

Ideological and Political Construction Based on the “Scenario-Action” Teaching Mode in the Major of French Language: A Case Study of “French Reading” Course

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Supported by “the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities” (No. 3162021ZYQB02) and by the project of Chinese Testing International Co.Ltd (No. CTI2021ZB06), this work is also a part of the Beijing’s model course “French reading” in ideological and political constructions in curriculum. A sincere gratitude to Ms. KE Yiyun, Mr. MENG Chuizheng, Mr.ZHANG Chenyi, Ms. YANG Run and all the students in class “2019311” of CFAU for their generous support in this study.

Received 15 May 2022; accepted 2 October 2022

Published online 26 October 2022

Abstract

This paper refers to the teaching design and practice in the field of Ideological and political construction of curriculum in French reading course, the authors will firstly analyse the background of our exploration of the new teaching and learning mode, and then, represent the main cores of this mode, in order to promote the construction of the ideological and political in curriculum of not only the French reading course, but all courses of the French language.

Key words: Ideological and political construction; “Scenario-action” teaching mode; “French Reading” course

Wang, P. F., Chen, J., Liu, Z. K., Li, Z. Y., & Shi, J.(2022). Ideological and Political Construction Based on the “Scenario-Action” Teaching Mode in the Major of French Language: A Case Study of “French Reading” Course. *Canadian Social Science*, 18(5), 106-109. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/view/12790>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12790>

1. INTRODUCTION

Ideological and political construction of curriculum is an effective way to attain the whole process and all-round

education. Comprehensively promoting the ideological and political construction of curriculum has become an important measure of moral and competence education in universities. The essence of ideological and political education in curriculums is to break the isolation between the ideological and political education and the education of major study and truly realize the perfect combination of moral cultivation and talent cultivation in major courses. When we talk about the major of foreign languages, for instance, the major of French language, we should promote the ideological and political construction of curriculum according to the characteristics of language learning and acquisition as well.

The researching group of authors composed of university teacher and students in the major of French language in China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) have been concentrating on the exploration of a teaching and learning mode (in other words, an interactive mode) in order to promote the construction of the ideological and political in curriculum of French language. This paper will focus on the “French Reading” course. We will firstly analyse the background of our exploration of the new teaching and learning mode, and then, represent the main cores of this mode.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHINA'S FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In 2016, China’s General Secretary XI Jinping proposed the fundamental requirement of “persisting in moral education and cultivating people as the central link, running ideological and political work through the whole process of education and teaching, thus realizing the whole process and all-round education”(Xi, 2016), which prompted college educators to reflect on the mode of “Ideological and political education”. In the major of French language, the “French Reading” course is a compulsory basic input course and an important window

for college students to enlarge the knowledge of French language and culture (the knowledge of other countries as well). Meanwhile, the “French Reading” course can also prepare for the students’ future communications and interactions. According to the above analysis, this course has a great impact on the long-term development of university students and the overall situation of the country so as to create opportunities and conditions for exploring the integration of ideological and political education into foreign language teaching reform.

At present, with the deepening of globalization, it is urgent to promote the establishment of a win-win cooperation for “A Community of Shared Future for Mankind”. The talents needed by the society are bound to face more international and cross-cultural exchanges, and they are supposed to have stronger cross-cultural communicative competence and more abundant professional knowledge. Therefore, to explore a good way to combine the elementary contents of the “French Reading” course and the ideological and political construction, the authors believe that the process of teaching and studying should be based on the competence to use language and symbols for international and cross-cultural communication.

However, this implementation, in some aspects, is also unsatisfactory. In 2019, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) released its latest report on “TALIS (International Survey of Teachers’ Teaching)” in Paris. The report data showed that teachers in our country have a high social identity and teaching efficiency, but there are still differences between the average value of OECD and their cultivation of students’ competence construction. For example, in the aspect of teaching task design, teachers’ willing of “giving students projects that require at least one week to complete”, there exists an obvious difference between the percentage of Chinese teachers (20.8%)¹ and that of French (27.4%) and Spanish (33%) teachers (Figure 1), from which we can see there is still potential to improve the index closely related to students’ core literacy (OECD, 2019).

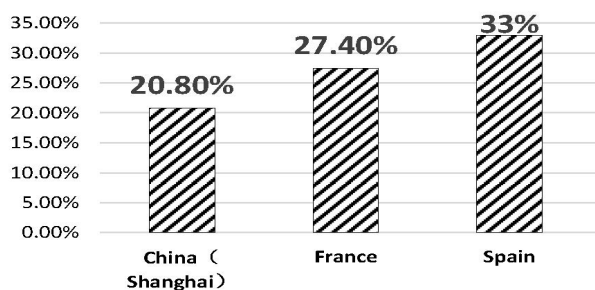


Figure 1
Percentage of teachers’ willing to “give students projects that require at least one week to complete”

¹ This survey in China focused mainly the condition and data of the teachers in the city of Shanghai.

According to the above data, it is urgent to be aware that there are still some problems in the current teaching, according to our review, there are mainly three aspects involved. Firstly, the dislocation of discipline orientation. On the one hand, examination-oriented teaching and learning are still deeply rooted to a large extent in China. On the other hand, the understanding of the dual attributes of instrumentality and humanism of foreign language in the new era is too insufficient to put into practice. Secondly, teachers find it is arduous to change their concepts. They stress “teaching” rather than “learning” and follow the concept of “teacher-centered”, contrary to the goal of “students-centered” and fully-cultivating competence. Thirdly, there is a lack of innovation in teaching mode, which is manifested in the superficial and seriously stylized classroom teaching, insufficiency of integration in fragmented teaching content, trouble in forming the competence, ignorance in creating theme situation and the deep exploration of the theme significance which has resulted in a lack of training in thinking (Wang, 2017 2019; Wang&Diao, 2020). Therefore, it is urgent to find a new way to meet the requirements for students’ overall competence in French discipline and to innovate teaching approaches from guiding ideology to specific implementation path in an all-round way.

During our exploration process, we have taken main ideas of the “action-oriented” approach of Europe and its latest theoretical progress into our French language teaching practice. In the following part, we will firstly introduce this latest orientation of foreign language teaching and learning in Europe, and then present our practicing teaching-learning framework based on the above approach and its progress.

3. FROM “ACTION-ORIENTED” APPROACH TO “SCENARIO-ACTION” TEACHING MODE

The “action-oriented” foreign language teaching embodies the new orientation of foreign language learning in Europe. The researchers in Europe believe that the purpose of learning a foreign language is not to learn the language itself, but to integrate into a different community and become its member as far as possible (Council of Europe, 2001). Obviously, this is very similar to the goal mentioned above of cultivating students’ competence in English teaching during the new period of “Ideological and political construction of curriculum” in China. In order to achieve this goal, action-oriented teaching creatively puts forward that “learning a foreign language means preparing to use it actively for communication” and “communication and learning will be achieved by completing tasks (in other words, actions)” (Council of Europe, 2001). Language users and learners are firstly identified as participants in social practice. In a

specific area of social action, tasks, including language activities, are accomplished based on certain conditions and circumstances. The so-called “action” refers to the ability of one or more behavior subjects to strategically use their capability of mastering to achieve a given goal. This is called an “action”, or a “task” (Council of Europe, 2001). At the same time, the completion of an “action” is also a process of opening and innovation. Therefore, language users and learners develop their comprehensive competence, especially their competence to use language to communicate (Council of Europe, 2001).

Based on what has been discussed above, the action-oriented approach requires teachers to design action plans according to teaching objectives and students’ language proficiency level before class. In latest researches, some researchers recognize that teachers have to organize students to participate in actions purposefully according to an action plan named “scenario” (Bourguignon, 2007; Riquois, 2015; Puren, 2015). All the action designs should follow the main ideas of the scenario, meanwhile, the scenario act as the guide of the students during their participation into the teaching/studying actions. Estelle Riquois (2015) divides the design of scenario into three parts: action reference, action arrangement and action presupposition, with several details, according to our previous studies, we paraphrased these details into seven critical steps listed as below in **Table 1**:

Table 1
Critical steps in “scenario-action” teaching mode

Action reference	Refer to the language competence level in CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)
	Determine teaching objectives
	Consider the learners’ specific needs
Action arrangement	Determine the task forms
	Setting action “scenario” for action subject
Action presupposition	Presuppose the help needed
	Presuppose post-action assessment

It is worth mentioning that the teacher has always served as the paver of action and the collaborator of action subject throughout the whole process of the scenario. As E.Riquois pointed out: “Scenario should meet the needs and identity of learners. With the help of action plan, teachers organize teaching to create a real interactive communication context for learners.”(Riquois, 2015) The authors have taken the “Scenario-Action” teaching mode into the French language teaching practice in CFAU, we have mainly explored the innovations in the task design part and the assessment part in order to achieve the main aims of the ideological and political construction of curriculum. In this paper, we will basically focus on the task design part in our teaching practice of French language in university. We will take the French reading course as an example of this design.

4. THE SCENARIO AND ACTION-DESIGN IN FRENCH READING COURSE

As mentioned above, the researching group of authors composed of university teacher and students in the major of French language in China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU) have been concentrating on the exploration of a teaching and learning mode (in other words, an interactive mode) in order to promote the construction of the ideological and political in curriculum of French language. In the “French Reading” course, we will firstly represent the exploration of the new teaching and learning mode, as well as the main cores of this mode.

The key point is to capture the “three unifications” in the design of the teaching framework. The first is the unification of partial language training and general comprehension of the whole text, which requires not only the attention to the linguistry in the reading process but also the overall understanding of the whole verbal meaning, viewpoint, and structure of the text. The second is the unification of professional knowledge and practice, which requires us to fully grasp the concept that the reading course is one of the important sources of language input in the cultivation of foreign language ability. At the same time, this course also has distinct practical characteristics, so while inputting through reading, it is necessary to guide students to make study serve the practical purpose and provide them with sufficient practice opportunities. The third is the unification of dealing with the unity of students’ subjectivity and teachers’ dominance in class. Teachers not only need to fully mobilize the enthusiasm and initiative of students and encourage students to construct knowledge actively but also need to accurately grasp the process, rhythm, and direction of class while providing necessary assistance to students.

Based on the general idea of the above design, we re-integrate the teaching objectives and divide them into four specific objectives: reading ability, cultural knowledge, application ability, and value shaping. Combined with the unit “La révolution industrielle”(in English, the Industrial Revolution), the following is the concrete representation of the above four objectives²:

Teaching Aims

- **Reading ability** (Language ability + Text analysis ability)
 Master sentence structure and other important language knowledge. Master the text positioning and searching skills of key information. Quickly extract the main idea of the text and master the relevant reading methods. Expand the reading of similar topics to improve reading comprehension ability.
- **Cultural knowledge**
 Learn vocabulary related to Industrial Revolution. Understand the role of Industrial Revolution in promoting social progress, and

² The design of the teaching objectives is offered by Mrs. WANG Xiaoxia, Mrs. JIN Junhua, Mrs. QU Guoyan, Mrs. LE Min and Mr. WANG Pengfei, the members of the group in CFAU of Beijing’s model course “French reading” in ideological and political constructions in curriculum. The authors express the sincere gratitude to them.

therefore understand the rapid development of China's industry after the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially after the reform and opening up and the changes brought by industrial development to Chinese society. The course can be expanded to introduce Industrial Revolution 4.0 and "Made in China 2025".

• **Application ability**

Through activities including group demonstration and discussion, train students' ability in information collecting, oral expression and other aspects. At the same time, students will also be trained to differentiate, classify and integrate different views of Chinese and French culture, and then be able to express and comment on different views through oral communication and writing.

• **Value shaping**

In comparing the industrial development speed in the Industrial Revolution period with the speed of China's industrial development and achievement, let students understand that though China's industrial development starts late, the Chinese catch up with and even outpace some western industrial countries in some areas within decades with their own wisdom and hard-working spirit and put forward the "Made in China 2025". Through the comparison, help students establish road confidence and system confidence.

5. TASKS REMAINED IN THE POTENTIAL CONSTRUCTION OF SCENARIO AND ACTION-DESIGN IN FRENCH READING COURSE

In our future practices, it remains several tasks in enlarging and deepening our teaching mode, which are going to be designed as the "three combinations" as below:

1) The combination with the ideological and political courses, which is a necessary theoretic support for the French language teachers during their exploration of the ideological and political constructions in curriculums.

2) The combination with other French language courses, which is related to the cohesion of the practice in the French reading course and the other courses, such as the translating, interpreting and writing ones. The final aim of our practice is to construct an overall community of knowledge, competence and value.

3) The combination with the input of Xi Jinping The Governance of China, which refers to the latest demand and purpose of the ideological and political constructions in curriculum, the French version of Xi Jinping The Governance of China should be introduced into the campus, the classes and the teaching materials.

The above tasks will be of importance in our future exploration of not only the construction of ideological and political approach in French reading course, but also the potential construction of ideological and political approach in all French major courses, even all foreign language major courses.

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