

Integrating Wenzhou Regional Culture into College English for Ideological and Political Education: Paths in the Digital Age

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Abstract: In the context of globalization and rapid digital transformation, the ideological and political education in college English faces a dual challenge: the disconnection between educational content and language teaching, and the insufficient expression of local culture. With Wenzhou regional culture as its focus, this paper explores the logic and paths for integrating regional culture into college English for ideological and political education in the digital age. It finds that Wenzhou regional culture provides rich resources for ideological and political education. Its integration into college English is theoretically based on intercultural education and Production-oriented Approach, and is oriented toward fostering cultural confidence and reconstructing intercultural competence. On the practical level, this paper proposes a systematic path framework covering the development of digital teaching resources, the design of blended online and offline teaching models, and the establishment of a multi-assessment mechanism. This framework offers theoretical reference and practical guidance for the localization and distinctive development of ideological and political education in college English.

1. Introduction

Globalization and digital technology are reshaping the context in which college English is taught. As one of the most widely covered general education courses in higher education, college English undertakes important tasks of developing students' linguistic proficiency, intercultural competence, and cultural confidence, and also faces unprecedented challenges. It has become a central task to integrate value guidance into college English and inherit and promote China's fine traditional culture with digital technologies.

In 2020, the Ministry of Education issued the *Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities*, requiring all disciplines and institutions to integrate ideological and political education into the curriculum, so as to realize the organic unity of knowledge teaching and value guidance^[1]. This was followed in 2025 by the policy *Opinions on Accelerating the Digitalization of Education*. It highlighted the role of digitalization in reshaping educational

concepts and teaching models ^[2]. Together, these initiatives have created an active policy environment and provided technological support for innovation in this area.

Yet translating policy into practice has proved difficult. The disconnection between ideological and political content and language teaching still exists. Digital technology has injected new vitality into ideological and political education, but the effective use of it is inseparable from the teaching content with cultural connotation ^[3]. The introduction of regional culture has helped to solve this problem. Regional culture is close to students' life, which can arouse emotional resonance and provide concrete material for language teaching. As a nationally recognized historical and cultural city, Wenzhou is endowed with cultural resources such as the Yongjia School's philosophy, the "Four Thousand Spirit", and rich intangible cultural heritage items. These resources carry both historical values and contemporary relevance, making Wenzhou a meaningful case for exploring the localized development of ideological and political education in college English.

2. The Value of Wenzhou Regional Culture for Ideological and Political Education

Regional culture refers to the cultural phenomena that have formed and been recognized within a particular geographical area over time ^[4]. It embodies the region's ecological environment, cultural heritage, customs, values, and spiritual identity. As important components of China's fine traditional culture, excellent regional cultures reflect the national spirit and the spirit of the age, and are vital sources for cultivating the core socialist values ^[5].

2.1 Core Spirit and Ideological and Political Elements of Wenzhou Regional Culture

Located on the southeastern coast of Zhejiang Province, Wenzhou boasts a civilization history of over 5,000 years. During the process of social development and productive practices, many regional cultural systems with local characteristics have been nurtured. As a renowned historical and cultural city, Wenzhou regional culture carries not only profound historical memories but also rich ideological and political education resources.

The Yongjia School laid the theoretical foundation for Wenzhou regional culture. As an important school of thought in Wenzhou during the Southern Song Dynasty, the Yongjia School, represented by Ye Shi, advocated "integrating righteousness with profit" and "practical statecraft", breaking the traditional Confucian mindset of "valuing righteousness above profit". The Yongjia School placed great emphasis on practical achievements. This has profoundly influenced the psychology of the Wenzhou people, making them pragmatic and truth-seeking.

Since the reform and opening up, the Wenzhou people have transformed the Yongjia School's pragmatic tradition into the "Four Thousand Spirit", i.e., "traveling a thousand miles, speaking a thousand words, trying a thousand methods, enduring a thousand hardships", as well as the Wenzhou spirit of "daring to be first and excelling in entrepreneurship and innovation". These spiritual qualities contain rich ideological and political elements, including courage, perseverance, pragmatism, innovation, and cooperation. Fang Dezhi and Sun Wu'an (2023) trace this pragmatic tradition from the Yongjia School to Wenzhou's modern revolutionary morality, contemporary entrepreneurial ethos, and the spirit of the new era ^[6].

Wenzhou also possesses exceptionally rich intangible cultural heritage resources. By 2025, five Wenzhou items had been inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists: Yongjia Kunqu Opera, Yueqing Fine Paper Cutting, Rui'an Wooden Movable Type Printing, the Traditional Craftsmanship of Chinese Wooden Arch Bridges (Taishun County), and the Tai Gong Spring Festival Ancestral Rite (Wencheng County) ^[7]. These heritage items embody the wisdom and aspirations of the Wenzhou people. Behind each traditional craft lies a spirit of excellence and intergenerational dedication, which provide tangible resources for ideological and political

education.

2.2 The Educational Value of Integrating Wenzhou Regional Culture into College English

Ideological and political education is an educational philosophy and practice that combines value guidance with knowledge teaching and ability training. Its core lies in the implementation of the fundamental task of moral education. Integrating Wenzhou regional culture into college English is not only a positive response to the coordinated advancement of ideological and political education and educational digitalization, but also a practical answer to college English teaching reform. This integration holds significant and multifaceted educational value.

For a long time, a problem faced by college English teaching is the dominance of Western cultural content and the relative absence of local cultural resources. Students acquire a great deal of English vocabulary and expressions related to Western societies, history, and values, but find it difficult to accurately introduce cultural phenomena from their own surroundings in English. The introduction of Wenzhou regional culture changes this imbalance to some extent. Guided by the theme of “telling Wenzhou stories well in English”, students learn to convey local culture while acquiring the foreign language, thus shifting from passive input to active output.

Wenzhou regional culture offers a large number of distinctive teaching materials. Effective language teaching cannot only rely on general topics. It also needs content with cultural depth and local characteristics. For example, Yongjia Kunqu Opera can be used as material for introducing and appreciating Chinese operatic culture in English; the Wooden Movable Type Printing technique can serve as a theme for reading and discussion on ancient Chinese printing; and the “Four Thousand Spirit” can be used as a core theme for writing and speaking tasks on entrepreneurship and hard work. Combining the text content and cultural materials, teachers can design English learning tasks based on real cultural contexts, which integrate the language learning and cultural experience deeply.

In terms of educational effect, the greatest advantage of regional culture lies in its closeness. Compared with macro-level patriotic education discourse, regional culture is closer to students and easier to arouse emotional resonance. Building on this advantage, teachers can organize visits to intangible cultural heritage transmission bases or patriotic education sites, where students can strengthen their cultural identity and emotional connection through immersive experiences. This experiential approach helps form a new paradigm for ideological and political education in college English teaching.

3. The Logic of Integrating Wenzhou Regional Culture into Ideological and Political Education in College English

Against the backdrop of digital transformation, the integration of Wenzhou regional culture into ideological and political education in English is guided by the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents. It seeks to achieve the organic unity of language competence training and cultural value guidance.

3.1 Theoretical Rationales

Intercultural education and the Production-oriented Approach (POA) offer theoretical guidance for the integration of ideological and political education into college English.

Cultivating “critical cultural awareness” is an important part of intercultural education, which provides fundamental conceptual support for the integration of regional culture. British scholar Byram (1997) establishes “critical cultural awareness” as a core dimension, alongside attitude,

knowledge and skill, in his model of intercultural communicative competence. He emphasizes that learners should be able to critically compare and evaluate other cultures and native cultures from their own cultural perspective^[8]. The *National Standards for Teaching Quality of Undergraduate Programs* issued by the Ministry of Education in 2018 defines intercultural competence as “respecting cultural diversity, possessing intercultural empathy and critical cultural awareness; understanding the basic characteristics and differences between Chinese and foreign cultures; and being able to interpret and evaluate different cultural phenomena, texts, and products”^[9]. Integrating Wenzhou regional culture into ideological and political education in college English directly responds to the core requirement, namely, deep understanding and active expression of one’s own culture.

In traditional teaching models, cultural content often functions as a supplement, separate from language skills training. The Production-oriented Approach, proposed by Wen Qiufang (2015; 2020), offers a methodology tool for transforming cultural resources into teaching materials. It takes the “output-driven, input-enabled, output-evaluated” cycle as the core process. The output-driven stage uses real productive tasks to stimulate motivation and clarify learning objectives; the input-enabled stage provides targeted input materials in response to task requirements; and the output-evaluated stage assesses learning outcomes through language performance^{[10][11]}. Applying POA to the integration of Wenzhou regional culture into college English allows ideological and political goals and language objectives to advance simultaneously under the same output task, so that students clearly know what they need to do in English at the very beginning of learning. As a result, their language competence and cultural identity develop together.

3.2 Value Orientations

The integration of Wenzhou regional culture into ideological and political education in college English has solid theoretical foundations and clear value orientations. These are centered on fostering cultural confidence and cultivating intercultural competence.

Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, profound, and lasting force in the development of a nation. The *College English Teaching Guide* explicitly identifies “strengthening cultural confidence” as a key component of curriculum objectives. It requires college English teaching to guide students, alongside language competence development, to “understand and respect cultural diversity, enhance cultural confidence, tell China’s story well and spread China’s voice”^[12]. However, in practice, the cultivation of cultural confidence often remains at the cognitive level. Students understand the richness of Chinese culture, but lack the practical ability to express it in a foreign language. The integration of Wenzhou regional culture provides an effective path for the cultivation of cultural confidence in English class. Through output-oriented language training, students acquire language skills, develop their consciousness of cultural subjectivity, and then transform cultural confidence into practical action when they learn to tell Wenzhou regional culture in English.

Intercultural competence is one of the core objectives of foreign language education. Sun Youzhong (2016) points out that intercultural competence includes not only the understanding and respect of other cultures but also deep cognition and active expression of native culture^[13]. Lin Dajin and He Yawen (2022) argue that intercultural competence development in foreign language education should go beyond the simple imparting of cultural knowledge and move toward the deep understanding and critical comparison of Chinese and foreign cultures. Its ultimate goal is to enable students to reflect on Chinese culture from a cross-cultural perspective and consolidate their sense of cultural belonging^[14]. With its accessibility and richness, Wenzhou regional culture offers ideal cultural materials and practical carriers for the development of intercultural competence. Its integration into college English enables students to become active participants in cultural exchanges

when they learn to introduce local culture in English.

4. Digital Paths for Integrating Wenzhou Regional Culture into Ideological and Political Education in College English

Driven by emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, virtual reality and cloud computing, the education ecosystem is undergoing profound changes. Digital technologies can not only transmit information, but also create scenarios, connect interactions and deepen cognition. From the perspective of ideological and political education, the essence of digital empowerment is to shift the ideological and political education from superficial superposition to deep integration. Against this background, the integration of Wenzhou regional culture into ideological and political education in college English needs digital technology to achieve systematic innovation in resource development, teaching models and evaluation mechanisms.

4.1 Developing and Integrating Digital Teaching Resources

Diverse and interactive digital learning materials can bring ideological and political content into language teaching in more natural ways. They also help students understand local culture from a broader perspective and create opportunities for immersive experience and language practice. These elements shape the overall quality and outcomes of ideological and political education.

Wenzhou has already established a solid foundation in the digitization of cultural heritage. Relying on the provincial key discipline of folklore, Wenzhou University Library has established a “Database of Folklore Literature and Wenzhou Regional Cultural Characteristics Resource”. After further processing, these digital resources can be transformed into materials which are suitable for college English teaching. Specifically, English introductions to Wenzhou intangible cultural heritage items can be compiled into reading texts, ancient books can be used as translation practice materials, and video materials of folk activities can serve as topic resources for oral discussions and writing tasks. Taking Ou embroidery as an example, teachers can guide students to introduce Ou embroidery techniques in English with the support of digital resources. The introduction should involve the English expressions of characteristics of the craftsmanship, historical origins and cultural symbols, etc. Teachers can also classify the materials to make sure they meet the needs of learners at different proficiency levels.

In addition, efforts should be made to promote the educational integration of existing digital resources. Currently, the folklore database of Wenzhou University Library and digital resources of related cultural heritage in various counties and cities of Wenzhou are scattered across different platforms. They are mainly intended for academic research and administrative purposes. To serve college English teaching, it is suggested to build a “Wenzhou Regional Culture Resource Database for English Teaching”. Such a database can provide unified indexing and teaching-oriented labeling of scattered resources. Besides, some teaching support functions, such as keyword search, thematic classification, and language difficulty grading, are offered to help teachers quickly locate and select materials, and thereby improve the efficiency of resource utilization.

4.2 Designing a Digital-Driven Blended Online and Offline Teaching Model

Grounded in the Production-oriented Approach and supported by digital platforms, blended online and offline college English teaching makes the integration of regional cultural materials more natural and efficient.

In the output-driven stage, teachers can use online teaching platforms to release real output tasks oriented towards “spreading Wenzhou regional culture in English”. For example, students may be

asked to introduce an intangible cultural heritage item of Wenzhou in English, or to write an English guide script for a Wenzhou historical district. These tasks not only clarify learning objectives, but also make students aware of the direct connection between what they have learnt and the real-world application. Digital platforms can intelligently push reference materials based on students' level. In the input-enabled stage, teachers can use digital platforms such as Chaoxing Learning and U Campus to push English reading texts, audiovisual materials and model displays related to Wenzhou regional culture. Through online interactive tools, teachers can also post discussion questions or quizzes, and guide students to conduct preliminary communication and critical thinking around regional cultural themes. In the output-evaluated stage, teachers can use intelligent assessment systems such as iTEST and FiF Oral Training to identify grammatical errors and provide feedback on the quality of language production.

Taking “the Yongjia School and its contemporary value” as an example, the teaching design can follow this procedure: Before class, teachers release output-driven task through the online platform. Students are required to prepare for a three-minute English speech, and the topic should be related to the Yongjia School's principles of “integrating righteousness with profit” and “practical statecraft”, and their relationship with contemporary entrepreneurship and innovation. During class, teachers first provide relevant input materials, including an English overview of the Yongjia School's core ideas, English interview clips about the Wenzhou entrepreneurial spirit, etc. Then, teachers organize in-class activities where students give short presentations on their initial ideas, engage in group discussion, and receive face-to-face feedback from teachers. After class, students submit their speech videos. An AI system performs initial language scoring, and teachers facilitate online peer assessment and in-class comments. In this way, technology-assisted assessment and human in-depth feedback work together. Throughout the whole process, Wenzhou regional culture is no longer an independent ideological and political module but a main content thread that runs through the entire language learning process.

Moreover, digital technology enables teaching beyond the classroom. Teachers can take students to visit local cultural heritage sites, where they use mobile devices to record English introductions, capture images for digital storytelling, or conduct interviews with local craftspeople. Back in the classroom, they are asked to present their findings, share their videos or e-handbooks and engage in cross-cultural dialogues through international collaboration platforms to introduce Wenzhou regional culture to overseas partners. These experiences strengthen students' intercultural communicative competence.

4.3 Building a Digital Multi-Assessment Mechanism

Teaching assessment is not only a test of students' learning outcomes, but also an important feedback on the teaching process and effect ^[15]. In the context of integrating Wenzhou regional culture into ideological and political education in college English, the construction of a digital multi-assessment mechanism not only concerns the precise evaluation of language proficiency but also involves the monitoring and feedback of educational effect such as cultural identity and value internalization.

Digital technology enables the effective integration of various assessment methods. Formative assessment focuses on the whole learning process rather than one final exam. With the support of learning management systems, teachers can set a series of assessment nodes. After finishing tasks of each thematic unit on regional culture, students submit online reflection logs, which document their gains and confusions in cultural cognition and language expression. The platform automatically records their task completion status, discussion participation frequency, resource browsing duration and so on, providing teachers with dynamic feedback on student learning. Performance assessment

focuses on students' comprehensive performance in real or simulated tasks. For example, after students hand in digital narrative works on the introduction of Yongjia School in English, teachers score them according to assessment rubrics. When students finish the English interpretation task in the virtual simulation scene, the system gives immediate feedback. The combination of the two assessment methods allows students' language progress, cultural understanding and value internalization to be continuously tracked and recorded, thus creating a complete learning portfolio.

Another aspect of digital assessment is that it involves multiple participants. Students, peers, technical systems, and teachers can all participate in the assessment process. In self-assessment, students can score their own digital narrative works or virtual simulation tasks based on rubrics. This helps them reflect on what they have actually learnt. For peer assessment, after students submit English videos or written work to the online platform, three to five classmates give anonymous ratings and written feedback according to the same rubrics. Peer perspectives help students find their blind spots. In technology-assisted assessment, intelligent systems like iTEST provide initial scoring of students' language output, identify grammar and vocabulary problems and offer standardized feedback. This frees teachers from repetitive correction work, so they can emphasize more on the guidance of content depth and value orientation. Teacher assessment draws on all the assessment data and teachers' own professional judgments to provide overall formative comments. These four assessment participants each have their own focuses and they offer a complete picture of student learning from various angles.

Assessment results can be fed back into teaching and learning. Learning analytics tools collect assessment data and analyze students' performance. Based on these results, teachers can identify students' common problems in specific cultural units, assess how well they understand different cultural topics, and evaluate how effectively they express themselves. These findings help teachers adjust the content focus and teaching strategies, as well as refine teaching materials accordingly. Assessment results can also be presented to students in the form of visual reports, showing them what they have achieved and what they need to improve.

5. Conclusion

As an integral part of China's fine traditional culture, Wenzhou regional culture contains both distinctive local characteristics and wisdom of the nation. Its rich humanistic heritage and moral education value provide abundant resources for ideological and political education in college English. This study finds that in the context of digitalization, through the development of digital teaching resources related to regional culture, the design of blended teaching models and the establishment of a multi-assessment mechanism, regional culture and ideological and political education in college English can be effectively integrated. As a result, language competence development and value guidance naturally occur within the same teaching process.

The integration paths address the shortage of regional cultural resources in college English teaching reform, and provide a systematic framework for their transformation into teachable materials. Future research should collect empirical data based on this framework, further test and improve the integration paths, so that the ideological and political education in college English can play a greater role in inheriting local culture, cultivating cultural confidence and enhancing intercultural competence.

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