

Research on Innovation and Practice Paths of Literary Teaching from the Perspective of Feminist Translation Theory

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Abstract: Feminist translation theory reconstructs the essence of translation from a gender perspective, breaks the binary opposition between original works and translations, and emphasizes the translator's subjectivity and the cultural and political attributes of gender discourse. Current literary teaching in colleges and universities still has problems such as focusing on language transformation as the core, lacking gender dimensions, and marginalizing the translator's role. Based on the core viewpoints of feminist translation theory, this paper explores its compatibility with literary teaching in the cultivation of subjective consciousness, dimensions of text interpretation, reconstruction of teaching objectives, and development of critical cultural competence. It then proposes four innovative paths: gender-oriented text selection, strategic integration in classroom teaching, diversified reconstruction of the evaluation system, and collaborative construction of practical platforms. Combined with classic translated texts such as Toni Morrison's "Love" and Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar," the study verifies the operability of the theory in teaching. It aims to promote the transformation of literary teaching from single language training to the cultivation of cross-cultural gender awareness, and provide theoretical references and practical paradigms for the innovative development of literary education in the new era.

Keywords: Feminist translation theory; Literary teaching; Translator's subjectivity; Gender awareness; Practice path

Online publication: April 21, 2026

1. Introduction

The cultural turn in translation studies in the 1970s gave birth to feminist translation theory. This theory challenges the traditional view of "faithfulness" in translation from a gender perspective and regards translation as a cultural and political act that highlights female discourse and deconstructs power structures. Current literary teaching in colleges and universities mostly focuses on close reading and language appreciation, paying insufficient attention to gender ideology in translation, translators' subjectivity, and the cultural reconstruction function of translated texts, resulting in a disconnect between teaching and the frontiers of contemporary translation studies^[1]. Integrating feminist translation theory into literary teaching can not only enrich the

dimensions of text interpretation but also cultivate students' awareness of gender equality and cross-cultural critical competence. Based on this interdisciplinary field, this paper starts with compatibility analysis, constructs a teaching innovation system guided by the theory, explores feasible practice paths with classic examples, and provides new ideas for the reform of literary teaching.

2. Compatibility between feminist translation theory and literary teaching

2.1. Value isomorphism in cultivating subjective consciousness

The core breakthrough of feminist translation theory lies in reshaping the subject status of translators, breaking the subordinate positioning of translators as “servants of the original text” in traditional translation theory. It emphasizes that the translator, as a creative subject, has gender identity, cultural background, and aesthetic experience that profoundly influence translation practice. This core claim is highly isomorphic with the core goal of literary teaching. The essence of literary teaching is not merely knowledge transmission but cultivating students' subjective consciousness and independent thinking ability through text interpretation. In traditional literary teaching, students often passively accept single interpretations of texts from textbooks; the creative contributions of translators are obscured, and the voices of female translators are marginalized in historical narratives. Feminist translation theory provides a new perspective for literary teaching, promoting the shift from “original text-centered” to “two-way interaction between translator and reader”^[2]. In teaching, guiding students to compare translation strategies of translators of different genders for the same text and analyze the presentation of translators' subjectivity in translations enables students to deeply understand the diversity of literary interpretation and further awaken their own subjective consciousness.

2.2. Complementary expansion of text interpretation dimensions

Feminist translation theory introduces a gender perspective into text interpretation, breaking the single social and historical interpretation framework in traditional literary teaching and providing a new dimension for text analysis. Traditional literary teaching mostly interprets texts around traditional elements such as plot, characters, and theme, paying little attention to gender ideology, the concealment and expression of female discourse in texts. Feminist translation theory emphasizes that the meaning of literary texts is not fixed but constantly reconstructed in the cross-cultural communication of translation, and the choice of translation strategies directly affects the transmission of gender meanings in texts. The introduction of this perspective can effectively expand the text interpretation dimensions of literary teaching, enabling students to interpret literary works from three dimensions: language, gender, and culture^[3]. In teaching, comparing and analyzing original texts and translations allows students to discover neglected gender connotations in original texts and the strengthening, weakening, or reconstruction of these connotations by translators in the process of translation. Taking Toni Morrison's “Love” as an example, Gu Yue's translation adopts feminist translation strategies such as supplementation, footnotes, and hijacking to strengthen the themes of female mutual assistance and self-redemption in the text. By comparing the original text and the translation, students can not only understand the literary value of the novel but also explore the cross-cultural transmission mechanism of gender discourse from the perspective of translation, realizing the complementarity and expansion of text interpretation dimensions.

2.3. Era compatibility in reconstructing teaching objectives

The goal of literary teaching in colleges and universities in the new era has shifted from single language ability

training to the comprehensive cultivation of cross-cultural communication ability, critical cultural competence, and value-leading ability, which is highly compatible with the social and cultural demands of feminist translation theory. Feminist translation theory not only focuses on the language transformation function of translation but also emphasizes its social and cultural function, regarding translation as an important tool for promoting gender equality and spreading feminist ideas. At present, society has put forward higher requirements for talents' cross-cultural literacy and value judgment ability. As the core position of humanities education, literary teaching undertakes the important mission of cultivating students' correct gender concepts and critical cultural awareness^[4]. Integrating feminist translation theory into literary teaching can promote the reconstruction of teaching objectives, making literary teaching not only a platform for cultivating language knowledge and literary literacy but also a position for developing gender equality awareness and critical cultural competence. In teaching, by analyzing the translation and communication of female literary works and discussing the differences in gender concepts in different cultural contexts, students can be guided to establish equal gender awareness and cultivate their ability to criticize cultural hegemony and gender prejudice.

3. Innovative paths of literary teaching from the perspective of feminist translation theory

3.1. Gender-oriented text selection and classic reconstruction

Text selection is the foundation of literary teaching. Teaching innovation based on feminist translation theory first requires gender-oriented text selection and classic reconstruction, breaking the dominant position of male writers and male perspective texts in traditional teaching, and building a diversified text system. In text selection, a trinity teaching text system of "original text – translated text – theoretical text" should be formed by taking into account original texts of classic female literary works, translations by translators of different genders, classic case texts of feminist translation theory, and translated texts of female themes in cross-cultural communication^[5]. First, select classic female literary works with distinct gender awareness, such as Simone de Beauvoir's "The Second Sex," Elena Ferrante's "Neapolitan Novels," and Sylvia Plath's "The Bell Jar," and select Chinese translations by translators of different genders to provide materials for students' comparative analysis. For example, introducing different translations of "The Second Sex" in teaching allows students to analyze the differences in translation strategies between female and male translators when dealing with core feminist concepts and understand the influence of gender identity on translation practice. Second, integrate classic research cases of feminist translation theory, such as Gu Yue's translation of "Love" and Zhu Hong's translation of "Playing in the Snow," closely combining theory with practice^[6]. Finally, explore translated texts of local female literary works, such as English translations of contemporary Chinese female writers' works, and guide students to discuss cross-cultural communication strategies of local female discourse. Through the comparison of diversified texts, students can deeply understand the internal connections among gender, translation, and culture, laying a solid foundation for subsequent teaching activities.

3.2. Strategic integration and method innovation in classroom teaching

Classroom teaching is the core link of teaching innovation. Literary teaching based on feminist translation theory needs to realize strategic integration and method innovation, transform theoretical viewpoints and translation strategies into operable teaching methods, and build a three-dimensional classroom teaching model of "theoretical explanation – case analysis – practical practice". In the theoretical explanation link, abandon

the traditional theoretical installation method, adopt a problem-oriented teaching method, and introduce core viewpoints of feminist translation theory combined with translation phenomena in literary texts. For example, by comparing different translations of female psychological descriptions in “The Bell Jar,” questions such as “whether the translator’s gender identity affects translation strategies” and “whether the traditional view of ‘faithfulness’ in translation has gender bias” are put forward to guide students to explore independently and understand core concepts such as translator’s subjectivity and gender discourse^[7]. In the case analysis link, focus on the core strategies of feminist translation, namely supplementation, prefaces/footnotes, and hijacking, and conduct in-depth analysis combined with specific examples. Taking Zhu Hong’s translation of “Playing in the Snow” as an example, analyze her translation strategy of strengthening the unequal status of women in social division of labor by adding words such as “alone” and “only”; taking Gu Yue’s translation of “Love” as an example, explain her practice of supplementing background knowledge of the women’s movement through footnotes and rewriting text language through hijacking to highlight female consciousness. In the practical practice link, design hierarchical and progressive teaching tasks, from basic translation comparison analysis to advanced translation strategy application, and then to high-level text interpretation and criticism^[8]. For example, ask students to select a section of a female literary text, translate it using feminist translation strategies, and then write a translation report to analyze their translation ideas and strategy choices, realizing the deep integration of theoretical learning and practical application.

3.3. Diversified reconstruction and standard innovation of the evaluation system

The evaluation system is an important guarantee for teaching innovation. Literary teaching based on feminist translation theory needs to break the traditional single evaluation model, build a diversified and reconstructed evaluation system, innovate evaluation standards, and realize the shift from “result-oriented” to “process-oriented” and from “single standard” to “diversified standards”. In terms of evaluation subjects, build a diversified evaluation subject system of “teacher evaluation – student mutual evaluation – self-reflection”, giving full play to students’ subjective role. Teacher evaluation focuses on the comprehensive consideration of students’ theoretical application ability, translation practice ability, and critical cultural competence; student mutual evaluation focuses on the rationality of translation strategies and the depth of text interpretation; self-reflection requires students to summarize gains and deficiencies in the learning process and cultivate their self-monitoring and self-improvement abilities^[9]. In terms of evaluation content, cover five dimensions: theoretical learning, case analysis, translation practice, classroom performance, and research reports to comprehensively evaluate students’ learning effects. Among them, translation practice and research reports, as core evaluation contents, focus on examining students’ ability to apply feminist translation strategies and critical cultural competence. In terms of evaluation standards, abandon the traditional single standard of “faithful to the original text” and build a diversified evaluation standard of “gender awareness display – translator’s subjectivity presentation – cultural context adaptation – language expression fluency”. For example, when evaluating students’ translation practice works, they not only pay attention to the accuracy of language expression but also focus on whether feminist translation strategies are used to highlight the gender connotation of the text, whether the translator’s subjectivity is reflected, and whether it conforms to the cultural context of the target language. Through the reconstruction of this evaluation system, students can be effectively guided to change their learning concepts, pay attention to process learning and ability cultivation, and truly achieve teaching objectives.

3.4. Collaborative construction and resource integration of practical platforms

The construction of practical platforms is an important support for teaching innovation. Literary teaching

based on feminist translation theory needs to break the limitations of classroom teaching, collaboratively build on-campus and off-campus practical platforms, integrate various teaching resources, provide students with diversified practical opportunities, and realize the seamless connection between classroom teaching and practical teaching. In terms of on-campus platform construction, rely on institutions such as translation centers, literary research institutes, and women's research centers in colleges and universities to set up feminist translation workshops and literary teaching practice bases. Workshops regularly carry out translation practice activities, invite experts and scholars from the translation and literary fields to give guidance, and conduct special seminars on the translation and communication of female literary works; practice bases are combined with curriculum teaching in colleges and universities to provide students with practical places for translation practice, text interpretation, and research report writing. At the same time, use the online teaching platforms of colleges and universities to build a digital resource library of feminist translation theory and literary teaching, integrating classic examples, theoretical documents, teaching cases, practical videos and other resources to support students' independent learning^[10]. In terms of off-campus platform construction, strengthen cooperation with publishing houses, cultural communication companies, and women's social organizations to establish off-campus practice bases. Cooperate with publishing houses to organize students to participate in the translation and editing of female literary works; cooperate with cultural communication companies to participate in the planning and implementation of female-themed literary activities; cooperate with women's social organizations to carry out public welfare lectures and cultural communication activities on gender and translation. Through the collaborative construction of on-campus and off-campus practical platforms, students can combine theoretical knowledge learned in class with practice, improve their translation ability, critical cultural competence, and cross-cultural communication ability in practice, and expand the social influence of feminist translation theory and female literature.

4. Conclusion

Feminist translation theory provides a brand-new theoretical perspective and practical path for the innovative development of literary teaching. Its core viewpoints are highly compatible with literary teaching in the cultivation of subjective consciousness, text interpretation dimensions, reconstruction of teaching objectives, and development of critical cultural competence. By realizing gender-oriented text selection, promoting strategic integration in classroom teaching, reconstructing a diversified evaluation system, and collaboratively building practical platforms, the limitations of traditional literary teaching can be effectively broken. It promotes the transformation of literary teaching from single language training to the cultivation of cross-cultural gender awareness and humanistic literacy, highlighting the humanistic value and era mission of literary education.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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