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# Research on PowerPoint Presentations in Foreign Language Teaching Against the Background of Moral Education in Curriculum*

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Implementing Curriculum-Based Moral Education is crucial for cultivating foreign language talents with national identity and international vision. Meanwhile, PPT, with its visualization advantages, has become an effective approach to integrate "moral education" and "talent cultivation" in foreign language teaching. Based on practical surveys and document research, this paper analyzes PPT-related problems in foreign language teaching, taking PPT cases of award-winning teachers in the 2020 Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) "Teaching Star" Contest as samples to systematically explore their embedded teaching principles and practical ideas. Guided by Multiliteracies Pedagogy, corresponding PPT design strategies are proposed from four dimensions: contextualized implicit education, dynamic interactive collaborative education, critical thinking-oriented all-round education, and learning-application integrated whole-process education.

*Keywords:* Moral Education in Curriculum, PowerPoint presentations, Multiliteracies Pedagogy

## Introduction

In December 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping urged that all courses coordinate with moral education at the national conference. Moral education has since become a key higher education research topic, with domestic scholars exploring its connotation and pathways and shifting from theory to practice (Xiao & Huang, 2020). Foreign language courses hold a unique role in moral education; improper teaching may cause the absence of Chinese culture in global communication.

The visual reading era has made PPT a core tool for foreign language teaching, as linguistic symbols alone fail to deliver humanistic values. Current PPT research focuses on technical design and application, lacking empirical data and systematic theory. With multimodal discourse analysis, some scholars have applied multiliteracies theory to PPT teaching (Li & Feng, 2019), offering useful insights. Thus, this study uses the multiliteracies framework to analyze 2020 Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP) "Teaching Star" winning PPT cases, exploring design logic for foreign language PPT in curriculum-based moral education.

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## Current Status of Foreign Language PPT Teaching

Based on empirical investigation and literature review, this study aims to clarify the current application status of PPT teaching. A questionnaire survey was administered to 200 first-year non-English major undergraduates, with prior pilot testing and reliability/validity checks to ensure data authenticity. Of 200 distributed questionnaires, 194 valid responses were retrieved (97% effective rate), meeting survey research statistical standards. IBM SPSS Statistics 20 was used for descriptive statistical analysis (frequency distributions and percentages), revealing that while PPT teaching is widely adopted, its effectiveness is suboptimal, with the main issues as follows:

### Neglecting Student Experience

The survey showed 50.8% of students deemed instructors' knowledge presentation overly unimodal—predominantly text-based with insufficient multimodal integration—reducing information readability and causing visual fatigue from dense text. Additionally, 40.3% reported excessive PPT textual content paired with inadequate instructor explanations, leading to poor post-class knowledge retention. This pedagogical context hinders students' emotional, attitudinal, and value engagement, resulting in superficial, rote learning that obscures the subject's inherent deeper values.

### Insufficient Student Engagement

According to the survey, 82.2% of students regarded the current PPT teaching mode as dominated by one-way knowledge transmission with superficial classroom interaction. Instructors often read slides directly, while students received information passively, resulting in low engagement and weak sense of presence, thus forming an avoidant interaction pattern. Although PPT was intended to promote multisensory engagement, it was still restricted by the traditional cramming teaching environment and failed to deeply integrate digital education with face-to-face instruction. As a result, teachers and students, as well as subjects and objects of cognition, remained mutually isolated.

### Separation of Knowledge Transmission and Value Cultivation

Survey results show that the strong information-carrying capacity of PPT has increased classroom content density and teaching speed. Among respondents, 53.8% reported anxiety from failing to follow the pace. Such knowledge-intensive instruction causes information disorientation due to mismatched decoding efficiency and input speed, as well as memory bottlenecks from rapid information delivery. Students thus remain at the memorization level, rarely reflecting on the inherent humanistic values, leading to a dissociation between knowledge transmission and value cultivation.

### Teaching Cases Divorced from Authentic Contexts

Survey data reveal that teaching materials and cases in PPT instruction often lack authenticity and real-world relevance. As a result, students struggle to apply classroom-acquired humanistic values in practice or conduct critical value reflection. Such disconnection leads students to separate media content from learning content, widening the theory-practice gap and weakening the educational value of knowledge and skills in holistic development.

## Analysis of PPT Courseware by Award-Winning Teachers in the "Teaching Star" Contest

The 2020 Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press "Teaching Star" Contest centered on foreign language curriculum design integrating moral education, highlighting moral cultivation and cultural education.

All winning entries included an "Introduction" and a "Demonstration" section; this study focuses on the teaching-focused "Demonstration" part. A total of 291 PPT slides from 18 award-winning teachers were analyzed. Adopting Li and Feng's (2019) analytical framework, the research examines the samples from four dimensions: modal configuration, knowledge explanation approaches, critical thinking design, and knowledge application ratio.

**Modal Configuration**

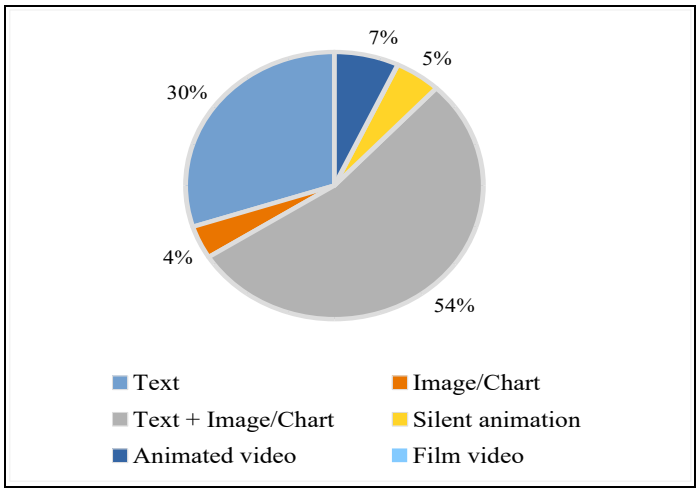



*Figure 1.* Modal configuration.

Modal configuration was quantified by modal types and complementary mechanisms. Following Zhu Yongsheng (2007), modalities were classified into static visual, dynamic visual, and audiovisual modes. Custom animations were excluded from statistics as all samples adopted them. As shown in Figure 1, all three modal types were applied, with audiovisual modalities included in 13 of the 18 PPT sets, moving beyond traditional single-modal design.

Award-winning teachers used multiple semiotic resources to contextualize abstract moral and humanistic values, enhancing contextualization and student engagement. Modal analysis showed rare use of single text or image modes; cross-modal combinations dominated. This indicates effective use of intermodal reinforcement to reconstruct authentic contexts, especially for ideological and political elements, stimulating deeper student perception through vivid, multi-resource situations.

**Approaches to Explaining New Knowledge**

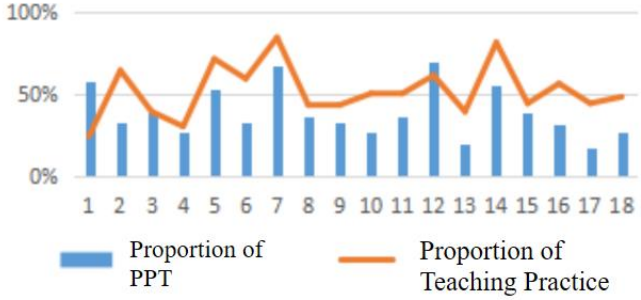



*Figure 2.* Proportions of PPT slides and instructional time dedicated to "Leaving Blanks" and "Interaction".

New knowledge explanation is key to students' in-class meaning construction, with different approaches exerting varied effects. A critical factor for student-centered moral education is activating students' active meaning construction. This study, via contest videos and instructional designs, explores how teachers explain new knowledge in PPT teaching and facilitate student meaning construction to promote curriculum moral education's people-oriented orientation.

We quantified PPT "white space" and "interaction" proportions and time allocation: "White space" (heuristic teaching) guides value reflection, while "interaction" (teacher-student community) shapes affective and value systems. All cases integrated both (35% of slides, 52% of class time on average), indicating award-winning teachers abandoned one-way presentation for problem-oriented instruction, upgrading knowledge teaching to ideological and political value education.

With teacher guidance, students memorize and comprehend knowledge through independent thinking, enhancing retention and responsibility. Following their cognitive rules, they reflect on positive values and strengthen curriculum moral education awareness.

**Critical Thinking Instructional Design**

Curriculum-based moral education shifts from knowledge to value orientation, highlighting spiritual-cultural connotations and cultivating students' critical thinking and moral discernment (Wang, 2020). This study analyzes "critical thinking instructional segments" in PowerPoint courseware to guide students in dialectically examining embedded values and enhancing their scientific analytical abilities in practice.

PPT analysis was supplemented with contest videos and instructional designs for accuracy. Results show all coursewares included a critical thinking component (33% of content on average, moderate pace for reflection), with common designs: progressive critical thinking themes integrating language and ideology, Chinese wisdom-based cases strengthening national identity, and holistic education-guided activities with cloud classrooms to deepen critical thinking.

**Proportion of Knowledge Application**

Contextualized PPT knowledge presentation enhances the appeal of abstract moral concepts, which instructors can elevate to students' affective cognition. However, one-way instructor demonstration fails to internalize knowledge; genuine internalization requires students to apply, reflect, establish correct values, and guide new practices.

Drawing on contest videos and instructional designs, this study quantitatively analyzed "in-class exercises" and "after-class assignments" in award-winning instructors' PPTs. Results show all included these components (30% of slides on average), which, unlike traditional mechanical drills, focused on cultivating higher-order analysis and application abilities via authentic communicative tasks.

Tasks often used real-life scenarios to link knowledge with students' experiences, realizing learning-application integration. In-class exercises also adopted diverse multimodal formats (e.g., audiovisual media) to stimulate interest and motivate students to reflect on embedded core values.

## Practical Pathways for Foreign Language PPT Teaching Guided by Multiliteracies Pedagogy

High alignment between PPT teaching and moral education at the philosophical and environmental levels generates a coupling effect of mutual interaction and promotion. PPT teaching provides a visual basis for moral

education: By integrating multimodal resources such as images, audio, and video, it delivers intuitive and sensory stimulation, activating students' deep cognition, and improving the persuasiveness of implicit value education. Conversely, moral education acts as a guiding principle for PPT teaching. Given that PPT-based instruction often involves cross-cultural and value-laden discourses, moral education—with its focus on integrating knowledge transmission and virtue cultivation—provides essential ideological guidance.

Analysis of award-winning teachers' PPT courseware reveals strong alignment between language learning and ideological education in modal structure, knowledge explanation, critical thinking design, and knowledge application. This consistency corresponds to the multiliteracies pedagogy proposed by the New London Group (1996/2000), which highlights multimodal resources and a systematic framework consisting of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice. These four components form a cyclical, interactive system rather than a linear sequence.

Under the guidance of multiliteracies pedagogy, this paper explores practical strategies for foreign language PPT teaching within moral education, focusing on the four dimensions of situated practice, overt instruction, critical framing, and transformed practice.

**Contextualizing Knowledge to Foster Implicit Education**

Moral education underscores the goal of fostering virtue through disciplinary education by integrating ideological and political elements via implicit instruction. In foreign language teaching, this entails utilizing interactions between linguistic and non-linguistic modalities to achieve educational objectives implicitly. The situated practice principle of multiliteracies pedagogy offers a suitable theoretical foundation, emphasizing knowledge transmission and value guidance within authentic contexts to facilitate students' internalization of attitudes, values, and moral systems.

Against the background of moral education, foreign language PPT teaching should exploit its contextual advantages by employing linguistic, visual, auditory, and gestural semiotic resources to transform abstract moral concepts into concrete experiences. Analysis of award-winning PPTs indicates that effective practice relies on modality diversity and modality complementarity.

First, enriching modality diversity within appropriate cognitive load helps visualize knowledge structures and enhance student engagement. As suggested by Zhang, Liu, and Lei (2021) and Li and Yang (2023), varied modalities support contextualized learning and foster students' cultural confidence and self-cultivation. Instructors may integrate audiovisual modalities such as animations to embody abstract humanistic and ethical connotations.

Second, excessive modality variation without coordination may cause visual noise and distract students from value transmission. Thus, modalities should be selected around a unified theme to achieve complementarity rather than redundancy. For instance, the integration of text, images, and videos about the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge effectively strengthens students' emotional and cultural identification by connecting individual ideals to the Chinese Dream.

**Interconnection and Interaction for Interactive Education**

Guided by the people-centered concept of moral education, foreign language teaching should construct a student-centered classroom ecology with collaborative teacher-student participation, optimizing the synergistic effect of classroom ecological factors and enabling students to form independent value judgments through immersive experiences. Such learning is often realized via teacher-student discourse: Teachers explain concepts

and provide scaffolding to help students integrate new knowledge with prior experience. However, excessive reliance on PPTs often weakens real interaction and leads to superficial engagement. The overt instruction principle of multiliteracies pedagogy provides a solution: It advocates knowledge construction through metalanguage and interactive activities rather than mechanical drills, aiming to elevate linguistic knowledge to cultural and value education.

In the digital era, foreign language PPT teaching must transcend one-way transmission and establish an interactive teacher-student relationship centered on dynamic learners (Li, 2023), enhancing student participation and critical reflection on ideological values. Supported by overt instruction and exemplary PPT practices, PPT design for moral education can be improved in two interconnected dimensions. First, when delivering new knowledge, teachers should align with students' cognitive rules to update their cognitive structures through progressive guidance. Appropriate "white space" in PPT layout and class pacing—such as incremental animation and timely black-screening—can encourage deep reflection beyond linguistic texts and integrate the instrumental and humanistic values of foreign languages. Second, interactive teaching requires two-way communication: Teachers should capture real-time student feedback via verbal and nonverbal signals, adjust pacing accordingly, and respect students' affective states to embody the people-centered ideal. For instance, an award-winning teacher guided students to analyze "rhetorical paradox" through text comparison and timely scaffolding, leading them to understand the concept of "situational paradox" with critical and dialectical thinking.

**Innovative Critical Thinking Drives Comprehensive Education**

The core of moral education in foreign language courses is to enable students to dialectically examine diverse cultural systems and develop cultural identity in multicultural communication. Its ultimate goal is to foster students' ability to analyze social realities and guide creative practice, thus integrating knowledge instruction and moral cultivation toward holistic education. The New London School (1996/2000) states that literacy development is closely linked to social values and ideology, which can be cultivated through critical framing: Scaffolded guidance helps learners establish independent critical thinking, dialectically understand Chinese and Western cultures, and strengthen cultural confidence.

In PPT-supported foreign language teaching, instructors should utilize multimedia advantages to provide multi-modal, in-depth critical discourse. Analysis of award-winning PPTs shows that teaching should pursue three-dimensional objectives (knowledge, competence, and ideological-political education), focusing on students' ability to interpret embedded values and form independent judgments. Teachers should select materials with philosophical depth and integrate real-world topics to encourage multi-perspective analysis, feedback, and discussion, broadening students' global vision and reinforcing their sense of national identity.

Furthermore, teaching materials can be localized to highlight Chinese cultural elements to enhance cultural confidence. For example, classic Chinese philosophical ideas can be used to cultivate students' dialectical and creative thinking. In addition, PPT presentation pace significantly influences critical thinking development: Overly rapid pacing limits reflection. Teachers should therefore adjust rhythm according to students' information-processing capacity, model critical thinking, and guide students to analyze texts and life from multiple perspectives.

**Unity of Knowledge and Action Propels Whole-Process Education**

The output orientation of moral education and the instrumentality of foreign language teaching together highlight the centrality of unity of knowledge and action in curriculum moral education. As Zhang and Wang (2021) noted, the goal is to internalize core socialist values into students' spiritual pursuits and externalize them

into conscious practice. A complete educational cycle requires cognitive knowledge to be transferred, elevated, and voluntarily applied in new social contexts. Transformed practice supports the recontextualization and innovation of disciplinary knowledge by enabling students to identify real-world application scenarios, with PPT's visual strengths helping to construct authentic communication environments.

However, mismatches between teaching materials and real contexts often hinder students' language output. Moral-education-oriented PPT teaching should therefore return to authentic contexts, promoting knowledge and value application to achieve knowledge‑action unity.

First, practice and assignment sections should prioritize real communication tasks and life-linked materials to extend students' cognition beyond class. Multimedia integration can combine language, thinking, and practical abilities, while China-context micro‑tasks help cultivate interdisciplinary talents with professional and humanistic qualities. For example, writing tasks on "filial piety" and "integrity" enhance language skills and convey Chinese wisdom.

Second, diverse interactive activities (group discussion, brainstorming, scenario simulation) should be adopted to develop collaboration and language competence. Instead of routine homework, multi-level tasks should stimulate innovation and critical thinking, guiding students to connect knowledge with social culture and realize the coexistence of "knowledge" and "action".

## Conclusion

Foreign language courses' inherent humanistic attributes demand the integration of language skills, critical thinking, and humanistic literacy. Under moral education, nurturing foreign language talents with international perspectives and national sentiments relies on practical pathways, which the image-reading era facilitates via multimodal PPT courseware—constructing interactive, multi-space teaching models to enhance moral education's appeal. Guided by multiliteracies pedagogy, moral education and PPT teaching can mutually empower, providing teachers with multimodal optimization plans to advance foreign language teaching's mission of fostering virtue through education. The "Party and nation talent cultivation" mission of foreign language courses can be achieved through four key approaches: contextualized implicit education, interactive engagement, critical thinking-driven comprehensive education, and knowledge-action integrated whole-process education.

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