Available Online: 26 October 2026 DOI: 10.54254/3049-7248/2026.38241

Integrating intangible cultural heritage into academic English for social science postgraduates: an implementation framework and research design at Jiangsu University

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Abstract. To address potential disconnects between language instruction and disciplinary inquiry, and the difficulty of transforming local cultural resources into material for academic argument, this paper proposes a curriculum and research plan under a foreign-language project approved within the *Jiangsu Provincial Program for Excellence in Applied Social Science Research*. The proposed participants are non-English-major master's students in the social sciences who entered Jiangsu University in 2024 and 2025. The project will use Taiping Nijiaojiao, an intangible cultural heritage practice from Zhenjiang, as a shared case and students' hometown heritage as the focus of independent inquiry. Drawing on needs analysis in English for Specific Purposes, genre-based pedagogy, the production-oriented approach, project-based learning, and constructive alignment, the curriculum will guide students through question formulation, evidence collection, interpretation, expression in English, feedback and revision, and transfer to new contexts. The research will combine iterative teaching improvement with embedded mixed-methods evaluation, using individual writing, oral defenses, process portfolios, and interviews to examine implementation conditions and changes in learning. The paper specifies course content, instructional measures, data collection, assessment criteria, and implementation arrangements, offering a research proposal that can be tested and adapted when local heritage resources are incorporated into postgraduate academic English teaching. Meanwhile, combined with the four values of intangible cultural heritage, this paper connects the economics, sociology and political science modules of ESP textbooks for non-English-major social-science postgraduates, and explores the integration path between the intangible-cultural-heritage value system and academic English tasks for different social-science orientations.

Keywords: intangible cultural heritage, academic English, social science postgraduates, Taiping Nijiaojiao, values of intangible cultural heritage, educational research design

1. Introduction

Against the background of promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) inheritance in higher-education foreign-language education, postgraduate academic English teaching faces the practical challenge of converting local cultural resources into evidence-based academic tasks for social-science students, alongside

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risks of superficial cultural description lacking rigorous disciplinary argumentation. Drawing on Zhenjiang's Taiping Nijiaojiao and students' hometown heritage resources, this paper aims to construct a feasible teaching implementation framework for embedding ICH into non-English-major social-science postgraduates' academic English and design corresponding mixed-methods pedagogical evaluation. Centred on Wang Wenzhang's four core values of ICH, it further explores how to align ICH value dimensions with economics, sociology and political-science modules of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) teaching materials. The core research question addressed is how local intangible-cultural-heritage resources can be transformed into appropriate academic-English learning tasks for social-science postgraduates, and what evidence can verify whether such curriculum integration facilitates students' evidence-driven English academic inquiry.

2. Background and research rationale

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) encompasses not only skills, performances, and oral traditions but also associated knowledge, social relationships, and continuing practices. The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage emphasizes that heritage is recognized by the communities and groups concerned and is continually recreated in response to environmental and historical conditions; education and transmission are integral to safeguarding it[1]. Incorporating ICH into university foreign-language teaching should therefore extend beyond translating artifact names, production procedures, and tourism descriptions into English. It should also examine who transmits heritage, how knowledge circulates, how cultural meanings change, and how different actors interpret those changes.

Wang Wenzhang systematically elaborates the multiple core values of intangible cultural heritage, covering four dimensions: educational value, economic value, cultural value and harmonious value [1]. First, the educational value: *Article 34, Chapter IV of Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage* stipulates that "schools shall carry out relevant education on intangible cultural heritage in accordance with the provisions of the competent education department under the State Council". Intangible-cultural-heritage education helps foster a sound social atmosphere for heritage protection and inheritance, raises public awareness of its significance, and embodies its function in educating people on fine traditional Chinese culture. Second, the economic value: within the framework of heritage protection, productive conservation can generate economic benefits for local development; beyond heritage protection, from the perspective of cultural-industry development, we may develop culturally distinctive and market-competitive cultural products and services on the premise of effective conservation. Third, the cultural value: as living cultural fossils, intangible cultural heritage carries the essence of national traditional culture and reflects national cultural identity. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage cultivates cultural self-awareness and preserves cultural indigenization and nationality amid globalization, so as to maintain global cultural diversity. Fourth, the harmonious value: consistent with the statement in UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* that "intangible cultural heritage is an essential factor for bringing human beings together and for their exchange and mutual understanding", intangible cultural heritage promotes harmony within individuals, between people and society, and between humanity and nature. It also facilitates communication and mutual learning among ethnic groups, regions and nations, and plays an immeasurable role in ethnic unity, social stability and national cultural security. These four values have inherent links with

[1] UNESCO. (2003). Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage. Retrieved from https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention

modules of ESP textbooks for social-science postgraduates: economic value corresponds to the economics module; educational and cultural values correspond to the sociology module; harmonious value corresponds to the political science module, which provides theoretical materials for interdisciplinary inquiry tasks in this project.

Social science postgraduates need English to read scholarly literature, formulate questions, interpret data, and participate in academic communication. Heritage issues connect with cultural identity, public governance, communication practices, educational transmission, and cultural industries, providing locally relevant academic tasks for language learning. Rich cultural resources, however, do not automatically produce educational benefits. A course centered primarily on visits, hands-on activities, and presentations may develop cultural awareness without strengthening students' understanding of evidence or their ability to construct arguments. Similarly, prioritizing fluent English narratives over source verification may lead students to present legends as historical facts or generalize one interviewee's views to an entire community. These are instructional problems the project intends to address, rather than established judgments about current courses at Jiangsu University.

Taiping Nijiaojiao in Zhenjiang lends itself to observation, discussion, and interdisciplinary inquiry. Jiangsu University's Language and Culture Center has reported a related hands-on making activity, indicating that this local resource has already featured in the university's cultural exchange activities[2]. This public report provides only an indication of potential accessibility; it does not establish that the present project has already formed a partnership with heritage practitioners. Once the study begins, arrangements for educational visits, willingness to participate, and permitted uses of materials will still need to be confirmed. Following the shared case, students' investigations of hometown heritage will extend their local experience into comparisons across regions and forms of transmission.

In teaching, students from different majors are guided to analyze Taiping Nijiaojiao from the perspective of the four heritage values. Economics-oriented students focus on its economic value reflected by productive conservation and cultural-creative development; sociology-oriented students analyze its educational and cultural values embodied in experiential activities and living inheritance; political-science-oriented students discuss its harmonious value in community cohesion and local cultural governance, so as to implement heritage-value theories in different ESP textbook modules.

The central question is how heritage resources can be transformed into academic English tasks suited to social science postgraduates, and how reliable evidence can establish whether this transformation supports learning. The present paper sets out an implementation proposal in response. Instructional hours, task specifications, assessment weights, and milestones are proposed arrangements. Participant numbers, course dates, and collaborating organizations will be determined through course coordination; no completed experimental findings are assumed.

3. Theoretical foundations and curriculum design

3.1. Defining the relationship between ESP and academic English through needs analysis

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) organizes instruction around learners' target situations, existing abilities,

[2] Language and Culture Center, Jiangsu University. (2023, July 21). Tiyan zhizuo "Taiping Nijiaojiao", Zhenjiang feiyi zhanfang bieyang guangcai [Experiencing the making of Taiping Nijiaojiao: A distinctive expression of Zhenjiang's intangible cultural heritage]. Retrieved from https://lcc.ujs.edu.cn/info/1049/5305.htm

and learning conditions [2]. While retaining the term ESP used in the approved project title, the present project specifically focuses on academic English that supports social science postgraduates' study and research, addressing both shared academic competencies and disciplinary differences. Heritage knowledge will not constitute the entire curriculum. Instead, heritage inquiry will provide a context for practicing problem definition, literature synthesis, evidence-based expression, and academic interaction. Task contexts may differ across disciplines, while the requirement to make claims that can be traced to evidence will remain consistent.

Needs analysis will examine three kinds of information: the research activities for which students need English, the difficulties they currently encounter in completing those activities, and the support the course can offer. At the outset, the project will collect diagnostic academic writing, learning-needs questionnaires, and teacher interviews. Where appropriate, disciplinary supervisors will be consulted about the authenticity of proposed tasks. As Hyland explains, academic English is connected to communicative practices within particular academic communities [3]. The course will therefore combine discipline-based grouping with cross-disciplinary exchange, rather than treating a single English presentation task as representative of all social science needs. Modules will be added to demand questionnaires and diagnostic tasks to investigate postgraduates majoring in economics, sociology and political science about their needs for reading English literature and academic writing concerning the four heritage values. Existing linguistic difficulties in discussing heritage values in English will be identified to customize learning scaffolds for the three ESP textbook modules.

3.2. Moving from cultural materials to arguments through genre-based pedagogy

Swales's genre analysis provides a basis for understanding the communicative purposes and organization of academic texts [4]. Bringing heritage materials into academic learning requires a shift from introducing a tradition to organizing evidence around a research question. Instruction will use abstracts, research-background passages, and discussion extracts that can lawfully be used for teaching. Students will identify functions such as establishing a research space, stating objectives, explaining methods, and qualifying conclusions, and compare how these functions help readers understand a study.

Genre scaffolding should not become a mechanical exercise in completing standardized sentence patterns. For example, students investigating Taiping Nijiaojiao from an educational perspective might examine how hands-on activities structure learning; those working in communication studies might analyze how short videos represent craftsmanship; and those in management might consider relationships between exhibition spaces and cultural services. Economics-oriented students practice English writing on productive conservation and cultural-industry-driven economic value of heritage projects; sociology-oriented students practice interpreting heritage's educational functions and cultural-identity construction; political-science-oriented students practice demonstrating harmonious values such as community cohesion, inter-group dialogue and cultural security. Teachers use sample texts from economics, sociology and political-science ESP textbooks to illustrate academic moves and argumentative logics for heritage-value topics across disciplines. The teacher will provide inventories of communicative functions and comparisons of model texts without requiring every student to adopt the same research structure. Students will select forms of expression in relation to their audience, purpose, and evidence, thereby understanding the research judgments underlying linguistic choices.

3.3. Organizing instruction through the production-oriented approach and project-based learning

The production-oriented approach seeks to motivate learning through meaningful output tasks and support task completion through teacher-mediated enabling and assessment [5, 6]. Accordingly, each unit will begin with explicit requirements for an English-language product. Students will first attempt the writing or speaking task

to expose difficulties, after which the teacher will provide targeted input, practice, and feedback. For example, an initial attempt to explain a heritage phenomenon in English may reveal weaknesses in defining concepts, citing sources, or expressing causal relationships. Relevant language resources and analytical tools will then be introduced.

Project-based learning provides an organizational framework for sustained inquiry and collaborative production. Guo et al.'s review indicates that evaluation in higher education should attend to concrete learning products rather than rely solely on student satisfaction [7]. The proposed course will therefore include hometown heritage projects extending over several weeks, while retaining individual writing, oral defenses, and revision commentaries. The quality of a group video will not serve as a substitute for individual academic competence. The production-oriented approach will primarily guide the facilitation of classroom learning, whereas project-based learning will organize inquiry across sessions; their functions are complementary. Stratified output tasks are designed: the economics group completes English mini-papers on the economic value of local intangible cultural heritage; the sociology group produces English analytical texts on educational and cultural values; the political-science group submits English reports on harmonious value. These tasks realize project-based integration of the four heritage values in Wang Wenzhang [1] and the three ESP textbook modules.

3.4. Aligning learning outcomes and assessment

Constructive alignment emphasizes coordination among intended learning outcomes, learning activities, and assessment tasks [8]. The project will operationalize its objectives as students' ability to formulate researchable questions, distinguish types of evidence, construct arguments in English, respond to challenges, and acknowledge limitations. Classroom activities must therefore include comparisons of sources, citation practice, peer questioning, and revision, while assessment must examine whether these practices are evident in individual work. Cultural identification and learning experiences may provide supplementary observations, but the strength of students' stated attitudes will not determine the quality of their learning. These theoretical-practice connections are summarised (see Table 1).

Table 1. Links between theoretical foundations and proposed teaching practices

Theoretical foundation	Instructional question	Activities and evidence
Needs analysis and academic English	Do tasks address research needs?	Diagnostic writing and needs surveys; discipline-specific task lists, investigating students' pain points in English demonstration of the four heritage values
Genre-based pedagogy	How can cultural materials become academic texts?	Analysis of rhetorical moves, evidence, and limitations; comparison of individual drafts and revisions, practicing English argumentation on heritage values with reference to different ESP textbook modules
Production-oriented approach and project-based learning	How can sustained inquiry be supported?	Initial output, enabling, and revision; project process portfolios, setting discipline-specific output tasks around four heritage values
Constructive alignment and formative assessment	Can intended outcomes be assessed effectively?	Shared rubrics, records of feedback uptake, and individual transfer tasks, evaluating students' accurate English paraphrasing and evidence-supported demonstration of multiple heritage values

Together, these theories support a pedagogical explanation to be tested: authentic and appropriate problems may increase engagement, structured scaffolding may reduce difficulties in handling evidence and organizing

English texts, and repeated feedback may improve argument quality. This remains a curriculum design hypothesis. The conditions under which it holds must be examined through actual process data, rather than presented as an established causal mechanism.

4. Participants research questions and overall design

4.1. Participants and recruitment

The project is intended for non-English-major master's students in the social sciences who entered Jiangsu University in 2024 and 2025. These dates identify entry cohorts. Actual teaching arrangements will depend on students' stage of study, course enrollment, and research commitments at the time of implementation. If the students concerned have already completed their compulsory English courses, a thematic elective module or research workshop may be arranged. Differences between these formats and regular courses in instructional hours, assessment, and participation must be documented rather than combined uncritically in the interpretation.

Participants will be recruited through eligible classes or thematic modules. Inclusion criteria will comprise enrollment in a social science-related master's program, the ability to participate in the main learning tasks, and awareness of the arrangements for research use of learning materials. Sample size will be determined after reviewing course capacity, the number of classes, and available resources, with statistical precision assessed in relation to the primary outcome and practical feasibility. Students should be able to receive normal instruction without having their materials included in the research analysis, and consent to research use will not affect course grades. Relevant information about discipline, entry cohort, English-learning background, and prior exposure to ICH will be recorded to help explain differences in starting points.

4.2. Research questions and pedagogical expectations

The study will address three questions. First, how can heritage-based tasks be aligned with academic English needs across social science disciplines, and what scaffolding is required? How can the four values (educational, economic, cultural and harmonious) of intangible cultural heritage be effectively integrated into economics, sociology and political-science modules of ESP textbooks, and what teaching difficulties will emerge? Second, what changes occur in individual English argumentation, evidence use, and oral academic interaction, and can these changes transfer to new tasks? Third, how do students with different starting points use feedback, and how do access to field resources, patterns of collaboration, and time investment shape the learning process?

The corresponding expectation is that systematic instruction may help students distinguish description from interpretation more clearly, attribute sources more accurately, and respond more appropriately in English when evidence is insufficient. Meanwhile, students are expected to interpret connotations of the four heritage values through English texts and produce evidence-based academic English demonstrations targeting corresponding value dimensions from their disciplinary perspectives (economics / sociology / political science). However, topic familiarity, additional practice, and normal postgraduate development may also produce change. Expectations will therefore be translated into indicators to be observed, without specifying a percentage improvement that must be achieved or making significant progress by every student a prerequisite for the final project account.

4.3. Iterative implementation and embedded evaluation

The overall approach will follow a cycle of needs diagnosis, initial implementation, process analysis, instructional adjustment, and integrated interpretation, incorporating quantitative and qualitative evidence throughout. A small group of volunteers will first trial the readability of materials, task duration, and scoring instructions. Feedback will inform delivery of the full module. If course arrangements permit parallel classes with comparable content and instructional hours, a quasi-experimental comparison may be used. Otherwise, individual pretests and posttests, delayed tasks, and process tracking will be adopted, with explicit acknowledgment of the limits on causal inference.

The two entry cohorts will not automatically be assigned as experimental and control groups, because cohort, stage of study, and prior coursework could become confounded with the instructional intervention. If the cohorts participate at different times, implementation contexts and findings will be reported separately before comparable elements are discussed. If scaffolding is revised in a subsequent cycle, version changes will be documented; data collected under modified arrangements will not simply be pooled as though they resulted from one fixed intervention.

5. Course content and the shared Taiping Nijiaojiao unit

5.1. Course structure and task progression

A 16-week module comprising 32 classroom instructional hours is proposed as the design baseline. Time spent on out-of-class investigation and preparation will be recorded separately, and the schedule will be adjusted to actual course capacity. The first half will use Taiping Nijiaojiao to establish a shared methodological foundation; the second half will transfer these methods to hometown heritage. Reading, writing, speaking, and research-method training will run throughout, rather than postponing language instruction until investigations are complete. Texts, interviews, and observations will draw on an appropriate range of bilingual materials, with English serving primarily as the medium for academic synthesis and communication. The overall course schedule and expected interim deliverables are outlined (see Table 2).

Table 2. Proposed teaching schedule and interim products

Stage	Hours	Main learning tasks	Proposed products
Weeks 1–2	4	Needs analysis, diagnostic tasks, ICH concepts, and types of evidence; introducing four heritage values from Wang Wenzhang [1] and their correspondence with economics, sociology and political-science ESP modules	Individual diagnostic text and learning plan; students' preliminary identification of heritage-value dimensions from their disciplinary perspectives
Weeks 3–4	4	Comparison of Taiping Nijiaojiao sources; research questions and interview preparation	Source list, problem statement, and interview guide
Weeks 5–6	4	Negotiated observation and interviews, or authorized alternative materials	Field notes and evidence matrix
Weeks 7–8	4	Genre analysis, English argumentation, shared-case presentations, and revision	Individual case analysis and revision commentary

Table 2. Continued

Weeks 9–10	4	Hometown heritage selection, literature searches, and project proposals	Group research plan and individual task agreement
Weeks 11–12	4	Data collection, cross-case discussion, and interim feedback	Research memos, argument outline, and draft
Weeks 13–14	4	Peer review, English presentations, and individual oral defenses	Group report and individual revised text
Weeks 15–16	4	Transfer tasks, course review, and learning reflection	Individual posttest, portfolio, and reflective text

Note. The proposed schedule totals 32 classroom instructional hours. Investigations must be coordinated with course requirements and practical conditions.

5.2. Developing research questions from observable phenomena

The shared-case unit will begin with phenomena students can observe, such as which stages of production are emphasized in demonstrations, how explanations communicate the significance of the craft, and what knowledge participants can access through hands-on activities. The teacher will first help students distinguish factual records, interviewees' accounts, and researchers' interpretations before selecting questions of manageable scope. Compared with asking why Taiping Nijiaojiao is important, asking how a particular public workshop presents craft knowledge and cultural meaning makes it easier to delimit the evidence and develop an analysis that can be examined. On this basis, students are guided to raise subdivided research questions from four heritage-value perspectives. Economics perspective: What local economic benefits can the productive-conservation model of Taiping Clay Whistle bring? Sociology perspective: How do experiential activities of Taiping Clay Whistle exert educational value and construct local cultural identity? Political-science perspective: How do local heritage projects such as Taiping Clay Whistle realize harmonious value and promote community identity? These questions connect disciplinary thinking of respective ESP textbook modules. The teacher will prepare local public sources, authorized images, relevant research abstracts, and materials on academic expression in English. Each item will identify its author or organization, publication date, means of access, and scope of use. Where accounts of historical origins differ, those differences will be retained. Students should be able to report that sources offer divergent accounts rather than impose a single version to produce an engaging story. English naming choices should likewise be explained in context. Where necessary, Chinese pinyin can be retained with a brief gloss, without presenting an unverified translation as an official designation.

5.3. Organizing traceable observations and interviews

Field activities will proceed only when permission, scheduling, safety, and teaching arrangements are in place. Before a visit, students will prepare observation checklists and rehearse interviews, learning appropriate questioning boundaries, paraphrasing practices, and recording conventions. Interviews will explore experiences of learning the craft, intended audiences for explanations, and experiences of transmission, while avoiding prompts that steer respondents toward predetermined conclusions. Audio or video recording will require explicit consent, and questions that respondents decline to answer will not be pursued. The course should also avoid imposing excessive unpaid teaching or checking duties on heritage practitioners.

During activities, group members will rotate questioning, recording, and verification roles, and each student will keep independent observation notes. Afterward, groups will create an evidence matrix linking

original data extracts to the claims they may support, alternative interpretations, and limitations. One additional column is set in the evidence table to mark which heritage value (educational / economic / cultural / harmonious) each piece of raw data can support in argumentation. If field visits cannot be arranged, authorized public interviews, exhibition materials, and observation materials compiled by the teacher will be used instead. Such work will be clearly identified as secondary-data analysis, without inventing a fieldwork process.

5.4. Supporting english expression and repeated revision

Language instruction will focus on defining concepts, attributing evidence, developing comparative explanations, and drawing appropriately qualified conclusions. Students will first write an account of approximately 250 words, develop it into an individual case analysis of approximately 800 words, and then deliver a five-minute English presentation followed by a brief oral defense. These lengths indicate proposed task scales and may be differentiated in response to diagnostic findings. Model passages will illustrate how to move from asserting that a practice is effective to specifying what claims the available evidence supports and within what limits. Instruction will also address reporting verbs, hedging, and paragraph cohesion. Sample libraries are supplemented with discipline-specific English samples: economics samples discuss heritage economic value; sociology samples interpret educational and cultural values; political-science samples analyze harmonious value. Samples are adapted from corresponding ESP textbook modules. Students are trained to accurately paraphrase four heritage values in English, and all value judgments must be supported by evidence rather than empty assertions that a project possesses certain heritage values.

Feedback will be organized in two rounds. The first will prioritize the clarity of the question, the relevance of evidence, and whether conclusions exceed the data. The second will address genre organization, terminological consistency, and linguistic accuracy. Each student will submit a revision commentary identifying feedback accepted or rejected and explaining the reasons. This will make it possible to examine whether feedback informs actual revision rather than simply count teacher comments. Students will also practice acknowledging insufficient evidence during oral defenses and identifying additional evidence that could be collected.

6. Independent inquiry into hometown heritage and transfer across cases

6.1. Topic selection and disciplinary integration

Hometown heritage projects will combine group collaboration with individual accountability. Groups will normally comprise three to five students, with size adjusted to class enrollment. Students may form groups around one locality or similar questions spanning different regions. Topics should offer accessible evidence, a definable problem, and a manageable investigative workload. Cultural practices whose listing status has not been confirmed may be discussed as relevant local cultural phenomena, but must not be described as officially recognized national- or provincial-level ICH projects without verification.

At the proposal stage, groups will submit a topic rationale, initial sources, research questions, intended evidence, and the form of their English-language product. Teacher review will focus on whether the question can be answered, rather than the prominence of the heritage item. Disciplinary orientations may involve public cultural services, platform-based communication, intergenerational learning, or community participation, but should go beyond adding disciplinary terminology to a title. Each group must explain how a concept guides the selection of materials and why the chosen analytical perspective is appropriate in light of available evidence. Students are encouraged to set research entry points based on four heritage values. Economics-major students focus on the economic value of hometown heritage; sociology-major students focus on educational

and cultural values; political-science-major students explore harmonious value. In this way, topics are deeply bound with economics, sociology and political-science modules of ESP textbooks. Students may discuss multiple values simultaneously yet must identify primary and secondary dimensions to avoid generalized statements without solid evidence.

6.2. Division of work evidence quality and equitable participation

Groups will prepare written task-allocation plans. However, students with stronger English should not become the permanent authors of all written work, nor should those familiar with hometown resources handle all external communication. Members will rotate responsibilities for source verification, abstract writing, discussion facilitation, and oral responses. The teacher will assess actual participation through individual memos, interim discussions, and independent oral defenses, rather than rely exclusively on peer ratings.

Alternative routes, including public-source research, online interviews, and comparisons of related cases, will be available to students unable to return home, contact practitioners, or access equipment. The richness of available sources will not be equated with research quality. Assessment will emphasize the appropriate use of available evidence and acknowledgment of limitations. Interview originals may remain in Chinese or the relevant local language. When translated extracts appear in English papers, the translation procedure should be stated and key quotations checked wherever possible, so that fluency does not displace fidelity to the original meaning. Even when secondary literature is adopted, students must clarify how literature supports one or more heritage-value claims. Direct repetition of ready-made statements such as "intangible cultural heritage has educational / economic / cultural / harmonious values" from the monograph without supporting data is prohibited.

6.3. Moving from presentations to comparative explanations

Proposed outputs include group research reports in English, academic posters or oral presentations, and individual analytical essays. In joint seminars, groups will compare cases around related questions, such as how different modes of presentation influence understandings of heritage transmission. Before making comparisons, students will consider comparability and explain differences in settings, data types, and access conditions. Placing stories from different regions alongside one another will not, by itself, constitute cross-case research. The cross-case seminar sets special themes: comparison of economic-value realization paths of heritage projects in different regions; comparison of realization forms of educational and cultural values among regional heritage; differences in how heritage facilitates community harmony. These themes correspond to three ESP textbook modules and guide students to complete multi-case English argumentation.

Public communication materials and research reports may support one another, but their assessment criteria should remain distinct. Public-facing short videos require clarity, accuracy, and appropriateness; academic reports must also specify questions, methods, and limitations. Any public presentation of work will follow source checks, quotation verification, and the necessary permissions. Interview content not cleared for public use will remain within the scope of teaching analysis that has been authorized. Community members who wish to participate may comment on factual descriptions and cultural context, but will have no obligation to grade students.

7. Assessment instruments data collection and analysis

7.1. Combining process and outcome assessment

The course will use formative assessment to support revision rather than rely on a single judgment at the end. Black and Wiliam's work on classroom assessment provides a basis for using feedback to improve learning [9]. The proposed grading scheme combines individual and collective work: individual case analysis and revision, 25%; individual hometown heritage analysis, 25%; group research report, 20%; individual English oral defense, 15%; and process portfolio and feedback uptake, 15%. Criteria will be explained to students before use and checked against university course-assessment requirements.

Table 3. Proposed data sources and their interpretive uses

Data source	Timing	Main focus	Interpretive limits
Individual analytical tasks	Before and after the module; delayed assessment where feasible	Argumentation, evidence, organization, and language performance, students' comprehension and English demonstration quality of educational, economic, cultural and harmonious values	Pre–post change alone cannot establish instructional causation
Drafts, revisions, and commentaries	At each core task stage	Feedback uptake, depth of revision, and reasons for changes, correction of misuse or empty generalization of heritage-value concepts	Revision quantity does not equal revision quality
English presentations and oral defenses	End of the shared unit and hometown project	Explaining evidence, responding to challenges, and acknowledging limitations, whether students demonstrate heritage values from disciplinary perspectives supported by evidence	Topic familiarity and speaking anxiety must be considered
Learning questionnaires and interviews	Diagnosis, interim stages, and course completion	Needs, engagement, difficulties, and learning experiences, students' perceptions and suggestions on integrating heritage values into economics, sociology and political-science ESP modules	Self-reports cannot replace performance measures
Teaching logs and implementation records	Throughout implementation	Instructional hours, scaffolding, resources, and departures from the plan, practical obstacles in integrating four heritage values into three ESP modules	Help explain differences across classes or course runs

The primary research outcome will be the score on an individual timed analytical writing task in English, recorded separately from regular course grades. Pretests and posttests will use different materials of comparable difficulty, with standardized time limits, source access, and tool-use rules. Where delayed measurement is feasible, a new task may be administered four to six weeks after the course. It will use a case not repeatedly taught in class to reduce bias arising from memorized content. If necessary, social science materials unrelated to heritage will be introduced to examine the scope of transfer further. Pre-test and post-test materials include reading excerpts related to four heritage values to examine whether students can interpret such texts and produce evidence-based English arguments from their disciplinary perspectives

(economics / sociology / political science). Multiple data sources with respective interpretive limits are presented (see Table 3).

7.2. Rubric development and scoring quality

Individual writing will be assessed using a proposed 100-point analytic rubric: research question and argument quality, 30 points; evidence selection and citation, 25 points; genre organization, 20 points; English expression, 20 points; and accuracy and qualification in cultural representation, 5 points. Each dimension will have four performance descriptors and anonymized examples, explicitly distinguishing between having a source and having a source that adequately supports a claim. The cultural-representation dimension will assess the accuracy of concepts and evidence, rather than whether students express uniform values or attitudes. The rubric will undergo peer discussion and small-scale trial scoring before revision in response to practical difficulties. Supplementary criteria are added to the dimension of research question and argumentation quality: students shall accurately grasp connotations of educational, economic, cultural and harmonious heritage values and conduct argumentation from economics, sociology or political-science perspectives. Empty repetition of heritage-value theories without evidence is forbidden.

Texts used for the principal measurements will be anonymized and presented in randomized order to two calibrated raters for independent scoring. Cohort and assessment stage will be concealed as far as practicable. The study will report the agreement statistic, model, and confidence interval used. Substantial disagreement will prompt examination of rubric interpretation and performance boundaries before independent rescoring. A final score reached through discussion may inform instructional feedback, but independent ratings will be retained so that negotiated agreement is not misreported as interrater reliability.

7.3. Quantitative analysis and qualitative interpretation

Quantitative analysis will first examine participant flow, data completeness, score distributions, and baseline differences, followed by descriptions of individual change, effect sizes, and uncertainty. Paired comparisons may be used where appropriate. If parallel classes and sufficient data are available, comparative models controlling for pretest performance may be considered. Students are nested within classes; where there are few classes, class effects require caution, and adding students within a class cannot substitute for evidence from independent classes. Pooling the two cohorts will be contingent on comparable measurement and implementation conditions.

Primary indicators will be specified in advance to avoid selecting favorable outcomes after analysis. Reasons for missing assessments will be documented and participant flow reported. Unsubmitted tasks will not automatically receive zero scores in the research dataset, nor will analysis be restricted to complete cases with better performance. Limited sample size, group differences, or an inability to conduct delayed assessment will be discussed honestly in relation to estimation precision and interpretive limitations. Questionnaires will describe needs and experiences. If existing scales are used, their conditions of use, the suitability of translations, and their measurement performance in the present study will be examined.

Qualitative analysis will draw on Braun and Clarke's thematic approach, proceeding through familiarization, initial coding, theme development, review, and interpretation [10]. Interviewees will be purposively selected by cohort, starting level, and mode of participation, including students showing clear improvement as well as those experiencing limited change or difficulty. Researchers will retain analytic memos and contradictory cases, acknowledge interpretive biases arising from their simultaneous teaching role, and avoid equating the frequency of a theme with its prevalence in a wider population. New sub-codes are added for qualitative coding: educational-value of ICH, economic-value of ICH, cultural-value of ICH,

harmonious-value of ICH, integration difficulties in economics module, integration difficulties in sociology module, integration difficulties in political-science module. Practical dilemmas and feasible experience of connecting four heritage values with three ESP textbook modules will be summarized.

Quantitative and qualitative evidence will be integrated during interpretation. For instance, improved individual scores accompanied by interview accounts of heavy reliance on templates would call for closer examination of transfer tasks. Limited change in linguistic accuracy alongside clearer source attribution should be reported as distinct developments. Bringing score changes, textual revisions, and learning experiences into a common evidentiary framework will support qualified explanations, without requiring every source of data to indicate positive effects.

8. Implementation support scheduling and anticipated outputs

8.1. Resources and collaboration

The project will seek to establish a course collaboration arrangement led by academic English teachers, with consultation from relevant social science faculty and, where feasible, heritage practitioners' advice on cultural context. Responsibilities will be specified in advance: English teachers will lead language and genre instruction, disciplinary teachers will advise on research questions and methods, and practitioners may voluntarily share experience and check facts. External collaboration will depend on actual communication; intentions will not be described as completed agreements.

Resource development will prioritize sustainable reuse, including verified source directories, differentiated language tasks, rubrics, interview templates, and anonymized teaching examples. New resources include: bilingual reading guides for four heritage values; task case packages adapted for economics, sociology and political-science ESP modules; collections of English sample texts on heritage-value topics from multi-disciplinary perspectives. Teachers will record weekly preparation, feedback, and communication workloads to inform estimates of the costs of wider implementation. Funding will primarily support necessary educational visits, data processing, and resource production, with detailed budgets determined by the project allocation and university requirements rather than assumed expenditure. Where staffing is limited, high-quality feedback on core individual tasks will take priority, with presentation formats and project numbers adjusted accordingly.

8.2. Ethics data management and tool use

UNESCO's ethical principles for safeguarding ICH emphasize the primary role of communities, dialogue, negotiation, and informed consent[3]. Consent in this project will therefore distinguish among instructional participation, research analysis, and public dissemination, avoiding unlimited extension of a single agreement. Students and interviewees may withdraw materials within the scope and deadlines explained in advance. Publications will use pseudonyms and de-identified texts, with identity keys stored separately from research materials. Access permissions and retention periods will follow university requirements.

Generative artificial intelligence and translation tools may be used for permitted language assistance, but students must document their purposes and verify outputs. They must not generate nonexistent interviews, quotations, or references. Unauthorized personal information and original interview content will

[3] UNESCO. (2015). Ethical principles for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Retrieved from https://ich.unesco.org/en/ethics-and-ich-00866

not be uploaded to external tools. Tool-use conditions will be standardized for research assessments, while drafts, revision commentaries, and individual oral defenses will document learning in course assignments. Assessment should examine whether students can explain their own judgments rather than infer independent authorship solely from the fluency of finished work. Meanwhile, students are reminded that AI-generated English arguments on four heritage values must be cross-checked against the Chinese monograph *An Introduction to Intangible Cultural Heritage* and first-hand research materials. AI-generated viewpoints without evidence shall not be adopted directly.

8.3. Phased implementation and contingency planning

The preparation phase will cover needs assessment, resource negotiations, instrument trials, and necessary university procedures. Implementation will follow the proposed 16-week module, with an instructional review after the shared case. Feasible delayed assessment, data analysis, and case compilation will follow course completion. Because participants belong to two entry cohorts, specific dates must accommodate their program schedules. If implementation must occur in separate runs, core tasks and rubrics will remain stable while all adjustments are documented.

The project will specify conditions requiring adaptation: restricted field access will trigger the use of authorized source materials; investigations exceeding course capacity will require narrower questions; substantial differences in initial English proficiency will call for differentiated scaffolding; and inadequate scoring agreement will require recalibration before results are interpreted. These adjustments are intended to preserve alignment between learning objectives and assessment evidence, rather than ensure results in an anticipated direction. The reason, timing, and potential implications of each adjustment will be recorded for subsequent review. Additional risk-response measures: simplified bilingual reading guides will be supplemented if students have difficulties understanding four heritage-value theories; task complexity will be reduced for over-challenging modules (economics / sociology / political science), while core argumentation training objectives will be preserved.

8.4. Anticipated contributions and conditions for wider use

Anticipated outputs include a set of heritage-based academic English tasks, authorized and anonymized teaching cases, an implementation and evaluation report, and papers addressing curriculum design or research findings. The task package contains a special sub-module: teaching resources for connecting four heritage values with economics-sociology-political-science ESP modules. Whether these outputs meet expectations will depend on actual evidence. Particular attention can be given to task feasibility, access to support for students with different starting points, manageable teacher workloads, and consistent evidence of individual learning change.

The principal contribution to wider practice lies in the method: using local resources to formulate questions, organizing evidence through academic English, and transferring shared methods to cultural contexts familiar to students. Other universities may choose different heritage practices, while retaining needs analysis, source verification, individual assessment, and community consultation. In addition, other universities may draw on the idea of matching four heritage values with different ESP modules and make adaptations according to local social-science majors. Institutions with different disciplinary profiles, instructional hours, and local resources will need to adapt task difficulty and delivery. An exploratory study at one university should not be presented as a universally effective model.

9. Conclusion

Integrating ICH into academic English for social science postgraduates requires transforming cultural encounters into learning that is question-driven, evidence-based, and open to challenge. The proposed project will use Taiping Nijiaojiao to establish a shared foundation for inquiry and hometown heritage to extend opportunities for independent research, aligning objectives, tasks, scaffolding, and assessment through its theoretical framework. This project attempts pedagogical integration between these four values and economics, sociology and political-science modules of ESP textbooks for non-English-major social-science postgraduates, and guides students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to conduct English academic inquiry on intangible-cultural-heritage topics from their own academic perspectives. Careful implementation records, multiple sources of evidence, and individual transfer tasks will support examination of feasibility, learning change, and conditions of applicability. The value of the approach remains to be tested in actual teaching; this paper provides an implementation proposal that can enter the classroom, undergo evaluation, and be revised over time.

Funding

Foreign-Language Category of the 2024 Jiangsu Provincial Program for Excellence in Applied Social Science Research: "Research on the Integration of Intangible Cultural Heritage Elements into ESP (Social Sciences) Classrooms" (24SWB-16)

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