

Language Attitude in Chinese Ethnic Minority Groups

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Introduction

What to study?

Attitude

- State of 'readiness' (Kircher & Zipp, 2022)

Language Attitude

- Tripartite model: **affective, cognitive and behavioural** evaluative reactions towards different languages and their speakers (ibid)
- The classic model lacks sufficient empirical evidence especially in a Chinese context

Why study?

Chinese Context

- 55 Ethnic Minority Groups (125M people)
- Speaking over 80 languages from 5 language families. 30 of them have written forms.
- In regions primarily populated by minority groups, **'trilingualism'** is usually the norm' (Wei et al, 2021: 294).

Minority Language

Putonghua
Lingua Franca

English
(in school)



Chinese Pinyin
Mongolian; Tibetan
Uyghur; Zhuang

(RMB Banknotes 2015 version) (C. Li & W. Li, 2022)

Research Question & Method

- Q:** Does the classic tripartite model of language attitude fit into the Chinese multilingual groups?

How to study? One possible paradigm ↓

Mixed Method (C. Li & W. Li, 2022; Wei et al, 2021)

- Qualitative:** Semi-structured interviews to form the structure of language attitudes
- Quantitative:** Develop the questionnaire based on the interviews and then conduct the survey, using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm the tripartite structure or Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify new models.

Example from C. Li & W. Li's study (2022)

- 5237 students from Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hubei, China.
- Han (34.89%), Tujia (42.81%), Miao (16.92%), other minorities (5.38%).

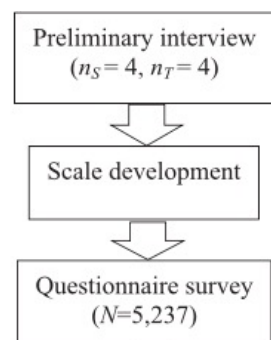


Figure 1: Development process

'Themes' from the qualitative analysis

Cognition: useful; important; educated

Affect: connected; comfortable; attractive

Behavior: study; use; media; class

✓ CFA

✓ **Convergent validity**

✓ **Reliability** (Cronbach's Alpha)

Key Findings (C. Li & W. Li, 2022)

YES! The classic model fits well in the Chinese context.

Table 1: Goodness-of-fit for the tripartite model (N = 5237)

benchmark	χ^2 /	df /	CFI >.90	TLI >.90	SRMR <.08	RMSEA [95% C.I.] <.10
Dialect	1013.752***	32	.95	.94	.08	.08 [.073, .081]
Putonghua	1198.530***	32	.95	.94	.05	.08 [.079, .088]
English	1351.650***	32	.96	.95	.03	.09 [.085, .093]
Ethnic	1098.405***	32	.97	.96	.03	.08 [.076, .084]

***p < .001. CFI: Comparative Fit Index. TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index. SRMR: Standardized Root Mean Square. RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

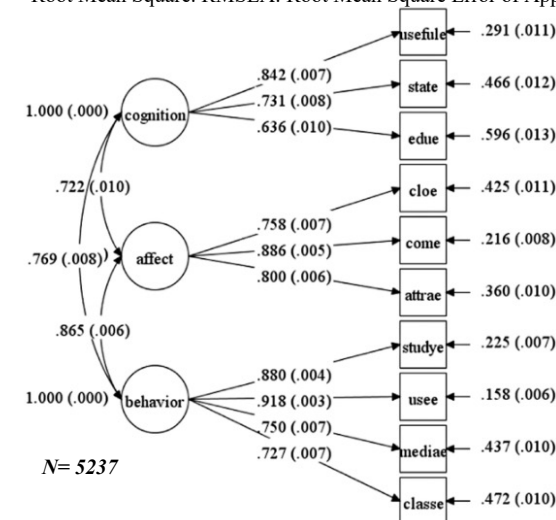


Figure 2: Attitude towards English

Future!

Attitudinal
Difference
+
Language
Achievement
+
Language
Identity



Reference

- [1] Kircher, R., & Zipp, L. (Eds.). (2022). *Research Methods in Language Attitudes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [2] Li, C., & Li, W. (2022). Language attitudes: construct, measurement, and associations with language achievements. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-26.
- [3] Wei, R., Jiang, H., & Kong, M. (2021). Attitudes toward trilingualism: A survey study of Chinese Mongolian university students. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(3), 291-306.

'China is a **linguistically heterogeneous** country' (Wei et al, 2021: 294).