

THE APPLICATION OF CULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN INTERNATIONAL CHINESE TEACHING: A CASE STUDY OF DEMI-GODS AND SEMI-DEVILS*

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Received 23 June 2026; Revised 7 July 2026; Accepted 9 July 2026

Abstract

This study aims to: (1) analyze the application modes of Wuxia works in international Chinese education, with a focus on the cultural values embodied in *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*; (2) construct a classroom transformation logic integrating cultural elements, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives through the analysis of JiangHu ethics and their linguistic features; and (3) design culture-language integrated teaching schemes for international Chinese classrooms. This study adopts a qualitative research approach, combining literature review and content analysis. The research focuses on the four dimensions of JiangHu ethics—righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility—and analyzes their linguistic representations in Jin Yong's *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*. The findings reveal that Wuxia works can provide authentic cultural and linguistic resources for international Chinese education. JiangHu ethics are expressed through evaluative vocabulary, modality systems, commitment sentence patterns, causal complex sentences, and transitional structures. Based on these findings, the

* Huang Junyi and Jin Ying. (2026). The Application Of Cultural Communication
In International Chinese Teaching: A Case Study Of Demi-Gods And Semi-Devils.

Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Development, 4(5), 738-751.;

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.>

Website: <https://so12.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/IJSDIADP/>



study constructs a three-tier instructional framework covering vocabulary, sentence, and discourse levels for HSK 4–6 learners. Furthermore, an integrated teaching scheme is proposed to transform literary texts into communicative classroom activities. The study suggests that Wuxia literature can effectively support culture-language integrated teaching and promote learners' intercultural understanding.

Keywords: International Chinese Education, Cultural Communication, Wuxia Literature, JiangHu Ethics, Culture-Language Integration

Introduction

With the development of international Chinese education, increasing attention has been paid to the integration of language teaching and cultural communication. Duan Peng (2022) pointed out that cultural content has become an essential component of international Chinese education. However, abstract cultural concepts are often difficult for learners to understand without specific contexts, making contextualized cultural teaching particularly important (Huang Zhonghui, 2023). Therefore, suitable teaching materials that combine linguistic forms with cultural meanings are needed.

As carriers of both language and culture, literary works possess unique advantages for cultural instruction. Among different literary genres, Wuxia novels are characterized by distinctive Chinese cultural values and rich linguistic expressions, yet their pedagogical potential has not been sufficiently explored. As one of the most representative Wuxia writers, Jin Yong has gained widespread international influence through translations and adaptations of his works. Nevertheless, the JiangHu ethical system embodied in his novels—righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility—has rarely been examined from the perspective of culture-language integration and classroom transformation.

Against this background, this study takes Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils as a case study to explore the application of Wuxia works in international Chinese education. Specifically, it aims to analyze the application modes of JiangHu ethics, construct a classroom transformation logic linking cultural elements, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives, and develop integrated teaching schemes for international Chinese classrooms. Through these efforts, the study seeks to provide theoretical and practical references for promoting the integration of language teaching and cultural communication.

Objectives

1. To analyze the application modes of Wuxia works in international Chinese education, with a focus on the cultural values embodied in Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils.
2. To construct a classroom transformation logic integrating cultural elements, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives through the analysis of JiangHu ethics and their linguistic features.
3. To design culture-language integrated teaching schemes for international Chinese classrooms based on Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils.

Literature Review

1. Culture-Language Integration in International Chinese Education

Culture and language are closely interconnected in international Chinese education. Hoskins and Mirus (1988) proposed the Cultural Discount Theory, suggesting that cultural products may lose communicative effectiveness when transferred across different cultural contexts, which helps explain the challenges of transmitting Wuxia culture to international learners. Xu Guozhang (1980) emphasized that culture-loaded words embody specific cultural meanings and values, providing a theoretical basis for interpreting JiangHu ethics in literary texts.

Hornby (1950) advocated situational language teaching and stressed that language should be learned in meaningful contexts. In recent years, Duan Peng (2022) argued that cultural communication should be integrated with language teaching, while Huang Zhonghui (2023) pointed out that abstract cultural concepts require contextual support to facilitate learners' understanding.

2. Literary Texts and Wuxia Culture in International Chinese Education

Previous studies have demonstrated the pedagogical value of literary texts in international Chinese education. Shen Changsheng (2014) and Wang Ding (2015) suggested that literary works provide authentic language materials and rich cultural resources. Shao Bin and Shi Huilin (2022) further confirmed the teaching value of linguistic expressions and culture-loaded vocabulary in Jin Yong's novels. Regarding Wuxia culture, Song Erguang (2025) analyzed the ethical system of righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility, while He Mingyang (2024) and Li Jiali (2024) discussed the cultural values and cross-cultural dissemination of Jin Yong's works. However, existing studies mainly focus on literary interpretation and cultural dissemination, and the relationship among JiangHu ethics, linguistic forms, and classroom teaching has not been systematically explored. Therefore, this study investigates the application modes of Wuxia works, constructs a classroom transformation logic integrating culture and language, and proposes instructional schemes for international Chinese education.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach combining literature review and content analysis to examine the cultural elements and linguistic representations in *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*.

1. Literature Review Method

The literature review method is used to examine previous studies on Wuxia ethics, cultural communication, and literary applications in international Chinese education, providing theoretical support for textual analysis and instructional design.

2. Content Analysis Method

Content analysis serves as the primary research method. Based on the ethical framework of righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility, this study analyzes the linguistic representations of JiangHu ethics in *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*. The analysis focuses on five categories of linguistic forms, including evaluative vocabulary, modality systems, commitment sentence patterns, causal complex sentences, and transitional structures, in order to reveal the relationship between cultural meanings and linguistic expressions and support classroom transformation.

Table 1 Analytical Dimensions of Linguistic Forms of JiangHu Ethics

Linguistic Form		Description	Examples
Type			
Evaluative Vocabulary	Explicit		
	commendatory/derogatory words and implicit value judgment expressions		wàng'ēnfùyi (ungrateful and treacherous), dǐngtiānlìdì (upright and unyielding)
Modality System	Contrast between obligatory and volitional modality		yīngdāng (ought to), dànqíú (only wish), juébùhuì (will never)
Commitment Sentence Patterns	First-person declarative structures		If... then not...; Since... then...

Causal Complex Sentences	Present ethical reasoning	It is because...; Therefore...
Transitional Structures	Present the tension of ethical conflicts	<i>Although... yet...; Prioritize the state, put personal affection aside.</i>

Results

1. Application Modes of Wuxia Works in International Chinese Education

The analysis shows that *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils* contains rich cultural and linguistic resources that can be effectively applied to international Chinese education. JiangHu ethics are mainly represented through four dimensions: righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility, each of which is associated with distinctive linguistic forms.

Righteousness is characterized by moral evaluative vocabulary and commitment expressions, highlighting the values of cherishing old bonds and upholding the greater good. Affection is mainly conveyed through lyrical sentence structures and emotional modality, presenting different types of interpersonal relationships. Loyalty is expressed through causal reasoning and obligatory modality, reflecting the progression from loyalty to a political regime toward responsibility for all people under heaven. Responsibility is represented through transitional structures and commitment expressions, showing the transformation from passive acceptance to active undertaking.

These findings suggest that Wuxia works are not only carriers of traditional Chinese values but also provide authentic linguistic materials for culture-language integrated teaching. The interaction between ethical values and linguistic forms enables learners to understand Chinese culture through meaningful language contexts.

Table 2 Mapping Relationship Between JiangHu Ethical Dimensions and Linguistic Forms

Ethical Dimension	Typical Linguistic Forms
Righteousness	Moral evaluative vocabulary; commitment patterns
Affection	Lyrical sentence structures; emotional modality
Loyalty	Obligatory modality; causal complex sentences
Responsibility	Transitional structures; commitment expressions

2. Classroom Transformation Logic of Culture-Language Integration

Based on the relationship between ethical dimensions and linguistic forms, this study constructs a classroom transformation logic integrating cultural elements, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives. The transformation pathway proceeds from the identification of JiangHu ethics to the extraction of linguistic forms and finally to the design of corresponding instructional activities.

Considering learners’ differences in language proficiency, the transformation framework is divided into three levels. The vocabulary level, intended for HSK 4–5 learners, focuses on the contextual understanding of culture-loaded words. The sentence level, also suitable for HSK 4–5 learners, emphasizes the pragmatic functions of sentence patterns. The discourse level, designed for HSK 5–6 learners, centers on ethical discussions and role-playing activities, aiming to cultivate learners’ logical expression and intercultural communicative competence.

The three-tier framework enables the same literary text to be adapted to learners with different levels of Chinese proficiency and facilitates the integration of language learning and cultural understanding.

Table 3 Three-Tier Framework for the Instructional Transformation of JiangHu Ethics

Teaching Level	Applicable Proficiency	Teaching Focus	Teaching Activities
Vocabulary Level	HSK 4–5	Culture-loaded words	Contextual word matching
Sentence Level	HSK 4–5	Pragmatic sentence patterns	Commitment intensity ranking
Discourse Level	HSK 5–6	Ethical reasoning and value expression	Ethical dilemma role-play

3. Integrated Teaching Scheme for International Chinese Classrooms

Based on the transformation framework, this study develops an integrated teaching scheme focusing on the ethics of righteousness in Chapter 15 of *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*. The lesson is designed for HSK 4–5 learners and aims to combine language learning with cultural understanding.

The instructional process consists of four stages. In the warm-up stage, students are introduced to the character Qiao Feng and the cultural background through contextualized activities. In the vocabulary stage, culture-loaded words are taught through contextual word-matching tasks. In the sentence stage, learners practice commitment sentence patterns and understand their pragmatic functions through ranking activities. In the discussion stage, students participate in ethical dilemma discussions and role-play activities, using causal and transitional structures to express their opinions.

This instructional design transforms abstract cultural values into concrete communicative tasks and promotes learners' understanding of Chinese culture while improving their language abilities.

Table 4 Instructional Design for "Qiao Feng Atones for His Sins by Shedding His Own Blood"

Stage	Main Activities	Teaching Method
Warm-up	"Guess the Hero" activity and introduction to Qiao Feng	Contextualized teaching
Vocabulary Learning	Contextual word-matching tasks with culture-loaded words	Cooperative learning
Sentence Practice	Commitment intensity ranking and sentence imitation	Task-based teaching
Ethical Discussion	Group discussion and role-play on ethical dilemmas	Communicative teaching
Summary	Reflection on the value of righteousness	Comprehensive application

Discussion

1. Implications of the Application Modes of Wuxia Works

The findings of this study support previous research emphasizing the cultural value of literary texts in international Chinese education. Shen Changsheng (2014) and Wang Ding (2015) argued that literary works provide authentic language resources and facilitate learners' understanding of Chinese culture. Similarly, Shao Bin and Shi Huilin (2022) highlighted the teaching value of linguistic expressions and culture-loaded vocabulary in Jin Yong's novels. The present study further demonstrates that Wuxia works contain abundant linguistic and cultural resources that can be transformed into instructional materials. The

four dimensions of JiangHu ethics—righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility—are not only important cultural values but are also manifested through distinctive linguistic forms. Therefore, Wuxia literature can serve as a bridge connecting language learning and cultural understanding in international Chinese education.

Compared with previous studies that mainly focused on literary interpretation and cultural dissemination, this study pays greater attention to the pedagogical value of literary texts. By analyzing the interaction between ethical meanings and linguistic representations, the study expands the application scope of Wuxia literature and provides new perspectives for integrating cultural communication with language teaching.

2. Significance of the Classroom Transformation Logic

A major contribution of this study lies in the construction of a classroom transformation logic that connects cultural elements, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives. Existing studies have mostly discussed cultural content at the level of interpretation, while relatively little attention has been paid to how cultural elements can be transformed into operable teaching resources. To address this issue, the present study proposes a transformation pathway from ethical dimension identification to linguistic form extraction and teaching objective alignment.

This transformation logic externalizes implicit cultural values into explicit linguistic features, making abstract cultural concepts easier for learners to understand. The three-tier framework also enables the same literary text to be adapted to learners with different language proficiency levels. Vocabulary-level activities emphasize the contextual understanding of culture-loaded words, sentence-level activities focus on pragmatic functions, and discourse-level activities encourage learners to express ethical positions through communicative tasks. Such a framework enriches the theoretical discussion of culture-language

integration and provides a practical model for classroom implementation.

Nevertheless, the proposed framework is mainly designed for HSK 4–6 learners. For beginners, simplified texts, videos, or visual materials may be required to reduce learning difficulty and enhance comprehension. Future studies may further examine the applicability of this framework to learners at different proficiency levels.

3. Pedagogical Implications of the Integrated Teaching Scheme

Another contribution of this study is the development of an integrated teaching scheme based on Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils. Through contextualized vocabulary learning, sentence pattern practice, and ethical dilemma discussions, abstract cultural values are transformed into concrete communicative activities. Such a design reflects the principle of integrating language teaching with cultural communication and highlights the importance of meaningful contexts in language learning, which is consistent with Hornby's (1950) view of situational language teaching.

From a practical perspective, the teaching scheme provides reference for the selection and utilization of literary materials in international Chinese classrooms. It demonstrates that literary texts can be used not only for reading comprehension but also for developing learners' intercultural awareness and communicative competence. Role-play and discussion activities encourage learners to compare Chinese cultural values with those of their own cultures, thereby promoting deeper cross-cultural understanding.

Although this study proposes an operable teaching framework, its effectiveness has not yet been verified through empirical classroom experiments. Future research may employ classroom observations, questionnaires, and interviews to examine learners' responses and evaluate the effectiveness of culture-language integrated teaching in different educational contexts.

4. Conclusion

This study explored the application of Wuxia culture in international Chinese education through a case study of Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils. By analyzing the four dimensions of JiangHu ethics—righteousness, affection, loyalty, and responsibility—the study identified their corresponding linguistic features, including moral evaluative vocabulary, emotional modality, commitment patterns, causal structures, and transitional expressions.

Based on these findings, the study constructed a classroom transformation logic linking ethical dimensions, linguistic forms, and teaching objectives, and proposed a three-tier instructional framework consisting of vocabulary, sentence, and discourse levels. Furthermore, an integrated teaching scheme was designed to demonstrate how literary texts can be transformed into classroom activities that combine language learning with cultural understanding.

Overall, the findings suggest that Wuxia literature possesses considerable pedagogical value in international Chinese education. Through the integration of cultural communication and language teaching, literary texts can provide meaningful contexts for learners and contribute to the development of intercultural communicative competence. This study enriches research on culture-language integration and provides theoretical and practical references for the application of literary works in international Chinese classrooms.

Recommendations

1. Theoretical Recommendations

Future studies may further examine the linguistic representations of cultural elements in different literary genres and explore the applicability of culture-language integration to a wider range of teaching materials. Comparative studies involving Wuxia novels, classical literature, and contemporary literary works could provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between cultural

meanings and linguistic forms. In addition, interdisciplinary approaches combining linguistics, literature, and international Chinese education may contribute to the development of more comprehensive theoretical frameworks for culture-oriented language teaching.

2. Future Research Recommendations

The instructional framework proposed in this study requires further empirical verification. Future research may employ classroom experiments, questionnaires, interviews, and learning performance assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the three-tier teaching framework among learners with different Chinese proficiency levels. Comparative studies involving learners from different cultural backgrounds are also recommended to examine the adaptability of culture-language integrated teaching in diverse educational contexts. Moreover, multimedia resources such as films, television adaptations, and digital learning materials based on Wuxia literature may be incorporated into future teaching practices to enhance learners' engagement and intercultural understanding.

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