The Integration of Ideology and Politics into Chinese Tertiary Integrated English Course Based on POA

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Abstract

Under current situations at home and abroad, it has been evident that ideological and political education plays an essential role in higher education. In college, English courses that is a main front, one of the hot research foci falls to how to effectively apply and practice ideological and political education. Lack of effective theoretical foundation and support, however, the ideological and political education in many college English courses has not yet truly been blended into language teaching and learning. As a result, the problems are still obvious since they are pasted together abruptly instead of seamlessly blending the two. On the basis of the POA theory and the key competency principle, this paper aims to explore and practice the following in college-integrated English classes: 1) the organic and seamless blend of the ideological and political instruction objectives and the language instruction ones; 2) the optimized integration of the instruction contents; 3) the progressive process of the instruction; 4) the diversified assessment of the instruction, so as to make contributions to improve the quality and effectiveness of college English courses with ideological and political education.

Subject Areas

Language Education

Keywords

Ideology, Politics, POA, Tertiary Integrated English

1. Introduction

In 2016, President Xi said at the conference of tertiary ideological and political

education: "Each course must take its responsibility, make full use of its own advantages, and keep the same direction and pace with the moral classes so as to achieve synergistic effect [1]. Afterwards, more relevant meetings and documents given by the state and the Ministry of Education made the moral construction of the curriculum a key endeavor in the implementation of ideological and political education in colleges and universities [2]. At the same time, educators in colleges and universities across the country have also begun to explore the new model of ideological and political teaching from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Language is closely related to culture/cognition, therefore it is clearly stated in College English Teaching Guide (2020) that college English classes should be integrated into the moral education system of the school curriculum, so that it can play an essential role in undertaking the fundamental task of moral education in colleges and universities. College English, as a course with double attributes of linguistic tools and humanity, bears the role of a window for college students to understand the West world and builds a bridge to spread Chinese culture. Therefore, how to effectively integrate ideological and political education into college English teaching has become the focus of current college English teaching reform research.

Some scholars have discussed and practiced its necessity, feasibility, teaching mode, teaching method, teaching evaluation, etc. For example, Ding Shuifang (2020) called on that frontline teachers should improve their awareness of ideology and politics, and construct the instruction model of ideology and politics in college English courses combined with specific teaching cases [3]. Lu Junping (2019) analyzed the necessity, practicality, instruction model, applying means, assessment tools and the need-to-solve problems in terms of the ideology and politics instruction in college English courses [4]. Kong Biao (2020) elaborated on how to build the curriculum of college English courses with ideology and politics [5]. However, these studies were mostly conducted at a strategic and macro level and not closely integrated with specific foreign language teaching theory and teaching practice, hence the actual teaching designs and arrangements are not scientific and systematic.

According to Hu Jiehui (2021), he pointed out the following problems of college English ideological and political education from the perspective of course design [6]. The current problems are as follows: 1) the goal of ideological and political teaching is separated from that of language teaching, and the two cannot be organically connected, resulting in the arbitrary setting of moral education objectives. 2) The content is too prominent: actually, most teachers separate the contents of ideological and political teaching from that of language teaching, and conduct them one by one. Sometimes the former is too highlighted to cover the latter. 3) The process of ideological and political teaching is simplified: college English teachers just spoon-feed students with the moral elements extracted by themselves, and turn the classroom that should be interactive into a teacher's personal show, which does not conform to the implicit teaching principle of

moral teaching, and does not follow the principle of teachers as scaffolding builders in the teaching process either. 4) Teaching assessment is formalistic: evaluation is an important means to test whether the teaching objectives are achieved. Nevertheless, the evaluation of moral teaching education mainly focuses on the surficial level such as the vocabulary and sentence translation. These methods cannot truly and deeply reflect their development and enhancement ideologically.

2. The Theoretical Foundation of POA

In the past decade, the theory of product-oriented approach (POA), proposed by Wen Qiufang leading the team of Chinese foreign language education research center of Beijing Foreign Studies University, has now become a theoretical system for foreign language instruction with Chinese characteristics, which generates positive and profound effects on foreign language pedagogical practice and reform. The theory opines that all the activities during the class should aim at "letting learn happen", with output tasks as the original and final goals, and with teacher-supporting input study and assessment as the means. The students are guided to practice while learning and learn while practicing, and to combine learning and practice so as to enhance the effectiveness of class instruction [7]. POA, generally, encompasses three aspects: its pedagogical beliefs, instruction hypothesis, and instruction process. Regarding its pedagogical beliefs, the learning-centered principle, learning-using integration principle and whole-person education principle are all included. Its instruction hypothesis consists of the output-driven hypothesis, input-enabling hypothesis and selective-learning hypothesis [8]. Three stages of motivating, enabling and assessing comprise the instruction process. Later, Wen Qiufang developed and improved POA, and she also added the cultural exchange principle and key competencies principle [9]. The key competencies principle is derived from the whole-person education principle in order to better effectively apply the function of educating and cultivating students in foreign language instruction.

According to POA, the key competencies refer to six main ones that are language competency, learning competency, critical competency, creative competency, and collaborative competency. Among these six, the language competency stands in the center, correlating to and interacting with the other five. The key competency is of mobility, flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and cross-domain, which can benefit students in terms of their career and life, and also their relations with themselves and others. Besides, according to POA, the key competency can be calculated with the formula as follows: the key competency = (key knowledge + key skills) * sentimental character * self-management * (±) value [9]. In this formula, the key knowledge and skills are the foundation, the sentimental character as the efficacy, the self-management as efficiency and the value as the direction. Generally speaking, the key competency principle is conducive to clarify the education target that is to cultivate the well-rounded talents who

can solve complex problems, acquire new knowledge and new skills, learn life long, and have the ability to develop and cooperate continuously.

3. Four Main Principles of Tertiary Integrated English Course Blended with Ideology & Politics

3.1. Repositioning of Teaching Objectives

Modern curriculum emphasizes that the nature of curriculum is goal-oriented educational activities, so the primary task of teaching design is to accurately locate teaching objectives [6]. The six key competencies and five elements ((key knowledge, key skills, sentimental character, self-management and value) in foreign language education under the theory of POA are used as guidance for college English teaching objectives under the background of ideological and political education. The ideological and political teaching objectives and language teaching objectives can be seamlessly connected and organically integrated, and the education work can be carried out in college English classroom teaching like spring and rain, avoiding the phenomenon of "two separated skins" of teaching objectives in college English teaching.

3.2. Optimization and Integration of Teaching Contents

The humanity of college-integrated English course provides many resources for ideological and political education, while it also has shortages of fragmented and arbitrary teaching contents that cause the ideological and political education of college English to be lack of main lines and souls. Therefore, based on the unit theme in the textbook, centering on the unit goal, with the help of network teaching resources, we should select the teaching contents that can truly stimulate students' learning motivation and interest, have strong practicability, and have cultural communication value, so as to make ideological and political education highly compatible with language ability training, and avoid ideological and political content replacing language teaching content.

3.3. Progressiveness of Teaching Process

According to the "motivating-enabling-assessing" in POA theory, the teaching process and the learning activities in social and cultural theory should follow the principle of the most recent development zone. According to different learning task objectives and learning content, the teaching activities and learning tasks will be refined and decomposed, with varying difficulties. At the same time, the teaching process organically integrates online and offline, pre-class—in-class—after-class operation processes, reflecting the three criteria of POA's effectiveness: progressiveness, precision and diversity [10]. According to students' level, learning characteristics and unit teaching objectives, the difficulty and complexity of teaching activities are presented in steps to ensure the progressive language learning. Unit tasks are divided into multiple sub-tasks to ensure that students first achieve small goals and then achieve big goals, ensuring the learning effect.

Teaching activity design always adheres to the principle of wanting to learn and use, so as to use middle school, with middle school. The design and selection of teaching tasks should not only take into account knowledge but also pay attention to the cultivation of realistic abilities. For example, when learning English argumentative essays, students should be trained to properly express their personal views in English and refute their views with reasonable evidence.

3.4. Diversity of Teaching Evaluation

Effective teaching evolution has long been a difficulty for both teachers and researchers, and it is more challenging to effectively assess ideological and political education. The results of ideological and political education are not overnight. Thus, we should adhere to the "scientific, diversified and stimulating" principle, construct a multiple evaluation system, adopt multi-step evaluation criteria, pay attention to the guidance and improvement of students' learning process, and give full play to the role of evaluation in promoting learning. The situation of knowledge acquisition is tested, and the dynamic change of students' learning is also understood, so as to achieve the effect of promoting learning by evaluation, promoting effectiveness by evaluation and promoting teaching by evaluation.

4. The Teaching Design of Tertiary Integrated English Course Blended with Ideology & Politics

4.1. Unit Teaching Objectives

Before clarifying the unit teaching objectives, the author will have an in-depth understanding of the relevant objectives and requirements of college English courses under the current ideological and political background of the curriculum: national objectives, disciplinary objectives and curriculum objectives.

Then, based on the textbook, combined with the learning situation and the school situation, the author will deeply analyze the teaching content, dig deep into the ideological and political education elements in the teaching materials, so as to organically connect the ideological and political teaching objectives with the language objectives. Language teaching goal is explicit, whereas ideological and political education goal is invisible. Therefore, the latter is embedded in the selection of teaching materials and teaching activities. The design of input materials and output tasks inside and outside the classroom should closely focus on both the language teaching objectives and ideological and political teaching ones.

4.2. Unit Teaching Process

4.2.1. The Motivating Stage: Assign Tasks to Create Hunger
According to the unit teaching objectives, teachers mainly release pre-class output tasks and related video, audio or text reading materials through an online learning app. The purpose is to let students know their own shortcomings by trying to complete output tasks, create a sense of learning hunger, so as to sti-

mulate students' interest in learning, strengthen learning motivation, and lay a foundation for subsequent targeted input promotion. The driving part will focus on the design of generating tasks around the unit teaching objectives. Based on the social practical problems, communication scenes and students' current English level and cognitive level, such output tasks will organically combine the improvement of language skills with ideological and political education, so that students can not only learn the core knowledge of language, but also exercise their ability to think or solve problems using language as a too, virtually guiding students to conduct cross-cultural thinking and so on. The forms of output tasks are diversified, which need to be completed by students independently or by students in a team. Doing this way not only exercises students' independent thinking ability, but also cultivates students' cooperation ability, communication ability and so on.

4.2.2. The Enabling Stage: Decompose Tasks to Achieve Output

According to the three criteria of effectiveness proposed by Professor Wen Qiufang: gradualism, precision and diversity, teachers should give full play to the role of "scaffolding" to help students successfully complete the training of ability objectives of a unit. Adhering to the principle of combining learning and application, the author will divide the total tasks of unit output into multiple subtasks to complete step by step. The main subtask types are as follows:

1) Subtask Series 1: Language Competence Level: In terms of text processing, the author adopts the mode of "reading circle", usually 3 - 4 people in a group. The author will set corresponding roles and tasks based on the language difficulty and theme of the unit text. Students will choose roles and tasks independently according to their own strengths and interests after class, first learn by themselves and then discuss in groups, waiting for presentation in class. In class, according to the core vocabulary and phrases of the unit input by the students in the enabling process (including the vocabulary in the textbook as well as related ideological and political vocabulary based on the textbook), the author designed a series of progressive activities, such as word guessing game - sentence making - paragraph writing - topic discussion (insisting on the output effect of students through the quantity and accuracy of ideological and political vocabulary). For sentences and discourse, students' classroom explanation, teachers' comments and supplements are mainly adopted.

2) Subtask Series 2: Ideological and political ability level (mainly corresponding to critical ability, cultural ability, innovation ability and cooperation ability among key abilities): in the activity mode of "reading circle", "Researcher" whose job is to search the background information and cultural notes) is usually set so as to investigate students' language, culture and cooperation abilities. "Connector" whose job is to relate the text to the life experience, study and the world outside) is set in order to test students' language, critical thinking and cooperation abilities; "Visualizer" whose job is to represent the text in a visual way

is used to evaluate students' language, innovation and cooperation abilities. Students conduct cooperative discussion based on the textbook materials to complete the driving task. During the process of such activities, they exercise their advanced abilities and improve their English communicative ability, learning ability, critical thinking ability, cooperative innovation ability and so on. Limited by their language level and relevant knowledge reserve, they will inevitably encounter difficulties or the completion result is far from the ideal output goal when doing these tasks after class. Therefore, in class, the author will set relevant questions based on text materials, gradually guide students to dig deeply into the ideological and political education elements contained in the textbook, and finally achieve effective input and output promotion.

4.3. Evaluation: Multiple Evaluations to Promote Learning

Evaluation and tests are vital means to examine the instruction quality and push the construction and development of college English courses (The guideline (2020)). The guideline for college English education released by the Chinese ministry of higher education (2020) proposes to build the comprehensive assessment systems combining the school-based evaluation tools with other diverse ways. According to the principle of "scientificity, diversification and incentive", the author adopts multiple evaluation and whole evaluation system. For the results of student group cooperative learning, the author adopts the teacher-student cooperative evaluation method. During the evaluation, the author will provide the evaluation focus and evaluation samples, and then carry out the teacher-student cooperative evaluation. In addition, each unit of learning will design relevant evaluation according to the output task, both quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation. At the same time, for the ideological and political teaching objectives, adhere to the evaluation of content, form as a supplement.

5. Conclusion

Based on the current situation and existing problems in college English teaching, Professor Wen Qiufang's POA and the key competency principle can not only effectively improve the teaching and learning results, but also perfectly make the combination of college English courses and ideological and political elements more operable, finally enabling college English courses to truly realize both instrumental and humanistic characteristics. At the same time, as a research mode with the primary goal of solving practical problems in education, action research method is more and more favored by front-line classroom teachers. This study is based on the practical problems existing in ideological and political teaching of college English courses, and takes the output-oriented method with Chinese characteristics as theoretical and practical guidance. However, because of the author's limited knowledge and capacity, the paper needs improving in terms of how to more effectively practice the ideological and political education in college

English course. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this paper can provide a paving point for the integration of ideological and political teaching into college English courses in the future. It is still on the way to constantly explore, improve and enhance the quality and effectiveness of college English teaching under the background of ideological and political education.

Acknowledgements

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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