A Study on the Incorporation of Ideological-Political Elements in Public Speaking from the Perspective of Production-Oriented Approach

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Abstract: This study is a four-year, three-round study on the incorporation of ideological-political elements in the activity of public speaking in Business English: An Integrated Course, based on a production-oriented approach (POA). With the overall result of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, reflection logs, and classroom observation, it is found that the six teachers in this course and all the students who participated in the study all agree with the online and offline blended teaching model, which, when used in this study, can help to strengthen students' business-related overall ability. Besides, vivid and brief teaching cases of the public speaking task design shown in this article demonstrate the implementation approach of this study, which includes the setting of POA tasks, multiple evaluations, and blended teaching. It is hoped that this study can serve as an example of the incorporation of ideological-political elements in the courses of foreign language.

Keywords: Foreign language courses; Ideological-political elements; Production-oriented approach; Blended learning; Public speaking

1. Introduction

Cultivating talents and making scholars is the foundation of the country. The future development of China depends on the cultivation of today's talents, and it is imperative to cultivate talents' speaking skills in spreading Chinese culture and improving China's image. The New National Standard for Business English majors stipulates that "the purpose of Business English majors is to cultivate solid basic English skills, international perspectives, and humanistic qualities... Compound and applied talents who can engage in international business work" and have "English application skills, cross-cultural communication skills... Critical thinking and innovation ability" [1]. The cultivation of these skills and the cultivation of the speech ability of "telling Chinese stories and spreading Chinese voices well" complement each other. The course of ideology and politics takes moral cultivation as the fundamental task. In the process of speech cultivation for business English majors, it integrates the learning of business knowledge and the cultivation of business ability and truly reflects the educational concept of the integration of knowledge and practice.

English speech course is a window for teachers to understand students' ideological and emotional demands, which has a natural advantage of integrating into values education [2]. This paper will specifically explain the theoretical framework and implementation path of introducing ideology and politics into classroom speech from the aspects of curriculum content reconstruction, evaluation method reform, and teaching method innovation, so as to achieve the internal integration of ideology and politics with foreign language major courses, and effectively expand and give full play to the function of cultivating students' speech ability of "telling Chinese stories well" inside and outside the classroom.

2. The theoretical framework of the introduction of ideology and politics into classroom speech

The theoretical framework adopted in the design of speech links for business English teaching is the production-oriented approach (POA) put forward by Professor Qiufang Wen in 2008.

The "teaching concept" of POA is the general guide of this theoretical system. Its "learning center" "advocates that in teaching with limited classroom time, teachers should adopt the best teaching activities in each teaching link to promote students' effective learning and achieve the expected teaching goals" [3]. "Learning and application in one" avoid the drawbacks of traditional teaching [4], such as "separation of learning and application," "separation of literature and Taoism," and realizes the seamless integration of input learning and output application. "Cultural exchange" advocates that language is not only a tool but also a medium of culture and a carrier of virtue. "Cultural exchange" is in harmony with "key ability," which is similar to the idea of "curriculum thinking and politics." It advocates improving students' comprehensive ability and humanistic quality through the subtle influence of language, so as to achieve the ultimate goal of all-round development. The "teaching process" of POA is consistent and gradual. It is mainly based on teachers guiding and stimulating students' communicative motivation through a detailed assignment of tasks and an explanation of relevant communicative functions and language environment. Through effective "input facilitation" and "selective learning" to promote the output of speech tasks; finally, multiple evaluation forms a complete cycle.

3. Setting the output-oriented task as the starting point

"The four elements of a task scenario are the topic (what is produced), the purpose (why it is produced), the identity (who produces and for whom), and the occasion (where it is produced)" [5]. It is worth noting that the presentation task adopts almost completely different identities: the "producer" includes both the current identity of the students as "university students" and the identities they may have in the future, such as "office workers," "tourists to Turkey," and "valedictorian," as well as challenging and attractive identities, such as "Columnist" and "representative of new immigrants," etc. Professor Qiufang Wen emphasized that the output tasks should present the communicative scenarios that students may encounter in their future studies and work [4]. Although students have not experienced these scenarios, they can really experience the possibility of these scenarios [6]. The selection of audience identity also takes into account the diversified needs, so as to better mobilize the speaker to consider the characteristics and needs of different audiences from the perspective of viewers and listeners. All these scenarios are designed to be carried out in a second or foreign language environment so that it is necessary for students to complete tasks in accurate, authentic, and fluent English.

"Promotion is the core link, and its effectiveness directly determines the quality of output" [7]. At the same time, "promotion" is also the most difficult for students. If teachers do not properly grasp the difficulty of textbooks and texts or the difficulty of speech tasks, it may dampen students' enthusiasm. Input and output

docking is very suitable for the speech task design of freshman students [8]. For example, for the speech task "Introducing how to make dumplings and explaining the cultural metaphor of dumplings" in Unit 2 of Volume 1, students can learn and apply it directly from the video Bilibili Chinese Food Culture (Part 1) in the materials of "Input Making" and "Choice Learning." There are also some food metaphors in Spring Festival Cuisine Across China, which can trigger their thinking, searching, discussion, and construction of the cultural metaphors of dumplings. These examples are similar to Shiwen Liang's "promoting path of popularization of content and colloquial language" [9].

"Output is the review and application of the understanding knowledge and output knowledge acquired in the input facilitation stage, and the output evaluation stage is the sprint stage where the language skills are most likely to approach proficiency" [10]. This point is most obvious in the comparison of the assessment scores of students who completed the speech task and those who did not. For example, students who completed the speech task of "giving a speech at the graduation ceremony to thank the people and things they want to thank" scored higher on the test of some fixed phrases and sentence patterns of the speech of thanks than those who did not participate in the speech task.

4. The support of multiple evaluations

Professor Qiufang Wen also created the Teacher-Student Collaborative Assessment (TSCA) [6] in 2016. This research adds the following new content on the basis of the basic principles of TSCA. On the basis of students' self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation, the research group carries out the evaluation of course instructors or industry experts, including four aspects: language content and form, speech skills, cultural connotation, and ideological and political elements. Foreign teachers and subject English postgraduates from the School of Foreign Languages, professors and doctors from other schools, alumni working in business-related industries, as well as enterprise representatives from the judges of the previous Business English Practice Competition in South China were invited to evaluate the online presentations of the students in the group, which enhanced the students' attention to and input into the task. The expert teachers' comments from different perspectives and levels have also been valued by the students, which has a profound impact on the continuous improvement of their speech ability, business ability, and comprehensive competitiveness.

In explaining the key points of TSCA implementation after class, Shuguang Sun emphasized that "students' self-evaluation and peer evaluation after class need to be supervised by teachers to achieve the best results," that is, "create an atmosphere of 'teacher presence'" [11]. Most student groups' speeches and evaluations are presented on-site in the classroom (including question-and-answer sessions), realizing the real "teacher presence." However, after the online teaching due to the epidemic, some of the student groups' speeches and evaluations were carried out online. Even so, the students are very serious about their own and their peers' achievements, so the evaluation is relatively accurate and in place, and achieved a better effect.

The German educator Diesterweg once said: "The art of education consists not in imparting skills, but in inspiring and awakening" [12]. Whether public speaking or English public speaking, the ability to speak involves both emotional and cognitive factors [13]. Therefore, ensuring students' acceptance of speech emotions is as important as their cognitive growth. According to the results of student evaluations and recorded interviews, 37% of students who had some degree of stage fright in the first year (such as night sweats, shaky hands, trembling legs, and blushing) had basically overcome it by the end of the second year. Some of them also tapped their potential in public speaking and participated in the National "FLTRP Cup" English Speech Contest or the National "Higher Education Club Cup" Business English Practice Contest and won honors.

5. Taking mixed teaching mode as the guarantee

This research group relies on the "Comprehensive Business English" course established by the platform of Super Star Learning Pass and puts all the "input facilitation" and "select learning" materials involved in the speech session on the platform for students to read, watch, and learn in time and repeatedly before class. Flipped classroom enables students to carry out activities such as brainstorming, group discussion, speech debate, poster design, jigsaw puzzles, and role-playing in class with ease. Teachers highlight the solution to teaching difficulties and the emphasis on teaching key points through colorful and moderately difficult classroom activities. Students' "learning by doing" and teachers' "guiding and teaching" form the real learning in class. In addition, the platform also provides the possibility for teachers, industry experts, and students to carry out multidimensional evaluations across time and space boundaries during the epidemic.

"Blended teaching" emphasizes two points. One is to build a learning community and the other is to emphasize cooperative learning [14]. Each class of students in the study set up a study group on the first day of class. Members of the group named their group, created logos and slogans, and built human statues to form group cohesion. In the following online and offline group cooperation, they spoke freely, shared knowledge, and created trusted peer relationships, which provided a strong guarantee for online and offline mixed teaching. In classroom teaching, teachers should take expanding students' knowledge, encouraging students to build self-confidence, guiding students to think and learn independently as the main contents of ideological and political courses [15]. Online teaching is undoubtedly the extension of offline limited teaching time.

6. Conclusion

Under the guidance of the concept of POA, this study establishes a research framework for introducing ideology and politics into the speech process of comprehensive business English courses, excavates the ideological and political elements of some units, creates feasible output-oriented speech tasks, integrates the development of mixed teaching mode and the feedback of multiple evaluation methods, and forms a preliminary attempt to cultivate composite and applied business English talents.

POA research framework has very good guidance and foresight in teaching practice and teacher team cooperation. The selection of ideological and political entry points is the key to the design of speech tasks and the success of the integration of ideology and politics into the classroom. Based on the school-enterprise cooperation and multiple evaluation methods, it plays the most incisive role in the scaffolding of teachers and students. The hybrid teaching reform of online and offline has added wings to the research, which will contribute to the cultivation of more international cross-cultural talents who can "tell Chinese stories well" in the future, and also help the cultivation of international high-end foreign language talents who can creatively export Chinese discourse in the future.

Funding

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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