



# AMY TAN ROMANLARIDAGI TRANSLIGUNASTIZM VA TRANSKULTURALIZM NUQTAYI NAZARIDAN TIL XUSUSIYATLARI<sup>1</sup>

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## ANNOTATSIYA

Maqolada Emy Tan asarlarida til va badiiy ifodalash xususiyatlarini translingvistika va transkulturalizm nuqtayi nazaridan o'rganiladi. Ikkinchi avlod xitoy-amerikalik yozuvchi sifatida, Tan ijodida asosan xitoy-amerikalik ayollarning hayotiy tajribalariga e'tibor qaratiladi. Unda til boyliklarini va xilma-xilligini ta'minlash uchun xitoy so'zlari, tili va madaniyati unsurlariga to'xtalinadi. Ushbu tilshunoslik yondashuvlari asardagi badiiy ayol qahramonlarning xususiyatlarini rang-barang, aniq, lirik va hazinona uslubda ifodalaydi.

Tadqiqotda til va madaniyat o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlik ta'kidlanadi, unda til faqat madaniy elementlarnigina emas, balki millat xarakterini ham shakllantirishi va aks ettirishi tahlil etiladi. Bu alohida ravishda xitoy-amerikalik adabiyoti kontekstida, undagi til masalalari xitoy-amerikalikning madaniy mansubliklari va identifikatsiya qurilishini aks ettirish uchun muhim rol o'ynaydi. Emy Tan tomonidan qo'llangan o'ziga xos adabiy strategiyalarni ochib berish maqsadini ko'zlaydi, bu esa uning xitoy-amerikalik shaxsiyati va tajribasining murakkabliklarini badiiy mahorat bilan taqdim etishini ko'rsatadi.

## KALIT SO'ZLAR

Transmilliylik, transkulturalizm, Emy Tan, til boyligi va xilma-xilligi, xitoy-amerikalik, ayollarning tajribasi, realiyalar, xitoy pinini, xitoy iyerogliflari va konnotatsiyalar.

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# ЯЗЫКОВЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ РОМАНОВ ЭМИ ТАН С ТОЧКИ ЗРЕНИЯ ТРАНСЛИНГВИЗМА И ТРАНСКУЛЬТУРАЛИЗМА

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АННОТАЦИЯ	КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА
<p>Данное исследование рассматривает особенности языка и художественной выразительности в романах Эми Тан через призму транслингвизма и транскультурализма. Транслингвистические явления - это слова и другие аспекты языка, которые имеют отношение более чем к одному языку. Будучи американской писательницей китайского происхождения во втором поколении, Тан в своих произведениях в основном сосредоточена на опыте американок китайского происхождения, подчеркивая богатство и разнообразие их языка за счет включения китайских слов, элементов языка и культуры. Этот лингвистический подход окрашивает женские характеристики героинь и выражается через поэтические приемы простым, лирическим и юмористическим стилем.</p> <p>Исследование подчеркивает взаимозависимую связь между языком и культурой, где язык не только содержит культурные элементы, но и формирует и отражает национальный характер. Это особенно очевидно в контексте китайско-американской литературы, где языковые вопросы играют решающую роль в определении культурной принадлежности и конструировании идентичности китайских американцев. Изучая особенности языка, средств и приемов художественной выразительности, данное исследование имеет целью описание уникальных литературных стратегий, используемых Эми Тан, доказательство ее художественного и стилистического мастерства в погружении читателей в проблему китайско-американской идентичности и опыта.</p>	<p>Транслингвализ транскультурализм, Эми Тан, богатство и разнообразие языка, опыт, китайско-американские женщины, реалии, китайский пиньинь, китайские иероглифы и коннотации</p> <p><b>Received:</b> August 15, 2024  <b>Accepted:</b> August 30, 2024  <b>Available online:</b> November 15, 2024</p>

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# THE LANGUAGE CHARACTERISTICS IN AMY TAN'S NOVELS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TRANSLINGUASTICISM AND TRANSCULTURALISM

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>This study explores the language and artistic expression features in Amy Tan's novels through the lens of translingualism and transculturalism. Translingual phenomena are words and other aspects of language that are relevant in more than one language. As a second-generation Chinese-American author, Tan's writings primarily focus on the experiences of Chinese American women, highlighting the richness and diversity of language by embedding Chinese words, language, and culture. This linguistic approach colors the feminine characteristics of the protagonists and is expressed through poetic devices with a simple, lyrical, and humorous style.</p> <p>The study underscores the interdependent relationship between language and culture, where language not only carries cultural, but also shapes and reflects a nation's characteristics. This is particularly evident in the context elements, but of Chinese American literature, where language issues play a crucial role in reflecting the cultural belonging and identity construction of Chinese Americans. The unique language features in Tan's novels, such as the insertion of Chinese and Chinglish words (realia), Chinese Pinyin, and Chinese characters with specific connotations, create an "unfamiliarity" effect that enhances the artistic tension of the text. These linguistic choices authentically depict the language barriers between mothers and daughters, while showcasing the distinct mindset and values of the Chinese culture. By examining these language and artistic expression features, the study aims to unveil the unique literary strategies employed by Amy Tan, demonstrating her poetic and artistic mastery in navigating the complexities of Chinese American identity and experience.</p>	<p>Translingualism, transculturalism, Amy Tan, richness and diversity of language, Chinese American women's experiences, realia, Chinese Pinyin, Chinese characters and connotations</p> <p><b>Received:</b> August 15, 2024  <b>Accepted:</b> August 30, 2024  <b>Available online:</b> November 15, 2024</p>

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Language is not only a carrier of culture but also an important component of a culture. Cultural differences between countries and ethnic groups inevitably reflect various aspects of language use. Language is influenced by culture and reflects it, as it represents a nation's characteristics, including its historical and cultural background, views, lifestyles, and ways of thinking about life. Language and culture coexist and are interdependent.

As a second-generation Chinese American, Amy Tan's mother tongue is English, but due to her mother's inability to speak fluent English for many years, they often communicate in Chinese. Language barriers between mother and daughter often lead to misunderstandings, and several of Tan's works reflect the problem of poor communication between daughters and mothers in Chinese American families.

One unique language feature in Amy Tan's novels is the implantation of Chinese and Chinglish words, or realia. Tan's use of Chinese words or Chinglish expressions, some of which are direct interpretations of Chinese expressions, and some are Chinese Pinyin or variants, reflects her deep emotional attachment to Chinese culture and the inseparable relationship between language features and Chinese identity. Tan also created some words with immigrant characteristics by combining Chinese Pinyin with English spelling habits, proving that dual cultures deeply influenced her.

Presenting Chinese characters and their connotations is another interesting feature in Tan's novels. On the one hand, it expresses the vastness and profundity of Chinese culture, on the other hand, it highlights the themes of "root seeking" and "identity", which Tan expressed in most of her writings. The use of Chinese characters with the same sound but different connotations also plays a significant role in conveying the themes and subtleties of the narratives.

Through the analysis of Tan's language and artistic expression features from the perspective of translingualism and transculturalism, her poetic and artistic mastery in portraying the experiences of Chinese American women and their cultural identity will be revealed.

## **METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCHERS IN NARRATOLOGY**

Translingualism, a term coined by scholars such as Steven G. Kellman (2000) and David Schwarzer et al. (2006), has emerged as a conceptual framework that challenges traditional linguistic categorizations. At its core, translingualism emphasizes the fluidity and interconnectedness of language systems, transcending the boundaries of bilingualism, multilingualism, and their derivatives. This research paper aims to delve into the nuances of translingualism, exploring its theoretical underpinnings and linguistic manifestations.

Translingualism is rooted in the idea of “seeing oneself in the other” and extends this concept to the realm of language. It posits that languages are not isolated entities, but flexible resources that speakers and writers draw upon to communicate across cultural, linguistic, or contextual barriers. This perspective rejects the static categorizations of language proficiency, emphasizing instead the dynamic and adaptive nature of language use.

Richard Slimbach, the author of *The Transcultural Journey*, posits that transculturalism stems from the endeavor to identify universal interests and values that transcend cultural and national boundaries. He further elaborates that the essence of transculturalism can be gauged as a means of thinking “outside the box of one’s motherland” and by “seeing many sides of every question without abandoning conviction, and allowing for a chameleon sense of self without losing one’s cultural center”. (Richard S. 2011, pp. 205-230)

Translingual phenomena encompass words and other aspects of language that are relevant across multiple linguistic systems. These include internationalisms, such as scientific vocabulary, which comprises thousands of translingual words and combining forms. Translingualism also recognizes the phenomenon of translanguaging, where communicative practices transcend autonomous languages, allowing for a mixing and changing of languages and communicative codes. This approach challenges the notion of linguistic purity, emphasizing instead the creative and strategic use of language resources.

Over the past decade, there has been a gradual increase in second language

scholars theorizing about translingualism and its implications for writing practices. While the paradigm of translingualism in classroom settings has yet to receive significant attention, scholars such as Nathanael John Rudolph are making strides in researching its adaptation into pedagogical practices. This research focuses on how translingual experiences can inform debates surrounding native and non-native speaking roles and identities, offering insights into the complex and dynamic nature of language use in diverse linguistic contexts.

Translingualism, as a theoretical framework, offers a unique lens for understanding the fluidity and interconnectedness of language systems. Its linguistic manifestations and pedagogical implications challenge traditional linguistic categorizations and pedagogical practices, advocating for a more inclusive and adaptive approach to language learning and teaching. As the field of second language acquisition and ESL continues to evolve, research on translingualism holds the promise of transforming our understanding of language and its role in communication and identity.

A.B. Temirbolat (2011) suggested ten criteria as the basic measuring tool for the fiction analysis. They can be divided into two groups in terms of content and form, and one is mainly about content, theme, and images including “*humanism; fidelity to life reality; deep observation; logic of author’s idea and breadth of creative imagination; the ability to generalize and typify; plot construction and mastery in creating the system of images;*”; another one deals with language, style and artistic expression, including “*the accuracy of artistic details and serve to the idea; skillful revelation of personages’ inner world; richness and diversity of the language in the work; ability to form an aesthetic sense.*”

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the literary criteria suggested by A.B. Temirbolat, the analysis of the language and artistic expression features in Amy Tan’s novels will be explored and explained from the perspective of translingualism and transculturalism to show the author’s poetic and artistic mastery. Since Amy Tan’s writings mainly focus on

Chinese American women's experiences, "richness and diversity of the language in work" mainly features the language embedding Chinese words, language and culture, colouring feminine characteristics, meanwhile poetic expressions in various rhetorical devices with a simple, lyric and humorous style. "Skillful revelation of personages' inner world" is mainly reflected in substantial inner colloquial monologues and psychological descriptions of protagonists. In terms of "the accuracy of artistic details and serve to the idea" and "ability to form an aesthetic sense", we just focus on the artistic symbolism presented in the novels and life philosophy, which is artistically expressed in a kind of parallel structure, or in a paradox way.

*"Language is not only a carrier of culture, but also an important component of a culture, which is self-proved."* (Hu,Y.2003, 207). Therefore, cultural differences between different countries and ethnic groups will inevitably reflect various aspects of language use. Some sociologists even believe that without language, there is no culture. On the other hand, language is influenced by culture and reflects it. It can be said that language reflects a nation's characteristics, including its historical and cultural background and the nation's views, lifestyles, and ways of thinking about life. Language and culture coexist and are interdependent. Language is not only a part of culture, but also a self-contained culture.

*"It is language, as well as the entire social customs system associated with language, that enables us to reconstruct our past every moment."* (Maurice H., 2002, 290) For humans, speaking a language may be a choice of identity, or a representation of cultural belonging, and this characteristic of humanity is particularly evident in Chinese American literature. Scholars have previously raised the issue of "language anxiety" in Chinese American literature, and critics believe that *"language anxiety in Chinese American literature is primarily a historical and practical issue."* (Hu,Y.,2003,207) This indicates that language issues do exist and play a very important role in Chinese American literature, as they reflect Chinese Americans' cultural belonging and identity construction issues.

As a second-generation Chinese American, Amy Tan's mother tongue is

English, but due to her mother's inability to speak fluent English for many years, they often communicate in Chinese. Language barriers between mother and daughter often lead to misunderstandings between them, and several works by Amy Tan also reflect in different degrees the problem of poor communication between daughters and mothers in Chinese American families.

One unique language feature in the four novels is the implantation of Chinese and Chinglish words, or *realia*. The term "realia" stems from medieval Latin, where it denoted the actual, tangible objects as distinguished from abstract concepts. The modern interpretation of this word was introduced by Bulgarian translators Vlahov and Florin, pioneers in its in-depth examination. They highlight that *realia*, due to their deeply localized nature, frequently presents a translational hurdle. ( Vlahov, S. & Florin, S., 2004, 63) Originating in popular culture, *realia* are now prevalent across a wide array of textual forms. Fiction, particularly, embraces *realia* for the exotic touch.

For Amy Tan, Chinese is the language of her home country and represents Chinese culture. As a cultural symbol, Chinese has also been deeply ingrained in Amy Tan's heart and influenced her creations, presenting unique Chinese American literary features in the language. Her text is often mixed with "Chinese words or Chinglish expressions," some of which are direct interpretations of Chinese expressions, and some are Chinese Pinyin or a variant of Chinese Pinyin. This is a unique feature of language in Amy Tan's novels. For Amy Tan, expressing directly in Chinese words or information related to Chinese words reflects her deep emotional attachment to Chinese culture and indicates the inseparable relationship between language features and Chinese identity. Just because both languages influence her Chinese American identity, there are imprints of both languages in the text.

Amy Tan created some words with immigrant characteristics by combining Chinese Pinyin with English spelling habits, as shown in the following table. These words sound like Chinese Pinyin, but in fact, these words are in line with English spelling habits. Amy Tan reorganized words by combining Chinese Pinyin with

English, proving that dual cultures deeply influenced her. On the other hand, we can also clearly see that Amy Tan has shown us a new relationship between Chinese culture and American culture in her text, that is, the relationship of coexistence and tolerance. We illustrate the realia in *The Joy Luck Club* in the following table.

**Table 1.** The realia in *The Joy Luck Club*

Classification	Chinese Words	Total
salutation	Aiyi (阿姨), Syaujye, Meimei (妹妹), Jyejye (姐姐), Nuyer (女儿), Hwai dungsyi (坏蛋子), Dajya (大姐), Taitai (太太), Syaudi (小弟), Syaujye (小姐)	9
culinary term	Dyansyin (点心), wonton (馄饨), chase (叉烧), chow mei (炒面), zong zi (粽子) syaumei (烧麦) tounau (豆脑) ywansyau (元宵)	8
toponym	Ningpo (宁波), Shanghai (上海), Taiyuan (太原), Taiwan (台湾), Kweilin (桂林), Chungking(重庆), Tai lake (太湖), Guangzhou (广州), Tiantsin (天津), Wushi (无锡), Peking (北京), Shansi (山西)	12
colloquialism	chiszle, Ai-ya哎-呀, Aii哎哎-呀-ya, Aiii-ya哎哎哎-呀, Wyah (呜啊), Ni kan (你看), Choszle (臭死了), Jrdaule (知道了), nala (拿啦), Swanle (算了), mangjile (忙死了), Jandale (长大了), Shemma bende ren (这么笨的人) Shemma yisz? (什么意思) chiszle (	14

	气死了) Yiding (一定), dajya (大家)	
Mah jong term	Pung(碰), Chr (吃), Mah jong (麻将)	3
cultural norm	Shou (孝), ni (逆), Dangsyng tamende shenti, (当心他们的身体) kowtow (磕头), koutou (叩头)	5
linguistic decorum	Mei gwansyi (没关系), Ching (请), kechi (客气)	3
untranslatable expressions	Chabuduo (差不多), butong (不同), Shwo buchulai (说不出来), Shemma yisz (什么意思), nengkan (能干), yiding (一定), hulihudu; heimongmong (黑蒙蒙) kai gwa (开瓜), lihais (厉害), chuming (聪明), chi (气), Chunwang chihan (唇亡齿寒) pichi (脾气), hong mu (红木), chang (璋)	16

In Amy Tan's novels, mothers, as the first generation of Chinese Americans, often communicate with their daughters in poor English language, and when encountering English words they cannot speak, they will use Chinese instead. In particular, they will speak Chinese when they want to express subtle and sharp feelings or emotions. The situation is true for Kwan and Olivia in *The Hundred Secret Senses*. Therefore, this characteristic is manifested in the textual authenticity of incorporating Chinese expressions into English sentences. For example, Suyuan wanted her daughter to watch a girl's performance on TV. *"My mother would poke my arm and say, 'Ni Kan'---You watch. And I would see Shirley tapping her feet, or singing a sailor song, or pursing her lips into a round O while saying, 'Oh my goodness.'.... 'Ni kan,' said my mother, as Shirley's eyes flooded with tears. 'You already know how. Don't need talent for crying!'*... *'Ni kan,' my mother said, calling*

me over with hurried hand gestures, 'Look here.' (TAN A.,2019,152-153) The Chinese expression "Ni kan" has more emotional connotations than just reminding the daughter to have a look. It implies the mother's educational purpose. Another example, Suyuan told her daughter "'Last week,' she said, growing angrier at each step, 'the waigoren accuse me.' She referred to all Caucasians as waigoren, foreigners." (TAN A.,2019,239) An-mei told her daughter "'He is American,' warned my mother, as if I had been too blind to notice. 'A waigoren. (外国人)'" (TAN A.,2019,133)

Mother's speaking English with Chinese can also be seen in the daughters' narration, such as "nengkan(能干)", "ying-gai 应该". These phrases have more connotations than the corresponding expression in English, "the ability to do something" and "should have done something". They imply some Chinese beliefs and Chinese culture. In *The Joy Luck Club*, Rose described what her parents did after finding out her brother Bing disappeared. "He believed in his **nengkan**, his ability to do anything he put his mind to. My mother believed she had **nengkan** to cook anything my father had a mind to catch. It was this belief in their **nengkan** that had brought my parents to America... My father stood at the end of the reef, patiently casting out, waiting for **nengkan** to manifest itself as a fish... She had never swum a stroke in her life, but her faith in her own **nengkan** convinced her that what these Americans couldn't do, she could. She could find Bing. And when the rescue people finally pulled her out of the water, she still had her **nengkan** intact..." This will go where Bing is. I will bring him back," she said fiercely. I had never heard so much **nengkan** in my mother's voice." (TAN A.,2019,138-149)

In *The Kitchen God's Wife*, Pear described how her mother always regretted things past. "i! **Ying-gai** find him another job." **Ying-gai** was what my mother always said when she meant I should have. **Ying-gai** meant she should have altered the direction of fate; she should have prevented disaster. To me, **ying-gai** meant my mother lived a life of regrets that never faded with time. "It's true. I just found out the electrician died—of cancer, too. **Yinggai**, pick somebody else." (TAN A.,2013,29)

This form of language expression creates an “unfamiliarity” effect on the text, increasing its artistic tension. At the same time, it also allows readers to intuitively see the language barriers between mothers and daughters, making the text more authentic. Speaking Chinese also shows how their mind style works. The way the Chinese perceive life is not as simple as that American and thus Chinese words are the perfect words to explain the Chinese values in the novels (*Mardliya P.*,2019,643).

In addition, presenting Chinese characters and their connotation is another interesting feature in the novels. In *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, the subtitles of several sections of LuLing's manuscript are Chinese characters with special meanings. They are “Truth真、Heart心、Change变、Ghost鬼、Destiny命运、Effortless道、Character骨、Fragrance香”. The author does not casually select these characters but with specific cultural meanings. They are highly refined from the essence of Chinese culture.

Presenting “Chinese characters” in the text directly, on the one hand, expresses the vastness and profundity of Chinese culture; on the other hand, it highlights the themes of "root seeking" and "identity", which Amy Tan expressed in most of her writings.

Furthermore, in *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, the author explains Chinese characters through the protagonists. For example, the Chinese character “心(heart)” is explained by Precious Auntie to LuLing. “*The oldest recorded name of our village was Immortal Heart. Precious Auntie taught me how to write this down on my chalkboard. Watch now, Doggie, she ordered and drew the character for "heart": See this curving stroke? That's the bottom of the heart, where blood gathers and flows. And the dots, those are the two veins and the artery that carry the blood in and out. As I traced over the character, she asked: Whose dead heart gave shape to this word? How did it begin, Doggie? Did it belong to a woman? Was it drawn in sadness?*”(TAN A.,2001,173)

It is well known that there are a lot of Chinese characters with the same sound

but different connotations. Amy Tan presents a good example of that in *The Bonesetter’s Daughter*; GaoLing explained to Ruth different characters with the same sound of “gu”, illustrated by the following table.

“No, no,” GaoLing said. “Gu as in ‘gorge.’ It’s a different gu. It sounds the same as the bone gu, but it’s written differently. The third tone gu can mean many things: ‘old,’ ‘gorge,’ ‘bone,’ ‘thigh,’ ‘blind,’ ‘grain,’ ‘merchant,’ lots of things. And the way ‘bone’ is written can also stand for ‘character.’ That’s why we use that expression ‘It’s in your bones.’ It means, ‘That’s your character.’” (TAN A.,2001,398)

**Table 2** The different characters and meanings of gǔ

Sound	Chinese character	Meaning
“gu” in the third tone:gǔ	谷	gorge
	骨	bone
	古	old
	股	thigh
	瞽	blind
	贾	merchant
	骨	character

Continually, GaoLing informs Ruth that her grandmother’s first name is Liu Xin, instead of Liu Xing(流星) that is confused and used by some people, implying the fate of Precious Auntie. “burns up quick, one day here, one day gone, just like what happened to Precious Auntie.” (TAN A.,2001,399) In China, parents attach great importance to a child’s name, which is usually given with special connotations, hopes and intentions. Here are more examples from the novels.

**Table 3.** The connotation of Chinese names in the novels

The novel	English Name	Chinese characters	meaning	Further explanation
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<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>	Suyuan	宿愿	Long-Cherished Wish	She wishes her twin daughters would be found.
	Jing-Mei	菁妹/精妹	Jing‘ like excellent jing. Not just good, it’s something pure, essential, the best quality. Mei, ‘younger sister.’	‘ <i>Jing is good leftover stuff when you take impurities out of something like gold, rice, or salt so what is left—just pure essence.</i> Suyuan left her two twin daughters in China, so she put all her hope and good intentions on Jing-mei.
	Ying-Ying	莹映	Clear Reflection	Ying-Ying is like her mother a lot, so she was named by her mother Ying-Ying
	Tyan-yu	天余	Tyan: sky Yu: leftovers Tyan-yu means he was leftover by the sky	because he was so important, and because when he was born, his father was very sick, and his family thought he might die. Tyan-yu would be the leftover of his father’s spirit.

<i>The Bonesetter's daughter</i>	<i>Gu Liu Xin</i>	谷鑒信	<i>Liu Xin: Remain True</i>	The name of Precious Auntie. Her name shows her character, true to her heart.
	<i>Luyi</i>	如意	all that you wish	Luring named her daughter after Sister Yu. Ruth was amazed and gratified that her mother had put so much heart into naming her.
The Kitchen God's Wife	Mochou	莫愁	Sorrow-free	Weiwei named her first stillborn child after the lake in Nanking, Mochou, because she had never known even one sorrow.
	Yiku	饴苦	pleasure over bitterness	Weiwei named her second child Yiku, two opposite words, the good one first to cancel out the bad one second. In this way, she was wishing her daughter a life of comfort, winning

				out over hardship. Yiku died from dysentery in her second year in the world.
	Danru	淡如	nonchalance	Danru is a good Buddhist name. Weiwei hoped that the baby would never be attached to anything in this life, not even its mother. Unfortunately, Danru died from a disease spread by Japanese-raised rats at six years old.
The Hundred Secret Senses	Yiban	一半	the one-half man	This man had the mother blood of a Chinese woman, the father blood of an American trader. He serves as a go-between.

## CONCLUSION

Transculturalism refers to the concept of understanding and identifying with different cultures, seeing oneself in the context of others. It involves embracing and combining elements from multiple cultures. Translingual phenomena, on the other hand, refer to words and other aspects of language that are relevant and shared across

multiple languages. Translingualism, a framework challenging traditional linguistic categorizations, emphasizes the fluidity and interconnectedness of language systems. It rejects static categorizations of language proficiency, highlighting the dynamic and adaptive nature of language use. From this perspective, the Chinglish language characteristics in Amy Tan's novels are explored. Based on the detailed analysis, we can see that Amy Tan shows her understanding of the culture of Chinese names and her emphasis on the culture of her homeland.

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