

Investigation on the Status of Mother Tongue Education in Mongolian Schools of Ningcheng Country, Inner Mongolia*

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Abstract—National language is the most typical symbol that distinguishes it from other nations, the most important carrier of national culture, and the key link of national identity. Therefore, mother tongue education plays an important role in the inheritance of national language and culture. As the Mongolian people in Ningcheng live in small communities and are widely dispersed, the language environment is further Sinicized, and the difficulty of mother tongue education is increased. This paper investigates the status quo of mother tongue education in Mongolian schools in Ningcheng, analyzes its gains and losses, and puts forward some suggestions.

Keywords: *Mongolian, mother tongue, school education*

I. INTRODUCTION

With the process of modernization and urbanization, the pace of integration between ethnic minorities and the main ethnic groups is also accelerating, and the mother tongue education and traditional culture of ethnic minorities are gradually fading away. Therefore, it is urgent to save and pass on the education of minority languages and mother tongues that are on the verge of extinction. Many researchers have done research on this problem up to now, but most of them have discussed it from the perspective of pedagogy, not focusing on the environment to leaving the subject, where the educators and educatees belong. Therefore, this paper discusses the native language education in Ningcheng, Inner Mongolia from the perspective of educational anthropology, deeply analyzes the gains and losses, and puts forward countermeasures to provide reference and reference for the stable development of Mongolian native language education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In terms of mother tongue education in previous studies, Cheng Shangrong's "mother tongue education and national cultural identity" elaborated the significance of cultural identity and the mission of mother tongue education, and believed that the essence of strengthening mother tongue education was to strengthen national cultural identity. Wang Heping's "on the value and construction of mother tongue

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education and its culture — mother tongue education, what have we lost?" This paper discusses the connotation, status and value of mother tongue and mother tongue education, and points out that it is necessary to strengthen the construction of mother tongue and culture, create a good mother tongue ecological environment, and correctly absorb and learn from the experience of mother tongue education in the world.

As for Mongolian education, the history of Chinese minority education edited by Han Da summarized the development history of Mongolian education from the primitive Mongols to the founding of new China. In the article "research on the development of Mongolian education in Inner Mongolia", Yang Shoubin made a detailed discussion on the development of Mongolian education in Inner Mongolia. Jin Zhiyuan analyzed the development of Mongolian education in Inner Mongolia in recent years in the "thinking caused by a set of figures of the most prominent problems in the education of Inner Mongolia nationality", explored the causes of the problems in Mongolian education and proposed corresponding countermeasures. Guirong analyzed the problems of mother tongue education in Mongolian schools in Hulun Beier area and proposed measures for mother tongue education, inheritance and protection of traditional culture.

The above research results have an important enlightening and guiding effect on the development of Mongolian mother tongue education, which provides a rich foundation for this thesis. So far, the study of mother tongue education in Mongolian schools is not deep enough. On the basis of fully absorbing the previous research results, this paper makes use of the existing works and investigations to further study the mother tongue education in Mongolian schools, trying to make up for the shortcomings of previous studies and achieve the goal of innovation.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

A. Research area

Ningcheng is located in the south of Chifeng city, Inner Mongolia, with a total population of 610,000. There are

72,000 Mongolians in the county, accounting for 11.8% of the total population, and they are distributed in 109 administrative villages in 15 townships. In 2017, there were 45 primary and secondary schools for ethnic minorities (including 5 teaching centers), including 1 senior high school, 7 junior middle schools and 35 primary schools. There are 3,835 students teaching ethnic languages, including 388 students teaching Mongolian and 3,447 students teaching Chinese plus Mongolian. There are 165 ethnic teachers, including 91 full-time Mongolian teachers, 74 "supplement Mongolian language" teachers (SML teachers, teach students whose first language is not Mongolian).

B. Research objects

The objects of this study are Mongolian teachers, SML teachers, students and parents of Mongolian in Ningcheng of Inner Mongolia.

C. Research methods

Through the questionnaire survey, the author researches the status of mother tongue education in Mongolian school education in Ningcheng, Inner Mongolia, and screened out the gains and losses. Based on the questionnaire survey, some representative Mongolian teachers, students and parents were interviewed by interview. 50 questionnaires were issued, of which 47 were valid. The interview surveyed 30 people, including 10 students, 10 teachers and 10 parents.

IV. STATUS OF MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION IN MONGOLIAN SCHOOLS OF NINGCHENG, INNER MONGOLIA

The work of ethnic education in Inner Mongolia autonomous region started in 1947. According to the living conditions of ethnic minority groups and the actual needs of language life, two teaching modes, "teaching in Mongolian" and "SML in Mongolian", were established. The primary and secondary schools in the areas where the mongols live in concentrated communities basically implement the "Mongolian language teaching" mode, which is also called "Mongolian A" mode. Some middle and primary schools in the mixed areas of Mongolia and the Han nationality carry out the mode of "supplement Mongolian language". All courses are taught in Chinese or Mongolian, also known as "Mongolian B" mode.

Mongolian language teaching is an effective way to inherit and develop Mongolian language. Similarly, the teaching mode of Chinese language teaching plus Mongolian language teaching not only meets the requirements of Mongolian students who have lost the national language environment to learn their own language, but also plays a very important role in inheriting the national language and culture.

Ningcheng is a minority area with Mongolian as the main body and Han as the majority. The education mode of the mother tongue in Mongolian schools is teaching in "Mongolian A" and "Mongolian B" mode.

A. "Teaching in Mongolian" mode: Mongolian A mode

"Teaching in Mongolian" means that all courses from kindergarten to high school graduation are taught in Mongolian, also known as "Mongolian A" mode. Mongolian school education in Inner Mongolia mainly uses this model. There are no fixed teaching materials in Mongolian schools in Inner Mongolia. From primary school until high school grade one use the "Chinese" course in teaching material of written using the Mongolian crossover trial committee, education publishing house published in Inner Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, Xinhua bookstore issued compulsory education textbook "Chinese", "school-based curriculum" written in school or district "school-based curriculum", the other Mongolian teaching courses are the use of people's education press and the compulsory education textbook written by institute of curriculum.

There is a high school in 2017, the county Mongolian teaching school 1 (Tianyi Ningcheng Mongolian middle school), and 2 nine-year schools (Geriletu Mongolian school, Mashiyngzi Mongolian school), 2 kindergartens (kindergarten affiliated to Geriletu Mongolian school, kindergarten affiliated to Mashiyngzi Mongolian school), in addition to the fourth Ningcheng kindergarten, DaChengZi primary school and Ningcheng Mongolian school, each school has a Mongolian teaching class. There are 470 students teaching in Mongolian, including 177 high school students, 44 middle school students, 167 primary school students, 82 children, and 95 full-time teachers teaching in Mongolian.

In 1981, Ningcheng County resumed the Mongolian language teaching education, and in the autumn of 1986, the Mongolian language teaching was implemented in the Mongolian school of Geriletu.

The number of Mongolian language students in Ningcheng County increased from 1991 to 1992, but gradually declined from 1992 until 2010 ("Fig. 1"). This is enough to prove that fewer and fewer Mongolian students are teaching in Ningcheng. Mongolian children are losing their mother tongue.

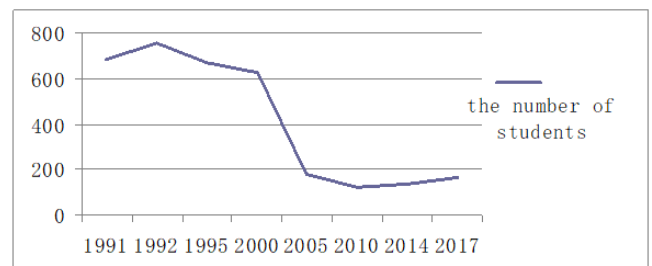


Fig. 1. Changes in the number of students teaching in Mongolian in Ningcheng.

In order to better understand the status of "Mongolian language teaching" mode in Ningcheng, the author interviewed teachers, students and parents.

About the mode of "teaching in Mongolian"(Mongolian A mode), students' answers are as follows:

Student A: "I like learning Mongolian, but I think it has a large number of vocabularies. I learned very little in the course. If I had been raised in a Mongolian environment, my Mongolian would have been much better."

Student B: "sometimes I don't understand what the teachers are talking about. There is a big gap between spoken and written Mongolian. Had to first understand in Chinese and then slowly digest into Mongolian. My family all speak Chinese, so there is no Mongolian environment."

Teachers' answers about the "teaching in Mongolian" mode are as follows:

Teacher A: "I think learning Mongolian as a Mongolian is a matter of course. When I was young, I didn't have to study Mongolian. But nowadays children generally do poorly in Mongolian."

Teacher B: "some children speak Mongolian very hard, pronunciation is not standard, a lot of wrong words. There's nothing you can do about it. There's no language environment for family and society."

Parents' answers about the "teaching in Mongolian" mode are as follows:

Parent A: "my parents can speak Mongolian, I can't, so I sent my child to the Mongolian school in order to learn Mongolian. I have no idea how to learn, and I can't make up for his lessons."

Parent B: "the child is in school all day. The environment in the school determines the child's future. Parents can also do a logistics job."

*B. "Supplement Mongolian language" teaching mode:
Mongolian B mode*

The mode of "supplement Mongolian language" includes two modes, namely "Mongolian B" mode and "Mongolian B changed to Mongolian A" mode. The mode of "Mongolian B" is the teaching mode of "teaching Chinese mainly". The so-called "teaching in Chinese mainly" means that all the courses are taught in Chinese, but a Mongolian language course must be set up and taught in Mongolian language. The "Mongolian B changed to Mongolian A" mode refers to the teaching mode in middle school, which is mainly taught in Chinese or Mongolian, and then transformed into "Mongolian A" mode from high school.

1) "Mongolian B" mode

After the resumption of the national college entrance examination in 1978, when students in the "Mongolian B" mode took part in the college entrance examination, the score of the subject "Mongolian B" was 100% included in the total score, and learning "Mongolian B" was more advantageous than learning English. Therefore, the number of students in Ningcheng "Mongolian B" increased rapidly, and the teaching of "Mongolian B" in the county's ethnic schools developed rapidly. But not for long time, "Mongolian B" students slowly flow to Chinese-language schools.

The original intention of "Mongolian B" mode is to provide the environment for Mongolian school-age children to learn their mother tongue. However, due to the impact of social transformation and language environment, the "Mongolian B" model in many areas of Inner Mongolia autonomous region (Mongolian inhabited areas, Mongolian and the Han nationality inhabited areas and urban areas) failed to achieve its original intention. In the long history, Songshan district and Kalaqin of Chifeng, where the mode of "Mongolian B" is implemented, have gradually lost the Mongolian language teaching and education, thus Mongolian students have lost the opportunity to learn their own language, writing and culture.

Students' answers about the "Mongolian B" mode are as follows:

Student A: "Mongolian is difficult to pronounce and remember, so it's very difficult to learn. Now I have no place to speak Mongolian, I just speak it in the Mongolian language course."

Student B: "I have been studying Mongolian since I graduated from high school. Now I have forgotten everything except simple conversations."

The teacher's answer about "Mongolian B" mode is as follows:

Teacher A: "I'm worried about the children losing their mother tongue, so I try very hard to teach. But the kids don't do well, and I can't help it."

Teacher B: "because there is no mother tongue environment, learning a language in class is really limited."

Parents' answers about "Mongolian B" mode are as follows:

Parent A: "as the Mongolian people learn the Mongolian language, it is necessary to understand the Mongolian language. Learn as much as you can."

Parent B: "our previous generation could speak Mongolian. They learned it naturally in the family. Our generation understands the Mongolian language and cannot speak it. It is impossible for a generation of children to learn fluent Mongolian in the classroom."

2) "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode

"Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode is to summarize the experience of "Mongolian B" mode construction of an education and teaching mode. The mode of "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" solves the inheritance problem of national language.

Ningcheng began to recruit about 30 "Mongolian B" junior high school graduates to form a class every year since 1996, and officially started the experiment of "Mongolian B to Mongolian A". In Ningcheng, there are a large number of "Mongolian B" junior high school graduates, and the high school enrollment rate is less than 50%. In order to enter the senior high school, many students choose the Tianyi Mongolian middle school and the experimental class

"Mongolian B to Mongolian A". "Mongolian B" students are taught in Chinese, the college entrance examination competition is fierce, compared with the students taught in Mongolian, it is more difficult to get into school, but to "Mongolian A" is easier to get into school and many "Mongolian B" students from the Han nationality school to the school taught in Mongolian successfully into the ideal university. On the other hand, students taught in Mongolian have a low score in the college entrance examination. After three years of "transformation" in senior high school, "Mongolian B" students can be admitted to universities. After graduation, "Mongolian B" students can obtain employment both in Chinese and in Chinese.

Since 2003, the college entrance examination additional score method for "Mongolian B" students has changed a lot. Since 2008, the scores of Mongolian language (Mongolian B) and foreign language subjects have been converted into the total score of one subject by 50% each. After two grades are converted into one, there are a lot of Mongolian students move up to give up learning English language and transfer, also influence the Mongolian students' learning motivation of Chinese compulsory education stage, "Mongolian B" born students less, and the Mongolian language environmental degradation, "Mongolian B" turn to be "A" teaching difficulty, the distribution scale increased as the experimental class into a period of hard work. However, "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" education model is still providing mother tongue education for the Mongols in Ningcheng after suffering a lot. In 2017, 42 students from the experimental class participated in the college entrance examination, including 10 students with the upper limit of one book and 25 students with more than two books. By 2017, a total of 523 students will have graduated from 17 classes. The enrollment rate of students in experimental classes remains above 60%.

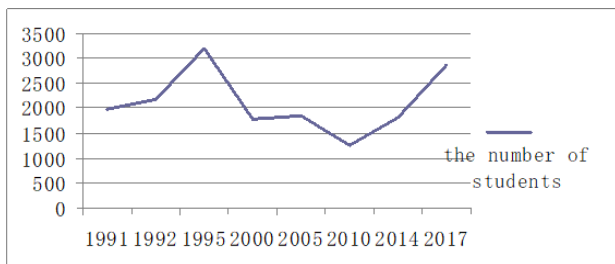


Fig. 2. Changes in the number of Jiashu Mongolian students in Ningcheng County.

The number of SML students in Ningcheng increased from 1991 to 1995, but declined from 1995 to 2010, and then rose from 2010 ("Fig. 2"). As can be seen from "Fig. 2", the number of SML Mongolian students in Ningcheng County is in an unstable state, which proves that the source of Mongolian students receiving mother tongue education is unstable.

According to the statistics of 2017, there are 41 primary and secondary schools for ethnic minorities in 14 towns and townships of the county, with 3,760 students, including 153

in senior high schools, 430 in junior middle schools, 2,864 in primary schools, 313 children and 74 full-time teachers.

In order to better understand the status quo of Mongolian "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode in Ningcheng. The author interviewed teachers, students and parents.

Students' answers about the "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode are as follows:

Student A: "if I have both Chinese and Mongolian skills, I will have no trouble finding A job. Both positions need such talents."

Student B: "the rate of admission to university is higher than that of the Han nationality students, so I decided to get admitted to a better university after discussing with my family."

The teacher's answer about the mode of "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" is as follows:

Teacher A: "I think it is an opportunity for Mongolian children to learn their mother tongue and go to a better university. It is rare to have the best of both worlds."

Teacher B: "this model can improve the children's mother tongue. There is pressure, there is motivation. They work hard to learn their mother tongue for college."

About the "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode parents answer as follows:

Parent A: "my child is not good at Mongolian since childhood, but through this process of gradual transformation, his Mongolian language level has improved a lot."

Parent B: "I only know Chinese, watching the child slowly become both Chinese and my heart is happy."

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

According to the living environment of Mongolian students in Ningcheng, the degree of exposure to the mother tongue, and the implementation of different modes of mother tongue education, teachers and students who teach and receive different modes of education also present different ideas. The main performances are reflected in the following points.

1) Teaching in Mongolian

Students receiving the "teaching in Mongolian" mode have a strong influence on their mother tongue and national culture. However, some students do not understand or have a slight understanding of some words or logical structures in the native language education courses of Mongolian schools.

Although Mongolian teachers are confident in teaching Mongolian, they have no choice about the poor performance of Mongolian students in their mother tongue.

Parents' expectations of school education are too high, and the concept of "Mongolian language education and Mongolian culture is taught in schools" is strong, ignoring

the importance of family's influence on children's mother tongue.

2) "Mongolian B" teaching mode

Students take "Mongolian B" education as a course to understand, have the idea of "qualified" can be, and do not take the Mongolian language as a must to master, use the idea of reality, hence the "learned but not remembered" phenomenon.

Although "Mongolian B" teachers attach great importance to the education of mother tongue, they can only acquiesce to the students' response.

Some parents expect the "Mongolian B" mode, but some parents deny it.

3) "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode

Some students believe that "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode provides a broader development for their later life, while some students believe that "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" mode is just a step to the university.

Teachers believe that the mode of "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" can give Mongolian students an opportunity to further their study in their mother tongue when they are admitted to institutions of higher learning.

Parents believe that "Mongolian B to Mongolian A" can prevent the loss of national language.

B. Suggestions

1) Student

In order to ensure the source of Mongolian students and learning quality of Mongolian schools, students should establish a good learning atmosphere and style of Mongolian.

Inheriting and developing national languages and cultures is an important responsibility of the younger generation. They need to learn to keep in mind their mission, with their own efforts to complete the inevitable historical responsibility.

2) School

Mongolian schools should attach great importance to students who are taught in Mongolian, and give regular lectures on "mother tongue, mandarin and foreign language are equally important to students" to guide students.

Actively create a mother tongue environment. Clear standard teaching language, school language, dormitory language, etc.

Teachers pay close attention to the basic teaching of Mongolian language and teach according to students' actual conditions and subject characteristics.

Teachers should be full of confidence in Mongolian language education and infect students with their personality charm and teaching charm.

3) Family

Parents should improve their knowledge of mother tongue education.

Parents must provide their children with a mother tongue environment to realize "home-school co-education".

4) Society

In order to ensure the source of students with mother tongue education, increase publicity and support teaching in Mongolian.

People from all walks of life in the society make their own efforts to create a mother tongue environment and establish social activity center, Mongolian exchange center and so on.

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