

Ideological Differences and Mutual Learning in Chinese and International Language Curriculum Standards: A Marxist Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

This study employs a dialectical comparative research approach grounded in Marxist ideological theory to systematically contrast the ideological construction logic of Chinese and foreign language curriculum standards. The research aims to reveal their differences and commonalities, providing a theoretical reference for language curriculum reform. Findings indicate that China's language curriculum centers on a "collective development orientation", cultivating core competencies in "cultural inheritance and understanding" to construct a trinity of content systems integrating "outstanding traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture". It emphasizes "integrative permeation" of ideology achieving endogenous growth of values through linguistic practice. Western countries exhibit an "individualistic orientation", prioritizing the cultivation of individual values through discussions of multicultural issues and critical thinking. Their ideological permeation carries implicit biases. These differences are fundamentally rooted in divergent social systems, cultural traditions, and historical missions. The study proposes that ideological mutual learning should adhere to the Marxist principle of "affirming the positive while negating the negative", while upholding cultural sovereignty, critically assimilating foreign pedagogical approaches such as thematic teaching and the modern adaptation of local classics to construct a Chinese specific literacy education paradigm that organically unifies "value cultivation and language proficiency development". By integrating cultural carriers with core values and innovating implementation pathways and evaluation mechanisms, this paradigm offers a localized solution for Chinese language curriculum reform while providing a cross-civilizational dialogue perspective for the ideological construction of global mother-tongue curricula.

Keywords

Chinese language curriculum standards, Ideological construction, Marxist methodology, Comparative research method, Cultural mutual learning

Introduction

Within the educational curriculum system, the language arts course bears the crucial responsibility of cultivating students' emotional attitudes and values. In today's era of globalization, it has been further tasked with enhancing national cultural soft power and strengthening core national competitiveness. Ideology refers to the aggregate of concepts, viewpoints, and ideas directly linked to a society's economy and politics, encompassing forms of consciousness such as political-legal thought, morality, literature and art, religion, philosophy, and other social sciences [1]. As a guiding document defining the educational objectives, content, and implementation pathways of the Chinese language curriculum, the

Chinese Language Curriculum Standards implicitly convey ideological orientations. These orientations not only reflect the nation's cultural traditions, social systems, and contemporary missions but also significantly shape the value systems of learners.

Marxist methodology asserts that the material base determines the superstructure of ideas [2]. As a unique discipline combining practical utility with humanistic values, the Chinese language curriculum must serve social production practices through language proficiency development while simultaneously fulfilling political socialization functions through cultural content selection. This duality inherently endows its ideological

construction with the dynamic nature of contradictory unity. Amidst the interplay of globalization and anti-globalization trends, national language curricula worldwide undertake the dual task of preserving local cultural heritage while cultivating universal human values. This study places the ideological construction of China's language curriculum within a global comparative framework, examining its differences and commonalities with those of the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, and other nations. It aims to provide reference points for resolving the educational tension between locality and universality [3].

Theoretical foundations and literature review

Marxist ideological theory provides profound philosophical tools for analyzing the value orientation of language arts curricula [4]. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels revealed that ideology, as the “superstructure of ideas” fundamentally embodies the interests of the ruling class, asserting that “the theoretical thinking of each epoch is a historical product.” Under this historical materialist perspective, curriculum standards in education become crucial texts for examining the logic of state ideological construction [5]. They not only systematize knowledge but also carry the mission of internalizing mainstream values within the individual's mental world. In *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, Althusser posits that education constitutes a core component of the ideological state apparatus (ISA), reproducing ideology through the “hidden curriculum”. The distinctiveness of the Chinese language curriculum lies in the deep interweaving of its ideological carrier function with its disciplinary attributes [6]. From the perspective of disciplinary attributes, language, as a tool for thought and communication, possesses distinct practical social characteristics. Its acquisition process inevitably involves understanding the meaning systems of specific cultural communities. From the perspective of its ideological carrier function, the selection of curriculum content fundamentally constitutes an institutional response to the question of “which values are worthy of transmission.” This intertwining of “instrumentality” and “value” makes the language arts curriculum a quintessential manifestation of “achieving ideological identification through nonviolent means” as described in Althusser's theory [7]. Compared to natural sciences, the ideological permeation within language arts

curricula is more covert and profound. American scholar Apple argues in *Ideology and Curriculum*, that curricula serve as covert tools for ideological infiltration. This precisely reflects the Marxist principle of the “unity of opposites between content and form” as manifested in the educational sphere [8].

Analyzing the ideological differences between Chinese and foreign language curriculum standards requires identifying commonalities within these differences and adopting a developmental perspective. Foreign language curricula similarly incorporate ideological education content, “pursuing the values driven guidance of the curriculum” and bearing the “task of transmitting core values to the younger generation” near universal consensus in the formulation of language curriculum standards across nations. In 2010, the United States promulgated the Common Core State Standards for English language arts, which emphasize critical thinking and multicultural understanding [9]. The current UK curriculum standards also specifically mention “appreciating one's own rich and diverse literary heritage”. In 2004, Japan formulated the learning guidelines: Japanese language. The elementary school section of the curriculum guidelines proposed fostering students' understanding and love for their own culture and traditions, cultivating a sense of “I am Japanese”, the junior high school section proposed “deepening interest in and understanding of our nation's culture and traditions, fostering an attitude of respect for them”, the senior high school section emphasized “deepening interest in and understanding of our nation's culture and traditions, fostering an attitude of respect for them”. Furthermore, Japan's latest curriculum standards also require students to “consciously recognize the importance of the national language and respect it”. All these approaches address the question of “what kind of people to cultivate” through language education, aiming to equip students with values and abilities suited to societal development. This commonality demonstrates that while the specific expressions of ideology differ among nations, the essence of language curricula as national tools for nurturing talent remains consistent, providing a foundation for mutual learning. When analyzing differences, we must situate them within their specific historical contexts. We should neither judge the past harshly by present standards nor assume current

models are immutable. In Marxist terms, this means “viewing issues through a developmental lens”.

Domestic scholars have conducted extensive research on Chinese language curriculum standards. Xu Peng summarized the presentation characteristics of “curriculum content” in national language standards through international comparisons, projected global trends in the development of “curriculum content” for Chinese language standards, and recommended that China’s standards should integrate learning domains, enhance content coherence, clarify core disciplinary concepts, and focus on students’ higher-order cognitive skills. Fan employed the discontinuous equilibrium model framework to reveal that each major shift in the policy objectives of the “Junior High School Chinese Curriculum Standards” correlates with contemporary social contradictions and economic, cultural, and societal contexts. Changes in the policy landscape serve as a crucial factor driving the evolution of policy objectives. Zheng emphasized that curriculum objectives serve as a key to understanding curriculum standards. Grasping them requires discerning curriculum reform trends, identifying critical issues, and integrating existing practical experience. Zhao found that the new curriculum standards establish cultural confidence as the central thread running through Chinese language education. Future research should continue exploring the knowledge spectrum of Chinese language courses, the development of Chinese learning task clusters, and paradigms for Chinese language practice activities. In contrast, international research tends to employ critical discourse analysis to examine how curriculum standards texts reinforce linguistic authority. Chang-Bacon and others explored how monolingual ideologies within the United States education system influence bilingual education policies, noting that traditional educational inequalities—such as unequal access to quality language instruction—persist under the “new bilingualism” paradigm. They specifically advocate for weaving more inclusive language policies into curriculum design to address these gaps and support diverse learner needs.

Heidt analyzed the language policies of an international school in Colombia, focusing on the tension between English as a commodified tool (often valued for economic advantage) and multilingual educational ideals that prioritize cultural and linguistic diversity. She

emphasized that schools face unique challenges in decolonizing language education, such as balancing institutional pressures with equitable learning goals.

Moea revealed multiple curriculum ideologies—including learner-centeredness, social efficiency, and social reconstruction—embedded within Lesotho’s secondary English curriculum framework, offering key insights into understanding how such ideologies shape African national curriculum standards. Overall, international literature not only broadens research perspectives beyond single-country contexts but also establishes a solid theoretical foundation for subsequent analysis [10].

Ideologies in Chinese and foreign language curriculum

Trajectories of ideological construction in Chinese and foreign language curricula

The evolution of China’s Chinese language curriculum throughout history vividly illustrates Marxism’s principle that social existence determines social consciousness. From the pre-Qin era classics like the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of Documents*, to the Four Books and Five Classics after the Han dynasty’s policy of “exclusive veneration of Confucianism”, language education has always centered on the concept of “literature as a vehicle for moral principles.” Since modern times, the Opium War opened China’s doors, and the language curriculum began to shoulder the historical mission of national survival and rejuvenation. During the Beiyang era, curriculum standards across primary and secondary schools required students to understand indigenous culture, awaken national consciousness, and promote national spirit. Simultaneously, they emphasized incorporating selections from various party-affiliated publications into the reading materials. After the founding of the People’s Republic, the language curriculum underwent a naming evolution from “National Language” and “National Literature” to “Language Arts”. The 1954 teaching syllabus first proposed that “the process of language teaching inherently includes ideological and political education”. Red classics such as “*Who Are the Most Admirable People?*” and “*Red Rock*” entered textbooks, laying the groundwork for an educational paradigm rooted in socialist ideology. Following the reform and opening, as the focus of work shifted, the curriculum standards

reinforced the “instrumental nature” of language education while upholding its educational foundation. The 1992 syllabus emphasized “cherishing the Chinese language and the outstanding culture of the Chinese nation”, maintaining cultural identity amid the tide of the market economy.

In the new era, the ideological construction of the Chinese language curriculum has embarked on a new chapter under the guidance of Marxism. The 2017 “Curriculum Standards for Chinese Language in General High Schools” introduced the concept of “core literacy in Chinese language”, incorporating “cultural inheritance and understanding”. The 2022 Compulsory Education Chinese Language Curriculum Standards further established a trinity content system comprising “outstanding traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture”. Further established a trinity content system encompassing “outstanding traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture”. Classical poetry and prose account for over 40% of the curriculum. Revolutionary texts such as “The Long March” and “Ode to the Yellow River”, construct a systematic teaching framework for revolutionary culture, which constitutes nearly 30% of the content. Texts reflecting scientific achievements, such as “*Artemisinin: A Small Step in Humanity’s Conquest of Disease*”, highlight modern civilization’s accomplishments, accounting for nearly 10% of the curriculum, achieving the organic integration of the “Four Confidences”. (Sì Gè Zìxìn: confidence in socialism with Chinese characteristics regarding its path, theory, system, and culture) Unlike previous approaches, this phase emphasizes the “integrated permeation” of ideology, moving beyond rigid conceptual indoctrination to foster the endogenous growth of values through “language construction and application”.

The ideological evolution of language arts curricula in major Western nations has consistently intertwined with their respective nation-building processes, social value transformations, and shifts in the international landscape, forming distinct developmental trajectories.

Before American independence, education was dominated by the Puritans established a tradition where literacy served religious faith. After the Revolutionary War, educational goals gradually shifted toward cultivating democratic citizens. Nineteenth-century

American language textbooks like McGaffey Readers represented early curricular expressions of capitalist ideology. In the mid-to-late 20th century, multiculturalism gained prominence amid waves of immigration and the rise of the civil rights movement. Section IX of the first United States. National Language Arts Standards explicitly stated: “As cultures become increasingly diverse, students need and should be provided with learning environments that respect cultural, racial, and ethnic differences schools have a responsibility to create an atmosphere that respects the languages students speak and the cultures that shape those languages.” This reflects the United States emphasis on the connection between language and culture in its native language instruction. As a “bellwether” for global educational reform, the United States 2011 Common Core State Standards introduced competency indicators such as “critical thinking” and “information literacy”. While these competency benchmarks were directly adopted by over thirty countries worldwide, the recommended reading lists still predominantly feature Western classics. Moreover, discussions on multicultural topics exhibit distinct characteristics of “Western modernity” ideology, making it an ideal case study for analyzing “individualism-oriented” approaches. This implicitly reveals a deeper logic: maintaining the centrality of Western values amidst multicultural coexistence.

The UK’s situation is closely tied to its history. Before the 19th century, language arts curricula centered on classic authors like Shakespeare and Milton, using literary education to construct the cultural identity of “British Empire citizens”. After World War II, with the dissolution of the Commonwealth and the integration of the European Union, curriculum standards began facing the dual challenges of “preserving local cultural heritage” and “embracing diverse values”. Item 5 of the UK’s National Curriculum for English 2007 states: “Understand one’s own and others’ cultural traditions within the context of the British tradition and develop a strong sense of responsibility towards British culture.” The 2012 Key Stage 4 English learning content and attainment targets, issued in May 2012, emphasized understanding the timeless influence and significance of texts selected from Britain’s literary heritage while exploring their contemporary relevance. Students were to

examine how texts from diverse cultures and traditions shape values, assumptions, and identities, recognize changes in spoken and written language driven by social and technological developments, and understand how this process relates to individual and cultural differences. The British curriculum standards clearly and systematically articulate cultural understanding requirements across educational stages. While they include comprehension of traditional British culture, they place greater emphasis on recognizing cultural differences, reflecting multicultural awareness. As the cultural heart of Europe and the birthplace of modern literary education, the UK's native language curriculum centers on Shakespearean classics to build cultural identity. Meanwhile, the systematic exposition of "multicultural differences" in the National Curriculum: English 2007 reflects the ideological strategy of Western imperial powers in globalization, forming a stark contrast with China. The United States and the United Kingdom represent the ideological exporters of the "English language and cultural sphere". Selecting the US and UK as subjects for analysis aligns with the mainstream comparative paradigm in the field of language education.

Ideological implementation in Chinese and foreign language curricula

Since its founding, China has regarded education as a crucial battleground for ideological dissemination. It holds that amid the impact of diverse cultures, teachers must guide students in building cultural confidence through explicit value orientation. Consequently, the 2022 curriculum standards explicitly introduced the concept of "curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education (IPE)," requiring that "correct values, cultural perspectives, and ways of thinking be reflected in the application of language and writing". In practice, ideological guidance is reinforced through explicit teaching objectives. For instance, when studying "Ode to the Yellow River", beyond linguistic appreciation, students are explicitly required to "appreciate the indomitable spirit of the Chinese nation". On the other hand, value infusion is achieved through implicit textual design.

For instance, in teaching "the 'Way of the Great Path' (Dà Tóng Zhī Dào, a core concept in Confucianism advocating a harmonious and public-oriented society)",

Professor Hu used grammatical analysis of negative sentences as an entry point to naturally introduce Confucius' critique of private ownership. By incorporating embodied learning at Guangzhou's landmark Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, he integrated the value of "the world as a commonwealth" into classical Chinese grammar analysis, enabling students to connect ancient and modern contexts to interpret the spirit of great unity. A more distinctive approach is the "task cluster" design. For instance, the "Revolutionary Culture Seminar" task cluster requires students to transform "ideals and convictions" into experiential language practice through activities like adapting revolutionary scripts and visiting memorial halls. This method excels in its systematic and directional clarity, ensuring effective transmission of mainstream values.

Western approaches, grounded in the principle that "education should cultivate independent thinkers", contend that overtly explicit values education can stifle critical thinking. Consequently, American language arts instruction rarely directly preaches values, instead employing "thematic teaching" for implicit guidance. For instance, when analyzing Uncle Tom's Cabin, teachers do not directly present the conclusion "opposing racial discrimination". Instead, they guide students to compare the words and actions of different characters, enabling them to independently deduce the text's underlying message of equality. The UK National Curriculum emphasizes "cultivating democratic citizens through literature". Classrooms frequently employ Socratic questioning. For instance, teachers might guide Year 11 students in group discussions on whether people should switch language variants across contexts, encouraging diverse viewpoints and requiring logical justification for each stance. During the discussion, students shared their perspectives on the relationship between language variants, identity, and social expectations. For instance, one student remarked: "I feel comfortable speaking dialect at home, but I try to use standard English at school or work because it's more accepted." Another student stated: "We shouldn't alter our speech due to societal prejudice, every language form holds value." Through such discussions, students not only deepened their understanding of linguistic diversity but also began reflecting on the social and power structures underlying language choices. Teachers served as facilitators throughout, ensuring discussions remained substantive and productive. This approach stems from a "value-

neutral” educational philosophy, which holds that students should develop values through independent inquiry rather than accepting predetermined conclusions. Yet this “neutrality” carries implicit biases: American textbooks frame discussions of “democracy and freedom” primarily within capitalist systems, while British classrooms’ embrace of “multiculturalism” carries an underlying preference for Western democratic values. For instance, when analyzing non-Western cultural texts,

evaluation criteria persistently adhere to Western modernity perspectives, essentially constituting “covert ideological control”.

The evolution and manifestation of these Eastern and Western ideologies in language arts curricula can be compared across three dimensions: “educational objectives”, “curriculum content” and “implementation pathways” (see Table 1).

Table 1. Comparison table of education goals, curriculum content, and implementation pathways between China and western countries.

Dimension	China	Western countries
Educational goals	Collective development orientation	Individual-oriented
Curriculum content	Three-culture system (approximately 80%)	Multicultural issues
Implementation pathways	Curriculum-based ideological and political education	Thematic teaching approach

Mutual learning pathways and local innovation

The practical contradictions in Chinese language education

The practical contradictions faced by Chinese language education in ideological construction are concentrated in three dimensions:

First is the excessive emphasis on exam-oriented approaches. Under the influence of the “test-score-centric” mindset, language teachers tend to focus on imparting knowledge required for exams or directly providing conclusions for text interpretation, reducing ideological education to a useless appendage. For instance, when teaching “The Lily”, the lesson should explore the revolutionary spirit and the bond between soldiers and civilians through analyzing the young messenger and the new bride. Yet in practice, teachers focus more on exam-oriented topics like “character description techniques” and “plot thread analysis”, with interpretations of “revolutionary spirit” reduced to a few slogans at the end of a PowerPoint slide. Second is the bottleneck in transforming traditional culture into modern contexts. The curriculum standards’ call for systematic integration of traditional culture clashes with the “fragmented” reality of teaching practice. Some teachers equate traditional culture with rote memorization of classical texts and poetry. Elementary classrooms have young students memorize entire passages from The Rules for Being a Good Student without explaining how phrases like “When parents call, respond without delay” might evolve in modern family

dynamics. This “cultural replication” approach fails to achieve the “creative transformation and innovative development” emphasized in the standards. Instead, it leaves students feeling that traditional culture is disconnected from real life, making it especially difficult to resonate emotionally with Generation Z. In today’s era, dominated by short videos and anime culture, static classical texts struggled to establish meaningful connections with modern life. Without such connections, the values they carry cannot truly “sink into the hearts and minds” of students.

Furthermore, there is the challenge of guiding students amid the clash of diverse values. In the internet age, students readily encounter diverse ideologies, such as Western individualism and historical nihilism-through social media yet lack effective discernment tools.

For instance, online smear campaigns against the “Five Heroes of Langya Mountain” may undermine students’ understanding of revolutionary culture. Meanwhile, ideological guidance in language arts classrooms remains reliant on traditional didactic methods, failing to engage effectively with online subcultures. This results in a disconnect between educational guidance and students’ cognitive realities.

Marxism emphasizes “analyzing specific problems in their specific context”. Resolving this contradiction requires grounding solutions in China’s educational realities. While upholding mainstream values, educators must consider which curriculum content will genuinely benefit students throughout their lives-from perspectives

including national development, global competitiveness, the community with a shared future for mankind, and lifelong student growth.

Critically absorbing international experiences

Foreign language curricula's experiences in ideological permeation and cultural transmission require localization to genuinely serve Chinese language education. Drawing from the United States' issue-based teaching model, abstract concepts like "patriotic sentiment" and "cultural confidence" can be transformed into authentic problems relevant to students' lives. For instance, when studying Mencius or Xunzi, students could engage in comparative reading of texts like Hobbes' Leviathan on the topic "Is human nature inherently good or evil?" Through reading, debate, speeches, and even specialized research, thesis writing, and interdisciplinary learning, students can harness the empowering and enhancing effects of ideological education. By introducing, guiding, and discussing topics in cooperative and inquiry-based learning processes, we cultivate innovative spirit and enhance practical abilities. Currently, issue-based teaching is widely applied in ideological and political courses. However, some teachers merely satisfy themselves with students' repetition and reproduction of knowledge during issue progression. Additionally, teachers designing issues according to textbook sequences have conditioned students to adopt the routine of "finding answers in textbook order". Issues that should prompt deep reflection and inquiry remain stuck at the stage of "listing knowledge" rather than forming "knowledge logic", resulting in a phenomenon of prioritizing superficiality over substance. How to make topic-based teaching truly effective and extend this approach to other subjects is an urgent issue we must address.

The UK's strategy for balancing indigenous classics with multicultural texts in its language curriculum offers valuable insights for nations globally to optimize cultural content selection in language curricula. On one hand, traditional texts can be reinterpreted through modern lenses much like Britain's feminist re-examination of Shakespeare's works. China could connect Mencius's "adversity breeds strength" with contemporary youth mental health issues, or link Zhuangzi's "the butcher's art" with the spirit of craftsmanship, allowing ancient wisdom to resonate with modern concerns. On the other hand,

foreign works like Tagore's "Stray Birds" and Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea" could be appropriately selected for interpretation through Chinese values. For instance, contrasting the individual struggle in "The Old Man and the Sea" with the collective perseverance in The Foolish Old Man Removing the Mountains (a Chinese fable embodying perseverance and collective effort) would showcase both the uniqueness of Chinese culture and universal human values, avoiding the fragmented coexistence of multiculturalism seen in Western curricula.

Establishing a Chinese-characterized integration paradigm

To establish a Chinese characterized ideological integration paradigm for language education, we must anchor it in Marxist guidance, ground it in China's outstanding traditional culture, and bridge it with modern educational concepts. This achieves deep integration between values cultivation and language proficiency development, manifested through systematic innovation across three dimensions: content construction, implementation pathways, and evaluation mechanisms. Content should be guided by socialist core values, transforming China's outstanding traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture into tangible, experiential language learning materials. Building upon nationally unified textbooks, further refine text selection logic: For instance, integrate ancient and modern cultural themes around "cultural confidence" by combining the traditional aesthetics of "Reeds" from the Book of Songs, the modern national salvation discourse of "On the Youth of China" and the contemporary technological narrative of "Technological Innovation": From "Jiaolong" to "Chang'e". During implementation, ideological cultivation should be integrated throughout the language learning process. This can be achieved by activating students' prior knowledge through open-ended topics, facilitating embodied cognition via contextualized tasks, and solidifying value recognition through language application in authentic scenarios. Digital media such as short videos, mind maps, and interactive courseware should be leveraged to transform lofty national narratives into relatable growth topics, thereby achieving discursive conversion in ideological dissemination.

The assessment system should transcend the limitations

of score-centric evaluation and break away from single-method assessments. It should evaluate the transfer of value concepts through practical projects. Refining formative assessment methods by incorporating qualitative approaches like learning journals and classroom observations. Establishing a three-dimensional values rubric knowledge-emotion-action scoring students on a 1-5 scale through peer reviews, self-assessments, and teacher evaluations based on in-class and out-of-class performance. For instance: Cognitive dimension, does the student actively connect personal experiences to interpret cultural confidence? Whether they demonstrate strong cultural pride during discussions or in writing on the affective dimension, and whether they actively practice core socialist values on the behavioral dimension.

This evaluation system focuses not only on “what students know” but also on “what students believe” and “what students can do”, precisely aligning with the goal of “cultivating new generations capable of shouldering the great task of national rejuvenation”.

The key to constructing this integrated paradigm lies in grasping the fundamental principles of language education. The cultivation of values must be grounded in linguistic practice, not detached from texts through empty preaching. This paradigm offers new pathways to address challenges in language education, such as the “disconnect between instrumental and humanistic aspects” and the “disconnect between tradition and modernity”, ultimately pointing toward the authentic purpose of education: “cultivating people through culture and nurturing them through language.” It addresses a universal challenge in global mother tongue education balancing tradition and modernity ultimately pointing toward the shared educational purpose of “cultivating character through culture and nurturing individuals through language”. It addresses the common challenge faced by developing nations in modernization, the need to balance “cultural inheritance with value reconstruction” while offering Eastern wisdom for global mother-tongue education, “absorbing external experiences while upholding local sovereignty”. This approach fosters a new paradigm of international educational dialogue characterized by “each beauty in its own way, yet all beauties together.”

Conclusion

This study, through a dialectical comparison of the ideological evolution and characteristics of Chinese and Western language curriculum standards, reveals that their fundamental differences are rooted in the dual influence of social systems and cultural traditions: China’s socialist system, founded on public ownership of the means of production, necessitates that language education centers on a “collective development orientation”. This is achieved through a trinity of content-Chinese excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture-to systematically transmit mainstream values. The Western capitalist system emphasizes individual freedom and market competition. Its curriculum design centers on an “individual-oriented” approach, maintaining capitalist democratic values through discussions of multicultural issues. This logic aligns with Marxism’s materialist conception of history, where the “superstructure serves the economic base”. The “literature as a vehicle for moral principles” philosophy, nurtured by Chinese civilization’s tradition of “great unification”, leads Chinese curricula to emphasize the “integrative permeation” of values through language practice. The Western tradition of individualism since the Renaissance, coupled with a cultural hegemony consciousness shaped by colonial history, imbues its curricula with an implicit value assumption of “Western modernity primacy” beneath the veneer of “multicultural inclusivity”. Research indicates that effective ideological mutual learning must adhere to the Marxist principle of “affirming the positive while negating the negative”: Grounded in China’s national conditions, while embracing human civilization’s achievements with openness, constructing a Chinese-characterized integration paradigm that naturally weaves ideological cultivation throughout the entire language learning process.

This study demonstrates that the ideological construction of language arts curricula is both local and global. China’s reform experience in language education offers a globally applicable reference for balancing cultural identity and openness amid multicultural conflicts-an urgent need for all nations’ mother tongue education, while also serving domestic cultural soft power development, thereby contributing to the establishment

of a more inclusive international education governance system. The Western case studies in this research primarily focus on English-speaking countries like the United States and the United Kingdom. The limited analysis of language curriculum ideologies in non-English cultural spheres may affect the universality of the conclusions. Future research could expand the sample to include East Asian and Middle Eastern countries to explore differences in ideological construction between the Confucian and Islamic cultural spheres.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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