

An Exploration of the Integration Pathways of Ideological and Political Elements into College English Teaching

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Abstract: *The organic integration of linguistic objectives and value dimensions in college English teaching faces inherent tensions. This study, grounded in curriculum ontology, reveals the implicit existence of value elements within discourses, analyzes the constraining mechanism of learners' cognitive schemas on value acceptance, and explores the structural influence of curriculum goal hierarchies on the depth of value integration. Accordingly, this study proposes a pathway organizational framework centered on theme selection and pedagogical translation, value negotiation in classroom interaction, and the generative support of productive tasks for expressive competence. Furthermore, this study constructs a system of strategies including the awakening of indigenous value stances from a cultural comparative perspective, the cultivation of ethical judgment within discourse analysis frameworks, and multi-modal situational simulations. The research indicates that an effective pathway for value integration lies in internalizing value elements as organic components of the language teaching process, thereby achieving the synergistic development of value sensitivity and linguistic competence through the progressive deepening of cognitive processing.*

Keywords: *college English teaching; ideological and political elements; value integration pathways; discourse analysis; cognitive schemas*

Introduction

The value information carried by college English courses is implicitly distributed across lexical choices, syntactic structures, and rhetorical strategies within discourses. Properly handling the value elements embedded in the curriculum during the process of language skills training has become a core issue that language teaching research needs to address. Traditional teaching models often treat the value dimension as an additional component outside the language knowledge system, which leads to the marginalization of value information or the interruption of language teaching continuity through indoctrination. This dualistic processing model neither benefits the improvement of language proficiency nor facilitates the natural internalization of value perception. From the perspective of the internal logic of language teaching, exploring the transformation mechanism between value elements and linguistic factors is of fundamental significance for the integrity of curriculum design and the effectiveness of teaching implementation. Based on the research findings of discourse analysis, cognitive schema theory, and task-based language teaching, this study constructs an analytical framework from three progressive levels, namely ontological composition, pathway organizational principles, and strategy system, in order to provide a theoretical basis and operational plan for the systematic handling of the value dimension in college English teaching.

1. The Ontological Composition and Pedagogical Adaptation of Ideological and Political Elements in College English Courses

1.1 The Implicit Existence Form of the Value Dimension in Language Teaching Content

The value dimension in language teaching content is typically embedded into the micro-structures of discourses in a non-declarative manner. The derogatory or appreciative coloring in lexical choices, the thematic progression patterns in syntactic organization, and the analogies and metaphors in rhetorical devices can all convey specific stances or attitudinal inclinations without directly manifesting them. The arrangement of causal chains of events in narrative texts implies a judgment on the

rationality of behaviors; the way of defining concepts in expository texts reflects the knowledge norms followed by the definer; and the criteria for selecting evidence in argumentative texts reveal the default value priorities of the arguer. These implicit forms determine that value information is not presented as independent items but is seamlessly integrated with such semiotic systems as phonetics, vocabulary, and syntax. Learners must rely on discourse analysis tools to extract this information from its linguistic shell.

The implicitly existing value dimension imposes special requirements on pedagogical treatment. Learners need to identify value presuppositions through discourse practice rather than passively accepting value declarations, which requires language task design to shift from "telling what values are" to "how to discover values." The advantage of the implicit form lies in avoiding the appearance of value indoctrination, thereby making value perception a natural derivative of the language interpretation process. For example, when comparing the wording of headlines on the same event in news reports from different cultural backgrounds, learners can autonomously perceive the divergence of value stances from the differences in lexical choices. Language teachers can guide learners to attend to the evaluation criteria that are not explicitly stated but actually function within the text, thus simultaneously accomplishing the awakening of value awareness during language skills training without interrupting the continuity of language teaching.

1.2 Learners' Cognitive Schemas and the Acceptance Conditions of Ideological and Political Elements

Learners' existing cognitive schemas constitute a filtering mechanism through which value elements enter the level of consciousness. The value framework that an individual has formed in their native cultural environment generates two basic reaction modes toward the value information in English discourses, namely assimilation and accommodation. When the input value elements are compatible with the existing schemas, the acceptance process tends to be frictionless, and new information is quickly categorized and stored; if a conflict exists, it may trigger cognitive dissonance or selective neglect, and learners tend to reconstruct the input information to make it conform to their original expectations. This psychological process determines that the same teaching content may produce differentiated value construction outcomes among different learner groups, and may even lead to the same discourse being interpreted as having opposite value orientations[1].

The optimization of acceptance conditions requires instructional design to pre-consider learners' cognitive readiness. The use of advance organizers can activate or adjust relevant schemas, thereby providing conceptual anchors for the smooth encoding of value elements. For example, before reading a discourse involving the tension between individualism and collectivism, introducing a discussion about group decision-making scenarios can keep the relevant schemas in an active state. The presentation gradient of value elements should match the gradual nature of schema development and avoid crossing excessively large cognitive distances. Setting up low-risk simulations of value conflict situations—such as role-swapping discourse rewriting tasks—prompts learners to gradually reconstruct their original schemas in meaning negotiation, thereby enhancing their tolerance toward unfamiliar value stances. The essence of acceptance conditions is the process of change in learners' cognitive structures, rather than the one-way transmission of external information.

1.3 The Constraining Mechanism of Curriculum Goal Hierarchies on the Depth of Ideological and Political Integration

College English curriculum goals are typically arranged according to hierarchies such as knowledge memorization, skill application, strategy development, and critical thinking. Different hierarchies impose structural constraints on the integration depth of value elements. At the basic skill level (e.g., vocabulary recognition, sentence pattern drills), value information struggles to obtain sufficient depth of cognitive processing and mostly remains at the level of shallow pairing or mechanical repetition. Learners at most notice that a certain word has a specific affective coloring but cannot understand its contextual dependence. After entering the discourse comprehension and production level, value elements begin to interact with contextual information, thereby influencing learners' attitudes and judgments. However, at this stage, value processing remains attached to content comprehension rather than becoming an independent goal dimension.

Higher-level goals (such as intercultural pragmatic competence and critical language awareness) provide the necessary conditions for the deep integration of value elements. When the curriculum

requires learners to evaluate, compare, or creatively restructure discourses, the value dimension is no longer a passive background but an active object of analysis, and learners need to invoke metacognitive monitoring to determine how their own value stances influence the interpretation outcomes. The breakthrough path for the constraining mechanism lies in the isomorphic design of value goals and language goal hierarchies, so that each level of language ability training undertakes a corresponding value processing task: the memorization level corresponds to value identification, the application level corresponds to value classification, the analysis level corresponds to value comparison, and the evaluation level corresponds to value judgment. Forced integration that is detached from the goal hierarchy may trigger cognitive overload, which is not conducive to the natural internalization of value elements and may even induce defensive reactions in learners[2].

2. The Pathway Organizational Principle of Ideological and Political Integration in College English Teaching

2.1 Theme Selection of Discourses and the Pedagogical Translation of Value Issues

The selection criteria for discourse themes need to balance the value of language teaching with the carrying capacity of value issues. Suitable themes possess dual attributes: they contain both sufficient lexical density and syntactic complexity to meet language input requirements, and they also embody value dimensions that can be pedagogically operationalized, such as the linguistic representation of fairness concepts in different allocation plans or the weight distribution between individual rights and group interests in narratives. The difficulty of selection lies in identifying discourses where systematic correspondences exist between value issues and linguistic forms, so that learners naturally encounter the value dimension while analyzing linguistic structures, rather than extracting value information separately after content comprehension.

Pedagogical translation is the technical process of converting abstract value issues in discourses into operable teaching tasks. This translation does not simplify the complexity of value issues but rather restructures their presentation modality to accommodate the time and cognitive resource constraints of classroom language learning. The basic strategies of translation include the contextualization, concretization, and operationalization of value issues. Contextualization refers to placing value issues within specific discourse situations, enabling abstract values to obtain perceptible carriers through role settings, scene descriptions, and plot development. Concretization refers to transforming value judgments into problems of linguistic choice, for example, requiring learners to compare the attitudinal differences implied by different wording methods in rewriting tasks. Operationalization refers to designing assessable behavioral indicators of language use, such as inferring learners' degree of value perception through the frequency and distribution of evaluative adjectives in discourses. Through these three levels of translation, value issues can enter the technical process of language teaching without losing their due cognitive depth[3].

2.2 Value Negotiation and Meaning Co-construction in Classroom Interaction Structure

The classroom interaction structure provides a social mediator for value elements to move from the textual surface to the deep cognitive level of learners. Within the dual framework of teacher-student interaction and student-student interaction, value information is no longer a one-way transmission of established conclusions but becomes an issue open to discussion, questioning, and revision. The core function of the interaction structure lies in creating "cognitive conflict points," where learners produce different value interpretations of the same discourse due to differences in their background schemas. These conflict points trigger negotiation behaviors, prompting participants to re-examine their initial judgments and consider alternative stances. The quality of value negotiation depends on the design of the interaction structure. Highly structured question-and-answer patterns tend to suppress the diversity of value expression, whereas open discussions and group debates reserve space for the confrontation of different stances.

Meaning co-construction is the product of value negotiation, referring to the process through which participants gradually form a shared understanding by means of discourse exchange. This process involves restating and confirming others' viewpoints, identifying and marking points of controversy, tentatively formulating compromises, and solidifying consensus through language. The language teacher acts as an interaction mediator rather than a value arbiter, and the teacher's responsibility lies in ensuring that all stances receive equal opportunities for expression and in guiding learners to attend to

the linguistic quality of arguments rather than the rightness or wrongness of stances. The outcome of meaning co-construction is the expansion of cognitive schemas regarding diverse value judgments, enabling learners to understand how different value stances can be legitimately derived from discourses, thereby transforming classroom interaction into a training ground for value sensitivity[4].

2.3 The Generative Support of Language Production Tasks for Value Expression Competence

Language production tasks provide a generative platform for learners to transform internalized value judgments into observable language behaviors. Value expression competence is not a special skill independent of general language production competence, but rather an integrated quality that naturally manifests when completing specific types of production tasks. Production tasks that support this competence need to possess three characteristics, namely stance openness, argument dependence, and form diversity. Stance openness refers to the task not presupposing learners' value conclusions, allowing different stances to gain expression space within the same task framework. Argument dependence requires that learners' stances must be supported by textual evidence, thereby constraining value expression within the scope of linguistic evidence. Form diversity allows various discourse genres to carry value information, such as the description of characters' emotions in narratives, the organization of arguments in argumentative texts, and the choice of wording in practical writing.

The realization mechanism of generative support lies in the requirement of production tasks for the depth of cognitive processing. When learners produce discourses that contain value judgments, the cognitive process involves the multi-task coordination of retrieving the affective coloring of vocabulary, regulating stance intensity through syntactic structures, and matching discourse coherence with value consistency, thereby promoting the automatic connection between value schemas and linguistic representations. The gradient design of production tasks is crucial: structured tasks such as gap-filling and imitation writing are adopted at the initial stage to reduce cognitive load; semi-open tasks such as opinion comparison and paragraph continuation are introduced at the intermediate stage; and fully open tasks such as argumentative essay writing or debate speech preparation are used at the advanced stage, thus achieving the systematic development of value expression competence from imitation to creation and from shallow to deep levels.

3. A Strategy System and Operational Modality for Ideological and Political Integration in College English Teaching

3.1 The Awakening of Indigenous Value Stances from a Cultural Comparative Perspective

The cultural comparative perspective provides methodological support for the awakening of indigenous value stances, and its core lies in introducing learners' native cultural background as a reference system into the English learning process. This perspective breaks away from the one-way focus on target language culture in traditional language teaching and instead turns attention to how cross-cultural contrasts influence learners' value judgments. The basic operational units of comparison are not holistic descriptions of cultures but rather specific cultural elements that can be carried by linguistic forms, such as the concept of politeness in greeting styles, the notion of efficiency in time expressions, and the awareness of boundaries in spatial descriptions. By juxtaposing these micro-cultural elements, learners can observe how different language systems encode similar social functions, thereby realizing that the processing methods in their native culture are neither the only possibility nor groundless[5].

The awakening of indigenous value stances is not about instilling some preset value conclusion, but rather helping learners develop conscious awareness of their own cultural presuppositions through the process of comparison. This awakening mechanism can be described as a process of "backgrounding," that is, elevating the value presuppositions that are taken for granted in everyday language use from an automatic cognitive state to an explicit level open to scrutiny. In pedagogical practice, this can be achieved through a "back-translation" task, which requires learners to express the value claims in an English discourse in their native language, then back-translate them into English, and compare the shifts in meaning caused by cultural conversion in the two translations. Such tasks prompt learners to identify culture-specific values deeply embedded in linguistic structures, thereby strengthening their understanding of indigenous value logic through comparison. The end point of awakening is not a judgment of the superiority or inferiority of the values being compared, but rather cognitive tolerance of value diversity and a clear grasp of the sources of one's own stances.

3.2 The Cultivation of Ethical Judgment Ability within the Discourse Analysis Framework

The discourse analysis framework provides an operable set of analytical tools for ethical judgment ability, transforming ethical considerations that originally relied on intuition into teachable techniques of language analysis. Ethical judgment is redefined here as the ability to identify and evaluate the implicit relations of obligation, attribution of responsibility, and behavioral evaluations within discourses. The specific tools of discourse analysis include transitivity system analysis, which traces the role allocation and responsibility assumption of actors in discourses; modality system analysis, which judges the speaker's attitude toward propositional certainty and the discursive space for different choice possibilities; and appraisal system analysis, which focuses on the distribution patterns of attitudinal resources, including the discursive presentation modes of emotional expression, judgment criteria, and appreciation standards. These tools enable learners to deconstruct the ethical dimensions in discourses in a technical manner, rather than remaining at the level of general impressions.

The cultivation of ethical judgment ability follows a progressive path from description to interpretation and then to evaluation. The description level requires learners to use discourse analysis tools to identify ethically relevant linguistic features in discourses, such as whether the use of the passive voice is intended to obscure the identity of the actor, or whether the frequency of high-value modal verbs implies obligatory relations. The interpretation level requires learners to relate these linguistic features to the communicative intentions of the discourse, inferring why the text producer chose a particular expression over other alternatives. The evaluation level requires learners, after considering contextual factors, to make reasonable judgments about the ethical stances presented in the discourse and to provide linguistic evidence to support their own judgments. Training at these three levels can be conducted cyclically on the same discourse. As learners become more proficient with the analytical tools, their ethical judgment gradually shifts from external guidance to autonomous operation. The core value of this ability lies in enabling learners to become active constructors of discourse meaning rather than passive recipients.

3.3 Classroom Simulation of Value Conflict Situations Using Multimodal Corpora

Multimodal corpora provide a rich material basis and representational forms for the classroom simulation of value conflict situations. Compared with single written texts, multimodal materials integrate multiple semiotic resources such as images, sounds, movements, and spatial layouts, enabling a more comprehensive presentation of the contextual dimensions in which value conflicts occur. For example, the visual composition, color choices, background music, and voiceover intonation in a commercial advertisement together convey value propositions about lifestyles. Different modalities may reinforce each other or generate tensions, and such tensions themselves constitute potential sources of value conflict. The introduction of multimodal corpora expands the scope of simulating value conflict situations, allowing non-verbal value information that is difficult to describe in plain text alone to obtain an operable pedagogical presentation.

The core operation of classroom simulation lies in compressing real or semi-real value conflict situations into micro-events that can be handled within class time. The design of the simulation must follow the principle of "structured improvisation," which presupposes the basic framework of the conflict and role parameters while retaining learners' autonomy in linguistic choices. Typical operational modalities include three types: situation reconstruction, perspective shift, and consequence deduction. Situation reconstruction requires learners to reconstruct the language interaction process of the conflict scene based on multimodal input, focusing on the linguistic representation differences of different stances. Perspective shift requires learners to produce discourses from the linguistic position of one party in the conflict, experiencing the differences in linguistic strategies arising from different stances in the same situation. Consequence deduction requires learners to predict the possible interaction outcomes triggered by different linguistic choices, thereby understanding the relationship between linguistic behavior and value consequences. The value of simulation activities does not lie in reaching a consensus, but in allowing learners to experience the linguistic consequences of value judgments in a low-risk environment, thereby developing sensitivity to the ethical dimension of linguistic choices.

Conclusion

This study, starting from the internal logic of language teaching, systematically explores the

integration pathways of the value dimension in college English teaching. The research clarifies the implicit existence form of value elements and their constraining relationship with curriculum goal hierarchies, and reveals the filtering and reconstructing functions of learners' cognitive schemas in value acceptance. On this basis, this study constructs a pathway organizational principle centered on discourse theme selection, classroom interaction negotiation, and language production tasks, and elucidates the transformation chain of value information from input to internalization and then to externalization. The further proposed strategy system encompasses the awakening of indigenous value stances from a cultural comparative perspective, the cultivation of ethical judgment within the discourse analysis framework, and multi-modal situation simulation, thereby providing operable technical solutions for classroom teaching. Future research can be extended in the following directions: exploring automated screening mechanisms for multimodal corpora in digital environments, investigating individual differences in the depth of value processing among learners at different language proficiency levels and corresponding instructional strategies, designing longitudinal tracking studies to assess the long-term effects of value integration pathways, and developing a classroom value negotiation quality monitoring system that integrates discourse analysis and learning analytics technologies.

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