

THE NEED TO USE MOTHER TONGUE IN COMMUNICATION OF ETHNIC STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: Contributing to promoting the national cultural identity, in which developing and maintaining the existence of ethnic minority languages is one of the essential tasks. Currently, the languages of ethnic minorities are narrowed in scope and influence on social development, that is, ethnic minorities who speak ethnic minority languages are decreasing in number. In the early years of their lives, the language of ethnic minorities is something like the only language and the need to use the ethnic minority language as they mature is not frequent. Facing that fact, it is of particular importance to find out about the needs of ethnic minority students to use their native language. The paper examines the current situation of ethnic minority students' needs to use their native language in communication in the school from 2019 - 2020 through sociological surveys with the support of some teachers and 100 ethnic minority students. This article mentions and points out the current needs of ethnic minority students who use their native language in communication, which is the first language they know how to use.

KEYWORDS: ethnic minority languages, mother tongue, students, teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

Ethnic minority students communicate in the community in ethnic minority languages. When they come to school, they can only use Vietnamese to acquire knowledge in the school environment. The process of using Vietnamese in learning and communication makes them encounter psychological barriers and difficulties in learning and communicating. The learning and communication process of ethnic minority students in schools is mainly conducted on the basis of using Vietnamese and ethnic minority languages [1].

II. THE NECESSITY OF USING ETHNIC MINORITY LANGUAGES IN COMMUNICATION

The reasons given by the children are that their mother tongue is the ethnic cultural identity [2]. Because there are some ethnic people who have no choice other than their ethnic minority language (they cannot go to school, cannot escape from their ethnic areas). The neat reason is that ethnic minority language is the private language for ethnic minorities to communicate. If the ethnic minority language is not used, it will be forgotten. Then, preserving the voice of ethnic minorities and the unique cultural identity of the nation [3].

III. THE LEVEL OF NATIVE LANGUAGE USE

To discover this status of using ethnic minority languages much more clearly, we survey the current situation of ethnic minority students' needs to use their mother tongue in communication in the school year 2019-2020 by conducting surveys and interviews with teachers and 100 ethnic minority students (Tay, Nung, H'Mong, Dao, Giay and Ngai) are studying in grades 7 and 8 of Vi Xuyen High School of Education, Ha Giang Province of Vietnam about the need to use ethnic minority languages, the dominant language used in communication and activities, subjects of communication, topics of communication in the native language of ethnic minority students [4].

According to the survey result, 13% of ethnic minority students answered that using ethnic minority language is not necessary. The first reason is that people use Vietnamese in communication more commonly [3]. The second one is just because there are many different ethnic groups, if we use our own language, people of other ethnic groups will not understand. Then, students often use ethnic minority languages less in communication [2]. Specifically, 10% of ethnic minority students mentioned that learning mainly takes place in Vietnamese, so it is not necessary to use ethnic minority languages. 3% of students said that the development of ethnic minority languages will limit human opportunities to learn and acquire scientific knowledge.

Most of the students interviewed agreed that ethnic minority languages are necessary to be used in daily communication. This shows the evaluation of ethnic minority students on the ethnic minority language development among the ethnic minority students themselves.

Table 1. Current situation of using language in the values of ethnic minority students

Languages	Communicate With Teachers			Communicate With Friends		
	Often	Not often	Never	Often	Not often	Never
Use ethnic minority languages	4	21	75	25	69	6
Use national language	94	4	0	78	22	0

For ethnic minority students studying at Boarding School for Ethnic Minority Students, their learning and practice activities are conducted within the school and they can communicate with each other by the language they like [4]. They can use both ethnic minority languages and national Vietnamese language to communicate with their friends and teachers. Ethnic Minority Students at Vi Xuyen Boarding School for Ethnic Minority Students in Ha Giang Province mainly use national Vietnamese because this is the national language, so it is used by the majority of the people. The communication in ethnic minority languages of ethnic minority students takes place when communicating with friends (25% regularly and 69% infrequently), but even while chatting with their friends, the language selected is Vietnamese.

IV. THE STATUS OF ETHNIC MINORITY STUDENTS' NEED TO COMMUNICATE IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE

The status of using their mother tongue in communication of ethnic minority students highlights 3 basic issues: Firstly, the need for communication objects. Regarding ethnic minority students communicating in their native language, 91.7% of ethnic minority students regularly and 8.3% of ethnic minority students sometimes use ethnic minority languages to exchange information, chatting with family members [5]. Students using native language to communicate with local people is about 83.3%. And, 16.7% of students use it occasionally. These are the two groups of subjects that ethnic minority students use their mother tongue for communication highest because the range of communication in their mother tongue depends on the communication environment using ethnic minority languages and in that condition. In the family and the residence community, ethnic minority students' families is the most dominant [6]. In addition, ethnic minority students use their mother tongue (ethnic minority language) in communication with their same ethnic friends (33.3% often and 66.7% not often), and communicate with close friends (58.3%) at regular rate and 41.7% at occasional level). This also shows the tendency of ethnic minority students to make close friends. There are 50% of ethnic minority students of Boarding School for Ethnic Minority Students in Vi Xuyen and Ha Giang Province, sometimes use ethnic minority languages to exchange information, chat with the classroom teacher. There are no students who choose to exchange information in their native language [7]. This shows that more or less teachers who work as head teachers of the school have the ability to communicate with their students in ethnic minority languages. The communication process mainly takes place in the scope of school hours should not be advantageous for using ethnic minority languages.

Second is about the need for communication topics using mother tongue (Table 2).

Table 2. Demand for ethnic minority students' mother tongue communication topics

No	Communication topics	Average scores	Average
1	Personal matters	2,2	3
2	Learning content	1,58	8
3	Movie, story, music, actor, singer theme	1,53	9
4	Family and family related affairs	2,15	4
5	Study method	1,65	5
6	About friendship	1,62	6
7	Local customs and practices	2,27	1
8	Relations between neighbors and villages	2,25	2

9	Topics about teachers and schools	1,59	7
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Based on the organization of the survey and the assessment of three levels (1- 3) according to the increasing degree, the results show that the topic of communication in ethnic minority languages that they have the highest need is the style of local customs, relationships with neighbors, that is, when having personal matters, family topics and issues related to family are also prioritized by the children in the group of topics. Then, content such as movies and music should not be given priority by the children when discussing this topic. However, in the given scale, the average / topic scores show that the demand for using the mother tongue among ethnic minority students does not tend to be outperformed [5].

Next is the current situation of using mother tongue (ethnic minorities) in communication of ethnic minority students (Table 3).

Table 3. Current situation of using mother tongue in communication

No	Evaluation	Agree	Confused	Disagree
1	Very little communication in ethnic minority languages	20	41	39
2	Use the ethnic language only when speaking with ethnic friends	67	18	15
3	Only use ethnic minority languages when chattering	11	32	57
4	Only use ethnic minority languages when needing information but do not want others to know	26	28	46
5	Sometimes, using ethnic languages makes you feel uncomfortable in communication	48	32	20
6	The teacher (at the school) does not know the ethnic language	20	35	45
7	Use Vietnamese more than ethnic minority languages	54	33	13
8	Can't communicate in ethnic minority languages	6	10	84
9	Often using ethnic minority languages in communication with family members	86	9	5
10	Having difficulties in learning and communicating because teachers do not understand the ethnic minority languages	24	44	32
11	Feeling not confident when communicating in ethnic minority languages	13	32	55
12	I like to use ethnic minority languages in communication	36	43	21
13	Often talk to friends in ethnic minority languages during class breaks	13	24	63
14	The communication between roommates is mainly ethnic minority languages	17	13	70

The fact is that there are only 20% use their mother tongue for communication for many reasons. Feeling unfavorable in communicating in ethnic minority languages is 48%. Then, feeling unsure when communicating in ethnic minority languages is 13%. In addition, 36% of ethnic minority students said that they like to use ethnic minority languages in communication, but in reality, they do not use their mother tongue at a high level since using their mother tongue when talking with their peers is 67%, when gossiping is 11% and when it comes to keeping secrets, they don't want others to know is 26% [8]. Chatting with classmates during recess is about 13%, that is they mainly speak the language in ethnic minority languages when talking with roommates (17%). According to ethnic minority students, factors hindering the use of their mother tongue in communication in schools are just because teachers do not know the ethnic minority language, some ethnic minority students do not know how to communicate in ethnic minority languages, students use Vietnamese more than ethnic minority languages in school (54%).

V. CONCLUSION

Communication in ethnic minority languages has contributed to enriching and diversifying the national cultural identity not only because of the ethnic cultural characteristics in daily life, customs and practices but also a treasure of Indigenous knowledge is stored and circulated in the community by the ethnic minority people. Boarding School for Ethnic Minority Students in Vi Xuyen, Ha Giang Province has a high need to use their mother tongue in communication because it is the language that has followed them since the years they were carried on their backs. At the same time, they are also aware that the ethnic minority language is valuable, a cultural characteristic of the ethnic group in particular and the entire nation in general should be preserved and promoted in all forms in which the form of community communication is a basic form. This fact poses for social managers, education managers, researchers to have specific orientations in the formulation and implementation of measures to conserve ethnic minority languages while minimizing weaknesses and language barriers for ethnic minority students in the process of accessing educational conditions and social progress.

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The authors ensure the quality and integrity of the research. In order to complete this research paper, the author read related documents and journals.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest is noted in the paper.

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