

Research on Exploring and Integrating Ideological-Political Elements in College Public English Textbooks

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Abstract

As a public compulsory course for Non-English majors in colleges and universities, College Public English should not only develop students' language and cross-cultural communication skills, but also cultivate their correct outlook on life, values, world and native land emotion, which is consistent with the ideological-political goals of the course. English textbook is the guarantee for the smooth progress of English teaching, and more importantly, it is an important carrier to practice Chinese teaching ideas. This paper mainly focuses on how to integrate ideological-political elements into English teaching from textbook perspective. It discusses the measures of integrating ideological-political education into College English courses from four aspects: teaching objectives, unit themes, and knowledge points, grammatical structure and word explanation. It is finally pointed out that exploring and integrating ideological-political elements in textbooks is the key link to realize ideological-political education in College Public English courses.

Keywords: college public English, ideological-political education, textbooks, exploring and integrating

1. Introduction

In 2020, the guiding outline for the construction of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" in colleges and universities issued by the Ministry of Education put forward the fundamental task of "fostering virtue" in higher education, emphasizing that higher education should not only pay attention to the teaching of knowledge and the cultivation of ability, but also strengthen the value guiding and shaping. In the new era, the combination of curriculum and ideological-political education is the demand of the times, and an important measure to promote the healthy and all-round development of college students as well. In the teaching design of College Public English course, which is a public basic course in Colleges and universities, teachers should not only pay attention to developing students' cognitive ability, cross-cultural communication ability and humanistic quality, but also cultivate students' correct ideas, values and good ideological morality, so as to improve students' overall comprehensive quality.

2. The Significance of Ideological-Political Education in College Public English Teaching

With the lengthy teaching time and large number of learners, Public English is an important channel for ideological-political teaching. On the one hand, the College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) points out that "College English teaching should actively integrate into the ideological-political teaching system of the school curriculum, and organically integrate the ideological-political concepts and contents of the curriculum into the curriculum; the content selection of College English teaching materials should consciously integrate into the socialist core values and Chinese excellent traditional culture, cultivate students to develop and expand the Chinese spirit, tell Chinese stories well, and guide students to establish correct outlook on world life and values".

Public English courses are expected to not only involve English language knowledge and western social culture, but also concern the comparison of Chinese and Western cultures, which plays an important role in cultivating students' outlook on the world and values. However, many college students fail in understanding the purpose of learning English. A questionnaire about College English courses for ideological, political education was conducted. One of the question is "What is your purpose of learning English?" 88.6% of the students chose the answer "Get credits and graduate successfully", and 76.32% considered "Obtain College English certificate to acquire employment qualification" their best choice. Only 19.3% of the students picked up "Be able to spread Chinese culture to the world in English". From the results, it could be got that students' purpose of study English mainly focus on examinations and credits, which differ the aims of the course.

Additionally, the introduction and explanation of western culture are mostly taken into account, and the ignorance of Chinese culture exists in College Public English teaching. This has caused many students to suffer from the aphasia of Chinese culture frequently in cross-cultural communication, and they cannot express Chinese culture in English. In the questionnaire, another question is “Can you express traditional Chinese culture or tell Chinese stories in English?” The students whose answer was “Can only express some of them” were as high as 70.18%, while 26.32% of the students thought they definitely could not express China’s traditional culture. It is common knowledge that Chinese culture is broad and profound, and excellent culture can be found everywhere. But now many college students cannot understand these excellent traditional cultures well, and then lack a sense of identity with their own national culture. And under the impact of foreign culture, they lack confidence in and even some students dislike their own culture. Therefore, public English is supposed to learn from foreign excellent culture, make the world understand China well, export Chinese cultures, and promote cultural exchanges between China and the West. In recent years, most of the translation questions in College English Test (Band 4 and Band 6) are based on Chinese cultural elements, which reflects China’s requirements for students’ cross-cultural ability and the importance of local culture, and also assist in making Chinese culture go global (Li, 2022). Moreover, College English Public English has the characteristics of instrumentality and humanism. Instrumentality is the foundation, and humanism is the soul. Without the ability to read and write, students cannot carry out cross-cultural communication. While cross-cultural communication will be meaningless if thought and value fail in existence. This determines that its teaching goal is beyond cultivating students’ ability to use language. Under the current needs of “New Liberal Arts” and “Big Foreign Language”, English courses should not only pay attention to the value of humanism and interactivity, but also focus on the two-way introduction of Chinese and Western cultures. Both cultures should become the main learning subjects (Ma, 2019). It shows that integrating ideological-political elements into public English classes can enable students to understand western culture and enhance their cultural confidence.

Consequently, English teachers need to educate students about the core values of socialism with Chinese characteristics, help college students establish a correct outlook on life, values and world, help the spread of China’s excellent traditional culture, and improve China’s international strength. Furthermore, students believe that English classes have an impact on their values. To the question “Do you think that College Public English can influence and inspire your outlook on life, world and values? Only one student’s answer is “No”. Meanwhile, to the question “Do you accept the integration of ideological-political education in College Public English courses”, 83.2% of the respondents chose “Yes”. It can be concluded that students are willing to accept ideological-political education in English courses, so it is necessary for teachers to conduct correct thinking and ideological guidance to college students who are at the stage of moral and intellectual development.

3. Ideological-political Elements in Textbooks

English textbooks are the carrier of knowledge, an important part of teaching activities, and a prerequisite for carrying out teaching activities to achieve teaching goals. The articles used in teaching are almost all foreign articles, so some teachers think that these articles are not suitable for ideological-political education. To guarantee the implementation of ideological-political teaching, they break away from textbooks and rigidly integrate ideological-political elements into curriculum teaching. Actually, this approach does not actually improve ideological-political teaching. According to some researchers (Zhang et al., 2021; Liu & Yue, 2020), the contents of the English textbooks are not suitable for ideological-political education, and they need to be reconstructed, integrated and redeveloped, so they prefer to add more Chinese elements or delete some foreign values in the contents of the books. However, Huang (2020) emphasizes that all types of discourse can be thought ideologically-politically. Students are more inclined to accept the organic integration of ideological-political teaching and language points. In the context of ideological-political education, the textbooks in the hands of every teacher are the best tools. College English courses should take these tools, and use the method of “moistening things silently” to nurture socialist builders and successors with an all-round moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic grounding (Wang & Gu, 2021). Under educational scene, the textbooks used in foreign language teaching are a certain number of carefully selected and meaningful input materials. Most of these teaching materials really do not contain obvious ideological-political elements, which is one of the main differences between foreign language courses and ideological-political courses. Although the articles in the textbook are all western literary works, they are rich in topics, authentic in language, reflecting social development and humanistic connotation. Some researcher (Lu & Zhang, 2020; Chen, 2021; Wang & Gu, 2021) take the textbook “the Reading and Writing course of New Horizon College English” as an example to analyze the feasibility of exploring the ideological-political elements in the teaching materials, and put forward ways and methods to effectively carry out ideological-political education in college English teaching. However, they did not elaborate on how to explore

ideological-political elements. Thus, in this paper, the measures of exploring and implementing ideological-political elements will be introduced, taking book “New Standard College English (3)” as an example, which ideological-political elements are not apparent in the book.

New Standard College English (3) consists of 7 units. The themes of the units can be summarized, based on the main contents. The following table shows the ideological- political elements in the textbook.

Table 1. Ideological- political elements in New Standard College English (3)

Title	Ideological-political element	Moral literacy
Unit 1 Discovering yourself	Life direction	Set goals and take action
Unit 2 Childhood memories	Healthy growth	Appreciate parents
Unit 3 Art for art’s sake	Art appreciation	Shape personal literacy
Unit 4 No place like home	Feelings of family and country	Love country and family
Unit 5 A place in society	Interpersonal relationship	Treat others equally
Unit 6 High days and holidays	International Perspective	Improve cross-cultural communication ability
Unit 7 Street full of heroes	Personal quality	Help others and love country

It can be seen from Table 2 that the textbook of New Standard College English (3) covers a wealth of ideological-political elements. Teachers need to explore ideological-political elements from seemingly ordinary texts and integrate ideological-political education into the curriculum (Huang, 2020). Provided teachers give correct teaching and guidance, these textbooks can be good textbooks for cultivating noble ideological and moral quality. Xu (2021) pointed out that the ideological-political content in the textbook has the following functions: 1) play and rely on the role of the textbook carrier to realize the ideological-political education of the curriculum and cultivate people with virtue. 2) Explore the coincidence and complementary between English teaching and ideological-political education, and organically integrate ideological-political elements into textbooks, so as to make English teaching meet the requirements of the times. 3) Give full play to teachers’ initiative and practice the concept of ideological-political education. Therefore, in the process of teaching, teachers need to excavate the ideological-political elements hidden in teaching materials, combine curriculum ideological-political with teaching materials, and practice ideological-political goals while transferring knowledge.

4. Measures for Exploring and Integrating Ideological-Political Elements

The implementation of ideological-political education in the curriculum is not added to the curriculum, but lies in the method. Therefore, the implementation of ideological-political education needs implicit teaching rather than explicit teaching, and the function of building virtue and cultivating people needs to be realized invisibly through language teaching (Cai 2021). College teachers should sort out and transmit ideological-political elements, but also improve their awareness and literacy of exploring and building ideological-political content (Xu, 2021). Teachers cannot rigidly incorporate ideological-political elements into the teaching content. They need to deeply explore the ideological-political content contained in the teaching materials. The ideological-political elements should meet the social needs and students’ ideological trends. Then, the effective integration of College English teaching and ideological-political teaching can be achieved.

4.1 To Set Ideological-Political Teaching Objectives

Before carrying out teaching activities, English teachers need to set teaching goals according to the teaching content. The teaching objectives of each unit include knowledge objectives, skill objectives and ideological-political objectives. Knowledge objectives mainly focus on learning and mastering vocabulary, grammar, sentences, and other knowledge points. Skill objective is to guide students to view Chinese and Western cultures dialectically, and cultivate students’ ability of cross-cultural communication and international communication. Ideological-political goals arouse students’ thinking and pursuit of their own ideals, so that students have the spirit of persistence, hard work and courage to take responsibility.

For example, “Catching crabs” is a passage in New Standard College English (3), which tells that the son in the graduation season is confused about what to do in the future. His father takes him to catch crabs at sea. By observing the behavior of crabs, the son finally determines the direction of future development. According to the main content of the text, teacher can set the knowledge objective is to understand the text and grasp the new words, skill objective to be able to use narrative devices and interpret underlying meaning and ideological-political goal to get tips on how to get to know oneself. Once the teaching objectives are set, all teaching activities have a center. And whether the teaching goal is completed is one of the signs to test the teaching results.

4.2 To Discuss Ideological-Political Aspects in Combination with the Theme of the Unit

In order to broaden students' horizons, English textbooks concern different fields such as society, culture, festivals, science and technology, covering many English speaking countries, and cultivating students to view the world from multiple perspectives. Each unit of the textbooks provides language input around the same topic. When teaching, teachers should not separate the theme, but combine the theme to lead to ideological-political elements. Any topic can be analyzed from the perspective of language and ideology (Huang, 2021). The text of "Catching crabs" can be used to be the example again. According to the theme "Discovering yourself" of this unit, teachers can ask students to explain the meaning "Discovering yourself" before teaching the text. The following table shows some answers of students.

Table 2. Students' answers to the question "How do you understand discovering yourself"

Question	Answers
How do you understand "Discovering yourself"?	Discovering myself is an positive attitude. With this attitude, we are able to get ourselves rid of doubting our ability, find the just right and have the courage to show off.
	Discovering yourself is an life experience when we meet some difficulties or when we gain success. We will find out our advantages and disadvantages, then we may change our lifestyles or keep on doing what we have been doing.
	I think "discovering myself" is to find what I really interested in. As mentioned in "Catching Crabs", only by doing what you like can you succeed.
	From my perspective, "discovering yourself" is an approach which can improve us a lot.
	I think to discovering ourselves is to find the advantages and disadvantages that we have not found.
	From my point of view, discover yourself means observing yourself and improve yourself.
	"Discovering yourself" means finding new things which you have the ability to master but you don't get it now.

From the above answers, it can be illustrated that students' answers differ, which shows that they are not very clear about the theme of the text. During the teaching, teacher can make a comparison between Chinese and Western educational systems and educational concepts, and guide students to look at the differences between China and the West in education and family from a dialectical perspective. Meanwhile, teacher can demand students to discuss the following question. "What will you do after you graduate from the university? Why?" Students are certainly confused about the future just like the author in the text. The following are there answers. "I don't know what to do after graduation." "Is it necessary for me planning the future now. I am freshman." "Walking and watching". At this time, teachers can guide students to conduct such classroom discussions. "As a college student in the new era, do you know how to discover yourself like the story in the text? How to realize your life value and what can you do to contribute to the great rejuvenation of our country?" In this way, college students can exercise their ability to express their views in English, and more naturally help them better discover themselves, establish a correct outlook on life, stimulate them to work hard for the realization of the Chinese dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and enhance their sense of mission and responsibility to study hard for the country and society. Because it is the true feelings of students, its effect is unmatched by teachers' teaching with simple knowledge.

4.3 To Arrange Ideological-Political Output Tasks in Combination with Knowledge Points

In any case, the language features and structures in textbooks are the basis for language learning. Teachers need to guide students to understand and flexibly use the knowledge points which are taught, and be able to draw inferences from one instance. For example, for this unit with the theme of "Art for Art's sake", before learning the article, the teacher can assign tasks to let students find photos of great significance that can reflect the Chinese spirit and spread Chinese excellent culture, such as photos of medical staff and volunteers' selfless dedication during the epidemic, and explain why they choose such photos. Before learning the article, students do not understand why photos they choose are meaningful. Keeping the question in mind, they are taught the text which is about the famous photo "V-J day". The photo represents the victory at the end of World War II. Besides background knowledge, teachers are supposed to explain the reasons why this photo are of great significance in class. One of them is to give people feelings of hearing, vision, smell, taste and touch. Then teachers can let students imitate this factor to describe the photos they choose, express their worship and understanding of people who selflessly contribute to the country. Through complete the output task, students improve their language skills and artistic appreciation, and the proper integration of output tasks and ideological-political elements can enhance

their Chinese consciousness and broaden their international vision.

4.4 To Add Ideological-Political Elements to Grammatical Structure and Word Explanation

There can be no better output without input. Professor Krashen's input hypothesis points out that only comprehensible input can promote output. Thinking and explaining sentences and words from the ideological-political perspective belong to the input. Teachers can use some current affairs to explain and apply the sentence structure and words in the text to replace the rarely used sentences, so that students can use the learned new vocabulary and syntactic structure for practical application. For instance, explaining the word "responsibility", teachers can give the following example sentences. "In the new era, we bear the responsibility of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." Through such example sentences, students can acquire the usage of the new vocabulary, and understand the current responsibilities. Moreover, teachers can also guide students to use new structures and words for ideological-political output. For example, when talking about the phrase "in appreciation of", teachers can encourage students to take Chinese volunteers as an example to make sentences. During the Winter Olympics, volunteers' selfless dedication is a good example. "The award is given in appreciation of their contribution to the winter Olympic." On the one hand, it can help students understand the meaning of words and deepen their memory. On the other hand, it can imperceptibly help them understand China's dedication. It can be illustrated that the integration of ideological-political education into vocabulary explanation can fully facilitate cultivating their character and lay a solid foundation for their future work and life. Take the sentence "The right time is the cheque that's permanently in the post, it never arrives" as another example. Students are confused of the way foreign cheque. Teachers can first introduce this culture. Then, teacher offer the explanation "It means money has been sent, it's on its way. This is often said as an excuse for late payment, so if the cheque permanently in the post, it means the money never comes." Take this as a starting point to discuss how contemporary college students seize the opportunity and point out that they should cherish the present and live up to their youth. By interpreting sentences in this way, students can have a profound understanding of foreign culture, and it is also enlightening, which can make students remember forever.

To sum up, the most basic teaching links in English teaching: the setting of teaching objectives, the discussion of topics, the arrangement of output tasks, and the explanation of vocabulary and sentences can be combined with the ideological-political elements in the textbooks to help students develop their moral political literacy in all aspects. In the process of learning, it is not just that students acquire language knowledge and skill, but they get good virtue and broaden horizon.

5. Conclusion

Public English courses in the new era should meet the needs of the times and society. Textbooks contain rich ideological-political elements. In College Public English teaching, teachers need to effectively analyze and explore the ideological-political elements of the curriculum in the teaching materials. In addition to the ideological-political elements in the textbooks, teachers are expected to explore the forms to supplement the textbooks in the subsequent research to deepen the ideological-political theme, and the application of teaching methods is also an important respect of ideological-education. In brief, in the teaching process, teachers should take establishing morality and cultivating people as the starting point, and integrate the ideological-political education into all links of teaching implicitly. The effective integration of ideological-political elements in College Public English teaching can realize the maximum value of English teaching, and cultivate college students with both integrity and ability in the new era, and finally make them become socialist builders and successors who have Chinese feelings, can carry out cross-cultural communication, and tell Chinese stories well.

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