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**Models of Trilingual Education in
Ethnic Minority Regions of China
Project**

Technical Paper No.7

**Questionnaire and Interview with
Students**

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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.

Models of Trilingual Education in Ethnic Minority Regions of China Project Technical Papers Series Editors: Anwei Feng (University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China) and Bob Adamson (The Education University of Hong Kong)

This series of Technical Papers presents information about the research instruments used in this project.

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Questionnaire and Interview with Students

Introduction

One of the key research questions driving the project is how the policy goals of trilingualism is being interpreted and realised in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The project distinguished four distinct policy models of trilingual education (Adamson and Feng, 2013). The first model focuses strongly on the ethnic minority language. Typically, the nine years of compulsory education from Grade 1 in primary schools to Grade 3 in junior secondary schools is provided through the medium of the minority language. Chinese and English are taught as subjects in the curriculum. Chinese could be used as the medium of instruction for certain school subjects in late primary and secondary years. The second model is a balance between Chinese and the minority language. The balance is evident in terms not only of the medium of instruction but also of the ethnicity of the teachers and students. The third model often exists in two different forms. The first form is the reverse of the first model, i.e., Chinese is used as the primary medium instruction and the major ethnic minority language is taught as a subject to all students in the school, irrespective of their own ethnicity or mother tongue. The second form is found in many remote village schools in which one minority group dominates. In these schools, the minority language is used as the medium of instruction for the first two to three years with Chinese taught as a major school subject. Starting from Year 3 or Year 4, all school subjects are taught in Chinese. In both cases, English is taught as a school subject, with Chinese being used when necessary in those lessons. A fourth model is represented by schools that proclaim to be an ethnic minority language school but, in reality, do not use the minority language as the medium of instruction nor even teach it as school subject. Such schools also claimed to be bilingual, in the sense that Chinese and English are studied as languages in the curriculum and Chinese serves as the medium of instruction.

Factors Shaping the Trilingual Education Models

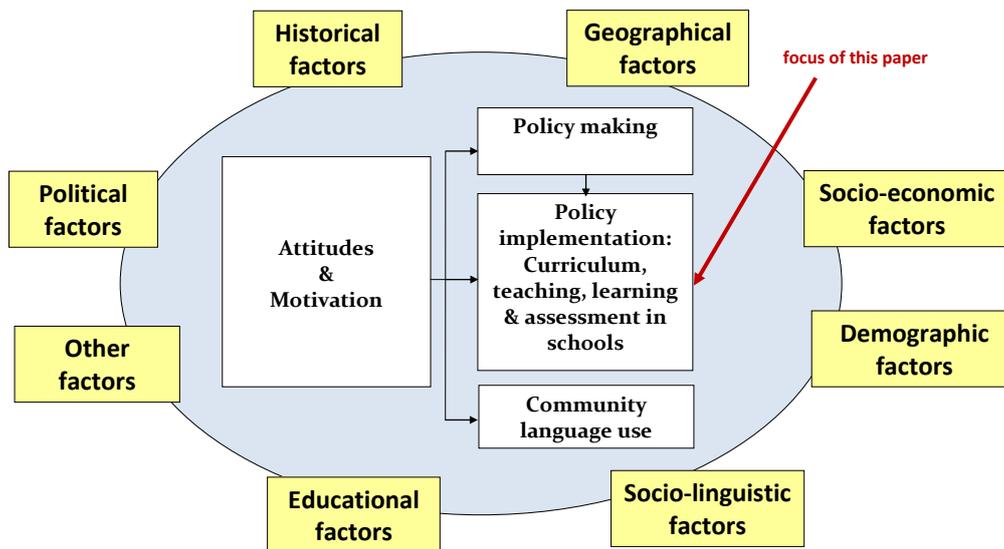
What factors shape and sustain the various models of trilingual education? This question denotes a particular view of education policy—that it emerges from, and forms part of broader contexts.

At the outset of the project, it was possible (on the basis of relevant literature) to identify key contextual factors that would likely play a role in shaping trilingual education policy. For instance, Fägerlind and Saha (1989) propose a triadic framework that positions education policy under the influence of socio-economic, socio-political and educational priorities.

A key concept for the study is ethnolinguistic vitality, the strength of life force of a language within a community. Ethnolinguistic vitality is influenced by geographical, historical, demographic and socio-linguistic factors, in addition to socio-economic and socio-political factors (Landweer, 2000). Other factors, such as religion, are emerging from the first phase of the project.

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework for the study of models of trilingual education in the PRC.

Figure 1—Conceptual framework



To conduct the research into the factors that shape and sustain the various models of trilingual education, a range of methodological tools were adopted.

A suite of research tools as shown in Table 1 were designed. A typical study of each single school would include:

- focus group interviews with 3-6 community leaders
- 2-3 interviews with regional and local education officials
- 1-3 interviews with school principal, deputy and other school leaders
- focus group interviews with 5-10 teachers
- focus group interviews with approximately 10 students
- 3-5 interviews with former students
- focus group interviews with approximately 10 parents
- documentary analysis of policy papers, syllabuses, timetables, learning resources and curriculum materials
- 5-10 lesson observations
- questionnaire surveys focusing on language attitudes and views of trilingual education among 60-100 students, 20-30 teachers including headteachers and deputies.
- field notes (e.g. observations of the school buildings and wall decorations, of languages used in the school outside of the classroom and of language use in the community).

These tools are described in detail in other Technical Papers in this series.

Table 1 – Methods to study factors that shape and sustain the models of trilingual education

Paradigm	Instrument	Focus
Qualitative	Semi-structured interview with head-teachers and teachers (focus groups or individuals)	Perceptions of and attitudes to trilingualism and each language, and their experiences implementing trilingual education models
	Semi-structured interview with policy makers (for individuals)	Perceptions of & attitudes to trilingualism and each language, and their experiences in policy making and implementation of trilingual education policy
	Semi-structured interview with parents (focus group or individuals)	Attitudes to different languages, their knowledge of what is going on in schools and their experiences of their children’s trilingual education
	Semi-structured interview with pupils (focus group or individuals)	Attitudes and experiences in using and learning languages in a trilingual education context
	School observation	Language environment: notice boards, signs, pictures, etc.; languages used by staff, pupils, etc.; the role and distribution of languages, as shown in curriculum documents
	Classroom observation	languages used by teacher and pupils, for classroom instruction and activities
	Ethnographic study	To study the language environment in a minority community
Quantitative	Teacher Questionnaire	Teacher’s perceptions of current practice, views of language use and views concerning language education
	Parent Questionnaire	Parents’ knowledge of current practice and views of language use and language education
	Student Questionnaire	Students’ attitude to current practice and views of language use and language education
	Subjective vitality survey	Ethnolinguistic vitality of a minority language
Other (Archival)	Objective vitality study	Ethnolinguistic vitality of a minority language by collecting data through archives, mass media, official documents, etc.

Questionnaire and Interview Protocol

The qualitative research aims to produce a thick description of the model of trilingual education that is in operation in the school under study, and probes the factors that produce and sustain this model.

Students are key stakeholders and informants. They experience language use at home and in the community, and they are affected by choices made by the schools in terms of language education policy. The questionnaire allows the research team to collect quantitative (and to some extent qualitative) data on a range of set issues related to the main research questions. It is advisable to conduct the questionnaire first, as it can produce lines of inquiry for the interviews.

Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility for the research team to deepen our understanding of the perspectives of students—how they view the different languages, how they are educated, the language learning outcomes and the life chances accruing to them, and so on. In a semi-structured

interview, there are a number of guiding questions that cover important aspects of the research project, but the researcher should feel free to ask supplementary questions on interesting aspects that arise as the interview proceeds.

Step 1 – Identify and approach the students (secondary students only) to seek their consent to participate in the study. The consent should be in writing but—if the informant is reluctant to sign the consent form—an oral agreement is acceptable.

Step 2 – Distribute the questionnaire and allow the informants sufficient time to answer the questions thoughtfully. Handle any queries over the wording of the questions.

Step 3 – Analyse the questionnaire data and highlight any key themes that emerge. Make a note of any interesting aspects that you could explore further in the interviews.

Step 4 – Approach a small number of the students (selecting those who look articulate as research subjects and are willing to chat to you). With consent, conduct the interviews with them as a group in appropriate (comfortable, non-threatening) venues, using the guiding questions below.

Step 5 – Analyse the interview data as soon as possible, ideally soon after each interview (not necessarily transcribing them, which is time consuming). Whenever necessary, conduct follow-up interviews with the same students if there are further points that arise from the analysis.

TRILINGUALISM QUESTIONNAIRE – STUDENTS

(Used by Secondary School Students Only)

We are a group of researchers conducting a research project on language education, including minority home language, Chinese and English, for schools dominated by minority pupils in China. Your views on language education are what we wish to study. We assure you that your personal identity will remain confidential. So, please feel free to give the most honest answers to the questions in this survey. The data collected from this survey will be used for research purpose only.

Part I – Something about You and Your School (Please write short answers or tick the boxes)

- Your Gender: Male Female Ethnic background:
- Name and place of your school:
- Is the school dominated by children of a minority group? Yes No
If yes, which minority group?
- Your age:
- How good are you in these languages:

	Fluent	OK	Limited	No knowledge at all
Chinese				
Minority language				
English				
Other				

Part II – How much do you know about your school (Please tick the boxes or write short answers)

1. Does your school teach a minority language to minority pupils?
Yes No
2. Does your school use a minority language to teach any school subject(s)?
Yes No
3. Is Chinese used as the only language to teach most or all school subjects in the school?
Yes No
4. Is English taught to minority pupils in your school?
Yes No

5. Do you find that your school attaches sufficient importance to minority pupils' home language and their culture?
Yes No
6. Do you find that your school attaches sufficient importance to minority pupils' home language and their culture?
Yes No
7. Do you find that the school treat minority pupils in the same way as they do with Han pupils?
Yes No

If the answer to 6 is No, in what way they are treated differently?

.....

Part III – Your Views on Languages and Language Education (Please read the statement in the left-hand column and circle the number in right-hand column that best reflects your view. 1 = strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Not sure; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statements	Strongly disagree Strongly agree				
1. Minority language teaching and learning should be promoted more seriously in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Chinese language teaching and learning should be further enhanced in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
3. English language teaching and learning should be improved in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. More teachers of minority nationality should be employed by my school because they know minority pupils' needs better.	1	2	3	4	5
5. More teachers of Han nationality should be employed by this school because they are generally better than minority teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
6. More equipment such as computers and language labs should be provided for my school.	1	2	3	4	5
7. There should be more schools with pupils of mixed nationalities so that we can integrate better.	1	2	3	4	5
8. There should be different syllabuses for Han and minority pupils, even in the same school, because their learning abilities differ.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Minority children should know their own minority language first, then Chinese and English.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Minority pupils cannot learn English as well as Han pupils. So English should be dropped from the school curriculum for them.	1	2	3	4	5

Please write any comments on how to improve the practice of the school you attend:

.....
.....

Please write any other comments here

.....
.....

Thanks for Your Time!!!

FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEW WITH STUDENTS

(For Semi-Structured Interviews with Students)

Date of Interview:

Language used for the interview: Chinese Minority Language Other. Specify

Thanks for your time. I hope our conversation is informal and casual. Please do feel relaxed. Though I have some questions for you, you can also ask any question during our talk. We understand that this area, region or country is dominated, or has a large ... minority population. We are doing some research on the languages minority pupils like you learn and use in schools in this region. Thus, the languages we talk about include pupils' home language, Chinese and English. ...

Questions:

1. Could you please first of all say something about yourself?

- Ethnic background:
- Which grade:
- Age:
- Linguistic background:

	Fluent	OK	Limited	No knowledge at all
Chinese				
Minority language				
English				
Other				

2. What language do you speak to each other when play?

Possible probing questions:

- Why your own language, or why not?

3. What language do you speak to Han children when play?

Possible probing questions:

- Why your own language, or why not?

4. What language do you speak to your parents at home?

Possible probing questions:

- Why your own language, or why not?

5. Do you learn your home language (L1) in the school?

Possible probing questions:

- Do you like learning it?
- Why? Or why not?

6. Is Standard Chinese (L2) the main language used and taught in your school?

Possible probing questions:

- Do you like learning it and using it as the main language for teaching?
- Why? Or why not?

7. Are you learning English (L3) at school?

Possible probing questions:

- Do you like it? Why? Or why not?
- When (from which Grade)?
- How (how many lessons per week)?
- Do you follow the same syllabus as the majority Han children?
- Do you do well with English as the Han children?

8. What language(s) do the teachers in your school speak to you?

Possible probing questions:

- In the classroom?
- Outside the classroom?
- Do you like the language(s) the teachers use to speak to you?

9. Which language is the most important for your future?

- a. Chinese, your home language or English?
- b. Or all of them?

问卷调查——学生卷

(仅用于中学学生)

我们是一个研究小组，正在进行一项关于语言教育的研究项目。主要针对中国少数民族学生占大多数的学校中有少数民族语言、汉语和英语的情况，我们希望了解你对于语言教育的想法。我们确保你的个人身份的机密，所以请放心真实回答此次调查中所提出的问题。本次调查所收集的数据仅用于研究。

第一部分：关于你和你的学校（请给出简短回答或在方框中打√）

- 你的性别：男 女 民族：_____
- 你的学校的名字和地点：_____
- 该学校是否是一所少数民族学生为主的学校？ 是 否
是的话，是以哪个民族为主？_____
- 你的年龄：_____
- 你在这些语言方面掌握的程度如何：

	流利	一般	有限的	完全不懂
汉语				
民族语				
英语				
其他				

第二部分：你对你的学校了解多少（请在方框中打√或给出简短回答）

1. 学校是否教少数民族学生学习少数民族语言？ 是 否
2. 学校有某门（些）课程是用少数民族语言讲授的吗？ 是 否
3. 学校的大部分或全部课程都是只用汉语讲授吗？ 是 否
4. 学校里对少数民族学生教授英语吗？ 是 否
5. 你觉得学校对少数民族学生的语言以及他们的文化是否足够的重视？ 是 否
6. 你觉得学校对少数民族学生的语言以及他们的文化是否足够的重视？ 是 否
7. 你觉得学校对待少数民族学生和对待汉族学生一样吗？ 是 否
如果第6题的答案是“否”的话，他们在哪些方面受到的待遇不同？_____

第三部分：你对于语言和语言教育的看法（请看左栏中各项表述并在右栏中选择最能代表你的观点的数字上画圈。
1=完全不同意；2=不同意；3=不确定；4=同意；5=非常同意）

看法表述	完全不同意 非常同意				
1.应在我校更加严肃的提倡少数民族语言的教与学	1	2	3	4	5
2.应在我校更多加强汉语的教与学	1	2	3	4	5
3.应在我校强化英语的教与学	1	2	3	4	5
4. 我校应更多选用少数民族教师，因为他们更了解少数民族学生的需求	1	2	3	4	5
5. 学校应该更多选用汉族老师，因为他们比少数民族老师要好	1	2	3	4	5
6. 我校应该有更多电脑和语言实验室等设备	1	2	3	4	5
7. 为了我们更好的融合应该有更多多民族学生的学校	1	2	3	4	5
8. 即使是在同一所学校中，汉族学生和少数民族学生应该有不同学习大纲，因为他们的学习能力不同	1	2	3	4	5
9. 少数民族学生应该先了解他们自己的民族语言，然后再学习汉语和英语	1	2	3	4	5
10. 少数民族学生不能像汉族学生一样学好英语，所以英语应该从他们的课程当中去掉	1	2	3	4	5

请评论该如何提高您的所就读的学校的具体措施

.....
.....

请在这里写下您的任何意见

.....
.....

谢谢！

以学生为调研对象的专访

(针对于学生的半开放式调查)

采访日期:

采访中使用的语言: 汉语 少数民族语言 其他语种. 请标明

首先感谢您能够抽出时间接受这次采访。我们这次非正式的谈话是非常轻松随意的，请您不要紧张。我这里为您准备了一些问题，同时谈话中您也可以提出一些问题。我们都清楚这些辖区、乡镇拥有很大比例的少数民族或者隶属于少数民族管辖。我们正在做一些关于少数民族学生语言的调查研究，例如您在本地区的学校里学习和使用的语言。因此，我们将要谈论的语言种类包括学生的母语、汉语和英语等。

问题:

1. 首先您能否简单的介绍一些自己?

- 民族背景:
- 年级:
- 年龄:
- 语言背景:

	流利	一般	有限	不会
汉语				
少数民族语言				
英语				
其他语种				

2. 课间您会使用哪种语言进行交流?

可能继续深入的问题:

- 为什么使用您的本民族语言? , 或者为什么不使用您的本民族语言?

3. 课间您会使用哪种语言和汉族学生交流?

可能继续深入的问题:

- 为什么使用您的本民族语言? , 或者为什么不使用您的本民族语言?

4. 在家时您会使用哪种语言和父母交流？

可能继续深入的问题：

- 为什么是使用您的本民族语言？，或者为什么不使用您的本民族语言？

5. 您是否在学校学过自己的民族语(L1)？

可能继续深入的问题：

- 您喜欢学您的民族语吗？
- 为什么？或者为什么不？

6. 您在学校使用和授课的主要语言是否是标准汉语(L1)？

可能继续深入的问题：

- 您喜欢把汉语作为主要的教学用语学习和使用它吗？
- 为什么？或者为什么不？

7. 您在学校是否学习英语(L3)？

可能继续深入的问题：

- 您喜欢学英语吗？为什么？或者为什么不？
- 什么时候开始学的（如从哪一年级）？
- 如何学习的（如每星期多少节课）？
- 您和绝大多数汉族学生一样是按照相同的教学大纲学习的吗？
- 您和汉族学生英语学的同样好吗？

8. 在学校老师用什么语言与您交流？

可能继续深入的问题：

- 在课堂上？
- 在课堂外？
- 您喜欢老师和您交流时所用的语言吗？

9. 您觉得哪种语言将来对您是最重要的？

- 甲、 汉语、您的母语或者英语？
- 乙、 或者上述所有语言？

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