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Zhou Qingsheng

ETHNIC MINORITY LANGUAGES IN CHINA

POLICY AND PRACTICE

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AND PRACTICES IN CHINA

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Ethnic Minority Languages in China

Language Policies and Practices in China



Edited by
Li Wei (李嵬)

Volume 5

Zhou Qingsheng

Ethnic Minority Languages in China



Policy and Practice

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In the last ten years, I have been hosting or participating in many collaborative academic projects, especially the *Green Paper on Language Life in China* published every year. I have worked on it for eight years, so much so that I have had no time to pay attention to my personal work – not even to think about it.

Three years ago, one of my old friends, Prof. Li Wei, who is the Vice-President of Birkbeck, University of London, Dean of the Birkbeck Graduate School, and Fellow of the British Academy, emailed me. He told me that he was helping the German publisher De Gruyter to compile a series of books, and he invited me to write a book in English on language policy and language use concerning ethnic minorities in China. This suggestion came as a surprise. I thought about it carefully. It was really worth doing. Then I started initial work on the manuscript.

Song Yuehua, a teacher from the Social Sciences Academic Press, had worked with me for a period. At the beginning of 2012, she came to our institute to give us information on applying to various social scientific publication funds. She advised me to apply to the Social Sciences Academic Press for funding from the China Classics International Publishing Project. I did so, and it was a big surprise to me that my application was approved. Funding was now guaranteed for the English translation of the manuscript. After that, the Social Sciences Academic Press suggested that I apply to the CASS Philosophical and Social Sciences Innovation Project. This application was also successful, so the publication of the Chinese text was guaranteed funding.

Chen Zhanqai, who is the former Executive Vice-Dean of the State Language Affairs Commission and a research fellow of the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the Ministry of Education, and Li Yuming, who is the former Vice-Dean of the State Language Affairs Commission and a professor at Beijing Language and Culture University, took time out of their busy schedules to write prefaces to this book. My book became much better due to their expert, comprehensive, and profound comments.

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Mr. Liu Dan, from the Social Sciences Academic Press, read through the whole manuscript and provided many very constructive and valuable suggestions. He made great efforts in editing and publishing the book.

The book *Yuyan Shenghuo yu Yuyan Zhengce: Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzu Yanjiu* (Language Life and Language Policies: Studies on Ethnic groups Minorities in China) was published in 2015. This book is a translated English version of the

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book, but cut some chapters from the Chinese version. The contents and the framework of the book are almost the same as the Chinese version.

The overwhelming bulk of the translation was done by Zheng Wuxi, from the School of Chinese Language and Literature at South China Normal University.

Without the good opportunities, suggestions, and assistance provided to me by the above-mentioned teachers and friends, it would have been impossible for me to publish the book now. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the above-mentioned people, the China Classics funding scheme, and the Innovation Project publishing fund of CASS.

Due to limited time and personal fallibility, mistakes in the book are unavoidable. Comments are welcome.

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Part 1: **Overview**

Chapter 1

The social language situation in China

1.1 Introduction

“Language situation” is a term often used in the sociolinguistic literature. In China, the phrase “language usage situation” is generally used. An analysis of the language usage situation may focus on a country, a geographical area, a ethnic groups, or an organization, and may typically cover a range of topics in relation to a community: historical background, geographical language, social language, law and politics, science and technology, commerce and trade, culture, and so forth. The social language situation mainly concerns the functional distribution, functional classification, and usage pattern of the different languages used in a community; it can also include people’s attitudes towards various languages or language variations.

I propose an analytical framework on the basis of original data from the China–Canada collaboration project entitled *The written language of the world: A survey of the degree and modes of use (China)* (McConnell 1995) and previous work conducted in the field by Chinese and international scholars. I then use this analytical framework to describe the language situation in China. Such an account may be useful for revealing the basis and nature of a country’s current language policies, for assessing their future prospects, and for forecasting the developmental trends of that country’s language situation.

1.2 The framework used to analyze the social language situation

1.2.1 The analytical framework proposed by Ouyang Jueya

Ouyang Jueya (1994) has analyzed the language situation of ethnic minority languages in China. His analytical framework mainly includes the following elements: how an ethnic group uses its native language, how it uses those of other ethnic group(s), how it shifts from its native language to other languages, and how it uses written language. This framework uses five important concepts or terms. The first is “language use,” which refers to the use by any ethnic group of its native

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language. The second is “bilingualism,” a phenomenon where members of an ethnic group use not only the group’s own language but also those of other groups. The third is “language shift,” which happens when the use of an ethnic group’s native language ceases among some of its members, who shift to a different language altogether. The fourth is “original writing,” which refers to a writing system an ethnic group created prior to the founding of the People’s Republic of China. The fifth is “newly created writing.” It refers to the Pinyin system in the form of the Roman alphabet created in the 1950s.

Experience shows that the analytical framework and terms mentioned above are suitable for describing the usage patterns of ethnic minorities’ languages and writing systems in China. However, they are not sufficient for describing the social language situation because they are not related to the various languages’ functional distributions and classifications.

1.2.2 The analytical framework proposed by Ferguson

Prior to the framework proposed by Ouyang Jueya, Ferguson, an American sociolinguist, proposed a framework for describing a country’s language situation (Ferguson 1971). He divided a country’s languages into three classes: major languages, ethnic minority languages, and languages of specific status.

Three criteria are employed to evaluate whether a language is a major language in a country. First, it must be spoken as a native language by more than 25% of the population in the country, or by more than one million people. Second, the language must be an official language of the nation. Third, it must be the language of education of no less than 30% of the students who graduate from middle schools. If it satisfies one of these three criteria, the language can be regarded as a major language.

Two criteria are used to identify an ethnic minority language. First, it must be spoken as a native language by less than 25% and more than 5% of the population, or by more than 100,000 people. Second, it must be used as a medium in the first years of primary school, and school textbooks, rather than primers, must be published in the language. As long as a language meets one of these two criteria, it can be classified as an ethnic minority language.

The criteria for a language of special status are wider and include languages used at religious ceremonies, such as the Pali language spoken in Ceylon; languages used for literary purposes, such as the “classical” Chinese used in Taiwan; languages widely taught as independent subjects in secondary schools, such as French as taught in Spanish secondary schools; and languages

acting as major languages for certain age groups of the population, such as Japanese as used by certain age groups in Taiwan.

Ferguson also stated that the above-mentioned major and ethnic minority languages should be divided into two subclassifications: standard languages and vernacular languages. Ferguson divided language functions into four classes: “official language”; “group language,” spoken within a particular community and functioning to identify the group; “wider communicative language,” spoken within the nation; and “international language,” used to communicate with other nations.

Ferguson used abbreviations to represent these classifications and functions, and then summarized a nation’s language situation in a simple formula. For example, the social language situation in Singapore is expressed as follows:

$$8L = 5Lmaj (Sow, Sowi, Soi, So, Vg) + 3Lmin (3Vg).$$

In the formula, “L” denotes a language, “Lmaj” denotes a major language, “S” denotes a standard language, “o” denotes an official language, “w” denotes a wider communicative language, “i” denotes international communication, “g” denotes communication within a particular speech community, “V” denotes a vernacular language, and “Lmin” denotes an ethnic minority language.

The formula shown above is to be read as follows: eight languages are composed of five major languages (including an official standard wider communicative language, an official standard wider international communicative language, an official international communicative standard language, an official standard language, and a group vernacular language) and three ethnic minority languages (three group vernacular languages).

The formula proposed by Ferguson is concise and highlights the functional distribution and classification of language, but it does not refer to language usage patterns such as monolingual usage, bilingual usage, and language shift. Even if his formula is applied directly to describe the language situation in China, it will be difficult to reflect the situation comprehensively and accurately.

1.2.3 The analytical framework employed in this chapter

Taking the actual situation into consideration, as well as taking advantage of the positive points in the two frameworks mentioned above, I propose a framework composed of the following five parts.

The first part is language classification (family, group, branch, etc.).

The second part is language usage patterns, such as use of a native language, use of a second language, language shift, and so forth.

The third part is language type, which contains four subtypes. The first subtype is a super-major language, which means a national language used as native language by more than a hundred million people. The second subtype is a major language, which means a language used as native language by more than one million people. The third subtype is an ethnic minority language, which means a language used as native language by less than one million and more than one hundred thousand people. The fourth subtype is an extreme-ethnic minority language, which means a language used as native language by less than one hundred thousand people.

The fourth part is writing system type, which includes three subtypes. The first subtype is traditional writing, created before the end of the nineteenth century and still in use now; the second subtype is new writing, created between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the foundation of the People's Republic of China and still in use now; and the third subtype is newly created writing, established after the founding of the People's Republic of China and still popular today.

The fifth part is language function, which comes in seven subtypes: (1) languages used nationwide, that is, in all the areas and fields of a country; (2) languages used at national political meetings; (3) languages officially used by the United Nations; (4) language used regionwide, that is, in many fields in ethnic autonomous regions or places; (5) languages used regionally and in a minority of fields, such as primary education, illiteracy education, road signs, and plaques; (6) languages for communication among members of the same ethnic group, for example languages used by native ethnic families or ethnic communities living in non-urban areas; and (7) languages used for transborder communication, such as languages used for transnational non-governmental communication.

1.3 Diversity of languages

1.3.1 Plurality in ethnicities, languages, and writing systems

China is a united country composed of a vast diversity of ethnic groups, fifty-six in all. The Han are the dominant ethnic group and account for the majority of the country's total population; the other fifty-five ethnic groups are ethnic minorities, which together account for 8% of the country's total population (according to 1994 census data). Excluding the Hui and the Manchu, the ethnic minorities use up to sixty languages. Some scholars have suggested that the number of languages in China may exceed one hundred. Moreover, twenty ethnicities adopt thirty ethnic minority languages and writing systems. Some ethnicities use two

or more spoken languages and writing systems. Linguistic diversity is particularly pronounced in China.

1.3.2 Super-major languages and major languages

The functional distribution of languages in northern China is distinct from that in southern China; the major languages distributed in southern China are different from one another. According to the above standards of classification, only Mandarin Chinese can be considered a super-major language in China, whereas twelve languages are considered major languages, including Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Yi, and Zhuang (see Table 1.1). Tables 1.1–1.4 in this chapter are based on McConnell (1995: book 1).

Of the twelve major languages besides Mandarin Chinese listed in Table 1.1, the first five are mostly distributed in northern China; moreover, these five languages are roughly identical and highly consistent with one another in terms of writing system type and language function. The latter seven languages shown in the table are distributed in southern China; none of these seven languages is used regionwide for speaking and writing. The major languages in southern China are, to a large extent, distinct from one another and display differences.

Why are the languages in northern China largely consistent with one another in terms of functional distribution and classification, while those in southern China are quite different from one another? I believe that, apart from an ethnic group's social, historical, and cultural background, this phenomenon may be related to geographical environments. Many northern ethnic groups live in vast pasturing grasslands and lead a nomadic lifestyle, which increases the frequency of communication, enlarges the range of contacts, and reduces the number of dialectal gaps caused by regional elements. Even if people live far away from each other, they can communicate with each other much more easily. In contrast, the southern ethnic groups practice farming in settlements, and the large number of high mountains reduces the frequency and scope of their communication. Over time, greater diversity has developed among the different dialects of the languages in the south than among the different dialects of the languages in the north.

Table 1.2 displays fourteen ethnic minority languages in China. Kyrgyz is used regionwide, and the other thirteen languages are either used regionally or for communication among members of the same ethnic group. Table 1.3 shows thirty-two extreme-ethnic minority languages. Thirty-one languages are used either regionally or for communication among the members of an ethnic group; only the Xibe language is used regionwide.

Table 1.1: The super-major and major language situation in China.

Language	Group ^a	Number of native speakers (in 10,000s)	% of the relevant ethnic group's population ^b	Language type	Writing system type	Scope and functions of language use
Mandarin	Sino-Tibetan	95,443.62	95.15	super-major	traditional	nationwide, an official language of the United Nations
Mongolian	Altaic (Mongolian)	273.10	2.72	major	traditional	an official language in the Chinese government's key political meetings, ^c regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Tibetan	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	366.32	3.65	major	traditional	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionwide, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Uyghur	Altaic (Turkic)	597.48	5.96	major	traditional	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionwide, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Kazakh	Altaic (Turkic)	91.28	0.91	major	traditional	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionwide, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Korean	under discussion	176.22	1.76	major	traditional	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionwide, transborder communication between ethnic groups

Yi	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	507.84	5.07	major	traditional (two types)	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Zhuang	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	1131.79	11.28	major	newly created	an official language in the Chinese government's political meetings, regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Miao	Sino-Tibetan (Miao-Yao)	400.00	3.99	major	new (five types)	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Buyei	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	139.91	1.93	major	newly created	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Dong	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	115.96	1.16	major	newly created	regionally
Hani	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	105.78	1.05	major	newly created	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Bai	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	103.24	1.03	major		communication among ethnic group member

^aLanguage families are followed by branches or groups in parentheses.

^bAs per the population census conducted in 1982 (summarized by electronic computer), the total population is 100,391,400,000. If other types of people and foreigners of Chinese nationality are not included, the actual total population of the country would be 100,310,930,000.

“Key political meetings” means the National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the National People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Table 1.2: The situation of ethnic minority languages in China.

Language	Group ^a	Number of native speakers (in 10,000s)	% of the relevant ethnic group's population ^b	Language type	Writing system type	Scope and functions of language use
Dai	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	80.38	0.80	minority	traditional (four types)	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Li	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	72.91	0.73	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group
Mian (Yao ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Miao-Yao)	70.46	0.70	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Lisu	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	48.49	0.48	minority	new (two types)	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Bunu (Yao ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Miao-Yao)	31.47	0.31	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group
Lahu	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	29.23	0.29	minority	new	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Wa	Austro-Asiatic (Mon-Khmer)	28.20	0.28	minority	new	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups

Shui	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	26.97	0.27	minority	newly created	communication among members of the same ethnic group
Naxi	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto- Burman)	25.82	0.26	minority		Regionally
Dongxiang	Altaic (Mongolian)	24.55	0.24	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group
Tujia	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto- Burman)	20.00	0.20	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group
Qiang	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto- Burman)	10.50	0.10	minority		communication among members of the same ethnic group
Kyrgyz	Altaic (Turkic)	10.47	0.10	minority	traditional	regionwide, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Tu	Altaic (Mongolian)	10.16	0.10	minority	newly created	regionally

^aLanguage families are followed by branches or groups in parentheses.

^bAs per the population census conducted in 1982 (summarized by electronic computer), the total population is 100,391,400,000. If other types of people and foreigners of Chinese nationality are not included, the actual total population of the country would be 100,310,930,000.

Table 1.3: Extreme-ethnic minority Languages in China.

Language	Group ^a	Number of native speakers (in 10,000s)	% of the relevant ethnic group's population ^b	Language type	Writing system type	Scope and functions of language use
Mulam	Tibeto-Burman (Zhuang-Dong)	9.04	0.09	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Daur	Altaic (Mongolian)	8.55	0.09	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Zaiwa (Jingpo ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	6.92	0.07	extreme-minority	newly created	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Gyalrong (Tibetan ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	6.29	0.06	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Salar	Altaic (Turkic)	6.26	0.06	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Blang	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	5.33	0.05	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups

Maonan	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	2.86	0.03	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members
Xibe	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	2.74	0.03	extreme-minority	regionwide
Jingpo	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	2.38	0.02	extreme-minority	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Tajik	Indo-European (Indo-Iranian)	2.31	0.02	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Achang	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	1.76	0.02	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Ewenki	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	1.70	0.02	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Jino	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	1.20	0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members
Deang	Austro-Asiatic (Mon-Khmer)	1.17	0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Language	Group ^a	Number of native speakers (in 10,000s)	% of the relevant ethnic group's population ^b	Language type	Writing system type	Scope and functions of language use
Nusu (Nu ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	1.15	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Derung	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	1.06	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Bonan	Altaic (Mongolian)	0.96	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Gin	under discussion	0.87	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Lakkia (Yao ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	0.87	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Gelao	Sino-Tibetan (Zhuang-Dong)	0.67	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Tsangluo language (Monba Ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	0.51	0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups

Uzbek	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	0.50	<0.01	extreme-minority	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Western Yugur (Yugur ethnic group)	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	0.46	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members
Eastern Yugur (Yugur ethnic group)	Altaic (Mongolian)	0.34	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members
Oroqen	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	0.21	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members
Tuva (Mongolian ethnic group)	Altaic (Turkic)	0.19	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Lhoba	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	0.14	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Monba language (Monba ethnic group)	Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman)	0.11	<0.01	extreme-minority	communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups
Tatar	Altaic (Turkic)	0.10	<0.01	extreme-minority	regionally, transborder communication between ethnic groups

(continued)

Table 1.3 (continued)

Language	Group ^a	Number of native speakers (in 10,000s)	% of the relevant ethnic group's population ^b	Language type	Writing system type	Scope and functions of language use
She	Sino-Tibetan (Miao-Yao)	0.10	<0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members
Hezhen	Altaic (Manchu-Tungusic)	0.02	<0.01	extreme-minority		communication among ethnic group members, transborder communication between ethnic groups

^aLanguage families are followed by branches or groups in parentheses.

^bAs per the population census conducted in 1982 (summarized by electronic computer), the total population is 100,391,400, 000. If other types of people and foreigners of Chinese nationality are not included, the actual total population of the country would be 100,310,930,000.

1.3.3 Summary

The tables presented above list up to sixty languages. Only Mandarin Chinese is counted as a super-major language that uses traditional writing. It is used nationwide and is one of the six official languages of the United Nations.

Among the twelve major languages, seven are used at the Chinese government's key political meetings and for transborder communication among ethnic groups, five are used regionwide, and seven use traditional writing. Two major languages are used regionally; only one of them uses traditional writing, whereas the other uses newly created writing. Three major languages are employed for certain cases of regional communication or transborder communication between ethnic groups; all three major languages have new writing or newly created writing; only one language is regionally used and uses newly created writing; and one language is merely used for communication among ethnic group members and does not use writing.

Among the fourteen ethnic minority languages, two use traditional writing for transborder ethnic or regional communication. Three ethnic minority languages use new writing for regional and transnationally regional communication. Two ethnic minority languages have newly created writing which is regionally used. Seven ethnic minority languages have no writing, and these languages are used for communication among ethnic group members and for transnational regional communication.

Of thirty-one extreme-ethnic minority languages, two use new writing; they are used for regional or transnational communication. One language has newly created writing; it is used for regional or transborder regional communication. A total of twenty-eight languages have no writing system; they are the languages used for communication among ethnic group members and for transborder regional communication.

Some other extreme-ethnic minority languages are not included in the statistical data.

1.4 Dominant languages

1.4.1 Putonghua and standardized Chinese writing are unique languages used nationwide for writing in China

A total of sixty languages are used by fifty-six ethnicities in China. Among these sixty languages, ethnic minority languages are usable only in one region or in a few regions rather than across the whole country. Only Putonghua and standardized Chinese writing are counted as languages used nationwide. This is a unique

super-major language and writing style in China. Moreover, it is one of the six official languages of the United Nations. This shows that the social language situation in China is unified.

1.4.2 Mandarin Chinese is used the most for transregional and transnational communication in China

Data from McConnell (1995: book 1, 24) show that more than eighteen million ethnic minorities speak both ethnic minority languages and Mandarin Chinese. The number of such speakers accounts for 37.5% of the number of people speaking ethnic minority languages. Table 1.4 displays situations where ethnic minorities in China speak both Mandarin Chinese and other ethnic minorities' languages.

Table 1.4: Situations where ethnic minorities speak both Mandarin Chinese and other ethnic minorities' languages.

Ethnic group	% of the ethnic group's total population who also use Mandarin Chinese	Most-used other ethnic minority language	% of the ethnic group's total population who use it
Manchu	100	Korean	0.02
Gelao	100	–	–
Hezhen	100	–	–
She	99.8	–	–
Oroqen	99.3	Daur	19.5
Tujia	98.2	–	–
Gin	96.7	–	–
Qiang	93.1	–	–
Xibe	91.1	Kazakh	13.1
Bonan	90.6	–	–
Yugur	85.5	–	–
Daur	72.7	Mongol	30.1
Li	70.6	Mian language (Yao ethnic group)	0.1
Tu	70.0	Tibetan	11.9

Table 1.4 (continued)

Ethnic group	% of the ethnic group's total population who also use Mandarin Chinese	Most-used other ethnic minority language	% of the ethnic group's total population who use it
Dongxiang	65.6	Uygur	2.1
Salar	64.1	Tibetan	6.5
Bouyei	63.5	Shui	0.7
Bai	63.2	Lisu	5.3
Ewenki	62.9	Mongol	46.4
Mulam	61.1	Zhuang	7.7
Zhuang	57.7	Dong	0.1
Naxi	57.7	Lisu	4.8
Jino	51.2	Dai	0.8
Achang	50.8	Dai	9.8
Maonan	49.7	Zhuang	29.7
Dong	49.1	Miao	2.2
Mongolian	48.8	Uygur	1.1
Primi	48.5	Naxi	21.0
Miao	48.2	Zhuang	3.8
Yi	44.9	Tibetan	0.1
Deang	44.9	Dai	20.3
Korean	44.8	Daur	0.01
Miao	43.4	Dong	1.3
Dai	42.4	Zaiwa language (Jingpo ethnic group)	1.2
Shui	41.9	–	–
Hani	38.7	Yi	0.1
Blang	38.3	Dai	20.5
Jingpo	33.5	Achang	2.4
Lahu	33.5	Dai	1.0

Table 1.4 (continued)

Ethnic group	% of the ethnic group's total population who also use Mandarin Chinese	Most-used other ethnic minority language	% of the ethnic group's total population who use it
Wa	33.5	Dai	1.7
Lisu	20.3	Bai	7.3
Nu	19.2	Lisu	32.8
Tibetan	16.6	Qiang	1.1
Derung	14.0	Lisu	0.2
Kazakh	7.9	Uyгур	5.0
Lhoba	7.3	Tibetan	71.9
Kyrgyz	5.7	Uyгур	65.5
Monba	5.3	Tibetan	17.9
Uzbek	5.0	Uyгур	57.3
Tatar	4.9	Kazakh	56.9
Tajik	2.6	Uyгур	53.0
Uyгур	0.5	Kyrgyz	0.1

Table 1.4 shows that, among fifty-five ethnic minorities in China, the Mandarin Chinese-speakers in twenty-three ethnic groups account for more than half, or even all, of the ethnic minority group total population.¹ In other words, in more than half of the ethnic minorities in China, most or all of the population is proficient in spoken Mandarin Chinese.

Moreover, after excluding seven minor or extreme-ethnic minority languages, including Kyrgyz, Nu, Lhoba, Monba, Uzbek, Tajik, and Tatar, and only considering the other (more than forty) ethnic minority languages, the number of Mandarin Chinese-speakers is far more than the number of ethnic minority language-speakers. In other words, Mandarin Chinese has become a dominant transregional and transborder language in China.

¹ The total table does not include the Hui, Manchu, Gaoshan, and Russian ethnic groups. If these four ethnic groups were included, the total number of ethnic groups would go up to twenty-seven.

1.5 Further conclusions and problems

The language situation in China has diverse and prominent characteristics that require Mandarin Chinese language policies to be diverse and prominent as well.

I describe the language situation of minorities in China, including the situations of the native language and second language, rather than describing the issue of language shift. Detailed descriptions of language shift are provided in a later chapter entitled “Language, ethnicity, and identity in China.”

I also discuss some issues relating to the language situation in the twenty-first century in order to provide reference material for people working with national languages and writing systems, or on language policies.

1.5.1 Problems regarding the development and use of transnational languages

Eight ethnic minority languages in China are regarded as transnationally dominant languages. Will these languages be explored? Do they deserve to be explored? How can one develop and use these language resources to develop the frontiers of local trade, tourism, and cultural exchange?

1.5.2 Problems regarding bilingual education

The ideal target for bilingual education is training ethnic minority students to speak both the ethnic minority language and Mandarin Chinese fluently. Many ethnic minority students display unbalanced bilingual abilities. Some can speak ethnic minority languages but cannot speak Mandarin; some can speak Mandarin fluently but are not familiar with ethnic minority languages; some can speak neither the minority language nor Mandarin Chinese. What are the reasons for this situation? What methods should be employed to improve this situation?

1.5.3 Problems regarding language maintenance

Can ethnic minority languages and extreme-ethnic minority languages maintain or prolong their linguistic vitality in the face of social modernization? What elements influence or restrict language maintenance? Are there any measures we should implement?

1.5.4 Problems regarding endangered languages

Until the first half of the nineteenth century, some minority languages in China were gradually becoming extinct. Is there nothing one can do to protect endangered languages? Can we implement any measures to protect or rescue endangered languages? How can we protect and rescue them?

Chapter 2

Requiring Putonghua as the common language and encouraging ethnolinguistic diversity: The development of language policy in China

There are numerous studies on language policies concerning Mandarin Chinese or ethnic minority languages, but few combine them. This chapter examines over half a century of the development of language policies on Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages in China, and provides an analytical framework based on the principle of requiring Putonghua as the common language and encouraging ethnolinguistic diversity (hereafter referred to as the principle of one common language and linguistic diversity).

Cobarrubias, a famous language policy scholar, pointed out that language policy thinking around the world takes four primary forms: language assimilation, language diversification, language internationalization, and language localization (Cobarrubias 1983). However, these types of thinking fail to explain the reality in China.

The earliest person to propose the principle of one common language and linguistic diversity in China with respect to policy was Xu Jialu. To solve the problem of use of Putonghua and the Chinese dialects, Xu Jialu (1998) proposed “to propagate Putonghua, and encourage almost all the citizens to be able to use Putonghua and consciously speak Putonghua on necessary occasions. This adheres to the ‘one common language’ principle. The use of dialects has value, and promoting Putonghua without eliminating other dialects adheres to the diversity principle.”

My proposition regarding the principle of one common language and linguistic diversity aims to analyze the uses of and relation between national commonly used languages and writing systems and the languages and writing systems of minority ethnicities. Regarding one common language, article 4 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (issued in 1982) stated that “the country propagates the use of Putonghua.” Regarding diversity, article 3 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China (issued in 1954) stated that “each nation has the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language.” These two regulations can be summarized as the principle of one common language and linguistic diversity, which is the general principle of language policy in China (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 242–243).

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the development of more than sixty years of Chinese language policy. This development is divided into four periods. First, in the early period of New China (1949–1958), a language policy of one common language and linguistic diversity was adopted. Second, in the leftist ideological period (1958–1978), language use in China was obstructed and limited. Third, in the period of modernization construction (1978–2000), language normalization and standardization were achieved. Fourth, in the initial period of the establishment of the market economy (2000 to now), the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems” was established.

2.1.1 One common language and diversity in language use

According to the sixth national census, conducted in 2010, the total population of China is 1.37 billion. This includes the Han population of 1.23 billion, which accounts for 91.51% of the total population, and the ethnic minority population of 110 million, which accounts for 8.49% the total population (National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China 2011).

The “one common language” aspect of language use in China mainly refers to the number of Chinese native speakers, who account for more than 95% of the total population. Among the ten Chinese dialects, the Mandarin dialect (also known as the northern dialect) is distributed the most widely: from Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province, to Urumqi, Xinjiang; and from Kunming City, Yunnan Province, to Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province. People thousands of kilometers from one another can talk to one another without much difficulty. The number of Mandarin-speakers in the Mandarin Chinese area accounts for 67.75% of the total number of Mandarin Chinese-speakers and 64.51% of the total population of the country (Li Rong 1989: 161). Putonghua and Mandarin Chinese are the commonly used languages in national political, economic, and cultural life. Putonghua and Mandarin Chinese are also the primary languages used to communicate between different areas and different ethnicities in China. The Standard Chinese writing system is commonly used in China.

The diversity of language use in China is mainly indicated by the large differences in the dialects of the provinces in south-eastern China, whose speakers cannot communicate with one another. There are about sixty million members of minority ethnicities who use their native ethnic languages, accounting for more than 60% of the total population of minority ethnicities. There are also about thirty million minority ethnicities who use their native writing systems

(Information Office of the State Council 2009). Within these fifty-five minority ethnicities, excluding the Hui and Manchu ethnic groups, who use Mandarin Chinese, fifty-three minority ethnicities use more than eighty languages. Most of these eighty languages belong to five language families. Multiple ethnicities, multiple languages, and multiple writing systems are some of the prominent features of the language situation in China.

2.1.2 A unified multi-ethnic country and unified multi-language policy

2.1.2.1 A unified multi-ethnic country

Since ancient times, China has been a unified multi-ethnic country. For about six-sevenths of the time since the establishment of the Qin dynasty two thousand years ago, China has been unified; for about one-seventh of that time, China has been divided. Unification is one of the main features of Chinese history. Han and minority ethnicities together created and developed the territory, history, and civilization of China.

2.1.2.2 The system of regional ethnic autonomy: Guaranteeing the autonomy of ethnic minorities and safeguarding national unity

The system of regional ethnic autonomy is an important political system in New China. It also provides important evidence for regulating ethnic minority policies in New China. Currently, there are 5 autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures, and 120 autonomous counties in China. Among the fifty-five ethnic minority groups, forty-four have implemented the system of regional ethnic autonomy. The territories of these autonomous areas account for 64% of the total national territory.

The system of regional ethnic autonomy involves autonomy under the unified national leadership. All the autonomous ethnic areas are integral parts of the Republic of China and are local authorities under the leadership of the central government. This system has successfully found a balance between the two key points of unification and autonomy, and has perfectly combined ethnic autonomy with national unification.

2.1.2.3 Language policy that both requires a single common language and encourages linguistic diversity

Putonghua is both the common language of the Han in different dialect areas and the communicative language of various ethnic groups in China. Promoting Putonghua in Chinese dialect areas will not eliminate Chinese dialects but reduce

the gap between different dialect areas. Additionally, promoting Putonghua in ethnic minority areas neither hinders minority ethnicities from using their own writing systems nor replaces their ethnic minority languages with Putonghua; instead, it encourages ethnic minority leaders in local governments, students, and the masses to master both their native languages and writing systems and a commonly used national inter-ethnic communicative tool, giving them wider space in which to develop. This language policy helps all the ethnic groups unite and learn from one another. This accords with the common interests of all ethnic groups.

The principle of languages and writing systems discussed above not only allows various ethnic groups to enjoy the right to use and develop their native languages and writing systems, but also makes it possible to promote the popularization of the common language of the Han, consolidate national unification and social stability, and find a suitable balance between the two different principles of diversity and one common language.

2.2 Promotion of cultural education and the establishment of a language policy of one common language and linguistic diversity

Writing systems have a close relationship with social politics. In modern times, major changes in the social systems of many countries have been accompanied by major reforms of their writing systems. For example, after the Meiji Restoration in Japan, the Japanese writing system was changed from pure Chinese characters into Chinese characters mixed with katakana and hiragana; after the October Revolution, most of the writing system of the Soviet Union was changed to the Roman alphabet; after the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the country announced that Vietnamese written in the Roman alphabet was the “national writing system” and completely discarded the Chinese and Nam characters used by traditional society; and, after the independence of North Korea, the country discarded the long-used Chinese characters and started using Hangul, the current Korean writing system.

China is no exception. Even before the founding of New China, Mao Zedong put forward his ideas about language policy. He stated, first, that the “writing system must be changed under certain conditions; language must be close to the masses; we must know that the masses are the unlimited source of revolution” (Mao Zedong 1952 [1940]: 680); and, second, that “each minority ethnic group has its own culture, region and customs, and we should not force them to study

the Chinese language and writing system, but sponsor them to develop a cultural education by using their own languages and writing systems” (Mao Zedong 1991b [1938]: 595).

After the founding of New China, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council immediately reformed writing system and language policy in order to develop ethnic minority languages and writing systems based on the thinking of Mao Zedong. The writing system policy reform aimed to resolve the serious differences between Chinese dialects and to boost the use of Putonghua and cultural education, and in doing so to tackle issues raised by the adoption of Putonghua as a common language. The aim of developing ethnic minority languages and writing systems was to implement policies for ethnic equality and language equality, and to help ethnic minority groups to improve their native languages and cultures, thus addressing the issue of the diverse development of ethnic minority languages.

The Chinese government did not try to restrict the development of diverse ethnic minority languages in order to support the status of Putonghua as the common language, but it did not hinder efforts to require the universal use of Putonghua either. China’s success in dissolving the tension between requiring the use of a common language and encouraging ethnolinguistic diversity has great significance for other countries that may face similar situations.

2.2.1 One common language: The development of cultural education and the writing system policy reform

During the early period of New China, the country faced difficult tasks, such as achieving political and economic unity. The country urgently needed to promote cultural education; rapidly develop the national economy; rectify the extremely backward state of industrial and agricultural production, science, and technology; and achieve national industrialization. However, at the time, the Chinese common language was not widespread. More than 80% of the population of the country were illiterate. Chinese characters are difficult to learn, write, and identify, which limited the promotion and development of cultural education. For these reasons, the CPC Central Committee and State Council formulated a writing system reform policy, set up corresponding organs, and made reform of the writing system an important part of the cultural reform and development of China (Office of Policy and Law of the State Language Commission 1996: 7–9).

2.2.1.1 Organs

In December 1954, the State Council established a directly affiliated institution, the Writing Reform Committee of China, whose main duty was to implement a writing reform policy in China by simplifying Chinese characters, promoting Putonghua, and formulating and implementing a Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. On December 16, 1985, this organ was renamed the State Language Work Committee. In January 1956, the State Council established the Central Working Committee for the Promotion of Putonghua,² whose working organ was the Writing Reform Committee of China. Only a few provinces and cities in the country created institutions for writing reform and the promotion of Putonghua.

2.2.1.2 Policy and tasks

The reform policy for the Chinese writing system stated that Chinese characters had to be reformed and had to follow the global tendency to adopt alphabetic writing systems. However, first, Chinese characters had to be simplified to prepare them for romanization (Wu Yuzhang 1978: 129). The preparatory work included the promotion of Putonghua and the formulation of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet.

In accordance with this policy, in 1958, Premier Zhou Enlai divided the specific work of writing reform into three tasks: “simplification of Chinese characters, promotion of Putonghua, and formulation and implementation of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet” (Zhou Enlai 1984 [1958]: 280).

2.2.1.2.1 Simplification of Chinese characters

In traditional feudal society, traditional Chinese characters were the original form of simplified Chinese characters, and simplified Chinese characters were a popular form of traditional Chinese characters. To reduce the strokes and number of Chinese characters, on January 28, 1956, the State Council approved a “Draft on the simplification of Chinese characters by the Writing Reform Committee of China.” After it was ratified in 1986, 2,235 national simplified Chinese characters were adopted. Simplified Chinese characters are now used nationwide. The Chinese versions of documents of the United Nations are written using simplified Chinese characters. In Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand, the ethnic Chinese use simplified Chinese characters as standard characters.

² This committee was abolished during the Cultural Revolution, and it never reconvened.

2.2.1.2.2 Promotion of Putonghua

On February 6, 1956, the instructions of the State Council on the promotion of Putonghua provided a comprehensive definition and standard for Putonghua: “Beijing pronunciation is regarded as the standard pronunciation; the northern dialect is the basic dialect; the grammar of modern Chinese vernacular writings is the standard grammar” (Office of Policy and Law of the State Language Commission 1996: 12). In June 1957, at the Conference on the Promotion of Putonghua, Wei Que, the Vice-Minister of Education, proposed a twelve-character policy on the promotion of Putonghua, entitled *Da-Li-Ti-Chang, Zhong-Dian-Tui-Xing, Zhu-Bu-Pu-Ji* [Strongly promote, intensively implement, and gradually popularize] (Wang Jun 1995: 279).

In 1956, the Central Working Committee on Promoting Putonghua was established. Chen Yi was the acting director; Guo Moruo, Wu Yuzhang, and others were the vice-directors. Between 1958 and 1959, there were five teaching achievement exhibitions on Putonghua. Between 1956 and 1960, there were nine nationwide seminars and refresher courses on Putonghua, which trained 1,666 core teachers. Between 1957 and 1958, the Working Committee investigated Chinese dialects in over 1,800 locations and compiled booklets on 320 types of dialect area in order to learn more about Putonghua.

The promotion of Putonghua did not lead to the artificial elimination of dialects, but it did require citizens who could speak those dialects to speak Putonghua as well. However, it did not require citizens to speak Putonghua on all occasions, merely in some formal contexts, such as school, State organs, and public services. Despite the promotion of Putonghua, some dialects existed for a long time in certain fields and areas.

2.2.1.2.3 Formulation and implementation of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet

The Chinese Phonetic Alphabet is a statutory phonetic alphabet in China, not an alphabetic form of writing that replaces Chinese characters. Between 1952 and 1954, the Writing Reform Committee of China formulated four ethnic alphabet drafts whose forms contained strokes of the Chinese grass script. In accordance with the instructions for applying Roman letters of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, between 1955 and 1957 the Writing Reform Committee of China developed the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, written in Roman letters. On February 11, 1958, it was approved and released by the National People’s Congress. In 1982, the International Organization for Standardization made it the international standard for spelling Chinese. The Chinese Phonetic Alphabet is mainly used to note pronunciation, identify characters, index and spell Chinese people and place names, formulate product codes, formulate a Chinese finger alphabet

for the profoundly deaf, draft romanized newspapers, and provide a common basis for ethnic minority groups to create and reform writing systems.

2.2.2 Diversity: The construction of a regional ethnic autonomy system and the use and development of ethnic minority language and writing policies

The regional ethnic autonomy system of China means that, under the unified leadership of the State, all the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities can exercise regional autonomy and establish organs of self-government. Ethnic minority people can act as their own masters in managing the internal affairs of their autonomous regions. In 1954, article 3 of the Constitution stated that “all ethnic groups can enjoy the freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems” (Dong Yunhu and Liu Wuping 1991: 820). In 1982, article 4 of the Constitution reaffirmed this fundamental principle.

Ethnic minority languages are generally the main communicative and intellectual tools of ethnic minority society. Ethnic minority writing systems are the bearers of the traditional ethnic minority culture. Ethnic identification, ethnic consciousness, or ethnic feelings are generally expressed by using ethnic languages and writing systems. Without a free and equal social environment to use ethnic languages and writing systems, social instability is likely to increase and social unity is likely to be affected to some degree. Article 4 of the Constitution adheres to the principle of equality between various ethnic languages and writing systems. It is an important symbol that marks the realization of ethnic equality and guarantees ethnic minority autonomy rights.

2.2.2.1 The use of ethnic minority languages and writing systems

During the early period of New China, many laws and rules with specific regulations were implemented. In 1952, article 15 of the “Implementation outline for regional ethnic autonomy in the People’s Republic of China” stated that “each ethnic regional autonomous organ must use a writing system that is commonly used within the autonomous region. This writing system is the primary tool used to exercise authority. When regional autonomous organs exercise authority over an ethnic minority group that does not use the commonly used writing system, they are required to use that ethnic minority group’s writing system” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 2–3). Article 6 stated that “each ethnic regional autonomous organ should use each ethnic group’s own language and writing system.” In 1952, the “Administrative Council’s decision to guarantee equal ethnic rights

for all the scattered minorities” was approved. Article 5 of the decision stated that “all scattered minorities with their own native ethnic languages and writing systems should use them to plea in court” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 95). In 1954, the contents of article 5 were absorbed into the first Constitution (article 77). Since the First National People’s Congress was held in 1954, there have been simultaneous interpretations in Mandarin and ethnic minority languages in the field of national politics and life. Moreover, in autonomous ethnic minority regions, in courts, procuratorates, ethnic education, news and publication, broadcasting, and other areas, one or more types of ethnic minority language and writing system are used to various degrees.

2.2.2.2 Development of ethnic minority languages and writing systems

During the early period of New China, the central government argued that helping ethnic minority groups establish writing systems that represented their own languages would benefit those groups and promote education and new science and technology, and improve the general cultural level. Moreover, the government argued, it would have great significance for socialist economic construction and cultural development.

2.2.2.2.1 Creation of writing systems

On February 5, 1951, article 5 of the “Administrative Council’s several decisions on ethnic affairs” stated that the central government should “help ethnic groups without writing systems to create writing systems and help ethnic groups with incomplete writing systems to complete them” (Shi Yun 1988: 247). To achieve this, between 1950 and 1955, and between 1956 and 1959, the relevant government departments twice organized groups to investigate the languages of forty-three ethnic groups: the Zhuang, Bouyei, Shui, Miao, Yao, Yi, Dai, Lisu, Jingpo, Hani, Wa, Mongols, Uygur, Dong, Li, Mao Nan, Mulam, Tibetans, Qiang, Lahu, Naxi, Bai, Achang, Tujia, Daur, Dongxiang, Bao’an, Tu, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Tatars, Uzbeks, Sarah, Yugur, Xibe, Hezhen, Ewenki, Oroqen, Beijing, Tajik, She, and Koreans.

On the basis of the investigations, institutions for ethnic language work and research were established. Based on the principle of voluntary self-selection, the government helped ten ethnic groups in southern China – that is, the Zhuang, Bouyei, Yi, Miao, Hani, Lisu, Naxi, Dong, Wa, and Li – create fourteen types of writing system written with the Roman alphabet, including four types of Miao writing system and two kinds of Hani writing system.

2.2.2.2 Reform and improvement of writing systems

The government also helped the Di, Lahu, and Jingpo in Yunnan Province draw up drafts on the improvement of writing systems, and helped the Uygur and Kazakhs in Xinjiang draw up drafts on writing reform.

The Li did not use the newly created Li writing system but used the Chinese writing system directly. The Hani only used one kind of Hani writing system (namely, the Haya Hani writing system) and abandoned all others. The Yi ethnic group did not embrace the newly created Yi writing system and continued to use the old Yi writing system, which was standardized.

In the process of the improvement and reform of writing systems, the Jingpo, Lahu, and Dehong Dai writing systems maintained most of their original character structures, which were well accepted by the masses and were promoted effectively. By contrast, the Xishuangbanna Dai writing system, the Uygur writing system in the Roman alphabet, and the new Kazakh writing system were changed a great deal. After using the new Uygur and Kazakh writing systems for a time, in 1982, the government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region decided to return to the old ones.

2.3 Influences of leftism on the policy of one common language and linguistic diversity

2.3.1 Influences of leftism on policy regarding ethnic minority languages

During the Great Leap Forward in 1958, leftism was dominant in the Communist Party of China. In ethnic minority areas, a rectification movement and an anti-local national chauvinism struggle occurred, in which many people working on ethnic languages were involved.

During March and April 1958, the Second National Symposium on Ethnic Minority Languages was held. At the symposium, the three-divorce phenomenon – that is, divorce from politics, divorce from reality, and divorce from the masses – was criticized for the first time. The tendency of “differentiation,” “separation,” and “purification” in ethnic language research was also criticized:

The “differentiation” tendency means amplifying the differences between different languages and different subdialects of the same dialect, and ignoring the commonalities. The so-called “differentiation” tendency holds that the more language differences there are, the better, and the more types of languages and writing systems, the better. The “separation” tendency means ignoring the solidarity between different ethnic groups promoted by writing systems and emphasizing the difficulties faced by different dialects with different writing systems within an ethnic group. Regarding ethnic language development [. . .],

the “purification” tendency means rejecting and blocking Chinese loanwords, overemphasizing the old lexicon that was discarded by the masses long ago, and creating new words that are not accepted and understood by the masses.

(Division of Culture and Education of the State Affairs Commission 1958: 3)

Work on ethnic languages was suddenly stopped by the central government. Because it was not good for ethnic unity for one ethnic group to use two types of writing system, the Zaiwa writing system of the Jingpo ethnic group and the new writing system of the Nani Bika dialect were scrapped. After 1959, the newly created trial writing systems in Yunnan Province were scrapped as well. In 1960, the Guizhou Ethnic Publishing House was closed. Furthermore, ethnic schools in many provinces were closed or merged with other schools, teachers were sent to rural schools, and ethnic language courses decreased in number or were canceled entirely.

2.3.2 The Cultural Revolution and the suspension of the policy of one common language and linguistic diversity

During the ten-year-long Cultural Revolution, the Writing Reform Committee of China stopped its work, most of the committees and scholars suffered persecution, and most of the local organizations for Putonghua promotion were closed down. The phenomenon of considering Putonghua education in schools as a part of intellectual education was criticized. The use of languages and writing systems in society was facing serious disorganization. Putonghua was confused with argot, lies, social formulas, and rude words.

Institutions for ethnic minority languages were closed down, ethnic language publications and broadcasting enterprises were forced to cease work, and those working to solve the problem of ethnic language illiteracy were forced to stop. Except for a few ethnic schools in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Yanbian, all the ethnic schools that taught languages canceled almost all their ethnic language courses (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 340).

2.3.3 The tortuous development of the policy of one common language and linguistic diversity after the Cultural Revolution

In 1972, under Premier Zhou Enlai, writing reform work and ethnic language work began again, in the following four respects.

2.3.3.1 Drawing up the draft program for the “Second simplification of Chinese characters”

In November 1971, the Office for Writing Reform of the Chinese Academy prepared its “First draft” on the new simplified Chinese characters. The Writing Reform Committee of China prepared the draft program for the “Second simplification of Chinese characters” (hereafter referred to as the “Second draft”) in May 1975, and after two years prepared a revised version. In December 1977, the revised version was issued after being approved by the State Council. The “Second draft” received much criticism in several respects. Finally, the State Council agreed to abolish the “Second draft.”

Zhou Youguang believed that there were three reasons for the failure of the “Second draft.” The first lay in technological errors. Many characters in the “Second draft” were collected from ordinary people; however, these characters were not conventionalized. After using them for a while, the public felt that these characters had been changed completely and found it difficult to accept them. The second was the change in the masses’ psychology. The “First draft” had been issued in the 1950s, when the masses were still enthusiastic after the Revolution and ready for change. However, the “Second draft” was issued after the Cultural Revolution, when the masses wanted stability and were against changing and reforming Chinese characters. The third reason lay in problems with the procedure of issuing the “Second draft.” It was issued in newspapers without being approved by the Writing Reform Committee of China (Zhou Youguang 1992 [1986]: 219).

2.3.3.2 Deletion of provisions in the Constitution

As discussed above, the statement that “all ethnic groups can enjoy the freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems” in article 3 of the Constitution was changed to “all ethnic groups can enjoy the freedom to use their own languages and writing systems” in article 4 of the Constitution in 1975 (Dong Yunhu and Liu Wuping 1991: 826). The word “develop” was deleted, in other words, during the late period of the Cultural Revolution. Ethnic minority languages and writing systems could be used, but not developed. The Constitution was largely revised.

2.3.3.3 Establishment of an ethnic language translation bureau

In the late period of the Cultural Revolution, ethnic minority translations of works of Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong attracted much attention. In 1974, Premier Zhou Enlai approved the establishment of the Central Bureau for Ethnic Minority Translations of Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong’s Works.

In 1978, the Ethnic Minority Translation Center of China was established on the basis of the translation bureau. It was the only ethnic minority language translation bureau on the national level, and its main tasks included translating works of Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong’s classic works; works of the Party and the national leader; important documents of the Party and the country; national laws and regulations; and the documents issued by the National Party Congress, National People’s Congress, and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference into seven types of ethnic minority language, namely Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi and Zhuang, and undertaking interpretation work at important national conferences.

It was unprecedented in China or any other nation to use seven languages to translate and simultaneously interpret a party’s documents and documents related to important national conferences.

2.3.3.4 Xinjiang decides to comprehensively use the Uygur and Kazakh new writing systems

During the Cultural Revolution, ethnic minority language reform work all over the country ceased, but the Xinjiang Uygur and Kazakh ethnic groups continued their new romanized writing system reform work. In June 1973, the Revolutionary Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region held a conference on the promotion of the Uygur and Kazakh new writing systems, where it decided to complete the work in the shortest amount of time possible (*Xinjiang newspaper*, June 15, 1973). In August 1976, the Revolutionary Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region decided to fully promote the Uygur and Kazakh new writing systems and cease to use the old Uygur and Kazakh writing systems. In September 1982, the Fifth Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region’s People’s Congress Standing Committee, at its seventeenth conference, approved the “Decision on full usage of the old Uygur and Kazakh writing systems.”

2.4 Modernization and the development of the policy of one common language and linguistic diversity

At the Third Plenary Session of the Party, held in December 1978, the State implemented the policy of opening up to the outside world and invigorating the domestic economy. Social economic development transformed from being “based on class struggle” to “centered on economic construction.” Economic construction; social, cultural, and educational enterprises; and information technology rapidly developed, creating an urgent need to strengthen the standardization

and normalization of languages and writing systems. To meet the requirements of social development and the change in the country's situation, the country immediately adjusted its language policy and, after 1986, began implementing the new era's policies and main language tasks (Liu Daosheng 1987: 4).

2.4.1 Adjustment of language policy

The most important national language task was no longer writing system reform,³ but “actively promoting and popularizing Putonghua” (Xu Jialu 1998: 4). To adapt to the reform and opening up of the socialist market economy, the State put the promotion of Putonghua and the standardization of Chinese characters in a very important position. The prevailing *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an* 汉语拼音方案 [Chinese Phonetic Alphabet] was a phonetic annotation tool for learning the Chinese language and writing system and for promoting Putonghua, rather than a replacement for Chinese characters. It was used when Chinese characters were inconvenient or inadequate. For a long time, Chinese characters would continue to play a role in the country's statutory writing system.

2.4.2 One common language: The State's promotion of Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters

2.4.2.1 The language policy of the new era

The language policy of the new era consisted of implementing national policy and laws for language work, promoting the standardization and normalization of languages and writing systems, and continuing to promote language reform work so that languages and writing systems played a better role in socialist modernization (Liu Daosheng 1987: 23).

2.4.2.1.1 National promotion of Putonghua

The primary purpose of promoting Putonghua was eliminating gaps in order to facilitate social communication rather than artificially eliminating dialects. In the 1950s, the policy of promoting Putonghua aimed to “strongly advocate, intensively promote, and gradually popularize” (Wang Jun 1995: 279). In the 1990s, this policy was adjusted to “intensively advocate, actively popularize,

³ Note in this respect the Second National Conference on Language Work, which was held in December 1997.

and gradually enhance” (Office of Policy and Law of the State Language Commission 1996: 320). This adjustment not only maintained the continuity of the original policy but also indicated the adaptation of the new policy to new situations and new tasks.

A comparison of the policy of the 1950s with that of the 1990s shows that the major changes were as follows. First, in the 1950s, Putonghua was primarily promoted in southern China, whereas in the 1990s, Putonghua was promoted in northern China. Second, in the 1950s, work focused on promoting Putonghua in schools, while in the 1990s, Putonghua was promoted in society as well, in order to make Putonghua a teaching language, working language, propaganda language, service language, and communication language.⁴ Third, in the 1950s, the focus was on the standardization of language, while in the 1990s, the focus was on the standardization of not only language but also the lexicon and other aspects.

2.4.2.1.2 Levels of Putonghua

In real life, Putonghua was used by groups from different areas, departments, industries, schools, and age groups, and divided into three levels. The first level involved standard Putonghua with no errors in pronunciation, lexicon, and grammar. The second level involved relatively standard Putonghua with no serious dialectal pronunciation and a few errors in lexicon and grammar. The third level involved ordinary Putonghua understood by people from different dialect areas. The levels of Putonghua were applicable in not only the southern dialect area but also the northern dialect area.

2.4.2.1.3 State promotion of standard Chinese characters

Standard Chinese characters mainly involve the simplified characters indexed in the “Simplified character table,” which was reissued by the National Language Work Committee in 1986, and the characters indexed in the “Modern Chinese character table” issued by the National Language Committee and the Press and Publication Administration. Since 1992, the National Language Committee has issued notices and stated that all government agencies, schools, mass media institutions, public occasions, and information and technological products should use standard Chinese characters.

⁴ The specific requirements were as follows: first, different kinds of schools at different levels were to use Putonghua as a teaching language; second, different kinds of organs at different levels were to use Putonghua as a working language; and third, different dialect areas were to use Putonghua as a communicative language (see Liu Daosheng 1987: 25).

2.4.2.1.4 Extremely careful simplification of Chinese characters

Simplification of Chinese characters should be undertaken with extreme care. The structure of the characters should be kept relatively stable. The “Second simplification of Chinese characters” in 1977 evoked a social reaction. In 1986, the State Council denounced the draft.

2.4.2.1.5 Information technology and Chinese language and characters

IT processing of Chinese language and characters is an emerging discipline with broad prospects. Research in this field has long-term significance for economic, cultural, scientific, and technological development. Therefore, current language work must include this material.

2.4.2.1.6 Hanyu Pinyin Fang’an

This is a statutory standard formulated and issued by the State, so it must be actively promoted instead of starting a new phonetic system.

2.4.2.2 The organs for work on languages and writing systems

In December 1985, the Writing Reform Committee of China was renamed the National Working Committee on Languages and Writing Systems. Its primary duties are as follows: drawing up national guidelines and policies for languages and writing systems; making mid- and long-term plans for language work; formulating, coordinating, and supervising the norms and standards of Mandarin Chinese and ethnic minority languages and writing systems; guiding Putonghua promotion; and promoting the normalization and standardization of languages and writing systems. In 1998, the Writing Reform Committee of China was merged with the Ministry of Education, although it kept its name. The director of the committee is generally the vice-minister of the Ministry of Education.

2.4.3 Diversity: The use and development of ethnic minority languages

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, policies on using and developing ethnic minority languages and writing systems were gradually implemented. In June 1991, the State Council issued its “Report on further implementing ethnic minority language work” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 390–392). This report systematically proposed the guidelines, duties, and aspects of ethnic language work in China.

2.4.3.1 Guidelines and main tasks

According to the report, in the new era, the guidelines and main tasks of ethnic language work are as follows: adhering to the principle of language equality; protecting ethnic minority groups' freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems; achieving ethnic unity, progress, and mutual prosperity; being practical and realistic; providing guidance based on different situations; actively, carefully, and steadily carrying out ethnic language work; and facilitating comprehensive political, economic, and cultural enterprise development in ethnic minority areas (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 391).

The main aspects of ethnic language work in the new era are as follows: implementing the State's ethnic language policy; strengthening the legal framework of ethnic languages; overseeing the normalization, standardization, and IT processing of ethnic languages; promoting the development of translation, publishing, education, mass media, radio, film, and television in relation to ethnic languages; promoting academic research on ethnic languages; facilitating communication and cooperation and talent cultivation; and encouraging various ethnic groups to learn languages and writing systems from one another (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 391).

Those implementing the above guidelines and tasks should follow three principles. First, they should be based in reality, provide different guidance based on different situations, and work successfully on the use and promotion of ethnic minority writing systems. Second, they should encourage ethnic groups to learn languages and writing systems from one another. Third, if schools that mainly enroll ethnic minority students are in good shape, they should use books written in ethnic minority languages, teach in ethnic minority languages, start courses in Chinese at appropriate grades, conduct bilingual education, and promote the national, commonly used Putonghua. Ethnic languages and bilingual language teachers, translators, editors, and researchers should be cultivated and supported; the number of ethnic language textbooks and various reading resources should be increased; and the quality of these books should be improved (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 392).

2.4.3.2 The use and development of ethnic minority languages

Since the 1980s, the fields in which ethnic minority languages are used have significantly expanded compared with the 1950s.

2.4.3.2.1 The field of political life

The documents of the National Communist Party Congress and National People's Congress, as well as those of the Chinese People's Political Conference, need to be translated into seven languages, namely Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi, and Zhuang. The People's Court and people's procuratorates also provide translations for litigation participants who cannot understand the commonly used local languages and writing systems. When many autonomous organs in autonomous regions perform their duties, their official documents, seals, and so on should be written in both ethnic characters and Chinese characters.

2.4.3.2.2 The field of education

Newly created writing systems and improved writing systems are mainly used for bilingual education in the lower grades to help students who cannot understand Chinese transition to Chinese education. Writing systems created long ago, such as Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, and Korean, are employed in high schools and some colleges. A relatively complete type of bilingual education system, which mainly teaches ethnic languages and is supplemented by Chinese languages, has been established from primary school to high school.

More than ten thousand schools targeting twenty-one ethnic groups in thirteen provinces and autonomous regions use ethnic languages, or both ethnic languages and Mandarin Chinese, as their teaching languages. Twelve ethnic groups, namely, the Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi, Zhuang, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Dai, Jingpo, and Russian, include ethnic languages in their curriculum plans. Nine ethnic groups, namely the Bai, Miao, Bouyei, Naxi, Dong, Wa, Hani, Lisu and Lahu, are conducting experiments or work to eliminate illiteracy using ethnic languages. There are more than six million students in schools, sixty ethnic languages, and twenty-nine ethnic writing systems. Ten provinces and autonomous regions have established relevant publication organizations for ethnic language textbooks, which edit and publish primary and secondary textbooks on nearly three thousand topics, totaling ten million printed copies. In 1997, 34.03 million copies of textbooks using ethnic writing systems were printed nationwide (Tutob Dorje 1999: 25).

2.4.3.2.3 The field of culture

The State has set up an ethnic language translation agency on the central level. Autonomous regions and autonomous prefectures have well-established translation agencies. Additionally, there are thirty-six ethnic language publication houses nationwide. In 1997, books on 3,429 subjects written in more than twenty ethnic writing systems were published, a 4.5-fold increase compared with the books on

621 subjects published in 1965. Newspapers on a total of 88 topics written in ethnic writing systems were being published, a 3.4-fold increase compared with the newspapers on 20 topics published in 1952. Magazines on a total of 184 topics written in ethnic writing systems were published, an 11-fold increase compared with the magazines on 15 topics published in 1952. The Central People's Broadcasting Station has started radio broadcasts in five ethnic languages. In autonomous ethnic regions, prefectures, and counties of ethnic autonomous provinces, radio stations and wired broadcast stations using ethnic languages have been established. Some autonomous regions have started television channels in ethnic languages. Many autonomous regions have established translation agencies to translate films and television shows into ethnic languages. A large number of television shows are made in ethnic languages every year (Li Jinyou 1999: 60).

2.4.3.2.4 Standardization, normalization, and IT processing of minority ethnic languages

In China, organizations are working on normalizing the noun terminology and writing systems of Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, and other languages. These organizations are responsible for bringing in experts to study the unified normalization of noun terminology and writing systems. After the normalization has been worked out, it is carried out by language departments. In 1995, the Special Subcommittee on Ethnic Minority Languages, subordinated to the National Technical Commission on Terminology Normalization, was established in Beijing. Then, four terminology commissions on the Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, and Xinjiang ethnic minority languages were subordinated to a special subcommittee that was established. Each organization set standards for the relevant language's basic terminology.

China has set transcription standards for the names and spellings of ethnic groups. Relevant departments bring in experts to set transcription standards (international standards) for the Mongolian Roman alphabets. In China, a national standard for characters, keyboards, and matrices for the Mongolian, Tibetan, Yi, Uygur, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz writing systems has been established. In the early 1990s, word-processing systems for Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi, Zhuang, Kyrgyz, and Xibe were worked out, and operating systems, phototypesetting systems, and office automation systems in the relevant ethnic writing systems were implemented. Furthermore, some progress was made in the automatic identification and machine-aided translation of Mongolian, Tibetan, and other ethnic writing systems, and websites or web pages were built in Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, Uygur, Yi, and other writing systems. A number of databases of ethnic languages were also established, and the character sets of

the Tibetan and Mongolian writing systems were examined and approved by an international standards organization and were made an international standard.

2.5 Initial establishment of the market economy and the promulgation and implementation of the “National law of commonly used languages and writing systems”

After the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in 1992, China was transformed from a planned economy to a market economy. At the start of the twenty-first century, the socialist market economy system was already established, but its transformation was yet to occur. Its main feature was the transformation of urban society from the primary to advanced stage, manifested in two aspects: first, the transformation from an unstable conflict-prone society to a stable class-harmonious society; second, the transformation from an inharmoniously and incompletely developed society to a comprehensively and harmoniously developed society. In terms of languages, a unified market calls for unified languages, and advanced urbanization calls for more standardized, more unified, and more popularized languages.

2.5.1 One common language: Language legislation

2.5.1.1 The background to language legislation

In the twenty-first century, China entered a socio-economic transitional period. Because language gaps had almost been eliminated in China, this provided a basis for the establishment of a socialist market economy. The State raised the requirements for the normalization and standardization of languages and writing systems and accelerated the promotion of Putonghua and standard Chinese characters. However, at the turn of the century, in the social language situation in China, phenomena such as the misuse of traditional Chinese characters, misinterpretation of simplified Chinese characters, mis-transliteration of characters, and misuse of foreign writing systems could be observed. These phenomena were hindering social development.

To rectify this, some members of the National People’s Congress and some committee members of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference developed proposals that required the State to formulate a language law and include the management of languages and writing systems in the legal system. Improving the socialist legal system and building a socialist legal country were two of

China's management policies proposed at the Fifteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China held in 1977. Against this background, at the eighteenth conference of the Standing Committee of the Nineteenth National People's Congress, the "National law of commonly used languages and writing systems of the People's Republic of China" (hereafter referred to as the "Language law") was established (Education Office of the Committee of Education, Science, Culture, and Health of the National People's Congress and Department of Language Application of the Ministry of Education 2001).

2.5.1.2 The main principle of the "Language law"

The "Language law" was the first national law about languages and writing systems in Chinese history. The promulgation of any language law has great significance for promoting national unity and social progress. The "Language law" has six main principles, as set out below.

2.5.1.2.1 Language status

The "Language law" stipulates that Putonghua and standard Chinese characters are the national commonly used language and writing system (cf. article 2), and establishes the legal status and scope for the use of Putonghua and standard characters.

2.5.1.2.2 Language policy

The "Language law" formulates a basic policy for a national commonly used language and writing system, stating that "the State promotes Putonghua and standard Chinese characters" (cf. article 3).

2.5.1.2.3 Language rights

The "Language law" provides that every citizen has the right to learn and use the national commonly used language and writing system (cf. article 4).

2.5.1.2.4 General principles

The "Language law" stipulates the general principle for use of the national commonly used language and writing system, stating that "the use of the national commonly used language and writing system should benefit national sovereignty and national dignity, national unity, and the construction of socialist material civilization and spiritual civilization" (article 5).

2.5.1.2.5 Language obligations

The “Language law” stipulates that employees of the Party and government, news media, education and teaching, and public service employees have an obligation to learn and use the national commonly used language and writing system.

2.5.1.2.6 Ethnic language rights

The “Language law” restates the regulations of the Constitution: “each nation has the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written language” (cf. article 8).

2.5.1.3 Implementation of the “Language law”

2.5.1.3.1 Formation of a language law and regulation system

After the enactment of the “Language law,” methods for implementing it were formulated based on various local conditions. Problems arising from the use of local languages and writing systems were discussed. Clear requirements for the normalization and standardization of languages and writing systems were put forth.

So far, thirty-two local language laws and regulations have been issued in all. Three provinces and autonomous regions (Tibetan, Heilongjiang, and Xinjiang) have revised old local language laws and regulations; twenty-nine provinces, cities, and autonomous regions have issued new local language laws and regulations (Beijing, Shanxi, Sichuan, Chongqing, Shandong, Hubei, Tianjin, Yunnan, Liaoning, Jilin, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Hunan, Fujian, Guangxi, Anhui, Ningxia, Zhejiang, Guizhou, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Hebei, Hainan and Shantou, Taiyuan, Dalian, Xi’an, Nanchang, and Guiyang; Wei Dan 2010). The framework for a language law and regulation system has been formed.

2.5.1.3.2 Establishment of local language organizations

Implementation of the “Language law” and local regulations promoted the development and improvement of organizations working on languages and writing systems. As of 2010, there were 32 Language Work Committee Offices, with 207 full-time and part-time staff members, and 482 Municipal Language Work Committee Offices, with 1,022 staff members (Wang Dengfeng 2010).

2.5.1.3.3 Creation of a national commonly used language test

Creating a national commonly used language test can provide scientific evidence for the improvement and cultivation of national language quality. The

test is composed of three parts: the Putonghua Proficiency Test, the Chinese Characters Application Level Test, and the Chinese Language Proficiency Test. The Putonghua Proficiency Test uses a relatively complete nationwide network and is at the stage of computerized testing and management. As of the end of 2009, 1,296 test centers had been built, 43,291 Putonghua testers at national and provincial levels had been trained, and up to 30 million people had taken the test (*Xihua news*, November 25, 2010). With the research and development of the Chinese Characters Application Level Test and the Chinese Language Proficiency Test, and the smooth development of pilot test work, the number of people involved in running these two tests has increased steadily.

2.5.1.3.4 Evaluation of urban language work

The “Language law” stipulates that “Party and government agencies, schools, news media, and public services” are the four key fields of language work. Evaluation of urban language work means that, according to the principles and standards of target management and quantitative assessment, the degree of normalization and standardization of the languages and writing systems used in various cities can be assessed in these four fields. As of the end of 2009, 32 first-tier cities (municipalities, provincial capitals, capitals of autonomous regions, and municipalities with independent planning status) have achieved standard level, accounting for 89% of the total number of first-tier cities; 191 second-tier cities (urban areas of prefecture-level cities, regional administrative office areas, prefecture-level suburban areas in first-tier cities, and county seats) have achieved standard level, accounting for 57% of the total number of second-tier cities; and 240 third-tier cities (counties, urban areas of county-level cities, suburban areas in first- and second-tier cities, and county governments located in cities and towns) have achieved standard level, accounting for 11% of the total number of third-tier cities (Wang Dengfeng 2010). The usage situation of languages and writing systems in urban areas has changed fundamentally. Since 1998, the State Council has made the third week in September the National Week for Putonghua Promotion. So far, fourteen sessions have been conducted. This has become an important platform for promoting Putonghua and implementing the “Language law.”

2.5.1.3.5 Normalization, standardization, and IT processing of languages and writing systems

Since 2000, the State has released nearly twenty standards for languages and writing systems, relating to various fields, such as language teaching and research, publication and printing, and dictionary compilation; it has established research centers; it has monitored language use; it has released *Language situation in China*

for eight years in succession (2006–2013); it has carried out pilot work on a sound database for the Chinese language; and it has effectively conserved and developed language resources. More than 130 applications and research projects on languages and writing systems have been made and established, and more than 100 projects on ethnic minority languages and writing systems have been set up.

2.5.1.4 Language conflict: The “Uphold Cantonese” movement in Guangzhou

In recent years, social and cultural environments have become complex and volatile. This transitional period coexists with the phenomenon of globalization; post-modernity co-occurs with diversification. The original balanced language situation has been affected, and conflicts between different languages have occurred. The harmonious development of Putonghua and dialects has become another important issue in the language field.

In May and June 2010, the Guangzhou Municipal CPPCC conducted a questionnaire survey on “the broadcasting situation at Guangzhou Television Station” on the Internet. They suggested increasing the broadcasting time and the number of programs spoken in Putonghua on the Guangzhou Television Station so that domestic and international guests could follow the Asian Games and the local news more conveniently. On June 6, 2010, an Internet user wrote the following in a microblog: “Guangzhou Municipal Government has unexpectedly transited all the programs in Guangzhou Television Station into Putonghua. Where is the justice?”. Suddenly, slogans such as “Cantonese is endangered” and “protect the mother tongue” were everywhere, giving rise to a debate on the topic of whether to preserve or abolish Cantonese.

On July 5, 2010, the vice-director of the Guangzhou Municipal CPPCC Committee for Handling Proposals submitted a report, “Suggestions for further strengthening the construction of the soft environment for the Asian Games,” which made “suggestions for increasing the broadcasting time of Putonghua programs on the Comprehensive Channel of Guangzhou Television Station.” Another CPPCC committee member wrote a microblog stating that the “mother tongue is endangered.” The media made comments about “promoting Putonghua and abolishing Cantonese” and stated that “Cantonese is endangered.” Activities to “uphold Cantonese” began.

On July 19, 2010, Su Zhijia, the vice-secretary of the Guangzhou Municipal Committee, told the media that Cantonese is an important part of Lingnan culture, asserting that the situation of “promoting Putonghua and abolishing Cantonese” did not exist and that the Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government never intended to “abolish Cantonese” and “weaken Cantonese” (Liu Haijian 2010).

On July 25, 2010, thousands of people assembled at Exit A of Jiangnan West Railway Station to take part in the “Uphold Cantonese” movement. On July 28, the Guangzhou Municipal Government held a press conference to restate that it never announced it would “promote Putonghua and abolish Cantonese” (Feng Qianni and Tang Zhiqi 2010). On August 1, thousands of people assembled on the streets of Guangzhou. People in Hong Kong also assembled to support Guangzhou and uphold Cantonese. The media referred to these events as illegal assemblies (*Guangzhou Daily*, August 2, 2010).

On August 4, at the mobilization meeting for the hundred-day countdown to the Asian Games, Wang Yang of the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the CPC claimed that no one was “promoting Putonghua and abolishing Cantonese.” He said, “I am speaking Cantonese. Who dares to abolish Cantonese?” (*Taiwan English News*, August 5, 2010). After that, the “Uphold Cantonese” movement ended.

Because China is in a period of transformation, social classes are being differentiated and social relations are changing. Various social problems and social conflicts caused by this social transformation are increasing. The “Uphold Cantonese” movement is a manifestation of this social conflict. It started with a “pseudo-proposition” and developed into a “real event.” Such events prove that language or dialect can become political tools and that a language problem is likely to raise social problems. The “Uphold Cantonese” movement seems like a language conflict; however, it has the implications of a cultural and social conflict. In a sense, it reflects the conflict between local culture and foreign culture; moreover, it reflects the conflict between cultural diversity and cultural integration in the region.

2.5.2 Diversity: Conservation and development of ethnic minority languages

With the accelerating development of economic globalization and the gradual advance of domestic reform and development, the application fields of ethnic minority languages are expanding, and new problems are arising. The development of modern communication technology such as information technology and the Internet is providing opportunities and challenges for the use of ethnic minority writing systems. Bilingual education needs to be urgently strengthened.

2.5.2.1 Recent policy

In 2010, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued the “State Ethnic Affairs Commission’s suggestions on the management of ethnic minority languages

and writing systems” (hereafter “Suggestions”; Website of the State Affairs Commission 2010). The “Suggestions” are composed of twenty-one articles, whose content includes the significance of the management of ethnic minority languages and writing systems, guiding ideologies, basic principles, main tasks, policies and measures, and safeguarding mechanisms.

The main proposals for future tasks in the “Suggestions” are as follows: “to implement the State policy on ethnic minority languages and writing systems; [. . .] to achieve normalization, standardization, and IT processing of ethnic minority languages and writing systems; to improve activity relating to translation, publication, education, news, radio, film, and television where ethnic minority languages and writing systems are concerned; to promote academic research, collaboration, and the cultivation of talent relating to ethnic minority languages and writing systems; and to encourage different ethnic groups to learn from one another” (article 7). The “Suggestions” emphasize “guaranteeing the application of ethnic minority languages and writing systems in relevant fields according to law” (article 9), “strengthening the rescuing and protection of endangered ethnic minority languages” (article 15), and participating in and conducting bilingual education work (article 10).

The Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet Autonomous Regions formulated (amended) and implemented relevant regulations and detailed implementation rules for the use and development of native ethnic languages and writing systems. There were a total of thirteen language regulations on the level of ethnic autonomous prefectures, and nine language regulations on the level of autonomous counties.

2.5.2.2 Ethnic minority languages in the field of radio and television and publishing

Currently, 154 radio and television organizations in autonomous ethnic regions are using ethnic languages. Central and local television stations use twenty-one ethnic languages to broadcast every day, and thirty-eight ethnic publishing houses are using twenty-six ethnic languages to publish texts. In 2008, books on 5,561 topics written in ethnic minority writing systems were published, totaling 6.444 million printed copies (Information Office of the State Council 2009).

2.5.2.3 Rescue and protection of endangered ethnic minority languages

As in many countries in the world, the languages of many ethnic minority groups in China are endangered, such as the She, Gelao, Hezhen, Oroqen, Ewenki, Yugur, Tatar, Tujia, and Manchu languages. Experts and governments on every level have reached a consensus to protect these endangered languages. First,

experts are investigating, recording, and collecting data on a number of endangered ethnic minority languages and publishing relevant books. Second, many works of literature and art based on endangered languages have been listed in a national or local “List of intangible cultural heritage” as works to be saved, collected, and protected. Third, the Ethnic Minority Language Office of the National Ethnic Affairs Committee is cooperating with the government of Qapqal Xibe Autonomous County of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the government of Songtao Miao Autonomous County of Guizhou Province to establish a model zone for ethnic minority bilingualism. Fourth, experts have started a database project to collect and preserve audio data of ethnic minority languages in China for deeper research and exploration.

2.5.2.4 Normalization, standardization, and IT processing of ethnic minority languages

The State has stipulated national standards for code character sets, keyboards, and matrices for Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Korean, Yi, and Dai. The code character sets for the Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Korean, Yi, and Dai writing systems submitted by China were formally included in the latest version of the international standards. The State explored various types of electronic publishing system and office automation system, and established some websites and web pages written in ethnic minority languages. Some of these websites’ software can run on Windows.

2.5.2.5 Ethnic minority bilingual education

The government of China has devoted itself to carrying out bilingual education (in ethnic languages and Mandarin Chinese) for many years to good effect in order to promote understanding and communication between different ethnic groups; to develop equal, unified, interdependent, and harmonious relationships; and to promote the common development of all ethnic groups. Until 2007, more than ten thousand schools were employing twenty-nine writing systems used by twenty-one ethnic groups to carry out bilingual education for more than six million students (Information Office of the State Council 2009).

In the future, bilingual education in China will change significantly. In 2010, the “National mid- and long-term plan for education reform and development (2010–2020)” aspired “to actively promote bilingual education, to set Chinese courses across the country, to comprehensively promote the national commonly used language and writing system, to respect and protect ethnic minority groups’ right to be taught using their native languages, to comprehensively strengthen pre-school bilingual education, and to support teacher training, education research,

textbook development, and publishing with respect to bilingual education” (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and State Council 2010).

2.6 Conclusion

To sum up, compared with bipartite or tripartite countries such as Canada, Belgium, and Switzerland, language policy in China is quite different. On the national level, China promotes a national commonly used language and writing system and implements monolingualism; however, in ethnic minority autonomous regions, China implements bilingualism, multilingualism, or monolingualism based on the different local situations and requirements. In contrast, in bipartite or tripartite Western countries, states implement bilingualism or multilingualism on the national level, and most of them implement monolingualism on the local level.

2.6.1 Overt changes in language policy

The latest language policy of China is intended to “actively promote, normalize, and use the national commonly used language and writing system, and scientifically protect all ethnic languages and writing systems” (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China 2011). This sentence is quoted from “The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China’s several important problematic decisions aimed at deepening cultural system reform and promoting socialism, cultural development, and prosperity,” approved at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Seventeenth CPC Central Committee on October 18, 2011. This was the first time that the CPC clearly stated the aims of the decisions made by the CPC Central Committee, which highlighted the strategic position of languages and writing systems in socialism’s cultural construction and embodied the importance attached by the CPC and the State to this.

Over half a century, the statements on China’s language policy of diversity have changed as follows:

promote Putonghua → actively promote Putonghua → national commonly used language → actively promote the national commonly used language;

simplify Chinese characters → achieve the standardization of Chinese characters → national commonly used writing system → use the standardized national commonly used writing system.

From another perspective, the policy changes mentioned above can be summarized as the following process:

alphabetization (reform of writing system) → standardization → legalization.

In 2011, Liu Yandong, a State Councilor, proposed “strengthening the promotion and popularization of the national commonly used language and writing system as a strategic measure that safeguards State sovereignty and dignity” (Central People’s Government Network 2011).

Over half a century, the change in China’s language policy of diversity can be summarized as follows:

use and development → use → use and development → rescue and protection → scientific protection.

After entering a new period, the implications of China’s language policy of one common language and linguistic diversity changed. As stipulated in the Constitution, the policy of one common language changed from “the State promotes the national commonly used Putonghua” to “[the State] actively promotes and normatively uses the national commonly used language and writing system”; and the language policy of “diversity” changed from “all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems” to “scientifically protecting all ethnic groups’ languages and writing systems.”

2.6.2 New trends in language policy

The latest statements about China’s language policy of one common language and linguistic diversity indicate a new trend in the development of China’s language policy. In the future, for quite a long time, it will be necessary to respect the development of languages and writing systems; to pay attention to the dialectical unification of adopting one common language and encouraging linguistic diversity; to deal with the problems of learning and using ethnic minority writing systems, dialects, traditional characters, and foreign languages and writing systems; to scientifically protect each ethnic group’s writing system; to respect each ethnic group’s freedom to use and develop its own language and writing system; to promote the concept that all ethnic languages and writing systems are valuable cultural resources for the country; to take practical protective measures; to help languages and writing systems play an important role in inheriting and developing China’s splendid culture; and to achieve harmony between languages.



Part 2: Language life

Chapter 3

The composition of the bilingual population in China

Bilingualism is defined differently by different scholars. In this chapter, bilingualism primarily refers to the ability of a person of an ethnic minority group in China to speak both his or her native language and another Chinese language – for example, a minority person in China who is proficient in both his or her ethnicity’s language and Mandarin Chinese; or a minority person who can speak his or her own minority’s language and another minority’s language; or a Han who can speak both Mandarin Chinese and a minority’s language, and so forth. I will not discuss the case in which a minority person or a Han speaks both his or her own ethnic language and a foreign language such as English, French, Lao, Thai, and so forth.

This chapter first aims to clarify the original data listed in the China–Canada collaboration project entitled *The written language of the world: A survey of the degree and modes of use (China)* (McConnell 1995). Second, it aims to describe the composition of the bilingual population in China in terms of ethnicity, age, and gender, thereby analyzing the characteristics, types, and differences of the minority bilingual population in China.

3.1 Ethnic composition of the bilingual population

The ethnic composition of the bilingual population can be stated in terms of the percentage of the population that is bilingual. See Table 3.1.

3.1.1 Classification of the bilingual population of ethnic minorities

The bilingual population can be classified into three types.

3.1.1.1 The common bilingualism type

If the bilinguals in an ethnic group account for 50% or more of the ethnic group’s total population, we classify the ethnicity as belonging to the common

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Table 3.1: Ethnic composition of the bilingual population in China from 1986 to 1988.

Ethnic group	Number of bilingual speakers	% of group's population	Ethnic group	Number of bilingual speakers	% of group's population
nationwide	10,954,080	1.91	Dai	316,628	37.72
Han	1,019,760	0.11	Li	437,192	49.28
minority nationalities	18,034,320	30.46	Lisu	81,068	16.82
Mongol	970,326	28.44	Wa	83,421	27.94
Tibetan	536,300	13.94	She	399	0.11
Uygur	26,887	0.45	Lahu	89,981	29.57
Miao	1,243,712	24.77	Shui	86,636	30.20
Yi	2,064,329	37.85	Dongxiang	149,388	53.44
Zhuang	7,323,190	54.72	Naxi	131,127	52.12
Bouyei	1,154,446	54.47	Jingpo	31,997	34.41
Korean	787,997	44.64	Kyrgyz	58,638	51.72
Manchu	500	0.01	Tu	71,226	44.62
Dong	340,838	23.89	Daur	62,957	66.89
Yao	447,180	31.67	Mulam	46,273	51.21
Bai	615,333	54.35	Qiang	45,184	43.95
Tujia	149,604	5.27	Blang	17,184	29.39
Hani	408,782	38.61	Salar	37,826	54.71
Kazakh	92,302	10.17	Maonan	14,943	39.16
Gelao	5,611	10.36	Yugur	6,409	60.65
Xibe	19,891	23.77	Gin	7,371	56.23
Achang	7,516	36.78	Tatar	809	19.63
Primi	10,289	42.45	Derung	650	14.03
Tajik	10,583	39.78	Oroqen	1,673	40.78
Nu	4,525	19.76	Hezhen	220	14.78
Uzbek	4,076	33.37	Monba	1,111	17.86

Table 3.1 (continued)

Ethnic group	Number of bilingual speakers	% of group's population	Ethnic group	Number of bilingual speakers	% of group's population
Ewenki	13,207	68.08	Lhoba	818	39.61
Deang	4,575	37.20	Jino	6,126	51.21
Bonan	5,064	56.16			

Data source: McConnell (1995: book 1). The total number of bilinguals in minority nationalities is 18,034,320, which makes up 30.46% of the total population of China. The original data in McConnell do not include the Hui, Gaoshan, and Russian ethnic groups.

bilingualism type. In China, fourteen ethnicities fall into this type. According to the proportion of the population that is bilingual, these fourteen ethnicities are ordered from high to low as follows: the Ewenki (68.08%), Daur (66.89%), Yugur (60.65%), Gin (56.23%), Bonan (56.16%), Zhuang (54.72%), Salar (54.71%), Bouyei (54.47%), Bai (54.35%), Dongxiang (53.44%), Naxi (52.12%), Kyrgyz (51.72%), Mulam (51.21%), and Jino (51.21%). The bilingual population of these fourteen ethnicities exceeds 9.6 million, accounting for 53.3% of the bilingual population of China.

3.1.1.2 The developing bilingualism type

If the bilinguals in an ethnic group account for between 15% and 50% of that ethnic group's total population, the ethnic group is classified as the belonging to the developing bilingualism type. Twenty-nine ethnicities are considered to fall into this type and are ordered from high to low as follows: the Li (49.28%), Koreans (44.64%), Tu (44.62%), Qiang (43.95%), Primi (38.61%), Oroqen (40.78%), Tajik (39.78%), Lhoba (39.61%), Maonan (39.16%), Hani (38.61%), Yi (37.85%), Dai (37.72%), Deang (37.20%), Achang (36.78%), Jingpo (34.41%), Uzbeks (33.37%), Yao (31.67%), Shui (30.20%), Lahu (29.57%), Bouyei (29.39%), Mongols (28.44%), Wa (27.94%), Miao (24.77%), Dong (23.89%), Xibe (23.77%), Nu (19.76%), Tatars (19.63%), Monba (17.86%), and Lisu (16.82%). The bilingual population of these twenty-nine ethnicities is more than 760 million, representing 42.2% of the bilingual population of China.

3.1.1.3 The reducing bilingualism type

If the bilinguals in an ethnic group account for less than 15% of the ethnicity's total population, the ethnicity is classified as the belonging to the reducing

bilingualism type, which includes two subtypes: the contractive type and the shrinking type. The term “shrinking type” indicates that all of the bilingual population are old and senior citizens; no children or young people and children speak the ethnic language, having become monolingual speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Five ethnicities belong to this type: the Hezhen (14.78%), Gelao (10.36%), Tujia (5.27%), She (0.11%), and Manchu (0.01%). The bilingual population of these five ethnicities is more than 150,000, representing 0.9% of the total bilingual population of China.

In contrast to the shrinking subtype, the bilingual population of the contractive subtype is primarily composed of young people, and almost no senior citizens can speak another language. Four languages belong to this subtype: Derung (14.03%), Tibetan (13.94%), Kazakh (10.17%), and Uygur (0.45%). The number of bilingual speakers of these four ethnicities is 650,000, representing 3.6% of the total bilingual population of China.

3.1.2 Ratio differences in terms of ethnic groups' bilingual population

Table 3.1 shows that bilingual minorities represent 30.46% of the total population. In contrast, only 0.11% of Han people are bilingual. These ethnicities are quite different from another.

In addition, four ethnicities in south-western areas – the Zhuang, Yi, Miao, and Bouyei – account for 65.4% of minority bilingualism nationwide. The bilingual population of another nineteen ethnicities accounts for just 13.6% of the bilingual population of China; these ethnicities – the Mongols, Koreans, Uygur, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Dongxiang, Tu, Daur, Salar, Tajik, Uzbeks, Bonan, Yugur, Tatars, Oroqen, Manchu, and Hezhen – are distributed in three northern areas (north-west, north-east, and northern China). One area is very different from the other.

3.2 Composition of the bilingual population by age

The composition of the bilingual population by age involves the ratio between bilinguals in each age group and the ethnic group total population. See Table 3.2.

3.2.1 Composition of bilingual speakers by age

The four age groups listed in Table 3.2 are children and teenagers (7–17 years old), older teenagers and mature adults (18–45 years old), older mature adults

Table 3.2: Composition of the bilingual population in China by age from 1986 to 1988.

Ethnic group	7–17 years old (%)	18–45 years old (%)	46–59 years old (%)	60 years and older (%)
Han	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.01
Mongol	7.20	16.50	3.05	1.69
Tibetan	3.94	8.02	1.69	0.29
Uygur	0.04	0.36	0.05	–
Miao	7.06	12.63	3.08	2.00
Yi	9.78	20.34	5.14	2.59
Zhuang	15.10	29.48	6.13	4.01
Bouyei	16.05	26.86	7.09	4.47
Korean	7.82	30.03	5.52	1.27
Manchu	–	–	–	–
Dong	7.06	12.36	2.85	1.62
Yao	9.23	16.36	3.79	2.29
Bai	17.60	26.04	7.22	3.49
Tujia	1.88	2.17	0.77	0.45
Kazakh	1.15	7.34	1.68	–
Dai	11.59	22.43	3.56	0.14
Li	15.20	24.63	6.03	3.42
Lisu	4.94	8.45	2.20	1.23
Wa	6.38	17.70	2.25	1.61
She	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.02
Lahu	6.30	17.23	4.09	1.95
Shui	9.65	16.55	3.17	0.83
Dongxiang	16.73	25.95	6.20	4.56
Naxi	16.14	25.30	6.94	3.74
Jingpo	8.34	20.69	3.64	1.75
Kyrgyz	17.26	24.65	5.92	3.89
Tu	16.25	20.91	5.21	2.25

Table 3.2 (continued)

Ethnic group	7–17 years old (%)	18–45 years old (%)	46–59 years old (%)	60 years and older (%)
Daur	22.17	34.26	7.11	3.35
Mulam	16.82	23.70	6.37	4.32
Qiang	17.18	20.25	4.14	2.38
Blang	4.60	17.91	3.96	2.92
Salar	13.20	29.52	7.36	4.63
Maonan	12.08	18.07	5.15	3.86
Gelao	2.97	4.35	1.75	1.29
Xibe	7.66	12.83	2.23	1.05
Achang	12.75	16.72	4.54	2.77
Primi	15.74	22.68	3.67	0.36
Tajik	11.32	20.99	3.88	3.59
Nu	1.52	13.47	4.30	0.47
Uzbek	11.98	15.67	3.26	2.46
Ewenki	29.46	31.54	5.39	1.69
Deang	5.74	22.75	4.91	3.80
Bonan	19.75	25.12	7.63	3.66
Yugur	25.64	27.18	5.65	2.18
Gin	17.86	24.82	6.15	7.40
Tatar	7.62	8.81	1.89	1.31
Derung	2.48	11.55	–	–
Oroqen	15.97	20.08	3.97	0.76
Hezhen	–	–	10.48	4.30
Monba	3.09	11.73	1.82	1.22
Lhoba	13.90	20.72	3.44	1.55
Jino	22.00	27.61	1.60	–

Data source: McConnell (1995: book 1). The Hui, Gaoshan, and Russian ethnic groups are not included.

(46–59 years old), and the elderly (60 years old and above). In terms of the bilingual proportion in each age group, forty-six ethnicities follow the pattern “2, 1, 3, 4” (where 1 is the highest proportion of bilinguals and 4 the lowest). These forty-six ethnicities are the Han, Mongols, Tibetans, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Bouyei, Hani, Dai, Li, Lisu, Wa, Lahu, Shui, Dongxiang, Naxi, Jingpo, Kyrgyz, Tu, Daur, Mulam, Qiang, Blang, Salar, Maonan, Gelao, Xibe, Achang, Primi, Tajik, Uzbeks, Ewenki, Deang, Bonan, Yugur, Gin, Tatars, Oroqen, Monba, Lhoba, and Jino. The bilingual population of these forty-six ethnicities is 17,910,000, which represents 93.99% of the country’s total bilingual population.

Of the four age groups, the proportion of bilingual speakers in the first two groups shows an increase, while that of bilingual speakers in the last two groups shows a decrease.

3.2.2 Differences in the composition of ethnic groups’ bilingual population by age

Apart from the basic type mentioned above, the age composition of the minority bilingual population has other forms.

First, the proportion of each age group’s bilingual population can be (or generally be) lower in the oldest and youngest age groups but higher in the middle. For example, the Uygur, Kazakhs, She, and Nu fall into this type.

Second, older speakers can be bilingual while younger speakers are not. Manchu and Hezhen are classified as this type. This pattern directly predicts that, in the near future (several decades), these ethnic groups’ languages will inevitably become extinct because young people, none of whom can speak their ethnic group’s language, represent most of the population. We predict that the Manchu language will disappear first, since the Manchu-speakers are distributed among a very few old-age groups. The Hezhen language will become extinct later because it is retained only in the mature and old-age groups.

Third, only the Derung belong to the type where younger speakers are bilingual but older ones are not. This situation demonstrates that bilingualism among the Derung probably developed after the founding of China, because hardly any mature or old Derung people can speak either Mandarin Chinese or other ethnic minority languages.

3.3 Gender composition of the bilingual population

The gender composition of a ethnic group bilingual population is mainly reflected by two indexes. The first index is the proportion of a ethnic group male

and female bilingual populations in the ethnic group total bilingual population. The second index is the gender ratio, which means the ratio of the male bilingual population to the female bilingual population; the formula for calculating this ratio is as follows: $gender\ ratio = (number\ of\ males / number\ of\ females) \times 100$.

3.3.1 Gender composition of ethnic groups' bilingual population

The gender ratio for ethnic minorities is lower than that for the Han people. In 1982, the figure for ethnic minorities was 103.7, while the gender ratios for Han people and the nation overall were 105.6 and 105.3 respectively. In general, the gender ratios for the Han people and the country overall are at almost the same level.

However, the percentage of bilingual speakers is higher among ethnic minorities than among the Han people and the nation overall. Table 3.3 shows that the gender ratio for minorities is 134.47, that for the Han nationality is 105.38, and that for the nation overall is 132.72. Except for the situation in which the Han nationality's gender ratio is essentially flat, the gender ratios for ethnic minorities and the nation overall are far higher than that of the Han nationality.

Table 3.3: Gender composition of the bilingual population in China from 1986 to 1988.

Ethnic group	Gender composition		Gender ratio
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
nationwide	57.03	42.97	132.72
Han	51.31	48.69	105.38
minority nationalities	57.35	42.65	134.47
Mongol	58.10	41.90	138.47
Tibetan	59.70	40.30	148.14
Uygur	68.23	31.77	214.76
Miao	61.31	38.69	158.46
Yi	58.76	41.24	142.48
Zhuang	57.06	42.94	132.88
Bouyei	54.83	45.17	121.39
Korean	54.51	45.49	119.83

Table 3.3 (continued)

Ethnic group	Gender composition		Gender ratio
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
Manchu	53.40	46.60	114.59
Dong	66.53	33.47	198.78
Yao	58.93	41.07	143.49
Bai	54.62	45.38	120.36
Tujia	55.47	44.53	124.57
Hani	59.20	40.80	145.10
Kazakh	63.07	36.93	170.78
Dai	51.85	48.15	107.68
Li	53.67	46.33	115.84
Lisu	57.07	42.93	132.94
Wa	57.51	42.49	135.35
She	54.39	45.61	119.25
Lahu	57.30	42.70	134.19
Shui	62.30	37.70	165.25
Dongxiang	52.98	47.02	112.68
Naxi	54.82	45.18	121.34
Jingpo	51.12	48.88	104.58
Kyrgyz	54.78	45.22	121.14
Tu	53.96	46.04	117.20
Daur	52.97	47.03	112.63
Mulam	51.48	48.52	106.10
Qiang	51.64	48.36	106.78
Blang	58.61	41.39	141.60
Salar	54.76	45.24	121.04
Maonan	51.65	48.35	106.83
Gelao	49.15	50.85	96.66

Table 3.3 (continued)

Ethnic group	Gender composition		Gender ratio
	Male (%)	Female (%)	
Xibe	53.40	46.60	114.59
Achang	50.00	50.00	100.00
Primi	54.20	45.80	118.34
Tajik	47.16	52.84	89.25
Nu	58.01	41.99	138.16
Uzbek	52.50	47.50	110.53
Ewenki	51.87	48.13	107.77
Deang	57.20	42.80	133.64
Bonan	48.24	51.76	93.20
Yugur	50.65	49.35	102.63
Gin	47.10	52.90	89.04
Tatar	51.80	48.20	107.47
Derung	88.77	11.23	790.47
Oroqen	50.93	49.07	103.79
Hezhen	51.36	48.64	105.59
Monba	78.49	21.51	364.90
Lhoba	48.78	51.22	95.24
Jino	57.15	42.85	133.37

Data source: McConnell (1995: book 1).

3.3.2 Differences between ethnic groups in terms of the gender composition of their bilingual populations

First, in forty-two ethnic groups, there are more male bilingual speakers than female bilingual speakers. In some ethnic groups, there are slightly more male bilingual speakers than female bilingual speakers (the gender ratio is 106–139). Thirty ethnic groups are considered to belong to this type: the Mongols, Zhuang, Bouyei, Koreans, Manchu, Bai, Tujia, Dai, Li, Lisu, Wa, She, Lahu, Dongxiang, Naxi,

Kyrgyz, Tu, Daur, Mulam, Qiang, Salar, Maonan, Xibe, Primi, Nu, Uzbeks, Ewenki, Deang, Tatars, and Jino. In some ethnic groups, there are far more male bilingual speakers than female bilingual speakers (the gender ratio is 140–199). Nine ethnic groups are considered to belong to this type, namely, the Tibetans, Miao, Yi, Dong, Yao, Hani, Kazakhs, Shui, and Blang. In three ethnic groups, including the Uygur, Derung, and Monba, there is a surprisingly larger number of male bilingual speakers than female bilingual speakers (the gender ratio exceeds 200).

Second, in five ethnic groups, including the Gelao, Tajik, Bonan, Gin, and Lhoba, there are fewer male bilingual speakers than female bilingual speakers.

Third, for some ethnic groups, including the Jingpo, Achang, Yugur, Oroqen, and Hezhen, there is parity between male and female bilingual speakers (the gender ratio is 100–105).

Chapter 4

Language, ethnicity, and identity in China

China is a unitary multi-ethnic state of fifty-six ethnic groups. Among them, the Han ethnic group forms by far the majority, comprising about 91.59% of the population. The other fifty-five are ethnic minorities accounting for 8.41%. While previous Chinese governments traditionally acknowledged the Han, Manchu, Mongol, Hui, and Tibetan ethnic groups, the current Chinese government officially recognizes fifty-six ethnic groups, including the Han. The Han majority, as well as the Hui and Manchu minorities, speak Chinese, but most of the minority ethnicities speak other languages, which fall into five main language families.

The ethnic group autonomous areas constitute 64.5% of Chinese territory, mostly in the border regions. China exercises a policy of regional autonomy for various ethnic minorities, allowing the diverse ethnic groups living in compact communities to establish self-government and direct their own affairs. This chapter discusses the relations between language, ethnicity, and identity through an examination of the official ethnic recognition process as recorded in the 1950s and 1960s.

The chapter is divided into three sections: first, there is a discussion of the criteria and practices of the official ethnic recognition process; second, there is a discussion of the correspondence of language to ethnic group and language functions; third, there is a discussion of the nonconformity of language, ethnicity, and ethnic identity.

4.1 Criteria and practices of official ethnic recognition

China is not a homogeneous country, and does not aspire to a one-nation, one-language, and one-culture model of development. In common with some other large states, China has a multi-ethnic polity whose constitutional arrangements provide for self-government in ethnic group autonomous areas. As a result of this national aspiration after the founding of the People's Republic of China,

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practices for identifying the various ethnic groups became an important question for government policy.

Implementing the plans for development and education in ethnic regions requires that a number of ethnic groups be acknowledged. Certain rights of these groups also have to be acknowledged in order to ensure effective administration of entitlements and governance.

Table 4.1 lists the names of the ethnic groups that comprise the Chinese population, the number of people present in each group, and the main geographical areas in which these populations are concentrated. The data are for the year 2000, drawn from the fifth census, issued in 2003 by the National Statistical Bureau of China.

Table 4.1: Ethnic minorities in China.

Ethnic group	Size	Main concentrations
Zhuang	16,178,811	Guangxi, Yunnan
Manchu	10,682,262	Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang
Hui	9,816,805	Ningxia, Gansu
Miao	8,940,116	Guizhou, Hunan, Yunnan
Uygur	8,399,393	Xinjiang
Tujia	8,028,133	Hunan, Hubei
Yi	7,762, 272	Sichuan, Yunnan
Mongol	5,813,947	Inner Mongolia, Liaoning
Tibetan	5,416,021	Tibet, Sichuan, Qinghai
Bouyei	2,971,460	Guizhou
Dong	2,960,293	Guizhou
Yao	2,637,421	Guangxi, Guangdong
Korean	1,923,842	Jilin, Liaoning, Heilongjiang
Bai	1,858,063	Yunnan
Hani	1,439,673	Yunnan
Kazakh	1,250,458	Xinjiang, Qinghai
Li	1,247,814	Hainan
Dai	1,158,989	Yunnan

Table 4.1 (continued)

Ethnic group	Size	Main concentrations
She	709,592	Fujian
Lisu	634,912	Yunnan
Gelao	579,357	Guizhou
Dongxiang	513,805	Gansu
Lahu	453,705	Yunnan
Shui	406,902	Guizhou
Wa	396,610	Yunnan
Naxi	308,839	Yunnan
Qiang	306,072	Sichuan
Tu	241,198	Qinghai, Gansu
Mulam	207,352	Guangxi
Xibe	188,824	Xinjiang
Kyrgyz	160,823	Xinjiang
Daur	132,394	Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang
Jingpo	132,143	Yunnan
Maonan	107,166	Guangxi
Salar	104,503	Qinghai, Gansu
Blang	91,882	Yunnan
Tajik	41,028	Xinjiang
Achang	33,600	Yunnan
Primi	30,505	Yunnan
Ewenki	30,505	Inner Mongolia
Nu	28,759	Yunnan
Gin	22,517	Guangdong
Jino	20,899	Yunnan
Deang	17,935	Yunnan
Bonan	16,505	Gansu

Table 4.1 (continued)

Ethnic group	Size	Main concentrations
Russian	15,609	Xinjiang
Yugur	13,719	Gansu
Uzbek	12,370	Xinjiang
Monba	8,923	Tibet
Oroqen	8,196	Inner Mongolia
Derung	7,426	Yunnan
Tatar	4,890	Xinjiang
Hezhen	4,640	Heilongjiang
Gaoshan	4,461	Fujian, Zhejiang
Lhoba	2,965	Tibet

The large-scale ethnic recognition process started in 1953. According to the registration records from the first census of that year, there were more than four hundred registered names of ethnic groups throughout the country. After ten years of ethnic recognition, these had been further categorized into just over fifty ethnic groups.

In 1979, an important development occurred in Chinese ethnic recognition practices. The recognition of the ethnic Jino marked the formation of the final pattern of the Chinese nation (Table 4.2): 1 (the ethnic Han as majority) + 55 (ethnic minorities).

Table 4.2: Officially recognized ethnicities in China.

Period	Number of newly registered groups	Number of newly recognized ethnic groups	Cumulative total
1949–1954	Over 400	38	38
1955–1964	183	15	53
1965–1982	–	2	55

Since this pattern took shape, the Chinese government has not recognized or distinguished any further new ethnicities, except for restoring, altering, or combining some ethnicities, which has not altered the total number. The fact that there are fifty-six ethnicities/ethnic groups in China has come to assume the status of a “solid truth.”

4.2 Correspondence of language to ethnic group and language functions

A central issue in the relationship between language and ethnicity revolves around the question of whether the majority of the members of an ethnic group are able to use their native language or not. The dimensions of this issue can be seen by the disparity between ethnic groups and language functions. At present there are over 80 languages – at some estimates 130 languages – used by the fifty-six ethnic groups. This means that the number of ethnic groups amounts only to two-fifths of the number of languages.

There are three major types of correspondence between language and ethnicity in China. The first correspondence is one-to-one, which means that one ethnicity maps onto one language. The second is one-to-many, which means that one ethnicity maps onto more than one language. The third is many-to-one, which means that more than one ethnicity maps onto one language. These correspondences between language and ethnicity are discussed below.

4.2.1 One ethnicity, one language

One relationship of ethnicity to language is that an ethnic group has its own independent language, which the majority uses as its native language. That language is the most important tool for social communication among members of the ethnic group and the most distinctive mark of ethnic identity. Outside the ethnic group, language is a barrier for communication between it and other ethnic groups, and becomes a criterion for distinguishing one ethnicity from another due to lack of mutual intelligibility. Such languages are a major characteristic used in the official recognition of an ethnic group, and can evoke a feeling of ethnic identity within the ethnic group; they can therefore be used as a criterion for delimitation of the ethnic group.

There are thirty-eight ethnic groups among the total of fifty-six that share the one ethnicity, one language characteristic. They are the Han, Mongols, Tibetans, Uygur, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Bouyei, Koreans, Dong, Bai, Hani, Kazakhs,

Dai, Li, Lisu, Wa, Lahu, Shui, Dongxiang, Naxi, Tu, Daur, Mulam, Qiang, Blang, Salar, Maonan, Achang, Primi, Tajik, Ewenki, Deang, Bonan, Gin, Derung, Lhoba, and Jino.

4.2.2 One ethnicity, many languages

The relationship of one ethnicity to more than one language can take two forms. The first – without a common language – occurs in five ethnic groups. The Yao in the south have more than five languages, the Nu in Yunnan have seven, the Yugur in Gansu have three, while the Jingpo in Yunnan and the Monba in Tibet each have two languages. The second pattern – with a common language – mainly occurs in three ethnic groups in the north. The Uzbeks in Xinjiang use four languages, the Tatars in Xinjiang use three, while the Oroqen in the Greater and Lesser Xing'anling Mountains use two.

Producing ethnic divisions and ethnic cohesion are two completely different functions of language in the one ethnicity, many languages case. The dividing function means that the languages can maintain divisions inside the ethnic group, but they can also promote assimilation between one ethnic subgroup and another. This function operates mainly through members of an ethnic group shifting to another ethnic language as their native tongue. The cohesive function of language means that languages can maintain ethnic unity within an ethnic community where a common language is spoken.

In the process of evolving ethnic identity, no language – including a native language in the case of one ethnicity, many languages – is available as a symbol or mark of an ethnic group. Although a native language could have been a common language for the group historically, division inside the group and assimilation into other ethnic groups continue. If a native language whose speakers have fallen to 50% or less of the population is used as a criterion of ethnic identity, it will not be possible to recognize half or more of the population, who have shifted to another language, as part of the ethnic group. These members will be unable to accept this kind of identity in future.

4.2.3 Many ethnicities, one language

The term “many ethnicities, one language” refers to situations in which most members of two or more ethnic groups stop using their original or native language and shift to the use of a different language as their mother tongue. In this pattern, “most” means more than two-thirds of the ethnic population.

Such a phenomenon mainly occurs in eight ethnic groups – the Hui, Manchu, She, Tujia, Gelao, Hezhen, Xibe, and Gaoshan (Ouyang Jueya and Zhou Yaowen 1994). Most or all of their members use Chinese as their native language.

4.2.4 Summary

Among the three forms of the language–ethnicity correspondence, that of one ethnicity, many languages reflects coherence between language and ethnicity. It is a basic, stable, and major case. A total of 70% of all ethnic groups are classified as belonging to this pattern. The two other patterns – one ethnicity, many languages and many ethnicities, one language – reflect the variability of and differences between language and ethnicity. These correspondences are secondary, changing, and not mainstream. Ethnic groups belonging to the latter two cases make up about 30% of all ethnic groups in China.

Table 4.3 lists the ethnic groups, and their percentage of the total, that correspond to the three models of the language–ethnicity relationship in China (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 98–102). The data here refer to only fifty-four ethnic groups; the Russian and Kyrgyz groups are not included.

Table 4.3: Relationships between language and ethnicity in China.

Language–ethnicity relationship	Number of ethnic groups	% of total ethnic groups	Identity/label functions of language
one ethnicity, one language	38	70	+
one ethnicity, many languages	8	15	–
many ethnicities, one language	8	15	–
total	54	100	

4.3 Incongruities between language, ethnicity, and ethnic identity

In the case of China, language is a very important basis for ethnic identity in the case of the one ethnicity, one language correspondence (Smith 1986). The

relationships between language and ethnicity in the one ethnicity, many languages and many ethnicities, one language correspondences, however, are very complicated. In order to give a clear description of these relationships, I will consider four aspects: ethnic origin, ethnic group, language, and ethnic identity. The relationships that emerge by considering the ethnic groups in terms of these four aspects can roughly be divided into four categories: (1) different origins, same ethnicity, different languages; (2) same origin, same ethnicity, different languages; (3) different origins, different ethnicities, same language; and (4) same origin, same ethnicity, different languages.

4.3.1 Different origins, same ethnicity, different languages

When different groups move into a common area, it is possible for them to maintain linguistic differences but develop a shared ethnic identity. This has occurred in the case of the Yao of Dayao Mountain in Guangxi, who came from five different ethnic groups outside of the mountains. They moved to a common geographical area and have lived in contact with each other for about five hundred years, and their ethnic characteristics are converging and becoming quite similar. However, due to the high mountains keeping them apart, they still use five different languages: Mian, Bunu, Lajia, Baheng, and Jiongnai. This linguistic diversity does not stop them from identifying collectively as having a shared ethnicity. During the research on official ethnic recognition of the 1950s, all of these groups regarded the other groups as being of their own kind and considered outsiders as strangers (Fei Xiaotong 1988: 6). The mountain people did not want to be separated from one another, and reported themselves as belonging to the same ethnic group.

An ethnic group that has been conquered for hundreds of years and has merged to share the characteristics of the conquering ethnicity will lose many of its ethnic characteristics but probably maintain its native language. For example, after the fall of the Tang dynasty (618–907), some of the Qiang living in the six river valleys in south-west China were conquered by Tibetan forces (the Tubo/Tufan Court). These groups lived under the Tubo/Tufan Court for a long time and were deeply influenced by Lamaism. Currently, their customs, religions, and dress are the same as those of the other Tibetans, and they have become ethnic Tibetans, although their mother tongue, the Qiang language, is still used in the village and at home (Sun Hongkai 1988).

4.3.2 Same origin, same ethnicity, different languages

Despite moving to another community because of the displacement caused by war, and shifting to another group's language, an ethnic group can still retain its ethnic identity hundreds of years later. An example of this phenomenon is the Mongolian ethnic group.

Historically, the Mongolians were nomadic and warlike, and Mongolian forces used to be very powerful. They conquered many parts of Eurasia, from Moscow in the north to Yunnan in the south of China; in fact, the Mongolians established the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) in China. Some Mongolians who followed the Mongolian army into the present Yunnan Province settled there. Several hundred years later, they have lost many Mongolian characteristics, but still maintain their Mongolian identity and call themselves Mongolians. On the other hand, some Mongolians in Tonghai near Kunming, the capital of Yunnan Province, are descendants of a Mongolian force that remained there from the time of the Yuan dynasty. They are unable to use the Mongolian language but have shifted to using the Kazhuo language, a relatively recent mixed form of language based on the Yi and Naxi languages. Kazhuo is closer to the Yi languages of the Sino-Tibetan family.

Different branches of an ethnic group can disperse to inhabit several places. After hundreds of years, the different dialects used by the subgroups can change and eventually become different languages. The ethnic Nu of Biluoxue Mountain in Yunnan Province fit this pattern. Those residing on the western side of Biluoxue Mountain speak the Nusu language, while those on the eastern side use the Rouruo language. According to historical records, both branches originated from the same ethnic group, and their linguistic differentiation occurred at least 1,200 or 1,300 years ago.

4.3.3 Different origins, different ethnicities, same language

The ancestors of the ethnic Hui were Arabic- and Persian-speaking merchants who came to mainland China by sea in the seventh century. They gradually stopped using their native languages and shifted to Chinese during long-term contact and communication with the ethnic Han. Over five hundred years later, the Mongolians conquered the Central Asian countries, and another large number of Muslim merchants and craftsmen moved into China with the Mongolian army. These are the main components of the ancestry of today's Hui. Most Hui used Arabic and Persian languages, and a few spoke Uygur. The Chinese language came to be used by the ethnic Hui as their native language in the late

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries due to their lifestyle as small groups in large-scale dispersion, Hui–Han exogamy, commerce, social contacts, and so on for some two to three hundred years.

The direct ancestors of the ethnic Manchu were the Nüzhen people from north-east China in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), during which time the Manchu had their own language but lacked a writing system. Based on the Mongolian script, a writing system for Manchu, called the old Manchu script, was created in 1597 and improved in 1632. Before the script could be promoted in the Manchu community, however, the Manchu majority had occupied Shanhaiguan Fortress in 1644 and established the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). About one million Manchu came to inhabit Chinese communities. By the time the Qing dynasty fell, over two and a half centuries later, the Manchu language had basically become extinct.

4.3.4 Same origin, different ethnicities, same language

The Xibe and Manchu are two different ethnic groups. Several historians have proved that they have the same ethnic origin, though in early times they used different languages.

From the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries, the ancestors of the Xibe were conquered by the Manchu. The former began to learn and use the language of the latter. After the Manchu established the Qing dynasty in 1644, the government sent a large number of Xibe who lived in compact communities to the border regions in north-west and south-west China on four occasions to prevent them from causing trouble. In 1764, the Qing government moved approximately three thousand Xibe soldiers, officers, and their relatives to the Yili River valley in Xinjiang in order to open up new land and guard the border. Since then, the Xibe have resided in two main areas: in the north-east and the north-west. Until the late 1950s, due mainly to geographical, natural, economic, and linguistic influences, the Chinese and Mongolian languages were the main means of communication used by the Xibe in north-eastern China, while the Manchu language was used by the Xibe in Xinjiang. There are now few Manchu who can speak the Manchu language anywhere in China.

The differences between the Manchu language used by the Xibe in Xinjiang and the Manchu language used by the Manchu in the north-east might be even smaller than those between British English and American English. The Xibe in Xinjiang have been speaking Manchu for approximately two hundred years. During the official ethnic recognition process in the 1950s, however, the Xibe identified their language, script, and ethnicity not as Manchu but as Xibe.

Nevertheless, as far as many linguists are concerned, due to the small differences between Xibe and Manchu, the Xibe language is considered a development and continuation of the Manchu language of the Qing dynasty. The Xibe script was developed from the Manchu writing system in 1947, and can be regarded as a branch of the Manchu language. At present, most of the researchers of the documents in Manchu at the Forbidden City are Xibe. This tells us that claimed identity is much more important than language alone in the official recognition of ethnic groups.

4.4 Conclusion

Incongruities between language, ethnicity, and ethnic identity are complex and vary across China according to historical circumstances. The abstractions that these incongruities involve are given in Table 4.4 as a conclusion to this description of the process of the official recognition of ethnic groups in contemporary China.

Table 4.4: Incongruities between language, ethnicity, and ethnic identity.

Ethnic speakers	Origin	Language	Ethnicity	Language
Yao who speak Mian, Bunu, Lajia, Baheng, or Jiongnai	–	–	+	+
Tibetans who speak Tibetan or Qiang	–	–	+	±
Mongols who speak Mongolian or Kazhuo	+	–	+	+
Nu who speak Nusu or Rouruo	+	–	+	+
Hui who speak Chinese, Han who speak Chinese, Xibe who speak Xibe	–	+	–	–

Chapter 5

The language situation of ethnic group in the transborder regions of China

Fifty-five ethnic minorities are recognized in China, thirty-three of which live in transborder regions. China shares land borders with forty countries; the total length of those borders is 22,000 kilometers, 19,000 kilometers of which cut through areas featuring a predominantly ethnic minority population.

There are many reasons for the appearance of transborder languages. Because of border changes, migration, natural disasters, wars and disturbance, and so on, the speakers of a single language can end up living on both sides of a border, that is, in a transborder area. In other words, one language can have speakers in two or more neighboring countries. Through use and development over extended periods of time, the language may be referred to with a new name in some of these countries, while in others the original name continues to be used. What is certain, however, is that those who speak transborder languages can communicate with one another without difficulty.

In this chapter, I aim to describe ethnic ethnic group in China, and their languages, that were officially recognized prior to the 1980s. I will not discuss ethnic groups and languages that have yet to be officially recognized, for example the Tuvas people in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and their languages, the Khmus people in Yunnan Province and their language, and so forth. Also outside the scope of this chapter is the distribution of dialects in border regions of China. For example, in Burma's Shan State, Hakka is called the Kohang language. In several Central Asian countries, Central Plains Mandarin and Lanyin Mandarin are called the Dungan language. Languages in border regions such as Kokang and Dungan are not discussed in this chapter.

The thirty-three ethnic minority languages that will be discussed in this chapter include Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Miao, Yi, Zhuang, Bouyei, Korean, Yao, Hani, Kazakh, Dai, Lisu, Wa, Lahu, Jingpo, Kyrgyz, Blang, Gelao, Achang, Tajik, Nu, Uzbek, Russian, Ewenki, Deang, Gin, Tatar, Derung, Oroqen, Hezhen, Monba, and Lhoba.

In any country, power and competitive advantages are associated with the language that is recognized as the national, official, or dominant language. For

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expository clarity, I define, in accordance with classifications widely used by linguistic scholars around the world, a country's major language as any language used by more than 150,000 people, and a minority language as a non-dominant language spoken by 150,000 or fewer people. The thirty-three languages listed above can be divided into five categories on the basis of language function and the number of speakers. The first category includes languages that are weak inside and strong outside China; these languages are more powerful and influential outside China's borders than within them. The second category includes languages that have the status of a major language both outside and inside the Chinese border. The third category includes languages that have the status of a major language inside China but that of an ethnic minority language outside China. The fourth category includes languages with the status of an ethnic minority language inside China but that of a major language outside it. The fifth category includes languages that have the status of an ethnic minority language both inside and outside China.

5.1 Languages that are weak inside and strong outside China

This first category includes languages which are more powerful and influential outside China's borders than inside them. This type primarily includes ethnic minority languages in border regions that are mutually intelligible with or similar to national languages, official languages, or nationally dominant ethnic languages outside China. The following eight ethnic minority languages belong to this type: Mongolian, Kazakh, Korean, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, Gin, and Russian.

Mongolian is Mongolia's official language and the language of the nationally dominant ethnicity. Kazakh is Kazakhstan's national language and the language of the nationally dominant ethnicity. Korean (called South Korean in South Korea) is the official language and the language of the nationally dominant ethnicity in both the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea. Kyrgyz (called Uzbek outside China) is Uzbekistan's official language and the language of the nationally dominant ethnicity. Tajik is Tajikistan's official language and the language of the nationally dominant ethnicity. Gin (called Vietnamese outside China) is the official language and language of the dominant ethnicity in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Russian is the national language and language of the dominant ethnicity in the Russian Federation.

5.1.1 Mongolian

Mongol is distributed in China, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation. In the Chinese border regions, Mongolian is distributed in autonomous areas such as Mongolia, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang. Mongolian is spoken nationwide in Mongolia. In the Russian Federation, Mongolian is most widespread in Buryat and the Republic of Kalmykia. In Kyrgyzstan, Mongolian is spoken in the Issyk Kul states. Worldwide, there are ten million members of the Mongol ethnic group. According to the 2010 census, there are 5,980,000 Mongols in China;⁵ there are 2,800,000 Mongols in Mongolia; and there are approximately 900,000 Mongols in Russia.

The standard Mongolian dialect in Inner Mongolia is distinct from the Mongolian spoken in Mongolia. In China, the standard Mongolian dialect is Chahar Mongolian; in Mongolia, the standard dialect is Khalkha Mongolian. In the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China, the traditional Mongolian writing system is still in use; in Mongolia and Russia, the Cyrillic alphabet is used.

5.1.2 Kazakh

Kazakh is mainly distributed in the Xinjiang, Gansu, and Qinghai Autonomous Regions in China; various regions in Kazakhstan; Karakalpak Province and Tashkent Province in Uzbekistan; Orenburg and Chelyabinsk in Russia; and parts of Mongolia. There are approximately sixteen million Kazakh people worldwide. Most Kazaks (10,900,000) are in Kazakhstan, 1,462,000 are in China (according to the 2010 census), 800,000 are in Uzbekistan, 650,000 are in Russia, and more than 100,000 are in Mongolia.

5.1.3 Korean

Korean (called South Korean in South Korea) is mainly distributed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (population approximately 22,600,000 in 2009) and the Republic of Korea (population 48,500,000 in 2009) on the

⁵ In this chapter, the source for data on the populations of minority nationalities in China from the 2010 census is State Council Population Census Office and Population and Employment Statistics Division subordinated to the National Bureau of Statistics (eds.), *The data of the Chinese population census conducted in 2010*, vols. 1–3. China Statistics Press, 2012.

Korean Peninsula, north-eastern regions of China (approximately 190,000 speakers in 2000),⁶ the Russian Far East (220,000), Uzbekistan (170,000), and Kazakhstan (100,000). There are approximately 80,000,000 Koreans in the world, 76,000,000 of whom use Korean as their native language. Most Korean-speakers live in South Korea and North Korea, which are located in East Asia. The number of Korean-speakers in these two countries accounts for 90% of the Korean-speakers worldwide.

The Korean writing system is called “Hangul” and the “national writing system” in North Korean, and it is called the “Korean writing system” in South Korean. In North Korean, all official documents are written in “Korean writing.” Certain characters, or family names and sensitive names in newspapers, can also be written with Chinese characters. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Korean ethnic group in China eliminated the combination of characters in 1948 and 1954, and only the Korean characters remained.

5.1.4 Kyrgyz

In Chinese, Kyrgyz is known as *Keerkeziyu* 柯尔克孜语 when referring to use of the language in China, and as *Jierjisiyu* 吉尔吉斯语 when referring to the language of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz is mainly distributed in Kyrgyzstan (3,800,000 speakers), Uzbekistan (250,000), Xinjiang in China (160,000 in 2000),⁷ the Russian Federation (100,000), Tajikistan (80,000), Afghanistan (30,000), and Kazakhstan (10,000). There are over four million Kyrgyz people worldwide, 95% of whom live in Kyrgyzstan.

In Xinjiang, Kyrgyz is divided into a southern dialect and a northern dialect. The writing system uses the Arabic alphabet. Kyrgyzstan, which was once part of the Soviet Union, became independent in 1991. Since then, Kyrgyz has been used as the country’s national language. Many politicians have proposed a return to the Roman alphabet for the Kyrgyz writing system. So far, these efforts have been unsuccessful. At present, the Cyrillic alphabet is used in the Kyrgyz writing system.

⁶ According to the 2010 census, the population of the Korean ethnic group in China was 1.83 million, a decrease of 100,000 from ten years earlier.

⁷ According to the 2010 census, the Kyrgyz population in China is 180,000.

5.1.5 Uzbek

In Chinese, Uzbek is known as *Wuzibiekeyu* 乌孜别克语 when referring to use of the language in China, and as *Wuzibiekeyu* 乌兹别克语 when referring to the language of Uzbekistan. Uzbek is mainly distributed in Uzbekistan (27,350,000 speakers), Afghanistan (3,500,000), Tajikistan (1,100,000), Kyrgyzstan (74,000), Kazakhstan (37,000), Turkmenistan (26,000), Russia (12,000), and Xinjiang, China (12,000 in 2000).⁸ There are up to thirty-three million Uzbeks worldwide, 83% of whom live in Uzbekistan.

In China, members of the Uzbek ethnic group are scattered across various areas of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. In addition to their native language, most Uzbeks can speak the Uygur and Kazakh languages. The commonly used writing systems are those of Uygur and Kazakh, both of which are based on the Arabic alphabet.

Uzbek is an official language of Uzbekistan. Before 1927, Uzbek writing in Central Asia had long employed the Arabic alphabet. In 1927, the Roman alphabet was adopted. From 1940 to 1992, the Cyrillic alphabet was used. After Uzbekistan became independent in 1992, the writing system based on the Roman alphabet became increasingly used in many regions for education- and currency-related matters, government websites, and street signs.

5.1.6 Tajik

Tajik is not only a national language but also the language of the dominant ethnic group (plains Tajiks) in Tajikistan. In China, Tajik is one of the ethnic minority languages (plateau Tajiks). It is mainly distributed in Afghanistan (8,350,000 speakers), Tajikistan (6,100,000), Uzbekistan (1,400,000), Pakistan (220,000), the Russian Federation (200,000), Kyrgyzstan (47,000), and Xinjiang, China (41,000).⁹ The number of Tajik people worldwide is up to twenty-nine million.

The Tajik used in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and western Pakistan is classified as a member of the Indo-Iranian group, Iranian subgroup. The Tajik used in western Xinjiang in China is classified as a Sarikoli language and Wakhi language that is subordinated to the South-eastern Iranian Pamir group; it is the lingua franca in Pamir Plateau areas.

⁸ According to the 2010 census, the Uzbek population in China is 10,569.

⁹ According to the 2010 census, the Tajik population in China is 51,000.

Influenced by Uygur, Mandarin Chinese, and other languages, Tajik in China is quite different from the standard Tajik language spoken in Tajikistan, but it is identical to the Tajik dialect variations spoken in neighboring countries on the Pamir Plateau. Tajik people in China use Uygur in school; some of them employ the Arabic alphabet (Uygur alphabet) for Uygur to write the Sarikoli language.

5.1.7 Gin

Gin is also called Vietnamese. Its speakers live in Vietnam (74,000,000 in 2008), Cambodia (600,000), Laos (100,000), Malaysia (87,000), the Philippines (27,000), Thailand (20,000), China's Taiwan Province (between 120,000 and 200,000), and the Guangxi Autonomous Region (22,000 in 2000).¹⁰ There are 77 million Gin people worldwide. The Gin spoken in China is not very different from Northern Vietnamese. Speakers of Gin and Northern Vietnamese can communicate with each other without difficulty.

5.1.8 Russian

The Russians are one of the ethnic groups recognized by the Chinese government. Russian-speakers are mainly distributed in the Russian Federation and its neighboring countries. There are approximately 160 million Russians worldwide. The number of Russians living in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan is 115,800,000, 44,800, 620,000, 600,000, 140,000, and 68,000 respectively. According to the 2010 census, there are 150,000 ethnic Russians living in China, mostly in Xinjiang, Mongolia, and Heilongjiang.

Worldwide, 140 million people are native speakers of Russian. When China and the former Soviet Union were on friendly terms, Russian was China's first foreign language, which was later replaced by English.

5.2 Languages that have the status of major languages both outside and inside China

This second category includes ethnic minority languages that are considered major languages on both sides of the national border. These languages are

¹⁰ According to the 2010 census, the Gin population in China is 28,000.

distributed in China's south-western and south-central border regions, and most of them are spoken in three or more countries. The following nine languages belong to this type: Zhuang, Miao, Hani, Yao, Wa, Dai, Jingpo, Lahu, and Lisu. We take a detailed look at each of these languages below.

5.2.1 Zhuang

Zhuang is the largest ethnic minority language in China. There are 16,920,000 ethnic Zhuang living in China (according to the 2010 census), primarily distributed in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Yunnan, Guangdong, Guizhou, and, outside China, northern Vietnam (two million Zhuang-speakers). There are more than ten million Zhuang-speakers. The Zhuang spoken in China can be divided into a northern dialect and a southern dialect. The southern dialect is almost indistinguishable from the Tay-Nung language spoken in northern Vietnam, and both are classified as belonging to the same language type. The Tay-Nung moved into Vietnam at an early date and have been deeply influenced by the Vietnamese. The Nung ethnic group has been in Vietnam for two to three hundred years; therefore, it has greater commonality with the Zhuang ethnic group in China.

5.2.2 Miao

Miao can be divided into three dialects: the Western Hunan dialect (one million speakers), the Eastern Guizhou dialect (two million), and the Sichuan–Guizhou–Yunnan dialect (more than three million). Miao-speakers are mainly distributed in Hunan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan in China, with a total population of 9,420,000 (according to the 2010 census). Miao is also distributed outside the border in countries such as Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand, which belong to the Sichuan–Guizhou–Yunnan dialect. The Vietnamese Miao ethnic group is called the Hmong ethnic group, with a population of 560,000. The Hmong immigrated from Yunnan and Guangxi two to three hundred years ago.

5.2.3 Hani

There are 1,660,000 Hani people in China (based on the 2010 census). The Hani language is mainly distributed in Yunnan in China, Shan State in Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, and northern Vietnam. The total number of Hani-

speakers is 1,750,000. The Hani language can be divided into three dialects. The first dialect is the Haya dialect, which is distributed in southern Yunnan (about 1,000,000 speakers), Laos (60,000), Myanmar (at least 200,000), and Thailand (60,000). Four hundred years ago, these Haya speakers moved further south-west, to where they now live, from central-southern Yunnan. Three hundred years ago, 10,000 people in northern Vietnam immigrated from Jingping and Lvchun Counties, Yunnan, China. The second dialect is the Haobai dialect, which is spoken by 120,000 people and distributed in central-northern Yunnan. The third dialect is the Bika dialect, which is spoken by 300,000 people and distributed in south-western Yunnan.

5.2.4 Yao

There are 2,790,000 ethnic Yao people in China (according to the 2010 census). “Yao” is an umbrella term encompassing numerous languages spoken by the ethnic Yao people in southern China. Yao includes Mian, Bunu, Pahng, and Lakkia. There are approximately 1,400,000 Mian-speakers. Of them, 700,000 live in China, 500,000 live in Vietnam, and the remainder live mainly in Laos and Thailand. Most Vietnamese Yao people live in central Vietnam and the Vietnam–Laos border regions; some live in Vietnam’s northern coastal provinces. Their ancestors immigrated from Guangxi, Guangdong, Guizhou, and Yunnan (China) during the Ming dynasty.

5.2.5 Wa

There are approximately 1.3 million speakers of the Wa language. They are mainly distributed in Yunnan, China (390,000 speakers in 2000)¹¹ and Wa State in Myanmar’s Second Special Zone (more than 600,000 speakers). Moreover, the villages inhabited by the Lawa people are located in the mountainous area of northern Thailand and the mountainous areas of northern Cambodia. The Wa language spoken in China can be divided into three dialects: the Barao dialect, the Lawa dialect, and the Wa dialect.

¹¹ According to the 2010 census, the Wa population in China is 420,000.

5.2.6 Dai

Dai is mainly distributed in counties in south-western and southern Yunnan, China. According to the 1982 census, there were approximately 840,000 speakers of the Dai language.¹² Dai-speakers can also be found in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. There are 1.1 million Dai people in Vietnam; they are the second-largest minority in that country. Because the Dai people in Vietnam are mostly immigrants from China's Yunnan Province, they have the same sources and ethnic characteristics as the Dai people in China. Moreover, some Dai people live in Assam, in north-eastern India.

5.2.7 Jingpo

Jingpo is called Kachin in Myanmar and Singpho in India. There are 940,000 speakers of the Jingpo language; they are distributed in Yunnan in China (130,000 speakers in 2000),¹³ Shan State and Kachin in Myanmar, and India. The Jingpo ethnic group in Yunnan mainly includes four subgroups: the Jingpo, Zaiwa, Leqi, and Lang'e. The Zaiwa are the largest subgroup; their population comprises approximately 80% of the Jingpo ethnic group's total population. In addition to the Jingpo language, the Jingpo ethnic group uses languages such as Zaiwa, Sulang, Leqi, and Boduo.

The Jingpo ethnic group's writing system is divided into Jingpo writing and Zaiwa writing. Jingpo writing is alphabetic. The system was created by Mr. and Mrs. Johansson in the nineteenth century and is still widely used in the concentrated areas of the Jingpo ethnic group and Jingpo-speaking groups in Yunnan, China. In the Myanmar border region, the Jingpo ethnic group also uses this writing system. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Chinese linguists made innovations in the Jingpo writing system. Zaiwa writing was created in 1957 and is used in the Zaiwa language area, which is located in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, China.

¹² According to the 2010 census, the Dai population in China is 1.26 million.

¹³ According to the 2010 census, the Jingpo population in China is 14,000.

5.2.8 Lahu

There are 650,000 speakers of the Lahu language, mainly distributed in southwestern Yunnan, China (400,000 speakers),¹⁴ Shan State in Myanmar (160,000), northern Thailand and Laos (160,000), and Vietnam. Two to three hundred years ago, the ancestors of the Lahu in Vietnam immigrated from Jinping County and Lvchun County, Yunnan Province. Some of the Laos Lahu immigrated into Luang Namtha Province and Bokeo Province (Laos) in the late nineteenth century. Lahu in China is divided into two dialects: Lahuna and Lahuxi. The number of Lahu speakers accounts for 80% of the total Lahu population in China.

5.2.9 Lisu

The Lisu language is mainly distributed in Yunnan and Sichuan, China. There are 480,000 speakers of the Lisu language. Abroad, Lisu is mainly distributed in Myanmar (400,000 speakers in 2007), northern Thailand (55,000 in 2006), India (6,000 in 2008), and Laos and Vietnam (a small number of speakers). There are 702,000 Lisu in China (2010 census).

5.3 Languages that have the status of a major language inside China but that of an ethnic minority language outside China

Speakers of this third type of language are largely distributed in China, with a minority living abroad. The following four ethnic minority languages inside border regions belong to this type: Uyгур, Tibetan, Yi, and Bouyei.

5.3.1 Uyгур

The Uyгур language is mainly distributed in Xinjiang, China (10,060,000 speakers in 2010). It is also distributed in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Mongolia, and the Russian Federation. Speakers of the Uyгур language can also be found inside Chinese border regions. The Uyгур language inside Chinese border regions can be divided into three dialects: Zhongxin, Hetian, and Luobu. The standard language is based on the Zhongxin dialect,

¹⁴ According to the 2010 census, the Lahu population in China is 48,000.

and the standard pronunciation is that of Ili–Urumchi. Uygur writing uses the Arabic alphabet and is used in various situations such as official activities, everyday communication, film and television, news and publishing, literature and the arts, national education, science, and technology.

5.3.2 Tibetan

Most Tibetan-speakers are distributed in China. There are 628,000 Tibetan people in China (according to the 2010 census). There are 271,000 Tibetan people in the Tibet Autonomous Region (according to the 2010 census). The Tibetan language outside the border regions is distributed in four countries: Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Bhutan. I have been unable to find accurate population statistics, but it is known that the number of Tibetan-speakers in these four countries is approximately 12,000 to 13,000 (Information Office of the State Council 2003).

The Tibetan language is divided into three dialects: the U-Tsang dialect (Lhasa variety), the Kangba dialect (Derger variety and Changduo variety), and the Amdo dialect. It is somewhat difficult for speakers of the different dialects to communicate with one another, but there is no difficulty in recognizing Tibetan writing, which is a superdialectal writing system used to record classical Tibetan pronunciation.

5.3.3 Yi

The Yi language is mainly spoken in four provinces/autonomous regions in China: Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi. It is divided into six dialects: the northern dialect, the eastern dialect, the southern dialect, the south-eastern dialect, the western dialect, and the central dialect. There are 871,000 Yi people (according to the 2010 census). Moreover, nearly one million Yi people inhabit areas in Southeast Asia such as Vietnam, Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand. In Vietnam, there are (according to the census conducted in 1999) 3,307,000 Yi people, who are called the Luoluo ethnic group and are distributed in Ha Giang Province, Cao Bang Province, and Lao Cai Province. The Luoluo people immigrated from Yunnan, China, after the sixteenth century; therefore, they have a genetic relationship with the Chinese Yi ethnic group.

Classical Yi writing is historically called *cuanwen* 爨文. In 1980, the State Council approved the implementation of the “Tentative program for the standardization of Yi writing.” Some overseas Yi areas retain the minority *Guide for the Road of the Soul* and classical Yi writing.

5.3.4 Bouyei

The Bouyei language is mostly spoken in China and mainly distributed in Southern Guizhou Province. There are 287,000 Bouyei people (according to the 2010 census). The Bouyei language spoken in Vietnam is distributed in Ha Giang Province and Lao Cai Province, with 1,864,000 speakers (according to the 1999 census). In the nineteenth century, the ancestors of the Vietnamese Bouyei emigrated from Guizhou via Yunnan, China. Originally, the Bouyei language did not have a native writing system. In the 1950s, with the help of the Chinese government, Bouyei writing was created, but it has not been widely promoted. The Chinese writing system is used more often than the Bouyei writing system.

5.4 Languages with the status of an ethnic minority languages inside China but that of a major language outside China

This fourth category includes languages that have the status of ethnic minority languages (150,000 or fewer speakers) in border regions but are considered major languages (more than 150,000 speakers) in neighboring countries. In other words, a minority of the speakers live in China and a majority live abroad. Three ethnic minority languages inside the border regions are classified as belonging to this type: Tatar, Deang, and Lhoba.

5.4.1 Tatar

The Tatar language is also called *Dada* 鞑鞑 in Chinese. There are approximately eight million Tatar-speakers, mainly distributed in the Republic of Tatarstan of the Russian Federation, along the Volga River, and in some regions of western Siberia (approximately 552,100 people); in Ukraine; in Xinjiang in China (4,800 people in 2000);¹⁵ and in other countries and regions.

In 2001, the government of the Republic of Tatarstan decided to change the writing system into a Turkish-style Roman alphabet. In February 2005, the decision to adopt the Roman alphabet was rejected by the courts, and the Tatar language continued to use the Cyrillic alphabet. The Tatar ethnic group in China uses a

¹⁵ According to the 2010 census, the Tatar population in China is 3,556.

writing system based on the Roman alphabet. In China, aside from senior citizens, Tatar people generally use the Kazakh or Uygur languages and writing systems.

5.4.2 Deang

There are approximately 500,000 Deang-speakers, mainly distributed in Shan State and Kachin State in Myanmar (480,000 speakers); Yunnan Province, China (more than 10,000);¹⁶ provinces in northern Thailand (5,000); and Laos. Previously, the Deang ethnic group in China were referred to as the Benglong, who were then renamed the Deang. Most Deang people in China can speak Thai, Mandarin Chinese, Jingpo, and Wa. Very few of them use Thai writing, and a majority use the Chinese writing system. Inside the Vietnamese and Thai border regions, the Deang are always called the Benglong, and can speak Burmese and Thai respectively.

5.4.3 Lhoba

The Lhoba language is mainly distributed in border counties in Tibet, China. There are approximately 200,000 Lhoba-speakers in Tibet. In areas actually controlled by China, there are more than 3,000 Lhoba-speakers.¹⁷ More than 600,000 Lhoba people live in the Indian-occupied area located south of the McMahon Line. In addition, some Lhoba people live in Nepal and India. Originally, the Lhoba had no writing system; a few Lhoba use the Tibetan writing system.

5.5 Languages that have the status of ethnic minority languages both inside and outside China

This fifth category mainly covers languages that are regarded as ethnic minority languages both inside China's border regions and in the neighboring countries (150,000 language users or fewer in each case). In other words, this type of language is classified as a ethnic minority language both at home and abroad; some are endangered. Nine ethnic minority languages inside the border regions

¹⁶ According to the 2010 census, the Deang population in China is 20,556.

¹⁷ According to the 2010 census, the Lhoba population in China is 3,682.

belong to this type, including Blang, Achang, Ewenki, Monba, Nu, Derung, Oroqen, Gelao, and Hezhen.

5.5.1 Blang

Users of the Blang language are mainly distributed in China's Yunnan Province, Myanmar's Shan State, Thailand's Chiang Rai Province, and Laos's Luang Namtha and Bokeo Provinces. The Blang ethnic group is called the La ethnic group in Myanmar, with a population of 50,000 (in 2001), and the Rua people or the Lawa people in Thailand, with a population of 1,300 (in 1995). Blang is the language of the Lao Theung ethnic group in Laos, with a population of 2,000 (in 1995),¹⁸ and there are 110,000 Bulang people in China (in 1995). In China, the Blang language is divided into the Blang dialect and the A'erwa dialect, which has no native writing system. Some Blang people can also speak Dai, Wa, or Mandarin Chinese; some can write Chinese or Dai.

5.5.2 Achang

Users of the Achang language are mainly distributed in Yunnan Province, China, and Shan State, Myanmar. There are approximately 80,000 Achang, 39,000 of whom live in Yunnan (according to the 2010 census); 35,000, called the Maingtha ethnic group, are distributed in Shan State, Myanmar. The Achang language is divided into the following three dialects: Lianghe, Longchuan, and Luxi. Achang does not have its own writing system.

5.5.3 Ewenki

Speakers of the Ewenki language are distributed in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province, China; Selenga Province, Mongolia; and the Krasnoyarsk Territory of the Russian Federation. There are more than 60,000 Ewenki, 30,675 of whom are in China (according to the 2010 census), 30,545 of whom are in Russia (according to the 2000 census, not including the Oroqen people), and 1,000 of whom are in Mongolia (according to

¹⁸ Zhao Yongsheng (2011); see also the Yunnan minority ethnic group website, August 3, 2011. <http://www.yn21st.com/show.php?contentid=7258> (accessed August 3, 2011).

the 1995 census). In China and Mongolia, the following three Ewenki dialects are used: Haila'er, Chenba'erhu, and Aoluguya. In Russia, the Ewenki language is called the Evenki language and includes three dialects: the southern dialect, the eastern dialect and the northern dialect. The eastern dialect is similar to the Ewenki language in China. Ewenki is considered an independent language in China. In Russia, Ewenki is considered a dialect of the Evenki language.

The Ewenki language does not include a writing system of its own. In China, the Manchu script was historically used. Currently, the Mongolian language and Mongolian script are commonly used in grassland areas; Mandarin Chinese and the system of writing associated with it are widely used in agricultural and isolated mountainous areas. Research data for linguistics and textbooks use the international phonetic alphabet or a transcription system based on the Roman alphabet. From 1930 to 1931, Russia began to write Evenki using the Roman alphabet. From 1936 to 1937, the form of Evenki writing was changed to use the Cyrillic alphabet.

5.5.4 Monba

Monba language users are mainly distributed in the southern mountains and the southern Tibetan areas of the Tibet Autonomous Region, China. More than 50,000 people belong to the Monba ethnic group, 10,561 of whom (according to the 2010 census) live in the areas under the control of the Chinese government and speak one of two dialects: the southern dialect and the northern dialect. Other Monba-speakers are mostly distributed in Indian-controlled areas (called Arunachal Pradesh by the Indian authorities who administer these areas). Nepal, Bhutan, and other countries have a small number of Monba-speakers. The Monba ethnic group does not have a native writing system; therefore, Tibetan script is used.

5.5.5 Nu

The Nu language used by the Nu ethnic group is mainly distributed in Yunnan Province and the Tibetan areas in China. According to the 2010 census, there are 37,000 Nu people. The Nu ethnic group outside China's border regions is distributed in Kachin State in Myanmar, with a population of approximately 30,000.¹⁹

¹⁹ Information about the Nu ethnic group was obtained from a central government website dated April 17, 2006. <http://www.seac.gov.cn/col/col319/index.html> (accessed April 17, 2006).

The Nu ethnic group in China is divided into four subgroups according to their use of the Nusu, Zauzou, Along, or Anu language. The differences between these four languages are so large that their speakers cannot communicate with one another. The Nu ethnic group has no native writing system.

5.5.6 Derung

The Derung language is used by both the Derung ethnic group and the Nu ethnic group. Derung-speakers are mainly distributed in Kachin State in Myanmar, and Yunnan Province and the Tibetan areas in China. There are 30,000 Derung people in Myanmar and 6,930 in China (according to the 2010 census). The Derung language is divided into the following two dialects: the Dulongjiang dialect, used by the Derung ethnic group, and the Nujiang dialect, used by the Nu ethnic group. These two dialects do not have substantial differences, and speakers from the two ethnicities can communicate with one another.

Historically, the Derung language had no writing system of its own. In 1951, the Rawang people in Myanmar created the Rawang script. In 1983, with cooperation from the Yunnan Ethnic Affairs Commission, Derung intellectuals drafted a “Scheme for the Derung phonetic alphabet,” which is based on Rawang script in the form of the Roman alphabet. This scheme was promoted; that year, reading material such as textbooks was published.

5.5.7 Oroqen

The Oroqen language is spoken both in the area that covers parts of China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province and in the highlands west of Lake Baikal in the Krasnoyarsk border area of the Russia Federation. The Oroqen are called the Oroch people in Russia, where they have a population of approximately 30,000. There are 8,659 Oroqen people in China (according to the 2010 census). The Oroqen language is classified as a ethnic minority language in China. In Russia, Oroqen is the eastern dialect of the Evenki language. In China, there are approximately 2,100 speakers of the Oroqen language (Nie Hongyin 2003).

The Oroqen language does not have a native script. In Russia, from 1930 to 1931, Evenki writing based on the Roman alphabet was adopted. From 1936 to 1937, the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the Roman alphabet in Evenki writing.

5.5.8 Gelao

The Gelao language is mainly spoken in Guizhou, Yunnan, and Guangxi in China and Ha Giang Province in Vietnam. According to the 2010 census, there are nearly 550,000 Gelao people in China. The Gelao people in Guizhou Province account for 96.43% of the total population of the Gelao ethnic group, but the number of Gelao-speakers is only approximately 6,000. Gelao people emigrated to Vietnam (where there are 1,845 according to the 1999 census) from Guizhou during the Qing dynasty. The dialects of Gelao have clear differences. The Gelao ethnic group does not have a native writing system. They use the Chinese writing system.

5.5.9 Hezhen

The Hezhen language is spoken in the Khabarovsk border areas in Russia and in China's Heilongjiang Province. There are 5,800 speakers of the Hezhen language. In Russia, the Hezhen ethnic group are called the Nannais and have a population of 12,000. In China, there are 5,354 Hezhen people (according to the 2010 census). The Hezhen language has no native writing system. During the Qing dynasty, the Manchu script was used; at present, the Chinese writing system is used. In the Sino-Russian border region, the written form of the Hezhen language (Nannais) is based on the Cyrillic alphabet. The Hezhen language is currently being taught in thirteen schools.

Chapter 6

An investigation into bilingualism in Dehong Dai

The Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture is located in the border region of south-western Yunnan Province. Myanmar borders to the north, west, and north-west. To the east and north-east, the prefecture borders on the Bonan areas of Yunnan Province. According to the 1991 census (Ding Chunxian 1992: 44), the prefecture had a population of 92,000 comprised of members of thirty-five ethnic groups. The population of the Dai ethnic group was 28,400, or 31.9% of the total population; the population of the Han ethnic group was 44,400, or 48.3% of the total population.

6.1 Research background and purposes

6.1.1 Background

Since the 1950s, the Dehong Dai language has been improved in several respects. To conduct a survey of the language situation after the 1950s, an investigation team went to the Dai language community in Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province, and conducted a thorough investigation from the end of May to June 1993. The investigation team was composed of the following four units: the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Institute of Ethnology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Ethnic Minority Language Work Committee of Yunnan Province, and the Ethnic Minority Language Work Committee of the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The investigation included interviews, tests, questionnaires, and collection of data from the cultural department of the local government. Very small parts of the questionnaires which were sent and returned at that time were used. Until now, the majority of the information from the questionnaires has not been analyzed and published.

6.1.2 Purposes

The research findings provide not only evidence for bilingual research on ethnic communities in China but also some directions, methods, and points of

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in *Zhongguo shehuiyuyanxue* (1) 2003. 140–150.

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reference for relevant research on communities' bilingualism and on bilingual communities. Moreover, the research findings might also form a scientific basis for departments of national and local language management and departments of language education when they make or modify language plans.

6.2 Research subjects and methods

6.2.1 Research subjects

From May to June 1993, six members of the investigation team went to Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province, to conduct a survey of how the Dehong Dai language was used. Samples were drawn from a variety of organizations and institutions on the prefecture, county, and township levels. Three hundred Dai people working for the Communist Party of China, the government, education, judicial, and police departments, and media organizations, as well as in fields that included publishing, radio and television, culture and arts, and religion were randomly selected for the sample. These three hundred samples come from two cities, five towns, and five townships of four counties: Mang City (seat of Dehong Prefecture), Mengmao Town (seat of Ruili City), Mangshi Town and Fengping Township of Luxi County, Nongdao Township of Ruili City, Chengzi Town, Zhangfeng Town and Qiangping Township of Longchuan County, and Pingyuan Town and Xincheng Township of Yinjiang County.

355 questionnaires were distributed, of which 280 were received back. Thus, the return rate was 79%. There were 260 usable questionnaires, which means that the usability rate of the returned questionnaires was 93%.

6.2.2 Composition of the sample

Men made up 60% and women 40% of the 260 subjects. In terms of educational level, 17% of subjects had a primary school education or less; 23% had a middle school education, 38% had a high school or polytechnic school education, and 22% had a university education or above. In terms of age group, 71% of subjects were young people (16–39 years old), 27% were middle-aged (40–59 years old), and 2% were old (over 60 years old). The genders, educational levels, and ages of the sample are listed in Table 6.1.

A breakdown of respondents' place of residence, marital status, and occupation is given in Table 6.2, which shows that 57% of subjects lived in urban areas and 43% of subjects lived in the countryside. In terms of marital status, 76% of

Table 6.1: Gender, educational level, and age composition of the sample.

Age group	Male					Female			Total	
	Primary school or less	Middle school	High school or polytechnic school	University or above	Subtotal	Primary school or less	Middle school	High school or polytechnic school		University or above
16-39	11	21	41	27	100	7	21	44	13	85
40-59	16	17	8	11	52	6	2	7	3	18
over 60	3	0	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	1
total	30	38	49	39	156	13	23	51	17	104
										260

Table 6.2: Respondents' residence, marital status, and occupation.

Occupation	Urban						Rural						Total	
	Single			Married			Single			Married				Subtotal
	Dai- Dai	Dai- Han	Missing information	Dai- Non-Han	Dai- Non-Han	Missing information	Dai- Dai	Dai- Han	Missing information	Dai- Dai	Dai- Non-Han	Missing information		
type 1	12	37	15	0	6	70	12	28	6	1	5	52	122	
type 2	5	19	6	2	3	35	4	3	2	0	0	9	44	
type 3	4	13	4	2	1	24	8	19	12	0	3	42	66	
type 4	10	0	0	0	0	10	1	0	0	0	0	1	11	
type 5	3	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	1	5	
type 6	0	3	1	0	0	4	2	6	0	0	0	8	12	
total	34	73	26	4	10	147	28	56	20	1	8	113	260	

subjects were married and 24% of subjects had never been married. With respect to occupation, 47% of subjects were office workers (type 1 in Table 6.2), 17% of subjects were full-time technical staff (type 2), 25% of subjects were teachers (type 3), 4% of subjects were middle school students (type 4), 2% of subjects worked in religious contexts (type 5), and 5% of subjects fitted into other categories (type 6).

The subjects' professional fields are given in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Subjects' professional fields.

	Party policy	Judiciary and police	Media and publishing	Education	Arts	Religion	Others	Total
Number	66	22	26	92	34	5	15	260
%	20	9	10	35	13	2	6	100

6.2.3 Research methods

International scholars have adopted various methods for conducting quantitative studies of bilingual level and bilingual ability, such as the oral interview test (Wilds 1975: 29–44), the tapescript test (Casad 1974), the sentence repetition test (Radloff 1991), the self-evaluation test (Adams and Frith 1979), and self-reporting questionnaires (Macnamara 1969: 80–97). Each method has both advantages and disadvantages.

This study used self-reporting questionnaires, in which the subjects self-report their bilingual ability. However, when preparing the questionnaires, we made many localized and contextual changes. For many questions, we repeatedly asked for suggestions from local Dai people and repeatedly modified the questionnaires. Once the local people were satisfied, we began to carry out our investigations. The advantages of our investigation method are its time- and labor-saving effects. Moreover, our approach is suitable for large samples and bilingual communities. The disadvantage of this method is the inconsistency between reported bilingual ability and actual ability. Some subjects in the sample reported their bilingual ability as higher than it actually was, while others reported the opposite. All of the data and examples in the questionnaires were processed using Excel.

The questionnaires consist of forty-four questions that cover five areas. The first set of questions concerns basic information about the subject (questions 1–11), the second set of questions concerns the subject's language usage situation

(questions 12–17), the third set of questions concerns the subject’s bilingual educational background (questions 18–22), the fourth set of questions concerns the subject’s bilingual level (questions 23–24), and the fifth set of questions concerns the subject’s attitudes towards bilingualism (questions 35–43). Question 44 asks for suggestions or recommendations.

6.3 Statistical results

6.3.1 Bilingual use patterns

This survey of the Dai language community is based on self-reporting by respondents. The results are as follows: three people are monolingual, accounting for 1.15% of the total sample; 257 people are bilingual or multilingual, accounting for 98.85% of all respondents; 222 people are bilingual, accounting for 85.38% of all respondents. Among the bilingual speakers, 215 speak Dai as their first language and Mandarin as their second, and the other 7 speak Mandarin as their first language and Dai as their second. 27 people are trilingual, accounting for 10.38% of the total sample. Among them, 26 are classified as Dai–Mandarin–other trilingual (the “other” may be Zaiwa, Jingpo, Achang, Burmese, Thai, Lao, and so forth). One person is Mandarin–Dai–other trilingual. Among the respondents who are quadrilinguals, eight know two languages in addition to Dai and Mandarin. Of these eight, seven speak Dai as their first language and Mandarin as their second; it is the reverse for the remaining respondent. The bilingual patterns among ethnic Dai people are given in Figure 6.1.

6.3.2 Patterns in the use of bilingual or multilingual writing systems

The Dehong Dai writing system has three variations: new Dai script, traditional (or classical) Dai script and Burmese Dai script. Traditional Dai script is also called Tai Nüa script, which is a dialectal writing system used historically for Dehong Dai with at least several hundred years of history. The new Dai script is also referred to as Dehong Dai script, which was improved after the founding of the People’s Republic of China. Burmese Dai writing is also called Tay Pong script, which is another dialectal script recording the Burmese Dai language in Burman writing; it is mainly used in Buddhist temples and some Dai language communities in Ruili City (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 313–314). In this book, we call those who can use two forms of writing (new Dai script and Chinese script) bilingual users of writing systems, those who can use three forms of writing (new Dai

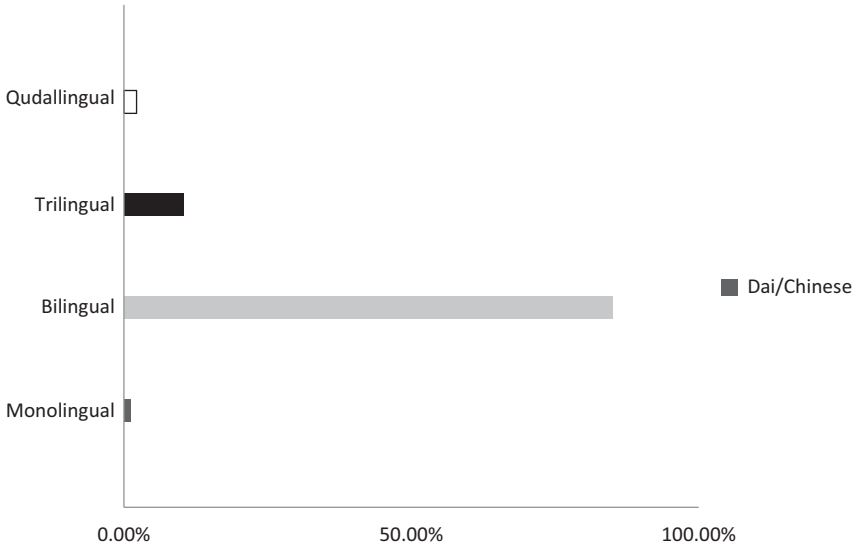


Figure 6.1: Bilingual patterns in the Dai ethnic group.

script, Chinese script, and old Dai script) trilingual users of writing systems, and those who can use four forms of writing (new Dai script, Chinese script, old Dai script, and Burmese Dai script) quadrilingual users of writing systems. The use of these writing systems among ethnic Dai is set out in Figure 6.2.

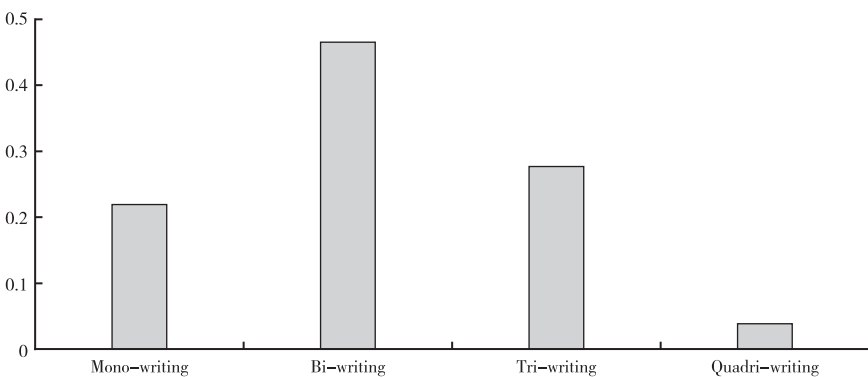


Figure 6.2: Patterns of writing system use among ethnic Dai.

The number of self-reported monolingual writing system users is 57, accounting for 21.92% of the total sample. Among them, 56 know Chinese script only, while one person knows Dai script only. The number of people who use two or more writing systems is 203, accounting for 78.01% of the total sample. Among them, 121, or 46.65% of all respondents, use two writing systems; 72 use three writing systems, accounting for 27.69% of respondents; and 3.85% of respondents use four writing systems.

6.3.3 Scope of bilingual practice

6.3.3.1 Adoption of bilingualism for work and public affairs

Figure 6.3 presents Dai–Mandarin bilingualism in Dai communities for eight work- or public affairs-related purposes.

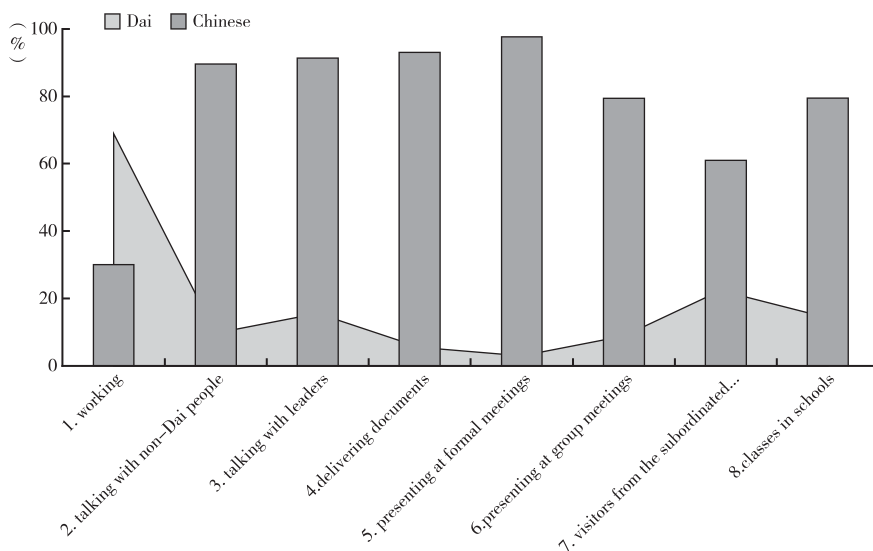


Figure 6.3: Adoption of bilingualism among ethnic Dai for work and public affairs.

6.3.3.2 Adoption of bilingualism in daily life

As shown in Figure 6.4, outside the workplace or work-related communication, far more ethnic Dai say they use the Dai language than those who say they use Mandarin for purposes such as communication among family members, in

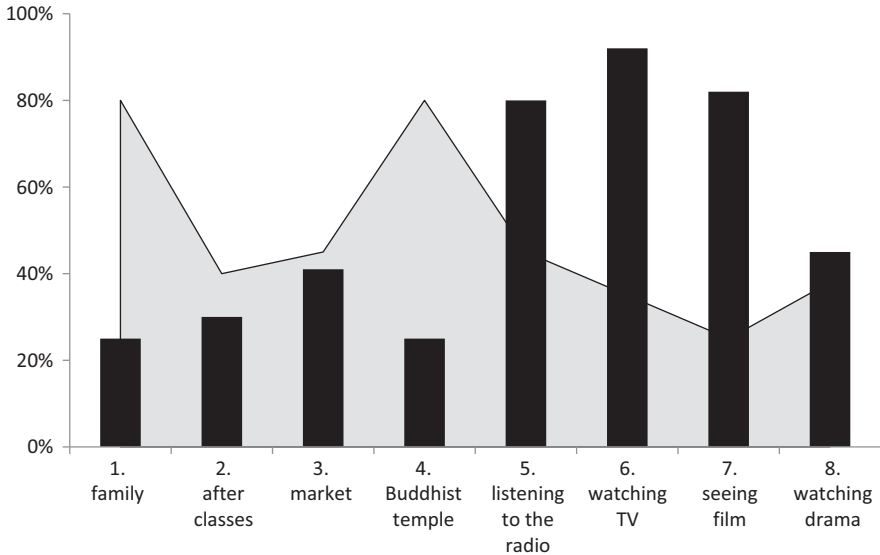


Figure 6.4: Bilingualism in Dai people's daily life.

school settings, at the marketplace, and during religious activities in Buddhist places of worship. In contrast, where radio, television, films, and shows and performances are concerned, more ethnic Dai say they use Mandarin than Dai.

6.4 Analysis and discussion

One of the main objects of bilingual education in Dai communities is training ethnic minority students to achieve bilingual competency in both their native language and Mandarin Chinese. People with bilingual competency in both these languages are also called proficient bilingual speakers. To evaluate respondents' listening, speaking, reading, and writing competency in either Dai or Mandarin Chinese, eight questions were asked (questions 23–26, 30, 32, 34, and 35). Each question is directed at one use of a particular language and can be answered by choosing from four options ranging from “proficient” to “not proficient.” Only those respondents who chose “proficient” for all questions were considered proficient bilingual speakers. In the context of this chapter, proficient bilingual speakers are those who can use the new Dai script and Chinese script proficiently. Numerous social factors help explain who is likely to become a proficient bilingual speaker; we discuss each of those factors below.

6.4.1 Proficient bilingual speakers and their ages

The proportion of people who self-report as being proficient bilingual speakers, proficient users of bilingual writing systems, or both decreases as age increases. As shown in Figure 6.5, the proportion of people with such linguistic competency reaches 70% among 39 or younger; it is 30% among those who are between 40 and 59, and it is as low as 10% among people who are 60 or older.

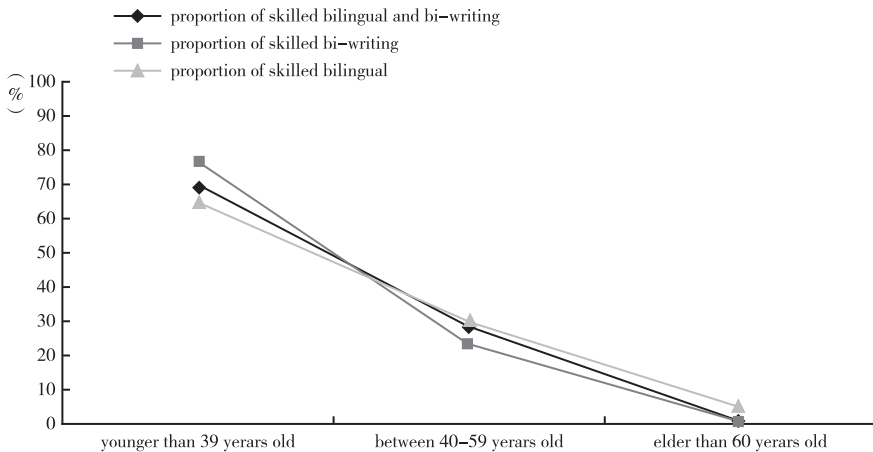


Figure 6.5: Proficient bilingual speakers and writing system users and their ages.

6.4.2 Proficient bilingual speakers and their educational attainment levels

Figure 6.6 shows that among the 168 self-reported proficient bilingual speakers, completion of middle school marks a threshold. Approximately 30% of those who are self-reported as being proficient bilingual speakers have completed middle school, and less than 20% have not. Among the 77 who self-report as being proficient bilingual users of writing systems, completion of high school or technical training is a threshold. Those who have a lower educational attainment account for 10–20% of the total number of people who say they are proficient bilingual users of writing systems, while the percentage of those with proficiency who have completed high school or technical training reaches 40%.

The findings above show that the education departments in ethnic minority areas have established the creation of ethnic minority language–Mandarin Chinese bilingual speakers as one of the bilingual educational targets for local

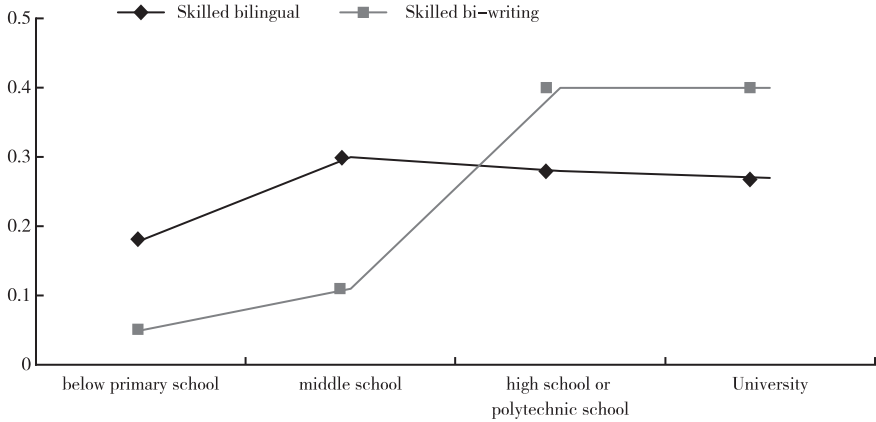


Figure 6.6: Proficient bilingual speakers and their educational levels.

ethnic minority middle schools and primary schools. Although the motivation is admirable, the target is probably slightly too high for primary schools. Education departments may better serve their local situations if they require ethnic middle schools to train proficient bilingual speakers and require the ethnic normal colleges or ethnic high schools to cultivate proficient bilingual users of writing systems.

6.4.3 Proficient bilingual speakers and their occupations

Figure 6.7 shows that the proportion of proficient bilingual speakers from four occupations in the total number of proficient bilingual speakers is roughly consistent with the proportion of those four occupations in the entire sample. Only the teachers show an apparent inconsistency. Teachers comprise 20.8% of the total sample, but the proficient bilingual speakers among them account for only 13.1% of all the proficient bilingual speakers.

6.4.4 Gender and place of residence

Figure 6.8 shows that proficient bilingual speakers have the same gender ratio as the total sample. However, there is a significant difference from the general population in the breakdown into urban residents and rural residents. The proportion of proficient bilingual speakers is relatively high in towns, while the proportion of proficient bilingual speakers is relatively low in the countryside.

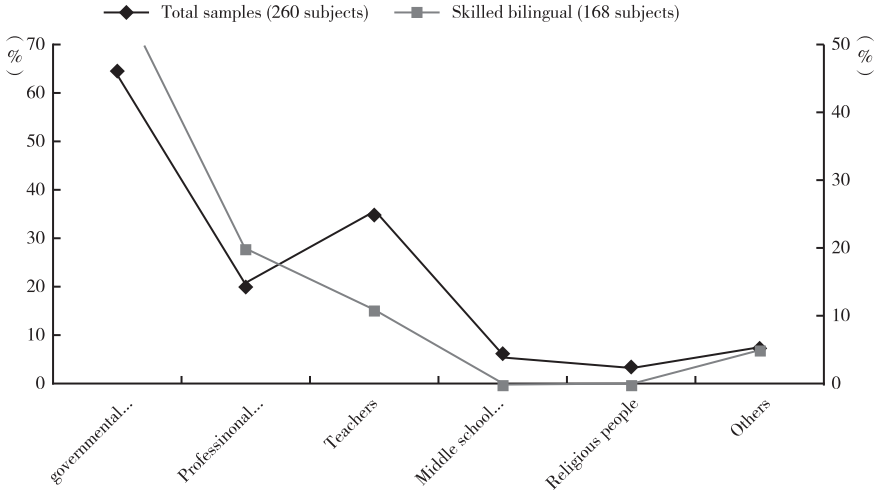


Figure 6.7: Proficient bilingual speakers and their occupations.

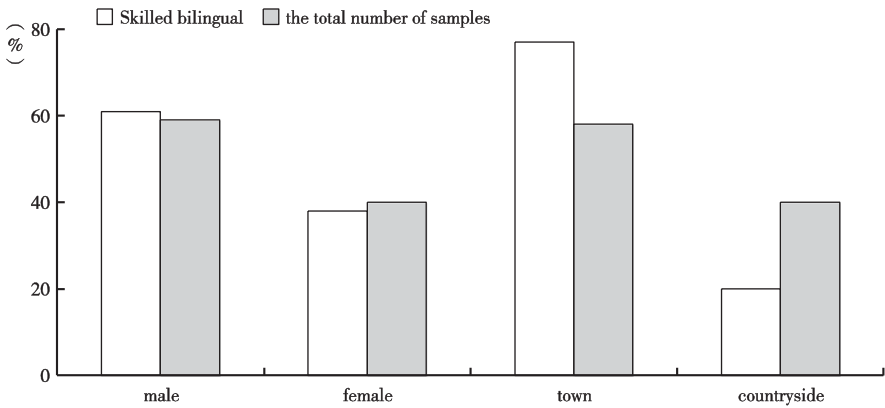


Figure 6.8: Gender ratios and places of residence of proficient bilingual speakers.

6.5 Conclusion

The sample for this investigation mainly includes professional and technical staff, government workers, heads of public institutions, teachers, students in technical schools, and a small number of religious workers, factory workers, and farmers from Dai language communities in Dehong Prefecture, but they

exclude commercial service staff, primary school students and self-employed workers. The sample covers Party and governmental institutions, judicial and police departments, the media and publishing, education, the arts and religion, and other fields.

The Dai language community in Dehong Prefecture is a typical bilingual community. In the sample drawn from members of this community, self-reported bilingual speakers account for 85.4%, and trilingual and quadrilingual speakers account for 13.4%. Proficient bilingual speakers who speak one ethnic minority language in addition to Mandarin Chinese represent 64.6%; people who are proficient in the use of two or more writing systems represent 78% of the total sample.

Mandarin Chinese is the major working language in the ethnic Dai bilingual community. When ethnic Dai people talk with people from other ethnic groups in the workplace, give work reports to their superiors, make public announcements about the content of government-issued documents, give presentations at semi-formal meetings or group meetings, host staff visiting from subordinate units, teach in schools, listen to the radio, or watch television or films, they tend to use Mandarin Chinese much more often than they would use Dai.

The Dai language is used in daily life in bilingual ethnic Dai communities. For occasions such as speaking with one's family, speaking with people after class, attending a Buddhist temple, visiting agricultural markets, and other informal occasions, the Dai language is used much more frequently than Mandarin Chinese.

Bilingual proficiency is less common among older people and more common among younger people. The proportion of proficient bilingual speakers is higher among those who have completed at least a primary school education than among those who have not. The proportion of proficient users of two or more writing systems is higher among those who have attended high school or technical school than among those who have not. Compared with workers from other occupations, the ratio of proficient bilingual teachers is low.

The proportion of urban proficient bilingual speakers in the total number of proficient bilingual speakers is higher than the proportion of urban people in the overall sample. In contrast, the proportion of rural proficient bilingual speakers in the total number of proficient bilingual speakers is lower than the proportion of rural people in the overall sample.

Chapter 7

Language change and economic and social transition: The case of the Gin in China

7.1 Introduction

The Gin are a small people that formerly inhabited the Do Son area in northern Vietnam and are now located near the Sino-Vietnamese border on the three small islands of Wanwei, Wutou, and Shanxin in the south of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, which are known as the Three Islands of the Gin. Most of the Gin live on the Three Islands of the Gin, and a small number in Hengwang, Tanji, Hongkan, Chushan, and other regions in Guangxi.

The Gin have had close contacts with the Vietnamese for a long time, and the spoken Gin language is basically the same as Vietnamese. There are not too many communication barriers between the Gin and the northern Vietnamese. However, there is a certain difference in pronunciation and vocabulary between the Gin language and the Vietnamese language after nearly five hundred years of separation. The Gin currently have no native commonly used writing system.

According to the 2000 census, the Gin had a total population of 22,500, in which the Gin-speakers numbered about 7,000–8,000 (Wei Jiachao and Wei Shengnian 2003: 138). Most of the Gin are able to use Cantonese, a Chinese dialect, also known as 粤语 (Yue) or 白话 (vernacular Chinese).

With a simple mode of production, the Gin historically engaged in inshore fishing as the only ethnic group in China that lived by the sea. They had hardly any contact with other ethnic groups. The Gin language was the most important vehicle of social intercourse used by the Gin.

Where agriculture, fish processing, cultured pearls, and seahorses are concerned, there was a development in the Gin-speaking community after the founding of New China in 1949, especially since the reform and opening-up policy. A change of language use has taken place in the Gin-speaking community because the relationship between the Gin and Han peoples in production, marriage, trade, politics, and economics is becoming closer.

The number of Gin-speakers making up 50% of the population has declined since the twenty-first century. In the region which the Gin inhabit in compact communities, the Gin language is used for fewer occasions and ranges of social

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in Zhou Qingsheng (ed.), *Language change and ecology*, 2–10. Intellectual Property Publishing House, 2012. I am grateful to Intellectual Property Publishing House for permission to reuse the article in this book.

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life (Wei Jiachao and Wei Shengnian 2003: 142), while the language shift is gradually progressing. As more and more Gin people speak Cantonese and Putonghua (standard Mandarin), words borrowed from the Chinese language are becoming more numerous in Gin. The language used by the Gin has obviously been impacted by social and economic life. For the Gin-speaking community, from the Gin monolinguals to Gin–Chinese bilingualism and Gin–Chinese–Vietnamese multilingualism, the change in language use has been directly correlated with a transition in economic and social life.

7.2 The Gin monolinguals and shallow-sea fishing

Due to residing on three islands and engaging in individual family activities prior to 1949, the Gin had been isolated from the outside world. The Gulf of Tonkin to the south is an ideal fishing ground. Of the more than seven hundred species of fish found there, over two hundred are of great economic value and high yields. Pearls, seahorses, and sea otters, which thrive there, are prized for their medicinal value.

The main livelihood was coastal and inshore fishing. The Gin seldom had a chance to communicate with outsiders. The Gin on the islands were shut off from the Han on the mainland by the sea.

The Gin language was completely and perfectly maintained for a long time, being transmitted from one generation to another since it was mostly and frequently used at home and for native communication.

7.3 Gin–Cantonese bilingualism and the project of enclosing tideland for cultivation

To compensate for the decline in marine fishery production, the project of enclosing tideland for cultivation started in the 1960s. It has linked the islands to the mainland and made possible an expansion of agriculture: in addition to rice, sweet potatoes, and taro, the Gin cultivate bananas, papayas, coconuts, and other newly introduced tropical fruits. The islands have become peninsulas. It is much easier for the Gin people to engage in contact with the Han people. In addition, with the implementation of the reform and opening-up policy, as well as the augmentation of social mobility from rural areas to urban areas, the intercourse between the peoples of the two ethnicities has become increasingly close.

Among the increasing number of Gin–Han bilinguals, Cantonese, as the most important tool for communicating with non-natives, has become the second-most

important language of the Gin. The Gin language is being increasingly influenced by Cantonese. These dramatic changes have continuously expanded the scope of social and economic integration, as well as promoting the cultural fusion of and permeation between the ethnic groups.

Naturally, a lot of Chinese loanwords are often used by the Gin–Han bilinguals. A 1980s survey of Gin vocabulary listed the number and percentage of loanwords from Chinese; see Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Statistics on Chinese loanwords in the Gin language.

Publication in the Gin language	Theme	Total vocabulary	Chinese loanwords	
			Number (%)	Number (%)
Scolopendra hole	legend	757	656 (86.5)	101 (13.5)
My family	family history	245	175 (71.4)	70 (28.6)
My production team	production	246	155 (63.0)	91 (37.0)
Improving the field management of corn	production	249	130 (52.6)	119 (47.4)
Strengthening field management	production	295	179 (63.7)	116 (36.3)
Note on celebrating the International Children’s Day	politics	497	0	497 (100)

Source: Ouyang Jueya, Cheng Fang, and Yu Cuirong (1984: 55, 59).

The statistics in Table 7.1 reflect Gin–Han language use in the daily life of the Gin people. In general, the use of Chinese loanwords is closely related to the content of conversations among the Gin. Chinese loanwords are used less in legends and daily life, and more in production and labor. However, the Chinese language is almost always used for political activities and new sciences and technologies.

The Gin people’s acceptance of the Chinese language is not balanced. The closer they live to the Han areas, the greater the development and opening up of residential land, and greater the use of Chinese by the Gin. In addition, the pupils and middle school students who have undergone training in Putonghua speak better Mandarin than the older people. The Gin cadres, who often go out for meetings, and Gin businessmen speak better Mandarin than the Gin fishermen.

Geographically, the islands of Shanxin, Wanwei, and Wutou are at different distances from the mainland, so some of the Gin have been affected by the Chinese language more deeply than others, Chinese loanwords are greater in number on some of the Three Islands and fewer on others.

Shanxin Island is closest to the mainland and was the first to become a peninsula, Wutou Island followed, and Wanwei Island was the last. Therefore, some Gin words were replaced by Chinese loanwords on Shanxin Island, while Gin words are still used on the islands of Wutou and Wanwei.

Two patterns in language use can be observed in the villages where the three ethnic groups of Gin, Han, and Zhuang live together. (1) Gin and Han are common languages used in the villages where the Gin and the Han live together in the Jianglong, Tanji, and Wanwei, while the Han language is used as the common language in the mixed villages in areas of Wutou. (2) Han and Zhuang are common languages used in the villages which the Gin, the Han, and the Zhuang inhabit together in Zhushan; however, the Gin cannot speak the Gin language, only the Han and Zhuang languages (Wang Shaohui 2005: 65).

7.4 Multilingualism and the development of trade and tourism

With the deepening of the reform and opening-up policy, especially after the 1990s, the domestic economy, tourism, and cross-border trade with Vietnam have become the main livelihood of the Gin (Wei Jiachao and Wei Shengnian 2003: 142).

In the emerging market for cross-border trade in Dongxing, the Gin people have used their geographical and linguistic advantage to start cross-border trading. Since the normalization of relations between China and Vietnam in 1989, Gin people have used their advantages to actively participate in cross-border trade, tourism, and other economic activities. After ten years of rapid development, the annual per capita income of the Gin has now become the highest of all ethnic groups in China.

As the Gin have come into contact with both the Cantonese-speakers coming from Lingnan and more Putonghua-speakers (business travelers and tourists) coming from across China, the Gin language, Cantonese, and/or vernacular Chinese have come to be used rarely. In the face of the new challenges of production and lifestyle, Cantonese and the Gin language are not enough for communication, and Putonghua has become frequently used in daily communication. The Gin have to learn to speak Putonghua, which is promoted in China. At the end of the last century, with the deepening of China's reform and opening up and the impact of

economic integration and globalization, the Gin started to study Putonghua to satisfy communicative needs (Wang Shaohui 2005: 67).

On the Three Islands, the Gin language, in general, is mainly used by the Gin of seventy or eighty years old and above. The Gin language and Mandarin are used by the Gin aged under fifty and/or sixty, some of whom can speak Putonghua. Among the young students aged six to twenty, the Gin language is mainly used at home; Putonghua is used for the language course in primary schools; Cantonese for exchange between the students after class. The children under six speak Gin at home, understand some Chinese words, and gradually learn Chinese at elementary school.

The Han women who marry into the Gin usually learn to speak Gin within one year for communicating with their family members, while the Gin women who marry Han men speak Chinese with their families and others. In addition, Cantonese is used for cultural entertainment such as singing, performances, and opera. The Gin language is used in folk songs that can be sung only by the Gin aged sixty to seventy; the rest of the Gin will not sing them (Wang Shaohui 2005: 65).

The level of Putonghua among the Gin at present is not very high. Most people are not used to communicating with others in Putonghua, which indirectly reflects the underdeveloped trade and tourism in the region and the relative lack of opportunities for people to practice Putonghua. With the further expansion of economic and trade activities, and the establishment of the China–ASEAN Free Trade Area, it can be expected that the Gin language, vernacular Chinese, Cantonese, and Putonghua will all be grasped well by Gin people.

7.5 Enthusiasm for Gin and Vietnamese and the establishment of the China–ASEAN Free Trade Area

With China's accession to the World Trade Organization, China and ASEAN have cooperated to establish the China–ASEAN Free Trade Area, and the China–ASEAN Expo has become permanently based in Nanning, Guangxi. With the establishment of “two corridors and one zone”²⁰ between China and Vietnam, and the economic acceleration of the Greater Mekong subregion, in which China has participated, learning the languages of ASEAN countries is on the rise in China.

²⁰ China and Vietnam reached an agreement in May 2004 to create “two corridors and one zone.” The two economic corridors are Kunming–Lao Cai–Hanoi–Haiphong–Quang Ninh and Nanning–Lang Son–Hanoi–Haiphong–Quang Ninh. The total span of the two corridors is 140,000 square kilometers, with a total population of 39 million.

The ten ASEAN countries have a total of eleven national or official languages, of which the national languages are as follows (see Table 7.2): Cambodian (Khmer) for Cambodia; Malay for Brunei; Bahasa Indonesia for Indonesia; Lao for Laos; Malay for Malaysia; Burmese for Myanmar; Filipino (Wikang Tagalog) for the Philippines; English, Chinese (Mandarin), Malay, and Tamil for Singapore; Thai for Thailand; and Vietnamese for Vietnam.

Table 7.2: Ethnicity and language in the ten countries of ASEAN.

State	Major ethnic groups	Languages
Brunei	Malay, Chinese	
Cambodia	Khmer	Khmer is the official language and the common language; English and French are the official languages
Indonesia	Java clan	Bahasa Indonesia is the official language and the common language; English is also used widely
Laos	Lao Loum, Lao Theung, Lao Sung	Lao is the common language
Malaysia	Malay, Chinese	Malay, Chinese
Myanmar		Burmese is the national language; some people speak English
Philippines	Malay	Filipino is the common language; English is the official language
Singapore	Chinese, Malays	Malay is the national language; Chinese, English, Tamil, and Malay are the official languages
Thailand		Thai
Vietnam	Vietnamese (Gin)	Vietnamese

Source: Gu Xiaosong (2004: 67).

Under the framework of the China–ASEAN Free Trade Area, the demand for foreign languages in the ethnic minority areas on the south-western border of China is inevitably for ASEAN languages, especially those of the ASEAN countries that are connected with the China or the neighboring countries, namely Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Vietnam is a bridge for economic development and technological communication between Guangxi of China and Southeast Asia. Since the normalization of bilateral relations in 1991, economic cooperation between China and Vietnam

has become closer. In 2004, China and Vietnam started to create an economic zone around the Gulf of Tonkin. The Vietnamese government has strengthened cooperation with Guangxi in the field of trade and investment,²¹ and many Vietnamese enterprises have invested in southern China. The expanded cooperation has increased demand for more proficient bilingual professionals. Learning Vietnamese in China has taken off rapidly, and students studying the Vietnamese language in colleges and universities have increased in number several times.

The vast majority of Gin parents, according to a survey, agreed their children should learn Vietnamese. The purpose of studying Vietnamese was to do business or be a tour guide (Wei Jiachao and Wei Shengnian 2003: 141).

In recent years, “language fever” has increased in the Gin region. The Gin language school in Wanwei Village holds training courses each year, training several groups of Vietnamese translators. Bilingual signs written by both Vietnamese and Chinese people are used in some private hotels in the Gin region. The local Gin cadres are actively training personnel in the Gin language, and also preparing to establish the Gin Culture Eco-Museum to protect the Gin language and culture.

7.6 Conclusions

In summary, all the changes in the Gin language are closely related not only to economic development but also to commercial activities on the Three Islands of the Gin. This also demonstrates that language is a communicative tool, and that the choice of tool is determined by the radius of activities and the purpose of activities.

In the twenty-first century, the Gin language has weathered some great changes. First, the scope of Putonghua has expanded. With economic development, frequent contacts with foreign countries, and especially the rise of tourism, outsiders come and go. Putonghua is increasingly popular among the Gin. In several instances, the native/ethnic language has been inadvertently replaced with Putonghua.

Second, Cantonese, or vernacular Chinese, is becoming stronger. Vernacular Chinese has always been the dialect of the Fangcheng, Jiangping, and Dongxing areas. In recent years, with the deepening of reform and opening up, a large number of vernacular Chinese-speakers have gone to the Gin islands to do business, living together with the Gin. Therefore, vernacular Chinese will further become

²¹ <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2006-11-01> (accessed January 11, 2016).

the lingua franca or the common language of the Gin community, with vernacular Chinese being used more widely than the Gin language.

Third, the younger generations only speak Putonghua and/or vernacular Chinese, and are unwilling to speak, or not able to speak, the Gin language. However, the Gin language still has vitality. The Gin language has always played an important role in the diplomatic history of China and Vietnam. During its assistance in Vietnam's war against France in the 1940s and 1950s, and in particular its assistance in Vietnam's war against the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, the State selected a large number of Gin youths, training them to master Vietnamese and to become Vietnamese translators.

In short, the Gin language, vernacular Chinese, and Putonghua will coexist in the long term. Meanwhile, the Gin language in Guangxi, under the positive protection of the Gin, has a great vitality because of the demands made by economic and trade activities.

Part 3: Language variation and change

Chapter 8

Overview of language variation

Originally, language variation was an important concept in sociolinguistics; however, the term is now likely to be used as a synonym for “language change” by some scholars, which has led to a confusing relationship between concepts such as language variation, language change, and language difference. In sociolinguistics, formal language changes or differences are regarded as examples of language variation only if the formal differences are related to social factors; language forms can change along with social factors, resulting in a covariant relationship. Changes that occur when language forms do not change along with social factors and are not in a covariant relationship with them would then be referred to as “language changes” instead of “language variations.”

In some language communities, language variation is generally related to region,²² gender, age, and certain other social factors. The languages used in a community always show formal differences due to differences in region, gender, age, and other factors.

8.1 Language differences in different villages

Due to the separation caused by geographical elements, such as mountains and lakes, spatial distance is generated between language communities in different areas. A single language in different regions is generally distinct in terms of dialects, subdialects, and vernacular varieties. For some languages, vernacular varieties classified as the same subdialect differ even in villages located very close to one another. Take, for example, the Zhuang language spoken in eight unincorporated villages governed by Wulong Village, Nachen Township, Yongning County, Guangxi Province. There are four phonological differences among these eight villages. According to these four phonological differences, the local villagers can immediately recognize which village the speaker comes from. Therefore, these phonological differences function to identify a speaker’s village of origin (see Table 8.1).

²² Geographical language differences are naturally caused by social factors. See the examples given below.

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in *Yuyan yu renlei: Zhonghua minzu shehui yuyan toudi*, 123–129. Minzu University Press, 2000.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501511837-008>

Table 8.1: Phonological comparison of Zhuang language varieties in the unincorporated villages of Wulong Village.

	Tanxue ^a	Pingge	Namu	Dongxu ^b	Gezhang	Gloss
1. Rhyme (<i>oi~ei</i>)	<i>poi</i> ³³	<i>pei</i> ³³				“go”
	<i>loi</i> ³³	<i>lei</i> ³³				“where”
	<i>koi</i> ³³	<i>kei</i> ³³				“near”
2. Rhyme (<i>i~oi</i>)	<i>ti</i> ³³			<i>toi</i> ³³		“he”
	<i>tɕi</i> ³⁵			<i>tɕoi</i> ³⁵		“paper”
	<i>ti</i> ³⁵			<i>toi</i> ³⁵		“touch gently”
3. Rhyme (<i>i:u~iu</i>)	<i>thi:u</i> ⁵¹			<i>thiu</i> ⁵¹		“jump”
	<i>li:u</i> ³³			<i>liu</i> ³³		“laugh”
	<i>ti:u</i> ³³			<i>tiu</i> ³³		“clever”
4. Tone value (33~55)	<i>pa</i> ³³ <i>tak</i> ³³				<i>pa</i> ⁵⁵ <i>tak</i> ⁵⁵	“crucian carp”
	<i>lak</i> ³³				<i>lak</i> ⁵⁵	“hard-working”
	<i>thak</i> ³³				<i>thak</i> ⁵⁵	“crack”

Data source: Ban Zhao (1995: 73).

^aThe phonological features in this village are consistent with those in Dingjin Village and Nawu Village.

^bThe phonological features in this village are consistent with those in Huatai Village.

Table 8.1 shows phonological differences between Tanxue Village and four other villages primarily in terms of vowel (or vowel cluster) and tone. The rhyme *oi* in Tanxue Village is pronounced *ei* in Pingge Village; the rhyme *i* in Tanxue Village is pronounced *oi* in Namu Village; the rhyme *i:u* in Tanxue Village is pronounced *iu:* in Dongxu Village; and tone value 33 in Tanxue Village is pronounced as tone value 55 in Gezhang Village.

The phonological differences between those unincorporated villages of Wulong Village are probably related to the influences of family names, migration-based language contact, and other factors.

8.1.1 Influences caused by family names and migration

The villagers from an unincorporated village are generally linked to one another through family names. Villagers from the same village or groups of villages share

a family name that indicates their village(s) of origin. In contrast, villagers with different family names have different origins. For example, Tanxue Village, Dingjin Village, and Namu Village are geographically connected to one another, while they are separated from Gezhang Village, whose phonological system is different from the phonological systems of the other three villages. However, most villagers from these three villages use the family name Pan, indicating they have the same villages of origin, and their phonological systems are fully consistent.

In Gezhang Village, the two most widespread family names are Huang and Pan, while in Namu Village, the two most widespread family names are Luo and Pan. These two villages share the family name Pan, but the population of villagers with the family name Pan in these two villages is smaller than that of those named Huang and Luo respectively. Because of their different origins, the phonological features associated with the family names Huang and Luo are distinct. However, each of these family names is dominant in its village, so the phonological features of the family names Huang and Luo are dominant in their villages and mark the phonological distinctions between these two villages.

Moreover, the family name of all the villagers in Pingge Village is Wei, and its source is apparently different from that of the family name in Tanxue Village; therefore, it is not possible for the phonological systems in these two villages to be identical.

8.1.2 Influences of language contact

Language contact between different languages generally influences their phonological structures. The rhyme *i:u* in Tanxu Zhuang is pronounced *iu* in Dongxu Village in most instances. *iu* is one of the rhymes in the Chinese dialect known locally as Pinghua. The Zhuang language only has the rhyme *i:u*, not *iu*. Why, then, does Dongxu Zhuang have the rhyme *iu*? The answer lies in the fact that villagers with the family name Ling speak Pinghua. The Pinghua spoken in the village has continuously mixed with the Zhuang language; thus, the rhyme *iu* in Pinghua was borrowed into Zhuang and, finally, replaced the original Zhuang rhyme *i:u*.

8.2 Gender-based language differences

In real life, it can always be perceived that female speech sounds like male speech, and that male speech sounds like female speech. These two styles of speech are gender-based differences of speech, which may be phonological,

lexical, or grammatical, or related to different colloquial styles. In some languages or individuals, these distinctions are very apparent, while in others they are not.

In the Wenshui language, a dialect of Taiwan's Taiya language, a large number of words exhibit obvious gender-based differences (see Table 8.2).

Table 8.2: Lexical comparison of gender-based differences in the Wenshui dialects of the Taiya language.

Type of difference	Male usage	Female usage	Gloss
1. word-final	<i>kahuy</i>	<i>kahu-niq</i>	“tree,” “firewood”
	<i>rasul</i>	<i>rasul-iq</i>	“sprout”
	<i>raan</i>	<i>ran-iq</i>	“road”
	<i>matas</i>	<i>mat-iq</i>	“tattoo”
	<i>ca-caqis</i>	<i>ca-ca-²iŋ</i>	“thread”
	<i>c-um-aqis</i>	<i>c-um-a-²iŋ</i>	“sew”
	<i>kucu²</i>	<i>kɤ-hiŋ</i>	“head louse”
	<i>qabubu²</i>	<i>qabub-iŋ</i>	“hat”
	<i>qapugag</i>	<i>qapu-ri²</i>	“kernel,” “earwax”
	<i>quras</i>	<i>qur-i²</i>	“white hair”
	<i>raqal</i>	<i>raq-ni²</i>	“tree branch”
	<i>lata²</i>	<i>lata-nux</i>	“courtyard”
	<i>qurip</i>	<i>quri-yux</i>	“ginger”
	<i>k-um-ai²</i>	<i>k-um-ai-huw</i>	“excavate”
	<i>buluq</i>	<i>buliq-uw</i>	“star”
	<i>mauxa²</i>	<i>muxa-al</i>	“illness,” “pain”
	<i>lihbaw</i>	<i>lih-ka²</i>	“light”
	<i>pcigpak</i>	<i>pcig-ha</i>	“chest”
	<i>kanawnu²</i>	<i>kana-iril</i>	“woman”
	<i>ha-habuk</i>	<i>ha-hab-il</i>	“T-shaped belt”
<i>qumu²</i>	<i>qumu-li²</i>	“rice cake”	

Table 8.2 (continued)

Type of difference	Male usage	Female usage	Gloss
2. infix	<i>qasug</i>	<i>qas-in-ug</i>	“wild beast”
	<i>guquh</i>	<i>guq-il-uh</i>	“banana”
	<i>rulug</i>	<i>rul-i-ug</i>	“treetop”
	<i>q-um-alup</i>	<i>q-um-alu-a-p</i>	“hunt”
	<i>s-um-ayug</i>	<i>a-um-ayu-na-g</i>	“replace”
3. consonant deletion	<i>ra g um</i>	<i>raum</i>	“needle”
	<i>makatatiralan</i>	<i>makatatialan</i>	“(rice) seed”
	<i>mnahuqil</i>	<i>minuqil</i>	“die”
4. consonant shift	<i>iluk</i>	<i>ihuk</i>	“strawberry”
	<i>hbug</i>	<i>lbug</i>	“bud”
	<i>sa-span</i>	<i>sa-sʔan</i>	“raise”
	<i>man-caqrug</i>	<i>man-caʔrux</i>	“stand up”
	<i>g-um-ba</i>	<i>g-um-ʔa</i>	“weeding”
	<i>giqas</i>	<i>ʔiqas</i>	“new”
	<i>ta pa punu q</i>	<i>taʔaʔunux</i>	“vine”
	<i>t-um-inun</i>	<i>t-um-inu q</i>	“weave”
<i>c-um-ius</i>	<i>c-um-inu q</i>	“witchcraft”	
5. different morphological form	<i>ʔutiq</i>	<i>rauq</i>	“floor”
	<i>haun</i>	<i>hayriŋ</i>	“loose”

Data source: Li Renkui (1983: 94).

Table 8.2 shows that, in the Wenshui dialect, the features of word formation adopted by male and female speakers can roughly be divided into five categories. First, where words used by male speakers are concerned, word roots can take certain suffixes, sometimes with certain changes. Second, where words used by male speakers are concerned, an infix can be inserted between the vowel and last consonant of the last syllable. Third, where words used by female speakers are concerned, one of the consonants of the word root can be deleted. Fourth, among words used by male speakers, one or more consonants

of the word root can be replaced. Fifth, word forms adopted by males are different from those used by females.

The characteristics of word formation mentioned above show that, in the Wenshui dialect, the word use of female speakers is relatively conservative and changes slowly; in contrast, the word use of male speakers changes relatively fast.

How can this phenomenon be explained? Some scholars propose the secret-language hypothesis, whereby male speakers seem to make use of morphological changes intentionally in order to use a secret language. This also occurs among children in Norway. Secret languages were first used in male groups, but, as a result of extended contact between male and female speakers, female speakers began to understand the secret languages (but do not use them).²³

8.3 Age differences in language use

In a large number of languages, speakers from different age groups speak differently. Take Taoping Qiang, spoken in Li County, Sichuan Province, as an example. The speech of older speakers retains consonant clusters that, in contrast, have been simplified in the speech of younger speakers. See the examples given below.

Table 8.3: Changes in consonant clusters by age group in the Qiang ethnic groups in Li County.

Older people	Younger people	Gloss
<i>khsi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>hi</i> ⁵⁵	“new”
<i>qhsua</i> ⁵⁵	<i>tshua</i> ⁵⁵	“mountain”
<i>gzi</i> ²⁴¹	<i>dzi</i> ²⁴¹	“spicy”
<i>kh̥sua</i> ⁵⁵	<i>t̥shua</i> ⁵⁵	“comb”
<i>gzue</i> ³³	<i>dzue</i> ³³	“plow”
<i>kh̥ci</i> ⁵⁵	<i>t̥chi</i> ⁵⁵	“dzo”
<i>gzy</i> ³³	<i>dzy</i> ³³	“light”

Source: Sun Hongkai (1981: 10).

²³ This is an idea proposed by Dr. Otto Dahl, a Norwegian linguist. It is cited from Li Renkui (1983: 91).

In particular, when a language community becomes open or comes in contact with other language communities, age-based differences in the language become particularly apparent. Over the 1950s, a Zhuang language scholar named Liang Min traveled to the Guangxi Zhuang ethnic area from Beijing several times to carry out fieldwork on the Zhuang language. In 1977, Liang Min noted obvious phonological distinctions between different age groups (old/middle-aged/young) in the suburban districts of his home town, Nanning City. His preliminary survey found that, in the speech of most Zhuang people older than fifty years, consonant clusters such as *pl*, *pʰl*, *kl*, *kw*, *kʰl*, *ml*, *hl*, and *kʰw* are retained. In the speech of thirty-year-old people, most of the consonant clusters are simplified, with the exception of two (*kw* and *kʰw*). In the speech of those younger than thirty, all of the consonant clusters are simplified to simple consonants (Liang Min 1987: 25–26).

Huang Xing investigated phonological variation situations in the Mian language among a hundred Yao people. All of these speakers are bilingual speakers of Yao and Mandarin Chinese, and some of them are trilingual or multilingual. His survey mainly investigated differences in the pronunciation of some codas. For example, the coda *-m* is typically pronounced *-m*, *-n*, or *-ŋ*. His investigation showed that the phonological variations in the Mian language spoken by the Longsheng Yao people are related to age, region, and educational level, with age being the most significant factor (see Table 8.4).

Table 8.4: Phonological variation in the Mian language as spoken by the Longsheng Yao people.

Age	Number of samples	Ratio of phonological variation
10–19	13	39.8
20–49	54	23.2
50–59	10	8.7
60–84	23	4.8

Data based on Huang Xing (1990: 31).

Table 8.4 shows that the younger the speakers, the higher the amount of language variation; the older the speakers, the lower the amount. Synchronic language differences generally reflect diachronic language evolution. These research results reflect a general pattern. As Chen says:

In general, the elders are more likely to think that the things which they are familiar with and which they have been accustomed to are better, so they keep the majority of a language's original forms. Younger people are less influenced by old things and prefer fashionable things, so they are sensitive to language variations caused by various social factors. It is easier for younger people to accept new forms, which leads to different social psychologies. Therefore, the older and the younger generations hold different attitudes towards the same language variation, which leads to language differences with regard to age. (Chen Songcen 1985: 116–117)

Chapter 9

The categories of language variation

“Language variation” refers to situations where a language or dialect presents relatively stable and systematic differences because of the social context of speakers – such as social hierarchy, occupation, nationality, religion, and differing relationships between communicators – or different communicative purposes, emotions, methods, and occasions. These differences can concern phonology, the lexicon, grammar, or style.

Based on Chinese scholars’ research findings, I attempt to divide variation in ethnic minority languages into five categories: social variation, variation by role, religious variation, socio-psychological variation, and contextual variation. Each category comprises many subcategories, twenty-one in all (See Figure 9.1). Some variations are restricted by primary social factors and can be restricted by other social factors as well. Therefore, to a certain degree, there can be transitional categories.

9.1 Social variation

9.1.1 Social hierarchical variation

After private ownership appeared in human society, its members had different economic statuses. They were divided into various levels of a social hierarchy, leading to the appearance of a well-defined hierarchical social system.

In feudal society or serfdom, each social status had a stable place in a hierarchy, and each had a definite title. Boundaries were well established between the different social levels; persons from different hierarchical levels could not marry each other. In terms of hierarchy, the majority of the members of a class inherited their family’s position from generation to generation. In terms of economy, policy, living customs, dress, and titles, the social levels were kept distinct from one another. These man-made social distances generally constituted barriers that, to a certain degree, prevented communication between hierarchical levels. In terms of language use, these social divides accelerated the formation of hierarchical variation.

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9.1.1.1 Hierarchical titles: Kinship terms in the Dai language as an example

“Hierarchical titles” refers to the varying titles, and variations in title, adopted by members of different levels of the social hierarchy in a hierarchical society. In the feudal society of the Dai ethnic group in Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province, the supreme lord, the Zhaopianling, was the first-level general representative. In order to present his family’s uniqueness and highlight their unparalleled status, imperial prominence, and most honorable bloodline, all of the kinship terms adopted by the supreme lord’s generation and those of his grandparents, parents, and grandchildren in Dai were changed into the classical language of Theravada Buddhism, the Pali language. Because of this change, the kinship terms used by the supreme lord were quite different from those used by other members of the nobility and commoners.

9.1.1.2 Honorific terms: Tibetan as an example

When Tibetan people from Lhasa City, Tibet Autonomous Region, communicate with one another, their choice of words depends on the different social statuses of the interlocutors. If the hearer or another person mentioned in the conversation has a higher social status than the speaker, the speaker generally chooses an honorific term from a set of words with the same lexical and grammatical meaning. If the listener or another person mentioned in the conversation has a lower social status than the speaker, the speaker will choose the common form of the word. The differences between the honorific and common forms partially reflect the social hierarchies in traditional Tibetan feudal society and the differences between social levels (see Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Examples of the system of honorific terms in Tibetan.

Common forms	<i>a pha</i> , “father”	<i>a ma</i> , “mother”	<i>shi</i> , “die”
General forms	<i>pa lags</i> , “lord father”	<i>ma lags</i> , “lord mother”	<i>gshegs</i> , “pass away”
Honorific forms	<i>yab</i> , “honorific/honorable father” <i>gyal yab</i> , “Buddha’s father,” “Dalai and Panchen’s father”	<i>yum</i> , “honorific/honorable mother” <i>rgyal yum</i> , “Buddha’s mother,” “Dalai and Panchen’s mother”	<i>dgongs pa rdzogs</i> , “(nobility leader) pass away” <i>sku zhing la phebs</i> , “(living Buddha and monk) pass away” <i>dgung du gshegs</i> , “(emperor) pass away”

Data source: Hu Shujin (1985: 93, 102).

9.1.2 Social relationship variations

Social relationships in a language community can be divided into horizontal and vertical relationships based on the direction of social communication. Horizontal relationships are those of marriage, brotherhood, partnership, and so on in modern society, while vertical relationships are those between ruler and minister, father and son, and so on in ancient society.

Like different social hierarchies, different social relations also influence or restrict language use, and thereby give rise to language variation. These variations are primarily reflected in terms of personal pronouns and social terms of address as well as kinship terms. In real society, the use of these variations not only indicates degrees of intimacy and social distance between communicators but also serves to establish or maintain their social relationships. Moreover, it partially reflects some of the communicators' social features.

9.1.2.1 Horizontal relations

Horizontal relations are relations between social equals or people of identical social status that objectively exist between communicators, or that they are prepared to maintain or establish. The pragmatic variations of these social relationships are primarily manifested by common and intimate forms of personal pronouns.

In Xishuangbanna feudal society, the common forms of personal pronouns are mainly used among Dai people with identical social status. Members of a higher level in the social hierarchy or elders aiming to express modesty towards the lower social hierarchy or younger generation occasionally use common terms. Intimate forms are primarily used by couples or between friends of the same age. The use of common and intimate forms of personal pronouns in the Dai language is set out in Table 9.2.

9.1.2.2 Vertical relations

Vertical relations involve superior–subordinate relations, power relations, or unequal social relations that objectively exist between communicators, or that they are prepared to maintain or establish. In the Dai language of Xishuangbanna, self-important, contemptuous, modest, and respectful forms of personal pronouns reflect the vertical relations between communicators (see Table 9.3).

In Xishuangbanna feudal society, when a person higher in the social hierarchy or of an older generation communicates with someone lower in the social hierarchy or of a younger generation, they often use the self-important forms to refer to themselves. Using this form of address can highlight or raise their

Table 9.2: Comparison of common and intimate forms of personal pronouns in the Dai language.

	First person		Second person		Third person	
Common forms	<i>to⁵⁵hau⁴¹</i>	“I”	<i>su⁵⁵</i>	“you (sg.), you (pl.)”	<i>xau⁵⁵, to⁵⁵tan³³</i>	“he”
	<i>hau⁴¹</i>	“we,” “I”	<i>su⁵⁵tsau¹³</i>	“you (pl.)”	<i>xau⁵⁵tan³³</i>	“they”
Intimate forms	<i>ha⁴¹</i>	“I”	<i>xij⁴¹</i>	“you (sg.)”		
	<i>tu⁵⁵</i>	“we,” “I”	<i>su⁵⁵</i>	“you (pl.), you (sg.)”		

Data source: Tong Wei and Dao Xiaozhong (1958: 56–63).

status during social interactions. As shown in Table 9.3, *ku⁵⁵*, “I” (transcribed *gū* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 孤 in Chinese characters), and *kau⁵⁵*, “I” (transcribed *guǎ* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 寡 in Chinese characters), convey an exaggerated sense of the speaker’s own importance. When addressing another person, communicators in Xishuangbanna feudal society generally use contemptuous forms that deprecate the other person’s status during social contact. As set out in Table 9.3, use of *muŋ⁴¹*, “you (sg.),” and *man⁴¹*, “he,” indicates that the speaker despises the listener.

In contrast, when a person who is younger or lower in the social hierarchy is talking with someone older or higher in the social hierarchy, he or she uses modest forms. This usage serves to highlight the listener’s noble status by emphasizing or lowering the speaker’s actual social status, thereby showing the speaker’s respect and polite attitude towards the listener. For example, both *xa¹³*, “servant,” and *xvi¹³*, “flunkey,” in Table 9.3 refer to oneself using the lowest level of the terms of address. When a person who is younger or lower in the social hierarchy addresses another person, he or she uses respectful terms because the interlocutor is older or higher in the social hierarchy. For example, both *to⁵⁵tsau¹³*, “you (sg.),” and *xau⁵⁵tsau¹³*, “he,” in Table 9.3 convey that the speaker is expressing respect for the listener.

9.2 Variation by role

From the perspective of anthropology and sociology, “status” refers to a person’s position or identity as endowed by a certain social system, such as that of

Table 9.3: Personal pronouns indicating vertical relations in the Dai language.

Lower-hierarchy addressing higher-hierarchy	Self-important forms	<i>ku</i> ⁵⁵	“I” 孤	first person
		<i>kau</i> ⁵⁵	“I” 寡	
		<i>tsau</i> ¹³ <i>man</i> ⁴¹	“I, myself”	
	Contemptuous forms	<i>mun</i> ⁴¹	“you (sg.)”	second person
		<i>man</i> ⁴¹	“he”	third person
Higher-hierarchy addressing lower-hierarchy	Modest forms	<i>xa</i> ¹³	“I” 仆	first person
		<i>xɔj</i> ¹³	“I” 奴才	
		<i>tu</i> ⁵⁵ <i>xɔj</i> ¹³	“we”	
		<i>tu</i> ⁵⁵ <i>xɔ</i> ¹³	“we” (more modest)	
	Respectful forms	<i>to</i> ⁵⁵ <i>tsau</i> ¹³	“you (sg.)”	second person
		<i>tan</i> ³³	“you (sg.)” (more respectful)	
		<i>tun</i> ⁵⁵ <i>tsau</i> ¹³	“you (sg.)” (imperial), “your highness”	third person
		<i>tan</i> ³³ , <i>xau</i> ⁵⁵ <i>tsau</i> ¹³	“he”	
		<i>tan</i> ³³ <i>tsau</i> ¹³	“he” (more respectful)	
		<i>tun</i> ⁵⁵ <i>tan</i> ³³	“him” (imperial), “his highness”	

Data source: Tong Wei and Dao Xiaozhong (1958: 56–63).

Buddha, wife, or husband. “Role” refers to a person’s patterns of behavior carried out against the background of social expectations after attaining a certain status.

Different social roles are generally marked by different features, some of which are not related to language. For example, in a language community, old people and young people dress differently; husbands and wives have different rights and obligations. However, some role features are related to language, especially those features that are related to kinship terminology systems. The language forms that reflect role distinctions and features are called role-based

variations. In Dai, teknonymy and tekeisonymy reflect role-based variations in kinship terminology.

9.2.1 Teknonymy

“Teknonymy” refers to a practice whereby parents address their relatives using their child’s term of address, rather than from their own perspective. Each teknonymic term in the Dai language can be changed into the pattern “my child’s . . .” For example, after a man in Dai society has a child, he should no longer call his brother’s wife “sister-in-law” but rather *mɛ³³lon⁵⁵*, “aunt,” instead. Here, *mɛ³³lon⁵⁵* is a teknonym that actually has the meaning “my child’s aunt,” rather than “my own aunt.” In the Dai language, teknonymy mainly applies to members of the older generation or the same generation, rather than the younger generation. See the examples in chapter 10, “Variation of kinship terms in Dai.”

9.2.2 Tekeisonymy

“Tekeisonymy” refers to variation in kinship terms in the Dai language involving a nickname or the full name of the addressee’s eldest child (first child) and the prefix *pɔ³³*, “father,” or *mɛ³³*, “mother.” If the eldest child dies, the parents continue using this nickname or turn to the second child’s nickname.

Teknonymy and tekeisonymy are different in two aspects. First, teknonymy is used only if the addresser has a child; if the addressee has a child, then tekeisonymy will be used. Second, tekeisonymy is adopted by the same or younger generation, not by the older generation.

In Dai, teknonymy and tekeisonymy become role markers for the parents of the addresser and addressee respectively. These two forms of variation reflect the age and changing roles of addressers and addressees in Dai. These two kinds of variation can be regarded as kinship terms reflecting the age hierarchies in traditional Dai society.

In the Dai society of Menghai County, Xishuangbanna City, age is an important standard used to distinguish the statuses of social actors, which can be divided into four levels.

The first age level covers youths and children younger than fifteen years old. They neither have the status of adults nor have reached the age of taking on feudal burdens. The village community does not allocate lands to these members. They lack a “spirit” after death and their funerals cannot follow the adult ceremony. Monks are not permitted to be invited to chant prayers for

them. They are not allowed to be dressed and laid in coffins, nor do villagers help to carry away and bury their corpses.

The second age level covers young people older than fifteen and younger than eighteen years. They begin to have the status of adults and begin to study knowledge and bear the burden of responsibility. The village community allocates land to them (one-quarter of an adult's allotment). After death, they have a "spirit"; they are permitted to be buried with an adult funeral ceremony.

The third age level cover adults older than eighteen and younger than fifty.

The fourth age level covers people older than fifty, who enjoy a variety of rights and obligations.

Here, it is worth mentioning the shift from the first age level to the second age level, which actually represents a substantive improvement from not having the status of an adult to having it, from being without a "soul" to having one, from lacking identity to having it. These improvements have very important implications for traditional social culture in Dai. The transition entails many ethnic cultural customs, such as tattooing and ohaguro, to mark the changes. Moreover, the transition requires language to reflect these changes, thereby becoming a marker of them; they are usually encoded linguistically through teknonymy and tekeisonymy.

Early marriage, at around the age of fourteen or fifteen, was historically popular among the Dai (Li Foyi 1933: 92), and couples had children as early as the age of fifteen or sixteen. Young parents within this age range underwent changes in two respects. On the one hand, they began to shift from the first age level to the second age level, from lacking identity to having it, from not having the status of an adult to having it. On the other hand, they began to shift from their original identity as children to that as parents, from a relatively junior generation to a relatively senior generation. Teknonymy and tekeisonymy emphasize the identities of addresser and addressee respectively, as adapted to the shift to double roles in Dai society.

9.3 Religious variation

In Dai communities in Xishuangbanna, most of the people follow Theravada Buddhism; Buddhist temples and monks are respected throughout society. Based on their traditional customs, local Dai teenage boys generally need to take the tonsure as monks and live in Buddhist temples. After a period of monastic discipline, most of the monks return to secular society. Converting to Buddhism and resuming secular life have important influences on the kinship terminology

system and have led to the appearance of kinship term variations involving Buddhist and laic terms.

9.3.1 Buddhist terms

A Buddhist term is a special term of address for a man who becomes a Buddhist monk. In Xishuangbanna, in the Jinghong area, if a Dai man becomes a Buddhist monk, the Dai people call his elder brother *phaʔ³³pi³³*, “monk’s elder brother.” If the elder brother is a Buddha, he would call his elder brother *tuʔ⁵⁵pi³³*, “Buddha’s elder brother.”

9.3.2 Laic terms

A laic term is a term of address used for a short time by an addressee’s relatives after he has given up his Buddhist life. For example, after a monk resumes secular life, he is called *tsi¹¹nvi¹¹*; after a Buddha resumes secular life, he is called *xaʔ⁵⁵na:n⁵⁵*; and so forth. The purpose of using laic terms in Dai society is to show that a person who has practiced monastic discipline and become a new man through Buddhist enlightenment should enjoy far higher social status and prestige than ordinary people who have not taken Buddhist vows.

9.4 Socio-psychological variation

In real social life, language variation not only marks the communicators’ social hierarchies, social relations, and social roles, but also expresses their emotions. For example, the word forms of classifiers in the Miao used in Weining, Guizhou Province, vary depending on the speaker’s emotions. Specifically, when the speaker expresses strong emotions about an object, augmentative classifiers are used; when the speaker indicates simple and ordinary emotions about an object, ordinary classifiers are used; and when the speaker expresses tender or loving emotions, diminutive classifiers are used.

Marking ordinary terms is the most normal use of classifiers in Weining Miao. Augmentatives and diminutives are two emotional variations of classifiers in Miao. In application, word forms vary, generally depending on the gender of the modified noun (human beings; see Table 9.4).

Table 9.4: Examples of the emotional variation of the classifier *ge* in the Miao used in Weining, Guizhou Province.

Gender of the modified noun	Augmentatives	Diminutives	Ordinary terms
female	classifier: <i>lu</i> ⁵⁵	<i>la</i> ⁵⁵	<i>lai</i> ⁵⁵
	<i>lu</i> ⁵⁵ <i>a</i> ³³ <i>bho</i> ³⁵ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>la</i> ⁵⁵ <i>ti</i> ⁵⁵ <i>ŋghau</i> ³⁵⁻⁵⁵ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>lai</i> ⁵⁵ <i>a</i> ³³ <i>bho</i> ³⁵ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵
	CL woman this “this (sturdy) woman”	CL girl this “this (little) girl”	CL woman this “this (ordinary) woman”
male	classifier: <i>tsi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>tsa</i> ⁵⁵	<i>tsai</i> ⁵⁵
	<i>tsai</i> ⁵⁵ <i>a</i> ⁵⁵⁻³¹ <i>zey</i> ⁵³⁻³¹ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>tsa</i> ⁵⁵ <i>a</i> ⁵⁵⁻¹¹ <i>la</i> ¹¹ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>tsai</i> ⁵⁵ <i>a</i> ⁵⁵⁻³¹ <i>zey</i> ⁵³⁻³¹ <i>ŋi</i> ⁵⁵
	CL man this “this (sturdy) man”	CL boy this “this (little) boy”	CL man this “this (ordinary) man”

Data source: Wang Deguang (1987).

9.5 Contextual variation

Human beings deliver information and communicate thoughts and feelings via language, using different media and delivery methods, such as spoken sounds and writing systems. For example, we can invite someone to a conference orally or by writing and sending a letter. Here, both spoken and written language can serve as the medium for delivering an invitation.

In real life, “spoken language” primarily means the language used to communicate information via sounds. The speaker can adjust his or her own speech forms according to the listener’s responses at any moment, and can also provide explanations and clarifications whenever the listener so requests. Therefore, more repetitive methods and various phonological features are adopted in spoken language.

“Written language” refers to the language expressed via characters based on spoken language. Most of its instances have the characteristics of unidirectional communication. Because the speaking and listening processes are generally independently completed at different times and in different places, written language is quite different from spoken language. Considering the fact that spoken language requires the speaker and the listener to communicate face-to-face, the speaker must have enough time to process and refine it. These differences account for why two different pragmatic varieties arise. In terms of phonology and the lexicon, we might call them “literal” and “colloquial.”

Literary and colloquial readings are widely distributed within Chinese dialects and the languages of China. For example, let us consider typical examples in Tibetan dialects. Since the creation of Tibetan writing in the seventh century, a large number of documents of both literature and history have accumulated, on which basis a uniform, superdialectal, and standard literary language (or so-called written language) has been formed. However, the Tibetan spoken language varies by region. Moreover, a standard spoken language for the entire Tibetan ethnic group has not yet been formed. The written language expressed by the Tibetan writing system roughly reflects the Tibetan language spoken in the middle ancient and late ancient periods, so it is different from the spoken languages of modern dialects in different places. Table 9.5 displays phonological differences between spoken language and written language in the Tianjun variety of the Amdo dialect of Tibetan.

Table 9.5: Phonological comparison of spoken and written language in the Tianjun variety of the Amdo dialect of Tibetan.

Example	Transcription	Gloss	Literal pronunciation	Colloquial pronunciation
མི་དྲིལ་	<i>mid</i>	“throat”	[mət]	[ɲət]
རྩེ་མཚམས་སྤྲོད་	<i>rgya srang</i>	“street”	[rdʒa saŋ]	[rdʒa ʂaŋ]
ལྷ་མཚམས་	<i>a bra</i>	“Manx mouse”	[atʂa]	[aφra]
བལ་	<i>bal</i>	“wool”	[wal]	[wa]
དཀྱིལ་	<i>dkyil</i>	“central”	[htɕəl]	[htɕi]
དངུལ་	<i>dngul</i>	“silver”	[rŋəl]	[rŋu]
དར་བུ་	<i>dar ba</i>	“buttermilk”	[tar wA]	[ta rA]
ལག་པ་	<i>lag pa</i>	“hand”	[lək pA]	[ləkua]
ནོར་བུ་	<i>nor bu</i>	“treasure”	[nor wə]	[no rə]
ཟོ་བུ་	<i>zo ba</i>	“bucket”	[so wA]	[sɔ:]
ནང་ཀ་	<i>nang ka</i>	“tomorrow”	[naŋ ka]	[naŋ hka]
སྤྲོད་	<i>spor</i>	“carry”	[hpor]	[φsor]

Data source: Xing Haining (1990).

Generally speaking, colloquial pronunciations in Tibetan are inherent in the existence of dialects. They represent natural changes to the earlier form of the language and are caused by the independent development of dialects through regional separation. Tibetan colloquial pronunciations are primarily used in Tibetan family life and daily communication. Tibetan literal pronunciations are extrinsic, and reflect both the locally transplanted pronunciations and the influence of the spread of Buddhism. Tibetan literary pronunciations are mostly used in formal and serious contexts such as religious activities, teaching, reporting, or reading articles.

Appendix: The categories of language variation

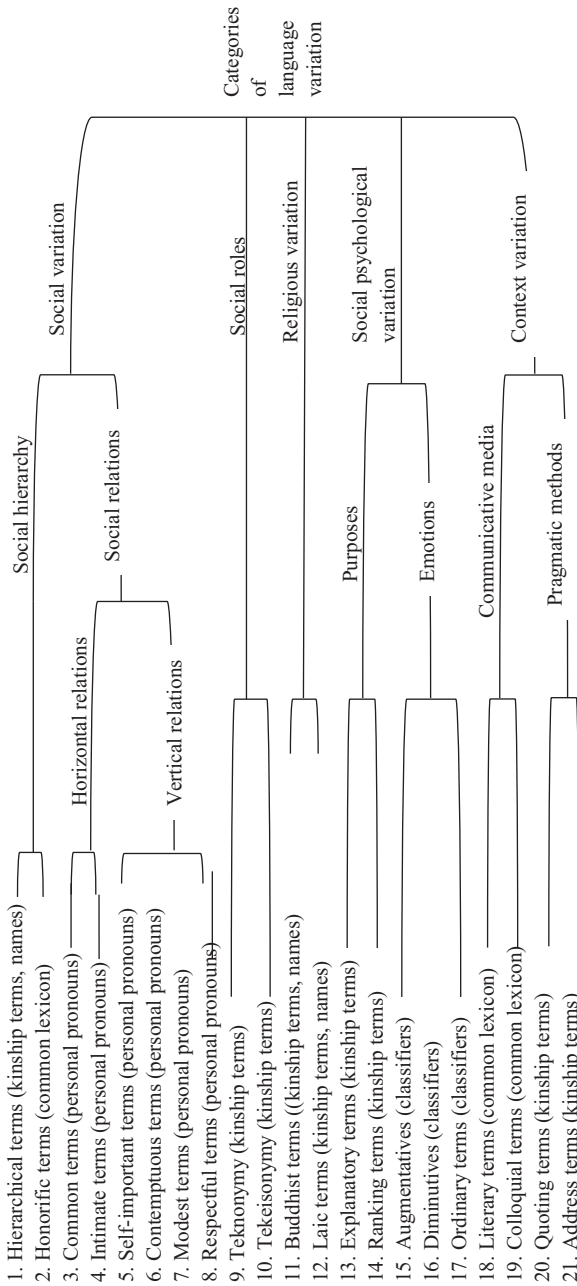


Figure 9.1: Categories of language variation.

Chapter 10

Variation of kinship terms in Dai

10.1 Introduction

In the pragmatic field of kinship terms, the Chinese ethnonymic scholars Feng Hanji (1936), Rui Yifu (1954), and Ling Chunsheng (1952) described the use of teknonymy in Mandarin in the 1930s and 1950s. After several decades, the linguist Wu Tieping called teknonymy *cong er chengwei* 从儿称谓. Moreover, when Rui Yifu carried out fieldwork on the Yaque Miao ethnic group in southern Sichuan, he discovered the phenomenon of tekeisonymy in the Miao language (Rui Yifu 1954). Luo Meizhen (1989) discusses some usages of kinship terminology in the Dai language.

At the end of the 1980s, S. S. Mufwene, a Greek scholar, published an article entitled “The pragmatics of kinship terms in Kituba” (1988). From a socio-pragmatic perspective, he described honorific usage and endearing usage in Kituba at length. However, it is still a very rare paper or book that describes the usage of a dozen kinship terms in a given language systematically.

This chapter aims to describe the usage of thirteen kinship terms in Dai, propose concepts relating to their variation, and provide definitions of them.

The data for the Dai language are based on my fieldwork. From 1987 to 1989, I went to Xishuangbanna, Dai Prefecture, Yunnan Province, to interview twenty-three Dai-speakers, including five females. They came from six locations, including three counties and one city (i.e., Yunjinghong Township in Jinghong City; Xiangshan Township, Menghui Township, and Mengzhe Township in Menghai County; and Mengla Township in Mengla County). The subjects were all between 38 and 97 years of age, with an average age of 60.5.

Before the democratic reforms of 1953, the old subjects had occupied various levels in the hierarchy of Dai feudal society, including those of senior officials and nobles in the old courts, immediate and collateral relatives of previous headmen, attendants of previous high-level leaders, monks and Buddhas who had resumed secular life, commoners from townships, and so on.

This chapter discusses pragmatic variation in the old kinship terms in Dai, but does not discuss the new kinship terms or the distinctions between the old and the new kinship terms. In the following sections, “Dai ethnic group” and “Dai language” refer strictly to varieties within Xishuangbanna Prefecture. When I returned to Xishuangbanna in 1994, I checked the data again.

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For convenience of discussion, I divide the thirteen types of kinship terms into seven groups.

10.2 Quoting terms and addressing terms

Quoting terms are also called reference terms, narrative terms, backing terms, or indirect terms. Addressing terms are also called face-to-face terms or direct terms. Quoting terms and addressing terms are two kinds of variation used from the perspective of the addresser.

Quoting terms are a standard variation in kinship terminology. In the context of both the traditional account of kinship terms as well as a new analysis of semantic components (Zhou Qingsheng 1990), quoting terms are generally regarded as the main subject of analysis.

Both the quoting terms and the addressing terms add an underlying meaning of “my . . .” and “(one’s) own . . .” to kinship terms. For example, the literal meaning of the quoting term *luk³³tsa:i⁴¹* in Dai is “male child” or “son.” Although the word does not include explicit markers indicating the meaning “my . . .” or “own . . .,” it implies this meaning.

The most important difference between quoting terms and addressing terms is that addressing terms are used when the addresser and addressee are talking face-to-face, while quoting terms are used when the addresser is addressing an absent addressee.

The use of quoting terms and addressing terms by relatives from different generations in the Dai ethnic group is very different. In terms of the kinship terms of the older generation, quoting and addressing terms generally do not come into conflict with one another.

However, in terms of kinship terms for the older generation’s step-kin, adoptive kin, claimed kin, and in-laws, quoting terms and addressing terms should be strictly separated. For example, when a Dai person from Yunjinghong Township addresses his or her own step-father, adoptive father, nominal father, or father-in-law, the addressing term for all these addressees is *pv³³*, “father,” while the quoting terms for these addressees are *pv³³na¹¹*, “step father,” *pv³³kep⁵⁵*, “adoptive father,” *pv³³leŋ¹¹*, “nominal father,” and *pv³³me⁴¹*, “father-in-law” (written language). When the addresser is addressing his or her own father’s non-relatives *pv³³kw¹¹pv³³seu³⁵*, “of the same age,” only the addressing term *pv³³*, “father,” not *i²⁵⁵pv³⁵*, “father,” can be used.

For relatives from the same generation, the use of quoting terms differs from that of addressing terms as well. See Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Comparison of quoting terms and addressing terms for relatives from the same generation in Dai.

Type of addressee	Quoting term	Addressing term	Type of addresser	Quoting term	Addressing term ^a
cousin elder brother	<i>pi</i> ³³ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹	<i>a:i</i> ¹³ <i>lon</i> ⁵⁵ <i>/a:i</i> ¹³ <i>/a:i</i> ¹³ <i>pi</i> ³³	cousin elder sister-in-law	<i>pai</i> ³³ <i>pai</i> ¹¹ <i>/i</i> ⁵⁵ <i>pai</i> ¹¹	same as the quoting terms/ <i>pi</i> ³³ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹
cousin younger sister	<i>pi</i> ³³ <i>ji</i> ⁴¹	<i>i</i> ⁵⁵ <i>pi</i> ³³ / <i>i</i> ¹³ <i>/i</i> ⁵⁵ <i>lon</i> ⁵⁵	cousin elder brother-in-law	<i>pi</i> ³³ <i>xyi</i> ⁵⁵ <i>/a:i</i> ¹³ <i>lon</i> ⁵⁵ <i>xyi</i> ⁵⁵	same as the quoting terms/ <i>pi</i> ³³ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹
cousin younger brother	<i>nv</i> : <i>ŋ</i> ¹¹ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹	call by nickname directly	cousin younger sister-in-law	<i>nv</i> : <i>ŋ</i> ¹¹ <i>pai</i> ¹¹	same as the quoting term/nickname
cousin younger brother	<i>nv</i> : <i>ŋ</i> ¹¹ <i>ji</i> ⁴¹	call by nickname directly	cousin younger brother-in-law	<i>nv</i> : <i>ŋ</i> ¹¹ <i>xyi</i> ⁵⁵	same as the quoting term/nickname

^aWhen the addressing term is the same as the quoting term, the former has a respectful and endearing emotive meaning. Such cases can be regarded as endearing terms (to be discussed in 10.7).

Table 10.1 shows that, when the addressee is of the same generation as the addresser, for example, elder brother, elder sister, younger brother, or younger sister, the quoting terms and addressing terms conflict with one another in terms of word forms, which should not be confused with one another. However, when the addressee is an in-law, for example, elder sister-in-law, elder brother-in-law, younger sister-in-law, or younger brother-in-law, the quoting terms can be either identical to or different from the addressing terms. If the quoting terms are identical to the addressing terms, the addressing terms express respect or an endearing emotion, with the properties of endearing terms as well (to be discussed in 10.7).

When applied to addressees of a younger generation, the use of addressing terms primarily depends on whether the addressee has a child or not.

If the addressee has a child, the addresser addresses the addressee with reference to the addressee's child. This type of addressing will be discussed in section 10.6 on *tekeisonymy*.

If the addressee has no child, the kinship terms are divided into two categories. First, when the addresser is addressing the addressee's own blood relatives, step-kin, claimed kin, or adoptive kin face-to-face, the addresser generally calls the addressee by name directly. It is worth mentioning the kinship term *luk*⁵⁵*fa*⁵⁵*fi*⁵⁵; it refers to twins, but the addresser should avoid using

this kinship term in a situation where the twins' mother is present because the mother will dislike it. Second, female in-laws such as daughters-in-law, nieces-in-law, and granddaughters-in-law are called *pai*¹¹, which means “getting a daughter-in-law” or “wife”; male in-laws such as sons-in-law, nephews-in-law, and grandsons-in-law are all called *xɿ*⁵⁵, which indicates “taking a son-in-law” or “husband.”

10.3 Ranking terms and explanatory terms

Most of the kinship terms in Dai are categorical kinship terms subordinated to the polysemous type (Zhou Qingsheng 1990: 27). These kinship terms are almost sufficient to address all relationships in the Dai ethnic group. However, on some occasions – for example, young people talking with adults or translating books into the Dai language – it is generally necessary to express a relationship by kinship terms precisely, and then two types of kinship terms arise: the first are explanatory terms used to clarify the specific kinship relationship; the second are ranking terms that follow the kinship term so as to clarify the order of seniority among brothers and sisters.

In the Dai language, paternal brothers and sisters are ranked according to gender rather than the sequence of natural birth; males and females are ranked separately. The names used to rank them generally contain *lon*⁵⁵, “the eldest (child)”; *ka:ŋ*⁵⁵, “elder (child)”; *nvi*¹¹, “younger (child)”; and *la*¹³, “the youngest (child).”²⁴ Only when there are more than four children do the ranking names show the sequence “four, five, six, . . .,” i.e.: *lon*⁵⁵, “the eldest (child)”; *ka:ŋ*⁵⁵, “elder (child)” or “the second (child)”; *nvi*¹¹, “younger (child)” or “the third (child)”; *si*³⁵, “the (fourth) child”; *ha*¹³, “the (fifth) child”; *hok*⁵⁵, “the sixth (child)”; . . .; *la*¹³, “(the youngest) child.” For example, assume that a Dai person's grandfather has six brothers and sisters. Among them, the eldest, third, and fifth siblings are the grandfather's brothers; the second, fourth, and sixth siblings are the grandfather's sisters. If a Dai person addresses them with ranking terms, the eldest one is called *pu*³⁵*lon*⁵⁵, “the eldest grandfather”; the third one is called *pu*³⁵*ka:ŋ*⁵⁵, “the second grandfather”; the fifth one is called *pu*³⁵*nvi*¹¹, “the third grandfather,” or *pu*³⁵*la*¹³, “the youngest grandfather”; the second one is called *ja*³³*lon*⁵⁵, “the eldest grandmother”; the fourth one is called *ja*³³*ka:ŋ*⁵⁵,

²⁴ This is an important supplement to Zhou Qingsheng (1990) provided by Luo Meizhen (personal communication).

“the second grandmother”; and the sixth one is called *ja³³nvi¹¹*, “the third grandmother,” or *ja³³la¹³*, “the youngest grandmother.”

Ranking terms in Dai are not used as widely as those in Mandarin. For example, for the brothers and sisters of a grandfather or grandmother, quoting terms or addressing terms, rather than ranking terms, are commonly used. Only when all of them are present are the ranking terms used to distinguish between them.

In the Dai ethnic group, ranking terms are adopted more frequently for the father’s generation than the grandfather’s generation. In terms of word formation, the quoting term and addressing term *pv³³loŋ⁵⁵* used of the father’s generation (literally translated “the eldest uncle” and referring to “the father’s brother” and “the mother’s eldest brother”) is composed of *pv³³*, “father,” and *loŋ⁵⁵*, “the eldest.” Another addressing term, *mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵* (literally translated as “the eldest aunt” and referring to “aunt,” “father’s sister,” and “mother’s sister”), is composed of *mɛ³³*, “mother,” and *loŋ⁵⁵* as ranking terms. These two kinship terms exemplify the typical ranking structure.

Originally, this type of word structure was probably used for ranking terms. Because of the increasing frequency of use, and social and cultural restrictions, they gradually received the status of quoting terms and addressing terms insofar as the two words can be followed by ranking terms. For example, *pv³³loŋ⁵⁵* is also called *pv³³loŋ⁵⁵loŋ⁵⁵*, “the eldest father’s brother” or “the eldest mother’s brother”; *pv⁵⁵loŋ⁵⁵ka:ŋ⁵⁵*, “the second father’s brother” or “the second mother’s brother”; *pv³³loŋ⁵⁵nvi¹¹*, “the third father’s brother” or “the third mother’s brother”; and so on. The ranking use of *mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵* is almost identical to that of *pv³³loŋ⁵⁵*. Only when *mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵* refers to the father’s first wife is *loŋ⁵⁵* a morpheme indicating ranking, and then *mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵* becomes a ranking term. For example, one historic Dai headman married three wives. His children called his first wife *mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵*, “the eldest mother,” his second wife *mɛ³³ka:ŋ⁵⁵*, “the second mother,” and his third wife *mɛ³³nvi¹¹*, “the youngest mother.”

An explanatory term uses a phrase to explain and define one of the relationships so as to avoid ambiguities during communication. Let us take the following idioms in Dai as an example.

<i>a:u⁵⁵</i>	<i>a⁵⁵</i>		
“father’s younger brother”	“father’s younger sister”		
<i>nv:ŋ¹¹</i>	<i>pv³³</i>	<i>a:i¹³na¹¹</i>	
“younger brother and younger sister”	“father”	“mother’s younger brother”	
<i>iŋ⁵⁵na¹¹</i>	<i>nv:ŋ¹¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³</i>	
“mother’s younger sister”	“younger brother and younger sister”	“mother”	

In terms of composition, explanatory terms can be divided into two categories: explanatory terms with names and explanatory terms without names. Explanatory terms with names comprise two parts that include an explained name in initial position and an explanation used to explain the explained name. Let us consider the term $lun^{41} pi^{33} tsa:^{41} pv^{33}$, “father’s elder brother.” In this term, lun^{44} , “uncle,” is an explained name and $pi^{33} tsa:^{41} pv^{33}$ is an explanation. Table 10.2 provides a structural analysis and examples of explanatory terms with explained names in Dai.

Table 10.2: Structural analysis and examples of explanatory terms with explained names in Dai.

Explained name	Explanation	Meaning
lun^{41} “father’s elder brother”	$pi^{33} tsa:i^{41} pv^{33}$ “elder brother” + “father”	“ lun^{41} , father’s elder brother”
lun^{41} “mother’s elder brother”	$pi^{33} tsa:i^{41} m\epsilon^{33}$ “elder brother” + “mother”	“ lun^{41} , mother’s elder brother”
$a:u^{55}$ “father’s younger brother”	$nv:\eta^{11} pv^{33}$ “younger brother” + “father”	“ $a:u^{55}$, father’s younger brother”
a^{55} “father’s younger sister”	$nv:\eta^{11} pv^{33}$ “younger sister” + “father”	“ a^{55} , father’s younger sister”
pa^{13} “father’s elder sister”	$pi^{33} j\eta^{41} pv^{33}$ “elder sister” + “father”	“ pa^{13} , father’s elder sister”
pa^{13} “mother’s elder sister”	$pi^{33} j\eta^{41} m\epsilon^{33}$ “elder sister” + “mother”	“ pa^{13} , mother’s elder sister”
$la:n^{55}$ “elder brother’s child”	$luk^{33} pi^{33} tsa:i^{41}$ “child” + “elder brother”	“ $la:n^{55}$, elder brother’s child”
$la:n^{55}$ “elder sister’s child”	$luk^{33} pi^{33} j\eta^{41}$ “child” + “elder sister”	“ $la:n^{55}$, elder sister’s child”
$la:n^{55}$ “younger brother’s child”	$luk^{33} nv:\eta^{11} tsa:i^{41}$ “child” + “younger brother”	“ $la:n^{55}$, younger brother’s child”
$la:n^{55}$ “younger sister’s child”	$luk^{33} nv:\eta^{11} j\eta^{41}$ “child” + “younger sister”	“ $la:n^{55}$, younger sister’s child”
$la:n^{55}$ “son’s child”	$luk^{33} luk^{33} tsa:i^{41}$ “child” + “son”	“ $la:n^{55}$, son’s child”
$la:n^{55}$ “daughter’s child”	$luk^{33} luk^{33} j\eta^{41}$ “child” + “daughter”	“ $la:n^{55}$, daughter’s child”

In books written in Dai and in spoken Dai, explanatory terms can use explained names, but in order to make the context clear, the explained names can be omitted, leaving only the explanation; for example, *pi³³jin⁴¹pv³³*, “father’s elder sister”; *pi³³tsa:i⁴¹me³³*, “mother’s elder brother”; *nv:ŋ¹¹tsa:i⁴¹me³³*, “mother’s younger brother”; and so on. Some explanatory terms lack the explained names, containing only the explanations. We call this type of explanatory term an explanatory term without an explained name. Table 10.3 presents examples of explanatory terms without explained names in Dai.

Table 10.3: Examples of explanatory terms without explained names in Dai.

Explanatory term without explained name	Meaning	Explanatory term without explained name	Gloss
<i>luk³³pv³³vn⁵⁵</i> “child” + “father” + “former”	“biological father’s child”	<i>luk³³pv³³sup³⁵</i> “child” + “father” + “step-”	“step-father’s child”
<i>luk³³me³³vn⁵⁵</i> “child” + “mother” + “former”	“biological mother’s child”	<i>luk³³me³³loŋ⁵⁵</i> “child” + “mother” + “eldest”	“eldest mother’s ^a child”
<i>luk³³pv³³tsvm⁴¹</i> “child” + “father” + “later”	“step-father’s child”	<i>luk³³me³³ka:ŋ⁵⁵</i> “child” + “mother” + “middle”	“second mother’s ^a child”
<i>luk³³me³³tsvm⁴¹</i> “child” + “mother” + “later”	“step-mother’s child”	<i>luk³³me³³nvi¹¹</i> “child” + “mother” + “youngest”	“youngest/third mother’s ^a child”
<i>luk³³me³³sup³⁵</i> “child” + “mother” + “step-”	“step-mother’s child”		

^aThese elements were historically used in polygamous Dai noble families.

10.4 Buddhist terms and laic terms

As mentioned above, the Dai people are traditionally Theravadists. Historically, seven- and eight-year-old boys were generally sent to Buddhist temples in their home or neighboring village by their parents to train as “little monks” for a period. After one or two years, or in some instances several years, most of them returned to their own villages. The number of those who could be promoted to *tu²⁵⁵*, “Buddha,” and *tu²⁵⁵loŋ⁵⁵*, “higher Buddha,” was limited; even fewer could

be promoted to a high-level $xu^{41}ba^{55}$, “abbot.” Therefore, taking Buddhist vows and then resuming secular life was a common social and cultural phenomenon in Dai communities in Xishuangbanna.

Dai people use Buddhist terms to address male relatives who convert to Buddhism. These terms are primarily used among members of the same generation.

In Jinghong City, regardless of whether the Dai addresser is male or female, an elder brother who has not converted to Buddhism is addressed as $a:i^{13}lon^{55}$ or $a:i^{13}pi^{55}$ face-to-face; however, if the elder brother becomes a monk, he is addressed as pha^{33} or $pi^{33}pha^{33}$, “elder brother who is a monk.” If the monk becomes a Buddha, the addresser calls him $tu^{55}pi^{33}$, “elder brother who is a Buddha.” If he becomes a higher Buddha, the addresser calls him $tu^{55}pi^{33}lon^{55}$, “elder brother who is a higher Buddha.” Finally, if he is promoted to abbot, he is called $xu^{41}ba^{55}$, “abbot” directly.

If the addresser’s elder brother has not yet converted to Buddhism, the addressing term is his nickname. Once he becomes a monk, he is addressed by his monk name. For example, when acting as a monk, an addresser’s elder brother is called pha^{33} ; when acting as higher Buddha, he is called $tu^{55}lon^{55}$.

Laic terms are used for a short period when a Buddhist monk has just shifted from monastic to secular life. Laic terms reflect the monk’s level before resuming secular life. For example, if the addressee was a monk before resuming secular life, he would be called $tsi^{11}nvi^{11}$ after resuming secular life;²⁵ if a Buddha, he would be called $xa^{755}na:n^{55,26}$ if a higher-level Buddha, he would be called $xa^{755}na:n^{55}lon^{55}$; and if an abbot, he would be addressed as $xa^{755}na:n^{55}then^{55}$.

If the addressee’s eldest son is in a Buddhist monastery or has just resumed secular life, the Buddhist term or laic term has some features of tekeisonymy as well; in other words, the Buddhist term or the laic term is augmented with pv^{33} , “father,” or $m\epsilon^{33}$, “mother,” in pre-head position. When the addressing term shares features of both tekeisonymy and Buddhist or laic terms, it is referred to as a hybrid Buddhist–laic term (see Table 10.4).

²⁵ This applies to Jinghong City. In Menghai, he would be called $a:i^{13}ma:i^{35}$, in Mengla County $a:i^{13}lon^{55}ma:i^{35}$, and in Mengpeng Township $pi^{33}ma:i^{35}$.

²⁶ In Mengla County, he would be called $a:i^{13}lon^{55}xa^{755}na:n^{55}$. In Mengpeng Township, he would be called $pi^{33}na:n^{55}$.

Table 10.4: Hybrid Buddhist–laic terms for sisters/brothers from the same generation in Dai.

Type of addressee	Level of addressee's eldest son	Compound Buddhist term	Gloss	Compound laic term	Gloss
elder brother/ younger brother	monk	<i>pv³³pha³³</i>	“monk’s father”	<i>pv³³tsi¹¹nd¹¹</i> (note a)	“mother of the monk who has resumed secular life”
elder sister/younger sister	monk	<i>mε³³pha³³</i>	“monk’s mother”	<i>mε³³tsi¹¹nd¹¹</i> (note b)	“father of the monk who has resumed secular life”
elder brother/ younger brother	Buddha	<i>pv³³tu⁵⁵</i>	“Buddha’s father”	<i>pv³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵</i>	“father of the Buddha who has resumed secular life”
elder sister/younger sister	Buddha	<i>mε³³tu⁵⁵</i>	“Buddha’s mother”	<i>mε³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵</i>	“mother of the Buddha who has resumed secular life”
elder brother/ younger brother	higher Buddha	<i>pv³³tu⁵⁵lon⁵⁵</i>	“higher Buddha’s father”	<i>pv³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵lon⁵⁵</i>	“father of the higher Buddha who has resumed secular life”
elder sister/younger sister	higher Buddha	<i>mε³³tu⁵⁵lon⁵⁵</i>	“higher Buddha’s mother”	<i>mε³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵lon⁵⁵</i>	“mother of the higher Buddha who has resumed secular life”
elder brother/ younger brother	abbot ^c	<i>pv³³xu⁴¹ba⁵⁵</i>	“abbot’s father”	<i>pv³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵then⁵⁵</i>	“father of the abbot who has resumed secular life”
elder sister/younger sister	abbot ^c	<i>mε³³xu⁴¹ba⁵⁵</i>	“abbot’s mother”	<i>mε³³xa⁵⁵</i> <i>na:n⁵⁵then⁵⁵</i>	“mother of the abbot who has resumed secular life”

^aThis is used in Jinghong City. In Menghai Township, the term is *pv³³a:¹³ma:¹³*.

^bThis is used in Jinghong City. In Menghai Township, the term is *mε³³a:¹³ma:¹³*.

^cA high-level monk in a Buddhist temple in Xishuangbanna is roughly the same as an abbot outside Xishuangbanna.

10.5 Matrilocal and patrilocal terms

In the Dai language, matrilocal terms are called *hɔŋ¹¹tsoŋ⁴¹me⁴¹*, while patrilocal terms are called *hɔŋ¹¹tsoŋ⁴¹pho⁵⁵*. These two types of kinship term refer to the practice whereby, after marriage and before having children, couples address each other's relatives following their spouse's practice. For example, a Dai man calls his own father *pɔ³³* during this period; his wife calls her husband's father *pɔ³³* as well. For the wife, *pɔ³³* is a patrilocal term. If the couple has a baby, the wife can no longer use patrilocal terms, but instead uses teknonymy to address her father-in-law (husband's father).

When addressers are addressing a member of their spouse's family from an older generation face-to-face, they generally use matrilocal or patrilocal terms. If the person is absent, quoting terms can be used. For example, a Dai man addresses his father-in-law face-to-face with the matrilocal term *pɔ³³*, "father," while he calls him *pɔ³³me⁴¹*, "father-in-law," in his absence.

10.6 Teknonymy and tekeisonymy

Teknonymy is called *hɔŋ¹¹tsoŋ⁴¹luk³³* in Dai. It refers to the practice of addressing one's relatives based on the name of one's child. Rui Yifu (1948) defines this type of kinship term as *qin cong zi cheng* 亲从子称 [literally "parents following the child's address"]. Ling Chunsheng (1952) terms it *qin cong zi ming zhi* 亲从子名制 [literally "the rule of parents following the child's name"]. Wu Tieping (1985) calls it *cong er chengwei* 从儿称谓 [literally "following the child's kinship terms"]. The naming rules in Dai are also referred to by another term, *cong hai ming* 从孩名 [following the child's name], which indicates the practice of addressing the parent by the nickname of his or her eldest child (son or girl), followed by ". . .'s father" or ". . .'s mother" (the ellipsis indicates the eldest boy or girl's nickname). I prefer the term *cong hai cheng* 从孩称 because the phenomenon differs slightly from that of *cong er chengwei* in Mandarin Chinese. Wu Tieping (1985: 249) points out that in Mandarin Chinese a speaker can use teknonymy regardless of whether he or she has a child. In the Dai language, however, the speaker uses teknonymy unless he or she has a child; otherwise it would cause pragmatic mistakes.

From the aspect of deep semantics, every teknonymic term in Dai can be analyzed as an expression of the form "my child's . . ." For example, after a Dai man becomes a father, he should not call his brother's wife *pi³³pai¹¹*, "sister-in-law," any more, but should call her *me³³lon⁵⁵*, "aunt," instead. Here, *me³³lon⁵⁵* is teknonymic, actually expressing the meaning "my child's aunt" rather than "my own aunt."

In Dai, teknomy is not used as widely as quoting terms and addressing terms. It is primarily adopted when the addressee is from the generation above the addresser or from the same generation as the addresser. Table 10.5 presents a comparison of teknonymic and quoting terms in the generation of the addressee's parents and in the same generation as the addressee in Dai. In the "Addressee" and "Gloss" columns, *gu* 姑 [father's sisters], *jiu* 舅 [mother's brothers], and *yi* 姨 [mother's sisters] are prefixed with *da* 大 [elder] to indicate "parent's elder brother/elder sister"; when prefixed with *xiao* 小 [younger], they indicate "parent's younger brother/younger sister." For example, *da-gufu* 大-姑父 [elder-father's sister's husband] is equivalent to "father's elder sister's husband," *da-gumu* 大-姑母 [elder-father's sister] is equivalent to "father's elder sister," *xiao-gumu* 小-姑母 [younger-father's sister] is equivalent to "father's younger sister," *xiao-gufu* 小-姑父 [younger-father's sister's husband] is equivalent to "father's younger sister's husband," *da-jiufu* 大-舅父 [elder-mother's brother] is equivalent to "mother's elder brother," *xiao-jiufu* 小-舅父 [younger-mother's brother] is equivalent to "mother's younger brother," *da-yimu* 大-姨母 [elder-mother's sister] is equivalent to "mother's elder sister," and *xiao-yimu* 小-姨母 [younger-mother's sister] is equivalent to "mother's younger sister."

The kinship terms numbered 1–14 in Table 10.5 refer to the generation of the addressee's parents, those numbered 15–22 to the same generation as the addressee. Table 10.5 shows that teknomy in the parents' generation is used to distinguish male from female addressees. Male addressees use only paternal teknomy, female addressees maternal. Turning to teknomy within the same generation, only the younger brother, elder brother's wife, younger sister, and younger sister's husband need to differentiate addressees' gender. In contrast, the elder brother, elder brother's wife, elder sister, and elder sister's husband need not distinguish the addressee's gender.

Tekeisonymy refers to kinship terminology formed on the basis of the nickname or full name of the addressee's eldest child (son or daughter), and is formed by adding the prefix *pv*³³, "father," or *me*³³, "mother." If the eldest child has died, the addresser will continue using the nickname or change it to the second child's nickname. Differences between teknomy and tekeisonymy mainly manifest themselves in two aspects. First, teknomy can be used only if the addressee has a child; if the addressee has no child, then tekeisonymy is used. Second, tekeisonymy is only applied by the same generation as, or the younger generation than, the addressee's eldest child, not by the older generation.

The structures of tekeisonymy in the Dai language can be divided into two types. Nicknames prefixed with *pv*³³, "father," and *me*³³, "mother," are called nickname-type tekeisonymy; full names prefixed with *pv*³³, "father," and *me*³³, "mother," are called full-name-type tekeisonymy.

Table 10.5: Comparison of tekonymic and quoting terms in the generation of the addressee's parents and in the same generation as the addressee in the Dai ethnic group.

Addressee	Quoting term	Gender of the addresser	Tekonym	Gloss
1. father	$i^{55}p\theta^{33}$	male female	$i^{55}pu^{35}$ $thau^{13}$ $tsa:i^{41}$	“father’s father” “mother’s father”
2. mother	$i^{55}m\epsilon^{33}$	male female	$i^{55}ja^{33}$ $thau^{13}jij^{41}$	“father’s mother” “mother’s mother”
3. father’s elder brother / <i>da-gufu</i> 大-姑父 [father’s elder sister’s husband]	$p\theta^{33}lon^{55}$	male female	$i^{55}pu^{35}$ $thau^{13}$ $tsa:i^{41}$	“father’s father” “mother’s father”
4. father’s elder brother’s wife / <i>da-gumu</i> 大-姑母 [father’s elder sister]	$m\epsilon^{33}lon^{55}$	male female	$i^{55}ja^{33}$ $thau^{13}jij^{41}$	“father’s mother” “mother’s mother”
5. father’s younger brother / <i>xiao-gufu</i> 小-姑父 [father’s younger sister’s husband]	$a:u^{55} / a:u^{55}xv^{55}$	male female	$i^{55}pu^{35}$ $thau^{13}$ $tsa:i^{41}$	“father’s father” “mother’s father”
6. father’s younger brother’s wife / <i>xiao-gumu</i> 小-姑母 [father’s younger sister]	$i^{55}a^{55}$	male female	$i^{55}ja^{33}$ $thau^{13}jij^{41}$	“father’s mother” “mother’s mother”
7. mother’s elder brother / <i>da-yifu</i> 大-姨父 [father’s elder brother]	$p\theta^{33}lon^{55}$	male female	$i^{55}pu^{35}$ $p\theta^{33}thau^{13}$	“father’s father” “mother’s brother’s father,” “mother’s sister’s father”

8.	mother's elder brother's wife/ 小-姨母 [mother's elder sister]	<i>mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i> <i>mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>	male female	<i>i⁵⁵˥˥ja³³</i> <i>mɛ³³θau¹³</i>	“father's mother” “mother's brother's father,” “mother's sister's father”
9.	mother's younger brother/xiao-yifu 小-姨父 [mother's elder brother]	<i>aːi¹³na¹¹/</i> <i>na¹¹xɿ⁵⁵</i>	male female	<i>i⁵⁵pu³⁵</i> <i>pɔ³³θau¹³</i>	“father's father” “mother's brother's father,” “mother's sister's father”
10.	mother's younger brother's wife/xiao- yimu 小-姨母 [mother's younger sister]	<i>na¹¹paɪ¹¹/</i> <i>i⁵⁵na¹¹</i>	male female	<i>i⁵⁵˥˥ja³³</i> <i>mɛ³³θau¹³</i>	“father's mother” “mother's brother's father,” “mother's sister's father”
11.	husband's father	<i>pɔ³³pho⁵⁵</i>	female	<i>i⁵⁵pu³⁵</i>	“father's father”
12.	husband's mother	<i>mɛ³³pho⁵⁵</i>	female	<i>i⁵⁵˥˥ja³³</i>	“father's mother”
13.	wife's father	<i>pɔ³³mɛ⁴¹</i>	male	<i>θau¹³</i> <i>tsaːi⁴¹</i>	“mother's father”
14.	wife's mother	<i>mɛ³³mɛ⁴¹</i>	male	<i>θau¹³˥˥jiŋ⁴¹</i>	“mother's mother”
15.	elder brother	<i>pi³³tsaːi⁴¹</i>	female	<i>pɔ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>	“father's elder brother”/da-jiufu 大-舅父 [mother's elder brother]
16.	elder brother's wife	<i>pi³³paɪ¹¹</i>	female	<i>mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>	da-jiumu 大-舅母 [mother's elder brother's wife]
17.	sister	<i>pi³³˥˥jiŋ⁴¹</i>	male female	<i>mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>	da-gumu 大-姑母 [father's elder sister]/da-yimu 大-姨母 [mother's elder sister]
18.	sister's wife	<i>pi³³xɿ⁵⁵</i>	male female	<i>pɔ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>	da-gufu 大-姑父 [father's sister's husband]/da-yifu 大-姨父 [mother's elder sister's husband]

(continued)

Table 10.5 (continued)

Addressee	Quoting term	Gender of the addresser	Teknonym	Gloss
19. younger brother	$np: \eta^{11} tsa: \eta^{41}$	male female	$a: u^{55}$ $a: i^{13} na^{11}$	“father’s younger brother” <i>xiao-jiufu</i> 小舅父 [mother’s younger brother]
20. younger brother’s wife	$np: \eta^{11} pai^{11}$	male female	a^{55} $na^{11} pai^{11}$	“father’s younger brother’s wife” <i>xiao-jiumu</i> 小舅母 [mother’s younger brother’s wife]
21. younger sister	$np: \eta^{11} jij^{41}$	male female	a^{55} $i^{55} na^{11}$	<i>xiao-gumu</i> 小姑母 [father’s younger sister]/ <i>xiao-yimu</i> 小姨母 [mother’s younger sister]
22. younger sister’s husband	$np: \eta^{11} xj^{55}$	male female	$a: u^{55} xj^{55}$ $na^{11} xj^{55}$	<i>xiao-gufu</i> 小姑父 [father’s younger sister’s husband]/ <i>xiao-yifu</i> 小姨父 [mother’s younger sister’s husband]

The structure of nickname-type tekeisonymic terms is pv^{33} or $m\epsilon^{33}$ plus the eldest child's nickname. The choice between pv^{33} and $m\epsilon^{33}$ depends on the gender of the addressee. For males, only pv^{33} is employed; for females, only $m\epsilon^{33}$ is adopted. For example, if an old Dai lady wants to address her child's son, and her son's eldest child is a boy with the nickname $a:i^{13}se\eta^{55}$ 岩香 [Yanxiang], the old lady will call her son $pv^{33}a:i^{13}se\eta^{55}$ "Yanxiang's father." If her son's eldest child is a daughter with the nickname $i^{255}ven^{35}$ 玉园 [Yuyuan], the old lady will call her son $pv^{33}i^{255}ven^{35}$, "Yuyuan's father."

The structure of full-name-type tekeisonymy is pv^{33} or $m\epsilon^{33}$ plus the eldest child's full name. In Jinghong City and Menghai Township, the eldest son is generally called $a:i^{13}tsa:i^{41}$ 岩宰 [Yanzai] in Dai, and the eldest daughter is generally called $i^{255}na:\eta^{41}$ 玉喃 [Yunan] in Dai. For example, in a situation where an old Dai man wants to address his child's daughter, and his daughter's eldest child is a boy, the old man would call his daughter $m\epsilon^{33}tsa:i^{41}$, "Zai's mother"; if his daughter's eldest child is a girl, the old man would call his daughter $m\epsilon^{33}na:\eta^{41}$, "Nan's mother."

The terms discussed above constitute tekeisonymy in Jinghong City and Menghai Township. The tekeisonymy of the full-name type in Mengla Township is far more complex than that used in Jinghong City and Menghai Township (see Table 10.6).

Table 10.6: Comparison of tekeisonymy of the full-name type as applied to the generation below the addresser in Mengla Township, Jinghong City, and Menghai Township.

Gender	Type	Type of addressee	Gender of addressee's eldest child	Full-name-type tekeisonym in Mengla Township	Full-name-type tekeisonym in Jinghong City and Menghai Township
male	1	son, niece, and so forth	male	$pv^{33}a:i^{13}tsa:i^{41}$	$pv^{33}tsa:i^{41}$
	2	son-in-law	male	$a:i^{13}pv^{33}tsa:i^{41}$	$pv^{33}tsa:i^{41}$
	3	niece-in-law	male	$la:n^{55}pv^{33}tsa:i^{41}$	$pv^{33}tsa:i^{41}$
	4	son, niece, and so forth	female	$pv^{33}i^{255}na:\eta^{41}$	$pv^{33}na:\eta^{41}$
	5	son-in-law	female	$a:i^{13}pv^{33}na:\eta^{41}$	$pv^{33}na:\eta^{41}$
	6	niece-in-law	female	$la:n^{55}pv^{33}na:\eta^{41}$	$pv^{33}na:\eta^{41}$

Table 10.6 (continued)

Gender	Type	Type of addressee	Gender of addressee's eldest child	Full-name-type tekeisonym in Mengla Township	Full-name-type tekeisonym in Jinghong City and Menghai Township
female	7	daughter, niece, and so forth	male	<i>mɛ³³a:i¹³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>
	8	daughter-in-law	male	<i>iɽ⁵⁵mɛ³³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>
	9	niece-in-law	male	<i>la:n⁵⁵mɛ³³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³tɕa:i⁴¹</i>
	10	daughter, niece, and so forth	female	<i>mɛ³³iɽ⁵⁵na:ŋ⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³na:ŋ⁴¹</i>
	11	daughter-in-law	female	<i>iɽ⁵⁵mɛ³³na:ŋ⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³na:ŋ⁴¹</i>
	12	niece-in-law	female	<i>la:n⁵⁵mɛ³³na:ŋ⁴¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³na:ŋ⁴¹</i>

In Table 10.6, the “Type of addressee” column is composed of twelve items, which are divided into two parts based on gender: the male type and the female type. Types 1–6 pertain to males, types 7–12 to females. In the first part (male addressees), the first and fourth items (“son, niece, and so forth”) are blood relatives, and the others are in-laws. Among the in-law addressees, the second and the fifth (“son-in-law”) pertain to direct relatives, the third and the sixth (“niece-in-law”) to indirect relatives. The principle of classification of female addressees in the second part (types 7–12) is the same as in the first part.

Table 10.6 shows that, with regard to the use of tekeisonymy of the full-name type in Dai, Mengla Township shares some features with Jinghong City and Menghai Township: addressees in the younger generation and their eldest child need to make a distinction between male and female. Addressees in Mengla Township need to further differentiate blood relatives and in-laws; moreover, for in-laws, addressees need to distinguish direct and indirect relatives, while in Jinghong City and Menghai Township, these distinctions are not made.

10.7 Endearing terms and general terms

Endearing terms are forms of address in which the addresser calls his or her in-laws relatives blood relatives, or calls his or her indirect relatives direct relatives, so as to make the addressees feel close or to convey respect. Endearing terms in Dai are generally used within the same generation and to refer to the generation below the addresser.

The endearing terms beginning with pv^{33} , “father,” or $m\epsilon^{33}$, “mother,” in Dai are used such that, after an addresser has a child, he or she addresses the spouses of his or her elder brother, elder sister, younger brother, or younger sister, or the younger brother or sister of the addressee, with such terms. Endearing terms adopted by the same generation are different from teknonymy. Teknonymy remains the marker of in-laws, such as pai^{11} , “daughter-in-law,” and $x\gamma i^{55}$, “husband.” In contrast, none of the endearing terms has such markers. Moreover, as shown in Table 10.7, if addressing terms of the same generation in Dai are the same as the quoting terms, the addressees will feel that they have been shown friendship and that they are respected. A comparison of endearing terms, quoting terms, and teknonymy adopted by the same generation as the addressee in Dai is shown in Table 10.7.

Table 10.7: Comparison of endearing terms, quoting terms, and teknonyms used by the same generation as the addressee in Dai.

Addressee	Quoting term	Addresser	Teknonym	Gloss	Endearing term	Gloss
elder brother	pi^{33} $tsa:i^{41}$	male/ female	$pv^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	“father’s elder brother”/ “mother’s elder brother”	$pv^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	“father’s elder brother”/ “mother’s elder brother”
elder brother’s wife	$pi^{33}pai^{11}$	male/ female	$m\epsilon^{33}lo\eta^{55}$ pai^{11}	“father’s elder sister”/ “mother’s elder sister”	$m\epsilon^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	“father’s elder sister”/“mother’s elder sister”
elder sister	$pi^{33}ji\eta^{41}$	male/ female	$m\epsilon^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	“father’s eldest sister”/ “mother’s eldest sister”	$m\epsilon^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	“father’s eldest sister”/“mother’s eldest sister”

Table 10.7 (continued)

Addressee	Quoting term	Addresser	Teknonym	Gloss	Endearing term	Gloss
elder sister's husband	<i>pi³³xvi⁵⁵</i>	male/ female	<i>pv³³lon⁵⁵</i> <i>xvi⁵⁵</i>	“father's eldest sister” / “mother's eldest sister's husband”	<i>pv³³lon⁵⁵</i>	“father's eldest sister's husband” / “mother's eldest sister's husband”
younger brother	<i>nv:η¹¹</i> <i>tɕa:i⁴¹</i>	male	<i>a:u⁵⁵</i>	“father's elder brother”	<i>pv³³a:u⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger brother”
		female	<i>a:i¹³na¹¹</i>	“mother's youngest brother”	<i>pv³³na¹¹</i>	“mother's younger brother”
younger brother's wife ^a	<i>nv:</i> <i>η¹¹pai¹¹</i>	male	<i>a⁵⁵pai¹¹</i>	“father's younger brother's wife”	<i>mɛ³³a⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger sister”
		female	<i>na¹¹pai¹³</i>	“mother's younger brother's wife”	<i>mɛ³³na¹¹</i>	“mother's younger sister”
younger sister	<i>nv:</i> <i>η¹¹jiη⁴¹</i>	male	<i>a⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger sister”	<i>mɛ³³a⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger sister”
		female	<i>iɾ⁵⁵na¹¹</i>	“mother's younger sister”	<i>mɛ³³na¹¹</i>	“mother's younger sister”
younger sister's husband ^b	<i>nv:</i> <i>η¹¹xvi⁵⁵</i>	male	<i>a:u⁵⁵xvi⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger sister's husband”	<i>pv³³a:u⁵⁵</i>	“father's younger brother”
		female	<i>na¹¹xvi⁵⁵</i>	“mother's younger sister's husband”	<i>pv³³na¹¹</i>	“mother's younger brother”

^aIf the younger brother's wife is much older than the addresser, the addressee is called *mɛ³³lon⁵⁵*, “father's elder sister” or “mother's elder sister,” as well in order to express respect.

^bIf the younger sister's husband is much older than the addresser, the addressee is called *pv³³lon⁵⁵*, “father's elder brother” or “mother's elder brother,” as well in order to express respect.

Table 10.7 shows that, with regard to the same generation in Dai, if the addressee is a full elder brother or full elder sister, the teknonymic and endearing terms do not display any difference. If the addressee is a full younger brother, full younger sister, or full elder brother's wife, elder sister's husband, younger brother's wife, or younger sister's husband, the teknonymic terms are different from the endearing terms.

Endearing terms for the younger generation in Dai are primarily used to address the full younger sister or younger brother's children and spouses. In the case of addressing terms in the younger generation in Dai, an elder sister or brother's children are not distinguished from a younger sister or brother's children. For example, an elder brother or sister's son is called *la:n⁵⁵tsa:i⁴¹*, "brother's son," "sister's son," and a younger brother's wife's son is called *la:n⁵⁵tsa:i⁴¹*, "brother's son," "sister's son." In the case of endearing terms, however, the order of seniority among full brothers or sisters must be distinguishable. Endearing terms are merely used to address younger brothers, younger sisters, and their spouses, rather than to address elder brothers, elder sisters, and their spouses. Comparisons of endearing terms and addressing terms of the younger generation in Dai are presented in Table 10.8

Table 10.8: Comparison of endearing terms and addressing terms of the younger generation in Dai.

Addressee	Addressing term	Gloss	Endearing term	Gloss
younger brother/ younger sister's son	<i>la:n⁵⁵tsa:i⁴¹</i>	"younger brother's son," "younger sister's son"	<i>luk³³tsa:i⁴¹</i>	"son"
younger brother/ younger sister's son's wife	<i>la:n⁵⁵pai¹¹</i>	"younger brother's son," younger sister's son's wife"	<i>luk³³pai¹¹</i>	"son's wife"
younger brother/ younger sister's daughter	<i>la:n⁵⁵jiŋ⁴¹</i>	"younger brother's son," "younger sister's daughter"	<i>luk³³jiŋ⁴¹</i>	"daughter"
younger brother/ younger sister's daughter's husband	<i>la:n⁵⁵xvi⁵⁵</i>	"younger brother's son," "younger sister's daughter's husband"	<i>luk³³xvi⁵⁵</i>	"daughter's husband"

Table 10.8 shows that the rule for the endearing terms for the younger generation in Dai is to address all of the indirect relatives as direct relatives. Specifically, a

brother's son is addressed as "son," a sister's daughter is called "daughter," and a brother's daughter's husband is addressed as "daughter's husband."

General terms are kinship terms that are used to address non-relatives in society in order to express the addresser's politeness or respect. Fei Xiaotong (1981 [1947]: 183) describes this type of kinship term as the "hierarchical spreading of relatives."

The general uses of kinship terms are widely accepted in Dai ethnic communities in Xishuangbanna as well as in East and Southeast Asia. However, in the many Indo-European languages of Europe and the Americas, general terms are not commonly used; this may perhaps be considered a distinguishing characteristic between Eastern culture and Western culture.

It is notable that some general kinship terms in the Dai language are quite different from those in Mandarin. Those old non-relatives addressed using patrilineal kinship terms in Mandarin are addressed using matrilineal kinship terms in the Dai language. For example, non-relatives who are the same age as the addresser's parents or older than fifty or sixty are addressed as "father's father" or "father's mother" in Southern Mandarin Chinese, while they are called *pv³³thau¹³*, "mother's father," or *mε³³thau¹³*, "mother's mother," in Menghai Dai. Non-relatives who are older than the addresser's parents are called *dajiu*, "father's elder brother," or *dayi*, "father's elder sister," in northern China, while they are called *pv³³lon⁵⁵*, "mother's elder brother," or *mε³³lon⁵⁵*, "mother's elder sister," in Menghai Dai.²⁷

Non-relatives who are young people or children younger than the addresser are addressed as "little younger brother" or "little younger sister" in Lower Yangtze Mandarin and the Wu dialect, while they are called *la:n³³*, "brother's son" or "grandson," in Dai, and this is also the case even when people who are older than sixty address young people who are younger than thirty and have no children.

10.8 Hierarchical addressing terms

Hierarchical addressing terms are kinship terms adopted for certain specific social hierarchies in Dai history. During the seven to eight centuries from the early twelfth century to the mid-twentieth century, Xishuangbanna gradually became a

²⁷ Yan Han has informed me that in many areas in Jinghong, the meanings of *pv³³lon⁵⁵* and *lon⁵⁵pv³³* are the opposite. *pv³³lon⁵⁵* is merely used as a general term referring to non-relatives rather than relatives, and *lon⁵⁵pv³³* just refers to relatives such as parents' elder brothers, not non-relatives. *mε³³lon⁵⁵* and *lon⁵⁵mε³³* exhibit such an opposition as well.

feudal society divided into a strictly defined hierarchy with five levels. Every hierarchy had definite names and a relatively stable status. The majority of members of the hierarchy had hereditary status. It was almost impossible to be promoted from lower to higher in the hierarchy. The different social levels were separated by strict boundaries, and the members of different levels could not intermarry. Moreover, they kept a certain distance from one another with regard to land allocation, wedding and funeral ceremonies, tributary gifts, clothing, names, and Buddhist monastic hierarchies. These social distances were considered social barriers that greatly obstructed communication between different social levels. The hierarchical addressing terms, reflecting variations based on hierarchical differences, developed in the process of using kinship terms.

The first level, at the top of the hierarchy, is called *mvm*³⁵ in Dai (“Meng” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 孟 in Chinese characters). Members of the first level comprise the topmost leader, the Zhaopianling (*tsau*¹³*phen*³⁵*din*⁵⁵) and his direct relatives. They enjoy the right to inherit the Xuanwei position and to act as chief court judge (*tsau*¹³*sa*²⁵⁵*na:m*⁵⁵) and Tusi (*tsau*¹³*mxn*⁴¹). They are the heart of the nobility.

The second level is called *vun*⁴¹ in Dai (“Weng” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 翁 in Chinese characters). Members of this level, who are collateral relatives of the Zhaopianling, enjoy the right to act as the vassals of the Zhaopianling and Tusi in various regions. They belong to the nobility with a status lower than that of the Meng.

The third level is named *tsau*¹³*vm*⁵⁵ (“Zhaozhuang” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召庄 in Chinese characters). Members of this level are distant grandsons of leaders from among the Meng and Weng, and most of them live in villages. They have lost their original noble identities and become free farmers. Only a minority of them, who inhabit urban areas, have retained their noble status.

Both the fourth and the fifth levels belong to the commoner group. The fourth level is called *tai*⁴¹*mxn*⁴¹ in Dai (“Daimeng” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 傣勐 in Chinese characters). They are aboriginal inhabitants and first established villages in the Dai area. The fifth level is called *kun*⁴¹*hxn*⁴¹*tsau*¹³ in Dai (“Gunhenzhao” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 滚很召 in Chinese characters), which means “the people belonging to the government” or “the people belonging to a master.”

The topmost leader, the Zhaopianling, is the general representative of the first level of the Dai nobility, the Meng level. Kinship terms for the topmost leader in the addressee’s generation, grandparents’ generation, parents’ generation, and grandchildren’s generation are entirely borrowed from the classical language of Southern Theravada Buddhism, Pali.

When I carried out fieldwork in Yunjinghong Township in Xishuangbanna in 1987, some old people inhabiting Xuanweijie told me:²⁸ “Kinship terms in the Pali language are not only used by the Zhaopianling’s direct relatives, but also by other people in Xuanweijie to address the Zhaopianling and his relatives. These kinship terms indicate a very honorable meaning.”

During the 1950s, Dao Guodong (1983) and other scholars found seventeen kinship terms for the Zhaopianling in Pali, which were transcribed into Chinese characters and published in the 1980s.

Table 10.9 compares the Pali kinship terms used by the Zhaopianling and the Dai kinship terms used by commoners. Twenty-one Pali kinship terms used by the Zhaopianling in the table below differ from those discussed by Dao Guodong. I cite the data on kinship terms from books stored at the ancient books office in Mengla Township. These books had originally been written in the old Dai script, and all of them were recorded and transcribed into the International Phonetic Alphabet. In the original texts, many kinship terms in the Pali language are explained very clearly. When I checked them, I referred to the *Concise Pali-English dictionary* (Mahathera 1949). The kinship terms used by commoners in Dai given in the table below were collected from a native of Xuanweijie who belonged to the fourth or the fifth level in Dai society.

The hierarchical differences between the kinship terms adopted by people on the Weng level and those adopted by Xuanweijie commoners in Dai primarily manifest themselves in the classification of the kinship terms for grandparents and parents (see Table 10.9).

In Table 10.10, relationships 1–4 belong to patrilineal ancestors in Dai. Kinship terms used by Dai commoners in Xuanweijie merely distinguish male and female. These four types of kinship terms are referred to by *iʔ⁵⁵pu³⁵*, “male,” and *iʔ⁵⁵ja³³*, “female.” However, the Weng level in Dai uses four kinship terms that not only distinguish between the gender of the addressee’s grandparents’ relatives, but also between the gender of the grandmother’s full brothers and sisters. With regards to the classification of patrilineal ancestors, the Weng level is more complex than that of commoners.

In contrast to the classification of patrilineal ancestors on the Weng level, the kinship terms for matrilineal ancestors on the Weng level in Dai are simpler

28 Xuanweijie was originally the residence of the topmost Zhaopianling in Xishuangbanna. Moreover, it is the residence of the topmost authority, namely the court. For long time, it was the political and military center of feudal political power in the Dai area. It was located in south-eastern Yunjinghong Township, Jinghong City, which is at the junction of the Lancang River and the Liusha River. During the Cultural Revolution, all of the local residents moved out. It became a primate research center.

Table 10-9: Comparison of kinship terms used in Xuanweijie by the topmost Dai leader and those used by commoners.

Relationship	Topmost leader's kinship term (Pali)	Commoners' kinship term (Dai)	Relationship	Topmost leader's kinship term (Pali)	Commoners' kinship term (Dai)
father's father	$a^{41}ja^{11}ka^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}pu^{35}$	mother's younger brother	$ma^{41}tu\tau^{55}la^{11}$	$a:i^{13}na^{11}$
father's mother	$a^{41}ji^{11}ka^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}ja^{33}$	mother's younger sister	$ma^{41}tu\tau^{55}sa^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}na^{11}$
mother's father	$ma^{41}ta^{55}ma^{11}hi\tau^{55}$	$p\theta^{33}thau^{13}$	elder brother	$tse^{41}tha^{55}/tse^{41}tha^{55}ka^{55}$	$pi^{33}isa:i^{41}$
mother's mother	$pit^{55}ta^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}p\theta^{33}$	elder sister	$tse^{41}thi^{55}ka^{55}$	$pi^{33}ji\eta^{41}$
father	$pit^{55}ta^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}p\theta^{33}$	younger brother	$a\tau^{55}nu^{11}isa:i^{41}$	$no:\eta^{11}isa:i^{41}$
mother	$ma^{41}ta^{55}$	$i\tau^{55}m\epsilon^{33}$	younger sister	$ka\tau^{55}\eta^{11}tha^{55}$	$no:\eta^{11}ji\eta^{41}$
father's elder brother	$ma^{11}ha^{55}pi\tau^{55}ta^{55}$	$p\theta^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	son	$but^{55}ta^{55}$	$luk^{33}isa:i^{41}$
father's younger brother	$pi\tau^{55}tu\tau^{55}nu^{11}isa^{41}$	$a:i^{11}$	daughter	$but^{55}ti^{55}$	$luk^{33}ji\eta^{41}$
father's younger sister	$pi\tau^{55}tu\tau^{55}sa^{55}$	a^{55}	grandson/brother's son	$na^{11}ta^{55}$	$la:n^{55}isa:i^{41}$
mother's elder brother	$ma^{41}tu\tau^{55}pha^{41}ta^{55}$	$p\theta^{33}lo\eta^{55}$	granddaughter/ brother's daughter	$na^{11}ti^{55}$	$la:n^{55}ji\eta^{41}$
mother's elder sister	$ma^{41}tu\tau^{55}tse^{41}thi^{55}ka^{55}$	$m\epsilon^{55}lo\eta^{55}$			

Table 10.10: Comparison of kinship terms in Xuanweijie used by the Weng level and by commoners.

Relationship	Kinship term used by the Weng level	Kinship term used by commoners	Relationship	Kinship term used by the Weng level	Kinship term used by commoners
1. father's father /father's father's brothers	<i>iɿ⁵⁵pu³⁵</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵pu³⁵</i>	8. mother's mother's sisters	<i>mɛ³³tui¹¹</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵na:i⁴¹</i>
2. father's mother/ father's father's sisters	<i>iɿ⁵⁵ja³³</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵ja³³</i>	9. wife's father's father	<i>thau¹³pu³⁵</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵pu³⁵ta⁵⁵</i>
3. father's mother's brothers	<i>pu³⁵ta⁵⁵</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵pu³⁵</i>	10. wife's father's mother	<i>tuau¹³ja³³</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵ja³³ta⁵⁵</i>
4. father's mother's sisters	<i>ja³³na:i⁴¹</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵ja³³</i>	11. father's elder brother	<i>pɒ³³luŋ⁴¹</i>	<i>pɒ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>
5. mother's father/mother's father's brothers	<i>pɒ³³thau¹³</i>	<i>pɒ³³thau¹³</i>	12. father's elder sister	<i>pa13pai11</i>	<i>mɛ33loŋ55</i>
6. mother's mother/mother's father's sisters	<i>mɛ³³tui¹¹</i>	<i>mɛ³³thau¹³</i>	13. father's sisters	<i>mɛ³³pa¹³</i>	<i>mɛ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>
7. mother's mother's brothers	<i>pɒ³³thau¹³</i>	<i>iɿ⁵⁵ta⁵⁵</i>	14. father's sister's husband	<i>luŋ⁴¹xvi⁵⁵</i>	<i>pɒ³³loŋ⁵⁵</i>

than the kinship terms used by commoners. Types 5 to 8 in Table 10.10 are relatives of matrilineal ancestors in Dai. Dai kinship terms on the Weng level in Xuanweijie refer to four types of relative relationships using just two kinship terms, *pɒ³³thau¹³* and *mɛ³³tui¹¹*. However, the commoners' terms include four kinship terms that not only distinguish male from female, but also distinguish a grandmother's sisters from her brothers.

Types 11–14 in Table 10.10 refer to patrilineal relatives one generation older. Kinship terms on the Weng level in Dai refer to these four types of relative relationship using four addressing terms. In contrast, the commoners' kinship terms adopt just two addressing terms to indicate these four types of relative relationship. Kinship terms used on the Weng level for patrilineal relatives of the older generation are also more complex than commoners' kinship terms.

Apart from the original Dai hierarchical kinship terms in Xuanweijie, I also found hierarchical kinship terms in Menghai Township. Most of the *tsau*¹³*tsom*⁵⁵ (Zhaozhuang) who lived in Xiangshan Township in Menghai County are relatives of the original noble Tusi. They are quite different from commoners in terms of land allocation, marriage and funeral customs, clothing, etiquette, and names. Moreover, in the case of kinship terms, they also manifest hierarchical differences. Table 10.11 displays a hierarchical comparison between the Zhaozhuang nobility and commoners.

Table 10.11: Comparison of hierarchical kinship terms used by the Zhaozhuang nobility and by commoners in Xiangshan Township, Menghai County.

Relative relationship	Kinship term used by the Zhaozhuang level	Kinship term used by commoners	Relative relationship	Kinship term used by the Zhaozhuang level	Kinship term used by commoners
mother's father	<i>iɿ</i> ⁵⁵ <i>ta</i> ⁵⁵	<i>pɔ</i> ³³ <i>thau</i> ¹³	elder brother's wife	<i>jiŋ</i> ⁴¹ <i>pai</i> ¹¹ (*)	<i>pai</i> ⁴³ <i>na:ŋ</i> ⁴¹ (*)
mother's mother	<i>iɿ</i> ⁵⁵ <i>na:i</i> ⁴¹	<i>mɛ</i> ³³ <i>thau</i> ¹³	elder sister's husband	<i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹ <i>xvi</i> ⁵⁵	<i>pɿ</i> ³³ <i>xvi</i> ⁵⁵
father	<i>tɛ</i> ³³	<i>pɔ</i> ³³	son	<i>tsau</i> ¹³ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹ <i>deu</i> ⁵⁵ (*)	<i>a:i</i> ¹³ <i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹ (*)
father's elder brother/ mother's elder brother	<i>luŋ</i> ⁴¹ / <i>te</i> ³³ <i>luŋ</i> ³¹	<i>pɔ</i> ³³ <i>loŋ</i> ⁵⁵	son's wife	<i>na:ŋ</i> ⁴¹ <i>pai</i> ¹¹	<i>pai</i> ¹¹ / <i>luk</i> ³³ <i>pai</i> ¹¹
father's elder sister/mother's elder sister	<i>pa</i> ¹³ / <i>pa</i> ¹³ <i>loŋ</i> ⁵⁵	<i>mɛ</i> ³³ <i>loŋ</i> ⁵⁵	daughter's husband	<i>tsau</i> ¹³ <i>luk</i> ³³	<i>luk</i> ³³ <i>xvi</i> ⁵⁵
elder brother	<i>tsa:i</i> ⁴¹ (*)	<i>a:i</i> ¹³ <i>tit</i> ⁵⁵ (*)	grandson/ brother's son	<i>tsau</i> ¹³ <i>la:n</i> ⁵⁵	<i>a:i</i> ¹³ <i>la:n</i> ⁵⁵
elder sister	<i>jiŋ</i> ⁴¹	<i>iɿ</i> ⁵⁵ <i>loŋ</i> ⁵⁵ (*)	grandson/ brother's daughter	<i>na:ŋ</i> ⁴¹ <i>la:n</i> ⁵⁵	<i>la:n</i> ⁵⁵ <i>jiŋ</i> ⁴¹

*Addressing terms are marked with an asterisk.

Chapter 11

Hierarchical structures and social functions of personal names in the Dai ethnic group

11.1 Introduction

During certain historical periods, the family names of the majority of members of an ethnic group were decided by certain rules or standards. Family names generally act as markers of blood relationships, individual identity, gender, social status, and social psychology. Compared with the naming rules of ethnic groups in other regions of China, the naming rules adopted by the Dai people in Xishuangbanna in Yunnan Province manifest three prominent characteristics: first, a person has given names but not family names; second, names change many times throughout a person's lifetime; third, a person's name reflects the social hierarchy.

Studies of the names of Xishuangbanna Dai people started more than sixty years ago. In the 1930s, a Chinese Dai cultural scholar named Li Foyi first pointed out two features of the names of Xishuangbanna Dai people. The first feature is having given names but not family names. The second feature is given names that change over time (Li Foyi 1933: 103–104). In the 1950s, a famous Dai historian named Jiang Yingliang first distinguished and described five types of name (nickname, monk name, laic name, parent name, and official's name) based on Li's research. Jiang Yingliang (1950: 211–221) proposed that the nicknames of noble feudal lords show hierarchically based differences from those of commoners in Dai. More recently, Gao Lishi (1979: 334–343, 1991: 311–323) further proposed that all five types of name in Dai strongly reflect the hierarchical system of feudal society. The famous ethnologist Ma Yao compared the naming rules in the Dai ethnic group to those of the Zhou dynasty from nine angles, and he discovered that they shared many similarities in reflecting feudal hierarchical systems (Ma Yao 1990: 708–712).

This chapter aims to describe the hierarchical structures, cultural implications, and social functions of personal names in Dai on the basis of previous scholarly research, synthesizing the relevant social and historical literature and data collected from fieldwork, and employing a structural-functional analytic approach.

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This chapter primarily analyzes the “old Dai people” who inhabited the Xishuangbanna area during the 1950s, without considering the “new Dai people” born after the twentieth century, whose naming rules in Dai are undergoing dramatic changes. Moreover, my research also excludes the non-native Dai people who immigrated from other multi-ethnic areas or scattered ethnic areas outside of Xishuangbanna in the last half-century, because almost all of these Dai people use Chinese family names.

11.2 The social background and classification of names

Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture is located in northern Yunnan Province, one of the largest Dai areas. From the early twelfth century, when the Dai leader established the tribal union and created the regime named the Jinglongjindian States, to the mid-twentieth century, when democratic reforms centered on land reform were carried out, the feudal system and the hierarchical system of the nobility in Xishuangbanna experienced an evolution over seven to eight centuries. A large amount of data collected from social and historical investigations show that, until the period of democratic reforms, Xishuangbanna remained a feudal economy with a hierarchical nobility. In the feudal system of Xishuangbanna, Dai society was divided into five hierarchical levels. Each level had a relatively definite name and a relatively stable status. Membership in each level was inherited from generation to generation, and it was almost impossible for a person from a lower level to move to a higher level.

The first level is called *mvm*³⁵ in Dai (“Meng” in Chinese Pinyin and written 孟 in Chinese characters). It is at the top of the hierarchical system in Dai and consists of the topmost leader, called the Zhaopianling, and his direct relatives. They enjoy the right to inherit the Xuanwei position, and to act as the chief court judge and Tusi in various regions. They are the heart of the nobility.

The second level is called *vurj*⁴¹ in Dai (“Weng” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 翁 in Chinese characters). Its members are the collateral relatives of the Zhaopianling. They enjoy the right to act as vassals of the Zhaopianling and Tusi in various regions, and belong to the nobility as well. Their status is lower than that of the Meng.

The third level is named *tsau*¹³*vm*⁵⁵ in Dai (“Zhaozhuang” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召庄 in Chinese characters). Its members are distant offspring of the officials of the Meng and Weng levels. Most of them live in villages. They have lost their original noble identity and become free farmers. Only the minority who inhabit urban areas have kept their noble status.

Both the fourth and the fifth levels consist of commoners.²⁹ The fourth level is called *tai*⁴¹*mɤŋ*⁴¹ in Dai (“Daimeng” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 傣勐 in Chinese characters). It consists of the aboriginal inhabitants who first founded villages in the Dai area. The fifth level is called *kun*⁴¹*hɤn*⁴¹*tsau*¹³ in Dai (“Gunhenzhao” in Chinese Pinyin and written as 滚很召 in Chinese characters), which means “the people belonging to the government” or “the people belonging to a master.”

In Dai hierarchical society, commoners had both given names and family names. During a man’s lifetime, with increasing age and changes of roles in family and society, he might have used and switched between five types of name: nickname, Buddhist name, laic name, parent name, and official’s name. Once he took a new name, he would no longer use his previous name

In order to aid communication with Han officials and education at Han schools, most noble Dai males followed binomial rules. This meant that, as well as using Dai names, they had names in Mandarin Chinese, referred to as *tsau*³³*hw*¹³ in Dai. Among the Han, only those having blood relationships shared a family name. However, the “Dao” family name used by the nobility in Xishuangbanna did not necessarily indicate having the same ancestor; moreover, those with the same ancestor might not have shared the “Dao” family name.

In a Dai woman’s lifetime, she would generally just use a nickname and a mother name (used after becoming a mother). It would be almost impossible for her to use a monk name, laic name, or official’s name because females were neither allowed to become Buddhist nuns nor to participate in politics.

When I was conducting my investigation in Xishuangbanna in 1987, Dao Fuhan, a representative member of the Dai upper classes and deputy chairman of the prefecture’s Political Consultative Conference, told me that he had already changed his name six or seven times so far. In his childhood, his nickname was “Hanwa.” After he went to a Buddhist temple to be a monk, he adopted the Buddhist name “Tanmaweng.” He adopted his nickname “Hanwa” again after returning to secular life. After his first child (a son), who was given the name “Yanmendian,” was born, he took the name “Boyanmendian,” which means “Yanmendian’s father.” When he became chief, his name became “Balongtaweng,” which is a kind of official title name. Finally, when he was promoted to the post of Minister of Internal Affairs, his name was changed to “Zhaolongpasa” (*tsau*³³*lon*⁵⁵*pha*⁵⁵*sa*^{t35}), which was still in use at the time of

²⁹ Many Chinese ethnologists define the fifth level as slaves. The structures of the names of people on the fourth and fifth levels have no hierarchical distinctions. Therefore, all of them are treated together as commoners in this chapter.

our conversation. The Dai names mentioned above are used in the Dai community. When he communicates with Han people or works on other formal occasions, he uses his Chinese name, “Dao Fuhan.”

In Dai feudal society, the effects of the hierarchical system on naming mainly manifest themselves in the use of four types of Dai names: nicknames, Buddhist names, laic names, and officials’ names. Analyzing the hierarchical structures and social functions of these four types of personal name helps us to understand more exactly the natural features of naming rules in Dai.

11.3 Nicknames: Structures, implications, and functions

The nickname, called *tsu³³my³³noi¹¹* in Dai, is the first name given to a newborn baby. The nicknames of boys and girls differ in terms of how long they are used. For boys, nicknames are generally used until they enter Buddhist temples to become monks. Those boys who do not become monks use their nicknames until their first child is born. For girls, nicknames are generally used until the birth of their first child.

11.3.1 Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of nicknames

Nicknames in Dai consist of two parts: the hierarchical element and the individual element. Hierarchical elements are the common terms used by members of the same hierarchical rank and the same gender; individual elements are the distinct terms used by individuals of different hierarchical ranks and genders. In other words, with regard to the structure of personal names, while hierarchical elements distinguish different ranks and genders, individual elements do not. Hierarchical names have the characteristics of category names or common names; individual names have the characteristics of proper names or private names. Because Dai people of both genders use nicknames throughout their secular lives, the individual name is also called the worldly name, secular name, or original name. The hierarchical structure and cultural implications of nicknames in Dai are set out in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1 shows that the nickname of boys of the Meng level of the nobility consists of two parts: the first part is the hierarchical element “Zhaomeng” (*tsau¹³mom³⁵*, “honorable master”); the second part is the individual element. If the individual element of the boy’s name is “Xiang” (*seŋ⁵⁵*, “precious jade”), his full nickname is “Zhaomeng Xiang,” which literally means “honorable master like precious jade.” Nicknames of commoner girls include the hierarchical

Table 11.1: Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of nicknames in Dai.

Hierarchical level	Gender	Hierarchical structure of nickname	Example of nickname	Literal meaning	Cultural implications
Meng	male	“Zhaomeng” + secular name	Zhaomeng Xiang ^a	“honorable host like precious jade”	“Zhaomeng”: name addressing the male group in the Meng hierarchical level of the nobility; “Xiang”: an individual secular name, used by all of the hierarchical levels
	female	“Mengnan”/“Meng” + secular name	Mengnan Yonghan ^b	“Miss golden peacock”	“Mengnan”/“Meng”: name addressing the female group in the Meng hierarchical level; “Yonghan”: an individual secular name, used by all of the hierarchical levels
Weng	male	“Zhao” + secular name	Zhao Wen	“the host’s first child”	“Zhao”: name addressing the male group in the Weng hierarchical level of the nobility
	female	“Nan” + secular name	Nan Zhan	“Miss <i>Michelia champaca</i> ”	“Nan”: name addressing the female group in the Weng hierarchical level; “Zhan”: an individual secular name, used by all of the hierarchical levels
commoner	male	“Ai” (or “Yan”) + secular name	Ai Dan	“the boy presenting Buddha with a gift”	“Ai”: name addressing the male group among the commoners; “Dan”: an individual secular name, used by all of the hierarchical levels
	female	“Yi” (or “Yu”) + secular name	Yi Wan	“sunshine girl”	“Yi”: name addressing the female group among the commoners; “Wan”: an individual secular name, used by all of the hierarchical levels

^aThis is the nickname of the second son of Dao Zhengzong, who is the thirty-seventh-generation Xuanweishi in Xishuangbanna.

^bThis is the nickname of the fourth daughter of Dao Cheng’en, who is the thirty-ninth-generation Xuanweishi in Xishuangbanna.

name “Yi” (or “Yu”) and an individual name. If a girl’s individual name is “Wan” (*van*⁴¹, “sun”), her full name is “Yi Wan,” which expresses the literal meaning “sunshine girl.” Unlike the hierarchical elements, the individual names in nicknames can be used for members of various levels in the social hierarchy, whether boys or girls, noble or humble; see the examples given in Table 11.1 under the column “Example of nickname”: “Xiang” (precious jade), “Yonghan” (golden peacock), “Zhan” (*Michelia champaca*), “Dan” (present Buddha with a gift), and “Wan” (sun).

The individual elements of nicknames in Dai exemplify five types of naming method. The first naming method follows the order of children’s birthdays; boys and girls are treated separately. They are not named by ordinal numerals, such as “first child,” “second child,” “third child,” and so on, but by the alphabetic grouping of the old Dai script. The forty-one letters of the old script are divided into seven groups. The name of the first child begins with a letter chosen from the first group, the name of the second child with a letter from the second group, and so on. The second naming method follows the birth date. The names of birth dates such as “Monday,” the “middle of the month,” and the “end of the month” are employed as children’s names. The third naming method involves the names of beloved animals and plants such as *Michelia champaca* (the magnolia flower), the peacock, the tiger, and so on. The fourth naming method uses the names of precious items, and the fifth naming method reflects primitive religion and customs.

11.3.2 Structural categories of nicknames

As discussed above, nicknames in Dai consist of a hierarchical element and an individual element. Hierarchical elements can be divided into two categories: nobility and commoners. The nobility category can be divided into two levels, Meng and Weng; within each category, males and females are distinguished. The commoners category simply differentiates males from females. All of the individual names are secular names. Figure 11.1 displays the structural categories of nicknames in Dai.

11.3.3 Social functions of nicknames

There are differences as well as close connections between the structures and functions of names. Generally speaking, the structural forms determine the

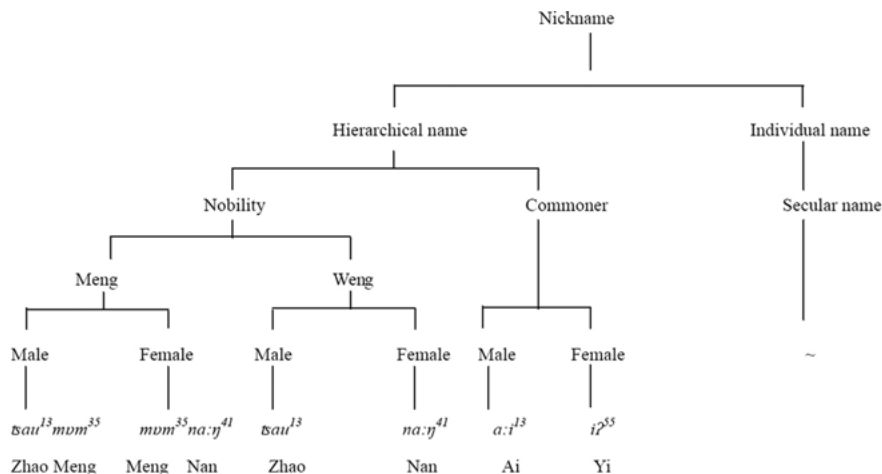


Figure 11.1: Structural categories of nicknames in Dai (“~” indicates “without stable formation”).

scope and performance of functions. The functions of names are determined by the structures and forms of names.

People’s names have the function of referring to and distinguishing between each member of a social group; however, in some social and historical contexts, names are generally marked by certain social and cultural features, and thus express a specific social and cultural meaning.

The nicknames of Dai people are used from the day they are born to the day they have a child. The original function of a nickname is to mark the fact that the person receiving the name is still in the early phase of his or her life and has the status of a child in the family.

The hierarchical elements of Dai nicknames not only mark membership of a hierarchical group but also distinguish hierarchical levels from one another. Generally speaking, once someone hears a Dai person’s nickname, he or she can judge the person’s gender and position in the social hierarchy. This type of inference has referential value for communication in hierarchical society because the communicators can prepare psychologically and then talk and act appropriately; it can also make their actions fit the rules of Dai society much better. Besides identifying position within the hierarchy of the group and differentiating between hierarchical levels, nicknames in Dai also function to show a person’s gender.

Because individual elements are produced through only five or six naming methods, it is very common for people in Dai villages to use the same names.

To distinguish identical names, modifiers are added to identical names. Modifiers may be names of villages, names from the environment, or names of physical features. For example, in a given village, many people have the name “Aixiang.” They are addressed as “Aixiang Long” (the oldest Aixiang), “Aixiang Gang” (the second-oldest Aixiang), and “Aixiang Nu” (the youngest Aixiang). Moreover, they may be referred to as “Aixiang living at the top of the village,” “Aixiang living in the middle of the village,” “Aixiang living at the foot of the village,” “Aixiang beside the water well,” “Aixiang under the big banyan,” “tall Aixiang,” “short Aixiang,” “fat Aixiang,” “thin Aixiang,” “Aixiang with big eyes,” “Aixiang with thick ears,” and so on.

11.4 Buddhist names: Structures, implications, and functions

The Sakyamuni Buddha was traditionally said to have died in 485 BC. After that, Buddhism was divided into Sthavira and Theravada (later often called the Mahayana and Hinayana denominations). At the end of the Western Han dynasty, both divisions of Buddhism spread to the Chinese mainland through the Western Regions. By the end of the Tang dynasty, Theravada Buddhism had almost disappeared from central China, but it spread widely in North Asia, Southeast Asia, and, in particular, the Dai ethnic areas in China’s Yunnan Province.

11.4.1 Rules for conversion to Buddhism and returning to secular life, and hierarchical rules for monks

From the seventh to fourteenth centuries, Theravada spread to the Dai communities of Xishuangbanna. Because the doctrines of Buddhism fit the requirements of the feudal government, Buddhist monks were ensured of the patronage of the feudal lords and gave them their support; the development and spread of Buddhism was solidly supported and promoted by the feudal lords. Since the fifteenth century, their political rule integrated religion and politics, unifying Buddhist doctrines and the laws formed in the Xishuangbanna region. Theravada became the orthodox religion of all the local Dai people.

For hundreds of years, communities in Xishuangbanna have built Buddhist temples in almost every village and celebrated Buddhist festivals every month. According to Buddhist requirements, every man in his lifetime needs to lead a monk’s life in a temple for a certain period, because it is commonly believed that only those who wear kasaya, take the tonsure, and enter the monasteries to practice religious discipline can eliminate the problems of life and become

new men; otherwise, they will be discriminated against by society. The majority of monks in temples will resume their secular lives and return home after a few months or several years. Very few of them can stay in temples and earn promotion to Buddha or topmost Buddha. Those who stay in temples throughout their lifetime are few. Every man is entrenched in monasticism, though most of them will eventually resume secular lives. This has become a specific local religious and social custom. The monks permitted to resume secular life are primarily divided into three levels. Ordered from low to high, these three levels are as follows.

The first level is *śramanera*, called *phaʔ⁵⁵* in Dai (written as 帕 in Chinese characters), and commonly known as “little monk.” Before boys in Dai become “little monks,” they have a preparatory period of study and training of six months to one year. After they have learnt the basic rules and doctrines of Buddhism, all of the villagers will conduct a ceremony promoting them to monk whereby they formally become “little monks.” “Little monks” are generally aged between seven to twelve years old. If their parents agree, the “little monks” can resume secular lives.

The second level is *bhikṣu*, called *tuʔ⁵⁵* in Dai (written as 督 in Chinese characters), and commonly known as Buddha or second Buddha (called *tuʔ⁵⁵nvi¹¹* in Dai, written as 督囡 in Chinese characters). When a “little monk” is twenty years old, he studies Buddhist doctrines and rules in depth. Once the topmost Buddha or abbot of the temple agrees and conducts a ceremony, a little monk can be promoted to second Buddha. If a second Buddha would like to resume secular life, the agreement of the abbot and the local headman is needed.

The third level is abbot, called *tuʔ⁵⁵loŋ⁵⁵* in Dai (written as 督龙 in Chinese characters). An abbot is good at dealing with affairs and is qualified to be the topmost Buddha. He controls the whole temple and enjoys the highest prestige inside and outside the village. In religious activities, even the Tusi needs to pay worship to the topmost Buddha.

The structures of the three-level Buddhist names discussed above are related to social hierarchies. Moreover, there are five other important monk positions beyond the three levels mentioned above. The structures of these monks’ names are not related to social hierarchies. Ordered from low to high, the five positions are as follows. The first level is called *xu⁴¹ba⁵⁵* in Dai (written as 袪巴 in Chinese characters), namely the topmost abbot, or the topmost Buddha in an area. The second level is called *sa⁵⁵mi⁴¹* in Dai (written as 萨米 in Chinese characters); these are eminent monks who eliminate evil and practice charity. The third level is that of primary monk, called *saŋ⁵⁵xa¹¹la⁴¹tsa⁴¹* in Dai (written as 桑卡拉扎 in Chinese characters), which is the equivalent of Pali *sangharāja*, also translated as “the king of monks.” The fourth level is that of the Buddhist master, called

pha²³³tsau¹³xu⁴¹ in Dai, who is proficient in dharma and good at practicing Buddhism. The fifth level is that of supreme living Buddha or lord Buddha, called *a⁵⁵ka¹¹mun⁴¹li⁴¹* in Dai (written as 阿夏牟尼 in Chinese characters). Only the topmost feudal lord's direct relatives can receive this addressing term.

11.4.2 Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of Buddhist names

Buddhist names are called *tsu³³pha²⁵⁵* in Dai, with the literal meaning “monks’ names.” Jiang Yingliang (1950: 215) first used this term in the Chinese scholarly literature. After that, Gao Lishi (1991: 315) replaced “monk’s name” with the term “Buddhist name.” In this chapter, “Buddhist name” is used, as these names not only refer to monks but also to Buddhas and the topmost Buddha. Moreover, the name forms of Buddhist names formally correspond to those of laic names (to be discussed in 11.5).

When a boy in a Dai ethnic group is seven to eight years old, his parents send him to a Buddhist temple to be a preparatory or novice monk, called *xo³³jom⁴¹* in Dai (written as 科勇 in Chinese characters). After the preparatory period, a ceremony will be conducted to promote him to “little monk.” At this point, the topmost Buddha provides a Buddhist name for him, and then his previous nickname is discarded. Once he leaves the temple, he will use his laic name because Buddhist names are only for monks.

Buddhist names in Dai comprise three parts: the monk-level element, the individual element, and the hierarchical element. The monk-level element is the name of the position granted by the Buddhist temple, with definite restrictions and promotion rules. The individual element is a monk’s religious name, bestowed by the topmost Buddha. Except for the noble level of Meng, for which an exclusive Pali loanword is used, religious names have no distinction in terms of social hierarchy and monks’ levels. Hierarchical elements are addressing terms used to mark specific social levels; these terms are used only by members of the respective level. Table 11.2 displays the hierarchical structures and cultural implications of Buddhist names.

Table 11.2 shows that the monk names for monks of the *pa* level from the Meng and Weng nobility and commoners in Dai all include “Pa” in pre-name position. In other words, the monk-level element for all three is the same. However, the corresponding individual elements are different. All of the monks from the Meng level use the religious name *sa⁵⁵ma¹¹ne³³*, an equivalent of Pali *śramanera*, which originally referred to monks younger than twenty years old but in this case has the literal meaning “novice Buddhist monk.” The religious names of monks from the Weng and commoner levels have no hierarchical distinctions,

Table 11.2: Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of Buddhist names in Dai.

Monk's level	Hierarchical level	Hierarchical structure of Buddhist name	Example of Buddhist name	Literal meaning	Cultural implications
<i>pa</i> 帕 [monk]	Meng	“Pa” + “Shamanian” (religious name)	Pa Shamanian ^a	“ <i>Śramanera</i> monk”	“Pa”: monk, monk-level term; “Shamanian”: equivalent of Pali <i>śramanera</i> , indicating “little monk”
	Weng	“Pa” + religious name + “Weng” (or religious name + “Weng”)	Pa Xili Weng	“Bodhi tree monk from the Weng level”	“Pa”: monk, monk-level term; “Xili”: a religious name; “Weng”: addressing the Weng level of the nobility
	commoner	“Pa” + religious name	Pa Xili	“Bodhi tree monk”	“Pa”: monk, monk-level term; “Xili”: Bodhi tree, a religious name
<i>du</i> 督 [Buddha]	Weng	“Du” + religious name + “Weng”	Du Bizha Weng	“Dignified Buddha from the Weng level”	“Du”: Buddha, monk-level term; “Bizha”: dignity, a religious name
	commoner	“Du” + religious name	Du Bizha	“Dignified Buddha”	“Du”: Buddha, monk-level term; “Bizha”: dignity, a religious name
<i>dulong</i> 督龙 [topmost Buddha]	Weng	“Dulong” + religious name + “Weng”	Dulong Tanma Weng	“Classic topmost Buddha from the Weng level”	“Dulong”: topmost Buddha; “Tanma”: equivalent of Pali <i>dhamma</i> , indicating laws and classics
	commoner	“Dulong” + religious name	Dulong Tanma	“Classic topmost Buddha”	“Dulong”: topmost Buddha, monk-level term; “Tanma”: from Pali, indicating classics and laws

^aSee Xishuangbanna Prefecture Political Consultative Conference (1992: 180).

but their hierarchical elements are quite different. The religious elements of the names of Weng-level monks are generally followed by the character for “Weng,” while commoners’ religious names take no such markers. For example, “Weng” in “Paxili Weng” (Bodhi tree monk from the Weng level) indicates that the name is used by a person from the noble Weng level, while “Paxili” (Bodhi tree monk) without the character “Weng” indicates a commoner.

Apart from monks from the Meng level, the religious names used by monks from various social levels are related to their nicknames. Generally, the religious name is formed by adopting one of the consonants of the nickname to create a new word related to Buddhism. For example, if a boy’s nickname is “Aixiang,” where the consonant of “Xiang” (*seŋ⁵⁵*) is /s/, then /s/ can suggest a word relating to Buddhist doctrine. “Xili” (*si²⁵⁵li⁵⁵*; Bodhi tree) can be used as a religious name, and the full Buddhist name is thus “Paxili” (Bodhi tree monk).

11.4.3 Structural categories and functions of Buddhist names

As mentioned above, according to the structural and hierarchical analytical approach, Buddhist names in Dai are divided into three categories: monk-level elements, individual elements, and hierarchical elements. Monk-level elements are further divided into three levels: monk (*pa*), Buddha (*du*), and topmost Buddha (*dulong*). The individual elements in Buddhist names mainly involve religious names, which are further divided into the levels of Meng and non-Meng. There are two hierarchical levels, Weng and commoner. Figure 11.2 displays the structural categories of Buddhist names.

As discussed above, Buddhist names in Dai are used from the day a boy enters a Buddhist temple and becomes a “little monk” to the day he leaves the temple and resumes secular life. Before becoming a monk, the boy uses a nickname; after returning home, he shifts back to his laic name. A shift from a nickname to a Buddhist name is like a shift from long hair to bare head and from ethnic clothing to the *kasaya*. The function of this shift is to distinguish monks from laymen and to highlight the monk’s identity and status.

Therefore, the overall function of the Buddhist names is to mark a person’s identity and status in the Buddhist temple, which are primarily represented by the monk-level element of the Buddhist name. Dai society in Xishuangbanna is a feudal society with a strict hierarchical system; thus, as well as reflecting a monk’s hierarchical position, Buddhist names are required to reflect hierarchical social distinctions. Therefore, Buddhist names are inevitably marked by social hierarchies. The function of distinguishing social hierarchies is realized by religious names and hierarchical terms. Religious names can distinguish the

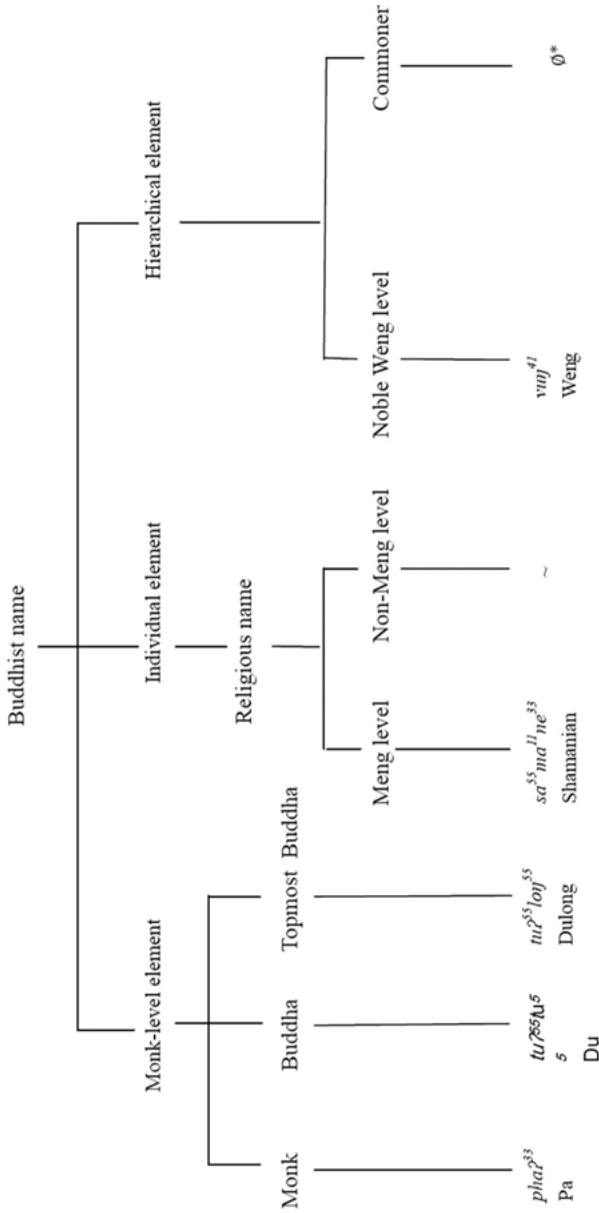


Figure 11.2: Structural categories of Buddhist names in Dai (“Ø” indicates a zero form, “~” indicates names without stable forms).

Meng level of the nobility from non-Meng; hierarchical terms can differentiate the Weng level of the nobility from commoners.

11.5 Laic names: Structures, implications, and functions

11.5.1 Lifespan of laic names

Laic names are called *sik*⁵⁵ in Dai, referring to the new name used by a monk from the date of leaving a Buddhist temple and resuming secular life. The lifespan of laic names is very complex. Students of Dai names generally believe that the order of names used during the lifetime of a Dai male is nickname, Buddhist name, laic name, father name, and official's name. In other words, after resuming secular life and having a child, a man shifts to the father name. After becoming an official, he shifts to the official's name. My investigation has yielded different results.

Generally speaking, the laic names of commoners and monks are used for a short time. After one or two weeks, the man resumes the use of his nickname until he has a child and takes a father name. Buddhas and some nobles of both the Meng and Weng levels use their laic names for a longer time because, between leaving the temple and becoming officials, they use their laic names all the time, even if they have children. Their father names are only used at home. If they are not officials, they use their laic names throughout their lives.

11.5.2 Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of laic names

Laic names in Dai comprise three parts: laic elements, individual elements, and hierarchical elements. Laic elements exclusively cover monks from different social and religious levels who have resumed secular life. Individual elements include both the “little monks” religious names granted by the topmost Buddha and the secular names within nicknames in Dai. The implications of the hierarchical elements are consistent with those of the hierarchical elements of Buddhist names discussed above. See Table 11.3.

Table 11.3 shows that monks' laic names have differences in hierarchical structure. The laic names of Weng-level monks are “Zhaomai” or “Zhao”; those of commoner monks are “Yanmai” or “Jinan” (all of these indicate monks who have resumed secular life). However, there is no hierarchical difference between the laic names of a Buddha and a topmost Buddha. All of them, whether Weng or commoner, use the laic term “Kanglang” (indicating a Buddha who has resumed secular life) or “Kanglanglong” (indicating a topmost Buddha who

Table 11.3: Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of laic names in Dai.

Monk's level	Hierarchical level	Hierarchical structure of laic name	Examples of laic name	Literal meaning	Cultural implications
<i>pa</i> 𑜀𑜂𑜆 [monk]	Weng level	"Zhaomai" + secular name + "Weng"	Zhaomai Zai Weng	"a monk from the Weng level who resumes secular life on market day"	"Zhaomai": new master, laic name of a monk from the Weng level; "Zai": market day; "Weng": hierarchal term
	commoner	"Zhao" + religious name + "Weng"	Zhao Manggala Weng	"a lucky master from the Weng level"	"Manggala": the equivalent of <i>mangala</i> in Pali, indicating luckiness, a religious name
<i>du</i> 𑜃𑜂𑜆 [Buddha]	Weng level	"Yanmai" + secular name	Yanmai Men	"a round monk who resumes secular life"	"Yanmai": the laic term for a monk from the commoner level, used in Jinghong; "Men": round (a secular name)
	commoner	"Jinan" + secular name	Jinan Jiao	"a glass-like transparent monk who resumes secular life"	"Jinan": the laic term for a monk from the commoner level, used in Menghai; "Jiao": glass (a secular name)
<i>du</i> 𑜃𑜂𑜆 [Buddha]	Weng level	"Kanglang" + secular name + "Weng"	Kanglang Jian Weng ^a	"fragrant Buddha who resumes secular life from the Weng level"	"Kanglang": laic term for a Buddha; "Jian": fragrant (a secular name)
	commoner	"Kanglang" + religious name + "Weng"	Kanglang Aliya Weng ^b	"Buddha with four truths who resumes secular life from the Weng level"	"Aliya": <i>Ariyasacca</i> in Pali, a religious name
	commoner	"Kanglang" + secular name	Kanglang Zhang	"weighed Buddha who resumes secular life"	"Kanglang": laic term for a Buddha; "Zhang": weighed (a secular name)

(continued)

Table 11.3 (continued)

Monk's level	Hierarchical level	Hierarchical structure of laic name	Examples of laic name	Literal meaning	Cultural implications
<i>dulong</i> 督龙 [topmost Buddha]	Weng level	“Kanglanglong” + secular name + “Weng”	Kanglanglong Zhen Weng	“topmost Buddha like a knight who resumes secular life from the Weng level”	“Kanglanglong”: laic term for a topmost Buddha; “Zhen”: knight (a secular name)
	commoner	“Kanglanglong” + secular name	Kanglanglong Mandong ^c	“topmost Buddha who resumes secular life in Mandong Village”	“Kanglanglong”: laic term for a topmost Buddha; “Mandong”: village’s name, a secular name.

^aThis is a laic name used by the fifteenth-generation Tusi in Menghun Township, Menghai County.

^bThis is a laic name used by Banabanfei (叭纳班费), a deputy official responsible for ships at the Xishuangbanna court in the 1950s.

^cThis is a laic name used by the topmost Buddha in Mandong Village, Jinghong Township, in the 1950s.

has resumed secular life). There are hierarchical differences between Weng and commoner laic names. The differences are primarily manifested in the hierarchical elements. A Buddha from the Weng level uses a laic name marked by the character for “Weng,” while a commoner uses an unmarked form.

Turning to individual elements, we see that all of the commoner monks use laic names. Weng nobles either use secular names, such as “Zai” (indicating market day) in “Zhaomai Zai Weng,” or religious names, such as “Aliya” (indicating four truths) in “Kanglang Aliya Weng.”

11.5.3 Structural categories and functions of laic names

Based on the structural and hierarchical analytical approach, laic names in Dai are first divided into three categories: laic elements, individual elements, and hierarchical elements. The laic elements are divided into three levels: monk (*pa*), Buddha (*du*), and topmost Buddha (*dulong*). The level of commoner shows two regional forms: Jinghong and Menghai. The names for a Buddha or topmost Buddha have no structural or hierarchical differences (see Figure 11.3).

Individual terms are divided into two levels: Weng and commoner. On the Weng level, the religious name is distinguished from the secular name. All commoners use secular names without hierarchical differences. The hierarchical categories are the same as those of the Buddhist names mentioned above; both distinguish the noble level of Weng from commoners.

The use of laic names in Dai serves to indicate that the person with the granted name has practiced Buddhist doctrines and become a new man trained in Buddhist doctrine. The social status and prestige of this type of new man far exceeds that of the layman who has never entered a Buddhist temple.

Secular elements in laic names in Dai primarily refer to monks, Buddhas, and the topmost Buddhas who resume secular life. At the same time, they are also used to mark the fact that the monk who has resumed secular life is from the Weng noble level or the commoners. The laic element of a commoner monk’s name can distinguish regions as well. The laic term for a commoner monk in Jinghong City is “Jinan,” that in Menghai County “Yanmai.”

Moreover, “Kanglang” (a Buddha who has resumed secular life), a laic name of a Buddha, indicates that the person with the granted name has become an adult and has attained a certain cultural level. The majority of the new “little monks” will go back home before they become twenty years old. Those who do not return home will be promoted to Buddha if they continue to obey the doctrine, learn Buddhism, pass the tests set by the abbot, and receive his agreement. After three years, they will be promoted to topmost Buddha once they pass the

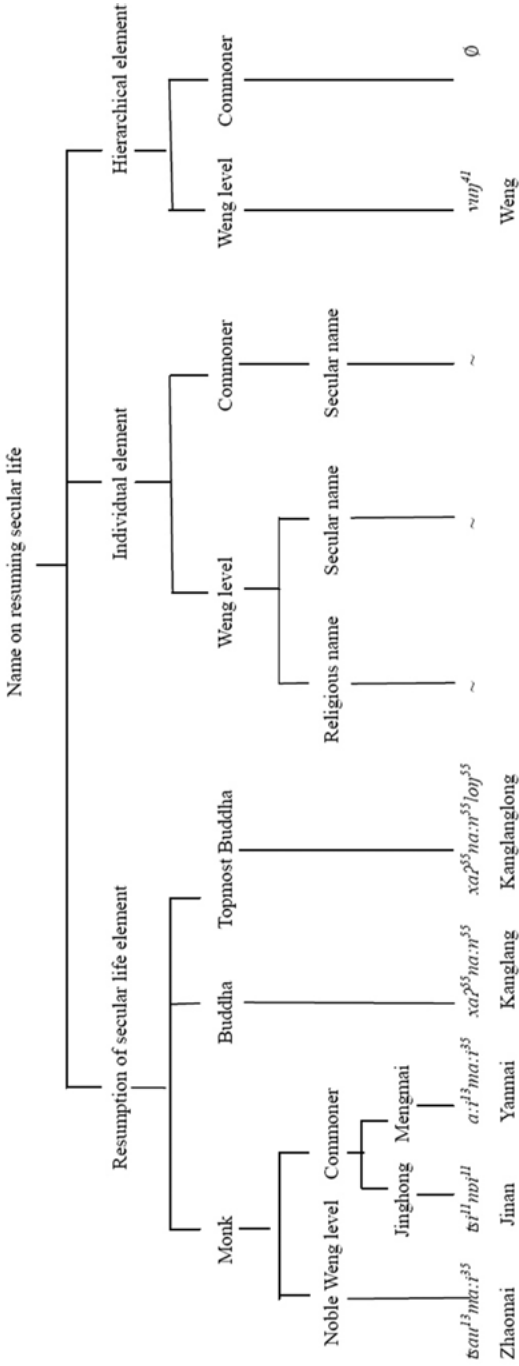


Figure 11.3: Structural categories of names used on resuming secular life in Dai (“∅” indicates a zero form, “~” represents a term without stable form).

relevant tests. Therefore, the majority of Buddhas who resume secular life are adults aged about twenty years. Because historically there were only Buddhist temples, not schools, in Dai regions, Buddhist temples functioned as schools as well. Buddhas are not only familiar with Buddhist books and disciplines, but also learn about many fields such as history, astronomy, the calendar, literature, law, and language. Therefore, in the Dai view, Buddhas who resume secular life, the “Kanglang,” are intermediate intellectuals in the Dai ethnic group. The laic name of a Buddha, namely “Kanglang,” functions to indicate an educational level as well.

As well as referring to individual people, the individual element of laic names in Dai can also distinguish between Weng and commoners. Laic names are multifunctional, indicating the level of monk, recognizing hierarchies, distinguishing regions, identifying educational levels, and marking adults.

11.6 Officials' names: Structures, implications, and functions

11.6.1 Officials' names and official hierarchies

The official's name, called *tsu*³³*xun*⁵⁵ in Dai, is the name used when a Dai male uses a new name consistent with the name of his official position after becoming an official. When he starts to use this official's name, his previous nickname or laic name will be discarded. The official's name must be consistent with his official position. If an official is promoted, his official's name needs to be changed as well. Once the official position is stable, the official's name will no longer change.

In Dai feudal society, the topmost official level is that of Xuanweishi, called *tsau*¹³*phen*³⁵*din*⁵⁵ in Dai. Official titles are subdivided into ten levels. The first official position is the president of the court, called *tsau*¹³*tseŋ*⁴¹*ha*⁴¹ in Dai.³⁰ The second is equivalent to prime minister, called *hvi*¹¹*da:ŋ*¹³ or *xa*¹¹*tsuŋ*³³ in Dai.³¹ The third official position is the home official or minister, called *tsau*¹³*loŋ*⁵⁵ in Dai,³² which includes the Tusi, called *tsau*¹³*myŋ*⁴¹ in Dai.³³ The fourth is the Little Tusi, called *tsau*¹³*loŋ*⁴¹ in the Jinghong region³⁴ and *tsau*¹³*bok*³⁵ in areas like

³⁰ Transcribed as *zhaojingha* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召景哈 in Chinese characters.

³¹ *hvi*¹¹*da:ŋ*¹³ is transcribed as *huailang* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 怀朗 in Chinese characters. *xa*¹¹*tsuŋ*³³ is transcribed as *kazhen* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 卡真 in Chinese characters.

³² Transcribed as *zhaolong* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召龙 in Chinese characters.

³³ Transcribed as *zhaomeng* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召勳 in Chinese characters.

³⁴ Transcribed as *zhaolong* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召陇 in Chinese characters.

Mengzhe and Menghan.³⁵ The fifth official position is the village head governing several villages, called *tsau*¹³*ho*⁵⁵*sip*^{55,36} the sixth is the topmost headman, called *phia*⁴¹*lor*^{55,37} who is in charge of a large village; the seventh is the headman, called *phia*^{41,38} who is in charge of a middle-sized village; the eighth is the little headman, called *tsa*⁴¹*lor*^{55,39} who is in charge of a small village; the ninth is the deputy headman, called *tsa*^{41,40} who assists the headman or the little headman in managing the village; and the tenth official position is that of the clerical staff or clerks, called *sen*⁵⁵ in Dai.⁴¹

On the basis of the collected data, the hierarchical distinctions in officials' names in Dai mainly concern three broad levels: the topmost headman on the sixth level (*balong*), the headman on the seventh level (*ba*), and the deputy headman on the ninth level (*xian*).

11.6.2 Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of officials' names

Officials' names comprise three parts: the name of the official title, the person's name or individual's name, and the hierarchical name. The first part, the name of the official title, includes, as the name suggests, the name of the official position. The second part is made up of typical names in Dai such as a nickname, laic name, father name, or individual name. The third part is a hierarchical term (see Table 11.4).

Table 11.4 shows that the official title name in the official's name shows no hierarchical differences. No matter what the position in the official hierarchy is, the officials' names always begin with the names of official positions such as *balong* (the topmost headman), *ba* (headman), or *zha* (the second headman). The second part of the official's name is the laic name, father name, or nickname. In Table 11.4, the fourth example, "Balong Yanxiang," expresses the literal meaning "a man acting as the topmost headman whose nickname indicates precious jade." "Balong" is an official title indicating "the topmost headman." "Yanxiang" is a nickname in which "Yan" refers to a commoner and "Xiang" means "precious jade"; "Yan" + "Xiang" indicates "a man like precious jade." Nicknames in Dai

35 Transcribed as *zhaobo* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召播 in Chinese characters.

36 Transcribed as *zhaohuoxi* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 召火西 in Chinese characters.

37 Transcribed as *balong* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 叭龙 in Chinese characters.

38 Transcribed as *ba* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 叭 in Chinese characters.

39 Transcribed as *zha* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 乍, 钆, or 扎 in Chinese characters.

40 Transcribed as *zha* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 乍 in Chinese characters.

41 Transcribed as *xian* in Chinese Pinyin and written as 先 or 徼先 in Chinese characters.

Table 11.4: Hierarchical structures and cultural implications of officials' names in Dai.

Official title	Hierarchical level	Hierarchical structure of official's name	Example of official's name	Literal meaning	Cultural implications (bold marks Pali)
balong (the topmost headman)	Weng	"Balong" + nickname (Weng)	Balong Zai	"the topmost headman from the Weng level whose religious name is 'market day'"	"Zai": the market day before gifts are presented to Buddhists
			Weng		
		"Balong" + religious name + "Weng"	Balong Yingda Weng	"the topmost headman from the Weng level whose religious name is 'the emperor of heaven'"	"Yingda": <i>inda</i> , indicating the emperor of heaven
commoner		"Balong" + laic name	Balong Mai Weng	"the topmost headman from the Weng level, the monk who resumes secular life"	"Mai": laic name for monks
		"Balong" + nickname	Balong Yanxiang	"the topmost headman whose nickname is precious jade"	"Yan": the group term for male commoners; "Xiang": precious jade
		"Balong" + administrative district's name	Balong Longkuang	"the topmost headman who lives in Longkuang district"	"Longkuang": former name of the administrative region
		"Balong" + religious name	Balong Yingda	"the topmost headman whose religious name means 'the emperor of heaven'"	"Yingda": <i>inda</i> , indicating the emperor of heaven

(continued)

Table 11.4 (continued)

Official title	Hierarchical level	Hierarchical structure of official's name	Example of official's name	Literal meaning	Cultural implications (bold marks Pali)
<i>ba</i> (headman)	Weng	"Ba" + nickname (Weng)	Ba Zai Weng	"the headman from the Weng level whose nickname is a market day"	"Zai": the market day before gifts are presented to Buddhists
			Ba Zhao Wen	"the headman from the Weng level whose nickname is 'the eldest child'"	"Zhao": child; "Wen": the eldest child
	commoner	"Ba" + religious name + "Weng"	Ba Bala Weng	"the headman from the Weng level whose religious name is 'power'"	"Bala": <i>bala</i> , indicating power
Ba Yan Shuai			"the headman who weighed out shuai [a unit of measurement]"	"Yan": the group name of male commoners; "Shuai": unit of weight	
Ba Kangmudun			"the headman whose nickname is 'Kangmudun'"	"Kangmudun": a secular name	
<i>zha</i> (deputy headman)	Weng	"Ba" + laic name	Ba Kanglang Zai	"the headman whose nickname is 'the Buddha with the laic name of a market day'"	"Kanglang": laic name for a Buddha
			Zha Jian Weng	"the deputy headman from the Weng level whose nickname is 'fragrance'"	"Jian": fragrance, a nickname; "Weng": noble hierarchical term
		"Zha" + nickname (Weng)	Zha Aliya Weng	"the deputy headman from the Weng level whose religious name indicates four truths"	"Aliya": four truths

commoner	“Zha” + nickname	Zha Yan Wenla	“the deputy headman who is the eldest child, born at the end of the month”	“Wenla”: the eldest child, born at the end of the month
	“Zha” + secular name	Zha Wenbian	“the deputy headman who is the eldest child, born in the middle of the month”	“Wenbian”: the eldest child, born in the middle of the month
	“Zha” + name on resuming secular life	Zha Kanglang Yin	“the deputy headman, a Buddha, whose name on resuming secular life was Yin”	“Kanglang”: a laic name; “Yin”: a secular name
	“Zha” + father name	Zha Bo Yanfei	“the deputy headman who is Yanfei’s father”	“Bo”: father; “Yanfei”: a nickname

Source: the official names listed in this table are cited from Yunnan Provincial Editorial Board (1983). Due to limitations of space, not all of the sources of these items are noted.

can reflect the differences between Weng and commoners. The second part of the official's name is an individual name such as a secular name, religious name, or name of an administrative district. Social hierarchical distinctions are not found among individual names. The third part of the official's name is the hierarchical element. As with the hierarchical element in Buddhist and laic names, an official's name including the character 翁 *Weng* belongs to the level of Weng, while a name without it belongs to a commoner.

If the structures of nicknames, Buddhist names, and laic names are regarded as simple structures, the structure of officials' names, i.e., the name of the official title + the person's name (nickname, laic name, or father name) can be considered a complex structure because it is formed from the simple structure of an original name to which is added an official title (a father name is an exception because of its complex structure).

11.6.3 Structural categories and social functions of officials' names

By using a structural and hierarchical analytical approach, we can divide officials' names in Dai into three parts: the official title, the person's name or individual element, and the hierarchical element. Terms of official title include just three ranks: the topmost headman (*balong*), the headman (*ba*), and the deputy headman (*zha*). The person's name can be of three types: nickname, laic name, or father name. As discussed above, a nickname comprises a hierarchical element and an individual name. Individual elements make no hierarchical distinctions, but hierarchical terms distinguish Weng from commoners. The laic name distinguishes only two levels: those of monk and Buddha. Father names are divided into two levels: father terms and nicknames. Nicknames are further divided into two levels, the hierarchical term and the individual term. The individual element, which acts as the substituted part of a person's name, includes three levels: administrative district name, secular name, and religious name. The hierarchical term just distinguishes two levels, those of Weng and commoner.

The whole function of the official's name in Dai is to mark a person's political identity and actual position, which are mainly reflected by official titles.

Before becoming an official, a Dai male may use a laic name, nickname, or father name. After becoming an official, in order to be consistent with his original name, the new official generally uses a name with a compound structure: name of the official title + nickname, laic name, or father name. Therefore, new officials' names not only mark their official level, but also serve other functions. For example, "Zhao" or "Ai" in a nickname shows whether the person belongs to the level of Weng or commoner; "Mai" or "Kanglang" reflects the fact that

the name-granted person is a monk or Buddha in a temple respectively; “Ai” or “Yi” in a father name indicates that the named person has become a father already, and that his first child is male or female respectively. The name of the administrative district indicates the area for which the named person is responsible. Hierarchical terms can distinguish Weng from commoners.

All in all, officials’ names in Dai are multifunctional, showing whether the named person has a high or low official title and a high or low hierarchical status, what his monk level was before he resumed secular life, and his responsibility as an official. Among these functions, marking his official title is the main one.

11.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described the standard naming methods in Xishuangbanna Dai (without referring to various slight distinctions on the ground). This naming method was formed and perfected between the fifteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century.

Before the twelfth century, the leaders of the Xishuangbanna Dai had not established a united feudal regime, nor had caste differentiation yet appeared in Dai society. The structural forms and cultural implication of Dai people’s nicknames were simple. For example, the affixes “Ai” (*a:i¹³*) and “Yi” (*i²⁵⁵*) just indicated male and female rather than expressing deeper meaning.

With the establishment of a hierarchical system, the nobility implemented strict hierarchical rules against intermarriage that prohibited members of different levels of the hierarchy from marrying (Zhang Yuanqing 1981). Moreover, they promulgated a series of hierarchical laws and regulations to legalize the hereditary character of their hierarchical status and privilege (Dao Guodong 1983). In order to strengthen and develop the feudal regime, hierarchical society requires etiquette, clothing, and tribute to be hierarchically based. For example, in funeral and burial ceremonies, the choice of graveyards and burial forms like ground-burying and cremation are determined by the buried person’s hierarchical status (Zheng Peng 1986: 98–101). The body parts, color, and content of a man’s tattoo are chosen on the basis of hierarchical status (Yang Shiguang 1990: 725). A large number of hierarchical terms appear among kinship terms (Zhou Qingsheng 1997a). Like those ceremonies and customs mentioned above, personal names in Dai unavoidably indicate hierarchical status.

Over Dai men’s lifetimes, their names change many times to fit the changes occurring at different phases of life. In childhood, they use nicknames. In adolescence, they use Buddhist names and laic names. As adults, they use a father

name or official's name. Names change along with the phase of life, but the hierarchy is always stable. The name is a verbal sign of the social hierarchy, indicating one's social status. Therefore, naming rules in the Dai ethnic group are significant in consolidating the feudal system's social order. Hierarchical naming has become a natural feature of Dai naming rules.

Since the 1950s, domestic reform completely abolished the land ownership of feudal leaders; the social hierarchical system has been broken up, and the original standards for the hierarchical naming rules have been lost. The naming methods specific to commoners throughout history have been adopted by descendants of nobles as well; the marker of nobility "Zhao" (master), which was used previously, has lost its original meaning and evolved into a family name. Along with the bilingualism of the population, the phenomenon of bi-names is developing continuously. Naming rules in Dai are entering a new era.

Part 4: Language maintenance

Chapter 12

Language loss and language maintenance: The example of Tungus

Now that the world's economy is developing towards globalization, the number of users of ethnic minority languages and many extreme-ethnic minority languages is declining; the range and degree of use of these languages are shrinking dramatically. Language loss and even language disappearance have become prominent as the speed of language loss and disappearance accelerates. Like the conceptual pairing of water and soil loss and conservation in natural geography, language loss and language maintenance have become a conceptual pairing for sociolinguists.

Faced with this linguistic recession all over the world, many linguists, especially sociolinguists, have carefully thought about how to slow down language loss so as not to lose the extreme-ethnic minority languages; their concerns include how to maintain the range of use of these languages and how to change or slow down the process of loss.

In the English-language literature, the term “language attrition” (De Bots and Weltens 1991: 31–52) is often substituted for “language loss” (Dorian 1982: 44–59), as are “language erosion” (Kravin 1992: 307–435; Smolicz 1992: 277–305; Taft and Cahill 1989: 129–144), “language regression” (De Bots and Weltens 1991: 31–52), and so forth.

In this chapter, I will not describe the basic theory of language loss and language maintenance but merely describe the situations of three extreme-ethnic minority languages in China – Hezhen, Ewenki, and Oroqen – which are spoken in Heilongjiang Province and Inner Mongolia (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 76–78), and emphasize that these three extreme-ethnic minority languages face the possibility of gradually disappearing. I hope thereby to attract the attention of scholars and language planners.

12.1 Hezhen

The Hezhen, Ewenki, and Oroqen languages belong to the Manchu-Tungusic group of the Altaic family and are mainly spoken in the Daxing'an and Xiaoxing'an mountain areas. The Hezhen, Ewenki, and Oroqen peoples mainly live by hunting, gathering, and fishing; some Ewenki people make a living

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from raising livestock. It has been noted historically that the Hezhen, Ewenki, and Oroqen people generally practiced shamanism. Meanwhile, the Ewenki people in pastoral areas follow Lamaism.

The Hezhen are the smallest ethnicity among the fifty-five ethnic minorities in China. Hezhen is a local language specifically spoken in Heilongjiang Province. Hezhen-speakers have lived near Heilongjiang, the Songhua River, and the Wusuli River over several generations. They mainly live on fishing, supplemented by hunting and gathering. According to the population census conducted in 1990, there are 4,245 Hezhen people in China; of these, 3,759 live in Heilongjiang Province, and of them, 2,561 are distributed in Jiejinkou Hezhen Township, Tongjiang City, Bacha Hezhen Township, Tianpai Hezhen Township, Raohe County, and Fuyuan County; some Hezhen ethnic settlement villages can also be found in a suburb of Jiamusi City (He Xuejuan 2002).

The Hezhen language is divided into two dialects: Qileng and Hezhen. The Qileng dialect is mainly spoken in the area of the confluence of the Songhua River and the Heilong River, including Fujin City, Tongjiang City, Ledeli, Xilinzi, and Raohe County in the middle of the Wusuli River area. Speakers of these dialects account for 97% of Hezhen-speakers. The Hezhen dialect is mainly distributed from Bacha to the junction of the Heilongjiang River and the Wusuli River, and speakers of this dialect account for 3% of Hezhen-speakers (Ouyang Jueya and Zhou Yaowen 1994: 923).

According to an investigation conducted in 1989 among the Hezhen ethnic group, Hezhen-speakers made up only 14.78% of the total ethnic population. Moreover, the majority of the speakers are aged over fifty (McConnell 1995: book 1, 922). This fact indicates that the “Hezhen language is merely conserved among a minority of strong people and old people” (Zhou Qingsheng 1997b: 369). The use of the Hezhen language has seriously declined.

12.2 Ewenki

According to a population census conducted in 1990, there are just 23,315 Ewenki people in China, mainly distributed in the Daxing’an mountain area in Hulunbeier League, Inner Mongolia (renamed Hulunbeier City in October 2001), and Nehe County (renamed Nehe City in 1992), Heilongjiang Province. The Ewenki people are livestock farmers; they inhabit the Ewenki Autonomous Banner and Old Barag Banner, Inner Mongolia, accounting for more than 70% of the whole Ewenki ethnicity. Those who mainly live on agriculture, supplemented by hunting, mostly live in such places as the Moridawa Daghur Autonomous Banner, Ewenki Autonomous Banner, and Arun Banner. Those who mainly

practice hunting and forestry mostly live in Genhe City (renamed the Ergun Left Banner in 1994), Inner Mongolia. Those who depend on agriculture are mainly distributed in Nehe City and Nenjiang County, Heilongjiang Province, and so forth.

The Ewenki language is divided into three dialects. The first is the Haila'er dialect, whose speakers make up 70% of the total population and are mainly distributed in the Ewenki Autonomous Banner, Moridawa Daghur Autonomous Banner, Oroqen Autonomous Banner, Arun Banner, and other areas in Inner Mongolia, and Nehe City and Nenjiang County in Heilongjiang Province. The second dialect is the Chenba'erhu dialect, whose speakers make up 18% of the total population and mainly inhabit the Chenba'erhu Banner. The third is the Aoluguya dialect, whose speakers account for 12% of the total population and are mainly distributed in Genhe City (McConnell 1995: book 1, 872).

According to a sample survey conducted in 1988, native Ewenki-speakers made up 32% of the Ewenki people in Heilongjiang Province. Among Ewenki teenagers in this province, those who understand or slightly understand Ewenki only account for about 12% (Ouyang Jueya and Zhou Yaowen 1994: 926–927). Among Ewenki people living in Hulunbeier City, Inner Mongolia, there are just 78% who can speak Ewenki. In Heilongjiang Province, the Ewenki language is apparently declining.

The Ewenki people lack a native writing system. Ewenki communities in Heilongjiang Province generally employ Mandarin.

12.3 Oroqen

The Oroqen language is mainly distributed in the Daxing'an and Xiaoxing'an mountain areas and coastal regions of Heilongjiang Province. According to the population census conducted in 1990, there are 7,004 Oroqen people in China. Of these, Inner Mongolia is home to 3,001 Oroqen people, mainly in the Oroqen Autonomous Banner (1,858 Oroqen people), the Moridawa Daghur Autonomous Banner (237 Oroqen people), and Zhalantun City (211 Oroqen people); Heilongjiang Province has 3,588 Oroqen people, mainly distributed in Tahe County in the southeastern Daxing'an mountain area (601 Oroqen people), Huma County on the coast (445 Oroqen people), Jiayin County, Yichun City (117 Oroqen people), and so forth (Hu Zengyi 2001: 1). Traditionally, the Oroqen people mainly lived from hunting, supplemented by fishing, gathering, and handicrafts. However, since the 1950s, they have taken up agriculture, which came to play a major role in their lives as the diversified economy progressed in the 1980s.

According to a study carried out on the language in 1989, 51% of the Oroqen people speak Oroqen as their first language (McConnell 1995: book 1, 1071). Moreover, in a survey of the Oroqen Autonomous Banner conducted in 2000, proficient Oroqen-speakers accounted for 39.5% of the total sample. Proficient speakers made up 95% of those aged fifty-one and older, 66% of those aged twenty-one to fifty, and only 7% of those aged twenty and younger (Xu Shixuan and Guan Hongying 2001: 135). These data show that in Oroqen settlement areas, proficiency in Oroqen increases with age: the older the generation, the more who can speak Oroqen. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the majority of Oroqen adolescents (younger than twenty years old) could no longer speak the Oroqen language. Oroqen has no native writing system. Oroqen communities in Heilongjiang Province generally employ Mandarin.

12.4 Conclusion

So far, there have not been that many detailed investigations of the situation of these three extreme-ethnic minority languages spoken in north-eastern China. However, many scholars have observed that current research indicates that these extreme-ethnic minority languages are disappearing dramatically. For example, as early as 1992, Zhang Xi and Wu Yuwen warned that “the Hezhen language will disappear immediately in China” when they attended the Fifteenth International Conference of Linguists (McConnell 1995: book 1, 921). Yu Xiaofei also holds that the Hezhen language “is in a condition likely to disappear” (Yu Xiaofei and Huang Renyuan 2002: 36). Chao Ke wrote a book stating that “Oroqen- and Ewenki-speakers are decreasing dramatically as well. We can say that those adolescents who can speak their native language are becoming fewer; in particular, preschool children who can speak their native language are much fewer” (Chao Ke 1997: 4–5). Scholars like Xu Shixuan have written articles to warn that “in a few decades, the Oroqen language will disappear under pressure from Mandarin” (McConnell 1995: book 1, 36). The prognosis for the three extreme-ethnic minority languages discussed above is not good. Worries and warnings from many linguists are attracting the attention of the relevant authorities.

More than a thousand languages are dying out around the world, losing their original character, and disappearing or in danger of doing so, but only five to six of these languages are being successfully protected by language maintenance plans. This shows that the trend of reduction and loss of ethnic minority languages and extreme-ethnic minority languages is very strong; it also shows that it is very difficult to implement language maintenance plans. Faced with this general trend, ethnic minority language workers and researchers

in China have no choice but to study new issues, new opportunities, and new challenges to the existence and survival of ethnic minority languages. Moreover, they need to deal with the relationship between language loss and language maintenance on the basis of China's social reality. This is the only way in which they can devise development plans for ethnic minority languages that will work in the Chinese context.

Part 5: Language policies and practices

Chapter 13

Language policies and practices for ethnic groups introduced by the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China during the National Government period (1927–1949)

13.1 The Kuomintang's language policies and practices in border areas

In 1927, the Kuomintang proposed to govern China through political parties that would rule the country through the Three Principles of the People, and also proposed party education as a strategy for establishing the country, and then gradually established a set of so-called Frontier Policies of the Three Principles of the People. The party declared that it would pay attention to policies for the border areas and consolidate both the country and the ethnicities so as to achieve national unification, thereby strengthening national assimilation. The Kuomintang instituted the Three Principles of the People, which were vigorously propagated throughout the frontier and ethnic minority areas.

In order to achieve good publicity, the Kuomintang made detailed regulations regarding the languages used to promote its principles.

13.1.1 Policies on frontier languages

13.1.1.1 Relevant regulations

In June 1929, the Kuomintang held the Second Plenary Session of the Third Central Committee in Nanjing, where it passed the “Resolutions on Mongolian and Tibetan.” This was the first time regulations regarding the languages used to promote the Kuomintang's principles in the frontier regions were clarified. The regulations were created “to promote Mongolian and Tibetan urgently, and to write various kinds of simple propaganda material translated into Mongolian and Tibetan” in order to propagate the Kuomintang's principles (Rong Mengyuan 1985).

In January 1930, the “Tentative measures on conducting Mongolian party affairs” were passed by the Third Central Executive Committee's sixty-third executive

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meeting. These measures stipulated how to “promote the Kuomintang’s principles in Mongolian” (Li Tinggui and Fan Rongchun 1990: 155–156).

In July 1930, the “Working outline on Mongolian party affairs workers” was passed by the Third Central Executive Committee’s ninety-ninth executive meeting. It proposed that “the principles be guided by promoting the Three Principles of the People so as to encourage the progress of Mongolian.” Moreover, it proposed to “translate and print relevant party books, and to create a party newspaper and news agency and to establish a library” (Li Tinggui and Fan Rongchun 1990: 155–156).

In April 1930, “Carrying out Mongolian and Tibetan education projects,” passed at the Second National Education Conference, specified specific rewards for the use of the Mongolian and Tibetan writing systems to translate and edit the Kuomintang’s principles or science books.

Academic works were compiled or written in Mongolian and Tibetan that met the standards set by the Ministry of Education and the Mongolian and Tibetan Committee; besides being subject to copyright law, rewards were also given for them. The rewards had three levels, and were checked and ratified by the Ministry of Education and the Mongolian and Tibetan Committee. The first was a monetary prize, and recipients were issued with a commendation by the National Government after approval from the Ministry of Education and the Mongolian and Tibetan Committee. The second was a monetary prize. The third was a certificate of commendation.⁴²

13.1.1.2 Kuomintang newspapers and Communist Party newspapers in ethnic minority languages

During the period of the Nanjing National Government (1927–1949), the Kuomintang newspapers were written in the writing systems of ethnic languages and created and controlled by the Kuomintang. They included *Zangmin Leikan* 藏民泪刊 [Journal of the Tibetan people’s sad stories] (first issued in December 1928; Tibetan only), *Minzong Ribao* 民众日报 [Public daily] (first issued in July 1929; both Mongolian and Mandarin versions), *Aqi Jianbao* [Aqi brief newspaper] (both Mongolian and Mandarin versions), *Xinjiang Ribao* [Xinjiang daily] (first issued in April 1936; Mandarin, Uygur, Kazakh, and Russian versions successively), *Guomin Ribao* [Nationalist daily] (first issued in October 1941; Tibetan only), *Xinmeng* [New Mongolian] (first issued in 1947; both Mongolian and Mandarin versions), and others.

⁴² Cited from *Inner Mongolian educational historical data*, vol. 2. Inner-Mongolian University Press, 1995: 144.

Zangmin Leikan was founded in Chengdu. For a time, this journal used Tibetan script to translate the Three Principles of the People so as to educate Tibetan people about the party's principles (Bai Runsheng 1998: 334).

Minzong Ribao was founded by the Sui Mongolian Party Affairs Committee of the Kuomintang. This newspaper primarily reported on the dynamic state of the war with Japan and conditions in the occupied regions.

Aqi Jianbao was founded at Dingyuaning (present-day Bayanhot) by the Kuomintang's Alxa Banner Party Headquarters, directly under the central government. This newspaper primarily copied and reported brief news from the Kuomintang's central broadcasting station.

Xinjiang Ribao was founded in Dihua (present-day Urumchi). The newspaper was controlled by the Kuomintang Xinjiang provincial government, and it survived the rule of Sheng Shicai, Wu Zhongxin, Zhang Zhizhong, and Bao Erhan. It was the earliest newspaper of an ethnic minority at the provincial level.

Guomin Ribao was founded in Xikang Province (present-day Sichuan). It was an official newspaper of the Kuomintang Xikang Provincial Party.

Xinmeng, published twice each month, was managed by the League Banner Culture and Welfare Committee of the Suiyuan provincial government. Its predecessor was the *Suimeng monthly*, an official journal of the Kuomintang Mongolian autonomous banners on the Suiyuan border whose purpose was to instruct the provincial government. It aimed to research various current issues of the Mongolian banners, promote political demands, improve Mongolian culture, and increase the welfare of Mongolian banners.

13.1.1.3 Newspapers and journals written in ethnic minority scripts, privately operated and founded by other parties and associations

The writing systems employed in ethnic newspapers and journals founded by parties and associations – apart from private individuals, the Kuomintang, and the Communist Party – primarily involved Korean, Uygur, Kazakh, Russian, Tibetan, Manchu, Xibe, and Mongolian.

The first group comprises newspapers and journals in Korean script, primarily including *Minsheng Bao* 民生报 [Minsheng daily] (founded in February 1928; written in both Korean and Chinese), *Hanmin Ribao* 韩民日报 [Korean people's daily] (founded in September 1945), *Renmin Xinbao* 人民新报 [People's newspaper] (founded in October 1945), *Yanbian Minbao* 延边民报 [Yanbian public newspaper] (founded in November 1945), *Laobaixin Bao* 老百姓报 [The civilian's newspaper] (founded in October 1946), *Shishi Xunbao* 时事旬报 [Ten-day newspaper for current affairs] (founded in May 1947), *Xuexi yu Zhandou* 学习与战斗

[Study and fight] (founded in May 1947), and *Minzu Ribao* 民族报 [Ethnic minority newspaper] (founded in March 1948), among others.

Minsheng Bao was founded in Longjing County, Yanbian Region, Jilin Province. It was a privately operated progressive newspaper with the aim of “waking up compatriots,” “representing public opinion,” and becoming “a mouthpiece of nationalities.”

The second group comprises newspapers and journals written in the Uygur, Kazakh, and Xibe languages, primarily including *Fandi Zhanxian* 反帝战线 [Anti-imperialist battlefront] (founded in September 1935; published in both Mandarin and Uygur versions), *Xinjiang Altay* 新疆阿勒泰 (founded in December 1935; Kazakh only), *Aksu Tongxun* 阿克苏通讯 [Communications in Aksu] (founded in 1936; Uygur only), and *Ziyouzhisheng Bao* 自由之声报 [Voice of freedom newspaper] (founded in July 1946; Manchu and Xibe versions),⁴³ and so forth.

Fandi Zhanxian was founded in Dihua (present-day Urumchi), hosted by a Xinjiang anti-imperialist union. It was a progressive journal in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang Altay was founded in the Altay region of Xinjiang; it was the first journal written in Kazakh in China. It was renamed *Ziyou Altay* 自由阿尔泰 [Free Altay] in 1945, and then *Altay Renmin Bao* 阿尔泰人民报 [Altay people’s newspaper] in 1951.

Ziyouzhisheng Bao was founded in Xining County (present-day Chabuchar County), Xinjiang. It was originally declared the official newspaper by revolutionary governments in three regions (Yining, Tacheng, and Altay in Xinjiang) as their official newspaper, and was the sole newspaper written in Xibe. This newspaper primarily promoted policies and guidelines of the national democratic revolution. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, it was renamed *Xinshenghuo Bao* 新生活报 [New life newspaper], and then renamed *Chabuchar Bao* 察布查尔报 [Chabuchar newspaper] in 1954.

The third group comprises Mongolian newspapers and journals, primarily including *Menggu Xinbao* 蒙古新报 [New Mongolian newspaper] (founded in April 1937), *Renmin zhilu* 人民之路 [People’s road] (founded in October 1945), *Ziyou Bao* 自由报 [Freedom newspaper] (founded in July 1946), *Menghan Lianhe Huabao* 蒙汉联合画报 [Mongolian–Mandarin united pictorial magazine] (founded in October 1946; texts written in both Mongolian and Mandarin), *Jiefang Bao* 解放报 [Liberation daily] (founded in July 1947), and *Neimenggu Huabao* 内蒙古画报 [Inner Mongolia pictorial magazine] (founded in 1948).

⁴³ When this newspaper was founded, it was written in Manchu. After the Xibe writing system was created in 1947, the written language was changed to the Xibe writing system.

Renmin Zhilu was founded in Wangyemiao (present-day Ulanhot), an official newspaper of the eastern Mongolian headquarters of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. It aimed at propagandizing the Mongolian people to unite with the Han people so as to shatter the Kuomintang's reactionary attacks and to report on local mass movements.

13.1.1.4 Broadcasts in ethnic languages

In 1935, broadcasts in the Tibetan language first appeared in the Tibetan area. In January 1949, broadcasts in the Uygur language started in Xinjiang.

13.1.2 Educational language policies in the frontier regions

13.1.2.1 Educational policies in the frontier regions

The general policy used to promote education on the frontiers was worked out by the Nanjing Kuomintang Government. It stated that “education on the frontiers should be fused with various parts of Greater Chinese culture and accelerate its development” (Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 625), and that the government should also “cultivate the national consciousness so as to complete cultural unification nationwide” (Compilation Committee of the Yearbook of Education of the Ministry of Education 1948). Under the guidance of this policy, language teaching policies on the frontier were set by the Kuomintang government following the general principle of standardizing the national language. Within a limited scope, it was permissible to use a few ethnicities' languages and writing systems.

13.1.2.2 Educational language guidelines on the frontiers: Promoting Mandarin education and unifying languages on the frontiers

In September 1931, at the 157th executive meeting of the Third Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, “Implementing principles of education according to the Three Principles of the People” was passed. It stated the need to “follow the ethnic equality principle proposed by Sun Yat-sen, depend on educational power, aim at unifying the linguistic will of the Mongolian and Tibetan people, and establish a grand nationalist country” (Compilation Committee of the Yearbook of Education of the Ministry of Education 1948: 21).

In 1941, the Ministry of Education of the National Government issued a general order entitled *Biandi jiaoyu shidao ying tebie zhuyi shixiang* 边地教育视导应特别注意事项 [Special notes on supervising education in the frontier areas] and released four key points for educational policies on the frontiers. The third

key point stated that “education in the frontier areas should promote Mandarin education.” The second point stated that “education on the frontiers should make a great effort to mix ethnicities in different areas” (Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 633).

13.1.2.3 Compiling Mandarin textbooks for ethnic minorities

13.1.2.3.1 Five principles and relevant regulations for compiling textbooks

The five principles for compiling textbooks in ethnic minority border areas were as follows. First, the Ministry of Education was to consult with various relevant organizations and then revise the Mandarin symbols used in border areas so as to facilitate education. Second, textbooks used at various levels of school on the frontiers were to be managed by compiling organs established by the Ministry of Education. Third, besides the regulations stated in “Implementing principles of education according to the Three Principles of the People,” textbooks were to follow the speech of the topmost leader, convey the significance of the war with Japan, provide knowledge about health, and transmit essential knowledge about the border areas. Fourth, the textbooks used in primary and intermediate primary schools were to be written primarily in Mandarin, accompanied by the Mongolian, Tibetan, and Hui writing systems. Above senior primary schools, textbooks were to be compiled in Mandarin. Fifth, in the process of compiling books, it was necessary to compile and print more colorful pictures and songs related to education, and then issue them to the educational institutions and temples in border areas (Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 627).

In 1930, *Di'erci quanguo jiaoyu huiyi jueyi de shishi mengzang jiaoyu jihua* 第二次全国教育会议决议的实施蒙藏教育计划 [Decisions on implementing Mongolian and Tibetan educational plans passed by the Second National Education Conference] stated that

in terms of various textbooks used at Mongolian and Tibetan secondary schools and primary schools, it is necessary to employ national textbooks, and also to take Mongolian and Tibetan social situations and requirements into consideration, and then choose other suitable textbooks. It is especially essential to translate and print bilingual Mandarin–Mongolian and Mandarin–Tibetan textbooks for schools below secondary schools.

(Mongolian Education History Committee 1995)

13.1.2.3.2 Brief introduction to the compilation of textbooks

In 1930, the Ministry of Education of the National Government established the Department of Mongolian and Tibetan Education, which then began to compile textbooks in ethnic languages in frontier areas. In 1934, textbooks written in

Mandarin and Mongolian, Mandarin and Tibetan, and Mandarin and Hui were published, including eight books in Mandarin used in primary schools, four books on general knowledge, two books specially for use in ethnic schools, and four books used at short-term primary schools. Each book was composed of eight volumes. These books were provided to Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uygur students in border areas.

Because these books were quite different in content from the real life of frontier peoples, the Ministry of Education instructed the National Education Center on Frontier Culture to compile other primary textbooks in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uygur. Moreover, in 1947, nine Mongolian books, eight Tibetan books, and ten Uygur books were published.

13.1.2.4 The curriculum setting of Mandarin Chinese

13.1.2.4.1 National universities and colleges

The Ministry of Education should order the national universities to create appropriate departments related to border-building and elective courses on the languages of the frontiers. If the registered schools and colleges above would like to create these departments and obtain consent from the Ministry of Education or local education administrations, they can obtain moderate subsidies. (Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 628)

13.1.2.4.2 Temple schools in frontier areas

Temples are required to establish public schools or half-day schools and to encourage the learning of characters and provide pep talks at assembly. Schools should increase the time spent studying the Arabic writing system by one hour per day and increase the time spent studying general knowledge and arithmetic by half an hour per day respectively.

(Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 628)

13.1.2.4.3 Mongolian and Tibetan schools in Nanjing

In the *Zhongyang zhengzhi xuexiao fushe mengzangban zuzhi guize* 中央政治学校附设蒙藏班组织规则 [Organizational rules for establishing Mongolian and Tibetan schools affiliated to central political schools], the sixth regulation states that:

Apart from party principles and necessary general courses, other courses at the Mongolian and Tibetan schools, such as local autonomy, rural education, peasants' and workers' management, and common management knowledge need to be added. Moreover, Mongolian students are required to learn Mongolian and learn about Mongolian issues; Tibetan students need to learn Tibetan and about Tibetan affairs. Based on the principles set out above, the head teacher is to organize outlines and submit them to the school's president.

Finally, the outlines are to be transferred to the central training department to check, approve, and implement. (Mongolian Education History Committee 1995)

The Nanjing National Mongolian and Tibetan School was subordinated to the Kuomintang Central Political School. Originally, the former was known as the Mongolian and Tibetan Overseas Chinese Special Classes of the Central Political School. In 1920, it was renamed the Mongolian and Tibetan Class. In 1930, it was enlarged and renamed the Mongolian and Tibetan School, and its purpose was to cultivate practical talents on the frontiers and make preparations for Mongolian and Tibetan students to enter higher education. It was subordinated to the Mongolian and Tibetan Committee and supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education. This school had specialized training classes, secondary school classes, research courses, and internship courses on Mongolian and Tibetan affairs. Apart from the educational course, obligatory courses included Mongolian or Tibetan writing, and so on. The elective courses included English and Russian. The core courses at secondary schools were Kuomintang principles, Mandarin, English, arithmetic, Mongolian writing or Tibetan writing, and so forth.

13.1.2.4.4 Primary schools in frontier areas

In September 1945, the Ministry of Education released a requirement that “the curriculum at primary schools in border areas should temporarily follow the laws and regulations of national schools, but whether Mandarin Chinese and the languages of the frontiers should be taught at the same time or whether one curriculum is to be chosen for instruction depends on local requirements” (Song Enrong and Zhang Xian 1990: 638).

According to statistics collected in the 1930s (1935–1938), the Ministry of Education established 2,375 primary schools in frontier regions all over the country. Among these primary schools, 155 were established in Gansu Province, 143 in Qinghai Province, 14 in Ningxia Province, 5 in Xikang Province, 135 in Yunnan Province, 12 in Guizhou Province, 15 in Sichuan Province, 100 in Hubei Province, 1,412 in Xinjiang Province, 29 in Suiyuan Province, 13 in Chahar Province, 541 in Guangdong Province, and 1 in Tibet.⁴⁴

Lhasa National Primary School was founded in 1938. At that time, Tibetan students were few. Students were primarily Hui, Han, and children of some foreign businessmen and Nepalese officials. The total number of students was less than a hundred. This school offered such courses as the Tibetan language,

⁴⁴ Government Information Office of the Republic of China. *Frontier education*. 1947.

Mandarin Chinese, arithmetic, history, geography, citizenship, general knowledge, music, painting, sports, writing, and Arabic. It was closed down in 1949 (Doje Cedain 1991: 57–59).

13.2 Language policies and practices relating to ethnic groups enacted by the Communist Party

13.2.1 General policy: Adhering to national equality and unity, and developing ethnic languages and writing systems

13.2.1.1 First proposal for a general policy

The use and development of ethnic languages and writing systems is an important reflection of national equal rights. The Communist Party of China first espoused the idea of adhering to national equality and unity, and developing ethnic languages and writing systems, in *Guanyu zhongguo jingnei shaoshu Minzu wenti de jueyian* 关于中国境内少数民族问题的决议案 [Resolutions on ethnic minority issues within Chinese territory], passed at the First National Congress of the Chinese Worker–Peasant–Soldier Soviet, in November 1931.

The Soviet Republic must pay special attention to the development of productivity and improvement of culture in backward ethnic republics and autonomous regions; must establish schools, editorial departments, and printing bureaus totally employing ethnic languages and writing systems for domestic ethnic minorities. In all official institutions, native ethnic languages and writing systems are allowed to be used. To the greatest extent, the leaders of local ethnic workers and farmers are recommended to take charge of management work. The Soviet Republic must resolutely oppose all tendencies towards Great Hanism. (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 170–171)

The above statement shows that there were three basic aspects to the ethnic language policies of the Communist Party. First, the Communist Party developed the culture of and education in ethnic languages and writing systems. Second, the Communist Party allowed the use of ethnic languages and writing systems in official contexts. Third, the Communist Party opposed all tendencies towards Great Hanism.

13.2.1.2 Systematic descriptions of the general guidelines

In 1938, Mao Zedong systematically described the Communist Party's principles of ethnic equality and policies for ethnic languages and writing systems in the reports of the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee Conference of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

First, the Communist Party allows various ethnicities such as the Mongols, Hui, Tibetans, Miao, Yao, Yi, and Fan to enjoy equal rights with the Han people. Under the principle of joint action against Japan, ethnic minority groups have the right to manage their own affairs. Meanwhile, they are united with the Han people to establish a united country. [...] Third, the Communist Party respects the culture, religion, and customs of ethnic minority groups. The government cannot force them to learn the Chinese writing system and language. On the contrary, the government should sponsor the ethnic minorities to develop their own culture and education in their own languages and writing systems. Fourth, the government should rectify existing Great Hanism and encourage the Han people to interact with various ethnic minorities with an attitude of equality so as to gradually maintain intimate contacts. At the same time, the government should prohibit all scornful and slighting speeches, characters, and actions.

(United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 595)

By comparing Mao Zedong's statement given above with the "Resolutions" passed in 1931, two aspects become apparent. First, Mao Zedong definitely described ethnic language policies as following policies of ethnic equality, which not only highlighted the fundamental principles of national equality but also emphasized the important role of using and developing ethnic languages and writing systems to guarantee national equal rights. Second, he only used the phrase "against the tendencies towards Great Hanism" to emphasize respect for ethnic languages and writing systems, advocacy of an attitude of equality, and prohibition of discrimination against languages and writing systems, so as to make the ethnic language policies of the Communist Party more specific, definite, and effective.

13.2.1.3 Enactment of the guidelines

In September 1949, with the beginning of the establishment of New China, the "Common program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference" (hereafter referred to as the "Common program") was enacted in law. In 1938, the policies proposed by Mao Zedong were included in the "Common program." These policies included the national equality policy of the Communist Party, a policy prohibiting ethnic discrimination against languages and writing systems, a policy on using and developing ethnic languages and writing systems, and a policy on helping ethnic minorities to develop their culture and education.

No. 50: All ethnicities in China are equal; work in unity and help one another; and oppose imperialism and the enemies of the people within various ethnicities in order to make the People's Republic of China become a great family with friendship and mutual collaboration among its ethnicities, to oppose Great Hanism and narrow nationalism, and to prohibit discrimination and oppression between nationalities and those activities splitting ethnic unity.

No. 53: Every ethnic group has the freedom to develop its own language and writing system, and to keep or reform its customs and religious faith. The people's government should help every ethnic group to develop with regard to policy, economy, culture, and education. (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 1290)

13.2.2 Respecting ethnic languages and writing systems, prohibiting language discrimination, and maintaining ethnic unity

13.2.2.1 Respecting the Tibetan language and script

In May 1936, during the Long March, the Fourth Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army helped the Tibetan people to establish the Chinese Soviet Central Borba Autonomous Government. The administrative program explicitly prohibited ethnic oppression, ethnic discrimination, and calling Tibetan people "Manzi" 蛮子 [savages], and further encouraged respect for the Tibetan language and writing system, urging the Han people to learn Tibetan, use both Tibetan and Chinese writing systems in slogans, and give preferential treatment to translation work.

13.2.2.2 Respecting the Hui people and Hui writing

In May 1936, the General Political Department of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army released instructions on the Hui people. It required the army to research the Hui people's living environment, policies, and work methods, and moreover required every soldier to learn some Hui. When meeting the Hui people, at the least they could say *sawabu* (meaning "thank you! bye!") so as to let the Hui public know that many Hui people were in the Red Army, thus encouraging them to support the army. Meanwhile, the following three prohibitions when dealing with the Hui people were issued. First, stationing troops at mosques was prohibited. Second, eating meat was prohibited. Third, destroying Hui classics was prohibited (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 364–365).

13.2.2.3 Respecting various ethnic customs, languages, and writing systems

In July 1940, the *Zhonggong Zhongyang xibei gongzuo weiyuanhui guanyu kangzhan zhong Menggu–Minzu wenti tigang* 中共中央西北工作委员会关于抗战中蒙古民族问题提纲 [Outline of anti-Japanese and Mandarin–Mongolian ethnic issues] was released by the North-western Work Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China with the requirement to "respect Mongolian ethnic customs, habitations, religions, languages, and characters, to

protect lamaseries, to advocate and encourage young lamas to participate in productive activities, and to oppose all speech and actions humiliating and despising Mongolians.” Meanwhile, the outlines emphasized that “in the Mongolian area, the local Mongolian army and government must treat various ethnic peoples on the basis of the principle of national equality; configure the relationship between various ethnic groups according to equal rights; respect their customs, habits, religions, languages, and scripts; and teach the local Mongolian people how to treat these ethnic groups with equality and intimacy” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 666–667).

In 1945, in the report to the Seventeenth Party Congress describing the ethnic policies of the Communist Party, Mao Zedong emphasized that “their [ethnic minority groups’] speech, characters, customs, habits, and religious beliefs should be respected” (Mao Zedong 1991a: 1084).

13.2.3 The use and development of ethnic languages and writing systems

13.2.3.1 Relevant regulations

In November 1931, the *Zhonghua suweiai gongheguo xianfa dagang* 中华苏维埃共和国宪法大纲 [Outline on the construction of the Chinese Soviet Republic] was passed.

In 1934, the revolutionary base of the East Guizhou Special Area was founded in Guizhou and Sichuan; its political outlines stipulated the “use of the Miao ethnic group’s own language and writing system, and the development of the culture of the Miao” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 234).

In June 1935, *Zhongguo gongchandang zhongyang weiyuanhui gao xifan kangzang xifan minzhong – jinxing Xizang minzu geming yundong de douzheng gangling* 中国共产党中央委员会告康藏西番民众书 – 进行西藏民族革命运动的斗争纲领 [The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party’s addresses to the masses in Tibet, Shanxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces – Struggle Program on conducting the Tibetan national revolutionary movement] was passed. This program stated that “ethnic minorities like Tibetans and Qiang living in Shanxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan are to use their own languages and writing systems to improve their culture and to establish schools. All of the people have the right to go school” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 290).

In June 1937, *Shaowei mengminbu: Muqian Suimeng xingshi yu women de renwu he gongzuo* 少委蒙民部: 目前绥蒙形势与我们的任务和工作 [The Mongolian

Division of the Ethnic Minority Committee: The current situation of Suiyuan and Mongolian, and our missions and work] was passed. It proposed to

create a regular magazine in Mongolian (primarily) and Mandarin, to circulate propaganda material among the Mongolian people, to compile pictorial magazines and folk songs about current affairs and widely spread them in Mongolian areas, to compile dramas suitable for the Mongolian people, to establish special propaganda teams to go to Mongolian areas to perform dramas, and to compile readings for soldiers, adults, and children that will meet the Mongolian people's requirements.

(United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 473)

In April 1940, the *Zhonggong Zhongyang xibei gongzuo weiyuanhui guanyu huihui minzu wenti de tigang* 中共中央西北工作委员会关于回回民族问题的提纲 [Outline on Hui ethnic issues released by the North-western Work Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China] was passed. This outline ruled that the “Hui people should enjoy the right to choose their own language and writing system” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 654).

13.2.3.2 The use of ethnic groups' languages and writing systems in ethnic autonomous governments

In October 1936, Tongxin County, Shanxi Province, Gansu Province, and Ningxia Province established the Yuhai County Hui Autonomous Government. The first half of the hoop of the seal issued at the founding conference was written in Mandarin. From right to left, it read *Shan-Gan-Ning Sheng Yuhai Xian Huimin Zizhi Zhengfu* 陕甘宁省豫海县回民自治政府 [Yuhai County Hui Autonomous Government of Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Provinces]. The bottom half of the hoop of the seal was written in Arabic (Zhang Erju 1995: 41).

13.2.3.3 The use of ethnic groups' languages and writing systems in the activity of the Red Army

From April 1935 to October 1936, the First, Second, and Fourth Front Armies of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army successively passed through Greater Tibetan areas, including the Diqing Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province; Ganzi Tibet Autonomous Prefecture and Aba Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province; Guoluo Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province; and Gannan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province.

When the Red Army entered the Greater Tibetan areas, due to the requirement of releasing propaganda, general orders, notices, and document translations, they added Tibetan versions of the army's official documents. In Tibetan

areas in Sichuan, Yunnan, Kang, and Gannan, the notices, slogans, and documents issued by the Red Army were generally written in both Tibetan and Mandarin for the convenience of the Tibetan people.

13.2.3.4 The use of ethnic groups' languages and writing systems in newspapers and magazines

The newspapers and magazines written in ethnic writing systems founded by the Chinese Communist Party were primarily distributed in the Korean area of north-eastern China and the Mongolian area of northern China.

13.2.3.4.1 Party newspapers written in Korean

During the twenty years between 1928 and 1948, the party newspapers in Korean created by the Communist Party in the Korean area of north-eastern China primarily included *Dongman Tongxun* 东满通讯 [Eastern Manchuria newsletter], founded by the Yanbian District Committee of the Communist Party of China (October 1928); *Liangtiao Zhanxian* 两条战线 [Two fronts], founded by the Eastern Manchurian Special Party Committee of the Communist Party of China (after 1932); *Jilin Ribao* 吉林日报 [Jilin daily], founded by the Jilin Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China (March 1947); and *Yanbian Ribao* 延边日报 [Yanbian daily], founded by the Yanbian Prefectural Party Committee of the Communist Party of China (April 1948).

Jilin Ribao is the earliest official newspaper of the Provincial Party Committee written in the Korean language; it was established in Yanji City, Jilin Province. Its purposes were to report on the war of liberation at that time, establish the people's political power, eliminate bandits, promote land reform, support efforts at the front, and so on. It ceased publication on March 1, 1948.

Yanbian Ribao was the newspaper with the longest history and greatest influence in the Yanbian area in China. It was founded in Yanji City, Jilin Province. Its purposes were serving the Yanbian people, reflecting mass struggles, life situations, land reform, and working to support efforts at the front, spring plowing, and production in Yanbian. In 1948, it was renamed the *Dongbei Chaoxian Renminbao* 东北朝鲜人民报 [North-eastern Korean people's newspaper], and then the *Yanbian Ribao* 延边日报 [Yanbian daily] in 1968.

13.2.3.4.2 Chinese Communist Party newspapers in Mongolian

During the thirteen years between 1936 and 1949, the Communist Party established party newspapers in Mongolian (including Mongolian and Mandarin), including the *Menggu Bao* 蒙古报 [Mongolian newspaper] created by the three

Bians (An Bian, Ding Bian, and Jing Bian in Shanxi Province) of the Communist Party of China's Prefectural Party Committee (1936); *Qianjin Bao* 前进报 [The advance], founded by the Zhemeng Prefectural Party Committee of the Communist Party of China (January 1, 1947); *Caoyuan Zhilu* 草原之路 [Grassland road], created by the Xike Middle Banner Committee of the Communist Party of China (summer 1947); *Neimenggu Ribao* 内蒙古日报 [Inner Mongolia daily], founded by the Inner Mongolian Committee of the Communist Party of China (January 1, 1948); *Muming Bao* 牧民报 [Shepherds' newspaper], founded by the Rebei Prefectural Party Committee of the Communist Party of China (autumn 1948); *Yimeng Bao* 伊盟报 [Yi League newspaper], founded by the Yike Zhao League Committee of the Communist Party of China (September 1949); and so on.

Neimenggu Zizhi Bao 内蒙古自治报 [Inner Mongolia autonomous newspaper] was the first party newspaper on the provincial (district) level written in Mongolian in China. Its predecessor was *Neimenggu Ribao* 内蒙古日报 [Inner Mongolia daily], founded in Wangyemiao (modern-day Ulanhot), which was an official newspaper organized by the eastern Mongolian branch of the Mongolian Autonomous Movement Federation. It emphasized the spread of common political knowledge and popular-scientific knowledge. Since September 1, 1947, it has served as the official newspaper of the Mongolian Committee of the Communist Party of China, aiming to spread guidelines, principles, policies, and various core activities of the Chinese Communist Party. This newspaper had high artistic quality as well as great effect, and earned the trust of the Mongolian and Chinese peoples. On January 1, 1948, it was renamed *Neimenggu Ribao* 内蒙古日报 [Inner Mongolia daily].

By “newspapers and magazines of the Chinese Communist Party,” I mean those created by the political organizations of the United Front under the leadership of the Communist Party. The newspapers and magazines of the Chinese Communist Party in the Mongolian language founded in Mongolian areas include *Neimenggu Zhoukan* 内蒙古周刊 [Inner Mongolian weekly] (March 1946), *Qunzhong Bao* 群众报 [Newspaper of the masses] (July 1946), *Hulunbeier Bao* 呼伦贝尔报 [Hulunbeier newspaper] (October 1946), and others.

Neimenggu Zhoukan 内蒙古周刊 [Inner Mongolia weekly] is an official newspaper of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Movement Federation. Ulanfu was the president of the Federation. The newspaper was founded in Zhangjiakou City and aimed at promoting the ethnic policies of the Communist Party and reporting the work of the Federation. Every page of the newspaper was in Mongolian and Mandarin.

13.2.4 Assisting ethnic minorities in the cultural and educational enterprise of native languages and writing systems

13.2.4.1 Relevant regulations

In May 1935, the *Zhonghua Suwiai xibei lianbang linshi zhengfu huifanyi shaoshu minzu weiyuanhui bugao* 中华苏维埃西北联邦临时政府回番夷少数民族委员会布告 [Announcements released by the Hui–Fan–Yi Ethnic Committee of the North-western Federation of the Chinese Soviet Temporary Government] set out a policy “to improve the cultural education of the Hui, Fan, and Yi ethnicities; to establish schools for the Hui, Fan, and Yi ethnicities; to teach using the Hui, Fan, and Yi ethnicities’ own languages and writing systems; and to provide free education for the youth of the Hui, Fan, and Yi ethnicities” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 264).⁴⁵

In August 1935, the *Zhongguo gongnong hongjun xibei junqu zhengzhibu* 中国工农红军西北军区政治部: 少数民族工作须知 [Political Department of the Chinese Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army in the North-western Military Area: Ethnic work notices] proposed “to assist ethnic minorities’ cultural work, to establish ethnic minorities’ own schools, and to teach ethnic minorities in their native languages and writing systems” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 282).

In August 1947, the Communist Party established the Daqing Mountain revolutionary base area for Mongolian-Chinese ethnic minorities in Suiyuan Province. This base passed the *Suicha shizheng gangling* 绥察施政纲领 [Administrative program of Sui Cha] that proposed to “establish schools for each ethnicity, to employ each ethnicity’s native languages and writing systems, and to teach each ethnicity the required courses.”⁴⁶

In April 1947, the *Neimenggu zizhi zhengfu shizheng gangling* 内蒙古自治政府施政纲领 [Administrative program of the Mongolian Autonomous Government] proposed “to establish Mongolian military and political universities and various technical schools, to promote newspapers and books written in the Mongolian language, to research Mongolian history, to popularize Mongolian textbooks at Mongolian schools, and to develop Mongolian culture” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 1113).

⁴⁵ “Hui” refers to ethnic minorities who believe in Islam, including such current ethnic minorities as the Hui, Uygur, and Kazakhs. “Fan” refers to ethnic minorities inhabiting Shanxi, Sichuan, and Yunnan Provinces, for example, the Tibetans and Qiang. “Yi” refers to ethnic minorities in eastern China.

⁴⁶ Neimenggu minzu tuanjie geming shiliao xuanbian. In Archives of the Mongolian Autonomous Region (ed.), *Mongolian Autonomous Area*, 88. 1983.

13.2.4.2 Establishing ethnic colleges and cultivating ethnic leaders in local governments

The first Nationalities' College founded by the Communist Party was established in September 1941 in Yan'an. Gao Gang was the president. The primary task was to cultivate ethnic cadres and Han cadres who would go to ethnic areas to work under the guidance of Marxist ethnic theory and the ethnic policies of the Communist Party.

This college combined an education department, a Hui ethnic issues research department, a cadres department, and a general affairs office. The first batch of students numbered more than three hundred and belonged to eight ethnicities, including Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Yi, Manchu, Miao, Dongxiang, and Han. Initially the length of schooling was six years. The college had a research seminar, political seminar, and cultural seminar. The primary curricula were political and cultural. The political curricula included Chinese revolutionary issues, ethnic issues, a brief history of social development, and current affairs and policies; the cultural curricula included Mandarin, ethnic languages, history, geography, and natural science. In 1943, the college was incorporated into Yan'an University, but it retained the organizational system of the Nationalities' College. In 1944, it was incorporated into Sanbian Public School, but it ceased to exist in 1948.

13.2.4.3 Establishing the Mongolian and Hui Culture Promotion Associations in order to promote the development of ethnic culture

The Mongolian Culture Promotion Association was founded in Yan'an in March 1940. Mao Zedong acted as the honorary president. In June of the same year, the association established the Genghis Khan Memorial Hall in Yan'an, which had a showroom exhibiting Mongolian culture. In October of the same year, the Hui Culture Promotion Association was established as well; the association had thirty directors, such as Lin Boqu, Gao Gang, Xie Juezai, Zhou Yang, and imams from various places in Yan'an.

In October 1944, the Mongolian and Hui Culture Promotion Associations organized the translation of Marxist writings and parts of Mao Zedong's works into Mongolian and Arabic respectively, and then published and issued these works in Yan'an. This event had great political and historical significance in terms of carrying forward the fine cultural traditions of the Mongolian and Hui ethnicities and of creating and developing new Mongolian and Hui ethnic cultures.

13.2.4.4 Broadcasts in ethnic languages

In June 1946, the Jilin Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China moved from Jilin City to Yanji. It took charge of the Yanji Xihua broadcasting station, whose predecessor was the Yanji broadcasting station founded by Japanese invaders in April 1938. In 1943, it was renamed the Jiandao broadcasting station. After Japan surrendered, it came under the military control of the Red Army of the Soviet Union, and after the withdrawal of the latter, it was managed by the Jilin Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.

This broadcasting station broadcast in both Korean and Mandarin. The broadcasts in Korean lasted up to fifty minutes. The broadcasts translated Mandarin programs into Korean; the station soon began the task of broadcasting in other ethnic languages of China.

13.2.4.5 Assisting ethnic minorities to develop ethnic language education

The Shanxi–Gansu–Ningxia Border Region government worked actively to help local ethnic minorities establish primary schools to teach ethnic languages. In these schools, students not only studied general scientific and cultural knowledge, but also specific curricula in ethnic languages such as Arabic. In 1944, the Border Region government established eight Islamic primary schools and one Islamic public school for the Hui people. Meanwhile, it founded two Mongolian schools in Balesesu and Halaxili.

Chapter 14

Ethnic language policies and their implementation during the reform and opening-up period

The focus on languages experienced a shift after the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was held, indicating a change in policy from class struggle to economic construction. The primary task of ethnicity-related work shifted from the reforms of the social system in the 1950s to the development of the social economy. Ethnicity-related work entered a new stage.

14.1 Social and historical background

Ethnic minority language policy is related to national language policies and to ethnic minority policies. Therefore, it will inevitably be affected by both.

14.1.1 Placing ethnic languages on the agenda of ethnicity-related work

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, policies of ethnic equality, unity, and improvement were implemented in China. Democratic reforms and socialist transformation were completed in ethnic areas. Ethnic minority areas exhibited prosperous and thriving situations in what was regarded as one of "the best periods" in history (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Policy Research Center of the State Affairs Commission 1996: 25). During the Great Cultural Revolution, the ethnic policies of the Chinese Communist Party were totally destroyed; ethnicity-related work was mostly canceled. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, China entered a new historical period; ethnicity-related work entered a new historical period and began a new phase as well.

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in Ma Liya, Sun Hongkai, Li Xulian, Zhou Yong, and Dai Qingxia (eds.), *Zhongguo minzu yuwen zhengce yu falv shuping*, 185–212. Nationalities Publishing House, 2007.

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On the eve of the founding of New China, ethnic languages were an important part of the agenda of ethnicity-related work. On April 17, 1987, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council approved the *Guanyu minzu gongzuo jige zhongyao wenti de baogao* 关于民族工作几个重要问题的报告 [Reports on some important issues regarding ethnicity-related work], which were issued by the United Front Work Department and State Ethnic Affairs Commission and printed and distributed as documents of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Policy Research Center of the State Affairs Commission 1996: 10–23). This document covered the experience of solving ethnic problems in China during the thirty-seven years since the founding of New China, especially since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee. It confirmed the general guiding ideology and basic tasks for ethnicity-related work in the new period; moreover, it clarified policies and guidelines on many important issues of ethnicity-related work. This document was an important instructive document in the process of carrying out ethnicity-related work over a longer period in the future.

The document pointed out that “some problems also deserve to be researched and solved carefully in cases of implementing the *Minzu quyū zizhifa* 民族区域自治法 [Law of national regional autonomy], cultivating ethnic cadres, and working on ethnic languages and writing systems” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Policy Research Center of the State Affairs Commission 1996: 13). Therefore, in future, “it is necessary to facilitate cooperation with relevant departments in order to investigate and research ethnic languages and writing systems and put forward reports to the Party Central Committee and the State Council” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Policy Research Center of the State Affairs Commission 1996: 23). The document listed ethnic languages in the agenda of ethnicity-related work.

14.1.2 Effects of the National Language Work Conference

In order to meet the requirements of social development and situational change, after approval by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council, the State Education Commission and the State Language Work Committee jointly convened the National Language Work Conference in Beijing from January 6 to 13, 1986. The conference surveyed and assessed experiences of language work after the founding of New China, and established the guidelines for language work in the new period and its main tasks.

The guidelines for language work in the new period were as follows: implementing national language policies and laws, promoting the normalization and standardization of language work, continually driving the reform of writing systems, and leading languages to play better roles in the construction of socialist modernization (Liu Daosheng 1987: 23).

The primary tasks of language work at present are as follows: improving the normalization of modern Mandarin; vigorously promoting and actively spreading Putonghua; researching and collating current Chinese characters; setting various relevant standards; further implementing *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an*; researching and solving relevant problems in practical use; researching issues on the computer processing of Mandarin and Chinese characters; and participating in identifying relevant results, strengthening basic and applied research on language, and conducting social investigations, social consulting, and service work.

The National Language Work Conference made those whose work concerned ethnic languages rethink what their policies should be in the new period; what their primary tasks were; and how to conclude such work that had been undertaken since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

14.1.3 New situations and new problems for work relating to ethnic languages

Along with the deep development of reform and opening up, the planned Chinese economy shifted to a socialist market economy. Numerous rural laborers migrated to cities. Exchange between various ethnicities was unprecedentedly wide and more frequent. Many Han working cadres in ethnic regions were able to use the local ethnic languages. The number of ethnic minorities who could handle both their native language and Mandarin continued to increase. Along with the day-to-day enlargement of the scope of the use of Mandarin, a trend of ignoring ethnic language work occurred in some places. "At departments and institutions that had used ethnic languages all the time in the past, due to funding shortages or difficulties in self-funding, work relating to ethnic languages shrank and even stopped" (Dob 1993: 2). "The guidelines for work relating to ethnic languages are neither understood properly nor carried out sufficiently," and "in terms of the creation and usage of characters, each department follows its own path" (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 391).

When the State Nationalities' Affairs Commission faced questions relating to ethnic languages and national ethnic language policies, the *Guanyu jinyibu*

zuohao shaoshu minzu yuyan wenzi gongzuo de baogao 关于进一步做好少数民族语言文字工作的报告 [Report on the further improvement of work relating to ethnic languages] was put forward to the State Council, based on investigations that further clarified the guidelines, policies, and primary tasks of work relating to ethnic languages in the new period and put forward corresponding measures to carry out these policies and tasks.

14.1.4 Production of documents

From 1987 to 1991, the State Nationalities' Affairs Commission cooperated with relevant departments to investigate national issues of ethnic languages widely and deeply, and to invite central and local leaders, those whose work concerned ethnic languages, and scholars to discuss and exchange a variety of opinions. The "Report on the further improvement of work relating to ethnic languages" was formulated on the basis of this. The report was submitted to the State Council in April 1991. In June of the same year, it was approved by the State Council. Since then, the report has been considered as laying down the new policies relating to ethnic languages in the reform and opening-up period.

14.2 Primary content of the new policies

The new policies addressed achievements and problems relating to ethnic languages in China over the preceding forty years; the document set out the guidelines and tasks for the new period by proposing measures and providing directions.

14.2.1 Conclusions for ethnic language work

14.2.1.1 Primary policies and laws regarding to ethnic languages and writing systems

Article 3 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China rules that "each ethnicity is free to use and develop its own language and writing system" (Dong Yunhu and Liu Wuping 1991: 820). Article 10 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo minzu quyue zizhifa* 中华人民共和国民族区域自治法 [National regional autonomy law of the People's Republic of China] stipulates that "autonomous organizations in autonomous ethnic areas are to guarantee the various local ethnicities the right to use and develop their own languages and writing

systems freely” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 40).

Article 134 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China stipulates that

all of the citizens from the various ethnicities have the right of litigation using their native languages and writing systems. The People’s Court and the People’s Procuratorate should translate for those litigants who are not able to understand the local commonly used languages. In ethnic localities or areas of multi-ethnic cohabitation, cases should proceed using local commonly used languages. Indictments, judgments, notices, and other official documents should be written in one or more local commonly used writing systems on the basis of actual requirements.

(Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 2007: 31)

The primary content of this principle was first proposed in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China in 1954. Since then, it has been restated in article 47 of the “National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China,” article 6 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo renmin fayuan zuzhifa* 中华人民共和国人民法院组织法 [Organizational law of the people’s courts of the People’s Republic of China], article 6 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo renmin fayuan xingshi susongfa* 中华人民共和国刑事诉讼法 [Criminal procedure law of the People’s Republic of China], article 9 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo minshi susongfa* 中华人民共和国民事诉讼法 [Law of civil procedure of the People’s Republic of China] issued in 1982, and article 8 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo xingzheng susongfa* 中华人民共和国行政诉讼法 [Administrative procedure law of the People’s Republic of China].

Article 37 of the “National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China” stipulates that

those schools (classes) and other educational organizations that primarily enroll ethnic students should adopt textbooks written in ethnic scripts and teach in the ethnic languages if conditions permit. Depending on the actual conditions, from lower grades or higher grades in primary school they are to implement the Mandarin curriculum and promote the nationwide commonly used Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters.

(Dob 1993: 43–44)

Article 6 of the *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo yiwu jiaoyufa* 中华人民共和国义务教育法 [Compulsory education law of the People’s Republic of China] stipulates that “schools should promote the nationwide commonly used Putonghua, and those schools that primarily enroll ethnic students can employ commonly used ethnic languages in teaching” (Dob 1993: 199). Article 6 of the *Saochu wenmang gongzuo tiaoli* 扫除文盲工作条例 [Rules on eradicating illiteracy] issued by the State Council stipulates that “education to eradicate illiteracy should use the nationwide

commonly used Putonghua. In ethnic areas, both the ethnic languages and the local commonly used languages can be employed in teaching” (Dob 1993: 535).

Article 38 of the “National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China” stipulates that “autonomous organizations in autonomous ethnic regions should autonomously develop ethnic cultural activity in ethnic forms and with ethnic characteristics, for example, literature, the arts, news, publication, radio, film, and television” (Dob 1993: 44).

Article 49 of the “National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China” stipulates that

autonomous organizations in autonomous ethnic regions should educate and encourage various ethnic cadres to learn languages and writing systems from one another. Han cadres are required to learn local ethnic languages and writing systems. Ethnic cadres should learn the nationwide commonly used Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters in addition to learning and using their native languages and writing systems. It is essential to give awards to the national functionaries in autonomous ethnic areas who are able to use more than two local commonly used languages and writing systems skillfully.

(Dob 1993: 45)

14.2.1.2 Primary achievements relating to ethnic languages over four decades

The freedom of ethnic minorities to use and develop native ethnic languages and writing systems has gained respect and been given some guarantees. In ethnically inhabited areas, the use of native languages and writing systems has become more widely accepted; various conferences generally use one or more local commonly used language and writing system so as to allow various ethnicities to exercise their rights by using their own languages and writing systems. The important documents, laws and regulations, and administrative rules released in many ethnic areas by the Party Central Committee, the State Council, the local Party Committee, and government at all levels are written in both ethnic scripts and Chinese characters. In autonomous ethnic regions where conditions permit, ethnic citizens litigate using native ethnic languages and writing systems; judicial departments issue judgments, notices, and other documents in native languages and writing systems. The educational enterprise in ethnic languages has been developed; bilingual education systems have begun to take shape in some ethnic areas. When schools primarily enroll ethnic students from minorities who have their own native languages, they employ textbooks written in ethnic scripts and teach in ethnic languages, and these schools have consequently cultivated many people with various talents required for local development. Some newly created and improved ethnic characters have been used in schools and have successfully served the education of children. Moreover, they present a special advantage in education to eliminate illiteracy.

Translation and publishing in ethnic languages have developed. Nationwide, thirty-two publishing companies have published books in ethnic languages. Even in 1990, books covering 3,250 subjects written in ethnic writing systems were published, which was 18.6 times the number of books published in 1949. The total number of printed books reached 38,670,000, 22.8 times the total number of the books printed in 1949 (Wu Jinghua 1992: 2).

The provision of news, radio broadcasting, film, and television in ethnic languages has developed greatly as well. All over the county, newspapers on seventy-seven topics have been published in seventeen ethnic writing systems. The total number of such newspapers is 14,835. In addition, magazines on 153 topics have been published in eleven ethnic writing systems. China National Radio and thirty local broadcasting stations employ sixteen ethnic writing systems. Twenty ethnic languages are used by radio broadcasting stations in the prefectures and counties. According to incomplete statistics, for three decades, twenty ethnic languages were employed in producing thousands of story films, science and educational films and documentaries, and 2,500 television series. Films and television shows are shot using ethnic languages in some places (Wu Jinghua 1992: 2).

Standardization of languages and writing systems has been achieved. Processing of some ethnic writing systems has been conducted on computers, which provide modern tools for the further development of ethnic languages and the promotion of economic and educational development in ethnic areas.

The country has produced many writers and artists who create works and performances using ethnic languages and writing systems. They have created many works, such as novels, poetry, music, drama, and folk art, which not only have ethnic characteristics but are also loved by ethnic peoples.

14.2.1.3 Problems relating to ethnic languages

Some urgent problems and difficulties relating to ethnic languages can be set out as follows. The relevant guidelines and policies are neither recognized clearly nor carried out effectively, as shown, for example, by not following procedures, the lack of effective management, and acting willfully in the process of creating and using characters. Meanwhile, insufficient personnel quotas and funds affect work involving ethnic languages. These problems and difficulties must be solved carefully. As the organ in charge of such work in China, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission has done extensive work implementing the ethnic language policies of the Communist Party of China and promoting the pursuit of objectives concerning ethnic languages, but this has been insufficient. In the future, it will be necessary to strengthen the guidance and management of this work.

14.2.2 Guidelines and tasks regarding ethnic languages

14.2.2.1 Guidelines and basic policies

Work concerning ethnic languages must stick to Marxist principles of language equality and guarantee ethnic minorities' freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems. It is to be carried out actively, carefully, and safely under realistic guidance. It is beneficial when it comes to promoting ethnic unity, improvement, and common prosperity. Moreover, it may serve to improve the comprehensive development of ethnic regional politics, the economy, and cultural activity, and to propel the pursuit of socialist modernization in China.

14.2.2.2 Main tasks

14.2.2.2.1 Carrying out ethnic language policies: The Party and the State

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China clearly stipulates that "every ethnicity is free to use and develop its own language and writing system." The "National regional autonomy law of the People's Republic of China" and other relevant laws specify a series of specific regulations. Their primary contents are as follows. When the autonomous organizations of autonomous ethnic regions carry out their duties, they are to use one or more local commonly used languages and writing systems. Meanwhile, those autonomous organizations that use several commonly used languages and writing systems in performing their duties can primarily adopt the languages spoken in the autonomous ethnic regions. The people's government assists ethnic minorities in developing and using their native languages and writing systems, and encourages all ethnic minorities to mutually learn one another's languages. Those Han cadres who work in ethnic areas should actively learn the local ethnic languages and writing systems. When ethnic cadres learn and use native languages and writing systems, they should also actively learn Mandarin and Chinese characters. Those national staff who are able to use more than two local commonly used languages should be rewarded. After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of China and the central people's government have implemented a series of measures to guarantee every ethnic minority the right to use and develop its native language and writing system freely.

When we earnestly implement the Party's and the State's policies and laws regarding ethnic languages, it is necessary to keep in mind that the use of ethnic languages and writing systems, due to historical reasons and restrictions by

various social elements, exhibits objective differences in terms of scope, level, and function. We need to recognize this phenomenon objectively, rather than considering these differences as manifesting inequality or as “discrimination.”

14.2.2.2.2 Strengthening the legal position of ethnic languages

As with other enterprises, work relating to ethnic languages not only needs to be managed by administrative measures but also to rely on laws. For the past forty years, the Party and State have promulgated a series of guidelines, policies, and regulations regarding ethnic languages that are contained in basic laws like the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and the “National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China.” In recent years, some ethnic areas have devised *Minzu yuwen gongzuo tiaoli* 民族语文工作条例 [Regulations on ethnic languages] and *Minzu yuwen shiyong guanli jiangli banfa* 民族语文使用管理奖励办法 [Rewards for the use and management of ethnic languages], which ensure that Han cadres learn, use, and develop ethnic languages and enhance their authority to manage the relevant activities by creating a new situation for them in the areas in question. Those regions that have no established regulations should prepare and issue relevant regulations taking into consideration the actual local situations. The central legislature is constantly considering the legislative issue of ethnic languages for inclusion in the agenda. The State Ethnic Affairs Commission has set out to plan, prepare, and organize drafts of laws on ethnic languages and writing systems suited to Chinese national conditions and socialist legal requirements, reflecting the need to improve ethnic unity and Chinese national unity and prosperity.

14.2.2.2.3 Spreading Marxist theories and policies on ethnic languages

The Marxist national conception is the theoretical basis for the ethnic policies of the Party and State. For the masses, the Marxist national conception primarily promotes the view that all the ethnicities share a common fate and are interconnected to one another’s hearts. All ethnicities should be united, treat one another equally, help one another, and make progress together. In some areas, translating and promoting relevant publicity material using ethnic languages, and through various other methods such as radio broadcasts, television, news, publishing, art, and literature, can greatly increase the scope and effect of such efforts.

14.2.2.2.4 Promoting academic research on ethnic languages

At present, in order to make further progress, it is necessary that more attention be paid to research on applied theories, especially research on the following

two aspects: first, studying in depth how to ensure ethnic languages fulfill their social roles more effectively and how to use this tool well in order to serve socialist material civilization and spiritual civilization in the ethnic areas; second, studying how to standardize ethnic languages further and how to connect them tightly with modern science and technology so as to ensure that more ethnic languages are able to process and convey such information.

14.2.2.2.5 Cultivating talented persons in the context of ethnic languages

Cultivating talented persons is a key measure in effectively engaging with ethnic languages. It is important to plan how to support various kinds of cadres in carrying out relevant work, which means not only supporting professionals such as the Party and governmental cadres, translators, editors, and bilingual teachers, but also supporting common talented persons (Ismail Amat 1992). Besides universities for nationalities, normal universities for nationalities and departments of ethnic languages in relevant universities are also necessary to support young and middle-aged talented people in working on ethnic languages through practical training and professional cultivation. It is also necessary to implement appropriate policies to avoid brain drain and brain waste, to attract the proficient undergraduates who are cultivated by the country, and to incentivize urgently needed persons to return. After working hard for many years, research groups working on ethnic languages in China have gradually been formed containing various kinds of professional talents, a reasonable age structure, and the capacity to innovate.

14.2.3 Measures where ethnic languages are concerned

14.2.3.1 Taking reality as the starting point

The characteristics of the distribution of ethnic minorities in China are such that several ethnic minorities are scattered and mixed with Han people in large regions, while each ethnic minority inhabits a small region of its own. Due to different historical situations and different social conditions, the development of various aspects is different. This is reflected in the languages and writing systems that make up the present complex situation. Some ethnic minorities have their own languages and writing systems, some ethnic minorities have their own languages but lack writing systems, some ethnic minorities use the Chinese writing system or another ethnic writing system, some ethnic minorities use nationwide commonly used ethnic writing systems, some ethnic minorities use ethnic writing systems that are commonly used in some areas, some

ethnic minorities use ethnic writing systems with a long history, and some ethnic minorities use newly created ethnic writing systems or improved ethnic writing systems. The language environments in towns, along transport routes, and in villages and pastoral areas are quite different. The social functions of ethnic languages are multifaceted and multileveled. In addition, there are differences in terms of ethnic historical traditions. The conditions are very complicated; even the situation within an ethnic minority is complicated due to the formation of the current situation over a long historical period. Therefore, we must work practically and realistically in order to proceed from the reality of every ethnic minority and area.

14.2.3.1.1 Continuing to study, use, and develop the commonly used ethnic writing systems

It is necessary that there be continuity in promoting the standardization of ethnic languages and the application of information technology, and to further strengthen and perfect the administrative offices and activities of transprovincial or transregional ethnic language cooperation organizations in order to promote cooperation and help it to develop in a healthier way.

14.2.3.1.2 Carefully summarizing and improving ethnic writing systems created and improved upon in the 1950s

When dealing with this issue, it is necessary to take the following two situations into account. The first aspect is the trial use of writing systems. Is the type of writing system scientific? Does the use of the writing system benefit communication among ethnicities and inter-ethnically? Does the writing system serve the political, economic, and cultural development of the respective ethnicity? The second aspect is the willingness of the masses. Once a writing system has had a good trial and is popular with the majority of the masses, it can be implemented by law. However, if the writing system has neither had an effective trial nor is popular with the masses, it should be improved upon rather than urgently promoted. Those writing systems that have had bad trials and are rejected by the masses cannot be promoted unreservedly.

14.2.3.1.3 Encouraging ethnicities lacking writing systems or commonly used writing systems to choose an appropriate existing writing system

It is very common around the world for an ethnicity to use another ethnicity's writing system. In China, some ethnicities use another ethnicity's language and writing system; this is determined by many aspects of their practical situation.

The facts prove that this is necessary and successful. It is necessary to encourage and support the ethnicities that lack their own writing systems in using Chinese characters or other ethnicities' writing systems, especially since some ethnic minorities use Chinese writing systems to improve ethnic development, which must continue.

14.2.3.1.4 Strictly examining and approving the ethnic writing systems designed in each area after 1980

The process of creating a writing system must strictly follow legal procedures. Creating a writing system is a serious matter because it deeply influences the social life and development of an ethnicity. Therefore, it requires meticulous, serious, and conscientious attitudes. One of the most important aspects is handling affairs in accordance with the law, strictly implementing the relevant regulations, conducting relevant work under the lead of the Communist Party of China and the organization of competent departments, never being rash, and strictly preventing and overcoming casual and arbitrary behavior.

14.2.3.1.5 Carefully and properly dealing with whether it is appropriate to create writing systems for ethnicities that lack them

The view that an ethnicity without an independent language and writing system cannot be considered an ethnicity does not tally with history and reality. Taking domestic and overseas history and reality into consideration, the existence of a language and writing system is not an essential element in forming an ethnicity. In China, while some ethnicities have their own languages and writing systems, others had them for a very long time but lost them later, but this has neither affected the existence of those ethnicities nor prevented them from enjoying rights and fulfilling obligations equally in the country.

14.2.3.1.6 Issues in the reform and improvement of ethnic writing systems

It is necessary to follow the developmental principles of language, to respect the will of the majority of the masses, and to carefully and properly reform and improve the writing system.

14.2.3.2 Encouraging ethnicities to learn languages and writing systems from one another

Encouraging ethnicities to learn from one another is one of the important contents of Party and national ethnic language policies. This has been specified in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and the "National regional

autonomy law of the People's Republic of China." In many Party and State documents, this policy is regulated in detail and realistic requirements are set out. In some provinces and autonomous areas, the mutual learning of languages and writing systems is used to assess, promote, and reward cadres.

14.2.3.3 Carrying out bilingual education, promoting Putonghua, and strengthening the study of ethnic languages

Bilingual education is almost a new educational pattern that gradually developed in some ethnic areas in China after the founding of New China. Its practice demonstrates that carrying out bilingual education according to circumstances is an effective measure for improving education quality, developing the intelligence of ethnic minorities, and changing the backward economic and cultural situation in ethnic areas as quickly as possible. For different ethnicities, areas, language environments, and teaching conditions, bilingual education needs to proceed from reality. According to the relevant regulations for ethnic autonomy, policy problems regarding bilingual education and specific issues such as training bilingual teachers, printing and issuing textbooks, funding bilingual education, and so forth need to be addressed.

14.2.3.4 Strengthening leadership

There is a need to strengthen leadership; mobilize all members of society to emphasize and support work relating to ethnic languages; put ethnic languages into the work agenda of the Party Committee and Political Committee; and study, supervise, check, and solve problems and difficulties in such work. As a functional department of the Chinese Communist Party and the central people's government managing the relevant work, the Ethnic Affairs Commissions at all levels and the Ethnic Languages and Writing Work Guidance Committee should actively fulfill their role and strive to work effectively; they should actively attract attention from the Party Committee and government at all levels in order to emphasize concern and support for work relating to ethnic languages; they should report regularly and often to leaders and act as good advisors and assistants; and they should supervise, guide, and manage their subordinates effectively so as to implement ethnic language policies in definite terms and also ensure the sound development of the relevant work.

The four originally established cooperative organizations working on trans-provincial and transregional ethnic languages will continue to be funded and developed as well. The existing eight cooperative organizations for Mongolian and three cooperative organizations for Korean should continue to strengthen and perfect their organizational methods and activities. The five provinces and

regions that have carried out Tibetan-language cooperative activities for many years should establish united cooperative organizations. The four cooperative organizations for the Yi language should organize a working team as soon as possible to implement cooperative activities.

14.3 Effects of implementing new policies

For the past twenty years, various directives and tasks for new policies have been implemented effectively. Ethnic minority languages and writing systems are applied in many fields of social life and have shown new developments.

14.3.1 Political life

In the case of important conferences such as the National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the National People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and important national and regional activities, documents are not only written in Chinese but also translated into seven languages, namely Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi, and Zhuang, for the benefit of ethnic minorities' delegates and committees. At the same time, simultaneous interpretations into these seven languages are provided. The People's Court and People's Procuratorate provide translations for litigants who cannot understand the local commonly used languages and writing systems. At conferences relating to the provinces, autonomous areas, autonomous prefectures, and autonomous counties, translators are provided as required. Ethnic writing systems such as Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, and Dai are widely employed in every autonomous organization's Party and government offices and business departments. When these local autonomous organizations perform their tasks, ethnic writing systems are adopted for the autonomous organizations' documents and seals and the people's organizations, factories, mines, school seals, boards, trademarks, advertisements, and tickets.

14.3.2 Legal systems

Historical practices prove that ethnic minority languages and writing systems cannot just depend on administrative methods because, where the scope and functions of their use are concerned, they are still in a weak situation.

Instances in which ethnic minority languages and writing systems are ignored do occur occasionally, and the use and development of ethnic minority languages and writing systems requires protection with special laws and regulations. During the past few decades, twenty autonomous ethnic regions have established regulations on ethnic minorities' languages and writing systems. Legal measures to support ethnic minority languages have apparently been taken with some effect; see Table 14.1.

Table 14.1: Regulations on languages and writing systems in autonomous ethnic regions (1987–2005).

Regulation	Year
Autonomous regions	
Regulations on studying, using, and developing the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region	passed in 1987, amended in 2002
Regulations on languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	passed in 1993, amended in 2002
Regulations on languages and writing systems in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	passed in 2004, implemented in 2005
Autonomous prefectures/cities	
Regulations on the Korean language and writing system in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1988, amended in 2004
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Hainan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1989, implemented in 1990
Regulations on the Mongolian and Tibetan languages and writing systems in the Haixi Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1990, implemented in 1991
Regulations on the Yi language and writing system in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1992, implemented in 1992
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Guoluo Tibet Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1993, implemented in 1993
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Huangnan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1993, implemented in 1994
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Haibei Tibet Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1994, implemented in 1995, amended in 2004
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Yushu Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1994, implemented in 1995

Table 14.1 (continued)

Regulation	Year
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Gannan Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1995, implemented in 1996
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in the Ganzi Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 1997, implemented in 1998
Regulations on languages and writing systems in the Bayingolin Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture	passed in 2005, implemented in 2005
Regulations on the bilingual use of Mongolian and Mandarin on streets with many shops in Hohhot City	passed in 2001, approved in 2001
Regulations on the bilingual use of Mongolian and Mandarin in streets with many shops in Baotou City	passed in 2001, approved in 2001
Autonomous counties	
Regulations on the Mongolian language and writing system in Fuxin Mongolian Autonomous County	passed in 1989, implemented in 1989
Regulations on the Mongolian language and writing system in Dorbet Mongolian Autonomous County	passed in 1991, implemented in 1991
Regulations on the Yi language and writing system in Mabian Yi Autonomous County	passed in 1994, implemented in 1994
Regulations on the Yi language and writing system in Ebian Yi Autonomous County	passed in 1995, implemented in 1995
Regulations on Mongolian language and writing system in Subei Mongolian Autonomous County	passed in 1996, implemented in 1996
Regulations on the Mongolian language and writing system in Qian Gorlos Mongolian Autonomous County	passed in 1996, implemented in 1996
Regulations on the Mongolian language and writing system in Kharatsin Left Mongolian Autonomous County	passed in 1998, implemented in 1998
Regulations on the Tibetan language and writing system in Tibet Autonomous County	passed in 1999, implemented in 1999
Regulations on the Kazakh language and writing system in Aksa Kazakh Autonomous County	passed in 2000, implemented in 2000

14.3.3 Ethnic language translation, publication, news, broadcasting, and film

In fields like translation, news, publication, broadcasting, and film, translation and publishing organizations using ethnic minority writing systems, and radio and television stations using ethnic minority languages, have been established from the central to local level, and newspapers written in ethnic minority writing systems have been founded. At the end of the twentieth century, newspapers on nearly 100 different subjects written in seventeen ethnic minority writing systems had been published; journals on 153 different subjects written in eleven ethnic minority writing systems had been published in China. The Chinese Central Broadcasting Station and local stations make radio broadcasts in sixteen ethnic minority languages. Up to twenty local languages are used in broadcasts at local, prefectural, and county radio stations. Up to 3,410 feature films have been produced in ethnic minority languages. By 1998, books published in twenty-three ethnic languages had been published by thirty-six ethnic publishers in China. 4,100 subjects were covered by these books, which numbered up to 53 million copies in print (State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China 1999).

14.3.4 Education

Progress is being made in education in ethnic minority languages and textbooks on ethnic minority writing systems. Under the guidance of national ethnic language policies, ethnic areas continue to develop education according to their own circumstances and establish ethnic bilingual education systems suited to each ethnicity's features. These bilingual systems are primarily divided into three types. The first type includes the ethnicities that have a native language but no native writing system, or that have a native ethnic writing system but use Chinese writing in the home. Mandarin and ethnic languages are used for teaching in the schools; ethnic language classes are not offered. The second type includes the ethnicities with widely used native writing systems. Two languages are used as teaching languages; Mandarin and ethnic language classes are offered; ethnic languages and writing systems are more emphasized than Mandarin. The third type includes the ethnicities who have native languages and writing systems but use Mandarin more; they use both Mandarin and ethnic languages as teaching languages; classes on Mandarin and ethnic languages are offered; and the use and study of Mandarin and Chinese script is more heavily emphasized.

At the end of the twentieth century, about ten thousand schools of twenty-one ethnicities in thirteen provinces and autonomous areas in China taught in ethnic languages or bilingually; ethnic languages are formally included in the primary and secondary school curriculum plans of twelve ethnicities: the Mongolians, Tibetans, Uygur, Kazakhs, Koreans, Yi, Zhuang, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Dai, Jingpo, and Russians; experimental teaching of the ethnic language or to eliminate illiteracy is carried out at primary school by nine ethnicities, namely the Bai, Miao, Bouyei, Naxi, Dong, Wa, Hani, Lisu, and Lahu. The number of students at school has reached six million, the number of ethnic languages sixty, and the number of ethnic scripts twenty-nine. Ten provinces and autonomous areas have established organizations that edit, translate, and publish textbooks on ethnic writing systems. Every year, the number of compiled and translated primary and secondary school textbooks is nearly 3,000; the total number of printed books is over 100 million. In 1997, the total number of printed textbooks was 34.03 million, and the total number of printed pages was 179.08 million (Tutob Dorje 1999: 40–52).

14.3.5 Normalization, standardization, and information technology

The normalization of ethnic languages primarily involves noun terms in ethnic minority languages and the normalization of the written use of characters in society. At present, for languages such as Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, and Korean in China, organizations specifically working on noun terms and the standardization of writing systems are responsible for organizing scholars to study and work out uniform standards for nominal terms and the written use of characters in society, which are then released and implemented by the departments of language work.

The standardization of ethnic languages primarily includes the standardization of ethnic minority terms, the standardization of information technology, and the standardization of transcription. In 1995, specific ethnic minority technical committee branches of the National Terminology Standardization Technical Committee were founded in Beijing. After that, four terminological working committees on ethnic minority languages (Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, and Xinjiang) were successively founded under the supervision of the relevant technical committee branch. The respective organizations developed standards for a given language's basic terms.

Standardization of the transcription of ethnic languages primarily involves transcription standards for Roman alphabets, particularly Pinyin transcription standards, which are used for writing out characters, personal names, place names, ethnic names, newspaper and journal names, and so forth. In China, transcription

standards for ethnic names have been drawn up (see Table 14.2). Regulations have been drawn up on spelling standards for ethnic minority place names. Meanwhile, the respective departments recognize scholars researching transcription standards for the romanization of Mongolian script (international standards). Information technology standardization primarily refers to the standardization of character sets, keyboards, and matrices, to be discussed in detail below.

Table 14.2: Roman alphabet transcriptions and codes for ethnic minority names in China (GB/T3304-1991; the release date is May 8, 2004).

Digital code	Name of ethnic group	Alphabetic code	Digital code	Name of ethnic group	Alphabetic code
1	Han	HA	29	Kyrgyz	KG
2	Mongolian	MG	30	Tu	TU
3	Hui	HU	31	Daur	DU
4	Tibetan	ZA	32	Mulam	ML
5	Uygur	UG	33	Qiang	QI
6	Miao	MH	34	Blang	BL
7	Yi	YI	35	Salar	SL
8	Zhuang	ZH	36	Maonan	MN
9	Bouyei	BY	37	Gelao	GL
10	Korean	CS	38	Xibe	XB
11	Manchu	MA	39	Achang	AC
12	Dong	DO	40	Primi	PM
13	Yao	YA	41	Tajik	TA
14	Bai	BA	42	Nu	NU
15	Tujia	TJ	43	Uzbek	UZ
16	Hani	HN	44	Russian	RS
17	Kazakh	KZ	45	Ewenki	EW
18	Dai	DA	46	Deang	DE
19	Li	LI	47	Bonan	BN

Table 14.2 (continued)

Digital code	Name of ethnic group	Alphabetic code	Digital code	Name of ethnic group	Alphabetic code
20	Lisu	LS	48	Yugur	YG
21	Wa	VA	49	Gin	GI
22	She	SH	50	Tatar	TT
23	Gaoshan	GS	51	Derung	DR
24	Lahu	LH	52	Oroqen	OR
25	Shui	SU	53	Hezhen	HZ
26	Dongxiang	DX	54	Monba	MB
27	Naxi	NX	55	Lhoba	LB
28	Jingpo	JP	56	Jino	JN

So far, of the fifty-five ethnic minorities in China, twenty-two have twenty-eight prevailing native writing systems; all of them have been realized in computer information processing. After a website in Mongolian, the first website in the Tibetan language all over the world – the Tongyuan Tibetan Language Website – was established in December 1992 at the North-west Nationalities University in Lanzhou, China.⁴⁷

Regarding the standardization of information technology, the writing systems of such languages as Mongolian, Tibetan, Yi, Uygur, Kazakh, and Kyrgyz have national standards for character sets, keyboards, and matrices; during the 1990s, word-processing systems for Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Yi, Zhuang, Kyrgyz, and Xibe were successively brought out. A group of operating and application systems, typesetting systems, and office automation technology for ethnic characters were developed. Automatic identification and machine-aided translation systems for the Mongolian and Tibetan languages were developed; preliminary websites in Mongolian, Tibetan, Korean, Uygur, and Yi were launched; a group of ethnic language databases were established; and the standards for the Tibetan and Mongolian character sets passed the criteria of the International Organization for Standardization and became international standards.

⁴⁷ *Minzu yuwen gongzuo fangzhen he minzu wenzi xinxi chuli*. http://www.e56.com.cn/minzu/nation_policy/Policy_detail.asp?Nation_Policy_ID=442.

14.3.6 Different ethnicities learning languages and writing systems from one another

In 1996, the Party Committee and government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region issued a call to enforce the requirement that cadres and masses from different ethnicities learn one another's languages and writing systems, and to establish a working group in which they could do so. A division of the Xinjiang Military Region made rules about learning ethnic minority languages and songs stipulating that officers who have served for more than five years and officers above the level of vice-commander should conduct daily conversations in ethnic minority languages; each company should learn a new minority song every two months. When the army participates in local large-scale events, they should sing ethnic minorities' songs. With the help of technological night schools, farms were founded with the primary objective of training minorities. Divisions and regiments trained about twenty ethnic minority people as expert hard workers.⁴⁸

Taking into consideration the characteristics of the masses of many ethnic minorities in its jurisdiction, the Public Security Bureau of the Huangnan Tibet Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province required the key units of public security organizations on all levels to solve the problem of translating ethnic minority languages in order to allow the masses to communicate conveniently when they work, report crimes, and lodge complaints. Policemen were mobilized to learn an ethnic minority language, to help and learn from one another, and to maintain close ties with the masses. Around 2002, more than ten thousand minority people in the region could use the Chinese writing system skillfully; several thousand Han people could speak ethnic minority languages.

14.3.7 Transprovincial, transregional, transindustrial, and transdepartmental cooperation

Since 1977, four collaborative teams have been established under the approval of the State Council of China. The first is the Collaborative Team Working on the Mongolian Language in Eight Provinces and Autonomous Regions, which covers eight provinces: Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaolin, Gansu, Ningxia, Xinjiang, and Qinghai. In Mandarin, the name of this team is abbreviated to *meng ba xie* 蒙八协 or *ba xie* 八协. The second is the Collaborative Team

⁴⁸ See "Wenhua yexiao" zengqiang xianjin wenhua fusheli. *Liberation Army Daily* (June 28, 2000). 3.

Working on the Korean Language in Three Provinces of North-east China, covering Jilin, Heilongjiang, and Liaolin Provinces. In Mandarin, the name of this second team is abbreviated to *chao san xie* 朝三协 or *san xie* 三协. The third is the Collaborative Team Working on the Yi Language in Four Provinces and Autonomous Regions, which was established in 1993, covering Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi Provinces. In Mandarin, the abbreviated name of this third team is *yi si xie* 彝四协 or *si xie* 四协. The fourth is the Leading Team Working on Education in Tibetan in Five Provinces, which was so renamed in 1994 and covers five provinces and regions: Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan. In Mandarin, the name of this fourth team is abbreviated as *zang wu xie* 藏五协 or *wu xie* 五协. Cooperative organizations working on books, textbooks, and the translation of films into Tibetan in five provinces and autonomous regions have been founded.

The Mongolian team primarily studies issues concerning the work program for and reform of Mongolian. The Korean team primarily carries out cooperative activities on issues such as ethnic education, investigations into and research on the Korean language and writing system, normalization, standardization, and academic research on Korean. The Yi team primarily works on standardizing the Yi language in four provinces: Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi. The Tibetan team primarily works on collaboration relating to books, textbooks, and the translation of films into the Tibetan language in five provinces and autonomous regions.

14.4 Conclusion

Work on ethnic languages is underpinned by very strong policies. Practice indicates that the following principles are effective and play a significant role in affecting ethnic relationships, enforcing ethnic unity, maintaining social stability, and promoting common prosperity for all of China's ethnic groups.

14.4.1 The principle of language equality

Language equality is an important component of the theory of ethnic equality. It is an important manifestation of ethnic equality. China adheres to the principle of language equality: each ethnicity has the freedom to use and develop its native language and writing system and to oppose language discrimination and language privilege in any forms. Language policies and language plans for ethnic groups are drawn up based on both this principle and the actual situation of ethnicities in China.

14.4.2 The principle of context-specific guidance

Insisting on this principle guidance requires us to work practically and to act according to local conditions and particulars. We cannot impose uniformity in all cases, but we can promote practicable language plans and detailed measurements based on different regions, ethnicities, social hierarchies, language environments, educational conditions, and jobs.

14.4.3 The principle of voluntary choice

We must follow the principle of voluntary selection where the issue of ethnicities using ethnic languages is concerned. This means that ethnic groups will not only enjoy the freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems but also the freedom to use Mandarin and Chinese characters or other ethnic languages and writing systems. Freedom in the use of the languages and writing systems of the minority ethnicities of China is comprehensive, sufficient, and complete (Min Wenshi 1997).

14.4.4 The principle of acting cautiously and safely

Generally speaking, language develops slowly and gradually. If a writing system is changed casually and often, this will cause confusion in the use of characters that will affect social communication. In the process of creating, improving, and reforming ethnic minority writing systems, we need to take the whole situation into consideration, think long term, and take a prudent and safe attitude, rather than acting recklessly.

14.4.5 The principle of learning about one another

Decades of practice prove that, if the Han cadres working in ethnic minority areas learn ethnic minority languages, they will understand their history and current situation much better; moreover, they will know the ethnic minorities' emotions and wishes directly and listen to their suggestions and requirements. Meanwhile, if Han cadres keep wide and close contact with the ethnic minority masses, they will carry out various kinds of work more easily. If ethnic minority cadres and masses learn and use Mandarin and Chinese characters, they will be able to participate in state affairs much better; moreover, they will be better

able to take part in various political, social, economic, and cultural activities; they will also receive various kinds of information faster and learn modern scientific culture and knowledge more rapidly, and then accelerate the development of ethnic regions. People from different ethnicities learning one another's languages and writing systems have great significance in allowing different ethnicities to understand, learn from, help, and unite with one another, and in promoting mutual prosperity across different ethnicities.

14.4.6 The principle of transprovincial cooperation

Practice proves that transprovincial, transindustrial, and transdepartmental cooperation is one of the successful aspects of how ethnic languages are treated in China. It is performed in accordance with the actual situation in China; it solves some practical problems in the development of ethnic education and culture for an ethnicity found in more than one province; and it stimulates the enthusiasm of an ethnicity found in more than one province for learning and using its own language and writing system, thereby promoting sharing and coordination and avoiding wasted labor and financial and material resources. It plays an increasingly important role.

Chapter 15

Comparison of language laws in Tibet and Xinjiang

China is a united multi-ethnic country. The Han people account for more than 90% of the total population. The populations of the fifty-five ethnic minorities, for example, the Tibetans, Uygur, and Kazakhs, is small, and thus they are customarily referred to as minority ethnicities. Implementing ethnic regional autonomy in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities is a basic policy for solving ethnic issues in China; moreover, it is a basic political system for implementing people's democracy.

15.1 Introduction

The Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region are two of the five autonomous areas on the provincial level that implement regional ethnic autonomy. In 2002, as local organs of State power, the People's Congresses of these two autonomous areas created language laws for each autonomous area respectively: the *Xizang Zizhiqu Xuexi, Shiyong he Fazhan Zangyuwen de Guiding* 西藏自治区学习、使用和发展藏语的规定 [Regulations on studying, using, and developing the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region] (hereafter the "New regulations") and *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Yuyan Wenzhi Gongzuo Tiaoli* 新疆维吾尔自治区语言文字工作条例 [Regulations on languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region]. These two language regulations mark the fact that language work in these two autonomous areas has been developed in a legal context; meanwhile, they also indicate that the laws and regulations for languages and writing systems in China have been enriched and further improved.

From the perspective of international linguistic law, these two language laws in China can be classified as official language laws, the most common of the four types of language law (Turi 2001: 262). However, if we compare these two language laws of China with the "Charter of the French Language" issued by Quebec, Canada, and the language laws issued by the Republic of Estonia

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in Wang Jie, Su Jinzhi, and Jozsef G. Turay (eds.), *Falv • Yuyan • Yuan de Duoyangxing: Dijiujie Guoji Falv yu Yuyan Xueshu Yantaohui Lunwenji*, 488–505. Law Press, 2006.

<https://doi.org/10.1515/9781501511837-015>

(Zhou Qingsheng 1999), or with the Sami language law issued by Norway (Zhou Qingsheng 2001), we can find clear distinctions between the language laws of China and other countries.

In order to help people around the world comprehensively understand the system of language laws of China, I will just consider the similarities and differences between the language laws of Tibet and Xinjiang, rather than comparing the language laws of China and other countries.

15.2 Language laws in Tibet

15.2.1 Social and historical background

Tibet is located in south-western China, covering an area of 1.2 million square kilometers and comprising one eighth of the total area of China. Tibet borders Myanmar, India, Bhutan, and Nepal along nearly 4,000 kilometers. Tibet is the largest area where Tibetan ethnic groups live in compact communities; meanwhile, of the five autonomous areas of China, Tibet has the highest proportion of autonomous ethnic inhabitants. In Tibet, the number of Tibetan people is 2,427,168, accounting for 92.77% of the total population of the Tibet Autonomous Region; the number of Han people is 158,570, making up 6.06% (Office of Population Census of the State Council, 2002). Members of other ethnicities such as the Hui, Monba, Lhoba, and Naxi account for no more than 1.2%.

Since the middle of the thirteenth century, when Tibet was officially taken into Chinese territory, Tibet has always been controlled by the central government. After the founding of the Republic of China and the democratic reforms conducted in 1959, the long-term system of feudal serfdom that combined religion and politics was completely abolished in Tibet, and the regional ethnic autonomy system was gradually established.

The Tibetan language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan family. Of the 2.4 million Tibetan people in Tibet, more than 84% can communicate in Tibetan. The Tibetan writing system was created in the seventh century, which makes it one of the oldest writing systems in the world. The Tibetan people play an important role in promoting the cultural development and social improvement of Tibet.

15.2.2 Language issues and “Several regulations on studying, using, and developing Tibetan in the Tibet Autonomous Region (trial implementation)”

The Tibetan language is the commonly used language and writing system in the Tibet Autonomous Region. However, since the Cultural Revolution of 1966, following the slogan that “ethnic minority languages and writing systems are outdated and useless,” Tibetan curricula in the majority of schools were scrapped. Ethnic education in the Tibetan language faced great difficulties.

On the one hand, central organizations mobilized university graduates from eastern China to work in universities in Tibet; on the other, the government transferred teachers from secondary schools and universities in eastern China to support Tibet. The problem was that these teachers who helped in Tibet could only speak Mandarin, not Tibetan, which led to Mandarin becoming the primary educational language in Tibet. Thus, a considerable number of Tibetan students could only understand Mandarin rather than Tibetan. Studying, using, and developing Tibetan met with problems. In order to solve the fundamental problem of the Mandarin-based writing system and education system, two vice-chairmen, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme and Panchen Erdeni Chokye Gyaltsen, provided suggestions at the Fourth Session of the Fifth National People’s Congress in the Tibet Autonomous Region on July 9, 1987 (Zhou Wei 2002). Their suggestions were deliberated upon and approved at this conference, and then “Several regulations on studying, using and developing Tibetan in the Tibet Autonomous Region (trial implementation)” (hereafter the “Old regulations”) were drawn up (Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress 1994). The “Old regulations” explicitly ruled that the Tibetan language and writing system are a commonly used language and writing system in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and that, when autonomous organs perform their public duties, they should carry out the policy of “being Tibetan-based and using Tibetan and Mandarin together.”

Based on the “Old regulations,” the government of the Tibet Autonomous Region established the Tibetan Language Work Guidance Committee in February 1988. In October, detailed implementation rules for the “Old regulations” were issued explicitly, stipulating that “a Tibetan-based education system be gradually developed” (Zhang Tingfang 2002: 338). The release and implementation of these regulations and detailed rules has ensured that the use and development of the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region has received reliable legal protection.

15.2.3 The reasons for and significance of revising the “Old regulations”

After the “Old regulations” on language in the Tibet Autonomous Region were first issued in 1987, they were in effect for fifteen years. In May 2002, after extensive revision, the “Old regulations” were reissued and reimplemented. The primary reasons for and significance of revising the “Old regulations” are discussed below.

15.2.3.1 The “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems”

In 2000, after the release of the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzifa* 中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法 [Law of the national commonly used languages and writing systems of the People’s Republic of China] (hereafter referred to as the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems”), the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the People’s Republic of China, the Science and Education Committee of the National People’s Congress, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, and the National Committee on Language jointly issued the *Guanyu Xuexi Xuanchuan he Guanche Shishi Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzifa de Tongzhi* 关于学习宣传和贯彻实施<中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法>的通知 [Notices on studying, promoting, and implementing the Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems of the People’s Republic of China]. These notices required various regions to devise methods for implementing the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems” based on local practical conditions, or to devise local laws and rules on languages and writing systems, and then bring them into line with the legal system.

The Tibet Autonomous Region responded to the requirements of the central government immediately by revising the “Old regulations” into the “New regulations.” The “Old regulations” in Tibet originally comprised sixteen regulations. Some additions were made on the basis of the framework, structure, and 16th–18th articles of the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems,” so that the “New regulations” had nineteen articles. The basic framework of the “Old regulations” remains almost unchanged in the “New regulations.”

15.2.3.2 Adjusting language relations and solving language issues

Ethnic language relations and ethnic language issues are important aspects of ethnic relations and ethnic issues. Dealing with the relations between ethnic languages properly is an important aspect of addressing ethnic relations and ethnic issues.

During the fifteen years in which the “Old regulations” were implemented, the Tibet Autonomous Region had carried out the policy of “being Tibetan-based and using Tibetan and Mandarin together.” Learning, using, and developing Tibetan attracted great attention in Tibetan society, and received effective guarantees from local laws. A Tibetan-based bilingual education system was established. Other fields also saw great achievements. However, some new problems also resulted.

Mandarin education in schools was planned and managed relatively weakly. At one time, there was a trend which held that learning Mandarin was unnecessary, so it became less common. Between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, a large number of Mandarin teachers left. Mandarin courses were taught as a minor subject or ended arbitrarily in some schools. Mandarin textbooks for technical secondary schools and universities were compiled, but were left unpublished due to lack of funding. Work on promoting Putonghua and using standard Chinese characters was relatively weak (Zhang Tingfang 2002: 356–357). Where the choice of teaching language is concerned, the “Old regulations” required Tibetan primary students to select curricula in Tibetan, but while the Tibetan curricula were being implemented, many Tibetan parents wished for their children to enter classes taught in Mandarin (Liu Qinghui 1989: 502).

In order to solve these problems and to adjust to the relationship between the use of Tibetan and the use of Mandarin, the “New regulations” abandoned the policy of “being Tibetan-based and using Tibetan and Mandarin together” in the “Old regulations,” and changed the statement to “using both the Tibetan language and writing system and the national commonly used language and writing system.” For example, article 3 of the “New regulations” states that “when the State organs on all levels in autonomous areas are carrying out their duties, Tibetan and the national commonly used language and writing system should exert the same effects.” Article 6 states that “at the stage of compulsory education, the Tibetan language and writing system and the national commonly used language and writing system are to be used as the basic educational and teaching languages and writing systems.” This statement highlights the purpose of the “Old regulations” and also improves on them by properly emphasizing the importance of the Chinese writing system. Therefore, it is more suitable to the practical situation of Tibet, more favorable to developing and maintaining a harmonious relationship between Tibetan and Mandarin, and better able to meet the requirements of the social, economic, and cultural development of Tibet.

15.2.3.3 Opposing the separatist activities of the Dalai Lama clique with respect to language and culture

When Tibet was ruled by the Dalai Lama, he continued a feudal serf system that combined religion with politics. In 1959, his army was betrayed in Tibet and

defeated, and he went into exile abroad to conduct long-term separatist activities that are the fundamental cause of the instability of the Tibet Autonomous Region. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Dalai Lama clique ignored the fact that the Tibetan language and writing system were rapidly developing, and spread wrong views, such as “the Chinese government discarded the Tibetan language gradually” and “Tibetan culture is being eliminated,” to the world in an attempt to reinstate the previous ways of life and cultural values in place under the feudal serf system in Tibet and restore his rule (Information Office of the State Council 2000).

In this context, revising the “Old regulations,” changing language relations and guaranteeing the right of the Tibetan people to learn, use, and develop the Tibetan language and writing system all played a significant role in opposing the separatist activities of the Dalai Lama clique and in maintaining social stability, ethnic unity, and national unity.

15.2.3.4 The main content of the “New regulations” concerning the Tibetan language and writing system

The “New regulations” in Tibet take the form of decrees and statutes that determine the legal status of the Tibetan language and writing system, specify the scope of use of Tibetan and the national commonly used language and writing system, and clarify the responsibilities and legal duties of government on each level in Tibet and the duties of the Department of the Tibetan Language and Writing System. This has not only helped the application of the Tibetan language and writing system in various social fields, but also helped communication between the Tibetan people and Han people or other ethnicities. The “New regulations” have thus promoted ethnic unity and maintained national unity.

- (1) The status of the Tibetan language and writing system, and the basis and basic principles of language legislation. Article 1 of the “New regulations” rules that “the Tibetan language and writing system are commonly used in the Tibet Autonomous Region.” The legal basis of the “New regulations” includes the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Quyu Zizhifa* 中华人民共和国民族区域自治法 [National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China] (hereafter the “Law of national regional autonomy”), and the *Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzifa* 国家通用语言文字法 [Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems]. The “New regulations” aim at guaranteeing the learning, use, and development of the Tibetan language and writing system. “Adhering to the equality of ethnic languages and writing systems” and “maintaining the

unity of laws of languages and writing systems” (stated in article 2) are two of the basic principles of the “New regulations.”

- (2) The scope of use of Tibetan and the national commonly used language and writing system. When State organs on various levels in the Tibet Autonomous Region execute their duties (stated in article 3), when important conferences are held (stated in article 4), and when judicial organs on various levels carry out judicial acts (stated in article 5), they can use Tibetan, national commonly used, or local commonly used languages and writing systems.

Tibetan and the national commonly used language and writing system should be used simultaneously in the following situations and contexts: documents issued by State organs on various levels (stated in article 4), official seals, credentials, plaques of State organs on various levels, people’s organizations, enterprises, permanent organs except for those in the Tibet Autonomous Region (stated in article 11), packaging descriptions for products produced by enterprises in Tibet and sold in the Tibet area (stated in article 12), and the names, management projects, prices, and bills of various service industries in the Tibet Autonomous Region.

At the stage of compulsory education, Tibetan and the national commonly used language are used as teaching languages. Schools are to offer Tibetan curricula, and the national commonly used language and foreign languages, in timely fashion (stated in article 6).

- (3) Duties of government bodies on various levels. Government bodies on various levels should assess and enforce the work of learning, using, and developing the Tibetan language (stated in article 2). The Tibet Autonomous Region should take measures to eradicate illiteracy among young Tibetan people (stated in article 4). Governments should encourage various ethnic groups to learn the Tibetan language and writing system (stated in article 8). The government of the autonomous area should actively develop the cause of the Tibetan language and writing system in education, news, publishing, radio and film, scientific research, popular science, literature, and art; moreover, the government should pay attention to the cultivation of Tibetan language teachers, editors, journalists, writers, secretaries, and researchers (stated in article 9). The government of the autonomous area should value and enforce translation work on Tibetan and the national commonly used language and implement measures to cultivate translators (stated in article 14). The people’s government above the county level should award and encourage those organs and individuals who perform prominently in learning, using, and developing the Tibetan language and writing system (stated in article 15).

- (4) The duties of Departments of the Tibetan Language. Departments of the Tibetan Language in government bodies above the county level in the Tibet Autonomous Region should ensure the supervision and management of Tibetan language learning and use; they should enforce scientific research on the Tibetan language and writing system and promote the further development of the Tibetan language (stated in article 13). The Department of the Tibetan Language of the Tibet Autonomous Government has uniformly standardized and issued terminology in Tibetan so as to normalize and standardize translations (stated in article 14).
- (5) Legal responsibilities. Articles 16, 17, and 18 of the “New regulations” clarify the rules or punishments concerning failure to use the standard language and writing system in actions by the Tibet Autonomous Government, by mass media, and at public occasions.

15.3 Language laws in Xinjiang

15.3.1 Social and historical background

The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, located in the border regions of north-western China, is the largest province in China. Xinjiang covers more than 1.6 million square kilometers, comprising one sixth of the total area of China, and far exceeds the total areas of England, France, Germany, and Italy. Xinjiang is in a very important strategic position. Xinjiang borders on eight countries – Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India – with a border that is five thousand kilometers long.

Xinjiang is an autonomous ethnic area with multiple ethnicities, multiple languages, multiple writing systems, multiple regions, and multiple cultures. The whole area has forty-seven ethnic groups, thirteen of whom are native ethnicities, including the Uygur, Han, Kazakh, Hui, Kyrgyz, Mongols, Xibe, Tajik, Manchu, Uzbek, Russians, Daur, and Tatars. According to the 2000 census, the total population of Xinjiang is 18,459,511. The total population of ethnic minorities is 10,969,592, (accounting for 59.43% of the total of population of Xinjiang), and the number of Han people is 7,489,919 (40.57% of the Xinjiang total). The Uygur population is 8,345,622 (45.21% of the total ethnic minority population); the population of the other ethnicities is 2,623,920 (14.22%; Office of Population Census of the State Council 2002: 234–240).

Since the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was established in 1955, five autonomous prefectures and six autonomous counties have been founded. The autonomous ethnicities are the Kazakhs, Mongols, Hui, Kyrgyz, Xibe, and Tajik.

In terms of regions and cultures, the Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Tajik, Uzbek, Russian, and Tatar populations are transregional ethnic groups that have close relationships with foreign ethnic groups.

Among the thirteen native ethnicities in Xinjiang, the Han, Hui, and Manchu people commonly use the Mandarin language and writing system. The Uygur, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, and Xibe people have their own native commonly used languages and writing systems. The Tajik, Uzbek, and Tatar people have their own writing systems, but they rarely use them because they have shifted to the Uygur or Kazakh writing systems.

The languages of the native ethnic groups in Xinjiang belong to three language families. Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Xibe, Manchu, Daur, Uzbek, and Tatar belong to the Altaic family; Mandarin belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family; and Tajik and Russian belong to the Indo-European family.

Moreover, Xinjiang is at the junction of four ancient cultures. The Turban and Gaochang cultures apparently have mixed features of Central Plains culture, Iranian culture, and Indian culture. The Quqa (Kucha) culture is deeply affected by Indian and Iranian cultures, while the Khotan culture is entirely influenced by Indian culture. Lop Nor was permeated by the Central Plains culture. However, after the Western Regions were unified under the Han dynasty, Xinjiang was included in Chinese territory. The primary culture of Chinese ethnic peoples deeply influenced the regions south and north of the Tianshan Mountains (Yin Zhuguang and Mao Yongfu 1996: 229–230).

15.3.2 Production of the “Regulations on languages and writing systems of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region”

Legislation on language in Xinjiang was a very long-term process. Since the second year after the founding of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in 1956, the government of the Autonomous Region and the People’s Congress issued many regulations and notices that required autonomous organs on various levels to use Uygur and Mandarin simultaneously in the case of documents issued within the autonomous region.⁴⁹ After the 1980s, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region issued documents on seven occasions that strictly required departments on various levels to implement two types of writing system. However, some departments still could

⁴⁹ Compilation Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Area Local Annals and Compilation Committee of General Annals of Xinjian • Annals on Languages and Scripts (eds.). *Xinjiang Tongzhi* • *Yuyan Wenzhi Zhi*. Xinjiang People’s Press, 2000: 274–275.

not adhere to the demands of these documents. Translators and interpreters were not provided at many conferences, so ethnic people could neither understand documents released by higher authorities nor grasp the content of conferences. Finally, the relationship between the leaders and masses became weakened. In addition, some departmental plaques and seals were written only in Chinese characters, without ethnic characters; some of them used ethnic characters, but the method was cluttered and non-standard. All of these phenomena caused dissatisfaction among the ethnic masses.

In order to solve many problems of using languages and writing systems in Xinjiang, to enforce the legal status of ethnic languages, and to meet the requirements for normalizing and standardizing languages and writing systems, the Ethnic Language and Writing System Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (hereinafter the Ethnic Language Committee) drew up the *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Minzu Yuyan Wenzhi Guanli Tiaoli* 新疆维吾尔自治区语言文字管理条例 [Management regulations on ethnic languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region] (hereafter the “Draft”) at the beginning of 1988. Based on this draft, the *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Minzu Yuyan Wenzhi Shiyong Guanli Zanxing Guiding* 新疆维吾尔自治区语言文字使用管理暂行规定 [Temporary provisions on the usage and management of ethnic languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region] (hereafter the “Regulations”) were established, and then announced and implemented by the government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on December 2, 1988. This was the earliest original version of the current regulations on the languages and writing systems of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

In September 1993, the Standing Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region issued the *Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Yuyan Wenzhi Gongzuo Tiaoli* 新疆维吾尔自治区语言文字工作条例 [Regulations on the languages and writing systems of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region] (hereafter the “Old regulations”; Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress 1994), which had relatively comprehensive content and reasonable structures. These regulations identified various ethnic languages and writing systems that had begun to be managed legally. The “Old regulations” issued in 1993 was drawn up on the basis of the “Regulations” issued in 1988, which were extensively amended. Six components of the “Old regulations” were retained in the “New regulations”; they are as follows.

- (1) “The Language Committee should reform and improve writing systems by following languages’ intrinsic development rules; it should respect the will of the majority of the masses; it should reform writing systems deliberately

and steadily” (stated in the “Old regulations” and article 3 of the “New regulations”).

- (2) “The Language Committee should respect and affirm the native ethnicities’ will” (stated in the “Old regulations” and article 4 of the “New regulations”).
- (3) “Every ethnic citizen enjoys the right to litigate using his or her native language and writing system” (stated in article 13 of the “Old regulations” and in the “New regulations”).
- (4) “From the third grade of primary school, schools need to offer a Mandarin curriculum. Those schools with good teaching quality can offer a Mandarin curriculum earlier so as to conduct Mandarin education well,” and “universities should enforce ‘ethnic language and Mandarin’ bilingual education so as to cultivate talented bilingual persons” (stated in article 19 of the “Old regulations” and article 18 of the “New regulations”).
- (5) Article 20 of the “New regulations” corresponds to the content of article 19 of the “Old regulations.”
- (6) Article 21 of the “New regulations” corresponds to the content of article 22 of the “Old regulations.”

15.3.3 The “Old regulations” and their significance

15.3.3.1 Experience over many years has shown the “Old regulations” to be relatively mature

The “Old regulations,” issued in 1993, adhere to the principle that all ethnic languages and writing systems are equal; they closely integrate the practices of Xinjiang; they guarantee every ethnic group the right to learn and use its native ethnic language freely. The content of the “Old regulations” is relatively comprehensive; their structure is relatively reasonable and complete. After being implemented for many years, the “Old regulations” had good social effects. Ethnic minority languages and writing systems were widely used in the schools. When the People’s Congresses and governments on various levels executed their duties, they paid attention to the use of ethnic minority languages and writing systems. Courts and procuratorates on various levels could hear cases using ethnic minority languages and writing systems so as to guarantee every ethnic citizen’s freedom to conduct lawsuits in their native language and writing system. Ethnic minority languages and writing systems were widely employed in society. Computer information processing and the exploration of ethnic scripts also achieved great results (Ao Junde, Nan Jia, and Ye Erken 2000: 733–734).

Experience over many years has shown that the implementation of the “Old regulations” has effectively improved work on ethnic languages and writing systems in Xinjiang and promoted ethnic unity, social stability, and common prosperity.

15.3.3.2 The “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems”

As discussed above, after the issuing of the *Guojia Tongyong Yuyan Wenzifa* [国家通用语言文字法 [Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems]] in 2002, five ministries, including the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China, jointly notified local authorities to draw up local language regulations. According to the details in the central organization’s notice, the revision of the “Old regulations” issued in 1993 was approved on September 20, 2002, at the Tenth Session of the Ninth Standing Committees of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, which formally issued the “New regulations.” Apart from a very few chapters, sections, and articles, and some added, omitted, or amended wording, the overall structures and basic content remained unchanged in the “New regulations.”

15.3.3.3 Fighting against separatism in the field of language

The management of ethnic languages in legislative form is not only related to ethnic equality, ethnic unity, ethnic minorities’ cultural qualities and levels of civilization, and the common prosperity of different ethnicities, but is also related to the fight against separatism, the maintenance of social stability, and the preservation of unity.

Ethnic separatism relies on the slogan “East Turkistan” (*Dong Tu* 东突 in Mandarin). In order to achieve the purpose of controlling Xinjiang as a separate entity, its proponents call Xinjiang “East Turkistan”; they argue that “Xinjiang has been an independent country since ancient times,” that the “Han people are colonial rulers who invaded Xinjiang and predators grabbing up the natural resources of Xinjiang,” and that “other ethnicities who speak Turkic languages have established their own countries; only the Uygur with a large population have not established an independent country” (Ma Dazheng 2003: 67).

Within this atmosphere, strange phenomena of resistance to learning Mandarin arose in some areas of southern Xinjiang. Some people put forward such absurd arguments as “the heretics’ language cannot be learned” and “learning Mandarin would erase their ethnic features” (Chen Yugui 2002: 64).

15.3.4 Main content of the “New regulations”

15.3.4.1 General principles

Chapter 1 of the “New regulations,” “General principles,” regulates the purposes and legal foundations of language legislation. It affirms the principle that language work must insist on the ethnic equality of languages and writing systems. It restates the regulation, stated in the Constitution, that “each ethnicity has the right to use and develop its native languages and writing systems” and the principle, stated in the “Law of national regional autonomy,” of “advocating and encouraging each ethnicity to learn the languages and writing systems of others.” It clarifies the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region’s policies for reforming, improving, and choosing writing systems. It regulates the rights of management authorities working on languages in various governmental organs in Xinjiang. It also, finally, regulates the awards granted to those people who perform prominently in language work.

15.3.4.2 Use of bilingual and dual writing systems in autonomous organs, education, and society

When the autonomous organs in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region execute their duties, they use Uygur and Mandarin simultaneously. They can use other ethnic languages as needed. When autonomous organs of autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties perform their duties, they use the autonomous region’s commonly used Uygur and Mandarin; meanwhile, they use the local autonomous ethnicities’ languages (stated in article 7). For example, the National People’s Congress and the government of the Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture in Ely use three kinds of writing system, namely Kazakh, Mandarin, and Uygur. On the occasion of large conferences, simultaneous interpretation in more than these three languages is provided.

Primary and secondary schools that use ethnic minority languages as teaching languages offer Mandarin courses from the third grade of primary school. Schools of a good standard offer Mandarin courses earlier. These schools gradually provide ethnic students the ability to speak both ethnic minority languages and Mandarin when they graduate from high school (stated in article 18). In areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, primary and secondary schools that teach in Mandarin offer courses in local commonly used ethnic languages (stated in article 19).

The situations and contexts that require the use of standard ethnic minority writing systems and Chinese characters include official seals, door plates, credentials of organs and institutions, and envelopes with organizations’ names; various

documents reported and issued in Xinjiang, letters, and important conference logos; enrolling new students, recruiting workers and cadres; promotions; signs in public places, public facilities and public services, public service advertisements, and traffic signs; organizations' names printed on cars, safety slogans, descriptions and instructions for the use of products sold in Xinjiang; and so forth (stated in articles 8, 9, and 10).

15.3.4.3 The use of one or more local commonly used languages and writing systems by governmental organs

According to the requirements or circumstances of conference participants, one or more local commonly used languages and writing systems are used in contexts such as study material and propaganda material released by governmental organs and institutions, general conferences, legal documents, and so forth (stated in articles 8, 10, and 12).

15.3.4.4 Guaranteeing the personal right to use and choose languages

Article 12 of the “New regulations” states that all ethnic citizens have the right to take up legal proceedings using their native languages and writing systems. Courts and procuratorates should provide translations for those litigants without mastery of the local commonly used languages and writing systems.

When organs and institutions enroll new students, workers, or cadres, or make promotions, the examinees or participants can voluntarily choose one of the local commonly used ethnic minority languages or Mandarin, except for situations specified by the State or autonomous area (stated in article 11).

Ethnic minority students can enter primary and secondary schools that use Mandarin as the teaching language, and Han students can enter primary and secondary schools that teach in ethnic minority languages. Schools should support and accept these students' choices (stated in article 20).

15.3.4.5 Duties of departments and governmental organs

Governmental organs on various levels should develop enterprises that employ ethnic minority languages, for example in education, technology, culture, news, publishing, radio, films, and the editing of ancient books (stated in article 14). They should guarantee ethnic minority scientists, technicians, and literary and art workers the opportunity to engage in scientific research, to invent and create, to write papers and books, and to carry out artistic creation and performance using native ethnic languages and writing systems (stated in article 15). They should

educate and encourage various ethnic groups to learn languages and writing systems from one another (stated in article 17). They should promote the national commonly used Putonghua and standard characters (stated in article 29).

In areas inhabited by ethnic minorities or multi-ethnic areas, courts and procuratorates should use the local commonly used languages to hear cases. Courts and procuratorates should provide translation for those litigants who cannot understand the local commonly used languages and writing systems (stated in article 20). When State organs, judicial organs, and people's organizations at various levels hear cases or consider various ethnic citizens' letters and visits, they should use languages and writing systems understood by the petitioners to respond to and deal with the issues, or else translate for them (stated in article 13).

Departments of business, the postal service, transportation, health, finance, tax affairs, industry and commerce, public security, and so forth should train workers in ethnic minority languages and Mandarin, so as to enable them to understand and apply the local commonly used languages and be able to serve citizens of various ethnicities (stated in article 21). Departments of the postal service, finance, and so forth should do their jobs well; for example, mail delivery, offering credit and loans, savings, and so forth (stated in article 16).

Governmental organs and institutions should value and enforce the translation of ethnic minority languages (stated in article 22); they should enforce the translation of books in ethnic minority languages and books in Mandarin and foreign languages; and they should also promote science, technology, and cultural communication in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region (stated in article 23). Organs and institutions must use the orthography, orthoepy, nominal terminology, personal names, and place names approved and published by the administrative authorities in charge of languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region (stated in article 28).

15.3.4.6 Duties of the administrative authority in charge of languages and writing systems

The administrative authority in charge of languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region drew up regulations for standards concerning ethnic minority languages, orthography, and orthoepy; they examined and approved criteria for nominal terminology in ethnic minority languages. The administrative authority in charge of languages and writing systems and the Department of Education should actively support scientific researchers and managerial talents who have worked on translation, editing, and education (stated in article 25).

15.3.4.7 Legal duties

In chapter 5 of the “New regulations,” “Legal duties,” article 3 specifies the relevant punishments and regulations for the use of illegal characters in official seals, door plates, credentials of organs and institutions; on envelopes with organizational names; in signs in public places, public facilities, and public services; and in public service advertisements and traffic signs.

15.4 Comparison of language laws and regulations

With respect to the socio-historical background, the structure and foundations of the language laws, the targets and aims of the language laws, the content of the language laws, the scope of language usage, the duties of departments and governmental organs, and so forth, Tibet and Xinjiang not only share many common points but also differ on many others. Generally speaking, there are more differences than similarities, and they are discussed in this section.

15.4.1 Similarities in language legislation between Xinjiang and Tibet

15.4.1.1 Many similarities in social and historical background

Both Xinjiang and Tibet are autonomous ethnic areas in the western border region of China that border on many countries and cover more than 1.2 million square kilometers between them. The autonomous ethnic populations in Xinjiang and Tibet exceed two million. Both Tibet and Xinjiang have specific language laws on provincial and regional levels. These two laws have seen more than ten years of social practice in the autonomous areas, and both were revised and reissued in 2002. The revision and reissuing of these two laws was aimed at bringing them into line with the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems” and at fighting ethnic separatism with regard to languages and writing systems.

15.4.1.2 Almost the same basis for language legislation

The legislative basis for drawing up language laws in Tibet and Xinjiang primarily includes the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, the “Law of national regional autonomy,” and the “Law of national commonly used languages and writing systems”; the latter two laws are connected in the autonomous regions.

15.4.1.3 Almost the same basic principles in the language laws

The basic principle of the two language laws is that of equality between ethnic languages and writing systems.

15.4.1.4 Almost the same composition of the bilingual system on the autonomous regional level

These two laws both state that the two languages commonly used in each autonomous area are primarily the autonomous ethnic language and Mandarin (or the national commonly used language).

15.4.2 Differences in language legislation between Tibet and Xinjiang

15.4.2.1 Differences in the ethnicities, languages, populations, and composition of the autonomous regions

The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is a multi-ethnic autonomous area divided into five autonomous prefectures and six autonomous counties. The Uygur people account for 45% of the total population of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region; the Han people comprise 41% of the total population; over ten other native ethnic minorities make up more than 10%. The proportion of Uygur is not so different from that of Han people.

The Tibetan people in Tibet are both an autonomous ethnicity and the dominant ethnicity, accounting for 93% of the total population of the whole autonomous region; Han people account for 6%; the other ethnicities account for 1%. The proportion of Tibetans far exceeds that of Han people.

15.4.2.2 Different structures and forms of the language laws

First, the titles are different. The title of the language law of Tibet is “Regulations on studying, using, and developing the Tibetan language in the Tibet Autonomous Region”; the title of the language law of Xinjiang is “Regulations on languages and writing systems in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.”

Second, the two regulations differ in structure and length. The language regulations of Tibet are not divided into chapters and sections, but include only nineteen articles. These regulations are relatively short. The language regulations of Xinjiang are divided into six chapters and thirty-three articles. The Xinjiang regulations are longer.

15.4.2.3 Different legislative purposes

The language regulations of Tibet aim to “guarantee learning, using, and developing the Tibetan language.” The language regulations of Xinjiang aim to “guarantee that every ethnicity enjoys the freedom to use and develop its native language and writing system,” and involve “promoting every ethnicity’s language and writing system to encourage development and prosperity, and enhancing every ethnic people’s scientific and cultural level.”

15.4.2.4 Different usage patterns

Overall, Tibet implements bilingualism, Xinjiang multilingualism. Specifically, the languages used when executing official duties in Tibet are the Tibetan language and the national commonly used language and writing system. In Xinjiang, bilingualism is implemented on the level of the autonomous region, including Uygur and Mandarin; trilingualism is implemented on the levels of autonomous prefectures and counties, including the autonomous ethnic language, Mandarin, and Uygur.

Two languages are used as educational languages in Tibet, namely Tibetan and the national commonly used language. Multiple languages are employed as educational languages in Xinjiang, namely Uygur + Mandarin, Kazakh + Mandarin, Mongolian + Mandarin, Kyrgyz + Mandarin, and Xibe + Mandarin.

In terms of public contexts (official seals, credentials, public facilities, shop signs, advertising, production, and so forth), bilingualism is employed in Tibet, so that the Tibetan language and Mandarin are used simultaneously; multilingualism is employed in Xinjiang: Uygur + Mandarin, Kazakh + Mandarin, Mongolian + Mandarin, Kyrgyz + Mandarin, and Xibe + Mandarin.

15.4.2.5 Different duties of governmental bodies on various levels

The government’s duties that are stated in the regulations of Tibet but not mentioned in the regulations of Xinjiang are as follows: eliminating illiteracy among young Tibetan citizens, and assessing and enforcing measures to learn, use, and develop the Tibetan language and writing system.

The government’s duties that are stated in the regulations of Xinjiang but are not mentioned in the regulations of Tibet are as follows: when various organizations and groups consider and accept letters and visits from various ethnic groups, they should use languages that are familiar to the petitioners or provide translations for them; they should work well when dealing with ethnicities, such as receiving and sending mail and approving credit and loans; in departments of business, post and telecommunications, communication, health, finance, tax, industry and commerce, the police, and so on, the government should ensure that workers learn ethnic

ethnic minority languages and Mandarin so as to serve citizens of various ethnicities using local commonly used languages.

15.4.2.6 Slight differences in legal duties

In Tibet, those who violate the rules are required to correct their errors within a limited time. The government criticizes and educates them or punishes them administratively. In Xinjiang, those who break the rules are required to correct their mistakes within a limited time; they may be criticized and fined.

15.5 Conclusion

Both Tibet's "New regulations" and Xinjiang's "New regulations" are special language regulations on the levels of province, region, and municipality. The foundations of the legislation and the basic principles of these two regulations are almost the same, but they are largely different in terms of targets, purpose, language use patterns, legal duties, and so forth. Tibet's "New regulations" regulate the scope of use of the Tibetan language and Mandarin across the autonomous area. This was the first formal regulation in China aimed at guaranteeing the right to learn, use, and develop an ethnic minority language. Xinjiang's "New regulations" regulate the scope of use of many languages, such as Uygur, Mandarin, Kazakh, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Xibe, and so forth. This is the first formal regulation aimed at promoting the development and prosperity of multiple ethnic languages and writing systems, and enhancing the scientific and cultural levels of a variety of ethnic peoples.

These differences in language regulations between Tibet and Xinjiang are primarily attributable to the different situations of the two autonomous areas, especially the different proportions of the ethnicities and the differing composition of language, society, and culture in them.

Chapter 16

Challenges and opportunities for ethnic minority languages in a time of social transformation

Since the Fourteenth Party Congress, China has passed from a planned economy system to a market economy system. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, a socialist market economy system was built up. However, a social transformation is still in progress, the primary features of which are a high level of urbanization, transformation from an unstable society with many conflicts into a stable society with a harmonious hierarchy, and transformation from an uncoordinated and incomplete society into a people-oriented society with comprehensive and coordinated development. In terms of language, a unified market requires a united language; a high level of urbanization requires a more normalized, more united, and more popular language.

16.1 Introduction

In the past twenty to thirty years, the process of economic globalization has continually accelerated. Reform and opening up are proceeding. China is constantly deepening its industrialization, informatization, urbanization, and marketization, transforming the country from a traditionally planned economic system into a socialist market economy system. Since 2007, urbanization in China has developed from the stage of primary development to the stage of high-speed development.⁵⁰ In 2011, the rate of urbanization in China increased to 51.27%. The urban population exceeded the rural population for the first time, with up to 690 million urban people (Editorial Department of Oriental Outlook 2012). In the near future, say the next two decades, urbanization in China will continue to increase rapidly.

Urbanization on such a large scale and at such a high speed is unprecedented in world history. Li Yuming (2010: 1–5) discusses the fact that the rapid development of urbanization has had a great impact on language life in China;

50 In 2007, the rate of urbanization in China was 32.93%.

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furthermore, he proposes new measures for language work. Dai Qingxia and Deng Youling (2001) demonstrate that urbanization causes changes in the functions for which ethnic languages are used, with the ability to use ethnic minority native languages being weakened in urban areas in particular. Guo Longsheng (2008) discusses the relationship between protecting languages and their cultural heritage and promoting Putonghua in the process of modernization. Sun Hongkai (2005) introduces new situations and new issues in ethnic minority language planning at the turn of the century, and advances several ideas. Dob (2005) analyzes economic and social reforms that have brought great changes to the vitality of ethnic languages and people's attitudes towards ethnic minority languages since reform and opening up; moreover, he proposes future steps that could be taken.

This chapter applies diverse data and information in describing clearly five challenges and five opportunities faced by ethnic minority languages in the period of transition to the market economy; it also discusses social and economic elements that restrict the development of ethnic minority languages, thereby helping us to forecast trends in the development of ethnic minority languages.

16.2 Five challenges

With the continually accelerating development of industrialization, urbanization, and marketization, the phenomena of self-sufficiency, self-seclusion, estrangement, and hostility among local ethnicities are decreasing; mutual interaction and interdependence are increasing. The unified national market requires the entire society to use a more united, more commonly used, and more normalized language. The number of people using the national commonly used language and writing system is on the increase, the frequency of its use is higher, the scope of its use is widening, and some ethnic minority languages and writing systems are shrinking or becoming relatively weak.

According to data released in 2004, the proportion of people communicating in Putonghua in China is 53.06%, the proportion communicating in Mandarin dialect is 86.38%, and the proportion communicating in ethnic minority languages is 5.46%. At present, about sixty million ethnic people in China can speak native ethnic languages, accounting for more than 60% of the total ethnic population; about 30 million ethnic people can use native ethnic writing systems (Leading Group of the Office of Investigation on the Use of Languages and Scripts 2006).

16.2.1 Ethnic minority language communities are shrinking

Some ethnic minority languages are in endangered or disappearing, which is generally due to the interaction of many elements. For example, the number of native language users is decreasing; the areas where they are spoken are shrinking; the social functions of the languages are weakening; there are no writing systems for many of them; ethnic parents are changing their attitude, becoming reluctant to allow their children to learn their native language, and sending them to school to learn the commonly used language; and so forth.

16.2.1.1 The number of ethnic native language users is decreasing, even dangerously so

Just as in many countries of the world, the number of people using ethnic minority languages in China is decreasing every year. Some weak ethnic minority languages such as Manchu, Hezhen, Tujia, She, Gelao, Tatar, Oroqen, Yugur, and so forth are in danger of disappearing.

The population of the Manchu people was more than 106.8 million (according to the 2000 census). Only about a hundred Manchu people could understand the Manchu language; only about fifty old people could speak the Manchu language. The proportion of Manchu-speakers is 0.0006% of the Manchu population. The population of the Hezhen people was about 4,500 (according to the 2000 census). Out of all the Hezhen people, only a small number who are over sixty years of age could communicate in Hezhen. If those who could speak it a little were included, the number of Hezhen-speakers would number less than fifty. The proportion of Hezhen-speakers was thus 0.07% of the Hezhen population. In the 1970s, the population of the Tujia people was 0.8 million, of which 25% spoke Tujia. In 2000, the population of the Tujia people was more than 8 million, of whom between 60,000 and 70,000 spoke Tujia. The proportion of Tujia language users was 0.086% of the Tujia population. The population of the She ethnic group was more than 0.7 million (according to the 2000 census), about 1,500 of whom could speak the She language (a proportion of 0.13%). The population of the Gelao people was 0.57 million (according to the 2000 census), and only 6,000 of them could speak the Gelao language (a proportion of 1.36%). The population of the Tatar people was nearly 5,000 (according to the 2000 census). The number of Tatar-speakers was no more than 1,000, or about 20%. The population of the Oroqen people was about 8,200 (according to the 2000 census), of whom only a few hundred could speak Oroqen. Young people below twenty years of age could no longer speak Oroqen.

Most of these endangered languages have no writing system. These languages remained confined to oral forms such as folk songs, legends, and so forth, and are taught orally. Some of these languages have lost their communicative functions and only exist in old people's memories. As early as the 1990s, Zhang Xi and Wu Yuwen warned that "the Hezhen language in China is about to disappear" (McConnell 1995: book 1, 921). Zhou Qingsheng (1997b: 369) demonstrated that "the Hezhen language survives only among a minority of people in their prime and old people," predicting that "in the near future (within some decades), these ethnic languages will inevitably disappear." Chao Ke (1997: 4–5) wrote a book pointing out that "speakers of the Oroqen and Ewenki languages are dramatically decreasing. We can say that, among young people, native speakers of these languages are decreasing by the day, especially preschoolers who can speak their native language." Xu Shixuan and other scholars wrote a book warning that "the Oroqen language will disappear from the map of Mandarin, which is a terrible fact we face!" (McConnell 1995: book 1, 36).

16.2.1.2 The number of students choosing to learn ethnic languages is decreasing

With the development of a market economy, urbanization is speeding up. Communication between various ethnicities is ever wider and more frequent. Many ethnic minority primary and secondary school students and their parents believe that Mandarin is becoming increasingly important when moving on to the next level of education, choosing jobs, and preparing for future market competition because the scope of use of ethnic minority languages is relatively narrow. Therefore, the number of people who choose Mandarin education is increasing year on year; in contrast, the number who choose education in ethnic minority languages is decreasing year on year.

At the beginning of the 1980s, in Inner Mongolia, 100,000 primary school textbooks for the first grade, entitled *The Mongolian language*, were ordered. In 2005, only 37,000 copies were published (Bao Guimin 2007: 21). Since 1980, in the Mongolia Autonomous Region, the number of people taught in Mongolian has been decreasing by 100,000 per year. Since 1990, the number of Mongolian students has been decreasing by 10% per year. In 1988, the number of Korean primary school students throughout China was 186,434, which had decreased by 39,987 to 146,447 students in 1997. All over the country, the number of Korean books published decreased by 70% compared to previous years. In 1983, the Korean books sold amounted to one book per two people, while in 1995 the equivalent figure was one book per ten people (Jin Meishu 2006: 109). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, ethnic minority textbooks ordered

from the Sichuan Nationalities Press were decreasing year on year. The textbooks ordered decreased from 100,000 to 60–70,000 copies (Zheng Xinrong and Zhuo Tingya 2004: 48).

16.2.2 Challenges to ethnic minority writing systems brought about by market competition

In recent decades, the number of published copies of books written in ethnic minority writing systems in China has increased. However, the proportion of ethnic books⁵¹ that account for the total number of books all over the country is decreasing. According to the statistics, ethnic books accounted for 8.9% of the total books published throughout China in 1980, which had decreased to less than 4% in 1991. In 2005, the proportion had decreased to no more than 2%.

16.2.3 Impacts of population movements on bilingual education in the Korean ethnic group

In the era of the planned economy, the Korean education system in Korean-speaking areas of China was very successful, setting a good example that was followed by other ethnic minorities in China, especially ethnic minorities in southern China. After the planned economy reform was implemented in China, spontaneous and large-scale population movements occurred among the Korean ethnic group that effectively promoted the economic development of the Korean area. However, this also impacted the bilingual education of the Korean ethnic group.

16.2.3.1 The Korean ethnic group and its population movements

The Korean ethnic group is an immigrant ethnic group. In 2000, the total number of Korean people was 1,923,800; most of them inhabited Yanbian Prefecture in Jilin Province, to which their ancestors had moved from the Korean peninsula 100–200 years ago. After the period of transition to a market economy, 200,000 Korean people, almost a third of those in China, immigrated to eastern China, the developed coastal areas, and overseas. Such a ratio is the highest among all the ethnic groups of China (Zhou Qingsheng 2004).

⁵¹ Ethnic books include books written in ethnic minority writing systems and Chinese characters.

16.2.3.2 The proportion of Korean students from “incomplete families” has dramatically increased

In the Yanbian area, “incomplete families” refers to families where the father, mother, or both have traveled abroad, or both of them are dead or divorced. According to a sample survey, a large number of children from incomplete families have appeared in Korean primary and secondary schools. Among Yanbian Korean primary and secondary school students, the proportion of incomplete families even exceeds half of all students (Cai Meihua 2004: 102–103), which has led directly to serious educational failures among the Korean population.

16.2.3.3 The number of Korean schools has decreased dramatically

The number of Korean primary schools in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture decreased from 228 in 1990 to 92 in 2000, just 46.4% of the 1990 figure. Helong City is the most densely populated area. At the end of the 1980s, there were 148 Korean primary schools in Helong City, which had decreased by 50% by 2000 (Cai Meihua 2004: 105).

16.2.4 Impacts of reform on Mongolian education

In order to adapt to the market economy, at the end of the twentieth century, education policies in colleges and universities shifted from free education, with jobs assigned by the country, to paying for education, with jobs no longer assigned by the country. In this situation of social transformation, students at Mongolian primary schools in the Mongolia Autonomous Region have decreased dramatically.

The proportion of Mongolian primary school students accounting for ethnic minority primary school students decreased from 73.3% in 1980 to 49.7% in 1995, and then continued to decrease to 40.8% in 2001. The proportion of Mongolian secondary school students accounting for ethnic minority secondary school students decreased from 66.8% in 1980 to 46.7% in 1995, and then to 31.7% in 2001 (Zhou Qingsheng 2004: 59–70). The data given above show that, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, about 60% of Mongolian primary and secondary school students had entered Han schools voluntarily but never chose Mongolian schools.

This phenomenon reflects the fact that, in the face of dramatic changes to the social and cultural environments, many Mongolians have adjusted their actions immediately. In addition, the traditional maintenance of the bilingual education plan, namely the plan of teaching in the Mongolian language and additionally teaching in Mandarin, gradually became unable to meet the requirements of many

Mongolian children who wished to learn Mandarin and foreign languages. This also reflects a shift from utilitarianism to instrumentalism in the motivation for school selection among many Mongolian children and parents.

16.2.5 Competition and permeation from outside China

More than thirty ethnic groups in China live adjacent to the same ethnic groups in neighboring countries, whose senses of identity are strong, and lead the penetration of China by languages and cultures from outside China. With deepening reforms and the opening of the nation underway in China, and increasingly frequent international communication, the languages of countries outside China are increasingly and prominently permeating and influencing the languages and cultures of transborder ethnic groups.

16.2.5.1 Overseas books are flooding the markets

At Xinhua Bookstore, 80% of the ethnic minority books are imported from Korea. At Yanbian University, there are 100,000 books written in the Korean writing system; among these books, 70,000 were donated by Korea (Chang Jiali 2006). Such a situation reflects the fact that the Chinese library market is controlled by overseas countries, rather than by China, which inevitably raises the issue of cultural security.

16.2.5.2 Illegal publications in ethnic minority languages are flowing onto the market

From 1995 to 2003, Xinjiang confiscated 160,000 copies of illegal political and religious books and journals. In 2004, Xinjiang confiscated more than 30,000 copies of illegal religious publications. In 2005, Urumchi Customs seized more than 10,000 reactionary propaganda items posted or brought to China by overseas separatist forces, an increase of 43% over 2004 (Xin Wen 2006: 62). In the Yunnan Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, newspapers, journals, and books on over 140 subjects written in Dai, Jingpo, Zaiwa, and Lisu came in from other countries; most of them were religious readings (He Lifeng, Xiong Yuyong, Zhang Xia, and Qi Wenxiu 2011: 103).

16.2.5.3 Overseas radio broadcasts and websites in ethnic minority languages

According to studies, there are more than forty overseas radio broadcasts in ethnic languages from outside the borders of Yunnan (Zhang Min 2007). Tibetan broadcasts

include Voice of America, India's Dalai Station, Nepal's Tibetan Station, and so forth. Dai broadcasts include the Rangoon Dai radio broadcast and the Chiengmai Dai radio broadcast. Other broadcasts include the Rangoon Jingpo radio broadcast, the Myitkyina (Myanmar) Jingpo radio broadcast, the Manila Jingpo radio broadcast, the Manila Zaiwa radio broadcast, the Manila Lisu radio broadcast, the Chiengmai Lisu radio broadcast, the Myitkyina (Myanmar) Lisu radio broadcast, the Jerusalem Lisu radio broadcast, and so forth. Miao radio broadcasts include the Manila Miao radio broadcast, the Voice of Vietnam Miao radio broadcast in Hanoi, the Xam Neua (province of Laos) Miao radio broadcast, the Chiengmai Miao radio broadcast, and so forth. Yao radio broadcasts include the Manila Yao radio broadcast, the Chiengmai Yao radio broadcast, and so forth.

Myanmar has more than twenty websites in the Dai language. Dozens of Miao websites have been established in America. These websites have attracted the attention of many ethnic groups in China (He Lifeng, Xiong Yuyong, Zhang Xia, and Qi Wenxiu 2011: 103).

16.3 Five opportunities

16.3.1 The State releases new documents on ethnic minority languages and writing systems

In recent years, the State has drawn up some important new regulations on the use and development of ethnic minority languages and writing systems. These regulations are as follows: the *Guojia Minwei Guanyu Zuohao Shaoshu Minzu Yuyan Wenzhi Guanli Gongzuo de Yijian* 国家民委关于做好少数民族语言文字管理工作的意见 [Suggestions of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission on how to manage ethnic minority languages and writing systems well], *Guowuyuan Shishi <Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Quyuzhifazhi> Ruogan Guiding (2005 Nian)* 国务院实施<中华人民共和国民族区域自治法>若干规定 (2005年) [Several regulations on the National regional autonomy law of the People's Republic of China implemented by the State Council (2005)], *Zhonggong Zhongyang Xuanchuanbu, Guojia Minwei, Caizhengbu, Guojia Suiwu Zongju, Xinwen Chubanshu Guanyu Jinyibu Jiada dui Shaoshu Minzu Wenzhi Chubanshiye Fuchi Lidu de Tongzhi (2007 Nian)* 中国中央宣传部、国家民委、财政部、国家税务总局、新闻出版总署关于进一步加大对少数民族文字出版事业扶持力度的通知 (2007年) [Notice on further increasing support for the publishing industry among ethnic minorities from the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party of China, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the State Administration of Taxation, and the General Administration of

Press and Publication (2007)], and *Guowuyuan Guanyu Jinyibu Fanrong Fazhan Shaoshu Minzu Wenhua Shiye de Ruogan Yijian (2009 Nian)* 国务院关于进一步繁荣发展少数民族文化事业的若干意见 (2009年) [Several suggestions to the State Council for the further development and flourishing of the cultural industry among ethnic minorities (2009)].

The “Suggestions of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission” are composed of twenty-one items whose content covers the significance of – and guiding ideas, basic principles, primary tasks, and policies and measures for – managing ethnic minority languages and writing systems. This will provide policy orientation and a basis for further work relating to ethnic minority languages and writing systems for a very long time. This document is a significant milestone.

16.3.2 The State vigorously promotes the information processing and normalization of ethnic languages

In the information age, information technology is developing rapidly; computers and the Internet are used widely. All of these changes have deeply influenced economic growth and changes in social lifestyles and have enlarged our communication space. Therefore, it is urgently necessary to enhance the level of informatization and normalization of languages and writing systems, including ethnic minority languages and writing systems.

Where ethnic minority languages and writing systems are concerned, the main objects of normalization and informatization are traditional commonly used ethnic minority languages and writing systems, for example, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Korean, Yi, Dai, and so forth. The State carries out various measures and invests extensive funds to support the healthy development of normalization and informatization relating to traditional commonly used ethnic minority languages and writing systems. It has many achievements to be proud of.

At present, the State has set national standards for the coded character sets, keyboards, and matrices for Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Korean, Yi, and Dai. The latest version of the international standards formally includes the coded character sets of Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Korean, Yi, and Dai that were submitted by China. Some websites or webpages in ethnic minority languages have been newly established. From July 2005 to January 2011, China opened fifty-eight websites in Tibetan (Wang Zhijuan and Zhao Xiaobing 2011: 394–397). In January 2004, the first mobile phone for the Uygur language was made available; it was the first version of a mobile phone for an ethnic language in China. In 2007, the Mongolian branch

of China Mobile produced mobile phones for Mongolian so as to provide more efficient and convenient services for Mongolian customers (Chen Zhenkai 2008). Voice and character recognition and machine-aided translation in ethnic minority languages have progressed.

16.3.3 The government organizes the rescue of endangered languages

Internationally, there are two kinds of method used to rescue endangered languages. The first method is compiling documents on endangered languages that completely record grammar, lexicon, syntax, and some folk literary culture, following scientific linguistic methods. The second method is reviving endangered languages, namely increasing the number of language users through political, media, or educational methods. The Chinese government and scholars have made efforts primarily in four directions and made clear progress.

16.3.3.1 Investigating, recording, and publishing on endangered ethnic minority languages

The government has a two-pronged approach to endangered ethnic minority languages. On the one hand, it implements the language equality policy and seeks to strengthen bilingual education; for some languages still in active use, the government is trying to create environments for language education and use so as to promote their durability and delay their extinction. On the other hand, it carries out special investigations and studies, and records and publishes work on endangered ethnic minority languages. The National Social Science Foundation, the Ministry of Education, and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences respectively establish major projects and fund projects in order to support scholars in conducting research and publishing on endangered ethnic minority languages. To date, more than forty languages have been investigated; the *Zhongguo Xinfaxian Yuyan Yanjiu Congshu* 中国新发现语言研究丛书 [Newly discovered languages in China book series] (most of which concerns endangered languages) comprises more than thirty volumes; the *Zhongguo Shaoshu Minzu Xilie Cidian Congshu* 中国少数民族系列词典丛书 [Ethnic minority languages in China dictionary series] comprises more than forty dictionaries.

16.3.3.2 Establishing pilot vocal corpora of ethnic minority languages

In 2008, the State Language Commission began to establish a vocal corpus. This involves starting trial vocal corpora of ethnic minority languages that are aimed at covering various ethnic minority languages in China, sorting these

resources scientifically, and then preserving them in the long term so as to study them deeply in the future and to develop and make use of these resources effectively. In July 2009, the trial vocal corpora projects on the Dai, Jingpo, and Zaiwa languages started in Kunming, Yunnan.

16.3.3.3 Rescuing and conserving languages and cultural heritage

Many works of literature and the arts in endangered languages on the list of national intangible cultural heritage on the State or various local levels are to be rescued, sorted, and protected. The lists of national intangible cultural heritage items were approved by the State Council and confirmed and issued by the Ministry of Culture.

The first group in the list was issued on May 20, 2006. Ethnic minority languages in this group (not all of them are endangered languages) include Tibetan, Qiang, Jingpo, Zaiwa, Dulong, Nu, Achang, Yi, Lisu, Hani, Lahu, Bai, Tujia, Miao, Yao, She, Zhuang, Bouyei, Dai, Dong, Gelao, Shui, Maonan, Li, Gin, Uygur, Yugur, Salar, Kazakh, Mongolian, Tujia, and Xibe.

Ethnic minority languages (not all of them are endangered languages) in the second group, issued on June 14, 2008, include Tibetan, Pumi, Yi, Hani, Lahu, Naxi, Bai, Tujia, Miao, Yao, She, Zhuang, Bouyei, Dai, Dong, Li, Uygur, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Mongolian, Qiang, Dongxiang, Korean, Oroqen, Ewenki, Daur, Xibe, Wa, and Blang.

16.3.3.4 Establishing zones that demonstrate the creation of a bilingual environment for ethnic minority languages

In order to create an atmosphere of attention to the learning and use of native languages and to maintain the diversity of languages and culture, in 2006 the State Ethnic Affairs Commission established zones demonstrating the creation of a bilingual environment for ethnic minority languages in Qapqal Xibe Autonomous County in Xinjiang and Songtao Miao Autonomous County in Guizhou Province. The State Ethnic Affairs Commission established training classes to create such an environment for the Xibe language in Xinjiang, and in Guizhou it organized an anniversary celebration for the fiftieth anniversary of the creation and trial use of the Miao writing system; moreover, it organized training classes to cultivate Miao–Mandarin bilingual teachers. All of these activities effectively promoted the learning and use of ethnic minority languages and writing systems. These activities were supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

The purposes of the demonstration zones are as follows: (1) creating an atmosphere of attention to the learning and use of the native language and

maintaining the diversity of languages and cultures; (2) strengthening children's education in learning native languages, enhancing the school enrollment rate, retention rate, and graduation rate, and improving the cultural awareness of ethnic minority young people; (3) conducting activities to eradicate illiteracy among adults, helping the poor to learn science and technology, popularizing legal knowledge, and preventing natural disasters and serious diseases; and (4) promoting the sustainable development of ethnic language-based news and publishing industries, radio, film and television, and literature and the arts.

16.3.4 Bilingual lawsuits and trials increase the demand for bilingual judges

Bilingual lawsuits and trials in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities require bilingual judges. A serious lack of Mandarin-speaking judges and full-time translators has resulted in a large backlog of cases, and in pending cases that cannot be closed due to trial time limitations.

According to the statistics collected by the Higher People's Court of the Mongolia Autonomous Region, there are 5,600 judges available across the area, of whom only 420 are Mongolian–Mandarin bilingual speakers, accounting for just 7.5% of the total number of judges (Yuan Tiao 2009). The number of bilingual judges is far from meeting the requirements of bilingual lawsuits in ethnic areas. In Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Tibet, the governments have begun to pay attention to the training of bilingual judges.

The *Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Gongzuo Baogao (2011 Nian)* 最高人民法院工作报告 [Work reports of the Supreme People's Court (2011)], issued by the Supreme People's Court, refer to issues like promoting the training of bilingual judges. On the issue of establishing a training base for bilingual judges in the eastern ethnic area, the Court carried out special research, and organized and supported Xinjiang, Qinghai, and Mongolia in compiling training textbooks for bilingual judges. The *Han Zang Duizhao Faxue Cidian* 汉藏对照法学词典 [Mandarin–Tibetan legal dictionary] was compiled.

16.3.5 International trade inspires a craze for ethnic minority languages

16.3.5.1 Construction of the China–ASEAN Free Trade Zone and the craze for the Vietnamese and Gin languages

The Gin ethnic group is a transborder ethnicity in China. Five hundred years ago, they moved from southern and northern Vietnam to China; the Gin people primarily live on the Three Islands of the Gin in Fangchenggang City in Guangxi Province; they occupy coastal fisheries. In 2000, there were 22,500 Gin people, of whom 7,000–8,000 can speak the Gin language. The Vietnamese language is the national language of Vietnam, one of the ten countries of ASEAN. The Gin language and Vietnamese are almost the same, and speakers of one can communicate with speakers of the other without difficulty.

The China–ASEAN Free Trade Zone, founded in 2010, is the third-largest free trade zone around the world, with 1,700 million consumers, GDP of nearly 2,000,000 million dollars, and total trade worth 1,200,500 million dollars (Mo Guangzheng 2007). The China–ASEAN Expo was held in Nanning, Guangxi, in 2010. China and Vietnam have cooperated to construct “two economic corridors and one economic circle.”⁵² Companies from Vietnam and other ASEAN countries have increasingly begun to invest in the provinces and areas of China, such as Guangxi Province. In Chinese universities, students learning Vietnamese have increased tenfold (Liu Yuanyuan and Qin Guanghua 2006).

In recent years, “Gin language fever” has appeared in the Gin ethnic area. The training classes on the Gin language at a Gin ethnic secondary school in Wanwei Village have produced several groups of Vietnamese translators every year who trade with Vietnam directly. Some Gin ethnic private hotels write their hotel signs in both Vietnamese and Mandarin Chinese. Local Gin cadres are actively cultivating talented Gin-speakers; they are preparing to build a “Gin ethnic eco-cultural museum” in order to protect the Gin language and Gin culture.

16.3.5.2 Korean investments in China and the craze for the Korean language

South Korea is an economically developed country, one of the well-known Four Asian Tigers. In August 1992, China and South Korea established diplomatic

⁵² The Kunming–Laokai–Hanoi–Haiphong–Guangning and Nanning–Liangshan–Hanoi–Haiphong–Guangning economic corridors and the Beibu Bay economic zone (referred to as “two economic corridors and one economic zone”) cover ten coastal areas. The two corridors cover 140,000 square kilometers and are home to 39 million people.

relations, bringing about the rapid development of economic trade between China and South Korea. Korea has invested in many companies in China, which require many Korean–Mandarin bilingual professionals and cheap labor. In addition, though communication between Korean and Mandarin is based on economic trade, it has expanded to include culture, science and technology, education, the arts, sport, tourism, and other fields. The craze for South Korea and North Korea is a long-lasting one in China (Zhou Qingsheng 2004).

16.4 Conclusion: Ethnic minority languages from “usage and development” to “scientific protection”

In the course of the transition to the market economy, it is not government policies and regulations that deeply influence and constrain the use and development of ethnic minority languages. Explicit national language policies on the level of Chinese laws apparently remain unchanged, but the implicit language policies are ever-changing. The Mongolian Autonomous Government once issued and implemented rewards for learning and using the Mongolian language and writing system, but nonetheless it has been unable to prevent the dramatic decrease in the number of Mongolian primary and secondary school students. Regulations on ethnic languages in the Korean language area and the structure of the perfect bilingual education system are unchanged. However, long-term large-scale population mobility is changing the language situation and language ecology.

Gin and Korea are transborder languages, but they are full of vitality, even language fever, influenced or driven by international trade and foreign companies that invest in China.

In terms of cultural heritage, number of users, scope and degree of use, functions, language status, protection of rights and interests, and so forth, ethnic languages and writing systems face both challenges and opportunities. Ethnic minority citizens who choose to learn the national commonly used language are on the increase, while those who choose to learn their own ethnic languages and writing systems are decreasing daily. However, concepts of language resources and language protection have aroused greater social concerns; endangered languages are being rescued and protected well (Zhou Qingsheng 2000b: 242–243).

If language policies and general principles in China are encapsulated by the concept of one common language and linguistic diversity, this is reflected in the Constitution’s references to “the country promoting the commonly used Putonghua to the whole country” on the one hand and to “every ethnicity having the freedom to use and develop its own language and writing system” on the other.

Two phrases, “heavily promoting and normalizing the national commonly used language and writing system” and “scientifically protecting every ethnic language and writing system” (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. 2011) which are written into the decisions of the Sixth Session of the Seventeenth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, are considered as new statements of the general principle for language policy in the new era. The statements will not only act as the guiding concept for Mandarin policies in the future, but also reflect a new trend in language policy. The *Guojia Zhongchangqi Yuyan Wenzhi Shiye Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2012–2020)* 国家中长期语言文字事业改革和发展规划纲要 [National medium- and long-term program outline on the reform and development of languages and writing systems (2012–2020)], states:

It is required that every ethnic language and writing system be scientifically protected, that the right of every ethnicity to use and develop its native language and writing system freely be respected, that it be understood that every ethnic language and writing system is a valuable cultural resource of China, that directed practical protective measures be taken, that the important role of languages and writing systems in inheriting and promoting outstanding Mandarin cultures be fully enacted, and that a spiritual home for Chinese ethnic peoples be constructed.⁵³

53 *Guanyu yinfa <Guojia zhongchangqi yuyan wenzhi shiye gaige he fazhan guihua gangyao (2012–2020)>*. <http://news.163.com/12/1228/16/8JQSV84300014JB5.html> (accessed October 25, 2011).

Part 6: Innovation in and reform of writing systems

Chapter 17

The creation of writing systems and nation-building

17.1 Introduction

The creation of a writing system tends to deal with issues such as alphabet design, the societal need for the system, and its use and acceptance in society. Many linguists tend to analyze the intra-code factors of letter forms, orthography, new terms, the standard pronunciation of the basic dialect, language standardization, and so on. Extra-code factors, needless to say, are crucial in the creation of a new writing system. Some linguists believe that, the less ambiguous and incongruous or the more scientific and rational a new writing system is, the more acceptable or promotable it is. However, many cases around the world, including those from China, show that some perfectly designed writing systems have not been accepted, while other “imperfect” ones with phonetic ambiguity are actually used for wider communicative purposes.

I have no intention to weaken the importance of both language normalization and scientifically designed alphabet systems, but rather to elaborate a point of view according to which whether a newly created writing system is acceptable may be decisively influenced by the social, extra-code factors instead of the intra-code ones. The present chapter attempts to describe the process by which China’s ethnic minority language policy was implemented to create new writing systems for ethnic minorities in the 1950s, including the background, content, and practices of creating writing systems.

17.2 Nation-building and the creation of writing systems

17.2.1 The social situation of China’s writing systems

The People’s Republic of China (PRC) is a unitary multinational state with many languages and writing systems. According to the State statistics in 1953, there were thirty-nine officially identified ethnic groups in the whole country, whose

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in Zhou Minglang (ed.), *Language policy in the People’s Republic of China: Theory and practice since 1949*, 55–70. Kluwer Academic Publishers. I am grateful to Kluwer Academic Publishers for permission to reuse the paper in this volume.

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population was about 578 million. Among them, there were 543 million Han people, that is, 93.94% of the population. The population of the ethnic minorities was 34.01 million, 5.89% of the total population, but some minorities were the majority in some minority regions. For example, the Tibetans made up nearly 100% in Xizang (Tibet), and non-Hans made up 93.01% in Xinjiang and approximately 50.95% in Qinghai (Hao Wenming 1999: 725–727). In addition, the ethnic minorities were scattered across more than 50% of the country's territory (Office of the State Affairs Commission 1959: 1) in the remote border areas, so stability and solidarity in these regions would directly influence the consolidation and development of the new power as well as peace and order in the long term.

In the early days of the PRC, according to two key early language planners, Luo Changpei and Fu Maoji (1954: 38–43), the writing systems of China's ethnic minorities could be divided into four categories: (1) writing systems that are widely used and are employed for wider communicative purposes, i.e., Tibetan, Mongolian, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Russian, Xibe, Uzbek, and Tatar; (2) those that do not have new reading material but are used for wider communicative purposes, such as Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Va, and Lahu; (3) those that are not used for wider communicative purposes, such as Manchu, Yi, Naxi, and Miao; and (4) no writing system, such as the Miao, Dong, Yao, Bouyei, Tu (Monguor), and Hezhen in some regions.

17.2.2 National-political development and the creation of writing systems

In the early days of the PRC, power had not yet been consolidated in some minority areas. There still existed some profound gaps between the Han people and ethnic minorities who did not have faith in the newly established people's government because of the influence of the previous governments' long-lasting national policies of oppression against minorities. In addition, among these ethnic groups there still existed political and economic remnants of primeval communal society such as slavery and feudal slavery, or feudal landlord systems. Therefore, it was necessary for the government on all levels to win the trust, understanding, and support of these ethnic minorities if it wanted to carry out any social reforms and socialist transformations. The new government realized from its experience that the policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) towards ethnic minorities during the period of the democratic revolution (1927–1949) had won the favor and support of these groups because of its respect for and development of ethnic minority languages and writing systems (Zhou Qingsheng 2000a). So had the Soviet Union in its successful practice of creating romanized writing systems for its ethnic minorities after the October Revolution.

Both the practices of the PRC and the Soviet Union demonstrated that, in the early days of a newly established state power, it is highly desirable for the government to create new writing systems for ethnic minorities so that it can win their confidence and support and develop an equal and unitary relationship with them.

17.2.3 National-cultural development and activity concerning the creation of writing systems

The “Common program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference,” adopted on September 29, 1949, served as the provisional constitution and laid out four principles for the new government’s policy towards the ethnic minorities. Article 53 of the program stipulates clearly that “all ethnic minorities enjoy the freedom to develop their own languages and writing systems, the freedom to retain or reform their own social customs and religious beliefs. The people’s government should help the masses of the ethnic minorities develop their own political, cultural, and educational causes” (United Front Work Department of the Central Committee 1991: 1290). The reason for this was simply that only by changing the backward status of the ethnic minorities could real equality among ethnic groups be achieved, step-by-step.

However, it was not until February 5, 1951, that the State made an official decision on the creation of writing systems in “Several resolutions on ethnic affairs by the State Council,” item 5 of which stipulated that a Steering Committee for Ethnic Minority Language and Writing Research be established under the Cultural and Educational Commission of the State Council. Its mission was “to guide and organize research on ethnic minority languages, so that the ethnic groups without their own writing systems may obtain help to create them, and the ethnic groups without well-developed writing systems may obtain help to improve them” (Shi Yun 1988: 246–247).

In the same year, when commenting on the development of the politics, economies, and culture of ethnic minorities, Li Weihai, chairman of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, particularly emphasized: “I wish all comrades present here to air your opinions regarding the pressing problem of creating writing systems for ethnic minorities who have independent languages but not their own writing systems. Your opinions shall be for the reference of the Central Committee of the CCP, which is considering how to solve the issue” (Li Weihai 1982 [1951]: 517).

There were hundreds of things to be done in the early period of the PRC. The central government began to put the creation of ethnic writing systems on

its agenda, and took this up as an imperative task not only from the perspective of national and political development but also because of its significance for cultural development. The State really wanted to help ethnic minorities develop their own cultures as quickly as possible so that the cultural gap between ethnic groups could be narrowed and actual equality between ethnic groups could gradually be realized. Nevertheless, for many ethnic minorities without their own writing systems, the development of universal education, the effective learning of scientific and technological knowledge, and the improvement of cultural and educational levels was unimaginable. As a member of the Steering Committee, Luo Changpei, stated: “The ultimate goal for the State in helping ethnic minorities with no writing system develop such a system is to provide a faithful guarantee for the undertaking of cultural development by brother ethnicities” (Luo Changpei 1954b: 12).

In 1951, when the Steering Committee was set up, the Institute of Linguistics (of the Chinese Academy of Sciences) submitted a report entitled “A trial scheme for minority alphabetic writing in China: First draft” (henceforth the “Trial scheme”) to the members of the Cultural Commission of the State Council. Composed of the Roman alphabet, the Cyrillic alphabet, and six different forms of *Hanyu Pinyin Fang’an*, the “Trial scheme” was to provide a good selection of alphabets for the creation of new writing systems, as the draft clearly expressed: “It is possible for concerned linguists to choose one of the several forms, assimilate the advantages of the other forms, directly adopt the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), create a new form of an alphabet, or adopt two or three or more forms of different alphabets” (Linguistics Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences 1951: 2).

By the end of 1956, some new writing systems in southern China had already been worked out, including seven writing systems in the Roman alphabet for the Zhuang, Bouyei, Yi, and Miao (including four vernacular writing systems) languages, and the Daur writing system in the Cyrillic alphabet was created in Inner Mongolia. Why was the Roman alphabet adopted for ethnic minority languages in the south and the Cyrillic for those in the north? Let us listen to what Fu Maoji said in his report to the First National Scientific Conference on Ethnic Minority Languages and Writing Systems, held on December 6, 1955:

When *Hanyu Pinyin Fang’an* is worked out, the alphabet same as that for *Hanyu Pinyin Fang’an* had better be used in the newly created writing systems for ethnic minorities in southern and south-western China because the ethnic groups in these regions are more deeply influenced by the Chinese language, but now the Roman alphabet can be used temporarily in the new writing systems until the scheme for *Hanyu Pinyin Fang’an* is promulgated. On the other hand, the Cyrillic alphabet had better be used by the ethnicities in northern, north-eastern, and north-western China and/or in the areas adjacent to the

Soviet Union and the Republic of Mongolia in accordance with the minorities' own willingness, so that it will be convenient for them to communicate with the peoples living in the neighboring countries and speaking similar languages. (Fu Maoji 1956: NN)

Mr. Fu reiterated this principle in 1956:

The reason why the new writing systems for Mongolian, Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tatar, Xibe and Daur are based on the Cyrillic alphabet is that these ethnicities have close relations with their co-nationals in the Soviet Union and the Republic of Mongolia. However, the other national minorities of China will create their writing systems on the basis of the Roman alphabet because many people prefer and get used to Roman letters.

(Fu Maoji 1957 [1956]: 180–181)

17.3 The official status of Roman letters

At the end of 1957, “On several principles of alphabet design in the scheme for minority writing systems” (henceforth the “Principles of alphabet design”), ratified by the State Council, clearly ruled that “the creation of writing systems for national minorities in China should be based on the Roman alphabet” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 312). This decision means that the use of the Roman alphabet rather than the Cyrillic has become a basic principle for the creation of writing systems for the national minorities with no written language. There may be three cultural, social, and political factors that led to the adoption of the Roman alphabet.

17.3.1 Formulation of the scheme for *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an*

The formulation of the scheme for *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an* was perhaps the essential and/or dominant factor affecting alphabet selection when creating a new writing system for an ethnic minority language. A vigorous movement of language reform for Chinese was in the making in the early 1950s. “Chinese characters,” as Chairman Mao Zedong pointed in 1951, “must be reformed and the reform of Chinese characters should follow the generally tendency to use alphabets in the world’s writing systems” (Wu Yuzhang 1978: 101). Although Mao was talking about the reform of Chinese characters, his words also had instructive significance for the reform and creation of writing systems for ethnic minority languages in China. Now that Chinese characters, as the mainstream writing system of China, were to be reformed along alphabetic lines, ethnic minority language planners

realized that ethnic minority languages should follow the same path too, especially when it came to creating new writing systems. However, until October 1955, China was unable to make up its mind and choose one of the six different drafts of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, in which there were two drafts based on the strokes of Chinese characters (like kana in Japanese) and two drafts based on the Roman and Russian alphabets respectively (Wu Yuzhang 1978: 151).

It was impossible for the national minorities that still did not have a written language to wait for the formal adoption of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, as they were anxious to create their own writing systems. In this context, following Mao Zedong's instruction to take the path of romanization, seven or eight writing systems had been created in the Roman alphabet in the south, and one writing system in the Cyrillic alphabet in the north, by the end of 1956. After the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet was promulgated in 1957, all of the national minorities immediately came to a common view that the Roman alphabet should be taken as the basis for the future creation of writing systems. By the end of 1957, over a dozen writing systems had been created in the Roman alphabet.

17.3.2 Suggestions by the elite

On August 25, 1949, on the eve of the founding of the PRC, Wu Yuzhang – the best-known Chinese writing reformist in China – wrote a letter to Chairman Mao Zedong. In the letter he put forward three principles regarding the reform of the Chinese writing system, two of which concerned the choice of letters for alphabetic writing: Chinese characters should be changed into an alphabetic writing system, preferably the Roman alphabet rather than a phonetic notation like Japanese kana, and all Chinese dialects and ethnic minority languages could be spelled in an alphabetic writing (Wang Jun 1995).

Upon receiving the letter, Chairman Mao Zedong quickly passed it to Guo Moruo, Shen Yanbing, and Ma Xulun – three leaders in literary and educational affairs – for discussion. In their reply to Chairman Mao, Guo, Shen, and Ma came up with five opinions, two of which were about the choice of letters for alphabetic writing: (1) they were in favor of a writing reform in the direction of the Roman alphabet and (2) they were in favor of the romanization of writing systems for national minorities (Wang Jun 1995).

The creation and reform of writing systems for national minorities was regarded as one of the three main duties of the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language, which was founded in Beijing on October 10, 1949. Wu Yuzhang was the chairman of its administrative committee, and Guo Moruo, Shen Yanbing, and Ma Xulun served as members of the committee. Their opinions on

writing system creation and the choice of the Roman alphabet for national minorities had a significant influence on ethnic minority language planning in China.

17.3.3 Experience of creating Roman writing systems in the Soviet Union

Wang Jun, a veteran language planner, suggested in 1952 that it was necessary to learn from the experience of the Soviet Union in creating Roman writing systems. He argued that Soviet linguists under the leadership of the Communist Party and Soviet government had worked out forty writing systems for ethnic minorities without written languages as well as many grammar books and dictionaries for these oral languages. Many economically and educationally backward ethnic minorities in the east and the far north of the Soviet Union came to have their own writing systems and schools. These minorities were successful in building powerful printing enterprises and published large numbers of newspapers and magazines in ethnic minority languages. Their own national sciences, literature, and arts were greatly developed (Wang Jun 1954 [1952]: 24).

In 1954, the State Council approved a report on creating writing systems for national minorities without written languages. Regarding this report, Luo Changpei pointed out: “The considerable experience of the Soviet Union in creating writing systems for its ethnic minorities can serve as our example” (Luo Changpei 1954b: 13–14).

In October of the same year, G. B. Serdyuchenko, a well-known Soviet linguist and corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Educational Sciences, arrived in Beijing upon China’s invitation. He presented a series of lectures to the research workers, teachers, and graduate students at Peking University and the Central Institute (University) for Nationalities, and for a whole academic year he systematically introduced the Soviet Union’s experiences in creating writing systems for ethnic minorities (Serdyuchenko 1956: 9–144). In addition, he helped his Chinese colleagues solve a lot of practical problems in writing system creation and reform in accordance with the actual conditions in China. In 1958, Fu Maoji also wrote an article introducing the experience of the Soviet Union in developing ethnic minority languages and solving problems in different periods of Soviet history:

The nineteen years since the victory of the October Revolution have been a period of romanizing writing systems for minorities. All of the newly created writing systems are based on the Roman alphabet, and most of the old scripts have been romanized. Even some of the minority writing systems in the Cyrillic alphabet have been transformed into the Roman alphabet.

(Fu Maoji 1995b [1958]: 242)

17.4 The process of creating new writing systems

The creation of writing systems for national minorities in China in the 1950s developed roughly in two stages: exploratory and full-scale.

17.4.1 The exploratory stage (February 1951 to December 1955)

This stage involved theory and experience. In November 1951, under the guidance of Luo Changpei (secretary general of the Steering Committee), the “Trial scheme” with two Roman alphabet systems and one Cyrillic one was formulated for the reference of language planners. In addition, for the purposes of comparison, the “Trial scheme” also included the IPA, the romanized scheme for the northern dialect, and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. The “Trial scheme” proved to be very convenient to use. A team dispatched by the central government, the Military Control Commission of Xichang Prefecture, Xikang Province (part of the present Sichuan Province), and Yi language planners jointly designed a scheme for an alphabetic Yi writing system in Xikang on March 5, 1951.

The exploratory efforts were aided by Soviet experience, because Serdyuchenko began to serve as Adviser to the Institute of Linguistics and the Central Institute for Nationalities in October 1954. His wife, Todajeva, an expert on Mongolian, also began to advise China’s language planners working on the reform of the Mongolian writing system.

It appears that, with Soviet theory and the preliminary experience with the “Trial scheme,” China was ready to resolve the writing problems of its minority groups as part of its nation-building efforts.

17.4.2 The full-scale stage (December 1955 to December 1958)

This stage had three aspects: (1) a national conference to mobilize ethnic minority language work, (2) carrying out large-scale language surveys, and (3) the development of new writing systems.

From December 6 to 15, 1955, the Institute of Linguistics and the Central Institute for Nationalities jointly held a conference on ethnic minority languages and scripts, which was later known as the First National Scientific Conference on Ethnic Minority Languages and Writing Systems. During the conference, a preliminary plan on ethnic minority languages and writing systems was proposed that called for launching a comprehensive survey of the ethnic minority languages in

order to help those who needed to create a new writing system or reform an existing writing system to develop a specific program for it.

In April 1956, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly organized a large-scale language survey. Over seven hundred people from the Institute of Linguistics, the Central Institute for Nationalities, local ethnic minority language institutions, and some other units formed seven survey teams who were dispatched to sixteen provinces and autonomous regions. For the next two and half years, these teams investigated the structures and usage situations of over forty ethnic minority languages in those areas. The results of their survey provided scientific foundations for the creation and reform of minority writing systems. It was the first large-scale language survey in China's history.

Between 1951 and 1958, fifteen writing systems were created, fourteen in the Roman alphabet for ethnic minority languages in the south and one in the Cyrillic alphabet for a ethnic minority language in the north. Of these fifteen writing systems, six were vernacular: four for the Miao language and two for the Hani language, as shown in Table 17.1.

Table 17.1: The programs for newly created writing systems in China in the 1950s.

Ethnicity	Writing program (draft)	Adopted by	Ratified by
Zhuang	Zhuang writing system	Guangxi Guixi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Dec. 10, 1955	State Council, Nov. 29, 1957
Bouyei	Bouyei writing system	Scientific Conference on Bouyei, Guiyang, Nov. 4–7, 1956	CNAC, ^a July 1957
Miao	Eastern Miao writing system ^b	Scientific Conference on Miao, Guiyang, Oct. 31, 1956 – Nov. 7, 1956	as above
	Central Miao writing system	as above	as above
	Western Miao writing system	as above	as above
	Northern Miao writing system	as above	as above
Yi	new Yi writing system	Forum for Yi Development, Xichang Prefecture, Feb. 2, 1951	none
	Liangshan Yi phonetic system	Scientific Conference on Yi, Chengdu, Dec. 18–24, 1956	CNAC, Oct. 1957

Table 17.1 (continued)

Ethnicity	Writing program (draft)	Adopted by	Ratified by
Li	Li writing system ^c	Scientific Conference on Li, Tongshi, Feb. 11–17, 1957	CNAC, June 1957
Lisu	Lisu writing system	Yunnan Conference on Ethnic Minority Languages, Kunming, Mar. 16–27, 1957	CNAC, 1957
Naxi	Naxi writing system	as above	as above
Hani	Hani writing system	as above	as above
	Bika writing system	as above	as above
Va	Va writing system ^d	as above	as above
Dong	Dong writing system	Scientific Conference on Dong, Guiyang, Aug. 18–22, 1958	CNAC, Dec. 31, 1958
Daur	Daur writing system	Conference on Daur, Huhhot, Dec. 20–27, 1956	none

Sources: Ying Lin and Gao Baozhen (1979: 307–312), Huang Guangxue (1993: 304–307), Ren Wujing (1994: 5), Wen Dusu (1994: 4–5).

^aThe Central Nationalities' Affairs Commission (CNAC) was usually known, before 2000, as the State Commission on Nationalities' Affairs (SCNA), and is now known as the State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC).

^bThese four writing systems were designed for the Xiangxi Miao, the Qiangdong Miao, the Chuanqiandian Miao, and the Diandongbei Miao respectively.

^cThe Li writing system has not been used since 1958.

^dThe Va writing system was originally called the Kava Writing Project.

17.5 New Roman writing systems meet with misfortune

The second half of the 1950s was the climax in the creation of writing systems for the ethnic minorities while the political struggle both at home and abroad was surging forward vigorously. The anti-rightist struggle that suppressed people with independent minds was launched at home in 1957, and the Great Leap Forward in 1958 sped up, among many things, the integration of minorities into the Han majority. Internationally, the Sino-Soviet relationship began to deteriorate rapidly. This political background was naturally unfavorable for the promotion of the new writing systems among the ethnic minorities. During the second half of 1957 and the whole of 1958, a lot of minority cadres and intellectuals

engaged in ethnic minority language work were deeply involved in movements of rectification and opposing local nationalism in minority regions.

The Conference of the National United Front Work held in December 1958 was a reflection of the erroneous assessment of the political situation as well as the anxiety about the success of ethnic minority work. “Socialist ethnic relations,” the conference deemed, “have been quickly formed and developed. There are more and more common points and fewer and fewer differences, and factors of ethnic integration are gradually increasing.” After the conference, “the wind of integration” blew stronger and stronger in the minority areas, especially among the ethnic minority workers (Huang Guangxue 1993: 131–132). There was, for example, a tendency towards ethnic minority language amalgamation in ethnic minority language work. For example, the newly created Hani (Bika dialect) writing system was abolished on the grounds that one ethnic group should have only one writing system, otherwise ethnic unity would be harmed (Dai Qingxia 1999: 109).

There was an armed riot in Tibet in March 1959. After that, anti-Chinese forces abroad continuously made trouble in China’s ethnic minority regions. For example, in April and May 1962, the Consulate of the Soviet Union in Xinjiang engaged in subversive activities in Tacheng in the Yili Hazak Autonomous Prefecture and instigated the well-known Yili Rebellion (Huang Guangxue 1993: 142). The Indian armed forces launched a large-scale attack on the long border area between the two countries, which led to China’s counter attack in self-defense. During this period, the CCP proposed the slogan of “taking class struggle as the key link” (meaning linking all important issues to the class struggle) and even considered that “the national question is a class problem,” the consequence of which was to treat tensions and conflicts between ethnic minorities and the Han as those between class enemies. In such a situation, the experimental promotion of the newly created writing systems had to be given up. Even the Zhuang writing system, which had been officially ratified by the State Council, had to cease being used. This depressing situation continued until the late 1970s.

17.6 Successes and problems in the creation of writing systems

17.6.1 Successes

The initial successes in writing system creation and use appear to have depended on three factors: the establishment of relevant institutions, vigorous promotion, and the establishment of ethnic publishing houses.

In order to guarantee the straightforward development of writing system creation and the experimental promotion of new writing systems, eleven ethnic minority language work institutions had been set up by 1959 in China, as shown in Table 17.2 below.

Table 17.2: Institutions of writing system creation and promotion in the 1950s.

Institution	Location
Institute of Ethnic Minority Language Studies, Chinese Academy of Sciences	Beijing
Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	Hohhot
Daur Language Work Commission	Hohhot
Zhuang Language Work Commission, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	Nanning
Yunnan Ethnic Minority Language Work Guidance Commission	Kunming
Lisu Writing Research Commission, Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan	Bijiang
Miao Language Work Guidance Commission	Jishou
Guizhou Ethnic Minority Language Work Guidance Commission	Guiyang
Sichuan Ethnic Minority Languages and Writing Systems Work Guidance Committee	Chengdu
Yi Writing Work Commission, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture	Zhaojue
Li and Miao Language Work Guidance Commission, Hainan Li and Miao Autonomous Prefecture	Tongshi

Source: Office of the State Affairs Commission (1959: 162–163).

Regarding promotion, let us examine the case of the Zhuang writing system. This system was unique because it was approved by the State Council and promoted officially rather than experimentally. In January 1956, the Guixi Zhuang School, which used the Zhuang writing system, was established in Wuming County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. By the beginning of 1958, the school had held three six- to eight-month Zhuang writing training classes and trained 2,984 local cadres and teachers to eradicate illiteracy. The number of people trained in the Zhuang writing system numbered 32,720, including 730 cadres trained in Base and Yishan Prefectures and 29,006 rural illiteracy eradication workers trained in the Zhuang writing training schools in various counties in Guangxi (Zhuang Writing Work Commission of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region 1958: 1–10).

The new romanized Yi writing system, publicized in February 1951, was a similar case. The system had been experimentally promoted in the Xichang Prefecture (now Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province). According to Luo Changpei:

By the end of April 1952, over 2,693 people had learnt this writing system. Some learners had already mastered it. Over 80,000 copies of reading material were printed in the new writing system [. . .]. In addition, fourteen conversation texts for Yi language users had been compiled in the new system in the Da Liangshan and Xiao Liangshan Areas.

(Luo Changpei 1954a: 95–96)

Ethnic publishing houses seem to have played a significant role in the successes. From 1957 to 1959, five ethnic publishing houses were set up for publications in the new writing systems. The location of these publishers and the writing systems used by them are set out in Table 17.3.

Table 17.3: Ethnic presses publishing in the new writing systems.

Institution	Date of establishment	Type of writing system	Location
Guangxi Ethnic Publishing House	May 1957	Zhuang	Nanning
Guizhou Ethnic Publishing House	February 1958	Miao, Bouyei, Dong	Guiyang
Sichuan Ethnic Publishing House	October 1957	Yi	Chengdu
Yunnan Ethnic Publishing House	August 1957	Lisu, Hani, Va	Kunming
Xiangxi Ethnic Publishing House	January 1959	Miao, Chinese	Jishou

Source: Office of the State Affairs Commission (1959: 133–134).

17.6.2 Difficult problems

In the 1950s, two major problems arose in the creation of writing systems for ethnic minority languages, problems that continue to affect those systems and their use today. The first problem is the suitability of the so-called five principles for writing system design. The second is the low prestige of the newly created writing systems in minority communities.

The suitability problem derived from the Symposium on the Issue of the Alphabetic Forms for Ethnic Minority Languages held in Guiyang, Guizhou, in October 1956 and sponsored by experts from national minorities in southern China and the newly established Institute of Ethnic Minority Languages (of the Chinese Academy of Sciences), a symposium of academic and political significance even

today. The symposium reached the consensus that the newly created Roman writing systems should be alphabetically and orthographically as similar as possible to the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Fu Maoji 1957 [1956]: 181). This consensus seems to be a reflection of the most harmonious relations between ethnic minorities and the Han on the one hand, and the reflection of the ethnic minorities' identification with the Han as well as with the Chinese nation under the PRC on the other. Based on the consensus, the "five principles," which came to be known as "the principles of alphabet conformity" (Fu Maoji 1995a [1957]: 221) or "the principle of seeking common ground while preserving differences" (Fu Maoji 1983), were established after the symposium (Fu Maoji 1979: 12). The "five principles," adopted in 1957 at the Sixty-Third Plenary Session of the State Council are: (1) in Roman writing systems for ethnic minority languages, letters should be used in ways similar to those in the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, representing similar phonemes with similar letters; (2) within writing systems for languages of the same group or from the same family, letters should be used in the same way; (3) across language groups and families, letters should be used in basically similar ways; (4) one letter, or at most two letters, can be used to represent one phoneme; and (5) Cyrillic letters or other modified letters can be used when the Roman alphabet is not enough.

The language policy of China in the 1950s was that Chinese characters should be reformed, and that writing system reform should follow alphabetic tendencies. Nevertheless, since the middle of the 1980s, China has made great changes to its Chinese language policy; the reform of Chinese characters has not been the chief task of language planning, and the central government has not mentioned the alphabetization of Chinese since 1986 (Liu Daosheng 1987: 24).

17.7 Rethinking the creation of writing systems

It has been stressed that, in the relatively long term, normalized Chinese characters will be the legitimate writing form. In such a situation, one might wonder whether the "five principles" formulated in the 1950s are still appropriate. How can the newly created writing systems conform to Chinese characters? Should the principle of alphabet conformity for romanized writing systems still be pursued? Facing these questions, since the 1980s some scholars have deviated from the tradition of the "five principles" and suggested that new writing systems could be composed of block-like characters, imitating the forms and semantic components of Chinese characters, but that the pronunciations of such block-like characters should be based on their users' native language rather than on Chinese characters, just like characters historically loaned into Japanese, Korean,

and/or Vietnamese. Such block-like characters, a few scholars believe, could solve not only the problem of conformity but also the problem of phonetic differences between dialects within a language. In addition, they would make it easier for ethnic minorities to learn Chinese (Chingertai 1991, 1992; Dai Qingxia and Jia Jiehua 1993: 16). How, however, should we adjust the policy of the “five principles” if we adopt this line of thought? And how should we deal with all those newly created writing systems already in use? In other words, what attitude towards the existing newly created writing systems should we adopt? What new problems will we face if we abandon the “five principles”? What problems would the new approach bring about? Clearly, there are more questions than answers for us at this moment.

Low prestige is probably an obstacle that any new writing system has to overcome. Since the writing systems of the ethnic minorities were created in China, “there has been a slump in the experimental promotion of the new systems, which was in progress from time to time, on and off. These writing systems have had little influence on the native speakers of ethnic minority languages, and people who have learned these systems account for one to three percent of the minority population” (Dob 2000: 9). And:

In light of the statistics of an adult education survey in 1979–1988, among the adult learners of seven newly designed writing systems of the Zhuang, Bouyei, Dong, Lisu, Naxi, Va, and Miao, only a little over 82,000 people reached a level beyond illiteracy, representing less than 0.6% of the population, aged fifteen and up, among the seven groups.

(Huang Xing 1989: 3)

Therefore, generally speaking, the newly created writing systems seem to be unsuccessful, because the total number of ethnic minorities who have learned to use them is rather small, the domains of their actual use are quite narrow, and the promotion of them has failed to continue long enough for success. These facts have made us realize that these writing systems have failed to win prestige. Furthermore, it has often been the case that some minority leaders and intellectuals were found to be suspicious of the promotion of the new writing systems, thus increasing the difficulty of further promotion of them. With the introduction and implementation of a socialist market economy in China, it can be anticipated that the use of these new writing systems will face more serious challenges, not opportunities.

Writing is not only a sign system for recording human language but also a social tool closely related to politics in particular social and historical circumstances, especially in China in the 1950s. The action taken by the new Chinese government in creating writing systems for the ethnic minorities without their own written languages performed an important function in the improvement of ethnic

relations as well as in the development of ethnic minority languages and minority cultures. The creation of new writing systems by a central government for its ethnic minorities was a governmental act which had not occurred in the previous few thousand years in China. For China, this action took place against a particular political, historical, and social background.

China's practice has shown that the support of the State is an important political basis for the large-scale creation of writing systems for national minorities. For this purpose, it was necessary for the government to establish corresponding institutions and provide enough financial support and human resources.

Also, in the State-managed creation of writing systems, the selection of an alphabet is principally restricted by corresponding social and political factors, though the design of specific letters and orthographies is mainly in the hands of linguists.

Thus, generally speaking, ethnic relations and ethnic policy in China have been a decisive factor governing the use of ethnic minority languages and writing systems. Whether the newly created writing systems can be used in an ethnic minority language speech community does not depend on a linguistically sound design or on a perfect orthography, but on the consistency of the government's policy towards ethnic minorities. The creation of new writing systems in China continued for about nine years from 1951 to 1958, but these systems were quickly forced out of use because of the rise of erroneous "leftist" thought and the incessant wind of "ethnic integration" and "language amalgamation." Since 1979, however, the newly created writing systems have been revived along with the original policy of ethnic equality and language equality.

Chapter 18

The creation and trial implementation of the Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system

18.1 Social language background

The Miao ethnic group is one of the ethnic groups in China that have a large population and a long history. As early as the Qin and Han dynasties, the ancestors of the Miao inhabited present-day western Hunan and Eastern Guizhou. They then continued to move to the central, western, and south-western regions of Guizhou, and other regions such as Guangxi, Yunnan, and Sichuan Provinces. In the past three hundred years, many Miao people within Chinese territory have continued to move to Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar. In the past twenty years, 110,000 Miao people in Southeast Asian countries have emigrated to America, France, Canada, Australia, and Argentina. By now, the Miao ethnic group has spread across south-western China and Southeast Asian countries, and is scattered over several continents all around the world.

According to the national population census conducted in 1990, there were 3,686,900 Miao people in Guizhou Province, accounting for 49.8% of the total population of Miao people all over the country, namely 7,398,035. Guizhou Province has the largest number of Miao people in China. Of the nine prefectures (cities) in Guizhou Province, Eastern Guizhou has the largest number of Miao people, 1,458,912, accounting for 39.6% of the total number of Miao people in the province. The Miao ethnic group in South-eastern Guizhou, Northern Hunan, North-eastern Guizhou, and south-eastern Sichuan generally inhabits areas with tens and even hundreds of villages.

The Miao language belongs to the Miao branch of the Miao-Yao part of the Sino-Tibetan family. It is divided into three dialects: Eastern Guizhou, Western Hunan, and Sichuan–Guizhou–Yunnan. The syntactic structures of these three dialects are almost the same; the phonology and lexicon are rather different between them. Speakers of different dialects cannot mutually communicate. The Eastern Guizhou dialect is divided into three vernaculars: the northern vernacular, southern vernacular, and eastern vernacular.

The Eastern Guizhou dialect is spoken by about 2.2 million Miao people, who are primarily distributed in the majority of counties (cities) of South-eastern

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Guizhou Province; Duyun, Sandu, Libo, Fuquan, and Weng'an in Southern Guizhou Province; Guanling, Pingba, and Zhenning in the Anshun area; Xingren, Zhenfeng, Anlong, and Mowang in South-western Guizhou Province; Rongshui and Sanjiang in Guangxi Province; and Jingzhou County and Huitong County in Hunan Province.

Historically, the Miao ethnic group had a commonly used writing system. In 1905, a British missionary named Pollard met Miao and Han intellectuals in Weining City, Guizhou Province, and they cooperated to create a kind of alphabetic writing system. Prior to 1949, a British missionary named Hutton was active in Bax Had Township, Kaili City, Guizhou Province. He designed an alphabetic Miao writing system based on the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, but this writing system has since disappeared. During the war against Japan, a Miao scholar named Shi Qigui created a writing system for the Western Hunan dialect of Miao, but this writing system was not promoted. In 1956, the people's government helped the Miao ethnic group to create the Western Hunan Miao writing system, the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao, and the Sichuan–Yunnan–Guizhou Miao writing system; moreover, the government has reformed the Miao language of north-eastern Yunnan.

The counties (cities) trying to implement the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao include Kaili, Leishan, Taijiang, Jianhe, Huangping, Danzhai, Majiang, Shibing, Rongjiang, Congjiang, Jinjiang, Liping, Tianzhu, Sanhui, and Zhenjiang in the Eastern Guizhou Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture; Fuquan, Weng'an, Libo, Sandu, and Duyun in the Southern Guizhou Bouyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture; Xingren County in the South-western Guizhou Bouyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture; Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County in Guangxi; and so forth.

According to statistical data on the eradication of Miao illiteracy, data on school education, and data from a sample survey, we estimate that, in the fifteen counties (cities) in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and five counties and cities in Southern Guizhou Prefecture trying to implement the Miao writing system, 100,513 people can use Miao writing system, comprising 6.2% of the total number of Miao people (1,614,640) in these two prefectures.

18.2 Formation and revision of the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao

In November 1950, five Miao ethnic young people carried out research in Beijing: Wu Diping (also called Jindan), Pan Guangcheng, Long Hede, Zhang Shuchang, and Yi Changfa. Under the guidance of Wu Yuzhang, the chair of the National

Writing System Reform Association, and Liang Juwu, the vice-chair of the Southwestern Ethnic Affairs Commission, they researched for four months before drawing up the *Miaoyu Ladinghua Xuexi Caoan (Qiandongqu)* (苗语拉丁化学习草案 (黔东南区)) [Draft on the latinization of the Miao language (Eastern Guizhou area)].

In this draft, the pronunciation of the Eastern Guizhou Miao dialect is regarded as the standard pronunciation. The content covers the alphabet, thirty-one consonants, five simple vowels, thirteen complex vowels, seven syllables with a nasal coda, tonal variation, syllable structure, and methods for dividing syllables.

In May 1951, this draft was printed as a book by the Central Ethnic Affairs Commission, constituting the earliest literacy textbook for farmers learning the Miao writing system. At the beginning of the 1950s, this book played an active role in teaching the Miao writing system.

18.2.1 The draft on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao (1956)

Initially, the current draft on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao was called the *Miaozu (Zhongbu Fangyan) Wenzifang'an (Caoan)* (苗族 (中部方言) 文字方案 (草案)) [Program (draft) on the Miao writing system (central dialect)], drawn up by the second work team for investigating ethnic minority languages, which was organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The basic principles of this draft are as follows: the alphabets of the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet are to be as consistent as possible; the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao is to use the same alphabet to express similar pronunciations, so as to make it convenient for the Miao people and Han people to learn each other's languages; in possible scope, the alphabets of the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao and the other three writing systems for the Miao language are to be as consistent as possible in order to make learning them convenient (this may create the conditions for unifying the Miao language in future); if there is a lack of Latin letters, then double letters, Russian letters, or signs from the International Phonetic Alphabet can be added to the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao; all of the tones are to be indicated by letters at the end of syllables.

The basic dialect of this draft is the northern subdialect (currently called the northern vernacular) of Eastern Guizhou Miao; the standard pronunciation of this draft is the pronunciation of Yanghao Village, Lushan County (present-day Kaili City), Guizhou Province; Latin letters and International Phonetic Alphabet signs are employed to indicate the consonants, vowels, and tones of the Miao language.

In November 1956, the Workshop on the Miao Language and Writing System was held in Guiyang City. The “Program (draft) on the Miao writing system (central dialect)” was preliminary approved at this workshop. Representatives at the workshop provided some suggestions for revising the letters used in the draft. They relied on the team to further revise the original draft, send it to the provincial government, and report it to the central government for approval.

18.2.2 The first revision (1956–1957)

After the workshop, the team discussed and revised the original draft of the writing system according to the representatives’ suggestions, and then drew up a revised draft on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao.

Compared with the original draft, the revised draft had appropriate adjustments and revisions in terms of style, letters, and spelling methods. The original draft was combined with a draft on the writing systems for the other three dialects in a single book; they shared the same preface and general alphabetic table. The revised draft on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao is independent from the draft on the writing systems of the other three dialects. The content of the revised draft includes a preface, areas of application, basic dialect, standard pronunciation, letters, consonants, vowels, glides, tones, syllables, some regulations related to the pronunciation and writing system of characters, and twelve sections of specimen texts. The length of the revised draft was double that of the original draft.

Major changes to the letters and spelling methods primarily reflect the following:

- (1) non-Latin letters were replaced by Latin ones. For example, ε was replaced by *eu*, ε was replaced by *ae*, η was replaced by *I*, ρ was replaced by *x*, and \varkappa was replaced by *r*;
- (2) the phoneme /x/ was denoted by *h* plus the glide *i* (when the vowel is *i*, the glide is *h*);
- (3) *I* was used to denote the capital letter η ;
- (4) *x*, rather than *h*, was added after voiceless fricatives to indicate aspiration;
- (5) the redundant letter *z* was removed;
- (6) *r* in Chinese loanwords was spelt *rh*, whose actual pronunciation is [z]; and
- (7) the four tone signatures, *c, h, k, s*, in the original draft were removed and replaced by eight tone signatures, *b, x, d, l, q, r, g, f*.

On June 10, 1957, at the Eighteenth Standing Committee of the Guizhou Provincial Political Consultative Conference, the attendees discussed the draft program for the Miao writing system. The People’s Committee of Guizhou Province submitted the *Miaozu (Dong, Zhong, Xi, Beibu Fangyan) Wenzhi Fang’an* 苗族(东、中、西、北部方言)文字方案 [Draft on the Miao writing system (eastern, central, western, and

northern dialects)] to the Central Ethnic Affairs Committee. In July of the same year, the Central Ethnic Affairs Committee issued the *Miaozu Wenzhi Fang'an Keyi Shiyang Tuixing* 苗族文字方案可以实验推行 [Draft on feasible implementation of the Miao writing system].

18.2.3 The second revision (1958)

Half a year after the “Program (draft) on the Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system” was approved and implemented by the Central Ethnic Affairs Committee, practice revealed some shortcomings in the draft. Especially with respect to alphabetic forms and usage, there were numerous inconsistencies with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. In order to correct the shortcomings in timely fashion, following the principle of using the Roman alphabet and being consistent with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, in late January 1958 the Ethnic Language Guiding Committee of Guizhou Province and the second work team of the Ethnic Minority Language Department of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences gathered people working on the Miao language in Guizhou Province to discuss the revision of the draft Miao writing system. The relevant workers from Yunnan, Sichuan, and western Hunan Provinces were invited to the conference as well. The conference was held for three days. The suggestions were almost uniform. According to the decisions made at the workshop, the Ethnic Language Guiding Committee of Guizhou Province and the second work team of the Ethnic Minority Language Department of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences revised the original draft once more. Compared with the first revised draft, the second revision included revised content as follows:

- (1) three sections, namely the preface, the section on syllables, and some regulations related to the writing of characters (including concatenation rules), in the first revised draft were removed;
- (2) all of the non-Roman alphabets were prohibited. Romanization was completely implemented;
- (3) all Chinese loanwords were spelled following the spelling rules of Putonghua;
- (4) in order to conform to the drafts for other Miao writing systems, *lx* was replaced by *hl*, *hl* was replaced by *dl*, and *r* was replaced by *hs*;
- (5) in order to indicate the voiceless aspirated fricatives consistently, *fx* was replaced by *hf*, *sx* was replaced by *hs*, and *sx(i)* was replaced by *hx*;
- (6) in order to be consistent with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, *v* was replaced by *w*, *z(i)* was replaced by *j*, *c(i)* was replaced by *q*, *s(i)* was replaced by *x*, *j* was replaced by *g*, *η* was replaced by *ng*, *q* was replaced by *ng*, *kh* was replaced by *x*, *eu* was replaced by *e*, *ae* was replaced by *ai*, *eη* was replaced by *en*, *aη* was replaced by *ang*, and *uη* was replaced by *ong*;

- (7) in order to denote pronunciation correctly, *e* was replaced by *ei*;
- (8) *y* and *rh* were removed;
- (9) some tone marks were changed (the fifth tone was denoted by *t* instead of *q*, the sixth tone by *s* instead of *r*, the seventh tone by *k* instead of *g*);
- (10) old Chinese loanwords were spelled based on the alphabet for the local Mandarin spoken by the Miao people. New Chinese loanwords were written as in the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet; in other words, they were written as in Putonghua, without tone marks.

As soon as the second revised draft was issued, the existing Miao writing system ceased to apply.

18.2.4 The third revision (1982)

On October 23, 1982, the Conference on the Revision of the Program (Draft) on the Eastern Guizhou Miao Writing System and Writing Standards for Chinese Loanwords was held in Guiyang City. Chen Yongkang, vice-chair of the Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee, hosted the conference. More than twenty people attended the conference, such as Jin Dan, working at the Provincial Ethnic Research Center; Xu Shiren, working at the Ethnic Affairs Committee of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture; and delegates from the United Front Work Department of the Provincial Committee, the Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee, and Guizhou Nationalities University. The group working on textbooks written in Eastern Guizhou Miao reported suggestions for revisions of the (draft) program for the writing system in various respects. The representatives discussed matters carefully and finally reached an agreement. The second revision was revised further as follows.

- (1) The convention that *h* plus *i* is pronounced as a voiceless velar fricative [xh] in the second revision is deleted. A consonant symbol *hv* indicating [xh] is added.
- (2) All Chinese loanwords are spelled following the actual pronunciation of Kaili Mandarin Chinese and are accompanied by tone symbols as well.
- (3) In order to spell Chinese loanwords, nine finals, *ao*, *ee*, *iao*, *iee*, *ua*, *ui*, *uai*, *un*, *uang*, and *ee*, are all pronounced [e].
- (4) In order to spell Chinese loanwords, the consonant *r*, pronounced [z], was added.
- (5) It is clarified that, when *i* combines with *z*, *c*, *s*, or *r*, it is pronounced [ɿ].

The third revision of the draft, namely the current draft on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao, has not been formally issued. The alphabet, consonants, finals, and tones of this draft can be consulted in the *Chinese–Miao dictionary (Eastern Guizhou Miao dialect)* edited by Wang Chunde (1992).

18.3 Situation and effects of the implementation of the current Miao writing system

In more recent times, within the last forty years, testing and implementation of the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao has to a large extent passed through two phases: from the initial stage to the middle stage (1950s), and from the recovery stage to the development stage (after the 1980s).

18.3.1 From the initial stage to the middle stage: The trial situation in the 1950s

Before the formal implementation of the “Program (draft) on the Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system” in November 1956, training was given to professional workers working on the Miao writing system and the organizations working to promote the Miao writing system.

In order to properly cultivate the ethnic language, workers, translators, and educational staff from the Department of Languages of the Central Nationalities College (the present-day Minzu University of China) offered classes on the Eastern Miao language every year between 1951 and 1953. The number of students in each class were seven, nine, and thirteen respectively, totaling twenty-nine over three years. In October 1956, Guizhou Nationalities University offered a course in the Eastern Miao language for the first time.

The Ethnic Language Guiding Committee of Guizhou Province was founded on October 5, 1956. Xu Jiansheng acted as the head; the deputy heads included Ou Baichuan, Ma Xueliang, Yang Hansheng, Chen Yongkang, Wang Lingang, and Wu Jinren. The Provincial Language Commission set up a research office, which included an Eastern Guizhou Miao language group. The textbooks and dictionaries in Miao compiled by this group are as follows: *Literacy textbooks on the Miao writing system for farmers* (1957), *Textbooks for cadres* (1958), *Mandarin–Miao (central dialect) vocabulary book* (1957), *Brief Miao–Mandarin dictionary (first draft)* (1958), and *Brief Mandarin–Miao dictionary (first draft) (Eastern Guizhou Miao dialect)* (1962). After their publication, these textbooks and dictionaries were regarded as the primary readings and reference materials for those who were learning the Eastern Guizhou Miao language.

Minzu Yuwen Gongzuo 民族语文工作 [Ethnic language work] was a bi-monthly journal in Mandarin founded by the Provincial Language Committee in October 1957. It was for workers around the province who worked on compiling, researching, publishing, teaching, and promoting the Miao and Bouyei writing systems. The purposes of creating the journal were as follows: exchanging

experiences when editing, translating, and promoting the Miao and Bouyei writing systems; reporting on this work; introducing experiences from other provinces; and discussing academic problems relating to ethnic languages.

In August 1957, the Eastern Guizhou Ethnic Language School and the Ethnic Language Guiding Committee of Eastern Guizhou Prefecture were established. This school held two semesters of courses on the Miao language and cultivated more than 190 Miao-speaking cadres and teachers.

On September 1, 1957, the students of the first experimental class on the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao became the Miao Language Implementation Team founded by the Ethnic Language Committee of Guizhou Province at Yanghao Village, Lushan County (present-day Kaili City), which was regarded as the standard pronunciation point for the Eastern Guizhou Miao language.

Between the winter of 1958 and the spring of 1959, thirty-two second-semester Miao language courses were studied in eight counties, including Kaili, Leishan, Taijiang, Jianhe, Danzhai, Rongjiang, Huangping, and Shibing, in a total of twenty-four communes by 1,021 students.

During holidays and festivals in 1958, streets in Zhenyuan, Taijiang, and some other places were filled with slogans written in Miao used for festival celebrations or to welcome visitors belonging to various ethnic groups from other provinces. The county newspaper in Leishan County began to publish articles written in Miao.

Between February 22 and 28, 1958, the Ethnic Language Committee of Guizhou Province organized a workshop on creating and borrowing new terminology. The representatives analyzed a large number of new terms that had been created and borrowed in the process of compiling works written in Eastern Guizhou Miao during the past year. They confirmed those that were applicable and excluded those that were not. Moreover, they reached an agreement on the future principles for writing loanwords as follows.

- (1) Loanwords were neither to be rejected outright nor used unchanged.
- (2) New meanings were to be added to old words, and the inherent meanings of native ethnic words were to be enlarged or extended.
- (3) In principle, new loanwords popularized among the masses were accepted.
- (4) All full loanwords were to be written following word formation rules; semi-loanwords were to be written following the word formation rules for native words.
- (5) Old loanwords were to be spelled using native phonemes; new loanwords were to be spelled following the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet for Putonghua.
- (6) In the process of creating an alphabetic system, the Eastern Miao writing system and other Miao writing systems were to be kept as consistent with one another as possible.

On November 11, 1957, the People's Broadcasting Station of Guizhou created radio programs in the Eastern Miao language. Each was broadcast once a week

for fifteen minutes at a time. This program was designed for Miao ethnic farmers, and it primarily reported the news, promoted the policies of the Party and government, reported on agricultural production, and covered knowledge and current events relating to science and health.

After the writing system for Eastern Guizhou Miao was approved and implemented by the Central Ethnic Affairs Committee, government on various levels in Guizhou Province, especially the Ethnic Language Guiding Committee on the provincial, prefectural, and county levels performed extensive work. The Miao writing system was gradually applied in various fields such as literacy classes, primary schools, secondary schools, universities, news, publication, radio, and civilian social life. In 1958, trial work on the Miao writing system began. For well-known reasons, this highly popular work among the Miao ethnic group was forced to stop.

18.3.2 From the recovery stage to the development stage: Trials in the 1980s

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party, the status and role of ethnic writing systems were once again considered valuable. In 1980, at the Third National Conference on Ethnic Languages and Writing Systems held in Beijing, the National Ethnic Committee stated that “the draft on writing system approved and implemented by the State Council and the National Ethnic Affairs Committee is still valid.”

In the spring of 1981, following the suggestions of the investigative team of the Guizhou Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee, the Party Committee and the government of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture decided to restore the trials and implementation of writing systems for ethnic languages from 1981. In November of the same year, the government of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture held Prefecture’s First Conference on Ethnic Languages in Kaili City. It stipulated that trials of ethnic writing systems in the autonomous prefecture should follow the policies of “developing actively and stably” and “only being allowed to do well, rather than being allowed to do badly.”

18.3.2.1 Guiding concepts

In May 1982, the Conference on Ethnic Languages and Writing Systems in Guizhou Province was held in Guiyang; it prepared to promote seven ethnic writing systems, including that for Eastern Guizhou Miao, across Guizhou Province. In late April 1983, the prefectural government held the Second Conference on Ethnic Languages and Writing Systems in the Prefecture in Taijiang, and

proposed guiding concepts for work on ethnic languages: “the principle of developing actively and stably, taking various forms, carrying out promotion work on ethnic languages according to local conditions, so as to serve the pursuit of the ‘Four Modernizations’ in China.” In August of the same year, the Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee and the Provincial Education Office jointly issued the *Guanyu zai Minzu Xuexiao Jinxing Minzu Yuwen Jiaoxue Shiyan de Tongzhi* 关于在民族学校进行民族语文教学实验的通知 [Notice on carrying out ethnic language education trials in ethnic schools], which proposed that

in order to change the undeveloped situation of ethnic groups in Guizhou Province, and to improve the development of material and spiritual civilization under the central government’s initiative, they gradually establish an ethnic education system so as to fit ethnic minority features; they change the previous “one size fits all” method; they take the actual situations in ethnic areas into consideration; and they carry out special measures, reform ethnic education, and try to make primary education universal in ethnic areas in Guizhou Province within the time limit prescribed by the central government.

For this purpose, they decided to carry out education trials of ethnic languages and writing systems in relevant schools, and then gradually promote them. The above-mentioned conferences and notices provided the ideological foundation for teaching Miao writing systems in schools in Eastern Guizhou Province.

18.3.2.2 Institutional structures

The Department of Ethnic Languages of the Guizhou Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee was founded in October 1982. In September 1984, it was renamed the Office of Ethnic Languages, which guided the work on various ethnic writing systems, such as that of Eastern Guizhou Miao, across the province through, for example, instituting teacher training, compiling textbooks, and conducting trials and implementations of ethnic writing systems. In November 1984, the Guizhou Nationalities Press resumed operation. There was an Ethnic Language Editing Office, including six editors who edited four languages, Miao, Bouyei, Dong, and Yi. The Guizhou Ethnic Research Institute had an Ethnic Language Research Office working on four languages, Miao, Bouyei, Dong, and Yi, with one researcher assigned to each.

There were four organizations for ethnic languages and writing systems on the level of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture: the Ethnic Language Department of the Prefectural Ethnic Affairs Committee (founded in 1984), the Prefectural Institute of Ethnology (founded in 1984), the Prefectural Office for Collecting Ancient Ethnic Books (founded in 1987), and the Coating Station of the Prefectural Film Company (founded in 1984).

Among sixteen counties (cities) in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, only Cengong County had no corresponding operating mechanism. The other fifteen counties set up organizations for ethnic languages.

18.3.2.3 Literacy in the Miao writing system

In the 1950s, experience gained from promoting literacy in the Miao writing system had proven that, in villages inhabited by Miao ethnic groups, night schools to teach the Miao writing system and wipe out illiteracy were effective methods of enhancing the cultural level of the Miao people.

Between 1981 and 1995, there were 1,958 literacy classes in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 26 in Southern Guizhou Prefecture. The total number of students was 66,416, of whom 65,296 studied in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 1,120 in Southern Guizhou Prefecture. Those who acquired literacy were 44,385, of whom 43,354 students were from South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 1,031 from Southern Guizhou Prefecture.

In late September 1995, I cooperated with an investigative team to carry out literacy tests on 124 subjects in the following villages: Yanghao Village in Kaili City (27 subjects), Gaowu Village in Taijiang County (14 subjects), Tonggu Village in Majiang County (48 subjects), and Baiyan Village in Leishan County (35 subjects). The test questions were set by the Language Office of the Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee. After the test, 110 subjects received scores above 90, accounting for 88.7% of the total; 12 scored between 60 and 89 (9.7%); and 2 scored below 60 (1.6%). The test results proved that the literacy points had a good educational effect.

18.3.2.4 Bilingual education

In 1981, the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao had been implemented in a few primary schools. By 1983, the schools that taught the Miao writing system had been greatly extended with the support of the education system. In the previous fifteen years, those schools that implemented Mandarin–Miao (Eastern Guizhou dialect) bilingual education in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and Southern Guizhou Prefecture had numbered up to 1,040. Of these schools, 902 were located in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 138 in Southern Guizhou Prefecture. There were 1,654 classes, 1,433 of which were offered in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 221 in Southern Guizhou Prefecture. The total number of students was 56,588, 48,191 of whom studied in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and 8,397 in Southern Guizhou Prefecture.

Since 1984, the Kaili Nationalities Teachers' School, the Ethnic Administration Management School of South-eastern Guizhou, and the Guizhou Nationalities College have successively offered Eastern Miao language courses (see Table 18.1).

Table 18.1: Statistics on Eastern Miao language courses in Guizhou secondary schools and colleges.

Year	Kaili Nationalities Teachers' School		Prefectural Ethnic Administration Management School		Guizhou Nationalities College	
	Number of courses	Number of students	Number of courses	Number of students	Number of courses	Number of students
1984	–	–	1	19	–	–
1985	–	–	–	–	1	32
1986	–	–	–	–	1	16
1987	–	–	–	–	1	25
1988	–	–	–	–	–	–
1989	6	245	1	34	1	20
1990	6	244	1	43	1	11
1991	6	251	1	36	1	16
1992	4	165	1	42	1	10
1993	4	160	1	35	1	16
1994	4	163	1	49	1	10
1995	–	–	–	–	1	29
Total	30	1,228	7	258	10	185

Education in the Miao writing system at schools in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture has taken four forms as follows. (1) Teaching the Miao language and Miao writing system at preschools such as Leishan County Kindergarten. Children in the primary class (3–5 years old) studied only the Miao language, not the Miao writing system, because most Miao children were able to speak Miao already. In the senior class (5–6 years old), children continued to study the Miao language; at the same time, they studied simple Miao writing as well. (2) In the primary schools, students studied the Miao language and writing

system first. Above the first grade of primary school, schools offered a Mandarin course. (3) From the first grade of primary school, Miao language and Mandarin were offered simultaneously. Types (2) and (3) were common across the prefecture, and their educational effects were evident. (4) Teaching Mandarin first until the second and the third grades of primary school or secondary school, then additionally offering a Miao language course. For example, Leishan County Ethnic Secondary School offered courses in Miao from secondary school to high school.

In September 1995, I cooperated with an investigative team to carry out literacy tests on 198 students at the following schools: Guading Primary School in Kaili City, Gaowu Primary School in Taijiang County, Taoyao Primary School in Leishan County, and Xibai Primary School in Shibing County. The test questions were set by the Language Office of the Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee. The test results show that all the students passed the test: 183 students (92%) scored above 90, and 15 students (8%) scored between 60 and 89.

Since the ten-year bilingual education trial carried out in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, more than one hundred reports on trials have been published. These reports have consistently proposed that, in ethnic areas where Mandarin is not spoken, Miao–Mandarin bilingual education be implemented and Mandarin be supplemented by the Miao language, as this has resulted in better educational effects than just teaching Chinese. For example, in 1984, Jiuyang Township Ethnic School in Jianhe County offered a Miao language course; teachers transcribed Mandarin into Miao, and methods like translation between Miao and Mandarin helped students to understand Mandarin. As a result, those Miao students who had learned the Miao writing system got higher scores on Mandarin course than those students at the same grade from other local primary schools that lacked a course for the Miao writing system (see Table 18.2).

In the past decade, various textbooks and reference works written in Eastern Miao have been published, totaling 481,000 copies. Among these books, the *Six-year Miao–Mandarin bilingual textbook* comprised seven volumes, *The Miao language* three volumes, *Mathematics* two volumes, and *Nature* one volume; 300,000 copies of all of these books were printed. Books were also published to develop literacy in the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao: a total of 154,000 copies were printed of a textbook, *Studying the Miao writing system* (four volumes), while 27,000 copies were printed of reference works such as the *Miao–Mandarin dictionary*, *Mandarin–Miao dictionary*, *Miao idioms dictionary*, *Grammar of Miao*, and *Basic knowledge of Eastern Miao*. What is more, there were local textbooks compiled by each county (city); for example, the books compiled in Shibing were as follows: *The Miao writing system for pupils*, *Phonology of Miao*, and *Miao–Mandarin lexicon* (compiled in Kaili City);

Table 18.2: Comparison of Mandarin scores between bilingual classes and monolingual classes in Jiuyang Township, Jianhe County.

Year	Type of class	School	Grade	Number of students	Average Mandarin score
1984	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	1	17	66.4
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	1	21	57.0
1985	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	2	33	47.5
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	2	23	40.0
1986	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	3	27	33.5
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	3	17	25.4
1987	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	2	17	73.1
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	2	28	61.0
1988	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	1	11	60.5
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	1	14	42.0
1989	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	3	27	48.9
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	3	21	35.0
1990	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	1	11	69.7
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	1	15	37.5
1991	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	2	24	38.5
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	2	20	21.8

Table 18.2 (continued)

Year	Type of class	School	Grade	Number of students	Average Mandarin score
1992	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	2	28	40.8
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	4	22	34.8
1993	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	4	27	39.6
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	4	23	23.4
1994	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	3	24	58.4
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	3	27	49.5
1995	bilingual	Jiuyang Private School	1	28	65.3
	monolingual	Jiugan Primary School	1	25	54.2

Data source: Ethnic Affairs Committee of Jianhe County (ed.). *Guanyu Minzu Yuyan Wenzhi Tuixing Gongzuo Zongjie*. September 14, 1995.

Educational reference on Miao–Mandarin translation of new words and new characters (compiled in Taijiang); and *Miao language textbook* (dialectal transcription textbook), *Reading Miao, Instructions for learning the Miao language*, and *Miao writing system textbook* (dialectal transcription)

18.3.2.5 Popular science and medicine

From 1982, researchers working at the Ethnic Medicine Research Institution of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture began conducting a general systematic investigation of Miao ethnic medicine and collected data on it. Based on these data, Lu Kemin and other scholars wrote the *Miaozu Yaowu Ji* 苗族药物集 [Collection of Miao ethnic medicines] (published by Guizhou People's Press in 1988). This book classified 163 kinds of Miao ethnic medicine. The name of each medicine was given in the Miao writing system. This was the first medical book on Miao herbal medicines; moreover, it was the first book on ethnic medicine in Guizhou

Province. In addition, all medical names in the book entitled *Miaozu Yiyaoxue* 苗族医药学 [Medicine of the Miao ethnic group] (published by Guizhou People's Press in 1992) were written in the Miao writing system.

Since 1989, Sansui County has successively translated books on high-yield cultivation techniques for rice, rape, corn, and fruit trees into Miao, totaling 20,000 printed copies. These books were handed out to farmers in villages. The farmers who learned these new techniques generally gained good economic benefits. Since 1990, the Office of Compilation for the Miao Writing System at Taoyao Village, Leishan County, has translated popular-scientific material as follows: *Technology of konjac planting*, *Technology of tobacco planting*, *Technology of tea planting*, *Two-stage seedling cultivation in greenhouses*, *Feeding and management of pregnant sows*, *Tea pest control*, and *New technology for raising fish in paddy fields*. They established experimental sites for tobacco and konjac (snake palm) at the Miao Writing System Club in Baiyan Village.

18.3.2.6 Publication of books

Besides Miao publications on popular science and medicine, and the textbooks and reference works mentioned above, in the decade leading up to 1995, ten books in literature, the arts, and history were published, totaling 39,000 printed copies (see Table 18.3).

In addition, the Ethnic Affairs Committees of counties (cities) such as Huangping County, Shibing County, Kaili City, and Majiang County published books in the Miao writing system, for example, *Ancient Miao songs and ancient words*, *Miao choruses*, *Miao drinking songs*, *Traditional law in the Miao ethnic group*, *The story of seeds*, *Collection of Shibing ethnic literature*, *Album of cultural and historical ethnic minority documents*, *Spoken and sung Miao literature*, *Selected Miao poems*, and so forth. The Art and Literary Association of Guizhou Province compiled 72 volumes of material in the “Collection of folk literature of the ethnic minorities in Guizhou.” Of these 72 volumes, eight were translated into both Miao and Mandarin. Volume 48 contained funeral songs of the southeastern Miao, and was named *Songs of cremation*; volume 52 contained songs of marriage, and songs of revolt and struggle, and was named *Traditional law*; volume 53 was *Miao love songs*; volume 61 was *Songs of the drum – Traditional law of the Miao*; volume 62 was a long poem called the *Love story of a Miao girl*; volume 66 was an introduction to engagements, the art of woodcuts, songs of etiquette, and folk customs; volume 71 was an ancient Miao song named the *Creation of the world*; and volume 72 was an ancient Miao song named *Ship gold and ship silver*.

Table 18.3: Statistics on publications in literature, the arts, and history written in the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao (1987–1995).

Book	Author	Publishing house	Year	Number of printed copies
<i>Selected Miao poems</i>		Guizhou Nationalities Press	1985	21,000
<i>Legend of Zhang Xiumei</i>	compiled by Yan Bao et al.	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1987	5,000
<i>Selected Miao proverbs and mottos</i>	translated by Wu Dejie and Yang Wenrui	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1989	2,000
<i>The Gabaiyu songs of the Miao</i>	selectively compiled by Yang Wenrui	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1990	1,000
<i>Song of engagement</i>	translated by Yang Tongsheng et al., compiled by the Provincial Office of Ancient Books	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1991	1,000
<i>Collected stories</i>	edited by Hu Tingduo and Li Jinping	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1992	3,000
<i>Selected Miao stories</i>	Ga Liang Guo	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1992	3,000
<i>Ancient Miao songs</i>	edited by the Provincial Office of Ancient Books, annotated by Yan Bao	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1993	1,000
<i>Paeon</i>	Guizhou Provincial Ethnic Affairs Committee	Guizhou Nationalities Press	1994	1,000
<i>Selected Lusheng songs</i>		Guizhou Nationalities Press	1995	1,000
total				39,000

18.3.2.7 Newspapers and journals

On January 26, 1985, the first issue of the *Miao and Dong newspaper*, hosted by the Ethnic Affairs Committee of South-eastern Guizhou Province, was published and issued by the South-eastern Guizhou Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture. The tasks of the newspaper were as follows: promoting the Party and county's guidelines and policies related to ethnic work; introducing scientific knowledge;

and publishing news about the provinces and prefectures, and folk songs, stories, and idioms of the Miao and Dong ethnic groups. It was published irregularly. Issues 1–4 were written in both Miao and Dong; issues 5–10 were written in Miao. The magazine *South wind*, hosted by the Art and Literary Association of Guizhou Province, was published bi-monthly. From the second issue, published in 1985, all the articles were translated into both Miao and Mandarin (published as submissions, without dialectal distinctions). In 1993, the “Ethnic languages column” ceased publication for one year. In 1994, the fifth issue was devoted to “The world of the Miao writing system,” and was entirely written in Miao without dialectal distinctions. From the sixth issue, articles translated into Miao and Mandarin were added. This magazine was printed in a run of 4,000 copies and distributed inside and outside Guizhou Province. Moreover, in order to coordinate efforts with Miao literacy work and the trials of the Miao writing system, the counties (cities) started more than twenty internal newspapers and journals, of which about 10,000 copies were published (see Table 18.4).

Table 18.4: Statistics on newspapers and journals written in ethnic writing systems in Guizhou Province between 1982 and 1995.

Newspaper or journal	Organizer	Founded	Language used	Copies published	Frequency
<i>Taijiang Miao newspaper</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Taijiang County	1987	Miao	800	irregular
<i>Danzhai Miao newspaper</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Danzhai County	1987	Miao	600	irregular
<i>Taoyao Miao newspaper</i>	Miao Language Editorial Department of Taoyao Village, Leishan County		Miao	400	irregular
<i>Bamboo shoots in spring</i>	Prefectural Administration and Management School for ethnic cadres	1986	Miao, Bouyei, Dong	150	irregular
<i>Censer Mountain</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Kaili City	1982	Miao, Mandarin	500	irregular
<i>Leigong Mountain</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Leishan County	1983	Miao, Mandarin	200	irregular
<i>Longquan Shan</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Danzhai County		Miao, Mandarin	500	irregular
<i>Guiren Peak</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Majiang County	1984	Miao	500	irregular

Table 18.4 (continued)

Newspaper or journal	Organizer	Founded	Language used	Copies published	Frequency
<i>Feiyun Cliff</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Huangping County	1989	Miao, Mandarin	600	quarterly
<i>Miao ethnic culture</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committees of Huangping, Shibing, and Zhenyuan Counties	1982	Miao, Mandarin	800	irregular
<i>Wuyang riverside</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committees of Huangping, Shibing, and Zhenyuan Counties	1983	Miao, Mandarin	800	irregular
<i>Ethnic research on Leishan</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Leishan County		Miao, Mandarin	600	irregular
<i>Spring sights of Wuyang</i>	Huangping County (township level)	1987	Miao, Mandarin	300	irregular
<i>Riverbank of Qingshui River</i>	Huangping County (township level)		Miao	300	irregular
<i>Ethnic work</i>	Prefectural Ethnic Affairs Committee	1984	Miao, Mandarin	1,000	irregular
<i>Wax flower</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Danzhai County		Miao, Mandarin	600	irregular
<i>Shengs of the Miao and songs of the Dong</i>	Ethnic Affairs Committee of Rongjiang County	1984	Miao, Dong	600	irregular
<i>Azaleas on Miao Mountain</i>	Miao Writing System Club of Baiyan Village, Leishan County	1992	Miao	200	irregular
<i>Cuckoos on Miao Mountain</i>	Leishan County Club, Wudong Miao Writing System Club	1992	Miao, Mandarin	150	irregular
<i>Brief newspaper of ethnic work</i>	Miao Script Club of Baiyan Village, Leishan County	1995	Miao	80	irregular
<i>Technology for becoming rich</i>	Miao Writing System Club of Baiyan Village, Leishan County	1991	Miao	200	irregular
total				9,880	

18.3.2.8 Radio broadcasts and films

In order to address poor transportation infrastructure, insufficient information, and language barriers in the ethnic areas of Guizhou Province and to enhance various ethnicities' scientific, cultural, and political quality, the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Guizhou Province and Guizhou People's Broadcasting decided to co-host a broadcasting program in the Miao language called the *Voice of ethnicities*. It started at the beginning of August 1987 and was broadcast once a week, fifteen minutes at a time, but due to a lack of funds it only operated for six months before being canceled.

In October 1990, the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Shibus County cooperated with the Broadcasting Station of Shibus County to create a radio program called the *Voice of the Miao ethnic group*. On market days, this program promoted the Party's guidelines, policies, laws, and regulations, imparted popular science, and reported local news in the Miao language to the Miao people. It received a favorable response from the Miao masses.

In 1987, the Broadcasting Station of Huangping County began broadcasting in the Miao language. By the end of 1994, the radio broadcasts in the Miao language had amounted to 480 hours, and more than 9,000 scripts had been broadcast.

Since the 1980s, translating and dubbing films in ethnic minority languages has been revived. In order to enrich the cultural life in ethnic minority areas and promote the development of a socialist spirit, the Coating Station of the Film Company of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture has actively translated films into ethnic languages. Between 1981 and 1994, the station translated 240 films into the Miao language, which were shown up to 2,100 times and watched by 2,019,000 viewers. Among these films, there were 196 feature films in the Miao language shown 1,960 times and watched by 1,685,600 people, and 45 scientific films shown 160 times and watched by 333,400 people. In November 1984, the Ministry of Culture and the National Ethnic Affairs Committee jointly held an awards ceremony for ethnic film dubbing. The feature film *Wudang*, which had been dubbed in the Miao language by the Film Company of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, won an award for excellence in dubbed films.

18.3.2.9 Plaques and seals

In 1985, the People's Congress Standing Committee of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, the Prefectural Ethnic Affairs Committee, and the Ethnic Administration and Management School of South-eastern Guizhou first hung plaques written in Miao, Dong, and Mandarin on their walls. Since September 1995, a total of sixty divisions of all the departments in the prefecture have put up or are going to put up plaques written in Miao, Dong, and Mandarin. Almost all the plaques

in every department and division of Taijiang County Government have been written in both Miao and Mandarin. In Shibing County, fifty-one departmental plaques have been written in both Miao and Chinese. At present, many departments and divisions on the level of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and counties (cities) are exchanging plaques in Chinese for ones written in both ethnic and Chinese writing systems. Currently, in the case of the National People's Congress and the Political Consultative Conference held by the prefectures and counties (cities), the flags displayed at conferences are all written in two writing systems, the local ethnic writing system and the Chinese writing system, or in three writing systems.

In 1990, the Miao Translation Office of Taoyao Village in Leishan County first used seals written in both the Miao and Chinese writing systems. Until October 1995, the Leading Group of the Miao Writing System of Kaili City had used seals written in the Miao and Chinese writing systems. Only two departments, the Language Department of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture and the Office of the Leading Group of Ethnic Writing Systems of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, had used seals written in three writing systems, namely Miao, Dong, and Chinese.

18.3.2.10 Judicial departments

Courts on various levels generally invited the Ethnic Affairs Committee to translate into Chinese complaints by the Miao masses written in Miao, after which they were filed and the cases heard. This implemented the right of Miao people who only knew the Miao writing system but not Chinese characters to use their native writing system freely. In order to eradicate illiteracy, in 1988 the Justice Bureau of Kaili City authorized the Language Department of the South-eastern Guizhou Prefectural Ethnic Affairs Committee, which had translated the *Nongcun Pufa Shouce* 农村普法手册 [Handbook of law dissemination in villages], to translate the handbook into Miao and hand out copies to Miao people who understand the Miao writing system. This activity had beneficial effects. In 1995, Taijiang County distributed questions on law dissemination in villages. The questions were written in both Miao and Chinese writing systems, so it was easy for families who could not understand the Chinese writing system to answer the questions.

18.3.2.11 Non-governmental communication

In Miao villages whose villagers did not speak Mandarin, once Miao people grasped the Miao writing system, they felt that the Miao writing system was an essential communicative tool in their social life. Young villagers worked in coastal areas, and the majority of them wrote letters to their relatives in Miao. Lovers or relatives who left home to do business preferred to write letters or

send telegrams in Miao. The Miao writing system was employed in a wide range of contexts. The Council Districts of Taoyao Village, Danjiang Township, and Leishan County all collected statistics on the promotion and use of the Miao writing system in eight administrative districts in the relevant areas during the previous ten years, including:

- translating 8 laws and regulations, Party documents, and material on family planning, amounting to 15,948 characters;
- translating and reprinting 79 pieces of popular-scientific material, amounting to 23,447 characters;
- translating 18 articles, including jokes and short sketches, from Mandarin, amounting to 18,000 characters;
- collecting 1 volume of riddles of the Miao ethnic group, including 174 riddles (already published);
- creating 44 literature and art programs, amounting to 26,613 characters;
- collecting 707 folk songs, amounting to 140,022 lines;
- collecting 12 ancient laws of the Miao, amounting to 1,467 lines;
- collecting 5 volumes of village regulations, rules, and laws, amounting to 12,800 characters;
- collecting 4 volumes of spells, amounting to 78,000 characters;
- writing 2 books on the history of the Miao ethnic group, amounting to 35,000 characters;
- writing 1 book of love songs of the Miao ethnic group, amounting to 48,630 characters (small parts of which have been published);
- collecting 2 volumes of drinking songs, amounting to 98,000 characters (small parts of which have been published);
- collecting 38 ancient spoken and sung stories, amounting to 282,000 characters;
- newly editing 137 folk songs, amounting to 2,271 lines;
- compiling 4 volumes of drama of the Miao ethnic group, amounting to 280,518 characters (2 dramas have been performed);
- writing 1 novel in Miao, amounting to 28 pages and 58,000 characters;
- performing 38 shows in the Miao language;
- singing 48 songs in the Miao language;
- screening 28 films;
- publishing 9 issues of the *Taoyao Miao newspaper*, amounting to 1,080 copies;
- publishing 5 issues of *Azaleas on Miao Mountain* and *Cuckoos on Leigong Mountain* on the township level, amounting to 308 copies;
- publishing 18 issues of the *Miao Wall newspaper*, amounting to 48,000 characters;
- collecting 1 book on the prescription of herbal medicines in the Miao ethnic group, amounting to 1.42 million characters;
- collecting 2 volumes of *Township regulations and non-governmental agreements* for two villages;
- collecting 1 account book written in Miao (the Huyang Village Credit Union's account book); and
- receiving many material objects such as notes, notices, letters, and telegrams written in Miao.

The majority of the material objects mentioned above are displayed in the Taoyao Primary School showroom, where implementation work on the Miao writing system is exhibited.

18.4 Evaluation and reflection in different social sectors

18.4.1 Attitudes towards the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao and implementation of the Miao writing system

In summary, four of the leading groups of one city and four counties in South-eastern Guizhou, namely the Party Committee, the government, the National People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, consistently required the State to formally approve and implement the Miao writing system as soon as possible. The majority of the Miao people also earnestly joined in this request. At the fourteen conferences I attended, attendees neither openly opposed the Miao writing system nor disagreed with the trial work on the Miao writing system. However, some advanced different suggestions. Among the 235 valid questionnaires, 3 provided systematic critical views of the Miao writing system and its implementation. The positive suggestions proposed by the majority of leaders and masses and the critical suggestions provided by the minority are summarized below.

The positive attitudes and opinions towards the Miao writing system and its implementation were as follows. (1) Having an ethnic writing system is an essential and important factor in eliminating ignorance and backwardness and becoming a developed ethnicity. (2) The Miao ethnic group is one of the six largest ethnicities in China, and there are a total of twelve million Miao people around the world. In China there are more than seven million Miao people, comprising the largest population of Miao people in the world. Guizhou has the largest concentration of Miao people in China, and South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture has the largest concentration of Miao people in Guizhou; it is the prefecture most inhabited by Miao people. If the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao is not legally and formally approved by the State, the Miao people's self-respect, confidence, and pride will be affected. (3) Formal implementation of the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao will promote regional stability and ethnic unity; it will also help the county to maintain prolonged stability. (4) Eastern Guizhou Miao is the fastest and most effective tool for popularizing primary education in Miao villages. (5) The writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao is an important tool for recording ethnic cultural heritage, transmitting scientific and technological information, and stimulating cultural life in rural areas.

The negative attitudes and opinions towards the Miao writing system and its implementation were as follows. (1) The common use of Mandarin helps to strengthen and develop various ethnicities. (2) The development of languages follows the rule of natural selection. The Miao writing system should therefore be allowed to develop without intervention. (3) Ethnic equality manifests itself in several ways. The lack of a writing system does not imply inequality. (4) It is inappropriate to offer courses in the Miao writing system at school because this will affect teaching progress and Mandarin learning. (5) People should spend their limited time and energy learning Mandarin and foreign languages because these languages are used much more widely than the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao.

18.4.2 Satisfaction with the usage situation of Eastern Guizhou Miao

The samples of this questionnaire were from Miao people who had attained a certain cultural level in the society of South-eastern Guizhou. Of the respondents to the 235 valid questionnaires, 75.32% were male and 24.68% were female; 0.85% had reached the educational level of elementary primary school, 2.96% primary school level, 8.08% secondary school level, 34.47% high school level, 45.11% bachelor's level, and 7.66% higher degree level. In terms of place of origin, 22.55% of them were from Guiyang, 33.62% from South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture, and 43.83% from various counties (cities). The social composition of the sample population is given in Table 18.5.

Table 18.5: Social composition of the sample Miao population in South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture.

Social sector	Number of samples	%	Social sector	Number of samples	%
Party and governmental organizations	33	14.04	radio, film, television	19	8.09
NPC and CPPCC	18	7.66	science and technology	12	5.11
Education Departments	85	36.17	judiciary	17	7.23
Departments of Literacy and the Arts	20	8.51	others	17	7.23
news	14	5.96			

I asked about respondents' attitudes towards language from eight perspectives.

- (1) Use of the Miao writing system on commemorative plaques. 16.6% of the respondents answered that they were “basically content,” 73.19% answered that the Miao writing system was “not widely employed” on plaques, 5.96% answered that this use of the Miao writing system was unimportant to them, 3.40% felt that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system for this, and 0.85% gave no answer.
- (2) Use of the Miao writing system in bilingual education at primary school. 19.15% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 70.64% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently for this purpose, 3.40% answered that this use of the Miao writing system was unimportant to them, 5.53% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system for this purpose, and 1.28% failed to answer the question.
- (3) Use of the Miao writing system for eliminating illiteracy. 21.7% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 66.81% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently for this purpose, 3.83% answered that this use of the Miao writing system was unimportant to them, 5.53% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system for this purpose, and 2.13% gave no answer.
- (4) Use of the Miao writing system in radio broadcasts. 9.36% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 77.45% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently in this context, 4.86% answered that the use of Miao writing system in this context was unimportant to them, 7.23% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system in this context, and 1.28% gave no answer.
- (5) Use of the Miao writing system in films. 9.79% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 76.17% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently in this context, 5.96% answered that the use of the Miao writing system in this context was unimportant to them; 7.23% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system in this context, and 0.85% gave no answer.
- (6) Use of the Miao writing system in television. 8.94% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 77.45% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently in this context, 5.96% answered that the use of the Miao writing system in this context was unimportant to them, 6.81% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system in this context, and 0.85% gave no answer.
- (7) Use of the Miao writing system in book publication. 11.91% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 75.74% answered that

the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently for this, 4.68% answered that the use of the Miao writing system for this was unimportant to them, 5.96% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system for this, and 1.70% gave no answer.

- (8) Use of the Miao writing system in newspapers and journals. 9.46% of the respondents answered that this was “basically satisfactory,” 77.45% answered that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently in this context; 5.53% answered that the use of the Miao writing system in this context was unimportant to them, 6.38% answered that it was unnecessary to use the Miao writing system in this context; and 1.25% gave no answer.

In conclusion, more than 70% of the respondents thought that the Miao writing system was employed insufficiently in the eight usage situations listed above. The percentages of those who believed that “it didn’t matter” or that “it was unnecessary” were both below 8%.

18.4.3 Attitudes about whether the Eastern Miao writing system is useful or not

In various sectors of society, just 112 respondents thought the Miao writing system was very useful, accounting for 47.66% of the sample; 56 respondents, 23.83% of the sample, thought the Miao writing system was somewhat useful; 14 respondents, 5.96% of the sample, thought that at present they had no chance to use the Miao writing system; and 19 respondents, 8.09% of the sample, thought that the Miao writing system was useless.

18.4.4 The purpose and significance of learning the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao

Eight reasons for learning the Miao writing systems were listed in the questionnaire, which required the respondents to list the relative significance of learning the Miao writing system on four levels. The first level concerned learning the Miao writing system to read and record prominent aspects of ethnic culture. The second to fourth levels were as follows: learning the Miao writing system can increase ethnic self-esteem and pride, helps the Miao people to engage in the creation of native ethnic folk literature, and helps the Miao people to become educated.

18.4.5 Parents choosing schools for their children

Three types of bilingual education were listed in the questionnaire. I assumed that all of the respondents had children and asked them which schools they wished to send their children to. The results showed that 54.47% of the respondents chose Miao–Mandarin bilingual schools, 27.23% chose schools where all the courses were taught via Mandarin textbooks and the Miao language was used as an auxiliary teaching language, and 17.02% chose schools where all courses were taught in Mandarin.

18.4.6 Opinions on bilingual education

51.06% of respondents were of the opinion that the most suitable type of bilingual education for the local situation was learning the Miao language and writing system first and then learning Mandarin, with decreasing class hours on Miao and increasing class hours on Mandarin. 34.47% believed that the most suitable type of bilingual education was offering courses on Miao and Mandarin simultaneously, while splitting class hours equally between Miao and Mandarin. Finally, 9.79% of the respondents thought that it was best to learn the Miao language and writing system first, and then learn Mandarin, while equally splitting class hours between Miao and Mandarin.

18.4.7 Views on the methods for eradicating illiteracy in rural areas

Regarding methods for eradicating illiteracy in rural areas, 58.03% of the respondents were of the view that it was better to learn the Miao writing system first and then Chinese writing, 36.17% thought that learning only the Miao writing system was better, and 5.53% believed that learning only the Chinese writing system was better.

18.5 Primary experiences of trial work

18.5.1 Experiences of creating and revising the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao

- (1) The currently used writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao is a Roman-based alphabetic writing system. It is scientifically designed to be easy to learn and

remember. In terms of the form of the alphabet, the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao and the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet are as consistent as possible; they use the same letters as much as possible to indicate identical or similar pronunciations so as to make them convenient to learn for both Miao people and Han people.

- (2) The alphabetic forms of the Eastern Guizhou Miao system and the other three types of Miao writing system are as consistent as possible in order to make it convenient for Miao people in different dialectal regions to learn one another's varieties. At the same time, this creates conditions for unifying the Miao writing system in the future.
- (3) All of the non-Roman alphabets were prohibited and romanization was completely implemented.

18.5.2 Primary experiences of trial work on the writing system for Eastern Guizhou Miao

- (1) Establishing organizations. Trial work on the Miao writing system is a systematic undertaking with various aspects. Only the establishment and improvement of organizations on various levels and ensuring a certain level of funding will enable trial work on the Miao writing system to proceed with reliable support and foundations.
- (2) Training teaching staff. The key to good trial work on the Miao writing system is creating a team of teaching staff with an ideological and political culture and professional proficiency. In recent decades, South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture has established a team of teaching staff working on the Miao writing system through many methods, for example training in the prefecture, training in groups, training in counties (cities), offering courses of the Miao writing system at teaching schools, setting up the Miao language at schools managed by the Ethnic Affairs Committee, and sending teachers to receive training at ethnic universities outside the prefecture. Only when a teaching team stays at a school for a long time can the implementation of and education in the Miao writing system continue to progress.
- (3) Paying special attention to literacy and bilingual education. In rural areas where the Miao people live, Miao literacy and bilingual education are deeply welcomed by the students and their parents who cannot understand Mandarin. The ten-year trial has fully proven that this is the best way to popularize primary education and enhance cultural quality. It has achieved good educational results.

- (4) Compiling textbooks and reading material in Miao. Consolidating the achievements of literacy education and bilingual education depends on having a lot of reading material in popular science and literature. In recent decades, the Ethnic Affairs Committee of South-eastern Guizhou Prefecture has organized organs to publish a large number of books in Miao in various forms so as to strongly promote the development of the Miao language and writing system.

18.6 Conclusion

Trial implementation work in the last forty years has proven that the Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system, a kind of Roman alphabetic writing system, is suitable for the Eastern Guizhou Miao language. After being revised three times, the writing system of Eastern Guizhou Miao has been clarified, with accurate pronunciation, beautiful character structures, and a convenient writing system. It has been welcomed by the Miao ethnic masses.

The Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system has been employed in many sectors, such as primary schools, secondary schools, technical secondary schools, universities, literacy night schools, popular science and medicine, radio and film, news, and publishing. Especially in trial areas where Miao people live, the Eastern Guizhou Miao writing system has taken root among the Miao ethnic masses. It has become a written communicative tool in daily life.

Chapter 19

Three major reforms of writing systems in Xinjiang and Mongolia

This chapter aims to describe the course of the reforms of ethnic minority writing systems in northern and north-western China in the later twentieth century, analyzing the backgrounds, motivations, and purposes of the reforms.

From the mid-1950s to the mid-1980s, during more than thirty years after the founding of New China, the writing systems of ethnic minority groups underwent large changes in Xinjiang and the Mongolian areas of China. In Xinjiang, there were three major reforms of writing systems. In the first reform, the original Arabic scripts used by ethnic groups were replaced by Cyrillic scripts; in the second reform, Cyrillic scripts were replaced by Roman scripts; and in the third reform, Roman scripts were abandoned in favor of the original Arabic alphabets. In the Mongolian areas, there were two major script reforms. In the first reform, the traditional Mongolian writing systems were abandoned in favor of Cyrillic scripts; in the second reform, Cyrillic scripts were discarded in favor of the traditional Mongolian script.

19.1 Currently used traditional writing systems

In many cases, the spread of writing systems is related to a certain culture or civilization. The most popular ethnic minority alphabetic writing systems in contemporary northern China are Arabic and Mongolian writing systems. The spread of Arabic script is tightly connected to the spread of Islam; Mongolian script is closely related to Buddhism.

19.1.1 Arabic

At the beginning of the seventh century, Muhammad (570–632), an Arab, founded Islam and recorded the Koran in Arabic. At the beginning of the eighth century, the Arabs established an Arab empire by force, whose territory extended from the

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Bay of Biscay on the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Indus River and western border areas of China in the east, including large parts of Africa, Asia, and Europe. Along with the military conquests of the Arabs, Islam and the Arabic language gradually spread west.

The spread of Arabic was not completely uniform across Xinjiang. Prior to the latter half of the tenth century, the Uygur writing system was popular in the Xinjiang area. Thereafter, with the introduction of Islam, the Kashgar area in southern Xinjiang began to use Arabic script. The great *Turkic dictionary* written in Arabic script was compiled. By the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, Arabic script was introduced to Hami, Turpan, and Hexi in Xinjiang, where it gradually replaced the locally used Uygur writing system.

In terms of languages and writing systems, the coexistence of two kinds of writing system in the earlier period gave place to the united modern Uygur writing system (the northern writing system represented by Uygur script and the southern writing system represented by Arabic script). This is called the old Uygur script (also known as Chagatai script).

(Geng Shiming 1983: 54)

Islam was introduced into the Kazakh area earlier than the Uygur area. In the latter half of the thirteenth century, the ancestors of the Kazakhs gradually came to write their native language in Arabic script, but the Kazakh writing system was formed in the latter half of the nineteenth century by the generation of the great poet Abay Kunanbaiuly (1845–1904), a period that saw the publication of the Kazakh newspaper *Grasslands newspaper* and the journal *Shout loudly* (Geng Shiming 1980).

The original Arabic script cannot indicate vowels accurately, so it is not well-suited to writing Turkic languages. However, from another perspective, this shortcoming of the Arabic alphabet is a major virtue, because it allows many dialectal differences between the written forms of various Turkic languages to be ignored. When many Turkic languages in Central Asia shifted to Arabic script, it promoted communication and assimilation between Turkic and Arabic culture; it helped many Turkic languages in Central Asia to borrow and absorb new terms from Persian and Arabic; and it enlarged the influence of Persian culture and Arabic culture throughout Central Asia.

19.1.2 Traditional Mongolian scripts

During the unification of the Mongols, Mongolian was written in Uygur script. In 1204, Genghis Khan defeated the neighboring Naiman tribe and gained the service of their scribes, who used Uygur script, after which a largely unmodified

Uyghur script, called Uyghur–Mongolian script by later generations, was used to write Mongolian (Dob 1981).

In 1269, Kublai Khan instructed the national master, the Phags-pa Lama, to create the Mongolian Square Script, often called Phags-pa script. This script was based on Tibetan script; the minority of newly created letters for non-Tibetan sounds were also based on corresponding Tibetan symbols (Junast 1980). This new Mongolian writing system was implemented in 1272. Due to its inconvenience, it was replaced by Uyghur–Mongolian script in 1310, and made into the so-called Kalika Mongolian script to express Buddhist scriptures more accurately. In the fourteenth century, Kalika was the legal writing system within the Mongol Empire (Zhou Youguang 1997: 241).

After classical Mongolian script had been used for hundreds of years, two regional variants of Mongolian writing systems arose. One variant is the Clear Script (*tod bichig*) used by Mongolian ethnic groups in Xinjiang of China. It was created in 1648 based on the Oirat dialect of Mongolian and formed on the basis of classical Mongolian script. The other variant is the Buryat script, whose basis is the Buryat dialect of Mongolian in southern Siberia around Lake Baikal. It was created on the basis of classical Mongolian script during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and primarily used in Irkutsk and the Transbaikalian areas of Russia.

19.2 The first major change of alphabets: Cyrillicization

19.2.1 Social and historical background

After the founding of New China, reform of writing systems played an important role in State political life. One issue that arose was whether the alphabets to be employed in the reform of ethnic minority writing systems should be Roman alphabets or Cyrillic alphabets. In the mid-1950s, Cyrillic alphabets were finally chosen to be the basis for writing systems in the reform of ethnic minority scripts in Xinjiang and the Mongolian areas. This choice was directly related to the social and historical background and was guided by many social factors. In particular, it was closely related to international and domestic politics at that time and the friendly relationship between China and the Soviet Union.

First, from the perspective of communication among ethnic groups, the Xinjiang area bordered the Soviet Union and Inner Mongolia bordered Mongolia. In these two areas, ethnic minority people living in the transboundary region accounted for a large proportion of the population. The ethnic minority inside China had close exchanges with the people of the same name outside China. In

the Soviet Union, many ethnic writing systems used by Turkic peoples were completely replaced by Cyrillic alphabets; in Mongolia, the writing system was changed to a Cyrillic alphabet as well, which to some extent influenced many Turkic ethnic groups in the Xinjiang area and Mongolian ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia when selecting a new script.

In addition, from the perspective of the political relationship between the two countries, in the early stages of the founding of New China, China and the Soviet Union had a close relationship. At that time, the imperialist camp headed by America enacted isolation and a blockade of China. If China wished to break through the imperialist blockade and embargo to help the national economy recover and develop quickly, China had no choice but to receive help from the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

In 1954, the Soviet linguist G. P. Serdyuchenko and the Mongolian linguist Bulyash Todaeva arrived in China and actively participated in the creation and reform of Chinese ethnic minority writing systems. They strongly urged replacing the scripts used in Xinjiang with Cyrillic alphabets and the writing systems used in the Mongolian area with a new Mongolian writing system (also a Cyrillic alphabet). If the writing systems in Xinjiang and the Mongolian areas were replaced with Cyrillic alphabets, this would help to strengthen communication and contact within the socialist camp. The policy implemented in China at that time and the specific suggestions proposed by Soviet experts deeply influenced the ethnic minorities in the Xinjiang and Inner Mongolian areas in deciding to replace their original writing systems with Cyrillic alphabets.

19.2.2 Xinjiang

According to the first national population census, conducted in 1953, the total population of Xinjiang was 4,873,600. Of this, 3,607,600 were Uygur, accounting for 74% of the total; 332,100 were Han, comprising 6.8%; 506,400 were Kazakhs; 70,900 were Kyrgyz; 58,300 were Mongols; 12,700 were Xibe; 22,200 were Russians; 13,600 were Tajik and Uzbeks; 6,900 were Tatars; 1,200 were Manchu; and 2,000 were Daur.⁵⁴

When New China was founded, the writing systems used by the various ethnic groups who spoke Turkic languages in Xinjiang employed Arabic script.

⁵⁴ These data are cited from Ethnic Affairs Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (ed.). *Xinjiang Minzu Cidian*. Xinjiang People's Press, 1995: 888.

After 1949, before the first large-scale reform of writing systems in Xinjiang, some improvements were made to the Uygur writing system.

In May 1951, the Conference on the Uygur Language was held in Almaty in the Soviet Union. This conference approved a set of new Uygur phonetic alphabets based on Arabic alphabets (Li Sen 1954: 62). After the conference, the *Weiwuer Wenxue Yuyan zai Alabo Zimu Jichu shang de Jianming Zhengzifa* 维吾尔文学语言在阿拉伯字母基础上的简明正字法 [Brief orthography of the Arabic-based Uygur literary language] was published. Based on this orthography, Mohmod Zaed drew up the *Weiwuer Wenxue Yuyan Jianming Zhengzifa* 维吾尔文学语言简明正字法 [Brief orthography of the Uygur literary language] in 1951. On May 1, 1954, at the Conference of the Xinjiang People's Government, the attendees approved this orthography and decided to implement it completely across the province (Aierken Arezi 1996: 81).

In 1954, the Kazakh writing system was reformed as well. In July of the same year, at the 136th Executive Conference of the Xinjiang People's Government, the attendees approved the *Gaige Hasakewen Zimubiao he Zhengzifa Guize (Caoan)* 改革哈萨克字母表和正字法规则(草案) [Reform of Kazakh alphabet and orthographic rules (draft)] and decided to apply it widely.

Between the 1930s and 1940s, the Kyrgyz ethnic group only used the Kyrgyz writing system, an Arabic script, but no books written in Kyrgyz script were published. In July 1955, the Xinjiang provincial government issued the *Keerkeziyu Zhengzifa Guize* 柯尔克孜语正字法规则 [Orthographic rules for the Kyrgyz language].

After the founding of New China, the government finally decided to carry out a major reform of writing systems in Xinjiang in 1956. In August of the same year, the Scientific Symposium on Ethnic Languages in Xinjiang was held in Urumchi City. At this symposium, the attendees formulated policies for nine new ethnic writing systems for independent languages with existing writing systems.

Those languages belonging to the Turkic family underwent reform of the writing system to complete cyrillization. Specific methods for different languages differed slightly. The population of the Uzbek and Tatar ethnic groups was small and scattered. The languages used by these two ethnic groups were the same as the corresponding languages in the Soviet Union, so it was decided to directly employ the Soviet Union's Uzbek and Tatar writing systems. The Kazakh and Kyrgyz ethnic groups lived in relatively compact communities and in autonomous prefectures. The Kazakh and Kyrgyz languages in China were almost the same as those in the Soviet Union, so the attendees decided that these two ethnic groups would employ the Soviet Union's Kazakh and Kyrgyz writing systems respectively. In addition, the Uygur ethnic group was primarily distributed in China. The Soviet Union's Uygur alphabets and orthography did not fit the reality

in China. Although the Uygur writing system in China employed Cyrillic script, the Soviet Uygur Phonetic Alphabet was not directly employed; instead, a program for another Uygur writing system was drawn up for China (Fu Maoji 1956).

In December 1956, at the Thirteenth Conference of the People's Government Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, it was decided to reform the Uygur, Kazakh, Mongol, Xibe, Uzbek, and Tatar writing systems and help those ethnic groups that had no writing system to create one. On February 9, 1957, the *Xinjiang Ribao* 新疆日报 [Xinjiang daily] released a new program (draft) on writing systems for five ethnic groups, including the Uygur, Kazakhs, Mongols, Kyrgyz, and Xibe, which were based on Cyrillic script.

According to Serdyuchenko (1956: 10–11), the five purposes of the first reform of writing systems in Xinjiang were as follows. First, if various ethnic groups speaking Turkic languages in Xinjiang continued to use modified Arabic scripts, these ethnic groups' writing systems would not only isolate them from the Turkic-speaking ethnic groups who used Cyrillic scripts, but also from ethnic groups who were not using reformed Arabic scripts. Second, due to the idiosyncrasies of their alphabets, various ethnic groups in Xinjiang needed sets of special printing equipment. Third, if the ethnic groups used reformed Arabic scripts, this would hinder the use of publications in the same or a similar language by the respective ethnic groups in the Soviet Union and Xinjiang. Fourth, except for Turkish, many other Turkic ethnic groups in Europe and Asia were still using Cyrillic writing systems. Fifth, if various ethnic groups in Xinjiang employed Cyrillic alphabets, this would help them to use important books and many scientific and educational reference works written in ethnic writing systems in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, it would help cultural development in Xinjiang.

19.2.3 Inner Mongolia

As discussed above, the replacement that began in 1941 of the traditional Mongolian writing systems with the Cyrillic-based new Mongolian script by the Mongolian People's Republic was completed in 1946. After the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was established in 1947, the leaders of the autonomous party and government paid much attention to promoting and studying the new Mongolian writing system; they retained some courses on the Mongolian language; they introduced knowledge of the new Mongolian writing system in Mongolian publications such as *People's knowledge* and *New Inner Mongolia*; and they published books such as literacy textbooks and guides to the orthography of the new Mongolian writing system. In 1951, they tried to teach Mongolian at primary and secondary schools in Hailar and Ulanhot; moreover,

they employed the new Mongolian writing system to eliminate illiteracy in some areas. The new Mongolian writing system had some effect in Inner Mongolia.

After the founding of New China, the work of studying, researching, and implementing the new Mongolian writing system in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region continued.

Advanced culture and the developed languages and writing systems once had a great and good influence on the establishment and development of economic and cultural cooperation between the Chinese people and the Mongolian people, and they still have the same influence on the rapid development of Mongolian ethnic languages and writing systems in China. In this way, the consistency of the writing system was developed. (Erdenetogtoo 1956: 7)

The People's Committee of the Mongolia Autonomous Region held a third conference in July 1955. They discussed the issue of the new, Cyrillic-based Mongolian writing system and approved the "Decisions on the implementation of the new Mongolian writing system." The decisions stated that "for the rapid development and popularization of culture and education in the Mongolia Autonomous Region, it is necessary to employ this new writing system."⁵⁵

In late May of the same year, the Preparatory Office of the Ethnic Minority Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the People's Committee of the Mongolia Autonomous Region, and the Committee for Language Reform in Mongolia jointly held the Symposium on the Mongolian Language in Hohhot. The Soviet expert Serdyuchenko attended the symposium and gave a talk. At the symposium, Erdenetogtoo announced a plan for the full implementation of the new Mongolian writing system on behalf of the Committee for Language Reform in Mongolia. They attempted to complete the implementation of the new Mongolian script within four years, namely before 1959. In detail, three steps were specified as follows.

In the first half of 1956, the Committee for Language Reform of Mongolia was to train full-time literacy teachers. In the summer of 1956, they were to concentrate on training teachers of the new Mongolian writing system at primary schools in the banners. In the second half of 1956, they were to begin eliminating illiteracy with the new Mongolian writing system. All new primary school students were to study the new Mongolian writing system. In higher primary schools and secondary schools, students were to study the new Mongolian writing system as well. The courses on Mongolian offered in cadres' cultural cramming schools were all taught in the new Mongolian writing system. From 1957, the new Mongolian writing system was to be employed in official documents

⁵⁵ Cited from People's Committee of the Mongolia Autonomous Region (ed.). Guanyu Tuixing Xinmengwen de Jueding. *Neimenggu Ribao* (July 21, 1955). 1.

and notices, gradually replacing the old Mongolian writing system. Relevant departments on various levels were to train cadres systematically. From 1956, publications written in the new Mongolian writing system were to make up 20% of annual Mongolian publications. By 1960, except for classical literature, all publications were to be written in the new Mongolian script.

On August 2, 1956, the People's Committee of the Mongolia Autonomous Region released the *Jiaqiang Lingdao Dali Kaizhan Mengzu Ganbu de Xinmengwen Xuexi Yundong de Zhishi* 加强领导大力开展蒙族干部的新蒙文学习运动的指示 [Instructions on strengthening, leading, and extensively carrying out the movement to make Mongolian cadres learn the new Mongolian writing system].

In order to demonstrate the advantages of replacing traditional Mongolian script in China with the new Mongolian script of Mongolia and to show the advantages of implementing the new Mongolian writing system in China, Serdyuchenko (1956: 257) made three points. First, the Mongol ethnic group in China should shift to using the new Mongolian script so as to access all books written in Mongolian provided by the Mongolian People's Republic, and those written in Buryat provided by the Soviet Union, regarding social politics, literature and the arts, and scientific education. Second, it would be very easy for China to establish the material basis of the latest printing technology immediately. If China so requested, the Soviet Union would immediately provide China with the necessary printing equipment. Moreover, the Soviet Union would provide China with the latest and most complete typewriters with Cyrillic keyboards. Third, if the Mongol ethnic group in China employed the Roman alphabet, it would be isolated from the Mongolian people, who had entered a highly developed phase of social politics, national economy, and culture.

19.3 The second major alphabet reform: Romanization

19.3.1 Social and historical background

In 1953, Stalin died and Khrushchev eventually came to power. The Sino-Soviet relationship became strained. After uprisings in Poland and Hungary in the autumn of 1956, China immediately realized that the assistance provided by Moscow would decrease because more funds had to be used to stabilize the situation in Eastern Europe.

After that, Moscow condemned the Great Leap Forward and People's Commune in China, which led the Sino-Soviet relationship to worsen. In 1969, the Soviet Union suddenly withdrew technicians from China, which further strained the Sino-Soviet relationship. In order to deal with such a situation,

since 1958 China had been making policies to enable it to seek help from outside on the grounds of self-reliance.

Since the second half of 1957, the rectification movement and the Movement Opposing Local Nationalism had been widely carried out in ethnic minority areas. Serious ideological and political pressures were felt (Huang Guangxue 1993: 155, 127).

19.3.2 Basic principles of designing alphabets for ethnic minority languages

Before 1957, the design of alphabets for ethnic minority languages lacked unified principles. Except for two types of Dai writing system, southern ethnic writing systems were almost all based on Roman alphabets; northern ethnic writing systems were based on Cyrillic alphabets. In 1956, the Symposium on Alphabetic Forms of Ethnic Writing Systems was held in Guiyang City. The design principles of southern Roman alphabetic writing systems were confirmed. The principles aimed at achieving consistency with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet.

In July 1957, the Forum on Ethnic Work was held in Qingdao City. Relevant experts from the Culture and Education Department of the National Ethnic Affairs Committee and the Ethnic Minority Language Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (merged into the Ethnicities Institute in 1962) proposed that, when ethnic minorities created or reformed writing systems in future, they would all employ the alphabetic form of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet; other alphabets would no longer be used. In December of the same year, the State Council approved *Guanyu Shaoshu Minzu Wenzhi Fang'an zhong Sheji Zimu de Jixiang Yuanze* 关于少数民族文字方案中设计字母的几项原则 [Some principles on the alphabetic design of ethnic minority writing systems] (Division of Culture and Education of the State Affairs Commission 1958).

In 1958, Premier Zhou Enlai pointed out in *Dangqian Wenzhi Gaige de Renwu* 当前文字改革的任务 [Current tasks in the reform of writing systems]:

If dozens of ethnic groups have their own respective alphabet systems, this will hinder various ethnic groups from learning from one another and exchanging experiences. Moreover, if each ethnic group uses its own printing and typewriting systems and telegraphic equipment, this will be bad for the cultural and educational development of various ethnic groups in future. Many ethnic groups have expressed the wish to be consistent with the Han people in terms of alphabets in order to conveniently communicate culture, learn Mandarin, and absorb Mandarin terminology.

[. . .] when various ethnic groups create or reform writing systems in the future, in principle, the writing system should be based on Roman script, and moreover, it should be consistent with the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet in terms of the pronunciation and use of letters. (Zhou Enlai 1984 [1958]: 288)

19.3.3 Steps of the second writing system reform

Following *Guanyu Shaoshu Minzu Wenzhi Fang'an zhong Sheji Zimu de Jixiang Yuanze* 关于少数民族文字方案中设计字母的几项原则 [Some principles on designing letters for the ethnic minority writing systems program], issued by the State Council, the People's Committee of the Mongolia Autonomous Region approved the *Guanyu Tingzhi Tuixing Xin Mengwen, Jixu Dali Xuexi he Shiyong Jiu Mengwen de Jueding* 关于停止推行新蒙文，继续大力学习与使用旧蒙文的决定 [Decisions on ceasing to implement the new Mongolian script, and on continuing to study and use the old Mongolian script] in March 1958. At the same time, they renamed the Committee of Language Reform of Mongolia the Working Committee on the Mongolian Language. On March 25, the *Mongolian daily* issued an editorial entitled *Liji Xianqi Xuexi yu Shiyong Jiu Mengwen de Gaochao* 立即掀起学习与使用旧蒙文的高潮 [Immediately initiate a climax in learning and using the old Mongolian script].

Between November 24 and December 11, 1959, the Second Symposium on Ethnic Languages in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was held in Urumchi. The delegates at the symposium suggested abolishing the current Roman-based Uygur writing system and the new Kazakh writing system and employing a new writing system based on the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet. On December 17 of the same year, the Eighth Conference of the People's Committee of the Autonomous Region approved the proposals in *Guanyu Gongbu Weiwuer, Hasake Xin Wenzhi Fang'an* 关于公布维吾尔、哈萨克新文字方案 [Program on a publishing program for new writing systems for Uygur and Kazakh]. On March 21, 1960, the programs (drafts) for these two writing systems were published in the *Xinjiang daily*.

In March 1964, at the First Session of the Third National People's Congress, the attendees approved the decisions on reforming the writing systems of Uygur and Kazakh. The two programs for the new writing systems were approved by the State Council in October and formally implemented in Xinjiang in January 1965.

In August 1976, the Revolutionary Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region decided to cease use of the old writing systems for Uygur and Kazakh and to use the new Uygur and Kazakh writing systems comprehensively. Since 1960, the new writing systems for Uygur and Kazakh had been taught in primary schools. By the beginning of 1979, nearly one million graduates and students at various schools had studied the new writing systems. In addition, the new writing systems were used to eliminate illiteracy among adults; they were also gradually employed in the documents, newspapers and journals, and books of the Party and government institutions in the Autonomous Region (Yang Zhengwang 1979: 36).

19.4 The third major alphabet reform: Nationalization

19.4.1 Social and historical background

At the end of 1978, at the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the attendees decided to transfer the focus of the work of the Party to socialist modernization from 1979, after which activity relating to ethnic minorities in China fully recovered and began to develop further. Various charges against these activities were dropped. The “ultra-left” theory that the nature of the ethnic issue was a class issue was completely discredited. Long-time constraints on thought were relaxed. Many unjust, fake, and false charges were dismissed. Those who had been identified as regional nationalists in the anti-rightist struggle of 1957 were rehabilitated. Those ethnic minority patriots on a high level who were persecuted during the Great Cultural Revolution were rehabilitated as well; moreover, they were properly organized in political respects.

In June 1980, the Islam Association of Xinjiang (referred to as the Islam Association for short) recommenced operations and held its second congress in Urumchi City. Between June 1980 and May 1982, more than 1,800 religiously observant people in Xinjiang were selected as people’s deputies, CPPCC members, and members of committees of the Islam Association of the Autonomous Region on various levels. By 1983, twelve thousand mosques had opened in Xinjiang, and the religious masses began to lead a normal religious life. All these phenomena restored and increased the Chinese Communist Party’s prestige among ethnic groups, and the gap in unity between the Han people and ethnic groups closed (Huang Xueguang 1993: 166).

The features of this phase were as follows: the ethnic policies, religious policies, and united front policies of the Party were restored; ethnic activities and religious activities were completely restored; and the value and status of ethnic cultures and traditional cultures in people’s hearts was restored and promoted.

In addition, in the process of romanization in the reform of writing systems in China, the Chinese writing system was not replaced with a Roman alphabetic writing system; all that occurred is that the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet was drawn up and some characters were simplified. Chinese characters remained in use. Roman alphabets created when New China was founded remained in use for a time, but they were finally replaced by the standardized Yi writing system. In 1980, the State Council formally approved the “Program for the standardization of the Yi writing system submitted by Sichuan Province” (Zhou Qingsheng 1993). After the Roman-based Kyrgyz writing system had been in use for twenty years, it was retired in 1979 with the consent of the Party Committee of the

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The Kyrgyz ethnic group returned to its old use of Arabic script.⁵⁶

19.4.2 Returning to old scripts

Against such a social and political background, the Seventeenth Session of the Fifth Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region approved the *Guanyu Quanmian Shiyong Weiwuer, Hasake Lao Wenzhi de Jueyi* 关于全面使用维吾尔、哈萨克老文字的决议 [Decisions on the comprehensive use of the old Uygur and Kazakh scripts]. The decision was as follows:

Years of practice have proved that the conditions for implementing the new Uygur and Kazakh scripts across the prefecture were not yet ripe. The simultaneous use of the new and old scripts was not beneficial to Uygur and Kazakh ethnic education or to scientific and cultural development. At the conference, we decided to annul the decision entitled “Decision to continue using the new Uygur and Kazakh writing systems and the old Uygur and Kazakh writing systems simultaneously,” which was approved at the Second Session of the Fifth Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; instead, we decided to use the old Uygur and Kazakh scripts completely across the Autonomous Region.

(Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 1191)

The decision also ruled that “after the old writing system has been completely applied, the new writing system can still be kept in reserve [. . .] and used on essential occasions. At the same time, researchers should continue to research the new writing system so as to ensure its constant improvement” (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 1192).

19.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, practices in China and the Central Asian region proved that reform of a writing system is directly related to social and political changes, with a great social and political change generally becoming the driving force for reform of the writing system. Similarly, a major reform of the writing system can serve

⁵⁶ *Xinjiang daily* (December 13, 1979). 1.

as a barometer that reflects international and domestic social and political life. The process of reforming writing systems is closely related to social and political processes; events involving the writing system are closely related to political events, because a writing system or the form of an alphabet is not only a symbolic tool for recording languages, but also a mark of ethnic, state, political, or cultural identity.

Chapter 20

Assessment of the theory and practice of the standardization of the Yi writing system

20.1 Introduction

Since the introduction of the standard Yi writing system in Liangshan, Sichuan, scholars such as Li Min (1979), Mahxiemuga (1985, 1989), Chen Shilin (1985), Wu Jinghua (1990), Zhang Tingxian (1991), and Zhu Jianxin (1991) have written articles covering the *Yiwen Guifan Fang'an* 彝文规范方案 [Program for the standardization of the Yi writing system] and discussing the unity and reform of the Yi writing system. From a macro-sociolinguistic perspective, this chapter will demonstrate successful practices in the standardization of the Yi writing system so as to encourage breakthroughs and development in the reform of ethnic minority writing systems in China; moreover, this chapter will demonstrate the influences of the standard Yi writing system on the improvement and reform of other traditional ethnic writing systems so that we may learn from scholars and colleagues.

20.2 The background to and development of the standard Yi writing system

The standard Yi writing system employed in Liangshan Prefecture in Sichuan Province is an alphabetic writing system generated on the basis of the traditional, or old Yi, writing system, which was standardized in the 1970s. The generation of the standard Yi writing system underwent a rigorous process of development.

From the beginning of its creation, the traditional Yi writing system had a long history as an ideographic writing system. As time passed and the Yi ethnicity spread, the complexities and shortcomings of the ideographs of the Yi writing system became increasingly clear. In order to overcome such shortcomings, the Yi ancestors largely employed a character-creation method, and created characters through homonyms and phonetic loans. As a result, they created 8,000 to 10,000 variant Chinese characters. Thus, the traditional Yi writing system gradually became a quasi-syllabary or set of ideo-phonographs that not only included certain ideographs but also a large number of syllabic symbols.

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The traditional Yi writing system is the primary bearer of traditional Yi culture. The contents of extant ancient books include astronomical and calendrical works, divination and sacred scripture, genealogies and myth, medicine and health, and so forth.

Historically, the priests who performed ceremonies and took charge of cultural relics were called Bimo by the Yi ethnic group (written 毕摩 or 贝毫 in Chinese characters). They were the primary propagators of the traditional Yi writing system. On the one hand, they copied and abridged their predecessors' books and genealogies of upper-class families; on the other hand, they taught recorded traditional culture to their descendants.

Many pieces of evidence can serve to clearly illustrate that the social functions of the traditional Yi writing system were not limited to primitive religious activities. These include lettering and marks written in Yi from the Ming dynasty found in Yunnan Province, bronze bells inscribed with Yi characters and tablet inscriptions in Yi from the Ming dynasty found in Guizhou Province, and contracts written in Yi regarding the slave trade, land and housing pledges, and various registers of debits and credits from the Qing dynasty collected in the Luquan area of Yunnan Province.

At the beginning of the 1950s, reform of writing systems started all over the country. It was like a boat where Yi and Han scholars took over the helm and set course towards alphabetization. The vitality and functions of the traditional Yi writing system were completely forgotten.

On February 2, 1951, the Conference on the Yi Ethnic Language was held in Xichang City, Xikang Province (present-day Sichuan Province). The attendees decided to try to implement the newly created Yi alphabetic script (Chen Shilin 1954: 2) and carry out an educational trial in relevant ethnic universities and primary schools. In 1957, the Central Ethnic Affairs Committee (the present-day National Ethnic Affairs Committee) formally approved the implementation of the *Liangshan Yizu Pinyin Wenzhi Fang'an* 凉山彝族拼音文字方案 [Program for the alphabetic writing system for Liangshan Yi].

If the newly created Yi alphabetic writing system is analyzed from the perspective of scientific accuracy, it would seem nearly perfect, although it needs further revisions and improvements. This program was based on the spoken language, so it was easy to learn, read, and remember, thereby helping mass education. However, it was like a tender shoot that is just sprouting and cannot withstand a rainstorm.

The crisis of the new writing system soon arrived. Between 1958 and the beginning of the 1970s, the Party's policy on ethnic languages was disturbed by the predominance of "ultra-left" thought. The government even decided to "use Mandarin directly" (Mahxiemuga 1985: 30). The new Yi writing system

was completely discarded; the old Yi writing system was not used either. Mandarin was employed in schools, literacy classes, and government organizations. However, the greater part of Liangshan Prefecture was a monolingual community inhabited by the Yi people. The language barrier caused trouble for the majority of the cadres on the basic level and confused many children and illiterates. However, these troubles and puzzles opened up an avenue for motivating the Yi people to reassess the value of their traditional culture.

In present-day society, production, work, and study cannot be performed independently of the use of a writing system. Only through being used in different fields can a writing system be spread and developed. The Liangshan Prefectural Committee of the Chinese Communist Party deeply understood the value of the Yi writing system in the hearts of the Yi people. They convened experts to rearrange the Yi characters; they selected over eight hundred words from eight thousand traditional Yi words and compiled them as *Commonly used Yi characters*. After 1965, they started to publish Yi textbooks in the Yi column of the *Liangshan newspaper* provided to rural cadres and villagers.

After an initial process of classification, the standard Yi writing system was immediately accepted by broad groups of the Yi people. Between the 1960s and 1970s, they repeatedly wrote letters to the Committee of the Provincial Party and the Central Committee of the Party, strongly requesting that the central government permit a standard Yi writing system.

Following the Yi people's wishes and requirements, and studies of the Yi writing system conducted by the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Sichuan Province, in 1974 the Sichuan Provincial Committee of the CPC approved the suggestions proposed by the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Sichuan Province. They suggested continuing to promote Mandarin in the Yi area of Sichuan Province and conducting necessary arrangements for the standardization of native Yi characters in order to perfect them. On such a basis, the Chinese and Yi writing systems were to be used concurrently. The *Yiwen Guifan Fang'an (Caoan) (1974)* 彝文规范方案(草案) [Program for the standardization of the Yi writing system (1974)] underwent a two-year process from draft and revision to approval by the Sichuan Provincial Committee and implementation in the Sichuan area. In 1979, Liangshan Prefecture summarized its experiences during the four-year trial implementation (1976–1979) and reported to the provincial government requesting an end to the trial implementation and the formal introduction of the program. The provincial government agreed with Liangshan Prefecture's suggestions and presented the "Program for the standardization of the Yi writing system" to the State Council. In 1980, the State Council approved the implementation of the program.

With the formal implementation of the standard Yi writing system, its social functions were rapidly enlarged, its usage gradually deepened, and its social status increased in an unprecedented fashion. This is reflected in the four primary aspects that follow.

First, the standard Yi writing system had become an important medium for eliminating adult illiteracy. According to statistics collected between 1980 and 1990, 70% of the counties in Liangshan Prefecture were literate; 450,000 people were no longer illiterate (Wu Jinghua 1990: 1). Between 1978 and 1990, 630,000 people embraced literacy and studied the Yi language in school, which was thirty-one times the number of people who were able to understand the Yi writing system at the beginning of the founding of New China.

Second, the standard Yi writing system became the writing system that mediated ethnic education. Yi–Mandarin bilingual education enhanced the quality of ethnic education. During the ten-year implementation of the standard Yi writing system, 329 primary schools, 58 secondary schools, and 6 high schools in Liangshan Prefecture offered courses on the Yi writing system.

Third, the standard Yi writing system had become important in the mass media. In 1978, the Yi version of the *Liangshan newspaper* (the present-day *Liangshan daily*) was founded; in 1980, *Liangshan literature* (now a quarterly publication) was founded. Between 1980 and 1989, books in Yi on over 110 subjects were published by the Sichuan Nationalities Press, totaling 13 million characters. Their content included politics and economy, science and technology, Yi ancient books, and children's readings. Moreover, textbooks on more than 80 subjects for primary and secondary schools were written in Yi. A large number of ethnic publications added new content to traditional ethnic culture.

Fourth, the Yi standard language has become one of the eight working languages used at national conferences such as the Congress of Party Representatives and the National People's Congress. The social status of the Yi writing system has passed successively through several stages.

20.3 Contributions of the successful standardization of the Yi writing system to the theory of the reform of writing systems

20.3.1 Romanization principles

The romanization of alphabetic forms is one of the basic principles of the theory of the creation and reform of ethnic writing systems in China (Fu Maoji 1979: 12). As early as the 1950s, from its formation to implementation, this principle caused

no controversy; there had always been a consensus among scholars about it. This situation did not arise by accident; instead, it had deep social, political, and historical sources.

Between the demise of the Qing dynasty and the birth of the People's Republic of China, the social system underwent radical changes. New thoughts coincided with social development. As a result, they became the spirit of the age. Reform of the writing systems of China, including theories on the creation and reform of ethnic minority writing systems, arose in this social and historical environment, so they were inevitably marked with the distinct stamp of the times.

Among the theories on the creation and reform of ethnic writing systems in China, three elements directly influenced the propagation of romanization.

- (1) In China, two romanization movements occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. The first was the Gwoyeu Romatzyh movement. In 1926, thanks to the joint efforts of Qian Xuantong, Liu Fu, Zhao Yuanren, Li Jinxi, and other linguists, Gwoyeu Romatzyh was created as a Roman script for Chinese. Chinese characters were “difficult to read and write; they impede the advancement of education and the spread of knowledge; moreover, they cannot be used to communicate with Western culture, namely modern culture all over the world, so Chinese characters have to be abolished and a new program of the Pinyin writing system has to be implemented” (Qian Xuantong 1923: 19). The second movement for a Roman script for Chinese was the movement for a romanized new writing system for the northern dialect. In 1931, the Chinese Communists and intellectuals living and studying in the Soviet Union held a congress in Vladivostok on the theme of *Zhongguo Hanzi Ladinghua de Yuanze he Guihua* 中国汉字拉丁化的原则和规划 [Principles and plans for the romanization of Chinese characters]. The conference approved principles whose purposes were “to create really demotic and popular characters, employ a writing system that meets the requirements of modern science, and pay attention to the significance of internationalization” (Zhou Youguang 1979: 45). In addition, the attendees created a new Roman script that was first implemented among Chinese people in the Soviet Union.
- (2) The successful experiences of the movement for a new, romanized writing system in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union originally had 182 ethnic groups and tribes, of which about half did not have a writing system or an alphabetic writing system. Since 1920, literacy work had been conducted in the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Soviet Union created or reformed writing systems for the ethnic minorities without writing systems or whose writing systems did not fit modern requirements. By the beginning of the 1930s, sixty-eight ethnic groups had already adopted Roman alphabets.

Literacy work achieved prominent results. In 1929, 1.52 million people left illiteracy. In 1930, the number of people who attained literacy reached 2.93 million; in 1931, 6 million; and in 1932, 9 million.

- (3) The influence of Li Jinxi's report. In 1949, Li Jinxi reported at the Conference on the Founding of the Association of Writing System Reform of China. He first proposed the basic principles for the creation and reform of ethnic writing systems in China (Li Jinxi 1957: 83).

The principle of romanizing alphabets is the theoretical basis for the reform of writing systems. It emphasizes the internationality of characters, because international alphabets are easily implemented around the world; it pays attention to the public acceptability of characters, because demotic alphabetic forms are simple and consistent between spoken and written language; it pursues the scientific accuracy of characters, because a scientific writing system has a reasonable structure that can express the most information with the fewest symbols; and it pursues the learnability of characters, because easily learnable characters can be applied very easily to eliminate illiteracy.

The theoretical and practical significance of principles for romanization is undeniable. Without the theories and practices of romanization, the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, the Zhuang writing system approved by the State Council, and dozens of other new writing systems for ethnic minorities under trial implementation would not have been created. However, it is impossible to apply the romanization principle everywhere because it has certain imperfections. Its greatest shortcoming is that it ignores the ethnic background of characters, which is a very important aspect that limits its range of application.

20.3.2 The national aspect, supplemented by romanization

The theoretical basis for arranging and standardizing the original Sichuan Yi writing system was based on the national aspect and supplemented by romanization.

As another factor in the reform of writing systems, the national aspect is incompatible with the romanization principle in many areas. The five overall characteristics of the national aspect are as follows. (1) Ethnic group. The traditional native writing system of an ethnic group represents the self-consciousness of the ethnic group. It can become an external mark representing the ethnicity of its members; moreover, it also represents ethnic independence and self-respect. (2) Culture. The traditional native writing system of an ethnic group is a carrier of the traditional culture of the ethnic group. Cultural heritage can be conveniently preserved only via this medium. (3) Unity. The traditional native writing system

of an ethnic group can transcend dialectal differences generally and become a link that connects different areas through communication and maintains national unity. (4) Diachronism. The traditional native writing system of an ethnic group can transcend time limitations, not only connecting the present generations with their ancestors but also being taught to descendants so as to sustain diachronic communication. (5) Stability. The traditional native writing system of an ethnic group has a stable and solid basis in people's hearts. The people as a whole feel a strong intimacy towards their native writing system.

In ground that nurtures the sentiments of ethnic group, the geographical environment and traditional social system are two very prominent conditions.

The Yi ethnic group has lived on the Yunnan–Guizhou Plateau and among the southern mountains of the Western Sichuan Plateau from generation to generation. Due to long distances and the barriers of mountains and rivers, communication between the Yi ethnic area and the Central Plains was very inconvenient. As a result, Yi ethnic communities were closed off and isolated from the outside world. This closed situation allowed a slavery-based system to last for two thousand years, which became a precondition for extending the ancient Yi cultural system from generation to generation. The typical closed plateau environment increased an ethnic self-consciousness that was rich in a sense of dignity; it also promoted the formation and development of closed values.

Under a long-time system of slavery, the Yi ethnic group generated a certain social psychology. On one hand, this manifested itself as worship of ancestors. Such ancestor worship originated from patrilineal society, which prayed to the ancestors for the prosperity of its offspring. On the other hand, it inculcated an extreme respect towards traditional culture, which was a relic of clan society as well. In addition, representative features of many agricultural ethnicities in the East, including the Yi ethnic group, were moderation, the avoidance of extremes, diligence, thriftiness, plainness, and the goal of stability.

Like the romanization principle, the national aspect has problems as well. The features of the national aspect and the romanization principle are largely in a contrary or complementary relationship. Here, I have analyzed three types of Yi writing system (see Table 20.1).

Table 20.1 shows that the features of the romanization principle in the new Yi writing system are lacking from the old Yi writing system; however, the features of the national aspect in the old Yi writing system are lacking from the new Yi writing system. If we adopted the strongpoints of the new Yi writing system to make up for the shortcomings of the old Yi writing system, could we realize an optimal combination of romanization and the national aspect? The process of arranging and standardizing the Sichuan Yi writing system exactly reflects the concept of such an optimal combination. A specific method was

Table 20.1: Comparison of features of the new, old, and standard Yi writing systems.

	Features of the romanization principle				Features of the national aspect				
	Internationality	Publicity	Scientificity	Learnability	Nationality	Culture	Unity	Diachronism	Stability
New Yi writing system ^a	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-
Old Yi writing system	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	+	+
Standard Yi writing system	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+

^aThe “new Yi writing system” is the Roman-based Yi writing system created at the beginning of the 1950s.

needed to classify traditional ideographs into a limited number of syllabographs that make up a formal writing system. At the same time, the new Roman-based Yi writing system created at the beginning of the 1950s was used as an auxiliary tool for the standardization of Yi, namely the alphabetic program. The standard Yi writing system has features of both the national aspect and the romanization principle, as clearly shown in Table 20.1.

20.4 Influences of the standard Yi writing system

Within the short space of two years after the “Program for the standardization of the Yi writing system” was implemented by the State Council, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region decided to reinstate the use of the Arabic-based Uygur and Kazakh writing systems and also use the new Uygur and Kazakh writing systems (Roman) created in the 1960s. This decision was apparently affected by the successful experiences of standardizing the Yi writing system in Sichuan.

The implementation of the standard Yi and reinstatement of the Xinjiang Arabic-based Uygur and Kazakh writing systems influenced the Dai ethnic group in Xishuangbanna in Yunnan as well. In 1986, the People’s Congress of the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture decided to reinstate the old Xishuangbanna Dai writing system; meanwhile, the new Dai writing system was employed. After five years, the new Dai writing system ceased to be used; the old Dai writing system was comprehensively employed.

Thus, the romanization principle was abandoned by all the members of the great ethnic family who had traditional writing systems. Instead, it was replaced by the national aspect, or the national aspect supplemented with the romanization principle.

20.5 Conclusion

The successful standardization of the Yi writing system made an old writing system young again. It marked the end of the era when the romanization principle played a dominant role in the reform of ethnic minority writing systems, replacing it with the national aspect supplemented by the romanization principle.

During the period of prosperous development of ethnic writing systems, Chingertai (1991: 36–40, 1992: 23–26) proposed a new idea that combined characters with alphabetic scripts. At present, I am still uncertain about whether such an idea is practicable. However, the idea does seem to provide a new

conception and new options for the creation and reform of ethnic minority writing systems.

For the past forty years, the formation and development of the standard Yi writing system has bestowed many rich resources upon us. If we research them carefully, we will find something worth learning and noting.

Part 7: Bilingual education and motivations for second language acquisition

Chapter 21

The development and problems of bilingual education in China

21.1 Introduction

“Bilingual education” refers to language education implemented in a multi-ethnic country or area with two kinds of language, namely an ethnic minority language and a dominant ethnic language; it also refers to a form of language education that combines an ethnic minority language with a dominant ethnic language.

Prior to the nineteenth century, ethnic minority languages had a low status in traditional education systems. Between the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, this situation was reversed.

Many immigrant communities in America established educational organizations for native languages and began to carry out bilingual education in some schools. However, due to the system of racial discrimination that was implemented in America in 1917, many national laws expressly prohibited the use of ethnic languages in education. Bilingual education disappeared from America. At the beginning of the 1960s, in the wake of the development of human rights campaigns, bilingual education began to recover. In 1963, a Spanish–English bilingual school was founded in Wade County in Florida to satisfy the needs of increasing numbers of Cuban children. In 1967, the “Bilingual education law,” namely the “Primary and secondary education law” (article 7) was approved. In principle, the law allocated funds for all children who spoke ethnic minority languages. In 1969, 7.5 million dollars were granted.

Prior to the October Revolution in the Soviet Union, the illiteracy rate was three in four. After the October Revolution, primary education was made universal within just sixteen years. After that, ten-year secondary education was almost universal due to the reform of the education system and the implementation of bilingual education. According to incomplete statistics, in the academic years 1938 and 1939, twenty-two languages were employed as educational languages in schools in Uzbek-speaking areas (Zhao Longgeng 1988: 25). At ethnic schools in the Russian Federation, there were seventeen educational languages and forty-nine ethnic language curricula (Ma Lan 1987).

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After the founding of the Indian Federation, the State regulated that children would use their native language at the stage of primary education, and set Hindi as the new national language, which was used by the majority of children. Thus, this weakened the dominant role of English in the Indian education system.

There was a similar situation in Western Europe. In the 1970s, as stated in a decision of the European Educational Committee and the European Community, the important role of ethnic minority languages in the education system was emphasized.

In 1957, the Philippine government decided to use local native languages to educate students in the first and second grades of regular schools. Many African countries such as Sudan and Nigeria also made a variety of efforts to provide education in ethnic minority languages.

In the development of bilingual education around the world, 1951 was a very important year because that was when UNESCO convened an expert panel to discuss the issue of language education in third-world countries. They especially emphasized the important status of native languages in education systems. Nowadays, a statement made by the panel, “the best teaching language for children is their native language” (UNESCO 1987: 60), has become an oft-cited famous saying.

In 1981, UNESCO reconvened an expert panel to research the use of native languages in education. The summary report of this conference states as follows: “the native language is the best method for education; it is the best tool for cultural inheritance” and “it is a powerful weapon used to wipe out illiteracy and ignorance, and to fight against discrimination and poverty” (Yan Xuejiong 1982). These words have become famous sayings often cited by Chinese scholars.

21.2 The development of modern bilingual education in China

The development of modern bilingual education in China can be divided into four periods: the initial foundation period (1905–1946), the later foundation and development period (1947–1958), the slow development and stagnation period (1959–1976), and the recovery and rapid development period (1977–1987).

21.2.1 The initial foundation period (1905–1946)

In 1905, the Guanghai Primary School was founded by the Methodist Missionary Society of British Christians in Shimenkan, Weining County, Guizhou Province.

A missionary named Sumnd Pollard, a Miao Christian named Yang Yage, and a Han Christian named Listifan co-designed a set of alphabets for spelling local Miao; this is what we call the old Miao writing system. Moreover, they compiled textbooks such as *Traditional Miao writing system*. A course on the Miao writing system was offered at schools, with two class hours per week. At the same time, courses such as Mandarin, arithmetic, history, nature, and geography were offered. Current data shows that this missionary school can be regarded as the first bilingual-education school in the modern history of ethnic education in China.

In 1931, at the Kelugouqi Primary School in the Subei area of Gansu Province, which was the location of Subei Palace, all of the courses were completely taught in Mongolian. At the Mongolian and Hui Teachers' School in Xining, Mongolia, the Fan School in Ledu, and the Hui primary schools in Linxia, Xiji, Haiyuan, Guyuan, and Jingyuan, Mongolian or Arabic curricula were once offered. However, due to a lack of teachers, most of them became formalistic.

The bilingual education policy of China was first put forward after the Ministry of Education set up the Department of Mongolian and Tibetan Education in 1930.

Bilingual education policy primarily focuses on respecting various ethnic languages. It proposes two writing systems. One is the ethnic writing system; the other is the national writing system, which is entirely chosen according to the ethnic people's discretion. However, those ethnic groups who have native languages without writing systems, or whose native writing systems have been abandoned for a long time, are not bound by this policy. Only those schools above the secondary level that want to make it more convenient for their students to study further will begin to offer the national language and national writing system as compulsory courses.

(Compilation Committee of the Yearbook of Education of the Ministry of Education 1957: 917)

In 1934, the Ministry of Education compiled and published primary school textbooks written in Mandarin and Mongolian, Mandarin and Tibetan, and Mandarin and Hui (Uygur). Each of them included eight volumes of Mandarin textbooks and four volumes of general knowledge textbooks. These textbooks were provided for Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uygur ethnic students in border areas. Because the content of these textbooks was far from the real life of residents in border areas, the Ministry of Education assigned the National Culture and Education Department of the Border Areas to compile another elementary textbook written in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Uygur. In 1947, nine volumes of Mongolian textbooks, eight volumes of Tibetan textbooks, and ten volumes of Uygur textbooks were published.

In 1935, the Ministry of Education issued a plan to promote Mongolian, Tibetan, Hui, and Miao education. In this period, the schools organized by the

National Ethnic Promotion Association developed rapidly. According to statistics collected in 1938, the Xinjiang Ethnic Promotion Association established 1,840 schools with a total of 105,087 students. Among these, 1,540 were Uygur schools with 89,804 students; 277 were Kazakh and Kyrgyz schools with 14,322 students; and 1 was a Hui school with 44 students. The curricula offered in these schools included ethnic languages, arithmetic, society, geography, nature, governmental policies, scriptures, and so on. Moreover, Mandarin courses were offered from the upper levels of primary school (Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education 1984: 401–402).

21.2.2 The later foundation and development period (1947–1958)

After the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was founded in 1947, a Mandarin education policy started to be implemented. Many bilingual Mongolian–Mandarin schools were established around the prefecture. These schools were bilingual secondary schools and primary schools created early on under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1951, the Ministry of Education of New China held the first National Ethnic Education Conference in Beijing. The decision reached at the conference was as follows:

For all the ethnic groups with currently commonly used writing systems, such as Mongolian, Korean, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, and so forth, every course offered at the primary and secondary school levels must be taught in the ethnic language. Those ethnic groups who have independent languages but lack a writing system or complete writing system should, on the one hand, begin to create and reform their writing systems; on the other hand, on a voluntary basis, they should employ Mandarin or their native ethnic language for teaching. (Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education 1984: 396)

Since then, bilingual education in China has been in a state of development. However, due to differences in the politics, economies, and bases of culture and education among various ethnic areas, different measures have been employed, and this has led to the imbalanced development of bilingual education. Nationwide, the circumstances of ethnic language education may be conveniently classified by their location in the northern, central, and southern areas.

21.2.2.1 The northern area: Inner Mongolian, Yanbian, and Xinjiang

In 1958, the Mongolian ethnic group in Inner Mongolia, the Korean ethnic group in the Yanbian area of Jilin Province, and the Uygur, Kazakh, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, and Xibe ethnic groups in Xinjiang all established bilingual education

systems from primary to secondary school (the Korean ethnic education system also extended to university), whose manifestations were as follows. First, ethnic secondary schools and primary schools were classified by ethnic language. Second, a whole set of textbooks written in ethnic writing systems from primary school to high school was published. Third, except for Mandarin courses, ethnic languages largely became the teaching languages for all courses. Fourth, a large body of ethnic language teachers was established. Four basic aspects of these achievements are described below.

- (1) Educational autonomy was fully exercised. From the point of view of human, financial, and material resources, the guaranteed development and speed of bilingual education exceeded or at least equaled the average speed of local educational development. For example, the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region proposed an eight-character policy for ethnic education, namely *Zhong-dian-fa-zhan, you-xian-an-pai* 重点发展, 优先安排 [Focus on the development of bilingual education, and give priority to bilingual education].
- (2) Flexible decisions were made without striving for unity. For example, at primary schools and secondary schools where courses were taught in Uygur, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Kyrgyz, the course settings and educational requirements were lower than those in Mandarin schools due to the limited quality of teachers. As the quality of the teachers improved, the course settings and educational requirements came to rival those of the Han people. Also, between 1947 and 1953, at ethnic secondary schools in Inner Mongolia, courses were taught based on Mandarin and supplemented by Mongolian; between 1953 and 1958, schools in Mongolian-inhabited areas and secondary schools with a good Mongolian basis primarily used Mongolian for teaching, supplemented by Mandarin. Such schools generally divided classes into those with Mongolian students and those with Chinese students.
- (3) Teachers and textbooks were treated as two basic components. As early as the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s, the Mongol ethnic group in Inner Mongolia, the Korean ethnic group in Yanbian, and the Uygur, Kazakh, Mongol, and Kyrgyz ethnic groups in Xinjiang used textbooks issued in the Mongolian People's Republic, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and the Soviet Union respectively. Meanwhile, these ethnic groups were actively compiling their own textbooks. After six to seven years' effort, the problem of ethnic language textbooks for secondary and primary schools had nearly been solved.
- (4) Bilingual education was developed based on the financial resources of local government and citizens. When the Jilin Yanbian Educational Press was founded, it was operated as a privately run, State-owned firm. At that

time, Korean secondary schools were preferred in Yanbian and local groups made voluntary donations. The donated food alone was worth 2,000 north-eastern dollars. In addition, the prefectural government allocated 22.6% of the local financial resources to developing education.

These four historical experiences still have a certain resonance for Tibet, Guangxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Hunan Provinces.

21.2.2.2 The central area: Qinghai, Tibet, Gansu, and Sichuan

Between 1950 and 1957, 467 ethnic primary schools were founded in Qinghai Province. Some Tibetan primary schools in Qinghai were able to teach in the Tibetan language. By 1956, a total of 158,000 copies of Tibetan textbooks for various courses at primary school had been published. Between 1951 and 1958, thirteen primary schools and one secondary school were founded across the Tibetan area, and all the primary schools in Tibet offered Tibetan and Mandarin curricula. At that time, there was no organization compiling and publishing Tibetan textbooks. Each school solved its problems independently based on the textbooks published in the hinterland. At the beginning of the 1950s, a total of six primary schools in Tianzhu County in Gansu Province offered a Tibetan curriculum, with a total of 512 students. Of these six schools, one school primarily taught in Tibetan. Schools located in Tibetan-inhabited areas such as villages and pastoral areas generally added the Tibetan language to their curricula.

In 1954, the North-western Education Bureau requested instructions from the Ministry of Education on the issue of including a Tibetan language curriculum at Lintan Secondary School in Gansu Province. The Ministry of Education replied that “ethnic schools must offer curricula in ethnic languages” (Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education 1984: 414). The Ministry of Education emphasized the significance of offering curricula in ethnic languages at ethnic schools.

Since the beginning of the 1950s, Sichuan Province had started to implement bilingual education at some Tibetan and Yi ethnic schools. By 1957, ethnic language education had been fully implemented in the first grade at ethnic primary schools. These schools took transitional measures by decreasing class hours in Mandarin and increasing those in ethnic languages. Xikang and the combined Sichuan Province published some primary school textbooks written in the Yi and Tibetan writing systems. The construction of a trained body of ethnic language teachers in Qinghai was promoted through two types of measure: the first was actively creating schools for ethnic teachers and cultivating them regularly, while the second was absorbing literate religiously observant people

and young Han people, who were allocated as ethnic teachers after a period of training in political theory, ethnic languages, and teaching methods. This measure was effective.

21.2.2.3 The southern area: Yunnan, Guizhou, Guangxi, and Hunan

When the bilingual system from primary to secondary school had almost been established in northern China, bilingual education was just starting in southern China. Between 1956 and 1957, the Dai ethnic group in Xishuangbanna Prefecture in Yunnan Province and Jingpo, and the Dai and Lisu ethnic groups in Dehong Prefecture in Yunnan Province, began to promote bilingual education in the first grade of ethnic primary schools. Four ethnic language schools, whose curricula included education in four types of Miao writing system and in the Bouyei and Dong writing systems, were founded in Guizhou. Zhuang language schools were founded in Wumin County and other counties in Guangxi Province. One Miao language school was created in Western Hunan Prefecture in Hunan Province. These schools made trial implementations of newly created or newly reformed writing system programs.

21.2.3 The slow development and stagnation period (1959–1976)

After 1959, the bilingual system around China was attacked by “ultra-left” thought. Many provinces and regions started to dissolve or combine ethnic schools, delegate ethnic teachers, and decrease or cancel courses in the ethnic language. Relatively speaking, the Mongolian and Yanbian areas were less affected.

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region indicated that ethnic middle schools were to insist on proficiency in both Mongolian and Mandarin, and the principles of first learning the ethnic language well and teaching based on ethnic languages. It also required ethnic students to learn the ethnic language first, and then learn Mandarin. It further advocated that Han students from an area inhabited by a given ethnic minority should learn the ethnic language of that area. In 1962, Inner Mongolia compiled a set of Mongolian–Mandarin textbooks suitable for three types of area, including urban, rural, and pastoral areas. At the beginning of the 1960s, among those ethnic primary schools that retained ethnic languages and writing systems, a bilingual education system gradually took shape. The bilingual education system stipulated that every course be taught in Mongolian (Korean); from the third grade, curricula in the Mandarin and Mongolian (Korean) languages were added, and every course was taught in Mandarin.

In 1963, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture added a Mandarin curriculum starting in the second grade, which was taught until students graduated from high school. In Gansu Province, 120 schools in the Tibetan language areas in Southern Gansu Prefecture offered a Tibetan language curriculum, and 4,024 students learned the Tibetan language. Between the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, fifty-three Zhuang language schools were founded in Guangxi Province. The Lahu and Wa ethnic communities in Yunnan Province founded ethnic language schools one after another. The Yunnan Ethnic Publishing House compiled and published textbooks for primary schools in two types of Dai writing system, Jingpo, Lisu, Lahu, and six types of Wa writing system.

During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), bilingual education across China was seriously damaged. Nearly all of the provincial (regional) ethnic education organizations, ethnic teachers' colleges, and ethnic publishing housing were dissolved or ceased operation. Except for a small number of the ethnic schools in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and Yanbian, the curricula for ethnic languages offered at the majority of ethnic schools and all the ethnic schools were closed.

21.2.4 The recovery and rapid development period (1977–1987)

After 1977, the ethnic primary and secondary schools that had been dissolved and merged during the Cultural Revolution in many provinces in northern and central China gradually recovered and reinstated curricula in ethnic languages. In the southern area, many provinces started to reinstate or expand trials of bilingual education.

In December 1978, the Sichuan Provincial Revolutionary Committee approved and forwarded documents released by the Provincial Department of Education. These documents ordered various prefectures and counties in ethnic areas to enlarge the range of courses offered in ethnic languages actively and systematically. In 1980, various ethnic primary schools in Xinjiang began to offer Mandarin courses from the fourth grade until students graduated from high school. The ethnic primary schools in the Tibetan, Mongolian, and Kazakh Autonomous Areas in Gansu Province offered Tibetan, Mongolian, and Kazakh courses respectively. Guangxi Province began to restore and establish autonomous areas and Zhuang language schools on the county level.

By 1987, in primary-only schools, secondary-only schools, and combined primary and secondary schools across China, encompassing twenty-three ethnic groups, thirty types of writing system were taught, namely Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Manchu, Zhuang, Yi, two types of Dai writing system, two types of Jingpo writing system, two types of Lisu writing

system, four types of Miao writing system, Lahu, Wa, Bouyei, Dong, Naxi, Bai, Hani, Tujia, and Yao (Mian).

21.3 Problems and suggestions

21.3.1 Educational efficiency and language barriers

Ethnic educational efficiency was not high in autonomous ethnic areas in central and southern China, especially in remote, poor, and undeveloped areas such as border areas, and in pastoral and remote mountainous areas. According to the statistical data collected in an ethnic autonomous prefecture in the Yunnan border area whose educational results were acceptable, during the thirty-seven years after the founding of New China, the State invested 2 billion yuan in education in the prefecture, about 54 million every ten years (Feng Chunlin 1988). Owing to a high rate of student loss, between 1976 and 1986 the prefecture educated 11,512 middle and primary school students in all. Among them, 8,372 were primary students, 2,430 were secondary students, and 710 were high school students. The costs were excessively high and the efficiency excessively low. The rate of illiteracy and semi-illiteracy reached 55.3% in 1985, which was 30% higher than the national average (23.5%) and 20% higher than the average in Yunnan Province (33.5%).

Apart from such factors as economic foundations, cultural backgrounds, educational structures, teachers' quality, and school facilities, another important element influencing educational efficiency in this prefecture cannot be ignored: the unsolved problem of the language barrier facing ethnic students. Because bilingual education had not been widely implemented in the prefecture, students were unable to understand their courses two years after they entered school. They seemed to find it very difficult and boring to study; a large number of students abandoned their studies. The minority of ethnic students who continued studying returned to their villages after graduation but became illiterate again due to the lack of a Mandarin study environment. Thus, students entered a vicious circle of entering school, learning, and then becoming illiterate again.

The issue of the language barriers facing ethnic minority school-age children was a serious problem common in ethnic education. Of more than 67 million ethnic minority people across China (1982), about 75% did not speak Mandarin as a native language; most of them lived in an autonomous ethnic area. Although some ethnic groups or groups of ethnic people grasped Mandarin as well, they generally spoke their own ethnic native languages in their families. Their children generally lived in ethnic environments at the school-age stage (except for the

minority of people who lived in urban and multi-ethnic areas); these children generally could not understand Mandarin when they entered school. If these students were not taught in their native language, it would become very difficult for them to overcome their language barriers. In terms of language use, they were already in an unequal competition with Han students when they had just entered school.

According to my initial investigations, at present, apart from the Mongolian and Korean ethnic groups in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region; the Korean ethnic group in Jilin, Liaolin, and Heilongjiang Provinces; the Uygur, Kazakh, Mongolia, Kyrgyz, and Xibe ethnic groups in Xinjiang; and the Tibetan ethnic group in Tibet, ethnic groups in China have almost completely resolved the problem of language barriers facing ethnic school-age children. More than forty ethnic groups in other provinces (areas) such as Gansu, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Hunan, Hubei, Guangxi, Hainan, and Qinghai have not fundamentally solved the problem.

I am of the opinion that this problem needs to be solved from the following four angles.

- (1) The National Ethnic Affairs Committee and the National Education Committee should jointly investigate how many ethnic autonomous counties in China have the problem of a language barrier. I suggest solving the problems of language barriers in various counties in a similar fashion to how the problems of poor counties are solved. I suggest devising plans and measures to solve the problems of language barriers in counties.
- (2) For those counties which have native ethnic languages but lack native ethnic writing systems (including alphabetic programs), or those counties that have native ethnic writing systems (including alphabetic programs) but whose native ethnic people are not willing to study them, I suggest choosing teachers who have in-depth knowledge of the native ethnic languages for various courses at lower grades of primary school. For those schools with a temporary shortage of teachers, I suggest devising plans, creating appropriate conditions, endeavoring to allocate sufficient teachers, and implementing auxiliary education in ethnic languages.
- (3) For counties that have native ethnic languages and native ethnic writing systems (including alphabetic programs), and whose native people are willing to use them, various curricula for the lower grades of primary school should be made based on education in ethnic languages. Those counties unable to do so in the short term need to transfer towards this aspect gradually.
- (4) For those counties that have native ethnic languages but lack a native ethnic writing system and those counties whose native ethnic people have chosen another ethnic writing system, I suggest choosing teachers who

understand both the native ethnic language and another ethnic language to teach various courses at lower grades of primary school. Those that cannot do this in the near future need to devise a plan and make efforts in this direction.

21.3.2 Leaders' attitudes and organizations

21.3.2.1 Leaders' attitudes

Native language education has great significance in, for example, enlightening children and developing their intelligence and thinking ability; overcoming children's sense of inferiority, anomie, and lack of confidence; conserving and developing ethnic languages and traditional ethnic cultures; and even enhancing educational quality and educational efficiency. Implementing education in native languages and bilingualism in ethnic areas is not only one of the principles of Marxism but also part of regulations and policies clearly decreed by the government. As a strictly academic issue, it is evident that the issues of implementing native languages and bilingualism can be discussed or argued over; but as laws and policies, they are only to be carried out, rather than be objected to or implemented incompletely.

However, New China has been established for forty years, and in that time the Mongolian and Korean ethnic groups in northern China have spent just five to six years or eight to nine years establishing bilingual education systems at middle and primary schools. However, after more than ten years, even decades, the ethnic economy in central and southern China is still in the starting stage. However, we must take objective elements such as social economy, languages and writing systems, and the educational situation into consideration. Some leaders stick to the conventional, achieve nothing, and even hold negative attitudes towards teaching the ethnic writing systems in schools and developing bilingual education. Such attitudes certainly lead to the single full-time ordinary educational pattern that is suitable for urban Han students in ethnic areas. This educational pattern, that is to say, is suitable for urban areas, rather than rural areas, in terms of many aspects, such as educational content, plans, and methods, and is more suitable for Han people than the ethnic minority groups who cannot understand Mandarin. Finally, it is more suitable for eastern China, rather than the borderlands, pastoral areas, mountainous areas, and poor areas. For many years, these leaders have only carried out education following this pattern, so it is very difficult to greatly improve education in ethnic areas.

21.3.2.2 Leaders' organizations

In southern China, bilingual education in Guizhou Province is primarily carried out by the Office of Ethnic Languages of the Ethnic Affairs Committee. Bilingual education in Guangxi and Yunnan Provinces is primarily implemented by the Provincial (Regional) Ethnic Language Guiding Committee. In the context of bilingual education work, there are a fair number of issues between the Ethnic Affairs Committees of the three provinces (regions) and the Education Committees. Their responsibilities and powers are interwoven, but they work discordantly. For example, if the Guizhou Ethnic Affairs Committee would like to carry out trials of bilingual education at primary schools, this must be approved by leaders of the local education system. With respect to teaching ethnic writing systems in primary schools, the Ethnic Affairs Committee works actively and passionately, but it lacks educational management experience; by contrast, the education system has rich experience, but its practitioners lack confidence in and passion for teaching ethnic writing systems in primary schools. The teachers' salaries and educational expenses for experimental classes in ethnic languages are provided by the Ethnic Affairs Committee. Textbooks compiled by the Ethnic Affairs Committee are printed without scrutiny by the management of the education system. Such a situation adversely affects the stability and development of bilingual education.

It has been suggested that the Ethnic Affairs Committee gradually transfer the implementation work for ethnic writing systems to the education system. Others have suggested setting up another Ethnic Affairs Committee and combining the relevant workers of the Ethnic Affairs Committee with workers from the education system so as to coordinate their efforts. Others still have suggested that the Ethnic Affairs Committee and education system release documents or notices jointly and exercise unified leadership. I think that, regardless of the measures taken, this issue should be brought to the respective leaders' attention for inclusion in the agenda so that it may be resolved as soon as possible.

21.3.3 Devising bilingual education plans

It is generally known that the Education Department of the National Education Committee and the Office of Ethnic Languages of the National Ethnic Affairs Committee have no specific and detailed plans for the development of bilingual education in China. The Education Committee and the Ethnic Affairs Committee generally allow the local organizations to make decisions by themselves; local leaders are used to execute the instructions issued by superiors. As a result,

they wait for each other to solve problems; some long-standing problems have not been resolved for a long time. I hold that the competent leaders from the National Education Committee and the Ethnic Affairs Committee should organize relevant experts, cadres, and teachers to jointly draw up development plans for bilingual education in China that can be implemented either after or before local governments draw up their own plans. Various provinces (regions), especially those of central and southern China, should work out plans so as to enable bilingual education to develop step-by-step, stably, and steadily.

21.3.4 Education policies and education legislation

Since the 1980s, education policies in China have been defined in a wide variety of ways, for example with the principles that “education needs to face modernization, face the world, face the future” (proposed by Deng Xiaoping), “education must serve socialist construction,” and “the reform of the education system fundamentally aims at improving ethnic qualities, cultivating more talents, and excellent talents” (Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education 1984). The State is drawing up laws of ethnic education, and the issue of education policy should be specified in the laws of ethnic education.

I have pointed out that, in the ethnic minority areas of China, especially central and southern China, the educational foundations are very poor. If we consider improving ethnic qualities and cultivating ethnic talents as the basis of an ethnic education policy, this will suit the situations and realities of ethnic areas better. Improving ethnic qualities means improving skills in culture and technology, moral and ethical quality, and physical quality. Cultivating ethnic talents means cultivating talented individuals who are able to progress to the next educational level, and, more importantly, cultivating a labor force able to meet the requirements of the local economy and culture so as to take their place in society and learn professional skills that will enable them to become wealthy. According to such an idea, the purpose of bilingual education is not to seek a unilateral enrollment rate but to develop every student’s ideological and ethical qualities, cultural and technological skills, and physical health.

Chapter 22

Types of bilingual education in China

22.1 Introduction

“Bilingual education” refers to education in two languages, namely an ethnic minority language and a dominant ethnic language, implemented in multi-ethnic countries or areas. “Bilingual education” refers to a form of language education that combines an ethnic minority language with a dominant ethnic language. In this chapter, “bilingual (dual writing system)” is used to describe the combination of an ethnic language (writing system) and Mandarin (writing system), and excludes foreign languages (writing systems) or two kinds of ethnic language (writing system). The bilingual education to be discussed in this chapter is limited to secondary and primary schools, excluding technical secondary schools, colleges and universities, and illiteracy remediation schools.

22.1.1 Overview of research outside of China

Many scholars outside China have studied types of bilingual education. Since the 1970s, representative scholars have included J. A. Fishman (a famous American sociolinguist) and C. Paulston. The classification proposed by Fishman focuses on worldwide types of bilingual education based on four criteria as follows. First, whether bilingual teaching planning emphasizes students’ native languages or non-native languages. Second, whether a language is an ethnic minority language or a dominant ethnic language. Third, whether a language is employed on-campus or off-campus. Fourth, whether bilingual education in the community belongs to regular education or irregular education (Fishman 1976). Fishman arranged and then divided these four criteria to characterize sixteen types of bilingual education (Fishman 1974: 112–124). However, later scholars have criticized these types as seeming to be very comprehensive but actually being impractical because some of the types do not exist or cannot exist in reality.

Paulston argued that, while the types of bilingual education are ever-changing on the surface, in fact they are essentially the same. According to him, the three basic types of bilingual education are as follows: first, every course at school is taught in the students’ second language; second, the students’ native language is employed as the teaching language for all courses,

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and the second language is not a teaching language but there is a course on it; third, each course is taught in both the native language and the second language (Paulston 1975: 1–44). Paulston’s classification is clearer than Fishman’s, but Paulston’s first category refers only to one language of education, which would not seem to qualify as a type of bilingual education.

22.1.2 Overview of research in China

Research on types of bilingual education in China started in the 1980s. In 1985, Yan Xuejiong first proposed six models of language education as follows: (1) the Yanbian type, (2) the Mongolian type, (3) the Tibetan type, (4) the Xinjiang type, (5) the south-western type, and (6) the illiteracy type (Yan Xuejiong 1985: 85–87). Yan’s original contribution should be fully affirmed. However, as a classification method, it merits discussion. For example, the first five patterns of Yan’s classification are divided on a geographical basis, but the sixth pattern is based on forms of schooling. This does not represent a uniform classification standard. Moreover, geographical distribution itself poses a problem because a strict correspondence between one area and one type does not exist. In other words, in a given area, there are generally two or more types of teaching categories; and one type may be distributed across two or more areas. Zhou Yaowen may have noticed this, so he combined the Mongolian type with the Yanbian type, and additionally he divided the south-western type into four parts, totaling seven types of teaching (Zhou Yaowen 1987: 34–35). Compared with Yan’s classification, Zhou’s classification undoubtedly made a great step forward; however, the contradictions were not fundamentally resolved.

In 1987, Zhang Wei proposed another classification method, which divided the bilingual teaching plans of China into three categories as follows: (1) monolingual teaching plans, (2) transitional bilingual plans, and (3) long-term bilingual plans (Zhang Wei 1987: 42–43). This classification resolved the earlier contradictions among different categories, but it also revealed new ones. For example, it classifies monolingual teaching plans in the bilingual teaching category; similarly, three types of bilingual teaching are classified based on three different standards, and so on.

When analyzing the advantages and disadvantages of the educational classification methods proposed by domestic and overseas scholars, I think an ideal classification method should have at least two features; specifically, it should reflect reality and logic. “Reality” indicates that every classified category should exist in reality; it is meaningless to posit categories that do not exist in reality. “Logic” has three implications as follows. (1) Every category should belong to

bilingual teaching; monolingual types cannot be included. (2) Classification standards should be uniform. (3) Categories on the same level cannot overlap.

22.2 Classification

22.2.1 Types of bilingual teaching plan

“Types of bilingual teaching plan” refers to types of bilingual teaching as well. The purpose of drawing up a bilingual teaching plan is to facilitate the successful mediation of the teaching content. The plan has additional functions, for example preserving and promoting native languages and cultures, transitioning from the native languages to Mandarin as the teaching language, and so forth. According to the additional functions of bilingual teaching plans, bilingual education in China can be divided into three categories, namely the preservational, transitional, and expedient types. Among these three types of bilingual education, the preservational and transitional types can be further divided into several subcategories. The classifications by subcategory are based on three standards as follows: (1) the ratio of the numbers of courses in the ethnic language to those in Mandarin in primary and secondary education; (2) the order in which ethnic language and Mandarin courses are offered; and (3) the frequencies with which the ethnic language, Mandarin, or both are used as teaching languages in various courses.

22.2.1.1 The preservational type

The preservational type aims at preserving or retaining native languages and cultures and at ensuring that students do not lose their abilities to use their own native languages in the process of learning the dominant ethnic language. The preservation type can be divided into three subcategories, types 1, 2, and 3.

22.2.1.1.1 Preservational type 1

Every course in every grade at school is taught primarily in the ethnic language; from the second and third grades of primary school, Mandarin is just offered as a course. This type of teaching plan makes the important status and the role of the ethnic language prominent in the education system; it guarantees the principle of grasping both ethnic languages and Mandarin. It is highly welcomed by students in ethnic minority areas.

The implementation of preservational type 1 requires relatively prevalent ethnic writing systems and textbooks for various courses at each grade to be

compiled using them; moreover, it requires native language teachers who can teach a complete range of disciplines. In addition, factors like whether the Department of Education and school leaders pay attention to these issues, whether they have the spirit of forging ahead, and whether they have deep ethnic emotion, are all important elements in determining whether this plan can be carried out and whether it can be carried out continuously.

22.2.1.1.2 Preservational type 2

Every course in every grade at school is primarily taught in Mandarin, while the ethnic language is only offered as one course from the low grades in primary school until graduation from primary or secondary school. This type of plan is primarily implemented in various townships in northern China for those students who are not able to understand their native ethnic languages, or at those schools that lack ethnic language teachers.

22.2.1.1.3 Preservational type 3

Some of the courses at school are taught in ethnic languages, others in Mandarin. Ethnic languages and Mandarin are offered as two courses at all grades at higher primary school, secondary school, or primary school. This type of plan has primarily been implemented at ethnic schools that lack teachers for science courses who could teach in ethnic languages.

In China, the ethnic groups that carry out the preservational type of teaching plan include the Mongolian ethnic group in Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, and Gansu; the Korean ethnic group in Jilin, Heilongjiang, Liaoning, and Inner Mongolia; the Uygur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Xibe ethnic groups (some schools) in Xinjiang; the Tibetan ethnic group (some schools) in Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan; the Zhuang ethnic group in Guangxi; and the Yi ethnic group (some schools) in Sichuan.

22.2.1.2 The transitional type

The transitional type aims to set up a bridge between the ethnic minority families whose children are not able to understand Mandarin, and primary schools that primarily use ethnic languages as teaching languages but then transition from ethnic languages to Mandarin as teaching language. As has been said, “flowers bloom on ethnic languages and fruit on Mandarin.” Generally speaking, in the first and second grades of primary school, the education of ethnic minority children is conducted using ethnic languages; if those students can understand Mandarin in the third and fourth grades, teaching will take place

both in Mandarin and in the ethnic language; in the fifth and sixth grades, courses are primarily taught in Mandarin.

The transitional type of bilingual education in China is relatively complex and can be divided into at least four variants, namely, the three-phase type, the two-phase type, the rebalancing type, and the auxiliary type. Some of the variants can be divided into subcategories.

The first variant is the three-phase type, which means that language courses in primary school are divided into three phases as follows: ethnic language, bilingualism, and Mandarin. Other courses are taught in Mandarin. The schooling system is seven years long. In the first and second grades, the students learn their ethnic language; in the third and fourth grades, they use textbooks applying the ethnic language–Mandarin contrast, whereby courses are taught in both the ethnic language and Mandarin; from the fifth to seventh grades, the students use national textbooks and have eight courses per week which are primarily taught in Mandarin; moreover, they study the ethnic language a little simultaneously (three class hours per week). After being drawn up, implementation of this plan was tried out immediately. Classes in the Wa language at Henan Primary School in Cangyuan County, Yunnan Province, belong to this type.

The second variant is the two-phase type, which can be divided into two subcategories: the first is the bilingual subcategory, which includes two stages, the bilingual and Mandarin stages. From the first to third grade of primary school, the ethnic language and Mandarin are taught at the same time; however, the class hours in the ethnic language increase. From the fourth to sixth grade, students just study Mandarin rather than the ethnic language, which functions only as an auxiliary teaching language. In the Bai–Mandarin experimental bilingual classes of Xizhong Primary School in Jianchuan County in Yunnan Province, a teaching plan for the bilingual subcategory is employed. The second subcategory is the ethnic–Mandarin subcategory, which includes two stages, the ethnic language and Mandarin. Generally speaking, from the first to third grade, courses are offered in the ethnic language; from the fourth to sixth grade, a Mandarin curriculum is offered and the ethnic language serves as an auxiliary teaching language. Some Dai ethnic primary schools in Menghai County in Yunnan Province and Wa language classes at Nanla Primary School in Cangyuan County follow this type.

The third variant is the rebalancing type. In the first grade of primary school, courses in ethnic languages and on speaking Mandarin are offered. Between the second grade and graduation from primary school, the class hours of ethnic language curricula decrease year by year, while the class hours of the Mandarin curriculum increase year by year. Most of the Dai, Jingpo, and Lisu ethnic primary schools in Dehong Prefecture in Yunnan Province follow this type.

The fourth variant is the auxiliary type, which is primarily employed in the lower grades of primary schools. For those ethnic groups with ethnic writing systems or alphabetic programs, ethnic orthography is taught for half a year or one year first, so that students will be able to learn Chinese phonetic transcription and paraphrasing in the future. Most of the Dong and Miao experimental classes in Taijiang and Liping Counties in Guizhou Province belong to this type. For those ethnic groups without ethnic writing systems (including alphabetic programs), the native language is used as an auxiliary teaching language. In China, many ethnic groups follow this type, for example, ethnic groups without their own writing systems or ethnic groups with native writing systems that have not been taught in schools.

The transitional type of bilingual teaching plan is primarily employed by the ethnic groups whose ethnic writing systems have been created only recently or not yet been created. This type is primarily distributed in the central, southern, and south-western areas of China. For many years, trials of bilingual education conducted by many ethnic groups in southern China have repeatedly shown that this plan has more advantages than the regular Mandarin monolingual teaching plan.

22.2.1.3 The expedient type

The expedient type can also be called the anormal type. It refers to education that violates the rules for ethnic minority children learning their second language. For example, schools do not offer courses on the ethnic language at primary school but offer Mandarin courses immediately; in the middle and high grades of primary school, or the last two or three months prior to graduation from primary school, teachers quickly teach a little of the orthography of the ethnic language. The aim of this ethnic language education is to eliminate illiteracy. The primary differences between this teaching plan and preservational type 2 are as follows. In the case of preservational type 2, the ethnic language is taught through a curriculum from easy to difficult, from the low grades of primary school until graduation from primary or secondary school, but the expedient type requires teachers to create curricula for ethnic languages for students in the middle and high grades, while courses on ethnic languages are taught in the low grades of primary school as well. The class hours of these courses are short and the teaching levels are low.

Various reasons for implementation of the expedient type of teaching plan can be given. Some schools lack ethnic language teachers or textbooks; some would like to postpone courses on ethnic languages until the end and retain those students who cannot understand Mandarin in order to reduce losses of

them; others are aiming for primary school graduates to score higher in national exams because the local Education Department stipulates that examination scores in the ethnic language test make up 30% of the total mark.

It is understandable that an expedient teaching plan be employed temporarily or occasionally. However, if it is employed for a long time, it will not only waste a great opportunity to develop children's intelligence but also disturb teaching order, entailing greater losses than gains.

22.2.2 Types of bilingual education system

According to the degree of development of a given regional bilingual education system and the amount of ethnic language teaching at schools, bilingual education systems in ethnic minority areas of China can be largely divided into three subtypes: the developed type, the developing type, and the trial type.

22.2.2.1 The developed type

In this case, the bilingual education system is relatively sound and perfect. All or the majority of the ethnic high schools and primary schools in an ethnic area implement bilingual education, and all of these schools implement a preservational teaching plan. The number of schools that teach ethnic languages suffices, or almost suffices, to meet the requirements of local ethnic minorities. Ethnic groups that have such a type of education system include the Mongolian and Korean ethnic groups in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Jilin, Liaolin, and Heilongjiang; and the Uygur, Kazakh, Mongolian, and Kyrgyz ethnic groups in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

22.2.2.2 The developing type

In this case, the bilingual education system has been established but needs further development and perfection. In ethnic areas, more than half, or the majority, of primary schools have implemented bilingual education. Due to a lack of ethnic teachers or other reasons, teaching in a large number of ethnic high schools or curricula still takes place only in Mandarin. Bilingual teaching plans of the preservational type or transitional type are employed. The number of schools offering courses in ethnic languages still cannot completely meet the needs of local ethnic minorities. Ethnic groups to which this type applies include the Tibetans in Qinghai Province and the Tibet Autonomous Region, and the Dai and Jingpo ethnic groups in Dehong Dai and the Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.

22.2.2.3 The trial type

In this type, only very few, or the minority, of schools in an ethnic area have created a bilingual education system or carry out bilingual teaching trials. The number of bilingual schools, teachers, and textbooks for ethnic languages is far from meeting local needs. Ethnic groups to which this type applies include the Tibetans in Sichuan, Yunnan, and Gansu Provinces; the Yi ethnic group in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan Provinces; the Zhuang ethnic group in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region; the Miao ethnic group in Guizhou, Hunan, and Yunnan Provinces; the Bouyei ethnic group in Guizhou Province; the Dong ethnic group in Guizhou and Hunan Provinces; the Lahu, Wa, Lisu, Naxi, Hani, and Bai ethnic groups in Yunnan Province and the Dai ethnic group in Xishuangbanna Prefecture;⁵⁷ the Yao ethnicity (Mian language) in Yunnan Province and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region; and the Tujia ethnic group in Hunan Province.

22.3 Characteristics

22.3.1 Types of writing systems use and types of bilingual education

Of the fifty-five ethnic minority groups in China, twenty-nine have implemented a current total of forty-six ethnic writing systems or alphabetic programs. According to the social function of an ethnic writing system in its ethnic language community, the types of writing system use are largely divided into three subtypes, namely the general type, the special type, and the tentative type.

22.3.1.1 The general type

This type has been in existence for a very long time. The scope of its in the native language community is relatively wide, its writing system is relatively perfect, and reading material is abundant. Seven writing systems belong to such a subtype: Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, the Liangshan standard Yi writing system, and the Tai Lue writing system (also called the Xishuangbanna old Dai writing system).

⁵⁷ In 1986, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture revived the use of the old Dai writing system. After that, the use of the new Dai script gradually ceased. Since 1989, trial teaching classes on the old Dai script have been founded at three primary schools in three counties around the prefecture.

22.3.1.2 The special type

This type has been in existence for a relatively long time. The scope of its use is generally limited to ethnic religiously observant people or small communities. For example, the writing systems used among religiously observant people include five writing systems, namely the old North-eastern Yunnan Miao writing system, the old Lisu writing system (alphabetic writing system), the old Wa writing system, the old Yi writing system (also called the traditional Yi writing system), and the old Lahu writing system. The writing systems primarily used in small ethnic communities include four new writing systems, namely the Daibeng, Daiduan, and Lisu (alphabetic writing system written in bamboo books) writing systems, and Manchu script.⁵⁸

22.3.1.3 The tentative type

The tentative type is also called the promotional type. This type of writing system covers writing systems or alphabetic programs created, improved upon, and reformed since the middle of the twentieth century. The majority of them have been approved for implementation by relevant national and local departments; a minority of them were created in the 1980s. Thirty writing system programs belong to this subtype: Zhuang, Eastern Guizhou Miao, Western Hunan Miao, Sichuan–Guizhou–Yunnan Miao, the new Miao writing system in north-eastern Yunnan, the standard old Miao writing system in north-eastern Yunnan, Bouyei, Dong, Xishuangbanna Dai, new Dehong Dai, Hani, Jingpo, Zaiwa, new Lisu, Wa, Lahu, Naxi, Bai, Tujia, Kyrgyz, Xibe, Tu, Yao (Mian), the Yunnan Yi standard program, the Derung alphabetic program, the Nu alphabetic program, and the Shui, Qiang, Blang, and Daur alphabetic programs.

Generally speaking, types of ethnic writing system use correspond to types of bilingual teaching plan. For example, the general writing system type is primarily employed in preservational types of teaching plan, but there are exceptions. The Dai Lue writing system in Xishuangbanna Prefecture in Yunnan Province was only employed in the transitional teaching plan type; the Liangshan standard Yi writing system is employed in both the preservational and the transitional teaching plan type.

Writing systems such as the trial subtype or the tentative type are largely employed in the transitional teaching plan type, but there are exceptions. The Zhuang and Kyrgyz writing systems are employed in a preservational type of

⁵⁸ Manchu script was used historically by the Manchu ethnic group. In the 1980s, three primary schools in Fuyu County in Heilongjiang Province began to found trial classes on the Manchu language.

teaching plan; the Xibe writing system is employed in both the preservational and the transitional teaching plan types. The Tu writing system, Yunnan Yi standard program, Nu alphabetic program, new Miao writing system in north-eastern Yunnan, and the Shui, Qiang, Blang, and Daur alphabetic programs were not taught in schools (until 1989).

Among the nine special types of writing system, only the old Lisu writing system, old Yi writing system, and Manchu writing system are taught in schools, and all of them are employed in the transitional type of teaching plan.

By 1987, a total of thirty ethnic writing systems were being taught at schools in China, namely Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazakh, Korean, Zhuang, Yi (two types of writing system), Dai (two types of writing system), Kyrgyz, Xibe, Miao (four types of writing system), Lisu (two types of writing system), Jingpo (two types of writing system), Lahu, Wa, Naxi, Hani, Bouyei, Dong, Bai, Yao (Mian language), Tujia, and Manchu.

22.3.2 Distribution characteristics

Among the five autonomous areas in China, except for the Hui ethnic group in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, where Mandarin is commonly used, the ethnic high schools and primary schools all implement bilingual education to different degrees; all of them employ the preservational type of teaching plan. The types of bilingual teaching plan are the same: the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region nearly belong to the developed type; the Tibet Autonomous Region belongs to the developing type; and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region belongs to the trial subtype of the tentative type.

In 1987, among thirty autonomous prefectures in China, twenty-six offered curricula in ethnic writing systems at schools, and two (Xinjiang and Gansu) commonly used Mandarin. Only two autonomous prefectures did not offer ethnic writing systems at school: the Hubei Tujia Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Hubei Province and the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province.⁵⁹

Of twenty-six autonomous prefectures where ethnic writing systems are taught in schools, fifteen (57.69%) employ the preservational type of bilingual teaching plan and eleven (42.31%) employ the transitional type of bilingual teaching plan (42.31%); two of the latter employ both the transitional type and

⁵⁹ Until 1989, four hundred students at four primary schools in Chuxiong Prefecture had been taught the standard old Miao writing system in north-eastern Yunnan.

the expedient type, and nine of them employ only the transitional type. Of the prefectures where ethnic writing systems are taught in school, six (23.08%) autonomous prefectures' bilingual education systems belong to the developed type: four autonomous prefectures in Xinjiang, one autonomous prefecture in Qinghai Province, and one autonomous prefecture in Yanbian City in Jilin Province. Seven (26.92%) autonomous prefectures' bilingual education systems belong to the developed type: six autonomous prefectures in Qinghai Province and one autonomous prefecture in Yunnan Province. Thirteen (50%) autonomous prefectures' bilingual education systems belong to the trial type, distributed in Gansu, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Guangxi, and Hunan Provinces (see Table 22.1).

22.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, bilingual education in China has been divided along two distinct dimensions, namely: types of teaching plan and types of education system. Then, from the perspective of function, the types of bilingual teaching plan were further divided into three subcategories. This classification summarizes the thirty writing systems of twenty-three ethnic groups taught in high schools and primary schools, and the situations of bilingual education; and it almost solves the problem of overlaps between subcategories. Of course, the classification method proposed in this chapter certainly has some problems. Two teaching plans implemented recently in Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province are based on bilingual education, learning to speak through Pinyin, learning to read through phonetic transcription, reading and writing characters before attending primary school; and bilingual and dual-writing-system education, word-for-word translation from ethnic languages into Mandarin, and reading characters independently. Although both of these teaching plans can be classified as rebalancing plans and subtypes of the transitional type, they are slightly different. Strictly speaking, the rebalancing type should be further divided into two subcategories, but for brevity and convenience, that was not done in this chapter.

Table 22.1: Statistics on bilingual education at high schools and primary schools in China.

Ethnic writing system	Distribution area	Year	Primary schools		High schools ^a		Type of teaching plan	Type of education system
			Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of students		
Mongolian	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region	1983	2,881 ^b	299,194	371 ^b	127,322	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Harqin Left Wing County, Liaoning Province	1986	65	7,880	18	4,321	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Fuxin County, Liaoning Province	1986	109	17,257	13	9,017	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Qian Gorlos County, Jilin Province	1985	14	2,093	4	1,599	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Dorbod County, Heilongjiang Province	1985	52	-	8	-	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Subei County, Gansu Province	1984	7	-	1	191	preservational type 1 and 2	trial type
	Haixi Prefecture, Qinghai Province	1986	20	-	2	-	preservational type 1	developed type
	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	1986	71	-	25	-	preservational type 1	developed type

(continued)

Table 22.1 (continued)

Ethnic writing system	Distribution area	Year	Primary schools		High schools ^a		Type of teaching plan	Type of education system
			Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of students		
Korean	Liaoning Province	1987	224	17,954	30	11,206	preservational type 1	developed type
	Jilin Province	1987	751 ^c	10,495	163	63,879	preservational type 1	developed type
	Yanbian Prefecture, Jilin Province	1987	425	72,010	113	48,744	preservational type 1	developed type
Uygur	Heilongjiang Province	1987	409	38,339	62	20,639	preservational type 1	developed type
	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	1986	3,507	-	532	-	preservational type 1	developed type
Kazakh	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	1986	840	-	182	-	preservational type 1	developed type
	Akesai County, Gansu Province	1986	1	301	1	123	preservational type 1	developed type
Kyrgyz	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	1986	108	-	17	-	preservational type 1	developed type
Xibe	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region	1986	8	-	5	-	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type

Tibetan	Tibet Autonomous Region	1986	2,268	114,950	60	20,852	preservational type 1 and 2	developed type
	Qinghai Province	1983	903	44,123	31	5,178	preservational type 1, 2, and 3	developed type
	Gansu Province	1983	226	10,492	6	1,824	preservational type 2	trial type
	Sichuan Province	1983	591 ^d	27,861 ^e	33	3,216	preservational type 1 and 2	trial type
	Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1985	20	500	—	—	preservational type 2	trial type
Zhuang	Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	1986	455	24,940	4 ^h	156	preservational type 1	trial type
standard Yi	Sichuan Province	1983	334 ^f	11,092 ^g	29	2,833	preservational type 1 and 2	trial type
	Zhongdian County, Yunnan Province	1987	1	—	—	—	transitional type	trial type
	Ninglang County, Yunnan Province	1986	—	—	1	—	transitional type	trial type
traditional Yi	Guizhou Province	1986	27	1,182	—	—	transitional type	trial type
Dai Lue	Xishuangbanna Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1987	140	5,455	—	—	transitional type, expedient subtype	trial type

(continued)

Table 22.1 (continued)

Ethnic writing system	Distribution area	Year	Primary schools		High schools ^a		Type of teaching plan	Type of education system
			Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of students		
Daina	Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1986	3	-	-	-	transitional type, expedient subtype	developing type
	Gengma County, Yunnan Province	1986	3	-	-	-	transitional type, rebalancing subtype	trial type
Jingpo	Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1987	39	1,890	-	-	transitional type, rebalancing subtype	developing type
Zaiwa	Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1987	80	3,841	-	-	transitional type, rebalancing subtype	developing type
Lahu	Lancang County, Yunnan Province	1986	35 ^h	1,038	-	-	transitional type, rebalancing subtype	trial type
	Ximeng County, Yunnan Province	1986	13	341	-	-	transitional type, rebalancing subtype	trial type
Wa	Cangyuan County, Yunnan Province	1986	27	1,073	-	-	transitional type, expedient subtype	trial type
	Gengma County, Yunnan Province	1987	2	-	-	-	transitional type	trial type
	Lancang County, Yunnan Province	1986	17	646	-	-	transitional type	trial type

Ximeng County, Yunnan Province	1986	36	–	–	–	transitional type	trial type
four types of Miao writing system ¹	1986	196	11,197	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Western Hunan Hunan Miao writing system	1985	21	–	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Sichuan– Guizhou– Yunnan	1987	1	236	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Miao	1984	2	–	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Bouyei	1986	107	7,986	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Dong	1986	53	4,641	–	–	transitional type	trial type
old Lisu writing system	1985	2	–	–	–	transitional type	trial type
	1987	5	686	–	–	transitional type	trial type
Ninglang County, Yunnan Province	1986	1	–	–	–	transitional type	trial type

(continued)

Table 22.1 (continued)

Ethnic writing system	Distribution area	Year	Primary schools		High schools ^a		Type of teaching plan	Type of education system
			Number of schools	Number of students	Number of schools	Number of students		
new Lisu writing system	Nujiang Prefecture, Yunnan Province	1984	93	708	-	-	transitional type	trial type
		1986	4	29	-	-	transitional type	trial type
Naxi	Lijiang County, Yunnan Province	1985	2	45	-	-	transitional type	trial type
		1986	1	32	-	-	transitional type	trial type
Hani	Honghe County, Yunnan Province	1986	127	5,557	-	-	transitional type	trial type
		1986	1	-	-	-	transitional type	trial type
Yao	Fuyuan County, Yunnan Province	1986	1	54	-	-	transitional type	trial type
		1987	1	46	-	-	transitional type	trial type
(Mian writing system)	Tianlin County, Guangxi Province	1987	1	48	-	-	transitional type	trial type
		1987	1	48	-	-	transitional type	trial type

Sources: Editorial Department of the Yearbook of Guangxi (1987), Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education (1986), Editorial Committee of the Local Chronicles of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (1987), Ouyang Jueya and Zhou Yaowen (1994), Wang Lisheng (1988), Shi Shaocheng (1988), Long Chengyun (1987), Chen Ruyi (1985).

^aIn this column, the number of schools and the number of students who use primary school textbooks or literary textbooks written in ethnic writing systems are excluded.

^bThis includes two types of school, namely Mongolian single-ethnicity schools and Mongolian–Han combined ethnicity schools.

^cThis includes two types of school, namely Korean single ethnicity schools and Korean–Han combined ethnicity schools.

^dOf these schools, 261 teach all of their courses in Tibetan and add Mandarin as an additional course. At other schools, an independent curriculum is taught in Tibetan.

^eFor these students, all of the courses are taught in Tibetan. Among them, 8,111 add Mandarin as an independent course. For other students, courses are not taught in Tibetan, and there is only one course on Tibetan.

^fAt these schools, all of the courses are taught in Yi. Among these schools, 147 add Mandarin as an independent course. For other students, courses are not taught in the Yi language, and there is only one course on Yi.

^gAmong these students, 5,829 receive all of their courses in Yi, and Mandarin is taught as an additional course. For other students, courses are not taught in the Yi language, and there is only one course on Yi.

^hThis is the number of classes, not the number of schools.

ⁱThe four types of Miao writing system are Western Hunan Miao, Eastern Guizhou Miao, Sichuan–Guizhou–Yunnan Miao, and North-eastern Yunnan Miao.

Chapter 23

A report on transitions between bilingual teaching models in China

In order to improve understanding and communication between various ethnic groups, to develop equal, united, cooperative and harmonious ethnic relationships, and to promote the common development of all ethnic groups, for many years the Chinese government has concentrated on carrying out bilingual education in ethnic languages and Mandarin in ethnic areas. Moreover, the government has attained good results. By 2007, tens of thousands of schools around China had employed twenty-nine writing systems of twenty-one ethnic groups in carrying out bilingual education, with up to six million students at these schools (Information Office of the State Council 2009).

The work of editing, revising, publishing, and issuing textbooks written in ethnic minority writing systems achieved results. Textbooks on 3,500 subjects written in ethnic minority writing systems were compiled and published each year, and up to one billion textbook copies were printed, which largely relieved the shortage of textbooks written in ethnic minority writing systems (Official Website of the Ministry of Education 2004).

In 2010, the *Guojia Zhongchangqi Jiaoyu Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2010–2020 Nian)* (国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要 (2010–2020年) [National medium- and long-term outline program on the reform and development of education (2010–2020)] (hereafter the “Outline education program”)) marked the start of a period of transformation for the bilingual teaching model for ethnic minorities around China.⁶⁰ This transformation in ethnic areas was shaped by many factors, such as teacher training and recruitment, the translation, editing, and printing of textbooks, and infrastructure and the housing conditions of staff, all of which required the government to invest considerable funds. In 2012, the central government invested 1.1 million yuan in training and developing bilingual teachers and publishing textbooks (Website of the National Ethnic Affairs Committee 2012). For many years, central financing of up to 26.2 billion yuan was

60 Discussed in detail in the third section of the chapter “Three transitions in ethnic minority language teaching models” in this book.

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used to support bilingual education in Xinjiang, an unprecedentedly large amount of funding (Wang Jinsheng and Yang Tianzao 2010).

In this report, I have attempted to objectively describe the situation of the bilingual teaching models for ethnic minority languages and the national commonly used language at the stage of basic education in China. I have not evaluated the characteristics, advantages, and disadvantages of various bilingual teaching models, or discussed higher education, secondary technical education, preschool education, or bilingual education in the national commonly used language and a foreign language. This is just a preliminary exploration. I hope to receive help, criticism, and advice from other scholars.

23.1 The current situation in the implementation of bilingual teaching models

In 1991, I classified bilingual education plans into three types from the perspective of their functions: the preservational type, the transitional type, and the expedient type (Zhou Qingsheng 1991). Wang Jian (2002: 120) applied these three types to bilingual teaching models: the preservational bilingual teaching model, the transitional bilingual teaching model, and the expedient bilingual teaching model. Compared to decades ago, the types of bilingual teaching model across China as a whole have generally not increased or decreased to any great extent. However, bilingual teaching models have indeed increased, decreased, and changed when it comes to different languages or different ethnic areas,

23.1.1 Five patterns of regional distribution

Geographically, bilingual teaching models in China are primarily distributed in northern and southern areas. The northern area includes the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, three provinces in north-eastern China (Heilongjiang Province, Jilin Province, and Liaolin Province), the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Gansu Province, Qinghai Province, the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Sichuan Province. The southern area includes three provinces and areas: the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Guizhou Province, and Yunnan Province.

Following the traditional categorizations of the Ministry of Education, the bilingual teaching model in China comprises five categories: patterns 1–3,⁶¹ the bilingual and dual-writing-system pattern, and the bilingual and single-writing-system pattern.

23.1.1.1 Bilingual teaching models in the northern area

In pattern 1, every course is taught in the ethnic language, and a Mandarin curriculum is offered in addition. In pattern 2, every course is taught in Mandarin, and an ethnic language curriculum is offered in addition. In pattern 3, parts of the curriculum are taught in ethnic languages and parts are taught in Mandarin.

23.1.1.2 Bilingual teaching models in the southern area

In the bilingual and dual-writing-system pattern, at the stage of primary education, both the ethnic language and Mandarin are used simultaneously for teaching. In the bilingual and single-writing-system pattern, at the preschool stage and in the lower grades of primary school, the ethnic language acts as an auxiliary medium of instruction for Mandarin.

23.1.2 Use of the five patterns for different languages

Bilingual education employs different teaching models for different languages.

23.1.2.1 Bilingual Mongolian–Mandarin and Tibetan–Mandarin education: patterns 1 and 2

In China, bilingual Mongolian–Mandarin and Tibetan–Mandarin education primarily employs patterns 1 and 2.

The Mongolian–Mandarin bilingual teaching model is distributed in Inner Mongolia, north-eastern China, Gansu Province, and Qinghai Province. Pattern 1 means that Mongolian is the primary medium of instruction; a Mandarin curriculum is offered from the second grade of primary school where Mongolian people reside, the Mongolian language is commonly used, and students speak Mongolian better than Mandarin. At some primary schools of a good standard, Mandarin courses are offered in the first grade; foreign language courses are offered in the third grade of primary school. Pattern 2 means that Mandarin is

⁶¹ The official names of patterns 1–3 are more literally translated as “first-category pattern,” etc.

the primary medium of instruction; Mongolian language courses are offered from the second grade of primary school in areas where Mongolian people live with other ethnic groups, Mongolian is not very commonly used, and students speak Mandarin better than Mongolian.

The Tibetan–Mandarin bilingual teaching model is distributed in provinces and areas such as Tibet, Sichuan, Gansu, and Qinghai. Pattern 1 means that Tibetan is the primary medium of instruction and courses in the national commonly used language and writing system are offered. This type is primarily employed in primary schools and teaching services in farming and pastoral areas. Pattern 2 means that the national commonly used language is the primary medium of instruction; as a compulsory course, the Tibetan language and writing system are taught in primary schools, secondary schools, and high schools in Tibet and the Tibetan classes in eastern China.⁶² Primary schools and secondary schools in the Tibet Autonomous Region employ pattern 1; high school switch to employing pattern 2 completely.

23.1.2.2 Bilingual Uygur–Mandarin education: Patterns 2 and 3

The Uygur–Mandarin bilingual teaching model is found in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. It primarily employs two types of teaching model. In pattern 3,⁶³ the national commonly used language and writing system are used for teaching in the following courses: primary school Mandarin, math, science, and information technology; secondary school Mandarin, foreign languages, math, physics, and information technology; high school Mandarin, foreign languages, math, physics, chemistry, information technology, and general technology. Other courses are taught in the Uygur language and writing system. In pattern 2,⁶⁴ the national commonly used language and writing system are used for teaching all courses; courses in the Uygur language and writing are offered; and, at schools without quality teaching, courses in sports, music, and painting can be taught in the Uygur language and writing system.

Xinjiang has almost completed the transition from the pattern 1 to pattern 3; in order words, the teaching model has switched from every course being taught in the ethnic language and a Mandarin curriculum being offered independently,

⁶² The majority of majors at Tibet University and Tibet Tibetan Medicine College choose pattern 3. This means parts of the curriculum are taught in Tibetan and others in Mandarin. However, high school education is not discussed in this article.

⁶³ The local Education Department mostly refers to this as pattern 1.

⁶⁴ The local Education Department mostly refers to this as pattern 2.

to parts of the curriculum being taught in the ethnic language and parts of the curriculum being taught in Mandarin.

23.1.2.3 Bilingual Korean–Mandarin education: Patterns 1–3

The Korean–Mandarin bilingual teaching model is primarily distributed in three provinces of north-eastern China. Three types of bilingual teaching model coexist. Pattern 1 is locally called the Korean-based pattern. It means that Korean is used as the medium of instruction and Mandarin is offered additionally; it is primarily applied in areas with a largely Korean population. Pattern 2 is locally called the Mandarin-based pattern; it means that Mandarin is used as the medium of instruction and Korean is offered additionally. It is primarily applied in areas with scattered Korean populations. Pattern 3 is locally called the bilingual pattern; it means that parts of the curriculum are taught in Mandarin and the rest in Korean. It is primarily applied in areas with a scattered Korean population.

23.1.2.4 Bilingual Yi–Mandarin education: Patterns 1 and 2

The Yi–Mandarin bilingual teaching model is primarily distributed in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. In pattern 2, Mandarin is the primary medium of instruction for the entire curriculum; at the same time, the Yi language is offered in addition. In pattern 1, the Yi language is the primary medium of instruction for the entire curriculum, while at the same time Mandarin is offered additionally.

Since the autumn of 2011, pattern 1 of bilingual education has been employed in Liangshan Prefecture at the stage of compulsory education. At primary school and the lower grades of secondary school, courses on sports and painting are taught in Mandarin; foreign language courses are taught in the foreign language; all the other courses are taught in Yi. Pattern 1 has given way to patterns 2 and 3.

23.1.2.5 Other cases of bilingual ethnic–Mandarin education: The bilingual and dual-writing-system pattern and the bilingual and single-writing-system pattern

In Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan Provinces, bilingual education is primarily implemented in the lower grades of primary school; in the higher grades of primary school or secondary school, bilingual education primarily takes the form of optional courses. Bilingual education is not carried out at high schools, except for one high school in Yunnan Diqing Prefecture.

The bilingual and single-writing-system pattern is dominant. It is implemented all over Guizhou Province. It is also dominant in Guangxi and Yunnan. The bilingual and single-writing-system pattern is primarily distributed in remote villages in ethnic areas, while such a pattern is no longer implemented in various counties and the centers and suburbs of various cities.

23.2 Achievements and characteristics

23.2.1 The quality of bilingual Korean–Mandarin education in north-eastern China is excellent

The number of students at Korean ethnic schools who went on to enroll at college was higher than that of Han schools. In 2009, in Yanbian Prefecture, the college enrollment rate of regular high schools reached 82.10% for the arts, which was 13.2% higher than the college enrollment rate of Han schools; the college enrollment rate reached 77.90% for science, which was 8.8% higher than that of Han schools.

Those Korean college graduates who graduated from Korean high schools had more opportunities to study further; they were able to study in Korean and work in Korean companies. Their employment rate is evidently higher than that of other graduates. The high quality of Korean–Mandarin bilingual schools attracted Han students. At Korean schools in Yanbian Prefecture, the proportion of Han students was 8%, which not only indicated the quality of the education of bilingual schools but also promoted ethnic unity.

23.2.2 Bilingual education in ethnic languages and Mandarin in Xinjiang develops rapidly

According to the statistics, in 1999, only twenty-seven middle schools in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region set up experimental classes, containing 2,629 students (Ma Wenhua 2011: 7). In September 2010, 827,100 ethnic students had accepted bilingual education and were studying at Han schools, making up 38.9% of the total number of ethnic minority students in primary schools and middle schools. There were 39,900 ethnic minority teachers (Ma Wenhua 2011: 9). Over ten years, the number of ethnic minority students in bilingual education had increased three hundred times.

23.2.3 Mandarin-teaching schools establish ethnic minority languages curricula

From the autumn semester of 2010, the Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture and Kashgar in Xinjiang attempted to set up ethnic language courses from the first grade of primary school and specified them as compulsory courses for those students who studied at Han schools in the first grade of primary school; however, for those students whose native language was Mandarin and those students in other grades at Han primary schools, the ethnic minority language was an optional course. Ethnic language courses were offered for two or three class hours per week, and the native textbook *Language*, which was published in 2009 by the Xinjiang Educational Publishing House and which especially provided for bilingual classes, was employed. An ethnic language curriculum was set up in order to enable the ethnic minority students studying at Han schools to explore and realize the path of knowing both ethnic languages and Mandarin, while at the same time creating conducive conditions for Han students whose native language was Mandarin to learn the ethnic minority language.

23.2.4 Rescuing and preserving endangered languages and passing on ethnic cultures

In order to rescue and preserve endangered languages and pass on ethnic culture, an Oroqen ethnic language curriculum was offered at primary schools in villages of the Oroqen areas of Heilongjiang Province, for example at Wulaga Oroqen Ethnic Primary School in Xinsheng Township in Heihe City. The Oroqen language curriculum was offered in one class every two weeks. The students studied the International Phonetic Alphabet and a small amount of vocabulary.

Three Hezhen schools in Heilongjiang Province set up a course on Hezhen or listed Hezhen in class schedules as formally taught. These three schools were located in Jiejinkou Hezhen Township in Tongjiang City and in Bacha Hezhen Township and Sipai Hezhen Township in Raohe County.

Samajie School in Zhalantun City in Inner Mongolia offered Oroqen courses, where teachers taught the Oroqen students their native language of daily life and Oroqen traditional arts, cuisine, customs, legends, and so forth.

Baifusi Ethnic School in Laifeng County of south-western Hunan Province set up bilingual Tu–Mandarin education and compiled a set of textbooks on Tu ethnic culture; moreover, the school introduced Tu language learning into the classroom.

On September 12, 2013, the first Shui–Mandarin bilingual educational trial in Rongjiang County in Guizhou Province started at the village primary school.

The trial would be based in schools. At the same time that Shui–Mandarin bilingual education was implemented, Shui culture was introduced into the classroom as something to be transmitted, preserved, and developed.

23.2.5 Overseas children come to China to receive bilingual Dai–Mandarin education

Almost all of the Dai–Mandarin bilingual schools in Xishuangbanna Prefecture in Yunnan Province had Burmese, Lao, and Thai children who came to China to receive bilingual education. This helped to spread Chinese culture overseas and to consolidate stability and harmony in overseas areas.

23.2.6 Creating the “Program for practical phonetic symbols for the Dongxiang language” and carrying out bilingual education

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, some Dongxiang ethnic scholars in Guizhou Province, together with a number of overseas scholars, established the “Program for practical phonetic symbols for the Dongxiang language.” The Office of Ethnic Language and Writing in Gansu Province examined and approved the program, and then published the *Dongxiang–Mandarin dictionary*, on which the Mandarin footnotes to the national commonly used textbooks are based. In year 1 and year 2 at a few primary schools, bilingual educational experiments were carried out with good results.

23.3 Debated topics

Scholars’ opinions still differ on the transition between bilingual teaching models. They primarily argue over whether the function of ethnic education is transmitting traditional culture or promoting the development of students. Of course, such a difference of opinions is a normal phenomenon.

23.3.1 Heritage and development

An ethnic group not only needs to survive and develop, but also to preserve and transmit its native traditional culture. However, reality generally shows that, the faster modernization progresses, the faster traditional culture disappears;

traditional cultures where modern civilization has not had much effect are preserved relatively well. In fact, the issues of cultural heritage, survival, and development are also issues of the relationship between modernization and traditional culture.

23.3.1.1 Survival and development

Western development brings opportunities for development in ethnic minority areas. Ethnic minorities are slowly entering modernized society. However, the maintenance and development of a society requires most of it to master stable professional skills. Therefore, schools pay more attention to how to cultivate a labor force that can meet the requirements of modernized society. Which language is employed by students to acquire modernized knowledge?

Due to various historical factors, many professional courses in China are based on the national commonly used language, and the relevant working environments primarily employ the national commonly used language. Therefore, proficiency in the national commonly used language and a grasp of the modern knowledge system using the national commonly used language have become important preconditions for students to find jobs and develop their prospects. By contrast, ethnic minority students who accept native language education will generally encounter language barriers when it comes to employment and development, and so will be unable to meet the requirements of social development.

23.3.1.2 Cultural heritage

Bilingual education should undertake the duty of transmitting cultural heritage. The ultimate purpose of ethnic minorities studying their ethnic language and the national commonly used language is not just to learn and grasp languages in and of themselves, but to understand and experience the rich and deep cultural knowledge preserved in them. Bilingual education not only makes ethnic minority students conscious of their ethnic cultural identity and makes them adapt to the social and cultural life of their native ethnic group, but also makes them enter the mainstream of modern society and adapt to mainstream culture so as to realize self-development. Therefore, the

implementation of bilingual education for ethnic minorities will not only satisfy our country's political requirements and the practical needs of ethnic minority areas in terms of social life, but can also protect and develop ethnic minorities' languages and writing systems effectively. Moreover, it will help to preserve and transmit various ethnic minorities' outstanding traditional cultures in China so as to maintain the diversity of Chinese culture and promote the diversity and coexistence of global culture. (Zhu Xiongquan 2006: 85)

23.3.2 Continuous decreases in the enrollment of students in bilingual schools

The majority of Mongolian students come from the grassroots level. They study in boarding schools far from their homes. The prices of food and lodgings are very high. When students study Mongolian, Mandarin, and a foreign language, these three languages, their course load, and their psychological load become heavy, which has led to decreases in student enrollment.

The sources of students for Korean–Mandarin bilingual schools are shrinking dramatically. In recent years, many members of native Korean ethnic groups have moved into the coastal areas, large cities, and abroad. The population of the Korean ethnic group in Jilin Province shows negative growth; the enrollment of students presents a decreasing trend year on year. In addition, some Korean parents have been eager to enhance their children’s Mandarin level, so many Korean students have entered Han schools, affecting the Korean schools as a result. Many Korean students from villages and remote areas have found it very difficult to study in Korean schools, further increasing the outflow of Korean students into Han schools and increasing the Korean school dropout rate. The issue of how to stabilize student enrollment has become a focus of discussion and a hot topic of common concern to the Korean population and schoolteachers. Such a problem also exists in the Tibetan–Mandarin bilingual schools in Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu Provinces and the Yi–Mandarin bilingual schools in Sichuan.

23.3.3 Insufficient numbers of bilingual teachers are restricting the development of bilingual education

Insufficient numbers of bilingual teachers, and poor quality of the teachers, are part of the bottleneck in the development of bilingual education. At present, the main way to increase the number and quality of bilingual primary and middle school teachers is to post teachers and bilingual teachers to the relevant places. However, various regions cannot provide teachers as required due to personnel limitations.

23.4 Discussion

23.4.1 The correct way of dealing with the relationship between the national commonly used language and ethnic minority languages

In the new period of economic transition, social transition, and transition between bilingual teaching models, the issue of whether every child can learn,

use, and grasp the national commonly used language well is closely related to every child's employment and future development. This is because the national commonly used language is the main communication medium in China, and moreover is the major carrier of scientific and cultural knowledge. This is the more pressing because the task of ethnic minority students in ethnic regions in learning the national commonly used language is very difficult.

Meanwhile, ethnic minority languages are an important embodiment of the diversity of Chinese culture. The process of studying and using native languages is governed by the "Law of ethnic regional autonomy." Learning one's native language well favors understanding and grasping Putonghua; learning Putonghua well helps in understanding native languages deeply. The commonly used language and ethnic languages reinforce one another.

Therefore, the promotion of the national commonly used language and education in ethnic minority languages should develop in parallel. We can neither pay less attention to the ethnic cultural heritage nor ignore education in ethnic minority languages, for we wish to emphasize survival and development, and thus we must also emphasize active promotion of the national commonly used language. Likewise, we cannot ignore the survival and development of – or phase out education in – the national commonly used language because we would like to maintain the ethnic cultural heritage and reinforce education in ethnic languages. We cannot be unbalanced and separate these two parts from each other. Thus, the purpose of bilingual education is to cultivate talents who can grasp both ethnic languages and Mandarin.

23.4.2 Respecting and guaranteeing ethnic minorities' right to use their native languages and writing systems and receive education

In the process of carrying out the "Outline education program," it is very important to respect the feelings and will of ethnic minorities, and meet them with tolerance, negotiation, and respect. In practice, we should realize that an ethnic language is a carrier of ethnic culture, a link connecting ethnic emotions, a tool of social mobility. Education in ethnic languages is no small matter, so we must carry out education in ethnic languages steadily rather than ambitiously. In the process of changing the language teaching model, we need to take teachers' adaptability into consideration and organize them properly. If there is a requirement to learn native languages and writing systems in ethnic minority areas, we should provide ethnic minorities with more opportunities to do so.

23.4.3 Revision of the bilingual teaching model

More than twenty years ago, I proposed a bilingual teaching model including the preservational type, transitional type, and expedient type. It now appears that such a classification is no longer suitable for the new situation of bilingual education in China, but requires revision and adjustment. It is appropriate to rename the previous preservational type the traditional type (namely pattern 1 discussed above), and to rename the previous transitional type the modern pattern 1 (which includes patterns 2 and 3 above). I set up a modern pattern 3 as well, which comprises the bilingual and dual-writing-system and bilingual and single-writing-system types. I also eliminate the expedient type and set up what I call a protecting type, which aims at protecting endangered languages and cultures.

Thus, the bilingual teaching model in China can be divided into four categories: (1) the traditional pattern, which includes pattern 1 in northern China; (2) the modern pattern 1, which comprises patterns 2 and 3 in northern China; (3) the modern pattern 2, which is made up of the bilingual and dual-writing-system pattern and the bilingual and single-writing-system pattern in southern China; and (4) the preservational pattern (see Table 23.1).

Table 23.1: Comparison of new and old bilingual teaching models.

Old model	New model	Teaching model	Language type or area
preservational pattern	traditional pattern	pattern 1 (ethnic language + Mandarin)	Mongolian–Mandarin bilingual education
			Tibetan–Mandarin bilingual education
			Uygur–Mandarin bilingual education
			Korean–Mandarin bilingual education
			Yi–Mandarin bilingual education

Table 23.1 (continued)

Old model	New model	Teaching model	Language type or area
transitional pattern	modern pattern 1	pattern 2 (Mandarin + one ethnic language)	Mongolian–Mandarin bilingual education
			Tibetan–Mandarin bilingual education
			Uygur–Mandarin bilingual education
			Korean–Mandarin bilingual education
			Yi–Mandarin bilingual education
		pattern 3 (some courses taught in Mandarin, some courses taught in ethnic languages)	Uygur–Mandarin bilingual education
			Korean–Mandarin bilingual education
	modern pattern 2	bilingual and dual-writing-system pattern, bilingual and single-writing-system pattern	bilingual education in ethnic languages and Mandarin in Guangxi, Guizhou, and Yunnan
	preservational pattern		bilingual education in endangered languages, Han schools set up curricula in ethnic languages

Chapter 24

Three transitions in ethnic minority language teaching models

Transitions in ethnic minority language teaching models strictly correspond with social transitions. By reviewing language education over the past hundred years in China, we will discover that ethnic minority language teaching models went through relatively major transitions three times. The first was the transition from frontier language education to ethnic language education; the second was the transition from ethnic language education to the self-selected type of bilingual education;⁶⁵ and the third was the transition from the self-selected type of bilingual education to the collectively agreed type of bilingual education.⁶⁶

24.1 The first transition: From frontier language education to ethnic language education (1930–1977)

24.1.1 Language education in border areas in the period of the Nanjing National Government

24.1.1.1 Social and historical backgrounds

After the Xinhai Revolution, academic circles did not yet have a concept of ethnicity in the modern sense. The Nanjing National Government pointed out that China just had one nation, namely, the Chinese nation; all of the five major ethnic groups, the Han, Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, and Tibetans, should be classified as the Chinese nation. These five ethnic groups were stated in the sense of Sun Yat-sen's "Five-Ethnic Unity for a Republic." In addition, China is a country; all of the regions where these five ethnic groups are located were governed by the Republic of China.

⁶⁵ The self-selected type of bilingual education is present when autonomous regions select and decide on bilingual teaching models and systems by themselves according to local situations.

⁶⁶ The collectively agreed type of bilingual education pertains to the regulations in the "Outline education program" that stipulate the active promotion of bilingual education, comprehensive establishment of the Mandarin curriculum, full promotion of the national commonly used language and writing system, and respect for and guaranteeing the right of ethnic minorities to receive education using their native languages and writing systems.

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Therefore, in the Republic of China, the dual structure of State and its borders, rather than the dual structure of ethnic groups and the Han, seems to be the basis adopted for solving the issues of ethnic minorities. The ethnic education discussed after the founding of New China was collectively known as border education in the Republic of China; the ethnic language education usually discussed nowadays was collectively referred to as border language education.

24.1.1.2 Teaching policies on border languages

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Nanjing National Government allowed the use of a few ethnic border languages and writing systems with a limited scope under the overarching principle of national linguistic unity.

First, the government proposed when the teaching policy for border languages should be implemented; this was set for approximately 1930, after the Ministry of Education set up the Education Department of Mongolia and Tibet:

The teaching policy is primarily based on respecting various ethnic languages and writing systems. The policy rules that two types of writing system are available: frontier writing systems and the national writing system, which are provided for ethnic groups to choose between. However, two types of ethnic group are not taken into consideration: one such type of ethnic group has a language but lacks a writing system; the other ethnic group has abolished its native writing system. Only those schools above the secondary level will start to offer compulsory courses in the national language and the national writing system so as to make it convenient for students to study further.

(Compilation Committee of the Yearbook of Education of the Ministry of Education 1957: 917)

In 1930, the *Dierci Quanguo Jiaoyu Huiyi Yijue de Shishi Mengzang Jiaoyu Jihua* 第二次全国教育会议决议的实施蒙藏教育计划 [Decision on the implementation of the education plan decided by the Second Conference of National Education] ruled as follows:

Various kinds of secondary school and primary school should not only employ the national unified textbooks, but also choose other suitable textbooks in addition according to the social situations in Mongolia and Tibet. In particular, the schools below secondary level are required to translate and print textbooks both in Mongolian and Mandarin or both in Tibetan and Mandarin. (Mongolian Education History Committee 1995: 145–146)

According to statistics collected in the 1930s, between 1935 and 1938 the Ministry of Education established a total of 2,375 frontier primary schools around China. Of them, 55 were in Gansu Province, 143 in Ningxia Province, 5 in Xikang Province, 35 in Yunnan Province, 12 in Guizhou Province, 15 in Sichuan Province,

100 in Hunan Province, 1,412 in Xinjiang Province, 29 in Suiyuan Province, 13 in Chahar Province, 541 in Guangxi Province, and 1 in Tibet.⁶⁷

In 1935, the Ministry of Education issued the *Tuijin Meng–Zang–Hui–Miao Jiaoyu Jihua* 推进蒙藏回苗教育计划 [Plans on promoting the education of Mongols, Tibetans, Hui, and Miao]. Around this same year, the schools established by the associations for promoting various ethnic groups in China developed rapidly. According to 1938 statistics, 1,840 schools were established by the associations for promoting the culture of various ethnic groups, with 105,097 students at school. Of these 1,840 schools, 1,540 were Uygur schools with 89,804 students, 277 were Kazakh and Kyrgyz schools with 14,322 students, and 1 was a Hui school with 44 students. The curricula offered in these schools were as follows: ethnic languages and writing systems, arithmetic, society, geography, nature, governmental policy, scriptures, and so forth. At the same time, a Mandarin course was also offered from the higher grades of primary school (Compilation Commission of the Yearbook of Education of the Ministry of Education 1984: 401–402).

24.1.2 Ethnic language education in New China

24.1.2.1 Social revolution

In 1949, the People's Republic of China was founded; China experienced a vast social revolution and established a socialist system. The Central Government identified fifty-six ethnic groups, of which fifty-five were ethnic minorities. An ethnic autonomous system was implemented in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. Such an autonomous system is one of the political systems of New China; moreover, it is an important basis for the State when drawing up teaching policy for ethnic minority languages. According to the national education principles and legal regulations, various autonomous organs can decide their local education plans and the mediums of instruction in various categories at various levels. Minority-based schools and other education organizations use native languages and writing systems or local commonly used languages and writing systems as mediums of instruction.

Prior to the founding of New China, Mao Zedong had proposed a conception of education policy for ethnic minority languages after the founding of New China, whereby “due to the culture, religion, and customs of various ethnic minorities, we cannot force ethnic minorities to learn Mandarin and the Chinese

⁶⁷ Government Information Office of the Republic of China (ed.). *Bianjiang Jiaoyu*. 1947.

writing system, but we can sponsor them in developing cultural education based on various ethnic groups' native languages and writing systems" (Mao Zedong 1991b [1938]: 595). Based on Mao Zedong's conception, the State drew up a teaching policy for ethnic minority languages and writing systems on time.

24.1.2.2 Teaching policy on ethnic languages

In 1951, the Ministry of Education convened the First Working Conference on National Ethnic Education in Beijing, and made rules on educational issues concerning ethnic minority languages and writing systems as follows:

For all the ethnic groups who have their own current commonly used writing systems, for example, the Mongolians, Koreans, Tibetans, Uygur, and Kazakhs, various courses in primary schools and middle schools must be taught in the native languages and writing systems. The ethnic groups that have independent languages, but lack writing systems, or that lack complementary writing systems, will, on the one hand, start to create and reform writing systems; on the other hand, based on their own volition, they will conduct education by employing Mandarin and the Chinese writing system or the native commonly used language and writing system.

(Editorial Department of the Chinese Yearbook of Education 1984: 396)

In 1952, article 16 of the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Quyu Zizhi Shishi Gangyao* 中华人民共和国民族区域自治实施纲要 [Implementation outline for regional ethnic autonomy in the People's Republic of China] stipulated that "each ethnic autonomous organization should employ each ethnic group's native language and writing system so as to develop the various ethnic groups' cultural and educational status" (Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 3).

Under the guidance of the national teaching policy for ethnic languages, education in the languages and writing systems of various ethnic groups across China primarily employs four types of pattern. In the first type, education in primary and middle schools is based on native languages, and teachers start to teach Mandarin from year 3 in primary school; for example, the education of the Mongolian, Uygur, and Korean ethnic groups belongs to this type. In the second type, various grades in school and various courses are taught primarily in Mandarin, and the students start to learn ethnic languages and writing systems from a certain grade; for example, the education of the Zhuang, Yi, and Jingpo ethnic groups belongs to this type. In the third type, if an ethnic group has a native language but lacks a native writing system, at the preschool or lower grades of primary school, the ethnic language will be used as an auxiliary medium of instruction; for example, the education of the Oroqen and De'ang ethnic groups belongs to this third type. Finally, in the fourth type,

students just study Mandarin; for example, the education of the Hui and Manchu and the ethnic minorities who live in regions where people of the Han ethnic group live in compact communities belongs to this type.

24.2 The second transition: From ethnic language education to self-selected bilingual education (1978–2009)

24.2.1 Social background

24.2.1.1 Reform and openness and the economic transition

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Congress of the CPC (December 1978), the State carried out an economic policy of opening up to the outside world and enlivening the economy in the domestic sphere. Socio-economic development transformed from the original class struggle to economic construction, from a planned economy to a socialist market economy. Policy on the use and development of ethnic minority languages was gradually implemented again and put into practice.

24.2.1.2 Communication between regions and ethnic groups is increasingly frequent

In this period, increasing numbers of the ethnic minority population moved from border areas to areas in eastern China so as to attend school, engage in trade, and run businesses. Ethnic minority peasant laborers continuously moved to urban areas to work. However, some of the peasant laborers could not understand Mandarin, which affected their communication with members of other ethnicities. Some of them needed to study Mandarin remedially for one year, and were then allowed to enroll in universities in eastern China to study, which increased the burden on them. In the process of market construction, Putonghua became a bridge for communication between regions and ethnic groups across China; moreover, it was a tool used to obtain extensive information on politics, economy, culture, science and technology, and so forth.

Learning Mandarin well was not only the common will of ethnic minority people but also a requirement for the development and prosperity of ethnic economies and culture. Meanwhile, according to the relevant national laws and regulations, the State needed to sufficiently respect ethnic minorities' right to use and develop their languages and writing systems. For such purposes, since the 1980s, relevant governmental departments had ruled that students were to learn Mandarin well in addition to ethnic languages.

24.2.2 Education in ethnic languages and Mandarin

Considering the new situation of reforms and openness, in 1980 the Ministry of Education and the National Ethnic Affairs Committee stipulated in *Guanyu Jiaqiang Minzu Jiaoyu Gongzuo de Yijian* 关于加强民族教育工作的意见 [Suggestions on reinforcing ethnic education work] that “all of the ethnic groups that have native languages and writing systems should use their native languages and writing systems to conduct education and should learn their native ethnic languages and writing systems well; meanwhile, they should also learn Mandarin and the Chinese writing system well.”⁶⁸ Once the statement that education in ethnic languages and Mandarin should be carried out at ethnic schools was issued, it was restated repeatedly in many subsequent laws, regulations, and documents.

In 1984, the *Minzu Quyu Zizhifa* 民族区域自治法 [Law of ethnic regional autonomy] was issued. Article 37 ruled that “for schools primarily enrolling ethnic minority students, those schools of a good standard should employ textbooks written in ethnic minority writing systems and teach in ethnic minority languages; higher grades of primary school or middle school should offer a Mandarin curriculum and promote the national commonly used Putonghua.”⁶⁹ In 1986, the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Yiwu Jiaoyufa* 中华人民共和国义务教育法 [Law of compulsory education of the People’s Republic of China] was released, in which article 6 ruled that “schools should promote the national commonly used Putonghua; the schools primarily enrolling ethnic minority students can teach by employing the commonly used languages and writing systems of ethnic minorities.”⁷⁰

Although these regulations did not use the term “bilingual education” directly, their content referred to some of the main aspects of bilingualism, such as the mediums of instruction of bilingual education and the curriculum setting.

After the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Congress, ethnic language education recovered in ethnic areas. In various ethnic areas, schools conducted education using both the ethnic language and Mandarin in a practical fashion and then gradually formed three basic teaching models: ethnic language-based

68 Ministry of Education and National Ethnic Affairs Committee (eds.). *Guanyu Jiaqiang Minzu Jiaoyu Gongzuo de Yijian*. 1980. <http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/mzjykj/2004-06-29/1170217314361252.htm> (accessed June 29, 2004).

69 *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Quyu Zizhifa*. 1984. <http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/zcfg/2004-07-10/1168742761857990.htm> (accessed July 10, 2004).

70 *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Yiwu Jiaoyufa*. <http://www.edu.cn/20060303/3176577.shtml> (accessed March 3, 2006). In the revised version issued in 2006, the contents of this article were deleted.

with added teaching in Mandarin, Mandarin-based with added teaching in ethnic languages, and ethnic language-based teaching that gradually moves to Mandarin-based teaching.

24.2.3 The self-selected type of bilingual education

As discussed above, the self-selected type of bilingual education covers the bilingual teaching models that are selected and decided on according to local conditions.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the theory and practice of bilingual education in the Soviet Union and some other countries began to be introduced into China, which aroused responses from Chinese scholars, especially some famous linguists and ethnic linguists; for example, Ma Xueliang, Xing Gongwan, Wan Jun, and Yan Xuejiong wrote comments and personal opinions on the theory and practice of bilingual education in the Soviet Union and some other countries. At that time, the need to implement bilingual education increased in China.

Local documents in China started to employ the expression “bilingual education.” The term “bilingual education” was first used in *Wusheng, Zizhiqu Zangzu Jiaoyu Yantaohui Jiyao* 五省、自治区藏族教育研讨会纪要 [Summary of the Conference on Tibetan Education of Five Provinces and Autonomous Regions], which was distributed by the National Education Committee in 1988.

In the case of implementing the requirements of bilingual education at schools in the Tibetan area, we need to proceed from actual conditions and adjust measures to local conditions. In principle, we can implement two types of education system gradually. In the Tibetan area, or those areas whose language environments are similar to Tibet, in the phase of basic education we should implement a system based on the Tibetan language and writing system, and from the higher grades of primary school, Mandarin is to be offered in an independent curriculum; at schools in other areas, we can implement a system based on education in the Tibetan language and writing system, and the Tibetan language and writing system can be offered in an independent curriculum so as to ensure that Tibetan high school graduates meet the requirements of grasping both Tibetan and Mandarin.

(Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 553)

However, in the 1990s, bilingual education was formally proposed in a national document as a policy at the State level. In 1991, the State Council approved and issued two documents; moreover, the National Education Committee and the National Ethnic Affairs Committee jointly published a document in 1992. All of

these documents formally and clearly illustrated the policy of bilingual (dual writing-system) education in China.

Based on the regulations in the “Law of ethnic regional autonomy of the People’s Republic of China,” the schools of a good standard that primarily enroll ethnic minority students should employ textbooks written in ethnic minority writing systems; moreover, they should teach in ethnic minority languages. At appropriate school grades, they should offer a Mandarin curriculum in addition, carry out bilingual education, and promote the national commonly used Putonghua.

(Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Political Division and Policy Research Center 1997: 392)

According to the regulations stated in the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China and the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Quyue Zizhi Fa* 中华人民共和国民族区域自治法 [National regional autonomy law of the People’s Republic of China], we should attach importance to promoting Putonghua in ethnic minority areas. We should promote bilingual education in both the local ethnic language and Putonghua at schools. The specific requirements and steps for promoting Putonghua in ethnic minority areas will be determined by the practical situation. The purposes of promoting Putonghua are to advance economic and social development and to improve citizens’ quality of life and work efficiency. These purposes neither prohibit nor abolish the use of dialects, and do not hinder various ethnic minorities from using and developing their native languages.⁷¹

In the areas that teach in ethnic minority languages and writing systems, we need to do bilingual education well practically and promote Putonghua actively.

Specific implementation of the policy on the medium of instruction and writing systems for ethnic schools is determined by the following elements: relevant regulations and decisions issued in the Constitution and “Law of national regional autonomy.”⁷²

The clear proposals for and implementation of bilingual education policy promoted the development of bilingual education. In 2007, more than ten thousand schools across China employed twenty-nine writing systems of twenty-one ethnic groups to carry out bilingual education. Students in such schools numbered more than six million (Information Office of the State Council 2009).

The bilingual teaching model and its characteristics differ by region and ethnic group. Schools on every level in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region taught in six languages and writing systems: Uyghur, Kazakh, Mongolian, Kyrgyz, Xibe, and Mandarin. In the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, it was ruled that, at

71 Guojia Minwei Guanyu Dangqian Yuyan Wenzhi Gongzuo de Qingshi. 1992. http://www.china-language.gov.cn/8/2007_6_20/1_8_2580_0_1182323761125.html (accessed November 6, 2002).

72 Guanyu Jiaqiang Minzu Jiaoyu Gongzuo Ruogan Wenti de Yijian. In General Office of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, Department of Politics and Laws, and Policy Research Office (eds.), *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Minzu Zhengce Fagui Xuanbian*, 589–90. Civil Aviation Administration of China Publishing House, 1992.

the Mongolian primary school stage, Mandarin was to be used as the medium of instruction, supplemented by Mongolian, for children who understood Mongolian; for children who could not understand the Mongolian language, Mandarin was employed as the medium of instruction, supplemented by the Mongolian language. In the Tibet Autonomous Region, it was ruled that, from year 4 of primary school, a Mandarin curriculum was to be offered in Tibetan classes and a Tibetan curriculum in Mandarin classes so that, by graduation from high school, students could grasp both the Tibetan and Chinese writing systems. In 1980, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region decided to restore the Ethnic Minority Language Work Committee of the Autonomous Region and Guangxi Zhuang School; moreover, the autonomous area chose a county to trial restoration of the promotion of Zhuang, the eradication of Zhuang illiteracy, and the implementation of Zhuang education in primary schools.

24.3 The third transition: From the self-selected type of bilingual education to the collectively agreed type of bilingual education (2010–present)

24.3.1 Social background

24.3.1.1 Social transition

The socialist market economy system was initially established in China at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The Chinese society transformed from tradition to modernization, namely from an agricultural, rural, and closed and semi-closed traditional society to an industrial, urban, and open modern society. Between 2000 and 2010, China experienced the most drastic and rapid urbanization and industrialization in human history. In 2011, the urban population of China reached 690 million, exceeding the rural population for the first time. Over the next twenty years, urbanization in China will continue to develop rapidly.

With the rapid development of industrialization, urbanization, and marketization, various ethnic areas gradually changed from the situation of the traditional planned economy; they have gradually found themselves in an intercommunicative and interdependent situation where various regions and ethnic groups communicate mutually to an ever-increasing extent. The map of the language ecology of China has changed and will continue to change.

24.3.1.2 Shortcomings of ethnic education

Ethnic education in China has experienced a half-century of development and made great achievements. However, it cannot meet the requirements of new situations and modernization. Compared to the other areas in China, the educational level in ethnic areas is still backward. From the perspective of the enrollment situations in higher and secondary education in 2006, in autonomous ethnic regions across China, for every 100,000 people there were 7,041 students in middle school (89% of the national average level), and 639 students at university (35% of the national average level).⁷³ From the perspective of adult illiteracy, in 2000, of the fifty-five ethnic minorities around China, the illiteracy rate in twenty exceeded 20% and the illiteracy rate in six exceeded 40%. In 2007, the average illiteracy rate of those over fifteen years of age around China was 8.4%; however, in five ethnic provinces and areas, the illiteracy rate exceeded the national average level, and the illiteracy rate in the Tibet Autonomous Region reached 36.8%.⁷⁴

24.3.2 Enforcing Mandarin education in the process of bilingual education

Article 4 of the *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Tongyong Yuyan Wenzhi Fa* 中华人民共和国国家通用语言文字法 [Law of the national commonly used languages and writing systems of the People's Republic of China], issued in 2000, rules that “citizens have the right to study and use the national commonly used language and writing system.” At the National Conference on Basic Education held in 2001, Vice-Premier Li Lanqing proposed as follows:

in ethnic minority areas, it is required to implement the “Law of the national commonly used language and writing system of the People's Republic of China” carefully, enhance teachers' ability to speak Putonghua and write standard Chinese characters, improve teachers' level of bilingual education, and conduct bilingual education well, especially in strengthening Mandarin education. In multi-ethnic areas, it is required to encourage different ethnic students to study together at the same school so as to improve ethnic unity.⁷⁵

⁷³ Drawn from the relevant data in *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian 2007*, *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian 2008*, and *Zhongguo Minzu Tongji Nianjian 2007*.

⁷⁴ National Bureau of Statistics (ed.). *Zhongguo Tongji Nianjian 2008*. China Statistics Press, 2008: 120.

⁷⁵ Jiaqiang shuangyu jiaoxue, qieshi tigao minzu jiaoyu zhiliang. *Zhongguo Minzu Bao* (October 1, 2012). 5.

On the local level, in the *Guanyu Dali Tuijin Shuangyu Jiaoxue Gongzuo de Jueding* 关于大力推进双语教学工作的决定 [Decisions on actively promoting bilingual education work], issued in 2004, the Party Committee of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and the People's Government emphasized that bilingual education “focuses on improving the quality of Mandarin education, apart from consolidating and improving the quality of native ethnic language education.”

Bilingual education needs to consolidate and improve the quality of native ethnic language education; meanwhile, it must focus on enhancing the quality of Mandarin education. Bilingual education is based on the principles of adjusting measures to local conditions, categorized guidance, regional planning and stepwise implementation, and then gradually promoting bilingual education work, continuously enlarging the scope and scale of bilingual education, and enhancing the quality of the education of ethnic minorities.⁷⁶

24.3.3 The collectively agreed type of bilingual education

In 2010, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the *Guojia Zhongchangqi Jiaoyu Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2010–2020 Nian)* 国家中长期教育改革和发展规划纲要 (2010–2020年) [National medium- and long-term outline program on the reform and development of education (2010–2020)], which marks the formal start of a new transitional period for the bilingual teaching models for ethnic minorities across China.

Bilingual education should be promoted actively. It must offer a Mandarin curriculum and promote the national commonly used language and writing system fully. It also needs to respect and guarantee ethnic minorities' right to study using their native languages and writing systems. Preschool bilingual education should be enforced comprehensively. The State should support the cultivation of bilingual teachers, education research, and textbook development and publication.⁷⁷

In 2012, the Ministry of Education and the National Language Work Committee issued the *Guojia Zhongchangqi Yuyan Wenzhi Shiye Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2012–2020 Nian)* 国家中长期语言文字事业改革和发展规划纲要 (2012–2020年) [National medium- and long-term outline program for the reform and development

⁷⁶ Xinjiang shaoshu minzu shuangyu jiaoxue gongzuo de huigu yu zhanwang. *Xinjiang Jiaoyu Xueyuan Xuebao* (4) 2011. 5–6.

⁷⁷ Article 27 of *Guojia Zhongchangqi Jiaoyu Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2010–2020 Nian)*. http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2010-03/01/content_19492625_3.htm (accessed March 1, 2010).

of languages and writing systems (2012–2020)]. It required bilingual minority teachers and students to grasp the national commonly used language and writing system.

It is necessary to promote the further training of bilingual teachers and develop bilingual education actively and steadily. By 2020, ethnic minority bilingual teachers will reach the requirements of using the national commonly used language and writing system for teaching; those ethnic minority students who have finished compulsory education will be able to grasp the national commonly used language and writing system.⁷⁸

24.3.4 The need and policies for transformation

24.3.4.1 The need for transformation

There is a need to actively promote bilingual education and cultivate bilingual talents who can grasp both the national commonly used language and an ethnic minority language. The national commonly used language is the primary medium of communication in China; it is the main carrier of scientific and cultural knowledge. Learning and grasping the national commonly used language and writing system are very important for enhancing the teaching quality of the Mandarin curriculum; it is important for ethnic minority students in ethnic areas to adapt to market competition, increase their personal and family incomes, and develop each person's potential for employment and development across China. In ethnic areas, it is still very difficult for ethnic minority students to learn and grasp the national commonly used language and writing system. Meanwhile, it is necessary that the right of ethnic minorities to receive education in their native languages and writing systems be respected and guaranteed.

24.3.4.2 Policy-directed transformation

In ethnic areas, especially in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, one policy would affect the whole ethnic area. In the process of implementing policies, we will inevitably meet some difficulties and specific problems, for example, in the transition from monolingual teachers to bilingual teachers, a serious lack of qualified bilingual teachers, and so forth. These problems need to be highlighted and properly dealt with, based on local conditions, and solved in a coordinated manner; otherwise, the promotion of bilingual education will be affected.

⁷⁸ Article 2 of *Guojia Zhongchangqi Yuyan Wenzhi Shiye Gaige he Fazhan Guihua Gangyao (2012–2020 Nian)*. http://www.china-language.gov.cn/14/2013_1_5/1_14_5299_0_1357369703676.html (accessed January 5, 2013).

24.4 Conclusion

The transition in ethnic minority language teaching models is not only an issue of education and linguistics, but involves a variety of subjects and fields, such as politics, ethnology, social development, cultural heritage, and stability in border areas. Any transition in the ethnic minority language teaching model will be affected or restricted by social reforms or social transitions at the time. These two aspects seem to be in a corresponding relationship. For example, nation-building largely influenced or restricted ethnic minority language teaching models in the first transition, and marketization largely influenced or restricted the self-selected type of bilingual teaching model in the second transition. To a large extent, socialization/urbanization is influencing or restricting the collectively agreed type of bilingual teaching model in the third transition.

The third transition in ethnic minority language teaching models is much more complex and deep than the first two transitions, and the difficulties and influences are much greater than in the first two transitions. This raises many theoretical problems, cognitive problems, and practical problems which need to be solved steadily rather than in excessive haste.

Chapter 25

Comparison of the motivations for second language acquisition among ethnic children

25.1 Research background and objectives

In China, second language acquisition (classroom learning) primarily has three basic types: Han students learning foreign languages, ethnic minority students learning Mandarin, and overseas students learning Mandarin. Some subtypes could be derived from these three types, for example, Han students learning an ethnic minority language, ethnic minority students learning another ethnic minority language, and overseas students learning ethnic minority languages.

Motivation is a kind of driving force that drives people to take actions. Personal motivation, wishes, purposes, and physical impulses can all be considered motivations. From the perspective of the sources of motivation, learning motivation is further divided into two subtypes: internal learning motivations and external learning motivations. Internal learning motivations are motivations generated because of interest in the topic itself. External learning motivations are motivations generated due to factors apart from study itself, for example, encouragement from parents, the agreement of teachers, and so forth.

Research on motivations for second language acquisition has been conducted for decades outside of China. In the 1950s, Gardner and Lambert (1959: 266–272) first proposed an analysis related to second language proficiency, language aptitude, and learning motivations and attitudes. In the 1960s, Lambert was also the first person to divide motivations for second language acquisition into two subtypes, the integrative subtype and the instrumental subtype (Lambert 1963: 51–62). In the 1970s, Burstall (1975: 388–402) showed that motivations for and attitudes to second language acquisition are related to students' academic record; the better their academic record, the stronger their learning motivations are. In the 1980s, Gardner (1985) redefined the motivations for second language acquisition and remarked that learning motivations included the following factors: (1) goal, (2) efforts, (3) achievement, and (4) attitude.

In China, research on motivations for second language acquisition, especially among ethnic minority students (mostly referring to Mandarin), has just started (Han Zhongtai and Fu Jinzhi 1992: 225). However, cross-ethnic and cross-cultural comparative studies are rarer.

Note: The original version of this chapter was published in *Minzu Yuwen* (2) 1997. 8–17.

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In this chapter, I will attempt to perform a quantitative and a qualitative analysis, from a cross-ethnic and cross-cultural perspective, of Dai, Jino, Hani, and Yao children's motivations for Mandarin acquisition in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province. My purposes for performing these analyses include determining the commonalities and differences in motivations for Mandarin acquisition among ethnic minority children from different ethnic cultural backgrounds, and explaining the effects of different ethnic cultural elements on children's motivations for Mandarin acquisition.

25.2 Research hypotheses

In township primary schools in Xishuangbanna, there is an influential opinion: most of the Dai primary students in the dam areas (basins) do not study hard because the environment they inhabit and their living conditions are undemanding, tending to generate dependent thought; by contrast, most of the minority students in mountainous areas are hard-working because their living conditions are harder, and thus they are eager to escape poverty. Based on such opinions and other relevant views, I would like to propose three types of research hypotheses on the learning motivations of ethnic minority children in Xishuangbanna.

First, geography is connected with tendencies in children's internal learning motivations for second language acquisition. The Dai people in the dam areas tend towards integrative or epistemic learning motivations, while ethnic minorities in mountainous areas tend towards instrumental learning motivations.⁷⁹ Second, ethnic minority children appear to differ by area in terms of the external motivations for second language acquisition (namely, parental encouragement). Parents in the dam areas give less encouragement to their children than parents in mountainous areas do in this respect. Third, in Xishuangbanna, ethnic minority children of different genders and from different areas are evidently distinct in their external motivations for second language acquisition

⁷⁹ Based on his research on bilingual communities in Canada, Lambert (1963: 141) divided the motivations for second language acquisition (namely internal learning motivations) into two categories: "if the purposes of language acquisition reflect the utilitarian value of language achievements, for example, someone finds a job successfully, his/her inclination belongs to the 'instrumental type' of motivations; if the student's motivation is for understanding another cultural group, and he/she seems willing to be a potential member of the community, then, such inclination is 'integrative' motivation." I believe that these two kinds of motivation still cannot completely cover the practical conditions in ethnic minority areas in China, and thus would add a further category, tentatively referred to as the "epistemic type" of motivation.

(namely parental encouragement). Parents in the dam areas encourage their children less strongly than parents in mountainous areas in this respect.

The hypotheses above primarily involve the following six research variables: geography (territory), region, ethnicity, gender, internal learning motivations, and external learning motivations. The first four research variables are independent variables, namely causal or conditional variables; the last two research variables are dependent variables, namely result variables.

Among the independent variables, the geographical element includes two types, dam areas and mountainous areas. Mountainous areas include Jinghong, Menghai, and Mengla. Ethnicities include the Dai, Jino, Hani, and Yao ethnic groups; gender is divided into male and female.

Among the dependent variables, internal learning motivations include the following three types: the integrative type, the epistemic type, and the instrumental type. The integrative type of learning motivation is defined as follows: (1) to read Chinese literary works directly, and (2) to understand Han culture better and communicate with Han people and other ethnic groups better. The definition of the epistemic type of learning motivation is learning in order to study more in future at the next educational level. Here, study is just for study's sake, rather than a tool used to achieve a certain personal interest. The instrumental type of learning motivation is defined as follows: (1) to obtain more and better opportunities of being recruited, and (2) to gain more and better chances to work further afield.

Among the external learning motivations in the dependent variables, I only chose one type, namely encouragement from parents, for this research. This is defined as three kinds of attitude that an only child's parents can hold when the child has to leave his or her parents to go to school.

25.3 Research objects and methods

In April 1989, I conducted a questionnaire survey in three counties in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province. The survey included 144 students from the fifth grade of primary school in six ethnic townships inhabited by the Dai, Yao, Jino, and Hani ethnic groups.

The Dai people in this prefecture all inhabited dam areas; other ethnic groups were primarily distributed in mountainous areas. I randomly selected one ethnic township from each type of region, namely dam areas and mountainous areas, in three counties of the prefecture, so the following six townships were selected: Menghan Township (a Dai ethnic township) and Jino Mountain Jino Ethnic Township in Jinghong County (now City), Mengzhe Township (a Dai ethnic township) and Gelang Hani Ethnic Township in Menghai County,

and Mengpeng Township (a Dai ethnic township) and Yao Area Yao Ethnic Township in Mengla County.

Each township had a comprehensive primary school. I selected 24 students from the fifth grade of each primary school, half male and half female. As there were only 8 males among the Yao students in the Yao area of Mengla County, to ensure the total numbers of students of each ethnicity were the same, I added 4 male students to the group of Yao male students to bring the number of male students up to 16.

All of the respondents were selected randomly from the ethnic students. The selection process was not affected by factors such as age, academic record, family condition, or parents' jobs. However, all of the respondents were in the fifth grade of primary school; their parents were all native speakers; they all lived in local monolingual areas; their first languages were all ethnic languages; and their second language was Mandarin, which they all learned in primary school.

All of the questionnaires were written in Chinese characters. Ethnic children in each area filled out the questionnaires together in each classroom, completing them within one hour. This was the first time any of them had filled out such a questionnaire. In addition, I held a meeting at each location, attended by school leaders or classroom teachers, to further investigate bilingual education in each school.

The questionnaire consisted of the following three parts. (1) Basic information about the respondents, for example, gender, birthdate, residence, ethnicity, parents' ethnicities, time and place of learning to speak Mandarin, degree of Mandarin proficiency, and so forth. (2) I required respondents to order five motivations for acquiring Mandarin by importance: reading Chinese literature, understanding Han culture, studying in high school, gaining opportunities for employment, and leaving one's home town. (3) A question on parents' attitudes towards a child leaving home to go to school: actively supportive, unwilling, or strongly opposed.

Where respondents' internal learning motivations are concerned, I employed interaction analysis to analyze the relationship between the geographical distribution of ethnic minority children and their motivations for Mandarin acquisition; I also analyzed the selection of these two variables. Chi-square tests were applied to infer whether these two variables were interconnected or independent.

Where respondents' external learning motivations are concerned, namely the degree of parental encouragement for children's learning of Mandarin, I first counted the percentage of ethnic children choosing a particular response, and then calculated the weighted average (P) of these percentages.

25.4 Statistical results

25.4.1 Frequency counts for the geographical distribution and motivations for Mandarin acquisition of ethnic children

Table 25.1 displays the interdependent relationship between the geographical distribution of ethnic children in Xishuangbanna and stated motivations for Mandarin acquisition. Values given in the table indicate the number of children who selected each option. For example, “4” in the first entry denotes that, among Hong (= Jinghong Dai) ethnic children, four placed the motivation of reading Chinese literature in first place, and so on.

25.4.2 Percentages of parents who encourage their child leaving home to go to school

Table 25.2 presents the percentages of ethnic children’s parents in Xishuangbanna who encouraged their only child leaving home to go to school.

25.5 Analysis and discussion

25.5.1 Comparative analysis of motivations for Mandarin acquisition

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS/PS+) was used to analyze the data on motivations for Mandarin acquisition, yielding the three following types of comparison.

25.5.1.1 Comparison across the prefecture

I conducted an interaction analysis between ethnic group in dam areas or mountainous areas in Xishuangbanna and five learning motivations. There are five possible rankings for each learning motivation; see Table 25.1. We can obtain five groups of data for each learning motivation, summarized in Table 25.3.

Of the five types of learning motivation in Table 25.3, only the second type, “understanding Han culture” (from 1st to 5th place in order of importance) had a p -value < 0.05 , showing that ethnic groups in dam and mountainous areas are apparently distinct; the p -values for the other four types of motivation are all higher than 0.05, indicating no distinct differences.

Table 25.1: Frequency counts for the stated motivations for Mandarin acquisition and geographical distribution of ethnic children in Xishuangbanna, by ethnicity.

Geographical distribution	Ethnic group of people	Reading Chinese literature					Understanding Han culture					Moving to the next educational level					Obtaining job opportunities					Leaving home town					
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
dam areas	Hong Dai ^a	24	4	6	2	2	10	2	4	9	2	7	12	3	3	3	3	0	4	8	10	2	6	7	2	7	
	Hai Dai ^b	24	6	7	2	6	3	3	0	7	7	7	6	5	8	2	3	1	10	3	7	3	8	2	4	2	8
mountainous areas	La Dai ^c	24	8	4	4	4	4	5	8	2	4	4	5	5	4	6	1	7	5	8	3	6	3	2	6	7	
	Total	72	18	17	8	8	12	10	9	24	11	18	18	13	16	9	12	2	21	16	25	8	20	12	8	15	17
mountainous areas	Jino	24	5	5	7	6	1	6	3	2	4	9	5	7	6	1	5	2	3	9	8	2	6	6	0	5	7
	Hani	24	3	8	8	4	1	6	4	4	3	7	1	5	7	8	3	1	5	5	7	6	13	2	0	2	7
total	Yao	24	4	2	6	1	11	2	1	3	11	7	6	10	4	3	1	4	5	5	6	4	8	7	6	3	0
	total	72	12	15	21	11	13	14	8	9	18	23	12	22	17	12	9	7	13	19	21	12	27	15	6	10	14
total		144	30	32	29	23	30	24	17	33	29	41	34	35	33	21	21	9	34	35	46	20	47	27	14	25	31

^a“Hong Dai” is short for the Jinghong Dai ethnic group.

^b“Meng Dai” is short for the Menghai Dai ethnic group.

^c“La Dai” is short for the Mengla Dai ethnic group.

Table 25.2: Percentage of ethnic children's parents in Xishuangbanna who encouraged their only child leaving home to go to school, by ethnicity.

Area	Ethnic group	Respondents	Parents actively encouraged the only child leaving to go and study			Parents were unwilling to let the only child leave to go and study			Parents were firmly against the only child leaving to go and study		
			Number of people selecting this option	Percentage	Number of people selecting this option	Percentage	Number of people selecting this option	Percentage	Number of people selecting this option	Percentage	
Jinghong	Dai ethnic group	male	12	9	75	1	8	2	17		
		female	12	8	67	1	8	3	25		
		total	24	17	71	2	8	5	21		
Jino	ethnic group	male	12	10	83	2	17	0	0		
		female	12	12	100	0	0	0	0		
		total	24	22	92	2	8	0	0		
Menghai	Dai ethnic group	male	12	10	83	0	0	2	17		
		female	12	6	50	0	0	6	50		
		total	24	16	67	0	0	8	53		
Hani		male	12	11	92	0	0	1	8		
		female	12	10	83	2	17	0	0		
		total	24	21	88	2	8	1	4		

Mengla	Dai	male	12	8	67	2	16	2	17
	ethnic	female	12	5	42	1	8	6	50
	group	total	24	13	54	3	13	8	33
	Yao	male	16	10	62	2	13	4	25
	ethnic	female	8	5	62	2	25	1	13
	group	total	24	15	62	4	17	5	21

Table 25.3: Summary of interaction analysis between ethnic groups by geographical distribution and motivation for Mandarin acquisition.

Motivation for Mandarin acquisition		Dai people in dam areas (72) and other ethnic groups in mountainous areas ^a (72)			
Categories	Degree of importance	Chi-square (χ^2)	Degrees of freedom	<i>p</i> -value	Significance level
1 reading Chinese literature	1st–5th place	7.72940	4	0.1020	$p > 0.05$
2 understanding Han culture	1st–5th place	9.84308	4	0.0432	$p < 0.05$
3 studying at the next educational level	1st–5th place	6.14291	4	0.1887	$p > 0.05$
4 getting work opportunities	1st–5th place	6.06510	4	0.1943	$p > 0.05$
5 leaving home town	1st–5th place	2.95192	4	0.5659	$p > 0.05$

^a“Ethnic groups in mountainous areas” includes the Jino, Hani, and Yao ethnic groups.

In order to confirm the relative importance of one or more than one of the second type of learning motivation and find significant differences between ethnic groups in dam and mountainous areas, I again conducted an interaction analysis of the five types of learning motivation. The result shows that the third motivation showed significant differences ($\chi^2 = 7.70516$ [modification value], $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$) but the other four motivations showed no distinct differences.

We can conclude that, throughout Xishuangbanna Prefecture, the distribution of ethnic minorities is independent of the primary motivations for Mandarin acquisition (those ranked in the first two places); they are not significantly distinct from each other and show no interrelation.

25.5.1.2 Comparison between different regions

I conducted an interaction analysis of ethnic groups in dam areas and mountainous areas in Jinghong, Menghai, and Mengla Counties with respect to the five types of learning motivation. Each learning motivation could be ranked in five positions. Except for reading Chinese literature (in position 5) among the Dai and Jino ethnic groups in Jinghong County ($\chi^2 = 9.21080$ [modification value], $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$), and understanding Han culture and leaving one’s home town (in positions 4 and 5; $\chi^2 = 6.89509$ [modification value], $df = 1$, $p < 0.01$)

and $\chi^2 = 63.30428$ [modification value], $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$ respectively) among the Dai and Yao ethnic groups in Mengla County, which present apparent differences, other areas, motivations, and orders showed no significant differences.

The above analysis shows that the geographical distribution of ethnic groups in various areas of Xishuangbanna and the primary motivations for Mandarin acquisition (the top three motivations) are two independent variables without a relevant relationship.

25.5.1.3 Comparison based on gender

I conducted an interaction analysis between the genders of Dai, Jino, Hani, and Yao children and their motivations for Mandarin acquisition. Each motivation could be ranked in five positions. The results revealed that ethnic groups show no apparent differences by gender in motivations or rankings. Therefore, children's gender and motivations for Mandarin acquisition are independent variables.

25.5.2 Comparative analysis of the degree of encouragement from parents

25.5.2.1 Comparison across the prefecture and comparisons by gender and geographical distribution

Table 25.4 shows that ethnic minority children in dam areas and mountainous areas present evident differences in terms of two of the three responses about the degree to which parents encourage their only child leaving home to go to school: actively encouraging the only child leaving home to go to school and being firmly against the only child leaving home to go to school. The degree of actively encouraging the only child leaving home to go to school among Dai children's parents in dam areas was far weaker than that among ethnic minorities in mountainous areas ($Z = -2.43$, $p < 0.05$). However, the degree of being firmly against the only child leaving home to go to school among Dai children's parents in dam areas far exceeded that among ethnic minorities in mountainous areas ($Z = 3.50$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 25.5 presents a comparison of the Z-values for the degree of parental encouragement between Dai boys and girls in dam areas and ethnic minority boys and girls in mountainous areas. It is evident that, in terms of the three responses regarding the degree of encouragement from parents, boys in dam and mountainous areas show no apparent differences. However, in terms of two options, namely actively encouraging and being firmly against, the parents of girls in dam areas and mountainous areas display apparent differences.

Table 25.4: Comparison of Z-values for parental encouragement of ethnic children by geographical distribution.

Geographical distribution	Ethnicity	Number of people	Actively encouraging the only child ^a leaving home to study		Unwilling to let the only child ^a leave home to study		Firmly against the only child ^a leaving home to study		Z-value	Z-value	
			Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})			
dam areas	Dai ethnic group	72	0.64	0.72	-2.43 ^c	0.07	0.09	0.80	0.29	0.18	3.5 ^d
mountainous areas	other ethnic groups ^b	72	0.81			0.11			0.08		

^aThe child can be an only son or only daughter.

^b“Other ethnic groups” includes the Jino, Hani, and Yao.

^c $p < 0.05$, differences are significant.

^d $p < 0.001$, differences are extremely significant.

Table 25-5: Comparison of Z-values for the degree of parental encouragement for ethnic children of the same gender by geographical distribution.

Gender	Geographical distribution	Ethnicity	Number of people	Actively encouraging the only child ^a leaving home to go to school			Unwilling to let the only child ^a leave home to go to school			Firmly against the only child ^a leaving home to go to school		
				Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})	Z-value	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})	Z-value	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (\bar{p})	Z-value
male	dam areas	Dai ethnic group	36	0.75	0.77	-0.3	0.08	0.09	-0.29	0.17	0.14	0.63
	mountainous areas	other ethnic groups ^b	40	0.78			0.10			0.12		
female	dam areas	Dai ethnic group	36	0.53	0.68	-2.82 ^c	0.05	0.09	-1.14	0.42	0.24	3.90 ^d
	mountainous areas	other ethnic groups ^b	32	0.84			0.13			0.03		

^aThe child can be an only son or only daughter.

^b“Other ethnic groups” includes the Jino, Hani, and Yao.

^c $p < 0.01$, differences are significant.

^d $p < 0.001$, differences are highly significant.

When it came to actively encouraging the only child in leaving home to go to school, the parents of Dai girls in dam areas gave far less encouragement than those of ethnic minorities in mountainous areas ($Z = -2.82, p < 0.01$), while when it came to being firmly against the only child leaving home to go to school, the number of parents of Dai girls in dam areas far exceeded that among ethnic minorities in mountainous areas ($Z = 3.90, p < 0.001$).

25.5.2.2 Comparisons among different areas

25.5.2.2.1 Comparison by geographical distribution in the same area

As shown in Table 25.6, in Jinghong and Menghai, the Dai ethnic group in dam areas and ethnic minority children in mountainous areas display significant differences in parental encouragement. When it came to being firmly against the only child leaving home to go to school, the number of parents of Dai children in dam areas in Jinghong and Menghai far exceeded that among the Jino and Hani ethnic groups in mountainous areas, respectively. In Mengla, ethnic minority children in dam areas and in mountainous areas showed no evident differences in parental encouragement.

25.5.2.2.2 Comparison by geographical distribution in the same area and with the same gender

I grouped the Dai people in the dam areas of three counties in Xishuangbanna and the ethnic minorities in mountainous areas by gender and tested their Z -scores, obtaining 18 Z -values in all, which show that, with respect to actively encouraging the only child leaving home to go to school, the parents of Dai people in dam areas in Jinghong and Jino girls in mountainous areas exhibited significant differences ($Z = -2.21, p < 0.05$). When it came to active encouragement, the parents of Dai girls gave far less support than those of Jino people, while when it came to being firmly against the only child leaving home to go to school, the parents of Dai girls in dam areas in Menghai were apparently different from those of Hani girls in mountainous areas ($Z = 2.83, p < 0.01$). When it came to being firmly against, the parents of Dai girls far exceeded those of Hani girls. The other 16 Z -values showed no significant differences.

25.5.2.2.3 Comparison by gender in the same ethnic group

I grouped the Dai, Jino, Hani, and Yao ethnic groups by gender and conducted a test of Z -values for gender, showing that each group and each item (12 items in all) showed no significantly distinct Z -values ($p > 0.05$).

Table 25.6: Comparison of Z-values for the degree of parental encouragement for ethnic children from the same area by geographical distribution.

Area	Geographical distribution	Ethnicity	Number of people	Actively encouraging the only child ^a leaving home to go to school			Unwilling to let the only child ^a leave home to go to school			Firmly against the only child ^a leaving home to go to school		
				Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (p)	Z-value	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (p)	Z-value	Percentage (p)	Weighted average percentage (p)	Z-value
Jinghong	dam areas	Dai ethnic group	24	0.71	0.82	-1.87	0.08	0.08	0	0.21	0.10	2.33 ^b
	mountainous areas	Jino ethnic group	24	0.92			0.08			0		
Menghai	dam areas	Dai ethnic group	24	0.67	0.78	-1.74	0	0.04	-1.14	0.33	0.19	2.59 ^c
	mountainous areas	Hani ethnic group	24	0.88			0.08			0.04		
Mengla	dam areas	Dai ethnic group	24	0.54	0.58	-0.56	0.13	0.15	0.16	0.33	0.27	0.94
	mountainous areas	Yao ethnic group	24	0.62			0.17			0.21		

^aThe child can be an only son or only daughter.
^bp < 0.05, differences are significant.
^cp < 0.01, differences are highly significant.

To sum up, the motivations for Mandarin acquisition of various ethnic minority children in Xishuangbanna are primarily manifested in two aspects.

First, ethnic children's geographical distribution and internal motivations for Mandarin acquisition are independent of one another. Second, ethnic children's external motivation for Mandarin acquisition, namely parental encouragement, displays apparent distinctions in terms of geography, region, and gender. With regard to parents encouraging their son or daughter in going to school, Dai children in the dam areas throughout the prefecture received less encouragement than ethnic minority children in mountainous areas; Dai girls in the dam areas throughout the prefecture obtained less encouragement than ethnic minority girls in mountainous areas; and Dai girls in Jinghong were encouraged less than Jino girls. With regard to responding that parents opposed their son or daughter going to school, Dai children in dam areas throughout the prefecture far exceeded ethnic minority children in mountainous areas; Dai girls in dam areas throughout the prefecture far exceeded ethnic minority girls in mountainous areas; Dai children in dam areas in Jinghong and Menghai exceeded Jino and Hani children in the respective mountainous areas; and Dai girls in Menghai far surpassed Hani girls.

I found that the first research finding mentioned above proved the first research hypothesis wrong. Originally, I posited that the geographical distribution of ethnic minority children was related to their motivations for Mandarin acquisition. The second research finding verifies the second and the third research hypotheses.

How might we explain these two research findings? I will attempt to discuss this matter in terms of the influence of cultural background.

25.5.3 Discussion: The influences of cultural background

Historically, there was a considerable gap between the developmental level of the society and culture of the Dai ethnic group in the dam areas in Xishuangbanna and that of various other ethnic groups. Before the 1950s, the Dai ethnic group followed the seigniorial system. Ethnic minorities in mountainous areas were under the rule of a seigneur; they were either in the final stage of a primitive commune or preserved some remnants of primitive society. Dai people in the dam areas were primarily engaged in farming rice; ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas primarily relied on slash-and-burn farming and shifting cultivation, which they supplemented with hunting and gathering. Dai people in the dam areas had their own language and writing system. The temple education system was formed, where religion was integrated with education. Historically and culturally rich books were

stored and preserved. Ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas had their native languages but lacked a native writing system; their culture was still in the primitive stage of notching wood or tying knots. Strictly speaking, there was almost no ethnic education. All in all, the gaps in the social, economic, and cultural development between the Dai ethnic group in dam areas and ethnic minorities in mountainous areas were the social and historical elements that formed the differences between the concepts of education of ethnic parents in those two areas.

In the middle of the twentieth century, the social systems of various ethnic groups in Xishuangbanna experienced dramatic changes. However, to a certain degree, such changes in social system only affected certain aspects of traditional ethnic culture; they still could not fundamentally change or replace all the content of traditional ethnic culture. With increasingly frequent communication between different ethnic groups and increasingly more extensive contact between different cultures, traditional ethnic cultural development unfolded in various directions, showing, for example, tendencies of intensifying, weakening, inverting, adapting, and conflicting.

25.5.3.1 Effects of cultural changes on parents' concepts of education

As mentioned above, the degree of social and cultural development of the Dai ethnic group in the dam areas had historically long been far higher than that of various other ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas. It is common sense that “the higher the degree of social development is, the more urgent the people’s educational requirements are” (Sun Ruoqiong 1990: 90). The degree of Dai parental encouragement for a son or daughter going to school in dam areas was supposed to be higher than that among various other ethnic minority parents in mountainous areas. However, the results of this research showed precisely the opposite; the degree of encouragement for children going to school among Jino and Hani parents in mountainous areas was significantly higher than that among Dai parents in dam areas. This may be due to the considerable economic and cultural progress of the Jino and Hani ethnic groups, whose traditional native culture has gradually weakened and whose traditional concepts of education have undergone a fundamental transformation; by contrast, traditional culture still plays a dominant role in the Dai and Yao ethnic groups.

Since the 1980s, the Jino mountainous area, which was once historically in the stage of primitive society, experienced very rapid economical and cultural development. In 1986, the average income of Jino people was 558 yuan, which was far more than the prefecture’s average personal income; the Jino ethnic group had fundamentally solved their clothing and food problems.

The forty-five primary schools founded in the Jino mountainous area, except for one funded by the province, were all built by the villages and townships themselves. In 1988, in the Jino mountainous area, there was one primary school student per 47 Jino people, one secondary school student per 11.3 Jino people, and one high school student per 56 Jino people. These ratios all surpassed other ethnic groups in that county.

When I was conducting research at a comprehensive primary school in the Jino mountainous area in 1989, the principal said the following to me:

Nowadays most people believe that children face bleak future prospects if they don't get an education. Children themselves also say that they feel ashamed, and so would their parents, if they are not in school. At present, the question of whether to send their kids to school has become for the Jino people a matter of basic values, of what's right and what's wrong. Most people do send their children to school. Once enrolled, most children manage to stay in school, hence the low drop-out rate. Education in the Jino mountainous area is developing faster than among other ethnic groups.

Besides these economic and educational factors, declining religiosity among the people has also helped the Jino and Hani people form new ideas about education.

25.5.3.2 Effects of traditional culture on parents' concepts of education

Unlike the Jino and Hani ethnic groups, traditional culture still plays an important role in the Dai and Yao ethnic areas.

25.5.3.2.1 Effects of religious beliefs

Since the fifteenth century, thanks to support from the seigneurs, a large number of ethnic Dai converted to Buddhism. Nearly every village had a temple built in it. Every male member of the ethnic group must spend a certain period of time living as a monk before marriage. Buddhism pervaded society, its presence reaching all areas of the life of the Dai people. Temples were not only places for Buddhist ceremonies but also where the Dai people congregated to engage in social interaction. Moreover, Buddhism was the only way for Dai boys to learn the Dai writing system and Dai traditional culture. It was still commonplace for families to send their sons to the monastery. When having to choose between sending one's own son to school and sending him to the monastery to study to become a monk, most committed Buddhist Dai people would be inclined to choose the latter, and when they chose the former they typically did so only reluctantly. To this day, many religious people are still in the grip of

the profound influence of Theravada Buddhism regarding how to behave and think.⁸⁰

In the Mengla Yao ethnic area, the majority of Yao people belong to the Landian Yao branch. They generally practice Taoism. Those boys who are older than ten years old would traditionally undergo Dujie (the Yao Taoist rite of initiation), whose purpose is to “obtain the name of Dujie,” because only those people who have the name of Dujie can master magic abilities, become qualified as Taoist priests or wizards, and gain respect from society (Huang Guiquan 1994: 101–115). Historically, the heads of Yao ethnic villages were almost entirely religious leaders, such as Shigong or Daogong (indicating a master’s master).

25.5.3.2.2 Effects of geography and economy: Valuing agriculture and neglecting study

In the dam areas inhabited by Dai people, the natural conditions were fairly advantageous. In the course of a year, once they had spent a short time on farming, their daily requirements for eating, clothing, and spending money would be satisfied. Such a farming-based and self-sufficient natural economy formed a closed small-production environment. In 1989, a Dai teacher in Menghan Township in Jinghong County told me that the parents of Dai children living in villages generally did not encourage them going to school, and after the children came home from school, the parents did not supervise their homework. If the children could study well, then they would continue to go to school; otherwise, they would drop out of school and come home to farm, which not only cut down parents’ expenses but also increased the family income.

Yao ethnic ancestors in Mengla had led a shifting-cultivation-based life for a long time. Since the beginning of the Qing dynasty, they had used up the resources of one area and then moved on to another. Their ancestors had inhabited many areas, such as Hunan, Guangdong, Hainan, Guangxi, and Yunnan, and they only arrived in the Yao ethnic area, where they are living now, a little over sixty years ago. Thus, clothing and food problems are the problems that have been bothering the Yao. When I investigated the comprehensive primary schools in the Yao ethnic area, a teacher informed me that the school charged the students six yuan for textbooks and two yuan for tuition and miscellaneous

80 At the end of the 1980s, Buddhism rebounded in the Xishuangbanna area, and the Dai people’s passion for sending their sons to be monks increased with it. Many parents were indeed reluctant to let their sons go to school. Several years later, this religious trend gradually became unpopular.

fees, but many parents still could not afford it. Among eight students coming from old Miao villages, only one was left; the other seven had given up studying because they could not afford the tuition. The principal went to encourage children by asking them to come to school but was unable to solve the problem. The Yao ethnic parents, whose economic burdens were heavy, commonly believed that it was useless and harmful for their children to study. If the children were to study for several years, their families would spend a lot of money. It was better for children to learn how to farm early so as to lighten their parents' burdens. Therefore, valuing agriculture and neglecting study was still the concept held by numerous poor Yao ethnic farmers.

25.5.3.2.3 Effects of custom: Valuing family property and neglecting study

The majority of families followed the system of descent through the youngest sons or daughters. In families with many sons and daughters, the eldest sons/daughters would separate from their parents' family after marriage, while the youngest sons or daughters would continue to live with their parents. When the parents became old, the youngest sons or daughters would be required to support them. When the parents died, their property would be inherited by the youngest sons or daughters. Therefore, if they wished to leave home to go to school, this would generally be opposed by their parents. In Dai villages, the majority of boys became monks in temples and learned the Dai writing system and Buddhist culture; girls shared their mother's housework and became their mothers' helpers. Thus, the majority of parents were reluctant to let their daughters leave home to go to school.

The descent system of the youngest son in the Yao ethnic group was slightly different from the descent system of the Dai ethnic group. Among the Yao, parents were supported by their youngest sons, who inherited their property. The majority of Yao ethnic parents were therefore inclined to prefer for their children to stay at home and take care of them, rather than allowing them to leave home to go to school.

25.5.3.3 Effects of school education on various ethnic children's learning motivations

This research shows that, in Xishuangbanna, the motivations for Mandarin acquisition of the children in different geographical areas are independent of one another. They manifest neither evident regional distinctions nor apparent ethnic distinctions. Such situations reveal that, in terms of the motivations for Mandarin acquisition, children from different ethnic groups have the same psychological features, which reflects the dominant influences of modern school

education on various ethnic children's motivations for Mandarin acquisition. School education exerts influences on various ethnic children purposefully, systematically, and based on planning in ways that are different from the effects of genetic and environmental elements. The effects of family are certainly important, but school education plays a more dominant role.

25.6 Conclusion

In the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Region, the primary motivations for second language acquisition are not related to different geographical distributions of ethnic children. The tendencies in ethnic minority parental encouragement for children in going to school display regional differences. The inclination of Dai parents in dam areas to encourage their children going to school is lower than that of Jino and Hani parents in mountainous areas. Dai parents in dam areas manifest a higher opposition to children going to school than Jino and Hani parents in mountainous areas.

According to the research findings presented in this chapter and the discussion accounting for them, I propose the following theoretical hypothesis or deduction. Ethnic minority parental encouragement for children in going to school is positively correlated with the degree of ethnic cultural change. The larger the changes in ethnic traditional culture, the greater the inclination of parents to encourage their children in going to school. On the other hand, the less the ethnic traditional culture changes, the less parents are inclined to encourage their children in going to school. New data from fieldwork investigations are required to test such hypotheses further.



Part 8: Conclusion

Chapter 26

Constructing a harmonious language life

Like air and water to life, language life is not only an indispensable element of human society but also a mirror of language policy. With the development of society, Chinese language life has changed and created many language phenomena, such as “English fever,” “dialect fever,” and so on. Some of these phenomena deserve attention, while others need to be promptly dismissed. Different languages and dialects are often used to communicate and can then influence one another; however, some of them are prosperous, while others may become extinct. In a word, the impact of language life determines the quality of our life. Building a harmonious language life benefits social harmony, national unity, national stability, and sustainable development.

Research on languages and harmonious thought can provide new ideas and points of reference for harmonious society in China. Confucian thoughts like the “unity of people and nature” and “harmony in diversity,” the Taoist theory of Lao-tzu, the idea of “harmony based on differences” of Chuang-tzu, and so forth, are all representative examples of the desire for harmony in ancient China.

Harmony is not equal to sameness. Harmony is a coordinated unity comprising different items. Harmony between different interest groups is the main body of harmonious society. A harmonious society requires equal, tolerant, win-win, mutually beneficial, and sustainable interpersonal relationships. Harmonious interpersonal, social, and ethnic relationships are the core principles of a harmonious society. In the context of a planned economy, we once sought to build a homogeneous society. To a large extent, this eliminated the economic and social differences between people and groups; however, it also eliminated many aspects of the vitality of a normal society.

With respect to language concepts, the idea of language harmony indicates that multilingualism and multi-dialectalism are valuable social, economic, and cultural resources for a nation rather than barriers in the way of national unity and social and economic development. Therefore, language harmony seeks the coexistence and coprosperity of multiple languages and multiple dialects. No matter

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how many majority or ethnic minority languages or dialects there are, each can own a space of independent existence and development. Each language or dialect has its place and plays its role; they jointly play their parts in the symphony of language use in China.

Historically, for a very long time, *yayan* (elegant language) and folk adages, classical Mandarin Chinese and the vernacular performed their functions independently and complementarily; they maintained language harmony in ancient society. In today's society, language harmony involves relationships of various kinds. Four cannot be ignored.

26.1 Language harmony and language development

With respect to economic development, there are two different concepts. The first is exploiting resources and dealing with pollution later, followed by many Western industrial countries in the initial period of industrialization; the second is the sustainable development strategy of exploiting resources and dealing with pollution at the same time, implemented in the developmental process of western China.

With respect to language planning, there are two different development concepts as well. One is the language development strategy of assimilating first and diversifying later, followed by the majority of Western industrial countries in the early stage of industrialization; the other one is the unified and diverse language development strategy implemented in China. The unified and diverse language development strategy is also called the language harmony development strategy. Specifically, the popularization and promotion of the national commonly used language cannot take place at the cost of the existence of the other languages and dialects. In other words, the time of popularizing the national commonly used language is not the time when a multi-language and multi-dialect society dies, but the time when a multi-language and multi-dialect society prospers and develops.

26.2 Harmony between ethnic languages and Mandarin

We should continue to adhere to the following principles and measures in the long term: maintaining harmony between ethnic minority languages and Mandarin, sticking to the principles of ethnic equality and language equality, respecting ethnic minority languages and writing systems, protecting and developing ethnic minority languages and cultures, and encouraging

various ethnic groups to learn one another's languages. Under the conditions of a market economy, on the one hand, with the influence of market mechanisms, the protection of ethnic minority languages and cultures will encounter many difficulties and challenges; on the other hand, the market economy will bring in its train a variety of opportunities for the development of ethnic minority languages and culture. The key is whether we can change challenges into opportunities, and whether we can seize every chance in time.

Practice proves that in ethnic minority areas, bilingual talents are more competitive than monolingual talents who just understand an ethnic minority language but cannot understand Mandarin, or those people who just understand Mandarin but cannot understand an ethnic minority language. It is easier to coordinate and to develop harmonious ethnic relationships with bilingual cadres, especially Han cadres. As a new trend, the need for ethnic minorities to learn more than one language is on the increase, which calls for a corresponding system to satisfy their desire to learn two or more languages.

26.3 Harmony between Putonghua and dialects

Putonghua is not only a common language used among different dialectal areas of Han Chinese, but also a language of communication for various ethnic groups across China. The purpose of promoting Putonghua in Mandarin dialectal areas is to close the gaps between different dialectal areas rather than to eliminate Mandarin Chinese dialects.

In dialectal areas, a new type of diglossia is forming. The people in dialectal areas are inclined to use Putonghua in such contexts as State organs, campuses, radio broadcasts, film and television, conference reports, academic lectures, court trials, public services, and communication with dialect-speakers. They tend to use dialects in situations such as family and daily life, local folk opera and literature, informal talking, and communication with local dialect-speakers. Dialects play an irreplaceable role in developing regional culture. The communicative functions of Putonghua and dialects are different but complementary. Such harmonious and complementary language relationships need to be developed and improved upon.

If we compare the promotion of Putonghua on the Mainland with the promotion of Mandarin in Taiwan, we see that the policies and measures carried out in Taiwan are more rigid and forcible, while those on the Mainland are flexible and elastic.

26.4 Harmony between the official language and folk languages

On official occasions, Putonghua and standard Chinese characters should be employed in strictly formal style. However, on informal occasions, if foreign words and written words are used or mixed in informal style, it is necessary to allow such use rather than interfering. For the standardization of languages, we need to distinguish official governments from the general public, and to implement strict or loose measures depending on the case in question. Thus, we will not only maintain the standardization and unification of the language used by mainstream media on official occasions, but also maintain the developmental vitality of public languages so as to realize the strategy of the harmonious development of languages.

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