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On the Effective Ways of Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics

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ABSTRACT

Higher education is an important symbol of state soft power. Constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is of great significance to build a powerful country in higher education and enhance the international influence of higher education. The main ways to construct the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics are as follows: first, we should take root in China, devote ourselves to the study of the realistic logic and Chinese problems during the development process of higher education in contemporary China and focus on creating new concepts, new categories and new expressions of higher education with originality and identity; the second is to integrate Chinese and Western cultures, realize the transformation of discourse logic of higher education, and demonstrate high-quality concepts of higher education and development models to other countries in the world; the third is to promote the modernization of higher education in an all-around ways with the support of constructing world-class universities and first-class disciplines, obtain discourse power in the academic and policy fields of international higher education, and show the world the Chinese road, Chinese model and Chinese experience during the development of higher education.

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1. Introduction

Discourse usually refers to the expression of a certain social behavior in a certain social context. The combination of discourse and academic established a discourse system with discipline as the unit^[1]. Discourse system is the foundation of discourse power. Constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is conducive to gaining discourse power in the academic and policy fields of international higher education. It is of great importance to build a powerful country in higher education and promote its international influence.

2. The Connotations and Significances of Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education

An important sign of a fully-developed and independent higher education system is to establish a corresponding ideological and theoretical system and then a unique discourse system and expression system. The discourse system of higher education is the theoretical expression and discourse presentation of the development paths and modes of higher education. The basic category of constructing the discourse system of higher education is the practice in personnel training, scientific research, social services, cultural inheritance and international exchanges and cooperation. The ideological system, theoretical system and knowledge system of higher education with local characteristics refined, sublimated and established in the specific practice of school running are the kernels of the discourse system of higher education, and are fundamentally guiding the development directions of future higher education and shaping the development forms of higher education.

Constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is the fundamental requirement to strengthen the confidence in the development paths of higher education in China. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the higher education in China has pioneered a development path from imitating the Western and Soviet models to independently sticking to the development path with Chinese characteristics. It has fully demonstrated to the world the Chinese plans and models of how a developing country promote the modernization of education and achieve progress as a poor country. Constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is a systematic study of the operation practice of higher education in China, an in-

depth analysis and theoretical sublimation of the course, causes and results of the choice of the development path of higher education in China. It is also an inevitable process for the experiences and modes of running higher education with Chinese characteristics to go global. It is the full embodiment of self-confidence in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism (four matters of confidence) in the development of higher education with Chinese characteristics.

Constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is a natural element for constructing a powerful country in higher education. From the angle of development practice of higher education in the world, it is the basic path of the topic shift of international higher education and the common law of the rise of the world's major higher education powers to imitate and learn from the mainstream discourse system of developed countries, then integrate, refine and innovate the discourse system in combination with the local reality, and finally spread the increasingly mature domestic discourse to the higher education system of other countries. Since the implementation of reform and opening up in 1978, the Communist Party of China and the governments at all levels have placed the priority on the development of education in the prominent position of the country's governance. Focusing on such major theoretical and practical issues as "what kind of people to cultivate, how to cultivate people, and for whom to cultivate people", a series of new ideas, new approaches and new views of higher education have been put forward, an education system with distinctive Chinese characteristics for all-round cultivation of morality, intelligence, physics, aesthetics and labor, and a higher level personnel training system has been basically established, and an operation and managerial system of higher education with its own characteristics have been initially established. These practices have laid a solid foundation for further construction and refinement of the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics, which is an important prerequisite for China to build a powerful country in higher education and promote her higher education to the world.

3. The Main Problems in Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics

The international discourse power of higher education is an important symbol of the international influence of a country's higher education, an important embodiment of the strength and competitiveness of higher education,

and an integral component of the national strength. The emergence and development of modern higher education in China mainly focus on learning from the West and the former Soviet Union. Although the time of independent development is relatively short, it has made remarkable achievements. In 2017, the number of students in various types of higher education in China reached 37.79 million, ranking first in the world in total. The gross enrollment rate of higher education has reached 45.7% in 2017^[2], which is expected to reach 50% in 2020 and enter the primary phase of popularization. The transformation of China's higher education from elite to universal took only half the time of the United States, which is shorter than that of most developed countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Australia. China has become a veritable country of higher education, and it is transforming from a big country to a strong one.

However, as a developing country, higher education in China is still at the learning stage. Although it has accumulated a lot of experience and lessons from poor state-run education, the international discourse power of higher education is relatively weak, the beneficial experiences and successful models of the development of China's higher education are rarely introduced to the world, and the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is still in a state of unknown. Compared with the magnificent reform and development of higher education, the theoretical innovation of China's higher education is insufficient, and the construction of the theoretical system of higher education lags behind its development, which greatly restricts the pace of the construction of the discourse system of higher education. As a result, many ideas and practical experiences of higher education with Chinese characteristics emerged in practice cannot be incorporated into the construction of discourse system of higher education in time, and then go to the world arena, and have influence in other countries' higher education system. Therefore, only by strengthening the construction of the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics, constructing the system and action mode in line with the discourse logic of higher education, and creating new concepts, new categories and new expressions that are integrated with China and foreign countries, can the development advantages of higher education in China be truly transformed into the theoretical advantages and discourse advantages. Only in this way can we gain the right to speak in the field of academic research and policy-making of international higher education, can we effectively participate in the development of rules of in-

ternational higher education and disseminate new ideas, new concepts and new experiences of higher education in China to the world, which is not only an important content and effective support to promote China's higher education to the world, but also a core sign.

4. The Basic Paths of Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics

4.1 Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics Should Take Root in the Practice of Higher Education in China

The more national the more international. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: "There will not be a second Harvard, Oxford, Stanford, MIT and Cambridge in the world, but there will be the first Chinese universities, such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, Zhejiang University, Fudan University and Nankai University. We should conscientiously absorb the world's advanced experience in running and studying schools, and more importantly, we should follow the laws of education and take root in China to run universities."^[3] Over the past 40 years of reform and opening up, higher education in China has entered a new stage of development. Higher education has shown its unique temperament, accumulated a wealth of new ideas and experiences with originality and identity, and displayed a wealth of "Chinese genes" and "Chinese characteristics". To build a discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is to constantly summarize the successful experience of reform and development of higher education in China, and to show the world the way, mode and experience of the development of higher education in China through the expression of systematic theory and knowledge system.

Theory comes from practice; theory is higher than practice. The integration of theory and practice is the most fundamental approach to solve the problem of the development of higher education. To construct the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics, we need to draw beneficial elements from both theory and practice. At present, the theoretical innovation of higher education in China is breaking through the limitations of disciplines, constantly promoting the combination of the universality and objectivity of theoretical thinking with the concreteness and value of engineering thinking, and the practical quality of educational theory is improving. At the same time, the scientific level of educational prac-

tice is also constantly improving. Traditional experience and inertia have been unable to effectively cope with the new challenges of the development of higher education in the new era. Higher education pays more attention to the transformation of theory and the sublimation of experience, and the theoretical content of educational practice is significantly increasing. It can be said that the significant progress in the theory and practice of higher education in China is providing stable, well-organized and strong logic support for constructing of the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics. Only by taking root in the theory and practice of the reform and development of higher education, can we form a discourse expression system with Chinese characteristics in the international community, and can we tell Chinese stories and disseminate Chinese voice well.

4.2 To Build the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics, We Need to Attach Importance to the Integration of China and the West

To construct the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics, we need to draw reasonable elements from Chinese traditional cultures and Western contemporary cultures. On the one hand, we should make the theory and practice of China's higher education continue the traditional Chinese cultures, build a theoretical system, knowledge system and action system of higher education with traditional cultures, and highlight the connotations and characteristics of higher education in China. On the other hand, we should fully learn from the concepts, theoretical systems and practical experiences of Western modern higher education, actively promote China's local higher education to go international, establish a discourse system linked with the development of global higher education, and build a community with shared future of higher education. Only in this way can we change the situation of aimless introduction and imitation of Western higher education concepts, theories and experiences, change the situation of being conventional and overconfident, and finally realize the logical transformation of higher education discourse in the process of cultural integration between China and the West, explore the sharing mode of high-quality higher education in the global scope, and consolidate China's position as a major country of higher education with high-quality higher education concept, mode and institutional output.

4.3 Constructing the Discourse System of Higher Education with Chinese Characteristics Need to Be Supported by Constructing of World-Class Universities and Disciplines

In 1962, Mintomo Yuasa, a Japanese scholar in the history of science, put forward the Transfer Theory of the Center of World Science. He believed that the five transfers of the center of world scientific activities from Italy to Britain to France to Germany to the United States in modern times fully showed that the academic discourse power of higher education was closely related to the strength of higher education and its position in the world. Ben David, an American scholar, first discussed the transfer of the center of international higher education (advanced scholarship or knowledge) in 1971. He found that there was a close relationship between the transfer of the center of scientific activities and the transfer of the center of higher education, and the coexistence time and cycle of the two were roughly overlapped.^[4] The development practice of higher education in the world's major developed countries also shows that if a country has a group of world-class universities, first-class disciplines and first-class talents, it will have a stronger voice in the academic system of higher education of the world.

Therefore, it is a comprehensive and systematic project to establish the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics. On the one hand, it requires the academia to make continuous efforts and continuous improvement in enriching the content of the discourse system, firmly rooted in the soil of reform and practice of China's higher education, and to put forward innovative and iconic new concepts, new ideas and new theories of higher education. On the other hand, we need to comprehensively promote the modernization of education and the construction of a powerful country in higher education, take the construction of world-class universities and first-class disciplines as guidance, adhere to morality, cultivate first-class talents, take serving the country as the responsibility, take the contribution to the country and society as the value pursuit, take the expansion of international cooperation and exchange as the school running strategy, effectively participate in the research and formulation of the rules of international higher education, and gain the right to speak in the academic and policy fields of international higher education. Only in this way can we promote ideas, thoughts, cultures and corresponding expressions of higher education with Chinese characteristics to the world.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, constructing the discourse system of higher education with Chinese characteristics is an inevitable requirement for promoting educational modernization and China's higher education to the world. In order to build the discourse system of higher education in China, we should take root in China, integrate Chinese and Western cultures, take the construction of world-class universities and first-class disciplines as support, establish the discourse system and expression system that are connected with the development of global higher education, so as to show the world Chinese road, Chinese mode and Chinese experience of the development of higher education, and realize the global communication of higher education and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

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