

Application of Interactive Teaching Theory in Japanese Classical Literature Course

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[**Abstract**] Under the guidance of the interactive teaching theory, the author puts the interaction between several factors, such as teachers, students, teaching contents and teaching resources in the teaching practice of Japanese classical literature. It greatly changes the dull and boring teaching status of Japanese classical literature, which improves the students' learning autonomy, so that the students gradually achieve the ability to roughly understand and appreciate the ancient prose, and deepen the understanding of Japanese culture.

[**Key words**] guidance of the interactive teaching theory; Japanese classical literature; application

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[**DOI**] <https://doi.org/10.62662/kxwxy0106005>

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Japanese Classical Literature course is a required course for undergraduates of Japanese major, which is targeted at upper grades (third and fourth years) with a certain level of language proficiency.

Tracing the spiritual culture, national thought and aesthetic taste of the Japanese, all of them are inseparable from Japanese classical literature. Aesthetic ideas that have a great influence on Japanese culture, and the psychology and emotion of the Japanese, such as “mono no aware” and “mysterious profundity”, all originate from Japanese classical literature. It is fair to say that the study of Japanese classical literature is an important channel to improve the ability in literature appreciation and to understand the modern Japanese society and thinking mode of the Japanese. Moreover, ancient Japan was greatly influenced by China, and shadows of Chinese classical literature can be seen everywhere in Japanese classical literature. Through the study, students can further understand the inheritance of Chinese and Japanese culture, deepen their understanding and knowledge for Chinese traditional literature, and enhance their cultural confidence.

However, the traditional indoctrination teaching mode of classical literature is not suitable for the learning habits and psychology of contemporary college students anymore. It even makes students afraid of learning and bored with learning, thus the teaching effect cannot be achieved. In order to solve this problem, this paper will analyze the teaching status, teaching theory and practical application of teaching theory.

1 Teaching status of Japanese classical literature course

The classical literature course of Japanese majors in Chinese universities is usually held for one semester with 32 hours. It is not easy to teach the huge and complicated Japanese classical literature in the limited time. As a result, teachers can only give a slapdash and generalized lecture on the contents. The students can only swallow it in one gulp without understanding it. In addition, although most schools offer Japanese classical grammar courses before Japanese classical literature courses, it is still difficult for non-native speakers to understand Japanese classical literature. From “not being able to understand” to “not willing to read” to “not being able to understand

even more”, the study of classical literature is trapped in a vicious circle, and the effect of the teaching can be imagined.

In terms of teaching methods, traditional Japanese classical literature courses often adopt a one-way teacher-centered indoctrination teaching method, in which the teacher introduces the background of the era, literary characteristics, representative works, and representative authors in a chronological manner, and the students can't fully devote themselves to the class and just passively accept the lessons. They just try to memorize all to cope with the final exam, and it is difficult to remember what they have learned after the exam. The teaching process is boring, which cannot stimulate students' interest in learning, and cannot improve students' ability in appreciation and their aesthetic level.

So, what kind of teaching mode should be adopted to let students integrate themselves into the classroom of Japanese classical literature, give full play to their subjective initiative, and turn passive acceptance into active learning?

2 Effectiveness of interactive teaching theory

Interactive teaching theory is produced under the influence of social interaction theory, constructivist learning theory and communicative teaching method theory. It was firstly put forward by American educational psychologist Palanza in 1982, which is a kind of creative and practical teaching theory and strategy. It “advocates that teachers are no longer just providers of specialized knowledge, and students are no longer just passive recipients. Knowledge can be acquired through a variety of ways” (Wang Xiaoru, 2011), which includes multiple interactions between teachers and students, among students, and between students and teaching resources. These interactions can help students build a more systematic and flexible cognitive structure. “Teachers play the roles of organizers and promoters in teaching, designing tasks and organizing activities for students, and helping them solve problems encountered in interactive activities. Students continuously improve their abilities through autonomous learning, cooperative learning and exploratory learning in the interactive process” (Li Guangfeng, 2007). “Especially in the information age, multimedia technology has been developed rapidly. As a result, interactive teaching mode has a greater advantage. Knowledge transfer and learning is not only limited to the classroom, but through autonomy, positional exchange, information exchange and other aspects to achieve the effective expansion of knowledge learning” (Tang Lifeng, 2019). It can be seen that interactive teaching can better exploit students' subjective initiative in learning, stimulate their interest in learning, and improve the teaching effect. Japanese classical literature course is full of interactivity in essence, such as literature and grammar, literature and culture, Chinese literature and Japanese literature, etc., which determines that the theory of interactive teaching is suitable for the reform of classical literature course.

However, “strictly speaking, interactive teaching is not a specific teaching method because it has no fixed teaching format and process. Instead, it is actually a guiding idea of teaching method” (Zhou Shu, 2002). Therefore, how to build an effective interactive teaching mode in the teaching of Japanese Classical Literature? This is a problem that we need to think theoretically and solve in practice.

3 Application of interactive teaching theory in the classical literature course

3.1 Effective interaction inside and outside the classroom

It is almost impossible for students to master the vastness of Japanese classical literature within the limited class time. In view of this, the author decides to introduce the task teaching method in accordance with the principle of interactive teaching, to give full play to the students' autonomous learning ability, make full use of the

classroom time, and improve the efficiency of classroom teaching.

At the beginning of the semester, 1 ~ 2 representative works of classical literature in different stages of development are selected and assigned to students as tasks. Taking advantage of the rapid development of Internet and the richness of students' means of acquiring knowledge, students can complete the tasks by searching for superficial knowledge points such as writer biographies and works introduction before the class, which were taught by teachers in traditional classical literature classroom. At the same time, teachers should provide some text, video and audio materials to help students complete the collection and reading of literature. Many Japanese anime, which are popular among students, are based on Japanese classical literature. For example, the original theme of "Genji Monogatari Sennenki" comes from "Genji Monogatari", while the stories in "Onmyoji", which is widely known in China, mainly come from Japanese classical works such as "Konjaku monogatari-sh" and "The Great Mirror". The information can also be provided to students for after-class learning, so as to cultivate their interest in classical literature and increase their understanding of it.

In addition, since students' knowledge of classical grammar is limited, after-class readings do not have to be original classical literature, but can be excellent modern Japanese translations or even Chinese translations. Teachers can select and recommend these works to students. The purpose is to reduce the difficulty of learning classical literature and let students feel the joy of classical literature.

During the class, teachers will first summarize the background of era and literature overview. Then students will present their thoughts on representative works. After that, teachers and students will discuss and evaluate them together. Finally, an extract from the original work can be interpreted and appreciated. According to the classroom appreciation, teachers can leave targeted reflection questions, and students can find unique answers by consulting the information after class and send them to teachers online. It cultivates students' literary appreciation ability and independent thinking ability, at the same time, exercise senior students' independent access to the literature, laying a foundation for thesis writing in the future.

3.2 Teacher-student and student-student interaction

Teacher-oriented teaching mode should be abandoned. Instead, students' main position in teaching should be fully exploited to guide them to construct knowledge actively.

Adopting the method of combining cooperative learning and task-based teaching, students are divided into several study groups to search for information, collect literature, formulate reports on representative works and present them in the class. The group is divided into report maker, classroom speaker, and question-answerer to ensure that each group member can participate in it. At the same time, according to the past teaching practice, students just mechanically "carry" the original information to the classroom. In order to avoid it, teachers will consciously put forward a few mandatory questions that require in-depth thinking when assigning the task, such as: the subjective reasons (writers) and the objective reasons (the background of the times) of the work; the connection with Chinese literature; and how do you evaluate the work? Students will be guided to analyze, think and solve problems through the literature. After the presentation of the group, other students are encouraged to ask questions about the content and viewpoints of the presentation, which will be answered by question-answerer in the presentation group. Discussion among students is also advocated, and teachers can give extra points in students' regular grades for those who are able to put forward their own viewpoints and make reasonable explanations. After that, teachers and students jointly grade the presentation, so that all students can participate in the evaluation and become active participants and constructors of the course, rather than passive recipients in the traditional

classroom. Finally, teachers will comment and summarize the academic aspects of the presentation, which is very important. Teachers should have a high degree of literary expertise, give students accurate and on-point guidance, and play a model role for their future presentation or research activities.

This kind of teacher-student and student-student interactive teaching method taking students as the main body and teachers as the leader not only stimulates students' enthusiasm for participation, but also deepens their understanding of Japanese classical literature. At the same time, it also cultivates their independent thinking ability and cooperative spirit. Indeed, considering the actual level of the students and the limitation of the preparation time, they are not strictly required to make a detailed and profound interpretation of the work. They are only expected to master the method of literature appreciation, understand the connotation of the work as accurately as possible, and take the initiative to think and put forward their unique opinions.

3.3 Integration of Chinese and Japanese literature

Students are guided to further understand Japanese classical literature from the perspective of the interaction between Chinese and Japanese literature, and to deepen their understanding of the importance and necessity of exchanges between China and Japan.

As is known to all, there is a deep connection between Chinese and Japanese literature, which is even more obvious in classical literature. Japanese classical literature is deeply influenced by Chinese literature, and many of their works have the shadow of Chinese works from the Six Dynasties, Tang Dynasty to Yuan Dynasty (Sun Jingran, 2016). The earliest poetry collection in Japan, *Manyōshū*, widely absorbed the essence of Chinese classical literature in terms of content, diction, thought and style. *Shih Chi* has a great influence on Japanese military literature represented by *Taiheiki*. In *The Pillow Book*, one of the three most famous essays in Japanese classical literature, words and phrases closely related to Chinese literature can be found everywhere. For example, it is said, "When the Nakamiya said, 'How is the snow on Mount Xianglu?', Sei Shonagon immediately lifted the curtain, and the Nakamiya was delighted by her wit and talent". This saying is closely related to the poem by Tang Dynasty poet Bai Juyi, "In bed listening to the temple bell out of affection, for snow on Mount Xianglu I lift the curtain". There are countless examples of such in Japanese classical literature, which shows that Chinese culture has been influencing Japanese culture for a long history. Indeed, Japan's unique geographical, natural and historical conditions have deeply influenced the psychology of the Japanese, which can be reflected in their customs and culture. Japanese classical literature, although deeply influenced by Chinese literature, has something unique, which is different from Chinese literature.

Based on this feature of the course content, students are consciously guided to pay attention to the interaction between Chinese and Japanese culture. For example, when assigning tasks, we set up an examination of the relationship between the work and Chinese literature, so that students not only learn Japanese classical literature, but also enhance their understanding of Chinese traditional literature. At the same time, a research-based teaching method is introduced. Organize 2 ~ 3 discussions on the comparison of Chinese and Japanese literature throughout the teaching process, such as: the study of the influence of Bai Juyi's poems on Japanese literature, and the comparative study of *Genji Monogatari* and *A Dream in Red Mansions*. In order to give students more time to prepare, the topics are provided to them at the beginning of the semester, and the discussions are held in the middle or late part of the course. Through the discussions, students can understand and evaluate Japanese culture more objectively, compare the similarities and differences between Chinese and Japanese literature from a cross-cultural perspective, enhance their understanding of the literature and culture of the two countries, and improve

their cross-cultural communication skills. During the discussion, everyone speaks freely and expresses his/her own opinion, which invariably brings the teacher and students closer together and makes the classroom atmosphere more harmonious. At the same time, teachers and students inspire each other to deepen the understanding of the problem, and the final conclusion is the crystallization of the joint thinking and discussion of all members, which is more vivid than the textbook's text narrative, and easier for students to accept and remember.

3.4 Integration of ideological and political education into the course

Integrating ideological and political education into the course helps students improve cultural confidence and establish a correct outlook on life and values.

In his speech, General Secretary Xi put together cultural confidence and road confidence, theoretical confidence, institutional confidence, and pointed out that cultural confidence is the foundation, which brings great inspiration to the teaching of Japanese classical literature. The influence of Chinese culture on Japan, especially in ancient times, is evident in the nearly 2,000 years of China-Japan exchanges. It can be said that the history of Japanese classical literature is, to a certain extent, the history of China-Japan cultural exchange and influence. By consciously introducing the interactive discussion of Chinese and Japanese literature in the teaching, students can realize the importance of Chinese classical literature and traditional culture, and understand and think about the profoundness of Chinese culture from another side. This is also in line with the requirements of the national standard for foreign language majors—both Chinese sentiment and international vision. This will help students to better base themselves on their own country and culture, and enhance their cultural confidence. Indeed, it is also necessary to pay attention to the uniqueness of Japanese classical literature and guide students to look at this issue critically.

At the same time, “excellent literary and artistic works often inspire people, indicating what they should and should not do in social life” (Liu Feng and Chen Wenjun, 2013). This is of great significance for conveying the correct outlook on life and values. The same goes for classical Japanese literature in ancient times. In the appreciation process of works in the classroom, teachers consciously select representative extracts, allowing students to acquire right and wrong concepts and moral emotions while reading.

3.5 Compound evaluation of process results

In the evaluation method, the limitations of traditional summative assessment are broken. A combination of process evaluation and summative evaluation is adopted to provide an accompanying and objective evaluation of the entire learning process of students. The evaluation indicators include: preview, data review, and completion of post-class reflection questions, which can be evaluated through in class questioning, practice, and homework submission. Classroom presentations and discussions can be evaluated through joint scoring by students and teachers. The specific score distribution is: after-school learning (20%) + classroom presentations and discussions (30%) + final exams (50%). It can be seen that, unlike traditional teaching evaluations where teachers are the main implementers, in an interactive evaluation system, both teachers and students become constituent elements of the evaluation subject, which helps to improve students' participation and learning enthusiasm. Meanwhile, this continuous evaluation throughout the learning process also ensures the objectivity of the final grade.

4 Reflection on the interactive teaching mode of Japanese classical literature

Interactive teaching, as a reform of traditional literature teaching, can inject fresh vitality into the previously rigid and dull classroom, and improve students' autonomy and enthusiasm for learning. At the same time, it inevitably brings some new problems that need to be continuously improved and summarized in teaching.

Firstly, in interactive teaching mode, students are the main body of the classroom. The active and enthusiastic participation of students directly affect the effectiveness of classroom teaching. Some students may experience emotional fluctuations during the learning process, from “curiosity” to “knowing difficulties and retreating”. How to further reform the teaching content and methods to maintain students’ interest in learning and enthusiasm for participation is a problem that needs to be seriously considered.

Secondly, there are many excellent works of different genres and styles in various periods of Japanese classical literature. It is not easy to select works that are rich in content, both readable and interesting, while also inspiring students. And this selection of teaching content and materials is a prerequisite for the smooth progress of classical literature courses. Therefore, this requires teachers to carefully study these excellent works one by one, while also having a certain degree of grasp of the ideological consciousness and interests of students at this stage. Based on this, targeted teaching content can be selected.

Thirdly, the introduction of interactive teaching mode into the classroom of Japanese classical literature makes the classroom teaching more vivid and attractive, and embodies the teaching concept of “taking students as the main body”. However, teachers should not neglect their status as “instructor” and “participant”, otherwise the teaching progress will be delayed, the teaching focus will be blurred, and the teaching effect will be affected. At the same time, teachers should also improve their own literary quality, and help students to complete the mastery and understanding of knowledge through precise questions, evaluations and summaries.

To sum up, although interactive teaching theory advocates that students’ initiative should be brought into play and classroom teaching should be constructed with students being the center, the teacher’s responsibility must not be neglected. It can be said that the more student-oriented, the higher the demand is for teachers. As the designer, organizer, instructor and participant of teaching activities, only when teachers continuously improve their professional ability, update their teaching concepts and improve their teaching methods can teaching activities achieve successful results.

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