

Research on the Ideological and Political Teaching in College English through the Multiliteracy Approach

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Abstract. With the development of communication technology and teaching concepts, students' learning process has been changed as they constantly interact with various multimedia. In the domestic academic community, it is widely spread that through college education, students can improve their professional knowledge, learn the world's excellent civilization and understand Chinese culture. Therefore, the college English class, as a part of general education, plays an important role to meet various requirements of talents. In dealing with the new challenges, this paper presents a case study of the ideological and political teaching in EFL Classroom by using the multiliteracy approach. The research instrument used in this paper is action research approach, questionnaire and observation. The findings show that through learning and using English, students can improve their language ability, learn different cultures, and understand Chinese culture simultaneously in multimodal environment. Findings also reveal that the motivation and effectiveness of students' study are simultaneously promoted.

Keywords: Ideological and Political Education; Multiliteracy; Multimodality

1. Introduction

With the development of information technology and network technique, today's society is perceived as an effective access that enables everyone to participate in various education, to express opinions and to make creative contributions, that can empower not just students but whole communities toward culture-building. The occurrence of new media highlights multimodal information resources such as images, videos files, audio files, facial expressions, and body language, etc. These resources have transformed people's ways of acquiring knowledge from traditional text reading to multimodal resource integration, and their communication methods have also transformed into multimodal communication that combines language and non-verbal communication etc.

In coping with the challenges of multimodal communication, education has an important impact on the dynamic evolution of culture and nation building. In the past two years, ideological and political education in college English courses has been highly valued by Chinese scholars and front-line teachers. On the website of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, a total of 23 articles were searched using the keyword "Ideological and Political Education in Foreign Language Courses". They mainly include three aspects: focusing on cultivating high-quality teaching resources; vigorously improving the quality of the teaching staff; and deepening the reform of teaching methods. Each university takes textbook construction and teaching approach as the starting points to promote English classes. Using literature analysis and comparative analysis methods, we systematically reviewed the research literature on curriculum ideology and politics in some CSSCI publications related to foreign language teaching. Using the keyword "Ideological and Political Education in Foreign Language Courses", we have retrieved a total of 48 articles, of which the proportion of articles published before 2019 was 20. The number of articles published in 2020 was 17, and the number of articles published in 2021 was 31. In the past years, the research on ideological and political education in foreign language courses has grown from scratch, and the attention has been increasing year by year. This trend reflects the top-down attention and bottom-up feedback of the domestic academic community on ideological and political education in courses. According to Wen (2021), ideological and political teaching in college English is to integrate moral

education into foreign language teaching. The new initiative propels pedagogical practices in college English that provide students with more real and flexible learning environment, address students' individual and collaborative interests and abilities, and allow students to master their own learning process and outcomes through multiple evaluations.

Research on ideological and political education abroad can be seen in terms of telling national stories well (Foner, 1998; Bergman (1999) and story-based teaching methods (Davidson, 2004). It has a history of over twenty years. It is mainly used in literature teaching, enabling students to mediate their lived experiences, and make connections with the outside world.

These studies take into account the objectives of building discourse system in the teaching and learning process during the implementation of English education or literature education. It promotes the idea that knowledge and meaning are culturally and socially interconnected and thus can be fulfilled in one process smoothly.

2. The Multiliteracy Approach in the Ideological and Political Teaching in College English

2.1 The Theory of Multiliteracy Approach with Multimodality

In 1996, the New London Group had introduced the multiliteracy approach, focusing on multimodality within electronic and digital environments. They aimed to find "a more equitable social and cultural participation that connects with the real world" (The New London group, 1996).

In 2005, Kalantzis and Cope introduced the theory of "Learning by Design Model", taking multimodality elements into consideration in the implementation of the multiliteracy approach. According to Kalantzis and Cope, there are four elements in knowledge process: experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing and applying. In experiencing, situated practice such as utilization of experience and available discourses can be used. Teachers may establish some simulated scenarios. In conceptualizing, overt instruction including systematic and conscious understandings and directions should be given. In analyzing, critical framing must be provided. In this process, teachers should interpret the social and cultural context of particular meanings and lead students to view them critically, thinking the purpose and social context. In applying, students are required to use the language and put the transformed meaning to work in another context.

Therefore, the multiliteracy approach is a way designed to diversify students learning process to connect with the change in communication technology and the concept of student-centered classroom, in which students' language capacity as well as moral level can be enhanced.

2.2 The Application of Multiliteracy Approach with Multimodality

The data collection methods in this study were questionnaire and observation. The survey was done in 8 Chinese colleges. Students in these schools learn English as the foreign language. Table 1 shows the students' assessment for their English study.

Table 1 Part of the questionnaire for college English class

Questions	Assessment scale	Percentage
I work hard to learn English in order to find a good job.	Agree	94.3%
	Disagree	2.3%
	Unknown	3.4%
During English class, I often feel afraid of the teacher asking you questions.	Agree	77.3%
	Disagree	17.4%
	Unknown	5.7%
I believe that as long as I work hard, I can achieve academic progress in English learning.	Agree	96.6%
	Disagree	1.9%
	Unknown	1.5%

A percentage of 94.3% of the groups study English for passing the exam or for a good job after the graduation. The external driving force is the main motivation to learn English in college. The respondents rated 77.4% of the whole have anxiety in English classroom as they are reluctant to

communicate with the teacher or peers in English. In conventional textbook-centered methods, students will become passive learner without individuality and creativity. Many college students find English learning difficult and boring especially when teachers pressure students to produce linguistically accurate output without exposing them to real situations to communicate in an appropriate manner. However, the majority of students are confident in their English study. Therefore, the study was guided by the following questions:

Q1. Apart from language itself, to what extent does the ideological and political education make English learning meaning and interesting?

Q2. How do college English teachers improve students' performance using the multiliteracy approach with multimodality?

In addition to more traditional teaching of reading and listening, today's learners who are exposed to and engaged in diverse forms of educational medias prefer to carry out reading, listening, writing, speaking and communication online and offline through classroom, QQ, WeChat, Mosoteach, U class and other smart teaching assistants. Table 2 looked into various text study procedures that encompassed different ideological and political topics. In this model, learning is designed to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of cultural differences. With multimodal media, students can establish a systematic cognition under the English learning environment.

Table 2 A Summary of English Lessons used the multiliteracy approach with multimodality

Text	Topic	Learning Objectives	Activities
A new life, a new you	People	Write a description of a place on campus; Create a campus guide brochure for international students.	a) Lecture of essay framework on thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting details and conclusion. b) Information search on campus landscape and culture with pictures, video clips, and essays. c) Peer conferencing: feedback through online and offline communication. d) Campus guide brochures are showed on class official accounts.
Learning is living	Value	Write a reflective journal about your English course; Make small talk on how culture affects learning.	a) Mind map presentation of essay framework on thesis statement, topic sentences, supporting details and conclusion. b) Information search on talent stories: picture, video clips and essays on news website and official accounts. c) Peer conferencing: group discussion online and offline. d) Writing is published on students' assignment on mosoteach.
Love is in the air	Social Issues	Write a simple synopsis for a play; Make presentation on cultural differences in social expectation.	a) Role play on the plot of the drama. b) Information searching on social expectation in different eras and countries: film, fables, stories and essays on news website and official accounts. c) Peer conferencing: pair discussion online and offline. d) Excellent speeches are made in the front of the whole class.

3. Results

In this paper, we proposed to specify the overall requirements for the comprehensive development of students' morality, language capacity and the relevant contents of culture. Efforts towards this end are being seen in English lessons using multiliteracy approach. The class of 32 students (Grade one in college) was selected. As shown in fig. 1, 27 students were supportive as they felt that they were able to engage with the essay topics and the cultural connotation, accounting for 84 % of the respondents. It can be seen that after the teaching experiment, students have very positive attitudes towards their English study, which was also reflected by the positive outcome of their writing test (fig. 2).

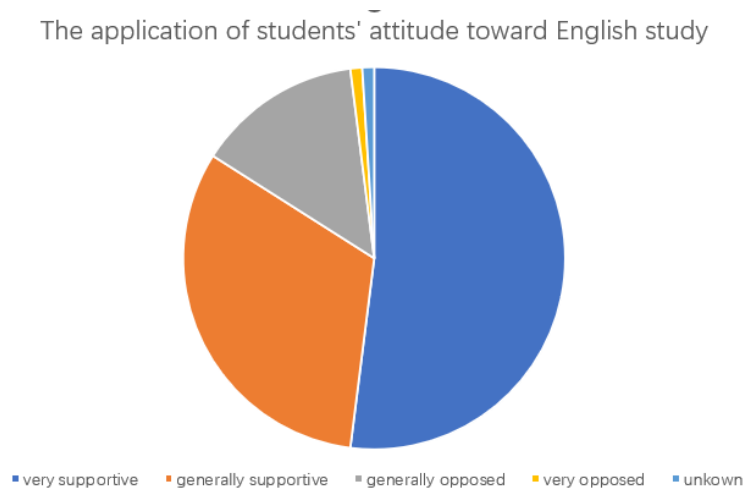


Figure 1. Students' positive attitude toward English study

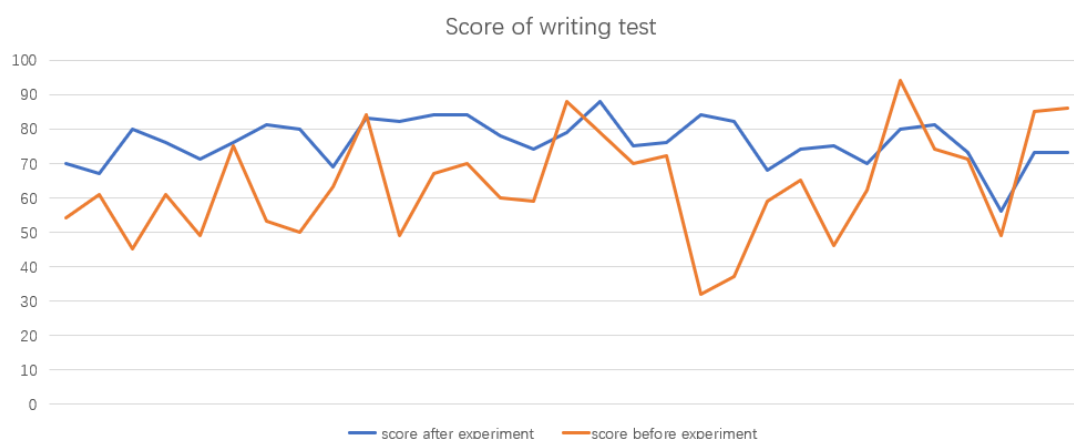


Figure 2. Students' score of writing test before and after the experiment

1. Conclusion

This study advocates to fill this gap as it integrates the current pedagogical practices employed by teachers including phase drills, students centered learning, PBL teaching methods and situated teaching methods. It is imperative that these factors help improve students' ability to use English language and to understand a range of social and cultural issues. Thus, the ideological and political construction of university courses is promoted in profound ways as these new changes and requirements provide opportunities to enhance meaningful practices of cultivating morality in professional knowledge education. Facing the typical problems, this study highlights multiliteracy approach that is to appealing students' interest by using multimodal resources and to promote students' motivation by using the integration of collaborative activities and individual activities.

Therefore, students are able to engage with the lesson with positive attitude and abundant learning outcomes. The multiliteracy approach with multimodality can serve as a basis for teachers to promote students' all-round development including a comprehensive understanding of China and the world. However, due to the relatively small size employed by this case, further research is needed to prove the effectiveness of this teaching approach among other challenges of EFL learning, therefore, the findings of this paper can be generalized.

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