

A Comparative Study of Chinese Literature Education and British Literature Education from the Perspective of Culture

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Abstract. Under the background of globalization, the cross-cultural comparison of Chinese and English literature education has attracted extensive attention in the field of comparative education, but there is still a gap in the existing research on the cultural roots behind the differences in the education modes between the two countries. Based on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, this paper systematically analyzes the deep shaping mechanism of cultural roots behind the differences in Chinese and English literary education from the perspective of cultural differences. The study clarifies the core cultural distinctions between Chinese and British collectivism and individualism, and the power distance index, and clarifies its decisive role in the value orientation, curriculum system, and acquisition mode of literature education in the two countries. At the same time, it reveals the cultural adaptation dilemma of minority students in English literature education. Based on this, this paper puts forward the optimization path of improving the diversified curriculum system, integrating the two kinds of learning modes, and constructing culture-sensitive teaching, so as to provide a reference for the reform of Chinese and English literature education and cross-cultural mutual learning.

1 Introduction

In today's globalized, cross-cultural society, literary education in various countries represents their respective cultural attributes and educational ideas. Chinese literary education has changed from the traditional "literature carries truth" to the contemporary cultural self-confidence construction. Literary education is an important path for the accumulation of cultural capital, which affects the flow of society [1]. British literary education once served colonial discourse, and then turned to reflection and multiculturalism. As a global cultural capital, English literature has both instrumental and cultural power. As the typical representatives of Eastern and Western cultures, China and Britain have formed different practical results in their literary education systems. The cultural roots behind their differences have become an important research direction in the field of comparative education.

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The existing research fields have formed rich research results around the curriculum reform and teaching classroom of literature education in China and Britain as a whole, but there is still a certain research space for the comparison of the detailed factors, and there is also a lack of research on the two dimensions of curriculum and students' acquisition. Therefore, this paper will take the cultural perspective as the core and Hofstede's cultural dimension theory as the theoretical framework to reveal the deep shaping mechanism of cultural differences for the curriculum and students' acquisition of literature education in the two countries. The purpose of this paper is to fill the gap in the perspective of cultural roots, provide cross-cultural reference for the reform of China's future literature education, and provide a sample of East-West cultural dialogue for international comparative education.

2 Cultural dimension theory

Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede put forward Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions. He believes that culture is a psychological process shared by people in an environment, which can distinguish a group of people from others [2]. The theory includes six dimensions, including collectivism, individualism, and power distance index, which helps to explain the systematic differences in literary education between China and Britain.

2.1 Collectivism and individualism

Chinese culture is influenced by Confucian culture and belongs to a typical collectivist culture. Collectivism emphasizes the integration of individuals and society. The interests of the collective take precedence over the interests of individuals. Individuals have a strong sense of belonging and responsibility to the collective. The success of the group is regarded as an important cornerstone of individual success. In contrast, British culture is full of individualism. Individualism attaches importance to individual independence, independent expression and the realization of individual value, encourages individual independent thinking and critical expression. Social relations tend to be based on the equal exchange of interests.

2.2 High power distance and low power distance

The power distance index measures people's acceptance of power inequality in a society. China belongs to the culture of high power distance. This culture originates from the ritual and music system of Confucian culture. Today, people's sense of respect and obedience to elders and authorities is integrated into all aspects of society. The society generally believes that the hierarchy system is reasonable and necessary. Britain belongs to the culture of low power distance, its social hierarchy boundary is relatively vague, and its organizational management tends to be flat. The whole society puts more emphasis on the equality between subjects. The power level gap is smaller and the communication is more open and bidirectional.

2.3 The shaping mechanism of cultural dimension on the education mode

Hofstede's cultural dimension theory provides the main theoretical framework for this study. That is, how the cultural core of collectivism shapes the curriculum setting goals based on collective identity, so as to form the receptive learning mode. The cultural core of individualism is how to shape the goal of curriculum setting based on critical thinking, so as

to form the inquiry learning mode. This theoretical logic constitutes the framework for this study to analyze the differences between Chinese and English literature education.

3 Differences between Chinese and English literature education

Based on Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, the previous article clarified the cultural differences between China and Britain in the two core dimensions of collectivism and individualism, high power distance and low power distance, and clarified the underlying shaping mechanism of cultural differences for the educational model. Based on the above theoretical framework, this section will systematically disassemble the specific embodiment, core differences, and influence of the two dimensions in the practice of Chinese and English literature education, reveal the cultural roots behind the two countries' literature education systems, and provide empirical evidence for subsequent cross-cultural mutual learning.

3.1 Embodiment of collectivism and individualism in Chinese and English literature education

In terms of the core objectives of the curriculum, Chinese and English literature education present the essential differences between the cultural orientation of collectivism and individualism, which is also the most fundamental value difference between the two countries' literature education. Chinese literature education is rooted in the cultural tradition of Confucian collectivism. The curriculum has always been focused on the teaching of classic texts and the construction of collective identity, and has undertaken the task of inheriting national culture. Niwenjin pointed out that the core literacy of Chinese includes four dimensions, among which cultural inheritance and development is one of the most core functions, so that students can strengthen their cultural confidence and base themselves on the excellent traditional Chinese culture [3]. This curriculum strongly binds the construction of collective identity, which is the direct embodiment of collectivism and long-term oriented cultural characteristics in Hofstede's cultural dimension theory. In sharp contrast, English literature education takes individual training as the core and an independent setting as the main body, with strong autonomy and flexibility. The British education curriculum outline officially presented by the British government only sets the minimum learning objectives and core content program of English literature education in primary and secondary schools. The core guidance is to promote students' moral, mental, physical, and other requirements through literature education, and help students prepare for future life in advance [4]. The difference in curriculum objectives between the two countries directly determines the overall trend of curriculum content in the two countries.

In terms of the core mode of students' acquisition, Chinese and English literature education also reflects the cultural core differences between collectivism and individualism, forming a completely different learning closed loop. The core of Chinese primary and secondary school literature education is receptive acquisition, which focuses on students' understanding and mastery of the established knowledge of the text. The process of Chinese students' literature learning is mainly dominated by teachers and professors, and students' standardized answer test is a closed-loop acquisition mode. The core goal of students' acquisition is to memorize the fixed required knowledge points of the text and improve their examination ability. Through the efficient internalization of the collective cultural consensus, the educational goal of cultural inheritance is completed, which fully meets the requirements of the unified values under the collectivist culture. The English literature education takes inquiry learning as the core, showing a distinctive individualism orientation. Gustavsen pointed out that the core of English literature education is students' independent group discussion. During the discussion, the theoretical knowledge taught in the classroom will

interact based on the practical knowledge formed by students' own experience, so as to create new learning opportunities [5]. This acquisition mode encourages students' personalized text interpretation and critical public expression, with the cultivation of individual independent thinking ability as the core, and conforms to the core demands of individualism culture for individual value and independent expression.

3.2 The embodiment of high power distance and low power distance in Chinese and English literature education

In terms of the authority distribution of the curriculum, the differences between Chinese and English literature education directly correspond to the cultural characteristics of high power distance and low power distance, forming a completely different curriculum management system. China belongs to a typical high power distance culture. The core feature of literature education is to take the national unified curriculum standard as the framework, with strong standardization and unity. Wen Rumin pointed out that the compilation of Chinese textbooks is essentially a national act, which is led by the Ministry of Education and compiled by the professional forces of the whole country. After being approved at all levels, a national unified edition of textbooks is formed [6]. This state-led curriculum setting mode is the direct embodiment of the emphasis on authority and unified order in the field of Education under the culture of high power distance. While Britain belongs to a typical low power distance culture, literature education has formed a highly autonomous and flexible curriculum model. The state only sets a basic curriculum framework, devolving the specific rights of curriculum setting and textbook selection to schools and teachers. Schools can carry out independent teaching without fixed textbooks [4]. This setting mode of authority sinking is the direct implementation of flat management and the concept of equality in the field of Education under the culture of low power distance. The essence of the two is the root shaping result of the culture of high and low power distance on the education system.

In terms of the adaptability between the classroom power relationship and students' acquisition, Chinese and English literature education also reflects the cultural differences between high and low power distance, and forms a completely different practical effect and dilemma. The cultural characteristics of China's high power distance shape the dominant position of teachers' authority and form the passive classroom power relationship accepted by students. This classroom model conforms to the cultural habits of Chinese students' structured and authoritative guided learning, ensures the efficient transmission of unified cultural knowledge, and forms a complete fit with the state-led curriculum system. The cultural characteristics of low power distance in the UK shape the two-way communication relationship of equal dialogue in the classroom, which is compatible with the independently set curriculum system. However, this kind of classroom model also has a significant dilemma of cultural adaptation. There is a considerable proportion of minority students in compulsory education in Britain. However, the core acquisition mode of the English literature classroom is equal dialogue and personalized critical expression under the culture of low power distance. A large number of minority students come from the cultural background of high power distance and collectivism, and there are significant adaptation barriers to the open inquiry classroom without standard answers. At the same time, among the required literary texts in the GCSE stage (General Certificate of Secondary Education), only 0.1% of the works are created by women writers of color, which systematically obscures the historical experience and cultural expression of ethnic minorities [7]. This single curriculum system makes it difficult for some students from ethnic minorities to find the mapping of cultural identity in literary texts, which leads to their sense of cultural marginalization. Because they have been used to receptive learning for a long time and are afraid to express different opinions in public, when they need to carry out critical interpretation and debate around completely unfamiliar

white mainstream cultural texts, they not only face obstacles in cultural understanding, but also choose silence for fear that their views "do not conform to the mainstream", which ultimately weakens their intrinsic motivation to participate in classroom discussion and sense of learning acquisition.

4 Suggestions

4.1 Improve the course content system

Literature education in any country should focus on the national classic literature, which is an important basis for national cultural identity. At the same time, it must break the closure of a single culture and integrate excellent literary works from different cultures into the curriculum system. All dimensions of cultural sensitivity play a role in the impact of ethnic factors on teacher-student interaction. Diversified courses help to improve students' learning engagement [8]. This is not only to promote the construction of a multicultural society, but also to cultivate students' intercultural understanding and the inevitable requirement of globalization. Only when the literature curriculum can reflect the diversity of human civilization can it become a cultural bridge connecting different civilizations.

4.2 Integration of learning modes

Literature education should explore the integration path of the two modes of receptive learning and inquiry learning. Receptive learning and inquiry learning are not two opposite ways, but promote and complement each other. There is no universal education model for literature education, only teaching methods suitable for a specific cultural background. Learning from each other between different models is the inevitable trend of the development of global education [9]. The ideal education mode should be progressive: in the stage of text knowledge teaching, teachers' guided receptive learning mode is the main mode, and in the stage of text interpretation, students' led inquiry learning is the main mode, so as to realize the unity of knowledge inheritance and thinking training.

4.3 For all students

In today's globalization and frequent population flow, there are natural differences in students' cultural backgrounds and learning styles. Literature education should respect this difference and abandon the unitary treatment. Teachers should understand the learning characteristics of students under different cultural backgrounds, understand the needs of students with high power distance cultural backgrounds for structured learning, and understand the needs of students with low power distance cultural backgrounds for autonomous expression. Teachers should adopt the "culture-sensitive feedback model" and adjust the feedback method to ensure learning equality [10]. By designing different learning tasks and creating an inclusive learning atmosphere, it can truly realize the fundamental purpose of "educating people" in literary education.

5 Conclusion

From the perspective of cultural differences, based on the two core dimensions of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory: collectivism and individualism, high power distance and low power distance, this paper systematically analyzes the systematic differences between Chinese and British literature education in the two dimensions of curriculum and students'

acquisition, and reveals the underlying shaping mechanism of culture on the two countries' literature education system.

The core conclusion of this paper is that the distinction between the Chinese and British literature education systems is the concrete presentation of the deep cultural dimension differences, rather than the simple surface differences in curriculum and teaching methods. The core cultural distinction between collectivism and individualism, high power distance and low power distance determines the core orientation, curriculum and students' acquisition mode of literary education in the two countries from the root of value. This is the fundamental reason for the formation of the differences between the two countries' education systems. There is no good or bad distinction between Chinese and British literature education, and the learning mode is not a binary opposition mode. It should break the closure of single cultural curriculum and promote the localization and integration of learning mode.

Future research can further deepen and expand with this perspective, and further include variables such as cultural transformation and regional differences between the two countries, so as to obtain in-depth cross-cultural comparative insight.

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