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## Oroqen Ethno-linguistic Education in Heilongjiang Province of China

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**Abstract.** This article provides a general analysis of the distribution of ethnic minorities in Heilongjiang Province, studies the distribution and current situation of the Oroqen language education, and suggests further increasing investment in ethnic minority language education. It is proposed to compile more systematic and professional bilingual textbooks, strengthen the construction of the teaching staff, cultivate more high-quality bilingual teachers, create an environment for the use of ethnic minority languages in multiple ways, promote exchanges and integration among different ethnic groups, and jointly drive the development of ethnic minority language education in Heilongjiang Province, so as to inherit and carry forward the unique cultures of ethnic minorities.

**Keywords:** Heilongjiang Province, China, Oroqen, ethnic minority language education.

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## Этнолингвистическое образование ороchon в провинции Хэйлунцзян Китая

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**Аннотация.** В статье дан общий анализ распределения этнических меньшинств в провинции Хэйлунцзян, исследуется распространение и текущая ситуация с образованием на ороchonском языке и обосновывается дальнейшее увеличение инвестиций в языковое образование этнических меньшинств. Предлагается создать более систематизированные и профессиональные двуязычные учебники, укрепить преподавательский состав, подготовить больше высококвалифицированных двуязычных учителей, создать условия для использования языков этнических меньшинств, содействовать обменам и интеграции между различными этническими группами и способствовать развитию образования на языках этнических меньшинств в провинции Хэйлунцзян с целью наследования и развития уникальной культуры этнических меньшинств.

**Ключевые слова:** провинция Хэйлунцзян, Китай, ороchonы, языковое образование этнических меньшинств.

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### 1. Ethnic Minorities and Their Distribution in Heilongjiang Province

Heilongjiang Province is rich in ethnic minority cultural resources. As a frontier province with multiple ethnic groups living together in China, it is home to 53 ethnic minorities, including the Mongolian, Korean, Oroqen, Daur, Hezhe, Xibe, and Kirgiz ethnic groups. Among them, the Oroqen, Ewenki, and Hezhe ethnic groups mainly inhabit Heilongjiang Province (Song Minghua: 67). The Oroqen ethnic group is one of the “Three Small Ethnic Groups” in Northeast China. Currently, they are mainly distributed in the Oroqen Autonomous Banner, Butha Banner, and Morin Dawa Daur

Autonomous Banner in Hulunbuir City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, as well as Huma, Xunke, Aihui, and Jiayin counties in Heilongjiang Province. According to the 7th National Population Census in 2020, the Oroqen population is 9,168 (Sun Yuming, Zhang Ziyi: 95). The Oroqen people in these two provincial regions account for 81.3 % of the total Oroqen population in the country. The Oroqen population in the Oroqen Autonomous Banner is 3,017. The Oroqen ethnic group in Heilongjiang Province is one of the 22 ethnic groups with a small population that the state focuses on supporting for development. In the province, Xinsheng Township in Aihui District, Heihe

City, and Xin'e Township and Xinxing Township in Xunke County under its jurisdiction are the concentrated settlements of the Oroqen ethnic group (Liu Yufeng: 36). There is no exact latest statistical data on the specific population of the Oroqen ethnic group in Heilongjiang Province.

## **2. The Situation of Oroqen Language Education**

### **2.1. Achievements**

Over the years, various local departments have made positive contributions to the development and inheritance of the Oroqen ethnic language education through a series of practical actions.

#### **2.1.1. The impetus of school education**

School education plays an important role in the inheritance of the Oroqen language. In recent years, the Xunke County Party Committee and the county government have protected and inherited the Oroqen ethnic culture in various forms, arousing the enthusiasm of teenagers to learn the Oroqen ethnic culture. Through school education and teaching, ethnic cultures such as the Oroqen language, Jew's harp, Oroqen dances, and birch bark appliqué are taught, disseminated, and inherited, making the school a fertile field for cultivating "pomegranate seeds".

Huma County has given full play to its educational advantages to rescue the Oroqen ethnic language. In the campus of the First Primary School of Huma County, Oroqen ethnic songs are sung by students, and Han and Oroqen students sing Oroqen language songs together. Huma No.1 Primary School has made the experience of "intangible cultural heritage" a regular course, and regularly holds a campus cultural festival. As a school for ethnic education, Baiyinna Central School in Huma County, in view of the current situation that ethnic minority students cannot even understand the ethnic language and that primary and secondary school students have few opportunities to use the Oroqen language, starts from the basics in Oroqen language classes to teach common vocabulary. To facilitate students' pronunciation, teachers use Chinese pinyin to achieve standard pronunciation. With the help of information technology equipment, teachers make teaching courseware by themselves to

help students improve their interest in learning the Oroqen language. They also carry out ethnic language report performances to show the learning results. In music classes, Han and Oroqen students learn to sing original Oroqen folk songs together, promoting language inheritance.

The Oroqen Nationality Central School in Tahe County has been designated as the Protection and Inheritance Base for the Oroqen Language in Heilongjiang Province. The school has not only developed school-based textbooks and courses related to the Oroqen nationality, but also the Heilongjiang Province Oroqen Nationality Language Online Learning Platform, which took three years to develop and is the first of its kind in the country, has been established here. Tahe County has held the Heilongjiang Province Oroqen Nationality Language Protection and Inheritance Competition and the application and training of the Oroqen Nationality Language Online Learning Platform, which have actively promoted the education, innovation, and inheritance of the Oroqen language.

#### **2.1.2. The contributions of intangible cultural heritage inheritors**

The intangible cultural heritage inheritors of the Oroqen ethnic group play a crucial role in language inheritance. Chen Yue and Wu Xiaodong, intangible cultural heritage inheritors in Xin'e Township, Xunke County, have inherited the Oroqen ethnic language and promoted the intangible cultural heritage with practical actions. Chen Yue has created many works, fully showing the beauty of traditional culture and making the intangible cultural heritage shine with the charm of the times. Wu Xiaodong, as an Oroqen language inheritor, has conducted in-depth research, sorting, and translation of the Oroqen language.

## **2.2. Challenges**

During the long historical development process, ethnic minorities have formed unique languages and cultures. However, with the development of society and the changes of the times, the Chinese and native language education of ethnic minorities in Heilongjiang Prov-

ince faces many practical problems. On the one hand, the acceleration of the modernization process has gradually narrowed the environment for the use of ethnic minority languages. In the context of economic globalization and informatization, the popularity of the Chinese language is increasing, and the frequency of using ethnic minority languages in daily life is gradually decreasing. On the other hand, the educational resources for ethnic minority languages are relatively scarce. Problems such as textbook shortages and lagging teacher construction have restricted the development of ethnic minority language education. The Oroqen ethnic group only has a language but no writing system, so its language inheritance faces huge challenges.

### **3. How to Strengthen the Practice and Theoretical Research of Ethnic Minority Language Education**

We believe that the practice and theoretical research of ethnic minority language education in Heilongjiang Province can be further strengthened from the following aspects.

#### **First, conduct in-depth research on the compilation of ethnic minority language textbooks.**

On the one hand, for ethnic minorities with a language but no writing system, such as the Oroqen and Daur ethnic groups, more research efforts should be made to explore innovative textbook compilation methods. Modern information technologies, such as audio, video, and other multimedia means, can be combined to record and preserve the pronunciation, grammar, and other contents of the ethnic language and make digital textbooks. At the same time, organize experts and scholars to conduct field research in ethnic minority concentrated areas, collect rich language materials such as folk stories, proverbs, and ballads, and integrate them into textbook compilation to enhance the interestingness and practicality of textbooks. For example, we can learn from the successful experience of compiling ethnic minority language textbooks in other regions and innovate according to the actual situation in Heilongjiang Province; on the other hand, for ethnic minorities

with a writing system, such as the Manchu and Korean ethnic groups, the textbook content should be further optimized to better meet the modern educational concepts and students' learning needs. Topics related to modern social life, such as science and technology, environmental protection, and cultural exchanges, can be added to broaden students' horizons. At the same time, pay attention to the interdisciplinary nature of textbooks, combine ethnic languages with knowledge of other disciplines, and cultivate students' comprehensive qualities. For example, in Manchu language textbooks, content related to Manchu history, culture, and art can be incorporated, so that students can understand the rich cultural heritage of their own ethnic group while learning the language.

#### **Second, strengthen the cultivation of ethnic minority language teachers.**

Establish and improve the cultivation system for ethnic minority language teachers. Increase majors in ethnic minority language education in normal universities and ethnic universities, and set up a systematic curriculum system, including courses such as ethnic minority language linguistics, ethnic minority language teaching methods, and ethnic cultures, to cultivate professional ethnic minority language teachers. At the same time, encourage universities to establish cooperative relationships with schools in ethnic minority areas, and carry out activities such as internship teaching and teacher training to improve teachers' practical teaching abilities.

Strengthen the training of in-service teachers. Regularly organize ethnic minority language teachers to participate in professional training, invite experts and scholars to give lectures and guidance, and update teachers' educational teaching concepts and methods. An online-offline combined training mode can be carried out to facilitate teachers to learn at any time and place. For example, use network platforms to carry out remote training, and teachers can learn by watching teaching videos and participating in online discussions.

Improve the treatment and status of ethnic minority language teachers. Formulate preferential policies to attract more outstanding

talents to engage in ethnic minority language education. Give appropriate preference to ethnic minority language teachers in professional title evaluation, selection for excellence, etc., to stimulate teachers' work enthusiasm and creativity.

**Third, explore diversified language education models.**

Make full use of modern information technology to carry out online teaching. Develop ethnic minority language learning platforms, providing functions such as online courses, learning resources, and interactive communication, so that students can study at any time and place. For example, students can log in to the learning platform through mobile phones, tablets, and other devices, watch ethnic language teaching videos, conduct online exercises, and communicate with teachers and classmates.

Strengthen the cooperation among families, schools, and communities to jointly create a good language learning environment. The family is the first classroom for children's language learning. Parents can communicate with their children in their own ethnic language in daily life to cultivate children's language interest and language sense. Schools can organize rich and colorful ethnic cultural activities, such as ethnic language speech contests, ethnic song singing contests, and ethnic dance performances, to arouse students' learning enthusiasm. Communities can carry out ethnic language training courses, cultural lectures, and other activities to raise community residents' awareness and attention to ethnic minority languages.

Adopt a model that combines bilingual education and multilingual education. In schools in ethnic minority areas, in addition to offering courses in the native language and Chinese, other foreign language courses such as English and Russian can also be offered according to the actual situation to cultivate students' multilingual abilities and lay a solid foundation for their future development.

**Fourth, strengthen the research and protection of ethnic minority language cultures.**

Conduct in-depth research on ethnic minority language cultures, and explore the historical, cultural, and artistic values of ethnic minority languages. Organize experts and scholars to conduct systematic investigations and research on ethnic minority languages, record and preserve the characteristics of the pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and related folk stories, legends, customs, and other cultural contents of ethnic minority languages. An ethnic minority language and culture database can be established to sort out and preserve research results for future research reference.

Strengthen the protection of ethnic minority language cultures. Formulate relevant policies and regulations to protect the use and inheritance of ethnic minority languages. Encourage ethnic minority people to use their own ethnic languages in daily life and inherit their own ethnic cultures. Activities such as setting up ethnic minority language and culture protection areas and holding ethnic minority language and culture festivals can be carried out to raise the public's awareness of protecting ethnic minority language cultures.

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