

Gao Yuhai

**READING LITERARY WORKS IN THE CONTEXT OF TEACHING
CHINESE**

Chinese language teaching abroad has more than a century's history, and, while studying Chinese, many foreign students have not only learned the basics of the Chinese language and culture, but also gained a lot of experience and have mastered the techniques of teaching the Chinese language, which led to the emergence of many scientists and researchers who have devoted themselves to studying Chinese.

In recent years, along with the rapid development of China's economy and relentless strengthening of the country in the world arena, the number of those who teach and learn the Chinese language has been growing as well, thus giving rise to so-called "Chinese fever."

It is worth mentioning that one of the main objectives of the work of the Confucius Institutes all over the world is to provide teaching of Chinese to everyone who would express such desire. However, the results of the comprehensive analysis of teaching materials and supporting literature widely used in teaching the Chinese language show that the texts of modern textbooks cover only the topics such as "travel", "trade", and "people's habits and customs", significantly reducing the use of texts of literary works, which were widely used in textbooks of an earlier time. The author himself encountered this in the process of teaching Chinese in Ukraine and wrote the article with the help and as a result of discussions on the number of issues with colleagues.

Chinese language teaching materials published before the 1950s.

Thus, until the 1950s, the main component of Chinese language textbooks was literary and historical works. For example, in Russia, the main tool for learning the Chinese language was classical literature pieces. In the 19th Century, in order to get better acquainted with the language and culture, customs, traditions, and natural

resources of China, as well as to train cadre who do not just love China, but are also well-versed in all aspects of its life, Christian missionaries used historical and literary works as a training material. On the tenth anniversary of the Qing Dynasty (1830), a student from the 11th Russian Mission Pavel Kurlyantsev, during his stay in Beijing, wrote a draft of a critical review on "Dream of the Red Chamber". However, because of poor health, he had to return home taking with him the precious draft. Another student, Alexei Kovan'ko, who studied together with Pavel Kurlyantsev and was a member of the Russian Mission, on returning home worked using the pseudonym Deming and, in 1843, "Notes of the Fatherland" published his own translation of the first part of the Chinese classic novel "Dream of the Red Chamber", which is the outstanding and well-known literary work of the Chinese literature. It should be noted that the main purpose of translation of the novel was the author's desire to master the spoken Chinese language faster and more accurately understand the customs and traditions of the Chinese. Kovan'ko, in the "Report to the chief mining engineer Kovalevsky", writes, "in order to understand the customs of China better, I've read four volumes of "Dream of the Red Chamber"... translation of this book was very important to learning Chinese customs and also very useful for people studying spoken Chinese as the work is written in a conversational style".

With the popularization of the "Dream of the Red Chamber" in Russia, the book has attracted the interest of more Russian Sinologists.

Then, in 1880, another well-known sinologist Vasily Vasilyev published the first book on history of the Chinese literature, entitled "Essay on the History of the Chinese Literature." The author writes: "But if you want to get to know the Chinese life, still closed to us in the higher realms, the only source you can get information from is the novel, and the information you will get is true. You will learn about a simple peaceful life, as friends get together, as they talk to one another, and as, for example, people meet the first snow." This passage tells about Cao Xueqin's "Dream of the Red Chamber."

Subsequently, the novel "Dream of the Red Chamber" became the basis for the study of the Chinese language. Vasilyev, who paid great attention to reading the

classics in the process of teaching, developed a Chinese language curriculum, according to which the first-year students studied grammar, the second and the third year students studied history of the Chinese literature, and, in the fourth year, they read literary works of the Chinese literature. The curriculum was successfully trialed on the students of Kazan University.

Among tutorials developed by him are "Analysis of Chinese Characters", "Chinese Chrestomathy". In the "Essay on the History of the Chinese Literature" in the "Beautiful Chinese Literature", Vasilyev does not only emphasize the importance of studying literature, but also gives a summary of such works as "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio", "Dream of the Red Chamber", "Water Margin", "Three Kingdoms", "Flowers in the Golden Vase Plum", "The West Wing", "The Pleasing History". There are also passages from such works as "Dream of the Red Chamber", "Water Margin", "The West Wing." Along with the essay, Vasilyev published "Materials on the History of the Chinese Literature", which is composed of classical Chinese prose, novels, poetry, and dramatic works.

Vasily Vasilyev's follower Vasily Alekseev made a translation of "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio" into Russian. This translation is considered to be the most successful of all existing. V. Alekseev is also well-known for his translation of "Chinese classical prose and poetry" (1858 edition).

Later, in 1954, Lubov Pozdneeva published a preface to the text-book "Fundamentals of the Chinese Grammar." All the examples used in the Russian-language introduction were selected from the novel "Dream of the Red Chamber."

"Selected Works of the Chinese Literature," issued in 1959, was a text-book for students and included such works as Gan Bao's "Diary of a Madman", Li Gongzuo's "The governor of Nanke" and "The story of Xie Xiao'e", Shen Yazhi's "Record of strange dreams", Xu Yaotszo's «Biography of Liu", Chen Hong's "Song of regret", Bai Ju's "Song of hatred", Bai Singjian's "The story of beautiful Li", "The story of three dreams", Yuan Zhen's «The Story of Ying-Ying ", Yi Ming's "The story of Mei Fei», Du Guangting's "The Story of the Curly-Bearded Stranger" and other fantastic stories and legends. It also contained such masterpieces as Shi Nayan's "Water

Margin", Lo Guanchzhun's "Three Kingdoms", We Chenen's "Journey to the West", Feng Menlun's "On the Antiquity and Modernity", Pu Sunlin's "Strange History", Wu Jingzi's "Unofficial History of Confucian", Cao Xueqin's "Dream of the Red Chamber" and other classical works of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Moreover, in the past, when selecting materials for foreign literature courses, Chinese students would all give preference to the Russian literature for both intensive study and home-reading, as well as for remedial reading. These works included Ostrovsky's "How the Steel Was Tempered", Chekhov's "Necklace", Fadeev's "The Young Guard", Maxim Gorky's "Childhood" and "Mother".

We should also mention such supporting educational materials as a "Reader of the Russian and Soviet literature," and "Russian classics. Chrestomathy".

The importance of the right choice of classic literature texts when developing Chinese language teaching materials

It goes without saying that, to stay up to date, it is necessary to provide the Chinese language teaching and learning content rich in information that reflects reality prevailing in our society. But the problem is that teaching materials from the elementary to intermediate and even to the advanced level are overloaded with the topics on the economy, landscape geography, customs and traditions, texts about daily life. That is why works of literature, especially classical literature, are lost for those mastering the language.

This situation is explained by the fact that those studying Chinese have the following purposes: employment, business, friendship, travelling, etc. This approach is justified by the fact that this is the way for the language learners to obtain knowledge about all spheres of human activity, but, nevertheless, it brings about a considerable negative impact. Importance of reading classical literature lies in the fact that all knowledge about culture and aesthetics can be derived only from the literary language.

First of all, the correct choice of literary works and systematic reading will allow language learners to obtain profound knowledge and develop language skills. Literature is a kind of practical application of a number of strictly limited linguistic

structures, regardless of the type of literary work: both in folklore or written literature, the basis of the linguistic system is the same.

Literature classes exert great influence on the development of language skills. So called "knowledge of methods of using the language" transforms into "skills and faculties of language proficiency". In this case, expression means and figurativeness of language abundant in literary works contribute to the development of communication skills within language proficiency.

A chance to frequently observe elaborate language constructions and their use in the speech is a good method to improve students' language skills. Also, it stimulates students to the comprehensive analysis of various linguistic aspects and thereby raises their "linguistic intuition". Along with this, students improve their writing skills.

Secondly, there is another very important aspect of literature – its aesthetic function. The literary language comes laden with various forms of consciousness, such as ideology, religion, moral standards, values, and aspiration for the aesthetic taste, etc.

As a result of reading literary works and understanding their nature, characters, language style of the author, and means of language expression, students increase their aesthetic perception and develop the ability to appraise the work of art, they are also enriched intellectually.

In conclusion, literature is not only the highest form of the language, but also is a generalized manifestation of the state, the quintessence of the national culture. It is necessary not only to study the phonetic structure of the language, its lexical and grammatical content, but also historical and cultural traditions of the country and its nation, customs and traditions, ways of life. This is the only way possible to completely grasp the essence of the language as well as its flexible, practical application.

Speaking about the students, it is clear that they lack knowledge about the long Chinese history and culture, about the country's rich literary heritage, which will inevitably influence the social aspect of their lives, as well as their work and study.

Generally speaking, it is obvious that the Chinese national and traditional culture, along with nation's rich literary heritage is not wide-spread and hasn't enjoyed any further development so far.

Despite the fact that we can list a number of arts that are abundant only in our culture, e.g. original calligraphy, paper clippings, Beijing Opera, the art of tea ceremony, etc., all these kinds of national cultural identity remain the object of research and discussions of a rather narrow circle of scholars and artists, for the majority of foreign youth, though, it is no more than a hobby. Countless facts prove that since ancient times every state and every nation have had a multi-faceted literary heritage.

In Russia, everyone is familiar with the works of Pushkin or Gorky, and in Ukraine there is no person who has not heard of Taras Shevchenko. Similarly, the history of the Chinese literature has, since ancient times, been rich in masterpieces known in every household. And it is worth noting that they have earned such widespread reputation through cinematography and television. But, from the perspective of foreigners studying Chinese, the situation looks different. "Dream of the Red Chamber", for example, came out on the world stage, Li Bai is also widely known and so on.

In fact, the vast majority of foreigners studying Chinese know little about the Chinese literature and its prominent poets and writers. The study of literature outside the classroom is impossible because of the lack of time, whereas in the classroom it's impossible because of the lack of chrestomathies and literary almanacs. For a long time, except for the study of everyday conversations and other random aspects of the language, learners of the Chinese language had a very narrow view of the Chinese culture and history. The only facts learners knew were the four great inventions of China (compass, paper, gunpowder, and printing) and the names of the four most famous literary works: "Three Kingdoms» (19th Century), "Water Margin" (15th Century), "Journey to the West» (16th Century) and "Dream of the Red Chamber» (18th Century).

How to select literary works for teaching Chinese overseas

Recently, the issue of selecting appropriate literature for those teaching Chinese abroad has been repeatedly raised by Chinese scientists. In general, the choice of literary works should be based on the following aspects:

- Do not make literature works the main topic of the lesson, both in elementary and in intermediate groups. Literature works, in the first place, is a supplementary educational material, which is never to become the core of the course. It is better to bring in the reading of classical novels as an supplementary home-reading task for the fourth year students; older groups can use the following bilingual educational materials "Chinese novels, selected works," "Poems of the Tang and Song dynasties" and others.

At the same time, it is recommended to actively use multimedia equipment and the latest technical developments. These can also be employed as a supplementary teaching material for extra-curricular activities, such as watching Chinese movies at the Chinese club.

- When selecting literature, it is necessary to pay attention to the level of language skills of students. Literary works should be selected in accordance with the following categories: linguistic opulence, normativity, canonicity, their further practical application. It must also be remembered that the main purpose of the introduction of literary works into the educational process is not an aesthetic pleasure, but their applicability and exemplarity. Ultra-modern works and network literature, which are full of symbols, abbreviations, contractions, and free expressions, cannot be used as teaching materials for the Chinese language.

- While selecting literary works, it is also necessary to focus on the epoch the work was created at. All outstanding literary works contain a clear description of the time, and students studying Chinese should pay particular attention to it. Also, in order to emphasize the epoch of the novel, it is not appropriate to refer to the language of contemporary newspapers or popular sites.

Of course, when selecting literary works, it is necessary to take into account the relevant data on the culture and literary language of the work. The content, though, should not be overloaded with the background knowledge about the culture,

otherwise the learners would fail to understand the culture, which is the major barrier in comprehending the language. Also, the language of the novel should not be too difficult to read, in order not to complicate the process of learning the Chinese language.

- Stylistic diversity of literary works is also very important. When studying a language, no one can evade the influence of personal subjective emotions, feelings, and inclinations. When studying a language, the learner should constantly develop. It is not only the improvement of language skills, but also the development of all facets of the personality: logical thinking, spiritual world, knowledge about the world, intellectual abilities. In this context, the content of the training process should include not only knowledge of linguistics, language and communicative skills, but also learning, cognitive, emotional aspects, and, through language learning, other knowledge.

Summarizing all the above, we hope that Chinese and foreign experts in developing Chinese training materials, will pay more attention to the distinct language norms and a large number of national characteristics, found in literary works. That is, from the easy to the difficult, from the plain to the elaborate.

Thus, children's stories, parables, adapted poems, passages from famous literary works, etc. are the first to be introduced into the process of learning; then, gradually, students will be able to read classical works and masterpieces of the Chinese literature independently or with the help of supplementary literature. As a result, learners of Chinese will master the extensive knowledge of the Chinese language and get acquainted with history and culture of China, which, in its turn, will provide them with the sound knowledge in the field of literature and aesthetics.

Literature:

1. 张文联，中高级对外汉语教学中的文学教学研究，《黑龙江高教研究》2011年第5期。
2. 高增霞，高级汉语教材编写中的选文问题，《南阳师范学院学报》2010年第8期。
3. 张可灵，中高级汉语教材中文学作品的研究分析，华东师范大学硕士论文，2009年。

Gao Yuhai. Reading Literary Works in the Context of Teaching Chinese

The article analyzes the linguistic concept of teaching foreign language by the means of reading classical literature as one of the effective ways of language learning. The author reveals the development of aesthetic perception and artistic thinking skills while reading Chinese literary masterpieces and defines the advantages of this teaching method within standard curriculum.

Key words: classical literature, Chinese language teaching, aesthetics, artistry.

Гао Юйхай. Читання літературних творів у контексті викладання китайської мови

Стаття містить аналіз лінгвістичної концепції викладання іноземної мови, яка полягає в читанні творів класичної літератури як одного з ефективних способів вивчення мови. Виявлено формування естетичного сприйняття й навичок художнього мислення під час роботи з творами китайського літературного мистецтва, а також визначено переваги цього методу викладання мови в рамках стандартної програми.

Ключові слова: класична література, викладання китайської мови, естетика, художність.

Гао Юйхай. Чтение литературных произведений в контексте преподавания китайского языка

Статья содержит анализ лингвистической концепции преподавания иностранного языка, которая состоит в чтении произведений классической литературы как одного из эффективных способов изучения языка. Выявляется формирование эстетического восприятия и навыков художественного мышления при работе с произведениями китайского литературного искусства, а также определены преимущества данного метода преподавания языка в рамках стандартной программы.

Ключевые слова: классическая литература, преподавание китайского языка, эстетика, художественность.

This is to confirm the receipt of the article by the Editorial Office 10.01.2012.

This is to confirm that your article has been put into print 27.01.2012