Language-socialization-based Analysis of Putonghua Promotion's Influences on Tujia Cultural Identity—A Case Study of Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture

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Language functions as a carrier of culture, playing a crucial role in individual socialization into his cultural community, thus it is inextricably interconnected with individual cultural identity. Language acquisition and language ability development require necessary sociocultural interactions and practices. China boasts 55 ethnic minorities which have their own distinctive cultures and language varieties. But some of them are experiencing loss of languages and cultural identity. This paper is dedicated to examining the influences of Putonghua Promotion on Tujia cultural identity from the perspectives of Language Socialization.

Keywords: Putonghua promotion, Tujia cultural identity, influences, language socialization

Introduction

As Putonghua and geographical dialects are the optimal code choices in daily communication, people in Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture (hereinafter ETMAP) think the perish of Tujia language makes no difference in their daily life, despite their membership of Tujia descendants and some of them even mistake Tujia language as geographical dialects, providing evidence for their lack of Tujia cultural identity. Nowadays, present descendants of Tujia ethnicity mostly have the knowledge of their Tujia identity from the identity card or residence booklet, instead of unconsciously from the language they usually speak or tangible or intangible cultural heritage of this Chinese minor ethnic group. To clarify whether Putonghua promotion bears a relationship with the Tujia cultural identity, perspectives of language socialization theory is borrowed to build the theoretical foundation.

As Li Fang (2018) puts forward, The Putonghua Promotion and its improper realization do influence the minority dialects, making their code systems opposites in the protection consciousness of most people and throwing threats on the existence of the latter. To solve those problems, grasping what the influences are and how these influences are exerted is supposed to be the initial task which is finished in this paper with some insights from theories about language socialization and linguistic adaptation.

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Tujia Cultural Identity

Cultural identity is conceptualized by Lusting and Koester (2010) as an individual's "sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group" (p. 142), formed and resulted from "membership in a particular culture" (p. 142). This process involves his or her internalization of the group's cultural patterns composed of beliefs, values, norms and social practices into his or her own self-concept. Ethnic identity consists of "self-identification as a group member, a sense of belonging to the group, attitudes about one's group membership, and ethnic involvement (social participation, cultural practices and attitudes)" (Phinney, 1990, p. 503).

Therefore, Tujia cultural identity refers to a Tujia member's sense of belonging to Tujia ethnicity and is a basic component of his Tujia-ethnic identity. However, his ethnic identity and cultural identity are "not static, fixed, and enduring, rather it is dynamic and changing with his ongoing life experiences" (Lusting & Koester, 2010, p. 146),

Literature Review on Language Socialization Theory

Introduction to Language Socialization Theory

Language socialization, founded by Schieffelin and Ochs, is a newly developed theory integrating cross-discipline philosophy of linguistics, sociology, anthropology and psychology. The two founders of this theory, explain a dyad implication of the concept of language socialization: "socialization through the use of language" and "socialization to use language" (1986, p. 163). Children and novices become knowledgeable about the social order and system of beliefs through their contact with and participation in language interactions (1986).

Current Research on Language Socialization Abroad

Native language socialization and Second language socialization are the main themes of researchers of language socialization. Families, schools, and contexts of pragmatics are the main field where native language socialization is achieved. Berstein (1975) supported that communication with family members is an important way of children's native language acquisition and discourse interaction is the main method for them to acquire the identity, roles and social norms of their society. Cook (1977) endorsed that it was important for children to apply standard academic discourse in order to achieve the socialization of school communication. And Pease (2003) conducted a 7-years study tracing Mexican children in California who learn English and their native language Spanish, finding that American mainstream culture and values penetrate too profoundly for their parents to pass on their native language and culture.

Current Research on Language Socialization at Home

Theoretical reviews combining second and foreign language education and language socialization theory account for the increasing scholarly attention to this theory in China. Lan and Huang (2022) integrated discourse analysis and language socialization to explore models of class interaction.

Empirical studies of this theory mainly put emphasis on foreign students in China and pedagogical strategies used by teachers. Based on language socialization theory, Yin (2018) carried a case study to examine the development of Chinese pragmatic ability of six female foreign students during their education in China. Chen (2018) discussed how teachers apply pedagogical strategies including IRF interaction, thematic discussion and virtual situation to develop students' language proficiency from the perspective of language socialization. Yang

(2008) groped into difficulties of the Chinese language socialization of young teenagers and high school students of Dong ethnicity in Guizhou Province. Comparing Chinese and Dong language in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar and disclosing recipients' self-cognition about their Chinese learning and psychological differences.

Analysis of Putonghua Promotion's Influences on Tujia Cultural Identity from the Perspective of Language Socialization

Language socialization theory, bearing an interdisciplinary basis on linguistics, sociology, anthropology and psychology, now is usually employed to study language acquisition, particularly second language competence. Studies related to it focus on the usage of language to socialization combining the interconnected relationship among language, culture and society (Wei & Zhang, 2013). Schieffelin & Ochs, the founders of this theory, explain a dyad implication of the concept of language socialization: "socialization through the use of language" and "socialization to use language" (1986, p. 163). To detail the first implication, it refers to the process where an individual socializes himself into his society through learning and realizing language and consequently accepts the values, social practices and behavior norms (Yin & Kang, 2009). This view stands a helpful tool to argue the Putoghua Promotion's influences on Tujia cultural identity.

China, as a nation-scale cultural group and speech community, "socio-culturally organizes the situational parameters of the communication" involving children as would-be members and other novices ready to be socialized to it—"who communicates what with whom in which style, genre, and code" (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2011, p. 7). They "come to understand the social and cultural underpinnings of these parameters through their own and others' socially structured engagement in such situations" (p. 7). According to language socialization theory, as those would-be members become fluent communicators, they also "become increasingly adept members of communities". To promote Putonghua in the whole China means that it penetrates in all social episodes including family communication, educational activities, social interactions, etc. This action or organization is of significance for the children as "novices" ready to be socialized to China society and its mainstream cultures, identifying Chinese core values, beliefs, behavior norms and social practices. However, especially official emphasis on the use of Putonghua in primary school drives parents to pay more attention to the usage of Putonghua and less to the use frequency of geographical dialects, let alone Tujia language. Parents consciously chat with their children in Putonghua since they insist that the more exposure to Putonghua, the better their children's academic performances are and the more acceptance they gain from the school. This reaction to Putonghua Promotion, together with lack of Tujia culture contact and Tujia language competence and practices, causes that Tujia children and other novices in ETMAP are hardly surrounded by the necessary sociocultural situation which is crucial for them to realize the socialization to this ethnic group through Tujia language acquisition and practices. Tujia cultural identity, as one part of the process of socialization to Tujia group, is not explored and achieved by those novices who fail to develop Tujia language ability and participate in Tujia social practices mediated by Tujia language. "When there is no ethnic interest, knowledge, commitment or involvement" (Phinney, 1991, p. 194) in Tujia ethnic practices, the ethnic and related cultural identity is said to be low and weak.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Promoting Putonghua is indeed beneficial for Chinese children and other novices to socialize into China group and respective mainstream cultures, simultaneously acquiring Putonghua as the official dialect and Chinese core values, beliefs, social norms and convention, etc., consequently to build, maintain and boost national, cultural, and personal identity. But, such an official advocate may trigger an extremely unbalanced concentration on Putonghua, leading to less use and speaker agents of Tujia language. Moreover, Tujia culture now is mainly presented in some tourism sites, far away from Enshi people's daily life. As a result, the would-be members of Tujia minority have less opportunity to contact with Tujia language and Tujia sociocultural activities especially those mediated via Tujia language, and similarly Tujia community fails to organize necessary parameters aforementioned, especially sociocultural interactions where Tujia language ability is developed, to socialize his would-be members. Thus the socialization through Tujia language use fades away, bringing the weakness or even failure of exploring and achieving Tujia cultural identity.

Thus, balance between promoting Putonghua and protecting ethnic minority groups' language. It is not enough to simply protect their tangible and intangible cultural heritage. And recording and documenting minor languages varieties has its less share of the conservation of them because active members who have acquired those languages and achieved ethnic identity would permanently activate and vitalize their multiple cultural communities. In other words, besides rendering Tujia traditional cultural manifestations like songs, dances, clothes and buildings, concentration on Tujia language acquisition in families and schools should be caught to build children and novices' ethnic and cultural identity. This practice is backed by most of the parents interviewed in the previous stage, implying its feasibility in terms of the demographic support.

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