

Research on the AI-Empowered Integration of Yunnan Ethnic Folktales into Ideological and Political Education in Primary School English Curriculum

A Perspective of Cultivating Chinese National Community Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

Forging a strong sense of the Chinese nation as one community stands as a critical mission for education in the new era. However, current ideological and political education in primary school English curricula faces challenges such as superficial integration of ethnic culture, monotonous teaching methods, and a lack of scientific evaluation systems. This study employs Yunnan ethnic folktales, compiled by Yang Lixian, as a starting point. Guided by the core literacy requirements of the Compulsory Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition), it explores AI-enhanced instructional strategies for embedding ideological and political education within primary English curricula. The research constructs a pedagogical framework grounded in four intrinsic attributes: the educational value of ethnic stories, the integration of language teaching, learner-centered design principles, and the innovativeness of teaching models. Leveraging Chen Lipeng's Chinese National Community Consciousness Scale, the study designs an evaluation system and proposes three instructional design principles: appropriateness of story selection, AI-empowered innovation, and multi-dimensional evaluation with quality monitoring. By proposing methodological innovations, this study contributes to the development of educational approaches that reinforce the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

Keywords: *Chinese national community consciousness, Yunnan ethnic folktales, AI (artificial intelligence), Primary school English, Curriculum-based ideological and political education.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultivating a robust consciousness of the Chinese national community has become a strategic priority in the Communist Party of China's ethnic policy initiatives under the new historical conditions. As President Xi Jinping emphasized, "it is imperative to guide people of all ethnic groups, particularly the youth, to firmly establish a shared community ethos of interconnectedness, collective honour, mutual support, and a common destiny through school education, social education, cultural promotion, and other channels." The Compulsory

Education English Curriculum Standards (2022 Edition) emphasize the imperative to foster students' patriotism and cultural confidence, thereby establishing a policy framework for incorporating ethnic unity education within primary English pedagogy. As a frontier province renowned for its ethnocultural diversity, Yunnan preserves an invaluable corpus of folktales that encode ancestral wisdom concerning interethnic cohesion. Yunnan Ethnic Folktales, compiled by Yang Lixian, systematically documents classic stories passed down through generations across ethnic groups, offering significant educational value. However, these high-quality ethnic cultural resources remain

underutilized in current primary school English teaching, with persistent challenges including: (1) Non-stratified narrative curation that misaligns with prescribed curriculum standards; (2) Non-stratified narrative curation that misaligns with prescribed curriculum standards; (3) Deficient assessment infrastructure impeding outcome quantification. Advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) present new opportunities to address these issues. AI technologies can assist in developing instructional resources, innovating pedagogical approaches, and optimizing evaluation mechanisms. This study explores AI-empowered pathways for integrating ethnic folktales into teaching practices, aiming to contribute practical insights for strengthening the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

2. AI-EMPOWERED INTEGRATION OF YUNNAN ETHNIC FOLKTALES INTO IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH CURRICULUM: FOUR INTRINSIC ATTRIBUTES

2.1 Pedagogical Focus on Moral Cultivation

Effective incorporation of ethnic narratives within civic-moral education frameworks requires systematic alignment with their didactic values, establishing axiological coherence between cultural heritage transmission and contemporary pedagogical paradigms. Current practices often suffer from arbitrary story selection and a lack of

systematic integration. Language education should transcend mere skill development and embrace the critical mission of fostering students' cross-cultural civic awareness and values. From this theoretical perspective, the integration of ethnic folktales into ideological and political education should embody the following characteristics:

2.1.1 Systematic Alignment of Value Orientations

The narrative selection process necessitates strategic alignment between ethnic stories' axiological dimensions and civic-moral education objectives, establishing axiological coherence through cultural semiotics theory. Grounded in curriculum integration practices, this study employs Yunnan Ethnic Folktales (Yunnan People's Publishing, 2019), compiled by Yang Lixian, and analyses representative stories for their integration with the PEP Primary English textbooks (see "Table 1"). These stories reflect the unyielding spirit of working-class communities in their struggles against nature and historical ruling classes, as well as their optimistic belief in triumph.

Through centuries of collective refinement by diverse ethnic groups, these tales have evolved into literary treasures characterized by vivid language, rigorous structure, imaginative narratives, and grand themes, each embodying distinct ethnic styles. They shine as invaluable assets within China's literary heritage and serve as a "textbook" for understanding the literature, history, and cultural practices of Yunnan's ethnic communities through literary forms.

Table 1. Integration of PEP primary English textbooks with Yunnan ethnic folktales in teaching

Integration of PEP Primary English Textbooks with Yunnan Ethnic Folktales in Teaching	Grade & Semester	Unit & Theme	Content Scope	Ethnic Folktale & Integration Points Ideological-Political Objectives
	Grade3, Semester 1	Unit1 Making friends	Full Unit	Yi Ethnic Story: The Nine Brothers 1. Cultivate teamwork spirit 2. Understand responsibility and accountability
	Grade3, Semester 2	Unit 2 My family	Full Unit	Yi & Dai Ethnic Stories: Tang Lai'er(Yi) and Zhao Bola (Dai) 1. Foster bravery 2. Develop a sense of justice
	Grade4, Semester 2	Unit 4 At the farm	Full Unit	Lisu Ethnic Story: The Fish Maiden(A tale of love between a fish maiden and a human youth, featuring farming, labor, and harvest scenes) 1.Traditional virtues education 2. Environmental awareness cultivation 3. Value food resources
	Grade5, Semester 1	Unit 2 My week	Full Unit	Yi Ethnic Story: Torch Festival (A traditional festival celebrated with diverse activities, symbolizing unity and cultural heritage)

Integration of PEP English Textbooks with Yunnan Ethnic Folktales Teaching	Grade & Semester	Unit & Theme	Content Scope	Ethnic Folktale & Integration Points
	Grade5, Semester 1	Unit 2 My week	Full Unit	1. Cultural heritage and identity 2. Spirit of unity and mutual aid 3. Gratitude and sense of contribution Bai Ethnic Story: Five Brothers Dividing the Twenty-Four Solar Terms (A tale of fairness and unity as five brothers resolve conflicts over seasonal division)
	Grade5, Semester 2	Unit 2 My favorite season	Full Unit	1. Fairness, justice, and unity 2. Respect for nature Dai Ethnic Story: The Little Carpenter (A story where a carpenter rides a mythical cloud to meet a princess, highlighting unique transportation methods)
	Grade6, Semester 1	Unit 2 Ways to go to school	Full Unit	1. Career aspirations and diligence 2. Innovation and practical skills 3. Traffic safety and rule awareness Bai Ethnic Story: Yanchi Lake(A narrative about Hai Mei finding a golden key to save people from drought, emphasizing problem-solving and societal progress)
	Grade6, Semester 2	Unit 4 Then and now	Full Unit	1. Courage to explore and problem-solving 2. Understanding change and development

2.1.2 Hierarchical Structure of Ideological-Political Elements

The ideological-political elements embedded in Yunnan Ethnic Folktales should adhere to a progressive principle, transitioning from fundamental socialist core values to deeper conceptual layers. This hierarchy manifests across three dimensions:

2.1.2.1 Personal Morality

The Bai ethnic story The Little Carpenter exemplifies the pursuit of happiness and self-actualization. The protagonist, who rides a mythical cloud to meet a princess, embodies perseverance and courage in chasing personal aspirations, fostering values such as determination and optimism.

2.1.2.2 Social Cognition

The Bai story Five Brothers Dividing the Twenty-Four Solar Terms conveys principles of fairness and justice. Through the youngest brother's wisdom in negotiating equal time allocation among siblings, the narrative aligns with the socialist core value of equitable resource distribution and collective harmony.

2.1.2.3 National Identity

The Yi ethnic story The Nine Brothers highlights the struggle for democracy, freedom, and resistance against oppression. By defeating tyranny through wisdom and bravery, the brothers establish a fair and harmonious social order, reflecting the socialist core values of prosperity, democracy, civility, and unity.

2.2 Integrative Approach to Ideological-Political Teaching

The fusion of language instruction and ideological-political education lies in the organic integration of Yunnan Ethnic Folktales with English pedagogy. Current research on curriculum-based ideological education lacks practical cases of combining ethnic folktales with primary school English language teaching, underscoring the innovative potential of this study. Guided by Krashen's Second Language Acquisition Theory, this research explores the following strategies:

2.2.1 *Natural Integration of Linguistic Elements*

2.2.1.1 *Vocabulary Acquisition via Input Hypothesis*

Teachers should leverage folktales to provide comprehensible input, enabling students to acquire vocabulary through meaningful contexts (e.g., learning terms like "perseverance" or "justice" within story narratives). Grammar Structures via Natural Order Hypothesis. Introduce grammatical patterns progressively through story plots, avoiding rote drills. For instance, teaching past tense through chronological storytelling in The Nine Brothers.

2.2.1.2 *Communicative Competence via Monitor Hypothesis*

It is necessary to create authentic communicative scenarios based on folktale themes (e.g., role-playing dialogues from The Fish Maiden), encouraging spontaneous language use while maintaining accuracy through guided feedback.

2.2.2 *Bidirectional Transformation of Cultural Content*

The integration of ethnic culture into English education requires a dual transformation mechanism grounded in Krashen's Output Hypothesis, enabling students to articulate their cultural heritage in English. This process involves, Ethnic Culture Expression through Language Output: Students actively engage in translating and presenting ethnic stories in English, enhancing both linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. Tasks such as speeches or essays on folktales (e.g., The Fish Maiden) encourage deep exploration of cultural themes like resilience and communal values. For example, designing a storytelling project where students reinterpret the Bai story Five Brothers Dividing the Solar Terms in English, emphasizing fairness and resource-sharing. Cross-Cultural Understanding via Comparative Input: Apply the Comprehensible Input Hypothesis by comparing cultural elements (e.g., attire, rituals, values) across ethnic stories (Yi vs. Dai traditions). Activities like analyzing contrasts between the Yi Torch Festival and Dai Water-Splashing Festival to foster respect for diversity and cultural sensitivity. Cultural Confidence Building via Affective Filter Hypothesis, reduce learning anxiety by anchoring lessons in familiar cultural contexts, for instance, using the Bai story The Little Carpenter to teach

perseverance, allowing students to connect personal experiences with cultural pride. Pedagogical strategy like integrate folk songs or traditional art into English lessons to evoke emotional resonance and strengthen cultural identity.

2.3 *Engaging Instructional Design*

To ensure that the integration of Yunnan Ethnic Folktales into English courses is both effective and engaging, instructional design must prioritize interactivity and multimodal experiences.

2.3.1 *Immersive Storytelling Techniques*

2.3.1.1 *Role-Playing & Scenario Recreation*

Students reenact key scenes from stories like Yanchi Lake, using dialogues to practice language skills while internalizing cultural values (e.g., problem-solving and bravery).

2.3.1.2 *Gamified Learning Activities*

Vocabulary quizzes that are themed around folktale characters (e.g., matching "cloud-riding" with The Little Carpenter). Sentence-building games using plot points from The Nine Brothers.

2.3.2 *Multimodal Resource Integration*

2.3.2.1 *Visual & Auditory Aids*

Teachers display images of Yi silver jewellery or Dai bamboo houses to contextualize stories. Incorporate audio recordings of ethnic instruments (e.g., the Hulusi flute) during storytelling

2.3.2.2 *Short Videos & Animations*

Teachers create animated clips of The Fish Maiden to illustrate farming practices and environmental stewardship.

2.3.3 *Interactive Classroom Dynamics*

Foster peer collaboration through group tasks such as rewriting the endings of the Torch Festival or dramatizing conflicts from Five Brothers. Implement story-chain activities in which students collaboratively create narratives in English. Enhance teacher-student synergy by encouraging collaborative learning activities. To effectively facilitate open discussions on cultural themes (e.g., "How does Zhao Bola reflect justice?"), while

fostering critical thinking and emotional engagement.

2.4 Innovative Pedagogical Models

AI-driven innovations are pivotal to modernizing the integration of ethnic stories into English education.

2.4.1 Smart Resource Development

2.4.1.1 Culturally Adaptive Storytelling

Teachers can use AI to simplify texts (e.g., adapting the Bai story Five Brothers for Grade 5 English levels) while embedding value-driven annotations (e.g., highlighting fairness).

2.4.1.2 Digital Ecosystem Construction

It is beneficial to develop interactive e-books with clickable glossaries and build a cloud-based “Yunnan Folktale Hub” with searchable stories, quizzes, and AR-enhanced scenes.

2.4.2 AI-Enhanced Evaluation Systems

2.4.2.1 Process-Oriented Assessment

There is a necessity to utilize Chen Lipeng’s Chinese National Community Consciousness Scale to track student growth in cultural identity, empathy, and critical thinking.

2.4.2.2 Data-Driven Feedback

AI algorithms analyse classroom participation, quiz scores, and creative outputs (e.g., story adaptations) to generate personalized learning reports.

2.4.2.3 Motivational Mechanisms

Gamified badges for achievements like “Master Storyteller” or “Cultural Ambassador,” linked to AI-curated progress pathways.

2.4.3 Interactive Learning Platforms

2.4.3.1 Virtual Collaboration Spaces

Students co-design digital posters on Yanchi Lake using AI tools, fostering teamwork and technological literacy.

2.4.3.2 AI Tutors for Cultural Q&A

Chatbots answer questions about ethnic customs (e.g., “Why do Yi people celebrate the Torch Festival?”), providing instant feedback.

3. AI-EMPOWERED INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR INTEGRATING YUNNAN ETHNIC FOLKTALES INTO IDEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH

3.1 Principle of Contextual Appropriateness in Story Selection

The appropriateness of story selection is pivotal when integrating ethnic folktales into ideological-political education in primary school English. This principle encompasses three dimensions.

3.1.1 Alignment with Ideological-Political Values

Educators should select literary works that authentically integrate socialist core values into their narrative frameworks, such as the Bai story Five Brothers Dividing the Twenty-Four Solar Terms illustrates fairness and justice, promote positive life philosophies, such as the Yi story The Nine Brothers highlights unity and collaboration, and reflect China’s cultural heritage, e.g., the Dai story The Little Carpenter symbolizes the pursuit of freedom and happiness. These elements should form a hierarchical value-guidance system, ensuring systematic ideological influence.

3.1.2 Cultural Authenticity and Local Relevance

As a multi-ethnic region, Yunnan’s folktales are rich in cultural specificity. Priority should be given to: Distinct ethnic characteristics, e.g., stories featuring unique festivals (Yi Torch Festival) or customs (Dai Water-Splashing Festival); Iconic cultural elements, e.g., traditional architecture (Bai courtyard houses), attire (Yi embroidered costumes), or cuisine. Themes of ethnic unity and progress, ensuring stories resonate with local identity while remaining adaptable for classroom use.

3.1.3 Pedagogical Suitability

Stories must align with:

- Language proficiency benchmarks: Vocabulary and syntax should comply with curriculum standards (e.g., CEFR A1-A2 for primary levels);
- Cognitive development stages: Content complexity should match students' age-specific thinking patterns (e.g., simplified narratives for Grades 3-4);
- Instructional feasibility: teachers should carry out task-based activities (role-plays, debates) and thematic extensions (e.g., environmental projects inspired by The Fish Maiden).

3.2 Principle of Pedagogical Innovation

Modern educational technologies must drive teaching-learning-assessment integration, transcending mere tool usage to enable transformative pedagogical practices.

3.2.1 Precision and Personalization

3.2.1.1 AI-Enhanced Content Adaptation

Teachers should apply natural language processing (NLP) to analyze and adapt story texts (e.g., simplifying Torch Festival narratives for Grade 5), and use learner analytics to recommend personalized learning paths (e.g., differentiated reading materials based on proficiency).

3.2.1.2 Intelligent Assessment Tools

It is necessary to deploy AI-driven diagnostics for real-time feedback on language accuracy and cultural comprehension.

3.2.2 Multidimensional Resource Development

Educators are encouraged to conduct a text complexity analysis, focusing on lexical density and syntactic structures, and to provide cultural annotations. Utilizing multimedia resources can enhance student engagement. For instance, educators may incorporate images of Yi silver jewelry and Dai bamboo forests, audio recordings of Lisu folk songs, and videos depicting the problem-solving journey at Yanchi Lake. Educators can leverage learning analytics to tailor lesson plans. For example, if data indicates low collaboration

scores in a class, prioritizing teamwork activities may foster improved collaboration among students.

3.2.3 Interactive and Adaptive Classroom Environments

Immersive learning scenarios can be created by using augmented reality (AR) to recreate folktale settings, such as a virtual Torch Festival celebration. Integrating speech recognition technology allows for real-time pronunciation feedback during role-plays. Dynamic process optimization involves monitoring student engagement through AI-powered analytics, including eye-tracking for attention assessment, and adjusting pacing accordingly to maintain optimal learning conditions. Personalized reinforcement can be achieved by assigning adaptive exercises, like vocabulary games themed on The Little Carpenter, via AI tutoring systems, catering to individual learning needs. Implementing practical safeguards is essential when integrating AI-powered tools into the ideological-political education of primary school English curricula. This includes ensuring cultural sensitivity and appropriateness in the application of Yunnan ethnic folktales.

4. DATA SECURITY MANAGEMENT

4.1 Data Collection

Educational institutions must clearly define the scope and purpose of data collection, encompassing not only basic learning metrics but also behavioral and evaluative data. A standardized collection process, adhering to the principle of minimal necessity, is critical to safeguarding student privacy and ensuring data quality.

4.1.1 Data Storage and Usage

A multi-layered security framework is essential. Educators should be trained to use AI tools responsibly, ensuring that these technologies enhance rather than overshadow the traditional narratives. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of AI applications in the classroom are essential to assess their impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. Collaborative efforts between educators, technologists, and cultural experts can facilitate the development of AI applications that are both educationally effective and culturally respectful.

4.1.2 *Institutional Safeguards*

Develop comprehensive personal information protection protocols, including clear accountability for each stage of the data lifecycle—collection, storage, and application; conduct regular security audits and risk assessments; and provide ongoing staff training on data ethics and compliance.

4.2 *Teacher Professional Development*

4.2.1 *Enhancing AI Application Competence*

Teachers require a tripartite competency framework.

4.2.1.1 *Technical Proficiency with AI Tools*

Educators should deliver workshops on AI educational platforms, such as utilizing speech recognition tools for language practice. Additionally, implementing skill certification systems with digital portfolios can effectively track student progress.

4.2.1.2 *AI-Integrated Instructional Design*

Researchers should conduct case studies on AI-enhanced lesson plans, such as those utilizing natural language processing (NLP) to adapt folktale texts. Additionally, organizing lesson plan competitions can incentivize innovative integrations of artificial intelligence and pedagogy.

4.2.1.3 *Ethical and Security Awareness*

Educational institutions should offer specialized training on AI ethics, with a focus on data privacy and algorithmic bias. Additionally, establishing comprehensive AI usage guidelines is essential to ensure the responsible integration of technology.

4.2.2 *Fostering Pedagogical Innovation*

Innovation should target three dimensions.

- Firstly, hybrid teaching models should be developed by integrating AI with traditional approaches, such as implementing flipped classrooms where students preview AI-annotated folktales (e.g., The Fish Maiden) prior to engaging in in-depth discussions. These models can be optimized by utilizing learner feedback analytics, including sentiment analysis of student reflections.

- Secondly, AI-driven resource development involves building school-based digital repositories containing culturally tailored materials, such as AR-enabled Bai festival guides. It is essential to adopt quality standards for these resources to ensure alignment with curriculum goals and the preservation of cultural authenticity.
- Thirdly, multidimensional AI-enhanced evaluation can be achieved by deploying smart assessment systems that combine formative feedback, like AI analysis of role-play performances, with summative metrics, such as automated quizzes on Torch Festival values. Predictive analytics should be utilized to identify learning gaps and recommend appropriate interventions.

5. CONCLUSION

This study explores innovative pathways for AI-empowered integration of Yunnan Ethnic Folktales into ideological and political education within primary school English curricula. Grounded in four intrinsic attributes — moral cultivation, pedagogical integration, learner-centered design principles, and technological innovation — the research proposes three instructional design principles: value-driven material selection, technology-enabled empowerment, and interactive praxis. It further constructs a practical safeguard framework encompassing technological support, teacher development, and evaluation mechanisms. By leveraging Chen Lipeng's Chinese National Community Consciousness Scale, the study establishes a scientifically grounded evaluation system to measure educational outcomes, offering novel insights for innovating pedagogical approaches to strengthen the consciousness of the Chinese national community.

Future research will empirically validate the feasibility of the proposed pathways, investigate the efficacy of AI in facilitating ethnic story integration, and refine both instructional designs and evaluation systems. These efforts aim to accumulate practical experience for advancing ideological-political education in primary school English curricula.

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