

Cultural Narratives and Communicative Functions in Academic Discourse: Qualitative Content Analysis of Scholarly Articles of Cultural Identity in Modern Chinese Literature Research

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Abstract

This research aims to explore the way the academic literature on modern Chinese fiction conveys, forms, and restructures meanings of Chinese cultural identity and traditional values. The study is based on a qualitative and interpretive research design, which involves the application of qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis to a purposely chosen sample of twenty-three English-language academic articles published in the years 2005-2025. The results indicate that modern academic discourse significantly rewrites the Chinese literary historiography by disrupting Eurocentric and monologic paradigms, expanding the canon by addressing the marginalized, diasporic, and transnational voices, and using allegory, symbolism, and mythological continuity to express the multi-layered cultural histories. Additional findings indicate that scholarly discourse has important mediating roles in the selective localization of Western theoretical paradigms, prefiguring translation and reception as spaces of cultural power, and assuming hybrid methodological positions to locate the Chinese literary identity in the international academic discourses. Traditional and modernity dialogic interactions generate plural, conflictual cultural negotiation spaces. In conclusion, academic research on contemporary Chinese fiction constitutes a dynamic field of cultural negotiation that defines the limits of tradition, legitimizes specific interpretive voices, and shapes how Chinese identity is redefined within world literature. These conclusions serve to underscore the larger implications of the scholarly discourse in the context of comprehending cultural authority, identity formation and knowledge production in the globalized humanities. Overall, the study highlights scholarly discourse as a critical agent shaping cross-cultural understanding, epistemic legitimacy, and evolving narratives of Chinese literary modernity.

Keywords: cultural identity, Modern Chinese Fiction, academic discourse, dialogic engagement, theoretical framing

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Cultural identity issues have taken centre stage in literary analysis in a globalized and rapidly changing sociocultural environment, and Chinese literature provides a particularly fertile field of study into the construction, negotiation, and transformation of cultural narratives as a result of its rich historical foundations and modern manifestations (Klein, 2024). The spread of literature and ideas around the world has heightened the academic concern of how national and cultural identities are articulated within the academic discourse as a sign of the growing international influence of China and the changing national and regional dynamics (Chow, 2000). Consequently, Chinese cultural identity studies are becoming more mediating between tradition and modernity, local and transnational views, and literature is being seen as an active participant in the creation of common meanings of identity, tradition, and Chineseness instead of a reflection of them (Wang, 2024). Recent research has shifted beyond essentialist conceptualizations of identity to plural, contested, and dynamic conceptualizations, and has used qualitative methods like critical discourse analysis, narrative inquiry, and content analysis to understand how scholarly writing replicates, redefines, and regenerates cultural identity (Li et al., 2024). These strategies reveal the culturally and politically constructed practices of academic language and theoretical framing to the exchange of meanings across contexts and bargain power relations. This hybridized and dialogic way of thinking aligns with the shift toward translation in Chinese literary studies where literature and its readership is seen as a practice of cultural translation that decenters identities and allows negotiations between local and global orders (Klein, 2024). Despite these processes, the systematic investigation of the communicative role of academic discourse as such in

the Chinese cultural identity and reconstruction of traditional values is still not done completely (Evers and Wu, 2006; Li et al., 2024). Against this backdrop, it is highly imperative that research be done systematically to explore how academic research on contemporary Chinese novels propagates, creates, and transforms cultural identity and traditional values through the representational and dialogic roles of scholarly discourse.

1.2 Research Aim

This research aims to explore how academic research on modern Chinese novels communicates, constructs, and reshapes interpretations of Chinese cultural identity and traditional values.

1.3 Research Questions

Now, for this research, 3 research questions have been selected, which are shown below:

1. How do scholarly articles on modern Chinese fiction represent and reinterpret Chinese cultural identity and tradition?
2. What communicative functions do academic language, theoretical framing, and interpretive discourse perform in transmitting cultural meanings?
3. How do academic narratives reflect dialogic engagement between Chinese cultural tradition and modern literary interpretation?

Thus, the present research fills a significant gap in the current literature by analyzing the academic discourse itself as the location of cultural identity formation in the field of modern Chinese fiction study in a systematic manner. The research addresses the shortcomings of previous research by exploring the role of scholarly narratives in cultural identity, as well as in communicative roles and in negotiating tradition and modernity. This research is directed by well-formulated research questions that will help us add a discourse-oriented and theoretically based approach to the study of Chinese literature. The significance of the research is that it sheds light on the ways academic knowledge production produces cultural authority, legitimizes interpretive voices and impacts the global perception of Chinese cultural identity in modern literary studies.

2. Literature Review

The chapter is a review of the available literature on Chinese cultural identity, modern Chinese literature and scholarly discourse, both in terms of interdisciplinary and methodological approaches. It critically analyzes the previous research in order to determine the prevalent themes, theoretical orientations, and research methodological tendencies and indicates the gaps that remain in the discourse and dialogic analysis.

2.1 Analysis of Previous Literature

The process of Chinese cultural identity negotiation in literary works and academic discourse has been broadly studied as a complicated interaction of historical, cultural, and socio-political powers. Huo (2025) predicts the future of modern Chinese literature in the context of international education, as a medium of cultural communication and the pedagogical importance of well-chosen texts and translation in the development of intercultural understanding and identity. Nonetheless, this teaching emphasis provides little exposure to the theoretical and discursive mechanisms of cultural identity construction in academic interpretation. However, Louie (2008) locates Chinese identity in more general socio-political discourses, emphasizing the conflicts between monocultural and multicultural paradigms, Han-centric discourses, the history of ethnic minority, and the duality of state policies in assimilation and oppression, yet textual and discursive processes are under-investigated. Yuan et al. (2025) apply Latent Dirichlet Allocation to more than 14,000 papers to identify the transformations of the revolutionary ideology into globalization, digital humanities, and gender studies, yet their macro-level findings need a qualitative analysis to understand cultural meaning-making. Tu (2024) discusses utopian and dystopian literature in Chinese and Sinophone literature as a dialectics of modernity and tradition but does not pay much attention to communicative strategies in academic writing. On the same note, Liu et al. (2015) illustrate the technical effectiveness of computational text mining without giving much emphasis to the interpretive aspects of scholarly discourse. He (2015) criticizes Anglophone scholarship because it is based on the dominant Western paradigms and fails to consider academic discourse as a place of cultural identity formation. Together, these studies indicate a gap in the study of academic discourse as a performative and dialogic space where tradition, modernity, globality, and locality are negotiated. To fill this gap, the current work uses qualitative content analysis based on the narrative communication theory and Bakhtinian dialogism to analyze academic narratives as the dynamic place of cultural meaning-making and identity negotiation in the modern Chinese literature studies.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study's theoretical framework examines the discursive production of cultural identity in contemporary Chinese literature research through two complementary lenses. Fisher's (1984) narrative communication theory posits human

communication as inherently narrational, where storytelling conveys values, beliefs, and identities via coherence and fidelity to lived experience. It views academic articles as narrative artefacts organising meaning around tradition, identity, and literature, rather than mere information transfers.

Bakhtin's (2010) dialogism emphasises texts' plurality of voices and ideological positions (polyphony, heteroglossia), rejecting monologic systems. This synthesis interrogates how scholarly discussions of modern Chinese fiction narrate cultural identity, engaging in dialogues between tradition and modernity. Together, the theories facilitate critical analysis of how articles construct narrative worlds and negotiate cultural meanings dialogically, revealing narrative structures and tensions in academic identity discourse.

3. Methodology

The chapter describes the research design, data selection, and analysis that were used in the study. It is based on qualitative and interpretive traditions and describes sampling strategy, coding instrument, and data analysis techniques that were applied to analyse academic discourse on modern Chinese fiction.

3.1 Research Design

The study is a qualitative, interpretive study based on content analysis. Qualitative content analysis is used to organize the interpretation of textual data with consideration of context and intertextuality to provide a rich and detailed interpretation of communicative functions and framing strategies that disseminate cultural meanings (Krippendorff, 2018). This method corresponds with the previous literature that argues the significance of interpretive methodologies to analyse the complex cultural narratives in scholarly work (Shih, 2011; Ren, 2023) and assists in critically examining the dialogic tensions that construct the representations of Chinese cultural identity.

3.2 Data Selection and Corpus

This paper used purposive sampling to create a corpus of academic literature on contemporary Chinese fiction and cultural identity. The inclusion criteria included academic publications in English published between 2005 and 2025 that dealt with intersections of culture, identity, tradition, and communication in Chinese literature. The sources were selected based on the reputable academic databases, such as JSTOR, ERIC, Google Scholar, and SCOPUS, with the help of specific keywords. The total number of selected texts was 23 (Appendix A), which allowed a thorough content analysis of qualitative data in terms of contextual and thematic relevance instead of representativeness. The framework of such a selection adheres to the best practices of qualitative content analysis and focuses on the significance of the context and thematic relevance instead of quantity or general representativeness (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017).

3.3 Data Collection Instrument

The research instrument used in the study was a comprehensive coding grid that was used to understand thematic material within the sampled articles of contemporary Chinese fiction in a systematic way. This coding grid was divided into major themes that were representative of the areas of research focus, which were: Cultural Identity, Tradition, Theoretical Framing, Communicative Function, and Dialogic Engagement (Table 1). The coding grid was tested on a sample of articles in the familiarization phase, and through this process, the coding grid could be refined through repeated coding reliability and clarity. This pilot testing was done so that codes were mutually exclusive at a base level and were extensive enough to reflect the thematic diversity of the corpus.

Table 1. Structure of the Coding Grid

Category	Description	Purpose
Cultural Identity	Themes addressing constructions and reinterpretations of cultural identity	Capture scholarly representation of identity concepts
Tradition	References to cultural heritage, continuity, and transformation	Analyze the framing of tradition in modern scholarship
Theoretical Framing	Use of theoretical perspectives and academic discourse	Identify interpretive lenses shaping the narratives
Communicative Function	Functions of academic language and discourse strategies	Explore how discourse transmits and mediates meanings
Dialogic Engagement	Evidence of dialogue between tradition and modernity	Understand negotiation of cultural tensions

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis process of this study combines the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) with Thematic Analysis (TA) to offer a detailed and in-depth analysis of the academic articles on contemporary Chinese fiction. The first step is familiarization, which entails several close readings and annotations of communicative patterns and discursive elements. After that, coding is done according to the 4 Cs approach of Cohen et al. (2002) which involves capturing

comprehensive, consistent, coherent, and contextually relevant codes and using them to explain meaningful segments that refer to cultural identity, tradition, theoretical framing, communicative function, and dialogic engagement. These codes are then classified into conceptual categories that portray higher-order themes that reflect the research questions. Comparative analysis of the 23 texts reveals repetitive and divergent discourses, especially tensions between traditionalism and modernity. The final interpretive step is the connection of these patterned results to general cultural and communicative processes in scholarly speech. The six stages of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) are explicitly used to expand this QCA process to provide the opportunity to explore underlying meanings and functions within the data in greater depth. This combined approach allows strict, open, and adaptable analysis, which is sufficient to capture the challenges of academic language and narrative techniques in passing cultural meanings concerning Chinese identity and tradition.

4. Findings

This chapter is a presentation of the results of the qualitative content analysis and thematic analysis of the chosen academic texts. It is structured around three broad themes in accordance with the research questions that show how the scholarly discourse reflects, mediates and negotiates Chinese cultural identity and tradition.

4.1 Thematic Presentation of Content

The thematic analysis of the text was carried out to explain how the academic discourse constructs, communicates and negotiates Chinese cultural identity and tradition in the context of modern literary studies.

4.1.1 Theme 1: Representations and Reinterpretations of Chinese Cultural Identity and Tradition

Subtheme 1: Reframing Literary Historiography and Canon

Contemporary Chinese fiction has critically rewritten literary historiography and the canon through re-framing Eurocentric narratives and monolithic understandings of Chinese cultural identity. The review of *A New Literary History of Modern China* by Wang (2017) emphasises the fact that the traditional approach to literary surveys has been replaced by a more comprehensive view of culture and historical context that prefigures the voices of the marginalised and non-canonical cultural locations, challenging the strict periodisation and introducing a more inclusive chronology based on the socio-political realities and cultural hybridity. In a similar manner, Shen and Zhou (2006) focus on the way Western literary theories are received in China and reveal how the Chinese scholars negotiate national subjectivity and are exposed to the international intellectual currents, revealing the weaknesses of wholesale Western theoretical importation. Shih (2011) also criticises the mainstream academic discourses as ignoring the imperial and colonial entanglement behind Chinese territorial and ethnic discourses, and suggests Sinophone studies as a reconceptualisation that disrupts hegemonic frameworks by focusing on marginal, diasporic and plural identities that challenge homogenized conceptions of Chineseness. The research by Ho (2012) also questions the linearity of the May Fourth era as a progressive adoption of Western modernity and focuses on intercultural dialogue and heterogeneous subjectivities as a result of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist traditions. Ho (2012) also anticipates the forgotten female narratives, disturbing the patriarchal literary historiography and uncovering the neglected aspects of the canon. Taken together, these works demonstrate a long-standing scholarly attempt to re-think Chinese literary history as a process that is multidimensional and is in a constant state of negotiation between tradition, modernity, and globalization. Simultaneously, they recognize enduring obstacles, such as ideological limitations, reductionist identity models, and deep-rooted historiographical suppositions. Thus, this discussion highlights the importance of acknowledging the dynamic, controversial, and unfinished quality of the literary canon in the contemporary Chinese literature by focusing on unsettled tensions and gaps that still inform cultural representation and academic knowledge.

Subtheme 2: Allegory, Tradition, and Symbolic Reflection in Chinese Fiction

The primary mechanisms by which Chinese fiction conveys and redefines cultural identity include allegory, tradition, and symbolic reflection, and they tend to go through the complicated question of how cultural memory and the modern society interact. The discussion of death as a triple allegory by Yu (2010) highlights the manner in which the existential truth, cultural reflection and political critique converge in the death as that which is beyond mortality to represent more cultural anxieties and moral orders. This allegorical application shows continuity and discontinuity at the same time in the Chinese traditions, but the emphasis on death used by Yu (2010) is sometimes too much to focus on other symbolic registers. The analysis of kinship and marriage system in the novel *To Live* by Yu Hua by Hidayati et al. (2023) is a premonition of traditional social structure as the symbolic representation of the cultural identity, where communal ties and moral standards are prioritized; nevertheless, this approach might over-romanticize tradition without questioning its disputable or repressive aspects. Shapiro (n.d.) emphasizes the perseverance of popular culture and symbolic motifs throughout the literature and film of modernity, and that the traditional cultural patterns can still shape identity, albeit in the subtle, often vernacular way. However, the method used by Shapiro (n.d.) though full of ethnographic description,

sometimes fails to give much weight to high-end literary discourses and their symbolic richness. In the work of Xu (2025) of the transformation of Yu Hua as an avant-garde of crime fiction, it is possible to see the deconstruction and reconstruction of the traditional forms of narration, which reveals the disruptions of society in its symbolic ambiguity. Together, these writings demonstrate how the allegory and symbolism can be used as a dynamic location of cultural negotiation within contemporary Chinese fiction, both in terms of the multiple identity formation and in terms of limitation of fully capturing the heterogeneity and contradictions within tradition.

Subtheme 3: Classical and Mythological Continuities in Modern Narratives

Classical and mythological traditions are often addressed in modern Chinese literature to create continuities that both celebrate and rewrite cultural tradition in the contemporary narratives. The paper by Zhao et al. (2021) about the evolution of cultural identity of Mulan as an ancient ballad and as a Disney film adaptation reveals the process of hybridization, whereby the main traditional values like filial piety and military prowess are merged with the Western principles of individualism and feminism, and the end result is a transnational cultural identity that is far different in context. This indicates the conflict of conservation and change of classical motifs as facilitated by the cultural exchange of the world. The analysis of ancient Chinese myths in modern literature by Zhang (2024a) reveals a variety of remodeling methods in which mythological characters and themes are integrated with the current sociocultural problems, which advances a dialogue between tradition and modernity, but at the same time, he also observes that there is a risk of cultural distortion and loss of original meaning in the oversimplification or commercial demands. The analysis of the fiction of Yan Lianke by Lashin (2024) through the prism of Shijing exegesis presents an intellectual endeavour to redefine the canonical texts, proving the use of mythological and classical allusions as the medium of discussing the intricate identity negotiations, but also exposing the constraints of the reconciliation of didactic traditions with the subversive tendencies of the contemporary narratives. All these works point to the ongoing academic interest in the efforts to reconcile the preservation of Chinese culture with creative revitalization in contemporary Chinese storytelling. These works also display the tensions of authenticity and demonstrate how the forces of transculturalism transform the identity representation in the modern literary discourse.

A synthesized summary of the main analytical observations, academic contributions, and interpretive implications that were determined within the context of this research question are presented in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2. Summary of Core Findings under Theme 1

Theme / Subtheme	Analytical Focus	Key Scholarly Contributions	Interpretive Insights and Implications
Reframing Literary Historiography and Canon	Reconsideration of canon formation, literary historiography, and national narratives	Wang (2017); Shen & Zhou (2006); Shih (2011); Ho (2012)	Scholars reconceptualize literary history as dialogic and plural, expanding beyond Eurocentric and patriarchal frameworks. Despite efforts toward inclusivity, challenges persist in addressing ideological censorship and inherited historiographical biases.
Allegory, Tradition, and Symbolic Reflection in Chinese Fiction	Symbolism and allegory as mechanisms for representing tradition and cultural anxiety	Yu (2010); Hidayati et al. (2023); Shapiro (n.d.); Xu (2025)	Allegory and symbolism mediate between moral order, trauma, and social critique. However, interpretive focus on death, kinship, or symbolism risks simplification and may obscure broader structural or cultural heterogeneity.
Classical and Mythological Continuities in Modern Narratives	Engagement with classical texts and myths in modern reinterpretation	Zhao et al. (2021); Zhang (2024a); Lashin (2024)	Modern narratives recontextualize classical motifs to bridge past and present, promoting cultural renewal yet risking cultural dilution under global influences. The process reveals creative hybridity but also tension between authenticity and adaptation.

4.1.2 Theme 2: Communicative Functions and Framing Strategies in Academic Discourse

Subtheme 1: Theoretical Localization, Resistance, and Adaptation

The introduction of the Western literary theories to the Chinese academic discourse is an expression of complex adaptation, resistance and localization processes which form the modern conceptions of cultural identity and tradition. This tension brings out the difficulty of working with hegemonic Western paradigms and still retain the native intellectual subjectivity. Shen and Zhou (2006) track the introduction of Western theories in China and report that initial blind acceptance excluded the cultural particularity and undermined the local critical voices. Recent scholarship, though, has been arguing in favor of a dialogic middle position, neither accepting nor rejecting Western theories but reworking them to generate localized Chinese frameworks. The decolonial translation praxis by Ren (2023) is an example of resistance and the practice of locating Mandarin-English translation within the neocolonial power structures and revealing the ideological ambiguities of the Anglophone knowledge production. Gao (2017) also criticizes hegemonic

discourse by exposing ethnic marginalization in nationalist, Han-centric literary historiography, and the necessity of theoretical models that would focus on multi-ethnic pluralism. The same author, Wu (2012) also points out the ambivalence of Chinese national-cultural identity between the global interaction and retention of cultural uniqueness. All of this research highlights the pressing necessity of subtle, context-specific theoretical approaches that cannot be assimilated by hegemonic forces and ethnocentric universalism. They are indicative of an increased self-consciousness of Chinese literary scholarship, which sees theoretical localization as a continuing process of negotiation and creative adjustment that is required to achieve intellectual autonomy and cultural authenticity within a global academic environment.

Subtheme 2: Translation, Reception, and Mediation in Global Literary Discourse

Translation, reception, and mediation are crucial to the formation of the global circulation and reception of modern Chinese literature, which reflects the conflicts between cultural particularism and universality. Ren (2024) underlines that a decolonial translation praxis is necessary, which critically historicizes Mandarin-to-English translations in global academic circuits and emphasizes the fact that these translations are bound to geopolitical power and market-driven commodification instead of being the exchange of cultures in a neutral way. Similarly, McDougall (2014) is critical of the challenges that Chinese literature encounters in the Anglophone market and observes that it encounters resistance because of political restrictions, language barrier and Western literary norms. She underlines the importance of not only proper translation but also strategic cultural mediation, and the lack of international visibility and reception of Chinese writers. Zhao and Jing (2023) pay attention to collaborative and cross-cultural processes of translation and cultural brokerage and unveil the negotiation of meaning between translators and authors when crossing cultural borders to ensure that the reader can engage in the situation in different contexts. The focus of their work also puts emphasis on the fact that transnational reception depends on the global distribution of ideas and localized interpretations, based on the particular historical and political circumstances. The analysis of cultural proximity in diasporic media consumption by Cheng (2006) provides the idea of how Chinese cultural identity is reproduced and modified by the use of symbolic capital in the context of regional globalization. Nevertheless, although McDougall predicts structural and market constraints of global literary reception, she arguably under-explores the role of translators and the political consequences of cultural mediation. Zhao and Jing (2023) are very rich in ethnographic examples but can exaggerate the coherence of the cross-cultural process of negotiation without focusing on power asymmetries. Cheng (2006) proceeds with an insight into the process of diasporic identity formation, but is constrained by a regionalist perspective that does not necessarily take into account the larger transnational processes. All these studies illustrate the intricate dialectic of language, culture, politics and market forces in mediating Chinese literary identity in the world, which exposes fundamental deficiencies in dealing with ideological forces and unequal power relations in the process of translation and reception.

Subtheme 3: Genre and Methodological Framing in Critical Scholarship

The methodological and genre paradigms of the academic review of contemporary Chinese fiction play a role in the definition of the image and struggle of cultural identity and culture. Wang (2017) contextualizes literary texts as being placed in their respective sociopolitical contexts, yet the interpretation of canonical modernist narratives is constraining of the diversity of interpretations. The interdisciplinary style of Shih (2011) that depends on cultural studies and critical theory is effective in deconstruction of the formation of complex identity but there are cases when it becomes somewhat too abstract and lacks specificity of the text. On the other hand, a comparative genre analysis, conducted by Hu et al. (2024) to reveal how contemporary Chinese fiction introduces classical narrative patterns into experimental ones, reveals conflicts between innovation and preservation, although aesthetic interests can cover ideological interests. The ethnographic methodology and reader response methodology presented by Yu (2010) ground the interpretation of literature on cultural practices people live in and other interpretive communities but may lack the general theoretical ground. Overall, these approaches indicate that methodological plurality enables sophisticated conceptualizations of cultural identity in modern Chinese fiction, and at the same time, presents an issue of common analytical paradigms. The intersection of the traditions of genres and methodological hybridity emphasizes the continuation of the discussion of how one might strike the balance between the necessity to be loyal to classical forms and the necessity to address the demands of contemporary critical inquiry. These tensions reveal certain conflicts in the strategies of scholarly framing which continue to shape the academic illustrations of Chinese cultural identity.

The table below (Table 3) synthesizes the main analytical focus, scholarly contributions and interpretive implications found under this research question.

Table 3. Summary of Core Findings under Theme 2

Theme / Subtheme	Analytical Focus	Key Scholarly Contributions	Interpretive Insights and Implications
Theoretical Localization, Resistance, and Adaptation	Negotiation between Western theoretical imports and indigenous frameworks	Shen & Zhou (2006); Ren (2023); Gao (2017); Wu (2012)	Chinese scholarship demonstrates selective adaptation of Western theory to maintain cultural agency, yet remains constrained by hegemonic academic hierarchies and the limited inclusivity of minority perspectives.
Translation, Reception, and Mediation in Global Literary Discourse	Cultural translation, mediation, and global circulation of Chinese literature	Ren (2024); McDougall (2014); Zhao & Jing (2023); Cheng (2006)	Translation and reception operate as arenas of negotiation shaped by politics and market forces; while fostering global visibility, they expose unequal cultural exchanges and power asymmetries.
Genre and Methodological Framing in Critical Scholarship	Impact of methodological diversity and genre hybridity on scholarly interpretation	Wang (2017); Shih (2011); Hu et al. (2024); Yu (2010)	Methodological pluralism enriches literary inquiry but risks analytical fragmentation; framing choices reveal tensions between traditional fidelity and modern critical innovation.

4.1.3 Theme 3: Dialogic Engagements between Tradition and Modernity in Scholarly Narratives

Subtheme 1: Negotiating Modernity through Cultural Memory and Belonging

Modernity as negotiated in cultural memory and belonging in modern Chinese fiction shows complex relationships with identity, history and homeland that cannot be easily divided into tradition and progress. The fluidity and multiplicity of home as an emotional category are predetermined by the analysis of the diasporic literature about the Chinese, where Li (2018) explains that simultaneous experiences of uprooting and re-rooting make the Chinese diasporic subjects move through the homeland and the country of adoption without any fixed attachments. This movement indicates the frailty and negotiability of cultural memory and the constraints of national identity models in the representation of the realities of the diaspora. Ren (2025) underlines the importance of genre negotiation as a material practice that combines the Western modernist influences with the traditional Chinese forms and literature innovation as a way to define the changing cultural belonging in the environment of globalization. The cross-genre experimentation represents a dialogic process challenging and maintaining the aspects of cultural memory. The philosophical discussion of the national-cultural identity of modern Chinese by Wu (2012) is a way of demonstrating that there is a constant conflict between the self and the other, tradition and modernity, in which the forces of globalization require a dynamic redefinition of self that balances between cultural preservation and openness. Although these works all emphasize the dialogic process of negotiating modernity via cultural memory and belonging, we can find some limitations in the fact that they sometimes rely on dichotomous concepts or weaknesses in considering the intersecting issues of gender and class. However, the scholarship demonstrates the acute and sustained attempts to make sense of how the modern Chinese fiction remakes identity through the fusion of historical memory with the present experiences of displacement and belonging in the globalizing world.

Subtheme 2: Transnational Dialogues and Polyphonic Identities

In contemporary Chinese literary scholarship, transnational discourses and polyphonic identities are manifested in a clash of forces of globalization and localized cultures of expression that oppose unitary narratives of identity. The idea of Sinopolyphony by Zhang (2024b) introduces literature in Chinese as a denationalized and transnationalized space that does not consider mainland China as the centre of Chinese identity but rather promotes a more pluralistic and multilayered approach to Chinese identity that includes diaspora and ethnic minorities. The article by Shih (2011) critically challenges the politics of Chineseness using the Sinophone studies as the tool to show how the linguistic diversity and colonialities of the past make the homogenization of nationality a complicated matter. In the meantime, McDougall (2014) addresses the issues of contemporary Chinese literature in the international market, noting that it is blocked by bureaucratic control, censorship, and the lack of translation work, which prevents its acceptance in the foreign market. The paradox of the global visibility of Chinese literature, in which literary quality is not as significant as political, linguistic, and market forces, is also mentioned by McDougall (2014). The critique by Zhang (2024b) is broad in its manner of handling the concept of ancestral and cultural plurality, but it occasionally has the downside of overgeneralizing the Sinophone communities and diminishing the power disparities among them. Shih (2011) cuts right through internal colonialism and linguistic stigmatization only to lean towards a politically charged model that may overwhelm new hybrid identities. Together, the scholarship displays a dialogic operation, through which the contemporary Chinese fiction negotiates between global and local forces, producing polyphonic identities that challenge totalizing discourses.

Subtheme 3: Dialogic Reflections on Chinese Literary Tradition

The dialogic meditations on the Chinese literary tradition in the modern Chinese fiction prove a complicated interplay

of classical tradition and modern narrative inventiveness that violates the oversimplified views on the continuity of the Chinese culture. The critical approach to *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* by Shen (2024) anticipates the transition of linear grand narratives to a more subtle history of history approach that challenges fixed literary canons and adopts plural temporalities and multiple plots, thus expanding the definition of Chinese literature beyond nationalistic lines. The analysis of the avant-garde novel *Mistakes by the River* by Xu (2025) shows that the classical Chinese crime and detective fiction conventions are simultaneously subverted and combined to create a new narrative that focuses on irrationality and social crisis, hence relating the traditional genres to the modern existential ones and revealing the constraints of moral justification that is inherent to classical melodrama. The discussion of the fiction by Yan Lianke presented by Lashin (2024) based on the exegetic tradition of Shijing exemplifies the constant intellectual activity of the author, the focus on conflicted hermeneutics, which combine political allegory, personal story, and cultural reinterpretation. Nonetheless, Shen (2024) interest in postmodern historiography provides an important critical depth, but it can be too theoretical, lacking any literary text, whereas Xu (2025) interest in genre fusion emphasizes the narrative techniques but does not always fully reflect the socio-political contexts. Collectively, the works are a critical expression of how the modern scholarship engages with Chinese literary tradition in complex ways, redefining the cultural identity in new narrative and interpretive forms that challenge canonical authority and historicist certitude.

The table below (Table 4) is a synthesized summary of the key analytical directions, scholarly contributions, and interpretive implications found in this broad theme.

Table 4. Summary of Core Findings under Theme 3

Theme / Subtheme	Analytical Focus	Key Scholarly Contributions	Interpretive Insights and Implications
Negotiating Modernity through Cultural Memory and Belonging	Reconciliation of tradition with global modernity through collective and diasporic memory	Li (2018); Ren (2025); Wu (2012)	Modern Chinese narratives integrate memory, displacement, and belonging to articulate fluid cultural identities, though limited by binary frameworks and insufficient attention to intersecting factors such as gender and class.
Transnational Dialogues and Polyphonic Identities	Cross-cultural dialogues and plurality of Sinophone identities	Zhang (2024b); Shih (2011); McDougall (2014)	Scholarly discourse emphasizes plural and denationalized cultural voices that challenge cultural centrality, yet global inequalities and linguistic hierarchies constrain full dialogic reciprocity.
Dialogic Reflections on Chinese Literary Tradition	Reinterpretation of classical Chinese texts and traditions within modern narrative frameworks	Shen (2024); Xu (2025); Lashin (2024)	Academic readings reimagine classical traditions through modernist and postmodernist approaches, promoting creative continuity while exposing the tensions between intellectual abstraction and socio-political relevance.

5. Discussion

This chapter explains the findings with reference to the research questions, and the existing scholarship. It takes a critical look at the extent of the findings to the existing literature and validate or refute other previous research and emphasize the wider theoretical and communicative significance of academic discourse in contemporary Chinese literary research.

5.1 Representing and Reinterpreting Chinese Cultural Identity and Tradition in Scholarly Discourse

The discussion shows that the academic discourse on the contemporary Chinese fiction is prolific in reconstructing the cultural identity through reformulating the literary historiography, redefining the allegorical traditions, and rethinking the classical texts in global and transcultural contexts. A number of recent studies in contemporary Chinese literary studies have also corroborated the results of this study, highlighting the re-definition of canon, tradition and identity. As an example, Yu (2021) shows the way the Chinese literary canon is being reinvented through anthologies to be viewed through the lens of Hong Kong, and thus criticize mainland-centric paradigms. This is in line with the present research finding of academic attempts to pluralise and enlarge the canon. Liu and Zhang (2022) discuss another study, historiography through translation, in the Chinese new historical fiction, which reveals that translation and rewriting of the historical process transform literary identities. This is similar to the current study and its focus on redefining the tradition using contemporary and global perspectives. The other new study by Gu (2021) talks about the way modern Chinese literature has gained access to the world literature paradigm and has negotiated tradition and modernity in the face of globalisation. This is directly echoed by the result of the study that found negotiation between continuity and change in cultural identity representations. Thus, these studies offer wider empirical and theoretical frames on the present findings that support the fact that the issues of canon, allegory, and tradition are the focal point of the contemporary Chinese literary studies and that scholarly discourse is a major factor in forming the cultural identity of the contemporary fiction.

5.2 Communicative and Theoretical Functions of Academic Language in Cultural Transmission

The discussion indicates that academic discourse plays important communicative and interpretive roles by localizing the Western theoretical paradigms, translating cultures in the international arena, and using varied methodological approaches that shed light and complicate the process of defining Chinese cultural identity. This study has been corroborated by a number of modern studies that also record the process of power, localization and cultural authenticity negotiation in Chinese literary scholarship through academic discourse. Indicatively, Gu (2023) illustrates that the contemporary Chinese literary criticism reorganizes the concept of the tragic by re-translating and re-contextualising the Western dramatic paradigms into culturally specific vocabularies, creating new modes of interpretation for local audiences. This reflects the findings of the present research in that it shows how theoretical adaptation and mediated academic language are the active locations of cultural negotiation, in terms of localization and intellectual exchange in the global scholarly discourse. Wang (2022) examines discursive mediation in translation and states that translation does not merely act as linguistic transfer but as rhetorical and ideological negotiation between the poles of culture. This observation is in line with the mediation witnessed in the current research of academic discourse in global contexts. In the review of the Chinese literature in world-literature discussions, Lingling (2023) identifies the tripartite approach of translation, adaptation, and theorisation as the key to institutionalizing Chinese literature in the world. This observation is consistent with the current study, which has proven that methodological diversity is influential in the representation of identity in scholarly discourse. Thus, these works reinforce the thesis that academic language, theoretical positioning, and methodological practices are not the neutral engines of culture transmission but as a matter of fact, they serve as sites of contestation, negotiation, and renegotiation of Chinese cultural identity in contemporary literary studies.

5.3 Dialogic Engagement between Tradition and Modernity in Academic Narratives

The results show that academic narratives form a dialogic space between Chinese tradition and modernity through the reinterpretation of cultural memory, the use of transnational voices, and repositioning classical literary forms in the context of contemporary ones. This study has been affirmed by the various current research studies in which the dynamic interplay between Chinese tradition and modernity is also emphasized in the context of academic narratives. As an example, the edited book on the modernization of Chinese culture by Rošker and Suhadolnik (2014) shows that Chinese thinkers are constantly redefining cultural memory and creating traditions to mediate the space between traditional values and new ideological requirements. Their study directly contributes to the focus of the current study on plural, reflective methods that are resistant to homogenization and contribute to interpretive renewal (Rošker & Suhadolnik, 2014). In the same vein, a critical discourse analysis conducted by Liu et al. (2025) on the representation of bride price in Chinese newspapers indicates that media discourses not only support traditional norms but also introduce generational and gendered discourse, which further complicates the process of cultural memory and identity negotiation. This is in line with the findings of the present research on the recontextualization of classical forms in the modern structures and the opposition to the simplistic cultural narratives (Liu et al., 2025). Moreover, Rosker (2021) discusses the ways in which Chinese scholars use theoretical hybridity and redefine Confucian ethics to find a way to resolve the conflict between Western theory and Chinese history. This conclusion is reminiscent of the current research observation that dialogic interaction leads to new and globally immersive ways of identity and interpretive renewal (Rosker, 2021). Together, these studies support and build on the existing findings, showing a general academic agreement on the transformative and modernity.

6. Conclusion

The chapter is the final part of the study, summarising the main findings, future recommendations and considering their implications in the context of the entire scholarly field.

6.1 Key Findings

This study shows that the academic discourse of modern Chinese fiction is a dynamic location where cultural identity and tradition are not only reflected but negotiated, contested, and redefined. Instead of having predetermined ideas of Chineseness, academic discourses show that there are long-running conflicts between tradition and modernity, native systems and international pressures, and official and alternative voices. The analysis raises the importance of allegory, myth, and historiographical refreezing as approaches to cultural continuity and creative reworking, and translation and theoretical adaptation as pre-empting cross-cultural mediation and intellectual independence. Altogether, the interaction with modern Chinese literature proves to be inherently dialogic, as it is defined by the contradictions that have not been resolved as well as by the plural cultural meanings in the globalised environment.

6.2 Limitation and Future Recommendation

Although this study presents a detailed qualitative study of the scholarly discourse regarding contemporary Chinese fiction, it has a number of limitations that indicate the future research directions. First, the limited selection of academic

articles written in English might have limited the diversity of cultural viewpoints that were taken into account, which might have left out valuable information provided by Chinese-language and other non-English literature. The future research might also include multilingual materials to create a more detailed picture of cultural identity formation in the linguistic and academic background. Second, the qualitative depth of purposive selection of a relatively small corpus of twenty-three texts restricts the generalizability of the results. Future studies can use bigger and more heterogeneous data, such as cross-cultural comparisons, to increase representativeness and the scope of analysis. Moreover, since qualitative content analysis is based on interpretation, the results can be affected by the subjectivity of the researcher. Future studies may use mixed method approaches, including integrating qualitative analysis with computational text analysis or empirical validation, to enhance methodological soundness.

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Authors contributions

Jiancheng Wang and Xiyuan Zhang were responsible for the study's conceptualization and study design. Jiancheng Wang was responsible for data collection and preliminary qualitative content analysis of the corpus. Xiyuan Zhang, as the corresponding author, was responsible for methodology refinement, drafting the manuscript, and leading the critical revision of the final version. All authors read and approved the final manuscript. No special agreements concerning authorship are declared, and the contributions are distributed as specified above.

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