Retrospect and Prospect: Interpretation Based on the Research Status of Ideology and Politics Education in Higher Vocational English Courses

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Abstract. With the all-round implementation of “the Great Ideological and Political Education”, the researches on the ideological and political education of higher vocational English curriculum are blooming. At present, the relevant researches were few but achieved good results which included the connotation of ideological and political education, the necessity and feasibility as well as the implement approaches of ideological and political education in higher vocational English teaching. The achievements are of positive significance to the ideological and political construction of English curriculum in higher vocational colleges. At the same time, there is still room for research in the development of English textbooks, the innovation of ideological and political education mechanism as well as the construction of characteristic system.

Keywords: Development of textbooks · Education mechanism · Characteristic system · Ideological and political education in higher vocational English courses

1 Introduction

Vocational English course is a compulsory public basic course for higher vocational education students [1]. Against the background of “great ideology and politics”, more and more vocational colleges have carried out practice and explorations of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses, and related research has also attracted the attention of the academic community. Interpretation of existing research has important practical significance for promoting the practice and research of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses.

2 Research Data Sources and Research Tools

Relying on the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) database, the advanced search was conducted with the theme of “higher vocational + English + ideology and
politics” and 171 original data records were obtained. After screening the data, 107 valid journal articles were obtained. The retrieval time was May 26, 2020.

The research tool was VOSVIEWER (version 1.6.15) developed by Leiden University in the Netherlands to conduct keyword clustering analysis, which more clearly presents the current situation of ideological and political research in higher vocational English courses.

3 Backtracking: Analysis of the Current Situation of Ideological and Political Research in Higher Vocational English Courses

3.1 Time Trajectory of Ideological and Political Research in Higher Vocational English Courses

Judging from the annual distribution of literature, the ideological and political research of higher vocational English courses has roughly gone through two stages of development (see Fig. 1). The first stage is from 2010 to 2015, which belongs to the initial stage of ideological and political research in higher vocational English courses. The three literature studies during this period mainly focus on discussing the importance of ideological and political education in higher vocational English teaching; the second stage is the rising period. From 2017 to 2019, with the proposal of the ideological and political concept of the curriculum in December 2016, more and more scholars began to focus on the ideological and political research of higher vocational English courses, and the number of published papers reached 63 articles. As of May 26, 2020, the number of ideological and political papers in higher vocational English courses has reached 41, which is only 13 less than in 2019. From this, it can be boldly speculated that 2020 will usher in the first study of ideological and political research in higher vocational English courses peak.

3.2 Hotspots Knowledge Map of Ideological and Political Research in Higher Vocational English Courses

The 107 articles were extracted and merged to obtain 110 keywords, and then the threshold of keyword co-occurrence was set to 3 in the VOSVIEWER tool, and a total of 14
keywords met the conditions. For the consideration of reliability and validity, the frequency of keyword occurrence is used as the weight, and finally a knowledge graph of keyword clustering is generated (see Fig. 2 for details).

### 3.3 Hotspot Analysis of Ideological and Political Research in Higher Vocational English Courses

According to the map, the existing research hotspots are mainly concentrated in the three areas of red, blue and green, which correspond to three major themes of ideological and political education in higher vocational English teaching, the ideological and political connotation of higher vocational English courses, the necessity and feasibility of higher vocational English courses and their practice paths.

#### 3.3.1 Research on the Situation of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational English Teaching

Compared with the achievements of ideological and political education in higher vocational English teaching, the existing research focuses more on the shortcomings, which are embodied in the following aspects.
The ideological and political awareness of English teachers in higher vocational colleges is insufficient. The teaching goals of English teachers in higher vocational colleges pay too much attention to imparting basic language skills and neglect to add elements and ideas of thinking and educating people in English classrooms [2]. The reason may be that with the expansion of the enrollment scale of higher vocational colleges, the workload of English teachers in higher vocational colleges has increased, and teachers can only focus on completing teaching tasks, and it is difficult to carry out ideological and political education [3].

Vocational English teachers have a single method of ideological and political education. Although higher vocational English teachers try to incorporate ideological and political elements into the teaching process, their strategies are outdated, and they lack teaching methods and practical experience to attract students [4]. For example, “When teachers introduce typical characters in English literary works, they only teach in the form of theoretical statements, which is not conducive to students’ understanding of the shining points of the souls of the characters” [5]. “This is because the teaching method will restrict the ideological and political education function of the curriculum” [6].

There is absence of Chinese traditional culture in higher vocational English textbooks. Due to the characteristics of higher vocational education itself, there are problems such as a wide variety of textbook versions and insufficient integration of Chinese culture into textbooks [7], p. 29. Most of the textbooks are imported from foreign cultures, but lack of input of Chinese values and excellent traditional culture [8]. Due to the textbooks, classroom teaching lacks participation in traditional Chinese culture, and it is difficult for teachers to effectively integrate ideological and political education [9]. The weak ideological and political concepts of higher vocational English teachers, the simple method of ideological and political education, and the lack of Chinese traditional culture in higher vocational English textbooks are the prominent problems in the function of strengthening moral education and cultivating people in higher vocational English courses.

3.3.2 Research on the Connotation of Higher Vocational English Curriculum

What is the ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses? Before answering this question, some studies have tried to clarify the similarities and differences between the terms “ideology and politics in courses” and “ideological and political courses”, “higher vocational English” and “ideology and politics in courses”; they indirectly discusses the connotation of ideology and politics in English courses in higher vocational colleges.

3.3.2.1 Relationship Between Two Sets of Terms

The first is the relationship between “ideology and politics in courses” and “ideological and political courses”. First of all, the main difference between “ideological and political courses” and “ideological and political courses” is that the two are essentially different. The former is an abstract educational concept, and the latter is a specific course category. “‘Ideology and politics in courses’ is a brand-new educational concept” [10], and “ideological and political courses” refers to the courses of ideological and political education.
Secondly, the educational goals of “ideology and politics in courses” and “ideological and political courses” are similar, which both take strengthening moral education and cultivating people as the fundamental task of education, so that various courses and ideological and political theory courses go in the same direction, forming a synergistic effect [11].

The second is the relationship between “vocational English” and “ideology and politics in courses”. First of all, “higher vocational English” is essentially different from “ideology and politics in courses”, “higher vocational English” is a course, while ‘ideology and politics in courses’ is an educational concept [12]. Secondly, “higher vocational English” and “ideology and politics in courses” are highly compatible with the concept of ideological and political education. “Higher vocational English courses are both instrumental and humanistic, establish socialist core values in language knowledge teaching, and achieve the all-round penetration of moral education while achieving the goals of higher vocational English language teaching” [13]; The ideology and politics in courses is to integrate the ideological and political education of colleges and universities into teaching, so as to realize the subtle education of people [14].

3.3.2.2 Connotation of Ideology and Politics in Higher Vocational English Courses
As the goal of educating people, “strengthening moral education and cultivating people” organically connects the three of “higher vocational English”, “ideology and politics in courses” and “ideological and political courses”. “Ideology and politics in Higher vocational English courses” is not a simple superposition of “higher vocational English” and “ideology and politics in courses”, but an organic integration of the two. The former provides soil for the latter, and the latter enriches the educational content and nurturing function of the former. “Higher vocational English” and “ideology and politics in courses” are the relationship between fish and water. The two need each other, promote each other, and develop together. Specifically, the former is a comprehensive education concept, that is to integrate the content of ideological and political education into the English teaching of higher vocational education to improve the effectiveness of its ideological and comprehensive education, and further “construct the integration of ideological and political education and higher vocational English courses to form a ‘synergistic effect’ ideological and political implicit education model for higher vocational English courses” [15].

3.3.3 Feasibility, Necessity and Approach of English Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Colleges

3.3.3.1 The Necessity and Feasibility of English Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational Education
Why it is necessary to implement ideological and political education in higher vocational English courses? Many scholars such as Zhu Yi [16], Yan Biyu [17], Zhu Rui [18], Peng Xuanhong [19] and others believe that the ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses is the ideological and political work of higher vocational education, and it is the need of higher vocational English teaching work.
First of all, higher vocational English ideological and political education is the need of higher vocational ideological and political education work. General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed that various courses and ideological and political theory courses should form a synergistic effect of the same direction [20]. “In order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of ideological and political education, it is a must to hold the main teaching position and make good use of the main classroom channels” [21]. As an important component of higher vocational education, “higher vocational English has received extensive attention due to factors such as large volume and wide coverage” [1]. Higher vocational English courses are accepted by many first- and second-year students of non-English majors in higher vocational colleges. The teaching objects cover a wide range, which is conducive to continuous ideological interaction and teaching exchange between teachers and students, and it has the conditions for long-term ideological education for students, which can prove the continuity of ideological and political education [16], p. 37. Therefore, it is necessary to integrate the ideological and political concept of the curriculum into the English teaching of higher vocational colleges, and jointly build a “three comprehensive education” model with other courses.

Secondly, higher vocational English ideological and political education is the need of higher vocational English teaching. It not only imparts language knowledge and skills, but also subtly conveys the three views contained in language [16]. This is because “the cultural and professional characteristics of higher vocational English provide a multidimensional theoretical basis for the exploration of higher vocational English education of ‘ideology and politics in courses’ education” [15]. Therefore, teachers should give full play to the characteristics of the English subject, and take “ideology and politics in courses” as the carrier to organically combine the teaching of language knowledge with the guidance of socialist core values, so as to educate people invisibly and silently [19].

To sum up, the needs of the development of ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges, the combination of instrumental and humanistic nature of higher vocational English courses, the long teaching time limit of higher vocational English courses, and the wide range of audiences provide the possibility for the implementation of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses. The implementation of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses has silently implemented the educational goals of ideological and political work in higher vocational colleges, diversified the ways of ideological and political education, and enriched the content and function of education of higher vocational English teaching. The implementation of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses is both necessary and feasible.

3.3.3.2 Implementation Path of Ideology and Politics in Higher Vocational English Courses

Combined with the situation of ideological and political education in higher vocational English teaching, many scholars have carried out research on the implementation path of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses from the macro and micro levels.

First, the macro-level research mainly includes the establishment of the concepts of ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses, the construction of teachers, and the establishment of evaluation systems. First of all, higher vocational English
teachers should implement the “knowledge imparting, ability improvement and value guidance” in the higher vocational English training plan and curriculum standards [21]. Secondly, it is to continuously improve the ideological and political teaching ability of higher vocational English teachers [7]. This requires higher vocational English teachers not only to have solid professional knowledge and skills, but also to strengthen their own political theory and the study of China’s excellent traditional culture, to practice socialist core values with firm ideals and beliefs, and to have a strong sense of national pride and patriotism by words and deeds in their teaching behavior [23], p. 36, which guarantees human resources for “co-education and peer-to-peer” in ideological and political curriculum education and higher vocational English curriculum education [24]. Thirdly, it is necessary to establish a diversified ideological and political education evaluation system for higher vocational English courses. In terms of evaluation content, patriotism, learning attitude, and teamwork spirit should be introduced into the evaluation system; in terms of evaluation methods, group self-evaluation and mutual evaluation of teachers can be used [25]. The teaching evaluation of English ideological and political education in higher vocational colleges should really promote thinking through evaluation and learning through evaluation” [26].

The research at the micro level mainly focuses on how to integrate the content of moral education into English teaching in higher vocational colleges and how to develop it. First of all, it is necessary to make full use of the ideological and political elements in higher vocational English textbooks and integrate them into teaching [26]. Vocational English textbooks are very rich in content, involving humanities and social sciences, natural sciences and other aspects, such as “New Comprehensive Course of Practical English” [27], “New Vocational English - Vocational Comprehensive English II” [28]. It is also necessary to dig deep into the existing teaching materials, and extract the ideological and political elements [6]. A community with a shared future for mankind” and contrast it with Kant’s theory, leading students to think [29], etc. Secondly, it is also necessary to innovate the teaching methods of English in higher vocational colleges [21], such as appropriate use of micro-courses, MOOCs and other informatization methods to stimulate students’ interest in learning English and guide them to actively engage in dialectical thinking [20], and so on. Finally, it is a necessity to give full play to the educating value of the second classroom, truly form an all-round education pattern, and give full play to the effect of collaborative education [25], such as “English curriculum ideological and political ‘learning + practice’, ‘in-class + extra-curricular’, ‘learning + practice’ and other practical teaching” [6].

4 Prospects: The Future Research Space of Ideology and Politics in Higher Vocational English Courses

To sum up, the existing literature has made a detailed study from the educating practice in higher vocational English teaching to the ideological and political connotation of higher vocational English courses, the necessity and feasibility of ideological and political development of higher vocational English courses and their implementation paths. However, there is still room for the development of higher vocational English textbooks, the innovation of ideological and political education mechanisms for higher vocational English courses, and the cultivation of characteristics.
4.1 Paying Attention to the Research on the Development of Higher Vocational English Teaching Materials

Vocational English teaching materials are an important basis for carrying out all higher vocational English teaching activities. The pros and cons of the content, the quality, and the old and new concepts of English textbooks in higher vocational colleges directly affect the students’ interest in learning, teachers’ teaching implementation, and the evaluation of teaching effects [30]. In the context of “great ideology and politics”, the compilation of higher vocational English textbooks should not only take into account its own necessary practicality, epochal and professionalism [31], but also focus on its cultural locality. The compilation should also introduce Chinese culture into Chinese culture, introduce foreign culture appropriately, and let students learn foreign language to introduce Chinese culture. Therefore, teaching students how to carry forward the excellent traditional Chinese culture with the help of foreign language teaching materials is consistent with the country’s strategy of “strengthening the country through culture” [30]. It is a must to integrate ideology and politics in courses into the development and research of higher vocational English textbooks, drive development through research, promote research through development, and continuously promote the maturity and improvement of textbooks, so as to give full play to provide assurance for the functions of strengthening moral education and cultivating people and collaborative education for higher vocational English courses.

4.2 Strengthening the Innovation Research on the Ideological and Political Education Mechanism of Higher Vocational English Courses

The ideological and political education mechanism refers to “the process and method of interconnection and interaction among the various elements of the ideological and political education system” [32]. Referring to the above definitions, the ideological and political education mechanism of higher vocational English courses means the process and method of mutual connection and interaction among the various elements in the education system of strengthening moral education and cultivating people with higher vocational English courses as the carrier. In order to achieve the dual goals of curriculum education and ideological and political education in the ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses, and the ideological and political construction of higher vocational English courses should be effective, the innovative research and exploration of the ideological and political education mechanism of higher vocational English courses must be done well, such as combination mechanism, synergy mechanism, dynamic mechanism, management mechanism [24], etc. At present, there are few studies on the innovation of the ideological and political education mechanism of higher vocational English courses, which also points out the direction for the research on ideological and political education in higher vocational English courses.

4.3 Emphasizing on the Construction of the Characteristic System of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Vocational English Courses

As a general education course, higher vocational English also needs to have the characteristics of “ideology and politics in courses”, so that students can improve their
ideological realm while improving their English level [33]. The ideological and political characteristics of higher vocational English courses are the high-quality general term that “when people have, mine is better” formed in the process of school-based ideological and political education in higher vocational English courses. Specifically, it refers to the qualitative differences and quality of strategies, means, and evaluations required in the ideological and political teaching process of higher vocational English courses that are different from other similar schools [34]. With the comprehensive development of ideology and politics in courses, it is particularly important how to make the ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses different from the same courses in different schools and different courses in the same school and have their own distinct attributes. The cultivation of ideological and political characteristics of higher vocational English courses is not only conducive to building the ideological and political system of higher vocational English courses, but also helps to improve the level of students’ quality development and promote the professional development of teachers [34]. At present, the academic circles have carried out a lot of researches on the promotion of “ideology and politics in courses” in colleges and universities, but few of them have carried out the construction of a characteristic “ideology and politics in courses” system based on the characteristics of different colleges and universities [35]. Therefore, the construction concepts, strategies and models of the ideological and political characteristic system of higher vocational English courses still need to be discussed.

5 Conclusion

The ideology and politics in higher vocational English courses have achieved certain achievements in the aspect of strengthening moral education and cultivating people, and there is still a lot of room for improvement. Higher vocational English courses need to persistently implement and deepen the concept of ideological and political education, and together with other courses, build a three-round education system in vocational colleges and cultivate high-quality professional talents.

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References


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