



Exploration of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education Elements in Academic English Teaching—Taking the Textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)* as an Example

Xi Luo

Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing 526061, Guangdong, China.

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Corresponding author: Xi Luo, Zhaoqing University, Zhaoqing 526061, Guangdong, China.

Abstract

As the focus of curriculum reform, curriculum-based ideological and political education is of self-evident significance in Chinese education. Ideological and political education are not just the duty of ideological and political courses; they are also the center of attention of every class. Academic English is a significant component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses at universities. However, exploring the ideological and political elements of academic English instruction is challenging because of the unique nature of this subject. Investigating the ideological and political elements of Academic English textbooks and courses, meanwhile, seems vital and necessary. Therefore, taking the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)* as an example, this paper investigates how to incorporate ideological and political elements into Academic English instruction, with the goal of providing teachers with ideas for exploring ideological and political elements, as well as assisting everyone in better achieving the goal of ideological and political education.

Keywords

Academic English; Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education; Ideology and Politics Elements; *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*

1. Introduction

“The Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Accelerating the Construction of High-Level Undergraduate Education and Comprehensively Enhancing Talent Cultivation Capabilities” clearly put forward that curriculum-based ideological and political education and major-related ideological and political education should be strengthened. In the process of building a “Three-dimensional Holistic Education” including Holistic Education by All Staff, Continuous Education Throughout the Entire Process, and Comprehensive Education in All Aspects, efforts should be made to promote the comprehensive strengthening of curriculum ideology and politics in colleges and universities. To do a good job in overall design, specifically, to scientifically and reasonably design the content of ideological and political education in accordance with the characteristics of talent cultivation in different specialties and the requirements of professional competence. Strengthening every teacher’s awareness of moral education, organically integrating elements of ideological and political education into every course, launching a batch of high-quality professional courses with remarkable nurturing effects, creating a batch of demonstration classrooms of ideological and political education, selecting a batch of excellent teachers of ideological and political education, and forming a pattern of nurturing in which the teaching of professional courses is

closely integrated with the teaching of ideological and political theories, and in the same direction.

As an indispensable course in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) curriculum in universities, the relevant explorations on the ideological and political teaching of the Academic English course are of vital importance. In view of its importance and urgency, certain progress has been made in the exploration and research on the ideology and political education of Academic English courses in China. For example, Miao Peng (2020) took the undergraduate “Academic English Reading and Writing” course at Shanghai University of Technology as an example to sort out the elements of ideology and politics in the course, with a view to providing an opportunity for the related course “Course Ethics and Politics”. Moreover, Tao Xiaorong (2020) believed that after integrating into the curriculum ideology and politics, the system of the Academic English Reading course can be reconstructed in terms of the course objectives, reading materials selection, teaching implementation, learning evaluation, teacher quality, etc. Thus, the cultivation of students’ disciplinary literacy and civic and political literacy are organically combined. Ren Yunlan (2022) took *New Exploration of Graduate English* as an example to study the exploration and innovation of ideology and politics teaching for Academic English courses among graduate students under the strategy of “New Agricultural Science”. Li Wenjuan (2022) explores the teaching design of ideology and politics education for Academic English courses by evaluating the book *Ideology and Politics Teaching Guidelines for English Courses in Universities* and other issues for Academic English courses. Furthermore, in the context of emerging engineering education, Chen Jing and Wang Beilei (2023) investigated the implementation path of organically integrating ideological and political education elements into English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching, with a focus on academic English for science and engineering disciplines via teaching practice. Their findings demonstrated that ideological and political factors may penetrate a variety of areas, including teaching, learning, assessment, and competitiveness. Zhang Li’s research (2023) extensively displays the design of a blended learning course for Academic English writing that incorporates ideological and political education, including teaching objectives, content, methodologies, and typical case studies. Furthermore, it uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to assess the success of the educational results. He Canwen (2024), based on the practice of ideological and political education in general medical English courses, discusses how to extract explicit educational elements and deeply explore implicit educational elements using textbook themes and texts, as well as how to set educational goals and knowledge and ability objectives, select teaching content, and design teaching activities. Moreover, Wen Tong (2024) suggests developing a “three entries” educational paradigm for ideological and political education in Academic English courses through teaching practice. This model entails the phased implementation of ideological and political teaching based on the three major curriculum modules of academic English reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as project-based research tailored to different majors, resulting in education via textbooks, courses, and scientific research practices.

This study takes the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)* (Ji & Fan, 2013) published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Publishing Press as an example to explore the ideological and political elements in the teaching of Academic English and to provide teachers with materials and ideas for exploring ideological and political education. This paper will also take the content of one unit in the textbook as an example to show how ideological and political education can be integrated in the teaching of Academic English courses, so as to provide some help and reference for better accomplishing the work of cultivating morality and educating people.

2. Analysis of Academic English Textbook and Lesson

The course material for Academic English is selected from the series of English for Academic Purpose (EAP) textbooks for Colleges and Universities published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. The textbook is divided into 10 units, and each unit features a theme, encompassing three articles centered around the same topic, along with academic listening, academic speaking, and academic writing training related to the major, as well as pertinent key terminology.

The teaching content is based on professional knowledge, with each unit incorporating listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translation training aimed at cultivating students’ academic communication skills. The language training content of each unit is interconnected, enabling students to comprehensively improve their abilities to use English effectively and appropriately in academic studies and exchanges.

The overall teaching arrangement for this course is mainly as follows: Firstly, language teaching is based on textbook materials. Secondly, students select a field of study according to their professional direction or areas of interest and they will be divided into different groups according to their selection. Each group should determine a research topic within their chosen field and conduct literature searches around the project. What’s more, each student must complete a certain amount of literature reading related to their project and form written notes. Moreover, students should present their research process and results in English class in the form of PPT presentations as a group. Finally, each student should complete a short paper of around 2000 words as a learning outcome of this course.

This course mainly adopts PBL teaching mode: students can determine their own research topics according to their interests or areas of expertise through group cooperation, and then carry out research and exploration for the project. This

is conducive to stimulating students' interest in learning academic English, improving their teamwork ability, and cultivating their habit of thinking diligently.

At the same time, this course also adopts a combination of classroom instruction and extracurricular autonomous learning. Students are required to consult a vast amount of extracurricular literature and materials on their own to further consolidate their academic English knowledge and skills, and independently complete various teaching tasks. This approach is conducive to cultivating students' enthusiasm for autonomous learning, as well as their abilities to actively think and take initiative.

3. Exploration of Ideological and Political Elements in Academic English Textbook

This course is a course based on the content of students' majors and is designed to cultivate students' academic communication skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and translating in English, with the aim of improving students' academic English skills as well as their professional English skills.

The development of globalization makes it more and more important for students to master the English expression of knowledge related to their own professional fields. This course is based on the students' professional contents and provides the conditions for students to expand their respective professional development with the help of English so that the students can express the contents of their professional knowledge in English and adapt to the needs of the country's social development and international exchanges. The teaching of the Academic English Program combines students' knowledge and English, which can lay a solid foundation for students to use English to engage in their own professional work directly after graduation or to pursue further studies, conduct academic research, and participate in academic activities.

3.1 Ideological and Political Education Objectives

This part mainly introduces the ideological and political education objectives of this Academic English course based on the textbook of *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*, which mainly contains the following points:

- (1) To enhance students' awareness of environmental protection and promote the harmonious development of man and nature.
- (2) To help students establish a correct view of consumption.
- (3) To help students establish a correct view of the world.
- (4) To enhance students' national consciousness and sense of social responsibility.
- (5) To cultivate students' logical thinking and critical thinking.

3.2 Units' Ideological and Political Education Objectives (Partial)

Table 1. Units' Ideological and Political Education Objectives (Partial)

Units	Ideological and political education
Unit 1 Economics	Help students establish a correct consumption viewpoint. Help students establish a correct view of life, the world, and values.
Unit 2 Business Ethics	Cultivate students' sense of social responsibility. Cultivate students' professional ethics.
Unit 3 Psychology	Pay attention to student mental health. Cultivate students' sound personality.
Unit 4 Environment	Enhance students' environmental awareness and promote harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Cultivate students' innovative consciousness and academic integrity.
Unit 5 Philosophy	Cultivate students' ability to think independently Cultivate students' logical thinking and critical thinking
Unit 7 Sociology	Enhance students' social morality and responsibility Enhance students' personal confidence
Unit 8 Globalization	Help students establish a correct global perspective. Enhance students' national awareness and cultural confidence.
Unit 9 Medicine	Enhance students' emphasis on physical and mental health. Cultivate students' compassion and encourage them to care more about and help others.

This part is based on the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)* and explores the ideological and political education objectives of some of the units in the textbook. To be specific, the main ideological and political objectives explored in Units 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 of the textbook are presented here.

3.3 Classroom Lesson Application Value

The application value of academic English classroom lessons based on this textbook is mainly reflected in cultivating high-quality scientific research talents with a sense of national identity, adherence to socialist core values, national spirit, and the spirit of the times, who can contribute to the development of the country and society.

3.4 Expected Effects of Teaching Implementation of This Course

This section focuses on the expected effects of the implementation of teaching this English for Academic Purposes course based on the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*. The expected effects of the implementation of this course are as follows:

- (1) To enhance students' sense of responsibility: students will have a strong sense of national consciousness, national spirit, and the spirit of the times.
- (2) To improve students' moral sentiments and improve their personalities: to enhance students' social, personal, and professional morality, and help them set up the correct view on life, world, and values.
- (3) To cultivate students' self-learning ability and teamwork spirit: the teaching process will continue to train students' self-learning and research ability, as well as through group cooperation to complete the learning and research tasks, which can effectively improve students' hands-on ability and cultivate their teamwork spirit.
- (4) To cultivate students' scientific research thinking: through the whole semester's study, students will be cultivated about their logical thinking, critical thinking, innovative new thinking, and systematic thinking.

4. Example Display of Ideological and Political Education in Academic English Teaching

English for Academic Purposes is a course for general sophomore students, who already have a certain English foundation, and their English level is basically above the College English Test Band 4 (CET 4). Students who choose to study Academic English are filled with interest and enthusiasm, which can lay a solid foundation for them to learn specialized knowledge or conduct academic research. This is exactly what students need. This lesson is about Text A of Unit 4 - *Environment* in the Academic English textbook. Students have developed a certain academic mindset through the study of the first three units, but they still need to go through continuous study and training in order to learn the relevant knowledge more solidly.

4.1 Teaching Objectives

This part of the lesson focuses on the teaching objectives of Text A of Unit 4 - *Environment* in the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*. The main teaching objectives of this lesson are as follows:

- (1) To understand the important concepts about the environment (e.g., environmentalism, ecology, biodiversity, ecosystems, environmental science, biosphere, carbon dioxide, etc.).
- (2) To summarize the main ideas of the text and identify the necessary supporting points.
- (3) To comprehend long and difficult sentences (e.g., sentences with abstract meaning or unclear referents).
- (4) To critically analyze the complex or controversial issues (e.g., environmental sustainability, climate change, economic and ecological issues).

4.2 Ideological and Political Education Objectives

This part of the main introduction is based on the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*, exploring the ideological and political education objectives in the teaching of Text A of Unit 4- *Environment* therein:

- (1) To enhance students' awareness of environmental protection and promote the harmonious development of man and nature.
- (2) To help students establish a correct view of the world and the right view of consumption.
- (3) To enhance students' national consciousness and sense of social responsibility.
- (4) To enhance students' sense of self-worth.
- (5) To cultivate students' logical and critical thinking.

4.3 Demonstration Lesson

The content taught in this class is the reading part of Unit 4 - Environment in the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)*: Text A - *The Green Movement at 50: What Next?* The specific teaching arrangement is as follows:

4.3.1 Lead-in Activities

It's well known that the lead-in activities before a lesson can effectively arouse students' interest. Therefore, some pictures and videos will be presented to show the environmental pollution problems and the changes that have taken place in the overall natural environment. The teacher will introduce the lesson content by showing the pictures and videos to trigger students' thinking. (To enhance students' awareness of environmental protection)

Then, students will be divided into groups of 4-5 people for each to list the causes and consequences of the imbalance between human beings and nature by brainstorming, and each group should send a student representative to share the results of the discussion with the teacher and other students. (To cultivate students' teamwork spirit and train their thinking skills)

4.3.2 Teaching Process

This section will introduce all the detailed steps of the lesson on Text A - *The Green Movement at 50: What Next?* and the ideological and political education objectives it integrates, so as to provide a reference for exploring the ideological and political elements in the process of teaching Academic English.

Skimming: Students should quickly skim the text to clarify its structure and summarize its main ideas.

Scanning: Students should learn how to make the text more coherent through effective transitions, repetition of key-words, and clear use of quotations.

Language focus:

Students should be familiarized with context-related collocations, understand the stylistic differences between formal and informal English in academic writing, and master the formal terms through exercises.

The ideological and political education objectives: To improve students' humanistic qualities.

Critical thinking: Students should work in groups, and discuss the following questions:

- (a) Do you agree with the author?
- (b) Why does the author say so?
- (c) Can you put forward some suggestions on how to alter societies' worldviews?

The ideological and political education objectives: To train students in logical thinking, critical thinking, and systematic thinking to enhance their analytical abilities.

Summary: Emphasize the importance of environmental protection.

(a) Show students the efforts the country has made to protect the environment and the effects and impacts it has reaped through pictures and videos ("Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.");

(b) Find out what students have contributed to protecting the environment by asking questions;

(c) Explore what more we can do to protect the environment through group discussions (such as "Ant Forest" (a virtual forest-planting initiative on Alipay that encourages eco-friendly behaviors by rewarding users with virtual trees)).

The ideological and political education objectives: To enhance students' environmental awareness, patriotism, and sense of social responsibility; help students establish a correct worldview and consumption concept; and boost students' sense of self-worth.

4.3.3 After-class Assignments

This part mainly introduces some of the assignments that students need to accomplish after class and the objectives of the ideological and political education that they embody. The main after-school tasks and the goals of ideological and political education are as follows:

(a) To learn more about the relevant policies proposed by your country to protect the environment.;

(b) To independently find and research various resources (articles, books, videos, etc.) to learn more cases of environmental pollution;

(c) To propose solutions for the pollution cases found above.

The goals of the ideological and political education of after-class assignments are to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility, independent thinking and problem-solving skills.

4.4 Application Value of this Lesson

This part mainly introduces the application value of this lesson, which are shown as follows:

While teaching students textbook knowledge to strengthen their professional skills, it can cultivate students' logical thinking and critical thinking, and also help students enhance their awareness of environmental protection, national consciousness, and sense of social responsibility. What's more, it helps students establish a correct view of the world and the concept of consumption, and boost their sense of self-worth. The goal is to cultivate high-quality scientific research talents for the country and society who possess both professional skills and patriotism, as well as national spirit and the spirit of the times so that they can make contributions to the development of the country and society.

4.5 Expected Effects of Implementing the Teaching of this Lesson

This section focuses on the expected effects of implementing the teaching of this lesson, and the main expected effects are as follows:

- (1) Students will be able to master solid professional knowledge and skills, cooperate with others in solidarity, and develop the habit of independent thinking.
- (2) Students will possess a strong sense of environmental awareness and are willing to take practical actions, starting from small things, to contribute to environmental protection.
- (3) Students have a deep sense of patriotism and loyalty to their country and are willing to dedicate their efforts to the development of their country.
- (4) Students will have a strong sense of social responsibility. They not only protect the environment themselves but also encourage others around them to do so.
- (5) Students will enhance their sense of self-worth and recognize that their words and actions may impact the development of the country and even the entire world.

5. Conclusion

This paper takes the textbook *Academic English (An Integrated Course)* as an example to explore how to tap into the ideological and political elements in academic English teaching and selects a specific unit as a case study to illustrate the extraction of ideological and political elements in academic English teaching. The aim is to provide teachers with ideas for exploring ideological and political elements and to assist in better achieving the goal of ideological and political education. Of course, the exploration of ideological and political elements in Academic English teaching still requires further exploration and extraction. Furthermore, with the proposal of the "Three Entries Education" (entering textbooks, entering classrooms, and entering students' minds), further research is needed in future Academic English teaching on how to integrate the core socialist values into textbooks, classrooms, and students' minds.

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