

# *Regional Culture as a Resource for Ideological and Political Education: A Case Study of Ouyue Culture in College English Curriculum*

Yan Lin<sup>1,a</sup>, Peipei Chen<sup>1,b,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*School of Foreign Language Studies, Wenzhou Medical University, Wenzhou, 325035, Zhejiang, China*

<sup>a</sup>*liny@wmu.edu.cn*, <sup>b</sup>*chenpp@wmu.edu.cn*

<sup>\*</sup>*Corresponding author*

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**Abstract:** Regional culture embodies profound humanistic spirit and moral educational resources, and its integration with ideological and political education in college English curriculum provides an innovative pathway to fulfill the fundamental mission of “cultivating morality and nurturing talents”. Taking Ouyue culture as a case study, this research systematically demonstrates the feasibility of integrating regional culture into college English teaching based on its characteristics of identity, diversity, and heritage. The study reveals the intrinsic alignment between Ouyue culture and curriculum-based ideological education in terms of value orientation, cultural resource integration, and synergistic educational functions. By constructing a tripartite implementation framework, i.e., developing localized teaching materials, optimizing pedagogical models, and expanding practical courses, the study proposes concrete strategies to empower English instruction through regional culture, aiming to achieve the organic unity of knowledge transmission, skill enhancement, and value cultivation. Further findings indicate that this integrative model not only strengthens students’ cultural confidence and intercultural communication competence but also facilitates the creative transformation and international dissemination of traditional culture. The research offers practical references and theoretical underpinnings for advancing ideological and political education in higher education and supporting the “Chinese Culture Going Global” strategy in the new era.

## 1. Introduction

The fundamental mission of higher education in the new era in China is to “cultivate morality and nurture talents,” aiming to foster well-rounded socialist builders and successors who excel in moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic, and labor education. Curriculum-based ideological and political education serves as a pivotal practice to implement this mission, requiring the integration of value guidance into knowledge transmission and skill development. The Guidelines for Ideological and Political Education in *Higher Education Curricula* (2020) explicitly emphasizes the

need to leverage the educational functions of all courses to achieve synergistic effects<sup>[1]</sup>. As a compulsory public course widely offered in Chinese universities, college English possesses broad accessibility and cross-cultural characteristics, making it a critical platform for ideological and political education. Its teaching objectives extend beyond enhancing linguistic competence; it must also organically incorporate socialist core values into instructional content, classroom management, and evaluation systems. This approach helps students deepen cultural confidence through cross-cultural comparisons and cultivates a correct worldview, outlook on life, and values<sup>[2]</sup>.

Regional culture, as a vital carrier of Chinese traditional culture, embodies the core values of national spirit while showcasing localized practical wisdom. It serves as a dynamic resource for nurturing socialist core values. The *Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ideological and Political Work in Higher Education under New Circumstances* (2017) mandates the integration of traditional culture into education<sup>[3]</sup>, and *The College English Teaching Guide* (2020) underscores the importance of strengthening national language capabilities and effectively disseminating Chinese culture<sup>[4]</sup>. Against this backdrop, the deep integration of regional culture with ideological and political education in college English has emerged as an effective pathway to achieve the goal of “educating through culture”.

Ouyue culture (i.e., Wenzhou traditional culture), a quintessential representative of regional culture, combines the pragmatic ethos of “balancing righteousness and profit”, the innovative spirit of “daring to pioneer”, and the open-mindedness shaped by its mountainous and maritime geography. It vividly reflects the diversity and unity of Chinese culture. This study takes Ouyue culture as a case to explore the practical mechanisms through which regional culture facilitates ideological and political education in college English. On one hand, it constructs a tripartite educational model—knowledge, competence, and values—by excavating local cultural resources. On the other hand, it leverages the linguistic advantages of English courses to promote the creative transformation and international dissemination of regional culture. This research not only provides a regional paradigm for ideological and political education in higher education but also injects local wisdom into the “Chinese Culture Going Global” strategy, contributing to the cultivation of new-era talents equipped with both patriotic sentiment and global vision.

## 2. Overview of Ouyue Culture

Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province, China), historically known as “Ouyue”, is a cultural city with over 5,000 years of civilization. Ouyue culture, as an indigenous regional culture nurtured in Wenzhou, “represents the material and spiritual wealth accumulated through the long-term socio-economic practices of its people”<sup>[5]</sup>. Since the establishment of Yongjia Prefecture in 323 AD, Ouyue culture flourished through the Tang and Song dynasties, reaching its maturity during the Southern Song period (1127–1279). Key milestones include advancements in handicrafts and shipbuilding that propelled national trade, the emergence of the Yongjia School advocating “practical governance”, the poetic innovations of the “Four Masters of Yongjia”, and the pioneering contributions of Southern Opera to Chinese theatrical traditions<sup>[6]</sup>. The core characteristics of Ouyue culture are manifested in the following two dimensions.

### 2.1 Dialectical Unity of Identity and Diversity

The identity of Ouyue culture is rooted in Wenzhou’s unique mountainous and maritime geography, which forged a dual character of conservatism and adventurousness among its people. This cultural identity aligns with national historical trajectories, demonstrating both universality and cohesion<sup>[7]</sup>. Simultaneously, its diversity is reflected in distinct subcultural forms: the Yongjia School emphasizes the harmonization of moral integrity and material benefit, underpinned by a

pragmatic commitment to truth-seeking and practical governance; marine culture exemplifies a dynamic and inclusive ethos, characterized by its adaptability and syncretic openness; agrarian-scholarly culture integrates agricultural practices with intellectual traditions, epitomizing the pursuit of unity of knowledge and action. These subcultures collectively construct Ouyue culture's progressive spirit, bridging historical continuity with innovative vitality.

## **2.2 Dynamic Balance between Heritage and Innovation**

As a living cultural heritage, Ouyue culture preserves historical essence while critically adapting to modernity. For example, master artist Fang Rujiang, a leading actor, revitalized Ou Opera by integrating it with animation, attracting younger audiences and rejuvenating this ancient theatrical form; during the early stages of China's reform and opening-up, Wenzhou entrepreneurs reinterpreted the Yongjia School's philosophy of "balancing righteousness and profit", catalyzing a pioneering culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that became a paradigm of China's economic transformation. These practices not only highlight Ouyue culture's educational value but also provide vivid case studies for integrating regional culture into ideological and political education, thereby fostering cultural preservation and innovation.

## **3. Feasibility of Integrating Ouyue Culture into Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum**

Curriculum-based ideological and political education is an educational strategy that aligns general and specialized courses with ideological and political theory courses by fully utilizing their embedded educational resources. Guided by value orientation and spiritual cultivation, it subtly influences students' ideological perspectives and behavioral norms. The primary goal of college English education is to enhance its humanistic dimensions by integrating socialist core values into teaching content, thereby fostering cultural confidence, promoting cultural dissemination awareness, and ultimately strengthening national soft power. Integrating ideological and political education into college English instruction is a vital approach to fulfilling the mission of "cultivating morality and nurturing talents" in the new era. Through this integration, students not only learn about foreign cultures but also deepen their understanding of China's excellent traditional culture, enhancing their cultural confidence and international communication capabilities. Ouyue culture, with its unique regional characteristics and universal values, can be integrated with curriculum-based ideological and political education through the following three aspects.

### **3.1 Alignment in Value Orientation**

College English courses, characterized by their dual nature of instrumental utility and humanistic education, serve as a critical component of higher education in fostering students' comprehensive qualities and holistic development, ultimately cultivating them into qualified talents. Ouyue culture, with its rich connotations, embodies diverse regional values. Marine culture reflects a progressive ethos of openness, inclusiveness, and adaptability; Wenzhou merchant culture exemplifies the spirit of risk-taking, perseverance, and integrity; Landscape culture inspires intellectual exploration and philosophical wisdom. These cultural elements collectively demonstrate the unique regional advantages and pluralistic openness of Ouyue culture. Integrating Ouyue cultural resources into ideological and political education within college English curriculum enables the dual function of value guidance and knowledge transmission. By leveraging multicultural contexts, this integration organically blends moral education with intellectual cultivation, enhancing both professional competencies and ideological shaping. Through studying traditional culture, students connect

historical wisdom with contemporary practices, bridging Chinese and global perspectives. This approach deepens their understanding of cultural connotations and values embedded in English texts, fostering a balance between “national identity” and “global vision”.

### **3.2 Uniqueness of Resource Integration**

Culture, as a spiritual force, profoundly shapes human cognition and behavior. Excellent cultural traditions purify the mind, enrich the spiritual world, and foster holistic personal development. Ouyue culture offers both theoretical and material heritage resources for educational purposes. The Yongjia School’s utilitarian ethics and the entrepreneurial ethos of Wenzhou people provide ethical frameworks for value education; the “Red Culture”, embodied in historical landmarks such as Yongchang Fortress and Yuhai Tower, inspires patriotic fervor among students; the “Oujiang Poetry Road Culture”, anchored in scenic sites including Jiangxin Poetry Island, Yandang Poetry Mountain, Nanxi Poetry Village, Wuma Poetry Street, and Wenrui Poetry River, evokes their visionary appreciation for the majestic landscapes of the motherland. These resources, enriched by historical depth and contemporary relevance, constitute rare educational assets. Their integration into college English curriculum can be operationalized through both classroom integration (e.g., embedding cultural themes into language drills) and experiential learning (e.g., creating bilingual guides for cultural sites or curating digital exhibitions on Wenzhou’s entrepreneurial history). This dual approach not only expands the scope of ideological and political education but also innovates pedagogical methods. By transforming cultural knowledge into actionable skills (e.g., translation, storytelling), students internalize traditional values while mastering language competencies, achieving the dual goals of cognitive acquisition and affective engagement.

### **3.3 Synergy of Heritage and Innovation**

Cultural transmission, as a societal mechanism for preserving and perpetuating human heritage, bears the historical responsibility of passing down accumulated wisdom, practices, and values to future generations<sup>[8]</sup>. Education stands as the most effective conduit for this process, enabling not only the transfer of knowledge but also the cultivation of individual creativity and collective cultural renewal. Through education, learners internalize cultural legacies, fostering spiritual growth and innovative capacities that drive cultural evolution. Rooted in a 5,000-year history, Ouyue culture encapsulates the intellectual, ethical, and emotional heritage of people in Wenzhou. It serves as a vital spiritual resource for nurturing students’ moral integrity and national identity. Integrating Ouyue culture into college English curriculum can help to achieve the goal of “inward cultural reinforcement” and “outward cultural dissemination”. It not only engages students with both foreign and indigenous cultural perspectives, deepening their understanding of Chinese traditions, but also empowers them to actively serve as cultural ambassadors. Through the international language of English, students bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, ensuring cultural vitality in the era of globalization.

## **4. Advantages of Integrating Ouyue Culture into Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum**

Regional culture, as a concrete manifestation of China’s cultural diversity and a symbol of its excellent traditional heritage, embodies the sense of belonging, pride, and confidence of local communities. Ouyue culture, a regional culture native to Wenzhou, serves as a vital medium for intergenerational transmission of local civilization, encapsulating the collective wisdom and efforts of its people. Integrating Ouyue culture into the ideological and political education of college

English curriculum achieves dual objectives: it not only addresses the pedagogical needs of fostering socialist core values among university students but also establishes a dynamic platform for promoting traditional culture's innovative revitalization. By leveraging cultural immersion and education-driven cultivation, this integration bridges historical continuity with contemporary relevance, empowering students to become both inheritors of indigenous traditions and advocates for cultural innovation in a globalized era.

#### 4.1 Constructing Content-language Integrated Curriculum

Krashen's second language acquisition theory posits that language acquisition occurs effectively only when learners receive comprehensible and meaningful input, rather than through rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar<sup>[9]</sup>. CaiJigang emphasizes that foreign language learning should serve as a medium for acquiring disciplinary knowledge, where content acts as the intrinsic motivation for language learning, and linguistic competence emerges as a byproduct of content mastery<sup>[10]</sup>. By positioning content as the cornerstone of language instruction, educators can simultaneously provide students with cognitive motivation for language learning, establish a communicative medium for content acquisition, and create a robust platform for ideological cultivation. Integrating diverse traditional cultural content—through activities such as literature readings, video analyses, and thematic discussions—enriches this pedagogical approach. Such practices enable students to enhance their linguistic proficiency while critically engaging with cultural content. This dual focus not only deepens their knowledge of Chinese traditions but also fosters objective comparisons between Chinese and foreign value systems, thereby strengthening cross-cultural communication competence. Crucially, while learning Western cultures, students develop heightened awareness of their roles as cultural ambassadors, responsible citizens, and innovators of local cultural dissemination.

#### 4.2 Aligning with Talent Development Trends

Amidst the accelerating evolution of the global landscape and the deepening implementation of China's Belt and Road Initiative, the internationalization of talent cultivation has emerged as a strategic direction in higher education. In the new era, university students are expected to “comprehend national policies and realities, possess global perspectives, master foreign languages, understand international norms, and excel in cross-cultural negotiations,”<sup>[11]</sup> evolving into versatile professionals with specialized expertise.

Strong professional capabilities are critical for students to fulfill the mission of “enhancing China's global engagement and fostering international understanding of China.”<sup>[12]</sup> The *National Standards for Undergraduate Teaching Quality* (2018) explicitly mandates that foreign language education should “integrate language acquisition with knowledge acquisition, prioritize competency development, and emphasize linguistic proficiency, cross-cultural competence, critical thinking, and autonomous learning.”<sup>[13]</sup> Integrating Ouyue culture into ideological and political education within college English curriculum provides abundant resources for cultivating both national identity and global citizenship. This integration fosters both linguistic-academic competencies and the ability to synthesize cultural and intellectual paradigms. Students utilize English as a tool for specialized study, research, and cross-cultural communication. By engaging with dialogues between Chinese and Western cultural paradigms, students enhance their ability to synthesize diverse perspectives, critically evaluate global advancements, and affirm the value of China's unique cultural heritage. Such practices not only deepen students' self-identity and national pride through the process of “understanding others” but also reinforce their ideological convictions. The organic fusion of Ouyue culture with curriculum-based ideological education serves as an effective pathway to realizing the

mission of “cultivating morality and nurturing talents”, significantly elevating the quality of talent development in alignment with national strategic priorities.

### 4.3 Supporting the “Chinese Culture Going Global” Strategy

Promoting the “Chinese Culture Going Global” initiative is a vital strategy for enhancing China’s cultural soft power. As emphasized in the 19th National Congress Report, the new era marks a period when China is increasingly approaching the center of the world stage and continuously making greater contributions to humanity. To advance the construction of a new type of international relations and foster high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative, it is imperative to strengthen international communication and create a favorable external environment for China’s development.

In recent years, while the foreign language proficiency of Chinese university students has improved significantly—exemplified by the 88% and 86% first-attempt pass rates for the CET-4 (College English Test Band 4) among freshmen at Wenzhou Medical University in 2023 and 2024 respectively—their understanding and ability to disseminate Chinese culture remain notably weak. For instance, in translation tasks related to Chinese culture on the CET-4, common errors include rendering “Grand Canal” as “big river” and “*Journey to the West*” as “West Swim”.

Integrating Ouyue culture into college English teaching addresses this “cultural aphasia” by creating authentic cultural contexts. Through explicit instruction and systematic learning, students first comprehend and then apply cultural knowledge, effectively bridging the gap between linguistic competence and cultural literacy. Studying Ouyue culture not only sparks students’ interest in exploring traditional Chinese heritage but also reinforces cultural confidence and historical consciousness. This pedagogical approach transforms foreign language learning into a patriotic endeavor, motivating students to actively participate in the international dissemination of Chinese culture. By fostering both linguistic mastery and cultural advocacy, the integration of Ouyue culture into English education advances the “Chinese Culture Going Global” strategy, amplifying China’s global influence and contributing to a more culturally interconnected world.

## 5. Pathways for Integrating Ouyue Culture into Ideological and Political Education in College English Curriculum

Ouyue culture serves as a pivotal educational resource for ideological and political education in college English curriculum at regional universities, significantly contributing to the enhancement of students’ comprehensive qualities. In practice, educators should actively integrate Ouyue cultural elements across all dimensions of English language learning to strengthen its role in value guidance, competency development, and talent cultivation within curriculum-based ideological education.

### 5.1 Developing Localized Teaching Materials: Bringing Ouyue Culture into the Classroom

Textbooks are the primary channel for students to acquire knowledge and develop competencies, acting as the “fundamental guideline for standardizing foreign language education and shaping the spiritual world of youth.” “Foreign language textbook development should adhere to the principle of mutual learning between Chinese and foreign civilizations, drawing on international educational materials while organically integrating domestic cultural values and global cultural diversity.”<sup>[14]</sup> However, current college English textbooks in China predominantly feature articles from foreign journals and magazines, focusing on Western customs, lifestyles, and ideological narratives. This overreliance on foreign content has led to insufficient exposure to indigenous cultural knowledge among students, hindering the inheritance of Chinese culture and the proper formation of their

worldview and values.

To address this gap, foreign language teachers at regional universities should further strengthen their cultural confidence, enrich their humanistic knowledge reserves, and fully explore the relevant content of Ouyue culture to develop school-based foreign language textbooks infused with local cultural characteristics. For instance, these textbooks could include English introductions to Wenzhou's identities as the "birthplace of Yongjia culture", "hometown of Southern Opera", "city of music and dance", "renowned hub of calligraphy and painting", and "land of a hundred crafts", alongside English translations of classical "landscape poetry". Such materials will help students understand the ways of thinking and value orientations embedded in Ouyue culture through comparative analyses of Chinese and Western traditions, enabling them to experience the spiritual essence of traditional culture, uphold national and ethnic values, and cultivate cultural pride.

Additionally, educators should recommend English translations of exemplary local literary works for student reading, such as Zhang Ling's *The Lost Daughter of Happiness* and Qi Jun's *Osmanthus Rain*. These texts not only nourish students' minds and broaden their horizons but also enhance their English proficiency. This dual focus fosters the development of internationally oriented communication talents who are deeply rooted in traditional culture yet equipped with a global vision—individuals capable of bridging cultural divides and advancing China's narrative on the world stage.

## 5.2 Optimizing Pedagogical Models: Deepening the Value of Ouyue Culture

New-era college English instructors should adapt to evolving educational demands and student needs by adopting advanced teaching philosophies and leveraging technologies such as online interactive platforms to reform pedagogical models. By organically integrating ideological and political elements into curricula, educators can enhance students' learning autonomy, classroom engagement, and intrinsic motivation, thereby elevating the educational efficacy of curriculum-based ideological cultivation. For example, in Unit 1: Winston Churchill—His Other Life from *21st Century College English 2*, which explores Churchill's identity as a painter beyond his political career, teachers can employ video-based pedagogy to introduce XieLingyun, a cultural luminary of Wenzhou, highlighting his dual legacy as the "Father of Landscape Poetry" alongside his role as a Yongjia governor. Virtual tours of Wenzhou's landscapes can immerse students in the region's natural beauty, fostering appreciation for the artistic essence of landscape poetry, love for the nation's scenery, and strengthened national pride. In Unit 2: Why They Excel, which discusses the influence of Protestant philosophy on Western thought and behavior, comparative pedagogy can be utilized to juxtapose the Yongjia School's philosophies, analyzing their core tenets and enduring impact on Wenzhou's development. Through critical reading of Chinese and Western ideological contrasts, students gain deeper insights into the profound intellectual heritage of traditional culture. Additionally, educators can utilize online platforms like Chinese University MOOC and Chaoxing to regularly share Ouyue culture-related articles, videos, and tasks, facilitating mobile and ubiquitous learning. This subtle, immersive approach deepens students' understanding of traditional culture and reinforces their identification with Chinese cultural values.

## 5.3 Expanding Practical Teaching: Promoting Ouyue Culture

While enriching classroom instruction with Ouyue culture, educators should extend pedagogical impact through experiential learning, integrating curriculum-based education, cultural immersion, and practical engagement. Students are immersed in authentic cultural contexts, enhancing historical consciousness and cultural confidence.

In-class practical tasks encourage students to delve into Ouyue culture by exploring its "what",

“how”, and “why”. Teachers can organize group activities where students systematically categorize existing English literature on Ouyue culture and translate untranslated cultural elements. Additionally, students are encouraged to “narrate Ouyue culture in English”, combining personal observations and reflections to present an authentic, multidimensional portrayal of Wenzhou. By leveraging new media platforms like WeChat public accounts and Bilibili for text-based or video-based content dissemination, educators enable students to revitalize traditional culture, integrating it dynamically into modern social life.

Beyond the classroom, experiential learning activities immerse students in the cultural essence of Ouyue. Field trips to historical sites and hands-on cultural workshops allow students to directly engage with Wenzhou’s heritage. Teachers may assign tasks such as proofreading and enhancing English descriptions at cultural landmarks or creating new bilingual content for sites lacking such resources. Students can volunteer as English-speaking tour guides, introducing foreign visitors to Wenzhou’s historical and cultural narratives. Participation in government-sponsored cultural festivals or forums, such as the Intangible Cultural Heritage Aesthetics Symposium or the “XieLingyun and Chinese Landscape Poetry” Summit, provides opportunities for students to offer language services, bridging cultural gaps in international outreach. Collaborative projects, such as compiling an English-language Wenzhou Travel Guide or building an Ouyue culture corpus, standardize terminology and amplify the global accessibility of local traditions.

These initiatives synergize language acquisition with cultural preservation, equipping students with both practical language skills and a profound sense of national identity. By showcasing the allure of Chinese traditions through globally accessible mediums, this approach not only elevates students’ cross-cultural competencies but also propels Ouyue culture onto the world stage, contributing to the global dialogue on cultural diversity.

## 6. Conclusion

As a spiritual gem of Chinese civilization, Ouyue culture embodies regional distinctiveness and national wisdom. Its profound humanistic heritage and moral educational value provide abundant resources for ideological and political education within college English curriculum. Through systematic analysis of Ouyue culture’s core characteristics, this study demonstrates the feasibility and unique advantages of its integration with college English curriculum-based ideological education, proposing a tripartite implementation framework: textbook development, pedagogical optimization, and practical expansion. This integration not only achieves the synergistic educational goals of knowledge transmission, skill enhancement, and value cultivation but also pioneers innovative pathways for the transformative adaptation and global dissemination of traditional culture in a globalized context.

Moving forward, regional universities should deepen curriculum reforms to transform local cultural resources into pedagogical strengths. By nurturing versatile talents equipped with both national identity and global vision, and by revitalizing traditional culture in the new era, higher education can contribute to strengthening China’s cultural soft power and advancing the “Chinese Culture Going Global” strategy. Such efforts will ensure that Ouyue culture—and by extension, Chinese cultural heritage—continues to thrive as a dynamic force in global cultural dialogues, bridging historical legacy with contemporary innovation.

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