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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **A Study on the Endangered Language: Saving the Oroqen Language of Northern China**

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**ABSTRACT**

The ethnic groups mainly distributed in the northern People's Republic of China include Manchu, Mongolian, Hui, Russian, Korean, Oroqen, Xibe, Hezhen, etc. According to the sixth National Census in 2010, the population of Oroqen is 8,659. In accordance with the 2021 China Statistical Yearbook, the Oroqen have a total population of 9,168. The Oroqen account for only about 0.03 percent of the ethnic minority population in northern China. Despite the rise of the Oroqen population from 2010 to 2021, the relative numbers of Oroqen people compared with other northern ethnic groups are still very small. When a language becomes endangered, there is more than one factor leading to the phenomenon. The assimilation of languages is an inevitable process in the course of globalization. But as a minority language, it stands for cultural consciousness. Under the background of integration, multi-ethnic cultures are particularly precious. The objective of the article is to maintain Oroqen language ideologies and cultural consciousness in the process of globalization and assimilation. This article traces the reasons that lead to the decline of minority language use in northern China by taking the Oroqen language as the case. In the meantime, since the Evenk language and Oroqen language are homologous, we might be able to gain a better understanding of language preservation by looking at how Russia protects the Evenk language. In order to restore the language's vitality, some measures can be taken to give the new Evenks generation more opportunities to connect with their own ethnic language. Finally, on the basis of the current situation of the Oroqen language, this study offers a few suggestions for language protection.

**KEYWORDS**

Language protection, language preservation, endangered language, language ideologies, Oroqen, Evenk, ethnicity

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### **1. Introduction**

Among the ethnic minorities in northern China, Chinese and Mongolian are the languages which are used by the largest population base. Almost every other ethnic group has its own language, with differences in grammar, pronunciation, etc. Although each minority has its own language, the dominant use of language in inter-ethnic communication is still Chinese (Hanyu). For instance, Oroqen is one of the northern ethnic minorities in China, and they are mainly dispersed along the border between China and Russia in Heilongjiang Province and Inner Mongolia in, China. While the Oroqen language is their mother tongue, they have rarely used it, especially for the younger generation. The influences of globalization, sinicization, and other mainstream cultures make "mother tongue" cannot be classified as the first language they use. The reasons that influence the reduction in using Oroqen language will be discussed later in detail.

### **2. Literature Review**

Language ideologies are a particular social group that uses the specific structure and characteristics of a language to express a belief under the cultural influence. It is used to explain "why a particular dominant view of language emerged" (Huang, 2019). Language ideologies represent a sense of belonging. The choice of language implicates the accession of a particular group. Besides, in 1997, famous Chinese sociologist and anthropologist Fei Xiaotong put forward the academic concept --- cultural consciousness after his field trip to the less-populated ethnic groups --- the Oroqen and Hezhen. In the economic globalization and

informatization age, the gradual assimilation of the languages of small ethnic groups is an inevitable phenomenon in the pursuit of integration and intercommunication in human development. However, how to maintain the cognition of the ethnic minorities' own cultures and languages under the impact and baptism of a relatively powerful culture is a problem worth discussing. The Oroqen language ideology and the cultural consciousness of the Oroqen people are gradually on the wane. In the past, the government tried to popularize commonly spoken Chinese in the areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, but now they think about how to successfully introduce English teaching in the minority regions. What remains unchanged is the teaching of their "mother tongue" - the Oroqen language, which has never been put on the agenda but is neglected at the corner. As a symbol of ethnic identity, the transmission and expression of social and cultural consciousness need to be improved urgently. The lack of Oroqen written language is also a major challenge in the process of language transmission.

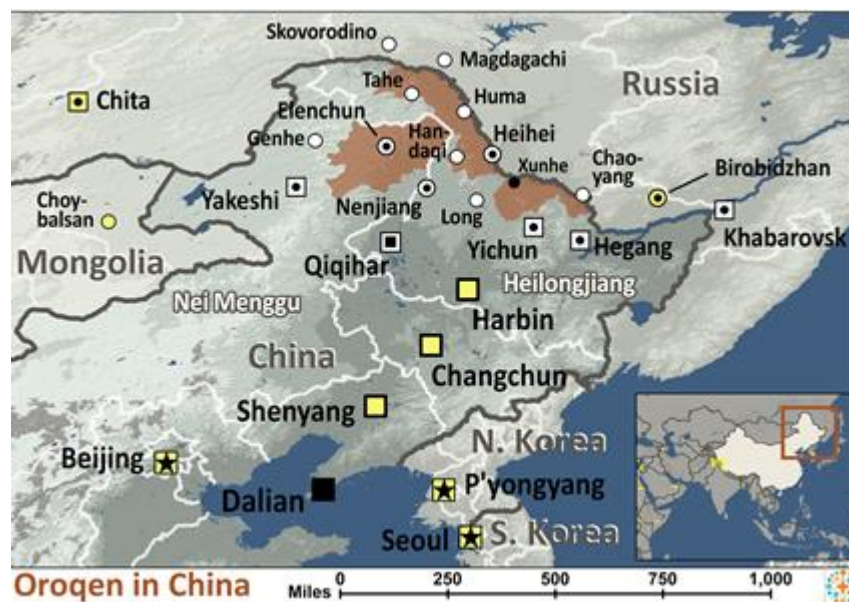
### 3. Methodology

Desk research was primarily used in this article. It is challenging for the author to undertake a field study to obtain a thorough inquiry in the Oroqen area because of the pandemic. As a result, the majority of content and information is gathered online. The majority of items are reputable because they come from scholarly journals or have undergone peer review. They primarily concentrate on the origins and progression of the Oroqen people, the Oroqen language teaching approach, and related government policies designed to safeguard the language and culture. The following paragraphs create deep analysis because acquiring information alone is insufficient.

The article is organized in the following structure. Firstly, the origin of Oroqen and its language will be introduced to provide relevant background information. Then, the concept of "endangered language" will be introduced. Next, the factors which affect the usage of the Oroqen language will be examined. It contains the population problem, alternated lifestyles, limitations of the media, and issues in school language education. Fourth, measurements to protect the Oroqen language will be put forward. Fifth, language policy in Russia will be discussed for reflection and reference. Finally, a conclusion will be made at the end.

### 4. The Origin of Oroqen and Its Language

The ethnic minority groups of northern China is mainly distributed in Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, and Xinjiang.



**Figure 1. Oroqen in China**

Sources: People Group location: IMB. Map geography: ESRI / GMI. Map design: Joshua Project.

According to the sixth national Census (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010), there are a total of 8,659 Oroqen in China, among which 3,943 in Heilongjiang and 3,632 in Inner Mongolia, and the remainder spread across northern China in places like Liaoning, Beijing, and Hebei. Oroqen is one of the northern minorities with the fewest people, ranking fifth from the bottom of China's 56 ethnic groups. In China, where there are more than 13 billion people, Oroqen only makes up 1% of the population. It is worth noting that only half of the Oroqen people currently speak Oroqen.

The Oroqen are a very old nomadic people. They reside in Inner Mongolia, the Taiga regions of Heilongjiang province, and on the spurs of the Greater and Lesser Khingan Mountains. Genetically, the Evenk of Russia is the closest to the Oroqen of China; hence they can also be referred to as Oroqen.

The distinct boundaries between Russia and China in northeast Asia were formalized in the middle of the nineteenth century, in 1858. The ethnic minorities who gathered there at that time, such as the Birars, Manyagirs, and Orochons, were thought of as the peoples of China and had to relocate to the zone, while their genetic relatives, the Evenk, remained in Russia. All of these people eventually adopted the name Oroqens. Oroqens' traditional way of life is based on the domestication of reindeer, which serves as a vital source of food and transportation. In order to pasture their reindeer, Oroqen periodically relocated with their fordable house called "du", which means dwelling.

A small population of Damur, Mongolia, and Han ethnic people who lived near Oroqen people used to take the Oroqen language as their primary communication tool. However, in order to improve economic development, the lumbering industry was expanded to the DaXingAnLing and XiaoXingAnLing regions from the 1950s to the 1960s. The native Oroqen who lived in that area began to communicate with the lumberjack of Han ethnicity. The continuous economic growth in Oroqen regions attracts a large influx of outlanders. More and more Han immigrants were arriving in the region where the Oroqen people gathered. During the Cultural Revolution, minority ethnic groups were forced to learn the Han language. Where the traditional Oroqen lived became a place with the dominant use of the Han Language. According to a survey in the late 1980s, only 51% of the around 4,000 population of Oroqen people still took their own language (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences & State Ethnic Affairs Commission, 1994).

In a survey of Oroqen language usage conducted by Xu and Guan (2001), 41.51% of people could not understand their native language, with the majority of them being young teenagers aged 11 to 20. Younger generations play an important role in the transmission of their native language and culture. However, due to economic and social factors, fewer people are willing to pass on their culture and language. Because Oroqen has no written language, it is only preserved and passed down through the mouths and memories of the older generations. If the older generation dies, the language will vanish quickly.

Battle (2008) used a questionnaire to investigate the Interactive use of the Oroqen language. He devised some simple questions about daily life and polled the locals. He divided them into different groups based on their native language ability. The result shows that Oroqen over the age of 40 could fluently speak their own language, whereas a part of people in their thirties cannot. Without any knowledge of their native tongue, those under the age of 30 found the Oroqen language to be completely foreign.

## **5. Endangered Language**

A conference on the preservation of endangered languages took place at UNESCO in Paris in March 2003. Linguistic experts collaborated on a report titled "Language Vitality and Endangerment". There are numerous factors that influence language vitality; no single factor is sufficient to evaluate the state of a language in a community. Scholars and experts assess a language function for its maintenance and revitalization by using nine criteria:

- (1) International Language Transmission (scale)
- (2) Absolute Number of Speakers (real numbers)
- (3) Proportion of Speakers within the Total Population (scale)
- (4) Trends in Existing Language Domain (scale)
- (5) Response to New Domains and Media (scale)
- (6) Material for Language Education and Literacy (scale)
- (7) Official Status and Use: Governmental and Institutional Language Attitudes And Policies (scale)
- (8) Community Members' Attitudes toward Their Own Language (scale)
- (9) Amount and Quality of Documentation (scale)

Language endangerment is a trend of linguistic diversity. A language is endangered when it is on a path toward extinction (Drude, 2003). The fewer people who use this type of language, the narrower the scope of its influential function. Languages can be thought of as a diverse pool, the shrinking of a language pool results in a loss of linguistic diversity (Denghazi & Gerel, 2017). If the linguistic function of one language deteriorates to the point where almost no people use it, the language becomes endangered. The evolution and development of an endangered language are like a vicious spiral; if it is not properly protected, it will eventually die out.

Language endangerment is a linguistic phenomenon as well. The advancement of the social history of linguistics is a continuous process in which multiethnic languages mingle unceasingly. During the course, some languages survive and become the dominant language of several ethnicities, while others, such as the Oroqen language, gradually lose their influence of linguistic function in a certain place and become endangered. Language evolution is similar to the "natural selection" of animals in that only those who

conform to the trend of the times survive. However, language evolution is much more complicated than animal evolution, and many more factors can have an impact on a single language.

Below is a standard proposed by Brenzinger to determine the degree of language endangerment, from safe to extinct; he classifies five categories (Brenzinger, 2015):

'safe'		a+		
<i>endangered</i>	<i>indecline</i>	<i>stable</i>		all speak, children & up
		<i>instable;</i> <i>eroded</i>	<i>a</i>	some children speak; all children speak in some places
		<i>definitively</i> <i>endangered</i>	<i>b</i>	spoken only by parental generation and up
		<i>severely</i> <i>endangered</i>	<i>c</i>	spoken only by grandparental generation and up
	<i>critically</i> <i>endangered</i>	<i>d</i>	spoken only by very few, of great-grandparental generation	
<i>extinct</i>		<i>e</i>	no speakers	

According to Kloss and McConnell (1989), language ideologies is a "cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (p. 255). Language is not just an austere vessel of culture but a more vivid ideology representing a sense of ethnic identity. Through the usage of language, people are able to collaborate and form their own communities. People in a tribe do not want to lose their own language because of its long history and communication value.. Language represents a cultural consciousness and can elicit exuberant emotion within an ethnicity. Nevertheless, language endangerment has become a worldwide issue. The way to solve the problem has attracted global attention.

## 6. Factors Affecting the Usage of Oroqen Language

When a language becomes endangered, the most visible manifestation of this phenomenon is a decrease in the number of users. The dominant language replaces the minority language, which sits in a relatively weak position, resulting in a shift in the number of language users. Economic factors have allowed more people of Han ethnicity to settle in the Oroqen regions, and political factors have forced the Oroqen people to abandon their traditional nomadic practices in favor of farming and planting. Furthermore, the limited availability of the Oroqen language in the media and on the Internet makes the language less accessible. Last but not least, a crucial element in minority language acquisition and development is the language instruction provided in Oroqen schools.

### 6.1 More Populations with Han Ethnicity Came to the Oroqen Region

As previously stated, with the establishment of the Forestry Bureau and lumber mill in DaXingAnLing and XiaoXingAnLing, where Oroqen lived, many forest workers of Han ethnicity flocked in during the 1960s. In addition, the construction of highways and railways accompanied the swift development of the national economy, making migration easier. According to Wu Fugui, a 62-year-old resident of Guli Leimin Village, "Han people are everywhere" (ZhaGanShan, 2012). The Oroqen Autonomous Banner had a population of 297,400 people as of the fifth census taken in 2000, with only 2,050 of those being Oroqen (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Oroqen people only compose a relatively small part of the Autonomous Banner's population; the dominant component is Han ethnicity people, who speak Han Language. The Han language is Chinese, and the standard language of modern Chinese is "Putonghua", which is also called Mandarin (Modern Chinese Dictionary). Since most people use Chinese, as a small proportion who wish to communicate with them, Oroqen chose to learn Chinese. Especially for younger Oroqen, their linguistic ecology is surrounded by Chinese; they seldom have the opportunity to learn the Oroqen language. Sarcastically, the Chinese replaced the Oroqen language and became their "mother tongue".

### 6.2 The Alternation of Oroqens Traditional Lifestyle

Because of the geographical environment, which was very cold in winter and cool in summer, traditional Oroqen people depended on breeding horses and reindeer. They roamed their horses in mountain-forest regions for hunting, and the hunting meat, like deer, became Oroqens' main food source. They wore fur coats, fur hats, and suede mittens. On January 23, 1996, and February 8, 1996, the People's Government of Oroqen Autonomous Banner promulgated the Announcement on *Banning the Hunting of Wild Animals* and the *Detailed Rules for Implementation* successively (ZhaGanShan, 2010). Due to the law stipulated by the Chinese government, Oroqen were no longer allowed to hunt. They were encouraged to participate in agriculture and animal husbandry. Most Oroqen became sedentary and discarded the nomadic lifestyle. They were forced to jump out of the forest and had to embrace a "normal" lifestyle; their ideology had to change from primitive to modern. A large influx of Chinese technology, medical treatment, etc., drove them to learn Chinese and integrate with Chinese culture. Furthermore, due to the small population of the

Oroqen ethnic group, intermarriage with the Han ethnicity has become one of the crucial ways for the Oroqen ethnic group to reproduce and persist. Interethnic marriage is the necessary development of the future. The shift in living environment forces the Oroqen people to adapt to the integration of multi-cultures. Oroqen urgently needs the transformation of their own culture to strengthen ethnic identification.

### **6.3 Limitations of Internet and Media**

In a nowadays technology-oriented era, the Internet and social media are among the simplest and fastest approaches to receiving and processing information. And they are also an important medium in transporting languages. Unfortunately, because Oroqen does not have their own script, the main written languages they employ are Chinese or Mongol, with the former being ubiquitous in news, entertainment, and television shows. Furthermore, there are nearly no TV channels using Oroqen. According to the *Annals of Oroqen Autonomous Banner*, "In order to preserve and promote the learning and use of the Oroqen ethnic language, in 1994 and 1995, the National and Religious Affairs Bureau of the Oroqen Autonomous Banner, the TV Station, and the Oroqen Ethnic Research Institute jointly set up the conversational teaching column of the Oroqen language on TV. However, due to the lack of the learning environment of the Oroqen ethnic language, the language teaching programme was suspended" (Jin, 2016, p. 118). The language protection path is obstructed and lengthy as a result of the absence of language documentation, which has visual and simple-to-save characteristics.

A similar situation happens in the Evenk language of Russia, too. It has almost never been used in the media; the written messages for Evenk are usually in Russian or Yakut. However, better than the situation of the Oroqen language is that Evenk in Russia has its own TV channels. Professor Morozova from Amur State University stated that "There is one Evenk newspaper and two Evenk TV channels". Yet the quantity of the TV channel is still an extremely small portion of power for language preservation.

### **6.4 Language Education in Schools**

The Chinese government has been paying attention to language diversity and ethnic harmony for a long time. And it emphasizes language education from the school level. Many regulations and laws have been put forward. The Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the law of the People's Republic of China on ethnic and regional autonomy, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Standard Chinese Language, the Education Law of the People's Republic of China, Compulsory education law in the People's Republic of China, and other laws and regulations, identify the ethnic language equally co-exist, and ban on any form of language discrimination (Ministry of Education of the PRC). The laws indicate that all ethnic groups have the equal right and freedom to use and maintain their own spoken and written languages. In the meantime, promoting Putonghua and standardizing Chinese characters is a long-term goal that the Chinese government dedicates. Although many laws and regulations have been proposed, the Oroqen language still becomes endangered; the key reason is schooling. There are a series of problems existing in the school system, such as impotent quality of faculty, boring teaching content, insufficient Oroqen teaching time, and so on ((Shi & Yu, 2016).

In 1986, The New Oroqen Nationality School in the Aihui District of Heihe City opened the Oroqen language class (Sun & Song, 2010). It marks the beginning of developing and testing the Oroqen ethnic language education. Because Oroqen schools are scattered in various places, each school doesn't have a uniform standard for language teaching and textbook writing. The teaching material is compiled and decided by each school. Usually, the content is simple, printing is rough, and there will often be some mistakes. Subsequently, with the increasing attention of relevant government departments to language education, the *Oroqen Ethnic Language* was compiled and published by the Education Department of Heilongjiang Province in Mar 2004 (Zhang & Wang, 2009, p. 120). Later on, the material of Oroqen language education has a uniform standard. It is only one small step on the road to language education, but more research begins to flourish after that. Chen and Zhao (2009) point out that the quality of Oroqen teachers is uneven; the traditional teaching method makes students feel bored or even comes with negative attitudes towards Oroqen language learning. Additionally, the textbook is not captivating enough to hold students' interest. The release of useful Oroqen language textbooks is a positive thing; however, it is not the only beneficial aspect. More revisions to textbook material and instructional strategies are required.

## **7. Ways to Protect Oroqen Language**

### **7.1 Establish Appropriate Cultural Value**

First and foremost, the popularity of the Chinese language in the northern ethnic minority regions is not exactly equivalent to sinicization. Sinicization refers to the imposition of Han Chinese culture on ethnic minorities. The ethnic minorities choose to absorb and accept the Han culture while maintaining their own cultural identity. Their selective acceptance is based on the practicality of the language rather than a blanket acceptance. Secondly, the fall of ethnic minorities is an inevitable result of globalization and modernization. Modernization is a global development trend that has its own set of principles and is not controlled or operated by any government. In the collision and conflict of modernization, both the Han and the ethnic minorities face the common challenge of the decline and modification of traditional practices. Finally, cultural transformation does not imply fully abandoning

the ethnic minority's own culture and blindly accepting mainstream ideology but rather maintaining a profound and sober cultural consciousness and identity while inheriting and nurturing the distinctive culture of one's own ethnicity.

### **7.2 Encourage Relevant Research on Oroqen Ethnic Language**

The earliest relevant research on Oroqen emerged in the 1930s. In the related research, which appeared successively, they mainly focused on the study of phonetics. There were fewer outcomes on syntax or semantics. In addition, the comparative study, protection study, and language education study of the Oroqen language don't get much attention, and relative academic documentation is also extremely limited. The most famous research on Oroqen language is *The Studies on the Oroqen Language*, written by Hu Zengyi (Hu, 2001). Other research, like *An illustrated dictionary of Oroqen*, which is taken by many Inner Mongolia experts, is still under preparation. Therefore, much more concentration can be taken on the applied linguistic function of Oroqen. Recently, the government has been concerned with the preservation of the Oroqen language and has come up with a lot of research activities. In 2020, the *Pronunciation dictionary of the Oroqen Language* was released, which contains more than a thousand traditional folk songs with the explanation of IPA. This marks a positive trend in language protection; it is believed that more research on ethnic minority languages will be taken in the near future.

### **7.3 Promote cultural exchanges and inheritance**

Language is an important medium of cultural learning as well as a means of cultural transmission. Many folk talents and opera performances are becoming extinct as a result of the endangered Oroqen language. Because the folk artists, such as Wei Linxiang, and Meng Delin, passed away one after another, one of the Oroqen folk characteristic performance customs --- Mosukun singing art, is in a tragic state of extinction (Liu & Guan, 2018). But in recent years, there has been a progressive improvement in the state of cultural inheritance, and a succession of different human activities has taken place. The 8th Ethnic Minority Arts Exhibition was held in Heilongjiang in 2017, and the stage was set with the distinctive Oroqen original ecological music and harmonica performance, which received a lot of applause. In June 2022, telling Oroqen stories activity is held in Oroqen Autonomous Banner. The Oroqen Autonomous Banner promotes the development of local tourism by setting cultural and educational tourism. For example, tourists can visit the local museums to learn the history and language of the Oroqen people. They can also participate in Oroqen dances, taste cuisine, and try to communicate with Oroqen people by learning the local language, which will be much more fun for them. Many similar activities can be carried out to emphasize the importance of the language and culture of the Oroqen ethnic group.

### **7.4 Changes in Education Method**

Language acquisition requires effective teaching methods. Beginning with speaking, teachers should teach pupils the correct pronunciation by opening their mouths. They should lead by example. In addition to concentrating on instructor modeling, pupils are also urged to relate the pronunciation to the character's shape. Teachers might also create ballads to assist pupils in mastering the pronunciation guideline. There are only 19 consonants in Oroqen and no compound vowels in the vernacular word. Meanwhile, if youngsters can hear some classic Oroqen songs while learning the language, it will be easier for them to perceive.

Traditional education methods based on scrambling are not suitable for students. Forcing them to remember the words they are not familiar with will make them feel bored, ultimately leading to their resistance to language learning. If the teaching methods can be diversified and interesting, students' interests can be aroused in learning Oroqen. For primary school students, interest is the best teacher. Fruitful activities can be designed to stimulate students' enthusiasm for learning. For instance, teachers can design a game called "drive a train". One "train" stands for an easy sentence they learn in the day. A sentence consists of some vowels and consonants. Each student has to find an IPA card and put them in a proper sequence; only when all the IPA composes the right sentence can the train take off. Take the sentence "si aja yie?" as an example, which means "how are you" in English. There are many vowel and consonant cards; each student should take one and put them in a sequence like "s" "i" "a" "j" "a". During the process, students not only enjoy the joy brought by the game but also feel the charm of the traditional language.

Textbooks are an important carrier of educational practice. It is also a useful tool in training students' reading and writing abilities. Research shows that compared to the black-white characters boringly printed in the textbook, colorful pictures can help students recognize quickly and learn languages better. With vivid photos, students can have a deeper impression of certain words. Their imagination is beyond the limitation of teachers' narration. The proper use of visual aids in teaching, especially video teaching means, can make the complex and abstract teaching content appear simple, clear, and concrete. For example, teachers can use PowerPoint or present documentation when they illustrate Oroqen culture and language. But one real problem is that some schools are located in remote areas, and it could be impossible for them to get many expensive video teaching media. The government should allocate money to improve the equipment quality in those distant schools. The intuitive teaching method makes the words more vivid and natural, stimulates the interest of the students, and forms a more profound impression.

## **8. Evenk Language Preservation in Russia**

Oroqen people in China and Evenk people in Russia have the same ethnic origin and share a similar development path. The facial features of the older generation of Evenk were alike. But when the border between China and Russia settled down, the Oroqen people who live on the Russian border became a part of the Evenk people and are also called Evenk. Nowadays, there are only around a thousand Evenk people in Russia, making the Evenk language face a similar endangered dilemma. However, some remedial measures have been implemented to give a new-born of the Evenk language, which is a valuable experience in language preservation reference.

### **8.1 Language Use at School**

Though Evenk language only takes place in a limited sphere of traditional activities, the Amur government still encourages language use in schools. The younger generation is an excellent vehicle for language transmission. In order to keep the language alive, the Evenk language is introduced in kindergarten classes. Besides compulsory exposure to the Evenk language at the preschool level, the Evenk language is also recommended in primary school in Russia as an elective course.

### **8.2 Legislation to Protect Language**

In accordance with federal legislation, the Evenk language in the Amur Region in Russia is defined as "The language of the indigenous people of the Russian Federation" (Article 16 of the Constitution Amur region). This means that every Evenk has the right to speak his own language wherever, including in court. Fortunately, China has similar legislation too. It defends the equal rights of language use in every ethnic group. Given that much of the legislation has not made much of a splash, more detailed and specific legislation conforming to ethnic characteristics needs to be enacted.

### **8.3 Type and Quality of Documentation of the Evenk Language in Russia**

Documentation is an efficient way to preserve a language because of its writability and audibility. Documentation is easy to store and can be kept for a long period of time. According to Kings, "many retrieval projects take documentation as a necessity and a goal in sustaining and preserving an endangered language" ((King et al., 2008). Many linguistic researchers in educational and scientific institutions have carried out lots of language documentation. Systematic research on the Evenk language started in the 1930s. In the process of documentation study, fruitful results have been produced. Plenty of articles and books related to phonetics, morphology, syntax, grammar, and dialects emerge one after another. Several Evenk and Russian bilingual dictionaries have been compiled. In the midst of a wealth of research, S. Shirokogorov plays a very important role. Sergey Shirokogorov mainly focuses on the study of northeastern regions around the Russia and China border. He dedicated all his life to the research of the Oroqens and the Evenks and has many outstanding publications. Nowadays, in the Pushkin Museum in St. Petersburg, a recording of the Evenki dialect speech materials can still be seen on wax rollers.

### **8.4 Local Holidays Bring People Together**

Local national holidays are of great importance in the preservation of the Evenk culture. Bakaldyn is a celebration in which Evenk people meet each other. In August, all Amur Evenks will come to Blagoveshchensk to see each other, chat about the latest news, and sit together at a festive table. Moreover, the Evenk language competitions and concerts will be held. Craftsmen will sell national clothes, souvenirs, amulets, and talismans. During the three days of the local festival, Blagoveshchensk will be the center of the Evenk culture exchange. With deep communications and various activities, the festival strengthens the unity of Evenks. In addition to the local Evenk, tourists are also welcome to attend the festival. During a Russian-Chinese culture fair held by the Russian government annually in June, tourists can have the chance to experience the Evenks' culture and learn about their language. Mutual cultural learning and interactions between China and Russia have gradually expanded in recent years. Since 2014, Heihe Municipal Bureau and Amur State University have jointly held seven consecutive Oroqen Language competitions for Chinese and Russian teenagers. Heihe City in China hosts an exhibition of ethnic products and aggressively invites the Russian Oroqen ethnic community to participate in the exhibition and exchange. The Oroqen ethnic group from both countries undertake a theoretical conversation on the production of traditional hand art in order to evoke ancestral memory and cultural cohesion.

## **9. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis above, the Oroqen language became an endangered language due to population factors, environmental changes, media transmission limitations, and language teaching methodology. Moreover, a language without the written word and only spoken by a relatively small number of people are extremely vulnerable, especially as the dominant culture and language ramp up the linguistic ecosystem. As a result, when dealing with the tremendous impact of the dominant language, language documentation, and language instruction is critical. In language teaching, the vitality of Oroqen can be maintained by the exploration and innovation of teaching design and content of the material. Festivals and local tourism can increase people's awareness of the importance of language protection, too.

The Oroqen language is the civilization achievement created and accumulated by the Oroqen people over a long history of production and life development, and it contains the precious traditional culture and spiritual wealth of the Oroqen people. The older generation of Oroqen is like living linguistic fossils. If a language can only be spoken by the older generation, it is seriously threatened. It takes work to keep a language alive. However, there are numerous successful examples of endangered languages being restored, such as Welsh in the United Kingdom, Sami in Finland, and the Maori language in New Zealand. The preservation of the languages of ethnic minorities will be a concern shared by all nations in the changing world.

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