

Research on the Approaches and Effectiveness Evaluation of the Organic Integration of Ideological and Political Elements in College English Courses

Kexin Lin*

Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou, 571126, China

*Corresponding author: hgcyj@163.com

Abstract: In the context of global higher education emphasizing holistic student development, achieving the organic integration of the instrumental and humanistic aspects of College English courses has become a crucial issue. This study systematically constructs an integration and evaluation system for incorporating Ideological and Political elements into College English courses. First, it defines their connotation from the cognitive, affective, and competency dimensions, and proposes a three-dimensional theoretical framework of "content-process-context" based on the mechanisms of cognitive construction, discursive practice, and cultural interaction in language learning. Subsequently, it designs systematic integration pathways encompassing value excavation, implicit integration, and the creation of an ecological learning context. Finally, the study constructs an effectiveness evaluation system that integrates multidimensional indicators, diverse methods, and a feedback-optimization mechanism, providing systematic theoretical reference and practical solutions for deepening the humanistic connotation of the curriculum.

Keywords: College English courses; Ideological and Political elements; organic integration pathways; effectiveness evaluation; intercultural competence

Introduction

As a widely offered humanities general education course in higher education, College English courses profoundly influence students' language proficiency, thinking patterns, and intercultural competence. Currently, deepening the curriculum's connotation and organically combining language knowledge instruction with value guidance has become one of the core issues in the field of foreign language education. However, further theoretical construction and practical exploration are still needed to address the challenge of preventing value guidance and language teaching from becoming a disconnected endeavor and instead achieving their seamless integration. This study is grounded in this practical need, and its necessity lies in providing a theoretically clear and operationally feasible systematic solution for College English courses to fulfill their value-guiding function. The significance of the research is reflected at the theoretical level by clarifying the connotation and mechanisms, thereby deepening the understanding of the humanistic attributes of language education. At the practical level, the designed integration pathways and evaluation system offer frontline educators a comprehensive action guide spanning from curriculum design to teaching assessment. This contributes to promoting a paradigm shift in College English teaching from a purely "instrumental" focus to a "unity of instrumental and humanistic dimensions," thereby more effectively serving the cultivation of students' comprehensive competencies and global competence.

1. The Connotative Definition and Theoretical Foundation of Ideological and Political Elements in College English Courses

1.1 Elucidation of the Core Connotation of Ideological and Political Elements in Foreign Language Teaching

1.1.1 The Cognitive Dimension: The Mutual Construction of Cultural Understanding and Critical Thinking

The cognitive connotation of Ideological and Political elements in foreign language teaching is

manifested in guiding learners to move beyond the surface structures of language and delve into the cultural concepts, modes of thinking, and ethical stances conveyed through texts and discourse. Its essence lies in cultivating a structured capacity for cultural understanding. This enables learners, when encountering heterogeneous cultural information, to engage in conscious comparison, analysis, and critical reflection rather than passive acceptance. Consequently, this process facilitates the preliminary shaping of value judgment capabilities alongside the construction of knowledge.

1.1.2 The Affective-Attitudinal Dimension: The Symbiosis of Cultural Consciousness and Intercultural Empathy

This dimension focuses on cultivating learners' affective dispositions and value stances during intercultural interactions. It emphasizes reflecting upon and internalizing one's own cultural identity in the process of cognitively engaging with the "Other," thereby fostering a sense of cultural consciousness and belonging grounded in rational understanding. Simultaneously, it guides learners to develop intercultural empathy, to understand and respect value diversity, and to form an open, inclusive, and self-aware affective-attitudinal orientation.

1.1.3 The Competency Dimension: The Integration of Pragmatic Practice and Value Expression

The connotation of Ideological and Political elements at the competency level pertains to translating value cognition and attitudes into concrete intercultural pragmatic abilities. It requires learners, in their language use—especially in advanced pragmatic activities such as argumentation, negotiation, and persuasion—to organically integrate factual information with value considerations. This enables them to engage in logical, empathetically resonant, and ethically sound expression and communication, thereby achieving the unity of language's instrumental and humanistic dimensions^[1].

1.2 Analysis of the Mechanism for Integrating Language Learning and Value Guidance

1.2.1 Cognitive Construction Mechanism: Meaning Negotiation and Schema Reconstruction

The process of language learning is essentially one of meaning construction, involving the interaction between new information and the learner's pre-existing cognitive schemas. The encounter between the inherent value-laden nature of foreign language materials and the learner's fore-understanding inevitably triggers cognitive comparison, conflict, and negotiation. This intrinsic cognitive mechanism provides a natural entry point for value guidance. By designing heuristic tasks, teachers can facilitate learners to actively engage in the discrimination and internalization of value-laden information during the decoding of linguistic symbols and the encoding of meaning, thereby achieving the enrichment and reconstruction of their cognitive schemas.

1.2.2 Discourse Practice Mechanism: Identity Projection and Stance Construction

Language production serves as a crucial arena for the externalization and enactment of values. In discourse practices such as writing, public speaking, and debate, learners must employ specific conceptual categories, lines of argumentation, and rhetorical strategies to structure their discourse. This inherently requires them, either explicitly or implicitly, to adopt certain value stances and project corresponding identities. Through repeated and guided discourse practice, learners can rehearse and solidify a comprehensive mode of expression that integrates linguistic competence with value judgment.

1.2.3 Cultural Interaction Mechanism: Horizon Fusion and Subjectivity Formation

Based on cross-cultural communication theory, foreign language learning is a process where the learner's horizon comes into contact with, and attempts to fuse with, the horizon of the target culture. In-depth cultural interaction not only enhances understanding but also prompts learners to reflect upon their own cultural coordinates, thereby clarifying, adjusting, or reinforcing their value identifications through this "dialogue." This mechanism emphasizes that value guidance is not a one-way indoctrination but rather facilitates the maturation and stabilization of the learner's intercultural subjectivity through bidirectional, dynamic cultural interpretation and reflection.

1.3 Construction of the Theoretical Framework for Organic Integration

1.3.1 Value Excavation and Systematic Reconstruction in the Content Dimension

The organic integration first requires the conscious value auditing and in-depth development of teaching materials. This framework advocates that, based on course objectives, educators should

identify and extract the value-laden issues inherently present in texts—such as cultural conflicts, ethical dilemmas, and the spirit of scientific inquiry—and systematically correlate them with language knowledge points and skill-training objectives. This process forms modular teaching content units characterized by a clear value theme, appropriate linguistic vehicles, and a suitable level of cognitive challenge^[2].

1.3.2 Implicit Integration and Interactive Generation in the Process Dimension

At the level of instructional implementation, the framework advocates the adoption of a guiding rather than didactic pedagogical approach. Through interactive strategies such as problem-chain design, critical discussion, and comparative analysis, the exploration of values is integrated into every facet of language skill training. The teacher, acting as a facilitator and coordinator of dialogue, focuses on creating a safe and rational environment for negotiation. This allows value concepts to naturally emerge, be debated, and deepen through the multiple interactions between learners and texts, as well as among learners themselves, thereby achieving a subtle, "imperceptible" permeation effect.

1.3.3 Ecological Construction and Meaningful Support in the Contextual Dimension

The organic integration requires a compatible learning ecology. This entails fostering a classroom micro-culture that respects diverse viewpoints and encourages rational expression, as well as utilizing technological means to construct virtual interactive spaces connected to authentic contexts. A supportive contextual ecology can lower learners' affective filter, stimulate their intrinsic motivation to engage in deep thinking and value expression, thereby providing continuous meaningful support and environmental assurance for the effective implementation of the content and process dimensions.

2. Design of Organic Integration Pathways for Ideological and Political Elements in College English Courses

2.1 Strategies for Value Dimension Excavation and Reconstruction of Teaching Content

2.1.1 Critical Analysis of Texts and Identification of Value-laden Issues

This pathway begins with an in-depth discourse analysis of teaching materials, utilizing frameworks such as Critical Discourse Analysis and narratology to systematically deconstruct the implicit value stances and ethical orientations embedded within a text's themes, characters, rhetoric, and cultural presuppositions. Its aim is to transcend superficial language form learning and identify native issues with discursive tension concerning cultural identity, technology ethics, ecological responsibility, among others, thereby establishing clear value anchors for subsequent pedagogical transformation.

2.1.2 Pedagogical Transformation of Issues and Integration with Language Tasks

Identified value-laden issues need to undergo a process of pedagogical transformation. This process emphasizes transforming abstract issues into actionable, investigable driving questions and learning tasks, and seamlessly aligning them with specific language skill objectives (such as academic reading, argumentative writing, thematic speeches). The issues thus become not the end point of discussion, but rather the central hub for organizing language input, stimulating language output, and guiding cognitive processing, ensuring that value exploration unfolds within the authentic process of language use.

2.1.3 Progressive Restructuring of Unit Modules and Cohesion through Meaningful Logic

At the macro level of curriculum design, it is necessary to restructure traditional units centered on language functions or topics. By following the progressive logic of "language knowledge → cultural comparison → meaning reflection," teaching materials and activities are reorganized to construct integrated learning modules. Here, the value dimension serves as the meaningful thread that connects all teaching activities, ensuring internal coherence within each unit—from cognitive understanding to critical application, and from language learning to meaning generation^[3].

2.2 Implicit Integration and Cognitive Structure Alignment in the Teaching Process

2.2.1 Heuristic Inquiry-Based Methodology and Cognitive Dissonance Design

The core of teaching implementation shifts from knowledge transmission to meaning negotiation. By designing interlinked chains of heuristic questions and inquiry-based tasks, teachers intentionally create points of cognitive dissonance. This guides students to actively encounter and grapple with the

value contradictions inherent within the materials while engaging in language activities such as textual analysis and case study discussions. This method embeds value reflection into the cognitive process of problem-solving, ensuring that learners inevitably undergo the mental exercise of value judgment while seeking solutions for linguistic expression.

2.2.2 Critical Discursive Strategies and Training in Value Position Expression

The integration pathway is concretely manifested in the shaping of students' discursive practices. In productive activities such as discussions, debates, and writing, students are explicitly trained to employ critical discursive strategies—including comparison, evaluation, and argumentation—and to learn how to construct and articulate their own value positions clearly and judiciously, based on evidence and logic. This training operationalizes value guidance into observable, cultivable academic communication abilities, achieving the integrated development of value-based thinking and linguistic expression skills.

2.2.3 The Teacher as Coordinator and Builder of Cognitive Scaffolding

Within this pathway, the teacher's role crucially shifts to that of a coordinator of learning dialogues and a supporter of cognitive development. The teacher's responsibility is not to provide authoritative conclusions, but rather to construct appropriate cognitive scaffolding for students through means such as selective feedback, introducing multiple perspectives, and metacognitive questioning. This approach helps support students in autonomously exploring and constructing meaning around complex value-laden issues, and gradually integrating new value cognitions into their pre-existing belief systems.

2.3 Creation of Teaching Contexts and Mechanisms for Generating Value Identification

2.3.1 Norm Establishment for an Academic Dialogue Community and Cultivation of an Emotionally Safe Atmosphere

Organic integration requires a supportive socio-cultural context. The primary pathway is the conscious construction of an academic dialogue community within the classroom, establishing discursive norms centered on mutual respect, rational argumentation, and empathetic listening. This atmosphere, both emotionally safe and intellectually challenging, can effectively lower students' psychological defenses. It encourages them to openly express, examine, and reflect upon value perspectives that are not yet fully formed, serving as a prerequisite for moving values from the implicit to the explicit realm and engaging in their negotiation.

2.3.2 Value Experience and Application in Authentic or Highly Simulated Task Contexts

By designing complex task contexts that are either authentic or highly simulated—such as project-based learning, simulated international conferences, and intercultural collaboration tasks—students are placed in situations where they must comprehensively apply both their linguistic competence and value judgment abilities to address challenges approximating those of the real world. Within such contexts, abstract value principles are translated into concrete choices and trade-offs in action, the consequences of which can be simulated and experienced. This process significantly facilitates the transformation of value cognition into deep-seated identification and behavioral dispositions^[4].

2.3.3 Ecological Expansion of Multimodal Digital Resources and Perspective Diversification

Digital technology is leveraged to expand the boundaries of the learning environment by introducing multimodal resources from diverse cultural backgrounds and holding varied stances—such as documentaries, academic lectures, and digital narratives. This builds a resource ecology around core issues that is rich in information and diverse in perspectives. This design intentionally disrupts singular narratives. It allows students to develop critical media literacy through comparing and analyzing different information sources, while deepening their understanding of complex value-laden issues and solidifying their identification formed through careful reflection amidst the clash and dialogue of multiple viewpoints.

3. Construction of an Effectiveness Evaluation System for the Integration of Ideological and Political Elements into College English Courses

3.1 Theoretical Basis and Structural Design of Multidimensional Evaluation Indicators

3.1.1 Hierarchization of Evaluation Dimensions Based on the Taxonomy of Educational Objectives

One of the theoretical cornerstones of the effectiveness evaluation system lies in integrating the taxonomy of educational objectives across the cognitive, affective-attitudinal, and competency domains. Guided by this framework, the evaluation indicators must transcend the mere assessment of language knowledge acquisition. They should systematically encompass learners' progressive performance in multiple dimensions, including cultural understanding and critical thinking (cognitive), cultural consciousness and intercultural sensitivity (affective-attitudinal), and integrated pragmatic practice (competency), thereby ensuring alignment between evaluation and the intrinsic instructional goals of the curriculum.

3.1.2 Structural Model Integrating Intercultural Competence and Value Judgment Capacity

The structure of the evaluation indicators should reflect the integrated nature of linguistic competence and value cognition. Drawing on models of intercultural communicative competence, the structural design must encompass linked dimensions of "cognitive understanding-affective adaptation-behavioral manifestation." Specifically, this involves assessing whether learners, in intercultural contexts, can accurately identify value-laden issues (cognitive), demonstrate attitudinal tendencies of respect and reflection (affective), and engage in appropriate, responsible value expression and interaction during linguistic communication (behavioral).

3.1.3 Weight Allocation Combining Formative and Summative Evaluation Indicators

To comprehensively capture the dynamic effects of "organic integration," the evaluation indicators require a reasonable allocation of weights between formative and summative assessments. Formative indicators focus on the quality of classroom participation, the depth of reflective journals, and performance in value negotiation during collaborative tasks. Summative indicators, in contrast, assess integrated application abilities through comprehensive tasks such as analytical essays and intercultural project reports. The weight allocation must reflect the emphasis placed on value construction throughout the learning process.

3.2 Observation and Measurement Methods for the Value Dimensions of Learning Outcomes

3.2.1 Design of Performance-Based Assessment for the Cognitive and Critical Thinking Dimensions

The observation of cultural understanding and critical thinking primarily relies on performance-based assessment methods. This can be achieved by analyzing learners' commentaries on texts containing value conflicts, their comparative analysis reports, or their ability to deconstruct and construct the logic of different positions in debates. Using analytical rubrics, a graded evaluation is conducted on the depth of their arguments, the rigor of their logic, and the diversity of their perspectives, thereby indirectly measuring the complexity of their value cognition and their level of critical thinking.

3.2.2 Indirect Measurement and Textual Analysis for the Affective-Attitudinal Dimension

The affective-attitudinal dimension (e.g., cultural consciousness, empathy) is inherently implicit, and its measurement necessitates indirect methods. This can involve the systematic analysis of learners' reflective writing, dialogue texts from simulated intercultural scenarios, or the use of culturally adapted semantic differential scales to investigate shifts in their emotional tendencies, expressions of identity, as well as the complexity and inclusiveness of their descriptions of cultural differences.

3.2.3 Authentic Task Assessment for the Competency Integration Dimension

To evaluate whether learners can integrate value judgment with linguistic competence, the optimal approach is assessment within authentic or simulated tasks. For example, a task can be designed that requires learners to write and present a position paper on a global issue. Their integrated pragmatic competence can be comprehensively judged by evaluating the appropriateness of their language use, the persuasiveness of their arguments, their consideration of counterarguments, and the overall ethical awareness demonstrated in their presentation^[5].

3.3 Feedback Loop and Continuous Optimization Mechanism for Teaching Effectiveness

3.3.1 Systematic Collection and Triangulation of Multiple Data Sources

The establishment of an effective feedback loop relies on the systematic collection of diverse evaluation data (such as rubric scores, textual analyses, observation records, and learner self-assessments). Utilizing the method of data triangulation, information from different sources is compared and analyzed. This approach enables a more comprehensive and credible diagnosis of the actual teaching effectiveness in the value dimension, helps identify strengths and weaknesses, and avoids partial judgments based on a single data source.

3.3.2 Evidence-Based Teaching Diagnosis and Iterative Adjustment

The core purpose of feedback is to inform teaching improvement. The mechanism requires conducting a structured teaching diagnosis based on aggregated evaluation evidence: this involves analyzing the correlations between specific integration pathways (such as the design of a particular unit or a specific discussion method) and corresponding learning outcomes. Based on the diagnostic conclusions, targeted iterative adjustments and optimizations are then made to the strategies for reconstructing teaching content, the methods of integration within the teaching process, or the creation of learning contexts.

3.3.3 A Closed-Loop System of Collaborative Reflection and the Promotion of Professional Development

Ultimately, the evaluation system should be embedded within a closed-loop system of collaborative reflection led by teachers and the course team. This involves regularly and systematically reviewing evaluation data, instructional design, and implementation experiences, thereby transforming the findings from effectiveness evaluation into concrete plans for curriculum revision and nourishment for the growth of teachers' pedagogical knowledge. This mechanism transforms effectiveness evaluation from an external measurement tool into an intrinsic, sustained driver for the organic development of the curriculum itself and the enhancement of teachers' professional competence.

Conclusion

This study, through the systematic construction of the connotative definition, organic integration pathways, and an effectiveness evaluation system for Ideological and Political elements in College English courses, forms a complete logical cycle spanning from theoretical foundation to practical operation, and further to outcome assessment and optimization. Research indicates that the organic integration of Ideological and Political elements is not a mere addition of content, but rather a systematic reconstruction of teaching objectives, content, process, and context based on the inherent mechanisms of language learning. The proposed three-dimensional framework of "content-process-context" and its specific pathways emphasize the permeable, interactive, and generative nature of value guidance. The accompanying multidimensional evaluation system provides an evidence-based scientific tool for verifying integration effectiveness and facilitating instructional improvement.

Future research can be further deepened in the following directions: first, exploring the adaptive adjustment and differentiated implementation strategies of integration pathways across different types of institutions and student population characteristics; second, developing more refined and convenient digital evaluation tools to enable dynamic tracking of shifts in value cognition and attitudes during the learning process; third, conducting long-term longitudinal studies to examine the profound impact of organic integration on students' intercultural behavioral competence, critical thinking qualities, and even long-term career development.

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