

## **Research on Promoting the Use of National Common Language and Characters in Schools in Border Ethnic Areas**

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**Abstract:** The promotion of the national common language and characters is related to the modernization of national governance and national unity. Border ethnic areas are geographically remote with rich and diverse ethnic languages, and schools face many difficulties in promoting the use of the national common language and characters. This paper takes schools in border ethnic areas as the research object, analyzes the current situation and dilemmas of promoting the national common language at the present stage, and explores specific solutions based on this. Focusing on schools as the core of language promotion, it discusses how to proceed from the perspectives of teaching content, teacher teams, campus culture, and social forces collaboration to promote the national common language and characters to truly "be taught well, be used, and be rooted in people's hearts", laying a solid foundation for promoting national unity and progress and realizing the modernization of education in ethnic areas.

**Keywords:** Border Ethnic Areas; National Common Language and Characters; Cultural Identity

### **1. Introduction**

The national common language and characters are an important symbol of national unification. For a multi-ethnic country, the popularization of the common language is related to the degree of social integration and educational equity. China is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country, and language issues in border ethnic areas not only affect the quality of education but also affect national security and social harmony and stability. In recent years, the state has paid increasing attention to promoting the national common language and characters in ethnic areas, and has successively issued policy documents such as the Law on the National Common Language and Characters, Education

Law, and Development Plan for Language and Character Cause in the New Era. However, in the practice of promoting the common language and characters, due to the fact that many people in ethnic areas mainly use their own ethnic languages in family and social life, students have obvious problems with their language foundation, and there are many problems in the education of common language and characters in schools, which are not conducive to the teaching effect of the national common language and characters and students' learning enthusiasm. Admittedly, language promotion should not be regarded as a technical teaching content, but also a construction of cultural identity and a mission of national unity.

### **2. Analysis of the Current Situation of Promoting the Use of National Common Language and Characters in Schools in Border Ethnic Areas**

#### **2.1 Disconnection between Language Education and Ethnic Cultural Education**

At present, in the practice of promoting national common language teaching in schools in border ethnic areas, the language is obviously highly instrumentalized. It is imposed on students as a language for further education and examinations, with insufficient explanation of its inherent cultural carrier function, leading to a situation in teaching practice where practicality is emphasized but culture is ignored. Students psychologically regard the common language as a "tool" and lack enthusiasm for learning. As a result, students' recognition of the national common language remains at a "utilitarian" level, lacking cultural understanding and resonance. In addition, students in ethnic areas are often exposed to their own ethnic languages and cultural traditions in families and communities, but it is difficult to see these cultures being respected and reflected in school classrooms, forming a "family-school" cultural discontinuity<sup>[1]</sup>. In a

teaching ecology lacking cultural integration, it is easy to lead to students' language communication and cultural identity crises. While learning the national common language, students may gradually alienate their ethnic languages, which not only affects the continuity and stability of language learning but also affects the inheritance and development of ethnic cultures.

## **2.2 Lack of Language Environment Restricts Learning Effect**

Language learning is essentially a social practice activity, which is naturally affected by the environment and ecology. It is true that schools in border ethnic areas often cannot build a good language environment in promoting the national common language. Even though students use the national common language for learning activities on campus, they still mainly use their own ethnic languages in families, communities, and daily communication. This phenomenon of "classroom-society" language division leads to students' lack of ecological space for language input and output, making it impossible to consolidate the learned language<sup>[2]</sup>. In addition, the school itself has not built a good language environment. Dialects or ethnic languages are still used in extracurricular activities, announcements, teacher communication, student associations, and other links, failing to create a complete national common language ecosystem. Moreover, teachers' proficiency in Mandarin varies, which subtly affects the standardization of the language. As a result, students find it difficult to form a sense of the common language and cannot acquire good expression skills in the natural environment.

## **2.3 Lack of a Systematic Language Transition Support Mechanism**

Students in border ethnic areas have different starting points in language learning. Before entering school, they rarely come into contact with the national common language, and their personal foundation is relatively weak. However, at present, many schools have not established a systematic language transition mechanism for such students. The teaching strategies are mostly "one-size-fits-all", following traditional unified textbooks, paying insufficient attention to students' language learning stages and the differences in their

language foundations, leading to a large number of students facing the dilemma of "not understanding and not being able to speak" at the initial stage<sup>[3]</sup>. In actual teaching activities, there is insufficient support from ethnic languages to the common language. Some schools lack special language preparatory courses or "pre-language classes", and also lack support measures such as intensive classes and supplementary classes for zero-based students. Faced with students with relatively weak language ability, teachers, due to time and resource constraints, find it difficult to provide differentiated teaching activities. Students' learning difficulties can only be solved by "gritting their teeth", resulting in decreased learning interest, continuous poor grades, and even a tendency to drop out of school.

## **3. Research on Strategies for Promoting the Use of National Common Language and Characters in Schools in Border Ethnic Areas**

### **3.1 Optimizing the Teacher Structure and Training System**

Teachers are the key to teaching activities and play multiple roles in promoting the national common language and characters. At present, there is a shortage of bilingual teachers in the teacher structure in border ethnic areas. It is necessary to optimize the construction of the teacher team to lay a solid foundation for promoting the national common language. Strengthen the targeted training of teachers in ethnic areas. Education authorities should link up with key normal universities, set up "order-based" targeted training programs in ethnic areas, and attract more outstanding students to study courses and majors related to language education by formulating preferential enrollment policies, providing scholarships, and signing employment agreements, so that they can return to teach after graduation, thereby improving teachers' language ability and cultural literacy and enhancing the sustainability of common language and characters education. In practice, it is necessary to create a national common language teaching ability improvement project and carry out hierarchical and classified training for in-service teachers. Specifically, the training content should not only involve Mandarin pronunciation, grammatical norms, and oral

expression but also cover language teaching methods and second language acquisition theories, continuously improving teachers' understanding of the laws of language teaching<sup>[4]</sup>. Teachers with weak bilingual language foundations can participate in "full-time intensive classes" or "online pronunciation improvement camps" to quickly improve their common language teaching level. Schools in border ethnic areas need to create a "teaching support pairing" mechanism, organizing urban teachers with a solid foundation in the national common language to teach and exchange in ethnic schools, realizing "teaching with training". Only by strengthening the construction of the teacher team can we achieve the goal of "being taught well, learned quickly, and used properly", making the national common language truly an effective tool for students to integrate into society and improve themselves.

### **3.2 Building a Multi-Level Textbook System**

Textbooks are important carriers of curriculum implementation and language learning. Scientific and reasonable textbooks are decisive for students in border ethnic areas to master the national common language. However, the current textbooks have problems such as inconsistent content and insufficient gradients, which cannot stimulate students' interest in learning common language and characters. Based on this, it is necessary to create a multi-level textbook system that conforms to the language ecology of ethnic minorities, develop hierarchical textbooks according to students' language characteristics and age characteristics. Students with weak Mandarin proficiency can use "enlightenment" textbooks to carry out listening and speaking training through interesting pragmatic materials, while students with a certain foundation can strengthen reading, writing, and grammar training, building a spiral ascend learning system. At the same time, there should be a natural progression of language difficulty between textbooks of different grades to avoid content discontinuity or leaps and enhance the coherence of students' language learning<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, the content of textbooks should be as culturally affinity and contextually authentic as possible. The content needs to integrate local ethnic cultural elements, allowing students to feel the value of their own ethnic culture in the process of learning the

language, thereby stimulating learning interest and cultural identity. Especially for lower-grade students, "dialogue scenes" and "story characters" can be set to make textbooks more life-like and perceptible. In addition, attention should be paid to the construction of digital auxiliary resources. Based on textbook content, develop supporting audio-visual materials, electronic courseware, voice practice APPs, online classes, and other digital resources, using modern information technology to break the limitations of time and space, providing students with richer input and practice channels, which is particularly valuable in remote rural areas. By building a multi-level, culturally integrated, and technically supported textbook system, it not only helps to improve teaching efficiency but also realizes the organic combination of language education and ethnic cultural inheritance, promoting the development of students' comprehensive language literacy.

### **3.3 Creating a Good Language Environment**

The language environment plays an important role in language learning practice. The language ability of students in border ethnic areas is not only affected by classroom factors. If there is a lack of family and community environment support, the continuity of students' learning of common language and characters will be greatly weakened. Based on this, at the campus level, schools should integrate the use of the national common language into all aspects of teaching and life. On the one hand, Mandarin should be used in classroom teaching; on the other hand, standardized national common language should be adhered to in campus radio, blackboards, publicity columns, morning reading, theme class meetings, extracurricular activities, etc., attaching importance to the subtle influence of language. Schools should organize students to participate in various language practice activities such as Mandarin speech contests, storytelling contests, recitation activities, and language games, guiding students to improve their language application ability in a real and interesting environment. In addition, teachers should encourage students to participate in school-organized language promotion volunteer projects, such as "Mandarin little teachers" and "language help groups", which not only improve language ability but also enhance self-confidence and expressiveness. For students with weak

language foundations, language corners, study groups, and other supportive learning organizations can be set up to promote learning effects through peer mutual assistance. It should be noted that creating a language environment is not to deny ethnic languages, but to enhance the functional status and daily use frequency of the national common language under the premise of multilingual coexistence. By building a "classroom-campus-family-community" four-in-one language environment support system, students' language application ability can be effectively improved, promoting language learning from "examination-oriented" to "practical", and realizing the synchronous improvement of language ability and social integration.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the promotion of the national common language in border ethnic areas is not only an educational project but also a strategic task related to social development and national unity. With the increase in national investment in education in ethnic areas and the continuous optimization of language and character policies, border schools have achieved phased results in promoting the popularization of the national common language. However, there are still many problems in practice that are not conducive to the implementation of policies and students' learning effects. It is necessary to strengthen multi-subject participation and explore more people-oriented, scientific, and localized promotion paths. At the same time, we must adhere to the basic principle of "attaching equal importance to promoting the national common language and characters and protecting

and developing ethnic languages and characters", realize language integration in respect and tolerance, and enhance national identity in communication and understanding.

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