

Course Construction and Exploration of a Public Elective Course “Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation” in Universities

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Abstract: *The promotion of aesthetic education in universities by public elective courses is a crucial approach to enhancing the overall competence of students. The course design of "Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" clearly delineates the course orientation and objectives, integrating aesthetic education, traditional cultural education, and foreign language translation proficiency training. It employs a diverse range of teaching methods and evaluation strategies while seamlessly incorporating elements of ideological and political education throughout. These approaches successfully fulfill education by fostering students' appreciation for aesthetics and humanistic cultivation, thereby offering some valuable insights for related curriculum development.*

Keywords: *Aesthetic education; Elective course; Xu Yuanchong; Poetry translation; Course Development*

1. Introduction

In 2013, the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee explicitly emphasized the need to "enhance aesthetic education teaching and cultivate students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities." In October 2020, The Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era, issued by both the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council, highlighted that "at higher education level, public art courses should be established with a core focus on enhancing aesthetic and humanistic literacy, fostering innovative abilities, as well as promoting inheritance and development of outstanding traditional Chinese culture and art classics. Ultimately, this will establish a comprehensive, diverse, and high-quality modern school aesthetic education system with distinctive Chinese characteristics in 2035."

The university period represents a crucial stage' growth where they not only acquire scientific knowledge but also develop sound personalities and comprehensive quality of all-round development. Although there are varying perspectives regarding college aesthetic education, it is widely acknowledged that such an education employs various forms of beauty to enhance aesthetic abilities while cultivating concepts of aesthetics to foster personal perfection [1]. As an integral component of high education curricula system, elective courses possess universal characteristics along with flexibility which can shape students' mental well-being as well as their overall personality development. By studying English translations of classical poetry effectively integrating both Chinese and English discourse system while appreciating poetic beauty alongside cultural diversity in language expression, we can further cultivate and enhance students' aesthetic sensibilities along with their understanding of humanities. This approach enables us to establish a solid cultural foundation for promoting Chinese poetry extensively while effectively narrating stories from China's rich literary heritage. All of above are the key propositions of this course construction.

2. Course background

2.1 Course introduction

"Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" is a public elective course aimed at promoting humanities and aesthetic education among college students. As a comprehensive course, it focuses on enhancing students' humanistic and scientific literacy while also considering sports,

art, and other forms of literacy. This public elective course plays a crucial role in ensuring the integrity and goals of talent training programs in universities, making it an indispensable part of the curriculum system. Unlike other courses, its primary objective is to broaden students' knowledge horizon, cater to their interests, optimize their knowledge structure and level, foster innovative and reflective habits, enhance cultural heritage appreciation, and improve overall quality.

Renowned as "the only translator who renders poems into English and French," Mr. Xu Yuanchong has authored over 180 books in Chinese, English, and French languages. He has been honored with the "Lifetime Achievement Award of Chinese Translation Culture" as well as the prestigious "Northern Lights Outstanding Literary Translation Award," which is considered the highest accolade in the international translation circles – making him the first Asian translator to receive this honor [2]. In addition to his renowned "Three Beauty Theory," Mr. Xu has also proposed theories such as "Three Similarities Theory" "Theory On Equalization, Generalization and Particularization" "Theory on the Understandable, the Enjoyable and the Delectable" "Theory of Excellence" "Theory of rivalry," and "Theory of Creation",etc. These contributions have established his own theoretical framework for translation. Throughout his life's work in translating poetry in the poetic and rhymed way[3], he realized that translation aims to transform beauty created by one country into universal beauty (Xu Yuanchong's words).

2.2 Course objectives

The primary objective and aim of this course are to enhance students' traditional humanistic qualities, strengthen their skills in Chinese and English translation and appreciation, and promote aesthetic education simultaneously. In the course of learning, students will study and appreciate the classic translations of Tang and Song poetry by Mr. Xu Yuanchong, experiencing the beauty of poetry and cultural charm. This will boost students' confidence in China's traditional culture and civilization, stimulate their motivation to actively promote Chinese culture globally, as well as establish ideals and awareness for enhancing its influence. Ultimately, it aims to develop proficiency in expressing traditional Chinese classical poetry in English, narrating Chinese stories effectively, while utilizing English at an advanced level.

2.2.1 Improve students' aesthetic and humanistic qualities

The term "aesthetic quality" refers to the capacity to perceive and comprehend beauty. As stated by renowned Soviet educator Sukhomlinskii, "Beauty is a form of spiritual exercise - it elevates our spirit, purifies our heart, emotions and beliefs." Through prolonged exposure to beauty, one becomes less tolerant of ugliness unconsciously. Thus, education should prioritize the displacement of ugliness and evil with beauty as its guiding principle. In essence, aesthetic education serves as an emotional education that influences individuals' spirit and soul. Enhancing students' aesthetic quality can elevate their emotions and spirits towards purity and nobility.

For instance, this course introduces the translation theories proposed by leading translator Mr. Xu Yuanchong: "Three Beauty Theory," "Theory on Equalization, Generalization and Particularization," and "Theory on the Understandable, the Enjoyable and the Delectable." These theories are the culmination of Mr. Xu's pursuit of "beauty" in translating Chinese poetry into foreign ones while striving for the harmonious integration of meaning, sound, and form in micro level – known as the "three beauty." Another example is Li Bai's poem "Sending Meng Haoran to Guangling," which beautifully evokes imagery of Yangzhou during its most vibrant season in spring by the term 'Fireworks March' - means green with willows and red with flowers in spring. Similarly, Su Shi's poem "Drinking on a Sunny Day at West Lake after Rain" praises the scenic beauty of West Lake. These English version of classic Tang and Song poems deepens students' understanding of their original essence while cultivating their ability to discover, appreciate, promote beauty. Moreover, the translated poems possess profound artistic conception along with rhythmic rhymes that deeply resonate with students. They are truly delightful to be read – captivating both visually and intellectually.

The term "humanistic literacy" refers to the ability to understand the world and human beings from the perspective of humanity and culture. In the course of teaching, we focus on helping students establish people-oriented thoughts and feelings, develop caring, loving and friendly emotional tendencies, realize emotional socialization, cultivate students' correct outlook on life and values, and achieve the purpose of improving students' humanistic quality. For example, in the second episode of Du Mu's "Composed at Farewell". The original verse borrowed the burning candle to express the infinite feeling of being reluctant to say goodbye. "The candle has a wick just as we have a heart, All night long it sheds tears for us before we part." Xu Yuanchong translated the candle wicks and the hearts of the people in "The candle

has a heart and is reluctant to leave "by using the adapted and deepened translation. In the first episode of the four poems in Su Dongpo's "Yu Fu", the poem begins: "The old fisherman wants a drink, Which tavern is a good place" reflects the old fisherman's poor state in the form of questioning, and also implies the author's deep sympathy for the old fisherman. The last verse, "The amount of money is no object between each other", is the finishing touch, reflecting the precious sincerity, kindness and innocence between the taverner and the old fisherman at the bottom of the society. In the lecture, different versions of translated poems are compared and their advantages and disadvantages are analyzed, so that students can have emotional resonance with the author, correctly understand the meaning of the original poem, and adhere to the simple and honest character of young college students in the new era.

2.2.2 Enhance students' awareness and responsibility of inheriting excellent traditional Chinese culture

It is the duty of contemporary college students to inherit the excellent traditional Chinese culture and carry on with the legacy of Chinese civilization. To cultivate and enhance students' sense of cultural inheritance and responsibility is an essential and important goal in university teaching practice, which will also promote students' all-round development. In classroom teaching, the study of translation theory is combined with the bilingual appreciation and analysis of poetry, and group discussions are carried out in specific situations. The students are actively guided to appreciate and analyze the traditional cultural elements and patriotism with prior knowledge in the original poems, so as to improve their ability to appreciate and empathize with literary works and comprehensively boost their all-round qualities.

2.2.3 Set students' ambitious life goals

The students will deepen comprehension of poetry, cultivate bilingual proficiency and expression in Chinese and English by appreciation of classic Tang and Song poems. This will promote students' cultural and ideological exchanges, confidence in Chinese culture, as well as establish students' ideals and awareness to actively boost Chinese culture globally and elevate its influence.

3. Curriculum Construction

3.1 Construct teaching content according to course characteristics

The public elective course "Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" mainly contains Xu Yuanchong's translation theories, appreciation and analysis of his Tang and Song poetry translations in English. Based on Mr. Xu Yuanchong's translation theories of "Three Beauty Theory", "Theory on Equalization, Generalization and Particularization" and "Theory on the Understandable, the Enjoyable and the Delectable", this paper compares different famous translations and Mr. Xu's translations to identify the practical application and advantages of the mentioned theories in poetry translation.

According to the characteristics of public elective courses, combined with the characteristics of this course, the course content is mainly divided into three parts, a total of eight chapters. The first part is a brief introduction to Mr. Xu Yuanchong and his translation theories. The second part mainly analyzes the characteristics and practice of Xu Yuanchong's poetry translation by concrete examples, so that students can understand that literary translation, especially poetry translation, should have the sense of rivalry between the target language and the source language, and try to achieve the equivalence of the deep meaning with fully understanding of the poetry. Only the translated version with profound implication of the original poem is the best translation [2]. The third part is the appreciation of bilingual poetry, including the bilingual versions of classic Tang and Song poems, and enumerating a number of translators' translations to compare with Mr. Xu's translations, which further demonstrated the beauty in sense, sound and form -- named "Three Beauty Theory", and translated poetry in the poetic and rhymed way. Through the systematic study of the above three parts, students can know more about Xu Yuanchong's translation theories, realize the characteristics and difficulties of poetry translation, and enhance their humanistic cultivation, bilingual proficiency and comprehensive qualities.

3.2 The application of modern diversified teaching aids and methods

With the development and progress of modern information technology, multimedia has become an important means to develop teaching. In addition to traditional classroom tuition, multimedia can output diversified teaching content by PPT, pictures, audio and video to create situational teaching scenes, so that students can have a more intuitive perception of teaching content, effectively strengthen memory of

theoretical knowledge, and increase learning interest and enthusiasm. Typical examples of translated poetry, on the other hand, were selected to discuss among students, and the discussion results and enlightenment were shared in class to deepen understanding and application of knowledge points, cultivate students' ability of critical thinking and teamwork, so as to improve teaching effect. In addition, intelligent teaching platforms such as "Xuexitong" and "Yuketang" can be used to further optimize the teaching process, urge students to attend classes, release class activities or projects, check and grade assignment online, etc., which greatly improves teaching efficiency, teacher-student interaction and student participation.

3.3 Full exploitation of ideological and political elements of the curriculum

To comprehensively promote the ideological and political construction of the curriculum is to intertwine the value guidance with the knowledge instruction and ability cultivation, and help students to shape a correct world outlook, outlook on life and values, which is the due meaning of talent training, but also an essential content [4]. The course "Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" strengthens students' cultural connotation, appreciates the beauty of English translated poetry, and stimulates their interest in English learning. In the meantime, students are led to become talents with extracted positive factors and values in the appreciation and summary of poetry. For example, at the beginning of the course, Mr. Xu Yuanchong's comments on Chinese culture and Chinese literary translation theory were introduced, and it was proposed that western translators were at least 20 years behind China in Chinese-English translation, so as to build students' Chinese cultural confidence. The appreciated and analyzed poems have the themes of strengthening students' understanding and edification of traditional culture, deepening students' patriotism, and enlightening students to cherish time, to establish a correct view of love and friendship, as well as to be optimistic, confident and well-grounded in the face of adversity and setbacks. By fully exploiting the ideological and political elements of the curriculum, "implicit" or "flexible" ideological and political education content is infiltrated into the teaching process [5], a pattern of educating students throughout the course is constructed. A fusion of the value of "ideological and political", the outstanding traditional Chinese culture and the English translation of classic poetry is realized in the course. It strengthens the students' theoretical base, cultivates students' sound "Three-outlooks", as well as the excellent quality of aiming high and forging ahead.

3.4 Develop diversified evaluation patterns

The course "Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" aims to cultivate students' ideological and cultural qualities, improve their bilingual abilities, humanistic and aesthetic qualities. The final evaluation of the course is thesis, but a single thesis cannot fully and accurately reflect students' studies. Therefore, the course adopts a combination of terminal and procedural evaluation. Among them, the final paper accounts for 70% of the total grade, and the process evaluation accounts for 30%, including the score of students' daily attendance, classroom interaction, discussion, and group presentation.

In classroom interaction and discussion, teachers encourage students to reflect on actively, communicate with each other, so as to comprehend and grasp the course content by questioning, inspiration and discussion. The group presentation module fully reflects the principal position of students. It can force students to change from passive learning to active learning, draw conclusions and presentation by means of literature review, information retrieval and analysis. It also makes students pay attention to the learning process, exercises information consultation, information integration and team consciousness in the whole course.

4. Summary

As the main position of aesthetic education in universities, elective course is an important way to cultivate students' comprehensive quality. The establishment of the course "Appreciation of Xu Yuanchong's Classic Chinese Poetry Translation" is a positive response to the national call. It takes the cultivation of aesthetic and humanistic qualities as the core, and the inheritance, development and dissemination of the excellent traditional Chinese culture as the main content. On the basis of the characteristics of the course, this paper makes specific elaboration and exploration in teaching objectives setting, teaching contents constructing, teaching modes diversity, ideological and political elements exploitation, evaluation methods development, etc. The constructed curriculum has realized the

interdisciplinary integration of aesthetic education with traditional culture inheritance and English ability cultivation, effectively enhanced students' aesthetic quality and personality cultivation, aroused students' enthusiasm and awareness of foreign language learning, innovative thinking in translation, and inheritance of Chinese excellent culture, as well as promoted the development of aesthetic education in our university with the cultivation goal of "foster character and civic virtue".

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