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## The development of minority education and the practice of bilingual education in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

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**Abstract** The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is an area of great importance for the ethnic minorities of northwestern China, and the development of local minority education has been a constant concern in both government and academic spheres. By means of analyzing government documents, statistical data and research literature, this article attempts to define the fundamental modes and development processes of minority education in Xinjiang. Furthermore, the article elaborates on discussion of the development and problems relevant to bilingual education in the concentrated Uyghur communities of southern Xinjiang based on the author's field research in the Kashgar Prefecture in 2007.

**Keywords** Xinjiang, minority education, bilingual education

**摘要** 新疆是中国西北一个非常重要的少数民族自治区，当地少数民族教育事业的发展也一直为政府和学术界所关注。通过对相关统计资料和研究文献的梳理，对新疆民族教育的基本模式和发展历程进行了梳理，并利用 2007 年在南疆喀什地区实地调查所得到的信息对南疆维吾尔族聚居区近年来在双语教育方面的发展及实践中反映出的具体问题展开了讨论。

**关键词** 新疆，少数民族教育，双语教育

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### 1 Introduction

Under the overarching principal of representing a unified nation-state, the

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political, economic, and cultural integration of diverse ethnic minority groups, is a constant core concern of any multi-ethnic country. When each ethnic group has its own particular language and cultural traditions, the use and the future trend of their languages surely become sensitive societal issues. Countries in the contemporary world have been, to varying degrees, involved in the trend of globalization; therefore, the function of language as both a cultural carrier and a tool for education and communication, takes on an important role in communication between countries and between ethnic groups within a country. Furthermore, in response to the need for increased inter-ethnic communication in trade and cultural interactions, “regional languages” emerge in different areas, meaning that the people of all groups in one region intend to learn and use one language for the sake of efficiency (Ma, 2008). Language learning is the necessary prerequisite for cultural exchange and integration among ethnic groups, and the development of languages’ usage predicts the prospect for the progression of an inter-ethnic relationship.<sup>1</sup>

In modern society, schools at different levels that offer formal education are places where people systematically acquire knowledge and skills, and also serve as important channels for learning social norms, becoming “socialized” and improving status in the system of social stratification. It can even be said that there is a close relationship between a person’s development opportunities as well as social status, and his/her educational achievement in schools—defined as the grade s/he has reached, what kind of school s/he attended, what s/he majors in, and similar measures. In the same framework, in a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country, the language adopted by students of each ethnic group is also of great importance, as is the linguistic and cultural environment in the classroom. Students acquire knowledge at school in order to apply it to future work and life and, at the same time, to foster communication with colleagues, clients, and other members of society. Therefore, the instructional language used in class and in textbooks will determine the students’ ability to converse with peers as well as defining the scope of society within which they are able to communicate and work in the future.

According to the Chinese *Constitution*, each ethnic group has the right to “apply and develop” its own language. At the same time, the study and use of

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<sup>1</sup> *Shutongwen* (write with the same language) issued by Emperor Qin Shi Huang (221–210 B.C.) in Chinese history was one of the vital policies establishing a new cultural identity after the unification of the six states. In the same vein, particular stress is also paid in the establishment of national languages in European nation-states and in the role that Western languages played in the construction of identity within colonies and in the process of “nation-building” after independence (Anderson, 2003).

*Putonghua*<sup>2</sup> as an “inter-group language in China” is advocated for the sake of communication among all ethnic groups and for the development of the country. In the ethnic minorities’ autonomous regions, both the nationally popularized *Putonghua* and the languages of native ethnic minorities are recognized as official and legitimate languages that can be applied concurrently not only for official and social public occasions, but also as languages of instruction at local schools. Since the founding of The People’s Republic of China, the government has gradually instituted a bilingual education system from kindergarten to college in each autonomous region for ethnic minorities, actively popularizing *Putonghua* and systematically teaching the local languages as well. Since the native minority language is a primary language of instruction at schools in ethnic minorities’ areas, bilingual education is a crucial subject when it comes to the issue of education of Chinese ethnic minorities.

Xinjiang is one of the five major autonomous regions in China. In the region, minorities account for 60 percent of the total population. As a result, many scholars in the field of minority education have focused on the development of bilingual education in Xinjiang. From 2000 to 2007, I have traveled to Xinjiang on many occasions, and I have cooperated with local scholars on field research concerning bilingual education and employment situation of minority students in certain areas. In August 2007 we conducted an ad hoc survey<sup>3</sup> on bilingual education in the Kashgar Prefecture of southern Xinjiang. Namely, we attended three colloquia of principals and teachers of local primary and middle schools organized by regional education bureaus; we also visited the Kashgar Education College (the normal school to train teachers), seven middle and high schools, and one kindergarten; and we had informal discussions with teachers and students, and paid home visits to a dozen students enrolled in middle schools or pre-school classes. Based on the field survey data and supplementary research, this article aims to shed light on the developing condition of bilingual education in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and discuss about some key issues presently at stake.

I would like to thank Li Xiaoxia, a researcher in Xinjiang Academy of Social Sciences whose as yet unpublished thesis on the affirmative action policy on college entrance examinations in Xinjiang provided thorough information. My thanks are also devoted to the documents and reports on investigation of

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<sup>2</sup> *Putonghua* is the language commonly used by the Han, Hui, Manchu, Hezhi, and She in China. Large proportions of other minority groups (Mongol, Zhuang, Tujia, Dongxiang, etc.) also speak *Putonghua*. It was used to be called “Mandarin” in the West and was officially renamed “Han *Putonghua*” (abbreviated *Putonghua*) in 1955 by the Central Government of P.R.C., and the regulations of its pronunciation, grammar, and simplified writing characters were issued in the following years. It is often called “Chinese language” in western literature.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Abduqadir Semet, Dr. Zuliyati Simayi, and Zhao Rui participated in this field survey.

bilingual education by the Education Bureau of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and relevant literature as well as survey data from other sources.

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## **2 The relative size and geographical distribution of the ethnic group populations in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**

Located in northwestern China, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has a total area of 1.664 9 million square kilometers, which makes up one sixth of China's total territory. It is the largest provincial-level administrative region in the country. To the north, east, and west, Xinjiang shares its 5 600 kilometers of borders with eight countries: Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan. The region's location makes it a crucial part of the historical "Silk Road," as the strategic channel by which Eastern Asia connects to Central Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. Therefore, the Autonomous Region occupies a position of vital international strategic importance.

From a demographic perspective, the ethnic relations in Xinjiang are seen in the following statistics:

Various minority groups constitute the majority of Xinjiang's population, with Uyghurs comprising the largest subgroup. The total population of Xinjiang in 2005 was 20.104 million; the 12.147 million minorities therefore account for 60.4 percent of the total population. 9.235 million Uyghurs make up some 45.9 percent of the total population of Xinjiang; 7.957 million Han Chinese make up 39.6 percent; 1.414 million Kazaks make up 7 percent; and 893 000 Hui make up 4.4 percent. In addition, the region is home to 172 000 Mongolian, 171 000 Kirgiz, 44 000 Tajik, 41 000 Xibe, 25 000 Manchu, 15 000 Uzbek, 11 000 Russian, 6 484 Daur, 4 717 Tartar, and other ethnic minorities with a total population of 114 000 (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, pp.82–83).<sup>4</sup>

In addition to populations, it is important to note that many ethnic groups live

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<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the census materials in 2000, the population sizes of other minority groups in Xinjiang are as follows: Dongxiang 55 841, Manchu 19 493, Tujia 15 787, Miao 7 006, Tibet 6 153, Zhuang 5 642, Sala 3 762, Tu 2 837, Yi 1 593, Chaoxian 1 463, Buyi 977, Dong 946, Yao 723, Baoan 571, Bai 409, Yugu 302, Shui 301, Qiang 284, She 166, Li 115, Qilao 110, Naxi 73, Ewenke 72, Wa 68, Hani 62, Dai 59, Dulong 51, Gaoshan 41, Lili 34, Luoba 33, Yaolao 29, Lagu 28, Jingpo 27, Hezhe 22, Nu 18, Deang 14, Elunchun 14, Jing 12, Menba 11, Pumi 10, Bulang 9, Maonan 9, Achang 2, others 109, foreigners with Chinese nationality 58 (Xinjiang Census Office, 2002, pp.40–95). The 13 groups mentioned in the main text plus these 43 ethnic groups sum to 56 ethnic groups. Seen from the ethnic-group structure mentioned above, albeit Xinjiang is located in the northwestern border area of our country, it has become a qualified common family of the 56 ethnic groups of the Chinese nation.

in geographically separated compact communities. Table 1 introduces the population proportion of each ethnic group as well as the total population of each prefecture and city at prefecture-level in administration in Xinjiang. The Uyghur population is mainly concentrated in the areas of Hotan, Kashgar, Aksu, and Kizilsu of southern Xinjiang; and also in the Turpan area of eastern Xinjiang. Smaller populations of Uyghurs gather around Shihezi and northern. The Kirgiz population is concentrated in Kizilsu Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture. Kazaks are centered mainly on Altay, Tacheng, and Ili. Of the fifteen prefectures/cities, eight have Han populations that account for more than half the total. The three prefectures, Hotan, Kashgar, and Kizilsu in southern Xinjiang, have Han populations less than ten percent of the local population. To be sure, the geographical distribution of ethnic groups in comparatively compact communities greatly influences the mode of education at local schools.

**Table 1** Population distribution of Xinjiang by prefecture/city and their ethnic structure in 2005 (%)

Location	Total population (in ten thousands)	Uyghur	Han	Kazak	Hui	Kirgiz	Mongolian
Urumqi City	194.1	13.0	73.7	2.8	8.6	0.1	0.4
Karamay City	25.5	15.3	75.2	4.1	2.4	0.0	0.9
Shihezi City	64.2	1.0	94.8	0.5	2.5	0.0	0.1
Turpan Prefecture	58.4	70.2	23.1	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0
Hami Prefecture	54.0	18.2	69.0	8.9	2.9	0.0	0.4
Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture	157.9	4.0	74.4	8.3	11.7	0.0	0.4
Ili Kazakh Subordinate County	259.6	23.7	40.2	20.4	10.0	0.6	1.2
Tacheng Prefecture	96.7	4.0	58.3	24.8	7.1	0.2	3.4
Altay Prefecture	63.0	1.6	42.8	50.3	3.4	0.0	0.9
Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	45.8	12.6	67.7	9.3	3.6	0.0	5.9
Bayin'gholin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	117.1	32.2	57.9	0.1	5.0	0.0	4.1
Aksu Prefecture	226.5	72.9	25.7	0.0	0.6	0.4	0.0
Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture	47.6	64.0	7.0	0.0	0.1	27.7	0.0
Kashgar Prefecture	369.4	90.0	8.5	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0
Hotan Prefecture	182.5	96.7	3.1	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Entire Autonomous Region	2 010.4	45.9	39.6	7.0	4.4	0.9	0.9

Source: (Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, pp.82–83).

While Xinjiang constitutes a vast territory, there is only an average of 12 persons per square kilometer, which is far lower than the average population density of the whole country (136 persons per square kilometer). In 2005, of the 87 counties of the whole region, 4 counties had a population density of less than 1 person per square kilometer.

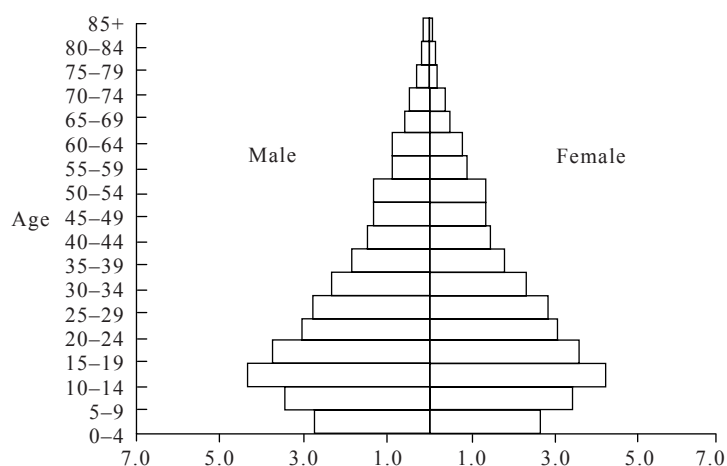
The Han Chinese tend to live in cities and towns, whereas minorities generally inhabit the sparse oasis villages of the Gobi Desert. The fact that these communities are small and relatively isolated makes inter-ethnic communications particularly difficult. Southern Xinjiang is mostly inhabited by Uyghurs, with the exception of a few Han people in cities and towns. Almost no Han live in villages,<sup>5</sup> so these areas lack any setting for Uyghur inhabitants and children to get in touch with Han and *Putonghua*. Even those Uyghur officials and teachers who learned *Putonghua* at schools in cities and towns find their *Putonghua* level declining in such a linguistic environment. As such, the development of bilingual education in these areas is extremely difficult.

Furthermore, due to different family planning policies for minorities and Han, the fertility rate of most minorities in Xinjiang is higher than that of the Han. According to 1990 national census data, the total fertility rate of Han in 1989 was 2.29 whereas that of Uyghur was 4.65, ranking highest in the nation (Zhang and Huang, 1993). The high fertility rate has enlarged the Uyghur population from 3.61 million in 1953 to 5.96 million in 1982 and 9.24 million in 2005. Subsequently, the trend has led to a substantial annual increase in the number of school-age children, bringing pressure to the operation and development of schools. If these students lacked bilingual capabilities, then they would have no choice but to search for employment opportunities within their own compact ethnic community, and the issue of employment among Uyghur youth would become increasingly dire. This possibility brings to the forefront the necessity of carrying out bilingual education in Uyghur communities.

From the population pyramid in 2000 (Fig.1), we can draw the following analysis of the age structure and developing trend of the Uyghur population: 1970–1990 was the period with highest fertility rate, and the birth rate began to decline in 1990. The age group with the largest population in 2007 was that of 17–21, followed by that of 22–26. The pressure of employment will reduce 5–10 years later, and the reduced number of school-age children would result in a benign historical opportunity for the construction and development of schools and the adjustment of curricula.

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, as is explained by teachers in the eighth township of Jiashi County in Kashgar Prefecture who attended the colloquium, of the some 8 000 families in that township, only 10 belong to the Han group. The 1990 census data indicates that of the township populace in Shufu County, Yingjisha County, and Shule County of the Kashgar Prefecture, Han people makes up only 0.2–1.1 percent (Ma, 2000).



**Fig.1** Population pyramid of Uyghur in Xinjiang in 2000

Besides its concerns about language diversity, Xinjiang is also unique in terms of cultural tradition and religious beliefs. Around the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Islam began to reach Central Asia, gradually reaching Xinjiang and China in general.<sup>6</sup> Of the ethnic minorities, Uyghur, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Tajik, Uzbek, and Tartar generally believe in Islam, and the corresponding populations mainly concentrate on the habitation of western Xinjiang bordering the countries in Central Asia with a few living in the east. The five ethnic groups of Kazak, Mongolia, Kirgiz, Tajik, and Uzbek belong to “cross-border groups” that have established corresponding countries outside China with independent sovereignties. Given the scope of these ethnic groups, religious belief and “cross-border group identity” are two key factors not to be ignored when it comes to the analysis of inter-ethnic relationships in Xinjiang.

### 3 The development of the education system in Xinjiang

#### 3.1 The development of educational institutions and the enlargement of enrollment capacity

In 2005, there were 7 426 schools at different levels (excluding pre-school institutions) in Xinjiang. At that time, school enrollment was 4.055 million, of which 57.4 percent were minority students. The proportion of school enrollment

<sup>6</sup> “Most scholars contend...Since 960 when King Shatuoke of Halahan converted to Islam, the religion has been introduced and developed in Xinjiang” (Ma, 1983).

of minorities is on a par with the proportion of the minority population to the total population. Of the 261 696 professional teachers in various schools, 158 000, or 56 percent, were minority teachers. Of the 241 693 professional teachers in primary and middle schools, 144 967 were minority teachers, accounting for 59.9 percent. The development of an education system started late in Xinjiang, where there were only 525 college graduates and 593 high school graduates in 1957 (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, p.519). In 2005, however, college enrollment reached 59 000, indicating that in the past decades, the educational system has been progressing at an astounding rate considering the relatively large population of school-age minorities and the difficulties in developing new courses in minority languages (Table 2). Nevertheless, there is still certain distance to cover in the development of education to make up the difference between minority schools and Han schools in Xinjiang. The Han schools take great advantages from schools, universities, and recruiting qualified teachers in coastal areas of China in developing textbooks and reading materials.

**Table 2** Enrollment of schools at different levels in Xinjiang (1980–2005)

Year	College/ university	Secondary school					Primary school	Special school for the blind and deaf-mutes
		Middle school	High school	Technical secondary school	Vocational secondary school	Technical training school		
1980	3 767	236 972	73 959	14 688	792	10 531	422 089	90
1985	9 298	247 431	93 692	13 919	20 429	10 603	374 643	91
1990	8 034	213 074	84 567	15 586	27 968	15 420	335 552	103
1991	8 179	161 986	77 525	16 902	29 354	16 722	344 432	15
1992	10 985	208 186	61 673	20 611	27 041	17 194	359 302	119
1993	13 359	207 503	56 180	26 572	24 778	16 851	385 535	102
1994	12 099	214 685	44 552	29 248	21 350	16 325	400 700	102
1995	12 307	228 115	58 203	25 260	25 643	19 593	419 717	165
1996	12 421	239 948	59 400	26 311	23 003	18 110	428 651	67
1997	12 673	262 117	64 377	27 302	21 741	17 034	443 238	120
1998	12 880	293 932	71 302	27 497	19 862	13 807	429 247	130
1999	19 821	329 715	69 801	36 014	18 828	9 221	391 298	175
2000	30 689	342 046	76 744	38 866	20 027	9 080	364 193	177
2001	42 253	366 359	93 519	26 763	16 621	7 207	352 975	135
2002	42 808	388 558	113 366	22 241	16 746	10 442	346 386	874
2003	44 733	406 824	126 163	24 016	15 378	10 652	347 619	369
2004	53 204	398 090	138 315	27 990	27 585	14 686	347 364	390
2005	58 653	390 224	145 044	34 882	12 416	15 115	338 539	847

Source: (Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, p.518).



In 2005, 2 017 of every ten 10 000 people in Xinjiang were enrolled students. In contrast, the national average is 1 667 enrolled students per 10 000 citizens. This figure shows the relatively young age structure in Xinjiang, and simultaneously indicates the rapid development of the education system in recent years. Since its institution, a population that has benefited from “the nine-year compulsory education” in Xinjiang makes up 81 percent of the total population. In 2005, the admission rate for middle school was 98.1 percent, and the rate for high school was 40.7 percent. These rates almost equal the national average rate at the time, 41.7 percent. However, the admission rate into college in Xinjiang was 56.4 percent in 2005, which was lower than the national average (76.3 percent).<sup>7</sup>

Another set of figures that shows the development trends of the education system in Xinjiang is the entrance rates of the school-age population at different levels of the school system. The gross entrance rate of senior high school students (the age group of 16–18) reached 45–48 percent, while that of college education students (the age group of 19–22) was 19.5 percent. In Table 3 it can be seen that as the education system throughout China has developed, the admission rate for junior middle school in Xinjiang has increased from 81 percent in 1980 to 98.1 percent in 2005. On the other hand, the entrance rate for senior high school and other schools (polytechnic school, vocational high school, etc.) was slow in advancing. Assuming that the “Others” in “Destination of graduates” in Table 3 entered the employment market, the employment rate of middle school graduates since 1999 has remained consistently over 40 percent—obviously higher than that from 1985–1998 (20–30 percent), which may indicate that high school education in Xinjiang has failed to grow simultaneously along with the scale of students of the corresponding age.

The rate of high school graduates entering college in Xinjiang increased greatly in 2000 and 2001, keeping pace with national college expansion. The number of enrolled students in Chinese colleges/universities has increased from 402 000 in 1978, to 1 million in 1997, and to 5.045 million in 2005. Of particular concern is that the number of college graduates in Xinjiang has been rapidly increasing annually since 2002 (Table 3). 1.57 times more college students graduated in 2003 than in 2002, 1.2 times in 2004 than in 2003, and 1.22 times in 2005 than 2004. Along with producing graduates, college expansion has begun,

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<sup>7</sup> According to the data of *Statistical Yearbook of China*, there were 6.616 million graduates of senior high school all over the country in 2005 while 5.045 million were enrolled in colleges and universities (State Statistical Bureau, 2006, pp. 800–801). The college education in Xinjiang develops (on the number of colleges and enrolling capacity) far slower than other provinces and coastal areas. Worse still, due to language barriers, minority students of Xinjiang suffer constraints when being enrolled in colleges in inner land or coastal areas, which exerts negative influence on the admission rate from high school to college of Xinjiang.

step by step, to directly influence the employment market for graduates. It is conceivable that at the present rate at which college education is developed, the issue of employment of college graduates will increasingly arise and eventually become a social problem in Xinjiang and even in the whole China.

**Table 3** The admission into higher schools and employment of graduates at different levels in Xinjiang from 1980 to 2005

Year	Middle school admission rate	Middle school graduates	Destination of middle school graduates (%)			Destination of high school graduates (%)		University graduates
			High school	Other schools	Other	University	Other	
1980	81.0	186 012	39.8	14.0	46.2	6.2	93.8	814
1985	85.6	199 206	47.0	22.6	30.4	13.7	86.3	3 511
1990	82.2	216 173	39.1	27.3	33.6	9.9	90.1	8 603
1991	88.3	195 249	39.7	32.3	28.0	10.3	89.7	7 919
1992	77.7	176 435	35.0	36.7	28.3	13.0	87.0	8 402
1993	80.0	182 827	30.7	37.3	32.0	17.0	83.0	7 741
1994	81.9	141 749	31.4	47.2	21.4	21.2	78.8	7 734
1995	84.1	171 167	34.0	41.2	24.8	27.6	72.4	10 505
1996	85.7	171 817	34.6	39.2	26.2	28.6	71.4	12 272
1997	89.0	190 321	33.8	34.7	31.5	33.4	66.6	10 908
1998	91.6	210 208	33.9	29.1	37.0	25.9	74.1	11 401
1999	92.2	230 083	30.3	27.8	41.9	37.8	62.2	11 886
2000	92.0	253 240	30.3	26.8	42.9	55.8	44.2	10 985
2001	92.7	270 550	34.6	18.7	46.7	71.3	28.7	16 121
2002	94.4	294 271	38.5	16.8	44.7	69.1	30.9	16 380
2003	96.5	308 445	40.9	16.2	42.9	63.2	36.8	25 785
2004	95.3	336 165	41.1	20.9	38.0	63.0	37.0	31 013
2005	98.1	356 359	40.7	17.5	41.8	56.4	43.6	37 920

Source: Calculated according to the data of graduates and enrollment over the years (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, pp.518–519).

### 3.2 Imbalance in the educational development exists among areas

Even with the high school admission rate throughout the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region being 40.7 percent, imbalance exists among areas within Xinjiang. In the three prefectures of southern Xinjiang, the admission rate of primary school-age children aging from 7 to 12 is 97.7 percent and the gross admission rate of middle school-age children aging from 13–15 is 80.3 percent, while the admission rate of middle school students to high school is lower than that of other areas and prefectures in Xinjiang. For example, in the Kashgar Prefecture of southern Xinjiang in 2005 there were 72 876 middle school graduates, while the senior high school enrollment was 13 642 students.

Therefore the admission rate was 18.7 percent. The admission rate in the Hotan Prefecture was only 10.9 percent (Table 4),<sup>8</sup> far lower than the average level of the Region.

**Table 4** Comparison of the admission situation of primary and middle schools in each prefecture and city of Xinjiang (2005)

Area/prefecture/city	Primary school graduates	Middle school enrollment	Middle school admission rate (%)	Middle school graduates	High school enrollment	High school admission rate (%)
Urumqi City	23 767	23 634	99.4	22 946	18 769	81.1
Karamay City	3 660	4 707	128.6	3 758	2 970	79.0
Shihezi City	2 053	2 739	133.4	1 956	2 671	136.6
Turpan Prefecture	9 848	9 313	94.6	11 373	4 147	36.5
Hami Prefecture	6 233	6 487	104.1	7 094	4 925	69.4
Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture	18 771	20 101	107.1	21 001	13 705	65.3
Ili Kazakh Subordinate County	39 847	37 589	94.3	34 382	17 933	52.2
Tacheng Prefecture	14 868	14 631	98.4	14 859	9 043	60.9
Altay Prefecture	9 512	9 144	96.1	11 353	4 935	43.5
Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	5 756	5 601	97.3	5 810	3 695	63.3
Bayin'gholin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	16 686	16 478	98.8	17 035	9 639	56.6
Aksu Prefecture	49 841	50 401	101.1	45 098	10 013	22.2
Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture	10 914	10 298	94.4	12 200	3 843	31.5
Kashgar Prefecture	94 326	86 785	92.0	72 876	13 642	18.7
Hotan Prefecture	42 323	43 112	101.9	30 886	3 366	10.9
Productive corps	49 187	49 204	100.0	43 732	21 748	49.7
Regional total	397 592	390 224	98.1	356 359	145 044	40.7
National total (in ten thousands)	2 019.5	1 976.5	97.9	2 106.5	877.7	41.7

Source: (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, pp.529–530).

<sup>8</sup> Since the teaching quality of schools in capital cities of prefectures is obviously higher than that of schools in the county-level underlings, the admission rates of many counties would be even lower than the average figure on area level if county were taken as the statistic unit.

The following phenomena can be observed in Table 4: (1) The admission rates to middle school were high around all prefectures (above 92 percent), which indicates the significant success of the “nine-year compulsory education” program in Xinjiang; (2) There are four prefectures/cities where the rate of enrollment into middle school has obviously surpassed the number of primary school graduates.<sup>9</sup> For instance, the enrollment rate at Shihezi middle schools was 1.33 times that of local primary school graduates, indicating that over 700 primary school graduates transferred to middle schools in Shihezi from other prefectures/cities;<sup>10</sup> (3) The same holds true for the admission from middle schools to high schools. Again in Shihezi, 1.37 times as many students enrolled in high school as graduated from local middle schools, which indicates that of the middle school graduates, a considerable number attended high schools trans-regionally. The trend is probably the result of parents hoping to send their children to high schools with relatively better qualifications. When schools in other prefectures/cities have better educational qualifications, certain parents eventually chose to “select schools trans-regionally” in spite of the inconveniences and financial burden of sending their children away from home. The trend also demonstrates that there exist obvious differences and imbalances in educational development as well as educational quality between prefectures and cities in Xinjiang.

With minorities making up 60.4 percent of the total population, necessary concern must be focused on the relative population of minority students in studies of educational development in Xinjiang. Table 5 illustrates that little difference exists between students of Han and minorities in middle school admissions rates. The admission rate to high school, on the other hand, shows that the difference increases plainly. In 2002, for example, 85.7 percent of Han middle school graduates enrolled in high schools, whereas only 35.1 percent of minority graduates enrolled, even with the preferential treatment from policy-awarded points (see Appendix I) in high school entrance examinations. This discrepancy provides evidence that during high school, a difference in performance develops between minority students and Han students.

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<sup>9</sup> These several prefectures and cities (Shihezi, Karamay, Changji, Hami) are just where Han population is the most centralized. It nevertheless remains to be further investigated whether the added students are Han examinees from other areas with small Han populations or are students of *Min kao Han* from adjoining minority areas.

<sup>10</sup> Since “Productive corps” is listed separately in statistics, the students who transferred to Shihezi for entering higher schools are not necessarily those from corps units in other areas.

**Table 5** The admission rates of students at different levels in Xinjiang in several years (%)

Graduates	Admission rate	1998		1999		2000		2002	
		Minority	Han	Minority	Han	Minority	Han	Minority	Han
Primary school	Total admission rate	91.0	99.7	93.6	95.8	93.5	99.3	94.1	102.5
	Middle school	88.5	99.3	90.7	95.6	88.7	99.1	90.5	102.5
	Vocational junior middle school	2.5	0.4	3.0	0.2	4.8	0.2	3.6	0.1
Middle school	Total admission rate	44.5	79.2	38.45	81.1	31.3	96.8	35.1	85.7
	High school	27.1	45.2	21.9	47.6	20.4	53.6	25.5	65.8
	Vocational senior high school	3.9	10.9	2.6	8.8	1.6	6.4	1.2	4.7
	Technical secondary school	8.4	15.5	11.3	17.9	7.0	30.1	5.6	10.3
	Technical training school	5.2	7.7	2.6	6.9	2.2	6.8	2.9	5.0
High school	Total admission rate	54.4	56.6	54.0	92.1	74.1	98.7	70.1	83.5
	College/university	40.0	48.6	42.0	84.1	62.1	96.8	67.9	82.2
	Technical secondary school	11.9	6.2	11.9	8.0	12.1	1.9	2.3	1.4
	Technical training school	2.5	1.6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Presumed proportion of the cohort admitted into college/university*		9.6	21.8	8.4	37.8	11.3	51.4	15.7	53.7

Note: \* Calculated in assumption that the enrollment rate is 100 percent in both Han and minority primary schools (the actual rate is 97–98 percent, with little difference) and those who are enrolled into high schools will further be enrolled into colleges.

The reason that the admission rate of Han primary school graduates was higher than 100 percent in 2002 should be pertinent to migration. When calculating the value of this year, we presumed that 100 percent of Han primary school graduates were enrolled into middle schools of which 0.06 percent entering vocational middle schools were precluded, and the rest were all enrolled into general middle schools.

Source: (Li, 2007), calculated in accordance with relative data in *Educational Statistic Data in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region* in 1998, 1999, 2000.

It is worth noting that the difference between Han and minority students decreases plainly in college/university admission rates, which were 83.5 percent and 70.1 percent, respectively, in 2002. The most evident explanation lies in the implementation of preferential policy-awarded points offered to minority students by the government (regardless, they study in Han or minority school) and ensuring the admission rate of 50–60 percent minority students in colleges. In 1986 there was a difference of 205 points on college admission requirements between Han and minority students, whereas in 2006 the admission requirement of humanities and social sciences in key universities for minority examinees

(*Min kao Min*: minority students take exams in minority language and apply for the programs of studying in minority language in universities) was 119 points (as to the preferential policy in each year, see Appendix I, II, III) lower than that for Han examinees (*Han kao Han*: Han students take exams in *Putonghua* and apply for the programs of studying in *Putonghua* in universities). Considering the comprehensive factors—namely the preferential policy on the entrance examination for middle schools, the admission rate of high school for minority students, and the high admission rate of minority high school graduates into college—the performance of minority students in universities and colleges will surely be influenced, eventually affecting their employment opportunities after graduation.

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## 4 Minority education system in Xinjiang

### 4.1 The education system in minority schools

In Xinjiang, the autonomous region in which minorities account for over 60 percent of the population, various languages are adopted as teaching-languages and for the production of teaching materials. There are 56 ethnic groups in Xinjiang, some of them (e.g., Hui, Manchu, etc.) use *Putonghua* as mother tongue, while many do not have their own native-language education programs because of their small populations. The autonomous government thus makes clear policies for the teaching-language of schools based on the realities of the region: (1) Uyghur language is adopted by the three groups of Uzbek, Tartar, and Tajik in school in addition to Uyghur; (2) The seven languages of *Putonghua*, Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongolia, Xibe, and Russian are applied to school teaching. Since the 1950s, the government has begun to organize professionals to compile textbooks and teaching materials for primary and middle schools in the six languages of *Putonghua*, Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongolian, and Xibe. Then, 1998 saw the beginning of self-compilation of Russian textbooks for primary schools; (3) the four languages of *Putonghua*, Uyghur, Kazak, and Mongolian are applied to teaching in universities and colleges in Xinjiang. The college curriculum comprises the basic frame of reference for teaching-languages applied in schools at different levels in Xinjiang.<sup>11</sup> To support the application of

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<sup>11</sup> Most of the students of Tartar and Uzbek in Xinjiang attend classes of Uyghur language. Tajik does not have its own writing characters so students use Uyghur textbooks and teachers apply Tajiki in teaching. Kirgiz has once adopted Uyghur language before Kirgiz writing was readopted. Then, textbooks in Kirgiz were applied gradually from low grades of primary school to middle school.

minority languages in teaching, Xinjiang Education Press published 1 550 different textbooks and teaching materials in minority languages in 2005.

After half a century of development, the scale of minority students and teachers at different levels in Xinjiang has reached a certain level. According to the statistics recorded in December, 2004, there was a total of 5 451 primary schools in the whole region, wherein 1 436 257 minority students made up 64.8 percent of the total population of enrolled students, and 86 315 minority teachers 64 percent of the total population of teachers. 1 467 middle schools consisted of 742 084 minority students and 41 823 minority teachers. In the 498 high schools, there were 148 398 minority students and 9 293 minority teachers. In accordance with statistics of primary, middle and high schools, there are altogether 7 416 schools at which there are a total of 2 326 739 minority students (62.3 percent of the total number) and 137 431 minority teachers (59.9 percent) (Table 6), which corresponds with the proportion of the minority population to the total population in Xinjiang. These data show that all minority groups have achieved corresponding progress on student enrollment and teaching staff employment. The policy of equality of different ethnic groups and vigorous development of minority education enacted by the central government has been implemented and carried out.

**Table 6** Statistics as to teachers and students at different schools in Xinjiang (December, 2004)

	Number of schools	Teaching and administrative staff		Professional teachers		Students	
		Total number	Minority	Total number	Minority	Total number	Minority
Kindergarten	977	17 767	—	9 612	2 178	262 624	77 811
%	—	—	—	100.0	22.7	100.0	29.6
Primary school	5 451	150 308	86 315	134 915	86 315	2 218 109	1 436 257
%	—	100.0	57.4	100.0	64.0	100.0	64.8
Secondary school*	1 965	113 047	59 028	94 381	51 116	1 517 948	890 482
%	—	100.0	52.2	100.0	54.2	100.0	58.7
Vocational school	84	4 732	—	3 079	—	61 502	—
%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Special education	8	356	—	257	—	2 549	350
%	—	—	—	—	—	100.0	13.7

Note: \* “Secondary school” includes both middle schools and high schools. Of the enrolled middle school students, there were 1 158 801 middle school students, 64 percent of whom being minority students and 359 147 high school students, 41.3 percent of whom being minorities.

Source: Statistics from the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Education.

In accordance with these language policies and development of textbooks, schools in Xinjiang follow two parallel systems based on the language of instruction: The first system is called “school of minority language system” (minority school), mainly teaching in the local language. This system may be further divided into schools taught in Uyghur language, Kazak language, and Mongolian language. The second system is called “school of *Putonghua* system” (Han school), in which teaching and learning activities are carried out in *Putonghua*. Geographical differences in ethnic composition of local populations lead to the phenomenon of Han students attending minority schools, minority students attending Han schools, and portions of minority students attending schools of other ethnic groups (for example, Kazak students attending Uyghur schools or vice versa). Meanwhile, there are Han teachers in minority schools and a few minority teachers in Han schools. As a result of these phenomena, the number of minority students in schools at different levels does not equal that of students attending minority schools, and the number of minority teachers does not equal that of teachers working in minority schools. When reading these statistical data, attention should be paid to the different statistical perspectives as well as methods.

In Table 7, I attempt to analyze the structure of schools in Xinjiang as a whole by comparing the various teaching-languages. There are essentially three types of schools in Xinjiang: minority schools, Han schools, and minority-Han joint schools. It has been impossible to attain a clear figure for the number of students enrolled in minority-Han joint schools because these schools have been changing continuously. The Autonomous Region began experimentally setting up a few minority-Han joint schools in 1960. Xinjiang once carried out the separation of minority and Han schools after the Cultural Revolution, but the number of such schools nevertheless increased to 165 by 1981. That number then decreased to 44 in 1984. Nonetheless, minority-Han joint schools were again encouraged in the late 1990s.<sup>12</sup> In 2000, there were 461 minority-Han joint schools in total; in 2004, the number was 656; in 2005, it increased to 707. Due to the lack of statistical figures of students in minority-Han joint schools and Han schools, their respective proportion is incalculable.

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<sup>12</sup> Take Kashgar No. 6 Middle School that we have investigated for example. It belonged to minority-Han joint school during 1971–1981 and was divided into a minority school (No.6 Middle School) and a Han school (No. 12 Middle School) with a wall built in the middle of the campus. The two schools were recombined in 2005.



**Table 7** The enrollment number of schools at different levels in Xinjiang in 2004

	Kindergarten				Primary school				Secondary school			
	Number	%	Students in attendance	%	Number	%	Students in attendance	%	Number	%	Students in attendance	%
Ethnic minority language schools*	—	—	77 811	29.6	3 777	70.3	1 226 678	55.3	971	49.4	787 689	51.9
Uyghur	—	—	—	—	3 297	60.5	—	—	726	36.9	—	—
Kazak	—	—	—	—	375	6.9	—	—	189	9.6	—	—
Mongol	—	—	—	—	22	0.4	—	—	23	1.2	—	—
Xibe	—	—	—	—	4	0.1	—	—	4	0.2	—	—
Kirgiz	—	—	—	—	79	1.4	—	—	29	1.5	—	—
Joint	—	—	—	—	636	11.7	—	—	20	1.0	—	—
Han	—	—	—	—	1 038	19.0	—	—	974	49.6	—	—
Total	977	—	262 624	100.0	5 451	100.0	2 218 109	100.0	1965	100.0	1 517 948	100.0

Note: \* There is another primary school with Russian as its teaching language, which turned into bilingual school in 2004.

Source: Statistics from the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Education.

From the statistics in Table 7, we can see that of the minority schools, Uyghur language primary schools make up 87.3 percent, Uyghur language middle schools make up 74.8 percent. These are followed by Kazak language in corresponding proportion. There are only a few other minority schools such as Kirgiz, Mongolian, and Xibe. This configuration reflects, on one hand, the important status of the Uyghur as the minority group with the largest population in Xinjiang; on the other hand, it shows the governmental accommodation of groups with relatively small populations and the policy protecting their languages.

#### 4.2 The attending mode of students of different minorities

Traditionally, minority students in Xinjiang can be roughly classified into three types according to the type of school attended and the teaching-language received: (1) *Min kao Min* (test minority students with minority languages); That is, minority students attend the appropriate minority schools and receive exams presented in the corresponding language; (2) *Min kao Han* (test minority students with *Putonghua*): That is, minority students attend Han schools and receive exams on each subject in *Putonghua*;<sup>13</sup> (3) *Han kao Han* (test Han students with

<sup>13</sup> Examinees of “*Min kao Han*” can also obtain policy-related awarded marks in their college entrance examination. In 2006, the admission line of *Min kao Han* for key universities in humanities and social sciences was 77 points lower than that for *Han kao Han*. Some studies by foreign scholars claim that the margin of awarded marks for *Min kao Han* in Kashgar is bigger than that for *Min kao Min* (Sautman, 1999, p.184), which is incompatible with the fact (see Appendix II).

*Putonghua*): That is, Han students attend Han schools and receive exams in *Putonghua*. In each case, the *kao* (test) refers to the language of exams, which is usually the teaching-language throughout a course of study.

The following points are worthy of attention when discussing the three traditional modes of instruction: (1) In the sphere of *Min kao Min* there are schools of different minority language systems (Uyghur, Kazak, Mongolian, Kizgiz, and Xibe), and this sphere includes situations in which students of a certain group study in the minority school of another minority language. For example, students of Kazak or Tajik study and get tested in Uyghur; (2) In different stages of study, a student may choose to attend different types of schools. For example, some students remain within the sphere of *Min kao Min* in primary school, but they may transfer to *Min kao Han* when they are enrolled in Han middle school, which, of course, might bring some difficulties to the transferees; (3) Some minority such as Hui and Manchu speak *Putonghua* as their native language and attend Han schools. As such, the tests they pass cannot be referred to as *Min kao Han* in the true sense of the phrase. Furthermore, they may enjoy certain policy-awarded points<sup>14</sup> in the college entrance examination on account of their minority status; (4) School-age children of minorities with small populations usually choose schools according to the mainstream language of their area, as is the case for students of southern minorities (Tujia, Miao, etc.) who generally choose to attend Han schools; (5) There is only a small number of *Han kao Min* students, that is, students of Han, Hui, or Manchu background with *Putonghua* as their mother tongue, who study in minority schools and sit examinations in minority languages.

Han schools teach courses in all subjects using *Putonghua* as well as one foreign language course (generally English). They do not offer courses of minority languages so their education is not truly bilingual. Seen from the point of view of the demands for language ability in the local employment market and the future development of Xinjiang, Han schools in minority areas (such as southern Xinjiang, inhabited mostly by Uyghur, and northern Xinjiang, inhabited mostly by Kazak people) should also offer a course of the minority language. Nevertheless, performance of foreign language (English) on the college entrance examination is used as a common metric, which demands students at Han schools learn the foreign language well. Considering that English may be more useful in their future careers, these Han students therefore prefer not to spend time and energy on learning minority languages. However, considering the instrumental function of language in a multi-ethnic environment, mastering a local minority language (Uyghur language or Kazak language) might be more favorable to the employment prospects and personal career paths of the Han

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<sup>14</sup> Students of Hui in Xinjiang who study in Han schools may be awarded 10 marks when attending college entrance examination (see Appendix II).

students who do not plan to attend college, or to those who seldom use English even after graduation from college.<sup>15</sup>

The bilingual education adopted by minority schools in Xinjiang can be classified, by and large, into three specific modes:

(1) Traditional Bilingual Teaching Mode: Priority is given to the teaching of the minority language, and a *Putonghua* course is added for 4–5 hours per week.

When publicizing the 1977 teaching plan, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government began to demand that *Putonghua* courses be taught from grade 3 in primary schools. In June, 1978, the Education Bureau of the Regional government issued *Opinions on Strengthening Putonghua Teaching in Minority Schools*. In 1980, the Education Bureau organized the compilation *Teaching Syllabus of Putonghua*, and recompiled the 7 volumes of *Putonghua* textbooks used by minority schools ranging from primary school to junior middle school.

The Autonomous Region government formulated in 1982 that minority students taking the college entrance examination should attend an extra examination in *Putonghua*, and their score should be taken into consideration. On January 9, 1984, the CCP Committee of the Autonomous Region stressed that *Putonghua* teaching must be strengthened. In December 28, 1984, it was claimed in the *Several Opinions about Implementing No.84 (3) Document of Autonomous Party Committee* by the Autonomous Region Bureau of Education that “the course of *Putonghua* is set up in our region from grade 3 of primary school to the last year of senior high school”.

The aforementioned government implemented measures have continuously strengthened the *Putonghua* teaching in minority schools, and the mode of teaching in these schools follows the prescribed outline for minority education. 2 830 schools (making up 74.9 percent of the total number of minority schools) adopted this mode in 2005. Now 1 189 456 students, making up 97 percent of the total number of minority students, and 135 584 professional teachers, making up 98.6 percent of the total number of professional in primary and minority middle schools follow this mode for *Putonghua* education in Xinjiang.

Even with these measures in place, there is still a significant difference in performance between students at Han schools and students at minority language schools, both on the performance on entrance examinations for senior high school of each subject and on the pass rate (Tables 8 and 9).<sup>16</sup> This phenomenon

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<sup>15</sup> Southern and northern Xinjiang alone will require about 40 000 teachers for the development of bilingual classes in minority schools in the next 10 years.

<sup>16</sup> From 2003 on, the educational departments in Urumqi began to gradually increase the proportion of identical content on science examination questions (math, physics, chemistry, and biology) of both minority and Han schools. The proportion of identical content increased from 50 percent in 2003, to 70 percent in 2004, and to 100 percent in 2005, abandoning the formulation of questions for exams separately and putting into practice the uniform formulation and grading of exams.

provides evidence not only for a difference in language ability of students and teachers, but also for a difference between the professional abilities of teachers at Han schools and minority language schools. It also points to differences in the quality of textbooks, and the teaching surroundings. With set protocol for language education, it is apparent that to a large extent the discrepancies between minority school and Han school students are due to the historical failure to develop high quality minority education in Xinjiang. At present, however, we are facing the task of changing this situation. Therefore, modification and improvement of the traditional bilingual teaching mode is really needed under new social circumstances.

**Table 8** Statistics of *Putonghua* and Uyghur language student performance on high school entrance exam throughout Xinjiang (2002)

Stat. Subjects		Politics	Language	Mathematics	Physics	Chemistry	English	
Test paper I*	Average score	Uyghur	30.8	54.4	24.5	34.4	34.4	
		<i>Putonghua</i>	57.3	59.1	58.8	66.8	68.0	56.8
	Pass rate (%)	Uyghur	2.7	42.7	3.0	6.0	9.1	17.3
		<i>Putonghua</i>	49.5	51.5	50.2	65.1	63.6	47.3
	Excellent rate** (%)	Uyghur	0.04	1.7	0.13	0.26	1.4	2.9
		<i>Putonghua</i>	2.2	1.7	13.8	18.7	31.6	14.3
Test paper II	Average score	Uyghur	17.3	29.6	7.6	12.6	12.9	13.7
		<i>Putonghua</i>	22.6	36.6	23.8	25.2	24.4	23.7
	Average score of students entering high school***	Uyghur	32.7	56.8	19.9	29.8	30.0	30.9
		<i>Putonghua</i>	52.9	66.1	53.2	59.5	58.4	52.5

Note: \* The various subject portions of test paper I are worth 100 points, and it counts as a middle school graduation score. On test paper II, language and math are worth 70 points, and other subjects are worth 50 points.

\*\* Scores higher than 85 points count as "Excellent."

\*\*\* The score for entering high school is calculated by adding half of the score on test paper I to the score on test paper II for a combined total.

Source: (Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Education, 2007) (The sample size of this survey is: Uyghur students 13 126, Han students 43 419).

**Table 9** Statistics of student performance on the high school entrance exam in Urumqi (2003–2005)

		Mathematics		Physics		Chemistry	
		Average score	Pass rate (%)	Average score	Pass rate (%)	Average score	Pass rate (%)
2003	<i>Putonghua</i>	98.7	68.5	58.4	64.4	44.7	—
	Uyghur language	74.7	35.8	49.3	42.5	39.5	65.7
	Kazak language	53.1	13.3	36.0	12.8	32.9	44.3

(Continued)

		Mathematics		Physics		Chemistry	
		Average score	Pass rate (%)	Average score	Pass rate (%)	Average score	Pass rate (%)
2004	<i>Putonghua</i>	89.7	56.1	61.7	71.9	44.0	77.9
	Minority language	40.3	4.6	39.1	20.1	33.3	45.6
	Bilingual	66.7	26.9	53.2	52.1	39.6	67.9
2005	<i>Putonghua</i>	85.1	—	60.3	—	41.4	—
	Minority language	42.6	—	43.3	—	30.8	—

Source: (Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Education, 2007).

College education in Xinjiang has also been implementing this traditional bilingual teaching mode for a long period, and every year the Autonomous Region formulates and issues different policies for admitting students in accordance with the varying conditions of study and examination results for examinees who study in different types of schools and attend examinations in different languages.<sup>17</sup> Upon entering college, minority students who graduated from minority high schools are more adept at *Putonghua* after a year of pre-college study program in college. Nevertheless, the four years of major study are carried out completely within “branches of minority languages,” so the “*Putonghua* system” and “minority language system” remain virtually isolated from each other even though they occur on the same campus (Zuliyati Simayi, 2003). Minority students in minority language departments at universities generally have only a low-level of *Putonghua*, and they take their specialized courses (such as computer science, biology, etc.) using minority languages. As a result, they can hardly communicate with people who do not speak their native language in study and work, which eventually leads to difficulties in obtaining employment after graduation. The field surveys we have made on the employment of college graduates in schools and universities in Xinjiang provide support for this assertion. From 2000 on, the government of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region began to emphasize *Putonghua* teaching in schools of different levels in order to address the employment difficulties of minority graduates.

(2) Bilingual Education of Particular Minorities: The main object of this mode is the small group of Xibe and Mongolian students who intermingle with Han. The Xinjiang government assigned the policy for this group that “native language education is the standard in primary schools with spoken *Putonghua* added. Then, *Putonghua* becomes the only teaching language in the period of middle and high schools.”

<sup>17</sup> For the admissions standards in every year for various examinees (*Min kao Han*, *Min kao Min*, Mongolian examinees, etc.) since 1977, see Appendix II.

According to government statistics, there are four schools with a total of 1 271 students and 100 professional teachers of minority languages that adhered to this mode in 2005. As is illustrated by Table 7, there are four Xibe primary schools and four Xibe middle schools, 22 Mongolian primary schools and 23 Mongolian middle schools in Xinjiang. It is probable that the four Xibe primary schools adhere to the bilingual mode whereas a few Mongolian schools turn to bilingual teaching in middle school.

The total number of students in minority primary and middle schools in Xinjiang was 2.014 million in 2005, and the 1 271 students comprise just a minor portion of the total. Due to their small population, these students and their parents are generally subject to the application of total *Putonghua* teaching rather than native-language education. As a result of schools adopting this transitional mode at present out of convenience, the schools may be gradually transforming into Han schools.

(3) New Bilingual Teaching Mode: Under the forceful promotion of the Autonomous Region government, a new bilingual teaching mode has become prominent in the past years that is specifically manifested by the establishment of “bilingual experimental classes” in Han schools and minority language schools, and by the establishment of a few “bilingual schools” in areas with appropriate conditions. The configuration of the teaching languages in this mode is as follows: some of the courses, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and English, are taught in *Putonghua*, while the rest, such as (native) language, ideology and morality, history, and geography, are taught in the native languages. The teaching effect and prospects of this teaching mode have become an attractive subject of research for insight into the present condition of minority education in Xinjiang.

Confronted with the serious pressure that minority university graduates have faced in finding employment in recent years, the government of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region has enhanced the implementation of *Putonghua* as the teaching language for minority education according to the following measures: the Autonomous Region government instituted a course of *Putonghua* study beginning in grade three of primary school, and pilot work began at Xinjiang University in 2002 to apply *Putonghua* to all courses except such particular courses as language, literature, and history of minorities.

It is also worth noting that in order to improve their *Putonghua* level, the attached middle schools of some normal universities and colleges in Xinjiang, such as Turpan, Changji, and Kashgar, are gradually adapting the mode of teaching all their courses in *Putonghua* complemented by the teaching of minority languages. Some other schools, namely the 18 bilingual classes in Zepu County of the Kashgar Prefecture, bilingual classes of Luntai County, and the bilingual classes in Kashgar No. 3 Primary School and No. 8 Primary School, are

adopting the teaching mode of *Putonghua* plus Uyghur language course. In effect, the difference between this mode and that in Han schools only lies in the addition of a native language course. One of the prospects of this new mode is that the schools may develop a new mode of “trilingual schools,” wherein courses of *Putonghua*, minority language, and English are opened simultaneously while all the other courses are taught in *Putonghua*.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.3 The progression of the new bilingual teaching mode in primary and middle schools

In accordance with the program of strengthening study of *Putonghua* put forward by the Autonomous Region government, the Education Bureau of the Region issued and distributed the *Circular of Accrediting 10 Experimental Schools of “Min Han Jian Tong”*<sup>19</sup> in the Autonomous Region on July 15, 1992, launching a bilingual teaching experiment wherein part of the courses, such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and later English, would be taught in *Putonghua* while the rest of the courses would be taught in native languages in some previously Uyghur-, Mongolian-, and Kazak-language schools.<sup>20</sup> By 1996, there were 26 such bilingual classes in minority schools throughout the Region, and the figure rose to 60 in 1997.

In January, 1999, *An Experimental Scheme for Bilingual Teaching in Minority Middle Schools of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (For Discussion)*<sup>21</sup> was issued by the Education Bureau of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. On May 28 of the same year, the regional Education Bureau issued *Evaluating the Scheme for Bilingual Experimental Classes in Minority Middle Schools of the Autonomous Region (For Trial Implementation)* and *Teaching Plan of Reference Courses for Bilingual Experimental Classes in Minority Middle Schools of the Autonomous Region*. On November 30, 2000, the *Circular of Publicizing the List of Schools Opening Bilingual Experimental Classes* was issued. It listed 28 schools, including primary and middle schools, setting up 91 bilingual experimental classes. In April, 2004, the CCP committee of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region issued its *Decision to Vigorously Promote Bilingual*

<sup>18</sup> Foreign scholars have noticed this tendency in many other countries as well. That is, “those members of minority groups who hope to maintain their native language and enter the global system are faced with the demand of mastering three languages individually (trilingualism) (Wright, 2004, p.248).

<sup>19</sup> “Mastering both *Putonghua* and minority language”.

<sup>20</sup> 1992 witnessed the opening of three junior middle school experimental classes in Urumqi, Tacheng, and Turpan. In total there were over 100 students whose mathematics, physics, chemistry, and English were taught in *Putonghua* with other courses taught in native language, and who were selected according to their performance.

<sup>21</sup> As to the specific content, see (Muhabaiti, 2002, pp.25–30).

*Teaching.*<sup>22</sup> And, in 2005, it further issued *Opinions of Strengthening the Pre-school Bilingual Education for Minorities*, advancing the opening year of *Putonghua* learning from primary school to pre-school and kindergarten, and emphasizing that “learning *Putonghua* should begin at an early age.”

As is shown by statistics, 943 schools (making up 20 percent of the total number of minority schools) opened bilingual experimental classes in Xinjiang in 2004. 35 948 students (making up 2.9 percent of the total of enrolled minority students) and 1 847 professional teachers (accounting for 1.3 percent of the total number of professional teachers in minority primary and middle schools) participated in the new teaching mode of bilingual experimental classes.<sup>23</sup> Another report indicates that of the minority teachers in Xinjiang in 2005, 8 487 took on bilingual teaching tasks, making up about 5.1 percent of the total number of professional minority teachers in the Region. If the two sets of figures are accurate, then it can only be said that a “great leap forward” was taken toward bilingual education that year in Xinjiang. Additionally, another program plan indicates that the government will provide intensive training for 85 524 bilingual teachers under age 35 in Xinjiang from 2005–2011. This figure far exceeds the current data, which may be due to its taking into account the multi-subject teachers who teach *Putonghua* and mathematics, physics, and chemistry in bilingual classes. The above-mentioned figures could also stem from different definitions (say, whether they are professional teachers of bilingual classes or professional teachers plus multi-subject teachers who participate in the teaching of bilingual classes). Either way, it is clear that under the powerful impetus of the government of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, bilingual education in recent years has been developing rapidly in the whole Region.

It can be seen from Table 10 that although the absolute figure of minority teachers engaged in bilingual education in the stage of senior high school remains small, it makes up the highest rate (12.1 percent) among minority teachers, which indicates, from another aspect, that the total number of minority teachers of minority high schools in Xinjiang is low.<sup>24</sup> This may be due to the fact that the admission rate of students from middle schools to high schools in the minority school system is far lower than that in Han schools, and therefore the

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<sup>22</sup> From 2007 on, in the bilingual classes of senior high sections of middle schools in Urumqi, all the courses (mathematics, physics, chemistry, politic science, and history) have been taught in *Putonghua* except the Uyghur language course.

<sup>23</sup> Bilingual classes have also been established in minority schools according to this proportion in Shufu County, where we conducted field survey.

<sup>24</sup> Table 5 shows that there are 51 116 minority teachers in middle and high schools of Xinjiang. In Table 7, it can be seen that the total number of minority teachers in bilingual classes of minority middle and high schools is 3 975, making up 7.8 percent of the total number of minority teachers in the Region.



number of teachers is smaller in minority high schools than in Han high schools. The admission rates from junior middle to high schools of the three prefectures of Hotan, Kashgar, and Aksu, where Uyghur people settle, are just 10.9 percent, 18.7 percent, and 22.2 percent respectively. Other causes remain to be further investigated.

**Table 10** Statistics of the development of bilingual experimental classes in Xinjiang (September 2005)

	Number of bilingual classes	Number of students in bilingual class	Percentage in total minority students	Number of bilingual minority teachers	Percentage in total minority teachers
Kindergarten (preschool class)	1 045	30 269	11.5	1 414	—
Primary school	2 074	60 886	2.8	3 098	3.6
Middle school	1 140	43 521	5.9	2 849	6.8
High school	246	10 462	6.9	1 126	12.1
Primary and secondary school total	3 460	114 869	4.9	7 073	5.1
Grand total	4 505	145 138	—	8 487	—

Source: As to the number of minority attendees, see (Xinjiang Autonomous Region Bureau of Statistics, 2006, p.524).

In accordance with statistics from the coverage of “teaching class”, up to September, 2005, there were 4 505 bilingual classes in Xinjiang with 145 138 students, which were 4 times in the respective numbers in 2004 (when there were only 35 948 students in such classes). Another piece of news claims that there were 5 000 bilingual classes in Xinjiang with at least 150 000 minority attendees, making up 6.6 percent of the total number of minority students in the Region. It should be pointed out that even with bilingual classes in every quarter of Xinjiang developing rapidly under the powerful impetus of the government, the proportion of students of bilingual classes to total minority students in Xinjiang is still small.

#### 4.4 Preferential policies implemented by the government to promote bilingual classes

To encourage the bilingual education in kindergarten, the Xinjiang Autonomous Region government has been implementing the following subsidies for attending children and teachers: (1) The meal allowance for children attending pre-school bilingual classes is RMB 330 per person per year, and the textbook subsidy is RMB 20 per person per year; (2) The salary subsidy for teachers of pre-school bilingual classes ranges from RMB 400–600 per month in some areas. According

to the financial program of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Education Bureau, the subsidy should include RMB 800 of monthly salary, RMB 78 of medical insurance, and RMB 84 of accumulation funds for housing. Together, the three sums amount to RMB 962 per month and RMB 11 544 per year. However, in our field survey in Shufu County of the Kashgar Prefecture, we found that the actual salary that teachers of bilingual classes in kindergarten received was only RMB 400 per month.

We conducted interviews with students and their parents as well as interviews with principals and teachers of bilingual classes in rural schools of Shufu County of the Kashgar Prefecture in August, 2007. Through these interviews we discovered that many rural families are willing to send their children to bilingual pre-school classes for the following reasons: First, the meal allowance can cover their children's lunches; Second, being aware that *Putonghua* is of great use in studying and future employment, the parents are willing to send their children to learn *Putonghua*; Third, parents may arrange their time freely without taking care of the children when they attend the pre-school classes.

Some statistics indicate that 81 000 pre-school children who attended bilingual classes enjoyed meal allowance and free textbooks, and altogether 1 296 bilingual teachers enjoyed salary subsidies in 2006 in Xinjiang. If this figure is valid, then it demonstrates that the number of pre-school children who attended bilingual classes in 2006 had increased by 2.7 times since 2005 and 29.4 percent of the total number of pre-school minority children attend such classes.

According to the Xinjiang Education Bureau, by 2012 they plan to have over 85 percent of minority pre-school children enroll in bilingual education. Raising the proportion of minority attendees of bilingual pre-school classes from 29 percent to 85 percent within 6 years is clearly an ambitious goal. The key to realizing this program is the rapid training of qualified minority teachers of bilingual pre-school classes. For that reason, the Education Bureau claims that within the five years from 2007 to 2011, 37 371 qualified pre-school bilingual teachers are needed in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

The government also offers certain subsidies to teachers who teach in primary and middle school bilingual classes. According to the Education Bureau's program, graduates recruited by the special quota for bilingual teaching will be offered a lump sum of RMB 3 000 as a settlement allowance, and the wage scale for 4-year university graduates is RMB 1 848 per month. The yearly average budget of each bilingual teacher is RMB 22 500 including the wage, social security funds (unemployment, medical care, pension), and the "13<sup>th</sup> month" bonus wage.

Due to the difficulty of implementing bilingual education in southern Xinjiang where Uyghur consisted of over 90 percent of local population, the government of the Region also decided to set up a special establishment of bilingual teachers

by adding an additional 10 percent (i.e., 8 706) of the present total number of teachers there. The government will make sure that the establishment will be gradually put in place in order from 2007–2012. To further implement bilingual classes, the government of the Region must enlarge the establishment of teachers and increase the subsidies of teachers and the operational expenses. Meanwhile, a large portion of the budget has been spent on training bilingual teachers on the job.<sup>25</sup>

#### 4.5 The imbalance on developing bilingual experimental classes between different areas

Among the 15 cities and prefectures (Table 11) in Xinjiang,<sup>26</sup> bilingual experimental classes have developed in an unbalanced pattern, which is directly correlated to the ethnic structure of population and school-age children in each area. Seen from the column on the right side of Table 11, most bilingual students are located in the prefectures of Ili, Kashgar, Aksu, and Hotan, where most of the Uyghur and Kazak population are settled. The average number of students in a bilingual class is 29 both in pre-schools and in primary schools, 38 in middle schools, and 42.5 in high schools.

It can roughly be seen from Table 11 that each area of Xinjiang has its respective population characteristics, and that differences also exist between their educational backgrounds and ranks of teachers. The subordinate county of Ili Prefecture is the most prominent on the vigor and performance of implementing bilingual experimental classes and, as does Kashgar Prefecture, it emphasizes the primary school stage. Aksu Prefecture, on the other hand, attaches importance to the development of bilingual education in the stages of pre-school and primary school, having slowly developing bilingual classes in middle school and high school stage. Comparatively, Hotan Prefecture's bilingual education is more prominent in the number of classes and attendees in middle schools. Since the basic bilingual education in the primary school stage in Hotan Prefecture is relatively weak, it remains to be investigated how the bilingual teaching in the junior middle schools manages to address the students' problems with listening comprehension.

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<sup>25</sup> The four ministries and commissions, including the Xinjiang Autonomous Region and the Ministry of Education of P.R.C., began to implement *The Scheme to Support Putonghua Teaching in Xinjiang* in 2002 with a total investment of RMB 76 million, for which the central government provided RMB 60 million, the Xinjiang government contributed RMB 16 million.

<sup>26</sup> There are three cities, four prefectures, and five autonomous prefectures in the administrative division of Xinjiang. Nevertheless, Ili Kazak Subordinate County governs one government-controlled county and three areas. Thus, I juxtapose the one government-controlled county and three areas with other cities, prefectures, and areas directly under the governance of the Autonomous Region.

**Table 11** Bilingual classes and students in different areas of Xinjiang (October 2005)

Area/prefecture/ city	Pre-school		Primary school		Middle school		High school		Total	
	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student
Urumqi City	0	0	119	3 650	50	2 142	12	641	181	6 433
Karamay City	0	0	18	443	2	91	3	116	23	650
Shihezi City	4	71	26	386	6	163	3	95	39	715
Turpan Prefecture	22	706	38	1 338	62	2 290	19	873	141	5 207
Hami Prefecture	0	0	15	536	26	974	10	350	51	1 860
Changji Hui Autonomous Prefecture	46	499	194	4 488	127	2 472	21	753	388	8 212
Ili Kazakh Subordinate County	314	10 096	451	13 422	134	5 236	63	2 733	962	31 487
Tacheng Prefecture	26	180	83	1 924	39	1 297	21	649	169	4 050
Altay Prefecture	31	801	109	2 319	95	3 107	11	455	246	6 682
Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	52	1 162	146	1 910	38	868	3	106	239	4 046
Bayin'gholin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture	107	1 886	90	1 836	46	1 793	15	702	258	6 217
Aksu Prefecture	176	6 265	376	12 312	59	2 817	18	745	629	22 139
Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture	0	0	7	306	14	529	2	135	23	970
Kashgar Prefecture	129	4 008	338	13 136	194	8 670	31	1 409	692	27 223
Hotan Prefecture	138	4 595	64	2 880	248	11 072	14	700	464	19 247
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 045</b>	<b>30 269</b>	<b>2 074</b>	<b>60 886</b>	<b>1 140</b>	<b>43 521</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>10 462</b>	<b>4 505</b>	<b>145 138</b>

Source: (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Bureau of Education, 2007).

The small Han population and the lack of *Putonghua* language surroundings in southern Xinjiang make bilingual education more important in that area. Accordingly, the difficulties of bilingual education in the area are greater. The extent of the difficulties can be seen in the fact that the bilingual classes in primary and middle schools of Hotan Prefecture only account for 2 percent of the total classes of local minority schools.

#### 4.6 About the development of *Min kao Han*

Along with the continuous progress of system reform as well as the “opening up” and rapid development of the Chinese economy, the industrial structure and personal mobility in Xinjiang also began to enter a new era. The strategy of the Western Development issued by the central government in 2000 brought into

force a large number of infrastructure projects in Xinjiang that further promoted the rapid development of manufacturing, transportation, communication, and service industries. As a result, *Putonghua* has become, step by step, the most important and the most universal working language for communication throughout Xinjiang, especially in urban areas. The bilingual education advanced to strengthen *Putonghua* also aims to help minority graduates enter the employment market with better prospects.

In addition to giving an advantage in the employment market, another impetus for minority students to attend Han schools is the fact that students of *Min kao Han* have a wider range of choices than those of *Min kao Min* when they apply for colleges and universities, and therefore the possibility of their being admitted increases accordingly. Table 12 shows the enrollment statistics of university education in Xinjiang in the period of 1977–1997, which demonstrate that the proportion of Xinjiang students admitted to universities of other provinces has increased from 25 percent in 1977 to 50.8 percent in 1997. In addition, it is clearly defined by the government of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region that of those who are admitted by universities in other provinces, minority students should make up no less than 50 percent. The superiority that students of *Min kao Han* have in college entrance examination can be seen via the connection between these two proportions.

While the cutoff for *Min kao Min* students to qualify for admission is lower than that of *Min kao Han* (see Appendix II), students of *Min kao Min* will by no means be admitted to many ordinary universities of other provinces,<sup>27</sup> which means these students face greater constraint on their application for the college entrance examination and the following admission.

**Table 12** The situation of enrollment in institutions of higher education for students from Xinjiang (1977–1997)

Year	Enrollment of universities and colleges						Number of applicants	Percentage admitted
	Total number	%	Study in Xinjiang	%	Study in other provinces	%		
1977	3 916	100.0	2 938	75.0	978	25.0	109 577	3.6
1978	4 930	100.0	3 816	77.4	1 114	22.6	66 504	7.4
1979	4 266	100.0	3 224	75.6	1 041	24.4	54 728	7.7
1980	4 807	100.0	3 346	69.6	1 461	30.4	60 370	7.9
1981	4 409	100.0	3 063	69.5	1 346	30.5	67 114	6.6
1982	5 568	100.0	3 795	68.2	1 771	31.8	69 504	8.0

<sup>27</sup> Minority students from minority schools in Xinjiang may apply for admission to the very few special universities that specialize in minority language teaching, such as Central University for Nationalities in Beijing and Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou.

(Continued)

Year	Enrollment of universities and colleges						Number of applicants	Percentage admitted
	Total number	%	Study in Xinjiang	%	Study in other provinces	%		
1983	7 761	100.0	4 967	64.0	2 794	36.0	77 621	10.0
1984	10 273	100.0	5 653	55.0	3 887	45.0	77 985	13.2
1985	12 000	100.0	6 741	56.2	5 259	43.8	69 673	17.2
1986	11 785	100.0	6 458	54.8	5 327	45.2	58 585	17.5
1987	12 939	100.0	7 281	56.3	5 658	43.7	73 947	17.5
1988	14 690	100.0	9 211	62.7	5 479	37.3	85 718	17.1
1989	13 405	100.0	6 903	51.5	6 502	48.5	86 499	15.5
1990	12 965	100.0	6 577	50.7	6 388	49.3	81 062	16.0
1991	12 791	100.0	6 480	50.7	6 374	49.3	79 000	16.2
1992	17 069	100.0	9 318	54.6	7 751	45.4	84 518	20.2
1993	20 143	100.0	10 475	52.0	9 668	48.0	78 675	25.6
1994	17 839	100.0	9 000	50.5	8 839	49.5	60 119	29.6
1995	17 814	100.0	9 200	51.6	8 614	48.4	54 561	32.6
1996	17 737	100.0	9 260	52.2	8 477	47.8	55 360	32.0
1997	19 299	100.0	9 496	49.2	9 803	50.8	52 381	36.8

Source: (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Education, 1998, pp.595–596).

The application constraints that universities outside Xinjiang put on language conditions drive more and more minority students to choose to enter Han schools directly and, in doing so, become *Min kao Han* students. As is indicated by the statistics of the Education Bureau of Xinjiang, during the period of 1998–2000, the number of students of “other ethnic groups” (that is, minority students who are not Han, Hui, or Manchu, the main body of which being Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongolian, students)<sup>28</sup> increases every year in Han schools of different levels. During these three years, the population of students of “other ethnic groups” (mainly Uyghur and Kazak) has increased by 19 percent in primary schools, 67.7 percent in junior middle schools, and two times in senior high schools (Table 13). The proportion of students of “other ethnic groups” compared to that of total minority students (excluding students of Hui and Manchu) also rises every year. Within the last two years mentioned above, the proportion of students of “other ethnic groups” compared with that of total corresponding minority students has increased from 3.5 percent to 4.2 percent in primary schools, from 3.5 percent to 4.8 percent in middle schools, and from 5.0 percent to 9.5 percent in senior high schools.

<sup>28</sup> Note that we express the number of *Min kao Han* students by virtue of the designation “students of ‘other ethnic groups’” due to the lack of exact statistical data for *Min kao Han*.

**Table 13** Proportion of *Min kao Han* students in Han schools

Year	School	Han students		Hui and Manchu students		Other minorities students		Total number of students in Han schools		Minority students	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Total number of minority students in minority schools	Proportion of <i>Min kao Han</i> students to the total number of minority students*
1998	Primary school	758 792	81.4	114 850	12.3	58 580	6.3	932 222	100.0	1 611 691	3.5
	Middle school	250 696	81.4	39 840	12.9	17 584	5.7	308 120	100.0	479 906	3.5
	High school	95 904	91.0	5 153	4.9	4 290	4.1	105 347	100.0	80 809	5.0
1999	Primary school	764 359	81.4	111 406	11.9	63 022	6.7	938 787	100.0	1 613 756	3.8
	Middle school	271 129	80.6	42 368	12.6	23 010	6.8	336 507	100.0	554 363	4.0
	High school	99 626	88.3	6 247	5.5	6 980	6.2	112 853	100.0	81 726	7.9
2000	Primary school	762 927	81.3	105 745	11.3	69 864	7.4	938 536	100.0	1 589 239	4.2
	Middle school	301 550	80.1	42 027	11.3	29 489	7.9	373 066	100.0	584 356	4.8
	High school	106 796	88.5	5 283	4.4	8 614	7.1	120 693	100.0	81 644	9.5

Note: \* The proportion of the *Min kao Han* students (the minority students other than Hui and Manchu, mainly Uyghur and Kazak, in Han schools) in the total of Uyghur/Kazak students in both minority schools and Han schools.

Source: Calculated in accordance with Statistical Materials of Education in Xinjiang compiled by the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Education.

This increasing trend has been sustained since 2000. According to the statistics, 79 000 *Min kao Han* students attended Han primary and middle schools in 2000.<sup>29</sup> The figure increased to 131 000 in 2005, a 66 percent rate of increase over five years. As fast it increases, the number of *Min kao Han* students still accounts only for a small proportion of total minority students. In 2005, *Min kao Han* students only made up 5.8 percent of the total minority attendees of primary and middle schools (2.262 million).

The rate of increase of the number of *Min kao Han* students is objectively constrained by the enrollment limitations of Han schools. The main problem is that most parents who would send their children to Han schools are unable to achieve their wish. In southern Xinjiang, Han kindergartens and primary schools have a considerable number of Uyghur students enrolled. Take Moyu County in Hotan Prefecture for example: Uyghur children there make up 75 percent of the Han kindergartens and 50 percent of primary Han schools. The dean of the Kashgar Education College explains that 70 percent of the students in local Han schools are Uyghur children. In Hotan No. 1 Primary School (a Han school), Uyghur students make up 11 percent of grade 6, whereas in grade 1, Uyghur students account for 30 percent of the class. Of the first year students in Han primary schools in the fall of 2004 in Aksu Prefecture, 25.6 percent were minority students. In Kashgar city, 30 percent of the students in Han schools are Uyghur children. In Zepu County, there were 2 200 Uyghur attendees, accounting for 6.5 percent of the total minority students. Due to the small numbers and limited capacity of Han kindergartens and Han schools in minority-inhabited areas, many school-age minority children are objectively unable to attend Han schools.

Considering the developing trend of more *Min kao Han* students, some contend that the bilingual experimental class marks a macro level transition from the present mode of “teaching in native language complemented with *Putonghua*” to that of “teaching in *Putonghua* complemented with native language.” When analyzing some cases, others contest that parents send their children to bilingual experimental classes due to their failure to enter the Han schools, and that they do so with the aim of helping their children enter Han schools by means of such a “transition” as bilingual experimental classes can facilitate. When *Nei gao ban* (special classes of Xinjiang minority students in the best high schools of Han regions, sponsored by the central government) attracted the particular attention of many minority parents, bilingual class became favored as the efficient path to *Nei gao ban*. During our interviews with Uyghur teachers

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<sup>29</sup> The number of “students of other minorities” in Table 9 is 107 967, with a margin of 29 000. This figure should be the students belonging to groups other than Han, Hui, Manchu, Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, and Mongol (*Min kao Han*), who make up 26.8 percent of the total number of “students of other minorities” in Table 9.



of primary and middle schools, some still assert that bilingual education is an ideal local education mode for its ability to give consideration to the learning of both *Putonghua* and native languages. The prospect of bilingual experimental classes in Xinjiang still needs to be explored and investigated in terms of future teaching practices and its effect on the employment market.

## 5 The current situation of bilingual education in the Kashgar Prefecture

In a subject investigation of bilingual education in the Kashgar Prefecture of southern Xinjiang conducted in August, 2007, we found that the bilingual education there developed at a considerably high speed. Comparing our research with the statistics from October, 2005 (Table 14), we find that within less than two years, the number of attendees of pre-school bilingual classes in the Kashgar Prefecture increased by 11.8 times from 4 008 to 47 238; the contemporary number of bilingual classes in primary and middle schools has also increased by 1.7 times from 563 to 1 031.

**Table 14** The development of bilingual education in the Kashgar Prefecture

Stat. time	Pre-school		Primary school		Middle school		High school		Primary and secondary schools combined	
	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student	Class	Student
Oct. 2005	129	4 008	338	13 136	194	8 670	31	1 409	563	23 215
May 2007	697	47 328	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 031	39 293

Source: *Educational Information of Kashgar*, No. 21 (May 9, 2007).

### 5.1 Pre-school bilingual classes

The planned enrollment figure and number of recruited teachers of pre-school bilingual classes in each county must be reported to the Region for accreditation and implementation due to the demand that the meal allowance of students and wages of teachers should be allocated by the Regional Financial Bureau. For example, 2 182 children aged five-years-old were enrolled in pre-school bilingual classes in 2006 in Shufu County (of these 2 182 children, 1 466 were enrolled in township-level kindergartens and 716 in village-level kindergartens). Each student was allocated RMB 20 for textbooks per year and RMB 1.5 for meal allowance per day (which was later increased to RMB 2 by the county via local budget). As prescribed by the Region government, one teacher was staffed to every 40 children, and the Autonomous Region was responsible for their wages (at this time the actual wage was RMB 400 per month). Many counties in

southern Xinjiang are official “state-level poverty-stricken county,” in which the local government is confronted with large budget deficits, so the bilingual education at the basic level is totally unable to develop without the support of a special budget from the Autonomous Region.<sup>30</sup>

The duration of a pre-school bilingual class is two years: In grade one, 5-year-old children are enrolled. The teaching focuses on oral practice of *Putonghua* and learning simple *Putonghua* characters. The demands for passing grade one are as follows: “being able to recite 10–20 *Putonghua* nursery songs, introduce himself/herself to others simply, pronounce the main body parts in *Putonghua*, and recognize the Arabic for numbers 1–10.” In grade two, more courses begin. Specifically: “*pinyin* (*Putonghua* alphabet), mathematics, *Putonghua* (dialogue, talking, telling tales, and reading nursery songs and children’s ballads), music (learning to sing in *Putonghua*), fine arts, physical exercise, and behavioral norms”. Children at this level have 4 classes everyday with 30 minutes for each class; appropriate outdoor games are also arranged. Accordingly, students of pre-school bilingual classes “should be able to understand simple *Putonghua* daily speech, speak *Putonghua* for simple daily communication, read *pinyin* and Chinese characters that have been learned, learn to add and subtract within 10, and precisely recognize Arabic numbers within 100 and pronounce them in *Putonghua*” (*Opinions of Promoting Rural Pre-school Bilingual Education of Shufu County, May, 2006*).

In the Kashgar Prefecture, the Han population only accounts for 8.5 percent of the total and mainly settles in urban areas of Kashgar. In some counties (such as Shufu, Jiashi, Yingjisha), the Han population makes up less than two percent of the total and mainly settles in the county town areas. In villages of Shufu and Yingjisha counties, Han population only makes up 0.3–0.5 percent of the total according to the statistics of the town/xiang<sup>31</sup>.

Under such circumstances, where few or no Han surroundings exist, the *Putonghua* ability of teachers becomes an important factor for assuring the teaching quality. In selecting teachers for Shufu County’s pre-school bilingual classes, teachers are chosen primarily for their *Putonghua* abilities: “the first choice for teachers are those who were *Min kao Han* students or Han teachers recruited in the last two years; the second choices are those at work in primary schools who have a certain *Putonghua* teaching ability and graduated from

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<sup>30</sup> Shufu County, wherein we conducted our field survey, is a “state-level poverty-stricken county.” Local financial revenue of this county in 2006 was RMB 34.28 million, and the county received RMB 321.86 million in assistance from higher authorities. The self-supporting rate of local finance was merely 9.63 percent.

<sup>31</sup> In the Chinese administrative system, the hierarchy from the top to the bottom is as follows: the central government, province (autonomous region/municipality), prefecture, county, town/xiang, and administrative village.

normal schools for kindergarten who are suitable for pre-school bilingual teaching; the third choice goes to job-awaiting graduates who are qualified for teaching in kindergarten and have reached the standard level of *Putonghua*” (*Opinions of Promoting Rural Pre-school Bilingual Education of Shufu County, May, 2006*).

We visited the bilingual kindergarten in Ayagemangan Xiang, in Shufu County. The 35-year-old teacher who accompanied us on visits to students’ homes was a Uyghur teacher with a *Min kao Han* background. She was recruited as a pre-school teacher in 2006 after being laid off when the textile plant she worked went bankrupt. She began to work in that plant after graduating from middle school. Kindergarten teachers with a *Min kao Han* background like her are scarce even in the whole county because many ordinary bilingual kindergartens have difficulties employing qualified teachers. A tentative solution adopted by Shufu County is to arrange officials and staff of the institutions under the county government and town officials to town and village bilingual kindergartens to teach in a rotational period of 4 months. In reading the government documents of this county, we find an appendix with the name list of the officials who will be sent to kindergartens in the next circulation: 12 from county institutions (all of them are Uyghur officials of *Min kao Han*) and 13 from town/xiang governments (10 Han, 1 Hui, 1 Xibe, and 1 Uyghur).

Up to July, 2007, there were 73 bilingual kindergartens with 4 395 attendees and 56 bilingual teachers in this county, but “most teachers fail to reach the required standard *Putonghua* level, have poor oral ability in *Putonghua*, and can only organize teaching by means of teaching CDs” (according to summaries of the Bureau of Education of the county). As a result, it becomes a measure of great importance to send county-level and town/xiang-level officials to support teaching and enhance education in bilingual. There are also 56 pre-school bilingual classes attached to primary schools, with 1 973 attendees in Shufu County. A generally adopted method there is to attach pre-school bilingual classes to primary schools by taking advantage of existing teaching conditions and teaching staff.

In total there are 20 888 children aged from three to six in this county, 29.3 percent having received a bilingual pre-school education. Of those, 5 048 are six years old and 43.1 percent of them receive bilingual education. Some success has been obtained through this coverage of bilingual education, which can be seen in that Uyghur children in pre-school classes we interviewed have been able to communicate with us in simple *Putonghua*.

## 5.2 Bilingual experimental classes in primary school

Since 2005, three teaching modes have been adopted by primary schools in

Shufu County: (1) The *Min kao Han* mode, in which *Putonghua* is totally used in classes to teach minority pupils in the county's No. 2 Primary School (Han school); (2) In minority primary schools in county town and suburbs, *Putonghua* is used beginning in grade 1 in courses of sciences and native language is used in the rest of the courses; gradually this mode will develop into a state wherein *Putonghua* is used in all the courses but native language course; (3) In all rural primary schools, *Putonghua* is used beginning in grade 3 in courses of sciences, and native language is used in the rest of the courses.

The county government has made a program schedule for implementing bilingual teaching for each year from 2005 to 2012. The County Bureau of Education plans to completely implement bilingual teaching to pupils beginning in grade 3 in rural schools by 2011, and to implement bilingual teaching to students of middle schools beginning in grade one by 2012 (*Opinions of Bilingual Teaching in Shufu County*).

From 2007 on, the mode of *Min kao Han* in Han primary schools of Shufu has not changed, whereas the education mode of township and rural primary schools has been adjusted to a certain extent as follows:

(1) In the four minority primary schools on township as well as suburbs, three courses (*Putonghua*, mathematics, and moral norms and life) are taught in *Putonghua* in grade one and two, and four courses (Uyghur language, arts, physical education, and "beautiful Xinjiang") are taught in Uyghur language. In grade three, six courses (the above-mentioned three courses plus sciences, Xinjiang comprehensive practical activities, and information technology) are taught in *Putonghua* while four courses (the same as above) are taught in Uyghur language.

(2) In the bilingual classes of the 9 central primary schools of township as well as the bilingual classes of all village-level primary schools of the whole county, two courses (*Putonghua*, and mathematics) are taught in *Putonghua* with the rest in Uyghur language in grade one and two. In grade three, four courses (*Putonghua*, mathematics, sciences, and information technology) are taught in *Putonghua* with the rest in Uyghur language.

(3) In common classes of rural minority primary schools, *Putonghua* continues to begin being used in science courses from grade three while other courses are all taught in native language.

This new adjustment further enhances *Putonghua* teaching in grade one and two of primary school. Looking at these actual trends, it is clear that developing bilingual education is the general policy advanced by the Xinjiang government. Nevertheless, each prefecture and even each county will make various specific programming choices, teaching modes, and implementation methods to take steps toward bilingual education in local schools in accordance with their practical conditions (i.e., language surroundings and conditions of teaching staff).

In 2007, among primary schools of Shufu County, there were 23 bilingual classes with 900 students in grade one, and eight bilingual classes with 262 pupils in grade two. Altogether there were 1 162 attendees of bilingual classes, making up 3.1 percent of the total primary school students in the county.

Bilingual education in Xinjiang originally started in middle schools. The original motive for beginning bilingual education at that stage was that minority graduates from colleges and universities were generally confronted with problems in employment due to their low level of *Putonghua*; it was hoped that by improving the *Putonghua* level of minority middle school students, those students would be compelled to study their specialized college courses in *Putonghua* so as to improve their employment conditions. In 1999, the Xinjiang Education Bureau planned to expand bilingual experimental classes in middle schools. In practice, it was then found that the bilingual classes in middle schools had no foundation when pupils' *Putonghua* was poor in the stage of primary school. In response, primary schools were added to "the name list of bilingual experimental schools" in 2000. Afterwards, it was found that language teaching would be more effective if bilingual education started from kindergarten; thus, from 2005 on, the Autonomous Region issued special documents for bilingual pre-school education and offered special budget support accordingly.

### 5.3 Bilingual experimental classes in middle schools

In January, 1999, goals for the teaching of bilingual classes were issued as *Experimental Scheme of Bilingual Teaching in Minority Middle Schools of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (For Trial Implementation)*. These goals were as follows: (1) "Graduates from senior high schools should reach a *Putonghua* level higher than level six of HSK (The *Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi*, the official test of *Putonghua* ability);" (2) "Strengthen the teaching of sciences, so that students' performance of mathematics, physics, and chemistry reach or approach the average performance of students in Han schools;" (3) "Ensure students' learning and mastering of their native languages such that their level of native language should not be lower than that of students in non-bilingual experimental classes of the same grade;" (4) "Students should have certain English ability so as to receive higher education more smoothly after entering university."

The *Scheme* issued specific regulations as to the enrollment methods of bilingual classes (with testing in the areas of spoken *Putonghua*, written Chinese, and mathematics), textbooks (compiled by the Autonomous Region for use in both *Putonghua* courses and native language courses, the rest adopt the teaching materials of existent compulsive education published by People's Education Press, and English course is opened from grade one in middle school, making use

of the universal textbooks in Han schools), the arrangement of periods of each subject, and testing methods.<sup>32</sup> To encourage teachers to actively participate in bilingual teaching, the *Scheme* presents the favorable workload accounting method. The workload of the teachers in bilingual classes is calculated at the rate of 1.5 to 1 compared with that of the teachers in Uyghur classes. Nevertheless, during the meetings with teachers in both Kashgar City and Shufu County, teachers reported to us that due to the financial difficulty of the area, the Autonomous Region offered policy without allocating the budget, so this preferential policy failed to be effectively implemented.

2006 witnessed the commencement of establishing bilingual classes in 20 percent of rural middle schools in Shufu County. In that year, 36 bilingual classes were set up in grade one of junior middle school, 6 in grade two, and 3 in grade three for a total of 1 972 students. At the same time, three bilingual classes were set up in grade one of high school. As of 2007 in the middle schools of this county, 45 bilingual classes with a total of 1 574 students have been set up in grade one, 6 in grade two with 266 students, and 3 in grade three with 133 students. The total number of attendees of bilingual classes was 1 973, accounting for 8.7 percent of students in middle schools in the county. In addition, one bilingual class with 47 students was set up in grade one of high school and two were set up in grade two with 64 students. Hence the total number of students in bilingual classes of high schools was 111, making up 2.9 percent of current students of the county. The accelerated speed of advancing measures toward bilingual education can thus be seen in accordance with the numbers of classes and students in different grades in the middle schools.

Meanwhile, according to the advocacy of the Region, Shufu County promoted the combination of minority and Han schools, and as a result combined No.2 Middle School (Han school) and No.4 Middle School (Uyghur school) in 2007. By this measure, teachers in the original Han schools may teach *Putonghua* to bilingual classes, which may solve the problem of shortage of qualified teachers in *Putonghua* in the original minority schools, and at the same time Uyghur

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<sup>32</sup> Regulations on examinations of experimental classes and entering in a higher school: (1) In the each semester's final exams, relative subjects taught in *Putonghua* and minority languages will be tested separately; (2) Students attend the region-standardized graduation examinations from middle school in the following subjects: mathematics, physics, chemistry, English, *Putonghua*, native language, political science, and physical exercise (the performance of English serves as a reference without being included in the total score). The examining languages correspond to teaching languages; (3) Graduation examinations of senior high school are organized by each prefecture; (4) Students who apply for college entrance examinations must pass level six on the HSK (*Experimental Scheme of Bilingual Teaching in Minority Middle Schools in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region*). The performance demand for the HSK decreased to level five in *Provisional Measures of "Bilingual" Teaching Administration in Primary and Middle Schools* of Shufu County in 2006.

students in bilingual classes may also have the opportunity to communicate more effectively with Han students on the same campus, which will improve their *Putonghua* level. The government of the Autonomous Region promotes the “combination of Han schools and minority language schools” in the hope of offering campus surroundings for minority students to practice *Putonghua*.

In response to the obvious differences between middle schools in towns and rural areas in terms of school conditions and quality of teaching staff, the running modes of bilingual classes in middle schools in Shufu County are classified into two types just as those in primary schools: (1) In the three middle schools in county town, the seven courses (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology, *Putonghua*, and English) are taught in *Putonghua*; other courses are taught in Uyghur language. (2) In rural middle schools, a total of six courses (mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, information technology and *Putonghua*) are taught in *Putonghua* while the rest are taught in Uyghur language. In theory, the only difference lies in the fact that English in rural middle schools is taught by means of students’ native language. In reality, however, we discovered that due to the lack of qualified teaching staff in rural schools, the six regulated courses that should be taught in *Putonghua* are actually taught in native language.

When we conducted interviews in Kashgar No. 1 Middle School (a Uyghur school), the Uyghur teachers presented their opinions about teaching science in *Putonghua*, based on their experiences. Take, for example, the 12 bilingual classes set up in 2007 in this school: there were three bilingual classes in each grade of the junior middle school sector and one in each grade of the senior high sector. The teachers thought that Han teachers did not understand Uyghur language and that Uyghur students generally had low *Putonghua* levels, both factors together led to the difficulties in communication between teachers and students, notably on the definitions of scientific terminology and formulas. When students have difficulty making their questions clearly understood and teachers have the same problem with explanations, the learning effect and performance of students naturally declines. It is said that only 4 students passed the physics exam in one class. Having recruited 10 Han teachers in succession, the school failed to keep any of them. The Uyghur teachers believe that an effective approach would be to send teachers with strong Uyghur language skills and a solid foundation of *Min kao Han* education background to receive training in *Putonghua* teaching.

These teachers said that they use Chinese textbooks for the courses, teach mainly in *Putonghua* in class, and supplement explanations by means of Uyghur language. In this way, students’ performance on mathematics, physics, and chemistry would be greatly improved.

Of the existing 25 teachers of bilingual classes in this school, with the

exception of one Hui teacher and one Han teacher who teach *Putonghua* (both of them graduated with a major in Uyghur language), the rest are all Uyghur teachers with *Min kao Han* backgrounds. Those teachers usually studied in Han schools at an early age and some even graduated with science majors from universities in Han regions. Since they studied specialized science majors in *Putonghua* themselves, so they seldom encounter problems with *Putonghua* teaching, nor do they have difficulty explaining science textbooks printed in Chinese to Uyghur students; therefore communication between them and students is easy and effective.

As was introduced by the deputy director of teaching affairs at this school, the newly enrolled students of junior middle school just started to know *Putonghua* at grade three in primary schools. They know little about *Putonghua* words, and are unable to make sentences; one third of them cannot write their names in Chinese characters; and 70 percent of them claim that they can understand nothing in class. Facing the actuality that freshmen have low *Putonghua* levels, the school took the approach of gradually increasing the proportion of *Putonghua* in teaching by increments; in grade one of junior middle sector, 50 percent of teaching using *Putonghua* in class while the other 50 percent was taught in Uyghur language; in grade two, 70 percent using *Putonghua* and 30 percent Uyghur language; in grade three, the proportion turned to 80–90 percent *Putonghua* to 10–20 percent Uyghur language. Under these conditions of gradual transition, better effects may be obtained on both the linguistic and psychological adaptation of students. Although at present the government dictates that no Uyghur language is allowed in bilingual class, this rigidity can neither be effectively realized, nor would the effect be practical. The implementation of these regulations should take a matter-of-fact approach to the problem of bilingual education.

According to the principal of Shufu Experimental Middle School, only those Uyghur students who fail to enter the Han No. 2 Middle attend bilingual classes there. With their low *Putonghua* levels, these students negatively influence the teaching quality of the bilingual classes. As was stated by the Han teachers in Kashgar Experimental Middle School, Uyghur students generally felt difficulties in their studies in the bilingual classes due to their low *Putonghua* levels. 95 percent of students at grade three in middle sector failed to pass science exams, and the language barrier in their studies would not be overcome until they reached grade three of senior high sector.

Han schools have strong teaching staffs and supportive *Putonghua* environment, so setting up bilingual classes in Han schools is superior to a certain degree for improving students' *Putonghua* levels. There are also obvious advantages to setting up bilingual classes in minority schools where teachers have a good knowledge of minority languages and can help students with low



Putonghua ability to better understand the science lessons. In summation, presumably the best place for bilingual classes is the combined Han and minority schools. Nevertheless, in southern Xinjiang, where few Han people settle, Han schools are only located in the county seat, so most rural schools cannot operate on this condition.

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## **6 Problems reflected in the practice of bilingual education in the Kashgar Prefecture**

### 6.1 How to develop bilingual experimental classes

(1) To develop bilingual classes, basic conditions must be met and the unrealistic goals of the “administrative achievement project” may not work. The first condition is having a certain number of qualified teachers who have mastered two languages and are familiar with the methods and techniques of bilingual teaching. The second condition is that the enrolled students (according to grade) must have the basic *Putonghua* ability necessary to sit in class and communicate with teachers. In addition, the other conditions of running a school, such as classroom buildings, library, equipment, laboratories, and operating budget, must be satisfied. In some bilingual classes set up in minority schools, the conditions have yet to mature. After graduation from the middle school, several ordinary classes in Kashgar No. 6 Middle School have been converted directly into bilingual classes in the senior high sector. The students in these classes had no previous language base for studying science in *Putonghua*, so the effect was predictably negative.

Of the bilingual class students in the senior high sector of Kashgar Experimental Middle School, 80 percent began to study their specialized courses with *Putonghua* as the language of instruction from grade one of junior middle sector, and 20 percent beginning to study these courses in *Putonghua* from grade one of senior high sector. The unbalanced *Putonghua* levels within the same class led to difficulties in teaching. To avoid this problem, when enrolling students for bilingual classes the school should present *Putonghua* exams with identical papers and correcting demands as strict criteria in order to formulate the size of the class according to the number of qualified students.

When bilingual classes were first established in the Kashgar prefecture, the exam-selection system led to perfect effect. In recent years, though, school enrollment was implemented in accordance with school district rather than exam performance, which resulted in the failure to assure the quality of students and the decline of effective teaching. A teacher in Shufu No. 4 Middle School contends, “the opposite effect would result if bilingual education were carried out

without taking into account the *Putonghua* ability and learning performance of students. To students with very poor foundation in *Putonghua*, bilingual class is hell, so they hate their courses. Therefore, bilingual education should be directed to students above the average performance.” Considering the *experimental* nature of bilingual experimental classes, it is suggested that the exam-selection system be resumed so as to control the quality of students. Qualified teachers are in great demand since the establishment of many bilingual classes. When the Experimental Middle School was rebuilt, the chief of the County Bureau of Education explained, “20 or so teachers were selected from more than 300 teachers who applied, but the schools remain unable to find enough qualified teachers. Only 9.6 percent of the Uyghur teachers have once attended bilingual training programs. The principal of Kashgar No. 27 Middle School believes that teachers graduating from *Min kao Han* or *Han kao Min* adapt to bilingual teaching best. Nonetheless, there are too few graduates of *Min kao Han* in southern Xinjiang to satisfy the needs of middle schools there.

(2) The demand that no minority language should be used in science courses in bilingual class is one of the indicators for teaching evaluation. Nevertheless, in the meetings many teachers pointed out that Uyghur language should be used to supplement the explanation of major content and terminology when most students have a low *Putonghua* capacity and there are not enough qualified teachers for bilingual education. Also, in the teaching of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, both the improvement of *Putonghua* ability and the learning of knowledge of these subjects should be taken into consideration. The approach presented by Kashgar No.1 Middle School, namely increasing the proportion of *Putonghua* teaching in science classes according to different grades, deserves reference. It has been argued that in terms of the application of *Putonghua* in bilingual classes, taking a realistic and practical approach and seeking positive results are the top priority.

(3) Along with the overall development of bilingual teaching, a learning series will be gradually set up, so that after graduating from pre-school bilingual class, the student will enter bilingual classes in primary school before further attending the bilingual classes in middle and high schools successively. When students have built a solid foundation of language learning, the effect of bilingual classes should visibly improve. With the present model of forcefully promoting the establishing bilingual classes simultaneously in schools of different levels and directly transferring minority students from the normal classes at lower grades into bilingual classes in higher grades, can only act as a temporary special measure during transitional period.

Considering the present employment situation, as long as the attendees in schools are transferred into bilingual experimental classes, their *Putonghua* level will be more or less improved, which may have positive consequences on their

employment prospects. As the deputy Director of the Bureau of Labor and Employment of the Kashgar Prefecture said, “advancing bilingual classes has marked effects on solving problems of unemployment. Speaking even a little *Putonghua* will make the employment of students easier.” There are concerns of some teachers, specifically the worry about that “bilingual class may improve their *Putonghua* level but diminish the quality of subject courses (e.g., math) learning for Uyghur students.” The key reason for these concerns lies in the lack of qualified students and teachers for bilingual education, which leads to the decline of the teaching and learning quality in bilingual classes. A special employment survey of relevant graduates could accurately measure whether bilingual education exerts positive or negative influences on employment of students.

(4) The teaching of minority languages in bilingual classes of primary schools deserves attention. As was understood from the teacher’s colloquia of Kashgar Prefecture, in the past, Uyghur language was taught from grade one in primary minority schools and *Putonghua* was taught from grade three. At present, however, *Putonghua* is taught from grade one in bilingual classes and Uyghur language is taught from grade three. The teachers said that, “the Uyghur alphabet is taught when pupils have just begun to make some progress in aural *Putonghua*, which might confuse them to a certain extent.” Since the development of bilingual teaching aims to make students “master both *Putonghua* and native language,” reducing the function of native language teaching is incompatible with the original intention of this policy.

(5) As for the prospect of bilingual teaching in primary and middle schools in Xinjiang, some think that bilingual teaching can supplement the deficiencies of both *Min kao Min*, which results in low-level *Putonghua* and difficulties in the job market, and *Min kao Han*, which results in students not knowing much about their native languages. They even believe that with good development prospects, bilingual education may become the mainstream in minority schools. Therefore, parents decide to send their children to bilingual classes.

Meanwhile, some parents consider that it costs too much to attend bilingual classes (extra textbooks and reference materials), and the teaching quality cannot be ensured due to the fact that the teaching staff is not always qualified in *Putonghua* and students are enrolled according to school district rather than being exam-selected.<sup>33</sup> As a result, many Uyghur parents with good incomes

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<sup>33</sup> The section chief of the educational administration of Kashgar No.6 Middle School explained that the incidental expenses for each middle school student is RMB 48 per semester, the tuition for each high school student is RMB 546 per semester, and the fee for bilingual class is RMB 680 per semester. The expenses for teaching reference materials are also very high.

send their children to Han schools. The principal of Shufu Bilingual Experimental Middle School once said, “only those Uyghur students who failed to enter No. 2 Middle School (Han school) will come to us.” Even some teachers of bilingual classes express clearly the opinion that their first choice is to send their children to Han schools. To be sure, if the teaching quality of current bilingual education fails to improve on time, its status and popularity in the mind of the public will be damaged.

## 6.2 Protect minority groups' enthusiasm for participating in bilingual education

During home-visits to students, we got the sense that the Uyghur populace had enormous enthusiasm for learning *Putonghua*. In Shufu County, we were even told that some Uyghur peasants planned to persuade their children who had been in grade two in minority primary schools to quit and turn to bilingual pre-school classes. The idea, of course, was rejected by kindergartens by regulations. We once visited a middle-aged peasant who lives in a rural area 9 kilometers away from county town but persists in sending his children to a bilingual experimental school (No. 4 Middle School) in town. At first, he ferried his children to and from school everyday by motorcycle; then, in 2002, he rented a house near the school and the whole family moved there. He takes care of their farm and does odd jobs in the slack season. Both of his two older daughters studied in bilingual classes in middle schools and entered *Nei gao ban* in 2006 and 2007 successively; his two younger daughters are now studying in bilingual classes in primary and middle schools. He takes great pride in this situation. According to teachers at No.4 Middle School, there are many students there whose parents rent houses in the town to support them. In another case, a Uyghur student who entered the *Nei gao ban* in 2007 graduated from the Bilingual Experimental Middle School in the town. He lives in a village 8.5 kilometers away from the town, but persists in riding his bicycle to and from school everyday. The distance is so great that even his parents and neighbors were surprised at his perseverance. According to a *Min kao Han* student, his parents encourage him to learn *Putonghua* and when he asks for something, his father, as a rule, would reply, “I'll buy it for you if you can name it in *Putonghua*.”

The ethnic relationships and religious issues are complex and sensitive in Xinjiang, and the central government and people all over the country show great concern for the stability and development of Xinjiang. It should be noted that the enthusiasm shown by Uyghur people who send their children to Han schools or bilingual classes is very valuable, and the availability of these classes offers an important historical opportunity for people to strengthen inter-ethnic communication and promote national unity. Despite strong governmental financial support, a scientific and practical attitude must be held on the concrete

implementation of bilingual education in each area, and people should learn from their practices and adjust running methods appropriately. The majority of people attach the greatest importance to actual practical results; therefore we should do the best to maintain, consolidate, and encourage the enthusiasm of minority students on learning *Putonghua* by means of continuously enhancing the practical effect of bilingual classes, improving their opportunities in job market and personal career after the students' graduation.

### 6.3 Teacher training for bilingual classes

The training of bilingual teachers is the key to improving the existing bilingual experimental classes and further developing them. According to many schools in Kashgar, after bilingual classes were set up, it became easy to find teachers for courses in grade one of junior middle school, while both the number and the ability of teachers for classes in higher grades failed to satisfy the needs of the school. Thus the difficulty of running bilingual classes increased. Only 9.6 percent of the total minority teachers of the Shufu County have attended bilingual training programs. Bilingual teachers of the Kashgar Prefecture are selected and sent to Urumqi for a year of training. The expenses for the training are paid by the government, but traveling expenses are borne by teachers themselves.

According to some teachers, they have to deliver a cautionary deposit when attending the training programs, which put great pressure on them.<sup>34</sup> It is understandable that this measure was issued by the government in hopes of driving teachers to attend the training programs actively and perform well. However, if the standard of assessment deviates in practice, then the negative consequences may emerge, and an unhealthy trend could develop.

In our informal discussions in Kashgar City and Shufu County, the school teachers stated on several occasions that training of bilingual teachers failed to yield good results. The main problems and suggestions for improvement follow:

(1) In the current training program, Uyghur teachers who speak low-level *Putonghua* are trained together, so they have no language surroundings in which

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<sup>34</sup> According to *Provincial Measures for the Management of Bilingual Teacher Training* of Shufu County, during training, each bilingual teacher should pay a monthly deposit of RMB 120 to guarantee learning quality, which is turned in to the budget accounting center of the Bureau of Education. The County treasury subsidizes the training fee. A system of monthly examination is implemented in the teachers' training center, and those who pass the monthly exam are not charged the deposit for the next month, while those who fail to pass the exam do not get back the month's deposit and must continue to pay for next month. Those who fail to pass the final examination of the training program are required to pay a training fee (RMB 1.1 per hour on primary school level and RMB 1.4 on middle school level) plus 30 percent of the training cost.

to improve their *Putonghua*. It is suggested that those teachers be sent to key primary and middle Han schools in the nearby area or city to attend classes for a year and practice *Putonghua* teaching under the guidance of Han teachers will greatly improve their daily *Putonghua* and quality of their teaching.

(2) Some Uyghur teachers who act as trainers in the programs do not speak fluent *Putonghua* or uphold professional knowledge themselves. Some trainees have said, “some teachers have a *Putonghua* level no higher than my own.” Thus it is suggested that trainers be selected on more critical grounds.

(3) Some of the teaching approaches in the training class are totally HSK exam-oriented, and do not paying attention to the development of trainees’ practical ability to teach, answer questions, and organize discussions in *Putonghua*. Due to the fact that such courses are directed to teachers of bilingual classes, innovative teaching methods should be introduced.

(4) Bilingual teaching is a specialized field with its own particular techniques and teaching methods. A teacher who knows the target language (*Putonghua*) and knows about mathematics, physics, and chemistry will not necessarily make a qualified bilingual teacher. Han teachers need to be trained to teach minority students whose native languages are not *Putonghua*. Because Han teachers who are able to speak Uyghur language would have improved communication with students, they need to learn Uyghur. On the other hand, the training of Uyghur teachers should not only demand that they can speak *Putonghua*, but also that they specifically master *Putonghua* as it applies to the teaching of science courses.

(5) Some training programs failed to complete the prescribed content because, although the teachers were highly paid, they did not follow the planned curriculum. It is recommended that the curriculum be restrictively implemented, the program be extended to two years, more teaching practice be added under the guidance of skilled trainers, and strict assessment be applied to the progress and results.

(6) Since many minority teachers fail to pronounce *Putonghua* correctly, it is recommended that high-quality audio courses be recorded and distributed to schools for students to learn and master standard pronunciation. This method is highly recommended because of its low cost but high effectiveness.

#### 6.4 HSK for minority teachers

HSK is an exam designed to test *Putonghua* level, popularized generally in the minority schools of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. From 1998, the HSK performance of minority senior high school graduates in the Region began to be connected with their college entrance examination. The total performance of students on the college entrance examination would be increased by 5 points for

reaching level three on the HSK, 10 points would be added for level four, 15 for level five, and 20 for level six. Students' performance in bilingual experimental classes would factor into their score on the HSK.

The demands of the Autonomous Region government posed on minority teachers are currently as follows: After being trained, full-time bilingual teachers who teach in primary, middle, or high schools should reach level six, seven, and eight respectively on the HSK. Since this is a rigid index that determines whether the teachers can keep their jobs or not, they would need to attend various *Putonghua* training programs for the relevant certificates of the HSK.

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned demands fail to be completely practical, and most local educational bureaus do not follow the criteria issued by the Autonomous Region government. Currently, teachers who meet the HSK criteria account for less than 35 percent of the total number of bilingual teachers in Shufu County. As was stated by teachers in the colloquia, there are a total of 11 levels on the HSK and teachers in courses other than *Putonghua* in primary minority schools of rural areas should reach at least level three, and *Putonghua* teachers should reach at least level five. Many teachers on the job failed to reach the requisite level, though. Moreover, many teachers hold fake certificates.

With the purpose to get the certificate and pass the quality assessment, or to reach the level of the language test required for promotion, black market HSK certificates have appeared in Urumqi with prices ranging from RMB 2 000 to 3 000. As a result, of the 28 teachers in a primary school, 5 reached level seven, 5 level six, 15 levels three to five, and 3 remained below band three. It is estimated that of the 28 teachers, 13 hold false certificates.

The phenomenon of black market certifications deserves great attention from educational authorities in Xinjiang, and reasonable required standards or indexes should be made in accordance with the reality and practice in each area, on the basis of field investigation, to check on teachers' performance. Different criteria may be presented in different areas (southern Xinjiang, northern Xinjiang, the middle area) and on different levels. A realistic attitude is demanded rather than a declaration of fixed criteria. Commensurate with the continuous improvement of the quality of, and renewal of the teaching staff, the index may be raised gradually until the indexes of the whole region become unified.

6.5 When bilingual education is actively promoted, the mode of *Min kao Han* should not be ignored

None would deny the fact that, from the prospect of the minority schools in Xinjiang, the main goal should be to develop bilingual education in order to improve the *Putonghua* ability and professional level of the teachers. In addition,

the enthusiasm of minority people for sending their children to Han schools should also be supported. In every colloquium and home-visit, was understood that the local Uyghur parents (notably in families located downtown, of which the children stay in *Putonghua* surroundings and have the ability to speak *Putonghua*) generally prefer sending their children to Han schools. For example, No. 12 Primary School in Kashgar (Han school) planned to recruit only 45 students in 2007. There were 475 applicants total, most of who were children of Uyghur officials. Such cases are common in every township in southern Xinjiang. In the view of many Uyghur parents, there are obvious advantages to students attending Han school: First, students can totally master *Putonghua* which is very useful in social communication and future career. Second, students use *Putonghua* textbooks and attend Han schools' exams, and therefore may learn science courses better. The parents, on the other hand, having a certain cultural knowledge, can coach their children on learning Uyghur language at home so that the children's native language would not be abandoned. Third, there are many preferences for students of *Min kao Han* when it comes to the college entrance exam that still keep maintain their priority when students attend the exam for *Nei gao ban* in Han schools.

About 90 percent of students in bilingual classes will choose *Min kao Han* at the time of college entrance exams. That is, they will attend the exam in *Putonghua*. The students do so because schools that enroll *Min kao Han* students outnumber those that enrolling *Min kao Min* students, so the *Min kao Han* students will have a much wider range of selection on universities and majors. They can also apply for the entrance examinations of more universities, and award marks may be added to their performance.<sup>35</sup> It is generally thought that *Min kao Han* and *Han kao Min* graduates are well-suited for teaching bilingual classes. As such, the number of Han schools should be increased, and *Min kao Han* programs should be actively developed at least as far as generally developing bilingual classes for Xinjiang in the future. Furthermore, more preferential policies and great encouragement should be applied to *Han kao Min*

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<sup>35</sup> In accordance with the required scores for the college entrance examination issued in 2006 by the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, the admission requirement for the humanities and social sciences for *Min kao Han* (both the first group or the second group of universities) was 70 points lower than that for *Han kao Han*, while the admission requirement for sciences is 130 points (the first group universities) and 78 points (the second group universities) lower. Teachers in Kashgar explained that students of bilingual classes sitting the college entrance examination as *Min kao Han* will be awarded 50 points. When students of bilingual classes apply for *Min kao Han* (constrained to sciences) by themselves, they may not attend the central government's standardized English examination, but the English exam presented by the autonomous region. When they apply on their own for *Min kao Min*, on the other hand, no English exam is required. As a result, the specific beneficial regulations on the college entrance examination for students of bilingual classes remains to be investigated further.



students.

The minority education in Xinjiang has developed various different modes at the same time, such as *Min kao Han*, *Min kao Min*, *Han kao Min*, and bilingual classes, according to the requirement of the local job market and the wishes of the minority people.

#### 6.6 The stimulating impact exerted by *Nei gao ban* on bilingual education

At present, minority parents generally intend to send their children to *Nei gao ban*<sup>36</sup> for the following reasons: First, *Nei gao ban* is held in the best high schools in China with the most satisfying teaching conditions, teaching staff, and teaching results. Second, the reduction of tuition for *Nei gao ban* students may greatly alleviate their families' economic burdens.<sup>37</sup> Third, their level of *Putonghua* and specialized courses will improve noticeably. Fourth, graduates of such schools can usually enter the best universities in China, which, as a rule, promise good prospects for employment. Students in middle schools who are selected and sent to *Nei gao ban* must pass certain exams, and attendees of *Min kao Min*, *Min kao Han* and bilingual classes all have different requirements. Now the annual selection of *Nei gao ban* has become a major event for schools and educational departments in Xinjiang.

The Bureau of Education has issued a definitive admission index for *Nei gao*

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<sup>36</sup> In 2000, the central government began to implement the program of "Xinjiang high school classes in other provinces of China" (*Nei gao ban* for short). Students in *Nei gao ban* classes are selected among minority students who graduated from junior middle schools in each area of Xinjiang, in accordance with their performance in *Putonghua* and mathematics. A certain quota of students is enrolled every year, and 5 000 students (10 percent of which are Han students) have been enrolled each year recently. The enrolled students are sent to *Nei gao ban* teaching centers in selected best high schools in big cities in coastal areas; after one year's preparatory study (for enhancing their *Putonghua*, mathematics, and English), they are assigned to ordinary classes in the schools individually or assigned to "Xinjiang class in group," depending on their performance and specialty in either humanities/social sciences or sciences. They are then enrolled individually in the college entrance examination, and all of them may enter universities or colleges according to their adjusted scores and preferences.

<sup>37</sup> The students most in need of financial aid may pay only the traveling expenses from their hometowns to Urumqi. Other expenses, namely, other traveling expenses, tuition, cost of textbooks, and return traveling expenses for their annual visit to home, are shouldered by the central government. The second rank of students in need of financial aid must pay RMB 450 each year to the school. The third rank, "ordinary students" pay RMB 900. Students whose parents are both peasants, who have one parent that lost the ability to work belong to the first rank category "most needy students." Those with healthy peasant parents with fixed incomes belong to the second rank category "poor students." Those who have one parent as employed by the state belong to the category "ordinary students."

*ban* or *Qu nei chu zhong ban*<sup>38</sup> for each school to evaluate the teaching performance in their best classes. Those who fail to reach the index will be fined.<sup>39</sup> The admission rate of students in bilingual classes to *Nei gao ban* is usually high, notably that of the first bilingual class, which was enrolled via exam-selection. According to data from Kashgar No.1 Middle School, of the 40 graduates of bilingual classes from the middle sector of this school, 36 (90 percent) were enrolled into *Nei gao ban* in 2000; the figure was 17 out of 102 graduates in 2006; in 2007, 24 students of the 83 graduates passed the *Nei gao ban* exam and were waiting for their health check during our visit. The opportunity to enter *Nei gao ban* is a major motivation for minority parents to actively send their children to bilingual classes. 2008 is the first year that students of the first *Nei gao ban* graduated from universities, so people are now generally concerned with their employment conditions and developing prospects. *Nei gao ban* has aided in promoting bilingual education in Xinjiang and will continue to exert influence in the future.

A new phenomenon appeared in recent years. Namely, a few students of *Nei gao ban* chose to return to their hometowns in Xinjiang to resume classes and take college entrance exams there because of the fear that they might not be enrolled in best universities upon their graduation from *Nei gao ban*. Schools in the Kashgar Prefecture welcome those students because their attending the college entrance exam in Kashgar can raise the admission rate of the local schools. Nevertheless, due to the fact that they also fill the local admissions quota, the dissatisfaction of local exam candidates should be taken into consideration.

#### 6.7 Teaching materials for bilingual education

Teachers universally complained that there are no unified textbooks for pre-school bilingual classes in Xinjiang. Now the materials for Han kindergarten, which seldom connect with local society and everyday life of Uyghur community, are used in Xinjiang. As a result, teaching materials need to be revised to boosting children's interest in order to satisfy teaching demands.

Not only native language textbooks but also those of every other subject now taught in bilingual classes are also identical with those of Han schools. Due to

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<sup>38</sup> In addition to *Nei gao ban*, there is also a *Qu nei chu zhong ban* (intra-regional junior middle school class) in Xinjiang. Quality minority students are selected based on their primary school departure examinations and sent to study in key middle schools within the Region. 5 000 students were enrolled in *Qu nei chu zhong ban* in Xinjiang in 2006.

<sup>39</sup> One primary school principal explained that the enrollment index of *Qu nei chu zhong ban* has been issued to best class in each primary school, and the school that fails to fill its quota will be fined RMB 200 each.

the different skill levels of the teachers, minority teachers in primary and middle schools have been evading or mentioning only parts of the content of some subjects (math, physics, chemistry and biology), and even refusing to cover some sections in exams. With the implementation of new bilingual teaching modes, teachers have more difficulties applying *Putonghua* to teach the content that was previously hard to teach in their native language. In response, the investigative report by the Autonomous Region Bureau of Education advises that,

In accordance with this practical condition, it has been a necessity to research and develop specialized textbooks for each subject that are suitable for promoting bilingual teaching in primary and middle schools in our region. It might be taken into consideration that textbooks published by People's Education Press and Beijing Normal University Press are still taken as the blueprint, although some difficult and profound content should be canceled. Additionally, the learning and understanding of basic knowledge should be further emphasized; native language should be marked in brackets after technical terms so as to facilitate teachers and students to use them in teaching and learning. It can also be taken into account that textbooks may be compiled by attaching glossaries of the two languages at the end of the textbooks.

Three successive sets of mainstream Chinese textbooks have been compiled and officially published by educational publishers, and the most recent, 1998 version also needs to be revised in accordance with the developing conditions in Xinjiang and the nation at large. As was determined by the teachers of Kashgar No. 1 Middle School (Uyghur school), bilingual classes now use the Chinese textbooks compiled by People's Education Press, which, are too difficult for Uyghur students in southern Xinjiang. On the other hand, those textbooks compiled by the Autonomous Region for minority schools are too simple—their level for grade six of primary school is lower than that of grade one in other provinces. A better effect would be achieved if the textbooks published by People's Education Press were revised by taking away with the section on ancient *Mandarin* and adding sections about daily life and local communities in Xinjiang.

#### 6.8 Other problems with bilingual education

In the colloquia and interviews, teachers also reported some other problems pertinent to bilingual education:

(1) Curriculum set up, class arrangement, and teaching materials lack a unified set of demands. Assessment of teaching quality is applied without unified criteria and methods. And furthermore, the structure, content, and degree of difficulty of

exams remain to be normative. In the view of the teachers, the *Experimental Scheme of Bilingual Teaching (Draft)*, issued by the Xinjiang Education Bureau in 1998, needs to be revised according to the changing conditions in recent years on the prescriptions and demands as regard many facets of teaching. In particular curriculum setup, teaching language, class arrangement, and demands for exams of different levels need to be standardized.

Two tendencies deserve attention here: First, the regional differences between southern and northern Xinjiang go ignored, and unified regulations are formulated that may be alienated from the realities of each area, leading to their failure to be implemented in some areas. Second, unified and normative teaching demands are lacking, which has led to the messy teaching situation. To overcome these two tendencies, the suggestion was made that on the basis of field investigations and surveys, the whole region be divided into several "administrative precincts of bilingual education," and that each precinct determine a set of teaching plans and assess methods to deal with the main content as consistently as possible, only permitting differences on a few aspects.

(2) There are serious problems with the students' tuition burden. It is reported that tuition is RMB 1200 per year for senior high school students, and textbook fees are RMB 230 per year. For students in senior vocational schools, the tuition is RMB 2000 per year, and the textbook fee is RMB 300 per year. What's more, in senior vocational schools, students from poor families account for 90 percent of the total student body. In the Kashgar and Hotan prefectures, the rural per-capita net income in 2005 was only RMB 1 699 and RMB 1 296 respectively (Statistical Bureau of Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, 2006, p.222). As such, the above-mentioned fees are truly beyond the reach of rural families. The subsidy offered by the government to each poor student in boarding high schools is RMB 1 000 per year (RMB 100 per month for 10 months). Each apprentice of senior vocational schools may be offered RMB 1 500 per year as subsidy by the government. The students who enrolled in jointly run vocational schools in the eastern and western regions of China (enrolling 3 000 persons each year) receives a RMB 2 000 subsidy per year offered by the program. These subsidies are of great necessity to minority students in southern Xinjiang for engaging in and completing education. We hope that the central government will reinforce its support for the courses of minority education in Xinjiang by enlarging the scope and the amount of the financial subsidy. And we can say for sure that investing in education, notably minority education, is a most suitable expenditure for the central government and the nation.

Teachers reported that the textbook fee for each pupil in primary school is RMB 75 each semester. The books are bought collectively by the County Bureau of Education, but some books, like those for the course of Information Technology, were never offered due to the lack of teachers. This kind of

phenomena should be avoided by the authorities by listening to the reports and complaints from the schools.

(3) Rural teachers currently take on too many non-teaching jobs in addition to their teaching tasks, and as a result their workload is too heavy. One major aspect of the problem is that the Bureau of Education and town/xiang government dually supervise rural primary schools. When there are certain tasks for the town/xiang departments, those tasks are then assigned to teachers directly. For example, the teachers must participate in the matter of managing employment services organized by county or town/xiang governments, reporting rural surplus laborers, and persuading the laborers to get registered or participate in the labor training and exchange programs. These tasks are made worse because if the teachers fail to finish the assignment, they must forfeit part of their wages. On top of these outside jobs, teachers must undertake the work of campus greening and cleaning, and of keeping campus watch. Each teacher will be on duty for 24 hours every 25 days. As a result, teachers often hire someone to do the duty and they have to pay him themselves. When teachers do not have enough time for study and teaching preparation, the teaching work of the whole school is surely affected. Thus it is advised that the Bureau of Education carry out special investigation into these problems and improve the working conditions of rural teachers and provide necessary subsidies.

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## 7 Concluding remarks

In the process of modernization, sciences, technology, economics, and military affairs have developed as the objective measures of a country's relative standing in the global community. Competition between countries has become much more serious than ever before in human history, and the nations that are left behind in sciences and economics face many difficulties to survive. To stand strong in the international community and to catch up with the developing pace of the whole world, a country must devote major efforts to developing education. For any country (notably developing countries), the preservation of traditional cultural heritage and native languages is not enough to survive in the modern world. It is also necessary to learn about sciences, technology, management, social sciences, law, and other modern knowledge to catch up with the progress of globalization. Only by mastering universal knowledge and techniques can China have the possibility to develop into a modernized nation, and thus engage in dialogue, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence with other countries of the world under equal circumstances.

To obtain and master modern knowledge, and to enable a nation to be intellectually creative, the government and people must address the question of

what language is most efficient and effective for use in school education. China is a multi-ethnic nation. Many ethnic groups in China have their own languages and cultural traditions. According to a sociological viewpoint, language basically has two functions: one is to act as the carrier of history and culture for a group, and the other is to serve as the tool for communicating and acquiring new knowledge from others. To remain current on the most advanced sciences and technologies in the world, China needs English education as a tool for study and application; Similarly, *Putonghua*, the common inter-ethnic language of the nation of China, is the most useful tool for people to communicate and receive basic knowledge in and out of the classroom. 95 percent of the population speaks *Putonghua* because it was chosen as the common language. While each minority group in China must make efforts to learn its native language, the opportunity for improvement and development through learning *Putonghua* should by no means be ignored.

The Chinese *Constitution* guarantees all minority groups the right to preserve and develop their languages. When a member of any minority group in China wishes to study in school using his/her native language as the language of instruction, the government should provide a school for them. In the case that there are too few students with such a wish and establishing and maintaining such a school is too inefficient, the government could arrange for those students to attend a boarding school in another region. In our field survey around the minority areas in China, this is the common arrangement.

Over the course of more than a century of development, with the hard work of tens of millions of teachers and scholars, Han schools have become an institution for research on *Putonghua* teaching and knowledge, publishing at a high level internationally. *Putonghua* educational system cultivates tens of millions of Han, Hui and Manchu students, and has also offered an important ladder for the development of minority education. From the perspective of eventual employment prospects, in particular, mastering *Putonghua* and expressing specialized knowledge by means of *Putonghua* are important conditions for minority students to develop on the grand stage of China. A Uyghur scholar emphasizes: "In contemporary China, not knowing *Putonghua* means self-enclosing" (Muhabaiti, 2002). In every minority settlement area where we have conducted field surveys throughout the country, the local population's enthusiasm for learning *Putonghua* was noticeable. In addition, local governments actively promote *Putonghua* teaching in order to improve the employment conditions of minority graduates. *Min kao Han*, and the new type of bilingual education in Xinjiang are cases of exploration and practice on this account.

Many Uyghur students have also fully realized the importance of learning *Putonghua*. In one interview, a Uyghur student in Kashgar No. 2 Middle School said, "Language is a tool, so learning *Putonghua* well is highly important for us to get to know the outside world... We could get only a few high-quality versions of

Uyghur language reference books before, while many Chinese reference materials can be found easily with wider coverage and a higher quality. Therefore we have to learn *Putonghua* well in order to do well on the college entrance examination.” When I was in Kashgar in 1997, I had a totally different feeling than what I have in 2007. I now feel that we should care for and maintain the active and enthusiastic approach to supporting the Uyghur populace in learning *Putonghua*, and we must contribute to efficiently running the bilingual education in Xinjiang by virtue of a realistic attitude and collective endeavor.

The Xinjiang Autonomous Region government is farsighted on attaching great importance to bilingual education and being determined to “start at an early age.” This is a measure of vital importance that can lay the foundation for the long-term stability and social development of the Region. When we made surveys across the Kashgar area, we could sense the force and influence of the government on promoting this work everywhere. We felt at the same time that some targets might seem somewhat beyond the reality in some areas. For example, the Autonomous Region government proposes that *Putonghua* will be applied in all the primary and middle schools for everything except native language classes before 2012. Since the problem of insufficient qualified teaching staff cannot be practically settled in time, the goal of setting up bilingual classes in rural primary and middle minority schools presumably can hardly be attained.

Therefore, it is clear that many issues remain to be discussed in determining how to promote and develop bilingual education in Xinjiang, and many relevant problems remain to be solved. The various extant modes of bilingual education in each area need to be taken into account due to the great regional variation in Xinjiang. Southern Xinjiang, with its low population density and high minority proportions, is a special area. There is a great necessity for the Autonomous Region government to make special programs for educational development in the three prefectures of southern Xinjiang. It is also suggested that Han schools in some minority areas of Xinjiang should open Uyghur language courses for Han students and students of *Min kao Han* because such courses would benefit those students in developing and obtaining employment locally. In addition, due to the fact that many poor counties are incapable of offering financial support for the local bilingual education, sufficient financial support must be provided by the central government to satisfy the needs of the local populace.

People’s high enthusiasm and great expectations notwithstanding, the road needs to be covered step by step. Integral programming is needed, and differences between the planning indicators of different areas should be apparent. Gradual exploration of experiences is still needed to promote smooth development of minority education in each area of Xinjiang. Presumably, Deng Xiaoping’s adage of “groping forward by feeling for stones in riverbed to cross a river” still applies here. Carrying out subject

surveys, interviewing principals and teachers who work in school campus and classrooms of bilingual education, and talking with parents and students participating in bilingual courses so as to understand their thought and attend to their ideas and suggestions are the necessary paths for us to objectively understand the situations and thoughts of the people involved. Only when we persist in making systematic and deep studies, can we have the right to speak and determine practical methods and paths toward the development of minority education.

In recent years, many scholars concerned with the minority education in Xinjiang have made deep and systematic studies and published their findings (Muhabaiti, 2002; Wu, 2004). This article serves to put order to the materials gathered based on a short-term field study, and may still contain some immature views. Therefore, critiques and comments from readers are sincerely expected.

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## Glossary

admission line 分数线

bilingual class 双语班

*Han kao Han* 汉考汉

*Han kao Min* 汉考民

Han school 汉校

HSK 汉语水平考试

*Min kao Han* 民考汉

*Min kao Min* 民考民

minority-Han joint school

民汉合校

*Nei gao ban* 内高班

policy-awarded point 政策性加分

*Qu nei chu zhong ban*

区内初中班

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## Appendix I

	Year	Policy-awarded points	Recipients of policy-awarded points
High School Entrance Exam (Urumqi)	2002	10	Hui, Taiwanese, children of those killed in military service, children of overseas Chinese and returned Chinese, children of returned Chinese scholars with foreign academic degrees
		70	<i>Min kao Han</i> students (key high schools and programs admissions requirement)
	2006	10	Hui, Taiwanese, children of those killed in military service, children of overseas Chinese and returned Chinese
		50	<i>Min kao Han</i> students
College Entrance Exam	1985	10	Hui students
		30	“Single minority”* <i>Min kao Han</i> students
		100	“Double minority”** <i>Min kao Han</i> students
	1987	10	Hui students
		80	“Single minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> students



(Continued)

	Year	Policy-awarded points	Recipients of policy-awarded points
College Entrance Exam		100	“Double minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> students that apply to universities in inner China
		150	“Double minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> students that apply to universities in Xinjiang
	2002	10	Hui, “Single minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> , students who have received the award for excellence, children of overseas Chinese and returned Chinese, children of those killed in military service
	2003	20	The top six finishers in key athletic competition and those who apply for the Autonomous Region’s institution’s majors with most rigorous working conditions
		70	“Double minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> students and “Double Han” <i>Han kao Min</i> students
	2004	10	Hui, “Single minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> students
	2005	20	The top six finishers in key athletic competition, those who apply for the Autonomous Region’s institution’s majors with most rigorous working conditions, and decorated military personnel
	2006	50	“Double minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> and “Double minority” <i>Han kao Min</i> students
Exams for College/ university degree certificate of adult program	2003	15	Hui graduates of two-year college for 4-year university degree
		20	High school graduate Hui specialists; “Single minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> graduates of two-year college for 4-year university degree, Han students from the three prefectures of southern Xinjiang, students from “poor counties,” children of overseas Chinese and those who died in military service
		30	High school graduate “Single minority” <i>Min kao Han</i> specialists, Han from the three southern prefectures, students from “poor counties”
		40	Specialized school “Double minority” (“Double Han”) <i>Min kao Han (Han kao Min)</i> graduates
		60	High school graduate “Double minority” (“Double Han”) <i>Min kao Han (Han kao Min)</i> specialists
	2006	10	Hui, <i>Min kao Han</i> “Single minority” students, <i>Han kao Min</i> “Single Han” students
		20	Returned overseas Chinese, children of returned overseas Chinese, Children of overseas Chinese, Taiwanese, Han from the three southern counties, prefectures, students from national and regional “poor counties”
		40	<i>Min kao Han</i> “Double minority” and <i>Han kao Min</i> “Double Han” students

Note: \*“Single minority” students are students of which one parent is Han and one parent

belongs to one of the 11 protected minority groups.

\*\*“Double minority” students are students whose parents both belong to one of the 11 protected minority groups (Uyghur, Kazak, Mongol, Kirgiz, Tajik, Xibe, Uzbek, Tatar, Daur, Tibetan, and Russian). *Min kao Han* students belong to one of the 11 minority groups and take the exams in Chinese; *Han kao Min* students are either Han or belong to one of the non-protected minority groups and take the exam using a minority language.

## Appendix II

### Required scores for admission to college/university in Xinjiang from 1977–2006

Year	Type of Student	Liberal Arts			Sciences			Appendix
		Key	Average	Specialist	Key	Average	Specialist	
1977	<i>Putonghua</i>	A65, B80, C65			A55, B70, C55			
	Minority language	A55, B65, C55			A35, B45, C30			
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	40			25			
1978	<i>Putonghua</i>	261			250			
	Minority language	95			90			Unified national proposition
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	140			90			
1979	<i>Putonghua</i>	256			232			
	Minority language	170			152			Xinjiang proposition
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	140			90			
1980	<i>Putonghua</i>	330	277		360	300		
	Minority language	256	267		150	130	150	
	Mongolian language	220			130			
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	150			130			
1981	<i>Putonghua</i>	320			340			
	Minority language	320			310			
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	190			215			
1982	<i>Putonghua</i>	365	349		375	336		
	Minority language	320			367			
	Mongolian language	320			310			
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	170			150			
1983	<i>Putonghua</i>	425	412		440	405		
	Minority language	425	400		500	460		
	Mongolian language	300			390			
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	200			180			

(Continued)

Year	Type of student	Liberal Arts			Sciences			Appendix	
		Key	Average	Specialist	Key	Average	Specialist		
1984	<i>Putonghua</i>	428	415		405	365		Politics, math unified national proposition	
	Minority language	320	295		350	300			
	Mongolian language	171			172				
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	180			155				
1985	<i>Putonghua</i>	430	415	405	440	400	385		
	Minority language	317	297	290	288	260	252		
	Mongolian language	115			170				
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	205			116				
1986	<i>Putonghua</i>	450	440	430	470	450	425		
	Minority language	245	235		335	300	285		
	Mongolian language	190			180				
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	195			210				
1987	<i>Putonghua</i>	445	428	419	470	435	421		
	Minority language	269	262	245	313	282	268		
	Mongolian language	213			242				
1988	<i>Putonghua</i>	463	453	441	480	453	443		
	Minority language	305	304	290	423	385	370		
1989	<i>Putonghua</i>	467	452	443	498	474	453		
	Minority language		322	308		364	347		
1990	<i>Putonghua</i>	434	418	409	500	473	454		
	Minority language		247	264		282	277		
1991	<i>Putonghua</i>	456	444	434	499	473	454		
	Minority language		258	250		260	247		
1992	<i>Putonghua</i>	458	445	435	523	500	473		
	Minority language		283	276		285	275		
1993	<i>Putonghua</i>	440	430	420	482	458	443		
	Minority language	320	280	273	322	287	282		
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	Students selected based on performance							

(Continued)

Year	Type of student	Liberal Arts			Sciences			Appendix
		Key	Average	Specialist	Key	Average	Specialist	
1994	<i>Putonghua</i>	488	471	454	522	485	446	
	Minority language	410	368	342	378	335	312	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	343			340			
1995	<i>Putonghua</i>	489	475	468	502	465	445	
	Minority language	372	337	288	347	310	280	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	359			293			
1996	<i>Putonghua</i>	526	516 498	481	498	473 446	424	
	Minority language	375	322		326		402	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	326			231			
1997	<i>Putonghua</i>	478	460	444	468	414	388	
	Minority language	371	335	320	332	288	279	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	326			260			
1998	<i>Putonghua</i>	464	434	404	484	432	404	
	Minority language	343	324	309	337	309	301	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	Students selected based on performance						
1999	<i>Putonghua</i>	480	452	434	470	420	396	
	Minority language	348	330	315	315	283	273	Lowest scores for this category
	<i>Min kao Han</i> (including scores)	442	397	363	404	353	329	
	Mongolian language	Students selected based on performance and accounting for regional differences						
2000	<i>Putonghua</i>	464	434	390	478	422	388	
	Minority language	330	304	285	324	290	260	
	Mongolian language	Students selected based on performance						
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	376		286	300		260	
2001	<i>Putonghua</i>	468	436	344	486	436	344	
	Minority language							
	<i>Min kao Han</i>							
2002	<i>Putonghua</i>	490	436	340	499	420	330	
	Minority language (lowest scores for this category)	330 (16)	296 (16)	255 (12)	315 (18)	265 (16)	220 (12)	
	Mongolian language	316 (16)	300 (12)	240 (12)	Not calculated	359 (16)	255 (12)	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	456	398	270	400	340	200	

(Continued)

Year	Type of student	Liberal Arts					Sciences					Appendix
		Key		Average	Specialist		Key		Average	Specialist		
2003		Undergraduate			Specialist		Undergraduate			Specialist		
		1	2	3	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	
	<i>Putonghua</i>	493	450	410	348	302	456	390	351	302	226	
	Minority language (lowest score for any subject exam)	333 (18)	290 (18)	288 (18)	251 (13)	225 (10)	307 (18)	270 (18)	265 (18)	235 (13)	210 (10)	
	Mongolian language	368 (18)	236 (18)	Not calculated	Based on performance		330 (18)	295 (18)	Not calculated	Based on performance		
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	476	400	388	Based on performance		370	320	300	Based on performance		
2004	<i>Putonghua</i>	538	484	437	320		522	447	397	300		
	Minority language (lowest score for any subject exam)	381 (23)	347 (23)	345 (23)	297 (20)		382 (23)	357 (23)	352 (23)	297 (20)		
	Mongolian language	Different groups were selected to set the cutoff based on performance. The qualification for math was the same as in the minority language category										
		<i>Min kao Han</i>	470	399	397	Based on performance		421	375	373	Based on performance	
2005	<i>Putonghua</i>	516	455	360	290		507	433	350	270		
	Minority language (lowest score for math exam)	393 (25)	360 (24)	300 (23)	280 (22)		367 (27)	335 (26)	300 (25)	260 (24)		
	Mongolian language	Different groups were selected to set the cutoff based on performance. The qualification for math was the same as in the minority language category										
		<i>Min kao Han</i>	435	380	Based on performance			383	342	Based on performance		
2006	<i>Putonghua</i>	517	452	380	295		520	448	370	275		
	Minority language (lowest score for math exam)	398 (26)	371 (25)	345 (24)	290 (23)		357 (29)	328 (28)	310 (26)	270 (25)		
	Mongolian language	Different groups were selected to set the cutoff based on performance. The qualification for math was the same as in the minority language category										

(Continued)

Year	Type of student	Liberal Arts			Sciences			Appendix
		Key	Average	Specialist	Key	Average	Specialist	
	<i>Min kao Han</i>	440	382	Based on performance	390	370	Based on performance	

Source: (Li, 2006); Data from before 1998: (Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Bureau of Education, 1998); Data from 1998 and later collected from Xinjiang newspapers and Internet sources.

## Appendix III

### The policy of “admission by proportion and ensuring the lowest fraction line,” implemented for minority students in Xinjiang

In 1976, the Xinjiang Autonomous Region Communist Party Committee document No. 36, *Directive Report on Enrollment for Colleges/Universities in 1976*, stipulated that minority students should make up 60 percent of the total number of students enrolled in universities/colleges, senior vocational schools, and technical training schools in the Region. Also, of students from Xinjiang enrolled in universities/colleges in other provinces/municipalities, minority students should account for no less than 50 percent. Furthermore, *Putonghua* should serve as the standard language for assessment. Since the reinstatement of the national college entrance examination in 1977, the central government’s approval has allowed minority students in Xinjiang to enjoy the policy, which formulates unique examination content and a unique required score for enrollment of minority students from the Region.

On October 19, 1980, the State Council and State Committee of Ethnic Affairs issued *Opinions about Strengthening Minority Education*, which stipulates that “universities should implement a policy of admitting the best examinees, and formulate the enrollment proportion of minorities by at least the same proportion as that of minorities in the total population.” Xinjiang Autonomous Region therefore stipulated that the enrollment rate of minority students in university/college should by no means be less than 50 percent.

In February, 1981, the Ministry of Education issued *Regulations on Enrollment for University and College in 1981*, according to which universities or departments in the Region that adopt the local minority language for teaching would be overseen by the Region on matters such as formulating exam questions, testing, and enrolling students without participating in the national entrance examination system. Students who apply for universities that use *Putonghua* as the teaching language will attend the national entrance examination, for which the questions pertaining to *Putonghua* are formulated by the Ministry of Education separately. As for other subjects, the questions should be translated into minority languages, and students may answer in their native language.

According to *The Supplementary Regulation of Enrollment in 1981*, issued by the Education Bureau of the Autonomous Region in 1981, examinees using minority languages (Uyghur,

Mongolian, Kazak) attend the particular examinations designated by the Region that do not include the foreign language examination; those students must also attend an additional *Putonghua* examination, the performance on which would not be included in the total score. The fifth item of the *Regulation* stipulates: (1) The required score for admission should be lowered for students who attend the examination in native language; namely the 11 minorities Uyghur, Kazak, Mongol, Kirgiz, Tajik, Xibe, Uzbek, Tatar, Daur, Tibetan, and Russian. (2) Minority students of other groups (Hui, Manchu, etc.) will be enrolled in advance when they meet the same conditions as Han examinees.

On April 26, 1986, the government of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region made comments on and transmitted The Supplementary Regulations about the Enrolling of Regular Higher Educational Institutions and Senior Specialized Schools of Xinjiang in 1986. The document made the following stipulations: (1) The required score for students of the 11 minorities who attend the general examination in *Putonghua* is 100 points lower than the required score for Han students. (2) The required score for students who have one parent belonging to the 11 minorities is 30 points lower than the required score for Han students. (3) Hui examinees would receive an additional score in pre-selection and admission. (4) Examinees of other minorities who attend the general examination in *Putonghua* will be admitted in advance of Han students with the same scores. (5) The admission proportion of minority students must correspond with that of the minority populace.

1987 witnessed the adjustment of the margin of preference by the Xinjiang government: (1) Examinees whose parents both belong to the 11 minorities will be offered 150 points when they apply for universities and colleges in other provinces of China and 100 points when they apply for universities within the region. (2) Examinees who have one Han parent will receive 10 points when applying for institutions in other provinces and within Xinjiang.

In the 1990s, the enrollment policy was again adjusted to a certain extent: (1) Examinees whose parents both belong to the 11 minorities will be granted 70 points. (2) Examinees who have one parent who belongs to the 11 minorities will be granted 10 points. Beginning in 1999, measures were taken to preserve the marks in the areas of “mathematics, physics, and chemistry” during the admission of minority students among colleges and universities, in order to ensure the lowest required score for admission.

At present, minority students in Xinjiang enjoy three areas of preferential policy on the national university/college entrance examination: (1) The proportion of admitted examinees of each minority will be predicted in accordance with performance. (2) The margin of policy-awarded points for all types of examinees will be determined each year on the premise that the proportion of admitted minority examinees is generally ensured. (3) To ensure a fundamental level in mathematics, physics and chemistry, the minimum required score for admission is set each year.

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