PERSPECTIVES OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS REGARDING THE PRESERVATION OF LANGUAGES OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

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ABSTRACT

Background: In today’s globalized world, ethnic minority languages face an increasing threat of extinction, both on a global scale and within specific countries. The urgent need to preserve and promote awareness of these languages among younger generations cannot be overstated.

Purpose: The present study was undertaken to investigate the perspectives of students regarding ethnic minority languages, as well as the efforts undertaken by teachers and schools to safeguard and preserve these languages.

Methods: A sample of 3,250 ethnic minority students and 646 teachers actively participated in this research, allowing for a rich and diverse range of viewpoints to be gathered.

Results: The findings of this study revealed that students hold a deep appreciation for their native languages and possess a keen understanding of the imperative nature of their preservation. It is heartening to note that schools and teachers have also been actively engaged in implementing various initiatives and policies to protect and promote ethnic minority languages.

Conclusion: While it is important to acknowledge the existence of challenges and obstacles in this endeavor, the overall results paint an encouraging picture. The fact that students value and embrace their ethnic minority languages, alongside the commitment demonstrated by educational institutions and teachers, provides hope for the continued existence and resilience of these linguistic treasures.

Originality/value: It is through the dedication and collective efforts of all stakeholders involved that ethnic minority languages can defy the threat of extinction and thrive for generations to come.

Keywords: Ethnic Language, Minority Language, Conservation, Preservation, Ethnic Student, Teacher.

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PERSPECTIVAS DOS ESTUDANTES E PROFESSORES VIETNAMITAS SOBRE A PRESERVAÇÃO DAS LÍNGUAS DAS MINORIAS ÉTNICAS

RESUMO

Contexto: No mundo globalizado de hoje, as línguas étnicas minoritárias enfrentam uma ameaça crescente de extinção, tanto em escala global como em países específicos. A necessidade urgente de preservar e promover a sensibilização para estas línguas entre as gerações mais jovens não pode ser subestimada.

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Propósito: El presente estudio se llevó a cabo para investigar las perspectivas de los estudiantes con respecto a las lenguas de las minorías étnicas, así como los esfuerzos realizados por los maestros y las escuelas para salvaguardar y preservar estas lenguas.

Métodos: Una muestra de 3.250 estudiantes de minorías étnicas y 646 profesores participaron activamente en esta investigación, lo que permitió reunir una rica y diversa gama de puntos de vista.

Resultados: Los hallazgos de este estudio revelaron que los estudiantes tienen una profunda apreciación de sus lenguas nativas y poseen una comprensión aguda de la naturaleza imperativa de su preservación. Es alentador observar que las escuelas y los maestros también han participado activamente en la aplicación de diversas iniciativas y políticas para proteger y promover los idiomas de las minorías étnicas.

Conclusión: Si bien es importante reconocer la existencia de desafíos y obstáculos en este esfuerzo, los resultados generales pintan un panorama alentador. El hecho de que los estudiantes valoren y acepten sus lenguas minoritarias étnicas, junto con el compromiso demostrado por las instituciones educativas y los profesores, brinda esperanza para la existencia continua y la resiliencia de estos tesoros lingüísticos.

Originalidad/valor: Es a través de la dedicación y los esfuerzos colectivos de todas las partes interesadas involucradas que las lenguas de las minorías étnicas pueden desafiar la amenaza de extinción y prosperar durante las generaciones venideras.

Palabras clave: Lengua Étnica, Lengua Minoritaria, Conservación, Preservación, Estudiante Étnico, Profesor.
1 INTRODUCTION

Language is an integral component of ethnic group identity, as emphasized by Luo & Wiseman (2000). Oriyama (2010) further asserts that language plays a crucial role in the social and ideological construction process. In the context of language as discourse systems, Gee (1988) posits that language and literacy are not only fundamental to individual identities but also central to how individuals situate themselves in the world. Language serves as an emblem of groupness and a vehicle for the transmission of culture. Group membership holds significant influence in the formation and negotiation of one's identity, as highlighted by Kanno (2003). Therefore, language, along with the communicative practices within a particular group, plays a pivotal role in the study of identity development and transformation. Aligned & Lemke's (2002) perspective that identity is conveyed through verbal and nonverbal performances of attitudes, beliefs, and values, He (2006) argues that the construction of identities among heritage language speakers primarily occurs through their speech. Consequently, identities become evident in the language individuals employ, the contexts in which they use it, the intended purposes, the manner of language utilization, and the individuals with whom they communicate. For bilingual speakers proficient in both a minority and a majority language, their language use reflects their desire and necessity to identify with either or both linguistic communities. The dynamic nature of identity construction is deeply intertwined with language use, serving as a reflection of individuals' affiliations and aspirations within diverse linguistic contexts. Bilingual individuals navigate the complexities of their linguistic identities, drawing from multiple cultural and linguistic resources to express their sense of belonging. The intersectionality of language use and identity formation demonstrates the intricate interplay between individual agency, social dynamics, and cultural context.

The plight of the world's indigenous languages and the imminent threat of their disappearance were highlighted during a conference organized by UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development (2016). Shockingly, it was revealed that one language is lost every two weeks, leaving countless others in a precarious state. It is crucial to recognize that language encompasses far more than mere communication; it shapes our worldview and understanding of the world. Each language represents a unique microcosm of beliefs, practices, and customs that binds its speakers to their collective past. However, distressingly, data collected by UNESCO reveals that 43% of the world's languages are currently at risk of extinction. Some languages are perilously endangered, spoken by only a small group of elderly
individuals. The loss of any of these languages would result in an irreplaceable loss for humanity and our collective heritage (Aoyagi & Veliko, 2021). The revitalization of indigenous languages is of paramount importance in ensuring the continued existence and transmission of culture, customs, and history. Preserving and safeguarding indigenous languages is crucial not only for the cultural identity and dignity of indigenous peoples but also for the protection of their traditional heritage. To this end, there are numerous examples of successful strategies and initiatives aimed at preserving and revitalizing endangered languages. These practices emphasize the vital role of intergenerational transmission, wherein knowledge and language skills are passed down from one generation to another. Additionally, the unique contributions of indigenous women in language preservation efforts are recognized, underscoring their significance as carriers of cultural knowledge and language proficiency. Furthermore, the importance of mother tongue education is highlighted as a key factor in sustaining indigenous languages and empowering future generations to embrace and utilize their linguistic heritage (UN DESA's Division for Social Policy and Development, 2016). The urgency of safeguarding indigenous languages cannot be overstated. It is a collective responsibility to ensure the survival and flourishing of these linguistic treasures, as they are an essential part of our shared human experience.

The advent of globalization has compelled us to reassess the educational framework designed for ethnic minority communities (Gao, 2010). The remarkable diversity within these minority groups, characterized by a multitude of languages and cultures, has resulted in a complex interplay between forces that seek to homogenize and those that strive to preserve indigenous traditions. It is within the context of economic growth that ethnic consciousness among minority groups has flourished (Iredale et al., 2001). In Vietnam, for instance, the 2019 census highlights the presence of 54 distinct ethnic groups, with the Kinh ethnic group constituting the majority at 85.3% of the total population (Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs, 2020). This demographic composition reveals the significant proportion of ethnic minorities within the country, comprising the remaining 53 groups. However, the linguistic landscape of these ethnic minority communities faces significant challenges. Some languages are at the brink of extinction, with a few on the verge of complete disappearance, while others are spoken by only a handful of individuals (Ta, 2021). The endangerment and loss of these languages pose a threat not only to the linguistic diversity of Vietnam but also to the cultural richness and historical heritage embedded within them. Efforts must be undertaken to address this pressing issue and ensure the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages. By
recognizing the value of linguistic diversity and investing in language preservation initiatives, it is possible to safeguard the cultural identities, traditions, and knowledge systems of ethnic minority communities. Furthermore, by promoting multilingual education and embracing the linguistic diversity within the educational system, it becomes possible to foster inclusivity and provide equitable opportunities for all learners, irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds.

Language preservation plays a crucial role in safeguarding endangered or extinct languages. Its significance extends beyond linguistics to encompass disciplines such as anthropology, prehistory, and psychology, as it ensures the preservation of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage (Foundation for Endangered Languages, n.d.). In a manner similar to historic preservation, language preservation allows for future studies and exploration in these fields by maintaining dying or dead languages. UNESCO (2005) identifies various factors that contribute to the endangerment of a language. One such factor is the discontinuation of language transmission to younger generations within a community. When children are no longer being taught the language, or its usage declines significantly, the remaining fluent speakers tend to be older community members. Consequently, with the passing of these fluent speakers, the language faces the risk of extinction. Additionally, a language can become stigmatized and associated with a lower social class. In response, parents may encourage their children to adopt the dominant language of society, distancing themselves from the perceived lower class. Within a generation or two, this societal shift can lead to the loss of the language. Efforts have been made globally to incorporate native local languages into public school curricula, aiming to foster cultural growth and language revitalization. One notable example is India's three-language formula, initially proposed by the University Education Commission. This policy sought to balance linguistic representation by including English, Hindi, and a local language. However, despite its potential, the program did not gain sufficient public support or government funding in India. In contrast, Kazakhstan successfully implemented a similar approach, with their three languages being English, Kazakh, and Russian. English was considered a global language for economic and business purposes, while Kazakh and Russian served as essential components in preserving Kazakhstan's culture and national identity (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2020). By recognizing the importance of language preservation, societies can actively promote the maintenance and revitalization of endangered languages. Efforts to integrate local languages into educational systems, alongside raising awareness about the value of linguistic diversity, contribute to the cultural enrichment and sustainability of these languages for future generations.
The investigation into the preservation of ethnic minority languages in Vietnam remains relatively limited, indicating the need for further research in this domain. In light of this, our study aims to examine the perspectives of ethnic minority students regarding their native languages. Additionally, we seek to explore the various initiatives undertaken by teachers and schools to uphold and encourage the utilization of ethnic minority languages among students. By delving into the views and experiences of ethnic minority students, we can gain valuable insights into the significance and role of their mother tongues in their lives and communities. Understanding their perspectives can shed light on the challenges they face in maintaining and utilizing their ethnic languages, as well as uncover the motivations, aspirations, and attitudes that shape their language practices. Moreover, this study seeks to investigate the strategies employed by educators and educational institutions to foster the preservation and promotion of ethnic minority languages. By examining these efforts, we can identify effective approaches and best practices that contribute to the vitality and revitalization of these languages.

2 METHODS

2.1 MEASUREMENT

Two distinct questionnaires were developed for the purpose of conducting surveys on the preservation of ethnic minority languages. The meticulous design of these questionnaires aimed to gather comprehensive data from both students and teachers, shedding light on different perspectives and aspects related to the subject matter.

The first questionnaire specifically targeted students, serving as a tool to elicit their perceptions and opinions concerning the preservation of ethnic minority languages. Through a series of well-structured questions, valuable insights were obtained. This questionnaire sought to capture the nuanced perspectives and experiences of ethnic minority students, providing valuable information for further analysis and understanding.

In parallel, the second questionnaire was strategically designed to engage teachers and administrators in the educational system. It was meticulously crafted to explore and assess the current state of schools regarding the promotion and support of ethnic minority languages. By gathering information directly from the educators themselves, this questionnaire aimed to identify the existing practices, challenges, and potential areas for improvement in educational institutions with regards to ethnic minority language preservation.
2.2 PROCEDURE

The sampling method employed in this study was convenience sampling, chosen for its expediency and convenience in gathering data from a targeted group. The survey encompassed a substantial sample size, including 646 teachers and administrators, as well as 3250 ethnic minority students in grades 6 and 7. These participants were carefully selected from junior high schools known for their significant enrollment of ethnic minority students, as well as boarding high schools catering to the educational needs of ethnic minorities residing in the mountainous northeastern provinces of Vietnam, namely Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Lang Son, and Quang Ninh. By conducting the survey within these specific regions and institutions, we aimed to capture a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences related to the preservation of ethnic minority languages in this particular context.

2.3 ANALYSIS

The data obtained in this study were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. To ensure consistency in coding, a 5-Likert scale was employed, with the following coding process: 1 = Disagree, 2 = Undecided, 3 = Partially Agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Totally Agree. For establishing group boundary values and facilitating outcome discussions, Narli’s (2010) guidance was followed. The interval width of the 5-Likert scale was determined to be .80, calculated using the formula: Interval Width = (Upper value – Lower value)/n = (5-1)/5 = .80. This interval width value was then utilized to generate group boundary values for data interpretation. The group boundary values are as follows: scores ranging from 1.00 to 1.79 are considered as Disagree, scores ranging from 1.80 to 2.59 are considered as Undecided, scores ranging from 2.60 to 3.39 are considered as Partially Agree, scores ranging from 3.40 to 4.19 are considered as Agree, and scores ranging from 4.20 to 5.00 are considered as Totally Agree.

3 RESULTS

Table 1 shows the perceptions of ethnic minority students regarding the preservation of ethnic minority languages. All questions listed from highest to lowest mean score, are as follows: Ethnic language is one of the indicators showing the existence and development of an
Perspectives of Vietnamese Students and Teachers Regarding the Preservation of Languages of Ethnic Minorities

ethnic community (M = 3.59); It is necessary to organize rich and diverse activities to organize an environment for ethnic language communication (M = 3.50); Many teachers can use ethnic minority languages fluently (M = 3.41); Ethnic minorities must be able to communicate in their ethnic language (M = 3.36); Many ethnic minority students do not know how to speak their native language (M = 2.93); The use of ethnic minority languages is limiting the social development of individuals and ethnic communities (M = 2.14).

Table 1
Perceptions of Ethnic Minority Students Regarding the Preservation of Ethnic Minority Languages (Survey conducted on students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Totally Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Partially Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The use of ethnic minority languages is limiting the social development of individuals and ethnic communities.</td>
<td>274 (8.4%)</td>
<td>404 (12.4%)</td>
<td>389 (12.0%)</td>
<td>614 (18.9%)</td>
<td>1568 (48.3%)</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many ethnic minority students do not know how to speak their native language.</td>
<td>412 (12.7%)</td>
<td>832 (25.6%)</td>
<td>738 (22.7%)</td>
<td>641 (19.7%)</td>
<td>627 (19.3%)</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many teachers can use ethnic minority languages fluently.</td>
<td>659 (20.3%)</td>
<td>1004 (30.9%)</td>
<td>891 (27.4%)</td>
<td>398 (12.2%)</td>
<td>298 (9.2%)</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic language is one of the indicators showing the existence and development of an ethnic community.</td>
<td>737 (22.7%)</td>
<td>1333 (41.0%)</td>
<td>470 (14.5%)</td>
<td>519 (16.0%)</td>
<td>191 (5.9%)</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic minorities must be able to communicate in their ethnic language.</td>
<td>669 (20.6%)</td>
<td>1098 (33.8%)</td>
<td>629 (19.4%)</td>
<td>454 (14.0%)</td>
<td>400 (12.3%)</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is necessary to organize rich</td>
<td>681 (21.0%)</td>
<td>1157 (35.6%)</td>
<td>689 (21.2%)</td>
<td>544 (16.7%)</td>
<td>179 (5.5%)</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and diverse activities to organize an environment for ethnic language communication.

N: number of participants; %: percentage.

Table 2 shows the current situation of schools for the promotion of ethnic minority languages.

**Table 2**  
*The Current Situation of Schools for The Promotion of Ethnic Minority Languages (Survey conducted on teachers)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totally Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers always encourage students to use ethnic minority languages in communication.</td>
<td>106 (16.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize activities to encourage the use of ethnic minority languages in communication.</td>
<td>81 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are no measures to support the use of ethnic minority languages by students who are ethnic minorities. Some teachers can communicate fluently in ethnic minority languages.</td>
<td>100 (15.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most teachers do not know how to communicate in ethnic minority languages.</td>
<td>103 (15.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to communicate in ethnic minority languages.</td>
<td>133 (20.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The school encourages teachers to communicate with students in ethnic minority languages. There are regulations that teachers need to learn ethnic minority languages to communicate with students. There are specific educational contents implemented in ethnic languages in schools. Bringing ethnic minority languages into schools as educational content of national cultural identity. Organize supplemental educational activities in schools on the language and writing of ethnic minorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school encourages teachers to communicate with students in ethnic minority languages.</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are regulations that teachers need to learn ethnic minority languages to communicate with students.</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are specific educational contents implemented in ethnic languages in schools.</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bringing ethnic minority languages into schools as educational content of national cultural identity.</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize supplemental educational activities in schools on the language and writing of ethnic minorities.</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N: number of participants; %: percentage

All questions listed from the highest to lowest mean score, are as follows: Some teachers can communicate fluently in ethnic minority languages (M = 3.82); Teachers always encourage students to use ethnic minority languages in communication (M = 3.71); Organize activities to encourage the use of ethnic minority languages in communication (M = 3.70); The school encourages teachers to communicate with students in ethnic minority languages (M = 3.61); Organize supplemental educational activities in schools on the language and writing of ethnic minorities (M = 3.61); Most teachers do not know how to communicate in ethnic minority languages (M = 3.52); There are specific educational contents implemented in ethnic languages in schools (M = 3.33); There are no measures to support the use of ethnic minority languages in schools;
by students who are ethnic minorities (M = 3.25); Bringing ethnic minority languages into schools as educational content of national cultural identity (M = 3.20); There are regulations that teachers need to learn ethnic minority languages to communicate with students (M = 3.16).

4 DISCUSSION

Ethnic minority students demonstrate a commendable level of consciousness regarding their indigenous languages. Rather than perceiving ethnic minority languages as a hindrance in their lives, they regard them as a wellspring of cultural identity and the embodiment of their nation's traditional allure. While the practice of instructing in ethnic languages remains relatively uncommon in Vietnam, children persevere in learning subjects through the medium of another language, namely Vietnamese, while simultaneously cherishing and upholding their mother tongues with profound respect. In contrast to the preservation efforts discussed earlier, there have been instances where vernacular languages have been marginalized and devalued in Sudan. Historically, vernaculars were often perceived by many Sudanese as lacking proper grammar, being underdeveloped, and incapable of playing a significant role in people's socioeconomic lives. Consequently, a significant number of community members who were speakers of vernacular languages have transitioned to using Arabic (Mugaddam, 2006). The shift towards Arabic was further exacerbated by external factors, such as drought in Dar Fur and the eruption of war in the South and the Nuba Mountains during the mid-1980s. These events created unfavorable circumstances where the newcomers found their languages and traditional lifestyles no longer functional, thus making the language shift to Arabic seemingly an unavoidable destiny (Mugaddam, 2006). This highlights the complex dynamics and challenges faced by linguistic communities in Sudan, where language shifts occur due to social, economic, and environmental factors that often lead to the marginalization and eventual decline of vernacular languages.

Due to the rapidly advancing modern landscape and the necessity of acquiring proficiency in Vietnamese, it is not unusual for certain students belonging to ethnic minority groups to gradually lose fluency in their mother tongues. While the proportion of such cases may currently be limited, it is a matter that warrants diligent consideration and proactive measures in order to safeguard the linguistic heritage of future generations of ethnic minority students. Ensuring the preservation and vitality of their native languages becomes paramount to fostering a sense of cultural continuity and identity within these communities.
The increasingly prevalent ability of teachers to communicate with students in ethnic minority languages is an admirable development. This positive trend signifies a growing number of ethnic minority students actively seeking to enhance their knowledge, aspire to become educators themselves, and subsequently return to their communities to impart their wisdom to the forthcoming generation of ethnic minority students. Such a phenomenon not only facilitates effective communication and interaction between students and teachers but also fosters a stronger sense of connection and shared experiences. It exemplifies a significant stride towards empowering ethnic minority communities and ensuring the seamless transfer of knowledge across generations. Indeed, the integration of indigenous languages into various spheres serves as a significant step towards addressing a key challenge in the use and preservation of ethnic minority languages. It ensures that speakers of indigenous languages are no longer deprived of sufficient educational resources, including technological tools that are readily available to other language communities (Aoyagi & Veliko, 2021). This inequity in access to educational resources has often hindered the development and vitality of indigenous languages, further exacerbating the risk of language loss. By rectifying this disparity and providing adequate resources, such as technology-enabled learning platforms and materials, individuals speaking indigenous languages can access the same educational opportunities as their counterparts. This inclusive approach not only supports the preservation of ethnic minority languages but also fosters a more equitable and inclusive educational landscape for all linguistic communities.

Furthermore, ethnic minority students exhibit a commendable level of knowledge and dedication in safeguarding their ethnic minority languages. Their profound understanding of the significance of language preservation instills a sense of optimism for the continued survival and perpetuation of these linguistic heritages. However, it is imperative for policymakers to consistently prioritize and prioritize raising awareness and fostering a sense of responsibility among students regarding the preservation of ethnic minority languages. By implementing effective policies, initiatives, and educational programs, policymakers can ensure that the importance and value of these languages are consistently highlighted. This, in turn, encourages future generations to actively engage in the preservation and promotion of their ethnic minority languages, ensuring their vitality for generations to come. According to UNESCO, it is essential to expand the scope of relevant social and policymaking spheres to embrace the inclusion of indigenous languages. Additionally, these languages should be integrated into justice systems to guarantee effective access to legal avenues, as emphasized by Aoyagi and Veliko (2021). By
recognizing and incorporating indigenous languages within legal frameworks, individuals from indigenous communities can exercise their rights and engage meaningfully in legal processes. This approach aligns with the principles of linguistic and cultural diversity, promoting a more equitable and inclusive society where indigenous languages are valued and respected as essential components of justice systems. The integration of indigenous languages into legal contexts not only facilitates effective communication but also upholds the rights and cultural identities of indigenous communities.

The active encouragement from teachers to facilitate the use of ethnic minority languages in communication, along with the organization of activities that prioritize the utilization of these languages, plays a pivotal role in enabling students to effectively employ their mother tongues in the learning process. These initiatives contribute significantly to the preservation and development of ethnic minority languages within educational settings. By creating an inclusive and supportive environment, teachers empower students to embrace their linguistic heritage and utilize their mother tongues as a means of acquiring knowledge. Such efforts not only foster language retention but also foster a sense of cultural pride and identity among ethnic minority students. Ultimately, these practices contribute to the continued vitality and growth of ethnic minority languages within the school context.

During the mid-1980s, the Chinese government initiated the implementation of bilingual education, which entailed the instruction of both Chinese and minority languages. The primary objective behind this policy was twofold: to preserve the rich cultural heritage of ethnic minority groups and to enhance their overall school enrollment rates (Gao, 2010). By incorporating the languages of various ethnic minorities into the educational curriculum, the government aimed to empower these communities to maintain their distinct cultural identities while simultaneously ensuring their active participation and access to quality education. This bilingual education policy served as a means of fostering inclusivity and supporting the educational aspirations of ethnic minority populations within China.

While it is true that there may be teachers who are unable to use or are unfamiliar with ethnic minority languages, schools are actively promoting initiatives to encourage teachers to learn these languages. By equipping teachers with the necessary linguistic skills, schools aim to enhance communication and understanding between teachers and ethnic minority students. Additionally, teachers and schools are dedicated to organizing extracurricular activities that utilize ethnic minority languages, fostering an environment where ethnic minority students are encouraged to use and preserve their native languages. These activities serve as platforms for...
students to engage in meaningful language interactions, strengthening their proficiency and sense of cultural identity. Through these concerted efforts, schools are actively working towards creating a linguistically inclusive environment that values and promotes the diverse languages and cultures of ethnic minority students. The preservation of ethnic minority languages is a significant aspect of school activities and learning processes, as highlighted by the UN DESA’s Division for Social Policy and Development (2016). Aoyagi and Veliko (2021) emphasize the need for ASEAN member states to foster inclusive and equitable educational opportunities and create supportive learning environments for speakers of indigenous languages. The scope of educational and cultural initiatives should extend beyond indigenous communities, encompassing wider society, to raise awareness and appreciation for the value of preserving endangered languages. In Vietnam, efforts have been made to implement a policy that supports teachers in learning ethnic minority languages. However, this policy encounters numerous challenges, such as the scarcity of qualified teachers proficient in ethnic minority languages or even the absence of standardized alphabets for certain ethnic minority languages (Tran, 2023). These obstacles underscore the ongoing complexities involved in effectively preserving and revitalizing ethnic minority languages within the educational framework.

5 CONCLUSION

The main objective of our study is to make a meaningful contribution to the current knowledge base regarding the preservation of ethnic minority languages in Vietnam. By examining the viewpoints and experiences of ethnic minority students, we seek to shed light on their perspectives and provide a platform for their voices to be heard. This will help in highlighting the significance of language diversity and the preservation of cultural heritage within the larger Vietnamese society. Through our research, we aim to raise awareness about the value of ethnic minority languages and their role in maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion. By showcasing the initiatives and efforts undertaken by educators and schools, we aim to inspire dialogue and encourage collaboration among stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, community leaders, and members of ethnic minority communities. The insights gained from our study will provide valuable guidance for policymakers in formulating inclusive language policies that recognize and support the diverse linguistic needs of ethnic minority communities. Furthermore, educators can benefit from the findings by
incorporating culturally sensitive teaching approaches and promoting the use of ethnic minority languages in educational settings.

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