

GAO YANGHE

PhD student, Institute of Manchu Studies, Heilongjiang University (China, Harbin)

e-mail: yanahelsa95@163.com

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-2703-2454>

THE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF MANCHU LANGUAGE

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to analyze the evolution of the Manchu language from its origins to the present day, to identify its characteristics and interactions with surrounding languages and cultures at various historical stages. The methodological basis of the proposed study is general scientific methods such as observation, description, induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis, as well as paradigmatic-syntagmatic analysis of model structures, comparative analysis of structural models to identify similar characteristics or features, translation analysis to determine ways of reproducing categories, and statistical research methods. Scientific novelty. The historical stages of development of the Manchu language as the native language of the Manchus are analyzed. It is shown that the Manchu language, as the native language of the Manchu people, reflects changes in Manchu culture and the process of ethnic integration throughout its development. It has been determined that the early Manchu language originated from the Tungusic language and was closely related to the languages of the Suiren, Wuzhe, and other ethnic groups. It was transmitted mainly in oral form. Research results. It has been determined that after the Manchus came to power at the end of the 16th century, Nurhaci ordered the creation of Manchu writing based on the Mongolian alphabet. Later, thanks to Da Hai's reform, a Manchu script with punctuation marks was developed, which improved the accuracy of phonetic reproduction. However, in the middle and late Qing dynasty, the Sinicization of the Manchu people and the decline of Manchu language education led to the deterioration of the Manchu language and a significant decrease in the number of its speakers. The modern Manchu language is in danger of disappearing. Only in some villages inhabited by Manchus has a limited oral tradition been preserved. The government and the public are actively taking measures to preserve the language, such as conducting a census of Manchus, creating special funds, and organizing cultural events. However, language preservation still faces problems such as a lack of resources.

Key words: Manchu ethnic group in China; Manchu language; Manchu script; endangered language; history of language development.

ІСТОРІЯ РОЗВИТКУ МАНЬЧЖУРСЬКОЇ МОВИ

Анотація

Метою статті є аналіз процесу еволюції маньчжурської мови від її походження до сьогодення, визначення її особливостей та взаємодія з навколишніми мовами та культурами на різних історичних етапах. Методологічною базою запропонованого дослідження виступають загальнонаукові методи, такі як спостереження, опис, індукція, дедукція, аналіз, синтез, а також парадигматико-синтагматичний аналіз структури моделей, порівняльний аналіз структурних моделей для виявлення подібних характеристик або особливостей, перекладацький аналіз для визначення способів відтворення категорії, а також статистичний метод дослідження. Наукова новизна. Проаналізовано історичні етапи розвитку маньчжурської мови, як рідної мови маньчжурів. Показано, що маньчжурська мова, як рідна мова народу маньчжурів, відображає зміни в маньчжурській культурі та процес етнічної інтеграції протягом її розвитку. Визначено, що рання маньчжурська мова походила від тунгуської мови і була тісно пов'язана з мовами суйренів, вуцзе та інших етнічних груп. Вона передавалася переважно в усній формі. Результати дослідження. Визначено, що після приходу маньчжурів до влади, наприкінці XVI століття, Нурхачі наказав створити маньчжурське письмо на основі монгольського алфавіту. Пізніше, завдяки реформі Да Хая, було сформовано маньчжурське письмо з розділовими знаками, що покращило точність фонетичного відтворення. Однак у середині та наприкінці династії Цін ханізація маньчжурського народу та занепад маньчжурської мовної освіти призвели до погіршення стану маньчжурської мови

та значного зменшення кількості її носіїв. Сучасна маньчжурська мова перебуває під загрозою зникнення. Лише в деяких селах, населених маньчжурами, збереглося обмежене усне передання. Уряд і громадськість активно вживають заходів для збереження мови, таких як проведення перепису маньчжурів, створення спеціальних фондів та організація культурних заходів. Однак збереження мови все ще стикається з такими проблемами, як брак ресурсів.

Ключові слова: етнічна група маньчжурів у Китаї; маньчжурська мова; маньчжурське письмо; мова, що зникає; історія розвитку мови.

China is a multi-ethnic country, the 56 ethnic groups of China have jointly shaped the rich and diverse Chinese civilization. Among all these ethnic languages, Manchu is undoubtedly a remarkable presence. The Manchu language originated in the vast land of Northeast Asia. Later, with the rise of the Manchu people, it became the official language of the Qing Dynasty for a period of two hundred years, experiencing both prosperity and decline during that time. However, with the passage of time, the Manchu language gradually faded from the mainstream language stage and became a precious and unique cultural heritage in the fields of linguistics and history. The history of the Manchu language development is not only a condensed portrayal of the history of the Manchu people, but also demonstrates the integration and inheritance of languages and cultures among multi-ethnic countries.

The Manchu language is a vivid carrier of the Manchu culture and history. From the rudimentary language of the early grassland tribes to the relatively complete writing system during Nurhachi's era, it witnessed the process of the Manchu people moving from dispersion to unity. In the early period of the Qing Dynasty, Manchu was the official language, undertaking the responsibilities of national governance and cultural exchange, and demonstrating the political influence of the Manchu people. However, with the policy adjustments of the Qing Dynasty, wars, and the decreasing use of the Manchu language, the Manchu language gradually declined and eventually became an endangered language. Nowadays, Manchu language has regained its significance in academic research and ethnic identity, becoming a cultural link that connects the past and the future. Its unique characters and sounds still carry the wisdom and national spirit of the ancestors of the Manchu people.

1. The Origin and Early Forms of Manchu Language

The origin and early form of the Manchu language originated from the language of the ancient Jurchen people in Northeast Asia. As the Manchu people moved and settled in the Songhua River Basin and the Changbai Mountain area, it gradually evolved. Early Manchu language further developed on the basis of the Jurchen language and might have been influenced by languages such as Mongolian. It was not until the end of the 16th century that the Manchu language was officially standardized and became the written language of the Manchu people, marking an important step for the Manchu tribe to transition into a nation.

1.1 The Ethnic Origin and Origin of Manchu Language

The Altaic language family is an important language group spanning Asia and Europe, and its branch languages hold significant positions in many countries. They carry rich ethnic cultures, bear witness to historical exchanges such as the migrations of nomadic peoples and trade along the Silk Road, and serve as linguistic ties that bridge regions and cultures.

1.1.1 Manchu Language belongs to the Tungusic branch of the Altaic language family

Wang (2023) posited that the Altaic language family mainly includes the Turkic, Mongolian and Tungusic (also known as Manchu-Tungusic) language groups. Some scholars argue that the Japanese and Korean language families are also part of the Altaic language family because their grammatical structures are similar. However,

there are also viewpoints suggesting that the Japanese and Korean language families should not be included in the Altaic language family, as there are not sufficient cognate words between them.

Among them, the Turkic language family includes Turkish, Uzbek, Uyghur, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani, etc. These languages are mainly distributed in Central Asia, Western Asia and some parts of Eastern Europe, and they constitute the largest language family within the Altaic language group. Mongolian language family includes Mongolian, Daur language, Kalmyk language, etc. The Mongolic language family is mainly spoken in Mongolia, and Inner Mongolia of China. The Manchu-Tungusic language family includes Manchu, Xibe, and Evenki languages, etc. They are mainly distributed in Northeast China, and some areas of Mongolia.

The languages of the Altaic language family share common features, which are manifested in aspects such as phonetics, grammar and vocabulary.

Li (2014) discovered that the vowel harmony phenomenon in Altaic languages can be divided into two aspects: formal characteristics and theoretical significance. In terms of formal characteristics, vowel harmony in Altaic languages is characterized by universality and directionality. That is, within a specific grammatical domain, all vowels share certain phonetic features, and the vowels of suffixes alternate according to the features of the vowels in the stem. Furthermore, neutral vowels exhibit permeability in vowel harmony, meaning that they are neither affected by the mapping and diffusion of harmony features nor do they block the diffusion. Regarding the predictability of vowel endings on neutral stems, in some languages, the vowel endings on neutral stems are unpredictable, which reflects the complexity of the historical evolution of the phonetics. Round lips and harmonious shapes make them highly sensitive to the vowel phonetic system. The process varies in different languages.

In terms of theoretical significance, the formal characteristics of vowel harmony in Altaic languages pose a challenge to the theory of phonology. The existing theoretical assumptions and analytical methods are unable to provide a comprehensive and thorough explanation for it.

In terms of syntactic structure, Xu (2001) revealed that Altaic languages possess the characteristics of agglutinative languages. Their syntactic structures often utilize inflectional forms such as copula verbs, adverbial verbs, and gerunds to form compound sentences or complex structural sentences. These morphological markers play a role in the sentence similar to that of conjunctions in other languages, such as the connecting words in Chinese compound sentences or the linking words in English complex sentences. Scholars have differing opinions on the role of the structures of transitive verbs and auxiliary verbs in sentences. Some scholars consider these structures as extended components of the sentence rather than subordinate clauses, while others emphasize their subordinate characteristics. Unlike some other language families such as the Indo-European language family, the languages of the Altaic language family are to some extent more flexible in terms of word order. Grammatical relations are more often expressed through affixes, but overall there is still a certain tendency in word order, such as the relatively common order of subject – object – predicate.

Simon (1996) observed that the lexical characteristics of the Altaic language family are mainly manifested in the fact that there are a large number of common basic words among the languages of the Altaic language family. These words are mostly related to basic things, such as body parts (head, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, tongue, teeth, hair, heart, hands, feet, etc.), and there are obvious consistency or intrinsic connections in pronunciation and meaning. Verbs in the Altaic language family are relatively stable and are not easily borrowed. They fall into the category of basic vocabulary.

1.1.2 The relationship between Manchu language and ancient Tungusic languages

Manchu language not only retains some fundamental features of the Tungusic language branch, but also demonstrates unique charm and value in historical evolution, grammatical structure, vocabulary formation, writing system and cultural influence.

Hasbatul (2000) analyzed the origin and evolution of ethnic names used by the ancient ethnic groups in Northeast China, namely Sushen, Yilou and Jurchen, reveal the homologous connections that exist between them. These ethnic designations originally stemmed from the Manchu-Tungusic language and were the self-designations of these ancient ethnic groups. The tribal names of the Sushen, Yilou and Jurchen people are all related to the word "arrow" in their etymology. They originally referred to "hunters" and were consistent with the names recorded in historical records.

Jiao (2013) showed that the Manchu culture inherited the traditions of the Jurchen culture. In terms of language and writing, 70% of the vocabulary in Manchu language originated from the Jurchen language; in terms of surnames, many of the Manchu surnames were derived from the Jurchen surnames of the Jin Dynasty. The Manchu language continued to develop on the basis of the Jurchen language. Its vocabulary system gradually became more extensive, covering more aspects of social life, natural phenomena and cultural customs. With the changes in the Manchu society, the Manchu language absorbed elements from other languages such as Chinese, while still retaining its own unique linguistic characteristics.

1.2 The Distribution and Usage of Early Manchu Language

The distribution area of early Manchu language was closely related to the activity range and living environment of the Manchu people and their ancestors. The Manchu language gradually took shape as the Manchu ancestors migrated and interacted with each other.

1.2.1 The distribution range of the Manchu language in Northeast Asia

The early Manchu language was widely used in the northeastern part of China and the northeastern region of Mongolia.

From the distribution of the Manchu language in Northeast China, the Heilongjiang River Basin, which was an important activity area for the ancestors of the Manchu people, has distinct characteristics in the use of the Manchu language. Wang (2025) concluded that during the Qing Dynasty, there were numerous Manchu tribes within the jurisdiction of the Heilongjiang General. The Manchu language was freely used and became an integral part of local social life. In the Jilin region of the Songhua River Basin, as the "Hometown of the Manchu People", the Manchu language is not only used for daily communication but is also widely employed in official documents and cultural inheritance. In the Liaoning region, due to its close connection with the Central Plains region, the Manchu language has been influenced to some extent by Chinese, resulting in some unique linguistic features.

In the northeastern part of Mongolia, the spread of the Manchu language was mainly facilitated by the political, economic and cultural exchanges between the Manchu and Mongolian ethnic groups. During the Qing Dynasty, some Manchu people were dispatched to the Mongolian region, which promoted the use of the Manchu language there. Furthermore, Qian (2006) uncovered that the marriages and trade exchanges between the Manchu and Mongolian peoples also facilitated the spread of the Manchu language. However, due to the dominant position of Mongolian in the region, the usage of Manchu language was relatively limited, mainly concentrated in areas where there was frequent interaction with the Manchu people.

1.2.2 The language usage of the ancestors of the Manchu people

The development of the Manchu language is closely related to the creation and use of the Jurchen script. Since the Jin Dynasty, the emergence of the Jurchen script laid the foundation for the standardization and dissemination of the Manchu language. However, over time, the language usage of the Manchu ancestors underwent significant changes.

In the Jin Dynasty, the creation of the Manchu script marked an important milestone in the development of the Manchu language. Wanyanxiyin drew inspiration from Chinese characters and Khitan characters to develop the large and small Manchu scripts. These scripts were not only used to record the Manchu language but also contributed to the unification and development of the Manchu language to a certain extent. However, due to the complexity of the Manchu script, its usage gradually decreased and eventually became lost in the late Ming Dynasty.

In the Yuan Dynasty, the language usage of the Manchu ancestors was relatively stable. Jin (2001) identified that although the Mongolian language began to spread in the Manchu areas and had a significant impact on the writing and communication of the Manchu language, the Yuan Dynasty government did not force the Jurchens in these areas to learn the Mongolian language. As a result, the Jurchens were able to preserve their own language in an intact form.

In the late Ming Dynasty, the ancestors of the Manchu people gradually abandoned the Jurchen script and began to use the Mongolian script. There were multiple reasons behind this change. Firstly, the Mongolian script had a relatively simpler writing system, which was more suitable for recording the Manchu language. Secondly, the close relationship and cultural exchanges between the Manchu and Mongolian peoples led to the widespread use of the Mongolian script. Furthermore, the use of the Mongolian language also received support from the political and religious forces at that time. During this process, the Mongolian language had a profound impact on the writing and communication of the early Manchu language, providing an important historical background and necessity for the creation of the Manchu language.

The language usage of the ancestors of the Manchu people underwent an evolution process from the creation and use of the Jurchen script to the gradual adoption of the Mongolian script. This process not only reflects the complexity of language development, but also demonstrates the adaptation and innovation of the Manchu culture in different historical periods.

2. The Creation and Development of Manchu Language

The creation of the Manchu language was not achieved overnight; rather, it was the inevitable outcome of historical development. The process of its creation and evolution was closely linked to the rise of the Manchu people and the social changes that occurred.

2.1 The background and process of the creation of the Manchu language

The background and process of the creation of the Manchu language reflect the historical inevitability of its emergence, as well as how it gradually developed and improved to become an important carrier of Manchu culture.

2.1.1 The historical background of the emergence of the Manchu people in the late 16th century and the early 17th century

In the late Ming Dynasty, there were numerous complex contradictions in the northeastern region. There were constant disputes among the various Jurchen tribes, and there were also numerous conflicts between the Ming Dynasty and the Jurchen, Mongolian

and other ethnic minorities. During the Ming Dynasty, the government implemented a policy of "moral governance" towards the ethnic minorities in the northeastern frontier. It established "moral governance military stations" and allowed local leaders to exercise autonomy, while also requiring them to pay regular tributes to the imperial court. Although this policy maintained the stability of the border to a certain extent, it also led to the relative dispersion and autonomy of various ethnic forces in the northeastern region, providing an opportunity for the rise of the Later Jin Dynasty.

General Li Chengliang of the Ming army took advantage of the internal conflicts among the Jurchen tribes to strengthen his rule. As a result, the Jurchen tribes among each other engaged in fierce battles. Chen (2020) indicated that in 1583, Nurhachi rose up in rebellion, using as his trigger the incident where his grandfather Juchang'an and his father Taku Shi were mistakenly killed by the Ming army during their siege of Gule City. In the early stage, he adopted a strategy of keeping a low profile and accepted the imperial edict of the Ming Dynasty appointing him as the Left Commandant of Jianzhou. At the same time, he secretly expanded his power. From 1583 to 1588, Nurhachi successively conquered the Suksuhe River tribe, the Dong'e tribe, the Hun River tribe, and the Zhennian tribe. Finally, in 1588, he captured the Yelang tribe and completed the unification of the main body of the Jianzhou Jurchen. Subsequently, he subdued Nei Yin, Zhusheli and Dalingjiang tribes in the Changbai Mountain region, achieving the complete unification of the eight tribes of Jianzhou.

In 1593, the Yehe tribe, along with nine other tribes, launched an attack on Nurhachi. However, thanks to his well-planned tactics, he successfully defeated the nine allied forces and further consolidated his power. As the internal corruption in the Ming Dynasty became increasingly severe and the border defense became lax, Nurhachi gradually expanded his influence and became a true ruler. After the war, the Jurchen people of Jianzhou gradually formed the rudimentary form of a state. Their military, political and economic systems gradually became integrated. Nurhachi, through a victory that proved the superiority of the weak over the strong, successfully promoted the unification of the Jurchen tribes. All of this began with the Guole Mountain Battle and ultimately led to the transformation from a tribal alliance to a state form.

2.1.2 Nurhachi ordered Erdene and Gagai to create the Manchu language

After the establishment of the regime, the Manchu society achieved rapid development in politics, economy and culture. Politically, Nurhachi strengthened the centralization of power through the Eight Banners system and unified all the Jurchen tribes; economically, agriculture and handicrafts flourished, and there were frequent trade exchanges with surrounding regions; culturally, the Manchu people actively absorbed multiple ethnic cultures and constructed their own cultural system. As the interactions between the Manchu people and the Ming Dynasty, Mongolia, Korea, and other surrounding regions deepened, the original use of Mongolian script for recording and communication was no longer sufficient. Due to the mismatch in pronunciation and grammar between Mongolian and Manchu language, the recorded content was limited. This led the Manchu people to urgently need to create an exclusive ethnic script system to meet the demands of social development and external communication.

He (2019) demonstrated that in 1599 (the 27th year of the Ming Dynasty), Nurhachi ordered Erdene and Gagai to create the Manchu language based on the Mongolian alphabet. He first proposed the idea of compiling the national language using Mongolian characters and discussed it with Erdene and Gagai. Initially, Erdene and Gagai expressed difficulty in completing this task, believing that it would be challenging to create a written language in

Manchu. However, Nurhachi used the example of Han people reading Chinese characters and Mongols reading Mongolian characters to point out that the Manchu language could also have its own writing system, and encouraged them to give it a try.

Under the guidance of Nurhachi, Erdene and Gagai drew on the basic framework of the Mongolian alphabet but made innovations and improvements based on the characteristics of the Manchu language. By combining the Mongolian alphabet with the phonetics of the Manchu language, they designed a new alphabet system that could accurately represent the vocabulary and sentences of the Manchu language. Finally, the uncircumambulated Manchu script, known as the “old Manchu script”, was successfully created. It was quickly promoted and used in the Manchu regions, providing a convenient writing tool for the political, economic and cultural activities of the Manchu people.

2.2 Manchu alphabet and Writing Systems

The creation of the Manchu script is an important milestone in the development of Manchu culture, with its core being the construction of a unique alphabetic system. The origin and composition of the Manchu alphabet are precisely the key to this cultural innovation.

2.2.1 The origin and composition of the full alphabet

The Manchu alphabet can accurately record the Manchu language, which is attributed to its borrowing and improvement from the Mongolian script.

Both Manchu language and Mongolian use vertical writing in their scripts. However, the Manchu alphabet has been simplified based on the Mongolian script, with the removal of complex curved decorations, making the writing process faster. In terms of phonetics, the Manchu language has been adjusted accordingly based on the pronunciation characteristics of the Manchu language. Some redundant syllables in Mongolian, such as long vowels and double consonants, have been omitted, and new letters for representing the unique phonemes of the Manchu language have been added, such as the sounds [ts] and [dz]. These newly added letters maintain the style of Mongolian letters in their form design, but in terms of pronunciation, they have been specially created for the Manchu language to meet the phonetic requirements of the Manchu language.

Ji (2011) showed that the Manchu language has 6 vowel letters, 22 consonant letters, and 10 special letters for spelling foreign words. In terms of spelling rules, the Manchu language follows a specific syllable structure. Usually, a consonant letter is followed by a vowel letter to form a complete syllable. The design of this alphabet not only preserves the writing tradition of Mongolian but also fully adapts to the phonological system of the Manchu language, laying a solid foundation for the writing system and language characteristics of the Manchu language.

2.2.2 The writing format and direction of the Manchu language

Zhang (2006) demonstrated that the writing direction of Manchu script is from left to right and from top to bottom, which is the same as the horizontal writing direction of modern Chinese characters. However, it is opposite to the vertical writing direction of ancient Chinese characters from right to left. This writing method enables the Manchu script to naturally integrate with the Han script in combined documents, avoiding reading difficulties caused by different writing directions. In official documents such as imperial edicts and proclamations during the Qing Dynasty, Manchu and Han scripts could seamlessly connect, with large seals placed in the middle, which not only reflected the integration of Manchu and Han cultures but also facilitated reading and archiving.

In Manchu language writing, words are usually separated by spaces from each other, which is similar to Mongolian writing but different from the writing style of Chinese characters. The writing style of the Manchu language was usually vertical, with the line order from left to right, while the words are clearly distinguished by spaces. This separation method helps to quickly identify the boundaries of words during reading, thereby improving the readability of the text.

The punctuation marks used in the Manchu language in history were relatively simple. There were mainly two basic punctuation marks: “’” was commonly used to indicate pauses in a sentence, equivalent to a comma, while “”” was used at the end of a sentence or paragraph, equivalent to a period. The frequency and position of the use of these punctuation marks were not strictly fixed, and their application was relatively flexible in practice.

The writing format of Manchu script had a profound impact on the dissemination and usage of Manchu language. Firstly, the left-to-right writing direction is consistent with the horizontal arrangement of Chinese characters, making the layout of Manchu-Chinese bilingual documents more natural and facilitating the exchange and integration of Manchu and Chinese cultures. Secondly, the use of spaces between words enhances the readability of the text, making Manchu language easier to learn and use. Moreover, the simplification and flexibility of punctuation marks align with the grammatical features of Manchu language, reducing the complexity in writing. These characteristics collectively promoted the wide application of Manchu script in the Manchu society. It was used not only in official documents but also in various fields such as literary creation and historical recording. This writing system was not only a tool for language recording but also an important carrier for the inheritance of Manchu culture.

2.3 The evolution and improvement of the Manchu language

Since its inception, the Manchu language has been continuously improved through practice to meet the complex demands of the Manchu language. This not only demonstrates the Manchu language's proactive correction of its own flaws, but also highlights its adaptability and vitality in cultural exchanges and dissemination.

The Manchu script without diacritical marks has many shortcomings in its usage, mainly manifested in the confusion of pronunciation and meaning caused by similar letter shapes, as well as the lack of standardization and uniformity in writing.

Firstly, the issue of similar letter shapes is particularly prominent. When letters have similar shapes, it is easy for people to misread them, thereby affecting the accurate transmission of information. This not only causes inconvenience in daily communication but also may lead to misunderstandings when recording important documents or historical events, seriously undermining the reliability of the information. Secondly, the lack of standardized and uniform writing is also a significant issue. When writing Manchu language characters, there are considerable differences in stroke order and font style among different regions and different scribes. This inconsistency leads to difficulties in reading and comprehension, especially in cross-regional communication and the inheritance of documents, increasing the difficulty of interpretation and not conducive to the wide dissemination of the Manchu language. Thirdly, in terms of learning, beginners need to invest more effort in distinguishing similar letters and adapting to different writing styles, which increases the difficulty and time cost of the learning process.

Ma (2021) indicated that to address these issues, Emperor Tai Zong of the Qing Dynasty ordered Da Hai to reform the Manchu language in 1632, thereby promoting the development of the Manchu language towards greater standardization and practicality. Dahai made four major improvements based on the non-marked Manchu script. Firstly, circles were added

beside the letters to distinguish the pronunciations of different letters, solving the problem of confusion between the form and the meaning caused by similar characters. Secondly, specific letters were created to spell loanwords from foreign languages, meeting the need to record foreign words in the communication between the Manchu people and the outside world. Thirdly, the continuous writing and phonetic notation form of the Manchu script was standardized, making the writing more standardized and reducing spelling errors. Finally, the font and writing style were unified, eliminating the understanding obstacles caused by differences in writing styles. These improvements made the Manchu language more complete and mature, giving rise to the cursive Manchu script (New Manchu script). This greatly enhanced the phonetic accuracy and ease of learning and use of the Manchu language, and promoted the dissemination and development of Manchu culture.

3. The Flourishing of Manchu Language in the Qing Dynasty

The flourishing of the Manchu language during the Qing Dynasty was a significant indicator of the cultural prosperity of the Qing. The extensive use and in-depth development of the Manchu language reflected the Qing's high regard for the inheritance of Manchu culture and also demonstrated the depth and breadth of the integration of Manchu and Han cultures, becoming an important symbol of the flourishing of the multiculturalism of the Qing.

3.1 Manchu language served as the official language of the Qing Dynasty

Manchu language as the official language of the Qing Dynasty, held a pivotal position in the political system of the Qing Dynasty. After the Qing Dynasty's conquest of the region, the ruling authorities, in the face of a multi-ethnic coexistence society, established the official status of Mongolian, aiming to strengthen political authority through language unification and also providing a bridge for the integration of Manchu and Han cultures.

3.1.1 The extensive application of the Manchu language in government affairs during the early Qing Dynasty

After the establishment of the Qing Dynasty, Manchu language was designated as the "national language" and was widely used in all levels of government institutions at both the central and local levels. It became the primary language for handling official affairs, issuing laws and decrees, publishing official documents, and recording history. This measure demonstrated the Qing rulers' emphasis on their own ethnic culture and was also an important means to consolidate their rule and strengthen political authority. In the political operations of the Qing Dynasty, Manchu language played an indispensable role.

The "Original Archives in Manchu script" are significant historical documents from the early Qing Dynasty. They meticulously record the original processes of numerous major historical events during that period, such as the political decisions, military operations, and diplomatic negotiations of Emperor Shunzhi and Emperor Kangxi. All of these were documented in Manchu script. These archives reflect the true operational picture of the Qing government and provide first-hand materials for the study of Qing Dynasty history. The "Clearance Records" is the official chronicle of the Qing Dynasty during the reign of the emperors. Some of its contents directly reflect the actual application of the Manchu language as the official language. Song (2019) observed that during the Shunzhi period, Manchu language was the primary language used for issuing decrees within the Eight Banners, and local governments also had dedicated Manchu recorders responsible for translation and archiving. The compilation and application of these documents demonstrate the significant role of the Manchu language in the political operations of the Qing Dynasty.

The unique value of Manchu language archives lies in their ability to help scholars more accurately restore the original appearance of the history of the Qing Dynasty. Compared with Han-language archives, Manchu language archives are often more direct and original, recording the true intentions and decision-making processes of the Qing Dynasty's rulers. Through the records of the Duolun Conference in the early Qing Dynasty in the "Original Manchu Archives", the role of the Manchu language in the interactions between the Qing Dynasty and various Mongolian tribes can be seen. Moreover, Manchu language was widely used in the legal and military fields of the Qing Dynasty. Some provisions in the "Great Qing Code" were written in Manchu script, demonstrating the authority of the Manchu language in the legal system; the orders and military reports of the Eight Banners Army were mostly communicated in Manchu language, ensuring the confidentiality and accuracy of military operations.

3.1.2 The use of Manchu language in military, diplomatic and other fields

The Manchu language played a crucial role in the military activities and diplomatic exchanges of the Qing Dynasty. Its application was extensive and far-reaching, exerting a significant influence on the Qing Dynasty's governance and its foreign interactions.

In the military field, Manchu language, as the unified military language under the Eight Banners system, significantly enhanced the command efficiency and combat effectiveness of the army. Under the Eight Banners system, Manchu language was the core tool for military command and soldier training, ensuring the rapid transmission and execution of military orders and avoiding misunderstandings and delays caused by language barriers. For example, in military training, the uniform Manchu commands and terms unified the soldiers' movements and reactions, improving the training effect. In battlefield command, generals issued orders in Manchu language, ensuring the collaborative combat capabilities of the troops. Moreover, the transmission of military documents also relied on Manchu script, from strategic deployment to intelligence transmission, the use of Manchu script ensured the accuracy and confidentiality of information. This language uniformity strengthened the cohesion of the Eight Banners army.

Yang (2011) identified that in the field of diplomacy, Manchu language, as the official language of the Qing Dynasty, played a bridging role in negotiations with neighboring countries and regions. The Qing Dynasty maintained close political, economic and cultural ties with neighboring countries such as Mongolia and Korea. During these diplomatic activities, Manchu language was the main means of communication. Many alliances and treaties between the Qing Dynasty and various Mongolian tribes were signed in Manchu script, ensuring the accuracy and authority of communication between the two sides. In the tributary system with Korea, Manchu language was also widely used. The Qing Dynasty conveyed imperial edicts and policies through Manchu language, and Korea submitted memorials and lists of tributes in Manchu language as well. To meet the needs of diplomacy, the Qing Dynasty cultivated a large number of people proficient in Manchu language and foreign languages. They held important positions in institutions like the Board of Ritual and Foreign Affairs and were responsible for handling diplomatic affairs with neighboring countries. The cultivation and use of these talents demonstrated the Qing Dynasty's recognition of the important role of language in diplomacy and also promoted the spread and application of Manchu language in foreign exchanges.

3.2 Manchu Language Education and Talent Cultivation

With the widespread implementation of Manchu language education, official institutions established for Manchu language learning, such as the Imperial College and the Eight-Band

Official Schools, provided platforms for cultivating Manchu language talents and promoted the inheritance and development of the Manchu language.

3.2.1 The official institutions for learning the Manchu language established by the Qing Dynasty

During the Qing Dynasty, a series of institutions in Manchu language education were established from the central government to local levels, aiming to preserve and promote the Manchu language. Wu (2012) revealed that these institutions included the Manchu Imperial Kinsmen College, the Eight-Band Youth School of the Upper Stable Department, etc. Their establishment was to cultivate Manchu language talents, in order to maintain the Manchu cultural tradition and meet the language needs in various aspects such as politics, military and diplomacy of the Qing Dynasty.

The Manchu Imperial Kinsmen College, as a central-level educational institution, mainly targeted the children of Manchu nobles. The teaching content included Manchu language, Confucian classics, as well as traditional skills such as horsemanship and archery. The Eight-Band Youth School of the Upper Stable Department focused on cultivating the Manchu language skills and military literacy of the Eight-Section children. The teaching methods of these educational institutions mostly adopted traditional lecturing and recitation, emphasizing the practical application ability of language. The main recruitment targets were the descendants of the Eight Banners, especially the Manchu nobles and officials. They were required to learn the Manchu language in order to maintain their ethnic identity and cultural identity. These educational institutions achieved certain success in preserving the Manchu language and cultivated a number of Manchu language professionals, providing support for the administrative management and cultural exchanges of the Qing Dynasty.

However, with the strong influence of Han culture in the middle and later periods of the Qing Dynasty, the education in Manchu gradually faced difficulties. Many Manchu nobles tended to learn Chinese instead, and the enthusiasm for learning Manchu language declined. Educational institutions encountered problems in both teaching quality and the number of students, resulting in a less-than-expected effect of Manchu language inheritance. Moreover, the reform of the imperial examination system and the rise of new-style schools also caused the traditional Manchu educational institutions to gradually lose their original status and function.

3.2.2 The development of Manchu language textbooks and teaching methods

During different historical periods, the Qing Dynasty collected and compiled various textbooks in the Manchu language. Among them, “The Enlightenment of Qing Literature” and “The Collection of Qing Literature” are two representative works. Yang (2015) revealed that “The Enlightenment of Qing Literature” was compiled by Du Ge and is one of the earliest Manchu language textbooks published in the Qing Dynasty. This book uses a Manchu-Chinese bilingual approach, covering aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. It has a clear structure and aims to help learners systematically master the Manchu language. Its writing style starts from basic letter pronunciation and gradually progresses to vocabulary memorization and grammar comprehension, making it suitable for beginners. The book contains a large number of daily expressions and dialogue examples, facilitating learners’ application in actual communication. Additionally, “The Enlightenment of Qing Literature” also pays attention to the explanation of Manchu writing norms, emphasizing stroke order and character structure, which helps learners form correct writing habits.

"The Qing Language Dictionary" is a more systematic full-scale Chinese-Orthography dictionary. It was compiled by scholars organized by the Qing government. It classifies words according to their meanings and includes a large number of Mongolian words along with their explanations. The content is rich and comprehensive, making it an important tool for learners to deeply study Mongolian. Its compilation format is rigorous, and the words are arranged in an orderly manner, facilitating easy reference. In addition to basic word explanations, "The Qing Language Dictionary" also provides some example sentences, demonstrating the usage of the words in specific contexts, which helps learners better understand and apply the words.

In terms of the teaching methods for Manchu language, the traditional approach mainly involves reading aloud, copying, and explanation. Learners familiarize themselves with the pronunciation and language sense by repeatedly reading the texts, and copying helps them remember vocabulary and master the writing norms. The teacher's explanations focus on grammar and difficult points. With the development of the times, Manchu language teaching gradually introduced teaching concepts that emphasize listening and speaking skills as well as practical application. In the teaching process, emphasis is placed on oral practice and situational simulation to enhance the learners' practical communication skills. This evolution of teaching methods has made Manchu language education focus more on cultivating learners' comprehensive language skills rather than just reading and writing abilities.

The use of these textbooks and the improvement of teaching methods have had a positive impact on the quality of Manchu language education and the cultivation of talents. The wide dissemination of textbooks such as "Enlightenment in Qing Dynasty Literature" has provided standardized and systematic resources for the learning of Manchu language, enabling more people to access and learn the language. The advancement of teaching methods has enhanced learning efficiency and produced batches of talents who can proficiently use the Manchu language, meeting the demands of the Qing Dynasty's political, military, and diplomatic fields for Manchu language professionals. At the same time, the development and changes of these textbooks and teaching methods also reflect the evolution of Manchu language education in the Qing Dynasty, and demonstrate the close connection between language education and social needs.

3.3 Mongolian literature and cultural achievements

The rich collection of Manchu language materials and cultural achievements serve as a powerful testament to the prosperity of the Manchu language during the Qing Dynasty. The compilation and translation of numerous historical documents and literary works have showcased the unique charm of Manchu culture, becoming an important part of the diverse culture of the Qing Dynasty.

3.3.1 The entire collection of historical classics and literary works

"The Complete History of Manchuria" is a historical record compiled by the Qing Dynasty's official authorities, detailing the origin and early history of the Manchu people. Its purpose was to document the historical development of the Manchu people and establish the legitimacy of the Qing Dynasty's rule. The book adopts a combination of chronological and biographical styles, providing detailed accounts of the origin legends of the Manchu people, Nurhachi's process of unifying the Jurchens, and important events in the early establishment of the Qing Dynasty, including the origin of the Manchu people, Nurhachi's military campaigns, the establishment of the Eight Banners system, the wars with the Ming Dynasty, and the alliances with various Mongolian tribes.

The “Record of the Early Years of the Great Qing Emperor” meticulously documents the life events and military-political activities of the Great Qing Emperor Nurhachi. Its purpose is to praise Nurhachi’s remarkable achievements and establish his significant position in the history of the Qing Dynasty. This book is written in chronological order, detailing Nurhachi’s military campaigns, political reforms, and diplomatic activities. The content covers Nurhachi’s early life, the process of unifying the Jurchens, the establishment of the Later Jin regime, and the wars with the Ming Dynasty.

Song (2024) uncovered that the “Record of Emperor Taizong of the Qing Dynasty” documents the reign of Emperor Taizong of the Qing Dynasty, highlighting his significant contributions to the unification of the Qing Dynasty and the governance of the country. This book also adopts the chronological style, detailing the military, political, and diplomatic activities during Emperor Taizong’s reign, including the reform measures he implemented after ascending to the throne, the wars with the Ming Dynasty, the alliances with various Mongolian tribes, and the diplomacy with Korea.

The significant historical texts in the Manchu language and Manchu literary works during the Qing Dynasty made important contributions to documenting the history of the Manchu people and preserving their culture.

3.3.2 The prosperity of the Manchu-Han translation undertaking

During the Qing Dynasty, translation activities covered multiple fields, including classic works, historical documents, and scientific works. Chinese classic works such as the “Four Books” and “Five Classics” of Confucianism were translated into Manchu script, becoming an important part of the education for the Eight Banners people. Additionally, historical documents such as “The History of Ming” and “The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government” were also translated into Manchu language for the benefit of the Manchu rulers. In the field of science and technology, important books in areas such as medicine, astronomy, and mathematics were also translated into Manchu script, promoting the dissemination of science and technology within the Manchu society. At the same time, Zhang (2019) discovered that Manchu official documents, literary works, etc. were also translated into Chinese. The translation of Manchu official documents helped Han officials understand Qing policies and laws, promoting communication between Manchu and Han officials.

Many renowned translators emerged during this period, such as Da Hai, Mu Linde, and He Ning. Da Hai was a famous Manchu scholar who participated in the translation and compilation of important documents such as “The Official History of Emperor Taizong of Qing”. Mu Linde was a German missionary who had in-depth studies of the Manchu language and translated a large number of Manchu documents, as well as compiled a Manchu-Chinese dictionary. He Ning was a translator during the mid-Qing Dynasty and translated important historical documents such as “The History of the Ming Dynasty”.

The translation activities in the Qing Dynasty employed a variety of strategies and methods. A combination of literal translation and free translation was adopted. During the translation process, both the literal meaning of the original text and the fluency and accuracy of the expression were given due consideration. The standardization of terminology was also an important task in translation. The Qing Dynasty established a specialized terminology review institution to standardize commonly used terms. Moreover, translators often referred to multilingual materials, such as Latin and Mongolian, to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the translation. In terms of technical means, the Qing Dynasty used woodblock printing and movable type printing technologies, and printed a large number of translation works, promoting the dissemination of translation achievements.

The Manchu-Han translation activities played a significant role in cultural exchange and the development of the Manchu language. These translation activities enabled the Manchu rulers to gain a deep understanding of Han culture, and also enabled Han intellectuals to have a better understanding of Manchu culture, promoting the integration of Manchu and Han cultures. During the translation process, a large number of Chinese words and expressions were introduced into the Manchu language, making it more rich and flexible. Through these translation activities, the Manchu language gradually became an important cultural language, not only widely used within the Manchu society but also playing a significant role in multi-ethnic communication.

4. The Decline of Manchu Language

In the late Qing Dynasty, with the changes in political power and social transformation, the once prosperous Manchu language gradually declined. This transformation not only reflected the fate of the language itself, but also mirrored the changes of the Manchu culture within the broader social and cultural framework.

4.1 The Decline of the Status of Manchu Language in the Mid-to-Late Qing Dynasty

During this period, Manchu language, which was once a powerful official language, gradually transformed into a weak ethnic language. Its usage scenarios and the number of users continuously decreased, and Manchu language education gradually became marginalized. The decline of the status of Manchu language was not only the result of language policy adjustments, but also a comprehensive manifestation of social changes, cultural integration, and changes in ethnic identity.

4.1.1 The penetration and influence of Chinese in the Manchu society

In the middle and late periods of the Qing Dynasty, as the Manchu rulers began to accept and promote Han culture, the spread and usage of the Chinese in the Manchu society expanded continuously, gradually replacing Manchu language as the dominant language in social, cultural, and educational fields. During this process, the Chinese had a profound impact on Manchu language, not only altering the pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar of Manchu language, but also leading to a change in the language usage habits of the Manchu people.

The widespread practice of intermarriage between the Manchu and Han ethnic groups was one of the significant factors contributing to the shrinking of the Manchu language-using community. The policy of intermarriage between the Manchu and Han ethnic groups led many Manchu families to use Chinese more frequently in their daily lives. Especially for Manchu women who married Han men, they often gave up the Manchu language and switched to using Chinese. This linguistic shift gradually spread within the family and affected the language acquisition of the new generation of Manchus.

Furthermore, it became a trend for Manchu officials to learn Chinese. In order to better manage the country and communicate with Han Chinese officials, many Manchu officials began to learn Chinese and used it in their work. This trend was particularly evident in the middle and later periods of the Qing Dynasty, and Chinese gradually became the preferred language for the upper classes of the Manchu people.

As Chinese spread in the Manchu society, Manchu language was greatly influenced by Chinese in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Firstly, the pronunciation of Manchu language changed under the influence of the Chinese phonetic system. Some phonemes in Manchu language gradually disappeared under the influence of Chinese. Manchu language originally had a rich system of vowels and consonants, but some

uncommon phonemes were gradually replaced by the phonemes of Chinese. Some double consonants in Manchu gradually simplified under the influence of Chinese, making the pronunciation more similar to that of Chinese. Secondly, Yu (2014) identified that a large number of Chinese words entered Manchu words, especially in official documents and daily communication. In the Manchu language, numerous Chinese loanwords have emerged, covering various fields such as politics, culture, and technology. This borrowing of vocabulary not only enriches the vocabulary of the Manchu language but also makes its expressions more similar to those of Chinese. Additionally, the grammatical structure of Chinese has gradually permeated into the Manchu language. Some case markers in the Manchu language have seen a decrease in usage due to the influence of Chinese, and have even been replaced by the prepositional structures of Chinese.

4.1.2 The restrictions imposed by the Qing Dynasty's policies on the use of the Manchu language

In the middle and late periods of the Qing Dynasty, the introduction of a series of policies and regulations imposed significant restrictions on the use of the Manchu language. Behind these policies lay the complex cultural and political considerations of the Qing rulers.

In the early Qing Dynasty, Manchu language held a significant position in the imperial examinations, especially in the translation section, which was established in 1723 and provided a way for Manchu children to enter the officialdom through the Manchu language. However, the rulers realized that the promotion of the Chinese would help strengthen centralization and ethnic integration. As the Qing Dynasty's rule consolidated and the Hanization policy deepened, the Manchu language imperial examination gradually weakened. Especially in the late Qing Dynasty, in 1905, the translation section of the imperial examination was abolished, and the status of the Manchu language in the imperial examinations dropped significantly. The abolition of the translation section of the imperial examination directly cut off the way for Manchu children to enter the officialdom through the Manchu language, weakening the motivation for Manchu language education. Manchu children turned to focus on learning the Chinese, and the transmission of the Manchu language experienced a gap.

In the middle and late periods of the Qing Dynasty, the official education in the Manchu language also underwent a process of abolition and weakening. Due to the sparse population of the Manchu people, it was difficult for them to resist the powerful assimilation ability of the Chinese. The rulers believed that strengthening the education in Chinese would help improve the administrative efficiency and cultural literacy of officials, and also facilitate the management and integration of a multi-ethnic country. The Manchu official schools and local Manchu language education institutions gradually decreased, and educational resources were increasingly tilted towards the education in Chinese. With the popularization of the Chinese, the demand for Manchu language education decreased. The abolition of the Manchu official schools led to a shortage of Manchu language educational resources, and the Manchu language education system gradually collapsed. The opportunities for learning Manchu decreased, and the number of Manchu language users further declined.

On the one hand, the rulers hoped to maintain the Manchu language in order to preserve the identity and ethnic characteristics of the Manchu people; on the other hand, they also had to rely on Han culture to strengthen centralization and national integration. This contradictory mentality led to the gradual change of the language policy.

4.2 The shrinking of the user base of the Manchu language

In the middle and late periods of the Qing Dynasty, the shrinking of the population using the Manchu language became a significant indicator of the decline of the Manchu language.

4.2.1 The Chinesization trend of the Manchu population

According to the "China Statistical Yearbook 2024", the population of the Manchu ethnic group exceeds 10.42 million, but the number of people who can proficiently use the Manchu language is extremely small. Statistics from 1982 showed that only about 500 people used the Manchu language, while a survey conducted in Sanjiazi Village, Fuxi County, Heilongjiang Province in 2002 revealed that among teenagers aged 7 to 20, only 10% could understand simple Manchu language for daily use, and 90% of the children neither understood nor could speak the Manchu language. These data indicate that the inheritance chain of the Manchu language as the mother tongue has almost been broken, and Chinese has become the main communication language for the Manchu ethnic group.

The traditional customs of the Manchu ethnic group are also gradually fading away. In terms of festivals, the unique Manchu festivals such as "Banjin Festival"(Manchu Cultural Festival), "Zoubaibing"(Washing away all diseases Festival), and "Tiancang Festival"(Stock Piling Festival) have their traditional celebration methods gradually being replaced by Han customs. In terms of culinary culture, although Manchu specialty foods such as Manchu hot pot are still known by some people, the cultural connotations and traditional production methods behind them are rarely known.

Education is the key to language transmission. However, in the middle and late Qing Dynasty, Manchu language education gradually became marginalized. The official education system focused more on promoting Chinese, reducing the opportunities for learning Manchu language. Even in areas where the Manchu people lived in concentration, school education was mainly in Chinese, with Manchu language being only an elective or extracurricular subject. This educational policy trend led to the younger generation of Manchus lacking systematic opportunities to learn Manchu language, further exacerbating the shrinking of the Manchu language-using group.

4.2.2 The gradual disappearance of Manchu language in daily life

In the early Qing Dynasty, Manchu language was the primary language used within Manchu families, especially among the Eight Banners families. The use of Manchu language was very common. However, as time went by, with the increasing prevalence of intermarriage between Manchus and Han people and the frequent exchanges between the two ethnic groups, more and more Manchu families began to use Chinese.

Guo (2017) posited that with the integration of Manchu and Han cultures, commercial activities and public affairs discussions in the community increasingly use Chinese, and the usage scenarios of Manchu language gradually shrink. Educational institutions in the Manchu community also gradually adopt Chinese teaching. Although Manchu language schools were established in the early Qing Dynasty, by the middle and late periods, the number and influence of these schools had greatly decreased. Many Manchu children entered Han schools to receive Chinese education, further weakening the status of the Manchu language in the community. In daily oral communication, the frequency of using the Manchu language has significantly decreased. The interaction between Manchus and Han people has become more frequent, and Chinese has become a more common communication tool. Even within the Manchu community, the use of Chinese has gradually increased. This change is particularly evident in urban areas, while in some remote Manchu settlements, the use of the Manchu language is relatively better preserved, but the overall trend is still that the use of the Manchu language is gradually decreasing. Many Manchu children no longer learn the Manchu language at home but directly use Chinese, and the Manchu language gradually becomes a language used only in specific occasions.

In the traditional wedding ceremonies, sacrificial rituals and festival celebrations of the Manchu people, Manchu language is an indispensable part. With the infiltration of Han

culture, the use of Manchu language in these traditional activities has gradually decreased. In the traditional Manchu sacrificial ceremonies, the prayer and singing words in Manchu language have also been replaced by Chinese. Even in the traditional Manchu festivals, such as the “Banjin Festival”, the elements of Manchu language in the celebration activities have gradually faded, and Chinese has become the main language of communication.

5. The current state and transmission of Manchu language

With the development of the times, the Manchu language, as a unique cultural heritage of the Manchu people, is facing numerous challenges in terms of its inheritance and development.

5.1 The Use and Protection of Modern Manchu Language

In modern China, like many minority languages, the Manchu language is facing challenges such as a decreasing number of speakers and difficulties in transmission. However, the Manchu language carries rich historical memories and cultural characteristics of the Manchu ethnic group, and is an important symbol of ethnic identity. Protecting and preserving the Manchu language is not only a respect for the Manchu culture, but also an important measure to maintain the diversity of Chinese and culture.

5.1.1 Usage of Manchu Language

In modern China, the use of the Manchu language is mainly concentrated in a few regions. Among them, the Duerbute Mongolian Autonomous County and Fuhe County in Heilongjiang Province, as well as the Xiuyan Manchu Autonomous County and Fengcheng City in Liaoning Province, are the most representative areas where the Manchu language is used.

Duolutu Mongolian Autonomous County is located in the west of Heilongjiang Province. It is an autonomous county with the Mongolian ethnic group as the main population, but there are also a certain number of Han people living there. Fuwei County is located in the west of Heilongjiang Province and is a region where multiple ethnic groups live together. The Han ethnic group is an important part of it. According to the survey, the number of speakers of the Manchu language in Sanjiuzi Village of Fuwei County may be less than 50, and there are no children using this language.

In Liaoning Province, Xiuyan Man Autonomous County and Fengcheng City are the main settlements of the Manchu people. Xin (2021) discovered that Xiuyan Man Autonomous County is located in the central part of Liaoning Province, where the Manchu population is large, accounting for over 90% of the total population. However, despite the large number of Manchu people, the usage of the Manchu language is not optimistic. According to the survey, only 53.25% of the Manchu people can proficiently speak and understand the Manchu language, and most of them are from the post-70s and post-80s generations. Among the 00s generation, 46.66% of them cannot speak the Manchu language. This trend indicates that the inheritance of the Manchu language faces a huge challenge among the younger generation.

Abroad, there are also a certain number of descendants of the Manchu ethnic group in countries such as Japan and South Korea. However, the use of the Manchu language is also not optimistic. The descendants of the Manchu ethnic group in Japan and South Korea have more often integrated into the local society, and the use of the Manchu language is even rarer. The groups of people using the Manchu language overseas and those in China face similar difficulties in language inheritance. The younger generation has a lower proficiency in the Manchu language, and the usage scenarios of the Manchu language are limited.

Nevertheless, some scholars studying the Manchu language overseas and descendants of the Manchu ethnic group are still striving to protect and inherit the Manchu language through academic research and cultural activities.

5.1.2 The current situation of Min language teaching and academic research

In Chinese universities and research institutions, the establishment of Manchu language courses and the cultivation of Manchu language professionals have shown a certain positive trend. The Manchu Language Research Institute of Heilongjiang University is an important base for Manchu language research in China. It has established a complete training system from undergraduate to doctoral level, and has cultivated a large number of Manchu language professionals.

The academic research on Manchu language has made significant progress in multiple fields. Through field investigations and data organization, scholars have collected a large amount of valuable Manchu spoken language materials. In the research on Manchu language theory, scholars have conducted in-depth discussions on the phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary of Manchu language; the historical comparative study of Manchu language reveals the relationship between Manchu and other Tungusic languages; the study of Manchu dialects records and analyzes the characteristics of Manchu dialects in different regions; the research on the contact between Manchu language and surrounding languages focuses on the mutual influence between Manchu and languages such as Chinese and Mongolian. These research results not only enrich the academic materials of Manchu language but also provide theoretical support for the inheritance and protection of Manchu language.

5.2 The value and prospects of Manchu language in modern society

Language is not only a tool for communication, but also a crucial carrier of cultural memory and national identity. The unique history, way of thinking and artistic value contained within Manchu language give it a distinctive color and meaning in the modern society.

5.2.1 The significance of Manchu language as a cultural heritage

The Manchu language, as an important part of China's ethnic cultural heritage, embodies the rich historical and cultural connotations of the Manchu people, and possesses irreplaceable historical and cultural value as well as ethnic identity value.

The Manchu language has a long history, and its formation and development process are closely linked to the ethnic origin, changes, and prosperity of the Manchu people. From the creation of the Manchu script to its widespread use during the Qing Dynasty, the Manchu language recorded a large number of historical events, social systems, customs and habits, and is an important basis for studying the history, culture and social development of the Manchu people.

The Manchu language is not only a means of communication for the Manchu people, but also a bond that unites their national sentiments and passes on their national spirit. During the process of Manchu language preservation, cultural traditions, family values, and moral norms of the Manchu people have been passed down and continued, enabling the Manchu people to deeply feel their sense of ethnic belonging and identity.

5.2.2 The potential applications of Manchu language in future fields such as culture and tourism

Developing cultural tourism projects related to Manchu language is one of the effective ways to protect and inherit the Manchu language. Tourist attractions themed around the Manchu language can be established in areas where the Manchu people live in concentrated

communities, such as Liaoning, Jilin, and Heilongjiang. These attractions can be designed as comprehensive venues that combine the display of Manchu history, the experience of Manchu traditional culture, and the learning of the Manchu language. Tourists can experience Manchu traditional festivals, participate in traditional Manchu handicraft-making activities, and also briefly learn the Manchu language vocabulary and expressions related to these crafts, thereby creating new environments and conditions for the inheritance of the Manchu language. This immersive experience not only attracts domestic tourists but also international tourists interested in Manchu culture. The Manchu language can not only be protected through entertainment and education, but also inject new vitality into the local cultural tourism industry.

Utilizing modern information technology to carry out digital protection and dissemination of the Manchu language is an important direction at present. By establishing a Manchu language database, creating an online Manchu language learning platform, and developing Manchu language learning applications, etc., it is possible to effectively record and preserve the phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, etc. of the Manchu language.

Strengthening academic exchanges and cooperation in Manchu language among countries is also an important strategy for promoting the development of Manchu language. Currently, Manchu language has attracted certain attention in the international academic community. Many scholars from various countries have conducted in-depth research on the history, culture, and linguistics of Manchu. Some academic institutions have collaborated to carry out the compilation and research of Manchu language materials, sharing the research results.

This not only helps to protect and inherit the precious cultural heritage of the Manchu people, but also enriches the linguistic and cultural diversity of China, and contributes to the development of world culture.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflicts of interest.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

No artificial intelligence tools or materials were used in the manuscript.

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