic translation."

Input Facilitation: After students are "driven," the teacher no longer simply imparts knowledge but acts as a "resource provider" and "methodological guide," leading students to study classic cases (such as "赛百味"), analyze translation strategies, and summarize principles and skills. At this stage, the input is highly efficient due to its clear purpose.

Selective Learning: OOA emphasizes that students should selectively learn and absorb from input materials based on the needs of their output tasks. In brand translation workshops, for example, when naming a specific brand (such as a tech product), students proactively search the lexicon for characters like "捷" (jié), "科" (kē), and "睿" (ruì) that convey a technological feel, rather than passively memorizing all high-frequency characters.

2.4.4 Situated Learning Theory

This theory supports the numerous authentic cases and practical activities in the course, emphasizing the importance of "communities of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

a) Theoretical Core:

Learning is the process through which learners legitimately participate in a social community of practice, and knowledge is the product of activities, contexts, and culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98).

b) Manifestation in Course Design:

Creation of a "Community of Practice": This course is committed to constructing the classroom as a "community of practice in brand translation". Within this community, there is a shared mission (to create excellent translated brand names), shared resources and tools (theoretical frameworks, case libraries, high-frequency character lists), and commonly recognized modes of practice (group collaboration, proposal presentations, multidimensional evaluations). Through participation in these practices, students gradually evolve from peripheral observers into core members capable of legitimate participation.

Authentic Tasks: As previously noted, all tasks in the course strive for authenticity, allowing students to feel that they are engaged in work similar to that of industry professionals rather than merely academic exercises.

2.4.5 Final Integration of the Theoretical Framework

In summary, the theoretical framework of this course is a multi-level, mutually supportive organic whole:

Constructivism serves as the philosophical foundation of the course, defining *how learning occurs*;

Project-Based Learning constitutes the macro-level structure of the course, organizing the entire learning process;

The Production-Oriented Approach guides the micro-level instructional procedures, directing the concrete implementation of each lesson;

Situated Learning Theory provides the socio-cultural dimension of the course, creating an immersive learning environment and culture.

These four major pedagogical theories collectively serve the teaching and transformation of the three core disciplinary domains: Intercultural Communication Theory, Translation Studies, and Linguistics & Semiotics. Ultimately, through the synergistic effect of these theories, the course successfully achieves its core objective: to cultivate students into interdisciplinary talents with intercultural awareness, creative translation competence, and strategic brand thinking.

3. Course Design Model of "From Coca-Cola to BMW"

This course model aims to transform students, through short-term intensive learning, from beginners with only a vague perception of brand name translation into quasi-professionals equipped with systematic analytical ability and creative practical competence. The course design follows a spiral progression of "cognitive construction – competence enhancement – practical application – integrated output," throughout which the teaching philosophy of "theory-led, case-driven, and practice-anchored" is consistently implemented.

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3.1 Course Philosophy and Objective System

3.1.1 Core Philosophy

This course is built upon the following three core philosophical pillars:

a) *Philosophy of Cross-disciplinary Integration:* Brand name translation lies at the intersection of linguistics, translation studies, marketing, and intercultural communication; the course must break disciplinary boundaries and provide an integrated knowledge framework.

b) *Competence-oriented Philosophy:* The core of course assessment is not the memorization of knowledge points, but students' ability to analyze, create, and solve real-world problems.

c) *Learner Autonomy Philosophy:* The teacher's role shifts from a "knowledge transmitter" to a "designer and facilitator," stimulating students' active exploration and collaborative learning through projects, case studies, and workshops.

3.1.2 Three-dimensional Objective System

a) Based on the above philosophy, the course objectives are specified across three dimensions: *Knowledge Dimension:* To systematically master the main strategies of brand name translation (transliteration, literal translation, creative translation, etc.) and the underlying theories of intercultural communication and translation studies.

b) *Competence Dimension:* To independently carry out the full process of brand name translation—from diagnosis and strategy selection to creative generation and evaluation—and to apply brand names as linguistic materials in second language teaching contexts.

c) *Literacy Dimension:* To develop a keen sense of intercultural awareness, cultivate critical thinking towards linguistic and cultural phenomena, and foster the ability to creatively solve problems in intercultural contexts.

3.2 Course Content Modules and Teaching Implementation

To achieve the above objectives, the course content is organized into four progressive modules, corresponding to the core process illustrated in the diagram.

3.2.1 Module One: Cognitive Construction — The "Principles" and "Methods" of Brand Name Translation (Sessions 1–2)

This module serves as the foundation of the course, aiming to establish a macro-level theoretical perspective and a basic analytical framework for students.

a) *Teaching Content:* Introduce the significance of brands and brand naming; analyze key differences between Chinese and English languages and cultures; focus on the two fundamental approaches to brand name translation: transliteration and literal translation.

b) *Theoretical Integration:* Introduce Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory and Hall's high- and low-context culture theory to explain the necessity of translation;

apply Skopos Theory to guide students in considering the criteria for selecting translation strategies.

c) *Teaching Implementation:*

Case Introduction: Use globally renowned examples such as "Coca-Cola", "Pepsi" and "Nike" to spark student interest and provide an intuitive understanding of the appeal of successful translated brand names.

Group Discussion: Organize a debate on "Literal Translation or Transliteration?" to allow students to experience the trade-offs between translation strategies through intellectual exchange, followed by a theoretical summary and enhancement by the instructor.

Practical Exercise: Students are divided into groups to design bilingual names for five international brands (e.g., Netflix), applying the concepts they have learned in an initial hands-on task.

3.2.2 Module Two: Competence Enhancement — In-depth Exploration of Strategy, Culture, and Language (Sessions 3–5)

After establishing basic cognition, this module delves deeper into the cultural, visual, and linguistic dimensions to cultivate students' critical analysis and strategic thinking abilities.

a) *Teaching Content:* Explore in depth the strategies of cultural adaptation, the interaction between visual and linguistic symbols (cross-modal thinking), and the lexical choices and semantic strategies in Chinese and English brand names.

b) *Theoretical Integration:* Deepen the application of cultural dimensions and context theories; introduce the semiotic theory of "signifier and signified" to analyze the interaction between visuals and language; apply lexical semantics to decode the cultural meanings of high-frequency words.

c) *Teaching Implementation:*

Case Analysis (Success vs. Failure): Compare successful cases such as "Mercedes-Benz" and "BMW" with cases that failed due to cultural misinterpretation, enabling students to understand the risks and benefits of cultural adaptation.

Micro-presentations: Students give short presentations on selected brand cases to develop their research and presentation skills.

Creative Design Activity: Design bilingual names for given logos to strengthen cross-modal thinking; create and name an original brand, integrating lexical strategies and cultural insights.

3.2.3 Module Three: Practical Application and Integration — From Classroom to Workplace and Classroom (Sessions 6–7)

This module encourages students to apply and integrate the knowledge and skills acquired in previous modules within real-world contexts.

a) *Teaching Content:* Integrate brand name translation with the field of Teaching Chinese as an International Language and conduct intensive brand name translation workshops.

b) *Theoretical Integration:* Combine Project-Based Learning (PBL) theory and Constructivist learning theory to enable students to "learn by doing".

c) Teaching Implementation:

Instructional Design Activity: Guide students to consider how brand names such as "Coca-Cola" can be used in teaching Chinese grammar points (e.g., the "可 + V" structure), cultivating their ability to transform professional knowledge into teaching resources.

Translation Workshop: The core practical component. Students work in groups to translate ten real or fictional brand names and receive peer review and instructor feedback based on four dimensions: phonological resemblance, semantic relevance, cultural appropriateness, and communicative effectiveness. This process greatly enhances students' abilities in teamwork, creative thinking, and rational evaluation.

3.2.4 Module Four: Outcome Presentation and Reflection — Completion of the Learning Loop (Session 8)

This module serves as the climax and conclusion of the course, aiming to complete the learning loop through outcome presentation and to promote the internalization of knowledge through reflection.

a) *Teaching Content:* Final project presentations by students; comprehensive review and summary of the course.

b) *Teaching Implementation:*

Final Project Presentation: Students present their "complete brand naming and promotion plan," a comprehensive final project requiring them to carry out the full process for a brand newly entering the market—from intercultural diagnosis and naming strategy to bilingual name design and a basic marketing slogan. This serves as the ultimate assessment of all the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the course.

Course Review: The instructor guides students in revisiting the core points of all eight sessions, linking fragmented knowledge into a systematic knowledge network.

Outlook and Feedback: Introduce frontier topics such as AI translation and brand-related legal issues to stimulate students' interest in future learning, and collect teaching feedback through questionnaires.

3.3 Teaching Methodology

The success of this course relies on a series of student-centered teaching methods:

Case-Based Teaching: Employed throughout the course, using a large number of classical cases—both positive and negative, ancient and modern, Chinese and international—to bring theories to life and make them tangible.

Project-Based Learning: The final brand naming project drives the entire learning process, enabling students to learn with tasks in mind, fostering a strong sense of achievement and purpose.

Collaborative Learning: Frequent group discussions, workshops, and project presentations cultivate students' teamwork and communication skills.

Practical Workshops: The classroom is transformed into a "design studio," where students learn by doing and gain insights through creation.

Through the above meticulously designed course model, this course successfully provides students with an immersive and intensive learning experience in brand intercultural translation within a compact short semester, laying a solid foundation for their future academic advancement and career development in related fields.

4. Teaching Practice and Effectiveness Evaluation

Whether the design philosophy and theoretical framework of a course are successful must ultimately be tested through teaching practice. This chapter, based on three iterations (a total of 24 class sections) of the "From Coca-Cola to BMW" course, adopts a case study approach to systematically evaluate the teaching effectiveness through diversified data collection and analysis, and to address the core questions raised in the introduction of this study.

4.1 Research Methods and Data Collection

To comprehensively and objectively evaluate the effectiveness of the course, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, collecting both quantitative data and qualitative materials to achieve triangulation.

a) *Research Subjects:* A total of 248 undergraduate students who took this elective course over three semesters, with majors including Translation, Business English, Teaching Chinese as an International Language, and Advertising.

b) *Data Sources:*

b1. Direct Evidence of Outcomes: Collected 126 physical submissions, including all group final project reports, brand naming proposals, and workshop exercise results.

b2. Reflective Questionnaires: After the course, students were invited to complete an anonymous online questionnaire to provide self-perceived feedback on the achievement of course objectives, with 230 valid responses collected.

b3. Semi-Structured Interviews: At the end of each teaching cycle, 12 students were randomly selected for in-depth interviews (approximately 30 minutes each), aiming to gain deeper insights into their learning experiences and perceptions.

b4. Instructor's Teaching Observation Log: The researcher (i.e., the course instructor) recorded highlights of class discussions, typical difficulties encountered by students, and key events during project progress in a teaching journal.

4.2 Analysis of the Teaching Practice Process

The teaching practice was closely aligned with the course model described in Chapter 3. The following presents typical teaching moments as illustrative examples.

4.2.1 Deepening the Application of Theory: From "Knowing What" to "Knowing Why"

At the beginning of the course, students' evaluations of brand name translations mostly remained at a perceptual level, such as "this translation sounds good." Through systematic theoretical input, students gradually developed a framework for rational analysis.

Classroom Record: When analyzing the case "IKEA → 宜家," Student A initially commented, "It feels warm and cozy." After studying Hofstede's collectivism dimension and semiotic theory, the student later wrote in an assignment: "'宜家' is derived from

The Book of Songs (诗经·宜其室家), which not only resembles the original phonetically, but also activates traditional Chinese cultural values regarding family harmony (collectivism), thus constructing a brand mythology of 'a suitable and beautiful home' (second-order signification). This perfectly realizes the brand positioning shift from a Nordic furniture company to a partner in Chinese family life."

Analysis: This example demonstrates that theoretical tools successfully transformed students' perceptual understanding into rational analysis supported by academic theory, achieving a shift from a "consumer perspective" to an "analyst perspective".

4.2.2 The Driving Effect of Project-Based Learning: From Passive Reception to Active Exploration

The final project (designing a brand name and promotion plan for a newly established tech company) served as a driving force that significantly increased students' learning engagement.

Observation Log Entry: Several groups actively researched cultural taboos in target markets (e.g., Southeast Asia) after class, studied naming strategies of competitors, and independently constructed semantic networks of high-frequency Chinese characters to support creative generation. One student stated in an interview: "Because we had to produce a complete and decent final proposal, I listened to the case studies in class with a clear sense of purpose, constantly thinking, 'Can I apply this strategy to our project?'"

Analysis: The successful implementation of PBL transformed external motivation (grades) into internal motivation (a sense of achievement and professional identity from completing the project), thereby promoting deep learning.

4.2.3 Creative Defiance in the Workshop: From Language Transfer to Cultural Creation

In the translation workshop of Session 7, students' creative thinking was fully stimulated.

Examples of Student Work:

Given Brand: A smart speaker featuring "minimalist design and human-centered interaction" (English name: *Aura*).
Student Translation Proposals:

Proposal One (Phonetic-Semantic Combination): "奥聆" — "奥" transliterates "Au," and implies "mystery"; "聆" means "to listen," highlighting the product function. The overall name conveys a sense of technological mystique and poetic elegance, suggesting "listening to mysteries".

Proposal Two (Creative Defiance): "启言" — Completely abandons transliteration, choosing instead the meaning "to initiate conversation," emphasizing the product's core of interactivity. The name is concise and powerful, evoking a sense of prestige and responsiveness, as in "speak

a command, and it obeys".

Analysis: These proposals go beyond simple transliteration or literal translation, demonstrating students' deep understanding and flexible application of Skopos Theory (emphasizing user interaction) and the concept of creative defiance (boldly abandoning the literal meaning of the original name).

4.3 Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness
4.3.1 Analysis of Learning Outcome Quality

An evaluation of the 126 final project reports shows that students demonstrated a high level of comprehensive ability in brand naming practices. The table below summarizes the achievement levels across assessment dimensions derived from the course objectives:

Assessment Dimension	Criteria for Excellence	Achievement Rate	Examples of Student Performance
Intercultural Awareness	Able to systematically analyze the target market's culture and select translation strategies accordingly	91%	One group, when designing a Chinese name for a "high-protein energy bar," proactively avoided characters such as "虫" (insect) and "兽" (beast), which conflict with traditional Chinese dietary values, and instead selected terms like "力源" and "谷魄" that convey the concept of "natural nourishment."
Application of Translation Strategies	Able to appropriately apply transliteration, literal translation, and creative translation strategies, with clear rationale	95%	The majority of reports clearly articulated their naming strategies, such as: "This project adopts a domestication-oriented strategy, aiming to quickly establish brand affinity."
Language and Creativity	Translated name excels in sound, form, and meaning, with originality and communicative impact	88%	For example, the name "随映" (phonetically close to "随影," meaning "to project anytime, like a shadow") created for a portable projector, received unanimous praise from both teachers and students.
Integrated Application	Able to combine naming with a basic promotional plan, demonstrating holistic thinking	82%	Some outstanding groups designed matching slogans for their brands, such as: "启言音箱，知你心意" ("Qiyan Speaker, Knows Your Heart").

4.3.2 Student Self-Perception and Feedback

Statistical analysis of 230 questionnaires indicates that students held highly positive self-perceptions regarding the achievement of course objectives.

> *"I have systematically understood the strategies and theories of brand name translation"*: 94% of students agreed or strongly agreed.

> *"My intercultural analytical and communication abilities have improved"*: 89% of students agreed or strongly agreed.

> *"The course has sparked my interest in the intersection of language, culture, and business"*: 92% of students agreed or strongly agreed.

> *"Project-based learning and workshops were very helpful for my knowledge acquisition"*: 96% of students agreed or strongly agreed.

In qualitative feedback, students frequently mentioned phrases such as "a door to a new world was opened", "I've learned to view advertisements through a theoretical lens", and "the most fulfilling final project". One representative comment from Student B in an interview was: "This course made me realize that translation is not a word game confined to a study room, but a bridge that connects products with people's hearts and facilitates communication between different cultures."

4.4 Conclusion and Reflection

In summary, through the triangulation of diverse sources of evidence, the teaching practice of this course has achieved significant results:

Effective Achievement of Course Objectives: Students not only mastered the knowledge and skills of brand translation, but also made substantial progress in intercultural awareness, creative thinking, and the ability to solve complex problems.

Validation of the Course Model's Effectiveness: The integrated model of "Theory–Case–Practice–Output," along with the application of PBL and POA teaching methods, has been proven effective in cultivating higher-order competencies within a short-term course.

Stimulation of Learning Motivation and Professional Identity: The course's authenticity, practicality, and level of challenge were well received by students, transforming the learning process from "passive task completion" to "active exploration".

Reflection and Improvement: Teaching practice also revealed that some students experienced anxiety when initially confronted with the abstractness of theoretical concepts. In the future, the introduction of theory will be further optimized—for example, by incorporating more visual tools such as short videos and infographics—to lower the threshold of understanding, thereby allowing theory to better serve practice and unlock greater creative potential among students.

5. Discussion and Implications

Through a detailed presentation of the design, implementation, and evaluation of the course *From Coca-Cola to BMW*, this study confirms the effectiveness of the model in cultivating students' intercultural communication and creative translation competencies. Building on this foundation, this chapter delves into the underlying reasons for the course model's success, elucidates its implications for related educational fields, and candidly analyzes its limitations, with the aim of informing future pedagogical reforms and research.

5.1 Analysis of the Key Elements Behind the Course's Success

The success of this course is not accidental, but rather the result of the synergistic effect of multiple pedagogical principles and design elements. Its core strengths can be summarized in the following three aspects:

5.1.1 The Empowering Effect of "Authenticity"

Brand translation is a professional practice that genuinely exists in the globalized market. By introducing this real-world issue into the classroom, the course endowed learning activities with an unparalleled sense of *meaning* and *mission*. Students were no longer memorizing theories to pass exams, but actively seeking and applying theories to complete a project of real-world significance (e.g., naming an actual brand). This kind of task-based learning rooted in authenticity greatly stimulated students' intrinsic motivation, achieving a transformation from "being told to learn" to "wanting to learn". As one interviewed student put it: "Every decision we made seemed to echo in the real business world."

5.1.2 The "Chemical Reaction" of Interdisciplinary Knowledge

The course skillfully situates itself at the intersection of linguistics, translation studies, communication, marketing, and culture. This interdisciplinary nature brings two major advantages: First, it provides a common dialogue platform and unique contribution perspectives for students from diverse academic backgrounds (e.g., translation and marketing majors), fostering the social construction of knowledge within groups. Second, it enables students to experience firsthand that solving complex real-world problems often requires transcending the boundaries of a single discipline to integrate and reconstruct knowledge. This "chemical reaction" nurtures exactly the kind of interdisciplinary, T-shaped talent urgently needed in today's society.

5.1.3 The High Sense of Achievement from "Creative" Output

Unlike traditional courses that are oriented toward standard answers, the core output of this course—the brand name—is highly creative and open-ended. When students see their self-created names such as "随映" or "启言" receive recognition from peers and instructors, the resulting sense of accomplishment and confidence is incomparable to that of conventional assignments. This positive emotional experience not only reinforces the knowledge learned but also shapes a proactive academic personality characterized by creativity and a willingness to express ideas.

5.2 Implications for Related Educational Fields

The model of this course carries significant referential value for translation teaching, intercultural communication education, and even broader practice-oriented humanities instruction.

5.2.1 Implications for Translation Teaching: From "Language Artisans" to "Cultural Strategists"

Traditional translation teaching often focuses on literary or official document translation, aiming to cultivate precise "language artisans." The practice of this course demonstrates that translation instruction can and should expand toward more *applied* and *strategic* orientations. By introducing practical projects such as brand translation, students can be guided to focus on the purpose, function, and audience response of translation, thereby

understanding translation as an intercultural strategic decision-making process. This opens up broader career paths for translation majors, such as localization and international brand management.

5.2.2 Implications for Intercultural Communication Teaching: From "Theoretical Cognition" to "Experiential Perception"

Intercultural communication teaching can sometimes fall into abstract theoretical explanation. This course offers a pathway to *embody* intercultural theory. Through conducting cultural diagnoses and selecting strategies for specific brands, students internalize theories such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Hall's high- and low-context cultures into a form of operable "cultural sensitivity." Brands become ideal carriers for perceiving cultural differences and practicing cultural adaptation, making intercultural learning tangible and applicable.

5.2.3 Implications for Applied Humanities Education: Constructing a Teaching Loop of "Unity of Knowledge and Action"

This course provides a replicable model for building practice-oriented humanities curricula. It successfully constructs a teaching loop of "unity of knowledge and action": real-world problems drive learning, theoretical tools enable competency development, project-based practice internalizes knowledge, and tangible outputs validate learning outcomes. This model demonstrates that the value of humanities education lies not only in the transmission of knowledge, but also in cultivating students' core competencies for solving real-world problems—thus strongly responding to societal doubts about the "practicality" of the humanities.

5.3 Limitations and Future Directions

While affirming the effectiveness of the course, this study also acknowledges its limitations, which in turn point to directions for future improvement and further research.

5.3.1 Limitations of the Course

Disciplinary Background Differences: Although interdisciplinarity is a strength, some students from humanities and social sciences backgrounds encountered certain challenges in initially understanding business concepts such as brand positioning and market segmentation.

Subjectivity in Evaluation: Despite the existence of multi-dimensional evaluation criteria, the assessment of brand names inevitably involves subjective judgment, which raises higher demands for the objectivity and fairness of evaluation.

Limitations of Course Scope: As a short-term course offered during a mini-semester, there is an inherent tension between breadth and depth. Some intriguing topics (e.g., legal registration of brand names) could not be fully explored.

5.3.2 Future Development Directions

Deepening University-Industry Collaboration: Seek partnerships with Chinese domestic brands undergoing internationalization or overseas brands aiming to enter the Chinese market. Introduce "real client" projects, allowing students to face actual business needs, budgets, and feedback, thereby enhancing the course's level of challenge and practical value.

Integration and Critical Use of AI Tools: Introduce large language models such as ChatGPT and ERNIE Bot into the classroom. Design specific teaching sessions in which students learn to use AI for brainstorming and generating alternative names—and more importantly—critically evaluate and refine AI-generated outputs. This not only improves efficiency but also fosters students' future competitiveness in working collaboratively with AI.

Expansion of Research Methods: Future research may include long-term tracking studies to examine whether students who completed this course demonstrate sustained advantages in intercultural competence and creative problem-solving abilities during further studies or in the workplace. Such research would provide more compelling evidence of the course's long-term impact.

Extension of the Curriculum System: Based on this course, more advanced or in-depth modules can be developed, such as "Brand Localization Strategy" or "Intercultural Advertising Copywriting," thereby forming a more comprehensive curriculum system for brand communication and intercultural application.

5.4 Conclusion

The *From Coca-Cola to BMW* course case demonstrates that, in the context of educational reform, a successful course should serve as a bridge connecting academic theory with the real world, a platform for stimulating students' creative potential, and a rehearsal space for developing interdisciplinary strategic thinking. It not only responds to the urgent contemporary need for intercultural communication competence in terms of content, but also offers a proven methodological paradigm for practice-oriented humanities education. This study hopes that the pedagogical principles and design strategies embodied in this course model may serve as a valuable reference for peers, collectively advancing China's foreign language education and intercultural talent cultivation toward higher quality and greater practical effectiveness.

Appendix.

A Brief Syllabus of "Cross-cultural Brand Name Translation: From Coca-Cola to BMW"

Designed by Dr. Huang Xiao

Course Objectives:
Understand the translation strategies and cultural connotations of Chinese brand names.
Master linguistic patterns and cultural adaptation skills in brand name translation.
Build students' intercultural awareness and cross-linguistic thinking.
Develop students' ability to analyze and design brand names from the perspective of language teaching and branding.

Focus Areas:
Cross-cultural Communication;
Brand Language Strategy;
L2 Teaching & Materials Design;
Translation Practice;
Chinese Culture Dissemination.

Course Schedule (8 Sessions):

Session 1: Introduction to Language, Culture, and Brand Name Translation
What is a brand? The importance of brand naming
Four functions of brand naming: identity, emotion, positioning, communication

Chinese-English linguistic differences, phonetic comparison, and cultural background

Case study introduction: Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nike

Group discussion: Should brand name translation be semantic or phonetic?

Session 2: The Art of Transliteration vs. Semantic Translation

Challenges and brilliance of transliteration (e.g., Subway → 赛百味)

Cultural creativity in semantic translation (e.g., Nestlé → 雀巢)

Wordplay and positive connotations (e.g., BMW, Heineken)

Activity: Group task – create bilingual names for 5 international brands

Session 3: Cultural Adaptation Strategies in Brand Naming

Localization strategies and risks

Reflection of "Chinese aesthetics" in naming

Analysis of failed brand name translations

Case analysis: Carrefour, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar, Porsche

Student micro presentations

Session 4: From Logo to Name — Cross-modal Thinking

How to derive brand names from logos?

Fun case: Ralph Lauren's "Three-legged Horse" joke

Cultural differences in visual-verbal interaction

Activity: Design bilingual names for a given brand logo

Session 5: Lexical Beauty in Brand Naming — Word Choice and Semantic Strategies

High-frequency characters in Chinese brand names (e.g., 乐, 福, 宝, 捷, 克)

Creative methods in English brand names (e.g., compound words, onomatopoeia, personification)

Activity: Create and name an original brand (food/auto/tech)

Session 6: Integrating International Chinese Education and Branding

How can brand naming promote Chinese internationally?

Teaching design: Use brand names to teach grammar (e.g., 可+V, 百+N)

Activity: Design a lesson using brand names as teaching materials

Session 7: Brand Name Translation Workshop (Practice)

Group project: Create Chinese/English names for 10 brands

Evaluation: phonetic similarity, semantic meaning, cultural adaptation, communication power

Group presentations and feedback

Session 8: Final Presentations and Wrap-Up

Students present full naming & promotion project (bilingual)

Review key translation principles and cultural insights

Instructor's summary and suggestions for further exploration (e.g., AI branding, legal issues)

Final quiz / reflection survey / feedback

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