



Research on the Construction of Western Classics and Local Discourse in Chinese Piano Textbooks from the Perspective of Cultural Geography

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Abstract. With the development of our country, piano art has become one of the arts pursued by people. However, in current piano teaching, the textbooks mainly focus on Western classic textbooks, and the integration of local music elements and the construction of discourse systems are relatively lagging behind, which hinders the localization development process of Chinese piano teaching materials. From the perspective of cultural geography, this study analyzes the infiltration of Western classics in Chinese piano textbooks and the current selection of Chinese piano textbooks. Based on this, a strategy for constructing local discourse in Chinese piano textbooks is constructed, providing effective practical support for the localization of Chinese piano textbooks.

Keywords: cultural geography; Piano textbooks; Western classics; Local discourse

1 Introduction

Since the introduction of piano art to China in the 19th century, after years of innovative development, a complete music education system has been formed. Piano textbooks, as the core carrier of piano teaching, not only affect the quality of teaching, but also reflect the collision and integration of different cultures in the field of music education^[1]. For a long time, Western classics have been widely used as teaching models in the field of piano education in China. Although this has to some extent promoted the development of Chinese piano education, it has also led to a lack of discourse power of local music culture in piano teaching^[2]. Currently, with the improvement of China's international cultural soft power and the increasing emphasis on cultural confidence, the localization of piano art has become a consensus in the industry. How to balance the Western classics and local discourse in Chinese piano textbooks has become an urgent problem to be solved in Chinese piano teaching.

2 The Infiltration of Western Classic Works in Chinese Piano Textbooks

2.1 The Historical Path and Geographical Diffusion of the Infiltration of Western Classics

The style gradually flowed into China, and during this period, piano music art also penetrated into music teaching in China. Among them, due to geographical differences, piano art was first introduced to coastal port cities when it was introduced to China. The piano textbooks it introduced included "Thompson Modern Piano Course", "Basic Piano Course of Baer", and "Bach Junior Piano Collection"^[3]. Therefore, these regions have also become the forefront of Western piano culture input and piano music development; Afterwards, it was gradually promoted to various inland regions, which formed a diffusion pattern of piano music teaching from the center to the periphery in China.

2.2 Expansion and Penetration of the Education System

At the beginning of the 20th century, China began to establish a modern music education system, successively establishing various levels of normal universities and music professional colleges, and piano education gradually moved towards standardization. Some scholars who have returned from studying abroad attempt to integrate classic textbooks with the local education system. The Shanghai Conservatory of Music has made Western classic textbooks such as "Introduction to Piano Practice of Czerny 599" and "Mozart Piano Sonata Collection" compulsory courses, and gradually promoted them to music schools at all levels across the country. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, it mainly drew on the music education model of the Soviet Union. The Soviet piano teaching system centered around Western classical music, with textbooks such as "Enlightenment Textbook of the Russian Piano School" and "Kabalevsky Piano Variations" becoming the core textbooks of Chinese piano education. During this period, the infiltration of Western classical piano textbooks into Chinese piano teaching became more significant, as shown in Fig. 1. "Czerny 599 Piano Beginner Practice" (excerpt).



Fig. 1. "Czerny 599 Piano Junior Practice" (excerpt)

2.3 Cultural Adaptation and Localization Transformation

In the long-term practice of piano education, Western classic piano textbooks, with their mature teaching system and scientific skill training logic, have gradually formed cultural norms and become fixed models for piano teaching^[5]. Although Western classic piano textbooks underwent "selective absorption" when they were introduced to China, such as the retention of "Sonata Collection", the high finger training method was replaced by the weight playing method and key touch diversity training in the later stage due to its conflict with traditional linear thinking in China. In addition, some music educators have made numerous attempts and innovative improvements to better integrate Western piano teaching with traditional Chinese music forms. Among them, Li Yinghai's "Five tone Piano Etude" combines the structure of Western etudes with Chinese pentatonic scales, allowing Western piano performance to reveal some unique elements of traditional Chinese music, which plays an important role in promoting piano music teaching in China.

3 Analysis of the Construction and Selection of Chinese Piano Textbooks

3.1 Regional Characteristics in Cultural Geography and the Development of Chinese Piano Textbooks

The "regional characteristics" of cultural geography and the development process of Chinese piano textbooks can be mainly promoted from three aspects: spatial level, contextual level, and cognitive level. At the spatial level, due to regional differences, textbooks in northern regions focus on rich and high pitched melodies and techniques, adapting to the spatial characteristics of loess and grassland culture; Southern regional textbooks focus on gentle and delicate melodies and techniques, adapted to the cultural characteristics of Jiangnan and water towns. At the contextual level, textbooks in northern regions convey the resilience and solidity of loess culture, while textbooks in southern regions convey the elegance and restraint of water town culture. At the cognitive level, based on the grasp of the rhythm and melody of local traditional instruments, the familiar melodies of Jiangnan silk and bamboo can be learned through arpeggios and the rhythm of Shaanbei folk songs can be integrated into piano teaching. For example, in North China, with Beijing as the center, Xinghai, the Pearl River and other brands promote the integration of "manufacturing, education and performance", and textbooks focus on the combination of basic techniques and folk music, such as "Variations of Northern Shaanxi Folk Songs" into the element of "Tianyou in Northern Shaanxi". In the southern region of China, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are promoting digital piano technology and the pianization of popular music, such as the piano version of "Blue and White Porcelain". The textbooks focus on improvisation and interdisciplinary integration, which demonstrates the organic penetration between regional characteristic music and piano music textbooks. This has positive significance for deepening and promoting piano teaching in China in the new era.

3.2 Choose According to the Content of Piano Textbooks

At present, many schools use relatively outdated piano textbooks, with a relatively single selection of content that focuses on classic inheritance. Emerging works and music elements have not been included in the textbooks in a timely manner. Some school textbooks are too biased, influenced by regional characteristics or historical factors, with one music element as the main focus and rigid content, which is not conducive to opening students' horizons and enriching their skills. Music teaching should be inclusive and incorporate more high-quality music into the teaching scope, enriching students' horizons while also guiding them to improve their performance level through multi-dimensional assessments. Although the piano is a Western instrument, in the current trend of music integration, the boundaries between Chinese and Western music are becoming increasingly blurred. The piano is no longer a single instrument for playing Western music, and many Chinese music can be expressed through the piano. In the collision of Eastern and Western music, many new sparks have been ignited. In recent years, many musicians in China have created music that combines Eastern and Western music, with high artistic appreciation value. Schools and institutions offering piano courses should consider the future development direction of music and develop piano textbooks. They should not always follow the tail of the times and blindly select content from old textbooks. Instead, they should strive to be pioneers in music, turn their attention to the future development of music, enrich the styles of music, and introduce local elements and various high-quality content into the development of piano textbooks.

3.3 According to the Selection of Piano Teaching Courses

Piano teaching needs to be carried out according to the laws of learning and development. When compiling textbooks, attention should be paid to the construction of the curriculum system, taking into account both students' development needs and the diversified construction of textbooks. Once the direction and content of these teaching methods are determined, directly compiling textbooks will cause confusion in textbook compilation, which is not conducive to students' learning. The compilation of piano textbooks should conform to the law of spiral knowledge system construction, in order to help enrich relevant knowledge and improve personal literacy. In terms of skills, we should consider the actual needs of students and try to encourage them to exert their subjectivity, promoting active and effective practice. Cultivating students' artistic literacy is not a one-time effort, it takes a long time. To cultivate students' artistic literacy, organic artistic infiltration needs to be carried out in daily teaching. In the process of compiling and selecting textbooks, attention should be paid to this point, and quality education should be implemented in the process of skill cultivation, integrating artistic influence into the teaching of theoretical knowledge, and comprehensively promoting students' growth.

4 The Dilemma of Constructing Local Discourse in Chinese Piano Textbooks

4.1 Insufficient Exploration of Local Music Materials

At present, the local music materials in piano textbooks mainly focus on Han folk music, such as Jiangnan silk and bamboo, northern folk songs, etc., while there is insufficient exploration of music materials with distinct regional characteristics, such as ethnic minority music and local opera. For example, the Miao Flying Songs and Dong Big Songs in the southwest, Qin Opera and Huaer Opera in the northwest are rarely included in piano textbooks. The limitations of this material selection make it difficult for local piano textbooks to fully reflect China's diverse musical cultural landscape and meet the local identity needs of learners from different regions.

4.2 Lack of Corresponding Logic in Textbook Writing

Currently, most local piano textbooks still use the teaching logic of Western classic textbooks as a framework, simply adapting local music materials and incorporating them into Western skill training systems, lacking innovative teaching concepts based on local music culture. For example, Western piano textbooks focus on the major and minor keys system, emphasizing the training of harmony and polyphony, while traditional Chinese music focuses on the pentatonic scale as the core, emphasizing the linear development of melody. Some local textbooks blindly apply Western harmony and polyphonic techniques to adapt local music works during the writing process, resulting in the loss of the original cultural charm of the works and making it difficult to effectively inherit local music culture.

4.3 Lack of Discourse Power in Local Music

Despite the increasing number of local piano textbooks, Western classic textbooks still dominate in actual teaching, making it difficult for local textbooks to enter the mainstream teaching space. On the one hand, piano courses at all levels of music colleges still focus on Western classic textbooks, while local textbooks are mostly used as elective or supplementary materials; On the other hand, the evaluation system for piano grading and competitions mainly focuses on Western classic pieces, with a very low proportion of local pieces. The insufficient penetration of this teaching space has made it difficult for local discourse to gain corresponding discourse power in the field of piano education, which has constrained the promotion and development of local piano textbooks.

5 Construction of Local Discourse in Chinese Piano Textbooks from the Perspective of Cultural Geography

5.1 Dig Deep into Local Music Materials and Enrich Textbook Content

Based on the theory of local identity in cultural geography, the compilation of local piano textbooks should focus on exploring diverse local music materials and constructing rich musical cultural landscapes. Firstly, expanding the scope of material mining should not only focus on Han folk music, but also strengthen the mining and organization of materials such as ethnic minority music, local opera, traditional instrumental music, etc. For example, the melodious melodies of Mongolian tribal tunes, the complex rhythms of Uyghur Muqam, and the variations in the style of Peking Opera can be incorporated into piano textbooks. Secondly, attention should be paid to the regional representativeness of the materials, and piano teaching modules with regional characteristics should be developed based on the geographical environment and cultural features of different regions. For example, for the Jiangnan region, textbook modules based on Jiangnan silk and bamboo and Suzhou Pingtan can be developed to effectively meet the local identity needs of learners in different regions.

5.2 Improve the Concept of Textbook Writing and Establish Local Logic

Based on the cultural landscape theory of cultural geography, the compilation of local piano textbooks should break through the teaching logic constraints of Western classic textbooks and construct teaching concepts and systems with local characteristics. Firstly, it is important to cultivate learners' perception of local music melodies, rhythms, and artistic conception. For example, in skill training, traditional Chinese music performance techniques such as guzheng scraping and pipa finger rotation can be combined to innovate piano performance training content; Secondly, it is necessary to construct a teaching logic based on the local music mode system, gradually introducing elements such as heptatonic scales and variations, forming a skill training system with Chinese characteristics, teaching different techniques to students at different levels, and effectively improving learners' comprehensive performance level.

5.3 Expand Teaching Penetration Channels and Enhance Their Discourse Power

Firstly, optimize the curriculum design. Music colleges at all levels should increase the teaching proportion of local piano textbooks, incorporate them into the compulsory curriculum system, and integrate the history and background knowledge of local music culture into piano teaching to enhance learners' understanding and identification with local music culture. Secondly, reform the evaluation system by increasing the proportion of local repertoire and establishing diversified evaluation criteria in piano grading, competitions, and other evaluation activities. For example, a special assessment for local repertoire can be added to piano grading exams to encourage learners to learn local

piano works; In piano competitions, establish local performance awards to promote the dissemination and promotion of local piano works.

6 Conclusion

Overall, from the perspective of cultural geography, there is an effective game between Western classics and local discourse in Chinese piano textbooks. Western classics have formed a dominant position in piano textbooks through the migration and diffusion driven by colonial culture and the expansion and diffusion of educational system implantation, while local piano teaching materials face the dilemma of a lack of discourse power. Based on this, the construction of local discourse should be based on the core theory of cultural geography, and through exploring diverse local music materials, innovating textbook writing concepts, and expanding teaching space infiltration channels, a piano textbook system with Chinese local discourse should be constructed.

Acknowledgments

This article is the research result of the 2023 Shaanxi Province Undergraduate and Higher Continuing Education Teaching Reform Research Project "Research and Practice on Talent Cultivation Strategies for Applied Undergraduate Music Education Majors from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts" (23BZ053).

Project Category: 2023 Shaanxi Undergraduate and Higher Continuing Education Teaching Reform Research Project

Project Number: 23BZ053

Project Name: Research and Practice on Talent Cultivation Strategies for Music Education Majors in Applied Undergraduate Universities from the Perspective of New Liberal Arts.

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