



New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences



Issue 1 (2017) 273-277

ISSN 2421-8030

www.prosoc.eu

Selected paper of 8th World Conference on Educational Sciences (WCES-2016), 4-8, February 2016, University of Alcalá, Madrid, Spain

Tujia native language using situation and schools inheritance in Dianfang Area

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Suggested Citation:

Liang, M. & Qu, T. (2017). Tujia Native Language Using Situation and Schools Inheritance in Dianfang Area. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*. [Online]. 01, pp 273-277. Available from: www.prosoc.eu

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Jesus Garcia Laborda, University of Alcalá, Spain

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Abstract

With the development of Chinese economy and culture changing, Tujia minority ethnic's native language is gradually becoming endangered, Tujia ethnic language and culture well retained in Dianfang area. In this study, by visiting and surveying several villages in Dianfang community, and taking interviews with the different age stages of Tujia people, the data statistics and qualitative analysis was applied, the result shows that their native language usage is waning and live transmission unsustainable under the background of the language and culture changing. Meanwhile, to investigate that how the Tujia native language inherits in the local schools, we find out that the insufficiency of educational investments and family's attitudes are the main problems to influence native language learning in school.

Keywords: Tujia native language, Dianfang area, school.

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1. Introduction

Tujia language is a kind of independent one in Tibeto-Burman language, the Tujia people divide their languages into south and north dialect area. The north dialect area is wide spreading which includes Longshan, Yongshun, Laifeng, Xuanen, Youyang, Xiushan and Guizhou west parts. Comparing with north dialect area, the south dialect area is small, which mainly is composed of Tanxi town of west Hunan province. Today, in the south dialect area people speak Tujia native language are reduced sharply, fewer than one thousand people, it is almost threatened with extinction. Whereas, in the north dialect area the people of Tujia native language speaking are more than the south dialect area, which accounts of nearly all the people. Up to now, many people still speak Tujia native language to communicate in Dianfang, Tasha town of north dialect area.

Professor Deshu Ye had divided Tujia native language using conditions into three kinds of type from synchronic aspect, which are Continue Using Type, Part Using Type and All Changing Using Type (Ye, 1999). From professor Deshu Ye's opinion, the Continue Using Type means that when Tujia people inter-communicate with each other, they speak Tujia native language. The Part Using Type means that Tujia people choose their native language or the Han language according to different communication situations and the All Changing Using Type refers the Tujia people speak Han language, they discard their native language. In order to analyze the native language using condition in detail of Dianfang Tujia ethnic group, on the views of professor Deshu Ye classification and I integrated the current situation of Dianfang Tujia language usage, I divide the people spoken Tujia native language by age, people over eighty ages are the Tujia Continue Using Type, people between thirty-sixty five ages are the Tujia Part Using Type, people below thirty ages are the Changing Using Type.

2. Investigation on three types of Dianfang Tujia native language

2.1. Tujia native language continue using type

Tujia native language Continue Using Type are mainly aged eighty or more old ones in Dianfang, this kind old people from birth to death always live in Dianfang area, they have no school education experiences, almost all of them have no Chinese language expressing abilities. In the daily life, they have formed the native language habits, the native language abilities exceed their second language abilities, and at any time and place they speak Tujia native language completely.

In the fieldwork, I found that the older of Tujia people, the more of their native language behavior have, and Chinese language ability was weak. Some old people could not read and express the borrowed words which were not emerged in Tujia native language, especially the digital production of PC, digital camera and smart phone etc. Since this kind of old people long-term lived in Dianfang area, they were less communicated with the outside world, few of them had gone out of Dianfang area, the geographic space and cultural environment of their living was extremely limited, Tujia native language naturally was their communicate language, for this reason, it has provided a better language environment to Tujia native language in Dianfang area. The Tujia old people had special feelings to Tujia native language; they thought that Tujia native language was the basis of Tujia people. However, they had gradually realized the plight of Tujia language inheritance, while Dianfang was deeply influenced by the outside economic development, it has lifted people out of poverty, but Tujia native language was gradually replaced by Chinese language, if they should still keep their native language behaviors or abandon it to integrate into Chinese language society and keep their descendants adapt outside society, they were very ambivalent.

2.2. Tujia native language part using type

Different with the Continue Using Type, the Part Using Type is almost middle age people, their Tujia native language speaking is complex, they have experienced the migrant working outside their home

town since the last decade of the twentieth century, at that time, China's reform and opening up policy had inspired a large number of migrant workers moving to developed province seeking for their livelihoods, thus large-scale population migration started. People in Dianfang also join into the migration trend; they leave their hometown to the coastal developed areas for some workings. In recent years, with the number of migration workers increased in Dianfang, the proportions of people migration are increased as well; nonagricultural workers are fast reduced in Dianfang. According to Dianfang town the sixth census figures showed, more than ten thousand people worked out of their hometown, Dianfang nonagricultural workers usually looked for jobs in inter-provincial and inter regional. This kind of people ages are usually from twenties to fifties, their jobs are wide range but mainly focused on build laborers and factory workers. Baoge village people considered that working outside Dianfang if we could not speak Chinese language, we would not find any jobs, it was hard to live, Tujia language didn't have any value. This kind of people before move out of Dianfang, as the same of their parents that the self-sufficient farming are the main way of their livings ,and they have formed the intercommunication circle by link of "agriculture work", they used to speak Tujia language as their daily communication language. With large-scale population migration and their means of livelihood changed, they had to face language problems after leaved Dianfang, if they still keep to speak Tujia native language or change to use Chinese language, No doubt, they must change it,

If Tujia language is irreplaceable under the background of Dianfang Tujia community self-sufficient agricultural economy, Chinese language is absolutely in an irreplaceable position in open economy developed areas. Therefore, in order to adapt to the survival and development, Tujia native language behavior in different area of Dianfang Tujia people is replaced by Chinese language. Whenever at holidays they backed to Dianfang community with traditional life style of Tujia, only did they had opportunities to speak Tujia native language, the old age man thought that it would be looked down upon not to speak Tujia native language at home, they would be considered losing themselves.

2.3. Tujia language all changing using type

Different from the previous two types, Dianfang Tujia language All Changing Using Type has completely lost the Tujia native language behavior and changed to use Chinese language, this kind of type mainly are children and teenagers, few of them can speak Tujia native language, some of them can understand what others said, but seldom of them take Tujia native language as their daily communication language. Although Dianfang teenagers and children live in the native language environment, under the strong influence from outside main trend culture their Tujia native language behaviors gradually become waning even being assimilated into Chinese language. Nowadays, in some families of more remote villages in Dianfang, Tujia teenagers and children's language behaviors mainly are confined to call their elders, such as called their grandpas as "PAPU" and called their parents as "APA" or "ANIE", etc. In the centre location of Dianfang, few of Tujia native language calls exited, teens adopt Chinese language name such as "dad "mom". In their eyes, if they still spoke Tujia native language, they would be despised to old fashion by friends from outside Dianfang, they thought parents were out of fashion, many of them only spoke Tujia native language for a lifetime, they could not walk out of the Dianfang community and hard to survive in outside world as they can't speak Chinese language. Native language psychology of Dianfang Tujia teens had been weakened, and it has directly affected their native language behaviors the aspiration of native language use gradually reduced finally their Tujia native language abilities declined even to change using Chinese language.

3. Tujia native language inheritance in schools

At early of 1984, Professor Xiumo PENG and Deshu YE of JISHOU University had created the draft of Tujia Language Poeticize Program. Subsequently, Deshu YE had written Tujia Language Textbook based on the draft, and at the supporting of Xiangxi autonomous prefecture government, he presented the experiment of Tujia and Chinese double language teaching in Dianfang center primary school, soon this experiment had expanded to other school in Tasha town, Experimental class from

the first three classes 90 students increased up to 10 class more than 280 students, experimental teachers also increased from 2 to 12 people. The experiment stopped and continued and lasted for several years; Tujia language inheritance has obtained the certain effects. Unfortunately, the experiment cannot continue after nineties of 20th century. From 2005 year, Dianfang education administration launched Tujia language and Chinese language bilingual teaching experiment in Dianfang center school and Pojiao primary school, the experiment had made a clear rules and specific requirements of Tujia language teaching organization, funding, teaching objectives, teaching requirements, teaching match, textbook compilation. From Dianfang and Pojiao area schools to carry out a series of Tujia language Chinese bilingual double text teaching, Tujia language research and inheritance has obtained the certain effect

On September 2011, Dianfang center school education research project "Study on Inheritance Tujia culture and school art education integration" had approved as the 12th Five-Year Plan planning project at provincial level by Hunan province. Moreover the school has conducted a diversity of ethnic art education activities, in the "ethnic art education activities" and art and to penetrate of Tujia language as much as possible. With the activities, all the students were able to speak Tujia language and sing Tujia folk songs. Dianfang and Pojiao schools takes Tujia language into classes, it is practicable to inherit Tujia language in school, School as a purposeful, planned and organized education institution, Tujia students can system learn their native language. However, we had to face a lot of subjective and objective disadvantage factors, from subjective factor, Tujia students native language consciousness has weakened, their endangered consciousness of native language has not yet formed, the identity concept of keeping Tujia native language is weak, social psychological foundation of language keeping has lost (Deng, 2007).Whereas the objective factor mainly is that Dianfang relatively closed native language environment is broken, because of the demand of survival and communication, Chinese language behavior gradually get dominated, Tujia language only has oral language without words, although through the school teach Tujia language, but it is difficult to create inner interaction and connection with school education.

Except for Dianfang and Pojiao, the second primary school which located in the urban area of Longshan county has introduced endangered Tujia native language into class by adjust the school-based research course, and set up independent course of Tujia language, employ Tujia language teacher outside school to teach daily Tujia language. Instead, Tujia language teaching effect in the second primary school was not ideal, it was different with Dianfang school, Tujia language environment was not existed in urban school, before studied Tujia language, many of them had never listen or spoken Tujia language, motivation and attitude of the Tujia language learning has not been generated intrinsic mechanism, so the study would become a mere formality.

4. Discussion

In recent years, Dianfang Tujia people are more and more in non-agricultural professions to seek livelihood, this way of living break Dianfang Tujia original interaction basis which has linked by blood, geopolitical, industry relationships, regardless of Dianfang Tujia for migrant workers, trade, cross-regional intermarried, study to walk out Dianfang community or stay at home, in order to survive all have to face the fact of accepting and adopting Chinese language as daily communication tool, thus Tujia language communicative functions is weakening. Dianfang relatively closed culture space has been blended by foreign open, diverse cultures, when foreign culture shocks Dianfang Tujia culture, Tujia original culture still keep existed in Dianfang, but people spoken Tujia language are sharp decreased. Language can't independence exist without context space, when Dianfang Tujia language context space occupied by foreign language and culture, Tujia language has lost its existence foundation, and the fact is irreversible of crisis or endangered. In the modernization process of Dianfang, the development of the society is more and more dependent on the interaction with the outside world, Dianfang relatively closed native language community are integrated into the mainstream society, will Dianfang Tujia native language slowly disappear in the process of social

development and cultural change? We could not foretell it, but we have seen Tujia people's native language consciousness is awakening, protection and inheritance of Tujia native language has become important part of their culture recognitions. We should also see clearly that regardless of the Tujia language endangered or inheritance we should respect the choice of their own culture of Tujia people, any outside force intervention is difficult to generate endogenously the "cultural consciousness" of Tujia people.

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