

**Globalisation spells the death of** (是...的恶咒, 生动表达全球化对小语种的威胁) **minority cultures**

A fellow instructor at Soongsil University once told me that Korean poetry cannot be translated. I often occasioned debate by asking students to name untranslatable Korean words, such as *han*, which denotes a sorrow of such profound injustice that it changes you.

By way of translation, I suggested “resentment” or, better yet, the French *ressentiment*, but they insisted these words didn’t cut it (cut 原意也有是...的切线, 相交到的意思, 这里为意思匹配切题)。

In the end, we agreed the meaning of *han* could never be fully rendered (翻译某事物) unless we carried over all its cultural connotations (语言中带有特殊特定文化含义的暗指) and associated words and phrases. However, when I asked whether Shakespeare was beyond their grasp (作为 beyond understanding 的同义替换) because they were not native English speakers, or if the same held true of Japanese television dramas, they usually reversed their position. Once the line of exclusivity had shifted, so did their perspective.

Years later, I asked my students at a school for ethnic minorities in Yunnan province to do the same thing. Unlike South Korea, which has one language spoken by a single ethnic group, China is home to 292 languages spoken by 56 ethnic groups, 25 of which live in Yunnan, so I anticipated a very different conversation.

However, my students – an ethnic medley (种族混血儿) of Han, Yi, Bai, Hani and Miao – called out words using either Kunming dialect or Putonghua. When I asked if anyone had an untranslatable word from their native tongue, they replied that Putonghua was their native tongue.

That wasn’t surprising. After all, it is the official language of China, but the country is lush with others, from the 1½-syllable words of Mon-Khmer dialects to the whopping 12-tone varieties of Miao-Yao. Yet Putonghua and English are pushing many minority languages to the brink of extinction

(push... to the brink/edge of extinction 把...推向灭绝的边缘, 这个表达可以用在 task2 背景陈设句里面) .

In December, Beijing instructed Han officials working in minority regions to learn local languages. This will improve governance in those areas, but it will not save these languages. Indeed, some of them are already beyond help, such as Mango, a variety of Lolo-Burmese spoken only in the Yunnan villages of Mumei and Zhelai by about 50 people.

Some linguists argue that language death is a natural development and that languages survive only as long as they are useful, but in China, it's questionable just how natural a development this is, especially since Putonghua and English are the languages of political and economic power.

(注意这个很有洞察力的对小语种流失的见解, 作为论据再加上适当 expand 是很有说服力的) As urbanisation moves minority families away from other speakers of their language, their children have fewer incentives to learn, say, fluent Yi as opposed to fluent Korean or Japanese. Meanwhile, English remains a part of compulsory education, which means, for many minorities, Yi or Miao becomes a third language.

To my disappointment, my students expressed little interest in learning the languages of their grandparents. But I cannot fault their reasoning (不能指责..., 或 ...是无懈可击的) . For them, culture is as powerful a factor as political or economic marginalisation.

Like my Korean students, their tastes are eclectic: they watch Japanese and Korean dramas, Hollywood films and listen to Mando-pop, K-pop and American hip hop. They are taking part in the global community.

Maybe Korean poetry cannot be translated and the death of a language means the death of a culture. But the decision to keep a language alive lies with the people who speak it, and not many young minorities have that desire. Perhaps then, the answer lies not with educators but with entertainers. (solution 段可用)

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Students may not see the value in minority languages, but, in my experience, when they feel left out of an interesting cultural conversation, that's when they reverse their position.