

Research Article

A Study on Language Practices and Identity Construction Among Youth in the China-Myanmar Borderland Under New Media Context

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization, the China-Myanmar border emerges as a distinctive site for cross-cultural integration. Ethnic language practices in this region not only serve as a vehicle for cultural inheritance but also facilitate the construction of cross-border identities. Ruili, the locality under investigation, lies on the China-Myanmar border and has been subject to frequent cross-border interactions, exhibits both universal trends in ethnic language development across border regions and unique characteristics shaped by such transnational dynamics. The language practices of Dai youth in Ruili thus provide a typical case for exploring the interplay between ethnic language ecology and identity construction in the new media era. Focusing on Dai youth aged 18 to 35 in Ruili, this study adopts a digital ethnographic approach. Through online participant observation, semi-structured interviews and new media textual analysis, it systematically portrays the patterns of language practices employed by this group in the new media environment, analyzes the construction and expression of their multiple identities, and explores the interactive mechanism between language practices and identity. Findings indicate that the informants' language practices bear clear connections with the construction of identity, which is characterized by the integration of ethnicity, borderland, nationhood and cross-border culture. It further illustrates the mutually shaping relationship in which language practices construct identity, while identity in turn guides language practices. By clarifying this interactive mechanism, this study seeks to offer typical cases and empirical support for the protection of ethnic language ecology and the innovation of cultural inheritance in border regions.

Keywords

China-Myanmar Borderland, Dai Youth, Language Practice, Identity Construction, New Media

1. Introduction

As a distinctive language type in border regions, border languages, characterized by their cross-border distribution, serve as an important bond connecting different ethnic groups and sustaining interactions among cross-border ethnic communities. The development and governance of border languages

have long constituted a core issue in the national language policy and practice. Scholars such as Dai Qingxia point out that in terms of essential attributes, border languages are subject to multiple constraints from regional ecology, humanistic relations, and cross-border characteristics, presenting three major

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traits: rich resources, sensitive changes, and policy prudence. This determines that relevant research must take into account language ontology practice, national policy context, and the reality of cross-border ethnic interactions [1]. China's terrestrial border language ecology is distinctive in its regionality and complexity. Chinese border languages are characterized by rich linguistic diversity, widespread cross-border distribution, and high endangerment, and serve as important strategic and security resources for national governance [2]. Li Yuming noted that language variants within the range of 300 to 500 kilometers along the terrestrial border are diverse in form, involving the national common language, Chinese dialects, foreign languages, ethnic minority languages and their dialects, mixed languages, etc [3]. Border languages encompass three categories: cross-border languages, intra-border languages, and extra-border languages. Its thematic research meets the needs of national language situation surveys and strategic development, highlighting the academic pioneering value of China's border language research.

As an important port on the China-Myanmar border, Ruili in Yunnan Province serves as a frontier for cross-border linguistic communication and ethnic interaction and integration. As an indigenous cross-border ethnic group in the area, the Dai people's language use and identity construction are naturally embedded in the China-Myanmar cross-border linguistic ecosystem. The widespread popularization of new media technologies has completely reshaped the language use scenarios, cross-cultural communication patterns, and information access channels of border youth, introducing a new variable to the study of border language practices and identity construction. Although existing studies have achieved fruitful results in the basic field of border languages, they still suffer from insufficient depth and incomplete coverage. In particular, there is a lack of research on the micro-language practices of border youth in the context of new media, and they have not adequately responded to the practical requirements for studies on the linguistic life of specific ethnic groups posed by the sensitivity of border language changes and the prudence of relevant policies. Against this background, this study focuses on Dai youth in Ruili, Yunnan, exploring their patterns of language practice and the logic of identity construction under the influence of new media. Through empirical analysis, it clarifies the mechanism by which new media affects the linguistic behavior of cross-border ethnic youth in border areas, and probes deeply into the internal relationship between language practice and identity. This study aims to fill the gaps in current research regarding micro groups and the new media dimension, provide empirical support for the precise formulation and optimized implementation of border language policies, and offer a reference for the protective development of China's border language resources.

1.1. Theoretical Perspectives on Language Choice

Language practice is fundamentally embodied in language

choice. Early sociolinguistics underwent a paradigm shift in its understanding of this phenomenon—from structural determination to interactional construction. In *The Handbook of Sociolinguistics*, Coulmas clearly stated that language choice is not a purely subjective decision, but a dynamic act occurring within complex social contexts. Centered on this act, three core research perspectives have emerged in academia [4].

First, the macro-social perspective regards an individual's language choice as a product of social structures (e.g., social class, ethnicity, national policy), with the research goal of exploring the social factors constraining language use. While this perspective reveals the social conventionality of linguistic behavior, it is characterized by a strong unilateral decision-making tendency.

Second, the micro-interactional perspective focuses on specific communicative situations, emphasizing that speakers actively adjust their language according to their interlocutors, topics, and contexts. Trudgill argued that the spread of innovative linguistic forms is often achieved through mutual adaptation among communicators, providing a key concept for understanding the immediacy and strategic nature of language choice. [5, 6].

Third, the social network perspective attempts to bridge the divide between macro and micro approaches. Coulmas in 2012 pointed out that individuals participate in multiple social networks simultaneously; their language choices are both constrained by the density and structure of these networks and dynamically reshape the maintenance and development of the networks [7]. This view profoundly reveals the dialectical interaction between language practice and the social relations in which individuals are embedded, laying the groundwork for understanding the connection between language and identity.

In recent years, the rise of translanguaging theory has further driven innovation in research perspectives. Carmen Llamas believes this theory no longer treats the language of bilingual or multilingual users as two or more separate systems, but emphasizes that they possess an integrated, dynamic linguistic repertoire from which they creatively and strategically deploy various linguistic features according to communicative needs [8]. This theory is particularly applicable to understanding language practice in the context of new media, as the multimodal and multi-contextual nature of online spaces provides a broad platform for such translanguaging practices that transcend traditional linguistic boundaries.

Drawing on the above theoretical developments, especially the social network perspective and translanguaging theory, this study regards the language practice of young Dai people in Ruili as a dynamically constructive act shaped by the interplay between specific social structures and individual agency, aimed at achieving communication, maintaining relationships, and expressing identity.

1.2. Language Situation of Cross-border Ethnic Groups

Borders are not only geographical dividing lines, but also

frontier zones where languages and cultures come into contact, collide and integrate. Domestic scholars' research on border languages has paid particular attention to their profound connections with national strategies and ethnic relations. Based on fieldwork on the China-Myanmar border, Dai Qingxia and Xu Xijian's research shows that macro factors such as national policies and economic exchanges indirectly shape the language choices of cross-border youth by influencing their language attitudes, thereby forming an interactive mechanism between linguistic harmony and social stability [9]. Li Yuming systematically elaborated on the role of border languages in fostering good-neighborliness and safeguarding border areas, emphasizing their special value in safeguarding national security and promoting cross-border communication [3]. These studies have laid the basic framework for border language research, which must take into account language ontology, national context and cross-border interaction.

At the level of language use, the linguistic life of cross-border ethnic groups often presents a complex and dynamic situation of multilingual coexistence and competition. For example, Jaafar in a study of residents on the Malaysia-Thailand border, found that although the dominant dialect is maintained in the family domain, the younger generation has begun to mix Thai in communication with their elders, indicating the possibility of language shift [10]. This study reveals the dynamics of the border language ecology and the key role played by generational differences. Recent studies on Chinese border regions reveal a shared trend: the national common language is dominant, ethnic minority languages are facing severe endangerment, multilingual capacity is structurally imbalanced, and intergenerational transmission has ruptured [11]. In Yunnan border areas, Mandarin has achieved high proficiency, while ethnic language domains have shrunk sharply, and cross-border language demands keep rising [12]. However, such research has mostly focused on traditional face-to-face communication scenarios, with insufficient attention paid to the intervention of new media. With the popularization of platforms such as WeChat, Douyin and Facebook in border areas, online space has become a new and even more active field for linguistic practice. Social platforms not only facilitate young people's mobilization of multilingual resources and translanguaging practices, but also make cross-border language contact more frequent and immediate than ever before. Existing research still lacks in-depth micro-level investigation into how online language practices intersect and interact with offline border life. Against the backdrop of "artificial intelligence +", digital media has accelerated cross-border language contact, making the language ecology and identity construction of border youth more closely related to intelligent governance.

1.3. Language Practice and Identity

Language is not only a tool for communication but also a constructive material and core representation of identity. This

relationship is particularly complex among cross-border ethnic groups, involving the entanglement of multiple identities such as national, ethnic, and regional identities.

On the one hand, language serves as the cornerstone of ethnic identity and cultural inheritance. Studies by some domestic scholars on ethnic minorities including the Dai people have found that the popularization of Chinese and the intervention of new media in the context of globalization may lead to the decline of young people's native language proficiency, which to some extent is interpreted as a signal of weakened ethnic identity. However, other studies present a more complex picture: although the younger generation may have lower native language proficiency than their predecessors, they generally hold positive attitudes and strong emotional loyalty toward their mother tongue. Such emotional identity is often strengthened and expressed through contextualized language practices such as festival ceremonies and cultural performances.

On the other hand, for cross-border ethnic groups, there exists a persistent tension between language practices and national identity as well as cross-border cultural identity. In his research on cross-border ethnic groups between China and Vietnam, and China and Laos, Zhou Jianxin pointed out that although national identity among cross-border ethnic groups has taken shape, the cultural memories and emotional bonds formed by the same ethnic group separated by national borders have not been severed [13]. This view profoundly reveals the non-isomorphism between national identity and cultural identity. The intervention of new media has undoubtedly intensified this tension: on the one hand, the younger generation can easily access and consume cultural products from Myanmar through the Internet, thereby strengthening their cross-border identity based on ethnic culture; on the other hand, the mainstream cultural communication and national narratives in the Chinese online space continuously shape and consolidate their national identity. The interaction and adjustment between these dual identities is particularly evident in language practices, manifested as the situational sensitivity of code-switching, that is, the choice of which language to use in which context is itself an expression of identity.

Nevertheless, a review of the above literature reveals that existing research still has room for further exploration. First of all, in terms of research subjects, there are still few integrated studies focusing on both new media and youth in border areas. In particular, systematic research on the specific group of Dai youth on the China-Myanmar border is still insufficient. Secondly, in terms of research content, most existing studies separately discuss the relationship between language and identity, or the impact of new media on language. However, they remain insufficiently in-depth regarding process-oriented and mechanism-based issues such as how online language practices specifically influence offline identity negotiation and how digital technology reshapes the linguistic ecology of cross-border ethnic groups and thereby affects the integration of their multiple identities. These deficiencies have left clear

academic space for this study. This study takes the young people of the Dai ethnic group in Ruili as the research subjects, and attempts to integrate the new media field, the borderland context, and ethnic culture. It conducts an in-depth analysis of how young people's linguistic practices in digital spaces participate in the construction and integration of their ethnic, national, and cross-border cultural identities.

2. Research Methods

This study investigates the language practices and identity construction of youth in the China-Myanmar borderland under the new media context, with Dai youth in Ruili as the focal research participants. Employing a digital ethnographic approach, the research was conducted over a three-month period. Research participants were restricted to Dai youth aged 18–35 who had resided in Ruili for at least three years and used two or more new media platforms on a daily basis. Eight key informants were selected through a combination of stratified purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Additionally, five auxiliary participants were recruited, including Dai cultural inheritors, new media content creators, and staff from local departments.

To collect empirical data, the researcher joined active online communities of the participants on platforms such as Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Facebook, and TikTok, conducting three months of participant observation. This process yielded approximately 23,000 words of data, encompassing online interaction texts, observation journals, and new media content materials (including written texts, transcribed audio recordings, and video subtitles). Semi-structured interviews, each lasting 20 to 30 minutes, were conducted with informants to explore their language choice motivations and identity cognition logics. Concurrent with interviews, 156 pieces of participant-generated content were collected, including short videos, comments, and reposted texts. From these materials, linguistic features, content themes, and identity-expressive keywords were extracted for analysis. Situated within the intersecting contexts of new media platforms, border settings, and ethnic culture, this study examines the dynamic characteristics of young people's linguistic practices shaped by the interactions of these contextual factors. It further seeks to reveal how new media influences the construction of multiple identities among Dai youth through their linguistic practices.

3. Results and Discussion

Against the backdrop of multicultural integration and the profound penetration of new media technologies in the China-Myanmar border, the linguistic practices of Dai youth in Ruili have broken through the constraints of traditional geography and social circles, forming diverse types and distinct features deeply integrated with digital and borderland contexts. Their identity has also exhibited complex and hybrid characteristics,

which are manifested and balanced through diversified new media approaches. Furthermore, a dynamic mechanism of two-way interaction and mutual construction has emerged between linguistic practices and identity.

3.1. Types and Characteristics of Language Practice

The linguistic practices of Dai youth in Ruili demonstrate remarkable context adaptability and function orientation, which can be mainly summarized into the following three core types.

Firstly, situational code-switching practice is the most common linguistic behavior. Its core logic lies in flexibly switching between Dai, Chinese, and Burmese according to the attributes of new media platforms and the characteristics of communication partners, so as to achieve the goals of communication efficiency and identity expression. On open public platforms such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, young people mainly share their daily lives in Chinese, only interspersing a few Dai vocabulary when describing ethnic-specific scenes. This approach not only ensures understanding among cross-ethnic and cross-regional audiences but also implicitly conveys ethnic identity through Dai language. In relatively closed circles such as WeChat family groups and communities of Dai culture enthusiasts, Dai language becomes the dominant language of communication, often integrated with Chinese internet slang, which maintains emotional and ethnic identification while conforming to young people's expressive habits. When communicating with Burmese friends via cross-border platforms such as Facebook, a mixed expression of Chinese and Burmese is mostly adopted. For example, in commodity transactions, product materials are explained in Chinese, while prices and logistics are informed in Burmese. Such code-switching is a practical choice based on both parties' language proficiency, effectively bridging gaps in cross-border communication.

Secondly, cultural symbolic language practice is a unique expression through which young people deeply bind language to ethnic culture. It aims to realize the digital communication and identity marking of ethnic culture via the carriers of language and cultural symbols. When some young people post content such as Dai script calligraphy, readings of Dai folk stories, and explanations of ethnic customs on platforms like Xiaohongshu and Douyin, they deliberately retain original Dai vocabulary, accompanied by Chinese annotations and situational explanations, enabling non-Dai audiences to perceive cultural connotations while understanding the language. In cross-border social scenarios, they translate and spread proverbs and folk legends in Dai using both Dai and Burmese, which not only promotes their own ethnic culture but also builds a linguistic bridge for cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar. Here, language itself becomes a symbolic carrier of cross-border cultural identity, reflecting young people's consciousness as cultural inheritors.

Thirdly, cross-border interactive language practice relies on the cross-border connectivity of new media, forming a diversified language combination model centered on border trade and cultural exchanges, highlighting the geographical particularity of the China-Myanmar border. Young people engaged in cross-border e-commerce generally adopt a three-language strategy of Chinese, Burmese, and Dai when posting product information on platforms such as Facebook and TikTok: Chinese is used to introduce product information; Burmese is used to focus on contents such as prices and logistics; Dai highlights the cultural selling points of

products to attract cross-border audiences interested in ethnic culture. In cultural exchange groups for Chinese and Burmese youth, language practice also shows the characteristics of two-way learning. The young not only teach Dai to Burmese friends but also actively absorb Burmese vocabulary, forming a unique cross-border linguistic hybrid. This not only serves specific interactive needs but also cultivates young people's cross-cultural communication skills. [Table 1](#) presents the language use and language function of Dai youth in Ruili City under different new media scenarios.

Table 1. Scenario-Language Adaptation Matrix.

Types of New Media Scenarios	Language Use	Language Function
Open Platforms (Douyin, Xiaohongshu)	Predominantly Chinese, with interspersed Dai terms	Ensuring public accessibility while implicitly expressing ethnic identity
Closed circles (family groups, cultural communities)	Primarily Dai, integrated with Chinese internet slang	Enhancing emotional bonding and facilitating intergenerational communication
Cross-border scenarios (Facebook, TikTok)	Chinese, Burmese, and some Dai expressions	Supporting cross-border communication, cultural exchange, and commercial activities

The above three types of practices collectively present characteristics of the language use of informants in the era of new media. First, young people exhibit differentiated language use across online and offline contexts. In online spaces, a linguistic ecology has emerged where Chinese prevails as the mainstream, the Dai language operates as a niche component, and Burmese is utilized instrumentally. Offline, by contrast, informants maintain high-frequency use of the Dai language in traditional settings while also deeply integrating Chinese internet slang acquired through online interactions. Second, by incorporating Dai terms with popular Chinese internet slang, as well as creating cultural emojis and short videos with bilingual subtitles, they disseminate the ethnic language in a more vivid and youth-oriented manner. Third, this process is inherently accompanied by an internal tension: new media has provided a convenient channel for Dai cultural and linguistic inheritance, enabling some young people with limited foundational knowledge to access and learn their mother tongue; however, excessive reliance on Chinese in online communication has objectively contributed to a decline in Dai language proficiency among a subset of young people. This dilemma is consistent with the common crisis faced by the linguistic ecology in the Eastern Himalayan Region of China and other border minority languages, namely inter-generational transmission rupture, shrinking functional domains, and disconnection between emotional identity and practical use [14]. Such a contradiction represents a widespread challenge for many minority languages in the digital era, and it manifests in distinctive forms among Dai youth in Ruili.

3.2. Expressive Paths of Multiple Identity Affiliations

Santa Ana and Parodi in 1998 conceptualize four distinct "nested fields", which serve to denote the embedded relational points among different speaker groups within a sociolinguistic framework. Specifically, they delineate the four nested layers as "locale", "vicinity", "district", and "national", emphasizing that this typological framework is not confined to specific linguistic contexts but possesses broad applicability across diverse sociolinguistic settings [15]. It has been recognized as a promising theoretical model with substantial potential for advancing sociolinguistic research. Parallel to this theoretical proposition, the identity construction of Dai youth in Ruili manifests a composite characteristic of four-dimensional superimposition in the new media context. These four interrelated dimensions---ethnic identity, borderland identity, national identity, and cross-border cultural identity---are mutually intertwined and constitutive, collectively shaping the complex landscape of the youth's self-perception and social positioning. Leveraging diverse new media channels, Ruili Dai youth actively engage in the expression, negotiation, and balancing of their multiple identities, thereby constructing a dynamic and contextually adaptive identity configuration that resonates with the nested logic of Santa Ana and Parodi's theoretical model.

Ethnic identity is the most fundamental form of expression. It originates from the innate bond of blood ties and culture,

manifested in the emphasis on the use of the Dai language, ethnic customs, and cultural traditions. Interview data reveal that after observing the widespread attention and positive feedback received by Dai cultural elements on new media platforms, most young people strengthen their recognition of the value of their own ethnic culture and enhance their willingness to take the initiative to inherit it. This identity is continuously consolidated through the interactive feedback mechanism of new media, through which the youth proactively establish their identity as inheritors of Dai culture.

Borderland identity is rooted in Ruili's unique geographical location, reflected in the adaptation of the border lifestyle and cross-border interactive scenarios. Young people frequently share their experiences of cross-border commuting, comparisons between Chinese and Burmese food cultures, and stories related to border trade on new media platforms. Their expressions imply a dual awareness: they clearly identify themselves as Chinese citizens, while being familiar with social life in Myanmar and recognizing their role as a bridge connecting the two countries. This sense of identity has profoundly influenced their linguistic practices and behavioral choices.

National identity is a sense of belonging formed on the basis of citizenship. On major new media platforms such as Douyin and WeChat, the youth actively participate in the discussion of major national themes including National Day, and use standard Mandarin when posting relevant content. When addressing sensitive topics such as border administration and national policies, they consistently uphold the national position and regard national identity as their most fundamental identity marker.

Cross-border cultural identity is a unique cognitive form shaped by the long-term integration of Chinese and Burmese cultures. Some respondents mentioned that they possess an understanding of both Dai culture and mainstream Chinese culture, as well as knowledge of Burmese living habits. This cross-cultural competence constitutes their unique identity advantage. Notably, this identity does not deviate from the framework of national identity; instead, it highlights cross-border connections and mutual understanding at the cultural level, enabling the youth to serve as a bridge for cultural exchanges between China and Myanmar.

Faced with these four potentially conflicting identities, young people achieve a dynamic balance through diverse new media approaches. The most direct practice is content production and identity articulation. When posting content related to Dai festivals, individuals reinforce their ethnic identity by expressing a sense of responsibility for and pride in inheriting their ethnic culture. When sharing content comparing Chinese and Burmese cultures, they convey their cross-border cultural identity as enthusiasts of both cultures. They skillfully integrate cultural symbols and hot topics in new media communication to realize the harmonious coexistence of different identities. For instance, in content posted during the Dai New Year, they combine celebrations of ethnic festivals with blessings for the motherland, demonstrating both the consciousness of

inheriting ethnic culture and strengthening national identity. In cross-border communication scenarios, they use emojis of the national flags of China and Myanmar and bilingual blessing messages to convey a friendly cross-border attitude while respecting the national identity of both sides. Such flexible symbolic practices fully reflect young people's clear cognition and proactive ability to manage multiple identities.

3.3. Interactive Mechanism Between Language Practice and Identity Construction

The above analysis indicates that the language practices and identity construction of Dai youth in Ruili do not exist in isolation, but rather form a two-way interactive mechanism. From Trudgill's perspective on Speech Accommodation Theory [5], this interaction can be understood as a process of mutual construction and dynamic adaptation in specific contexts, with new media platforms serving as the core field where this process occurs, accelerates, and amplifies.

On the one hand, language practice is the carrier for constructing and strengthening identity. When young people use the Dai language to spread culture on new media and communicate within their communities, this is not merely a linguistic act but an active affirmation and performance of ethnic identity. Positive feedback such as likes and shares on their content translates into pride in ethnic culture, thereby deepening their ethnic identity. Similarly, the mixed use of Chinese, Burmese, and Dai in cross-border interactions embodies the identity of border youth and cross-cultural communicators, making these abstract identity labels tangible and practicable. The dominant use of Chinese on public platforms, in itself, constitutes an implicit declaration and daily reinforcement of their national identity as Chinese citizens.

On the other hand, identity construction in turn guides and constrains language practices. The informants' identity positioning directly determines their logic of language choice in different situations. When conflicts arise among multiple identities, they flexibly adjust their language practices to achieve balance. For example, when the identity of an ethnic cultural inheritor clashes with that of a content creator targeting the general public, they adopt a strategy of prioritizing Chinese with Dai embellishments—retaining the mark of ethnic identity while ensuring broad content dissemination, thus striking a balance between the two identities. In cross-border exchanges, they uphold the primacy of Chinese to demarcate national identity boundaries, while appropriately using Burmese and Dai to show respect, achieving harmonious coexistence between national identity and cross-cultural identity.

It is thus evident that language practice serves both as the external manifestation and constructive carrier of identity, while identity provides guidance for language practice. Within the new media environment, the two form a recurring interactive mechanism. New media not only provides a broader interactive space and richer expressive tools for young people, but its characteristic of instant feedback has also strengthened

this interactive process, making it an intermediary force driving the dynamic reconstruction of youth identity and the continuous innovation of language practice.

4. Conclusions

Adopting a digital ethnographic approach, this study takes Dai youth in Ruili as its subjects and systematically examines the intrinsic relationship between language practices and identity construction in the China-Myanmar borderland within the new media context. The research draws the following conclusions. First, empowered by new media technologies and shaped by the diverse socio-cultural context of border regions, the language practices of Dai youth manifest in three distinct forms: situated code-switching, culturally symbolic expression, and cross-border interactive integration. These practices demonstrate the situational adaptability of differentiated expression online and offline, as well as the contemporary characteristics of digital linguistic innovation, while also reflecting the tension between the inheritance and loss of ethnic languages in the digital era. Second, young people have constructed a composite identity system encompassing ethnicity, borderland, nation-state, and cross-border culture. Through proactive declaration in new media content production and flexible appropriation of cultural symbols, they achieve the dynamic balance and self-representation of multiple identities, adhering to their ethnic cultural roots and national citizenship while fully demonstrating the unique cross-cultural adaptive advantages of border youth. Third, language practice and identity construction form a bidirectional and mutually constitutive relationship: practices construct identity, while identity guides practices. With the instant feedback of content dissemination and the infinite expansion of scenarios, new media platforms serve as a crucial intermediary that amplifies and reshapes this interactive relationship.

Meanwhile, this study also has certain limitations. It mainly focuses on the Dai youth in a partial area of Ruili City, and the coverage of the sample in terms of occupation type, educational background and age level is relatively limited. The study adopts a three-month digital ethnographic method, which can present in detail the current language practices and identity status of the research subjects. To further demonstrate their long-term dynamic evolution and development trajectory, expansion and in-depth exploration can still be carried out in follow-up research.

Based on the research conclusions and limitations, future studies can be further expanded in two key aspects. First, regarding the sample scope and research vision, it is recommended to include youth groups from other regions and ethnic communities along the China-Myanmar border. Conducting cross-regional and cross-ethnic comparative studies will help explore the common laws and differentiated characteristics of border youth's language practice and identity construction. Second, concerning the research cycle and methodology, longitudinal tracking methods can be adopted to conduct long-

term follow-ups on the research subjects. By doing so, researchers can dynamically capture the evolutionary trajectory of language practice and identity against the backdrop of new media iteration and societal changes in border areas. This will facilitate a deeper systematic understanding of the formation mechanism underlying border youth's language practices and identity, thereby providing typical cases and empirical support for the protection of the linguistic ecology of border ethnic groups.

Author Contributions

Yuanyuan Zhang: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Validation, Investigation, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

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Data Availability Statement

The data is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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