

The Study of the Localization of the Teaching of British and American Poetry

—Illustrated by the case of *The Wild Honey Suckle*

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Abstract—British and American poetry helps to improve people's language and spiritual state. Through the analysis of the teaching example of American poetry *The Wild Honey Suckle*, this paper expounds the significance and ways of the localization of the teaching of British and American Poetry, and highlights the role of the localization of the teaching of British and American poetry in arousing students' emotional resonance and cultivating cross-cultural awareness.

Keywords—British and American poetry; The localization of teaching; *The Wild Honey Suckle*

I. AN OVERVIEW OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN POETRY TEACHING

A. The significance of the teaching of British and American Poetry

Poetry is the oldest and the most advanced form of literature. Western poetry has always been entitled "European literature". Rita Dove, an American poet, once said, "Poetry is the most refined, the most pure and the most powerful language". On September 26, 2007, the *Requirements for the Teaching of College English Course* announced by the Ministry of Education put forward that College English course is not only a basic language course, but also a quality education course to broaden knowledge and understanding of the world culture. It has both instrumental and humanistic nature. Therefore, when teachers are designing college English courses, full consideration should be given to the cultivation of students' cultural quality and the imparting of international cultural knowledge. It is necessary for college students to learn western language and literature, especially poetry art [1].

B. Teaching strategy of British and American Poetry

The study of British and American poetry is first to face a foreign language, but more important is to experience the artistic conception of the language. Therefore, the appreciation of British and American Poetry cannot be a translation class and take teaching language and understanding the surface meaning of poetry as the teaching content and goal. Up to now, the teaching mode of British and American poetry mainly includes the introduction of the life of the poets, the social and cultural background of the creation, the textual analysis and

the discussion of the theme, the study of the influence of the poets and their works. The teaching approaches of British and American poetry mainly include theoretical introduction, reading, translation and contrast. And some teaching contents are closely connected with the final examination. In the practice of teaching, it has experienced the stages of focusing on the understanding of poetry, paying attention to the deep interpretation of the learners, and returning to the text aesthetic from literary theory criticism [1].

Teachers guide students to appreciate and learn different situations brought about by social background in poetry creation by comparing the same theme, Eastern and Western poetry. The feature of poetry is to use visualized means, such as images, symbols, metaphors, metonymy and other rhetorical devices and techniques, such as parallelism, contrast, pun and transition, which constitute a wonderful and unique artistic conception. If a teacher can introduce poetry of different genres, times, backgrounds, styles and qualities to the students, and through the aid of multimedia teaching, they can teach the students to learn by listening, reading, appreciating, reciting and translating. Teachers can help the students experience the charm of poetry even by reciting and appreciating poems created by teachers themselves. For most students, it will be the first time for them to face the literary appreciation to study the poetry provided by the teachers, which is also the most difficult step in the literary appreciation. So how to choose the more classic and moderate poetry is very important for the students to taste and appreciate, and will greatly promote and improve the teaching of poetry [2]. If teachers can choose the more familiar and native poetry for the students, it will undoubtedly arouse the students' emotional resonance and stimulate the students' interest in learning so as to achieve better teaching results.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LOCALIZATION OF TEACHING

Localization presents the vitality and innovation of language. It embodies the local functions of foreign languages, conversational culture and communication strategies in the new context, as well as the transfer from local languages. Nowadays, China has the largest number of people learning English in the world. China's English learners understand the world through English, and at the same time let the world know China through the medium of English. China's English teaching should emphasize the organic combination of English internationalization and localization. China's English teachers should attach importance to the function of English to engage in two-way cultural communication and cultivate students' intercultural communication ability. China's English teachers should also tell students to try to help foreigners overcome the possible understanding obstacles when using the English expression forms with Chinese localization characteristics [3].

The English syllabus requires students to have a solid basic skill in English language, broad knowledge, certain professional knowledge, strong ability and good quality, including more than 40 items of language ability, cross cultural communication ability, independent learning ability, thinking and innovation ability, compound and application ability. The syllabus emphasizes the cultivation of thinking and innovative ability, and frankly, these are weak links in the cultivation of English majors. It can be said that the ability of thinking and innovation are the most important qualities of college students, and are also their most important demands. At the present stage the cultivation of speculative ability in domestic colleges and universities is still an undeveloped field of research and practice. It is imperative to make clear the core position of the cultivation of speculative ability in the training target of the English majors and make it the guiding ideology of all the teaching activities of English majors [3].

To cultivate the ability of thinking, teachers must help students find speculative problems and contents, immerse them in speculative activities, and eventually lead to innovation. Integrate students' language ability training and subject content learning with thinking and innovative ability training. These ideas are fully in line with the goal of training English majors and have an important methodological significance for cultivating high quality English talents and should play a critical role in English professional education [4]. The localization of teaching helps to cultivate students' awareness of Chinese and Western comparison, thus contributing to the cultivation of students' critical thinking ability and cross-cultural awareness.

China's English teaching should pay attention to internationalization and localization at the same time. Internationalization and localization are different, mutually supportive, mutually precondition, and common development. Internationalization is the necessary condition and effective medium for intercultural communication. Localization is the only way for the construction, embodiment and development of national cultural identity. In the process of foreign language teaching, teaching contents, methods and evaluation should take both internationalization and localization into consideration. In terms of teaching content, teaching materials

must change the British and American language patterns and the principles of native language as the target language, increase the composition of multiculturalism, enhance students' cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences, and improve students' cross-cultural communication ability. Curriculum and teaching materials should not include only British or American English and culture, world culture and all kinds of English should be added to complete the teaching contents. In terms of teaching methods, China's English teachers can keep and carry forward effective traditional teaching methods. At the same time, they can learn the effective language teaching method from other countries and draw lessons from traditional, local and national culture. It is good to use multimedia network, group discussion, role play, presentation and so on to realize the teaching purpose. All kinds of English extracurricular activities can be carried out. And teachers should try to create more opportunities for students to communicate with native speakers and non-native speakers, and enrich the experience of intercultural communication. The concept of China's English teaching should be combined with China's national conditions, taking Chinese value orientation, national psychology, learners' own characteristics and learning habits into account, emphasizing the organic combination of internationalization and localization, and paying more attention to the function of two-way cultural communication in English, in order to achieve an ideal teaching effect [5].

Localization is relative to globalization and internationalization. In the context of globalization, the globalization of English teaching is determined by the "universal language of the world", and the teaching of English will be localized at the same time. The localization of English teaching is the inevitable result of globalization, and it is also an indisputable objective phenomenon. According to the law of language teaching, every country and region has its unique "localization" language teaching theory, teaching environment, teaching design, teaching mode and examination method. It has its unique local culture, language habits, thinking mode and the "transfer" interference of the mother tongue. Each nation will treat and accept foreign language based on its own culture and tradition of acquisition. Therefore, from the perspective of ontology, practice, methodology, localization and pluralism, China's English teachers should rationally think about the characteristics, laws and methods of the localization of English teaching with the view of globalization and the development of post-modern foreign language teaching [6].

III. AN ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHING CASES OF *THE WILD HONEYSUCKLE*

The Wild honeysuckle is the masterpiece of Philip Freneau, a famous American poet. Unlike the poets of his contemporaries, Philip Freneau did not blindly imitate British poetry and repeat the themes of the masses, but rather a new way of paying attention to the native characters, plants and landscapes of the America, writing the native features of the America and making great contributions to the development of American poetry, so he was praised as “the Father of American Poetry.” The short lyric was written in 1786. Freneau was inspired by the beauty of the wild honey suckle when he was walking at Chaeleston, South Carolina. It was virtually unread in the poet’s lifetime, yet it deserves a place among major British and American works of poetry of that time. This is one of the most quoted works of Freneau. Generally speaking, it is the best of Freneau’s poems, and the best poem on nature before the appearance of the verses of William Cullen Bryant, William Wordsworth, and Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *The Rhodora*. But unlike those early writers who turned to look for themes outside America, Freneau rooted his poem on this piece of land. He is one of the few early writers who eulogize the country. Before Freneau there had been some American poets who, however, wrote mostly on the religious theme and either in style or structurally they imitated English poets. Freneau, the first American-born poet, was one of the earliest who cast their eyes over the natural surroundings of the New Continent and American subject matter. As is displayed in this poem, honeysuckle, instead of rose of daffodil became the object of depiction; it is “wild” just to convey the fresh perception of the natural scenes on the new continent [7]. The poem expresses the poet’s view about the writing material of American writers. In the author’s opinion, the origin land in America was filled with beauty and myth, which could compete with the relics of Europe. It revealed on the basis of American beauty, the American writers can produce good works. The central image is a native wild flower, which makes a drastic difference from elite flower images typical of tradition English poems. The poem showed strong feelings for the natural beauty, which was the characteristic of romantic poets [8].

In the process of explaining this poem, teacher should guide the students to feel the deep feeling of Freneau to the land of America. By describing the growing environment and vicissitude of the wild honeysuckle, the poet expressed the sigh of the short life, and added a philosophical thinking to the beautiful artistic conception and the rich colorism of the America. The poem is natural and simple, full of strong local atmosphere. In the first four lines from the beginning of the poem the poet shows the impression of fair flower: it grows in the valley of the mountains, but is enchanting, sweet and fragrant, and fluttering [9]. From this wild, simple and common plant, profound and philosophical meditation is conveyed by the brilliant and patriotic poet.

There are also many ancient and modern poems describing flowers or other plants in China. Teachers can find Chinese poems with local features on flowers and let students appreciate and compare the similarities and differences between these poems and *the Wild Honeysuckle*. The teacher

himself can also select the most common wild plant in the campus, for example dandelion, to create a poem “dandelion on the campus” with local characteristics. When students see the familiar campus native plants, they will have a sense of identity, which arouses the students’ emotional resonance and achieves good teaching effect. At the end of class, teacher can leave students a piece of homework: write an English poem on your favorite plant imitating the style of *The Wild Honey Suckle*.

Through the learning of *The Wild Honeysuckle*, teacher should strive to convey two ideas to students: 1. Try to find miracles from the common things and have philosophical meditation over trivial things. Wild honeysuckle is only a common wild plant in the North American continent, but it has aroused the poet’s philosophical thinking of the meaning of life. Teachers should lead students to understand the unique perspective of the poet, pay close attention to things around them and learn to think deeply. 2. The more national, the more international, the more local, the more national. As language learners, when learning foreign culture, never forget to preserve and spread national and local culture. In this way, every language learner can make contributions to the world culture. The American poetry of the eighteenth Century followed the imitation of British poetry, while Freneau was able to develop a school of its own and consciously open up the local culture. The literary creation and deed of Freneau accord with what Mr. Lu Xun had advocated “the more national, the more international”. This idea is very important for foreign language majors to keep in mind. In learning the culture of other countries, foreign language majors should never forget to inherit and spread their own excellent national culture. Through the teaching of *The Wild Honeysuckle*, teachers can inspire students to inherit and spread Chinese culture and intensify students’ cross-cultural awareness.

IV. SUMMARY

In a word, through the above research, we have a basic understanding of the significance and ways of the localization of the British and American poetry teaching, but the localization process of the English teaching is not accomplished overnight. To truly establish the local characteristic teaching system, teachers need to combine the theory with the practice to further study and discuss the localization of the interaction and antagonistic relationship of various elements. Innovate the concepts and methods of English teaching, form an English teaching model that fits the local reality and cultivate high-quality English talents.

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