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ДУНГАННОН СТУДЕНТТЕРИНИН ТИЛДИ КОЛДОНУУ СУРАМЖЫЛООСУ

ОПРОС ОБ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИИ ЯЗЫКОВ ДУНГАНСКИМИ СТУДЕНТАМИ

#### A SURVEY ON THE LANGUAGE USE OF DUNGAN STUDENTS

**Аннотация:** Казакстан, Кыргызстан жана Өзбекстандан келген 182 дунган студенттеринин изилдөөснин негизинде Кытайда билим алган дунгандардын санынын көбөйншн менен жаңы муундагы дунган студенттеринин кытай тилин билин жыштыгы жана деңгээли жакшырганы аныкталган. олуттуу, жана алардын Кытай өлкөсн менен идентификациясы, улуту, дини жана өлкөсн бара-бара жакшырды.

**Аннотация:** На основе исследования 182 студентов-дунган из Казахстана, Кыргызстана и Узбекистана установлено, что с увеличением числа обучающихся в Китае дунган частота и уровень владения китайским языком среди нового поколения студентов-дунган значительно улучшились, и их идентификация с Китаем, этнической принадлежностью, религией и культурой постепенно улучшились.

**Abstract:** Based on the study of 182 Dungan student from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, it is found that with the increase in the number of Dungan people studying in China, the frequency and proficiency of the use of Chinese among the new generation of Dungan student are greatly improved, and their identification to China's country, ethnicity, religion and country gradually improved.

**Негизги сөздөр:** дунгандар; дунган тили; Тилди колдонуу; Борбордук Азия; Тиндик-Батыш педагогикалык университети.

**Ключевые слова:** дунгане; дунганский язык; Использование языка; Центральная Азия; Северо-Западный педагогический университет.

**Keywords:** Dungan people; Dungan language; language use; Central Asia; Northwestern Pedagogical University.

### I. Analysis on Investigation Background

The Dungan people of Central Asia are descendants of the Muslim people in Gansu and Shaanxi provinces of China. Due to complex historical reasons, they settled in Central Asia after three migrations. At present, they have a population of more than 150,000, making them the largest group of overseas Muslims in China. Over the past more than 100 years, the Dungan people have inherited the tradition of diligence and wisdom of the Chinese nation, and have gradually been accepted by the local people of Central Asian countries and won recognition and praise from the mainstream culture. For more than one hundred years, their local pronunciation has not changed, and their customs are still the same, preserving the language and customs of the

Hui culture in northwest China. With the deepening of the "Belt and Road Construction" in Central Asia, the number of Dungan people studying in China has increased, and the frequency and proficiency of Chinese among the new generation of Dungan people has greatly improved. With the deepening understanding of Chinese traditional culture, the new generation of Dungan people's identity to the Chinese country, ethnic, religious and country also gradually improved.

Dungan language is a language used by the Dungan people, which comes from the northwest dialect of modern Chinese. Based on the basic vocabulary and grammatical structure of northwest dialect, it integrates and absorbs the multi-ethnic language components of Central Asia, which is the variant of Shaanxi dialect and Gansu dialect in Central Asia. It is mainly distributed in the Chu River basin between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and around Issyk Lake. It belongs to the North dialect of Sino-Tibetan Chinese and the northwest branch dialect of Central Plains Mandarin.

As one of the cross-border ethnic groups, Dungan also encountered problems of adaptation and development with the host country and surrounding ethnic groups in language and culture in the process of survival and development. Especially in recent years, under the influence of Pan Turkic Ideology, Central Asian countries have introduced Language Localization policies and adopted Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and other main national languages by state decree. This policy, while aimed primarily at Russian, also limited the development of other national languages. At the same time, Central Asian countries are demanding the Latinization of the original Kirill language, which will have a great impact on the Dungan language.

Because the Dungan people are scattered in Central Asia, their population only accounts for 0.2% of the total in Central Asia. They are in a weak position in language and are easy to be assimilated by the surrounding strong national languages. It is difficult to maintain the purity of their mother tongue[7]. Relevant data show that the comprehensive frequency of Dungan language only 30.8% among Dungan people, which has become an endangered language and has a trend of gradual extinction. Therefore, it is particularly necessary to solve the crisis of the use of Dungan language and its atrophy and to find ways for its successful transformation in the process of Language Localization.

As the new generation of Dungan ethnic group, Dungan students have experienced the process of specialization of political status of the main ethnic group in Central Asia and nationalization of the main ethnic language since their birth. The reconstruction process of the main ethnic culture in the Central Asian countries is a severe test to the Dungan nationality both culturally and psychologically[3]. In order to keep the purity of the language and characters of the Dungan ethnic group and develop them for a long time under the main political and cultural background, the Dungan ethnic group has made a lot of efforts and attempts, including using the Dungan media, establishing the Dungan schools and publications, and compiling textbooks and books reflecting the history and culture of the Dungan ethnic group. Especially in recent years, under the circumstances that "Latinization of Language and Characters" has become the common language policy of Central Asian countries, Dungan people have to seek more opportunities and ways to make their own culture derived[5]. Sending their children to China to learn Chinese has become one of their main choices.

Dungan students are bilingual or multilingual language users who mainly use Dungan language. They can use Dungan language, Russian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, English, Turkish, Arabic and Chinese respectively depending on the conversation partner, topic and occasion[6]. Northwest Normal University has almost 200 Dungan students from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan respectively for undergraduate study of Teaching Chinese to Speakers of other

languages in four grades and 10 classes. How does their language use reflect the use and development of Dungan under the background of "Language Localization", and how does learning in China affect their national identity and cultural identity? It is worth our in-depth investigation and research.

Based on the above reasons, since September 2021, the author has conducted a questionnaire survey on language use and cultural identity of Dungan student studying Chinese in our school. The content involves their personal situation, language learning and use, national language policy, family language use, understanding of their own national history and culture, understanding of Chinese history and culture, national sense of belonging and so on. In order to ensure the full, comprehensiveness and representativeness of the investigation, information tracking of Dungan student in different grades and countries was conducted in stages, supplemented by interviews.

# Investigation and analysis of language use among Dungan International Students

Questionnaires were distributed to 182 Dungan international students in stages. A total of 182 questionnaires were sent out and 182 were collected with a recovery rate of 100%, among which 180 were valid with an effective rate of 99%. The questionnaire was set up in Chinese and Russian respectively. Due to their language habits or Chinese proficiency, the student of Dungan mostly chose Russian to answer the questionnaire.

The basic information of this survey is as follows: there are 154 male students, accounting for 85%; There are 28 girls in total, accounting for 15%. 68 Kazakh nationals, accounting for 37.4%; 101 Kyrgyz nationals, accounting for 55.5 percent; 13 people from Uzbekistan, accounting for 7.1% (from 2015 to recruit children of Uzbekistan Dungan student). The respondents were born between 2000 and 2007 and ranged in age from 16 to 23, with an average age of about 20. The longest time

of learning Chinese is 5 years, the shortest is 0.5 years, and the average time of learning Chinese is 2.5 years. The respondents all have bachelor's degree, see Table 1.

Basic Gender nationality age Chinese information learning time Male 154 Kazakhstan 68 The youngest: The shortest 16 years old 0.5 year The oldest: 23 The longest 5 Female 28 Kyrgyzstan 101 years old years Uzbekistan 13 Average: 20 Average 2.5 years years old Total 182 182

Table 1. Survey on the basic situation of Dungan students

The questionnaire and interview show that the living environment of Dungan students is mainly divided into urban and rural areas. Dungan students from Kazakhstan are mainly from rural areas, while Dungan students from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are mostly from cities. Their parents work mainly in business, education, agriculture and other jobs, and most of the students come from modest families.

In terms of the language used in the questionnaire, only a small number of people can proficiently use Chinese. In terms of activities, they have participated in the International Students' Cultural Festival of the university and the province, the National Dungan Students' Fellowship, interviews with national leaders, their own National Day celebrations, Silk Road Cultural Expo and other cultural or sports activities. For example, Dungan international students have participated in the "Cultural Investigation Activities in Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture of Gansu Province" every year since they were enrolled. In addition, there are other activities held by the school, such as Chinese character dictation competition, Li Bai's Broken leaves poetry recitation, Trinity teaching Competition, etc. Their participation in these activities is extensive, their enthusiasm is high, and their achievements are remarkable. The author will take 3 grades Dungan students in our school as an example to analyze and explain the language use of Dungan overseas students.

There are 138 Dungan students in these 3 grades, including 117 boys and 21 girls. Among them, 50 were from Kazakhstan, 80 from Kyrgyzstan and 8 from Uzbekistan. They are between the ages of 18 and 23, with an average age of around 20, and have a relatively balanced performance in language learning and use. The questionnaire mainly focused on their mother or first language, Chinese learning (time, place, reason, level, HSK), the use of mother language, and the use of other languages such as English, Arabic and Turkish.

First, the use of mother tongue or first language. 86 (62.5%) of the respondents spoke Dungan language as their mother tongue or first language. 3 (2.5%) speak Kazakh as their first language; 41 (30%) speak Kyrgyz as their first language; 8 people speak Russian as their first language, accounting for 5%. See Table 2.

Table 2. Survey on language use of Dungan students

Mother tongue or first language	Dungan language	Kazakh	Kyrgyz	Russian
Number	86	3	41	8
Account	62.5%	2.5%	30%	5%

As can be seen from the above table, Dungan students who speak Dungan language as their mother or first language show a high degree of identification and belonging to their native language. These students are mainly from the areas inhabited by the Dungan ethnic group, and the Dungan language is the main language for daily communication. Those who speak Kazakh as their first language were told by the interview that they could not use Dungan language. Influenced by the national language policy and the surrounding environment, they turned to Kazakh and took it as their mother tongue[3].

Because the families of Dungan students, who speak Kyrgyz as their mother tongue or first language, mostly live in cities, far away from Dungan inhabited areas, their families use Dungan language less frequently and gradually forget Dungan language. They are influenced by their families and generally do not speak Dungan language. At the same time, under the influence of the surrounding environment, the children of Dungan who speak Kyrgyz as their mother language or first language and Russian as their first language do not use Dungan language except that they are far away from the Dungan settlement area and do not use Dungan as their first language, and their use of Russian as their first language is mainly due to the

influence of their father or mother's Russian nationality. It can be seen from the analysis that the use and recognition of Dungan by Dungan students still play a dominant role in all languages, but it should also be seen that the "Language Localization" policy of Central Asian countries has a distinct impact on the language use of Dungan. At the same time, the Dungan themselves still need to work hard to protect the national language unity and long-term operation[3].

Second, Chinese learning. This includes the time and place of learning Chinese, the reason for learning Chinese and the level of Chinese of the respondents. Of the 138 people surveyed, the longest time of learning Chinese is 5 years, the shortest time is 1 year, and the average time of learning Chinese is 3 years. Among them, a total of 45 students had Chinese learning experience before entering the school, accounting for 32.5%. The learning time ranges from two months to three years, mainly about one year. The places of study are Confucius institutes, primary schools or companies in their home countries and in China. There are five reasons for learning Chinese: 34 people love learning and want to learn Chinese well, accounting for 25%; 79 people were interested in Chinese language and Chinese culture, accounting for 57.5%; 25 people, accounting for 17.5%, learned Chinese because of work. In terms of Chinese proficiency, Chinese is good, 42 people passed the HSK4 examination, accounting for 30.4%.

According to the survey, the main motivation for Dungan students to learn Chinese is to have a deep understanding of Chinese language and Chinese culture. This motivation has a great role in helping and promoting their study, and also helps them to learn and understand Chinese culture in a better and deeper way and increase their sense of national cultural identity[1].

Thirdly, the use of the Russian language. According to the questionnaire, although the mother tongue or first language of the respondents is different, the vast majority of the respondents use Russian, 131 people in total, accounting for 95% of the total. The use of Russian can be divided into four levels: 7 users, accounting for 5%; 49 people are good at Russian, accounting for 37.5%;

Russian is very good 30 people, accounting for 22.5%; Russian very good 45 people, accounting for 35%, see Table 3.

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Usage of	Can use Russian	Good	Fairly Good	Fluently	
Russian					
Number	7	49	30	45	
Proportion	5%	37.5%	22.5%	30%	

Table 3. Investigation on the use of Russian by Dungan students

According to the survey, Russian still occupies a very important position in the language of Dungan students, and the proportion even exceeds Dungan language. The main reason lies in the irreplaceable role of Russian in ethnic communication. Since independence, Central Asian countries have generally adopted the policy of "Language Localization" to some extent in order to resist the deep-rooted influence of Russian. Many countries even restrict the use of Russian by constitution. In addition to political factors, it is more for the purpose of protecting the development of national language of their main body. However, through the investigation and research of some scholars on the language policy of Central Asia, especially the use and development of Russian under the background of "Language Localization" policy in Central Asia, it can be known that although Russian is excluded from the law as the first language, its

influence formed over a long period of time can not be ignored, and it still plays an irreplaceable role in the process of communication between people of all ethnic groups in Central Asia. The influence of Russian in Central Asia still exists and will continue. Therefore, the ethnic groups in Central Asia still regard it as an important choice when learning and using the language, and Dungan people is no exception[3,4].

Fourth, the use of other languages. This included the respondents' knowledge or proficiency in English, Arabic and Turkish respectively. According to the survey, the above three languages also have a great influence on the Dungan students, especially the high proportion of English. Of the respondents, 10 (7.2%) is able to speak English. Two (1.4%) can speak Arabic. 2 people with good command of Turkish, accounting for 1.4%, see Table 4.

Table 4. Survey on the use of English, Arabic and Turkish among Dungan students

Language	English	Arabic	Turkish
Number	10	2	2
Proportion	7.2%	1.4%	1.4%

According to the survey, although English, Arabic and Turkish are not the main languages, they still occupy a place in the language use in Dungan students. The higher percentage is English, mainly due to its global influence, including in Central Asia and Dungan. The respondents who can use English are mainly interested in themselves. Some even graduated from specialized English schools, and some hope to engage in English-related jobs, so they have high interest in English learning and high level. Arabic and Turkish speakers attend specialized schools to learn Arabic or Turkish, mainly out of interest or at the request of their parents and families. The Arabic language learners mainly come from the needs of religious and commercial cooperation. Turkish has a great influence in Central Asia. Many specialized Turkish schools have been established, and many parents require their children to learn Turkish for better development in the future.

To sum up, taking Dungan students of three grades in our school as an example, this paper investigates and analyzes the language use of Dungan children from four aspects. It is found that in the background of "Language Localization policies", ethnic attributes and communicative utility are the most important factors to determine their language use. Meanwhile, the main ethnic language of Central Asia, namely "national language", has increasingly significant influence on the language of Dungan students. In this process, due to the increasing national strength of China and the increasingly close communication with Central Asia, Dungan students' enthusiasm for learning Chinese is increasingly rising and deepening, and their understanding of Chinese language and Chinese culture is increasingly strengthened, which helps them to better assume the responsibility of cultural transmission ambassadors after completion of their studies. At the same time, under the increasingly severe " Language Localization " and "Latinization" policies in Central Asia, Chinese has become an important breakthrough and effective way to solve the crisis of Dungan language islands and endangered languages. Inherit and transmit Dungan language, continue to retain Dungan language and its purity, better develop Dungan language and Dungan script under the surrounding of the main national language and strong national language, and relieve the "dialect island" crisis of Dungan language. In the process of Latinization of Central Asian Kirill languages, a series of important tasks such as how to transform and keep the close relationship with the northwest Shaanxi and Gan dialects of China will fall on the shoulders of the new generation of Dungan students.

### III. Analysis of Cultural Identity of Dungan students

Although the Dungan people were defined as an independent ethnic community in Central Asia in 1924, the Dungan people still maintain their identity as Hui Muslims. Compared with Hui nationality, the development of Dungan people in Central Asia is obviously multi-colored, but its core is still Han culture and Islamic culture. At the same time, in order to distinguish the surrounding Muslim ethnic groups, more tend to Chinese culture, namely Chinese traditional cultural characteristics. Dungan people's awareness of China is not only limited to the recognition of Chinese Hui Muslims, but also appears in the consciousness of Chinese people. This phenomenon is also reflected in other overseas immigrants[1].

Based on the characteristics of Dungan nationality, such as national sexuality, language and culture, this paper discusses the origin and inheritance relationship between Dungan nationality and Chinese traditional culture, so as to strengthen the sense of identity and belonging of Dungan nationality and make them better serve as the bridge of promoting Chinese culture. The survey mainly includes four aspects:

First, the recognition of Dungan ethnic sexuality and ethnic identity consciousness. The Dungan ethnic group in Central Asia is an independent ethnic group abroad, but it has the same origin with the Hui ethnic group in northwest China in terms of cultural origin, ethnic characteristics, ethnic ideas and ethnic identity. Accept and advocate traditional culture education, take Chinese as its national common language, and internalize Chinese traditional culture into its national consciousness.

Second, the relationship between Dungan language and the northwest dialects. As a Chinese dialect variant in a special environment, Dungan language has a great difference from the northwest dialect, but as a special variant of Shaanxi and Gansu dialects, it retains the basic features of the language elements of the parent group, which is a significant symbol for Dungan people to distinguish the language and culture of other local groups. It is also the deep reason why Dungan people still maintain their national cultural characteristics in the vast sea of many nationalities.

Thirdly, the relationship between Dungan's multi-cultural characteristics and the origin and inheritance of Chinese traditional culture. After moving to Central Asia, the Dungan people adapted to and absorbed the surrounding Russian and Turkic cultures and created their own multi-ethnicculture. At the same time, they stick to the identity of the Hui nationality, adheres to and innovates the language, maintains the traditional Chinese customs and living habits, and always have a strong yearning and love for China and the Northwest Hui nationality. Such strong preference towards China and their native land makes them first put themselves in the position of Chinese people when dealing with ethnic consciousness, regard it as their duty to stick to and spread Chinese traditional culture, and consciously act as ambassadors for the spread of Chinese culture in Central Asia.

With the expansion of cooperation between China and Central Asia, more and more Chinese scholars have realized the importance of Dungan ethnic group, and many of them have visited Dungan areas for research, which makes the connection between the two gradually restored and increasingly close. In recent years, more and more Dungan people have come to China to study and visit, which has greatly enhanced their understanding of China and the Chinese nation, and enhanced their pride and sense of belonging to the Chinese nation. In particular, a large number of Dungan students enter China to learn Chinese. With the deepening of learning, their sense of identity of China and the Chinese nation is increasingly enhanced. They also take the initiative to further learn Chinese culture and are willing to spread their Chinese and Chinese culture to Central Asia.

At the same time, we should also be aware that although Dungan students are subjectively willing to actively spread Chinese culture, there are still many problems in the actual process. The low level of Chinese language and little knowledge of Chinese culture are notable manifestations. Therefore, how to better help them improve their Chinese level in teaching and how to integrate cultural factors into language teaching is a big challenge. At the same time, in the process of seeking common ground, pay attention to respect their national attributes and uniqueness is also a very important issue in the process of communication.

## Краткое содержание

Дунганское население составляет всего 0,2% от общей численности в Центральной Азии и они разбросаны по территории трех стран. Они проживают в иной этнокультурной среде, поэтому им трудно, а иногда и невозможно, поддерживать чистоту родного языка. Соответствующие данные показывают, что общая частота использования дунганского языка составляет всего 30,8% среди дунган, который стал вымирающим языком и имеет тенденцию постепенному исчезновению. Поэтому особенно необходимо разрешить кризис использования дунганского языка и его атрофии и найти пути для его успешной трансформации.

этой целью автор сделал анкетирование среди дунганских студентов, граждан трех стран Центральной Азии (Кыргызстана, Казахстана и Узбекистана), обучающихся в Северо-Западном педагогическом университете (КНР г. Ланьчжоу, провинция Ганьсу). Анкеты поэтапно были распространены среди 182 иностранных студентов-дунган и основные результаты анкетирования представлены в данной статье.

Из исследований видно, что дунганские учащиеся, для которых дунганский язык является родным или первым языком, демонстрируют высокую степень идентификации и принадлежности к своему родному языку. Эти студенты в основном из районов проживания дунганского этноса, а дунганский язык является основным языком повседневного общения.

Согласно опросу, русский язык по-прежнему занимает очень важное место в языке дунганских учащихся, и его доля даже превышает дунганский язык. Основная причина кроется в незаменимой роли русского языка в этнической коммуникации. С момента обретения независимости страны Центральной Азии, как правило, придерживались политики усиленного внедрения государственного языка, чтобы противостоять в некоторой степени глубоко укоренившемуся влиянию русского языка. Основной государственный язык стран Центральной Азии оказывает все более существенное влияние на язык дунганских учащихся. Все большее количество дунганских учащихся в повседневной жизни используют государственный язык в стране проживания, например, из анкетирования видно, что 30% учащихся-дунган используют в Кыргызстане кыргызский язык как свой родной. В то же время необходимо отметить, что благодаря возрастающей национальной мощи Китая и все более тесному общению с Центральной Азией, у дунганских учащихся все больше возрастает и углубляется энтузиазм в изучении китайского языка, все более укрепляется их понимание китайского языка и китайской культуры. В процессе перехода к латинизации государственных языков стран Центральной Азии на плечи нового поколения дунганских студентов ляжет ряд важных задач, таких как сохранение тесной связи с северо-западными шэньсийским и ганьсуйским диалектами китайского языка. И при этом актуальной остается задача наследовать и передавать дунганский язык следующим поколениям, продолжать

сохранять дунганский язык и его чистоту, лучше развивать дунганский язык и дунганскую письменность в окружении иной этно-культурной среды.

Как вариант китайского диалекта в особой среде дунганский язык имеет большое отличие от северо-западного диалекта, но как особый вариант диалектов провинции Шэньси Ганьсу сохраняет основные черты языковых элементов родительской группы, что является существенным символом для дунган, чтобы различать язык и культуру других местных групп. Это также глубокая причина, по которой дунгане до сих пор сохраняют свои национальные, культурные особенности в огромном море многих национальностей.

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