

# On Integrating Values Education and Enhancing International Communication Capacity in the Course “Appreciation of Famous Translations”

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From the perspective of integrating values education and enhancing international communication capacity, this paper takes the course “Appreciation of Famous Translations” at Leshan Normal University as an example to explore values education from five aspects: the spirit of the times, historical legacy, cultural literacy, international perspective, and translation ethics. It further examines pathways for integrating these values into the course teaching through three approaches: alignment within teaching activities, extension before and after class, and combined teaching methods. The goal is to enhance the quality of translation appreciation course and cultivate well-rounded translation-major graduates.

*Keywords:* translation appreciation course, teaching exploration, values education

## Introduction

Compared to other course types of translation majors, appreciation course has a natural advantage in implementing values education. It aims to heighten students’ aesthetic appreciation of language, facilitating a deeper understanding of translation works, the translation process, and related phenomena. This effectively fulfills the fundamental goal of translation criticism and appreciation: to enable translation to play its proper role in national communication, cultural heritage, and social development. Therefore, the educational function of appreciation course is closely tied to achieving the goal of fostering virtue and talent, necessitating ongoing refinement and enhancement in future curriculum development (Che, 2020).

However, the curriculum for undergraduate translation programs is predominantly focused on practical translation courses, which emphasize language skills—especially foreign language proficiency—often at the expense of students’ cultural literacy and the preservation of their own historical and cultural heritage. This approach is detrimental to the long-term development of translation majors. To cultivate translation graduates with international communication capacity and competitive edge, undergraduate education in translation should not only deepen students’ understanding of the target language and culture but also enhance their grasp of their native language and traditional culture. Only in this way can students gain insights into the world and more

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effectively introduce and promote Chinese culture internationally, becoming high-quality, globally-minded translators. The reform is at hand.

### **A Review of Teaching Research in Appreciation Course**

In recent years, although the integration of values education into curricula has become a hot topic, research specifically focused on appreciation courses in translation programs remains relatively scarce. Existing studies primarily address three areas: first, the complementary relationship between appreciation courses and practical interpretation and translation courses, as discussed by Hua Youjie (2011) in “Appreciation Courses Under Functional Translation Ecological Environments: A Case Study of Translation Education at Hezhou University”; second, the importance of appreciation courses, highlighted by Huang Yuezhen (2004) in “The Need for Emphasis on Appreciating Quality Translations in Translation Teaching” and Liu Zhengbing’s “The Role of Translation Appreciation in Translation Education” (2010); and third, studies focusing on teaching strategies for appreciation courses, such as Zhao Xiaoxing’s “How to Cultivate Critical Thinking in Undergraduate Translation Students: A Case Study of Two Translation Appreciation Classes” (2015). Overall, there is a lack of comprehensive and systematic research on integrating values education into appreciation courses within translation programs in China. Most existing studies tend to approach the topic from the perspectives of cultural literacy and aesthetic awareness, presenting a fragmented rather than a cohesive view that aligns with contemporary educational advancements. Furthermore, appreciation course is relevant to a range of courses including “English-Chinese Translation Analysis”, “Chinese-English Translation”, “Translation Theories”, “Advanced English”, and “English Reading and Writing”. But existed research often focuses on a single course, which limits its systematic nature. This narrow research scope hinders a holistic understanding of appreciation course. Additionally, there is significantly less research on appreciation courses compared to practical translation courses, which is detrimental to the training of translation professionals. Hence, there is an urgent need to strengthen research on appreciation courses and promote a seamless integration of values education with translation appreciation.

### **Exploring Values Education in Appreciation Course**

Taking the core translation course “Appreciation of Famous Translations” at Leshan Normal University as an example, this paper aims to explore key values from five perspectives: the spirit of the times, historical legacy, cultural literacy, international perspective, and translation ethics. The goal is to promote an organic integration of the course’s professional and ideological dimensions.

#### **Education in the Spirit of the Times**

The core socialist values and the idea of a community with a shared future symbolize the spirit of contemporary China, reflecting the essence of the new era of socialism with Chinese characteristics. These concepts also form the core elements of values education in appreciation course. Through the appreciation of outstanding translations, teachers can guide students to learn from exemplary translators like Yang Xianyi, Lin Yutang, and Xu Yuanchong, et al., instilling in them noble character and a pursuit of truth. This can elevate students’ moral standards and strengthen their sense of social responsibility. Additionally, by comparing bilingual texts, particularly focusing on cultural-loaded words, students can better understand the universal patterns and individual differences in cultural development. This helps establish their awareness of a community with a shared

future, encouraging respect for cultural diversity and recognizing the importance of cross-cultural exchange for human progress.

### **Education in Historical Legacy**

Familiarity with the transmission of one’s own exceptional historical culture is not only a fundamental quality for qualified translators, but also an important historical mission assigned to outstanding translators in the new era. The 2019 Undergraduate Teaching Guidelines for Translation Programs clearly states the requirements for translation professionals, emphasizing the importance of understanding Chinese cultural knowledge, recognizing differences between Chinese and western languages and cultures, and being aware of China’s national conditions and international situation.

In terms of passing on China’s outstanding traditional culture, the appreciation course offers a wealth of knowledge that can be explored as values elements, such as the appreciation and translation of Tang poetry and Song lyrics. These poems are rich in cultural genes and vitality, significantly enhancing students’ national pride and cultural confidence. For example, the poem “Qingming” in the text book portrays the scenery and emotions of the Qingming Festival (Li, 2010), embodying important aspects of historical legacy education. It not only reflects the Chinese people’s respect for history and reverence for their ancestors, but also showcases the daily life and customs of the Tang Dynasty as well as the value placed on familial bonds and respect for life.

### **Education in Cultural Literacy**

Cultural literacy and critical thinking are the key strengths of appreciation course.

Firstly, the appreciation of various genres of classic translations helps students understand differing cultural values and moral perspectives, thereby enhancing their cross-cultural communication and aesthetic abilities. For instance, the appreciation of the English translations of *Dream of the Red Mansion* allows students to explore traditional Chinese views on family, marriage, and friendship, thus deepening their understanding of Chinese culture.

Secondly, this course aims to broaden students’ academic horizons and develop their critical thinking. Through the comparative analysis of classic Chinese and western literature, students gain a deeper appreciation for the beauty of language artistry. It particularly emphasizes the interplay between translation activities and ideology, politics, culture, and literature, allowing teachers to guide students in developing critical thinking and sensitivity to the interaction between translation and sociocultural contexts.

### **Education in International Perspective**

In the context of globalization, China is rapidly moving to the forefront of the world stage. University students should adopt a proactive attitude toward engaging in international affairs, addressing global challenges, and contributing to global development. This necessitates the cultivation of graduates with an international outlook and cross-cultural competence. Having a global perspective means understanding and respecting one’s own history and traditions while learning from the outstanding achievements of civilizations worldwide, allowing students to recognize China’s unique position through international comparisons and grasp global trends and currents. To respond to the national call for promoting Chinese culture globally, teachers can utilize different case studies in appreciation course, prompting students to reflect on the current strategies and methods for Chinese literature’s international outreach and explore ways to effectively convey Chinese stories and perspectives.

### **Education in Translation Ethics**

Translation ethics is also an essential component of values education within appreciation courses. Translation ethics refers to the moral principles and standards involved in the translation process. Translation is not merely a linguistic exercise but a means of cultural exchange and dissemination. In this process, translators must adhere to ethical guidelines to ensure the accuracy and fairness of their translations while respecting the original author’s intent and the cultural values of the target language.

Taking the classic drama *Thunderstorm* by Cao Yu as a case study, when this play was performed in the United States, its translation played a crucial role in its success. While analyzing the translation of the script, teachers should encourage students to carefully observe the ethical principles and moral standards reflected in the translator’s work.

### **Approaches for Improving Teaching Process**

In the course “Appreciation of Famous Translations”, teachers can subtly incorporate the above five aspects of values education into the teaching process. The most effective way to achieve this integration is by encouraging students to actively engage in learning, thinking, and practicing both inside and outside the classroom, thus empowering them to take the initiative in their education. With this philosophy, it is suggested to explore the paths from three perspectives: reinforcing teaching activities, extending learning before and after class, and combined teaching methods.

#### **Aligning Teaching Activities**

To effectively integrate knowledge transfer with values education, various teaching activities, such as introduction, discussion, case study, and summarization must work cohesively and support each other. According to Vygotsky’s (1978) constructivist approach and the principles of collaborative learning, students are central to the learning process, acquiring knowledge through interactions, discussions, and shared information with teachers and classmates. Knowledge is constructed in an engaging and participatory manner across these teaching activities. Teachers should always remember their role as facilitators, aiming to stimulate student thinking and encourage them to take charge of their learning.

For example, in a comparative analysis of poetry in the appreciation course, the teacher could start by briefly introducing the author’s significance in literary history. This sets the stage for a discussion on how to maintain cultural confidence and emotional resilience in varying social contexts and personal experiences, as well as exploring the relevance of the work for modern youth. Next, students could be grouped to analyze different English translations of the poems, sharing their findings and insights. This would lead to a class discussion on addressing cultural differences, emotional expression, and the representation of poetic meaning in translations. Finally, students would be guided to reflect on the importance of Tang and Song poetry, and their English translations, for the transmission of Chinese culture. They would also explore how to promote excellent traditional Chinese culture through translation in a globalized context, enhancing cultural exchange and mutual understanding, while examining the responsibilities and missions of youth in the new era. At the end of the class, summarization and feedback are also essential activities: Students and teachers engage in a deep dialogue, jointly summarizing key points from the comparative analysis of poetry translation and values education, highlighting the works’ contemporary relevance and the significance of cross-cultural communication. Teachers encourage students to actively explore and convey the unique charm of Chinese culture in their future studies and lives, thereby strengthening cultural confidence.

### **Emphasizing Pre-class and Post-class Extensions**

In today’s information-driven, networked, and digital society, traditional models of values education in the classroom face limitations regarding guiding students’ attention, engaging their interests, and monitoring their learning outcomes. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) break down the walls of universities by providing high-quality course resources largely for free. They not only offer a wealth of learning materials, such as teaching videos, courseware, and practice resources, but also encourage interaction between students and teachers, thereby transforming the conventional model of passive information absorption in classrooms.

Appreciation courses place great emphasis on developing students’ critical thinking capacity. The rich and specific learning materials and interactive learning experiences provided by MOOCs help students immerse themselves in the context, actively engage in thinking, and cultivate their analytical abilities. Before class, teachers can guide students to autonomously explore relevant resources on MOOCs, allowing them to come to class equipped with their own reflections. After class, teachers can encourage students to expand their learning by connecting classroom discussions to broader, real-world contexts, integrating value formation, knowledge transmission, and skill development into other aspects of education.

For instance, teachers can present multiple extension topics, providing background information and supplementary reading materials to support students. This approach encourages students to form discussion groups and independently attempt translation criticism or analysis of certain classic texts. For example, “Border Poems” hold a significant place in the history of ancient Chinese literature. After the poetry appreciation section, a teacher might introduce the topic of “The Ideological Significance of Translating Border Poems Into English” and provide corresponding bilingual reading materials, including famous works, such as Wang Zhihuan’s “On the Road to Liangzhou”, Li Bai’s “The Moon Over the Pass”, etc. Students can then appreciate and explore the education value significance of these translations in promoting Chinese culture, uplifting national spirit, enhancing cross-cultural communication, boosting national pride, fostering correct values, and advocating for peace. Additionally, they could undertake projects in conjunction with innovation training, thereby enhancing their practical skills in real-world contexts.

### **Integrating Teaching Methods**

Scholars Pither and Soden (2011) have noted the “90-90 principle”, which states that teachers often spend 90% of classroom time trying to push students towards predetermined answers, and may only stop when students achieve 90% correctness. While it is undeniable that teachers sometimes unconsciously adhere to this principle until they guide students to what they consider the correct answer, this can also hinder the development of critical thinking. By inadvertently limiting students’ ability to think from multiple perspectives, this phenomenon is common in teaching.

Teachers need to think alongside students, recognizing that many discussion topics do not have a single conclusion. Relying solely on lecturing is no longer sufficient to meet classroom needs. Given the unique nature of the appreciation course, teachers should emphasize cultural context, ideological awareness, theoretical guidance, and practical application while also highlighting students’ agency and the teacher’s leading role. A flexible application of various teaching methods is essential to engage students effectively. For instance, the “Focused Teaching” approach allows teachers to systematically introduce knowledge related to translation criticism and appreciation, enabling students to quickly grasp course content. The “Case Study” method encourages in-depth comparisons and analyses of selected representative translations under the teacher’s

guidance. The “Flipped Classroom” approach motivates students to gather information extensively before class, using high-quality online resources, such as MOOCs from Chinese universities to prepare preliminary research results and discussion topics. These can then be shared and debated in small group formats during class. Additionally, integrated teaching methods can be enhanced by utilizing emerging interactive online education platforms like Chaoxing Learning, combining online and offline instruction to increase engagement and flexibility in teaching.

### Conclusion

Since being recognized as a “Provincial Demonstration Program for Values Education” in Sichuan Province in 2022, the Translation Program at Leshan Normal University has undergone three significant reforms: first, the establishment of a provincial-level values education framework for the curriculum; second, a deep exploration of the values elements within the curriculum to reconstruct resource development for a new era; and third, the implementation of blended and research-based teaching, integrating and innovating the learning, translating, thinking, and acting process. The translation department has also provided volunteer translation services for international exhibitions and events, such as the Emei Travel Expo, Tea Expo, and the Emei International Martial Arts Festival, effectively telling the story of Jiazhuo and promoting the voice of China.

With the effective integration of values elements—including education in the spirit of the times, historical legacy, cultural literacy, international perspective, and translation ethics—into appreciation courses, and through the ongoing implementation of the overarching educational goal to examine how language reflects ideology, national sentiment, cultural literacy, the rule of law, and moral cultivation (Song, 2022), the quality of the course “Appreciation of Famous Translations” in Leshan Normal University is bound to reach new heights.

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