

A Study on the Ideological and Political Teaching Reform of the Advanced English Course in Maritime Universities Empowered by Large Language Models: Taking the Translation Teaching Practice of Guangdong Local Chronicles as an Example

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Abstract: Fostering virtue through education and promoting fine traditional Chinese culture abroad set higher requirements for ideological and political education in foreign language courses, while large language models (LLMs) offer new conditions for transforming language teaching. To address the separation of value guidance from language instruction, the absence of local culture and insufficient output-oriented training in the Advanced English course of maritime universities, this paper, supported by the Zhanjiang philosophy and social science project, takes Zhanjiang local chronicles as the core corpus and extends to Guangdong local chronicles and the international publicity of city images in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). With the aid of LLMs, it reconstructs teaching objectives, content, process and assessment, thereby building a “corpus–technology–value” integrated model illustrated by teaching examples. Practice shows that the model can foster cultural confidence, maritime awareness and patriotism in translation training and serve the international communication of Guangdong and the GBA.

Keywords: Large language models; Advanced English; Ideological and political education; Guangdong local chronicles; City image; Translation teaching

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1. Introduction

Curriculum-based ideological-political education is a key vehicle for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. The Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum-Based Ideological-Political Education in Institutions of Higher Learning, issued by China’s Ministry of Education, require that all

universities, all teachers, and all courses assume their responsibility for educating students, so that every type of course moves in the same direction and advances together with ideological-political theory courses ^[1]. As a bridge for the exchange and mutual learning of Chinese and foreign civilizations, foreign-language courses are expected not only to develop students' linguistic competence but also to bear the value-shaping mission of guiding students to "tell China's stories well and communicate China's voice."

For maritime universities, this mission is closely tied to the strategy of building China into a maritime power and to the "going global" of China's excellent maritime culture. Zhanjiang was an important point of departure of the Maritime Silk Road during the Han dynasty and is rich in maritime history and folk customs; Guangdong, in turn, is accelerating the building of a strong maritime province and of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, which generates strong demand for the international communication of city images. How to convert local chronicles and city publicity resources into pedagogical resources for foreign-language education is therefore a question that curriculum reform at maritime universities should answer.

Large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT, which integrate functions including information retrieval, machine translation, and text generation, are profoundly reshaping the contexts and practices of foreign-language teaching ^[2]. Advanced English, a core course for senior English majors, has long been dominated by the input and intensive reading of canonical target-language texts, and it commonly suffers from a "two skins" problem in which value guidance and textual analysis proceed in parallel without genuine integration, as well as from weak training in expressing local culture. Whether large language models can be used to bring Guangdong's local chronicles—centered on those of Zhanjiang—and translation resources for Greater Bay Area city images into the Advanced English course, thereby unifying language competence and value guidance in translation practice, is precisely the question that this paper seeks to explore.

2. Practical rationale for integrating regional cultural translation into the advanced English course

2.1. Practical difficulties of ideological-political education in the advanced English course

First, value guidance and language teaching remain "two separate skins": ideological-political elements are mostly external to the texts, being delivered through a brief extension appended at the end of each lesson, and thus fail to win students' identification. Second, Chinese culture—and local culture in particular—suffers from "aphasia": because the textbook texts are largely drawn from Anglophone classics, students can introduce Western culture fluently but are at a loss to express the history and folk customs of their hometowns in English. Third, the course is input-heavy and output-light, providing insufficient training in Chinese–English conversion and outward expression. Fourth, now that generative artificial intelligence can accomplish routine linguistic conversion, the focus of instruction must shift toward higher-order abilities that machines cannot readily replace, such as cultural interpretation, critical evaluation, and value judgment ^[3,4].

2.2. Large language models create new conditions for integrating ideological-political education with translation teaching

Large language models can support teachers' lesson preparation and students' inquiry in resource generation, multi-turn dialogue, machine translation, and immediate feedback ^[5], and can provide individualized practice ^[6]. In translation teaching, they can quickly generate first drafts and multiple versions of a rendering, making it convenient to carry out the contrastive training cycle of "machine-generated initial translation—human

evaluation—revision and refinement”^[7]. Model outputs, however, may involve factual errors, cultural distortion, and value bias, and over-reliance on them may weaken students’ originality and critical thinking. The reasonable path, therefore, is not to let machines replace teachers and students, but to build human-led, machine-assisted collaborative learning^[8], in which students establish their agency and value responsibility as translators by evaluating machine-translated output^[9].

2.3. Local chronicles and greater bay area city images as transformable place-based ideological-political resources

Local chronicles systematically record the natural environment, politics, economy, culture, and folk customs of a place, and are therefore authoritative and credible. The local chronicles of Zhanjiang preserve the port memory of the Maritime Silk Road, the traditions of maritime production and trade, coastal defense, and urban transformation, along with a rich array of maritime folk customs such as the sea-worship and fishing-season-opening rituals, the human-dragon dance of Donghai Island, and the stone dogs of Leizhou^[10]; they constitute the first-hand corpus compiled under the research project on which this study is based and form the main body of the teaching corpus. At the same time, the building of the Greater Bay Area has made city image an important soft power in regional international competition: city images such as Guangzhou as the “City of Flowers” and Shenzhen as the “Roc City,” together with publicity texts oriented to international audiences, such as city English-language portals and image promotional videos, constitute the translation scenarios that students encounter most frequently. Research shows that image promotional videos, through multimodal resources, construct the Greater Bay Area’s international image of innovative confidence, solidarity, and sustained development^[11]. Combining the “historical local chronicles” with “contemporary city publicity” naturally embodies cultural confidence, attachment to country and home, and maritime awareness, and there are already transferable practices of introducing local provincial resources into the cultivation of translation talent^[12]. It should be noted that this does not mean converting the intensive reading course into a Chinese–English translation course; rather, the course incorporates a special topic on the “outward translation of local culture” and a productive practice module, in which Chinese–English conversion feeds back into, and reinforces, students’ comprehension of English discourse.

3. Constructing the “Corpus–Technology–Value” triadic integration teaching model

Using Guangdong’s local chronicles and Greater Bay Area city-image corpora as the content vehicle, large language models as the technological mediator, and the value guidance of curriculum-based ideological-political education as its soul, this paper constructs a “corpus–technology–value” triadic integration model in which the three elements run through the pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases. Wen Qiufang points out that ideological-political education in foreign-language courses is led by foreign-language teachers, who organically integrate the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education into every part of the classroom through teaching content, classroom management, assessment systems, and teachers’ words and deeds^[13]. The present model is a localized and technologized implementation of this idea and echoes the requirement for the deep integration of ideological-political education with professional education in foreign-language courses^[14].

3.1. Teaching objectives: A trinity of language, translation and dissemination, and value

The reformed teaching objectives comprise three levels. The first is linguistic competence, which consolidates the basic skills of discourse analysis, rhetorical appreciation, and bilingual conversion. The second is translation-and-dissemination competence, which enables students to master methods for handling culture-loaded words and the expressive conventions of publicity texts. The third is value shaping, which, through understanding and translating hometown and regional culture, strengthens students' cultural confidence, enhances their consciousness of building a maritime power and of ecological civilization, and leads them to consciously place their personal language competence at the service of telling China's stories well and promoting mutual learning among civilizations ^[15]. The three levels are not simply juxtaposed and added together; rather, with translation-and-dissemination practice as the pathway, they are achieved simultaneously in authentic cultural contexts.

3.2. Teaching content: Integrating the teaching corpus with instructional content

The teaching corpus is organized at two levels. The first level centers on the Zhanjiang local chronicles compiled by the research team, selecting four categories of content: maritime transportation and trade; maritime production and folk customs; maritime intangible cultural heritage and folk art; and marine ecology and the relationship between humans and the sea. The second level is oriented to the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, drawing on contemporary publicity corpora such as city names and nicknames, city image slogans, subtitles of image promotional videos, and texts of city English-language portals, so as to extend students' horizons from “the history of their hometown” to “the present of the region.” On this basis, a small-scale Chinese–English parallel corpus and glossary of “maritime culture + city image” is built, in which proper nouns, historical appellations, folk-custom items, city images, and publicity phrases are classified and organized. The corpus adheres to the principles of being “small but refined, discussable, and productive,” with difficulty progressing from the elementary to the advanced: students begin with terms and short sentences and then move on to complete texts that contain historical narratives, descriptions of folk customs, and publicity rhetoric, under guidance to handle sentence restructuring, textual cohesion, and cultural default.

3.3. Teaching process: Pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases supported by large language models

Before class, teachers use large language models to assist in selecting and compiling local-chronicle and city-publicity corpora and in generating background reading guides and lists of doubtful points, while students preview the relevant excerpts, submit trial translations, and receive individualized feedback. During class, students' translations, the model's initial versions, and the research team's reference translations or official English renderings are placed side by side for students to compare and evaluate; the teacher focuses the discussion and analysis on key points such as cultural distortion, historical appellations, political expressions, and city image positioning. Value judgments are always made by teachers and students, and the model provides only linguistic options ^[9]. After class, students use the model to polish and revise, complete multimodal outputs such as English tour-guide texts, short publicity pieces, or cultural glossary entries, and feed mature works back into the corpus, forming a cycle of “translation—research—teaching—dissemination.” This process embodies the view of learning in the intelligent age, in which humans and machines cooperate and students actively construct knowledge ^[8].

3.4. Integrating ideological-political education: Eliciting the way from the texts and avoiding the “two skins” problem

Value guidance consistently grows naturally out of specific items rather than being affixed as external labels: the memory of openness carried by the departure port of the Maritime Silk Road gives rise to the contemporary responsibility of building a maritime power and advancing the Belt and Road Initiative; the traditions of sea worship, the opening of the fishing season, and the seasonal fishing moratorium give rise to an ecological civilization outlook of revering nature and living in harmony with the sea; the intangible cultural heritage of the human-dragon dance and the stone dogs gives rise to cultural confidence; and the urban development and outward translation of city images in the Greater Bay Area gives rise to institutional confidence and the translator’s responsibility to tell China’s stories well. Expressions concerning historical sovereignty, regional names, and cultural positions must be strictly examined by teachers and must not be left to automatic generation by models, so as to prevent value bias hidden behind an appearance of technological neutrality.

4. Translation teaching practice and ideological-political integration in the advanced english course

This special topic is a four-class-hour unit on the “outward translation of local culture,” comprising two modules. Module 1 (two class hours), the main body, uses maritime folk-custom entries from the Zhanjiang local chronicles as its corpus; Module 2 (two class hours) extends to the outward translation of Greater Bay Area city images, with corpora drawn from local-chronicle materials and the official English texts of the cities. The renderings cited in this paper are used for classroom demonstration only; final versions follow the research team’s outputs, authoritative publications, and official English releases. The teaching process is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Teaching process of the special topic “Outward Translation of Guangdong Local Chronicles and City Images”

Teaching phase	Use of large language models	Student activities	Ideological-political anchoring
Pre-class	Selecting excerpts from local chronicles and city publicity texts; generating background reading guides, terminology lists, and prompts on doubtful points; providing individualized feedback on students’ trial translations	Reading entries on the Maritime Silk Road and maritime folk customs as well as city names and slogans; completing trial translations of culture-loaded words and image-related sentences; recording difficulties	Building awareness of hometown and regional culture; stimulating interest in inquiry
In-class	Providing multiple versions of initial translations for comparison without substituting for conclusions	Comparing students’ translations, model translations, and official or reference translations side by side; debating and revising around historical appellations, cultural distortion, and city image positioning	Cultural confidence, critical thinking, translators’ value responsibility, and awareness of the national and regional image
Post-class	Assisting with language polishing and multimodal text generation	Completing English translations of local chronicles, English city tour guides, or short publicity texts; peer review and revision; feeding mature works back into the corpus	Telling the stories of Zhanjiang, Guangdong, and the Greater Bay Area in English; serving the outward communication of local culture

Module 1 can be illustrated by the in-class treatment of culture-loaded words from local chronicles. First,

the “Donghai Island human-dragon dance”, a national intangible cultural heritage, is often rendered generically by models as dragon dance, losing its distinctive form of “forming a dragon with the dancers’ bodies stacked layer upon layer, without props.” In class, students are therefore guided to adopt the method of “transliteration plus explanatory amplification plus annotation,” as in “Renlong Wu (Human Dragon Dance), a prop-less dragon dance formed entirely by the dancers’ bodies, a national intangible cultural heritage of Donghaidao in Zhanjiang,” which preserves cultural identity through transliteration while ensuring comprehension among overseas audiences through explanation. Second, the historical place name “Guangzhouwan” is easily generalized by models into Guangzhou Bay, which not only risks confusion with Guangzhou but may also obscure its history as a French-leased territory. In class, students are guided to adopt, according to the context, renderings such as “Kwangchow Wan (the French-leased territory, in present-day Zhanjiang),” and to discuss the accuracy of historical place names and of expressions concerning sovereignty.

Module 2 operates a “city image translation clinic,” organized around three types of problems. First, the political accuracy of regional names. The official rendering of “Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area” is Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area, but when generating freely, models may omit Guangdong or Hong Kong and Macao and shorten it to Greater Bay Area. In class, students are guided to analyze that the full name simultaneously names Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao, corresponding to the regional integrity of the Greater Bay Area as “one country, two systems, three customs territories,” and that formal publicity should give priority to the official designation and must not simplify it at will.

Second, the comprehensibility of city images. If nicknames such as Guangzhou as the “City of Flowers” and Shenzhen as the “Roc City” are translated literally as Flower City and Peng City, overseas readers often fail to grasp their meaning; following the “three closenesses” principle of publicity translation^[16], the class adopts “conventional name plus explanatory amplification,” as in “Guangzhou, known as the City of Flowers,” and adds for “Roc City” the connotation of “daring to explore and try, and being vigorous and enterprising” (wording subject to official English releases).

Third, audience adaptation of city slogans. Chinese publicity slogans often rely on parallelism, antithesis, and lyrical rhetoric, and word-for-word translation tends to sound hollow; students use models to generate multiple versions and then, according to the information needs and thinking habits of overseas audiences, reduce redundancy, simplify, and supplement concrete evidence, thereby grasping the re-creative essence of publicity translation, which is to “stay close to the foreign audience.”

Metaphors and rhetoric in translation directly participate in the cross-cultural construction of city images^[17], and multimodal language, sound, and images jointly shape the overall image of a region^[11]. This suggests that teaching should not fixate on words and sentences alone but should polish the city image as a whole discourse. Students thus come to understand that translation is not merely linguistic conversion but an expression of historical attitudes, cultural positions, and national and regional images—which is precisely the natural point where ideological-political education lands in translation practice.

From the classroom implementation, students showed a high level of engagement in comparison reading and debate; most could proactively point out the deficiencies of model translations in cultural connotation, historical context, and city image positioning, and consciously attempted transliteration with annotation, contextual supplementation, and audience-oriented rewriting. This suggests that when translation tasks are connected with the local culture around students and the development of the region in which they live, language training and value identification can occur in the same process. The above is a qualitative observation from a single round of teaching; given the limited sample, it is not yet appropriate to draw generalizable conclusions.

5. Assessment methods and implementation safeguards

5.1. Combining process-oriented and product-oriented assessment

Replacing the single assessment model dominated by the final written examination and focused on knowledge reproduction, the course establishes process-oriented assessment covering the pre-class, in-class, and post-class phases alongside product-oriented assessment centered on student works. Process-oriented assessment attends to preview, in-class comparison reading, discussion, prompt design, and records of translation revision; product-oriented assessment is based on English translations of local chronicles, city publicity works, and reflection journals. Assessment incorporates student self-assessment, peer assessment, and teacher assessment, and may, when conditions permit, draw on feedback from local publicity departments or overseas readers. The rubric specifically includes a value dimension that examines whether cultural understanding is accurate, whether positions are firm, and whether expressions concerning historical sovereignty and regional names are standard, making value shaping observable and measurable ^[13].

5.2. Teacher, ethical, and resource safeguards

First, teachers' intelligent literacy and their capacity to design ideological-political education should be enhanced, and a teaching-research team should be built that brings together English teachers, translation researchers, local chronicle experts, and publicity practitioners, so that technology application and value guidance rest on professional judgment ^[2]. Second, the boundaries of large language model use and academic norms should be clarified: models may be used for first drafts and polishing at the linguistic level, but the final version, cultural interpretation, and value judgment must be completed independently by students under teachers' guidance, so as to guard against plagiarism, data security risks, and risks in the use of local documents, and to avoid thinking outsourcing ^[7]. Third, the translation corpus and case database, centered on the Zhanjiang local chronicles and covering Guangdong's local chronicles and Greater Bay Area city images, should be continuously developed, promoting research feeding back into teaching and collaborative education between universities and local communities.

6. Conclusion

Large language models provide new technological possibilities for the ideological-political reform of the Advanced English course at maritime universities. Converting Guangdong's local chronicles—centered on those of Zhanjiang—and translation resources for Greater Bay Area city images into translation-teaching corpora, and running the “corpus–technology–value” triadic integration through the entire teaching process, helps to realize linguistic competence, translation-and-dissemination competence, and value shaping simultaneously in authentic translation practice, and to cultivate for the outward communication of Guangdong and Greater Bay Area culture a foreign-language workforce that “knows the locality, can express it, and holds a clear position.” This paper is mainly a model construction and a practical exploration in a single course; the sample and the period are limited, and the educational outcomes still await testing through longer-term teaching experiments, questionnaire surveys, and corpus analysis. In the future, the model can be extended to more ocean-related foreign-language courses with empirical research, improving the integrated mechanism of “translation—research—teaching—dissemination” for local culture.

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