

Exploring the Mechanism of ASEAN-Oriented Translation Talent Cultivation from the Perspective of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

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Abstract: Research on translation competence has long prioritized linguistic competence, technological competence, and cultural knowledge, while giving insufficient attention to the hidden dimension of psychological and sociocultural adaptation. In ASEAN-oriented Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) education, a common phenomenon is “linguistic fluency with cultural blockage”: translations may be grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate, with cultural connotations lost and communication effectiveness compromised. Taking cross-cultural adaptation theory as its analytical framework, this article reverses the traditional focus from “international students in China adapting to China” to a new scenario in which “Chinese translation professionals adapt to ASEAN and disseminate Chinese culture.” It proposes an Adaptation–Mediation–Translation (AMT) theoretical framework. This framework divides cross-cultural adaptation into three dimensions—psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and academic/professional adaptation—and links them to three dimensions of translation competence: competence in rendering culture-loaded expressions, competence in achieving pragmatic equivalence, and cross-cultural communication effectiveness. It further proposes a progressive transformation pathway of “cultural cognition → cultural identification → cultural dissemination.” The article then discusses pedagogical transformation pathways for ASEAN-oriented MTI education, including the reconstruction of training objectives, the development of teaching resources, innovation in teaching models, and reform of the assessment system. It argues that cross-cultural adaptation is not an appendage to translation competence but a hidden antecedent variable of ASEAN-oriented translation quality and communication effectiveness. The AMT framework offers a new theoretical perspective for MTI education reform and provides scholarly support for serving China–ASEAN people-to-people and cultural exchanges and regional language service needs.

Keywords: Cross-cultural adaptation, translation competence, ASEAN-oriented, Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI), cultural mediation, Adaptation–Mediation–Translation (AMT) model.

1. Introduction

1.1. Problem Statement

International communication capacity building has imposed new requirements on high-level translation professionals. Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) students not only undertake the task of linguistic conversion but also shoulder the mission of cultural interpretation and external dissemination; their cross-cultural competence directly affects the effectiveness of China’s discourse. In recent years, China has attached great importance to international communication capacity building and the development of an external discourse system, which provides fundamental guidance for the development of foreign language programs and talent cultivation in higher education. However, a deep-seated contradiction in current MTI education has not received sufficient attention: students have strong foreign language proficiency but lack “cultural confidence” when facing the target culture. This contradiction is particularly prominent in ASEAN-oriented translation scenarios. From the perspective of translation education, translation is not simple linguistic conversion but the re-creation of cultural contexts. If translators lack the ability to adapt to the target culture, even if the language is correct, cultural connotations may be lost and communication effectiveness may be compromised. Therefore, MTI education needs to shift from “linguistic conversion” to

“cultural adaptation” and incorporate cross-cultural adaptation competence into its core training objectives. This is not only a theoretical extension of translation competence research but also a practical necessity for serving the national strategy of international communication.

Guangxi is a frontier window for China–ASEAN openness and cooperation and the permanent host of the China–ASEAN Expo. Connected by mountains and rivers with ASEAN countries, Guangxi undertakes the important mission of deepening China–ASEAN people-to-people and cultural exchanges and economic and trade cooperation. In recent years, September has been the month when the China–ASEAN Expo is held and an important period for China–ASEAN people-to-people and cultural exchanges. Various foreign-related activities have generated a surge in demand for high-level translation professionals who are proficient in Chinese culture, familiar with the ASEAN context, and equipped with cross-cultural communication competence. Universities in the region, such as Guangxi University and Guangxi University for Nationalities, have long carried out ASEAN-oriented translation talent training practices and accumulated rich teaching resources and industry connections [1][2]. However, current ASEAN-oriented translation talent training mostly focuses on language skills and translation technology, with insufficient attention to the soft power of “cross-cultural adaptation competence.” Graduates often face the awkward situation in foreign-related practice where “the

words are translated, but the meaning is not conveyed.” Therefore, leveraging Guangxi’s geographical advantages and treating cross-cultural adaptation competence as a distinctive focus of translation talent training has clear contemporary urgency and practical value [3].

In actual teaching, when MTI students face translation tasks involving ASEAN cultural contexts, the phenomenon of “linguistic fluency with cultural blockage” often occurs. Translations may be grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate, with cultural connotations lost; students’ insufficient depth of understanding of ASEAN countries’ cultural psychology, social customs, and values directly affects the accuracy and communication effectiveness of translation [4][5]. This phenomenon is not an isolated case but a common dilemma in MTI education. The German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin once pointed out that “the problem with Chinese translators is that their mother tongue is not good enough,” but this judgment reveals only half of the problem. Beyond mother-tongue cultural literacy, whether translation professionals possess the cross-cultural adaptation competence to accurately convey Chinese culture to target audiences is equally worth questioning. If translators experience cultural anxiety, misunderstanding, or psychological resistance when facing the target culture, translation quality will inevitably suffer. In other words, MTI students’ level of cross-cultural adaptation to ASEAN cultures is increasingly becoming a key variable constraining the improvement of their ASEAN-oriented translation competence.

1.2. Research Gap and Core Questions

Since the mid-to-late 20th century, cross-cultural adaptation theory has undergone a multidimensional evolution from “one-way adaptation” to “two-way interaction,” and from “psychological adaptation” to “sociocultural adaptation” and then to “academic/professional adaptation” [6][7]. However, traditional research has long focused on the one-way perspective of “how sojourners adapt to the host country,” with research subjects mainly being international students in China, international migrants, and expatriates [8]. The reverse dimension of “how native talents can better disseminate their own culture outward” has received little scholarly attention. This narrow research perspective has limited the application of cross-cultural adaptation theory in translation talent training. As “going-out” cultural disseminators, MTI students’ object of adaptation is not their own culture but the target country’s culture; their goal of adaptation is not to integrate into the host country but to effectively convey their own culture. Therefore, applying cross-cultural adaptation theory in reverse to MTI education has important theoretical extension value.

Translation competence research has formed a relatively mature theoretical genealogy, covering dimensions such as linguistic competence, transfer competence, cultural competence, technological competence, and strategic competence. However, existing research mostly remains at the level of experiential description and rarely incorporates the emotional-motivational dimension of “psychological adaptation” into the core model of translation competence [9][10]. How psychological factors such as cultural anxiety, tolerance of ambiguity, and culture shock affect translation quality still lacks systematic investigation. In ASEAN-oriented translation, psychological and sociocultural

adaptation is particularly important. ASEAN countries differ significantly in culture, and religion, etiquette, face, and communication styles all influence translation strategies. If translators lack sociocultural adaptation competence, even with strong language proficiency, they will find it difficult to achieve pragmatic equivalence and effectively handle culture-loaded expressions. Therefore, translation competence research needs to incorporate the dimension of cross-cultural adaptation and establish a transformation mechanism from “adaptation competence → translation competence” [11][12].

Research on ASEAN-oriented translation talent training has gradually emerged in recent years, but it mostly focuses on language service industries, technology platform construction, and curriculum reform [13][14][15]. Existing research has recognized the importance of cross-cultural competence, but few studies start from the psychological-social dimension of “cross-cultural adaptation” to deeply explore how MTI students’ cross-cultural adaptation level affects their ASEAN-oriented translation quality and communication effectiveness. In other words, ASEAN-oriented translation education research lacks mechanistic explanation and has not yet answered the core question of “how adaptation competence is transformed into translation competence.” This gap provides the entry point for this study. Building on existing research, this article proposes an “Adaptation-Mediation-Translation” theoretical framework, explores the internal relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence, and provides theoretical support and practical pathways for ASEAN-oriented MTI education.

1.3. Core Argument and Structure of the Article

The core argument of this article is that cross-cultural adaptation is not an appendage to translation competence but a hidden antecedent variable of ASEAN-oriented translation quality and communication effectiveness. MTI education should shift from “linguistic conversion” to integrated training in “adaptation-mediation-dissemination.” Specifically, cross-cultural adaptation is transformed into translation quality and communication effectiveness through the process of cultural mediation; adaptation competence affects the handling of culture-loaded expressions, the achievement of pragmatic equivalence, and the attainment of communication effectiveness [16][17]. This argument contains three layers of meaning: first, cross-cultural adaptation is multidimensional, including psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and academic/professional adaptation; second, cross-cultural adaptation influences translation competence through the progressive pathway of cultural cognition, cultural identification, and cultural dissemination; third, MTI education should incorporate cross-cultural adaptation into training objectives, teaching resources, teaching models, and assessment systems.

This article is divided into seven parts. The first part is the introduction, which raises the problem and research gap. The second part reviews the theoretical intersection of cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence and identifies existing research gaps. The third part analyzes the particularity of cross-cultural adaptation in the ASEAN context. The fourth part proposes the “Adaptation-Mediation-Translation” (AMT) theoretical framework and offers testable propositions. The fifth part discusses

pedagogical transformation pathways for ASEAN-oriented MTI education. The sixth part discusses theoretical contributions, practical significance, and research limitations. The seventh part is the conclusion. Through this structure, this article attempts to construct a cross-cultural adaptation theoretical framework for ASEAN-oriented translation talent training and provide operable propositions for subsequent empirical research.

2. The Theoretical Intersection of Cross-Cultural Adaptation and Translation Competence

2.1. Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory

Psychological adaptation is the dimension that first received scholarly attention in cross-cultural adaptation research. Individuals experience varying degrees of “culture shock” in cross-cultural contact, manifested as emotional reactions such as anxiety, confusion, rejection, and avoidance [18]. Psychological adaptation mainly involves emotional well-being and psychological satisfaction, whereas sociocultural adaptation involves the ability to interact with members of the target cultural group. In translation contexts, psychological adaptation directly affects translators’ performance stability and risk judgment. When translators face ASEAN cultural contexts, a high level of cultural anxiety may manifest as avoidance of culturally specific expressions, over-reliance on literal translation, and tension and errors in interpreting settings. Conversely, translators with a higher level of psychological adaptation are able to tolerate ambiguity and maintain judgment and creativity in culturally uncertain situations. Therefore, psychological adaptation is the “emotional chassis” for the exercise of translation competence and cannot be ignored.

Sociocultural adaptation focuses on individuals’ ability to interact with members of the target cultural group, including understanding and respect for etiquette norms, values, and communication styles. In the ASEAN context, sociocultural adaptation involves multiple dimensions such as religious taboos, face concepts, and communication styles [19]. For example, Islamic dietary norms, Buddhist etiquette, relationship-maintenance strategies that avoid open conflict, and the coexistence of implicit expression in high-context communication with direct expression in low-context communication. Sociocultural adaptation directly affects the handling of culture-loaded expressions and the achievement of pragmatic equivalence in translation. When translating content involving ASEAN religion or royalty, if translators are unfamiliar with relevant taboos, serious diplomatic discourtesy may result; when translating business negotiation discourse, if translators are unfamiliar with ASEAN countries’ face concepts and indirect expression habits, pragmatic failures may occur. Therefore, sociocultural adaptation is an important guarantee of translation quality.

Academic/professional adaptation focuses on individuals’ discourse comprehension and identity construction in professional settings. In the field of translation, this includes mastery of diplomatic discourse, economic and trade terminology, legal texts, and institutional norms, as well as identification with translation ethics and professional identity [20]. Translators with a high level of academic/professional adaptation can accurately understand the conventions of domain discourse, make judgments consistent with professional ethics in real tasks, and effectively achieve

communication effectiveness. In ASEAN-oriented translation tasks, academic/professional adaptation is particularly important. Documents related to the China–ASEAN Expo, leaders’ speeches, and economic and trade cooperation agreements are highly professional, politically sensitive, and culturally specific. If translators lack in-depth understanding of these domain discourses, even with strong language proficiency, they will find it difficult to achieve precise communication. Therefore, academic/professional adaptation is a key link for translation professionals to move from “linguistic fluency” to “communicative fluency” [13].

2.2. The Evolution of Translation Competence Research

Traditional translation competence research centered on bilingual competence and transfer skills. Early translation competence models included dimensions such as bilingual competence, extra-linguistic competence, translation knowledge, instrumental competence, psycho-physiological elements, and strategic competence. This model laid the foundation for translation competence research, but its attention to dimensions such as cultural adaptation and psychological adaptation was relatively limited [7][10]. In ASEAN-oriented translation, linguistic competence and transfer competence are certainly important, but linguistic competence alone is insufficient to cope with cultural differences. Linguistic correctness does not equal cultural appropriateness, and transfer accuracy does not equal communicative effectiveness. Therefore, translation competence research needs to shift from a language-centered to a culture–communication-centered orientation and incorporate the dimension of cross-cultural adaptation [6].

With the rise of cultural translation studies, the academic community has gradually recognized the key role of cultural competence in translation. Some scholars have pointed out that the creativity of translation stems from cultural specificity, and translators need to seek a dynamic balance between accuracy and cultural awareness, emphasizing the importance of going beyond literal translation, as exemplified by culturally specific vocabulary [7]. Culture-loaded expressions, metaphors, and political discourse require cultural adaptation rather than literal transfer. In the ASEAN context, the handling of culture-loaded expressions is particularly complex. For example, the translation and dissemination of the “Belt and Road” Initiative in ASEAN countries involves not only linguistic conversion but also the alignment of cultural schemas and the adjustment of discourse strategies. If translators are unfamiliar with ASEAN countries’ historical memories and geopolitical perceptions, misreading and resistance may result [11]. Therefore, cultural competence is a core component of translation competence.

Pragmatic competence focuses on the appropriateness of translations in the target context. Some scholars have proposed that translators’ performance in cross-cultural contexts depends not only on linguistic competence but also on their “cultural intelligence” [12]. In interpreting research, some scholars have pointed out that interpreters’ anxiety levels in multicultural settings directly affect interpreting quality [16]. Communication effectiveness further focuses on target audiences’ understanding, acceptance, and attitude change, emphasizing the communicative effect of translation rather than mere linguistic equivalence [10]. In ASEAN-oriented translation, pragmatic competence and communication effectiveness are closely related. Translators

need to adjust expression strategies according to ASEAN audiences' cultural expectations to achieve equivalence in tone, identity, politeness, and intention. If the translation is pragmatically inappropriate, even if linguistically correct, communication failure may result. Therefore, pragmatic competence and communication effectiveness are important dimensions of translation competence [3][5].

The rapid development of artificial intelligence technology is changing the ecology of translation education. Some scholars have analyzed the current state of foreign language disciplines in the context of artificial intelligence, pointing out that current translation teaching suffers from problems such as disconnection between curriculum content and market demand and insufficient cultivation of cross-cultural competence [10]. However, technology cannot replace translators' cultural judgment, ethical choices, and cross-cultural mediation competence. In ASEAN-oriented translation, artificial intelligence can assist with terminology management and corpus retrieval, but the grasp of cultural contexts, the selection of pragmatic strategies, and the assessment of communication effectiveness still require the support of translators' cross-cultural adaptation competence. Therefore, translation education should, beyond technological competence, place greater emphasis on cultivating cross-cultural adaptation competence [5].

2.3. Gaps in Existing Research

A survey of domestic and international research shows that cross-cultural adaptation is mostly treated as background literacy for translation competence rather than a core competence variable. Existing translation competence models rarely incorporate dimensions such as psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and professional adaptation, and also lack operationalization and measurement of these dimensions [7]. This has led to an awkward position for cross-cultural adaptation in translation education: "important in rhetoric, secondary in practice." In ASEAN-oriented translation, the importance of cross-cultural adaptation is particularly prominent. If cross-cultural adaptation cannot be incorporated into the core model of translation competence, translation education will find it difficult to accurately diagnose students' cultural adaptation problems and to design effective pedagogical interventions. Therefore, constructing a translation competence model that includes the dimension of cross-cultural adaptation is an urgent task for translation education reform [4].

Research on ASEAN-oriented translation has gradually increased, but it mostly focuses on language service industries, technology platform construction, and curriculum reform [13]. Insufficient attention has been paid to "translators' adaptation process in the ASEAN context," and there is a lack of in-depth exploration of hidden dimensions such as psychological adaptation, cultural anxiety, and professional identity. Existing research mostly answers "what kind of ASEAN translation talents to cultivate" but rarely answers "how to cultivate translation talents adapted to the ASEAN context." This gap has led to a lack of mechanistic explanation in ASEAN-oriented translation education research. How do translation professionals move from "linguistic fluency" to "cultural fluency"? How does cross-cultural adaptation affect translation quality? These questions require theoretical construction and empirical testing [17].

The most critical gap is that existing research has not yet established a transformation mechanism between "cross-

cultural adaptation competence" and "translation competence." How does adaptation competence affect translation quality? How is cultural cognition transformed into translation strategies? How does cultural identification affect communication effectiveness? These questions require theoretical construction and empirical testing. This article aims to fill this gap by proposing an "Adaptation-Mediation-Translation" framework that links the three dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation with the three dimensions of translation competence and offers testable propositions. This framework both extends the research object of cross-cultural adaptation and enriches the research dimensions of translation competence.

3. The Particularity of Cross-Cultural Adaptation in the ASEAN Context

3.1. Cultural Heterogeneity and Regional Complexity of ASEAN

ASEAN is not a homogeneous entity but a multicultural region composed of 11 countries. Multiple religions-Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism-coexist and influence communication norms and values [17]. Indonesia and Malaysia are predominantly Islamic, Thailand and Myanmar predominantly Buddhist, and the Philippines predominantly Catholic. Ethnic composition is complex and languages are diverse; Indonesia alone has hundreds of local languages. This heterogeneity requires translators to possess country-specific and culture-specific adaptation competence rather than a generalized "cross-cultural awareness." Translators need to understand the religious taboos, etiquette norms, and values of different ASEAN countries in order to avoid cultural missteps. Therefore, ASEAN-oriented translation talent training should emphasize the systematicity and refinement of regional cultural knowledge [2].

Communication styles differ significantly among ASEAN countries. Some cultures emphasize implicit, indirect, relationship-oriented high-context communication, such as Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia; other scenarios require direct, efficient, contract-oriented low-context communication, such as Singapore [12]. Translators need context-switching competence to adjust translation strategies according to specific scenarios and audiences. If translators do not understand the difference between implicit expression in high-context communication and direct expression in low-context communication, pragmatic failures may result. For example, when translating business negotiation discourse, literally rendering an ASEAN party's indirect refusal as a direct refusal may damage the relationship; conversely, converting a Chinese party's direct request into an overly implicit expression may reduce efficiency. Therefore, context-switching competence is an important manifestation of cross-cultural adaptation [16].

ASEAN countries differ in their perceptions of China; some are influenced by historical memory, geopolitics, and ethnic relations, resulting in different degrees of acceptance of Chinese discourse [3][11]. Translation is not only a linguistic issue but also a cognitive and emotional one. Cross-cultural adaptation affects translators' sensitivity and expression strategies, requiring translators to balance accuracy and acceptability in translation. If translators are unfamiliar with ASEAN countries' historical memories and geopolitical perceptions, they may touch sensitive points in translation, producing counterproductive communication

effects. Therefore, ASEAN-oriented translation talent training should strengthen area studies education to help students understand the pluralistic perceptions and emotional structures of ASEAN countries [9].

3.2. Typical Scenarios of China–ASEAN Translation

Major events such as the China–ASEAN Expo, the China–ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, and the China–ASEAN Education Cooperation Week involve a large amount of translation of diplomatic speeches, exhibition documents, and business negotiations [2]. These scenarios require accurate, appropriate, and communicatively effective translation, placing high demands on translators' cross-cultural adaptation competence. In diplomatic activities, translators need not only linguistic accuracy but also an understanding of political sensitivity and cultural etiquette. If translators lack adaptation competence regarding ASEAN etiquette and political culture, diplomatic discourtesy or communication deviation may result. Therefore, diplomatic translation is an important scenario for testing cross-cultural adaptation competence [12].

China–ASEAN economic and trade cooperation involves professional translation of contracts, agreements, and legal texts, while people-to-people and cultural exchanges involve cultural publicity, educational cooperation, and media communication [3]. These scenarios require translators to balance professionalism and cultural adaptation, achieving effective transmission of cultural connotations on the basis of terminological accuracy. In economic and trade translation, if translators focus only on terminological accuracy while ignoring cultural differences, misunderstanding of contract clauses or damage to business relationships may result. In people-to-people and cultural exchanges, if translators focus only on linguistic fluency while ignoring cultural resonance, poor communication effects may result. Therefore, both economic, trade, and cultural translation require translators to possess cross-cultural adaptation competence [8].

Educational cooperation involves translation of course introductions, academic exchanges, and study-abroad publicity, while media communication involves translation of press releases, social media content, and film and television subtitles [13]. Different audiences require different translation strategies, demanding that translators possess audience awareness and communication sensitivity. In educational cooperation, translators need to understand ASEAN countries' educational systems and cultural expectations in order to accurately convey enrollment information and cooperation intentions. In media communication, translators need to understand ASEAN audiences' media habits and emotional tendencies in order to achieve effective communication. Therefore, educational cooperation and media communication are important application scenarios for cross-cultural adaptation competence [10][15].

3.3. Manifestations and Causes of “Linguistic Fluency with Cultural Blockage”

When translating texts involving ASEAN cultures, students often produce mistranslations of culture-loaded expressions. For example, literally translating expressions involving religious etiquette leads to the loss of cultural connotations; literally translating Chinese political discourse leads to difficulties in understanding for ASEAN audiences [3]. On the surface, this is a linguistic problem; at a deeper level, it is

a lack of cultural schemas. The cause of mistranslations of culture-loaded expressions lies in translators' insufficient understanding of ASEAN cultural schemas. If translators do not understand ASEAN countries' religions, histories, and values, they will find it difficult to find appropriate culturally corresponding expressions. Therefore, competence in handling culture-loaded expressions is an important manifestation of cross-cultural adaptation [6].

Translations that are grammatically correct but inappropriate in tone, identity, or politeness level constitute another common problem [8]. For example, when translating speeches involving ASEAN leaders, failure to adopt appropriate honorifics and politeness strategies may lead to pragmatic failures. When translating business negotiation discourse, failure to consider ASEAN countries' face concepts and indirect expression habits may affect communication outcomes. The cause of pragmatic inappropriateness lies in translators' lack of sociocultural adaptation competence. If translators do not understand ASEAN countries' politeness strategies and status relationships, they will find it difficult to achieve pragmatic equivalence. Therefore, competence in achieving pragmatic equivalence is an important dimension of cross-cultural adaptation [16].

Some students, when facing ASEAN cultural contexts, adopt avoidance strategies due to uncertainty, resulting in translations that tend toward over-safety and flattening, thereby losing communicative power [4]. Cultural anxiety affects not only translation quality but also translators' professional confidence and identity. The cause of cultural anxiety lies in insufficient psychological adaptation. If translators lack tolerance of ambiguity and emotional resilience, they will find it difficult to maintain judgment in culturally uncertain situations. Therefore, psychological adaptation is an important foundation of cross-cultural adaptation and a hidden dimension that translation education needs to address [16].

4. Theoretical Framework

4.1. Overview of the Framework

The AMT framework draws on three main theoretical sources: first, cross-cultural adaptation theory, particularly the two-dimensional model of psychological adaptation and sociocultural adaptation [4]; second, translation competence research, particularly theories of cultural competence and pragmatic competence [10]; and third, cross-cultural mediation theory, which emphasizes the translator's role as a cultural mediator [12]. These three theoretical strands provide a solid foundation for the AMT framework. Cross-cultural adaptation theory provides the basis for adaptation dimensions, translation competence research provides the evaluative dimensions of translation quality, and cross-cultural mediation theory provides the explanatory framework for the transformation mechanism. Their integration makes it possible to construct a theoretical model for ASEAN-oriented translation talent training, as shown in Figure 1.

This article names the framework the “Adaptation–Mediation–Translation” (AMT) framework. Its core logic is that cross-cultural adaptation is transformed into translation quality and communication effectiveness through the process of cultural mediation. The AMT framework emphasizes that adaptation is not a bypath of translation but a precondition of

translation competence [7]. The naming of the AMT framework reflects three key links: adaptation is the foundation, mediation is the process, and translation is the outcome. Adaptation competence is transformed into translation strategies through cultural mediation and ultimately manifested as translation quality and communication effectiveness. This framework provides a theoretical tool for ASEAN-oriented translation talent training [10].

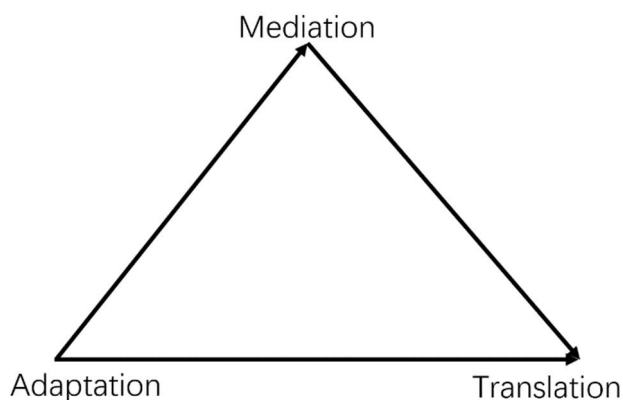


Figure 1. The Adaptation–Mediation–Translation Model

The basic logic of the AMT framework is that cross-cultural adaptation is not a bypath of translation but a precondition of translation competence. Psychological adaptation affects the stability of translation performance, sociocultural adaptation affects pragmatic equivalence and the handling of culture-loaded expressions, and academic/professional adaptation affects communication effectiveness in real tasks [6]. Through the progressive pathway of cultural cognition, cultural identification, and cultural dissemination, these three dimensions are ultimately transformed into translation quality and communication effects. This logic breaks through the limitations of traditional translation competence research by incorporating psychological and sociocultural adaptation into the core model of translation competence. It also provides a new point of intervention for translation education: by enhancing cross-cultural adaptation competence, translation quality and communication effectiveness can be indirectly improved [7].

4.2. The Three Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

The Psychological Adaptation Dimension

The psychological adaptation dimension includes elements such as cultural anxiety, tolerance of ambiguity, emotional resilience, and culture shock tendency [18]. In ASEAN-oriented translation, psychological adaptation affects translators' performance stability and risk judgment. Translators with a high level of psychological adaptation can remain calm and make sound judgments in culturally uncertain situations; those with a low level may avoid cultural expressions due to anxiety, thereby affecting translation quality. Psychological adaptation is the "emotional chassis" for the exercise of translation competence. If translators lack sufficient psychological adaptation, even with strong language proficiency, they may underperform in real tasks. Therefore, translation education should attend to students' psychological adaptation and enhance their emotional resilience through simulation training, reflective journals, and psychological counseling [16].

The Sociocultural Adaptation Dimension

The sociocultural adaptation dimension includes understanding and respect for ASEAN etiquette, religion, face concepts, communication styles, and value norms [19]. This dimension directly affects pragmatic equivalence and the handling of culture-loaded expressions. Translators with a high level of sociocultural adaptation can accurately grasp ASEAN audiences' cultural expectations and adopt appropriate translation strategies. Sociocultural adaptation is an important guarantee of translation quality. If translators lack sociocultural adaptation competence, they may touch cultural taboos in translation, leading to communication failure. Therefore, translation education should strengthen ASEAN cultural knowledge education to help students develop cultural sensitivity and cultural respect [12].

The Academic/Professional Adaptation Dimension

The academic/professional adaptation dimension includes elements such as domain discourse, translation ethics, professional identity, and institutional context [20]. This dimension affects communication effectiveness in real tasks. Translators with a high level of academic/professional adaptation can accurately understand the conventions of diplomatic discourse, economic and trade terminology, and legal texts, and make judgments consistent with professional ethics in real tasks. Academic/professional adaptation is a key link for translation professionals to move from "linguistic fluency" to "communicative fluency." If translators lack professional adaptation competence, they may find it difficult to understand institutional norms and ethical requirements in real tasks, thereby affecting communication effectiveness. Therefore, translation education should strengthen professional ethics education and real-project training [13].

4.3. The Three Dimensions of ASEAN-Oriented Translation Competence

Competence in handling culture-loaded expressions refers to translators' ability to identify culturally specific items and carry out cultural adaptation and creative transformation [3]. In the ASEAN context, this includes the ability to translate and disseminate Chinese political discourse, cultural concepts, and historical allusions, as well as the ability to understand and transform ASEAN culturally specific items. Competence in handling culture-loaded expressions is a core component of translation competence. If translators lack this competence, they may literally translate culturally specific items, leading to the loss of cultural connotations. Therefore, translation education should enhance students' competence in handling culture-loaded expressions through case teaching and comparative analysis [11].

Competence in achieving pragmatic equivalence refers to translators' ability to achieve equivalence in tone, identity, politeness, and intention [8]. In the ASEAN context, this requires translators to adjust expression strategies according to ASEAN audiences' cultural expectations so as to achieve pragmatic appropriateness. Competence in achieving pragmatic equivalence is an important indicator of translation quality. If translators lack this competence, translations may be grammatically correct but pragmatically inappropriate. Therefore, translation education should enhance students' competence in achieving pragmatic equivalence through scenario simulation and role-playing [16].

Cross-cultural communication effectiveness refers to translators' ability to promote target audiences' understanding, acceptance, and identification [13]. This is not merely

linguistic equivalence but the achievement of communication effects. In ASEAN-oriented translation, communication effectiveness requires translators to balance accuracy and acceptability so as to achieve effective translation and dissemination of Chinese culture. Cross-cultural communication effectiveness is the ultimate manifestation of translation competence. If translators lack cross-cultural communication effectiveness, translations may be accurate but unacceptable to audiences. Therefore, translation education should enhance students' cross-cultural communication effectiveness through audience analysis and communication effect assessment [3][5].

4.4. The Transformation Mechanism of Cultural Cognition → Cultural Identification → Cultural Dissemination

Cultural cognition is the foundational level of cross-cultural adaptation, referring to understanding of ASEAN cultural schemas, taboos, and values [4]. Cultural cognition forms cultural sensitivity, enabling translators to identify cultural differences and potential risks. Cultural cognition is the prerequisite for cultural identification and cultural dissemination. If translators lack cultural cognition, they will find it difficult to identify cultural differences, let alone carry out cultural adaptation. Therefore, translation education should help students build systematic ASEAN cultural cognition through resources such as knowledge graphs and case banks [17].

Cultural identification is the deeper level of cross-cultural adaptation, referring to the formation of a respectful, consultative, and open cultural stance that avoids cultural centrism and stereotypes [11]. Cultural identification enables translators to seek dialogue and negotiation amid cultural differences rather than simply transplanting or pandering. Cultural identification is the value foundation of cultural dissemination. If translators lack cultural identification, they may adopt cultural centrism or pandering strategies, thereby affecting communication effects. Therefore, translation education should help students form an open cultural identification through cross-cultural dialogue and reflective discussion [16].

Cultural dissemination is the practical level of cross-cultural adaptation, referring to the transformation of cognition and identification into translation strategies so as to achieve the unity of “accuracy–appropriateness–effectiveness” [3]. Cultural dissemination requires translators to balance source-language cultural connotations and target-language reception habits in translation, achieving “negotiated reconstruction” between cultures. Cultural dissemination is the ultimate goal of cross-cultural adaptation. If translators lack cultural dissemination competence, translations may be accurate but communicatively ineffective. Therefore, translation education should enhance students' cultural dissemination competence through real projects and volunteer services [13].

5. Pedagogical Transformation: Pathways for ASEAN-Oriented MTI Education

5.1. Reconstruction of Training Objectives

The training objectives of Master of Translation and Interpreting (MTI) education should shift from “linguistic

converter” to “cross-cultural mediator.” Translators are not merely converters of language but also interpreters and disseminators of culture. Training objectives should incorporate cross-cultural adaptation competence and emphasize the coordinated development of psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and professional adaptation. This reconstruction of objectives requires translation education to shift from a “language-centered” to a “culture–communication-centered” orientation. Curriculum design, teaching methods, and assessment systems should all revolve around cross-cultural mediation competence. Only in this way can translation talents truly adapted to the ASEAN context be cultivated.

Training objectives should embody the trinity of “language + culture + region.” Linguistic competence is the foundation, cultural competence is the core, and regional knowledge is the distinctive feature. ASEAN-oriented MTI students should possess ASEAN regional knowledge and understand the cultural characteristics and communication contexts of ASEAN countries. The trinity of “language + culture + region” requires corresponding adjustments to the curriculum system. In addition to language skills courses, courses such as ASEAN culture, area studies, and cross-cultural communication should be offered. Through curriculum integration, students' comprehensive competence can be cultivated.

Training objectives should serve the needs of the China–ASEAN strategy and cultivate composite translation talents who are “rooted in China, familiar with ASEAN, and capable of bridging China and the world” [2][3]. Such talents are not only proficient in language but also familiar with the ASEAN cultural context and equipped with cross-cultural communication competence. Composite talents serving the China–ASEAN strategy should possess three core competences: linguistic transfer competence, cultural adaptation competence, and communication effectiveness competence. Translation education should design training programs around these three competences to provide talent support for regional development.

5.2. Development of Teaching Resources

An ASEAN cultural knowledge graph should be constructed to visually present the cultural key points of the 11 ASEAN countries, including religion, etiquette, taboos, and values. The knowledge graph can serve as a teaching resource to help students systematically understand ASEAN cultures and form cultural cognition. The knowledge graph should be presented by country and by theme to facilitate students' retrieval and learning. The construction of the ASEAN cultural knowledge graph should draw on cross-cultural adaptation research findings and integrate multidisciplinary knowledge from anthropology, sociology, and translation studies. Through the knowledge graph, students can intuitively understand ASEAN cultural differences and enhance cultural sensitivity [17].

Authentic translation cases from China–ASEAN economic and trade cooperation and people-to-people and cultural exchanges should be collected and classified by cultural theme [3]. The case bank can serve as teaching material to help students understand the importance of cross-cultural adaptation through real cases. The case bank should include both successful and unsuccessful cases to facilitate comparative analysis. The construction of the China–ASEAN translation case bank should emphasize authenticity and

typicality. Cases should come from real scenarios such as the China–ASEAN Expo, diplomatic activities, and economic and trade cooperation, covering multiple dimensions including culture-loaded expressions, pragmatic strategies, and communication effects [15].

A parallel corpus of China–ASEAN cultural keywords should be constructed to support translation teaching and research [5]. The corpus can help students understand the translation of cultural keywords and accumulate cultural translation experience. The corpus should cover multiple fields such as politics, economy, culture, and education. The construction of the parallel corpus of cultural keywords should emphasize dynamic updating and multilingual coverage. As China–ASEAN exchanges deepen, new vocabulary and new expressions continue to emerge, requiring continuous corpus updating. Through the corpus, students can master the translation of cultural keywords and improve translation quality.

5.3. Innovation in Teaching Models

With ASEAN cultural themes as task drivers, students complete translation tasks in simulated real scenarios. Teachers provide feedback from the dual dimensions of “linguistic transfer” and “cultural adaptation” to help students improve cultural translation competence. Workshops should emphasize interactivity and practicality, allowing students to learn through real tasks. The design of cultural translation workshops should revolve around ASEAN cultural themes such as religious etiquette, business negotiations, and educational exchanges. Through workshops, students can experience real translation scenarios and enhance cross-cultural adaptation competence.

MTI students should be organized to engage in thematic exchanges with ASEAN students studying in Guangxi, enhancing adaptation competence through authentic cross-cultural interaction. Through dialogue, students can understand ASEAN students’ cultural perspectives and enhance cultural sensitivity and empathy. Dialogue should revolve around cultural themes such as festivals, etiquette, and values. MTI student–ASEAN student cross-cultural dialogue can provide students with authentic cross-cultural interaction opportunities. Through dialogue, students can test their cultural cognition, discover cultural misunderstandings, and enhance cross-cultural adaptation competence.

Students should be encouraged to participate in translation volunteer services at events such as the China–ASEAN Expo and the Education Cooperation Week, testing and enhancing their competence in practice. Volunteer services provide real scenarios and help students accumulate cross-cultural translation experience. Volunteer services should be combined with course learning to form a “learning–practice–reflection” cycle. China–ASEAN event volunteer services allow students to experience the importance of cross-cultural adaptation in real tasks. Through volunteer services, students can enhance professional adaptation competence and strengthen professional identity.

Teaching should be organized around authentic translation projects to strengthen professional adaptation and teamwork. Project-based teaching can help students understand translation processes, professional norms, and ethical requirements, enhancing professional adaptation competence. Projects should come from real needs such as corporate publicity, government foreign affairs, and media communication. Project-based teaching and authentic task-

driven learning allow students to learn through practice. Through projects, students can enhance teamwork competence, project management competence, and professional adaptation competence, laying the foundation for future career development.

5.4. Reform of the Assessment System

A cross-cultural adaptation assessment tool should be designed, including three dimensions: psychological adaptation, sociocultural adaptation, and professional adaptation. The assessment can be used to diagnose students’ adaptation levels and provide a basis for pedagogical intervention. The assessment tool should undergo reliability and validity testing to ensure scientific rigor and reliability. Cross-cultural adaptation assessment can help teachers understand students’ adaptation status and precisely design pedagogical interventions. Through assessment, students can also understand their own adaptation levels and make targeted improvements. A multidimensional translation quality assessment system should be established, balancing accuracy, pragmatic equivalence, and communication effectiveness. Assessment should focus not only on the linguistic dimension but also on the cultural and communicative dimensions. Assessment criteria should be refined for ease of operation. Multidimensional translation quality assessment can more comprehensively reflect students’ translation competence. Through assessment, students can understand their deficiencies in cultural adaptation and communication effectiveness and make targeted improvements.

A blended assessment scheme combining quantitative and qualitative assessment, and combining process-oriented and performance-oriented assessment, should be adopted. Through multiple methods such as questionnaires, interviews, case analysis, and portfolio assessment, students’ cross-cultural adaptation competence and translation competence can be comprehensively evaluated. Blended assessment should emphasize process orientation and development. Blended assessment can more comprehensively evaluate students’ cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence. Through assessment, teachers can understand teaching effectiveness, students can understand learning progress, and a “assessment–feedback–improvement” cycle can be formed.

6. Theoretical Contributions, Practical Implications, and Limitations

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

This article reverses cross-cultural adaptation theory from the traditional focus on “international students in China adapting to China” to a new scenario in which “Chinese translation professionals adapt to ASEAN and disseminate Chinese culture.” This extension enriches the research object and application boundary of cross-cultural adaptation research and carries important theoretical significance. Traditional cross-cultural adaptation research mostly focuses on “incoming” international students, whereas this article focuses on “outgoing” translation professionals. This reverse perspective helps to more comprehensively understand the mechanisms and value of cross-cultural adaptation.

This article incorporates psychological and sociocultural adaptation into translation competence research and proposes a transformation mechanism from “adaptation competence → translation competence.” This mechanism enriches the

theoretical dimensions of translation competence research and provides a new perspective for such research. Traditional translation competence research mostly focuses on dimensions such as language, culture, and technology, whereas this article supplements the dimension of psychological and sociocultural adaptation. This supplement helps to more comprehensively understand the composition and formation mechanism of translation competence.

This article constructs the ASEAN-oriented AMT theoretical framework, providing a theoretical model for regionalized translation talent training. This model can also serve as a reference for translation talent training research in other regions and has value for wider application. The AMT framework emphasizes three links—adaptation, mediation, and translation—and provides a new theoretical tool for translation education. Through the AMT framework, translation education can design training programs more precisely and improve training quality.

6.2. Practical Implications

The research findings of this article can provide theoretical support for Guangxi's high-level educational opening-up toward ASEAN. By enhancing translation professionals' cross-cultural adaptation competence, it can help Guangxi build a highland for ASEAN-oriented translation talents. Guangxi is at the forefront of China–ASEAN openness and cooperation, and cultivating ASEAN-oriented translation talents is an urgent need for serving national strategy and local development. The research findings of this article can provide reference for relevant policy formulation.

The pedagogical transformation pathways proposed in this article can provide reference for optimizing MTI training programs, including the reconstruction of training objectives, the development of teaching resources, innovation in teaching models, and reform of the assessment system. These suggestions are operable and can be directly applied to MTI training practice. By optimizing training programs, MTI education can better meet the needs of China–ASEAN exchanges and enhance translation professionals' cross-cultural adaptation competence and communication effectiveness.

The cross-cultural adaptation assessment tool proposed in this article can provide assessment reference for the selection of translation talents for major events such as the China–ASEAN Expo. Through assessment, translation talents adapted to the ASEAN context can be selected more scientifically. The selection of translation talents for major events requires not only linguistic competence but also cross-cultural adaptation competence. The assessment tool proposed in this article can provide a scientific basis for such selection.

6.3. Research Limitations and Future Directions

The AMT framework proposed in this article still requires empirical testing. Future research can employ methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and experimental studies to test the relationship mechanism between cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence. Empirical research can further verify the effectiveness of the AMT framework. The value of a theoretical model lies in guiding practice, but it requires empirical testing. Future research can design longitudinal tracking studies to explore the dynamic relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence. The 11

ASEAN countries differ significantly in culture, and future research can be conducted by country to explore the characteristics of cross-cultural adaptation and translation strategies in different ASEAN national contexts. Country-specific research can guide translation talent training more precisely. Different ASEAN countries differ significantly in religion, history, and values, and translation strategies should also differ. Future research can explore the relationship between cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence by country. In addition, in the era of artificial intelligence, human–machine collaborative translation has become a new trend. Future research can explore cross-cultural adaptation issues in human–machine collaboration and examine how translators can play a cultural mediation role in such collaboration. This direction has important forward-looking significance. Human–machine collaborative translation can improve efficiency, but cultural judgment and ethical choices still need to be made by translators. Future research can explore the cross-cultural adaptation mechanism in human–machine collaboration, providing new ideas for translation education.

7. Conclusion

ASEAN-oriented translation talent training is not merely a matter of language education but also a matter of cross-cultural adaptation and communication capacity building. The AMT framework provides a new theoretical perspective for MTI education reform and offers scholarly support for serving China–ASEAN people-to-people and cultural exchanges and regional language service needs. In the era of artificial intelligence, translators' cultural judgment, ethical choices, and cross-cultural mediation competence will become even more important. Cultivating composite translation talents who are “rooted in China, familiar with ASEAN, and capable of bridging China and the world” is an urgent need for serving national strategy and regional development, and it is also the contemporary mission of MTI education reform. Future research should further test the AMT framework, explore the transformation mechanism between cross-cultural adaptation and translation competence, and provide more solid theoretical support for translation education reform.

This article offers three implications for MTI education: first, shifting from linguistic conversion to cultural mediation, cultivating translators' cross-cultural mediation competence; second, shifting from knowledge transmission to adaptation competence training, incorporating cross-cultural adaptation into training objectives; third, shifting from single-dimensional assessment to multidimensional assessment, establishing an assessment system that balances language, culture, and communication. These implications can provide reference for optimizing MTI training programs. Through curriculum reform, teaching innovation, and assessment reform, MTI education can better serve the needs of the China–ASEAN strategy and enhance translation professionals' cross-cultural adaptation competence and communication effectiveness.

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