

The Enlightenment of Huayin Qimeng on the Use of Yi Language and Yi Language Education

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v15-i9/26425>

Published Date: 15 September 2025

Abstract

Huayin Qimeng, a representative spoken Chinese textbook from abroad, provides significant insights for the education of minority languages, specifically in the context of Yi language instruction. This study initially examines the compilation logic and educational attributes of Huayin Qimeng through textual analysis. This study examines the interplay between language policy and sociolinguistic theory, focusing on their effects on language attitudes and identity. Through comparative analysis, the experience of Huayin Qimeng is associated with the present condition of Yi language education, emphasizing the deficiencies of Yi oral language textbooks, the intricacies of learners' language attitudes, and the constraints faced by teachers in utilizing the textbooks. The research indicates that the communicative orientation, scenario-based design, and cultural integration present in Huayin Qimeng provide valuable insights for tackling the existing issues in Yi language education, including the dominance of written textbooks, insufficient communicativeness, and a disconnection between identity and usage. This strategy can enhance learners' positive language attitudes and ethnic identification by utilizing the functional capabilities of Yi language textbooks, including elements of ethnic culture, and integrating teacher development, so supporting the use and preservation of the Yi language.

Keywords: Huayin Qimeng, Yi Language Education, Teaching Materials, Language Attitude, Language Identity

Introduction

Amidst the surge of globalization and modernization, the world's linguistic diversity is diminishing at an unprecedented rate. Language textbooks are not only tools for language learning but also crucial vehicles for social and cultural dissemination and identity recognition. The "World Map of Endangered Languages" released by UNESCO (2010) shows that about 43% of the world's languages are at risk of extinction. This language ecological crisis directly threatens the genetic diversity of human culture. As a core element of the language education

system, language textbooks have transcended the realm of mere teaching tools in terms of significance and have become an important medium for the dissemination of social culture and identity recognition.

As Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) point out, textbooks carry the multiple functions of knowledge transmission, value formation, and cultural continuity. In language education, the design and use of textbooks directly influence learners' language proficiency, language attitudes, and sense of ethnic identity (Byram, 1997; Richards, 2001). For minority languages, textbooks not only determine how learners encounter and acquire the language but also influence whether the language can be inherited and reproduced within the education system (Fishman, 1991; Spolsky, 2004).

In the field of language education, existing research shows that the design and use of teaching materials not only directly affect the language ability development of learners, but also shape learners' language attitudes and their sense of identity towards ethnic groups through the hidden curriculum mechanism (Byram, 1997). Especially in the context of language revitalization (Hornberger, 2008), for minority languages, the quality of textbook compilation and the effectiveness of its use directly determine whether the language can achieve intergenerational inheritance within the education system in the predicament of "multigenerational language transmission interruption" (Fishman, 1991).

The compilation styles and linguistic characteristics of overseas Chinese textbooks during the Ming and Qing dynasties illustrate the state of Chinese language education in that period. "Huayin Qimeng," created in the context of significant interactions between China and Korea, seeks to assist learners in acquiring practical spoken Chinese and understanding etiquette. The textbook emphasizes the development of communicative skills while integrating language and cultural instruction through accessible language. The "function-context" structural model serves as a significant reference for the compilation of textbooks and the instruction of Yi language education. The integration of historical language textbook experiences with contemporary minority language education elucidates the role of textbooks in language use and identity formation, serving as a reference for the preservation and sustainable development of minority languages.

Conducting a diachronic comparison between the research of historical language textbooks and contemporary minority language education can not only reveal the role of textbooks in the construction of language ideology of the Yi language (Hansen, 2011), it can provide empirical evidence for the ecological preservation of minority languages. Under the current background of implementing the bilingual education policy of "national common language and characters + minority languages" in China (Zhou & Sun, 2004), this research has urgent practical significance for improving the theory of textbook compilation of minority languages and optimizing language inheritance strategies.

The core focus of this study lies in conducting an in-depth analysis of the overseas Chinese language textbook "Huayin Qimeng" from the Ming and Qing dynasties in China, to explore its unique value in language teaching models, content design, and cultural integration, and to investigate how these experiences can provide beneficial references for the current promotion and educational practice of the Yi language.

Language, as the fundamental carrier of culture and the maintenance of ethnic identity, cannot survive and thrive without effective educational dissemination. For a large number of relatively weak minority languages, the absence of teaching materials, outdated content or lagging teaching models may all lead to their difficulty in achieving effective inheritance and regeneration in the education system. (Fishman, 1991; Spolsky, 2004). Therefore, an in-depth study of the role of teaching materials in the education of minority languages is not only a deepening of linguistic theories, but also a practical exploration of the protection of cultural diversity and the inheritance of ethnic cultures. This research holds significant practical significance and value for the Yi ethnic community, language educators, researchers of folk culture, and all parties dedicated to the protection of language diversity.

Research Background

Textbooks play an irreplaceable role in language education. They are not only a vehicle for linguistic knowledge but also a crucial medium for cultural transmission and identity recognition (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Byram, 1997). In second and minority language education, textbooks often become "de facto curricula," profoundly influencing the language forms and cultural content learners encounter and acquire (Garton & Graves, 2014). Therefore, the design logic and writing style of textbooks not only affect learning outcomes but also directly reflect the sociolinguistic ecology and cultural needs of a specific historical period.

"Huayin Qimeng," compiled by North Korea, is a typical overseas Chinese spoken language textbook. It emerged in the historical context of close exchanges between China and North Korea, which led to a strong demand for translation talent. The textbook employs a dialogue-based structure, covering scenes from daily life, diplomacy, and etiquette, and uses Hangeul phonetic notation to lower the learning threshold. This textbook embodies two core values. On the one hand, it meets the needs of practical communication. On the other hand, by embedding ritual expressions, it strengthens learners' cultural identity. This integration of language and culture makes "Huayin Qimeng" not only a linguistic tool but also a medium for disseminating cultural norms and social identities.

Ethnic minority language education in China faces challenges (Lai et al., 2014). For example, the Yi language in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture (referred to as Liangshan in this study) has seen its functional scope gradually shrink with the widespread use of Mandarin and the demand for language in social interactions. In particular, it has been marginalized in schools and public settings, with lagging textbook updates and a shortage of teaching materials. This has hindered the teaching and learning of bilingual education (Asu, 2018). Textbooks, as a core component of language education, play a crucial role in Yi language education. If we can draw on the experience of historical textbooks and effectively integrate communicative and cultural functions for identity, we may be able to provide new insights for the sustainable development of Yi language education.

Among China's 55 ethnic minorities, the Yi are the sixth largest. Liangshan, home to the largest concentration of Yi people in China, accounts for approximately 50% of the total population. However, the number of Yi language users is disproportionate to the total population. The frequency of Yi language use is decreasing, and the number of Yi language users is decreasing. Despite the large Yi population, the preservation and development of the

Yi language has not kept pace with its growth. In the Liangshan Yi region as a whole, only 2.75% of the population knew the Yi script before China's ethnic reforms (Wu, 2002). This highlights the problem of minority language use: few people truly master the language.

Yi language education in Liangshan is at a critical juncture. While Yi language remains vibrant in families and communities, its use in schools and public spaces is declining. Young learners exhibit complex language attitudes: they identify emotionally with their Yi ethnicity, yet rely more heavily on Chinese in practical communication (Zhang & Tsung, 2019). They note that while Yi students generally identify with their ethnic identity, limitations in teaching materials, classrooms, and social environments hinder effective Yi language practice. Furthermore, Yi language textbooks generally suffer from overly written language orientation, a lack of oral communication scenarios, and teachers' inability to adapt the language flexibly in the classroom (Wang & Wang, 2017). These challenges not only undermine the status of Yi language in the education system but also impact students' language practice and cultural identity.

Problem Statement

Minority language education in contemporary China, particularly the use of the Yi language and Yi language education among the Yi ethnic group, faces challenges such as a shrinking use of the language, declining learning interest among young people, and a shortage of teaching materials and instructional materials (Wang & Wang, 2017). Huayin Qimeng, a typical overseas Chinese oral language textbook, emphasizes communicative orientation, contextualized expression, and cultural integration, providing important insights for the development of minority language textbooks. Drawing on Huayin Qimeng's compilation logic and pedagogical features can provide a reference for the development of minority language textbooks and educational practices.

With the Chinese government's vigorous promotion of Mandarin, students begin learning Mandarin and Chinese characters from the moment they enter school. The Liangshan Education Bureau's policy stipulates that English language exams will be a requirement for primary school graduation starting in the 2024-2025 academic year. This has led to an increasing number of Yi students being exposed to and learning English. With the implementation of language education policies, students' attitudes toward Mandarin, English, and Yi language are gradually shifting. Learners' attitudes are complex. Research has found that while young people identify with their Yi ethnicity, they prefer Mandarin as their language of choice, believing it to have greater social and economic value (Zhang & Tsung, 2019). This misalignment between identity and language practice has become a significant constraint on the preservation of the Yi language.

The Yi language's usage is shrinking, and it faces the severe challenges of a discontinuation of its heritage and weakening of its functions. Bradley (2019) found that Yi language is primarily used in families and communities, with Mandarin being the dominant language in public education and official settings. This "shrinking functional domain" has led to a decrease in the younger generation's use of Yi language in real-life communication.

Yi language textbooks are becoming more and more written. Existing Yi language textbooks mostly focus on the written study of phonetics, vocabulary, and grammar, lacking

oral communication training in real-world contexts (Ji et al., 2014). Language textbooks rarely cover Yi cultural content, such as rituals, festivals, songs, and dances, and lack a close connection between language education and the inheritance of cultural customs. Language textbooks lack the function of strengthening cultural identity through language learning. The textbooks are disconnected from students' daily needs, making it difficult to stimulate learning interest or establish a positive emotional connection with learners (Wang, 2014).

While language policy emphasizes protection in policy, in practice it tends to promote Mandarin, creating a tension between policy ideals and practical realities (Zhou & Sun, 2004). Garton and Graves (2014) point out that in practice, many teachers rely heavily on textbooks and lack the ability to flexibly adapt and recreate them. This leads to overly rigid use of textbooks in the classroom, further diminishing learners' opportunities for language practice.

The current challenges in Yi language education lie not only in language instruction itself, but also in the lack of a healthy interaction between textbook design, teacher practice, learner attitudes, and cultural identity. This dilemma stands in stark contrast to the historical experience reflected in "Huayin Qimeng": the latter achieves a fusion of language learning and identity construction through communicative contexts and cultural embedding.

This suggests that textbooks play a potential mediating role in language education: on the one hand, through communicative and cultural design, they can promote the transformation of language attitudes into actual use; on the other hand, they are also the core vehicle for the implementation of language policy in schools and classrooms.

How to effectively maintain language diversity and realize the vitality and function expansion of ethnic languages through education in the dual context of maintaining language diversity and popularizing the national common language has become a core issue that needs to be urgently addressed in the current fields of ethnic minority language policy, language protection and language education.

Research Methods and Objectives

This study employed qualitative methods, analyzing the text of the North Korean Chinese textbook "Huyin Qimeng". Drawing on the current state of Yi language education, the study explored the role of textbooks in Yi language learning, cultural identity, and language attitudes. Fishman's (1991) RLS theory was employed to analyze how textbooks contribute to the maintenance and transmission of ethnic languages. Furthermore, the researchers employed Spolsky's (2004) language policy framework to explore how textbooks interact with policy objectives, teacher practices, and learner attitudes.

The research objective is to explore the implications of Huayin Enlightenment for the use and education of the Yi language through comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between historical textbooks and contemporary minority language education.

Literature Review

Research on the Huayin Qimeng

The Huayin Qimeng, compiled in the late Qing Dynasty, serves as a representative "practical" textbook for instructing Chinese as a foreign language during that period. The work depicts

daily life scenarios, diplomatic and commercial exchanges in a dialogue format, and incorporates phonetic notation in Hangul to assist learners in mastering Chinese pronunciation (Zhou, 2014). The main users consisted of Korean scholars and translators engaged in the study of Chinese. The interactions between Korea and the Qing Dynasty necessitated significant oral communication, which traditional written texts were inadequate to fulfill, resulting in the development of the Huayin Qimeng. The Huayin Qimeng Yanjie utilized the Hunminjeongeum script, developed by King Sejong the Great, to offer phonetic notation and translation of the original text. The Huayin Qimeng disseminated across the Korean Peninsula and emerged as a fundamental textbook for Chinese language acquisition. The influence is evident in both academic research and the extensive Sino-Korean cultural exchanges during the Qing Dynasty.

Liu (2011) examined the word usage in Huayin Qimeng Yanjie, providing a brief analysis of numerous colloquial characters, dialect substitute characters, as well as homophones and ancient characters present in the text. This analysis alleviated reading difficulties for readers and facilitated a more accurate comprehension of the text's meaning. The academic community assessed the Huayin Qimeng textbook as follows: it was extensively utilized in Chinese language instruction and garnered significant interest within the linguistics field (Zhang, 2011; Seon-Ah, 2021). The compilation of Huayin Qimeng was initially intended to address the requirements of diplomatic oral communication during that period. Simultaneously, it implicitly undertook the responsibility of disseminating Chinese culture.

Research on the Current Status of Yi Language Use and Education

In recent years, Yi, as one of China's most populous minority languages, has gradually become a focus of academic attention. Related research, primarily from the perspectives of language policy, writing system development, school education, language attitudes, and ethnic identity, has revealed the multiple difficulties faced by Yi language in education and social life.

Bradley's (2009) research emphasizes the central role of language policy and the writing system in Yi language education. He noted that the wide range of dialectal differences in Yi language posed challenges in orthographic standardization and promotion. Yi language reforms in the 1950s and 1970s aimed to establish a unified writing system to support education and publication. However, debates across regions over which Yi script was more authentic reflected the complexity of community language attitudes and limited the effectiveness of policy implementation. This demonstrates that if top-level design ignores ethnic diversity and linguistic identity, it will be difficult to truly promote the educational and institutionalization of language.

In the field of education, Zhang and Tsung (2019) explored the role of schools in maintaining minority languages from the perspective of bilingual education. They argue that schools are both key venues for the implementation of language policies and the core of language transmission. On the one hand, bilingual courses and textbooks provide students with opportunities to learn the Yi language. On the other hand, due to the dominance of Mandarin in academic advancement and employment, as well as a shortage of textbooks and teachers, Yi language education is often marginalized in practice, with a significant gap between students' language identity and actual use.

Wang (2018) utilized the two bilingual education models in Liangshan Prefecture as a foundation to examine Yi children from both models in Xide County, Liangshan. She discovered that Yi students from both models possessed a robust sense of identity with their traditional culture and a pronounced aspiration to assimilate into mainstream culture. The organized selection of the teaching language by schools has, to a certain degree, reinforced the Yi people's ethnic identity. It is noteworthy that despite the implementation of the legislation, schools prioritize the instructional language over bilingual development, leading to a scenario where kids from the first model are eager to learn Chinese, while those from the second model are keen to learn Yi. The capricious selection of Chinese educators by first-model schools and the unsuitable pedagogical approaches utilized by instructors do not fulfill pupils' aspiration to learn Chinese. Disparities in language selection within schools and teacher competency further intensify this relative disadvantage, obstructing the advancement of educational equity.

Rehamo and Harrell (2020) contend that bilingual education in China's ethnic minority regions can exemplify the government's capacity to preserve linguistic variation amid swift social transformation and the proliferation of a standardized ethnic language. Bilingual education has not adapted to the evolving linguistic landscape, leading to insufficient teacher training, obsolete texts, and the exclusion of the Yi language from entrance examinations. Graduates of bilingual programs infrequently utilize the Yi language.

Yao's (2021) doctoral research, based on fieldwork in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, detailed the language use of teachers and students within the framework of "maintaining bilingual education." The research showed that even in Yi-language maintenance schools, the actual use of the Yi language remains limited, with classroom instruction relying more heavily on Chinese. While teachers emotionally support the continuation of the Yi language, in practice they often prioritize Chinese due to pressure to advance to higher education and inadequate teaching materials. While students generally identify with their ethnic identity, they lack the motivation to actually use it due to a lack of context in their teaching materials and insufficient oral language training. This highlights the significant gap between the symbolic nature of "maintaining education" at the policy level and its effectiveness in practice.

Current study identifies three significant issues in Yi language education: Firstly, the promotion of policies and the standardization of written language must be integrated with community language attitudes to facilitate genuine advancement (Bradley, 2009). Secondly, while educational institutions can preserve symbolic language identity, their efficacy in fostering actual usage is limited (Zhang & Tsung, 2019a; Yao, 2021). Lastly, textbooks and classroom methodologies often lack communicative functions and cultural integration, leading students to endorse the Yi language at an identity level while remaining distanced from its practical application (Zhang & Tsung, 2019).

These studies collectively suggest to researchers that Yi language education is not merely a matter of language instruction; it involves a multifaceted interplay of policies, textbooks, teachers, and learners' attitudes. To overcome the dilemma of "misalignment between identity and usage," textbooks must balance communicative function, cultural identity, and classroom practice. This resonates closely with the historical experience of the Huayin Qimeng program: the latter, through scenario-based oral design and the integration of cultural

etiquette, achieves a unity between language learning and identity construction, providing important lessons for contemporary Yi language education.

Research on Teaching Materials, Language Attitudes, and Language Identity

McGrath (2013) points out that language learning materials play a crucial role in teaching interactions. Their selection, use, and design must not be marginalized, limited to broad syllabi or pedagogy courses within teacher education programs, or labeled as optional. Teaching material evaluation and design should be a core component of both pre-service training programs and in-service graduate programs.

Graves and Garton (2019) Teaching materials should not be seen as static, neutral products, but as a dynamic, practical process in a sociocultural context. The authors emphasize the core role of teachers in this process, that is, teachers are not passive "material users", but active "material developers" and "adapters". Textbooks are not only language learning tools, but also have a profound impact on learners' language attitudes and identity. Spolsky (2004) proposed that the implementation of language policy depends to a large extent on education, and textbooks are an important link in the implementation of policies. Fishman's (1991) "Reverse Language Shift Theory" emphasizes that if endangered languages are to be saved, it is necessary to start from multiple levels of family, school and community at the same time, among which school textbooks are one of the key links.

Zhang and Tsung (2019) further studied the language attitudes and ethnic identity of Yi students. They found that while students generally maintain a strong emotional identification with their ethnic identity, they tend to use Chinese in language practice, viewing the Yi language as a "cultural symbol" rather than a tool for communication. This contradiction between "affected identity and insufficient practice" reflects the lack of communicative design in textbooks and the emphasis on symbolic transmission in classroom practice, which are key factors in the misalignment between attitudes and usage.

Zhang and Adamson (2025) explored the attitudes of ethnic minority students in Urumqi, Xinjiang, China, toward Mandarin, their ethnic languages, and English, and the impact of these attitudes on language use and identity. The study found significant divergence among students. Students generally recognized the instrumental role of Mandarin in education, employment, and other fields. Students also had positive attitudes toward English and viewed it as a crucial tool for internationalization. Attitudes toward their ethnic languages also showed a weakening across generations, with students' emotional identification with their ethnic languages outweighing their actual use.

Li, Croucher, and Shen (2024) found that the younger generation's use of Miao language has decreased significantly in families and communities. Diverging linguistic attitudes have accelerated the marginalization of Miao language in daily communication. School education relies heavily on Mandarin, and Miao language is almost absent from the formal education system. However, the incorporation of Miao cultural elements into teaching materials and curriculum can enhance language identity and encourage family language transmission to promote the revitalization of Miao language.

In the classroom, educators assume a dual function. They are both enforcers of language regulation and architects of classroom practice. Moreover, in education, they encounter a dilemma between "preserving ethnic languages" and "fulfilling teaching obligations" (Liu, 2024). Researchers conducted a detailed examination of the linguistic techniques employed by ethnic minority educators in the classroom, focusing on the teachers' perspectives. Research indicates that educators typically acknowledge the significance of ethnic languages emotionally; but, in classroom implementation, they favor the use of Mandarin. The factors encompass policy directives, pressure to pursue higher education, a deficiency of instructional materials, and inadequate classroom functionality. Teachers' conflicting opinions have suppressed ethnic languages within the educational framework. This conclusion underscores the strong correlation between instructional materials and pedagogical practices: if instructional resources are deficient in communicativeness and cultural relevance, it becomes challenging for educators to utilize ethnic languages innovatively in the classroom.

The attitudes of teachers and students towards textbooks frequently influence learners' ability to cultivate a good language identity. Studies indicate that when textbooks are pertinent to students' everyday experiences and include ethnic cultural significance, students are more inclined to cultivate favorable language attitudes, thereby enhancing their language utilization (Yao, 2021). Conversely, textbooks that are disconnected from daily life and devoid of cultural components might intensify a decrease in interest in language acquisition. Textbooks are pivotal in the challenges of Yi language instruction, serving as both a primary medium for executing language policy and an essential instrument for altering teacher methodologies and student perceptions.

Nevertheless, although current research has identified deficiencies in textbooks, it does not provide a comprehensive functional analysis of historical textbooks or important insights into their utilization. This serves as a foundation for the investigation. This study will examine the Qing Dynasty-era overseas Chinese oral textbook "Huayin Qimeng," focusing on its distinctive communicative function, cultural integration, and identity formation, to derive ideas for the establishment of contemporary Yi language textbooks and educational practices.

Discussion

Features of Huayin Qimeng

(1) Enhancing the veracity of communication contexts in oral instructional materials

Huayin Qimeng primarily focuses on scenarios including "welcoming and bidding farewell, commerce, dining, and official interactions," effectively illustrating the communication requirements of everyday life. The design of contemporary educational materials must be grounded in the learners' actual situation to ensure that the content is both "learnable" and "usable." This can also be applied to cross-cultural communication contexts, including tourism, commerce, and online interactions.

Greater emphasis should be placed on the practical application of terminology in the instruction of material design. Contemporary educational resources may moderately integrate certain growing online verbal terms, such as "reliable," "like," and "complain." Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognize the fundamental distinction between oral instructional resources and grammar textbooks. Oral instructional resources extend beyond

just grammatical guides. The presentation of grammatical concepts should be incorporated into certain communicative contexts, similar to Huayin Qimeng.

(2) Emphasis on the harmony between polite expression and cultural context

The large number of polite expressions in "Huayin Qimeng" reflects the communication norms in the context of Confucian culture (Piao, 2000). Contents such as greetings, refusal, and titles are not just simple language forms, but cultural practices that carry social values and behavioral norms. When teaching language, modern oral teaching materials should highlight the cultural context and guide learners to understand and master the cultural logic behind communication. Carrying out Chinese teaching in the cultural context can promote language teaching and cultural teaching to promote each other, help improve learners' language ability, and promote cross-cultural communication and understanding.

This inspires textbook writers to use "untraceable" means to naturally integrate cultural vocabulary when designing oral teaching materials. For example, cultural knowledge can be integrated into daily conversation scenes, such as "scan code payment", "high-speed rail", "involution", "lying flat" and other contemporary Chinese social vocabulary, so that learners can naturally learn them in communication practice. Students can naturally absorb relevant cultural background in the process of learning a language, which is the modern continuation of the concept of "integration of language and culture" of "Huayin Qimeng".

Implications for Yi Language Education

This study's analysis of "Huayin Qimeng" reveals that its textbook development incorporates communicative functions, cultural embedding, and identity construction. These characteristics contrast sharply with the predicaments facing contemporary Yi language education. Figure 1 reveals the five-level logic of Yi language education: policy framework → textbook design → teacher roles → learner attitudes → identity. Textbook design plays a key intermediary role, serving as the core link between macro-policy and micro-practice, instrumental function and cultural identity.

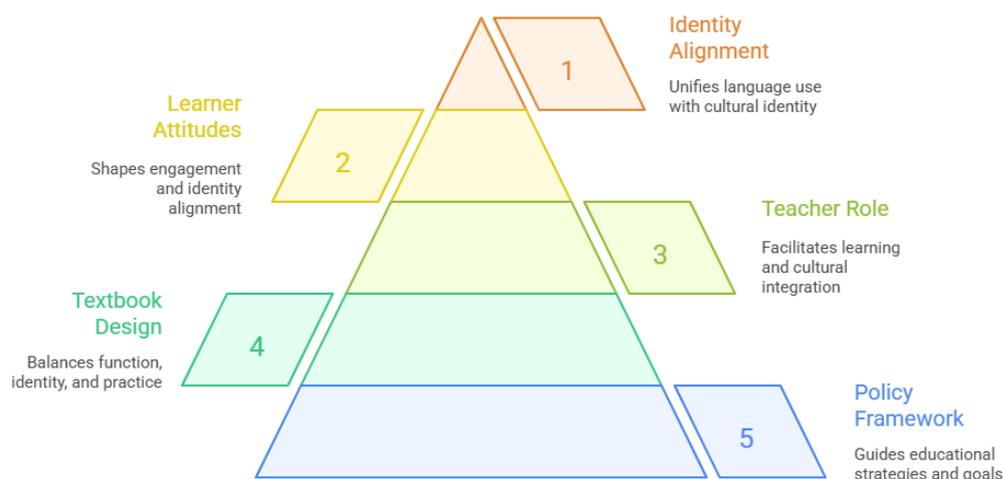


Figure 1: Yi language Education Pyramid

First, Huayin Qimeng illustrates the reduction of learning barriers and enhancement of the practicality of instructional materials via phonetic transcription and organized discussion. Bradley asserts that although the standardization of Yi orthography holds policy importance,

its efficacy is constrained in the absence of community endorsement and adequate instructional resources. Huayin Qimeng's experience with phonetic notation in Hangul indicates that the design of educational materials must consider learners' local language systems and offer accessible learning tools, so establishing a connection between language policy and ethnic perspectives.

Secondly, in contrast to the findings of Zhang and Tsung (2019), Huayin Qimeng emphasizes the mediating function of instructional materials in the relationship between identity and practice. Zhang and Tsung discovered that students predominantly identify with their Yi ethnicity; nevertheless, due to the constraints of educational resources and classroom environments, they predominantly utilize Chinese in practice. This conflict of "identification in the heart, yet inadequate practice" illustrates the issue of textbook functioning failure. Huayin Qimeng effectively merges language acquisition with identity development by including cultural etiquette into language instruction, exemplifying how educational resources can facilitate the conversion of attitudes into practice.

Then, Yao's (2021) field research indicated that educators and pupils in "maintenance bilingual education" predominantly acquire the Yi language symbolically due to legislative mandates, largely use Chinese for effective communication. The investigation of the textbook "Huayin Qimeng" demonstrates that its communicative context and cultural functions significantly improve learners' language application in real-world situations. This indicates that to avoid Yi language instruction being just symbolic, textbooks should emphasize communication purposes and be closely aligned with students' daily settings.

Finally, Liu's (2024) research reveals that although instructors may provide emotional support for ethnic languages, they are unmotivated to implement them in the classroom, mostly due to a lack of textbooks, inadequate resources, and limited practicality. "Huayin Qimeng" offers educators well organized, clear educational resources, alleviating their workload. Consequently, improving the communicative and practical aspects of textbooks is essential for encouraging teachers to actively utilize ethnic languages.

Research Implications

The results of this study offer both theoretical and practical implications. Existing research often emphasizes the gap between language policy and language attitudes. The experience of Huayin Qimeng demonstrates that textbooks can play a mediating role between the two. Policy objectives can only be translated into classroom practice and student use through communicative and culturally relevant textbooks. Textbooks serve as a bridge between policy and practice.

Secondly, the literature reviewed reveals that students' and teachers' ethnic identity fails to translate into language practice. This study finds that Huayin Qimeng achieves this transformation through cultural embedding, demonstrating that the textbook's identity function is a key mechanism between attitudes and practice. Furthermore, Huayin Qimeng's communicative structure reduces the difficulty for teachers. Providing more contextualized, ready-to-use textbooks for Yi language education will help increase teachers' use of the language in the classroom.

Research Limitations

This study employed qualitative text analysis and comparative methods, lacking quantitative data or empirical experiments. Therefore, the evaluation of the textbook's effectiveness requires further verification. Secondly, the sample size in this study is limited. While the study focused on the use and education of the Yi language, it did not delve into the education of other minority languages, such as Miao and Zhuang. This may lead to discrepancies in the generalizability of the findings. The implications of this study suggest that adjustments may be needed within different ethnic groups based on the actual use of the language.

Future research could employ mixed research methods for quantitative analysis. Classroom observations and interviews could be conducted in Liangshan, incorporating feedback from students and teachers to further analyze the effectiveness of the textbook. Furthermore, the theoretical and practical framework for textbook design could be enriched by drawing on the experience of international minority language education textbooks, such as Maori and Welsh, and incorporating them into the Chinese context.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of *Huayin Qimeng*, this study reveals its unique value in terms of communicative function, cultural embedding, and identity construction. As a textbook for spoken Chinese outside of Korea during the Qing Dynasty, it not only provided learners with practical communicative materials but also strengthened their identity through etiquette and cultural elements. This experience offers important insights for contemporary Yi language education.

Existing research indicates a significant gap between policy promotion and actual implementation of Yi language education: while policies emphasize language maintenance, schools often marginalize the Yi language; while students and teachers identify with their ethnic identity, language practice is insufficient; and textbooks lack communicative and cultural relevance, hindering their effectiveness. Against this backdrop, the experience of the "*Huayin Qimeng*" program demonstrates that textbooks can serve as a bridge between policy goals, teacher practice, and learner attitudes. Only through contextualized design and cultural embedding can textbooks promote the transformation of language attitudes into actual use.

Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in highlighting the central role of textbooks in minority language education through a comparison of history and present times, and proposing a design principle that balances the three dimensions of communicative function, cultural identity, and classroom practice. This not only has implications for the sustainable development of Yi language education but also provides a reference for the development of textbooks for other minority languages.

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