Research Status and Prospects of "Language Poverty Alleviation" in New China

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Abstract. Language support is a key part of China's poverty alleviation and national development work. Its main goal is to improve the language abilities of vulnerable people in less developed areas. Better language skills help these people communicate better. They can take part in social activities. They can create more economic value.This method brings many social and economic benefits. It provides more job opportunities for disadvantaged people. It helps them make more money. It makes different social groups more united.This work follows the idea of comprehensive development. Improving language skills is an important way to reduce poverty. It helps individuals and regions get rid of poverty more quickly. It develops the study of language economics. It increases the areas of related research. It improves the modern level of language management. Language poverty alleviation has special features that fit China's situation.Many scholars have carried out research after the founding of the People's Republic of China. They got many useful results in language poverty alleviation.

Keywords: China's poverty alleviation, China's poverty alleviation, language poverty alleviation

1. Research overview of "language-based poverty alleviation"

Human capital theory provides a brand-new perspective for rethinking the issue of poverty. It points out that low income and poor living conditions are only external appearances of poverty, while the real internal cause lies in the insufficient personal abilities and serious skill shortages of poor groups. Such shortcomings directly prevent people from obtaining stable jobs, so their income cannot reach the basic poverty line.Personal ability is a comprehensive system composed of multiple dimensions. It covers not only physical health and educational level, but also scientific knowledge and psychological qualities. At the same time, core abilities can be divided into IQ, EQ, social skills and practical skills. Among all these components, language ability including literacy is the most fundamental and important part that supports the improvement of other abilities [1]. Based on this important cognition, China has launched a targeted poverty alleviation measure. The "language-based poverty alleviation" strategy takes language ability improvement as the core, aiming to solve the fundamental problem of skill deficiencies. This strategy helps poor people enhance their

comprehensive competitiveness through language development, so as to get rid of poverty effectively.

When exploring the underlying causes of poverty, human capital theory brings a brand-new interpretive perspective. It breaks the traditional view that poverty only refers to the lack of material resources and financial income, and points out that the insufficiency of personal abilities and core skills is the essential factor leading to poverty.Disadvantaged people often cannot find stable jobs. They also cannot take part in social and economic life. This situation limits their work development. It also affects their daily life quality. They lack important skills. These skills include thinking, communication and emotion control. These skill shortages stop them from getting fair chances. Language proficiency is a fundamental component of personal competence,which forms the basis for developing various practical skills, like professional knowledge as well as mental adaptability. Language skills are definitely a key part of personal development. Only through strong language skills, that people can be better able to learn job-related knowledge and express themselves clearly in conversations. This ability to communicate and understand also helps them think more clearly. On the other hand, a person with weak language skills may find it difficult to grow and move forward in life.

Language serves as a helper so that individuals can break away from poverty. With stronger language skills, they can communicate with others well. They can also gain better occupations .This connection between language and funding is studied in two academic fields: linguistic economics and human capital theory. Relevant research proves that language learning can enhance personal work efficiency and increase income levels, making language ability a vital component of human capital that drives overall economic development. This means creating conditions in which people can use the language in daily life.These efforts help remove language barriers that keep people from getting resources and chances. When people can speak and understand the language used in each public places, they can join in economic and social life. Studies show that education is one of the best ways to reduce poverty. Access to language learning is a key part of that process [2].

China adds language empowerment to its targeted poverty alleviation policies turning these theories into real and usable poverty reduction actions. It's believed that, this policy is made to improve the use of human resources helping the poors develop independent skills and make a living by themselves.

2. The historical process of language-based poverty alleviation

China's efforts to use language as a tool for poverty alleviation are supported by two important academic theories: linguistic economics and human capital theory. These frameworks demonstrate the clear connection between language proficiency, employability, and personal income. Building on this theoretical basis, China has translated these concepts into concrete anti-poverty actions. By combining solid academic foundations with practical policy actions, this approach supports stable and sustainable progress in both society and the economy.

2.1. The first phase of "language-based poverty alleviation" – promoting Mandarin

The approach to language policy has been shaped by both its development goals and ethnic diversity. After the founding given in 1949, the government recognized the need for a unified language system which led to the creation of a national language strategy, that in turn guided a series of targeted policies in areas like word standardization, writing system reform, and so on. These policies were designed at the national level and put into practice through local measures.

A key challenge behind these efforts is the country's rich linguistic diversity. With 56 ethnic groups, each with its own language and cultural traditions, communication between groups has not always been easy. To address this, the government launched a national plan to popularize Mandarin. The aim was to establish a shared language that would allow people from different backgrounds to communicate more effectively. This plan set official language standards and ensured that Mandarin education reached communities across the country.By building a common language framework, these policies have helped remove long-standing communication barriers. As a result, social inequality has been reduced, and more people now have access to equal education and fair use of language. In this way, language planning has become a key tool for supporting both national unity and individual opportunity.

China makes new laws and rules. These laws help more people use Mandarin.China set legal rules for Mandarin in 1982 [3]. China added promoting Mandarin to the Constitution. This became an important national policy.The government started a public activity in 1998. The activity is National Mandarin Promotion Week. This activity is held every year in the third week of September. This activity lets more people know about Mandarin. More people want to learn Mandarin.China passed the Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Common Language and Script on October 31, 2000. This law names Mandarin and standardized Chinese characters as the official spoken and written languages. This law protects people's right to learn and use the national common language. This law asks the government to help people improve their language skills.

2.2. The first phase of "language-based poverty alleviation" – simplification and standardisation of chinese characters

A major reform of the writing system was launched on January 28, 1956 , when the Chinese government released the Scheme of Simplified Chinese Characters. This comprehensive reform made significantly progress to Chinese characters. It simplified the overall form and internal structure of characters, lowered the number of strokes required for writing, and established consistent writing practices across different regions. With unified character standards put in place through this reform, the general public are more willing to read and write.

2.3. The first phase of "language-based poverty alleviation" – creation of romanised scripts

When it's in 1956, the Chinese government who wanted to help the ethnic minority languages become more prosperous launched a national study. It helped social progress.The survey brought many practical improvements to ethnic minority areas. It raised the literacy rate among adult ethnic minorities. Then, the government did more things to support the cultural development of ethnic minorities. It released a series of new projects as well as wanted to create a good environment for traditional culture. Besides, key measures has implemented by the government to develop the writing systems of ethnic minority groups. For 13 ethnic groups, the government designed 17 new writing systems based on the Latin alphabet revised and unified the original writing systems of other ethnic minorities.These efforts brought two major positive results that not only cultivated a large number of local professional talents, but also made it possible to document and protect intangible cultural heritage effectively.

2.4. The first phase of "language-based poverty alleviation" – implementation of the hanyu pinyin system

Before February 11, 1958, the Chinese government officially approved the Hanyu Pinyin Scheme that adopted the 26 Latin alphabet letters instead of the traditional pronunciation systems which were complicated and difficult for ordinary people to master. These old systems created many obstacles for people learning to read and write Chinese, so the new one provided a consistent method for showing the pronunciation of Chinese characters clearly.It is because the simple structure of Hanyu Pinyin that made pronunciation much easier to grasp.

2.5. The second phase of "language-based poverty alleviation"

China updated its poverty alleviation policies in 2011.The government released the National Outline.The outline added language support to main poverty alleviation policies.This policy change changed the role of language help.Language help was not a small and indirect support.It became a direct way to help poor people.The new policy had a clear goal.It focused on language problems of poor people.

Language policy moved from a minor part to a main part of national anti-poverty work. It got great attention in important policy papers. These papers include the 13th Five-Year Plan for Poverty Alleviation. This shows its higher position in national governance. Many government departments worked together. They made a series of clear plans. These plans include the National Language and Script Development Plan, the Action Plan for Mandarin Promotion (2018–2020) and the Implementation Blueprint. These policies worked together. Language ability became more and more important in poverty alleviation. This brought a big change to the whole work. Language was once ignored in people's basic life needs. It became a planned tool to help development and better life.

The government built a full five-level governance system. The system manages and pushes language-based poverty alleviation. It covers provinces, cities, counties, townships and villages. The Action Plan for Promoting Mandarin in Poverty Alleviation (2018–2020) supports this system. Different levels work closely in poor areas. They make sure policies work well. The government adds Mandarin promotion into poverty alleviation plans. It adds language skill targets into local work evaluations.

China connects its modern language poverty alleviation work with its general poverty reduction work. The 13th Five-Year Plan shows this connection. The plan uses many different policies together. These policies include education help, industry development, job support, relocation, health care, ecological protection, skill training and social security. Language skills are very important in this system. Good language skills help people understand policies better. They also help different work areas work together well. China helps poor people learn standard language skills. This makes the whole poverty alleviation system stronger.

China uses many different ways to carry out language poverty alleviation. All these efforts work well together. Mandarin is now widely used across the country. The national Mandarin usage rate is 80.72%. The rate in the poor Three Regions and Three Prefectures is 61.56%. Better Mandarin skills help poor people get better job skills and want to start businesses. China has a five-level work system. This system is led by the Party. It helps use resources well and makes sure policies are carried out strongly.

3. The outcomes and highlights of "language poverty alleviation"

The implementation of language-focused poverty alleviation projects has brought about comprehensive and meaningful effects across multiple areas. These efforts have improved the language ability and basic education level of people in poor communities. They have also supported the economic and social progress of local areas. All these results show that language poverty alleviation plays an effective and positive role in many aspects.

Due to the support from Mandarin, poverty alleviation has greatly aided the persons who live in the awkward areas to learn and use. The national Mandarin penetration rate rose from 53.0% in 2000 to 80.7% in 2020. During the same period, the proficiency rate in the Three Regions and Three Prefectures increased from 36.5% to 61.5%. In addition to this growth in coverage, the overall quality of Mandarin application and usage also improved significantly. By 2020, 67.8% of the population could use Mandarin at a high level, representing an increase of 30 percentage points compared to 2000 [4].The government set up many training programs for the language poverty alleviation work. These programs helped poor people learn new skills for jobs. And they made people feel more confident to start their own businesses.Many people learned to speak Mandarin. This helped the local economy grow. And it gave steady support to poor areas.Bingzhongluo Town in Yunnan Province is one example of these good changes. People there got better at using language and talking with others. Then the town's tourism business grew a lot. And it also sold more farm products.

4. Challenges and issues faced in language poverty alleviation

Although Mandarin learning has made clear progress across the country, obvious gaps still exist between urban and rural regions.Development levels of Mandarin proficiency also vary widely among different parts of China.About half of the population still lacks standard and fluent Mandarin skills.This uneven language ability has become a factor that restricts the overall development of society.A long-term assessment and supervision system needs to be formulated, adopting diversified criteria adapted to regional and ethnic differences, accompanied by sustained monitoring and policy optimisation. Accordingly, language poverty alleviation shouldn't be limited to the popularisation of Mandarin , it should also enhance the conservation, development and application of dialects and ethnic minority languages [5]. The insufficient mastery of dialects and minority languages among young people threatens the inheritance of indigenous cultures. While promoting Mandarin, more attention should be paid to the protection and utilisation of dialects and ethnic languages. Cultural activities can be carried out to strengthen linguistic identity, so as to advance cultural diversity and integrated development. Furthermore, in the era of globalisation, multilingual competence has emerged as a key competitive edge. Future language poverty alleviation should coordinate Mandarin promotion with the cultivation of multilingual abilities, develop the language industry, expand global vision and respond effectively to global challenges.

5. Research prospects for language-based poverty alleviation

Future research on language poverty alleviation should focus on refining education and social services, improving employment and income for disadvantaged groups through enhanced language skills. Modern technologies such as online education can be employed to provide flexible and extensive learning resources. Meanwhile, efforts should be made to develop language-related cultural resources, including distinctive local cultural products and intangible cultural heritage

projects, to boost the development of tourism, advertising and related industries. In addition, the quality of language assistance should be improved through customised teaching materials and methods, as well as optimised volunteer service mechanisms. These measures will jointly promote language competence and socio-economic development in impoverished areas.

6. Conclusion

Language poverty alleviation is a long-term and vital task concerning national and ethnic progress. With social development, we must keep pace with the times while implementing it, and maintain the right direction amid crises and opportunities.As Chinese citizens, we should recognize that language poverty alleviation is still ongoing. It requires joint efforts, cooperation and collective wisdom to promote its development for a better China.

We should uphold the people-centered philosophy, raise public linguistic awareness, explore and innovate poverty alleviation models, and strengthen voluntary services and the development of language resources.A complete system should be established to support these concepts, so that years of accumulated experience will not be wasted due to slackness.

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