

Symposium Report

By Anwei Feng and Bob Adamson

To begin with, we all felt that we had a very successful and productive symposium at Yanbian University in Yanji on 31st Oct- 2rd Nov. It was evident that participant felt benefited and inspired by the research papers presented and ideas exchanged. We have reasons to feel very proud of our achievement so far.

Below is a summary report of our symposium:

a) The Yanbian event followed earlier symposia held in Hong Kong Institute of Education (2009), Kunming (2010), Chongqing (2012) and Chengdu (March 2013). Prof Bob Adamson, Head of IELL, and Prof Anwei Feng (University of Nottingham-Ningbo) currently hold a General Research Fund grant to conduct research into trilingualism and trilingual education and they have set up a national network in 11 ethnic minority regions.

b) The symposium, attended by forty scholars and government officials from throughout China, discussed the latest findings of research on trilingual education in ethnic minority regions of the country. The focus was on how schools teach three language—the ethnic minority language, the national language (Chinese/Putonghua) and an international language (usually English). The symposium also considered ways to enhance the development of talented trilingual speakers so as to empower minority groups to preserve their cultural identity and language while accessing the social and economic benefits of engaging in mainstream society in a globalised context.

c) Participants visited a trilingual primary school in Yanji City, and were deeply impressed by the student-centred teaching methods and the students' competence in three languages, Korean, Chinese and English.

d) Ms Helen Yi Yayuan, a doctoral candidate at HKIEd, gave a presentation on "Language-in-education policies in Inner Mongolia: empowerment and identity". Other speakers analysed trilingualism and trilingual education in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Region; among the Southern Kam in Liping County, Guizhou; in Lahu nationality schools in Yunnan Province; among Tibetans in Qinghai Province and in Sichuan Province; and in *neidiban* (boarding schools for ethnic minority students to study in major cities such as

Shanghai). Prof Adamson and Prof Feng presented sessions on how to disseminate research findings in order to influence education policies, and future directions for research and policy.

e) A book on trilingualism and trilingual education in China, edited by Profs Feng and Adamson and published by Springer, is expected to appear in spring 2014.

f) Towards the end, we discussed how we can increase the impact of our research on individual and society. In essence we discussed:

- How we can attach our group (organization) to a national standard political organization in order to enlarge our impact in the society.

- How we can share our latest findings more effectively through social media and internet.

- How we can enlarge our impact and draw a more holistic view in our research and improve the measurement of trilingualism.

- Detailed introduction of under publishing journals and books are given to the members.

- Discussed whether to set up own journals or not.