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Theoretical Logic and Practical Dimensions of the "Three Entries" Initiative in Foreign Language Education at Plateau Universities: From the Perspective of Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation

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Abstract: The "Three Entries" initiative, which involves integrating Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era into textbooks, classrooms, and students' minds, represents a core strategic measure for fulfilling the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education. Foreign language education, possessing dual attributes of linguistic tool value and cultural value, undertakes the special mission of communicating China's narratives to the global community in the implementation of this initiative. Promoting the "Three Entries" initiative in foreign language education at universities in the western regions of China carries unique strategic values: forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, cultivating talents for regional international communication, and safeguarding regional stability. From the theoretical perspective of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, this paper analyzes the practical progress and realistic dilemmas of the "Three Entries" initiative in foreign language education at plateau universities. It extracts experience through case studies of Beijing Foreign Studies University, Sichuan International Studies University, and Southwest Minzu University, and puts forward optimized approaches for the work from three dimensions: ideological guidance, institutional innovation, and evaluation system optimization. The findings suggest that a systematic and context-sensitive approach is essential for effectively embedding ideological and political education within foreign language curricula, particularly in geographically and culturally distinct regions. This study contributes to the broader discourse on curriculum-based ideological education and offers practical recommendations for policymakers and educators working in higher education institutions across the western regions of China.

Keywords: "three entries" initiative; curriculum-based ideological education; foreign language education; plateau universities; sense of community for the Chinese nation

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1. Introduction

Comprehensively integrating The "Three Entries" initiative into textbooks, classrooms, and students' understanding is a strategic initiative to fulfill the fundamental educational mission of cultivating moral character and competence [1]. As a discipline embodying both linguistic functionality and humanistic significance, foreign language education plays a distinctive role in communicating China's perspectives and narratives internationally. Universities located in the western regions of China—particularly those serving multiethnic communities—implement this initiative within foreign language instruction. Such efforts respond to the practical need for strengthening national unity and shared identity, as well as to broader considerations of international discourse engagement, thereby acquiring distinctive relevance beyond that of more centrally located institutions.

In recent years, universities in the western regions of China have made steady progress in implementing this initiative; however, they continue to encounter region-specific challenges related to students' foundational foreign language proficiency, localization of instructional materials, and capacity development among teaching staff. Many instructors report difficulties in achieving an appropriate balance between linguistic skill development and value-oriented pedagogy in daily practice [2]. Systematically sorting out practical experience of representative institutions and refining optimized paths matching local regional context, is of significant theoretical and practical importance for advancing curriculum-integrated ideological and political education in foreign language instruction across multiethnic, geographically remote areas.

2. Status and Value of the "Three Entries" Initiative in Foreign Language Education at Xizang's Universities

2.1. Practical Progress

Universities in the western regions of China have achieved initial progress in integrating ideological and political education into foreign language instruction across three dimensions: organizational support, textbook development, and classroom pedagogy [3].

Regarding organizational support, a university in the western regions of China established a dedicated coordination team for this initiative and developed targeted implementation frameworks, ensuring comprehensive coverage of relevant courses for undergraduate and graduate English majors. In July 2024, another university in the same region convened the third regional symposium on foreign language teaching advancement [4]. The event brought together educators and scholars from across the area, signifying a transition from isolated exploratory efforts to coordinated, institution-wide implementation. Participants exchanged teaching resources and instructional approaches, strengthening collaborative capacity among institutions.

In textbook development, multilingual editions of authoritative publications on contemporary China and nationally endorsed textbook series have been progressively incorporated into core foreign language curricula [3]. A university in the western regions of China initiated this integration beginning in the autumn semester of 2022, introducing the above textbooks into foundational courses such as Public Speaking in English, Basic Bidirectional Translation, and Advanced Interpretation—reaching over 400 undergraduate and graduate students. The School of Foreign Languages at another university in the region uses a nationally endorsed textbook series as the primary instructional foundation for designing integrated courses. Faculty members are supported in developing supplementary teaching materials that connect theoretical content with local cultural contexts.

In classroom instruction, a university in the western regions of China employs interactive methodologies including small-group discussion, case-based analysis, and theory-practice integration. Instructors anchor abstract concepts in relatable everyday experiences to enhance student comprehension. All universities in the region regularly host online teaching seminars for foreign language faculty focused on pedagogical integration, fostering cross-institutional collaboration and resource exchange. These virtual forums mitigate geographical constraints and provide accessible platforms for educators to share challenges and innovative practices.

2.2. Strategic Value

Implementing the "Three Entries" initiative in foreign language education at plateau universities holds three distinct layers of strategic significance [5].

First, it serves as a key educational approach to foster a sense of community for the Chinese nation [6]. Integrating ideological guidance with language instruction helps students develop sound perspectives on nationhood, history, ethnicity, and culture, thereby reinforcing their identification with the country, the Chinese nation, and Chinese civilization. The cross-cultural competence cultivated through foreign language learning

enables students to situate regional development within broader national and global contexts, enhancing their understanding of the integral relationship between ethnic minority regions and the nation as a whole.

Second, it addresses the strategic need for talent capable of advancing regional international communication. Ethnic minority regions play a vital role in global narratives concerning China's governance and development. Persistent misrepresentations and imbalanced reporting about these areas have appeared across international media platforms [7]. To proactively shape accurate, constructive global discourse and convey authentic accounts of local socioeconomic progress, there is an urgent demand for foreign language professionals who can clearly articulate regional policy frameworks and share credible, locally grounded development experiences with international audiences.

Third, it provides talent support for the region's opening-up towards South Asia. As the Belt and Road Initiative advances, cross-border cooperation in trade, cultural exchange, and people-to-people interaction between the region and South Asian countries continues to expand [8]. This dynamic creates substantial demand for foreign language professionals equipped with linguistic proficiency, contextual knowledge of partner countries, and commitment to contributing to regional development.

2.3. Development Dilemmas

Constrained by geographical and developmental conditions, foreign language education at plateau universities encounters four prominent challenges in implementing the "Three Entries" initiative [9].

The first challenge arises from the mismatch between students' relatively weak language foundations and the preset teaching objectives. Students admitted to plateau universities generally exhibit lower proficiency in foreign languages compared to their counterparts in inland regions [10]. Consequently, substantial class time must be devoted to foundational language skill development, inevitably compressing instructional space allocated to "Three Entries" content and in-depth thematic exploration.

The second challenge stems from the misalignment between standardized national textbooks and local educational contexts [4]. While current instruction relies heavily on nationally developed textbooks featuring authoritative content, these materials often lack resonance with students' lived experiences. The region possesses rich educational resources like including ecological conservation initiatives, yet there is insufficient systematic guidance for incorporating such locally grounded elements into "Three Entries" pedagogy.

The third challenge concerns the gap between teachers' comprehensive competencies and evolving pedagogical expectations. Effective "Three Entries" instruction demands that foreign language educators possess both robust linguistic expertise and sound theoretical grounding. However, foreign language teaching teams at plateau universities tend to be small in scale, and many instructors have not undergone formal training in the relevant theoretical frameworks. Furthermore, the high-altitude environment restricts opportunities for professional development and academic exchange, impeding the collective enhancement of teaching capacity.

The fourth challenge lies in the disconnect between prevailing evaluation mechanisms and the core objective of value internalization [11]. Current assessment systems emphasize explicit linguistic metrics, such as grammatical accuracy, lexical range, and examination performance, while lacking validated instruments to gauge implicit dimensions of learning, including value identification, civic consciousness, and awareness of interethnic solidarity. This limitation hinders the realization of the goal to embed theoretical understanding deeply within students' cognitive frameworks.

These challenges reflect the multifaceted nature of integrating ideological and political education into foreign language curricula in ethnic minority regions. In terms of value orientation, instruction must harmonize overarching national educational goals with region-specific pedagogical needs. Regarding content structure, it synthesizes three interwoven knowledge domains: disciplinary language competence, ideological and

political literacy, and locally situated regional knowledge [12]. In instructional design, educators must thoughtfully align with students' cognitive development patterns while maintaining cultural responsiveness.

3. Case Analysis

This section reviews practices at Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), Sichuan International Studies University (SISU) and Southwest Minzu University (SWMU), to identify improvement directions for universities in the western regions of China.

3.1. Beijing Foreign Studies University: The "Concentric Circle" Model of Ideological and Political Education in Translation Courses

As one of the first batch of pilot universities for the initiative, the university has built a five-dimensional education system for translation majors covering classroom teaching, academic research, cultural immersion, practical training, and academic exploration. In translation courses across all language programs, authoritative official publications are used as core teaching materials. Instructors guide students to engage with original texts, identify standardized terminology, and analyze discourse structures, to support a deeper understanding of conceptual frameworks and linguistic features in formal documents. To support pedagogical innovation, the university funded thirty specialized teaching development projects within two years, yielding adaptable instructional models.

A distinctive feature of this model is its multilingual simulated international conference, incorporating relay simultaneous interpretation. Senior professional translators with extensive experience in formal document translation deliver guest lectures. Students from diverse language programs rotate roles as simultaneous interpreters, transforming academic presentations into authentic, collaborative multilingual practice. This approach integrates technical skill development with contextualized learning: students refine interpreting proficiency while observing firsthand how formal discourse functions in cross-linguistic communication settings [13].

Although regional universities may lack comparable multilingual infrastructure, the underlying principle of project-based experiential learning remains highly transferable [3]. Local institutions can leverage regionally relevant international communication tasks as pedagogical anchors, developing practice-oriented curricula aligned with local contexts and needs.

3.2. Sichuan International Studies University: The "Three-Level Full-Coverage Full-Chain" System

SISU is a national pilot university for the "Three Entries" initiative and has comprehensively integrated ideological and political education into all foreign language major curricula, establishing a systematic implementation model characterized by three-tier coordination, full coverage across courses and teaching processes, and integration throughout the entire talent development chain.

The three-tier coordination mechanism operates at university, school, and instructor levels—strategic planning at the university level, organizational execution at the school level, and pedagogical innovation at the instructor level [2]. Full coverage ensures that the "Three Entries" content spans all foreign language courses, student cohorts, and instructional and research activities. Full-chain integration embeds these principles across the entire talent development process, including program design, syllabus development, textbook creation, classroom instruction, experiential learning, and assessment.

A central theoretical outcome of SISU's practice is the "Three Forging" framework: Forging Talents, Forging Teaching, and Forging Values. Forging Talents focuses on student development, aiming to cultivate proficient foreign language professionals grounded in ethical integrity and cultural commitment. Forging Teaching emphasizes pedagogical advancement, using the "Three Entries" initiative as a catalyst for comprehensive innovation in foreign language education. Forging Values centers on holistic character development, fostering students' internalization of core socialist values and their embodiment in daily conduct and academic practice. This framework offers

adaptable guidance for plateau universities, supporting integration with broader educational goals such as strengthening national unity and shared cultural identity.

3.3. Southwest Minzu University: Coordinated Pathways between Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation and the "Three Entries" Initiative in Ethnic Universities

As a representative ethnic university, Southwest Minzu University focuses on clarifying the internal logical relationship between forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation and the "Three Entries" initiative, and explores integrated implementation mechanisms for both objectives.

The university views the two initiatives as mutually reinforcing: the "Three Entries" initiative supplies theoretical grounding and pedagogical content for strengthening the sense of community, while forging that sense establishes the core value orientation and overarching objective for the "Three Entries" work. Both emphasize cultivating well-rounded students prepared to contribute meaningfully to societal development. In practice, the university systematically examines opportunities, challenges, and responses in implementing the "Three Entries" initiative within ethnic higher education institutions, with emphasis on international discourse capacity, curriculum modernization, and pedagogical innovation, thereby developing implementation pathways responsive to regional ethnic contexts [11].

Southwest Minzu University's experience offers practical reference for universities located in high-altitude regions. Given their shared focus on multi-ethnic student populations, such institutions face comparable educational contexts and operational requirements. Southwest Minzu University has developed substantial expertise in multicultural curriculum-integrated ideological and political education, mixed-ethnicity classroom instruction, and embedding ethnic unity education within disciplinary courses. High-altitude universities are encouraged to enhance collaborative exchanges with Southwest Minzu University and other ethnic institutions, jointly share teaching resources, and pursue coordinated pedagogical innovation through the ethnic university cooperation network supporting the "Three Entries" initiative, thus advancing curriculum-based ideological and political education models suited to ethnically diverse regions.

4. Optimization Strategies for the "Three Entries" Initiative in Foreign Language Education at Xizang's Universities

Based on the above analysis, the "Three Entries" initiative in foreign language education at universities in the western regions of China can be optimized from three dimensions: ideological guidance, institutional innovation, and evaluation system refinement.

4.1. Ideological Guidance: Adopting the "Three Forging" Philosophy to Guide Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

Ideological guidance lays the foundation for practical work [5, 12]. Plateau universities should adopt a comprehensive philosophy centered on cultivating talent, advancing pedagogy, and shaping values as the overarching framework for curriculum-based ideological and political education, aligning with the developmental realities of ethnic minority regions.

In cultivating talent, the goal is to develop graduates proficient in foreign languages, knowledgeable about national and regional contexts, committed to local development, and grounded in shared national values. Instruction should foster cultural confidence through cross-cultural comparison, equip students to uphold principled positions in international communication, and strengthen their capacity to recognize and respond constructively to misrepresentations of China in multilingual discourse.

In advancing pedagogy, institutional requirements for integrating ideological content into curricula should be embedded within the university's strategic development plan. A dual-competency faculty development initiative should be implemented to cultivate teaching professionals with strong ethical grounding and disciplinary expertise.

Concurrently, institutions should encourage faculty-led research and curriculum innovation that meaningfully connects ideological integration with regional educational contexts.

In shaping values, instruction should support students' internalization of contemporary socialist thought as a guiding intellectual and moral orientation. Central to this effort is fostering a robust sense of shared national identity, which serves as the unifying value orientation across all aspects of foreign language instruction [2].

4.2. Institutional Innovation: Establishing a Collaborative Mechanism Integrating Classroom Teaching and Practice-oriented Education

Sound institutional construction is essential for translating conceptual goals into effective teaching outcomes. Universities must establish a sustainable coordination mechanism that integrates classroom instruction with off-campus experiential learning to enhance the overall effectiveness of the initiative.

In classroom instruction, educators should move beyond didactic delivery and adopt participatory approaches such as thematic seminars and project-based learning. Drawing on proven blended teaching practices, institutions can integrate digital learning resources with face-to-face classroom activities to extend pedagogical reach across time and space. Supplementary materials may be disseminated through official university digital platforms and nationally endorsed learning channels, supporting students' autonomous engagement with course content beyond scheduled class hours.

In textbook development, while fully utilizing authoritative national curricular resources, plateau universities should develop localized bilingual case repositories tailored for foreign language instruction. Local practical achievements in poverty alleviation, ethnic unity, ecological protection and border construction can be sorted into teaching cases. When students interpret and communicate these authentic local experiences in foreign languages, they strengthen their experiential understanding of developmental pathways aligned with national educational objectives.

In practice-oriented education, universities should design a distinctive practice-oriented curriculum for the "Three Entries" initiative, leveraging regional geographical, cultural, and linguistic assets. They can organize students to translate and sort regional international communication materials, provide voluntary language services for cultural exchange events with South Asian countries, and conduct social research and language volunteer services in border areas.

Furthermore, institutions in high-altitude regions can cultivate sustained partnerships with local departments responsible for international engagement and regional communication agencies to offer students structured, professional practice opportunities. A project-centered, multi-tiered implementation model provides a useful framework: real-world regional communication and translation assignments serve as core practice vehicles, enabling students to internalize key educational themes through authentic, cross-cultural application.

4.3. Evaluation System Reform: Establishing a Developmental Evaluation Model for Curriculum-Based Ideological and Political Education

A scientific evaluation system provides institutional support for the sustained advancement of the "Three Entries" initiative. To shift away from an overemphasis on linguistic proficiency at the expense of value development, plateau universities should implement a developmental evaluation framework for foreign language curriculum-based ideological and political education [1, 13].

Evaluation dimensions may follow a three-dimensional framework encompassing cognition, affect, and behavior. The cognitive dimension assesses students' ability to articulate foundational theoretical concepts in appropriate foreign language expressions and apply theoretical knowledge to analyze social phenomena. The affective dimension measures implicit qualities such as national identity, confidence in indigenous culture, and awareness of social cohesion. The behavioral dimension documents students'

participation in regional international communication activities, volunteer language services, and community engagement initiatives.

Evaluation methods should integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative assessment may include purpose-built rubrics to gauge instructional outcomes of the "Three Entries" courses, alongside open-ended examination items designed to evaluate students' capacity to express theoretical understanding through foreign language [3]. Qualitative assessment may draw upon learning portfolios, reflective journals, recorded oral presentations, and structured interview transcripts to capture longitudinal evidence of students' evolving perspectives.

Evaluation subjects should involve multiple stakeholders—teachers, students, and peers—to form a collaborative assessment mechanism. Developmental evaluation prioritizes individual progress over static performance metrics [7]. Given the heterogeneous language proficiency levels among students at plateau universities, evaluators should employ longitudinal tracking to monitor each student's growth trajectory, thereby sustaining motivation and self-efficacy.

5. Conclusion

The 'Three Entries' initiative represents a strategic effort to integrate ideological and political education into foreign language instruction at higher education institutions. Universities located in high-altitude regions encounter distinctive challenges in implementing this initiative, including students' limited proficiency in foreign languages, constraints in teaching personnel capacity, and scarcity of instructional resources. At the same time, these institutions also own unique strategic opportunities: the core demand of forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, growing demand for regional international communication talents, and the need to provide talent support for local opening-up and development.

This paper examines the strategic relevance, implementation progress, and persistent challenges associated with embedding the 'Three Entries' initiative in foreign language education at high-altitude universities, drawing on the conceptual framework of a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. Through comparative analysis of practices at three representative institutions, the study proposes targeted enhancements in ideological guidance, institutional innovation, and evaluation system optimization.

Moving forward, high-altitude universities are encouraged to deepen collaborative learning with peer institutions across the country. Guided by the objective of strengthening the sense of community for the Chinese nation, institutions should continue refining locally responsive curriculum frameworks, pedagogical strategies, and assessment systems. The aim is to develop a distinctive model of foreign language-based ideological and political education suited to high-altitude, multiethnic contexts. This study seeks to stimulate scholarly inquiry into regionally grounded approaches to such education and to draw greater research attention to the advancement of higher education in high-altitude, multiethnic settings.

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