

A Study on the Ideological and Political Construction of English Education Curriculum Aimed at Cultivating Intercultural Competence

Jingjing Lu^{1,*} Siqu Deng²

^{1,2} School of Foreign Language, Zhejiang Ocean University, Zhoushan 316022, Zhejiang Province, China

* Corresponding author: Jingjing Lu, lujingjing@zjou.edu.cn

ABSTRACT

Under the background of new era, combination of curriculum ideological and political implementation and intercultural competence in foreign language teaching is increasingly important. This paper makes an empirical study on the ideological and political construction and intercultural competence of English education major curriculum, and finds out existing problems and seeks attribution, attempting to construct a practical path of ideological and political education in English education major curriculum aimed at cultivating intercultural competence, which provides reference for training foreign language talents with intercultural communication ability in the new era in line with the construction of Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: English Education Curriculum , Ideological and Political Construction , Intercultural Competence

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the National Standards for the Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Majors in General Institutes of Higher Education, which proposed new requirements for foreign language and literature major students who are required to possess foreign language proficiency, literary appreciation, intercultural competence, critical thinking, as well as the ability to research, to innovate, to apply information technology, to learn independently and the ability to practice[1]. This is the first time when intercultural competence is required for foreign language majors in the undergraduate teaching quality standards developed at the national level.

Since the introduction of curriculum ideological and political concept, curriculum ideological and political construction in colleges and universities across the country has been carried out in full swing, and academic achievements have been fruitful. Thus, as the current society attaches great importance to ideological and political education in colleges and universities, course education plays an important role in building the ideological and political education system and education teaching reform. By contrast, there are relatively few

achievements in the course ideological and political research with English discipline.

Through literature analysis, it is found that the current scholars' research on ideological and political research of English major courses mainly includes four aspects: core connotation and significance, implementation path, teaching practice and practitioner. English teachers' professional courses in the aspect of theory and practice has been forming, but in the teaching process, there are still many problems in integrating intercultural competence training and curriculum ideological and political design. Therefore, combining the effective intercultural competence training and ideological teaching elements in the current English education major teaching is the top priority.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Connotation and characteristics of ideological and political education in English education major curriculum

The ideological and political education of English education major curriculum means that the teaching subjects carry out ideological and political education to the teaching objects intentionally or unintentionally, so

that the professional courses shoulder the responsibility of educating people while imparting professional knowledge[2]. To be more specific, on the one hand, the content and purpose of ideological and political education should be integrated into the whole process of English education major activities; On the other hand, the ideological and political education elements in the English education major curriculum should be fully explored and brought into full play.

The ideological and political education of English education major curriculum has the following three characteristics. First of all, it is a kind of education method, which integrates ideological and political education into the whole process of English education major activities and gives full play to the educational function of English education major curriculum. Secondly, it is a kind of ability. In the process of imparting professional knowledge, college English professional teachers lead students to internalize the ideological and moral education content in foreign language knowledge as their own virtue, and turn it into their own ability and quality of an individual to understand the world and the basic ability to transform the world. Finally, it is a kind of pattern. It is a pattern of educational community formed by explicit ideological and political education and implicit ideological and political education contained in English education major curriculum.

Generally speaking, the ideological and political education of English education major curriculum refers to the the dual functions of teaching the basic knowledge of foreign language and educating people. Every foreign language teacher shoulders the dual responsibility of teaching and educating people, so ideological and political education should be integrated into the teaching philosophy of English education major curriculum.

2.2 The meaning and constituent elements of intercultural competence

Early studies on intercultural competence mainly focus on the learning ability of cultural differences and different acculturation behaviors. Intercultural competence is then defined and divided into cognitive process, behavior, personality, attitude, mode of thinking and self-awareness and other relevant elements. Most of the cultivation modes of intercultural competence are based on the three main elements of emotion, cognition and behavior.

According to Byram, intercultural communication goals in foreign language teaching include four aspects: cultivating intercultural attitude, acquiring intercultural knowledge, cultivating intercultural skills and awareness of cultural criticism[3], which systematically and completely reflect the content and scope that should be included in intercultural foreign language teaching. In the

actual situation of foreign language teaching in China, it is necessary to materialize these objectives into specific teaching tasks and integrate them into foreign language teaching. Rooted in the local characteristics of foreign language teaching in China, Sun Youzhong proposed five principles of intercultural foreign language teaching: speculation, reflection, inquiry, empathy and experience[4]. These principles are practical and conducive for teachers to match it with daily teaching tasks.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND FINDINGS

In order to better improve students' intercultural competence and ideological and political quality in the teaching reform, this study adopts quantitative and qualitative research to evaluate their intercultural competence of junior students in English education major, with quantitative scale as the main research method and qualitative interview as the auxiliary one. In order to obtain a more comprehensive self-evaluation of cross-cultural competence, qualitative methods are mainly used to assist in the analysis and interpretation of questionnaire data, so as to enhance the accuracy and credibility of research results.

The questionnaire is a scale for the self-evaluation of intercultural competence of English education major undergraduates, to investigate the level of students' self-evaluation of intercultural competence. The scale is based on the multidimensional model of intercultural competence of Byram, and is adjusted in combination with the actual situation of Chinese college students, which has been proved to have good reliability and validity in empirical research[5]. The scale includes 28 description items from four dimensions of cross-cultural knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness. Lecter scale grading and scoring method is adopted. The scale from 0 to 5 represents none, weaker, weak, generally strong and very strong.

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Sample size	Items	Cronbach α
47	28	0.939

The reliability analysis results in Table 1 show that Cronbach's reliability coefficient is greater than 0.9, indicating that the reliability of the scale is very good.

Table 2 Validity Analysis

Chara cteristic root value (after rotation)	5.53	5.50	3.30	2.72	2.62	2.58
--	------	------	------	------	------	------

KMO value	0.713
Bart's spherical number	1270.369
df	378.000
sig	0.083

The validity analysis results in Table 2 show that the characteristic root values are all greater than 1, the KMO value is greater than 0.7, and the SIG value corresponding to Bart's spherical value is less than 0.01, indicating that this scale item has a good validity level.

Table 3 Self-rating Scale of Intercultural competence

Four Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Knowledge	3.06	0.45
Attitude	4.16	0.07
Skill	3.27	0.22
Awareness	3.82	0.02

The data in Table 3 show that the mean values of students' intercultural communication attitudes and awareness are much higher than the average values of knowledge and skill. In addition, foreign cultural knowledge average (average 2.57) is far lower than the average level of Chinese cultural knowledge (average 3.55). In terms of skill, the average value of intercultural communication skill is 3.37, and that of intercultural cognitive skill is 3.16. According to the results, most students believe that they lack cross-cultural skill and knowledge. Therefore, in foreign language teaching, teachers should help students focus on improving cross-cultural knowledge and skill.

The qualitative auxiliary method adopts semi-structured interview, which focuses on the constitutive dimension of cross-cultural competence and emphasizes on understanding the classroom experience and extra-curricular cross-cultural communication activities related to the learning of English education major courses. The interview emphasizes the description and reflection of learning experience. The interviewees were selected from the sample of the questionnaire, and the interview lasted for an average of 40 minutes, including 4 students with different cross-cultural communication backgrounds (overseas experience), English language proficiency and classroom performance.

4. EXISTING PROBLEMS AND ATTRIBUTION

Through questionnaire and interview, this paper analyzes the problems existing in four aspects, talent cultivation program, teaching methods, teaching materials and teaching tactics in the ideological and political course of English education major, and further reveals the root causes and influencing factors of the problems. At the same time, through the intercultural competence assessment of English education major undergraduates, the existing problems and weaknesses are found.

The theoretical and practical teaching construction of English education major courses has taken shape, but there are still the following problems in the teaching process of integrating intercultural competence cultivation and design of curriculum ideology and politics.

Due to the characteristics of language courses for English education major, it is easy to put emphasis on the introduction of western culture, and break away from Chinese traditional ideology and culture, neglecting ideological and political education. Because the students are foreign language majors, politics, economy and culture in Britain and the United States often become the focus of the class, and there are relatively few contents that can reflect Chinese elements. In view of this phenomenon, it is particularly important to combine the courses of English education major with the courses of ideology and politics.

English education major students are deeply influenced by western culture, leading to the absence of Chinese culture in some students. Under the trend of rapid development and globalization in today's society, college students' spare time life is inundated with western individualistic values. English education major students tend to ignore Chinese traditional culture, traditional festival customs, and they know little about Chinese ancient poetry, the development path and direction of contemporary China. Even if they know something about it, they can hardly express it in English, and can't give full play to the advantages of English majors and spread Chinese culture in English.

At present, few textbooks used in English education major curriculum involve the ideological and political contents. Most of the textbooks lack the contents that reflect the contemporary Chinese economy, politics, culture, science and technology and other fields that can promote national pride, and there are few contents related to patriotic ideological education in the existing textbooks.

At present, the core elements of intercultural competence training are not well matched with the current curriculum system of foreign language teaching,

and there are problems of unsystematic training methods and scattered and one-sided teaching. The students' ability of cross-cultural self-evaluation questionnaire results show that the students' cross-cultural attitude and consciousness is stronger, but cross-cultural knowledge and intercultural skill has much room to improve. The cultivation of intercultural competence is still in the preliminary and exploratory stage, and it is unable to systematically and scientifically integrate intercultural teaching concepts into all aspects of foreign language teaching, which affects the effect of intercultural competence cultivation.

5. A PRACTICAL PATH OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN ENGLISH EDUCATION MAJOR CURRICULUM AIMED AT CULTIVATING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

In view of many problems and obstacles in the implementation process of ideological and political education of English education major curriculum, this paper tries to construct a practical path to improve the ideological and political education of English education major curriculum, mainly including the following four dimensions.

5.1 Remodel the training scheme based on the professional practice

The educational function of professional courses should be deeply probed to clarify the professional training program, and Chinese culture-related courses and credit weight should be added and increased.

5.2 Improve professional teaching materials and strengthen value orientation

The content of teaching materials should be adjusted to balance the proportion of Chinese and western cultures, and western materials should be strictly selected to prevent the infiltration of western values.

5.3 Optimize course content and enrich teaching approaches

The professional teachers should fully excavate ideological and political materials in teaching content, naturally infiltrate ideological and political elements in teaching practice, and train new foreign language talents with high cross-cultural ability and ideological and political consciousness with brand-new values and diversified teaching methods.

5.4 Strengthen the construction of foreign language teachers, improve the ideological and political teaching ability and cross-cultural teaching ability

The concept of professional curriculum to strengthen the consciousness of teaching and educating should be updated; traditional cultural experience to enhance teachers' ethnic culture confidence should be highlighted; mainstream awareness training should be strengthened to enhance teachers' core value accomplishment. In addition, the construction of system and mechanism should be to emphasized to strengthen the implementation of subject teaching.

The aim of cultivating talents in English education major is to pay more attention to the characteristics of the new era of compound innovation and cross-cultural awareness. It is urgent to cultivate college students with intercultural communication ability in foreign language teaching, so the teaching content and emphasis should be changed. With the development and popularization of modern information technology and the diversification of traditional teaching methods, the second classroom of foreign language teaching is particularly important. The teaching environment, the relationship between teachers and students, and the roles they play will also change. In view of the fact that the content proposed by the model is real and simple in structure and its functions can generate specific behaviors, we try to build a foreign language teaching model based on intercultural competence cultivation, as shown in the figure below.

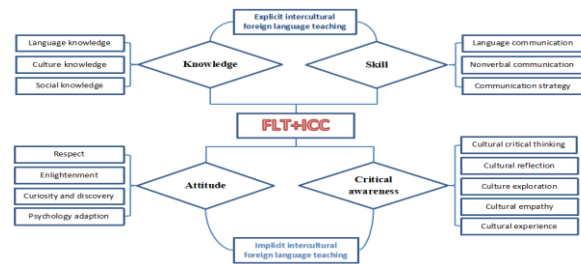


Figure 1. Foreign language teaching model based on intercultural competence cultivation

FLT+ICC (Foreign Language Teaching+ Intercultural Communication Competence) refers to foreign language teaching aimed at training students' intercultural competence. In this model, the cultivation of intercultural competence is the core of teaching, and the teaching content is divided into two aspects: explicit intercultural teaching and implicit intercultural teaching. Explicit intercultural teaching includes intercultural knowledge and skills, while implicit intercultural teaching includes intercultural attitude and intercultural critical awareness. Explicit intercultural teaching is mainly carried out in the traditional classroom while implicit intercultural teaching is mainly carried out in the second classroom. In the

actual teaching process, the important role of the second classroom is reflected, and the role of the teacher is invisible or does not actually appear. Since the model is generative, users can fill in and expand these four elements based on their own teaching experience.

6. CONCLUSION

Under the background of the new era, the fundamental task of education is to integrate value shaping, knowledge imparting and ability cultivation. The curriculum of English education major aimed at cultivating cross-cultural ability contains abundant ideological and political elements. Teachers need to find the complementary points between intercultural competence training objectives and ideological and political education element, to strengthen the awareness of education. We will intensify reform of curriculum education development, constantly explore how to integrate the content of the course and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, and how to carry out education on socialism with Chinese characteristics and the Chinese Dream in a more systematic way. Students should understand the close relationship between language and culture and communication, while accepting the world culture, identify with the traditional Chinese culture from the heart, learn to tell Chinese stories, and develop the ability of cross-cultural communication, to become cross-cultural communication foreign language talents in the new era in line with the Belt and Road construction and social development.

Project Fund

This paper is one of the phased results of 2021 College Students Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training Program with the project name *An empirical*

study on the construction of foreign language teaching model based on intercultural communicative competence cultivation in Marine universities under the Belt and Road Initiative. It is also one of the phased results of 2021 research project of Ideological and Political Teaching in Higher education curriculum of Zhejiang Province with the project name *A study on the Ideological and political Innovation of English Education Curriculum aimed at cultivating cross-cultural competence.*

REFERENCES

- [1] Higher Education Steering Committee, Ministry of Education.(2018) National Standards for Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Majors in Regular Institutions of Higher Learning.Higher Education Press,Beijing,92.
- [2] At the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Universities, Xi stressed that ideological and political work should run through the whole process of education and teaching to create a new situation in the development of China's higher education. (2016) People's Daily,12-09(1).
- [3] Byram M.(1997) Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence. Multilingual Matters, New York.
- [4] Sun Y. Z.(2016) Foreign language Education and intercultural Competence Cultivation. China Foreign Language,13 (3) :1, 17-22.
- [5] Zhong H & Fan W.W.(2013)The theoretical framework for the construction of intercultural communicative competence scale for Chinese college students.Foreign Language Education in China (Quarterly),8:19-28.