

Research on Teaching Reform of the "Public Speaking and Debate" Course from a Curriculum Ideological and Political Education Perspective

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of the Ministry of Education's vigorous promotion of curriculum ideological and political education, to address the issue of "overemphasizing language skills while neglecting ideological guidance" in the cultivation of translation professionals, a western university has undertaken classroom teaching reform from a curriculum ideological and political education perspective. The reform focuses on the "Public Speaking and Debate" course within its nationally recognized first-class translation program. The course adopted a tripartite model integrating "theory + practice + ideological and political education," utilizing dual textbooks-The Art of Public Speaking and Understanding Contemporary China: An English Speech Tutorial-to incorporate themes such as the Chinese Dream and cultural confidence. It innovated pre-class, in-class, and post-class teaching processes, employed diverse teaching methods, and implemented comprehensive assessments. Post-reform, students demonstrated concurrent improvements in public speaking skills and ideological literacy, achieved significant competition results, and awarded the course high evaluations. This initiative provides a reference model for ideological and political education development in similar programs.

Keywords: Ideological and Political Education; Speech and Debate; Translation Program; Classroom Teaching Reform

1. Research Background

1.1 The Importance of Ideological and Political Education in Courses

In recent years, the Ministry of Education has vigorously promoted the integration of ideological and political education into all

courses, requiring that such education permeate the entire teaching process. This initiative aims to align various academic courses with ideological and political courses, fostering a synergistic effect in education. For foreign language programs, integrating ideological and political elements into language skill instruction has become a crucial task in educational reform. This involves cultivating students' ability to effectively tell China's stories and convey China's voice in foreign languages while strengthening their ideals and convictions.

As a nationally recognized first-class major, our university's Translation program has consistently focused on enhancing students' English public speaking and debate skills through its "Public Speaking and Debate" course since its inception. To lay a foundation for further deepening teaching reform, the course has embraced an opportunity for ideological and political transformation with the adoption of the Understanding Contemporary China textbook series. Against this backdrop, this study explores classroom teaching reforms for the course from a curriculum-based ideological and political education perspective. This initiative not only responds to national educational policy demands but also represents an essential choice for enhancing teaching quality and cultivating high-caliber translation professionals.

1.2 Current State of Talent Cultivation in University Translation Programs

As China's international influence continues to grow, the world increasingly needs China, and China cannot thrive without the world. Particularly now, with China's sustained economic expansion capturing global attention, there is a greater need for us to effectively tell our story to the world and help the world understand China. As the world's second-largest economy, China faces the urgent task of conveying its narrative, disseminating its concepts, and gaining international

understanding-especially addressing the challenge of "being able to do but not to say." We urgently require a large number of high-caliber "Chinese-to-foreign" translation professionals.

In the context of the new era, the cultivation of translation professionals is grounded in national development needs and serves societal demands. With moral education as its foundation, it supports socioeconomic development and national strategic objectives. The goal is to cultivate individuals with solid linguistic foundations, strong professional competence, and excellent teamwork skills-talents capable of providing translation and language services in fields such as culture and foreign affairs. In undergraduate translation programs, universities primarily focus on enhancing language proficiency, strengthening translation awareness, and mastering translation techniques. Regarding ideological education through courses, the curriculum mainly centers on introducing traditional Chinese culture.

In the new era, we should effectively integrate ideological and political education into translation classrooms, shifting the focus from "translating the world" to "translating China." This involves introducing China's outstanding traditional culture and the successful experiences to the world. Advancing ideological and political education in translation programs will help enhance students' professional competence and cultural literacy, strengthen their cultural confidence, and effectively tell China's stories.

2. Review of Domestic and International Research

2.1 Current State of Domestic Research

In December 2016, at the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education Institutions, the need to "enhance the appeal and relevance of ideological and political education, ensuring that all courses align with ideological and political theory courses to achieve synergistic effects" has been emphasized. This formally introduced the concept of "ideological and political education integrated into all courses," signifying that political and ideological work extends beyond a single ideological and political course to permeate "all courses" in higher education institutions. Since then, "ideological and political education through all courses" has been promoted

nationwide with the core objective of "deepening the reform of ideological and political theory course teaching." The development of this initiative has been vigorously implemented across all higher education institutions.

A search on China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) reveals 23,059 articles containing the term "course-based ideological and political education," spanning all university disciplines including humanities, history, philosophy, science, engineering, medicine, and agriculture. Using the keyword "course-based ideological and political education + translation teaching" yields 4,355 articles, which primarily propose the following approaches for implementing course-based ideological and political education in English language programs: disseminating Chinese culture and effectively telling China's stories (Yang Jincai, 2020) [1]; and critiques of insufficient implementation in university English courses, such as "many teachers neglect or fail to cultivate students' ideological and political awareness" (Yue Mannan, 2020) [2].

Preliminary literature review reveals that research on ideological and political education in courses has explored various dimensions, including conceptual frameworks, educational objectives, content composition, resource repository development, model courses, faculty development, organizational management models for specialized courses, textbook compilation, and effectiveness evaluation. These studies have provided explicit designs and descriptions of principles, implementation details, and outcomes for integrating ideological and political education into translation courses. By establishing a translation course ideological and political education resource repository, model courses, teaching guidelines, and a specialized teaching faculty, a relatively comprehensive system integrating ideological and political education with translation instruction can be constructed [3]. Furthermore, drawing on general course evaluation models, a comprehensive assessment system for ideological and political education in translation courses has been developed. This system encompasses pre-semester discussions and preparations, mid-semester teaching (formative assessment), end-of-semester examinations, and post-semester reflections and adjustments. [4] (Liu Jianda 2020: 38-42) Textbooks serve as a powerful guarantee for implementing ideological

and political education within courses. Translation textbooks can incorporate cross-cultural comparisons to cultivate students' cultural confidence and awareness of a community with a shared future for mankind. [5] (Sun Youzhong 2020: 46-51) Ideological and political education in translation courses is grounded in specific curricula, such as exploring pathways for ideological and political education in courses like Comprehensive English, English Translation, and Foreign Literature. Among these, translation courses represent a crucial front in this endeavor. Their inherent cross-linguistic and cross-cultural nature confronts students with the cultural and ideological differences embedded in source and target languages. The translation process inevitably requires students to deeply interpret foreign values and cultural concepts. Therefore, political orientation, educational direction, and cultural identity must be aligned in translation course development. Second, diverse course resources form a vital component of ideological and political education in translation courses. Rich and varied resources help capture students' attention, guide them in recognizing differences in translators' cognitive and cultural backgrounds, and discern the values embedded in source texts and translations, thereby awakening students' cultural consciousness. (Li Zhiying 2020: 22-27)

2.2 International Research Landscape

Although Western academia lacks the concept of "ideological and political education in courses," it emphasizes integrated research on cultural translation and value transmission. Early scholars like Kramersch (2006) proposed critical cultural awareness, advocating for enhancing cultural reflection through translation practice. In recent years, research in this field has gained momentum. Smith (2019) developed the theory of "translation as cultural mediation," highlighting translators' ethical responsibilities in cross-cultural communication. Jones (2022), in *Ethical Dilemmas in Translation Education*, noted that translators must balance 'fidelity' with

"social responsibility," though their work did not address specific ideological education strategies. Recently, Kumar (2024) attempted to embed indigenous Indian cultural elements into translation curricula, using "critical translation practices" to strengthen students' cultural identity recognition, offering new insights for regional cultural translation instruction.

However, Western theories predominantly stem from postcolonial contexts, rendering them insufficiently adaptable to China's distinctive "curriculum-based ideological and political education" objectives. Consequently, Chinese scholars must develop localized translation teaching models grounded in the Chinese context that simultaneously ensure international communication efficacy and ideological security. Addressing these research gaps, this study creatively integrates ideological and political education into the "Public Speaking and Debate" course, exploring novel strategies for translation professional education.

3. Research Content

3.1 Classroom Teaching Content Reform

As a required course for our university's translation program, the classroom teaching content reform centers on integrating "ideological and political education into the curriculum," adopting a teaching model that combines "theory + practice + ideological and political education." Two classic speech textbooks are used: *The Art of Public Speaking* (13th Edition, China Edition) and *Understanding Contemporary China: A Course in English Public Speaking*. The former primarily covers theoretical learning and speech technique acquisition, while the latter focuses on practical training and the integration of ideological and political education. Case studies and other methods are employed to reinforce the learning of theoretical techniques.

The reformed course structure is outlined in Table 1 (only the first five chapters are displayed here):

Table 1. "Public Speaking and Debate" Course Structure

Chapter	Course Content	Ideological Theme	Theory	Practice	
			Speech Technique Learning	Case Analysis	Student Speech/ Debate Topics
Chapter 1	<i>Understanding Contemporary China</i> Unit 1: Making People's Life Better	Chinese Dream	Comprehend the essence of public speaking, master fundamental	"battle against poverty" speech: "The Chinese Dream is the	Speech Topic: The Changes of Hometown in Past Decades

	<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> Unit 1: Understanding Public Speaking		knowledge, and construct basic speech frameworks.	People's Dream”	
Chapter 2	<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> Unit 4: Defining Speech Topics	Core Socialist Values	Selecting a speech topic and defining the purpose of the speech	speech: "Young People Should Practice Core Socialist Values"	
	<i>Understanding Contemporary China</i> Unit 2: Upholding Core Socialist Values				
Chapter 3	<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> Unit 5: Analyzing Your Audience	Confidence in Chinese Culture	How to analyze your audience: tailoring strategies for different audience types	"FLTRP ETIC Cup" English Public Speaking Contest (Video+Script): "Round Table: A Symbol of China"	Speech Topic: The Symbols of China
	<i>Understanding Contemporary China</i> Unit 3: Boosting Cultural Confidence				
Chapter 4	<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> Unit 6: Supporting Your Ideas	From Poverty Alleviation to Common Prosperity	Master the techniques for crafting arguments; learn to incorporate supporting materials such as facts, examples, data, and quotations into speeches	Former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim's Speech: "Forty Years of Reform and Poverty Alleviation"	Speech Topic: The Reform and Development of New China
	<i>Understanding Contemporary China</i> Unit 4: Making Development People-Centered				
Chapter 5	<i>The Art of Public Speaking</i> Unit 7: Organizing the Main Body of a Speech	Comprehensive Reform	Master techniques for organizing the body of a speech, using chronological order, spatial order, topical order, cause & effect order, and question & answer order	Speech by Liu Xiaoming, Former Chinese Ambassador to the UK: "Further Reform and Opening Up, Creates a Brighter Future"	
	<i>Understanding Contemporary China</i> Unit 5: Furthering Reform and Opening Up				

3.2 Instructional Process Innovation

The course's instructional components primarily consist of three parts: pre-class motivation, in-class facilitation, and post-class extension.

The specific teaching process includes: (1) Pre-class motivation: students conduct pre-class preparation, while instructors provide introductory guidance; (2) In-class facilitation: This includes text study, case analysis, skill instruction, thematic discussions, individual presentations, and speech practice; (3) Post-class Extension: Post-class supplementary material study and speech practice.

3.3 Teaching Method Reform

The "Public Speaking and Debate" course adopts a teacher-guided, student-centered approach emphasizing outcome-oriented and task-driven learning. It employs a "combination of instruction and practice" teaching model to comprehensively enhance students' public speaking skills, oral expression abilities, critical thinking capabilities, and cross-cultural communication and dissemination competencies. The following teaching methods are primarily employed throughout the course:

Content Lecture Method: In-depth interpretation

and instruction of textbook content, analyzing underlying speech techniques, ideological values.

Case Study Method: Reading, analyzing, and discussing speech cases from the Understanding Contemporary China textbook through problem-based learning, combining independent and collaborative study

Discussion Method: Group discussions and interactions during class sessions centered on chapter themes

Task-Driven Approach: Assign speech and debate tasks related to contemporary China (online + offline; in-class + out-of-class)

Practical Experience Approach: Organize class speech contests and debate competitions; coach students for provincial and national speech/debate tournaments

3.4 Course Assessment

This course employs a blended assessment approach combining formative and summative evaluations. The final grade comprises 50% coursework and 50% final assessment. Regular Grades=Pre-class (preparation, learning outcomes) + In-class (performance, prepared speeches, impromptu speeches, group discussions, debates) + Post-class (assignments, speech writing, short videos, online platform usage). Final grades are based on the score of the assigned speech.

4. Research Findings

Through this classroom teaching reform study, the following conclusions are summarized.

(1) Integrating ideological and political education with the "Public Speaking and Debate" course is feasible. As a foreign language professional skills course, the selection of speech topics and debate themes in this course provides ample space for incorporating ideological and political elements. By adopting textbooks such as Understanding Contemporary China: A Guide to English Public Speaking and integrating them with theoretical frameworks and practical cases of socialism with Chinese characteristics, we can achieve an organic fusion of language skills instruction and ideological and political education.

(2) The "Three-in-One" teaching model demonstrates significant effectiveness. The course's "theory + practice + ideological and political education" model effectively addresses students' weaknesses in professional knowledge, language expression, and cultural awareness.

While mastering public speaking knowledge and techniques, students gain deeper insights into contemporary China, significantly enhancing their cultural confidence and patriotic sentiments.

(3) Diversified teaching methods enhance instructional quality. The integrated application of content-based instruction, case studies, and task-driven approaches stimulates students' learning motivation and initiative. Competition-driven learning-such as organizing class speech contests and encouraging participation in the "FLTRP ETIC" Cup Contest-provides practical platforms, leading to noticeable improvements in students' speech abilities and competition performance.

5. Research Outcomes

This classroom teaching reform initiative has yielded remarkable educational outcomes, specifically manifested as follows:

(1) Significant enhancement in student competencies. Students in the 2024 pilot cohort demonstrated markedly improved English public speaking abilities, with notable progress in oral fluency, logical reasoning, and cross-cultural communication skills compared to previous cohorts. The rate of excellent performance in the final assigned speech reached 35%, representing a 15% increase over pre-reform levels.

(2) Fruitful Integration of Competition and Teaching. In 2024 and 2025, students won multiple silver and bronze awards in the Shaanxi Provincial Competition of the "FLTRP · ETIC Cup" English Public Speaking Contest. At the 35th and 36th school's Foreign Language Oral Competitions, they secured 3 first prizes in speech contests and 2 championship titles in debate competitions. The course director was also honored as an "Outstanding Instructor."

(3) Course evaluations are outstanding. Students consistently rate the course highly, with excellent evaluations in the last two semesters. Feedback highlights its "strong practicality, enhancing both presentation skills and understanding of contemporary China." Peer and supervisory evaluations commend the seamless integration of ideological and political education, noting its significant teaching impact and setting an exemplary standard for similar courses.

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