

On Approaches and Teaching of British and American Literature Reading

Yapeng Song

School of Foreign Languages
Huanghe Science and Technology College
Zhengzhou, China

Abstract—Through the elaboration of British and American literature reading, this paper discusses the problems students may meet while reading, the correct reading and teaching approaches of British and American literature. While discussing the reading approaches, the author tells us the importance of reading methods before, during and after reading. While teaching, the author describes the teaching approaches from the teaching reform of teachers and the active study of students. Finally the author draws a conclusion that British and American literature reading is different from normal text, we must pay attention to approaches, so we can get twice the result with half the effort.

Keywords—*british and american literature reading; teaching approaches; metacognition*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the development of social diversified cultural exchange, it is not enough for talents to master single cultural background, the more important thing is that we need to understand foreign customs and habits, ideas and value orientation, which can affect the communication smoothly. And this kind of intercultural knowledge is the weak link of college students, British and American literature reading and teaching can make up for the inadequacy of this aspect. The language of literature is not only the real language, but also the artistic language. It is vivid, thoughtful, and is the result of the characteristics of life, moreover, higher than life. So it is one of the best ways for students to imitate and study the diversified knowledge, at the same time, the absorption of the vivid story is beneficial to students. This paper will explore British and American literature reading and teaching methods to illustrate the way to learn English and American literature.

II. THE PROBLEMS OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE READING

Although the excellent students have already had a more solid basic ability of reading and writing, most students don't pay attention to reading methods, and lack effective strategies, so the reading and teaching effect is not ideal by only a limited number of drills.

- The students' learning is lack of plans and enough consciousness. In the learning process, they tend to be utilitarian, their goal is just to take exams. Therefore,

they must be negative in learning, they will not take the initiative to collect the related materials, such as politics, economy and culture. This rote learning does not have the prospective effect.

- The students lack self-control, so they have distraction and low learning effect. If they don't understand the background of literature and don't want to get the information of works, so they have little effect after reading an article. Meanwhile, the students have limited patience, when they meet with difficulties; they only rely on the surface characteristics of the article and don't have imagination, so they can't get the inner meaning of an article. British and American literature is mostly professional article, it is normal for students to meet with difficulties. Then the students should adjust psychology to read it over and over again, or check the related background of the article. But once they meet with difficulties they will learn it inefficiently or waste a lot of time, at last the effect isn't very ideal.
- The students lack ability in the process of reading. Some students can understand the contents in Chinese thinking, but they are not clear about the structure and theme of the article, so they don't know the structure totally. The reason is that in the process of reading, except the basic decoding ability, students should master related knowledge, perfect their own knowledge structure and have a good command of knowledge, therefore, they can have creative thinking and aesthetic ability. This is the essential condition in the process of reading, the students must have this kind of ability.

III. THE IMPROVEMENT METHODS OF READING ABILITY

Seemingly, reading is the understanding of the content of works and the writer's writing style, actually otherwise. In fact, everyone's reading is the recreation of his own thoughts and learning activities. According to American scholar Flower's metacognitive theory, the process of reading includes planning strategy, monitoring strategy, regulation strategy and evaluation strategy. Moreover, the stages contain pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading.

A. Pre-reading

Pre-reading is the preparation stage of reading, in this stage, the students should understand the learning goal, background information of reading materials and overview of the works, etc. While learning, they should obtain basic information through various ways and learn to use materials to find the difficult tasks actively. In this way the students are able to understand the orientation of the reading materials correctly.

B. While-reading

This stage needs the students and teachers work together to take the monitoring strategy. The aim is to check whether the students' thinking reaches the intended target. At the same time, the students can also discuss the reading materials to test whether their understanding degree and orientation are in the anticipated channel. In this way, we can determine whether the students' logical thinking and reasoning are reasonable. Many students lack their own monitoring strategy, when they read obscure works; they often read it again or look up the notes in class, so this strategy does not have efficiency. Monitoring strategy suggests that the students should guess, look up the notes, skip the difficult sentences and passages, analyze the long difficult sentence's structure and read in detail to improve their reading ability. Strategy drills include drawing inference and prediction strategy, if students can master the above abilities, they will improve their understanding ability of literature works definitely.

In addition, regulation strategy and monitoring strategy can't be separated from each other. They are adjustment of thinking activity and the research methods of psychology. Students have to be very sensitive to realize the existing obstacles and difficulties, rather than only read the works. Only face the disadvantages bravely, they will adjust the psychological change and correct the learning behavior.

C. Post-reading

After reading students should evaluate their reading behavior, reflect and summarize their reading procedure, plan and monitoring measures. If the evaluations of all the above criteria are yes, the reading methods are correct. If no, the reading methods should be improved, in the future, students should adjust the reading methods. Whether the evaluation is good or bad, it is helpful for students to read afterwards. Students should evaluate the process of reading and understanding, reflect their thinking process after reading and evaluate their reading behavior, so their reading ability can be improved in the future.

Compared with general reading, there is obvious difference in the literary works of different cultural backgrounds. British and American literature is a more complicated text; there are differences in backgrounds, targets, procedures and time arrangements. Teachers can change some problems through checking, monitoring and adjustment. This stage can clear all the reading barriers in the process of reading. Plan strategy can improve the consciousness of students in reading, and force them to make preparation. Monitoring and adjustment strategy can solve the autonomy problem of students, and promote their self-adjustment. Finally, evaluation strategy is able to improve

the student's ability to sum up, thus can promote the improvement of student's reading ability.

IV. THE TEACHING METHODS AND STRATEGIES OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE READING

A. Reform the Teaching Mode

In the process of teaching, teachers should change the traditional cramming teaching mode, try to arouse the enthusiasm of students. It requires the teachers and students to change their ideas so the students can experience the emotion of the works from passive acceptance to active appreciation. Meanwhile, many teachers arrange the teaching contents at random; they always arrange the contents according to their preference, so it is difficult for students to know the social backgrounds and ideological trends of literature in all periods of time. Thus it is impossible to understand the literature history totally. Students should take part in choosing the teaching contents to form a whole knowledge structure, enrich reading patterns and experience different cultural backgrounds.

In order to improve the efficiency, many teachers are used to adopting the methods of self-teaching, the students have to listen to them without thinking. So the effect is not good because the students only get rational knowledge. In order to let the students get interests of reading, teachers should make the students contact the works directly. While discussing the literature with them, teachers should use the literary criticism theory to guide the students, let them summarize the characteristics of works, so their reading experience will rise to aesthetic level. After the students form a good habit of reading, they will gradually acquire a sense of accomplishment, then the teaching will be much easier in the future.

In the process of students' literature learning, teachers should use diverse teaching method, such as simulation of the operational performance and speech. In order to respect the student's individuality and personal form of expression, the teacher can use the character role-play methods to improve the students' reading interest, meanwhile can improve students' reading and language expression ability, at last the character and psychological change can be understood. In this way the students can realize the communication with the authors' ideas and resonance, and can experience the scene and feeling of life. At the same time, teachers should make full use of video data to stimulate the students' interest in learning. Especially for long novels, students can check some related materials to arouse the enthusiasm of thinking. After accumulating a certain amount of literature materials, teachers can organize students to communicate learning with each other. Therefore, students can learn from each other and make up their own disadvantages, in the end, they can implement the reading methods further.

B. Improve the Students' Self-Study Ability

Teachers should take advantage of their own teaching, change their traditional teaching mode and let students learn to refer to the literature materials. Many measures can be taken to make the students experience the fun of autonomous learning. At the same time, teachers should teach students skip,

skimming reading skills, so the students won't be puzzled by the difficulties in reading, their self-study ability enhance. If students can understand literature ideological trend, genre, classification, characteristics through their own analysis, they can understand literary works from perceptual knowledge to rational knowledge, such a learning mode is deeper in essence, and memory is more profound. At the same time, according to the author's school, language style and characteristics of some famous masterpiece, teachers can let the students to recite some articles so as to cultivate the students' language sense. Good language sense can produce better ability, including understanding ability and reading ability, if students can experience the charm of the works, they will be able to achieve a higher level and improve the aesthetic experience. In addition, in the process of reading, students should form the good habit of rewriting and commentary. It can not only let the students have a deeper understanding of the author's original motivation, but also improve the students' writing and thinking ability. In the long run, it will raise students' interest in English writing and understanding.

V. CONCLUSION

British and American literature reading is more complicated than normal reading. In the learning process, students will face many problems, such as rich cultural content, novel design, elegant language expression and deep intention. Students will be afraid of these problems and can't finish reading completely. This demands that we must be good at summarizing the reading methods and skills, let the students be familiar with the reading method and flexible using, help students to build confidence, finally obtain the excellent reading effect. At the same time, teachers should adopt various teaching methods in teaching, guide the reading comprehension. They should not only impart knowledge, but also pay more attention to cultivate the students' reading ability and effective training. Only by constant improvement in the teaching process, the ideal teaching effects in British and American literature can be achieved.

REFERENCES

- [1] Cheng Xiaotang. Task-based language teaching [M]. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2004.
- [2] Chu ZhiHui. The exploration of literature appreciation in higher vocational Chinese teaching [J]. Journal of Chinese Construction, 2015
- [3] Zhang Jing, Cui Ying. British and American literature education research in cognitive poetics [J]. Journal of Chinese Construction, 2015 (17).