

## On the New Paradigm of National Unity Education to College Students: Based on the Perspective of Communicative Practice

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### Abstract

From the perspective of production practice, the national unity education emphasizes, in educational relations, teachers are in the dominant position with teacher-centered tendencies, and college students are in the object position, heavily politicized in the content, infusion emphasizing on the method, class in the approach, so that the penetration of national unity education to college students is insufficient, lack of pertinence, and the effectiveness is not strong. With the theory of communicative practice, guiding and caring national unity education to college students will implement the change of educational relations between the subject and object, the reconstruction of the education field, the enrichment of the education goals and contents, the transformation of the education ways and methods, and give rise to the new paradigm of national unity education to college students.

**Key words:** College students; National unity education; New paradigm

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### INTRODUCTION

China is a united multinational country, carrying out the national unity education among college students, can not

only achieve the basic task of developing good moral characters and training talents in higher education, but also has very important significance for maintaining national unity and social stability. In traditional theory of national unity education, educators are regarded as education body, and the educated persons are regarded as education object. One-sided emphasis on the dominant position of the educators and the subordinate status of the educated persons results in monotonous education contents, simple education methods and weak education effects. By using the theory of communicative practice, guiding national unity education to college students will bring new enlightenment to relations between subject and object, educational contents, educational methods and education field of reconstructing national unity education, in order to realize the new paradigm shift of national unity education to college students.

### 1. THE DEPTH FIT OF THE COMMUNICATION PRACTICE THEORY AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

Communication practice theory is regarded as the theoretical support of national unity education and paradigm shift of realizing national unity education for college students. We must find the theoretical joints, and practical junctions and logic in common, in order to provide basic ideas and researching framework for paradigm change of national unity education to college students.

#### 1.1 The Background and Perspectives of Communication Practice Theory

With the rise of globalization, exchanges and dialogues have become the trend of the times. The western philosophers have reflected profoundly on the issues in modern society, such as the excessive rationality, communicative alienation, deficiency of human spirit

in consumption age (Hu, 2010). They have achieved the communication practice shift from “the subject to object” production practice view to “subject to subject production practice view. For example, Husserl proposed “the philosophy of subject interaction”; Martin Buber founded “the inter-subject theory of dialogues”; Habermas proposed “the theory of communicative rationality and communicative action” and so on. Although there were various communication practice theories, we still can find a lot of consensus by summarizing its main perspectives and basic ideas. Firstly, we should acknowledge the inter subjectivity of exchanges and communications. Exchange is a process of material and spiritual things between people, and it also is interactive relationship between subject and subject, constructed by the material and spirit mediums. Secondly, we should admit the object intermediary of communication. Interpersonal relationships must start with common object mediation, and as a medium, the form of the mediation is varied, but it exists objectively and participates in the interaction between the main bodies. Thirdly, we should admit the communication practice essence of life. The living world is the background perspective of the communicative action between the main bodies and it is always the place where the communication runs, and the interpersonal communication activities are the main contents of the living world. In a word, reviewing the national unity education with the theory of communicative practice, we will surpass the traditional ideas and methods of the national unity education, which can bring new ideas to national unity education to college students.

### **1.2 The Communication Practice Characteristic Analysis of the Ethnic Relationship**

In essence, the ethnic relationship is a kind of communication practice relationship, and it is a kind of manifestation and existing condition of communication practice relationship. From the perspective of human history, the reason why people have developed from the individual to society is the need for survival at first and the need for development in the end. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, human needs include the need for survival, the need for communication, and the need for self-actualization. In modern society, due to the development of labor division, whatever existence, communication and self-actualization depend on the communication practice activities. Therefore, the communicative practice has become the basic way of existence and development. As a stable community of people in a certain historical stage, nation has a common political and economic life, a common historical tradition, and common cultural psychology, which is unique identities of telling the differences from other ethnic groups. From the perspective of embryology, various forms of exchanges are places and source where the formation and development of ethnic relations happen. Common political and economic life, common historical

tradition and cultural psychology comes from exchanges and development in the communication. Without national communication practice of the individual and community, the ethnic relationship won’t appear. The realization of national identity among individual members in the same or different group happens in the communication practice activities. That is to say, the formation and development of the nation and national relationship have the characteristics of communication practice in source, evolution and essence.

### **1.3 The Characteristics of Communication Practice of National Unity Education**

Education activity is essentially a kind of communication practice activity between subject and subject, rather than an activity of knowing and changing nature. We can’t regard the “subject - object” production mode as the theoretical basis of subjectivity education, and we must seek to regard the “subject - object - subject” production mode as the theoretical cornerstone of subjectivity education (Huang, 2008). Therefore, as a concrete form of communication practice, national unity education to college students reflects its own unique characteristics of the communication practice. Firstly, national unity education is primarily a spiritual education. The spiritual communication includes national consciousness, national emotion and psychological identity and so on. Secondly, national unity education is a kind of generative communication. The formation of ethnic relations and the connotation of national unity consciousness don’t depend on the external implant, but the educated people actively construct by two-way interaction between the main bodies. National unity education is a kind of reflective education. In fact, exchanges between different ethnic groups imply the self-identity and self-segregation of their national identities, and national unity education is to make the educators and the educated persons tend to have common and stable ideas. At last, national unity education is the unification between the daily communication and other communication. Because of the communication practice characteristics of national unity education, national unity education to college students should return to the living world, and it should be close to the actual life of college students in order to realize the effective unification between the class and outside class.

## **2. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE “SUBJECT-OBJECT” RELATIONSHIP OF THE NATIONAL UNITY EDUCATION TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

From the perspective of the production practice, in the concept of national unity education to college students, students are treated the educated objects, emphasizing that the teacher should play the dominant role. The relationship

between students and teachers is binary relation, not one-way infusion. In communication practice theory, it advocates equal understanding and communication between bodies, and it realizes the reconstruction of the relationship of national unity education for college students.

### **2.1 The Extension of Education Subject and Object**

Under the guidance of production practice, in national unity education for college students, teachers are single education bodies, and students are relative education objects, which constitutes a relationship between subject and object. In this relationship, the subject is the only one, and the object is also the only one. It solely restricts the relationship education activities between teachers and students, no investigation to the complexity of the education activities, ignoring the complexity and diversity. In fact, in the practice of national unity education to college students, the concept of the national unity is passed through education activities between teachers and students; through various forms of communication among the same and different ethnic students, the concept of national unity is passed and has a great influence. Therefore, national unity education to college students is a kind of communication practice. From the diverse forms and persistent characteristics of communication practice, its education subject must be multipolar. Firstly, the educational status of students is differentiated. In the communication exchange between students of different nationalities, some students are education main bodies, but some students are education objects; In the communication exchange between students of the same nationality, some students are main bodies, but some other students are education objects; Sometimes under different circumstances, the body and object is different. Therefore, in communicative practice sense, teachers are no longer simple givers in education relationship, and students are no longer simple receivers. In many cases, the situation is changeable, that is to say, students can become givers. As a result, in national unity education practice, the education subject and the object are no longer simple and fixed, but present overlapping parts, differentiation, fixed and changeable relationship.

### **2.2 The Reconstruction of the Relationship Between Subject and Object**

National unity education is useful for training, developing people, and different practice views inevitably affect people's understandings. Under the influence of practice view, national unity education is regarded as "the subject - object" activity, and in this kind of relationship, teachers are the simple subjects, but the students are with no subjectivity. Therefore, the subjectivity of the students is restricted. As human being, the educated persons don't get enough attention. College students are passive receptors,

accepting those authoritative concepts and behaviors which represent the social ideology and national unity. In the shadow of social supremacy, persons' independent and active creation is restricted. National unity has become an empty slogan, and it goes in the "no man's land" for a long time. Under the influence of post modern practice, education showed "subject - subject" two polar or multipolar patterns, namely, no blank communication mode. In this kind of education mode, standard and truth are cancelled, and value education has been to relativism and nihilism. In communication practice theory, practice is treated as a social interaction between subject and subject. Under such practice point of view, education is the structure of "subject - object - subject" which combines "subject - object" and "subject - subject" relationship. It revitalizes the modern practice that ignores and forgets the existence of the multipolar main body and the social relationship between them, and overcomes the post-modern practice with emphasis on the relationship between social people which neglects the object restriction on the main body of communication, thus making contact the subjective behavior and avoiding knowing the idealism tendency toward relativism and irrationalism. We can see, in the perspective of the communication practice theory, national unity education to college students is no longer the composition of the relationship between the subject and object, but the "subject - object - subject" education structure.

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## **3. THE ADJUSTMENT OF THE TARGET AND CONTENT OF NATIONAL UNITY EDUCATION TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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By college students' national unity education activities, education goal decided the value orientation of education, education contents as contact with the bridge and the link between education main body, plays an important role in the mediation. Whether the education target is reasonable or the educational content is in line with the actuality can directly affect the education direction and carrier of communication practice and this is crucial for the formation of a national unity education consciousness.

### **3.1 The Target Adjustment of National Unity Education to College Students**

Since a long-term, in our country's education policy, we have advocated to cultivate qualified builders and reliable successors of socialism". This is actually a kind of concept of education policy from the perspective of production practice. Regarding college students as the educated people from the point of production practice, national unity education to college students ignores the subjectivity, initiative and constructive characteristics of a person. In the process of education, strengthening "instrumental rationality", and weakening the "humanities

rationality”, advocating the education goal is to ask the educated people to adapt to the requirement of external political goals, and this leads to the alienation of people and education. This kind of value orientation is the external political center, rather than internal people-oriented. As is known to all, the purpose of education is to cultivate people, and it is the free and comprehensive development of human beings. In the communication practice theory, the goal of national unity education to college students is not to develop people who meet the requirements of politics now, but fundamentally guide and help students construct the identity of the Chinese nation, the psychological ownership and emotional attachment, in the end they can constantly strengthen such a cognitive identity, and consciously safeguard the unity of the nationalities. The value orientation of this kind of education target is to prompt people into the Chinese ethnic groups so as to reduce and eliminate the psychological differences and discomfort between different nationalities.

### **3.2 The College Students’ National Unity Education Content Construction**

With the traditional perspectives of national unity to education college students, the content of national unity education to college students emphasizes the educational content of political correctness, but it ignores ideological the subjectivity and diversity of the world and life. As a result, we often see national unity education activities with “high-profile political slogans, grandiose language expression, and inflexible teaching material”, which lead to students unity education flat, rigid and boring, in the end, college students tend to hate the contents and the education effect is not good. Under the communication practice theory, we advocate that national unity education to college students should return to the living world, and use the diversity of life to meet the richness of man’s spiritual construction. Also only in this way, the content of the national unity education be close to the practice of college students’ real life and the thought can get popular among educators. Therefore, starting from the diversity of the education of the people, we should construct the content of the national unity education for college students for scientific construction, from single to rich things, from plane to solid thing, in the end it can satisfy people the richness, gradation and expansibility of the spirit world. Therefore, starting from the diversity of the education of the people, we should construct the content of the national unity education for college students for scientific construction, from single to rich things, from plane to solid thing, in the end it can satisfy people the richness, gradation and expansibility of the spirit world. This is a unity of emotional foundation among all ethnic groups, and it is also the psychological foundation of national unity consciousness. Fifthly, it is the policy and law education, including a split, reverse osmosis and education

laws and regulations. All nationalities are enhancing unity consciousness and maintaining the national unity of the bottom line.

## **4. THE WAYS AND METHODS SHIFT OF NATIONAL UNITY EDUCATION TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

Due to the theoretical basis shift of the national unity education relationship, goal and content, we require that the education method should change so as to realize the goal of transferring from the epistemology to methodology.

### **4.1 Methods Expanding of National Unity Education to College Students**

Historical experience has shown that the diversity pattern of Chinese nation is a result of communication exchanges among ethnic people’s all around the world for a long time. This suggests that the national unity consciousness, emotional and psychological identity never simply form by one way, but form in the long term exchange of communication. Traditional national unity education to college students emphasizes the education of the classroom, and it does not comply with the national relations formed in the development of history. It is also not accord with the requirements of richness and gradation national unity education. Therefore, reviewing national unity education to college students, we must establish a systematic, adaptable, and diverse education way. Firstly, class education is the main channel. The national unity educational content should be systematically taken into the curriculum system of the undergraduate education, and it can play a role of main channel in ideological and political theory course., then the school opens the discussion project of nationality; History, language, politics, economic and social course of self-restraint can play important roles, and we should blend national unity education among them. Secondly, everyday life has important positions. College students’ daily life is an important part in college students’ ideological development. Here the daily life mainly refers to life besides studying life, including interpersonal communication and emotional communication between teachers and students etc., in which special attention should be paid to the relationships between teachers and students, and we can create conditions for forming invisible education atmosphere, promoting the formation of national unity consciousness. Publicity is an important channel. Using a variety of campus media to prompt national policy, national culture and the unity of the advanced deeds in order to form a positive public opinion. Finally, the social practice is an important way. By gathering students and teachers to the areas of ethnic minority, the teachers and students can

carry out the duty and obligation to support agriculture, intellectual township, such as various forms of social practice activities, making the broad masses of teachers and students in the personal experience to consolidate and strengthen national unity.

#### **4.2 The Method Change of National Unity Education to College Students'**

From production practice to communication practice, the basic paradigm of national unity education to college students has profound changes. From the education relationship, national unity education has transformed from teacher-centered stage to student-centered stage, and the relationship between subject and object has changed. Looked from the education field, it transformed from pure knowledge to value guidance, communication, consensus of moral experience and understanding of spiritual growth. Looked from the education field, it transformed from pure knowledge to value guidance, communication, consensus of moral experience and understanding of spiritual growth. From the perspective of education method, it transforms from inside class to outside class, from daily education non daily education, from theoretical education to the living world. This requires college students' education method change from a unidirectional type to a bidirectional type, from educational transformation to conversational transformation, from class to daily life, from the dominant education to the invisible education. Which requires the organization to carry out national unity education activity to college students', it must be combined with principle and flexibility. In other words, the selection of education content and education method is adopted, in person, because of things, from place to place and condition, does not have "one size fits all", "one-pot". Such as, some content selection should pay attention to the policies, and selection should emphasize on the emotion. On methods, some students should persuade other people, some should make people moving by feeling, and some people should have positive thoughts. We should correct students' mistakes and reverses undesirable tendency with the combination of a variety of methods.

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### **5. THE SUPERPOSITION OF VARIOUS EDUCATION FIELDS OF NATIONAL UNITY TO COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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The happening of the national unity education to college students and the relationship dealing between the main bodies is actually a process of multi-factors integration and differentiation, and it is also the process of value construction, emotional communication, spiritual dialogue, and moral experience, further more it is a process of using a variety of educational tools. In fact, it is also the superposition of various kinds of education fields.

#### **5.1 The Construction of Value Field**

The inner relationship between the subject – object-subject decides the bilateral, interactive, leading and constructive characteristics. This means that for national unity education activities for college students, we should fully realize that college students are actively constructing their own national unity consciousness through independent communication, and should pay more attention to the leading role of the educators. The value guidance mainly show the requirements, contents and characteristics to national unity education, and fully showed the value orientation, the inherent law and time requirements of national unity education activities; Facing the differences and acceptable degree of college students, we should make the education content pertinent and adaptable; Flexibly choosing the way of national unity education, and making it autonomy and independent; Creating a good education environment, and making it with democracy and equality. We should handle the dialectical relationship between the educators "value guidance" and college students' active construction. We should neither speak "value guidance", nor only "active construction", otherwise, we will return to the Lord - "relationship". With the "value guidance" of educators, we should promote students' active construction and adhere to the educators' value on the basis of promoting students' active construction.

#### **5.2 Mind Exchange in Dialogues**

Martin buber (DE) once said: "My conversation with you is not only words on you, but expression in a deep life" (Chen, trans., 1986). Dialogue is the communication activity between the main body, and this process is between the main body of discourse communication, fusion of the heart, and integration of view, and this point to an a realm of life (Wong & Yu, 2009). In the process of guiding college students, we must pay attention to three transformation: firstly, the way of education should transform from infusion to dialogue; Secondly, the education contents should transform from the external regulation to the actual life practice and thoughts of college students; Thirdly, education connotation pays more attention to students' emotional and psychological factors.

#### **5.3 The Moral Perception Experience**

National unity education to college students is dialogue of language on the surface, deeply it is not only moral experience and emotional resonance, but also the key of effective national unity education. Experience is not only a moral relation, but also a scene, a kind of atmosphere. As a kind of activity, at the first stage, experience shows as college students' perception of the current status, as the shock of the soul, at the second stage, it is the perception and experience to stay in college students' emotional and cognitive world, and it will become a part of their values. This has an important role in the formation of the concept

of college students. This has an important role in the formation of the concept of college students. The moral experience of national unity education to college students, not the individual's unique experience, but experience together between the main bodies. In other words, only by integrating moral experience and emotional resonance of the communicative community, we can achieve the requirements of national unity education transforming "from the outside world to the inside world and from me to you.

#### 5.4 The Spirit Agreement of Understanding Field

To college students' understanding of national unity education, firstly, it is the understanding of the subject to "object" (education contents), reflecting the objective relationship between the subject and object; Secondly, it is between the subject and subject (people), showing the understanding of subject through objects. As Habermas puts it: "the two exchanges in the process of participant can reach an understanding of something in the world and each other can make oneself understand each other." (Zhang, trans., 1983) Through equal dialogue, emotional communication and communication and understanding between the main bodies, we formed a consensus among subjects, so as to achieve the transferring of value. Therefore, the dialogue, experience, and understanding of national unity education communication practice must point to a multipolar resonance, enlightenment and consensus among the subjects. The process is the formation process of subjective values, ideology and moral character, and it is also a process of spiritual formation between subjects.

Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher thought character formation is a long-term process of habituation. In essence, the concept of national unity is the virtue of ethnic group or individual in handling ethnic relations (good qualities and functions), which means carrying out national unity education for college students. The formation of national unity to college students is a long-term habit by "outside – inside-outside" process. We must admit that the so-called habituation is the long-term or repeated practice in life, and it is intrinsic in the associations of college students' practice activity. We can say, communication practice provides a new vision and place for national unity education. We must shift from epistemology to methodology so that we can promote the concept of national unity into the real value of college students.

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