

Improving Learners' Adaptability to Exotic Culture Through Literature Education

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Abstract—The Korean Language Education Center, also known as the Korean Language School in Korea, is a branch of the International Language Institute at Korea University which is one of the highest institutions of learning in the country, both in terms of teachers and hardware equipment. This paper mainly focuses on the historical features and the use of teaching materials of Korean language schools in Korea University. At the same time, this paper combines “interesting Korean language 2” to study the teaching mode of Korean College. The Korean college is not only the top in Korea, with national characteristics, a preferred institution for learning languages, but also has compiled the Korean language teaching material with Korea's major characteristic. While large and excellent teachers explore the formation of an effective, suitable for foreign learners of the teaching model through a long period of teaching practice.

Keywords—Korean learners; literature education; adaptability to culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Languages develop gradually under the cultural background of countries. In the process of learning languages, on the one hand, foreign language learners are in contact with languages; on the other hand, they also contact with the cultural background and knowledge of languages. Therefore, it is an effective method to explore cultural knowledge by learning languages and making use of literature flexibly and vividly during the process of foreign language education. For example, Chinese people learning Korean are bound to contact with lots of culture about language, which tends to lead to conflicts between two countries' cultures. However, it is in the process of reducing conflicts that learners gradually adapt to Korean culture.

With the continuous enhancement of cultural acquisition, we attach more significance to literature in Korean teaching, because the literature not only contains Korean history and social customs, but also indirectly reflects Koreans' emotions, ways of thinking and various ideas. Therefore, making use of literary works vividly can not only make learners enjoy learning literature, but also reduce the conflicts between different cultures. In the education of Korean literature, the contact of culture is mainly based on the traditional culture contained in classical literature, reflecting the integrity of

culture and diverse cultural phenomena about South Korea's values.

With South Korea's growing international competitiveness, the influence of Korean idol culture and the transformation of government's policies, the number of Korean majors in China who plan to go to South Korea for further education increases year by year. Due to the differences in languages, cultures and social customs between two countries, Korean learners have great pressure in language learning and completion of studies. Besides, the differences in living habits and way of thinking also lead to confusion. As a result, both will cause great psychological pressure and burden on Korean learners' studies and life. For teenagers, the integral confusion, cultural differences and language barriers will inevitably bring them pressure. Although most students may reduce the stress in the process of learning culture, such differences can't be avoided completely. Because the lectures in universities are not enough to solve the existing problems, it is necessary to provide learners with an opportunity to deeply learn about Korean culture and society and explore a series of teaching methods which can help reducing this culture pressure.

Based on analysis of the relationship between literature and culture, this article contribute to understanding Korean culture through literature, so as to explore the possibility of Korean learners adapting to exotic cultures in literature education.

II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Literature is inseparable from culture. As the result of human perceiving the world, literature is undoubtedly an important component of culture. Therefore, as a subsystem of the cultural system, literature's functions and characteristics are influenced and restricted by culture. In turn, literature works with other cultural factors to achieve the overall functions of cultural system. Cultural elements at the same level as literature, such as religion, morality, law, etc., influence each other; literature is different from other cultural factors in its uniqueness and functions, showing its unique value and significance. Literature is closely related to culture. Culture is the gathering of a nation's spirit; literature is an important tool for people to shape literary images through language to reflect social life, express ideas and

inherit culture. Besides, literature is also a vital representation of culture [2]. What's more, culture always includes literature under its wings, making it an integral part of itself. As for people, the creators of culture, they express culture through literature (Wang Yimei, 2006). Literary works are important carriers of culture. The cultural knowledge contained in them is the historical materials for later generations to learn about the national and social customs, as well as historical overview. Culture plays a dominant role, which determines literature and the content of literary works (Huang Weiqun, 2006). Nowadays, the development of society directly influences the development of culture. Meanwhile, literary works reflect culture and become an important force for culture reform.

III. THE POSSIBILITY OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN KOREAN LITERATURE EDUCATION

Literature is an art in which people use language to express themselves. Literature education has three purposes: to improve the accuracy of understanding and mastering literary works; to enrich life experience; to make people have integrity. This means that we can not only acquire knowledge, but also cultivate the ability of literary appreciation and the integrity people should have.

In foreign language teaching, using literary works flexibly and vividly is a common phenomenon. Korean language teaching also has such characteristics, because literary works can reflect the essence and cultural characteristics of Korean. The foreign language teaching and literature education can be carried out simultaneously, because literary works, as historical materials with great value and authority, contain abundant cultural knowledge and promote the growth of personality. Besides, the purpose of foreign literature education is to improve language learning ability and learn cultural knowledge. We can also cultivate learners' understanding ability through literature education, and stimulate their learning motivation in the process of contacting cultural background (J. Colie & S. Slater, 1987). However, different from the standardized and scripted textbooks, literary works can be shared by learners to achieve a sense of empathy.

South Korea has the same cultural traditions as other East Asian countries, which are attaching great importance to literature and believing knowledge, thought and philosophy are spiritual supports. Therefore, literature is closely related to Korea's tortuous history. Koreans have kept their unique life habits and way of thinking intact, especially the idiomatic expressions, which symbolize traditional culture of Korea. So, literary works containing traditional culture have become important materials for learners to learn Korean language and culture. By understanding characters in literary works, Korean learners can indirectly experience Korean culture, so that they can have deeper communication with Koreans and know their culture better.

In Korean education, understanding Korean culture through literature is mostly to study the necessary and effectiveness of cultural adaptation in literature education and various education methods in teaching practice [1].

Recently, more and more studies have been carried out on adaptation to Korean culture through literature education in the Korean language education for foreign women from multicultural families. However, these studies only focus on Korean language or Korean characteristics and emphasize the uniqueness of Korea to achieve the purpose of making Korean learners understand Korean culture, mainly focusing on classical literary works and legends which contain the differences between the native culture of learners and Korean culture. This is helpful for Korean learners to adapt to Korean culture, but it has no positive effect on Chinese who is learning Korean in resolving conflicts and frictions between their own culture and Korean culture (Shen Yizhi, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to use the method of studying literary works to reduce the pressure of learners' cultural adaptation, so that they can understand and accept Korean culture well.

Chinese learning Korean will inevitably compare the two countries' cultures to deepen their understanding of Korean values, beliefs and social structures. In this process, the social reality reflected by literary works has become effective historical materials for learners to learn about Korean culture.

IV. EXPLORATION OF THE METHOD FOR CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN KOREAN LITERATURE EDUCATION

A. The Premise of Literature Education Courses

This paper takes Korean majors in Chinese universities as research objects. Carrying out education course on Korean literature should meet the following requirements. First, the teaching purpose should match the learners' Korean learning level; second, the difficulty of language application in literary works, such as vocabulary, grammar, content, etc. should have certain levels; third, the difficulty coefficient of literary works should match the Korean teaching process.

Nowadays, universities in China, for instance, Shandong University, offer Korean majors a professional course called Selected Reading of Korean Literature. However, this course is offered according to the grade, not the level of the learners. For example, if literature course is offered in sophomore year, all students in the class will be sophomores. In other words, the course is not planned according to the Korean language learning level. However, the sophomores do not know well about their Korean language learning level because their different learning conditions. So, the literature course should be open to students who have passed the intermediate Korean language proficiency test [3]. Because there are several levels from intermediate to advanced, it is different to teach literature courses according to each specific level, and the teaching content can only be determined by the overall learning level of students attending lectures. Besides, the selection of literary works should meet the following requirements. First, choose works with high literary value; Second, consider students' proficiency in Korean; Third, select works that meet the standard of mandarin in combination with language education; Fourth, literary works are supposed to conform to learners' interests; Fifth, the emphasis is on how to adapt to culture through literary

education. In conclusion, the purpose of literary works selection is to make it easier for learners to understand Korean culture by learning literary knowledge they are interested in, and to learn about the universality of culture on the basis of gradually understanding the similarities and differences between indigenous culture and Korean culture [4].

B. Practical Exploration of the Literature Education Courses

1) *Based on the professional course called Selected Reading of Korean Literature for Chinese majoring in Korean, this paper mainly studies the influence of Korean literature education on learners' adaptation to Korean culture:* There are 33 subjects in the study, including 4 sophomores, 12 juniors and 17 seniors. All of them have passed the intermediate Korean language proficiency test, but their specific abilities are different. Literary works can be selected from classical literature, such as myths, legends, fairy tales, etc., or modern literature, such as poetry, fiction, prose and so on. Classical literature can be explained in concise and straightforward modern language, while modern poetry and prose can be interpreted according to the language in the original text. Classical literature can help students understand the historical background and national customs of South Korea, while reading modern poetry and novels can show Korean traditional sentiment, values and the tortuous history to learners.

2) *This course is given once a week and is divided into three sessions, each of which lasts 50 minutes:* In order to enable students to better participate in the class, teacher can list what they need to learn in class one week in advance, including vocabulary, historical background and legends, which gives students enough time to preview. Besides, each class can be divided into three stages, that is, before class, during class and after class, which are respectively theoretical study, learners' impressions and preparation for the next class.

Before the class, we need to stimulate learners' interests. Using pictures, animations, etc. can make learners to think about the content of literary works and express their views. Then, group discussion can be conducted by comparing the culture embodied in literary works with the indigenous culture.

During the class, on the basis of previous discussions, students actively publish their understanding of the content of literary works, including words, idioms and speculations about the author's experience. After fully mastering the background knowledge of the work, the group will discuss with each other to find out the deep meaning contained in the work and the Korean culture reflected and to further confirm whether the understanding of the structure and overall content is accurate.

After the class, write down own thoughts on the work by taking notes, and look for the similarities and differences between the cultures reflected in the domestic and Korean

literary works. By learning Korean literary works, students can not only improve their Korean language ability and comprehensive understanding of Korean history, society and culture, but also further learn about the sentiment of Koreans.

3) *The following is the author's notes on Korean literature, which discuss how to improve Korean learners' adaptability to exotic cultures through literary works:* The first example is the notes on The Dan-gun Myth. The Dan-gun Myth is the most representative literary work of Korean classical culture, which introduces the history of Korea to learners. This is a good way for students to compare the universality of mythology in the work with that of China and Japan. Besides, the following course content is embodied in the form of three stages of literature education. First, animal images can be used to understand Korean cultural symbols, namely totem worship. Second, it is to master mythological stories and historical knowledge. Third, it is to understand Korea's founding notion and origin of nationality. Fourth, it is to indicate the similarities and differences between Korean mythology and domestic mythology. Fifth, introduce the Chinese myths and legends. In conclusion, by learning The Dan-gun Myth, we can learn about the ancient history, the founding notion and the spiritual world of the Korean nation. Meanwhile, we can also understand the Korean cultural symbols. While by telling the myths of our country, we can understand the differences between different cultures and further clarify our national character.

The second example is about The Rhododendron, which is one of the representative works of modern poetry. In class, students can try to speculate about the poet's realistic situation and Korean's sentiment of separation by reading The Rhododendron; then, have group discussion about expressing the different feelings of separation between Korea and their own country according to the following content. First, express views of the sudden departure described in the poem; second, compare the past love view with the present love view and discuss the changes; third, after reading the poem, write a play based on the author's actual situation; fourth, find out the similarities and differences in the parting scene between two countries' love views; fifth, suppose you are the protagonist, then write a letter to your lover who is leaving. In conclusion, the theme of The Rhododendron is eternal love. The above activities provide learners with the opportunity to understand the different views of Korean men and women on grief in love and to feel grief of different meanings in the progress of reading poetry.

V. CONCLUSION

In Korean education, learning Korean literary works is not only to understand Korean literature and improve Korean learning abilities, but also to deepen the understanding of Korean culture through literature, as well as to learn about South Korea at a deep level by comparing indigenous culture with Korean culture. For Korean learners planning to go to South Korea for further education, understanding the differences between the two countries and learning about the

cultural knowledge contained in literature will greatly contribute to improving the adaptability to Korean culture.

The professional course called Selected Reading of Korean Literature is not only conducive to learning Korean language and literature, but also can promote students' understanding of Korean culture. Of course, teachers' expertise and application of teaching equipment are limited to a certain extent, which may make the course less attractive. However, if we can make full use of multimedia tools, the course will be more colorful and vivid. For instance, play films, TV series and cartoons adapted from literary works. Therefore, it's necessary to explore more efficient teaching methods to improve Korean majors' understanding of Korean culture in the following education construction.

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