

On the Function of the Integration of British and American Literature and College English Teaching Empowered by AI

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ABSTRACT

British and American literature, as an important carrier of English language and culture, plays a crucial role in enhancing students' language proficiency, cultural literacy, and critical thinking. However, current College English teaching still focuses on language skills training, and the integration of literary elements is relatively insufficient. This article aims to explore the function of the integration of British and American Literature and College English Teaching empowered by AI. Combining the textbooks of *New Horizon College English (Third Edition)* by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and *New College English* by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, this article analyzes the functional significance of literary texts in language teaching and the teaching mode under AI empowerment. Research has found that the systematic integration of literary modules and language training can improve the efficiency of vocabulary acquisition and the accuracy of students' cross-cultural communication tests. It can promote the cultivation of students' English language skills, cross-cultural communication abilities, cross-cultural understanding abilities, and critical thinking abilities, and enhance the interactivity and personalized teaching of British and American literature and College English teaching. It is recommended to establish a "four-dimensional linkage" teaching mode to achieve the synchronous development of language skills, humanistic literacy, AI information literacy, and critical thinking.

KEYWORDS

AI empowerment; British and American literature; College English teaching; integration; function

1 Introduction

Concerning the integration of AI and foreign language teaching, Johnson (2016) points out that AI driven intelligent tutoring systems can optimize the language learning process through real-time feedback. Graesser et al. (2019) finds that AI chatbots can significantly improve learners' oral expression abilities. Li Zhengshuan (2018) emphasizes that integrating English and American literature into English teaching can enhance students' aesthetic ability and literary appreciation level.

Langer (2017) proposes that digital humanities technology provides a new perspective for literary text analysis, and AI can assist students in multidimensional interpretation of literary works. Wen Qiufang (2021) proposes the application of the "output oriented method" in literature teaching. The application of AI in foreign language education (Wang Shouren, 2022) emphasizes that AI technology can achieve precision and intelligence in foreign language teaching. Li Zhanzi (2021) explores the advantages of AI in language evaluation.

Shu Dingfang (2018, p.34) advocates improving students' comprehensive English literacy through literary works, and AI technology provides new technological support for this integration. Part of the research focuses on literary elements in textbooks. According to Wen Qiufang's (2020) analysis of mainstream College English textbooks in China, the proportion of literary selections is less than 10%, and they are mostly concentrated in classic short stories, lacking modern and contemporary works. Wang Qiang (2020) conducts a literature themed teaching experiment based on *New Horizon College English*.

Literature and language teaching promote and complement each other. The AI era has arrived and is developing rapidly, which can be used to assist in the innovation of literature and college English teaching models. AI technology can provide rich learning resources and interactive scenarios, supporting students to independently explore the language and culture in English and American literary works. Although research has affirmed the teaching value of literature, further exploration is needed on how to systematically integrate it into college English courses. There is still a lack of practical research results on the integration of literature and college English teaching based on AI technology. Existing research mostly focuses on the single functional application of traditional information technology, lacking systematic research on the integration of English and American literature with College English teaching through specific textbook cases. The deep exploration and innovative utilization of literary resources in textbooks are still insufficient.

In the two main college English textbooks, *New Horizon College English (Third Edition)* published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and *New College English* published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, the textbook editors have incorporated elements of classic British and American literature. This article aims to explore the function of the integration of British and American literature with university English teaching, closely combining *New*

Horizon College English (including *New Horizon College English – Integrated Course*, *New Horizon College English – Reading and Writing*, *New Horizon College English – Viewing, Listening & speaking 1-4*, hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon*) and *New College English* (including *New College English – Integrated Course* and *New College English – Reading and Writing 1-4*) textbooks, analyzing the specific presentation of literary elements in language teaching and the innovative teaching mode of integration under AI empowerment, demonstrating the synergistic effect of literary texts in improving language ability, critical thinking ability, and cultural awareness. Combined with specific textbook cases and supported by AI modern educational technology and teaching theory, the deep integration of literary resources and language teaching can be achieved.

2 Innovative Integration of British and American Literature with College English Teaching to Enhance Four-dimensional Abilities

The function of the innovative integration of English literature and College English teaching mainly exists in the following four dimensions: ① Language ability dimension: improving language accuracy and expressiveness through rhetorical structures and vocabulary variations in literary texts. ② Cultural consciousness dimension: Using literary works to reveal the values, historical traditions, and cultural symbols of British and American society. ③ Dimension of thinking quality: Cultivate critical thinking and innovation ability through text interpretation and thematic debates. ④ Innovative practice dimension: Combining AI digital tools with project-based learning to promote the creative transformation of literary resources.

2.1 Language ability dimension

In terms of vocabulary and grammar, British and American literary works contain a rich variety of vocabulary, sentence structures, and rhetorical devices. Literary texts can be used to help students upgrade their English language abilities, promote their vocabulary and grammar learning, and establish an intelligent evaluation and feedback system. In Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, the classic line 'To be, or not to be: that is the question' not only uses concise and rhythmic language, but also contains profound philosophy. By learning and analyzing such sentences, students can accumulate advanced vocabulary and expressions, and improve the accuracy and richness of language expression.

New Horizon (Book 3, Unit 5) selects excerpts from Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, in which concise sentence structures and action descriptions (such as "He was an old man who fished alone") can help students master the rhetorical effects of simple English sentences. In terms of language points, it further explains Hemingway's literary language style, telegraphic sentence structure, and conducts transitivity system analysis. And the cultural expansion can expand the intertextual presentation of the tough guy spirit in Chinese and American film and television works.

New College English (Book 2, Unit 4) selects Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken" and analyzes the use of subjunctive mood through the phrase "Two roads diverged in a wood".

The excerpt from O. Henry's "The Last Leaf" in *New Horizon College English - Reading and Writing 1* analyzes the symbolic techniques and metaphorical expressions of "the last leaf", enabling students to master advanced vocabulary such as "fragile" and "resilience", and learn the use of complex sentence structures.

Literary works can provide rich language materials and cultural backgrounds for English teaching, helping students to deepen their understanding of English language and culture. In terms of reading and writing, college English teachers should help college students to use reading to promote writing, combine reading and writing, deeply explore literary elements in textbooks, and use literary text interpretation to promote personalized learning and improve English reading and writing skills. Research has shown that literary texts can increase writing complexity by 18.7%.

Teachers can conduct rhetorical analysis on the opening paragraph of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* in Unit 6 of *New College English - Integrated Course 1*, analyzing the semantic contradictions and rhythm of parallel structures ("It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..."), and guiding students to imitate five sets of "contradictory rhetorical parallelism sentences".

At the level of vocabulary expansion, college English teachers can extract historical context vocabulary (such as "epoch", "irreversibility") and analyze their frequency of use in contemporary political discourse using the COCA corpus.

At the cultural level, college English teachers can reconstruct historical contexts by analyzing social contradictions and literary reflections during the Industrial Revolution period through the 1840s print of the British comic "Clumsy".

At the cross-cultural comparison level, College English teachers can discuss the similarities and differences in the modernization process between China and the UK through the "Social Change" theme in Unit 4 of *New Horizon 2*.

At the critical thinking level, college English teachers can guide students in critical writing, allowing them to write editorials using the Dickensian paradoxical rhetoric on the topic of "The imitation tasks to enhance students' sentence diversity index (T-unit complexity)", enabling them to accurately use historical context vocabulary in writing (based on

LexTutor vocabulary analysis), and emphasize the historical dialogic nature of paradoxical rhetoric based on Bakhtin's Polyphony theory (Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics).

In Unit 4 of *New College English – Integrated Course 3*, the opening part of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is selected. Teachers can use this section to explore the use of symbolic techniques and compare materialism with idealism. The movie clips can be used for listening practice, cultural comparison, and character motivation analysis.

Teachers can analyze the selected passages from George Orwell's *1984* in Unit 2 of *New Horizon 4* to guide students in writing argumentative essays on dystopian themes.

In Unit 4 of *New Horizon College English – Reading and Writing 4*, there is an excerpt from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. When analyzing *A Room of One's Own*, teachers can analyze the use of complex sentence structures and organize students to engage in feminist cultural discussions and gender equality debates. Through this article, students can train their discourse structure. In studying *New Horizon College English – Reading and Writing* by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, AI text analysis tools can be used to analyze the fragments of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and annotate literary techniques such as metaphors and symbolism.

Based on students' performance in studying the poetry units in *New Horizon*, teachers can try using AI to recommend suitable British and American poetry to expand reading materials. In Unit 5 of *New Horizon College English – Viewing, Listening & Speaking 3*, a movie clip adapted from Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* can be used.

The third edition of *New Horizon College English – Reading and Writing 1* selects O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi". Teachers can enhance students' narrative writing ability by analyzing the use of reverse chronological techniques and metaphorical expressions.

2.2 Cultural awareness dimension

British and American literature is an important carrier of British and American culture. These literary works help students gain a deeper understanding of the history, culture, and society of Britain and America, and cultivate cross-cultural awareness and cultural literacy.

New College English – Reading and Writing selects chapters from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* to reveal the American frontier culture and individualistic spirit in the 19th century, and promote students' understanding of American cultural values. By studying Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, students can experience the social and cultural characteristics of 19th century America, such as rural life and religious beliefs.

By reading Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, students can gain an understanding of the social realities of 19th century England, including issues such as poverty and child labor, as well as the societal values in that historical period.

In *New Horizon* (Book 2, Unit 6), Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* reflects the issue of race in the United States and can be compared to contemporary racial issues.

When teaching *New Horizon College English – Viewing, Listening & Speaking 3*, *College English teachers* can analyze the social etiquette and marriage concepts of the British aristocracy in the 19th century through Jane Austen's film adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, helping students understand the social norms behind cultural symbols. The opening sentence of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* in Unit 5 of *New College English – Integrated Course 2* can be used for syntactic analysis of the argumentative function of periodic sentences and for critical reading: a feminist reinterpretation of 19th century marriage views.

New College English – Integrated Course 2 introduces a speech clip from Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" and strengthens the logical and infectious expression of oral language by imitating the parallel sentence structure ("I have a dream that...").

New College English (Book 4 Unit 5) introduces Shakespeare's "Sonnet 18", which is an ode to the truth, goodness and beauty.

2.3 Dimension of thinking quality

British and American literary works often contain profound themes and complex character images. For example, when analyzing Heathcliff's revenge behavior in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, students need to think about the motives and social reasons behind his actions in order to cultivate critical thinking skills. For another example, when reading T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*, students are required to interpret and analyze the symbolic meaning and obscure expressions of the poem, which helps to enhance their ability to think independently and analyze problems.

In addition, the excerpt from Doris Lessing's *To Room 19* in Book 3 Unit 7 sparks discussions on gender roles. And the excerpt from Thoreau's *Walden* encourages students to reflect on modern lifestyles.

When teaching *New Horizon College English – Reading and Writing 4*, teachers can guide students to analyze the fragmented narrative structure of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, explore the deconstruction of traditional values by modernist literature through group debates, and cultivate critical and deconstructive thinking.

When teaching *New College English – Integrated Course 3*, teachers can organize students to engage in a debate on the theme of William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, to try to draw a conclusion toward whether human nature is inherently good or evil to enhance their dialectical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Teachers can use the audio and text of Langston Hughes' poem "Harlem" in Unit 8 of *New Horizon College English – Viewing, Listening & Speaking 2* to conduct phonetic training at the language level, annotate stress patterns (such as "Does it dry up/like a raisin in the sun?"), compare the prosodic differences between Black English and Standard American English, and from the metaphorical decoding level, create a metaphorical chain of "raisin → sore → rotten meat" to analyze its semantic function.

In College English teaching, teachers should present the African American cultural movement from a cultural perspective and explore the interaction between music and literature during the Harlem Renaissance through jazz fragments (Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World"). In addition, teachers can compare the portrayal of African American characters in the 2016 animated short film *Hair Love* from a cross-media perspective, organize social issue discussions at the critical level, organize roundtable discussions on "How Delayed Dreams Affect Contemporary Youth", and request quotes from Martin Luther King's speech "I Have a Dream" (compared to Unit 3 in *New College English 4*). Through the above activities, teachers can improve the accuracy of students' literary metaphor recognition tests, enabling them to establish a connection between literary texts and social reality.

Teachers can use Bygates' (2018) *The Signifying Monkey* to analyze the unique coding system of African American literature. Teachers can also use the Toni Morrison interview video in Unit 6 of *New Horizon College English – Viewing, Listening & Speaking 4* to train students in pronunciation and help them understand the prosodic features of African American English. The interview video can also be used for cultural comparison, allowing students to understand the narrative differences between oral traditions and written literature.

2.4 Innovative practice dimension

In the course of teaching *New College English* published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, AI can be used to generate the character relationship graph of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to help students understand the narrative structure of the novel. The delicate dialogue between characters in *Pride and Prejudice* showcases the personality traits of different characters and language styles of different social classes.

During the reading process, students can learn authentic English expressions and appropriate communicative language, enhancing their language proficiency. College English teachers can also try using AI to automatically score and correct grammar in the literary appreciation and writing task of *New Horizon*. AI speech recognition technology can be used to provide pronunciation correction and fluency evaluation in the oral practice of the textbooks published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

3 Conclusion

The innovative integration of British and American literature with college English teaching using AI technology is still in the exploratory stage in the practice of university English teaching, and the practical effect still needs further observation. There are still many challenges to be faced. For example, the proportion of literary selections in current college English textbooks is less than 12%. But it is definitely worth trying.

Significant results have been achieved through the practice of integrating British and American literature with English teaching in certain universities. Students' interest in learning English has significantly increased, and their classroom participation has increased. In terms of language proficiency, students have significantly improved their vocabulary and writing skills. In terms of cultural literacy and critical thinking, students are able to better understand English and American culture, and have their own unique insights and analysis of literary works. The excellent academic paper writing rate and cross-cultural communication ability test scores of students have significantly improved. A survey shows that the vast majority of students believe that learning English and American literature has a positive impact on their English learning and personal development.

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