



Ideological and Political Construction of Non-lingua Franca Curriculum in Chinese Colleges: A Case Study of Languages of Countries Along the Belt and Road

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Abstract. Since the implementation of curriculum ideological and political reform in China in 2014, ideological and political construction in Chinese colleges has become one of the key topics of research. The author found that many scholars and teachers have studied the ideological and political construction of curriculum in a single field or major, but there is still a research gap in the non-lingua Franca of the countries along the “Belt and Road”. By collecting the current status of ideological and political construction of languages of countries along the “One Belt and One Road” in recent years, this research explores the ideological and political construction of the non-lingua franca curriculum in Chinese colleges. From the perspective of teaching methods, teaching contents, and teaching objectives, this research found that there are many problems in the ideological and political construction of non-lingua franca curriculum in Chinese colleges and universities, such as single teaching methods, and cultural gaps in teaching contents and unclear teaching objectives. In view of these problems, the author suggests diversifying teaching methods, focusing on cultivating students’ cultural literacy in the teaching process, unifying teaching content, designing curriculum objectives more scientifically, and improving the teaching feedback mechanisms.

Keywords: Curriculum ideological and political · Non-lingua franca · Belt and Road

1 Introduction

With the increasingly frequent and close political, economic, and cultural exchanges between countries and regions, China has a stronger need to export its own culture abroad and receive other cultures at home. Language is a vital tool for international communication. The development of curricula ideology and politics of language majors in colleges and universities has been a concern for society, especially the languages of countries along the Belt and Road.

Understanding the status of ideological and political construction in language majors curriculum, which are used along the “Belt and Road” in Chinese colleges is crucial for

at least two reasons. On the one hand, in the Guiding Outline of Ideological and Political Education Curriculum Construction in Colleges and Universities issued by the Ministry of Education on June 1, 2020, it is mentioned that “ideological and political education should run through the personnel training system... Give full play to the educational role of each course. Knowledge delivery and competence development should be values-oriented “ [1]. It claims the spiritual guiding role of ideology and politics in China’s education system. On the other hand, “One Belt and One Road” is one of the important diplomatic strategies of modern China, which involves non-lingua franca ranging from Persian, Serbian to Romanian. These majors have a short history of development in China and a small size of major construction, but they account for a large proportion of foreign translation and the export of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is necessary to research Chinese universities’ ideological and political construction from the perspective of the non-lingua franca of countries along the “Belt and Road”.

Previously, many scholars in related fields have conducted some studies on curriculum ideological and political and the languages of a single country or region, including the exploration and practice of teaching models, the status in construction of curriculum ideological and political, and the factors affecting the curriculum ideological and political construction. They found that in the past eight years, the ideological and political reform in the curriculum of Chinese universities has obtained numerous changes, with many universities constantly exploring innovative teaching methods and expanding the scope of ideological and political content in the curriculum design as much as possible. However, in these studies, there is a lack of systematic combing of this topic from the perspective of the languages of countries along the Belt and Road.

From three aspects of teaching methods, teaching contents, and teaching objectives, this study will reveal the current situation of ideological and political construction of non-lingua franca curriculum in Chinese colleges and universities, especially in the countries along the “One Belt and One Road”. In the meantime, based on the status, the author will analyse the problems existing in the current teaching system of ideological and political construction of curriculum and put forward corresponding suggestions.

2 Current Status of Ideological and Political Construction of Chinese College Non-lingua Franca Curriculum

2.1 Teaching Methods

From the perspective of teaching methods, since Shanghai took the lead in carrying out the reform of “curriculum ideology and politics” in 2014, certain research achievements have also been made in related research fields of various majors in universities and colleges. However, due to the small size and short history of non-lingua franca majors, especially the language majors of countries along the “Belt and Road”, their teaching methods in ideological and political construction of the curriculum are also limited.

In the past eight years, most of the non-lingua franca majors have adopted these teaching methods to complete the reform: inviting experts to give lectures and organizing students to attend them; leading students to translate ideological and political content into corresponding languages; encouraging students to give oral presentations on ideological and political topics in their major languages. Of course, some Chinese colleges

and universities offering relevant majors also actively explore teaching practice and put forward innovative teaching methods that meet the requirements of curriculum ideological and political construction and can improve students' language levels. For example, Beijing International Studies University, the college offers 12 non-lingua franca majors in Central and Eastern Europe (Latvian, Hungarian, Czech, Polish, Estonian, Serbian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Slovak, Slovenian). The 12 languages are all spoken by countries along the Belt and Road. They add the course named "Central and Eastern European Countries Newspaper Reading" to their curriculum. By reading texts of different subject matter and genres of the mainstream media at home and abroad, enriching the connotation of the student's knowledge, enhancing the students' language output, analysis, induction, and ability of critical reading media content, enhancing the students' national identity, national confidence, and values. At the same time, they also use classroom teaching and a combination of field practice teaching methods. By organizing students to visit the national museum, military museum, the communist party of China history museum, explore the Chinese communist's red memory, strengthen the understanding of the party's one hundred years of struggle, improve personal political culture and the connotation, makes sure the student's understanding of ideological and political content more than stay in the textbook, but into their own personal experience [2].

2.2 Teaching Content

In recent years, in the construction of ideological and political curricula in Chinese universities, the teaching content of non-lingua franca majors focuses on international exchanges and national policies, traditional Chinese culture, and speeches of national leaders. The chairman of China in the conference on ideological and political work in colleges and universities across the country stressed that "the education of colleges and universities should guide students to correctly understand the world and China's development trend... Correctly understand Chinese characteristics and international comparison and have a comprehensive and objective understanding of contemporary China and the world" [3]. In addition, China is now at a critical stage of establishing cultural confidence at home and actively exporting culture abroad. Taking traditional Chinese culture as the main teaching content in the ideological and political construction of the curriculum can help students learn how to tell Chinese stories well in foreign languages. At the same time, national leaders are also the spokesmen of a country facing the international community, and learning their important speeches can help students keep pace with the development of the times, keep abreast of the latest ideological and political content, and constantly improve their knowledge structure.

Since Shanghai took the lead in carrying out the reform of "curriculum ideology and politics" in 2014, Shanghai International Studies University has given full play to the educational function of all courses and the educational responsibility of all teachers and gradually realized the transformation from "ideological and political curriculum" to "curriculum ideological and political". Especially in the language majors, they integrate the ideological and political content into many major courses, including translation theory and practice, cultural and political literature reading, foreign classics and newspapers

reading, etc. For example, in the Persian political translation theory and practice, teachers by selecting representative passages, and training students in Chinese and Persian translation ability, help the students promptly to understand contemporary China's and Iran's latest changes and development in social, political, economic, and cultural fields, improve students' ability in the understanding of the real world and analysis ability. Make sure students fully understand the great achievements of China since the reform and opening up, understand the Chinese society today, and at the same time develop the ability to introduce today's China to the target countries, tell The Story of China [4].

2.3 Teaching Objectives

The goal of education is not only the imparting of knowledge but also the inheritance of culture [4]. To achieve such inheritance in language teaching in colleges and universities, students are required to accumulate knowledge, and teachers are also required to guide students in moral and ideological aspects. In May of 2020, the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a Guiding Outline of Ideological and Political Construction of University Curriculum and it mentioned that curriculum construction of ideological and political work should around the emphasize of comprehensive improve the ability of personnel training [1], which means that the teaching goals of ideological and political construction in college curriculum should not be limited to cultivating students with excellent language ability, it is more important that we should cultivate language talents with correct ideological, political and moral concepts and a deep understanding of the traditional Chinese culture as international communicational envoys.

Taking Xi'an International Studies University as an example, in response to the national policy and social demand for high-end foreign language talents, the university added four majors in non-lingua franca of countries along the Belt and Road in 2017: Kazakh, Ukrainian, Malay, and Polish. The teachers of these majors naturally integrate mainstream values into the classes of foreign language professional knowledge in the teaching process, promote the ideological and political construction of the curriculum "based on foreign language" while "jumping out of foreign language", and promote interdisciplinary integration. In order to realize the organic unity of ideological and political education and professional knowledge education, the ideological value guidance should be placed in the first place in the foreign language major education and teaching. In this way, the teaching objectives of ideological and political construction for non-lingua franca majors are clearly defined. It is to cultivate excellent international talents with rich professional knowledge, strong cross-cultural communication ability, and broad international vision [5].

3 Problems of Ideological and Political Construction of Chinese College Non-lingua Franca Curriculum

3.1 Teaching Methods are not Rich Enough

The previous part mentioned that some Chinese universities have explored and designed some innovative teaching methods in the practical teaching construction of ideological

and political construction in non-lingua franca curriculum, but the monotonous and boring teaching methods are still a common problem in the teaching field of ideological and political construction in China.

For a long time, scholars have divided language teaching and learning into listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation. The curricula of language majors in most colleges and universities are also designed according to this system. From this point of view, therefore, the diversification of teaching methods of ideological and political courses is also limited. Besides, language learning is boring to some extent. In some classes, ideological and political teaching content is presented rigidly and mechanically, it not only fails to achieve the teaching goal of guiding students' values but also causes antipathy and even resistance among students. At the same time, when ideological and political content is integrated into translation teaching, this teaching method also tends to cause the deviation of teaching emphasis. Some scholars have phrased this problem as "emphasizing translation knowledge over ideological infiltration" and "emphasizing knowledge transmission over ideological and political introduction" [6]. This means that teachers focus on teaching translation skills, vocabulary, and grammar knowledge while neglecting ideological education and cultural dissemination.

3.2 There are Cultural Gaps in Teaching Content

In the ideological and political actual construction of the Chinese college curriculum, in the face of rich teaching contents, the cultural gaps between different countries, and the incomplete correspondence between different languages making this reform is not easy. Especially for non-lingua franca majors, fewer scholars and a limited number of research in related areas lead to these majors' teaching constructions being more difficult.

Take Persian, the official language of Iran, as an example. In the ancient Silk Road period, Iran's predecessor, Persia, was an important participant on this trade road. Today, Iran has become an important oil importer of China and a trusted strategic partner of China. In May 2022, China and Iran formally signed the 25-year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement, which took bilateral relations to a new stage [7]. However, in this case, due to the limitation of the development of Persian in Chinese universities, there are still many gaps in China's ideological, political, and cultural export to Iran. For example, there is a lack of uniformity in the teaching content of this language in ideological and political construction: "Compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Straits are the descendants of Chinese culture, the blood of the Chinese nation flows through their veins, and the spirit of the Chinese nation sticks to them." Should literal translation or free translation be adopted in translation teaching for such expressions with Chinese characteristics? If the literal translation is adopted, whether the contents like "inheritor", "blood" and "soul" can be understood from the perspective of Iranian culture when exported. In addition, the use of words in language translation teaching is also a teaching difficulty. "The Chinese youth in the new era should take the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation as their responsibility, and strengthen the ambition, backbone, and confidence of being Chinese". How to choose the corresponding Persian words, so that the Persian native speakers can accurately understand the contents. All these need to be discussed together by teachers and students in the process of teaching practice.

3.3 Teaching Objectives are not Clear

“Guiding Outline of Ideological and Political Construction of University Curriculum” puts forward that “comprehensively promoting ideological and political construction of curriculum is a strategic measure to implement the fundamental task of moral cultivation” [1]. Since the ideological and political curriculum in Chinese colleges has been constructed, there has always been a situation of unclear teaching objectives, especially for non-lingua franca majors. On the one hand, due to the lack of value-oriented teaching objectives in the setting of teaching objectives of the major curriculum and the lack of route of ideological and political content in the teaching, resulting in the phenomenon of paying attention to knowledge teaching and neglecting value guidance. On the other hand, although colleges and universities have realized the horizontal coverage of ideological and political construction of curriculum in accordance with the guiding outline of work development, the penetration degree of vertical ideological and political education is not deep enough, and the teaching plan has not made clear the target depth of penetration. As a result, it becomes difficult for teachers to determine the depth of teaching during lesson preparation. Students are likely to lose learning objectives and motivation in the learning process. It also weakens students to the sense of acquisition of relevant knowledge. The questionnaire data collected by scholars on the current situation of curriculum ideological and political construction shows that nearly 85% of the students think that there are still various teaching problems in the ideological and political classes of their curriculum, among which 16% of the students reflect that “the teacher only pays attention to the course content, without ideological and political elements”, indicating that the teacher does not have a clear understanding of the teaching objectives. [8].

4 Suggestions of Ideological and Political Construction of Chinese College Non-lingua Franca Curriculum

4.1 Diverse Teaching Methods and Share Teaching Plans

Optimizing Teaching Means and Making Full Use of Modern Information Technology

With the continuous development of the Internet and strong support for the diversification of teaching methods, new media has become a teaching tool widely adopted by colleges and universities [6]. Teaching methods should actively adapt to the change in information technology, especially for Chinese non-lingua franca majors. Due to its short development history, there are few teaching materials available for reference and use. In addition to the global pandemic, language learners cannot go to the corresponding language environment for in-depth study. To ensure the achievement of talent training goals, it is necessary to make full use of all kinds of online materials and multimedia resources in the new media era.

Taking Practice Activities as the Carrier to Stimulate the Enthusiasm of Students

In addition to the necessary teaching of classroom content, teachers can also organize students to carry out some relevant practical activities, such as visiting military museums,

watching patriotic movies, holding bilingual news broadcasting activities, etc., so that students can deeply experience ideological and political content, so that the knowledge learned in class can be integrated in practice.

Setting up Sharing Platform of Excellent Innovative Plans Among Colleges

As mentioned by the author, although there is a common problem of monotonous and boring teaching methods in the construction of ideological and political curricula in Chinese colleges, there are still some majors that have explored teaching methods worthy of reference. To build a platform for the communication of excellent teaching programs of ideological and political construction between colleges and universities, so that effective teaching programs can be promoted, but also provide more opportunities for college teachers to learn from each other.

4.2 Cultivate Cultural Literacy and Unify Teaching Content

Teaching both Chinese Culture and Other Cultures

In language learning, the thickness of the mother tongue determines the height of a foreign language. Similarly, in the process of practical teaching ideological and political content, teachers and students should have a full understanding of the culture, religions, and politics of the corresponding countries on the premise of having a profound understanding of Chinese culture. Only in this way, in the translation practice of relevant content, can we retain the Original Chinese meaning and enhance the understanding of the others.

Normalizing and Standardizing Teaching Content

Non-lingua franca in Chinese colleges is generally characterized by a small number of experts in the field, a small number of college teachers, and a small number of teaching materials for reference and use [9]. However, language is an important communication tool and cultural output carrier for a country facing the world. Every word and sentence in ideological and political content must be the result of the careful discussion. Therefore, experts and teachers of the same specialty and field should establish a unified and standardized working mechanism for ideological and political content translation to avoid the same Chinese content, different foreign language translation, or even wrong foreign language translation in ideological and political fields.

Taking Full Use of External Experts from Corresponding Countries

In addition to the above, unification and standardization of teaching content by domestic personnel in relevant fields, teachers in colleges and universities should also discuss the teaching of ideological and political content with external experts from corresponding countries before bringing ideological and political content into the classroom and teaching them to students. Through the teaching assistance of external experts, the translation language will be more accurate, the cultural output will be more effective, and the national image will be more positive.

4.3 Design Teaching Objectives Scientifically and Improve the Teaching Feedback Mechanism

Excavating Scientifically the Ideological and Political Resources

By following the knowledge logic of professional courses, the knowledge system is decomposed into modules that are easy to analyse, and the ideological and political elements such as a sense of mission and responsibility contained in the application scenarios of professional knowledge and cutting-edge research are explored. By following the logic of history, teachers can explore ideological and political elements such as hard struggle and unremitting self-improvement contained in the stories of model figures in related fields and the difficult period of historical development according to the teaching needs [10]. In this way, the design of teaching objectives is ensured to be more scientific and logical.

Integrating Teaching Content into the Assignment

At the present stage, the ideological and political construction of Chinese college courses mostly stays in the classroom, and ideological and political content often does not penetrate the assignment. However, this happens to be an efficient way of teaching feedback. When teachers assign the assignment, they will consider whether the teaching objectives have been achieved. When students finish the assignment, they will monitor their self-learning situation and check the deficiencies and make up for the deficiencies according to the standards of the assignment. When teachers correct assignments, they will reflect on the formulation of teaching objectives again, so as to ensure that both teachers and students can make clear the teaching objectives and learning objectives.

Improving Students' Teaching Evaluation Methods

Similar to the above suggestion, in addition to the daily assignment feedback, students can also give feedback and teachers gain feedback through teaching evaluation. For example, when the teaching progress is too fast or the teaching difficulty is too high, students can submit feedback in time through the teaching evaluation system. After receiving the feedback, teachers should adjust their teaching objectives. In this way, the quality of teaching will be guaranteed.

5 Conclusion

Through research, this paper found that the ideological and political construction of non-lingua franca majors in Chinese colleges has been developed for eight years. As a result, they not only by making use of the rich and innovative teaching methods to integrate ideological and political content into specialized classes but also focus on the teaching content in China's contemporary development situation, the Chinese traditional culture, and the development of international political, economic, cultural and other fields. At the same time, In the course of teaching, the teachers make clear teaching objectives, which are to cultivate language talents and international communication messengers with correct ideological, political, and moral concepts and a deep understanding of Chinese excellent traditional culture. However, there are still some problems that cannot

be ignored in colleges: single and boring teaching methods, inevitable cultural gaps, and unclear teaching objectives. To solve these problems, the author suggested that Chinese colleges and universities should diversify teaching methods, cultivate students' cultural literacy on the basis of unified teaching content and use scientific logic to clarify the teaching objectives.

This study systematically sorted out the ideological and political construction of non-lingua franca curriculum in Chinese colleges from the perspective of languages of countries along the Belt and Road and filled the research gap in related fields. At the same time, it also builds the framework for further detailed research. However, due to the wide range of research subjects, the depth of this research is not enough. Future research can narrow the research scope and carry out more in-depth research in a smaller field.

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