

Mechanisms and Countermeasures of Language-Cultural Identity of Cross-Border Ethnic Groups in Border Areas

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Abstract: Border areas are inhabited by multiple ethnic groups and serve as key regions for cross-border exchanges. There exists a close and interactive correlation between language use and cultural identity, which is closely linked to border stability and ethnic communication. Taking cross-border ethnic groups in border areas as the research object, this study focuses on exploring the influencing mechanism of language-cultural identity. The research findings show that family language environment, daily social interaction, and school education guidance are the main factors affecting mother tongue identity, common language cognition, and cultural heterogeneity cognition. Language is not only a tool of communication but also an important symbol of cultural identity; in turn, cultural identity also influences the selection and inheritance of language. The two interact and promote each other at the family, community, school, and social levels, contributing to the construction of a stable psychological identity structure. This study further puts forward effective ways to enhance the language-cultural identity of cross-border ethnic groups in border areas, aiming to provide a theoretical basis and practical guidance for ethnic communication, cultural integration, and social stability in border areas.

Keywords: Cross-border ethnic groups in border areas; Language; Cultural identity; Influencing mechanism

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1. Introduction

China boasts a long border line and numerous ethnic groups, most of which live in cross-border settlements, forming a unique linguistic and cultural ecology. In the process of daily production, life, trade, and cultural interaction, frequent language contact and mutual cultural penetration take place, making language choice and cultural belonging a core issue commonly faced by border residents. With the deepening and intensification of exchanges, clarifying the correlation between language and cultural identity and its influencing mechanism is of great practical significance for promoting ethnic unity, safeguarding border stability, and facilitating friendly cross-ethnic exchanges.

Most existing studies focus on a single ethnic group or specific linguistic phenomena, lacking a

systematic exploration of the comprehensive mechanism under the cross-border ethnic context of border areas. In view of this, based on realistic situations, this paper deeply explores and analyzes the influences of multiple factors such as family, education, society, and cross-border mobility on language use and cultural identity, clarifies their interrelationships, summarizes regular characteristics, and proposes feasible implementation paths, so as to provide understandable and referential theoretical basis for border language and cultural governance as well as ethnic integration practice.

2. Influencing mechanism of language-cultural identity of cross-border ethnic groups in border areas

In border areas, multiple ethnic groups live adjacent to each other with frequent daily contact. Language use and cultural identity are not abstract concepts, but permeate many aspects of individuals' daily life, such as daily communication, study and work, and social interaction. There are many realistic factors affecting language use and cultural identity, which can be summarized into the following four dimensions.

2.1. Family language environment

As the primary place for language acquisition and cultural cognition, the family is the most direct and stable factor affecting language-cultural identity. In multi-ethnic border families, the language used by parents in daily life determines the initial language type mastered by their children. Many families use both ethnic mother tongue and national standard Chinese. Parents often communicate trivial daily matters and tell ethnic stories to their children in their mother tongue, enabling children to naturally acquire the ethnic language. While national standard Chinese is mainly used for external communication and academic tutoring, allowing children to proficiently master the common language.

In addition, dietary customs, festival traditions, and etiquette habits in the family are passed down to the next generation through language carriers. Individuals growing up in a mother tongue environment from an early age have a stronger sense of closeness to their ethnic culture and a more stable cultural identity. Conversely, individuals with a single family language environment and little exposure to ethnic language have a limited understanding of their mother tongue and correspondingly weaker cultural identity^[1,2]. Characterized by daily life orientation, the family language environment exerts a direct impact on language inheritance and cultural identity, and is regarded as the most fundamental influencing mechanism.

2.2. Daily social interaction

Daily social interaction is a key field driving changes in language use and shaping cultural identity. In border areas with mixed habitation of multiple ethnic groups, ethnic groups have frequent contacts in neighborhood interaction, market trade, migrant work, and other scenarios, where language acts as a vital communication tool. To facilitate communication, individuals often take the initiative to learn other ethnic languages or national standard Chinese.

As a result, the use scope of the mother tongue, originally limited within the ethnic group, gradually shrinks; on the contrary, the use frequency of the common language keeps rising, forming a pattern of "bilingual coexistence." People choose languages according to practical needs^[3]. In daily exchanges, the diet, clothing, song and dance, customs, and other cultures of different ethnic groups come into contact with each other, enabling individuals to gradually understand and accept other ethnic cultures and form multi-cultural

cognition.

For example, through collective festival celebration, mutual assistance in labor, and participation in community activities, individuals continuously improve their language communication ability, which is greatly conducive to enhancing the inclusiveness and recognition of diverse cultures ^[4,5]. With increasingly frequent daily interactions, the degree of language integration continues to deepen, and cultural identity gradually shifts from a single ethnic identity to an inclusive multicultural identity. It is evident that the practicality of social interaction is a key factor affecting language choice and cultural attitude.

2.3. School education guidance

School education standardizes language use and guides cultural identity with systematic and guiding characteristics. Schools in border areas take the national standard language as the main teaching medium, and some offer ethnic language courses to build a bilingual education model. In classroom teaching, teachers generally impart knowledge in the common language, which helps improve students' language standardization and practicality, laying a solid foundation for their future study and employment. Ethnic language courses mainly teach ethnic languages and characters, enabling students to understand their ethnic history and cultural traditions ^[6].

In addition, schools regularly publicize diverse ethnic cultures and spread the ideas of ethnic unity and cultural inclusiveness through class meetings, cultural activities, folk custom exhibitions, and other forms, guiding students to recognize their own ethnic culture as well as that of other ethnic groups. Research shows that people receiving systematic school education have higher proficiency in the common language, a more comprehensive understanding of multiculturalism, and a more rational cultural identity ^[7]. It can be concluded that school education balances language learning and cultural inheritance in a standardized way, exerting a profound influence on the language and cultural identity of teenagers.

Based on the above analysis, the language-cultural identity of cross-border ethnic groups in border areas is the result of the joint action of family, society, and school. The family serves as the foundation, undertaking emotional identity and cultural enculturation; society drives changes and acts as a public space for ethnic interaction and cultural symbol dissemination; schools guide the direction, mainly undertaking the functions of standardizing language education and integrating mainstream culture. The three major mechanisms are closely connected and mutually influential, jointly determining the language choice and cultural identity state of border residents, and directly affecting linguistic harmony and ethnic integration in border areas. Only by forming joint efforts can family, society, and school achieve coordinated development.

3. Effective paths to enhance cross-ethnic language and cultural identity in border areas

3.1. Rooted in family field to consolidate the foundation of mother tongue inheritance and cultural identity

As the earliest place for individual language acquisition and the deepest cultural immersion primary socialization venue, the family is the most stable and lasting basic unit for constructing language and cultural identity. In multi-ethnic border families, parents' language practice choices and elders' cultural transmission behaviors directly shape the younger generation's mastery of ethnic language as well as their sense of closeness and belonging to ethnic culture.

Therefore, the primary measure is to fully activate the family's function of language and cultural inheritance, integrate ethnic language and culture into daily life practice naturally, and realize seamless intergenerational transmission^[8]. Specifically, on the one hand, families should be encouraged to actively use the ethnic mother tongue in daily interaction, creating an immersive mother tongue acquisition environment for children through dinner conversations, bedtime storytelling, folk ballad singing, and family history narration, helping them form stable language habits. It should be recognized that mother tongue is not only a communication tool, but also the core carrier of cultural memory and ethnic identity, which can guide children to form internal recognition of cultural elements such as ethnic clothing, diet, festivals, and etiquette^[9,10].

On the other hand, support should be provided for multi-ethnic families to use both mother tongue and national standard language, creating a bilingual or multilingual family environment. While inheriting the root of ethnic language, children can communicate smoothly across ethnic groups and regions. Grassroots community organizations can provide incentives by regularly selecting "model families for mother tongue inheritance" or carrying out activities such as "ethnic culture entering households," and distributing easy-to-understand ethnic language reading materials and folk custom manuals. This transforms cultural inheritance from rigid tasks into a relaxed and normalized part of family life^[11]. Under the subtle influence of such a family atmosphere, individuals can establish a stable and confident cultural identity from an early age, laying a solid foundation for higher-level cross-ethnic linguistic and cultural identity.

3.2. Relying on community platforms to promote language intercommunication and cultural mutual trust

Communities are the center of daily life and an important place for social communication of residents in border areas, serving as a major venue for promoting language exchanges, deepening cultural understanding, and building mutual trust. The more frequent the internal communication and the better the relations within the community, the stronger the atmosphere of mutual language learning, cultural exchange, and mutual assistance among ethnic groups.

Therefore, communities should be positioned to carry out co-construction and co-governance activities close to residents' lives. First, establish a community multi-language public service system, set up language service posts in village committees, neighborhood committees, and community service centers, providing convenient services such as translation, affairs handling, and communication coordination for the elderly and residents with language barriers, effectively improving the convenience of handling affairs and communication fluency among all ethnic groups^[12,13].

Second, regularly hold various community activities in forms such as ethnic food sharing, folk craft making, ethnic sports events, and folk dance performances to gather residents of all ethnic groups. In this process, participants' natural language acquisition ability will be improved, enabling them to master basic greetings and daily expressions, and enhance cross-language communication ability in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

In addition, multi-ethnic mutual aid groups can be established to cooperate in practical needs such as production collaboration, employment information sharing, emergency assistance, and temporary child care, enhancing mutual trust and eliminating estrangement through mutual aid practice^[14]. Finally, communities should give full play to the advantages of publicity boards, cultural walls, radio, and other media, vigorously publicize fine traditional ethnic cultures and typical deeds of outstanding figures, and strive to create a community cultural atmosphere that respects linguistic differences and embraces cultural diversity, so as to

effectively promote language intercommunication and cultural integration.

3.3. Strengthening school education to guide teenagers to establish inclusive identity concept

As an institutionalized organization for systematically cultivating language ability, shaping cultural cognition, and nurturing values, schools exert a long-term and far-reaching guiding effect on the language choice and cultural identity of border teenagers. Effectively improving school education is a key link to promoting harmonious language relations and cultivating cultural inclusiveness from the source.

First, continuously strengthen the education of national standard language and characters, improve classroom teaching quality, ensure students firmly master comprehensive abilities of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, provide necessary support for their further education, employment, and broader development, and enable the national standard language to act as a bridge promoting communication and development.

Second, incorporate ethnic language and cultural education into the school curriculum system according to local conditions. By offering local courses, school-based elective courses, and cultural student associations, students are given the opportunity to learn ethnic languages and characters, deeply understand ethnic history, legends, customs, and arts, so as to enhance their cultural consciousness and self-confidence.

Third, carry out diverse thematic education activities on ethnic unity in a wide range of forms, such as organizing theme class meetings, multicultural exhibitions, paired mutual assistance among cross-ethnic students, and visiting local folk museums, guiding students to establish the concept of equality among all ethnic languages and cultures, appreciate the unique value of different cultures, and advocate mutual learning and common progress^[15]. Teachers should set an example in teaching and daily interaction, treat every student equally, and convey the values of unity, friendship, openness, and inclusiveness. Through systematic and normalized school education guidance, teenagers can build a healthy and inclusive identity structure that cherishes their own ethnic cultural characteristics while respecting and accepting other ethnic cultures, growing into an important new force promoting ethnic exchanges, interaction, and integration in border areas.

4. Conclusion

Strengthening the cross-ethnic language-cultural identity in border areas is a systematic project covering multiple dimensions including family, community, school, and society. This paper systematically discusses the influencing mechanism and promotion paths of cross-border ethnic language-cultural identity. Through analyzing realistic fields such as family, community, and school, it can be seen that language practice and cultural identity in border areas are not driven by a single factor, but the result of the interaction and long-term evolution of multiple forces.

The family provides the foundation for language inheritance and cultural identity; daily social interaction boosts language intercommunication and cultural mutual appreciation; school education undertakes the key role of standardized guidance and value shaping. Only by concretizing promotion paths, implementing measures effectively, making language learning more practical, cultural exchanges more normalized, and ethnic interactions deeper can we truly achieve linguistic communication, cultural integration, and emotional resonance among all ethnic groups, promote harmony and stability in border areas, and ultimately build a sound pattern of ethnic unity and progress.

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