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Chinese Korean Language Educational Policy and Practice — A Case Study at Yanbian University

I Abstract

Based on 2021 China Statistical Yearbook, Han population is 91.5%, while Chinese Koreans, 1.2% of population. About 60% of minorities use native languages, with 129 languages spoken (Sun, Hu & Huang, 2007). Chinese Koreans excel in education, bilingualism, using both languages in families, politics, education. In China's autonomous regions, both minority languages and Han used in official matters, media, education. Using Kaplan, Baldauf (2003) and Yang's (2022) framework, the study examines Chinese Korean language programs at Yanbian University to understand successes and challenges of language education policies.

II Research Gap

Previous studies may simply describe the timeline of the development of Chinese Korean language education in Chinese universities after the establishment of People's Republic of China (PRC). Even through some studies tried to focus on the Chinese Korean language curriculum setting, few could systematically analyze the whole language education process at tertiary level. Language education not only includes curriculum development, but also relates to language education policies and the influence of culture.

III Research Questions

- How do Chinese Korean language programs and courses carry out in universities regarding:
 - Access;
 - Personnel;
 - Curriculum;
 - Teaching methods and materials;
 - Resourcing;
 - Evaluation and professional accreditation;
 - Further study and career pathways?
- Are there any effective ways to improve language-in-education policy and entrepreneurship for the programs examined?

V Background of Interviewees

A student majoring in Japanese at Yanbian University, her father is one of Chinese Koreans and speaks Chinese Korean language. The interviewee was taught in Chinese Korean language from childhood, and the textbooks for the whole subjects from primary school onwards are both in Chinese Korean language and Han language, therefore, she is proficient in both Chinese Korean and Han languages.

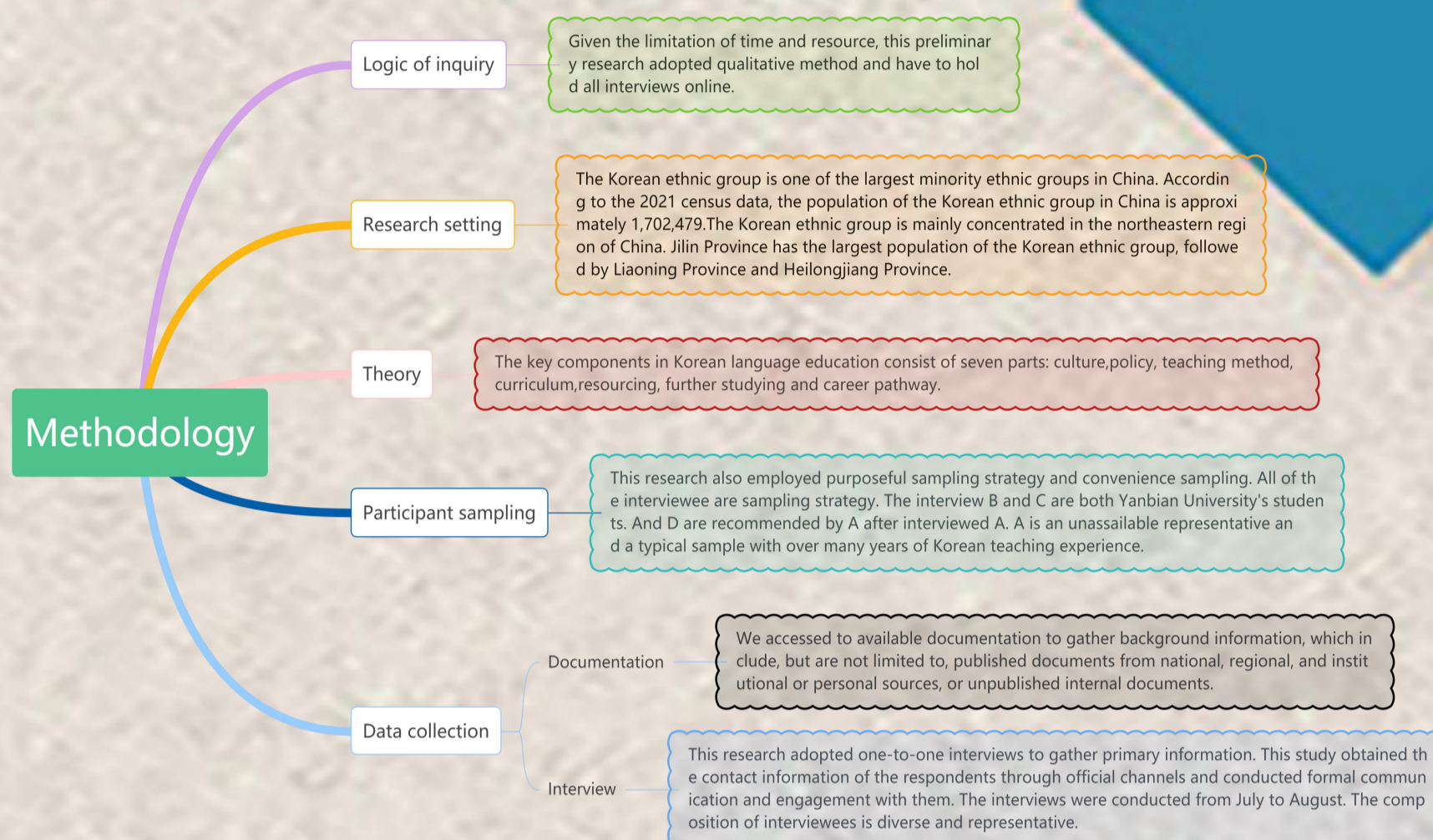
The interviewee went to schools where instruction was in Chinese Korean language, leaving her limited opportunities to use Han in her daily life. Enjoy reading Korean books and literature and has a deep appreciation for her own language. She is a student majoring in Chinese Korean language and literature at Yanbian University, and she plans to pursue her Master's degree in South Korea after graduation. She is also determined to earn a doctorate.

She attended a kindergarten where instruction was in Han language, but she received her primary and secondary education in the Chinese Korean language. She has been surrounded by Chinese Korean speakers and her parents only speak Han when necessary. She is an undergraduate student majoring in Chinese Korean language and literature at Yanbian University.

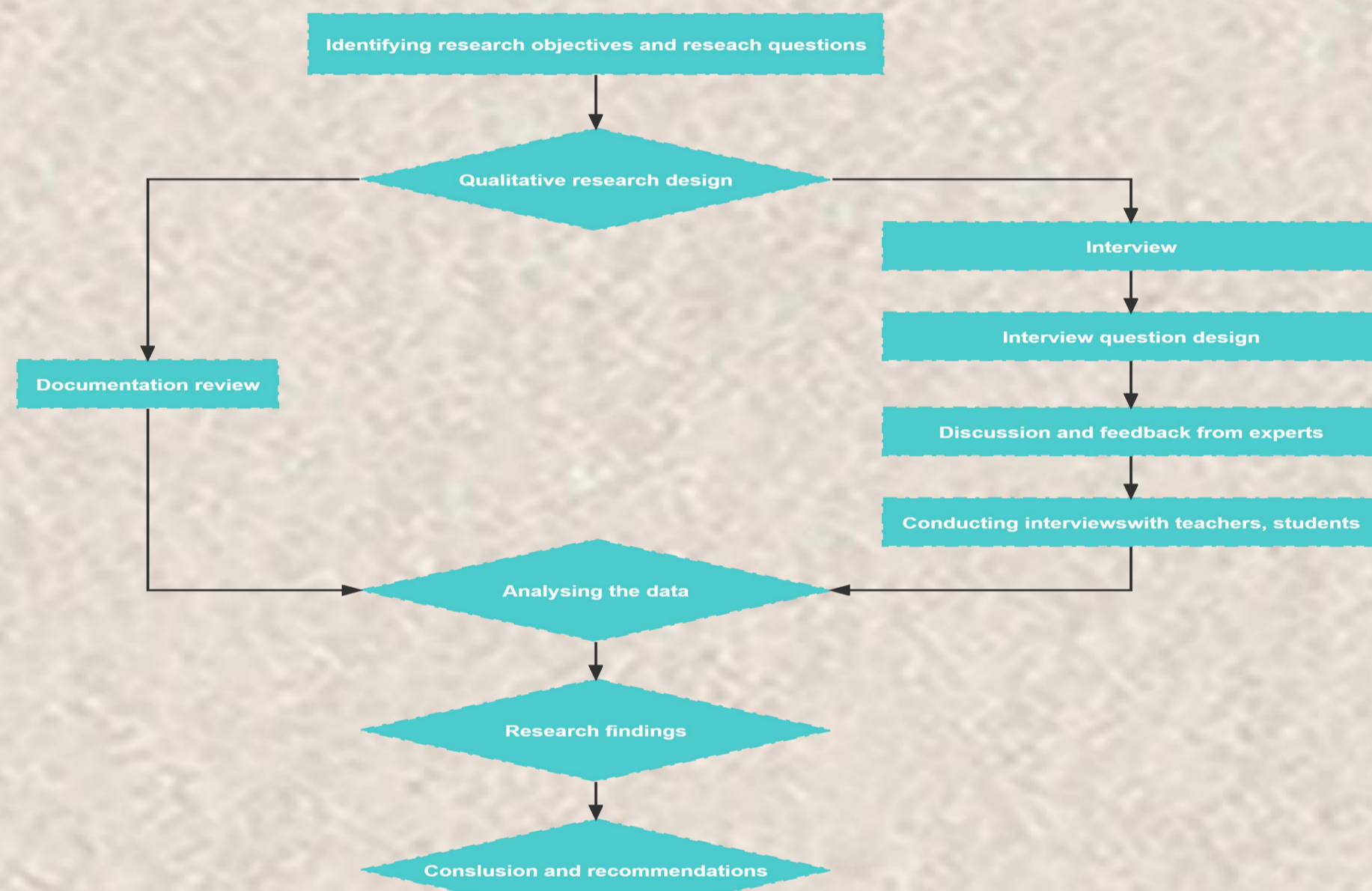
PhD in Korean Language and Literature from Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea. She received her Bachelor's degree in Chinese language (teaching & translation) from the Yanbian University. She communicates with her parents mainly in Han, and she attempted to learn Chinese Korean as child, but was not successful. It was not until her undergraduate years that she began learning Korean language. After she received her PhD, she plans to go to another country, either for post-doctoral studies or to secure a university position.

Associate Professor at the Faculty of Chinese Korean Language, Yanbian University. His expertise is in the research and teaching of Korean modern and contemporary literature and Sino-Korean modern literature exchange. He has more than 20 years of teaching experience.

IV Research Methodology



VI Research Process



VII Preliminary Findings

1. Student perspective

Student background: Various factors play a decisive role in students' tendency to use Korean/Chinese and their proficiency while growing up in a bilingual environment.

Formation of Language Usage Habits

Educational Experiences	Family Environment	Personal Interests
(Ethnic 'Han' Schools or Korean Schools)	(Language customarily spoken by family members)	(Chinese TV show or Korean TV show)

Admission requirement: In terms of admissions, the Chinese Korean Language and Literature major at YBU only admits students whose mother tongue is Chinese Korean, however, other majors, including Chinese Korean for beginners, are available for enrollment nationwide without ethnic restrictions. Beginner and advanced classes have been set up for students of different levels. Regarding the college entrance examination in China (Gaokao), ethnic minority students can take the exam in their own ethnic language, but they are required to take the national Mandarin exam one month prior to the gaokao.

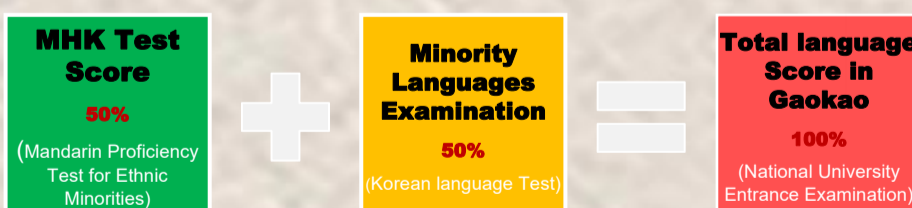


Figure 2: Components of the Gaokao Language Score for Ethnic Minority Candidates

2. Career pathway perspective

Among the interviewees, 2/3 of undergraduate students expressed their personal willingness to pursue a master's degree for further study in the Yanbian university or apply for graduate programs in South Korea. The proportion of students who are admitted to the graduate program directly from undergraduate studies is about 20% in one major. Among the master's degree graduates, about 1/3-1/4 of them will continue their studies for a Ph.D. degree. As for career development, the following pie chart displays a few of the mainstream career paths.



Figure 3: Career Paths For Bachelor's and Master's Degree Graduates

3. Personnel perspective:

Remuneration: There is a certain gap between the income of teachers at YBU and those universities in more developed regions in China, which is also a cause for the difficulties in talent recruitment and retention at YBU.

Pre-service: Upon assuming their duties, Yanbian University teachers are required to attend a pre-service training organized by the university in the Year 1, Semester 1 to learn about ideological theories and educational methods in order to acquire qualifications as university teachers.

In-service: Regular professional training at each stage is a mandatory requirement for job promotion evaluation, which can include overseas academic visits or online learning through the Ministry of Education website.

4. Curriculum perspectives

Curriculum outlines: It generally focuses on North Korean language courses and translation courses, although it also includes several foundation courses in Han and foreign language courses in either Japanese or English.

Curriculum levels: The curriculum is more basic for Han Chinese students with no knowledge of Korean, and more demanding in majors such as North Korean Language and Literature, which only accepts the ethnic Chinese-Koreans students, with more emphasis on accurate grammar, advanced communication skills, and the ability to teach.

Curriculum goals: The curriculum's purpose is to cultivate brilliant people capable of working in Korean schools or businesses, and the number of people who go on to higher education and graduate school is also extremely high.

5. Teaching perspectives

Teaching materials: Teaching materials are mainly in Korean or Han, and there are no imported foreign teaching materials, just the university's own teaching materials, depending on the specialism and course needs.

Teaching methods: Teaching methods include group work, individual presentations and lectures, depending on the teacher's discretion. Korean is the main languages of instruction.

Delivery mode: Delivery modes include large classes and small classes, with large classes at the undergraduate level and small classes at the graduate level.

6. Financial support perspectives
Student assessment: Students who belongs to Ethnic Chinese Koreans or Korean language majors have more scholarship opportunities. There is no tuition fee reduction or exemption policy. National, provincial, and local governments collaborate in projects, establish research bases, and invest funds with Yanbian University. Korean corporations also invest in Yanbian University, create scholarships and collaborate with the institution.

7. Certification perspective:
Student assessment: In terms of professional subjects, undergraduate students at Yanbian University are assessed twice per semester through mid-term and final exams, primarily in the form of essays and examinations (open-book for elective courses and closed-book for compulsory courses) to assess students' knowledge mastery.

VIII Conclusion and Recommendations

This qualitative study examines the pedagogical and sociocultural dynamics influencing the perpetuation and dissemination of the Chinese Korean language within China. Yanbian University offers a Korean and Chinese (Han) Language & Literature major exclusively to native Chinese Korean speakers, fostering the conservation of Chinese Korean heritage. Nationwide enrollment in disciplines like Chinese Korean language is not restricted by ethnicity. While this approach supports cultural inheritance, it currently struggles to attract sufficient enrollment. In addition, Yanbian University collaborates with governments at various levels to establish language research centers and fund academic initiatives. Additionally, corporate sponsorship from Korean enterprises facilitates the provision of grants and scholarships. Upon graduation, students typically pursue one of two paths: advanced academic pursuits, culminating in university-level teaching, or seeking employment opportunities in South Korea. It is recommended that Chinese universities with Chinese Korean language programs invest in more resources to support bilingual education, including hiring more qualified teachers and providing more opportunities for language immersion. Additionally, there should be more collaboration between universities and government agencies to ensure that policies are being implemented effectively and that students are receiving the support they need to succeed.

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