

A Empirical Study on the Construction of Morality Cultivation Discourse in College English Textbooks - A Case Study of New Era Mingde College English Comprehensive Course

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Abstract: The “*New Era Mingde College English Comprehensive Course 1*” for the first time taking the Socialist Core Values as an element outline into the content of the textbook, is a typical case of College English morality cultivation education. From the perspective of discourse practice, this study analyzes the characteristics and construction strategies of morality cultivation discourse in the target textbook with the corpora empirical method. The research shows that compared with traditional College English textbooks, the proportion of morality cultivation words in New Mingde textbook has indeed increased, and the focus of vocabulary learning has shifted from morphology to lexical meaning. At the same time, the construction of curriculum morality cultivation discourse adopts a cross-cultural strategy based on the context of China and current times, highlighting the juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultural figures, and forms a systematic and hierarchical value cognition strategy through the explicit node design of value cognition.

Keywords: Curriculum Morality Cultivation Discourse; Values Cognition; Corpus

1. Introduction

The construction of curriculum morality cultivation discourse is one of the important contents of the current higher education practice. Curriculum morality cultivation textbooks are the key link of curriculum morality cultivation education practice activities, and also the concentrated embodiment of the content and presentation of curriculum morality cultivation discourse. Therefore, the study of typical curriculum morality cultivation textbooks can reproduce and construct curriculum morality cultivation

discourse practice, enrich the theoretical system of curriculum morality cultivation discourse, and then feed back the curriculum morality cultivation practice activities.

The College English Course Teaching Guide (2020 edition) makes it clear that the selection of teaching materials should consciously incorporate Socialist Core Values and traditional Chinese culture. Edited by Wang Shouren, the *New Era Mingde University English Comprehensive Course 1* (hereinafter referred to as *New Mingde*), published in April 2021, is characterized by “morality cultivation Education”, and the “morality cultivation Education” content focuses on 12 elements of Socialist Core Values, and for the first time, and the Socialist Core Values are integrated into the textbook content in the form of element outline. From the perspective of discourse practice, the characteristics and construction strategies of morality cultivation discourse in textbook curriculum are necessary for the teaching practice of front-line teachers. This study intends to turn this textbook text into a small corpus, and use high-frequency words and keywords of the corpus method to analyze the characteristics and construction strategies of curriculum morality cultivation discourse in this textbook, in order to provide enlightenment for front-line teachers and writers of morality cultivation textbooks.

2. Literature Review

Compared with language, discourse points to concrete and real utterance, emphasizing context, the dynamic, communicative and social nature of language. Critical discourse analysis proposes to broaden the depth and breadth of discourse analysis by putting discourse analysis under the framework of social and discourse interaction through the analysis of real language use. Domestic Critical Discourse Analysis began in the 1990s.

According to Van Dijk's theory, discourse control is divided into action control and cognitive control: the former refers to the restriction of one party holding power on the other's freedom of action, while the latter refers to the influence on thinking (Tian Hailong, 2006). On the basis of discussing discourse theory and CDA's critical consciousness, Tian Hailong (2008) put forward a third critical perspective of discourse research, that is, to study how discourse reproduces and builds up social changes, and how the changes of discourse itself drive or restrict social changes. Domestic scholars have made a lot of research achievements from this perspective. Hu Kaibao (2018, 2019a, 2019b) conducted research on the construction of China's diplomatic image, the major country diplomatic discourse with Chinese characteristics, and the Chinese Dream. He Anping (2011) proposed the "people-oriented" teaching reform concept for the new curriculum standards, and interpreted the modern educational concept and teaching function of "paying attention to students' emotions and improving humanistic quality" reflected by the slogans in College English textbooks through modal verbs and certain syntactic forms in the mandatory discourse.

For *New Mingde*, the second issue of *China Foreign Language* in 2021 published a special issue on the morality cultivation construction of foreign language courses, focusing on the development, compilation and teaching design of the textbook. Among them, Wang Shouren (2021) discussed the connotation of "Ming Ming De" and the cultural essentials in the textbook of *New Mingde*; Xiao Qiong and Huang Guowen (2021) discuss the multiple syllabuses and teaching methods of *New Mingde*; Liu Zhengguang, Xu Zhe, and He Lan (2021) analyzed the development principles and methods of *New Mingde* teaching materials; Zhang Jingyuan and Wang Na discussed the morality cultivation teaching task design of the textbook; Li Xiuying (2021) analyzed the dialectical relationship between "Mingde" and "speculative thinking" in the textbook. There is no any research on curriculum ideology and politics in the textbook from the perspective of corpora demonstration. This study intends to analyze the language use of *New Mingde* by using the corpus method, and explore the characteristics and construction strategies of the curriculum morality cultivation discourse

presented by the textbook from the perspective of discourse practice.

3 Research Design

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This paper is based on Critical Discourse Analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis places discourse analysis under the framework of the interaction between society and discourse, and broadens the depth and breadth of discourse analysis. It proposes to analyze the language structure, clarify the social meaning of language, reveal the power relations and social ideology hidden in it, and then criticize and reflect on the social structure. The constructive effect of discourse practice on social practice stems from three functions of discourse: identity function, relationship function and idea function (Fairclough, 2003). Conceptual function refers to the construction of participants' knowledge and belief system through social activities and texts.

Teaching material discourse is an important link in constructing the mainstream social ideology of students. Gao Lingbiao (2002) pointed out that "contemporary teaching materials are the media to guide students to understand the existing experience and knowledge of human beings; It is a knowledge resource for classroom learning. It is a tool to help students learn and learn to learn. It is a 'catalyst' for students to develop healthy emotional attitudes and correct values." The ideology of teaching materials is the key channel for the dissemination and cognition of social mainstream ideology.

3.2 Research Methods

This study adopts the corpus research method of contrastive analysis. As an morality cultivation textbook, *New Mingde* is analyzed only based on the statistical results of its high-frequency words and keywords, and the logic may not be rigorous enough. Therefore, a comparative analysis is designed with traditional College English textbooks to clarify the differences between *New Mingde* and traditional textbooks in terms of discourse characteristics. The comparative textbook selected in this study is the *Comprehensive College English Course of New Horizon* (hereinafter referred to as *New Horizon*). Since its first publication in 2011, the textbook has

been continuously revised and republished, and now it has reached the fourth edition of morality cultivation wisdom edition, which is widely used in major universities in China and has a certain representative role in college English textbooks. In this study, the first, second, third and fourth volumes of the third edition are used as comparison materials.

First, all four volumes of the third edition of *New Horizon* and *New Mingde I* were scanned into electronic versions by the Scanner King APP. After manually removing pictures and verifying text, the preliminary corpora “*New Mingde I XMD*” and “*New Vision XSHY*” were formed. XMD contains 211,500 characters, the total number of symbols is 33,637, and the number of symbols used to calculate high-frequency words is 32,770. XSHY has the size 1,334,048 characters, total number of symbols 214,113, the number of symbols used to calculate high frequency words is 199,560. The Reference Corpus uses the Mini version of British National Corpus BNC, which contains 95,015,099 characters and 4,167,827 symbols, and 4,128,467 is used to calculate the number of symbols for high-frequency words, which meets the requirement of the reference corpus size 10

times that of the research corpus.

Corpus linguistics belongs to descriptive linguistics, which mainly focuses on the use of computer data statistics to analyze the implied content meaning at the level of words and sentences. The characteristics of curriculum morality cultivation discourse are embodied in the use of curriculum morality cultivation words at the lexical level. Among language parts, noun is a part of words that expresses the conceptual meaning. Based on this, this study first made use of WordSmith8.0 to make XMD and XSHY high-frequency vocabulary lists, and extracted high-frequency content words among the top 100 high-frequency words respectively, as shown in Table 1. Then, the top 40 XMD and XSHY keyword tables were extracted taking the Mini BNC as reference corpus, as shown in Table 2. Table 1 and Table 2 are used to analyze and summarize the usage of words in *New Mingde*.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 High-Frequency Content Words and Characteristics of Curriculum Morality Cultivation Discourse

Table 1. List of nouns in the top 100 high-frequency words of XMD and XSHY

Number	XMD			one	XSHY		
	Noun	Frequency	Frequency(per hundred)		Noun	Frequency	Frequency(per hundred)
1	people	139	0.41	word	1,064	0.5	
2	para	126	0.37	people	773	0.36	
3	paragraph	90	0.27	time	599	0.28	
4	words	75	0.22	life	546	0.26	
5	work	74	0.22	student	463	0.22	
6	integrity	72	0.21	way	431	0.2	
7	life	67	0.20	example	393	0.18	
8	rules	63	0.19	woman	333	0.16	
9	information	62	0.18	year	333	0.16	
10	students	60	0.18	paragraph	332	0.16	
11	time	56	0.17	question	316	0.15	
12	writing	56	0.17	man	311	0.15	
13	knowledge	52	0.15	child	302	0.14	
14	ideas	50	0.15	world	291	0.14	
15	world	50	0.15	day	290	0.14	
16	team	49	0.15	author	277	0.13	
17	text	47	0.14	college	274	0.13	
18	use	46	0.14				
19	way	46	0.14				
20	value	45	0.14				

The list of nouns in the top 100 words in the

XMD and XSHY high frequency words list is

shown in Table 1. Examining Table 1, the high-frequency nouns can be divided into three categories: Textbook Structure Language Vocabulary, Weak Context Vocabulary and *New Mingde* Morality Cultivation Vocabulary.

The first category is the vocabulary of textbook structure language. In *New Mingde*, there are para (126, 0.37), paragraph (90, 0.27), words (75, 0.22), writing (56, 0.17), text (47, 0.14). “text, paragraph, words” indicates that the structure of the textbook is centered on the text, and “writing” indicates that the textbook attaches importance to the cultivation of English writing-related abilities. The corresponding words in *New Horizons* include “word, paragraph, question, author”. “word and paragraph”, as the core words of textbook structure, are shared in *New Mingde* and *New Vision*, and there is no obvious difference between them.

The second category is the vocabulary of weak context. In *New Mingde*, there are words like people (139, 0.41), work (74, 0.22), life (67, 0.20), information (62, 0.18), students (60, 0.18), time (56, 0.17), world (50, 0.15), use (46, 0.14), way (46, 0.14), team (49, 0.15), etc.; the counterparts in *New Horizon* are “people, time, life, way, woman, man, child, world, day, college, etc.”. The common words of the two books are “people, time, life, student, world, way”, while the different words in *New Mingde* are “information, work, use, knowledge, team” and in *New Horizon* are the words “woman, man, child, day, college”. Compared with their different words, the nouns “information, work, use, knowledge, team, rules” in *New Mingde* point to the social work field of the current times, reflecting certain aspects of the current times and sociality; *New Vision* focuses on the eternal theme that does not reflect the characteristics of the times, including the topic of people. This shows that college English teaching content is gradually integrating into the contemporary elements, reflecting that driven by the teaching concept of morality cultivation education in the curriculum, the humanistic content of college English courses has gone out of the traditional abstract love education and has a more specific scene context, that is, the contemporary work field, reflecting the intention of the textbook editor to conduct morality cultivation education in the curriculum based on the present society context.

Liu Zhengguang (2021) judges that before the Ministry of Education clearly put forward the requirements of curriculum morality cultivation education, the humanistic nature of College English has not been fully reflected and implemented into specific courses in the reform of curriculum teaching objectives and methods, and curriculum morality cultivation education provide a very favorable opportunity for College English teaching to realize a certain humanistic function. Although different textbooks may have different curriculum morality cultivation teaching strategies, the practical requirements of curriculum morality cultivation teaching will without exception make the content of College English courses tend to focus on the development of the age and society, and effectively respond to the objective needs of training future talents based on the times developments. This is indeed the positive impact of curriculum morality cultivation concepts on the design of curriculum teaching content.

The third category is *New Mingde* Morality Cultivation Vocabulary, namely “integrity (72, 0.21)” and “value (45, 0.14)”. “integrity” means the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles and refers to personality traits. The index analysis of the word “value” (Figure 1) shows that the word cluster “Core Value” occurs 24 times out of a total of 45 times. After tracing the text of the textbook, it is found that the textbook has designed three explicit values cognition nodes, “Core Value Focus”, “Exploring the Core Value” and “Seminar on the Core Value”, which reflects the curriculum morality cultivation design of the textbook. It guides the process of presenting the morality cultivation elements of the explicit curriculum. In addition, in the co-occurrence of “Value” index, “China” and “Chinese” have the highest frequency of co-occurrence, which emphasizes the Chinese context of core values. The textbook takes socialist core values as the outline of elements, and indeed presents the connotation of socialist core values in the structural design and lexical level of the textbook.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the construction strategy of morality cultivation discourse of *New Mingde* is embodied in the construction of sinicized and epochal contexts and the explicit design of the nodes of the cognitive process of teaching material values.

curriculum morality cultivation discourse

4.2 Keywords and characteristics of use

Figure 1 "Value" Index
Table 2. XMD and XSHY Keywords List

Number	XMD			XSHY		
	Keywords	Frequency	Keyness	Keywords	Frequency	Keyness
1	para	126	1,045.78	word	1,064	4,128.29
2	paragraph	90	564.46	learn	476	2,012.14
3	integrity	72	536.63	paragraph	332	1,467.90
4	Deng	35	288.64	text	346	1,131.30
5	giving	70	260.01	parent	266	1,073.58
6	CQ	28	255.09	read	415	1,040.32
7	rules	63	245.87	make	737	1,024.60
8	students	60	242.40	college	274	935.96
9	cultural	45	186.83	it's	156	926.55
10	blanks	25	177.51	promote	180	898.45
11	writing	56	172.01	work	688	833.19
12	one's	19	168.20	fill	224	828.23
13	personal	55	167.72	topic	244	820.19
14	topic	43	164.85	Internet	135	799.77
15	china's	18	158.54	noun	154	780.04
16	text	47	153.06	people	773	776.01
17	knowledge	52	148.08	sentence	264	725.32
18	expressions	29	142.21	collocation	116	685.06
19	Lincoln	23	142.07	example	393	620.28
20	Slotin	16	139.23	essay	221	605.32
21	volunteer	22	137.91	child	302	576.95
22	Jiaxian	15	129.58	adjective	101	543.35
23	harmony	22	126.79	understand	251	533.36
24	collaboration	21	124.49	friend	222	528.86
25	China	29	122.80	expression	194	526.83
26	responsibility	37	118.74	question	316	521.78
27	details	39	114.16	animal	198	517.96
28	paragraphs	22	111.53	woman	333	514.30
29	you're	13	110.27	suffix	95	507.95
30	volunteering	14	100.92	combine	114	507.95
31	fulfillment	12	100.61	verb	124	497.99
32	verbs	15	97.97	necessary	210	488.61
33	intelligence	24	97.92	online	68	455.80
34	morality	21	89.81	spend	150	384.90
35	dedication	14	84.22	add	147	384.45
36	diverse	14	83.72	begin	144	383.19
37	sentences	26	82.73	job	254	369.23

38	speaker's	10	81.30	friendship	85	358.49
39	learn	27	78.51	discuss	131	356.53
40	skill	22	74.76	behavior	62	346.79

It can be observed from Table 2 and Table 1 that their word classes are roughly the same, but the distribution of word classes is different. In Table 2 and Table 1, there are the vocabulary type: textbook structure language, weak context and morality cultivation words, but the number of weak context words in *New Mingde* decreases, while the number of morality cultivation words increases.

The Vocabulary of Textbook Structure Language. The words are like “para, paragraph, paragraphs, blanks, writing, topic, text, expressions, details, verbs, sentences, speaker's, learn, skill in *New Mingde* and “word, learn, paragraph, text, read, para, topic, noun, sentence, collocation, example, essay, adjective, understand, expression, question, suffix, combine, verb, discuss” in *New Horizon*. The keyword thesaurus is derived from the comparison of high-frequency word classes between the research corpus and the reference corpus, which reflects the usage characteristics of the research corpus relative to the reference corpus. BNC in this study presents the general usage of English words. Compared with the general use of English, English teaching materials have their special teaching function requirements, and it is natural to be rich in text structure language vocabulary. In order to get rid of the interference of textbook text structure language, this study attempts to take XSHY as the reference corpus and extract the XMD keyword list again. From the extracted keyword list, it can be seen that the textbook structure language vocabulary still cannot be avoided. The reason is that compared with other college English textbooks, research textbooks always have the structural and functional design of the textbooks themselves, unless different textbooks of the same series are used as reference corpora, and the structural modules of the textbooks are completely consistent.

By comparing the textbook structure language words of *New Mingde* and *New Horizon*, it can be found that *New Mingde* has fewer such words than *New Horizon*. From the structural module design of the two textbooks, in addition to the key vocabulary strengthening exercises in the text, there are also special exercises of word formation in the English vocabulary

exercises in *New Horizons*, which are implemented in the first to the fourth volumes. It's not surprising that “noun, verb, adjective, suffix” are keywords in *New Horizons*. It can be seen that the lexical morphology in *New Mingde* is no longer paid attention to, and its focus turns to lexical meaning. Curriculum morality cultivation education comes from the aggregation of the connotation meaning of words, and attaching importance to the meaning of words is the strategy of constructing curriculum morality cultivation discourse.

The Vocabulary of Weak Context. Such words are “giving, cultural, personal, one's, knowledge, you're” in *New Mingde*, and “parent, make, college, Internet, people, child”. friend, animal, woman, online, spend, add, begin, job, friendship, discuss” in *New Horizon*. It is obvious that the number of such words in *New Mingde* is less than that in *New Horizon*. The keyword table reflects the difference in the use of words between the research corpus and the reference corpus, which indicates that *New Mingde* and BNC have little difference in the use of weak context words, while *New Horizon* highlights some weak context words in its text language.

The morality cultivation Discourse Vocabulary can be divided into name category and values category. Name classes include personal names, proper terms, and country names. Personal names are like “Deng Jiaxian, Lincoln, Slotin. “Slotin” is the character of Text A in Unit 1. “Deng Jiaxian” is the character of Text B in Unit 1. The character of Text A in Unit 3 is “Lincoln”. In addition to these heroes, a series of Chinese and foreign cultural celebrities appear in different modules such as famous quotes, exercises, and core values discussions. Chinese cultural figures include former Premier Zhou Enlai; winners of the Two Bombs and One Star Medal of Merit: Qian Xuesen, Qian Sanqiang, Yu Min; winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics: Yang Zhenning; winner of the Nobel Prize in Biology: Tu Youyou; Chinese Medicine God Li Shizhen, Chinese Medicine Sage Zhang Zhongjing, Chinese Medicine King Sun Simiao; Confucian representatives: Confucius, Mencius; Neo-confucianist Cheng Yi, poet Bai Juyi, mathematician Hua Luogeng, famous scholars

Ji Xianlin and Fang Xiaoru; the first Chinese speaker at the graduation ceremony of Harvard University: He Jiang, are all over the field of traditional culture, thought, science and technology. It can be seen that the textbook content are fully immersed in Chinese culture from ancient times to the present and depicting Chinese cultural figures is a strategy to construct the morality cultivation construction of the course of this textbook. Foreign cultural figures include the physicist Albert Einstein, the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and the American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. American statesman Benjamin Franklin, American industrialist Henry Ford, British statesman Winston Churchill, and American President Theodore Roosevelt, the English writer Samuel Johnson, and the African-American writer Maya Angelou. The essence of foreign language education is cross-cultural education, and exchanges and mutual learning with other cultures are the basis and characteristics of the morality cultivation construction of foreign language curriculum. In the perspective of equal dialogue between Chinese and foreign cultures, cross-cultural awareness, cross-cultural critical thinking ability and cross-cultural communication ability can be improved, so as to truly cultivate the personality qualities of respect for differences, equality and mutual trust, tolerance and inclusiveness. Under the view of the juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultures, this paper takes cultural figures as the starting point and uses the cognitive influence of celebrities to construct the characteristics of curriculum morality cultivation discourse.

The term “CQ”, according to its index, is the subject topic of Text B of Unit 8 in *New Minde*. The full name of CQ is “Cultural Quotient”, which is a term derived from IQ specifically referring to cultural IQ (short for Cultural Quotient). The measurement of Cultural Quotient can be carried out from the four aspects of motivation, knowledge, strategy and behavior, reflecting the level of individual’s cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication ability. The country name “China, China’s” is the core morality cultivation vocabulary, highlighting Chinese elements in the textbook text, reflecting that the strategy of curriculum morality cultivation construction is based on

the Chinese context.

The values vocabulary in *New Mingde* include “Integrity, volunteer, harmony, collaboration, responsibility, volunteering, fulfillment, morality, dedication, diverse”. Among these words, “Integrity, morality, dedication, fulfillment” refers to individual personality attributes and belongs to values concept. “volunteer, volunteering, collaboration, responsibility” refer to the attribute of individual behavior and belong to values behavior. ‘harmony, diverse’ jumps out of the individual barrier, points to the group status attribute, and belong to a group values orientation. It can be seen that *New Mingde* not only highlights values-related words at the lexical level, but also forms an organic structure of values vocabulary, which reflects the systematization and hierarchy of values cognition in *New Mingde* from idea to behavior, from individual to group.

Through analysis, the morality cultivation discourse in *New Mingde* reflects the weakening of Textbook Structure Language and Weak Context Vocabulary, and the strengthening of morality cultivation vocabulary, and the shift of the focus of vocabulary learning from lexical to lexical meaning. The construction of curriculum morality cultivation discourse adopts a cross-cultural strategy that it highlights the Chinese context, the juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultural figures, and a systematic and hierarchical values cognition strategy.

Based on the analysis of Tables 1 and 2, it can be seen that the number of morality cultivation vocabulary in *New Mingde* textbook has increased to a certain extent, and the emphasis has been placed on learning the meaning of vocabulary, indicating that the morality cultivation discourse in *New Mingde* has been improved obviously compared to traditional textbooks. The construction of morality cultivation discourse adopts a cross-cultural strategy based on a Chinese and contemporary context, highlighting the juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultural figures, and forming a systematic and hierarchical value cognition strategy through the design of explicit nodes of values cognition.

5 Conclusion

This study analyzes the characteristics and

construction strategies of morality cultivation discourse in *New Mingde* from the perspective of discourse practice using corpus empirical methods. Research has shown that the proportion of morality cultivation vocabulary in the text of the New Mingde textbook has indeed increased compared to traditional College English textbooks, and the focus of vocabulary learning has shifted from morphology to lexical meaning. At the same time, the construction of curriculum morality cultivation discourse adopts a cross-cultural strategy based on a Chinese and contemporary context, highlighting the juxtaposition of Chinese and foreign cultural figures, and forming a systematic and hierarchical value cognition strategy through the design of explicit nodes of value cognition.

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