

First Submitted: 27 November 2023 / Accepted: 24 December 2023

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61707/qv95at37>

A Study on the Discourse Guidance of Major International Political Issues in the Returnee's Overseas Teacher in Zhejiang Province

Wu Yong¹

Abstract

This research mainly investigates the level of discourse guidance among returnees overseas teachers in Zhejiang province. Moreover, the related aspects of political consciousness, political attitude, feedback, and discourse guidance are also investigated. 356 Chinese university returnees overseas teachers in Zhejiang province have been involved in this study. There is a medium level of political consciousness, a high level of attitude, a medium level of feedback, and a low level of discourse guidance. This study also explores the characteristics of discourse expression, reactions, and factors in discussing major international political issues among returnees overseas teachers. Some implications are also proposed.

Keywords: Returnees Overseas Teachers, International Political Issues, Discourse Guidance

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The united front has always been an essential component of the general line and general policy of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and an important magic weapon for the CPC to lead the people to victory in the cause of revolution, construction, and reform. With the development of society and economy, the number of returnees from the overseas study is increasing, and colleges and universities have become the main places for returned overseas teachers to work. They play an essential role in teaching, scientific research, management, and other posts, becoming the main object of united front work in colleges and universities. With the deepening of China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative and the "go global" strategy of Chinese culture, there will be many different voices in the international community, and some countries will even create some major political issues to provoke the international community's anti-China and other unilateralist thoughts.

Returnees from overseas study are essential members of the talent team in these institutions and play a vital role in teaching and research work. Their ideological and political status, particularly in the face of major international issues, impacts students and contributes significantly to the development of colleges and universities. Furthermore, their bi-cultural characteristics (having knowledge of both Chinese culture and the culture of the country they studied in) make it even more necessary to convey the "China story effectively." Therefore, it is crucial to enhance the united front work with returned overseas teachers in colleges and universities to guide their discourse and promote the correct understanding and representation of China.

Given the prevalence of "we media" and the widespread availability of platforms for sharing information, negative or incorrect discourse spreads among the returned teachers, leading to social disharmony, public security crises, social unrest, and damage to China's reputation. Therefore, this study can assist colleges and universities in refining their monitoring, warning, strict judgment, and communication mechanisms for public opinion. However, also it can contribute to maintaining social stability and enhancing China's international image, especially in the context of the "One Belt and One Road" initiative.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the context of the coexistence and competition of multiple ideologies, the competition for discourse power is essentially a competition for ideological discourse power, and the focus of the issue is on "who dominates" and "who is subordinate" in the ideological field. This issue is related not only to individuals' thinking and values

¹ Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, China. E-mail: 704991373@qq.com

but also to the direction of society and the choice of banners and paths. Western scholars mainly focus on the following two aspects:

(1). research on the concept of discourse. Many scholars have contributed to the research on the concept of discourse. Some of the most influential ones include Michel Foucault, Whose major works include "The Archaeology of Knowledge" and "The Order of Discourse" on discourse are widely considered foundational. Jürgen Habermas is known for his theory of communicative action, which emphasizes the role of language and discourse in social interaction. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe are known for their work on discourse theory and post-Marxist political theory. These scholars come from various disciplines, including philosophy, linguistics, sociology, and cultural studies, and they have different theoretical approaches to the study of discourse. However, they all share a common interest in understanding how language and communication shape our social reality and how power relations are embedded in discourse.

(2) Research on the variety of discourse. Gramsci (1971) proposed that cultural leadership fundamentally refers to controlling ideology and culture and argued that "state = political society + civil society." Merely controlling political power is insufficient, as only by controlling civil society through discourse can society be genuinely integrated. However, Giddens (1991) in Britain believed that the right to discourse is a means for various groups to express their interests. He argued that discourse is not just a matter of language or communication but is deeply embedded in social practices and structures. He also emphasized the importance of critical analysis of discourse in order to challenge dominant power relations and promote more democratic forms of communication and social organization. Through an analysis of the nature of discourse, it is clear that under the background of the coexistence and competition of multiple ideologies, the dispute over the right to speak is fundamentally a dispute over the right to speak for ideology. The issue of "who leads" and "who is subordinate" in the realm of ideology concerns individual thoughts and value orientations and relates to the direction, flag, and path choice of society as a whole.

Since 1998, with the rapid spread of the Internet worldwide, there has been an increasing intensity in domestic discussion and research on the right to discourse. The research mainly focuses on the following three aspects:

(1) Research on the current situation of discourse guidance. Tan (2023) believe that in the era of rapid Internet development, educators have become opinion leaders on international political topics through various network media tools. Their words and actions will quickly spread and influence almost all audiences, and the subject of discourse power will also undergo transfer and redistribution.

(2) Research on the dilemma of discourse guidance. Han (2021) believes that there has been a transfer of discourse power between educational subjects and objects, and many unforeseen new situations have emerged, with opportunities and challenges coexisting in educational work. Zhao (2022) believes that the fixed situation where teachers were dominant, and students were secondary no longer exists, and both teachers and students have discourse power. They can express themselves in various ways in a more open environment, and there are also more difficulties and problems than before. Chen (2011) and Peng et al. (2022) argues that the power of discourse is shifting between the subject and object of education, leading to unexpected situations and the coexistence of opportunities and challenges in educational work. Liu (2008) believes the traditional power dynamic where teachers dominate students no longer exists. Both teachers and students now have the right to express their discourse in a more open environment, leading to more difficulties and challenges than before. As a result, research on the construction of discourse power has become increasingly important. Luo and Wei (2010) argue that universities must protect the rights and interests of students to freely express their thoughts on social media platforms, enabling them to form their own unique culture and voice. Zhan (2012) proposes that addressing the current issues with discourse guidance among college students requires coordination and solutions focused on the appropriate environment, people, topics, ways of expression, and evaluation.

(3) Research on the construction of discourse guidance. Tu (2022) pointed out that the Chinese Communist Party's network ideological discourse power is the right, power, and ability of the Chinese Communist Party to innovate, disseminate, guide, and regulate network ideological discourse. Universities must adhere to the leadership of the Party, value guidance as the core, innovation in discourse as the direction,

ideological confrontation as the focus, environmental optimization as the foundation, and media integration as the guarantee, to effectively promote the construction of network ideological discourse power. Leng and Li (2022) believe it is necessary to address the current issues of discourse guidance in universities from the perspective of relevant environments, people, topics, expression methods, and evaluations.

Therefore, it can be seen that the issue of discourse guidance has become an indispensable part of ideological and political education in universities. Many domestic scholars have made many research achievements on this issue through their dedicated studies. However, there needs to be a specialized publication on the intervention and guidance of major political issues in the Internet-media environment, and little attention has been paid to the returnee teachers as research subjects who are part of various universities. Given the particular background of returnee teachers, especially when there are political debates between China and the countries where they once studied, it is vital to effectively guide their discourse, make them the spokespersons for telling the "China story," and correctly convey the "Chinese voice" to the world. Therefore, this research project intends to study the issue with three research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of discourse expression of college teachers returning from overseas study under the "We Media" environment?
2. What is the reaction of returned overseas teachers to major international political discourse?
3. What factors induce the discussion of major international political issues by returning teachers?

RESEARCH METHODS

The Subjects

Data for this investigation were collected from 19 universities in Zhejiang Province, China. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity before the survey was completed. The subjects of this study are 374 returnee teachers from 10 different universities in Zhejiang province (Male=167, female=207; average age=29.97). Respondents have distributed a series of paper and pencil questionnaires to investigate their international political issue consciousness, attitudes towards the report on the Internet, and feedback on these international political issues report. This study was anonymous, and no credits were provided to participants. One of the authors and a trained research assistant conducted the measures in the classroom environment to ensure their confidential and independent responses.

This study adopted a questionnaire with 24 items to measure the level of consciousness, attitudes, feedback, and discourse guidance among returned overseas teachers in Zhejiang province, China. The instrument is a 6-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3= somewhat disagree, 4= somewhat agree, 5=agree, 6=strongly agree). The questionnaire assesses the four components: consciousness, attitudes, feedback, and discourse guidance. Six items evaluate each component.

Reliability of Instrument

According to Table 1, the analysis of the pilot study data (N=83), the results show that the reliability value of each construct reliability ranges from 0.720 to 0.813.

Table 1: The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of the Pilot Study (N=83)

Construct	Whole Cronbach Alpha	Each-Construct's Cronbach's Alpha
conscious		0.720
attitudes		0.801
feedback	0.832	0.808
discourse guidance		0.813

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were recruited from December 15, 2022, to February 15, 2023. During the administration, 374 participants filled out the questionnaire voluntarily. Of 374 received questionnaires, 18 are invalid because they chose the same options in every question or answered the first two questions in Chinese characters rather than figures. As a result, there are 356 valid questionnaires among 374. this study also interviewed 30 teachers (15 male and 15 female).

Data analysis Procedure

According to Cohen et al. (2011), descriptive statistics include frequencies, measures of central tendency (means, modes, and medians), measures of dispersal (range, interquartile range, and standard deviations), cross-tabulations, and standardized scores. Therefore, this research question can be used the mean and standard deviation to describe the statistics. The interpretations for level according to mean, which is divided into low, medium, and high with an equal interval, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Interpretation of Level According to Mean of 6 points

Mean	Interpretations (level)
1-2.49	Low
2.5-4.49	Medium
4.5-6.0	High

Source: Pimdee & Paksanondha, 2013, p.83

RESEARCH RESULTS

The Characteristics of Discourse Expression

The discourse characteristics of college teachers who have returned from studying abroad are diverse. Different teachers exhibit different characteristics based on their field of study and background. Generally speaking, the discourse characteristics of these teachers include the following aspects:

- (1) Strong foreign language proficiency: Teachers who have studied abroad are often fluent in English or other foreign languages, which gives them an advantage in cross-cultural and international academic exchanges. This ability enables them to communicate and collaborate more effectively with the international academic community.
- (2) Rich academic background: Teachers who return from overseas study have earned a doctoral degree or other high-level academic achievements, which provide them with a wealth of academic knowledge to draw. This rich background helps them provide students with high-quality teaching and guidance.
- (3) Open-minded and pluralistic: Teachers who have studied abroad have been exposed to diverse cultures and ideas. This exposure makes their thinking more open and diverse, allowing them to bring new academic ideas and teaching methods.
- (4) Possess an international perspective: Teachers returning from overseas study often have a solid international vision, enabling them to better understand international academic development trends and hot issues. This perspective provides students with a broader academic vision and thinking space.
- (5) Attention to domestic and international political issues: Teachers returning from overseas study often pay close attention to domestic and foreign political hot issues, possessing a certain level of political literacy and

sensitivity. They can guide students to view political issues rationally and objectively, helping them improve their political literacy and social responsibility.

The Reaction of Returned Overseas Teachers on Major International Political Discourse

Some variables were used to describe the sample characteristics by the valid 356 respondents to the survey questionnaires. The means will be interpreted and displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis for returned overseas teachers on major international political discourse (N=356)

Dimension	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
Conscious	356	4.45	0.78	Moderate
attitudes	356	4.55	0.83	High
feedback	356	4.43	0.83	Moderate
Discourse guidance	356	4.23	1.06	Low
Overall Mean	356	4.45	0.78	Moderate

Note. Mean–low level=1.00-2.49; Moderate level= 2.5 -4.49; High level=4.5-6

Based on the survey conducted, it was found that the participation awareness of college teachers who have returned from overseas study in major international activities is at an average level. Out of the 356 returned teachers from universities who were surveyed, 68.75% of male teachers and 47.13% of female teachers expressed their willingness or eagerness to participate. Some female teachers who have returned from overseas believe that involvement in politics is more of a male thing, and their influence is minimal. Such political awareness affects the formation of their political feelings and values. Women tend to have a low desire to express their opinions emotionally. The survey also indicated that the returned teachers who studied in Europe and the US had a stronger sense of political participation than the teachers from other regions. 67.42% of the respondents expressed their willingness to participate in political affairs, which is likely because they are more influenced by Western liberalism and their political values have already been formed. Therefore, they tend to actively express their opinions or emotions about major or significant international events.

Regarding political attitudes, 76.2% of overseas returnees show a greater interest in political events in China, and 56.6% of teachers are interested in international events in the countries where they studied. Due to language and cultural barriers, 89.6% of returning teachers prefer foreign and domestic media over Chinese and foreign media. Regarding identifying reliable information on websites, 60.1% of overseas teachers rely on the authority of websites and publishers to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Meanwhile, 57.31% of returnee teachers base their judgments on their knowledge and experience. 28.2% of returnee teachers prefer to discuss information with their friends before making a judgment. As a result, returnee teachers possess a particular ability to discern the authenticity of information. When they encounter unverified information, they verify it repeatedly instead of immediately sharing it. Regarding discourse guidance, 87% of returnee teachers expressed willingness to accept adequate information from higher authorities and leaders. They tend to be more cautious in providing feedback during major issues or international events.

Based on the above analysis, it is essential to enhance the sensitivity of returning overseas teachers to public opinion information and political discrimination to improve their ability to gather and evaluate online information. Compared to regular teachers, overseas teachers can quickly detect the dynamic changes in online public opinion and gather as much helpful information as possible in a short period. Therefore, universities

and relevant authorities should inform overseas teachers promptly to ensure that the public opinion situation maintains an average communication trend to minimize the impact of negative online public opinion.

The factors that Induce the Discussion of Major International Political Issues by Returning Teachers.

(1) International academic exchanges: Many returning teachers have established connections with scholars and researchers from different countries during their studies abroad. These connections give them a platform to discuss international political issues with their peers and colleagues. "International academic exchanges" refers to the exposure and experience of college teachers studying abroad in international conferences, seminars, or other academic events. Such experiences can broaden their horizons and perspectives and allow them to interact and collaborate with scholars and researchers from different countries and cultural backgrounds. It can stimulate their interest and motivation to discuss major international political issues, as they may have firsthand knowledge and insights on the subject matter from their interactions with international colleagues. It can further motivate them to discuss and contribute to major international political issues, as it aligns with their professional and academic goals. Moreover, participating in international academic exchanges can also enhance the reputation and recognition of returning teachers in the academic community, as it demonstrates their engagement and contribution to the international academic arena.

(2) Strong international perspective: Teachers who have studied abroad usually have a more assertive international perspective and are more sensitive to global issues. It makes them more likely to engage in discussions about major international political issues. "strong international perspective" in inducing the discussion of major international political issues by returning teachers includes: the first aspect is knowledge of global issues. Returning teachers with a solid international perspective are more knowledgeable about global issues such as climate change, human rights, and economic interdependence, which can lead to discussions of related political issues. The second is understanding of cultural differences. Having lived and studied in different cultures, returning teachers with a solid international perspective are more likely to understand and appreciate cultural differences. It can lead to discussions of international political issues related to cultural diversity, tolerance, and cooperation. Third is awareness of international trends, which means returning teachers with a solid international perspective are more aware of international trends in various fields, such as technology, trade, and security, which can lead to discussions of political issues related to these trends, such as the impact of technology on privacy or the politics of trade agreements. Fourth is the ability to think critically. Returning teachers with a strong international perspective are often better equipped to think critically about political issues and see them from different perspectives, leading to more nuanced discussions of international political issues rather than simply accepting one viewpoint. Lastly is engagement with international networks. Returning teachers with a strong international perspective often connect with academic and professional networks in other countries, providing access to a broader range of perspectives and expertise, leading to more informed discussions of international political issues.

(3) Political and social awareness: "Political and social awareness" refers to a person's consciousness and understanding of political and social issues. When discussing political and social awareness, we refer to a person's understanding and engagement with political and social issues, including being aware of current events, understanding the historical and cultural context of these events, and analyzing and forming opinions on them. Returning teachers' overseas study experience often exposes them to different political systems, social norms, and cultural practices, which can broaden their understanding of the world and enhance their awareness of political and social issues.

Having a strong political and social awareness means being conscious of the political and social issues and challenges facing one's own country and the world, being knowledgeable about the different political and social systems and structures, and being able to analyze and critically evaluate political and social events and phenomena. For example, a returning teacher with strong political and social awareness might have a deep understanding of the political and social changes that are taking place in their home country and other countries worldwide. They can analyze and evaluate different political systems and structures and identify the strengths

and weaknesses of different approaches to social and political issues. This awareness can help them become more engaged and effective citizens and educators and better understand the challenges and opportunities facing their students as they prepare for their roles in society.

(4) Broadened worldview: Studying abroad exposes teachers to different cultures, ideologies, and perspectives, which can broaden their worldview and lead them to discuss major international political issues. When teachers study overseas, they are exposed to different cultures, values, and ways of life that they may not have encountered in their home country. This exposure allows them to broaden their worldview or understanding of the world and its people. For example, a teacher who studied in a country with a different political system may better understand how different political systems work and how they can impact people's lives. Or, a teacher who studied in a country with a different education system may gain new insights into teaching and communicating with students. Broadening one's worldview can also lead to more empathy and understanding of others. Teachers who have studied abroad may be more open to diversity and inclusive practices, which can benefit their students and colleagues. They may also be better equipped to engage in cross-cultural communication and collaboration, which is increasingly important in our globalized world.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Therefore, some implications are proposed as follows:

Firstly, it is crucial to establish returning teachers' correct ideology and discourse expression level. While some returning teachers possess strong subject consciousness, they may use extreme expressions, which can be harmful. Personality and commonness are not opposites, and guiding the rational and reasonable expression of appeals is essential. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a multi-form ideological discourse training mechanism, which can be achieved by optimizing the discourse environment of campus education, utilizing the guiding role of teachers' classroom discourse, and increasing the positive influence of propaganda and broadcast discourse. Educators should use effective propaganda on campus, classrooms, dormitories, and other places to create a clean and cheerful campus cultural atmosphere. Teachers should prioritize the construction and research of classroom discourse patterns, select the most appropriate corpus for different disciplines and educational content, utilize the positive transfer effect of traditional culture on ideological education, and avoid the negative transfer effect of immutable content and rigid language forms on ideological education. Strengthening teacher development training can also help teachers guide the worship of virtue towards the good, distinguish right from wrong, devote themselves to study, and be grateful to society.

Secondly, it is necessary to construct the correct ideology and discourse expression level of returnee teachers. Some returnee teachers have a strong subject consciousness but often use extreme expressions. Personality is not the opposite of commonness. Therefore, guiding them in expressing their appeals rationally and reasonably is essential. A multi-form ideological discourse training mechanism should be built, including optimizing the discourse environment of campus education, giving full play to the guiding role of teachers' classroom discourse, and increasing the positive influence of propaganda and broadcast discourse. Teachers should attach importance to the construction and research of classroom discourse patterns, select the most appropriate corpus according to different disciplines and educational content, and give full play to the positive transfer effect of traditional culture on ideological education while avoiding the negative transfer effect of immutable content and rigid language forms on ideological education. It is necessary to construct a multi-mode media language guidance system.

Universities should first use the authority and credibility of official mainstream media to guide the discourse power of new media. They should actively expand new communication channels and platforms and increase the ability of information distribution and aggregation based on the database, which will improve the communication power and influence of mainstream media in cyberspace. The content should be continuously enriched, and an authoritative discourse system should be built. Multiple discourse contexts should be continuously optimized, and the form should be made more vivid, closer to life, to the campus, and to teachers and students. We should give full play to the advantages of new communication media and actively construct various discourse forms, such as creating campus civilization discourse, teachers' and students' communicative discourse, and classroom interaction discourse to spread mainstream values and mainstream culture. It is

important to actively cultivate "opinion leaders" who can interpret and disseminate information, set up topics according to the focus of international students, construct positive discourse, deliver positive information, and guide teachers and students to see the essence through the phenomenon, rational thinking, and scientific judgment on various issues. "Opinion leaders" should also be good at using discourse strategies to actively communicate with those who make negative remarks, resolve their feelings, and spread the positive energy of mainstream culture.

Finally, an early warning mechanism is crucial for effective online public opinion management in colleges and universities. The mechanism should be designed to detect potential issues or controversies that may arise, allowing universities to take preemptive actions to prevent or mitigate the impact of opposing public opinions. To construct an effective early warning mechanism, colleges and universities can use big data and other analytical tools to monitor social media platforms, online forums, and other relevant sources to identify potential issues. These tools can help identify emerging trends, track sentiment, and detect sudden changes in public opinion, allowing universities to respond promptly. In addition, colleges and universities can establish a system for collecting feedback from students and faculty members, such as through regular surveys or focus group discussions, which can provide valuable insights into the concerns and perspectives of stakeholders, allowing universities to address potential issues before they escalate into more significant public opinion crises. Universities should also focus on improving their communication with students and the public. By engaging with students and the public through various channels, universities can better understand their needs, opinions, and concerns and build trust and mutual understanding, which can be achieved through regular surveys, forums, town hall meetings, social media, and other communication channels.

Moreover, universities should establish effective crisis management mechanisms to handle online public opinion emergencies, including establishing a clear and effective crisis response plan, training staff on handling different crises and conducting regular crisis drills to improve their response capabilities. Effective management of online public opinion in universities requires establishing a multi-dimensional network public opinion management platform, using big data technology and discourse analysis, and establishing a professional and well-trained team. It also requires effective communication with students and the public, as well as the establishment of effective crisis management mechanisms, which requires a well-established upper and lower linkage mechanism, where the higher management level should establish a leading group for public opinion response, which should be responsible for formulating policies and plans for handling public opinion. The lower-level management department should establish a corresponding team to carry out the implementation of policies and plans. The communication between the two levels should be smooth, and timely feedback should be given on handling public opinion to ensure that the upper-level management can understand the progress of the work at any time and adjust the direction and measures in time. This upper and lower linkage mechanism can effectively ensure the scientific and practical disposal of public opinion in colleges and universities and prevent adverse events caused by the mishandling of public opinion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research is supported by ideological and political subjects of Zhejiang Conservatory of Music: A Study on Discourse guidance of international major political issues for returning college teachers(SZ2023008)

REFERENCES

- Chen, A. J. (2011). International Network Development and China's Educational Countermeasure. *Education normalization*, 10, 52-58.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education* (7th ed.). London: Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self identity: Self and society in the modern age*. Stanford, CA .
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Han, Y.B.(2021)The Knowledge Genealogy of the Centennial Hero Culture Concept of the CPC.*Journal of Southwest University (Social Science Edition)*,3(47),1-15.
- Leng, S.A., & Li, X.(2022).Enhance college students' awareness of the community of human destiny Discourse system research.*Hunan social sciences*,05,132-137.
- Liu, X.Y.(2008). *Right of Discourse*. Beijing: Communication University of China Press.

- Luo, Y.T. & Wei, Q (2010). On the Discourse Right of College Students' Network Culture. *Teaching and Research*, 10,56-72.
- Pimdee,P. & Paksanondha, P.(2013).Promotion Behavior for Ecotourism of Sub-district Administration Organization Member in Thailand.*Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*,4(2), 81-87.
- Peng, W., Nair, S. M., & Wider, W. (2022). Chinese English Lecturers' self-identification as researchers. *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, 10(3), 369–382. <https://doi.org/10.18488/73.v10i3.3077>
- Tan,Y.(2023).Research on the Ways to Improve the Effectiveness of Teaching Discourse of Ideological and Political Theory Course in Universities——From the Perspective of Optimizing Discourse Context,*Journal of Hubei Open Vocational College*,36(5).99-101.
- Tu, G. P.(2022).The Internet ideology of the Communist Party of China in the new era--The basic experience of power construction.*School party building and ideological education*,22,9-13.
- Zhao, W.H.(2022).Mainstream ideology of universities in media convergence field The resolution and reconstruction of discourse power.*Science and technology communication*,13(20),70-74.
- Zhang, A.L.(2022).Research on the discourse power of network ideological and political education for ideological and political courses.*Journal of Huaibei Normal University*,11,34-42.