

Ideology Security Education in Senior High School in China: A Focus on Core Socialist Values in English Textbooks*

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In this article, we examine ideology security education in China with a special focus on English textbooks in senior high school. Ideology security education has long been treasured in China and high school students are the reserve forces of national development and rejuvenation. Core socialist values are the mainstream value orientation initiated by the Communist Party of China and are originated from the system of core socialist values. The research takes the prevailing five compulsory textbooks as the subject. The research framework is informed by critical discourse analysis theory. Textual analysis is applied as a methodological approach to determine the main value orientation embodied in the senior high school English textbooks. The distribution of three value levels of nation, society, and individual is investigated. The study finds evidence of the dissemination of core socialist values throughout the textbooks and the disproportion of the three-dimensional core socialist values. The value orientation is explicitly and implicitly embedded in the textbooks. In response, we argue for the role shift of senior high school teachers from knowledge transmitters to value guides and the responsibility of cultivating students' values, which ought to be the ideological and political significance of foreign language teaching.

Keywords: core socialist values, value orientation, ideology, senior high school English textbooks

Introduction

Ideology security education has long been treasured in China (Apple, 2001). High school students are the reserve forces of national development and rejuvenation and it is vital to strengthen and improve their ideological security education. Core socialist values are the mainstream value orientation in China. The new curriculum reform has a high requirement on the current teaching and evaluation. Guided by the Communist Party of China, *The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School* (2017 edition) stipulates educational objectives and content, and reflects the national will in the field of education (The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2018). The aims and objectives of English curriculum is to cultivate students' correct concept of value and the establishment of cultural confidence and correct values are the purpose and significance of language learning (Wang, 2018). What's more, the standards lay emphasis on Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and core socialist values, cultivating political, moral and personal quality, and Chinese should fortify our confidence in the socialist path, theories, system and culture with Chinese characteristics and form correct world outlook, views on life and values. As we all know,

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senior high school stage is a crucial period of forming correct world outlook, views on life and values, textbooks are the basic teaching material in school education (Fu, 2004), which undertake the propagation of current ideology. As English inevitably bears the mark of Western cultures and ideology, how are core socialist values embodied in the textbooks? During the period of different ideological trends mingled, it is imperative to make an analysis of the value orientation of senior high school English textbooks on the basis of core socialist values.

Value Orientation and Core Socialist Values

Value orientation is an important category of philosophy, which is being widely applied in some fields, and different scholars have different definitions. Value orientation is an organizational, internal, and stable concept, influencing the judgement and behavior of individuals or groups (Wu, 1998). It is always embodied in the basic value standpoint, attitude, and tendency when we are confronted with various contradictions, conflicts, and relations, which are deeply rooted in the soil of values (Xu, 1998). Value subject distinguishes and filters different values by combining with his own pursuits and ideas. Value orientation is the basic value standpoint, attitude when facing or dealing with various contradictions and relationships (Li, 2007). Value orientation is the process of pointing to the goal when one is carrying out value activities, reflecting the overall trend of values (Ruan, 2004). In brief, value orientation refers to the basic value standpoint, attitude, and tendency.

According to Prime Minister Hu's report at 18th Party Congress, core socialist values are the mainstream value orientation in China, which are put forward by the Communist Party of China and are originated from the system of core socialist values (Hu, 2012). Prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship are the basic content of core socialist values. Prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony are the value goal of the national level, reflecting the inherent regulation of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and embodying the all-round value demand of economic, political, cultural, and social progress. Freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law are the value orientation of the social level and a vivid expression of a better society, reflecting the basic requirement of Marxism, the ideal value attribute we pursue unremittingly, and the core idea of the unswerving and long-term practice. Patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship are the basic moral code that citizens should follow, the essence of the traditional virtues of the Chinese nation, socialist morality and revolutionary morality of the Communist Party of China. The three levels of core socialist values are a connective and logical entirety. The guide of core socialist values has influential impact on the students' ideological security education from the perspective of value goal, value norm, and value behavior (Liu, 2017).

Research Design

Research Subject

School textbooks are written by individuals or committees to convey particular pedagogical purposes. The intention of the contemporary society is implicated in the content and the underlying pedagogical significance can be reflected through the study of textbooks. The subject of the research is five compulsory textbooks of *New Senior English for China* (PEP, the 2nd edition, 2007, Book 1-5). As *The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High School* (experimental version) was promulgated by the Ministry of Education separately in 2003, the curriculum reform in senior high school reached its climax, which fully reflects the value orientation

of realizing the optimal development of English education (Cheng & Sun, 2011). Moreover, *New Senior English for China* (PEP, 2nd edition, 2007, Book 1-5) is a set of textbooks widely used in China, covering most provinces, such as Henan, Hebei, Anhui, Jiangxi, Guangdong, and so on. It is influential on textbook users' perception of the world due to its extensive use.

Research Questions

In order to understand the ideological security education in high school English classroom, we need to have an analysis of the teaching material. Research questions are put forward as follows:

1. How are core socialist values distributed in the textbooks?
2. What are the characteristics of value orientation embodied in the textbooks?
3. Given the value orientation embodied in English textbooks, what suggestions can we provide for the compilation and use of textbooks?

The key issue to be resolved in the study is the distribution of the three levels of nation, society, and individual of core socialist values in the textbooks.

Research Methods

The study undertakes the analysis of textbooks by content analysis. Mixed method approach involves both qualitative and quantitative data and incorporates theoretical frameworks and philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2016). Textual analysis refers to the method of analyzing and integrating texts according to the need of a topic, and commentary interpretation is applied to understand what is in the text and explore the background knowledge. For the textual analysis, extracts were selected from the textbooks under the three categories of national, social, and individual. The thesis makes an analysis of core socialist values reflected in the textbooks, so as to explore the mainstream values of textbooks.

Data Collection

The data are collected from five compulsory textbooks of *New Senior English for China* (PEP, 2nd edition, 2007, Book 1-5). Compulsory textbooks of *New Senior English for China* consist of five books, each of which is composed of five units, so there are altogether 25 units in the textbooks. How to judge the classification of reading texts according to the connotation of core socialist values needs consistency test. A senior high English teacher with Master's degree in education was invited to make a consistency test analysis. A table of the distribution of core socialist values in the textbooks is compiled, which is used to make a statistics of the percentage of each item of core socialist values and explore the mainstream values of the textbooks. In order to facilitate the analysis, some common marks are widely used. The letter "B" represents each set of the textbooks, and the letter "U" represents each unit. For example, "B1U1" represents Unit 1 in Book 1, which is frequently used in high schools.

Data Analysis

Following the principle of qualitative data analysis, the research extracts the data subject and analyzes the mutual verification and interaction among various data. According to the definitions of the concrete content of core socialist values, data analysis is made by compiling tables of the distribution of the three different levels of nation, society, and individual of core socialist values in the textbooks. In order to ensure the authenticity of the research and avoid personal assumptions, consistency test is used. The author and the invited teacher choose 16% items of core socialist values (justice and the rule of law) to test the consistency. The result shows the

consistency coefficient is 98%. Thus, the reading texts in the textbooks can be classified clearly according to the connotation of core socialist values, which ensures the objectivity of data analysis.

Results and Analysis of Core Socialist Values in the Textbooks

The Results and Analysis of Core Socialist Values From the National Level

Prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony are the national level of core socialist values consists, and they reflect the pursuit of building an ideal country.

Table 1

The Distribution of Value Orientation From National Level

| Value orientation | Units |
|-------------------|--|
| Prosperity | B1U5, B4U1, B4U2 |
| Democracy | B1U5, B2U2, B4U1 |
| Civility | B1U1, B1U2, B1U3, B1U4, B1U5, B2U1, B2U2, B2U3, B2U4, B2U5, B3U1, B3U2, B3U3, B3U4, B3U5, B4U1, B4U2, B4U3, B4U4, B4U5, B5U1, B5U2, B5U3, B5U4, B5U5 |
| Harmony | B1U1, B1U2, B1U3, B1U4, B1U5, B2U1, B2U2, B2U3, B2U4, B2U5, B3U1, B3U2, B3U3, B3U4, B3U5, B4U1, B4U2, B4U3, B4U4, B4U5, B5U1, B5U2, B5U3, B5U4, B5U5 |

Value orientation of prosperity. Prosperity means a wealthy and strong nation, which is the condition of economic construction of a modern socialist country, the dream of Chinese people, and the basis of happiness. There are altogether three units embodying value orientation of prosperity in the five textbooks, which accounts for 12% of the units. Constructing a modern socialist country is the dream of Chinese people, so value orientation of prosperity should be concerned in the textbooks to encourage students to struggle for the glory of the country.

Value orientation of democracy. Democracy is an appeal of human society, whose essence is that the people are masters of the country, reflecting the important characteristics of a modern socialist country. It is like the meridian of a country, dredging the body and coordinating the political function. There are altogether three units embodying value orientation of democracy in the textbooks, which accounts for 12% of the units. As socialist democracy develops day by day, value orientation of democracy should be widely publicized among senior high school students.

Value orientation of civility. Civility is not only an important symbol of social progress, but also an important feature of a modern socialist country. As the condition of cultural construction of a modern socialist country, it is the latest summary of a national, scientific, and people-oriented socialist culture that embraces modernization, the world, and the future and supports the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation in the new era. There are altogether 25 units embodying value orientation of civilization in the textbooks, which accounts for 100% of the units. Therefore, value orientation of civilization has a great influence on the textbooks.

Value orientation of harmony. Harmony is a basic idea of Chinese traditional cultures, reflecting the situation of ensuring people's access to education, employment, medical services, elderly care, and housing. There are altogether 25 units embodying value orientation of harmony in the textbooks, which accounts for 100% of the units. Thus, it can be seen that value orientation of harmony has become the consensus of people.

The Results and Analysis of Core Socialist Values From the Social Level

Freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law are the social level of core socialist values, and they reflect the pursuit of constructing a society of great harmony.

Table 2

The Distribution of Value Orientation From Social Level

| Value orientation | Units |
|-------------------|---|
| Freedom | B1U1, B1U3, B1U5, B2U2, B2U4, B2U5, B3U3, B3U5, B4U1, B4U2, B4U3, B4U5, B5U3, |
| Equality | B1U5, B2U2, B2U4, B3U3, B4U1 |
| Justice | B1U5, B2U2 |
| Rule of law | B1U5 |

Value orientation of freedom. Freedom refers to the condition of the will, existence, and development of human beings and the yearning of the society, which is the social value goal pursued by Marxism. There are altogether 13 units embodying value orientation of freedom in the textbooks, which accounts for 52% of the units. It is known that freedom is the desire of people, so value orientation of freedom is occupying a certain position in the textbooks.

Value orientation of equality. Equality refers to the fact that citizens are equal before the law, and its value orientation is the realization of the substantive equality. It requires respecting and safeguarding human rights, and ensuring equal rights to participation and development for all members of society in accordance with the law. There are altogether five units embodying value orientation of equality in the textbooks, which accounts for 20% of the units. It is suggested that value orientation of equality should be added more into the textbooks because there are still much inequality in real life.

Value orientation of justice. Justice is the fundamental value ideal of the society, which is based on liberation, freedom, and equality. It is also the balance of defending rights and the criterion of measuring social development. There are two units embodying value orientation of justice in the textbooks, which accounts for 8% of the units. The fact that value orientation of justice is ignored in the textbooks is a concern to us, because justice protects our legal rights. Justice should be attached important in the textbooks.

Value orientation of the rule of law. The rule of law is the basic way of running the country, which requires the law-based governance of the country. It is the shield of social security and the core of modern political civilization, guaranteeing freedom, equality, and justice. There is only one unit embodying value orientation of the rule of law in the textbooks, with the topic of Nelson Mandela—a modern hero, which accounts for 4% of the units. As we all know, ruling the country by law and building a socialist country under the rule of law is our country's basic general plan and the objective of ruling the country. Thus, value orientation of the rule of law should not be absent in the textbooks.

The Results and Analysis of Core Socialist Values From the Individual Level

Patriotism, dedication, integrity, and friendship are the individual level of core socialist values, and they reflect the pursuit of shaping a sound personality. The results and analysis will be presented from the four items.

Table 3

The Distribution of Value Orientation From Individual Level

| Value orientation | Units |
|-------------------|--|
| Patriotism | B1U3, B1U5, B2U1, B2U2, B3U1, B4U1, B4U2, B5U1, B5U2 |
| Dedication | B1U5, B3U2, B4U1, B4U2, B4U3, B5U1, B5U4 |
| Integrity | B1U5, B2U2, B3U2, B3U3, B4U1, B5U4 |
| Friendship | B1U1, B1U3, B1U5, B2U1, B2U2, B2U4, B3U2, B3U3, B3U5, B4U1, B4U2, B4U3, B4U4, B5U1, B5U2, B5U3, B5U4, B5U5 |

Value orientation of patriotism. Patriotism is the deep feeling of loving motherland, and it is also a code of regulating the relationship between individual and country. It is also the center of the spirit of the Chinese people, which establishes the strongest emotional bond of individual and country. There are nine units embodying value orientation of patriotism in the textbooks, which accounts for 36% of the units. As patriotism is the core spirit of the Chinese nation, the proportion of patriotism in the textbooks is not enough, which means the cultivation of patriotism should be laid more emphasis on the textbooks.

Value orientation of dedication. Dedication is the value evaluation of citizens' professional code of conduct, which requires loyalty, self-restraint, and service, reflecting the socialist professional spirit. Thus, enterprise and responsibility are advocated. There are seven units embodying value orientation of dedication in the textbooks, which accounts for 28% of the units. Owing to the importance of dedication, senior high school students should have a sense of dedication through the textbooks.

Value orientation of integrity. Integrity refers to honesty and trustworthiness. It is a moral tradition inherited by human beings for thousands of years, and the content of socialist morality construction. It emphasizes laboring honestly, keeping promises and treating people sincerely. Integrity is also the cornerstone of morality. There are six units embodying value orientation of integrity in the textbooks, which accounts for 24% of the units. Though value orientation of integrity accounts for a certain proportion in the textbooks, it still need to be attached much importance to.

Value orientation of friendship. Friendship emphasizes the importance of mutual respect, mutual concern, mutual help, and harmony, which tries to form a new type of interpersonal relationship. It is also the spectrum of civic virtue, which injects positive energy into relationship and provides lubricants for social harmony. There are 18 units embodying value orientation of friendship in the textbooks, which accounts for 72% of the units. It is satisfied that friendship is receiving enough attention in the textbooks.

Conclusion

Research Findings

There are altogether 25 units in the five compulsory textbooks of *New Senior English for China* (PEP, the 2nd edition, 2007, Book 1-5). Core socialist values are disseminated throughout the textbooks with the disproportionate distribution of these values from the level of national, social, and individual.

Table 4

The Percentage of Core Socialist Values in the Textbooks

| Level | Value orientation | Number | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-------------------|--------|----------------|
| Nation | Prosperity | 3 | 12 |
| | Democracy | 3 | 12 |
| | Civility | 25 | 100 |
| | Harmony | 25 | 100 |
| Society | Freedom | 13 | 52 |
| | Equality | 5 | 20 |
| | Justice | 2 | 8 |
| | The rule of law | 1 | 4 |
| Individual | Patriotism | 9 | 36 |
| | Dedication | 7 | 28 |
| | Integrity | 6 | 24 |
| | Friendship | 18 | 72 |

Firstly, the national level of core socialist values occupies the majority of textbooks. Specifically, the percentages of prosperity and democracy are 100%, while the percentage of civility and harmony are 12%, which creates a big gap. Secondly, the social level of core socialist values occupies the minority of textbooks. It is being neglected in the textbooks to some extent. The percentages of justice and the rule of law are very rare, which is inconsistent with the requirement of the law-based governance of the country. Thirdly, the individual level of core socialist values has a moderate proportion in the textbooks. More concretely, the percentages of patriotism, dedication, and integrity are relatively balanced.

Value orientation embedded in the textbooks is both explicit and implicit. We can clearly recognize the value orientation of texts from some explicit words and expressions, while we have to infer connotation from those thought-provoking words and expressions.

Suggestions on the Use of Textbooks

Given the value orientation embodied in English textbooks, suggestions can be provided for the use of textbooks to strengthen and improve the ideological education in high schools. Firstly, senior high school teachers should switch their roles from purely knowledge transmitter to value guides. Curriculum reflects the value choice of a certain class, which needs to be spread through teaching, so teachers should also pay attention to the value orientation of textbooks and properly guide the students to think about underlying values. Thus, students will accept the positive value orientation conveyed by textbooks subtly, and form multicultural and ideological understandings and have an ability to spread Chinese cultures someday. Secondly, teachers should shoulder the responsibility of fostering virtue through education throughout the whole process of language teaching. English textbooks are a bridge communicating between different cultures. Learning English not only means learning Western cultures, but also means spreading fine traditional Chinese cultures and telling Chinese stories. All the teachers should remain true to the original aspiration and fully understand the educating value and function of English subject to realize the goal of fostering virtue through education.

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