



# Research on the technique of "realism" in the teaching of foreign literature in Colleges and Universities——Taking Saisei Murô's novels as an example

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**Abstract.** The research on foreign literature teaching in Colleges and universities mainly focuses on teaching ideas, teaching courses and contents, teaching methods, and how to effectively select literary works. Among them, the analysis of works is inseparable from the analysis of the author's life, creative background and the relationship between the protagonist and the author, which is also reflected in the application of "realism". Saisei Murô, the original author of many films, is a famous poet and novelist who self-taught in the three periods of Meiji, Taisho, Showa. Due to his extremely special growth experience and unusual family background, as well as his ugly face and excellent wife, he has low self-esteem all his life. However, as the song of the mud sparrow said, "the rudeness and rebellious heart of people who have not been loved at all has become the root of my character". At the same time, in order to get rid of this psychology, I constantly struggle with the tragic fate and the life at the bottom of society, and even reach the degree of wildness. Write poetry for a living, and rewrite novels for a better living. In his early, middle and late novels, he embodied his inferiority complex and his efforts to get rid of it and fight against fate by means of "realism".

**Keywords:** Saisei Murô; Realism; poetic flavour

## 1 Introduction

In the teaching of foreign literature in universities, in addition to appreciating and studying literary masterpieces, the use of multimedia methods such as movies to enable students to understand the innovation of literary teaching methods is not lacking. As directed by Sotoji Kimura in 1936, Mikio Naruse in 1953, Imai Tadashi in 1976 (the film's name is translated as "Brothers" in China), and Kiyohiro Makoto in 2018, "Brothers and Sisters" were produced; Directed by Mikio Naruse in 1958, 'Apricot' was produced; Directed by Hiroshi Kurosaki in 2009, 'The Fish of Fire' was released; In 2010, directed by Masayuki Ochiai, the film "Strange Tales of Ghost Writers" was released; In 2016, directed by Gakuryû Ishii, several novel works of the same name, such as "Sorrow of Honey" and other works by Shin Shin Shin, were successively

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S. Yacob et al. (eds.), *Proceedings of the 2023 7th International Seminar on Education, Management and Social Sciences (ISEMSS 2023)*, Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research 779, [https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-126-5\\_189](https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-126-5_189)

brought to the screen and became films. People began to pay attention to this self-taught poet and novelist. The original novels behind these movies not only have the characteristics of "private novels" and "realism", but also have elements of "revenge literature" and "autobiographical fiction". The analysis is as follows:

## 2 The Growing Experience and Poetry of Saisei Murô

The analysis of the "realism" technique has appeared in foreign literature teaching classes in universities, with the main purpose of assisting in the analysis of literary creation background, the author's birth and growth experience, and the protagonist of the novel. It is particularly evident and prominent in the works of Saisei Murô (1889-1962). It is precisely because he has extremely special birth and growth experiences and corresponding obvious psychological changes that it is difficult to fully understand the content and theme of the "prolific writer"'s works in foreign literature teaching classes in universities without grasping this. Saisei Murô was born in the beautiful hometown of Kanazawa in August 22 of Meiji, and its original name was Doushou. Later, its pen name was Saisei Murô. The word "Sai" was taken from Saigawa River near the village. "sei" represents his pursuit and lifelong dream, which is as brilliant as a star in the sky. However, his father, Kichidane, a former Gaga vassal, fell in love with his 33 year old maid at the age of 63 and gave birth to Saisei Murô, who was sent to a nearby temple shortly after his birth. After the Abbot Shijou Murô and his wife adopted him, Saisei Murô began his miserable childhood in the Uhouin along the Saigawa River. His adoptive mother, Akai sho, was addicted to alcohol as much as her life, and was extremely brutal and rough towards Saisei Murô Rhinoceros. During her childhood, she was often insulted and beaten by her adoptive mother.

My foster mother often beats me for nothing, and whenever I talk back, I will suffer from physical pain. When she gets angry, she uses a long brass pipe to smoke and her cigarette bag to beat me, an adopted son who is around ten years old and not yet fully developed. Thanks to this cigarette bag, she often leaves bruises and bruises on me. Amidst the screams of a shrew in her forties, she tore her apron and was so arrogant that she didn't realize that she was still a growing child, and how much hatred had made her so ruthless. He also described such a domineering foster mother in his autobiography "Lions" (1936). After completing this novel, Saisei Murô also explained to her adoptive mother that it was just a novel and that only such exaggerated descriptions could make a living by writing. However, when Saisei Murô lived in Tokyo at that time, his adoptive mother Akai sho also sent him his favorite fish and small Dim sum. She said, "I don't mind how to write Doushou's novels, even if he is successful again, I can still remain calm". From this perspective, adoptive mother Akai sho also has a little-known aspect of tolerance.

For her biological mother, Rhino Star is full of human expectations, without any animosity. For example, in his early debut work "Childhood" (1919), Saisei Murô wrote about the situation where he met his biological mother: her biological mother was not tall and her face was slightly pale. However, compared to an adoptive mother, the biological mother appears slightly more serious and feels more relaxed when

speaking, such as "you need to be like an adult, you can't come twice a day" or "but I still want to come". However, in fact, the impression of Rhino Star is almost lifelong and difficult to meet with its biological mother. Under the lonely streetlights, I kept thinking of my mother and sister while keeping my eyes wide open, quietly hearing the sound of the nearby riverbank and the night breeze blowing to my pillow. It's winter at the end of my 13th year old. I peered through the roof of the temple corridor, overlooking the beech trees of the gods. Since my sister got married, I have no friends anymore. No matter who I talk to, not only am I uncomfortable, but also how lonely and lonely I am! My sister is both a mother and a father to me. Also someone who soothes my soul. I was still thinking, 'My sister and I are not siblings.'. Due to the weakness of often feeling stabbed in the heart by such words, sometimes extreme melancholy occurs. Psychology has started searching for the biological mother who has no information at all. When can we meet again? "And" It's hard to see again, isn't it. I have easily injured eyes and look forward to dreaming of depicting my biological mother's appearance and talking to her. I even whispered the name of my biological mother in the deserted yard or street. And it is the name of the biological mother who will never be seen. I thought, 'Yes, there is no reason why people have two mothers.' At that time, they would extremely hate foster mothers. On the one hand, although I feel guilty about her, when I am occupied by those thoughts, I have no reason to treat my foster mother coldly.

A child abandoned by their biological parents portrays their foster mother very badly, filling the emotional vacuum caused by her absence. Perhaps the foster mother, Akai Chu, can help alleviate that feeling. After his birth, Saisei Murô was abandoned by his mother and hardly felt the maternal love from his biological mother. As a child, he often sat helplessly under a withered tree, with only an apricot tree accompanying him, seeking solace. When his biological father passed away, Saisei Murô was nine years old, and his biological mother disappeared shortly after leaving home. Later, he found Kṣitigarbha. Although it was an ordinary stone, he believed that it had some magic power to bless the unknown mother. Lacking maternal love from the biological mother, we can only endow the biological mother in our thoughts with fresh life through the illusory and beautiful artistic conception of another world that is different from reality.

After three years of studying at Saisei Murô Elementary School, he dropped out and worked as a temporary laborer at the Kanazawa District Court. Fortunately, he was appreciated and taught by his boss who loved haiku. As a result, Saisei Murô learned haiku and short songs and published them in newspapers and magazines. After resigning from his temporary job, he worked as a journalist in several newspapers. In 1909, he left his hometown and was forced to return several times to Tokyo due to poor living conditions. Hometown is like a thorn in the flesh, unable to be pulled out, unable to stop. Although his hometown and birth mother were thousands of miles away, he could only express his lingering longing.

The following poem also frequently appears in literature teaching classes in universities, which can be said to be a vivid description of the real life situation and experience of the room student Saisei Murô at that time. Although my hometown is far away, wanderers miss me day and night. It's a deep sadness in my heart. Even if I'm

down and begging in a different place, I won't be able to return to my hometown. I'm alone in the dusk of the capital. I can't help but feel homesickness. I still have to return to the distant city. The poem "Little Scenes and Strange Feelings" was published in the second year of the Taisho era (1913) in the "Zhu Luan" founded by Kitahara Hakushuu. During the same period, poet Hagiwara Sakutarou, who also published his poetry, also had a deep feeling for this poem. Taking this as an opportunity, he began to communicate with the rhinoceros star. In the end, the two became close friends and became their leaders. In the fifth year of the Taisho era (1916), Takahara Shotaro and Saisei Murô founded the poetry magazine "Emotion", advocating that the essence of poetry lies in "expressing emotions". In the sixth year of the Taisho era (1917), Hagiwara Sakutarou published his first collection of poems titled "The Vee Moon", and his commentary was published in the poetry magazine "Emotion". Saisei Murô also published a special number of modern free style poetry in the poetry journal soon. In 1918, Saisei Murô published "The Collection of Love Poems" and "The Collection of Lyric Songs", establishing a position in the poetry world of the Taisho era that could be on par with Hagiwara Sakutarou. The following year, inspired by writers such as Haruo Sato and Ryunosuke Akutagawa, he set out to write novels in order to make a living. With the release of the autobiographical trilogy "Childhood", "Before a Girl Dies", and "Incense Stolen" ("Love Begins"), he turned to become a novelist.

Tai Lang, the eldest male leopard born to Saisei Murô, died in 1922, the eleventh year of Taisho when he was 13 months old. He wrote the poem Socks: "Put on Jômô Line socks for you/prepare your favorite toys for you..." Later, he kept recalling his son through creation. Eight months after the death of his eldest son, Saisei Murô published *The Boy After Tomorrow on February of Women*, which is about the family of bereaved children. The pain of losing a son is like the pain of being abandoned by his biological mother, like a retreat. Children may appear and disappear, which may provide comfort. At this moment, he also wrote his wife's three month pregnant son into the novel. The unfortunate shadow may linger, but we still have to live on, and Chaozi will give some light to the future.

In the teaching of foreign literature in universities, we will make students aware of the importance of literary learning, as literature is a spiritual asset for a country or even the world. Meanwhile, literary creation may also become a means of livelihood for authors. In her childhood, like the rhinoceros star, she couldn't bear to look back. She was born out of wedlock, retired from elementary school, and separated from the bottom of society. It was not a formal school education or a prominent family background, but literature, which gave her a strong desire for survival. Saisei Murô's literature began with haiku and achieved success in poetry and prose. The early works showcased the duality of rhinoceros literature. That is to say, in the psychological structure of Rhinoceros, there is a duality of wanting to escape and transcend from the gloomy birth and growth environment. One is the sentiment towards the experience of tragic growth. Rhino Star did not accept fate's arrangement, but rather intended to apply the pain to literary life. The second is to exhibit a positive attitude towards the misfortune - anger, which in turn highlights the form of angry love, known as the "Poems of Love". The middle period matured as revenge literature. Like this, the two contradictory and intertwined elements of Saisei Murô's literature are sadness and anger, or

narration of emotions and wildness, forming the beauty of poetry and prose interweaving. As for the reasons for the transition from poetry to prose, there are various opinions, the biggest reason being that the expression form of Saisei Murô's inner distress and troubles, such as poetry, is no longer sufficient. The Collection of Poems of Love "is a work of transition from poetry to prose, but the lack of poetic meaning also made Saisei Murô turn into a prose writer.[1]

## 2.1 The Technique of "Realism" in Early Novels

The teaching of foreign literature in universities aims to enable students to learn and understand "heterogeneous and heterogeneous" literary history and works, but there are also "commonalities". Any work reflects the characteristics of the era and society in which the author lives, as well as the author's experiences and psychological changes. As one of the early representative works of Saisei Murô, "Childhood" (1922) is a poetic prose with a tone similar to the pure "Collection of Love Songs" (1918). It just showed its early wildness in the "Collection of Love Songs" (1918), but gave way to a lyrical theme. It is not completely disappearing, but often showing fragility and easily falling into a state of sadness. The lyricism based on sadness adopts a realistic approach of "realism". From the high-frequency vocabulary appearing in "Childhood", it can be seen that "loneliness" and "sadness" appear quite frequently, while there are also many words such as "anger", "hatred", and "revenge". Like this, teenagers who often argue and have a strong hatred for teachers go beyond this sentimentality.

## 2.2 The Technique of "Realism" in Middle Stage Novels

The teaching of foreign literature in universities starts from the humanistic spirit, enabling students to master literary knowledge, cultivate cross-cultural thinking ability, and improve comprehensive language application skills. The analysis of works is indispensable in literary knowledge, and the study of "realism" techniques has emerged as the times require. Taking the example of "Brother and Sister" in the mid-term works of Saisei Murô, "Brother and Sister" is a depiction of the psychological entanglement of the Akzo family of the Sichuan teacher by the Tama River, especially the unusual love between special siblings (not related by blood), set against the wild and beautiful Tama River, similar to the father of the hometown Saigawa River. [2]Although this work shares similarities and differences with the "Poetry Collection of Love", its material selection, expression techniques, and poetry are completely different. Firstly, from the material perspective, although they are siblings of different bloodlines, they are also siblings who curse each other. He starts from his unfortunate upbringing experience and still holds a sense of inferiority towards his tragic upbringing experiences, such as lack of education, lack of background in studying in Europe, and ugly appearance. For example, in "Brothers and Sisters", he first explores the path to overcoming these challenges by describing his brother who is not related to his appearance and is naturally wild. That is to say, if a person is pursued to the limit, anyone will become a selfish person under the control of lust, and this will reveal their rightful life path. The functionalism of rhinoceros stars is not affirmed from a positive perspective, but rather

expressed through twists and turns, accompanied by a unique sense of sadness. The reason why this work not only depicts the struggles between the lowest levels of society, but also does not lose the warmth of human nature, is the deep love of rhinoceros for people. Nurturing him into a person with clear love and hate may stem from this special upbringing experience. He doesn't know the love of his biological parents; Instead, he grew up enduring unbearable abuse from his adopted mother, who was unimaginable to ordinary people. However, even if they hate their foster mother again, in a sense, it is the emotions of those around them that shape Rhino Star into a person with clear love and hate, nostalgia for life, and a strong pursuit of love.

### 2.3 The Technique of "Realism" in Late Novels

The teaching of foreign literature in universities has shifted from a traditional "teacher centered" model to a "student centered" model, where students can choose their own literary works and media for exposure to literary works, replacing the previous one-way teaching of literary history and works by teachers in a deliberative manner. The mastery of the technique of "realism" can effectively enable students to consciously and spontaneously establish an organic connection between the protagonist and the author in the work. It is precisely this connection that can better achieve the goals and tasks of foreign literature teaching in universities. As stated by Saisei Murô himself in the postscript to 'Anzukko', he completed the 'liquidation of his life' and 'literary resume'. Apricot "has a poetic quality that expresses beautiful dreams, a vent of anger, and an objective" me ", such as" Heishirou is afraid of adults "," If standing in front of someone named 'mother', Heishirou's wrist strength will suddenly lose more than half ", and even some sense of self mockery. However, although it cannot be called a representative work of later years, it is also insufficient to be called an autobiographical novel, and in terms of its superb literary quality, it is also inferior to other works. But in 'Apricot', after completing the 'life's reckoning', it reveals the rhinoceros star from his childhood, and the portrayal of Heishirou living in the world of story and beauty, with both anger and pity. Therefore, the portrayal of Heishirou as a timid and cautious young man, rough but not innocent.

The Sorrow of Honey "(1959) is the novel that best embodies the aesthetic consciousness of Saisei Murô. It is composed of conversations and is known as the "printed film ".[3] But later works such as "Firefish" (1960) were no longer considered novels by some scholars. But according to Asako Murô, Saisei Murô actually hoped to make a movie of "Sorrow of Honey" and once sent it to the director living in "Red Balloon" in Paris under the real name of the embassy, but it didn't happen at the time. [4]This "printed movie" called "Sorrow of Honey" is more like a novel completed with suppressed visuals. [5]Due to immaturity, the initial works were difficult to completely detach from the poet, resulting in poetic prose. However, Saisei Murô, who once abandoned poetry, once again returned to the realm of poetry in his later years to write his works, just as he sought his spiritual homeland. His language expression has reached the highest level, even sliding into an unrealistic world. To some extent, it deviates from the direction of "realism". Therefore, in the teaching of foreign literature in universities, attention should be paid to the phenomenon of "alienation" in the use of

"realism" techniques in different stages of works. The emergence of Chinese modern realism literature and Japanese modern realism literature has played a connecting role in the literary development process of both countries.[6]

### 3 Conclusions

As is well known, foreign literature teaching in universities is an important component of foreign language and literature teaching, and plays an irreplaceable role in improving students' cross-cultural communication ability and humanistic literacy, which cannot be replaced by other courses. However, foreign literature teaching in universities also faces some new challenges. For example, how to solve the problem of allowing students to learn and understand more excellent foreign literary works within a certain classroom time, how to analyze the theme ideas of works with a critical perspective, how to integrate ideological and political courses into foreign literature teaching classrooms of heterogeneous cultures, and how to transform into a "student-centered" foreign literature teaching model in universities. As an effective solution strategy, carry out a literature classroom that combines both in and out of class, allowing students to independently choose excellent foreign literary works based on their interests and hobbies. While improving their foreign language application ability, it also cultivates their critical thinking ability. The theme of the work and the ideological changes of the protagonist are deeply influenced by various factors such as the author's material and cultural life, personal experience, etc. If students master the commonly used "realism" techniques in literary works to analyze literary works, they can to some extent explore new concepts and models of foreign literature teaching in universities.

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### Acknowledge

This article is the result of the Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology's first-class undergraduate Japanese major construction project (Guangzhou Institute of Technology {2022} 95) and the Guangzhou Institute of Science and Technology's key discipline cultivation project for foreign language and literature (project number: Yjz201902).

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