An Empirical Study on Vocational English Curriculum Reform from the Perspective of Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract. From the perspective of ideological and political education, this study analyzed factors relating to vocational English curriculum reform-cultural internationalization, college-enterprise cooperative education mode, and student status. Culture globalization and education internationalization are the development trend under the influence of economic globalization, college-enterprise cooperative education facilitates vocational English to meet enterprise demands and have vocational characteristics, the 00s students are experiencing great polarization-some want excellent performance while others are fearless and inactive. It explored moral education penetration indirectly and implicitly in vocational English curriculum reform, made corresponding reforms in teaching objectives, teaching procedures, teaching process, and teaching evaluation. Teaching objectives should not only contain such basic language skills as vocabulary and structure, but also workplace adaptability and critical-thinking ability cultivation. Teaching procedures should abandon former rigid teaching modes, instead should have interesting and inspiring lead-in, systematic and conclusive display, facilitating and creative exploration, and sustainable extension. Teaching process should be implemented on the basis of students’ collecting data, teachers should inspire students to summarize and analyze data, students are to make output display and encouraged to make changes to show their personality differences, peer evaluation will be provided to teach students how to be qualified audience, and teachers’ feedback will be timely provided to call close the course.

1. Introduction

At the National Ideological and Political Work of Colleges and Universities, our Chairman provided scientific answer to such problems as cultivating what kind of people, how to cultivate people, and cultivating people for whom. The conference called on us to take moral education as the central part, to ensure ideological and political work is implemented in the whole teaching process, so that all courses cooperated with Ideological and Political Course, which can form a synergy effect, realizing students’ all-round cultivation in the whole process.

CNKI, also known as China National Knowledge Infrastructure, is an information construction project aiming at realizing the dissemination, sharing and value-added utilization of knowledge resources in the whole society, initiated by Tsinghua University and Tsinghua Tongfang. The writer has conducted on CNKI a search of titles containing ideological and political education and keywords of vocational, and the time was limited to July 10, 2020. The number of relevant papers obtained were 3,672, among which 342 were ideological and political education related to vocational English teaching. In vocational colleges, the value and function of ideological and
political education have been neglected or not emphasized by Professional courses and Liberal Arts courses, which makes Ideological and Political course an isolated island in moral education, and it is difficult to create an effective cooperative mechanism and a strong talent-cultivation atmosphere by all courses. Some teachers of Professional courses and Liberal Arts courses think that their teaching task is to impart knowledge and skills to students, and they have a resistance to ideological and political education, presuming that ideological and political education is only the duty of Ideological and Political course teachers, head teachers and counselors.

2. Implementation Surrounding of Vocational English Curriculum Reform

2.1. Cultural Globalization

The cooperation between countries in economy, technology and culture is becoming more and more frequent, while problems also appear frequently, as different values, lifestyles, religious beliefs and behaviors among people from different countries will inevitably lead to some cultural conflicts. English, as a lingua franca of the world, can be called Standard Language of the world in international communication, due to its large number users and high frequency use. With the advance of economic globalization and the trend of cultural internationalization, we need to understand foreign cultures, broaden our knowledge horizon, and avoid the passive or even awkward situation in cross-cultural communication. The preponderant status of developed countries changes the two-way interaction in cultural exchanges and forms a unidirectional globalization dominated by western culture.

Ideological and political education elements are added casually instead of making systematic and scientific integration, let alone Chinese-foreign culture comparison part, which is not beneficial to the formation of students' critical-thinking ability, nor helpful for students to spread traditional Chinese culture in international communication. First of all, vocational English focuses on knowing others in cross-cultural communication, introduces the cultural conditions and ideologies of only British and American countries. Moreover, as the course fails to guide students to discriminate between the strength and weakness of foreign cultures, they don’t find out some cultural defects and deficiencies in time. Finally, vocational English teaching fails to guide students to know ourselves, failing to help students understand the core socialist values nor to understand our long-history traditional culture. Students need to reserve Chinese cultural knowledge, enhance their recognition of culture identity, and take the initiative in cross-cultural communication to carry forward and spread Chinese traditional culture. Vocational English teaching can cultivate students’ sense of nation and family, implement core socialist values, attain the integrity of individual knowledge and social culture by means of Chinese-western culture comparison, appreciation and experience [1].

2.2. College-Enterprise Cooperative Education Mode

Chinese government set new requirements for vocational education that we should improve the vocational education and training system, deepening the integration of industry, education, and school-enterprise cooperation, play the leading role of vocational education, and put forward the new strategy of Do Better Vocational Education, Do Well Vocational Enlightenment. Vocational English courses neglect enterprise’s workplace needs and students’ workplace competence for prospective employees. Furthermore, vocational English teaching objectives are not clear, lacking in vocational characteristics; and the teaching mode is rigid for ignoring the demands of majors and job posts. The assessment system is relatively backward, which pays too much attention to the understanding and mastery of knowledge while neglecting the students’ application ability. As an
important elective course of Liberal Arts Education, it fails to implement the cultivation of students' professional ethics and career competence, nor to teach students the importance of professional dedication, independent learning, practical innovation and teamwork.

The ideological and political education in vocational English courses has changed the phenomenon that they are high and far from students' majors and future career. They are set for simulating working environment such as cases, projects, team cooperation and project reporting. To meet the requirements of enterprise positions in language skills, vocational English teaching reform should focus on the cultivation of students' language application skills. The ideological and political reform of vocational English course helps students cultivate not only good professional skills, but also professional ethics and career competence [2], including professional dedication, independent learning, practical innovation, teamwork ability, employment and entrepreneurship ability, time management ability, stress tolerance as well as communication and coordination ability. Vocational English curriculum reform is helpful to cultivate college students' explicit and implicit career competence, including good professional ethics, positive professional attitude and correct value consciousness.

2.3. Students Status Analysis

Due to the Family Planning Policy, most college students live in a typical 421 family, i.e. four elderly people, one couple and one child. Families can provide them with good living conditions and pay attention to their all-round development. They are open-minded and innovative, so they have innovative ideas and distinct personalities. They use the mobile internet to study, live, entertain and socialize; experience such characteristics of information dissemination as equality, diversity, convenience and instantaneous communication. As they are not yet mature in thought, they are vulnerable to the influence of bad information and lack the ability to discriminate mixed information on internet.

With the popularization of vocational education and the diversification of student sources, many students enter higher vocational colleges with the help of registration, counterpart education with secondary vocational schools, 3+2 combination of higher vocational and secondary vocational education. The polarization of high vocational students is very serious, some students pursue excellent academic performance, independent economic life and have a strong interest in entrepreneurship and innovation; while other students generally have a fearless and inaction attitude towards learning (especially English learning), lacking learning interest, motivation and planning, and they are not afraid of the negative consequences of no-learning. Considering the fact that some students have not experienced the National Entrance Examination (GAOKAO), their background knowledge, overall cultural proficiency and learning ability have weakened. Students' learning methods for vocational English courses are outdated; assuming that learning English is nothing more than memorizing a few words and doing several multiple-choice exams, are passive in the input of vocational English and cultural background knowledge.

Vocational English teaching should choose practical teaching materials that students are interested in, design teaching tasks that fit the workplace work scenes [3], pay attention to the input of Chinese and foreign culture, and choose the assessment form that students can have a long-term benefit. Only in this way can the course participation be improved, their career adaptability be enhanced, their critical discrimination ability be strengthened, so students take the initiative to spread Chinese traditional culture.
3. Empirical Study of Vocational English Curriculum Reform

English teachers in vocational colleges should revise the curriculum teaching standards, take the implicit emotional goal of moral education as an important teaching goal, and realize the three-dimensional teaching goal unity of knowledge, skills and competence, as language has both the instrumental and humanistic features [4]. Before class, teachers should carefully make the teaching design, reintegrate excellent teaching resources, match the employment needs and career competence of enterprises, guide students to treat foreign culture critically, and embed Chinese traditional culture in an indirect and implicit way. This empirical study is based on the course of Career English, taking as an example the lead-in part of Business Entertainment Module, to explore the application of ideological and political education in vocational English teaching. Career English is a general elective course offered to all students in the fourth semester, 2 periods per week.

3.1. Teaching Objectives Outline

Business Entertainment module is an indispensable part of Career English course, a very important part of the company's daily affairs, which can be used to contact clients, communicate information and negotiate business. The teaching objectives of this module are to help students form necessary cuisine knowledge system, improve their workplace adaptability, cultivate their critical-thinking ability, and cultivate their awareness of spreading actively Chinese culture in cross-cultural communication, as is shown in Figure 1.

3.2. Teaching Procedures Design

Business Entertainment module is divided into four parts, i.e. introduction, presentation, exploration and extension, as shown in Figure 2. The lead-in part starts with the students' favorite part ordering food and teaches them to order Chinese food in English, helps students understand Chinese cuisine system as well as the importance of Ordering Chinese food in English, and enhances students' confidence in Chinese cuisine culture. In the presentation part, students are encouraged to search for information on the Internet to get the differences between Chinese and western cuisine systems; then the teacher explains to them different forms and functions of business meals, business meal ordering, so as to help students develop critical-thinking ability. In the exploration part, students are inspired to explore other cultural conflicts that may occur in business entertainment, such as choosing business gifts, choosing small talk topics in business entertainment, and changing the awkward situation in business communication, as the teaching focuses on the interactivity of cultural exchanges. In the extension part, supplementary learning materials and further-study tasks
are provided, so the teaching can guide students to conduct independent learning offline, and help students develop sustainable learning ability.

3.3. Teaching Process Implementation

The lead-in part *How to Order Chinese Food in English* lasts 40 minutes, which consists warm-up part (5 minutes), display part (30 minutes) and teaching evaluation part (5 minutes).

The warm-up part guides students to summarize the characteristics of their favorite Chinese cuisine, instructs them that Chinese cuisine is also very popular abroad, and further explains the necessity of ordering Chinese food in English. For such gradual warming up questions as *Do you like Chinese food?* and *Do you prefer Chinese food or Western food?*, most students chose Chinese food. Teachers ask the students to share their reasons for preferring Chinese food, which helps the students to summarize the characteristics of Chinese food, such as long history, healthier and nutritious, rich in variety, delicious taste and attractive appearance. Chinese food is also becoming more and more popular abroad, according to a British TV program *The Nightly Show*. We Chinese love delicious food and making friends, therefore *How to Order Chinese Food in English* can make us a great host and spread Chinese food culture.

The presentation part teaches students the components of Chinese cuisine, favorite dishes among foreign friends and usual English expressions in Ordering Chinese food, as shown in Figure 3. Firstly, referring to a complete picture of Chinese food, the teacher guides students to think over what components Chinese cuisine contains, helps students to summarize components of Chinese cuisine, i.e. drinks, cold dish, main course, staple food, soup and fruit tray. During this process, the teacher should explain to students that main course also contains seasonal dish and local dish, which shows the seasonal and local adaptation of Chinese cuisine. Moreover, favorite dishes among foreign friends are introduced, i.e. Chow Mein, Spring Rolls, Kung Pao Chicken, Beijing Roast Duck, Squirrel-Shaped Mandarin Fish, Sweet and Sour Pork Fillet. Students are encouraged to add their favorite dishes, and are instructed to get the differences between Chinese and foreign food. Chicken Feet and Duck Necks are not accepted, as they are considered horrible in many cultures. Finally, by watching the video *Ordering Chinese Food in English* performed by the teacher and students, the students are guided to pay attention to the English expressions of Inquire information and Give Recommendations. Through video playback, General Questions, Special Questions and
Choice-making Questions are concluded for *Inquire information* in the case study, while Objective Recommendations and Subjective Recommendations are summarized for *Give Recommendations*. Finally, the students are instructed to have a five-minute pair discussion, make a dialogue on ordering food to display their achievement. Students are also encouraged to show their personality differences and make appropriate changes.

![Figure 3. Part Teaching Content Display.](image)

### 3.4. Teaching Evaluation Design

Teaching evaluation is a timely and effective way of communication between teachers and students, which plays a guiding and encouraging role in classroom teaching. It also plays a good role in promoting students to know themselves and build self-confidence. The teaching evaluation part adopts the combination of Peer Evaluation and Instructor Feedback. Peer evaluation encourages students to watch the dialogue display and evaluate their peers' performances. Besides, it guides them to respect the achievements of others' work, seriously watches the content of the dialogue, and makes critical comments. The teacher gives feedback to summarize performances of the performer and the evaluator; and praises the performer's innovative consciousness and the evaluator's dialectical thinking ability. Teaching evaluation can stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning, promote students' all-round development, and help teachers to reflect on and improve teaching, so as to enhance their teaching ability.

### 4. Conclusion

Ideological and political courses require all courses, including specialized courses, general courses, to participate in moral education, to cultivate moral integrity throughout the teaching activities, and to promote the all-round development of students through full participation and thorough moral education penetration. Vocational English, as a general elective course of numerous and wide coverage, should pay attention to students' ideological and political education continuously in daily teaching activities, and form synthetic counterparts with Ideological and Political course, which can facilitate students to be proficient in skills and to be mature in morality.

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References


