

Research Grants Council of Hong Kong (General Research Fund 840012)

Models of Trilingual Education in Ethnic Minority Regions of China Project

Briefing Paper No.8

**Exploring Trilingual Education in Tibetan,
Chinese and English—The Case of Ganzi
Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture**

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Models of Trilingual Education in Ethnic Minority Regions of China Project

This research project offers a holistic and descriptive account of trilingualism and trilingual education in China. Policy changes have led to the introduction of English language teaching and learning in primary schools. These reforms pose particular challenges to communities in ethnic minority areas, where Putonghua often competes with the minority language, and English is often taught in under-resourced schools with teachers with the requisite training in short supply.

The project involves extensive and intensive research comprising investigations into school- and community-level practices, policies and perceptions relating to trilingualism in such key regions as Xinjiang, Yunnan, Inner Mongolia, Sichuan, Gansu, Guizhou, Guangxi, Qinghai, Jilin, Tibet and Guangdong. Using first-hand data collected from each region, the researchers examine language policies and curricula, as well as language allocation in the classroom and in the community, and analyse them in their specific historical, socio-political, demographical, economic, geographical and cultural contexts.

A distinctive feature of the project is its presentation of a new methodology and approach to researching such phenomena. This methodology encompasses policy analysis, community language profiles, as well as school-based field work in order to provide rich data that facilitates multilevel analysis of policy-in-context.

This series of Briefing Papers presents information about different aspects of the project.

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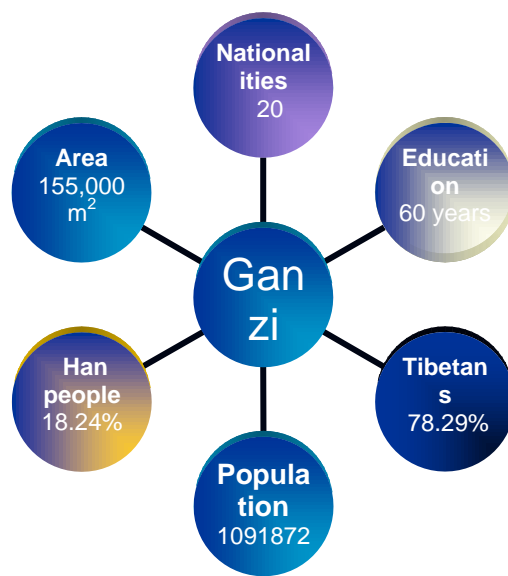
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Context of the Program



Language Education development

- Initial phase: 1950-1970
- Recovery phase: 1970-1990
- Weakening phase: the late 1990s-2004
- Rapid growing phase: 2005-present

Preschool→primary school→ middle school→higher education

Monolingual mode: T/C→Bilingual mode: T+C, C+E→Trilingual mode: T+C+E, C+E+T

Problems:

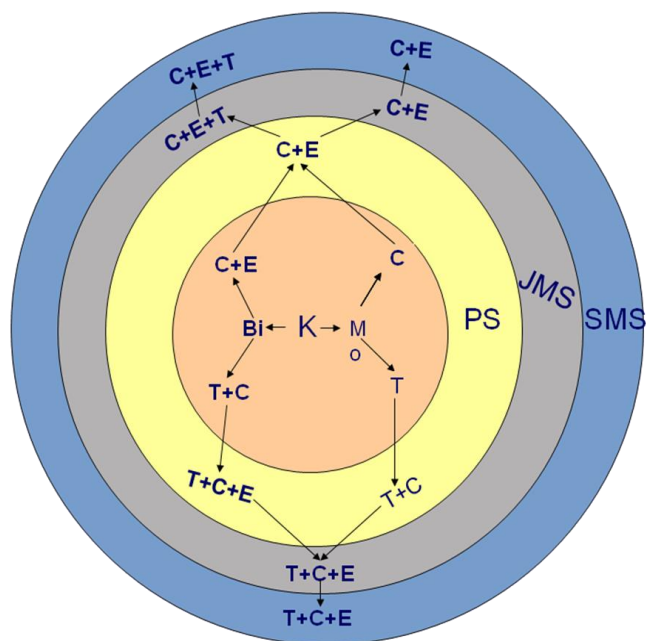
Uneven development: region, language, mode, teacher→students' mobility & loss confusion

Causes:

Free and random choice of parents, learners, schools→different trilingual views

Suggestions

- ✓ Restructuring language education system to promote its unity and continuity
- ✓ Transforming the regular teaching mode and special teaching contents
- ✓ Improving related policies and regulations on examinations and enrolment



Unity

Continuity

✓ Transforming the regular teaching mode and special teaching contents

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------|
| Type1. T /T+C/ T+ C+E | Zangdan* |
| Type2. C+T / C+T+E | Zangjia# |
| Type3. C /C+E/ C+T / C+E+T | Hanjia^ |
| Type4. C /C+E / C+E | Handan% |

*Zangdan: Tibetan is the language of home and school; Chinese and English are school subjects

#Zangjia: Tibetan is the language of home; Chinese is the medium of instruction; Tibetan and English are school subjects

^Hanjia: Chinese is the language of home and school; Tibetan and English are school subjects

%Handan: Chinese is the language of home and school; English is a school subject; Tibetan is not taught

✓ Improving related policies and regulations

- A. on curriculum standard
- B. on textbook construction
- C. on teacher training
- D. on examinations and enrollment

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