

# Teaching Research on Integrating Ideological and Political Elements into Business English Reading Courses

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**Abstract:** In the current situation of economic globalization and communalization with a shared future for mankind, it is crucial to cultivate outstanding composite talents who possess morality, literacy, patriotism, business knowledge, good cross-cultural communication skills, and teamwork spirit. This requires the Business English major to increase the reform of course ideology. This article will propose several innovative paths for the ideological and political education of Business English Reading courses based on the necessity of conducting ideological and political education in Business English majors and working together with colleagues to study.

**Keywords:** Business English Reading; Curriculum ideological and political education; Countermeasures

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## 1. Ideological and political education

In September 2017, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China proposed for the first time “curriculum ideological and political education” in the Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Education System and Mechanism, which aims to “improve the system and mechanism of education for all staff, the whole process, and all aspects, fully tap into the moral education content in various courses, strengthen moral education courses, ideological and political courses, pay attention to subject moral education, and curriculum ideological and political education”<sup>[1]</sup>. In December of the same year, the Ministry of Education responded to the central call and proposed to “vigorously promote classroom teaching reform with the goal of ‘ideological and political education in the curriculum,’ optimize curriculum settings, revise professional textbooks, improve teaching design, and strengthen teaching management”<sup>[2]</sup>. In March 2019, our President once again emphasized the importance of providing good ideological and political theory courses at the Symposium for Teachers of School Ideological and Political Theory Courses held in Beijing.

As is well known, education not only needs to impart knowledge and dispel doubts but also fulfills the mission of educating people. Curriculum ideological and political education is the education of cultivating

morality and nurturing talents. Integrating moral education with talent cultivation is not only a fine tradition in China's education but also a major educational plan that needs to be implemented <sup>[3]</sup>. We must always adhere to the principle of putting morality first, cultivating ourselves with morality, teaching students according to their aptitude, guiding them to establish a correct outlook on life, worldview, and values, cultivating a sense of mission for students to inherit and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture, and cultivating their national perspective, overall perspective, and sense of responsibility to contribute to society, the people, and the country. Curriculum ideological and political education should integrate these ideological and political elements into various courses in teaching practice, and have a subtle and positive impact on students' ideological concepts and behavior.

## **2. The necessity of ideological and political education in the curriculum of Business English courses**

The establishment of a Business English major is guided by the demand for applied talents in the international business field, based on English language proficiency, with a focus on cultivating cross-cultural and business communication skills, relying on the business subject knowledge content, and adhering to the principle of "student-centered, skill-oriented" <sup>[4]</sup>. With the support of practical training platforms and joint guidance from schools and enterprises, it is committed to cultivating students who can adapt to regional economic development and high-quality applied talents with an international perspective. Therefore, it is very important to cultivate comprehensive development in morality, intelligence, physical fitness, aesthetics, and labor skills, possess humanistic literacy, patriotism, and innovative consciousness, master solid English language knowledge and systematic international business knowledge, and possess comprehensive English application skills, practical application skills, and cross-cultural communication skills. At present, although the Business English major has cultivated a large number of versatile applied talents for our country, there are also some bottlenecks that need to be overcome in the ideological and political aspects of the curriculum in the Business English major. If ideological and political education cannot be fully integrated, it will not be possible to truly achieve the talent cultivation goals of quality education <sup>[5]</sup>. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to integrate ideological and political education into the teaching of Business English courses.

Firstly, the implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum is conducive to achieving the goal of cultivating Business English professionals <sup>[6]</sup>. In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the "Teaching Guidelines for Undergraduate Foreign Language and Literature Majors in Ordinary Higher Education Institutions (Part 1) - Teaching Guidelines for English Majors," which clearly elaborates on the training objectives of Business English majors: "Business English majors aim to cultivate composite international talents with solid English language basic skills and business professional knowledge, good humanistic literacy, strong cross-cultural skills, and business communication skills." From this, it can be seen that students majoring in Business English need to have not only a solid foundation in English language skills and business knowledge but also cross-cultural and business communication skills. More importantly, they need to have a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values; as well as good humanistic literacy and professional ethics, a scientific attitude of seeking truth from facts and daring to innovate, a good sense of self-directed learning and lifelong learning, the ability to adapt and cooperate with self-reflection and independent development, and a sense of teamwork, national sentiment, and patriotism. These training objectives need to be achieved in the course of ideological and political education.

Secondly, the implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum is beneficial for students to establish correct values. Students majoring in Business English should not only have solid English

language skills and business knowledge as their foundation but also possess cross-cultural and business communication skills. More importantly, they should have a correct outlook on life, values, and the world. Business English major students are exposed to Western ideology and business culture through the course and are easily influenced by foreign ideologies in this process. Therefore, in the process of Business English teaching, teachers should incorporate ideological and political elements such as honesty and trustworthiness, devotion to work, love of the party, and patriotism from multiple perspectives; integrate excellent traditional Chinese culture into professional education like salt into water; let students dialectically view the cultural differences between China and the West; take its essence and discard its dross, dialectically view individualism, collectivism, egoism, and altruism; and establish a correct outlook on life values<sup>[7]</sup>. At the same time, through ideological and political education, students can understand the concept of unity in the world community, help them establish a grand worldview and cosmology, and enable them to love their country, people, and the world while respecting their parents, elders, children, and work.

Thirdly, the implementation of ideological and political education in the curriculum is conducive to cultivating students' cultural confidence. In primary and secondary education, learning at the knowledge level has become a more concerning part for teachers and parents, while the infiltration of culture, morality, and cultivation is insufficient. Entering university, especially in the field of Business English, requires cultivating applied talents who can grasp the overall situation, take on major responsibilities, shoulder the mission of going global, and tell the story of China well<sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture into Business English teaching can help students improve their academic development, cultivate cultural confidence, accumulate materials for spreading Chinese culture, ignite their patriotic enthusiasm, confidently tell Chinese stories, promote Chinese culture, and lead China to the world, allowing the world to understand China.

### **3. Strategies for improving ideological and political education in Business English Reading courses**

Business English Reading is a core course for Business English majors, including Business English Reading 1, Business English Reading 2, Business English Reading 3, and Business English Reading 4. The program is designed for first-year and second-year Business English learners to cultivate applied foreign business skills who excel in both English and professional fields.

#### **3.1. Designing course objectives for ideological and political education**

After China's accession to the WTO (World Trade Organization), the teaching philosophy of Business English has also changed, shifting from focusing on the cultivation of language, knowledge, and skills to emphasizing the cultivation of cross-cultural awareness<sup>[9]</sup>. However, with the proposal of the "Belt and Road" cooperation initiative and the concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind, the "language + culture" Business English talent training model can no longer meet the new needs of social development. Under the ideological and political background of the curriculum, it is required to promote human development as the main value orientation of building knowledge. Therefore, the Business English teaching model has changed from the original focus on language and culture, developed to shape the values of students, the teaching process follows the foreign language teaching philosophy of mastering language, acquiring knowledge (language, culture), developing thinking, shaping value, and achieving the ultimate goodness<sup>[10]</sup>. Due to the proposal of OBE (outcome-based education) teaching philosophy, we will combine talent cultivation standards (graduation ability requirements), curriculum teaching objectives, textbook design concepts, and specific textbook content to cultivate talents, enlighten students, and achieve educational goals. Based on the training standards and

curriculum objectives of our school's Business English major, and relying on the design content of "language ability + business knowledge + comprehensive skills" in the textbooks, we aim to achieve the "applied and professional" talent training standards of "language communication + business practice + humanistic literacy + international cultural understanding."

The objectives of ideological and political education are as follows. Transition to "holistic education" in teaching, dedicated to cultivating:

- (1) Excellent moral and ethical qualities;
- (2) A fervent national sentiment and a broad international perspective;
- (3) Good social responsibility and professional ethics and norms;
- (4) Organizational, collaborative, leadership, and accountability qualities;
- (5) Independent personality, exploratory spirit, practical skills, and creativity;
- (6) A love for life and a reverence for life.

### **3.2. Exploring the resources of ideological and political education in the curriculum**

At present, the teaching of Business English courses still focuses on English language and business knowledge, and many articles used in textbooks are excerpts from foreign original texts, especially Business English reading materials, which lack elements of local Chinese culture. This inevitably conveys foreign cultures and values to students in their original form, which is inconducive to their understanding and recognition of Chinese culture. Moreover, some textbooks are of low quality and have a strong sense of patchwork, which has a negative impact on students' learning. Some textbooks have strong theoretical foundations and lack practical experience, which cannot provide students with good practical guidance. Given the various problems with teaching resources for Business English, it is recommended to make some improvements:

- (1) The teaching content should appropriately increase the recitation of Chinese classics on the basis of covering language, knowledge, and skills. This is also a requirement of the National Standard, Guidelines, and Course Ideological and Political Education. Inheriting and promoting excellent traditional Chinese culture, promoting the creation, transformation, and innovative development of excellent traditional Chinese culture, has become the most distinctive spiritual symbol of the contemporary Chinese people. The Chinese cultural elements in the National Standards and Guidelines for undergraduate education in ordinary higher education institutions are integrated into the training objectives and specifications, curriculum system, and reading materials. In addition, the combination of reciting classic Chinese classics and cross-cultural communication is more conducive to enhancing national cultural confidence and promoting ideological and political education in the curriculum. Business English major learners should have firm cultural confidence, adhere to the position of Chinese culture in cultural exchange and mutual learning, and tell the story of China and spread the voice of China well.
- (2) In the teaching process, more practical activities should be added, workplace scenarios should be set up, and thinking activities should be created to allow students to practice the knowledge and skills they have learned in practice, cultivating their abilities to discover, solve, think independently, and collaborate.
- (3) It is necessary to make full use of abundant online resources as a supplement to paper textbooks, expand the breadth and depth of student learning, and combine social hotspots and the spirit of the times to encourage students to keep up with the pace of the times, care about national affairs, and understand business dynamics.

### 3.3. Improving the design of ideological and political education in the curriculum

In the teaching of Business English reading courses, teachers should focus on highlighting the design of ideological and political aspects in the course. Firstly, teachers assign students some open-ended ideological and political topics related to the teaching content before class, encourage students to form groups for online discussions, and guide them to learn how to search and access information. Secondly, in class, the teacher encourages students to give presentations and speeches in small groups, highlighting ideological and political key points, conducting peer evaluations, and delving into Chinese culture through exploration, ultimately resonating with excellent Chinese culture among students. After class, students can carry out second classroom activities such as recitation of traditional Chinese culture and cross-cultural foreign language volunteer services. Recitation can link the wisdom of ancient Chinese sages, improve students' service and team awareness, expand their horizons, cultivate their comprehensive skills, and enhance their confidence in Chinese culture.

Our Business English Reading course group developed the "Chinese English Classics Week Plan" in the second classroom activity of reciting classics launched in 2018. Students are encouraged to establish both macro perspectives and micro process arrangements to guide recitation activities. In addition, a WeChat communication group is established where students record their check-in days and content, guide teachers to send guidance and encouragement messages twice in the morning and evening, and promote theoretical and practical cases of classic recitation. At the same time, students also hold offline recitation and sharing activities.

#### 3.3.1. The cultivation of cultural literacy

After practicing this activity for a year and a half, our Business English course group conducted a questionnaire survey, which included seven cultural dimension factors (Table 1). The population mean is 3.885, which is close to "very much in line with me." The cultivation effects of enhancing cultural confidence, exploring Chinese culture and wisdom, and comparing ancient and modern civilizations and societies are significant.

Table 1. Description and analysis of cultural literacy dimensions

Cultural literacy factor	Minimum	Maximum	Mean value	Variance
Helps to comprehensively and deeply understand the essence of Chinese culture	2	5	4.00	0.866
Helps to compare ancient and modern civilizations and societies	3	5	4.37	0.628
Helps to open up exploration of Chinese culture and wisdom	3	5	4.93	0.787
Making me love my country and culture more, and enhancing cultural confidence in cross-cultural communication	4	5	4.90	0.831
I have gained a more comprehensive comparative understanding of Western core values	1	4	2.93	0.877
Helps to discern values and examine civilization	1	4	2.20	0.629
In future life and learning, I will practice classic wisdom and become the inheritor of classic wisdom	2	5	3.80	1.190

N = 108, Population mean = 3.885

#### 3.3.2. Cultivation of worldview, outlook on life, and values

This survey on the cultivation of the three values includes 13 factors: 4 factors of worldview, 5 factors of outlook on life, and 4 factors of values. The population mean of reading activity for three semesters is 3.175, slightly higher than "basically in line with me." The data shows that it contributes to the cultivation of the

three values, but the overall impact is not significant. From the numerical analysis of mean and variance, the most influential factors are right and wrong views, love for life, coping with setbacks and challenges in life, understanding core values, etc. The above four factors have a high mean and low variance, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Description and analysis of the dimensions of three outlooks

Three outlook factors	Minimum	Maximum	Mean value	Variance
Helps to understand the workings of the universe, nature, and society	1	5	3.51	1.344
Helps to handle relationships between oneself and nature, society, and others	2	5	3.61	1.339
Helps to understand the formation of Chinese society and culture	2	5	2.95	0.835
Helps to understand the core socialist values of China	1	5	3.90	1.300
Helps to clarify the value and significance of one's own life	1	5	2.32	1.604
Helps cope with setbacks and challenges in life	2	5	3.73	1.184
Helps to infiltrate more life philosophy and ways of dealing with the world, and establish a more positive life orientation	1	5	3.24	1.609
Helps to imbue family and friends with wisdom and energy through classic wisdom	1	4	2.07	1.191
Helps to cultivate a sense of responsibility and accountability	1	4	2.00	0.866
Helps to form a clearer view of right and wrong	2	5	4.07	0.848
More positive energy and open-mindedness contribute to one's own interactions with others	1	4	3.00	0.894
Helps to enhance one's love for life	1	5	3.88	1.187
Helps to accept and understand oneself	2	5	3.00	1.095

N = 108, Population mean = 3.175

Based on the above data analysis, the integration of reciting traditional Chinese classics into the second classroom of Business English reading courses under the background of ideological and political education has played a significant role in cultivating cultural literacy and values, and can be widely promoted.

#### 4. Summary

Integrating ideological and political elements into curriculum teaching can play a role in cultivating morality and nurturing talents. We must always adhere to the principle of putting morality first, cultivating ourselves with morality, teaching students according to their aptitude, guiding them to establish a correct outlook on life, worldview, and values, cultivating a sense of mission for students to inherit and promote excellent traditional Chinese culture, and cultivating their national perspective, overall perspective, and sense of responsibility to contribute to society, the people, and the country. Curriculum ideological and political education should integrate these ideological and political elements into various courses in teaching practice, and have a subtle and positive impact on students' ideological concepts and behavior. However, the ideological and political education in the curriculum requires teachers to first continuously strengthen their moral cultivation, strengthen their patriotism, and improve their cultural cultivation, and then combine theoretical research with teaching practice, and continue to work hard.

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