

สถานภาพการนำใช้สองภาษากับภาษาในการดำรงชีวิตของนักเรียนในอำเภอจอห์นนี่

Bilingualism and Language Vitality amongst Middle School Students in Zhuoni County

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นักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอกมหาวิทยาลัยยูนนานนอร์มอล สาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน

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บทคัดย่อ

ภาษาจอห์นนี่ ตระกูลทิเบต เป็นตระกูลภาษาที่ใช้ในอำเภอจอห์นนี่ เมืองกัณัน มณฑลกานซู่ สาธารณรัฐประชาชนจีน นักวิชาการ Prins ได้รายงานไว้ว่า ปัจจุบันนี้ภาษาจีนได้เข้ามามีอิทธิพลต่อการใช้ภาษาจอห์นนี่ในทิเบตเป็นอย่างมาก ผู้วิจัยจึงได้ดำเนินการสำรวจในพื้นที่ภาคตะวันออกและภาคตะวันตกของอำเภอจอห์นนี่ และคัดเลือกนักเรียนชั้นมัธยมต้นและมัธยมปลายเป็นกลุ่มเป้าหมายในการศึกษาวิจัย โดยวิธีการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึก พบว่า ภาษาทิเบตในภาคตะวันตกของอำเภอจอห์นนี่ยังมีการนำใช้อย่างผสมผสาน และมีการอนุรักษ์ภาษาดั้งเดิม รวมทั้งเป็นการใช้ภาษาอย่างมีความกลมกลืนระหว่างภาษาจีนกับภาษาทิเบตได้เป็นอย่างดี แต่ในส่วนภาคตะวันออกพบว่า การนำใช้ภาษาจอห์นนี่ ตกอยู่ในสภาวะวิกฤต และเป็นสภาวะที่ไม่ค่อยมีความกลมกลืนทางภาษาเลย ภาษาจีนจะเข้ามามีอิทธิพลกับคนส่วนใหญ่ และมีคนส่วนน้อยที่สามารถนำใช้ภาษาจอห์นนี่ได้เท่านั้น

คำสำคัญ: อำเภอจอห์นนี่ การนำใช้สองภาษา ความกลมกลืนทางภาษา

Abstract

Zhuoni Tibetan is spoken in Zhuoni County, which is located in Gannan Prefecture, Gansu Province, China. Prins (2003) reported that the Chinese language is exerting an ever-increasing pressure on Zhuoni Tibetan. This study assessed the language vitality of Zhuoni Tibetan in the east and west of Zhuoni County and recruited high school students as the research samples. In-depth interview was conducted and the results were as follows. In the west of Zhuoni County, Zhuoni Tibetan was used harmoniously and original reservedly, so there was a strong degree of language vitality between Chinese and Zhuoni Tibetan. On the other hand, the common language for every domain was Chinese in the east of the county. Therefore, Zhuoni Tibetan was in the crisis and less vitality as less people use and Chinese became more common use.

Keywords: Zhuoni County, Bilingualism, Language Vitality

Introduction

Zhuoni Tibetan (ISO 639-3 code cda) is a Tibetan variety spoken within Zhuoni County, Gannan Prefecture, China (Ethnologue 2017). Prins (2003) reports that life for the Zhuoni Tibetans is rapidly modernizing and this modernization is increasing the amount of pressure Zhuoni Tibetan receives from Chinese. In order to further explore the language vitality of Zhuoni Tibetan and the current bilingual situation, I traveled to Zhuoni County to conduct language survey work. The research goal of this survey was to study language vitality and bilingualism in both the east and west of Zhuoni County. I choose to

interview junior and senior middle school students and their parents for this survey because a child's ability in their parents' and grandparents' mother tongue not only reflects the current vitality of a language, but also reveals trends related to vitality and bilingualism. Through asking students and their parents about the home, village and school language environments I made the following findings: (1) In the west of the county, Zhuoni Tibetan is well preserved and although students extensively use Zhuoni Tibetan, Amdo Tibetan, and Chinese, these three languages enjoy a relatively stable state of trilingualism; (2) In eastern Zhouni County, the Zhuoni Tibetans have by in large become Sinicized and there are few middle school students who are able to speak Zhuoni Tibetan. The full survey report is as follows:

The Geographical Position of Zhuoni County

Zhuoni County is located to the south of Hezuo City and Lintan and Weiyuan Counties. It is bordered by Min County to the east, Diebu County and Sichuan's Ruoergai County to the south, and Luqu County to the west. The Taohe River runs horizontally through Zhuoni County. Zhuoni Tibetan is mostly used south of the Taohe River, especially in the Cheba and Kache Valleys. In order to develop a more complete understanding of the language vitality of Zhuoni Tibetan and bilingualism on the part of its speakers, I wanted to visit villagers in both the east and west of Zhuoni County. In the west I choose the village of Niba, located in the central portion of Cheba Valley, for data collection. In the eastern part of Zhuoni, I choose to work in Dayu Valley's Duoba Village and Zhale Village. Duoba is located at the mouth of the Dayu Valley and Zhale is located in the upper region of the valley. By visiting both of these sites we were able to develop an understanding of language vitality and bilingualism in both the lower and upper valley regions.

Data was collected through home visits and interviews as well as questionnaires. One problem I met with in conducting the research was shyness on the part of many of the students, many of whom had never been interviewed before, especially by a foreigner. Another problem which was met with was that many of the villagers in Duoba village were busy with the harvest while many of those in Zhale were busy in the pastures shepherding cows and sheep. This certainly impacted the research trip and lead to a smaller pool of participants than what was originally planed. Despite this, the energetic help of many local residents lead to the collection of a reasonable amount of data.

Language Vitality and Bilingualism Amongst Niba Village's Students

1. The Geographic and Social Context of Niba Village

Niba Village is one of remotest villages in Zhuoni County's Niba Township. A total of 310 households live in this village with a total population of 2140. With the exception of about 40 Han Chinese working in the local government offices, the rest of the population are Tibetan. Niba village has a total cultivation area of 1300 Mu and the village's grasslands are quite expansive. It would take 18 days on foot to walk the circumference of this pasture land. About 190 of the households make their living through the livestock industry, 50 households make their living doing business, and another 40 households make their living through farming. The remaining few households will make their living working as migrant workers in the cities.

2. The Language Environment of Niba Village

The Niba villagers use Zhuoni Tibetan in every part of the village. Regardless of whether they are taking part in a Mani chant meeting, building a house, herding animals, farming, celebrating a holiday, holding a village meeting, attending school or resting at home, they use Zhuoni Tibetan to communicate. In contrast, Chinese is used only in two situations: (1) when interacting with the Han Chinese civil servants who work in the township government offices or (2) when interacting with Han

Chinese tourists who come to this area to enjoy the beautiful scenery. The villagers as such have a very high level of Tibetan. However, there are an estimated ten children who don't speak Tibetan. These children have grown up in the county seat where their parents work as civil servants. Being absent from village life, their parents do not speak Zhuoni Tibetan to them and as such they have never learned to speak Zhouni Tibetan. The Chinese level of the villagers is relatively low. Most women speak only a very little Chinese. Most men can speak the local Chinese dialect to some extent and some who have been to work in the urban areas have a slightly higher level of Chinese.

3. Language Attitudes of Parents and the Language Environment of the Home

The language environment of the home is usually determined by the parents. If parents don't pass on their native language in the home, it is hard for children to ever be able to master the native language of their parents. However, if parents value their native language and use it in the home, their children will not only master this language but also have a deeper affection for their ethnic heritage. In Niba Village, I interviewed the following parents from eight different households (see Table 1):

Table 1: Parent Participants in Niba Village

#	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Highest grade completed	Chinese ability	Favorite Television Station
1	Male	48	Tibetan	Farmer/Herder	Middle School Grade Three	Low	Qinghai TV
2	Male	40	Tibetan	Farmer/Herder	Completed Elementary School	Low	Qinghai TV
3	Male	45	Tibetan	Farmer/Herder	Elementary School Grade 4	Low	Qinghai TV
4	Male	44	Tibetan	Business	Elementary School Grade 1	No proficiency	Qinghai TV
5	Female	38	Tibetan	Business and farming	Completed Elementary School	No proficiency	Qinghai TV, Korean Soap Operas
6	Male	62	Tibetan	Civil Servant	Elementary School Grade Three	Moderate	Qinghai TV, Kangba TV, Lhasa TV
7	Male	47	Tibetan	Migrant worker	Elementary School Grade 1	Moderate	Qinghai TV, Kangba TV
8	Male	42	Tibetan	Business	Elementary School Grade Three	Moderate	Qinghai TV

The eight interviewees included six men and two women. The youngest was 38 years old and the oldest was 62 years old. All were Tibetan and speak Tibetan with a high degree of fluency. Two of them did not speak Chinese at all, three of them could only speak a little Chinese, and three of them had a moderate level of spoken Chinese. Out of the eight parents, three of them are farmers and herders, three are involved in business of some sort or other, one was a migrant worker, and one a retired civil servant. All of them had at least some level of education. Two of them had completed elementary school grade one, two had completed elementary school grade three, one had completed elementary school grade four, two had completed elementary school, and the last one had completed middle school grade three. All of these parents grew up in homes speaking Zhuoni Tibetan and received their education in Zhuoni Tibetan. Their love for their children, their ethnicity, and language were evident in their carefully considered, earnest responses.

As the parents responded to questions their hopes for their children became evident. Their hopes and aspirations for their children are very similar to what any Han Chinese parent would want for their child or any American parent would want for their child. In addition to hoping that their child's basic needs will be met, they also hope their children will study hard, be able to go to a good college, find a good job, and do something for the betterment of society. However, these parents hopes didn't stop there. They also expressed a hope that their children would gain a degree of mastery over the Tibetan language at the same time they master Chinese. Although these parents realize the importance of Chinese for their children's future, they still believe it is more important for their children to master their own native Tibetan language. Four of the parents emphasized that they hope their children will take action in the future to help preserve Tibetan by improving Tibetan education. One parent said: "My daughter is in the science track at school. Our Tibetan children don't do well in the sciences. I hope my daughter will master her course material and then in the future return to Cheba valley to be a teacher in our local school and help our children here to learn science better."

The eight parents related that language use in their home was quite simple. They only spoke Zhuoni Tibetan in the home; however, as their economic situation have improved, TVs have become more common in the village and almost everyone has a smart phone. All the parents interviewed enjoy watching the Qinghai TV station, which uses Amdo Tibetan. Five of the parents said that their children usually prefer to watch TV in Mandarin Chinese, another parent said their child likes to watch both Mandarin Chinese and Tibetan cartoons, and the last two parents said they don't let their children watch TV. These eight parents said they rarely use their phones for anything other than calling people and most of their phone's have Chinese as the interface language.

I interviewed nine Tibetan students, five of them boys and four of them girls. Their ages ranged from 15-20 years old and they represented every grade from junior and senior middle school. All were Tibetan speakers. Seven of the nine receive their education in Tibetan and two of them receive their education in Chinese.¹ Five of spent all six years of elementary school at the Niba Village elementary school. Although the remaining four spent some time at the local elementary school in Niba Village they also spent some of their elementary school years at other locations (Wanmao Township and and the the county seat). The main

¹ Many of the schools in this region offer both a Tibetan and Chinese track for education. Those in the Tibetan track will receive their education primarily in Tibetan. Those in the Chinese track will primarily receive their education in Chinese.

language at the Niba elementary school is Zhuoni Tibetan and the primary language of education in Wanmao Township's elementary school is Amdo Tibetan.

Table 2 : Niba Village's Student Participants

#	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Tibetan	School	Grade in School	Medium of Education
1	Male	18	Tibetan	High	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 2	Tibetan
2	Female	18	Tibetan	High	Hezuo Tibetan Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 3	Tibetan
3	Female	17	Tibetan	High	Hezuo Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 2	Chinese
4	Female	20	Tibetan	High	Hezuo Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 3	Chinese
5	Female	17	Tibetan	High	Hezuo Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 1	Tibetan
6	Male	15	Tibetan	High	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 1	Tibetan
7	Male	15	Tibetan	High	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 2	Tibetan
8	Male	19	Tibetan	High	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 2	Tibetan
9	Male	18	Tibetan	High	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Senior Middle School Grade 1	Tibetan

4. The Language Environment of Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School and Hezuo Tibetan Middle School

Because Cheba Valley does not have its own high school, students must leave the valley to go to middle school. Many students from Cheba Valley, after completing elementary school, will go to either Hezuo Tibetan Middle School or Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School. Both of these schools offer two tracks of education, one in Chinese and one in Tibetan. The Tibetan track almost exclusively uses Tibetan and even includes science classes in Tibetan. The variety of Tibetan used is Amdo Tibetan. At Hezuo Tibetan Middle School, even teachers from Cheba Valley will use Amdo to communicate with student from Cheba Valley rather than Zhuoni Tibetan. In the Zhuoni County Seat, the situation is somewhat different. Students report that sometimes the

teachers will speak Zhuoni Tibetan with them in class rather than Amdo; however, this is a rather rare situation. The Chinese classes primarily use Mandarin Chinese for class; however, sometimes teachers will use the local Chinese dialect. Teachers of both schools required their students to also use the language medium for that particular class. If in the Chinese track, they must speak pure Chinese with no Tibetan. If in the Tibetan track, they must speak pure Tibetan with no Chinese added in. Code switching is not allowed.

School leaders would use their own mother tongue when addressing students. If the leader was Chinese, they would use Chinese, if Tibetan, they would use Tibetan. However, given that both of these schools were built to promote Tibetan education, there are many Tibetans in leadership. As such, many school leaders to use Tibetan in addressing students. Both schools have monthly breaks. Because of the heavy workload that residents of this area have, students will attend class six days a week in order to give them a few extra days at home during the month in which they can help their parents with the chores. During this time students have opportunities to use their specific dialect at home. In this way, students say they have never met with the situation of forgetting a word from Zhuoni Tibetan. Despite this, some students report occasionally using a few Amdo Tibetan words with when at home communicating with family.

As both Hezuo Tibetan Middle School and Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School are boarding schools, a very important language environment outside of the classroom is the dormitory. All the nine students I interviewed only had Tibetan roommates. Five of them (participants 1, 6-9) only had roommates from Zhuoni County. Not surprisingly, these are the five students who attend Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School. However, what is unique is, out of the five dormitories represented here, only two of them use the Zhuoni Tibetan dialect, all the others use Amdo Tibetan as the language of the dorm room. When asking them why this was, they answered that because in the classroom they use Amdo, it is natural for them to continue using Amdo after class has finished and they have returned to their dormitory. Another likely reason for this is that in the northern areas of Zhuoni County, including Wanmao and Shenzang Townships, Amdo is the main language of communication as historically these people have never spoken the Zhuoni variety of Tibetan. Participant number 8 said that in his dorm room there are four students from Cheba Valley and one from Wanmao Township. In order to make it convenient for everyone, especially the student from Wanmao, they use Amdo Tibetan. Participants 3 and 4 attend the Chinese immersion classes and use a combination of Chinese and Tibetan to communicate with each other. Participant number 5 who is a student at Hezuo Tibetan High School said that they use a combination of Chinese and Tibetan in her dormitory room; however, they don't permit each other to code switch. Student number 6 who is also a student at Hezuo Tibetan High School said that they use Amdo Tibetan in their dormitory room.

The students told me of a new game emerging amongst the students at these two schools. In order to protect their mother tongue, they have started to punish those who speak Chinese. Sometimes they have to pay a small monetary fine. Sometimes they have to do pushups. This is all done volitionally and has originated with the students themselves as they seek to do something to preserve their native tongue. Although this game started in the male dormitories, however, the female students are also starting to follow suit and punish their classmates for speaking Chinese. It would appear that these children are fulfilling their parents wishes that their children would work to protect and develop Tibetan. Although each of these nine students said that objectively speaking Tibetan and Mandarin Chinese are of equal importance, however, the Tibetan Language is more important to them. One female student said: "I believe that we need a high level in both [Tibetan and Chinese] because if you travel outside of Cheba Valley it will be hard to survive without proficiency in Chinese and thus learning Chinese is very important for life.

However, our language [Tibetan] is our foundation, without this foundation, we will not be able to learn other languages.” Another male student told me that, “The present situation is that Tibetan is slightly more important than Chinese. However, this will certainly change. This is because we can’t find jobs here in our villages. We have to leave for the big cities for jobs. As such the pressure to learn Chinese is becoming greater and greater. The biggest pressure we face is that our level of Chinese is not good.”

Table 3: Dorm room Language Dynamics

Participant number	Number in a dormitory room	Where doormats come from	Language used in dorm	Ethnicity
1	6	Zhuoni County	Zhuoni Tibetan	Tibetan
2	10	Zhuoni County and other areas located in Gannan	Amdo Tibetan	Tibetan
3	7	Zhouqu County, Diebu County, Xiahe County, Lintan County, Hezuo City	Mostly Chinese, a little Tibetan	Tibetan
4	7	Diebu County, Lvqu County, and Zhuoni County	Chinese and Amdo Tibetan	Tibetan
5	8	Maqu County, Xiahe County, Zhuoni County	Amdo Tibetan and Chinese, but no code switching is allowed	Tibetan
6	8	Zhuoni County	Amdo Tibetan	Tibetan
7	?	Zhuoni County	Zhuoni Tibetan	Tibetan
8	5	Zhuoni County	Amdo Tibetan	Tibetan
9	8	Zhuoni County	Amdo Tibetan	Tibetan

5. The Language Vitality and Bilingualism found in Niba Village as well as the reasons for it

In the lives of Niba’s junior and senior middle school students, Zhuoni Tibetan, Amdo Tibetan, and Chinese each have their own unique place. Zhuoni Tibetan is the language of their hometown and their homes and as such it has been well preserved. Zhuoni Tibetan is even used by the teachers of Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School, albeit very occasionally. The role of Amdo Tibetan in their lives is as a language of wider outside of Cheba Valley. It is the language of the classroom and school life in general for those students who are in the Tibetan track at school. Chinese is the other language of wider communication. It is

used especially by those who choose the Chinese track at school; however, because the number of parents and students who choose the Chinese track is few, the reach of Chinese is not as great as that of Amdo Tibetan in the lives of the Niba's students. The domains of use for each of these speech varieties appears fairly stable; however, there still exists competition between them. One of the clearest examples of this is student dormitories where three of the interviewed students said that they (although they are all Tibetan) use some Chinese in their dormitories. Another example of this competition is the choosing of which track a student will take in school: the Chinese track or the Tibetan track. Although most of the parents and students interviewed (and indeed most of the students in the village) choose the Tibetan track, some still choose the Chinese track. One of the last and most interesting examples of this language competition is the TV channel preferences between generations in Nina Village. While the parents seem to mostly prefer watching the Qinghai TV station which uses Amdo, their children prefer watching Chinese programs.

There are three primary reasons why Zhuoni Tibetan has kept a high level of vitality and maintained a fairly stable linguistic situation with Amdo and Chinese: (1) Niba County's geographic position, (2) language attitudes, and (3) government policies. Niba Village is located in a remote area with no main road nearby or any city or center of commerce. All the villages surrounding it use Zhuoni Tibetan as well. There are almost no Han Chinese or any other minority in any of these villages. It is rare for residents of the villages to meet with situations where they must speak Chinese in this local area. In this way, Zhuoni Tibetan remains quite vital in Niba Village and by implication, the rest of Cheba Valley.

The language attitudes of students and parents reveal what great love they have for their ethnicity. In China, the language of wider communication is Mandarin Chinese, and although these parents and their children realize how important Chinese is for securing a job, getting medical treatment, access to higher education, etc., they still voice their belief that the Tibetan language is more important for them to master than Chinese. The reason they gave was that this is their root, and without this root they have no connection with their ethnicity. With no connection to their ethnicity, then they have nothing. In this way they are adamantly opposed to switching to Chinese; however, given that Amdo Tibetan is also a Tibetan dialect, they value it greatly.

The Chinese Government's language policies have given Zhuoni and Amdo Tibetan a wonderful political and legal environment in which to be developed. The Chinese Constitution states: "Every nationality is entitled to use and develop their own language." Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture Hezuo City and Zhuoni County Bureau of Education have always supported the building of Ethnic High Schools and providing education in Tibetan. This can be seen clearly in the case of the Hezuo Tibetan High School and the Zhuoni Tibetan High School. Although both schools offer classes in Chinese, they also offer classes in Tibetan. Near to Niba Village is a town named Zhagulu. The residents of Zhagulu originally did not have a track in their elementary school which included Tibetan. Wanting their children to be educated in Tibetan and not Chinese, they requested that the government consider opening a Tibetan track. The government took these requests seriously and not long later opened a Tibetan track at the Zhagulu Elementary School. This example shows how seriously the government policies and policy enforcement take protecting and developing ethnic languages.

6. Language Vitality and Bilingualism Amongst Duoba Village's Students

6.1 The Geographic and Social Context of Dayu Valley's Duoba Village

Duoba Village is located at the mouth of Dayu Valley and is administrated by Zhuoni County, Muer Township's municipal

government. It is located quite near the Zhuoni County Seat at a distance of only ten kilometers. The village has a total of 104 households and is 95% Tibetan; however, many Tibetans and Han Chinese intermarry here. There is 400 Mu under cultivation in Duoba; however, the main source of income for the residents here comes from being a migrant worker.

6.2 The Language Environment of the Home and the Village.

Aside from the old clan flags waving from the long poles in every households' courtyard, there was almost nothing to suggest that this was a Tibetan town. No one seemed to speak Tibetan, all were wearing clothing common to rural Han Chinese villagers, etc. Almost no children or middle aged residents could speak any Tibetan whatsoever. Many of the older generation were bilingual speaking both Chinese and Tibetan. Even when local monks come to read scriptures, they use Chinese and not Tibetan. As I conducted the survey in this village, no matter where I went I heard residents speaking Chinese with each other. I only met with one middle aged person (a women) who could speak Tibetan. Residents did tell me the although they almost never wear their ethnic clothing, they do put it on for holidays.

6.3 The Language Environment of the Schools

Almost every single elementary school student from Duoba Village attends the Muer Town elementary school. This school offers no Tibetan track. Chinese is the only medium of education which is available at this school. When going to high school, the children of Duoba Village will almost never choose to go to a Tibetan high school, let alone study in a Tibetan track program. In Duoba Village, I interviewed four junior middle school students and one college student, two of them were male and three female.

Table 4 : Duoba Village's Student Participants

Participation Number	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Tibetan	School	Grade	Language of Education
1	Male	17	Tibetan	0	Zhuoni Number I Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 2	Chinese
2	Female	15	Chinese	0	Liulin Middle School	Senior High School Grade 1	Chinese
3	Female	17	Tibetan	0	Liulin Middle School	Senior High School Grade 1	Chinese
4	Female	18	Tibetan	0	Liulin Middle School	Senior High School Grade 3	Chinese

Participation Number	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Tibetan	School	Grade	Language of Education
5	Male	24	Tibetan	0	Zhuoni Number I Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 3	Chinese

The ages of the students ranged from 15 to 24 years old. Four of them were Tibetan and one was Chinese. None of their parents speak Tibetan and they don't know how to speak Tibetan either. Naturally none of them have gone through a Tibetan track at school. The language of the home for each of these five students is Chinese. Two of the students know some kinship terms in Tibetan, but not many. In each of their different classes there are some students who are able to speak Tibetan, however, they are not many in number. One of the students has four dorm mates who speak Tibetan; however, their entire dorm (eight people) uses mostly Chinese to communicate.

6.4 Language Vitality and Bilingualism in Duoba Village

Tibetan is about to become extinct in this village. The last generation who are able to speak Tibetan are old and dying. The majority of their children (those who are middle aged) do not speak Tibetan, and even fewer of the young of this village are able to speak Tibetan. There are three reasons which explain why Chinese is replacing Tibetan as the language of the Duoba villagers. The first reason is the geographical location of Duoba Village. It is located at the mouth of Dayu Valley and is located near a major road. It is also located quite close to the county seat of Zhuoni. For many long years those living here have been in frequent contact with Han and Hui Chinese. The second reason for this switch to Chinese probably relates to the fact that there are Han Chinese living in the villages in this valley, including Duoba Village. This has impacted the very identity of the Tibetans in this area and as such has obviously impacted their language choice. Many of the locals identify with the Han Chinese. Upon first entering the village, many villagers told me there were few Tibetan in the village. It was only after meeting with the village leader that I learned that 95% of the village was Tibetan. This clearly relates to language attitudes which seems to be the third reason for this switch. There is very little appreciation for Tibetan. Chinese is more convenient and the only option for many. Thus, Tibetan is not vital in this village and levels of bilingualism are actually quite low.

6.5 Language Vitality and Bilingualism Amongst Zhalei Village's Students

6.5.1 The Social and Geographical Context of Zhalei Village

Zhalei Village falls under Muer Township's jurisdiction and is located at the top of the Dayu Valley close to the Die Mountains. There are a total of 60 households in Zhalei Village which is considered to be a classic Tibetan Village in the valley. Most of the households are Tibetan and it is common to see middle aged women here wear their ethnic clothing. When celebrating holiday, the young men and women of the village will also done their ethnic costumes. The ethnic costume of this particular place is quite unique and is called the Senkormor and preserves the unique look of the Tubo period.

Zhalei Village has a total of 300 Mu of land under cultivation. In addition its grasslands are also quite extensive. Income amongst the households of Zhalei Village either comes through shepherding animals or through going to the city as migrant workers. Overall, the village is quite prosperous with almost all families having one car and some having two.

6.5.2 The Language Environment of Zhalei Village

Although Zhuoni Tibetan is better preserved in Zhalei than in Duoba, Zhalei's language situation is developing much the same as Duoba's language situation is. Chinese is slowly replacing Tibetan and indeed it has already become the main language of communication in the village. The older generation all still speaks Tibetan and are also bilingual in Chinese. However, there are very few middle aged people and even fewer children who speak Zhuoni Tibetan.

6.5.3 The Language Environment of the Home

I interviewed seven students in Zhalei, six of whom were Tibetan and one was Chinese.² Language use in the home in Zhalei is somewhat complicated with some homes using only Chinese, some using only Tibetan, and some using both Chinese and Tibetan.

Table 5: The Linguistic Environment of the Home in Zhalei Village

Participant Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Mother's mother tongue	Chinese	Tibetan	Chinese (mother is Han Chinese)	Chinese	Chinese	Tibetan	Tibetan
Father's mother tongue	Tibetan	Tibetan	Tibetan	Chinese	Chinese/Tibetan	Tibetan	Tibetan
Language the parents use with each other	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Tibetan	Tibetan/Chinese
Language parents use with children	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese	Tibetan/Chinese

² I was unable to interview parents in Zhalei as many of them work busy working and didn't have time to be interviewed personally.

Participant Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Children's level of Tibetan	0	Able	Able to understand but unable to speak Tibetan	0	0	Able to understand but unable to speak Tibetan	Able

The first student's mother tongue is Chinese and her father's mother tongue is Tibetan. His parents use Chinese to communicate and when speaking with him they also use Chinese. He is unable to speak Tibetan himself. The second student's mother and father have Tibetan as their mother tongue; however, they use Chinese when communicating with each other and with their children. Despite this, this student is able to speak some Tibetan. The third student's mother is Han Chinese and thus her mother tongue is also Chinese. The father, however, is Tibetan and his mother tongue is Tibetan. The parents use Chinese when communicating with each other and with their children. This child is able to understand Tibetan but unable to speak it personally. The fourth student's parents are both Han Chinese and Chinese is the language her parents use with each other and with her. She is completely unable to use Tibetan. The fourth student's mother has Chinese as a mother tongue and her father has Tibetan as a mother tongue. Her parents use Chinese when communicating both with her and with each other. This student is also unable to use Tibetan. The sixth student's parents both have Tibetan as their mother tongue and speak it with each other; however, when they speak to her, they use Chinese. This student is able to understand Tibetan but not able to speak it. The seventh student's parents have Tibetan as their mother tongue; however, they use a mix of Chinese and Tibetan when speaking with each other and with their children. This student is able to speak Tibetan.

6.5.4 The Language Environment of the School

Of the seven students interviewed, three were male and four were female. The youngest was 14 years old and the oldest was 17 years old.

Table 6 : The Students Interviewed from Zhalei Village

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Tibetan	School	Grade	Language track at school
1	Male	15	Tibetan	Unable	Zhuoni Number 1 Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 3	Chinese Track

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Level of Tibetan	School	Grade	Language track at school
2	Male	15	Tibetan	Able	Zhuoni Tibetan Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 3	Junior Middle School I
3	Male	17	Tibetan	Able to understand but unable to speak	Zhuoni Number 1 Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 3	Junior Middle School I
4	Female	15	Chinese	Unable	Zhuoni Number 1 Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 1	Junior Middle School I
5	Female	15	Tibetan	Unable	Zhuoni Number 1 Middle School	Senior High School Grade 1	Junior Middle School I
6	Female	14	Tibetan	Able to understand but unable to speak	Zhuoni Number 1 Middle School	Junior Middle School Grade 1	Junior Middle School I
7	Female	17	Tibetan	Able	Gansu New	Vocational Year 1	Junior Middle School I

Of the seven interviewed, two are in first grade in junior middle school, three are in third grade junior middle school, one is in first grade senior middle school and one is grade one in a polytechnic school. Three of them are completely unable to understand Tibetan, two are able to understand Tibetan but unable to speak it, and two are able to speak Tibetan. Five of them attended the Zhuoni Tibetan Elementary School when they were young but only one of them was in a Tibetan track program. This student reported that though it was supposed to be a Tibetan track program, the teachers often used Chinese with them. When entering middle school, only one of the five remained in a Tibetan school (#2). The language of education for all of these students is Chinese, no matter whether in their dormitories or in class. These seven students also reported that almost all of their Tibetan roommates cannot speak Tibetan.

6.5.4 The Language Vitality and Bilingualism found in Zhalei Village as well as the reasons for it

In Zhalei Village, an ever larger number of people are using Chinese as their main language of communication inside the village. Most of those I met during my stay in Zhalei could not speak Tibetan. Three of the main contributing factors to this situation are the geography, demographics, and language attitudes of the village and villagers. Although Zhalei is 20 kilometers from the lower part of the valley, however, historically the people here have had significant language contact with Han Chinese. An elderly gentlemen told me, “When I was young I would often go to the county seats of Zhuoni County, Lintan County, and Min County. In these places the main language of communication was Chinese, and so we learned Chinese. The Hui and Chinese have lived in Lintan and Min Counties for many years, and if you wanted to do business with them, then you had to learn Chinese.” Now meeting with Han Chinese does not even take a trip to neighboring areas. Zhalei is a class AAAA tourist destination in China and every year many come from around the country to visit this area. In addition, many of the residents of this valley are Chinese. Most of the villages have both Han Chinese and Tibetans. Zhalei is the same. One of the students I interviewed was Han Chinese. Another student’s mother was Han Chinese. The son of the village leader also told me that 16 of the 60 households were of mixed ethnicity. In this type of social environment, there is a great advantage to being able to speak Chinese. All in all, Zhalei’s geographical proximity to majority Han Chinese or Hui areas, like Lintan and Min Counties, coupled with the influx of Chinese residents into the valley lead to changes in language use.

Conclusion

In Niba Village, Zhuoni Tibetan has been completely preserved and no matter what people are doing or where they are in the village, Zhuoni Tibetan is their number one choice to communicate. In Duoba Village, only the old and a few middle aged people are still able to speak Zhuoni Tibetan. The main language of communication for the village is Chinese, and Tibetan only has a very limited range of use. Zhalei Village has preserved Zhuoni Tibetan slightly better than what Duoba has done and even some children in the village are able to speak Tibetan. Despite this, like in Duoba, Zhuoni Tibetan is going extinct in Zhalei. For Niba middle school students, Zhuoni Tibetan, Amdo Tibetan, and Chinese all have their own distinct domains of use. However, a fairly stable trilingualism in these three languages was observed. Because the Niba parents and their children have a deep affection for their ethnicity, the next generation will certainly continue to speak Tibetan; however, parents stated that they weren’t sure if it would be Amdo Tibetan or Zhuoni Tibetan.

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