

Original Paper

Integrating Ideological and Political Education into An Arabic for Tourism Course in China: A Student-Centered Case Study

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Received: June 15, 2025

Accepted: June 28, 2025

Online Published: July 7, 2025

doi:10.22158/elsr.v6n3p54

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/elsr.v6n3p54>

Abstract

This study investigates how Ideological and Political Education (IPE) may be effectively integrated into an Arabic for Tourism course utilizing a student-centered, task-based approach. Seven third-year Arabic majors focused on the “Traveling to Jordan” class, which included both academic training and practical simulations. The data from classroom observations, student work, and interviews were evaluated thematically. The findings indicate that learners improved in tourism-specific language usage, cross-cultural communication, and civic consciousness. The combination of declarative, procedural, and tacit knowledge increased student autonomy and value internalization. Despite limitations such as a small sample size and breadth, the study presents a reproducible strategy for incorporating IPE into non-English LSP courses, which contributes to China’s larger foreign language education reform efforts.

Keywords

integrating ideological and political education, Arabic for tourism course, student-centered case study

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

In recent years, the Chinese higher education system has experienced considerable ideological and institutional upheaval, triggered by state policy initiatives such as the “Great Ideological and Political Education” framework (Liu, Zhao, & Starkey, 2021). This educational reform seeks to build a comprehensive talent development paradigm that incorporates moral, intellectual, physical, artistic, and labor education (Zhao, Muhamad, Mustakim, & Yang, 2023). Ideological and Political Education (IPE) is central to this concept, and it is taught in many disciplines, including foreign language training. IPE is no longer limited to traditional political science classes; it is increasingly interwoven throughout the

academic curriculum as a means of transmitting values, forming national identities, and fostering civic duty (Wu, 2025).

Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) has developed as an important pedagogical approach in China's modern education agenda, notably in foreign language departments. LSP courses like "Business English," "Medical Japanese," and "Arabic for Tourism" put professional communication skills and domain-specific terminology ahead of broad language competency (Trace, Hudson, & Brown, 2015). The promotion of LSP reflects China's aim to create a competent and globally competitive workforce that is congruent with the country's economic and diplomatic objectives. However, while LSP courses emphasize applied abilities, they have typically lacked an ideological dimension that is consistent with the overall IPE mandate.

Arabic is strategically important in China's education and diplomacy, particularly in light of the Belt and Road Initiative. As China's political, economic, and cultural relationships with Arab nations strengthen, there is an increased need for Arabic-speaking experts in tourism, commerce, international relations, and media (Deng, 2025). As a language service course, "Arabic for Tourism" seeks to educate students for genuine cross-cultural communication in a tourism setting (Anhui Interantional Studies University, 2023). Existing courses, on the other hand, frequently overlook the incorporation of ideological content such as cultural confidence, international cooperation narratives, and national image development in favor of practical terminology, itinerary planning, and customer service skills.

Despite the simultaneous emergence of IPE and LSP in the Chinese educational system, there is still a considerable gap in research and practice for incorporating IPE into Arabic LSP courses. IPE-based pedagogical innovations typically prioritize English education (Le & Mai, 2021) over non-mainstream languages like Arabic. Furthermore, combining abstract ideological material into highly practical language courses continues to pose pedagogical issues. This project seeks to close this gap by investigating how to include IPE into Arabic tourism courses in a student-centered way, therefore establishing a scalable paradigm for multidisciplinary, values-based education.

1.2 Problem Statement

In recent years, there has been an increase in the incorporation of ideological and political education (IPE) into university curricula, but most empirical research and instructional innovations have concentrated on general and professional English (Le & Mai, 2021). Arabic, despite its strategic relevance under the Belt and Road Initiative, has a limited impact on IPE integration theory and teaching practice. "Arabic for Tourism", as a professional LSP course, focuses on enhancing students' communication abilities in professional tourist settings (Mohammad, Wan, & Saipolbarin, 2019). However, the training focuses on professional language and situational conversation while frequently ignoring moral, civic, and cultural content that is congruent with national ideological aspirations.

Furthermore, even when ideological information is given, it is frequently delivered in a teacher-centered way (Garrett, 2008), limiting students' active engagement and critical thought. This contradicts the

increased emphasis on student-centered learning models that prioritize autonomy, agency, and experiential knowledge, which are crucial for internalizing ideological principles in a permanent fashion. To far, there has been little study on how to include international public education (IPE) into Arabic language training courses in a way that is both pedagogically effective and consistent with student-centered teaching approaches. The scarcity of evidence-based models and case studies is a difficulty for educators attempting to integrate language instruction, professional skills, and ideological and political education in a cohesive and practical manner.

1.3 Objectives

To address the stated inadequacies, this study will investigate how ideological and political education (IPE) may be effectively integrated into Arabic tourism courses using a student-centered teaching paradigm. This study intends to achieve the following objectives:

- Create a teaching unit for Arabic tourism courses that incorporates IPE themes such as civic duty, cultural confidence, and China's worldwide narrative while being linguistically and professionally relevant.
- Implement and assess a student-centered teaching strategy that stresses learner autonomy, collaborative projects, and real-world simulations (e.g., playing tourist ambassadors) as vehicles for language learning and idea development.
- Analyze students' comments and performance in the integrated course, with an emphasis on language competency, cross-cultural communication skills, and ideological awareness.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive research design, observing and measuring variables without manipulation, to accurately describe a population, situation, or phenomenon (McCombes, 2022). This approach allowed the researcher to observe, record, and interpret learners' responses, behaviors, and reflections during a structured, student-centered instructional sequence. Since our research aims to create and evaluate an Arabic tourist teaching unit that incorporates Ideological and Political Education (IPE) topics including civic duty, cultural confidence, and China's global narrative while being linguistically and professionally relevant.

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The study was carried out at Anhui International Studies University (AISU), one of the Chinese universities specializing in foreign language teaching. AISU offers many full-time undergraduate language programs, including Arabic. As part of the university's continuing curriculum reform push to change Arabic language education from a typical business-oriented concentration to tourism-oriented topics, Tourism Arabic was launched as an option for third-year students (Anhui Interantional Studies University, 2023).

The course lasts for 16 weeks, with one theoretical class and one practical class per week. The course is taught in Arabic and combines Introduction to Tourism (Huang & Wu, 2023; Almuhri, Alriyami, & Scott, 2017) with Arab attractions (using materials such as official Arab tourism brochures and state-approved media). In accordance with China's national education policy, which emphasizes the fundamental function of "moral education" in all higher education curriculum, the course was changed in 2023 to include components of Ideological and Political Education (IPE) (Xue & Li, 2020; Anhui Interantional Studies University, 2023; Deng, 2025). This integration sought to link foreign language instruction with ideological awareness and civic education goals.

This study involved seven third-year undergraduate students participating in the Tourism Arabic course. They had finished core Arabic courses such Basic Arabic, Arabic Listening, Translation Theory and Practice, and Introduction to Arab Countries. In addition, all participants had completed the three mandatory ideological theory courses: Introduction to Marxism, Ideological Morality and the Rule of Law, and Modern Chinese History. This academic background equipped students with both the linguistic abilities and the ideological literacy required to engage with the course's dual-language and value-oriented material (Anhui Interantional Studies University, 2023).

Purposive sampling (Nikolopoulou, 2022) was used to choose participant, and they included all students registered in the course throughout the study period, independent of gender. All students provided informed consent, and pseudonyms were employed to maintain anonymity and ethical research requirements. The researcher had a solid teacher-student rapport with the participants, having taught them in prior semesters, which aided in the development of trust and open communication throughout data collection.

2.3 Instructional Procedures

The course Traveling to Jordan was chosen as the main example for this study because of its balanced integration of declarative, procedural, and tacit knowledge, making it ideal for merging professional tourism material with ideological and value-based education. The instructional design adhered to student-centered learning concepts as outlined in Shanghai Jiao Tong University's "Student-Centered Instructional Model" (Wang, 2020), which emphasizes learner autonomy, real-world simulation, collaborative learning, and reflective thinking. The course structure and teaching process are shown in Figure 1:

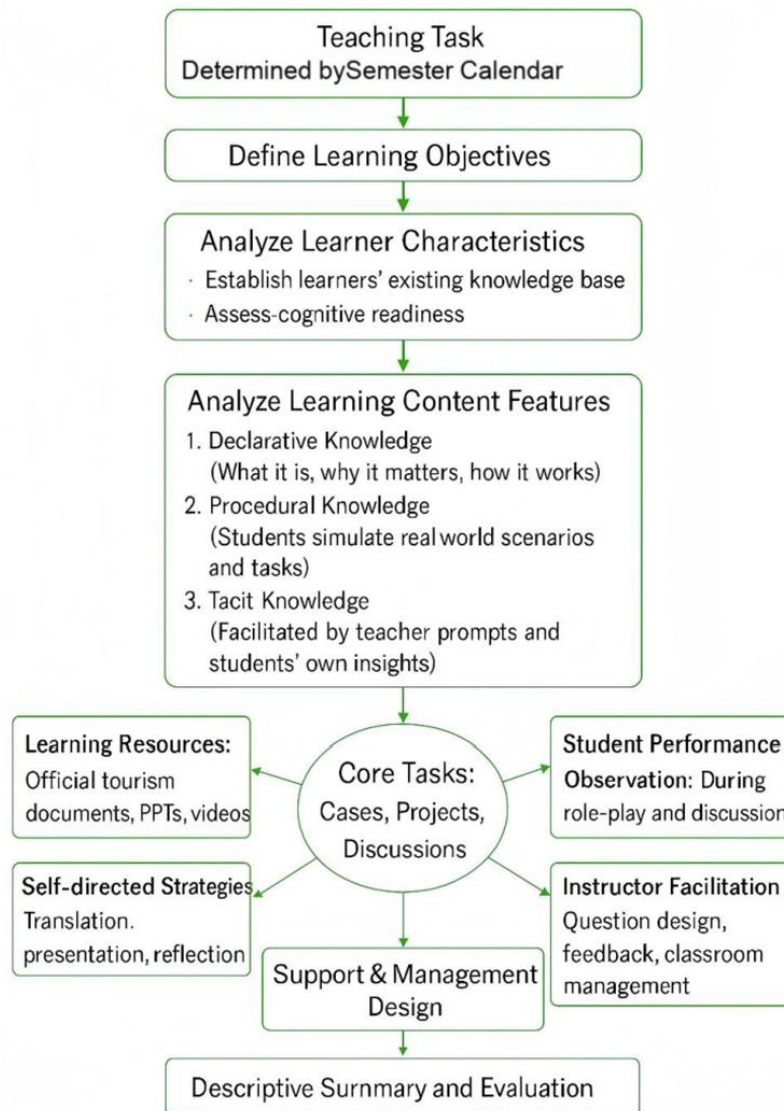


Figure 1. Instructional Process for Integrating Ideological and Political Education into “Traveling to Jordan” under A Student-Centered Learning Model

During the 16-week semester, students follow a weekly teaching cycle that includes both theoretical and practical lessons. Traveling to Jordan is an example of a two-week course in which the theoretical portion focuses on the development of declarative knowledge (Wang, 2020), providing students with fundamental knowledge of Jordan’s geography, historical landmarks, religious tourism, political structure (The Official Website of The Jordan Tourism Board, n.d.), and tourism development between China and Jordan (Jraid, 2023). They improve their reading comprehension and domain-specific vocabulary by learning this information before and during class, while also stimulating discussions about national identity, cultural diplomacy, and ethical expression in global tourism, all of which are important components of ideological and political education (IPE).

The practical sessions aimed at developing both procedural and tacit knowledge through experiential learning (Wang, 2020). Students acted as “China-Jordan Tourism Ambassadors” (reference Jordan Tourism Board Partners with International Tennis Star Abdullah Shelbayh as Brand Ambassador (Alaa, 2024) and took part in simulated tourist situations to promote Jordan to Chinese audiences using Arabic. Oral presentations, small-group bilingual tourism activities, peer teaching, and cross-cultural interactive role-plays such as airport greeting, tour guide explanations, and Q&A with potential visitors were all part of the program. These assignments were highly interactive, situational, and professional, allowing students to practice their language abilities in real-world circumstances while reflecting on their roles as cultural communicators.

To foster a student-centered atmosphere, teachers served as facilitators rather than lecturers, fostering peer participation, self-assessment, and critical reflection. Students were instructed to keep reflective journals—written in Arabic or Chinese—after each session to record their language improvement, intercultural insights, and ideological views. The course’s cumulative structure ensured a transition from information reception to language creation, and eventually to ideological internalization, matching with national education goals that emphasize the integration of “moral cultivation” into all elements of university instruction (Xue & Li, 2020).

This integrated educational method enabled students to not only improve their language and cross-cultural communication skills, but also to critically engage with China’s global narrative and their roles in it. The design therefore provides a reproducible paradigm for introducing IPE issues into foreign language education in a professional and pedagogically competent manner.

2.4 Data Collection

Multiple data sources were employed to collect thorough information regarding student experiences and learning outcomes, in accordance with descriptive research methodology.

- Classroom Observation Logs (Press, 2022)

Throughout the theoretical and practical sessions, the teacher kept thorough records on student engagement, language use, group dynamics, and ideological expression.

- Student Reflective Journals (Ahmed, 2019)

Following each session, students contributed brief written comments (in Arabic or Chinese) that documented their language learning progress, cross-cultural insights, and value-related interpretations.

- Student Work Samples

Presentation slides, translated brochures, promotional video scripts, and project reports were used to conduct a descriptive study of performance.

- Post-course informal interviews (Barrett, 2023)

All seven participants were interviewed informally, open-ended, to learn about their perspectives on the course, notably the integration of IPE and the usefulness of simulated assignments.

2.5 Data Analysis

All collected data were analyzed using a descriptive thematic approach (McCombes, 2022), which allows for the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of patterns related to language proficiency, cross-cultural communication, and ideological engagement. First, classroom observation records, student works (e.g., presentation slides, promotional materials, translation exercises), reflective diaries, and post-class interview records were transcribed and organized using Chaoxing Xuexi Tong Software (Ma, 2023). The researchers independently conducted open coding to generate a preliminary codebook, and the codes were clustered (Open, Axial, and Selective Coding in Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide, 2024) according to three a priori dimensions: linguistic competence, cross-cultural awareness, and IPE awareness.

Next, the researchers then used axial coding to explore the relationships between the codes, identifying subthemes such as vocabulary depth, syntactic complexity, pragmatic appropriateness, cultural sensitivity, narrative framing, and expression of civic responsibility. Through continued comparison, these subthemes were refined into several prominent categories: (1) Enhanced Professional Discourse, reflecting students' increased ability to use tourism-specific terminology and structured rhetorical strategies; (2) Intercultural Mediation (Wang & Gao, 2023), referring to students' ability to interpret and reconcile tourism cultural meanings in the Jordanian and Chinese contexts; and (3) Internalized Civic Identity (Petrovska, 2021), indicating the emergence of reflective statements that position learners as responsible ambassadors of tourism culture.

To confirm the validity of the study, coder triangulation was used: inconsistencies in coding were handled by recurrent discussion until consensus above 90% inter-coder agreement (McAlister, Lee, Ehlert, & Kajfez, 2017). Memoing (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008) was employed throughout to record analytic judgments and emerging insights, creating an audit trail. Finally, sample passages were chosen to demonstrate each category while keeping the breadth of production about "Arabic for Tourism" course and ideological reflexivity. This tiered analytic method guaranteed that the data appropriately represented the various effects of the Traveling to Jordan educational unit.

3. Results and Discussion

The "Traveling to Jordan" module of the Arabic for Tourism course was taught in one practical and one theoretical lesson. The integration of Ideological and Political Education (IPE) into each mode was investigated to determine its influence on learners' professional, linguistic, and ideological growth.

3.1 Theoretical Session Results and Discussion

During the first week of the "Traveling to Jordan" subject, instruction focused on acquiring declarative knowledge of Jordan's national profile, tourist policy, and bilateral collaboration with China. Prior to class, students used the Chaoxing Xuexi Tong (Ma, 2023) to retrieve Arabic-language documents from the Jordan Tourism Board, which they then translated and interpreted.

During the session, students were randomly selected to answer two rounds of questions. Their responses demonstrated accurate comprehension of vocabulary and contextual understanding. The instructor supplemented these interactions with elaborations on:

- Differences between China's and Jordan's political systems (Marks, 2022),
- Historical parallels between the Hijaz Railway (The Official Website of The Jordan Tourism Board, n.d.) and China's earliest railway (Shanghai–Wusong),
- Strategic planning for optimizing travel itineraries using local transport systems.

After the knowledge-based instruction, students engaged with the IPE component of the lesson. They studied the quote:

“Core values are the soul of cultural soft power and the key to building it.” (Zhang, 2022)

To absorb this ideological message, students were encouraged to identify a Chinese red tourism destination that would appeal to Arab tourists. The group replies included the following:

- Xiao Jing praised Qionghai, site of the Red Detachment of Women Memorial Park, highlighting the symbolic importance of women's contributions in national liberation and drawing parallels with present Arab women's rights campaigns.
- Yan'an was proposed by Xiao Wu, who emphasized its revolutionary tradition and historical interactions between Chinese and Arab personalities during the anti-Japanese fight, establishing it as a location of shared intellectual heritage and mutual understanding.

These examples showed that learners not only understood the ideological meaning underlying the phrase, but also displayed the capacity to apply such ideas to culturally grounded, professional tourism contexts. Therefore, the theoretical session effectively supported cognitive scaffolding, allowing students to connect factual tourist knowledge to ideological interpretation and value-based decision-making.

3.2 Practical Session Results and Discussion

The second week focused on procedural and tacit knowledge building through a student-led simulation. One student, using by the alias “Xiao Yu,” offered to be a Jordanian tourist ambassador. He created and conducted an Arabic-language promotional campaign to students who acted as prospective Chinese visitors.

Xiao Yu provided an Arabic presentation that included multimedia elements such as PowerPoint, video clips, and official brochures. He began with the Dead Sea and discussed Jordan's tourism attractions. He posed an intriguing question: “Why doesn't anyone drown in the Dead Sea?” This prompted a heated debate. Following the students' speculations, Xiao Yu discussed the scientific reasons for the increase in salinity in the Dead Sea, linking it to the growth of health tourism.

He then discussed Petra and other UNESCO historic sites, emphasizing Jordan's involvement in the China-Arab Ecotourism Alliance. His presentation got universal applause, with one student stating:

“Thanks to our motherland's cooperation with Jordan, travel there is now more accessible!”

During an informal post-class interview, Xiao Yu expressed his own insights:

“Simulating being a tourist ambassador helped me feel responsible for crafting the national image. I must think about how to transmit attractions convincingly and ethically. It taught me to conduct yourself professionally and consider the long-term cultural influence.”

The workshop was effective in improving not just presentation and verbal fluency, but also professionalism and ideological depth. His students, albeit serving as the audience, acquired crucial cultural and diplomatic narratives, expressing national pride and acknowledging China’s worldwide impact through tourist collaboration.

The practical session demonstrated that real-world simulations may aid in deep learning. Students gained autonomy, took on professional positions, and assimilated civic principles while utilizing the target language in genuine, high-stakes circumstances.

3.3 Assignment Results and Analysis

Figure 2 presents the assignment performance for seven students (The names used in this study were pseudonyms with the students’ consent). Based on a 100-point rubric:

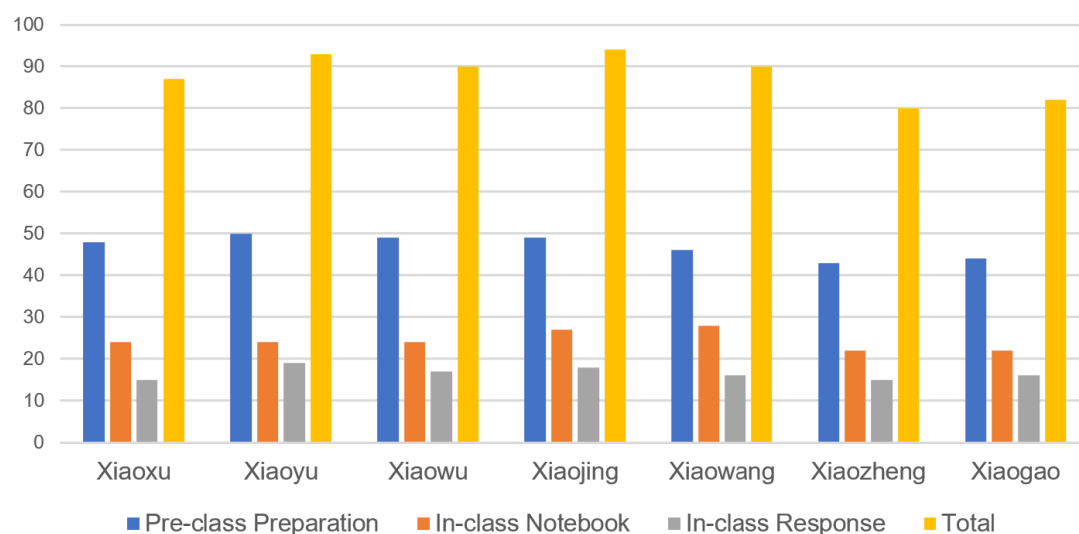


Figure 2. Student Performance in “Traveling to Jordan” Assignment

- Pre-class preparation (50%): four students scored above 45 and three between 40 and 45, demonstrating significant initiative.
- In-class notebook completion (30%): the majority had scores ranging from 20 to 25, indicating active note-taking and revision, with variance due to variations in speed and focus.
- Response accuracy (20%): all students scored higher than 15, suggesting an excellent knowledge of the preparation material.

Overall, four students scored above 90, one between 85 and 90, and two between 80 and 85, demonstrating a substantial correlation between learner autonomy and instructional effectiveness.

3.4 Descriptive Summary

Following the training sessions, the teacher combined material from the theoretical and practical lessons. This featured student-created materials, corrected exercises, and pertinent Sino-Jordanian cooperation news stories. A structured knowledge map was uploaded to the Chaoxin Xuexi Tong (Ma, 2023), which serves as a scaffolded and reusable framework for post-class evaluation. The paradigm characterized learning as:

- Tourism content (e.g., geography, heritage sites),
- Language input (vocabulary, sentence frames),
- IPE elements (core values, diplomatic narratives).

Through class observations, student work samples, and post-lesson reflections, the following pedagogical conclusions were drawn:

a. Integrative Knowledge Framework with Instructor Facilitation.

By combining declarative information (fact-based tourism ideas), procedural knowledge (student-led simulations), and tacit knowledge (self-reflection and value internalization) (Wang L., 2020), the teacher operated as: a facilitator of experiential learning; a moral guide fostering civic awareness; a cognitive strategist helping students internalize ideological principles.

This pedagogical synergy enables students to connect professional language learning and ideological consciousness.

b. Student Autonomy and Meaningful Learning Motivation

Students demonstrated heightened autonomy, evidenced by: independent translation of Arabic tourism texts; development of bilingual promotional materials; role-based performance with contextual sensitivity.

These behaviors fostered a sense of ownership, success, and confidence across language and ideological boundaries. The ensuing intrinsic drive encouraged innovative thinking, reinforced ideological identification, and supported long-term professional goals.

In this light, the incorporation of IPE into the “Arabic for Tourism” course, particularly in the “Traveling to Jordan” section, demonstrates how student-centered, task-based pedagogy may seamlessly and effectively combine professional, linguistic, and ideological education. The case shows the feasibility and effectiveness of values-based instruction within a Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) framework, which contributes to both academic research and practical curricular reform in Chinese higher education.

4. Conclusion

This study investigated how Ideological and Political Education (IPE) may be effectively integrated into an Arabic for Tourism course using a student-centered, task-based teaching strategy. Using descriptive research methodologies, the study examined the “Traveling to Jordan” lesson as a typical module of a larger Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) program. The findings offer persuasive evidence that ideological material, when incorporated in linguistically and professionally relevant situations, may

improve students' language competency, cross-cultural competence, civic consciousness, and value alignment.

The combination of declarative knowledge (e.g., tourism concepts and national policy), procedural knowledge (e.g., tourism ambassador simulations), and tacit knowledge (e.g., value reflection and moral reasoning) was critical in producing multidimensional learning results. The instructor served many roles, including facilitator, moral advisor, and cognitive strategist, assisting students in transitioning from passive language learning to active ideological participation. Students took considerable initiative in pre-class preparation, role-based performance, and reflective inquiry, all of which helped to shape their professional and ideological identities.

Furthermore, students' performance in classroom activities, assignments, and interviews demonstrated increased autonomy, inventiveness, and confidence. These characteristics are critical for developing the sort of internationally competent, value-driven professionals envisaged in China's educational development plan, particularly considering the Belt and Road Initiative. By embedding ideological information in real-world tourist communication problems, the course was able to make IPE relevant and useful.

However, many restrictions should be recognized. First, the study used a small sample of seven students from a single university, which limited the generalizability of the findings. Second, study focused on a single instructional unit within a single LSP course, hence the findings may not be applicable to other modules or fields. Third, the brief observation period precluded assessing long-term ideological internalization or behavioral change. Fourth, the course design was heavily instructor-dependent, raising concerns regarding scalability. Finally, while the Chaoxing Xuexi Tong facilitated post-class evaluation, the study did not thoroughly analyze the platform's function in developing autonomous ideological thinking.

Despite these limitations, this study adds to the developing area of IPE in foreign language education by presenting a repeatable example of value-oriented instruction in a non-English, professionally specialized setting. It illustrates that ideological and civic education may be deeply ingrained and pedagogically effective in technical LSP courses such as "Arabic for Tourism," if they are driven by rigorous instructional design and student-centered principles.

Acknowledgement

Thank the students from the Arabic major of 2021 class at Anhui International Studies University for their participation. The names used in this study were pseudonyms with the students' consent.

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