



Educational Planning for Trilingual Program in Northeast Asia: Focusing on Trilingualism of Korean Minorities in China

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Abstract

Trilingual phenomenon becomes more popular among ethnic groups in China. In the last decade, more ethnic groups get concerned with trilingual education under the influence of foreign language education and development of cultural exchange. Educational planning for multilingual minorities faces both great opportunities and challenges. Educational innovation and cultivations of trilingual program become rather urgent for trilingual groups living in China.

Key words: Trilingual program; Korean ethnics; Educational planning; Innovation

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INTRODUCTION

Trilingualism is rather broad term ranging from societal trilingualism where three languages are used and learned in formal educational setting to personal trilingualism where it is constricted to individual case due to immigration or different origins of parents. As a matter of fact, trilingualism is not a rarity in Africa. In the long

history of colonization period, different African tribes have to use neighborhood tribal language for contact and colonizer’s language to communicate with even more tribes. However, this phenomenon has been left unnoticed or given less attention in the last century. With the increasing integration of world economy and the rampant campaign for promoting ethnic culture and pride which otherwise used to be ignored or even suppressed in the last decade, trilingualism, together with multiculturalism, suddenly becomes a buzzword in many parts of the world, in particular in Europe. Meanwhile, it is also attracted to the political and academic attention. As Genesee (1998) argues that bilingual and multilingual has become the rule rather than the exception, the research into the multilingualism and multiculturalism has mushroomed in the final decade of 20th century. The European Union has first foreseen the importance for its citizens being multilinguals and emphasized in EU Commission’s White Paper (1995) that multilingual ability with (a) major foreign language(s) should become the minimum linguistic repertoire of being a European citizen. While in the US, a nation adhering to uniform cultural heritage and assimilationist policy toward ethnic minorities, the Federal Government has re-examined its ethnic policies and started to advocate the multilingualism and multicultural orientation in the last decade of 20th century. To echo the political and social demand for multilingualism and multiculturalism, educationalists and policy makers, guided by the educational researchers, have developed various forms of trilingual/multilingual programs¹ in multilingual countries like Switzerland and even in monolingual countries like Japan.

¹ In Europe and in other countries, English education is a very important component of trilingualism or trilingual education. This paper uses trilingualism or trilingual education (program) in the sense that English is an integral part. This is not only true in European countries but also in developing countries like China.

Back home in China, the last decade also witnessed a wave of discussion and experiment of trilingual program with English as the foreign language in various regions where ethnic minorities densely live. The case for the Korean ethnic is one of the prime examples. From the early 1990s, the Korean educational system has faced unprecedented challenges and been widely blamed externally and internally. The external pressure came from the academic marginalization of top Korean ethnic students in universities with the Mandarin Chinese and its various accents as the only instructional language in class. The challenge also derived from the shrinking of prospective university enrollees whose foreign language was Japanese, an absolutely advantage for Korean ethnic students. Realizing the drawbacks of the Korean ethnic educational system, an increasing number of Korean ethnic families sent their children to han-ethnic schools for better Chinese and English education (Zhang, 1997). The first endeavor to save the national educational system came from bottom up, which was initiated by the Korean ethnic parents who possessed strong bond to Korean ethnic culture and heritage, suggested to the educational administration to reform the syllabus and innovate the curriculum especially in term of language training. This demand quickly was responded by the educationalists and policy makers. However, this was also a start of unending disagreement: for the hardliners the ethnic language is considered as utmost important in academic achievement and cultural identity, thus Korean language should always be placed as the first choice either in its importance as a subject or instructional language whereas Chinese should be secondary; for the reformists, the increasing use of Mandarin Chinese and early introduction of English language can facilitate students' progress in academic achievement and ensure fast assimilation into the mainstream society when graduating from colleges or universities. The focus of their contestation is centered round the time allocation to the use of Korean and Chinese. With English edged into the field and grabbed class period, the situation has become more complicated and been beyond the manipulation of both educationalist and policy makers.

The domestic and overseas experiences can be characterized by the fact that the rocketing profile of English language partially triggers the educational earthquake for reform. Up-to-date curriculum is desperately needed by countries with multilingual and multicultural heritage. Adopting a holistic view of the English, Korean and Chinese education, this paper will focus on the relationship between the three languages either as subjects or as instructional languages in other content-based subjects. Based upon the findings, preliminary considerations upon the educational planning are proposed for a long-term objective of cultivating the future leadership in the Northeast Asia.

1. CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN KOREAN ETHNIC SCHOOLS

This section will be an overview of the national/local policies for the Korean ethnic education and it constitutes a background of the trilingual program adopted by many ambitious Korean ethnic schools. The educational policies concerning the trilingual program with English have yet been formulated due to its profile not established among educationalists and policy makers who have been preoccupied with drafting and supervising bilingual education and not realized the undercurrent of an arrival of a new age. But Korean ethnic schools assume the role of pioneer and active promoter of the trilingual program either for keeping apace of the new trend or elevating school image among prospective Korean ethnic enrollees.

2. NATIONAL/LOCAL POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF TRILINGUAL PROGRAM WITH ENGLISH

The Constitution and the Law on the Widely Used Languages of the People's Republic of China stipulate that all ethnic groups have equal right in using their own languages in all social domains in the speech community and that Mandarin Chinese (Putonghua) should be popularized nationwide. Other laws such the Law on the Ethnic Minority Autonomy in Ethnic Area and the Law on the Compulsory Education of the People's Republic of China, together with the above-mentioned laws, show due respect to the ethnic minority languages and ensure their functions in all social domains where ethnic minorities live densely. They also serve as the guidelines in implementing minority language-Chinese bilingual education.

There are more talking in trilingual program than official documents. As a matter of fact, the trilingual program has remained a vague concept in various government reports. For example, Mr. Li Dezhu, director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission has once argued that trilingual program is a fast way for ethnic minorities to join in the economic prosperity and the wagon of globalization. Other top officials of the government also expressed the same concern. In all, trilingual program is only described as an educational campaign that can bring about bright future for ethnic minorities.

In this case, local governments have had to do more than talking. For example, the booming obsession of English education from Korean ethnic parents constituted a biggest pressure group for the local government. Therefore, in the early 1990s, the experimental trilingual program was initiated in the Korean ethnic educational institutions of the three Northeastern provinces in China. Guan (1995) reported that in some non-key Korean ethnic

senior high schools, multilingual program experiment with Korean, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese and English had carried out in Harbin and Shengqing at the increasing demand of multilingual personnel by Korean companies. Some Korean ethnic kindergartens and primary schools also started to offer English class in Yanji and Hunchun. Other similar reports about the experiment trilingual program for ethnic minorities mushroomed in the late 1990s (Tian, 2001; Xiong, 2001; Wu, 2001; Guo, Menggenqiqige, & Tang, 2003; Aomubasier, 2004). In the fall of 2001, the State Educational Commission issued the new standards of English course demanding English was a compulsory subject started from the Grade three in county-level cities and above. Korean ethnic educational institutions are among the first batch to quickly respond the state decree, for most of the Korean ethnic schools had started to offer English class around the turn of the century. Nonetheless, by 2003 most of urban Korean ethnic schools in the center cities of different area offered English subject from the Grade one. The rest schools offered English class from the Grade three as requested by the State Educational Commission. In a draft for the trilingual program of Longjing government, a county-level city of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, the trilingual program is suggested like this:

To uphold the principle of the consistency of Korean ethnic education with national standards. Education for Korean ethnic is a very important component of national educational system. Therefore, uniformity and consistency with the national level is prioritized in terms of value orientations, teaching objectives, educational policies and system, curriculum structure and content. Then Korean heritage and language should be taken into account in the formulation of educational planning, strategy, reform procedures, syllabus designing, curriculum development, teaching material, instructional language in order to attain Korean characteristics in education.

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“To reform the curriculum structure. To carry out structured bilingual education experiment under the planning of the educational administration. With regards to the class period allocation in the *trilingual teaching*, it should be scientifically planned with the goal of *keeping the core syllabus of the Korean language teaching, intensifying Chinese teaching, and optimizing foreign language teaching*”. Specific measures should be taken to *increase the class period for Chinese and open English class in lower grades*. In the primary school level, the sequence of language learning is recommended as Korean, Chinese and a foreign language; in the junior high school, the order should be Chinese, Korean and the foreign language; in the senior high school, Chinese and the foreign language class go before Korean language. (Translated from the Decision on the Promotion of the Reform and Development of the Korean Ethnic Education, Draft for Suggestions, 2003)

Systematic studies upon the trilingualism and trilingual education for ethnic minorities in China are on the rise in the new millennium. Ge (2003) attributes different social functions to the three languages that ethnic minority students are learning and using. He

points out that ethnic language is a core component of a culture whereas Chinese competence is critical for the cultivation of ethnic minority intellectuals. The English language education can elevate the social status of the ethnic minorities and push forward the exchange in all social aspects with foreign countries. The message implied in his proposal is that the three languages, ethnic language, Chinese and English assume different roles in the language learning and instruction for content-based subjects. Wu (2005) analyzes the cultural identity shaping and rational balance between the language than can bring about economic return and language that shape the socio-cultural identity, arguing that multicultural value orientation should be adopted for the development of ethnic minorities. Meanwhile, time allocation to the different languages learning should take into account of assimilation to the mainstream society economically as well as the maintenance of social-cultural identity. None of the studies above mentioned touches upon the core issue of linguistic side of the trilingual education, as mentioned by Dai (2005), the relationship of the three languages in the educational setting and the educational planning of the trilingual program. In all, the practice of trilingual program is as an old Chinese saying goes that when crossing a river with unidentified depth, it is better to hold a stone. What's more, the related research remains superficial, just striking around the bushes.

The insufficiency of the above analysis is apparent that they can never answer the questions of many “hows” in implementing a successful trilingual program with English. To make it worse, the Chinese and English education, both economically profitable languages guaranteeing bright future, undermines the ethnic language education, which results in the curtailing of the ethnic minority language either as a subject or instructional language in other content-based courses. Bilingualism is perceived mistakenly as the increment of Chinese language in all possible courses and trilingual program as the future of ethnic minority education whereas ignoring the key concepts of consolidated linguistic development and maintenance of cultural identity of the ethnic minorities.

This paper intends to arouse the reasonable thinking in pre-mature trilingual program with English as claimed by various ethnic minority schools, and clarify some key concepts in planning the trilingual program with English. The principal research questions are:

- What are the relationship between the three languages, ethnic minority language, Mandarin Chinese and English?
- What educational planning should we adopt for the balanced development of the minority language student academically, cognitively and culturally?
- Why is it possible that Korean ethnic will be the leader in the Northeast Asia?

3. PRELIMINARY THINKING INTO THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY INNOVATION

Relationship between the three languages in formal setting is the immediate issue to be tackled with. It is a far more complicated issue than the two languages in the bilingual setting. As a matter of fact, English education can benefit from the well-organized development of the Korean-Chinese bilingualism because it is taught as a foreign language with lower requirement in terms of oral and written proficiency than the mother tongue and Chinese language. Therefore, the big issue can also be views as the relationship between the bilingualism and the foreign language education. Among many scholars, Li (2006) proposed to introduce Cummins' Threshold Theory, which is widely attested in the bilingual studies, into the explanation of the relationship between the bilingualism and the third language acquisition/learning. Cummins emphasizes the academic and cognitive development attained through relatively balanced bilingualism. In his Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins, 1987, 2000), he argues that the attainment in the first language competence determines

the level of the second language a child can achieve. In another word, the more competent a child is in his first language, the easier for him/her to achieve high competence in the second language. Figure 1 (From Baker, 2001) is an illustration of his hypothesis. The fundamental idea in his consideration is that, as Baker summarized, under what conditions bilingualism has positive, neutral and negative effects on cognition, or how far someone has to travel up the two language ladders to obtain cognitive advantages from bilingualism. Cummins considers there are two thresholds for bilingual language learners: for the first threshold, the bilingual learner is competent in neither of the two languages, or we can that he/she is a beginner for both of the languages. Under this threshold, the incompetence in the two languages will hinder child's cognitive development. Under the second threshold, bilingual learner has fully competent in one language while learning a second language. In this regard, the second language learning will neither hinder nor facilitate the cognitive development. Beyond the second threshold, the bilingual learner is competent in both languages, thus bringing about the positive cognitive development.



Figure 1
Cummins' Threshold Theory

Coupled with the Threshold Theory, Cummins further distinguishes the oral proficiency and other linguistic skills that have to be acquired in formal language setting. He labeled the former as the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and the latter cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). Cummins (1984a, b, 2000, 2001) argues that the BICS can be acquired in no more than two years by children in natural exposure to the target language without any formal instruction but the CALP has to be attained through formal training within a

minimum of five to seven years. Through the distinction has become the target for criticism, the research results supporting this separation has also been bulky. Because it is not concern of this paper to critique Cummins' theory, we shift to the immediate relevancy of his theory in the educational planning.

Cummins' theory can cast light on some of key issue of the trilingual program with English. The immediate one is that whether it is appropriate to introduce English language into the trilingual program as early as possible

as it is the case that many ethnic Korean schools hastily offer English subject from Grade one following suit of immersion method. As is widely acknowledged, the inappropriate transition from home language to school language will jeopardize the future academic failure for minority language students. But the other side insists that early learning of a foreign language is to the advantage of children. With the Puberty Hypothesis, some scholars believe that children tends to achieve higher level of proficiency in the foreign language when they acquire it in a relatively natural setting than adults do in the same environment (Penfield, 1953; Scove, 1988; Krashen, 1979). This view finds strong echo from the parents. Their enthusiasm constitutes a far more pressure upon the educational policy makers. However, researchers find that early learners can achieve no better results than the later learners of foreign language without the help of accidental learning. (Burstall, 1977; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Su, 2005) There are even results that later learners outperform early learners in many aspects (Munoz, 2000). In the case of the Korean ethnic school, we can assume that either Korean ethnic students are cognitively and communicatively superior than English learners of han-ethnic students or that they achieve less competence in English or other languages, for they have to allocate learning time to three languages while han-ethnic English learners only need to concentrate into two, provided other factors draw equal. The first assumption seems to have sufficient evidence in that bilinguals are much more flexible in communication and superior in terms of divergent thinking and meta-linguistic awareness (Wang, 2003). But people with this optimistic view may forget the fact that those qualities are referring to relatively balanced bilingual while Korean ethnic children, on a whole, Korean-dominating bilinguals with inferior Chinese competence to that of han-ethnic children. The second assumption is more logical when considering the truth that a person has to lose something when getting another thing. Then it is worth asking what Korean ethnic children will lose when the trilingual program with English is implemented with the learning standards of major subjects are almost identical with those of han-ethnic schools.

It is the Korean language being the scapegoat for the so-called trilingual teaching. In reality, the opening of English class in the lower grades, in many cases Grade one, further curtails the syllabus of Korean as a subject and the rampant de-Koreanization of instructional language in content based subjects and even ridiculously in English class under the aura of experimental bilingual education, making it increasing difficult for some Korean children to catch up with the syllabus. In some extreme examples, the motivation for study of some Korean ethnic children is hard hit by the reform. Baker (2001) strongly opposes the implementation of bilingualism/multilingualism at the expense of mother tongue, believing it will bring about

detrimental effects upon children's confidence in and loyalty to the cultural heritage and pride.

Cummins' theory has aroused researchers to reconsider the relationship between the language choices in classroom and the cognitive development in an additive fashion. Communicative competence is as important as the coordinated development of literacy in the three languages involved with the latter placing more emphasis on reading and writing skills. It is widely agreed in the study of bilingualism that the use of home language, in most cases ethnic language, is beneficial for the cognitive and literacy development for young children when the competence of their native tongue outperforms the other language(s). The language development is closely bound with the cognitive development because students perceive the world and conceptualize what they have learned with the aid of the linguistic input. In a sense, the growth of cognitive capability entails or is entailed by the growth of linguistic competence (Cummins, 2001). The failure of the submersion education in the US, in a large degree, is attributed to the ignorance the gap between the English-media syllabus and teaching material and inferior English competence. However, in many countries with successful experience of bilingual education, educationalists and teachers place positive status on and show due respect to children's native tongue. To ensure the balanced bilingual development, dual language bilingual education is adopted where there is a need for both languages to function in various social domains. Under this educational program, both languages are given equal status. In content-based courses, both languages are used as instructional language. The hindrance of wrong language choice also interferes with the identity-formation and ethnic pride, which in turn constitutes a threatening factor subduing the study motivation. When a child sees that his/her mother tongue is not appreciated by teachers of the societal environment, he/she will probably lose interests in study, thus leading to academic failure.

Cummins' theory has exerted profound influence among the educationalists and policy makers. As for trilingual program with English in ethnic minority areas in Europe, most educational planning place his theory the top priority in designing local policy. A trilingual model at hand is reported by Genesee (2001), which is also called the two-way immersion program. Strictly following equal time allocation to the mother tongue and the official language, Genesee proposes that bilingual education should start from the kindergarten. The third language (L3) is introduced as late as grade three when children have developed competence of the two languages. Meanwhile, the time allocation of the L3 never surpasses that of the L1 and L2 at least to the Grade 6. The implied message in this model is rich: First, due respect is paid to the coordinated development of the ethnic language and the national/official language, in particular in the early period of linguistic development; second, the gradual

increment of the L3 indicates that bilingual development continues even after the introduction of the L3, expecting the additive effects of the bilingualism on the third language learning; thirdly, the cognitive development will

not lag behind the monolinguals by balanced bilingual use; fourthly, the coordinated development of languages and cognition leaves a large room for the innovative curriculum design and trilingual program implementation.

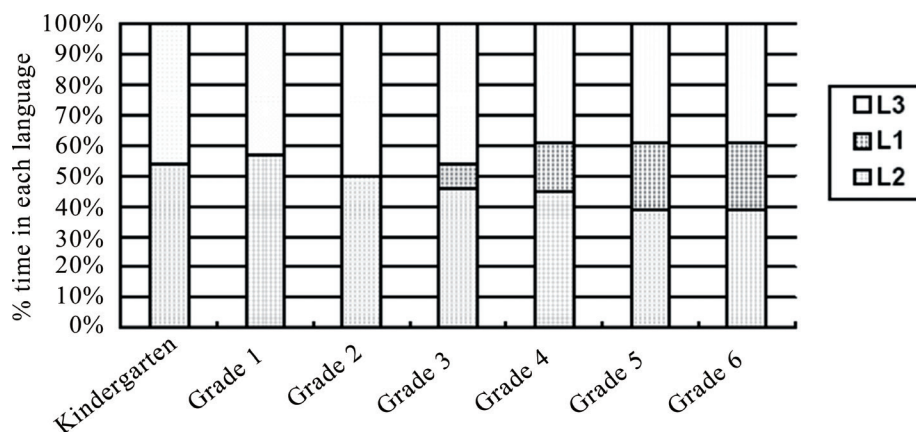


Figure 2
The Two-Way Immersion Program

Some studies indicate that no detrimental effects of early introduction of the third language are found to hold back L1 and L2 learning (Cenoz, 2001; Lasagabaster, 2000). But Etxeberria, after careful analysis of the trilingual program in the Basque Country in Spain where children start to learn Basque, Spanish and English at four, points out that the simultaneous learning of the three languages lacks sufficient theoretical foundation and successful experiential support in other countries.

Comparing Yanbian case with international experience, a fact cannot be ignored in that in Europe and North America, trilingual program is to students from either mainstream or minority background in the regions in question. So there is no issue of educational equality. However, in Yanbian, trilingual program is only for the Korean ethnic schools. In an environment of test result dominates over everything, Korean ethnic schools have to invest more teaching resources to the area which can bring about more short-term goal. Pathetically, this policy is implicitly supported by the government. Trilingual program is itself an innovative and challenging undertaking that the needs more than readjustment of original syllabus or curriculum. Up to now, a relatively mature experience shows that “contact between members of different groups leads to increased liking and respect for members of the outgroup, including presumably reductions in stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.” (Genesee & Gandara, 1999, p.667) By attracting students with majority language background into minority schools, the chances of incidental learning and cultural exchange will exponentially increase. Thus more political courage should be expected to carry out a systematic educational policy in order to clear away the “unsaid norms”. As a matter of fact, a good trend now turns out that some han-ethnic parents send their

children into Korean-dominating kindergarten with the hope to make their children bilinguals from a very young age.

4. CULTIVATION OF LEADERSHIP IN THE NORTHEAST ASIA

The possession of two or three languages has increasingly become an assets, or capital investment for language learners, as the cross-border business transactions or cultural exchanges have been all the more on the rise, thus demanding a large number of those with “English bilingualism” (Baker, 2001) or English multilingualism. With an increasing number of free trade areas and lowering or removing trade barriers, the economical competition is on the global scale. Competence in several languages, especially English and some local languages will greatly enhance a person’s marketability. Korean ethnic assumes the role of broker of cultural and commercial exchange for being competent in both Korean and Chinese, with additional English used in a far more broad reach.

Linguistic asset for ethnic minorities who are competent in the minority language, an official language of a country and a language of wider communication, especially English, means more access into the employments. The EU and Canada have first realized it in its written form that the diversity of ethnic languages is in the interests of the Europe in keeping its influence in the world. Heller (2003) contends that many sectors of the globalized new economy are centered on multilingual communication, and, despite widespread complaints about the McDonaldization of the linguistic landscape, varied aspects of language and identity have turned out to be important in some perhaps unexpected ways.

Li (2006), an expert in the speech science, predicts that the linguistic barrier will become the paramount blocking stone for free communication between peoples with different languages, and which has to be tackled by the speech scientists to develop mean-time multimedia translation system. In all, the multilingual repertoire of the ethnic minorities, once being suppressed or even deprived of existence, suddenly turns out to be the most important intangible asset, and with it, bilinguals or multilingual assume much more active role in all domains of the society. Take Korean ethnic as an example. Since China has established diplomatic relationship with the Republic of Korea in 1992, there appeared a strong trend of the gold rush for Korean businessmen to usurp the market share in mainland China. According to the Yonhap News Agency (2005), the degree of the economic dependency of Korean to China has jumped by 3.6 times since 1992. A large number of Korean-Chinese bilinguals have been employed to work in Korean corporations at all types of positions, especially the management level that coordinates the working relation between the Korean bosses and Chinese-speaking employees. The increasing economic involvement of Korean corporations also kindles the enthusiasm of the local governments in Chinese-speaking area, so they have started to recruit more Korean-Chinese bilinguals. Meanwhile, Korean language has become the second favorite foreign language in Liaoning and Shangdong provinces, not mentioning the fashion of various Korean languages classes in some prestigious universities in China. With the wealth accumulated by the Korean ethnic migrant workers who remit foreign exchange homeward, the second generation of Korean ethnic have more opportunities to study overseas. The common sense of the first generation experienced in the developing countries has been transmitted to their sons/daughters that English language is very important for obtaining a decent job or the academic success. This is also proved by the fact that more Korean corporation begins to recruit fresh graduates who can speak English besides Korean.

The multilingual and multicultural resource does not singly endow the ethnic minorities in the mainstream society with the potentiality of shouldering the leadership in politics, economy and social activities. As the status of ethnic minorities is politically defined by the mainstream majority, the ethnic minorities have to reshape their cultural identity, broadening their visions toward this fast-evolving globalized world and empowering themselves by more creative educational program and actively readjust their cultural orientation. In essence, a multicultural society presupposes equality and harmony and mutual respect to others' language, cultural heritage. The economic organizations, represented by colossal transnationals, have blurred the definition of the sovereignty and physical territory of a state. Ethnic minorities, once being

considered as marginalized, emotionally unstable, and economically underprivileged, are now embracing a golden opportunity to fully exploit their social and cultural resource and edging themselves into the central stage formerly possessed by the mainstream majority. Lynch (1992) proposed the theory of historical development of identity for ethnic groups.

We do don't have to choose between local and ethnic loyalties, national citizenship and global community... and we are well on the way to recognizing three major levels of group affiliation: local community membership, by which is meant familial, ethnic, community or other cultural and social local groupings, including language, religion and ethnicity but not necessarily linked in the same geographic place at the same time; national membership, determined by birth or choice but which may not be an exclusive membership; and international membership, which draws on the overlapping constellations which members of the world community have in common, regardless of the other two levels (Baker, 2001, p.402).

The implication of three-fold identities in the new era demands innovative educational planning. Reasonable language planning and creative curriculum design, with more political courage of local educational administration, combine to push forward awareness-raising campaign. Languages vary from each other in that each individual language perceives the world in a unique way and in turn determines distinct cultural-psychological aspect of an ethnic group. Therefore, language planning should not elevate the importance of one language at the expense of another. All languages should be treated equal as ethnic minorities stand at equal terms. In the educational setting, focus should be shifted from sheer language learning or test-obsession pedagogy to the fostering of critical thinking of ethnic minority history and values in the globalized society, fostering students' positive attitude toward their cultural heritage and sufficient respect to others. And this can be done through the following ways.

- Multilingual/multicultural orientated in designing school curriculum
- Critical thinking and understanding of common human values and attitudes
- Versatile language education program

The first suggestion involves the re-examination of the current educational practice in that Korean ethnic and han-ethnic students are under different roofs. Successful multilingual/multicultural education derives from the co-participation of both the ethnic minority and majority. Take the Yanbian case as an example. The high profile of Korean language in the nationwide and international community attracts an increasing number of Korean learners. Universities and colleges flock to set up Korean language department to fill in job vacancies that require prospective employees proficient in Korean and a major foreign language. Correspondingly, han-

ethnic parents gradually realize that Korean language can add the competitiveness to their children's future career. Some pioneers send their children to Korean-dominating kindergartens, thinking that the language environment is the best way for their children's linguistic competence to grow. Therefore, it is not far that Korean ethnic schools carry out innovative bilingual program to meet the need for bilingualism. This will be a win-win result for both parties involved. The second suggestion is for the intellectual and cognitive development of the Korean ethnic students in the multilingual/multicultural environment. With the coming of new enrollees with different cultural backgrounds, Korean ethnic can benefit from peer cultural exchange and incidental learning of the Chinese language. With the third suggestion, it is recommended that the European and Canadian bilingual/multilingual program be well studied and transplanted into Yanbian with sufficient consideration of local characteristics.

CONCLUSION

As stated before, language repertoire of the minority language should be considered as intangible assets which can bring about abundant economic return and increased consciousness of ethnic autonomy. With the case of the Korean ethnic, multilingual development should not be achieved at the expense of the ethnic language. To the educationalists and policy makers, political courage and innovative educational policy should be coordinated to promote Korean ethnic education in a progressive manner.

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