



# Culture Language Translation Methods and Teaching Strategies in *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

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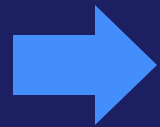


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# INTRODUCTION

KEY TERMS	DEFINITIONS	RESEARCH RANGE
<b>Culture</b>	<p>Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by (a human) as a member of society (Tylor, 1817, p.1).</p>	<p>Understanding culture provides a framework for language, making communication more efficient and minimizing misinterpretations.</p> <p>Culture language teaching in foreign language education is crucial for fostering cultural awareness, enhancing language proficiency, and preparing learners for effective cross-cultural communication.</p>
<b><i>Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio</i></b>	<p>Also known as <i>Liao Zhai Zhi Yi</i>, is a renowned classical literary work written by Pu Songling (1640-1715 AD) of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911AD), composed of 491 individual tales including supernatural stories, anecdotes, and folklore that ridicule the officialdom and expose the darkness in the realistic society of the early Qing dynasty</p>	<p>It is an excellent resource for Chinese as a foreign language teaching, in which the abundant cultural terms will be greatly aid Chinese language learners in better understanding Chinese culture.</p>

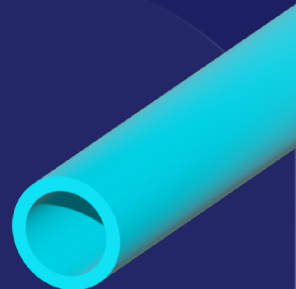
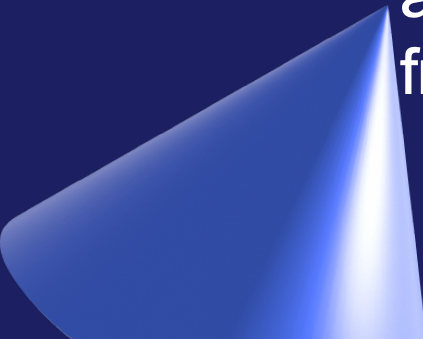


# Problem Statement

The collection's abundance of cultural terms requires suitable **translation methods** and **teaching strategies** to ensure that learners not only understand the surface meanings but also grasp the deeper **cultural connotations**.

There is a lack of comprehensive research on the impact of various translation approaches and teaching methods in this context. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how to enhance learners' cultural insights, comprehension of themes, and appreciation of traditional Chinese culture within the framework of this literary masterpiece.

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# Research Objectives

1. To identify **effective translation methods for cultural terms** in *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*.
2. To reveal the significance for Chinese as a foreign language learners to understand the **connotations of Chinese cultural terms**.
3. To explore **translation methods that promote learners' comprehension of themes**, enable recognition of traditional Chinese sociocultural systems, and facilitate a deeper understanding of Chinese cultural terms, enhancing their overall cultural and linguistic proficiency.

# Literature Review——Cultural Terms

Cultural term refers to the concepts, relations, tools, phenomena or generally to physical and spiritual aspects of living in a particular society which is closely related to the specific culture of that nation. Mostly cultural words are easily recognizable on the basis of their obvious differences with the target language culture, being particular to source language, and being problematic in the process of translation (Newmark, 1981, p.94-95).

Chinese linguist Zhou Zhipei introduced the concept of “cultural words” and classified them into two categories: the word (phrase) that carries the meaning of a cultural trait particular to a certain socio-cultural community, that is, whose reference is a unique thing or conception, and therefore that has no corresponding equivalent in other communities, when it is used in cross-cultural communication, it is referred to as word of cultural uniqueness or a cultural word (Zhou, 2003, p. 491). “邑宰(yi zhai)” usually translated as “County Magistrate” in English.

# Literature Review——Categories of cultural terms

Eugene A. Nida

Peter Newmark

Zhou Zhipei



ecological culture  
material culture  
social culture  
religious culture  
linguistic culture



ecology  
material culture  
social culture  
social organizations  
gestures and habits



different classification  
different association  
different cultural norms



# Literature Review——Categories of cultural terms



## ecological cultural terms

encompass geographical and ecological features in the source culture. 兰麝 (lan she)

## material cultural terms

refer to unique vocabulary related to clothing, food, housing, transportation, and leisure activities, including everyday objects, tools, utensils, and even units of measurement in the source culture. 尺(chi)

## institutional cultural terms

includes words related to political institutions, seasonal customs, social behavioral norms, ethics, standards, and both written and unwritten rules. 青庐(qinglu), 吉服(ji fu)

## spiritual cultural terms

often consist of abstract vocabulary that reflects a nation's philosophical thinking, ideology, and religious culture. 阴(yin), 阳(yang), 道(Dao)

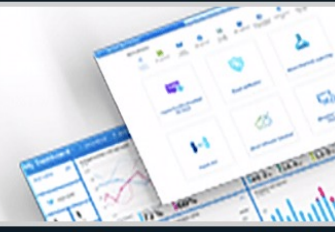
## linguistic cultural terms

are words that reflect the phonetic and written characteristics of a language community. Idioms, allusions, proverbs, rhetoric, word formation, and character construction, with their unique formal and semantic features, carry a wealth of historical traditions and customs.



Why Azure?

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# Dictionary

## Definition

Did you know?

Example Sentences

Word History

Related Articles

Entries Near

Show More

Save Word

# connotation noun

con·no·ta·tion (,kă-nə-'tā-shən)

[Synonyms of connotation](#) >

**1 a** : something suggested by a word or thing : **IMPLICATION**

| the *connotations* of comfort that surrounded that old chair

**b** : the suggesting of a meaning by a word apart from the thing it explicitly names or describes

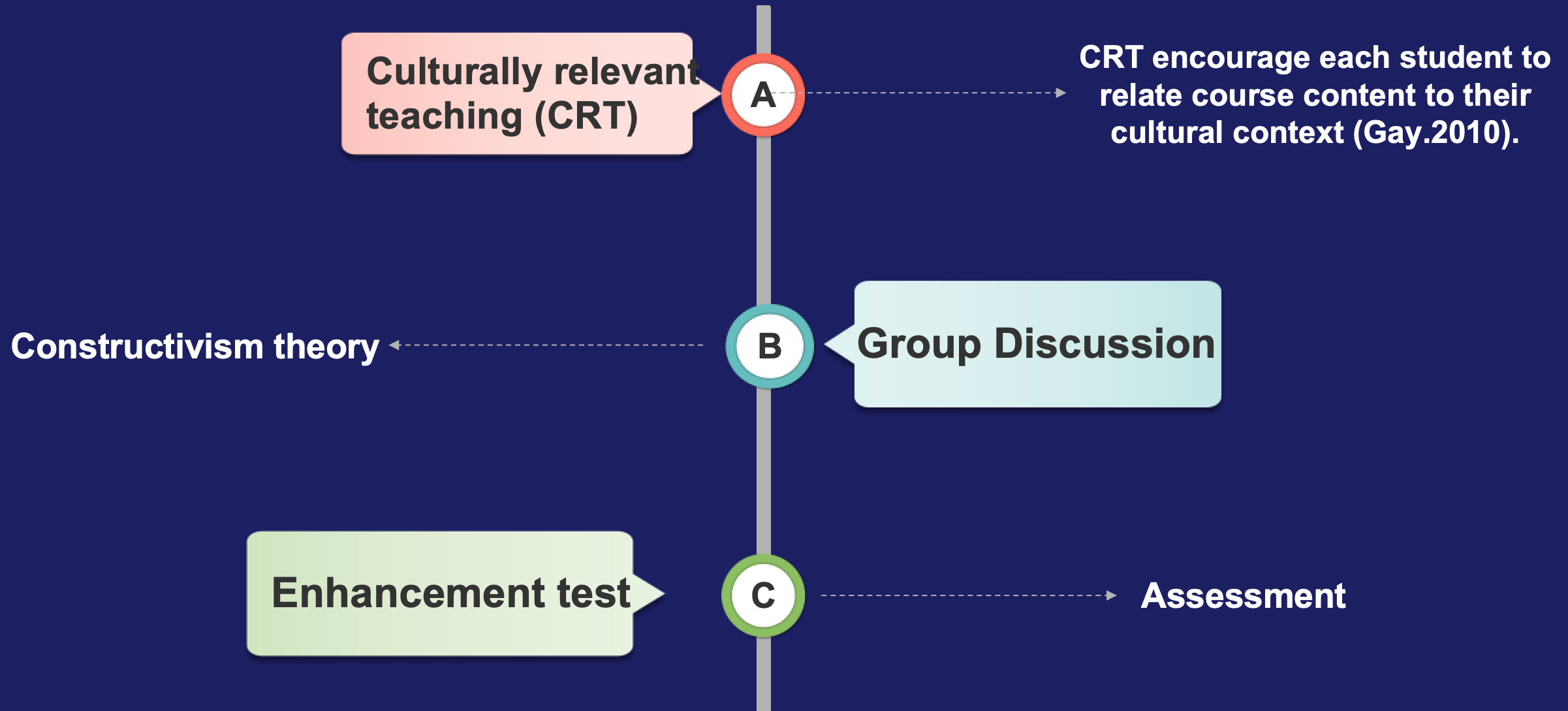
**2** : the **signification** of something

... that abuse of logic which consists in moving counters about as if they were known entities with a fixed *connotation*.

## Connotations of cultural terms

The concept of connotations of cultural terms relates to the additional layers of meaning, emotions, and **cultural** significance attached to words beyond their literal definitions.

# Methodology



# Group Discussion

## Term Selection & Group Formation

- Teacher selects culturally significant terms.
- Learners divided into groups of 4-6.

## Assigning Categories

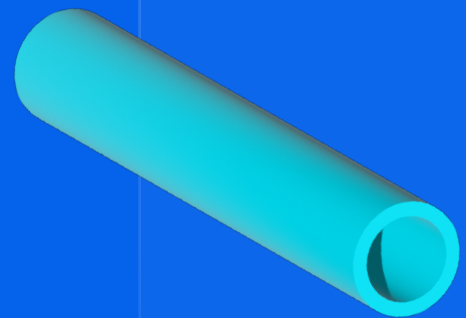
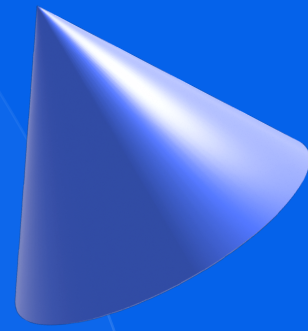
- Within each group, teacher assigns one of the selected categories to explore the cultural connotations and significance of the assigned terms

## Discussion Structure

- Discussion lasts around 30 minutes.
- Focus on distinctions between literal and free translations.

## Teacher's Roles

- Teacher acts as a facilitator, guiding discussions.
- Teacher is a resource provider, offering materials.



# Enhancement test

The enhancement test plays an essential role in improving respondents' comprehension of cultural terms.

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
总分	84	35	100	56.96	13.218
1、墙倾屋塌之声，与儿啼女号，喧如鼎沸。Which is the correct literal meaning of the term “鼎沸” in the sentence?	84	0	5	3.81	2.142
Valid N (listwise)	84				

Target Respondents : Learners who passed HSK level 4

Time Limits: 30 minutes

Number of Questions : 20 questions

Examination Contents: Literal meaning and cultural meaning of selected cultural terms

# Table 1 Categories of cultural terms in the test selected from *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*

Categories of cultural terms	Secondary categories	Words selected from <i>Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio</i>	English translation	Translation method	Marks of each
ecological cultural terms	plants	Q6葭苕 “jia fu” refers to the thin membrane inside the reed, and metaphorically, it refers to more distant relatives	closely related	literal translation	10%
		Q13麝兰 “she lan” refers to musk and orchid fragrance	the scent of musk and orchid	literal translation	
material cultural terms	utensils	Q7鼎铛油镬 “ding dang you huo” refers to boiling oil in a cauldron or wok to scald someone	cauldrons and works filled with boiling oil	literal translation	15%
		Q4鬋凤 “huan feng” refers to “phoenix hairpin”, which is a women's hair ornament.”	phoenix ornaments	literal translation	
		Q18箫管 “xiao guan” is a kind of musical instrument made of bamboo	flageolet	literal translation	
institutional cultural terms	official titles	Q2孝廉 “xiao lian” refers to the specific title of a graduate passed a vigorous exam in Qing Dynasty	Provincial Graduate	free translation	5%
	social values	Q5初学涂鸦 “chu xue tu ya” refers to a beginner's scribbles, with many revisions and corrections, to describe the early stages of studying	write very indifferent prose	free translation	5%
	customs festivals	Q20寒食 “han shi” known as the Cold Food Festival, one of China's traditional festivals	the Cold Food Festival	literal translation	5%
spiritual cultural terms	religion	Q3随喜 “sui xi” is a Buddhist term, which means visiting temples and playing with others	went out to greet them and took them on a tour of the precincts	free translation	25%
		Q10广寒 “guang han” refers to the moon palace	Cold Palace	literal translation	
		Q11寿籍 “shou ji” refers to the thin booklet in Chinese superstitions and legends that records people's lifespan	longevity file	literal translation	
		Q16散花天女 “san hua tian nv” refers to the Goddess in Buddhist sutra stories.	Apsaras Scattering Flowers, beautiful fairylike beings	literal translation+addition	
		Q19物化 “wu hua” is a euphemism for death	transformed	literal translation	
linguistic cultural terms	allusion	Q4结草以报 “jie cao yi bao” means to repay kindness even after death	grateful	free translation	15%
		Q8曹丘 “cao qiu” is synonymous with someone who recommends or introduces others	Maecenas	substitution	
		Q9关壮缪 “guan zhuang mu” Guan Yu, a renowned military general during the Three Kingdoms	the God of War, Guan Yu	free translation	
	metaphor	Q1喧如鼎沸 “xuan ru ding fei” describes roaring like a boiling cauldron	seething cauldron	literal translation	10%
		Q15黑面如漆 “hei mian ru qi” describes a person's face as black as pitch	a face as black as jet	free translation	
	actions	Q12启睑拨视 “qi jian bo shi” refers to pull open the eyelids to take a look	lift up his eyelids and take a look inside	literal translation	10%
Q17反身鹞顾 “fan shen e gu” refers to someone turn around and look at it ferociously		cast a piercing gaze around him	literal translation		
total marks					100%

# Research findings and results

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Chinese	84	10.00	50.00	27.0833	8.50968
English	84	10.00	50.00	29.8810	8.81456
Valid N (listwise)	84				

Questions fall into the categories of spiritual and linguistic cultural terms received the lowest mean scores, such as religious related terms like “广寒 (guang han)” and “物化(wu hua)”, and metaphors expression “黑面如漆 (hei mian ru qi)” highlighting the challenge of cultural understanding for learners who do not share the same cultural background.

# Concluion

**This research focus on the significance of effectively teaching cultural language in the context of Chinese classic literary works such as Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio. While categorizing cultural terms and employing suitable translation methods are crucial, it is essential to integrate cultural language teaching with other teaching methods for a comprehensive approach.**

**Contextual  
teaching**

**Cultural  
immersion**

**Addressing  
cultural loss**



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**Thank you for your listening!**