

## Study on Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching

Haiyan Zhao

School of Foreign Languages, Northeast Electric Power University, Jilin, Jilin Province, China

haiyanpetreL917@126.com

**Keywords:** Socialist Core Values; Ideological and Political Education; College English

**Abstract:** Cultivating a young generation with socialist core values is an important part of contemporary Chinese education. In addition to specialized ideological and political courses, integrating ideological and political education into various professional courses is an important way to convey values to students. As a compulsory general course for college students, college English is an important field of ideological and political education. Based on the connotation of ideological and political education, this article explores the practical process of ideological and political education in college English classrooms through specific examples.

### 1. Introduction

In the 21st century, globalization has been further strengthened, and cooperation between countries in the political, economic, and cultural fields has become more frequent. “Diversity is an obvious feature in the field of consciousness and thought”<sup>[1]</sup>. Against this background, cultivating a young generation with firm socialist values is a top priority for higher education in China. In addition to specialized ideological and political courses, integrating ideological and political education into various professional courses is an important way to convey values to students. In August 2019, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China issued a document entitled “Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of the Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era”, which called for an in-depth exploration of ideological and political education resources contained in professional courses in various disciplines of colleges and universities and underlined the need for the coordination between professional courses and ideological and political courses, giving full play to the educational function of all courses so that professional courses and ideological and political courses go in the same direction, forming a synergistic effect<sup>[2]</sup>. As a compulsory general course for college students, college English course is featured by long teaching hours, which lends itself to an important platform for ideological and political education of college students. How can teachers make full use of college English classes, both imparting students language knowledge and cultivating socialist core values in them so that students become qualified successors to the socialist cause? This is a problem that must be considered by both educators and college English teachers.

### 2. Connotation of Ideological and Political Education

China’s ideological and political education, at the macro level, includes three major elements, namely ideological concepts (including world outlook, outlook on life and values), political views (including patriotism, collectivism and socialism), and moral norms (including social morality, professional ethics, family virtue and personal integrity)<sup>[3]</sup>.

One of the teaching objectives of college English courses is to integrate the above-mentioned three elements into all aspects of college English teaching in an explicit or invisible way; so that students can be guided by the correct values while learning language knowledge and acquiring comprehensive language skills.

### 3. Digging of Ideological and Political Elements in College English Teaching Material

College English is a compulsory general education course for colleges and universities across China. A variety of versions of textbook are adopted in different schools, but the content of these textbooks is carefully selected by experts in the field of second language acquisition after a long period of consideration and discussion. The textbooks basically cover a diversity of fields including politics, economics, and technology, culture, education, ethics etc. What's more, these teaching materials contain ideological elements in themselves. For example, Book One of "New College English Integrated Course" published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press contains 8 Units, each of which is concerned with a certain aspect of ideology or value cultivation. The titles of the eight units are: Ways of Learning, Values, The Generation Gap, The Virtual World, Overcoming Obstacles, Women Half the Sky, Learning about English and Protecting Our Environment<sup>[4]</sup>. All the texts in the eight units focus on the problems faced by young people during their growth, including challenges in learning and changes in life as well as the confusion caused by building interpersonal relationships such as contacting with relatives, friends, and the entire society. By deeply digging into the positive ideological elements inherent in the teaching materials, teachers can contribute to promoting students' capability to solve the problems they encountered in the process of growth by influencing them implicitly besides imparting language knowledge. This is one of the major objectives of college English course<sup>[5]</sup>.

Most of the texts in college English textbooks come from British and American countries, reflecting daily life and value system of their people<sup>[6]</sup>. Western culture advocates individualism, and religion plays a critical role in the western value system; while Chinese culture takes collectivism as the core value, in which individual interests are subject to collective interests and national interests, and patriotism and collectivism are highly consistent<sup>[7]</sup>. Consequently, students are likely to feel confused during the learning process due to the conflicts of the two cultures. In response to this situation, college English teachers must provide students with favorable ideological guidance and help them examine Western culture with dialectical materialist philosophy and methodology, removing its dross, extracting its essence, and finally establishing socialist core values.

#### **4. Examples of Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching**

Ideological and political education in college English teaching is not only reflected in the teaching content, but also in the teaching methods. Teaching method refers to the specific activities applied during the teaching process. It is the actual presentation form of the teaching activity, such as narration, explanation and lecture in the expository teaching method; demonstration and imitation in the drill method<sup>[8]</sup>. Take "A Life Full of Riches", the first text of Unit 2 of Book 2 in "New College English Integrated Course" as an example to show how the teacher integrates ideological and political teaching into college English teaching process.

##### **4.1 Analysis of Teaching Material**

This text is about the author's deep reflection upon the question—"is you poor" which was asked by a little boy when he was serving as a Salvation Army bellman. This question caused the author to think for a long time, and finally came to the answer: he is rich, as he has a lot of tangible and intangible wealth. This text deals with people's attitudes towards money, which has a strong ideological value in it. The whole teaching process is divided into three steps, namely introduction, text understanding and discussion<sup>[9]</sup>.

##### **4.2 Teaching Step One: Lead-in**

The teacher uses a 4-minute video clip to introduce the topic of the text. In the video, a man throws a question to the audience: What is the most important thing you have ever had? He gives three choices—money, love and happiness, and then he deny these three options, and give the final answer: the most important thing is values. Two examples are cited to demonstrate the answer. The teacher asks the students to fill in the blanks based on the video content. The video used in lead-in part serves three purposes. First, the question in the video causes students to think about life, which

is an obvious embodiment of ideological and political education; second, students' English listening ability is trained by filling in the blanks based on the video; third, the adoption of video enriches teaching methods and stimulates students' interest. Thus, the imparting of language teaching and ideological and political education is effectively integrated. After that, the teacher presents two pictures, a businessman who is already rich but still using unlawful means to accumulate money and a beggar who is putting money into a donation box despite being poor. The students are asked to express their views on the two pictures. The sharp contrast formed by the two pictures will definitely make the students get into deep thought about the means of earning money and the worth of money. Ideological and political education and oral English training are perfectly combined.

#### 4.3 Teaching Step Two: Text Comprehension

At the stage of text comprehension, the teacher sets up two topics for students to do a comparative analysis. First of all, students are required to compare the author's material life and spiritual life after going through the text and then express their thought about the question: is the author poor? (See Table 1) The second task is to analyze the image of a woman whom the author had dated by contrasting her remark and her behaviors (See Table 2). These two comparison tasks help students understand the content of the text thoroughly while allowing students to put themselves in the author's perspective. They may also try to analyze their material and spiritual wealth, and think about the most important thing in their life.

**Table 1.** Comparison task one

Poor (financially)		Not poor (spiritually )
Income	Lowest income bracket	Exceptionally good health Vigorous and spirited Fun in exercising Gift in creativity Writing poetry, fabricating jokes Talking with interesting Friends
Travel	One vacation in 35 years	
TV	Black-and-white TV	
Car	Old car	
Apartment	Modest apartment	
Clothes	Outdoor clothes	
Computer	No computer	

**Table 2.** Comparison task two

The woman he dated	
Her remark	What is most important to her was on the inside.
Her real value	Put material possessions above the inside.

#### 4.4 Teaching Step Three: Discussion

After analyzing the text, the teacher sets a discussion question asking students to compare the charity of the founder of Microsoft Corporation Bill Gates and the charitable act of Bai Fangli, one of the "moving China" figures and discuss who contributes more to society. Finally, the discussion ends with the teacher's conclusion: "Do not fail to do good even if it's small; do not engage in evil even if it's small." In this way, students may have a deeper understanding that kind actions, no matter how trivial, are the power that fills the society with love and hope.

To sum up, language skills training and ideological education are effectively integrated during the whole college English teaching process.

#### Conclusion

The integration of ideological and political education in college English courses can help the young generation resist the invasion of various unhealthy ideologies, establish lofty ideals and beliefs, and cultivate socialist core values. College English teachers and educators should make endeavors to excavate ideological and political elements hidden in teaching materials of college English, and make full use of various useful information accessible on internet, so that language

education and ideological and political education can play a complementary role in improving the quality of teaching and cultivating professional talents with lofty values and ideals<sup>[10]</sup>.

## References

- [1] Feng Haidi. (2019) Thoughts on Integration of Ideological and Political Education into College English Courses. *Modern Vocational Education* (21).
- [2] Speech at the National University Ideological and Political Work Conference [EB/OL]. (2016) Retrieved from <https://wenku.baidu.com/view/3d202a10cec789eb172ded630b1c59eef8c79a0a.htm>.
- [3] Wang Jun, Li Fangyuan. (2020) Exploration into Ideological and Political Education in College English Course. *Education Teaching Forum*, 52-53.
- [4] Ji Peiying, Wu Xiaozhen, Chen Jin. (2010) *New College English Integrated Course*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- [5] *College English Teaching Guide*. (2017) Ministry of Education.
- [6] Jiang Xuemei. (2020) The Penetration Path of Ideological and Political education in College English Classroom. *Drama House*, 181.
- [7] Liu Zelin. (2020) The Integration of Curriculum Ideological and Political Education in College English Teaching. *Journal of Changji University*. *Journal of Changji University*, 99-101.
- [8] Huang Baihong. (2020) Reform and Practice of College English Teaching from the Perspective of Curriculum Thinking. *Journal of Zhejiang University of Technology*.
- [9] Gu Mingyuan. (1998) *Dictionary of Education*. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press.
- [10] Xia Jun. (2020) Research on Ideological and Political Education in College English Courses. *Modern Communication*.