

The Practice of English and American Literature Course in Teaching



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Abstract

In the teaching practice of British and American literature courses, there is a problem of weak or even missing cultural subjectivity. In the perspective of cultural exchange and mutual learning, it is necessary to reposition the nature of British and American literature courses, establish local cultural awareness in teaching, introduce Chinese cultural discourse and other teaching methods to improve the dual level of cultural subjectivity in teaching and learning. The enhancement of cultural subjectivity is helpful to promote the combination of the teaching of the course with Chinese discourse, promote the localization of the course, and enable students to play the spirit of the subject and improve the sense of initiative and participation in the face of heterogeneous culture and literature.

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Keywords

British and American literature, Cultural exchanges and mutual learning, Cultural subjectivity

In the current historical trend of the world, as an element of development as important as politics and economy, culture has come to the forefront of the stage of The Times, and cultural strength and self-confidence have become one of the important issues of national construction. At the same time, culture is a crucial component of a civilization. In *The Clash of Civilizations and the Reconstruction of World Order*, Samuel Huntington proposed the clash of civilizations theory, dividing the world into seven major circles of civilizations that compete and clash with each other, and emphasizing the recognition of differences among civilizations, or "fault lines of civilizations." The danger of conflict lies in the fault lines, the differences of civilizations cannot be erased, and the danger of conflict persists. However, acknowledging the existence of conflict does not mean that we will no longer seek opportunities for exchange and cooperation and the possibility of learning from each other. In fact, increasingly frequent exchanges and dialogue between different countries and ethnic cultures have become an important platform for all countries and ethnic groups to seek common

development. We need to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning among different countries, nations and cultures in the world and consolidate the cultural foundation for building a community with a shared future for Asia and mankind." Thus, the correct attitude towards different parts of human culture should be exchange and mutual learning, which has become one of the core words of international political life. The British and American literature courses offered by Chinese universities are an important platform for exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. The courses involve literary classics of other countries, and both the teachers and students have a profound and vivid basis of local culture. The sparks of ideas in the classes are the proof of the realization of exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations. Under this background, the course of English and American literature has ushered in new challenges and opportunities.

1. Background

The subjectivity in the philosophical category is relative to the object, which refers to the dynamic dimension that human beings show in the process of establishing and promoting a certain object relation (Samuel, 2009). The cultural subjectivity involves the subject's actions in the cultural field. Broadly speaking, cultural subjectivity refers to the initiative and initiative of participation, learning, communication and adaptation in the face of heterogeneous culture. Specifically, cultural subjectivity can be divided into consciousness, introspection, creativity and communication. The course of British and American literature is a stage for the exchange and mutual learning of different civilizations. At present, the cultural subjectivity of British and American literature is facing certain challenges and opportunities.

In terms of challenges, the courses of British and American literature have the characteristics of heterogeneous culture, and the lecturers (teachers) will encounter certain difficulties in the process of localization, while the lecturers (students) have certain cognitive biases towards them, for example, they think that they are just the collection of foreign literary materials, and fail to form the consciousness of subject participation and the integration of vision (LIU Qing, 2022). As a result, the English and American literature courses have limited effect on the cultivation of talents in colleges and universities, especially the cultivation of talents' cultural deposits. Horizon fusion is originally a hermeneutic term, which refers to the integration of the interpreter, the text and the current situation: the interpreter often interprets with antecedents, and starts from his current situation to contact the horizon of the text and grasp the connotation revealed by the text. By using this concept, this paper aims to show that in the course of English and American literature, teachers and students are brought into contact with the antecedents from the local culture and the exotic texts and current situations to form the ideal situation of understanding integration.

In terms of opportunities, the course of British and American Literature is a basic compulsory course for the majors of Chinese language and literature and other related majors in the College of Arts and Chinese Department of all universities. It is not only necessary to construct a complete disciplinary structure, but also to tell Chinese stories well and construct Chinese discourse. At the same time, the presentation of foreign literature and culture of this course is an indispensable part of building up China's cultural confidence. Cross-cultural communication and mutual learning can promote the prosperity of local culture to a certain extent. For example, the interaction and integration of Han culture and foreign culture in the Han, Wei and Tang Dynasties created a glorious period when local culture flourished and shone (Mu Wenchao, 2021).

2. Significance

First, to enhance the cultural subjectivity of British and American literature courses is conducive to the expansion of the international vision of Chinese language and literature teaching. The course of British and American literature is an indispensable part of the discipline construction of Chinese language and literature, which needs an international perspective. With the changes in the world pattern, to enhance the image of China as a great power depends not only on economic and military strength, but also on cultural soft power. In the 21st century, with the advancement of world integration, globalization and localization inevitably collide, and the gap in communication and dialogue between cultures and civilizations still exists. The reason lies in the game of national interests and the differences in social and cultural environment. With the continuous integration of China into the process of globalization, the teaching of British and American literature has become a window to understand the heterogeneous culture, which is conducive to cultural exchange and mutual learning and the expansion of the international vision of Chinese language and literature teaching.

Second, to enhance the cultural subjectivity of English and American literature courses is conducive to the localization of English and American literature courses. The English and American literature courses under the major of Chinese Language and literature teach the texts of foreign literature in Chinese, and the texts used are usually translated versions (Liyan & Yu, 2020). This behavior itself contains the collision and exchange of Chinese and foreign cultures,

which is a cross-language and cross-cultural practice. Teachers should give full play to the consciousness of cultural subject consciously in the process of teaching and analyze the integration of Chinese and foreign literature in foreign literature teaching based on the perspective of comparative literature and world literature. At the same time, teachers should overcome the aphasia phenomenon of Chinese cultural discourse in English and American literature classes, introduce foreign literature based on Chinese culture, integrate the exchange and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign cultures into classroom teaching, and promote the combination of English and American literature classes with local reality (Guangzhu Zhao, 2022).

Thirdly, improving the cultural subjectivity of British and American literature courses is helpful to enhance students' subjective spirit when facing the heterogeneous culture, thus improving their participation and initiative. Students are the subject of the English and American literature class. "What is the relationship between this course and me?" is a question often raised by students. Students often feel strange because of the otherness of the classroom content, and thus lack the consciousness of participation. Therefore, it is the top priority to consciously enhance students' cultural subjectivity in the teaching of this course, which helps students to understand the process of world cultural exchanges and dialogues, learn the nature of mutual learning, enhance the sense of participation, and choose and learn valuable content in foreign literature with the spirit of subjectivity.

3. Path

3.1 Repositioning the nature of the course

The nature of British and American literature courses in the past, namely knowledge transmission, explanation and accumulation, is repositioned as the exchange and mutual learning of literature and culture. Through the infiltration of teachers and students' consciousness of cultural subject into the teaching process, the cross-cultural acceptance and reconstruction characteristics of this course are realized. The teaching content should be changed from simple and flat knowledge teaching to sorting out and showing the development of world literature. Teachers should not only explain important literary phenomena, literary movements, literary trends, literary schools and representative important writers and classic works, but also analyze the reasons and processes of various cultural exchanges and dialogues, mutual influence and variation during the formation of the pedigree of foreign literature. For example, in the period of romantic literature in the 19th century, the trend of romantic literature developed not in a single country, but in many countries, which had a great influence on Russian literature. According to Isaiah Berlin, "whatever the differences among scholars of Russian intellectual or literary history, there is one thing they seem to agree on -- or almost agree on: the dominant influence on Russian writers in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was German Romanticism."

3.2 To enhance the cultural subjectivity of teachers and students

First, be culturally conscious.

Since the late Qing Dynasty began to "look at the world with open eyes", faced with the vigorous trend of "the west is the teacher", the knowledgeable and patriotic intellectuals gradually anticipated the crisis of cultural subjectivity. "In fact, there has always been a contradiction between learning foreign culture and maintaining the subjectivity of domestic culture in various plans of Chinese cultural construction since modern times." This contradiction also exists in the course of English and American literature. For this course with foreign literature as the main content, teachers should recognize the long history and profound Chinese literature in the process of teaching the rich literary heritage of heterogeneous culture, teach from a comparative perspective and the purpose of cultural exchange and mutual learning, contact Chinese literature in the analysis of foreign literature, and timely pay attention to the relationship between Chinese and foreign literature. Yang Zhouhan pointed out that "the biggest flaw in Chinese scholars' preparation of foreign literature textbooks is the lack of connection between foreign literature and ancient and modern Chinese literature." Although this defect has been made up by the gradually expanding and perfect teaching practice of comparative literature, the English and American literature courses should also adopt and absorb the foreign literature research results of the Chinese school, so as to enhance the cultural subjectivity of the courses.

Second, adhere to cultural introspection.

Insisting on cultural introspection is one of the key points for Chinese culture to maintain its unique superiority and strong vitality, and the comparison with other cultures is one of the ways to carry out cultural introspection. English and American literature class is an important platform to cultivate students' cultural introspection. By absorbing, comparing and discriminating foreign literature, students are able to engage in a comparative perspective and use comparative methods to develop an expanded understanding of local culture. For example, when teaching enlightenment literature in

the 18th century, teachers can guide students to compare it with the new culture movement, and explain how the advanced intellectuals at that time imbued Chinese culture with the new connotation of keeping pace with *The Times* in cultural introspection and comparison between China and the West, so that the excellent contents of traditional Chinese culture can shine brightly under the new situation.

Third, improve cultural communication.

Cultural communication is not a one-way, infusing process, but a two-way, interactive. On the one hand, through the course of English and American literature, the essence of foreign literature and culture can be spread in our country and realize the exchange and mutual learning between civilizations. On the other hand, based on the consciousness of comparative research, the excellent parts of our local culture have also formed a dynamic chain of comparison, exchange, integration and dialogue with foreign culture. Diaspora literature in the study of foreign literature is a prominent example of two-way cultural communication, which itself is cross-border, cross-national, cross-language and cross-disciplinary, and is the unity of literature and cross-culture.

3.3 Introducing Chinese cultural discourse

On the one hand, the introduction of Chinese cultural discourse refers to combining the disciplinary methods of comparative literature with the teaching of British and American literature. For example, influence studies and parallel studies are used to demonstrate the enlightenment and influence of foreign literature on the inclusive Chinese literature. At the same time, teachers should explain to students in class that Chinese literature also has influence and radiation on foreign literature. On the other hand, the introduction of Chinese cultural discourse also requires the construction of Chinese system in the teaching of British and American literature. "The teaching of British and American literature is more or less troubled in the teaching process due to the unique foreign culture of its subject itself, which will affect teachers to form an inexplicable separation of cultural subjectivity and subject consciousness in the teaching process. In fact, this kind of trouble is the main problem that should be paid attention to in the construction of Chinese system in the teaching of British and American literature." It can be seen that the construction of the Chinese system in the teaching of British and American literature should be based on and starting from the respect for local culture, and a comprehensive review and objective assessment of the history and current situation, hot spots and difficulties, achievements and problems, trends and directions of Chinese studies on foreign literature.

The heterogeneity and otherness of English and American literature curriculum will make it face the problem of weak cultural subjectivity to a certain extent. At present, cultural exchange and mutual learning has become a cognitive system with consensus. The curriculum of British and American literature should aim to enhance cultural subjectivity, reposition the nature of the course, establish the awareness of local culture, broaden the spiritual boundary of students, and give play to its due value and role. This is not only the meaning of cultural exchange and mutual learning, but also the only way to develop the curriculum of British and American literature.

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