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From Content Superimposition to Value Symbiosis: The Logic of Integration and Reconstruction of Educational Pathways for Ideological and Political Education and Fine Traditional Chinese Culture in English Curricula

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, advancing curriculum-based ideological and political education (IPE), and carrying forward fine traditional Chinese culture (FTCC), English education in primary and secondary schools undertakes the dual mission of cultural transmission and value guidance. However, the integration of traditional culture into current English teaching is beset by practical dilemmas, such as the superficial superimposition of content, formalistic embedding, and the detachment of the educational value of IPE. Thus, it is necessary to clarify the core connotation of the shift from content superimposition to value symbiosis between IPE and FTCC, and to analyze the internal logic and practical educational value of their integration. Taking Nanchong's fine regional cultural resources as a carrier, this thesis examines educational pathways across four dimensions, namely resource development, curriculum construction, activity design, and environment cultivation. It further provides practical references for implementing IPE in primary and secondary English courses and fostering students' cultural confidence.

Keywords

English Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education; Fine Traditional Chinese Culture; Value Symbiosis; Educational Pathways; Regional Cultural Resources

I. Era Context and Core Connotation of the Integration

Education serves as the primary carrier of cultural inheritance and innovation, and as a core arena for providing value guidance and fostering virtue. In an era of

globalization marked by increasingly frequent cultural exchanges, English education in primary and secondary schools is presented with opportunities brought by multicultural interaction, yet it also faces challenges such as Chinese cultural aphasia and the weakening of value guidance. It remains a core issue for foreign language educators to select, integrate, and transform fine traditional Chinese cultural resources in English teaching, while simultaneously enhancing students' language competence and strengthening ideological and political guidance.

1.1. Era Context: Dual Requirements of Curriculum IPE and Cultural Inheritance

As defined by Wen (2021), "Foreign language curriculum IPE is led by foreign language teachers. It integrates the concept of fostering virtue through education into all links of foreign language classroom teaching through teaching content, classroom management, evaluation systems and teachers' conduct, and plays a positive role in shaping students' correct world outlook, outlook on life and values"[3]. At present, curriculum IPE has become a key path to deepening foreign language education reform (Gu, 2025)[1].

In 2017, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council issued the Opinions on the Implementation of the Project for the Inheritance and Development of Fine Traditional Chinese Culture. It explicitly requires that FTCC should be integrated into the whole process of national education and all educational links. The Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standard (2022 Edition, Revised 2025) lists "Cultural Awareness" as one of the four core competencies of the English subject[7]. "Cultural awareness covers national identity and patriotic sentiment. Students should understand Chinese culture from the perspective of human civilization, deepen their cognition through cross-cultural comparison, strengthen patriotism and cultural confidence, and acquire basic competence to spread FTCC" (Mei & Wang, 2020: 63) [2].

As a basic subject with both instrumental and humanistic attributes, English is a vital carrier for disseminating FTCC and conducting IPE. However, most current classrooms remain at the superficial stage of "content superimposition". Subject knowledge and moral education fail to function in synergy. Problems such as forced insertion, patchwork, and labeling are prevalent: moral education is rigidly attached to language knowledge, and teaching activities degenerate into empty preaching detached from texts (Wang & Wang, 2024)[4]. Ideological and political elements and cultural content are separated, forming a disjointed "two-skin" phenomenon (Wu, 2024)[5]. This pattern can neither realize in-depth cultural inheritance nor deliver tangible IPE effects. Therefore, promoting the shift from "content superimposition" to "value symbiosis" is an inevitable direction for English education reform.

1.2. Connotation Shift: From "Content Superim -position" to "Value Symbiosis"

"Content superimposition" is the initial form of integrating traditional culture into English teaching. It is characterized by formalism, fragmentation, and instrumentalization. This indicates that traditional cultural knowledge points are mechanically spliced into lessons, and cultural content is used only as material for language training, with no exploration of its underlying spiritual connotations and value orientation. IPE in the English curriculum and cultural integration operate independently, with no internal connection. As a result, students memorize cultural facts without comprehension, and ideological education is reduced to empty rhetoric, thus failing to achieve the educational objectives.

"Value symbiosis" is the advanced form of in-depth integration. It means that IPE in the English curriculum and FTCC align in educational goals, empower each other through shared content carriers, and generate effects collaboratively in the teaching process. On one hand, IPE in the English curriculum sets a clear value orientation for cultural integration. It guides the selection and presentation of cultural content with the principle of fostering virtue through education, avoiding fragmented and meaningless cultural supplementation. On the other hand, FTCC provides concrete, subject-specific content support for IPE. It roots ideological education in vivid cultural carriers, avoiding empty preaching and disconnection from the subject. The two support each other and work together to educate students, jointly cultivating talents with language competence, cultural literacy, and patriotic sentiment.

1.3. Internal Logic of Integration

The rationale for value symbiosis lies in the high inherent compatibility between the two, reflected in three aspects.

- First, consistent educational goals. Both take fostering virtue through education as the fundamental task, and take cultivating correct values and enhancing cultural confidence as the core orientation. IPE in the English curriculum emphasizes value infiltration in language teaching, while traditional cultural inheritance emphasizes educating people through culture. Both ultimately aim at the all-round development of students' core competencies.
- Second, compatible subject attributes. English has both instrumental and humanistic features. It is a tool for language communication, and also a carrier for cultural bearing and cross-cultural communication. FTCC enriches English teaching with humanistic content, while IPE anchors the educational direction of language teaching. The two naturally fit the dual attributes of the English subject.
- Third, synergistic value generation. The ideological essence of FTCC is vivid material for IPE, and the value guidance of IPE is the spiritual core of cultural inheritance. Students understand cultural connotation through English learning, and identify with values through cultural experience, achieving coordinated improvement of language competence, cultural cognition, and

ideological attainment.

II. Practical Educational Value of Value Symbiosis

2.1. Fulfilling the Fundamental Task of Fostering Virtue Through Education and Cultivating Core Competencies

For a long time, English teaching in primary and secondary schools has prioritized language skills over value guidance. It takes knowledge transmission as the core goal, thereby weakening the educational function of the subject. Promoting value symbiosis can reverse this tendency and organically integrate IPE with the cultivation of the four core competencies, namely language competence, cultural awareness, thinking quality, and learning ability. Take the integration of Nanchong's regional culture as an example: when learning English texts about Nanchong-born historical figures such as Zhu De and Zhang Lan, students not only accumulate language knowledge and improve their reading skills, but also comprehend the patriotism and striving spirit of revolutionary predecessors. In this process, education in core socialist values is naturally embedded, allowing language learning and value guidance to progress in tandem and truly fulfilling the task of fostering virtue through education.

2.2. Addressing "Chinese Culture Aphasia" and Strengthening Cultural Confidence

In current English teaching, Western cultural themes account for a high proportion in textbooks and classrooms. Students generally lack English expression competence for FTCC, leading to the phenomenon of "Chinese cultural aphasia," in which they can speak fluently about Western festivals but cannot introduce the twenty-four solar terms in English. Integrated teaching oriented toward value symbiosis can systematically fill the gap in the supply of local cultural content. It enables students to learn FTCC systematically in English lessons, master the corresponding English expressions, and understand the spiritual core behind the culture. This approach not only improves students' ability to spread Chinese culture in English, but also enhances their sense of identity and pride in Chinese culture through cross-cultural comparison. It guides students from cultural cognition to cultural identification, and finally to a firm cultural confidence.

2.3. Revitalizing Regional Cultural Resources and Boosting Local Cultural Development

The inheritance of FTCC relies on local practice. As a national historical and cultural city, Nanchong boasts rich regional cultural resources, including Three Kingdoms culture, silk culture, intangible cultural heritage, and red culture, all of which are important components of FTCC. Integrating Nanchong's regional culture into IPE in the English curriculum has two main benefits. First, it provides vivid teaching

materials close to students' daily lives, breaks the stereotype that traditional culture is remote, empty, and outdated, and makes teaching more engaging and immersive. Second, it enables young people to become learners, inheritors, and communicators of local culture. It promotes the creative transformation and innovative development of Nanchong's fine traditional culture, supports local cultural construction and communication, and contributes to the overall development of the local economy and society.

III. Reconstruction of Educational Pathways Under Value Symbiosis Orientation

3.1. Exploring and Integrating Regional Cultural Resources as Content Carriers

Curriculum resources are the foundation of value symbiosis. FTCC resources in Nanchong could be systematically organized, classified, and transformed within a three-dimensional framework comprising cultural themes, language materials, and ideological elements, and a localized resource library for primary and secondary English teaching should be established accordingly.

Taking Nanchong's distinctive local culture as an example, its cultural resources can be divided into four categories for targeted development. First, celebrity culture resources, covering Chen Shou and the Three Kingdoms culture, Zhu De and red culture, and Zhang Lan and democratic patriotic culture, are mined for ideological elements including scholarly spirit, patriotic sentiment, and moral integrity, and developed into supplementary English reading and listening materials. Second, intangible cultural heritage resources, ranging from North Sichuan shadow puppetry and North Sichuan giant puppetry to Nanchong silk weaving techniques and the traditional brewing technique of Baoning vinegar, are refined to highlight ideological themes of craftsmanship and cultural inheritance, and are produced into graphic and video English teaching resources. Third, folk culture resources, including Langzhong Spring Festival culture, North Sichuan lantern opera, and Langzhong dragon boat customs, are explored to uncover the life wisdom and cultural connotations embedded in traditional folk practices. Fourth, historical architecture and landscape resources, such as Langzhong Ancient City, Wanjuanlou Tower, the Former Residence Memorial Hall of Zhu De, and the Former Residence of Zhang Lan, are developed into English commentary materials for practical learning. Through hierarchical and classified resource transformation, regional culture can truly serve as a concrete carrier for IPE in the English curriculum.

3.2. Optimizing the Curriculum Content System for In-depth Embedding

In addition to textbook teaching, teachers can carry out extracurricular activities around cultural knowledge, including "creating a cultural atmosphere through extracurricular reading, and organizing themed speeches, cultural essay contests,

English poetry recitals, knowledge quizzes, English drama performances and English singing activities" (Ministry of Education, 2020: 35)[6].

It is imperative to abandon the "cultural attachment" model of content superimposition, deeply embed traditional culture and ideological and political elements into the English curriculum system, and develop a tripartite framework integrating language, culture and ideological and political education.On one hand, conduct secondary development and localized expansion of national textbooks. For cultural theme units in current textbooks, supplement expanded content of Nanchong's traditional culture to realize school-based implementation of the national curriculum. For example, in the junior high school unit Festivals, supplement English reading materials about Langzhong Spring Festival culture. Guide students to compare Chinese and Western festival cultures, explore connotations such as family reunion and ancestor reverence, and infiltrate cultural confidence education. In the unit Great People, supplement English stories of Nanchong celebrities such as Zhu De and Zhang Lan, and integrate themes of patriotism, struggle, and dedication.

On the other hand, develop characteristic school-based curricula. Combined with Nanchong's cultural features, develop the school-based curriculum series Telling Nanchong Stories in English, with four thematic units, namely "Craftsmanship of Intangible Heritage", "Legacy of the Three Kingdoms", "Red Memory", and "Charm of the Silk Capital".Each unit could formulate teaching objectives around three dimensions: improving language competence, deepening cultural understanding, and delivering value guidance, and embeds IPE requirements throughout the entire curriculum

3.3. Designing Immersive Practical Activities for Value Internalization

The key to cultural inheritance and ideological education is value internalization, not knowledge memorization. It is essential to develop student-centered, immersive, experiential and inquiry-based English learning activities that guide students to transition from factual cultural cognition to identification with cultural values.

- First, carry out project-based learning (PBL). Launch the "Nanchong Culture English Ambassador" project. Students work in groups to choose cultural themes of interest, such as North Sichuan shadow puppetry, Baoning vinegar, or Langzhong Ancient City. Through field visits, data collection, English writing, and work production, they complete deliverables such as English promotional videos, commentaries, and cultural creative handbooks, and present them in class and on campus. This process helps improve students' comprehensive English competence, deepen their appreciation of traditional culture, and strengthen their sense of responsibility for cultural communication.
- Second, hold themed English practical activities. Combined with campus English culture festivals, organize activities such as the "Telling Nanchong

Stories in English" Speech Contest, Nanchong ICH Creative English Design Competition, and Three Kingdoms Culture English Drama Performance. For example, students adapt classic stories from Records of the Three Kingdoms into English short plays, and experience traditional wisdom and humanistic spirit through performance. They design English introduction cards for North Sichuan giant puppetry, and inherit craftsman spirit through creation, realizing "learning by doing, educating through experience".

- Third, promote cross-cultural comparison and inquiry. Guide students to deepen understanding of Chinese culture through comparison, such as comparing Nanchong silk culture with Western costume culture, and Langzhong Spring Festival customs with Christmas culture. This cultivates students' cross-cultural communication competence and cultural discrimination ability, and establishes a correct cultural outlook of respecting diversity and upholding local culture.

3.4. Building a Multi-dimensional Collaborative Educational Environment

Environment is an important carrier of implicit education. It is necessary to construct a tripartite educational environment integrating the classroom, the campus, and the wider society to achieve comprehensive cultural immersion and ideological and political guidance.

At the classroom level, teaching environments infused with cultural and ideological-political (IPE) elements can be created. Specifically, a classroom-based English Corner dedicated to Nanchong's local culture may be established, with periodically updated English posters and reading resources covering local intangible cultural heritage (ICH), scenic spots, and prominent historical figures. Furthermore, excerpts from English-language documentaries on Nanchong's cultural resources can be screened via multimedia teaching facilities, thereby facilitating students' subtle exposure to local culture and delivering implicit ideological edification throughout the language learning process.

At the campus level, a school-wide Nanchong Culture English Corner may be developed as an informal learning platform to extend cultural education beyond formal classroom teaching. Columns such as "Daily Nanchong Culture in English" and "English Stories of Nanchong Culture" can be launched on campus bulletin boards, radio stations, and the school's official WeChat account. In addition, an annual English Theme Week dedicated to fine traditional Chinese culture can be held, featuring cultural exhibitions, ICH experience sessions, and achievement displays, so as to foster a rich campus cultural atmosphere.

At the social level, museum-school collaboration and school-community partnerships can be further deepened. Cooperative relationships can be established with local cultural institutions, such as the Former Residence Memorial Hall of Zhu

De, the Langzhong Ancient City Scenic Area, the North Sichuan Shadow Puppet Troupe, and the Nanchong Silk Museum, to build off-campus English practice bases. Students can be regularly organized to take part in English study tours and volunteer commentary services. For instance, they may visit the shadow puppet troupe to learn puppet-making and performance skills from inheritors, and then attempt to introduce shadow puppet art to English-speaking tourists. This approach enables students to practice cultural communication in authentic scenarios and attain the unity of knowledge and action.

IV. Conclusion

The integration of IPE in the English curriculum and FTCC is not a mere mechanical accumulation of content or formalistic juxtaposition of elements. Rather, it constitutes a systematic reconstruction of educational philosophies, curriculum content, and educational pathways. The transition from "content superimposition" to "value symbiosis" represents an inherent requirement for the English discipline to fulfill the mission of fostering virtue through education and cultivate students' core competencies. It also provides a core pathway to resolving the formalistic integration of traditional culture and the hollow practice of ideological education. Nanchong's abundant fine regional traditional cultural resources furnish vivid teaching materials and broad practical scope for advancing this value symbiosis. Through a systematic approach covering resource integration, curriculum optimization, activity innovation, and environment cultivation, the disjointed "two-skin" dilemma can be effectively addressed, and synergies can be realized among language teaching, cultural inheritance, and ideological education. Ultimately, this framework will nurture young people of the new era with solid English proficiency, profound cultural accomplishment, and firm cultural confidence, enabling the English discipline to make its unique contribution to carrying forward FTCC and effectively communicating Chinese and local stories.

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