

Models of Teaching on Japanese Literature from the Perspective of Visual Culture

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Abstract: Visual culture has been rapidly developed in China with the popularization of multimedia. Under this background, the paper, with the guidance of the teaching aims and concepts on Japanese literature, expounds the setting up of teaching models of teacher- student interaction, based on the combination of interpreting the literature texts both linguistically and audio-visually as well as the application of multimedia courseware and web teaching platforms. It holds that the literature quality and cross-cultural competence of the students could be improved by the use of these models of teaching.

Keywords: visual culture, Japanese literature, models of teaching, literature texts

1. Introduction

Japanese Literature is a required course for senior students majoring in Japanese at universities in our country, serving as a logical extension of the basic Japanese curriculum. It aims to enhance students' linguistic expression and literary literacy, cultivate their appreciation and research skills, and deepen their understanding of Japanese society and culture. It can be said that outstanding literary works have a profound impact on inspiring the younger generation and shaping a sound personality. At present, the teaching of Japanese literature in most universities still centers on the verbal interpretation of literary texts. However, in today's society where modern media technology is increasingly advanced, this traditional model has been gradually questioned and even considered one of the reasons for the decline in the field of literature.

Since the new century, with the development of modern media technologies such as film and television, and the internet, social culture has shifted from a language-based form to an electronic image-based form, gradually forming a discourse context dominated by visual images. This culture of imagery, with its unique advantages of compatibility, synchronicity, and openness, is impacting traditional culture and changing modern life. For instance, the emergence of film and television literature, online literature, and photographic literature signals that traditional literature, which uses language as a medium to reflect society, will face new challenges. It is clear that leveraging modern educational tools to construct a new type of literature teaching model is an urgent issue to be addressed. This paper first analyzes the shortcomings in traditional Japanese literature education and then, through examples, explains how to establish a more intuitive, interactive, and efficient new teaching model under the background of image culture, in order to achieve the goal of cultivating students' abilities in literary research, cultural tolerance, and cross-cultural communication.

2. The Current Status and Drawbacks of Traditional Japanese Literature Teaching Models

So far, the majority of universities' Japanese programs have established courses such as "History of Japanese Literature" and "Selected Readings of Japanese Literary Works," which typically cover the "three major components": introduction to the social background, explanation of literary theory, and analysis of literary works by authors. The typical traditional teaching model is characterized by teacher-centered

lectures under the guidance of established educational philosophies, with minimal use of internet multimedia technology. In class, the focus is on the dissemination and inculcation of knowledge, while after class, students are expected to digest, review, and consolidate the knowledge points, as well as complete related assignments. The advantage of this teaching model is that teachers meticulously prepare every aspect to ensure that students can grasp the content; students follow the thought process designed by the teacher, understanding the knowledge points through the teacher's explanations. However, the Japanese literature classroom under such a model is prone to the following two issues:

2.1. Excessive Teacher Lecture and Lack of Teacher-Student Interaction

In Japanese literature classes, teachers focus heavily on explaining the social background and literary knowledge, overemphasizing the standardization of literary work evaluation. This leads to writers and works from the same era, with distinct literary styles, being labeled similarly due to similar backgrounds or belonging to the same school of thought. Such a literary teaching model can easily lead students to bring the rote memorization methods from their middle school days into literature classes, hindering the possibility of re-interpreting literary works in new contexts. As a result, students' aesthetic taste, literary literacy, and appreciation skills are difficult to improve, and even their longing for literature may disappear completely. Taking Shiga Naoya's short story "In Jozai" as an example, teachers often categorize the work as a private novel and start explaining from the origin and development of private novels, citing authoritative academic achievements, and ultimately positioning it as a work that condenses the author's view of life and death. In such teaching, students are not involved in the teaching activities at all, so their initiative has no place to be utilized. How can they appreciate the literary charm of "the god of novels," Shiga Naoya? It can be said that such a teaching model restricts students' imagination, deprives them of the right to directly communicate with literary works, and what students obtain is "second-hand knowledge."

2.2. The Limitations of Verbal Interpretation of Japanese Literary Texts

If teachers only use dictionary language and simple pictures to explain scenes from different cultures, the lack of vivid examples can affect students' understanding of the works and even lead to misunderstandings. When students read Japanese novels, they often encounter customs and cultures unique to Japan. At such times, relying solely on written explanations is not enough to fully convey their meanings. Moreover, since Japanese is not their native language, many students end up with a superficial understanding, and over time, they lose interest in literature. For example, the term "yukata" is explained in dictionaries as a kimono worn after bathing. However, we often see in Japanese dramas that Japanese people wear yukatas in different colors and patterns to watch summer fireworks displays. If students are shown a video illustrating the different uses of "yukata," it would be much more effective than simply reading the dictionary. Additionally, because students need to use a dictionary when reading Japanese original works, if they read entirely in text, the pace is too slow. Even reading a short story takes two days, not to mention longer novels, thus greatly limiting their reading volume.

3. Teaching Objectives Adjustment and Introduction of Teaching Concepts

Teaching objectives play a central role in the construction of teaching models, determining the operational procedures of the teaching model and the combination relationship between teachers and students in classroom teaching. They are the standards and scales for teaching evaluation. In view of the current situation and drawbacks of Japanese literature teaching, the author believes that to truly realize the reform of the Japanese literature teaching model, it is necessary to first adjust the teaching objectives.

Compared with other disciplines in the humanities, the teaching objectives of Japanese literature have their distinct characteristics. It is not only the process of "imparting knowledge, imparting skills, and resolving doubts" to students, but also an activity that cultivates aesthetic taste and cross-cultural communication skills. Therefore, the teaching objectives of Japanese literature should be developed at two levels. First is the level of literary cultivation. Through the appreciation of literary works of different styles and categories, students can obtain a diversified literary aesthetic ability, helping them to break through fixed thinking and develop innovative thinking skills. Second is the level of cultural understanding. By interpreting Japanese literary works from different eras, students can deepen their understanding of the

social culture of various eras in Japan, and experience the deep connotation and social significance of different cultures.

After the teaching objectives are established, it is also very important to update and introduce corresponding teaching concepts. What kind of teaching concept is suitable for the teaching objectives of Japanese literature? The author believes that according to the special nature of Japanese literature courses, it is recommended to introduce a teaching concept centered on constructivism. Constructivism advocates that knowledge is not an absolutely correct representation of the real world, nor is it a universally applicable dogma. They are in a state of continuous development and change, and need to be reconstructed in different contexts. Moreover, knowledge is actively constructed by the individual, not passively received and absorbed, especially in the context of communication with others, this construction often manifests as a social interactive effect.

In recent years, the constructivist teaching concept that has gradually entered the university classroom is an idea that takes teacher guidance as a premise and student autonomous learning as the center. Its characteristics are manifested in emphasizing the cognitive subject role of students, while not ignoring the guiding role of teachers; teachers are facilitators of meaning construction, not imparters of knowledge; students are the main body of information processing and active constructors of meaning, not passive recipients and objects of external stimuli. The constructivist teaching concept advocates that students should go to the real world to feel and experience, not just sit in the classroom to listen to the teacher's explanation and the introduction of the experience of predecessors. Therefore, in the teaching process, it is necessary to first clarify the positioning and role of teachers and students. That is, with students as the main body, in the process of teacher-student interaction, teachers fully mobilize students' enthusiasm for learning and open up their creativity and imagination. If the constructivist teaching concept is introduced into the Japanese literature classroom, that is, in the form of a presentation meeting, a model of teacher comments after students analyze the works is implemented. We can easily speculate that under this teaching model, students who have become the main characters of classroom activities will exert the greatest autonomy and invest in the preparation of the literary presentation meeting with the enthusiasm of the host. This can not only stimulate students' interest in literary works but also cultivate their innovative consciousness, guiding students to explore new things from different perspectives and contexts.

4. Constructing a New Model of Japanese Literature Teaching and Its Specific Approaches

Under the guidance of the constructivist teaching philosophy, we must break away from the traditional model where the teacher lectures and the students listen. By utilizing multimedia technology, we should attempt to shift the focus of Japanese literature courses from "teaching" to "learning," establishing a new model of teacher-student interaction. The specific approaches include the following three aspects.

4.1. The Combination of Verbal Interpretation of Texts and Audio-Visual Interpretation of Texts

In the reform of foreign literature teaching, some experts have suggested that audio-visual interpretation of literary texts can only serve as a supplementary means, "to compensate for the lack of professional quality of teachers or the imagination of students, so as to avoid the lack of aesthetic experience caused by the failure of communication with the text," advocating "to take verbal interpretation of texts as the foundation, with audio-visual interpretation as an auxiliary means."

However, I believe that in the teaching of Japanese literary works appreciation, especially for the interpretation of medium and long novels, it is more suitable to adopt a method where verbal interpretation of texts and audio-visual interpretation complement each other. For example, Natsume Soseki's famous work "The Young Master" is a long novel with humor and satire in the original text, but it also contains many dialects and ancient grammatical structures, making it quite difficult for junior students to read. Therefore, before letting students read the text of "The Young Master," teachers can first show the film of the same name adapted from the novel. This film not only fully retains the content of the original work but also vividly portrays the psychological changes of the characters. Proper use of such audio-visual resources can stimulate students' interest, allowing them to experience the advantages of film and image narrative

functions, and to have a comprehensive and coherent grasp of the work in a short time. Subsequently, teachers should focus on the movie clips that students are most interested in, find the corresponding chapters in the original text for partial verbal text analysis. At this time, students will naturally combine visual symbols with textual symbols, thus achieving an effect with half the effort.

It is important to note that videos cannot replace the reading of the original text. Some students tend to equate images with texts, accepting the content imposed by the adapter on the original work without analysis, which affects the objective evaluation of the original work. Therefore, teachers should control the proportion of the use of images and texts according to the specific situation, and must point out the differences between the video and the original work, integrating the two methods of interpreting texts, verbal and audio-visual, reasonably.

4.2. The Application of Multimedia Courseware in Recitation Classes

Literature classes involve not only text reading but also the study of authors, which has always been a difficult point in teaching due to the complexity of the fields involved in author research. The traditional teaching method is for the teacher to introduce the author's life, artistic thoughts, living environment, and historical background according to the teaching materials, while students listen and take notes, understanding superficially, and as long as they memorize the key points explained by the teacher, they can pass the exam. Obviously, such a standardized teaching model suppresses students' imagination and innovative consciousness. In today's increasingly developed image culture, we should try a new model of author research using images, videos, etc. The author has conducted research in several universities in Japan, and recitation classes are a required course for senior students in Japanese universities. Simply put, this course is a report meeting conducted by students around a certain topic. Here, the author would like to draw on the experience of Japanese universities and suggest introducing recitation classes into Japanese literature classes, and interspersed with the multimedia courseware in recitation classes. For example, taking the literary master of the Meiji period, Natsume Soseki, as a topic, let students collect pictures and video materials related to Natsume Soseki after class, and make courseware in conjunction with text, first let students show the courseware and explain while in class, the teacher asks questions about the students' explanation, and then supplements the difficulties and key points. In this way, students will use their rich imagination to design and make courseware, making the originally rigid and rigid introduction of the author's life immediately become a vivid and lively literary story meeting, and the lively recitation can stimulate students' interest, enabling students to master literary knowledge in a relaxed atmosphere. Although students are the protagonists in recitation classes, the role of teachers as designers cannot be ignored. Because teachers must teach students how to collect materials in advance, and appropriately convey relevant text and image materials to students, students will make multimedia courseware with characteristics based on these materials, achieving an interactive model between teachers and students.

4.3. Teacher-Student Interaction through Online Teaching Platforms

Online teaching platforms can be considered a new development in teaching that reflects the culture of images. Nowadays, most universities are promoting the sharing of high-quality course video resources through online teaching platforms. By leveraging the openness and synchronicity of online teaching, combined with the characteristics of Japanese literature courses, the author believes that this course is quite suitable for the use of online teaching platforms.

Taking a course on selected readings of Japanese literature as an example, teachers first upload the names of the required works for the semester, introductions to the authors and their backgrounds, thoughts and exercises, and films and TV dramas adapted from the original works to the online platform in a timely manner, first establishing a framework for teacher-student dialogue; then, as guidance and reference, teachers recommend relevant high-quality course videos to students, guide them to watch, and require them to submit reflections or learning reports; finally, teachers assign homework for students to answer online, forming a situation of online exchange between teachers and students. This interactive model that takes place outside the classroom can cultivate students' ability to think independently and strengthen the exchange of ideas between teachers and students. In this way, it undoubtedly improves classroom efficiency.

Because a large amount of time for reading literary texts and answering questions is placed after class, the role of teachers in the classroom is only a guide to learning methods.

However, this teaching environment puts forward higher requirements for the professional level of teachers. Teachers must always stand at the forefront of academia to ensure that they can provide correct answers to the questions raised by students.

5. Conclusion

In summary, based on constructivist theory, this article has explored several approaches to building a new model of Japanese literature classroom under the backdrop of image culture. It should be noted that the extensive application of film and television, images, and online resources in the teaching of Japanese literature is aimed at fully reflecting the artistic connotation and aesthetic value of literary works. At no time should it replace the literary text. Otherwise, the true significance of the reform of literary teaching would be lost. Furthermore, in the teacher-student interactive model, although the teacher plays a supporting role, the guiding position they hold requires teachers to continuously improve their professional level and quality of cultivation.

6. References

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