

A Study on the Integration of Humanistic Spirit and Ideological and Political Connotations in the Applied English Course

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Abstract: *With the deepening of globalization and the innovation of educational concepts, the Applied English course needs to achieve a transition from single language skill training to the cultivation of comprehensive competencies. This paper explores the theoretical logic and practical pathways for integrating the humanistic spirit with ideological and political connotations, pointing out their inherent unity in the dimension of cultivating well-rounded individuals. The study analyzes the limitations and superficial dilemmas of three integration models, including content addition. Subsequently, it systematically constructs an integration strategy system from four dimensions: goal reconstruction, content integration, method innovation, and evaluation reform. This aims to promote the organic unity of instrumentality and humanity in the course, ultimately cultivating interdisciplinary talents equipped with linguistic competence, cultural insight, and value judgment.*

Keywords: *Applied English course; humanistic spirit; ideological and political connotations; holistic education; curriculum integration; teaching strategies.*

Introduction

Against the backdrop of increasingly frequent globalization and cross-cultural communication, the Applied English course, serving as a crucial vehicle for cultivating students' international communication skills, urgently needs to transcend the limitations of traditional language skills training and integrate the profound dimensions of humanistic spirit and value guidance. The humanistic spirit concerns human dignity, rational thinking, and cultural inclusivity, while ideological and political connotations involve moral judgment, social responsibility, and value identification. The integration of the two is not only an inevitable requirement for achieving the goals of holistic education but also a response to the strategic demand for cultivating interdisciplinary talents in the new era. Currently, in its integration practices, the Applied English course still faces issues such as ambiguous goal orientation, superficial content design, monotonous methods, and imperfect evaluation mechanisms, which restrict the full realization of its educational function. Therefore, a systematic exploration of the theoretical basis, practical dilemmas, and implementation pathways for integrating the humanistic spirit and ideological and political connotations holds significant theoretical significance and practical value. This study aims to construct an Applied English curriculum system centered on integration, promote the synergistic development of language education and value guidance, and provide a reference framework for curriculum reform and talent cultivation.

1. The Theoretical Basis and Necessity of Integrating the Humanistic Spirit and Ideological and Political Connotations in the Applied English Course

1.1 Defining the Core Concepts of the Humanistic Spirit and Ideological and Political Connotations

The humanistic spirit represents the core pursuit of human cultural values, and its essence lies in affirming human subjectivity and dignity, emphasizing the cultivation of rational thinking, ethical concern, and cross-cultural understanding. In Applied English teaching, it is embodied in exploring the cultural concepts and value systems carried by the language through learning, guiding students to build an open and inclusive worldview. Ideological and political connotations, on the other hand, point to the dimension of value guidance in the educational process, aiming to shape students' moral judgment and sense of social responsibility, enabling them to form stable value criteria and a sound personality while

mastering professional knowledge. Together, they constitute the indispensable dual dimensions of individual development—the humanistic spirit provides a profound cultural foundation for value judgment, while ideological and political connotations offer internal value norms for individual behavior. This inherent unity provides the logical starting point for curriculum integration.

1.2 The Philosophical and Pedagogical Theoretical Basis for Curriculum Integration

From the perspective of value education theory, education is essentially an activity imbued with values. As a medium for cultural transmission, the content and process of language teaching inevitably embody specific value orientations. The materials involved in the Applied English course, such as business communication and scientific and technological literature, inherently contain rich cultural presuppositions and value judgments, which provide a natural vehicle for value guidance. Constructivist learning theory further points out that knowledge acquisition is a process where learners actively construct meaning based on their existing cognitive structures, and the depth of meaning construction relies heavily on emotional experience and value identification. Integrating the humanistic spirit and value guidance into language skills training can create richer cognitive contexts for meaning construction and promote deep learning. The concept of holistic education demonstrates the necessity of integration from the perspective of educational goals, criticizing the one-sided orientation that reduces language teaching to mere tool skill training, and emphasizes that education should promote the coordinated development of cognition, emotion, and values ^[1].

1.3 The Inevitable Requirement for Achieving the Goals of Holistic Education

The concept of holistic education pursues the coordinated development of professional competence and humanistic literacy. This goal requires the Applied English course to transcend the traditional paradigm of language skill instruction. When language teaching merely remains at the level of grammatical accuracy and communicative fluency, what it cultivates are only communicators at a technical level. However, when the course integrates the humanistic spirit and a value dimension, students can, while mastering the language tool, develop sensitivity to cultural differences, the ability to discern ethical dilemmas, and a clear awareness of their own cultural standpoint. This transformation elevates Applied English teaching from mere language training to a comprehensive educational process that integrates knowledge, skills, and competencies. It enables students not only to negotiate effectively in business situations but also to understand corporate social responsibility; in scientific and technological translation, they can not only accurately translate terminology but also contemplate the human impact of technological development. This cultivation model, which combines language ability with humanistic literacy, is precisely the concrete realization of holistic education within the Applied English course.

1.4 Responding to the Strategic Demand for Talent Cultivation in the New Era

The in-depth development of the globalization era has put forward new, interdisciplinary requirements for talent cultivation, demanding international talents who are not only proficient in professional communication but also capable of cross-cultural thinking. As a key link in cultivating students' international communication skills, the teaching objectives of the Applied English course must adapt to this trend, shifting from cultivating pure language users to nurturing global citizens with cultural insight and value judgment. This strategic demand is reflected in the restructuring of the talent quality framework—future international communicators need not only language fluency but also the ability to maintain cultural self-awareness and make rational judgments in multicultural contexts. By systematically integrating the humanistic spirit and value guidance into the curriculum system, Applied English education can effectively cultivate students' cross-cultural competence, ethical judgment, and global vision. This enables them to maintain an open and inclusive dialogic stance while adhering to necessary value criteria when facing complex international communication situations. This adjustment in the direction of talent cultivation is not only an inevitable choice for education to adapt to the development of the times but also a crucial pathway to enhancing the international competitiveness of national talents ^[2].

2. An Analysis of the Current Situation and Problems in Integrating the Humanistic Spirit and Ideological and Political Connotations in the Applied English Course

2.1 Practical Explorations and Main Models of Current Curriculum Integration

Currently, several representative models have emerged in the integration of the humanistic spirit and ideological and political connotations within the Applied English course. The content addition model selects original materials rich in specific cultural values and ethical issues, such as case texts involving business ethics or discursive articles exploring the relationship between technology and society, thereby enabling students to naturally encounter relevant themes during language training. The skills integration model incorporates critical thinking and value discernment abilities into the teaching objectives. When designing oral discussions and written tasks, it guides students to engage in rational expression and multi-perspective analysis of ethical dilemmas or cultural conflicts within their professional fields. The implicit infiltration model focuses on constructing the learning environment. It achieves the permeation of humanistic literacy and values through the teacher's words and actions, the cultivation of classroom atmosphere, and the subtle influence of the learning community's values. These models reflect the initial attempts of educational practitioners to transition from mere knowledge transmission to the cultivation of comprehensive competencies.

2.2 The Core Dilemmas Faced in the Integration Process

The practice of curriculum integration faces multiple structural dilemmas. The phenomenon of superficial integration is relatively common, with some teaching attempts merely adding relevant discussion segments to existing content, failing to achieve an organic unity between language skill training and value guidance. This results in a state of mechanical addition rather than organic integration between the two. Another dilemma is the insufficient systematic support of the curriculum system; existing attempts often rely on individual teachers' initiative and ad-hoc designs, lacking a clear main thread running through the entire course and a progressive cultivation plan, which renders the integration effect fragmented. The adaptability gap in teaching resources also constrains the depth of integration. Current textbooks and supplementary materials often struggle to simultaneously meet the pedagogical requirements of language teaching and the demands of value guidance in terms of topic selection and content depth, requiring teachers to invest significant effort in secondary development and material reconstruction.

2.3 Analysis of Key Factors Influencing the Effectiveness of Integration

Teacher competence constitutes the primary factor affecting the effectiveness of integration. The depth of a teacher's cross-cultural understanding, their level of value cognition, and their ability to transform abstract concepts into concrete teaching activities directly determine the design quality and implementation effect of integrated teaching. The guiding role of the course evaluation system is equally critical; current evaluations mostly focus on language accuracy and skill proficiency, lacking effective tools and indicators for assessing humanistic literacy and value judgment abilities. This evaluative orientation indirectly diminishes the investment of both teachers and students in integrated teaching^[3]. The level of support from teaching management is also not to be overlooked, including the approval standards for course syllabi, the prioritization of teaching resource allocation, and the provision of teacher development opportunities. These institutional factors shape, at a macro level, the implementation space and developmental potential of integration practices.

2.4 Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of and Feedback on Curriculum Integration

The perceptions of curriculum integration among teachers and students exhibit significant differences. Most teachers agree with the necessity of integration at the conceptual level but experience anxiety regarding their competence and time constraints at the operational level. Some teachers are confused about how to balance the core task of language teaching with value guidance, worrying that overemphasizing the latter might dilute the professional nature of the course. Student feedback, on the other hand, shows a divergence. Some students acknowledge the role of integrated teaching in deepening their thinking and broadening their perspectives, believing that such content enhances the richness of the learning experience and its relevance to reality. Another group of students, however, is more concerned with the immediate acquisition of language skills and shows varying levels of acceptance towards content that goes beyond direct skill training. This cognitive disparity, together

with the "evaluative inertia" present in teaching implementation-where students are accustomed to accepting clear knowledge points and skill standards but are inadequately adapted to learning tasks requiring subjective judgment and value deliberation-collectively constitutes a micro-level psychological mechanism that influences the effectiveness of integration.

3. Pathways and Strategies for Deepening the Integration of the Humanistic Spirit and Ideological and Political Connotations in the Applied English Course

3.1 Establishing a Teaching Objective Orientation Centered on Integration

The systematic reconstruction of teaching objectives is the primary prerequisite for deepening integration practices. The Applied English course needs to transcend the traditional limitation of taking language skills as the sole core and construct a three-dimensional objective system that integrates knowledge construction, competence cultivation, and value guidance. While clearly specifying traditional indicators such as language proficiency and cross-cultural communication skills, this system must establish humanistic literacy and value judgment ability as indispensable core dimensions. Specifically, the teaching objectives should be clearly articulated as follows: while mastering the language application ability in professional fields, students should develop their capacity for cultural interpretation, ethical discernment, critical thinking, and a deep understanding of issues of common human concern. This goal orientation reflects a paradigm shift in language education from pure instrumentality to valuing both instrumentality and humanity, making the cultivation of value rationality an internal main thread running through the entire process of technical skill training ^[4].

This goal reconstruction needs to be systematically reflected at all levels of curriculum design. Taking business English as an example, the teaching objectives should simultaneously and precisely define professional skill requirements such as negotiation language strategies and business document conventions, while also explicitly incorporating the understanding and reflection upon corporate social responsibility, business ethics norms, and mechanisms for mediating cultural conflicts in the context of globalization. In the field of English for Science and Technology, a balance must be struck between core skills like interpreting professional literature and conveying technical information, and the capacity for dialectical thinking on issues such as the human dimension of technological development and the ethical boundaries of innovation. This dual-focused objective system not only provides clear guidance for the selection and organization of teaching content but also establishes a fundamental direction for the innovation of teaching methods and the reform of the evaluation system, ensuring that the humanistic spirit and value guidance are no longer mere surface-level decorations of the curriculum but become core pillars supporting the curricular framework.

3.2 Reconstructing Course Content with Dual Value

The reconstruction of course content needs to break away from the traditional organizational model centered on linguistic knowledge points and shift towards a thematic modular structure oriented by value guidance. This reconstruction should be based on selecting common issues of enduring significance in the development of human civilization, such as "the tension between technological innovation and humanistic heritage," "the balance between global collaboration and cultural identity," and "the adaptation between economic development and ecological ethics," thereby constructing a content system that can both stimulate deep thinking and meet professional needs. Within these thematic frameworks, teaching content should carefully select authentic materials, including original academic discussions, typical case studies, and multimedia resources that present different cultural perspectives and embody dilemmas of value choice. This ensures that while students are exposed to high-quality language input, they are inevitably led to contemplate fundamental issues concerning the human condition and the direction of societal development ^[5].

The design of teaching content needs to follow the inherent laws of cognitive development and language acquisition, achieving a deep integration of language form practice and the exploration of intellectual content. This integration is not a simple addition of materials but is realized through a carefully designed progressive task chain-proceeding from foundational text analysis and terminology mastery, to intermediate comparative analysis and opinion synthesis, and finally to advanced creative expression and solution proposal. For instance, when exploring the theme of "AI ethics," students not only need to master relevant technical terms and expressions but also, through a series of tasks, analyze ethical frameworks from different cultural backgrounds, evaluate the potential social impacts of

technological applications, and attempt to construct their own ethical guideline proposals in English. Such content design enables the practice of language skills and the exploration of values to form an organic whole that supports each other. In the process of enhancing their professional language abilities, students naturally deepen their understanding and internalization of the humanistic spirit.

3.3 Innovating Immersive and Heuristic Teaching Methods

The innovation of teaching methods should be dedicated to constructing a learning ecosystem that fosters the mutual stimulation of inner experience and rational deliberation. The case immersion method, by introducing real ethical dilemmas and value choice situations from professional practice—such as international business cases involving cultural conflicts or technological innovation projects facing ethical challenges—guides students, in the process of analyzing complex situations and seeking solutions, to both employ specific linguistic structures and communicative strategies and to deeply examine the value presuppositions and cultural logic underlying decisions. This approach situates language use within tension-filled, authentic problem scenarios, enabling students to cultivate ethical sensitivity and judgment when facing complex situations while mastering professional modes of expression^[6].

The issue-based discussion method and project-based learning further expand the depth and breadth of students' value cognition and language use. The issue-based discussion method organizes multi-stage research, debate, and reflection activities around controversial 前沿 issues within professional fields, such as cultural differences in data privacy or the global governance of a green economy. This approach prompts students, through multiple rounds of language interaction involving the construction of arguments and rebuttals, to deepen their multi-dimensional understanding of the issues and develop communicative competence that accommodates different perspectives. Project-based learning, by designing extended tasks that require the integrated application of language skills and humanistic thinking—such as developing a cultural integration plan for a multinational corporation or proposing a cross-cultural initiative on a global issue—enables students to experience the complexity of value judgment through authentic project collaboration and cultivate comprehensive competencies that combine professional ability with social concern. Together, these methods construct a complete learning cycle from perception and analysis to expression and creation, promoting the organic internalization of humanistic values through deep engagement.

3.4 Constructing a Multi-Dimensional and Dynamic Teaching Evaluation and Support System

Establishing a multi-dimensional evaluation mechanism aligned with the objectives of integrated education is a crucial link in ensuring the sustainability of reform effectiveness. The evaluation system needs to shift from a single dimension focused on linguistic accuracy to a comprehensive assessment that holistically examines language application ability, depth of cross-cultural understanding, quality of critical thinking, and value judgment. This assessment should innovatively combine quantitative indicators with qualitative analysis. While retaining necessary language proficiency tests, it should introduce diverse evaluation methods such as learning portfolios, thematic research reports, project outcome presentations, and performance in simulated scenarios. Particularly for the assessment of value cognition and humanistic literacy, evaluation tools capable of observing students' thought processes should be designed. For example, analyzing how students weigh the demands of different stakeholders in cross-cultural cases, or how they integrate professional knowledge and ethical considerations in project reports, can thus accurately depict the growth of students' comprehensive competencies.

The construction of a support system needs to form a systematic support network that fosters teacher development and curriculum innovation. A professional development support system should continuously enhance teachers' theoretical awareness and practical wisdom in integrating value guidance into professional teaching by forming interdisciplinary teaching research groups, offering workshops on integrated instructional design, and establishing a high-quality database of teaching cases. Concurrently, institutional innovation in curriculum management is indispensable. This includes establishing specific indicators for humanistic literacy in the syllabus review process, reserving flexible space for in-depth reflective activities in teaching schedules, and prioritizing the development and application of cross-cultural teaching resources in resource allocation. More importantly, a continuous improvement mechanism for curriculum quality should be established. By systematically collecting data on student learning outcomes and regularly reflecting on the practical effects of integrated teaching, an evidence-based cycle of curriculum optimization can be formed, thereby providing

long-term support for the humanistic and value-guiding functions of the Applied English course.

Conclusion

The integration of the humanistic spirit and ideological and political connotations in the Applied English course is a crucial pathway for promoting the transformation of language education from instrumentality to humanity. This study, by clarifying the theoretical basis for integration and analyzing the dilemmas and their causes in current practices, proposes systematic strategies centered on goal reconstruction, content integration, method innovation, and evaluation support.

Future research can further focus on evaluating the implementation effectiveness of the integrated curriculum, exploring the suitability of humanistic themes and language training in different professional directions, and the mechanism for enhancing teachers' cross-cultural teaching competence. Furthermore, in the context of digital education, how to leverage technological means to construct immersive and interactive integrated teaching scenarios will also become an important research direction. Through the continuous optimization of curriculum design and implementation mechanisms, the Applied English course is expected to deepen students' humanistic literacy and value consciousness while enhancing their language abilities, thereby truly undertaking the educational mission of cultivating international talents with a global vision and cultural confidence.

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