



Reflections on Realization Paths of Curriculum Ideology and Politics in Senior High School English

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Abstract: Since the introduction of the concept of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" in comprehensive education reform, senior high schools have actively embraced its implementation throughout the entire education process. However, due to the pressures of exam-oriented education, systematic integration into actual frontline teaching work has been challenging, with various factors hindering its development. These include difficulties in exploring ideological and political elements within textbooks, a lack of vitality in traditional teaching models, and outdated educational mechanisms. Considering that teachers play a crucial role as educational leaders, textbooks serve as the primary tools for teachers' educational activities, and the education mechanism provides the institutional framework for teaching, these three interconnected components collectively shape the education and teaching process. Therefore, this study aims to explore the most suitable teaching mode for integrating foreign language ideological and political instruction into the curriculum through three paths: upgrading the teaching model, updating textbook content, and innovating the educational mechanism. To achieve this, the study will employ textbook analysis as a methodology and provide suggestions to textbook compilers on effectively integrating "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" into senior high school English teaching. These efforts aim to enhance the vitality of the English subject.

Keywords: Curriculum Ideological and Political Education, Senior High School English Teaching

Introduction

In 2014, the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee took the lead in transforming "Ideological and Political Courses" into "Curriculum Ideology and Politics". However, there is still limited understanding among scholars regarding the specific paths of its implementation. Therefore, this study employs the textbook analysis method to examine the ideological and political elements in the reading sections of senior high school English textbooks, specifically focusing on the People's Edition. This edition is widely adopted by most senior high schools, comprising a total of 10 textbooks. However, students can meet the requirements of the college entrance examination by studying the first 7 books, which include compulsory courses 1-3 and elective courses 1-4.

The analysis reveals that the exploration of ideological and political elements in these textbooks is not exhaustive. Additionally, the study identifies issues such as the unitary teaching model and the inflexible educational mechanism. Addressing the practical challenges faced in constructing the curriculum's ideological and political components in senior high school English, this research aims to provide suggestions for realizing these components. By doing so, it intends to compensate for the ideological and political shortcomings of the English curriculum and expand the practical strategies employed in senior high school English teaching.

This study encompasses three main research objectives. Firstly, it seeks to support teachers in updating their ideological and political concepts and actively exploring new approaches to English teaching. Secondly, it advises textbook compilers to reconstruct the teaching content based on the proportion of various thematic contexts, thus enhancing the contemporaneity of English textbooks. Lastly, it suggests that schools and other educational institutions undertake institutional reforms to facilitate the development of ideology and politics by supplementing the existing system.

Literature Review

With the in-depth implementation of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics", domestic research on it in English teaching has the following two directions. The first is its implementation in senior high school. Jiang Linpu points out that the constraints of exam-oriented education mechanism, the poor awareness of this concept, and the single teaching mode make it difficult to run through senior high school English teaching ^[1]. Ren Yurong adds that factors such as teachers' cliché educational concept and weak evaluation systems are obstacles to carry out moral education ^[2]. The second is the classification of ideological and political elements of English textbooks. Zhao Jiang takes thematic contexts as the framework, and analyzes specific cases in English textbooks of the New People's Education Edition, with hopes to cultivate students' emotional attitude and cultural awareness ^[3]. Above all, such research in terms of concept, necessity

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and other theoretical achievements is on the rise, but now the new era emphasizes more on the realization paths of how to deeply implement it. Therefore, there is still a theoretical gap in the study of ideology and politics in English teaching, which makes it difficult to carry out its construction in the actual front-line teaching.

Due to the differences between Chinese and Western education systems, there is no concept of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics" in foreign countries, but such similar concepts as civic education and moral education appeared as early as the ancient Greek period. Aristotle discussed the relationship between politics and education in *Politics*, and advocated educating citizens with virtue to discover their goodness and realize political ambitions. Based on contemporary times, this research mainly cites its implementation in the United States to compare with China's. The citizenship education includes the cultivation of patriotism, practical ability and global vision, which is committed to improving citizens' recognition of American democratic principles. It can be seen that different countries formulate different policies to cultivate citizens to form a correct value orientation, which provides theoretical guidance for the realization of China's "Curriculum Ideology and Politics". But so far, such research is relatively rare in domestic senior high schools, especially in English curriculum.

The Innovation of Teaching Mode:

As teachers are pioneers of reform, this chapter will take experiential learning and heuristic teaching as examples to explore the feasibility of non-traditional teaching mode for the development of ideology and politics. Gross and Rutland argue that experiential learning overcomes the disadvantages of de-contextualization of traditional teaching, and realizes the pluralistic integration of knowledge imparting, value shaping and ability training^[4]. The following will take some cases in English textbooks (PEP) to explore how teachers could develop this teaching mode.

Firstly, use audio-visual situation to perceive emotion in observational learning. Teachers could make good use of some media such as documentaries and feature films to allow students to fully perceive emotions under multi-sensory stimulation, thereby causing profound effects. Taking *Unit 4: Natural Disasters* in compulsory course 1 as an example, the real situation of earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters couldn't be reproduced in class, but teachers could use relevant videos with strong emotional awakening function such as Wenchuan Earthquake as an introduction to show students what are the signs of an earthquake. Through these visual materials, students could feel the destructive power of disasters, thus holding a correct view of man and nature, and establishing the awareness of disaster prevention and mitigation.

Secondly, use the role situation to deepen emotions in role-playing. According to the content, teachers could create a situation to help students understand characters' characteristics and other related background knowledge. Taking *Unit 3: Travelling Around* in compulsory course 1 as an example, teachers could create a role-playing situation, for example, let students act as the staff of a travel agency, and answer the questions from customers interested in traveling to Peru, so that students could have a deep understanding of such background knowledge as Peru's human history, develop problem-solving skills and even establish a positive outlook on professionalism. With the current raging COVID-19 pandemic as the background, teachers could also intersperse relevant emotional education by guiding students to think deeply about the meaning of a sentence, this is, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step," so as to cultivate students to form a broader international perspective.

Thirdly, use the activity situation to promote emotions in the practice behavior. Teachers could make good use of such youth practical education centers as museums and memorial halls to set up second classrooms, so that students could correct their behaviors in specific practices. Taking *Unit 1: Cultural Heritage* in compulsory course 1 as an example, after learning some experience about foreign cultural heritage protection, students could link it to local cultural protection and take youth practical education centers as excellent instructional media where they could participate in volunteer activities if conditions permit, thus establishing a sense of national responsibility in specific practices.

The other desirable teaching mode is heuristic teaching, which means that teachers guide students to use their thinking to get to the essence of things, and construct a theoretical framework of knowledge through active exploration, such as asking questions. Capon also believes that teachers should cultivate students' ability to discover problems by themselves, thus establishing knowledge system in activities and acquiring the ability of independent learning^[5]. However, many teachers often adopt inappropriate strategies, which leads to the phenomenon of students not being fully enlightened, so this section mainly discusses how English teachers could effectively organize heuristic teaching.

Firstly, set up questioning session where students could get inspiration by brainstorming. *Unit 1: Teenage Life* in compulsory course 1 describes the dilemmas Adam faced in campus, who is the epitome of these freshmen. Based on students' cognitive level, teachers should excavate the elements of ideological and political education and gradually clarify the key points of knowledge by asking the questions below of different depths, thus inspiring students to understand the spiritual world of their foreign peers. Set related questions as follows:

Q1: What challenge does Adam encounter?

Q2: How does Adam deal with this challenge?

Q3: How has Adam's attitude changed?

Q4: Do you have such challenges as Adam, if you have, what will you do?

Secondly, set up link session where prior knowledge helps to strengthen the acquisition of new knowledge. The grammar of *Unit 5: Music* in compulsory course 2 is to let students master the usage of the attributive clause with the

preposition ahead of the relative clause. And teachers could follow the universal law of students' thinking and find out the connection between the topic and grammar by using English lyrics in grammar teaching, thus guiding students to comprehend language knowledge and cultivate their aesthetic taste. Taking the song *Hand in Hand* as an example, teachers could highlight the lyrics S1, and guide students to draw out the rules of this type of attributive clause through observation, analysis, guessing, and induction. After presenting S1, teachers could create a new sentence S2 and ask students to find out the difference.

S1: We can make this world a better place **in which to live**.

S2: We can make this world a better place **which to live in**.

Above all, as developmental teaching strategies, these two teaching modes still requires being deepened. Therefore, teachers should focus on teaching exploration, and adopt such teaching methods as task-based teaching, blended teaching and flipped classroom to enrich the research about some innovative teaching strategies.

The Compilation of Textbooks:

As the main carrier of education, textbooks are usually arranged according to thematic context stipulated by *General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards* (2017 edition), which reveals that thematic context "includes human and self, human and society, man and nature, involves humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and provides topics and language environment for educating people ^[6]." Therefore, this chapter will analyze the arrangement rules of its first seven textbooks (PEP), so as to better implement the goal of "Curriculum Ideology and Politics".

Firstly, the distribution of different thematic contexts is uneven, among which "man and society" accounts for the highest proportion of 57.2%; "man and self" followed at 22.8%; the least, at 20%, was "man and nature." However, the education of "man and self" (compulsory course 2, elective course 1) and "man and nature" (elective course 1) is even missing in some textbooks. While Zhang Qiang stresses that "man and self" is the premise of addressing the relationship among people, society and nature ^[7]. And at the UN climate summit in 2021, President Xi even put forward several propositions about nature, such as "committed to harmony between man and nature", "committed to green development" and "committed to systemic governance ^[8]." These thematic contexts can be detailed into ten thematic clusters, among which "history, society, and culture" accounted for the highest. The report to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China points out that it is necessary to "strengthen the guiding role of patriotism, collectivism, and socialism, and see that the people develop an accurate understanding of history, ethnicity, country, and culture ^[9]." It can be seen that compilers do grasp new requests of the times and focus on the cultivation of students' social and historical awareness and cultural consciousness.

Secondly, the breadth and depth of knowledge under the same thematic clusters always reveal a progressive trend. Take the thematic context of "man and self" as the retrieval condition, and analyze materials presented in different textbooks. As the first unit taught in senior high school, *Unit 1: Teenage Life* tells about some conflicts that students may encounter when entering a new campus. While *Unit 5: Launching Your Career*, as the last unit, guides students to launch their career concepts through vocational aptitude tests, and helps them position themselves in the future society. It can be seen that the topic selection is often based on the contradictions of students in different stages, while some materials do not keep up with the times. Taking the main line of the Internet, *Unit 3: The Internet* in elective course 2 tells the positive impact of the Internet. It is true that online communities sometimes play a technology-friendly role, but this unit ignores the negative or even destructive impact of the Internet on the moral education of teenagers. However, *Unit 2: Looking into the Future* in elective course 1 guesses the intelligent level of future homes and holds a more rational attitude towards technology.

The following are three suggestions towards the compilation of textbooks. First, for personal morality is the basis of social morality, compilers could expand the arrangement of ideological and political elements in "man and self". Next, by learning the official documents of the Ministry of Education timely, compilers are supposed to mine updated ideological elements, and integrate them into English textbooks to spread such mainstream spirits as aerospace spirit and anti-epidemic spirit. Finally, compilers should abridge some narrow themes, so that educators could grasp the ideological and political elements in the secondary development of textbooks.

The Innovation of Educational Mechanism:

The innovation of the educational mechanism serves as a driving force for "Curriculum Ideology and Politics." This paper aims to explore whether the implementation of an educational mechanism based on resource sharing, multiple evaluations, and incentive mechanisms will promote its development.

Zhang Ying emphasizes the importance of comprehensive planning for curriculum ideological and political education at the management level. This entails establishing effective leadership, management, operational, and evaluation mechanisms ^[10]. However, the construction of such mechanisms is still in its early stages. Therefore, it is crucial to achieve broad consensus among a group of frontline English teachers to coordinate the development of relevant systems.

Firstly, it is recommended that each school's leadership establish a resource sharing mechanism, fostering collective commitment among English teachers to cultivate exemplary courses and share high-quality videos, teaching plans,

courseware, and other resources. This will enrich the database of shared high-quality teaching cases. Simultaneously, English teachers can enhance their professional development through demonstration classes, symposiums, and one-on-one assistance, thereby gaining a better understanding of the ethical value of the English subject. Secondly, local education bureaus should establish an exchange platform among schools and formulate a cross-school resource sharing mechanism. This approach will encourage schools to utilize their unique teaching resources to develop textbooks with regional ideological and political characteristics. For instance, textbooks in the Yimeng area could emphasize the appreciation of revolutionary enthusiasm as an emotional objective within a unit, thereby celebrating the remarkable legacy of the Yimeng revolutionary base area. Furthermore, diverse evaluation mechanisms and incentive systems should be implemented, as traditional teaching evaluations primarily focus on students' knowledge and skill acquisition, neglecting the moral effects of English education. *The General Senior High School English Curriculum Standards* suggest that teaching evaluations should primarily emphasize formative evaluations while incorporating summative evaluations, aligning with the core literacy goals of the English subject [6].

Firstly, teacher evaluations should encompass teachers' political literacy, English teaching abilities, and ideological and political teaching abilities. These evaluations should be conducted through a combination of self-evaluation, peer evaluation, student evaluation, and expert evaluation to ensure a comprehensive assessment. Furthermore, student performance both inside and outside the classroom, should be integrated into the teacher evaluation mechanism. When establishing evaluation criteria, equal attention should be given to moral and language goals, incorporating relevant indicators of emotional value, such as assessing students' alignment with socialist values.

Next, the final examination should include scores for intellectual education, moral education, and practical application. Each score should be assigned based on the corresponding proportion, for example, intellectual education accounting for 60%, moral education for 20%, and practical application for 20%. Implementing this innovative evaluation approach, particularly under the double reduction policy, not only alleviates the burden on students but also ensures the consistent integration of value formation in knowledge impartation and skill development. Moreover, teachers should combine qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods, as well as assess in-class performance and extracurricular activities, to achieve a comprehensive assessment of students' performance.

In addition to diversified evaluation mechanisms, education departments should establish incentive mechanisms by increasing financial investment or providing subsidies to excellent teachers who actively engage in ideological and political education within English courses. This policy not only promotes teachers' professional development but also encourages the formation of their unique perspectives within the English curriculum, thus enhancing the diversity of curriculum-based ideological and political education.

In short, the development of ideology and politics within English teaching is closely linked to the establishment of relevant institutional frameworks. Therefore, it is essential to improve the teacher and student evaluation systems, as well as implement a series of welfare mechanisms, to promote the standardization of ideology and politics in English teaching.

Results and Discussion

This paper examines three approaches for implementing ideology and politics in English teaching at senior high schools, focusing on teachers, textbooks, and the educational mechanism. However, it specifically focuses on English reading classes and does not encompass other types of English courses, such as vocabulary, listening, or composition classes. Consequently, further research is needed to explore the integration of this concept into other areas of the English curriculum in order to comprehensively incorporate it into senior high school English classroom teaching.

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