



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

**Becoming Bilingual in School and Home in Tibetan Areas of China:  
Stories of Struggle**

**By**

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This research initially grew in my heart through many people's inspiration in my life. My father was a Tibetan poet. He told me as a Tibetan we need to love our nation like we love our mother. He said: we need to put a piece of butter into our mother's tea. If not, what sort of children are we? (Tibetans love to drink butter tea.) Father did not get the chance to learn written Tibetan in school but he realized the importance of protecting the mother tongue for Tibetans. He regarded it as the way for us to love our nation. I consider my PhD research as the opportunity for me to put a piece of butter into my mother's tea.

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyses the stories of five Tibetan individual journeys of becoming bilingual in the Tibetan areas of China at four different points in time from 1950 to the present. The data consists of the narratives of their bilingual experiences. They talked about their experiences of using language in family, in village and in school. Their narratives show that their opportunities to develop bilingualism were intimately linked with historical and political events in the wider layers of experiences, which reveals the complexity of bilingualism. Moreover, my five participants struggled to become bilingual. They struggled because they wanted to keep two languages in their lives. It illustrates their relationship with society. They are Tibetans, L1 is not the official language of their country, but it is the tie with their ethnicity. It addresses bilingualism linked with the formation of identity.

A narrative method within an ethnographic research approach was used in this research. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory was used to explain how the layers of experiences fundamentally influenced the development of bilingualism. Holland et al.'s concept of history in person was used to explain why an individual's formation of identity is affected by their experience of developing bilingualism. Furthermore, the view of language as repertoire also used to explain why Tibetans need two languages in their lives, thus emphasising the importance of understanding bilingualism from a social-cultural perspective. These three theoretical frames together provide tools to better understand the complexity of bilingualism.

This study found that my five participants' opportunities to become bilingual were heavily affected by the transition of society and change of policies towards the Tibetan language. Moreover, their stories show that bilingualism is a social phenomenon, which happened because my five participants interacted with two languages in their daily life. Therefore we need to see bilingualism from a social-cultural perspective and understand the complexity of bilingualism for education policy and practice. In addition, this study found that my five participants' experiences of developing bilingualism led the path of developing identity. It shows that language played a very important role in the formation of identity for my five participants. Moreover, their experiences demonstrate the relationship between identity and education; education may either facilitate or impede an individual's identity development.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of stories: Myself in the study

It is good to know many other languages  
However it is a shame to forget your father tongue

#### **Tibetan proverb**

My interest in this topic initially comes from the life I have experienced. My bilingual experiences have been closely affected by the changing of policy and society. My early educational experience in a Han city where school did not value my first language made me gradually lose my L1 and my Tibetan identity. Moreover; this was the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976) when the Tibetan language was labelled as a black language. In the early period of the Cultural Revolution people directly told my parents: “Do not speak black language”. My L1 was being devalued by both school and society during my growing up years. All of these attitudes led me to feel ashamed to be a Tibetan. I remember my refusal to speak Tibetan when my parents spoke with me in that language; I even hid myself whenever my father came to my school because I was embarrassed by his appearance.

The turning point came when I entered college. The Cultural Revolution had ended, and minority languages had started to revive in China. I will discuss this period of time in my literature review. I was enrolled at one of the minority universities in China where I selected Tibetan literature as my major. I studied for four years in this university, during which time, I met my wonderful Tibetan teacher A Ke Gyatso. We called him Ake (this means uncle in Tibetan). This is our cultural way to name someone you like very much. Ake was a monk before the liberation, and he had been a Tibetan teacher in my university before the Cultural Revolution. During the Cultural Revolution no Tibetan classes were offered, so most Tibetan teachers including Ake went back to their hometowns and became farmers. He came back to university after the Cultural Revolution. I still remember the first time I met him in his tiny dark room. During that time, China was undeveloped and people didn't have their own flats. Ake was allotted two rooms in a building belonging to our university; the building had a very long corridor leading to Ake's house. The corridor was dim, even in day time. Ake's room was simple: the only furniture he had was a desk, a few chairs, and a bed. It was his study room as well as his bedroom. I was taken to his house by my father who happened to be Ake's friend. He chatted with me in Tibetan, I just responded to him in Chinese. I understood what he was saying but was unable to answer him in Tibetan. That night he said something

like: "Oh, poor girl, you have just forgotten your Tibetan language. However I will teach you." He always gave extra classes to any of us who had a desire to learn Tibetan. Every night from Monday to Sunday his small room (which was only 15 square meters) was full of students. It was so crowded that the students just sat on the floor to listen in his class. For me it was my time for the rediscovery of Tibetan. Through four years intensive study of Tibetan I began to realize the Tibetan language sounds beautiful to me and is rich in description. I grew a sense of pride in being a Tibetan during this time through learning, reading, and writing in Tibetan. Just as losing my L1 related to a particular period of policy and so regaining L1 was also closely related to the changing of policy toward minority languages in China during this time.

Monolingual people might ask members of minority groups: if it is so difficult to become bilingual, why not just simply remain monolingual in the dominant language? I always ask myself this question: do I have a choice not to become bilingual? The answer always is NO. I have asked this question to my mother and sister and many Tibetans whom I encountered every day, and their answers were the same as mine: No. Safer Alladina (1995:19) indicates: "Early experience of love, pleasure, joy and the things that are important to children happen in the home language". Losing your L1 means losing your tie with your home. For me my L1 evokes the warmth of the relationship with my grandma. I was raised up by her; she was the one who always cared about me. I remember, every time when I went back to my home town, she would always come to the bus station to wait for me. Sometimes she would spend several hours waiting there. When I got there, the first sentence she said was: "My precious one has come." I remember during the time I studied Tibetan as my major in college, my grandmother was so proud of this, and she would tell everyone: "My precious one is studying Tibetan in a college." And the others would say: "We thought your granddaughter could not speak Tibetan." My grandmother would always say: "She can even read Tibetan books."

Because my bilingual experiences were not easy, I therefore always took a great interest in any other person's experience of becoming bilingual. I have encountered many children who struggled to become bilingual in school and at home. Most Tibetans, as Grosejean (1982: viii) states, "rarely make a conscious decision to become bilingual. It happens because their interaction with the world around them requires the use of two languages". Children in Tibet start to know two languages as soon as they enter school. Over the years I have seen children crying because their L1 - Tibetan was not recognized in school; moreover, I also have seen children became confused because the L2 - Chinese was more greatly valued in school. A nine year old boy refused to speak Tibetan at home though he was in a bilingual

school, and started learning Tibetan and Chinese from Grade One. He told his grandmother one day: “A yi ( A yi means grandmother in Amdo Tibetan language)Tibetan is not a pleasant language.” His A yi was shocked by this and asked where he got this idea. This is an example of how a child’s Tibetan identity was strongly affected through the journey of becoming bilingual. He had lost his love for his own heart language just by beginning to study in Chinese. These are the facts that resulted in my wanting to study the bilingual experience for Tibetans more closely.

In 2005 I participated in a bilingual project supported by the British Government (DFID) which was called the Gannan Tibetan Bilingual Education Project (GTBEP). The plan of the project was to develop four sets of bilingual teacher training materials (for primary and secondary schools), focusing on improving teaching methods in Tibetan classes. However, only the bilingual teaching training materials for primary schools were completed, and the project was terminated in 2007. (I don’t know why, we were just told it was finished). This was one of the few occasions in which Tibetan areas were able to develop materials and teaching methods for Tibetan; moreover, hundreds of primary school teachers attended trainings sessions held by GTBEP trainers using the developed Tibetan material. By participating in this project I had many opportunities to observe schools in Tibetan areas.

“I am a Tibetan child; I like to speak Tibetan; I like to wear Tibetan outfits; I like to read Tibetan books.” That was a motto I saw in a Tibetan primary school which was the one of the pilot schools of our project. These four sentences were very simple but they made children feel a certainty about their mother language, their identities, and their cultural heritage. I was impressed by this motto as soon as I entered that school. It was written on the board of every first grade classroom. This was the attitude which principals and teachers have taken in the Tibetan language; it has given children great courage to enable them to cherish their identities even when they had just started to make progress in becoming bilingual as a learner at this early learning stage. The children in this class were very active: they just pushed each other to get ahead in order to answer the teacher’s questions. However, after we were told the project had finished, the faces of the school children I saw always came to my mind. I wonder how much the positive attitude of these children towards L1 was affected through education and society? What will their bilingual journeys be like in this developing world? This is another motivating factor which drives me to carry out this research.

My experience of becoming bilingual and the experience of going to schools to observe children’s bilingual experiences are the motivating factors which inspired me to pursue a

PhD in the field of bilingualism. I began as an insider in research context, and my journey towards becoming more of an outsider is clarified in methodology chapter (see 3.9.3.2).

In my research I focus on the experiences of five different people as bilingual Tibetans in the Tibetan areas of China, each of whom lived and attended school at different times between 1950 and 2011. Through studying their stories I hope to better understand:

1. What have been the bilingual educational experiences of Tibetan learners from the 1950s to the present in Tibetan areas within China?
2. How have their bilingual experiences been influenced by political - social – economic changes in China?
- 3 How have their identities as Tibetan been mediated through these experiences?
- 4 What role has language played in the process of developing bilingualism?

## 1.2 Context

### 1.2.1 Tibetans in China

China has fifty-five recognized nationalities which are labelled as minorities, in addition to the majority Han Chinese. Tibetan is one of the biggest ethnic groups living in the Tibetan plateau of China. Hao (2000) states that based on the 1990 national census, the Tibetans were the ninth largest minority group, with a population of 4.6 million in 1990.

Tibetans live in Tibet Autonomous Region, Qinghai province, Sichuan province, Gansu province and Yunnan province within China. Traditionally Tibetans divided Tibetan areas into three districts. Based on Tibetan historic books these three districts were U–tsang, Kham and Amdo. U-tsang is the area of Tibet Autonomous Region, Kham is located in areas of Tibet Autonomous Region, Sichuan province and Yunnan province. Amdo is located in areas of Qianghai province, Gansu province and Sichuan province. Tibetan people categorize themselves as '*Bo ba*' '*Kham ba*' and '*Amdo ua*' based on the traditional Tibetan geographic concept (Gongquemdanbaru; 1989). Westerners divide Tibetan areas into two categories which are termed 'political Tibet' and 'ethnographic Tibet' (Goldstein, 1993). Sir Charles Bell used the term 'political Tibet' to categorize the Tibetan areas which were ruled by the Tibetan Government from the earliest times until 1951 (Goldstein: 1993), and the 'ethnographic' Tibet for other areas such as Amdo and Kham which were outside that state (Goldstein, 1993: 77).

### 1.2.2 Tibetan religion and education

In this section I review the education system in Tibetan areas before the People's Republic of China was established in 1949. Monastic education was the main education system in the Tibetan area for over one thousand years, although in the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was an attempt to modernize education. However, this was not successful because the traditional Tibetan educationists rejected any attempts to separate religion from education. When the PRC was founded, the thousand year precedent of making religion the basis for education in Tibet was changed. Tibetans themselves had tried to separate education from Buddhism but could not. Now, there was no choice and Buddhism was removed completely by the new society, leaving Tibetans to come to grips with a new reality in which bilingual education symbolized a departure from tradition and the once sacred language of the monasteries and Buddhism became secularized.

Tibetans are rich in both culture and history. The history of having a written language can be traced back to AD 600. Tibetan people predominantly believe in Buddhism. Religion always has had a dominant status in Tibetan daily life. The original creation of the Tibetan written language, and the beginning of education started with the development of Buddhism from AD 600.

Traditionally, education has been connected with religion ever since Buddhism came to Tibet in ancient times. The first person who started to build education in Tibetan history was the King Songtsen Gambu. Nima (2000: 30) believes that, based on ancient Tibetan books, the Tibetan King Songtsen Gambu (596-650) was the first person in Tibetan history who consciously paid attention to education.

In about the seventh century when Tibet's King Songtsen Gambu came to power, Tibetan people believed in the 'Bon' religion, an indigenous religious tradition which was the dominant during that time (Powers 1995:1). However, King Songtsen Gambu, whose name in Tibetan , means king of wisdom, believed Buddhism could bring civilization to his people. He sent his minister Tumme Sambota and another sixteen people to India to study the Buddhist scriptures. When they returned to Tibet, they created Tibetan writing according to the Indian letters represented in the Sanskrit example (Suonam (1985).

King Trisong Deste was the second great king in Tibetan history to have a significant impact on forming an education system. Firstly, he built Samye Monastery, which was the first monastery in Tibetan history. The Tibetan scholar Sunam (1985) says that: In around the eighth century the Tibetan king Trisong Deste directly commanded the establishment of Samye in Tibet. Secondly he started to invite many scholars from abroad to Tibet to teach Buddhism there. Thirdly, he chose seven sons from noble families to become monks; these

were the first group of monks in Tibetan history. So at that time, the Samye Monastery became the school for learning religion, and teachers were invited from outside Tibet; the students became the first group of monks. From this, we can know that the traditional Tibetan education system was started during the reign of King Trisong Detsen in the 8<sup>th</sup> century in Samye Monastery.

Nima says (2000:153) that: every big monastery in Tibet functions as a university. Monks are divided into different “zhacang” to study. The ‘*zhacang*’ function like different colleges in the monastery. Each zhacang offers different subjects for study, such as Buddhist scripture, Buddhist art, astronomy and Tibetan medicine. For example, there are ten different zhacang in Labrang Monastery with four different degrees which monks can obtain during their study. The highest degree is called ‘*Geshi*’, which is similar to a PhD. degree in Western education. As the only forum for scholarly study in ancient Tibet, the Tibetan monastic education system has made a great contribution to Tibetan civilization.

After Samye Monastery was established, Buddhism swept across Tibet, and from that time many monasteries and temples appeared and many boys became monks. The people’s main aim in life was to learn about Buddhism, which provided different practical paths for their lives. Religion gradually changed the character of Tibetan people; favouring wars and battle became a distant memory. Tolerance, pity and perseverance in faith became the aims of the Tibetan people; consequently the purpose of the monastic education system was to prepare more and more educated monks to lead people in both the spiritual and practical aspects of their lives, teaching the basic tenets of Buddhism and performing weddings and funerals. The monastery was the only educational institution in Tibetan society for nearly a thousand years, then later Tibetan Medical Colleges were established. Nima (2000) affirms that in Tibetan history ‘Men-Tsee-Khang’ was the most famous Medicine College in Tibet; it was established in 1695, and was initially located on the hill just to the south-west of the Potala Palace. Students were recruited from different parts of Tibet as well as from countries such as Mongolia, India, and Nepal. The Tibetan traditional education curriculum included Tibetan astronomy, Tibetan Buddhist art, and the Tibetan calendar. Drama, dances and songs, music, *thangka* painting (a kind of art), sculpture, embroidery, and architecture make up the art and training courses. Tibet consistently maintained its unique monastic education system for over one thousand years with the aim of training monks and scholars within the fields of traditional medicine, philosophy, astrology, architecture, and the arts (Nima, 2005). Throughout this time, after being adopted as the main religion of Tibet, Buddhism continually strengthened its power so that by the time the PRC was established, 98% of Tibetan people were Buddhist.



Buddhism became so firmly entrenched in Tibetan culture and tradition so that any attempts to change or modernize the education system also struck at the heart of their dearly held religious beliefs. Conflict quite naturally arose and all efforts to introduce modern education were immediately shut down.

Here I would like to cite the great Thirteenth Dalai Lama's modern education experiment around 1912. From it we can see that traditional Tibetan education was quite intentionally challenged by modern education before PRC was established the failure of this modern education experiment in Tibet exemplifies the deep root of education with religion.

When His Majesty the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was young, he was intelligent and had a broad mind. He might have thought the monastic education system was not always appropriate for a developing society. I can imagine he may have struggled with his contemporaries and with his traditional ideas too. Finally he decided to send four Tibetan young men to England to study science and to get a modern education.

These four young Tibetan men were Gongkar, Mondo, Kyipup, and Ringang. After leaving Delhi on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1913, the party visited Indore, Sanchi and Bhopal. They arrived in Bombay on the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> April. On the afternoon of the same day, the party of Tibetans sailed for England by a P&O S (Yang, 1984:4).

These four young Tibetans arrived in England, and after finishing language training, they began to study different subjects like coalmining and electricity generation. Mondo was a monk; his full name was Khyenrab Kunzany Mondo. When he first arrived in England he was very homesick and volunteered to return to Tibet at once. Instead of learning English, he encouraged the others to speak in Tibetan and when reprimanded by the tutor, he energetically and decisively said that he would gladly to go back to Tibet at once. He had written many reports to the principal of the school, asking to be sent back to Lhasa.

Fortunately, all four of them did gradually set their minds to study. After finishing several years of study, they were prepared to serve their own people when they returned. Nearly two decades after their return to Tibet, the three surviving students (Gongkar died in Lhasa in 1917) had adjusted to their native condition without letting their modern education and outlook seriously interfere with their roles in the conservative, unpredictable and suspicious Lhasa establishment (Yang, 1984).

They had struggled abroad for many years, and when they were ready to come back to try to contribute their modern education to their people, it was refused by their own beloved

people. 'Mondo became discouraged in his mining work when the abbots of the monastery complained that he was disturbing the local spirit by digging the earth and requested him to move on to the next districts before the crops failed and people were smitten with epidemics as result of the disturbances' (Yang, 1984:56).

As the essay 'Animism in Tibetan Folk Religion' says: Every part of the natural environment is believed to be alive with various types of sentient forces, who live in mountains, trees, rivers and the like, rocks, fields, the sky ,and the earth. Every region has its own native supernatural beings, and people living in these areas are strongly aware of their presence. In order to stay in their good grace, Tibetans give them offerings and perform rituals to propitiate them, and sometimes refrain from going to particular places so as to avoid the more dangerous forces ([www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/Tibet/understand/bon.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/Tibet/understand/bon.html)).

Kyipup, on his return to Lhasa, was made to develop the telegraph system, but as he knew little about telegraphy, he conveniently retired to his family estates. Another student tried to construct an electric power station near the Lhasa Summer Palace, but this also failed.

This modern education experiment was a failure. The Tibetan scholar Young (1986: 32) says that the reason was: 'Not only because the students were selected at random for the experiment but also because, after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama nobody really bothered to consider whether the modern education attained by the surviving students was of any use to Tibet'.

In retrospect, we can see how Tibetans were used to understanding the world according to their religious views ever since Buddhism came to Tibet. Education in Tibet was linked to this religion, and society was not prepared to accept any ideas which could challenge their religion. Nima (2000) points out that from its beginning, 'monastic education has produced generation upon generation of brilliant scholars and highly prestigious monks in this ancient land of Tibet'. This was the educational situation in Tibetan areas before PRC was established.

Before 1950, apart from the religious education system outlined above, there were a few secular schools in the three areas of Tibet, U-tsang, Kham, and Amdo. (Bass, 1998; Nima, 2000). In Lhasa there were a few private schools where children learned Tibetan. (Aiming; 2004; [www.Tibetinfo.com](http://www.Tibetinfo.com)). At this point, few children attended formal schools and Tibetan was the language of everyday life for all. However with the geopolitical changes that followed

the establishment of the new China (PRC) in 1949, schools were built in Tibetan areas and bilingualism began to become an issue.

My research intends to focus on how social, economic and political changes in society affect Tibetans' bilingual experience from 1950. I show a historical picture of individual learning experiences of four generations from 1950.

### **1.3 My five participants**

Professor: His story happened from 1950 to 1970. The story started from a small village located in Hwari, Tianzhu county of Gansu Province. It is in Amdo area based on Tibetan traditional geography. Professor is *Amdo ua* (a person from Amdo).

A Ji: Her story happened from 1966 to 1981. The story started in a village located in Gannan Tibetan Prefecture of Gansu Province. It is in a Tibetan Amdo area based on traditional Tibetan geography. A Ji is *Amdo ua* ( a person from Amdo).

Manlatso: Her story started in a village located in Jiancha Tibetan county of Qinghai Province. It is in Amdo area based on Tibetan traditional geography. Manlatso is *Amdo ua*. (a person from Amdo area)

Dawa: Her story started in a village in *Degen* Tibetan Prefecture of Yunnan Province. It is in *Kham* area based on Tibetan traditional geography. Dawa is *Kham ba*.(a person from Kham area)

Jampa: His story happened in Lhasa, the capital city of the Tibetan Autonomous Region. It is in the U-tsang area based on traditional Tibetan geography. Jampa is *Bo ba* (a person from Central Tibet).



Figure 1: Map of China

Source:

## Chapter 2: The knowledge of stories: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

My research focuses on five different Tibetan people's bilingual experiences in the context of Tibetan areas of settlement in China. I look at the narrative of their bilingual development by focusing on individual stories structured through their educational experiences. My study through the stories of these five informants, aims to bring understanding to how their personal bilingual experiences have been influenced by changes in political policy and society in the context of Tibetan areas in China. Their five stories will help us understand further the concept of bilingualism which, for minorities like Tibetans whose first language is not the official language of their counties, is not only a matter of language skill but rather part of their development as human beings. Moreover, their stories of developing bilingualism illuminate that how language and culture are always mediated by historical, socio-political events.

I divide literature into five sections. Each section contains several sub-sections. In the first section I begin by discussing bilingualism, and then I discuss different concepts of bilingualism which describes practices of Additive and Subtractive bilingualism. I argue the possibilities for minority children to become additive bilinguals deeply relies on whether education and society value children's both L1 and L2 language. Grosequean (1982) points out that minority people were born to become bilingual. L1 is the language they know from birth, while L2 is the language they use in their interactions with society. Then I explain, for Tibetans as an indigenous ethnic group in Tibetan area of China, the necessary/ necessity of becoming bilingual. Thus in my third sub-section, then I argue the necessity of bilingualism for speakers of minority language.

Identity is closely affected by the development of bilingualism for my five participants. In section 2.3 discuss several important elements in establishing identity for Tibetans, covering the relationship among culture, language towards education. I discuss how all of these elements deeply impact the development of identity for Tibetan individuals.

In section three, I discuss the role education may play globally in hindering or encouraging the development of bilingual skills among minority peoples everywhere. I review the change of policy from 'majority language only' to implement bilingual education to minority children from global thus I argue that the matter of becoming bilingual or not for minority children is

related to whether or not the development of bilingualism is facilitated or impeded by schools.

In section 4 I narrow down my discussion to the context of Tibet. It is a brief review of the implementation of the minority education policy in the Tibetan context since 1959. It helps my reader to understand the complication of developing bilingualism from the general to specific: development of bilingualism in Tibetan areas.

Bilingualism is not simply a linguistic phenomenon but rather a complex social one which is both closely related to the development of identity and fundamentally affected by the changing of policy and society. Moreover, learners' home and community experience influence their opportunities to become bilingual which is in turn affected by socio-cultural contexts. In section 2.6 I introduce three theoretical frames to better understand the complexities of bilingualism. I firstly apply Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory to understand how changes of politics and policies in society deeply impact my five participants' journeys toward developing bilingualism. It explains why their stories of developing bilingualism are different and also how their stories formed in different ways, Then I apply a sociolinguistic perspective about viewing language as a repertoire. It leads me to see my five participants' different stories by focusing on language. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory leads me to see their different stories by focusing on physical contexts as like school, village, and home, etc. However, the theory of seeing language as a repertoire shows how changes of society bring up changes to individual's daily language communication, thus it reinforces the concept of viewing bilingualism as a social phenomenon by focusing on language. Finally I apply 'History in Person' (Holland and Lave, 2001) to understand that the journey of developing bilingualism leads people to the path of realization of who they are.

## **2.2 Bilingualism**

### **2.2.1 Definition of bilingualism**

Bilingualism has become a worldwide phenomenon. Grosejean (1982) believes half the world's population to be bilingual. Other writers, such as, Harding and Rile (1986), Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) and Cummins (1996) make the same statement on the distribution of the population of bilinguals. But the figure now is believed that more than the half of the world's population is bilingual (Bialystok; 2012).

Bilingualism is defined in a variety of ways. Baker (2006: 4) indicates: "the ownership of two languages is not as simple as having two wheels or two eyes." Conteh (2003) identifies

many definitions for the term bilingual. Most consider the phenomenon from a linguistic point of view.

Baker (1998) clarifies that there is no simple definition of bilingualism and further identifies the terms bilingual and bilingualism as complicated. He (2004) states that bilingualism includes the ability to speak two languages; the domain of using two languages; and the age at which people start to interact with others in two of languages.

I have seen clearly from the differing linguistic abilities of my five informants in Tibetan and Chinese that capabilities of bilinguals in two languages vary from one to the other. I agree with Gibbon (1991)'s and Conteh (2003)'s definition of bilingual children that, while they may know two languages, their abilities vary greatly from one another. However, I also don't believe that a person who can only speak ten sentences of a second languages is bilingual. I was a bilingual before I started to learn English, but my abilities in speaking two languages varied from each other. I could read, write, and speak both in Tibetan and Chinese, but my Chinese was much stronger than my Tibetan. I have also come across many Tibetan bilinguals through my teaching in Tibetan Department at the Minorities University. Most of my students were Tibetan bilinguals but their abilities in speaking two languages varied from each other. These circumstances explain the difficulty of defining 'balanced bilingual' to many bilinguals. These circumstances coincide with Baker's (1998) and Hoffmann (1991)'s argument. They believe the term "balanced bilingual," where people might be equally fluent in two different languages, is merely an ideal. Following I will discuss different types of bilingualism. It further shows that bilingualism is a very complicated issue.

### **2.2.2 Different types of bilingualism**

Literature on bilingualism suggests there are various types of bilingualism, namely additive, subtractive, 'elitist', and 'folk'. Although there are a number of terms, there are essentially two main types: One is called "additive bilingualism" (Baker, 2006, Cummins, 1996; Landry and Allard 1991.) or 'elitist' bilingualism (Harding and Riley, 1986). The other is called subtractive (Baker, 2006, Cummins, 1996, Rajanayagam,1986) or 'folk' bilingualism (Harding and Riley, 1986).

The two types of bilingualism mentioned above have different effects on the bilingual. The first type, additive bilingualism, means that the majority learn a second language without finding the first language to be replaced by the second language. For these, L1 is usually the official language of their countries and they do not suffer any loss by becoming bilingual

(Baker, 1988, 2006, Cummins, 1996, Harding and Riley, 1986). This would be where an English speaker learns French or German in school but finds no effect on their own fluency in English. Moreover, King and Fogle (2006: 695) point out that ‘this sort of additive bilingualism has traditionally been viewed as the purview of upper class ‘elites’. The second type, subtractive bilingualism, means members of minority groups learn a second language and find their first language replaced or demoted by that language which becomes more dominant than the first (Baker, 2006, Rajanayagam, 1986). These individuals belong to minority groups and become bilingual involuntarily in order to survive (Tosi, 1982, Baker, 1996, Cummins, 1996, Grosjean, 1982, Nima, 2008, Bangsabo, 2004, Ogbu;1998). Tibetans are representative of a minority group who need to become bilingual for the reasons mentioned above. Bangsbo (2004:20) states that: “most Tibetans are interested in learning Chinese and that an increasing number of Tibetans want to learn Chinese due to day-to-day survival requirements and because literacy in Chinese provides access to broader occupational opportunities”. In addition, in the process of acquiring Chinese, their second language, Tibetans risks losing their mother tongue.

However, Casanova & Arias (1993) argue that it is possible for minorities to become additive bilinguals. They cite an example of a Canadian bilingual project which claims the aim is to encourage children to become additive bilinguals by enabling/encouraging ‘Children to maintain and develop their home language while they add a second language’ (Casanova & Arias, 1993: 24). Furthermore, King and Fogle (2006) set examples for us to see how parents try to use family language policy to help their children to become additive bilinguals rather than subtractive in the United States. Parents view additive bilingualism as beneficial for their children ‘ranging from maintenance of cultural ties to increased economic opportunities - for the children’ (King and Fogle: 2006: 700). From this I suggest that most minority children want to become additive rather than subtractive bilinguals simply because they need two languages in their daily life. The one language symbolises their ties with their culture and their background, while the other language means more opportunities in education and in the job market. Therefore, I argue that it is necessary for minorities to become bilingual. In the next section, I discuss the necessity of bilingualism for speakers of minority languages.

### **2.2.3 Necessity of bilingualism for speakers of minority language**

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:10) states:



“Those individuals whose mother tongue does not happen to be the official languages in the countries where they live, have to become bilingual (or multilingual). If they want to be able to speak to their parents, know about their history and culture, and know who they are, they have to know their mother tongue. If they want to get a good education (which is usually not available in their own language, at least not to the same extent as in the official language) and if they want to participate in the social, economic and political life of their country, they have to know the official language. It should be the duty of the educational systems to help them become bilingual, since bilingualism is a necessity for them, and not something that they themselves have chosen”.

Bilingualism is a necessity for speakers of minority languages because L1 symbolizes the relationship with their home and the ones they love (Alladina, 1995). Jalava (1988) told his story of trying to eradicate his mother tongue—Finn—in his years of pursuing an education in Sweden. He states (1988: 166) that: “I was without a people, without ties. Perhaps this is what made me feel empty. Or perhaps the reason could be found in the dismal faces flitting in the mirror of my soul”. In contrast, L2 means employment, education and more opportunities. Mackerras (1994:144) points out that: “If the members of minority nationalities do not learn Modern Standard Chinese, they will find all the opportunities that society has to offer barred to them”.

Similarly, Grosejean (1982) indicates that bilingualism is a social necessity for minorities. People cannot live without ties and emotional relationships with the ones they love and yet, they still need to part of society as a whole. Trueba (1991) explains how members of minority groups in the United States give up their home culture and home language at the cost of losing their identity and emotional bonds with senior members of their family. “As a result, they don’t belong to either the majority society or their own ethnic group” (Trueba, 1991:48).

Therefore I argue that developing bilingualism affects the development of identity. In the following section I will discuss the general understanding of identity and how it closely relates to the development of bilingualism.

## **2.3 The development of identity**

Identity is a crucial concept in my research. From my own experiences described in chapter 1, it should be clear just how confused I was about my identity in my years of education in

schools where my L1 was excluded. And yet, my education also helped me to develop my identity as a Tibetan through a four-year intensive study of Tibetan. My personal experience shows how language plays an important part in the development of identity and how identity can be reinforced through education.

In this section I am going to discuss 1) identity as a representation which shows different perspectives on the world and which is deeply rooted in context. 2) The role of language in developing identity.

### **2.3.1 Identity as a representation**

Bolmmaert (2005:203) states that: "Identity is who you and what you are". Gee (2010:101) also points out that identity is dealing with "Who I am". Ryan (1999) connects identity with who and what questions as well. Conteh (2003) identifies identity as a performance. Norton (2000) and Katzenstein (1996) view identity as a demonstration of an individual's direct understanding of the world. Our different understandings of the world are being represented through identity. Identity shows different perspectives of the world. I am going to show an example of different perspectives on colours between Tibetan and Chinese to show how identity is being represented through our different understanding of the world.

For Tibetans, white is the colour which symbolizes purity. As Tibetans, we offer white *khaptags* (long white scarves) to people as a symbol that our hearts are with you wherever you are. We offer *khaptags* in most special circumstances: at weddings, funerals, and farewell parties. At weddings, we offer *khaptags* to symbolize happiness; at funerals, we offer *khaptags* to symbolize sorrow; at farewell parties, we offer *khaptags* to symbolize prosperity. White means our hearts are pure and spotless. We also prefer white to any other colour because there are many snow-capped mountains around us in Tibet. By contrast, Chinese believe that red is the colour to symbolize good luck, whereas white symbolizes bad luck and death. Once when my father bought a pot of white flowers, a Chinese fellow asked my father why he was buying white flowers.

This example indicates that we form different identities based on the context in which we live and the culture through we learn how to act. The distinct opposite view on colour between Tibetan and Chinese demonstrates the importance of representation—choosing different colours for the same circumstance, thus revealing who we are. Ryan (1999:140) points out that representation is a way for people to see "themselves". It is a way of knowing who you are and what you stand for.

Tibetans call themselves '*tsampa* eaters' (see Professor's story: 4.5.2). Tibetans eat their staple food *tsampa* every day. *Tsampa* is fine powdery flour made from roasted barley, which is the predominant grain grown on the Tibetan plateau. *Tsampa* is not only the predominant diet for Tibetans, it also is also used in religious rituals. Throwing pinches of *tsampa* flour into the air during wedding celebration is the Tibetan way to bless new couples to have good luck; furthermore, *tsampa* – throwing also occurs at most Tibetan funerals, where the action is intend to release the soul of the deceased. A Tibetan's identity as a *tsampa*' eater shows that identity is rooted in culture. And we represent our identity through practicing our culture. Furthermore, culture is shaped in context. William Wentworth (1980:92) states "Context is a unit of culture" (cited in Cole, 1998:215). Through living in a context, we develop our own culture gradually, overtime. Cole (1998) states that culture of itself is an everyday practice. Through our daily behaviour we manifest our perception to the world. Rogoff (1990:16) states that: "Culture itself is not static but is formed from the efforts of people working together" (cited in Cole, 1998). Based on cultural activities we develop a sense of identity.

Furthermore, we know ourselves through interacting with others. Harrell (2001:16) indicates that humans, living in one place and associating with a particular group of people, readily and universally classify humanity into selves and others, attributing to the others different ways of doing things, different ways of talking, different places where they ought to be, different relations of kinship and descent, and different looks. Through interacting with others we recognize our language and culture are distinctively different from others. Thus we gradually develop our identity. In the next section I will discuss how language contributes to the knowledge of who we are by suggesting that language plays fundamental role in developing identity.

### **2.3.2 The role of language in developing identity**

Language plays a very important role in developing identity for human beings. Carter (1995: xv) identifies: "Language as a marker of identity, which is a synonym for those roots which shape and give meaning to living". Furthermore, Pattanayak (1986:7) states that: "A mother tongue is the expression of the primary identity of a human being. It is the language through which a person perceives the surrounding world and through which initial concept formation takes place". Moreover, Pennycook (2003) perceives identity as a 'performativity'. He indicates that people using language to perform their identity rather than to use the language based on their identity (cited in Garcia; 2009: 83). Thus we suggest the importance of L1 for the development of identity (Smolicz: 1986; McLaughlin: 1986).

Tibetans say 'it is shame to forget your father tongue' (Tibetans name their L1 'the father tongue'). Moreover, Tibetans regard their L1 as the soul of the nation. They say: "I am a Tibetan I speak Tibetan." Thus we can see that Tibetan people perceive their language as the way to represent themselves as a Tibetan. Tibetans have had a highly sophisticated written script for over a thousand years (Chodag, 1988; N.A. 2005 cited in Postiglione, 2008). Tibetans are very proud of their own language and they regard their language as a close connection with their Tibetan identity (Nima, 2000). It is the Tibetan belief toward their language which significantly impacts their development of identity as a Tibetan. There is a story written in a Tibetan historical book called 'The Happy Banquet of Philosophers' by The Tibetan historian Pawa Tsuklak trengwa (1504 – 1566). It described how the king, the symbol of wisdom, was a good example for his people as to how to learn Tibetan writing. The king shut himself in a remote place to study writing for one month. He also ordered all of his ministers to learn the new written language. This story expresses the Tibetan's deep love to/of the written language. The love to the written language passed through one generation to another generation, and eventually it becomes the identity of Tibetan. Leibkind (1999) shows that 'there is a reciprocal role between language and identity; that is, language use influence the identity formation of the group, while at the same time, the identity of the group influences the patterns of attitudes and language uses (cited in Garcia, 2009: 83). The slogan I saw in a school written 'I am a Tibetan child, I like to wear Tibetan outfit, I like to speak Tibetan language and I like to learn Tibetan written language' (see introduction chapter: 1.1) elaborates Tibetan identity as formed by speaking Tibetan, learning Tibetan written language and wearing Tibetan outfit. Nima (2007) points out that the Tibetan people have a special need to conserve and develop their own language because of their cultural identity in China. Thus identity is clearly seen to be mediated by language.

Furthermore, I think the identity of bilingual is another identity that children develop from home and school from childhood. For Tibetans, the Tibetan language is key to their Tibetan identity, but they also need to learn the Chinese language in order to have access to and become members of Chinese society. I remember observing a Chinese class in a Tibetan bilingual primary school while I was participating in a Tibetan bilingual education project eight years ago. This was a second grade class in which most children were 8 years old. I only was there for 45 minutes, but I noticed that children in primary school now start to learn Chinese at the same time they learn Tibetan. This is different from the 1980s, when children began learning Chinese in Grade Four. However, the school did not emphasize the identity the children as bilinguals through bilingual education in Tibetan areas of China. They were not encouraged to have any sense of pride in learning to speak two languages, nor were they taught to see both languages as equally important. Nima: (2007) emphasizes the

necessity of educating Tibetan children in written Tibetan language and written Chinese language. This will help the children establish their identities firmly in two languages.

Unfortunately, the opportunity for minority children to learn to read and write their L1 depends heavily on whether education provides this opportunity to them or not. In next section I will review the change of educational policy which from rejecting children's first language to implement bilingual education to minority children. Through reviewing it, I will demonstrate how education can either impede or promote children's development of bilingualism.

## **2.4 Bilingualism and education**

Whether education impedes or facilitates bilingualism among minorities depends on how policy makers view bilingual education. If they view the minority language as a problem, they will apply educational policies which try to make bilingual education a transitional system only which aims to help children transfer to second language as soon as possible. If they view minority language and culture as important for minority children, then the education policies will try to offer some spaces in curriculum and text books to value children's first language and culture. Jasparent and Kroon (1991:7) indicate that: "Whether they like it or not, whether they realize it or not, all countries in which minority language can be used are forced to adopt some form of language policy".

Heath (1972)'s perspective about language policy is: "Language decisions are primarily made on political and economic grounds and reflect the value of those in political power" (cited in Paulston, 1986:118).

In this section, firstly I review how the traditional belief towards bilingualism that resulted in the majority language only policy. In the second section I review educational policy from the 'majority language only' (English only/ Swedish only/ Chinese only) viewpoint to implement bilingual education for minority children. I demonstrate that the power of educational policy implemented in schools can deeply affect children whose L1 is not the majority language. In 2.4.3 I review bilingual education for minority children.

### **2.4.1 Educational policy towards bilingual education and minority children**

Historically, educators thought bilingualism was undesirable because they intuitively viewed bilingualism as a problem from three perspectives. From the cognitive point of view, bilingualism was viewed as inhibiting cognitive development (Lambert, 1977 cited in Fillmore, 1991 ). This view can be traced back to the early 1900s (Zeev; 1977:29).

Bilingualism also was thought to be 'a thin soil' for developing intelligence. From the linguistic point of view, 'monolingualism would be a rich, fertile soil' (Baker C & Jones S, 1998: 62). The reason for poor achievements among minority children in learning was attributed to their speaking more than one language at home (Trueba, 1991:43). Thus bilingual children were labelled as 'handicapped' children (Garcia, 2009). In addition, bilingualism was viewed as a political problem. Baker (1996) indicates that language is viewed as a problem for society. Cummins (1996) identifies the belief in the United States that the use of any language other than English would retard the progress of unity within society. Therefore, "the aim of traditional bilingual education is to assimilate minorities even at the cost of losing both their first language and their ethnic identity" (Spolsky, foreword, cited in Lewis, 1981). All too often, the majority views any diversity belonging to minorities as a threat to nationhood and unity (Cummins, 1996, Bangsbo, 2004).

Nowadays, in some countries, diversity in culture and language are still viewed as an obstacle to the unity of the whole country and as a problem for learning achievement. In China, minority languages are viewed as a problem that causes low achievement in learning. Hansen (1999) states that: "the Chinese government considered Tai traditions (including the Tai language) as impeding the construction of a "successful Chinese education system" (Hansen, 1999:109) in Tai minority areas. Because of this belief, schools in Tai minority areas of China neglect minority children's home culture and language. Bangsbo (2004) indicates that schools in a majority society are much too scared to reinforce the children's mother tongue because the majority people feel the children's mother tongue will threaten the stability of the society. Moreover, many minority children are sent to Mandarin speaking areas (Bahry, et al, 2009). Wang and Zhou (2003:88) point out that Tibetan and Xinjiang schools or classes are opened and developed in Han metropolises outside Tibet and Xinjiang. It is the attempt which tries to dislocation children in order to reinforce their second language: the official language of China. In Sri Lanka the policy 'Sinhala only' has damaged the traditional education of the Tamil minority and their ethnic identity as well (Rajanayagam; 1986).

Thus, we can see that bilingualism is still viewed as an impediment to learning achievement for children to some extent.

### 2.4.1.1 Majority Language Only Policy

Education prefers monolingual children to bilingual or multilingual. Moreover, monolingualizing in majority language has become the target of education for long periods across many countries in the world. In addition, historically, the policy of assimilation was implemented in schools by rejecting recognition of a child's first language.

A Spanish boy's story took place in New York City. He said: 'My teachers thought they knew exactly what they need to do in order to prepare me for the future, so the first thing they told me ... was: "Learn English," So I said, "Si, si." Then, in the same vein, they came up with, "Forget Spanish," And interestingly enough, before I learned English I forgot Spanish, and soon I was illiterate in two languages.' (Casajnov and Arias 1993: 4). This story happened in United States in 1970s in New York City. Similar story occurred in a Tibetan area of China during 1970, this simple story which is about one of my cousins when he was a little boy took place in school. His teacher could not understand Tibetan, his mother tongue, which was neither accepted nor recognized by his school. As a result, he wetted his trousers at school. When his mother called him stupid, he said, "Mum, my teacher doesn't understand my language." This story illustrates that the school failed to value this boy's first language—Tibetan. These are examples of how, for children whose home language is not the majority language, school is always the first place "where a child's language is first scrutinized or judged by strangers" (Casajnov and Arias 1993: 28). It illustrates that children suffer in school simply because it was believed that their L1 (children's first language) would not bring prosperity to their life either in school or in society. Therefore, children's L1 was simply excluded by school. 'Majority language only' was applied in education which impeded children to become bilingual, and led minority children to feel ashamed of both their mother tongue and their native identity in schools (Baker, 1996, 1992, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, Skutnabb-Kangas and Cummins, 1988, Cummins, 1996).

Garcia (2009) indicates that 'The 1878 report of the *Commissioner of Indian Affairs* suggested that children be removed from their parents and put in boarding schools (Garcia, 2009). Moreover, children's language was labelled as the 'barbarous dialect' by education (Garcia, 2009:164). From that time, native American children in the United States would be sent to boarding schools and forbidden from going home to see their parents because the schools believed that their home language would have a bad influence on them or would impede their assimilation into a white society (Cummins, 1996, Grosjean, 1982). In

nineteenth century the increased influx of immigrants raised fears of the “foreign element” in United States (Arias & Casanova: 1993: 7). During this time children in school whose first language was not English were subjected to ‘English only policy’ without differentiating Indian children or immigrant children. Arias & Casanova (1993:9) states that minority students were subjected to severe punishment whenever they resorted to a language other than English on the playground or in the classroom.

English only policy was also applied to Welsh children in England (Cummins, 1996). Welsh children were forced to wash their mouths with soap or to wear a wooden plaque when they spoke their native language (Baker, 1998, Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981, Gravelle, 1996). “The Welsh not” education policy came into existence after the 1870 Education act in Britain. Children would be forced to wear a heavy wooden placard if they spoke any Welsh in school (Cummins, 1996).

In Sweden, children of immigrants from Finland were also subjected to ‘Swedish only’ language policy in schools. A story written by Jalava (1988), a little boy who was Finnish and who immigrated to Sweden when he was a young boy, talks about how he was violently told no Finnish for writing compositions:

“When the idea had eaten itself deeply enough into my soul that it was despicable to be a Finn, I begin to feel ashamed of my origins” (Jalava, 1988:164).

Finnish children were identified by the integration model in school as “socially and culturally handicapped” (Honkala, Leporanta-Morley, et al.1988:241). “Being ‘Finnish’ thus became an illness, the cure was “more Swedish” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1991:39). Some of them forgot their first language and became monolingual in the majority language through education.

“As for myself, I was no longer capable of yelling in Finnish—even though, down in my heart, I might have had the desire” ( Jalava, 1988:166).

Under the policy of ‘majority language only’, minority children feel confusion about who they are through their education because their mother tongues do not have any status in school. Skutnabb-Kangas (1981) indicates the whole system led the children to feel that everything connected to home, including language, was a symbol of shame, thus the education minority children got from school was how to run away from everything associated with home “as soon as possible” (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981:381). This kind of assimilation was mostly demanded by majority people (Goresen, 1982).



#### 2.4.1.2 Majority language only in Chinese education

It is sometimes the case that the majority think of the minority's culture as uncivilized (Cummins, 1996). Looking at Chinese society, Hansen (1999) points out that Han Chinese believe that the Non-Han people are usually categorized as 'backward'. Non-Han people means minorities who are called '*shaoshu minzu*' in Chinese. Moreover, he points out that Chinese believe Chinese ideology and culture represent the highest level of civilization in China, even in the world. Furthermore, in Chinese tradition, Chinese prefer homogenous in language and culture rather than diversity (Dikotter, 1992). Furthermore, Chinese named 'barbarian' to the people who were not Han Chinese and who did not follow the Chinese ideology of Confucianism (Dikotter, 1992; Hansen, 1999). Nevertheless, Chinese culture regards China as the centre of the world and labelled other groups 'the distance savages hovering on the edge of bestiality' (Dikotter, 1992: 4). The simple way to civilize them is to "*laihua*': come and be transformed; or '*hanhua*': become Chinese" (Dikotter, 1992: 2). It is the theory labelled 'using the Chinese ways to transform the barbarians' (Dikotter, 1992: 2). Therefore, Han Chinese people always tried to civilize ethnic groups through making them to learn Chinese culture and language (Bass, 2005; Macherras, 2003; Dikotter, 1992; Yi, 2008).

A Chinese scholar Xiangwen carried out field research in a Tibetan area in 1935. He described a primary school in his report which was established by the *Guomingdang* (the Republic party). Because of the strong belief held by Chinese policy makers that Tibetan culture is a backward one which much be eradicated, Tibetan children had to learn written Chinese instead of written Tibetan. The curriculum in the Kangsa primary school only taught Chinese to Tibetan children. Moreover, the scholar himself also firmly believed that the only way to promote literacy levels for any backward nationality, including Tibetans in Tibetan areas, was to learn culture from the more civilized outside. He (1935) believed that Tibetan children would get a lot of benefit from learning Chinese because it represented a more advanced culture (Xiangwen, 2005).

Nima (2007) points out that the Tibetan language and traditions have long been regarded as backward; therefore, civilizing projects have been carried out in Tibetan areas as well. Moreover, Hansen (1999) states that minority education is regarded as a civilizing institution to civilize those regarded as backward; therefore, we should not be surprised to see "the form and content of this education often contradicts the outspoken message of national

equality” (Hansen, 1999: 4). Zhou (2009) describes this situation as a gap between the policy and the practice of policy. Mackerras (1994) states that though policy in China is promoting national equality, it prefers assimilation to pluralism. In next section I review the various kinds of bilingual education systems around the globe.

#### **2.4.2 Bilingual education for minority children**

Many people still ask this question, “Why not simply become monolingual in the majority language?” A Han Chinese asked me this question in a conference regarding the challenges of bilingualism among Tibetans. “Why not only become monolingual in Chinese?” I realized that people still think the best way to solve the problems of minorities becoming bilingual is to teach them majority language. Cummins and Swain (1986:100) indicate that people may say, “Do not develop bilingualism; develop monolingualism. Teach the children of immigrants minority English. Assimilate them, and the problem will go away.” Moreover, educators blamed the minority’ children’s poor marks in school to their speaking a different language at home. However, the problems do not necessarily go away; they may even increase, for the individual, and for society. Cummins and Swain (1986) further point out that the only way to solve this problem is to get help from education, from bilingual education.

Baker (1993) indicates that the term of bilingual education normally refers to two different kinds of phenomenon. One is the students who spoke two languages, but the other is students who consciously /voluntarily learn another foreign language as part of their school education. However, Cummins (1996) states that the definition of bilingual education differs regarding to the different goals of those programmes. I agree with Ogbu’s suggestion of voluntary minority and involuntary minority (Ogbu and Simons: 1998). He refers to immigrants learning another language as voluntary minority, but to indigenous people who are forced to learn the majority language as involuntary minority. Therefore, I would say that how bilingual education is applied for voluntary and involuntary very different.

In many countries, the bilingual education designed for immigrant children is to help children to achieve proficiency in the school language through deploying the children’s home language. For instance, the United States provides three types of bilingual education to minority children: transitional bilingual education, developmental bilingual education, and two – way bilingual education (Garcia, 2009). Overall, the purpose of these types of bilingual education is to apply different methods to deploy the children’s home language in order to improve their proficiency in English. ‘When it is assumed that students have attained

sufficient proficiency in the school language to follow instruction in that language, home language instruction is discontinued (Cummins, 1996:99).

There are some other types of bilingual education designed for involuntary minorities. The Soviet Union was an example of teaching the official language Russian as the second language to minorities whose first languages were not Russian. McLaughlin (1986) points out that Soviet educators strongly believe that a person's first language plays a significant role in learning a second language. Moreover, he indicates that the official policy of the Soviet Union supports minority languages and their cultures. Guboglo (1986) states that the Soviet Union always strives to support minority languages. It is an example of official language being applied in school curriculums as the second language to involuntary minority children in the Soviet Union.

The Canadian immersion programme was studied as a good example in bilingual education. It was designed for a large community whose L1 is English but the official language is French. It happened in the mid 1960s, and took place in the Canadian province of Quebec. The official language of Quebec is French and it is the first language for most of the population. However, it accommodates a quite large population of English – speaking communities (Swain, 1997). Cummins (1998:34) indicates that there are three major variants of the French programme: early immersion starting in kindergarten or occasionally grade 1; middle immersion starting in grades 4 or 5; and late immersion starting in grade 7. Moreover, Cummins points out that the early immersion programme use 100% of French in class, and gradually introduced the children's first language English into the curriculum from Grade 2. And by Grade 4 or 5, the instruction language in classroom is divided equally between French and English. The aim of this programme is for additive bilingualism. The released result shows that children in immersion program were able to do better than monolingual children in academic subjects (Cummins and Swain, 1986; Genesee, 1987; Arias & Casanova, 1993). It was a breakthrough finding. Arias & Casanova (1993: 21) indicate that findings from this study were the first in psychological and educational research to suggest that bilingualism could be an advantage instead of handicap. The Canadian immersion bilingual programme is an example of how children whose L1 is not the official language of the area can become additive bilingualism through the reinforcement of the education. In the Canadian immersion programme teachers are bilingual in French and English (Cummins: 1998).

Tibetans are an involuntary minority in China, and bilingual education in Tibetan areas provides a two–tracks system. One is '*zang wei zhu*' in which subjects are taught in Tibetan,

with the addition of a Chinese language class; the other track is '*han wei zhu*' in which all the subjects are taught in Chinese, with the addition of a Tibetan language class (Gouleta: 2011). In the first track, children use their first language to learn the academic subjects; however, following in the second track, children use their second language to learn all of the academic subjects. These bilingual systems have been offered to children in Tibetan areas where the majority language is Tibetan but the official language is Chinese, their second language. Sadly there is little or no research done to compare the difference in academic results between children from track 1 and track 2. In my research, my youngest participant has been through the '*han wei zhu*' system. He started to learn all of subjects in his second language from Grade one. I observed a Chinese class in a Tibetan primary school which was a boarding school. Most children in this school were from Tibetan nomad families. The Chinese language class was for children in grade two. The teacher was a Han Chinese, she only used Chinese as the instruction language for class. I was sitting next to a boy; I asked him whether he understood what the teacher was saying (I asked him in Tibetan). His face flushed and he shook his head. One of my other participants has been through the track 1 system. She said she even did not understand 'sit down' in Chinese while her teacher asked her in Chinese (See 6.3: Manlatso's story). I am always wondering how Tibetan children manage to survive in bilingual school where teachers used the second language to teach all of academic subjects. Research has proven that children's language skills are better learned in one language first and then gradually developed in the second language (Cummins & Swain, 1986). And the first language is very important for children's educational development (Cummins: 2000; Skutnabb – Kangas: 2000). But most Tibetan children started to learn Tibetan, Chinese from Grade One and do not have the opportunity to first begin learning in one language with the second added in slowly. Most Tibetan teachers in school are bilingual; however, most of Chinese teachers in school are monolingual in Chinese. There is a little research done to investigate how children manage to learn in this kind of bilingual education.

Above I have reviewed different kinds of bilingual education. Moreover, I have exemplified three approaches to bilingual education designed for involuntary minority children in three contexts. I would say that different bilingual education approaches were followed in Soviet Union, Canada and Tibet due to the different educational policies in various contexts. In the next section I will look at how the development of bilingualism for Tibetans has been affected by changing policy over the past 60 years. The following sections will demonstrate how much the change of political and social circumstance affects education policies which in turn affect individual's bilingual experiences.

## **2.5 Brief review of the implementation of the minority education policy in the Tibetan context since 1959**

Bass (1998) indicates that politics always interfere with the development of education in Tibetan areas of China. In this section I am going to discuss how minority education in multinational states is very much affected by political /attitudinal changes within the national context. .

### **2.5.1 Tibetan language treasured**

China's attitudes towards bilingualism provide very clear evidence of the first pluralistic stage (1949-1957), in which the government recognized the minorities' language rights, established infrastructures for minority education, and developed prototypes of bilingual education. During this time, the Tibetan language was supported in schools. Moreover, it was a time when 'minority policy' was applied in Tibetan areas (Iredale Bilik & Su: 2001). Bass (1998), Mackerras (1994, 1995), Zhou (2009), Wang, Y. and J. Phillion (2009) all point out how education policy during this time focused on fostering minority languages and tried to build up nationalities under the conditions of equality and unity for all nationalities. Moreover, strong patriotism in education and the preservation of minority language and culture were considered as well (Bass, 1998). Mother tongue was used in bilingual education after 1949 (Tsung and Cruickshank; 2009). Zhou (2008) attributes this education policy to China's adoption of the Soviet model of a multinational state. He indicates how this model encouraged using and developing fifty-five minority languages. McLaughlin (1986) points out how during the time of Lenin and Stalin, the educational policy towards minority languages in the Soviet Union was to preserve minority languages. He (1986: 40) further indicates that: "Both Lenin and Stalin supported the use of the national languages in the education system, yet the goal of creating a single Soviet nation implies a linguistically homogeneous society". China's education policy during this time was strongly influenced by the Soviet Union because many aspects of social organization were copied from the 'older brother', the Russians.

### **2.5.2 Tibetan language disappears from school curriculums**

From 1958 to 1977 was the period of time in China which some scholars named 'the Chinese –Monopolistic stage' (Tsung and Cruickshank: 2009). During this time, language policy in China promoted the Chinese language over minority languages in education, and the Tibetan language was eliminated from school curriculums. I divide the disappearance of the Tibetan language from schools into two time periods.

The first time period started in 1959. During this time, the Tibetan language was treated as "old custom". Bass (1998) indicates that beginning in 1959, the Tibetan language was considered synonymous with 'old custom'; moreover, the education policy implemented in Tibet shifted to "fight against 'old customs'" (Bass, 1998: 31); furthermore, Mao stated in public that religion is the opiate of the people. The changing attitude towards the Tibetan language was due to the flight of the Dalai Lama in March 1959 to India (Mackerras, 2003). Moreover, monks in monasteries were the key influence on the Tibetan uprising on March 10, 1959. All of these led the government to suspect the added influence of the Tibetan language in education. The government began to believe that that education was like a mirror reflecting political instability in Tibetan areas.

The second stage was during the Cultural Revolution. Education was generally in a state of chaos throughout China during this time and schools were closed across the country. However, Goldstein (1997) states that during this time in Tibetan areas not only were schools closed, but also "Tibetans were pushed into the larger Han Chinese linguistic world" (Goldstein, 1997: 184). During this time, schools became the places where children were learning to become Chinese and many Tibetans were even asked to change their Tibetan names to Chinese names. Iha (2013) indicates that the generation of people who went through the education system during the Cultural Revolution could not even speak Tibetan in his village. However, from my participant A Ji's story (6.1.3: A Ji's story) we can see villagers rejecting becoming Han Chinese simply by refusing to send their children to school. I would say it was the time language remained as the only tie to connect them to their heritage since monasteries were closed down and Tibetans were forbidden from practicing their religion and their culture.

### **2.5.3 The period of revival of the Tibetan language in school curriculum**

1978 to 1990 was the second stage of a pluralistic period in China (Tsung and Cruickshank: 2009). It was a time to restore, revive, and significantly develop bilingual education.

Both Bass (1998) and Mackerras (1994) point out how the constitutional changes of 1982 regarding minority education advocated the use of minority languages in educational programmes. Bass (1998) quotes some of the new measures for minority education policy which were adopted by China's national conference on education and which brought significant changes to Tibetan education. Although there are six measures, I will only quote the second, fourth, and fifth, which brought fundamental changes to Tibetan education.

“2. New legislation allowing national minority areas to develop their own education programmes, including kinds of schools, curriculum content and the language of instruction.

4. The establishment of boarding schools and grants for students in pastoral areas.

5. The encouragement of ‘minority ‘nationality languages, culture and tradition” (Bass, 1998: 51).

The bilingual schools started to be established in many Tibetan areas after 1982 based on measure 2. Many boarding schools were established in Tibetan areas based on measure 4. Wang and Zhou (2003) point out that boarding schools have been set up in all minority areas. In addition, boarding schools in minority areas ‘benefit from government subsidies to a varying degree’ (Wang and Zhou: 2003:93). Because of measure 5, enthusiasm for learning Tibetan was revived in Tibetan areas. Under this situation, a slogan appeared on one of Lhasa's main streets: “Learn Tibetan, use Tibetan, and develop Tibetan” (Goldstein, 1997: 186). Goldstein was impressed by minority people's huge enthusiasm and pride for their own culture and language during 1982 in China. He indicates that many ethnic people were proud of their ethnic identity in the 1980s due to encouragement from the state.

#### **2.5.4 Minority education policy focuses on ‘diversity in unity’**

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 90s brought further change to bilingualism policy in Tibetan areas of China, implying a reassessment of the role of minority languages in education. ‘One nation with diversity’ (a model learned from the Soviet Union) was being replaced by the inclusive Chinese nation with ethnic diversity (Zhou, 2008). Moreover, Zhou (2009) identifies that after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Chinese government started to employ Fei Xiaotong's (a famous Chinese ethnographer) concept of “The inclusive Chinese nation includes fifty-six ethnic groups”. Fei Xiaotong's concept called *duo yian yi ti* in Chinese means ‘plurality and unity within the configuration of the Chinese nation’ (Postiglione, Zhiyong, and Jiao; 2004: 197). “China is similar to a flower garden, where each bloom is unique in size, colour, and fragrance, yet contributes to a beautiful and harmonious

whole” (Bahry, et, al 2009:115-116). However, Bahry et.al further (2009:116) indicate that: “In practice, curriculum and pedagogy in minority areas frequently emphasize the whole (unity) more than its parts (plurality)”. The shift to focus on the whole in education policy is represented by the one example of Putonghua (standard Chinese), where proficiency in Putonghua has become a potential condition for employment (Zhou, 2008). Another example is the move to legitimately teach Chinese to minority children from the first year of primary school (Zhou, 2008). One of my informants started to have Chinese classes in the first year of primary school. In addition, Wang and Phillion (2009) indicate that patriotic education has been strengthened in the school curriculum (Wang and Phillion, 2009). Moreover, patriotic education has been instilled through language text books. For instance, ‘I am Chinese’ ‘Beijing’ were in second grade Tibetan text books (See my appendix 2). Tibetan children started learning the patriotic education as soon they could read written Tibetan. Mackerras (1994) states that the riots which repeatedly happened in Lhasa from 1987 to 1989 led the government to emphasize the need for minority education policy to develop integration to strengthen Chinese national cohesion. Further, school level education was trying to get rid of religious influence from children by eliminating any religious figure in text books (Bass, 2005). In March of 2008 a riot took place in Lhasa again and it was regarded as one of the biggest uprisings occurring in Tibetan areas in 50 years (Topgyal, 2011). On the same day that the riot happened, Tibetan students in a national university carried on a – sit – in protest to support the riot. All of these happened under the policy of ‘one nation diversity’. My youngest participant was in grade one in Lhasa primary school when the riot happened in Lhasa.

### **2.5.5 Education policy focuses on ‘*xi zang ban*’ in Tibetan Autonomous Region**

PRC implemented different policies in different areas of Tibet so ‘there were large variations among provinces, prefectures, and even counties, which means it is not easy to describe the situation of bilingual education in general terms’ (Kolas and Thowsen: 2005: 94). For instance, in some areas children are offered two track systems. They can chose either ‘*han wei zhu*’ or ‘*zang wei zhu*’. However, in some areas children are only offered one system. For instance, my third participant went through ‘*zang wei zhu*’ system because it was the only system offered by the bilingual schools in her area (see 6.3: Manlatso’s story). In contrast, my youngest participant went through the ‘*han wei zhu*’ system in Lhasa primary school (see 6.4: Jampa’s story), which that was the only option he was offered by the bilingual school in Lhasa.



Since 1984 children in Tibet Autonomous Region have been sent to mainland China to pursue middle school and high school education. It is named dislocated education by some scholars (Postiglione, 2009; Zhou 2008). A proposal to 'establish schools in inland provinces and municipalities to help Tibet cultivate talented people' was made after Hu Qili, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China visited Tibet in August 1984 (Postiglione Zhiyong and Jiao: 2004). It is viewed as similar to the establishment of boarding schools for Indian children in 18<sup>th</sup> century in American history (Bass: 2005, Wang and Zhou: 2003). However, Chinese government claims it is to benefit the development of Tibet (Wang and Zhou; 2003). Wang and Zhou (2003: 96) indicate that three '*xi zang zhongxue* (Tibetan Secondary schools) were established in Beijing, Sichuan and Jiangsu, and 15 Tibetan classes were set up in Shanghai, Zhejiang, and other inland and coastal provinces and municipalities after 1984. Tibetan class are named '*xi zang ban*' (Tibetan class in Chinese). Every '*xi zang ban*' is located in a local school in a Chinese city and Tibetan children are allocated to a '*xi zang ban*'. PRC provides free education, however, the endeavour for going to '*xi zang ban*' and '*xi zang xuexiao*' is very high children are only allowed to go back to Tibet two or three times during their first three years study in junior school. Though the competition for getting a place in '*xi zang ban*' is very intensive parents still chose to send their children to '*neidi*' ('*neidi*' means inland China. Tibetans name the cities in inland China as '*neidi*' in Chinese), because they believe it provide best education for their children and brilliant jobs in future for their children. Wang and Zhou (2003: 95) point out that the purpose of establishing schools in inland China is to bring up Tibetan teenagers educated in mainland of China who 'would be reliable cadres and desirable talents through schooling in '*neidi*'. It regarded as a contribution to the development of Tibet. Postiglione (2011: 8) states that being tracked in the '*neidi*' school requires a high examination score but is an attractive proposition from the point of view of an increasing number of parents because it virtually guarantees a good jobs upon return to Tibet, though local TAR secondary school heads are not always in favour of '*neidi*' schools since they draw away the best talent from Tibet. Piao (1990: 46) states that Nowadays, they (their Tibetan parents in Tibet) regarded it an honour to send children to study in '*neidi*'. In the past they regarded those who became lamas in monasteries as first class citizens. In agricultural and pastoral areas, people hold grand ceremonies to send off the selected primary students. Primary students in many Tibetan areas set their goals to study in '*neidi*' Tibetan junior secondary schools and classes (cited in Wang: 2003: 102). Tibetan language is included in school curriculum for '*xi zang ban*' students. It was stated that 'Chinese language and literature (*Han yu wen*) and Tibetan language and literature (*Zang yu wen*) are two main subjects in the curriculum. In fact, Chinese language has now become the main teaching medium in all Inland Tibetan Secondary Schools' (Postiglione Zhiyong and Jiao, 2004: 204). Moreover,

Postiglione, Zhiyong and Jiao (2004) indicate that there are several revised conditions for student requirement based on the conference held by the Department of Ethnic Minority Education of The Ministry of Education (of PRC).

Primary – school graduates should be aged 12 – 14, although students from urban regions could be aged 11.

Most students should be Tibetan, but some Menba, Luoba and other ethnic minorities indigenous to the TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region) can also be recruited.

Students should be locally registered permanent residents of the TAR.

Students should perform well in ideology and morality.

Students should be examined in Tibetan language, Chinese language and math.

Students should be healthy and able to study for a long time in the inland.

Students enrolment in Inland Tibetan Secondary School should be on a voluntary basis (Postiglione Zhiyong and Jiao, 2004: 206)

Furthermore, it is likely that all best children in the Tibet Autonomous Region go to '*neidi*', creating a dilemma for educational programs in Tibet. I know a boy who decided with his mother to pursue his middle school education in Lhasa rather than in the '*neidi*'. He is a very bright boy; he did not take the exams for going to '*neidi*'. The reason choosing to stay in Lhasa to do his middle school education is because he heard that '*xi zang ban*' only teaches written Tibetan language for a few hours per week, which much less in comparison with the curriculum in middle school of Lhasa. Now he is going the Lhasa Number 1 Middle School, which is believed to be the best middle school in Lhasa. However, his mother started to doubt whether she had made the right decision to keep her son in Lhasa to complete the nine-year compulsory education because her son has not liked to study since beginning middle school. Even though he does not put much effort into study, he always ranks top place in his class. This worries his mother so much that her son would not be able to compete with children who have chosen to go to *xi zang ban*.

We can see that children in the Tibet Autonomous Region go through two kinds of education systems. One is going to boarding school in inland China; the other is the bilingual education in local areas. All of these education systems affect identity formation.

In the following section, I discuss how particular political emphases affect identity formation for Tibetan children.

### **2.5.6 The gap between Tibetan identity and ethnic minority under the patriotic education in schools in Tibetan areas**

Nowadays schools in Tibetan areas try to reinforce children's nationalistic sentiments through emphasising patriotic education. Moreover, school is a place to teach children to develop the identity of a minority nationalist through focusing on patriotic education and moral education to strength Chinese national cohesion (Wang Y and J. Phillion, 2009; Bass, 2005; Mackerras, 1994). Regarding 'minority nationalist' in China, Iredale Bilik and Su (2001: 21) state that in all of the nation – states of China in the twentieth century, Han have been the most populous ethnic group/ race/nationality but there are have also been a number of much smaller groups of people living inside China's borders. There are defined as minority nationalities. Kolas and Thowsen (2005) indicate that the implementation of patriotic education was issued in September 1994 in schools across China. Bass (2005) points out that patriotic campaigns have been carried on in TAR in 1990, 1994, 1997, and 2000.

The PRC always categorizes religion as a bad influence on children's nationalistic sentiment. Bass (2005: 436) states that 'in 2000, a 'materialism and atheism' campaign was launched during which teachers and parents were urged to increase children's understanding of atheism, 'in order to help rid them of the bad religious influence of religion (Tibet Daily, 2000, 20 October cited in Bass, 2006: 436). Moreover, Bass (2005) points out that through the patriotic campaigns carried on in school 'children are taught to denigrate the traditional Tibetan culture. This has led to what Harrell describes as 'stigmatised identity' (1995:436). In Tibetan culture, religion is the part of the daily life for ordinary people. It is fundamentally rooted in People's daily lives, so when it is disallowed, the very heart of Tibetan culture is attacked. Iha (2013) indicates that every Tibetan household (in his village) has an altar where images of Buddha are placed. Morning starts with offering butter lamps to Buddha in Tibetan homes in his village. Moreover, Goldstein (1997) told a story of a Tibetan woman who even saved her small amount of butter from her monthly food ration to light a small butter lamp to Buddha during the Cultural Revolution. It means she would not get enough butter for her butter tea in the morning (Tibetans drink butter tea every day). This is an example showing religion is an integral part of Tibetan lives regardless of whether the States prohibits or not. Moreover, the creation of the Tibetan writing system was closely related to the foundation of Buddhism (see introduction: 1.2). Children grow up exposed to their culture

and religion at home, showing the importance of influence on the development of identity at home (Freeman; 2004). Moreover, Lee (2001) points out that family and village play a very important role in the construction of identity for students in his research. However, I was told in Lhasa, children are forbidden from joining any religious activities with their grandparents. Bass (2005: 445) states that 'minority' nationalities are expected not only to become moral citizens but also to renounce their traditional values (as taught by their families) for the abstract Chinese socialist values taught in school. Thus we can see the dilemma between the development of their Tibetan identity and the identity as an ethnic minority for Tibetan children within Tibetan areas.

Nima (2000) indicates that we are firstly human beings, and then Tibetans; and finally citizens of Chinese society. Nima (2001) further states that schools should help children construct a relationship between their Tibetan community and Chinese society. However, since 2012, many Tibetan individuals set themselves on fire to protest within Tibetan areas of China (Mills; 2012). As of 20/12/14, the number has increased to 135. Most of the self-immolators are monks. Therefore, religion is viewed as the symbol of separatist groups trying to split Tibet from the mother land, leading schools to trying to get rid of the influence of religion from the school curriculum and text books. In a lesson on Sakya Monastery, one of Tibet's great monasteries, pupils are told of the scholarship that took place in the institution: 'There is a saying among the villagers that even if the stone walls of the building collapsed, the wall of teaching would not collapse'. The introduction to the lesson informs the pupils that they will learn about the site, the location, its famous scholars and 'the position of Sakya in promoting the cultural history of the Motherland and how the State is looking after it'. No mention is made of the fact that the teaching described in the text is religious teaching and its scholars are Buddhist monks (TAR People's Publisher, 2004: 30 cited in Bass, 2005: 437).

Thus we can see the gap between school and home. It becomes a dilemma for children to develop both Tibetan and ethnic minority identity.

Nevertheless, through analysing a time table of teaching schedule of Tibetan secondary schools or classes Wang and Zhou (2003) summarize that Tibetan culture and written language only occupied few hours in school curriculum in Tibetan class of boarding school. The journey of pursuing education in mainland China would be 'seven continuous years' (Wang and Zhou 2003). It would be interesting to see how children struggle to cope with the dilemma between their Tibetan identity and that of being an ethnic minority after living and studying in mainland China for a long time.

In this section I have reviewed the changing of policy from including the Tibetan language in the school curriculum to totally excluding it from school curriculum. Then to the stage of emphasising unity through reinforcing patriotic education in schools in Tibetan areas, and at the same time through sending many primary graduates to '*xi zang ban*' only from the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The brief review of fluctuating policies applied in schools of Tibetan areas illustrates the complexity of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas due to the unstable policies towards bilingualism over time the implementation of different policies in different Tibetan areas. The complex nature of bilingualism led me realize that we should see bilingualism from a socio- cultural perspective. This led me to decide to use three theoretical frames to try to interpret the process of bilingualism.

## **2.6 Theoretical frames to understand bilingualism**

My five participant's different stories of developing bilingualism at four points in time show me that bilingualism is a very complicated issue which significantly affects the process of identity development. Moreover, their stories led me to realize that an individuals' opportunity of developing bilingualism is affected by whether education promoted bilingualism or not, which is in turn affected by changing policy and transition of society. Reviewing my five participants' different stories of developing bilingualism at five different contexts in four points time highlighted the extent of the complication of developing bilingualism, thus I have decided to use Bronfenbrenner (2005)'s ecological theory to try to understand the layers of influences on a person's bilingualism. Bronfenbrenner (2005)'s ecological theory illuminates the complexity of bilingualism through looking at layers of contexts. It reinforces my argument that bilingualism is a social phenomenon.

In addition, my five participants' stories are the stories of struggling to become bilingual in five different contexts. All of their struggles reflect how social changes, which took place at institutional level, affected their life and so highlight the relationship between persons and history. Moreover, their encounter of different struggles affected the understanding of their identity. Thus I have decided to use 'History in Person' to better understand how the development of bilingualism fundamentally affects the development of identity. 'History in Person' (2001) shows that how individual lives are situated in local practice, and moreover, how local practices are situated in historical structures. We can see the identity is affected by how they choose to participate in the practices that surround them. This is not offered by Bronfenbrenner (2005)'s ecological theory.

Conteh (2012: 23) indicates that Language is an inextricable part of our personal and social lives, of the cultures we live in, and of who we are. It is part of the way in which we develop a sense of where we belong, and how we fit in with the social worlds that around us. Blommaert (2011; 2013)'s social linguistic view of seeing language as resource linked to social situation, histories and biographies lead me to further argue the complication of bilingualism is closely related to the social changes through the different ways they choose to tell their stories.

These three theoretical frames provide tools for me to see bilingualism as a social process. By using these three theoretical frames to discuss my five participants stories will help my reader to understand the complication of my five participants' stories.

### **2.6.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory**

Bronfenbrenner (2005)'s ecological theory, which focuses on how the ecological environment affects the development of a person, is important for the study of bilingualism as a sociocultural process. It helps me to understand why bilingualism became part of my five individuals' lives through looking at society as different layers of environments, and at how the development of bilingualism was affected by these layers.

Bronfenbrenner (2005:50) conceives the ecological environment as a set of nested structures, each inside the next like a set of Russian dolls. At the innermost level is the immediate setting mediating the development of the individual person. 'This is the *microsystem* (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: 56). Bronfenbrenner (2005: 148) indicates that the first immediate setting is also called the *'face-to-face setting'*. 'A microsystem is a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relation experienced by the developing person in a given face – to –face settings with particular and material features and containing other persons with distinctive characteristics of temperament, personality, and system of belief' (Bronfenbrenner (2005: 145). Furthermore, he suggests that the person's development can be profoundly affected by events occurring in settings in which they are not even present (Lerner; 2005); those contexts, *'he or she may never enter but in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment'* (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: 54). These settings he named *'exosystems'*. He states that the exosystem encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person. For a child, this could be the

relation between the home and the parents' workplace; for parents, the relation between their child's school and the neighbourhood peer group (Bronfenbrenner, 2005: 80).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory has helped me to better understand my five participants' story of becoming bilingual within Tibetan areas. It provides a conceptual tool for me to see how each story is linked with each other through the linkage between microsystem and exosystem. For instance, what happened in the professor's story acted as the 'exosystem system' which influenced A Ji's story of becoming bilingual during Cultural Revolution. Similarly what happened in A Ji's story provided the exosystem system' in Dawa's immediate environment, it explains why school in Dawa's village could not offer Tibetan class for her. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory thus provides a tool for me to see the connection between one generation to the next generation in a setting.

I would say the concept of 'microsystem' and 'exosystem' highlights the complication of developing bilingualism within layers of contexts. It helps us to further understand bilingualism from social cultural perspective. However, Bronfenbrenner (2005)'s theory only focuses on the impact of developing person from layers of contexts, it does not refer how individual as an agent reflect the impact of the layers of context. My five participants' stories in one hand show that how the development of bilingualism affected by the changing of society, on the other hand show that layers contexts as social formation and cultural production, but which contribute to the development of identity. Bronfenbrenner (2005) helps me to understand the impact for developing bilingualism through layers of contexts, but it does not help me to see how individual as an agency they response to the layers of impact differently. Therefore I decided to use history in person to discuss the development of identity is a process of how individual position themselves through the impact of layers of contexts.

### **2.6.2 History in person**

The concept of history in person shows, how, among other things, social practice in everyday life in local places is influenced by historical processes. It is 'grounded in a theory of practice that emphasizes processes of social formation and cultural production' (Holland and Lave: 2001:4). They further argue that social practice theory is constructed in inquiry into historical structures of privilege, rooted in class, race, gender, and other social divisions, which are in this way brought into the present – that is, into local situated practice (pp.4-5). Linger (2001)'s article 'The identity path of Eduardo Mori' helps me to understand the term 'History in Person. It is a story of an individual who tries to position who he is through his

daily life from Brazil to Japan. Eduardo Mori was born in Brazil but was raised in a Japanese immigrant family. He was taught by his family he was Japanese and he was sure that he was Japanese not Brazilian. Later on when he had grown up, he moved to Japan for a better paid job. However, this was the first time he doubted his identity as Japanese. He could not understand Japanese properly and he found out that his Japanese colleagues did not think he was Japanese. After a struggle to live in Japan, he started to rethink his identity of who he was. This article reminds me so much about my five participants' stories of developing identity through the experiences of developing bilingualism. For instance, in A Ji's story we can see her struggle of learning only Chinese through nine year compulsory, and her struggle of learning Tibetan, all of her stories of struggle shows that everyday life in local places is influenced by historical processes. Moreover, it led her to a path of understanding her identity. A Ji's understanding about who she is highlights the relation 'between subjects' intimate self – making and their participation in contentious local practice (Holland & Lave: 2001:5). 'History in Person' (2001) shows that an individual's formation of identity not only is influenced in environment, but also is a path of self-realization through participating in local practice. The local practice for my five participants is the language experiences which occurred in their villages and schools. This addresses the relation 'between continuous local practice and the production of subjectivities' (Holland and Lave, 2001). The continuous local practice is the changing of policy towards Tibetan language in schools and in villages in the different periods of time when my participants were developing bilingualism. Using 'History in Person' (2001) helps us to see the layers of contexts as social formation and cultural production in which struggles occur, but which contribute to the development of identity for my five participants.

### **2.6.3 Language as a 'repertoire'**

Sociolinguistics suggests we can see how language is related to society through identifying language as a 'repertoire' (Blommaert and Backus: 2011). The theory of repertoire views language as a resource shared with a community (Blommaert and Backus: 2011). It links language with a society in which people are using language to carry on daily communication. Moreover, Blommaert and Backus (2011: 2) indicate that the origins of repertoires are biographical, and repertoires can in effect be seen as 'indexical biographies'. Hymes (1972a (1986); 1974) suggests studying language in terms of what it is used for, and acknowledging that individuals may have access to different varieties of language, including dialects and accents as well as a greater or lesser understanding of the 'rules of use' appropriate for interactions with others in their context. All of these are referred as their 'linguistic repertoire' (Blommaert and Backus: 2011; 3). Moreover, the means of speaking



shows us that the process of changing society brought changes to language. The changes of society from the influx of migrants to society and the spread of the internet have brought fundamental changes to individuals' repertoire. These changes of society are termed 'superdiversiy' by Vertoverv (2007) cited in (Blommaert and Backus: 2011: 4).

Sociolinguistics identifies individuals' differing language competence in 'super - diverse context' (Blommaert and Bachus (2011:8), and recognizes that we can learn so much about our social situation, histories and biographies through viewing language as a resource. Phillimore (2013:4) indicates that our linguistic repertoires give so much about our biographies. Blommaert and Bachus (2011:22) indicate that:

'the resources that enter into a repertoire are indexical resources, language materials that enable us to produce more than just linguistic meaning but to produce social and cultural images of ourself, pointing interlocutors towards the frames in which we want our meanings to be put. Repertoires are thus indexical biographies, and analysing repertoires amounts to analysing the social and cultural itineraries followed by people, how they manoeuvred and navigated them, and how they placed themselves into the various social arenas they inhabited or visited in their lives'.

The perspective of viewing language as a repertoire led me to see the complication of bilingualism through looking at how my five participants choosing different ways to narrate their stories.

## **2.7 Summary**

This literature review demonstrates that bilingualism is a global issue. There are more and more minority people becoming bilingual simply because their mother tongue is not the majority language of their countries. Moreover, this literature review shows that bilingualism is a very complicated subject, indicating that the development of bilingualism is heavily linked with social and political changes in society. However, through reviewing literature on the subject of developing bilingualism, I realize that bilingualism has rarely been studied with the aim of seeking a deeper understanding through tracing individuals' language experiences at home and in school. Furthermore, I found that most studies on Tibetan education in Tibetan areas of China have normally been done through analysis of documents and text books. For instance, Bass (1998) uses lots of official documents and newspapers as resources, providing a comprehensive overview of education provision and

policy in Tibet, and so offers us a historical picture of education in different periods of time through focusing on document analysis. However, my study focuses on study of the lived experiences of five Tibetan people, growing up and going to school in Tibetan areas of China, it studies how their language experiences in school and at home have been affected by the changing of policy. My research therefore goes further than previous studies in seeking to deepen understanding of bilingualism, its links to socio- political and historical changes for language minority groups and individuals, and the implications for education. My work will make a contribution to the understanding of bilingualism from a social – political perspective, which has rarely done by other studies.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology: Finding stories**

### **3.1 Introduction**

My aim is to study five Tibetan people's bilingual learning experiences in Tibetan areas of China. My research is grounded in my own experiences in the context of Tibetan areas of China. My personal experience and the privilege of being able to directly observe many people's bilingual experiences in my life drive me to research the bilingual experiences of Tibetan people. I seek to gain a deep understanding of how their process of becoming bilingual has been affected by the changing of society, especially how the change of policy towards the Tibetan language has been implemented in school and has impacted bilingual development in individual Tibetans since 1950. I am trying to understand how the policy changes have impacted on individual's Bilingual development. The stories of becoming bilingual in Tibetan areas of China will be explored by investigating the following questions:

- 1: What have been the educational experiences of Tibetan learners from the 1950s to the present in Tibetan areas within China?
- 2: How have their bilingual experiences related to political–social–economic changes in China?
- 3: How have their identities as Tibetans been mediated by these experiences?
- 4: What role has language played in the process of developing bilingualism?

### **3.2 Research design**

I have designed my study as four linked case studies, and seek to understand the connection between individual learning experiences and the changes taking place in social and political levels. I needed to find people whose educational experiences took place at 4 different points in time from 1950 to the present. These points have been chosen to cover the whole period from 1950 to the present in order to look at whether or how experiences have changed over time and what factors have influenced any such changes taking place in Tibetan areas of China.

I have five informants, two of whom I have included in the same case study. Each of their bilingual experiences occurred in different decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries within the context of Tibetan areas of China. Each one illustrates a critical time in China. I will try to

understand how each individual's educational experiences were affected by changing society in a particular time. I am going to use ethnography to understand the layers within which I am taking narrative. I will endeavour to explain why the use of case study is the best method to employ, and why I have chosen these four points in time; moreover, I will explain how these four case studies are linked through time.

### 3.2.1 Participants

Two of my informants are teachers in a university which is famous all over China for its Tibetan literature and history departments. I have known and maintained a close relationship with these two informants since I was a college student; one was my teacher who is now a professor. His learning experience covers the period of time beginning from 1949 when the PC was established to the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966. And the other was a fellow student who has been promoted to professor as well. I called her A Ji in my research (Chapter 6:1 explains why I called her A Ji). Her educational learning experience covered the period of Cultural Revolution from 1966-1976 and the time of 1977 to 1981. My third and fourth informants (whom I include in the same case study) were two Tibetan major students: Dawa and Manlatso. I named their stories as 'slob ma's stories in my research (Chapter 6.4 explains why I named their stories as 'slob ma's stories). They were in the third year of pursuing a BA degree in a university for nationalities in China. Born after 1990, their educational experience covered the period of time the policy toward minority education started to shift from 'a pluralistic period' (see: 2.5.3) to Feixiaotong's '*duo yuan yi ti*'; it means diversity in unity (see: 2.5.4). I will elaborate on why I select two participants rather than one for this period of time. My fifth informant was attending a primary school in Lhasa while I was interviewing him. Lhasa is the capital of the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China.

**Table 1 : My participants**

Informant	Age	Education Background	Everyday Language experience
University Teacher	75	B.A degree in Tibetan Literature	Tibetan/Chinese
College Colleague	52	B. A degree in Tibetan	Tibetan/Chinese
2 University students	20/23	In the third year of University	Tibetan/Chinese
School Pupil	13	Primary School	Tibetan/Chinese

### 3.2.2 The reason for choosing these five participants

Each of my five informants' stories of developing bilingualism happened in four points of time, and their stories show that individual's opportunities of developing bilingualism were significantly influenced by the transition of society and changing of policies in Tibetan areas of China. In addition, the different ages of my five participants allow me to consider how the development of bilingualism taken place at different points in time in the political and cultural context of China.

The rationale for me to select my five participants is their stories naturally exist in my life. My opportunity of meeting my participants happened in the natural setting. I did not plan to meet them but they naturally became the part of my life. I have been inspired by their stories. Furthermore, I have come to notice that many Tibetan bilinguals around me have different stories of developing bilingualism, their different stories illuminate the ways in which individual's learning experience is much affected by the socio- political and historical changes that happened within China. Moreover, it leads me to realize the importance of conducting a research to seek deep understanding about Tibetan bilinguals' stories happened at four point times within China. Tibetan bilinguals belong to marginalized group of people. They started to develop bilingualism from 1950, but their stories have rarely been researched by scholars either within China or Western countries. I looked for people who covered the period of time from 1950 to present. These five individuals, who belong to four generations, happened to be my teacher, my friend colleague and my students. I would argue the rationale for me to select my five participants demonstrating the distinctive feature of ethnographic research that is always happen in real settings, and it intends to pursue real understanding rather than just finding truth (Blommaert and Jie, 2010; Spreadley, 1979).

Golafshani (2003) states that "to ensure reliability in qualitative research, examination of trustworthiness is crucial" (p.601). Moreover, Golafshani (2003) quotes from Mishler (2000) who indicates that: "the idea of discovering truth through measures of reliability and validity is replaced by the idea of truth worthiness" (p. 602). The quality of trustworthiness is achieved through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability in qualitative research (Wedell; 2010).

### *Credibility*

Credibility is obtained through Prolonged Engagement & Persistent Observation (Lincoln & Guba 2000). I spent more than 20 years working in the case of environment prior to beginning the study. More importantly, my personal experience of developing bilingualism happened in the case of environment. Credibility is also obtained through triangulation in qualitative research (Yin 1989, Merriam 1988, Goodson, 2013). Goodson (2013: 37)

indicates that the life history can be seen as the 'triangulate' created from the original life history by employing documentary and oral data on historical context and other oral testimonies. In my research, data came from the life stories in interviews, triangulated with different documentary sources, for example, local articles, school documents, diaries and textbooks. That was how triangulation is achieved in my research.

### *Transferability*

This considers the extent to which the research findings apply to other situations or contexts. Thick description is one way of achieving transferability. Through detailed 'thick' description, the reader is able to make judgement about whether the research is transferable. In my research, the method in which the data has been analysed ensures that the detailed description about Tibetan individuals' experiences of developing bilingualism is constantly present in the linked case studies. A second way is through considering generalizability in the sense that 'generalization is context' – a free statement without restricted through time and space (Lincoln and Guba; 2000). Maxwell (1992) suggests that although the results of most qualitative research will not be able to make the same claims for wide (or indeed universal) generalizability as made by pure scientific research, they ought still to be examined to see to what extent any theories they develop may be relevant to other similar subjects in other contexts. My research will provide general insights into the development of bilingualism which should relevance to studies on this topic in other contexts. A third way of achieving transferability is through naturalistic generalization. The concept of 'naturalistic generalization' was introduced by Robert Stake in 1976 (Lincoln and Guba; 2000). Stake (2000: 9) stated: 'I believe that it is reasonable to conclude that one of the most effective means of adding to understanding for all readers will be by approximating, through the words and illustrations of our reports the natural experience attained in ordinary personal involvement'. This research seeks deep understanding about five Tibetan individuals' bilingual experience happened in the particular contexts within China. Although achieving generalization is not the main purpose, as this study seeks to understand that bilingualism is a social process and it links to social – political and historical changes within society – the . particular knowledge of bilingualism through study five Tibetan individuals' life history helps other study about bilingualism can take similar perspective from this study. This is the naturalistic generalization in my study.

### *Dependability*

This addresses issues of transparency of method, which is the question of how the data are free from bias. Transparency of Method (Miles & Huberman 1994) raises questions about

whether there is a clear account of the research process and how decisions were made about data collection and analysis. In my research, the methodology chapter provided an account of research process, and the decisions of how to collect and analyse data, which demonstrates the way I pursue transparency in my research. Another requisite of dependability is ensuring that all the research materials are available for scrutiny (Wedell: 2010). In my research, examples of all research instruments are provided in the appendices, and all interview tapes and transcripts are available for examination.

### *Confirmability*

This raises the question of whether the findings truly represent the voices of participants and are not influenced by researcher's bias. In narrative study, the bias is avoided through focusing on listening to the voices of participants and seeking to listen to the voice of participants through doing data analysis on content and form. Elliott (2005:50) indicates that 'what is distinctive about the method is that it advocates producing a summary of the content of a biographical interview (i.e. the 'life lived') and a separate summary of the form of the biography as told in the interview, and then requires the analyst to examine the connection between these analytic documents in order to produce a case history documenting theories about how the two are related'. It is important that participants are not only given voice (the 'first order, ontological narrative') but also able to confirm the accuracy of the researcher's interpretations (the 'second order representational narrative') of their accounts. My approach to the analysis and presentation of the data in the first stage of recording the interviews provides a way for me to ensure the findings truly represent the voices of my five participants. In the second stage of interpretation discussion with the participants about the accuracy of my interpretations ensures the avoidance of any misinterpretation and therefore the confirmability of my findings.

### **3.3 The research approach I am using in my study**

My research seeks to understand how these individuals' learning experiences have been impacted on by this context, which has been influenced by the changing policies towards minority languages in China. This research does not intend to seek truth; rather it intends to understand how individuals develop bilingualism in a certain time and in a particular context. Therefore, this research has been designed to carry to study educational experiences at 4 points in time. I am using ethnography as my research approach.

### **3.3.1 What is ethnography?**

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research always conducted in real settings, and involves studying the lived experience of a particular group (Stewart,1998). Ethnography is a research approach to study particular people's daily lives. Ethnographers seek deep understanding of these groups of people. Madden (2010: 16) indicates that: the term 'ethnography' comes from Greek and broadly means 'writing about people', but has a narrow meaning of writing about particular groups of people, that is to say ethnically, culturally or socially defined groups. Furthermore, Wolcott (1988:188) demonstrates that ethnographic research is the approach to study 'a way of life' of groups of people. There are several features of ethnography.

#### **3.3.1.1 Studying human behaviour in natural settings**

Naturalism is the distinctive feature of ethnography. Ethnography aims to study people in a natural setting and seeks to gain the meaning hidden behind the actions of people occurred in a natural setting (Hammersley; 1994). Therefore, ethnography also bears another name as 'Naturalism' (Hammersley and Atkinson: 1995). Moreover, the naturalism is represented in ethnography through studying people's way of life in 'every day context, rather than under conditions created by the researcher' (Hammersley and Atkinson; 2007: 3). The original intention of going to a natural setting to study a group of people for ethnographic research is 'to describe what happens in the setting, and how the people involved see their own actions, others' actions, and the context (Hammersley and Atkinson: 1995: 6). By doing this ethnography aims to collect 'undisturbed data' from participants (Punch: 2005). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:6) point out that Naturalism proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its 'natural' states, undisturbed by the researcher. So this research is about "a person-centered" approach (Wolcott, 2010: 23); moreover, it is 'face-to-face, direct research' (Madden: 2010:16).

#### **3.3.1.2 Pursuing real understanding rather than just finding truth**

The significant feature of ethnographic research is that it is always conducted in real settings, to pursue real understanding rather than just finding truth (Conteh et al. 2005, Hammersley, 1992, Bloomaert and Jie, 2010, Spradley, 1979). Ethnography argues that 'human action differs from the behaviour of physical objects, and even from that of other animals: it does not consist simply of fixed responses or even of learned responses to



stimuli, but involves interpretation of stimuli and the construction of response (Hammersley: 1998: 8). Therefore, ethnography believes that 'physical stimuli can mean different things to different people – and, indeed, to the same person at different times (Hammersley and Atkinson: 1995: 7). Furthermore, ethnography indicates that society becomes more and more complicated and individuals living in the complexities of everyday life develop different views towards society based on their different experience (Hammersley: 1998; Hammersley and Atkinson: 1995). Real understanding is achieved through 'observing, watching, looking at, gazing at and scrutinizing' (Gobo; 2011; cited in Edwards and Holland; 2013) people's lives in a context and trying to understand the way of life and how in context behaviour and attitudes are being influenced by external contextual factors.

There are 'emic' and 'etic' understandings in ethnographic research. Madden (2010:19) indicates that an emic perspective is one that reflects the insiders' or research participants' point of view, whereas an etic perspective is one that echoes the outsiders' or researchers' point of view. It highlights the role of researcher in ethnography. It emphasizes on how researcher understanding a particular group of people in two ways. The understanding have been gained through studying a familiar setting as member of same culture, which is emic perspective from researcher, in addition; etic perspective has been obtained through ethnographic reflexivity which indicates that 'we must not forget that we will always maintain some sense of the 'outsider' in our study (P: 20; Madden: 2010).

### **3.3.1.3 Discovery through seeking thick description and explanation**

Hammersley (1998) points out that discovery is another distinctive feature of ethnography. He refers the process of carrying on ethnographic research is process of learning and discovering new knowledge. Moreover, he proposes that researcher' should maximise one's capacity for learning' through minimize one's assumption. He also believes that one might 'fail to discover its true nature' with 'a set of hypotheses' (1998: 9). Discovery is achieved through seeking thick description and explanation. Ethnography refers to thick description as the lived experience of human beings, (Geertz: 1988; Denzin:1989) and it is always produced in a real setting (Brewer: 2000). Moreover, Denzin (1989:83) points out that "Thick description invokes emotionality and self-feelings. It establishes the significance of an experience or the sequence of events. In thick description, the voice, feelings, actions, and meanings of the interacting individuals are heard. It captures and records the voices of 'lived experience'.

Providing the thick description means the researcher gives detailed information about how people carry on their daily life and why people act in this way rather than in a different way. Moreover, he tries to explain what is hidden behind tears, laughter and behaviour. Through this the researcher illuminates how the meaning of construction takes place in individuals' daily lives. So in ethnography, thick description is an interpretation going beyond the surface of human life, it is the 'construction of meaning' (Eisner, 1991: 15). This is how discovery takes place in ethnographic research.

Furthermore, thick description in ethnography is aimed at 'making the strange familiar and familiar strange'. The ethnographer working in a foreign land is attempting to make the strange familiar, while ethnography in a local sense must reverse the process and make the familiar strange in order to understand it. In my research my deep understanding of my research has been gained through making the familiar strange. There are lots of new knowledge I have learned from my five participant which are hidden behind the stories. I would say that the process of making familiar strange is the process of discovery in ethnographic research.

Furthermore, Wolcott (2010: 103) indicates that thick description is clearly better than thin. Description requires making choices: what is to be described, at what level of detail, while something else is ignored or described with less detail.

### **3.3.2 Why ethnography is appropriate for this study**

The nature of my study:

- My study comes from my own personal experience

Gregory, in Conteh et al (2005:x) illustrates 'The beginnings of an ethnography study are often rooted in anger, even fury, and as such, are partisan.' Hammersely (1992) demonstrates that anger and emotional feelings are distinct features of ethnography. My ethnographic research comes from my own direct experience (outlined in Chapter 1); my feelings, tears, and even anger are the direct reason driving me to conduct this study. This is my "boundedness" with my research topic and ethnographic methodology. Wolcott (2010: 36) argues, 'there is nothing wrong with boundedness in a study; it is an essential quality that sets limits on what we can handle. The parameter of a study defines its boundness' . The significance of boundedness is, as Ryan, Bernard, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) demonstrate, that an ethnographer 'uses the "self" to learn about the other (Ryan, Bernard, Denzin and Lincoln, 2000:741).

Moreover, the meeting of participants happened in a natural setting. I did not plan to meet them but they naturally have become the part of my life. Some of them I have worked with them for more than 20 years; some of them happened to be my students. In addition, one of the participants was my sister's student. They naturally exist in my life. Their educational experiences of becoming bilingualism is the 'undisturbed data' (Punch: 2005) in my research.

- Seeking real understanding about Individual Tibetan educational experiences of becoming bilingual

My research is to study the experiences five Tibetans in developing bilingualism in school and at home from listening to their stories. Though my research proposal is rooted in my own personal experience during the years of going to school and observing classes in many Tibetan schools, I have come to a realization that the familiar settings of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas have become more and more strange to me. Firstly it is very different from my own experience of becoming bilingual; moreover, I have realized that Tibetan individuals in same age of group may have vastly different experiences in learning a second language because the very specific circumstances surrounding them in different Tibetan areas. For instance, my third and fourth participants Dawa and Manlatso tell stories which clearly reveal the complexities of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas of China. Nevertheless, individual Tibetan bilingual experiences have rarely been studied either in China or elsewhere in the world. Clearly the time is right to probe this particular group of people's experiences. I try to understand them better through listening to their stories and identifying their distinctive views about themselves and others in their world. This is how ethnographic research has been manifested in my study.

- Seeking thick description about individual Tibetan educational experiences in developing bilingualism

My thick description to my research has been gained through the journey of transforming myself from a familiar to a stranger in my research. For instance, in my research I share two languages with my participants; this is the one of the key factors for me to get in touch with them and gain thick description. People like to talk about their feelings and their thoughts behind the particular routine in the language with which they feel most comfortable. My ability to understand both Chinese and Tibetan have offered me a way to understand my subjects deeply. I will discuss how this helps me to gain thick description later when I discuss research method and will show it in my data analysis as well. Creswell (2002) indicates that for those carrying out ethnographic research a culture-sharing group is needed for the study – one that has been together for some time and has developed shared values,

beliefs, and language. Moreover, my long term intimate relationship in the field helps me to understand the meanings behind the language shift constantly occurring in interviews. Denzin (2000:34) indicates that understanding is not like seeing. Understanding grows with time: you understand one point, then another, and a third, a fourth... and your understanding changes several times until you have things right. He further states that the ethnographer who wishes to understand another has to build up an understanding based on a deep involvement in the subject's world of experience. This means the subject is transformed into a person who is no longer the object of an external voyeuristic gaze (Denzin: 2000: 35).

However, in ethnographic research there is always 'a danger of misunderstanding' (Hammersley: 1998: 8) if the group of people under study is very familiar to researcher. In my study I have known my first and second participants for more than 20 years, my relationship with them provides an access for me to invite stories from them (see my next section: 3.4); however, the opportunity for me to study in UK has provided a great opportunity for me to perceive my five participants stories from a distance. The distance has been achieved through my study of ethnographic methodology as well as the opportunity in the UK to read extensively about bilingualism and methodology. Most importantly, I have been changed through the years of travelling between China and the UK, between involvement in the field and coming back to read and write out my five participants' stories. I have become a stranger to my study through minimalizing my assumption so that I would be see the world through the perspective of my participants. It is the thick description in my study.

### **3.4 Inviting stories: Research method**

I have designed my study to gain understanding of the diverse bilingual learning experiences of five Tibetans from four generations through listening to their stories. The method I have chosen to collect my data is narrative. Below I explain what narrative is and why I am using the narrative method in my research.

#### **3.4.1 What is narrative method?**

Creswell (2005) indicates that: the term *narrative* comes from the verb "to narrate" or "to tell (as a story) in detail" (cited in Ehrlich, Flexner, Carruth, & Hawkins, 1980: 442). Narrative research seeks to build up stories of individual lives and experiences (Connelly & Clandinin: 1990). Narratives are always about individuals in a specific place at specific times, always including: location–place, narrator-individual, and history–time. Narrative, as a way of

making sense of the world, is at times equated with experience, time, history and life itself; more modestly, as a specific kind of discourse with conventionalised textual features (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2000: 64-68 cited in Georgakopoulou: 2006). Narrative method is a research 'focus on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual' (Creswell, 2005: 252). Furthermore, Clandinin & Connelly (2000:20) demonstrate that narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience. Moreover, Clandinin & Rosiek (2007:42) point out that narrative method studies individuals' experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transferring that experience for themselves and others.

Bruner (2001:264) indicates that ethnographies are guided by an implicit narrative structure, by a story we tell about the people we study. We are familiar with the stories people tell about themselves in life history and psychiatric interviews, in myth and ritual, in history books and Balinese cockfights. I wish to extend this notion to ethnography as discourse, as a genre of storytelling. He further states that ethnographers acted as 'a material body through whom a narrative structure unfolds (Bruner, 2001: 274). My research started from my own story of developing bilingualism; furthermore, it has been inspired through interaction with other people in my daily life. For example, the reason for me to select Jampa as my youngest participant resulted from hearing his story from my sister. The stories are always there and what I have done by going back to field is acted as a 'material body' to encourage my five participants to unfold their stories to me. This is how ethnographic research manifested in my study.

### **3.4.2 The features of narrative method**

- Stories are the distinctive outcomes/substance of narrative method

Narratives collect data from personal stories about people's lives and experiences, making stories are the distinctive of the narrative method. Narratives view stories as the linkage and bridge human beings have had with their tradition, heritage and history. Atkinson (2007: 224) points out that: 'We are the storytelling species. Storytelling is in our blood. We think in story form, speak in story form, and bring meaning to our lives through story. Our life stories connect us to our roots, give us direction, validate our own experience, and restore value to our lives'.

Through inviting stories from individuals, narratives seek to understand the reality from the particular 'subject' - an individual. The centre is the narrator, who enables us to access how

experience has influenced actions, emotions and motivations. "It is also and always a narration of self" (Patterson, 2008:29); he or she is the object of research. The stories in narrative are always about the self and try to explain how the particular self sees himself and the surroundings over time –past, present and future. It is 'evocative' (Freeman: 2004: 64; Ellis & Bochner (1997, 1998/2000).

- Exploring an individual's experience is a key feature of narrative method

Narrative perceives the world through the individual's story of their journey. It recognizes the importance of the lived experience of the individual (Creswell: 2005), moreover, it honours the lived experiences as a fundamental knowledge of the world (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007).

Narrative acknowledges the linkage between the self and the context. Stories always start from a person within a place. It is about the self in the context and how this self experiences the world through his or her own personal stories. In narrative, experience is integrated with subject and object. John Dewey (1938), regarded as the pioneer of narrative approach, identified experience as the representation of both personal and social continuity within context (Atkinson: 2007; Creswell; 2005). John Dewey (1938:251) pointed out that experience is undergoing 'between "subject" and "object", between a self and its world'. Furthermore, it is a process of how 'the live creature is changed and developed through its intercourse with things previously external to it.' ( cited in Clandinin and Rosiek; 2007: 39).

Dewey (1938) links education with life experience. He points out that life experience is or could be the basis for education. He says, 'one learns about education from thinking about life, and one learns life thinking about education' (Dewey, 1938:89, cited in Mello, 2007: 204). In my research, my focus is on education and how an individual develops bilingualism in school, which I access through the life experiences of my participants.

- Narrative - representing the part in a whole and the whole in a part

Narrative provides a unique way to understand how a person interacts with others in a context or in a situation. It is about the part in whole and the whole in part (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007 ). In my research Tibetan learners' stories of developing bilingualism will provide a way for us to understand their need for two languages in the lives and how their journey toward becoming bilingual is always full of struggles. This helps us to explore 'the relation between the individual agency and social structure and society' (Bathmaker and Harnett (2010:1). Furthermore, human beings understand themselves not only through telling about the past, but also through telling personal dreams and wishes. This is how

narrative offers opportunities to study individuals in depth. Riessman (1993:45-52) believes “the narrative method represents reality and at the same time represents a dream of how the narrator would like life to be” (cited in Patterson, 2013:340). Life history is a part of narrative.

### **3.4.3 My narrative in the field**

I agree with Bruner (2001)'s statement about the nature of ethnography in narrative. My narrative in the field, which I regarded as the process of study building and storytelling, is the example of narrative symbolizing the nature of ethnography. I would say that narrative exists in ethnography.

In this section through reviewing how storytelling was utilized in my field work, I show my readers that the process of story building and storytelling is a process of establishing a kind of research relationship which requires researchers to try to build up intimacy and trust with participants. I regarded it as the process of how ethnographer acted as ‘a material body’ (Bruner: 2001) to unfold the narrative structure. Connelly & Clandinin (1990) identify some important factors in research relationships, which are, *‘the equality between participants, the caring situation, and the feelings of connectedness. A sense of equality between participants is particularly important in narrative inquiry’* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990: 4).

#### **3.4.3.1 To be there and being with people**

The first place I visited was X, the location of the university where I worked for more than 16 years, where my first two participants Professor and A Ji were also working, and where my third and fourth participants were students. It is the university from which Professor, A Ji, and I all graduated, Professor as the first graduate from the Tibetan Department in 1953, A Ji in 1981, and I in 1983. This is also where I wrote my name in Tibetan for the first time. All of the stories of meeting my participants occurred in the Tibetan department.

The Tibetan Department of this university is the one of the largest Tibetan departments in the whole of China. It recruits Tibetan high school graduates from all the Tibetan areas in China, which include Gansu, Qinghai, Yunnan, Sichuan and the Tibet Autonomous Region (see introduction). X is predominantly Han Chinese with few Tibetans on the streets. However, soon after entering one of the three gates of this university, you can see many Tibetan students, some wearing Tibetan outfits but most others simply wearing ordinary clothes. Located in front of a small mountain, the university campus is surrounded by a wall which separates it from the Han Chinese dominated city. I have lived in this city long enough

to know how little society outside of the university walls knows about Tibetans and how they view them. As soon as I entered the gate of the university, I felt physically near to my participants. I had studied, worked and lived here for many years. My oldest participant, Professor, was retired and living on the university campus. My second participant, A Ji, was also living nearby, only distance 2-minute walk from school. My third and fourth participants, Dawa and Manlatso, were living in the student dormitory on campus. I carried out most of my interviews on this campus. Every time I entered the gate, I met many students who said 'bdemo' to me (Hi in Tibetan). Former students from my classes would approach me and ask me what I was studying in UK and what it was like.

The university was like a Tibetan community where I met people. I visited A Ji many times before conducting the interviews. The visiting became opportunities for her to know and understand more about my research. She would ask me why I wanted to do this research, I would explain to her what I felt like when I could first read Tibetan and how I felt when I was criticized by my Tibetan students because of my poor Tibetan. Moreover, I told her how bilingualism had become a global issue, as many people in this world need two languages in their lives. After much visiting, she changed from being a passive participant. She arranged a dinner to welcome me in a posh restaurant. She sent a text to everyone she invited for this dinner, and said: 'I am very impressed by Yixi's courage to go to England to study for a Ph.D. I think this will make a great contribution to our nation, I am proud of her, I invited all of you to join me to have a special dinner to honour her.' I was touched by this text. Gubrium & Holstein (1997) speak about the impression researchers make on their participants. Later, A Ji arranged a trip for me to go with her to her husband's home town – a small Tibetan village. It is my narrative about 'story building and storytelling' in a real setting (Gubrium & Holstein (1997: 30).

### **3.4.3.2 Establishing connections with my participants**

My relationship with Dawa and Manlatso started as teacher and student. I was requested by the Tibetan department to provide some help to students in English during the time when I was doing my field work. I met Manlatso and Dawa in this class. I gave them some help twice a week. Dawa was very active in my English class but I was told she was very quiet in her Tibetan classes. Her silence in Tibetan class aroused my interest to learn about the story behind it, and later she told me she did not get any opportunities to learn Tibetan in her village primary school. It surprised me, because I had learned from all the official documents that bilingual schools had been set up from 1980s in Tibetan areas, but Dawa was born after 1990; however her village did not have a bilingual school when she was in school. The result



was that her Tibetan is much weaker than her Chinese. Her different attitudes in classes and her weakness in Tibetan drove me to attempt to understand her bilingual learning experiences. Therefore, I decided to invite her as my third participant and she gave consent. We spent lots of time together, going to the park, drinking tea and talking. All of the time I spent with her was for her to get to know me and my research and learn to trust me. The trust gradually built up when Dawa learned that my Chinese is much stronger than my Tibetan. Moreover, when she learned I have been struggling to speak better Tibetan all my life, she knew I understood her feelings towards the difficulties of majoring in Tibetan in university. That began the connection I have with Dawa.

Manlatso was Dawa's classmate; she also was attending my class. She was very active in Tibetan class, Chinese class and English class. Most of the time she only spoke Tibetan to me, but she also spoke fluent Chinese. Her abilities in languages were very different from Dawa's. This difference led me to inquire why the language abilities among people from the younger generation vary from each other so drastically under the same national policy implemented in Tibetan areas. It led me to decide to select Manlatso alongside Dawa as the fourth participant in the third case study. Manlatso gave her consent as soon as I asked her. I was not surprised by this; in our culture, students need to honour their teachers, so it would hardly occur to her as a student to reject her teacher's research request. However, I knew her consent did not mean she trusted me; if she did not trust me I would not be able to get her story from her. Again it was the issue of entering the participant's world as well as that of building a positive relationship. I decided to turn our first relationship of teacher-student into a researcher-participant relationship. She did not really have any choice about her participation at the beginning because she was obligated to respect my wishes, but to truly gain her trust, I needed to wait for the opportunity to turn our relationship from researcher-participant to narrator and listener. I believe this is the only access to get truth-worthy data in the narrative method. Moreover, I believe this process of encouraging the narrative to unfold was up to me as an ethnographer. The breakthrough moment happened one morning when we were having our class, and we were talking about famous Tibetan contemporary poets. She shared with me one of her favourite poems written by Yidan Cairong, the famous Tibetan poet who passed away in 2004. She recited it to me in English. (Several of Yidan Cairong's poems have been translated into English). I told her it is one of my favourite poems as well, and then I told her Yidan Cairong is my father. Suddenly I saw tears in her eyes; I felt my eyes were moist as well. At that moment I saw a sparkle in her eyes. I realize this formed the connection between us.

I found that I shared similar experiences with both A Ji and Professor, which gave us an immediate connection that went beyond our shared culture and identities. A Ji and I found common ground simply because we had both started to learn the written form of Tibetan at university. Similarly, Professor told me when I was interviewing him that, like me, most of his Tibetan teachers when he started to learn Tibetan in college were Chinese. (see Chapter 5: Professor's story). He had known me since I was a little girl, and he said in the interview: 'Just like your experience, most of my Tibetan teachers were Chinese as well.' Professor knew my connection with him more deeply than I myself did, which was the reason he was so open with me. Our shared experiences, culture, identity, and even love for a particular person are all elements which determined how deep and detailed the stories I could elicit from my participants would be. That is how I was involved in their real world in order to get truth-worthy data. Park (1950: vi-vii) insists his students get "their hands dirty in real research," furthermore, he also indicates that "what sociologists most need to know is what goes on behind the faces of men" cited in Gubrium & Holstein (1997:6).

### **3.5 Research tool: Life history interview**

Ethnographic research focuses on life experience of individuals. Life history is one of tools for ethnographer to study the lived experience of individuals. Gordon and Lahelma (2003:249) indicate that an essential methodological principle that we share with life historians is contextualization: since context strongly influences life experience we were interested not only in the narratives through which people interpret their experiences, but also in the cultural, social and material conditions and positions through which they live their lives and plan for their future. As human beings we live in stories and everyone has life story to tell. Furthermore, as an ethnographer the inspiration for carrying on research always come from our own stories, and our stories interacting with others in daily lives. All of these lead us to meet life history in context. It symbolises that story is embodied in ethnographic research. Therefore, I used life history interview in my research as a tool to collect my data.

A life history interview starts from the life story. The term *life story* has more of a home in folklore (Titon, 1980) and focuses on how the storyteller sees her or his life and what is significant for him or her (Atkinson, 1998: 4). The term 'story' arouses memories for me of the nights when I was a little girl sitting on my grand mum's traditional Tibetan carpet listening to her sister telling stories of going to Lhasa on foot with a pilgrim group. This story held great significance for us as we considered the holy city of Lhasa to be the ultimate pilgrim destination for all Tibetans. How we all longed to go there as well!

The essence of 'story' always focuses on a personal account. Atkinson (1998:8) gives a definition to life story:

A life story is the story a person chooses to tell about the life he or she has lived, told as completely and honestly as possible, what is remembered of it, and what the teller wants others to know of it, usually as a result of a guided interview by another.

Life history starts from a life story situated in its particular time and place, with experiences grounded in the external social and historical context in which they took place (Hatch & Wisniewski: 1995 in Tierney: 2000; Goodson & Sikes: 2001 cited in Bathmaker & Harnett: 2010). Through life history interviews, we gain a deeper understanding about ourselves, about the others, about the surroundings, and about how events influenced us as human beings. Atkinson (2007) states that the significance of personal stories in a life interview is designed to help the storyteller, the listener, the reader, and the scholar to understand better how life stories serve the four functions of bringing us more into accord with ourselves (psychological), others (sociological), the mystery of (spiritual), and the universe around us (philosophical) (Atkinson, 1995, cited in Atkinson, 2007:225).

The form of a life interview is that of biography (Creswell, 2005; Tierney, 2000). However, it is not actually a biography. A biography intends to put 'the narrative more in the voice of the researcher', but in a life story, the researcher tends to 'retain the voice of the storyteller, often in its entirety'(Titon, 1980). A person's story is always heard in the voice of first person in the life history interview, symbolizing subjectivity in their stories.

Life history research studies marginalized people (Tierney, 2000; Brewer, 2000). In life history, people's stories of struggles are analysed against a socio-political background; it is not simply the story of an individual, however. It is the story of an individual who happened to be in a particular Socio-political context. This is how the researcher turns a life story into life history research. Goodson (2013: 13) points out that: 'but beyond the life history, in the life history, the intention is to understand the pattern of social relations, interactions and historical constructions in which the lives of women and men are embedded'. All of the stories of developing bilingualism in my research are situated in three contexts:

- 1: The social context within the larger Chinese political system.
- 2: The Tibetan cultural context.
- 3: The local Tibetan provincial context in different periods of time.

I seek to understand how these layers of contexts have influenced an individual's learning experience in school and at home. Multiple contexts present in a person's story offer an opportunity for a researcher to understand how people make sense of their experiences within these contexts. Biesta et al (2005) indicates that life-history research aims to understand those stories against the background of the wider socio-political and historical context in processes (cited in Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010: 4).

### **3.5.1 How I carried out the life history interview**

#### **3.5.1.1 The theme of my questions**

I have chosen to use life history interviews in this study as my interviews trace the life histories of different individuals and focus on knowing the their learning experiences from the past which continue in the present and evoke their dreams and wishes for the future.

The data in my research trace individuals' bilingual experiences, beginning from the village in which they were born and continuing through all their years of education from primary school to secondary school in particular places and then to university. It tells about the individuals' life history in pursuing bilingualism. The interview initially starts from the life story and centers on inviting stories from different individuals. Questions invite stories (Chase, 2005); this is how Tierney (2000) states life history is prompted by another person, the interviewer.

My theme of questions:

Please tell me about your language experience before you attended primary school.

Please tell me about your language learning experience during in primary school.

Please tell me about your language learning experience in middle school.

Please tell me about your language learning experience in high school.

Please tell me about your language learning experience in university.

Before I started to interview, I outlined the range of questions I was going to ask. The questions were outlined chronologically: childhood language experiences, primary school language experiences, middle school experiences, high school experiences and learning experiences in university. And in my interviews, each period of time was covered in one

interview. The purpose of the questions I designed was to invite stories using the 'biographical method' (Tierney, 2000), as it highlights the essence of the life history interview which, as Bathmaker & Harnett (2010) state, invites participants to share their lives in a longitudinal way – past, present and anticipated future. These are 'the three temporal phases of life' (Abbs, 1974, cited in Bathmaker & Harnett, 2010:67). For my five participants, the first period of learning languages would trace back to primary school, then continue on to middle school, then high school, then college.



**Figure 2 Strategies used for inviting stories**

### 3.5.1.2 Strategies for inviting stories

For every interview I prepared themes of questions as I have mentioned above, and I also carried a tape recorder and took notes for every interview. Tierney (2000) terms the researcher as an instrument, functioning like a tape recorder. Yes, that is true. I took my tape recorder everywhere I went for my field work. And every time I started my interview with Professor, he would ask me 'Have you got your recorder ready?' I nodded and he would start to talk. But there are more things for the researcher to do besides taking notes and tape recording, since the purpose of a life history interview is to elicit first person stories in order to seek an understanding of how the self evolves over time. Now I would like to discuss what I did in my interviews to get personal stories of developing bilingualism in different periods of time in the Tibetan areas.

- Sharing my stories with them if necessary

The life history interview is a form of first person interview. As a researcher, everything I tried to do in my interview was to invite stories. Chase (2005:661) refers to inviting stories as 'inviting interviewees to become narrators'. Stories in my interviews always begin with 'I was born in a village called ---.' Stories are a memory. I remembered A Ji frequently told me: 'I feel like I had forgotten everything which happened in primary school during the interview or even before I started the interview.' This was the time that I shared my personal feelings for the first time about learning Tibetan as a college student, by sharing my experience with her. Through this she started to recall her own story that had happened in a village primary

school. She even remembered the first day she went to primary school, how all of her peers in her class laughed at her because of her wearing a Tibetan outfit. That was the moment I asked her ‘Why did pupils laugh at you? Was not this primary school located in a small Tibetan town just five or six miles away from your village?’. She said: ‘Yes, but so far as I remember most of the pupils in my class were Chinese.’ That was the moment when she saw herself as a Tibetan child going to school in a Tibetan area and being laughed at because of her Tibetan outfit. This was the moment we both shared the power of a life story interview: it enabled us to see the meaning behind the laughter. It is through the story that we gain context and recognize meaning made in a particular time within a particular context. It would be fine if this laughter had been in a Chinese town; however, it happened in a Tibetan area. It shows ‘history hidden in a memory’. Her memory is in a pattern – a Tibetan outfit which she was wearing on her first day to school, (I did not ask if they were new clothes, but I would imagine they were nice and most likely ones she liked very much because she was wearing them on the first day of school). Her memory is in people – she was laughed at by her classmates. Her memory is in a place - it happened in the school in her hometown. This illustrates that history is the discovery of patterns, place and people (Tierney, 2000: 544). Moreover, the memory of the first day to school shows the memory and history are ‘conjoined in mutual construction’ (Tierney, 2000: 545). What I did by sharing my personal experiences was not only for stimulating memory, but I also put myself into my own research, thereby showing that we ‘as a researchers ... are participants in the creating of the data’ Tierney (2000: 543). It further shows how co-constructed memories happened in life history interview between researcher and participant.

- Becoming a listener in interview

In the life history interview, the centre of research is the narrator, the interviewee. The purpose of life history is to hear the narrator’s own voice. Based on my field work, conducting the history interview is a lesson in learning how to let interviewees to become the narrator in an interview.

I designed my questions as chronological themes from primary school, to middle school, to high school and university. However, in some cases my interviewees did not follow this time line. For instance, in the first interview with Manlatso, I asked about her childhood language experiences in her village; however, she started talking about the activities of the mother tongue protection organization in her village without talking about her own language learning experience. At first I was puzzled, but I did not stop her. Later on I understood how her image of a Tibetan has been influenced by this organization, as well as how her pure spoken Tibetan had been impacted through it (‘pure’ here means she did not mixed with Chinese

words in her speaking). Furthermore, all the years of hard study in learning Tibetan initially came from the influence of this organization. Her interview started with talking about this organization and finished with talking about it as well. During the interview, I really became Manlatso's listener and she became a narrator whose talking I enjoyed very much. My interview with Manlatso is very similar to Debray (1984)'s interview with Rigoberta. She said (Debray, xix-xx) 'As we continued, Rigoberta made more and more digressions, introduced descriptions of cultural practices into her story and generally upset my chronology ....I became what I really was: Rigoberta's listener. I allowed her to speak and then became her instrument, her double, by allowing her to make the transition from the spoken to the written word. ( cited in Tierney, 2000:540).

- Asking lots of What and How questions in interview when necessary

I used an open-ended interview. Chase (2005: 661) points out that the open ended interview offers the opportunity for an authentic gaze into the soul of another. I prepared questions for every interview, and tried not to interrupt if my interviewee was in the given topic. I remember the interviews I conducted with Professor; as soon as I gave the leading question, he would start talking. In every interview I had a feeling he was waiting to share his life with me. He memorized everything in detail and sometimes I was amazed how he could construct in memory the dialogue he had with an individual. For instance, he was telling about a conversation he had with a Chinese leader who had worked in Tibetan areas for many years and who, even though he himself had not bothered to learn the Tibetan language, was laughing at a young Tibetan teacher that did not understand his Chinese. While Professor was recalling his argument with that Chinese leader, he constructed the dialogue sentence by sentence in very detailed form. It was not generalised but in detail. It is his story in details of everyday dialogue. This supports the idea that the life history interview is talking about life in everyday form (Atkinson: 1998). It is not general and abstract but rather detailed, based on every day experiences. Chase (2005) suggests if we ask "sociological questions the interview would easily end up with generalities about interviewees and the others' experiences. Sack (1989: 88) defines 'sociological questions' as 'Questions that are organized around the researcher's interest in general social processes' (cited in Chase, 2005: 661) Czarniawska (1997:28 ) indicates that researchers prefer to ask interviewees in the field 'to compare, to abstract , to generalize' (cited in Chase, 2005: 661). Sack (1989:28) refers these questions are "social – logical questions" (cited in Chase: 2005: 661). For example questions like 'can you compare ....?' 'What is the most .....?' are the questions which encourage interviewee to draw generalization and comparison to their experiences. Chase (1995) further suggests that by avoiding sociological language in our

questions but rather framing questions in simple, everyday language which focus on participants' experiences, thoughts, and feelings, we can "gather data thick enough to shed light on our sociological problems." The questions we ask and the relationships that we form with our interviewees will affect the quality of the information we collect and responses we obtain.

With other interviewees I needed to ask how and *what* to invite more detailed stories. Atkinson (1998: 31) indicates that sometimes asking directly what you want to know is the best approach. When I was conducting the interview with my youngest participant, he was not able to talk a lot. I asked 'How did you feel when you could not understand Chinese in class? What language did your teacher speak in Chinese class? How did you feel when your teacher in nursery asked you how to play a Tibetan game?' Through asking all of these What, How and Why questions the story was drawn out in detail. Sack (1989) recalls how "Why and What "questions invited stories in her research instead of sociological questions (cited in Chase; 2005). Gubrium and Holstein (1997) elaborate that for qualitative research, the What question addresses the meaning in content and How questions typically emphasize the production of meaning. They further point out that to answer *What* questions, one must focus on people and settings, looking for the meanings that exist in, emerge from, and are consequential for, those settings. Researchers seeking answers to constitutive *How* questions temporarily set meaning as they identify meaning-making practices (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997:14).

In my research by asking what questions I tried to find out the way of my participants interacting with two languages in school and home. Moreover, I also asked lots of why questions in my research. By asking why questions help me to identify the meaning hidden in stories. Moreover, the example I cited with the female professor shows how 'Why, How and What' questions evoke interviewees to be 'fully aware, fully conscious, of our own lives through the process of putting them together in story form' (Artkison, 1998: 7). Nevertheless, Josselson and Lieblich (1995:3) state that if we want to hear stories rather than reports, then our task as interviewers is to *invite* others to tell stories, to encourage them to take responsibility for the meaning of their talk. I invite stories through themes of questioning, through sharing my personal experience and through asking Why, What, and How questions in order to encourage my interviewees to tell stories in a form and in the words they want. Riessman (2008) suggests that encouraging and allowing people to tell their narratives to us as researchers allows participants to negotiate their identities and to make meaning of their experience (cited in Bathmaker and Harnett 2010: 3).



### **3.6 Research Tool: Documents**

Originally I designed history interview as the only tool I would use for my data collection. However, while I was in the field my second participant A Ji showed me her diary which was written during the Cultural Revolution. Through reading her diary I found out that her diary provides an opportunity for me to deeply understand her stories. Furthermore, while I was carrying on my interview with Jampa he showed me his Tibetan textbook and Chinese textbooks and his short essays written in Tibetan. The opportunities for me to access to these documents led me realize the importance of using document review as a second tool in my study to gain deep understand my five participants' stories. Yin (1994:79, 81) writes that documentation is one of the most important sources of data collection for case studies because they can 'provide other specific details to corroborate information from other sources. In my research, A Ji's diary is one type of document; Jampa's Tibetan and Chinese text book is another type of document. Moreover, Jampa showed me two of his essays which I refer as another type of document. Furthermore, I took photos about the bilingual classroom in Tibetan areas, and photos about bilingual signs on street. Moreover, I wrote fieldnotes. Bucholtz (2011: 37) indicates that 'Fieldnotes are traditionally used to systematically document the details and meaning of everyday social science. All of these 'tell us about what is going on' (Silverman: 2012: 96) and provide another resource to help us understand participants' stories. Nevertheless, I came to recognize that educational documents relating to Tibetan areas, and journal articles about Tibetan bilingualism were a further resource. These sources were gained mainly through websites. In addition, public newspaper articles and books about Tibetan bilingual education were another source of information. Bucholtz (2011: 37) states that in ethnographic research 'data are not simply discovered by the researcher but are jointly produced in the encounter between researcher and researched and then recontextualized through analysis and writing'.

### **3.7 What language I used in Interview**

Language was a very important issue in my interview. Eisner (1991:27) states that 'we know the world through language'. All of my participants are bilingual; however, their language abilities in the two languages vary from each other.

My interviews were conducted in two languages, Tibetan and Chinese; this was the privilege I got from being an insider. My interviewees knew two languages and they just shifted from one language into another very quickly. I, as the researcher, also understood these two

languages and naturally participated in the talk because my own stories of my struggles to become bilingual made sharing with them much more personal. I would say this was the power of language which offered me a process to hear the voice of my participants. Normally the storyteller's story is a pouring out in the language with which they feel the most comfortable. Working hard to allow them the use of whichever language was most comfortable, I always started my questions in Tibetan, but my subjects shifted from Tibetan into Chinese, and then back from Chinese to Tibetan. However, their frequency of shift from one language to another varied because of the range of their abilities in two languages and their bilingual learning experiences. In the interview with my oldest participants, in the first interview he only used Chinese to narrate his story but from second interview we shifted frequently from one language to another. In my data analysis I will analyse what makes the frequency of shift between two languages different between interviewees. The free shift between languages further proves that I was inside the research. Wolcott (1995:82) states: 'The ability to make appropriate jokes, especially in a different language, is another measure'. This is the power of language in my research, furthermore, it is the quality in it. As I mentioned previously, my ability in both languages provided me with a great chance to get deep and thick information from my interviews. Furthermore, these languages also provided me with a chance to let people talk freely in whichever language they preferred. My privilege in sharing two languages with my participants was the key factor helping me to carry on history interviews. My third interviewee preferred to carry on her interview in Tibetan. I will explain this in my data analysis. However, my fourth participants Dawa she was more comfortable in narrating her story in Chinese rather than in Tibetan. I understand people living with stories, but people would prefer to tell the stories and personal experiences with their native language. For instance, Manlatso (my third participant) talked about the 'Yellow River, and the Yangtze River.' However, in Tibetan we call the Yellow River, 'Wounded River' and the Yangtze is called 'Milk River', it would be natural to say this in Tibetan, which helps the teller to talk fluently. I regard this as the texture and the quality of life story interview in my research. Furthermore, language shift was the way my interviewees used their words in order to hear their own voices. The essence of life story interview is focused on hearing their own voices. Chase (2005: 661) indicates that 'interviewees are narrators with stories to tell and voices of their own'. Moreover, Tierney (2000) also points out that the significance of a life story interview is to seek some sense of voice. Their voice is embedded in their words. Josselson and Lieblich (1995:ix) say: 'We work then with what is said and what is not said, within the context in which life is lived and the context of the interview in which words are spoken to represent that life'. I will show how and why shift occur for each individual in my data analysis. Language shift in the life history in my interview provides an opportunity for me to be able to get in touch of the souls of the storyteller.

### 3.8 Ethics

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:117) indicate that: 'Research ethics are focused on what is morally proper and improper when engaged with participants or when accessing archival data'. All of my research is about personal stories which occurred in Tibetan areas of China, that this is a sensitive topic. Moreover, it requires me as a researcher to protect my informants from any harm and hurt that may come their way because of my interviews. While I was interviewing professor he asked me to turn off my recorder when he talked some of issues he did not want me to include it in my research, I did what he asked. Furthermore, while I was interviewing my youngest participant he mentioned the riot of 3.19. I stopped him and did not let him talk this issue any further. Because I know it was a very sensitive topic in Lhasa. As a researcher, I came to realize just how much more important than our research is the protection of our informants. The process needs to be ethical. This is the important issue of the treatment of research participants. Johnson and Christensen (2004), states that the harm to informants in social research includes physical and psychological harm. In my research the harm might be manifested through researchers aggressively wanting to know a lot of private personal experiences which sometimes might cause emotional problems for informants. Therefore, there are several issues included in ethics. I followed the principle of no harm or risk to participants in field work. Because my research focuses on personal stories and is engaged a lot on the emotional struggle of being bilingual, I tried to avoid any harm that might come to them from recalling the uneasy past. One of my informants is over 70 years old. I always reminded myself to consider the condition of his health before interviewing him. I also informed my informants that they had "the right to withdraw" (Johnson and Christensen, 2004:110).

Researchers need to explain the purpose and aim of research and to get consent from participants. In field work, I paid visit to my participants and explained my research to them. I gave them a week time to consider whether they would like to join my research as participants. I got the consent from my participants. For my youngest participant I got the consent from him and his parents before carrying on interview.

Johnson and Christensen (2004: 121) identify that 'the researcher ensures privacy by using three practices; (1) anonymity, (2) confidentiality, and (3) appropriate storing of data'. I ensured privacy by using pseudonyms for my participants. Anonymity is 'a cornerstone of research ethics' (Oliver, 2004:77). A researcher must give a chance to respondents to hide their identity. The most common way of anonymisation is through giving 'fictional names' (Oliver, 2004:80) or the use of pseudonyms (Wiles, 2013:50). In my field work, I did not talk

anything related to interview. Nevertheless, after interview I send all of data to university of Leeds and myself did not carry the data with me while I was traveling.

### **3.9 Listening their voices: Data analysis**

#### **3.9.1 Narrative analysis**

I used narrative analysis to analyse my stories. Bruner and Weisser (1991:129) indicate that 'narrative and story –telling is one of the oldest forms of literature'. Narratives seek to understand data both from content and form. Elliott (2005: 50) indicates that 'most of examples of narrative analysis focused on the form of narratives, this is not to say that they have ignored their content. Rather an examination of the way a narrative has been put together is used in conjunction with looking at the content of narrative in order to understand what meaning is made of specific events and experiences'. In my research my participants told me their stories of developing bilingualism in two languages. I would say their stories are fascinating. At the beginning I was excited by the content of their stories; however, through listening to recorded tapes again and again I came to recognize a very important fact that the shift of two languages differ from each other among my five participants, it is the style of their stories; moreover, it is the special voice only belongs to each of them which corresponds with their stories. It provides a better understanding of their stories, the daily interaction with people and situation both in school and home. Coffey and Atkinson (1997: 55) suggest that 'the analysis of the story can be function – based, content – based or structure – based defining their effects on the individual'.

#### **3.9.2 Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM)**

Elliott (2005: 50) points out that Biographic – Narrative - Interpretive Method is the one of very formalized approaches which aims to investigate 'the specific relation between the form and content of narratives. Wengraf (2001) indicates that BNIM is the one of the methods to analysis narrative life stories.

Wengraf (2001:236) demonstrates that the first stage of analysis researchers produce transcript. Then based on the transcript two different documents are produced one named 'lived story' and the other named 'told text' or told story. The first document is the 'chronology of the interviewee's life' which is the lived story, and the second document 'describes his or her delivery – within interview – of the biographical account and responses to the interviewer interventions as a result of which it is told'.

In my research firstly I did transcript. Then I applied two different kinds of coding to code my data based on my transcript. The first coding (see below) focuses on the content: the individual story of the learning experience. It is their Lived life (Wengraf; 2001). The second coding focuses on the structure, how my five participants told their stories to me. I only focus on language shift as the way to depict how my five participants deliver their stories. I have elected to code their stories line by line and remove most of my response during the interviews, because, firstly, the main focus is on content, the story of their learning experience. I used the idea of numbering in narrative because I believe that what they said is very important and provided the content of the narrative, therefore, I transcribed and coded the story line by line in order to present a narrative which focuses on content. I divided data into three categories. In my code 1: the first category is the content. The second category is their themes developed from their stories. The third category is the memos I developed based on their stories. In my Code 2, the first category is the content. The second category describes what language used in the part. The third category describes in what situation language shift occurred. Below are my two documents.

Figure 3: Code 1

Memos (2013/08/10)	Preliminary Codes	Memos
<p>Raw data</p> <p>1: I had the learning experience in a Chinese school, I realized that since there were few Tibetans in Chinese are and Chinese people had so little knowledge about Tibetan. They looked Tibetans and even named us 'barbarian and wild yak'</p> <p>2: moreover, while I was in that Chinese school, I suffered bully and racial discrimination from my pupils in that school. Teachers did not call us 'wild yak' as like pupils, but their attitudes towards me showed that they were also looked down our Tibetans.</p> <p>3: under this situation I was thinking that our Tibetans we have our own written language, we could built many monasteries why we could not built our own schools to let our children to learn Tibetan? We need to cultivate Tibetan own intellectuals.</p> <p>4: from that time I developed an ambition which was I want to become a Tibetan teacher. At first I need to learn Tibetan. Then I wish I could build a Tibetan school in my hometown.</p>	<p>Tibetans were called barbarian and wild yak.</p> <p><u>Every looked down Tibetan at that school.</u> School is the place reflecting the value of society.</p> <p><u>His response to the discrimination.</u></p> <p>The ambition was developed under the cruel discrimination.</p>	<p><u>The Chinese central ideology.</u></p> <p>The rise of the Han nation and Han nationalism has resulted in Han <u>majoritarianism</u> both in theory and in practice. This has serious implications for the Tibetans. Using a totalitarian democratic logic, the Communist power elite present the will of the Han majority as the will of all, thereby marginalizing the non-Han social groups in China as a matter of no consequence. (P: 96; 2001; <u>Dawa Norbu</u>)</p> <p>He cherished his heritage even more since he suffered the racial discrimination</p>

Figure 4: Code 2

Words	Language	Notes
<p>1. We had a big Tibetan scholar 'a ke genka' from a monastery. He was invited to teach in our department. But he could not speak any Chinese and all of Tibetan teachers were Chinese. And all of Chinese Tibetan teachers could not understand real Tibetan language, so he came to our college but did not get chance to teach any one. The purpose to invite 'a ke genka' was to ask him to give lessons to Tibetan teachers in our department in order to increase their Tibetan academic level, but all of Tibetan teachers were Chinese and they could not understand 'a ke genka's Tibetan language.</p>	In Tibetan	Talked about Tibetan scholar
<p>2. Then our department invited a monk to be teacher in our department. He had been a monk for many years, his Tibetan academic level was not very high, but after he came, he approached to 'a ke genka' and learned lots of Tibetan grammar, Tibetan literature and Tibetan knowledge from 'a ke genka'.</p>	In Tibetan	Talked about a Tibetan monk teacher.
<p>3. Then 'A ke gongque' became the one of the best teachers in our department. You know 'a ke gongque' he also taught you Tibetan while you were college student.</p>		
<p>4. Since I became a Tibetan teacher through I took many classes and we also had lots of political activities every week, I approached to 'a ke genka' and also learned lots of knowledge from him. During that time</p>	In Tibetan	Talked about the Tibetan monk teacher.
<p>5. Three afternoons in one week was occupied by political meeting. There was a saying 'political meeting would not be canceled though thunder was over the head'.</p>	In Tibetan	
	In Chinese	Political meeting: report

In the first stage I produced two types of documents to analysis my data. The first data is the 'lived story' (Wengraf: 2001) of my five participants. The way of analysis 'lived story' is regarded 'constructing a Biographical Data Chronology BDC'(Wengraf: 2001:236). Moreover, Wengraf (2001: 238) points out that Biographical data does not only comprise the interview but it can also include many other types of data as like 'historical research, personal documents like letters, dairies, written autobiographical texts (unpublished and published), official files, etc.'. Miller (2000) and Rosenthal (1998) both believe that including some other types of data would be the complementary to the data ignored or denied by the interviewee. Therefore, in my stage of analysis the lived story' I used lots of other types of document in order to understand the lived story of my five participants. As I mentioned in 3.6 I collected many other types of documents to 'what is going on' from another resources in order to gain deep understanding their stories, their interaction with people in a particular time. Apart from diary I reviewed textbook for interpreting Jampa's story. It help me to gain deep understand about Jampa's story (see Jampa's story). Furthermore, I reviewed some of local document from education administration. For example, the school document I collected from a Tibetan secondary school reveals the fact when bilingual school started in Gannan Tibetan Prefecture after Cultural Revolution, it corresponds to A Ji's story (see A Ji's story). Moreover, I collected a document about the two different college recruitment systems in Qinghai area which corresponds with Manlatso's story, and it could further explain why Manlatso could not go to another university to study geography which was her dream (see Manlatso's story). In addition, books are also reviewed related to my five participant's stories of developing bilingualism in a particular time and context. My participants' stories of bilingual development happened in several places, especially for Professor, whose pursuit of a bilingual education occurred in more than one place. Therefore I need to introduce the specific context, i.e. the place where the story happened, and how the changes in society in this specific place influenced the development of bilingualism for each participant. I reviewed some of articles and local documents to gain information 'what is going on' in Hwari when Professor was pursuing his education. Moreover, 'what is going on' in Deqen Tibetan prefecture when Dawa was pursuing her education in that area. I believe in order to understand the developing bilingualism, we must also understand the society in which the story of becoming bilingual emerges and furthermore, demonstrate the relationship between the self and the society. I believe that all of these different types of documents certainly help my reader better understand how the political situation influenced the individual's development of bilingualism.



I focus on the 'told story', it is the form of story. It is referred as the way of how participant presenting them. It is also named '*told story*' (Wengraf: 2001). Wengraf (2001) indicates that at the stage of doing analysis on 'a person's told story we do not focus on content, what happened for the person, rather then we focus on how this person narrating her story. He regards it is the opportunity for us to understand the story from the way of 'giving story' from interviewee (Wengraf: 2001: 239). Wengraf (2001) suggests to focus on 'noting Three Types of Changing in the Transcript' in structure of text (Wengraf: 2001: 239) which named 'Text Structure Sequentialization' and 'TAS' in short (Wengraf, 2001: 236). TAS looks at how changes occurred in the text of structure, '*either the topic has changes, or the way a topic is spoken about has changed, or both* (Wengraf: 2001: 240). But in my data analysis I pay attention to language shift as my focus on how my participants delivering stories. The reason for paying attention to language shift is that while interviewing I noticed that the choice of language to tell stories and how language shifts occur in the narrative opened the door for us to see how Tibetan bilinguals represent self through narrative in two languages. The Self emerged in the story by how they chose to tell it. Furthermore, they brought meaning to the occurrence of language shift in their narrative. Therefore I use language shift structure analysis for my data. Now I want to give an example how I carried on Language Shift Structure Analysis in my data analysis to understand my participants' stories.

Example:

Table 2 : Jampa's language experience at pre – school and home

Line	Summary of Language Shift Structure	Brief Indication of Content
1-4	Tibetan	Village life in Gam Gongsong Father/Tibetan proverb about Tibetan language
5	Chinese	The experience of starting learning Chinese
6	Chinese and Tibetan	Chinese class in Chinese, and then shifted into Tibetan talking talk home language for other children
7	Tibetan Chinese	Tibetan stories; Tibetan games. Talked in Tibetan Then talked in Chinese

Jampa's account about his language experience both at home and preschool was not very long only contained 7 lines but thorough focusing on Language Shift Structure I found out the shift happened 4 times in this short account. It shows lots of meaning hidden behind the occurring of language shift. It is shown in Jampa' story. Focusing on language shift opens a door for me to gain deep and detained information to deep understanding my five participants' stories.

### **3.9.3 Presenting stories in three layers**

I present the story in three layers. The first part is the story which happened in the field between me and my participant. Secondly I present the story told by the participant, which I refer to as the lived story (Wengraf; 2001). Following that, the story is retold by me as a researcher based on my understanding and the document review. It is the understanding of the context, the culture and the political situation at the time the events took place. I refer to this as the interpreted story. Thus the interpreted story consists of two parts, the first being the story, and the second being the introduction of the context, where it took place and what the educational circumstances were in context. I use bold print to identify language shifting in all stories.

#### **3.9.3.1 Organizing my data**

This research investigates the journey of five Tibetans from five different Tibetan areas in China toward developing bilingualism in Tibetan and Chinese at four different points in time. It is designed and presented as four case studies.

The data is presented in the next three chapters. The decision to spend two chapters on Professor's story and only one chapter for the remaining three cases was for the reason given below.

Professor's story is the longest, beginning before the PRC was established when he was 14 years old and continuing until 1976 when the Cultural Revolution in China ended. I refer to his experience of being a Tibetan teacher during the Cultural Revolution as an important stage which overlaps with those of the other participants, it shows the reader the historical link between Professor's progress toward bilingualism and that of the next participant who belongs to next generation; she pursued her education during the Cultural Revolution. (CR as watershed, see my literature review). Therefore, I felt it would be useful to have more

space to elaborate on professor's story. I would say that Cultural Revolution as a rationale for me to decide to how to organize my data and how many chapters to give to each person.

I am going to present the other three case studies as one chapter for the following reasons. Firstly, I put Professor's story as the most important part of my research because it demonstrates how the changing policy towards the Tibetan language from 1950 to 1976 influenced the individual's educational experience. Moreover, it builds the foundation for my reader to understand how the daily practice of bilingualism in school and home was affected by changing policies in the Tibetan areas of China. Much of what Professor says is also relevant to the others. For example from the third case study I try to show that for the generation liker Dawa who was born after 1990 but her outcome of struggling to become bilingual due to the result of the shortage of faculties in teaching Tibetan in her area which (see Dawa's story) explicitly demonstrates the historical link from professor's story to Dawa's story. It can explain that how the Cultural Revolution has been the long term influence to the development of bilingualism to the young generation. And because I have laid these foundations I am able to present my other case studies in only one chapter. Also their stories of developing bilingualism are of course much shorter than Professor's story. For example my youngest participant was only 12 years old. I follow the pattern below to show how these four case studies link to each other. I divided Professor's story into five chronological stages:

1. His childhood life in a village
2. Educational experience in a primary school before the PRC was established
3. Educational experience in a primary school after the PRC was established
4. The experience of learning in a college
5. The experience of being a Tibetan teacher in a Tibetan village during the Cultural Revolution

The other three case studies will form chapter six, with one section for each case study, as follows:

A Ji 's story of developing bilingualism during and after the Cultural Revolution

Dawa and Manlatso's stories about developing bilingualism in two different Tibetan areas in the 1990s

Jampa's story of developing bilingualism in Lhasa after 2000.

### **3.9.3.2 The journey from insider to outsider of research**

My research was a journey for me beginning as an insider and gradually becoming more and more of an outsider.

My experience of developing bilingualism was the initial motivating factor which inspired me to pursue a PhD in the field of bilingualism. Moreover, my long term experience of working as an educator in Tibetan areas gave me a unique perspective on what exactly it means for Tibetan individuals to become bilinguals in Tibetan and Chinese and in my research, I am bilingual in Tibetan and in Chinese, and my five participants are also bilingual in Tibetan and in Chinese. This experience gave the certain advantages as an insider sharing the same culture and language. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993:120) state that teacher research 'identifies and investigates a distinctive set of problems of practice that outside researchers cannot address because they do not stand in the same relationship to the practice of teaching'. My recognition that Dawa and Manlastso practiced different types of bilingualism came about because I stand in the same relationship to learning two languages as they do.

However, there is a potential disadvantage of being insider. I have to avoid my insider bias and be aware that my research is an opportunity for the world to hear the authentic voices of Tibetan individuals. One means of doing it is through using unfamiliar methodology and theoretical frames, which are new to me. By doing this I become an outsider. Moreover, I realize that the process of gaining new knowledge from my five participants also showed me to be an outsider. For instance, the language shift that happened in the interviews was unexpected. In the field I did not understand why they used two languages to narrate their stories; however, coming back to Leeds, and transcribing and listening to their stories again and again, led me to recognize that language shift was very important in understanding their stories. From this I realize that I had become an outsider of my research. Furthermore, the outward and inward travelling between UK and China over the 4 years of study also led me to become more and more of an outsider in my own context. Finally, in the data analysis, I focused on participants' voices rather than my own. I was always conscious of not allowing my inside bias to influence my five participants' stories.

## Chapter 4: The Professor's Story

### 4.1 Introduction

I split professor's story into five chronological stages which are:

1. His childhood life in a village
2. Educational experience in a Han Chinese primary school before PRC was established
3. Educational experience in that same Han Chinese primary school after PRC established
4. Experience of beginning to learn Tibetan in a minority college
5. Being a Tibetan teacher in a village school during the Cultural Revolution

In this chapter the first three stages will be presented. Stage 1 begins in the little village - Xiamutso, where Professor started his language experience. Primary school life was the next stage of his learning experience. However, I divided this period into two, the first part being before the PRC was established, and the second part after the PRC had begun. Through dividing the time in the same school into two parts I aim to reveal how the transition of society brought significant changes in school and affected his daily learning life. Professor's story was collected by conversation in open-ended interviews.

Professor's account of the story is presented at first as the lived story, line by line. I have taken away most of my responses because I believe what he said is very important; it is his lived story of developing bilingualism which is the essence of my research. The interpreted story consists several parts, my interpretation of the story, and the introduction of the context where it took place and what was the political circumstance of the time. I believe it would help my reader to better understand how the political situation influenced the individual's development of bilingualism. Finally language shift is presented as the third part of my interpretation of the story.

This chapter starts with the introduction of Professor and the narrative of how I selected him and what happened in the field with him. Then I will present the first three stages of his life in three sections, and each section presents two kinds of data to reveal his story. The first is Professor's life-story (lived story) following that, the story is retold by me as a researcher based on s the understanding of the context, the culture and the political situation at the time the events took place from document review (see methodology: 3.6).

In this chapter language shift did not occur many times in the way Professor chose to tell his story from being a village boy to a teenager. But in the next chapter, language shift occurs regularly from his story of going to a minority college to learn Tibetan until the day he became a teacher in a village school. The reader will see how I analysis his story together from the lived story: the content, and the told story: language shift. I use bold print to identify language shifting in all the stories)

## **4.2 Introduction of Professor**

Professor was born in 1935 and he was 77 years old at the time I interviewed him. He is a retired Tibetan grammar professor in a university of China.

I have known Professor since I was a university student, when he was one of our Tibetan teachers in Tibetan department. Moreover, since 1993 we were colleagues for more than ten years until he retired, so he knew me very well.

Before the interview, Professor asked me which language I would prefer him to speak for the interview. He asked in Chinese and I answered in Tibetan: I said: 'You speak whatever you want.' Then he said: 'In Chinese: I speak Chinese, because you are taking notes in Chinese, right?' I said in Tibetan: 'If you want to speak in Tibetan, this is fine.' He started his first interview in Chinese, because he knew I was going to take notes in Chinese. Actually I did not tell him, but because he knew me since I was a student, he certainly knew I was able to take notes in Chinese faster than in Tibetan, as my Chinese was much stronger than my mother tongue. He knew I started to learn Tibetan from alphabet in university. I am recalling this to show the long - term relationship with him provided a great opportunity for the interview, enabling the process of cooperation between participant and researcher. It further shows that close relationships between researchers and participants help to gain better understanding in the field.

### **4.2.1 Narrative of selecting Professor**

I have known Professor for more than 20 years. He was one of my Tibetan teachers while I was studying in university. However, the opportunity of developing a close relationship happened when he and I both participated in a bilingual project which was supported by the British Government (DFID) which was called the Gannan Tibetan Bilingual Education Project (GTBEP) (See introduction section).

I discovered he was in the first group of Tibetan-major graduates when China established the first schools in Tibetan areas. Moreover, I found Professor's learning experience had started before the PRC was established. Since that time I had always wondered how the development of bilingualism occurred before and after the establishment of the PRC. This was the reason I decided to invite him as one of my participants.

I went to his house to visit him and received a warm welcome. My study on Tibetan individual's bilingual learning experiences was regarded as a great contribution to our nation by him and so he was happy to be my participant. I said: 'Can we start to conduct interview from next time?' But he said: 'Why not start today?' That was a big surprise for me as a researcher, as I imagined my participants might agree to join the project, but never thought it would be so quickly.

The interview went smoothly. I prepared one question for each interview, for instance, in the first interview I asked: 'Please tell me your language experience in the village'. Every question I prepared was about my participant's life story of developing bilingualism in different periods of time, i.e. it was a life history interview (see 3.5). Professor seemed eager to tell me all of his learning experience of developing bilingualism. I would ring him up before I went, and he would say: 'Come I am waiting for you.' When I pressed the bell he opened the door with smile and we would directly enter his study room. A ni (a polite way to address an older lady in Tibetan) would offer both of us Tibetan tea and left the kettle on the table. She would not come again because she knew we were doing an interview and later on A mi (grandpa in Tibetan)'s story would also be researched by me. As soon as I was sitting on the chair professor offered me (it was his special chair, bigger and looked comfortable, only used by him for study. He offered it to me and he sat on a normal chair - this also shows how much he valued my research) he would say: 'Shall we begin?' I turned on my recorder then he would start to talk. I felt confident and easy while I was having interviews with him.

The sun always shone on my notebook while I was writing notes. I felt warm in his house because of the sunshine and because of the special Tibetan tea, but mostly because the warmth of acceptance that I received from him and A ni. This is the trust we have built over many years, and it opened the door for me to be the insider in this research.

I brought Professor Yorkshire tea from Leeds. Tibetans like tea and value tea as a precious present. Later on I noticed he placed the tea pack on his book shelf. "Yorkshire tea bags" with the big English letters looked so different among his Tibetan ancient books wrapped in yellow cloth. It symbolizes the new element I brought in to his house. I realised it also somehow implies I am the outsider in this research.

### 4.3 Professor's story: Stage one: life in a village before attending primary school

#### 4.3.1 Professor's account of his language experience in a village

1. I was born in a village Xiamotso (a Tibetan name, he said this name in Tibetan) in Hwari.
2. My family was half farmer and half nomad. When I was born the life of my family in this village was going fine.
3. My family was originally from Qinghai and immigrated to Hwari in my grandmother's time. My family started life in Hwari by buying a piece of a field, and then gradually bought some livestock.
4. In my father's time gradually life became better.
5. I was herding livestock when I was six or seven years old.
6. When I was eight years old I was herding cows in summer time. In winter I was herding sheep for another family. This kind of work is called '*shouziua*'. And in winter, I went to help to deliver the lambs. This kind of work called '*jie dong gaozi*' (Lit: deliver baby sheep in winter).
7. I started to go to school when I was 14 years old.
8. When I was 12 years old, our hometown was practicing '*baojia*' system. It was Republic party's system.
9. Every wealthy family in my village would be asked to become '*baozhang*'. The less wealthy families would be asked to become '*jiazhang*'. It was under the control of Republic party.
10. Because our family was quite wealthy one year we were asked to take turns as '*Baozhang*'.
11. '*Baozhang*' took some responsibilities for villagers. For instance, all documents were written in Chinese.
12. However, in my family no one was educated. And, no one really spoke Chinese.
13. Sometimes officials from the administration came to the village to visit. We needed to entertain them as '*baozhang*'. However we even could not speak Chinese. We had trouble talking to them.
14. So my family hired a Chinese teacher who was in his 50s. He came to help us to read the Chinese documents and talk with the officials. He was a teacher. I think his Chinese was very good and his handwriting was very nice.
15. In my family my uncle was the '*baozhang*'. He was the older brother of my father. My father was his younger brother.
16. The teacher could speak a little Tibetan and he could show my uncle how to deal with the officials. Then the teacher made a suggestion to the elder in my family.
17. We were a big family that time. My father had three brothers and I had an aunty who was not married so she was staying with us. We had more than ten people in our family.
18. The teacher said: 'You are a big family and the living condition is getting better and better.' What he said was right. During that time our livestock increased greatly because our grassland was very good.
19. The teacher kept saying: 'But you must let your children go to school to be educated,' (he raised his voice for this sentence). 'In this society young people need go to school. If next time you will be '*baozhang*', are you still going to hire someone to read the documents for you again?'
20. Moreover, the Chinese teacher said 'These two children in your family.' He mentioned me and my cousin who was three years younger than me. The teacher



said that I and my cousin could be able to go to school in a nearby Chinese town because we both were old enough to take care of ourselves.

21. We did not have any schools in our Tibetan villages. So the only school we could go was Chinese school. The elders listened to the teacher's suggestion.

### 4.3.2 The interpreted story

#### 4.3.2.1 Daily language interaction in Xiamutso

'I was born in Xiamutso'. That was the first sentence which kicked off his story. Xiamotso was a Tibetan village which was not located in central Tibet but located in Hwari: a Tibetan Amdo area.

The life in Xiamotso was simple, lived in a traditional family with more than ten people living together. It was the traditional Tibetan family structure. People used to live together to support each other. Tibetan was the only language used in Xiamotso. Moreover, people in Xiamotso were living isolated from the neighbouring Chinese.

However, the necessity of speaking Chinese happened when his family was promoted the position of '*Baozhang*' – 'the head of village'. Because no one could speak Chinese in his family they hired a Chinese teacher to speak Chinese on behalf of the family. The teacher suggested the family send the boys to school to learn Chinese. He said: 'In this society young people need to go to school. If next time you will be *Baozhang*, are you still going to hire someone to read the documents for you again? (from interview). Thus he and his cousin started to go to school in a Chinese area. During that time most rural areas of China were practicing '*Baozhang*' system. *Baojia* (*baozhang*) regulations were issued centrally in 1548, during the Ming dynasty, and the *baozhang* (the leader of *bao*) was given authority to collect taxes, and maintain the local order of village. *Baozhang* system was criticised as "remained a formality" in Qing dynasty. It was reintroduced to rural areas of China by Chiang Kaishek (Hai-quan; 2004).

The story shows how language learning took place through daily interaction. The event of becoming *Baozhang* was due to the position of the family in the village and it became the turning point in his life. This narrative tells us how an individual and his family are situated in a society and how changes over time to their role within that society may lead to a need to become bilingual. The place where the story happened, and the time when it happened had a great impact on Professor's development of bilingualism.

#### 4.3.2.2 Context: The story happened in Xiamotso

Traditionally Tibetans divided whole Tibetan areas into three geographic districts which are Amdo, Ü-Tsang and Kham areas (Gongquemdanbaruji, 1989). Xiamotso is located in Hwari which itself belongs to Amdo area. Tibetans in Hwari call themselves 'Amdo wa' meaning the people of Amdo area. Amdo is located in the northeast corner of the Tibetan Plateau in Qinghai, northern Sichuan and southwest Gansu provinces. Most Amdo areas were divided into Chinese provinces in the Qing dynasty. It started in Kham after Chao Er-feng pacified Kham (Goldstein; 1989) and the whole of eastern Tibet divided into Chinese province by 1904 (Spengen; 2000). Long before Professor was born Hwari belonged to Gansu province. Hwari is named Tianzhu in Chinese.

Professor's education started two years before the establishment of the PRC when he was around 14 years old. During that time most of the Tibetan areas in Qinghai and Gansu were under *Guomingdang's* administration. The *Guomingdang*, practised the *baozhang* system in the rural areas of the whole of China, and this is why his uncle had the duty of becoming *Baozhang* in Xiamotso. In fact, Professor recalled that Hwari was ruled by the Muslim Warlord Mabuqing, cousin of Mabufang who was ruling the Qinghai area. This information shows that Tibetans in the Amdo area co-existed with Chinese and Muslims.

Education was not popular in Tibetan areas during that time. There were several schools built by Mabufang and the Republic government in Tibetan Amdo areas (Dhondup, 2008) but no school was available in Hwari. Mostly, traditional Tibetan monasteries were the only educational institutes in Tibetan areas. Becoming a monk was the only access to education in most Tibetan areas, however, some rich people invited a private tutor to teach their children in their home. Present Dalai Lama's brother-in-law (who was born in another Amdo area, Qinghai) recalled in his unpublished memoirs how his education started from learning Chinese from a 50 year-old Chinese man who lived with his family. This man had come to their area to escape famine in the neighbouring Chinese area. He taught them in the morning and evening, while herding the sheep during the day (Dhondup: 2008: 35).



Figure 5 : Map of Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County

#### 4.4 Stage two: Learning experience in a Chinese primary school

I divided the learning experience in the Chinese primary school into four periods which I categorized as the four conflicts: the first - their barley flour was rejected by the school cafeteria; the second - their Tibetan names were being mocked by the Chinese; the third - the fight, and finally the final stage - having a Chinese name in the school. The following is Professor's account.

##### 4.4.1 Professor's account of his learning experience in a primary school

###### 4.4.1.1 The issue of black and white flour

1. Then we were sent to Dajing, to go to a wangxiao (a school with six grades of pupils).
2. Oh, before that, we stayed shortly in two schools which only provided four years primary school, so our family decided to send us to the wangxiao in Dajing.
3. Dajing was a Chinese town, there were two wangxiao in this town.

4. Some schools only provided four grades to pupils from grade one to grade four. That was not the wangxiao system. Wangxiao means a complete primary school, and after wangxiao pupils finished primary school they could upgrade to middle school.
5. It was a big school, and had more than ten teachers in that school.
6. And there were over 500 pupils in that school. It meant that was a huge school; you could hardly find any other school with more than 500 students during that time.
7. It was located in a Chinese town called Gulang. It was 80 miles away from my village.
8. At that school there was a refectory. To join it students needed to provide flour from their homes.
9. Most students were from Chinese villages and the flour they took was whiter than the flour we took from our home.
10. So we were being refused to join the refectory. They did not want to have our flour and there was no shops selling flour during that time. Therefore, we had to cook for ourselves.
11. My cousin and I just cooked for ourselves. The time for cooking lunch was very rushed with only two hours lunch break.
12. If your flour was not white enough you were rejected by the refectory in school even you still intended to pay the money for eating in refectory.
13. Other students would complain if the refectory accepted our flour, because no one wanted to eat black flour.
14. We ran back to the rented house to cook lunch and then ran back to school. When school finished we got home and started to cook for dinner.
15. Sometimes we could not find dry wood to light up the stove. The smoke hurt our eyes, tears just came out. Sometimes we would not cook but just ate some dried steamed bread.

#### 4.4.1.2 To be called 'fang people'

Below is the professor's account of the second conflict at that Chinese school.

16. The Chinese students could not pronounce our names properly; they called us 'wild xi fang' (Chinese traditionally used to call Tibetans 'western fang people').
17. They just messed around our names as much they could. That was showing disdain and disrespect towards Tibetans.
18. They even made a song which was a play on Chinese and Tibetan to mock our names. For instance, they called us 'sticky fang people eat eggs.' [san xi fang, chi jidan]
19. We just tried to tolerate it as much as we could.
20. We were only two Tibetans in this school. In the first term, there were five Tibetans but in the second term three of them stopped coming, because they could not bear the bully in this school any longer.
21. My cousin and I were trying to avoid any confrontation with the bullies. And our family also asked us to keep peace with other people in school. However, our tolerance was treated as *ruanshuo* (Chinese meaning weakness).
22. And the bully was getting worse and worse.

#### 4.4.1.3 To be called 'wild yak'

23. And one Sunday morning, I was walking in the playground and some students were playing basketball. I never played basketball because we did not know how to play.
24. As I was walking by the ball just rolled towards my feet and I picked it up and tried to throw it to the playground. Unfortunately the ball hit one of students' back by accident.
25. Immediately they all rushed towards us and said: 'You, the wild western fang, how could you dare to hit us?' Then we had a big fight.
26. I became very angry at them. I thought I am only one, there was a group of them, I would not mind if I died today but I need to fight for myself.
27. I picked some stones from the road and threw at them. They saw it and ran away and said: 'He really is a wild western fang. He is so wild.'
28. Then I just walked back to our rented house and felt proud for my bravery.
29. But they told our form teacher. The teacher came to me. Without asking any reasons he just beat me with a very big stick.
30. He struck me 18 times and it was so hard, my legs felt numb. But the pain got worse during the night and gradually my two legs were swollen.
31. On following day I had a conversation with my cousin.
32. I said: 'I cannot take this bully any longer. I want to go home.' And he said: 'The other three Tibetans have already left the school, I think we had better leave as well.' I said: 'Let us go home. It is fine for us without getting Chinese education since the bully is too harsh for us to bear.'
33. We decided to leave the school the next day. Then, in the morning we went to talk to the head teacher of this school.
34. We told the head teacher: 'We are leaving school.' The head teacher asked: 'Why do you want to drop out the school?'
35. I just rolled up my trousers and showed my legs which were very bruised and swollen to the head teacher. He asked: 'What happened to you?' I said: 'I was beaten by a teacher.'
36. He asked: 'Why?' So I told him the teacher only trusted these guys. I said: 'I was trying to throw the ball to the playground but threw at a student by accident. They rushed to me and started to hit me. So I picked up some stones for defence. I needed to defend myself. So I fought back with them.'
37. 'They called me a wild yak. I would hit more people if they come again. Fortunately they ran away'.
38. I asked the head teacher: 'Do you know why the other three Tibetans left the school? It was because they could not bear the bully any more. Neither can I and my cousin. We have decided to leave school.'
39. The head teacher said: 'You western fang people come to our school to pursue education and it is not an easy thing.'
40. The Chinese did not call us Tibetans but they called us western fang people. 'Moreover, you western fang people hardly had any one to be educated,' the head teacher kept saying.
41. This began due to the name 'xi zang' -western zang. We Tibetans called ourselves 'Bo', but it is written in a Chinese character containing two parts, but the Han Chinese people did not read this character properly, just pronounce half.

42. Then the head teacher said: 'You two, don't leave school. You western fang people really need educated people. I will make an investigation. If the teacher really did what you said, then I have the power to punish him.'
43. After talking with the group of students one by one, he talked to the teacher and blamed him for beating me without knowing the truth. He asked the teacher to come to apologize to me.

#### **4.4.1.4 Giving a Chinese name**

44. Then one day the head teacher told me: 'We have difficulty in pronouncing your name properly.' At that time, I had my Tibetan name, which was Tsering. 'Shall I give you a Chinese name?' he asked.
45. 'What is your family name?' he asked. We do not have family names so I did not understand. I said: 'My family name might be Niu.'
46. Because I was born in the year of Ox (Niu means ox in Chinese) I claimed 'Niu' as my family name. He said: 'Niu is a family name in Chinese; it is fine you to select Niu as your family name.'
47. Then he gave Yong to be my last name, saying: 'Yong' means 'brave' in Chinese. Since you are pursuing your education far away from your family you need to be brave enough.' So he called me 'Niu Yong'. This was the origin of my Chinese name.
48. Later the head teacher invited us to his office, and said: 'I want to apologize to you on behalf of our school. It was the students' and form teacher's fault. I guarantee you if anyone in this school tries to bully you, I will punish them immediately - just come to tell me.'
49. Then he held a whole school meeting and said: 'As students in this school you must unify one with other. From today if anyone still tries to bully students from other areas I will dismiss them immediately.'
50. After that I had no trouble in school; no one dared to bully me and my cousin. I started to feel as equal as other students in this school.
51. I can remember we went to school in 1946. Yes, it was in 1947, not in 1946.

#### **4.4.2 The interpreted story: The Tibetan identity was rejected**

##### **4.4.2.1 The identity of a *Tsamba* eater was rejected**

After listening to the suggestion from that Chinese man, the elders in the family started to send Professor and his cousin to Chinese school. They had tried two schools before they attended that wangxiao in Dajing. Dajing was a Chinese town located in Wuwei of Gansu Province. And Hwari also belonged to Wuwei district during that time (Tianzhu xianzhi; 1994). It meant these two areas were under the same regional administration. However, Tibetans were called western fang by Chinese people in Dajing and Chinese knew little about Tibetans and their culture.

Professor and his cousin confronted the first conflict as soon as they reached the school. They carried all their barley flour from home and expected to be able to eat their dinners in the school cafeteria. However, because the barley flour was not as white as the other flour brought by the Chinese students, it was rejected. It was the first time they had left home and interacted with Chinese. But the Chinese did not accept their flour and criticized their flour as 'too black'.

Barley was the original wheat growing in the Tibetan plateau. The Tibetan staple food *tsampa* is made of barley. The barley is fried after being ground to flour, so the flour was ready to make *tsampa*. The most common way to eat *tsampa* is to mix it in a bowl with butter and tea. It is the simplest and easiest food but contains lots of proteins from barley flour and butter. People always take barley, butter and Tibetan cheese with them when they go on pilgrimage and so Tibetans call themselves *tsampa* eaters. *Tsampa* is "unique to Tibetans and at the core of Tibetan identity" ([https:// dechenpemba.wordpress.com/2011/01/19/tsampa-eater/](https://dechenpemba.wordpress.com/2011/01/19/tsampa-eater/)), therefore, the rejection of barley flour meant the rejection of their identity as *tsampa* eaters.

#### **4.4.2.2 Tibetans were called 'sticky western fang people'**

After confronting the first rejection, then came the second conflict. The Chinese could not pronounce their Tibetan names properly; they called them 'western fang people' and 'wild yak'. The Chinese simply categorized Tibetans as a nation of barbarians and wildness. Moreover, they even called Professor and his cousin 'the sticky western fang people'.

Tibetans call themselves 'Bo' but Chinese call Tibetans '*zangzu*' officially. '*Bo*' was the name for the ancient Tibetan kingdom at the time the Tibetan written language was created, when Tibet was unified (Zulachengwa; 2006). Moreover, it was the time when Tibet started to invite Buddhism from India to the kingdom. From that time Tibetans were proud of calling themselves '*bo*'. But Chinese people liked to call '*bo*' as 'fang people' (Baidu/ 2013/). The name of fang originally developed from the name '*bo*'. As Professor said in his interview, the Chinese transferred the Tibetan written language '*bo*' into a Chinese character containing two parts, they 'did not read this character properly, just pronounce half' (from interview).

The origin of calling Tibetans '*Zangzu*' can be traced back to the Qing dynasty. As the Qing name for central Tibet was 'Xi Zang' – 'Western Zang area'. Actually central Tibet consists of two big areas, Uing and Zang. Therefore, Qing named central Tibet as the Zang area but put Western in front of Zang to remind people that central Tibet was located in western China.

In Tibetan '*Zang*' means the area near the river Zang Bo; however, the Chinese transferred the '*Zang*' into a Chinese character '*zang*' which also means 'dirty'. That was why they called Professor and his cousin 'sticky western fang people'. In Chinese ideology, 'western areas' also implies a backward area.

At the same time, they also called Professor and his cousin 'wild yak'. The yak is the most domesticated animal on the Tibetan plateau and daily life is influenced by it. Tibetans eat yak meat and they use yak hair to make tents; as well as this, they use yaks to carry their luggage when moving from one grassland to another in summer time (yaktibetgratefulgoose.com) However the Chinese consider yaks very strange animals so they do not like them and they called the Tibetans wild yaks. Seems like everything Tibetans cherish would be disgraceful in the eyes of the Chinese.

It was a very difficult period of time for Professor, a Tibetan boy confronting rejection, bullying and racial discrimination from others through daily interaction. As a teenager growing up in a village he ate barley every day, and he and his family got all of their needs from the yak, which meant life for them. Moreover, he was given his Tibetan name at birth. There are lots of stories about the process of giving names to children in Tibetan culture (Xizang folk story; 1980). I remember my grandmother used to tell me how she carried me to a monastery and a monk touched my head and gave me a name. Names are very important in Tibetan Buddhist culture. In Tibetan culture there are two main sources for personal names. People get their names from either parents or from great Lamas (<http://www.namgyal.org/resource/archive/articles-and-audio/names-in-tibetan-culture/>). Every name has a meaning which expresses the parents' wish for the child. Moreover, But Professor's cherished name, the precious yak in his life and the food of daily life, all of these became the target of discrimination.

Fighting happened at the end. 'They called me wild yak; I would hit more people if they come again' (from interview). He was told to live in harmony with others from his family, however, on experiencing the difficulties of being a Tibetan in a Chinese school, he started to challenge the ideology of Tibetan tradition which always focuses on living in harmony with others.

#### **4.4.2.3 Giving a Chinese name**

Acceptance of a Chinese name is the way a Tibetan negotiates and make compromise with The Chinese in order to seek their acceptance in daily interaction. Professor was rejected



because his name could not be properly pronounced by his teachers and classmates. Moreover, his name always gave rise to disrespect, so finally he conceded and accepted a Chinese name. Professor's name was viewed as a defect by his head teacher, who was a good teacher but had little knowledge of Tibetan. So he was given a Chinese name by his head teacher. However, the head teacher also called Tibetans 'western fang people', implying he also looked down on Tibetans just like everyone else in that school. Furthermore, he said: 'You western fang people really need educated people.' It shows that on the one hand he believed education was very important for Tibetans, but on the other, it implies that he believed that such education should be applied in Chinese.

I heard many stories of Tibetans whose Tibetan names were changed into Chinese when they interacted with Chinese in daily life. One of my relatives has a Chinese name, and I was told by my father how her Chinese teacher in school changed her Tibetan name to a Chinese one. Moreover, I had the chance to work with a local leader in a Tibetan village for three months in 1992. He was Tibetan and was the *shuji*: the secretary of a township in a southeast Tibetan county. He could not speak proper Chinese but he had a Chinese name. I asked him why he had this name; he told me he was in military for three years when PRC was established. His monitor could not pronounce his Tibetan name properly so he gave him this Chinese name.

Referring to my own experience, when I was six years old, I moved to a Chinese city to attend a school where I was the only Tibetan. My name, my home language, and even my bracelets and my mum's earrings (Tibetan love to wear earrings and bracelets) aroused curiosity among my peers, who laughed at all of these. They made a song which was a play on Chinese and Tibetan words to mock my name. All of this made me feel ashamed to be a Tibetan amongst the Han Chinese. I asked my mother to change my given name to one which was more like the names of my peers. I even asked my mum to give me a family name which would be more like the names of my peers. But my mum said: 'We don't have a family name.' I still can remember I was very disappointed that I could not have a name similar to my peers. However, my mum told me the beautiful meaning of my name and the story of how I got this name as soon as I was born.

#### **4.4.2.4 Context: Story happened in Dajing**

Dajing is located in Gulang county, Wuwei prefecture of Gansu province. Dajing is 80 miles away from Xiamotso. Xiamotso is located in Hwari (Tiangzhu in Chinese). During that time *Dajing* and *Hwari* both belonged to the same administration. It was located in a Chinese

town called Gulang, 80 miles away from Xiamotso village. But Tibetan and Han Chinese did not really contact with each other.

## **4.5 Stage three: Educational experience in primary school after**

### **PRC established**

#### **4.5.1 Professor's account of the learning experience after PRC**

##### **established**

##### **4.5.1.1 Becoming *ganbu***

1. And then in 1949 we stopped going to school. Because the situation was very messy, my family worried about us, so we stopped going to school.
2. Everyone said during that time the Republic party and Communist party were having a fight, so society was chaotic.
3. In the winter time, the new China was established, and *Tiangzhu (Hwari)* became an Autonomous Xiang.
4. Soon PRC (the new China) established *ganbu* (administration officials) who came to the villages to encourage youth to become *ganbu*. The slogan during that time was: Tibetan *ganbu* are needed to administrate Tibetan areas. So my cousin in our village became *ganbu*.
5. I was in the valley to look after livestock, so I did not get the chance to become *ganbu*. Actually the officials visited our family every day and asked my family to call me back home.
6. They really wanted me to become *ganbu*, because people in my hometown knew I and my cousin were educated in *Wangxiao*.

##### **4.5.1.2 The first time I heard 'minority' which drove me back to school**

7. In 1950 I got letters from my classmates in *Wangxiao*. They wrote: 'Please come back to *Wangxiao* to complete your primary education, now it is a new society led by the Chinese communist party.' Moreover, they wrote: 'This new government is practicing democracy, and the new policy towards minority people is very good.'
8. That was the first time I heard 'minority people', a new term referring to Tibetans in a different way.
9. My classmates wrote: 'You western fang people are minority people, and nobody would bully you. Nowadays under the system of the new society nobody would even dare to treat you badly.' Finally they wrote: 'Please come back to school.'
10. I did not want to become *ganbu*. I was thinking: 'I have not even completed primary school education, what is the point for me to become *ganbu*, I could not even write a proper official document.'

11. After I got the letter from my classmates. I thought, 'It might be a good chance for me to complete my primary school education and then I could pursue further education like secondary school and even going to university.'
12. Then I discussed this issue with the elders in my family. However, since all our family were illiterate, they could not understand why I still wanted to go back to school.
13. They said: 'You have already been in school for a long time; why do you still want to go to school?' I said: 'I have not finished even my primary school education, and after that there are secondary school and university ahead.'
14. And I said: 'It is not enough to go only to primary school, and my educational level is not good enough to become a *ganbu*. My family said: 'Why has *Zhaxi* (Professor's cousin) decided to become *ganbu*?' as he also had not finished his primary school education.
15. I begged my family: 'Let me just go to have a look, if it is not ok, I will come back.'

#### 4.5.1.3 Three surprises Professor encountered when he re-joined his school

16. When I reached my school, all my classmates and teachers were coming to the school gate to welcome me.
17. I was very surprised by it. It was really amazing. I had never received this kind of welcome. And my teachers said: 'Now we are in a new society and we practice equality among nations. We have several different nationalities in our school, also Muslim students.'
18. When they saw me carrying big luggage they asked: 'What have you brought with you?' I said: 'I am carrying lots of flour with me.' They said: 'Actually you don't need to bring flour. But, fine, you can give your flour to the refectory to join the cafeteria.' I said: 'No, my flour is not very good, not very white.' They said: 'No, your flour is fine, it will be fine mixed with other flour. You can go to refectory to eat.' It was a big surprise.
19. I was put in the sixth grade and I studied very hard. We were learning math, Chinese, history and geography. At the end we had final exams.
20. We were the first graduates of '*wangxiao*' since the new China was established. So schools and local education administration paid great attention to us.
21. Our results were being ranked in a list. Surprisingly, I got the first place in the ranking list.
22. I can remember, the ranking list was displayed at the gate of our school, written with red glitter mark on a white paper. My name was written with a big mark. It was a big surprise for me, and it was a big surprise for both my teachers and my classmates.
23. Some of the local people in Dajing even complained to the school. They said: 'How can a village boy, not even Chinese, a western fang person, get it?' And they said: 'It is a big shame for our Dajing people. We Dajing people should get the first place.'
24. However, our head teacher said: 'What attitude do you have? The Communist party is not like the Republic party. The Communist party always respect the facts and everyone is equal under their system. We cannot deceive people. The ranking is based on students' grades.'
25. When I heard all of these arguments I felt grateful to the Communist party and also felt proud for myself.

## 4.5.2 The interpreted story:

### 4.5.2.1 Learning influenced by the transition of society

The PRC was established in 1949, and there were many changes taking place in Hwari as soon as this happened. It was a story of how a changing society made a deep influence on an individual's life in Xiamotso.

Becoming *ganbu* (government worker in Chinese) was spreading in Xiamotso. Soon the PRC encouraged Tibetan youth in Hwari to work for the government. However, professor said: 'I don't want to become *ganbu*, I have not finished *wangxiao*, what is the point for me to become *ganbu*?' (From interview) This is when we hear him voice his ambition for pursuing education, which challenged his family's idea about Chinese education.

The family did not like his ambition of continually pursuing education at that Han primary school. The initial aim of him going to the school was due to the need of speaking Chinese to officials on behalf of his family. However, now there was no need to complete his education at primary school because in the new (PRC) society his family would not be asked to become *baozhang*. This rejection implies that learning Chinese was not encouraged by his family. Actually going to a Chinese school was rejected by Tibetans living in the villages. I had a trip to one place during my fieldwork and I had a good talk with the elders there. They recalled how they viewed going to Chinese school in 1950.

"The grandpa objected to sending his children to school, and he only wanted them to stay in the village with him while they were small. At that time most farmers regarded education institutions as the places where their children would be transformed into Han Chinese. They did not want their children to become a Han. They talked about how people did not value education. They remembered when PRC was established and the Minority College began in 1950. The village needed to select some villagers to get education in Minority College, actually it was a very good chance to become *ganbu*, which could transform them from farmer to *ganbu*, getting payments from the government monthly. But at that time the villagers did not respect education. So they collected money from every family and found someone who was the laziest person in the village; they paid him the money and begged him to go to the Minority College to study. This person became a big *ganbu* in their area after graduated from Minority College. They were laughing while they were telling this story (Field notes: 13th June 2012).

Three surprises encountered in school symbolized the transition of society which brought changes to an individual's daily interaction in daily life. The new society created an opportunity for this young Tibetan boy to fulfil his ambition, which was to complete primary school and even go to university to study in future. He studied very hard and finally gave all the people in Dajing a big surprise when he got the first place in the ranking list. Even though the new society practised equality among every nationality, the Han Chinese in Dajing could not bear a Tibetan boy getting the first place instead of a Chinese. The term '*fang*' was not used in the new society anymore. Teachers and classmates would refer to Tibetans as a minority group (*shaoshu mingzu* in Chinese). However, when he got the first place in the ranking, it challenged the whole Dajing Han society and they called him '*fang*' again. For the Chinese, '*fang*' means backward and stupid. However, Professor proved that *fang* people are not stupid.

#### **4.5.2.2 Narrative in Chinese**

He narrated the first interview in Chinese. And he thought it would be easier for me to take notes because he knew I would be faster taking notes in Chinese rather than in Tibetan. The second interview was narrated in Chinese as well. It was the experience of schooling in that Han Chinese school.

## Chapter 5: Professor's story: Becoming a Tibetan teacher

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the story of Professor from the beginning of his dream to become a Tibetan teacher, and follows his process of fulfilling that dream as he majors in Tibetan in a minority college. The three stages of Professor's experience are:

Stage Four: Wanting to be a Tibetan teacher

Stage Five: Developing bilingualism in a minority college

Stage Six: Becoming a Tibetan teacher

Stage Four: speaks of how Professor developed an ambition and what he did to achieve his dream. Stage Five is the story of developing bilingualism in a minority college when he studied very hard to become bilingual. Stage Six relates how he became a Tibetan teacher and his experience of teaching in a Tibetan village during the Cultural Revolution.

I have broken the stages into different parts, each of which has a subtitle based on the main events. By dividing each stage into segments I hope to help my reader understand the story more easily. This is the story of a young Tibetan man who, following graduation from a Han Chinese primary school, developed a strong ambition to become a Tibetan teacher. It is the story of an individual's journey toward becoming bilingual, a journey full of struggles and conflicts.

Professor's story was collected by conversation in open-ended interviews. I conducted three interviews covering the last three stages of his story, each lasting nearly one hour. The story is presented in three sections:

1. His account of the story: the story as lived;
2. The story retold by me based on my understanding of the context: the interpreted story.
3. Language shift

Professor's account of the story is presented at first as the lived story, line by line. I have taken away most of my responses. However, I kept four of my responses in the lived story in this chapter (section 5.4.1) because they show how my bilingual experience was similar to

his, both being situated in a minority college. Firstly, it shows the importance of sharing in research between the researcher and the participant in a life history interview (see my methodology); secondly, it offers a space to consider why his bilingual experience in a minority college would be similar to mine, even though they were thirty years apart (mine in the 1980s and his in the 1950s). The interpreted story consists of several parts, the first being the story, and the second the introduction of the context, i.e.. where it took place and what was the political circumstances were at that time. Finally language shift is presented as the third part of the story.

## **5.2 Stage Four: Wanting to be a Tibetan teacher**

I divided this stage into two sections with subtitles identifying the main event happening during the period of time. I present the story below: First, Professor's account (the lived story); and second, the story retold by me (the interpreted story) which is based on my understanding of the context as a researcher. Finally I offer my reader an opportunity to experience how meaning is made through analysing the language shift occurring in the interview.

### **5.2.1 Professor's account**

#### **5.2.1.1 My ambition**

1. When I had the learning experience in a Chinese school, I realized that since there were few Tibetans in the school, Chinese people had little knowledge about Tibetans. They looked down on us and even named us 'barbarians and wild yaks.'
2. Moreover, while I was in that Chinese school, I suffered bullying and racial discrimination from other pupils in the school. The teachers did not call us 'wild yaks' like the pupils, but their attitudes towards me showed that they also looked down on Tibetans.
3. In this situation I thought about how we Tibetans have our own written language, and we have built many monasteries, so why could we not build our own schools to let our children learn Tibetan? We needed to cultivate our own Tibetan intellectuals.
4. From that time I developed an ambition: I wanted to become a Tibetan teacher. At first I needed to learn Tibetan. Then I wanted to build a Tibetan school in my hometown.
5. After I graduated from Wangxiao, the North Western Minority College came to recruit students in Hwari. It was 1952. The Minority Language department had just been established that year, and it was the first time they were recruiting students.
6. As soon as I heard this news I went to the teaching administration of the Tianzhu Autonomous Region to book a seat to take the college entrance exam for that school.

7. The leader of education administration was a Tibetan fellow. He knew I was the first Wangxiao graduate in Hwari. So, he told me: 'You don't need to take this exam, we decided to send you to Xian University to study.'
8. During that time, Xian University allocated a study opportunity to Hwari. The requirements were first that you must be a Tibetan and second that you should be a high school graduate, or at least a middle school graduate. That was the reason the education administration selected me as a candidate. Though I did not have middle school certification I had graduated in first place in the Wangxiao ranking system.
9. The leader told me: 'It is an honor for you to go to study journalism in *Xian* University. You will become a journalist in the new China in the future. You don't need to take an exam; you are the first Tibetan graduate of Wangxiao in the whole of Hwari since the PRC was established. Your qualifications meet the requirements.'
10. I did not want to go to Xian to become a journalist. The opportunity to become a journalist was not my dream; my dream was to become a Tibetan teacher. If I went to Xian, I would not have a chance to learn Tibetan.
11. So I told the leader: 'Please let me take the *Xibei Minyuan's* [Northwest Minorities College] entrance exam. I would like to have a try since there is no exam for going to Xian University.' He said; 'You can have a try, but we have decided to send you to *Xian* not *Xibei Minyuan*.'
12. I took the exams, which were in Chinese; Politics, and Math. I got first place in Chinese and Politics, so the my total score was in the first place. I was the only Tibetan. Most of candidates were Chinese.
13. The education administration was pleased with my score, and they determined to send me to *Xian* University.

### 5.2.1.2 I was determined to fulfill my ambition

14. Then I told them: 'My dream is to become a Tibetan teacher, so the only university where I can study Tibetan is *Xibei Minyuan* (Northwestern Minorities College).' I was very determined to do it.
15. Then the following day, I was asked to go to meet the chairman of Tianzhu (Hwari) who was the highest leader of Tianzhu.
16. **He was a Tibetan. I went to his office. He made a Tibetan milk tea for me, and said: 'Have some tea and some *tsampa*.'**
17. **He said: 'We need to have a talk. I know you are the first graduate of Wangxiao in the whole of Tianzhu and you got the first place. It was an honor for our Tianzhu. Xian University is a very good university. We hope you can go to Xian to study. Our local government of Tianzhu will send you to Xian.'**
18. I said: 'Xian is too far away from home.' The chairman said: 'The Hero goes to the border to fulfill his ambition.' This was a Tibetan proverb. And he used another Tibetan proverb when he said: 'we go to the world to see the play; the more the better we know the world, the better scholars we become.'
19. Finally I told the chairman: '**My ambition is to become a Tibetan teacher**, not to become a journalist.' The chairman said: 'To become a journalist is far better than to become a teacher. A teacher is always stuck in the classroom and has no chance to travel around the world; however, if you become a journalist, you can travel everywhere.'



20. **I said: 'I want to be a Tibetan teacher. I want to teach Tibetan to Tibetan children in future. So I want to learn Tibetan.'** He asked: **'Where do you want to be a Tibetan teacher?'** I said: **'I can come back to Hwari and build a Tibetan school, and teach Tibetan to Tibetan children.'**
21. 23: He was impressed by my ambition. He was a Tibetan, and he was from a *'touden'* family (a local Tibetan noble). He could read and write in Tibetan.
22. The Communist party was not the *Guomindang*, so he did not force me to go to Xian. He respected my ambition.
23. **Finally, he said: 'Teaching Tibetan to Tibetan children is significant. Please come back to our place after you finish your study in Northwest Minorities College. I will help you to build a Tibetan school for Tibetan children.'**

## 5.2.2 The Interpreted story

### 5.2.2.1 I want to become a Tibetan teacher

'I want to become a Tibetan teacher' is the ambition he developed from the experience of studying in a Han Chinese school. Developing this ambition was the process of realizing his identity through interaction with others, i.e. the Han Chinese who lived in the neighborhood. The realization of his identity started from attending the Han Chinese school where he was one of only two or three Tibetans in that school. Moreover, he realized that Han Chinese people 'had little knowledge about Tibetans, and 'they looked down on us and even named us barbarians and wild yaks' (from the interview). Nevertheless, the bullying and racial discrimination he suffered at school was the soil leading him to the path of self-realization and self-recognition of his identity as a Tibetan. Experiencing racial discrimination in a Han Chinese school led him to know he was a Tibetan. Moreover, he realized that he needed to learn the Tibetan language and become a Tibetan teacher in the future. In the interview he said: 'While I was in that Chinese school, I suffered bullying and racial discrimination from other pupils in that school. Teachers did not call us 'wild yaks' like the pupils, but their attitudes towards me showed that they also looked down on Tibetans. In this situation I thought about how we Tibetans have our own written language and how we have built many monasteries, so why could not build our own schools to let our children learn Tibetan? We need to cultivate our own Tibetan intellectuals'(from interview).

From this we can see how daily interaction with others played significantly in the development of identity; it is an example of knowing ourselves through daily interaction with others.

### 5.2.2.2 The fulfilling of his ambition became a possibility in the new society

It was a new society and changes were taking place in Hwari, which later became Tianzhu Autonomous County; moreover; many Tibetans became cadres in the new government. Furthermore, going to university, which would have been impossibility under the old system was now possible for this young Tibetan village boy. The new and changing society provided opportunities for him to complete his dream and fulfil his ambition.

Professor was the only Tibetan *Wangxiao* graduate who was educated in Chinese, so he was expected to go to Chinese university to become a journalist in the new China. However, his ambition to become a Tibetan teacher was very strong, grounded in his experience of studying in a Chinese school. His suffering from racial discrimination became his strength for fulfilling his ambition. However, his ambition contradicted the expectation of the top leader of the county. This happened at the time the PRC was just established, when the country needed educated Tibetan youth working for the government (Gaocairang; 1994). Because of this, lots of chances were offered to Tibetans educated in Chinese. Facing the contradiction between his ambition and the expectation of the big leader, he determined to fulfill his dream. 'I want to become a Tibetan teacher.' occurred five times in this interview. This ambition gave him courage even to persuade the Party Secretary of the county, who promised he would support him to build a Tibetan school after his graduation from the Minority College, showing that his ambition to become a Tibetan teacher won the support of the new society.

### 5.2.2.3 The context: Hwari in 1950

Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County of Gansu Province was the first minority autonomous county established in China in 1950. (An autonomous county has the right to govern itself independently of the provincial government). Tianzhu, also called Hwari in Tibetan mean "Heroic Tribe." It was named by China's former Premier Zhou *En'lai* after the founding of the People's Republic of China. (Tibet, Cn. November 10, 2014). Since Tianzhu was the first minority autonomous county, young Tibetans in Tianzhu were encouraged by the new government to participate in the construction of new society and to become cadres who would work for the government (Gaicairqang, 1994).

#### 5.2.2.4 Narrative in two languages

In the interview Professor shifted into Tibetan when he recalled the conversation he had had with that Tibetan leader. (I used black bold to identify language shift in his story) It was the first time in the interview he shifted into Tibetan. I regard it as the turning point both in his life story and in my interview. The chance to meet that Tibetan leader implies two things: First, it tells us that under the new government Tibetans were offered the chance to become high ranking leaders in the county; second, his chance to meet this leader shows how the new government paid great attention to cultivating more and more young Tibetans to work for the new society.

In this interview the language shift occurred back and forth between Tibetan and Chinese when he recalled the conversation he had with that leader. In his memory, the offering of *tsampa*, a Tibetan food, was the beginning of his language shift into Tibetan. Offering the *tsampa* was a symbolic action, which implied the recognition of Tibetan identity from both sides: the chairman and Professor. *Tsampa* is the traditional staple food for Tibetans (see chapter five about *tsampa*). Their action of shifting into Tibetan symbolizes that they both realized they shared the same identity which was rooted in sharing the same language. The shared identity started with the leader's offering *tsampa*, which was symbolic of their shared culture. The leader even used Tibetan proverbs to try to persuade Professor. Traditional Amdo Tibetans like to use lots of proverbs in daily talk (Desi; 1983). I have many memories how my grandmother used proverbs in her daily speech. The leader was successfully persuaded by Professor, and at the end he even promised that he would support him to build a Tibetan school.

Furthermore, language shifting occurred naturally during the interview. Chinese was used when he was recalling the conversation about Xian University. However, when they talked about Professor's ambition they shifted into Tibetan. It shows Professor telling the story in two languages, portraying him as a bilingual narrating his story through both tongues. One language represents the new changing world, but the mother tongue was used to talk about his ambition came from the bottom of the heart.

### 5.3 Stage Five: Developing Bilingualism in the Minority College

I divided this stage into three sections. Every section has a subtitle which identifies the main event happening during the period of time. I present the story as follows: At first I present Professor's account as the lived story. I kept two of my sentences in this interview which I

regard as very important. Then I present the story retold by me, which is based on my understanding of the context as a researcher. Finally I offer an opportunity to my reader to experience bilingualism through an analysis of how language shift occurred during the interview. I use bold type to identify language shifting in all the stories.

### 5.3.1 Professor's account

#### 5.3.1.1 Learning Tibetan and Chinese in college

1. **(Started in Tibetan) I was finally accepted by the Minority Language department. It happened in 1951. Most of the students were Chinese high school graduates. The precondition for studying in the department was to be a Chinese high school graduate, and the entrance exams were delivered in Chinese.**
2. **It was my first time to learn Tibetan. I started from the alphabet. All of our Tibetan teachers were Chinese. They used Chinese to teach Tibetan and I felt their pronunciation of Tibetan was very different from mine. I thought they were Tibetan teachers; of course they have a high academic level in the Tibetan written language. Therefore, I should not doubt their pronunciation.**
3. **Not a single teacher was Tibetan. Most of the students were Chinese, and there were only three Tibetans in our department.**
4. **Yixi: Ohh, that was just like us! When I first learnt Tibetan, all of my teachers were Chinese.** You know my classmates were very upset with one of the Tibetan grammar teachers, he was from Shanxi, and he was teaching Tibetan grammar to us in a Shanxi Chinese dialect. (Both the professor and I laughed.)
5. **Finally I realized that all of my Tibetan teachers could not speak Tibetan, and their pronunciation was very poor. The main course they were teaching was oral Tibetan. I was good at speaking Tibetan, so it was no problem for me to keep up with the progress.**
6. **The most difficult course for me was Political Economy. The text book was translated from 'Su lian' (the Soviet Union in Chinese). It was very difficult for me, all of my classmates were Chinese high school graduates. Their Chinese was much better than mine.**
7. **One day, one of my classmates approached to me. He said: 'Did you know that the date of taking the political economy exam is approaching. I think it will be very difficult. Anyone who fails this exam will be asked to drop out of the school.'** (This student was Chinese and this conversation was in Chinese)
8. **I was really scared. We took the exam and most of the students failed that exam.**
9. **One day the teacher gave a speech to all of us. He was very upset with our exam results.**
10. **He said: 'I am not very happy with your exam results. Why are you guys here? Are you here to study? The university treats you very well. You enjoy 'si cai yi tang' (a moderate standard of food) in university.'**
11. **The 'si cai yi tang' meant enjoying four dishes and one soup for lunch and supper. Moreover, we were offered *tsampa* at breakfast.**

12. **The teacher also said:** 'You know the *'si cai yi tang'* is for the *'xianzhang'* (the highest administrator of county). Besides, you are enjoying the free provision system in the university. Free food, free clothes and even getting free shampoo'.
13. **Yes, what he said was true. The communist party covered our tuition and living expenses, and even gave us four yuan pocket money every month. Also they offered Tibetan customs to Tibetan students.**
14. **And then the teacher said:** 'No one passed this exam.' **When I heard, it was a big relief to me. And the teacher said:** 'The University has decided to give you two more weeks to revise, and then you need to retake this exam in two weeks'.
15. **I studied very hard and found a very good text book which was easier than the political economy text book we used. In the end, I passed this exam.**
16. Yixi: **Yes, I also enjoyed four yuan pocket money when I studied Tibetan at the Minority College.**
17. **However, there were still six students in our class who did not pass the exam. They complained they had problems in understanding the teacher's Shanxi Chinese dialect and also that the text book was very difficult to understand. The teacher said:** 'The text book is translated from *su lian'* (Soviet Union in Chinese).
18. **But the teacher suggested these students should come to me to consult with me about how I passed this exam. The teacher was impressed with my progress.**

### 5.3.1.2 Learning was influenced by changes happening in both the Minority College and society

19. **In 1952 there was a big change in our Minority Language Department.** There was the Minority Studies Department in both Zh and Xian Universities. There were two projects under the Minority Studies Department which were about the Tibetan language and the Mongolian language. But in 1952 the Minority studies Departments in both Zh and Xian Universities were transferred into our department. The aim of combining them was to strengthen the faculty of the Minority Language Department in our college.
20. We had two Chinese Tibetan professors from Xian University and **we had a Tibetan professor from Zh University, who had been the great secretary of Labrong monastery before 1950.**
21. We learned oral Tibetan language, Tibetan literature and Tibetan grammar. However, all of these subjects were taught by Chinese teachers. They used Chinese to teach us Tibetan.
22. **The only teacher I met using Tibetan during class was 'A Ke Choden'. He had been a monk before becoming a Tibetan teacher.**
23. We had a Chinese Tibetan teacher who was a lecturer. His academic Chinese level was very high, and his Tibetan was self-taught. This really impressed me so much. Later I was told the story of how he got interested in learning Tibetan.
24. When he was in high school in Zh, the family's economic condition was not very good. His father travelled to Tibetan areas to sell fruit. Then his father went to Joni, (a Tibetan area, *'Zhuoni'* in Chinese) and made friends with monks in Joni monastery.

25. **His father started to get interested in learning the Tibetan language, and he also admired Tibetan culture, so he thought ‘Wouldn’t it be wonderful if my son learnt Tibetan writing and Tibetan culture?’**
26. Then he told his son: ‘I will take you to Tibetan areas this summer.’ **Then he took his son to Joni monastery and told him how wonderful it would be if he could learn Tibetan.**
27. **After that, every summer he went to Joni monastery to learn Tibetan. He met a monk there who could speak Chinese. He taught him Tibetan grammar.** Then he became a Tibetan teacher. He became a teacher in Zh University and later transferred to our college.
28. During that time tension increased in Tibetan areas. There was a big need for *ganbu* (*cadres*) working in Tibetan areas who knew both the Chinese and Tibetan languages. There was a big need to explain the communist party’s national policy to local Tibetan people.
29. We were told about the urgent need for having *ganbu* who knew two languages in Tibetan local areas because they were conducting Land Reform in the Tibetan areas. Therefore our course was cut short to two years instead of three.
30. ‘*caofei*’ (Chinese term meaning riots) events happened in Gannan Tibetan areas; this was another reason why they asked us to finish our course in two years. We studied very hard, and the Communist Party treated us very well. Now it was our chance to repay it.
31. I can remember I worked in the military for eight months, to be a translator for the soldiers in ‘*caofei*’ and ‘land reform’.

### 5.3.2 The interpreted story

#### 5.3.2.1 The opportunity of learning Tibetan happened in the new society

This story is situated in the Minority College in 1951 which marked the turning point in Professor’s life. He became a university student majoring in Tibetan in a Minority College. In traditional Tibetan society, entering a monastery to become a monk was the only chance for young people to learn Tibetan (Nima; 2000). However, in the new society Tibetan was introduced as a BA degree major in Minority Colleges which made learning the written Tibetan language possible for this young Tibetan. The opportunity to learn Tibetan was offered by the new society. In the mid-1950s, newly established education departments in Tibetan areas issued their first guidelines on “bilingual education.” The use of Tibetan as the primary language of schools for Tibetans was the only feasible strategy at the time, since few people in these areas could understand Chinese (Kolas; 2003).

Professor started to learn the written Tibetan language from the alphabet, but *ga ka* (Tibetan letters) was taught by Chinese teachers. Traditional Tibetan education institutes were monasteries (see my interdiction part) and Tibetan scholars were monks in monasteries (Nima; 2000). The PRC government hesitated to enrol monks to be teachers in college, as

they were viewed as representations of the old society as well as a symbol of religion, which did not fit the ideals of the Communist Party. This could explain why there were only Chinese teachers teaching Tibetan at the Minority College.

It was a dilemma. He wanted to learn Tibetan; however his first Tibetan teachers were the Chinese who even could not speak proper Tibetan. But then he met good Chinese Tibetan teachers though their Tibetan level did not reach a high academic level. I also remembered that same Tibetan grammar teacher, who spoke the *Shanxi* Chinese dialect to teach us Tibetan grammar; he even invited me to go to his house.

Both Professor and I enjoyed free education in at the Minority College. The free provision system in his time was ‘free food, free clothes and even getting free shampoo’ (from interview). Moreover, he could even have *tsampa* for his breakfast in the Minority College. In my time, we were not offered *tsampa* for our breakfast and no free clothes were provided. However, we were offered free shampoo and four yuan pocket money per month as well. My chance to learn Tibetan was thirty years later in the 1980s.

### **5.3.2.2 The development of bilingualism was influenced by socio-political aspects during that time**

Professor met his first Tibetan teacher in his life. This Tibetan teacher had been the great secretary of Labrong monastery before 1950. This showed that the Minority College started to recognize the value of traditional Tibetan scholars; furthermore, this action implies that the PRC compromised and started to enrol a few traditional Tibetan scholars to teach Tibetan to Tibetan major students. But this Tibetan professor did not teach them. Later on the Minority College invited another monk to become a Tibetan teacher there. This was the time when finally Professor had a Tibetan teacher who came from a monastery, which shows monks were the intellectuals in Tibetan society, the academic authority of Tibetan culture. The experience of having a Tibetan teacher contribute to his education was due to the PRC government changing their altitude towards Tibetan traditional scholars.

The duration of Professor’s BA course was cut short due to tension occurring in Tibetan areas. He recalled: ‘*Caofei*’ (*the grassland-bandit*: the Chinese term referring to riots in Tibetan areas) events happening in Gannan Tibetan areas, which was the reason they asked us to finish our course in two years (from interview). (I will elaborate on the riot and why it happened in Gannan Tibetan areas in the following section.) This shows how the development of bilingualism was influenced by socio-political aspects during that time.

### 5.3.2.3 The context: The two policies carried on in Amdo areas in the 1950s

Since land reform was carried on in Tibetan Kham and Amdo areas, a large number of political *ganbu* or *cadres* were needed. The need for political *ganbu* was the original motive for setting up the *Minyuan* (Minority Colleges), and it linked with the PRC's practise of establishing different policies between the Tibet Autonomous Region and the other Tibetan areas.

Norbu (2001) states that two policies were carried out in Tibetan areas, one for the Tibetan Autonomous Region and the other for the other Tibetan areas, Amdo and Kham (P: 213, 2001). PRC signed 17 agreements with the local Tibetan government which clarified that they would practice different policies regarding the special circumstances in Tibet because 'Mao realized that Tibetans were completely different people' (Norbu:2001: 213). However, Norbu (2001) indicates that 'with regard to ethnic Tibet (Kham and Amdo) the Chinese policy was based on a rigid legality and lack of realism. For the fact was, that no matter how far these eastern Tibetans were away from Lhasa or even how relatively close they were to the Chinese provinces, they behaved and acted like any other Tibetan. And this social fact should have been taken into consideration.' (Norbu: 215).

In 1950 the PRC started to carry out 'land reform' policy in the Tibetan Amdo areas. Land reform originally started in the north of China during the Chinese civil war (Feigon; 2002). "By 1949, land reform had been completed in less than one-third of Chinese villages" (Feigon: 2002: 95). It was carried out in Amdo and Kham areas from 1950. The initiative of applying the land reform policy in rural areas was how the communist party addressed the "great economic imbalances endured by the Chinese peasantry" (Feigon; 2002: 95). Land reform was the policy which intended to divide the land belonging to the landlord in every village and ensure that "even lowest level peasants had a piece of property to call their own" (Feigon: 2002: 96). Norbu (2001: 214) indicates that the inner Tibetan Autonomous Region did not carry out reform. That was the reason why later on riots occurred in both the Amdo and Kham areas. This was named '*caofei*' in the interview. Goldstein (1994: 88) states that "China treated ethnographic Tibet very differently from political Tibet during the period 1951-9 because ethnographic Tibet was not normally covered by the terms laid down in the Seventeen Point Agreement, which applied only to political Tibet. As a result, while the traditional economic-religious system continued in Tibet per se, China attempted to impose reforms in ethnographic Tibet, which precipitated bloody rebellions in 1955-7 and considerable loss of life". All of these socio-political aspects made a deep impact on Professor's life in the Minority College.



#### 5.3.2.4 The Language shift

The fifth interview provides an opportunity for my reader to see the bilingual educational atmosphere at the Minority College through language shifts which occurred in the fifth interview. The interview started in Tibetan. Professor used Tibetan when recalling starting to learn Tibetan from the Chinese. The language shift occurred when he was mimicking how his Chinese teacher was talking to his class. It implies firstly his capacity to alternate between two languages freely; secondly, it shows that the educational atmosphere at the Minority College was interaction in a world containing two different languages and cultures.

In the third and fourth parts of the interview, he shifted into Chinese mostly because he was talking about the changes happening in the Minority College, but he shifted into Tibetan when he mentioned a traditional Tibetan scholar. Moreover, when he was talking about the political tension in Tibetan areas, he used Chinese in the fourth part of the interview. However, in the fifth part, he shifted back into Tibetan to mention the Tibetan teacher who originally was a monk. The shift to Tibetan occurred again when he was talking about how his Chinese teacher learned Tibetan from a monastery in a Tibetan area. He intentionally used Tibetan when the conversation was about Tibetan culture and Tibetan language, but he shifted into Chinese when talking about Chinese teachers, the political situation and the changes happening in the Minority College. This reveals his real world of bilingualism. He always prefers to use L1 to express everything belonging to his culture, but he prefers to use L2 to express everything connected with the Chinese people and the Chinese-dominated society. '*Caofei*' was the only Chinese word he used in relation to Tibetans. It means *the grassland-bandit* which described the Tibetans involved in the riots. The language shift occurring in this interview shows the role L1 plays in his life, representing the close relationship a person maintains with his village culture and his ethnic people. Secondly, the use of '*caofei*' as the only Chinese word related to Tibetans shows that any negative word representing his ethnic group would not be included in his culture. The use of language shift demonstrates a Tibetan bilingual making sense of the world through narrative in two languages.

## 5.4 Stage Six: Professor's experience during the Cultural Revolution

This is Professor's experience as a Tibetan teacher during the Cultural Revolution, which lasted ten years from 1966-76. His life was deeply affected by this political campaign launched in China. He became a Tibetan teacher after graduating from the Minority College in 1954 and taught Tibetan grammar there from 1954 to 1966. He did not tell me much about this experience; however, he said I want to tell you about what happened during the Cultural Revolution which brought tumultuous change into my personal life.

I have divided this stage into three sections. Every section has a subtitle which identifies the main event happening during this period of time.

### 5.4.1 Professor's account

#### 5.4.1.1 The Cultural Revolution affected his life as a Tibetan teacher

1. I became a Tibetan teacher after graduation from the Minority College. I had taught Tibetan grammar for many years before the Cultural Revolution. When the Cultural Revolution happened, I was dispatched by my college to the Tibetan area of Machu to carry on socialist education among the Tibetan nomads.
2. I was in the village of Cairima carrying on socialist education by acting as a translator. Soon after the Cultural Revolution started, most leaders in every team of socialist education became a target of the Red Guard.
3. Then one day I received a notice from our college, asking me to go back there in three days. A villager lent me his horse so I rode the horse from Cairima to *Machu* County. Then I took a bus to reach Zh on the third day.
4. When I got back to our college, I tried to visit a colleague to find out what was happening. But he did not open the door to me and whispered to me through the door. He said: 'Do not try to see any one. *'bu xu jiatou jie er'* (Lit: forbidding talking head to head and ear to ear in Chinese: it means no communication with others.)
5. In the morning I went to register; during that time the college was under the control of the *Gong Xuan Dui* (the working class team belonging to the Red Guard). The *Gong Xuan Dui* blamed me for coming back late.
6. And then I was told the three regulations. 1. It was forbidden to visit other colleagues. 2. It was forbidden to talk with other colleagues. 3. You must prepare to write self-criticism at home.
7. The following day I went to read the criticism written in big characters on campus. I was caught by the Red Guard. 'You monster and ghost, how dare to come to look at the criticism written in big characters.' Then I was dragged to a hall. Then the Red Guard held a mass rally to criticize me. During the meeting they asked me to kneel down, but I did not want to, so they pulled my hair and forced me to do so. They said:

'You are so stubborn. Are you showing your Reactionary academic authority to us?' And they shouted down the authority of anti-revolutionaries and they asked me to confess my crime.

8. I said: 'I just came back to college last night, and I don't know what crime I can confess. I am totally confused. Could you please give me some time, let me have a think.' They started beating me with a stick, after that they pushed me back to my living quarters.
9. When I got home I decided to have a haircut. I secretly ran to the street and found a barber's, had my head shaved. I did not want the Red Guard to pull my hair again.
10. The following morning I was pushed back to the meeting and asked to confess my crime.
11. I said: 'I did two things wrong while I was the vice team leader of the teachers' group. I appreciated the professors and lecturers who originally came from an anti-revolution background. (I meant monks from the monastery). I treated the exploitative class as my friends. Since I am the youngest one in our team, I thought I should respect the elders, so I always offered seats and drinks to the reactionary authorities (*baizhuan* in Chinese) during our staff meeting. It was wrong; I did not have class distinction.'
12. They said: 'We were told you taught 'the monkey and bird's story' in one of your Tibetan classes.' I said: 'Yes, it was traditional Tibetan literature. It was the story about the conflict between monkeys and birds, where they finally applied a peaceful method instead of fighting.'
13. They said: 'Do you realize that you were advocating a peaceful transformation?' (i.e. means of transforming the old society to the new.) I said: 'It was my mistake. My political consciousness was very numb.' I said: 'Besides these, I cannot remember any crime I committed.' They said: 'These were very small crimes. You need to confess your anti-revolutionary crime.'
14. I was very nervous when they said this. I thought hard but could not find any clue to my anti-revolutionary crimes.
15. *Ge wei hui* (The Revolution Committee in Chinese ) asked me about the situation of my family and home town, Hwari. I said: 'My family was a big family before liberation; moreover, most Tibetan families had fields sheep and yaks .The life was fine for us.'
16. They asked me: 'Every holiday what did you do when you went back to your home town? We were told that you rode a horse to show your prestige of being landlord to the peasants in your village'.
17. They did not understand that every Tibetan rides a horse daily. They referred to this as my crime.
18. My family, like most Tibetan families in our village had fields and livestock before liberation. When land reform was carried out in our area, our family was categorized as the landlord who owned lands and livestock. All of our fields and livestock were confiscated by the Communist party. Actually most Tibetan families in our village were categorized as landlords.
19. 'Why did you always visit your family on holidays? Did you ride a horse and carry a big gun when you went back to your village?' 'No,' I said: 'All my family's horses were confiscated in our new society. How could I ride a horse?' They said: 'This is an excuse. ' And then they beat me again. I was there for two hours.
20. The third night, the Red Guard came to my home again. Among them was a student from Hwari named *kalsang* (a Tibetan). He was one of my students, and because I

told him off while he was my student, he was very cruel to me at that evening mass rally.

21. They forced me to kneel down, which I refused to do. Finally they hung a bucket full of water around my neck. The mass rally continued in this way until morning.
22. Facing this cruel situation however, I was not depressed, I believed that one day our party (meaning the Communist Party) would change all of these situations.
23. After five days' of intensive criticism I was sent to a farm in Chang (the labor center) to accept education from the peasantry. I was there for one and a half years.

#### **5.4.1.2 5.4.1.2 School only taught Chinese to Tibetan children**

24. In 1966 the *Minyuan* ( the Minority College) stopped having any classes, and in 1970 the *Minyuan* was moved to Gannan and degraded to a teacher's college. Most teachers were sent to different areas of Gannan, and some teachers who were from Qinghai were sent back there.
25. I was sent to Luchu. I wanted to be a teacher, but I was dispatched to a school located in a remote area. I got a position as a head teacher in a school which combined both a middle school and a high school.
26. During that time, Mao said that the education institutes should put more emphasis on improving basic education, i.e. primary and secondary schools. Moreover, Mao said the highest leader in a county would not be recognized as a good leader if he did not pay attention to education.
27. At that time, the local county government was informed that the percentage of children attending school should reach 70 percent in Luchu, Machu and Xiahe (three counties).
28. However, during that time, Tibetan was removed from the school curriculum as most teachers in middle and high schools were Chinese who did not speak Tibetan, so most children from the farmer and nomad families stopped going to school.
29. The attendance rate in Luchu was only 10 percent, and in some areas it was even lower than this. During that time, the Revolutionary Committee of the *Shuangchua* Commune held a meeting named 'teacher working meeting' (*jiashi daibiao zuotanhui*) to discuss how to improve the children's attendance in school.
30. At the meeting there was a young teacher, who could only speak fluent Tibetan; he had only had a primary school education for three years, and his Chinese was not good enough to express his opinions.
31. However, the Secretary of the Revolutionary Committee of *Shuangchua* asked him to give his opinion in Chinese at the meeting. Because of his poor Chinese he begged the secretary to let him speak in Tibetan instead of Chinese.
32. He said: 'Please let me speak in Tibetan and then teacher *Niu* (i.e. Professor) will translate into Chinese.'
33. The party secretary was angry and said: 'You are a teacher in a primary school, yet you refused to speak Chinese. How can you teach children to learn Chinese?'
34. During that time schools only taught Chinese to Tibetan children.
35. Finally the party secretary said: 'If you refuse to give your speech in Chinese I will dismiss you from school. You will lose your job as a teacher in a village primary school.'
- 36. During the lunch break, the young man cried and came to me for help.**

37. **He said: 'If I lose this job my life will be difficult.' I said: 'Don't worry. You just speak in Tibetan at the meeting this afternoon and I will speak for you.'**
38. At the meeting that afternoon, the party secretary asked the young man to speak about the rate of enrolment in Luchu. He spoke confidently in Tibetan, but the party secretary was very angry and he said: 'I told you to speak in Chinese; why did you not listen to me?'
39. At that moment, I started to talk. I asked the party secretary: 'How long have you been working in our Tibetan area? I know you have been here for more than ten years. Do you speak Tibetan? I think the answer is no. You cannot even speak simple sentences in Tibetan. You always take a translator with you even when you go to have dinner with local people. But you ask a young man who has only had three years' of education in a primary school and has never had any chance to learn Chinese to give a speech in Chinese. I think you need to remember how poor your Tibetan is and then wonder about how this young man can give a speech in Chinese.'
40. After I said that the party secretary's face became red and he did not say anything.
41. At the meeting, I suggested that we should build a village primary school to improve the attendance rate. If we set up a school near the homes, it would be easy to persuade the parents to let the children come to school.

#### 5.4.1.3 5.4.1.3. Teaching in a village school

42. **The village of *Shuangcha* was a big area under the township, there were three villages. *Shuangcha* was a big village with 200 families. Many children did not go to school.**
43. **Children did not like going to school. In the morning they told their parents they were going to school. However, they went to the local forest to play and came back in the afternoon at finishing time for the school.**
44. **The reason they did not like going to school was because school only taught Chinese and they did not even know a single sentence of Chinese.**
45. **Furthermore, most of the teachers in the primary school in the commune were Chinese. There were only two teachers who understood Tibetan; one was me, and the other was a Muslim lady who grew up in Tibetan areas. I was the head teacher. Most of the pupils were Chinese, and only seven or eight Tibetan children came to school.**
46. **I suggested that if we wanted to increase the school attendance, we needed to set up a village school in *Shuangcha*.**
47. **So I was asked to go to *Shuangcha* to set up a village school there, since I was the only Tibetan teacher in commune school.**
48. **As Tibetan had been taken away from the school curriculum, the school in the commune said that they only needed one Tibetan teacher who understood the Tibetan language.**
49. I went to *Shuangcha*, and started a school in a cow shed. When the wind blew we could smell the dung. Even worse, the wind would blow the dung into our eyes so we could not even open them. There were no desks and chairs. The children sat on the floor to have class.

50. When the children tried to write their homework, they had to put their paper on the floor to write, and the notebook would get dirty from the dust. One could not even recognize their writing.
51. I was the only teacher, and opened four grades (from the first to the fourth) for the village children.
52. Some children even carried their younger siblings who were only one or two years old to school. I felt like I was both a teacher and a babysitter. There were more than 20 children in the first and second grade.
53. I asked the kids in the fourth grade to come to school at 8am, then, I dismissed them around 10 am. I asked the third grade to come at 10am and they were dismissed at 12 noon. Then at noon I asked the first and second grades to come to have lessons. I taught Chinese, math, and politics to the kids.
54. In the afternoons, I would let all the children come to school to do revision together, and we would have PE classes. I started to teach the kids some Tibetan folk songs. They enjoyed it so much.
55. All the youth in the village joined our singing lessons as soon as they heard I was teaching Tibetan songs.

#### 5.4.1.4 Teaching Tibetan in a village school

56. The farmers came to me and said: 'Can you teach our children Tibetan instead of only Chinese?' I said: 'Don't you know that we are not allowed to teach written Tibetan language in school?' I was there in 1970. I stayed in *Shuangcha* from 1971 to 1972.
57. The production team leader said: 'The school is under the control of our peasantry.'
58. I started to teach Tibetan at the village school, and all the people in the village were very happy.
59. All the children were very excited to learn Tibetan. Everyone one in the village was very happy and said: '**Our children are learning Tibetan.**' They even sent their children under six years old.
60. However, there was a Chinese doctor in this village, who said: 'Now we are in the Cultural Revolution, the minority policy is different from before. I am going to complain about you teaching Tibetan in this village school.'
61. A leader came to have a talk with me. He said: 'Chinese is the main language for *zhong hua mingzu*, (Chinese: implies that all the ethnic groups in China were Chinese). You are not allowed to teach Tibetan.'
62. I told him: 'Our children have emotional ties to their mother tongue. You are a Chinese – if you were not allowed to learn Chinese, what kind of feelings would you have?' We argued.
63. After a while, one day while I was teaching children Tibetan, some of the officials from Luchu local education administration came to my classroom. The blackboard was full of written Tibetan.
64. The official said: 'Who gave you permission to teach Tibetan in school?' They asked me to stop the class.
65. I said: 'No one gave me permission; I was doing it on my own. The constitution of our country stipulates that every ethnic group in China has the right to use its own verbal and written language. If a nationality did not have the right to use its own language, it

would raise the question of whether this nation exists or not, whether it has a position in this society or not.'

66. The official said: 'The constitution is out of date.'
67. I said: 'You said the constitution is out of date. I doubt this.'
68. The official said: 'Sorry, I did not mean it. It was my mistake. But you should know Tibetan has been removed from broadcasts and newspapers in our Gannan Tibetan areas. Moreover, no school in our Gannan Tibetan area is keeping Tibetan in the curriculum.' This is the political orientation toward the Tibetan language during the Cultural Revolution.
69. I said: 'The children do not understand Chinese, only Tibetan. Why can I not teach Tibetan? Also, it was demanded by the peasantry. Their children like to learn Tibetan, and since I started teaching Tibetan even children under six years old have come to school.' He said; 'Yes, I can see some children are very small.'
70. The official said: 'I just told you it is not right to teach Tibetan. If you keep carrying on, you must take any consequences yourself.'
71. I went to find the production team leader. I said: 'The Luchu education administration had a talk with me and asked me to stop teaching Tibetan in school.'
72. The production team leader said: 'This is our demand. We will take responsibility for any bad result happening to you because of this.'
73. I will take any results on myself. It is a matter of keeping the written language of our race. (1971-1972)

## **5.5 The interpreted story**

### **5.5.1.1 Cultural Revolution affected his life as a Tibetan teacher**

He graduated from Minority College and became a Tibetan teacher. He taught Tibetan grammar for many years and was promoted as the team leader of a teachers' group.

1966 was the turning point in his life; it was the time the Cultural Revolution was launched all over China. It was referred to as the social upheaval of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution (Tsang: 2000) which brought great impact on Professor's life.

The Cultural Revolution brought tumultuous changes in the Chinese socio-political order. It deeply affected education. Feigon (2002: 147) indicates that the August 1966, decision on the Cultural Revolution proclaimed: "In the Cultural Revolution a most important task is to reform the old educational system and the old principles and methods of teaching". The experience of Professor in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution further elaborates how it fundamentally affected an individual's life while he was a Tibetan teacher during that time. Moreover, it demonstrates that the Cultural Revolution was a period of eliminating Tibetan culture, tradition and education from Tibetan society.

Professor was criticized for offering seats and drinks to professors and lecturers, some of whom had been monks before becoming teachers. Furthermore, he was accused of teaching traditional Tibetan literature during class. Thus he was categorized as a 'monster and ghost'. This was the term used to describe 'reactionary academic authority' during the Cultural Revolution (Feigon: 2002). It shows that Tibetan culture and tradition were targets during the Cultural Revolution in Tibetan areas. Also, later on the Minority College was closed down, which further indicates how Tibetan education was put at the edge of extinction. Actually the negative attitudes towards Tibetan culture and tradition could be traced back to 1958 (See 2.5.2).

Furthermore, in the interview Professor recalled that he was also criticized for riding a horse when he went back to visit his family. The Red Guard referred it as an anti-revolutionary crime. For Tibetans, horses were regarded as the chief means of transportation (Tibetan folk songs: see appendix). And before land reform, many Tibetan families in his village had their own horses and fields. Also, he was accused a carrying a gun, but this was in the tradition of hunting. From this we can see the Cultural Revolution not only targeted Tibetan culture and tradition, it also attacked the way Tibetans carried on their daily life. I would say it was a political movement which, under the name of anti – revolutionary crime, determined to put the Tibetan race on the edge of extinction through rejecting everything they loved in their daily life.

#### **5.5.1.2 No Tibetan language was promoted in Tibetan areas**

At this time, only Chinese was taught in school, but the children did not know any Chinese; however, the school teachers did not understand any Tibetan. Children stopped going to school. In the interview Professor said: 'The attendance rate in Luchu was only 10 percent, and in some areas it was even lower than this.' (interview sentence 6). This fact corroborates the scholars' indication that during the Cultural Revolution, school was the place for Tibetan children to become Han Chinese (See 2.5.2).

My second participant's learning experience happened in a Tibetan village school during the Cultural Revolution, and further elaborates why many children in Tibetan villages did not both to go to school during that period of time. It was the time when the Tibetan language was rejected in Tibetan areas.

The story of the Tibetan youth, who was threatened with losing his job if he did not speak Chinese at the meeting, demonstrates in detail how the Tibetan language was nearly



eradicated during the Cultural Revolution. In contrast, the Han Chinese party secretary who had worked in Tibetan areas for many years even needed a translator to attend a dinner with local people. This shows how the Tibetan language was treated by the Han Chinese representing the majority people's view towards the Tibetan language during that time.

### **5.5.1.3 'Can you teach our children Tibetan?'**

Chinese was the only language teachers spoke in school. Because the children did not understand their teachers, many children in *Shuangcha* village did not want to go to school. Professor was appointed to be a teacher at that village school after the meeting. The classroom for this school was in a cow shed and they learned Chinese and math. This experience demonstrates Mao's encouragement to use any place to build schools in rural areas (Feigon: 2002). It depicts how the "one school one teacher" system worked. Children would come to school at different times according to the different grades. Moreover, children would bring their younger brothers and sisters to school, so school was also like a nursery. However, in the school, the mother tongue was promoted and the children liked coming to school. Professor used the mother tongue to teach Chinese and math, he even taught Tibetan folk songs to children and soon the farmers heard he was teaching Tibetan songs, and came to him and said: 'Can you teach our children Tibetan instead of only teaching Chinese?' I said: 'Don't you know that we are not allowed to teach Tibetan written language in school?' (from interview).

This happened in 1970, which was the time Tibetan was taken out of the school curriculum, because the written Tibetan language was labeled as a representation of the 'old society' (see 2.5.2). In addition, this event happened in a village school where villagers were practicing Mao's educational policy for rural areas, which was 'education under the control of the peasantry in rural areas' (Feigon, 2002).

### **5.5.1.4 The context: The educational policy implemented in *Shuangcha***

*Shuangcha* is a Tibetan village located in Luchu County which belongs to Gannan Tibetan prefecture of *Gansu* Province. During the Cultural Revolution, *Shuangcha* village established a production team of the peasantry. The village school in *Shuangcha* was under the control of this team. During the Cultural Revolution Mao shifted the focus of education from the urban areas to the rural ones. Professor's experience of teaching Tibetan at *Shuangcha* village school during the Cultural Revolution exemplifies the educational policy implemented in rural areas during that time.

Feigon (2002: 147) clarified that “during the Cultural Revolution, teachers and students in rural areas heeded Mao’s call to address educational imbalances. While schools and universities in urban areas closed, rural Red Guards opened new ones in the countryside. Village production brigades established primary schools. In communes and districts throughout the countryside, the Red Guard promoted the formation of middle schools and high schools”.

In the interview, Professor recalled a meeting held in a commune with the aim of improving the children’s attendance rate in the village schools. This corresponds to historical data showing that the Cultural Revolution was the time that Mao practiced his lower-level education policy through setting up many village schools to increase the school enrolment figure between 1966 and 1976 (Feigon, 2002).

#### **5.5.1.5 Narrative in two languages**

In the first part of this interview, (sentences 1-27) Professor spoke only Chinese and did not have any language shift. The tough and cruel experience he describes happened at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. At that time, he was humiliated and was not treated as a human being. He mostly used Chinese to recall this experience. Tibetan appeared in the second part of the interview but only in two sentences which described how the young Tibetan guy came to Professor and asked him to speak for him at the teacher’s work conference. His memory of the whole conference was that it was carried on in the Chinese language, and the only person who spoke Tibetan was that young guy. Moreover, in the third part of the interview he shifted to Tibetan when he was recalling the Tibetan village where he became a Tibetan teacher. But he shifted into Chinese to describe how teaching was carried on at that school. Furthermore, he used Chinese to recall how he fought with the Chinese administration official. The language shift assigns meaning to the daily interactions through selecting different languages to narrate them.

## **Chapter 6: Three Stories of people becoming bilinguals in the Tibetan areas of China from 1966**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents three other studies which are:

A Ji's story of developing bilingualism during and after the Cultural Revolution

Dawa and Manlatso's stories about developing bilingualism in two different Tibetan areas in the 1990s

Jampa's story of developing bilingualism in Lhasa after 2000.

I divided A Ji's story into three stages which are stage one: The learning experience in primary school. The stage two: The learning experience in secondary school, and stage three: the learning experience in university. I have divided this stage into two sections. Every section has a subtitle which identifies the main event happening during that period of time. I present the story in the following way: At first I present A Ji's account, regarding it as the lived story. Then I present the story retold by me which is based on document review and my understanding of the context as a researcher. Finally I offer an opportunity to my reader to experience bilingualism through analysis of how language shift occurred in interview. I use bold typeface (black bold) to identify language shift in all the stories.

I present Dawa's story in three stages. And I present Manlatso's story in three stages.

### **A Ji**

### **6.2 Introduction of A Ji**

#### **6.2.1 A Ji**

A Ji was born in 1958, and started her education when she was ten years old. This was in 1968, two years after the Cultural Revolution was launched in China.

I met A Ji when she was only 20 years old. During that time we were both university students majoring in Tibetan. At this time we both started learning written Tibetan, beginning from the alphabet. It was the period when the Cultural Revolution ended in China.

A Ji's experience of pursuing education in schools in Tibetan areas shows us in detail how schools during the Cultural Revolution became places where Tibetan children were made to become Han Chinese. This links with Professor's story of how the Minority College was closed down and Tibetan was taken out of the school curriculum while he was teaching during the Cultural Revolution; A Ji's experience was that school became the place for her to take off her traditional Tibetan clothes and learn to become a revolutionary Chinese youth, all from the viewpoint of a student.

Now A Ji is a professor specialising in teaching Tibetan traditional poetry.

### **6.2.2 The Narrative of selecting A Ji**

I have known A Ji for more than 20 years. I asked her to become my second participant for the following reasons. Firstly, her experience of becoming bilingual was closely related to the political and social changes taking place in the Tibetan areas of China from 1968 to 1982. These changes fundamentally affected her bilingual development.

I have a close relationship with A Ji, and always call her A Ji, which means 'big sister' in Tibetan. Calling her this shows both my respect and my close personal relation with her. She impresses me as someone who has been continually occupied in study from the time she was a university student until now as a professor in Tibetan literature. In 2012 when I went back from the UK to visit, she told me she was translating a well - known western novel from the Chinese version into Tibetan. She said: 'I am trying to translate two pages every day after I finish each day's work in school. And I intend to finish next year.' This is who she is – always occupied in study.

When I told A Ji I wanted to invite her to be one of my participants, she consented, but she was a bit nervous that she would not be able to remember all the events which happened many years ago. However, once while we were having a picnic together, she told me she had started to remember some of her experiences of learning Chinese in her village school. She even said: 'Thank you for inviting me to be a participant in your research. It has offered me a chance to look back on my life.'

I started to interview her after I came back from my field work in Lhasa. The duration of time from telling her about the interview until the interview took place was about two months. I did four interviews with her. The first was quite short, only lasting 30 minutes, because she said she could not remember things which happened 40 years ago. However, in the second interview she told me she remembered events in detail which happened when she was going to primary school. Saturday and Sunday were the only time she had to spare for me. I always gave her a call to check whether she was available before paying a visit. She was a very busy person. She was the academic tutor for both BA and Master degree Tibetan major students. Moreover, she was personal tutor for BA students.

As soon as I entered her house she would offer me tea and we would start to talk. The first interview was about her learning experience in primary school. The second was about the middle school learning experience, and she added more detailed stories of her primary learning experience. The third interview was about her university learning experience.

Amazingly, she still had the diary she had written during the Cultural Revolution which she showed me during the third interview. It was a notebook in a red cover showing the image of Mao. When I thanked her for allowing me to read her diary, she kept saying: 'I hope it is useful for your research.'

## **6.3 A Ji's story**

### **6.3.1 A Ji's account: stage one: the learning experience in primary school**

#### **6.3.1.1 The story of going to primary school**

- 1. I grew up in a Tibetan village called *Nima*. It was a big village.**
- 2. During that time there was no Tibetan school and we only had a Chinese school. It was during the Cultural Revolution.**
- 3. Not many children attended school during that time. But my father was the one in our family who considered education as a good opportunity for us to know the world. He was the secretary of the production team of our village.**
- 4. Father was a farmer. He always thought education was very important. But since no school was teaching Tibetan to children during that time, many villagers did not want to send their children to school, because school was only taught in Chinese.**
- 5. But my father thought Chinese was an important language to learn. The villagers said that my father liked the Han Chinese.**

6. I was sent to school by my father when I was ten years old. I did not speak any Chinese. I could not even speak one sentence of Chinese.
7. Father had six children. Only one of my sisters still remained in the village because she was adopted by another family and the foster parents of this sister rejected the idea of sending children to school. They told father: 'We do not want our children to become Han Chinese just like your children.'
8. I always thank Father for his decision to send me to school.

### 6.3.1.2 The story of learning Chinese in a primary school

9. When I went to school I could not speak any Chinese and my father did not know there were two academic terms for going to school. So he sent me to school for the second academic term. It was in 1969.
10. I did not understand any Chinese, and we were learning Chinese math. Every subject was in Chinese. I remember that in the math class I did not understand plus and minus, so the teacher was very upset. I did not understand what he was saying but I knew he was upset with me.
11. Later on I got a friend who was in the fourth grade. She was a Tibetan girl and came to my house to help me every night. Gradually I could understand Chinese in half a year.
12. I only spoke Chinese in school and only spoke Tibetan when I returned home. Yes. I suddenly remembered that in primary school, when I first attended the school, I could remember I wore a Tibetan outfit and could not speak any Chinese.
13. The school was located in a monastery. The monastery was taken over by the government during the Cultural Revolution. We had a blackboard, desks and chairs. It was a boarding school. Seven girls stayed in one bedroom.
14. I also remember learning all Chinese songs, for instance the song 'I love *Beijing Tianan men*'. In school I did not need to speak Tibetan; there were only two or three Tibetan pupils in school. I wore my Tibetan outfit for a quite long time and I was laughed at by my peers.
15. I cannot remember when I stopped wearing my Tibetan outfit. I think I need to ask my friend Ai Ping about it. She is a Chinese lady who was my classmate in that primary school. We are still friends.
16. I just cannot remember when I became a Chinese person, wearing Chinese clothes, speaking Chinese and playing games with my Chinese schoolmates. I also remember that we learned a Chinese revolutionary song during that time called 'Three Roles of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention'. But I did not understand the meaning at all.
17. Ok yeah, I also remember that in the primary school we were asked to attend lots of 'pidou' (criticism rallies in Chinese). We were told these were the bad people who were the people of anti-revolution. I always wondered what anti-revolution means.

## 6.3.2 The interpreted story of stage one

### 6.3.2.1 School in *Nima* was viewed as the place to lose ones Tibetan identity

*Nima* was a big village located in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture. It was a village where people only spoke Tibetan during the Cultural Revolution. Tibetan was the only language in daily life for Tibetans living in villages. But there were no schools teaching Tibetan children in Tibetan areas (Chunyuan, 2013); therefore, many villagers in *Nima* did not bother to send their children to school. This shows the gap between the daily life of Tibetans at that time and possibilities for educating their children. The language was the issue which discouraged Tibetans from sending their children to school. School was taught in a language which the children did not use at all in their daily life. Therefore, the Tibetans in *Nima* rejected the school system, because they were afraid their children would lose their identity as Tibetans in a school taught only in Chinese. This corresponds to Professor's experience as a teacher in a village school where children did not want to go to school. Moreover, it corresponds to a document which indicates that schools in Gannan Tibetan Prefecture only taught in Chinese.

However, A Ji had a father whose ideas about learning Chinese were different from those of the other villagers. He thought Chinese was a very important language to learn. Her father was the most significant person in her life who influenced her deeply.

Her father was criticised by the villagers. They told Father; 'We do not want our children to become Han Chinese just like your children' (from interview). This demonstrates that although this was during the Cultural Revolution, becoming Han Chinese was still rejected by the Tibetans living in *Nima*.

All of A Ji's memories about her education started from the memory of her father. His action of sending his children to school contradicted the villagers' idea of retaining Tibetan identity by refusing to send their children to school. This data shows the dilemma villagers faced in *Nima*. On the one hand, choosing to send children to school was a matter of losing their Tibetan identity. On the other hand choosing not to send their children deprived them of the opportunity to pursue a better life in the future. A Ji is a professor now. This implies that education played a key role in her life. So she said: 'I always thank father for his decision to send me to school.'

### 6.3.2.2 Losing her identity as a Tibetan in a Chinese – only school

The next stage of her learning experience took place in a *Gonshe* primary school. *Gonshe* was the administrative district over villages during the Cultural Revolution . It was located in a Tibetan area only ten miles away from her village *Nima*. However, but most of the pupils in *Gonshe* School were Han Chinese. They were the children of *ganbu* (cadres in Chinese) in *Gonshe*. The teachers were Chinese who had lived and worked in this Tibetan area for a long time but could not understand Tibetan. Suddenly A Ji was transferred into a monolingual world of Chinese speakers. The teachers were upset when they found she could not understand their lessons.

Her unforgettable memory of primary school was of being laughed at because of wearing her Tibetan outfit. She has now forgotten when she took off her Tibetan outfit and put on Chinese clothes. She said: “I just cannot remember when I became a Han Chinese. I wore Chinese clothes spoke Chinese and played games with my Chinese friends in school” (from interview). Her experience of failing to understand the meaning of Chinese songs further implies how she struggled to learn Chinese in the early years of her education.

School was the place for speaking Chinese, and written Tibetan was no included in school curriculum, which meant that anything related to Tibetan culture and Tibetan tradition had no place in school. However, Tibetan was still spoken at home, making it the main place where she related to others the Tibetan. Losing Tibetan meant losing connection with her father and mother. It also meant losing connection with the village –*Nima*. However, Chinese was the language not only promoted in school but also used at public rallies.

### 6.3.3 A Ji’s account Stage Two: The learning experience in secondary school

1. I went to Xiahe (Labrong in Tibetan) to attend a middle school, because one of my sisters was working there.
2. There were over 50 students in our class. However, there were only five or six Tibetan students in our class. We used national text books and we learned Russian as a foreign language. I can still say one Russian sentence which is long live of Chairman Mao. (she said it in Russian for me).
3. We had math, physics, chemistry; all taught in Chinese by Chinese teachers. We spoke mostly Chinese, but we did speak Tibetan to the few other Tibetan classmates in our school.



4. I did not meet any Tibetan teachers, and I did not get any chance to learn the written Tibetan. You know, Tibetan was not included in the school curriculum during the Cultural Revolution.
5. I transferred to the second middle school in Hezuo (Tsui in Tibetan) My sister who worked in Xiahe was sent to a Chinese city to study. So I transferred to Hezuo as one of my sisters was working there.
6. It was a school belonging to the Prefecture. Oh, now I realize that I had been in *Gonshe* school, County school and Prefecture school. Thank you. You help me to remember all of these experiences.
7. The school in the Prefecture was quite big. But all I can remember is that we did not do much study during that time. Every afternoon we worked on the school playground, dug, and constructed a new playground for the school.
8. When we were in high School, all the schools in China launched a campaign of learning from *Huangshuai*.
9. The slogan of that campaign was 'We can do revolutionary work without knowing ABC.' It was the time we wrote the capital letter of criticizing teachers. And most of the time we worked in a factory.
10. I did not feel I learned a lot of knowledge. The middle school was a two year system and the high school was a two year system. Together I studied four years in secondary school.

### 6.3.4 The interpreted story of Stage Two

#### 6.3.4.1 Becoming a young Chinese revolutionary

I viewed the learning experience in secondary school as a process of becoming a Chinese revolutionary youth. Tibetan was not included in the school curriculum; moreover, schools in Tibetan areas were carrying on lots of political movements just like all other schools in China. Students in secondary school in Gannan Tibetan Prefecture carried on the campaigns as like learning from *Huang Shuai* and learning from *Zhangtie Sheng*. *Zhangtie Sheng* was a student who submitted an empty exam paper while he was taking one of the college entrance exams (Jinghua, 1997). He said that 'We can do revolutionary work without knowing ABC' which became the slogan for students across schools in China. All the students in China were called to learn from him (Jinghua,1997; [www.mofangge.com/html/9Detail/07/g2](http://www.mofangge.com/html/9Detail/07/g2)).

The CR was the time when A Ji began to truly lose her identity. She did not mention anything related to her Tibetan heritage. These four years of study became the time for her to become a young Chinese revolutionary.

This experience illuminates how school was deeply influenced by the political movement carried on in China; moreover, it shows how an individual's learning experience was under

the impact of the political movement. All of these led to the path of losing her identity as a Tibetan. In her diary dated in 1975 she wrote:

“ I want to be:

forever the Red Guard;

forever wear red cloth;

always follow the Communist Party;

and carry on the revolution.”

She used Chinese in this interview to recall her learning experience which happened in high school. This further implies how she perceived herself during these four years of education. It was the period of time when she forgot her original identity and developed a new one as a young Chinese Revolutionary.

This experience reminded me so much of my own experience during the Cultural Revolution. In middle school I also experienced the movement of learning *Huang Shuai*, a middle school student in Beijing, who wrote the capital letter of criticising on her teachers, after this event every school in China launched a campaign which called ‘learning from *Huang shuai* (Copithorne; 1977). Actually *Huang Shuai* was a 12 year - old girl of Peking (Beijing)(Xu; 2011; Jinghua,1997). She wrote a letter to her teacher and challenged the authority of teachers who were regarded as the representation of the knowledge and power in classroom based on philosophy of Confucius. *Huang Shuai* wrote a letter to the Peking Daily and demanded, “What wrong have I done? Are we children of the *Mao tse- Tung* era to be made to act like slaves under the school master’s absolute authority created by the old education system?” (Hsin Huan, 1973:9; cited in Copothorne; 1977). Her letter was published on Peking Daily and also was circulated by many other local newspapers across China (Jinghua,1997).

### **6.3.5 A Ji’s account stage three: The learning experience in university**

1. Then, in 1977 I took the college entrance exam in Chinese. I intended to study medicine because I have seen villagers suffering from illness and the lack of medical treatment. But I was accepted by the Tibetan Department because my score was insufficient for attending the School of Medicine.
2. **I was quite sad when I opened the acceptance letter from the Minority College which informed that I was accepted by the Tibetan Department.**

3. I had not learned any written Tibetan during my 9 year of compulsory education. I felt it would be very difficult for me to learn Tibetan from the alphabet. So I felt sad on this point as well.
4. And I was worried that if I became a Tibetan major then there would be no place for me to use all the Chinese which I had learned during all the years since primary school. I had suffered a lot for learning Chinese.
5. This was the first time China restored the higher education exam system since the Cultural Revolution. All of my classmates had had a job before entering university. They were two or three years my senior. They studied very hard to become a Tibetan major student.
6. Most students in our class were Tibetans from Gansu province. Nobody had learned the written form of Tibetan before entering college.
7. All of the textbooks we were using were hand copied by our teachers.
8. The first traditional book we studied was 'The story between the monkeys and the birds'. I remember it was hand copied on *mimeograph paper*.
9. My Tibetan teacher was A Ke Gyatso. He taught us Tibetan for four years.
10. He opened private Tibetan lessons for students from Monday to Sunday, every day like this for four years. All the lessons were free. He taught us traditional literature. I attended his lesson for four years. He did it after the formal lessons were over.
11. We also had Chinese teachers teaching us Tibetan. The students were not happy about the Chinese teachers' Tibetan lessons. They could not even speak proper Tibetan.
12. I studied very hard. I felt sad for my poor written Tibetan. And I felt it was shameful for a Tibetan not to know her own written language.
13. I always thank my previous teachers who taught me Tibetan. Teachers always told us we were the first group of students in the Higher Education institute after the Cultural Revolution. Teachers had high expectations of us.
14. I studied very hard. Two of my Tibetan-Chinese dictionaries were torn because I used them every day.
15. Moreover, I could not remember that I had any breaks on the weekends; I always studied.
16. My teacher A Ke (who has since passed away) once said this: 'Children, please study hard. We are getting older and older. The future of our nation is in your hands. Please study hard.'
17. That was the first time I was told the future of my nation would be in the hands of people like me.
18. I believed that I needed to study hard to pay back my parents for their goodness, and I also needed to pay back the teachers for their goodness. But I had never thought that the future of the nation would be in my hands.
19. I was always thinking about my mum. She was on her own when I was going to university. My father had passed away. I asked my mum: 'If you don't want me to go I will stay with you in the village.' But mum said 'Go to university, I promise you I will not die in four years.' (She was in tears as she said this).

### **6.3.6 The interpreted story of Stage Three**

#### **6.3.6.1 Learning Tibetan and developing a Tibetan identity under the changing policies towards the Tibetan language**

University was the place where A Ji retrieved her identity as a Tibetan through the four years of intensive study of Tibetan. When she was enrolled by the Tibetan department she was not happy. It contradicted with her original aspiration, which was to become a doctor. She did not want to learn written Tibetan and had never in her life felt the need to learn it. We can presume that if she had got into medical school, she would have continued to lose her Tibetan identity and to become more like the Han Chinese. However the feeling of shame for not knowing written Tibetan appeared first in her life when she started to learn the Tibetan alphabet which shows how significantly the mother tongue plays an important role in the development of an individual's identity as a Tibetan. It was the time for her to study Tibetan literature, Tibetan history and Tibetan tradition; the more she was learning, the more deeply she felt that as a Tibetan she had the duty of learning Tibetan. We can see a determined individual trying to fill the gap between herself and her nation through studying written Tibetan. There were no breaks for her in four years. Day and night, her time was occupied by study. Only study could lead the way back to her identity. In the interview A Ji said: 'I studied very hard. I felt sad for my poor written Tibetan. And I felt it was shameful for a Tibetan not to know her own written language.'

A Ji's story of learning Tibetan elaborates how learning took place under the change of policy towards the Tibetan language. This happened in the early 1980s. It was a time to restore, revive, and significantly develop bilingual education in Tibetan areas (see 2.5.3). A Ke was her significant other at this period of time as he opened her eyes to see the beauty of the Tibetan world through teaching her written language. Moreover, he tried to encourage his students to think that the future of the Tibetan nation was in their hands. A Ke tried to help all of us, his students, to build a relationship with their nation through learning Tibetan. From this we can see the importance of others in developing identity for the self. A Ke was sent back to his village to become a farmer during the Cultural Revolution. Most of scholars in China were sent to rural areas during Cultural Revolution (Jinghua, 1997). A Ke's chance to return to university teaching was due to the change of policy towards the Tibetan language. A Ji was educated in Chinese during the Cultural Revolution. Her chance of learning Tibetan was also due to the changes of policy towards the Tibetan language. This is a story of how an individual's learning was influenced by policy; nevertheless, it is also the story of how the shaping of identity as a Tibetan closely related to the opportunity to learn

one's mother tongue. A Ke had a strong sense of Tibetan identity. Furthermore, he wanted his students to develop it through learning about their Tibetan heritage. Ake taught every evening from Monday to Sunday with no breaks. A Ji attended A Ke's evening class from Monday to Sunday - no breaks for her either!

### **6.3.6.2 The context: the story happened in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous**

#### **Prefecture**

Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is located in Gansu Province. It includes Xiahe, Luchu, Maqu, and other mostly Tibetan towns and villages. The capital of it is 'Hezuo' in Chinese 'Tsui' in Tibetan. 'Tsui' means in Tibetan an inhabitant for antelopes. According to the 2010 census, Gannan has 689,132 inhabitants. The percentage of Tibetans is 51'44. (From Wikipedia)

During the Cultural Revolution, Tibetan was not included in the school curriculum. Professor's story of becoming a teacher in a village school in Gannan (Chapter Five) shows what school was like in the Tibetan areas of Gannan when A Ji was going through her nine-years of compulsory education. In 1980, the Tibetan language was included in the school curriculum in Gannan, and many bilingual schools were established there during that time (Guoliang, 1997).

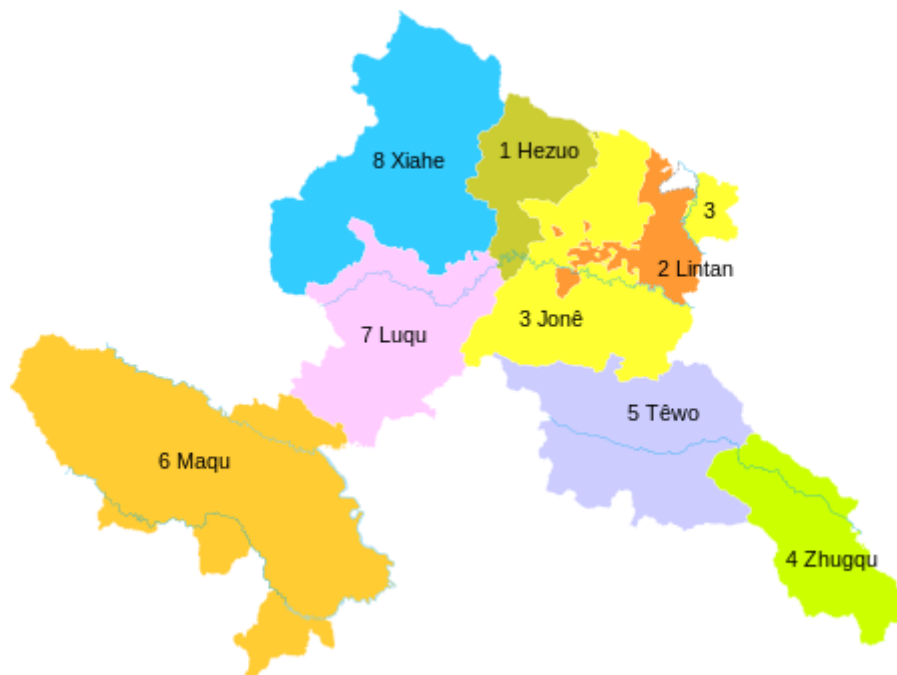
### **6.3.6.3 Narrative in two languages**

We started the interview in Tibetan; she described village life in *Nima* in Tibetan. She also talked about her sweet and unforgettable memories of her in Tibetan. No single Chinese word appeared during the talk about life in the village. The first Chinese word appeared when she was talking about the math class. She did not understand 'plus and minus', and she used Chinese to describe this, and then she used Tibetan to say it. Then she switched into Chinese when she was recalling the Chinese songs and Chinese games she learned from school. She also used Chinese when she was talking about the experience of attending 'criticism rallies'.

In the third interviews, language shift did not occur. She only used Chinese to recall her experience of becoming a young Chinese revolutionary. All her memory of this period of time was in Chinese.

The last interview was carried on in Tibetan; only one or two Chinese sentences appeared in the whole interview, which were 'laogao' and 'youyin' (mimeograph paper), two technological words. The interview covered the journey she had to take to restore her Tibetan identity through learning written Tibetan. It was the story of her learning Tibetan and developing her Tibetan identity from her daily language interaction in university. It was the sweet memory of her development of affection for her Tibetan language; moreover, it was the sweet memory of A Ke. As I remember, A Ke only spoke Tibetan; he could not speak any Chinese (A Ke was my Tibetan teacher as well. See my introduction). Therefore, the narrative in this interview was in Tibetan.

The language shift which occurs in these interviews offers the opportunity for my reader to experience how A Ji uses both languages to describe her experience of interacting with two languages in her early years of education. It provides a picture of how bilinguals like A Ji present themselves in two languages. I discuss it in my discussion chapter.



**Figure 6 : Map of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture**

## 6.4 Introduction of slob ma: *Dawa and Manlatso*

Both Dawa and Manlatso were my *slob ma* – *slob ma* means student in Tibetan. Calling them ‘slob ma’ shows my personal relationship with them. They are both Tibetan major students from the same class. I met them in 2012 which was their second year in university. When I met them, Dawa was 23 years old and Manlatso was only 19 years old.

### 6.4.1 The narrative of selecting *slob ma*

I was planning to find one individual in the Tibetan Department at the University. However, when I met Dawa and Manlatso in a class, I was impressed by their differences in how they became bilingual. These differences led me to inquire the reason hidden behind it. I was seeking why the younger generation’s language abilities vary vastly when they are all under the same national policies which are implemented in Tibetan areas. This led me to decide to invite Dawa and Manlatso to be my third participants.

I met them both in a class under my charge. I was selected as the personal tutor for 13 Tibetan majored students when I went back to my university in 2012 and I was asked to give them some lessons in English as well.

Both Dawa and Manlatso attended my class regularly and were very active in class. They both showed their interest in learning English. They are both very extroverted. For instance, Dawa has a beautiful singing voice; in one class we were discussing about different songs in different Tibetan areas, and she just stood in front of the class and sang a beautiful song from her hometown, Shangrila. Manlatso is also an extrovert but she shows it in a different way. She is not good at singing; however, she is not shy about talking to strangers. I remember once while we were climbing a mountain she was the one always asking the way for us if we got lost.

I invited Dawa and Manlatso to be my participants, they both gave their consent.

I interviewed Dawa first and conducted three interviews with her. After finishing these, I was trying to find the right time to interview Manlatso when Dawa asked whether she could be there to listen to Manlatso’s story. The reason for this was that, since Manlatso was the one of the best students in her class, Dawa wanted to learn about the educational experiences

Manlatso had been through which made her good at both Tibetan and Chinese. I asked Manlatso about it, and she said it was ok.

The interview with Manlatso took place in a park. It was not the weekend, so the park was very quiet and the weather was nice. We sat under a tree eating snacks while we talked. The interview with Manlatso took one and a half hours. She finished her whole story on that afternoon. Dawa did not say anything while the interview was in process. At the end I asked Dawa: 'What have you found out?' Dawa said: 'I finally understand better why I and Manlatso are so different in our ability to use two languages.' I noticed the tears in Dawa's eyes. I saw moisture in Manlatso's eyes as well.

## 6.5 Dawa's story

### 6.5.1 Dawa's account stage one: The experience of learning in a village primary school

1. **My mother is a farmer, my father is a *diangong* ( electrical worker in Chinese).**
2. **There are five people in my family. I have two brothers. I lived in a village. I always helped my mother in the fields and in the house. Therefore I only went to school when I was ten years old.**
3. **The primary school I attended was a village primary school. Children from the same village were going to the same school.** There were more than 30 families living in our village, and all the families sent the children to the same school. There was only one teacher in our school.
4. Normally we had a local teacher. Sometimes there might be a chance to get a teacher from outside our locality. I remember we once had a teacher from Zhongdian, a small town located next to Deqen prefecture, but he only stayed in our school for one month. The reason he left might be because of the teaching and living conditions in a remote village.
5. My teacher in primary school was a 56-year old fellow; he had lived in our village for more than 30 years.
6. I did not study hard in primary school. I remember that during harvest I often did not go to school for two or three weeks since my mum needed me to help her. We really did not spend time to study, and our teacher would not say anything about it. I think he understood children were needed in the field and at home.
7. On the final exams, the children in our school always got low grades compared with the children in the township primary school. I only learned Chinese in primary school. Because we only had one teacher in school, basically we just learned Chinese and math from Grade One to Grade Six.
8. Our teacher was a Tibetan; he did not speak proper Chinese, and he taught us Chinese and math. He would read the Chinese first, and then he would use our Tibetan language to explain the meaning to us; we were learning Chinese just like learning a foreign language. The Teacher would read one sentence in Chinese and



then explain it in Tibetan. We normally communicated with each other and with the teacher in Tibetan.

9. In Grade One there were 15 pupils, but when I reached grade six there were only four pupils left in our class. Only four pupils attended the middle school entrance exams. Pupils just dropped out of school. I only learned some of the Chinese characters, and we all did not learn how to speak proper Chinese.
10. Sometimes there would be some teachers from township school coming to observe our class. They would ask us questions in Chinese, but we did not understand their Chinese. We just hid behind our teacher and asked in Tibetan what the question was, and then he would translate for us.
11. The class language in our class was our local Tibetan. Our teacher spoke Tibetan to us in every class.

## **6.5.2 The interpreted story of stage one**

### **6.5.2.1 Primary school: Learning Chinese through Tibetan**

Dawa was born in 1988, and went to school when she was ten years old. She went to school a bit later because she was needed in the field to help her mother. She said: 'Therefore I only went to school when I was ten years old' (from the interview, line 1). From this point we can see education was not viewed as very important in Dawa's village. The school was located in the village and all the children in the village were going to the same school. Moreover, it was under the one school - one teacher system. However, the school did not have a Tibetan class in the curriculum. Children in that village school only learned Chinese and Math in school.

The learning experience in that school was learning Chinese through Tibetan language. The only teacher was a Tibetan guy, but he did not know written Tibetan. He was in his 50s, so we can assume he did not get the chance to learn Tibetan during the years when he was pursuing education. But he spoke Tibetan to teach the pupils Chinese. Part of the reason for this was that the pupils did not understand Chinese; therefore, the best way to teach them was using their own language. At the end, Dawa only learned Chinese characters, but she was not able to speak Chinese.

This learning story occurred in 1998 in Deqen Tibetan prefecture. That was 18 years after the restoration of the Tibetan language to the school system in Tibetan areas. However, the primary school in Dawa's village still was not able to offer a Tibetan class to children. Deqen Tibetan secondary school was the only school in Deqen Tibetan prefecture teaching Tibetan during that time.(China. Com; 2008).

### 6.5.3 Dawa's account: Stage two: The learning experience in middle school and high school

#### 6.5.3.1 Learning experience in middle school

1. It was a boarding school that was located in Degen County. The school required everyone to use Chinese as the tool of communication.
2. There were students from other ethnic groups as well as Tibetan students studying in this middle school; for instance, we had many *Lisu* students in our school as well. In addition to this, many Chinese students were also studying in our school.
3. Learning to speak Chinese was urgently needed for communication. We did not have a Tibetan class in middle school as well.
4. Furthermore, Chinese was the class language, and the teachers in middle school spoke standard Chinese. Moreover, we also had teachers from Shanghai (the biggest city in China). Teachers only spoke Chinese and they did not understand any Tibetan. So you see the urgency for learning to speak Chinese.
5. I remember that once I wanted to say 'style of clothes' in Chinese which should be pronounced '*kuanshi*'. However, because of my incorrect pronunciation in Chinese, my classmates misunderstood me, and they thought I was talking about a mine '*kuangshi*'. Finally they told me my pronunciation was wrong.
6. At that time we had teachers from Shanghai. I really wanted to talk to them; I wanted to chat with them. They were very warm. However, because of my poor Chinese, I did not dare to speak with them. I only stood there smiling while they were talking to other students. I felt very stupid. I missed my home very much during that time.
7. I learned written Chinese, Chinese culture and Chinese traditions in school. The school did not teach any subjects connected to our own culture.
8. However, during that time I never felt sad about it, I thought every Tibetan child was just like me, learning Chinese in school until the time for taking exams to go to high school. That was the first time I heard there was a Tibetan high school in our area. It was exciting news and it also gave me a shock. My father heard this news and told me. He was excited about it.

#### 6.5.3.2 Learning experience in high school

9. I started to learn Tibetan in high school. Finally I started to learn the written language which belongs to my own culture. Do you know, I learned Chinese as the first written language since primary school, and then I started to learn English in middle school, and finally in high school I began my journey to learn my own language. It was the time to feel proud of myself to be able to write my own name in Tibetan.
10. We were doing *hanwei zhu* system in school, which meant all the other lessons were taught in Chinese, and we had Tibetan class. Because most pupils in my class had not had any Tibetan class before we came to high school, we used a textbook named 'Wiping Out Illiteracy in Tibetan' for the first term and then from the second term of high school we started to use the Tibetan textbooks for high school students.

11. It was very difficult. I felt I only learned some basic knowledge in the first term, and from the second term I did not learn anything.
12. The pupils from our class voluntarily found a teacher to teach us basic Tibetan on Saturdays, because we wanted to learn Tibetan, however, the class provided in school was too difficult for us. We invited a teacher to give us lessons on Saturdays and Sundays. We paid him. We had a great interest in learning Tibetan, but it was too hard for us.
13. There were other Tibetan students who joined this Tibetan secondary school from middle school, so they started to learn Tibetan in the middle school. We had to do lots of catching up. School only provided basic Tibetan lessons for one term, from the second term we started to use the same textbook as the other students who had learned Tibetan from middle school.
14. Our teacher also felt it was very difficult to teach us Tibetan. In the second year of high school, we were required to do writing in Tibetan, we could not even write one sentence.
15. The college entrance exam was different from other areas where children had learned Tibetan since primary school. The exam papers were easier. Actually most exams were in Chinese.
16. We did have a Tibetan exam which was very easy. I applied to the Tibetan department, because I was told if I wanted to learn Tibetan as my major, the Tibetan department of this university would be the best choice. I was happy to come to university to study Tibetan.

#### **6.5.4 The interpreted story of stage two**

##### **6.5.4.1 Middle school: The necessity of speaking proper Chinese in daily interaction**

The middle school was located in the county headquarters, not the village. It was the first time for Dawa to meet people other than Tibetans. Therefore, speaking proper Chinese became very urgent for her, as the school required students to speak Chinese to each other. I believe the entrance to middle school was the first time for her to meet students from other areas of Yunnan. It was the first time she felt shame at not being able to speak proper Chinese; in fact, she felt she was stupid because of her poor Chinese. In the interview she said: 'I felt I was very stupid. I missed home very much during that time.' (from Interview)

Dawa's experience in middle school illustrates that daily language interaction played a key role in her way of learning the language used in that middle school. Moreover, her weakness in speaking Chinese led her to feel shame, further illuminating the necessity for members of minority groups to become bilingual. They must know two languages: one is the mother tongue, the other is the language for education and for communication with the majority people.

#### 6.5.4.2 High school: The personal attachment to L1 - Tibetan written language

The chance of learning Tibetan happened in high school for Dawa. She said in the interview: 'Finally in high school I began my journey to learn my own language. It was the time to feel proud of myself to be able to write my own name in Tibetan.' This illuminates her personal attachment to L1.

Dawa liked to learn Tibetan. The story of how she and other students paid a teacher to teach them basic Tibetan on the weekends shows her enthusiasm for learning Tibetan. Through years of struggling to learn Tibetan she was determined to keep making progress in written Tibetan. Finally she decided to become a Tibetan major student. In the interview she said: 'I was happy to come to university to study Tibetan.'

However, from the narrative it is clear that the school was not able to offer them proper Tibetan lessons which suggests that the school might have been too short of staff to offer them Tibetan lessons fitting their level. This story happened in Deqen where many primary schools did not have Tibetan classes for Tibetan children when Dawa was attending primary school, and not many learned it until high school. Dawa kept telling me the situation is different now in her village school. This demonstrates how being in a particular place at a particular time fundamentally shapes an individual's trajectory toward developing bilingualism.

#### 6.5.5 Dawa's account stage three: Learning experience in university

1. Most students in my class had learned Tibetan from primary school level.
2. Compared with the students from other areas, my Tibetan level is far behind theirs.
3. Furthermore, my Chinese also is not as good as theirs. My experience in a village school would be the reason – I did not learn a lot in primary school.
4. Nevertheless, some of my classmates had even had English lessons in primary school. Most of them learned Tibetan from primary school. Some of them even went to the '*zang wei zhu* system' from primary school.
5. This means that most lessons are taught in Tibetan, except Chinese class. Moreover, some of my classmates they even had English native speakers who taught them English in middle school or high school, for instance, some students from Qinghai areas.
6. I am struggling with every subject I am learning. My foundation in written Tibetan written language is very poor. As I said, I started learning Tibetan from high school, therefore, I have been overwhelmed by it.
7. The grammar teacher understands that Tibetan was not included in the curriculum in the primary school in our area; therefore, she paid special attention to me and the students from our area.

8. Grammar was the subject I enjoyed a lot; part of the reason was that I learned Tibetan grammar in high school as well. There is a connection in this subject between the knowledge we learned in high school and university.
9. I like history very much. My knowledge of history was poor before I came to university. The history teacher is a good teacher, he is full of knowledge. I enjoyed taking his course. I really wanted to raise questions and participate in discussion; however, I never dared to do it. I always kept silent during class.
10. In the future I want to go back to our town and to be a Tibetan teacher. This is my dream. I feel like learning Tibetan is very important for us as Tibetans. We are looked down by students that come from other regions. Some time they even asked me 'Do you speak good Tibetan?'

### **6.5.6 The interpreted story of stage three**

#### **6.5.6.1 University: A silent girl in Tibetan class**

Because of her educational background, Dawa was one of the few students in her class who did not learn Tibetan in primary school, therefore, she was in difficulty taking Tibetan as a major in university. University is the place for Dawa to see the gap between her level and that of her classmates and to realize just how far behind she really is. In Dawa's class, students are from five Tibetan areas within China. Some of them are from Qinghai Province, an area where most inhabitants are Tibetan. (I will talk about this area in the later part of this section regarding Manlatso's learning experience.) Some classmates are from Gansu Province, which contains Gannan Tibetan Prefecture (see A Ji's story) and Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County (see Professor's story). Some of them are from Sichuan Province within which Aba Tibetan Autonomous County is located. Others are from the Tibet Autonomous Region (see Jampa's story). Comparing herself with students from other regions, Dawa kept saying 'They all started learning Tibetan from primary school except us who are from Deqen.'(From interview).

Deqen was the place which could not offer Tibetan classes to many Tibetan children when Dawa was attending primary school and middle school. At university, she had to work hard to catch up because of her poor Tibetan. She said: 'I am struggling with every subject I am learning.' (from interview). This is how she describes her learning life in university. University is the place where she always feels overwhelmed with difficulty, and realizes she has been left behind since primary school compared with students from other areas. She said: 'The history teacher is a good teacher. He is full of knowledge. I enjoyed taking his course. I really wanted to raise questions and participate in discussion; however, I never dare to do it. I always keep silent during class' (from interview ). The silence in class offers us an opportunity to see how this young Tibetan girl is struggling in her Tibetan class. And the

struggle she is facing today can be traced back to her educational experience from its beginnings in a village school.

The next section tells us more about Deqen, which will help my reader to understand how Dawa's learning has been influenced by events taking place before she was born.

#### **6.5.6.2 The context: Dawa's story happened in Deqen (Diqing in Chinese pinyin)**

Dawa's bilingual learning experience started in the small village where she finished her six years of a primary school, and then she moved to Shangilia – the capital of Deqen to complete her middle school and high school education. All her learning experience was situated in Deqen, the only Tibetan prefecture in Yunnan province.

Deqen is situated of Southwest China's Yunnan Province. Deqen can be best be described as a multi-ethnic area, despites that is officially recognized as 'Tibetan'. According to recent statistics, Tibetans continue to be the largest ethnic group of the prefecture, comprising about 30 percent in the population, with Han Chinese following closely as the second largest group (Kolas, 2005:2). There are other minorities other than Tibetans living in Deqen as well. They are *Naxi*, *Lisu*, *Yi*, *Bai*, *Miao*, *Hui*, *Pumi* and *Zhuang* comprising the 34 percent of population of Deqen (Deqen Zhouzhi: 2014).

Tibetan was not included in school curriculum in all the Tibetan areas of China during the Cultural Revolution; I assume Deqen would not be an exception. Furthermore, as many bilingual schools started to be built in other Tibetan areas after 1980, establishing Tibetan bilingual schools also was in progress in the Deqen Tibetan Prefecture of *Yunnan* province as well. An article written by a Tibetan teacher in Deqen Tibetan middle school indicates that in the 1980s, the education administration and State Ethnic Affairs Commission of the PR China issued two documents. Both of these indicate "Every ethnic group who has their own written language, has to apply their own language in the classroom, first to learn their own written language, and then to learn Chinese as well." From this time schools started to practice Tibetan and Chinese bilingual teaching pedagogy in schools in Deqen (Duoma, 2007). However, it took time to restore Tibetan in the school curriculum. This shows that ten years of destruction demanded a long-term recovery to restore what was lost. Duoma (2007) states that after five years' preparation, the Teacher's College in Deqen established

a Tibetan teacher training class in 1985, and this class only recruited students for three years, the total number being 150. The purpose of developing this class was to send Tibetan teachers to schools in Deqen Tibetan areas so that school would have teachers to teach Tibetan to children. However, Duoma (2007) further indicates that until 2005, only 21 schools in the whole Deqen area were teaching children Tibetan out of a total of 924 primary schools and 23 secondary schools. Dawa's experience in learning Tibetan only on reaching high school and her struggle trying to improve her Tibetan level show us the importance of locations for provision the opportunities of bilingualism development for an individual like Dawa.

### **6.5.6.3 Narrative in Chinese**

The narrative started in Tibetan but after a few sentences she shifted to Chinese. She was more comfortable to tell her story in Chinese. She is from Deqen and people in Deqen speak the Kham Tibetan dialect. However, Dawa seemed to prefer to narrate her story in Chinese. After the shift she only used Chinese to narrate her story. From then on, the language she used to narrate her story demonstrates that Dawa's Chinese is stronger than her Tibetan.



Figure 7: Mape of Yunnan

## 6.6 Manlatso's story

### 6.6.1 Manlatso's account Stage one: Language experience in the village

1. My home is in Chentsa (jiancha in Chinese). Everyone in our home speaks Tibetan.
2. There has been an organization named The Mother Tongue Organization (MTO), which was set up when I was a little child.
3. It is an organization which takes responsibility to protect the pure mother tongue. For example if anyone in our village speaks Tibetan and mixes it with Chinese, they will be fined. If you are caught, you will be asked to pay money to the organization.
4. Therefore since I was a little girl, I was in this environment, where people around me always speak pure Tibetan. Moreover, terms for items which we don't have in our own culture, such as TV, computer, telephone, also some



**drinks and food, are always translated into Tibetan, and the university students in our village would come to every family to teach these new terms.**

- 5. By taking this effort, the Tibetan language is being kept pure in our village.**

## **6.6.2 The interpreted story of stage one**

### **6.6.2.1 The Mother Tongue Organization (MTO) in the village plays an important role in Manlatso's life**

The language experience in Manlatso's village turned out to be an introduction to the MTO of her village. People in her village speak Tibetan; moreover, they are asked to speak pure Tibetan. The activity of the MTO has had a deep impact on the development of Tibetan identity. It was initially established by villagers living in Chentsa (Jiancha), and plays a very important role for children growing up in these villages as Tibetan. The first sentence Manlatso said in the interview was: 'My home is in Chentsa. Everyone in our home speaks Tibetan.'(from Interview). This demonstrates that speaking Tibetan was the basic requirement for Tibetans living in Chentsa. This reminded me of Dawa's experience in her village which did not have an MTO, and where she did not get the chance to learn Tibetan. The MTO in Manlatso's village plays a significant part in Manlatso's daily language interaction, as it facilitates her development of Tibetan identity through speaking pure Tibetan in daily life.

### **6.6.3 Manlatso's account: Stage two: learning experience in primary school**

- 6. We had a primary school in our village which only provided Grade One to grade three. Since the township primary school could provide the whole six years of primary school study, I selected the township primary school.**
- 7. In primary school we learned Tibetan, Chinese and Mathematics from Grade One; when we reached grade three, we also had an English class. There were 20 teachers in the township primary school and most of the pupils were Tibetans; furthermore, all the teachers were Tibetans as well.**
- 8. My Chinese teacher was a Tibetan. Because none of us really understood Chinese, Tibetan was the language used for teaching Chinese. Our teacher would read one Chinese sentence and then explain it in Tibetan. This was the beginning of learning Chinese.**
- 9. We learned Tibetan, Chinese and Math in school. All the teachers were Tibetans, and they all knew both Tibetan and Chinese. I had a wonderful teacher teaching me Chinese in Wangxiao primary school. If anyone did not**

- understand lessons during class, he would ask them to go to his office and would teach until they understood. He was very nice to us.
10. I got a very good foundation in learning Chinese characters. This teacher passed away last year. Many students were impressed by him. I only stayed in Wanxiao for three years; I still remember how he taught us Chinese.
  11. I transferred to the county primary school when I was in fourth grade, because my parents believed that the county primary school would provide better education opportunities for me.
  12. In the county, there were more Chinese living there. So the children in our class had much better Chinese than I did. I could not understand the Chinese lesson. I remember that I did not even understand the meaning of the words *distinction* and merit in Chinese. When I saw it on my assignment, I thought it meant the teachers knew I was in school today.
  13. Also, I did not understand “*sit down*” - this kind of simple language. Moreover, in the county primary school, the teachers used Chinese as the instruction language for teaching Chinese. I remember that I did not really understand the Chinese lessons. The teaching method was very different from the method in township school.
  14. In the township school, the Tibetan language was the medium of instruction for teaching Chinese; however, in the county school, Chinese was the language used in the Chinese class. Furthermore, in township school, the teachers only focused on the content of the text book, but in the county school they did not only teach the textbook, they also taught some knowledge not included in textbooks. It was a difficult experience for me as a little girl.

#### 6.6.4 The interpreted story of stage two

##### 6.6.4.1 Developing bilingualism from primary school

Manlatso went to the township primary school instead of the village primary school. The reason was that township primary school could provide better education than the village school. And then she transferred to the county school in order to pursue a better quality of education. It shows there were more options for Manlatso than Dawa in selecting schools.

The narrative of Manlatso’s learning experience in primary school depicts daily language interaction. In the township school most of the teachers were Tibetans and moreover they were bilinguals. Learning Chinese took place through the Tibetan language. This made Manlatso’s learning experience easy and pleasant. The teacher she liked very much was her Chinese teacher in the township school. He was a Tibetan and used Tibetan to teach them Chinese. Moreover, he was a teacher who cared about his pupils’ progress in learning Chinese. Therefore, Manlatso believed that she built a good foundation of Chinese because of this teacher. Her image of this teacher is unforgettable.

Learning in the county school was not as easy as in the township school. The difference was that the county school teacher used Chinese as the instruction language during class. Manlatso struggled a bit at the beginning, but since all her teachers were Tibetan, they were always there to help her. So she said: ‘All our Chinese teachers in the county primary school were Tibetans as well; they understood my problem in learning Chinese’ (from interview).

Manlatso’s experience of pursuing bilingualism had a good beginning in primary school. Unlike Dawa, she only learned Chinese in the village primary school and since her teacher used Tibetan to teach Chinese, she could not even speak proper Chinese when she finished her primary school.

### **6.6.5 Manlatso’s account: Stage three: Learning experience in middle school, high school and university**

15. I went to a boarding school. There were two middle schools in the county. The first middle school was a Chinese one, and the second was Tibetan. My school was the Tibetan middle school.
16. In middle school my Chinese was not bad compared with that of other students who came from the village; because I came to the county school from grade four in primary school.
17. All the Chinese language teachers in middle school were Chinese. When I was in middle school our Chinese teachers spoke standard Chinese.
18. At that time when I spoke Chinese, I mixed it with Tibetan. I remember that once I attended a Chinese speech competition. I wanted to say “following” in Chinese but I accidentally said it in Tibetan, and I saw the Tibetan teachers were laughing. But the Chinese teachers did not understand what mistake I had made. All their Tibetan teachers were bilinguals, and all of the Chinese teachers I met in school were monolinguals.
19. We learned three languages beginning in primary school. I had a really good opportunity to learn English while I was in high school. During that time, we had some foreigners teaching us English in our school. They were from Canada, United States and England. They came to our area to learn the Tibetan language and culture. I started to speak English during that time.
20. Tibetan is much valued in our hometown Chentsa. However, through discussion with people around me about what major I should take for university study, I realized that Tibetan was only valued in Chentsa.
21. Nevertheless, selecting Tibetan as a major in university would not easily lead to a job after graduation. I was interested in geography while I was in high school, but I was told by my teachers that we didn’t get opportunities to select any other majors which did not have any connection with Tibetan.
22. I knew there was a very good university in *Nanjing* which has a good reputation for the subject of geography; however, we as Tibetan bilingual students, were not allowed to select this kind of university.

23. Most Tibetan students who have the choice to select any university in China are those who select the Chinese monolingual school system.
24. In addition to this, so far as I know only Tibetan students in Tibet Autonomous region have the privilege of selecting any universities in China. I was really disappointed by this news.
25. I decided to select English as my subject in university because I was informed that there was a Tibetan–English major being provided as a new major for Tibetan students. This was a piece of good news for me. I studied very hard and my score met the requirement for going to this university. I thought I would go. However, during that year, an earthquake occurred in the Yushu Tibetan area, so more educational chances were given to the students from Yushu, causing me to lose this chance.
26. Then, I was accepted by this university and Tibetan is my major. I slept for two days and felt very sad about the result.
27. I had gone through the *zang wei zhu* system from primary school; there was no other selection for us.
28. I was accepted by this university and Tibetan is my major. I do not feel any difficulties in university. I am always ranking among the top students.
29. I am thinking about taking an exam for doing a Master’s degree because the *gongwuyuan* exam ( the exam for getting posts in administration of government) is in Chinese.

### 6.6.6 The interpreted story of stage three

#### 6.6.6.1 Tibetan is less valuable than Chinese

Manlatso wanted to select English as her major field of study in university. She got a good chance to improve her English and started to develop her preference in English. The high school in Chentsa (Jiancha in Chinese) offered a good opportunity for her to learn English from native speakers. Manlatso’s story of developing bilingualism turned out to be a story of developing skills in three languages in her life from the primary school level onwards; moreover, the learning experience in Manlatso’s story was not as difficult as in Dawa’s. The schools provided lessons in three languages from primary school to high school. Moreover, there were many Tibetan teachers in the schools who were educated in two languages. It made her learning life much easier than Dawa’s.

However, Manlatso as a girl who had learned Tibetan from primary school did not want to take Tibetan as a major in university. It happened in high school. It was the first time we see a struggle occurring in Manlatso’s narrative. It came from her realization that her mother tongue was less valuable than L2. She said: ‘I realized that Tibetan was only valued in Chentsa (Jiancha in Chinese)’ (interview, line 6). Moreover, she noticed that Tibetan major students would face difficulty in seeking jobs. Therefore, she did not want to take Tibetan as

a major in university. Nima (2007:10) indicates that in every department of the government most of the documents, informal letters, notes, certificates and so on are in Chinese. All of these lead young Tibetans realize that Chinese languages is more important than Tibetan language (Nima; 2007). Furthermore, Chunfang (2008) indicates that lots of Tibetan parents in Qinghai province consider the learning Chinese is more important than learning Tibetan, because in reality that the Han Chinese language is the language of economy.

Manlatso's story of how she was unable to apply to any other universities in China except the Minority University shows the vulnerable position of her L1 in the education system. Secondly it demonstrates that an individual's learning is always influenced by the particular policy implemented in particular areas. Nevertheless, her failure to study English as her major further shows that the struggle of the individual was influenced by the changing situation in a particular context. Manlatso started struggling as soon as she found out the lower position of her L1 in the job market and in education. This illuminates that pursuing education in L1 facing the exclusion from higher education and job market in many Tibetan areas of China during that time except the students in Tibet Autonomous Region. Manlatso now faces the dilemma that she as a Tibetan major student must take employment exams in Chinese in the future. Following this I will introduce the context of what happened in the development of bilingualism in Manlatso's area before she was born, and how it influenced her experience of developing bilingualism in Chentsa.

#### **6.6.6.2 The context of the story: The development of bilingualism in Chentsa**

Manlatso's story happened in Chentsa which is not far away from Robkong. Manlatso mentioned *Robkong* when she introduced her home town Chentsa. It indicates that Manlatso was very proud of being a Tibetan living near Robkong. In this section I will introduce Robkong at first, then I will introduce the educational circumstance in Qinghai Province since Chentsa county is located in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in *Qinghai* Province of China. It leads us see how the layers of contexts influence a Tibetan individual's bilingual experience. Thus we see the importance of locations for provision of opportunities for development of bilingualism.

Chentsa County is a county located in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province of China. The capital town of Huangnan is located in Tongren (Chinese, named *Robkong* in Tibetan, and (written in *Reb Kong* as well in Tibetan: from internet). Rob Kong is a very important place in Tibetan Amdo area ( Dhondup, 1995). Robkong is famous for Rebkong Buddhist painting. It is known as the centre of Tibetan *thankga* painting. Robkong

(Reb kong) arts were named to the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009 (From Wikipedia). Moreover, 'Reb Kong is the birthplace of a number of remarkable people who are viewed as important religious, political and cultural figures within Tibetan history (Dhondup, 1995:33). Furthermore, the monastery of *Reb Kong, Rong bo dgon chen*, counts as one of a the large monasteries in Amdo areas ( Dhondup; 1995:33). Nevertheless, Robkong was the only few place Tibetan was not taken away from the school curriculum during Cultural Revolution. Students from Robkong have high reputation of cherishing Tibetan language and written Tibetan. In October, 2010 there were reports of large demonstrations in Tongren by Tibetan students who reportedly shouted the slogans, "equality of ethnic groups" and "freedom of language (<http://www.savetibet.org/OCT26/2010>). Chensta is only hundreds miles away from Tongren (Rebkong).

Moreover, Manlatso's home town is located in Qinghai Province which contains six Tibetan prefectures. As Tso (2003) indicates, every Tibetan prefecture in Qinghai has a national teacher college where they train many qualified bilingual teachers for the local area. Most teachers in village schools and township schools are graduates from the national college. In addition, there are several universities located in Xining, the capital city of Qinghai province. Furthermore, every university has Tibetan development. Tso (2003) also mentions another college in Qinghai which is named Qinghai National Teaching College. In fifteen years, this school has cultivated 1100 graduates who are specialized in teaching math, chemistry and physics through the medium of Tibetan and Chinese. Furthermore, mother tongue protection activity is carried on in many villages in Qinghai areas. On February, 21st, of 2009, to celebrate the tenth international mother tongue day, an event was held in a village in Pingan county, *Qinghai* Province. On that day, there were many Tibetan traditional cultural activities were carried on, for example, stories, poetry, folk songs and folk dances, etc. (<http://www> Lenzhi and Ganja,2009), Speaking Tibetan activity on international mother tongue day.

Manlatso lives in this area, where most inhabitants are Tibetans, (The 64 percent of population is Tibetan in Huangnan Tibetan prefecture. From internet). In addition, this is where many universities had the tradition of teaching Tibetan even before the Cultural Revolution. I was told that many professors who taught Tibetan in the *Qinghai* Minority College were sent to the villages, and after the Cultural Revolution they were invited back to the college. Therefore, it has been much quicker to restore Tibetan teaching in Qinghai than in Yunnan where few universities really had a legacy of teaching Tibetan before the Cultural Revolution.

### 6.6.6.3 Narrative in Tibetan

Manlatso only spoke Tibetan in her interview. It was a very different interview from Dawa's. Manlatso preferred to narrate her story to me in Tibetan. Manlatso grew up in a Tibetan village where she was taught that as a Tibetan, she needed to speak Tibetan to Tibetans. The language she used in the interview further demonstrates the deep impact the Mother Tongue Organization had on her; Tibetans need to speak Tibetan to Tibetans.



Figure 8 : Map of Huangnan Tibetan prefecture

## The little boy from Lhasa –Jampa's story

### 6.7 Introduction of Jampa

Jampa was born in 2000. He was born in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region. He was a fifth grade pupil of a primary school in Lhasa when I met him. It was a crucial year for all the pupils in primary schools of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Most of those who hope to go to mainland China to do middle school education will take exams to get the opportunity. Many Tibetan secondary schools have been established in many big

cities of China since 2000. (See 2.5.5 '*xi zang ban*'). Jampa hopes he can pass the exam and go to the big city in China to do his middle school education. The only issue he is concerned about is whether the school he will attend provides Tibetan classes, because he hopes he can continue to study Tibetan, his mother tongue.

### **6.7.1 The narrative of selecting Jampa**

The original idea of selecting my youngest participant in Lhasa was inspired by my nephew's learning experience in Lhasa. My nephew was attending a primary school in Lhasa. Like many pupils he started to learn Tibetan and Chinese from Grade One; in addition, he had an English class as well from first grade. My nephew's story of developing bilingualism from Grade One led me to make the decision to find my fourth participant in Lhasa.

My sister opens/offers private an English classes on weekends. When I reached Lhasa, I heard my sister talking a lot about Jampa. He always spoke Tibetan, and he knew lots of jokes in Tibetan. Moreover, he was the one during break time who shared lots of Tibetan history with the other students. After hearing what my sister said about him, I started to pay attention to Jampa and tried to establish some relationship with him whenever he came for his English class. I liked to talk with him after class or during lesson breaks. He was shy at first, but gradually he talked more and more to me. I started to interview him when he grew more comfortable chatting with me.

My participant was quite young, only 13 years old. As I was interviewing him, I felt like he could not tell me many things regarding his bilingual experiences, so I conducted three interviews with him and each interview only lasted for 20 minutes. Every time we finished the interview, I would ask him to think of some stories when he went home about learning two languages in his life. The next time he saw me he would have another story to tell me how language learning had taken place in his life from nursery school.

Jampa was busy going to school and doing homework after school. He was planning to take exams to go to Tibetan secondary school in the China mainland. Furthermore, he was told that a Tibetan class was available in any of the Tibetan secondary schools located in Chinese cities. He was happy about it.

Jampa and my nephew attended to the same school in Lhasa. I often wondered what it was like in school for Jampa and the other children. I was invited to attend the school's sport day as a relative of my nephew, so I went to the school on Friday afternoon to join the sport meetings with my sister and other parents. We sat there watching the children's sports. The



*zhuxitai* (the Chairman's platform in Chinese. pupils and teachers said it in Chinese) was in front of a building, and the running competitions were taking place in a playground nearby. All the classes from the different grades were sitting in a semi-circle around the playground. I could see how much the children enjoyed the sports meet. Everything to do with the sports meet was in Chinese. The children shouted '*Jia you*' (Chinese for cheering people on) to their classmates who were participating. All announcements made from the platform were in Chinese. All the winners got awards written in Chinese. Even though this sport meet was held at a school in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, with predominantly Tibetan children, Chinese was used most that day because the official language is Chinese. This shows the power of the Chinese language in school.

As I sat there with my nephew's class and I was able to observe how language interaction occurred between teachers and pupils and among the children. The form teacher, a Tibetan who taught Chinese, spoke both Tibetan and Chinese to her pupils. Sometimes she would mix one or two Chinese words in with her Tibetan. I noticed this when I heard her using both Tibetan and Chinese to talk about sports events like 400 meter running, 800 meter running, high jump, and long jump. The pupils did the same. I could hear two languages in one sentence. When someone in their class got their award, the teacher would say "congratulations" in Chinese (*zhuhe ni*). When someone in her class was going to participate in the competition, she would encourage them in Chinese. She said: 'Please say, 'I can do it', in Chinese. (*wo neng xin*)' She and her pupils shifted from one language to another very naturally because the pupils understood the two languages very well. They were in fifth grade and the following year would have the opportunity to take exams to go to inland China to get their middle school education. Therefore speaking fluent Chinese was very important for them.

While walking on the street, I noticed many shops were run by either Han Chinese or Tibetans. I could see one shop run by Han Chinese person and the next by a Tibetan, creating an environment where people interacted daily in the two languages. Moreover, all the shop signs were written in both languages; Chinese was on the top, bigger, and Tibetan was written under the Chinese characters, smaller. This also reveals the power of the Chinese language compared with the Tibetan language.

Jampa lived in a traditional Tibetan community where most people spoke Tibetan and where he was told: 'It is shameful to forget your own language.' Furthermore, Jampa lived in a society where bilingualism was promoted in school and where bilingualism could be seen everywhere on street and neighborhood.

Now Jampa is attending a Tibetan middle school located in the south of China.

### **6.7.2 Jampa's account: stage one: Language experience at pre- school and home**

1. **I live in Gama Gongsong. My father told me Gama Gongsong is not a normal place; it is a place which has relationship with a great Lama.**
2. **Most people living in our neighborhood are Tibetans. Chinese people living on our street are the people who run the shops on our street.**
3. **My parents only speak Tibetan to me and all of friends I play with in Gama Gongsong also only speak Tibetan.**
4. **When I started to attend pre-school I couldn't understand any Chinese. My father told me the Tibetan proverb: 'It is good to know many other languages but it is shameful to forget your own language.'**
5. I started to learn Chinese in pre-school. It was difficult to learn at the beginning. At pre-school we only had two teachers; one was Tibetan and the other was Chinese.
6. **My Chinese was always behind the other children's Chinese, because in my home I only spoke Tibetan, but some other children spoke both Tibetan and Chinese at home. My teacher always tried to help me with my Chinese.** (this sentence was spoken in both Tibetan and in Chinese)
7. **However, I know lots of Tibetan stories. Once I showed my teacher how to play a Tibetan game; even my teacher did not know this game. I showed her how to do it.**

### **6.7.3 The interpreted story of stage one: A Tibetan boy from Gama Gongsong**

Jampa started his story by telling me about the place where his family is living. Gama Gongsong is near the Bargur, a traditional Tibetan commercial center in Lhasa; however it is also the religious center of Lhasa. The first two temples of Tibetan Buddhism which were established in the 7<sup>th</sup> century are located in the Bargur. Most of the Tibetan communities are concentrated around this area, and it is named 'the old city area'. Jampa is proud of living in Gama Gongsong, because he was told: 'Gama Gongsong is not a normal place; it is a place which has relationship with a great Lama' (from interview).

Most people living in Gama Gongsong are Tibetans, so Tibetan was the only language Jampa spoke before attending pre-school. His daily language interaction was Tibetan in Gama Gongsong.

Lhasa is becoming a bilingual city. Furthermore, the development of the economy has drawn many Han Chinese to come to Lhasa to run businesses (Goldstein, 1997). Jampa told me: 'Chinese people living on our street are the people who run the shops on our street' (from interview). However, he was too little to go to the shops to purchase products for his parents. Therefore, he did not find any need to speak Chinese as a little boy living in Gama Gongsong. So Jampa lived in a monolingual world in Gama Gongsong where Tibetan was the only language in his daily life.

The experience of developing bilingualism started at pre-school. It was then Jampa started learning Chinese, and he found it a bit difficult. Moreover, he realized that his spoken Chinese was not as good as like other Tibetan children in his class. But he viewed himself as a boy speaking good Tibetan, and he even knew a Tibetan game that he played with his friends in Gama Gongsong which his Tibetan teacher asked him to show to the class. From this we can see how much influence he got from daily language interaction in Gama Gongsong.

#### **6.7.4 Jampa's account: Stage two: Learning experience in primary school**

1. **I went to primary school when I was 8 years old. In my primary school my Chinese teacher was a Tibetan. If I had difficulty understanding Chinese the teacher would explain it in Tibetan. It was a great help to me. (This sentence was in Tibetan and in Chinese)**
2. **I studied Chinese, math and English from Grade One. In Grade One my English teacher was a Tibetan. My Chinese teacher was a Tibetan. But my math teacher was a Chinese. It was quite difficult for me. While the teacher was teaching addition I did not get it.**
3. I had a desk mate. She spoke two languages at home so her Chinese was good. She helped me a lots.
4. **And from the fourth grade, although my English teacher is Chinese, my math and Chinese teachers are Tibetans. I like my Tibetan class. My Tibetan is always better than my Chinese (This sentence was in Tibetan and in Chinese).**
5. **In daily life in school we mostly speak Tibetan. My form tutor is a Tibetan teacher who always asks us to speak Tibetan and encourages us to learn more Tibetan. Sometimes if any other teachers are not able to come, he will give us a Tibetan lesson (He said it in Tibetan and then in Chinese).**
6. In school all the Tibetan teachers speak two languages. We also have Chinese teachers, who all only speak Chinese. Now that I am in fifth grade, I understand Chinese very well.
7. Now our math teacher is Tibetan, and my Chinese teacher is Tibetan as well. But my English teacher is Chinese.

8. I always ran to a shop to get help in my Chinese from the owner of the shop. He was always helpful to me when I was having difficulty with my Chinese homework.
9. I heard he was a teacher in a primary school in mainland China. His shop was burned on 3.14 and he went back to China after 3.14. [This refers to riots in Lhasa on March 14<sup>th</sup> 2008.]
10. **At home my parents only speak Tibetan to me, and they only watch Tibetan programs on TV. My mother speaks some Chinese. My father is very good at Tibetan, but he also speaks some Chinese. My father always told me Tibetan historic stories, like the king *Langdama's* story. Father told me lots of knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism.**
11. **He is working in the Tibetan hospital. I am learning Tibetan and Chinese. I feel both are very important for me. I am Tibetan I feel I need two languages.**
12. **Once I went to a shop. The shop assistant was a Chinese. I wanted to buy milk, but I asked in Tibetan and they could not understand me. It took a while for me to buy milk. So Chinese also is a very important language in my life.**
13. **My father always tells me Tibetan stories. Father is from Penbo, and he always tells me lots of stories about Penbo. Father said there were lots of animals living in Penbo. Father always takes me to Norbulingka (the summer palace) to watch Tibetan traditional operas. I really like watching (This sentence first spoke in Tibetan and he said it in Chinese)**
14. **I am planning to go to mainland China to do my middle school. I want to keep learning Tibetan in middle school.**
15. **At beginning I did not want to go I thought I could not learn Tibetan there but My father told me that there are Tibetan teachers in Tibetan middle schools in mainland China ( was in Tibetan and in Chinese).**
16. **You know I am Tibetan. I have to keep learning Tibetan.**

### **6.7.5 The interpreted story of stage two**

#### **6.7.5.1 Becoming bilingual through daily interaction in school and the neighborhood**

The learning experience in primary school shows that learning taking place through the interaction of two languages. Jampa learned Tibetan, Chinese, Math and English from Grade One. He had a Tibetan teacher who was teaching him Chinese, which made his learning easier. So he did not mention any difficulty in learning Chinese in Grade One, but he did mention the difficulty in learning Math in Grade One because his math teacher was a Chinese, therefore, the class language instruction was only in Chinese. In the interview he said: 'In school all the Tibetan teachers speak two languages. We also have Chinese teachers, who all only speak Chinese.'

He was becoming bilingual in the classroom and society through learning and through daily interaction with people. As he was growing up he needed to run to the shop to buy groceries for his family. He confronted an embarrassing moment for not being able to say milk in Chinese. It made him realize the importance of Chinese in his daily life. He also realized the importance of Tibetan in his life. Father was the important influence in his life. Moreover, in primary school, his form teacher who was Tibetan also had a great impact on him. His realization of the importance of two languages was through this daily interaction in school and society.

Jampa mentioned 3.14 when he was recalling his interaction with the owner of a shop who helped with his Chinese. This was the date of riots in Lhasa - March 14<sup>th</sup> 2008 (internet) which everyone knows about because they were the biggest riots in Lhasa in recent years. I was surprised Jampa that mentioned 3.14, as it happened when he was only 8 years old. I stopped Jampa talking further about 3.14 because it is a very sensitive topic.

Jampa's day in school always began with raising the Chinese national flag and singing the national anthem. He learned English, math, Chinese, and Tibetan from Grade One, however, he also learned a subject named 'ideology and morality' from Grade One. In interview he did not tell me about this subject but later on I learned that all of children are learning this course from Grade One. Jampa showed me two of his compositions - written in Tibetan. One was about 'hometown Tibet' which talked about where Tibet is located in China, then talked about it belonging to our mother land: China. His other essay was about 'the fight in Gyangze (Jiangzi in Chinese), which about how the British Imperialists attacked Gyangze which is located in central Tibet. He talks about how the brave people in Gyangze protected our motherland. These two pieces of writing show how Jampa learned patriotism in school. The fight of Gyangze was written like that in Tibetan textbook: In 1904 a British expeditionary army crossed the Himalayas and invaded Tibet for the second time. The Tibetan people bravely beat back the British invaders. In conditions of extreme hardship, the Tibetan people conducted a guerrilla struggle against with the British colonialists which lasted over a year. They fought to maintain the unity of the nation and the territorial integrity of the motherland (from Tibetan text book).

Jampa always goes to the Norbulinka with his father to watch the traditional Tibetan operas which normally take place during the *Shodun* Festival. *Shodun* means yogurt in Tibetan. As Tibetan operas are performed and Buddha paintings are exhibited at this time, it is also called "Tibetan Opera Festival" or "Buddha Exhibition Festival." The traditional way of starting the *Shodun* Festival is to show Buddha paintings. The *Shodun* Festival starts on the

20th day of the 6th month according to Tibetan calendar and lasts eight days (internet: Tibet Highland Expedition: Shodun excursion 2011). Furthermore, Jampa often goes to his father's home - town. He likes spending time in Penbo. However, Jampa is growing up in a place where tensions remain high and where children are forbidden to go do religious activity of all kinds with their grandparents. When I went back to Lhasa in June, 2014, I heard that teacher from every school acted like watch dogs on street, trying to catch the children who joined religious activities with their grandparents in order to bring them back to school. Children, of course, want to join their grandparents in religious activities, particularly the Tibetan practice of walking clockwise around the city of Lhasa. However, this is no longer allowed, creating conflict between society as seen in the school environment for children and the values of homes where they are raised. In the next section I am going to introduce the context.

#### **6.7.5.2 Context: The story happened in a primary school located in Lhasa**

Jampa's story of developing bilingualism is situated in Lhasa, the capital city of Tibet Autonomous Region. PRC practices an educational policy in Tibet Autonomous Region which is very different from the other Tibetan areas. Jampa was in the '*han wei zhu*' system where the school provides Tibetan language class but the other subjects like Math, Chinese and English were taught in Chinese and the textbooks in Chinese. This was the only bilingual system carried on in Jampa's school. As teachers in the Tibetan department for many years my colleagues and I know the result coming out from the '*han wei zhu*' bilingual system and the '*zang wei zhu*' bilingual system. Students coming from the '*zang wei zhu*' bilingual system have better Tibetan language than Chinese language; in contrast, students coming from the '*han wei zhu*' bilingual system have better Chinese than Tibetan.

Jampa is going to a school which uses the '*han wei zhu*' bilingual system. Most of Jampa's Tibetan teachers were bilingual so they used Tibetan in the Chinese class if children had difficulty in understanding Chinese. The Appendix 1: bilingual classroom illuminates that Jampa was studying in a classroom similar with the appendix 1, where Tibetan and Chinese written languages were displayed on classroom boards. The appendix gives readers a picture about what Jampa's classroom like.

The distinctive policy PRC being employed in the Tibet Autonomous Region is that all the primary school children who achieved a high enough score on the middle school exam had options to go to big cities in mainland China to have their middle and high school education ( Xiaorong, 2014). The middle school Jampa was planning to attend is called '*xi zang ban*'

(see chapter two: 2.5.5). Every '*xi zang ban*' is located in a local middle school or high school in a Chinese city and Tibetan children are allocated to a '*xi zang ban*'. There are two opportunities for Tibetan children in the Tibet Autonomous Region to choose to go to mainland China to do secondary school. The first opportunity is going to '*xi zang ban*' located in a middle school in a Chinese city to do three years middle school study, and then children can take exams named '*zhongkao*' to pursue high school education in mainland China. '*Zhongkao*' is the entrance exam given to middle school students for admission to the senior middle school (*gaozhong*) in China (Lio, Zhang, and Luo; 2009). The second chance is children can take exams for going to do '*xi zang ban*' located in a high school in a Chinese city to do three years senior middle school study (*gaozhong*) and then they can take exams named *gaokao* for pursuing a university degree.

I interviewed a teacher from a primary school in Lhasa who had begun teaching in 2008. He remembered that in 2008, his first year of teaching, there were 35 pupils from one primary school class in Lhasa going to mainland China to continue their education. Normally there were 50-60 pupils in a class, so it meant that half the children from that particular class were going to study in mainland China. However, a few years ago, the PRC changed the policy by shifting focus to undeveloped rural areas rather than city areas like Lhasa, differentiating between the scores required of children in city areas and those required in rural areas in the Tibet Autonomous Region. Under this adjustment, the score required of pupils in Lhasa are much higher than the scores for pupils in rural areas. Now in primary schools in Lhasa there are only ten pupils in one class who can achieve the score needed to go to mainland China. Education is free for all the children in TAR (Xiaorong, 2014). But pupils who have not reached the required scores and who really want to go to mainland to do the middle school and high school education are allowed to go within their parents' money for their education. My nephew told me that his two good friends have gone to mainland china by this way.

This teacher further informed me that Tibetan classes taught by Tibetan teachers sent from school in the Tibet Autonomous Region are still provided in middle schools in mainland China. However, since the environment is pure Han Chinese, some students complain that their levels in Tibetan writing and reading are getting worse and worse after three years of middle school education in the inland. This teacher said that he met some students doing middle school education in mainland China who said: 'Teacher, we really wanted to learn Tibetan but we were not encouraged by our teachers or schools. However this teacher told me another story about how a Tibetan teacher applied to teach Tibetan in a Tibetan middle school in China because she wanted to accompany her son. She taught Tibetan three years

at the same school at the same time as her son was doing his three-year middle school education, motivated to teach well so that her son would not lose interest in Tibetan. She became a famous teacher because she took great responsibility to encourage Tibetan students to retain their enthusiasm in learning Tibetan. After this interview finished, I only hope Jampa will have a good Tibetan teacher in his middle school which is in the city of Nantong, located in the south of China.

### **6.7.5.3 Narrative in two languages**

There are three main dialects of Tibetan spoken language which are U-zang, Kham and Amdo (see introduction chapter). Spoken Tibetan varies between regions and localities. There is a great deal of difference between the U-zang and Amdo dialects. Jampa speaks Lhasa dialect which belongs to the U-zang dialect group; I speak Amdo dialect which is distinctly different from U-Zang dialect.

In the interview Jampa mostly spoke U-zang dialect to me, because I have worked in Lhasa for a few years and understand U-zang dialect a bit. However, we shifted into Chinese whenever we facing difficulty in communication. The difficulty of understanding each other was due to the reason we do not share dialects. This provided a great opportunity for me to observe Jampa's capacity of using two languages in a conversation. From the interview I realized that Jampa is a bilingual; however, I noticed that his Tibetan language was stronger than his Chinese. It illuminates the variety of bilingualism.





**Figure 9 :Bilingual signs in Lhasa (Chinese is much bigger than Tibetan written language) by yixilamuscuo**

The advertisement is framed with a decorative border. At the top, there is Tibetan script followed by the Chinese characters '次仁工艺品商店' and the English text 'TSERING HANDICRAFT SHOP'. The central image shows a cowboy on a horse, surrounded by several different styles of hats. Brands of hats shown include Akubra, Stetson, Barman Hats, Bailey, Coastline Hat Co. (Australian Made), and Head 'n' Home Hats. At the bottom, there is more Tibetan script, Chinese text describing the products as 'various styles of hats, Australian high-end cowboy hats, gentleman hats and leisure hats', and two phone numbers: 0391-6329735 and 13989090939.

Figure 10: Bilingual signs in Lhasa (i)



Figure 11: Bilingual signs in Lhasa (ii)



Figure 12: Bilingual signs in Lhasa (iii)



**Figure 13 : Potala palace by Sharon Getter**



**Figure 14: Monastery in Lhasa by Sharon getter**

## **Chapter 7: Understanding stories: Discussion**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The focus of this thesis is the stories of developing bilingualism at four points time in five different contexts. My research questions are:

1. What have been the bilingual educational experiences of Tibetan learners from the 1950s to the present in Tibetan areas within China?
2. How have their bilingual experiences been influenced by political, social and economic changes in China?
3. How have their identities as Tibetans been mediated these experiences?
4. What role has language played in this process?

I have presented the narrative of my five participants' bilingual educational experiences in the previous three chapters (chapters 4, 5, 6). These chapters thus answer the first research question.

In this chapter I will discuss what these narratives suggest about the remaining research questions listed above.

My five participants' stories of developing bilingualism are very complicated. Every individual has a different story. Each individual's experience of becoming bilingual has been influenced by a range of different factors. Firstly it was influenced by the immediate opportunities that their homes and their relationships with people in the immediate locality provided to develop bilingualism. The greater or lesser availability of such opportunities was in turn affected by the social and political changes that have taken place in different parts of China across the last 60 years. The complexity of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas within China is clearly illustrated by the fact that even the two participants who grew up at the same time but in two different places had very different stories. Moreover, the greater or lesser availability of opportunities to developing bilingualism fundamentally affected their realization of their identities as a Tibetan.

The aim of this chapter is to use three theoretical frames to lead my reader to see the complexities of bilingualism. Moreover, it explains bilingualism as a social cultural process which has been fundamentally impacted by some of the main social and political factors that have occurred in the wider Chinese environment.

This chapter is divided into 3 sections. I use Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (2005) (see 7.1) to illuminate the complexity of individuals' development of bilingualism within Tibetan areas from layers of influences. The first section discusses how national-level policy changes, themselves emerging from the changes in the national political, economic and social context, affected individuals' opportunities for bilingualism development at local (village and school) level. I use this theory to discuss how the national level of political and social changes impacted individuals' daily life in either their village or school. Bronfenbrenner (2005) leads me to see their struggles of becoming through layers of influences; however, 'History in Person' (2001) shows me to see the layers of influence on a person's bilingualism development from historical processes. My five participants' everyday life in a local place is influenced by historical processes which lead the path of realization of their identities as Tibetans. In my second section, I use 'History in Person' (2001) to understand the relation between the development of bilingualism and the formation of identity in historical processes.

The last section, I use the theoretical frame which suggests seeing language as a repertoire. This section emphasises on bilingualism as a social cultural process by focusing on my five participants' different choices of using language. Their different ways of narrating their stories come from the indexical biographies, which guide us to see that language reflects the changing of society. The theoretical frame of seeing language as a repertoire further shows us that bilingualism is significantly affected by changes in society.

The aim of using these theoretical frames is to support the argument that bilingualism is fundamentally affected by the changing of society. Bronfenbrenner's (2005) theory leads us to see it through layers of influences; 'History in Person' (2001) helps us to understand the layers of influences from historical processes and how they are contextualized in the daily practice which leads the path of realizing the identity as who you are for my five participants. Therefore, these two theoretical frames complement each other thus lead us to understand bilingualism as a social process fundamentally affect individuals' development of identity. The theory of viewing language as a repertoire takes us to see bilingualism as a social process by focusing on my five participants' choice of narrating their stories.

## 7.2 Developing bilingualism related to changing policy

In this section I will discuss how the experience of developing bilingualism was affected by changes in political and socio-economic systems. I divide this section into two. The first sub-section discusses how language interaction in the village was affected by the changing of the political and socio-economic system. The second sub-section discusses how the opportunity of developing bilingualism in school was affected by changes in the political and socio-economic system. I address the relation between the micro system and the exosystem for the development of bilingualism within Tibetan areas for my participants.

### 7.2.1 In the village

My five participants' stories of developing bilingualism started from the villages where they lived.

Daily language interaction in the village plays a very important part in showing us how much the changing political policy towards the Tibetan language could affect the journey of developing bilingualism. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory illuminates the relation between the 'micro system' and 'exosystem'. It enables us to see how daily language interaction in a village was influenced by events happening somewhere else. For instance, Professor's story initiated in Xiamotso. The start of developing bilingualism for Professor was the opportunity to meet that Han Chinese teacher in Xiamotso. This is the micro system in Professor's story. However, this meeting with the Han Chinese teacher was due to the '*Baozhang* system' practised in Xiamotso. Furthermore, the reason for practicing the '*Baozhang* system' in Xiamotso was because Xiamotso was located in Hwari, and Hwari was under the control of the *Guomindang* (Republican Party) (Chapter 4: Professor's story). Moreover, his family's position in Xiamotso was the other main point which created the opportunity for him to learn Chinese in Xiamotso. If his family had not listened to the Han Chinese teacher's suggestion, then he would not have learned Chinese as well. His family listened to the teacher's advice because they realized the importance of learning Chinese for the younger generation, themselves having needed to hire someone to speak Chinese for them. All of these events functioned as an exosystem influencing his possibility of learning Chinese in Xiamotso. Looking at how learning Chinese happened in the Professor's life helps us to how opportunities for developing bilingualism were influenced by layers of contexts.

A Ji's story happened during The Cultural Revolution (see 2.5.2 about Cultural Revolution). A Ji went to school because of her father, who viewed education in Chinese as very



important for her (Chapter 6: A Ji's Story). Most children in her village during that time were not going to school because the villagers regarded it as the place where their children would become Han Chinese. Moreover, most of them would remain in the village as farmers after they had grown up. In contrast, A Ji is a professor in a university. Her father's realization of the importance of the Chinese language happened during the Cultural Revolution. Father was the team leader of the village and his view of education was influenced by his role. As the leader, he needed to go to '*gongshe*' to attend political meetings at that time. From Professor's story we know that during that time most of the cadres in Tibetan areas were Han Chinese. Moreover, most of the meetings were held in the Chinese language (Chapter 5: Professor's story:). A Ji's father got more chances to go out of the village to meet more Han Chinese than the normal villagers in Nima. This was the time when the Tibetan language was not promoted even in Tibetan society and it was viewed as the language connected with "old custom" by the society (Bass; 1998; Mackerras, 2005). Father's role as village leader and society's view towards the Tibetan language at that time both influenced the decision made by A Ji's father to send her to school to learn Chinese in the micro system. All of the political meetings that father had attended acted as like 'exosystem' which impacted A Ji's destiny of going to school.

My youngest participant's story happened in a village named Gam Gongsong, which is located within the city of Lhasa. Jampa started to interact with two languages from childhood in the village. He started to speak Chinese when he was old enough to run to the shop to buy groceries (Chapter 6.7: Jampa's story). The shop was run by Han Chinese in Gam Gongsong. More and more Han Chinese have come to Lhasa running businesses. This started in 1987 and was encouraged by Deng Xiaoping (Goldstein, 1997). Now the number of Han Chinese in Lhasa seems to equal or even exceed Tibetan residents in Lhasa (Goldstein, 1997). This is the reason why speaking two languages is a necessity for Jampa in his microsystem. Jampa's language experience in the small village illustrates how the language interaction happening in Gam Gongsong was influenced by the changes happening in Lhasa due to policies designed in Beijing since Jampa was born.

Lhasa has become a tourist city. Since the Tibetan plateau railway opened in 2006 it has attracted more and more Han Chinese tourists. A big slogan displayed on the front wall of the Potala palace, 'Happy Lhasa welcomes you' is written in Chinese and Tibetan. (The Chinese is bigger than the Tibetan.) Moreover, every night there is a Tibetan circle dance party taking place in the Potala Square during the peak tourist season; the lyrics are alternatively in Tibetan and Chinese. Children are encouraged both by society and school to speak Chinese as early as possible because economic development has been brought

many Han Chinese to Lhasa ( Bass: 1998). The changes taking place in Lhasa functions as the exosystem which have influenced Jampa's experience of having two languages from childhood. We can see how layers of the environment impact the development of the individual.

### 7.2.2 In school

Professor's story of developing bilingualism shows that an individual's development of bilingualism in school is deeply influenced by fluctuating policy. In Professor's story the turning point was his learning experience which happened in the Minority College, where he first had the opportunity to learn the written Tibetan language. This happened to him in 1951 just after the PRC was established. This was during first pluralistic stage in China, in which the government recognized minorities' language rights, was from 1949-57 (Bass, 1998; Mackerras, 1994; 1995; Zhou: 2009; Wang,Y, and J. Phillion: 2009). The daily learning interaction in the Minority College shows how an individual's learning experience is directly influenced by the changing policy towards the Tibetan language at that time. Professor's story of learning Tibetan from Han Chinese people, and then the opportunity to learn Tibetan from Tibetan monks, show how an individual's bilingual experience was influenced by the events happening far away from the micro system (Chapter 5.3: Professor's story), for instance Mao's opinion of religion (Mackerras, 2003), also the two different policies applied in Amdo Kham Tibetan areas and Tibet Autonomous Region (Chapter 5: Professor's story). Furthermore, the land reform carried on in Amdo areas, and later on the rioting which happened in both Amdo and Kham areas (Chapter 5: Professor's story) all acted as the exosystem which deeply influenced his learning life in *Mingyuan: Minority College* (Chapter 5: Professor's story).

A Ji's narrative elaborates how an individual's daily interaction in school is deeply influenced by political campaigns (CR) carried on across China (6.1.3: A Ji's story). It illuminates how daily interactions were affected by events happening far away from the micro system, which further addresses the relation between the micro system and exosystem. 'exosystem' defined as a setting that does not itself contain a developing person but in which events occur that affect the setting containing the person (Bronfenbrenner; 2005).The Cultural Revolution lasted ten years and it fundamentally influenced A Ji's daily interaction in school. Her narrative mentions *Huangshuai's* campaign (Chapter 6.3.3: A Ji's story). Huangshuai was a pupil in Beijing, who wrote a letter criticizing teachers in 1970. Her action in Beijing deeply influenced A Ji's daily learning life in school. A Ji learned only Chinese during her nine-year compulsory education. Her experience learning Tibetan happened when the policy of restoring the Tibetan language was applied in Tibetan areas in 1980 (Bass,1998; Mackerras, 1994). Her daily interaction either in school or in college reflects the fluctuation of educational policy towards Tibetan languages. Again it is an example of how the face-to-face environment was influenced by the exosystem.

Manlatso and Dawa's narratives of developing bilingualism happened at the same time, but their bilingual experiences were very different. Dawa started to develop bilingualism in speaking, writing, and reading when she was in high school. However, Manlatso practiced bilingualism from primary school (Chapter 6.5 Dawa's story; 6.6 Manlatso's stories). Their different experiences developing bilingualism portrays the complexity found within Tibetan areas. Bronfenbrenner suggests that the formation of the developing person takes place under the impact of 'a set of nested structures'. Through revealing each set we understand how the person developed in the immediate setting. Dawa and Manlatso's different narratives demonstrate that daily interaction happening in school is profoundly impacted by the exosystem. Their bilingual experiences were respectively located in Yunnan and Qinghai. The fact that Dawa's experience of learning Tibetan only happened in high school shows how the eradication of Tibetan from schools during the Cultural Revolution substantially affected individuals like Dawa, who was born after 1990 and lived in a Tibetan village in Deqen. The Cultural Revolution ended in 1976 but the ten years' eradication of the Tibetan language from school acted as the 'exosystem' in Dawa's learning life. It deeply impacted her daily learning experience in school in Deqen. Her struggle to develop bilingualism was affected by the shortage of Tibetan teachers in her area before she was born, and it continued throughout her period of education. It was the 'exosystem' in Dawa's story.

On the contrary, Manlatso's story started through the introduction of mother tongue protection in her village, which is located in Chentsa. Every school Manlatso attended offered a bilingual education system in Chentsa, which is located in Qinghai where many universities have had the tradition of teaching Tibetan. Qinghai Minority College was the only college retaining the Tibetan language during the Cultural Revolution (Chapter 6.6. Manlatso's story). To sum up, the legacy of the tradition of teaching Tibetan, together with the establishment of a national teachers' college (Chapter 6.6.6.2: Manlatso's story), functioned as the exosystem which significantly influenced Manlatso's life in Chentsa from village to school.

My five participants' story of developing bilingualism shows us that what happened in village and in school significantly was influenced by what happened on the national level which affected their language experience in their village and school. Furthermore, their stories demonstrate that what happened in the past even before my participants were born could affect their language learning. Their stories illuminate the relation between microsystem and exosystem for a developing person. Moreover, it led me to see their stories in layers. It shows that how 'exosystem' fundamentally influence the development of bilingualism.

### 7.3 The path of self- realization through struggles

In this section I will discuss how the formation of identity relates to the development of bilingualism. Moreover, I discuss how Tibetan individuals' realization of their identity as Tibetan has been formed within their struggles of becoming bilingualism in different contexts.

My five participants' struggles of becoming bilingualism show how individual lives are situated in local practices, and moreover, how local practices are situated in historical structure. From the first time learning Chinese happened for Professor in a village in Hwari, and later on the opportunity of going to that Han Chinese school, furthermore, his future of going to *minyuan* (Minority College) to learn Tibetan, all of these experiences indicate that the political, economic, social, and cultural structuring of social existence are contextualised in the daily practice and lived activities of subjects who both participate in and produce the cultural forms that mediate them (Holland et al., 2001:40).

Professor was Tsering (his Tibetan name) when he attended that Han Chinese school, but eventually he became 'Yong' (his Han Chinese name). He became the first Tibetan to graduate from the Han Chinese primary school in his home town. However, the interesting point is he started to realize that importance of Tibetan education for Tibetans. He questioned himself 'Why we do not have schools to teach Tibetan to Tibetan children?' (Chapter 5: Professor's story). He developed a strong ambition to become a Tibetan teacher through learning Chinese at that Han Chinese school. Moreover, he positioned himself 'as a Tibetan. We must learn Tibetan and teach Tibetan to Tibetan children' (Chapter 5: Professor's story). I would say his identity as Tibetan was being formed through the struggles and conflicts he faced in his Chinese school. The struggle contributed to his realization of self. Becoming a Tibetan teacher was the goal of his life, which he developed from learning Chinese and dedicated his whole life to achieving. His story shows that struggle was the way in which he depicted his relationship with society. He was a Tibetan starting to learn Chinese from village in Hwari where most people only spoke Tibetan; and then went to a Han Chinese school where most of people were Han and they believed that everything related to his ethnicity was not good, therefor they changed his name to a Han Chinese name. But on the other hand, struggle was the process through which he understood who he was. His story indicates that the realization of identity is a process of how an individual decides to respond to the situation he or she is in. Moreover, the realization of identity is shaped in the long term struggle in local practice. All of these traditions, cultural beliefs and social structures continually exist and constitute individual's

daily life in school. We can see ‘the relation between contentious local practice and the production of subjectivities’ (Holland and Lave: 2001: 6) through professor’s story.

A Ji struggled to learn Chinese while she attended that Han Chinese school. She was laughed by her peers because her wearing Tibetan outfit, therefore, she took off her Tibetan cloth and started to wear Chinese cloth since then. Furthermore, because of her poor Chinese she could not gain the favour of her teacher. In interview she said: I did not understand any Chinese, and we were learning Chinese math. Every subject was in Chinese. I remember that in the math class I could not understand plus and minus since I did not understand Chinese, so the teacher was very upset. I did not understand what he was saying but I knew he was upset with me (from interview). It was A Ji’s story of struggling to learn Chinese which happened during Cultural Revolution, the time of ‘Tibetans were pushed into the larger Han Chinese linguistic world’ (Goldstein, 1997:184). During this time, schools became the places where children learned to become Chinese and many Tibetans were even asked to change their Tibetan names to Chinese ones.

A Ji never thought about learning Tibetan in her nine years of compulsory education. Moreover, she became a revolutionary youth in secondary school (Chapter 6.3.3: A Ji’s story) and wanted to carry on the revolution forever (Chapter 6.3.3 A Ji’s story). The identity as a Young Chinese revolutionary was produced through the learning she received in her school located in the Tibetan area during the Cultural Revolution. The language learning experience during that time was learning both spoken and written Chinese and learning to play Chinese games as part of the local practice for her daily life. The learning experience in school led A Ji to embark on the path of developing identity as a young Chinese Revolutionary. In the interview she said: ‘I become a Chinese’. However, A Ji’ started to rethink her identity when she was engaged in the learning life in ‘*minyuan*’ (minority college). It was the time of starting to learn written Tibetan language as well as the time she met her favourite Tibetan teacher A Ke (Chapter 6.3.5: A Ji’s story). In addition, it was the time of struggling to learn written Tibetan. In interview she said: I studied very hard. I felt sad for my poor written Tibetan. And I felt it was shameful for a Tibetan not to know her own written language (from interview).

A Ji’s struggle started from learning Chinese through nine year compulsory education. She could only spoke Tibetan before she attended the school, but school did not recognize her first language, moreover, her first language was not valued either by school or by society during that time. Nevertheless, she also struggled while she was accepted by the Tibetan Department at the Minority College. A Ji was not happy about it because she wanted to

major in something else rather than Tibetan in university. However, that was not a possibility because the educational system at the time assigned students to their college major. Moreover, she felt difficult to learn written Tibetan (see 6.3.5 A Ji's story). All of her struggles took place as a result of the transaction of society with her daily life either in home and educational institute, however, struggles made contribution to her path of identity realization. The realization of her Tibetan identity happened while she was learning Tibetan in university. It also shows how closely the learning of L1 is related to the formation of her Tibetan identity. It elaborates the important role of L1 for the development of identity (Pattanayak, 1986; Smolicz, 1986; McLaughlin, 1986).

A Ji's story of her transformation of identity from Chinese revolutionary youth to Tibetan illustrates how individuals' realization of identity is the process of rethinking, reinterpreting, and repositioning themselves in everyday life over times. Like Eduardo Mori (History in Person; 2001)'s path of developing identity in everyday life from Brazil to Japan, which took years, A Ji's narrative also illustrates how history is formed and embodied in an individual's engagements with everyday life, leading to the realization of identity. Moreover, A Ji's story demonstrates the relationship between identity and education; it shows that the development of identity is closely related to education in complex ways. She lost her Tibetan identity because of the education she gained; by contrast, she regained her identity as a Tibetan through education. This is a story of how an individual's daily life and languages have been influenced by changing social, cultural and political contexts; it is a story of history in person.

Manlatso and Dawa's stories happened at the same time but in different contexts (Chapter 6.5: Dawa's story; 6.6: Manlatso's story). Their different stories of developing their identity as a Tibetans enable us to see:

...a person engaged in social life, a person involved in an activity or practice, is presumed to have a perspective. One looks at the world from the angle of what one is trying to do. (Holland et al., 2001:44)

Dawa's struggle started from her village school where she did not get any opportunity to learn written Tibetan. She started to learn written Tibetan when she was in high school. Dawa struggled because Deqen was a place where most of schools could not offer Tibetan class to children (see 6.4, Dawa's story); she was always at the edge of losing her first language, she was at the risk of becoming a subtractive bilingual: this further shows, 'how the shaped subjectivities, and how they are shaped in practice if we are also to address relation between contentious local practice and the production of subjectivities' (Holland and Lave: 2001:4).

The struggles contributed to her realization of self. Dawa's experience in university, her sadness of being a silent girl in Tibetan class and struggling to catch up with other students from other Tibetan areas is the way through which we see the realization of self is from interaction with others, which provokes some illumination about the self. In interview Dawa kept saying, "they all started learning Tibetan from primary school except us who are from Deqen." (from interview). Dawa gradually positioned her self into a place where she could settle down. As she describes it in the interview, 'I feel like learning Tibetan is very important for us as a Tibetan' (Chapter 6.5: Dawa's story). Moreover, teaching Tibetan in school of Deqen became her goal. Finding self and the position of self is the process constructing history in person. Rogoff (1990:36) states that 'each child enters the world with the forms of movement constitutive of thought embodied in the environment surrounding him or her, and as he or she is led to reproduce those practices so he or she becomes a thinking being, a person'.

Manlatso presented a different story of developing identity as a Tibetan. Her understanding of her Tibetan identity is 'as a Tibetan we must speak pure Tibetan.' It initiated with her participating in the mother tongue organization in her village. People in her village are fined by MTO if they do not speak pure Tibetan to each other (Chapter 6.6: Manlatso's story). This was Manlatso's first understanding of her identity as a Tibetan in her early year's daily conversation in her village. However, Manlatso did not internalize this realization at the time. After years of learning Tibetan and Chinese from primary school to secondary school and then studying Tibetan in university, she realized that as a Tibetan, simply speaking Tibetan is not enough. She also came to understand that speaking good Chinese is likewise important. In her interview, she said: Tibetan is only valued in Chentsa (Chapter 6.6: Manlatso's story). This came from her experience of only being allowed to study Tibetan in university and rejected from all other major fields of study. Moreover, she realized that even if a Tibetan major student is required take Chinese in job exams in her area.

Manlatso's journey of understanding her identity started from life in her village and continued to her experiencing exclusion from even applying for other universities as she completed secondary school. This, together with the realization that, the Tibetan language was not included in job market led her to the long process of thinking and rethinking her identity as a Tibetan. Manlatso and Dawa's different stories enable us to see how the individual and society are part of the same overall structure. Maynes, Pierce, et al. (2008:3) identify that:

Individual life stories are much embedded in social relationships and structures and they are expressed in culturally specific forms; read carefully, they provide unique insights into the



connections between individual life trajectories and collective forces and institutions beyond the individual.

Importantly, Dawa and Manlatso's different experiences of developing their identity help us to understand that how individual understands self; it is a process through which individual constructs and reconstructs self, revealed through their narratives. Their stories set examples for us to understand how individual's daily life embodied in local practice and thus produce unique understanding sense of self.

The first sentence Jampa said in his interview was: 'I am living in Gam Gongsong. My father told me Gam Gongsong is not a normal place; it is a place which has relationship with a great Lama' (Chapter 6.7: Jampa's story). This shows that his father tried to teach Jampa that his identity as Tibetan was tied to Tibetan Buddhism. Jampa's story happened in a village within Lhasa. Lhasa is Tibetan religious centre where monasteries, temples and monks are part of the city. Moreover, Lhasa is a holy place for Tibetan Buddhism and is considered to be the ideal destination for any and every Tibetan. Therefore, in Lhasa you can see pilgrims from all Tibetan areas. However, years of interacting in the neighborhood also led Jampa to realize the importance of the Chinese language. Furthermore, Jampa was planning to go to boarding school in inland China to do his secondary schooling. It was his dream to be one of the excellent primary school graduates sent as part of a '*xi zang ban*' to the inland China. Going to the inland became the everyday topic for Jampa as a boy living in Lhasa emphasizing for him importance of the Chinese language for Tibetans (Chapter 6.7: Jampa's story). However, Jampa worried he might not keep learning Tibetan in the inland (*neidi*). In his narrative he told me that his father told him that he would still have Tibetan class in *neidi*. After he heard that, he decided to go there.

Jampa's story occurred at a time when the minority education policy faced dilemmas in China (see 2.5.5; 2.5.6). His story happened in Lhasa where school is the place to teach children to develop their identity as a minority citizen of China through focusing on patriotic and moral education to strength Chinese national cohesion (Wang Y and J. Phillion, 2009; Bass, 2005; Mackerras, 1994). Furthermore, because the riots of 2008 in Lhasa, broke out among monks (Topgyal, 2011), religion is viewed as having a bad influence on children (See 2.5.6). School tried get rid of religious influence on children by eliminating any religious figures from their text books (Bass, 2005) and forbidding children to join '*gnas skor*' (the religious activity) with the grandparents (see 6.7 Jampa's story). However, in his interview Jampa was very proud of knowing a lot of stories from Tibetan history as well as religious knowledge which his father had told him at home. Jampa's story shows that he is expected

to develop two different identities between home and school. Children are told to love their Tibetan heritage as part of the mother land but the connection between the Tibetan heritage and the religion is ignored in school. In fact, almost all of the Tibetan heritage, even the development of written Tibetan is related to their religion (see: 1.2.2). Instead of acknowledging the moral basis children can gain from Tibetan Buddhism, moral education is instilled in children through their textbooks from Grade one ( see: 2.5.4). Moral education is a very important part of the school curriculum, aiming to guide children to develop their identity as a 'minority nationalist' instead of a 'Tibetan' (see: 2.5.4).

While I was interviewing Jampa, he only was a 12 year old boy. However, he sensed the gap between home and school. For instance, heard lots of stories about religion at home, but none of these were discussed at school. He also knew he was not allowed to go to 'gnas skor' with grandparents. He could feel the gap between home and school. He was too young to understand why it was like this, but all of these daily practices at home and school shaped his understanding about who he was.

Jampa's first realization of his Tibetan identity was in connection with Buddhism. It depicts his relation with his culture. Then the interaction with two languages in his daily life from home and school led him to realize that as a Tibetan he needs two languages in his life which explains the process of how human being recognize who they are through daily interaction. Jampa struggled to keep two languages in his life. The trend of going inland to do secondary education led him to realize that Chinese language is of high importance for him as a Tibetan since it is almost the only language for any future education in inland China. However, he still insisted on the importance of keeping on learning written Tibetan. His parents only watch Tibetan programmes on TV, and most of the time his parents only spoken Tibetan at home. In addition, his Tibetan teacher always encouraged them to learn Tibetan. All of these led him to say 'You know I am Tibetan. I have to keep learning Tibetan' (the last sentence of his interview). Jampa struggles because he must practice two languages in his life. Nevertheless, because Lhasa is the place where PRC employed the policy of sending excellent Tibetan children to boarding school inland of China, he might face the risk of losing his L1 because his L1 is less powerful than L2 in future for him. His story is a story of how social structure is implicated in the development of language for a person.

My five participants' narratives show that the formation of identity took place in classrooms and other activities in home and villages. Their stories further show 'how the shaped subjectivities, and how they are shaped in practice if we are address relations between contentious local practice and the production of subjectivities.' (Holland and Lave 2001:4).

All their struggles of learning Tibetan and Chinese contribute to their realization of self. Bronfenbrenner (2005) helps me to understand my five participants' struggles of becoming bilingual through layers of contexts; however, history in person (2001) helps me to see the layers of contexts as social formation and cultural production in which struggles occur, but which contribute to the development of identity.

#### **7.4 Bilingualism is a social process: through looking at the occurrence of language shift in interviews**

In this section, through looking at the occurrence of language shift in the interviews I discuss bilingualism is a social process because people interact with two languages in their life.

Language functioned as a repertoire (Blommaert and Backus, 2011), as seen in my five participants' different choices in speaking Tibetan and Chinese. 'Balanced bilingual' is the term originally used by Hoffmann from 1959, and by many scholars since that time (see 2.2.1). It has been challenged by scholars like Baker (1998) who emphasizes that there is no simple definition of bilingualism and identifies the terms bilingual and bilingualism as complicated. This corresponds with what I found happening in the language shift occurring in the interviews with my five participants. All of my five participants are bilinguals; moreover, all of them have been educated in both languages. They can read write and speak in two languages. However, by paying attention to language shift occurring in their interviews, I firstly discovered that their preferences in using two languages differ from each other. For instance, Dawa started her interview in Tibetan but shifted into Chinese after she narrated two or three sentences in the interview. Dawa was more confident narrating her story in Chinese rather than in Tibetan, though she is a Tibetan major bilingual. Manlatso preferred to narrate her story in Tibetan though she can speak fluent Chinese, but she thinks her spoken Tibetan is much better than her spoken Chinese. Moreover, Jampa learned Tibetan and Chinese from Grade One; however, since Tibetan is his home language, in his interview he shows that he can communicate in Tibetan much more freely than in Chinese. The language shift occurring in interviews provides a chance for my reader to see that Tibetan individuals' capacity for using two languages varies greatly, demonstrating that the term 'balanced bilingual is merely an ideal. (Baker's, 1998; Hoffmann, 1991) and demonstrating instead the complex nature of bilingualism.

Language as a resource we can learn about our social situation, histories, and biographies. My five participants' different choices in speaking two languages demonstrate that they have

gone through different experiences of developing bilingualism. That their repertoires reflect their individual biographies (Blommaert: 2011; 2013). Manlatso used only Tibetan in her interview, corresponding with her narrative that Tibetan was provided in school and she learned every subject in Tibetan in her nine-year compulsory education. This corresponds with many scholars' statement: bilingual school have been established in Tibetan areas since 1980 and two different tracks of bilingual system have been provided in Tibetan areas (see 2.5.3: Bass; 1998; 2005, Nima; 2000). Furthermore, in Manlatso's talk she did not mix her Tibetan with any Chinese. Her competence in L1 shows that the mother tongue protection in her village has made a great impact on her L1 competence. Moreover, her L1 competence has been reinforced thorough learning written language from primary school, which illustrates that individual language competencies reflect individual learning experiences. Furthermore, it indicates that Manlatso grew up in a context where people valued Tibetan as an important part of their cultural heritages, showing us the relation between language and society (Blommaert, 2011). In contrast, Dawa mostly used Chinese to narrate her story. What occurred naturally in Dawa's interview would not happen to Manlatso because Manlatso's village had an organization to protect their mother tongue. This corresponds to Dawa's narrative that she only got the chance to learn Tibetan in high school and there was no organization to protect her mother tongue in her village. Thus by viewing language as a repertoire provides a door for me to see bilingualism as a social process alongside with the changes of society. Moreover, it led us to see that differentiation in language choices due to individuals' different learning experience occurred in various contexts.

The language shift which occurred in Manlatso and Dawa's interviews reveals the very important fact that they belong to different bilingual groups. This was not clear so much from the stories they told as it was from the language shift occurring naturally as they told those stories. Dawa and Manlatso experienced two different approaches to bilingualism from childhood, one being additive bilingualism and the other subtractive bilingualism (see 2.2.2). Mostly people who learn a second language simply add another language without any risk of weaken their first language, thus experiencing Additive bilingualism. By contrast, many minority people who are forced to leave behind fluency in their L1 as they learn and master the majority language naturally experience Subtractive bilingualism (see 2.2.2: Baker: 1988; 2006; Cummins: 1996; Harding and Riley: 1986; Dagmar Hellmann – Rajanagam; 1986). Manlatso's experience of bilingualism shows that she belongs to Additive bilingualism though her L1 is not the official language of her country. Manlatso started to learn two languages from primary school. Moreover, her L1 was valued from primary school until high school and the intentional protection of her mother in her village demonstrates that her first

language has continued to be the dominant one in her life both in society and in school since she was a child. Moreover, both L1 and L2 were valued both in school and at home for Manlatso. It corresponds with Casanova and Arias (1993: 24)'s statement that 'the situation of additive bilingualism obtains when the society values both languages'. Manlatso's village valued both languages. In contrast, Dawa experienced Subtractive bilingualism. She felt comfortable narrating her story in her L2. She started to learn Tibetan when she was in high school, and her L1 was not valued from primary school to middle school. Moreover, her L1 has been always at the edge of replacement by L2 since she was a child. Manlatso and Dawa experienced of two different types of bilingualism further shows us the complication of the development of bilingualism within Tibetan areas. It further shows that language functions as a repertoire, revealing the biography of an individual's learning experience and helps us understand the complex nature of bilingualism through looking at language shift in their "means of speaking" (Blommaert and Backus: 2011: 3).

Through looking at the occurrence of language shift, we learn how language reveals changes in society. Blommaert and Backus (2011) point out that 'superdiversity' (named by Vertovec: 2007) has brought significant changes to language. 'The concept of super – diversity studies the result of '(a) ever faster and more mobile communication technologies and software infrastructures, along with (b) ever expanding mobility and migration activity related to major geo-political changes around 1990' (Blommaert 2012, cited in Arnaut and Spottis: 2014:2). I use the concept of superdiversity to show that social changes from time to time after 1949 in Tibetan areas can be recognized through the language shift occurred in my five participants' interviews. The first language shift occurred in professor's story was the narrative recalling the conversation he had had with that Tibetan leader (see 5.2.2.4). The language shift indicates that it was a bilingual society where Tibetans freely spoke their own language. This corresponds with Iredale Bilik & Su (2001)'s statement that it was the time of 'minority policy' was applied in Tibetan areas. Professor's experience of learning in that Chinese school was only narrated in Chinese. Moreover, all memories of the conversation he carried on with teachers and classmates in that school were in Chinese. Daily interacting for him in that Han Chinese school only occurred in Chinese, which implies that Tibetan did not have any place in that school. This happened one year before the PRC was established and Han Chinese people viewed the Tibetan language as a symbol of 'backwardness' (2.4.1.2: Xiangwen, 2005; Hansen, 1999). Professor used both Chinese and Tibetan languages to narrate his experiences at the Minority College (see 5.3: Professor's story). In his interview, he related conversations he had with Chinese teachers and classmates, and also conversations he had with Tibetan teachers and classmates. His narrative in two languages illustrates how bilingualism was promoted in society at that period of time. This

narrative corresponds to many scholars' statements that it was the period when minority policy focused on fostering minority languages in China (2.5.1: Iredale Bilik & Su: 2001). Moreover, this period of time is regarded as the first pluralistic stage (1949-57) in China (see 2.5.1: Bass: 1998; Zhou: 2009; Wang, Y. and J. Phillion: 2009). However, the occurrence of 'Caofei' (the grassland-bandit: the Chinese term referring to riots in Tibetan areas in 1957. See 5.3.2.3 and 5.3.2.4) in his fifth interview indicates that this special term as a resource telling us social situation of that time. Professor mostly used Chinese to describe the Cultural Revolution. As we know, the 'Cultural Revolution' was a period of time when Tibetan was not promoted in society (see 2.5.2). During this political campaign, Professor suffered rally criticism and was sent to a village school from his university. Again all of these experiences were told in Chinese. His memory about the political campaign and the rally were in Chinese. He only used Tibetan to describe how a young Tibetan guy came to him and begged him to speak Chinese for him at that teaching work conference (see 5.4.4: Professor's story). The language shift occurring in this interview shows that it was a time when bilingualism was not promoted in society and Chinese was the dominant language. Furthermore, it shows that Tibetan was not valued even in Tibetan areas during the Cultural Revolution. This corresponds to Goldstein (1997)'s statement about how the Tibetan language was treated during the Cultural Revolution. It also shows how language reveals the knowledge of society to us. The example of how the Tibetan teachers were forced to speak Chinese illustrates that the Tibetan language did not have any position even in Tibetan areas during that time. This further illustrates that language as a resource we can learn about our social situation, histories, and biographies (Blommaert, 2011, 2013).

In A Ji's story she used Tibetan to narrate her village life in Nima before she attended school. All of the vivid memory living in Nima and conversations with her father were related in Tibetan. This implies that though it was during the Cultural Revolution, Tibetans in Nima still used Tibetan in daily life. However, A Ji mostly used Chinese to narrate her learning experience in schools, corresponding to her narrative of how she became a young Chinese Revolutionary during her nine-year compulsory education. Furthermore, it shows that the school did not promote Tibetan, and only promoted Chinese. This was the time when Tibetan was taken away from school (see 2.5.2: Bass, 1998; Nima, 2000). This piece of narrative corresponds with some scholars' (Tsung and Cruickshank, 2009) statement: it was 'the Chinese –Monopolistic stage' (see 2.5.2).

A Ji used Tibetan to recall her journey of restoring her identity through learning written Tibetan. Most of the conversations she had with her teacher A Ke were memorized in Tibetan, which shows that Tibetan was the language not only used in the classroom but also

used in daily interactions with teachers like A Ke who did not speak any Chinese. This happened in 1980 which was the time of restoring the Tibetan language in China (see 2.5.3: Bass, 1998; Mackerras, 1994; Goldstein, 1997). A Ji's way of narrating her story shows us that changes in society brought changes to an individual's daily communication. Thus, we can see how changes of society related to the changes of language. It is the power of narrative. Goodson (2013: 20) indicates that the study of personal storylines is one way to examine people's ongoing struggle for purpose and meaning. By scrutinizing storylines in this way, we can begin to understand how the human species is responding to changing historical and cultural circumstances. Furthermore, it shows the 'narrative capital' (Goodson: 2013) in an individual's story, an example of 'studying people's lives are part of a wider context of social relations, priorities and provisions (Goodson: 2013: 19).

Moreover, their alternating from one language to the other shows that one language is not enough for Tibetans. It indicates that Tibetan individuals have lived with two languages in their daily lives. Jampa's narrative in two languages further illustrates that he is living with two languages. He encountered the Chinese language at a very early age, showing that the influx of migrants has brought changes to his language interaction which again addresses the relation between society and language (Blommaert, 2011, 2013). It shows a picture of a superdiversity society (Arnaut & Spotti, 2014; Blommaert, 2011, 2014) where changes in society brings changes to an individual's communication on daily basis. It shows us that Tibetans are living with Han Chinese side by side in Jampa's daily interaction.

Language shift illuminates how different languages play different roles for the Tibetan identity. From the occurrence of language shift in interviews, I realized that my five participants chose to use two languages to express their identity as Tibetan and Chinese speakers in daily life. Moreover, it shows the different role of L1 and L2 in their lives. They use L1 to express the ties and deep connection to their home and their culture. For instance, in A Ji's story the sweet memory from village life in Nima was only told in Tibetan and no language shift occurred in that interview. The third interview was carried on in Tibetan as well. This was a pleasant memory about the opportunity to learn Tibetan in the minority college, moreover, it was the precious memory about her Tibetan teacher 'A Ke' (A Ji's story: 6.1.5). Moreover, in Jampa's story his memory about father and about the Tibetan teacher was also in Tibetan. All of these illustrate that L1 is related to pleasant memories about their village, culture, and ambition. That is how Tibetan bilinguals view their relationship with their L1. It is a tie to their villages and their culture. It corresponds with Alladina's (1995) statement: L1 symbolizes the relationship with their home and the ones they love (see: 2.2.4). Moreover, it shows that L1 links to their identity (Trueba (1991: see

2.2.4). It also corresponds to Jalava (1988)'s research about how L1 linked to Finnish children's' identity (see 2.2.4). L2 was used to remember the learning experiences happening in the Han Chinese school. A Ji and Professor both used Chinese to recall their learning experience in school. This implies that Chinese was the only language in education for generations of people like Professor and A Ji. It implies their relationship with L2 when they were pursuing education. Furthermore, L2 also was used to remember the experiences which happened in the Cultural Revolution (Professor and A Ji's stories), which shows that the older generation of Tibetan bilinguals prefer to remember the unpleasant experiences in the Cultural Revolution in Chinese. For my youngest participant, L1 and L2 were promoted in school. For him L1 and L2 were both the languages of education. Jampa has not yet finished his education. It would be interesting to see how he narrates his story in future after he finishes his education in mainland China. It shows that 'the emergence of life stories is of course closely related to the historical construction of notions of selfhood (Goodson: 2013: 25). Moreover, Goodson (2013: 25) indicates that life stories, then, are intimately connected to cultural locations, to social position and even social privilege as well as to historical periods, which provide different opportunities for the construction and expression of selfhood.

The occurrence of language shift in my interviews with my five participants illustrates the necessity of bilingualism for minority like Tibetans. My five participants encountered two languages at very early age. Professor's memory of his experience in that Han Chinese school to which he travelled when he was 15 was told in Chinese. A Ji's memory about her encounter with the Chinese language happened when she was sent to school at the age of 9. This was the time when all of Tibetan children only learned Chinese in school. Furthermore, my youngest participant's encounter with the Chinese language happened when he was six or seven years old running to the shops to buy groceries for his parents. It shows that he lived with two languages in his village. From the language shift, we learn about the necessity of having two languages in their lives. In addition, Tibetans from the younger generation living in cities and going to schools like Jampa are of a generation born to become bilingual. This corresponds with Grosejean's (1982) statement: they are born to become bilingual. We also learned from the occurrence of language shift that there was no choice for them to decide whether to become bilingual or not; it was their destiny. They need two languages in their daily life and for their education. It corresponds with Skutnabb-Kangas (1988:10) and Grosejean (1982) statements about the necessity of bilingualism for speakers of minority language. I would like to use Grosejean (1982)'s statement about bilingualism to finish my discussion chapter: "Bilingualism is a social necessity for minorities.



People cannot live without ties and emotional relationships with the ones they love and yet, they still need to be part of society as a whole”.

## **Chapter 8: Revealing from stories: conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter forms the conclusion of the thesis. This chapter provides me an opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of research in term of the four research questions. Moreover, this chapter offers me a chance to assess the strengths of the research and the key contributions to knowledge in the field of bilingual education. In addition, while reflecting on the strength of this research I have come to realize the limitation of the research, offers me an opportunity to make some suggestions for further research.

### **8.2 Reflections on research and research questions**

This research intended to explore Tibetan individuals' bilingual learning experience from 1950 to the present, which led us to the first major question:

**What have been the language educational experiences of Tibetan learners within China from the 1950s to the present areas?**

My five participants' stories of becoming bilinguals are presented in three chapters and covered four periods of time, beginning in 1950 with Professor's story. Professor's story of developing bilingualism presented in Chapter 5 and 6, describes in detail one Tibetan individual's learning experience during the transition from the old society when opportunities for education were restricted to the new society when opportunities improved but bilingualism in education was still only available to a few Tibetans and only implemented at the Minority College. His story depicts a historical picture of how learning Chinese and Tibetan became reality for a Tibetan learner before and after the PRC became established in Tibetan areas. In addition, his story describes in detail how learning Tibetan was strictly limited in Tibetan areas during the Cultural Revolution. This gives insight into A Ji's learning experience which started during Cultural Revolution. Her story is also the story of just one individual, but through it, we gain understanding into how Tibetan learners managed to become bilingual at that time point.

I present A Ji, Manlatso, Dawa and Jampa's stories in chapter 6. A Ji's story, detailing the learning experience of a Tibetan both during and after the Cultural Revolution, shows that

developing bilingualism was not possible for Tibetan learners during the Cultural Revolution and further demonstrates that opportunities for becoming bilingual were closely related to changes in society. Manlatso and Dawa's experiences happened after 1980 and are examples of the complications of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas. Jampa's story shows us in detail how a young Tibetan learner might develop bilingualism in the present time.

The narrative of these three chapters illustrates that for people from older generations like Professor and A Ji, becoming bilingual was due to exceptional opportunities provided to them; for instance, Professor and A Ji's opportunities came to them at the Minority College, suggesting that developing bilingualism only happened to individuals who were selected to study Tibetan as a major in university. Very few others in Tibetan areas in China from their generations became bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese. Professor's experiences took place just after the PRC had been established and there were few schools in Tibetan areas. Becoming fully bilingual in both Tibetan and Chinese was only possible for the few Tibetans able to take the college entrance exams in Chinese for admittance to the two or three national colleges offering Tibetan classes during that time. Only one or two Tibetans in one hundred could become bilingual in both Tibetan and Chinese in Professor's time because education in written Chinese was the first requirement for access to learning written Tibetan in college. Written Tibetan was effectively excluded from the Chinese educational system in the early years of the PRC. The new government did not recognize monasteries as valid institutes for education, and so Tibetan education was not recognized in the new society.

By A Ji's time, however, Tibetan children learned Chinese throughout their nine years of compulsory education in schools built in Tibetan areas after the PRC was established. By then, most Tibetan children were offered free education in school in their own villages, showing radical change between Professor and A Ji's time. However, most children were educated only in Chinese with little access to their own language in the education system. Becoming bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese was only possible for people like A Ji who decided to take the college entrance exam and whose grades met the acceptance requirement for the Tibetan department. Most Tibetan children in A Ji's time lost the opportunity to become bilingual because of the educational policy during the Cultural Revolution, causing many Tibetan young people to be excluded from knowing the richness of their culture simply because they could not read or write in Tibetan.

By contrast, it has now become necessary for the young generation to become bilingual. Bilingual schools have been built in Tibetan areas since 1980 because of changing

educational policies regarding the Tibetan language. Tibetan children may now become bilingual through choosing to attend bilingual schools in their areas, with access to learning their own written language from Grade One. However, Manlatso's sadness at being deprived of the opportunity to apply to other universities beyond simply the Minorities shows that she also faced exclusion from the educational system in her area. Thus we can argue that different generations of Tibetan individual face different types of exclusion from 1950 up to now. My five participants' different stories show how the changing society and political system at four points time heavily influenced their journeys toward developing bilingualism, leading to the second question:

### **How have their bilingual experiences related to political – social – economic changes in China**

Their stories illustrate how closely each individual's process of becoming bilingual closely was affected by the changing policy and political environment.

Professor's story of developing bilingualism is the story of a Tibetan learner's journey toward developing bilingualism in a changing society. His very opportunity to become bilingual came about because of the change in. It was the time PRC needed more educated young Tibetans working for new society. Moreover, it was the time PRC carried on land form in the Amdo and Kham areas which required more cadres who knew written Tibetan working in Tibetan areas. Under these circumstances of this the first minority college was established, and young professor became the only few Tibetans enrolled by Tibetan department of this college. Professor's story illustrates that the individual's possibility of developing bilingualism at the time of 1950 was heavily affected by the transition of society, moreover; by the special policy PRC applied in Amdo and Kham areas.

A Ji's story is an example of how a Tibetan learner's opportunity to become bilingual was closely for us to see that a Tibetan learner's possibility of becoming bilingual was closely affected by the changing of society for those born the Cultural Revolution. A Ji did not learn Tibetan during her nine – year compulsory education because schools in most Tibetan areas only taught Tibetan children Chinese. A Ji's future of learning Tibetan was closely related to the changing of policy towards the Tibetan language in 1980s.

The younger generations like Manlatso and Dawa and the youngest one Jampa, are all bilinguals. Their learning experiences happened after the implementation of restoring Tibetan language policy in the school curriculum in Tibetan areas from 1980, which provided opportunities for and many Tibetan children to become bilingual through choosing to go to

bilingual school in their areas. However, the PRC employed different educational policies in different Tibetan areas, which explains the different experiences of developing bilingualism among my three young participants. For instance, the PRC has applied the ‘*xi zang ban*’ policy in Jampa’s area, which led him experience a journey of developing bilingualism that was very different from Manlatso’ and Dawa’s.

Overall I would say that their experiences of becoming bilingual were significantly affected by the changing society and different policies applied in different Tibetan areas at four points in time.

My five participants’ bilingual experiences have deeply influenced their sense of who they are. It leads to the third research question:

**How have their identities as Tibetan been mediated these experiences?**

My five participants’ different journeys of developing bilingualism have led to the different patterns of knowing who they are, symbolizing that how deeply their identities as Tibetans were mediated in their various bilingual experiences. It addresses the relation between identity and education. Professor’s realization of his Tibetan identity happened while he was being rejected by his Han Chinese classmates and teacher. He was called ‘wild yak’ then he developed his desire of learning Tibetan written language. It was at this time he realized that the importance of learning Tibetan for a Tibetan. However, in A Ji’s story, she developed her Tibetan identity while she was learning written Tibetan at the Minority College. We can see the different patterns of developing identity from Professor’s and A Ji’s experiences. However, they both realized the importance of Tibetan language for the development of their Tibetan identity.

For the young generation like Manlatso and Jampa, they developed bilingualism at an early age. Manlatso started developing bilingualism from primary school and Jampa started developing bilingualism from nursery. Their understanding of their identity as Tibetans is not limited simply to the realization of the importance of Tibetan language for the Tibetan identity, but also to the importance of Chinese language for a Tibetan who needs two languages to survive in this superdiversity society. However, Dawa’s understanding of her Tibetan identity is slightly different from Mnalatso and Jampa. She only recognizes the importance of Tibetan language for a Tibetan. Dawa was not offered any opportunity to learn Tibetan until she reached high school. All of these are examples to show how the realization of their Tibetan identity has been mediated in their experiences. In addition, my five participants’ realization of their identity as Tibetan took place in education institutes which

addresses the relation between education and identity. Furthermore, their realization of their Tibetan identity was closely related to their experiences of learning written Tibetan.

Thus leads to the fourth question:

### **What role has language played in this process?**

From my five participants' stories, we can understand the necessity for Tibetans to become bilinguals because they need two languages in their lives. Without their first language – Tibetan – they would be people without roots; however, without their second language – Chinese – they would lose opportunities for education and jobs. For instance, from Jampa's story we can see that Chinese is the most important language for him in future because he is going to '*xi zang ban*' in China to pursue his secondary education. Moreover, for Manlatso and Dawa, Chinese is the language needed for exams in the job market. In addition, because of the socio-political history and the particular personal circumstances, in Dawa's case her second language – Chinese – is stronger than her Tibetan language.

I use language shift structure analysis (LSSA) for my data, which provides the greatest strength for my research. When language shift occurs in the interview, it offers my reader an opportunity to experience the role of two languages for my five participants in a real setting. We can see that L1 is always used to recall the sweet memories of village and home, showing that for these participants L1 represents the relationship with family and their own culture. L2 is used to remember the political campaigns as well as encounters with the Han Chinese in school and in the neighbourhood. My five participants interact with two languages in their daily lives, using them as resources in a society where one language is not enough for daily communication. I argue that Tibetans need two languages in their daily lives.

### **8.3 Strengths and Contributions of Knowledge:**

The section discusses the strengths and the contributions of this research. The significance of the research can be seen in the strengths and contributions of this study in three areas of knowledge: factual knowledge of Tibetan bilingual education; methodological knowledge of the ethnographic approach; and theoretical knowledge through the integration of three theoretical research perspectives.

### **8.3.1 Strength and contribution to the knowledge of Tibetan bilingual education**

This research reveals a historic picture of the circumstances surrounding bilingual education over a period of nearly 60 years by examining the stories of five individuals living the Tibetan areas of China from the time the PRC was established until now. This offers a unique understanding of bilingualism and the bilingual education that happened in Tibetan areas of China in different period of times.

Through analysing my thick data, I came to realize that my two participants belong to different types of bilingualism even though they grew up under the same policy towards the Tibetan language. This finding came through of analysing the language shift in Manlatso and Dawa's stories. There are two types of bilingualism: Additive and Subtractive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism refers to learning L2 which does not interfere with L1 and subtractive bilingualism refers to learning L2 which does interfere with L1. Most time minority groups belong to subtractive. In many Tibetan areas, Tibetan students attend school in the official language of Chinese and lose much of their L1. This is an example of subtractive bilingualism. However, in the case of my participant Manlatso, she did not lose her Tibetan (L1) when she began to learn Chinese (L2). This is because she already had a strong foundation in Tibetan from first her village school and then from her bilingual education. It gives hopes to bilinguals in the world whose L1 is not the official language of their living countries, showing that they can become additive bilinguals through reinforcing the L1 both in school and in society just like what Manlatso experienced from her village to her bilingual school. I would say this is the most important finding of this research. Most studies on bilingual education for minority children show that minority children in the process of acquiring the second language always face the risk of losing of their mother tongue. (see 2.2.2; 2.2.3). However, Manlatso's story illuminates that if school community and family work together, and try to reinforce children's first language while teaching the second language to children in school, there is possibility for children to become additive bilinguals. They can enjoy two languages in their daily lives without worrying about losing their first language, the connection with their culture and their heritage.

We need to acknowledge that when minority students find they are losing their L1 through learning L2, they suffer an identity crisis and many find themselves rootless, without a place of true belonging. This can lead to social problems. Through Manlatso and Dawa's stories, we can draw parallels with bilingual learners in other contexts as well. Also, we can begin consider the practical implication for education both in policy and in the classroom. This is

essential, both in avoiding the risks of subtractive bilingualism and in promoting additive bilingualism to the minority children who need two languages in their lives.

### **8.3.2 Strength and contribution to the knowledge of methodology**

I used the ethnographic approach in this research which was initiated from my own experience of developing bilingualism and inspired by the opportunities to meet many Tibetan bilinguals in my daily life. This is the nature of my research it led me to see how ethnographic research approach bounded in my research. I refer it as the strength of my research.

The ethnographic approach seeks to gain a deep understanding through collecting detailed information, which led me to use the life history interview to invite stories from my participants because the 'story is embodied in ethnographic research' (Gordon and Lahelma: 2003: 249). The life history interview offers a great opportunity to hear each individual's very personal voice of developing bilingualism in different Tibetan areas of China at four points in time. Their stories, which have never been heard by outside world, belong to a marginalized group of people becoming bilingual in order to better survive. The stories about themselves in which we can hear their angers, their sadness and their happiness through using life history interview as the tool to collect the thick and deep data. However, these are not only their stories of themselves, but also stories of themselves with the world, allowing use to see the part in the whole and the whole in the part. This is the strength of this research through using narrative as a strategy to collect data.

The ethnographic research approach provides "thick description" as it seeks to interpret the meaning hidden the surface. I gain unique thick description by using Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM). This distinctive method of narrative analysis provides significant strength to my research and contributes to methodology in general by offering insight into data collected in two different languages.

I believe that this methodology makes contribution to the field and adds understanding of bilingualism and bilingual education both in Tibet and in general

### **8.3.3 Strength and contribution to the knowledge of theory**

Bronfenbrenner (2005) divides the environment to 'face – to – face' and 'exosystem' to understand the development of a human being. It offers an insight for me to understand the



complication of bilingualism. From face –to face’ environment we can see the opportunity of developing bilingualism significantly impacted by our daily life at home and in school; furthermore, through looking at the complication of developing bilingualism I came to realize that some events happened long time ago could still largely affect individual’s experience of developing bilingualism. This is ‘exosystem’. In my research the ‘exosystem’ can be the political campaign which happened thousands miles away from face to face environment could fundamentally affect the development of bilingualism in face to face environment. Moreover, the events which happened in the last generation could deeply affect the bilingual experiences of this generation. I would say that through using Bronfenbrenner (2005)’s ecological theory help me to better understand the relation between an individual’s development of bilingualism and society which address the complexity of bilingualism. However, Holland et al.’s concept of history in person helped me to understand why individual’s formation of identity is affected by their experience of developing bilingualism. It helps us to see the layers of contexts as social formation and cultural production in which struggles occur, but which contribute to the development of identity for my five participants. Their stories are illustration of how history is implicated in the development of language for individuals. In addition, the perspective of viewing language as a repertoire led me to see the complication of bilingualism through looking at how my five participants choosing different ways to narrate their stories. It offered an opportunity to see how changes of society affected Tibetan individuals’ language experiences through focusing on viewing language as resource. It further shows the relation between an individual’s development of bilingualism and society, emphasising the important of understanding bilingualism from social – cultural perspective. These three theoretical frames together provide tools to better understand the complexity of bilingualism. Moreover, together reinforce my argument that bilingualism is a social phenomenon.

#### **8.4 The limitation of the study and the implications for further research**

I have acknowledged that there are limitations in this study. In terms of methodology, this study was designed to use life history interview as the only tool for collecting data at the beginning, but when I reached the field, I came to realize the importance of using document as the second tool for data collection. Because the realization of it only happened in the middle of field work while encountering other kinds of data rather than only the data from life

history interviews, I missed the opportunity of collecting more documents which would provide a greater breadth to understanding the subject of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas of China. For example, I did not collect Dawa and Manlatso's Tibetan essays which could show reader that their level in Tibetan writing was very different and it corresponds to my finding that they belong to different types of bilingualism.

Another limitation of my study is that I was not able to meet my participants in the rural contexts where they became bilingual. Goodson (2013: 6) points out that 'life story work concentrates, then, on personal stories, but life histories try to understand stories alongside their historical and cultural backgrounds'. However, because of time constraints, I did not go to the villages, the places where my participants started their journeys of developing bilingualism. I only managed to go to Jampa's village and I also got the opportunity to visit Jampa's school (see 6.7 Jampa's story). Going to villages, staying there visiting people and hearing more stories, it would create more triangulation for this study. Goodson (2013: 37) indicates that the life history can be seen as the 'triangulate' created from the original life history by employing documentary and oral data on historical context and other oral testimonies. The awareness of this can be the suggestion for the further research.

A third limitation of my study is that I only looked at the stories of five different participants. It has been my hope that the particular knowledge of bilingualism through studying five Tibetan individuals' life histories can help other studies on bilingualism to develop similar perspectives. However, I realized that I could have included more participants. If I had been able to choose more participants from more Tibetan areas, my study would have more depth and could offer a more detailed picture of the complexity of developing bilingualism in Tibetan areas from 1950 to present.

My youngest participant Jampa is pursuing his secondary education in a big city of China now, which is a big transition. He was living in Lhasa where Tibetan was the main language for him at home, and where most people both speak Tibetan and Chinese. However, now he is living in a place where most people only speak Chinese and in school most teachers also only speak Chinese. This momentous change in his life is also the big change for all Tibetan children who are doing their secondary education in mainland of China. This policy has been applied only in the Tibet Autonomous Region since 1985. Every year more and more Tibetan children take the exams to go to China to pursue the secondary education. It would be very interesting to know how children develop bilingualism in mainland China and how this experience will take them to the path of either practicing additive or subtractive bilingualism, and how this experience will affect their understanding of their identity as a Tibetan. Because

of the limitation on the number of participants, I was not able to include a participant studying in a xi zang ban in mainland China. However, after this research I will go to N to visit Jampa to see how he is doing. I might try to carry on a life history interview with him and listen to his story of developing bilingualism in a Chinese school with his Tibetan classmates. I would like look at how he sees himself as a Tibetan pursuing his education in mainland China. This is how my PhD research will take me in future research. The limitations also signal fruitful areas for further investigation to build on these foundations and extend knowledge of bilingual education in Tibet.

## 8.5 Summary

China has fifty-five recognized nationalities which are labelled as minorities. Rong (2007:12) states that ‘Of the fifty-five ethnic minorities in China, one-third function in Chinese as well as in their own language, six of the nationalities have converted mainly or entirely to using Chinese, and a majority of the members of forty of the nationalities can use Chinese as a second language.’ Bilingual education has been carried on among many minority areas since 1950 (see 2.5). However, since Chinese is the most advantageous language in education and the job market, some of educators and even parents of minority children regard learning minority language as a waste of children’s time. Su Keming (1989: 49) points out that “in minority areas there are teachers, parents of students and even students themselves who believe that since placement examinations, especially college entrance examinations, are not written in the minority language, nor is the minority language one of the subjects on the examinations, then, rather than being like ‘the blind person who only wastes wax by lighting a candle,’ it is better to invest the time allocated for learning the minority language in studying mathematics, physics and chemistry” (cited in Rong: 2007:22). However, a protest happened in Huangnan Tibetan prefecture of Qinghai Province in 2012 (see 6.6: Manlastso’ story). Students ran to the street to protest when they heard the Tibetan language was about to be taken away from school curriculum. Developing bilingualism or not has become a big issue in minority areas of China. It is not a matter of whether parents decide to send their children to a bilingual school or mainstream school where their children only learn Chinese, or the decision made by educators to reduce the time table on learning minority written language in school curriculum. It relates to PRC’s ambition of building up a more harmonious society. Moreover, it is the issue of provision of equal education within China.

The significance of this research is the contribution to understanding bilingualism and bilingual education from listening to the voices of five Tibetan individuals. It is potentially a very significant for educational policy and practice, especially for ethnic minorities and bilingual education in China. This research shows that we need to see bilingualism as a social phenomenon, because the five participants' experiences illustrating Tibetans interacting with two languages in their daily lives. Thus this research leads us to understand bilingualism from social – political perspectives. It indicates that minorities like Tibetans are born to become bilingual. It is therefore important for policy makers and educators to realize the significance of improving bilingual education within minority areas, because minority children need two languages in their lives.

## **8.6 My final thoughts on my research**

Bilingualism is a necessity, not a choice, for Tibetans living in the PRC if they want to preserve their cultural and linguistic identities and at the same time be successful citizens of their neighbourhoods, society and country. As I hope has become clear through my research and interviews, Tibetans becoming bilingual over the past 65 years in the PRC has truly been a complex struggle. Now, looking forward to the future, I believe that in order to help Tibetan students develop a solid bilingual identity which preserves and does not diminish the importance of their L1, I suggest that schools and communities work together to encourage a balanced bilingualism. Perhaps some of my suggestions below may be a bit idealistic, but I would like to dream aloud for what could be reality if Tibetans truly want to preserve their unique identity as they become bilingual and move forward with the changes sweeping through their towns and villages and all of the PRC as a whole.

I believe that schools can both support nationalism and at the same time, affirm the Tibetan ethnicity of their students. As I hope has become clear, policies in different times and areas have shifted from promoting Tibetan culture to promoting nationalism. I do not believe these two approaches are necessarily mutually exclusive. Instead, I believe schools can, with careful planning, include both. Of course, educational systems are subject to a continuously evolving society and changing political policies, but I believe the uniqueness of the Tibetan identity can be maintained in spite of these changes. Additionally, Tibetans who become additive bilinguals have the distinct advantage of being able to enter into two cultures to enjoy the richness of each one: they can enjoy the depth and beauty of their own language and culture and at the same time respect and honour Chinese language and culture without resentment. Perhaps these are lofty ideals, but I truly believe this can be achieved at least to some degree.

Because education can either facilitate or impede an individual's identity development, I would love to see schools working hard to facilitate bilingualism in their programs. This could be achieved by first helping children establish their Tibetan identity by teaching the first two years of school exclusively in Tibetan and then slowly adding in Chinese so that by the time the children reach middle school, they are comfortable interacting and reading and writing in both. Children could learn to respect and honour their L1 from the beginning if the schools and their teachers celebrate it and promote it by encouraging its use in creative expression.

Communities can also establish centres of Tibetan learning, where people with knowledge of Tibetan language, history, and culture can give lectures, teach language classes, and help develop artistic expression in song, art, and drama. The government of the PRC is rightfully concerned that such centres may become hotbeds for subversive political activity, so these centres would need to work closely with government officials.

If schools and communities create such programs, Tibetans can become bilingual in positive, wholesome ways. Of course such efforts must be intentional and widespread. It is my hope that this research may be something of a catalyst for change in the right direction.

I would say I have grown up as a researcher during these four years' journey of conducting this research project. My five participants are the essence of my research. They are university professors, university students, and a pupil in primary school. They have different backgrounds, ages and experiences but they all shared their precious experiences of developing bilingualism in their daily lives from village to school with me. My thesis rested on the stories which tell of their sadness, their happiness, their anger, and their hardships toward bilingualism in their daily lives.

Now I come to the end of my study. However, life still continues for my five participants. Professor is retired; A Ji is busy carrying on teaching. Manlatso and Dawa graduated from university in July of this year. Malatso took the exam for doing a postgraduate course in Tibetan history. But she failed and she told me she wanted to have another try next year. Dawa intended to find a job as a Tibetan teacher. But I have not heard from her about her job hunting. Jampa is pursuing his secondary school education in a big city of mainland China.

Though the study comes to an end, their voices will always echo to me and their stories will forever be an inspiration for me. I would like to finish this thesis with the Tibetan proverb.

It is good to know many other languages.  
However it is a shame to forget your father tongue.

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**Appendix 1 Bilingual Classroom By yixilamtso**



By Yixilamtso



Children in a Tibetan boarding school



## Appendix 2 Tibetan folk story

### Harmony of four different animals

by Yixilamtso

The following folk tale illustrates the Tibetan idea of harmony. Many years ago, there was a place whose deep beauty drew four different animals - an elephant, a monkey, a mountain rabbit, and a bird – to settle there one by one. These four animals enjoyed their life year after year. However, gradually they became confused about one another's age. One day, they held a meeting among themselves during which they discussed finding a way to know each other's accurate age in order to respect the eldest and take care of the youngest. Since there was a big, heavily-branched tree there, they decided they could know each other's age by measuring the tree.

First the elephant said, 'When I first came here, I was able to eat the little fresh leaves from the tree by stretching my neck.'

The monkey said, 'In my memory, the tree was not as tall as I was when I first saw it.'

The mountain rabbit said in hurry, 'The tree was just a little plant with only two leaves when I came here.'

Finally, the bird began to speak. He said slowly, 'Oh, I saw a beautiful place. I had a seed in my mouth. I planted it here and now it has become a big tree.'

Everybody got to know each other's age by this explanation. They were very happy to respect the oldest- the bird-and to take care of the youngest-the elephant. The elephant carried the monkey on his back, the monkey lifted the rabbit, and the rabbit lifted the bird.

This tale is called 'The Harmony of Four Different Animals.' It spread throughout Tibet for a long time. Its idea of harmony has deep roots in Tibetan culture and religion, and its impact has lasted until the present time.

The picture below is the harmony of four different animals which displayed on a wall of classroom in a Tibetan school.

By Yixilamtso





## Appendix 3 Tibetan folk song

### Honouring every element in a person's life

Translated by Yixilamtso

*I used to ignore the chance to show gratitude to my lovely cow,*

*Tears welled up in my eye when I thought of it.*

*I seldom showed my feelings when I was fed by her milk.*

*Now, I cannot find my lovely cow anywhere,*

*And I lay my hand on my heart with deep sorrow.*

*I used to ignore the chance of repaying my gratitude to my horse,*

*Tears poured out like a flowing river when I remember it.*

*I scarcely showed my feeling when he carried me as I travelled.*

*Now my heart is disturbed and overwhelmed with deep grief.*

*I can hardly find my dear horse at the end of the earth.*

*I used to ignore the chance to repay my gratitude to my parents.*

*My heart is broken with great remorse when I dream about it.*

*I never showed my feelings when I was consuming their strength.*

*Now my heart is troubled as a restless sea.*

*I cannot find my dear parents in any part of my life.*

## Appendix 4 Yidan Cairang's poems

Lu (path)

On the road I relish the speed of a horse's hoof.  
In the desert I admire the heavy load a camel carries.  
On the snow mountain that frightens the eagle,  
I see the yak with its tongue struck out jumping like a fierce tiger from the ravine!  
Beneath the feet of those who struggle, there will always be a path!  
Please do not think too highly of the one who dives into the water-  
The necklaces of my ancestors are the corals deep in the sea!

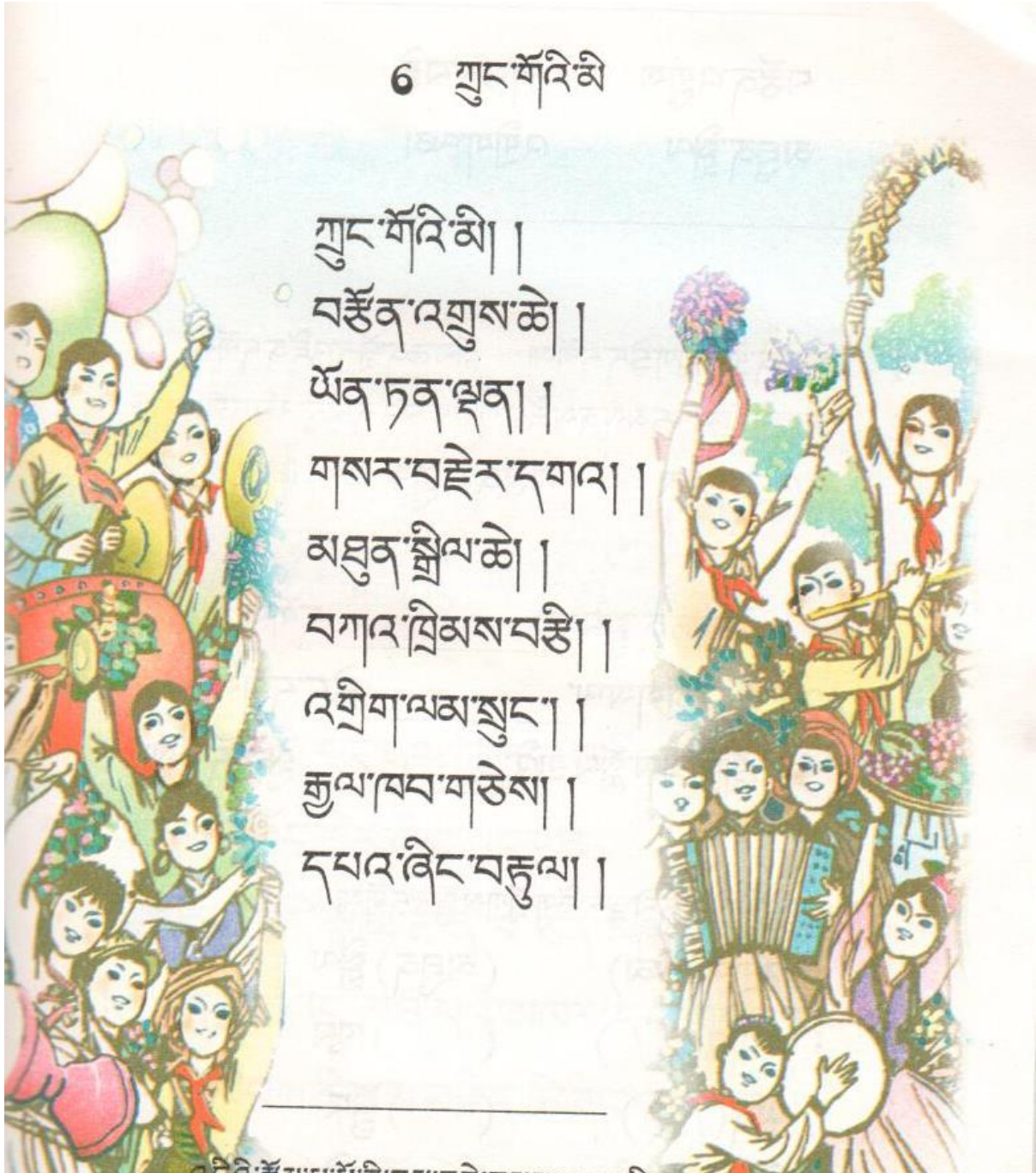
(Dhondup, 2008: 46)

Dabian (A replay)

I praise the Amazon which sings the greatness of the native Americans.  
I gasp in admiration when the Nile accumulates the splendour of the  
"Thousand and One nights."  
But I do not therefore blame at all my mother,  
Because the Yellow River and the Yangtse River gave Gesar to a world of  
Twinkling stars!  
The cultural history of each nationality is not bestowed by heaven!  
My responsibility is not to dress up my mother with things from faraway  
Places,  
But to transform my mother's milk into wisdom that inspires epics!

((Dhondup, 2008: 47)

Appendix 5 Tibetan text book



**TRANSLATION**

By Yixilamtso

**Chinese People**

Chinese people

Hard working

Full of knowledge

Prefer revolution

And unity

Respect law

Discipline self

Love their country

Brave and respectful

## Appendix 6 The interview schedule

Interviewee	Date of Interview	Length of Time	Language
Professor	12/March/8/march/ 23/march/ 6/March	Five and half hours	Chinese and Tibetan
A Ji	16/June of 2012  17/June of 2012  23/June of 2012  24/June of 2012	Two hours and forty minutes	Tibetan and Chinese
Dawa	15/June of 2102  17/June of 2012  19/June of 2012	Two and half hours	Chinese
Manlatso	27/July of 2012	Two and ten minutes	Tibetan
Jampa	12/May of 2012  19/May of 2012  26/May of 2012	One and half hour	Tibetan and Chinese

## **Appendix 7 Model Information Sheet**

Information Sheet for a person who is 70 years old

Research project –

We wish to invite you to take part in this research project. Please take time to read the following information to help you decide if you wish to take part. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The purposes of the project are:

To understand how bilingual experiences being affect in the term of education.

To understand how Tibetan and Chinese have been mediated at different points in time in the political and cultural context.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are a bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese and because your age fixes the design of my research.

### **What will happen if I agree to take part?**

If you agree to take part, I will interview you for several times. And the interview will be taken place at your home.

### **Will I be recorded, and how will the recordings be used?**

With your permission, I will take notes during interview and will record the interviews so that I have a good record of what you have said. I will be the only person to listen to the recording, and I will transcribe it so my supervisors can read it shall they need to. I will change all the names so that no-one else will be able to identify you or your school. Before I share the transcripts, I will check with you that you are happy for me to do this. If there are any things you are not happy about, I will not share them. After I have finished doing the research, the recordings will be kept safely in a file at the university.

During the recording process, if you would like to say something that you don't feel comfortable for me to record, please signal and I will switch off the recorder and switch it back on again later when you think it's fine.

We will not show the results to anyone else, but we will write about them and speak to other people from universities about them at conferences and seminars.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is being organised by myself, Yi XiLaMuCuo , under the supervision of Dr Jean Conteh and Dr Martin Wedell in the School of Education at Leeds and is self-funded.

If you wish to speak to me, please reply by email or phone us. Here are my phone numbers:

Landline: 0931 8815143

Mobile

Thank you very much for reading this information sheet. We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project, and thank you for your time and interest.

Information Sheet for a person who is 50 years old

### **Research project –**

We wish to invite you to take part in this research project. Please take time to read the following information to help you decide if you wish to take part. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The purposes of the project are:

To understand how bilingual experiences being affect in the term of education.

To understand how Tibetan and Chinese have been mediated at different points in time in the political and cultural context.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

*You have been chosen because you are a bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese and because your age fixes the design of my research.*

### **What will happen if I agree to take part?**

If you agree to take part, I will interview you for several times. And the interview will be taken place at your home.

### **Will I be recorded, and how will the recordings be used?**

With your permission, I will take notes during interview and will record the interviews so that I have a good record of what you have said. I will be the only person to listen to the recording, and I will transcribe it so my supervisors can read it shall they need to. I will change all the names so that no-one else will be able to identify you or your school. Before I share the transcripts, I will check with you that you are happy for me to do this. If there are any things you are not happy about, I will not share them. After I have finished doing the research, the recordings will be kept safely in a file at the university.

During the recording process, if you would like to say something that you don't feel comfortable for me to record, please signal and I will switch off the recorder and switch it back on again later when you think it's fine.



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If you wish to speak to me, please reply by email or phone us. Here are my phone numbers:

Landline: 0931 8815143

Mobile

Thank you very much for reading this information sheet. We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project, and thank you for your time and interest.

Information Sheet for a person who is a Tibetan majored university student

### **Research project –**

We wish to invite you to take part in this research project. Please take time to read the following information to help you decide if you wish to take part. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The purposes of the project are:

To understand how bilingual experiences being affect in the term of education.

To understand how Tibetan and Chinese have been mediated at different points in time in the political and cultural context.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen because you are a bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese and because your age fixes the design of my research.

### **What will happen if I agree to take part?**

If you agree to take part, I will interview you for several times. And the interview will be taken place at your home.

### **Will I be recorded, and how will the recordings be used?**

With your permission, I will take notes during interview and will record the interviews so that I have a good record of what you have said. I will be the only person to listen to the recording, and I will transcribe it so my supervisors can read it shall they need to. I will change all the names so that no-one else will be able to identify you. Before I share the transcripts, I will check with you that you are happy for me to do this. If there are any things you are not happy about, I will not share them. After I have finished doing the research, the recordings will be kept safely in a file at the university.

During the recording process, if you would like to say something that you don't feel comfortable for me to record, please signal and I will switch off the recorder and switch it back on again later when you think it's fine.

We will not show the results to anyone else, but we will write about them and speak to other people from universities about them at conferences and seminars.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

This research is being organised by myself, Yi XiLaMuCuo , under the supervision of Dr Jean Conteh and Dr Martin Wedell in the School of Education at Leeds and is self-funded.

If you wish to speak to me, please reply by email or phone us. Here are my phone numbers:

Landline: 0931 8815143

Mobile:

Thank you very much for reading this information sheet. We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project, and thank you for your time and interest.

Information Sheet for the parents of my youngest participant

### **Research project –**

We wish to invite your son/daughter to take part in this research project. Please take time to read the following information to help you decide if you wish to let your child take part. If you have any questions, please get in touch.

### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The purposes of the project are:

To understand how bilingual experiences being affect in the term of education.

To understand how Tibetan and Chinese have been mediated at different points in time in the political and cultural context.

### **Why have I been chosen?**

Your child has been chosen because he/she is a bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese and because his/her age fixes the design of my research.

### **What will happen if I agree to take part?**

If you agree to let your child to take part, I will interview him/her you for several times. And the interview will be taken place at your home.

### **Will I be recorded, and how will the recordings be used?**

With your permission, I will take notes during interview and will record the interviews so that I have a good record of what your child have said. I will be the only person to listen to the recording, and I will transcribe it so my supervisors can read it shall they need to. I will change all the names so that no-one else will be able to identify your child. Before I share the transcripts, I will check with you that you are happy for me to do this. If there are any things you are not happy about, I will not share them. After I have finished doing the research, the recordings will be kept safely in a file at the university.

During the recording process, if your child would like to say something that you don't feel comfortable for me to record, please signal and I will switch off the recorder and switch it back on again later when you think it's fine.

We will not show the results to anyone else, but we will write about them and speak to other people from universities about them at conferences and seminars.

**Who is organising and funding the research?**

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If you wish to speak to me, please reply by email or phone us. Here are my phone numbers:

Landline: 0931 8815143

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Thank you very much for reading this information sheet. We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project, and thank you for your time and interest.

## Appendix 8 Model Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Becoming bilingual in school and home in Tibetan areas of China: Stories of struggle

Name of Researcher: \_\_\_\_\_ Yi XiLaMuCuo \_\_\_\_\_

*Initial the box if you agree with the statement to the left*

1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet which explains the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

2 I understand that I have agreed to take part in the research. I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. If I withdraw, there will be no negative consequences. Also, I do not wish to answer any questions in my interview, I do not need to answer.

3 I understand that the researchers will make sure that all information collected about me will be kept strictly confidential. My name and the names of my place of employment and colleagues and any other details will be made anonymous

4 I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research

5 I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the researcher if my contact details change.

6. I agree that the interview be audio recorded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant  
*representative)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (or legal

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

*To be signed and dated in presence of the participant*