

Study on the Integration of British and American Literature into College English Teaching under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

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Abstract

Under the background of the continuous deepening of the Belt and Road initiative, the internationalization of higher education faces new opportunities and challenges. College English teaching shoulders the responsibility of cultivating compound talents with international vision, cross-cultural communication ability and profound humanistic quality. Based on this, the integration of British and American literature into college English teaching and the systematic analysis of the significance and multidimensional impact of British and American literature in college English teaching are carried out. In-depth exploration of its special value in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, and put forward practical and feasible integration path from the aspects of curriculum content reconstruction, teaching method innovation, teacher strength improvement, etc., to help improve the quality and level of the training of compound international talents.

Keywords

The Belt and Road, English and American literature, College English Teaching.

1. Introduction

The Belt and Road initiative proposed in 2013 marked China's transformation from participating in globalization to shaping globalization, providing a new strategic framework for the internationalization of higher education. The *Promoting the Joint Construction of the Belt and Road Education Action* issued by the Ministry of Education in 2016 clearly pointed out that Education exchanges build bridges for the hearts of people along the route, talent training provides support for the Five Links, and emphasizes the need to strengthen exchanges and mutual learning among different civilizations and build a Belt and Road education community. In this context, college English teaching is no longer limited to language skills training, but takes on the mission of cultivating compound talents with international vision, cross-cultural communication ability and humanities literacy.^[1] English and American literature, as an important carrier of Western culture, has long occupied an important position in English teaching. In recent years, with the promotion of the Belt and Road initiative, the academic community has begun to re-examine the value of British and American literature in the cultivation of cross-cultural talents. Based on this, the article systematically analyzes the significance and multidimensional impact of British and American literature on college English teaching, explores its unique value in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, and proposes specific teaching implementation paths to help improve the quality of the training of compound international talents.

2. The Importance of Integrating British and American Literature into College English Teaching under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

2.1. Cultural exchange: the core link to break the cultural barrier

The core of the Belt and Road initiative is interconnectedness, and cultural exchanges are the foundation of people-to-people exchanges. As a concentrated carrier of Western culture, British and American literature can help students understand the values, thinking patterns and customs of Western society, for example, understanding British class culture through *Pride and Prejudice* and understanding the spirit of American Dream through *The Great Gatsby*. This kind of cultural decoding ability enables students to avoid cultural conflicts and achieve effective communication in the cross-cultural communication of the Belt and Road. [2]

2.2. Language upgrade: from tool use to meaning construction

Traditional college English teaching focuses on vocabulary and grammar, while the Belt and Road Initiative requires language ability that can convey cultural values. Metaphorical expression in English and American literature (such as hard man spirit in *The Old Man and the Sea*), narrative logic (such as equal consciousness in *Jane Eyre*), can help students master non-standardized language expression, for example, using “a drop in the ocean”[3] (沧海一粟) metaphorically means a small contribution, and “break a leg”(祝你好运) is used to express good wishes. This kind of pragmatic flexibility is an indispensable ability in the international exchanges of the Belt and Road.

2.3. Talent Empowerment: Cultivating Composite International Talents

The Belt and Road Initiative does not need people who can only speak English, but comprehensive talents who understand culture and can communicate. The integration of British and American literature into teaching enables students to understand the culture while understanding the text, for example, understanding Western humanism through *Hamlet* and understanding Latin American magical realism through *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.^[4] This kind of cross-cultural vision enables students to understand both technical language and cultural language in the Belt and Road project, and become true international communicators.

3. The Path of Introducing British and American Literature into the College English Classroom under the Background of the Belt and Road Initiative

3.1. Content reconstruction: from classic text to Belt and Road Cultural Dialogue

Jump out of the framework of single British and American literature and connect classic texts with the culture along the Belt and Road. By juxtaposing *The Merchant of Venice* (British commercial culture) with *One Thousand and One Nights* (Arabian commercial stories), analyze the differences in trade ethics between China and the West, such as the spirit of contract of Venetian merchants and the culture of integrity of Arab merchants, so that students can understand the cultural foundation of the Belt and Road and win-win cooperation. Select texts on the theme of cross-cultural communication in British and American literature, such as the interaction of passengers from different countries in *Murder on the Orient Express* (Agatha Christie), and guide students to think about how to reach a consensus in a multicultural environment, echoing the concept of mutual learning of civilizations in the Belt and Road Initiative.[2]

3.2. Model innovation: from teaching by teachers to project-based cultural practice

Use project-based learning (PBL) to activate students' active participation.[5] Let students study the cultural symbols of countries along the Belt and Road, such as the elephant in Southeast Asia and Camel in the Middle East in groups, and compare the corresponding images in British and American literature, such as whale in *Moby Dick* and islands in *Robinson Crusoe*, and make a cultural symbol comparison manual. Simulate the Belt and Road international business scene where students act as British and American businessmen and merchants from countries along the Belt and Road, using negotiation language in literature, such as polite refusal in *Pride and Prejudice* and indirect expression in *The Great Gatsby* to improve cultural adaptability.

3.3. Course linkage: from single course to interdisciplinary integration

Break through the barriers of disciplines, and link the British and American literature with the courses related to the Belt and Road. In the newspaper editing course, compare the financial articles of the Wall Street Journal with the theory of free trade in *The Wealth of Nations* (Adam Smith) to help students understand the theoretical origin of the Belt and Road and trade liberalization. In cross-cultural courses, analyze non-verbal communication in British and American literature (such as eye contact in *Jane Eyre*), Compare the body language habits of countries along the Belt and Road (such as the folded hands in Southeast Asia and the hug in the Middle East) and cultivate cultural sensitivity.

3.4. Teacher upgrade: from language teacher to cultural guide

Enhance teachers' cross-cultural teaching ability. Organize teachers to participate in the Belt and Road Cultural Seminar to learn about the history, religion, and customs of the countries along the Belt and Road, and integrate these knowledge into the teaching of British and American literature. For example, when explaining the influence of the *Bible* in British and American literature, compare the status of the *Quran* in Middle Eastern culture.[6] Establish a British and American Literature + One Belt One Road teaching resource library, including literary works, cultural documentaries, and business cases of countries along the route, so that teachers can quickly obtain cross-cultural teaching materials.

4. The Influence of British and American Literature on Promoting College English Teaching under the Background of the Belt and Road

4.1. Cultural soft power empowerment: from language tool to cultural bridge

Under the Belt and Road initiative, cultural soft power is the core support for external communication. As a living fossil of Western culture, British and American literature can help students understand the values and thinking patterns of Western society, such as: By analyzing the use of slang in *The Great Gatsby* (such as "The cat's pajamas"[7] means a very excellent person or thing), students can not only master native expressions, but also understand the characteristics of American culture. This kind of cultural decoding ability enables students to avoid cultural conflicts in cross-cultural communication and become cultural envoys of the Belt and Road.

4.2. Humanistic quality improvement: from knowledge learning to cross-cultural thinking

English and American literature can expand students' global vision: through the humanism of *Hamlet* to understand the importance of Western individual value, through the magical realism of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to understand Latin American culture. This kind of cross-

cultural thinking enables students to understand both technical language and cultural language in the Belt and Road project, and become comprehensive international talents.

4.3. Cultural self-confidence upgrade: from knowledge transmission to value leadership

Under the background of the Belt and Road initiative and the Chinese culture going out strategy, college English teaching undertakes the mission of cultivating students' cultural self-confidence and the ability to tell Chinese stories well. English and American literature teaching can achieve the goal of ideological and political education through cultural comparison and value guidance. For example, after analyzing the female image in *Jane Eyre*, guide students to introduce the classic characters in Chinese women's literature in English. This not only improves students' language ability, but also cultivates cultural confidence and cross-cultural communication ability.

5. Conclusion

Under the background of the in-depth promotion of the Belt and Road initiative, college English teaching faces the new mission of cultivating compound international talents. English and American literature, as an important carrier of Western culture, has unique value in enhancing students' language ability, cultivating cross-cultural communication ability, and deepening humanistic quality. Through the reconstruction of course content, the innovation of teaching methods and the improvement of teaching staff, British and American literature can be effectively integrated into college English teaching, and high-quality talents with international vision, cultural confidence and cross-cultural communication ability can be cultivated for the construction of the Belt and Road.

The practical path proposed in this study provides a reference for the reform of college English teaching, but it still needs to be adjusted and innovated according to the characteristics of different colleges and the needs of students in the specific implementation process. Future research can further explore new models of literary teaching in the context of digitization, as well as comparative teaching of literature from countries along the Belt and Road and British and American literature, to provide more theoretical and practical support for the construction of a more diversified and inclusive college English teaching system.

In short, integrating British and American literature into college English teaching is an important measure to meet the needs of talent training under the background of the Belt and Road Initiative, which helps to improve students' comprehensive quality, promote exchanges and mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, and contribute to the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

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