



# International Journal of Education and Teaching

Publisher's Home Page: <https://www.svedbergopen.com/>



Research Paper

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## A Strategy for Learning Yi Etymology in the National General Context

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### Article Info

Volume 5, Issue 1, June 2025

Received : 03 April 2025

Accepted : 11 June 2025

Published : 25 June 2025

doi: [10.51483/IJEDT.5.1.2025.133-143](https://doi.org/10.51483/IJEDT.5.1.2025.133-143)

### Abstract

As a member of the Chinese national community, the Yi nationality, like the Han nationality, is a part of the excellent culture of the Chinese nation. Under the background of advocating the comprehensive revitalization of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation, the Yi nationality, as a member of the Chinese nation, needs to make use of the writing as a carrier for a better inheritance, therefore, learning the Yi language well has become particularly important, and under the support of the Party and the state's policy on the education of the ethnic minority areas, the development of bilingual education is helping to inherit the Yi culture and train the successors who are fluent in both Yi language and national common language. However, there exists a phenomenon in the current literacy teaching of Yi language, that is to say, the way of students' learning of the Yi language is boring and mechanical, and they gradually detach themselves from the original intention of learning the language for the purpose of better inheriting the culture. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to discuss whether the learning of Yi language can be promoted with the help of the learning method of the national common language script in the context of the national common language script, so that the Yi culture can be better inherited and developed, and then inject new vitality into the inheritance of the Chinese national culture.

**Keywords:** Yi language; Chinese characters, Traceability, Literacy teaching, Learning strategies

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. The Cause of the Problem

At the National Conference on Commending Ethnic Unity and Progress, General Secretary Xi Jinping made this speech: "Our vast territory is jointly pioneered by all ethnic groups, our long history is jointly written by all ethnic groups, our splendid culture is jointly created by all ethnic groups, and our great spirit is jointly cultivated by all ethnic groups" (Xinhua News Agency, 2019). From this, we can see that the Chinese nation is a community of destiny by the combination of all nationalities, the inheritance of Chinese culture is inevitably inseparable from the participation of all nationalities, in order to realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, we have to build up a strong sense of community of the Chinese nation as the main line, and unite all the nationalities in order to better inherit the excellent culture of the Chinese nation.

Since ancient times, the inheritance of culture is the need for generations of successors to use the written word as a tool to record and pass on the culture, the Yi language as a written symbol system of the Yi people, recording the Yi

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people and their cultural development and evolution, it is the foundation of the Yi culture, but also an important tool for the inheritance of the culture of the Yi people, so I believe that only the successors to better master this tool, in order to better Yi culture, inheritance and development, thus injecting new power into the development of Chinese culture. Therefore, I believe that only when the successors master this tool can the Yi culture be passed on and carried forward, thus injecting new power into the development of Chinese culture. Therefore, the learning of the Yi script has become particularly important. Under the support of the national policy on education for ethnic minorities, some districts and counties in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Region have started to implement the bilingual education of the national common language and the Yi language. In Liangshan Prefecture, there are currently two modes of teaching, namely, “the first mode and the second mode”. The first mode refers to the mode of teaching in which the teaching of students from elementary school to senior high school is based on the curriculum of the national language supplemented by the national common language. The second model refers to the teaching of students from elementary school to high school in which the national language is the main subject supplemented by a course in the national language. Since the introduction of bilingual education, the Yi children have been given the opportunity to learn their own language and script, so that they can learn their mother tongue and write in their mother tongue. However, the current method of learning the Yi script is rather mechanized, and the children have the phenomenon of recognizing words without knowing them. This makes the learning of the Yi script detached from the cultural background of the mother tongue behind the Yi script, and the learning of the script gradually becomes superficial, which is contrary to the original intention of using the Yi script to pass on the Yi culture. Therefore, I will discuss in this context how the children of the Yi ethnic group in the current national context can learn their mother tongue script better.

## **1.2. Conceptualization**

### *1.2.1. What is the State Common Language*

Chapter 1 of the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language clearly states that the State common language and writing system refers to Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters. The use of the state common language and writing system should be conducive to the safeguarding of national sovereignty and national dignity, national unity and national solidarity, and the construction of socialist material civilization and spiritual civilization. Thus, the national common language context means the language environment in which Putonghua is used for communication and standardized Chinese characters are used for writing. The national common language is a superior concept and should be viewed from a holistic perspective, it is a communication tool used by the whole Chinese nation.

### *1.2.2. What is the sense of community of the Chinese nation?*

The Chinese nation is composed of a number of nationalities, and the Chinese nation as a large family contains a variety of different nationalities; only when all nationalities are united and move forward together will the Chinese nation be able to survive, and in order to safeguard national unity and the unity of the motherland, the Party and the government have put forward a series of policies relating to national unity. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, under the guidance of the CPC Central Committee, it has been proposed to vigorously cultivate the sense of community among the Chinese nation and to strengthen the interaction, exchange and integration of all nationalities, and the Opinions on Strengthening and Improving Ethnic Work in the New Circumstances, issued by the State Council in 2014, also explicitly proposes to insist on laying down a firm ideological foundation for the community of the Chinese nation, and then General Secretary put forward the proposal of building a firm sense of community among the Chinese nation at the 19th National Congress. From fostering to building up the sense of community of the Chinese nation, it reflects a situation in which all ethnic groups have each other and each other, and no one can be separated from the other. The Chinese nation is a community made up of various ethnic groups, which should be viewed from the perspective of the whole. In order to develop this community, it needs a unified concept of consciousness to guide its way forward, thus giving rise to a sense of community. The so-called community consciousness is the common value norms and active cohesion willingness of the members in a specific aggregation relationship, based on the common conditions of the survival and development of the self and others. The so-called community consciousness of the Chinese nation is the revitalization and cohesion mentality of the nationals of the People’s Republic of China, which upholds the value norms of common goodness and the will of active maintenance on the basis of recognizing the commonality of the conditions and history of each other’s survival and development (Qing, and Xu, 2018).

### *1.2.3. What is National Identity*

In recent years, scholars have made some explanations about the concept of national identity. Mr. Wang Jianmin thinks that national identity refers to a special cognition that contains feelings and attitudes of members of a nation to each other, and it is the cognition of other people and the self as members of the same nation; (Wang, 1991) Mr. Zhang Shiyi thinks that national identity is actually about identifying the unique spirit of the nation, and this unique spirit is like a person's uniqueness, and identity is the internal reflection of a nation itself, that is, figuring out where it is coming from and where it is going to. This unique spirit is like a person's uniqueness, and identity is a nation's internal reflection, i.e., figuring out where it has come from and where it is going to (Zhang, 2005). It is thus clear that national identity is the recognition by each social group of its own national identity, the understanding of which group it belongs to and how it came to be.

### *1.3. Current Problems in Teaching Literacy in Yi Language*

At present, the learning of Yi characters is an easily neglected issue in the teaching of Yi language, especially for the teaching of Yi language in primary school. Taking the sixth grade students as an example, it is found in the survey that after the teachers have taught them the Yi language, many students memorize the words just like English words, only knowing the pronunciation, the shape of the words and their surface meanings, but not the origin, evolution and the rich knowledge behind the shape of the words. They do not try to find out the origin and evolution of these words and the rich knowledge behind them. This kind of boring and monotonous mechanical learning method will easily lead students to recognize words in isolation from the original language environment, which will not only speed up the students' forgetfulness of what they have learned, but also neglect the fundamental purpose of teaching Yi language, i.e., spreading the Yi culture. Students have little understanding of the evolution of the Yi script and the culture behind the script.

### *1.4. The Significance of the Study*

With a long history of the Yi script, there are many types of ancient Yi literature, including many books of historical and scientific value on nature, society, ethics, astronomy and calendar, medicine, religious classics, poems, aphorisms and proverbs, as well as a large number of literary works for the enjoyment of the people. These documents are invaluable historical materials for the study of Yi history, politics, economy, culture, astronomy, geography, medicine, etc., and are also an inaccessible part of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation. However, some of these documents are still confined to the scholars who know the Yi language, so if they can be translated into the common language of the country, more people will be able to know about the Yi nation, so that the Yi culture can be better inherited, and thus give a chance to the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation to be better transmitted. This will inject new power into the inheritance of the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation.

The Yi script has evolved from the primitive pictures depicted by the ancient Yi ancestors on flat objects such as stone tablets, erasers, scapulars, animal skins, and so on, and a word is a picture embodying a specific thing. For the Yi children who are learning their mother tongue for the first time, when learning their mother tongue, in addition to simply learning phonetics, glyphs and grammar, they should also learn about the origin, evolution and development of the characters and the culture behind the characters. Only in this way can they really understand the Yi language, and understand what kind of ethnic group their own ethnic group is, so as to improve their national self-confidence and strengthen their sense of identity. The purpose of this paper is to explore the effective learning methods of Yi characters for primary school students, and to put forward some suggestions for the better learning of Yi characters and the inheritance of Yi culture.

### *1.5. Research Ideas*

Yi script and Chinese characters are both products of the traditional and excellent culture of the Chinese nation, and they are like two of the many children of the same mother, so there must be commonality between them while there is individuality. Like Chinese characters, Yi script is one of the ancient autochthonous scripts, evolving from primitive pictorial scripts to the present day. At present, the State is fully promoting the use of the national common language and writing system, i.e., the use of Putonghua and standardized Chinese characters. The teaching method of Chinese character literacy has been popularized in primary and secondary schools. Inspired by this method, I wondered whether we could make use of the idea of teaching Chinese character literacy to promote the development of Yi language teaching, and to explore whether Yi characters could be learned in the same way as Chinese characters by means of the method of character literacy. First of all, it is necessary to understand what Chinese character literacy is, and secondly,

why Chinese characters can fulfill the conditions of character literacy teaching; then we have to talk about the Yi characters themselves to see if they have the same conditions as Chinese characters to fulfill the conditions of character literacy teaching. Finally, corresponding measures are proposed.

## 2. What Is Etymological Literacy

Etymological literacy is based on the research results of characters, taking the glyphs of Chinese characters as the core, utilizing the analysis of Chinese character structures, tracing the origin of Chinese characters through the original pictures of Chinese characters and the process of character evolution, and trying to establish the connection between modern Chinese characters and early Chinese characters as well as their original contexts, so as to help the students to understand the structures and meanings of Chinese characters from the origin of Chinese characters and from the angle of Chinese characters' culture, which is based on the development of the overall thinking of human beings as the central axis of the study of Chinese characters. It is to enhance cultural quality, lay the foundation of history, and master reading and writing, i.e., it embodies the law of development and evolution of Chinese characters from image to abstraction, and is in line with the law of development of learners' thinking from pictograms to abstraction (Liu and Zhang, 2010), it can be seen that etymological literacy is to trace the origin of Chinese characters, and then use multimedia technology to create a cultural context to show the origin and evolution of Chinese characters, so that students can intuitively understand how the words they learn come from, and what meanings they contain.

## 3. Reasons Why Chinese Characters Satisfy Etymological Literacy

### 3.1. Chinese Character Tracing

Chinese characters and the Dingtou characters (also known as cuneiform characters) of the two river valleys in West Asia, and the Sacred Script characters of Egypt in North Africa are the world's three major classical autochthonous scripts. About the origin of Chinese characters, there are "knot-rope record-keeping, gossip, Cangjie said," several kinds of claims, but in these kinds of claims is the most popularly accepted "Cangjie said", "Xunzi - to solve the shelter," said: "Therefore, the good book of many, and Cangjie's unique creation is one of the many good books." In "Shuo Wen Jie Zi - Narrative", it is also recorded that: "When Cang Jie, the historian of the Yellow Emperor, swallowed the hoofs of birds and beasts, he knew that the differentiation of reasoning could be different, and he first created the Book of Deeds. Hundreds of works were made and ten thousand items were examined." It can be seen that Cangjie is constantly being deified as the sole creator of Chinese characters. But whether it is "to knot the rope for about, things big, big knot its rope; things small, small knot its rope knot the rope to remember things said" or "close to the body far from all the things gossip said" or "constantly deified Cangjie creation of Chinese characters said "All of them are based on the images of plants and animals as well as the appearance of mountains and rivers, and express their meanings in the form of pictures, which shows that Chinese characters were developed on the basis of native pictures.

### 3.2. Characteristics of Chinese Characters and Character Creation

#### 3.2.1. Characteristics of Chinese characters.

Chinese characters were developed from primitive drawings, and have evolved through the stages of oracle bone inscriptions, gold inscriptions, seal scripts, official scripts and regular scripts. Chinese characters are a unity of form, sound and meaning, and have the characteristic of expressing meaning by form, that is, the meaning of a Chinese character can be derived by analyzing its etymology, and many ancient Chinese characters are very similar to the things they represent, which reflects the characteristic of Chinese characters as autochthonous characters. For example, the characters for sun, moon, mountain, water, and so on

Sun: ☀(oracle bone script) - ☀(jinwen) - ☀(seal script) - ☀(clerical script) - Sun(regular script) Moon: ☾(oracle bone script) - ☾(jinwen) - ☾(seal script) - ☾(clerical script) - Moon (regular script) Mountain: 山(oracle bone script) - 山(jinwen) - 山(seal script) - 山(clerical script) - Mountain (regular script) - River: 水(oracle bone script) - 水(jinwen) - 水(seal script) - 水(clerical script) - River (regular script)

#### 3.2.2. The creation of Chinese Characters

The "Six Books" is the earliest theory of Chinese character formation, which is the six methods of creating and using characters put forward by ancient Chinese scholars through analyzing the formation of Chinese characters, and reasonably

sums up the basic methods of Chinese character formation and use of characters, so it can be said that the “Six Books” is the core theory of Chinese character formation in ancient China. It can be said that the Six Books are the core theories of ancient Chinese character studies, and their influence on the study of Chinese characters has continued since the birth of Xu Shen’s *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (Explaining Characters in Chinese) (Yang and Sun, 2014). Therefore, the creation of Chinese characters was based on Xu Shen’s theory of the six books.

### 3.3. Reasons for Etymology-Based Literacy in Chinese Characters

Based on the fact that Chinese characters are characterized by their shape and meaning, the multimedia etymology of Chinese characters has come into being. Specifically, multimedia technology is used to create vivid and rich contexts (original drawings), to restore abstract Chinese characters into the original context of the images created by the ancients, and then to use animation technology to show the evolution of Chinese characters (primitive - oracle-bone script - bronze script - seal script - official script - regular script) in real time and continuously. Then we use animation technology to show the process of Chinese character evolution (primitive - oracle bone script - golden script - seal script - official script - regular script) in real time and continuously (Tu, 2006). For example, “hand, mouth, eye” and other simple common characters. With the help of multimedia, the evolution of these characters from oracle bones to standardized Chinese characters is shown in the form of animation. This will bring the learners back to the original context of Chinese characters to experience the culture and the wisdom of the character makers, so as to deepen their understanding.

Hand:  (Oracle Bone Script) -  (Bronze Script) -  (Small Seal Script) -  (Clerical Script) - Hand (Regular Script)  
 Mouth:  (oracle bone script) -  (Bronze script) -  (small seal script) -  (Clerical script) - mouth (regular script)  
 Eye:  (Oracle Bone Script) -  (Bronze Script) -  (Small Seal Script) -  (Clerical Script) - Eye (Regular Script)

### 3.4. Significance of Etymology-Based Literacy

The character source literacy makes literacy no longer mechanized, using the traceability of the Chinese characters learned to bring the learners back to the original cultural background behind the Chinese characters, so that the students can clearly know how the characters they learnt evolved step by step from the form of pictures to the present day, and at the same time gives the characters a new vitality, and then uses the form of modern multimedia animation to show the living characters in front of the children, which makes it easy for the children to enter the culture and feel the culture and further promotes the national identity in this kind of dynamic situation. In this dynamic situation, children can enter into the culture contained in Chinese characters, feel the culture, and further promote the sense of national identity.

## 4. Reasons for Satisfying Etymological Literacy in Yi

### 4.1. Yi Language Traceability

Yi script is an ancient autochthonous script with a long history. Over the years, many papers on the origin of the Yi script have emerged, mainly centering on the question “When did it originate? Who created it?” These two topics are discussed in different ways, although supported by excavated documents, there is no definite answer for the time being. Therefore, regarding the research of the former scholars, I will talk about the literature and the excavated materials to discuss the Yi language and when it was created.

#### 4.1.1. Oral Documentation

Liangshan Yi District, Sichuan Province. There is a story that goes like this: “When he was alive, Bhima Asuragi made a lot of words, and when he died, he turned into a Lolong Gobu god bird to teach his mute son, Laji Gechu, to write. Laji Gechu went up the mountain every day to follow the god bird to learn how to write, and one day his mother came and shouted at him, frightening the god bird away, but Laji Gechu began to speak: “Amu ah! Why have you come at this hour? Why don’t you come a little later? There are still three articles left to be copied from Abba’s book!” From then on, Raji Gertrude spoke and taught the people the characters left by his father, but since there are still three articles left to be copied, the Yi language is not enough now” (Li and Tao, 1981). The Yi region of Guizhou. There is a legend circulating that “the old man Jilu created the Yi language”. In ancient times, there was a wise old man who started from carving the images of six kinds of fowls and six kinds of beasts, commemorated them on the trees, recorded the months on the stones, and became the symbols of twelve geomantic branches, and gradually formed the Yi language (Kong, 2005). Yunnan Yi area. In addition to the above legends, there are other folk stories related to the origin of the Yi language, in the Yi region of Yunnan Province, the folk story “red leather box” that the Yi language is given by the gods.

4.1.2. Written Documentation

The Nisu Raider Festival, a Yi book in the southern dialect area, says: “In ancient times, when there was no writing, Nisu Raider was born in the sky, and when he reached the age of seven, he came to Tonglong Mountain and planted a gold tree and a silver tree. After eight to ten years, the gold tree grew thickly and the silver tree bloomed beautifully, with 1,500 gold flowers and 1,500 silver flowers. Mr. Nishrub liked it so much that he invited guests from all directions, one from the center, and six from the east, west, south, north, south, and center, together with Mr. Nishrub. The six heavenly deities came together to describe the gold and silver flowers on the gold and silver trees, turned them into 3,000 characters, wrote them on bamboo tablets, and compiled them into six books (Yunnan Provincial Office for the Sorting and Publishing of Minority Ancient Books, 1985).”

The Yi text “The Beginning of Things” says: “In the world, if we don’t create words, if we don’t create words, there will be no glory in the sky and no light on the earth. It was difficult for people to save their lives, so they kept on thinking and creating countless words, and left them on the earth. From then on, the sky is bright and the earth is bright. The roots of mankind are strong, and the golden characters, like the sun, shine brightly, and like the moon, shine brightly. From then on, the God of Knowledge, Ai Nui Ju Xue Zhe Zhe, spoke after deep thought and kept on speaking; the God of Wisdom, Heng Ying A Baini, kept on writing. Ninety scrolls of wisdom have been handed down on earth (Chen, 1993).” In addition to the above, in Guizhou’s Yi literature, Southwest Yi Zhi, it is also recorded that Hengben Aru “founded the ancestor worship, invented the root of heaven and earth, and created the Yi language”. 3, in the Chinese literature “Hou Han Shu - Southwest Barbarians”, “Yunnan Tongzhi”, “Qing Yitongzhi” and other documents began to appear in the Yi language records, called Yi for “Cuanwen” or “quwen”.

4.1.3. Unearthed Documentation

The Banpo pottery inscriptions in Xi’an and related matters. Some scholars have claimed that the incised symbols discovered on the rim of a painted pottery bowl excavated at Banpo, Xi’an (see Table 1), can be interpreted using the form, sound, and meaning of Yi script. One of the Yi scholars, Mr. Li Qiao, in his journal “Is this a coincidence? From the Yi Script”, Mr. Li Qiao, a Yi scholar, mentioned that “the engraved symbols on the pottery unearthed in Xi’an Half-slope are the ancient Yi script”. Besides, in his book “History of the Ancient Civilization of the Yi”, the Yi scholar Qie Sa Wuniu used Liangshan ancient Yi script to interpret some of the Half-slope pottery texts (see Table 2).

**Table 1: The Pottery Inscriptions Unearthed at Banpo, Xi’an**

**Table 2: Twenty Banpo Pottery Inscriptions Deciphered by Scholar Qie Sa Wuniu Using Ancient Yi Script**

Banpo Characters		Y	ll	≡	X	W	⊞	X	+
Yi Meaning	One	Divide	Male	Many	Fence	Bend	Sow	Cross	Ten
Yi Pronunciation	cyp	jjie	bu	nyi	gop	ngot	put	ke	ci
Banpo Characters	⊞	W	W	L	≡	≡	U	木	卩
Yi Meaning	Wild Vegetable	Squeeze	Cattle	Ladle	Sacred Branch	Cedar	Mother	Sacrifice, Shaman	Bundle
Yi Pronunciation [12]	but	nyie	nyo	kit	mgu	shut	mop	bi	shat

Sanxingdui excavated carved symbols. Sanxingdui Museum is located in Guanghan, Sichuan Province, in its excavated materials, such as: human head jade seal, coiled serpent jade zhangs, divine turtle carrying Luo script, holding the Bijie standing man, wind ear god’s head, four-legged jade tripod cover, bronze gorgon, two dragons, two birds, two fish cups and other cultural relics on the inscription of some similar or the same with the ancient Yi language, Ma Jinwei scholars in his book “Origin and Study of the Yi Script,” the book of the Sanxingdui Museum on the display of the text of the symbols and ancient Yi language In his book “Origin and Study of the Yi Script”, Ma Jinwei made a comparative interpretation of the symbols displayed in Sanxingdui Museum and the ancient Yi script. In this paper, we will only list some of them.

Original glyph										
Ancient Yi										
Word Meaning	Name	Do	Center	Wealth	Bright	Plow, plow	Harrier	Six	Dragon	
Word Sounds	[mi33]	[mu33]	[gu36]	[dz33]	[bo21]	[mo33]	[ts33]	[fu55]	[lu33]	

To sum up, the Yi script is not created by one person, nor is it a work of the moment, it is formed in the long-term life of the Yi people, and it is the crystallization of the wisdom of the Yi forefathers. There is a lack of reliable documentary information about the origin of the Yi language. There are several kinds of claims made by the predecessors: the Yi script was created in Tang Dynasty, created in Tang Dynasty and synthesized in Ming Dynasty, started in Han Dynasty, created before Xia Dynasty, created in ancient Qiang Dynasty, and the Yi script was inherited from Yangzhao culture and engraved symbols. Southwest Yi Zhi, Volume 5, “Evolution of Heaven and Earth”, said: “When the trees blossomed, it was called Spring March; when the trees were blossomed, it was called Summer March; when the fruits of the trees became ripe, it was called Autumn March; when the leaves of the trees withered and fell, it was called Winter March.” Also said: “If the king do not know the year, look at the trees to remember the years; If the king do not know the month, observe the stones to keep track.” These records are the earliest written materials in the existing Yi ancient books about the period when the Yi ancestors entered the “civilized society” from the “barbaric society” with the creation of carved symbols and pictorial writing. The “Aibu” generation was 6,000 years ago, and some scholars deduce that the Yi language has a history of more than 6,000 years.

From the oral and written literature, it can be seen that the creators of the Yi script were Bi Mo, as well as wise men, mysterious figures and heavenly deities, etc. At the same time, it can also be seen that the initial form of the Yi script was in the form of drawings and paintings, which were based on the images of plants and animals in daily life. Through scholars can use the ancient Yi script to interpret the symbols of the excavated pottery and the excavated materials of Sanxingdui, it can also be seen that the Yi script was developed on the basis of hieroglyphic symbols and engraved symbols.

## 4.2. The Nature and Characteristics of the Yi Language

### 4.2.1. The nature of the Yi script

The Nail-shaped script (also called cuneiform script) of the two river valleys in West Asia, the Sacred Script of Egypt in North Africa, and the Chinese characters are the world’s three major classical autochthonous scripts, and the Yi script is also a kind of ancient autochthonous script, and like the Chinese characters, it is a kind of script that has been used from ancient times to the present day. Due to the different perspectives, there are several different voices in the academic circles about the nature of the Yi script, namely, “hieroglyphic script, ideographic script, phonetic script, epigrammatic script, etc.” (Chen, 1982). With the birth of excavated materials and the analysis of ancient Yi materials by scholars in recent years, “ideographs” is accepted by the majority of scholars. Scholar Ding Chunshou mentioned in his book “Theory of Yi Writing” that “Yi writing belongs to the system of ideographic writing, which, like Chinese characters, is the existing ideographic writing in the world today with its own system and unique characteristics (Wang, 1993).”

Scholar Wang Zhengxian said in his article “A Casual Discussion on Yi(Bimo) Script Literature”, “The Yi language is basically a fixed system of symbolic symbols to represent words or lexemes, not directly or purely phonetics, it is a trinity of form, sound, and meaning in the nature of the ideograms, and the way of constructing the Yi language is entirely determined by the nature of its ideograms (Wang, 1990).”

#### 4.2.2. Characteristics of Yi script

Like Chinese characters, a word represents a meaningful syllable, and each word is of the same size, basically in the shape of a square, with fewer straight strokes, more curved strokes and folded strokes, and complex types of strokes, maintaining the characteristic of “stuttering with the body” of the early scripts. The lines of traditional Yi script are written from top to bottom and moved from left to right, so when reading some ancient Yi texts, one has to turn the book to the left and read it upside down; while after the promulgation of standardized programs by various places, the lines of modern Yi script are written from left to right and moved from top to bottom as in the case of modern Chinese books.

#### 4.3. Word Formation in the Yi Language

Regarding the creation of characters in the Yi language, according to Mr. Zhou Youguang, in his article “The Six Books have universal applicability”, he put forward the following viewpoint: “The principle of the Six Books was founded in China, and it not only explains the method of creating and using Chinese characters, but also explains the method of creating and using other human characters, and the Six Books have universal applicability.” According to Mr. Zhou Youguang’s principle of the universality of the six books, together with the fact that the Yi language is derived from primitive drawings, the creation of characters in the Yi language can be summarized by Xu Shen’s theory of the “six books”.

#### 4.4. Reasons for Satisfying Etymological Literacy in Yi

In order to explore whether the Yi language satisfies the etymological method of literacy, we must first look at the commonalities between Chinese characters and the Yi language, and then look at whether the Yi language satisfies the etymological method of literacy.

##### 4.4.1. The Commonality of Chinese Characters and Yi Language

Firstly, in terms of origin. The origin of both the Yi script and the Chinese characters was not created by a single person, but came from the wisdom of many people in the process of national development. Besides, whether it is Cangjie creating Chinese characters, or Bimo Asuraji creating the Yi script, the creation of both writing systems started by depicting primitive pictures based on the images of animals or plants in the world.

Secondly, in terms of nature and characteristics, regarding the nature of the two kinds of characters, Yi and Chinese, there are several opinions in the academic circles, but both Yi and Chinese characters were initially ideographic characters, and some ancient Yi characters can be understood through direct viewing of their meanings, and similarly Chinese characters can be understood through viewing their oracle bone forms. Both the Yi script and the Chinese characters are ancient autochthonous scripts, and the characters are in the form of squares, each of which is of the same size.

Thirdly, in terms of characterization, according to Mr. Zhou Youguang’s principle of the universality of the six books, the word formation of both Yi and Chinese characters can be summarized by Xu Shen’s “six books”, but the difference lies in the fact that in the six books, Chinese characters have fewer referential characters, more ideograms and a large proportion of form-sounding characters; whereas, Yi has more referential characters, fewer ideograms and fewer form-sounding characters, and there are some dialectal areas where there are no ideograms and no form-sounding characters at all.

##### 4.4.2. Reasons for the Fulfillment of the Etymological Literacy Method in Yi

From the introduction above, the Yi language is a kind of autogenous script originated from carved symbols. Tracing back to the original form of the Yi language, it can be seen that it is similar to Chinese characters in terms of the principle of character creation, and the culture of heaven and earth reflected in the characters is also similar, both of them are originated from the carving of natural objects. Each character is a living picture, if we can utilize modern multimedia technology to show the evolution of Yi language, we can let the learners go to the mother tongue context created to learn the characters, besides, for the primary school students who are learning their mother tongue for the first time, they are in the best stage of learning the language, and inputting the knowledge to them at this moment can make them memorize the characters more deeply. Relying on the regular Yi language classroom teaching, teachers can introduce the relevant

knowledge of Yi characters by using multimedia technology, and then expand the knowledge according to the students' absorption, which can make the learning of Yi language no longer feel noisy and boring.

## 5. Strategies for Applying Etymological Literacy in the Yi Language

### 5.1. Making Yi Script Learning Interesting by Displaying Images and Text

Before the teacher teaches a new lesson, teachers can provide students with some pictures, images or objects related to the Yi script to be studied through multimedia. Or let the students search for stories related to the characters they are going to learn. This will deepen students' intuitive impression of the Yi characters they are going to learn. For example, when learning the words “𐌎 (jjut, human); 𐌎 (mo, mother)”, the teacher can first play the images or pictures of the evolution of these words from hieroglyphs to the current Yi script on the projector. As shown in the picture.



### 5.2. Understanding of the Yi Characterization System

The Yi script also has a complete “six books”, how to learn these character creation method, this article will cite three of them.

#### 5.2.1. Yi Hieroglyphic Characters

In Shuowen Jiezi, it is said: “The pictographs are drawn as objects, with the body stuttering, the sun and the moon are also.” That is to say, pictographs use lines to draw a figure similar to a certain thing to represent the semantic meaning of the thing drawn. This is also the case with Yi pictographs, for example: “𐌎 (ndo, drink): this character takes the image of a man bending over to drink. “𐌎 (mo, mother): this character takes the image of a pregnant woman.”

#### 5.2.2. Yi Indicative Characters

Shen Xu (100BC) said: “Those who refer to things can be recognized by looking at them, and can see their meaning by looking at them, up and down.” That is to say, by looking at it with the naked eye, one can understand what word it represents. There are three ways to create Yi indicative characters. One is to use abstract symbols directly, such as: “𐌎 (cyp, one), 𐌎 (nyip, two), 𐌎 (suo, three)”. One type of character is made by adding some abstract symbols to the pictograms, such as “𐌎 (yut, saw)”, in which the upper and lower parts of the character are separated from each other by a saw-like blade. The last type of character is an indicative character that is formed by adding an indicator symbol to a single pictograph. For example, the character 𐌎 (ho, circle) consists of an outer and inner circle, with the outer circle representing the circle around the livestock and the inner circle representing the livestock in the house.

#### 5.2.3. Yi Associative Compound Characters

In Shuowen Jiezi (Explaining Characters in Chinese), it is said: “Associative compounds means to compare two or more characters to form a new character, and the meaning of this new character is combined by the meanings of these two characters.” It means that two or more characters are combined together to form a new character, and the meaning of this new character is a combination of the meanings of these two characters. For example, the word “𐌎 (yi, house)” is composed of “𐌎 (pat, father)”, “𐌎 (mop, mother)”, and “𐌎 (mop, mother)”. “which, when combined, form the new word house, meaning that a home is made up of a father and a mother, and the place where the home is located is the house.

### 5.3. Exploring the Origin of Yi Script and Perceiving the Character Formation Patterns

After recognizing the images of the characters studied, the teacher provides various glyphs and fonts of the Yi script from pictograms to the current Yi script, perceives the evolution pattern of the Yi script and explores the origin of the characters together with the students. For example, the character “𐌎 (ndo, drink water)” has evolved from pictograms to modern Yi script, and each symbol represents one thing. It can be seen as a man bending over to drink from a pool of water. The wavy strokes on the left represent water, the circle in the center represents a pool of water, and the one on the right, which looks like a person, represents a person drinking water. This character is created with the posture of a person drinking water, which means that the person is drinking water. The evolution of this character can be seen from the living condition of the Yi ancestors at that time.



#### 5.4. Imitating Character Creation and Dialoguing with the Yi Script

Teachers guide students to analyze the pronunciation, shape and meaning of the characters studied, for example, whether the image of the pictogram “ndo, drink water)” in the picture above is accurate. Let the students create another character by imitating the pattern of the character, and then the teacher and students will evaluate and deepen their understanding of the pattern of the character. Teachers and students talk about Yi characters together. For example, imitate the pattern of “ndo, drink)” to create the character “hnie, sit)”, the evolution of this character is shown in the following diagram. The character hnie, sit), which shows a person sitting with a cushion like clothing or felt, is called hnie, sit).



#### 5.5. Expanding Knowledge of Yi Script

The teacher guides the students to master the words, phrases, proverbs, allusions, sources and poems composed of the Yi characters they have learned. Expanding the text, combining each individual Yi character with a vivid linguistic environment. For example, in the ancient Yi text 𪛗 𪛘 𪛙 𪛚 (translated into Chinese as “Source of Fire”), there is a sentence that reads: “𪛛 𪛜 𪛝 𪛞 𪛟 , 𪛠 𪛡 𪛢 𪛣 (“Burning for the reproduction of humankind, burning for the benefit of mankind”), 𪛤 (jjut)” here refers to human beings.

#### 5.6. Improving the Ability to Use the Yi Script

After teaching the characters, the teacher will guide or participate in letting the students make sentences, expand words, write texts, or organize the students to participate in calligraphy, painting, riddle competitions, and reenactment to enter into the Yi script and get to know the Yi script. Many students come from different dialect areas, teachers can let students dig and collect different dialects related to them, through these methods to improve the Yi language ability.

The above are some effective measures I propose for learning Yi script through the study of the origins of Chinese characters. There are still shortcomings, and with more professional accumulation in the future, further improvements can be made.

### 6. Conclusion

Yi script is an ancient script, an autogenous script that does not depend on other scripts. It is also a kind of syllabic writing. Each character of the Yi script is a picture of a specific thing, reflecting the production and living conditions, customs and wisdom of the Yi ancestors. Many outstanding events and works of the Yi people throughout the ages have been recorded in Yi script. Nowadays, under the support of the Party and the state policy, Liangshan Prefecture government pays more and more attention to the bilingual education of Yi and Chinese in the Yi area, and many parents, teachers and students also support the learning of Yi language more and more. Under this trend of wanting to learn, as a contemporary mother tongue learner, we have to make more efforts to learn the Yi script, learn to understand the Yi script, understand the law of character creation of the Yi ancestors, and the culture behind each form they created. It is only by learning and understanding the meaning behind each character that the Yi culture can be better passed on, thus allowing the Yi culture to reflect its value in the comprehensive revival of the traditional Chinese culture.

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**Cite this article as:** Qing, Qing and Sarwat Aqeela (2025). A Strategy for Learning Yi Etymology in the National General Context. *International Journal of Education and Teaching*, 5(1), 133-143. doi: 10.51483/IJEDT.5.1.2025.133-143.