Problems of Translation in the Context of Cross-Cultural Communication



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The Untranslatable World

He decided to bite the bullet and tell her the truth.

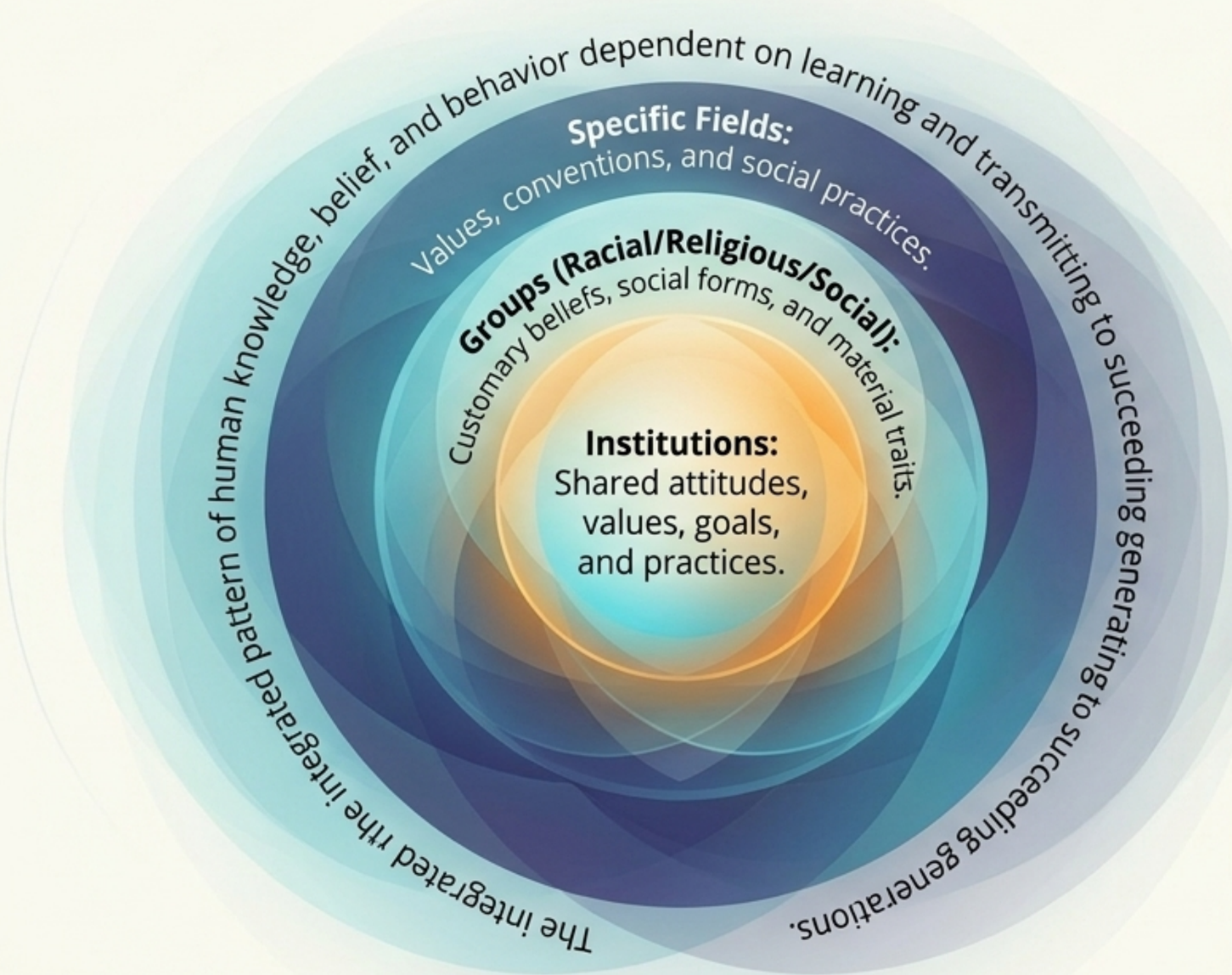


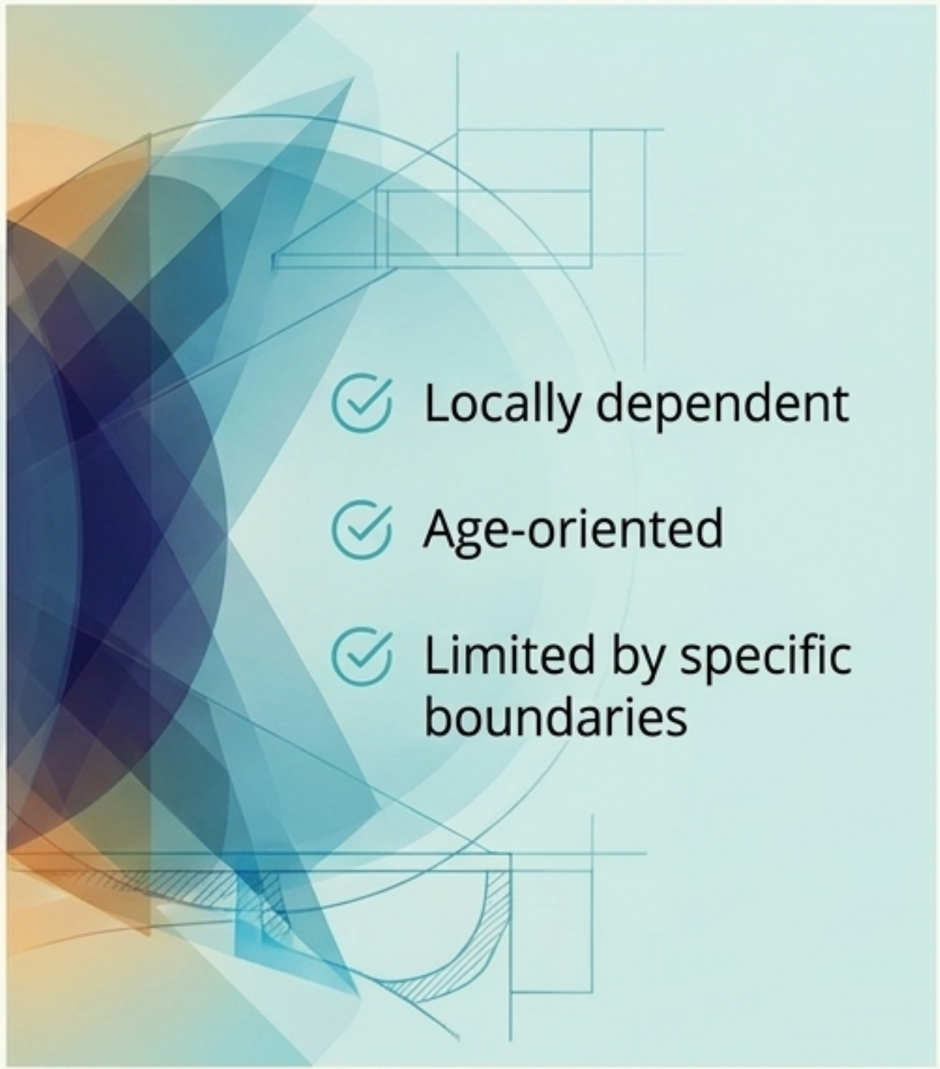
На Івана Купала дівчата пускали вінки на воду.

На святі всі були одягнені у вишиванки.

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Unpacking the Dimensions of Culture





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Enter E.D. Hirsch and Cultural Literacy

“Reading in its widest sense.”

“Understanding the meaning of words based on a background of common knowledge that enables one to make sense of what is read.”

Eric Donald Hirsch	Born: March 22, 1928 (Memphis, Tennessee, USA)	American literary critic, educator, and writer.	Coined “Cultural Literacy”: the ability to understand and participate fluently in a given culture.



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The Matrix of Understanding



The Literate Profile

Characterized by the ability to talk to and understand others of that culture with total fluency.



The Illiterate Profile

Fails to understand culturally-conditioned allusions, references to past events, idiomatic expressions, jokes, names, and places.

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The Glue of Society



“Shared knowledge... is the glue that holds society together.”

A litirerate public needs a common background to ensure efficient communication and social organization.

Today’s youth are increasingly being schooled without such a background.

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Culture-Specific References in the Wild

Biblical & Historical

Genesis (the biblical book)

Civil War (1861–1865)

Hoover Dam

Pop Culture & Society

Genesis (the rock band)

Madonna (the singer) vs. Madonna (religious figure)

SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test)

Idioms & Traditions

He spilled the beans.

She made a Thanksgiving turkey.

We celebrated the 4th of July with fireworks.

He wore an ugly Christmas sweater to the party.

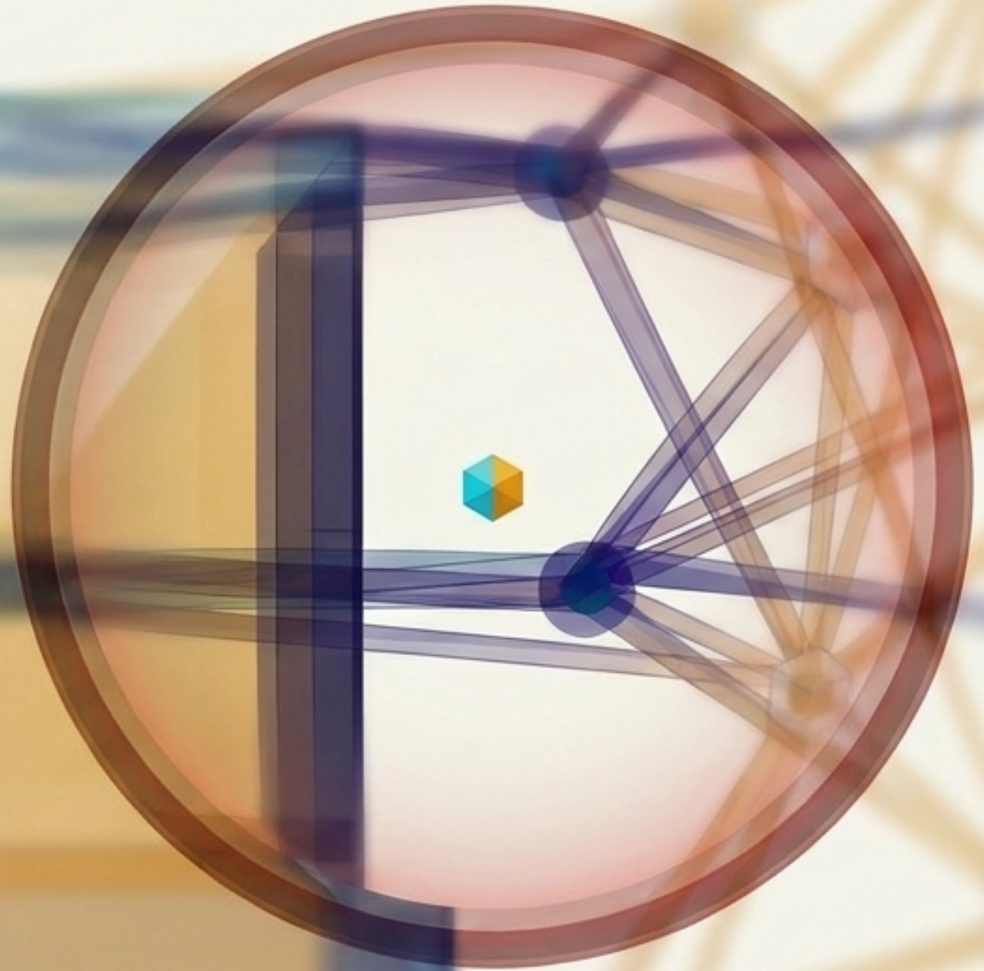
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Critiquing the Framework

American Centrism

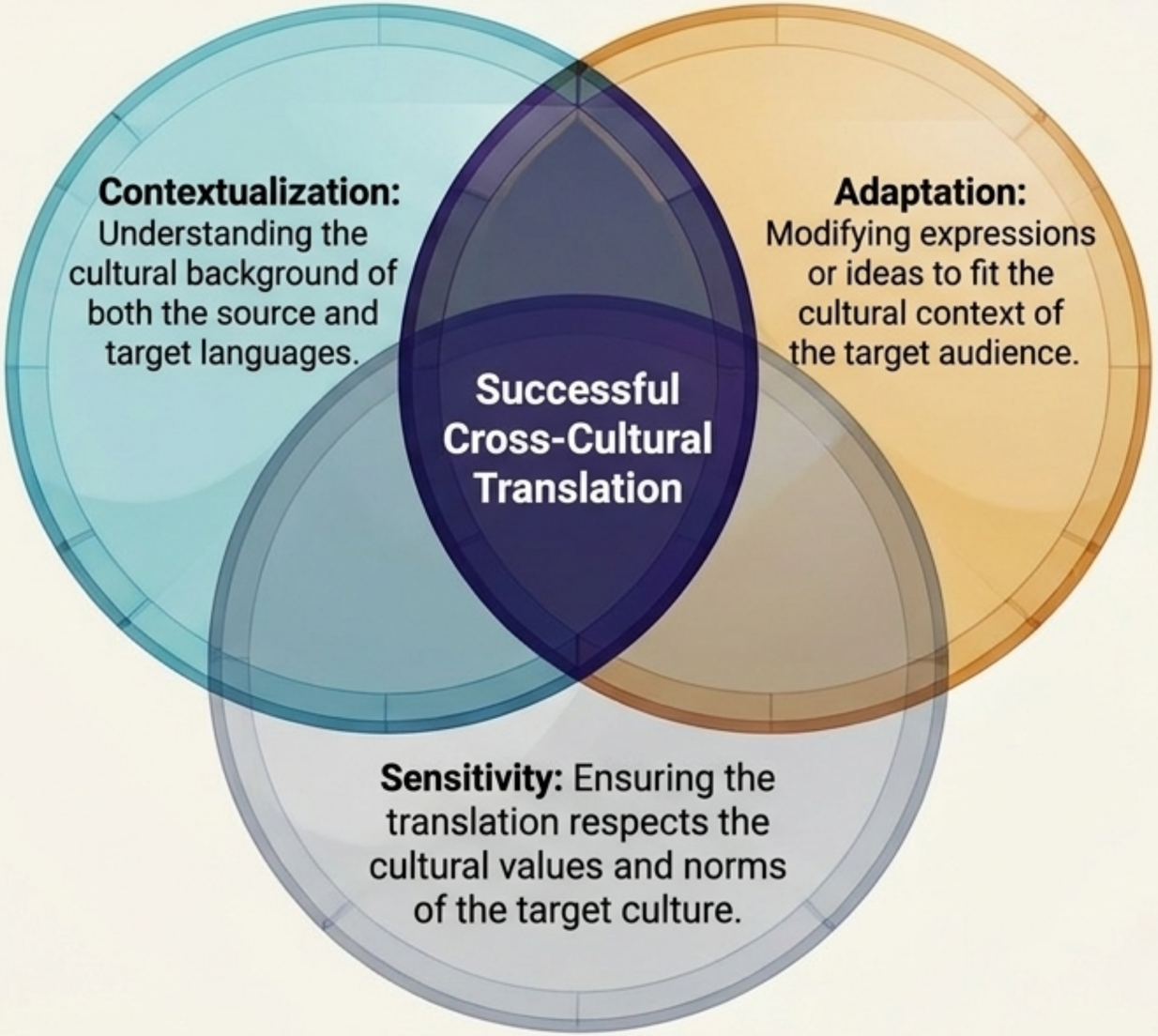
Subjective choice of components

Vague application methodology (the assumption that an extensive curriculum serves as an input to the intensive curriculum).



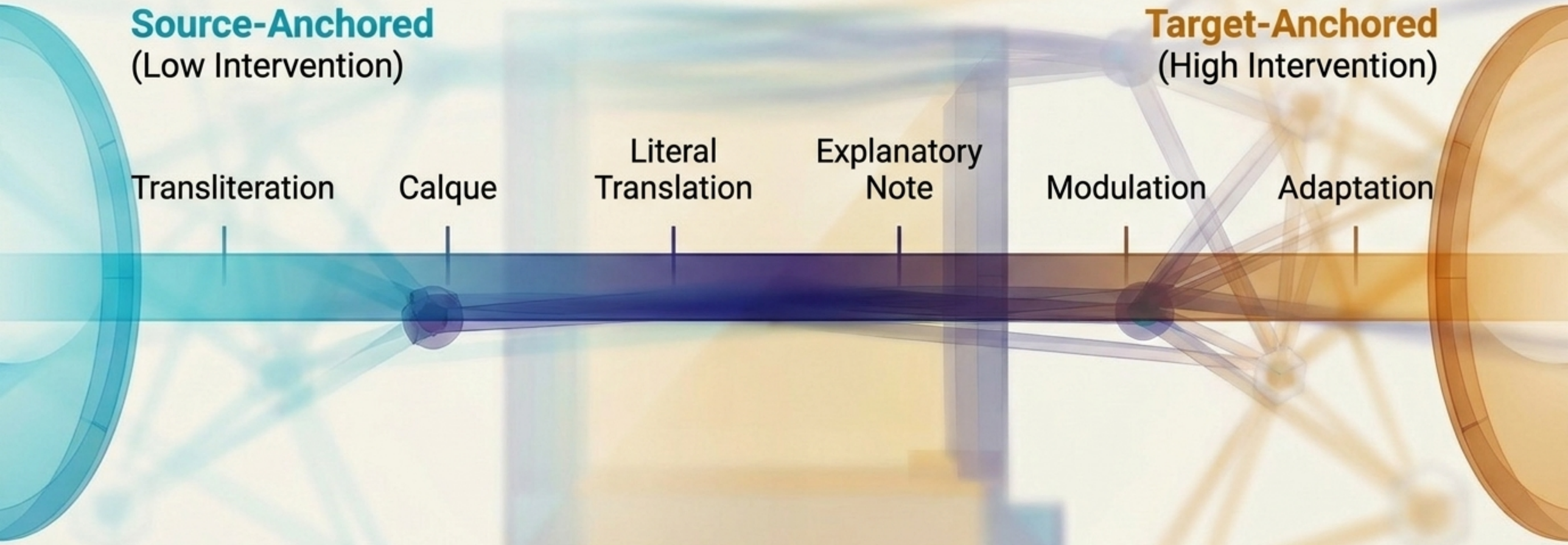
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The Three Pillars of Cultural Translation



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The Spectrum of Strategic Intervention



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Bridging the Gap: Interactive Task Synthesis

Source Phrase	Strategic Intervention	Target Output
Grant and Lee at Appomattox.	[Explanatory Note]	
The early bird catches the worm.	[Adaptation]	
Cultural literacy means knowing that Genesis is the biblical story of creation.	[Modulation]	

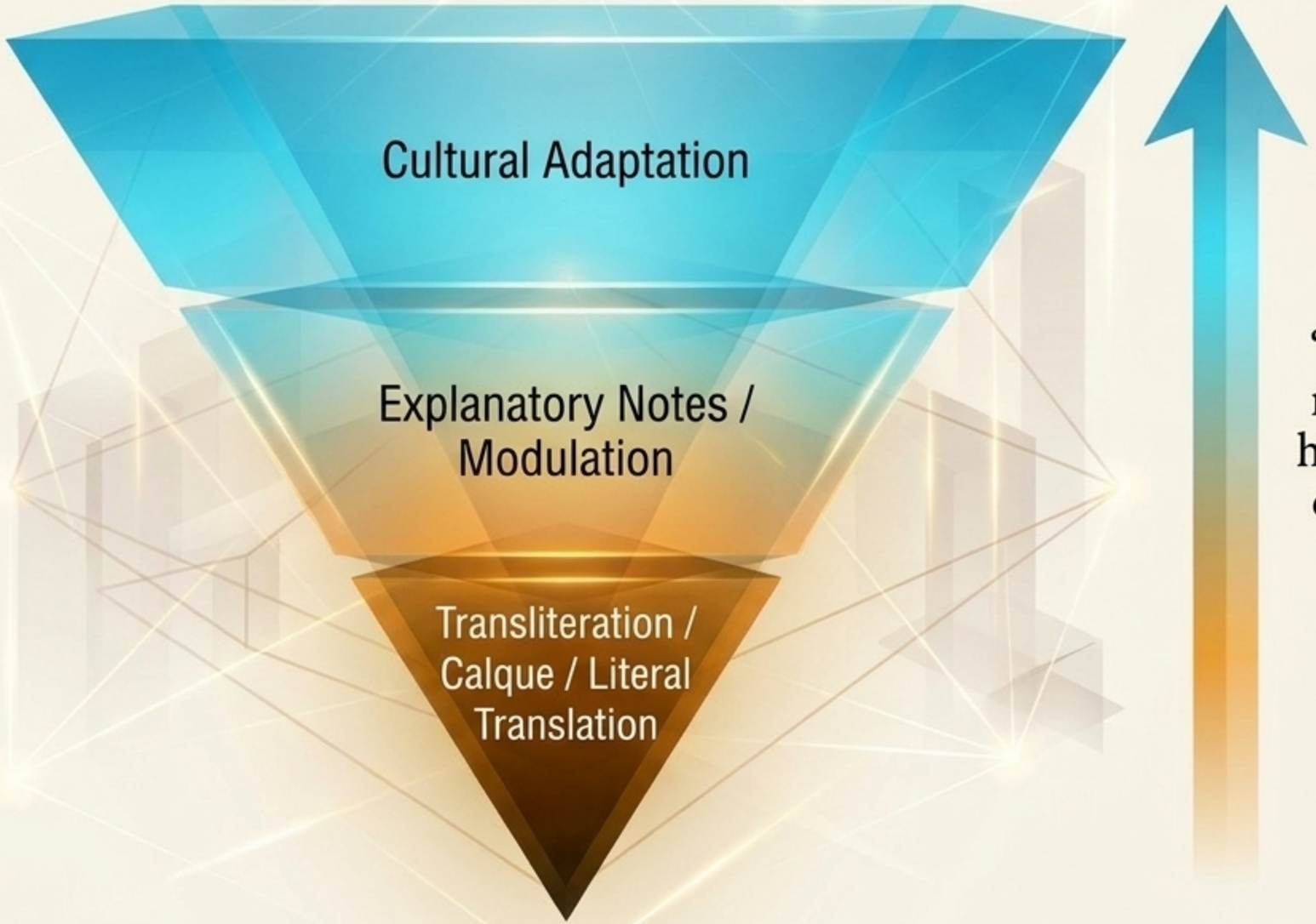
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Moving from Lower to Higher Order Thinking



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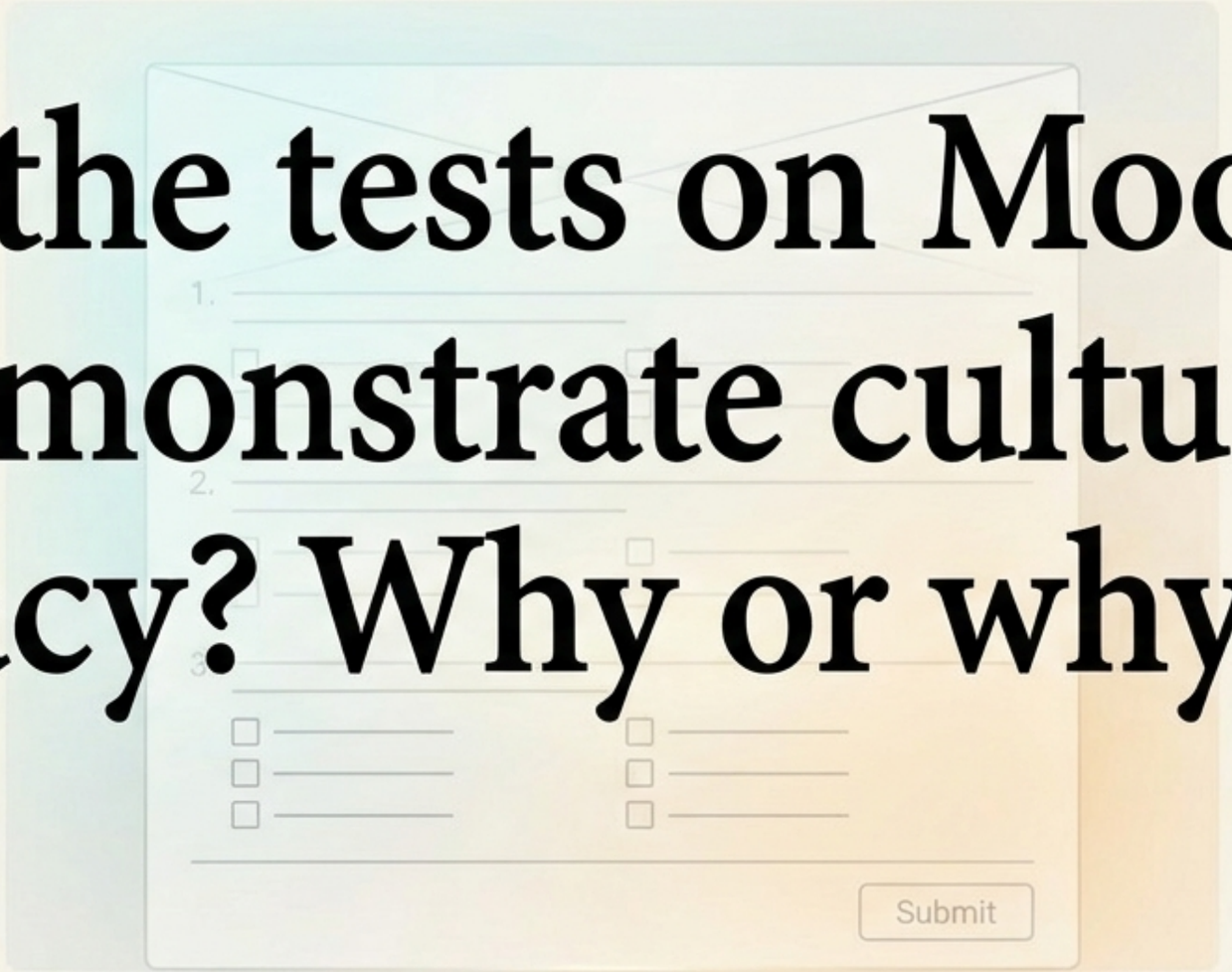
The Translator's Cognitive Engine



"Adaptation requires the highest order of cognitive creation."

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Assessing Cultural Literacy



Do the tests on Moodle demonstrate cultural literacy? Why or why not?

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The Filter and the Synthesis

1. Cultural friction is inevitable without shared knowledge.

2. Hirsch’s lens provides context but requires critical filtering.

3. Strategic intervention turns translation into Higher-Order Thinking.



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