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Pathways for Integrating the "Three Entries" Initiative in the Curriculum Reform of Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking

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Abstract: *Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking* is a practice-oriented core course in the translation program that serves three functions: language production, cross-cultural communication, and value formation. This paper focuses on the implementation pathways for integrating the "Three Entries" (into textbooks, into classrooms, into minds) initiative into this course. Based on a review of relevant research and in conjunction with the unit structure of the *English Public Speaking* Course and the course's project-based reform, it proposes an integration pathway that establishes a content framework guided by unit themes, achieves skill progression and value integration driven by project tasks, and is supported by closed-loop projects and formative assessment. The curriculum reform divides the 16-week course into four projects-"People and Society," "People and Culture," "People and Development," and "People and Nature"-forming a progressive structure that moves from the individual to the nation and then to nature. The study argues that only by transforming ideological content into speech tasks that are expressible, debatable, and verifiable-and by allowing professional learning and value-oriented guidance to occur naturally within project tasks-can we avoid the separation of ideological and political content from skills training and truly achieve the unity of value-oriented guidance and competency development.

Keywords: "Three Entries" initiative; English public speaking; Ideological and Political Education; Project-Based Learning

1. Research Background

1.1 The "Three Entries" Initiative and the Transformation of Foreign Language Education

The "Three Entries" initiative-bringing the Thought into textbooks, classrooms, and students' minds-is an important lever for ideological-political education in university courses. Since the pilot work was first launched at foreign language universities in 2019, foreign language programs have been entrusted with a new mission: in addition to developing students' language transfer competence, they must also shoulder the responsibility of telling Chinese stories well and communicating Chinese ideas to the world. For a long time, translation programs have centered on language fundamentals, translation techniques, and the application of translation technologies, while ideological-political content has focused largely on introducing traditional Chinese culture, with insufficient presentation of contemporary China's governance philosophy, development path, and policy logic. Students can translate content related to traditional culture, yet they struggle to explain clearly and accurately the implications of contemporary China's development in English. As international discourse power becomes an increasingly important component of a country's comprehensive national strength, China faces the practical dilemma of "being able to do but not to say," and the shortage of high-end Chinese-to-foreign-language translation talent is conspicuous. Against this backdrop, introducing the "Three Entries" initiative into the core courses of translation programs and highlighting the outward translation of Chinese discourse and the cultivation of international communication competence is both an inherent requirement of curriculum-based ideological and political education and an inevitable choice for serving national strategic needs.

1.2 The Course Orientation of *Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking*

Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking is one of the practice-oriented

core courses for translation majors. The course adopts English public speaking as its training format and themes of contemporary China as its content carrier, requiring students to organize materials, construct arguments, and accomplish persuasion and communication before an audience in real or simulated contexts. Unlike theory-oriented courses, the ideological content of this course cannot remain at the cognitive level. It must be transformed into expressible and communicable discourse, which provides a natural practical arena for the integration of the "Three Entries" initiative. At the same time, it should be recognized that how to transform the philosophy of state governance into concrete speech topics, how to embed value reflection naturally into skills training, and how to determine whether students' ideological understanding and expressive competence improve in tandem remain questions awaiting systematic answers-and these questions together constitute the starting point of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Domestic Research

Since the concept of "curriculum-based ideological and political education" was formally proposed in 2016, related research has expanded rapidly, concentrating on conceptual elaboration, resource development, model courses, faculty development, textbook compilation, and outcome evaluation [1,2](Yang Jincai, 2020) (Wang Qiang, 2021). In the field of translation teaching, scholars generally agree that translation courses, by virtue of their cross-linguistic and cross-cultural nature, possess inherent advantages for ideological-political education: in the process of language transfer, students directly encounter different cultural backgrounds and value orientations, which fosters cultural awareness and critical thinking. Specific studies have proposed strategies from such angles as introducing current political issues, disseminating Chinese culture, and telling Chinese stories well [3](Ma jie, 2023), while others have criticized certain teachers for insufficient ideological-political awareness and for mechanically attaching ideological-political elements to teaching content [4](Zhang Liang, 2023). In the pilot implementation of the "Three Entries" initiative, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Shanghai International Studies University, and Sichuan International Studies University have respectively carried out practical explorations, including the innovative project "Telling Chinese Stories in Foreign Languages," the development of a "Contemporary China" course series [5](Chang Xiaoling, Bi Zheng, 2025), and simulated press-conference interpreting workshops. These experiences provide practical references for this study, but they mostly concern courses such as comprehensive English and translation practice, specialized research on English public speaking courses remains scarce, and systematic discussion is particularly lacking on how to transform grand narratives into concrete speech-skill training and instructional activity design.

2.2 Overseas Research

Western scholarship has no direct counterpart to "curriculum-based ideological and political education," but it maintains a relevant research tradition in cultural translation and the transmission of values. Early studies proposed critical cultural awareness, advocating the enhancement of students' cultural reflection through translation practice; later scholars advanced the notion of "translation as cultural mediation," emphasizing translators' ethical responsibility in cross-cultural communication. Recent research has begun to address the balance between "fidelity" and "social responsibility" in translation education, and some scholars have attempted to embed local cultural elements into translation curricula to strengthen cultural identity (Jones, 2022; Kumar, 2024). These studies offer methodological insights for the present research-namely, that language teaching should attend to the transmission of values and the construction of cultural identity. However, their theoretical orientations tend to emphasize critique and deconstruction, which differ markedly from the content stressed by the "Three Entries" initiative, making them difficult to apply directly to explaining and guiding teaching practice in the Chinese context.

Taken as a whole, existing research mostly proceeds from general principles and pays insufficient attention to specific courses, specific textbooks, and specific instructional procedures. In particular, for courses targeting oral output competence, systematic strategies are still lacking on how to transform ideological content into speech tasks and how to realize value guidance within language training. This study therefore takes the course *Understanding*

Contemporary China: English Public Speaking as the objects of analysis, attempting to connect the "Three Entries" initiative with unit themes, skills training, corpus resources, and assessment methods, so as to propose operable integration strategies.

3. Research Content

3.1 Taking Unit Themes as the Course Framework

The unit organization of *Understanding Contemporary China: An English Public Speaking Coursebook* itself forms a relatively complete ideological thread, which can be grouped into three thematic modules. The first module concerns basic national conditions and value identification: Unit 1 centers on the Chinese Dream, guiding students to understand the relationship between national development goals and individual responsibility; Unit 2 revolves around the core socialist values, with a focus on the connotation of democracy; Unit 3 discusses cultural confidence from the perspectives of fine traditional Chinese culture and revolutionary culture. The second module addresses development themes and issues of the era: Unit 4 focuses on common prosperity and poverty alleviation; Unit 5 deals with reform and opening-up and the modernization of national governance; Unit 6 discusses green development; and Unit 7 analyzes high-quality development. The third module concerns international themes and a global vision: Unit 8 explains the integration of the rule of law with the rule of virtue; Unit 9 introduces the Belt and Road Initiative; and Unit 10 expounds the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind. Covering national goals, social values, development philosophy, rule-of-law building, ecological civilization, and international relations, these themes correspond closely to the core content of the "Three Entries" initiative.

On this basis, teaching can establish a correspondence idea of "project theme-ideological elements-speech task," making the integration points of each unit concrete and explicit. For example, in the unit on "people-centered development," achievements in poverty alleviation can serve as speech material: students may cite data such as the decline in the incidence of poverty to support their arguments and enhance persuasiveness, while recounting the stories of individuals such as Zhang Guimei and Huang Wenxiu to bring themselves closer to the audience, thereby training their ability to tell Chinese stories in cross-cultural contexts.

3.2 Driven by Project Tasks

The integration of the "Three Entries" initiative in *Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking* is embodied in project-based learning (PBL). The reformed course breaks away from linear instruction and divides the 16 weeks of teaching into four core projects, with a complete cycle finished every four weeks, so that professional learning and value guidance occur naturally within project tasks.

Specifically, Project One, "Humans and Society," focuses on the Chinese Dream and the core socialist values, training the construction of speech frameworks and the determination of topics. After studying the speech script "The Chinese Dream is the People's Dream" from Unit 1, students complete a speech on the topic "Changes in My Hometown," which renders the grand narrative in concrete, personal terms and guides students to connect national development goals with individual responsibility. Project Two, "Humans and Culture," focuses on "cultural confidence" and trains audience analysis and the adjustment of speaking strategies. Taking the championship speech script "The Round Table-A Symbol of China" from the "ETIC Cup" contest as a case study, students complete a speech on the topic "A Symbol of China," achieving the cross-cultural interpretation of cultural symbols. Project Three, "Humans and Development," extends the ideological-political focus from poverty alleviation to comprehensively deepening reform and high-quality development; in terms of speaking skills, it trains the use of evidence, the organization of the body, and rhetorical language. Drawing on speeches by former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim, former Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom Liu Xiaoming, and the champion of the "21st Century Cup" contest as case studies, students then complete a keynote speech on the topic "The Development and Reform of New China." Project Four, "Humans and Nature," focuses on ecological civilization and green development, training techniques for writing speech openings and conclusions. Through analyzing speeches by Chinese and international leaders on topics such as biodiversity and climate change, students complete a keynote speech on the topic of "Live

Green, Live Better", cultivating a global vision and a sense of ecological responsibility.

The four projects follow the same logic: professional skills training is situated within concrete issues, and value reflection is embedded in the process of language output, thereby avoiding the separation of content and skills.

3.3 Taking Process-Based Assessment as the Safeguard

The project-based reform divides the course into four project cycles, each of which itself constitutes a complete task loop. Within this framework, the integration of the "Three Entries" initiative no longer depends on one-off explanations by the teacher but must recur in the output tasks of every project.

Specifically, the teacher transforms "Making Your Voice Heard" section of the textbook into the final output task of each project. In Project One, students are required to deliver a keynote speech on "Changes in My Hometown over Recent Decades". Assessment focuses on whether students can transform the idea that "the Chinese Dream is the people's dream" into concrete, perceivable personal and social narratives and organize their content using basic speech frameworks. In Project Two, students deliver a keynote speech on "A Symbol of China"; the teacher focuses on whether students can adjust their speaking strategies and methods for audiences from different cultural backgrounds, ensuring effective communication in cross-cultural contexts while disseminating their own culture. After Project Three, students deliver a keynote speech on "The Development and Reform of New China," which requires the comprehensive use of facts, statistics, and quotations, etc. as evidence, and the organization of the body in chronological, topical, spacial, or cause-and-effect order; the teacher focuses on whether the supporting details are used accurately and appropriately and whether the overall line of reasoning flows smoothly. After Project Four, students deliver a keynote speech on "Live Green, live better", teacher focuses on whether the opening and conclusion effectively employ the corresponding writing techniques to enhance the speech's appeal and persuasiveness, and whether ecological ideas are internalized into the speech content rather than remaining superficial slogans.

In terms of assessment, the course has established a project-based evaluation index system covering three dimensions: ideological understanding, language competence, and cross-cultural communication ability. Process-based assessment may include speech outlines and manuscripts, in-class presentations with impromptu question-and-answer sessions, peer review, and reflective reports. Summative assessment may consist of the final speech together with a portfolio of the four projects, focusing on whether students have developed coherent and transferable speaking competence and value identification across the four themes of "Humans and Society," "Humans and Culture," "Humans and Development," and "Humans and Nature." Setting process-based assessment checkpoints at the end of each project helps integrate the "Three Entries" initiative into every stage of classroom teaching. Meanwhile, in subsequent offerings of the course, digital resources such as micro-lectures and online case libraries can be developed in tandem with the projects, moving part of the background-knowledge instruction to pre-class study, so that more class time is reserved for theoretical explanation, analysis of speech cases, project presentations, and critical peer discussion.

4. Conclusion

The project-based reform of *Understanding Contemporary China: English Public Speaking* has restructured the course into four projects-"Humans and Society," "Humans and Culture," "Humans and Development," and "Humans and Nature"-forming a progressive structure from the individual to the nation and then to nature, deeply integrated with the core content of the "Three Enters" initiative. The study shows that an effective integration strategy should take unit themes as the framework for course content and transform governance philosophy into concrete speech topics; be driven by speech tasks, embedding speech-skill training and value reflection into each specific project so as to avoid the separation of content delivery from skills training; and be safeguarded by project cycles and process-based assessment, making improvements in ideological understanding, language competence, and cross-cultural communication literacy observable and verifiable. The key to this strategy lies in leveraging the strength of project-based learning in integrating content, skills, and values, enabling students, in the process of completing

project speeches, to improve their English expressive competence while gradually deepening their understanding of and identification with contemporary China's development path-truly learning to tell Chinese stories well in English.

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