LANGUAGE POLICY

# Language Policy in the People's Republic of China

## Theory and Practice Since 1949

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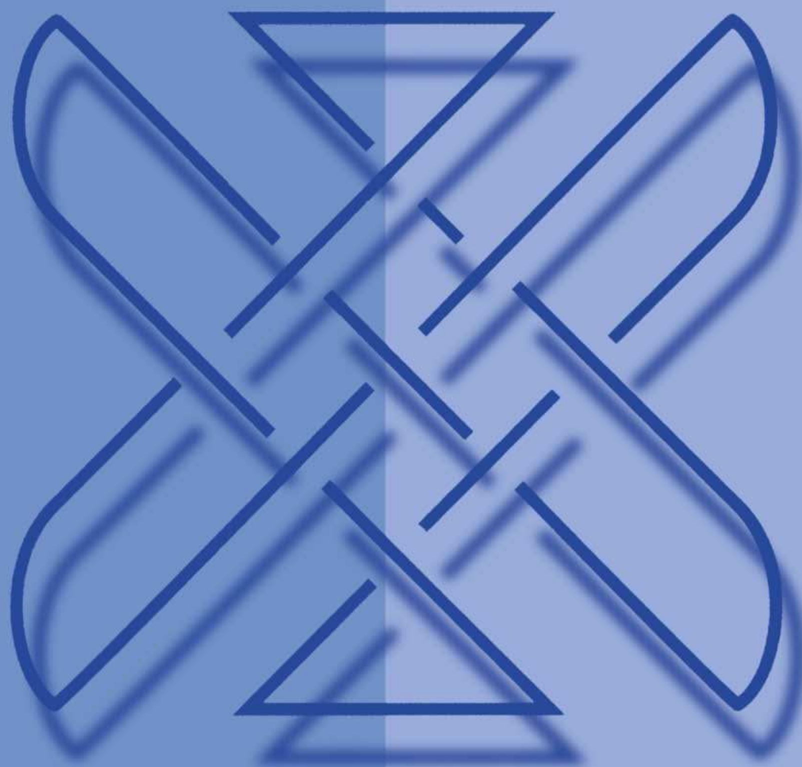

# Language Policy in the People's Republic of China
*Theory and Practice Since 1949*

# Language Policy

VOLUME 4

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

The series will publish empirical studies of general language policy or of language education policy, or monographs dealing with the theory and general nature of the field. We welcome detailed accounts of language policy-making - who is involved, what is done, how it develops, why it is attempted. We will publish research dealing with the development of policy under different conditions and the effect of implementation. We will be interested in accounts of policy development by governments and governmental agencies, by large international companies, foundations, and organizations, as well as the efforts of groups attempting to resist or modify governmental policies. We will also consider empirical studies that are relevant to policy of a general nature, e.g. the local effects of the developing European policy of starting language teaching earlier, the numbers of hours of instruction needed to achieve competence, selection and training of language teachers, the language effects of the Internet. Other possible topics include the legal basis for language policy, the role of social identity in policy development, the influence of political ideology on language policy, the role of economic factors, policy as a reflection of social change.

The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

# Language Policy in the People's Republic of China
## *Theory and Practice Since 1949*

*Edited by*

**Minglang Zhou**
*Dickinson College, U.S.A.*

*Consulting Editor*

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To those who have devoted their whole lives to facilitating the use and maintenance of minority languages in China

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# PREFACE BY THE SERIES EDITORS

When we started this series, we assumed that each volume would be a monograph written by an individual author. As a result, we were at first somewhat reluctant to consider Minglang Zhou's proposal to edit a collection on Chinese language policy. As we came to appreciate the complexity of the topic and when we learned that many of the contributors had already participated in a colloquium, offering promise of a coordinated view, we were quickly convinced that a collected volume made sense.

The complexity resulted of course from considerations of both breadth and depth. While the focus of the volume is on developments in the last half-century, leading up to the Language Law of 2001, China has clearly had language policies for at least 2000 years. The centre of its current concern remains the issue of a common language and the relationship between the written system and the many spoken forms of the language. There are therefore several chapters in this book that deal with the relationship between Putonghua and the dialects and the various efforts to reform the written language. The managed diffusion of Putonghua remains a key item, as does the simplification of the writing system. Two other major issues benefit from the detailed treatment that the volume allows: management relating to the minority languages, including questions concerning both their status and their form; and the role of the teaching of foreign languages.

This volume thus includes one of the first serious discussions of the policy towards Chinese minority groups, whether the speakers of varieties other than Putonghua, or the recognized speakers of languages other than China. It charts rapid changes in attitudes and policies that continue to be in turmoil.

With its size and complexity, China presents a fascinating challenge for the study of language policy. The wide range of language practice, as yet not fully charted, provides a backdrop for the last half century of centralized language management affecting more people than in any other country and driven by developments in language ideology that reflects ongoing changes in political thought. We have in this unique collection of chapters a wide range of perspectives, some from inside the system and others seeking to understand it from outside. The insiders give a fascinating if cautious view of the developments with a number of minority languages, each with its own special situation; the outsiders are understandably more critical and questioning about the gap between constitutional theory and practice.

We are grateful therefore to Minglang Zhou for initiating and carrying through the work of producing this pioneering contribution to the understanding of language policy, and to the twenty-two scholars who have written its chapters.

Bernard Spolsky and Elana Shohamy

VICTOR H. MAIR

# FOREWORD

During the second half of the twentieth century, there occurred a host of radical readjustments in government policy concerning the languages and scripts of China. These transformations of the linguistic landscape in the world's most populous country are continuing, and they directly affect every one of its citizens. Despite the dramatic linguistic revolution that has swept across China, there has been no comprehensive overview that describes the nature of the changes that have taken place or their implications for the people of China. Since language planning in China is an integrated phenomenon, it is desirable that a wide-ranging appraisal of the shifts that have taken place be made available. Fortunately, with the present volume *(Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949),* we now have such a multi-authored study.

The main goals of language planning in China may be divided up under the following rubrics:

1. simplification and standardization of the sinographic script
2. promotion of Putonghua (Mandarin) as the national language
3. the design and refinement of Pinyin (the romanized spelling of Putonghua) and its adoption for appropriate applications
4. identification and mapping of languages, topolects (*fangyan*), and dialects – both Sinitic and non-Sinitic
5. recognition and description of languages meriting official "minority" (*shaoshu minzu*) status
6. creation of scripts for languages that lack them and the streamlining of traditional non-Sinitic writing systems
7. translation of words, names, and technical terms from other languages
8. pedagogical issues, including methods for elementary instruction, uniform testing at higher levels, and the teaching of Mandarin to speakers of topolects and non-Sinitic languages within China, as well as to foreigners abroad
9. bilingualism
10. foreign language instruction and applications within China

While language planning and language policy in China have manifested themselves in an astonishingly broad array of measures (including careful attention to the uses of the proper characters on signage, correct pronunciation, rules for typography, and

so forth), most sociolinguistic issues in China can be subsumed under these headings.

For the first time, we have within the covers of a single book scholarly, authoritative assessments that touch on all of the aspects enumerated above. The papers collected here not only provide detailed accounts of language policy in China during the past half century and more, they also describe how government regulations concerning language usage have worked out in practice.

Inasmuch as China is a country of enormous ethnic and linguistic diversity that has traditionally been plagued by a high degree of illiteracy in many segments of its population, language-related issues will continue to receive the close attention of the authorities. Indeed, the languages and scripts of China have taken on even greater prominence as a result of such developments as globalization, the rapid growth of electronic information technology, and China's emergence as a world power. Such questions as orthography (*zhengcifa*), word division (*fenci lianxie*), the phonetic annotation of characters (*zhuyin shizi*), digraphia (*shuangwenzhi*), user-friendly inputting (*rongyi shiyong de diannao shuru*), language modernization (*yuyan xiandaihua*), and language rights (*yuyan quanli*) will surely become increasingly urgent in coming years.

In order to understand the measures that China will inevitably be forced to adopt to meet these challenges, it is good to take stock of the current situation and its background during the past half-century. The authors of the individual chapters deserve our gratitude for their careful, fact-filled studies. Above all, Minglang Zhou, the editor of this volume, is to be warmly commended for his successful completion of the arduous task of locating individuals with the requisite expertise, coordinating their efforts, and editing the numerous drafts leading up to the published volume.

Hong Kong
November 25, 2002

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume arises from two panels that I organized for the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) 2002 annual conference. AAS granted me financial support to bring Hongkai Sun and Longsheng Guo to Washington, DC to participate in the presentation. Dickinson College funded the translation and editorial work of this volume, funding that made this project a reality, and moreover provided a collegial and supportive environment for my research. I also appreciate Luce Foundation's commitment to China studies and its funding of my current position at Dickinson College.

Since its conception, this project has received enthusiastic support from Victor H. Mair, Mary S. Erbaugh, Florian Coulmas, Charles Li, Ping Chen, and Timothy Light, though not all of them were able to participate in the panels or contribute to the collection. Prof. Hongkai Sun encouraged many of the minority contributors to write for this collection. Without his support, I could not have been able to put these minority scholars' contributions together in a short time. All the contributors were very cooperative and patient, though sometimes I gave them unreasonable deadlines, such as the same one as the US Federal tax deadline. Many of them participated in the self-refereeing process, reading and commenting on fellow contributors' chapters.

As early as August, 2001 when I posted a call for papers, Dr. Bernard Spolsky, Editor of *Language Policy* and its companion book series, invited me to publish our panel papers in his journal. To have a more comprehensive coverage of the topic, instead I submitted a book proposal for this collection, to which Dr. Spolsky, Dr. Shohamy, and their editorial board have made some significant suggestions. The editors and their editorial board have been very constructive throughout this project. Two anonymous referees who made numerous critical and helpful comments have helped improve the readability and scholarship of many contributions in this collection. Some scholars at the Central University for Nationalities and Institute of Ethnology & Anthropology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences translated into English the chapters written in Chinese. Dr. Michael R. Shurkin copyedited the English of the translated chapters. Renee de Boo, Marianna Pascale, Mary Panarelli, and Marie Sheldon at Kluwer assisted me at different stages of this project.

Finally, but most importantly, I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation of my wife's (Ping) love and support throughout my good times and my difficult times and of my son's (Daoyou) understanding of why I did not play his toys and games with him as often and long as I should have – because "dad got to work" in his words. He is an inspiration.

MINGLANG ZHOU AND HEIDI A. ROSS

# INTRODUCTION: THE CONTEXT OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CHINA'S LANGUAGE POLICY

## 1. ABOUT THIS VOLUME

This volume is a collective effort to study systematically language policy and language planning in the People's Republic of China (PRC). In the second half of the twentieth century, China engaged in the largest language engineering project in the world in terms of the number of speakers and the second most extensive project – second probably only to that in the former Soviet Union – in terms of the number of languages. Given the number of speakers and the number of languages affected, however, relatively few book-length studies (see Chen, 1999; Ramsey, 1987; Zhou, 2003) have been published on the evaluation of the policies, processes of policy-making and implementation, and impact on the various language/dialect speakers and their communities. This volume is our attempt to address the lack of assessments of China's language policy, and moreover our effort to address a pressing concern of the maintenance of linguistic diversity in a century of ever increasing globalization – globalization whose crushing economic power is intentionally or unintentionally taken advantage of by the state, in China and elsewhere, to expand the domains of mainstream language use and squeeze the survival space for minority language and/or dialect use. In this volume, we hope to share with the world community the Chinese experiences, both positive and negative experiences from over fifty-years of China's theory and practice of its language policy, in order to draw lessons from the past and to facilitate linguistic pluralism and maintenance of dialects and minority languages in the future.

This volume is a collective effort by a diverse group of scholars. Some of the contributions in this volume build upon panels presented at the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) conference in Washington, DC in April 2002. Some have been solicited from scholars of minority origin in China. All of the contributions have gone through a contributor-refereeing process and an anonymous refereeing process.

We chose to use the current names of PRC state organs, unless older ones are necessary in the text, and have used the official PRC English names for various minority groups (for example, *Uygur* instead of *Uighur*). Most importantly, we have structured the contributions under the following five themes: (1) theory and practice

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in the center, (2) the center versus the periphery in practice, (3) theorizing personal experiences from practice, (4) theory and practice viewed from minority communities, and (5) foreign language education policy and modernization. We hope that this structure facilitates our presentation of the theory and practice of China's language policy historically and contextually as well as an understanding of the linguistic culture of China because this culture usually constrains both theory and practice of a language policy within the limit of its ideology (cf. Schiffman, 1996). We hope that it also facilitates readers' understanding of the Chinese theory and practice in context.

## 2. THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE CENTER: FROM STATE-BUILDING TO NATION-BUILDING

Language status planning is a topic of significant modern concern, but it has a long history in China. Chinese states have paid special attention to the relationship between the standard language and state control for over 2,000 years (see Chen, 1999, pp. 7–10), realizing that they could use language, their versions of language, as a means to regulate power from the center in managing the Middle Kingdom.

This understanding of the relationship between language and the state emerged, at least, in 221 BC when the Qin Emperor launched the first official standardization of the Chinese script (see Norman, 1988, p. 63). After the Qin Emperor had unified various warring states in 221 BC, his Prime Minister, Li Si, proposed several measures to consolidate state power and to unify the whole of China. Those measures included the standardization of laws, currency, measurements, width of axles, and scripts, all of which were then considered essential to state-building (see Chen, 1999, pp. 67–68; Wang, 1989, pp. 133–137; Zheng, 1996, pp. 55–59). Before the Qin's unification, the Chinese script had developed many variants within the territories of warring states, a consequence of power decentralization during the late Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770–256 BC). To strengthen its rule of the newly unified China, the Qin government decided to adopt the small seal style script (*xiaozhuan*) as the official script and abolish all other forms of the Chinese script, so that its orders and rules could be passed from the center to the periphery without any distortion in writing. To enforce the use of this standardized script throughout China, the Qin government took the most extreme measures: it burned books written in other variants of the Chinese script and executed scholars who dared to oppose the standardization effort.

That was the beginning of language planning in China. It was bloody, but it worked to facilitate the unification of China. After the Qin effort, every literate person in China read a standardized Chinese, though s/he might speak a different speech (*hua*) or dialect. This standardized script eventually unified various Sinitic languages, in the eyes of Western scholars, or dialects (*fangyan*), in the eyes of Chinese scholars, under one single cover term – Chinese (cf. Mair, 1991; Norman, 1988, pp. 1–22). Today speakers of Cantonese, Shanghainese, Min, and any other Sinitic languages believe that they speak Chinese or a dialect of Chinese though the

difference among these Chinese "dialects" is as large as that between any two languages.

During the Han Dynasty (206BC–AD220), coupled with the influence of orthodox Confucianism, Chinese came to be known as the Han language, and thus became a significant identity marker for the Han Chinese – establishing a direct relationship between language and nation. This relationship was further reinforced in the following centuries, and linked to the struggle to "modernize" China during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century when Western powers knocked at China's door with their gunboat fleet.

Of many Western ideas, two linguistic ones struck many Chinese intellectuals as the panaceas that could cure China's problems. One of them was the notion of one state with one nation and one language, and the other was the romanization of the Chinese writing system, both of which have haunted China's language policies ever since (see Chen, 1999; DeFrancis, 1950, Zhou, 2003). The examples of the Western powers seemed to convincingly demonstrate that a strong modern nation-state spoke one common language and the roman alphabet triumphed there. Consequently, well before 1949, numerous efforts were made by individuals and/or the state to modernize the Chinese writing system and to unify the spoken language. Since 1949, the PRC has continued this legacy of tradition and modernization in the theory and practice of its language policy in order to consolidate its control throughout the country and build a strong China.

John Rohsenow's chapter documents the continuation of this rough journey, a journey that has been marked by tensions between modernization and tradition in the past half-century. The language policy developed during the first decades of the PRC initially called for a three-fold goal of spreading *Putonghua* (Standard Modern Chinese) to the point where it would become the actual national language of communication, developing and spreading a standard romanization for Chinese (*Hanyu Pinyin* or *Pinyin* in short), and simplifying characters to enable widespread literacy. As Rohsenow relates, debate (and resulting confusion) over whether Pinyin could ever replace Chinese characters as the major writing system was brought to a close only in the 1980's. While the major character simplification of the 1950's has become the actual writing system of China, a more radical second scheme proposed in the 1970's failed. And since the beginning of the Millennium the language law of 2001 calls for further work to make Putonghua the actual language of common communication and the language of instruction in schools throughout the country.

Rohsenow's chapter on script reform is complemented by Longsheng Guo's analysis of the relationship between social concerns and the processes of language policy making and implementation, Guo's chapter examines three stages of the evolution of policy statements regarding the relationship between Putonghua as the official and common speech and various Chinese dialects as the actual daily speech of the Chinese masses. With the elites' promotion of Western ideas of linguistic modernization, the first stage (the 1950s to the mid-1980s) was characterized by both official and mass misunderstanding that Putonghua would eventually and naturally replace Chinese dialects in almost every domain of language use. The second stage (the late 1980s to early 1990s) initiated a reconsideration of this relationship amid a revival of dialect use in public domains (e.g. in television and

movies) and a political environment tolerating some policy diversity. This reconsideration eventually led to the third stage (the mid-1990s to present) that has since redefined the relationship between Putonghua and dialects in terms of a mainstream principle and a diversity principle, two principles that promote Putonghua for public use and designate Chinese dialects for complementary private use. The redefinition was finally legislated in the language law of 2001 (for the law, see Rohsenow, this volume). Guo shows that social concerns, not the processes of policy making themselves, fundamentally define how much linguistic pluralism can be tolerated by language policy in China, and probably elsewhere too.

An underpinning element in China's language policy, which is not explicitly discussed in the above two chapters, evolves from state-building to nation-building, an evolution that has also seen its culmination in the language law of 2001. The PRC has been struggling for a national identity since 1949 (cf. Brødsgaard & Strand, 1998), but has settled for *Zhonghua Minzu* (the Chinese nation, including both the Han and the non-Han minorities) or "one nation with diversity" for the whole of China only since the mid-1990s (Fei, 1991, 1999; Zhou, 2003, pp. 93–98). In its first few decades, the PRC had been officially building a multi-nation-state, though the ultimate intension of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders might be a mono-nation-state (cf. Dreyer, 1976; Heberer, 1989; Mackerras, 1994). Thus, as a whole the PRC's language policy had been mainly concerned with state-building, the state of the PRC, in order to strengthen its control and fend off any real or perceived international hostility. In this context, the Chinese language policy was officially directed toward the Han Chinese, as Rohsenow and Guo illustrate, while minority language policy had been instrumental in minority-nation-building. Because of constant conflicts between integrationism and accommodationism within the CCP, the coordination among state-building, Han-nation-building, and minority-nation-building tended to be uneasy, leading to frequent tensions and collisions in the theory and practice of China's language policies (see Zhou, 2003, pp. 36–98). In the 1990s, the PRC's language policy finally and officially began to move towards the concept of one nation with diversity under the state of the PRC, but this move, legislated in the language law of 2001, has been far from smooth and sometimes contradictory to previous policies already entrenched in the constitution and other laws.

Qingsheng Zhou's chapter discusses the PRC's early effort at writing reform and writing system creation in minority-nation-building, an effort influenced by the elites' linguistic ideas and the Soviet model (for details, see Zhou, 2003), and framed within the architecture of the PRC state-building. Thus, the constrained effort gradually limited its choice of script to the Roman alphabet and orthography to that of Pinyin – the unifying writing system clearly intended for the state's easy management of power from the center and probably also intended for an ethnically integrated China. This choice of script and orthography in writing reform and creation met persistent resistance from extra-code factors and contributed to the failure of many newly created and reformed writing systems. Q. Zhou shows that a proposed writing system may be linguistically perfect and still fail if prevailing social values were not taken into account during its development.

Minglang Zhou's chapter introduces the thorniest political, moral and legal issue in China's language theory and practice: How does a society reconcile a widely publicized and constitutionally guaranteed multi-national/ethnic equality with a history of dominant cultural expansion and a state intension of national/ethnic integration? Since this is not an issue unique to China but rather common to many multinational/ethnic nation-states, M. Zhou examines the PRC's language policies and practice from the perspective of international ethics and law. He describes the actual implementation of China's encouragement of minority writing systems as being "Hobbesian", meaning that the minority languages which have actually received the greatest support for use and development have been those of groups whose strategic border locations and/or population size attracted prudent governmental attention. Thus, in theory China's designation of official status to minority writing systems may have violated minority language rights entrenched in the PRC constitution, while in practice China's management of minority language use and development is essentially a management of power – power negotiated between the state and minority communities. This incompatibility of China's language theory and practice becomes the most serious challenge to its language policy as China moves from multi-nation-building to mono-nation-building – a challenge that will complicate the theory and practice of China's language policy in the twenty-first century.

## 3. THE CENTER VERSUS THE PERIPHERY IN PRACTICE: FROM UNIFORMITY TO DIVERSITY

Although China's legal and sociocultural value systems both heavily favor the centralization of power (cf. Chu, 2001; Peerenboom, 2002, pp. 81–82), how to ensure uniform implementation of central policies throughout the country has presented a persistent challenge, beginning with the Qin Empire (221–206 BC) to the PRC (1949–present). The age-old Chinese saying "The heaven is high above, and the emperor is far away" (*Tian gao huangdi yuan*) clearly suggests that the power of the center has its limit, while the newer popular Chinese saying "The central government has policies but the local governments have leeway" (*Shang you zhengce, xia you duice*) shows that the periphery has a great deal of flexibility in implementing central policies.

Strained or ineffective communication between the center and the periphery is a problem which China's language planning is supposed to help resolve. The Qin Emperor's unification of the Chinese script appears to have successfully ensured the passage of central policies to the periphery without any distortion in writing. The PRC has taken effective communication a step further by attempting to ensure that not only script reform continues, but also the same speech – Putonghua – is spoken from Beijing to mountain villages and border towns, a speech that facilitates communication between the center and the periphery and control of the periphery by the center. This goal, however, has turned out to be more difficult to achieve than that of the unification of the script for a number of reasons. First, after moving through various levels of the bureaucratic system language policy may not always be

understood and implemented in the way it is intended. Second, the development of an oral language is less likely to be "tamed" by political power alone. Third, social, cultural, economic and political contexts of a local speech community may create a culture in which the community cannot embrace completely the promoted common speech and/or even the promoted official script in some cases.

Dongyan Blachford's chapter guides us through the labyrinth of the bureaucratic system of the PRC from the center to the periphery and shows us the processes of language policy making and implementation. Blachford provides a layered account of the actual steps, convolutions, contradictions, and opportunities for diversion that are embedded in the progress of policy discussion and implementation that joins and divides China's central government and the remotest and smallest localities. Blachford's detailed record should permanently bury simplistic assertions that even at its point of strongest power the PRC government has ever been able to bring about a major cultural alteration by fiat. Blachford illustrates this point with mixed messages from the case of Xinjiang in northwest China. The Xinjiang government attempted to replace the received Arabic script of Uygur and Kazak with romanized writing systems based on Pinyin. This reform was initiated in the late 1950s, forcibly carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, and ended in failure in the early 1980s (For details, see Zhou, 2003, pp. 299–310). To implement national policy, Xinjiang policy makers also promote Putonghua among the various Altai language speakers, a promotion that has met resistance but is making inroads as the the economic utility of Putonghua is increased for individuals by forces of a market-oriented economy (cf. Zhou, 1999).

From the contrast between pure perception and actual use, Susan Blum's chapter examines the center-vs.-periphery or official-vs.-unofficial contradiction in Putonghua promotion in China's most multilingual province – Yunnan where officially nearly 30 languages or unofficially hundreds of languages are spoken. Blum observes that in China, as elsewhere, the choice of language within a highly dynamic code-switching environment is domain-centered, and that the standard language in China is more often appraised as 'beautiful' than as truly common in use. The latter, if not unique to language attitudes in China, obviously reveals a Chinese value of reverence for the power of the center and adaptation to the practices of the localities, a value that deeply permeates the linguistic culture of China. This culture appears to be a double sword that may facilitate the promotion of Putonghua or obstruction of it, depending on whether the implementation of the central government's language policy meets local needs and provides non-Putonghua speakers opportunities for social, economic, and political advancement.

Bennan Zhang and Robin Yang's chapter explores the same theme of the center-vs.-periphery contraction in the extreme case of Hong Kong, which was returned to China only in 1997. Hong Kong's language use situation is unique amongst PRC territories, owing to its trilingual (English, Cantonese, and Putonghua) and biliterate (English and Chinese) linguistic needs. Hong Kong needs English for the maintenance of its status as an international trade and finance center, Cantonese for daily communication among the locals, and Putonghua for its political communication with Beijing and economic and business exchange with the mainland. Zhang and Yang illustrate the problems inherent in a language plan that

calls for instructional results that surpass any competency norms previous achieved. There is a wide variety of opinions regarding the relative value of Hong Kong's three languages. For some, Putonghua is a foreign language, and the authors' statistics seem to suggest that its place in the schools' curriculum reinforces that estimate. Stressing Hong Kong's political needs in incorporating Putonghua into its active communication life, Zhang and Yang caution policy makers that success in this language change will require attention to both cultural-political values and economic-pragmatic values, which after one and half century's separation deviate significantly from those of Beijing.

Regardless of the differences in language attitudes and linguistic needs in the periphery, Putonghua is usually spoken with an "accent" there. Saillard's chapter draws our attention to what she calls "vernacularization of Putonghua" – the development of varieties of Putonghua, which paradoxically accompany its promotion and spread. Saillard observes that Putonghua varieties have their own phonetic, phonological, lexical, and syntactical features, and more importantly their own functions. These functions reveal that dialects, local varieties of Putonghua, and standard Putonghua compete in certain domains of language use (see Bai, 1994; Kalmer et al, 1987). Now these varieties of Putonghua are accepted as different levels of Putonghua in official proficiency tests, a position that the state has taken since the mid-1990s under the guidance of the mainstream and diversity principles (see Guo, this volume). Saillard raises a significant question. Are these emerging varieties of Putonghua forms of interlanguage – only transitional – or vernaculars of Putonghua – like standard varieties of world English? She is not able to provide a definite answer with her linguistic data here, but recommends collection of more data for further study.

We believe that the answer to Saillard's question lies ultimately in the large picture of state-building and nation-building. Varieties of a rather standard language become many standard dialects, such as those of world English, or independent languages, such as French and Italian, because there are different states and polities that politically, economically, and socioculturally polarize the differences among the varieties of the same language. The political, economic, and sociocultural forces of the PRC's state-building and nation-building appears to indicate otherwise (see Bai, 1994; Kalmer et al, 1987; Zhou, 2001a; also see Blum, this volume). As a matter of fact, in language contact Putonghua and Pinyin not only have influenced Chinese dialects but have also assimilated linguistic features of many of China's minority languages in the half-century course of language engineering (see, Zhou, 2003, pp. 347–388). Our casual observation suggests that Putonghua is spoken by more and more people overtime, and better and better Putonghua is spoken over generations. This is an area which deserves further serious study as Saillard suggests.

## 4. THEORIZING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES IN MINORITY LANGUAGE WORK

Many studies of language planning are conducted by students of language policy rather than by practitioners of language policy. These studies are valuable, but they

cannot provide the perspectives that are unique to the practitioners as "insiders". The practitioners' views at the time of the implementation of a policy and their views of it now in retrospect are as important as what they intended to do and what they actually achieved in language planning. In China, many veteran minority language planners started enthusiastically and altruistically to do something good for minority communities in order to pay the moral debt that the Han majority owe, as in the late PRC Premier Zhou Enlai's words (see Zhou, 2003, pp. 45–47). They have done so with great efforts as an essential part of the PRC's state-building and nation-building processes and as loyally as the ideal Chinese civil-service morality has required since the time of Confucius. However, in the course of language planning they sometimes made innocent errors in their technical approaches or occasionally their idealism and professionalism were politically hijacked to take approaches that they would not have otherwise (see Zhou, 2003, pp. 196–198, 361–364). Undoubtedly, their perspectives will shed much light on the complexity of language planning in China.

Hongkai Sun's chapter on the creation of writing systems for pre-literate minority languages and standardization of extant scripts chronicles idealistic attempts to fulfill aspirations for linguistic and ethnic equality, attempts which have been at times derailed by dramatic political events, but which resurface in the national agenda when stability returns. Sun himself has personally experienced these uneven processes of language planning since 1954 when he graduated from Beijing University (cf. Zhao & Li, 1989, pp. 133–141). As a loyal civil servant, Sun presents us his official administrative account of the Institute of Nationalities/Ethnic Studies' work (now known as the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology), as a fait accompli, and as dutiful implementations of the PRC's language policy which civil servants are not supposed to question but to carry out faithfully. As a practitioner, he shares with us experiences of how he and his colleagues have turned the Chinese government's rather abstract policy into a concrete language engineering project – the development and use of the Qiang writing system, which started in the late 1950s and renewed in the early 1990s. From his experience, Sun summarizes a few lessons on how language work can succeed for the development and maintenance of minority languages in the political and cultural environment of the PRC.

In contrast to Sun's chapter, Yaowen Zhou and Fenghe Fang's chapter presents a more personal account of the reform of the Dai writing systems though in no less a committed spirit than the Confucian civil-service morality encodes. Being one of the earliest practitioners of the PRC language policy, Y. Zhou went to work on the Dai writing systems immediately after he graduated from Zhongshan University (in Guangzhou) in 1951. Fenghe Fang is a Dai who married Y. Zhou in the 1950s – a marriage that symbolizes a close relationship between the Han majority and minorities in the early years of the PRC's state-building and multi-nation-building when the government showed a lot of sincerity in its affirmative-action work (see Zhou, 2003, pp. 45–47). In comparing the reforms and use of Dai vernacular writing systems, Y. Zhou and Fang draw a few lessons from the rather successful work for the Dehong Dai writing system and the less smooth work on the Xishuangbanna Dai writing system. The most significant lesson is the distinction between the notion of writing reform and that of writing improvement – a theoretical distinction that has

not been seriously considered before in the field of writing reform. A writing reform is defined as revolutionary changes of the script and/or the orthography of an existing writing system, as represented by the dramatic reform of the Xishuangbanna system. In contrast, a writing improvement is evolutionary work on the script and/or orthography of an existing system, as seen in the four progressive changes of the Dehong writing system. Most importantly and admirably, Y. Zhou has expressed sincere regret for having participated in attempting to impose linguistic and orthographic uniformity in a context where it did not belong.

These two chapters suggest that we will benefit significantly in language policy studies if more of China's veteran language policy practitioners are able to share with us their soul-searching experiences and technical lessons from a half-century of implementation of the PRC's language policy.

## 5. THEORY AND PRACTICE VIEWED FROM MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Life is harder for minorities whether they live in a democratic state or a totalitarian state and whether they can use their native languages or cannot use them. This is the added life burden in being "minority". A totalitarian state can arbitrarily decide to limit minority language rights, but in a democratic state the majority can also vote to limit minority language rights. The two situations make no moral difference as M. Zhou argues elsewhere (2001b). In the former case, the decision to limit minority language rights is made through a totalitarian process, taking away minorities' rights and choices against their will and to their disadvantage. In the latter cases, while the vote to limit minority language rights is decided through a democratic process, it nevertheless takes away minorities' rights and choices, often against their will and to their disadvantage (see Crawford, 1991; Mitchell et al., 1999). Of course, building a democratic state will facilitate the protection of fundamental rights of all peoples, including minorities. More central to the issue of ethnic equality is nation-building: multi-nation-building accommodates minorities while mono-nation-building tends to integrate, sometimes forcefully, minorities into the majority. Accommodationism generally tolerates linguistic pluralism and allows development and use of minority languages, but integrationism usually prohibits linguistic pluralism and forces minorities to use the mainstream language.

When minorities cannot use their native languages, they may fight to regain their right to use them, but their fight is always uphill. This does not mean that they can live an easier life when they can use their native languages. Even when they have their rights and choices at their disposal, they still face the dilemma of how to choose between their native languages and the mainstream language. In education, for example, choosing bilingual education or monolingual education in the mainstream language is often a false choice, because minorities are frequently forced to choose the maintenance of their native language and identity or the advancement of their socioeconomic status in the mainstream society (Zhou, 2001b). These are difficult choices. Unfortunately, globalization and the market economy increasingly force individuals to make a quick choice, usually a choice in favor of the language of economic and political power, in China and in the world community.

What do minorities think? What do minorities want to say about their language use and maintenance? It is imperative that we hear their voices, because non-minority authors do not have the same experiences and cannot tell the same stories. A Chinese saying goes: Only the feet know how comfortably the shoes fit (*Xie heshi bu heshi zhiyou jiao zhidao*). Unfortunately they face double risks, offending the PRC government and displeasing some readers outside China. On the one hand, minority researchers in China may not be able to tell the whole story because the PRC's current unwritten rule for academics is that there is no taboo for research but there are regulations governing what can be published and what cannot be published publicly (M. Zhou's personal communication with China's academic administrators, 2002). On the other hand their stories will not satisfy all readers because their dialectical analyses do not always present discouraging stories – they present both sides of them on balance.

Maocao Zhou's chapter explores the relationship among language policy, linguistic ecology, and the development and use of Tibetan – the native language of one of the least sinicized minority groups in China. In contact with Chinese and other minority languages, Tibetan has experienced small gains but significant loss in terms of both function domains and use by population. The little gains are found in small neighboring minority communities where some members of other minority groups have shifted to Tibetan. However, the huge loss is mostly to Chinese in Tibet proper and the greater Tibetan communities where many Tibetans have shifted to Chinese. Being a Tibetan and a new generation of minority language worker, M. C. Zhou has discussed some positive effects of China's language policy in her community, but is concerned about the lack of local governments' attention to the maintenance of Tibetan, the abstractness or "emptiness" of language policy/laws, and the consequences of the insufficient use of Tibetan in education in Tibetan communities. In this regard, she is not alone.

Xulian Li and Quanxi Huang's chapter traces the history of the development and use of a romanized writing system for the Zhuang – the native language of China's largest minority group and one of China's most sinicized minority groups. Being central and provincial language planners, Li and Huang take a unique look at the creating, merging, recreating, and remerging of language planning offices in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the past half century. The up-and-down experiences of those offices represent that of the Zhuang writing system. This system is the second earliest officially created and the first new one given official status by the PRC in its Hobbesian practice (Zhou, 2003, pp. 105–107), but it is still trying hard to find its place in education and government. Being Zhuangs and minority language workers, Li and Huang optimistically see a promising domain where written Zhuang is used and may not be replaced by Chinese, even amid the crushing tide of a market-oriented economy, in the most sinicized minority community. Instead of a common literacy campaign in which written language is learned and forgotten, Zhuang is used innovatively to educate farmers, who read little Chinese, on how to raise farm produce for which the market has a strong demand. Zhuang is needed constantly to follow the ups and downs of the market. We believe that this may be the most practical way to confront the challenges of globalization and spread of mainstream languages – a way that may successfully

maintain a workable, livable balance between the maintenance of minority languages and modernization of minority communities. This experience is of significance not only to China's minority communities but also to minority communities worldwide.

Zhongliang Pu's chapter documents the development and use of Yi writing systems for a language and a minority community that was not and that has been officially categorized as one, regardless of linguistic and ethnic differences, by the PRC in its revised Stalinist approach to multi-nation-state building (see Bradley, 2001; Bradley & Bradley, 2002; Harrell, 2001). As a native of Yi, Pu shows implicitly two types of major tensions, in language planning, within this highly non-homogenous community. First, the Yi communities in Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan provinces have taken different approaches to their written languages, effectively creating a rivalry within these communities and damaging the chance of success of the Sichuan Standard Yi writing system – one that gained official status in 1980, the last such status that the PRC has awarded (see Zhou, 2003, pp. 245–251, 282–290). Second, the Yi elites and Yi masses disagree as to whether Yi should be extensively used in education in their communities. We want to point out that this is because the two groups have different needs and see different futures. The first group and their families who are able to speak Chinese have already made significant socioeconomic and political gains and are more likely to see a rather bright future in the Chinese nation with diversity. The second group who speak little or no Chinese have made little socioeconomic advancement and do not see such a future. This conflict may be more serious in Yi communities but it is not confined to their communities as the following chapters show.

Feng Wang's chapter on Bai demonstrates similar tensions, but to a different degree, conditioned by China's theory and practice of its minority language policy. In the 1950s, being the most sinicized and literate minority group in southwestern China, the Bai elites chose assimilation into Han culture and gave up the development of a writing system of their own – a strong indication of a minority group' early trust in the sincerity of the PRC's theory of ethnic equality. After thirty years of experience with the PRC's Hobbesian practice, in the 1980s the Bai people decided to regain the substance and symbolism of their ethnic identity by renewing the development of a Bai writing system. However, since then the Bai people have seen increasing tensions among their communities over the choice of the standard speech which serves as the basis for the development of the writing system, a practice that has been dictated by China's adoption of the Soviet model of writing development (For the Soviet model, see Zhou, 2003, pp. 169–195, 271–274). In language planning, obviously, Wang and his fellow Bai speakers face challenges from outside their community as well as from within their community.

Though it has a solid history of written tradition and broad distribution of speakers across borders, Caodaobateer's chapter illustrates that Mongol has also been struggling for function domains and for speech communities in the face of the onslaught of the spread of Chinese. Chinese has spread from Han communities to sinicized Mongolian communities, and is spreading from the latter to the heartland of Mongolian communities. As a Mongol, Caodaobateer is worried that "the intense infiltration of Chinese will gradually reach all Mongolian communities". In response

to this linguistic encroachment, Mongolian communities have made two significant official efforts to consolidate the basis for the use of Mongol. The first is the promotion of the standard (Hudum) Mongolian writing system to replace the Clear (Todu) writing system used in Oriad dialect communities in Xinjiang. The effort has caused some uneasiness and controversy within Mongolian communities (cf. Zhou, 2003, pp. 239–245). The second is the establishment of an across province/region committee (*Baxie*) since 1974 to coordinate the development and use of Mongol in all Mongolian communities found in eight provinces/regions in China (Shenamujiela, 2000). Still many Mongols are learning Chinese and giving up Mongol. Rapid economic development and increased population mobility are not conducive to a long-desired common prosperity for Chinese as the national commonly-used language and Mongol as a regional language.

Pingwu Tai's chapter examines the processes of the standardization of Korean terminology in China since late 1945 when China's Korean communities were brought under the CCP's control. The development of Korean terminology has undergone three stages, direct borrowing from Korea, combination of borrowing from Beijing and from Pyongyang, and standardization of terms from the two sources. These processes are unique in China's minority language work, probably because of the special relationship between China and North Korea. Being a newer immigrant group the Koreans are also unique in that they have managed so far to maintain a workable balance between Korean and Chinese. But Tai and his fellow Koreans have concerns about the loss of Korean – a threat that becomes more imminent as China's market-oriented economy attracts more Koreans to Beijing and other major Chinese cities and more Hans to Korean communities in northeastern China.

These scholars and language planners of minority origin have all confirmed that China has worked extensively in the maintenance and development of minority languages, and of equal importance they have all voiced concerns about the use and maintenance of their native languages in their respective communities. Has China done enough? It depends how "enough" is defined. Arguably, China has done more to develop and maintain minority languages than any other nation-states have done so since the middle of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, China's minority communities have all seen a gradual and, sometimes, rapid loss of their native languages. What has China done right and what remains to be done? This collection will provide our readers some answers and a basis for judgement.

## 6. FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AND MODERNIZATION

Foreign language education policy debates in China have been fueled for well over a century by the quest for modernization and national/state power. In the late nineteenth century missionaries and nationalists perceived foreign languages as the means to religious salvation on the one hand and national salvation on the other. Attitudes regarding the proper role of foreign knowledge in the Chinese episteme fluctuated wildly, and foreign language experts were perceived as both political liability and valued economic commodity (Ross, 1993).

Divergent responses to whether foreign languages are utilitarian tools or frames of mind continued to complicate the development of foreign language education throughout much of the twentieth century, and spark arguments about the relationship between knowledge and power that mirrored debates regarding the role of minority languages in creating and maintaining social stability and development. Foreign language expertise simultaneously secured technological knowledge, assured China's position in the global community, furthered political control, facilitated cultural exchange, and transformed identities.

The history of foreign language education thus provides a fairly accurate barometer for measuring what China's leaders have considered appropriate levels of interaction with foreign values and peoples. Support for foreign language education has been high when sustained international participation was deemed commensurate with China's political and economic interests and low when it was perceived as threatening to domestic stability and cultural integrity.

As Luming Mao and Yue Min's chapter points out, by the 1980's foreign language educators used no word more frequently to justify their missions than "modernization," the most persuasive weapon in the CCP's arsenal of reform rhetoric. Twenty-first century educators and policy makers use "globalization" to approximate the pedagogical and social means (including cultivating a citizenship capable of creativity, flexibility, and innovation) they believe will enhance China's engagement in an international knowledge economy.

### *6.1. The Quest for Quality: Breaking away from Teacher, Text, and Test Centered Pedagogy*

Providing quality (*suzhi*) foreign language education in the contemporary context of high expectations and demand is constrained by a number of material and structural factors. First, the sheer number of qualified language teachers required to fill Chinese classrooms is staggering. In pilot programs designed to extend the public school foreign language curriculum from six or nine to twelve years, kindergarteners and first graders in Shanghai and Beijing are studying English. Farther up the ladder, English, (along with mathematics and Chinese) is one of three core subjects that anchor the curriculum for 80,000,000 secondary school pupils. Finally, English teaching capacities are stretched to the breaking point in colleges and universities, where enrolments are increasing dramatically. Until very recently, China's educational system has been described as having a low center of gravity. Relative to other developing countries, its educational pyramid has been broad at the base and very narrow at the top. For example, 3% of 18–22 year olds were studying in Chinese tertiary institutions in 1990 compared to 8% in India. However, in 1999 enrollment in nearly 1,100 regular tertiary institutions expanded to 4.13 million, an increase in just one year of 770,000 students. In this decade the proportion of 18–22 year olds in higher education is expected to increase from 9% to at least 15%. English language teaching capacity must accommodate this expansion.

Two decades have passed since Deng Xiaoping proclaimed that Chinese education must be directed toward "modernization, the world, and the future." What

Deng failed to mention is that modernization produces both knowledge and ignorance. In fact, English language education, like Chinese Putonghua language learning, plays a central role in stratifying educational access, attainment, and achievement. A subject in all matriculation examinations and recognized for its currency in the global marketplace of employment and travel, English provides students with educational and social capital. Parents in the most isolated rural communities understand that the study of English is crucial to their children's educational thus social mobility. They know and so do their children that "educated people know English"(Siu, 2002). Yet rural schools struggling to generate local funding in an era of fiscal decentralization lack the human and material resources to provide lessons that enable children to excel. English teachers in rural schools are typically less well educated and far less proficient than their urban counterparts. Rather than engage pupils directly in recitation, teachers expose students to spoken English transmitted via satellite and accessed in classrooms equipped with wireless headphones that are paid for by public and private organizations and agencies. Teachers admit that "passive exposure" to English cannot provide an adequate substitute for engaged interaction with a fully trained teacher. Nevertheless, the lessons "do signal that we are trying." "They give the students a taste of correct pronunciation and intonation."[1]

To fill gaps in the public sector, private schools claiming expertise in foreign language instruction have also emerged at all levels of the system. In 2000 there were over 50,000 non-state educational institutions in China, reflecting a diversity of programs and administrative and fiscal autonomy. As Mao and Min note, while some private schools offer superior foreign language training, unscrupulous proprietary institutions essentially swindle students – with little or no accountability. Many of the 1,000 private English-language teaching institutions in Beijing are unlicensed; yet compete for a market worth 200 million yuan annually (Siu, 2002).

Despite these challenges, many Chinese educators suggest that the most serious obstacle to providing quality foreign language education is not material but deeply philosophical, rooted in the failure to create educational content and methodologies that advance social as well as economic development (China, 2000). Private metropolitan preschools may employ native English and Japanese speakers. Elite public high schools may provide privileged students with multi-media classrooms and home-stay opportunities in North America. Curricular reforms may allow competent teachers to experiment with materials published not only in China, but Britain, North America and Australia. The Ministry of Education may have identified lightening the oppressive workload of school children as the most urgent educational goal of the new millennium. College preparatory courses, criticized as "too advanced, too difficult, too deep, too much," may have been streamlined to offer students time to pursue individual interests. Yet, foreign language classrooms remain dominated by a teacher, text, and test-centered pedagogy whose effectiveness is measured by student performance on high stakes examinations.

Of all the perceived ills in the system, it is the deleterious effects of China's numerous examinations that seem most intractable and most infuriating to educators and the public. Schools are criticized as soulless; cut throat institutions whose single-minded focus on examination results creates what a leading Chinese

psychologist calls the "desertification of the student's inner world" (Jin, 2002). Min and Mao point out that by the end of the 1980s "assessment" came to dominate discussions of foreign language teaching. As pupils faced a growing number of mandated competency, matriculation, proficiency, and placement tests, teachers tried to balance students' legitimate needs to be credentialed in the eyes of colleges and employers with the professional responsibility to nurture "both linguistic and communicative competence."

Scholars are divided about whether a "new educational paradigm" might emerge from this compromise and direct foreign language education toward the goals of communicative competency and assessment for further learning. Persuasive findings from classroom-based research indicate that Chinese teachers commonly engage their students in warm educational environments in which deep learning and intense interaction lead to high cognitive expectations and outcomes (Ma, 1999; Watkins & Biggs, 1996). These conclusions are frequently the subject of conversation between Chinese and U.S. educators. While Chinese educators praise U.S. schools for nurturing individual student ability and capacity for independent research, U.S. teachers praise Chinese schools for cultivating "achievement oriented" students (Lee, 2001) whose firm grounding in fundamental knowledge is sustained by a pervasive cultural belief in education as the vehicle for social mobility and self-cultivation. In contrast, other scholars are skeptical of the conclusion that "the strength of Chinese education lies in the beginning," (i.e., when students attain a deep understanding of fundamental knowledge). They maintain that such a perspective mistakenly equates the accumulation of knowledge with the accumulation of power. Knowledge becomes power, they argue, only if it is functional in the future, if it connects with action.[2]

### *6.2. The Open Door: English and the Global Marketplace*

Debates surrounding how to enhance quality foreign language teaching and learning aside, China's market oriented approach to development and entry into the WTO has made English language learning a state sanctioned rage (Siu, 2002). With China's State Economic and Trade Commission taking a leading role, the state has challenged millions of key industry and government personnel to become proficient in English. In Beijing alone, five million people (30% of the population), including all members of the metropolitan police force, are to be speaking English by the Olympic games in 2008. Communicative competence is also being demanded by large numbers of Chinese traveling abroad. Over 63,000 Chinese students were studying in the U.S. in 2002 (second only to students from India), and their abilities to communicate in English and Chinese are shaping global patterns of the production of knowledge, not only in science and technology but increasingly in the social sciences and humanities as well.

A measure for just how big the English education enterprise in China has become is the enthusiasm with which educational corporations and organizations like Educational Testing Service (ETS) have entered the Chinese market. ETS, the world's largest testing organization, creates international examinations and materials

for nearly 200 countries and derives from these activities 40% of its revenues (a large part of which comes from ventures in China and India). In 2002 ETS and the Beijing Topeak International Education Investment Company, which was founded in 2001 to promote international cooperation and exchange, signed a partnership for the creation and use of the first standardized test of practical English in China, designed to assist managers in businesses and government agencies improve their communicative competence.

China's current ten-year "action plan" for education advocates the development of lifelong learning and knowledge innovation systems that will widen access to quality, student-centered teaching and learning opportunities, cultivate structures and attitudes that encourage life-long learning, and, ultimately, "revitalize" China (China, 1999). How Chinese policy makers and educators talk about language learning and intercultural communication in the context of this ambitious policy statement provides clues to what we might expect from language teaching in China in the coming decade, as well as how state-building as a concept is being altered by the forces of globalization. Effective foreign language learning within China, they suggest, might be coordinated in a dual effort to enhance the teaching of Chinese language abroad. Starting with the belief that the twenty-first century belongs to China, they envision Chinese as the second most important world language after English. This conviction, coupled with the massive scale on which Chinese students are studying English, suggests that China will soon be, if it is not already, a global leader in language teaching reform efforts.

## 7. CONCLUSION

We have devoted the previous pages to illustrate our point that the theory and practice of China's language policy in the past half-century must be viewed in the context of changing perceptions of tradition, modernization, state-building, and nation-building. We can conclude that China's tradition, modernization, and state-building all tend to empower one single standard language politically, legally, socioeconomically, and even aesthetically. China's early multi-nation-building efforts enthusiastically supported the maintenance and development of minority languages, whereas its recent mono-nation-building drive has significantly decreased such support, if not withholding it, and adopted a (social) Darwinist attitude – allowing nature to run its own course because there are too many languages in China as Jiang Zemin, the CCP's past general secretary, suggests (Tiemuer & Liu, 2002, p. 57). Coupled with globalization and the forces of market economy, China's modernization drive appears to favor only two dominant languages, Chinese as the national commonly-used language and English as the world language (cf. Ross, 1993; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, pp. 156–186).

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## 8. NOTES

We appreciate some input from Timothy Light in the writing of this introduction.

1. Heidi Ross, transcribed interview with rural English teachers in Shaanxi Province, November 2002.
2. Heidi Ross, transcribed interview with secondary school language educators, Shanghai, November 2002.

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# PART I: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN THE CENTER

JOHN S. ROHSENOW

# FIFTY YEARS OF SCRIPT AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE REFORM IN THE P.R.C.

*The Genesis of the Language Law of 2001*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The chief goals of language planning in China are given as: (1) to standardize and promote "Mandarin Chinese" (*Putonghua*) as the common spoken language of the People's Republic of China (PRC); (2) to develop and promote a "clear speech writing" style (*baihuawen*) closer to that vernacular spoken language with which to replace the more classical "literary language writing" style (*wenyanwen*) traditionally used in China; (3) to design and promote a system of phonetic symbols with which to accurately and efficiently express standard modern spoken Chinese; (4) to simplify the forms of Chinese characters; (5) to design and improve writing systems for the languages of China's many ethnic minorities (Zhou, 2001, p. 9). The tasks of developing and promoting Putonghua as a common spoken language and of designing and improving writing systems for China's ethnic minorities are explored in depth elsewhere in this volume. Therefore in reviewing the evolution of language planning policy and activities in the PRC, this chapter will focus primarily on the policies and realities of those questions involved in *writing* modern standard Chinese, that is, on the evolution of policies concerning the simplification of Chinese characters, and the development and status of the official *Hanyu Pinyin* romanization system now used to express the pronunciation of modern standard Chinese, within the larger context of Chinese language planning in general. As we shall see, beyond the standardization and simplification of the forms of Chinese characters, efforts at standardizing *written* Chinese have focused mainly on attempts to standardize the use of words and terms, to regularize *words* written with variant Chinese character combinations (e.g. China, 2001a), as well as to standardize the pronunciation of words and characters. But as noted elsewhere (e.g. Chen, 1999, pp. 111–112) beyond a number of dictionaries incorporating the above standards, there has been no extensive work on standardizing the grammar of written Chinese, or attempts the regulate the *baihuawen* style(s) in which modern Chinese has been written since the May 4th Movement of 1919.

M. Zhou (ed.), *Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949,* 21–43.
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The history of language reform in China beginning in the last years of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) and lasting throughout the twentieth century has been well documented in English (cf. DeFrancis, 1950; Seybolt & Chiang, 1979; Chen, 1999). Underlying the desire for a nationally recognized modern standard spoken language, and the development of a commonly accepted written style more closely related to that spoken language was the overriding goal of making reading and writing available to the vast majority of China's population of hundreds of millions of illiterates as a necessary prerequisite to making China into a modern, industrialized nation state. Believed to be central to that enterprise was the task of simplifying the complexities of the archaic non-alphabetic, logographic system of Chinese characters, and in addition, the development of some sort of phonetic notation system to convey the actual pronunciation of the words of the standard national language and of the Chinese characters used to represent them. To give a brief overview, after an abortive attempt in 1935 during the Republican period (1911–1949) to simplify 324 characters (which was defeated by conservative forces in the Nationalist government), it remained for the government of the PRC, newly established in 1949, to undertake the formal simplification of the forms and shapes of a large number of characters in the early 1950s. After several trial lists were proposed by the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language (*Zhongguo Wenzi Gaige Weiyuanhui*), in 1956 a list of 515 simplified characters and 54 simplified character components was published in Beijing. In 1964 the list was expanded to a comprehensive list of 2,236 characters simplified either by incorporation of those components or by analogy (cf. Zhou, 2001, p. 13). This comprehensive list was republished in 1986 with minor corrections (cf. China, 2001b, pp. 177–208) and is now the standard for all newspapers, periodicals and modern language books written in modern Chinese throughout mainland China.

As for the problem of devising a phonetic notational system to accurately represent and express the sounds of standard Northern Mandarin (*Putonghua*) and the characters used to write it, the first nationally recognized system initially proposed in 1913 and published in 1918 was the so-called *zhuyin zimu* or 'sound notating letters,' a system of *kana*-like symbols derived from Chinese characters, used to represent the initial consonants and final 'rhymes' (i.e, vowel and semi-vowel syllabic nuclei, plus final nasal, if any) of each spoken monosyllable associated with a Chinese character. This system was later renamed as *zhuyin fuhao* or 'sound notating symbols' by the Nationalist educational authorities in order to stress that these were only phonetic *symbols* designed purely for the purpose of annotating the pronunciation of words and characters and *not* as a system of independent *letters* to be used as an independent writing system as Western alphabets are used. This system, colloquially known as '*bo,po,mo,fo*' after the first four symbols of the system, continues to be used for teaching standard Mandarin to school children in the Republic of China on Taiwan to this day.

As these Chinese character-derived symbols were peculiar to Chinese, in 1928 a new system based on the Roman alphabet called *'Gwoyeu Romatzyh'* (*Guoyou Luomazi*) or 'National Language Romanization' was proclaimed by the Nationalist government to be used in foreign affairs, but only the character derived *zhuyin fuhao* symbols were permitted to be used to teach Chinese in schools. Between 1929–1931

another romanized system for Chinese known as *'Latinxua Sin Wenz'* (*Ladinghua Xinwenzi*) or Latinized New Writing was developed by Chinese and Russian linguists in Soviet Russia and introduced into communist controlled areas of China in 1933 (Zhou, 2001, p. 12).

As noted above, it was not until after the founding of the PRC in 1949 that the present Hanyu Pinyin system was designed and promulgated by the new Chinese government. This romanized system draws on the National Language Romanization of 1928, the Latinized New Writing of 1931, and other such systems, and incorporates the diacritic markings of the 1918 *Zhuyin fuhao* 'sound notating symbols' system to mark the four tones of standard Mandarin Chinese over the vowels. As we shall see below, while many of the designers of Hanyu Pinyin had high hopes for this romanized alphabetic system to evolve into a full fledged independent *writing system* to exist side by side with, or even eventually replace, the system of Chinese characters, nevertheless this system, now almost half a century old, remains officially *only* a system for annotating and teaching the sounds of standard Putonghua and the characters which express them.

## 2. LANGUAGE REFORM AND POLITICS, 1949–1980

After the founding of the PRC in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] and the newly established government, based on its experiences with literacy education movements and the *Ladinghua wenzi* romanization system in the areas under its control in the 1930s and '40s, actively supported both anti-illiteracy education and also language reform, which it viewed as central to long term literacy and the promotion of Putonghua as a standard language throughout China. The Chinese Script Reform Association (*Zhongguo Wenzi Gaige Xiehui*) is said to have been established on the same day as the formal proclamation of the founding of the PRC, October 10, 1949, to be succeeded by Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language on December 23, 1954.[1] In October of 1955 the Ministry of Education and the Committee for the Reform held two important conferences in Beijing, the National Conference on Script Reform (*Quanguo Wenzi Gaige Huiyi*) and the Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese (*Xiandai Hanyu Guifanhua Xueshu Huiyi*), the first focussing on Chinese character simplification and second on the definition of Putonghua. The first meeting resulted in the passing of the Revised Draft of the Scheme for the Simplification of Chinese characters (*Hanzi Jianhua Fang'an Xiuzheng Cao'an*) as well as the Draft of the List of the First Set of Variant Characters to be Standarized (*Di Yi Pi Yitzi Zhengli Biao Cao'an*), both of which were given full propaganda support by the CCP, the government, the *People's Daily,* etc. After some study and revision, the first Scheme for Chinese Character Simplification (*Hanzi Jianhua Fang'an*) was formally approved by the State Council on January 28, 1956. The complete list of 2,236 characters simplified according to the principles in the 1956 Scheme published in 1964 is entitled the General List of Simplified Characters (*Jianhuazi Zongbiao*). (As noted above, this General List was republished in October, 1986 with minor

revisions, including a few characters which were allowed to return to their original complex forms,[2] and is now the official standard.)

The second October 1955 meeting, the Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese, concluded with a resolution defining Putonghua as being based on the vocabulary and grammar of the Northern (Mandarin) dialects with Beijing pronunciation as the standard for the national language, its written grammar to be derived from works written in contemporary vernacular literary language (*baihuawen*). The Central Working Committee for the Promotion of Putonghua (*Zhongyang Tuiguang Putonghua Gongzuo Weiyuanhui*) was established on January 28, 1956 to coordinate the nationwide campaign. On February 6, 1956 the State Council issued Instructions Concerning the Promotion of Putonghua (*Guanyu Tuiguang Putonghua de Zhishi*) and between 1957 and 1962 also issued three sets of the First Draft of Variant Pronunciations of Words in Putonghua (*Putonghua Yiduci Shenyin Biao Chugao*) to standardize variant pronunciations.

Central to the promotion of Putonghua as a national language with a standard pronunciation as well as to assisting literacy in the non-phonetic writing system of Chinese characters was the development of a system of phonetic symbols with which to convey the pronunciation of spoken words and written characters in standard northern Mandarin. Although Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong had said that China "should take the direction of phoneticization [*pinyinhua fangxiang*] common to all the world's languages" (Wu, 1978, p. 101; Lehmann, 1975, p. 51), Mao also "insisted in the early 1950s that [whatever phonetic system was developed] should be national in form, and should be elaborated on the basis of existing Chinese characters." (Chen, 1999, p. 173) However, at a conference on intellectual problems held on January 20, 1956 Mao in the end did express his approval that the romanized system about to be proposed (*Hanyu Pinyin*) should use the Latin alphabet. [3] Three weeks later, on February 12, 1956, the Committee on Script Reform issued the Draft of the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing (*Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an:* (*Cao'an*)), albeit with a long explanatory note devoted to justifying the adoption of this non-Chinese script as the basis for this new phonetic scheme. The scheme was later formally approved by the National People's Congress in February, 1958 as the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing (*Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an*).[4] Since this formal endorsement Hanyu Pinyin has continued to play an important part in standardizing pronunciation, dictionary annotation, and basic education throughout the People's Republic.

Obviously the history of language and script reform in China cannot be viewed in a vacuum. On one hand, the great strides made by the government of the PRC on all fronts in the 1950s were possible because of the initial enthusiasm of both intellectuals and the population at large for the new regime. Illiteracy and lack of widespread education were symptomatic of China's far more serious social, political and economic problems for more than one hundred years. The CCP's experience and accomplishments in literacy education (including the use of *Ladinghua Xin Wenzi*) in those parts of China under their control during the 1930s and '40s, in contrast to the lack of any meaningful progress by the Nationalist government in addressing those and many other social problems, may be said to have contributed to the Communist's victory over the Nationalists and to the success of their initial

efforts in both the spread of Putonghua and in script reform, especially in the 1950s and early 1960s. At the same time, the progress of language reform was always dependent on the larger political context within the PRC, which could also not only divert resources and distract participants, but also actively interfere with the work to be done. Thus, to give one example, although the CCP had supported the use of the Latin alphabet-based *Ladinghua Xin Wenzi* in the areas under their control before 1949, even according it the *de facto* status of an official alternative writing system (cf. Su, 2001a, pp. 111–112), yet once they were in power their policy changed, and Pinyin was once again reduced to the status of an auxiliary notational system (cf. Chen, 1999, p. 121 and pp. 188–189).

The flurry of activity in language reform in 1956 may be correlated with the short-lived period of relative intellectual freedom in the mid-1950s, once the initial excesses of the founding of the PRC were over and many intellectuals who had chosen to stay in China (or to return from abroad) were being encouraged to participate in the building of the 'New China.' Following Premier Zhou Enlai's proposed reforms designed to placate these intellectuals, the so-called 'Hundred Flowers Movement' (*Baihua Yongdong*) was inaugurated by Mao Zedong in his speech of May 2, 1956. In fact, while intellectuals working on language reform and in other areas were doubtless encouraged by the apparent call for more freedom of thought, people were nevertheless very slow in coming forward with criticisms and it was not until April – May 1957 that large numbers of articles began to appear in such publications as the leading intellectual *Guangming Ribao* newspaper and People's Literature (*Remin Wenxue*) and elsewhere complaining about bureaucracy, inept administration, nepotism and corruption within the CCP. At the eleventh session of the Supreme State Conference on February 27, 1957 CCP Chairman Mao delivered his (in)famous speech *'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Within the People'* in which he outlined his views on the continuing existence of class struggle in China. By the time a revised version of this speech was released to the public in the *People's Daily* on June 19, 1957, the CCP Central Committee was already committed to a full scale political campaign against those who had been foolish enough to express their opinions in public. In the ensuing mass nationwide 'Anti-Rightist Campaign' which followed, up to fifty thousand intellectuals, including educators, professionals, writers, artists and scientists were branded as 'rightists'. Most of these people lost their jobs, were expelled from the CCP, and were exiled to the countryside for re-education through labor, not to have their cases 'cleared' (*pingfan*) until after Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in 1976. Such a repressive political climate had an obvious dampening effect on any further intellectual activity beyond beginning to implement those language reform policies after 1957.

On January 10, 1958 the more pragmatic Premier Zhou Enlai made his oft-cited speech to the National Political Consultative Congress on "The Immediate Tasks of Writing Reform" (*Dangqian Wenzi Gaige de Renwu*) in which he stressed the three important tasks of simplifying Chinese characters, promoting Putonghua nationwide, and fixing and promoting the Scheme for Hanyu Pinyin. Speaking of character simplification in his speech, Premier Zhou specifically stressed the two cornerstones of "general acceptability" (*yueding sucheng*) and "advancing with steady steps"

(*wenbu qianzou*). (Zhou, 1958, translated in Seybolt & Chiang, 1979, pp. 228–243) As noted above, the draft scheme for Hanyu Pinyin approved two years earlier by the Committee on Script Reform on February 11, 1956 was then finally formally approved by the National People's Congress in February, 1958 as the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing (*Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an*) (cf. China, 2001b, pp. 117–121). Following up on this, on March 3, 1958 the Ministry of Education issued the Circular on Teaching the Pinyin Alphabet in Primary, Middle, and Teacher Training Schools (*Guanyu Zai Zhong-xiaoxue He Geji Shifan Xuexiao Pinyin Zimu Tongzhi*), and on September 30, the Administrative Management Bureau for Industry, Commerce and Trades and the Chinese Committee on Script Reform together issued the Joint Circular on the Addition of Hanyu Pinyin Letters to Trade Designs and Commercial Product Packaging. (*Guanyu Zai Shangbiao Tuyang He Shangpin Baozhuang Shang Jiazhu Hanyu Pinyin Zimu de Lianhe Tongzhi*). No other actions or directives related to language reform appeared again until the last days of December, 1963, six years later.

Just as things may briefly have appeared to return to a semblance of normality after the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, in February 1958, the same month that the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing (*Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an*) was approved by the National People's Congress, Mao's next campaign, the 'Great Leap Forward,' was also approved by the National People's Congress. Throughout the country China's entire population was mobilized to meet greatly increased production quotas, and people were temporarily withdrawn from schools and their normal employment to work on large scale public works projects and to make what turned out to be worthless steel in the now notorious 'back yard steel furnaces.' The disastrous policies of the Great Leap Forward of 1958 are now known to have caused several years of agricultural, ecological and economic catastrophe resulting in at least twenty million deaths from famine and related diseases which affected the entire nation for several years. Dissatisfaction with Mao's policies led to his temporary retreat from power in the mid 1960s, until his 'comeback' to power with the start of the Great People's Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966.

We can thus see that it was the effects of Mao's political policies which explain the gap in language reform work (and most other work) from 1958 through 1964. On December 29, 1963 the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Education and the Committee on Script Reform resumed their interrupted activities by issuing the Joint Circular on the Promulgation of the Scheme for Chinese Finger Spelling [for deaf-mutes] (*Guanyu Gongbu Hanyu Shouzhi Zimu Fang'an de Lianhe Tongzhi*), a system based on Hanyu Pinyin. On February 4, 1964 the State Council passed the Circular Concerning Agreement with the Committee on Script Reform's Request for Advice on Questions on Simplified Characters. (*Guowuyuan Guanyu Tongyi Zhongguo Wenzi Gaige Weiyuanhui Jianhuazi Wenti de Qingshi de Tongzhi*), followed on March 7, 1964 by the Joint Circular on Simplified Characters (*Guanyu Jianhuazi de Lianhe Tongzhi*) jointly issued by the Committee on Script Reform, the Ministry of Culture, and the Ministry of Education.

As noted above, the General List of Simplified Characters (*Jianhuazi Zongbiao*) containing a complete list of 2,236 characters simplified according to the principles in the 1956 Scheme was also finally published in 1964 (cf. China, 2001b, pp.

177–180).[5] Once these new forms were established, their mechanical implementation in the printing industry was then guaranteed by the joint declaration on August 8, 1964 of the Joint Circular on the Unification of Forms of Chinese Characters for Typewriter and Linotype Machines jointly issued by the Committee on Script Reform, the Ministry of Light Industry, and the Ministry of Commerce, followed on January 30, 1965 by the Joint Circular on the Unification of Forms for Chinese Character Typesetting, jointly issued by the Committee on Script Reform and the Ministry of Culture. Finally, the last such action in this period of the early 1960s was the application of Hanyu Pinyin to China's minorities in the joint statement by the Committee on Script Reform and the General Office on National Surveying and Mapping on May 5, 1965 of the Transliteration of Minority Place Names Using Hanyu Pinyin Letters (*Shaoshu Minzu Diming Hanyu Pinyin Zimu Yinyi Zhuanxiefa*). No further activities of this sort occurred for more than ten years until this Circular on the Transliteration of Minority Place names was revised by the Committee in September of 1976, the month that Chairman Mao Zedong died, bringing about the end of the decade of chaos known as the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution is well known as a period when China's educational and cultural institutions were greatly disrupted. Universities were either closed or had their normal activities greatly curtailed as university professors, researchers and other intellectuals throughout China were restricted in their activities and criticized as being more "expert" than "Red." This climate naturally affected the National Committee on Script Reform, and its senior members did not meet or confer for most of those years. Aside from various propaganda screeds endlessly quoting the above mentioned remarks of Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai in support of the important tasks of Chinese character simplification and promotion of Putonghua and Hanyu Pinyin while criticizing as "feudal" and "bourgeois" any retrograde tendencies in language use, virtually no substantive work was issued between 1966 and 1976, with the exception of the Spelling of Chinese Personal Names in Hanyu Pinyin Letters (*Zhongguo Renming Hanyu Pinyin Zimu Pinxiefa*) in May of 1975. (Together with the 1965 Transliteration of Minority Place Names Using Hanyu Pinyin circular noted above, this document on the spelling of personal names was also revised in September, 1976, the month that Mao died and the Cultural Revolution ended.) That some non-politically sensitive work may have continued, especially towards the end of the Cultural Revolution, may be concluded from the joint issuance by the Committee on Script Reform and the National Bureau of Standards of the Circular on the Unified List of Characters to be Used for the Names of Measurement Units (*Guanyu Bufen Jilang Danwei Mingcheng Tongyi Yongzi de Tongzhi*) on July 20, 1977.

The most notorious result attributed to the Committee during those years is of course the Draft for the Second Chinese Character Simplification Scheme (*Di 'erci Hanzi Jianhua Fang 'an* (*Cao 'an*)) (SCCSS), which was published on December 20, 1977, more than a year after the 'Smashing of the Gang of Four' and the end of the Cultural Revolution in October, 1976. I have explored elsewhere in detail the history of the genesis, demise and aftermath of the Draft for the SCCSS (cf. Rohsenow, 1986). To summarize briefly, on October 24, 1974 towards the end of the Cultural

Revolution members of a U.S. linguistics delegation met in Beijing with four representatives of the Committee for Script Reform and learned that

> Since 1964 the Committee on Language Reform [*sic*] has been collecting characters simplified by the masses. In 1973 it published the *Hanyu Zhengli Xiao Zihui (Chugao),* a small dictionary of Chinese characters in which newly simplified characters are included. The Committee is making systematic studies of alt these simplified characters, and a draft list of them will be submitted to the central government for approval. The approved draft list of them will again be distributed to the masses for discussion and comments. The Committee will then prepare a definitive list for official approval. Mr. Ye [Laishi] told us that a list of about 100 simplified characters would be formally promulgated sometime in 1975. (Lehmann et al, 1975, pp. 46–47)

Professor C.C. Cheng, also a member of the American delegation, later noted that

> As Ye Laishi, a leading member of the Committee, communicated ...[that] the [Second Chinese Character Simplification ] Scheme was already taking shape in 1974. In fact, it had been scheduled to be published in 1975. The Committee [had] submitted it to the State Council for comments. But due to a shift of priority when the late Premier Zhou Enlai was hospitalized, the request of approval for publication was not acted upon immediately, In late 1975, however, the draft was distributed to people in some areas down to the brigade level of the rural communes for discussion. (Cheng, 1979, p. 46)

It was in fact not until December 20, 1977, more than a year after the fall of the ‘Gang of Four” in October 1976, that the second draft scheme greatly enlarged in scope, was published in its entirety as front page news throughout the People’s Republic. The New China News Agency specifically attributed the delay, since May 1975, to “unreasonable suppression” by Gang of Four member Zhang Chunqiao during the Cultural Revolution “using authority that he had stolen.”

The enlarged SCCSS as it appeared in 1977 contained 853 new proposed simplified characters and 61 simplified components. In addition, by ‘homophone substitution’ (*jingjian*) of an already existing simpler character for one with a similar pronunciation, 263 additional characters were proposed for elimination. The 853 characters were divided into two lists. The 248 characters in the first list (of which 21 could be used as components of other characters, thus giving 55 more derived from these 21) were described as “already widely current throughout the country” and therefore available for use in printed materials immediately (cf. Leon, 1981, pp. 477–482; Martin, 1982, pp. 241–244). The second list contained 605 new proposed characters, of which 245 were new non-component characters, 24 potential character components, and 336 derived from those components. We should note that it was stated that the characters in this second list were not to be adopted until after discussion and revision by the ‘masses.’ The characters in the second list were subdivided into three types: (1) the majority of characters, current only in certain restricted geographical or vocational areas; (2) a small proportion, chosen from among several variant simplifications currently popular among the masses, and (3) simplifications of some complex yet commonly occurring characters which the Committee had itself created “following the methods of simplification among the masses.”

The Second Scheme came under widespread criticism almost immediately after its publication, and although some of the characters were used experimentally for a brief time, the Scheme was effectively withdrawn within six months. It appears to

have been prepared by some working staff members of the offices of the Committee in Beijing, probably trying to justify or maintain their political position within the Committee's offices, but without consultation from either senior members of the Committee or from the general public (Zhou, 1992, pp. 172; Zhou, 2001, pp.13–14).[6] As Chen (1999, p. 160) notes, not only did the general public find the sudden appearance of so many unfamiliar character forms strange and unacceptable (and – in the case of some of the character forms constructed by the staff members themselves – laughable), but even more importantly its release was simply extremely ill-timed. The disastrous experience of ten years of chaos during the Cultural Revolution had left the Chinese public in general, and intellectuals in particular, with a strong aversion to any radical change. Weary of a decade of political 'campaigns,' those who paid any attention to the draft at all simply conceived the entire proposal to be ill conceived and reserved their attention for more important matters. But for many the name of the Committee on Script Reform was inevitably linked to and tarnished by this public fiasco.

The Committee on Script Reform was reorganized in the spring of 1980. The first sentence of the front page New China News Agency story in the Peoples' Daily and the *Guangming Ribao* announcing this reorganization and the Committee's first meeting on May 20, 1980 began with the announcement that the Committee's first act was to recommend revision of the Second Scheme. After the Committee's reorganization, a committee to revise the SCCSS was set up, and after lengthy and careful consideration ended up recommending a list of 111 characters, similar to the list which Ye Laishi had described to the visiting U.S. linguistics delegation in 1974 (see above).[7] In fact, however, it was not until the Second National Conference on Language and Script met in January, 1986, thirty years after the First National Conference on Script Reform, that the SCCSS was finally officially terminated. At the same time it was revealed at this 1986 meeting that despite several years of research and consultation, the revised list of 111 characters had failed to win sufficient support either in intellectual circles or from the State Council, and was also therefore being withdrawn. The 1986 Conference further resolved that a much more "cautious attitude" to character simplification would be taken in the future, and –while some individual characters might be simplified on a case by case basis – no more large scale simplification schemes on the order of the first and second schemes would be attempted (cf. China, 1987, p. 52 and p. 325; Liu, 1986, p. 27; Zhou, 1992)

## 3. CHANGES IN PRIORITY IN SCRIPT AND LANGUAGE REFORM

By 1986 the pragmatic reformers headed by Deng Xiaoping who had overthrown the Gang of Four in 1976 were firmly in control, the rule of law had at least nominally been established in 1979, China was opening to the West both economically and culturally, and universities and research institutions had returned to their normal activities. In addition to attempting to salvage their original plan for the Second Character Simplification Scheme, the Committee resumed their technical work, as evidenced by their issuance in conjunction with other relevant government agencies of a Draft for a Unified System of Character Radicals in 1983, a circular concerning

the issuing of the principles for the spelling of Chinese place names in Pinyin in December 1984, and a circular on a list of pronunciations for words with variant pronunciations for broadcasters in December of 1985 (China, 2001b, pp. 138–171).

On December 16, 1985 the Committee on Script Reform (*Wenzi Gaige Weiyuanhui*), which since the 1950s had reported directly to the State Council as an independent central government organization, was reorganized and renamed as the "State Language Commission" (the name they prefer to use in English, although the Chinese name of the organization – *Guojia Yuwen Wenzi Gongzuo Weiyuanhui* – would be more accurately translated as "National Committee for Language and Script Work), and was also made subordinate to the State Education Commission. As noted above, in January, 1986 the newly reorganized State Language Commission together with the State Educational Commission convened the Second National Conference on Language and Script in Beijing, the first such meeting in thirty years, in order to review the language planning work since the 1950s and to set a new agenda for future work.

In addition to finally abandoning the 1977 proposed draft of the Second Chinese Character Simplification Scheme, the conference explicitly precluded any possibility of developing Hanyu Pinyin as an independent *writing system* (*'wenzi'*). As Liu Daosheng, Chairman of the State Language Commission, declared in his speech on "Language and Script Work in the New Era" (the title of the conference): "It must be emphasized that from now on for a relatively long time, Chinese characters will continue to play their role as the official national writing system. The Hanyu Pinyin Scheme currently in use is not a phonetic writing system to replace Chinese characters; [rather] it is a tool to phonetic annotation to help in the learning of Chinese language, Chinese characters and the promotion of Putonghua, and to be used where it is inconvenient or impossible to use Chinese characters." (Liu 1986, p. 24) Turning to the "future of Chinese characters," again citing Zhou Enlai's 1958 pronouncement that "this is a question to which we at present cannot rush to a conclusion," Liu went on to agree: "What the future of Chinese characters will turn out to be, whether or not our country can bring out a Hanyu Pinyin writing system, these are matters for the future, not belonging to the present task of language reform; at present there are different views, which may be discussed, and even more scientific research may be carried out. But it is still inadvisable to rush to a conclusion." (Liu, 1986, p. 24)

This shelving of the possibility of what Mao had called the "direction of alphabetization," and of the hope of Hanyu Pinyin attaining the status of an independent writing system, co-equal with Chinese characters in a relationship of "digraphia" (cf. DeFrancis, 1984a), greatly distressed a significant minority of those working in language reform (Su, 2001a, p. 113; Rohsenow, 2001, pp. 128–129) In his "Summary Speech to [this Second] Meeting of the State Language Commission", Commission Vice Chairman Professor Chen Zhangtai took the unusual step of adding the following revealing explanation:

> As for "the direction of alphabetization," .... the majority of delegates agreed not to mention this issue in the [committee's final] report, feeling that this [revised] position] is in line with the spirit of the Central [Party Committee's] policies of "seeking truth from facts," and of "stressing [only the] concrete matters related to the task" [at hand].

> [This larger group felt that this change in policy toward the direction of alphabetization would] facilitate the achievement of practical effects, be beneficial to the development of 'language and writing [reform] in [this] new era,' and at the same time would also be beneficial to the work of advancing *writing* reform. [But] other representatives felt that the statements in the report on this matter [of Hanyu pinyin] , although [both] realistic and practical, nevertheless – without the addition of some *direct* statement –[this would] be a kind of *retreat,* the tone too muted, [which] could possibly have a negative influence on the work [of promoting Hanyu Pinyin] in the future. ...Here let us explain to our colleagues that the *wording* used in Chairman Liu Daosheng's report [see above, – JSR], was first submitted by the SLC to the leading comrades of the Center and the State Council with a request for instructions. During the meeting [itself] the differing viewpoints of the delegates on this matter were also reported to the [Communist] Party Central Committee and the State Council. Yesterday afternoon the SLC received the written reply to our request from the leading comrades of the Party Central Committee and the State Council agreeing with the statement concerning this matter [about the policy concerning Hanyu Pinyin] in Liu Daosheng's work report. [It is] hoped that [you] comrades can understand this clearly [now]. Naturally there are differing views on this matter, which is normal and [the matter] may [still] be discussed. But it is hoped that this kind of discussion will not [negatively] influence [our] concentrating our strength on successfully accomplishing the present work before us [remaining] to be done. [China, 1987, p. 52]

From this unusually frank report, it is clear that the formal announcement of the abandonment (at least for the present) of any efforts toward Hanyu Pinyin attaining the status of a full fledged writing equal to (not to speak of replacing) the Chinese character writing system had caused such a debate among the delegates to this 1986 national meeting of the State Language Commission that it was thought necessary to give them an "explanation" that would both justify and at the same time effectively enforce the decision with the full weight of the CCP Central Committee and the State Council, technically the highest organ of government in the PRC.[8] At the same time, the explicit granting of permission to continue to discuss the issue avoided the stigma of several decades of unappealable decisions from the CCP Central Committee and/or the central government.

Of the original three principal tasks of language reform – promotion of Putonghua, simplification of Chinese characters, and development of Hanyu Pinyin – only the first remained effectively unchanged and became the "principal task" of "Language and Script Work in the New Era." (China, 1987, p. 326) According to the 1986 meeting, the following goals to be achieved by the end of the twentieth century were proposed: (1) Putonghua to become the language of instruction in all schools nationwide; (2) Putonghua to become the working language of government at all levels; (3) Putonghua to be the language used in radio and television broadcasting, and in cinemas and theatres; (4) Putonghua to become the common language used among speakers of various local dialects. (China 1987) As Chen notes (1999, p. 27) the fact that there is so little difference in wording between these goals and those set in the 1950s shows that for all the progress made in the promotion of Putonghua as a national spoken language since that time, the original goals still remained unfulfilled. In fact, in 1982 a new clause stating that Putonghua was to be promoted nationwide had been added to the revised Constitution of the PRC. However, given the new economic climate, work in promoting Putonghua,

similar to literacy work (cf. Imber, 1990), was not being pursued or received with the enthusiasm of the early 1950s.

With this conference, "Language and script work entered a new era in which standardization and regularization [became] the principal tasks (China, 2001b, p. 303). Beginning with the circular on a list of pronunciations for words with variant pronunciations for broadcasters issued in December of 1985, most of the Committee's work since the conclusion of their second national meeting in January 1986 has focused on the promotion and standardization of terminology, vocabulary and pronunciation in Putonghua, though the issuance of dozens of documents and proclamations, usually following research work with their parent organization, the State Education Commission, and/or with other bureaus and offices specifically related to the topic at hand (e.g., Ministry of Broadcasting, Film and Television; Ministry of Commerce; Bureau of Management of Industry and Commerce; Committee on Banking of the CCP Central Committee, Ministry of Railroads; Bureau of the Post Office, etc.; see China, 2001b, pp. 266–271). Much of this work of course involves regularization of terminology in these various areas, including standardization of terminology, vocabulary and characters, as well as of pronunciation.

Most of these publications are based on much more sophisticated research undertaken using surveys and computerized statistics beginning in the mid 1980s (see Su, 2001b, pp.60–182). For example, in 1987 the State Language Commission and the State Education Commission jointly conducted a research project, resulting in their joint publication on January 26, 1988 of the List of Common Characters in Modern Chinese (*Xiandai Hanyu Changyongzi Biao*), consisting of two lists. The first list contains 2500 common characters, which account for slightly more than 99% of all characters in general use, to be taught in primary schools, and a second list of an additional 1000 slightly less common characters, to be taught at the middle school level. Together these 3500 characters account for almost 99.9% of all characters in general use. In addition, on March 25, 1988 the State Language Commission and the State Press and Publications Administration together published the List of Regular Characters in Modern Chinese (*Xiandai Hanyu Tongyongzi Biao*), containing 7000 characters, slightly more than the 99.999% covered by 6600 characters (cf. Yin, 1991; Yin & Rohsenow, 1994, pp. 76–80; China, 2001b, pp. 209–250; Chen, 1999, pp. 136–137).

That research on Hanyu Pinyin had not been abandoned is evidenced by the publication by the State Language Commission and State Education Commission on July 1, 1988 of the Basic Rules for Hanyu Pinyin Orthography (*Hanyu Pinyin Zhengcifa Jiben Guize*). [9] This reflects continued attempts to continue to expand the uses of Hanyu Pinyin beyond that of a purely notational system (cf. Zhou, 1992, pp. 286–98). This is important in two respects. First, because of the extremely large number of homophones in Chinese, computer entry of Chinese using Hanyu Pinyin is greatly facilitated by entering entire (spoken) **words** (*ci*), usually more than one syllable long, rather than the individual separate morphemes which correspond to each Chinese character in the traditional writing system. This input method allows the internal Pinyin-to-character conversion software to 'guess' with a much higher degree of accuracy which actual character combinations are desired (even when tone

marks are not entered, as they usually are not). It is true that the majority (of that small minority of China's population) of computer users, such as professional clerks, typists, and copyists, do use other *character-based* input systems, which require the typist to first analyze and then input each Chinese character in terms of its (most significant) strokes, according to one system or another. Proponents of Hanyu Pinyin input systems insist that even though the use of the *Wu Bi Xing* Five Stroke character input system by the Chinese government and businesses under their influence does promote its general use throughout China, nevertheless many (educated) private individuals prefer the Hanyu Pinyin input system, and that many character stroke input users are often forced to switch to Hanyu Pinyin input when they cannot figure out the character-stroke coding of a characters in the *Wu Bi Xing* system (see Rohsenow, 2001, pp. 134–135). For users of Hanyu Pinyin input systems, standardization of what constitutes a 'word' is obviously of great importance in terms of efficiency. Increasing refinements of the orthographic principles for word division (cf. Guojia Jishu Jianduju, 1996; Yin & Felley 1990; Yin et al, 2002) and word lists (e.g. *Hanyu Pinyin Cihui* (1991)) and dictionaries (DeFrancis, 1996) are evidence of continuing research and progress in the standardization of Hanyu Pinyin, which advocates of its eventual use as a parallel writing system for Chinese know are necessary prerequisites to that end. (On the history and possibility of *digraphia* in China, see Su, 2001a; Rohsenow, 2001).

Another great hope of Hanyu Pinyin advocates is a twenty year experiment in easing the burdens of some Chinese children and illiterates in their learning to read and write using Chinese characters through the extremely successful *Zhuyin Shizi, Tiqian Duxie* ('Phonetically Annotated Character Recognition Promotes Earlier Reading and Writing' or 'ZT') Experiment, which has been on-going in the PRC since 1982. To paraphrase what I have noted elsewhere (Rohsenow, 1996, p. 33), the 'ZT' Experiment

> ... is an educational program carried out in a number of primary schools [and adult education classes for illiterates and semi-literates] throughout mainland China with the encouragement of the State Language Commission and ... the State Education Commission of the PRC. Under this innovative pedagogical program, Chinese children [and adult illiterates] are taught to read and write standard Mandarin Chinese using [the] Hanyu Pinyin [alphabet] in addition to Chinese characters for the first two years of their education. In contrast to the standard curriculum, under which [students] are only taught Hanyu Pinyin for the first two *months* purely as a phonetic notational device for the pronunciation of Chinese characters, under this "*Zhu-Ti* " experimental curriculum, children [and other beginning learners] are encouraged to develop their reading and writing skills in standard Mandarin Chinese using Hanyu Pinyin for the first two *years.* The [beginning learners] are thus not hampered in their reading and writing development by knowing only a limited number of Chinese characters; within a few weeks they are able to read and write (phonetically) anything that they can say. After more than [twenty] years, results show that students taught using this ["ZT"] method learn to read and write *using Chinese characters* faster and at a higher level than most students who are taught by more traditional methods.

In continuing to improve efficiency in Pinyin to Chinese character conversion software and in improving basic education and literacy, Hanyu Pinyin retains the role of an auxiliary system assisting in overcoming some of the difficulties of the age old, non-phonetic Chinese character writing system. Privately, many supporters

of such research and uses of Hanyu Pinyin look forward to a day when Latin alphabet-based phonetic notation system becomes sufficiently familiar to a large enough population of Chinese users that it can become a *de facto* alternate writing system for Putonghua, existing in a state of digraphia with the Chinese character writing system. This, of course, is exactly what the opponents of Hanyu Pinyin fear most, for a variety of reasons. But one clear prerequisite for such a situtation is of course that speakers and writers of Chinese be familiar enough with the pronunciation of (or at least the standard *spelling* of) words in Hanyu Pinyin (as well as the concept of what constitutes a 'word' as a unit), which is exactly the set of circumstances which the above-mentioned uses of Hanyu Pinyin as a auxiliary system are designed to promote.

After a brief hiatus caused by the Tiananmen Incident in 1989, China continued its modernization and general relaxation of strictures in non-politically sensitive areas, while at the same time becoming more open to, and sensitive to, opinions from (potential investors and supporters in) Chinese communities abroad. While not appearing in regular publications, nevertheless traditional, old style complex Chinese characters still in use in Hong Kong, Taiwan and most overseas Chinese communities abroad began to (re)appear in shop signs, university and commercial logos, gaining a certain popular *cachet.* At the same time, many in education and language reform circles were equally distressed by the continued popular use (in handwriting) of some of the abbreviated characters from the officially abandoned Second Chinese Character Simplification Scheme, as well as other more newly-coined simplifications. While Hong Kong is permitted to continue to use its traditional old-style complex characters after its retrocession to China in 1997, those who may have feared the abandonment of simplified characters within the PRC itself were placated by CCP General Party Secretary Jiang Zemin's statement on December 14, 1992 that "The direction of the simplification of Chinese characters cannot change." (China, 2001b, p. 303)[10]

Following the 1986 meeting, the SLC reacted to what it perceived as an increasingly "chaotic" situtation by issuing a series of directives against the use of non-standard characters in public, some of which were accompanied by administrative measures designed to enforce compliance. In a few cases, businesses in Beijing were reportedly forced at great cost to remove and replace signs containing unauthorized characters, which in turn was perceived by many as excessive.[11]

Another aspect of the desire for increased enforcement of standardization growing out of the 1986 meeting was a proposal for the development of a National Proficiency Grading System for [Spoken] Putonghua (*Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi Dengji Biaozhun*; literally: 'Standards for Measurement and Grading of Levels of Putonghua' or "PSC"). In 1988 the State Language Commission, with the assistance of the National Foundation for Social Science, established an investigation group which, after three years of research, formulated a set of draft standards, which were then in 1992 distributed to the various provinces, autonomous regions and central municipalities for discussion as *"Guo Yu Pu* 1992 Document No. 4." After revision by the group in 1994, the State Language Commission, the State Education Commission, and the Office of Broadcasting, Film and Television jointly issued a

report of their decision (*Guo Yu,* 1994, No. 143), which was then redistributed to the various provinces, regions, and cities for continued trial. After six years of consultation, and trials, this set of standards was proposed in a "Trial Version" by the State Language Commission on December 5, 1997. Note that the PSC standards, which focus on "reading aloud and free conversation," concentrate primarily on accuracy of pronunciation (including tones) and fluency, but also require correct (oral) use of standard vocabulary and grammar (China, 2001b, pp. 172–175; Li et al, 1999, pp. 218–219).

## 4. THE EVOLUTION OF THE 2001 LANGUAGE LAW

Both the attempts at enforcement of administrative measures against improper public use of unauthorized Chinese character forms, as well as the development of formal standards for the measurement and grading of spoken Putonghua may be seen as part of a growing trend in the 1990s to experiment with the (re)introduction of *law* into the People's Republic, which had been largely absent since its founding in 1949. According to the authoritative *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Bao* (Chinese Education News, November 2, 2000; reprinted in China, 2001b, pp. 302–305), in response to "widespread concern" with the above-mentioned "chaotic" situation in terms of language use, in March, 1994 twenty-two representatives of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference drawn from educational, language reform and cultural circles published a "Proposal for the Immediate Establishment of a Law for the Increased Supervision of Language and Script" (*Guanyu Jiachang Yuyan Wenzi Guanli, Jinkuai lifa de Changyi Shu*) in the Chinese Education News. Between 1990 and 1996 ninety-seven proposals and recommendations were put forward in both the People's Congress and the Political Consultative Conference, including twenty-eight proposals in the People's Congress for the speedy enactment of such a law. In 1996 at the fourth meeting of the eighth session of the Congress, such calls reached an all time high, with 227 representatives presenting seven proposals requesting the enactment of a language law. In 1997 at the fifth meeting of the Congress' eighth session, 164 members submitted an additional five such proposals.

On October 28, 1996 the twenty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of the eighth session of the People's Congress forwarded the report of the Committee on Education, Research, Culture and Health concerning the National People's Congress representatives' above-mentioned requests, agreeing that that committee should take the lead in drafting a proposed "Language and Script Law of the PRC" (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Yuyan Wenzi Fa* (sic)), and added it to the Standing Committee's 1997 plan for enactment of laws. Work on the drafting of the language law by the State Language Commission and the National People's Congress' Committee on Education, Research, Culture and Health formally commenced in January 1997. The working group carried out extensive investigations concerning actual language and script use conditions in thirty cities and counties throughout China's major metropolitan regions, provinces and autonomous regions, as well as investigating language law policies in other countries (cf. China, 2001b, pp.

295–301). The group also held eight forums in consultation with minority peoples, language work offices, linguists, and legal scholars, seeking opinions from all quarters, before drafting the proposed law. After being discussed and passed at the forty-ninth meeting of the Committee on Education, Research, Culture and Health, the draft was submitted to the Standing Committee of the eighth session of the National People's Congress. Taking into consideration the complex nature of the language and script needs of the minority peoples (China's minority peoples' rights to their own languages and scripts have long been protected by the PRC Constitution, see M. Zhou, this volume), in February of 2000 a meeting of the heads of the committee decided to restrict the scope of the proposed law to Putonghua and changed the name of the draft to the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the ***National Commonly Used*** Language and Script" (*Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo* ***Guojia Tongyong*** *Yuyan Wenzi Fa*). On July 5, 2000 the Standing Committee of the NPC held a meeting on this draft and made suggestions for revisions. On October 31, 2000, this new law was passed at the eighteenth meeting of the Ninth Session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and on the same day CCP Chairman Jiang Zemin signed an executive order proclaiming this law (China, 2001b, p. 3 and pp. 304–305). The complete text of the Law is appended to this chapter.

Changes made to the initial draft of the law and the reasons given for them give interesting insights into differences in standards and desires between the language reformers and educators who initially drafted the proposed law on one hand vs. the more socially aware government leaders who reviewed and revised it into its final form on the other. In reviewing the initial draft proposal of the law, on August 17, 2000 the Law Committee of the National People's Congress had made a number of observations and changes (see China, 2001b, pp. 19–21). Noting that language is by its very nature an evolving phenomenon, the Law Committee recommended that the law should leave room for flexibility in its provisions. Specifically Article 6 was revised to read that "The regulations and standards for language promulgated by the nation are to regulate the usage of language and script in society, to support teaching and scientific research on language and script, in order to promote standardization, enrichment and development." In addition to the alteration of the name of the law to make it clear that it refers only to China's *"National Commonly Used* Language and Script" (i.e. Putonghua, and simplified Chinese characters), rather than *all* of China's languages and scripts, Article 8 was also strengthened to clarify that minority languages are protected and regulated by the PRC Constitution, as well as by laws in China's autonomous regions and elsewhere (see M. Zhou, this volume).

The Law Committee also noted that while requirements concerning script and language use in official documents, educational institutions, news media and publishing should be strict, on the other hand regulations on spoken language and normal social intercourse should be more relaxed. The Law Committee therefore recommended (1) that the original wording of Article 13 that public businesses must use both (spoken) Putonghua and standard Chinese characters be changed to require only the use of standard Chinese characters. (2) The draft requirement in Article 19 that all broadcast personnel, teachers, and personnel in government organizations and related offices must be rated according to the (above-mentioned) PSC grading

system of spoken Chinese and reach a nationally fixed standard was amended to read merely that "the Putonghua level of broadcasters, program hosts, and of film, television and stage actors, as well as teachers and personnel in government offices who use Putonghua ought to achieve a fixed national standard," without specifically stating how that standard was to be evaluated. (3) The draft of Article 24 stating that a special department for language and script work under the Standing Committee would be responsible for implementing the PSC exam was changed to read only that such a department would promulgate standards for the PSC exam.

Lastly, the Law Committee pointed out that language standardization is a long evolutionary process, which absolutely cannot be forced, and that proposals in the draft for the imposition of fines would be extremely hard to carry out. Therefore the original proposed articles recommending fines were eliminated, and draft Articles 26 and 27 were combined to read: "Those who violate the regulations of Section 2 of this Law, who do not use language and script according to the national regulations on language and script, may be criticized by citizens, and the relevant administrative departments may also issue warnings, urging corrections within a set time." (China, 2001b, pp. 19–21)

Thus we see in the formulation and the evolution of the Language Law of 2001 a realistic appreciation of the limits of 'social engineering' where the daily use of language is concerned, combined with a reaffirmation of the premier legal status of China's commonly used national language and simplified Chinese character script, and of the authority of China's language reform organizations to continue (under the supervision of the State Council) to promote regularization and standardization of language use and continued promotion of the common language in both its spoken and written forms. The standardization of the written forms, both in simplified characters and in the Hanyu Pinyin alphabet, is preserved; increased use of Putonghua by government officials and in public interactions is encouraged, but not to be harshly enforced by unrealistic, excessive measures, and the use of dialects in necessary or appropriate situations is authorized. And once again, the rights of China's minorities to the maintenance of their own spoken languages and scripts are reaffirmed.

From the initial historic accomplishments of the simplification of Chinese characters, the invention and spread of the Hanyu Pinyin alphabet, and the massive strides in literacy education and the promotion of Putonghua as a *lingua franca* throughout China in the 1950s, there has been a shift in emphasis away from any further modification of the Chinese character writing system and any dreams of the rapid implementation of the use of Hanyu Pinyin as an independent writing system. Language reform work is not isolated from political or historical forces, neither in the past nor in China's increasingly open present as it rushes to join the globalized world system. As social, political and technological circumstances change, language and script policies must also evolve. While at one end of the social spectrum, many of China's 'masses' remain illiterate or semi-literate, with many still monolingual in their native topolects or dialects, many others in China's more technologically sophisticated cities, who are educated and fluent in standard Putonghua, face different challenges in their daily use of language and script. Just as the invention of (the technology of) the brush pen affected the forms and uses of China's antique

logographic writing system in satisfying the 'information processing' needs of its day, so the importation of the computer and the Western keyboard is having an inevitable effect on the language and scripts used for China's information processing needs today. Computers and modern information processing technology demand absolute standardization of forms, and high efficiency in information input systems. The search for efficient input systems for Chinese characters has given rise to a number of competing input systems. As noted above, in order to be efficient, alphabetic input systems for Chinese must overcome the age-old problem of homophony in Chinese, and writers must be familiar enough with standard Putonghua pronunciation (or more accurately speaking, with the standard alphabetic *spelling* of entire *words* in Hanyu Pinyin, and with the concept of the 'word' as a unit) for that technology to be efficient for Chinese. These prerequisites would obviously require great educational and cognitive changes in Chinese language users, and may also have additional unanticipated consequences. To give one example, in contemporary China computer use by Chinese for writing and communication is said to be causing a deterioration of traditional handwriting skills, given that the memory-motor coordination necessary for remembering how to write Chinese characters is not being reinforced by constant handwriting practice (Lee, 2001). Also, as noted above, if familiarity with standardized pronunciation, spelling and word division in Hanyu Pinyin were to become widespread, and the use of Hanyu Pinyin input systems were to become common, it is possible that *Pinyin* to character conversion systems might become redundant, and texts might simply begin to be transmitted and read purely in Pinyin. Alternatively, it is possible that a mixed Pinyin-Chinese character writing system such as that used in Japan with phonetic *kana* script mixed with Chinese characters might evolve. Language planners can only deal with the problems of the present and do their best to provide reasonable standards for efficient public education and use. But in the end language and script use will evolve as they will; only the future can tell.

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## 5. NOTES

1. Chen (1999, p. 155) says 1952, but both China (2001b, p. 303) and Li et al (1999, p. 266) say that the Committee was founded in December 1954. Note that the specific dates and names of all of the formal language reform measures cited in the following detailed history are taken from China (2001b, pp. 264–274 and 302–305). Although *Zhongguo Wenzi Gaige Weiyuanhui* translates strictly as 'Chinese Committee on Script Reform,' because its purview encompassed more than mere writing reform, it is often referred to in English as the 'Committee on Language Reform.' All translations in this article (including the Appendix) are by the author.
2. For details of the various versions of the drafts of the Scheme for Simplified Characters, see Chen, 1999, pp. 154–155.
3. As to the "major unanswered question of exactly what motivated the turnabout in policy" (DeFrancis, 1984b,p. 258) from replacement of traditional Chinese characters bv a phoneticized script to one of simplification of Chinese characters, Zhou Youguang (2002): personal communication) believes

that Mao's support for an alphabetic script for Chinese was changed by advice from Stalin during Mao's trip to Moscow in December of 1949. Zhou says that Stalin told Mao that a great country such as China should not employ a foreign alphabet, but should have a writing system based on its own script. This may explain why after his return to China, Mao began to emphasize the 'national-in-form' aspect of the writing reform project, focussing on simplified Chinese characters as the primary writing system.. (see DeFrancis, 1984b, pp. 257–259, 262–264, 295.) Chen also notes in a footnote (1999, p. 209, n.10:3) that there had been some pressure by visiting Soviet experts during the 'honeymoon' period between the Soviet Union and China after Stalin's death in 1953 for the Chinese to adopt a phonetic system based on the Cyrillic alphabet, (see also DeFrancis, 1984b, p. 262). But in the end in 1958 the committee decided to favor the Latin alphabet over the Cyrillic (as they had with the development of *Ladinghua Xin Wenzi* when working with Soviet linguists in the late 1920s). This appears to have nothing to do with the Sino-Soviet split of the late 1950s, which culminated in the withdrawal of Soviet advisors from China in 1960.

4. As Chen rightly points out, it is significant that the first draft of the Hanyu Pinyin scheme presented to the National Conference on Script Reform in October 1955 was entitled Hanyu Pinyin *Wenzi (Lading Zimu Shi) Cao 'an Chugao* (First Draft of the Chinese Phonetic *Writing System* (in the Latin Alphabet)), but the later versions presented in 1956 and 1958 were entitled simply *Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an* (Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Spelling), "with the crucial term *wenzi* ('writing system') deleted." (Chen, 1999, pp. 188–189)
5. The General List of Simplified Characters published in 1964 was revised in 1986, with minor changes, including a few characters which resumed their original traditional complex forms (see China, 2001b, pp. 181–208.)
6. For details of the political machinations behind the delay in publication of the SCCSS from 1975 to 1977, see Rohsenow (1986, pp. 76–79). For a technical critique of the Second Scheme's shortcomings, see Chen (1999, pp. 159–162).
7. For details on the principles of the "revision" of the SCCSS, see Rohsenow (1986: 80–83).
8. For more details on this point, and also my analysis of the reasons for the change in policy, see Rohsenow (2001).
9. This was officially published as GB/T 16159 – 1996 by the National Technology Supervision Bureau (China, 1996; China, 2001b, pp. 122–137). For my translation of these orthographic rules for the SLC, which was submitted to the International Standards Organization, see DeFrancis (1996, pp. 835–845).
10. Perhaps the most persistent and vociferous advocates of the return to traditional Chinese characters are those centered around an expatriate Chinese woman returned from the United States and later member of the People's Political Consultative Conference named Yuan Xiaoyuan, whose privately funded "Xiaoyuan Language and Cultural Science and Technology Research Center" has published dozens of books in support of, and demanding "justice for," traditional Chinese characters (e.g, see DeFrancis, 1984b, p. 276, Lu, 1987).
11. For an insightful discussion of the situation in the 1990s, see Chen (1999, pp. 191–201). For a short sampling of editorials on observing standardization in advertising, see Yu, (1995).

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## 7. APPENDIX

### The Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the PRC

(Passed by the eighteenth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ninth Session of the National Peoples Congress on October 31, 2000.)

**CONTENTS:**

**Section 1: General Principles**
**Section 2: Applications of the Law of the National Commonly Used Languages and Script**
**Section 3: Administration and Supervision**
**Section 4: Note**

#### Section 1: General Principles

**Article 1:** In accordance with the Constitution, this law is formulated in order to promote the regularization and standardization of the national commonly used language and script, as well as its healthy development, to cause the nation's commonly used language and script to become eve more widely used in society, and to accelerate economic and cultural exchange between various nationalities and regions.

**Article 2:** The national commonly used language and script referred to in this law are Putonghua and standard Chinese characters.

**Article 3:** The state will promote Putonghua and employ standard Chinese characters.

**Article 4:** Citizens have the right to study and to use the national commonly used language and script. The state will supply the necessary conditions for citizens to study and use the national commonly used language and script.

The People's government offices and other departments at the various local levels shall adopt measures to promote Putonghua and to put standard Chinese characters into practice.

**Article 5:** The use of the national commonly used language and script shall be beneficial to maintaining national sovereignty and dignity, be beneficial to national integrity and unity, and be beneficial to the growth of socialist material and spiritual civilization.

**Article 6:** The state will issue regulations and standards for the national commonly used language and script, administer the use of the national commonly used language and script in society, support teaching and scientific research of the national commonly used language and script, and promote the regularization, enrichment and development of the national commonly used language and script.

**Article 7:** The state will encourage and reward organizations and individuals who make outstanding contributions to the cause of the national commonly used language and script.

**Article 8:** The various nationalities all have the freedom to use and develop their own languages and scripts. The use of the ethnic minorities' languages and scripts will follow the regulations [set] in the Constitution, the Law of Regional Autonomy for Minority Naitonalities, and other national laws.

#### Section 2: Applications of the Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script

**Article 9:** The state takes Putonghua and standard [simplified] Chinese characters as the language and script for state business. The law also provides for regulated exceptions.

**Article 10:** Schools and other educational organizations will take Putonghua and standard Chinese characters as the basic language and characters to be used in teaching and study. The law also provides for regulated exceptions.

Schools and other educational organizations will teach Putonghua and standard Chinese characters using a Chinese language curriculum. The Chinese language materials used shall meet the regulations and standards for the national commonly used language and script.

**Article 11:** Publications in Chinese shall meet the regulations and standards for the national commonly used language and script.

Foreign languages and scripts used in Chinese publications shall employ the national commonly used language and script to make the necessary notations.

**Article 12:** Radio and television stations will take Putonghua as the basic language of broadcasting.

Those who wish to use foreign languages to broadcast must have the approval of the Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting of the State Council.

**Article 13:** The public service industry will employ standard Chinese characters as the basic script to be used in public service. When needed for public service, signs, advertisements, announcements, and trade logos, etc. which use foreign language scripts as well as Chinese, shall use standard Chinese characters.

The use of Putonghua as the language of service in the public service industry is encouraged..

**Article 14:** The national commonly used language and script shall be used as the basic language and script in the following situations:

(1) The language and script used in radio, film and television;
(2) The script to be used in all publicly used facilities;
(3) The script on signs and advertisements;
(4) The names of for profit and non-profit organizations;
(5) The wrappings and instructions of all products sold domestically.

**Article 15:** The national commonly used language and script used in all information processing and information technology products shall meet the regulations and standards for the national commonly used language and script.

**Article 16:** Under the relevant regulations of this section, dialects may be used in the following situations:

(1) When really necessary to carry out public business by national level government personnel;
(2) Language used in broadcasting approved by the Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting of the State Council;
(3) When needed for use in artistic forms such as stage, film and television;
(4) When necessary in publications, teaching, and research.

**Article 17:** Under the relevant regulations of this section, [old style] complex characters and variant characters are permitted to be used in the following situations:

(1) On historical relics and sites;
(2) Variant characters in personal names;
(3) Artistic works such as calligraphy, seal carving, etc.
(4) Handwritten characters on inscriptions and signs;
(5) When needed for use in publications, teaching and research;
(6) Under special conditions approved by offices of the State Council.

**Article 18:** The national commonly used language and script will employ the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing *(Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an)* as the instrument for spelling and sound annotation.

The Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing is the uniform standard for the spelling in the Latin alphabet of Chinese personal names, place names, and literature and documents in Chinese, and is to be used in places where Chinese characters are inconvenient or impossible to use.

Elementary education shall use the Scheme for Chinese Phonetic Writing [Hanyu Pinyin] in teaching.

**Article 19:** In all positions in which Putonghua is the working language, those personnel should possess the ability to speak Putonghua.

The level of Putonghua of broadcasters, program hosts, and film, television and stage actors as their working language should conform to different standard levels as fixed by the state; those who have not yet met the standard levels set by the state should undertake training at the appropriate level.

**Article 20:** Chinese language teaching for foreigners shall teach Putonghua and standard Chinese characters.

### Section 3: Administration and Supervision

**Article 21:** Planning, assistance, administration and supervision of work on the national commonly used language and script is the responsibility of the Offices of Language and Script Work of the State Council.

The ministries and offices of the State Council will administer the use of the national commonly used language and script through their own [administrative] system.

**Article 22:** Local language and script work offices and other related offices will administer and supervise the use of the national commonly used language and script within their own administrative areas.

**Article 23:** The commerce departments of People's governments above the level of the county will carry out the administration and supervision of the use of language and script in commercial names, product names, and advertisements according to the law.

**Article 24:** The language and script work office of the State Council will issue standards for the [Proficiency] Grading System for [Spoken] Putonghua [*Putonghua Shuiping Ceshi Dengji Biaozhun*].

**Article 25:** The translations of such proper nouns as foreign personal names, place names, etc. into the national commonly used language and script will be systematically examined and approved by the language and script office of the State Council or other relevant offices.

**Article 26:** Citizens may make criticisms of and suggestions to those who violate the regulations of Section 2 of this law and who do not use language and script according to the regulations and standards of the national commonly used language and script.

For those who violate the relevant sections of Section 2 of this law in terms of the use of language by [broadcast, teaching and government] personnel [as specified] in Section two of Article 19, the work units concerned shall carry out criticism and education of those personnel directly responsible; those who refuse to make corrections will be dealt with by the units concerned.

Those who violate the relevant regulations of Section 2 of this law concerning the use of [proper] script in urban public facilities, signs and advertisements will be ordered to make corrections by the relevant administrative offices; those who refuse to make corrections will be warned and officially urged to make timely corrections.

**Article 27:** Those who violate the regulations of this law, interfering with others' study and use of the national commonly used language and script, will be ordered to make timely corrections and given warnings by the relevant administrative offices.

**Section 4: Appendix**

**Article 28:** This law will take effect on January 1, 2001.

(This unofficial translation is by J.S. Rohsenow, with supplementary information added [thus].)

LONGSHENG GUO

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUTONGHUA AND CHINESE DIALECTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Status planning essentially represents both social concerns and social implementation of language planning (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 37). Whatever social concerns there are, status planning always selects among competing languages/dialects a language/dialect for a higher status and designates it for dominant and broader functions (Cooper, 1989, pp. 99–121; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 31; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999, p. 39). Depending on the motivating social concerns, status planning may or may not make any overt policy statement about the fate or status of the competing languages/dialects when the selection is made. For example, while selecting Hebrew as the official language, status planning in Israel treats Arabic as a statutory language, recognizing the linguistic and ethnic distinctiveness of the Arabic (see Cooper, 1989, pp. 100–101; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999). On the other hand, designating English as the only official language, California's 1986 and 1998 propositions denied the legitimacy of the use of non-English languages in governmental and educational domains, attempting to force minority groups to assimilate into the English-speaking majority (cf. Crawford, 2000, pp. 104-127; Cooper, 1989, pp. 101–102). Thus, it is enlightening for students of language policy to study the relationship between the selected language/dialect and the once-competing ones.

This chapter examines the evolution of China's policy statements regarding the relationship between Putonghua as the official speech and the "competing" Chinese dialects in its half-century language planning. First, I review China's understanding or misunderstanding of the relationship between Putonghua and Chinese dialects in the 1950s and the underpinning social concerns. Second, I examine China's reconsideration of the relationship in the 1980s and early 1990s. Third, I discuss China's redefinition of the relationship since the mid-1990s. I conclude with remarks on the relationship between policy-making processes and social concerns.

## 2. INITIAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Mandarin Chinese was officially adopted as the common speech – Putonghua – for the PRC at the beginning of 1956 (China, 1996a, pp. 10–15). Putonghua is officially

*M. Zhou (ed.), Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949*, 45–53.
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defined "to have Beijing speech as its standard pronunciation, the northern Chinese dialect as its base dialect, and modern Chinese literary classics written in vernacular Chinese as its grammatical norm" (China, 1996a, p. 12; also see Rohsenow, this volume). What is the relationship between Putonghua and other Chinese dialects in everyday life? Both China's policy-makers and dialect-speaking masses appeared to have some misconceptions of the relationship in the early days of Putonghua promotion. It took several decades for both of them to reach a healthy understanding of this relationship.

When the 1950s policy statements concerning the relationship between Putonghua and dialects are reviewed, it becomes obvious that Chinese dialects were thought to be eventually replaced by Putonghua in every domain of language use. Let us examine two 1950s policy statements and to see how the early policy spelled out the fate for Chinese dialects.

Before Putonghua was officially adopted as the national speech, on October 26, 1955, the *People's Daily*—the official newspaper of the CCP – published an editorial "Strive to promote the reform of the Chinese script, the spread of Putonghua, and the standardization of Chinese". The editorial stressed:

> We should vigorously advocate the importance of the spread of Putonghua, so that people know correctly the relationship between dialects and Putonghua. Putonghua serves the people of the whole country, and dialects serve the people of an area. To spread Putonghua does not mean to wipe out dialects artificially, but to reduce the scope of dialect use progressively. This is in line with the objective laws of social progress. Dialects are to exist side by side with Putonghua for quite a long period, but the use of Putonghua must be expanded constantly. We should advocate speaking Putonghua on public occasions and using Putonghua as the literary language. We should eliminate localism that does not accept Putonghua, is not willing to listen to Putonghua, and even does not allow children to speak Putonghua, and we should eradicate the phenomenon of abusive use of dialects in publications, especially literary works.

This editorial shows that the official position in the 1950s was that the spread of Putonghua does not "wipe out dialects **artificially",** but "reduce the scope of dialect use **progressively"**[emphases mine]. This position was usually associated with two assumptions. The first assumption was that not wiping out dialects **artificially** does not exclude replacing dialects by other means. The objective of reducing "the scope of dialect use **progressively"** implies the second assumption that as the scope of Putonghua use widened the scope of Chinese dialect use would narrow, and dialects would ultimately be driven out of daily communication and die out. Obviously, these two assumptions would be harmful to the promotion and spread of Putonghua.

To promote proper understanding of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects, in 1958 Premier Zhou Enlai of the PRC State Council pointed out in his report "Current tasks of script reform" that:

> The promotion of Putonghua has as its goal the removal of the barrier of dialects, not the prohibition or abolition of dialects. Does the promotion of Putonghua mean to prohibit or abolish the dialects? Of course, not. Dialects will exist for a long time. They cannot be prohibited by administrative order, nor can they be abolished by artificial measures. In the promotion of Putonghua, distinctions should be made between old and young people; between activities on a national scale and those of a local nature; between the present and the future. There should be no overgeneralization. On the other hand, those who can speak only Putonghua should learn local dialects so that they will

> be able to make close contact with the working people in dialect communities. (Zhou, 1958, p. 8)

Premier Zhou's view that dialects "cannot be prohibited by administrative order, nor can they be abolished by artificial measures" still gave people the impression that in the future dialects will eventually die out. But clearly, his view showed much more tolerance of dialects, and it was a step forward for China's proper understanding of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects as compared to the earlier view.

However, the basic official view that Chinese dialects are to be eventually replaced by Putonghua persisted until the 1980s, without any further change. As late as 1986, the theme report of that year's national working conference on spoken and written Chinese pointed out that:

> To promote Putonghua does not mean an artificial abolition of Chinese dialects. The major objective is to remove barriers created by these dialects so that communication may be facilitated. (China, 1987, p. 26)

China's view of the relationship between Putonghua and Chinese dialects can be traced to the social concerns underpinning the China's language policy. Since China's repeated defeats by Western powers in the 1840s, the reform of the Chinese written language and the pursuit of a unified Chinese oral language have been considered important measures to modernize China (see P. Chen, 1999, pp. 13–30; Y. Zhou, 1992, pp. 204–215). China's promotion of Putonghua is an integrate part of over-a-century continuing efforts at China's modernization (cf. China, 1955, pp. 37–47). The underpinning social concerns determined, in the early stage, that Putonghua be promoted at any expenses, and moreover Chinese dialects were considered barriers to the modernization efforts. Premier Zhou Enlai made this point clear in his 1956 executive order on the national-wide official promotion of Putonghua:

> Many unintelligible dialects have hindered the communication between people from different dialect communities and caused many inconveniences for China's socialist construction . . . these phenomena must be effectively eliminated in order to protect the interest of China's political, economic, cultural and national defence development. (China, 1996a, p. 12)

Under China's then social concerns, dialects were considered harmful to its national unity, national security, and socialist construction, so that these dialects were no doubt targets of elimination. The question was only whether to eradicate dialects artificially (meaning by strong administrative measures) or to allow them to die out naturally as Putonghua spread to every domain of language use.

Under this circumstance, the dialect-speaking masses also had concerns and uncertainty about the future of their dialects and doubts about the role of Putonghua in their daily life. The early misconception that the abolition of dialects was a goal of Putonghua promotion was caused by four general factors (cf. China, 1956, pp. 111–128). First, people did not recognize the great significance of Putonghua promotion for communication throughout the whole country. They thought that Putonghua would replace dialects completely. Second, the misunderstanding was aided by the mindset of the time. Some people thought that to speak Putonghua

meant to forget their past sufferings; to cut themselves from the masses, and to talk like a bureaucrat. They did not support learning Putonghua, and even opposed it. They adopted an attitude of ridicule towards those who were learning and speaking Putonghua. Third, there were no adequate conditions for people to learn Putonghua, and thus they did not develop the ability to speak it. Without facilitating conditions, people could not speak Putonghua well, so that they were afraid of being ridiculed by others and developed a negative psychological reaction.

Fourth, and finally, people did not understand the nature of Putonghua promotion and the natural laws of the development of Putonghua (T. Chen, 1990). In order to promote Putonghua, language workers must first study Putonghua, including its definition, phonetic standards, lexical standards, and grammatical standards, and also study the problems that have arisen in the process of Putonghua promotion. The study of Putonghua presumes the study of dialects, because Putonghua is based on the northern dialects. In order to study the northern dialects thoroughly, language workers must contrast them with other dialects, which means that they must also study other dialects. But in those years there were not enough such studies.

Language planners' incompletely understanding and dialect speakers' misunderstanding of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects in the early years were not helpful, if not harmful, to the promotion of Putonghua in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.

## 3. RECONSIDERING THE RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between Putonghua and Chinese dialects has been one of the most important issues in China's academic circles since the 1950s, but not much work was done on it because the early policy statements did not leave room for such studies. After China started its reform in the late 1970s and particularly since it deepened its reform in the 1980s, Chinese linguists begun to conduct research on the relationship between Putonghua and Chinese dialects as well as on language use in dialectal communities, and also begun to reconsider the status of Chinese dialects in dialect-speaking communities while the spread of Putonghua progressed rapidly (cf. Yu, 1990; Zhan, 1993). Many of these studies have appeared in a book series *Shuangyu Shuang Fangyan* [Bilingualism and bidialectalism] published by Hanxue Press since 1992.

In the past, when they approached the relationship between Putonghua and dialects from the point of view of language planning, both language planners and scholars had the tendency to focus on the purity of language (cf. China, 1987). They used to pay attention only to the "typical" languages, either the "pure" national common language or typical dialects. Consequently research is either on Putonghua or on dialects. China's publications either on Putonghua or dialects (a series of dialect dictionaries) in the 1980s clearly demonstrate this tendency.

In the early years, language workers in China overlooked the linguistic phenomena between pure Putonghua and typical dialects, that is, the phenomena resulting from contact between Putonghua and dialects (see Saillard and Blum, this volume). They did not seem to realize that bidialectalism exist side by side in a

community (cf. Zhan, 1994). Therefore, they knew little of the positive role that bidialectalism may have played in the process of Putonghua spread, not to mention that studies of the transitional stages from dialect to Putonghua and from interlanguage to Putonghua may provide a theoretical basis for a more positive and realistic impetus to the promotion of Putonghua.

China's language workers appeared to be taken by surprise when there was a dialect revival in public language use in the late 1980s, though the use of Putonghua had been rapidly spreading and the attitudes had been changing since then (see M. Zhou, 2001). The revival stirred a heated discussion on the relationship between Putonghua and dialects. At a 1990 symposium on Putonghua and dialects sponsored by the Institute of Applied Linguistics of the State Language Commission, the relationship between the national language and dialects became a topic of general interest (see Yu, 1990). Many scholars and language specialists found fault with the revival and criticized extensive dialect use. Fortunately, the revival drew scholars and language planners' attention and forced them to study and reconsider the relationship between Putonghua and dialects – studies that eventually changed the way language workers and policy-makers view dialects (see Zhan, 1996).

What is the relationship between Putonghua and dialects and what is the role of dialects in Putonghua spread? To answer these questions, Hou Jingyi, a leading scholar at the Institute of Linguistics, has raised a good point regarding the diversity of language use and the confirmation of the leading position of Putonghua:

> To use the mother tongue dialect and Putonghua simultaneously is a social demand and is a natural trend. When the mother tongue dialect and Putonghua are used simultaneously, the relationship between them should not be mutually exclusive, but should be complementary, and in this mutually complementary relationship, the leading position of Putonghua should be gradually established. This issue merits our attention. (Hou, 1994, p. 76)

Other scholars held the same view and stressed that Putonghua and dialect would coexist, instead of the latter being replaced by the former (see Zhan, 1996). A theoretical breakthrough in China's language planning came when the complementary relationship between Putonghua and dialects was officially accepted by the PRC State Language Commission:

> Now we recognize that people who use language are diverse and the life of language is diverse, which certainly facilitates language diversity: The value of Putonghua lies in facilitating free communication, without dialect barriers, among the people of the whole country. Putonghua must be the principal language. The value of dialects lies in facilitating communication among people in dialect communities and enables family members to express their feelings and ideas. Dialects complement Putonghua. (Xu, 1999, pp. 164–165)

This is an example of how both scholars and policy-makers in China have reached a consensus on the future of the diversity of language use and on the new relationship between Putonghua and dialects in China's language planning. This view is one between the principal and the subordinate, with the former being the principal.

Obviously there have been always concerns about dialect use, but representing the State Language Commission, Director Xu Jialu has made it clear that:

> The basic law of language development is that along with industrialization and modernization of information in society, the flow of mobile people and information will necessarily increase rapidly. A language will inevitably become more dominant in certain regions. The regional dominant language will bring speakers close to the national dominant language. People from different areas will learn the communicative means common to the whole nation, that is, the national commonly used language on their own initiative. To promote and to spread the national commonly used language among people does not mean to wipe out dialects. Actually, dialects cannot be exterminated. The experience of Putonghua promotion for the past several decades on the mainland and the current status of dialects in the whole country have proved this point. (Xu, 1999, p. 271)

It must be pointed out that the reconsideration of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects was possible because China's reform had changed the way people view things. In the past, the dominance of uniformity was considered healthy while the existence of diversity was seen as harmful, particularly in policy making and implementation. By the 1980s, China's reform had already brought a lot of policy diversity, such as "special economic zones" where Western countries' ways of doing business were introduced and "one country and two systems" which allowed the reunion of a capitalist Hong Kong with a socialist China in 1997 (see Zhang & Yang, this volume). The environment of policy diversity and the rapid economic development in southern China where many unintelligible dialects are spoken made language workers realize that a national commonly-used language will facilitate China's modernization but diverse dialects will not necessarily hinder it, and may even enrich it (see Zhan, 1996). This new view revolutionized the social concerns underpinning China's language planning, and eventually led to the redefinition of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects.

## 4. REDEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP

After nearly a decade of reconsideration of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects, China's language planners began to redefine it in the mid-1990s. The official redefinition of this relationship started in 1995 and was completed in 2000 when the *Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the PRC* was passed by the Chinese National People's Congress (see Rohsenow, this volume).

Scholars had explored more extensively the relationship between Putonghua since the 1990 symposium, and their views began to be considered by policy-makers. In 1995, at the 40th anniversary of the reform of the Chinese script and the standardization of modern Chinese, Vice-Premier Li Lanqing of the State Council made the following comment on the relationship between Putonghua and dialects:

> To uphold the legal status of Putonghua and continue to promote Putonghua vigorously does not mean the prohibition of Chinese dialects, but rather to limit the scope of dialect use. (China, 1996b, p. 3)

For the first time, it was officially made clear that in the promotion of Putonghua Chinese dialects are not the targets of prohibition or elimination artificially or by any other means.

Two years later, in the theme report of the 1997 national working conference on spoken and written Chinese, Director Xu Jialu of the State Language Commission pointed out that:

> To respect the law of the development of language and script, we must appropriately handle the relationship between the mainstream and diversity. For example, the promotion of Putonghua impels citizens to develop the ability to use Putonghua, and to use Putonghua conscientiously as occasion requires. This is to adhere to the mainstream principle. The promotion of Putonghua does not mean the abolition of Chinese dialects. Dialects have their own use value on many occasions. This is to adhere to the diversity principle. (China,1999, pp. 9–10)

Here Xu has made a theoretical clarification of the relationship between Putonghua and dialects. This clarification not only affirms the concept that in the process of the promotion of Putonghua dialects will not be eliminated artificially, naturally, or by any other means or under any other situations, but also recognizes the value of dialects in certain domains of language use. This accommodating theory of the mainstream and diversity principles is a great step forward in proper treatment of the official language and the competing languages/dialects in status planning. When appropriately implemented in the promotion of Putonghua, this theory can dispel dialect-speaking masses' misconception of the death of Chinese dialects as the final outcome of Putonghua promotion and their consequent resistance to it.

On September 14, 1998, the *People's Daily* published a commentator's article titled "To promote Putonghua vigorously." The article pointed out that people were becoming more and more deeply aware that the grave barrier created by dialects was one of the unfavorable factors hindering social development in China. To remove this barrier, the State Language Commission develops activities for the Publicity Week for Putonghua promotion and public relations, so that the whole society will learn of the importance of the promotion of Putonghua. The Publicity Week is intended to make following points clear to language workers and the public (cf. China, 2000, pp. 47–48).

First, Putonghua is the standard form of modern Chinese and the national commonly used language in China. The state asks citizens to use Putonghua conscientiously on formal and public occasions. It also requires everyone to speak Putonghua conscientiously in broadcasts, on television shows, in films, in education, in official business, in order to remove the communicative barrier and to improve the quality and the efficiency of communication.

Second, dialects are the regional form of a language. They can serve the people of specific regions. They are also useful media of daily communication and for the communication of emotions. Dialects are still important carriers of regional culture and are also precious treasures of the Chinese nation. In fact, language workers are asked by the state to protect and develop traditional arts like traditional drama, folk art, etc. which are based on dialects and have a strong local flavor.

Third, language is constantly changing. Dialects all over China are changing along with social progress, the spread of education, and the spread of Putonghua. Meanwhile, Putonghua constantly absorbs nutrients from dialects to enrich its dynamics of expressions. There is a mutual facilitating relationship between the two.

These diversified views on the relationship between Putonghua and dialects influenced China's legislators too. They seriously considered these views in drafting the *Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the PRC,* which was passed in October 2000. Predicated on the basic view of Putonghua spread throughout the country, Article 16 of the Law provides a clear explanation of the use of dialects. Dialects may be used on the following four public occasions (for the complete law document, see Rohsenow, this volume):

> (1) When really necessary to carry out public business by national level government personnel; (2) Language used in broadcasting approved by the Office of Radio and Television Broadcasting of the State Council; (3) When needed for use in artistic forms such as stage, film and television; and (4) When necessary in publications, teaching, and research. (China, 2001, pp. 6–7)

The law emphasizes the promotion of Putonghua throughout the country, but also stipulates on what public occasions and under what conditions dialects can be used. The law has completely redefined the relationship between Putonghua and dialects.

The clear legal stipulation on dialect use makes people more willing to accept the national policy to promote Putonghua, while not feeling alarmed that dialects will be wiped out. Dialect-speaking people actually take advantage of the separate function designations in their daily communication, and the use of Putonghua and dialects sometimes makes communication more effective (cf. S. Xu, 1990; Zhan, 1996; M. Zhou, 2001). This official approach may be helpful to further spread of Putonghua throughout China and to effective implementation of the new Law.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Starting with a brief review of the relationship between social concerns and status planning, I have examined the three stages of the evolution of the relationship between Putonghua and Chinese dialects, the initial understanding, the reconsideration, and the redefinition, in China's language planning process.

To a large extent, the social concerns have determined how policy statements regarding the relationship between Putonghua and dialects were made and changed, rather than the policy-making process itself has in China. Initially the policy was made in a more top-down fashion, while recently the policy was made in a more bottom-up manner. The two processes might have some influences too, however. In the top-down process social concerns of the elites were more extensively represented in the policy, while in the bottom-up process social concerns of the masses were more appropriately represented. In either way, social concerns of the time have influenced how extensively the policy could accommodate the competing languages/dialects in status planning. This seems to be true in other societies too (see Kibbee, 1999; Spolsky & Shohamy, 1999; Tollefson, 2002). Language policy is a means to legalize and implement social concerns, whether those concerns are rational, ethical and moral or not. Changes to and/or adjustment of an existing language policy essentially reflect changing social concerns.

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## 6. NOTE

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QINGSHENG ZHOU

# THE CREATION OF WRITING SYSTEMS AND NATION ESTABLISHMENT

*The case of China in the 1950s*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The creation of a writing system tends to deal with issues such as letter design, the societal need for the system, and its use and acceptance in the society. Many linguists tend towards an analysis of the intra-code factors of letter forms, orthography, new terms, the received pronunciation of the basic dialect, and language normalization, etc. Extra-code factors, needless to say, are essential for creating a new writing system (see Sun, this volume). Some linguists believe that the less ambiguous and incongruous or the more scientific and rational a new writing system is, the more acceptable or promotable it is. However, many cases around the world, including those from China, show that some perfectly designed writing systems have not been accepted, while other "imperfect" ones with phonetic ambiguity are actually used for wider-communicative purposes.

The author of this chapter has no intention to weaken the importance of both language normalization and the scientifically designed alphabet system, but rather to elaborate a point of view that whether or not a newly created writing system is acceptable may be decisively influenced by the social, extra-code factors instead of the intra-code ones. The present chapter attempts to give a description of the process of the implementation of China's minority language policy for creating new writing systems for ethnic minorities in the 1950s, including the background, contents, and practices in creating writing systems.

## 2. NATION ESTABLISHMENT AND WRITING SYSTEM CREATION

### *2.1. The Social Situation of China's Writing Systems*

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is a unitary multi-national state with many languages and writing systems. According to the state statistics in 1953, there were

*M. Zhou (ed.), Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949,* 55–70.
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39 officially identified ethnic groups in the whole country, whose population was about 578 million. Among them, there were 543 million Han people, that is, 93.94% of the population. The population of the ethnic minorities was 34.01 million, 5.89% of the total population, but some minorities were the majority in some minority regions. For example, the Tibetans were nearly 100% in Xizang (Tibet), non-Hans were 93.01% in Xinjiang, and approximately 50.95% in Qinghai (Hao, 1999, pp. 725–727). In addition, the ethnic minorities were scattered in more than 50% territory of the country (China, 1959, p. 1), in the remote border areas, so that stability and solidarity of these regions could directly influence the consolidation and development of the new power as well as peace and order in the long term.

In the early days of the PRC, according to two key early language planners, Luo Changpei and Fu Maoji (1954, pp. 38–43), the writing systems of China's ethnic minorities could be divided into four categories: (1) writing systems that have considerable readings and are used for wider communicative purposes, i.e. Tibetan, Mongolian, Uygur, Kazak, Korean, Russian, Xibe, Uzbek and Tatar; (2) those that do not have new readings but are used for wider communicative purposes, such as Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Va, and Lahu; (3) those that are not used for wider-communicative purposes, such as Man (Manchu), Yi, Naxi and Miao; and (4) no writing systems, such as the Miao, Dong, Yao, Bouyei, Tu (Monguor) and Hezhen in some of regions.

*2. 2. National-Political Establishment and Creation of Writing Systems*

In the early days of the PRC, power had not been consolidated yet in some minority areas. There still existed some profound gaps between the Han people and ethnic minorities who did not have faith in the newly established people's government because of the influence of the previous governments' long-lasting national oppression policies against minorities. In addition, among these ethnic groups there still existed political and economic remnants of primeval communal society such as slavery, and feudal slavery, or feudal landlord systems. Therefore, it was necessary for the government at all levels to win the trust, understanding, and support of these ethnic minorities if they wanted to carry out any social reforms and socialist transformations. The new government realized from its experience that the policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) towards ethnic minorities during the period of the democratic revolution (1927–1949) had won the favor and support of these groups because of its policy of respect for and development of minority languages and writings (Zhou, 2000a). So had the former Soviet Union in its successful practice of creating romanized writing systems for its ethnic minorities after the October Revolution. Both the practices of the PRC and the former Soviet Union demonstrated that in the early days of a newly established state power it is highly favorable for the government to create new writing systems for ethnic minorities so that it can win their confidence and support and develop an equal and unitary relationship with them.

*2.3. National-Cultural Establishment and Efforts in Writing System Creation*

*The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference,* adopted on September 29, 1949, served as the provisional constitution and laid out four principles for the new government's policy toward the ethnic minorities. Article 53 of the Program stipulates clearly that

> All ethnic minorities enjoy the freedom to develop their own languages and writing systems, the freedom to retain or reform their own social customs and religious beliefs. The people's government should help the masses of the ethnic minorities develop their own political, cultural and educational causes. (China, 1991 [1949], p. 1290)

The reason was nothing else but that only by changing the backward status of the ethnic minorities could real equality among ethnic groups be achieved step by step.

However, it was not until February 5, 1951 that the state made an official decision on the creation of writing systems in *Several Resolutions on Ethnic Affairs by the State Council,* Item 5 of which stipulated that a Steering Committee for Minority Language and Writing Research be established under the Cultural and Educational Commission of the State Council. Its mission was:

> To guide and organize research on minority languages, so that the ethnic groups without their own writing systems may obtain help to create them, and the ethnic groups with no well-developed writing systems may obtain help to improve them. (Shi, 1988, pp. 246–247)

In the same year, when commenting on the development of the politics, economy, and culture of ethnic minorities, Li Weihan, Chairman of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, particularly emphasized:

> I wish all comrades present here to air your opinions regarding the pressing problem of creating writing systems for ethnic minorities who have independent languages but not their own writing systems. Your opinions shall be for the reference of the Central Committee of the CCP, which is considering solving the issue. (Li, 1982 [1951], p. 517)

There were hundreds of things to be done in the early period of the PRC. The central government began to put the creation of ethnic writing systems on its agenda and took it up as an imperative task not only from the perspective of the national and political establishment but also for its significance for cultural establishment. Because the state really wanted to help ethnic minorities develop their own cultures as quickly as possible so that the cultural gap between ethnic groups could be narrowed and actual equality between ethnic groups could be gradually realized. Nevertheless, for many ethnic minorities without their own writing systems, the development of universal education, the effective learning of scientific and technological knowledge, and the improvement of ethnic-cultural/educational level was unimaginable. As a member of the Steering Committee, Luo Changpei states:

> The ultimate goal for the state to help ethnic minorities with no writing system develop such a system is to provide a faithful guarantee for the undertaking of cultural establishment by brother ethnicities. (Luo, 1954, p. 12)

## 3. THE ORIENTATION OF ALPHABET SELECTION

In 1951, when the Steering Committee was set up, the Institute of Linguistics (of the Chinese Academy of Sciences) submitted a report entitled *A Trial Scheme of Minority Alphabetic Writings of China: First Draft* (henceforth, Trial Scheme) to the members of the Cultural Commission of the State Council. Composed of the Roman, Cyrillic, and National Phonetic alphabets with six different forms, the Trial Scheme was to provide a good selection of alphabets for the creation of new writing systems as the draft clearly expressed:

> It is possible for concerned linguists to choose one of the several forms, assimilate the advantages of the other forms on the basis of one alphabet, directly adopt the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), even create a new form of an alphabet, or adopt two or three or more forms of different alphabets. (China, 1951, p. 2)

By the end of 1956, some new writing systems in southern China had already been worked out, including seven writing systems in the Roman alphabet for the Zhuang, Bouyei, Yi and Miao (including four vernacular writing systems, see Sun, Li & Huang, and Pu, this volume), and the Scheme of Daur Writing System in the Cyrillic alphabet was created in Inner Mongolia.[1] Why was the Roman alphabet adopted for minority languages in the south and the Cyrillic for those in the north? Let us listen to what Fu Maoji said in his report to the First National Scientific Conference on Minority Languages and Writings held on December 6, 1955.

> When the Chinese Phonetic Writing (CPW) is worked out, the alphabet same as that for the CPW had better be used in the newly created writing systems for ethnic minorities in the southern and southwestern China because the ethnic groups in these regions are more deeply influenced by the Chinese language, but now the Roman alphabet can be temporarily used in the new writing systems until the Scheme for the CPW is promulgated. While the Cyrillic alphabet had better be used by the ethnicities in the northern, northeastern and northwestern China and/or in the areas adjacent to the Soviet Union and the Republic of Mongolia in accordance with the minorities' own willingness, so that it would be convenient for them to communicate with the peoples living in the neighbouring countries and speaking similar languages. (Fu, 1956).

Mr. Fu reiterated this principle in 1956:

> The reason why the new writing systems of Mongolian, Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Uzbek, Tatar, Xibe and Daur are based on the Cyrillic alphabet is that these ethnicities have close relations with those co-nationals in the Soviet Union and the Republic of Mongolia. However, the other national minorities of China will create their writing systems on the basis of the Roman alphabet because many people prefer and get used to the Roman letters. (Fu, 1957 [1956], pp, 180–181)

## 4. THE OFFICIAL STATUS OF ROMAN LETTERS

At the end of 1957, *On Several Principles of Alphabet Design in the Scheme of Minority Writing Systems* (henceforth, Principles of Alphabet Design) ratified by the State Council clearly ruled that "the creation of writing systems for national minorities in China should be based on the Roman alphabet." (China, 1997, p. 312). This decision means that the use of the Roman alphabet rather than the Cyrillic has become a basic principle for the creation of writing systems for the national

minorities with no written languages. There might be three cultural, social and political factors that led to the adoption of the Roman principle.

### *4.1. Formulation of the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet*

The formulation of the Scheme for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet is perhaps the essential and/or dominant factor affecting the alphabet selection in the process of creating a new writing system for a minority language. A vigorous movement of Language Reform on Chinese was in the making in the early days of the 1950s (see Rohsenow, this volume). "Chinese characters," as Chairman Mao Zedong pointed in 1951, "must be reformed and the reform of Chinese characters should follow the generally alphabetic direction of the world's writing systems"(Wu, 1978 [1955], p. 101). Although Mao was talking about the reform of the Chinese characters, his words also had instructive significance for the reform and creation of the writing systems for minority languages in China. Now that the Chinese characters as the mainstream writing of China were to be reformed in the alphabetic direction, minority language planners realized that minority languages should take the same direction too, especially in creating new writing systems. However, until October 1955, China was unable to make up its mind to choose an incontestable alphabetic from the six different drafts of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, in which there were two drafts belonging to the type strokes of Chinese characters (like kana in Japanese) and two drafts to the Roman and Russian alphabets respectively (Wu, 1978 [1958], p. 151).

It was impossible for the national minorities still with no written languages to wait for the formal adoption of the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, as they were anxious to create their own writing systems. In such a situation, according to Mao Zedong's instruction to take the road of Romanization, seven or eight writing systems had been created in the Roman alphabet in the south, and one writing system in the Cyrillic alphabet in the north by the end of 1956. After the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet was promulgated in 1957, all of the national minorities immediately came to a common view to take the Roman alphabet as the basis of future creation of writing systems. By the end of 1957, over a dozen of writing systems had been created in the Roman alphabet.

### *4.2. Suggestions by Senior Elitists*

On August 25, 1949, just on the eve of the founding of the PRC, Wu Yuzhang – the best-known Chinese writing reformist in China – wrote a letter to Chairman Mao Zedong. In the letter he put forward three principles regarding the reform of the Chinese writing system, two of which concerned the choice of letters for alphabetic writing: (1) the Chinese characters should be changed into an alphabetic system of writing, preferably the Roman alphabet rather than a phonetic notation like the Japanese kana; and (2) all Chinese dialects and minority languages can be spelled in an alphabetic writing (Wang, 1995).

Upon receiving the letter, Chairman Mao Zedong quickly passed it to Guo Moruo, Shen Yanbing and Ma Xulun – three leaders in literary and educational affairs—for discussions. In their reply to Chairman Mao, Guo, Shen and Ma came up with five points of opinions, two of which were about the choice of letters for alphabetic writing: (1) they are in favour of a writing reform in the direction of the Roman alphabet and (2) they are in favour of Romanization of writing systems for national minorities (Wang, 1995).

The creation and reform of writing systems for national minorities were regarded as one of the three main duties of the Committee for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language, which was founded in Beijing on October 10, 1949. With Wu Yuzhang as the chairman of its administrative committee, Guo Moruo, Shen Yanbing, and Ma Xulun served as members of this committee. Their opinions on writing system creation and the choice of the Roman alphabet for national minorities had a significant influence on minority language planning in China.

### *4.3. Experience of Creating Roman Writing Systems in the Former Soviet Union*

Wang Jun, a veteran language planner, suggested in 1952 that it was necessary to learn the advanced experience of the Soviet Union in creating Roman writing systems. He argued that Soviet linguists under the leadership of the Communist Party and Soviet government had worked out 40 writing systems for ethnic minorities without written languages as well as many grammar books and dictionaries for these oral languages. Many economically and educationally backward ethnic minorities in the East and the Far North of the Soviet Union came to have their own writing systems and schools. These minorities were successful in building powerful printing enterprises and published large numbers of newspapers and magazines in minority languages. Their own national science, literature and art were greatly developed (Wang, 1954[1952], p. 24).

In 1954, the State Council approved the report on creating writing systems for national minorities without written languages. Regarding this report, Luo Changpei pointed out: “The advanced experience of the Soviet Union in creating writing systems for the ethnic minorities can serve as our example” (Luo, 1954, pp.13–14).

In October of the same year, G. B. Serdyuchenko, a well-known Soviet linguist and correspondent member of the Russian Academy of Educational Sciences, arrived in Beijing upon China’s invitation. He presented a series of lectures to the research workers, teachers, and graduate students at Peking University and the Central Institute (University) for Nationalities and for a whole school year he systematically introduced the Soviet Union’s experiences in creating writing systems for ethnic minorities (Serdyuchenko, 1956, pp. 9–144; for a comprehensive review of Serdyuchenko’s work, see M. Zhou 2003, pp. 169–196). In addition, he helped his Chinese colleagues solve a lot of practical problems in writing system creation and reform in accordance with the actual conditions in China. In 1958, Fu Maoji also wrote an article introducing the experience of the Soviet Union with developing minority languages and solving actual problems in different periods in Soviet history:

> The nineteen years since the victory of the October Revolution has been a period of Romanization of writing systems for minorities. All of the newly created writing systems are based on the Roman alphabet, and most of the old scripts have been Romanised. Even some of the minority writing systems in the Cyrillic alphabet have been transformed into the Roman alphabet. (Fu, 1995 [1958], pp. 242)

## 5. THE PROCESS OF CREATING NEW WRITING SYSTEMS

The creation of writing systems for national minorities in China in the 1950s developed roughly in two stages: the exploration and the full-scale.

### *5.1. The Exploration Stage (Feb. 1951–Dec. 1955)*

This stage involved obtaining theory and experience. In November 1951, under the guidance of Luo Changpei – Secretary General of the Steering Committee, the Trial Scheme with two Roman schemes and one Cyrillic were formulated for the reference for language planners. In addition, for the purpose of comparison the Trial Scheme also included the IPA, the Romanised Scheme for the Northern Dialect, and the Phonetic Symbols. The Trial Scheme proved to be very convenient to use. A team dispatched by the Central Government, the Military Control Commission of Xichang Prefecture, Xikang Province (part of the present Sichuan Province), and Yi language planners jointly designed a scheme for a Yi alphabetic writing system in Xikang on March 5, 1991 (see Pu, this volume).

The exploration was aided by the Soviet experience, because since October 1954, Serdyuchenko began to serve as Adviser to the Institute of Linguistics and the Central Institute for Nationalities. His wife, Todajeva, a Mongolian expert, also began to advise China's language planners working on the reform of the Mongolian writing system.

It appears that, with Soviet theory and the preliminary experience with the Trial Scheme, China was ready to resolve writing problems for its minority groups as part of its nation-building efforts.

### *5.2. The Full-Scale Stage (Dec. 1955 – Dec. 1958)*

This stage took three steps: (1) a national conference to mobilize minority language work; (2) conduction of large-scale language surveys; and (3) the development of new writing systems.

From December 6 to 15, 1955, the Institute of Linguistics and the Central Institute for Nationalities jointly held a conference on minority languages and scripts, which was later known as The First National Scientific Conference on Minority Languages and Writings. During the conference, a preliminary plan on minority languages and writing systems was proposed that called for launching in the next few years a comprehensive survey of the minority languages in order to help those who needed to create a new writing system or reform an existing writing system to develop a specific scheme for it.

In April 1956, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly organized a large-scale language survey. Over 700 people from the Institute of Linguistics, the Central Institute for Nationalities, local minority language institutions, and some other units formed seven survey teams, who were dispatched to sixteen provinces and autonomous regions. For the next two and half years, these teams investigated the structures and use situations of over 40 minority languages in those areas. The results of their survey provided scientific foundations for the creation and reform of minority writing systems. It was the first largest-scale language survey in China's history.

Between 1951 and 1958, fifteen writing systems were created, fourteen in the Roman alphabet for minority languages in the south and one in the Cyrillic for a minority language in the north. Of these fifteen writing systems, six were vernacular: four for the Miao language and two for the Hani language, as shown in Table 1 on the following page.

## 6. NEW ROMAN WRITING SYSTEMS IN MISFORTUNE

The second half of the 1950s saw the high tide for the creation of writing systems for the ethnic minorities while the political struggle both at home and abroad had been surging forward vigorously. The Anti-rightist Struggle that suppressed people with independent minds was launched at home in 1957, and the Great Leap Forward in 1958 sped up, among many things, the integration of minorities into the Han majority (see Rohsenow, this volume). Internationally, the Sino-Soviet relationship began to deteriorate rapidly. This political background was naturally unfavourable for the promotion of the new writing systems among the ethnic minorities. During the period of the second half of 1957 and the whole year of 1958, a lot of minority cadres and intellectuals engaged in minority language work were deeply involved in the movements of rectification and anti-local-nationalism in minority regions.

The 11th Conference of National United Front Work held in December 1958 was a reflection of the erroneous estimate of the political situation as well as the anxiety about success in ethnic minority work. "A socialist ethnic relation," the conference deemed, "has been quickly formed and developed. There are more and more common points and fewer and fewer differences among them, and factors of ethnic integration are gradually increasing." After the conference, "the wind of integration" blew stronger and stronger in the minority areas, especially among the ethnic minority workers (G. Huang 1993 [vol.1], pp. 131–132). There was, for example, a tendency toward minority language amalgamation in the minority language work. For example, the newly created Hani (Bika dialect) writing system was abolished for the reason that one ethnic group should have only one writing system; otherwise ethnic unity would be harmed (Dai, 1999, p. 109).

There was an armed riot in Tibet in March 1959. After that, anti-China forces abroad continuously made trouble in China's ethnic minority regions. For example, in April and May 1962, the Consulate of the former Soviet Union in Xinjiang engaged in subversive activities in Tacheng of the Yili Hazak Autonomous Prefecture and instigated the well-known Yili Rebellion (G. Huang, 1993 [vol. 1]

*Table 1. The Schemes for Newly Created Writing Systems in China in the1950s*

| Ethnicity | Writing Schemes (Drafts) | Adopted by | Ratified by |
|---|---|---|---|
| Zhuang | Zhuang Writing System | Guangxi Guixi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Dec. 10, 1955 | State Council, Nov. 29, 1957 |
| Bouyei | Bouyei Writing System | Scientific Conference of Bouyei, Guiyang, Nov. 4–7, 1956 | CNAC[1], July 1957 |
| Miao | Eastern Miao Writing System[2] | Scientific Conference of Miao, Guiyang, Oct. 31–Nov. 7, 1956 | CNAC, July 1957 |
| | Central Miao Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| | Western Miao Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| | Northern Miao Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| Yi | New Yi Writing System | Forum for Yi Development, Xichang Prefecture, Feb. 2, 1951 | None |
| | Liangshan Yi Phonetic Writing | Scientific Conference of Yi, Chengdu, Dec. 18–24, 1956 | CNAC, October 1957 |
| Li | Li Writing System[3] | Scientific Conference of Li, Tongshi, Feb. 11–17, 1957 | CNAC, June 1957 |
| Lisu | Lisu Writing System | Yunnan Conference on Minority Languages, Kunming, Marc. 16–27, 1957 | CNAC, 1957 |
| Naxi | Naxi Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| Hani | Haya Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| | Bika Writing System | the same as above | the same as above |
| Va | Va Writing System[4] | the same as above | the same as above |
| Dong | Dong Writing System | Scientific Conference on Dong, Guiyang, Aug. 18–22, 1958 | CNAC, Dec. 31, 1958 |
| Daur | Daur Writing System | Work Conference on Daur, Huhhot, Dec. 20–27, 1956 | None |

Sources: Ying & Gao (1979: 307–312), Huang (1993[2]: 304–307), Ren (1994:5), and Wen (1994:4–5).

Notes:

1. Central Nationalities Affairs Commission (CNAC) was usually known, before 2000, as State Commission on Nationalities Affairs (SCNA) and now as State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC).
2. These four writing systems were designed for the Xiangxi Miao, the Qiandong Miao, the Chuanqiandian Miao, and the Diandongbei Miao respectively.
3. The Li writing system has not been used since 1958.
4. The Va writing system was originally named as the Kava Writing Project.

p. 142). The Indian armed forces launched a large-scale attack on the long border area between the two countries, which led to China's counter attack in self-defense. During this period, the CCP proposed the slogan of "taking class struggle as the key link" meaning linking any important issues to the class struggle) and even considered that "the national question is a class problem," the consequence of which was to treat tensions and conflicts between ethnic minorities and the Han as those between class enemies. Under such a situation, the experimental promotion of the newly created writing systems had to be given up. Even the Zhuang writing system, which had been officially ratified by the State Council, had to cease to be used. This depressing situation continued till the late 1970s.

## 7. SUCCESSES AND PROBLEMS IN CREATING WRITING SYSTEMS

### *7.1. Successes*

The initial successes of writing system creation and use appear to have depended on three factors: the establishment of relevant institutions, vigorous promotion, and the establishment of ethnic printing houses.

In order to guarantee the normal development of writing system creation and the experimental promotion of new writing systems, eleven minority language work institutions had been set up by 1959 in China, as shown in Table 2 below.

*Table 2. Institutions of the Writing Creation and Promotion in the 1950s*

| *Name of the Institutions* | *Location* |
|---|---|
| 1. Institute of Minority Language Studies, Chinese Academy of Sciences | Beijing |
| 2. Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region | Hohhot |
| 3. Daur Language Work Commission | Hohhot |
| 4. Zhuang Language Work Commission, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region | Nanning |
| 5. Yunnan Minority Language Work Guiding Commission | Kunming |
| 6. Lisu Writing Research Commission Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan | Bijiang |
| 7. Miao Language Work Guiding Commission, Xiangxi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture | Jishou |
| 8. Guizhou Minority Language Work Guiding Commission | Guiyang |
| 9. Sichuan Minority Nationality Languages and Writing Working Guiding Committee | Chengdu |
| 10. Yi Writing Work Commission, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture | Zhaojue |
| 11. Li and Miao Language Work Guiding Commission, Hainan Li and Miao Autonomous Prefecture | Tongshi |

Source: China (1959, pp. 162–163).

Regarding promotion, let us examine the case of the Zhuang writing system (see Li & Huang, this volume). This system has been unique because it was approved by the State Council and promoted officially rather than experimentally. In January 1956, the Guixi Zhuang School using the Zhuang writing system was established in Wuming County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. By the beginning of 1958, the school had held three six to eight month Zhuang Writing Training Classes and trained 2,984 local cadres and teachers in eliminating illiteracy. The number of people trained in the Zhuang writing system numbered 32,720, including 730 cadres trained in Base and Yishan Prefectures and 29,006 rural illiteracy-eliminating workers trained in the Zhuang Writing Training Schools in various counties in Guangxi (Guangxi, 1958, pp. 1–10).

The new Romanised Yi writing system, publicized in February 1951, was a similar case. The system had been experimentally promoted in the Xichang Prefecture (now Liangshan Prefecture, Sichuan Province). According to Luo Changpei:

> By the end of April 1952, over 2,693 people learned this writing system. Some learners had already mastered it. Over 80,000 copies of reading materials were printed in the new writing system, including specially prepared pupils' emulation exercise books, letter-writing papers, and envelopes as well as six publications. In addition, fourteen conversation texts for Yi language users had been compiled in the new system in the Da Liangshan and Xiao Liangshan Areas. (Luo, 1954[1952], pp. 95–96)

Ethnic publishing houses seem to have played a significant role in the successes. From 1957 to 1959, five ethnic publishing houses were set up for publications in the new writing systems. The location of these publishers and the writing systems used by them are illustrated in Table 3.

*Table 3. Ethnic Presses Publishing in the New Writing Systems*

| *Name of Institutions* | *Date of Establishment* | *Type of Writing System* | *Location* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Guangxi Ethnic Publishing House | May 1957 | Zhuang | Nanning |
| Guizhou Ethnic Publishing House | February 1958 | Miao, Bouyei, Dong | Guiyang |
| Sichuan Ethnic Publishing House | October 1957 | Yi | Chengdu |
| Yunnan Ethnic Publishing House | August 1957 | Lisu, Hani, Va | Kunming |
| Xiangxi Ethnic Publishing House | January 1959 | Miao-Chinese | Jishou |

Sources: China, 1959, pp. 133–134.

For example, according to incomplete statistics, Guangxi Ethnic Publishing House published, from November 1957 to October 1960, over 200 kinds of materials in minority languages, totalling 14 million copies, including textbooks on Zhuang language and writing and popular books (China, 1962, pp. 1–2). Later, Guizhou Ethnic Publishing House published five kinds of textbooks on the Dong language and writing from 1959 to 1962 and 20,000 copies of dictionaries (McConnell, 1995, p. 108). Yunnan Ethnic Publishing House published 34 kinds of readings in the new Lisu writing system, totalling 140,000 copies (McConnell, 1995, p.290).

### *7.2. Difficult Problems*

In the 1950s, two major problems arose in the creation of writing systems for minority languages, problems that continue to affect these systems and their use today. The first problem is the suitability of the "Five Principles" for writing system design. The second is the low prestige of the newly created writing systems in minority communities.

The suitability problem derived from the Symposium on the Issue of the Alphabetic Forms for Minority Languages, held in Guiyang, Guizhou in October 1956 and sponsored by experts from national minorities in southern China and the newly established Institute of Minority Languages (of the Chinese Academy of Sciences), a symposium of academic and political significance up to today. The symposium reached the consensus that the newly created Roman writing systems should be alphabetically and orthographically as similar as possible to the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet (Fu, 1957 [1956], p. 181). This consensus seems to be the reflection of the most harmonious relations between ethnic minorities and the Han on the one hand, and the reflection of the ethnic minorities' identification with the Han as well as with the Chinese nation under the PRC on the other hand. Based on the consensus, "five principles," which became to be known as "the principles of alphabet conformity" (Fu, 1995 [1957], p. 221) or "the principle of seeking common ground while reserving differences" (Fu, 1983), were established after the symposium (Fu, 1979, p. 12). The five principles, adopted in 1957 at the 63rd Plenary Session of the State Council are (1) in roman writing systems for minority languages letters should be used in ways similar to those in the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet, representing similar phonemes with similar letters; (2) within writing systems for languages of the same group or for the same family, letters should be used in the same way; (3) across language groups and families letters should be used in basically similar ways; (4) one letter or at most two letters might be used to represent one phoneme; and (5) Cyrillic letters or other modified letters might be used when the roman alphabet was not enough.

The language policy of China in the 1950s was that Chinese characters should be reformed, and the writing reform should follow the alphabetic direction. Nevertheless, since the middle of the 1980s, China has made great rectifications in its Chinese language policy; the reform of Chinese characters has not been the chief task of language planning, and the central government has not mentioned the direction of Chinese alphabetisation since 1986 (Liu, 1967, p. 24; also see Rohsenow, this volume).

## 8. RETHINKING OF THE CREATION OF WRITING SYSTEMS

It has been stressed that in the relatively long period, normalized Chinese characters will be the legitimate writing forms. In such a situation, one may wonder if the "five principles" formulated in the 1950s are still appropriate? How can the newly created writing systems conform to Chinese characters? Should the principles of the alphabet conformity for romanized writing systems still be pursued? Facing these questions, since the 1980s some scholars have deviated from the tradition of the five

principles and suggested that a new writing system may be composed of block-like characters, imitating the forms and semantic components of Chinese characters, but the pronunciations of such block-like characters should be on the basis of their native language rather than on Chinese characters, just like characters historically loaned into Japanese, Korean and/or Vietnamese. Such block-like characters, a few scholars believe, can solve not only the problem of the conformability, but also the problem of phonetic differences among dialects within a language. In addition, it makes it easier for ethnic minorities to learn Chinese (Chingertai, 1991, 1992; Dai & Jia, 1993, p. 16). However, how should we adjust the policy of the five principles if we adopt this line of thought discussed above? And how should we deal with all those newly created writing systems already in use? In other words, what attitude towards the newly created writing systems should we adopt? What new problems shall we face if we give up the five principles? What problems shall the new attitude bring about? Clearly, there are more questions than answers for us at this moment.

Low prestige is probably an obstacle that any new writing system has to overcome. After the writing systems of the ethnic minorities were created in China,

> There has been a slump in the experimental promotion of the new systems, which was in progress from time to time, off and on. These writing systems have little influence on the native speakers of minority languages, and people who have learned these systems account for one to three percent of the minority population. (Dob, 2000, p. 9)

> In the light of the statistics of an adult education survey in 1979–1988, among the adult learners of seven newly made writing systems of the Zhuang, Bouyei, Dong, Lisu, Naxi, Va and Miao, only a little over 82,000 people passed the level beyond illiteracy, representing less than 0.6% of the population, aged fifteen and up, among the seven groups. (X. Huang, 1989, p. 3).

Therefore, generally speaking the newly created writing systems seem to be unsuccessful, because the total number of ethnic minorities who have learned to use the new writing systems is rather small, the systems' domains of actual use are quite narrow, and promotion of those writing systems has failed to continue long enough for success. These facts have made us realize that these writing systems have failed to win prestige. Furthermore, it has often been the case that some minority leaders and intellectuals were found to be suspicious of the promotion of the new writing systems, thus increasing the difficulty for further promotion. With the introduction and implementation of a socialist market economy in China, it may be predicted that the use of these new writing systems will face more serious challenges rather than opportunities.

Writing form is not only a sign for recording human language, but also a social tool closely related to politics in certain social and historical conditions, especially in China in the 1950s. The action taken by the new Chinese government in creating writing systems for the ethnic minorities without their own written languages performs an important function in the improvement of ethnic relations as well as in the development of minority languages and minority cultures. Creating new writing systems by a central government for its ethnic minorities is a governmental act, which has not occurred in the past few thousand years in China. For China, this action took place in a particular political-historical-social background.

China's practice has shown that the support of the state is an important political basis for the large-scale creation of writing systems for national minorities. For this purpose, it was necessary for the government to establish corresponding institutions and provide enough financial support and human resources.

Also, in the creation of writing systems managed by the state, the selection of an alphabet is principally restricted by corresponding social and political factors, though designs of specific letters and orthographies are mainly in the hands of linguists.

Thus, generally speaking, ethnic relations and ethnic policy in China have been a decisive factor governing the use of minority languages and writing systems. Whether the newly created writing systems can be used in minority language speech community does not depend on a linguistically sound design of a writing system, nor on a perfect orthography, but on the consistency of the government's policy toward ethnic minorities. The creation of new writing systems in China continued for about nine years from 1951 to 1958, but these systems were quickly forced to cease their use because of the rise of erroneous "Leftist" thought and the incessant blowing of the wind of "ethnic integration" and "language amalgamation." Since 1979, however, the newly created writing systems have been revived along with the original policy of ethnic equality and language equality.

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## 9. NOTES

[1] According to the report of *the People's Daily* (Page 7, Dec. 29, 1956), a Daur Language and Writing Working Meeting was held in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, which approved the Daur Writing System Project (draft), a five-year plan to promote Daur language and writing system as well as the 1957-year plan for the promotion of Daur language and writing system (for details, see M. Zhou 2003, pp. 179–182).

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MINGLANG ZHOU

# MINORITY LANGUAGE POLICY IN CHINA

*Equality in Theory and Inequality in Practice*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has been struggling since 1949 to make and practice a minority (language) policy that is supposed to serve its ideological goals, safeguard its territorial integrity and national unity, and accommodate the minority communities' linguistic and cultural diversities and that has often swung between integrationism and accommodationism in order to achieve whichever of those three objectives is the top priority on its agenda at a given time in the last five decades of the history of the PRC (see Dreyer, 1997; Zhou, 2001a).

In is chapter, I examine the relationship between the theory/law of the PRC's minority language policy and the PRC's practice of it at both its best and its worst. I first review the concepts of language rights, language equality, and language laws from broad international perspectives to build a framework for the discussion of the Chinese case in perspectives. Second, I analyze the theoretical and legal foundation of the PRC minority language policy in comparison to international practices. Third, I scrutinize the PRC's practice of its policy against its own laws in three areas: legal status for minority languages, opportunities for minority language use/development, and government service in minority languages in minority communities. In conclusion, I briefly discuss reasons behind the theory-practice gap and the constitutionality of the PRC's current minority language policy and practice.

## 2. CONCEPTS OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS, EQUALITY, AND LAWS

In comparison to other areas of rights, equality, and laws, the concepts of language rights, equality, and laws are relatively new and controversial, having emerged as crucial and prominent issues for the international community only since the 1960s though the issues are not new at all (see MacMillan, 1998; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995; Trifunovska & Varennes, 200; Varennes, 1996).

### *2.1. Language Rights: International Perspectives*

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universal human rights or not? Are language rights individual rights or collective/group rights? First of all, the question of language rights as universal human rights contemporarily arises from the ambiguity of the status of such rights in a series of international covenants, from the *United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) to *the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950), though it is more clearly spelled out in *the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (1991). The extent to which these international covenants, together with other international and national laws, support language rights for linguistically dominated peoples may be gauged, in terms of two dimensions: the degree of overtness and the degree of promotion, as illustrated in Figure 1 below (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995).

*Figure 1. Typological Orientations of Language/Human Rights Laws*

Judged by these two dimensions, the early UN declaration supports, at best, covert toleration of language rights, while its more recent declaration gives overt permission to such rights to indigenous peoples. The stance of covert tolerance endorsed by these international covenants has serious consequences for treating language rights as human rights. For example, both the UN Human Rights Commission and European Human Rights Commission have consistently sided with states in cases brought by individuals accusing the latter of failure to provide minority language services in administrative and judicial processes and of refusal to serve citizens using unofficial languages (see Varenness, 1996, pp. 38–42). However, this may not be strange given the power structure of the modern world, since international commissions are sponsored by those states that are signatories of the relevant covenants. Members of international commissions are often unwilling to act against a state because it has alleged human rights problems unless they also happen to have other motivations for doing so. As a result, they respond to human rights problems very selectively.

The question of whether or not language rights are universal human rights divides scholars as much as it does the general public. There are arguments for language rights as universal human rights but also arguments against them as such. Arguments for the universality of language rights as human rights are usually derived from the concept of negative rights, that is, rights to impose on the state only a duty of abstention, **not a duty to act** (see Witte, 1990). This concept of universal human rights is exemplarily defined in Phillipson, Rannut, and Skutnabb-Kangas (1995, p. 2):

> The principle underlying the concept of universal human rights is that individuals and groups, irrespective of where they live, are entitled to norms which no state can be justified in restricting or violating.

This definition of universal human rights requires, at best, non-discrimination and, at worst, toleration of minority language rights, if it is gauged by the typological orientations in Figure 1. The benefit of this definition is that no state should discriminate against anyone, whether s/he is a citizen of that polity or not, in its administrative and judicial processes as well as in every aspect of that person's life because s/he speaks an unofficial language, one that is always a minority language. Language rights conceived in this concept of universal human rights are intended to provide protection to indigenous peoples as well as (im)migrants who face regular linguistic discrimination in industrialized countries and in industrialized areas of developing countries in current power and economy structures.

The arguments against language rights as universal human rights are usually based on the concept of universal human rights as claim rights, which are considered claims being advanced against others (individuals or institutions) for particular liberties, goods, or services (MacMillan, 1998, p. 15). Human rights as claim rights are positive rights, that is, rights, when being claimed, to impose on the state **a duty to act** in favor of the claimants. This is where problems arise for language rights as universal human rights, because these rights as claim rights presumably have to meet three criteria, paramount importance, practicability, and universality (Granston, 1967, MacMillan, 1998, pp. 15–22).

There appears to be little doubt about the paramount importance of language rights as universal human rights, because language is an integral part of a human being's cultural heritage and ethnicity (cf. Fishman, 1989, 1999). When the state bans or restricts a person from using his/her first language, it effectively forbids him/her to be himself/herself and to be different (usually from the majority). In doing so, the state essentially restricts or violates the norm that he/she is entitled to, even in the sense of negative rights. Such acts by the state are usually considered human rights violations.

Language rights may pass the practicability test as well depending on how strong claims are made (see MacMillan, 1998, pp. 18–19). The weakest claim is that the state should not interfere with language use and maintenance in minority communities. This claim can be easily satisfied when the state enacts toleration-oriented language laws. A stronger claim can demand that the state provide administrative, judicial, and educational services in minority languages and help to maintain minority languages in minority communities. Most parts of such a claim may be satisfied when the state enacts affirmative or promotion-oriented language laws, but there is a limit to what the state can and cannot do to maintain minority languages because some factors may be out of the state's control, (cf. Zhou, 2001b, 2001c). This same claim may become the strongest one against the state, when a minority group has a small population geographically dispersed throughout the polity. In this last case, language rights have difficulties passing the practicability test for universal human rights.

It is claimed that the most difficulty test for language rights as universal human rights is universality (see MacMillan, 1998, pp. 19–22). Two cases are usually used

to demonstrate that language rights do not attain the status of universality. The first case is usually the notorious American tourist who demands that English be spoken to him/her wherever s/he travels regardless of the local language and culture. Does the tourist have the right to make this demand? The second case is often a non-Western-language-speaking immigrant to a Western-language-speaking country where he/she requests that the host state provide services in his/her native language. Does the immigrant have the right to make this request? Arguments are advanced against such language rights claims on two grounds. First, the tourist and the immigrant *chose* to go to a non-native language community. Second, they leave *their own* language communities and go as *outsiders* into others' language communities. It is claimed that one relinquishes his/her language rights when he/she crosses the border of his/her own language community, particularly at his/her own will. Though they are based on the tourist case and the immigrant case, these arguments are essentially used in industrialized countries/areas to defend linguistic and other forms of discrimination against (im)migrants because (im)migrants are perceived as political and economic threats to the host communities (cf. Grin, 1995; Trifunovska & Varennes 200; Varennes, 1996, pp. 95–96). In addition, the tourist case and the (im)migrant's case are fundamentally different, though both of them have legitimate reasons to request services in their respective native languages.

Universal human rights are undoubtedly individual rights, though not all individual rights are human rights. Interestingly, in many countries language rights are more often considered individual rights rather than group rights (cf. MacMillan, 1998, pp. 23–33; Ricento, 1998a). When they are treated as individual rights, language rights are claimable and exercisable by individuals, such as in the United States; but when they are treated as group rights, language rights are claimable and exercisable by groups, often not by individuals, as seen in Canada (MacMillan, 1998, pp. 28–32). Because of this distinction and as group rights, language rights are considered collective self-interests of groups (Morton, 1985, 1989). As group rights, language rights belong to the arena of national and/or subnational politics, where they are politically resolved (see Means, 1974; Williams, 1998). This essentially means that minority groups are to share power in the government, education, judicial system, etc, with the dominant group. Thus, the group rights approach to language rights appears to threaten the majority, which of course does not want any power-sharing, be it in a democratic society or a totalitarian society. For example, the group rights approach in Canada has caused a lot of anxiety among the Anglophones and even among the white majority in the United States, where language rights have been systematically channelled to the judicial process as individual rights protected by the First and the Fourteenth amendments of the Constitution (see Ricento, 1998; Califa, 1992).

In short, the question of language rights is a question of minority rights. When they are claimed, language rights impose duties on the state as well as "burdens" on the majority, which experiences neither language rights problems nor minority rights problems. Recognition of language rights will always face challenges both from the state and the majority, which would rather marginalize such rights.

*2.2. Language Equality and Language Law*

The concept of equality may be defined philosophically, morally, and/or legally. The issue of language equality is generally treated legally in relation to language rights, because languages themselves are not considered proper subjects for equality while the speakers of languages are (MacMillan, 1998, p. 167). The association of language equality with language rights leads to two approaches to equality, the individual approach and the group approach. In the individual approach, as in the United States, language equality is considered in terms of the weak principle of equality—expectations that all persons are treated equally (equal opportunity) and that the freedom of choice of individuals is respected (MacMillan, 1998, pp. 165–166). So long as these expectations can be legally tested, language equality is perceived as guaranteed regardless of the actual results and benefits (Williams, 1998). Thus, language equality in the individual approach leaves a lot of ambiguity as to exactly what equality is. Moreover, group rights do not have a place in the individual approach, a situation that will definitely affect the maintenance and use of minority languages adversely because only the group approach provides institutional support for the maintenance and use of minority languages in a multilingual society.

In the group approach, as in Canada, language equality is treated more or less either in terms of proportional equality, as at the provincial level or lower levels, or in terms of a Hobbesian principle of equality, as at the federal level (see MacMillan, 1998, p. 168). With the application of proportional equality, the language of the quantitatively dominant group is given more weight (e. g., French as the official language in Quebec where the Francophones are dominant, English in the majority of other provinces where Anglophones are dominant, and Indian languages in reservations) or languages of two significant groups are given roughly equal weight (e.g. both English and French as the official languages in New Brunswick) (cf. Beaujot, 1998). Under the Hobbesian principle that groups of equal terror or threat are equally respected, English and French are designated as the official languages at the federal level, because the Anglophones and the Francophones are of equal threat to each other and to the state (MacMillan, 1998, p. 168; Magnet, 1998). The group approach leads to three rather clearly defined and operational measures of language equality, though the essence of equality may still be questioned (MacMillan, 1998, pp. 167–176). The first is equality of legal status; equality is measured according to a language's status in law as a language of government and its institutions. The second is equality of service: equality is checked according to the degree and quality of government service being available in the languages that the government is supposed to use. The third is equality of use: equality is gauged according to whether languages of equal legal status are equally used in government and its institutions, with the assumption that these languages are modernized for such use. Obviously, the group approach may do a better job in maintaining minority languages, because language survival is eventually an issue of community survival and a language cannot survive without its speech community.

The individual approach and the group approach do not only represent the different philosophical, moral, and pragmatic considerations of language rights and equality, but also reflect the reality of laws regarding language rights and equality in

Canada and the United States as well as throughout the world (cf. Kibbee, 1998; Trifunovska & Varennes, 2001; Varennes, 1996). Language laws may be typologically categorized according to their functions and/or their support for language rights. Functionally, language legislation may be *official*—intended to make languages official in official domains, *institutionalizing*—aimed at regulating language use in unofficial domains, *standardizing*—targeted at language standards in certain domains, and *liberal*—enshrining legal recognition of language rights implicitly or explicitly (Turi, 1995). The group approach usually results in official and/or institutionalizing language legislation, as in Canada, whereas the individual approach often relies on laws implicitly enshrining some language rights, as in the United Sates (cf. Lippi-Green, 1997, pp. 152–175; Ricento, 1998b). With regard to support for language rights, language legislation may also be categorized as having overt or covert promotion, permission, non-discrimination, toleration, and prohibition orientations (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995). For example, Canada's federal language policy may be considered promotion-oriented, whereas the United States' language policy, if there is one, is regarded as toleration-oriented or, at best, as non-discrimination-oriented.

The above international treatment of language rights as individual rights, and/or group rights, and the two consequent approaches to language rights serve as the benchmark for the scrutinization of the PRC's approach, both in theory and in practice, to minority language rights.

## 3. MINORITY LANGUAGE RIGHTS, EQUALITY, AND LAWS IN CHINA

### *3.1. Laws on Minority Language Rights in the PRC*

The PRC's language policy consists of two major components, legislation and executive directives and regulations. The legislation component includes the PRC Constitution, various national, provincial, prefectural, county, and local legislation. The executive component ranges from directives and regulations issued by the State Council (the cabinet) and by various ministries as well as those of the organs of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee, at the national level, to those issued by local governments and CCP branches (For the complexity of various organs, see Blachford, this volume). This section focuses only on the national legislation on minority language rights because it is the legal foundation of all local legislation. As a matter of fact, minority language rights enshrined in the PRC Constitution are ultimately the test for the legitimacy of the executive directives issued by the government and the CCP. In the PRC's half-century history, the government and CCP's directives and regulations have been eventually, though not timely, considered explicitly or implicitly erroneous when they come in fundamental conflict with the PRC Constitution (see Zhou, 2001a, 2001b). For example, the Chinese monopolistic language policy adopted in 1958 was criticised and finally abandoned in 1979 because that policy was unconstitutional. Though the CCP often plays a role above the constitution, and though the CCP virtually drafted the constitution and controlled the legislature that passed it, the CCP's policies apparently must adhere to the constitution to some degree for legitimacy.

Minority language rights were enshrined in the PRC's provisional constitution, the Common Program, which was passed in late September 1949 before the PRC was officially established on October 1, 1949. The Program is still considered in effect today. Article 50 of the Program declares that all ethnic groups in the PRC are equal. Article 51 provides minority groups the right to autonomy in their communities. Article 53 states specifically that every minority group has the freedom to use and develop its language and writing system(s) and to maintain or reform its customs and religion (China, 1997 [1], p. 12).

In September 1954, the PRC's first formal constitution readopted Article 50, 51, and 53 of the Program, word for word, in Article 2 of its General Principles (China, 1997 [5], p. 522). Further, the 1954 Constitution required that autonomous regions (provinces), prefectures, and counties should adopt one or more languages commonly used in the local minority communities (Article 71) and that citizens of all ethnic groups had the right to use their native languages in courts, which had an obligation to provide interpreters, and that courts of law should conduct their business in languages commonly used in local minority communities (Article 77) (China, 1997 [5], pp. 537–538).

Unfortunately, when the constitution was revised in 1975, Articles 71 and 77 of the 1954 constitution were completely deleted, while the minority language rights enshrined in Article 2 of the 1954 version were significantly reduced (cf. Shi, 1988, pp. 12–14). The reduced 1975 constitution guaranteed national minorities only the freedom to use minority languages (Article 4), but stripped them of their freedom to develop their languages though all ethnic groups were still constitutionally equal. In 1978, when the constitution was further revised, minority language rights, both rights to use and develop their languages, were once again enshrined (Article 4) and autonomous governments were required to use one or more languages commonly used in local minority communities. But the 1978 constitution still failed to restore Article 77 of the 1954 constitution, that is, the right for citizens of all ethnic groups to use their native languages in courts and the duty imposed on the courts of law to use minority languages in official business in minority communities (cf. Shi 1988, pp. 15–17). Minority language rights enshrined in the Common Program and the 1954 constitution were not fully restored until the 1982 constitutional revision (Articles 4, 121, and 134), but the 1982 constitution also requires that *Putonghua* (Standard Modern Chinese) be promoted nationally (Article 19) (China, 1999). For the first time in the PRC history, the 1982 constitution makes a distinction between the national(ly promoted) language and non-national(ly promoted) languages, a position that remains unchanged throughout the 1988, 1993, and 1999 constitutional amendments, and is actually further strengthened in the *Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script of the PRC* passed by the National People's Congress in 2000 (see Rohsenow, this volume; China, 2001).

Minority language rights, as enshrined in the PRC constitution, used to be implemented by means of executive regulations or directives before the 1980s, and they have been practically implemented via specific laws/statues on education and minority autonomy since the early 1980s (cf. China, 1998; Sun & Gao, 1996). For example, in 1952, to implement Articles 50, 51, 52, and 52 of the 1949 Common Program, the State Council passed "The Guidelines for Regional Autonomy for

Minority Nationalities in the PRC" and "The Decision on the Organization and Structure of Local Minority United Governments" (China, 1997 [3], pp. 79–88). Both executive regulations had specific articles spelling out minority language rights in administrative, judicial, and educational processes. After over 40 years of practice, in 1984, those two administrative regulations were revised and incorporated, in accordance with the 1982 constitution, by the National People's Congress as the *PRC Regional Autonomy Law for Minority Nationalities.* This law has six articles on minority language rights and use (China, 1998; translated by this author):

> Article 10: Autonomous governments should guarantee the freedom for local national minorities to use and develop their native languages and scripts …
>
> Article 21: According to their own regional autonomous laws, autonomous government should use one or more locally common languages and scripts in their official business; they may choose the major minority nationality's language and script as the main ones when more than one are used.
>
> Article 36: Schools mainly enrolling minority students should adopt textbooks in minority languages and scripts when available and use minority languages as the media of instruction; in upper grades in primary schools or in secondary schools Chinese courses should be offered and Putonghua should be used.
>
> Article 47: Courts of law and offices of public prosecutors in autonomous areas should use the locally common language in their official business, guarantee citizens of all minority nationalities the right to use their native languages in law suits and trials, provide interpreters when the parties involved do not understand the locally common language, and adopt one or more locally common languages in legal documents according to actual needs.
>
> Article 49: Autonomous governments should educate and encourage their officials of all ethnic origins to learn each other's languages and scripts. Officials of Han origin should learn the community's minority language(s) and script(s); officials of minority origin should learn their native language(s) and script(s) as well as Mandarin and Chinese script. Officials of autonomous governments who can proficiently use two or more locally common languages and scripts should be rewarded.
>
> Article 53: Autonomous governments should . . . encourage officials and masses of all ethnic groups to respect each other's languages and scripts …

Together with the PRC constitution and other national laws/statutes, the new autonomous law has clearly specified the domains where minority languages and Putonghua should be used as well as citizens and officials who should learn minority languages and Putonghua.

### *3. 2. Language Rights and the PRC's Laws in International Perspectives*

The PRC's laws on minority language rights may be viewed in relation to the typology of language laws, international concepts of language rights, and philosophical and legal concepts of language equality. When gauged in terms of the dimensions represented in Figure 1 (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1995), the

PRC's laws on minority language rights reviewed above appear to do well with respect to both the dimension of overtness and the dimension of degree of promotion. Language rights for minorities and their communities are spelled out as explicitly as possible in the PRC Constitution and other legislation. The constitution not only guarantees the right to use and develop minority languages in minority communities (Article 4) but also requires that minority languages be used in both the administrative process and the judicial process in autonomous areas (Articles 121 and 134). In addition, to implement the constitutional requirements the autonomy law goes further to encourage government officials to learn and use minority languages and to reward those who can use two or more languages (Article 49). Clearly, the PRC's laws on minority languages rights are overtly promotion-oriented. In fact, in comparison to relevant laws of 52 European countries (see Coulmas, 1991; Trifunovska & Varennes, 2001, pp. 341–606) and those in 142 countries throughout the world (see Varenness, 1996, pp. 380–459), the PRC's laws on minority languages are one of the most overtly promotion–oriented, if not the most overtly promotion-oriented. Functionally, some aspects of these laws are liberal while these laws are generally official (cf. Turi, 1995). For example, Article 4 of the 1982 constitution is liberal in that it enshrines total legal recognition of minority language rights. On the other hand, the majority of the PRC's legislation on minority language rights specifies the official use of minority languages in official domains, such as in local government business, judicial processes, and in public schools. Standardizing language legislation for minority languages is not found at the national level but is common at the local level in China (cf. Zhou, 2001a, 2001b).

When human rights, individual rights, and collective/group rights are concerned, however, the PRC's laws on minority language rights deviate from the mainstream international practices in two significant ways. First, no connection is explicitly made between human rights and minority language rights in any of these laws, though the PRC is a signatory of nearly 20 international treaties on human rights (see China, 1999b). Issues of human rights were not discussed in public discourse in China until the 1980s. The PRC government began to make a connection between its concept of basic human rights (right to subsist, right to socioeconomic development, and right to education) and its laws only in the 1990s, after it was internationally pressed (China, 2000, p. 1). In this connection, minority rights and minority language rights enshrined in the PRC Constitution and other legislation are viewed as the PRC's recognition and protection of human rights in its minority communities (China, 2000, p. 6). Second, the PRC's laws generally fail to enshrine minority language rights as individual rights. Only Article 134 of the 1982 constitution appears to do so, by stating that "citizens of all nationalities have the right to use their native languages in courts" (China, 1999a, p. 44). However, when implemented in the PRC's law on autonomy, this right of citizens' is converted into a duty on the courts of laws and offices of public prosecutors to "guarantee citizens of all national minorities the right to use their native languages in law suits and trials" (see Article 47 in quotation in Section 3.1). The same legal discourse can be found in all of the PRC's legislation with an aspect on minority language rights, such as "Education Law of the PRC" and "Law on Compulsory Education" (Sun & Gao, 1996, pp. 2

and 92). The distinction between individual-rights and government-duties, which concerns the question of whether to empower the state or to empower the individual, represents fundamental differences between the PRC and the mainstream international community in moral and legal approaches to human rights and citizen rights. In a polity that legally guarantees individual rights and thus empowers the individual, the individual may have more channels to force the state to fulfill its duties. On the other hand, in a polity that legally specifies the state's duties and thus empowers the state, the state may fail to carry out its duties, but citizens as individuals may not have any means to make the state comply with the laws, a problem that the PRC's own experience has fully demonstrated regarding minority language rights and use in the last 50 years (cf. Zhou, 2001a, 2001b).

The interpretation of minority language rights as state duties also lies in the view of such rights as group rights rather than individual rights. Following Stalin's (1975, p. 22) definition that "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture," the PRC categorized minority groups into 55 nationalities or ethnic groups, of course with a lot of flexibility by manipulating the term "historically." In this categorization, the four criteria—common language, territory, economic life, and culture—are defining features of groups, not of individuals. The PRC's adoption of the Stalinist notion of nation and nationality determines that minority rights and minority language rights are to be resolved in the group approach in the arena of national and subnational politics. The group approach is first of all entrenched in regional autonomy and proportional representation of minority groups in people's congresses (legislature) at various levels, as guaranteed by the PRC Constitution (Article 23 of the 1954 version and Article 59 of the 1982 version). Language rights have been enshrined as group rights, that is, "all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their native languages and scripts" in the 1954, 1975, 1978, and 1982 versions of the PRC constitution. As my review of the international perspectives suggests, the group approach may actually have an advantage over the individual approach in minority language maintenance.

The PRC's adoption of the Stalinist approach to the national question entails, in theory, a true equality among different ethnic groups, an equality that does not exist in the capitalist system, as claimed by Stalin (1975, pp. 122–150 and 282–294). This equality is based on the four common bases, language, territory, economy, and culture. In theory, the development or expansion of one or all of these four bases of one nation/ethnic group at the expenses of another nation/ethnic group) is a cause of inequality between two nations/groups. This theoretical equality is enshrined in all the four versions of the PRC Constitution as "every ethnic group has the freedom to use and develop its language and writing systems and to maintain or reform its customs and religion." The constitution so worded suggests that languages of every ethnic group are equal, which can also be taken literally to mean that minority languages and Chinese are equal. This interpretation of the Common Program and the 1954, 1975, and 1978 versions of the constitution may be justified without question, theoretical or practical. However, this interpretation of the 1982 constitution runs into a contradiction, because Article 19 declares that the state

promotes the commonly used Putonghua throughout the whole country. This article suggests that there is a distinction between Chinese as the national common (official) language and minority languages as local languages. This constitutional distinction leads to the common language law passed in 2000, which specifically enshrines Chinese as the national/official language of the PRC (China, 2001, pp. 4–9; see Rohsenow, this volume). Conservatively speaking, the PRC Constitution recognized equality among the languages of all officially recognized ethnic groups, including Chinese, between 1949 and 1982, and still recognizes that all minority languages are equal, though Chinese and minority languages may not be completely equal. The Chinese government still stresses that all languages are equal and this equality is a Leninist-Stalinist principle (China, 1996, pp. 708, 713, and 731), but this equality currently appears to be interpreted narrowly as legal equality among minority languages. In spite of the differences between the broad and narrow interpretations, the issue is how much of the constitutionally guaranteed equality has actually been practiced in every day life. Laws represent ideals, not realities, in the world and especially in China.

## 4. THE PRACTICE OF LANGUAGE RIGHTS AND EQUALITY IN THE PRC

The group approach, which opens the door to the arena of national and subnational politics for minority language rights, allows three dimensions of equality for languages. These are equality of legal status, equality of use/development, and equality of government service, as is best exemplified in language policy in Canada (MacMillan, 1998, pp. 167–176). This section examines the same three equalities among languages in China between 1949 and 2001, in order to assess how theoretical/legal equalities are practically guaranteed and implemented in the sphere of minority language policy.

### *4.1. The Question of Equality of Legal Status for Minority Languages*

Equality of legal status requires equal status in law for minority languages as the language(s) of government and its institutions (MacMillan, 1998, pp. 169–170). The broad interpretation of equal status for languages of all 56 officially recognized ethnic groups (including Chinese) were guaranteed by the Common Program, and 1954, 1975, and 1978 versions of the constitution, and the narrow interpretation of equal status for languages of 55 minority groups (excluding Chinese) are still guaranteed by the 1982 constitution and the law on autonomy. The narrow interpretation is probably what the PRC really meant from its very beginning. Even examined from the perspective of this narrow interpretation, however, in practice the Chinese government appears to have limited the legal status of minority languages by functionally classifying their writing systems in the early 1950s as "commonly used," "incomplete," and "none" and subsequently, in the late 1950s, by giving them the administrative classifications of "official," "experimental," and "unofficial" (see Sun and Q. Zhou, this volume). This functional and sublegal status allocation in a three-tier system involves a process that seems to be fundamentally permeated by

ideology and power politics in every country in the world (cf. Cooper, 1989, pp. 99–121; Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, pp. 195–214). As such, this process may be labelled as a practice of a Hobbesian principle of language equality (see MacMillan, 1998, p. 168), which in the Chinese case allocates a certain status to a minority language on the basis of its community's threat, real or perceived, to the state in relation to the territorial integrity and national unity of the PRC.

This practice of a Hobbesian principle of language equality officially started as early as in September 1951, when the first national conference on minority education recognized Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean, Uygur, and Kazak writing systems as commonly used while brushing aside other writing systems as incomplete (China, 1991, p. 36). This categorization was based on neither linguistic criteria nor functionality, for in March of the same year the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences had included four other writing systems, namely, Russian, Xibe, Uzbek, and Tartar, in the same category of the commonly used (see Fu, 1995 [1954], pp. 95–111). Apparently, two factors appear to have determined a language community's weight in its status negotiation with the state in the early 1950s. The first factor is the strategic location of a minority language community within the territory of the PRC. Tibetan, Mongolia, Korean, Uygur, and Kazak communities are located along China's western, northern, and northeastern borders, where local stability and territorial integrity have been of paramount importance to the PRC regarding its national security, as witnessed by the Korean War (1950–1953), Sino-Indian border conflicts (the early 1960s), and Sino-Soviet border tension and conflicts (the early 1960s to the middle 1970s). The second factor is the relative strength of a community, with strategic location, in terms of its population size. In the early 1950s, the Tibetans had a population of nearly three million, the Mongolians nearly one million and a half, the Uygurs over three and a half million, the Koreans over one million, and the Kazaks nearly a half million, but the populations of the Russians, Xibes, Uzbeks, and Tartars ranged from a little over twenty-two thousand to barely seven thousand (China, 1994a, pp. 2–4). It is thus no wonder that the writing systems of the latter four groups were excluded from the prestigious category of the commonly used.

If it was politically implicit in the early 1950s, the three-tier categorization became explicit and official in 1956, when State Council Document # 10 defined official writing systems as those approved by the State Council, experimental writing systems as those approved by both provincial governments and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, and unofficial writing systems as those without the above two types of approval but with some authorization from authorities below the provincial level (China, 1991, pp. 414–426). This is where the executive regulations began to deviate from the PRC Constitution.

The practice of a Hobbesian principle of language equality is seen not only in the categorization of existing writing systems but also in the revision of the "incomplete" writing systems and creation of new ones (Zhou, 2001b; also see Sun and Q. Zhou, this volume). The most prominent example is the Zhuang writing system, which was created and revised between 1952 and 1957 (see Li & Huang, this volume). In 1957, this system became the first newly created writing system to have won the official status, as the Zhuang community had successfully negotiated

with the central government for authorization to establish a provincial level autonomous administration (Li, 1981 [1957], pp. 483–502). The population and location factors favored the Zhuang community in the 1950s, because it had the largest minority population, nearly seven million strong (1953 census), and a strategic location along China's southern borders. This practice is also found in allocation of the second-tier status, the experimental, to the Jingpo, Dai (two systems), Va, Lisu, Lahu, Naxi, Hani, Miao (four systems), Yi, Dong, Bouyei, Li, Daur, Kirgiz, Xibe, Uzbek, and Tartar between 1952 and 1957 (see Zhou, 2001b).

The preferential treatment and prioritization based on a minority community's potential threat to the state and the PRC's national security figured most prominently in Yunnan's implementation of central laws and policies—a practice firmly supported by Deng Xiaoping, then first secretary of the CCP Southwestern Bureau (China, 1994b, pp. 51—64). With authorization first from the CCP Southwestern Bureau and later from the Central Committee, in 1950 the Yunnan Provincial CCP committee and government divided minority communities into two zones, a border zone and an inland zone. In 1952 it added a buffer zone between the two for the purpose of policy implementation, the most exemplary case of the practice of a Hobbesian principle of equality (Yunnan, 1994 [1], pp. 134–136). Depending on how well they were perceived and received, the PRC's laws and the central government's policies were not implemented at all or were enforced on a case-by-case basis in the border zone, implemented and enforced laxly in the buffer zone, and regularly implemented and enforced in the inland zone. In the allocation of the experimental status, consequently, minority communities located in the border zone were given priority over those located in the buffer and inland zones. For example, writing systems of the Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Va, and Lahu communities within the border zone were revised between 1952 and 1957 and given experimental status in 1957 (see Zhou & Fang, this volume). In addition, new writing systems were created and also given experimental status for the Hani and Naxi communities within the border zone in the same year. In contrast, writing systems for minority communities, such as the Bai and Yi, located in the buffer and inland zones, were not created or not given experimental status in Yunnan until the 1980s (For Bai and Yi, see Wang and Pu, this volume).

This practice of allocation of status to minority languages in a three-tier system was further reaffirmed by State Council Document #32 in 1991 (China, 1996, pp. 707–711) after a relatively lax period in the 1980s (Zhou, 2001b). The reaffirmation process took between 1992 and 1996, which recognized almost all writing systems already with the experimental status, except those of Li and Northern Miao (the revised Pollard system), which failed to receive support from the local communities and governments. At the same time, this process has added those of the Bai, Yunnan Yi, Qiang, and Tu to the list of experimental writing systems. The Bai and Yunnan Yi communities are located in the buffer zones in Yunnan. The Qiang community lies between the Tibetan and Han communities, while the Tu community is in Qinghai, adjacent to the Mongolian community. Efforts at winning such status by minority communities (e. g., the Tujia, Shui, and Yao) have so far failed, probably because of their non-strategic locations and/or their high levels of assimilation into the Han. The former condition allows the government to ignore these communities

while the latter gives less incentive to these communities to act unanimously for their mother tongues.

Clearly, the allocation of sublegal status to minority languages by categorizing their writing systems into official, experimental, and unofficial status was practiced in accordance with a Hobbesian principle, in that minority languages whose communities were perceived to pose a greater threat to the state were given higher status, minority languages whose communities were considered to pose a lesser threat were given a lower status, and minority languages whose communities were seen to pose equal threats to the state were given equal status. This practice has had serious consequences for the equality of use and development and the equality of service for minority communities (cf. Zhou, 2000, 2001d).

### *4.2. The Question of Equality of Use and Development*

Equality of use and development requires that all minority languages be equally used in government and its institutions in minority communities and that all minority languages have equal opportunities to undergo language development, such as graphization and standardization (Ferguson, 1968), so that they can meet the needs of government and its institutions. The essential objective of this dimension of equality is to provide a linguistic base for the minority language speakers' active participation in public service and thus to ensure their proportional representation in government, at least in their own communities, against the majority's tendency to dominate or monopolize this arena of power (see MacMillan, 1998, pp. 172–176).

Equality of use and development may be considered from two perspectives; one is equality between Chinese and minority languages and the other is equality among minority languages. Let me examine the equality between Chinese and minority language first. Nationally, equality of use between Chinese and minority languages has not been fully practiced, but considerable efforts have been made to give consideration to proportional weight to minority languages. Since the 1950s, documents and simultaneous interpretation have been provided in some minority languages, starting with Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean, Uygur, and Kazak and expanding to Zhuang, Yi, and some second-tier languages, at the National People's Congress, the CCP National Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress (China, 1996, p. 713; also see Tai, M. C. Zhou, Pu, Li & Huang, and Caodaobateer, this volume). In a sense, this practice represents proportional equality of use when consideration is given to the proportion of Chinese speakers and minority language speakers in China. The proportional equality of use effectively classifies Chinese as the national language and minority languages as provincial and local languages. For example, in 1986, the Ministry of Public Security and the Sate Ethnic Affairs Commission jointly issued a document on language use on citizen identification cards, a document that requires that Chinese and only Chinese be printed on the front side of the card, allowing minority languages only on the back side (China, 1996, pp. 574–575).

Locally, equality between Chinese and minority languages in government has been far from proportionally practiced. At the regional and provincial level, many

government conferences and documents have been in Chinese or mainly in Chinese. Let me examine the case of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, where Chinese and Uygur are the legal official languages of the regional autonomous government (for details, see Blachford, this volume). In 1993 alone, of the 2,069 official documents issued by three departments of the Xinjiang government, 1,873 were in Chinese, while only 196 were in Uygur (Jianabur, 1994). At regional public conferences also in Xinjiang, key officials of Han origin speak Chinese with simultaneous interpretation into minority languages, while key officials of minority origin speak minority languages with simultaneous interpretation in Chinese (China, 1994c, p. 873). The reality is, at best, that half of the key officials are of Han origin and half of minority origin, so that the regional CCP standing committee usually conducts its meetings completely in Chinese (Jianabuer, 1986). The limited use of Uygur, even one of the first-tier, has apparently limited minority citizens' ability to participate in public service in Xinjiang, where fluent Chinese speakers and readers are below 10 percent of the Uygur population (China, 1994c, p. 872–875). The situation of equality of language use is definitely not better in other autonomous regions, but statistics are difficult for outsiders to obtain.

At the prefectural and county level, equality of language use between Chinese and minority language fares even worse. Let me look into the case of Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, where Chinese, Dai, and Jingpo are the legal official languages. In reality, Chinese is the only official language, particularly when written language is concerned (Dehong, 1998, pp. 198-204). For example, the prefectural court of law and office of public prosecutors did not issue any legal documents in Dai and/or Jingpo nor did they publish any legal announcements in a minority language during the early 1990s, though they provided interpreters for the accused and citizens involved in legal cases. A more ironic example is that in 1993 the prefectural government issued Document # 58 that stressed the importance of minority language use and required minority language use in government, but this document was published only in Chinese (Dehong, 1998, pp. 9–12 and 199). The message and the language used to carry it in this document best illustrates the gap between the lip service paid by the local government to equality of language use and the reality of minority language use in the local government. The barrier for minority language use appears to lie in the local CCP committees. The local power structure consists of the CCP committee, the people's congress, the administration, and the people's political consultative congress (see Blachford, this volume). The local CCP committee is the locus of power, though constitutionally the people's congress is. In 1995 a review of minority language use in various organs of the power structure since the issuing of Document #58 in 1993 showed that the prefectural CCP committee and its departments were the worst minority language users, even having no bilingual or trilingual stationary (Dehong, 1998, p. 199). However, Dehong is not the worst scenario of minority language use in government at the prefectural and county level, it is located along the border. The more inland an autonomous prefecture or county is located, the less the government uses minority languages in its official business, a practice that reflects both a Hobbesian principle of equality and the reality of the degrees of assimilation into the Han majority.

From the perspective of equality of use and development among minority languages, almost the same relationship between Chinese and minority languages is found in that between the first/second tier minority languages and minority languages with no official status. Whenever minority languages are in fact used in government, they are the first and second tier languages. Without legal status at the local level, unofficial minority languages are marginalized to the extent that they are only orally used in sporadic situations that compel government officials to communicate in unofficial minority languages.

I will focus on equality of language development in two aspects, graphization and standardization in corpus planning (cf. Ferguson, 1968). Language planning is the pursuit and maintenance of power, which has been fully exemplified in the Chinese case at various stages (see Zhou, 2003; Dwyer, 1998). This concept of power pursuit and maintenance is first of all reflected in the structure of the bureaucracy of language work as state organs. Only minority languages with first and second tier status have corresponding offices and budgets in local minority language work commissions, a department of the government, while unofficial languages do not (Dehong, 1998, pp. 19–20; Xinjiang, 1988, pp. 289–294). For unofficial minority languages, the speakers usually have to gather support from the community and petition for support from the local people's political consultative congress and/or people's congress (cf. Ye, 1995, pp. 239–240). If they can mobilize sufficient support, they may receive special grants from the government to move to graphization—creating trial writing systems for small-scale trials. Broad community support is needed before a trial writing system is to gain experimental status. However, most trial systems of unofficial languages have never moved beyond graphization.

As for standardization, the offices in charge of specific first or second tier languages generally do two things to maintain the status of such a language. First, they constantly try to improve the orthography of the language's writing system by publishing revised orthography in newspapers and standard dictionaries with the most updated orthography and pronunciation. Between 1983 and 1992, for example, the Xinjiang Minority Language Work Commission revised the orthographies and published standard dictionaries for Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, and Xibe (cf. Apana, 1992). Second, these offices oversee the modernization of terminology for the languages that they are responsible for. Between 1989 and 1990, for instance, Dehong Minority Language Work Commission held conferences on the modernization and standardization of terms for Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, and Zaiwa (Dehong, 1998, pp. 241–245). With linguists, educators, ethnologists, and government officials participating, these conferences standardized about 15,000 terms for those four languages. Because of the lack of such opportunities to update their terms, unofficial minority languages are left farther and farther behind the official languages in their ability to meet wider communication needs in their communities.

Obviously, the different extent of minority language use in government and the amount of opportunities for minority languages to undergo graphization and standardization essentially symbolize the proportional representation of minority communities in the negotiated power structure in China.

*4.3. The Question of the Equality of Service*

Equality of service mandates that the same degree and quality of government service be available to speakers of all languages (see MacMillan, 1998, pp. 170–171). I will examine equality of service in government and its institutions (education and media) in minority communities only, because those communities are where such services are truly needed and constitutionally guaranteed.

Equality of government service has been most seriously challenged by the high proportion of government workers who are Han and do not speak minority languages. According to the PRC autonomy law (Article 16 and 17), the head of an autonomous government should be a member of the minority group in whose name the autonomy is granted, and his/her cabinet and government should have as many officials and workers of minority origin as possible (China, 1998, pp. 5–6). Some local autonomous laws have spelled out more specifically the proportional representation of minorities in the government. In Yunnan, for instance, the local autonomous laws require a higher percentage of minority officials than its proportion when an autonomous area has only about 30% to 50% minority population, but require about 33% officials of Han origin when an autonomous area has 80% or more minority population (Wang, 1993, pp. 64–66). The proportion is specified in the laws, because during 1980s—a period of rather liberal minority policy—Yunnan had just about 22% officials of minority origin, though the overall minority population was over 30%. In autonomous governments throughout China, the percentage of officials of minority origin range from 20s at the regional level to the 30s at the prefecrural level and the 40s at the county level, with the exception of Tibet where there is a higher percentage of local officials of Tibetan origin (China, 1999c).

This high proportion of non-minority-language speaking Han officials limits quality service to the minority population in two ways. First, it prevents minority citizens from even trying to get service from the government. The first obstacle for minority citizens is the difficulty of locating relevant offices when they need service. Take Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture for example (see Xiao, 1998). In 1990, of the 177 government departments and institutions located in Mangshi—the prefectural capital, only 55 institutions (31%) had trilingual (Chinese, Dai, and Jingpo) exterior signs; of 894 offices within these 177 institution, only 43 (4.8%) had trilingual interior signs (Dehong, 1998, pp. 177–176). It is almost like walking into a labyrinth for minority citizens to find a government office, because over three quarters of the minority population could not read Chinese well (about half were illiterate and, of the literate half, at best 50% were not competent Chinese readers.) (see Zhou, 2000, 2001d). Even if a minority citizen eventually locates the office he/she needs, nearly 80% of the time (calculated according to the percentage of Han officials) the staff in the office does not speak the minority citizen's language. A former provincial leader of Yunnan publicly acknowledged that these situations discouraged minorities to communicate with the government and seek service from it (Wang, 1993, p. 102).

Second, the high percentage of Han officials prevents the government from delivering quality service to citizens in minority communities. In the past half-

century, state-run farms, factories, and other businesses have constantly had cultural and economic conflicts with the minority communities where these businesses are located. When government officials go to investigate the conflicts and provide solutions, they have difficulties communicating with citizens in the local minority communities and are unable to get whole picture. As a result, the government's conflict-solutions are often perceived as unfair by the local minority community. Minority citizens usually take three approaches to the government's poor service in conflict-solutions: (1) they run away from the conflicts into remote areas, (2) they run away across the border into a foreign country, or (3) they resort to violence for a fairer solution (Wang, 1993, pp. 102–103). Even when minorities complained to their local government in writing, these Han officials were not able to respond timely or at all (Dehong, 1998, pp. 190 and 254). Obviously, government service in Chinese only is not just inferior; it causes serious problems in ethnic relations.

Equality of service in public education should be of the greatest concern to language rights and use, because the right to education is considered a basic human right by the Chinese government (China, 2000). The lack of regular bilingual education is the major problem in delivery of quality education in minority communities in China (cf. Lin, 1997). Since I have already extensively examined the inadequacy of bilingual education and its consequences elsewhere (see Zhou, 2000, 2001a, 2001d), I will focus on the state's financial investment and talent "return" in education in minority communities, in order to show that the role of first language is not what money can buy in education. In the early 1980s, the Yunnan provincial government allocated over $20 (at the then exchange rate of $1 = ¥1.75) per student per year for schools in the autonomous prefectures along the borders and only $3.5 per student per year for schools in the Han prefectures in inland areas (Zhang, 1992, pp. 115–116). Financially both numbers did not amount to much, even in terms of developing countries' standards at that time, but a minority student's funding was then six times more than that of a Han student.. This was a significant step toward affirmative action—a step that probably no other majority-dominant government, democratic or totalitarian, has even considered to take.

However, the government's financial investment failed to yield desirable talent return. In one of the autonomous counties in 1982, for instance, the allocation for schools was about $1,142,800 ($1 = ¥1.75), but only 77 students (3.3%) of the elementary school graduating class (2,334 students) got a pass grade in math and (Chinese) language courses (Zhang, 1992, pp. 155–156). The problem may be found in the language of instruction: Chinese was used as the instructional medium in schools in minority communities where only below 50% of the population spoke and understood some Chinese (see China, 1994a, pp. 764–766 and 847–850). Clearly, in education, the role of the first language cannot be replaced simply with funding. Equality of service in public education depends largely on equality of language use in public schools.

In China, public media is state-controlled and is perhaps the only arena where the government has done a relatively good job, particularly in radio and television broadcasting that effectively targets at minority populations with rather high illiteracy. Since 1950, radio programs in Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean, Uygur, and Kazak have been gradually provided by the PRC's Central Radio Station (see M. C.

Zhou, Tai, and Caodaobateer, this volume). In the following years, radio programs in 11 second-tier minority languages have been added by central and provincial radio stations. By the late 1990s, programs in 16 minority languages were broadcasted by central and provincial radio stations, and programs in 20 minority languages were made available by local radio stations (China, 1996, p. 714, 1999c).

Since the 1980s, television programs have been regularly available in the five first-tier minority languages, and some programming is also available in some second-tier minority languages (China 1994c; Dehong, 1998, p. 189). For example, in Xinjiang by the early 1990s, the regional radio station and 36 local station had regular programs in Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongolian, and Xibe, and the regional television station and twenty three local stations had regular programs in Uygur, Kazak, and Mongolian (Apana, 1992). The CCP has held tight control over the public media because of its belief of the media's force in stabilizing or destabilizing the state, a force that is considered second only to the armed forces. In addition, the CCP also considers radio and television broadcasting as the best means for it to reach out to illiterate and semi-illiterate citizens in minority communities in order to have its policies received by them. This political motivation has in fact facilitated the development and maintenance of broadcasting in minority languages.

Minority language newspapers have also been considered by the CCP as just as forceful as radio and television broadcasting (cf. Bai, 1996, pp. 32–43). For example, in the mid-1950s, Mao Zedong personally intervened in the preparation for the publication of the *Tibetan Daily* and instructed that the daily should have separate Chinese-language and Tibetan-language editions instead of a combined edition. In the past half century, minority language newspapers have been regularly published in minority communities in northeastern, north, and northwestern China, but only irregularly in south and southwestern China (Ma, 1990). The different treatment of minority language newspapers largely reflects the CCP's instrumental motivation behind its support for these newspapers. Minority communities in the northeast, north, and northwest have a much high rate of literacy than that in minority communities in the south and southwest, so that newspapers can reach out to more minority citizens in the northeast, north, and northwest than they do in the south and southwest (see Zhou, 2000).

All three areas—government, public education, and public media—considered, real equality of service cannot be claimed between the Han community and minority communities, nor even among minority communities, though the PRC government has sometimes tried hard to do so.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This chapter shows that there is a significant disparity between what the PRC Constitution guarantees and what the Chinese government has practiced in the sphere of language rights and equality. The PRC Constitution, laws on minority autonomy, and other laws enshrine language rights and equality most explicitly and broadly, even considered from international perspectives. It appears, however, that the government has actually practiced a Hobbesian principle of equality: among

minority communities, minority languages whose communities are equal threats to the PRC's territorial and national integrity receive equal status, equal opportunities for use and development, and equal government service, whereas minority languages whose communities pose unequal threats to such integrity are given unequal legal status, unequal opportunities for use and development, and unequal government service. Moreover, Chinese and minority languages have not been meant to be equal, though this unequal status was not explicitly written in the constitution until 1982 and in the national commonly used language law until 2000 (see Appendix in Rohsenow, this volume).

Why is there such a huge disparity between the PRC's constitutional guarantees and the Chinese government's actual practice of language rights in minority communities? The answer appears to lie in three factors. First, as in all communist countries, the constitution always promises more than the state is willing to deliver and is simply used to legitimize the party's control. Second, in Leninist-Stalinist theory (see Connor, 1984, pp. 273–277) the accommodation of ethnic and linguistic diversity is only a means, whereas ethnic and linguistic integration is the true end. Third, and most crucially in China's actual practice, Han chauvinism has aggravated the already unbalanced situation. The non-minority-language-speaking Han CCP secretaries in charge of minority areas usually do not understand the importance of minority language rights or care about such rights at all – rights that are not even clear to responsible officials in Beijing (the author's personal communication with relevant officials, 2002). It probably has never occurred to them and most Hans that minority languages and Chinese should be equal, even in minority communities.

For minority communities, on the other hand, their foremost concern is the equality between Chinese and their native languages in their own communities (see minority authors, Chingaltai, 1997, pp. 63–89; Fang, 1993; Zhang, 1992, pp. 87–104). Without that equality, even the first and second tier minority languages have little room for their use and development, not to mention opportunities for the unofficial minority languages to be considered for use and development. The overuse of Chinese in government and its institutions in minority communities, which is clearly against the constitutional and autonomous guarantees of minority language rights, creates most problems in language equality, real and perceived, problems that alienate minority citizens and sometimes result in their resistance against learning Chinese (Jiangbulatuofu, 1988). Minority communities whose languages are not granted any official status definitely have a lot of concerns about the Chinese government's practice of a Hobbesian principle of equality (see Zhang, 1992, p. 97; Wei, 1993; Ye, 1995, pp. 213–225), but they have little voice in the current power structure of the PRC, compared with those minority communities whose languages are granted some official status. The disparity between the legal rights and equality on the one hand and actual practices on the other hurts the harmony among the various ethnic groups, particularly that between the Han and minorities.

In the sphere of language rights and use/development, the practice since 1992 of a Hobbesian principle of equality, which the Chinese government has termed *"cong shiji chufa, fenlei zhidao"* [The use and development of minority languages should be guided, in terms of their status categorization, according to the reality.] (China,

1996, pp. 709–710), is not only contradictory to the Leninist-Stalinist principle of national equality that the CCP still claims to hold on to, but can also be interpreted as a constitutional violation, because there is no legal basis for this practice. A draft of legislation to legalize this policy and to protect minority language rights had been worked on by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and discussed by the National People's Congress's subcommittee on education, science, culture, and public health between 1992 and 2000 (cf. China, 1996, pp. 721–722; 2001, pp. 12–13). But it has been stalled there since 2000 because of questions of constitutionality and coverage of minority language rights (author's personal communication with Chinese officials, 2002; also see Rohsenow, this volume). Originally the draft was intended to be an independent legislation, and later it was considered to be a part of the language law of 2001. The latter proposal did not work out because of the apparent conflict between constitutional rights and constitutional obligations: the draft of minority language legislation was intended to protect minority language rights, whereas the language law of 2001 focuses on linguistic obligations. After the failure to pass the minority language legislation, the gap between theory and practice has been expanding. For example, the 2001 revision of the PRC autonomy law stresses, more than before, the use and teaching of Putonghua in minority communities, while deleting a clause on rewarding officials who learn to use two or more languages in government service (see revised Article 37, Wang & Chen 2001, p. 301). This policy and practice orientation represents the efforts at integrating minorities into the Chinese nation *(Zhonghua Minzu),* efforts initiated since the early 1990s first as a response to the collapse of the former Soviet Union and then as a long-term goal of mono-nation-building (see Fei, 1991, 1999; Zhou, 2003, pp. 93–98)

In short, the role of the constitution and issues of constitutionality have been puzzling the PRC and the CCP since the 1954 constitution. Technically some national legislations often delimit broad constitutional rights. For example, the constitutional provisions for linguistic rights for minorities have been delimited by such terms "when conditions permit" and "commonly used" in the *PRC Regional Autonomy Law for Minority Nationalities* (Article 37) and the *PRC Education Law* (Article 12). Politically, the CCP often makes policies without due respect for the PRC Constitution. Celebrating the 20th anniversary of the 1982 Constitution on December 4, 2002, Hu Jintao, now President of the PRC, called for more respect for the PRC Constitution in his first major public speech right after he became the CCP general secretory (*People's Daily,* December 5, 2002), a speech that is said to have met resistance from CCP conservatives, including ex-President Jiang Zemin. Hu's speech clearly suggests the overall graveness of these issues in China. Until the overall situation changes for better, the disparity between constitutionally guaranteed minority language rights and the actual language rights enjoyed by minorities will remain a significant problem in the Chinese practice of language rights.

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## 6. NOTE

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# PART II: THE CENTER VERSUS THE PERIPHERY IN PRACTICE

DONGYAN RU BLACHFORD

# LANGUAGE SPREAD VERSUS LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE: POLICY MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ever since 1949 when the Communists came to power in China, minority issues in general and minority language issues in particular have been a continuing challenge for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). For the past 50 years, the core of the minority policy dilemma has been the CCP's constant effort to build a united socialist nation state and the sensitive task of developing a policy to fit the country's social economic reality as well as the aspirations of its 104-million minority population. The policies are intended to attain national unity by integrating the national minorities into the Han and Communist culture and at the same time maintain political stability by addressing the concerns of the minority population. Reflected in minority language policy is a dilemma and constant struggle to search for a fine balance between the spread of *Putonghua* (Mandarin) and the maintenance of minority languages. The intention to spread the majority Han language was stipulated in the Constitution of the PRC (1982) that "the state is to promote Putonghua in the whole country", which is stated again in the *Law of the National Commonly Used Language and Script* passed in 2000 (see Guo and Rohsenow, this volume). This has been one of the Party's chief unifying tools and the goal is to promote the status of Putonghua not only as the official language of China but also as the national lingua franca among the Han dialect speakers as well as in minority areas. On the other hand, authorities are also expected to work towards preservation and development of minority languages, an objective that is also guaranteed by the Constitution and several other statutes (see M. Zhou, this volume).

There have been many factors and conditions that determine and affect policy decisions (see Blachford, 1999). However, one very important yet less understood factor is the complex bureaucratic structure of the state itself as a significant determinant of the political process and policy outcomes. The author examines how the Chinese bureaucratic structure, the largest in the world, played its unique role in minority language policy development and implementation. In essence, how minority language policies are initiated and formulated at the national level with interaction from below, how such policies are interpreted into more concrete educational plans at the regional level and the reactions to and impact of these

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policies on minority languages, culture and their communities. The investigation illuminates the relationships between various levels within the Chinese bureaucratic structure: central government policies on minority language and education; provincial and autonomous regional government practice in interpreting, legislating, and modifying the central policy into language education programs; and local (prefecture, county, municipal-administration and schools) reaction and adaptation in implementing or ignoring these programs.

The author had the opportunity to visit pertinent government organs and agencies at each level of administration, to interview a number of relevant personnel from national level leaders to classroom teachers, to review large volumes of documents both published and unpublished, and to observe minority communities and schools. The author was fortunately able to be part of a research exchange project between Canada and China funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). For details see "A report of a five-month research trip in China" (Blachford, 1999, p. 362).

## 2. BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE AND POLICY PROCESS

As anywhere else where social systems are built according to a distinct set of values, political principles and official ideologies, it is crucial, in the analysis of policy making, to remember the historical identity of the system and to see the forces currently struggling within it. The forces that build, maintain and function within the bureaucratic structure are the key players and participants at each level of the policy making and implementation process. To keep the policy machine running, these players and participants have devised and employed a unique set of strategies and mechanisms of communications that bears distinct Chinese tradition and has been detrimental in the policy process. Therefore, to understand minority language policy making and implementation, one needs to first identify personnel whose values, beliefs and power have been the major influence and determinants in the making of minority language and education policy in contemporary China. Secondly, to examine their roles and functions within the pertinent government agencies at various levels and the bureaucratic structure that granted them the power and legitimacy to function in an organized manner. Thirdly, to explore the methods of communication and negotiation among them and the strategies used by them to push through their ideologies and policies to each corner of the country and to evaluate, monitor, and control the policy outcomes.

### *2.1. The Individuals as Participants in Policy Decisions*

Three groups of individuals are the major participants in the policy-making and implementation process: the top political leaders, the minority sector leaders, and the language experts and linguists. Although their functions and positions may carry different weights, all, in their own way, have had a particular influence and input in policy decisions.

The top leaders of the CCP, have, no doubt, shaped the general directions of any given policy in the PRC. Rule by absolute power of an individual or a group of individuals has long been the Chinese tradition. Anyone who has lived his or her life in China knows that the country has been led by powerful individuals at the very top of the Chinese political system. They are the ones who decide not only which ideologies to follow but also at what moment to change them. The CPC has certainly practiced this tradition to the fullest. "Hundreds of men have born the title of emperor in China's long history. Few have exercised more power, personal and political, than Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping" (Salisbury, 1992, p. 1).

The top leaders like Mao and Deng decided what ideology to follow in minority policy and what was expected of the national minorities themselves. The top leaders also tried to ensure their ideas were carried out by entrusting and selecting the personnel to lead the work in the minority sectors. For the past 50 years, the three most influential top leaders who had been responsible for minority policy directions and the changes were Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai (the Premier from 1949 to the year he died in 1976), and Deng Xiaoping (who took over from Mao from 1977 and ruled the country until his death in 1997). President Jiang Zemin, the successor of Deng, has largely maintained the minority policies made by previous leaders. Although he made some minor changes to the *Law On National Regional Autonomy* in 2001, it was more of a token for a change of leadership than a change in the essence of the policy.

Another group of important players were the leaders in minority sectors. The visions and wills of the top leaders were entrusted to people who not only shared their beliefs in the Communist course but were very often blessed with the knowledge and experience in dealing with nationality issues. For example, Li Weihan, a Han and a close friend of Mao, was appointed Head of the United Front Work Department in 1944 and continued to hold positions after 1949. His responsibilities over the years focused on minority issues. To appeal to the strong sense of minority aspirations, well-respected minority elites who demonstrated loyalty and sympathy to the Communist cause were rewarded with important administrative positions, as had been the practice in the Chinese imperial tradition.

There have also been cases where well-known scholars who were perceived as firm believers of communism and who contributed significantly to the Party's cause were given leadership positions. For example, Fei Xiaotong, a sociologist as well as ethnologist and a graduate of London University with a Ph.D., held positions such as the Deputy Chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress and Deputy Chairman of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission as well as the Deputy Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. All these organizations are Party and government agencies that handle minority work.

Another group of minority sector leaders consisted of minority elites (especially those representing minority groups with large populations) who were either trained or accepted by the Party and who also enjoyed popularity among their own ethnic groups. For example, Yang Jingren and Liu Geping (both Hui), Ulanfu (Mongol), Sai Fuding (Uygur), Apei Awangjimei (Tibetan) and Wu Jinghua (Zhuang) all held powerful positions in the PRC government.

Apart from the top leaders and minority sector leaders, another group of individuals who has input or influences on minority policies, either directly or indirectly, have been the prominent experts and scholars in minority culture and language research. When the Communists came to power in 1949, there were very few scholars in China who had specialized in the field of minority languages such as Luo Peichang and Fu Maoji. Very little was known about how many national minorities there were in the country, let alone their cultures and languages. A few language scholars whose expertise was in Han language, together with a few western-trained scholars who came back to China hoping to lend their expertise to the new country, were all China had at the time. They were depended upon to carry out the research work needed in minority language planning and policies. Very often they were given some leadership positions that, on the one hand, helped to strengthen the image of the Party—in that its policy was based on research—and on the other hand, were seen as rewards for those serving the Party faithfully.

In the book *Linguists of Minority Languages in Contemporary China* (Zhao & Li, 1989), 179 scholars, most born during the 1930s—including eleven who have since passed away—are listed as experts in the field of minority languages. Among them, many have made important contributions to the discovery and description of minority languages, including many that were before unknown to the outside world. Others have focused on translation and on compiling dictionaries and reference books on minority languages. Among them, a few particularly noticeable scholars have been involved with, and have influenced, the development of minority language policy by training large numbers of younger researchers, by presenting important data to inform policy makers, or by acting as administrators and leaders of research and policy-making institutes.

### *2.2. Pertinent Government Organs and Agencies*

China's political system is largely a combination of the Soviet model and its own imperial past. Mao Zedong and his colleagues set up such a strong national system that it ensured that leaders in Beijing could govern the entire population, some of it located thousands of miles away. (Remember that modern communication technology is only a recent phenomenon.) The government of the PRC is organized into two distinct sections, the Party and the government, with the military as part of the Party organization. As far as policy making is concerned, there is a unified chain of command with the Party having direct and total control of both the government and the military, both of which are merely tools to achieve goals set out by the Party. The top leaders usually hold several key positions in both the Party and the government decision-making bodies including the politburo of the CCP, the Secretariat of the CCP, the Standing Committee of the State Council and the Military Affairs Commission. The system runs parallel through each level of administration: the national level (centered in *Beijing*), the provincial/regional level (including all autonomous regions), the prefectures and then the counties. The Center exercises its control over the country through its 33 provincial-level governments which include: 23 provinces, five autonomous regions (Xizang

Tibetan, Xinjiang Uygur, Ningxia Hui, Guangxi Zhuang, and Inner Mongolia), four major cities (Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Chongqing), and most recently Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). The provincial-level units possess only those powers delegated to them by the Center. The next level down consists of the autonomous prefectures for the minority areas and districts and cities for the rest of the country. The counties, townships and villages are the next levels. Just as in the governance of the country throughout the dynasties, there are four layers in structure in the Han areas: the national *(zhongyang);* the provinces *(sheng);* the counties *(xian);* and the cities *(shi).* The fundamental system for the minority areas is regional national autonomy that means that the national minorities, under a unified central leadership, practice regional autonomy in areas where they live in concentrated communities. The organs of self-government are set up for the exercise of the power that autonomy brings. The system is parallel to that of the Han areas. Under the umbrella of the national level leadership, their recognized governance or autonomous status falls into three administrative levels: autonomous regions *(zizhiqu)* at the provincial level; autonomous prefectures *(zizhizhou)* at the level of municipalities under the direct jurisdiction of the provincial/regional government; and autonomous counties *(zizhixian)* at the level of the county (which is referred to as 'banner' in the case of Inner Mongolia). The autonomous areas are established where a certain minority group live in concentrated communities. By the end of 1994, a total of 157 autonomous areas have been established including five autonomous regions, 30 autonomous prefectures and 122 autonomous counties (banners) (Wu, 1995). It is not a self-contained clear-cut system but rather it mingles with the Han system.

There are major organs and agencies set up at each level that directly deal with minority issues. At the national level, two organs are at the top: United Front Work Department of the Party Central Committee and the State Council that heads the government. Under the State Council are major Ministries and Commissions. Nationalities Affaires Commission, as its name suggests, is the organ handling minority issues. The strategic importance of the major relevant organs, commissions, agencies and institutions lies in the network that not only participates in the policy-making process but also is responsible for carrying the policies through their offices at lower levels. The roles and functions of each of them, as discussed below, keep the whole network afloat.

The United Front Work Department, as a department of the Party Central Committee, is the most direct link between the CCP leadership and the national minorities (Moseley, 1966). It is in charge of the relations with non-Communist groups in China. It was first set up in 1944 and since then has been responsible for shaping the broad outlines of policy in minority areas in accordance with the Party line. The groups with which the Department is specifically called upon to carry out its "united front" activities include, in addition to leaders of the national minorities, members of democratic parties, religious leaders, non-communist intellectuals and so forth.

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is a public organization through which the CCP operates in its united-front work. It enacted the Common Program (the equivalent of the Constitution) on September 29, 1949 and also set up

the State Council (formerly known as the Government Administrative Council). It is the organization of the Chinese people's patriotic united front, and an important institution for multi-party cooperation and political consultation by the CCP.

The Nationality Committee of National People's Congress is under the National People's Congress, which theoretically is the highest organ of state power (Postiglione, 1992) and the equivalent in government to the Party Congress in the Party. The Nationality Committee is chiefly responsible for working out enactments concerning national minority problems and deliberating on the acceptability of autonomy regulations and specific proposals submitted by the autonomous area, and submitting these to the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee for approval before they go into effect.

The State Ethnic Affairs Commission is a functional department under the State Council. It was formally constituted on October 19, 1949. Its role is to supervise and inspect the implementation of nationality policies in minority regions. Like most commissions and ministries, the Commission has its own nationwide vertical bureaucratic hierarchy with offices at each subordinate territorial level of administration.

The State Ethnic Affairs Commission is the government's major organ responsible for minority affairs. It has considerable powers. The major tasks of the Commission include the following: to formulate policies and enact decrees on ethnic issues, undertake publicity and education work, and supervise the implementation of the minority policies and laws; to give guidance to and supervise the setting up of the Regional Autonomy for minority nationalities and the enforcement of the Law on Regional National Autonomy for minority nationalities; to coordinate the relationship between different ethnic groups and handle the affairs of protecting the various rights of the minorities; to participate in the drawing up of the long and middle term plans of the national economy and the social development in the minority areas; to conduct research on ethnic theory and policies; to organize and coordinate comprehensive surveys of minorities across China; to participate in the study and formulation of the guidelines and policies towards promoting the development of education, culture, science and technology, public health and sports in the minority areas; to administer colleges and universities for minorities as well as cultural organizations subordinate to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission; to manage the work concerning minority language and collection of minority classic works and to give guidance to editing, translation, and publishing work of minority languages; to coordinate administrative and personnel departments in training, educating and promoting officials and keep close contact with them; to conduct research on ethnic groups in the world and carry out publicity work abroad of the Chinese minorities; to give guidance to minority work organs at the provincial level and keep close contact with autonomous regions; and to take on other work assigned directly by the State Council.

At the national level, broad guidelines from the United Front Work Department and Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress are sent to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, which has the responsibility for implementing them. The thing to be noted here is that all minority sector organizations are usually under the double or triple leadership of the Party, the government and the organizations in charge of

minority work. The minority language agencies are under the supervision of all of the above.

The Ministry of Education, although not directly linked with minority sectors, provides policies which have a profound influence on minority schools. It also has a minority education department dealing with minority education issues. Several minority higher education institutions are also under the control of the Ministry of Education.

The State Language Commission, formerly known as the Chinese Committee on Script Reform before 1985, is under the direct leadership of the State Council. Its major mandate includes: implementing the state policies and laws on language and scripts; regulating the use of standardized language; and working on the written language reform. The focus of the work by the State Language Commission is on Han language. However, one of its major tasks, spreading Putonghua, dictates that it has to work closely with language and education agencies located in minority regions.

The major research institutes for minority language work at the national level include the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) and the Central University for Nationalities. The Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (originally Institute of Ethnic Studies) was first established in 1958 and in 1962 it merged with the former Institute of Minority Language Research (established in 1956). The mandate of the institution is to conduct research in the following areas: Marx's nationality theories, CCP's nationality policies, nationality relations, laws on nationalities, social, historical, cultural, economic issues, and language of each of the minority groups, and nationality issues abroad. It also offers Master and Ph.D. degrees in these fields. It has 13 research offices, one research center and seven research associations.

The Central University for Nationalities in Beijing is placed under the joint responsibility of both the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and Ministry of Education. It was first established in June 11, 1951 (Ye, 1992). It is one of the "key" universities in China. Its language faculty has been largely responsible for training minority language workers and administrators. Its faculty of languages was first set up in 1952 and was divided in 1964 into two departments: Han language and literature, and minority languages and literature. Since 1986 the latter has operated its own Institute of Minority Language Research. The university has sisters in other parts of China: Northwest, Southwest, and Central-South. These and other similar institutions in minority regions and these institutions are usually under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments, but a few are directly controlled by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission in Beijing.

### 2. 3. *The Dynamics of Policy Making*

The Chinese Party and government structure, and the major actors within these structures can be described in detail. But how decisions are made remains a mystery to the outside world as well as the general public in China. Restrictions on the dissemination of information in China have made the analysis of its policy decision-

making a very challenging task. It has been a common practice in China that the important pre-decision discussions and decision making meetings are kept behind closed doors and the diffusion process takes place through written documents that are often unpublished. It is extremely unusual for Chinese decision makers to give interviews. The general public are only informed of the final decisions or policies through the mass media.

Scholars such as Lieberthal and Oksenberg (1988) have observed three methods of communication in general policy process: mass political campaigns; conference/ meeting systems; and the documentary system. The author confirms the use of the same mechanism in minority language policy process. In addition, this author also identified other policy implementation strategies such as quick training programs to address numerous policy issues; a distinct award and punishment system; and planned large-scale migration within the country. Each is discussed briefly.

The method of policy dissemination through mass political campaigns was a major practice during Mao's years. The major political campaigns marked the turn or change of policy directions. For example, the "campaign against imperialism" in the early 1950s, shortly after the Communists came to power, required a united front to include all that could be united to fight against foreign imperialists and their allies in China. This led to a tolerance of diversified minority characteristics, and the encouragement of minority language development. A later political campaign, the "Great Leap Forward", launched in 1958, saw a change in minority language policy towards less tolerance and more uniformity with the Han since the party began to feel more secure about their control over the country (Dreyer, 1976). The largest political campaign launched by CCP, the "Cultural Revolution", from 1966 to 1976, manifested an extreme assimilation policy towards minorities. Although Deng Xiaoping and the current leader Jiang Zemin showed less interest in political campaigns, they both used it to a certain degree. Deng promoted at least two during his transitional years. Deng's campaigns of "Four Modernizations" and "Open Door policy" turned China to economic development rather than political reform. As a result, minority language and education policy turned, again, towards diversification and tolerance. Bilingual education for the minority schools became a new education model for minority children. Jiang Zemin has largely continued along the directions set by Deng. The much more publicized political campaigns in China are only one overt way to motivate the masses and, while they give us some information about policy changes and one method of policy implementation, they do not show the more important and hidden processes which lead to policy development. Many policy decisions are made and disseminated through a system of conferences and meetings.

The cases of Uygur and Kazak written scripts reform in Xinjiang demonstrated that policy decisions have been reached and disseminated through a series of meetings, from conferences of the Party's Congress, the work conferences *(gongzuo huiyi)* of State organs, research conferences *(yanjiu hui)* at the national level, to the provincial/ regional level, and to the specialist meetings *(zhuanye bumen huiyi),* discussion meetings *(taolun hui),* and symposia *(zuotan hui)* at any level. The meetings at the regional level and below most often served as a forum for policy dissemination as well as consultation with the local groups. A policy is very often

initiated and made at the top level, but there are many occasions where policy suggestions were initiated at the grassroots level, passed up through each level in the form of reports, and reviewed and discussed at each level, after which investigations were conducted, and a work report on the topic was drafted for more discussions in work conferences. Sometimes the process repeats itself several times before a final report with more or less agreed upon decisions is sent to the State Council for its approval. Once approved by the State Council it becomes an official policy and is passed on through all types of meetings again for implementation. The issues and discussions are very often passed through each level in the form of documents; therefore, intertwined with the meeting system for policy process is the documentary system within the bureaucracy.

The greatest difficulty in analysing policy process in China derives from the practice of closed-door meetings and the confidentiality of almost all internal documents. Not only the country's top military secrets and government directives are dealt with in the form of secret documents; many reports, questionnaires, and even school statistics are also classified documents which therefore can only be reviewed in due time by persons whose rank and function give them access. This study revealed that once a document is issued from the Center, it is often viewed as a written policy and is expected to be implemented at each level. Through the right connections, many documents regarding bilingual education and minority languages were made available for the author to read, but she was not permitted to copy them or bring them out of the country.

Organizing large-scale training programs has been a distinct step taken by the government to assist in policy implementation. In the case of minority languages, as soon as a policy decision is made, institutions or short-term programs were set up to train personnel that are needed to carry the new policy through. Many minority administrators, language workers, researchers, and teachers, both Han and non-Han, are the products of such policy implementation strategy. Many minority education and research institutions have been established in response to policy decisions to train related personnel. Examples are described in the following Section 3.2.

The Party's award and punishment system has been another effective tool to control policy implementation at each level. Once a policy decision is announced, various rewards are set up to motivate and encourage the achievement of policy goals. The rewards range from high honors such as air tickets to Beijing with receptions and photos with top officials, certificates, appearances on television or in newspapers, recognition at public meetings to economic benefits such promotions and bonuses. In contrast, those who were deemed as being against or hindering the Party's policies may face punishment ranging from public disgrace, demotion or imprisonment. Such practice is discussed further in the following Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

Government enforced large-scale migration of the Han population to minority areas has been an effective strategy to assist the process of integration and to ensure central control in the minority regions. Since 1949, especially during the period of the Cultural Revolution, the author, as many of her contemporaries in China, often heard the reports from the media that large numbers of Han administrators and their families as well as high school graduates volunteered to move to remote minority

regions in answer to the Party's call to assist our minority brothers to join the socialist big family and to share the great Han civilization and its advanced way of living. As a result, from 1953 to 1985, in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region alone received 2.06 million Han migrants (Zhou, 1990, p. 4). Thus over the years the Han population increased most sharply in the region, from 6.7% in 1949 to 40.4% in 1982 (Aximu, 1994).

## 3. THE CASE OF XINJIANG UYGUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

The following examination of two of cases of language policy – minority language maintenance and majority language spread – over the period since the 1949, provides an understanding of the policy process in China. Over that past 50 years the minority language policy development can be divided into three periods: the "transitional years" (1949–1957), the "destructive years" (1958–1977), and the "modernization years" (1977–present). Language policy in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region illustrates policy development and implementation through each level and each period.

During the first decade, the Party was just taking over a large country with very little experience of managing it. The most important thing was to maintain stability and get established. Therefore, it needed all the support it could get from all the people within its borders. They knew very little about the minority people, let alone their culture and their languages. To win them over, the Party adopted a very positive policy towards minorities and their languages. The essence of its policy at this time was to show acceptance and support to minority languages and it promised to further develop the minority languages for those who did not have one. In Xinjiang, Uygur school children had the freedom to choose either Russian or Mandarin as a second language.

Seven years into power, as mentioned earlier, the Party grew more confident and began to show signs of impatience with the speed of the country's reform. It started with the political movement of "the Great Leap Forward". From 1958–1965 there was a change towards language assimilation in a non-explicit and gradual manner. But the following ten years know as the "Cultural Revolution" saw a complete turn around in policy towards minority languages. These political movements have had direct bearings on minority language policies.

### *3.1. The Reform and Implementation of Uygur and Kazak Written Script*

This reform remains a very sensitive and controversial topic. Some see it as a movement towards minority language maintenance while others see it as a deliberate effort for language shift. When the Communists took over, the Uygurs and Kazaks in Xinjiang had used Arabic-based written script since the 16th century (Xinjiang, 1991, p. 87). The Arabic-based written forms have been widely used by the two groups. Even the well-respected linguists at the time Fu Maoji and Zhu Zhining (1964) admitted that these Arabic-based written scripts are basically functional. Therefore, the policy makers were faced with the decision of whether to keep and

standardize the Arabic-based traditional Uygur and Kazak writing systems or reform them into Roman-based scripts to make them closer to Putonghua. Shortly after the launching of the "Great Leap Forward", in 1959, new Roman-based written scripts were proposed and passed by the regional government, and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1960 approved their implementation on a trial basis. Before one can quickly call this a locally initiated policy, several factors were at play.

First, the political campaign of the "Great Leap Forward" at the national level put great pressure on the region for a speedy integration of China's minorities into the big socialist family. To answer the revolutionary call from the Center, some regional scholars and leaders claimed that current Uygur and Kazak written forms somehow could not fulfill the need for fast socialist development. Among several shortcomings listed were that it was written from right to left, easier to misspell, and not convenient for printing. These shortcomings were viewed as making the systems unsuitable for the needs of the socialist construction and therefore reform was needed right away. The proposed reform was to substitute the Arabic-based Uygur and Kazak written script with the Roman-based *Pinyin* alphabet. The new script was designed in December 1959 by the Regional Language Reform Committee with the assistance of the Institute of Minority Language Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. The new designs were said to have many advantages over the previous ones (Fu & Zhu, 1964), such as all sound positions in the Uygur and Kazak languages are properly indicated, almost every sound can be expressed by a single letter, and, above all, all 26 roman letters and four double letters were used in the new scripts, which now have exactly the same alphabet as the Scheme for the Phonetic Spelling of Chinese *(Hanyu Pinyin Fang'an)* known as Pinyin.

Despite what has been claimed, the nature of the written language reform was clearly more of a political than linguistic act. To reform the minority languages from Arabic-based written scripts to Roman-based script was clearly a policy to get the minority language closer in form to that of the Chinese language. The Chinese language reform – the completion of the Roman-alphabet-based Pinyin in 1958 – could not have been more timely (see Q. Zhou, and Sun, this volume). Since then the policy for all minority language development has aimed at bringing minority languages closer to the Scheme of Pinyin. The Scheme provided a tool to integrate minorities faster by bringing their languages closer to the Pinyin system used for schooling of Han children. It is easy to see that one of the major features of the new scripts was that they were made as close to Putonghua as possible.

By now, the Party also believed that conditions for such language reform were ready. Large numbers of language workers had been trained, the knowledge of these minority languages had been obtained, and most of all, the Party had grown more confident of bringing this remote region under its control and more impatient with its differences from the mainstream culture. The bureaucratic structure had been well set up and various policy implementation tools had proven effective, such as the political campaigns, various forms of propaganda established through all the channels in which the Party has the sole control, the Party monitoring system of rewarding those who interpret Party's intentions correctly, and prosecution for those who question the policy. It was obvious under the political situation, then, that any counter argument would have been labeled counter-revolutionary. For example, in

the major journal of minority issues *Nationality Unity (Minzu Tuanjie,* July 1958, p. 30), Tuer Duxi (a Uygur) and Ke Jieyi (a Kazak) were quoted as saying "the local nationalists among Xinjiang minorities have tried very hard to stop adding Chinese in minority schools. Their sole purpose is to sabotage national unity and destroy our motherland. We absolutely will not allow their dirty plot to materialize." This was the typical situation and typical language used during those years. Although the positive reaction towards language reform from the regional leaders and scholars both Han and non-Han may have been due to a true belief in, or simple enthusiasm for the Party's campaign, many were probably afraid of being condemned as anti-revolutionaries or "the running dogs" of the imperialists abroad.

Once the decision was made, the Xinjiang CPC Committee approved an ambitious three-year plan to promotethe new scripts among the Uygur and Kazaks: for the year 1960 to implement on a trial basis; 1961 to fully popularize; and 1962 to replace the old scripts. The implementation was to start from the education system and then on to the wider society.

The implementation plan made by Xinjiang's department of education regulated that starting from 1960, grade one would be taught using only the new scripts. In other grades, new scripts would be taught as a subject. The same also applied to high schools, community colleges, vocational and technical schools and universities. All graduates were expected to have mastered the new scripts. From 1961–1962 the new script was to be the only written form taught within the entire educational system. The government administrations at the regional, prefecture, and city levels were expected to master the new script by the end of 1960; administrators at the county level were given until the first half of 1961; while at the commune (village) level in rural areas up to the first half of 1962 was the deadline. Implementation in the army and factories started during the first half of 1961 while the second half of the year was dedicated to the communes and the common city dwellers. In 1962, it was intended to be popularized among all adult peasants. To incorporate this plan, training classes were held at every level. During the three years, the government organized over 100 conferences (sit-and-talk meetings, *zuotanhui*) inviting people from all walks of life to give input and feedback to the new scripts, and the new scripts were revised repeatedly. On March 19, 1964, the first plenum of the Third Regional People's Congress of Xinjiang passed the revised design that was approved later by the State Council. On January1, 1965 the Chairman of the Regional Government, Sai Fuding (Seypidin Azizi, a Uygur), officially ordered it to be fully popularized immediately.

The four-year trial seemed to be successful. According to the *Education Year Book* (1949–1989), in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, over the period from 1960–1964, 600,000 elementary children and over 200,000 workers and peasants had learned the new scripts. With the mastering of the new scripts some people were able to learn Mandarin on their own. More than 20,000 new teachers were trained and were said to have contributed greatly to the process. "The two new scripts are wholeheartedly welcomed by the Uygur and Kazak mass" (Fu & Zhu, 1964, p. 4). Such sweeping statements cannot be taken as a simple statement of fact. Again, this was a typical behavior of the Party propaganda agency in support of government policies.

After the publication of the finalized design of the new scripts in 1965, a new implementation plan was established which specified three periods (Xinjiang, 1991): focus on the education system from 1965 to 1966; focus on the government offices, the military, and industries from 1967–1970, and overall replacement of the old scripts with the new ones from 1971–1972.

The intended goal was that by 1976 the traditional scripts would no longer be used, which would have marked the success of government policy in "minority language development" or in "minority language maintenance". However, the heat of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1967) interrupted the process. All activities gave way to this political revolution. Hardly any progress was made in any other aspect of the society including schooling which itself was stopped from 1966–1969. As a result, many people did not master the new scripts. Some had learned them, but without any new reading materials to sustain their skills, lost them. For a while there was no way to communicate through writing between the young people who knew only the new scripts and the older people who knew only the traditional scripts.

The death of Mao in 1976 saw the end of the Cultural Revolution and the new power of Deng Xiaoping. With the new leader, the Party's agenda changed from political movements to economic development and modernization. Regional and local leaders, in fact all party members and even the non-members, had learned to respond to political changes in the Center. Beginning in August 1976, many Uygur people demanded the restoration of the traditional scripts. Once the old scripts were allowed to be used again, they took over very quickly. More and stronger demands were voiced by the Uygurs and Kazaks to replace the roman-based new scripts with the Arabic scripts that they cherished as their own.

In September 1982, the regional government put forward a report to the Fifth Conference of the Standing Committee of the Regional People's Congress indicating that "The reality dictates that it is inevitable that the old scripts will be the dominant ones among the Uygur and Kazak people in the Region" (Document of the *Language and Script Work Commission of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region,* 1988, p. 212, unpublished). Based on the report the Regional People's Congress decided in the same year to restore the use of the old scripts throughout all domains of life in the Region. To carry out the decision, the Regional Education Department decided to use old-script textbooks starting from the fall semester in 1982 from grade one, and the new scripts were to be taught as a subject to grade four and above. It was a total reversal of the policy of 1960.

After over 20 years of planning and implementation (1959–1981), the Uygur and Kazak writing systems were back where they were before 1960, with a generation lost to the traditional written forms. Still, it was considered a great achievement among Uygurs and Kazaks to get their own writing systems back. Even though it is quite clear that the failure of the Uygur and Kazak writing reform was due mainly to the resistance of the people, the change of political agenda at the Center provided opportunities for the change of policy.

After Deng Xiaoping took power, there was a major debate about the directions of minority language policy. Some argued that Putonghua should take over, others argued against it. A middle position seemed to have ended the controversy and prevailed. That was the beginning of bilingual policy for the minorities regions

throughout China (see Blachford, 1997). Therefore, right now the work is being carried on to standardize Uygur and Kazak traditional scripts. Uygur and Kazak written language reform – the return to the traditional script – can be viewed as struggle between majority language spread and the minority language maintenance initiated from the regional level, encouraged by the Center, and within the guidelines of the Center's overall language policy. However, the new bilingual policy also provided grounds for the spread of Putonghua among minority populations.

### *3.2. The Spread of Putonghua in Xinjiang*

Within a similar policy process as the reform of Uygur and Kazak written language, the policy of majority Han language spread was carried out, only with more central support, more political rightness, more openness and with greater enthusiasm.

As indicated earlier, during the first decade of Communist rule the Chinese language was not imposed on the minority population. For example, in 1950, the policy required all middle school classes in the region to add a second language as an elective. The Uygur schools had an option of choosing either Mandarin or Russian and the Han schools were given the choice between the Russian and the Uygur language. So during that period Chinese language was an option for minority school children. The next 20 years (1958–1977) saw the beginning of the major organized, yet gradual effort in spreading Putonghua. In 1960 the new educational policy stated that Putonghua should be one of the major subjects for minority middle schools.

Several strategies were employed to help implement this policy. A large number of short-term teacher training classes were held at the regional, district, and prefecture teacher training schools. In addition, one significant step taken from 1960 to 1965 was to recruit Han high school graduates from major cities such as Beijing, Tianjin, Jinan, Nanjing and many other cities. These young Han recruits were trained briefly to gain some knowledge of the Uygur language and then assigned to teach Putonghua in minority schools thousands of miles away from their homes. In 1963 alone, 960 such Han graduates were recruited. However, the process of implementing Han language education was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution from 1966–1977, during which almost nothing could be offered in schools except political meetings.

After the Cultural Revolution, with bilingual education set as the general policy direction for minority schools, and with the related government agencies reorganized, new efforts were made to promote Putonghua in minority regions including Xinjiang. The policy was officially initiated at the national level by the State Language Commission that organized a working conference in Beijing in October 1984. More than 60 delegates in charge of language and education, from all regions and provinces, were called to participate. Important political leaders were present to indicate the status and importance of the issue at stake. According to the Conference report made by the State Language Commission to the State Council in February 1985, the focus of the Conference was the discussion of the related issues in language work and the future language work in China. Such discussions are

usually the first public visible step to policy formulation. The state leader spoke about the Party agenda and the general policy towards the minorities. The language administrators, researchers, and educators from various agencies at various levels were asked to provide input on language policies in support of the overall policies of the CCP and the government.

The following decisions, suggestions, and recommendations were reached (Document of the Language and Scrip Working Commission of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, 1988, pp. 14–15, unpublished). The major tasks set for the period include actively spreading and promoting Putonghua, and further promoting the Scheme of Pinyin (see Rohsenow, this volume). It was recommended that the State Council establish administrative offices to assist the spread of Putonghua and allow the regional/provincial level government to set up either language Reform Commissions or Spreading Putonghua Working Commissions at various lower levels. It was suggested that the State Council hold the Second National Language Reform Conference, since it had been 30 years since the first such conference was held in 1955. The purpose of the Second National Conference would be to review experiences for the past thirty years in order to further clarify the policies and tasks for language work.

These suggestions were treated as the general policy guidelines for the development of more detailed policies decisions. In March 1985, the State Council approved the report and forwarded the copies of the report to the related offices at various levels (State Document No. 17, 1985, unpublished). Based on the above policy guidelines, in May 1985, the State Language Commission and the Ministry of Education jointly issued a document (No. 8 for the former and No. 002 for the later, unpublished) to their offices at the regional/provincial level, announcing that the Second National Language Reform Conference would be held in October 1985, co-hosted by both organizations.

This is usually the second step of consultation for refining policy decisions. This conference was open to the next level below the Center with the purpose of both informing of the new policy guidelines set by the report and forming and detailing the specific policies with the consultation with the regional/provincial representatives. These representatives were supposed to consult with the lower levels and the wider public with their own plans and bring all these to the conference. Who could participate in the National level conference was determined by the Center and specified in a separate appendix attached to the directives. The list for each region/province included one of the directors of the Regional Education Commission (in charge of language work and spreading Putonghua), one head from the Regional Language Work Commission, one administrator in charge of language reform, and several representatives from the model institutes and language-spread activists. The related regional/provincial level agencies were required to prepare for the Conference by taking five steps. First, before the end of June, after extensive consultation, they should submit a summary of the past 30 years of language work, current demands, and future plans. Second, based on the initial policies made by the State Language Commission, before the end of August, they should draft a detailed seventh five-year-plan including objectives, practice, and strategies. Third, they should submit a list of recommendations of organizations and individuals that have

contributed significantly to the spread of Putonghua and to the work of language reform for receiving awards at the up-coming conference. Fourth, they should prepare up to three videos showing the achievements in language work, the scripts for the video to be submitted to the Conference Commission before mid-September. Finally, each region/province should inform the Conference Planning Commission of the progress in conference preparation.

This was supposed to be the period during which consultations were done at the local level and suggestions and implementation strategies were drafted. In response to the directions from the Center, the Xinjiang Regional Minority Language Work Commission completed its plan in October 1985 and submitted it to the Regional Government for approval before sending it to Beijing. The plan was entitled "Suggestions on the Seventh Five-Year-Plan of Language Reform for Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region" (Xinjiang Minority Language Work Commission Document No. 44, 1985, unpublished). It suggested that the focus of the language work in Xinjiang should be on "double spreading" *(shuang tui)* which means to promote Putonghua as well as to spread Pinyin. It was planned to be carried out in two sectors: the education system and the general society.

In education for the next five years, the plan called for the achievement of three objectives: First, nursery school workers, and city and town elementary school teachers were required to use Putonghua during meetings and in public locations within four years. The teachers and students in the county and minority school teachers in the cities were given up to 1990 to achieve the same objectives. Second, above the county level key middle school teachers and students were given three years. Ordinary middle schools were given to 1989. The key minority school language, political science, and geography teachers and high school students had 1990 as a deadline. Third, all social science teachers and students in teacher training schools and higher education were given two years, and teachers of other subjects had up to 1989.

A number of strategies were specified to assist the implementation of the plan:

1. Propaganda was to be conducted through publication and broadcasting. Every March will be designated as the month of Putonghua.

2. The administration was to be strengthened by appointing personnel to be in charge.

3. Putonghua was to be legalized as the language of instruction. Pinyin must be included in the entrance and graduation examinations for middle schools and high schools.

4. Putonghua was to be used as one of the conditions for promotion and awards both in education system and in society.

5. Language competitions and educational conferences were be held every two years at prefecture, county, and district levels. At the Regional level, every two years awards would be granted for spreading Putonghua and competitions in the use of Putonghua would be held.

6. Pronunciation training was to be implemented for all teachers.

7. In the general society, all work units would have an oral examination of Putonghua when hiring new employees.

8. All minority administrators were to set themselves as examples in learning Putonghua.

After the plan was approved by the regional government, it was submitted and discussed during the Second National Language and Script Work Conference, which was held in Beijing in January 6–13, 1986 (see Rohsenow, this volume). There the policy was finalized and announced in major speeches by state leaders, and the proceedings of the conference were passed down in the form of state documents to all pertinent sectors, level by level. The main implications of the conference were usually reported in meetings at each level and plans were made to implement them in the relevant administrative and educational systems.

The third step, after the two national level conferences, was policy diffusion within the region. In December of the same year as the National Conference in Beijing, the regional offices organized the First Regional Language and Script Working Conference with the approval of the regional government. Among the 234 participants in the regional level conference were the regional language sector leaders, the heads of the prefectures as well as prefecture level language administrators, the heads of the counties, scholars and researchers from universities and colleges, and the representatives of the state leaders, language experts and scholars from Beijing. During the regional conference, the national policies were passed on in the form of the State directives. There was an overview of the past work and the changes for the new directions and tasks to be taken for the future; the seventh five-year-plan on language work was presented and suggestions were expected; and a session for the exchange of ideas and experiences was scheduled. One of the items on the agenda of the conference was to give awards to those who were considered to have contributed in a major way to the language work in the region, including the spread of Putonghua. Eighteen "model institutions" and 81 "model individuals" received such honors (Xinjiang, 2000, p. 54).

Similar conferences were held at the prefecture level and the next level below. This seemed to have been the most common method for passing on of the Party's policies, and implementations were expected immediately thereafter. Yet once the planning was done and the policy set, the Center had little control over the actual implementation, especially in such far away places as Xinjiang. In education, the policy of spreading Putonghua and the rights to use a minority language, that are guaranteed by the Constitution and the related laws, resulted in a single generic description of how schooling should take place; for example, a variety of bilingual educational programs have been put into practice. However, there have been many different objectives and stages in bilingual education.

## 4. GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION: CENTRAL-LOCAL AND INTER-AGENCY RELATIONS

Implementation of policies has been shaped by the intricate interplay among various stakeholders and government agencies within the Chinese bureaucratic structure. The process of policy initiation, decision, and implementation was controlled largely by the Party agenda, but also limited by the very structure set up to carry on such a

process. Various policy tools were applied within the structure to ensure the implementation. Many agencies at each level were at play and had influenced the policy outcome, but their agendas and strategies were uncoordinated and in many cases contradictory. The bureaucratic structure allowed objectives, substance, and principles of the national policy to be implemented very differently at various levels across the country. The complex political and administrative structure is like a net woven by the Center to string the whole country together, yet at the same time there were many holes that permitted or created a situation where local implementation might stray far from the national policy.

It is clear that in the domain of language policy the Center controls the policy guidelines that are often developed to support the Party's overall political agenda of a certain period. Within those guidelines, with regional input, decisions and directives are reached. Implementation of the policies is largely in the hands of the local administrators, including those at the prefecture and the county levels. The relationship is neither one of complete Central dominance, as many outsiders believe, nor of regional autonomy, as its name suggests. Rather, some kind of consensus is achieved by the interdependent relationships between the two. The balance seems to be in favor of the Center, but there has been a gradual but sure shift towards more control on the part of the region. The Party has the control over the military, the key financial resources, the communication system, and the appointment and dismissal of some important positions at the Center as well as some key positions at the regional/provincial level. Although tight central control seemed to be the trademark of communist rule, such control is not perfect; the Party must rely largely on the loyalty of its administrators at every level and even the loyalty of its members at large. For a region like Xinjiang that holds many sources of strength, it is crucial that the Party has the support of minority leaders and elites. The party has other policies and laws to help secure such support. Apart from the right granted in the Law on National Regional Autonomy, the real bargaining power of Xinjiang lies in its social and demographic make-up as well as its economic potential and its value in national defence. In recent years, Xinjiang's position has become stronger as large oil and mineral deposits were found and the region's earning of foreign currencies through the increasing tourist industry and cross boarder trade. More importantly, three republics created out of the demise of the former Soviet Union in 1991 – Kazakhstan, Kirghizistan and Tajikistan – share not only borders with minorities in Xinjiang but also share the same religions and languages with Kazaks, Uygurs, Kirghizs, and Tajiks living in China (see Landau and Kellner-Heinkele, 2001).

After the death of Deng, nationalism among the minorities grew. There have been several riots of the independence movement (Mickleburgh, R. 1997). The Center recognizes the strong position of the region in the bargaining process, since the Center was often informed by the Han leaders who had been working in the Region for all their lives and who not only understand the local situation better, but are also very loyal to the Center. Sometimes to maintain consensus the Center gives in on some policies; e.g., on the reversion of Uygur and Kazak written language reform. The only condition was that the Party's control should not be threatened. The stronger bargaining power has been reflected in differences in school programs,

facilities and materials, as well as in more qualified teachers. The regional/provincial level leaders, including non-Hans, hold an important intermediate position in the hierarchy between the local and the Center. In other words, the Center needs the willing cooperation of the regional administrators to reach local people, especially minority communities in remote areas.

During the early Mao period (1949–58), the Center seemed to have more control over the whole range of language issues. Most of the policies and planning regarding minority languages were developed during this period. As for minority language policy, the basic principles were firmly controlled by the Center, including the Communist principles of language equality and unity among all nationalities. This was reflected in the policy guidelines in the Constitution and the related laws. However, the directives and more detailed policies were made after consultations with representatives of the minority groups. Ambiguities and contradictions were, however, generated by directives from the Center, such as the simultaneous guarantee of the freedom to use all minority languages and the policy to promote the spread of Putonghua. The ambiguity of the policy from the Center, as suspected by some, may or may not have been a deliberate appeal to proponents of opposing views, in order to build a broader coalition in support of the Center. In the case of language spread and language maintenance, the author believes that there did not seem to be any deliberate effort on the part of the Party to create ambiguity, but rather, the dilemma and the ambiguity of the matter is a result of Communist ideology of equality among all nationalities and the deep-rooted Chinese imperial tradition of national integration. Consensus between regional and Center officials is crucial in policy process. During Mao's period such consensus was achieved through political campaigns and enormous pressure from the top leaders. The case of Uygur and Kazak writing system reform was a good example. The powerful political campaign of the "Great Leap Forward" and the project of the Center to apply the Scheme of Pinyin in minority language creation and reform resulted in the policy decision to romanize the Uygur and Kazak written language. The reform was portrayed as initiated from the region. Perhaps what made it possible to present the reform as a regional initiative was that while there had been talks about language reform at the Center, regional leaders loyal to the Center saw the way as the Center supporter and turn the region into a show case. In any case, the policy decision was announced in the form of directives from the regional government with the support of the Center. Such policies were rationalized and carried through with support of the mass propaganda. The newspapers announced that the Uygur masses could not wait to see the reform so that they could learn the big Han brothers' language much easier and earlier. One must keep in mind that there have always been leaders who do not agree with the view of the Center. These leaders could face demotion but might achieve respect from the local people.

When Deng came to power, the cooperation of all parties involved became extremely important. As Xinjiang's position became stronger more and more people were complaining about the Roman-based scripts. Some local leaders were strongly supporting the local demand. Finally, to maintain consensus the Center agreed to restore the traditional Arabic-based scripts. Although it was a heavy loss on the part of the Center to admit the failure of the 20-year policy and the loss of the money

spent to implement it, the Center realized the strong position of the region in the bargaining process. Even the Han leaders in the region would advise the Center that insisting on Roman-based written forms might result in political rebellion among the minorities (Xinjiang, 1988. pp. 211–214). Also, in negotiation with the Center, the use of precedence to bargain in one's favor is not uncommon. In its negotiation with the Center, Xinjiang actually took advantage of the newly approved Yi writing system based on a Siniform script (see Pu, this volume).

There were also quite a number of regional leaders (more at the lower levels) who were merely political survivors. Whenever a policy directive came from above they had to make a choice. They had to determine which directives were really serious, so that they needed to act upon them right away, and which could be safely ignored without injury to their careers. For example according to the regulation, in Xinjiang all official documents must be written in Mandarin as well as in a major local language. Yet many local Han leaders simply use Mandarin only since they know they will suffer very little or no consequences at all. Also, they had to be able to combine the new directives with their on-going agendas. Before they decide whether the new policy was implementable, they had to consider their own safety. It seems that the largeness of this group made, and continue to make the balance favorable to the Center. Very often such power-keeper regional level administrators have shifted responsibility to superiors in Beijing or to subordinates at lower level. This can be seen in the inefficient work of spreading Putonghua in some cases. The leaders of the Regional Language Work Commission have blamed the Center for insufficient funding and lack of specific language laws. At the same time, they blame the lower level officials for not taking the directives seriously. In similar fashion, the prefecture administrator blamed the regional government for not providing enough manpower to do the job and lamented the lack of teacher training. The county level officials complained about the lack of language environment for Putonghua and the low quality of bilingual teachers.

From the observations of the author, although not inclusive, it seems that the top regional leaders of the Han nationality tend to lean towards the Center while some of the minority leaders (very often minority elites) might try to defend the local interests. According to the *Law on Regional National Autonomy,* the ratio of administrative office holders in autonomous areas should be 40% Han and 60% minority members. However, the author heard complaints from some minority members that the Center will always win since there are always minority elites who were selected by the Center for their positive attitude towards the Party, and who wanted to keep their power and therefore vote in favor of the Center. So it is never difficult for the Han to get the majority support, hence a popular saying among the minorities: "minorities maybe the masters of their own house, but the Hans make the decisions" *(Shaoshu minzu dangjia, Hanzu zuozhu).*

Another complaint which the author's observations appear to confirm is that many administrators, especially at the lower levels with little education and less experience, have a very poor sense of participation but follow rather rigidly the regulations from the top. For them it is always safer to follow than ask questions. This may have been the influence of the deep-rooted tradition of the relationship between superiors and subordinates. It may have been their fear of political

persecution as has happened to so many leaders around them. The Confucian tradition of respect and obedience causes many crucial yet sensitive issues to be avoided.

The broad policy guidelines from the Center, together with the bureaucratic structures at each level, made the implementation of policy and inter-agency relations between various levels extremely complicated. Mao had also seen these problems as early as in 1956, and called for change:

> At present scores of hands are reaching out to the localities, making things difficult for them. Once a ministry is set up, it wants to have a revolution and so it issues orders. Since the ministries don't think it proper to issue orders to the Party committees and people's councils at the provincial level, they establish direct contact with the relevant departments and bureaus in the provinces and municipalities and give them orders every day. These orders are all supposed to come from the central authorities, even though neither the Central Committee of the Party nor the State Council knows anything about them, and they put a great strain on the local authorities. There is such a flood of statistical forms that they became a scourge. This state of affairs must be changed. (Mao, 1977, p. 293)

But the nature of the bureaucracy made it hard for Mao to change it, even though he was very well aware of the problem. For example, the Minority Language Work Commission of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is under the direct control of the regional government and at the same time under the parallel control of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and other central government organizations. Many government agencies, especially at the lower levels, are in a similar situation. Since there are no specific laws to control the policy implementation and since the agencies get directions from various sources above, they have the liberty to choose to implement certain parts of policies and not others without being penalized, especially under the generic rule attached for autonomous areas which says that policies that do not agree with the local situation can be adapted or not implemented. More than 50 years have passed since the first stage began in language planning for minorities. The tensions of administrative authorities remain a fact of life and have a direct effect on policy decisions and implementation. During the post-Mao era the regions/provinces had more autonomy than before, but the Center, by and large, still has the dominant role. Problems similar to those described by Mao still exist due to the nature of the bureaucratic structure.

The essence of central-regional-local relations is a complex process of negotiation, bargaining and compromises dictated by the various factors and conditions. One tendency under the current leader, Jiang Zemin, is that regions have been gaining increasing control over language and education affairs. The unified curricula and textbooks are gradually being replaced by more localized versions with more minority cultural content rather than direct translations from the Mandarin textbooks as had been done in the past. The revised *Law on Regional National Autonomy* even added an item "all levels of governments should provide financial support to the development and publication of teaching materials in minority languages". (Tiemuer, 2001, p. 47). However, at the same time, Jiang's government has intensified the spread of Putonghua. This new law passed in February 2001 also made a change from offering Putonghua class to minority

schools from **senior years** of elementary school to offering Putonghua class to **early years** of elementary school or senior elementary school (emphsis added by the author to indicate the change in the law). The explanation was that “some committee members suggested that Putonghua is the common language of the country and it is very important for minority students to learn and master it. Therefore, where conditions permit, Putonghua class can be offered from the early years of elementary school” (China, 2001, p. 56). Although, the change is only two words, it reflects the Party and the new government’s determination to continue the task of spreading Putonghua.

However, these generalizations cannot be applied to all situations in China, because every province or region has a distinctive relationship with the Center. The sensitive nature of minority issues and the underdevelopment of the economy in these areas determine that the relations between the Center and the local regions are some times quite different from those between the Center and the more developed coastal provinces.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that, under the Chinese Communists, minority language policy has been motivated by a persistent desire to integrate the national minority groups with the Han Chinese, both politically and culturally. The source of this desire is a synthesis of Communist ideology and thousands of years of imperial tradition. The approaches employed to fulfill the desired integration have been determined by a combination of factors, the most important of which has been the CCP’s political agenda at the time. The resulting policies have swung back and forth ranging from forced assimilation, or mere tolerance, to celebrating diversity. The long-term impact of such policy on minority languages and on community survival still remains to be seen.

As far as the policy process is concerned, this study is only one of a few attempts at a systematic investigation of the processes of minority language planning and policy development in China, and therefore, it is far from conclusive. However, this investigation has provided a unique perspective. The study in this case suggests that the bureaucratic structure under a given political system may have a profound influence on language and education policies and their implementation. It also suggests that even in a centralized government like China, the relationship is neither one of complete Central dominance nor regional autonomy as the name suggests. Rather, some kind of consensus is achieved by the interdependent relationship between the two. This study also demonstrates that in China, language policy formulated at the Center very often cannot be implemented into local school programs. Implementation requires that decisions be made at the regional, municipal, or even school level, before reaching the classroom level. With the central control system in China, the Party can inflict much more harm to minority language and education by imposing unified curricula and spread Putonghua at the expense of minority languages. However, it also has greater power to enforce remedial measures as it sees fit.

The social and political impact of the CPC's language policy is a significant factor in promoting national unity and political stability in the country. But its impact on majority language spread and minority language maintenance is quite unbalanced. Over 50 years of policy and planning activities have led to the following results. In general, the spread of Putonghua has been steadily gaining ground. Putonghua, being the common language of northern Han speakers in 1949, has become the common language of all Han dialect speakers by the end of 1970s and now is on its way to becoming the second language of all national minorities and eventually the lingua franca of the entire nation (see Guo and Rohsenow, this volume). Statistics show a slow yet steady growth of language shift among Chinese minority groups especially among small and less concentrated groups. The struggle for minority language maintenance is still fighting an up-hill battle. The Chinese national minorities still have major, unsolved language and educational problems that will make policy and implementation issues a continuing concern for many years to come. There are, however, signs that further development on minority language issues will take place.

Global cooperation may provide the external expertise and insight for studies in the future. At present, even with China joining the WTO in 2002 and with a much more open attitude and tremendous change in the country's economic structure, there is still no sign of drastic change in the political system and as a result the existing bureaucratic structure will continue to play a significant role in policy making in China.

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SUSAN D. BLUM

# GOOD TO HEAR

*Using the Trope of Standard to Find One's Way in a Sea of Linguistic Diversity*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In talking about food, Claude Lévi-Strauss claimed that some foods are not necessarily delicious, good to eat, but rather provide food for thought; they are, in his famous phrase, "good to think." Similarly, I am claiming here that some language in China is "good to hear," or *haoting,* in the sense that it makes the hearer feel comfortable. Playing on the ambiguity of the phrase in Chinese – ambiguous between "pleasing" and "intelligible" – I explore the affective dimension of local varieties in China's multilingual linguistic field. Appreciation and use of these varieties persist despite the national government's promotion of Putonghua since the 1950s (see Rohsenow and Guo, this volume).

Robert Ramsey (1987) asserts that China's linguistic uniformity reveals recent colonization of the Chinese land mass, especially in its northern areas, areas easily reached by horse, in contrast to the inaccessible locales of the south, reached by boat *(nan chuan bei ma).* Though his view of the spread of Mandarin, *Putonghua,* is well informed, it overlooks the vibrancy of local topolects, *fangyan*. Even the Mandarin *(beifang fangyan)* topolects differ, and in some cases they differ significantly (again, deliberately ambiguous between the social scientific meaning of statistical significance and the ordinary language meaning of "meaningful"). At the least, their difference conveys social meaning. In sociolinguistics, it is a bedrock assumption that tiny linguistic differences convey social difference. For anthropologists interested in the ideology of language, the interpretation of such differences also demonstrates a view of language and identity.

Not only are some topolects prevalent, and not only are some comprehensible, but they are also enjoyed. This chapter investigates some of the ways respondents in one city on China's geographic periphery comprehend linguistic differences.

## 2. ETHNOGEOGRAPHIC SETTING

My research investigated the linguistic situation in Kunming, capital of Yunnan province in southwest China. Surrounded by Tibet, Burma, Laos, Vietnam, Sichuan,

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Hunan, Guizhou, and Guangxi, Yunnan is China's most ethnically diverse province. One third of Yunnan's population is considered officially ethnic minority, but Kunming is only slightly more diverse than China as a whole, with about 10% of its population minority (compared with China's 8%).[1] Kunming's linguistic situation is very similar to other southwestern cities, and indeed to that in other locations in China. Though Putonghua is the official language, nearly everyone speaks the local topolect. This is not to say that Putonghua has made no inroads into Kunming, but that its presence is additive, not replacing the other varieties. Putonghua coexists in a linguistic marketplace in which minority languages are encountered occasionally, and in which many varieties of topolects – other Chinese languages, other local versions of *guanhua* – are frequently encountered. The linguistic diversity is striking, a swirl of sounds and meanings with which residents of virtually all Chinese cities have long been familiar. How can speakers and hearers find their way in this perplexing assortment? ("Perplexing" may apply to outsiders' views; locals find it familiar.) The remainder of this chapter describes and explains how those varieties that are familiar, *haoting,* and those that are officially sanctioned, *biaozhun,* serve as a kind of steppingstone in the swirling waters of linguistic complexity.

## 3. LANGUAGE IN THE PERIPHERY: KUNMING

Although the Sinitic languages are officially classified into eight topolect groups (Mandarin, Wu, Yue, Gan, Xiang, Kejia (Hakka), Northern Min, and Southern Min), there are many more divisions that could – and some say should – be made on the basis of mutual (un)intelligibility. Mair (1991, p. 16) states that there may be three or four hundred different, mutually unintelligible varieties. Putonghua is the defined version of Mandarin that has the role of standard, yet Mandarin itself, *guanhua,* is far from monolithic. Linguists usually divide *guanhua* into three groups (though this is not especially well studied): northern, southern, and southwestern. (Some add a northwestern group as well.) The third of these includes all the Yunnan topolects, along with those of Sichuan, Hunan, and perhaps Guizhou. *Kunminghua,* the language of Kunming, is one of an uncounted – uncountable – number of Yunnan topolects. (See Romaine, 2001, pp. 1–25 for discussion of the difficulty of drawing boundaries and naming varieties.) The southwestern Mandarin of Yunnan differs from standard Putonghua largely in terms of phonology. Most immediately noticeable are several consonant series that merge with others:

*hu* and *fu* merge into *fu* (e.g. *Fulan* instead of *Hunan)*
*zh, ch,* and *shi* merge with *z, c,* and *si* (though there is some hypercorrection: the most famous park and lake in Kunming, Cuihu, is usually pronounced *Chuifu)*
initial *n* and *l* merge into *l (nan* becomes *lan)*
final *ng* merges with final *n (jing* becomes *jin)*

There are vowel differences as well. The sound represented in Pinyin romanization by *ü* (a rounded, high front vowel [/y/ in the International Phonetic

Alphabet]) becomes *i* (a non-rounded, high front vowel). Off-glides are simplified to the main vowel (*su(e)i* becomes *sei*).

The tonal contours are regarded as "flatter," which is to say that tones realized as high rising may appear in Kunming as low falling, and covering less of the vocal range.

The folk explanation (perhaps with a grain of truth) is that the language of Kunming is like the language of Nanjing – a southern version of *guanhua* – because so many Nanjingers moved to Kunming after Nanjing fell to the Japanese during World War II. Reminiscent of statements that the accent of New Orleans comes from Brooklyn or that New York accents come from England, these explanations oversimplify very complex social as well as linguistic interactions.

In general, monolingual Putonghua speakers reported to me that those who spoke other topolects were less educated. In contrast, bi- or multilingual speakers had linguistic repertoires and varied their use by context and situation. Politeness norms as well as status suggest that the language of power is used when necessary. A multilingual Putonghua speaker will speak Putonghua with monolingual Putonghua speakers, but not with other multilinguals.

From what I have been able to learn about language in other places in China, whether through fieldwork or research,[2] this pattern of accommodating to the person in power or to the outsider is common. Most Chinese cities include speakers of many varieties, whether Sinitic topolects or minority languages. The particular aspects of language that might be present will of course vary, but the general existence of linguistic diversity will be ubiquitous. For instance, Chiang (1995, pp. 20–24) describes the three Sinitic languages spoken in a particular region of southern Hunan, in terms somewhat similar to the situation in Yunnan: Putonghua, a version of the Xiang topolect, and (different from the Han in Yunnan) *Xiangnan tuhua* (southern Xiang topolect). As in Kunming, each of the varieties has an appropriate domain for use.

Within a short period of time, however, change can occur. Speakers in Shanghai and Canton, with their own sense of high status, were much less willing to accommodate to the speech of Putonghua speakers, but during the 1990s they have become more willing to accommodate (see Kalmar, Zhong, & Xiao, 1987; Bai, 1994; Zhou, 2001). Some reasons include increased perception that these cities have important needs for communicating across varieties.

Evidence from around the world shows that multilinguals juggle competing values in choosing (consciously and unconsciously) which varieties to use in varying situations. "Codeswitching" is the general term; it is triggered both situationally and discursively (see, e.g. Blom & Gumperz, 1972; Heller, 1988). Some societies have official bodies promoting standard languages; in others the pressure is more diffuse (see, e.g. Schiffman, 1996). China has had both official promulgation of the standard language and unofficial pressure in varying directions (see Guo and Rohsenow, this volume, for up-to-date coverage of official policy). The endurance of local speech varieties suggests very strong norms opposing overt standardization. These norms are aesthetic as well as an index of social solidarity.

## 4. "STANDARD" *(BIAOZHUN)* AND *HAOTING*

A great deal of emphasis in China's language work lies in making people's speech *biaozhun,* or standard. Most Putonghua spoken by ordinary people is not especially standard. Standard has many meanings and even within a single language such as English (dividing, as the joke goes, England and the United States), the ramifications of "standard" vary. In England "standard" English indexes class, while in the United States it indexes region. (That is, most respondents find the English spoken in their own region to be standard, while they evaluate that spoken in other regions as nonstandard; see Milroy, 2000.)

In China, "standard" tends to refer primarily to pronunciation (see Saillard, this volume). There are certain phonemes that are emblematic of standardness, such as the retroflex series of consonants *(zh, chi, shi).* These are quintessentially northern and are merged into a sibilant series by almost everybody not resident in northern cities (including Taiwan). Much conscious attention is paid to these consonants, and very strong judgments are made about them. Indeed, at several U.S. universities a Taiwanese colleague was considered unfit for language teaching by northern Mainlanders because she occasionally hypercorrected for her otherwise not-distinguished consonants.

Asking people about language that was standard and that was *haoting,* I discovered that *haoting* could be translated as having two meanings: beautiful and easy to understand (kind of like "easy on the ears"). Even language that was not entirely *biaozhun* could be considered *haoting.* More speech was judged *haoting* than *biaozhun.*

In 1991 I had a long conversation with several Naxi (minority) students at the Minorities Institute in Kunming. One described a complex situation in which most students at the school spoke their own versions of *"Yunnan tuhua"* (local Yunnanese) when they interacted. "Can they understand each other? [*jiangde tong?]"* "Yes, they can." A collection of small differences did not apparently lead to difficulties in communication.

At home, however, they spoke entirely different Naxi varieties. In fact, the students did not speak the same Naxi, though with effort they could understand one another. I asked if they thought *Naxihua* was *haoting* and they responded enthusiastically. "How about Putonghua?" "Putonghua is also very *haoting."* "What about local *Yunnanhua"* "We're used to local *Yunnanhua!"* They were reluctant to assess it *haoting,* yet seemed to relish using it anyway. Later they talked about the contexts in which they spoke Naxi at home and *"yibande Hanhua"* ('ordinary Han speech') out in public with non-Naxi.

In conversations, people joked quite a lot about their own speech, but despite constant exposure to a standard, and the ability to imitate it for humorous effect, they had no interest in producing it consistently. I sometimes asked if people could direct me toward a speaker of *biaozhun Kunminghua,* standard Kunming dialect. I was often corrected: "standard" applies only to Putonghua, in common parlance; a topolect different from northern Putonghua could not be standard. It could be *dianxing,* typical or classical, but not standard.

I call "standard" a "trope" because it is not literally assessable by most people, but rather serves as an index of education and status. In Yunnan there is a variety referred to as *MaPu.* I asked some students about it and they laughed uncomfortably at the oddness of my question. (I had already thrown them off by asking what was good about modernization and openness. My questions about what is obvious caused them to regard me as something of a simpleton!) They did agree to elaborate but they seemed shocked that I would spend time asking about an obvious yet not admirable – in fact somewhat embarrassing – aspect of local life. *Magai* ('street', in local Mandarin) or *Majie* Putonghua is the extremely nonstandard Putonghua attempted by people without the benefit of good education. *MaPu* is never *haoting.* Whether it should even be deemed Putonghua is unclear; many people hesitated before classifying it, and almost all felt they had to explain their classification.

Some of my understanding of China's linguistic complexity comes from interviews and observations I made during 1991, 1994, and 1996–97, but some of it comes from a variant of Lambert et al.'s matched-guise test (1972) in which I recorded sixteen speakers of various topolects and languages and asked different people to respond and evaluate it. Many of the varieties were not identifiable to the respondents; they often responded *"bu haoting"* when they couldn't understand it.

One way I attempted to unpack the idea of responses to language was through a variant of the "matched-guise test," designed to assess language attitudes.

Most respondents believed their primary task to be identifying the varieties. When I finished the test, each time people said, "What was it *really*?*"* Hence, identifying them took their primary attention.

The first three questions asked concerned "what variety", "whether or not it was standard", and "whether or not it was *haoting".* Though the second two responses were similar they were not identical. It was much more common for a variety to be considered *haoting* than standard.

Even though the speakers were all reading the same passage (in the pronunciation most appropriate for their topolect – using reading pronunciations rather than conversation), there were differences assessed in terms of education and social class. Since most of my respondents were college students, their views of potentially kindred speakers largely corresponded to evaluations of speakers' social class.

## 5. A MATCHED-GUISE TEST

The matched-guise test I designed was a set of stimuli, only some of which were familiar to listeners. In many ways this test resembles a "projective test" as used by psychologists because respondents projected their own categories onto unknown images (in this case verbal stimuli). The most famous projective test is the Rorshach test, or ink-blot test. When the variety heard was unknown, listeners suggested a variety that came to mind within the same category – for instance, knowing that a variety was non-Sinitic, they might suggest *"Dai."* This test evoked impressions leading to linguistic identification in addition to the attitudes toward those varieties. I recorded eleven speakers speaking sixteen varieties, then scrambled the order to

mask the fact that several speakers were used more than once.[3] The varieties included three speakers of *Kunminghua* (speakers 1, 5, 14), two of other Yunnan dialects (speakers 4 and 12), five of Putonghua spoken by people from various places (speakers 2, 7, 11, 13, 16), four of other Chinese dialects or languages (speakers 3, 6, 8, 9), and two of minority languages from Yunnan (speakers 10, 15). Five of the speakers had matched guises; that is, they spoke in two or, in one case, three different varieties. (See Table 1.)

*Table 1. Identity of Speakers in the Matched-guise Variant*

| *Speaker no.* | *Pseudonym* | *Native place* | *Ethnicity* | *Gender* | *Linguistic variety* | *Years of education* | *Occupation* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Zhang San | Kunming | Han | male | *Kunminghua* | 2 | repair person |
| 2=12=15 | Mu Xiaohua | Lijiang (Yunnan) | Naxi (minority) | female | *Putonghua* | 11 | floor attendant |
| 3=11 | Professor Lin | Shanghai | Han | male | *Shanghaihua* | 18 | college prof. |
| 4 | (none) | Baoshan (Yunnan) | Kucong (minority) | male | Baoshanhua (Yunnan) | 5 | gatekeeper |
| 5 | Wang Hui | Kunming | Han | female | *Kunminghua* | 15 | Administrat-or |
| 6=14 | Li Jianhua | Kunming | Hakka (Han) | male | Hakka | 13 | vocational college student |
| 7 | Teacher Ji | Dongbei (Northeast) | Han | female | *Putonghua* | 18 | college prof. |
| 8 | (none) | Sichuan | Han | female | Sichuanhua | 8 | floor attendant |
| 9 | (none) | Jiangxi | Han | male | Jiangxihua | 17 | graduate student |
| 10=16 | Feng Meimei | Honghe (Yunnan) | Yi (minority) | female | Yi | 8 | nanny |
| 11=3 | Professor Lin | Shanghai | Han | male | *Putonghua* | 18 | college prof. |
| 12=2=15 | Mu Xiaohua | Lijiang (Yunnan) | Naxi | female | Lijianghua (Yunnan) | 11 | floor attendant |
| 13 | Professor Suzuki | Japan | -- | male | *Putonghua* | 24 | college prof. |
| 14=6 | Li Jianhua | Kunming | Hakka (Han) | male | *Kunminghua* | 13 | vocational college student |
| 15=2=12 | Mu Xiaohua | Lijiang (Yunnan) | Naxi (minority) | female | Naxi | 11 | floor attendant |
| 16=10 | Feng Meimei | Honghe (Yunnan) | Yi (minority) | female | *Putonghua* | 8 | nanny |

Eighty-five respondents were asked to identify the variety of language and to answer a series of questions. Respondents came from two classes of university students (71) and one group of factory workers (13). Originally 14 factory workers sat for the exercise, but one left all answers blank. For various reasons, some responses are unusable. An addendum to the test itself asked for demographic and

biographic information about the respondents. I took as "people from Kunming" those who were born and grew up in Kunming or those who spent enough of their childhood there that they reported using *Kunminghua* most of the time. Like most such tests in China, the sample is not "representative" in the way such tests are attempted in opinion surveys in the United States, but can provide a starting point for further inquiry.

Questions on the test included the degree to which a given segment was *biaozhun* 'standard' and *haoting,* the place of origin of the speaker, his/her level of education, ethnic identity, job category, wealth, suitability as a friend, and a vague category: *Zheige ren bucuo ma*? 'Is this person okay?', trying to get at the overall decency of the person.[4]

One of the questions most easily and universally answered was whether a language was *haoting* 'pleasing' or not. Very few people left this answer blank, compared, e.g., with the question of whether the speaker could be the hearer's friend. This followed a question about the standardness of the language. Some of the more curious responses left the linguistic variety blank for some speakers, but still made judgments as to whether or not it was standard.

People's attitudes toward Putonghua and *Kunminghua* were particularly interesting for the question of national prestige and local solidarity. I will discuss in some detail responses to the speakers of *Kunminghua* and Putonghua and the responses to matched *Kunminghua* and Hakka guises, then conclude with some remarks about language standardization and internalization of shared norms.

The first question with respect to each speaker was the identity of the variety. Most people saw this as the purpose of the exercise, and when they were finished wanted to know if they had been accurate. In the test as a whole, responses were quite inaccurate, with ethnic groups mentioned who were not represented.[6] But for the familiar Mandarin varieties, identification was fairly accurate—with interesting exceptions that will be discussed below.

### *5.1. Local Dialects Identified and Evaluated: Kunminghua*

There were three speakers of the local dialect, *Kunminghua.* One speaker (Speaker 1) was an older man, with only a few years of education. The other two were a recent female college graduate (Speaker 5) and a male college student (Speaker 14), both in their early twenties.

The young man—let's call him Li Jianhua—was identified 94% of the time as speaking *Kunminghua,* and the young woman—we'll call her Wang Hui—was identified 86% of the time as speaking *Kunminghua.* The older man—Zhang San, to us—was judged only 63% of the time as speaking *Kunminghua.* Those with fairly detailed experience in Kunming were able to identify him as being from the outskirts of town, a village at some twenty kilometers' distance. The non-*Kunminghua* identifications tended to be of other places in Yunnan. It is not the case that linguistic varieties are completely fluid, but neither are they clear-cut. (See Table 2a.)

The second question asked regarding each speaker was that of ‘standardness’. Usually the term *biaozhun* is used to describe a given person’s accent and usage in Putonghua. There are a number of well-known features, such as strong retroflex consonants, that are seen as indices of standardness. When applied to a regional variety, however, the same term, as written on the questionnaire accompanying the tape, was interpreted to mean, according to follow-up questions I asked, something more like ‘typical’. Notions of standard Putonghua are learned largely through schooling, and there is no official educational support for any non-standard linguistic varieties. So it is not surprising to find inconsistencies in judgment of the standardness of the three *Kunminghua* speakers. Zhang San’s speech was judged by 47% as standard or average and an equal 47% as non-standard. Of those who judged Wang Hui and Li Jianhua, however, the evaluations were more clear. Wang was seen by 74% as speaking standard or average *Kunminghua,* while Li was seen by 82% as speaking standard or average *Kunminghua.* Note that all respondents were current residents of Kunming, with considerable exposure to *Kunminghua,* even though only some are Kunming natives; the others are students from the rest of Yunnan.

*Table 2a. Kunminghua Identified*
*(N = 79)*

| | *Variety guessed* | | *Biaozhun (standard)?* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speaker* | *Kunminghua* | *other or blank* | *yes* | *so-so* | *no* | *blank/don't know* |
| *Zhang San* | 50 (63%) | 29(37%) | 36 (46%) | 1(1%) | 37(47%) | 5 (6%) |
| *Wang Hui* | 68 (86%) | 11(14%) | 57 (72%) | 2(2%) | 6(20%) | 4 (5%) |
| *Li Jianhua* | 74 (94%) | 5 (6%) | 65 (82%) | 0 | 10(13%) | 4 (5%) |

*Note: Totals may not equal 100% because of rounding.*

Questions of evaluation were also worth pursuing. Here I will discuss the attitudes reported about the three *Kunminghua* speakers in terms of whether their speech was *haoting* (pleasing), whether the speaker was decent *(bucuo)* and whether the speaker was a potential friend. (See Table 2b).

First, the question of whether the speech was *haoting:* Zhang San: 20%, Wang Hui, 46%, Li Jianhua, 38%. Wang’s speech was considered more than twice as pleasing as that of Zhang.

Second, the question of whether the speaker was “decent”: Zhang San: 59%, Wang Hui, 62%, Li Jianhua, 55%. In this case, the evaluations were all quite close.

Third, the question of whether the speaker was a potential friend. These follow the basic pattern for pleasing speech: Zhang San, 22%, Wang Hui, 50%, Li Jianhua, 48%. In this case, there are at least two variables: socioeconomic status (Zhang San is less educated, and also comes from the countryside) and age (Zhang San was over 55 years old, and thus quite an inappropriate “friend” for the respondents to this test, most of whom were in their 20s).

In terms of attitudes toward the speech they heard, it is revealing to divide the respondents into two groups: those who identify themselves as being from Kunming, and those who identify themselves as being from elsewhere in the province. (Here I have disregarded the few people from other provinces.) (See Table 3).

*Table 2b. Kunminghua Evaluated*
*(N= 82)*

| *Speaker* | *yes* | *so-so* | *no* | *blank/don't know* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Pleasing? Haoting?* | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 10 | 6 | 64 | 2 |
| | 20% | | 78% | 2% |
| *Wang Hui* | 27 | 11 | 41 | 3 |
| | 46% | | 50% | 4% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 27 | 4 | 45 | 6 |
| | 38% | | 55% | 7% |
| | *Decent?* | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 25 | 23 | 29 | 5 |
| | 59% | | 35% | 6% |
| *Wang Hui* | 32 | 19 | 26 | 5 |
| | 62% | | 32% | 6% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 30 | 15 | 35 | 2 |
| | 55% | | 43% | 2% |
| | *Potential friend?* | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 15 | 3 | 59 | 5 |
| | 22% | | 72% | 6% |
| *Wang Hui* | 33 | 8 | 36 | 5 |
| | 50% | | 44% | 6% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 34 | 5 | 39 | 4 |
| | 48% | | 48% | 5% |

People from Kunming tended to give more favorable opinions of the two younger, educated *Kunminghua* speakers, and more unfavorable opinions of the older man. This group as a whole tended to be quite conscious of class differences.[5] Fully 85% of the Kunming people felt Zhang San's speech to be displeasing, while Li Jianhua's speech was disliked by only 35% and Wang Hui's by an equal 35%. The respondents from the rest of Yunnan, on the other hand, overwhelmingly disliked Kunming speech—73% disliked the speech of Zhang San, 60% that of Wang Hui, and 69% that of Li Jianhua. The speech of the younger people is disliked by almost twice as many non-Kunming people from Yunnan as by the Kunming natives.

Decency was fairly even across Kunming and other-Yunnan respondents. Zhang San was considered decent and so-so by 59% of Kunmingers and by 58% of other

Yunnanese. Wang Hui was considered decent and so-so by 71% of Kunmingers and 56% of other Yunnanese. Li Jianhua was considered decent by 56% of Kunmingers and 54% of other Yunnanese.

*Table 3: Kunminghua Evaluated*

| | *From Kunming (N=34)* | | | | *From other places in Yunnan (N=48)* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speaker* | *yes* | *so-so* | *no* | *blank/ don't know* | *yes* | *so-so* | *no* | *blank/don't know* |
| | | | | *Pleasing? Haoting?* | | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 3 | 2 | 29 | 0 | 7 | 4 | 35 | 2 |
| | 15% | | 85% | 0 | 23% | | 73% | 4% |
| *Wang Hui* | 15 | 7 | 12 | 0 | 12 | 4 | 29 | 3 |
| | 65% | | 35% | 0% | 33% | | 60% | 6% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 16 | 4 | 12 | 2 | 11 | 0 | 33 | 4 |
| | 56% | | 35% | 6% | 23% | | 69% | 8% |
| | | | | *Decent?* | | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 7 | 13 | 13 | 1 | 18 | 10 | 16 | 4 |
| | 59% | | 38% | 3% | 58% | | 33% | 8% |
| *Wang Hui* | 16 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 16 | 11 | 18 | 3 |
| | 71% | | 24% | 6% | 56% | | 38% | 6% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 13 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 17 | 9 | 21 | 1 |
| | 56% | | 41% | 3% | 54% | | 44% | 2% |
| | | | | *Potential friend?* | | | | |
| *Zhang San* | 7 | 1 | 24 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 35 | 3 |
| | 24% | | 71% | 6% | 21% | | 73% | 6% |
| *Wang Hui* | 18 | 3 | 12 | 1 | 15 | 5 | 24 | 4 |
| | 62% | | 35% | 3% | 42% | | 50% | 8% |
| *Li Jianhua* | 19 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 15 | 3 | 27 | 3 |
| | 62% | | 35% | 3% | 38% | | 56% | 6% |

But potential friendship varies considerably: Zhang San: approximately the same (24% by Kunmingers, 21% by other Yunnanese). Wang Hui: Kunmingers: 62% yes and maybe, Yunnanese 42% yes and maybe; Li Jianhua: Kunmingers: 62% yes and maybe, Yunnanese 38% yes and maybe.

The difference in response of the Kunming natives and those from throughout the province accords well with one of the fundamental divisions in contemporary Chinese society: the difference between rural and urban residents. (In Yunnan, only Kunming is a very large city; other cities are much less cosmopolitan.) There is mutual dislike, disdain, and distrust, with the city dwellers claiming superiority in terms of worldliness, style, clothing, food, and general cultivation. The rural folk consider themselves more honest, moral, trusting, and trustworthy than the urban dwellers, who they feel are likely to cheat than non-city people. So the differences in attitudes toward *Kunminghua* may be understood in terms of the moral discourses surrounding country and city, with *Kunminghua* evaluated in terms of feelings about city people. Despite its being the provincial capital and a center of economic

development, nearly three quarters of those outside Kunming find its language 'hard to hear', ugly, *bu haoting.*

This is consistent with interviews in which people invariably offered the judgment that *Kunminghua* is *nanting* 'ugly'. Even Kunming natives refer to it disparagingly when asked directly about it, explaining that *Kunminghua* had only two tones, was *ping,* 'flat,' and thus *nanting,* as opposed for instance to Cantonese which has many tones and is very *haoting,* even though everyone was quick to add that they couldn't understand it. Not coincidentally, Cantonese is the language of the wealthiest and most 'modernized' area of China, as well as that of Hong Kong. Linguists analyze *Kunminghua* as having the same four tone classes as Putonghua, though with different contours (Li Zhaotong, personal communication).

All of this must be considered in conjunction with the fact that almost everybody in Kunming speaks *Kunminghua* almost all the time. Despite official policy that all classes should take place in Putonghua (but see Guo's chapter, this volume), university classes are conducted in (Yunnan or Kunming) local topolects perhaps 70% of the time (personal communication, Li Zhaotong), and in fact most often in *Kunminghua;* bureaucrats speak *Kunminghua,* as do elementary and high school teachers. Intellectuals, Party members, workers, petty business persons—everybody except foreigners and Chinese transplanted from other provinces speaks *Kunminghua.* Only the fiercest of northerners refuses to learn Kunming dialect; weeks could go by without my hearing Putonghua spoken on the street. Still, I never observed any resistance to language standardization or the promulgation of Putonghua in a place like Kunming, despite the overwhelming de facto use of *Kunminghua.* People defend the policies of standardization, at least in talk about language, invoking the need for a common language by which to learn science and technology (see also Schoenhals 2001). (This is considerably different among some minority groups, such as Dai and Uygur [see Davis 1999, Hansen 1999, Dautcher 2000, and Zhou, this volume].) See also Saillard, this volume, on the limited use of Putonghua in classrooms around the Wenzhou area, in Zhejiang province.

Although there is an official policy stating that the nation's eventual goal is universal acquisition of Putonghua, local linguistic varieties are still greatly in use—and are legally permitted to remain in use—with varying sorts of loyalties to them and different sorts of outside pressure brought to bear to supersede them with Putonghua. The goal of monolingualism is tempered by the widespread use of other linguistic varieties (see, e.g., Chu 2001). Recognition of the persistence of topolects is visible in the Common Language Law, passed in 2000, which in effect makes explicit China's de facto additive-bilingualism policy (see Guo, this volume). Minorities and Han from non-Mandarin-speaking areas, mostly the south, are subjected to efforts to promulgate the Standard Language. There has in fact been quite a bit of success in this regard. A generation ago, only young men who had frequent contact with outsiders spoke Putonghua, whether they be Yi minority in the Yunnan mountains, or inhabitants of Canton. Now, it is common to find virtually universal comprehension of Putonghua among the younger generations, though the rates of actual use are much lower.

Minorities, I was told, would never resist Sinicizing educational efforts, since they are concerned with getting ahead, with attaining something like the social

position possessed only by the wealthier, more urban, Putonghua-speaking Han. Only Han Chinese in self-confident places like Shanghai, Canton, and Fujian demonstrate any overt resistance to efforts at promulgating the standard language (Erbaugh, 1995) and even there resistance has waned since the mid-1990s (Zhou, 2001).[7] These three places, all in eastern coastal provinces, are perceived as the centers of civilization, modernization, advancement, and 'openness' (*wenming, xiandaihua, fada,* and *kaifang*), open to the world, confident, brilliant with new construction, technology, and consumption of global products. And while many in Canton can now speak Putonghua, it is Cantonese that has the greater cachet. Shanghai's language—a version of the Wu topolects—has grown in prestige in the 1990s along with the rebuilding of Shanghai. Taiwanese business people working in Shanghai now learn the Wu topolect spoken in Shanghai, while they use Putonghua as a lingua franca. Minglang Zhou (personal communication) reports that "Putonghua and *Shanghainese* have developed different functions in business and socialization since the mid 1990s. When talking about business, two *Shanghainese*-speaking businessmen usually switch to Putonghua. After business is done and when they have their meal together, they switch to *Shanghainese.* When a customer goes to a department store, bank, or post office, salesperson/staff will greet him/her in Putonghua and will not switch to *Shanghainese* unless the customer does so first." The snobbishness of Beijing or Northeast speakers of standard Putonghua is rivalled by the stylishness of speakers of *Cantonese* or *Shanghainese.* A matched-guise test comparing Putonghua and *Shanghaihua* shows that preference for one over the other is not clear-cut (Zhou, 2001).

### *5.2. Official National Language: Putonghua*

But these places are extremely remote from Kunming. Kunming people may find *Kunminghua* to be pleasing, but they have also been greatly influenced by official efforts to persuade the Chinese population of the superiority of Northern Mandarin. On the tape, I had five speakers of Putonghua (see Table 4). Only one would be considered truly standard, the speech of a university professor (Speaker 7) I'll call Teacher Ji from the northeast who had been in Kunming for over 30 years yet insisted she could not speak a word of *Kunminghua.* Indeed, her speech was judged most standard by the respondents (55%) as well as most pleasing (87%). At the same time, her speech is so alien or unnatural to people in southwest China that 8 people guessed her to be a foreigner speaking Putonghua! (They still found it pleasing, perhaps a symptom of appreciation for things foreign.)

The person judged second-most standard was a university professor of linguistics (Speaker 11) from Shanghai whom I'll call Professor Lin. His speech was very standard **Southern** Mandarin, but clearly not that of a northerner. Standard Putonghua is defined as having the phonology of the North, the area around Beijing, so anyone with southern features could not officially be considered a speaker of standard Putonghua. Yet this person was evaluated as such by people from Yunnan. Some qualified their assessment: "**approaching** standard," "you could say it's standard," basically standard," and so on. His speech was evaluated as standard by

45% of the respondents; overall 64% found it pleasing. This was essentially the local prestige form.

*Table 4. Putonghua Identified and Evaluated*
*(N = 84)*

| *Variety guessed* | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Speaker* | *Putonghua* | *other* | *blank / don't know* | |
| *Mu Xiaohua* | 72 (86%) | 8 (10%) | 4 (5%) | |
| *Teacher Ji* | 71 (84%) | 8 (10%) | 5 (6%) | |
| *Professor Lin* | 69 (82%) | 10 (12%) | 5 (6%) | |
| *Professor Suzuki* | 63 (75%) | 10 (12%) | 11 (13%) | |
| *Feng Meimei* | 46 (55%) | 27 (32%) | 11 (13%) | |
| *Evaluation* | | | | |
| *Speaker* | *yes* | *so-so* | *no* | *blank / don't know* |
| *Biaozhun? Standard?* | | | | |
| *Mu Xiaohua* | 13 (15%) | 0 | 65 (77%) | 6 (7%) |
| *Teacher Ji* | 46 (55%) | 4 (5%) | 29 (34%) | 5 (6%) |
| *Professor Lin* | 33 (39%) | 5 (6%) | 40 (48%) | 6 (7%) |
| *Professor Suzuki* | 18 (21%) | 4 (5%) | 54 (64%) | 8 (10%) |
| *Feng Meimei* | 8 (10%) | 1 (1%) | 68 (81%) | 7 (8%) |
| *Pleasing? Haoting?* | | | | |
| *Mu Xiaohua* | 16 (19%) | 13 (15%) | 51 (61%) | 4 (5%) |
| *Teacher Ji* | 62 (74%) | 11 (13%) | 7 (8%) | 4 (5%) |
| *Professor Lin* | 34 (40%) | 20 (24%) | 24 (28%) | 6 (7%) |
| *Professor Suzuki* | 17 (20%) | 12 (14%) | 48 (57%) | 7 (8%) |
| *Feng Meimei* | 8 (10%) | 3 (4%) | 67 (80%) | 6 (7%) |
| *Decent?* | | | | |
| *Mu Xiaohua* | 30 (36%) | 23 (27%) | 23 (27%) | 8 (10%) |
| | 63% | | | |
| *Teacher Ji* | 63 (75%) | 7 (8%) | 7 (8%) | 7 (8%) |
| | 83% | | | |
| *Professor Lin* | 45 (54%) | 18 (21%) | 18 (21%) | 3 (4%) |
| | 75% | | | |
| *Professor Suzuki* | 27 (32%) | 21 (25%) | 29 (34%) | 7 (8%) |
| | 57% | | | |
| *Feng Meimei* | 23 (27%) | 14 (17%) | 43 (51%) | 4 % (5%) |
| | 44% | | | |
| *Potential friend?* | | | | |
| *Mu Xiaohua* | 33 (39%) | 5 (6%) | 38 (45%) | 8 (10%) |
| *Teacher Ji* | 57 (68%) | 7 (8%) | 13 (15%) | 7 (8%) |
| *Professor Lin* | 43 (51%) | 8 (10%) | 28 (33%) | 5 (6%) |
| *Professor Suzuki* | 27 (32%) | 6 (7%) | 43 (51%) | 8 (10%) |
| *Feng Meimei* | 27 (32%) | 1 (1%) | 51 (61%) | 5 (6%) |

A very interesting case is that of the third speaker of Putonghua (Speaker 13). It was a Japanese professor of Chinese, whom I'll call Professor Suzuki, whose speech is quite remarkable for a foreign speaker of Putonghua. Few people had any suspicion that he was not Chinese. Many guessed him to be from Yunnan! Though 75% of the respondents guessed him to be speaking Putonghua, only 26% considered him to be speaking standard Putonghua. Thirty-four percent of the respondents liked his speech, but 57% did not.

The fourth speaker of Putonghua was a Naxi minority woman who had graduated from high school (Speaker 2). Mu Xiaohua (pseud.) spoke Putonghua very similar to that of the respondents, being from Lijiang, a medium-sized city in Yunnan designated as a Naxi autonomous area. Both she and the respondents for the most part spoke Putonghua as a second language. Opinions were fairly uniform as to whether or not her speech was standard. Only 15% said yes, none said it was average, and 77% said no. But in terms of overall evaluation, the figures are almost identical to Professor Suzuki: 34% liked it, and 61% did not.

The fifth Putonghua speaker (Speaker 16, here called Feng Meimei) evoked the greatest dissention with regard to whether what she was speaking was in fact Putonghua. Fifty-five percent said yes, while 32% said no, and 13% were uncertain—the same degree of uncertainty as evoked by Professor Suzuki. Only 11% considered it standard (compared to 26% for Professor Suzuki and 15% for Mu Xiaohua speaking Putonghua). Feng Meimei was a young woman of the Yi minority from the countryside in southern Yunnan, with a junior-high-school education. Her Mandarin was clearly awkward. Virtually no one found it pleasing—80% evaluated it negatively, compared with 8% for Teacher Ji. Her was the prototypical *MaPu.*

Comparing views of the persons speaking (rather than of their speech), we can look at "decency" and potential friendship. The person evaluated as most decent was Teacher Ji (75%), while least decent was Feng Meimei (27%)—almost a three to one difference. Professor Lin—the Southern speaker—was midway, with 54% saying he was decent. The middle values (where people responded that the person was average, so-so, or fair) are also interesting. The extremes had the fewest middle values—only 8% for Teacher Ji and 17% for Feng Meimei—compared with values in the 20% range for the other three speakers of Putonghua.

Combining "yes" and "so-so" values, we find less extreme views but still noteworthy—83% for Teacher Ji, 44% for Feng Meimei, 75% for Professor Lin.

Assessed as potential friends, again Teacher Ji is most likely (68%) to be the respondents' friend, even though she was obviously much older than most of them (in her late 40s or early 50s); least likely to be the respondents' friend was Feng Meimei (32%); second highest was Professor Lin (51%). But even Feng Meimei could have been envisaged as the hearers' friend a third of the time, which suggests a democratic impulse coursing through the population, alongside the prestige-conscious norms of standardization and nationalism. A sense of solidarity with local speakers exists in some residents of Yunnan, while identification with the national prestige norms also exists.

The responses to the five speakers of Putonghua suggest that there has been quite a bit of internalization of the norms of standardization from the national center, even in a place as remote from that center as Yunnan. But the norms have southern flavor

as well, and there is concomitant pride in local identity. It is more complex than a simple case of local solidarity opposing central power. The remainder of the data—which I cannot pursue in this chapter (see Blum, 2001)—yields stereotypes about regions and ethnic groups with many subtle surprises, such as the fact that rich business people are not considered appropriate friends for students, while poor peasants from certain groups might be.

### *5.3. One Guise Matched*

One of the speakers of *Kunminghua,* Li Jianhua (as Speaker 14), was also the speaker of another linguistic variety, Hakka, which he spoke as Speaker 6. Hakka people, known as *Kejia* ('Guest People') in Mandarin, are considered a subethnicity of Han. Their language, *Hakka,* is classified as one branch of the Chinese languages, and shows very clear genetic connection with these other varieties, especially the Yue dialects (Norman, 1988; Ramsey, 1987; Erbaugh, 1992; Cohen, 1996; see Constable 1996: 14–15 for discussion of linguistic classification). Hakka are very common in Guangdong province, and in Fujian, Hongkong, and Taiwan. They are not as common in Kunming. Hence respondents were largely unfamiliar with this variety and only two of seventy-five who even attempted a response to this speaker identified it accurately. Varieties guessed for this guise can be sorted into five categories: blank or don't know (twenty-eight responses; these were people who did attempt to fill in some other aspect of the questions for this speaker); other areas of China (twenty-one responses; guesses included the following: Dongbei, Sichuan, Hakka, Fujian, Henan, Xinjiang, Jiangsu, Minnanhua, Shanxihua, Jiang-Zhe, and Guangdong); Yunnan dialects (14 responses; guesses included the following: Yunnan dialect, Qujing, Yuxi, Fuyuan, Wenshan, Nujiang, Baoshan, Chuxiong, Jianchuan); minority languages (eleven responses; guesses included the following: Dai, Bai, Dali dialect, Dehong, Zhongdian, Tibetan, "minority dialects," and "mountain area dialects"), and one guess of "Chinese English."

The results of the comparison of responses to the Kunming and Hakka guises are summarized in Table 5.

*Table 5. Kunming and Hakka guises compared*

| | *Kunminghua* | | | *Hakka* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *yes and so-so* | *no* | *blank /don't know* | *yes and so-so* | *no* | *blank /don't know* |
| *haoting (pleasing)* | 38% | 55% | 7% | 16% | 76% | 8% |
| Decent | 55% | 43% | 2% | 36% | 44% | 20% |
| Friend | 48% | 48% | 5% | 19% | 61% | 20% |

A simple explanation for the prevalence of responses to the question of potential friendship is that it would be difficult to be the friend of someone whose language one doesn't speak! Other explanations include an assumption that anyone not

speaking an intelligible variety is bound to be less well educated and of a lower social stratum.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

"Standard" Putonghua is heard daily on television and radio; films are dubbed into it. Though there is some noteworthy increase in television programming in local languages, the bulk of popular media production is in standard Putonghua. This is almost always reflexively considered *haoting*. Yet a parallel world of linguistic diversity coexists, with its own standards and judgments. In contrast to many studies worldwide of attitudes toward two languages in bilingual settings, in China I found that given the range of topolects there were a large number of varying judgments made. Judgments are made of Putonghua, but are also made of local varieties such as *Kunminghua.*

The way in which government language work and policy influence the thought and speech of people constantly subjected to it is well documented in such works as Orwell's *1984* and numerous works about China's Cultural Revolution. However, as Perry Link, Richard Madsen, and Paul Pickowitz point out in the preface to their book *Unofficial China* (1989), there is a great difference between "official" and "unofficial" China, to use somewhat oversimple terms (see also Link 1992, p. 39). The former is what is offered to strangers, colleagues, cadres, and often foreigners, and involves the politically correct terminology and viewpoints that lead casual visitors to China to despair that everybody says the same thing and that conversations in China are predictable, boring, and impersonal. The official version also provides a hopeful spur to positive action. The latter is what is shared with trusted friends and family, or perhaps in conversation when it becomes interesting and is less fully monitored. It is not the case that there is an absolute difference between the two types of behavior, but that this distinction is sometimes quite useful. But even more interesting for this chapter is the fact that despite all the propaganda or "education" urging unity with minorities and Chinese nationalism and non-elitism in a socialist country, there was an astonishing degree of frank disdain expressed in people's evaluations of the linguistic varieties to which they were asked to respond.

Similarly, I would suggest that as a result of this test, one can begin to gauge the sorts of unofficial reactions held with regard to "difference" as revealed when the actual object of study is not fully apparent to respondents: City dwellers are proud of their language; everybody disdains the speech of ethnic minorities, especially those viewed as having a great likelihood of being peasants; there is great uncertainty as to what constitutes Standard Mandarin, so much so that when it is encountered it might sound like a foreigner speaking; and foreigners are unanimously regarded – by college students – as worthy of friendship. Prestige is complicated everywhere. There are opposing centers of prestige, and these vary from region to region. In the north, standardness of language is an important barometer of social class, while in the south and southwest it works a little differently. Beijing standards are understood

imperfectly, and yet operate in some fashion to guide evaluations of speech. They are not powerful enough to convince anyone to select a Beijing-type language to use in a place like Kunming, however. Just as people in China in the 1990s could mouth the words to patriotic songs, so they could ape the standards of language. But when it comes to action, the standards are irrelevant and people proceed as they always have, speaking their local languages to the people they know, without apology or shame.

In other settings the notion of "standard" may be defined clearly, in overt work of academies, or it may be a covert category as Schiffman (1996) and Milroy (2000) described. In China it is both, but in different directions. Overtly the standard is appreciated, but it is only one of many other varieties. In Kunming as in other areas of China, linguistic and cultural complexity requires appreciation (at least) of Han and minority, center and periphery, regional center and local area, social class, age, rural and urban residence, and gender. Speech that is standard provides a named, defined variety to which hearers can nod assent, "Ah yes, that's standard, that's beautiful" within a universe of different and subtly competing norms. Standard Putonghua is good to hear, even if for most of China's 1.3 billion people it is not necessarily good (easy, appropriate) to speak.

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## 7. NOTES

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1. China's ethnic diversity is both theoretical and practical. In theory, ethnic groups are scientifically identified and organized, so that clear boundaries between groups should be identifiable. In practice, the situation is overwhelmingly complicated and there are many cases that do not fit the Stalinst criteria of ethnic groups (common language, common territory, common economic life, and common culture) that China uses to classify groups. Such cases involve not only intermarriage but also groups that wish to be considered minority but are not, groups that are minority but have few identifiable traits, and groups that are united that have few commonalities. For some of the background to this topic, see Dreyer 1976, Fei 1980, Heberer 1989, Gladney 1991, Harrell 1995, 2001, Litzinger 2000.

2. It is very difficult to read about linguistic difference, in part because of a language ideology that tolerates multilingualism. I call China a "boundary-shrugging" society, especially in contrast with European societies, which are "boundary contesting." See Blum n.d.

3. I did not attempt to verify the claims of the speakers about which varieties they spoke and how typically. I took their word that they were fluent in these varieties, in part because of a frequent experience of people declining to speak in a given variety, claiming imperfect knowledge of it.

4. I present some numerical responses to this test, not to "prove" "significance" but to support my impressions. Since the survey was not administered randomly and I simply asked people I knew to record for me, this would not meet rigorous social scientific standards for instrument design. There are principled reasons for rejecting the notion of "proof as derived from surveys. I would not even begin to know which categories to use to determine a "representative sample." My feeling is that the whole social and linguistic field is far too complex to reduce to numbers. I present them simply because I have them. Readers: please take them as suggestive and requiring explanation.

5. Class is complex in contemporary China. Here I mean levels of education and urban versus rural residence. Appearance, speech, occupation, and residence make a person's class membership apparent. Urban residents with college educations made clear that they looked down on uneducated rural residents.

6. I use these responses in more detail to investigate attitudes toward particular minority groups in my *Portraits of "Primitives "* (Blum 2001), taking this test as a kind of projective test.

7. The linguistic situation in Taiwan is quite different. After decades of suppression, Taiwanese is being acknowledged as one of the official languages of Taiwan. Linguistic activism on behalf of Taiwanese includes efforts to represent the spoken language in romanization (Dwyer 2002).

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BENNAN ZHANG & ROBIN R. YANG

# *PUTONGHUA* EDUCATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN POSTCOLONIAL HONG KONG

## 1. INTRODUCTION

On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong ceased to be a colony of the United Kingdom (UK) and became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The political transition has greatly affected Hong Kong society, including language education. *Putonghua* (Standard Modern Chinese), the official language of the PRC, has grown to be a powerful and important language in primary and secondary schools, sitting together with English and Cantonese. Because the linguistic situation in Hong Kong is complex, however, a substantial debate on the language policies governing the three principal languages has continued for more than two decades among policy-makers and educators (Johnson, 1998; Pierson, 1998; Pun, 1997). What has changed in the position of Putonghua in the Hong Kong educational system after 1997? What is the relationship between Putonghua and the other two principal languages? Will Putonghua ever be in a position of hegemony in the context of Hong Kong? These questions have drawn energetic study from Hong Kong as well as international sociolinguists. This chapter will discuss the status of Putonghua in Hong Kong and will attempt to explain the changes in the linguistic context of Hong Kong during the past decade or so.

## 2. 'ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS' AND A NEW EQUILIBRIUM AMONG THREE LANGUAGES

Hong Kong is linguistically complex with three principal languages: English, Cantonese, and Putonghua. Up to 94.9% of the population of Hong Kong regard themselves as 'Chinese' (Census and Statistics Department, 2001a) and the community of Hong Kong, as a whole, is typically seen as a predominantly 'Cantonese-speaking community' (Bolton & Luke, 1999), but, as Bolton (2000, p. 270 ) points out, 'during the period of British colonial rule, the English language had the status of the official language of government, the official language of law, and was *de facto* the most widely-used medium of secondary and university education'. The functions of English 'included its use as an official language, its use in

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education, its use in industry, trade, business, finance, and communications.' After the early 1990s, due to the imminent transition of sovereignty, Chinese gradually rose in importance among political and economical situations in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, the increasing use and importance of Putonghua that accompanied the transition have increased the complexity of the linguistic ecology of Hong Kong. It is clear that the change of sovereignty brought new language prospects, in which Cantonese, English, and Putonghua are to find a new equilibrium among each other. It is only with recognition of such a complicated context that the main language policies of Hong Kong can be understood and explained.

The PRC guaranteed the HKSAR freedom with a 'high degree of autonomy' in the running of its affairs, including the freedom to decide its own language policy under the formula of 'one country, two systems'. Regarding language policy, the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region* (National People's Congress, 1991) states:

> Article 9: In addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
>
> Article 136: On the basis of the previous educational system, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic awards and the recognition of educational qualifications.

The formula of 'one country, two systems' allows Hong Kong freedom to decide its own language policy, but the formula also puts significant responsibility on the Hong Kong policy makers to formulate a balance among the three major languages.

Since 1997, the post-colonial government of Hong Kong has made a series of language policy reforms attempting to create a reasonable equilibrium among the three languages in the community. Among these policy reforms, the policies of 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' and 'mother-tongue teaching' are two of the most significant in terms of impact and controversy.

## 3. 'BI-LITERACY AND TRI-LINGUALISM' AND PUTONGHUA EDUCATION

### *3.1. The Policy of 'Bi-literacy and Tri-lingualism'*

To create a reasonable equilibrium among the three languages, the Hong Kong government came up with and strongly asserted a policy touting 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' as an appropriate solution. In the 1999 Policy Address entitled *Quality People, Quality Home,* Tung Chee Hwa, the first Chief Executive of the HKSAR, declared that '[i]t is the SAR Government's goal to train our people to be truly biliterate and trilingual'(p. 23). In his 2000 Policy Address, Tung (2000) continued to promote Hong Kong's schools as enabling 'our students and workforce to be bi-literate and tri-lingual' (vol.1, 11:5). In the latest 2003 policy address, Tung (2003) says once more that one policy agenda of the Second Term Government of HKSAR

is to '[I]mprove language education and the language proficiency of our people, i.e. biliterate in written Chinese and English and trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and spoken English' (Tung, 2003, p. 28). The emphasis he places on this notion is clear.

'Bi-literacy' refers to literacy in the two written forms of Chinese and English, and 'tri-lingualism' refers to competence in two spoken forms of Chinese, Cantonese and Putonghua, and the spoken form of English. In formal written communication, Cantonese and Putonghua essentially share the same written form (see Saillard in this volume). The formal written form of Chinese, commonly called modern standard Chinese, is actually based on the vocabulary and grammar of Putonghua, and this form is preferred in Hong Kong, but derivations from modern standard Chinese that incorporate various Cantonese features can be found occasionally in informal written media, such as popular magazines and websites.

Actually, this is not the first time that the government of Hong Kong announced an intent to create a multilingual atmosphere in Hong Kong. In fact, the *Official Language Ordinance,* enacted in 1974 by the colonial government of Hong Kong, declared that both English and Chinese are to be the official languages in Hong Kong for 'the purposes of communication between the Government or any public officer and members of the public' (Hong Kong Government, 1974). The last British Governor, Christopher Patten, also declared his intent to promote the wider use of Chinese language and even 'to strengthen the teaching of Putonghua in schools' in his policy address of 1995 (p. 79). In March 1995, in recognition of the need to give priority to extending the use of Chinese internally within the civil service, a working group on the use of Chinese was set up under the chairmanship of the Secretary for the Civil Service. Seven months later, in September, a report of the working group was published, which stated: 'It is already the Government's ultimate objective to develop a civil service which is biliterate (in English and Chinese) and trilingual (in English, Cantonese and Putonghua)' (Civil Service Branch, 1995, p. 5). It is the initial clear declaration of Government clearly declaring on 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' policy.

Nobody doubted the sincerity of the Hong Kong colonial government on their intents to promulgate the usage of Chinese, but throughout the British administration, no form of Chinese had ever shown a tendency to rival English in status and usage, not even during the period of Christopher Patten.

Only after 1997 did all the effort and proclamations of governmental intent to promote any form of Chinese show any actualization. Perhaps it was the atmosphere of Chinese rule, or perhaps a growing vocational need, but it was only under Tung's administration that the policy of 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' or any of its British precursors showed actual results: after 1997, Putonghua has spread dramatically across Hong Kong, emerging on school curricula, under job requirements, and in other social situations. However, as shall soon be discussed, this policy of 'bi-literacy and tri-ligualism', though ostensibly successful, might have also rather obscured the full development potential of Putonghua in Hong Kong and continues to uphold the existing superiority of English in the region.

### *3.2. The Dramatic Development of Putonghua after 1997*

The most noticeable and quantifiable growth of Putonghua presence after 1997 appears in the field of primary and secondary education, and from this field, a general idea of Putonghua's situation in Hong Kong can reasonably be inferred, as education will produce the citizens that will determine the context of a society in the near future.

Before 1998, Putonghua was offered, when schools were capable, only as a non-core and optional subject at primary schools from the 4th to the 6th years (referred to as Primary 4 to Primary 6) and secondary schools from the 1st to the 3rd years (referred to as Form 1 to Form 3). According to records from the Education Department, Putonghua was offered as an independent and optional subject at about 60% of primary schools and at about 46% of secondary schools in Hong Kong during the academic year 1995–96. Since September 1998, Putonghua has been officially made a core subject from Primary 1 to Primary 6 and from Form 1 to Form 5. In September, 2000, up to 98% of primary and secondary schools offered Putonghua courses to their students (Education Department, 2000). Since 2000, Putonghua has also officially been a fully independent subject of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), the most important examination for secondary school students, normally taken at the end of five years of secondary school (after Form 5), to determine eligibility to continue studies in Form 6 and Form 7, which would, in turn, end with the matriculation examinations to university, called the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE).

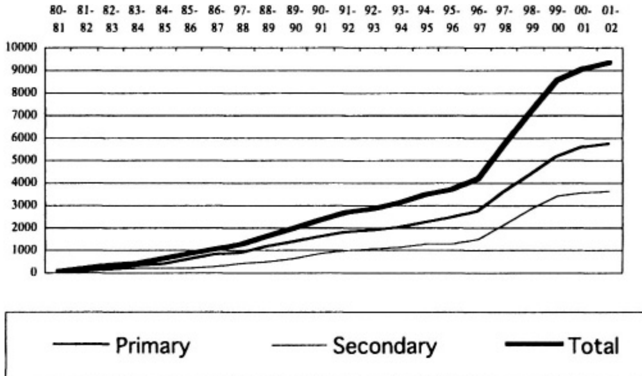
This trend in increased Putonghua courses leads invariably to an increase in Putonghua educators, the numbers of which within a year can be indicative of the effects of Putonghua educational policies in Hong Kong. Twenty years ago, Hong Kong had few qualified Putonghua teachers serving primary and secondary schools. School principals had the authority to appoint any teacher he or she deemed capable of speaking Putonghua to teach students on an occasional basis or outside normal school hours. In the early 1980s, the Hong Kong Government began to understand the importance of trained and qualified Putonghua teachers for the promotion of Putonghua education and started conducting short and long-term training programmes for school teachers who were, or would be, teaching Putonghua. Through the efforts of the colonial and post-colonial Hong Kong governments, the number of trained Putonghua teachers has increased yearly, as can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show that the number of trained Putonghua teachers has increased from 92 to 9,355 during the past 22 years, but the greatest increase occurred immediately after 1997. Between 1997 and 2002, the number of trained Putonghua teachers doubled in both primary and secondary schools, indicating a significant spread of Putonghua in Hong Kong during those years, correlating with the enactment of the government's 'bi-literate, tri-lingual' model of language policy for Hong Kong.

The HKSAR government's push to train new Putonghua teachers at full-time tertiary level institutions is also supplemented by the Government's investment of considerable resources to encourage continuous training, part-time study, and other

*Table 1. The number of trained Putonghua teachers*

| Years | No. of Trained *Putonghua* Teachers | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Primary | Secondary | |
| 01–02 | 5,739 | 3,616 | 9,355 |
| 00–01 | 5,541 | 3,546 | 9,087 |
| 99–00 | 5,166 | 3,416 | 8,582 |
| 98–99 | 4,353 | 2,829 | 7,182 |
| 97–98 | 3,565 | 2,164 | 5,729 |
| 96–97 | 2,710 | 1,472 | 4,182 |
| 95–96 | 2,398 | 1,317 | 3,715 |
| 94–95 | 2,195 | 1,270 | 3,465 |
| 93–94 | 2,013 | 1,163 | 3,176 |
| 92–93 | 1,825 | 1,035 | 2,860 |
| 91–92 | 1,765 | 975 | 2,740 |
| 90–91 | 1,556 | 824 | 2,380 |
| 89–90 | 1,360 | 660 | 2,020 |
| 88–89 | 1,122 | 531 | 1,653 |
| 87–88 | 873 | 405 | 1,278 |
| 86–87 | 761 | 292 | 1,053 |
| 85–86 | 598 | 245 | 843 |
| 84–85 | 386 | 233 | 619 |
| 83–84 | 254 | 191 | 445 |
| 82–83 | 172 | 171 | 343 |
| 81–82 | 92 | 96 | 188 |
| 80–81 | 92 | / | 92 |




Source: Education Department (2002).

*Figure 1. The increase of trained Putonghua teachers*

forms of professional development for Putonghua teachers. The Language Fund and Quality Education Fund, established in 1993 and 1998 respectively, have given

grants to many projects devoted to the professional development of Putonghua teachers. For example, in 2000, the Language Fund granted HK$ 13.22 million to 22 Putonghua projects, including projects aimed at enhancing teachers' Putonghua proficiency (Census & Statistics Department, 2001b).

These numbers are indicative of the significant progress that has been made in the spread of Putonghua in Hong Kong education and in Hong Kong in general, especially during the time after 1997, according to the government's vision of creating a 'bi-literate and tri-lingual' society. However, progress in Putonghua has lead to a much more difficult challenge for policy makers of determining the relative importance and status of the members of the linguistic triumvirate that make up Hong Kong's tri-lingualism.

### *3.3. The Balance between Putonghua and English Education*

Just before 1997, some people worried that a great use of Putonghua in the administration after the 'hand-over' would mean a concomitant reduction in the use of English, and even mean that, to some extent, Putonghua would 'take over from English as a high-status language for discourse with non-locals' (Bray, 1997, p. 20). In fact, partly due to the 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' policy, English has survived its position of 'high-status language', which has never been challenged by the increasing use of Putonghua after the change of sovereignty 1997. That can be evidenced by all Government's documents concerning the 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' policy, as well as seen from primary and secondary language education.

*Table 2. Suggested minimum time allocation per week in primary schools*

| Subject | Class | Number of periods |
|---|---|---|
| English | Primary 1 | 5 |
| | Primary 2 | 6 |
| | Primary 3 | 7 |
| | Primary 4–6 | 8 |
| | Secondary 1–5 | 7–8 |
| *Putonghua* | Primary 1–6 | 2–3 |
| | Secondary 1–3 | 2–3 |
| | Secondary 4–5 | 4 (minimum) |

Source: Curriculum Development Council (1993), (1997a), (1997b), (1997c), (1999a).

After the policy of 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' was conceived, academics and language policy-makers of HKSAR had a difficult project to implement. In the PRC, for example, one is clear that Putonghua is the 'common language', and to be treated as first acquisition for students. However, in Hong Kong, arguably, due to its history, Putonghua should be treated as a second language for students. As a secondary acquisition, which language then, should get more attention in schools, English or Putonghua? Despite the advances in the spread of Putonghua since 1997, English is still occupying the more prestigious position in primary and secondary

schools in Hong Kong today. It can be seen in Table 2 that, in terms of teaching hours in primary and secondary schools, English still carries much more emphasis than Putonghua does.

The 'suggested' teaching hours indicate the required or approved teaching hours decided by the Curriculum Development Council, to be followed by most schools, if not all, under its oversight. Table 2 hence shows that the suggested number of Putonghua teaching hours, since 1997, is about one-third of that of English in primary schools, and 41% of that of English in secondary schools. In other words, although Putonghua has been developing due to governmental policy, we still see that as a language subject, it has the lowest time allocation in primary and secondary schools. 'Tri-lingualism' has apparently meant an unequal share of learning in the second languages, with English taking a very prominent spot as before.

As some scholars observed, 'Colonial transition does not appear to have impinged upon English language in the school curriculum in Hong Kong. English remains a high-status subject in the primary and secondary school curricula and as a key element in assessment for placement in secondary education and entry to tertiary education. In terms of timetabling, its suggested allocation of periods per week is second only to Chinese language in the guidelines for primary schools and, together with Chinese language, it forms the largest component in the guidelines for secondary schools' (Adamson and Auyeung Lai, 1997, p. 91). In 2001, Rosanna Wong Yick-ming, the former head of the Education Commission, believed English was 'the language of success' and 'a priority for Hong Kong as an international city should be how to enhance students' English', as reported by a local newspaper (Yeung, 2001). Since 1988, the Government has even spent millions of dollars in conducting the Native English-speaking Teacher (NET) Scheme by hiring native English-speaking teachers from oversees for primary and secondary schools. Recently the Government published a consultation document concerning language policy, *Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong,* prepared by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCLER), an important think-tank on language policies in Hong Kong, which had very few words on raising Putonghua standard of Hong Kong primary and secondary school students. The document suggested to specify 'a clear and realistic set of expected language competencies' and said the Government 'is now developing a full set of learning outcomes, which will describe the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in Chinese Language and English Language that students are expected to achieve on completing Key Stages 1 to 4 (i.e. Primary 1 to Secondary 5)'. But Putonghua is not included in this 'full set' of key stages, because '[s]ince Putonghua was only introduced into schools as a core subject in 1998, and the social environment affecting students' learning of Putonghua is changing rapidly, it is considered premature to develop learning outcomes of basic competencies for Putonghua for difference Key Stages' (SCLER, 2003, p. 4,10).

Although time allocation in curricula or to specify a set of expected language competencies for students may not be conclusive evidence, it still serves as a ground for us to suspect whether this policy really will result in true 'tri-lingualism' in Hong Kong.

The emphasis on English still indicates the hesitation of policy makers on reducing the status of English in the territory. One must of course understand that the Hong Kong post-colonial government is in an awkward position trying to balance the three spoken languages, with English representing world-status, Cantonese representing localism, and Putonghua representing a dedication to the PRC, but nonetheless, one should also realize that the recent growth of Putonghua in the territory may actually already be at full potential, being limited from further growth by policies, such as teaching hours, that linger on to the pre-1997 *status quo.*

## 4. THE 'MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHING' POLICY AND USING PUTONGHUA AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

### *4.1. The 'Mother-Tongue Teaching' Policy and the so-Called 'Chinese Schools'*

In 1998, the HKSAR government introduced another important language policy, the 'mother-tongue teaching' policy, in secondary schools. Under this policy, most secondary schools were requested to teach students from Form 1 to Form 3 in Cantonese, which is considered the students' mother-tongue. A review of the policy is expected to be completed by the summer of 2003 when the first batch of students under this regime graduates from secondary school.

Shortly after the enactment of the 'mother–tongue teaching' policy, Tung Chee Hwa (1999), stated that '[m]other-tongue teaching was introduced to help students learn more effectively. Most secondary schools adopted mother-tongue teaching in September 1998. Since then, we have found that students have improved in both their cognitive and learning abilities' (p. 24). In 2001, Tung (2001b) said again that '[a]fter three years of operation of the medium of instruction policy, it is observed that mother-tongue teaching has positive effects on students' learning'(Vol. 1,11:5).

'Mother-tongue' referred to Cantonese, but what really is the 'mother-tongue' of Hong Kong students? A survey on the definition of 'mother tongue' conducted in 1983 (Bolton & Luke, 1999) showed that up to 76% of Hong Kong Chinese people believed their mother tongue to be 'Cantonese', 7.99% of the people believed their mother tongue to be 'Chinese', and only 2.53% of the people said their mother tongue was 'Mandarin'. In Hong Kong, as 'Chinese' generally can be understood as Cantonese, so then up to 84.44% of Hong Kong people believed their mother-tongue to be Cantonese at the time of the survey. The census data (Table 3) on the 'Usual Languages' of the population in 1991, 1996, and 2001 may help us better understand the facts supporting the beliefs of these people, as one can assume that there exists a strong correlation between one's mostly used language and one's mother-tongue.

Four years after 1997, Table 3 shows that the population of Cantonese speakers increased 0.5%. In contrast, Putonghua speakers decreased 0.2% compared with the situations in 1996 and 1991. Other Chinese dialect speakers decreased their percentage in the whole population by 1.5% since 1991 and English speakers increased about 1% since 1991. In 2001, almost 89.2% of the population in Hong Kong used Cantonese regularly while only 0.9% used Putonghua regularly. Would these statistics seem fair for the decision to use Cantonese as the mother-tongue in education? Would these statistics support the decision that even written Chinese

lessons, which are based more on spoken Putonghua than on spoken Cantonese, are to be taught in Cantonese?

*Table 3. Population Aged 5 and Over and Their Usual Language, 1991, 1996 and 2001*

| | 1991 | | 1996 | | 2001 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Usual Language | Number | % of total | Number | % of total | Number | % of total |
| Cantonese | 4 583 322 | 88.7 | 5 196 240 | 88.7 | 5 726 972 | 89.2 |
| Putonghua | 57 577 | 1.1 | 65 892 | 1.1 | 55 410 | 0.9 |
| Other Chinese Dialects | 364 694 | 7.0 | 340 222 | 5.8 | 352 562 | 5.5 |
| English | 114 084 | 2.2 | 184 308 | 3.1 | 203 598 | 3.2 |
| Others | 49 232 | 1.0 | 73 879 | 1.3 | 79 197 | 1.2 |
| Total | 5 168 909 | 100.0 | 5 860 541 | 100.0 | 6 417 739 | 100.0 |

Source: Census & Statistics Department (2001a). The figures exclude mute persons

It is clear that the policy of 'mother-tongue education' using Cantonese is a practical and minimally disruptive transition, seeing that most people use it often and that most people do consider it their mother-tongue. This contrasts, however, with the situation in most other parts of China with dialects, where Putonghua is instead used in schools as the mother-tongue. Some Hong Kong people think that, 'like it or not, Putonghua is, to most Hong Kong students, another foreign language' (Cheung, 2001), and hence would not make an effective medium of education. This relates to an important issue of language education, that is, the issue of deciding which languages are feasible to be adopted as media of instruction in the classroom.

Although the majority of the population uses Cantonese as the common communication link in their daily lives, as an international port and a former British colony, Hong Kong has gotten used to using English to conduct most official affairs and international commercial business. Right now, at the school level, while Cantonese is the medium of instruction in most primary schools, a different situation exists for the secondary schools. There are two types of secondary schools: One type uses English to teach (hereafter called English schools). The other uses Cantonese to teach (hereafter called Chinese schools). The medium of instruction in English schools is supposed to be English in all subjects except for Chinese language and Chinese-related subjects, such as Chinese literature and Chinese history. Chinese schools are the opposite and use Cantonese for all subjects except English and English-related subjects like English literature (Lee & Leung, 1999). Table 4 and 5 show some statistics on the two types of schools.

Table 4 shows that pupils in English schools had been increasingly dominant in Hong Kong from 1960 to 1990. However, there was a dramatic change after 1997 as Table 5 indicates. In the academic year 1998/99, the number of Chinese secondary schools had sharply increased from 77 to 307. This large shift reflects the Government's implementation of the 'mother-tongue teaching' policy in 1998.

*Table 4. The percentage of day pupils in the two types of secondary schools (1960–90)*

| Year | Chinese Schools (%) | English Schools (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1960 | 42.1 | 57.9 |
| 1965 | 29.0 | 71.0 |
| 1970 | 23.3 | 76.7 |
| 1975 | 21.3 | 78.7 |
| 1980 | 12.3 | 87.7 |
| 1985 | 9.5 | 90.5 |
| 1990 | 8.3 | 91.7 |

(Source: Lee & Leung, 1999)

*Table 5. The number and percentage of Chinese schools (1996–2000)*

| Years | Number of Chinese Secondary Schools | Percentage of All Secondary Schools (%) |
|---|---|---|
| 1996/97 | 74 | 18.5 |
| 1997/98 | 77 | 19.5 |
| 1998/99 | 307 | 72.5 |
| 1999/00 | 312 | 73.2 |

(Source: HKSAR Government,1999; SCMP, April 7,2000)

*4.2. Debate on Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction in the Classroom*

Aside from the Chinese and English schools, there has actually been a small number of another type of school that chose instead to adopt Putonghua as the medium of instruction since many years before 1997. These schools use Putonghua in all subjects except English and English-related subjects. Schools in this category include Kingsu-Cheking College, Fujian College, and Sun Fong Chong Primary School. The number of these schools is quite small but still notable.

Following the practice of these Putonghua schools, a number of schools have experimented with adopting Putonghua as the medium of instruction, mostly for the Chinese subject only at first. According to the number officially issued by the *Annual Report* of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCLER, 1999), 27 primary and secondary schools had adopted Putonghua as the medium of instruction for the Chinese subject by the end of 1999. Two years later, by July 2001, a study found that at least 136 primary and secondary schools 'had adopted Putonghua as the medium of instruction for the Chinese subject' (Authors' translation, Ho W., 2001a). The number has increased significantly indicating growing support for the use of Putonghua, rather than Cantonese, in schools for all subjects.

Supporters of this transition in practice believe that, instead of Cantonese, *Putonghua* not only could, but should, be used as the medium of instruction in Hong Kong schools for all subjects. 'The existing policy of the medium of instruction has

to face a complete shake-up. Cantonese can never be the principal language at schools. No other place in the world uses a dialect as the medium of instruction. It is killing [the students],' said Cheng Kai-ming (2000), vice-chancellor of the University of Hong Kong and an Education Commission member of Hong Kong. He believes that Putonghua is a suitable language to use as the medium of instruction in schools for all subjects.

Another senior officer, Michael Tien Puk-sun (2001), chairman of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research stirred the debate again when he said at a seminar on English education that all secondary schools should be taught in English and Putonghua in the future in order to make Hong Kong a trilingual city. Because English must be mastered to maintain Hong Kong's international standing, and Putonghua is vital as the HKSAR builds on closer PRC ties. Many in the business community support this goal as an enhancement to Hong Kong's competitiveness.

Some other senior officers and educators, however, question not the vision, but the feasibility, of the idea. One main argument they hold is that they believe that the Putonghua language abilities of teachers and students are not adequate to teach and learn in Putonghua. In an interview with the *South China Morning Post,* Fanny Law (2001), Secretary for Education and Manpower, said that switching to teaching in English and Putonghua would be feasible only when teachers and students could communicate effectively in these languages. 'It's hard to say whether we can or how long it takes to reach that long-term vision of using Putonghua as a medium of instruction.' Ho Wai-kit (2001b), Chairman of the Centre for Research and Development of Putonghua Education at the Chinese University, said that school principals are willing to use Putonghua as the medium of instruction but teachers fear their grasp of the language is inadequate. Ho's comments came after his centre carried out a study that involved 34 primary and secondary schools using Putonghua as a medium of instruction for at least one subject.

The Putonghua ability of teachers and students is important, but, as another researcher found, this is actually not a major factor in the classroom. A research based on the case studies of 4 primary and 2 secondary schools during the period of July 2000 to December 2001, led by Ho Kwok Cheung of the Hong Kong Institute of Education, yielded two significant findings. First, after a three-month period of adaptation, most pupils were satisfied with their ability to accept Putonghua as a medium of instruction in Chinese subject classes, if the teachers instructed them in an orderly way and step by step (Ho, 2002, p. 16). Second, a teacher's Putonghua ability is not the most important factor in teaching effectively when compared with the teacher's use of teaching methodologies and learning strategies. 'It is true that better Putonghua will improve teaching, but the case studies indicate that the level of a teacher's Putonghua ability is not a decisive factor in the effectiveness of a Chinese subject class' (Authors' translation, Ho, 2002, p. 4). If the research results of Ho Kwok Cheung are reliable, then we must explore other reasons to explain the Hong Kong policy makers' hesitation to radically adopt Putonghua as the medium of instruction in the Chinese subject.

*4.3. The Policy Makers' Hesitation to Adopt Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction*

It is useful to make a comparison between Guangdong Province in Mainland China and Hong Kong. There is a significant difference between Guangdong and Hong Kong in terms of 'mother-tongue teaching'. Although Cantonese is the 'mother-tongue' to most of the students in Guangdong, Cantonese is officially neglected in primary and secondary schools of Guangdong. Putonghua is, of course, the official medium of classroom instruction for all subjects. As early as February 26, 1956, merely seven years after the founding of the PRC, the State Council issued the *Policies for the Popularization of Putonghua.* This official document stipulated:

> After the autumn of 1956, all primary and secondary schools of all of China are to use Putonghua as the classroom language to teach Chinese, except in areas inhabited by minority nationalities. By 1960, all students above the third grade in primary and all students of secondary schools and teacher's colleges should be able to speak Putonghua. Putonghua should be the medium of instruction for all subjects in primary and teacher's colleges. All the teachers in secondary and middle professional training schools should speak Putonghua.' (Authors' translation, China, 1996, p. 12)

In 31st October 2000, the Government of PRC promulgated *The Law of the State Common Using Language and Characters of the People's Republic of China,* which has enforced since 1st January 2001. Under the Item 10, this Law stipulated:

> 'Schools and other educational institutes use Putonghua and standard Chinese characters as basic language and characters in teaching and education.' (Authors' translation, China, 2001, p. 5)

This was a decree that was not to be challenged and was applicable to all schools in the PRC, including schools in Guangdong province. Taking Shenzhen as an example, it is a city in Guangdong and is the closest city to Hong Kong. On 27 July 1994, the Shenzhen Government issued an official regulation which stipulated that 'all kinds of schools (including kindergartens and nurseries) should be taught using standard Chinese language and characters. All schools in this city must adopt Putonghua as a campus language by the end of 1995.' (Authors' translation, China, 1996, p. 446). In Shenzhen, hesitation was not needed. The dramatic change quickly swept through the territory in one year and all schools in Shenzhen now officially teaching all subjects in Putonghua (Regarding different view on this, see Blum and Saillard, this volume).

Things are much different in Hong Kong. Cantonese has been officially promoted from 1970s onward, and until the hand-over, Putonghua was essentially neglected when compared with the attention given to Cantonese. After the 1997 hand-over, Cantonese has still been emphasized as the 'mother-tongue', while Putonghua has been delegated to a kind of 'second language', if not a 'foreign language'.

In 1999, in a Government educational consultative document, *A Holistic Review of the Hong Kong School Curriculum Proposed Reforms,* 'to adopt Putonghua as medium of instruction in the Chinese Language Education' was set as a 'long term' goal (Curriculum Development Council, 1999b, p. 9). How long it will be? In 1999, in a Government educational consultative document, *A Holistic Review of the Hong*

*Kong School Curriculum Proposed Reforms,* 'to adopt *Putonghua* as medium of instruction in the Chinese Language Education' was set as a 'long term' goal (Curriculum Development Council, 1999b, p. 9). How long it will be? In the recent consultation document, *Action Plan to Raise Language Standards in Hong Kong,* the Government announced very carefully that '[m]ore studies should be conducted to further understand the conditions necessary for schools to make a successful switch to using Putonghua as the MOI for Chinese Language and prevent possible negative outcomes before a firm policy and timetable can be formulated' (SCLER, 2003, p. 14).

Obviously, there is considerable confusion in the minds of Hong Kong people, who are hesitating at the crossroads of Putonghua and Cantonese. They hope to maintain a sense of local pride and identity rooted in Cantonese on one hand, and also expect to return into the broad Chinese culture that is represented by Putonghua on the other hand. What Hong Kong policy makers are concerned about are not only the Putonghua proficiency problem of students and teachers, but also the problem of culture. Cantonese is the root of Hong Kong local culture. Choi Po-king, a professor in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, further worried that if Cantonese were banned as the medium of instruction, it would amount to 'dialect cleansing' (Choi, 2001).

Therefore we can find that the 'mother-tongue' policy in Hong Kong is another issue that has prevented Putonghua from possibly developing more by becoming the medium of instruction for other subjects, even the Chinese subject. Such a policy is not only an issue of pedagogy but also an issue of culture. The policy indicates a kind of cultural hesitation of Hong Kong. This hesitation is part of the dual citizenship or character of Hong Kong people and may be delaying further development of Putonghua in Hong Kong education. It is also another sign that although Putonghua is increasingly widespread in Hong Kong, Hong Kong is unlikely to be identical with the PRC in language policy in the near future.

## 5. THE POLITICAL AND PRAGMATIC FOUNDATIONS FOR PROMOTING *PUTONGHUA* IN HONG KONG

### *5.1. Cultural-Political Basis for Promoting Putonghua*

Despite the difficulties in integrating Putonghua successfully into Hong Kong society, language policy makers still recognize the importance of Putonghua in Hong Kong's future and realize the significance of their decisions. The policy makers of the HKSAR base their decisions and efforts on two fundamental values of Putonghua. One is the cultural-political value and the other is the economic-pragmatic value.

On the cultural-political side, Hong Kong policy makers understand that Putonghua itself might bring a strong sense of Chinese ethnic and cultural consciousness to the population. The Syllabus of Putonghua for primary and secondary schools (Curriculum Development Council, 1997a, b) states that 'Putonghua subject teaching in Hong Kong aims to enhance students' language skills as well as to strengthen their sense of self-identity and sense of belonging to

the Chinese culture' (Authors' translation). Students' ethnic identity, or cultural-political identity, could be learned through the language of Putonghua. In this sense, some Hong Kong people would treat Putonghua as their 'mother-tongue' or 'mother country's tongue', symbolizing a belonging to the 'Chinese people' or 'citizenship of China'.

Although the cultural-political basis for Putonghua emerges as a significant consideration for Hong Kong policy makers, it is also necessary to mention the complications involved when making decisions based on the political sense of Hong Kong Chinese. The fact is that most Hong Kong Chinese are political and economic refugees or the descendants of these refugees coming from the metropolitan region of Guangzhou in Guangdong province or from the counties and villages in the Canton delta (Pierson, 1998). To the older refugees, the communist China used to be the source of their remembrance of sorrow. But to the younger generations who were born and raised in Hong Kong, socialist China is far away from them or means nothing to them but a place with limited political freedom and poorer living conditions. This could be one of the reasons for the political hesitation and uncertainty that characterized some people in the 1980s, when the British and PRC governments were negotiating and preparing the future of Hong Kong. After surviving a 13-year period of political disputes and confrontations, which had triggered off the alienation of local Chinese, distrust, and even hatred for the Beijing government, Hong Kong ended her colonial status by reunifying with the PRC. This political reunion has not solved the issue of Hong Kong people's political and cultural identity with the PRC. The situation of post-1997 Hong Kong is therefore similar to many new nations that would also find difficulties in trying to assimilate young people into national consciousness and loyalty to a nation, which to many young people is nothing but a name (Lee & Leung, 1999; Leung & Wong, 1997). In 2001, a survey on the cultural values of Hong Kong young people shown that only 18.6% young people identified themselves with 'people of China' and 8.9% preferred to be called by 'Hong Kong Chinese', while 54.3% young people believed they were 'Hong Kong people', not 'Chinese people' (*Sing Pao Daily News,* 1st October 2001).

With the above considerations, one might doubt whether there is a strong enough cultural identity or strong enough political patriotism to serve as a motive for Hong Kong people to learn Putonghua. Or alternatively, the case may be that the cultural-political and national identity sense of Hong Kong people need to be encouraged and cultivated by promoting Putonghua. Therefore, cultural-political values with regards to Putonghua are not clear-cut and can either serve as a goal for Putonghua popularization or a reason against Putonghua learning.

However, in spite of the complicated cultural-political situation, there is no doubt that promoting Putonghua is one of the political duties of the government of the HKSAR and, because of this, Putonghua education can nonetheless still be regarded as having a high cultural-political value in Hong Kong, which is an advantage for the spread of Putonghua. This value is strong enough for Hong Kong policy makers to continually attempt to create specific niches for Putonghua education in the post-colonial era. Whether or not these policies will ultimately make Putonghua as widespread in Hong Kong as it is in other parts of China is open to debate.

*5.2. The Economic-Pragmatic Basis for Promoting Putonghua*

China's 'open-door' policy has promoted and increased economic relationships between Hong Kong and the PRC. China's recent economic developments such as its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 have created a great need for Hong Kong people to learn Putonghua. On the pragmatic side, the increasing economic contact between Hong Kong and the PRC in the last two decades has made Hong Kong more dependent on the PRC. Using imports and exports as an example, from 1996 to 2001, imports to Hong Kong from most countries or territories had decreased, but imports from the PRC in 2001 increased by 19.57% over 1996. While re-exports to other countries or territories showed little change, the value of re-exports to the PRC was HK$496 billion in 2001, an increase of 18.86% over 1996. (Census & Statistics Department, 2001c) These significant economic factors suggest that knowledge of Putonghua has become more valuable in commercial life.

Another example for close relationship between Hong Kong and Mainland is the increasing tourism industry of Hong Kong. The number of Putonghua-speaking tourists and visitors from northern parts of the PRC has been increasing yearly. According to the report of Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), the surge of visitors in 2002 set a record of 16,566,382. Visitors from Mainland China were 41.2% of the total, reached 6,825,199, a remarkable 53.4% increase on the 2001 figure. For 2003, the HKTB is forecasting 7.86 million arrivals from the Mainland, a growth of 15.2% than 2002 (HKTB, 2003). This can be seen in Table 6 below:

*Table 6. Visitor arrival summary by country/territory of residence, 2001 and 2002*

| Country/Territory | Jan–Dec 2001. | | Jan–Dec 2002 | | % Growth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | |
| The Americas | 1,258,567 | 9.2 | 1,346,840 | 8.1 | + 7.0 |
| Europe, Africa and the Middle East | 1,171,386 | 8.5 | 1,263,115 | 7.6 | + 7.8 |
| Australia, N.Z. and S. Pacific | 386,750 | 2.8 | 410.196 | 2.5 | + 6.1 |
| North Asia | 1,762,270 | 12.8 | 1,852,458 | 11.2 | + 5.1 |
| South & Southeast Asia | 1,746,588 | 12.7 | 1,905,208 | 11.5 | + 9.1 |
| Taiwan | 2,418,827 | 17.6 | 2,428,776 | 14.7 | + 0.4 |
| Macau | 532,391 | 3.9 | 534,590 | 3.2 | + 0.4 |
| *Mainland China* | *4,448,583* | *32.4* | *6,825,199* | *41.2* | + *53.4* |
| TOTAL | 13,725,332 | 100.0 | 16,566,382 | 100.0 | + 20.7 |

Source: http://partnernet.hktourismboard.com.

Since 1997, Putonghua has also claimed territory in different areas of social life in Hong Kong. Radio and television programs in Putonghua have also brought Putonghua to all levels of civil life. Recently, as examples, two major public English television stations of Hong Kong, TVB and ATV, both expressed their wish to slash the number of English-language programmes they air and replace them with more shows in Putonghua. ATV plans to have Putonghua programmes represent 40% of the broadcasting hours on its World channel, and TVB has asked the broadcasting

authorities for permission to air Putonghua on their Pearl channel during the primetime hours of 7:00 pm to 11:00 pm. These two major English TV channels believe that they need to meet demand from Putonghua speakers and to cater to locals who wish to learn the language (*Leung,* 2002). Being thus encouraged by the context, a great economic-pragmatic niche for Putonghua has built up quickly in the Hong Kong community in the past few years.

Hence, it can be observed that two forces shape the future of Putonghua in Hong Kong: cultural-political values and economic-pragmatic values. The cultural-political values often shape the growth of Putonghua in Hong Kong through government policies, while the economic-pragmatic values often affect the future of Putonghua based on commercial and daily life need. These two forces need to be coordinated to establish the status of Putonghua in the multilingual situation of Hong Kong.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The influence of Putonghua has grown significantly since the transition of sovereignty in 1997. Policy makers have encouraged the integration of Putonghua into daily life through policies such as 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism' and 'mother-tongue teaching'. This, fuelled with an economic need, has lead Hong Kong people to adopt Putonghua very quickly in the past few years.

However, the future development of Putonghua in Hong Kong is difficult to predict at present, because first of all, it is very difficult to create policies that maintain a proper and feasible balance among the three official languages of Putonghua, English, and Cantonese. Implemented policies such as 'bi-literacy, tri-lingualism' and 'mother-tongue teaching' must inherently place restrictions on the balance of languages and the development of any single language; these policies have hence complicated the linguistic context in Hong Kong. Policies such as 'bi-literacy and tri-lingualism', which inherently suggest the hierarchy of languages, and 'mother-tongue teaching', which uses Cantonese to teach written Chinese, might actually cap the potential for Putonghua to further develop in Hong Kong.

These language policies in Hong Kong often reflect the cultural-political values of the people and government. The political reality is that language policy must be changed to acknowledge the replacement of sovereignty over Hong Kong: at least Putonghua needed to be recognized as an official language in Hong Kong. However, aside from the policy and cultural-political issues, there is also significant change in the economic-pragmatic context that has influenced, and will continue to influence, the development of Putonghua in Hong Kong.

The development of the PRC as an economic power, and the proximity of Hong Kong to the PRC have offered businesspeople opportunities to tap the PRC's resources and markets. Putonghua became the key to these business opportunities.

The second reason that the future of Putonghua in Hong Kong is hard to determine is that these economic-pragmatic values of Putonghua, the very ones that have lately greatly encouraged the spread of Putonghua in Hong Kong, may change. Arguably, economic-pragmatic values may have had, and may also will have, a

greater influence on the spread of Putonghua in Hong Kong, as they are more realistic than the cultural-political issues.

Despite its uncertain future, Putonghua has certainly had a significant impact on the linguistic context and educational structure of Hong Kong. It seems unlikely that Putonghua will disappear anytime soon from the educational landscape in Hong Kong as a Chinese territory. An appropriate way to handle the issue of Putonghua will remain a challenge for policy makers and educators to solve during the coming years. They will need to base their decisions on both the cultural-political values and the economic-pragmatic values of the language, one of which is hard to define, and the other subject to change. It will be a significant challenge for policy makers to create a niche for Putonghua education and for Putonghua in general in the future of Hong Kong.

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## 7. NOTE

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CLAIRE SAILLARD

# ON THE PROMOTION OF *PUTONGHUA* IN CHINA: HOW A STANDARD LANGUAGE BECOMES A VERNACULAR

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the 20th century, language policy in China has had a single aim: promotion of the national standard, called *Putonghua* (Mandarin Chinese) in the second half of the century (see Rohsenow and Guo, this volume). In this chapter, I start by discussing whether this aim has been reached. This will allow me to reflect on a seemingly paradoxical phenomenon related to the promotion of Putonghua, namely: vernacularization of the standard language.

The vernacularization process described here is not without precedent, even in the history of the Chinese language(s) (see Chen, 1999). Similarly, all languages which have undergone a geographical extension outside of their traditional territory, such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese etc., can be shown to have passed through a similar cycle: a first phase of spread, accompanied by linguistic simplification, followed by a geographical fragmentation phase, leading to larger scale variation, and finally a vernacularization phase. This last phase sometimes leads to the development of new and more complex features in language structures, independent of the norms of the original standard (or superstrate) language.

However divergent these new vernaculars get, they are nevertheless often regarded as variants of *one* language, as is the case with English.[1] The question is then twofold. On the one hand, regarding the function of the superstrate language, one can wonder how much the language is still able to function as a lingua franca. Regarding the vernacular varieties of the language on the other hand, one could ask what differentiates them functionally from the substrate topolects.[2]

In this chapter, I shall seek an answer to both questions by examining in some detail the status and functions of the national language, as well as those of the emerging vernaculars.

First of all, concerning the promotion process of Putonghua, I shall try to assess how much the national standard has really been accepted as a lingua franca by the speakers of other Chinese topolects, and what have been the major obstacles to its spread as such. Second, due to these obstacles, as well as geographical factors, I shall show how the spread of Putonghua appears to lead ultimately to the emergence of regional varieties of the standard language. It will be shown that this phenomenon

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takes place both at the formal and the functional levels. In this process, I shall base my work on two kinds of sources: published data concerning the mastering and use of Putonghua by Han Chinese and the current language policy, and interviews I conducted in 2000 with various education professionals in the Wenzhou area, Zhejiang Province.

## 2. PUTONGHUA AS A LINGUA FRANCA

### *2.1. Facts*

With Mandarin dialects being spoken by the majority of Chinese nationals (it is estimated that 70% of Han Chinese are Mandarin dialect speakers)[3], and Beijing the political capital, the choice of *Beijinghua* as a phonetic basis for Putonghua and Mandarin dialects at large as its lexical and syntactic bases has obvious advantages in terms not only of prestige, but more importantly, of the closeness of the imposed norm to the majority's topolects.

But despite its demographic and political assets, and despite an acknowledged breakthrough since the 1990s (see Guo, this volume), Putonghua does not seem to have encountered all the success that was originally hoped for. This does not really come as a surprise. In fact, when describing standard language teaching in pre-modern China, Chen writes:

> Even though basic education ensured a knowledge of the literary pronunciation of characters that was sufficient for literary purposes, this by no means guaranteed proficiency in Standard Spoken Chinese even at the most rudimentary level. In spite of the prestige associated with the national spoken standard, the average level of proficiency in the spoken standard was extremely low in southern dialect areas during the final years of the Qing dynasty, even among the privileged few who had access to education. (Chen, 1999, pp. 12–13)

One could, maybe by using slightly less dramatic terms, make a similar statement regarding the situation in China today. Of course, some studies about language use in China report rather positive figures on the spread of the standard language. But a more detailed analysis of those figures sometimes reveals some disquieting facts. For instance, in the following table, one cannot help notice that Putonghua speaking proficiency is much lower than comprehension skills, which means that in most cases, speakers have only a passive mastery of the standard language.

Table 2 on the next page shows clearly why the Chinese government has deemed it necessary to re-launch policies for the promotion of Putonghua as the national language several times since the 1950s (Chen, 1999, pp. 26–27; Guo, this volume). It should be mentioned here that, as shown by the interviews cited below in part 2.2, efforts to further promote *Putonghua* during the last decade are reported by education professionals to have had appreciable success. Nevertheless, language policy in favor of *Putonghua* is still the rule nowadays nationwide.

*Table 1. Percentage of population with comprehension and speaking proficiency in Putonghua*

| | | *Early 1950s* | *1984* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | Mandarin areas | 54 | 91 |
| | Other dialect areas | 11 | 77 |
| | Whole country | 41 | 90 |
| Speaking | Mandarin areas | not available | 54 |
| | Other dialect areas | not available | 40 |
| | Whole country | not available | 50 |

(After Wu R. and Yin B. 1984[4]: 37, quoted in Chen 1999: 28)

I shall try to explain in the next section how these facts, namely the necessity for renewed language policies intended to reinforce the learning and use of Putonghua as the national language, are linked to a number of factors. While some of them are already well-known (Chen, 1999; Norman, 1988, see below), others need to be elaborated and discussed.

### *2.2 Factors*

When commenting on the preceding facts, Chen (1999, pp. 28–30) cites several factors which may further or hinder the progress of Putonghua as a language used for national communication. These are the prestige of standard topolects at the regional level, the linguistic homogeneity of local topolects, the local economy, and the education level of speakers. For his part, Norman cites as relevant factors "remoteness of the locality from cultural and educational centers, social and official station of the speaker, and the degree to which any given individual is called upon to communicate with outsiders in his daily routine" (1988, p. 247). That these factors play a crucial role in the willingness of the people to use Putonghua or in establishing its desirability as a lingua franca is quite obvious and well-documented, and I shall not discuss these issues further here. However, it seems that other kinds of factors could be responsible for the arguably low level of achievement attained by a significant number of non-native speakers of Putonghua, even educated ones.

In 2000, while conducting a research project on the linguistic repertoires of Chinese immigrants in Paris (see Saillard and Boutet, 2001), I had the opportunity to meet various education professionals in Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province), teaching in the Wenzhou Normal Institute (dedicated to the education of prospective elementary school and junior-high school teachers), a professional high school in Wenzhou city, an "elite high school" (*zhongdian gaozhong*) in Li'ao (Wenzhou area), and several elementary schools in Wenzhou city and area.

From these interviews, it emerged that at least one factor directly linked to the teaching of Putonghua had to be considered, namely the prominence of pronunciation in the Chinese peoples' conception of language.

The standard language (as well, seemingly, as Chinese topolects in general) is conceived primarily as a standard *pronunciation.* As for syntax and the lexicon, they are related to written language, which is to say, literary writing. Strangely enough,

"modern written Chinese" is often considered universal at the meta-topolectal level, despite the fact that there still exists a writing tradition in some Chinese topolects, reflecting each topolect's specific syntactic structures and lexical peculiarity. Chao Yuen-Ren himself considered that the whole of Chinese topolects was homogeneous in terms of syntactic characteristics. That is why he practically neglected issues of syntax in his dialectology fieldwork, exploring only phonological issues (Li, 1988, p. 147).[5]

Such a conception of the Chinese languages, and especially Putonghua, evidently has consequences for language teaching. It entails that only the phonetic needs of Chinese topolect speakers are considered while they are taught Putonghua.[6]

In the Wenzhou area (especially outside Wenzhou city) where exposure to the national language before schooling is restricted to passive exposure through the media, language courses in primary schools aim primarily at the acquisition of standard pronunciation of Putonghua. For this aim, such devices as *Pinyin* reading and writing, character reading, character-to-Pinyin transcription, or Pinyin-to-character deciphering, and word reading are widely used through the six grades. This type of activity excludes teaching syntactic structures as the means of organizing discourse for communicative aims. As a result, despite several years of having been taught Putonghua and in Putonghua, [7] pupils are unable to use the standard language fluently in their everyday interactions until the fourth or fifth grade in the best of cases, as most of the interviewees report.

Conversely, in high-school, Chinese language teaching centers on literature, through the exclusive reading of literary texts. The aim of this teaching is to enrich the pupils' vocabulary and have them acquire a literary writing style referring broadly to classical Chinese. This means oral communication skills are not specifically developed at this stage either.

In terms of the acquisition not only of communication skills for non-native speakers but also of more straightforward pronunciation skills, such a way of teaching Putonghua is avowedly ineffective, as recent official endeavors have shown. For instance, in 1994, the State Language Commission, together with the State Education Commission and the Ministry of Radio and Television issued a joint document[8] in order to stipulate and regulate the establishment of an evaluation procedure for Putonghua language skills, the National Putonghua Proficiency Test, applying to primary and secondary school teachers, Normal Institutes teaching staff, as well as television and radio broadcasters, and entertainment professionals nationwide (see Guo, this volume). This test should ultimately apply to graduating students in Normal Institutes and other teachers' schools, whatever their specialization.

As can be seen by the list of individuals specified above, this test applies to highly educated persons (6 years in primary school, 6 more in secondary school, and 2 to 7 years in higher education, all officially using Putonghua as the teaching language). This amounts to acknowledging the fact that, in spite of all those years spent in studying the language and all other subject matters through the language, a significant number of individuals do not acquire sufficient Putonghua language skills.

As the description of the required language abilities shows (see full text in appendix), the emphasis is put on pronunciation skills, lexicon and syntax errors being considered only in the lowest levels of proficiency.

The document also exhibits a partition into three different levels of qualification (each of them further split in two degrees). This amounts to acknowledging that the "standard" cannot be enforced as an absolute norm, even among educated speakers.

Teaching staff and graduates of Normal Institutes/Schools should attain level 1, or if they fail to do so, they have to attain at least level 2. Language and literature teachers should attain a level of proficiency superior to teachers of other subject matters.

Teachers specialized in the phonetics of Putonghua, radio broadcasting, movie, television, theater and soundtrack professionals, as well as graduate students in these domains should attain the first degree of level 1, or else the second degree of level 1.

Although there is a level 3, it is not considered sufficient to work in the domains mentioned above. In other terms, one can conclude that some highly educated people who consider themselves speakers of Putonghua actually speak the standard language with characteristics described as "dialectal" by the National Putonghua Proficiency Test document, committing 20% to 40% "errors" according to this document.

This new testing procedure was not immediately ratified by all provinces of China. Due to the different Chinese topolects spoken in each province, and their greater or lesser similarity to the national standard, the Putonghua proficiency rates of the population (including teachers) vary greatly from north to south. Accordingly, some southern Provinces feel that they are being discriminated against by being compared with northern Provinces in terms of standard language proficiency. The Zhejiang Province, for instance, agreed to enforce the National Putonghua Proficiency Test only in 1997. In the Wenzhou Normal Institute, the exam was required for graduates in the year 1998. However, a comparable procedure had already been applied to graduating students in the Chinese language and literature Department for several years, although neither the objectives of the test nor its standards were clearly defined. According to the Normal Institute's Dean however, teaching methods have not evolved since the 1950s, since the special training classes created by the Institute to prepare their own students for the proficiency test aim essentially at the acquisition of a standard pronunciation of Putonghua.

According to a member of the National Putonghua Proficiency Test Enforcement Committee for Zhejiang, the proficiency exam should shortly be extended to all graduating university students in China. Such a policy can be interpreted as an official acknowledgement of the shortcomings of current language policy through education: whereas high-school graduates were heretofore expected to master Putonghua, testing of standard language proficiency is now about to be enforced in all higher education curricula, and, in some cases, teaching of Putonghua is to be continued in higher education.

## 3. PUTONGHUA: LINGUA FRANCA OR VERNACULAR?

As revealed by the error types described in the National Putonghua Proficiency Test document, characteristics of the standard language which differ the most from other Chinese topolects tend to be blurred by non-native speakers. These speakers adopt characteristics of their own mother tongue while speaking Putonghua (well-known instances are non-distinction of retroflex and non-retroflex apicals for all Southerners, and non-distinction of [n] and [1] or [f] and [hu] for many of them). There is indeed a phonetic pattern common to most varieties of "Southern speech," which is commonly described as a "dialectal accent" (*fangyan yudiao*). But the document also alludes to deviant uses at the phonetic, lexical and syntactic levels (*fangyin tezheng, fangyan ci, fangyan yufa),* describing them as "dialectal." The question is, do these particular language uses (or local variants) amount to forming "regional varieties" of Putonghua? Or, in technical terms, can we speak of "vernacularization" of Putonghua into distinct varieties?

Let us first recall how the sociolinguistic process called "vernacularization" operates. In his work on Creole formation, Manessy (1981) characterizes vernacularization (or "vernacular appropriation") as "functional expansion" of the language. Obviously, languages that are used as *lingue franche* only have a restricted set of social functions, whereas vernacular languages have to enable their speakers to cope with all their social needs.

Using the example of the evolution of French in Africa, Manessy further defines vernacularization mechanisms as "the effect produced by the operation of two complementary processes on a language variety: simplification of grammatical structures and compensatory elaboration of means of expression" (Manessy, 1981, p. 87).[9] In his work on African varieties of the French language, Wald describes two related phenomena that occur conjointly during vernacularization: "stabilization of certain features" and "elaboration of specific expressive means that produce forms of expression that may be assigned to more or less stable social aggregates" (Wald, 1990, p. 7).[10] Let us see how the linguistic and sociolinguistic phenomena pertaining to local variants of Putonghua fit these definitions.

### *3.1 Linguistic features specific to local variants of* Putonghua

Once again, the document defining the National Putonghua Proficiency Test proficiency levels is quite revealing as regards characteristics of local varieties of Putonghua. As mentioned before, the majority of "errors" described concerns phonetic/phonological phenomena. All are likely to result from interference between Putonghua and local Chinese topolects. Most of the phenomena described here lead to simplification of the phonological system and only very few to a more complex system.

A certain number of phonemic contrasts existing in standard Putonghua may be unconditionally neutralized in local variants of Putonghua: contrasts between palatal apicals (noted *zh, ch, sh* in Pinyin) and coronal apicals (*z, c, s*), between the coronal nasal final (*n*) and the velar nasal final (*ng*), between the coronal nasal (*n*) and the lateral (*l*) in initial position, between the labio-dental fricative (*f*) and the velar

fricative + posterior high rounded vowel (*hu*), between the coronal and palatal affricates (*z*, *zh* and *j*), between the plosive or non-plosive obstruents, between round and non-round high anterior vowels (*i* and *ü*). In the cases where this occurs, the result is a simplification of the phonological system of Putonghua.

In some local variants of Putonghua, the glides preceding the nuclear vowel in the syllable are not pronounced. This, again, is a case of phonological simplification compared with standard Putonghua (simplification of the syllabic structure).

In standard Putonghua, voiced obstruents or affricates do not exist. Some non-native speakers reinterpret part of Putonghua obstruents or affricates as voiced. This is an instance of complexification of the phonological system.

The document finally alludes to errors in terms of prosody (tone values, "dialectal accent"), and "dialectal" lexicon and grammar (*fangyan ci, fangyan yufa*).

Through the few publications describing lexical and syntactic differences between standard Putonghua and given Chinese topolects,[11] it appears that a certain number of grammatical characteristics are shared by most of Southern Chinese topolects. Chen (1999, pp. 91–93; 1993) writes that a few of them have progressively crept into modern written Chinese, as well as some lexical items, mainly from the Wu dialects. Whereas all the variants cited by Chen are now widely accepted in standard Chinese, there are many more colloquial structures that occur only locally and contribute to defining the specificity of regional varieties of Putonghua. Chen (1993, pp. 126–128), when citing "regional variations in lexical norms", describes differences between the "four Chinese communities" of mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

However, even within mainland China, variations do occur regionally. A few examples could be given of syntactic characteristics of Putonghua as spoken in the Wenzhou area, such as adverb position, position of ditransitive verb objects, etc. Other examples could include the use of the co-verb *gei* and the verbal complement particle *de* in the Guangzhou variety of Putonghua, etc. All these characteristics contribute to the definition of syntactic rules specific to local variants of Putonghua.

Therefore, in connection with Wald's definition of vernacularization, one could say that the local characteristics described here amount to "stabilization of certain features […] that produce forms of expression that may be assigned to more or less stable social aggregates," these being the various local linguistic communities. By using their local variant of Putonghua, speakers make themselves assignable by their hearers to a given linguistic community.

### *3.2. Linguistic functions of local variants of Putonghua*

According to Manessy (1981, p. 87), when a standard language limited by definition to normative uses "vernacularizes" (i.e. becomes a vernacular), its functions have to expand in order to encompass vernacular uses of language.

As a national language, Putonghua was designed for specific functions, such as uses in official settings, in education, at work, and for inter-group communication.[12] As Wang (1990, p. 32) states, "promoting Putonghua does not necessarily mean eliminating dialects […]; it only means requiring that Putonghua be used in public

settings, while conducting public affairs (including teaching, acting, working in offices, directing traffic, indicating bus stations, working in services, etc.)".[13]

As regards functions of languages, T'sou (1983, 1984) describes the sociolinguistic situation in contemporary China as a "triglossia" with three levels of languages: Low (dialects of regional Chinese standards), High (regional Chinese standards)[14] and Superior (Standard Chinese, i.e. Putonghua). These three levels of language are reported to have a functional breakdown in the 1980s as shown in Table 2.

*Table 2. Language use in contemporary China*

| *Domain* | *L* | *H* | *S* |
|---|---|---|---|
| At home, with family | + | | |
| Popular literature | + | | |
| Dealings with salespersons | + | | |
| Dealings with servants, waiters, minor civil servants | + | | (+) |
| Basic education | (+) | | + |
| Secondary education | | | + |
| University lessons | | (+) | + |
| Opera | | (+) | + |
| Official dealings with provincial government | | | + |
| Dealings with national government | | | + |
| Relationships with visitors from other areas | | (+) | + |
| News broadcasting | | (+) | + |
| Poetry | | | + |
| Letter writing | | | + |

(After T'sou 1984: 78–79)

In order to show that the regional varieties of Putonghua described above amount to vernacularized varieties of Putonghua, I would like to claim that they have expanded their functions in the last twenty years to encompass some of those formerly associated with L and H languages in non-Mandarin speaking areas. Unfortunately, I know of no large-scale sociolinguistic study allowing me to make such a claim. But some punctual but repeated observations in large or medium urban areas tend to indicate that there a certain amount of functional expansion could be happening at least in those areas (see Blum, this volume, about the existence of a vernacular variety of Putonghua called *MaPu* in Yunnan).

Let us once again take the Wenzhou area as an example. Here it is necessary to distinguish between Wenzhou City itself and the surrounding Wenzhou area. Whereas in the Wenzhou area, uses of Putonghua are reported to be quite scarce, the national standard seems to have expanded functionally in the city. First of all, with the establishment of kindergartens in Wenzhou city, young urban children are exposed to the language much earlier than their rural counterparts. As a result, they

are reported to use Putonghua before actual schooling takes place, especially in the family domain with which *Wenzhouhua* (a member of the *Wu* dialect family) was traditionally associated. Another domain exhibits a shift in language use: radio broadcasting in *Wenzhouhua* tends to disappear. While the topolect is still used in programs aimed at "remote" and elderly rural listeners, it has been totally replaced by Putonghua in other programs. Thus, Putonghua has expanded its functions in the information and entertainment domains.[15] Finally, Putonghua made its entry in the professional domain in the 1980s. The Wenzhou area, being economically dynamic, attracted a number of workers from other areas (mainly from the Jiangsu, Anhui and Sichuan provinces). These workers do not learn the local language but speak Putonghua with their employers and the public in commercial exchanges. Thus, Wenzhou residents themselves are more exposed to the use of Putonghua in the professional domain as well as in their everyday social life.

Therefore, in some urban areas at least, local variants of Putonghua have undergone a certain functional extension, which amounts to saying that Putonghua has indeed started a process of vernacularization into local varieties.

The contrast between urban and rural zones shows that vernacularization can take place only where spread is already an established fact.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a number of facts related to language policy in China were examined. The promotion of Putonghua, aiming to extend the standard national language's functions geographically and socially, has had seemingly paradoxical results. Not only is promotion incomplete after several decades, but this same process of language spread has given birth to local varieties of Putonghua used among speakers of other Chinese topolects. It appears that some of those local varieties of the standard could ultimately change into new vernacular languages. In the introduction, I alluded to the existence of similar developments among "global" languages. In the case of the historical development of languages spreading across continents, such as English, geographical, economic and political factors led to scarcity of communication between speakers of different communities on the one hand, and increase of communication between members of the newly constituted communities on the other hand, which fully explains linguistic fragmentation and the development of new features in local varieties of language. However, I believe that it is highly unlikely that this phenomenon was expected by Chinese reformers as they tried to provide the Chinese nation with a common language.

One could ask whether these emerging vernacular varieties of Putonghua are likely to last and to be transmitted to younger generations, or whether they are rather similar to the approximation phase evidenced for individuals learning a foreign language, and therefore likely to disappear with the current generation of speakers. One important key towards an answer is that vernacular varieties of Putonghua are not idiomatic (whereas foreign language learners' approximations are), but shared by linguistic communities. As such, they stand as local social norms, and are likely to be passed on to children. But we can also turn toward creole studies for another

partial answer. Creole studies have demonstrated the existence of "creole continua", through which decreolization occurs (Holm, 1988, p. 52), attracting local creole varieties towards the standard acrolect. This process typically occurs when the acrolect is socially valued by, and accessible to, speakers of the creole. Therefore, local varieties of Putonghua may be attracted by two opposite poles: local identity values leading to the maintenance of the local vernacular, and national identity values calling for a better approximation of the standard. Thus, the question of the possible maintenance of vernacular varieties of Putonghua should find its answer in the balance between local and national identification needs of speakers.

More importantly, if it is confirmed, the rise of new vernaculars stemming from the national standard is bound to have consequences on language ecology in China.

Let us first consider the role of Putonghua. How much linguistic variation is acceptable, if regional varieties of Putonghua still have to play the role of a lingua franca, to be spoken and understood nationwide? The current situation in which there already exists a certain amount of phonetic, lexical and syntactic variation seems to work satisfactorily at the functional level, if not at the political one (as shown by renewed language policies over the past few decades). But one cannot exclude a natural process of growing dissimilarity between the local varieties of Putonghua in the coming decades, unless the increase of mass mobility resulting from economic factors (and thus a more powerful trend to national identification) prevents the fossilization of local varieties. Thus, linguists need to describe local varieties of Putonghua and their evolution more thoroughly.

Even if this vernacularization process does not really endanger the function of Putonghua as a lingua franca, it may yield serious consequences for Chinese topolects. As pointed out by Ferguson (1959) and his successors, a diglossic – or triglossic, as would be the case here – situation is viable only if there is a functional repartition between languages. Thus, if vernacular varieties of Putonghua fossilized, they would be in direct competition with Chinese topolects at the functional level. Therefore, the viability of topolects could be seriously endangered. For the speakers, the choice between local Putonghua and topolect as a vernacular language would depend on a number of sociolinguistic factors, such as language prestige, group identification, group vitality, language access, social mobility, and so forth. Consequences of the vernacularization of Putonghua on the vitality of Chinese topolects remain to be systematically explored. One cannot exclude a certain amount of linguistic convergence between local varieties of Putonghua and topolects in the coming decades. This is already the case with many Chinese topolects, who adopt large amounts of lexical items borrowed from Putonghua (usually, items related to science, technology, politics, education…), as well as syntactic structures.[16]

In conclusion, it now seems obvious that we need more data, both at the descriptive level (linguistic descriptions of local varieties of Putonghua and of competing local topolects) and at the sociolinguistic level (functions of competing languages, language vitality, language convergence). Only with these data will it be possible to ascertain the role of Putonghua in China in the near future.

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## 6. NOTES

[1] See the collection of articles in Watts and Trudgill (2002) for an in-depth discussion of the status of the non-standard, non-British and non-American varieties of English.

[2] In this chapter, I chose to use the word "vernaculars'" to designate local varieties of Putonghua used in daily interactions when and where Putonghua is socially appropriate, and distinct from topolects. I will use the words "dialect" and "topolect" with a functional distinction, although both correspond to the term *fangyan* in Chinese. I will use the terra "dialect" to refer to a language variety when I want to emphasize that it belongs to a certain language family (as in the expression "the Mandarin dialects"), even though the dialects of this family may not all be mutually intelligible. I will use the term "topolect" to refer to a non-standard, non-official, locally restricted language variety, when only these characteristics are relevant.

[3] Norman, 1988, pp. 181–8

[4] Wu R. and Yin B. (1984). Putonghua shehui diaocha [A social survey of Putonghua], *Wenzi gaige, 11,* 37–38.

[5] Many other authors make similar statements. For instance, Tai (1988, p. 186) writes: "Han Chinese speak a great variety of mutually unintelligible dialects [...] They are similar in grammar, and, to a lesser extent, in vocabulary, but very different in pronunciation".

[6] Recent language policy in Hong Kong reveals the same trend. For instance, in their research paper on Chinese language teachers' proficiency in Putonghua in Hong Kong, Cheung and Ho (1996) list as the "four major aspects or teachers' abilities in Putonghua": "articulation, listening ability, phonetic notation, and recitation". No mention is made of lexicon or syntactic structures.

[7] Note that, whereas Putonghua is the only authorized teaching language for the Han ethnic group, it is reportedly rarely used as such in areas where the first language of pupils and teachers is another Chinese topolect. In these areas, the only schools where Putonghua seems to be the sole teaching language are senior high schools in urban neighborhoods. This can be explained by the fact that, given the smaller number of senior high schools (compared to junior ones) and their concentration in urban centres, there is more linguistic heterogeneity among the staff and pupils. In such multilingual settings, Putonghua is necessarily the sole language used for teaching.

[8] The text of this document is quoted in Fu and Yin, 1998, pp. 463–6, and part of it is translated in appendix. See also Guo, this volume, for further comments on this policy.

[9] My translation.

[10] My translation.

[11] For instance, Fu and Yin (1998) for the Zhejiang dialect families, Li (1988) and Tsao (1988) for Taiwanese Hokkien (*Minnanyu*).

[12] Interestingly enough, Chen (1993, p. 508) remarks that only in 1982 is it officially stipulated in the Constitution that Putonghua is to be promoted across China.

[13] My translation. But see also the following contradictory statement by Tai (1988, p. 199): "[…] the ultimate goal of the promotionof Putonghua involves the elimination of Han Chinese dialects […]".

[14] To make this distinction clear, we could say for instance that among the *Wu* dialect family, "L" languages would be *Wenzhouhua, Ningbohua, Shaoxinghua* etc., while the "H" language would be *Shanghaihua,* a regional standard.

[15] Note that, when local television appeared in Wenzhou in the late 1980s, the current language policy prevented any local language broadcasting. Thus, all the Wenzhou television channels broadcast exclusively in Putonghua.

[16] See Li (1988) for examples of such phenomena in Taiwanese *Minnanhua* verb phrases.

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## 8. APPENDIX

Description of levels and proficiency degrees as measured by the National *Putonghua* Proficiency Test (translated and adapted from Fu and Yin, 1998, pp. 467–8)

**Level 1:**
*First degree:* when reading and discussing freely, pronunciation is standard, lexicon and grammar are correct and without mistake, tone is natural, expression is easy. Test error rate does not exceed 3% on the whole.
*Second degree*: when reading and discussing freely, and pronunciation is standard, lexicon and grammar are correct and without mistake, tone is natural, expression is easy. Some pronunciation errors (phonemes and tones) occur. Test error rate does not exceed 8% on the whole.

**Level 2:**
*First degree:* when reading and discussing freely, pronunciation (initials, finals, tones) is generally standard, tone is natural, expression is easy. A few difficult sounds (distinction between retroflex and non-retroflex consonants, anterior and posterior nasals finals, nasals and laterals) are occasionally badly articulated. Lexicon and grammar errors are very few. Test error rate does not exceed 13% on the whole.
*Second degree:* when reading and discussing freely, some tones are not standard, certain initials or finals are articulated incorrectly. For many difficult sounds (distinction between retroflex and non-retroflex consonants, anterior and posterior nasals finals, nasals and laterals, *fu* and *hu, z, zh* and *j,* plosive or non-plosive obstruents, i and ü; unmotivated voiced obstruents or affricates, loss of semi-vowels, simplification of complex initials, etc.), errors are quite frequent. Dialectal accent is not too audible. There is occasional use of dialectal words and grammatical structures. Test error rate does not exceed 20% on the whole.

**Level 3**
*First degree:* when reading and discussing freely, pronunciation errors in initials and finals are fairly numerous; incorrectly articulated sounds exceed the usually identified difficult sounds; most of the tones are wrongly pronounced. Dialectal accent is clearly audible. Lexical and grammatical errors are committed. Test error rate does not exceed 30% on the whole.
*Second degree:* when reading and discussing freely, pronunciation errors in initials and finals are numerous; characteristics of dialectal pronunciation are clearly observable. Dialectal accent is marked. Lexical and grammatical errors are quite numerous. Discourse is not fully intelligible to someone with a different geographical origin. Test error rate does not exceed 40% on the whole.

# PART III: THEORIZING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES FROM THE PRACTICE

HONGKAI SUN

# THEORIZING OVER 40 YEARS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MINORITY WRITING SYSTEMS OF CHINA

## 1. THE BACKGROUND

The 55 officially recognized minority groups use over 120 different languages in the People's Republic of China (PRC). In the semi-feudal and semi-colonial situation of dynastic China, the minority groups did not have political recognition. They suffered discrimination, and were undeveloped both economically and educationally. They lived in extremely impoverished conditions. Only a few minority peoples had writing systems, many of which were mainly used in religion, with very few being used in education. The majority of ethnic minorities either did not have scripts or had incomplete writing systems. With a literacy rate of less than 5%, many groups could only record events by carving wood, knotting string, or counting beans.

The founding of the PRC marked the end of ethnic oppression and discrimination, ushering in a new era of unity, harmony, and equality among ethnic groups as well as equality for all languages. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and PRC government formulated a series of guiding policies to protect the equal rights of minority peoples. These included the establishment of policies for minority languages and writing systems, in order to protect their use and to aid the cultural and educational development of minority peoples.

After the founding of the PRC, the Central Government was determined to acquire a thorough understanding of the political, economic, and cultural needs of the minority peoples. They sent out delegations on many occasions into all the minority regions of China, expressing their concern for the needs of the peoples. They conducted research into the local situations, and solicited opinions from the minorities themselves. One of the pressing requests from the minorities was a desire for the Central Government to create writing systems for groups without writing systems for their languages, in order to help in their cultural and educational development. Some ethnic minorities presented these central delegations with banners which had no writing on them, as powerful symbols of their urgent desire to have their own scripts.

*M. Zhou (ed), Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949.* 179–199.
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Therefore, the creation of writing systems for ethnic minorities without them became a basic national policy for the PRC. This was a very important step towards the realization of ethnic unity, as well as essential to the development of minority areas and the promotion of minority education. Because of this, the Government attached great importance to the implementation of this policy. In February 1951, the Central People's Government made six important decisions regarding minority work. The fifth of these decisions pointed out, "a Steering Committee for Minority Language and Writing Research are to be established within the Commission for Culture and Education of the State Council (the cabinet). The Steering Committee will be responsible for directing and organizing research into minority languages and writing, including the creation of writing systems for those without any, as well as substantiating the orthographies of ethnic groups with incomplete systems." (China, 1996; p. 429). In May 1954, the Steering Committee and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission submitted a report to the Central Government, which was entitled *A Report of the Issues involved in the Creation of Writing Systems for Minority Groups without Written Languages.* This report stated:

> Over the past few years, there has been considerable political, economic, and cultural development among the minority peoples, and minorities without writing systems or without systems in common use urgently require the creation of orthographies for their languages. In order to do this, basic principles for dealing with these issues must first be determined. (China, 1958, p. 101)

After analysing seven basic situations related to the use of languages and writing among the minority peoples, the report concluded:

> According to the above analysis, the following conclusion can be drawn: for those groups without writing systems or without systems in common use: [we] will assist them in the gradual development of phonetic writing systems or in helping them to choose appropriate systems which are already in existence. This process must take into account the wishes and choices of the minority peoples themselves, and should commence only after a period of research and investigation. (China, 1958, pp. 101–102)

The report also stated:

> The forms of the letters to be used for the creation of phonetic alphabets for the minorities should, at present, be based on the Roman alphabet for trial use and as symbols for transcription, with future changes if necessary. This decision is based on the advantages of the Roman alphabet over the current Chinese phonetic notation, before the implementation of the Chinese *Pinyin* system. (China, 1958, p. 102)

In the same month, this document was discussed and approved by the 217th Meeting of the State Council, whose official reply to the report was as follows:

> [We] hereby instruct the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission to carefully scrutinize the methods proposed by the report with regard to assisting minority peoples with no orthographies in the creation of writing systems, and then to draw up plans for gradual implementation in one or two minority groups. The situation should be subject to continuous review and the experiences in the process summarized, in order to prove that these methods are indeed feasible as borne out by practical implementation. When other conditions are ripe, the same process can gradually be implemented in other minority groups. (China, 1958, p. 103)

At the same time, the Government invested much manpower, as well as material and financial resources into developing investigation and research of minority languages. A lot of preparatory work was done towards the creation of minority writing systems. This work included the establishment of institutions and working teams, as well as the training of skilled personnel to conduct minority language research. Since 1956, based on much research which had been done on minority languages and writing, many different kinds of academic symposia focusing on minority languages were held in provinces such as Guangxi, Hainan, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan. The opinions of the minorities themselves and of people from different sectors of society towards the project were solicited. By the end of 1958, 14 new proposals for writing systems for 11 ethnic minorities were approved. These minorities were the Zhuang, Bouyei, Dong, Li, Miao (3), Hani (2), Lisu, Naxi, Zaiwa, Va, and Yi peoples (For details, see Table 1 in Q. Zhou, this volume). More than one proposal was necessary for the Miao and Hani peoples as there were considerable dialectal differences within their languages. These proposals were described in a report titled *Notification by the State Council of the Procedures for the Approval of and Division of Labor for Experimental Implementation of the Projects for the Creation and Improvement of Minority Writing Systems.* This report was examined and approved by the relevant Government authorities. On December 10, 1957, the Zhuang script was formally approved by the State Council as the official writing system of the Zhuang people. The remaining 13 scripts were approved for trial use by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Since the implementation of the policies of reform and the opening up of China's doors to the outside world, other minority peoples have expressed their desire for the creation of writing systems for their languages, including the Monguor in Qinghai and the Qiang in Sichuan. Based on the results of investigations and research into these languages, workers on minority languages were able to create phonetic scripts based on the Roman alphabet for these peoples. These scripts were approved by the provincial governments, and were submitted to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. In addition, phonetic symbols were created for other minority peoples, so that their languages can be transcribed and read, a step towards solving the problem of bilingual education. These peoples included the Bai, Yao, Tujia, and Derung peoples. To date, most of the above scripts and phonetic symbols are still being used within certain domains, and their creation has contributed greatly to cultural development in minority areas, raising the educational level of minority peoples. Therefore, these newly-created scripts have been very beneficial for the minorities and have been welcomed and accepted by the minority peoples themselves.

In addition to the creation of new writing systems, the Government also assisted in improving existing scripts for the Jingpo, Lahu, Dai (2 types), and Yi peoples. The Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak, Korean, Kirghiz, and Xibe peoples already have their own writing systems. Therefore, there are now over 30 kinds of minority writing systems in use in China, with over 90% of the minority population having their own scripts. A few minorities which have smaller populations have chosen to use Chinese or the writing systems of neighboring ethnic groups: these include the Monba and Lhoba peoples in Tibet who use Tibetan; the Tatar and Uzbek peoples in

Xinjiang who use Uygur; and the Daur people in Inner Mongolia who use Mongolian. Many other minorities have requested the use of Chinese, including the She, Gelao, Maonan, Gin, Jinuo, and Pumi peoples.

With the above as the background, I will first provide a general picture of the theory and practice behind the creation and development of writing systems for minority languages in China, then examine the specific case of the Qiang writing system, thirdly theorize nearly fifty years of personal experience in minority language work, and conclude this chapter with the challenges China's minority language workers and planners face in the twenty-first century.

## 2. THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Constitution of the PRC stipulates that all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own languages. This is the general State policy towards minority languages and writing systems. The minority language work which is carried out by the Chinese government has the following goals:

(1) *Implementation of the principles of ethnic equality and linguistic equality.* This ensures the protection of the general policy stated in the Constitution by legislation, with thorough practical implementation. In this way, the historical vestiges of discrimination towards minority languages with restriction of their use can be thoroughly erased.

(2) *Continuous development of minority languages and writing through use.* Standardization and improvement are essential components of development, enabling minority languages and writing to contribute to social progress, scientific and technological development, as well as educational and cultural development in minority areas. This in turn will assist in the modern socialist reconstruction of China as a whole.

(3) *Based on the principle of free choice, encouragement of minority peoples to learn the common national language, Putonghua.* While protecting the full use and development of minority languages and writing, minority peoples are also encouraged to learn Putonghua, the common national language, as well as Chinese writing. This will increase mutual understanding and promote national unity, as well as being beneficial for the development of the minorities themselves.

The formulation of a uniform language development policy for all the minority peoples is fraught with difficulties because the following factors vary among different groups and their interactions are complex: length of historical development of their scripts; amount of written literature; degree of standardisation of the writing systems; usage situation and domains of the languages; degree of dialectal differences; living conditions; number of speakers; surrounding environment; as well as mental attitudes and psychological constitutions. Therefore, the relevant authorities in charge of minority languages and writing must adhere to the principle of case- and situation-specific implementation. This means that the authorities must

take into account the actual situations in different minority autonomous areas, and formulate appropriate management plans and strategies, with the State offering overall monitoring and guidance.

In recent years, work on minority languages and writing has laid emphasis on the following tasks:

(1) *Comprehensive investigation of the usage situation of minority languages and writing.* This will provide a foundation for the formulation of minority language policies in the coming years. During the early years of the founding of the PRC, the State had organised large-scale investigations of minority languages, but the emphasis was on linguistic structure. After the implementation of the policies of reform and the opening up of China's doors to the outside world, the usage situation of minority languages has undergone some changes. Since the period of the 8th Five-Year Plan (1990–1995), in order to ascertain the situation after these changes, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences undertook a joint project entitled *Investigation and Research into the Usage Situation of Minority Languages and Issues concerning their Writing Systems.* This project involved investigation of the usage situation of over 80 minority languages and over 30 writing systems in the 5 Autonomous Regions, 30 Autonomous Prefectures, and 113 Autonomous Counties (Banners) of China. Over 1,000 locations were investigated and over 10,000 data points were collected. This project was designated a key item in national ethnic studies, with its completion resulting in the publication of three specialist volumes entitled *Usage Situation of the Minority Languages of China, Writing Systems of the Minority Peoples of China,* and *Issues in the Use and Development of Minority Languages and Writing in China.* In addition, a report entitled *Discussion of Issues pertaining to the Use and Development of Minority Languages and Writing in China* was also submitted for the perusal of government leaders.

(2) *Formulation of guidelines for minority language work during the coming years.* Based on findings during investigations in the late 1980s and the objective needs of minority areas, the State confirmed the following guiding principles and basic goals for minority language work in the long-term: adherence to Marxist principles for the equality of minority languages and writing, thus safeguarding the freedom of minority peoples to use and develop their own languages and writing. This will also be beneficial to ethnic unity, progress, and mutual prosperity. Implementation of minority language work should be case- and situation-specific, and should promote political, economic, and cultural development in minority areas. This will in turn assist in the modern socialist reconstruction of China as a whole.

The principal tasks of minority language work in the coming years are the following: thorough implementation of the minority language policies of the Party and State; strengthening the formulation of minority language legislation; propagation of Marxist theories and policies concerning minority languages and writing; standardisation and information processing for minority languages; promoting translation, publication, education, broadcasting, and archiving for minority languages; increasing academic research of minority languages; fostering cooperation and academic exchanges; training skilled personnel; and encouraging minority peoples to learn their own languages and writing.

In order to put the above guiding principles on minority language work into practice, a Working Conference for Minority Language Work in China was convened by the State Ethnic Commission in Beijing in the winter of 1991. Delegates included over 150 minority representatives from 22 provinces, cities, and autonomous regions of China, as well as representatives from the relevant ministries of the State Council and departments of the Central Committee of the CCP. Conference delegates acknowledged that considerable achievements had been made in minority language work since 1949, and there were enthusiastic discussions concerning the future guiding principles, tasks, and major strategies for minority language work. As China is a united socialist country consisting of many different ethnic groups, successful implementation of minority language work is essential towards the consolidation of ethnic equality, unity, and mutual prosperity. The need of minority peoples to use and develop their own languages and writing is a practical reality. While minority languages and writing systems will coexist and develop in tandem with Chinese for the foreseeable future, they have unique roles within their own usage domains. Based on the principles of ethnic and linguistic equality, and the actual situation in China, the Party and State have formulated minority language policies which are distinctively suited to this country. These policies can promote the development of minority language work, which in turn can lead to cultural development and economic prosperity in minority areas.

(3) *Summary of the work in the 1950s with regard to the creation and improvement of minority writing systems.* Among the 14 writing systems created in the 1950s as well as other improved minority orthographies, apart from Zhuang and standardized Liangshan Yi, which were approved as official scripts by the State Council, the other minority scripts were all for trial use only. It is therefore necessary to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the usage situation of these writing systems, and to ascertain any problems which have been encountered over the past 40 or so years. A document from the State Council pointed out:

> With regard to writing systems which were created or improved during the 1950s, if trial results were good and the scripts welcomed by the minority peoples, the writing systems should be submitted to the relevant government departments according to stipulated procedures. For those where results have been less than ideal, detailed reports must be made in order to improve and perfect the scripts. For those which have not been accepted by most people, the wishes of the minorities themselves must be respected and use of the scripts must not be forcibly implemented." (China, 1997, p. 710)

Therefore, based on the guidelines laid down by the State Council and the practical needs of the minority groups, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences cooperated in a joint key project for ethnic studies during the period of the 8th Five-Year Plan. This project was entitled *Summary of the Results of and a Theoretical Discussion of the Trial Implementation of Minority Writing Systems Created and Improved since 1949.* This report showed that the majority of minority scripts were welcomed by the people themselves, including Dehong Dai, Jingpo, Zaiwa, Hani, Lahu, Va, Chuanqiandian Miao, Dong, Bouyei, Qiandong Miao, and Xiangxi Miao. For other scripts such as Naxi, Diandongbei Miao, Lisu, and Li, the individual circumstances

governing their use varied, and further investigations are necessary to decide whether they should continue to be used on a trial basis.

Over the past 40 years, much important experience has been gained in dealing with the provision of writing systems for those groups which had languages but no scripts of their own. These precious experiences are an integral component for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and are an important aspect of the resolution of ethnic issues in a multi-ethnic socialist state. Through a comprehensive overview of the work concerning the creation and improvement of minority writing systems, we have the opportunity to conduct systematic analysis of it. In this way, the experiences gained can lead to the formulation of theoretical bases for the supervision of language work in the future.

(4) *Research into the standardization of minority languages and writing systems.* This is an important task in the use and development of minority scripts, especially the standardization of existing writing systems. Take Tibetan writing as an example: Tibetan writing was created in the 7th century and although it has been subjected to several revisions in the past, there are still serious discrepancies between writing and oral speech. This has resulted in the inconsistent use of Tibetan writing in different dialectal areas. With this in mind, the Government established the Organization for the Examination of Tibetan Teaching Materials over Five Provinces and Regions (for details, see M. C. Zhou, this volume). Several meetings were held around the themes of producing consistent teaching materials and the exploration of certain questions concerning standardization of the Tibetan language. Another example is Korean, for which the Collaborative Office for Work on Korean Language and Writing in the Three Northeastern Provinces was set up. A specialist working party was convened, where a *Plan for Standardization of the Korean Language* was established, and *Principles for Standardization of Technical Terms in Korean* were discussed (for details, see Tai, this volume). This was an attempt to solve some of the issues surrounding the standardisation of Korean writing and new technical vocabulary.

For newly-created writing systems, although the basic dialects and standard pronunciation have been determined, and standardized dictionaries have been published, standardization of new technical vocabulary remains an important problem. As the Working Committee for Minority Languages and Writing in Yunnan stated in their foreword to a new dictionary of technical terms which they were editing:

> At present, there are some pressing problems in the management of new technical terms for the minority languages of Yunnan, such as: inaccurate representation of word meanings; inconsistent phonetic transcriptions; inconsistent writing; the appearance of a single term in many different forms; and partial understanding of new lexical items leading to deviation from the true meanings of the terms. Many new terms lacked accuracy, consistency, and popularisation, thus affecting the full use of the minority languages and writing concerned. These problems are detrimental to the healthy development of minority languages and writing." (Yunnan, 1991, p. 2)

Therefore, the Working Committee edited and published many different kinds of dictionaries for technical terms, making a considerable contribution to the

standardization of such terms and assisting in the healthy development of minority languages.

(5) *Research into the standardisation of and information processing in minority languages.* In order to accommodate the needs of modern information exchange and scientific and technological development, much research has been done in the past few years in the Romanization of minority place names, ethnonyms, and names of newspapers and periodicals, as well as information processing for minority writing systems on the computer. Since 1991, the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences has conducted research into a combined information processing system for many different scripts. This project was funded by the State Social Sciences Foundation, and included many different writing systems which employed non-Roman scripts or unconventional Roman alphabets, including Mongolian (Manchu), Tibetan, Xishuangbanna Dai and Dehong Dai, standardized Liangshan Yi, Uygur (Kazak, Kirghiz), and Lisu. This combined system included Chinese and English and was successfully completed and authenticated by the Academy in 1994. During this same period, many minority areas also conducted their own research into information processing systems for their writing systems, with many being in practical use. In order to enable the minority writing systems of China to be listed within the international multi-octet character set (also known as IS 10646), the State Ethnic Affairs Commission established a specialist working group in 1993 to conduct research into standard character sets for Mongolian, Tibetan, Yi, Xishuangbanna Dai, and Dehong Dai. After several rounds of reviews, these were submitted to the international ISO/IECJTC1/WG2 organization. In addition, suggestions for modifications to the IS 10646 set for Arabic script were submitted, owing to the distinctive features of Uygur, Kazak, and Kirgiz. At the WG2 conference which was held in Finland in June 1995, the IS 10646 set for Tibetan which was proposed by China was approved, with research and revisions to the other scripts being in progress.

In order to further the work of standardization of technical vocabulary, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the All-China Technical Committee for Standardization of Technical Terms undertook a joint investigation of the work on technical terms among minority languages in minority areas. In 1994, the All-China Working Conference for the Standardization of Technical Terms in Minority Languages was convened in Chongqing, and a Special Sub-Committee of the All-China Technical Committee for Standardization of Technical Terms was established in Beijing in June 1995. Separate Working Committees for different minority languages were set up under this Sub-Committee, with the Mongolian branch being established in Hohhot in August; other branches for Tibetan, Korean, and minority languages in Xinjiang (including Uygur, Kazak, and Kirgiz) have also been set up in recent years. In July 1998, the All-China Congress for Modernization of Minority Languages and Writing was held in Beijing. Over 60 delegates attended the meeting, including experts on information processing from different provinces, cities, and autonomous regions in China, as well as leaders from relevant government departments. Delegates held in-depth discussions of the different problems involved in the standardization of minority languages and writing, basic research into information processing, and the development of relevant software. This was an

important event in the development of work on standardization and information processing among minority languages.

Speech analysis and synthesis of minority languages are research projects which have only been commenced in recent years. Although its development occurred fairly late, the intermediate results are already very pleasing. Funded by the State Natural Sciences Foundation, the Institute of Ethnic Studies started research into speech analysis and synthesis of Lhasa Tibetan, establishing a database of acoustic parameters for the Lhasa Tibetan phonological system which had 30 special features. Preliminary trials for speech synthesis have also been held. At present, synthesis for single words is already successful, with work on the synthesis of multi-syllabic words and sentences in progress. In addition, analysis of other languages such as Uygur, Kazak, and Mongolian has also been successful, laying the foundation for future work on speech synthesis.

(6) *Research on legislation for minority languages and writing.* In 1991, Document No. 32 of the State Council clearly stated that legislation for minority languages and writing must be established. After this, an official from the State Ethnic Affairs Commission published a long article in the linguistic journal *Minzu Yuwen* (Minority Languages), outlining the necessity and urgency of establishing legislation for minority languages and writing, as well as stating the guiding principles for this legislation. He felt that, like other kinds of work, minority language work could not simply be managed by administrative measures, but had to be protected by legislation. Therefore, establishing legislation for minority language work was not only necessary, but pressing. He stated:

> Over the past 40 years, the Party and State have formulated a series of guiding principles and regulations regarding minority languages and writing, which have been written into the Constitution and the legislation for minority autonomous regions. This is the legislative basis for the development of minority language work. However, specific legislation for minority languages and writing has still not been formulated as yet. To date, such work has progressed at the discretion of individual managers, so that it is often difficult to ensure the stability and continuity of such work. This situation is incompatible with the special status and role of minority language work in China." . . . "We will strengthen legislation for minority languages, striving to formulate a series of special legislation which will be compatible with China's national situation, the needs of a socialist society, and the desires of the ethnic minorities themselves, and which will be beneficial towards national unity, progress, and prosperity. This will enable the use and management of minority language work to be brought into formal legislative channels. (Wu, 1992, p. 6).

In practice, over ten minority autonomous areas have already formulated regulations for the management of minority language work which are appropriate to specific minority areas. These serve to protect and promote the successful development of minority language work in those regions. The State Ethnic Affairs Commission has already established management and supervisory teams, and preliminary drafts of such special legislation are being produced in earnest.

## 3. THE CASE OF THE QIANG WRITING SYSTEM

With the general theory and practice in mind, let us examine the case of the Qiang people, who number about 200,000, and are mainly distributed in the counties of Maoxian, Lixian, Wenchuan, Heishui, Songpan, and a few other neighbouring counties in the Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in the northwestern part of Sichuan Province. In the past, the Qiang people did not have their own writing system. After the founding of the PRC, the Qiang minority requested the creation of a writing system for their language. Since the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in 1978, Qiang representatives have voiced their requests for the creation of a Qiang script on many occasions.

In 1990, the Government of Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province granted official approval for the creation of a Qiang writing system. Consent was also obtained from the Sichuan Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Sichuan Provincial Government. A working team for the creation of a Qiang script was rapidly established. Based on research data collected in the 1950s, further and more in-depth investigations were undertaken. After many discussions, thorough reviews and planning, the experts of the working team created a Qiang writing system which reflected the special features of the Qiang language, as well as being easy to teach, learn, and understand. After several trials of teaching the new script in different locations, it was proven that this Qiang writing system was feasible; it was also accepted, supported, and liked by the Qiang people.

In the autumn of 1992, the Sichuan Provincial Government submitted the Qiang script for examination and approval by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission. In March 1993, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission asked experts from the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences to appraise the new Qiang script. The results of the appraisal were: the Qiang phonetic script contained 26 letters from the Roman alphabet; identical letters were used to represent sounds which were the same as those in Chinese; while double letters were used to represent sounds distinctive to the Qiang language. The design of the script was rational, and was able to represent Qiang sounds in a systematic manner. It was therefore considered to be a good script. During this same period, many different types of literacy classes were held in Qiang areas. Qiang language classes were also held in the Aba and Weizhou Teacher Training Colleges in Sichuan Province, at both university and technical secondary school levels. A group of teachers from the Qiang minority were trained, making conditions ripe for promoting the Qiang script.

Over the past decade, the creation and preliminary promotion of Qiang writing have already reaped the following benefits:

(1) It helps the implementation of the CCP's policies for minority language work, and satisfies the desires of the Qiang people for the creation of a script for their own language. In the words of a Qiang cadre:

> The birth of Qiang writing has realized the desires we have had over many years to use our own language and writing. It has increased our sense of equality and warmth within the Chinese peoples, as well as augmenting the dignity and confidence of our own people. This in turn has stimulated our love for the Party and for our socialist nation..." (Sichuan, 1993, p. 6)

(2) It is easy for the Qiang people to learn their own writing system and it motivates them to master this system. When trial teaching sessions were held in areas with standard Qiang pronunciation, the literacy rate increased extremely rapidly, especially among those elderly illiterates who were unable to learn to read Chinese. Since the creation of the Qiang script, Qiang broadcasts also began, improving the transmission of many kinds of information. This has led to both economic and cultural development in Qiang areas. During the experimental bilingual education sessions, elementary school teachers discovered that Qiang children were better able to use Qiang than Chinese, and were able to learn Qiang writing much faster than Chinese characters. The acquisition of Qiang writing was beneficial to the development of the children's intellects, as well as increasing their motivation to learn. This in turn had a positive effect on rates of school enrolment, examination pass rates, and percentage of children remaining in primary education in Qiang areas.

(3) The birth of Qiang writing promoted the discovery and collation of literary works reflecting traditional Qiang culture. The Qiang are a people with a long history, and possess a substantial amount of oral literature which has been preserved in folklore. Due to the relative complexities of Qiang pronunciation, the Qiang language was recorded using Chinese characters in the past, with the result that many errors were introduced into the transcriptions. After the creation of the Qiang script, workers in many areas were able to learn the new Qiang writing and to use it to record a large number of literary works including stories, legends, and songs. In addition, the interlinear Qiang-Chinese work entitled *Classics of the Qiang People, with Annotations and Comparative Notes* was completed: this volume required the collation and translation of over a million characters. Qiang writing was also beneficial in stimulating the cultural life in Qiang areas, leading to spontaneous use of the Qiang script by the people themselves to write and perform songs and poems.

(4) Qiang writing was beneficial for the propagation and use of scientific knowledge, leading to prosperity for those living in the mountainous Qiang areas. In areas where the Qiang people live interspersed with other groups, the majority are fluent in Chinese. However, in areas where there are homogeneous Qiang communities, many do not understand Chinese or cannot speak it well. In 1994, a training program to promote literacy as well as to propagate scientific knowledge was held in Qugu Village in Maoxian County. Qiang writing was used in mimeographed leaflets detailing cultivation methods for the best varieties of vegetables and chillis. These were distributed to farmers living in villages such as Hexi and Heba. This project was very successful, leading to substantial increases in farmers' incomes in the same year. Some farmers were able, through this project alone, to increase their income by tens of thousands of Chinese dollars (Yuan).

(5) The training of a group of teachers and cadres bilingual in both Qiang and Chinese has laid the foundation for the development of future cultural activities in Qiang areas, including education, translation, publication, production of literary works, broadcasting, and film-dubbing. Since 1993, apart from the literary programs which have been established in Qiang areas, over 1,300 people have become literate. In addition, two training sessions were held for Qiang teachers. Over 80 Qiang intellectuals from farming villages, schools, and other organizations who could read

Chinese were able to use the new Qiang script after two months of training. Over 70 students who had graduated from the Aba and Weizhou Teacher Training Colleges have already found employment. Therefore, while the work of creation of and trial use of the Qiang script was going on, a group of local people who understood minority language policies, and who were familiar with and loved their own language, have been trained to continue language work in Qiang areas.

The majority of the Qiang are bilingual, with some who no longer use their mother tongue but who have already shifted to using Chinese. Notwithstanding, the Qiang people are still persistent in their request for the creation of a writing system for their own language. Since the success of the creation and trial use of Qiang writing, those Qiang people who already know Chinese are also keen to learn the Qiang script. This is due to their love for their own people: through the use of their own writing, they hope to continue to develop their own traditional culture. They feel that they do not have such a strong sense of equality without possessing their own script. Surely we should recognize the appropriateness of this kind of love for their own ethnic minority and should support their efforts!

## 4. THEORIZING OVER FORTY YEARS' PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Based on personal insights from my experiences in research and work in minority languages since the middle 1950s, I strongly believe that the following six basic principles for the development of minority language planning in China should be emphasised.

### *4.1. Minority Language Work Must be Undertaken under the Leadership of the Central Government.*

Minority language work must be based on Marxist theories concerning ethnic issues, as well as the many fine guiding principles that have been formulated by the Chinese government over the past five decades. Only then can minority language work be successful. In contrast, if work proceeds without following the leadership of the Government or Marxist theories on ethnic issues, then the work will go astray, with setbacks and irreparable losses. Summarising the long and winding path of over 40 years of minority language work, I believe that when work has proceeded according to the right guidance and leadership, as well as adhering to basic Marxist principles, it has been successful and prosperous; when it has not done so, there have been disappointments and poor results.

After the formulation of accurate guiding principles, the most important task is for management organs in charge of minority language work at all levels to implement those policies in an enthusiastic, reliable, and timely way. New situations and problems which arise in the course of this work must be subject to thorough and objective research, leading to healthy development of language work in minority areas.

*4.2. Adherence to the Principle of Free Choice for the Minority Peoples.*

As early as the 1950s, the Government had already formulated basic policies which guaranteed ethnic and linguistic equality for the minority peoples, as well as the freedom of the minorities to develop their own languages. In 1954, the Government Administrative Council approved the joint report entitled *Issues involved in the Creation of Writing Systems for Minority Groups without Written Languages.* This report was jointly submitted by the Steering Committee for Minority Languages and Writing of the Committee for Culture and Education, and stated:

> For those groups without writing systems or without systems which are in common use: [we] will assist them in the gradual development of phonetic writing systems or in helping them to choose appropriate systems which are already in existence. This process must take into account the wishes and choices of the minority peoples themselves, and should commence only after a period of research and investigation. (China, 1958, pp. 101–102)

This guiding principle was enthusiastically welcomed by all the minority peoples. The Government created writing systems for those ethnic minorities with larger populations, and who had expressed urgent desires for having their own scripts; for those minorities who did not have writing systems in common use, improvements were made to their scripts. However, this guiding principle was quickly disturbed by "leftist" elements, and thorough implementation could not be carried out. The minorities concerned were not able to use their newly-created or improved writing systems, and development was halted, with interruption of the trial programmes. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, the minority peoples were able to return to the use of their own scripts, after having suffered a long period without being able to use them. In addition, some ethnic minorities who had already submitted their requests for scripts in the 1950s, but where scripts had not been created in time for them, repeated their requests for the creation of orthographies for their own peoples. Some could not even wait for approval to be obtained from the relevant departments at higher levels, but started to design their own writing systems, teaching and learning them among themselves.

In my own opinion, the writing systems which have been devised by minority peoples themselves over the past decade certainly need further investigation, research, appraisal, and authentication, according to the guidelines laid out in the State Council's document, *Notification by the State Council of the Procedures for the Approval of and Division of Labor for Experimental Implementation of the Projects for the Creation and Improvement of Minority Writing Systems* (China, 1991, pp. 425–426). However, if the desires of the minorities to develop their own languages and writing are in accordance with official policies and guidelines, their efforts must be appreciated and supported. With regard to the role of minority scripts, they have been viewed in the past simply as tools for communication and exchange of ideas, and their role in transmission of information concerning new commercial products and scientific knowledge has been largely ignored. This is especially important in the present era and over the coming years, as the development of a commodity economy proceeds apace in China. Information about new commercial products can be transmitted using minority languages and writing,

thus improving the knowledge of science and technology in minority areas. This can lead to the rapid alleviation of poverty and economic prosperity in these areas. Many specific examples can be found to substantiate this.

In addition, the role of minority scripts in the discovery of the cultural heritage of ethnic groups has also been ignored in the past. Having their own writing can lead to an increase in the educational level of a people, especially in monolingual areas; this cannot be replaced by the use of languages other than their mother tongue. The language and writing of a people are also important distinctive features of that people, and have enormous positive benefits in raising their self-confidence. For example, we saw for ourselves the joy on the faces of members of ethnic minorities when they were able to watch a film dubbed in their own language for the first time: their exultation on those occasions was truly moving. The educational value of having their own script can also have positive effects which may be many times more than simply using Chinese to announce the same policies (see Dai & Cheng, this volume). It is therefore not surprising that some minority language workers have compared the financial assistance that the Government gives to minority areas to a blood transfusion, while helping a minority people to use and develop their own language and writing and to raise their cultural and educational level is seen as increasing the people's own ability to produce blood. Figuratively, the former is similar to focusing on healing the head when the patient has a headache, or healing the foot when the patient has a pain in his foot: such measures can only solve the problem for a little while; whereas the latter is a radical and heuristic solution to the problem by improving the cultural and educational level of the people themselves. I think that this comparison does have its merits. In conclusion, the acquisition of a writing system by an ethnic minority can only have positive effects, regardless of the extent of its usage domain or degree of usage. As there cannot be any negative effects resulting from it, no restrictions are necessary. The request of a minority people for the creation of their own script is an expression of their self-awareness as an ethnic group. Although this feeling has to be guided towards the right path, it is beneficial towards development and progress in minority areas.

Therefore, important goals for a minority language worker in the present era and in the coming years are to have an accurate understanding of and to thoroughly implement the Party principle of free choice for the minorities, respecting their right to choose their own writing systems. These are also important goals for departments involved in the formulation of policies for minority language work.

### *4.3. Minority Language Work Should Be Practical and Realistic, and Must Be Case- and Situation-Specific.*

This principle of not applying the same program to all minorities regardless of their different situations has been borne out of decades of experience in minority language work, which has undergone many twists and turns over the previous years. It is also determined by the many complex situations surrounding minority language work. Adherence to such a principle is demanding, but the most important task is to fully understand the prevailing conditions. Circumstances are constantly changing,

especially after the implementation of the policies of reform and the opening up of China's doors to the outside world. When the full picture has been grasped, workers can proceed with confidence, and can formulate programs which are best suited to individual circumstances. Decisions can be made and the work can proceed smoothly. This depends on a high degree of professionalism and responsibility on the part of minority language workers. They must often travel deep into minority areas to do in-depth research and investigation, in order to acquire a comprehensive overview of the situation over which they are the supervisors, as well as a clear knowledge of what comprises a typical situation. They should be able to propose practical solutions to problems arising among different ethnic minorities, areas, languages, and writing systems of different types. They should also be able to adjust their priorities and deploy their resources appropriately according to different features of the use and development of minority languages and writing within different periods. They should be able to adapt their work to changes in the situations in minority areas.

Therefore, an essential component of case- and situation-specific implementation of minority language work is a comprehensive overview of the situation. The minority language worker should be able to raise specific questions regarding the work which are incisive, accurate, and timely. Only then can minority language work develop successfully, and subjective ideas and bureaucratic attitudes avoided.

### *4.4. Minority Language Work Must Take Into Account the Natural Changes and Developmental Trends Within Languages.*

Minority language work is academic and has a scientific basis, with its own underlying rules. Minority language workers can only succeed if they have mastered the objective rules governing their discipline, and work according to the developmental trends of the languages themselves. In the over 50 years since the founding of the PRC, during the times when we have not adhered to scientific principles, we have had to go through painful experiences, the memories of which are still very profound. For example, during the late 1950s, "leftist" ideas held sway. At that time, knowledge about the stability of languages was lacking, and it was thought that minority languages would very rapidly be assimilated into Chinese. Therefore, large-scale programs advocating direct transition to Chinese were implemented: these denied the objective needs of the minorities for their own writing, leading to huge setbacks in minority language work. Another example can be seen in the issues surrounding the use and standardization of new technical terms: excessive adherence to Chinese was advocated, with an increase in elements common to both Chinese and the minority language. Thus, discrepancies arose between the practical needs of the minority languages and their own developmental trends and rules of change. This led to difficulties in implementation, as well as arousing antipathy among the minorities themselves and setbacks to the work. In addition, language and writing are social phenomena; when they are used within society, they should retain a relative degree of stability. However, some have over-emphasised the "scientific" basis of programs for writing systems in the past, and

introduced frequent changes to scripts in trial use in minority communities. These measures led to a lack of confidence by the minority people in the script, leading to the untimely abortion of some projects and unnecessary "detours" in minority language work.

Policies with a scientific basis are based on an understanding of fundamental Marxist theories concerning minority issues, as well as a clear grasp of basic scientific knowledge, an accurate understanding of objective developmental trends, and precise analysis and evaluation of changing situations. Of course, achieving the above is a difficult task, but successful implementation will prevent arbitrariness and ignorance, decreasing the number of errors which may occur in the resolution of specific issues. These are very important principles which have arisen from both positive and negative past experiences.

### *4.5. Cooperation between Government Organizations, Minority Communities, and Minority Language Research Workers*

Minority language work is, at its root, a cultural work belonging to the minority peoples themselves, but it is also an important and integral component of cultural development for the whole of China. It will only be successful if the desires of the minorities themselves are respected, with participation by the minority peoples themselves and the intellectuals among them. However, it is not enough to rely on the enthusiasm of the minorities alone; relevant government organizations must provide guidance and support, and research workers must also supply the necessary technical expertise. If any one of these three factors is missing, the work may not be successful. In the past, we have had bad experiences whereby the minorities themselves were very enthusiastic, and had achieved a measure of success in language work, but support and concern from the leadership and specialist personnel were lacking, resulting in failure of the projects. During the 1950s, there was a lack of minority intellectuals, as well as of skilled personnel trained in minority language work. Today, over 40 years later, there have been great changes in the situation, with the development of language workers from the minorities themselves. Therefore, in the cooperation between the three parties, attention must be paid to developing the function and enthusiasm of language workers from the minorities themselves. They should be fully relied upon to develop the work, while increasing their professional abilities and grasp of language policies. If it is possible, specialist teams of minority workers should be established within each minority. These workers should understand the policies, have a high degree of professionalism, and love minority language work, thus ensuring the prosperity and development of minority language work.

### *4.6. Implementation of Bilingual Education, with Gradual Establishment of a Sound Bilingual Education System*

The issue of bilingualism became an important topic among the international community in the 1960s, along with the rise of the discipline of sociolinguistics.

Bilingual education did not develop in China until the early 1980s (see Dai & Cheng, this volume). However, as soon as the issue was considered, it was imbued with an enormous vitality. Over the past decade, based on theoretical considerations of bilingualism, bilingual education as a new form of education developed widely in the minority areas of China. Practice has proven that this form of education is suited to the situation in China. It is beneficial to the use and development of minority languages and writing, as well as being able to realize the full potential of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. It has led to a rapid increase in the educational level in minority areas, and is beneficial to the development of children's intellects. It can increase school enrolment rates, percentage of children remaining in education, and rates of graduation in minority areas. It is beneficial to the development of minority education, increasing the training of skilled minority personnel and the overall educational level within the ethnic group itself. In addition, while the minorities are able to use their own language and writing, they can also learn to use Chinese: this can lead to mutual communication among different ethnic minorities.

At present, each minority area has formulated a bilingual education system which is appropriate for their own distinctive features. The experiences gained are very valuable: they should be summarised and elevated to the status of theoretical knowledge. On the other hand, as there is a certain degree of localization in the experiences of different areas, inter-ethnic and inter-regional exchanges should be organized. These will enable minorities to learn from one another's strengths as well as weaknesses, offering overall guidance to ensure healthy development of the work. This will in turn lead to economic prosperity and cultural development in minority areas.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In general, the development of minority language planning in China is healthy, and has already achieved evident results. However, problems still exist and are challenging, of which the main ones are found in the following four areas.

First, implementation of the guiding principles established by the Central Government for minority language work has not been entirely thorough or efficient. In 1991, Document No.32 issued by the State Council established clear guiding principles and tasks for minority language planning; and the All-China Working Committee for Minority Language Work was convened to aid in their implementation. However, many years have passed since then, but many tasks which were stipulated by the document have still not been completed, with some not even having been started. For example, the document stated that there should be further investigation, research, and scientific authentication for minority writing systems which had been designed by the minorities themselves since 1980. These should be evaluated and approved under the procedures laid down by the document produced by the State Council, titled *Notification of the Procedures for the Approval of and Division of Labor for Experimental Implementation of the Projects for the Creation and Improvement of Minority Writing Systems.* Since the 1980s, minorities

such as the Bai, Yao, Tujia, and Derung have designed their own phonetic alphabets and scripts, with some having gone through several rounds of revisions (For Bai, see Wang, this volume). These have confirmed that the scripts are based on sound linguistic principles; experts have given their approval, and experimental use has proven that they are much welcomed by the minority peoples themselves. However, it is still unclear how such work should be further developed, and whether there will be further funding available for their implementation.

Second, of great concern is the management of the relationship between Han cadres learning minority languages and minority cadres learning Chinese. This is in order to fully implement the regulations concerning mutual acquisition of one another's languages and writing by cadres of all ethnic groups, which are contained within the PRC's *Laws of Autonomy for Minority Areas.* Article 49 of the above laws clearly stipulates:

> Organizations within minority autonomous areas should educate and encourage the cadres of all ethnic groups to acquire one another's languages and writing, with Han cadres having to learn the local minority languages and writing. While minority cadres are learning to use their own languages and writing, they should also acquire proficiency in Putonghua and Chinese writing, which is the common language and writing of the whole of China. (China, 1985, p. 11)

This is an important component of China's policy for minority languages and writing. Practice has proven that minority peoples are very enthusiastic in learning Chinese, and they have achieved excellent results. However, the part which involves Han cadres acquiring proficiency in minority languages and writing has not been thoroughly implemented. In the 1950s, Chairman Mao advocated that "Han cadres working in minority areas must learn the local minority languages, and minority cadres must also learn Chinese." This summons was widely welcomed by the Han cadres working in minority areas at the time. However, today's situation is different: even though there are specific stipulations laid down in the laws of autonomy, with some areas even offering encouragement and rewards, there are few Han cadres who are seriously engaged in learning minority languages and writing. The problems include a lack of organization, publicity, and appropriate measures to put the policies into effect.

Third, emphasis must be placed on the issues of development, standardization, and information processing for traditional writing systems. Traditional scripts often have long histories, are deeply-rooted within society, and possess substantial amounts of literary material. Many of these writing systems are not only used within the community, but also in religious activities. Since the 1980s, the usage domains of these scripts have already expanded, and their degree of use has also greatly increased. However, an increasing disparity can be seen between the rapid and successful development of information processing for the Chinese language as opposed to minority writing systems. The majority of traditional scripts used by the minorities of China have complex forms and are all non-Roman alphabets. The degree of standardization of such scripts is low, leading to many difficulties in the area of information processing. In addition, research has been conducted by different workers, and has therefore lacked unified management, with the results that high-quality research cannot be produced or maintained. It is therefore necessary to

strengthen unified planning and management, in order to link the areas of standardization and information processing for minority writing systems. Implementation should be well-planned, well-organized, and managed in stages. Only then can traditional scripts be taken to higher levels of development.

Last, attention must be paid to the use and development of minority languages and writing in border areas. There are 32 cross-border ethnic minorities in China: although some groups employ identical writing systems inside and outside China, the majority have different scripts. This is especially so for the southern minorities, with writing of different forms being used by the same ethnic group within and outside China. Some minorities may only have writing systems abroad, but none within China, and *vice versa.* Since the implementation of the policies of reform and the opening up of China's doors to the outside world, there has been increased cross-border communication between ethnic groups, rendering the issue of language and writing very prominent. In November 1995, when I was conducting investigations in Fugong County in Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province, which bordered on Myanmar, I found circulating in the villages literacy primers and Bibles which had been introduced from across the border. These items of literature constituted one of the forms in which religious influences could be exerted from abroad. Furthermore, unhealthy material in the form of reading material, broadcasts, and videotapes could also be introduced into China. Unless education in issues pertaining to socialism is disseminated in these areas, the peoples living in such areas will be introduced to other, possibly unhealthy, influences. It is therefore important for us to use the available tools of minority languages and writing. In addition, some ethnic groups whose writing systems are different within and outside China are requesting a change to identical systems; these requests have to be investigated and the issues resolved. We must not be indifferent, neither should we simply follow what others are saying, but should manage language work according to our national situation.

Recently, China has formulated a set of plans for the development of her western regions, which include minority areas. Along with the acceleration of economic construction, cultural development should also proceed apace. The issues of minority education, as well as the use and development of minority languages and writing, will become increasingly prominent. Lack of good management of such issues will slow down the pace of economic development, and lead to inconsistencies and contradictions within the work. Minority language workers must therefore take into account the current situation, working hard to the best of their abilities to contribute towards the development of the western regions of China.

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## 6. NOTE

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YAOWEN ZHOU & FENGHE FANG

# THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF DAI AND ITS VERNACULAR WRITING SYSTEMS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Dai population in China is 1,250,000, which is mainly distributed in the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, Gengma Dai and Va Autonomous County, Menglian Dai-Lahu Autonomous County, Jinggu Dai and Yi Autonomous County, and Xinping Yi and Dai Autonomous County in Yunnan (China, 1994a, p. 3). These Dai autonomous communities have a population of 700,000, and the remaining 500,000 Dai people live together or live with other minority groups in more than 30 counties and cities. There is also a small group of Dai people in the juncture of Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces along the Jinsha River (Zhou & Luo, 2001, p. 1).

The Dai have a long history, which is closely connected with those of the Zhuang, Bouyei, Dong, Shui and Li minorities in China. They also have a genetic relationship with the Tai in Thailand, the Lao in Laos, the Shan in Burma, and the Dai, Nong, and Tu peoples in Vietnam. Although there are only 1,250,000 Dai people in Yunnan, they have been widely distributed for a long time (see China, 1994b, p. 847). Due to their uneven political, economic, and cultural development, many different branches have been derived from the Dai. Every group has its autonym (which are transcribed in IPA here, with the superscript for tones). When branches have the same name, their dialect is also the same. The group living in the Xishuangbanna Prefecture calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***lɯ***$^{4}$.The group living in ordinary houses in the Dehong prefectures calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***lə***$^{1}$ or ***tai***$^{2}$***nə***$^{1}$, but others call it *Han Dai.* The group living in two-story bamboo stilt houses calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***taɯ***$^{2}$, while others call it *Shui Dai.* One group in Jin Ping County calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***dɔn***$^{5}$, ***tai***$^{2}$***lɔn***$^{5}$ or ***tai***$^{2}$***khau***$^{1}$, while others call it *Bai Dai.* Another group there calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***lam*** $^{1}$, but *Hei Dai* by others. Those living in Xinping County call themselves ***tai***$^{2}$***jə***$^{5}$ and others call them *Huayao Dai;* another group there calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***ka***$^{2}$, and *Han Dai* by others; one group also calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***sa:i***$^{2}$, and *Sha Dai* by others. There are also three groups living in Yuanjiang County: One group calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***tsuŋ***$^{4}$; a second group calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***hiu***$^{4}$; and a third group calls itself ***tai***$^{2}$***lo***$^{2}$. Although the names used by the Dai people in Yunnan differ in the second syllable, they all share the first, that is,

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***tai***$^{2}$. It means that they all have the same origin. Therefore, the PRC government recognized all these groups as the Dai according to their own wish in the 1950s.

The Dai people are widely spread out, living separately far away from each other. Hence, there are dialects and subdialects (see China, 1994b, 847–848; Zhou & Luo, 2001, pp. 10–14). Dai can be divided into four major dialects: Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Hongjin (spoken along the Hong and Jinsha Rivers), and Jinping dialects. The Dehong dialect is the most widely distributed and used. It has 600,000 speakers. Over 300,000 of them live in the Dehong Prefecture, and more than 200,000 of them live together in small groups or live with other minorities in over twenty counties, which are located inland, including Baoshan, Simao and Lincang Prefectures. The Xishuangbanna dialect or Banana dialect is spread over the Xishuangbanna Prefecture and spoken by 330,000 people. The Hongjin dialect, with 160,000 speakers, is distributed in ten counties of the Honghe, Wenshan, Chuxiong and Yuxi Prefectures. The Jinping dialect, the smallest, is spoken by about 18,000 people in Jinping County.

Some dialects are mutually intelligible, but some are not (see Zhou & Luo, 2001, pp. 10–14). Their differences are largely found in vocabulary and pronunciation. Generally speaking, the grammars of these dialects are similar. The difference between Hongjin and other dialects are greatest, so that Hongjin dialect speakers cannot understand other Dai dialects. The differences between Dehong and Xishuangbanna dialects are smaller because the differences in their phonological systems are regular, but their speakers have some difficulty in communicating with each other. Dehong dialect has two subdialects: Debao and Menggen. The speakers of these subdialects can communicate with each other. Spoken by the largest Dai population and with an overall consistency in pronunciation and vocabulary, the Debao subdialect is distributed in Dehong Prefecture and Baoshan Prefecture. The Menggen subdialect, with some differences, is mainly spread over Simao and Lincang Prefectures. The Xishuangbanna dialect is rather uniform. The Hongjin dialect shows the largest differences. It can be divided into five subdialects with little intelligibility among their speakers. The Jinping dialect, without any subdialect and with the smallest speaker population, is distributed in Jinping County in Honghe Prefecture.

Yunnan's Dai speakers use four writing systems: Dehong, Xishuangbanna, Jinping, and Mengding (Zhou & Luo, 2001, pp. 350–374). The Dehong Dai writing, also known as ***la:i***$^{2}$***tai***$^{2}$***lə***$^{1}$ or ***la:i***$^{2}$***tai***$^{2}$***nə***$^{1}$, is mainly used in Dehong Prefecture, but it is also used in some Dai communities in Baoshan, Tengchong, Menglian, Lancang, Jinggu, Zhenyuan, Gengma, Cangyuan, Lincang, Shuangjiang, Zhenkang and Yongde Conties. The Xishuangbanna Dai writing system, known as ***la:i***$^{2}$***tai***$^{2}$***lɯ***$^{4}$, is used in Xishuangbanna Prefecture as well as in Dai temples in Menglian, Shuangjiang, Gengma, Zhenkang, Jinggu, Lancang and Cangyuan Counties, where the Dai people use the Dehong Dai writing outside temples. The Jinping Dai writing system is used only by a few Dai speakers in Mengla area of Jinping County. The Mengding Dai writing system, known as ***la:i***$^{2}$***tai***$^{2}$***pɔŋ***$^{5}$, is mainly used in Mengding and Mengjian areas in Gengma County. It is also used by a small group of Dai speakers in Ruili County of Dehong Prefecture bordering Danbang in Burma.

The four writing systems are all phonetic writing systems that have an Indic origin (see China, 1992, pp. 63–95). They were not directly adopted from India. The first three writing systems were borrowed from the Burmese writing system, but it is not certain whether the Jinping Dai writing system came from the Laotian writing system or not. The Mending and Xishuangbanna Dai writing systems both use round-shaped letters. Letters of the other two are neither round nor square and have their own characteristics. As far as phonogram goes, the Jinping Dai writing system is similar to the Xishuangbanna Dai writing system in that they both have two sets of initial consonants: high pitch ones and low pitch ones. They have many initial consonant letters, forty four for the Jinping system and forty eight for the Xishuangbanna system. The two systems both use additional diacritics to represent tones. The Dehong and Mengding Dai writing systems have no high pitch and low pitch differences, so that they have only one set of initial consonants. There are 19 initial consonant letters in the Dehong Dai writing and 17 initial consonant letters in the Mengding Dai writing. Only some tones are represented by diacritics. There is also a big difference in the number of final vowel letters. Among the nine basic vowel letters in the old Xishuangbanna Dai writing, most of them are graphically represented for the contrast between long vowels and short vowels in finals (nuclear plus coda), though modern Dai speakers do not make such distinctions in their oral language. Thus, the traditional Xishuangbanna system has 210 finals, resulting in numerous homographs. The Jinping Dai writing system represents the long and short contrast only for [a] in the final, and thus has only 84 finals altogether. Without any representation of tones, the traditional Dehong and Mending Dai writing systems do not represent the long and short contrast for the vowel [a], nor do they represent the contrast for these pairs of vowels, [e] and **[ɛ],** [u] and [o], and **[ɯ]** and **[ə],** in finals, resulting in one grapheme for multiple phonemes. Therefore, the Dehong and Xishuangbanna Dai writing systems have undergone revisions since the early 1950s. The chapter will focus on the processes of the revision and the use of the different versions of writing systems.

## 2. IMPROVEMENT AND USE OF DAI WRITING SYSTEMS

The PRC Constitution stipulates that every ethnic group has the freedom to use and develop its own language and writing system (see Sun and M. Zhou, this volume). In 1951, the early period of the founding of the PRC, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission made a decision to help minorities without writing systems to create writing systems and to help minorities with imperfect ones to improve them (see Q. Zhou, this volume). This is an important component of China's minority language policy. With the exception of the Jinping Dai writing system, the other three writing systems were commonly used before the founding of the PRC. They were not only used in Buddhist temples, but they were also used by local *Tusi* (chieftain) administrations and ordinary Dai people. Obvious, these Dai writing systems played an important role in transmitting and developing the Dai culture.

After the founding of the PRC, when Dai autonomous prefectures were established in Dehong and Xishuangbanna, the Dai writing systems became an

important tool for the official functions of the local governments and for promoting the Dai culture and education. However, because the Dehong, Xishuangbanna, and Mengding Dai writing systems each had a history of hundreds of years and because there was a huge gap between the writing systems and the dialects that they represent, these writing systems had shortcomings and needed to be improved.

### *2.1. The Improvement and Use of the Dehong Dai Writing System*

#### *2.1.1. The Reform of the Dehong Dai Writing System*

The improvement of Dai writing systems started with the reform of the Dehong Dai writing system because it had the most serious shortcoming, that is, the lack of a one-to-one correspondence between grapheme and phoneme. Without reform it could hardly meet the needs of the development of modern culture, education, technology, and science (Xi, 1999).

In 1952, during the Baoshan Prefecture's first People's Congress (of which Dehong was then a part), representatives of Dai upper circles and intellectuals from Dehong proposed to reform their Dai Writing system. The People's Congress approved the proposal. After the congress, Baoshan Prefecture established a committee on Dai writing reform, which approved the first draft of the reformed writing system at its first meeting, and then distributed the draft in Dai communities in Baoshan for their feedback. The committee also invited Zhou Yaowen from the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences to participate in the writing reform and Dai policy formulation. On July 24, 1953 when Dehong Autonomous Region/Prefecture was formally established, the committee on Dai writing reform took advantage of the gathering of Dai representatives of all circles in Mangshi and held the second meeting on the reform of the Dai writing system. The meeting approved the draft of the reformed Dehong Dai writing system on August 2, which the Dehong government asked the Yunnan government to submit to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission for review and approval. On June 10, 1954, the State Commission approved the draft for experimental use. After years of tentative use and several revisions, the reformed Dehong writing system has been commonly used in Dai communities in Dehong.

#### *2.1.2. The Use and Development of Dai in Dehong*

The improvement of the Dehong Dai writing system was a leap forward for the Dai written tradition and education in Dehong as well as an important landmark in the development of the Dai writing system from Buddhist temples to public schools and the whole society. Let us examine the use of Dai in education, media, and publishing.

In 1956, after preparation in teacher training and textbook publishing, the improved Dai writing system was formally introduced into primary schools in Dai communities, which was a landmark change for minority education in Dehong. During the early years of the PRC, most of the Dai people in rural communities could not speak Chinese, and school-aged children could speak only Dai at that

time. However, before 1956, primary schools offered an education only in Chinese. The non-Chinese-speaking children had to go to these Chinese schools, a situation that seriously affected enrollment, retention, and graduation. When Dai began to be used in primary schools in the autumn of 1956, it was warmly welcomed by our Dai masses who enthusiastically sent their children to schools. The use of Dai improved enrollment, retention, and graduation. Bilingual education has developed more rapidly since the 1980s. According to 1990s' statistics provided by Dehong's department of education, of its 352 primary schools in Dai communities in Dehong, 261 schools (74.14%) adopted Dai-Chinese bilingual education.

In 1956, Dehong launched its Dai literacy campaign for adults, with the establishment of literacy offices in every county within the prefecture. Some counties set up literacy associations in villages. For example, in 1956, Lianshan County of Dehong set up 11 literacy associations and 25 literacy night schools which had 799 students. During the Great Leap Forward in 1958, the Dai literacy campaign reached its climax, having almost wiped out illiteracy among young Dais by 1960. Unfortunately, the campaigns were abandoned until 1978, when Dehong's department of education again made plans to eliminate illiteracy among adults in Dai communities. According to available statistics, between 1984 and 1992, Dehong offered 1,925 literacy classes with an enrollment of 53,447. After six months of intensive training, 37,222 of these participants (69.64%) passed literacy tests.

The use of Dai in schools was made possible because local governments made an effort to train Dai language teachers and compile textbooks in Dai. In 1955, soon after the improved Dai writing system was authorized for experimental use, Dehong Prefecture's department of education made plans to train teachers for primary schools and literacy campaigns. The department held four training classes for a total of 184 trainees in Mangshi from 1955 to 1957. In addition, Dehong's Yingjiang and Linage Counties also trained 123 teachers. Meanwhile, outside Dehong, 292 teachers were trained to teach the improved Dai writing system. Thereafter, all the counties in Dehong ran short-term training classes for primary school teachers every year or every other year until the interruption of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. In 1974, after Dehong's Normal School was founded, again, it began to train Dai teachers for primary and middle schools. In 1974 alone, the school ran three training classes for 135 Dai language teachers for counties in Dehong. From 1985 on, the school decided to enroll 50 Dai majors for a three-year associate degree program. By 1998, there were 191 Dai language teachers in primary schools, ten in middle schools, and three in technical schools.

The training of advanced talents in Dai Language started in April, 1956, when the Yunnan Institute for Nationalities enrolled 29 students for Dehong Dai. In 1957, it enrolled 50 students to study. From 1956 to 1964, the Language Department of the institute trained 383 students for Dehong Dai, Xishuangbanna Dai, and other minority languages. The institute was closed between 1966 and 1972. In 1973, the institute reopened to enroll students for three-year programs. In that year, it enrolled twenty for the Dehong Dai major and 28 students for this major in 1976. At the end of 1977, the institute established a minority language and literature department to train minority language translators, bilingual teachers, and minority language/ literature researchers. In 1980, the department began a four-year program for

undergraduates and enrolled 26 students for the Dehong Dai major. In 1984, authorized by the State Council's Academic Degree Commission, the department began to offer master's degree in the Dai Language. From 1974 to 1991, the department produced 48 graduates in the three-year Dai program, 54 graduates in the four-year Dai program, and seven masters in Dong-Dai languages and literatures.

In the early years, the compilation of Dai textbooks for primary schools and for literacy campaigns went hand in hand with teacher training. In 1953, Dehong's department of education established an office to compile, translate, and print Dai textbooks to meet the needs of the development of Dai culture and education. Soon Yunnan's department of education also opened an office for minority language teaching materials, an office that published Dai language and arithmetic textbooks for the first three grades in primary schools. In 1956, the Yunnan Minzu Press established its Dehong Dai editorial and translation department. By 1960, the press had published seven volumes of Dai language textbooks and eight volumes of arithmetic textbooks for primary schools and one volume of the Dai language textbook for literacy classes.

In 1978, Dehong's department of education founded a minority language editorial and translation office, which compiled ten volumes of Dai language textbooks, two volumes of arithmetic textbooks in Dai, and one volume of textbook for Chinese conversation. In 1981, Dehong established its own minority press, which included an office in charge of Dai editorial and translation. According to the recent teaching experience, the press revised the ten volumes of Dai language textbooks for primary schools and two volumes of Dai textbooks for adult education in rural areas. In 1989, Dehong's department of education issued an official syllabus for Dai language study for primary schools, a syllabus that requires Dai-Chinese bilingual education in primary schools in Dai communities. From 1993 to 1996, on the basis of its experiences in Dai-Chinese bilingual education, Dehong's department of education compiled twelve volumes of new Dai language textbooks, one volume of a new mathematics textbook in Dai, twelve volumes of a Chinese-Dai translation handbook for primary schools, and three volumes of Dai language and literature textbooks for secondary normal schools. These new textbooks are not only used in Dehong but also in primary schools in Dai communities in Gengma and Shuangjiang Counties outside Dehong.

Before the founding of the PRC, Dai communities in Dehong did not formally publish any books, newspapers, and magazines in Dai. In 1955, on New Year's Day, Dehong published the *Dehong Tuanjie Bao* (Dehong Union), a publication that opened the door for Dai to be used in news media. In the early days, the newspaper was a weekly with four pages, one in Chinese, one in Dai, one in Jingpo, and one in Lisu. In 1958 the circulation reached 9,000 copies. In 1966, an independent Dai edition was published with four pages, but its publication was stopped until October, 1972. From October 1972 on, it has been published bi-weekly. In addition, Dehong also publishes, on an irregular basis, some newspapers for internal circulation, such as the *Dehong Weisheng Bao* (Dehong Hygiene, since 1988), the *Dehong Keji Qingbao* (Dehong Scientific and Technological Information, since 1984), and the *Nongdao Wenhua* (Nongdao Culture, since 1990).

In order to transmit and develop the Dai culture, in 1980 Dehong's Federation of Literature and Art started an art journal in Dai, titled ***joŋ²xam²*** (the Peacock). In 1989, it was awarded the First Prize for Excellent Research on Minority Literature. It has been listed in the national catalogue of newspapers and periodicals. By June of 2002, 82 issues of the journal have been published. In addition, there are also three professional journals, *Dehong Yuwen* (Dehong Language), *Luxi Daixi* (Luxi Dai Drama), and *Ruili Jiaoshi Yuandi* (Ruili Teachers' Forum), all of which have started since the 1980s for internal circulation.

In July of 1955, the Yunnan People's Broadcasting Station formally started its Dehong Dai broadcasting program, in addition to Xishuangbanna Dai, Lisu, Lahu, and Jingpo programs. The Dehong Dai program included news, special reports, entertainment, weather forecasts, and advertisements. Special programs included *Lectures on Minority Policies, Lectures on Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, Lectures on the Law for Minority Autonomy, Lectures on Agriculture and Science and Technology, Lectures on Family Planning, Lectures on Hygiene, Yunnan's 4,000 Kilometers Frontier, the Beautiful and Magic Land,* and so on. Entertainment included Dai opera, folk songs, poems, popular songs, radio dramas, radio novels, and clapper talks. These programs were broadcasted half an hour respectively in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, and were very much enjoyed by the Dai masses.

In the early 1990s, television programs in Dehong Dai pioneered the use of minority languages for television programs in Yunnan. Now there are television stations for Dai communities: Dehong Televison Station began its service in Dai and Jingpo on New Year's Day of 1992, and Mangshi Television Station and Ruili County Television Station started broadcasting a year earlier. In August of 1997, with approval from the central government, Dehong opened its own Dai television production center, which produces local news, weather forecasts, entertainment and advertisements in Dai. Entertainment programs, including Dai opera and movies dubbed in Dai, are usually broadcasted during the Spring Festival and the Water-Sprinkling Festival. Mangshi and Ruili television stations usually transmit Yunnan Station's and/or Dehong Station's news, weather reports, entertainment, and advertisements. These stations have a regular 15 minute program for local weather and news in the evening.

The dubbing of movies in Dai started in the 1950s. In those days, movies in Chinese were shown in villages with impromptu interpretation in Dai by the movie projectionist through a microphone. Although the effect was not impressive, it was much better than in Chinese and was liked by the Dai people. From 1965 on, Yunnan's movie distribution companies began to dub, with magnetic coating, movies in minority languages. According to the statistics provided by the Yunnan Film Distribution and Projection Company, 608 movies were dubbed in 12 minority languages between 1978 and 1987. Among them, 103 movies were dubbed in the Dehong dialect, 172 movies in the Xishuangbanna dialect, and 70 movies in the Lincang Dai dialect. In 1979, Dehong Film Company began its own dubbing project. By 1992, it had dubbed 131 movies in Dai, including feature films, documentaries, and science education movies, and it projected movies 17,706 times

with a total audience of 11,260,000. Two movies, *The Peacock Princess* and *The Heroine in the Melon Hut,* won state and provincial excellence awards respectively for dubbed movies. In addition, the Lincang Film Distribution Company began to dub movies in Dai in 1980. By 1991, it had dubbed 82 feature films and 13 science education movies in Dai. Unfortunately, statistics since 1992 are not available.

The publication of Dai textbooks, reference materials, and other books is the fundamental guarantee for the use and development of Dai. According to available statistics, between 1957 and 1995, Yunnan Minzu Press published 242 titles of books in Dai: 121 titles on literature, 43 titles on culture and education, 12 titles on arts, 15 titles on popular science, 37 titles on politics and laws, seven on references, three on medicine, and four on history.

### *2.2. The Improvement and Use of the Xishuangbanna Dai Writing System*

#### *2.2.1. The Refom of the Xishuangbanna Dai Writing System*

The Xishuangbanna Dai writing system has a history of over 700 years. Since the Dai people in Xishuangbanna call themselves ***tai***$^{2}$***lɯ***$^{4}$**,** the Xishuangbanna Dai writing system is also called ***tai***$^{2}$***lɯ***$^{4}$ writing. The Dai people also call it ***to***$^{1}$***tham***$^{2}$ or ***la:i***$^{2}$***tham***$^{2}$**,** which mean the Sutra script. In Yunnan, this writing system is not only used in Buddhist temples and Dai communities in Xishuangbanna, but it is also used in Dai Buddhist temples in the Malian, Shuangjiang, Gengma, Zhenkang, Jinggu, Lancang and Cangyuan Counties outside Xishuangbanna. It is also used in some Dai communities in Burma, Laos and Thailand.

Affected by the phonetics of loanwords from ancient Indic languages, many ancient sounds remain in the Xishuangbanna dialect. Thus, the traditional Xishuangbanna writing system has more letters, initial consonant letters and final (vowel) letters, than they are needed. For examples, it has twice as many finals as there are in modern oral Dai, resulting in a miss-match between graphemes and phonemes, and particularly in multiple graphemes for a single phoneme. In October 1954, Xishuangbanna set up a committee on its writing system and invited Dr. Fu Maoji of the Institute of Linguistics from Beijing to participate in the project. In the same month, the committee passed its draft on an improved Xishuangbanna Dai writing system, which was authorized by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission for experimental use in 1955. This improvement was primarily designed for ease of learning, teaching, typing, printing, and spelling, but it did not pay any attention to Dai communities' traditional practices and the communication needs among Dai people in China, Burma, Laos, and Thailand.

#### *2.2.2. The Use and Development of the Xishuangbanna Dai Writing System*

From the autumn of 1956 on, Xishuangbanna's primary schools in Dai communities began to offer courses in the improved writing system and practice Dai-Chinese bilingual education. Soon both departments of education of Yunnan and Xishuangbanna collaborated in compiling eight volumes of Dai language textbooks

for the first three grades, two volumes of Dai language textbooks for the fourth to sixth graders, eight volumes of mathematics textbooks in Dai for the first three grades, and one volume of a calculation with abacus textbook in Dai for primary schools. In 1980, they published two volumes of a Chinese Primer and one volume of Dai vocabulary for primary schools.

According to the statistics in 1966, 60% Dai students in Xishuangbanna received their education both in Dai and Chinese. Bilingual education was developing steadily until the Cultural Revolution (1967-1976) when Dai courses ceased. Dai courses gradually resumed in primary schools from 1978 on. In 1980, a set of new Dai textbooks for primary schools was published. According to the 1986 statistics, there were 1,087 classes, with an enrolment of 27,235 Dai students, of which 356 classes practiced Dai-Chinese bilingual teaching with an enrollment of 9,568 students. Bilingual classes were 32.75% of the classes, and bilingual students were 35.2% of the total number of Dai students. Compared with the 60% students who received Dai and Chinese bilingual education in 1966, there was still a 25% decrease in 1986. It was the consequence of the Cultural Revolution.

Another setback in the development of the Xishuangbanna writing system was the passage of *The Proposal on Resuming the Use of the Traditional Dai Writing System* at the Fifth Session of the Sixth People's Congress of Xishuangbanna on May 25,1986. It was proposed that the traditional Dai writing system should be reused in Xishuangbanna because the new one had changed too much: 90% of the graphemes had changed their shape. This radical reform was not helpful for studying historical documents, inheriting the traditional culture, and conducting cultural exchanges with Dai people living in neighboring countries who used the traditional writing system. However, the measure of using the old Dai writing fell short of the demands. It was three years later in 1989 that textbooks in the traditional writing system for primary schools were compiled. Only in 1990 were primary schools able to use the new textbooks. Furthermore, the use of Dai in schools suffered because the traditional Dai writing is more difficult to learn than the reformed one, there were not enough teachers who were capable of teaching the traditional writing, and there was no consensus among teachers and education administrations on whether the traditional or the reformed system should be used. According to the 1993 statistics, there were 1,116 classes with an enrollment of 33,084 Dai students in Xishuangbanna. Of these classes, only 309 (26.3%) were offered Dai courses, with an enrollment of 8,810 students (26.6%). These percentages were lower than those (60% and 35.2% respectively) in 1966 and 1986. There was clearly a decrease in the use of Dai in primary schools in the 1990s.

The reuse of the traditional Dai writing system also affected the publication of newspapers, magazines, and books in Dai. For instance, the Dai version of the newspaper, Xishuangbanna Bao, started with a circulation of 200 copies on March 4, 1957 and reached its peak with a circulation of 5,200 copies, of which 4,300 were individual subscriptions. The increase in the newspaper's circulation is largely due to the use of the reformed Dai writing system in primary schools and in literacy campaigns for adults. However, when the traditional writing system was reused to publish the newspaper on January 28, 1992, the circulation dropped rapidly to about 2,090 copies, because the majority of the young and middle-aged Dai readers could

not read in the traditional system. In April of 1995, in response to readers' demand, the press published two versions, one in the reformed system and one in the traditional system. By December of 1995, the circulation increased to 3,354 copies. In January 1996, the newspaper began to publish entirely in the reformed writing system, and the circulation increased to 4,630 copies. Meanwhile, the Yunnan Minzu press insisted on publishing in the new writing system. Generally speaking, the reformed writing system seems to be coming back in primary schools and in publishing.

Although there were some twists and turns, we have still made progress in training Dai Language teachers and professionals, Dai-Chinese bilingual education, Dai literacy campaigns for adults, Dai publishing, Dai radio and television programs, and the preservation of historical Dai documents.

*2.3. The Improvement and Use of the Mengding Dai Writing System*

The Mengding Dai writing system is used only by about 18,000 Dais in Mengding and 2,000 Dais in Mengjian, of Gengma County, some Dais in Ruili County, and some Dais (known as *Taipong*) in northeast Burma. The Dehong Dai people call the Mingding Dai writing ***la:i² tai² taµ³***, which means the Dai writing down the Nu River. The Dai people in Burma call Dehong Dai writing ***la:i² tai² n'¹***, which means the Dai writing up the Nu River. The Mengding Dai writing system and the Dehong Dai writing system have developed from the same system. They used to be used for the same dialect, so they still have about the same number of initials and finals and similar grapheme-phoneme representations. The Mengding and Dehong systems differ only in letter shapes (the former being square and the latter being round), which is perhaps due to the introduction of the brushpen in writing Dehong Dai, and the positions of vowel letters as diacritics on the upper part of consonant letters came down to the same level with consonants in joint spelling for the Dehong Dai. They have become two different writing systems today because they represent two different dialects. However, since both Mengding and Dehong writings have the same origin and are used for the same dialect, they have the same spelling rules and the same defects. Now the revised Dehong writing has eliminated shortcomings such as the ability of one word to have several readings and meanings, so the Dais in Mengding who used to use the Mengding writing can use the Dehong one instead. Therefore, since the 1950s Gengma County's department of education has sent scholars to Dehong Prefecture to learn the improved Dehong writing. After their return, they conducted training courses and used the new writing to eliminate illiteracy. In the early 1980s, the department informed the Mending regional office of culture and education that the new Dehong Dai writing classes could be offered in some primary school in a favorable situation and that the textbooks compiled by Dehong Prefecture could be used in teaching and eliminating illiteracy.

In the early 1980s, Zhou Yaowen intended to help Gengma County to improve the Mengding writing system in light of the improvement of the Dehong writing, however for some reason nothing came of the project.

In 1984, encouraged by the improvement of the Dehong writing system, Burma began to improve its Dai writing system, the corresponding form of the Mengding Dai writing system. Dai communities in Burma learned from Dehong's experience with reforming the Dehong writing system. They took tradition into account, and they succeeded. The reformed writing system has been welcomed by the Dai communities there. Publications in the reformed writing system spread to Mengding in China. Some Dai people in Mending are learning the reformed writing system and are buying more publications from Burma. But primary schools in Dai communities in Mengding still use the reformed Dehong writing system in class.

### *2. 4. The Use of the Jinping Dai Writing System*

The Jinping Dai writing system is used by some of the 10,000 Dai people in the Mengla Valley in Jinping, Miao-Yao-Dai Autonomous County. Before the founding of the PRC, Mengla was the biggest region under the Dai *Tusi* (chieftain) administration, which used both the Jinping Dai writing system and Chinese as the local official writing. The Jinping Dai writing is mainly used by the Dai communities in the Fengtu and Laizhou area of Vietnam bordering China, Dai communities who call themselves ***tai$^{2}$ kha:u$^{1}$***. They have the same language, the same dress, the same social customs, and the same writing system as the Dai communities in Jinping, China. Actually, the Jinping Dai writing system and handwritten copies of historical documents all came from the Dai communities on the Vietnamese side. In the past, the Jinping Dai writing system was used by only about a thousand Dai people. The Jinping Dai people were not Buddhists and had no temples. The spread of this Dai writing system had nothing to do with religion, and the system was taught only privately. After the founding of the PRC, between the 1950s and 1980s, the government offered training classes in this writing system for several terms in the Mengla Dai communities, which were supported by the younger generation. However, compared to the 1950s, fewer Dai people can read and write this system now because it was not used for literacy classes nor in primary schools, where Chinese is the language of instruction.

## 3. ISSUES IN DAI USE AND DEVELOPMENT

The experience with language planning in Dai communities sheds light on issues in two areas, writing reform and bilingual education, which may be of significance to language planning in minority communities in China and language planning in the world community.

### *3.1. Lessons of the Dai Writing Reforms*

We have learned two major lessons from writing reforms in Dai communities. The first lesson is that the unification of vernacular writing systems, particularly ones with a long history, cannot be forced, and the second is that there is a distinction between writing reform and writing improvement.

In Dai communities, each dialect and its writing system have their own use domains, religious associations, and emotional associations. We should have let them run their own course, respected their users' wishes, and not forced them to be unified. Of the four Dai vernacular writing systems, all but the Jinping writing are used in temples and by common people. They have a solid foundation and are common languages in their own communities.

In the 1950s, the first question in Dai writing reform was whether a socialist nationality (minority group) should use one single unified writing system as in the Soviet Union or use multiple vernacular writing systems. The answer to this question would determine whether only one single Dai writing system should be improved or if all four Dai writing systems should be improved at the same time. In those years, Mr. Fu Maoji, who was sent to Xishuangbanna from Beijing to advise the writing reform there, suggested that the Xishuangbanna and Dehong writing systems should both be reformed for use because they had been used for so many years in their own communities, had their own historical documents, and had the support of their communities (Fu & Dao, 1955). The reality showed that this understanding and practice were correct. However, Fu Maoji also suggested that since there were only two dialects of Dai (there turned out to be four, according to a 1980s survey), Dai speakers should adopt the Xishuangbanna and Dehong writing systems gradually, according to their dialects, and abandon the other writing systems (Fu & Dao, 1955). Further, Fu Maoji believed that in order to develop a common language and a socialist nationality, the Xishuangbanna and Dehong writing systems should be unified in the future after they had been used in their respective communities for a period of time (Fu & Dao, 1955). Fu's ideal, conceived according to the Soviet model, is difficult to realize for three reasons.

First, the Dai dialects are too different from each other (Zhou & Luo, 2001, pp. 182-196). For example, the vocabulary of the Jinping Dai is very different from that of the Xishuangbanna Dai, with over 35% of its vocabulary consisting of non-cognates. In addition, Hongjing Dai and Dehong Dai consist of over 40% non-cognates. There are also great differences in pronunciation. These dialects are basically not mutually intelligible. It is difficult for speakers of one Dai dialect to study another dialect and its writing.

Second, the Dai people are too widely distributed. The dialectal speakers in different communities have no direct economic and political relationships with each other. Thus, these Dai dialects cannot be unified through political and economic unification. Yunnan has more ethnic groups and autonomous prefectures/counties than any other province in China. One third of Yunnan's population (over 40 million) are minorities, and only 3% of them are the Dai People. The Dai population is distributed in two Dai autonomous prefectures and five Dai autonomous counties. Except in Xishuangbanna Prefecture, the Dai population is smaller than the Han population in other autonomous prefectures and counties. In fact, the population of other ethnic groups is also smaller than the Han population in all other minority autonomous prefectures and counties. In this pattern of mixed inhabitation, it is difficult for minority groups to form their own political, economic, and cultural centers, and form their common ethnic languages. This is true for the Dai people as well. Without a common Dai language, it is almost impossible for the Dai people to

use a unified writing system. The Dai people will continue to use their four vernacular writing systems.

Third, Chinese is commonly used in the whole of China. In Yunnan, it has become the lingua franca not only among minority groups but also among dialect communities within a minority. Communication among the four Dai dialect communities is now conducted in Chinese, either in the local Chinese dialect or in *Putonghua.* This trend indicates that in the development of Dai there will be no common Dai. Instead, Dai speakers use their dialect and Chinese simultaneously. There is a possibility that Dai speakers will shift to Chinese, which of course will take a long, long time. However, in the early 1950s we did not foresee this development, and we dogmatically adhered to the Soviet model that every socialist nationality should have its own common language (Serdyuchenko, 1956).

Fortunately, Fu Maoji's suggestion to prepare the ground for the eventual unification of the Xishuangbanna and Dehong writing systems was not accepted by the Xishuangbanna and Dehong prefectures. During the Great Leap Forward in 1958, Dao Youliang, Vice-Governor of Xishuangbanna, asked Zhou Yaowen to draft a romanized Dai writing system. Again in 1978, Dao Anju, Governor of Dehong, made the same request. However, both efforts to romanize the Dai writing systems were abandoned because few people supported them. Those proposals were made because in the early 1950s Mao Tzedong supported the romanization of the Chinese writing system (see Q. Zhou, this volume). By the late 1980s, even the voice for the romanization of Chinese had disappeared. Thus, romanization of the Dai writing systems was no longer an issue.

The second lesson is that a distinction between writing reform and writing improvement should have been made. When improving an existing writing system, consideration must be given to the orthographic traditions and the original graphemic structures. If an existing system has some defects, we can gradually enrich and standardize it to eliminate these defects, but we cannot radically reform it or replace it with a totally new system.

When working on the Dehong and Xishuangbanna Dai writing systems, Dai elites had two different approaches (Fu & Dao, 1955). One was to slightly improve some graphemes and orthographic rules to avoid ambiguity, but to keep the traditional writing system as much as possible. The second approach was to reform the writing system scientifically, without consideration of the orthographic tradition.

The first effort to improve the Dehong Dai writing system in 1953 represented the first approach. At that time, Dao Jingban, Governor of Dehong, and most Dai intellectuals insisted that the improvement should maintain the original letters, clarify the confusing initials and finals, and add new initials and finals that are graphically similar to the traditional ones. However, inspired by Fu Maoji, Zhou Yaowen proposed that the Dehong writing system be scientifically reformed without consideration of its orthographical tradition, a proposal that was fortunately adopted partially then. As a result, the first improvement of the Dehong writing system had left two shortcomings: it maintained some initials and finals which represent no phonemes in the modern oral language, and it still represented one phoneme with two different graphemes in some cases. But the version of the Dehong writing system took the traditional convention and historical succession of the original

writing system into account. Although it added one initial [f], 35 finals (in addition to the original forty five) and six tone marks, most people did not feel that the new writing system was out of line with the old one because these new initials and finals were graphically similar to those original ones. Therefore, the first improved version of the Dehong Dai writing system was welcomed by most people who had learned the traditional version of the Dehong writing system. It was an organic combination of tradition and science.

However, the reform of the Xishuangbanna writing system represented the second approach, that is, it gave no consideration to the traditional orthographic convention and attempted to achieve the "scientific perfection," resulting in a completely new system that radically changed the orthographic convention and the graphemic shapes. Looking back on past practice, it is still considered necessary, feasible, and beneficial for learning to have reduced the number of letters from fifty six to forty two (used only as initials) and the number of finals from 210 to 118 and further to ninety one, a reduction that makes the writing system closer to the oral language. However, it cannot be denied that it was a mistake to have changed the vertical representation of vowels as diacritics above or below an initial consonant into a horizontal and lineal representation and added new tone marks.

This radical change was not acceptable to many Dai people, who made the following comments: the old Dai writing was like a very beautiful flower (meaning the initial consonant letter was the center with the vowel finals as diacritics around it), while the new Dai writing was like an ugly line (meaning the lineal representation of graphemes); the old Dai writing was short and could be read quickly, whereas the new one was long and read slowly; the old one was convenient for cultural exchange among Dai people in China, Laos, Burma, and Thailand, but the new was not; and the old writing system would disappear as the Dai elders die out (Xishuangbanna, 1964). Therefore, from the early 1960s on, many Dai intellectuals suggested that the improvement of the traditional Xishuangbanna writing system should be based on ***to$^{1}$teu$^{2}$ m'N$^{2}$*** (popular writing) used in Xishaungbanna, so that it would be not only easy for people to learn but also favorable for the maintenance of the Dai cultural heritage and the development of a unified Dai writing.

However, the reformed Xishuangbanna writing system was fully affirmed by Serdyuchenko who, during his visit to Kunming, Yunnan, in 1955, praised it as the most scientific and systematic reform while criticizing the first version of the improved Dehong writing system as conservative and imperfect. Serdyuchenko emphasized that we should not give in to some minority people's conservative thoughts and that we should persuade them and perfect their writing systems (Fu & Dao, 1955). Fu Maoji supported Serdyuchenko and believed that when initiating work on the Dehong Dai writing in 1953, we had proposed to perfect the writing system, but we compromised too much to maintain the orthographic convention of the traditional writing system. Some defects, such as two graphemes for one phoneme, and some unnecessary letters remained (Fu & Dao, 1955). At that time, Zhou Yaowen, as the Institute of Linguistics' representative in the Dehong writing reform project, enthusiastically agreed with Serdyuchenko and Fu Maoji. To take advantage of Serdyuchenko's weight in the controversy, Zhou Yaowen immediately

proposed to systematically improve the one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes, reduce or combine those redundant graphemes, and change those five diacritics for tones into five roman letters at Dehong's third conference on the improvement of the Dehong writing system in that same year. The second improvement resulted in a very different writing system from the traditional version, so that about 75% of the words in the language changed their orthographic forms.

At that time and in the following years, Dehong's Dai upper circles, intellectuals, and ordinary Dais who could read and write the traditional Dai writing opposed this new improvement. They commented that, after the second reform, the writing system appeared like a rope with many knots and that they "bumped into something" in their hearts when they read it. They also believe that the new tone marks made it difficult to tell which mark indicates the tones for which syllable, and that with diacritic tone marks it was easier and faster to segment syllables and read them. They went further to suggest that, without the reform of the tone marks, the second version of the improved writing system would be closer to the traditional writing system (Dehong, 1963). Therefore, in 1963, Dehong's writing reform committee met to revert the changes and returned to the five diacritic tone marks in the first version ratified in 1953. This third version of the writing system also included some minor changes to some finals. This was considered the best version, which combined the orthographic tradition and science of writing reform (Dehong, 1963).

However, this third version of the Dehong writing system caused problems for those who learnt the Dai writing between 1956 and 1963. They thought that the letters representing the tones were artistic and could be written, typed or composed easily. They demanded that those five letters be resumed to represent tones, and their voice grew stronger as this generation climbed up the hierarchy. In July, 1988, a proposal to resume the use of letters for tones and to abandon the diacritics was made by eleven people's representatives and was approved during the Sixth Session of the Eighth Dehong People's Congress. The third version returned to the second version as far as tone marks are concerned, resulting in the fourth version of the Dehong Dai writing system.

It was a retreat again. In Zhou Yowen's opinion, the second version was a product of Serdyuchenko's extreme advice, which failed to distinguish writing improvement and writing reform. This second reform created an insurmountable obstacle between the new version and the traditional version of the Dehong writing system, an obstacle that undermined the development of the new from the traditional Dai writing system and made it difficult for children to learn. Zhou Yaowen was an initiator and designer of the representation of tones by letters, and today he still feels guilty and regretful.

We have learned a hard lesson from the repeated improvements of the Dehong Dai writing system. Fortunately, these setbacks are relatively small. The third version of the improved Dehong writing system has been in use since 1963, with the only revision being the change of tone marks in 1988 and other minor changes to initials and finals. Therefore, the improved Dehong Dai writing system was feasible,

and basically successful, though the 1988 return to the representation of tones by letters made it more scientific but less traditional.

On the other hand, the reform of the Xishuangbanna writing system has not undergone repeated revisions as the Dehong one has done, but it experienced a huge fatal setback, a setback that has had a more extensive impact on Dai communities and given us a more difficult lesson. The radically reformed Xishuangbanna writing system, which affected the communication among Dai communities in China, Laos, Burma, and Thailand, and hurt the feelings of the old Dai intellectuals, was completely replaced by the traditional writing in 1986. This is actually a total rejection of the idea of seeking a perfect one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes and abandoning the old orthographic tradition.

However, by 1986, the reformed Xishuangbanna writing system had matured in Dai communities because it had sunk roots in primary school education and literacy campaigns. At that time, there were more Dai people who read and wrote the reformed system than those who read and wrote the traditional one. Thus, it was not easily replaced, as demonstrated by the ups and downs in the circulation of the local newspaper discussed in Section 2.2.2. It is the younger generations in rural Dai communities who read and write the reformed writing system that decide in which version of the writing system the local newspaper is printed. They have kept the reformed writing system alive. In education, some schools and teachers teach the reformed one while other schools and teacher teach the traditional one, because the government did not make corresponding policies nor necessary measures. Give this situation, it is highly likely that the traditional Xishuangbanna writing system will be again replaced completely by the reformed one in schools and publishing, but it will remain in the Buddhist temples where young Buddhists will learn it. This setback for the reformed writing system is more costly because of its timing.

### *3. 2. How to Provide Bilingual Education to Dai Communities*

The PRC Constitution stipulates that every ethnic group has the freedom to use and develop its own language and writing system and, at the same time, that the state popularize standard Chinese as a common language (see M. Zhou, this volume). In order to stimulate the development of minority education, the PRC's laws on minority autonomy also stipulate that schools which enroll a considerable proportion of minority students should provide bilingual education. These are the legal bases for the minority language and the Chinese bilingual teaching system. However, a system of bilingual education suitable for a specific minority community can not be achieved with one step, nor can it remain unchanged regardless of changes in the outside world. China has many minority groups. Their populations, distributions, written traditions, and domains of native language use and Chinese use are all different, so that each community has to explore what is the best for it instead of indiscriminately copying experiences from other minority communities or from foreign countries

The Dehong and Xishuangbanna prefectures have the largest Dai population and the longest history of using Dai writing systems. Since the founding of the PRC,

they have practiced Dai-Chinese bilingual education and have been models in this regard for minorities in Yunnan. Especially Dehong Prefecture has made striking progress since the 1950s.

Dehong has six ethnic groups, the Dai, Jingpo, Han, Achang, Lisu and De'ang, with a total a population of over 800,000. Dai is the major minority accounting for 30% of the population, and the Han is the majority, being 50% of the population, while the four other minority groups form about 20% of the population. What is unique about education in Dehong is that primary schools in rural Dai communities enroll predominantly Dai students and use Dai as the major language of instruction while secondary schools, which are usually located in towns, enroll students from different ethnic backgrounds and use Chinese as the language of instruction. Under these circumstance, how to use Dai in teaching and what Dai-Chinese bilingual education system to set up are controversial issues.

There are four different opinions. First, some Dais believe that, within a Dai autonomous prefecture, Dai should be the dominant language of instruction not only in primary but also in secondary schools and universities. They also hold the view that the Han have a system of schools from primary level to university level where Chinese is the only language of instruction and, to be equal, the Dai and other minority groups should have a system of schools where minority languages are the only languages of instruction. Second, some Dais suggest that Dai communities should adopt the Yanbian Korean model where bilingual education is conducted with Korean as the main language of instruction and Chinese as a supplement language of instruction from primary schools to universities (see Tai, Dai & Cheng, this volume). Third, some Dais think that in the ideal form of bilingual education primary schools in Dai communities would use Dai as the main language of instruction and Chinese as the supplementary while minority secondary schools and normal schools/colleges offer Dai as subject courses and other courses in Chinese. Fourth, some Dais even suggest that primary schools in Dai communities should use Chinese as the major language of instruction, not Dai, so that Dai students can improve their Chinese proficiency so that they can advance to secondary schools and colleges and better assimilate into the mainstream society.

What is the best choice? Of these four opinions, Yunnan and Dehong's education administrations regard the first one as too demanding and unrealistic given the reality of a multiethnic society and the limited domain of Dai use in Yunnan and Dehong; they also consider it impractical to mechanically copy the Yanbian Korean model because language use situations are different in Dehong and Yanbian; they consider the fourth option disadvantageous in improving educational quality and the students' Chinese proficiency because it fails to takes advantage of the enlightening and auxiliary function of the mother tongue. The education administrations, educators, and linguists generally believe that the third option is the most practical and feasible, but the fourth option still affects bilingual education from time to time, given the increasing influence of Chinese.

In fact, the focus of bilingual education in primary schools has been changing since the late 1970s. Primary schools in Dai communities in Dehong generally used Dai as the main language of instruction from the 1950s to 1977, but since 1978 Chinese has been gradually replacing Dai as the main language of instruction.

Dehong's practice may be beneficial to Dai children's primary education. It enables students to master primary level Chinese, so that they can succeed in Chinese secondary schools while enabling them to maintain their native language. It may be an effective bilingual education system for primary schools in Dai communities.

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## 4. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese into English by Huriyet.

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# PART IV:THEORY AND PRACTICE VIEWED FROM MINORITY COMMUNITIES

MAOCAO ZHOU

# THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF TIBETAN IN CHINA

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Tibetan, one of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) 56 officially recognized ethnic groups, has a population of over 4,000,000 (China, 1994, pp. 2–3), which is distributed in the Tibetan Autonomous Region and four neighboring provinces, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan. Within Tibet, the Tibetans are the dominant majority (above 95% of the population). Outside Tibet in those four provinces, the Tibetans either concentrate in smaller communities or are scattered in larger communities with other ethnic groups. This distribution of the Tibetan people has a consequence for the linguistic ecology of their language.

Tibetan, a Tibetan-Burman language of the Sino-Tibetan family, has three main vernaculars: Wei Tibetan, Kang Tibetan, and Ando Tibetan. It is traditionally believed that the Tibetan script was created from Sanskrit by Tumi Sanpuzha in the 7th century (see China, 1992, pp. 17–18). Tibetan was used to different extents in different regions before the founding of the PRC in 1949.

Since 1949, the PRC government has shown a great concern for the Tibetan language, and has made a series of policies to ensure its use and development. In this chapter, I introduce China's language policy for Tibetan, discuss the linguistic ecology for Tibetan, and examine the use of Tibetan in education, cultural activities, media, and government. I conclude this chapter with some thoughts on both positive and negative experiences from the use and development of Tibetan in China.

## 2. LANGUAGE POLICY AND PLANNING FOR TIBETAN

A language is the bearer of culture and the living fossils of human beings. It contains the material and spiritual civilization that has been accumulated over hundreds and thousands of years. Similarly, Tibetan is an immortal carrier of the extensive and deep Tibetan culture. It is the best media through which Tibetan culture, education, and economy can be developed, because Tibetan, with its special standing in the cultural psychology of the Tibetans, is an important symbol of its ethnic pride and a tool of thought that harmoniously fits with the pattern of Tibetan thinking. This further illustrates a point made by the UNESCO in Paris in 1981 that "native language is the key to beginning and succeeding" (China, 1993, p. 118),

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Since the founding of PRC, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chinese government have paid close attention to the use and development of minority languages and writing systems. The PRC constitution, laws on regional autonomy for national minorities, and other national laws all guarantee the freedom and rights of minority groups to use and develop their own languages (for details, see M. Zhou, this volume).

To implement these national laws and statues, all the local governments in Tibetan communities have enacted local laws or issued local regulations that guarantee the use and development of the Tibetan language. For instance, the Tibetan people's congress passed in 1987 *Preliminary Regulations on the Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language,* which was formally enacted as a law on May 22, 2002. As required by the local people's congress, in 1988 the Tibetan Autonomous Government announced *Detailed Rules and Regulations for Implementation of the Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language in Tibet* (see Tibet, 1999a, pp. 372–391). In 1999, in order to promote the use of Tibetan, the Tibetan Language Committee commended model Tibetan-use units (government offices, schools, and businesses that had exemplarily used Tibetan in their work) in Lhasa, and the Tibetan Autonomous Government and the Tibetan CCP Committee also commended many model Tibetan-use units in Tibet (see Tibet, 1999, p. 104).

Similarly,Tibetan autonomous prefectures in Qinghai and Gansu Provinces have passed working regulations for the Tibetan language, specifying the use of Tibetan in politics, economy, culture, education, public health, judicature, administration, publishing, mass media, film, television, communication, and scientific research while also establishing a system of rewards and commendations to promote Tibetan (China, 1997).

The standardization of Tibetan terms is considered the basis for the promotion of Tibetan. Since the middle 1990s, Tibet has drafted *Methods and Regulations for Standardization of Tibetan Terms,* which has been experimentally implemented, and preliminarily standardized more than 3,000 terms. These preliminarily standardized terms are distributed, for comments and feedback, to news agencies and translation departments in Tibet, to the minority language work committees of five provinces/regions with Tibetan communities, to research institutions and universities with Tibetan studies departments, and to relevant central government offices (Tibet, 2000, p. 8). In recent years, Tibet has also standardized Tibetan used in public signs in Lhasa and other cities in Tibet.

## 3. LINGUISTIC ECOLOGY AND DIFFERENCES IN TIBETAN USE

Two factors appear to have a deep impact on the linguistic ecology for Tibetan. The first is the relative concentration of the Tibetan population: the greater percentage of Tibetans is found in a community the more Tibetan is used, even by a non-Tibetan population there. The second is urbanization: the more a Tibetan community is urbanized the less Tibetan is used by Tibetans who become Chinese and Tibetan bilinguals.

*3.1. Higher Percentage of Tibetans and More Use of Tibetan*

Higher percentage (50% or more) of Tibetans is found in Tibet and in some of the autonomous prefectures and counties in the four neighboring provinces. In these communities, Tibetans speak Tibetan, and some non-Tibetans also speak Tibetan. The majority of Tibetan farmers and herdsmen use the Tibetan script to write letters, keep books, write notes, file lawsuits, and write couplets for festivals and cultural activities.

In Tibet where Wei Tibetan is spoken in most areas and Kang Tibetan is spoken in its eastern part, Tibetans generally use Tibetan at home and at work, whether they are ordinary people or government officials and whether they live in urban/suburban areas or agricultural/pastoral areas (see China, 1994b, pp. 162–168).

Outside Tibet, in Tibetan-dominant communities Tibetans generally use Tibetan in their everyday life, but more of them are bilinguals, speaking Chinese and/or other minority languages. For example, in Tibetan communities in Sichuan Tibetans speak either Kang or Ando Tibetan, but many of them are bilinguals (China, 1994b, pp. 397–424). Urban bilinguals, such as Tibetan teachers, students, and officials, use Chinese or both Chinese and Tibetan in public, but they mainly use Tibetan at home. On the other hand, rural bilinguals speak Tibetan at home and use Tibetan and Jiarong or Qiang in public. Similar situations are found in other Tibetan-dominant communities outside Tibet. In my fieldwork in Maqu County (of Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu) in the summer and fall of 2001, I found 90% of the Tibetans speaking Tibetan in communities where 80% of the population is Tibetan. This is pretty much true in most parts of Gannan where Ando Tibetan is spoken, with Kang Tibetan being used in some areas. In everyday life in Gannan, Tibetans speak Tibetan, especially in families in agricultural and pastoral areas, temples, and Tibetan hospitals. In urban areas, Tibetan is mainly used among Tibetans, but in pastoral counties people commonly speak Tibetan regardless of occasion and age. Only educated Tibetan officials and students can speak Chinese, but they use it only to communicate with members of other ethnic groups.

Bilingualism increases as the percentage of the local Tibetan population decreases. For example, in Muli Tibetan Autonomous County of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan, Tibetans (with the exception of women and children) generally speak Kang Tibetan as well as local Yi and Chinese (see China, 1994b, pp. 422–424). These bilingual/trilingual Tibetans use Tibetan in many occasions, but usually they communicate with members of other ethnic groups in Chinese and use Chinese at school. However, Tibetan is always spoken in religious activities in these Tibetan communities. In Tibetan communities with a smaller percentage of Tibetan population, Tibetan use may still vary, depending on the concentration of Tibetans in a particular community. For example, in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County of Gansu, Tibetan is basically used in temples, Tibetan hospitals, and in Tibetan families in communities with larger percentage of Tibetans. In areas of the same county where Tibetans live together with a larger percentage of members of other ethnic groups, they use Tibetan and Chinese, except the elders who speak only Tibetan. In towns there, Tibetan officials and students often speak Chinese or communicate with people completely in Chinese.

Generally speaking, members of other ethnic groups speak Tibetan or have completely shifted to Tibetan as their first language because they live in communities where Tibetans predominate. This is demonstrated by statistics made available by the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology (see China, 1994b, pp. 759–763, 821–823). In Tibet, for example, about 54% of the Lhoba people in Mutuo County, 40% of the Monba people in Cuona County, and 20% of the Monba people in Heituo County speak Tibetan. Over 1,000 Hui people living in Lhasa all speak Tibetan.

This situation is also found in Tibetan-dominant communities outside Tibet (see China, 1994b, pp. 8–13). In Yunan, some Primi people in Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture speak Tibetan too. In Gansu, many Tu (Mongour) people in Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County and adjacent regions speak Tibetan and Chinese, and many Tu, Hui, and Han people in Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture also speak Tibetan. In Qinghai, most Hui people in Hualong Hui Autonomous County speak Tibetan. Interestingly, in Henan Mongol Autonomous County of Qinghai, which is surround by Tibetan communities, though 86% of the population is Mongol and only four percent are Tibetan, over 20, 000 Mongols have shifted to the Tibetan language. In addition, some Bonan and Salar people in this county can speak Tibetan as well. Even in Sichuan, Mongols, Miaos, Lisus, and Dais who live in the same small communities with Tibetans in Liangshan speak Tibetan with various degrees of fluency.

It is clear from the above that a larger percentage or a higher concentration of Tibetans in a community helps to maintain the long-term dominant position of Tibetan, a point that is further illustrated below.

### *3.2. Migration, Urbanization, and Tibetan Use*

Since the founding of the PRC in 1949 and especially since the adoption of the open-door policy in the late 1970s, with rapid economic development and the improvement of transportation, members of ethnic groups everywhere have increased their contact. Increased language contact changes language use

Change in language use is first found in cities and towns, later spreading to their suburban communities. In Tibet, for example, educated Tibetans and Tibetan officials in Lhasa were the first to master Chinese when a large number of Han officials came to work for the Tibetan people after 1949. In Lhasa, nowadays, the number of Tibetans who speak Chinese has been increasing, starting from the urban area to suburban farming areas (China, 1994b, pp. 163–164).

Recently, Tibetans in urban and suburban areas in Tibet, Gansu, Qinghai, and Sichuan have begun to have more and more contact with the Han people, so that they have become bilingual with different proficiency levels in Tibetan and Chinese and use different languages under different circumstances. The general trend is that the larger the urban community is and the closer to it one lives, the higher the level of bilingual proficiency in Chinese and Tibetan.

Bilingualism among Tibetans is not limited to urban communities, but it is more common in agricultural areas than pastoral areas because agricultural communities

have more contacts with the Han people or more Han migrants. For instance, in some areas in Tibetan communities in Gansu, Qinghai, and Sichuan where the majority of the population is the Han, tens of thousands of Tibetans have now shifted to Chinese. Language use by the Tibetans in Tianzhu, Gansu Province, best illustrates this language shift situation (China, 1993, pp. 255–256). In Tianzhu, since 1949, the number of the Han people has increased rapidly to about 70% of the local population. The dominance of the Han population has changed the status of language use: Tibetans in urban and agricultural areas where they are a minority in number have given up or have begun to give up their native language. I have observed in my own community in Gannan that nowadays fewer and fewer Tibetan teenagers speak Tibetan, especially in urban and agricultural settings with an ethnically mixed population, though Tibetan in pastoral areas still holds its ground.

In short, language use in Tibetan communities shows three general patterns. First, Tibetan use increases from urban areas to rural areas, and to pastoral areas, while Chinese use decreases in exactly the same way. Second, older Tibetans use Tibetan more widely than younger Tibetans do, and common people speak Tibetan more frequently than Tibetan officials, students and government workers, whereas the use of Chinese is just the opposite among these groups of Tibetans. Third, more and more Tibetans are speaking Chinese and other languages now than before.

## 4. TIBETAN USE IN EDUCATION, CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, MEDIA, AND GOVERNMENT

Wei Tibetan, Kang Tibetan, and Ando Tibetan are not mutually intelligible to a large degree. Fortunately, Tibetans share a rather standard written language which has developed through a long history, so that Tibetans in different communities can generally read written Tibetan and understand oral Tibetan close to the written form. Hence, the dialect differences do not appear to strike Tibetans as barriers to communication, perhaps because of their geographical adjacency, and moreover because of their common psychology (their awareness of being Tibetans) based on their perceived common language – Tibetan. It also shows the supra-dialect Tibetan writing system's role in unifying Tibetans – the perception of one people with one single (written) language. The Tibetan writing system is commonly used in concentrated Tibetan communities in Tibet and the four neighboring provinces. Unlike the oral language, the use of the Tibetan written language is closely related to education. Let me examine in detail the use of Tibetan in education, cultural activities, media, and government.

### *4.1. Tibetan in Education*

Before the founding of the PRC, monastery education was the main means of Tibetan education and few common Tibetans were literate. Since the founding of the PRC, Tibetan education has been developing. Education and literacy campaigns have been geared to the needs of the masses of Tibetan farmers and herdsmen and

have made progress. I briefly review Tibetan use in education in Tibet and the four neighboring provinces.

*4. 1.1. Tibetan in Education in Tibet*

Immediately before the PRC took over Tibet, there were about 3,000 students in Tibet, including those in about 20 public schools and in many old style tutorial schools (China, 1993, p. 186). From 1951 to 1958, 13 primary schools and one secondary school were established, and later more schools were built. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, there were 120,000 students in primary schools, of whom 60- 70% were Tibetans in Tibet (see China, 1994b, pp. 165–167).

In the 1980s, with the exception of a few Chinese primary schools, Tibetan and Tibetan teaching materials were commonly used, and Chinese was offered from the third or fourth grade on. In most secondary schools, except Tibetan language courses, Chinese textbooks were generally used in other courses, but Tibetan teachers usually used Tibetan for explanation or tutoring (see Tian, 1998). In secondary technical schools and universities, only students who majored in Tibetan used Tibetan and Tibetan textbooks. In addition, in communities with a concentration of Monba, Lhoba and Dengren (the Deng people) populations, Tibetan was generally used in primary schools, but Chinese was used in other courses, with the local languages as the supplementary.

Since the 1990s, Tibet has established a preliminary bilingual education system. Apart from a few primary schools in urban areas, other schools have used Tibetan as the language of instruction (Tibet, 1999b, pp. 217–223). Tibetan as the language of instruction has been steadily promoted in middle schools, where there are 102 classes taught in Tibetan. In addition, some courses are taught in Tibetan to those not enrolled in those Tibetan classes.

A lot of work has been done to promote Tibetan as the language of instruction (Tibet, 2000, pp. 1–6). From the late 1980s to the late 1990s, the Tibet University had trained over 1,400 middle school Tibetan teachers, compiled 19 Tibetan language textbooks, edited and translated 181 textbooks on 16 subjects from primary school to high school, 122 reference books and 16 kinds of syllabi. It had also compiled Chinese-Tibetan dictionaries on the terminology of eight subjects, including physics, biology and mathematics, each with over 120,000 entries. The University has translated 55 educational books on patriotism for primary school students and produced a lot of teaching software, pictures, and materials for Tibetan language teaching

We can see that the level and scope of Tibetan use in education in Tibet are expanding. But there still exists a gap between reality and the reputation of Tibet as "the Center of Tibetan Culture." Three factors have contributed to the gap (see Geng & Wang 1989; Tibet, 1999b). First, historically, education in Tibetan was limited, so that masses of ordinary people had little chance to learn, causing a lack of people capable of teaching Tibetan. Second, because of this, there are many non-Tibetan-speaking Han teachers in secondary schools and universities (Geng & Wang, 1989, pp. 206–208). In addition, most Tibetans who have been trained in inland China

since the founding of the PRC have more opportunities to use Chinese than Tibetan, making it difficult for them to teach courses in Tibetan in secondary schools and universities. Third, the study, use and development of Tibetan is not emphasized enough (see Ciwangjunmei, 1999). Although a series of policies and measures have been adopted and some progress has been made, not enough has been done to promote the importance, usefulness, and long-term effect of the study and use of Tibetan. The measures and strength of governmental supervision are not enough. In addition, the supervisors of Tibetan language work lack initiative on their part, and their passive attitudes impede the promotion of Tibetan use. Insufficient use of Tibetan in schools in Tibet where over 90% of the population is Tibetan has serious consequences (Qunzeng, 1999; M. Zhou, 2000, 2001; Zhou & Ni, August 3, 2001). There is still a high percentage of illiterate Tibetans. Even among the educated Tibetans their educational level is lower than that of other minority groups. High illiteracy and poor education have hindered economic development in Tibet.

### *4. 1. 2. Tibetan in Education outside Tibet*

Of the four provinces with Tibetan communities, Qinghai and Gansu have done a relatively good job in using Tibetan in education. Sichuan has been making progress since the late 1980s, but Yunnan still has a lot of catch-ups to do before its Tibetan education reaches a level comparable to those in the three other provinces.

In Qinghai's Tibetan-dominant communities, a Tibetan educational system of primary schools, secondary schools, and normal schools has been established since 1949 and has been reinforced since the late 1970s (see Caiguo, 2000; China, 1995, pp. 765–766). Qinghai College for Nationalities, Qinghai Normal University, and other colleges have offered Tibetan language courses and trained many talented students of minority origin. In primary schools for Tibetans, teachers use Tibetan as the main medium of instruction in the lower grades, but they use both Tibetan and Chinese from the fourth grade on, with Chinese as a supplementary medium. In middle schools and normal schools for Tibetans, Tibetan literature and math are taught in the native language for lower-level students, but Chinese is used in all courses, except Tibetan language courses, for higher-level students.

In communities with mixed ethnic groups, Chinese is usually used in primary and secondary schools in urban areas, but Tibetan is used in primary schools in pastoral areas and villages, especially in schools for minorities. In these schools Tibetan students and teachers usually communicate each other in Tibetan after class (see China, 1993, pp. 280–305).

Qinghai's use of Tibetan in education displays three general patterns. First, Tibetan is more widely used in rural schools than in urban schools. Second, Tibetan is used more in primary schools than secondary schools and higher education. Third, Tibetan is more commonly used in minority schools than in ordinary schools.

In Gansu (mainly in Gannan), minority teachers and students in primary and secondary school in urban communities use Tibetan for daily communication among themselves, but Chinese is the main medium of instruction in these schools (see

China, 1993, pp. 245–258). The situation is similar in higher education, where Tibetan is used only in Tibetan language courses.

In minority schools and rural schools, Tibetan or both Tibetan and Chinese are used in teaching. In these primary schools, Tibetan is the main language of instruction while Chinese is supplementary, not being taught until the third grade. In these secondary schools, Tibetan is the main medium of instruction in junior high schools, and with the exception of Tibetan language courses, Chinese is mainly used in senior high schools where Tibetan is supplementary. In vocational schools, math, chemistry, physics, etc. are taught in Tibetan, while Chinese courses and political education courses are taught in Chinese. This type of bilingual education provides Tibetan students a good foundation for improving their overall education. Let us look at Xiahe County's (of Gannan) Tibetan Secondary School as an example (Gannan, 1999, pp. 1450–1457). In 1987, the school had 13 classes with total enrolment of 537 Tibetan students. In this school, up to 47% of its students were able to pass the national college entrance examination and go to college – a percentage much higher than the national average.

To ensure success in the use of Tibetan and maintenance of Tibetan culture, Gansu has allowed some diversity in teacher training (see China, 1993, pp. 101–110). First, universities have cooperated with local Tibetan communities to train their teachers. For example, the Chinese Medical College of Gansu has set up a Tibetan medicine department that offers Tibetan medicine courses in the Tibetan language and trains Tibetan medical doctors who can serve Tibetan communities both as doctors and teachers. Second, Gannan Normal School and normal schools in Gannan's several counties all have held special classes to train primary and secondary teachers to be bilingual in Tibetan and Chinese. Third, traditional temple education has also played a role. For example, Xiahe Labuleng Temple (in Xiahe County of Gannan) has set up six colleges to train Tibetan talents in Tibetan culture and Buddhism (Gannan, 1999, pp. 1458–1459). Religion courses comprise 70% of their instruction, Tibetan culture courses form 20%, and political education courses are ten percent. These colleges aim at the maintenance of Tibetan culture and the practice of Buddhism, but also facilitate Tibetan language education.

In Sichuan, the use of Tibetan in education had a slow start, but has made progress in bilingual education since the late 1980s. In the early 1950s, Sichuan adopted some measures on the development and use of Tibetan, requiring that textbooks for Tibetan, math, and other subjects be written or translated into Tibetan for primary schools. The use of Tibetan as a medium of instruction was interrupted during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In the late 1970s, Tibetan courses began to be offered again in primary and secondary schools in Tibetan communities and bilingual education developed very slowly.

In 1988, after a lot of experience and research, Sichuan passed *Opinions on Bilingual Education in Yi and Tibetan Schools* (see China, 1995, 814–822). This document has sped up teacher training, teaching materials development, and research for bilingual education. Up to the mid-1990s, in Tibetan communities in Sichuan 870 primary and secondary schools offered bilingual education (see Yang, 1996). Among these schools, 167 (including six secondary schools) use Tibetan as the major language of instruction, with a total enrollment of over 70,000 students,

half of the total Tibetan student population in Sichuan. At the same time, normal schools and normal colleges have begun to offer a Tibetan major and train bilingual teachers for liberal arts and sciences. The Southwestern University for Nationalities in Chengdu has established a department of Tibetan language and literature and offered majors in bilingual education, office management, government administration, and law, all in Tibetan. In 1992, the university also began to offer a master degree in (Tibetan-Chinese) bilingualism. The progress since the late 1980s shows the feasibility and necessity of an education in the native language in Tibetan communities in Sichuan (Hu, 1997, pp. 266–268).

In Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan, Tibetan has been barely used in schools. In the early 1980s, the prefectural government decided to offer Tibetan courses in primary schools in the Tibetan communities. But by the late 1980s, only 40 classes in about 20 (out of over 300) primary schools offered Tibetan courses, with an enrollment of about 500 (China, 1994b, p. 557). Tibetan was not used in secondary schools. When the late Banchan Lama, Vice-Chairman of the PRC People's Congress, inspected Diqing in 1986, he suggested more use of Tibetan in education (China, 1993, p. 113). His suggestion pushed local leaders to decide to emphasize and strengthen the use and teaching of Tibetan there. Since then Tibetan has been used as a language of instruction or a subject course in 214 primary and secondary schools (Duan, 1998), but it is still behind the use of Tibetan in education in Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan, not to mention that in Tibet.

### *4.2. Use of Tibetan in Cultural Activities and Maintenance*

Tibetan has been extensively used in maintaining Tibetan literary traditions and performing arts and preserving Tibetan classics. This is done via a network of state-run publishing houses, translation departments, and state-supported performing troupes.

At the national level, the *Minzu* Press in Beijing started to publish books in Tibetan in the 1950s, and at the provincal/regional level the Tibetan People's Press and Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan minority publishing houses also publish in Tibetan. In addition, local printing houses in the Ganzi, Aba, Guoluo, Hainan, and Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefectures publish in Tibetan to meet local needs. These publishing houses all have published a great number of Tibetan books. For example, the Tibetan People's Press has published 4,900 titles of Tibetan books, covering subjects in medicine, history, religion, tourism, etc., totalling about 60 million copies (Tibet, 1999c, p. 114, 2000, p. 47). The Dege Sutra Printing House printed over 7,000 copies of classic Tibetan books on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, geography, and Buddhist Scripture. In addition, the *Zhongguo Zangxue* Press has also published many Tibetan books on religion, Hindu logics, mathematics, medicine and education since its establishment in the 1980s. These presses publish literary works, popular science books, and classics as well.

Tibet has recently published more than 30 volumes of collections of literary works, in addition to the regular publication of literary magazines *Tibetan Literature* and *Bangjin Meiduo* for more than one hundred issues (Tibet, 1999c, p. 112).

Outside Tibet, other Tibetan communities publish occasional literary magazines. For Example, Gannan has published literary magazines, *Dasai'er* and *Gesanghuar.*

Much of the publishing work is devoted to documents, popular science books, and textbooks because state and local authorities have set up translating and editing organs within the government. In Beijing, the State Translation Bureau has a Tibetan department, which is responsible for translating the central government's policies, documents and publications. The Tibetan government also has a department in charge of translating its documents and policies. In addition, Tibet has a center for textbook translation and editing, which has translated and published 1,200 titles of teaching materials, covering over ten subjects, such as Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geography and science. These translations have promoted the use of Tibetan in natural sciences and other fields. In order to develop a market economy, an innovative approach has been taken to translating and disseminating information on commodities markets and applied science and technology for farmers and herdsmen. In 1999, for example, the Lhasa Science Committee edited and disseminated 20,000 copies of its *Handbook of Applied Technology for Agricultural and Pastoral Areas* (Tibet, 2000, p. 22). A similar job has been done in Tibetan communities outside Tibet, though not in a scale comparable to that in Tibet.

In addition to *Tripitaka,* Tibetan classics include numerous works on philosophy, prosody, astronomy, the calendar system, historical biography, language, literature, drama, poetry, mottos and so on (China, 1992, p. 25). These comprise an invaluable cultural heritage and must be preserved. The preservation has been done both in Tibet and outside Tibet.

In recent years, the PRC's Office of Classics Collection has allocated special funds to collect classics. Specific measures have been taken to do the job since a conference on Tibetan classics was held in Beijing in spring 2001. The library of China's Tibetan Studies Center, the National Library, the library of the Central University for Nationalities and other organizations have all participated in a project to modernize catalogues for Tibetan classics.

In Tibet, after sorting through all kinds of manuscripts and block-printed editions, the Tibetan People's Press and the Classic Publishing House of the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences have published dozens of classics such as works on traditional Tibetan medicine, Tibetan opera scores, and *Legends of Gesa'er,* some of which have been translated into Chinese. The Potala Palace is also preparing to publish the catalogue of all its collections.

A lot of work has been done to preserve classics in Tibetan communities outside Tibet. I review the situation in Gannan here as an example (Gannan, 1999, pp.1472–1516). Gannan has an abundance of precious classic Tibetan documents, such as the famous Zhuoni edition of the *Tripitaka* of *Ganzhu'er* and *Danzhu'er.* The Astronomy and Calendar System Institute has more than 300 volumes of collections of Buddhist manuscripts in Tibetan, the most important of which are the scrolls of the Buddhist scripture written by Master Zong Kaba. The Lapuleng Temple in Xiahe County has a collection of 65,000 volumes, the richest collection in Tibetan areas. Work has begun to do catalogue and conduct researching on the classics and prepare for their publication. However, this type of project requires a broad and deep knowledge of Tibetan and Tibetan culture. If the job is not done by

experts with rich background knowledge, it may do harm to the transmission, enhancement, and development of the excellent Tibetan literary culture and tradition.

The most popular art form among Tibetan communities is performing arts. In Tibet, there are 35 professional performance ensembles. They collect and modify Tibetan traditional dances and comedies for performances in rural and pastoral areas. Tibetan communities outside Tibet all have their own performing troupes. Gannan alone has 11 Tibetan performing troupes and opera groups (see Gannan, 1999, pp. 1469–1470). Almost each county has one. They all use Tibetan in their performances. A typical program of a Tibetan performing troupe includes modern plays, comic dialogue, and songs in Tibetan, which are warmly welcomed by Tibetan farmers and herdsman. Some county performing art groups do excellent jobs. For example, Maqu County's eight-member troupe has amazing programs in Tibetan, all created by itself, and its songs are broadcast in Gansu, Tibet, Qinghai, and Sichuan. Performing art groups like these are found in Tibetan communities in Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan, though their programs in Tibetan are not as extensive as in Tibet and Gansu.

### *4.3. Use of Tibetan in Media*

Facilitated by the development of information technology, Tibetan is now more regularly used in newspapers, radio, television, and film. The government has policies to support the development of programming in minority languages (see M. Zhou, this volume).

There are over ten newspapers in Tibetan, of which six are published in Tibet. Of all these newspapers, The *Tibetan Daily* is the most important and has a daily distribution of over 16,000 copies (Tibet, 2000, p. 5). The daily has four pages, about three of which are translations from news in Chinese and one of which carries news directly reported in Tibetan by its reporters in Lhasa, Shannan, Rihaze, and Naqu. Major Tibetan newspaper published outside Tibet are the Tibetan editions of *Qinghai Tibetan Daily,* the *Gannan Daily,* the *Aba Daily* and the *Ganzi Daily* (China, 1992, p. 24). In addition, there are nearly 20 popular and science magazines in Tibetan covering technology, literature, arts, education, religion, popular sciences, etc. Nine of them are published in Tibet, including *Tibet Studies, Tibet Education,* and five are published on Tibetan literature and arts. Outside Tibet, for example, Beijing publishes *The Chinese Tibetan Study;* Qinghai publishes *the Qinghai Education,* Sichuan publishes *The Gongna Mountain* in Ganzi and *Bangjin Meiduo* in Aba. All these magazines are welcomed by Tibetan readers.

Tibetan radio programs are one of the most accessible media. There are four levels of radio stations, national, regional, local, and county. The Central People's Broadcasting Station has a Tibetan department and broadcasts Tibetan programs six hours a day, with nine programs on economy, law, entertainment, homeland, etc. In Tibet, the radio system consists of the Tibet People's Broadcasting Station and Shannan (local) People's Broadcasting Station. In the late 1990s, the Tibet station broadcast programs in Tibetan for 14 hours and 30 minutes a day, and broadcast

important events in Tibetan and Chinese simultaneously (Tibet, 1999c, p. 1). It has nine special programs for Tibetan agricultural and pastoral areas as well as five programs on homeland affairs for overseas Tibetans. For example, these Tibetan programs include *Stage in the Air, Literature and Art Garden, Agricultural Air School,* and *Tibetan Lectures,* the last of which promotes the study, use and development of Tibetan. In addition to the transmission of programs by the Tibet Station, the Shannan Station broadcasts its own Tibetan programs for 45 minutes a day.

Gansu and Qinghai also have rather rich Tibetan radio programs. For example, the Gannan People's Station broadcasts mainly in Tibetan together with some Chinese programs for eight hours and forty minutes a day. It has news, entertainment popular science, law, youth, China's minorities, and other programs, all of which are retransmitted by county stations. The Qinghai People's Broadcasting Station has a Tibetan editorial office and uses scripts written in Tibetan for broadcasting. These programs are transmitted and/or enriched by local stations and wired-county stations throughout Qinghai's Tibetan communities.

Sichuan has done an uneven job of developing Tibetan radio programs. Ganzi Prefecture has many local broadcasting stations and a radio relay station. Most of its county stations have Tibetan programs. However, Aba Prefecture has no Tibetan programming, so that Tibetan communities there listen to programs broadcast by Qinghai and Gannan stations. Yunnan's Diqing Prefecture has three wired-broadcasting stations, but they broadcast in Chinese. Tibetans there usually listen to programs from other Tibetan communities.

Television programs have become more accessible since the 1990s. Television has similar structures of national, regional, and location stations but the programing is not as rich as radio programing. In Tibet, there are two stations, the Tibet Station and the Lhasa Station. In the late 1990s, the Tibet Station and the Lhasa Station broadcast Tibetan programs for two hours and one hour respectively everyday, while they mainly transmit programs by the Central Television Station in Beijing (Tibet, 1999c, p. 1). In Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan, television stations in Tibetan communities broadcast news programs in Tibetan and Chinese, but generally they also transmit programs from China's Central Television Station (China, 1994b, p. 164; Gannan, 1999, pp. 1684–1685).

Tibetan communities have many film projection teams, some of which are local and some are teams that tour rural areas. Tibet has over 600 such teams, plus a number of cinema theatres. Gannan of Gansu has more than 100 projection teams. These teams usually show Chinese films with Tibetan translations or subtitles. On average, Tibet translates about 25 Chinese films into Tibetan a year. For example, in 1998 Tibet translated 30 Chinese films into Tibetan (Tibet, 1999c, p. 110). Other Tibetan communities also translate Chinese films into Tibetan. For example, the Ganzi Film Company has translated 110 films into Tibetan (China, 1994b, p. 247). In addition, projection teams also show Chinese films with live oral explanation in Tibetan, a creative way to use Tibetan and to entertain Tibetans. Now some Tibetan communities systematically train team members to provide live interpretations.

Now we are living in an information and internet era. The codification of a language and its script is the basic technology for information processing and the

first step to joining the new era. In order to inherit and enhance Tibetan culture and make the Tibetan language and script meet the needs of the new age, in 1993 the Tibetan government began to standardize computer coding and processing for Tibetan, and set the Tibetan code in the frame of national and international standard codification norms. Through joint efforts by experts in the Tibetan language, computer science, and information technology, the standard Tibetan code system successfully passed the strict review by the international standard organization in 1997. Thus, Tibetan becomes China's first minority language with an international code. This means that Tibetan will play an important role in political, economic, and cultural development in Tibetan communities. China has now published the two national standards for use of Tibetan in information technology, *The Collection of Signs of Tibetan Designed for Information Technology and Exchange,* and *The First Part of Modular Pattern of Tibetan Codes and Signs* (Tibet, 2000, p. 8). Software for the Windows platform for Tibetan is being developed. All of these measures mark the great development of Tibetan writing in information processing, and an historic step toward the modernization of the language.

### *4.4. Use of Tibetan in Government*

Tibetan is used both in legislature, judicature, and administration in Tibet and outside Tibet, though its use is much less satisfactory in the latter communities.

In Tibet, the Tibetan People's Congress, the Political Consultative Conference, and the government usually publish their documents, reports, notices, and bulletins in Tibetan and Chinese. Government offices, social organizations, and business generally have their stationery and stamps in both Tibetan and Chinese. Though by law they should be in Tibetan (see Tibet, 1999a, p. 374), recently government documents, bulletins, and introduction letters are written more in Chinese than in Tibetan at all levels, a problem largely caused by the shortage of qualified translators (China, 1993, p. 165). In contrast, the Tibetan Supreme Court of Law and the Office of Public Prosecution have taken care to use Tibetan in the judicial process and law enforcement, treating equally law suits, letters of accusations, and reports whether written in Chinese or Tibetan and responding to them in both Chinese and Tibetan. In recent years, the Tibetan Supreme Court has translated and published booklets on the basics of laws and provided 2000 legal terms for local courts of law. The Tibetan Office of Public Prosecution has translated and edited a Tibetan-Chinese dictionary of basic legal terms. The Tibetan Department of Justice has published a two-volume, 1.2 million word *Reader of Basic Laws* (Tibet, 1999c, pp. 111–112). The regional CCP Party School has prepared special lectures on patriotism and relevant government policies, which are delivered in Tibetan to members of the local political consultative committees, the Budala Temple, the Dazhao Temple, and the Xiaozhao Temple, and to the Tibetan agricultural and pastoral regions in order to introduce the government's policies and regulations.

In Gansu and Qinghai Provinces, government documents, laws, bulletins, indictments, court verdict notices, instructions, and government and party seals and stationary are all written in both Tibetan and Chinese (China, 1993, p.

257). Speeches at the CCP's conferences, People's Congresses, and Political Consultative Conferences at different levels are translated into Tibetan. At these conferences, Tibetan is often used in group discussion when a considerable number of participants are Tibetan. Tibetan is also used in the judicial process in these two provinces. For example, in Yushu of Qinghai, both Tibetan and Chinese are used in trials and court hearings.

In Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces, Tibetan use in judicature and administration is less satisfactory. In Ganzi and Aba Prefectures of Sichuan as well as in Diqing Prefecture of Yunnan, nameplates of government offices and government seals are usually in both Chinese and Tibetan (China, 1993, p. 404). Some government documents are written in Tibetan, but not all of them. Speeches at local CCP and government conferences are sometimes translated into Tibetan, but not always either.

Clearly, the proportion of a Tibetan population in the area decides the scope of Tibetan use in government. In Tibet, Qinghai and Gansu, the Tibetan population is the majority or more concentrated in certain areas, a situation that guarantees Tibetan use.

## 5. SOME THOUGHTS ON THE STUDY, USE, AND DEVELOPMENT OF TIBETAN

I think that the study, use, and development of Tibetan in the last five decades have been affected by both objective factors and subjective ones.

Objective factors, such as language contact, urbanization, modernization, and population distribution, have determined Tibetan use in many ways. First, this is seen in the fact that Tibetan is used more often and wider in communities with a higher concentration of Tibetans, with a lower proportion of other ethnic groups, and with a greater physical distance away from urbanized areas. Language contact, largely promoted by population mobility and media in China, has spread from large cities to small towns, then to farming areas, and finally to pastoral communities. The influence of other languages, such as Chinese, penetrates more in communities with proportionally smaller Tibetan populations not in concentration than in communities with proportionally larger Tibetan populations in concentration.

Second, the use of Tibetan is also influenced by the age and gender structure of a population in a community: the more older people and women there are, the more Tibetan is used or vice versa. This reflects two factors, opportunities of contact and degrees of education. When one communicates with members of other ethnic groups, he or she is definitely influenced by them because he or she needs a common language. Young males are more mobile and thus have more opportunities for contact with other peoples, while seniors, women, and children usually stay at home. Tibetan students, officials, state workers, and business people who have more education, better Chinese, and more opportunities to work with members of other ethnic groups, use Tibetan less than Chinese.

Third, traditional institutions use more Tibetan than modern institutions. For example, throughout the ages, temples have used Tibetan and its scripts, and they

still use them for every activity. For modern institutions, the longer their history of Tibetan use, the better they use Tibetan. For example, Tibetan is more widely used in education than other institutions such as media.

There are six subjective factors that reflect the attitudes of government officials and the Tibetan masses, and that may have hindered progress in Tibetan use and development. First, some government offices and leaders do not fully understand and/or do not pay enough attention to what the PRC Constitution, the Laws of Regional Autonomy for Minorities, and the Compulsory Education Law have stipulated with regard to the freedom and right of minorities to use and develop their native languages and writing systems (see M. Zhou, this volume). Although local governments at different levels have formulated local regulations and established local institutions to implement these freedom and rights, they usually do not realize the importance, reality, and long-lasting nature of studying and using minority languages and writing systems. Consequently, there are policies but no concrete measures for implementing them. Only full attention to language policy by local leadership can ensure administrative measures for the implementation of language laws and regulations. For example, the Tibet government has recently done a lot of specific work on the study, use and development of Tibetan such as rewarding model units and individuals, measures that are effective. But Tibetan use in education in Tibet still needs a high level of understanding, attention and concrete measures.

Second, the lack of enough qualified Tibetan teachers is the main problem for the use of Tibetan in education. Education is essential for social and economic development. In order to minimize the gap between the Tibetan area and inland areas in modernization, we should have enough qualified teachers in the first place. We should invest in teacher education without hesitation and train Tibetan teachers in Tibetan communities as well as in inland Han communities. Qualified teachers are those who have both professional and subject training as well as bilingual training. These teachers can adjust teaching methods and update and diversify teaching materials according to their students' levels and real needs. Only when primary and secondary schools are staffed with qualified bilingual teachers in every subject, can the students' transition from primary school to secondary school be consistent and smooth. Consistent and smooth transitions guarantee that students can adjust to teaching and thinking in both Tibetan and Chinese and succeed in learning languages and sciences.

Third, high illiteracy among Tibetans is a serious problem (see M. Zhou, 2000). All Tibetan communities should continue Tibetan literacy campaigns aiming not only at wiping out illiteracy but also at promoting the importance of studying and using Tibetan. Tibetan should be used to teach the basics of applied sciences and laws, so that the citizens can learn the language with enthusiasm and at the same time improve their education level as well as the economy and spiritual civilization in Tibetan communities. Just as UNESCO's 1981 Paris meeting pointed out, native language is the most powerful tool for wiping out illiteracy, non-education, discrimination, and poverty (China, 1994a, p. 123).

Fourth, not enough has been done in language planning and standardization to narrow the gap between written Tibetan and the three major Tibetan vernaculars.

The supra-dialectal nature of the Tibetan writing system indicates that there is a gap between the regional dialects and the written language (including differences in grammar, lexicon, and phonology), which also requires standardization and unification. At the same time, the norms of spoken Tibetan should be formulated earlier, so that obstacles in Tibetan education and communication can be eliminated. Presently, because of the dialectal differences, Tibetan is read and written in each region according to the local pronunciation, a situation that hinders communication. Therefore, it is necessary for all Tibetan communities to discuss these issues together and to reach a consensus on the standardization of new terms, grammar, lexicon and phonology, so that standard Tibetan can be used more effectively in education and communication.

Fifth, there is not sufficient funding for the promotion of the use and development of Tibetan. Without sufficient funding, inside or outside schools, all people can do is to talk about Tibetan use and development without actually doing much. One solution requires local governments to budget special funds for the use and development of Tibetan.

Last, work in minority language and language rights started relatively late, and the existing regulations and laws are usually too abstract to implement. So it is necessary to make more detailed and effective regulations and laws according to the reality of each region. That way we will be able to carry out our task of using and developing Tibetan in accordance with the laws, which must be strictly observed and violations of which must be prosecuted.

In conclusion, the regulations for the use and development of Tibetan are not enforced as they should be, and they mostly remain on paper only. Insufficient use and development is undermining the development of native culture and education. Therefore, we must focus on understanding, action and education. Only in this way can we improve the use and development of Tibetan, so that we can inherit our excellent cultural heritage, master modern sciences and technology, and promote progress in our economy and society.

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## 6. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese into English by Huriyet.

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XULIAN LI & QUANXI HUANG

# THE INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ZHUANG WRITING SYSTEM

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Zhuang people live mostly in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and Wenshan Zhuang-Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province. There are also some isolated Zhuang communities in Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, and Hunan provinces. In Guangxi, there are 52 counties populated by the Zhuang people, who make up 90% of the total population in nine counties and 50% of that in 39 counties. According to the 1990 national census (China, 1994a, p. 3), the total population of the Zhuang people was 15,555,820, and it is now estimated to be roughly seventeen million (statistics of the 2000 census not officially available yet), the largest ethnic minority group in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

The autonyms of the Zhuang vary from place to place. They are *Bouxcuengh, Bouxyaex, Bouxnoengz, Bouxdoj, Bouxmbanj, Bouxraeuz,* and *Bouxrungh,* with the number totalling over twenty (see China, 1994b, pp. 838). The Zhuang is official name for this native ethnic group originated in southern China. The origin of this native group can be traced, in historical records in Chinese, to the Spring-Autumn and Warring States periods (722–221 BC). The Zhuang language, a member of the Tai languages of the Sino-Tibetan family according to most Chinese linguists, is divided into Southern and Northern dialects with two rivers (the Youjiang and the Yongjiang) constituting the boundary (see Wei & Qin, 1980, pp. 78–96; J. Zhang, 1990). The population of Northern Zhuang speakers is 68% of the Zhuang population, while that of Southern Zhuang speakers is 32%. There are seven subdialects in the Northern Zhuang dialect, i.e., Guibei, Liujiang, Hongshuihe, Yongbei, Youjiang, Guibian, Qiubei, and Lianshan, and five subdialects of the Southern Zhuang dialect, Yongnan, Zuojiang, Dejing, Yanguang, and Wenma. Phonologically, one of the most outstanding distinctive features of Zhuang dialects is that there is a set of aspirated initials in the Southern dialect which is absent in the Northern dialect. Subdialects within either dialect are mutually intelligible, but speakers of the two dialects can't understand each other unless they switch to Chinese.

In daily life, Zhuang is the main means of communication because of the Zhuangs' deep emotional attachment to it, but Chinese is the only language that is

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used on official occasions (see China, 1994b, pp. 840–841). In the nine counties where the Zhuang comprise 90% of the total local population, Zhuang is spoken in most occasions except official occasions and in many classrooms. In the 18 counties where the Zhuang make 70-80% of the total local population, both Zhuang and Chinese are spoken on non-official occasions. But in the vast rural areas, Zhuang is the farmers' daily language. According to a late 1980s survey (China, 1994a, p. 838), monolingual Zhuangs form 42.29% of the total Zhuang population, while Zhuang-Chinese bilinguals make 54.72%.

Because of a long history of contact, Zhuang has been strongly influenced by Chinese. There is a large amount of Chinese loanwords in Zhuang that were borrowed in different historical periods. Among these loans, a good many of them were introduced from Guiliuhua, a subdialect of Mandarin Chinese. According to the above survey, a large numbers of Zhuang can speak fluently or reasonably well Chinese dialects such as Cantonese, Guliuhua, and Hakkha. But for most periods of history, the Zhuang did not have their own writing system. The Zhuang often tried to create a native writing system. During the Tang Dynasty (618–907), imitating *liushu* (six motivations) of Chinese characters, Zhuang literati initiated a Zhuang character system called *Sawndip* in Zhuang, which figuratively means uncooked characters (see Y. Zhang, 1987). In the next thousand years, *Sawndip* was the main auxiliary instrument for communication among the Zhuangs. There is a large amount of stories, mythologies, legends, folksongs, proverbs, operas, medical prescriptions, genealogies, and contracts written in *Sawndip.* However, without official standardization and promotion, *Sawndip* was not spread, and it has remained a symbol of a strong hope among the Zhuang for a writing system of their own.

## 2. LINGUISTIC SURVEY AND CREATION OF A WRITING SYSTEM

One of the important tasks faced by the PRC in the early 1950s was to support ethnic minorities with the creation or reform of their native writing systems (see Q. Zhou and Sun, this volume). On May 2, 1951, the State Council's *Several Resolutions of the State Council on the Ethnic Affairs* stipulated that a steering committee be established under the State Council's Culture and Education Commission that would be in charge of the supervision and organization of studies of minority languages and the creation and improvement of writing systems for minorities (China, 1996; p. 429).

With the guidance of this committee, in February 1952 the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences dispatched three linguists, Yuan Jiahua, Wei Qingwen (a native of Zhuang), and Zhang Junru, to survey Zhuang in Guagxi (Yuan et al, 1953). For the Zhuang linguistic survey, these three scholars set up a training class at Guangxi Institute for Nationalities with over 30 Zhuang trainees. After 15 months of training in linguistics, the trainees were able to write down Zhuang dialects in IAP or romanization. During the training they also went to various locations to survey Zhuang dialects, and they worked out a romanized writing system based on the Zhuang dialect spoken in Laibin County for experimental use in a local school in Laibin (for the 1952 writing system, see M.

Zhou, 2003, p. 168). It was the first trial in the creation of a Zhuang writing system (Liang, 1993; Yuan, 1954). After the linguistic survey, scholars from different government departments and institutions reached a consensus that two Zhuang writing systems, sharing as much similarities as possible, should be created for intelligibility between Northern and Southern dialects speakers, because in Zhuang communities there was no political, economic, and cultural center whose dialect could serve as the base dialect for a single writing system for all Zhuangs (Yuan, 1952)

In Beijing on May 30, 1954, the Institute of Linguistics held a meeting for the Zhuang representatives to the National People's Congress so that they could express their opinions regarding the creation of a Zhuang writing system. After a steering committee on the Zhuang language was set up in Gauangxi in August 1954 to be in charge of linguistic surveys and the creation of Zhuang writing systems, it asked Beijing's Institute of Linguistics for more help. In response, the Institute sent Yuan Jiahua, Luo Jiguang, and Wang Jun to Guangxi, where they led three groups of the Zhuang linguistic survey team into 54 sample communities in 49 counties to collect linguistic, political, and economic information and information about public opinion that might be used for the selection of one or two base dialects for the creation of a writing system. In January 1955, the three groups returned to Nanning, the Capital of Guangxi, to analyze the collected information, and after discussion it made a list of six candidate subdialects, each with pros and cons, for the base dialect or dialects for the Zhuang writing system (see Yuan & Luo, 1955).

At the conference on issues related to the Zhuang writing system between May 27 and 30, 1955, with participation by Fu Maoji and G. B. Serdyuchenko, Yuan Jiahua proposed that two writing systems be created, one for the North and one for the South, but Yuan's proposal met strong opposition by the Zhuang representatives, who argued that the coexistence of two writing systems would hinder communication and unity among the Zhuang people. Serdyuchenko originally agreed with Yuan's proposal, but after hearing the representatives' opinions and reconsidering the linguistic materials he suggested that in the Soviet Union the standard pronunciation and the base dialect were determined respectively, that is, only one sample speech community might be selected exclusively as the model for the standard pronunciation while the standard vocabulary might be taken from a base dialect that was spoken by most speakers of the language (for details on Serdyuchenko's role and the Soviet model, see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 169–195, 251–258). His suggestion balanced all those different and contradicting opinions because it provided a solution with one writing system instead of two (Li, 2000; Serdyuchenko, 1955). Finally, for the new Zhuang writing system, the less diverse Northern dialect spoken by two thirds of the total Zhaung population was chosen as the base dialect, and the phonological system of Zhuang spoken in Shuangqiao, Wuming County, was chosen as the standard pronunciation because Wuming is very close to Nanning, the Capital of Guangxi.

The draft scheme of the first official Zhuang writing system took into account not only the Chinese *Pinyin* but also the phonological characteristic of Zhuang, such as pre-glottalized voiced stops, the distinction of vowels by length, and the tonal system (for the writing system, see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 194–195; also see Liang,

1993). The design of the draft scheme considered these four principles: (1) the Zhuang system should be phonemic, with one grapheme for one phoneme, so that a grapheme may represent the same phoneme, across dialects/subdialects, though it is phonetically different; (2) the standardization of Zhuang grammar and vocabulary would be based on those of the Northern Zhuang dialect; (3) the standard pronunciation should be selected from a subdialect of the Northern dialect, one that contains the most phonological features of the Southern dialect; and (4) the writing system should be based on the Roman alphabet and avoid additional symbols. The actual draft scheme had six non-Roman letters and five non-Roman tonal symbols (see Chen, 1993).

The draft scheme of the Zhuang writing system was submitted to the central government on November 11, 1955, and it was published by the *Guangxi Daily* on December 12 of the same year to solicit public comments. In the summer of 1956, when the Institute of Linguistics and the State Ethnic Affairs Commission dispatched seven teams to carry out national wide minority language surveys, Team One, led by Yuan Jiahua, Luo Jiguang, Wang Jun, and Yan Xueqiong, continued the survey of Zhuang in Guangxi. The team sent a special group to Wenshan in Yunnan and surveyed ten local Zhuang communities there. Later, based on experiences with using this system in local literacy campaign and feedback from Zhuang speakers, the team made some minor revisions of the draft scheme (see Chen, 1993; Liang, 1993).

On July 1956, the revised draft of the Zhuang writing system was submitted by the local Zhuang autonomous authorities in Guangxi to the central government. Later, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Institute of Linguistics held a meeting and invited over 30 representatives and scholars from the Chinese Committee on Script Reform, the Central Institute (University) for Nationalities, Beijing University, and other government offices to examine and discuss the draft scheme. The meeting produced, in the name of the Chinese Committee on Script Reform, a report titled *Several Principles of Alphabet Design in the Schemes of Zhuang and Other Minorities' Writing Systems,* which was submitted, together with the draft scheme, to the State Council on November 1957. On December 10 of the same year, the State Council officially responded to the above report:

> The state council approves your opinions in the report on the scheme of the Zhuang writing system. The Zhuang writing system can be gradually promoted in Zhuang communities, and in the results of promotion should be regularly assessed so that the scheme can be perfected. Whenever a revision is needed, the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region should submit a proposal to the State Commission on Ethnic Affairs for ratification. The State Council approves the five principles for the creation of writing systems for minority languages. From now on the design of minority writing systems should abide by these principles. (China, 1991, p. 426)

The five principles have had a deep impact on the creation and reform of writing systems for China's minority languages over the past several decades (see Sun and Q. Zhou for details, this volume).

The significance of the creation of Zhuang writing system and its promotion is both historically and realistically far reaching. First, the Zhuang system is the first new writing system supported and authorized for community and national use by the central government after the founding of the PRC, and it embodies the CCP's

consistent policy of equality among China's ethnic groups and languages (see M. Zhou, this volume). Second, the creation of the Zhuang writing system marked the end of the Zhuang's history of no scientific and unified writing system. It provided a new powerful instrument for the Zhuang people to get an education and study technology, to exchange thoughts, to develop their native culture, and to promote their self-confidence and pride. It marked a new era for the Zhuang. Third, the ratification and promotion of the romanized Zhuang writing system not only provided valuable experience for the romanization of other minorities' writing systems, but it also made it easier for the Zhuang to learn *Putonghua* (Mandarin) and provided conditions for the Zhuang people to communicate with the international community.

By the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, when the draft scheme of Zhuang writing system was being revised, all non-Roman letters were replaced with Roman letters (see Wang, 1984). The revision followed these two principles: (1) there should be as few changes as possible of the draft scheme in order to maintain both the representation of the Zhuang phonological system and the scheme's similarity to Pinyin; and (2) only Roman letters should be used for both domestic and international compatibility. In comparison to the draft scheme, the revised scheme enjoys several advantages. It is convenient for typewriting, typesetting, printing, and international communication; it provides a consistent representation of the Zhuang phonological system; it makes Pinyin easy to learn for Zhuang readers; and it is consistent with the draft scheme except that *e* in *ie, ue,* and *we* represents a long vowel while in *ae* and *oe* it represents a short vowel.

In August 1981, the Guangxi Ethnic Affairs Commission and Minority Language Work Committee submitted *The Report on Opinions in the Revision of the Zhuang Writing System Program* to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, which in February 1982 approved the changes and authorized Guangxi to publish the revised scheme (for the writing system, see M. Zhou, 2003, 253–254; also see China, 1992, pp. 141–143). On April 26, 1982, the People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region published the revised scheme of the Zhuang writing system and asked that the new writing system be taught in communities with a higher percentage of Zhuangs and that it be fully used for publications (see China, 1995, pp. 248–260; Liang, 1993).

## 3. INSTITUTIONS FOR ZHUANG LANGUAGE WORK

Since the 1950s, institutions for Zhuang language work have been gradually established within different levels of local governments in Guangxi, institutions that have made efforts to assure the use of the Zhuang writing system in different social domains (see Guangxi, 2000).

We review the history of these institutions at two levels, the regional level and local level. At the regional level, according to the central government's instructions on the creation and reform of writing systems for minority languages, Guixi Zhuang Autonomous Region (part of Today's Guangxi) set up its Steering Committee on Research on the Zhuang Writing on July 23, 1954, a committee that was charged

with overseeing surveys of Zhuang and the creation and promotion of a Zhuang writing system. The Committee reinforced leadership in linguistic surveys, Zhuang writing system experiments, and the finalization of the draft scheme of the writing system. It compiled Zhuang textbooks and basic readers, and it sped up the establishment of a Zhuang publishing house, printing press, broadcasting, schools, newspaper, and local institutions for Zhuang language work (see Guangxi, 1957).

In March 1956, Guixi Zhuang Autonomous Region was renamed as Guixi Zhuang Autonomous Prefecture, but the Steering Committee continued its tasks. Besides the administrative office, the committee set up six offices in charge of the Zhuang writing scheme, publishing, lexicography, grammar, literature/arts, and promotion, with over one hundred employees.

In March 1957, the Steering Committee was renamed as the Guangxi Committee on Zhuang Writing and expanded to take charge of Zhuang language work in the whole Gaungxi. It quickly founded, with its publication office as the base, Guangxi Minority Publishing House in May and started to publish *Zhuang News* in July.

With the establishment of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region on Mach 5, 1958, the Committee was once again renamed as the new autonomous government's Minority Language Work Commission and given increased responsibility (see Guangxi, 2000). Qin Yingji, then a vice governor of the region, chaired this new commission, which consisted of an administrative office, a promotion division, a research division, and the office of *Zhuang News,* with 151 language workers. It also ran the Guangxi Zhuang Language School with 1,151 employees. But the commission was disolved in 1960, with only a few language workers from the promotion division transferred to the Region's Department of Education's new office for the Zhaung writing system, an office with merely six language workers. Three years later, in 1963, the commission was re-established, with 38 employees (and later five) working in the offices of Administration, research, the *Zhuang News,* and the minority press. The commission resumed its work on Zhuang and reopened Zhuang language schools, but it was paralyzed when the Cultural Revolution broke out in 1966. And in 1970, the commission was again disbanded with most of its employees dispersed to rural Zhuang communities.

Ten years later, in 1980, the Guangxi government authorized the restablishment of this Zhuang language work institution as its Minority Language Work Commission, with 25 to 35 language workers. On October 17, 1988, the Guangxi CCP committee and the government issued a joint circular, renaming the Minority Language Work Commission as the Steering Committee for the Zhuang Writing System. The circular stated that the promotion of the Zhuang writing system in Zhuang communities was an important implementation of the right of autonomy accorded by *the Law on National Regional Autonomy of the PRC,* and it was also an important means to reform minority education and to strengthen primary education in Zhuang communities. With members from the leadership of various departments of the Guanxi government, this new steering committee coordinates the promotion of the Zhuang writing system among these various departments and provides leadership for such work, but it no longer directly oversees everyday work for the promotion and use of the Zhuang writing system.

In Nanning in January 1986, the Central government's Bureau of Translation, which translates Marxist-Leninist works and the works of Mao Zedong into minority languages, established its Zhuang branch office, an office that became the Zhuang Translation Office of the Center of Minority Language Translation in 1990. The twenty-one-member Zhuang Translation Office is the only organization in China that translates works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao into Zhuang. The office is also in charge of translating documents into Zhuang for the CCP's National Congress, the National People's Congress, and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference as well as providing simultaneous interpretation for the Hall of the People's Congress, where sessions of the above congresses are usually conducted. This office ensures that the Zhuang language and writing system are used in national political processes.

At the local level institutions for the promotion of the Zhuang writing system have also been gradually established to form a wide network for promoting the Zhuang writing system in Guangxi, but they have also experienced the ups of the 1950s and the years since the 1980s and the downs of the 1960s and 1970s. From 1956 to 1957, committees for the promotion of the Zhuang writing system were established in the prefectures of Bose and Yishan, and an office was set up in the Yongning Prefecture. At county and district levels, all counties of the prefectures mentioned above and other counties with a considerable Zhuang population, such as Longsheng, Luzhai, Yangshuo, Hexian, Guixian, and Guiping, had set up committees for the promotion of the Zhuang writing system, usually chaired by local leaders and directed by heads of local Zhuang language schools. These schools organized cadres and the masses to learn to spell and write in the new Zhuang writing system. The Guixi Zhuang Language School was established to train Zhuang teachers for secondary schools and Zhuang language workers for these prefectures, while Zhuang language schools operated by prefectures trained Zhuang teachers for rural middle and primary schools. Some counties also founded Zhuang language schools to train local teachers and language workers. Since the 1980s, institutions at both prefecture and county levels have resumed their efforts to promote Zhuang writing system in local Zhuang communities (see China, 1995, pp. 795–802) Gaungxi, 1998).

Under the leadership of the CCP and with the support of local governments, these institutions and Zhuang language professionals have made great contributions to the development of the Zhuang culture and promoted the use of the Zhuang writing system in literacy campaigns, education, administration, courts, cinema, broadcasting, translation, publishing, natural language processing, and academic studies, which greatly facilitate socioeconomic and cultural development in Zhuang Communities (see China 1994, pp. 94–157; Guangxi, 1998; Y. Wei, 1989; Zeng, 2000).

## 4. THE PROMOTION AND USE OF THE ZHUANG WRITING SYSTEM

The romanized Zhuang writing system was created 45 years ago. In these 45 years, the promotion of the new Zhuang writing system went through three periods.

*4.1. The Start-up Period (1957–May 1966)*

During this period the promotion of the Zhuang writing system focused on literacy campaigns in rural Zhuang communities, with the writing system being used experimentally in a few primary schools (see China, 1994b, p. 841). In May 1957, 14 counties offered 4,055 Zhuang literacy classes with 350,000 participants. Meanwhile, Zhuang language and math textbooks were experimentally used in eight first-grade classes in seven schools in Wuming, Longzhou, Liucheng, Pingguo. On January 20, 1958, Guangxi's People's Congress issued a circular requesting that institutions at all levels actively mobilize cadres, especially those of Zhuang origin, to learn the Zhuang writing system. Thus, Zhuang courses mushroomed everywhere in Guangxi and enrolled 2,900,000 Zhuang learners, that is, 90% of the target population (see Chen, 1993). In March, 1962, Guangxi's Department of Education identified eight key counties where Zhuang should be taught in primary schools. By then there were actually eleven counties where Zhuang was used as the language of instruction in primary schools. Two years later, on December 9, 1964, Guangxi's Minority Language Work Commission issued the *Report on Opinions in Implementing Literacy Campaign among the Zhuang Masses,* stressing that (1) with the improvement of the economy, the literacy campaigns in Zhuang must be carried out by plan; (2) both literacy campaign teachers and Zhuang language workers should be trained; (3) institutions for the promotion of the Zhuang writing system should be restored at every level, and (4) relevant counties should strengthen their experiments with Zhuang in literacy campaigns.

During this period achievements were made in the training of Zhuang language workers, in Zhuang studies, and in publication in Zhuang (see Guangxi, 2000). In 52 counties with a large Zhuang population, Zhuang language schools trained over 8,000 professional Zhuang teachers, 40,000 literacy campaign teachers, and 16,000 farming technicians. Various presses published 10,440,000 copies of 430 different books in Zhuang, 1,028 issues of *Zhuang News,* and many issues of the Zhuang editions of *The People's Pictorial* and *The Nationality Pictorial,* both of which were distributed internationally. Books on Zhuang and Zhuang-Chinese bilingual dictionaries were also published, including *Zhuang-Chinese Vocabulary, Basic Zhuang Vocabulary, An Introduction to Zhuang Grammar, Grammar of Wuming Zhuang,* and *An introduction to Zhuang-Chinese Contrastive Grammar.* Starting in 1957, programs in Zhuang were broadcasted by China's Central Radio Station. The Zhuang script began to appear on China's currency *Renminbi.* In Guangxi, governmental seals, tablets, public signs, and traffic signs were bilingual.

The nine years of this period achieved a lot and laid a good foundation for the use and development of the Zhuang writing system.

*4.2. The Stagnancy Period (May 1966–1979)*

The Cultural Revolution began in May 1966, knocking out all levels of institutions for the promotion of Zhuang writing system, including institutions that used Zhuang. The *Zhuang News* stopped its circulation in the first half of 1966. The Guangxi Minzu Press was closed in 1969, and a year later, in 1970, Guangxi Zhuang

Language School was also closed. Few Zhuang people learned the Zhuang writing system in those years. Millions of Zhuangs who had just learned to read and write some Zhuang earlier became illiterate again because there was not anything to read. The only Zhuang users were some Zhuang people who kept using Zhuang to write dairies, folk songs, and keep work records.

### *4.3. The Recovery and Development Period (1980–present)*

During this period, Guangxi's CCP committee and the government issued a series of official documents to encourage the use of Zhuang in all domains of the society. The Guangxi CCP committee's principle states that active but steady steps should be taken to popularize gradually and according to plan the Zhuang writing system in schools, offices, and rural Zhuang communities, and that the method of achieving success in the local domain before spreading gradually to all domains should be relied upon. The achievements of this period have been made in six spheres (see Li, 1997; Wei, 1990; Zhang, 1990; Zheng, 2002).

First, all the institutions for Zhuang language work were restored, as discussed above. In addition, a Zhuang edition program of the Guangxi People's Broadcasting Station was set up in 1980, a press for a comprehensive periodical for native culture, *Sanyue San* (March 3), was founded and began publishing in 1986, and the Division of Zhuang Promotion was established within Guangxi's Department of Education. More importantly, these old and new institutions took the lead in learning Zhuang. In 1982 Zhuang classes were offered to the regional government's offices and departments (see China, 1994b, pp. 100–101, 1995, pp. 850–851; Y. Wei, 1989). College graduates who were of Zhuang origin and were assigned to work in government were sent to Zhuang language schools for training in Zhuang. In 1987, for example, there were 73 Zhuang classes for cadres, and over 2,000 government officials and staff members received training in the Roman Zhuang writing system. According to relevant laws, the Guangxi government issued two circulars in 1984 and 1991 respectively that requested that all government offices and organizations use Zhuang-Chinese bilingual signs, seals, and stationary. Now all plates and seals and the stationary of government organizations and some non-government institutions in Zhuang communities are bilingual. This symbolizes Zhuang's successful role in local politics.

Second, Zhuang-Chinese bilingual education has been adopted in primary schools as a part of general education (China, 1994b, pp. 841–842; Guangxi, 2000). At the beginning of this period, the Guangxi government made it clear that Zhuang should be used as the language of instruction in schools where the Zhuang was the majority, and it emphasized that the experiment of mother tongue instruction should be carried out first in primary schools. Zhuang could be compulsory in middle school but not required in high school. It should be pointed out that the adoption of Zhuang as the language of instruction was a historical breakthrough. From 1981 to 1990, Guangxi's Minority Language Work Commission oversaw the experimental use of Zhuang. In autumn 1981, eight primary schools in Wuming and Debao counties opened experimental Zhuang classes with 167 first-graders. Then, Mashan,

Shanglin and some other counties also started experimental bilingual schools. By 1989, experimental bilingual instruction had spread to 306 primary schools in 45 counties with 1,071 classes, and 308,791 students received mother tongue training. Twenty-two counties founded minority secondary schools with 67 classes and 3,499 students.

Teachers participating in the experimental use of Zhuang were energetic in the study and practice of bilingual education, and they derived the following principle: "combined use of Chinese and Zhuang with Zhuang as the focus and fluency in both languages with fluency in the mother tongue first." (See Dai et al, 1997, pp. 283–285). According to this principle, the language of instruction in the preschool classes of the experimental schools is predominantly Zhuang, and the pupils learn spelling in their native language without any Chinese. Then, from the first grade on both Zhuang and Chinese are taught to fulfill the targets in the curriculum made by the Ministry of Education. Because Zhuang students know little Chinese, Zhuang is the main language of instruction in the first three years in primary schools. It becomes the auxiliary language in the final two years. It is believed that through this process the students learn the two languages with high efficiency.

In June 1990, the Guangxi government decided that the experimental use of Zhuang in schools should be directly supervised by its department of education (see Guangxi, 1998). The department adjusted the scope of the experminent in light of budgetary considerations and its personnel. In Guangxi there are currently 66 experimental Zhuang primary schools in 23 counties with 20,766 students, and there are 24 minority secondary schools with 17,318 students, of whom 5,571 are in Zhuang classes. In these experimental Zhuang primary schools there are 647 competent bilingual teachers, amounting to 50% of all the teachers there. The minority secondary schools there are 53 Zhuang or bilingual teachers.

Thanks to the efforts of various government offices, Zhuang-Chinese bilingual education system is now firmly established. Institutions, personnel, and the regulations for bilingual education have been improving. Zhuang textbooks meet the demands of the bilingual education experiment. The students' Chinese proficiency in experimental schools is generally higher than that of those who receive a Chinese monolingual education in Zhuang communities.

Third, the number of Zhuang language professionals is growing to meet the demands of all aspects of society (see Guangxi, 2000). The Guangxi Zhuang Language School re-enrolled students in 1982. In the past 20 years, it has produced over 6,000 graduates with associate degrees, most of whom became Zhuang teachers in middle schools and primary schools. The number of graduates from Guangxi Institute for Nationalities and the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing has reached about 900, including graduates with masters or doctoral degrees. In addition, four secondary normal schools for minorities in four Zhuang-populated prefectures also offer Zhuang as a required course so that their graduates can practice bilingual instruction in local primary schools. Meanwhile, all levels of Zhuang language schools have trained over 6,300 local cadres and teachers, college graduates, folklore professionals, and other Zhuang language learners. Now in Guangxi, 27 Zhuang language professionals have senior professional titles, and 343 have intermediate professional titles. They have long been active in Zhuang

language teaching, translation, publishing, broadcasting, and academic studies, and they have made great contributions to the development of Zhuang and their native culture.

Fourth, remarkable achievements have been made in Zhuang translation, publishing, broadcasting, cinema, and academic studies (see China, 1994b, p. 101). In these years both professional and amateur translators have translated a great number of books and materials for farming, schooling, and entertainment. They have translated important laws, regulations, and the official documents of the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and they have provided simultaneous interpretation for Zhuang participants at national conferences. One of the most important achievements in the 1990s is the publication of *Selected Writings by Deng Xiaoping* in 1996. These results reflect the equal status of Zhuang in the political life of the PRC.

Since the early 1980s, Guangxi Minzu Publishing House has published over 230 titles with 2,583,000 copies, of which fourteen titles have won national or provincial book prizes. Ninety four issues of the Zhuang edition of *Sanyue San* have been distributed as well as over 2,500 issues and 3,800,000 copies of *Guangxi Minority News.* The journals and newspaper have been at the forefront of Zhuang publishing, promotion, and usage, and they have played an important role in the spread of technical knowledge, the revival of native culture, and local economic development. Contributors to the journal and newspaper have steadily increased, and over 30 Chinese translations of their contributions have appeared in the national journal *Minority Literatures.*

In the area of broadcasting and cinema, there are also many successful examples (see China, 1994b, p. 100). In the past 20 years, Guangxi Cinema Company has translated an average of 90 movies into Zhuang every year, and the average audience of each movie has reached over three million. In 1994, for instance, six features and one science educational film won the *Tenglong* (Galloping Dragon) Prize from the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Ministry of Radio, Film, and Television. As part of the initiative "to develop the frontier and to take its people to affluence," launched by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission and the "Frontier Construction Campaign" of the Guangxi government, Guangxi's Minority Language Work Committee cooperated with local governments and provided over 100 science educational films in Zhuang for Bose prefecture in the second half of 2001. During a period of six months in each of the 100 villages in the Youjiang River valley and along the Sino-Vietnamese border, one feature, two science educational films, and a slide presentation on Zhuang language promotion were shown to a Zhuang audience.

When Guangxi People's Broadcasting Station set up its Zhuang department in 1980, it used both the Northern and Southern Dialects in broadcasting. From October 1, 1983 on, only standard Zhuang has been used in broadcasting. Every day there are 75 minutes of Zhuang programs: thirty minutes for news, thirty minutes for entertainment and arts, and fifteen minutes for popular science. The programs include *News in Zhuang, New Development in Zhuang Communities, Heart-to-Heart Chat in Zhuang, Technology Tips in Zhuang, Folklores, Basic Zhuang,* etc. These programs cater to Zhuang audiences in rural areas. The programs cover Zhuang

phonology and grammar, ethnic history, folklore, economic and cultural development in Zhuang areas, farming technology, and state policies in agriculture. In order to meet the needs of farmers, information on farming and husbandry is the focus. Information on markets for farm produce is also provided. The daily program *Lectures on Zhuang* is surprisingly welcome by the audience. In the past 14 years over 1,800 lectures have been broadcasted. Now Guangxi Television Station also broadcasts News in Zhuang everyday. In Wenshan Zhuang-Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan province, the local broadcasting station provides one hour of Zhuang programs daily.

Zhuang language workers and scholars have broadened their studies and published on Zhuang phonology, vocabulary, grammar, translation, comparison, information, and standardization. For example, *Studies of Zhuang Dialects* (Zhuang Fangyan Yanjiu), published at the end of 1999, is a collection of over forty years of hard work, including survey materials from the 1950s (see Zhang et al, 1999). In 1985, Guangxi founded its own association of minority language and literatures, with over 200 members, which has held four conferences and accepted 145 presentations. Members of the association have visited Yunnan, Tibet, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, and other minority communities and engaged in academic exchanges with those areas. The association has also been active in international exchanges. Scholars and students from Thailand, Japan, America, Australia, England, and other countries have studied the Zhuang language and culture and or done fieldwork in Zhuang communities.

Fifth, progress has been made in the standardization and adaptation of information technology for Zhuang (see Huang, 1999). One of the most important aspects of Zhaung language planning is the standardization and computer-processing of the Zhuang writing system. Zhuang has dialectic diversity and constantly borrows Chinese to enrich itself. Thus, the standardization of terminology in particular and Zhuang in general should be recognized as a long-term task. The academic office of Guangxi Minority Language Work Committee has edited and revised many reference books and dictionaries for Zhuang people. These reference books include *Chinese-Zhuang Vocabulary, Zhuang-Chinese Vocabulary, Basic Zhuang Vocabulary, An Introduction to Zhuang Grammar, Grammar of Wuming Zhuang, Zhuang Function Words, Zhuang Classifiers, Basic Zhuang, Zhuang Orthography* (draft), *Zhuang Dictionary, Collection of New Terminology in Zhuang, The Sound Systems of Zhuang Dialects and Vernaculars, General ZhuangVocabulary and Typical Dialect Vocabulary,* etc. The office is collaborating with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in compiling a trilingual dictionary *Zhuang-Chinese-English dictionary.* It will be a treasury of the Zhuang language.

In information technology, in addition to the development of software for the romanized Zhuang writing system, the development of software for the classical Zhuang script makes it convenient to publish classics written in traditional Zhuang characters--*Sawndi.* Before the system was developed, publishing the Zhuang classics required typesetting by hand. Painstaking work was required to sort through large quantities of material and publish the ten-thousand-character *The Dictionary of Archaic Zhuang Characters,* a Zhuang-Chinese bilingual dictionary. But in the 1990s, when *Love Songs (I)* and *Love Songs (II)* of *The Treasury of Ancient Zhuang*

*Folksongs* and other classics were published, the new system played an important role in the whole project and made the preservation of Zhuang classics much easier.

Sixth, great progress has been made in the literacy campaign and beyond (see China, 1994b, p. 842). Although in this period the focus of Zhuang language works has been on the use of Zhuang as the language of instruction in schools, the use of the mother tongue in literacy campaigns was also recognized by the government. In the early 1980s, experimental literacy campaigns in Zhuang were carried out in Wuming and Debao counties. Later, Guangxi Minority Language Work Committee wrote a *Report on Experiments in Zhuang as Language of Instruction in Primary Schools in Twenty Two Counties and Rural Literacy Campaigns,* which was approved by the Guangxi government in July of 1983 for circulation. Since then, quick progress has been made in the mass literacy campaign. The institutions concerned have compiled and published seven titles of textbooks for learners. Over 350,000 copies were distributed, And up to 13,470 training classes were offered in 51 counties, where about 500,000 local people enrolled to learn to spell and write. One tenth of these learners reached the required standard of literacy.

In the context of the Great West Development Project (*Xibtt Dakaifa,* started in 2000) and globalization, literacy campaigns in the native language have been oriented to economic development in Zhuang communities. The Guangxi Minority Language Work Committee has promptly adjusted its strategy in accordance with the central and provincial governments' direction. Ten times it has offered *Courses for Farmers* that taught technology in mother tongue, which has brought the literacy campaign together with poverty elimination. The project has been implemented in Guigang, Wuxuan, Hengxian, Pingguo, Huanjiang, and Mashan counties with about 800 farmers participating so far. The majority of the trainees are Zhuang women with little education. In each course, the trainees spend 100 to 200 hours learning Zhuang and 40 to 60 hours learning farming technology in Zhuang. As a result the trainees not only learn to spell and write Zhuang, but they also master some useful farming techniques for the planting of fruit trees, potato, vegetables, and rice as well as domestic animal breeding. It is notable that rabbit-raising techniques have enabled over 100 families to successfully breed the new domestic animal in Wuxuan. Meanwhile, in Menggong Xiang, Guigang City, training has been conducted according to the "Company-Supplies-Family" method. Technicians from Yangxiang Forage Company, Guigang Sugarcane Chemistry Corporation, and the local farming technology promotion station have taught farmers scientific methods for pig breeding, sugarcane planting, and rice field management, and the trained farmers have become regular raw material suppliers for those companies, so that the results of training are more practical and effective. This method is welcome by farmers and approved of by the local government for broader promotion. It has opened a new horizon for the use of a minority language in a globalized market economy.

Another popular form of literacy education in the mother tongue is to hold courses for Zhuang folksong singers. The Zhuang writing system may play an important role in the exploitation, transmission, and development of native cultures. It is well known that singing is one of the most remarkable traditions of the Zhuang people. In the past people would prefer singing to speaking. Whenever possible,

they would sing for some time. They sang to themselves or to each other. The most important phenomenon occurred on market or festival days, when people would gather in a field far from the village to sing folksong. As early as the Tang dynasty, the Zhuang antiphonal singing tradition was noted in the poems of the famous Chinese poet Liu Zongyuan. Historically the custom was referred to as a "folksong fair." In folksong fairs people not only shared their daily feelings, but they also learned their native cultures. Participation was the most important way to represent one's membership in the Zhuang community. However, the tradition is vanishing today because of the destruction by the Cultural Revolution and the shock of modern mass media. Entertainment and the people's way of communicating their feelings have changed surprisingly. Except in remote mountain villages, the folksong fair is losing its original function as the bond of Zhuang society. Fewer and fewer youngsters can comprehend and compose folksongs. The situation caught the attention of Zhuang language workers. After two years of careful preparations, the Guangxi Minority Language Work Committee held a training course for Zhuang folksingers in order to revive the tradition. Forty singers were selected from 176 applicants to participate in the class. Most of these singers were over forty years old and had a primary school education, which meant that they knew their mother tongue better than Chinese. Actually they were good at singing and could gather and compose folksongs by themselves. After 200 hours of language instruction and 160 hours taking a folklore course, these native singers could record, edit, and compose songs in the Zhuang writing system. Particularly with the guidance and supervision of Zhuang scholars, they developed a better understanding of the theory and technique of folksongs. Two members of the class won a special prize at the 2000 Nanning International Folksong Festival. This approach appears to provide a way to maintain both the native language and culture.

## 5. PROSPECTS OF FUTURE ZHUANG LANGUAGE PLANNING

It may be affirmed that after over 40 years, the accomplishments of the development of Zhuang are obvious to all even though there were frustrations in the past. Currently, especially in light of Chine's openness, its Great West Development policy, and its embracement of globalization, issues regarding the use of the native language in a market economy and the revival of native culture are worthy of exploration and discussion by both Zhuang cadres and masses. No matter what difficulties and obstacles may come, Zhuang will definitely play a role in facilitating the social, economic and cultural development of Zhuang communities as long as the CCP's and the PRC's policies toward minorities and their languages are implemented in the interest of equality, unity, and the progress of all, minorities and Han Chinese. Zhuang should have a promising future. In the new century, Zhuang language planning should focus on the following five aspects.

First, promotion of the importance of the use of Zhuang should be enhanced. A favorable social environment for the use of Zhuang should be created by disseminating among cadres and masses the CCP's ethnic policy and minority language policy in order to make them aware that native language work is long

lasting and important. Minority language issues are part of minority affairs, and thus Zhuang language planning is a part of minority affairs. With the establishment and development of a socialist market economy, communication between China's minorities and the world is increasingly frequent. In the distant future languages, as means of communication, may eventually amalgamate. The tendency is obvious. Nevertheless, the evolution should be gradual, and it should not contradict the principle of the free development of all minority languages. Thus, in the predictable future, minority languages and Chinese will coexist and codevelop.

At present, Zhuang cadres and masses need to reach a consensus on the promotion of Zhuang. Contradictory attitudes among Zhuang cadres and masses may create obstacles and difficulties for the promotion of the language (see Qin, 2000). It is necessary for active propaganda to be implemented to make all cadres and the masses aware that the free use of their native language is part of their fundamental rights guaranteed by the PRC Constitution and the law on minority regional autonomy, and that the use of their native language is important for social stability in Zhuang communities and for the equality, unity, progress, and prosperity of all ethnic groups. It is also necessary to inform the masses that the native language is indispensable for the development of native education, the promotion of the ethnic group's educational level, its ability to adapt to technological change and the challenges of modernization, the group's cultural development, and its spiritual life. Propaganda work should also draw the attention from all levels of the People's Congress in Guangxi, so that they will make legislation that ensures the Zhuang's linguistic rights.

Second, more work needs to be done to promote Zhuang as a language of instruction in schools. The introduction of Zhuang into schools is one of the most important achievements of Zhuang language planning. Whether it is successful or not will be a decisive element in the cause of Zhuang language planning. This process is actually one of systematic engineering, and it concerns many aspects of Zhuang society. Experience in the past 20 years has shown that if all levels of governments see its importance and maintain a good balance between Zhuang and Chinese, then Zhuang-Chinese bilingual education in Zhuang communities will develop smoothly and with an increasingly improving quality. In early 2002, Guangxi's Department of Education suggested that, according to current situations in Zhuang communities, the budget for the use of Zhuang as a language of instruction should be increased, and the distribution of experimental schools should be properly adjusted. In other words, educational departments may call off experiments in those less efficient small schools scattered in the remote areas and set up more concentrated bases to improve efficiency and expand the scale of the experiments. Meanwhile, all levels of minority language planning organizations should actively cooperate with educational authorities in guiding and supervising these experiments, gathering information, and improving and adjusting policies. They should also provide more capable and trained personnel to local communities.

Third, innovative ways need to be continuously found to improve Zhuang language work in the new century. Based on the success of various training courses for farmers and native singers as well as the promotion of cinema in rural areas, positive experiences should be studied so that we can learn what works for the

overall community, on what the focus of further experiments should be, which measures are efficient, how operations should be standardized, and what will produce outstanding results. Only in this way can Zhuang better serve the exploration and enhancement of Zhuang traditional cultures and the development of Guangxi with science, technology, and education.

Fourth, the proper treatment of the relationship between Zhuang and Chinese is needed to ensure the free development of both languages for the prosperity of the Chinese nation. During the socialist period all ethnic groups can develop and prosper, and the languages of these groups can be freely used and developed. However, it must be noted that since in the big Chinese family the Han constitutes the majority, the status of minority languages, including Zhuang, is in fact not equal with that of the Han, even if the basic political rights of minority languages are constitutionally and legislatively guaranteed (see M. Zhou, this volume). The use of minority languages is limited to communities where minorities are the majority. But if members of minorities hope to receive a better higher education and broaden their opportunities for better employment, they must have a good mastery of Chinese. With this in mind, China's language policy thus encourages all ethnic groups to learn each other's languages to enhance mutual understanding, but it especially encourages all citizens of the PRC to learn the national lingua franca, *Putonghua,* and standard Chinese characters. Accordingly, when Zhuang is promoted, language planning offices must determine the respective roles of Zhuang and Chinese and properly take that relationship into consideration so that the two languages will not come into conflict with each other, but complement each other for their mutual benefit. The approach toward the Zhuang language can be summed up as follows: to treat Zhuang as the principal language is to enhance Zhuang's political influence and unity and to develop native culture and inspire native pride; to promote fluency in Zhuang and Chinese, with the help of Zhuang, is to enhance the educational level of the whole Zhuang community. If the Zhuang want to enter modernity and act on a larger social stage, it is necessary for them to master advanced science and technology through Chinese. From this point of view, the relationship between Zhuang and Chinese is that between the left and right hands. Neither can be overemphasized or neglected. Negating Zhuang's progressive role in native cultural development is hostile to the ethnicity, while over-emphasizing the social role of the Zhuang language may degenerate into extreme ethnic nationalism.

Fifth, the social status of Zhuang needs to be further strengthened and enhanced. As one of the four scripts printed on China's currency and one of the seven working languages for national political processes, the political status of Zhuang is obviously high. However the social status and role of Zhuang must be realized through use in various social domains. In addition to the continuous use of Zhuang for government organizations' plate inscriptions, seals, and stationary, the use of Zhuang in mass media should be further enhanced to strengthen Zhuang's communicative function. Current, mass media use mostly Chinese, which is incomprehensible to most Zhuang farmers and negatively affects their entertainment and recreation. In the future, we must give full consideration to the inseparability between Zhuang and its speakers and make more and more Zhuang programs to meet their demands.

In conclusion, there is every reason to believe that with the guidance of the CCP and the PRC's policy of equality among China's ethnic groups and their languages, Zhuang will be increasingly welcome and supported by Zhuang cadres and masses, and it will play an important role in the development of the Zhuang culture. Zhuang should have a bright future.

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## 6. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese into English by Liu Jianxun of the College of Minority Languages and Literatures, Central University for Nationalities in Beijing

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ZHONGLIANG PU

# POLICIES ON THE PLANNING AND USE OF THE YI LANGUAGE AND WRITING SYSTEMS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will discuss the policies on the planning and use of the Yi language and writing system(s) from five perspectives: (1) Yi communities, their language use, and the Yi script, (2) the standardization and use of the Yi script as an official writing system in Sichuan, (3) the rise of a standardized Yi writing system and its use in Yunnan, (4) the traditional approach to Yi writing and its use in Guizhou, and (5) achievements and problems of the use of Yi and its standard writing. I hope that some lessons may be drawn from the Yi experiences in handling linguistic and script diversity in language planning and writing development.

## 2. YI COMMUNITIES, THEIR LANGUAGE USE, AND THE YI SCRIPT

The Yi, one of the aboriginal peoples of southwest China, are mainly found in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and the Guangxi Provinces/Regions with a population of 6,570,000 (1990 census, 2000 census not available). The population in Yunnan is 4,050,000 (61.5%), 1,780,000 in Sichuan (27.2%), 700,000 in Guizhou (10.8%), and 7,000 in Guangxi (0.5%). The Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan, the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, the Honghe Hani-Yi Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, the Lunan Yi Autonomous County, the Luquan Yi Autonomous County and other 15 Yi autonomous counties are main regions where the Yi people live in compact communities. The rest of the Yi people live together with the Han, Miao, Hui, Buoyei, and Bai in Guizhou; with 20 other ethnic groups, such as the Han, Tibetan, Lisu, Miao, Zhuang, Jingpo, Naxi, Lahu, Hani, etc. in Yunnan; with the Han, Tibetan and Naxi in Sichuan; and with the Han, Zhuang, and Miao in Guangxi. The overall pattern of the geographical distribution of the Yi is that they live in small compact communities far from each other or in large communities with mixed ethnic populations.

The status of the use of Yi is closely related to the Yi's distribution pattern (see China, 1994, p776). Yi dialect speakers from different areas cannot communicate with each other in their own dialects when they meet at dinner table because the difference between these dialects, especially in phonology and vocabulary, is as large as those between any two languages. It is reasonable to classify, corresponding

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to the population distribution, the use of Yi into three general patterns: use in compact Yi communities, use in scattered Yi communities, and use in urban Yi communities.

Generally speaking, those who live in compact Yi communities are monolingual Yi speakers and always communicate with each other in the native language. However, those who live in the outskirt of these communities may be bilingual or trilingual speakers, who speak the native language among their own Yi fellows but other languages with members of other ethnic groups.

In scattered Yi communities, Yi people speak Yi among members of the family or relatives, while using Chinese or any language intelligible to both parties when they speak with people in the same community who have a different ethnic background.

Yi people who live in urban communities use Chinese as their main communication tool outside the family but within the family both Yi and Chinese may be chosen. According to the statistics of a sample survey (see McConnell & Tan, 1995, pp. 551–577), 99.94% of Yi people in compact Yi communities use their mother tongue; most of the Yi in the communities with mixed ethnic populations are likely to choose Chinese as their main language, and in some scattered Yi communities, such as Pu'er, Mengzi, Kaiyuan, Jianshui, Zhenxiong, and Xuanwei in Yunnan and Dafang, and Bijie in Guizhou, even no one can speak their native language except for the old Yis.

The traditional Yi writing in the Yi script – a Siniform one – is a writing system with a long history (see China 1992, pp. 104–109). It originated from nongovernmental institutions as a symbol of the Yi wisdom and the major carrier of the Yi traditional culture. The birth of the Yi writing brought the Yi people into written history in their own language.

No final conclusion has yet been reached on the issue of when the Yi writing was born. According to the Yi folk legend, the Yi writing came into practice 80 generations ago. If 25–30 years constitute a generation, legend would place the birth of this writing to 1,500–2,000 years ago. In academic circles, some scholars (see Ding, 1993, pp. 4–6) believe the Yi writing came into being in the Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 220); some (see Sichuan, 1988, p. 2) hold that it began to take shape in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and was supplemented later on. However, some think it originated in the period of Tang and Song or much later; others believe it did not come into existence earlier than the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The first historical records about Yi in Chinese, such as *Dian Xi, Yunnan Tongzhi, Yitong Zhi,* were written during the Ming and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties. In these records Yi writing was named "Chuai wen" or "Wei wen" and was believed to have been formulated in the period of the Han and Tang dynasties. After the Ming and Qing Yi writing was called "Lolo wen." The earliest relic of Yi writing still remaining today is the inscription on the bronze bell named "Dafang," which was cast in the twenty first year of the Chenghua Period of the Ming dynasty (1485). More inscriptions were found in the later steles, two of which are the most famous. One was named *Juan Zi Yan* (cliff engraved with inscriptions), found in Luquan County, Yunnan Province, engraved in the twelfth year of the Jiajing Period of the Ming Dynasty (1533). The other was named *Qiansuiqu Beiji* (stele record of the Qiansui Road),

found in Dafang County, Guizhou Province, engraved in the twenty-fifth year of the same period. The contents of the historical records in Yi writing we read today include astronomy, calendar systems, divination, rituals, records of family trees, myths, medical knowledge, poems, mottos, proverbs, which are all popular folk literature works.

In the past, sorcerers, or “bimo” or “beimao” in Yi, who held rituals and mastered historical records, were the only major people who carried on and disseminated the Yi traditional writing. They notly copied, collated, sifted and reedited the works of their predecessors, but in addition they passed on and taught the next generation the traditional culture recorded in Yi writing. However, the inscriptions carved on Yunnan cliffs during the Ming Dynasty, the bronze bell inscriptions, and the engraved in the steles in the same dynasty in Guizhou, as well as the Qing contracts in Yi writing dealing with the slave trade, the pawning of land or houses, loans, etc. found in Luquan County of Yunnan all effectively prove that the social functions of the traditional Yi writing went far beyond the perceived use of the script only in religious rituals (see China, 1992, p. 108; Q. Zhou, 1993, pp. 27–31).

The first Yi characters were a kind of ideography (China, 1992, pp. 104–105). But with the elapse of the time and its propagation, the complexity of ideography increasingly became a major barrier. In order to surpass this barrier, Yi ancestors created 8,000-10,000 characters in variant forms by means of loaning homonyms on a large scale, which naturally made the traditional Yi writing system gradually a quasi-syllabic writing system with lots of logographic symbols and many syllabic symbols. Unfortunately, these symbols had not systematically been collected, sifted, and standardized across Yi communities until the founding of the PRC. The characters used by *bimos* in Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou or Guangxi had developed in their own ways – having differences in form, meaning, and pronunciation (see Ding, 1993, pp. 15–16). After 1949, according to the new language policy of the PRC, a campaign of writing system creation and reform was launched over the whole country (see Sun and Q. Zhou, this volume). Interested institutions in Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou successively standardized their local traditional Yi writing systems. However, the complex variations of population distribution, language use, and the Yi script have not allowed Yi language workers to adopt a uniform approach, as it has been in Chinese, in language planning, standardization of the Yi writing, and bilingual education.

## 3. STANDARDIZATION AND USE OF THE YI SCRIPT AS AN OFFICIAL WRITING SYSTEM IN SICHUAN

Language work in Yi communities in Liangshan of Sichuan is prominent because the standardized Yi writing of Liangshan was ratified by the State Council of the PRC in 1980 as an official writing system – one of seven systems with such status in China (China, 1991, pp96–103). The development of this writing system and its use represent the government’s overall policy and its successful implementation in Yi communities.

*3. 1. Standardization of the Yi script in Liangshan*

Liangshan's standardization evolved through a difficult course, with two major steps, from the early 1950s to 1980, and has made steady progress since 1980.

In early 1951, a working group dispatched by the Institute of Linguistics (of the Chinese Academy of Sciences) to Sichuan and Sikang provinces worked out the *Scheme for the Alphabetic Writing of Yi* based on the Yi spoken in Liangshan after a preliminary investigation of the language there (for the writing system, see M. Zhou, 2003, p. 283). In February of the same year, a symposium on developing Yi language and writing was held in Xichang, the capital city of the Yi Autonomous Prefecture, during which a decision on the experimental implementation of the newly-created alphabetic scheme was made (Chen, 1995, pp. 104–109). But as the experiment proceeded, it became more and more obvious that it had lacked the base of mass use, had lost contact with the reality of language use, and worst of all had cut itself from history by abandoning the traditional Yi script. Both Yi cadres and masses faced more and more problems using this alphabetic writing system, problems that confused and frustrated them. Thus, it is natural that further experimental implementations of the new Yi writing in Liangshan were increasingly resisted. Both cadres and common Yi demanded to use the traditional writing instead of the new one, particularly in light of the principle of willingness and self-choice (see Sun and Q. Zhou, this volume). In 1956, after a general survey into the whole Yi community and its language and a more comprehensive linguistic comparative study, the *Scheme for the Alphabetic Writing of Yi* was revised. Subsequently the new version was officially ratified by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission in 1957 (for this version and a Roman and Cyrillic version, see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 285–286)

But from 1958 to the early 1970s, the PRC's minorities policies, as other policies, suffered under the influence of "Leftist" thought that wrongly believed that minority languages were backward and had no future, and that by means of the Great Leap Forward language use in minority communities would shift from minority languages to Chinese in a short period of time. The historical background and the reality that very few in the Yi community understood Chinese were blindly ignored. Chinese was unrealistically advocated for use not only in all classrooms but also in all the experimental literacy campaigns in Yi communities in the vast rural areas. Those who advocated the use of the traditional Yi writing were labeled as "conservative rightists" or "local nationalists" and strongly criticized. As a result, a decision to replace Yi with Chinese was made by the local government in 1960. The traditional Yi writing was abandoned, and many books in traditional Yi writing were even burned. The newly revised *Scheme for the Alphabetic Writing of Yi* was also denied by the cruel reality of this political situation.

Under these circumstances, Chinese became the only language used in all official activities, in schools, and in public in Liangshan. But most of Liangshan was inhabited predominantly by the Yi only, and Yi was the only language spoken in the Yi communities there. The language barrier became a thorny problem that dragged the grass-root cadres of Yi origin into a difficult position when they worked in Yi communities. By speaking Chinese, they confused all the Yi children and illiterates.

Because it was difficult for Yi people to learn Chinese, they had no choice but to learn and use the traditional script spontaneously out of the demand of everyday work, As a result, the traditional writing was rapidly disseminated in the vast rural area. In view of this situation, in 1964, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Committee of Liangshan asked Yi scholars to select some traditional Yi characters for everyday use. These scholars selected 800 characters from a total of 8,000 traditional scripts and edited them into a handbook entitled *Everyday Yi Words*. In 1965, a series of Yi texts began to be published in the Yi Writing edition of the *Liangshan Daily* for the use of cadres at the grass-root level and Yi villagers. However, the promotion of the traditional Yi writing was again suspended after the Cultural Revolution started in 1966. The preliminarily standardized traditional Yi writing system won the Yi people's heart to such an extent that they strongly asked both the Sichuan provincial government and the central government for the recognition of it by writing numerous supporting letters from the 1960s to the early 1970s.

In accordance with the wishes and demand of the Yi people and after an investigation of the Yi writing issue, Sichuan's CCP subcommittee on ethnic affairs presented a written suggestion to the CCP Committee of Sichuan Province that Chinese continue to be promoted and, at the same time, that the traditional Yi writing be standardized and used side by side with Chinese (China, 1992, p. 98). The suggestion was approved in 1974. In the same year, Yi language planners drafted a scheme for writing in traditional Yi characters, known as the (Sichuan) *Scheme of Standard Yi Writing* (hence the Sichuan scheme, for the writing system see Daniels & Bright, 1996, 240–241; also M. Zhou, 2003, p. 246) and in the following year it won approval from the provincial CCP committee for experimental use.

After successful trial use between 1976 and 1979, the Liangshan Yi Autonomous government presented a report to the Sichuan Government asking for an official recognition of the scheme for the traditional Yi writing. The provincial government accepted the report and passed it along with the Yi scheme to the central government. In 1980, the State Council granted the Liangshan scheme its official status. The Sichuan scheme has six components: (1) in accordance with tradition, it is still a syllabic system, with 819 standardized characters as the core of the scheme and with four tones: high level tone, mid-high level, middle level tone, and low falling for a given syllable – each represented by a different character; (2) The vernacular of Shenzha of the North dialect serves as the standard dialect and the phonology of Dexi as the standard pronunciation; (3) It writes from left to right; (4) Loan words from Chinese into Yi should be directly from *Putonghua* (Standard Modern Chinese) and phonetic forms corresponding to those of Putonghua; (5) It adopts the Chinese punctuation system; and (6) It has a set of Roman phonetic symbols for phonetic notation, indexing, phonetic analysis, and teaching (see China, 1992, pp. 98–100).

*3. 2. Use of the Standard Yi Writing in Liangshan*

After the Sichuan scheme won its official status in 1980, it became widely used and has achieved the highest social recognition for the Yi writing system in history, as shown in its use in literacy campaigns, education, media, publication, information technology, legislature, and administration.

The Sichuan scheme became an important tool for literacy work in Yi communities. According to the statistics from 1980 to 1990 (Wu, 1990), 70% of the counties in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture basically eliminated illiteracy, with a total of 450,000 illiterates becoming literate. From 1978 to 1990, the total number of the people who became literate or got schooling in literary Yi was 630,000, amounting to thirty-one times the number of literate Yis in 1949. Over the two decades of the 1980s and 1990s, 1,288,600 of 1,465,600 Yi people between the age of twelve and forty became literate, making up 85.1%. Those who became literate in 2,000 villages and the 318 towns/districts of seven counties accounted for nearly 95% of the local population. Meanwhile, 1,436 adult literacy and technology schools were set up in the whole prefecture, 296 of which were operated by towns/districts and 1,134 by villages (Qumutiexi, 1999).

As an important tool in education, the standard Yi writing system greatly promoted the cause of minority education. Bilingual education in Chinese and Yi helped to improve the quality of education in Yi communities. Since the promotion of the standard Yi writing system, courses in Yi were offered in 329 primary schools, 58 middle schools, and six high schools (Wu, 1990). In October of 1985, the School of Sichuan Yi Writing was established in Xichang, the capital city of Liangshan Autonomous Yi Prefecture, in order to meet the needs of economic and cultural development in Yi communities. This school trained a large number of teachers of Yi as well as other personnel for Yi communities. The department of Yi Language and Literature of the Southwestern University for Nationalities, which was founded in 1952 and renamed as Department of Yi Studies in 2000, resumed to enroll students in 1977 after it was closed down during the Cultural Revolution. Since then, the department has trained nearly 1,000 Yi specialists for the central government and provincial governments in southwestern China. Students from the United States, France, Germany, Sweden, Poland, Japanese, Australia, Singapore, and other countries were also admitted to the department to learn the standard Yi writing and Yi literature, which has played an important role in enhancing international communication, spreading the Yi culture, advancing minority education, and strengthening international interest in Yi studies.

The standard Yi writing has become an important mass medium. In 1978, the *Liangshan Daily* started to publish a Yi edition, and the journal of *Liangshan Literature* started to publish a Yi edition in 1980. Seventy films were made in Yi or translated into Yi during the same period, so that Yi people could now enjoy films that they used to watch without a complete understanding (Maheimuga, 1985).

The publication of Yi textbooks and reference books in Yi gave a lot of impetus to Yi teaching and translation (Sichaun, 1998). In order to meet the needs of Yi people in learning to read and write in Yi, Liangshan's education department compiled and/or translated textbooks for elementary schools in the Yi communities,

such as *Yi Language* (ten volumes), *Arithmetic* (ten volumes), *Moral Education, Elementary, Knowledge of Nature,* and *History* as well as teaching materials for teachers, *Selection of Yi Readings* and *Literacy Textbook for Farmers.* A total of 2,200,000 copies of books were published in Liangshan. Liangshan's language workers has also compiled many Yi reference books and dictionaries. At the same time, efforts were made at the provincial level. From 1980 to 1989, Sichuan Minority Press published 80 titles of Yi textbooks for primary and secondary schools and 110 titles of books in Yi on politics, economy, science, technology, literature, arts, classics, and readings for children (Q. Zhou, 1993).

The Liangshan scheme also facilitated the development of information technology for the Yi language (See Jiang, 1999). Since 1984, Shamalayi, a well-known Yi professor, and his colleagues have developed a series of information processing systems for the Yi language and writing for use in personal computers to process information in oral and written Yi. His word processing system received a positive appraisal at the provincial level in 1984, and it won Sichuan's third prize for advances in science and technology in 1985. His computer-laser system for Yi/Chinese editing and printing passed a national test and won a third prize from the State Council in 1986 and another national third prize in the same year. In 1988, the State Bureau of Standards ratified two standards by which the Yi language should be used to exchange information (Document No. (88) 0025). The *Collection of Yi Coding Symbols for Information Exchange* and the *Collection of Yi 15x16 Matrix for Information Exchange & Data* were examined and approved by both computer specialists and Yi linguists, and they were published as national standards by the State Bureau of Technological Supervision in 1989. In 2000, Shamalayi developed a Yi operating system (Network Edition) Ywin2000. These systems, software, and standards have greatly facilitated the modernization of the processing of written Yi in the Liangshan Standard Yi Writing System.

On April 29, 1992, the People's Congress of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture passed the *Regulations for the Yi language and Writing Work in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture,* which was approved, on September 26, 1992, by the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Sichuan Province (for the regulation, see Yu, 1995, pp. 480–485). In October of the same year, the People's Congress of Liangshan decided to publish the regulations immediately and to begin, on January 1, 1993, to implement them. The regulations provide detailed stipulations for the use of the standard Yi writing in administrative organs at all levels and in public institutions in Liangshan. They also set requirements for the standardization, study, and evaluation of the standard Yi language and writing, institutions for Yi language work, and awards for the promotion and study of Yi. The promulgation and implementation of the Regulations in Liangshan Prefecture show that the Standard Yi Writing System had won the widest social recognition there, a recognition that took the form of a local law guaranteeing the legality and validity of the use of Yi in every aspect of social life in Liangshan.

The legal recognition of the Yi language and its standard writing system makes Yi one of the eight working languages and scripts in the National Congress of the CCP, the National People's Congress, and other national conferences, in addition to

being the working language and script of the local government and CCP organs. This marks a new status for Yi as a language of broad use.

### *3.3. The Practice of Dual Models of Bilingual Education in Liangshan*

The Sichuan scheme makes bilingual education possible and official. Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture and its neighboring Yi communities in Yunnan, an area that is known as "Da Xiao Liangshan", has adopted what is called dual models of bilingual education. In these Yi communities, some schools adopt Model A which uses Yi as the language of instruction with Chinese as a subject of study and/or as the supplementary language of instruction. Others adopt Model B which selects Chinese as the language of instruction with Yi as a subject of study and/or as the supplementary. This selection depends on the patterns of language use in each communities (see Munaihere, 1998; Sichuan 1998).

As the largest Yi community in China, Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture has 1,540,000 Yi people, 24% of China's total Yi population and 42.9% of the total population of the prefecture (3,600,0000). Because of its history and geographical environment, Liangshan's economy and educational system were not sufficiently advanced for most of its inhabitants to master any language other than their own mother tongue. Therefore, in the early 1950s, some local colleges and schools for minorities practiced Yi-Chinese bilingual teaching to meet the social needs there and had some success. But the fact that Chinese as a language of instruction was beyond the students' ability diminished teaching effectiveness.

After the standard Yi writing system became official in 1980, four years later a plan to implement the dual models of bilingual education in Yi communities was put forward at the conference on the teaching of Yi language in Sichuan. In 1985, in accordance with the principle of being enthusiastic but realistic about bilingual education, a principle that promoted bilingual education according to language use in minority communities, developing it step by step, and focusing on its real effects, the Sichuan CCP Committee and Government issued a document titled *Decision on the Enhancement of Minority Education.* It stipulates that Chinese be used as the language of instruction (with minority languages taught as a subject course) in Yi or Tibetan communities where Chinese is the common language and that Yi and Tibetan be used as the language of instruction (with Chinese taught as a subject course) in communities in which Chinese is spoken by a few people. This document has specifically authorized these two models of bilingual education in Liangshan of Sichuan. This practice was further recognized by the Sichuan government for broad promotion in a 1988 document (see China, 1995, pp. 812–820).

From then on, Liangshan has explored and developed a system of bilingual education that meets the needs of the Yi communities there. Liangshan's system of bilingual education has the following five characteristics in its planning and development (see Munaihere, 1998; Sichuan, 1998).

First, the two models have been both practiced in schools in Liangshan.

Second, students have two opportunities to choose which form of bilingual education best meets their needs and preferences. The first time is after graduation

from primary schools, when students from Model-A elementary schools can apply for admission to Model-B secondary schools and vice versa. The second time is upon graduation from secondary schools, when students from Model-A schools can apply for admission to Model-B colleges.

Third, the development of bilingual education is planned by three levels of administration depending on the type of school: plans for primary schools are made by township governments, those for secondary schools are made by county governments, and those for colleges are made by the prefectural government.

Fourth, two steps were taken to normalize standards for Model-A high school graduates' national college entrance exams. During the initial step between the late 1980s and early 1990s, students graduating from Model-A high schools took college entrance exams that were specially prepared and scored independently from the national standards. During the second step of the normalization, which started in the late 1990s and is projected to continue to 2004, Model-A high school graduates take national college entrance exams that are directly translated from Chinese into Yi, with enrollment scores being independently determined. By 2005, Model-A high school graduates will take directly translated national exams that will be scored according to national standards.

Fifth, three stages within 20 years have been planned for the development of a complete bilingual education system. During the first stage, which lasted from 1980 to 1990, preparations for qualified bilingual teachers, bilingual textbooks, classrooms, and other equipment were made while the two models were publicized, planned, and subjected to experimente. During the second stage, from 1991 to 1996, the two models of bilingual education were to be initially established in elementary schools, secondary schools, and colleges in Yi communities to ensure a comprehensive Yi education. During the third stage, from 1997 to 2001 or later, the system of Yi-Chinese bilingual education with Liangshan characteristics is to be consolidated, improved, and perfected as a model for all Yi communities.

After 20 years of effort, the system of dual models of Yi-Chinese bilingual education in Liangshan has developed significantly and made encouraging achievements. Liangshan's bilingual education has reached the general goals set for the first and second stages, and is striving for the goals set for the last stage.

## 4. EFFORTS TO STANDARDIZE THE YI WRITING IN YUNNAN

Over four million Yi people inhabit nearly every county or city of Yunnan Province (more than 100 counties), but the majority of them live in the Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Honghe Hani-Yi Autonomous Prefecture, and 14 other Yi autonomous counties. They speak six Yi dialects. Because of the big differences among these dialects, the complexity of the population distribution, and language contact situations, there were plenty of difficulties in standardizing the traditional Yi writing in Yunnan (Pu, 1999).

In June 1982, Yunnan Ethnic Affairs Committee and Yunnan Language Work Committee held a conference to discuss issues regarding the standardization of Yi writing (Yunnan, 1999, pp. 21–36). During the conference, inspired by the progress

made in Liangshan of Sichuan, a proposal was made that a scheme for Yi writing should be developed on the basis of the traditional logographic characters, so that it could encompass the differences among the different Yi dialects. After the conference, the two provincial committees presented the proposal to the Yunnan government, which soon approved it (see Yunnan, 1995). In July 1983, with a vice provincial governor as its leader, a steering committee for the standardization of Yi writing in Yunnan was established to oversee the standardization process. On the basis of surveys, comparative studies of Yi dialects, and the collection and sifting of Yi characters in Yunnan, the group standardized 1,675 characters for a preliminary scheme supplemented by a Roman system (like Pinyin for Chinese) for pronunciation and loan words. In May 1985, experimental textbooks written in the standard Yi characters began to be successively used in 18 experimental schools/classes in 13 counties. The results of these experiments were encouraging (Yunnan, 1995). The scheme was considered to be a feasible one suitable for the linguistic reality and diversity of Yi and Yi use in Yunnan.

In March 1986, Yunnan held the Symposium on the Scheme for the Standardized Yi Writing in Yunnan, during which all the representatives anonymously asked the provincial government for authorization to use the standardardized Yi characters experimentally throughout all Yi communities in Yunnan (Yunnan, 1999, p.23). A year later in February 1987, the provincial government responded (Document 41) that the *Scheme of the First Standardized Yi Characters* (henceforth, the Yunnan scheme) could be experimentally used throughout the province, but it asked that care be given to sum up experiences from the large-scale trial use for further revision so that the scheme could win approval as an official writing system.

After a period of trial use, addressing needs in actual use, the Yunnan scheme was revised by adding 580 standardized characters and 350 characters for Chinese loanwords and by deleting the Roman supplementary. The revised scheme has a total of 2,605 characters, basically meeting the needs of expressing modem Yi and the needs in new terminology (see Yunnan, 1999, pp. 21–36).

### 4. 2. Use of Yi and the Yunnan Scheme

In February 1987, the Yunnan scheme was ratified by the provincial government for trial implementation in Kunming, Yuxi, Honghe, Chuxiong, Simao, Wenshan and other areas where the Yi people inhabit (Yunnan, 1999, pp. 30–35). After over ten years of trial implementation, some achievements have been made in bilingual teachers training, bilingual education, and literacy education.

Since 1987 to the present, the Yunnan Language Work Committee and the Ethnic Affairs Committees of prefectures have successively run 34 training classes for bilingual teachers, with a total of 1,226 bilingual teacher candidates, either at the levels of county, prefecture, and province or jointly (see Yunnan, 1995). These qualified bilingual teachers from different dialect communities have become pioneers in bilingual education and literacy campaigns in Yunnan's Yi communities after their graduation. They have alleviated the shortage of qualified Yi-Chinese bilingual teachers needed in the trial implementation of the Yunnan scheme, and

have laid a base for the development of Yi-Chinese bilingual education in Yunnan (Pu, 1999).

Bilingual education experiments have been conducted in 56 schools throughout the province since the late 1980s (Zhang, 1997). The results of the experiments indicate that Yi pupils with Yi-Chinese bilingual education did better academically than Yi students who had only monolingual education in Chinese. Examples of schools that have noted these successes include the Naka Elementary School of the Niukong District of Luchun County in the Honghe Prefecture, the Xinfang Elementary School in Fengtun Town in Wuding County, the Tanhua Elementary School in Dayao County, and the Full Time School for Preschool children in Faguoshao Village in Wushan Town in Mile County, Chuxiong Prefecture (Yunnan, 1995).

However, it is difficult to use the Yunnan scheme for bilingual education unanimously throughout the province because of the distribution of the Yi population and differences in language use and language contact. Instead, it is only feasible to choose representative villages and/or towns for trial implementation of Model B of bilingual education. Yunnan's trial implementation faces a lot of difficulties in planning, financial support, and bilingual teachers' salary and benefits. As a result, the trial implementation is limited to some primary schools. Most of the bilingual classes in small village elementary schools are still in the experimental stage, and some of them are left to survive on their own without official support. Therefore, whether bilingual education can consolidate and develop in Yi communities in Yunnan depends crucially on a change of notions for decision-making, the emergence of a consensus between the government and local populations, and the resolution of existing problems in bilingual education.

Meanwhile, since 1987, Yunnan has offered 140 adult/night literacy classes, which have trained 5,100 illiterate people to read and write preliminarily in Yi (see Yunnan, 1995). Bilingual anti-illiteracy campaigns enjoy immense popular support from the Yi communities because of their short lengths and because they combine the teaching of reading in Yi with the popularization of scientific knowledge and cultural entertainment. These Yi-Chinese bilingual anti-illiteracy programs have not only made the Yi participants literate but also enriched the cultural life of Yi communities.

To support bilingual education and literacy campaings, Yunnan's Office for the Promotion of the Yunnan Scheme and the Yunnan Ethnic Press collaboratively compiled, translated and published *Yuwen,* 3 volumes of Yi textbooks for full-time primary school pupils, *Primers for Preschool Children, Yi Primers, How to write in Yi, Concise Yi-Chinese Glossary, Yi-Chinese Dictionary* and various readers. These publications have met the basic needs of the Yi masses who are learning the Yunnan scheme. Cooperating with the Computer Center of Yunnan University, the Office for the Promotion and the Yunnan Ethinic Press has developed a Yi processing system, which solves problems in the inputting, editing, proofreading, and typesetting of Yi.

## 5. GUIZHOU'S TRADITIONAL APPROACH TO STANDARDIZATION AND USE OF THE YI SCRIPT

Guizhou province took a traditional approach to standardize the Yi writing, an approach that uses standardized texts as the model for standard writing (see Wang & Zhang, 1999, 232–323). Guizhou's approach is largely determined by its tradition, distribution of Yi communities, and diversity of the Yi language, but in turn its approach has an impact on the use of Yi and Yi writing in the local Yi communities.

### *5. 1. Standardization of the Yi Script in Guizhou*

In Guizhou, most Yi communities use the East dialect, and the majority of Yi speakers live in Bijie and Liupanshui prefectures in northwestern Guizhou. Between the northwestern Guizhou subdialect, of which Weining Speech and Hezhang Speech are representative, and the Panxian subdialect, of which Panxian Speech and Xingren speech are representative, there are many different vernaculars (see Wang & Zhang, 1999, pp. 171–173). Meanwhile, the traditional culture in Weining and Hezhang has developed independently on a rather large scale while its counterpart in most of the Panxian Subdialect communities has been more or less affected by the cultures of the local Chinese and other neighboring ethnic groups. In addition, *Bimos* or Yi sorcerers in different areas often changed the forms of the characters as they pleased by adding or subtracting strokes when they copied the scriptures. As a result, many variants of the same character were passed on from generation to generation among the Yi people. Therefore the characters of the traditional writing were in confusion with too many local variants, which naturally made the compilation and the standardization of the traditional writing very difficult.

Given this situation, Guizhou took a traditional approach. Its standardization efforts started with translation, compilation and standardization of the ancient manuscripts and classics written in Yi and has since being using those standardized texts as the model for standard writing. As early as 1955, the Ethnic Affairs Committee of Bijie Prefecture established a translation office in charge of projects in translating, compiling, and publishing Yi historical works into Chinese (Tuotuluru, 1993, pp. 100–109). This office, the only such institution in Guizhou, was unfortunately dismantled and its projects were suspended in 1966 when the Cultural Revolution started. These projects were resumed in 1977 when the Revolution was over. At the same time, Dafang, Hezhang, Weining and Renhuai counties, Liupanshui City, and Guizhou Institute (University) for Nationalities successively established offices responsible for compiling and editing classical Yi books.

As the compilation and translation progressed, more and more Yi people asked to learn the Yi writing. In order to meet the needs of Yi communities across the province, Guizhou set up a provincial office for promoting the Yi writing (see Guizhou, pp. 345–355). Many literacy classes for written Yi were opened in Yi communities all over the province. With the help of the translation office of the Bijie Prefecture, Yi textbooks were compiled for the masses to use in these Yi classes. In 1980, answering the request of the Yi public, Guizhou launched experiments in bilingual eduction (in Chinese and Yi) throughout the province, and asked Yi

scholars to compile Yi textbooks (six volumes) for elementary schools, *Yi Dictionary, 1,000 Yi Characters, Yi-Chinese Everyday Dialogue, Yi Idioms,* and *Reading Primer of Yi* (for literacy classes).

### *5.2. Use of the Guizhou Standard Yi Writing in Education*

Bijie has a Yi population of 450,000, making up 64.3% of the total Yi population in Guizhou. About 90% of the Yi people there use their native language as the main means of communication, and more than 50% of them speak no Chinese or just a little Chinese (Bijie, 1994). Although the Yi people in Guizhou all speak the Eastern dialect of Yi, the sub-dialects are very different (see Wang & Zhang, 1999, pp. 171–185). Thus, it is difficult to determine which speech should be used as the standard speech for instruction in bilingual education and for the promotion of the Guizhou standard writing. Given this situation, Yi communities in Guizhou mainly practice Model B of bilingual education, using Yi as a supplementary language of instruction and/or subject of study.

In 1982, after the Guizhou Education Commission and the Guizhou Ethnic Affairs Commission issued a joint circular encouraging experiments with bilingual education in schools in minority communities (see Guizhou, 1999, pp. 361–362, Bijie launched programs for Yi-Chinese bilingual education in the Yi communities where Chinese is not commonly spoken. These programs were well received and supported by the Yi people. The number of the schools with bilingual programs reached sixty at its highest point, and they greatly facilitated the promotion of the Yi writing.

Inspired by State Council's Document (#32), in 1991 Bijie Normal College ran two Yi language teachers classes with 98 trainees and began to list the Yi language as an elective course (see H. Zhang, 1998). In September 1992, Bijie's high schools also started to list the Yi language as an elective course for minority students. Since 1993, the college has run an extra class for training Yi-Chinese bilingual teachers each year. In the same year, the bilingual education experimental schools/classes increased to forty four, with 2,227 students being taught in Yi and Chinese. With support from the departments concerned, Bijie's experimental schools and classes developed with great vigor. For example, Sanguan Elementary School in Bijie County (see Chen, 1989), Tianbao Elementary School in Dafang County (see Liu & Yang, 1989), and Bandi Elementary School in Weining County have run bilingual classes up to today, from which over 30 students have continued on to the Central University for Nationalities, the Southwestern University for Nationalities, and Guizhou Institute for Nationalities for further study in Yi. At present, with support from the local government, bilingual education has expanded from rural areas to urban districts, from primary schools to secondary schools and even to secondary vocational schools and colleges, and from short-term classes to long-term curricula. Meanwhile the number of qualified bilingual teachers has gradually increased as has the number of bilingual students.

## 6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROBLEMS

The promotion of the standardized Yi writing systems has many positive impacts on Yi communities, but there are still problems that have to be addressed by both Yi communities and language planners.

### *6.1. Social Effects of the Standard Yi Writing*

Positive impacts on Yi communities may be found in the following six areas (see China, 1992, 100–102; Guizhou, 1999, pp. 349–355; Yunnan, 1999, pp. 30–35). First, the promotion of the standard Yi writing has facilitated political developments in Yi communities, developments that strengthen the status of the Yi language and Yi autonomy. At the local level, Yi-Chinese and/or Chinese-Yi simultaneous interpretation has been provided to plenary sessions of the People's Congress of Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, and oral interpretation aids are available during group sessions of the congress. In addition, major documents of the local congress are written in both Yi and Chinese. Yi representatives who do not know Chinese can write proposals, criticize legislative drafts, and introduce legislation. The local autonomous regulations and other statutes are published both in Yi and Chinese, serving a positive role in promoting knowledge of the laws among the Yi masses as well as enabling the Yi masses to watch if the government follow these rules. The legal equality of Yi and Chinese in criminal and civil lawsuits is more easily guaranteed when both Yi and Chinese are used (Wu, 1990). Moreover, at the provincial and national levels, Yi interpretation at the Sichuan Provincial People's Congress and the National People's Congress helps Yi representatives who don't know much Chinese actively participate in the discussion and management of state affairs.

Second, the promotion of the standard Yi writing has facilitated the economic development of rural Yi communities. In the past 20 years, the Liangshan government has had the Central Government's documents related to the reform of rural economic management system and the acceleration of rural economic development translated into Yi and circulated among Yi villages (see Sichuan, 1998). Liangshan has also published in popular readings in Yi on policies such as *Reading Materials on Policies on Rural Economy* and *Basic Knowledge of Commodity Production and Exchange.* The Liangshan government's action has played a positive role in promoting the rural economic management reform and commodity production. Meanwhile the Bureau of Translation, the Bureau of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Husbandry of the Prefecture have jointly published a series of over 20 Yi-Chinese bilingual popular science books such as *Easy Readings on Agriculture* and *Popular Science of Husbandry.* These publications have effectively improved Yi farmers' skills in modern agriculture. By cooperating with Liangshan Language Work Committee, the Education Bureau of Zhaojue County has printed several hundred thousand Yi books of popular science and has used these publications, together with those by Sichuan and Liangshan, in 1,500 short-term training classes for Yi farmers, with a total of 90,000 trainees. These classes

have significantly improved the Yi farmers' educational level and resulted in economic benefits for them (Wu, 1990).

Third, the standard Yi writing systems have improved education in Yi communities, as discussed in detail above.

Fourth, the promotion of standard Yi writing systems has helped Yi cultural undertakings to flourish (see China, 1994, 777–778). It has initiated Yi news publications, facilitated the dubbing and/or subtitling of over 200 films, and made Yi radio broadcasting possible. Thus, Yi people can enjoy films and a richer cultural life. They can learn what is going on at home or abroad and learn the government's policies. The promotion has facilitated the sorting and compilation of Yi historical documents and created favorable conditions for preserving and carrying on traditional Yi culture. The promotion has also facilitated scholarly research on the Yi language and writing as well as academic exchanges at home and abroad. Moreover, Yunnan, Sichuan, and Guizhou have set up Yi studies associations, and some prefectures have also established regional Yi studies associations. These associations have collaboratively or independently undertaken many research projects, in addition to publishing many books and academic papers on Yi, both of which have exerted a positive impact on Yi studies at home and abroad. For example, four international academic conferences on the Yi have been held (Seattle, USA, 1996; Germany, 1998; Shilin, Yunnan, 2000; and Chuxiong, Yunnan, 2001).

Fifth, the promotion has made possible the establishment of the coordinating office for the unification of the Yi writing systems in Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangsi and subsequent work on the unification (see M. Zhou 2003, pp. 281–290). It has long been the Yi people's common wish to have one single standardized Yi writing system for all Yi communities, an unfulfilled wish because of the various reasons discussed above. The encouraging success in the use of the standardized Yi writing systems, especially that in Liangshan has inspired the scholars of Yi and responsible government offices with new ideas for unification. Lianghshan's successful experience made these scholars and offices realize that only by abandoning each province's independent Yi writing systems and only by joining forces in planning and coordination could the four provinces develop a unified Yi writing system. After consultation, in 1992 a coordinating office for the four provinces and regions was established under the Yunnan Language Work Committee. Based on the comparative analyses of different Yi dialects, the office compiled as its first step *The Yi Character Dictionary of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Guangxi,* the characters of which were chosen from the Standard Yi Writing Systems of Guizhou, Yunnan, and Sichuan. In 1994, the dictionary was revised during a meeting held in Guiyang City. Then the office organized Yi specialists from the four provinces and regions to compile *A Collection of Yi Characters* (three volumes for Yunnan; one for Sichuan, Guizhou and Guangxi respectively). In April 1995, the office presided over a second meeting held in Kunming, Yunnan, where the Yi specialists from the four provinces and regions reviewed the *Yi Character Dictionary* and the *Collection of Yi Characters* (with a total of 84,329 characters and 28,495 entries in both dictionaries) (see Q. Zhang, 1996). As a result, the coordinating office has clarified the features of characters used in Yi dialect communities, an important step toward the unification of Yi writing systems.

Sixth, writing reform in Liangshan appears to have had a positive role in the readoption of some minority traditional writing systems because it suggests that writing reform and writing system creation do not have to follow the path of Pinyin romanization (see Q. Zhou, this volume). In 1982, two years after the State Council ratified Sichuan's Scheme for the Standard Yi Writing for implementation, the Standing Committee of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region's People's Congress decided to readopt the traditional Uygur and Kazak writing systems in the Arabic script and to abandon the new romanized writing systems (see Blachford, this volume). The actions taken by the Yi, Uygur, and Kazak communities might have prompted the Dai communities in Xishuangbanna to reconsider their traditional Dai writing system (see Zhou & Fang, this volume). In 1986, the People's Congress of Xishuangbanna decided to readopt the traditional Dai writing system (Q. Zhou, 1993).

### *6. 2. Problems in the Promotion and Use of the Standard Yi Writing*

In the course of the promotion and use of the standard Yi writing, difficulties and problems have occurred in the following three areas.

First of all there is a lack of consensus within the Yi community regarding the use and standardization of Yi writing systems. For example, in Liangshan, some of the members of the Yi elite (cadres and intellectuals) have held sceptical, worrisome, and even oppositional attitudes toward the use of the standard Yi writing and the practice of bilingual education in Yi communities. They have developed many negative opinions about the use of Sichuan's standardized Yi writing system, some of which are listed below (see Teng, 2001, pp. 74–150):

(1) "retrogression", an opinion that holds that learning the Yi writing – a product of a slave society – means stepping backward to a more primitive society;

(2) "separationist", an opinion that to learn the Yi writing is an attempt to separate from the PRC because both Yi and Chinese are members of the same family and Chinese is the only official language;

(3) "redundancy", an opinion that learning the Yi writing is a superfluous detour because Chinese is the final language for socioeconomic and political success in the mainstream society;

(4) "pacifier", an opinion that to learn the Yi writing again is to pacify the Yi people after a twenty years' suspension of the system;

(5) "imposition", an opinion that the standard Yi writing is created by a few Yi and Chinese scholars with bad intentions and is imposed upon the Yi people;

(6) "perniciousness", an opinion that learning the Yi writing produces only pernicious effects for students because both the Chinese and Yi scripts are too complicated and confusing to memorize and they increase the children's burden in learning;

(7) "limitedness", an opinion that Yi cannot be used to translate the terms for advanced modern science and technology, to operate computers or teach children in schools, and that it can be used only for literacy campaigns;

(8) "local utility", an opinion that Yi language is a non-official language that it can be utilized only in Yi towns or villages;

(9) "no future", an opinion that the use of the Yi writing is temporary, so that it is just a waste of time, energy and life to learn it;

(10) "subjectivism", an opinion that is often held by local Yi leaders who insist that the Yi writing is not welcome at all in the Yi communities, and who oppose the implementation of bilingual education in their communities during their term in office; and

(11) "transition", an opinion that learning Yi and other minority languages is just a transitional measure, one that helps minority students master Chinese more efficiently as the final goal (see Teng, 2000).

In short, these views have become barriers to the implementation of the PRC's language policy and have a negative impact on the use and development of Yi.

In addition, there are problems with bilingual teacher training, the teachers' quality, and their salary. Though many bilingual teachers have been trained, neither the quality nor the quantity of bilingual teachers can meet the actual needs of Yi communities. For instance, although Bijie has made efforts in training Yi-Chinese bilingual teachers, many of the bilingual teachers are still unqualified and only employed temporarily. According to the available statistics (Li, 1991), in the 1988-1989 school-year, for every eight bilingual teachers employed by the ethnic affairs committees of Dafang County and Qianxi County of Guizhou Province, two were primary school graduates, five were middle school graduates, and only one was a high school graduate. None received any formal training in bilingual education. These teachers had demoralizingly low pay (Sixty Chinese dollars – less than eight US dollars – per month) (Bijie, 1994). In addition, the number of bilingual teachers is unstable. All the facts we discussed above have influenced the implementation and quality of bilingual education.

Moreover, the lack of bilingual textbooks, reference books, and reading materials as well as the lack of complete sets of existing bilingual textbooks has long been a difficult obstacle for bilingual education. Yunnan and Guizhou have never been able to provide sufficient bilingual textbooks, supplementary readings, reference books, and exercises to meet local needs, though Sichuan has been doing a little better. Let us look at the case of Guizhou: only six volumes of a Yi textbook for elementary schools have been published by Guizhou Ethnic Press, while other textbooks and matching reading materials were compiled by various bilingual schools. For example, the Tianbao Yi experimental class in Dafang County compiled *Yi Primers;* Bijie Prefecture compiled *Everyday Words of Yi and Chinese, Yi Character Dictionary, Yi Idioms,* and *Everyday Dialogue of Yi,* etc. (Liu & Yang, 1989). There is a lack of standardization for textbooks, so that consistency and quality cannot be guaranteed.

To sum up, the shortage of textbooks and supplementary readings, the poor pay for bilingual teachers, the inadequacy of personnel and financial support, the lack of classrooms, the poor quality and quantity of teaching materials, and the lack of a uniform approach to the Yi script standardization have hindered Yi-Chinese bilingual education and ultimately the use and development of the Yi language and

writing in Yi communities. These urgent problems need to be solved before the use and development of Yi can have a bright future.

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## 7. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese to English by Shi Defu of the Central University for Nationalities in Beijing.

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FENG WANG

# LANGUAGE POLICY FOR BAI

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter first introduces the Bai people and its language, then briefly reviews the history of language policy for Bai before the People's Republic of China (PRC) and extensively examines language policy and language use in Bai communities since the founding of the PRC in 1949. It tells the story of how a minority language strives to survive in the context of long and close contact with the Han majority in China.

### *1.1. The Bai People*

The Bai call themselves *Baini* and *Baizi* and used to be called *minjia, nama,* and *lemo.* In Chinese historical records, the Bai's ancestors were known as *Baiman, Bairen* or *Heman* (China, 1994, p. 794). Generally, it is believed that the Bais are the descendants of the ancient Diqiang people who migrated southward. There is a blood relationship between the *Heman* and the *Baiman,* who were scattered around the Erhai region during the Sui-Tang Dynasties (AD 581–907). The Bai established the Nanzhao and Dali kingdoms, which coexisted with the Tang and Song central governments and lasted for about 500 years (AD 618–1279). It is during this period that the Bai became a unique ethnic group. During the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), the feudal hereditary chieftain system *(Tusi)* was still maintained among Bai aristocrats. After the removal of the chieftain system in the succeeding Ming Dynasty (1368–1664), the Bai people came under the direct rule of China's central government. They played an important role in the development of a multiethnic China.

The Bai have an age-old history and flourishing culture, and they enjoy a long record of cultural development, such as the Neolithic Culture, the Bronze Culture around the Erhai Lake region, and the Nanzhao and Dali cultures (see China, 1981, pp. 319–329). The Bai people also enjoy a good reputation among the other ethnic groups in China in the fields of architecture, literature, history, music, dance, opera, painting, and sculpture.

After the founding of the PRC, they were formally named the Bai according to their own wish. In November 1956, the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture was founded for the Bai community. According to the 2000 national census, the Bai have a population of 1,850,000, eighty percent of whom live around Erhai Lake in Dali in

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western Yunnan. The rest of the Bai population is distributed mainly in Lijiang, Baoshan, Nanhua, Yuanjiang, Kunming, and Anning Counties/Cities in the Yunnan as well as in the Liangshan Mountains in Sichuan, in Bijie Prefecture in Guizhou, and Sangzhi in Hunan.

### *1. 2. The Bai Language and Script*

The Bai people have their own language and script (China, 1994, pp.794–797). Bai has three dialects: the Central dialect, the Northern dialect and the Southern dialect. The Central dialect, also known as the Dali dialect, includes the Dali and Xiangyun subdialects spoken in Dali, Eryuan and Bingchuan Counties; the Central dialect, also known as the Jianchuan dialect includes the Jiachuan and Geqing subdialects spoken in Jianchuan and Geqing Countries; the Northern dialect, known as the Bijiang dialect, includes Bijiang and Lanping subdialects spoken in the Bijiang and Lanping Counties in Nujiang Prefectire. Because the Bai are concentrated in specific communities, their dialects and subdialects are mutually intelligible, except the Southern dialect. Like other languages of the Sino-Tibetan language family Bai is monosyllabic, with little morphologic changes, and its grammatical relationships are marked by word order and by the use of independent grammatical particles. Historically, Bai has a close relationship with Chinese. Bai has some phonetic, lexical, and grammatical features that closely resemble those in Mandarin Chinese, though it has more features that are commonly found in Tibeto-Burman languages. Thus, scholars have three different views on the affiliation of Bai. First, Luo Changpei and Fu Mauji (1954) and Xu Lin and Zhao Yansun (1982, 1984) believe that Bai belongs to the Yi branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages. Second, some scholars, such as Dai Qingxia (1990), believe that Bai belongs to an independent Bai branch of the Tibeto-Burman languages. At the Sino-Tibetan international conference, which was held in 1997, Matisoff also supported this classification (Sun & Jiang, 1999). Third, some scholars speculate that instead of belonging to the Tibet-Burman language, Bai may be closer to Chinese. For instance, Benedict (1972) had earlier classified Bai as a part of the Chinese language family, and more recently, Zhenzhang Shangfang (1999) claimed that Bai is member of an independent Chinese-Bai branch.

In language use, the Bai people who live near towns and in valleys can speak Chinese and are generally bilingual, but those who live in the remote mountains speak only Bai. Within the Bai population, there is a gender difference in language use: more Bai men, who usually migrate for work, speak Chinese than Bai women. Due to the local influence of Bai, some Chinese in Dali also speak Bai. Because Lanping County in Nujiang Prefecture is a multiethnic community where Bai is dominant, Bai is the lingua franca among the various ethnic groups there. In Bai communities, Chinese is usually used in radio broadcasting, television, and newspapers, but Bai is used for folk-art activities.

Bai has a classical script that was created on the basis of the Chinese script more than one thousand years ago at the end of the Nanzhao Kingdom (AD 738–902). This script is usually called “the old Bai script” or “classical Bai script” by the Bai.

The classical Bai script is still used in certain folk activities, but it has never developed into a form used by the whole Bai community. The classical Bai script has two types of characters: those directly borrowed from Chinese characters for recording Bai pronunciations and annotating Bai and those derived from Chinese characters (see Wang, 2000; Zhao, 1987). The second type of characters, known as the Bai characters, are created by adding and deleting strokes, reducing radicals (meaningful components), reorganizing radicals, and adding new components. The Bai characters form a very complex system with different kinds of formation processes. The Bai script has never obtained an official status, even though it has been in use in Bai communities for a very long time. Some Bai script inscriptions and historical documents from the Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing dynasties are still preserved today.

After the founding of the PRC, in 1958 a romanized Bai writing system was created, which is now called "the new Bai script." Unfortunately, it had not been used until it was revised in 1982 and 1993. After its experimental use in some Bai communities, the romanized Bai writing system appears to have achieved some good results.

## 2. LANGUAGE POLICY FOR BAI BEFORE THE PRC

The Bai community developed closer ties with the Han in inland provinces as early as during the Qin (221–207 BC.) and Han (206 BC–AD 220) Dynasties (see China, 1981, pp. 320–321). In 109 BC, the Western Han Dynasty set up the Yeshu county administration, moved a large number of Han people to the Erhai Lake area to farm the land, and opened Han schools to spread the Han culture, which all contributed to a foundation for Chinese as an official language there. Since then, political, economic and cultural exchanges between the Central Plains and Erhai areas were further strengthened, contributing to the greater influence of Chinese in Bai communities. By the end of the Sui and Tang Dynasties (AD 581–907), Chinese had already been commonly used in Bai communities. Historical records *(Xin Tangshu: Taizong benji; Xin Tangshu: Nanman zhuan xia)* indicate that the *Heman,* the predecessor of the Bai, had adopted more then ten Han surnames, such as *Yang, Zhao, Li,*and *Dong,* and that, although there were some differences, their language was quite similar to Chinese and had a written form. The language and script mentioned in the historical records were varieties of Chinese and Chinese characters used by the Bai communities.

After its establishment, the Nanzhao Kingdom (738–902) increased exchanges with the Tang Dynasty (see China, 1981, p. 321). As a united kingdom of both the *Wuman* and the *Baiman,* Nanzhao rulers admired Chinese and the Han culture and considered it an honor to adopt Han rituals and learn Confucian poetry and classics. At that time, Chinese had already prevailed over the Erhai Lake area. According to historical records (*Manshu* by a Tang author, Fan Chuo), the *Baiman*'s pronunciation of Chinese was more precise than that of any other tribes in the area. Literary works written in Chinese by Bai scholars also demonstrate high achievement, so that some poems by Bai poets have been included in the *Complete*

*Collection of Tang Poems* (Quan Tang Shi). This reflects a strong and deep Chinese influence around the Erhai Lake area.

The unification of language and its written form should be very important for a new ethnic regime like Nanzhao, but due to the deep influence of Chinese, the Nanzhao neither attempted to unify the language nor to create a writing system for Bai. Analysis of various historical documents suggests that there must have been two languages, Bai and Chinese, used as lingua franca during that time, but the official written language was only Chinese. Nanzhao's Buddhist scripture written in the classical Bai script, which was unearthed in the 1950s, indicates that the classical Bai script had become a mature writing system used among the Bai people, but the Nanzhao regime did not seem to standardize or promote the script as its official language. This is in stark contrast with other minority regimes, such as Tufan, Liao, Xixiao, and Jin (all in western and northwestern China), who created their own writing systems right after establishing their kingdoms.

The Dali Kingdom (AD 937–1253) followed the Nanzhao's language policy. Even though the Dali regime was dominant and the aristocracy used Bai and even the classical Bai script for communication, the regime did not make any efforts to standardize and popularize the classical Bai script. Thus, it existed only as a nonofficial writing system among the Bai people.

During the Tang and Sui Dynasties, Nanzhao and Dali were important minority kingdoms located in the southwest. Their territory covered today's Yunnan Provinces and part of Today's Sichuan, Guizhou, and Guangxi Provinces. The two kingdoms' positions as vassal states of the Chinese Dynasties, the close economic ties, and the strong attraction of the Han culture impelled the two regimes to spread and promote the Chinese script instead of creating their own. The relationship between the two kingdoms and the Song and Tang Dynasties played an important role in the development of a multiethnic China.

The Bai communities in the Erhai Lake area came under the direct control of the central government since the Yuan Dynasty (AD 1279–1368) (see China, 1981, p. 321). The Yuan government ignored Bai, because it carried out a discrimination policy against people in southern China and the Bai aristocracy did not care about the Bai script.

The Ming Dynasty (AD 1368–1644) implemented an assimilationist ethnic policy, a policy that sabotaged the development of minority cultures in Yunnan (see China, 1981, pp. 321–322). According to historical records, for example, Mu Ying, a Ming marshal who conquered Yunnan, set a lot of minority communities on fire, destroying numerous books, documents, and records written in minority languages, including many in the classical Bai script. That was a huge setback for the development of the Bai script. At that time, the aborigines of Yunnan were forced to claim their origins from the Central Plains of China, resulting in the decreased use of the minority languages and scripts that symbolized their culture. In 1411 the Ming Dynasty began to offer imperial examinations in Yunnan, so that learning Chinese became the only way to obtain social recognition for minority intellectuals. The examination solidified the position of Chinese as the official language. Without support by minority intellectuals, it was more difficult for minority languages to develop in their communities (Wang, 2000).

From the Qing Dynasty to the Republic of China, the central government carried out a passive policy towards minority languages. Except for the Tibetan, Mongol, Turkic-speaking Muslims, and Manchu, which were considered bona fide minority groups, the central government denied the existence of any minority groups in southern China. When minority groups in southern China were politically oppressed and economically exploited, their languages and cultures, including those of the Bai community, were ignored and had to survive on their own.

## 3. THE PRC'S LANGUAGE POLICY AND WORK FOR BAI

In the 1950s, particularly after the founding of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture in 1956, the unification of the Bai language and creation of a Bai writing system became a general concern in the Bai community. Since then, the development of Bai has experienced setbacks and made progress as well. I will divide the half-century's work on Bai into three periods for this review.

### *3.1. The Development of Bai and Its Writing System in the 1950s*

In the 1950s, the third language survey team dispatched by the Institute of Linguistics extensively surveyed the Bai spoken in every Bai community and categorized Bai into the North, Central, and Southern dialects. According to the Soviet theory (see Zhou & Fang, this volume; for details see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 169–177) and the *Putonghua* model, which specified that the dialect spoken in the political, economic, and cultural center should be the base dialect and the pronunciation of this center should be the standard pronunciation, the team chose the Southern dialect as the base and the speech of Xiaguan town as the standard pronunciation. Given the theory and model at the time, the team had made the right choices.

Objectively, the Southern dialect was representative of Bai because it was spoken by more Bais in more Bai communities than the other two dialects. In addition, the Southern dialect community was economically more developed than other dialect communities, and it had a long history as the political and cultural center of the Bai. Thus, it was very reasonable to choose the Southern dialect as the base. However, there were problems with Xiguan speech as the standard pronunciation. Though Xiaguan in the Southern dialect community was the political, economic, and cultural center of the Bai, its pronunciation was not representative of Bai for three reasons. First, although Xiaguan was the capital of the Bai Autonomous Prefecture, most of its population were Han people. Second, Chinese was then the language commonly used in daily life and work in Xiaguan. Third, the majority of the Bais in Xiguan had came from Bai communities all over the prefecture and their speech neither represented a unified Bai nor a specific Bai dialect/subdialect. Therefore, the Xiguan speech was not a speech of authority among the Bai people. Clearly, it is not practical to use the "political, economic and cultural center" principle mechanically in China's minority language planning.

Based on the survey, in 1958, the language survey team designed a romanized writing system for Bai. In accordance with the five principles authorized by the State Council (see Q. Zhou, this volume), this writing system, with 26 Roman letters and with 23 initials, 31 finals, and seven tone markers, represented Bai phonemes with the same letters or letter combinations that represent similar Chinese phonemes in the *Pinyin* system. It adopted the same alphabetic order and pronunciations and the same orthographic rules as Pinyin did then. This writing system was officially adopted at the second national conference on minority languages held in Beijing in 1958 (Yang, 1993). Under the policy of romanization and the desire to romanize even the Chinese writing system, no consideration was given to the classical Bai script and its role, so that it missed the first opportunity to be standardized as an official writing system.

However, this roman writing system was not put into experimental use nor promoted in Bai communities for three reasons (see Ma, 1993; Zhang, 1992, pp. 232–242). First, the leaders of the Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture failed to recognize the importance of minority language work, so that they did not fully support the use of this system. Second, without a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the Bai society, economy, and culture and of the needs of ordinary Bai people, some Bai intellectuals opposed the creation and promotion of a Bai writing system. They believed that it was not necessary because Chinese had been used in Bai communities for such a long time. Their opinion was dominant for a long period of time because they had extensive influence in Bai communities. Third, a change of policy under the historical conditions of the time made it impossible to use this writing system. Minority language work took a wrong track after 1958. Guided by the idea of ethnic integration, many people thought that minority groups should shift to Chinese soon and that minority languages were not needed any more. There were even times when minority language work was viewed as "nationalist" and "localist" and a hindrance to communist integration (Jiang, 1994). Thus the scheme of the romanized Bai writing system was not even submitted to the State Ethnic Affairs Commission for approval of its official status. Over the next 30 years this writing system was completely neglected.

### *3.2. Language Work for Bai in 1980s*

After China adopted a policy of reform and opened up to the outside world in the 1980s, minority language work, like all other work, returned to its normal development. After 30 years of discontinuation, Yunnan and Dali governments resumed their work on Bai. In the spring of 1982, experts and scholars from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Central University for Nationalities, the Yunnan Minority Language Work Committee, and Yunnan Institute (University) for Nationalities formed a research group on the Bai writing system. The group started a new round of writing reform for Bai, with the 1958 romanized writing system as its basis, and made two adjustments and one reform (see Yunnan, 1999, pp. 48–61).

First, the group adjusted the base dialect and the standard pronunciation for Bai. The Central dialect replaced the Southern dialect as the base dialect, and the speech

of Jinhua Town of Jianchuan County replaced the Xiaguan speech as the standard pronunciation. The adjustment was made for three reasons: (1) Jianchuan County and Jinhua Town were highly concentrated Bai communities in which 91% and 95% of the populations were Bai; (2) Bai was the lingua franca among different ethnic groups in Jianchuan County and was the working language of the county government, a situation that was uncommon in minority communities in China; and (3) it was believed that, compared with the Southern dialect, the Central dialect had preserved its purity and features of classical Bai, with little influence from Chinese, so that it was respected by Bai people from different communities.

Second, these two important adjustments made it necessary to revise the 1958 romanized writing system. In the 1982 revision, the research group followed the same five principles used in the creation of the 1958 writing system by adopting the Roman alphabet, Pinyin-oriented grapheme-to-phoneme correspondence, and Pinyin-oriented orthographic rules. With the Central dialect as the base dialect and Jinhua speech as the standard pronunciation, the 1982 revision of the 1958 writing system was rather substantial in order to accurately represent the Jinhua speech, because the Southern dialect and the Central dialect differ in initials, finals, and tones. The revised Bai writing system increased initials from twenty three to twenty seven and tones from seven to eight, and it added nasalized finals.

After the revision, the writing system was experimentally used in some Bai communities. In order to train the teachers of Bai, four training courses were run in Kuming and Jianchuan, with an enrollment of over 200 primary and secondary teachers and folklore and folk-art workers. It generally took only two weeks for a primary school teacher to learn the revised Bai writing system. In September 1986, an experimental Bai language class was opened for first grade students at Xizhong elementary school in Jianchuan County, who studied Bai and its revised writing for three hours a week. In the experimental use, whether in schools or in literacy classes and whether in towns or in rural Bai communities, the revised Bai writing system was welcomed and supported by the Bai people in Jianchuan.

However, the experimental use of the revised writing system in Bai communities outside the Central dialect community was far from ideal. This situation reflects the shortcomings of this writing system. First, given that fact that the revised writing system was based on the Central dialect that has fewer speakers than the Southern dialect, it was very difficult to ask the majority to learn the minority's dialect and writing system. Second, the revised writing system failed to accommodate the differences between the Southern and the Central dialects. For instance, it could not represent the distinctions between the Southern dialect's vowels and the Central dialect's nasalized vowels, and the Southern dialect's mid-low tones and the Central dialect's high-level tones. Obviously, the revised writing system could not accurately represent the Southern dialect. Third, in experimental use, speakers of the southern dialect demonstrated a strong dislike for and objected to the writing system when they were learning the nasalized vowels and tense high-level tones. Fourth, the scheme of the revised writing system and textbooks all used word and sentence examples from the Central dialect. These written examples not only increased the difficulties for the learners who spoke other dialects, but also decreased their interest in learning it. These problems slowed down the use of the revised writing system in

the Southern dialect communities. In 1987, for example, the revised writing system training class in Dali had to close because of the lack of interest. The Central Universities for Nationalities in Beijing adopted this revised writing system for Bai courses, but the results were unsatisfactory because the Bai students were speakers of the Southern dialect. These problems show that the revision did not properly address the problem of dialects in the creation of a writing system and needed further work.

### *3.3. Language Work in Bai Communities in the 1990's*

The deficiencies of the 1982 revised Bai writing system not only hindered its use in the Bai communities, but also caused some tension among the Bai dialect communities. In 1993, Yunnan Minority Language Committee held a conference on "The Problem of the Bai Language and Script." The participants included Yunnan and Dali government officials and scholars from Dali, Kuming, and Beijing. The conference comprehensively reviewed the characteristics and use of Bai, arriving at the conclusion that, on the one hand, there is no significant difference among Bai dialects and, on the other hand, Bai will not be able to develop a unified and standard language over a short period. In order to improve the efficiency of Bai language work, the conference decided to make the following two major adjustments to the 1982 scheme of the Bai writing system (Xi, 1993).

First, in contrast to the 1958 and 1982 versions, the 1993 revision of the Bai writing system does not stress either the Southern dialect or the Central dialect as its base, but rather takes advantage of the strong points of both previous versions and tries to accommodate both dialects as much as possible. The breakthrough lies in the deviation from the Soviet theory and the Putonghua model of one writing system with one base dialect and one standard pronunciation; the 1993 revision allows one writing system with two base dialects and two standard pronunciations (for a discussion on the theoretic breakthrough, see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 271–274).

The 1993 scheme reconfirms the Southern dialect again as the base dialect, as the 1958 scheme did, because the Southern dialect community has been the political, economic, cultural and communication center of the Bai communities and of western Yunan. In addition, *Sanyuejie* (the March Street), which has been an important commodities exchange fair for western Yunnan and even southwestern China for 1,000 years, is located in the Southern dialect community. As time goes by, the Southern dialect community becomes more predominant in the economic, cultural, and transportation spheres. In the future the Southern community will increase its influence on other Bai communities. At present, speakers of the Southern dialect are already twice as many as those of the Central dialect area, and the number of speakers of other dialects will not come close in the foreseeable future.

However, the 1993 scheme has replaced Xiguan speech with Xizhou speech as the standard pronunciation. Given the focus on economic development since the 1990s, Xizhou speech is now considered more representative of the Southern dialect because Xizhou Town has been an important economic center of the Bai

communities for a long time. Before the founding of the PRC, Xizhou had developed a market economy with active commerce, a situation rarely seen in China's minority communities during that time. Moreover, Xizhou also enjoys a highly developed culture with many famous intellectuals in Bai history, the earliest modern secondary schools, unique Bai architecture, and well-known cultural scenic spots such as Butterfly Fountain. In fact, the majority of historical documents in Bai history is written in Xizhou speech. Thus, people in other Bai communities believe that Xizhou speech is pleasant and expressive and that it is easy to learn.

Second, with two base dialects and two standard pronunciations, the 1993 scheme allows two variants of the orthography, one for the Southern dialect and one for the Central dialect. Thus, speakers of the Southern dialect and speakers of the Central dialect may spell a word differently, depending on their pronunciations. The 1993 scheme also added, to the 1982 scheme, a mid-falling tone mark, a grapheme for the representation of retroflex in the Southern dialect, and word examples from the Southern dialect. Thus, the 1993 scheme can represent the Southern dialect more accurately. It is more convenient for students from different dialect areas to learn and use, eliminating any possible tension among speakers of different dialects and promoting the use of the Bai writing system in all Bai communities. The ability of the 1993 revised writing system to accommodate both the Southern and Central dialects has protected the enthusiasm of those Bais who had mastered the 1982 scheme and consolidated the progress made in the previous ten years of experimental use. In addition, the 1993 scheme with variants of a written word enables Bai speakers to learn the difference and correspondence among the Bai dialects, which may promote the unification of the Bai dialects and Bai people. The 1993 scheme is pragmatic in facing the reality of Bai language work, though from a long-term point of view it may be only transitional.

This scheme is well received by Bai speakers from all walks of life, and it is experimentally used in some Bai communities. Primary schools in Jianchuan have used it in bilingual classes. Jianchuan's department of education and Yunnan Minority Press have been compiling textbooks in this writing system, the first two volumes of which have already been published and used with great success. Dali has used the 1993 scheme in Bai schools. Yunnan Minority Press has published music manuals, libretto, folklore, and idioms in this system. At present, the 1993 scheme has been submitted to the appropriate government department for approval for large-scale use.

Because the 1993 scheme may be transitional, concerned research departments are actively looking for another feasible solution. Yunnan Minority Language Work Committee and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) are collaborating to study the correspondence, similarity, and intelligibility among the Bai dialects and are searching for a Bai dialect that has the highest correspondence, similarity, and intelligibility among all the Bai dialects and that may be used to unify Bai base dialects and standard pronunciations for a unified Bai writing system.

## 4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, I will make three points about the experience of language work in Bai communities and the relationship between Chinese and Bai. First, the Chinese language is firmly entrenched in Bai communities because of its use over a long period of time. This is the reality for Bai language work. The status of Chinese as an official language has not been affected by Bai language work. In fact, the relationship between Chinese and Bai in status and use has never been discussed during the three periods since the 1950s. Thus, Bai language work has mainly consisted of experimental standardization and planning, as Bai does not hold the same status as Chinese does. With China's rapid social, economic, and cultural development, the use and influence of Chinese has been gradually increasing.

Second, the ongoing work on Bai is closely related to the Bai people's increasing awareness of their ethnicity. Since the founding of the PRC, the Bai people have increased their sense of pride and unity as an ethnic group because of the implementation and popularization of the government's ethnic policy. The Bai people have gradually considered their language and script as a symbol of their ethnicity as well as a very important part of their culture. The most dramatic change in Bai language work is that Bai intellectuals have changed their attitudes from rejecting Bai to supporting Bai (See Zhang, 1992).

Third, the focus of Bai language work is the creation and improvement of the writing system. The goal of establishing a base dialect and a standard pronunciation is not to develop a unifying oral language, but only to serve the work on the writing system. Bai is not used in news media, such as newspaper, television or radio, nor is the writing system used in daily life. Therefore, Bai language work does not emphasize the language and script's communicative functions. Moreover, Bai autonomous governments have not enacted legislation or regulations on the use of Bai. All these factors are not helpful for the maintenance, use, and spread of Bai and its writing system in Bai communities.

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## 5. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese into English by Reyihan of the Institute of Ethnology & Anthropology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

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CAODAOBATEER

# THE USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MONGOL AND ITS WRITING SYSTEMS IN CHINA

## 1. THE MONGOL LANGUAGE AND ITS USERS

The Mongol language must be considered internationally because Mongols are a transnational ethnic group. Thus, we will mention Mongolia and Russia when we talk about Mongol in China. Mongol belongs to the Mongolian group of the Altai family. This group has seven languages: Mongol, Daur, Dongxiang, Bonan, Monggor, Shar-a Yogor, and Mogol. While Mogol is spoken only in Afghanistan, Mongol is spoken in China, Mongolia, and Russia, and Daur, Dongxiang, Bonan, Monguor, and Shar-a Yugor are spoken only in China. Of these seven Mongolian languages, only Mongol has its own writing systems. It also has the largest population of users and a vast distribution.

There is a total of about eight million Mongolians on earth who live in the vast prairie areas of China, Mongolian, and Russia. According to 1991 statistics, the Republic of Mongolia had 2,156,300 Mongols. Russia had 207,000 Buryat Mongols and 122,000 Kalmyk Mongols in 1990 (Yu, 1994, pp. 119–120 , 173). The Chinese Mongols had a population of more than 5,400,000, amounting to 67.5% of the total Mongol population in the world. Because of political and historical reasons, Mongols in China, Mongolia, and Russia have developed separately. They have gradually formed their own linguistically different standard languages.

The Chinese Mongols are distributed over more than ten provinces. Among them, Inner Mongolia has the largest proportion, having reached 4,030,000 in 2000 and amounting to three quarters of the total Mongol population in China (Chen, 2002). The other quarter is distributed over ten other provinces. The 1995 statistics shows that Liaoning had 650,000 Mongols, Xinjiang had 151,000 Oirat Mongols, Heilongjiang had 159,000, Jilin 156,000, Hebei 150,000, Qinghai 8,000, Henan 60,000, and Yunan 10,000 (Senamzil, 2000). There are also some Mongols scattered over Sichuan and Shandong (Secen, 1998). According to 1982 statistics (China, 1994), 80% of Chinese Mongols spoke Mongol, a number that was further confirmed by the 1986-1989 sample survey (see China, 1994, pp. 894–899). A report from the survey shows that 624,600 Chinese Mongols spoke Chinese. However, the 1990 national census shows that only 50.6% (of a total of 480,000) Mongols spoke only Mongol, 29.99% of them spoke both Mongol and Chinese, and

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19.95% shifted to Chinese (He, 1998, p. 92). At present, 80% of 4,030,000 Mongols in Inner Mongolia speak Mongol while 20% of them speak Chinese (Chen, 2002).

## 2. CURRENT STATUS OF MONGOL DIALECTS

On the whole, Mongol remains rather uniform across borders without major difference. It can be classified into four dialects: the Oriat-Halimag in the west; the Khalkha in the middle; the Horcin-Haracin in the east; and the Bargu-Buriyad in the north. The Horcin-Haracin dialect is spoken in northeastern China while the other three are transnational.

Spoken in central and western Inner Mongolia and most of the territory of Mongolian Republic, the Khalkha has over four million users and is the largest and most prestigious dialect. Spoken in agricultural communities in northeastern China, the Horcin-Haracin dialect has about two and one half million speakers, but it has been greatly influenced by Chinese. As a result of Mongol-Chinese contact, this community is linguistically characterized by the sinicization of Mongol, bilingualism, and Chinese-Mongol Creole. The Bargu-Buriyad dialect area lies in the north part of Mongolian communities, with a total of 300,000 speakers in the Buriyad Autonomous Republic of Russia, the eastern territory of the Republic of Mongolia, and China's Hulunbuir. The dialect has been subject to different influences in each country: within Russian territory it has been greatly influenced by Russian, within the territory of the Republic of Mongolia it has been extensively influenced by the Khalkha dialect, and in China it tends to develop close to China's standard Mongol based on the Chakhar, a subdialect of the Khalkha, in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. The Oirat-Halimag dialect is spoken by about 330,000 speakers in Russia's Autonomous Republic of Halimag, and China's Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, and Qinghai regions.

Mongol spoken in China is usually classified into three dialects: the Western, the Central, and the Eastern, i.e. the Bargu-Buriyad dialect, the Inner Mongolian dialect and the Oirat dialect (see China, 1994, p. 894; Chingaltai, 1991, p. 1, 1998, pp. 181–201). In fact, the Western is the Oirat dialect, a branch of the Oirat-Halimag dialect; the Central is based on the Chakhar; the Eastern is the Bargu-Buriyad dialect (excluding the Bargu-Buriyad in Hulunbuir and Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning). However, this classification cannot reflect the actual dialectal differences between agricultural communities and pastoral communities. As a matter of fact, the Central dialect includes six subdialects: the Horcin, the Haracin-Tümüt, the Bagarin, the Chahar-Sunid-Urad, the Ordos, and the Alagsa-Ezine. The first two of these six belong to the Horcin-Haracin dialect, and differs strikingly from the other four. Thus, Mongol spoken in China can be more ideally classified into four dialects: the Oirat in the west, the Inner Mongolian spoken in the half agricultural and half pastoral areas in the center, the Horcin-Haracin spoken in agricultural areas in the east, and the Bargu-Buriyad in the north, as I will demonstrate below.

The Oirat dialect is spoken in Xinjiang's Bayan Gool Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture, Boru Tala Mongolian Autonomous prefecture, and Buksair Mongolian Autonomous County, Inner Mongolia's Alagsa Prefecture, Gansu's Mongolian

Autonomous County, and Qinghai's Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and Henan Mongolian Autonomous County. It has about 200,000 speaker, but some Mongols in this dialect community have shifted to other languages. For example, about 60% of the 48,000 Mongols in Qinghai speak Tibetan instead of Mongol (see MC Zhou, this volume). The core of the Oirat dialect community is in Xinjiang, where the Oirat people created their own writing system – the Clear writing system – and developed their own dialect on the basis of the Oigurzin Mongol 300 years ago. For example, some vowels of the Oirat maintain the same pronunciations found in ancient Mongol; some vowels are deleted or assimilated as glides. It has affixation processes that are different from other dialects. It has borrowed a lot of words from Uygur, Kazak, Tibetan, Russian and Chinese. The differences between the Oirat and the Inner Mongolian dialects have arisen for historical reasons. First, ever since the period of Cinggis Hagar, the Oirat Mongols have lost direct contact with the core Mongol communities. Second, the Oirat dialect has its own writing system, the Todu or Clear writing, on the basis of which the Oirats created their own literature, leading to the existence of their unique literary language.

The Inner Mongolian dialect community includes Chifeng City, Ordos City, and prefectures of Silingool, Ulangan Cab, and Bayan Nagur. This community and its people have maintained both political and economic unification throughout history. Hence this community has become the representative of Mongol. The dialect has a perfect system of short vowels, long vowels, and compound vowels as well as a consonant system as represented in the Mongolian writing system. It has symmetric vowel harmony with masculine and feminine vowel harmony, eight different plural suffixes, many suffixes that mark eight formal cases for nouns, a rich system of tenses, aspects, and moods, and a very rich vocabulary. It is the basis for the standard modern written Mongol. The traditional culture of Mongols is a nomadic culture, so that words and expressions about nomadism form the core of the Mongolian vocabulary. Within this dialect community, the Ongnigud–Naiman subdialect and Aru Horcin–Bagarin subdialect spoken in the half agricultural and half pastoral areas show transitional characteristics with both an agricultural vocabulary and a pastoral vocabulary. Thus, the Bagarin speakers have played a special role in the process of the formation of the standard modern written Mongol.

Whether in the Northeast or the contact areas in central Inner Mongolia where the Horcin-Haracin dialect is spoken, the Han migrants' lifestyle and language gradually influenced the local Mongols. As Han villages and the Han population increased, agricultural Mongols were completely surrounded by the Han and its culture. Some Mongols stayed with the Han while failing to compete with the stronger Han people. Some Mongols moved northward to the pastoral area with sinicized language and culture. Thus, Mongolian communities in contact with the Han first became bilingual, then creolised, and finally Chinese-speaking communities. As the sinicized communities expanded to the pastoral area, the processes of sinicization repeated themselves. In Mongol-Chinese bilingual communities, obviously, bilingualism is not balanced, but directional: Mongols learn to speak Chinese, to become bilinguals, to become Creole speakers, and eventually to become Chinese speakers. It is a process wherein Mongols have passively accepted Chinese. The early spreaders of Chinese were Han people from the

heartland of the Han, but later spreaders included both Hans and sinicized Mongolian migrants. According to the degrees of sincization, there are two types of Mongolian subdialect communities in agricultural areas: the less sinicized and more sinicized.

The latter is typically represented by the Haracin-Tumed subdialect whose community has been almost completely sinicized. In this subdialect community, most of the Mongolian masses can speak only Chinese, with the exception of a few people in a few small communities who still speak Mongol. The Haracin-Tumed subdialect is distributed in Inner Mongolia's Haracin Banner, Ningcheng City, and Huriy-e Banner and Liaoning's JianPing City, Jianchang City, Lingyuan City, Chaoyang City, Beipiao City, Fuxin Mongolian Autonomous County, Zhanwu City and Haracin left-wing Mongolian Autonomous Banner. This area had about 300,000 Mongolians in the 1950s and over 500,000 in the 1990s, but the majority of them now speak Chinese (Caodaobateer, 1999). In addition, about 40% of Mongols in the Horcin dialect communities in Hei Longing and Jillian Provinces have shifted to Chinese, and the proportion is still increasing. It must be pointed out here that the Huriy-e and Monggolzin subdialects are not as sinicized as the Haracin. The Mongolzin subdialect has a lot of vitality, and the Mongolzin people's love of their language and culture is admirable.

Although the Haracin-Tumed subdialect cannot be separated completely from the Inner Mongolian dialect, it has changed a lot. The Haracin-Tumed and the Horcin subdialects are classified in to the same dialect group because they share quite a lot of similarities. For example, both of them have the same phonological features borrowed extensively from Chinese, and they have abandoned some original grammar patterns. However, they do have distinctive differences. For example, the Horcin subdialect does not have the sixth vowel represented in the Mongolian writing system while the Haracin-Tumed has preserved it albeit in a changed form. As a matter of fact, the Horcin subdialect shares the absence of this vowel with the Mongolzin subdialect, Manchu, Xibe, Hezhen and Daur (Chaoke, 1997, p. 15; Enghebatu, 1998, pp. 27–30). As is well known, the history of China's northeast was written by the Zurcin, Khitan, Mongolian, and Manchu, and we have every reason to believe that some features of the Haracin-Tumed dialect are related to the Zurcin language, the Khitan language, and the subsequent Manchu language. Of course, the Haracin-Tumed dialect maintains some distinct features of classical Mongol. Thus, when we examine the Haracin-Tumed subdialect, we should take into account not only Chinese but also the Khitan, Zuricin, Manchu languages, and even Korean as well.

The less sinicized Horcin subdialect community has the largest subdialect-speaking population, which is distributed in Inner Mongolia's Tongliao City, Xing'an Prefecture, Heilongjiang's Durbed Mongolian Autonomous County, Zhaoyuan County, and Jilin's Guorlos Mongolian Autonomous County. This area has a long history of agricultural civilization which was cultivated by the Han migrants and the agricultural Mongols from Haracin-Tumed subdialect area. The Horcin subdialect has some unique phonological features, unique cases and other unique grammatical features (Secen, 1998, p. 328). Its vocabulary has a considerable number of Chinese loans, many original Mongolian words, and some Manchu loans.

For historical reasons the economic life in the Horcin area has changed a lot, and herdsmen have settled and become farmers. With influences from Chinese, the Horcin subdialect is different from those spoken in the pastoral areas. Currently, with the economic reform and the development of a market economy, the influence of Chinese on the local Mongol subdialect has been increasing. The Horcin influence has even reached Bargu as well. In Bargu, the Horcin migrants' cultural and linguistic influences are fully expressed, some of which the Bargu people have already absorbed. Moreover, the Horcin migrants are scattered over every corner of Mongolian communities and will exert linguistic and cultural influences on those host Mongolian communities. Although the Horcin subdialect is not as sinicized as the Haracin-Tumed subdialect, it has so many Chinese loans that a Horcin speaker cannot communicate with others in every day life without using a Chinese loan. Fortunately, these Chinese loans have been mongolianized and thus have lost their original Chinese pronunciation, for most Mongols here cannot yet speak Chinese.

However, in terms of future development, the intense infiltration of Chinese will gradually reach all Mongolian communities, with those agricultural communities as the breakthroughs. Due to factors such as high population density, a high degree of settlement, frequent contact with Han people, and a large educated population, the educated from the Horcin community form a majority of Mongolian intellectuals. They work in every corner of Mongolian areas, holding important posts in research, education, administration, medical care, judicature, etc. In this way, starting with daily communication, the influence of the Horcin dialect is growing via books, periodicals, and school education, and it will guide the future of Mongol in China and the everyday life of Chinese Mongols. Inner Mongolia's contemporary literary language and its development are moving eastwards as well. Mongols have strong affection for their language and its rich and beautiful expressions, but they may try to follow new development, accept new changes, and create a new form of literary language.

Lastly, the Bargu-Buriyad dialect is spoken by about 80,000 Mongols in four banners or counties (New Bargu Zuo Banner, New Bargu You Banner, Old Bargu, and Ewenki Autonomous Banner). It has its own phonological, grammatical, and lexical features, but its speakers general speak the standard Mongol, the dialect of Inner Mongolia (Chingaltai, 1998, p. 182). Because of the location of its community, the Bargu-Guriyad dialect has not been significantly influenced directly by Chinese, though Chinese influence has already infiltrated the community via Horcin-speaking migrants.

Among the four dialect areas, the Haracin-Tumed dialect has accomplished its historical mission. The Tumed literature represented by Inzannasi, together with Isidanzinwangzil and Hesigbatu from Ordos in the west, laid the earliest foundation for the contemporary standard Mongolian literary language, but a century later this glorious community is about to lose its language. The center of modern Mongol has moved to the pastoral and half-pastoral communities. In the middle and late 20th century, works by Na Saincogtu from Cahar and Ba Burinbehi, A. Odsar from Bagarin represented the contemporary standard Mongolian literary language. Oirat speakers are still creating refined literary works on the basis of their own dialect, although they are using more and more standard Mongol based on the Inner

Mongolian dialect. Bargu speakers love their native dialect, which has already been influenced more and more by the standard Mongol. With the abundant features of agricultural culture and a strong national spirit, Horcin speakers are forming their own style. While they are actively promoting the standard Cahar pronunciation, their local-featured literature and literary language are gradually developing. The policy of promoting the standard (Cahar) pronunciation in theory and the Horcin influences in reality will be the dialectical contradiction and unity in the future development of Mongol (see Chingaltai, 1997, pp. 26–46). With the combination of pastoralist culture and agriculturalist culture, the glorious tradition of the language and the changing language are undergoing an unprecedented process.

## 3. THE HISTORY AND PRACTICE OF MONGOLIAN WRITING SYSTEMS

The Mongol has used writing systems based on the Old Uygur script, Phags pa script, current Mongol script, and Cyrillic script. At present, the current standard Mongolian writing system and Todu (or Clear) writing system are used in Mongolian communities in China (see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 238–245). The current Mongol writing system, which has developed from the Old Uygur script, has changed a lot through several hundred years' development, with block letters, artistic letters, and hand-written letters of all font sizes. The current Mongolian writing system is also called the traditional or Hudum Mongolian writing system, in contrast to competing systems adopted in history. For example, the writing system based on Phags pa created in the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) is called the new Mongolian writing system. Oirat speakers created the Todu or Clear system, leading to the naming of the traditional Mongolian system as the Hudum or Obscure system. Apart from China, Mongols in Russia and the Republic of Mongolia both use what is called the new writing system based on the Cyrillic script, a system that China adopted briefly during the 1950s, but the traditional Mongolian writing system has been returning to wider use in the Republic of Mongolia since 1994.

The current Mongolian script can be traced back to the ancient Phoenicia writing system. It is believed that the current script has developed from the Phoenicia script, to the Aramaic script, to Brahmi script, to the Sogdian script, to the Old Uygur script, and finally to the Mongol script (Yilinsite, 1987). At about sixth or seventh century, both the Uygurs and Mongols started to borrow the Sogdian script (Ce Sagdarsurung, 1989). Through more than one thousand years of development, this writing system has been perfected and its letters aesthetically enriched. As a result, it can fully express not only this modern language but also loan words from any other language. The current Mongolian writing system is composed of 29 letters including five vowels and twenty four Consonants (for sample, see Daniels & Bright, 1996, p. 546). From the regular combination of vowels and consonants come syllables, which combine, with no more than ten, to form words. The words are written from the top to the bottom to form a line and lines are arranged from left to right. Documents in the Old Uygur script are rare. All that have been found so far have been edited by Dobu as *Collection of Documentations in the Old Uygur Script*

*(Huihe shi menggu wen wenxian huibian),* which was published in 1983 by Beijing's Minzu Press. It has been widely used by scholars of the Mongolian language.

In academic circles, it is usually believed that the modern Mongol script began with the *Ganzuur,* which was translated and published during the period of Ligedn Hagan, the last emperor of the Yuan Dynasty. Many more documents are preserved in the modern Mongol script. They are mainly works on Mongol history, Buddhist Scriptures, translations of classical novels written by the Han, and original Mongolian literary works. Representative of these documents are the translated version of *Ganzuur* (1607 or 1629), *Pilgrimage to the West* (1721), *The History of Gold* (1651-1675) *Erdeni Tobci* (The origin of the Mongol, 1663), and *Huhe Sudur* [Stories of the history, 1871) (Dobu, 1983; Ce Damdinsurung, 1979; Sanang Secen, 1981). The modern Mongol script was finalized as a result of the application of lead printing in the early 1900s. Temgetu (1887-1939) from Haracin began lead printing in Mongolian in 1922 and founded the first Mongolian publishing house in 1923, which paved the way for the Mongolian press business and nurtured a large number of talents. In his lifetime, he edited, translated and published more than fifty kinds of works amounting to 10,000 volumes of books in Mongol, Chinese, Manchu, and Tibetan. Under his direct influence and support, the East Mongolian Publishing House and Cahar Press were set up subsequently and produced many publications (Chifeng, 1986).

Since the founding of PRC in 1949, the use of the Mongol script has developed extensively (see China, 1992, 6–16). Over ten major presses publish a large quantity of Mongolian books, newspapers, and periodicals each year. Even banners/counties have Mongolian newspapers. The script is also commonly used by governments. At the local level, governments in Mongolian communities have established language committees in charge of the use of Mongol: government documents and communications inside Mongolian autonomous areas are written in both Chinese and Mongol. So are official notices, bulletins, house numbers, official seals, graduation certificates, marriage certificates, identification cards, etc. At the national level, the documents and reports of the CCP national congress, the National People's Congress, and the Political Consultative Conference are translated in Mongol, in addition to simultaneous interpretation. The script is also taught and studied at educational institutions from kindergarten to university, a practice with almost a hundred-year history. Graduate studies of the Mongol script, writing system, and language are carried on in the Chinese Academy of Social Science and some universities.

In addition to the traditional Mongolian writing system, the Oirat people created the Todu or Clear writing system on the basis of the Old Uygur script (see China, 1992, pp. 8–10). Based on the Oirat dialect, the Todu writing system was the result of a writing reform intended to satisfy the need of translating Tibetan Buddhist Scriptures. The phenomenon of a single letter matched to multiple sounds appeared in the classical Mongolian writing system when people represented as many sounds as possible with as fewer letters as possible. As for people who speak dialects in the heartland of the Mongol, there appears to be no obstacle to use this system. However, the relatively independent Oirat people had great difficulty using this system for the spoken language of the Mongol Empire. In fact, history repeats itself

when it comes to the use of the Mongolian writing system in Oirat communities today when the traditional writing system is promoted there. This is one of the reasons why the Oirat people had to create their own writing system. On the other side, the Old Uygur script appeared rather limited and obscure when it was used to translate the Buddhist Scriptures. Thus, in 1648, Zaya Bandied created Todu with 31 letters, seven of which represent vowels while twenty four represent consonants. Through over 350 years of development, the Todu writing system became the main tool of receiving education and knowledge and passing down and creating literary works.

The merit of the Todu writing system is that seven unique letters represent the seven vowels in Mongol, while the Hudum writing system represent those seven vowels with five letters and the Cyrillic writing system represent them with 13 letters, depending on the phonological contexts (Zamca, 2001). The Todu writing system has graphs (letter reduplication) for long vowels, graphs that the Hudum writing system does not have. Since 1980s, supported by the government, the Oirat people have taken initiatives to promote the use of the Hudum writing system and have had great success (see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 238–245). At present, both the Todu and Hudum writing systems are used side by side. This language planning project fully demonstrates the Oirat people's great spirit of selflessness, for they are sacrificing their own writing system for the unification of Mongolian writing. However, it is a complicated project. People are debating the essences of the use of the Hudum writing system in Oirat communities and the future of the development of these two systems. The Hudum writing system has revealed a weakness in its ability to represent fully the local dialect during the process of its use. Also, the intention of quick replacing the Todu writing system has stirred up dissatisfaction and uneasiness among Oirat speakers. Oirat speakers who love both their Mongolian nation and the Todu writing system are facing a dilemma. While criticizing the mistakes made during past Mongolian writing reforms, scholars appealed to people not to give up the Todu system in order to learn the Hudum system but to use both systems, with the Todu system as the major one in Oirat communities (Mendubilig, 2000). It might be the best way for the Oirat speakers to use both Todu and Hudum writing systems in the long run.

## 4. CURRENT STATUS OF THE USE OF MONGOL

Both the constitution of the PRC and the laws of the PRC on the autonomy for national minority regions have special entries stating that each ethnic group can enjoy to the full extent the freedom of using and developing its own language within the unified country (see M. Zhou, this volume). Like languages of other ethnic groups, Mongol and its writing systems have received full confirmation and have developed themselves as well. To guarantee the freedom of using and developing Mongol, the CCP committee and the people's government of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region have paid special attention to the development of Mongol. They have always believed that the use and development of Mongol are significant for maintaining and passing on the Mongolian tradition, promoting and

implementing the government's policies toward national minorities, improving the educational and scientific levels of Mongols, promoting reform and modernization, and strengthening the national unity and the stability and prosperity of China's border regions. Considering the above reasons, the local government pays special respect to Mongolian language work and is determined to legislate and standardize it (Chen, 2002).

The specific measures taken by the Inner Mongolian government to develop Mongol since the 1980s are the convening in 1984 and 2001 of conferences held to recognize excellent Mongol usage by individuals and groups. At the 2001 conference, 50 groups and 248 individuals received commendations and awards (Chen, 2002). At this conference, special attention and emphasis were given to the significance and importance of Mongolian language, the usefulness of Mongol for economic development, the legalization and standardization of Mongol, the relationship between inheritance and development, and leadership in Mongolian language work. In other words, the local government clearly demonstrated its desire to develop Mongol as a part of the cause of the CCP (Chen, 2002). In Mongolian communities Mongol plays an indispensable role in politics, administration, judicature, education, news media, translation, publication, broadcasting, and film. As one of the major languages in China (see M. Zhou, this volume), Mongol is one of languages used at the CCP National Congress, the People's National Congress, and the Political Consultative Nation Conference, and it plays an important role in China's political life.

Mongol is distributed mainly over eight provinces/regions: Heilongjian, Liaoning, Jilin, Inner Mongolian, Hebei, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Gansu. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), only 16% of the Mongolian population and 12% of the Mongolian territory in the middle were allocated to Inner Mongolia, while the larger part of the territory and population were divided into five parts for Heilongjian, Jilin, Liaoning, Gansu, and Ningxia. Because of the interference by the extreme-leftist ideology, teaching and work on Mongol stopped. In language use, undue emphasis was put on the use of Chinese and borrowing from Chinese, so that all the propaganda work was in Chinese or in Mongol with Chinese loans. This practice greatly hindered communication between the CCP and the Mongolian people. At that time, the Inner Mongolian government could not do anything to change the overall situation of Chinese dominance, so that it tried to do a better job in maintaining Mongol by organizing a steering group and office to carry on Mongolian language work in Inner Mongolia, and it reported its efforts to the State Council. In 1974, the State Council ratified (Document #3) Inner Mongolia's report, asking the steering group and office to coordinate and promote work on Mongol in all eight provinces/regions with a Mongol population.

This steering group, sponsored by the governments of those eight provinces/ regions and headquartered in Hohhot, is known *Baxie* (see Senamzil, 2000). After the Cultural Revolution in 1977, the State Council reconfirmed (Document # 138) its early position on *Baxie*'s role in work on Mongol and stipulated this office's guiding principles as: working under the direction of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought, implementing the CCP's policy on minority languages according to the reality in those eight provinces/regions, making working plans on Mongol,

organizing cooperation and exchange experiences, implementing cooperative programs, and promoting the development of Mongol to better serve political and economic development in minority areas and as well as the socialist development of the country (Senamzil, 2000). The eight members of *Baxie* include Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu, and Ningxia. After this last member withdrew, Hebei joined in 1992. The eight members had 96% of the total 4,800,000 (1990 census) Mongolians residing in their territories in the 1990s.

Ever since its foundation, *Baxie* has taken the initiative to compile textbooks in Mongol and to unify and standardize Mongolian terms. More recently it has made efforts to develop an educational system with Mongol as the major language of instruction, to expand Mongolian publication, to ensure the use of Mongol in media, arts, and scientific research, to sort out classic Mongolian documents, and to standardize and unify Mongol writing systems. *Baxie* has made a lot of contributions to the use and development of Mongol, the most significant of which are the following two aspects.

First, the efforts of *Baxie* have ensured China's principle of language equality, helped implement the CCP's policies, and strengthened China's national unity. In the later years of the Cultural Revolution, when Chinese loan words were forced into Mongol to the extent of endangering the healthy development of Mongol, *Baxie* started to check and eliminate the disasterous Chinese loan words (Senamzil, 2000, pp. 161–162). Secondly, the efforts by *Baxie* have accelerated the improvement of the educational quality of the Mongolian masses (Senamzil, 2000, pp. 102–105). In China, the first choice of communicative tool for the Mongols is still Mongol. About 80% of Mongols use their native language, and the remaining 20% who have lost Mongol have a strong desire to learn it. Mongol plays an indispensable role in tapping the Mongolian people's intellectual resources and developing their economy. *Baxie* has always put its emphasis on the systemization of Mongol as the language of instruction, cooperation in compiling text books for primary schools, secondary schools, and even universities, and an exchange and training program for talented people in the eight provinces/regions. For example, since 1977 Inner Mongolia has trained in Mongol over 1,200 college graduates, over 1,000 technical schools students, a large number of preschool, primary, and secondary schools teachers, translators, editors, reporters, actors and broadcasters for the cooperating provinces/regions. *Baxie* has also greatly facilitated Mongolian news media, broadcasting, publishing, and arts. It has published its official journal *Mongolian Language and Script,* which covers language policy studies and Mongolian linguistics, classics, translation, and teaching.

Regarding the use of Mongol and the maintenance of Mongolian culture, we may classify Mongolian communities into three types: agricultural, half-agricultural/half-pastoral, and pastoral. The differences within the three types of communities are striking, as a 1980s survey demonstrated when the total Mongolian population was 3,411,367 (China, 1994, pp. 894–897).

First, Mongols in pastoral communities and half pastrol/half agricultural communities mainly used Mongol. About 53.6% of all Mongols in China or 66.6% (1,830,000) of China's Mongol speakers lived in these communities. Of this population, 1,350,000 Mongols spoke only Mongol and 480,000 knew some

Chinese. Since Mongol is the only language of wider communication, the Hans and people from other ethnic groups there could speak Mongol too. These communities include most of Inner Mongolia, the Mongolian communities in Qinghai and Gansu, and Mongolian communities in XinJiang where Mongols also speak Uygur and Kazak.

Second, among the 31.38% (1,070,000) of Mongols who dwell in Inner Mongolia, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning, 657,800 speak both Mongol and Chinese, and 142,500 speak only Mongol, whereas 270,100 have completely shifted to Chinese. In these Mongolian communities, the economy is generally based on agriculture. Mongols and Chinese inhabit in the same community, but the Han is the majority. Mongol is spoken within the family or among some Mongols in the community. In addition, Mongol is spoken with a lot of Chinese loan words there. The language of wider communication is Chinese. Even in Mongolian schools, Chinese is the language of instruction, while Mongol is taught as a subject course.

Third, as for the 354,500 Mongols (10.39% of the total) who are long-time residents in agricultural areas in Henan, Shandong, and Beijing, they had shifted to Chinese for a very long time because they have been totally immersed in a Chinese-speaking environment and have lost contact with other Mongolian communities for ages. In addition 14,500 Mongols in Sichuan speak Naxi, 18,000 Mongols in Qinghai speak Tibetan, and 6,000 Mongols in Yunnan speak Yi.

To summarized, in the 1980s, 663,300 (19.45%) Mongols had shifted to Chinese and other languages; 2,830,000 people, including Mongols, Hans, Kazaks, Daurs and Ewenks, spoke Mongol; and 1,543,500 (56.17%) Mongols spoke only Mongol, while 1,204,200 (43.83%) Mongols were bilinguals.

Recently, the shift to Chinese appears to remain stable, at least in Inner Mongolia. In 1995, Inner Mongolia had a Mongolian population of 3,600,000, 180,000–200,000 of whom had shifted completely to Chinese (Senamzil, 2000). In 2000, Inner Mongolia's Mongolian population reached 4,030,000, 80% of whom spoke Mongol (Chen, 2002) while 20% had shifted to Chinese. However, this does not mean that Chinese-Mongol bilinguals have remained the same. Moreover, although statistics show 80% of China's Mongols speak Mongol, 30% of the Mongolian population are bilinguals and 20% of it have shifted to Chinese. In other words, bilinguals and Chinese speakers account for 50% of China's Mongolian population. With ever increasing contact with Han people as well as rapid economic development, sinicization is increasing.

In reality, the use of Mongol is rather limited because Mongol is the main language of communication only in the vast rural and pastoral areas. It is obvious that, in terms of social functions, Mongol can hardly travel out of villages and small towns and survive in large county towns. Mongol is no longer the regular working language in government offices above the county/banner level, nor the language of social communication in manufacturing, business, or the daily life in small and medium cities. In urban areas, Mongol is restricted to such places as campuses of universities for nationalities, Mongolian departments of the news media, minority language committees of the government, the Mongolian editing departments of publishing houses, and Mongolian singing and dancing ensembles. When Mongolian herdsmen leave their pasture, Mongolian farmers walk away from the farm,

Mongolian teachers and students leave their campuses, and Mongolian professionals leave their offices, communication has to be carried out in Chinese. This happens because they live in an ocean of Han people.

As far as Inner Mongolia is concerned, the 1990 census shows that 81% (17,300,000) of a total population of 21,450,000 are Hans and 19% (4,150,000) are minorities, among the latter 3,800,000 are Mongols. The 2000 census shows that the population in Inner Mongolia has reached 23,755,400, of which 79.24% (18,823,900) are Hans and only 16.96% (4,029,200) are Mongols. In other words, the Han people are the primary inhabitants in villages, towns, and especially big cities in Inner Mongolia. In addition, the Han people are much more powerful in social functions. The Han people are the social, economic, and cultural main stream. In such an environment, the use of Mongol is rather weak. Considering future development, much more Mongolian youth would rather receive an education in Chinese than in Mongol.

On the other hand, Inner Mongolia's educational system for Mongols is complete and consistent. Different levels of Mongolian courses are offered in farming areas, pastoral areas, and urban areas. In farming and pastoral areas, primary and secondary schools use Mongol as the language of instruction. There are kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools which use Mongol in cities too. Over 20 colleges and universities and all kinds of occupational schools all enroll students for classes taught in Mongol. Although opportunities for employment are far from enough for Mongol talent, there is some demand in research, teaching, propaganda, judicature, manufacturing, arts, publishing, foreign affairs, trade, transportation, and finance. Mongol can be used to prepare students for study at colleges and universities. Some students who graduated from Mongolian high schools entered Beijing University and Qinghua University, the best universities in China, to receive further education in Chinese and to learn foreign languages with other students, together with Han students. Thus, learning Mongol does have a future.

Let me examine a successful example here. Zhelimu League (Prefecture) has a total population of 2,400,000, of which 1,030,000 are Mongols. From 1980 to 1986, 4,869 students successfully passed college entrance examinations. Of this group of students, 60% (2,895) were Mongols, of whom 72% (2,087) had received an education in Mongol. Obviously, they did better than those who had receive an education in Chinese. After they had finished their secondary education in Mongol, many students from Chifeng and Tongliao in this area finished masters or doctoral degrees and are now holding important positions in state natural science research centers. As far as those people are concerned, they usually do well not only in Mongol but also in Chinese and even in foreign languages. These examples shows that the use of Mongol as a language of instruction does not at all hinder Mongolian students' future; instead it enriches their knowledge, strengthens their ethnic ties, and improves their skills.

Inner Mongolia has set a good example for the use of Mongol for all Mongolian communities. As an illustration, let me review the 1989 statistics regarding education in Inner Mongolia (Senamzil, 2000, pp. 99–100). Ten of Inner Mongolia's 19 colleges and universities had departments using Mongol as a language of

instruction or majors in Mongol language and literature; 7,367 of the 24,224 college students were Mongols, 50% of whom were taught in Mongol. In 110 junior colleges, include 38 Mongolian normal schools, 6,730 Mongolian students were learning through Mongol, which amounted to 65% of the 10,402 Mongolian students in these schools. In 359 out of 2,062 secondary schools, Mongol was used as the language of instruction, and their 105,290 (57.712%) students were learning through Mongol. Of 344 vocational schools, nineteen have 9,660 students who were taught in Mongol. In primary education, 24,04% of the 15,010 primary schools taught in Mongol; and 62% (228,871) of the 369,136 pupils received their education in Mongol. The educational level of Mongolian youth is above the national average. According to the 1990s data, twenty four out of every ten thousand Mongols were studying in colleges; 55.5 of every ten thousand working Mongols had an education above the junior college level, and most of them had received their education in Mongol (Senamzil, 2000).

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In China in 2002, an estimated 80% of the 5,400,000 Mongols speak Mongol as their first language. Mongols have a complete educational system, from kindergarten to university, with Mongol as the main language of instruction. Mongol is also used in publishing, new media, and artistic performance. Mongol is used in both local and national political processes. In public in Inner Mongolia, wherever characters are used, there are characters of both Mongol and Chinese. From various government departments to different trades, a large number of Mongolian language workers are working hard to make their contributions. However, due to historical reasons and current social and economic factors, many Mongols are learning to speak Chinese while giving up Mongol. It is hoped that there will be a common prosperity for both Chinese as the national commonly used language and minority languages as local commonly used languages.

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PINGWU TAI

# LANGUAGE POLICY AND STANDARDIZATION OF KOREAN IN CHINA

## 1. AN OVERVIEW OF KOREAN IN CHINA

The Koreans in China are a cross-border ethnic group. Actually, they can be divided into two groups according to the history of immigration. One group includes the descendants of the laborers who worked on the farms of Manchu nobles after they were captured during the Manchu army's two invasions of Korea in the early 17th century. This group has about 5,000 people who live in Hebei Province and in Liaoning Province's Piao Village (Pang & Huang, 2001, p. 69). The other group includes the descendants of the immigrants who came to China in four waves since the end of the 19th century. With a history of 120 years in China, this newer immigrant group amounts to 99.97% of the two million Chinese Koreans (Cao & Pu, 1997).

Given the fact that the Chinese Koreans are an immigrant group, the Korean spoken in China is a branch of Korean spoken on the Korean Peninsula. Its root is in the Korean Peninsula. However, after it crossed the Yalu River into China, its historical, geographic, political, cultural and linguistic surroundings have changed greatly, and it became a special language that it is today. The environment of Korean in China at present is different from those of Korean in South Korea and in North Korea as well as different from those of China's other minority languages.

First of all, the Korean spoken in China has been influenced by Korean in the Peninsula. Its phonology, grammar, word structure, and word-formation share a lot of similarities with that spoken on the Peninsula. Its orthographic standardization is based on *the Unified Orthography of Korean* formulated in 1933 and *the Korean Orthography* formulated in North Korea in 1954 (see China, 1992, pp. 39–47; King, 1998).

China's Korean has been spoken in China for over 100 years. Through the contact with and influence by the Chinese language and culture, its cultural content changed a lot more than its linguistic forms. For example, although the Korean textbooks for primary and secondary schools in China are written in Korean, their contents and background materials are mainly Chinese. Especially after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), as Chinese citizens and a member of the 55 minority groups, Chinese Koreans have been directly influenced by Chinese politics, economy, culture, history, and ideology, and they have undergone a

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Cui, 1993). The Chinese Koreans have also been influenced by South and North Koreas, but not directly. They have received indirect psychological and cultural influences because they share a culture and nation. Of course, North and South Koreas' linguistic influence is strong. The Korean spoken in the North has been affecting the Korean spoken in China for over 50 years, but since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and South Korean in 1992, the South Korean language has influenced Chinese Korean more than the North Korean language during the same period (see Zhang, 1999).

Little has been done to study the history of the standardization of Korean spoken in China (see Q. Jin, 2003). Only Zhang Jingyan and Liu Yinzhong (1995) of the Yanbian Academy of Social Sciences points out that the standardization has undergone five chronological stages: The first stage – before and after 1950; the second stage – before and after 1960; the third stage – the mid-1960s; the fourth stage – during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976); the fifth stage – during the new era of China's open-door policy (since 1978). Zheng's chronological classification may be accepted, but it is hard to distinguish the relationship between the dates and the processes of the standardization, and similar processes may be covered by different stages.

Thus, I propose that the history of the standardization of Korean in China be divided into three stages on the basis of the processes and characteristics of each period (see Tai 2000a. 2000b). The first stage is a borrowing period (1945–1954) when everything in language standardization was copied directly from Korea. The second stage is an integrating period (1955–1976) when the standardization of North Korean was used as a model adopted for the standardization of Korean in China and for the development of China's standard for Korean. The third stage is a mature period (1977–present) when an independent standardization system for Korean in China is fully developed.

At the same time, I recommend classifying the linguistic experiences of the Chinese Korean community according to four phases. The first phase is monolingual, when the early Korean immigrants (the first and second generations) spoke only Korean. The second phase is developing bilingualism, when Chinese Koreans gradually master Chinese and can speak both Korean and Chinese, with Korean as dominant language. The third phase is declining bilingualism, when Chinese Koreans speak both Chinese and Korean, with Chinese as the dominant language. The fourth phase is sinicization, when second and third generations of Chinese Koreans, particularly those living outside Korean communities, speak little or no Korean. In China's Korean communities the current linguistic situation is as follows: the first phase is almost over, while the fourth phase is growing, with most communities in a transition from the second phase to the third phase. China's Korean communities face a serious problem maintaining their native language (see Guan, 2001; Jin, 1999; Tai, 2000).

## 2. THE FIRST STAGE OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF KOREAN IN CHINA

The first stage of the standardization of Korean in China (1945–1954) is characterized by simply copying standardizing measures from Korea and applying them mechanically to Korean spoken in China (see Y. Cui, 2003)

In August 1945, after Japan surrendered and northeastern China was liberated by the forces of the CCP, which soon carried out land reform, the Chinese Korean language did not have its own system of standardization because China did not formulate its own minority language policy then. In the next few years, supported by local governments, Korean communities in Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning provinces, with Yanbian Korean Prefecture as their center, spontaneously built Korean primary schools in every village and Korean secondary schools in every district of their counties (see Pu, 1989, pp. 75–116). The Korean communities also published 14 Korean newspapers, 16 Korean magazines, and established several Korean radio stations. During those years, for example, Yanbian published *Korean People's Daily* (Han Minbao), *Yanbian People* (Yanbian Minbao), *People's Daily* (Remin Ribao) and five other Korean newspapers simultaneously or one after another. It also published *Yanbian Culture* (Yanbian Wehua), *Yanbian Literature* (Yanbian Wenyi), *Yanbian Youth* (Yanbian Qingnian), and other Korean magazines.

In order to do a better job of standardizing Korean, the Democratic League of Jilin (the CCP controlled government of Jilin before 1949) held a meeting at Yanji (Capital of Yanbian) to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the publication of *Hunmin Zhengyin* (The Correct Pronunciation for Plebeian Vocabulary) (see Pu, 1989, pp. 112–113). At the meeting a resolution was passed on preparations to establish an association for Korean orthographic studies, and Li Haoyuan, Chairman of the Democratic League, and Liang Huanzhun, CCP Secretary of the League, were to be in charge of the preparations. After intensive efforts, over 40 representatives from cultural and educational circles in Yanji City held a meeting at Yanji Second Middle School to formally establish the Association for Korean Orthographic Studies. The meeting passed the association's constitution, elected Li Haoyuan as its president and Jin Ping as its associate president, established committees, and decided to hold a symposium once a month to discuss Koran language issues. On November 26 of the same year, the Korean Textbook Compiling Committee of Yanji City was founded, with Li Haoyuan as its chair, Lin Minhao as its associate chair, and 24 committee members. In 1947, the Yanbian Education Press was established, which published a large number of Korean books, particularly Korean textbooks and reference books for primary and secondary schools. In April, 1949, the Yanbian University was established, which trained a large number of talented Koreans and made contributions to the development of Korean.

At that time standardization was mainly based on *the 1933 Unified Orthography of Korean,* but there were problems. For example, the rules for hyphenation were inconsistent: some followed the Japanese style, and some used a word as the boundary, and a lot of Chinese characters were mixed with the Korean script in writing. Opinions also varied on the use of Chinese characters: some people supported the mix of the two scripts while others opposed the mixed use (see Q. Jin, 2000; Tai, forthcoming). The workers and farmers who had little education and

knew little about Chinese characters wanted to use the Korean script only. To facilitate literacy and the development of literacy among the masses, Chinese characters were eliminated from Korean newspapers starting on April 20, 1954. In the spring of 1953, Chinese characters were removed from secondary school textbooks. In the autumn of 1953 they were removed from primary school textbooks for juniors, and in the autumn of 1955 from primary school textbooks for seniors. This was a revolution in Korean writing reform. At the same time, starting with Korean textbooks and extending to all Korean books, writing changed from the vertical style to the horizontal style, a rule that was adopted in newspapers from March 1, 1956 on.

The principles for Korean language policy began to take their shape in 1952. In that year, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture was established. At the first session of the local people's congress, between August 29 and September 2, 1952, Zhu Dehai, a Korean and then CCP Secretary of Yanbian, officially talked about ethnic equality for the first time. He stressed that the following four principles of ethnic equality should be followed in the autonomous prefecture (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 191).

First, the government should ensure every ethnic group in the autonomous region the right of equality, educate all ethnic groups to respect each other's language, script, custom, and religious belief, prohibit any kind of prejudice against each other or oppression among them, and prohibit any behavior that might incite ethinc conflicts.

Second, all the people in the autonomous region, regardless of their ethnic origins, had the freedom of thought, speech, assembling, communication, residence, migration, religion, and demonstration, which were stipulated in the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, and they enjoyed the right to vote and to stand for election.

Third, the government should educate every ethnic group in the autonomous region to learn from each other, to unite and be friendly to each other, and to overcome big-nationality chauvinism and local nationalism.

Fourth, ethnic groups' special problems and problems regarding relationships among ethnic groups should be fully discussed and resolved with every effort.

These principles were applicable not only to the autonomous communities where Korean inhabitants were concentrated, but also to the areas where they were scattered.

In order to promote their political, economical, cultural, and educational life at that time, over one million Koreans in northeast China published a lot in Korean. The Yanbian Education Press published 114 titles of books on politics, economics, culture, education, arts, language, literature, history, geography, natural science, medicine and hygiene, and agricultural technics, and it also published seven monthly magazines, reaching half million copies. In Yanbian in 1951 alone, the circulation of Korean newspapers reached 30,000 copies, and 3,104,800 copies of textbooks in Korean were printed (see Bai, 1994, 91–96).

By 1951, the standardization of orthography adopted the 1946 revised *Unified Orthography of Korean,* and the standard grammar taught in schools first followed Piao Xiangjun's *The Korean Grammar* published in Korea in 1948 and later Jin

Shouqing's *The Korean Grammar* (Zheng & Liu, 1995). However the focus of Korean language work then shifted to the standardization of the vocabulary. An important problem was how to purify and standardize the vocabulary. During the early years of the PRC, Zhu Dehai played an important role in the standardization of Korean. As the CCP secretary and governor of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, he stressed the standardization of the language and emphasized that

> Our language style in the newspapers and magazines should follow the Pyongyang standard... we will do that only for the time being, and we will follow the Seoul standard when North and South Koreas are unified. (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 195)

However, he explained further that not all words should be based on the Pyongyang norm. Some terms about the state system and other innovations should not be the same as those in North Korea. For example, 'premier' should not be called 'prime minister.' His opinion played an active role not only in making sure that the standardization conformed to the natural development of the Korea language in China, but also in preventing the possible development of another Korean variety in a different community.

In short, in the 1950s, the standardization of the Korean language meant purifying it, normalizing its orthography according to Korea's standard, and eliminating Chinese characters.

## 3. THE SECOND STAGE OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF KOREAN IN CHINA

The second stage (1954–1976) adopted North Korea's norm while exploring Chinese Korean's own norm. At first there was not a single independent norm, with Chinese Korean influenced both by the Korean spoken in North Korea and by Chinese. In addition, every organization in China's Korean communities tried to gather their own experiences and to establish a standard. In their efforts, they found and solved problems, finally leading to a prototype for the standardization of Korean in China.

### *3.1. In Search of a Norm: Uncoordinated Approaches*

The transition from the first stage to the second stage is characterized by several individual approaches initiated by four institutions, the Yanbian Education Press, Beijing's Minzu Press, Northeastern China Korean People's Daily Press, and Yanbian People's Radio Station, respectively (see Q. Jin, 2003).

To standardize Korean in its publications, between September 1953 and March 1955, the Yanbian Education Press published 13 issues of *Editors' Bulletin* (Jiaoyue Tongxun) for internal circulation, the title of which was changed into *Editors' Professional Studies* (Yewu Xuexi) between August 10, 1955 and September 1964. This bulletin focused on the discussion and establishment of norms for vocabulary, orthography, and hyphenation. There were two key tasks regarding the norm of the

vocabulary. The first was to abolish Chinese characters, and the second was to find native Korean words to replace Chinese words.

Beijing's Minzu Press, which was founded in 1953, publishes books on politics, economy, and culture in many of China's minority languages. According to the statistics, it published 430 titles of Korean texts between 1953 and 1958. The press followed Zhu Dehai's advice and used the Pyongyang standard as the yardstick, which was also Yanbian's standard. The press also published an internal bulletin, called *Unified Terminology* (Shuyu Tongyi). In this bulletin, several thousand social and natural sciences terms were standardized, many of which were native Korean words.

At the same time, *The Northeastern China Korean People's Daily* started to standardize its Korean, and it published an internal bulletin, *Professional Report* (Yewu Jianbao), between June 1953 and September 1955. The standardization of the vocabulary in the newspaper was the main topic of this bulletin. The bulletin went on to examine Korean grammar by publishing articles on the analysis of problematic sentences in newspapers and in news drafts as well as tables and samples of problematic sentences in newspapers and common mistakes found in proofreading.

The Yanbian People's Radio Station also explored the standardization of Korean. Between 1953 and 1954, it published eight issues of *Unified Terms* (Mingci Tongyi), a bulletin for internal circulation which was called *The Radio Correspondence* (Guangbo Tongxun) from 1956 on. Standardization of Korean was the goal of this bulletin.

In short, during this period, these presses, newspapers, and radio stations' uncoordinated effort could hardly meet the needs of rapid social development and handle the mushrooming of new terms.

### *3. 2. In Search of a Norm: A Coordinated Approach*

Given the rather chaotic situation, the whole Korean community began to pay attention to the standardization of Korean. It was at this moment that the *Northeastern China Korean People's Daily* initiated an organization in charge of the standardization of Korean, To support this effort, in 1953 and early 1954 Zhu Dehai, Governer of Yanbian Korean Autonomous prefecture, instructed that the Yanbian Education Press, the *Northeastern China Korean People's Daily,* and the Yanbian People's Radio Station to jointly establish the Committee on Korean Terminology Unification and follow the Pyongyang standard in its standardizing efforts (Zheng & Liu, 1995). It was the first official institution charged with the responsibility for overseeing the standardization of Korean since the founding of the PRC. It standardized about 200 terms in 1954.

In December 1954, according to instructions from the central government, the Publishing Board of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* in Korean was founded, with some key members of the Committee on Korean Terminology Unification participating in the translation of the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*. The Publishing Board decided to publish the works in standard Korean with standard orthography and terms as a model of standard Korean, so that it could unify standards set by

different organizations nationwide. Hence, Korean had its own foundation for standardization, which played an active role in the purification and standardization of Korean in the years to come.

Although we made progress, some people looked down upon Korean and even scorned it. To change people's attitudes, the *Yanbian Daily* started a column for discussing the use and standardization of Korean between March 1 and June 29, 1957. The discussion underwent two phases. In the first phase, the main topics were about how to use minority languages properly, how to keep the purity of Korean, why people did not use their native minority language, and so on. In the second phase, the main topics were about issues regarding the correct way to standardize minority languages, the use of Chinese characters in Korean, the standardization of Korean in China , and so on (see Y. Cui, 2003)

During the discussion, Professor Cui Yunjia pointed out that Korean developed and underwent changes in the special political, economic, and cultural circumstances of China (China and North Korea had the same political system), and according to the new circumstances we should formulate a new norm that might be significant for the Great Leap Forward (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 208). He also mentioned that although Korean was affected by Chinese culture, its grammatical structure, and linguistic system did not change in general. However, the basic elements of the language, that is, the vocabulary, changed a lot. Hence, not the entire Korean language needed to be standardized, but only the vocabulary. It was mainly Chinese loanwords that had to be standardized. He classified Chinese loans into three groups: (1) special Chinese loanwords for China's political, economic, and cultural systems, such as *zhuxi* (chairman), *guowuyuan* (the State Council), *zongli* (Premier), *shujiy* (CCP secretary), and *buzhang* (minister); (2) Chinese loanwords for new changes and new things, such as *hezuoshe* (agricultural cooperatives), *zongluoxian* (the CCP's general line), and *xianjin shengchanzhe* (model worker); and (3) Chinese loanwords that replaced the original Korean ones, such as *maobing* (shortcomings), *laoshi* (honesty), *keben* (textbook), and *hetong* (contract).

The terms in the first two groups represented changes in China's politics, economy, and culture, and they must be accepted. However, the words in the last group undermined the purity of Korean and should be subjected to standardization.

Through the discussion in the newspaper column, people analyzed and clarified the nature of the purification of Korean, concepts of Korean basic vocabulary, the relationship between the purification and standardization of Korean, and its basic principles. Thus, we reached consensus on many issues, including the following three major ones: (1) the original vocabulary existing in standard Korean (North Korean) was not to be standardized, but rather it should be allowed to be used as it had been before; (2) new terms should be created with native Korean words or Chinese characters already used in Korean before new Chinese loanwords were used; and (3) Chinese and foreign loanwords that could not be understood easily by Korean speakers should be replaced by Korean words. These principles laid a solid foundation for the later standardization of Korean (see Y. Cui, 2003; Q. Jin, 2003).

The undertaking of the standardization of Korean developed from a stage without principles, planning, or clear goals between the late 1940s and the early 1950s into a stage with clear principles, planning, and goals in the late 1950s. The

standardization of Korean in China began to acquire its theoretical basis through the discussions of the purification of Korean in 1957. People called it the golden age of Korean development in China.

### *3.3. In Search of a Norm: The Assimilationist Approach*

However, good times did not last long before political movements interfered. In the late 1950s, under the influence of the dominant leftist thinking in China, Korean language work was affected by the theory that it was best "to increase common Chinese elements" among minority languages (see J. Cui, 1993). Thus, the preference for replacing new terms by finding equivalent native words or creating them with native elements rather than borrowing from Chinese was criticized as an expression of local nationalism and capitalism. The leftist thought began to dominate Korean language work, leading to a major setback for the standardization of Korean.

From the second half of 1957, all of China began the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the rectification movement, the Great Leap Forward, and the establishment of people's communes. China's minority language work was inflicted with an overall setback. On April 11, 1958, the *People's Daily* carried an editorial titled *'Promote minority language work',* which criticized what was called bourgeois nationalism in minority language work (for a full discussion, see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 55–67):

> There are two ways and two ideas in minority language work, that is, the socialist idea and the capitalist idea. In another word, it is a struggle between the proletariat collectivist thinking and the bourgeois nationalist thinking. The emphasis, by some people, on **difference, divergence,** and **purity** in minority language is a very specific expression of bourgeois ideas.

The editorial also pointed out that with the development of the socialist reform and socialist construction there emerged many new things and new concepts that minority languages should represent. Once new things and concepts emerged, new terms should represent immediately what was used in spoken language. Hence, when we chose new terms for written language, we should follow the masses and adopt their oral language. According to the specific atmosphere of the country, borrowing new terms from Chinese to enrich minority languages became a general development, a development which was regarded as increasing "the common elements" among minority language and Chinese.

At a meeting on ethnic affairs in March 1959, on the basis of the 'common element' theory, a leader of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission made the following summary (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 230). It was inevitable to borrow words from other languages. To borrow words was not to deny the splendid culture of the borrowing ethnic group, but rather to enrich its culture. Borrowing is good for the development of minority languages. The increase of Chinese loanwords meant an increase of common elements among the languages spoken in the big family of the motherland. The common elements would play a great role in facilitating cultural exchange, mutual contact, mutual influence, and mutual learning among ethnic

groups as well as the development and prosperity of the new socialist culture (see M. Zhou, 2003, pp. 347–388).

Thus the general principle for loanwords stipulated that whenever minority languages did not have equivalent terms for new things and concepts or could not express them accurately, Chinese words should be borrowed and written in their standard pronunciation in the Chinese *Pinyin* system. The specific rules were as follows: (1) when new terms in social science, especially political terms, found accurate equivalents in minority languages, Chinese terms must be borrowed; (2) general terms in natural sciences should be borrowed from Chinese; and (3) proper nouns for personal and place names should be treated on a case-by-case basis: All Chinese personal and place names should be written in standard Chinese pronunciation while minority or foreign personal and place names could generally be written in standard Chinese pronunciation or in the pronunciation of the original language (see Q. Jin, 2003). Obviously, these rules were intended to assimilate minority languages into Chinese.

Korean could not escape the misfortune of this policy. Instructed by its superiors, in September 1958, the Yanbian government held the Yanbian's first conference on Korean language work. According to the spirit of the Second National Conference on Minority Languages and Scripts held in Beijing early in that year, which was critical of local/ethnic nationalism and ethnic-nationalist feelings, the Yanbian conference criticized "local nationalism" in Korean standardization in Korean communities. Through criticism and self-criticism and reporting each other and self-examination, the conference labelled the approach of deal with "difference, divergence and purity" in Korean and in its relationship with Chinese as local nationalism, nationalist exclusivism, and nationalist restorationism.

The draft plan on the standardization of Korean and the three-year plan (1958-1960) developed at this conference were all based on the above-mentioned spirit. The principle of the draft plan stated that the language widely used by the Korean people in China should be the criterion; the standardization should take into consideration national prosperity, national unity and cooperation, and the unity of China; it should facilitate the increase of common elements in minority languages; to design new terms, one should follow the masses, but one should mainly borrow words from Chinese (phonetically) and consider Chinese's positive impact on Korean (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 232).

After the conference, on September 25, 1958, the *Yanbian Daily* published an article, titled *Fighting against Local Nationalism in the Field of Language and Script Work,* which publicized the conference's essentials for the whole Korean community. On April 30, 1959, *Principles for the Standardization of Korean* was formulated on the grounds of transliterating new words in Chinese pronunciation and increasing common elements in minority languages. It was the first formal standardization plan since the founding of the PRC, a plan that advocated borrowing terms from Chinese.

During the early 1960s, the Chinese government and the CCP began to reflect on the CCP's General Line/Policy, the Great Leap Forward, and the People's Commune. Thus, between 1961 and 1962 the extreme leftist thought was corrected. Its impact on Korean language work was also carefully redressed. Thus, the Yanbian

government founded the Yanbian Research Committee on Language and Script, which held its first meeting on July 21, 1962 to discuss problems in Korean language work and its own future tasks, all in light of the new situation.

On June 28, 1963 during his visit to Jilin Province and his meeting with a delegation from the Korean Academy of Sciences, Premier Zhou Enlai pointed out that the Korean language had Pyongyang, Seoul and Yanbian standards; the Pyongyang standard must be the standard for the Chinese Korean community too, because our Korean comrades and the Korean people both could understand it; and this standard must be followed in both oral and written language (Zheng & Liu, 1995, p. 281). Later on his words were passed to Yanbian in the form of an oral document as having the following meaning: The Central Government approved the report of Jilin Province. The Central Government supported the Pyongyan standard, so that Korean in China could be unified with Korean in North Korea up to 95 percent. Thus, Korean in China should not be sinicized, nor should it be foreignized. It should have its own characteristics. The direction indicated by the Central Government must be followed.

With the principle problem solved, the standardization of Korean was on the right track. On October 27, 1964, with the approval of the provincial and Yanbian prefectural governments, Yanbian's Research Institute of Korean History and Language started language planning for Korean. After investigation and research, it prepared drafts of *the Regulations of Language and Script Work of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture, the Policy on the Unification of Korean Terms, the Policy on the Spelling of Chinese Loanwords,* and *Summary of Korean Language and Script Work,* and it submitted these four drafts to the provincial government for approval and for publication during the third session of the Yanbian Research Committee on Language and Script.

These four documents constituted the first comprehensive plan for the standardization of Korean since 1949. We could say that the standardization of Korean began to take its shape in China, which would have been very remarkable if it had been implemented. However, the Cultural Revolution broke out soon in 1966, and the plan stayed on paper only.

## 4. THE THIRD STAGE OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF KOREAN

The third stage (1977-present) is marked by the final establishment of an independent and mature system for the standardization for Korean in China. After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, rights and wrongs were gradually distinguished in minority language work and minority language policy, so that Koran language work began to find its right track. Since then, the standardization of Korean has been carried out with organizations, plans, regulations, and measures.

Firstly, the State Council instructed that coordination steering groups should be established in provinces and autonomous regions where the same minority language is spoken (China, 1991, p. 428, 1994, p. 965). It stipulated that the northeastern-three-province coordination steering group for Korean should include Jilin Province, Heilongjiang Province, and Liaoning Province, with Jilin in charge (see Y. Cui,

2003). The first meeting of the three provinces on Korean language work was held in Changchun, the Capital City of Jilin, in May 1977. Through recommendation and discussion, the representatives from the three provinces approved the list of the members of the coordination steering group recommended by the three provinces and the charter of the steering group. They worked out an outline of plans for the steering group for the next few years, and exchanged opinions on drafting four standards, *the Korean Orthography, the Standard Pronunciation of Korean, the Rules for Hyphenation,* and *the Rules for Punctuation Marks,* and set up a drafting group to formulate the four regulations. After the meeting, representatives from the three provinces were dispatched to each other's Korean communities to learn their experiences with Korean language work. In November 1977, the coordination steering group decided to publish *the Korean Language Work Bulletin,* with the first issue appearing in that month.

At that time the State Ethnic Affairs Commission's general principle was as follows: We should respect every ethnic group's right to use and develop its own language and script; we should help ethnic groups without scripts to develop new ones and help those with scripts to reform their writing systems; and although ethnic groups would integrate (not being forced into assimilation) in the phase of socialism, minority groups and minority languages would not disappear, but prosper (see China, 1993). The commission also gave specific instructions for Korean language work. It called for following the Pyongyang standard while taking the actual situation into account. Although both China and North Korea were socialist countries, they were different in terms of politics, economics, and culture. The Pyongyang standard therefore could not be copied blindly.

In December 1986, the inaugural meeting of the coordination steering group of Korean language work (the same as the previous group, only with a changed name), with delegates from the three northeastern provinces and Beijing, set up a committee on the standardization of Korean in China. It approved policies on the standardization of Korean as a language of instruction in schools, the language for sports terms, musical terms, and art terms, and on the methods of representing and using loanwords (Hong, 1999). In January 1987, subcommittees were set up on the standardization of terms in chemistry, physics, mathematics, and biology. The committee on the standardization of Korean held 14 meetings in 15 years since its establishment, and it published many bulletins and materials on standard Korean. For example, the committee published *the Chinese-Korean Dictionary of World Place Names* in 1999 (see Zhang, 1999).

Korean language work and standardization has been supported by academic research. The Korean language Society, which was founded in 1981, held 12 large-scale symposiums, at which several hundreds of excellent papers on every aspects of Korean, including standardization, were presented. The *Journal of Chinese Korean Language and Script,* which is published by the coordination group, has published more than 100 issues, of course with a substantial number of articles on Korean standardization. The journal is now becoming well-known in Korean communities around the world.

Currently, the committee of the standardization of Korean is housed in the language office of the Jilin Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission and under the

direction of the chair of the commission. The committee has over 20 members, who work in news media, publishing industry, research institutes, and universities in the three northeastern provinces, Beijing, and Qingdao. The committee meets annually to ensure that the standardization of Korean is developing further and making great progress in the new century (see Tai, 2000a, 2000b).

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## 6. NOTE

This chapter is translated from Chinese into English by Huriyet.

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# PART V: FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AND MODERNIZATION

LUMING MAO AND YUE MIN

# FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE PRC

*A Brief Overview*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Foreign language education in the People's Republic of China (PRC) has undergone many transformations since the PRC was founded in 1949. These transformations in part mark a series of social and political events that have brought the PRC either to exhilarating highs or cataclysmic lows, and they also in part represent China's educational pendulum "between traditional knowledge patterns for political control and transformed ones for economic development" (Ross, 1993, p. 36). In this chapter, we intend to provide a brief overview of the policies affecting foreign language education in higher education in the PRC since 1949. Our aim in writing this essay is not to cover everything that can be covered, but to focus on a few major historical moments that are indicative of policy changes and that are representative of significant consequences that these changes have brought about. Since this kind of historical study focusing on China's foreign language education remains relatively new in the PRC as well as in the West, this essay is also intended to serve as an invitation to others to join us in this effort – especially in terms of pursuing more research at elementary and secondary levels. Namely, by critically engaging with the PRC's past, with its accomplishments and its disappointments, we can then be in a much better position to understand and assess its current and future policies and initiatives on foreign language education at its major universities and colleges.

The history of foreign language education in the PRC since 1949 is complex. Our following overview is based in part on Professor Fu Ke's (1986) and on interviews we've conducted with Professors of English from both Fudan University and East China Normal University. For ease of exposition, we've divided our overview into five major periods, and we will review the policies, curriculum changes, and other major initiatives in each of these periods. We will end this essay with some closing remarks.

## 2. RUSSIAN: THE FAVOURED LANGUAGE (1949–1956)

On October 1, 1949, the PRC came into existence under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its Chairman Mao Zedong. To build a new China, the CCP looked up to the (former) Soviet Union for guidance and for advice.

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to train people to be able to speak and use Russian before it could take advantage of its "brotherly expertise." So, there began a serious campaign to build both brand-new Russian-only schools and Russian departments at nation's universities and colleges. In the first half of 1949, Beijing Foreign Language Institute was founded with Russian being its prominent foreign language. Not long after, many universities and other foreign language institutes followed suit: they started their own Russian departments, programs, or intensive training sessions. Their sole mission was to prepare students to be experts in Russian and to meet the needs of the society as it sought to ally itself with the Soviet Union. Quickly, Russian replaced English as the dominant foreign language chosen by both foreign language majors and non-foreign language majors at universities and colleges. Further, it also became the foreign language overwhelmingly favoured by students at secondary schools. There was simply no getting around not studying Russian after one's elementary education and not noticing the diminishing importance of English-language teaching in China in the early 1950s.

This kind of enthusiasm for Russian was appropriate given the very close ties with the Soviet Union in early 1950s. On the other hand, it also had contributed to poor quality in Russian education simply because there were not enough qualified Russian teachers and/or resources to support such a massive undertaking. In August 1953, at the second national conference on Russian education, officials from the Ministry of Education and Russian teachers from different parts of the country gathered to discuss their young experiences and to make some recommendations about foreign language education in the PRC in general and about Russian teaching in particular. This conference turned out to be quite significant because of what it recommended to the Ministry of Education (Fu, 1986, p. 69).

On April 3, 1954, at the approval of the State Council, the Ministry of Education distributed to all universities and colleges in the country a set of guidelines on the teaching of Russian based on the recommendations made at the conference. These guidelines became the first comprehensive document on foreign language education issued by the new government – albeit they were exclusively focused on Russian. What was noteworthy was that for the first time the Ministry of Education allocated resources to several specifically identified areas, and asked different schools to meet different needs relative to their strengths. For example, according to the guidelines, some schools were going to direct their resources to training translators while some other schools would focus their energy on preparing students to become teachers and educators. Moreover, sensing that nobody wanted to miss out on this "Russian bandwagon," the Ministry of Education cautioned that all schools of higher education should offer Russian according to their own strengths and resources, and that schools should not strive for the higher number of graduates if such an objective were to be achieved at the expense of quality. These specific measures and cautionary calls were in response to the then trend seen at many schools to provide and promote Russian education at any cost and with hardly any regard for specific purposes. This headlong rush for everything Russian had led to, among other consequences, a surplus of Russian-trained professionals in many parts of the country.

Between 1949 and 1956 Russian education grew and expanded at a rapid pace. With the help of advisors or experts from the Soviet Union, universities across the country made significant progress in planning, in curricular development, and in pedagogy. By the end of 1956, the number of Chinese Russian teachers had reached 1,960, and the number of graduates reached 13,000. And between 1953 and 1956, the enrollment by both Russian-only colleges and comprehensive universities climbed up to 12,477 (Fu, 1986, p. 71).

The growth in Russian education throughout the PRC during these seven years was clearly a boom to the popularity of Russian among Chinese people, and it was also in recognition of or in response to the close ties between the two countries. But what about the status and teaching of other foreign languages in these seven years? Simply put, the teaching of other foreign languages had suffered a great deal – especially Western European languages, many of which were associated with imperialism and colonialism. Not only had these languages been neglected considerably, but also many of their teachers, especially English teachers, had to join their Russian colleagues to teach Russian – even if it meant they had to be re-educated with a very short time. And mandated from the Ministry of Education, when universities and colleges began to reorganize themselves in 1952, English departments in many schools were asked either to cease their existence entirely or to merge with other departments. Similarly, the number of French and German departments also decreased sizeably. This trend of neglecting other foreign languages continued until 1956 – when the white-hot relationship between the Soviet Union and the PRC began to cool down, and when the CCP began to openly break away from the Soviet Union. The need for change of direction in foreign language education was quite palpable in the air.

## 3. FROM RUSSIAN TO ENGLISH: A REVERSAL OF FORTUNE (1957–1966)

By 1957 it became clear that there were more Russian-trained professionals than needed as the number of these individuals greatly exceeded the demand. This surplus, coupled with the growing tension and hostility between the Soviet Union and the PRC, led the government to put a stop to further expansion of Russian education. Meanwhile, English and other foreign language education saw the beginning of their revival and expansion – thanks in large part to the efforts of Premier Zhou Enlai, who in 1956 urged that the teaching of foreign languages be extended to include English, French, and German (Fu, 1986, p. 41; also see Zhou, 1956). As a result, in September 1958, Beijing Russian Institute merged with Beijing Foreign Language Institute by turning itself into a Department of Russian. Similarly, many other universities either established or revived English and other non-Russian departments, which included French, Japanese, German, Spanish, and Arabic. During this time period, while Russian education in postsecondary education shrank, other foreign languages took hold in many universities across the country as they regained their legitimacy.

But the revival of English and other Western languages in this period also renewed China's age-old ambivalence toward them, and the ambivalence was again

about whether foreign language proficiency could be helpful for modernization (known as the belief) or whether these languages would quickly weaken and corrupt the minds and souls of their learners (known as the fear). This tension continued, culminating in the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when the fear totally trounced the belief. For fear that corrosive influences may accompany the re-entry of English and other Western languages, the CCP Central Committee issued a new policy in 1958 that called for China's higher education to serve the political cause of the proletariat and to connect with manual labour and with social service. This new policy led to what is now known as "the Great Education Revolution." This education revolution aimed to abolish educational ideologies and systems that had been favoured by previous regimes so as to make way for socialist ideologies and egalitarian principles. In so doing, this new campaign sought to neutralize this age-old struggle that China had been grapping with and to truly make things foreign to serve China and its pledge to "catch up with the Great Britain in 15 years." While many of these traditional ideologies and systems were indeed out of step with the new society, thus deserving to be abolished, this revolution was carried too far in many other areas, and it gave rise to a growing tension between the Party's need to inculcate political ideology (out of the fear) and the teacher's need to teach foreign languages (out of the belief).

As this tension grew, foreign language education began to be criticized, and it began to be viewed as having divorced itself from political education, from social practice, from not serving the causes of the proletariat. Because of this perception, schools were asked to place a greater emphasis on foreign language pedagogy serving the needs of the Party and the people. Consequently, newly compiled textbooks began to be dominated by Chinese politics and by translations of Chinese materials rather than materials in their original languages. And since practice was now given top priority, classroom instruction paid less attention to language theory, and language practices lacked theoretical foundation or guidance. In addition, participation in political activities and in manual labours became a major part of foreign language education – regularly at the expense of classroom teaching.

In 1960, the CCP Central Committee reviewed both the positives and the negatives that resulted from the Great Education Revolution, and quickly moved to correct some of its mistakes. The Central Committee soon issued two major policy directives: one was for higher education and the other was for secondary education. These two directives played a major role in putting classroom teaching back to the centre stage, and in making teachers become major players again in education. Soon after, new teaching materials began to be published, including Professor Xu Guozhang's *College English,* which soon became the canonical textbook for English majors. In the area of pedagogy, many schools began to pay more attention to the four basic skills in foreign language learning, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These efforts then helped reverse the trend of students learning "Deaf English" or "Mute English" – that is, students lacked the ability to speak English in spite of many years of learning it (Fu, 1986, pp. 74–75).

In early 1960s, Premier Zhou Enlai spoke out about the need for foreign language learning to start from children who would then be able to speak and think like native speakers as they grew up. Premier Zhou's speech gave a new impetus to

foreign language teaching (Fu, 1986, pp. 75–76). In 1963, over a dozen of major cities in the PRC, including Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chongqin, and Xian, opened foreign language institutes. And these new schools provided more class time for students from third grade onward, and they created friendlier environment for foreign language learning. These measures greatly improved students' quality and ensured that universities would have qualified freshmen down the road ( Ross, 1993, p. 50).

In 1964, the Ministry of Education, following Premier Zhou's directives, presented a seven-year foreign language education plan. The plan contained four major policies for expanding foreign language education. First, the plan required that equal emphasis should be given both to students studying foreign language for special purposes and to students studying foreign language as their major concentration. In the past, those non-foreign language major students had often been neglected. Second, the plan asked that foreign language education should not just be taking place inside school, and that it should also have a prominent presence outside school. In other words, foreign language education and education from society should go hand in hand, and students should receive both. Third, the plan agreed that English should become the first foreign language at school and that at the same time efforts should be made to recruit students to study other foreign languages such as French, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, and German. Finally, the plan required that quality education must be ensured while schools were increasing enrollment and readjusting the ratios of foreign languages being taught.

According to this plan, the enrollment in foreign language institutes and departments would reach 82,000 students between 1964 and 1970, with an average of 11,700 new students per year, and with an estimated number of 54,000 graduates by 1970 (Fu, 1986, pp. 78–79). Even though this plan was being implemented for two short years because of the Cultural Revolution starting in 1966, it helped foster a vibrant environment for foreign language education throughout the country.

## 4. THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION: FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION TO "RE-EDUCATION" (1966-1976)

In 1966, Mao Zedong launched what is now known as the Cultural Revolution in China, which lasted for ten long years – a revolution that wrecked havoc on the Chinese people as well as on foreign language education. The Cultural Revolution first started with calls and campaigns to root out "capitalist roaders"(people within the CCP who promoted a more pragmatic approach to education and modernization) from the sites of education and arts and sciences. After Mao Zedong declared that every class in every school should be temporarily suspended for the purpose of "making revolution" (Ross, 1993, p. 55), schools all over the country, elementary, secondary and tertiary, began to suspend their regular classroom instruction in order to fully participate in revolutionary activities. As a result, from 1966 to 1970, foreign language education in the PRC was almost on the verge of total collapse because schools stopped their regular enrollment, and because many students and teachers were sent to the countryside to be "re-educated." Like so many other areas,

foreign language education was dealt a severe blow during the first four years of the Cultural Revolution.

Starting from 1971 to 1972, however, following the directives from the CCP Central Committee, things began to take a turn for the better as China began to emerge from chaos and ruins. For example, a few foreign language institutes began to enroll new students again – though most of these students had to come from families of revolutionary pedigree. In addition, the government invited a number of foreign language experts to teach their respective native languages to Chinese students. Nevertheless, these efforts of reform, however limited and limiting, were drowned in the sea of accusations and recriminations. Foreign language education was still deeply mired in politics because the leftist wing in the CCP headed by the Gang of Four (*Sirenbang,* four top CCP Politburo members with Mao's Wife, Madam Jiang, as the head) deliberately took the slogan – "First in Political Standard" – to extremes or used it for their own political gains.

For example, to prove that educators put politics before everything else, the Gang of Four insisted that only Mao Zedong's works and other related political treatises be studied in foreign language education. They claimed, with no factual basis at all, that all texts written in foreign languages were teeming with "feudal, capitalist, and hedonistic" ideologies, and that students were likely to be "poisoned" or "taken for a ride" by these "corrupting materials." What became more extreme, if not ridiculous, was that any beginning foreign language students had to first learn such sentences or slogans as "Long Live Chairman Mao" and "Long Live the Proletarian Revolution" in order to show that they were up to the test of being "First in Political Standard." Further, the Gang of Four, under the pretext of integrating manual labor into education, required that all students had to spend considerable time, ranging from three weeks to six months, participating in manual labor during their three-year foreign language study. In addition, during this period, it was workers, peasants, and soldiers that had the privilege to attend, administer, and reform universities, because they were deemed most clean of all capitalist, bourgeois, and other corrupting influences. As a result, all activities related to foreign language education were taken over by these students, thus creating an unavoidable conflict with teachers, who were now literally pushed to the sideline. The prevailing ethos then at China's universities and colleges was that those who failed in exams were hailed as "heroes" and those who excelled in exams or simply spent more time studying were branded as "white experts"—students who sacrificed political standard (being "red") to achieve academic excellence (being "white"). One can easily imagine, then, what was like to study foreign language in China during these years. There were no entrance exam, no end-of-semester exam, and no graduation exam, and the quality of foreign language education for those students plummeted who lived through this tumultuous period because it was the ideological and political principle that dictated linguistic correctness or incorrectness (Ross, 1993, p. 59).

## 5. A TIME OF RENEWAL (1976–1984)

The Cultural Revolution ended in October 1976 with the arrest of the Gang of Four and with the reinstatement of many old guards who had been persecuted and pushed aside. The end of the Cultural Revolution brought literally new life to the PRC's foreign language education, which was soon to be marked by serious reform, and by its commitment to help modernize the PRC. On August 28,1978, the Ministry of Education held a symposium on foreign language education, and there were altogether 235 participants coming from foreign language institutes, colleges, and departments, as well as from key secondary and elementary schools. The outcome of this meeting was the issuing of the symposium document, approved by the State Council, on how to strengthen foreign language education. This document became a major policy blue print for many years to come.

The participants at the symposium re-examined the country's experiences in foreign language education in the past three decades. While confirming many accomplishments, they also acknowledged mistakes and shortcomings. Most noticeable among them were (1) zealously expanding, in the first seven years after 1949, Russian education at the expense of English and other foreign languages and (2) focusing on foreign language major education with not much attention being paid to foreign language education both for special purposes and at elementary and secondary level.

To redress the overwhelming imbalance between the lack, if not the non-existence, of foreign language education, on the one hand, and the increasing demand for people with expertise in foreign language training, the symposium document identified a number of areas that required immediate, urgent action. These areas can be summarized as follows.

First, a greater emphasis must be placed on foreign language education at elementary and secondary levels. In the next three to five years, secondary schools should be expected to offer foreign language classes and to improve its quality of education. Second, better efforts must be made to improve foreign language education for special purposes at postsecondary level as well as to provide as many different kinds of foreign language education for adults and post-graduates as possible—so as to train specialists who know both their fields and foreign languages. Here, we see China's educational pendulum swinging back toward that belief again that foreign language proficiency could be useful for modernization. Third, resources must be streamlined to ensure quality education for a few key foreign language institutes; the mission of these schools was to help train more advanced interpreters, more qualified teachers, and more researchers who specialized in literature and linguistics. Fourth, long-term planning should not interfere with implementing current tasks. The symposium document pointed out that the main task at this time was to focus on English education. At the same time, we should not neglect other foreign languages, including Russian. Fifth, more resources should be provided to train teachers and to improve their quality – especially at secondary level. Sixth, foreign language textbooks for all levels should be standardized and go through a review process approved by a team of specialists, and these textbooks should be accompanied by audio and video materials. Seventh,

research in foreign language education and in language study must be strengthened, and contemporary theories and pedagogies from abroad must then be introduced and brought into our classroom. Finally, language labs and other audio-visual facilities should be quickly developed to aid foreign language teaching (Fu, 1986, pp. 88–92).

These guidelines played a significant role in reviving foreign language education in the PRC. By 1984, foreign language education reached a level that had never been seen before in the nation's history. For example, by 1984, there were altogether 34 foreign languages being taught at the nation's colleges and universities. Schools also began to offer different degree programs to meet the needs of students and society. There were, for example, two-year, four/five-year, and Master programs, with six universities and institutes nation-wide being certified to confer Ph. D. degree. By 1983, there were altogether 30,395 college students majoring in foreign language study – a number that was quite significant given the devastating effect of the Cultural Revolution upon foreign language education in the previous two decades. And the number of foreign language teachers had also reached a record high of 9,987. And starting from 1978, the government provided funds to expand existing publishing presses and to open up new ones in order to publish foreign language books, dictionaries, and other teaching materials to meet the increasing needs. By the end of 1983, there were altogether 71 different kinds of foreign language textbooks, with English dominating the field. In short, by the end of 1984, foreign language education in the PRC had witnessed unprecedented expansion and development (Fu, 1986, pp. 94–100; Ross, 1993, pp. 37–40).

## 6. TAKING FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM (1984-PRESENT)

In September 1983, Deng Xiaoping, China's then paramount leader, told Jingshan School in Beijing that Chinese education needs to respond to modernization, to the world, and to the future (Fu, 1986, p. 316). His remark signified a complete swinging back toward using foreign language to serve the needs of "four modernizations" (in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology). To accomplish these three goals, the government continued to give top priority to foreign language education, and the Ministry of Education issued to universities and colleges in 1984 a series of directives stating that we must do everything we can to raise foreign language education to a higher level in order to meet China's modernization needs. Thus, since 1984, foreign language education has continued to grow at all levels, and the overall foreign language proficiency among Chinese students, especially students of English, has improved significantly. Along with this positive development, several major trends have also emerged – trends that are worth reviewing since they may give us a sense of where China's foreign language education is heading, and since they may tell us some important lessons that may otherwise get lost.

First, since 1984, China has continued its social, economic, and political reform, and foreign language education has benefited a great deal from these reforms. Not only did the Ministry of Education begin to increase funds to local, provincial

schools so that they could invite foreign language experts to come to their schools, but also it started sending a large number of teachers and students abroad to study. Both sets of individuals in turn have played an important role in shaping the direction of foreign language education in the country.

For example, since 1949, much of foreign language instruction has been dominated by the listening and speaking method in terms of achieving oral competence and by the grammar-translation method in terms of achieving written competence. These two methods were clearly influenced by American structuralism, and Chinese teachers of English had benefited from using these two methods in their classroom. On the other hand, these two teaching methods also helped lead teachers to focus too much on the drill part of learning, on teaching language use in settings that were far too removed from real communicative situations. Consequently, creative teaching and learning were often sacrificed, if not totally stifled (Paine & Delany, 2000, pp. 107–110).

To overcome this methodological bias, Chinese teachers of English, many of whom had been educated abroad, began to introduce new teaching methods, new ways of making their students become more effective learners of English. For example, while continuing to stress the importance of listening and speaking, these Chinese English teachers began to introduce, and emphasize the importance of, cultural competence. In other words, in order to be communicatively competent, speakers of English need to be knowledgeable about its culture, its history, and its literature as well. As a result, more courses in these areas were offered, and students were encouraged to develop interests in these areas in addition to their interest in the language per se. Similarly, teachers also began to incorporate cultural elements into their classroom instruction by, for example, putting culture back into language, and by asking students to apply their newly acquired cultural knowledge to language learning (Qu, 2002).

Second, as China continued to open itself to the rest of the world, the need for graduates majoring in foreign languages, especially in English, grew rapidly. Enterprises, both state-owned and privately owned or jointly-owned with foreign investors, were vying for students who could use English with real communicative competence. This social need put a lot of pressure on schools to produce such talents and to certify them as qualified and competent. As a result, testing suddenly was catapulted into a prominent part of foreign language education.

Beginning from 1988, universities and colleges throughout China, following the directives from the Ministry of Education, began to test students according to different proficiency levels. While this kind of testing certainly has played a positive role in raising students' language proficiency level and in forcing students to link language study to real use, it has also pressured teachers to focus, almost exclusively, on preparing students to pass these tests – so that their own report cards could pass muster. For example, many schools began to overwhelm students with endless mock exams, additional class hours, and grammar and composition drills. These tasks inevitably disrupted regular classroom instruction and led students to devote all their energy to taking exams than to engaging in systematic learning.

To correct this unhealthy trend without dismissing the need to certify graduates' English proficiency level, schools, starting from mid-90s, began to pay more

attention to developing well-balanced curricula, and to creating an environment that is most conducive to systematic learning than to crash preparation for exams. Since 1998, a more positive trend has emerged to challenge the one that overemphasizes testing at the expense of healthy classroom learning. Though there is a long way to go before this rush for testing disappears, many English teachers have begun to treat proficiency exams not as the ultimate gauge for success or failure, but just as part of an overall curriculum. As a result, classroom instruction has begun to focus more on language learning than on test taking, and pedagogy has openly sought to provide a more comprehensive knowledge structure for students. In other words, there was more emphasis being placed on training students' communicative competence rather than their testing ability only.

Nevertheless, according to two professors of English we've interviewed at Fudan University and East China Normal University, the tension continues to play out before their very eyes between the social need to put students through these standardized proficiency tests so that they can be recognized and employed by the society and the pedagogical need to provide for these students a well-balanced curriculum so that they will attain both linguistic and communicative competence in a timely fashion (Xiong, 2002).

Third, since the early 1990s, there has been a push to integrate multimedia technology into traditional classroom teaching. Namely, both teachers and policy makers had realized by then that most effective learning takes place not in a classroom dominated by one teacher relying solely on traditional teaching methodology, but in a setting that combines the role of a teacher with other technologies to foster and promote students' creativity and active involvement in learning. For instance, English major students in China had been complaining for a while about two major roadblocks. One was that they had cram down their own throat a great number of new words and content information in a very limited amount of time—a task that was both almost impossible and detrimental to their learning. The other had to do with how to apply all the skills they had learned—including reading, writing, speaking, listening – to real communicative situations even though they had not been properly taught. In addition, any initiative or creativity on the part of the students was quickly stifled in the face of "thick textbook" and "mounting vocabulary" (Zang & Xu, 2001, p. 82).

To reform traditional classroom pedagogy, to improve classroom efficiency, and most importantly to bring out the best out of students, teachers in many universities have been encouraged to apply multimedia technology to classroom teaching. For example, for writing classes they use language lab to facilitate the process of drafting. For intensive reading classes, they take advantage of slides, transparencies, and other video clips to introduce background information and to increase student participation. While the use of multimedia technology is certainly not the silver bullet to every problem teachers encounter in their classroom, it has played a very positive role in improving teaching effectiveness and in motivating student learning. There is every indication that this trend will continue, and that more and more teachers are going to use multiple teaching methods in their classrooms as the technology becomes increasingly available to schools and students alike (Xiong, 2002).

## 7. CLOSING REMARKS

Our preceding overview, though brief, seeks to demonstrate that foreign language education in the PRC has gone through a series of important changes and has experienced many ups and downs since 1949. As we have suggested, these changes in part reflect the tradition in China's educational pendulum to swing between the long-held belief that foreign language proficiency is helpful to China's modernization and the ever-present fear – at times bordering on xenophobia – that foreign languages may embody ideologies that directly contradict or compromise the CCP's own ideologies. At the same time, they also indicate that China always is in search of new ideas, new methodologies, and new paradigms to improve and to expand its foreign language education. Further, these changes, especially the most recent ones, give us confidence that foreign language education will continue to receive the support it needs to grow, to mature, and to meet the needs of China in the 21st century. We anticipate more innovations and reforms in the months and years to come, though, of course, not without encountering usual obstacles or resistance. To close, this short essay represents our attempt to develop a narrative that aims to capture these historical changes and to invite others to expand and to enrich this narrative. To the extent that this essay has done that, we feel we have accomplished our mission.

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# POSTSCRIPT

ANN MAXWELL HILL

# LANGUAGE MATTERS IN CHINA: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL POSTSCRIPT

> "The great cultural barrier imposed by a separate language is perhaps the most effective guarantee that a social world, easily accessible to insiders, will remain opaque to outsiders… a unique language represents a formidable obstacle to state knowledge, let alone colonization, control, manipulation, instruction or propaganda" (Scott, 1998, p. 72)

Scott's concern, in his recent book *Seeing Like a State,* is how modern states make "legible" local cultures and their peoples within schemes that are universal, inevitable and grandly utopian. Language, as a key code to particular histories, sensibilities and identities, is a logical focus of governments with modernist ambitions and nationalist ideologies. In the latter half of the twentieth century, language policy has become a dimension of state power with profound implications for relations between minority populations and their governments, so much so that language rights may serve as an index to the overall status of minorities within state polities, including the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Read through the eyes of an anthropologist, Scott's quote reminds us that language for many people, and certainly for various minorities in China, is an emblem of identity, an identity often deeply felt and linked to a social world intimately experienced. A second observation, also somewhat of a truism, is that the language of states – in documents, courts and media – is at once powerful and exclusionary. Purveyed in the context of the official, workaday bureaucracy, including educational institutions, it has the potential for bringing order to the unknown, and in Scott's terms, illegible, corners of state society, rendering those parts governable. State languages, too, such as *Putonghua* (Standard Modern Chinese) in the PRC, literally mediate access to resources sought after by modern populations, privileging the language of officialdom and the majority over local vernaculars.

As linguists interested primarily in documenting the vicissitudes of state language policy and its implementation over the last fifty years in China, few of the contributors to this volume directly address the cultural and identity issues at the local level that make language reform so fraught. By contrast, many anthropological studies of China's minorities *(minzu)* point to the significance of non-Chinese languages to group and personal identity, even among people who are bilingual or

*M. Zhou (ed.), Language Policy in the People's Republic of China: Theory and Practice since 1949,* 333–338.
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> "...They do not identify as Nuosu because they speak the language: rather, they speak the language because they identify as Nuosu. They have local traditions of common descent and common history ...that shape their identity as a group, and part of those traditions is the idea that they are a group that has a language of its own. So they speak it (2001, p. 167).

Although not all people among China's official minorities express this self-conscious connection between language and identity, and some feel no connection at all (see Borchigud, 1996), allegiance to particular languages and historically meaningful scripts often figures into the relative success or failure of language reform efforts at the regional or local level.

For example, Blachford in this volume notes that among the Uygur and Kazak in Xinjiang, Arabic-derived scripts have been in use as early as the tenth or eleventh centuries. As part of a national-level campaign associated with the push for radical change on all fronts during the Great Leap Forward (1958), Xinjiang's regional government launched a large-scale program to replace the older scripts with a *Pinyin*-type romanization. Deemed a success in all official assessments of the program, it was carried forward until interrupted by the Cultural Revolution in 1966. With Mao Zedong's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, local practice in Xinjiang revived the older Arabic scripts. The efforts to introduce the romanized script continued but were eventually undermined by a combination of persistent local practice, new government policies focusing resources on economic development and new laws giving more autonomy to minority populations in the early 1980s.

In their discussion of Dai script reforms in Yunnan, Zhou and Fang also point to the close link between language and local culture. In an overview of earlier efforts to reform and unify Dai scripts, Zhou and Fang demonstrate that central government language policies in the 1950s were locally unacceptable and unworkable. In the name of science and visions of the possibilities of perfection, scripts used for centuries in Dai areas were to be jettisoned. These schemes assumed, to their detriment, a uniformity of culture and a corresponding unanimity of views among all Dai populations in Yunnan that oversimplified a much more complex reality on the ground. In the Xishuangbanna, in particular, the language planners underestimated the importance of temple education, a longstanding tradition of instruction for young boys based on Buddhist texts, that underwent a local revival in the early 1980s (Hansen, 1999, 109–121). And there seemed to be little awareness among the 1950s language planners of the considerable cross-border contacts between Dai in Yunnan and other Dai(Tai)-speakers in Northern Thailand and Burma, cultural and linguistic "traffic" that continually infused local Dai cultures in Yunnan with texts representing modern Buddhism and reproducing modern forms of literacy in Dai scripts. New research on Dai scripts reiterates the significance in the 1990s of the revitalization of Buddhist networks across national boundaries, literally manned by traveling monks, that promote indigenous, temple-based scripts and, co-incidentally, pan-Tai ethnicity (Davis, 2003, pp. 189–192). Although there are indubitably a host of factors responsible for the revival of interest in monastic education among the Xishuangbanna Dai, surely the Dai are no longer convinced that their traditional scripts are relics of an antique past. Ultimately, report Zhou and Fang, the older,

traditional script of monastic education was officially re-instated in 1986 in Xishuangbanna, somewhat to the consternation of younger generations of Dai who had learned a reformed script in government schools.

Zhou and Fang's discussion of script reform among Dai populations, as well as the chapter on this same issue in Xinjiang by Blachford, resonate with a familiar theme in much of the Western anthropological understanding of relations between the Chinese state and its national minorities – negotiation. This is a complex process, implicating Chinese-speaking minority elites with provincial and national clout, official planning committees at various administrative levels, and nowadays new market forces diffused through tourism and various media. At the turn of the new century in China, minority images get swept up in the zeitgeist of popular culture, now sentimentalizing this image and this language, the next day creating a new "fever" with a different obsession (Baranovitch, 2001). How much agency minority populations have in this flux of popular representations is an open question, as is surely the capacity of the state to impose, unchallenged, its policies and ideologies.

A typical case of negotiation in recent anthropological literature on China is Siu-woo Cheung's study of the Ge in Guizhou and their struggle with state authorities for recognition as an independent *minzu* (1996). In state documents, the Ge are often officially designated Miao, an especially repugnant classification to the Ge, given their long history of hostilities with neighboring Miao groups. Although the Ge have been unhappy with their position in official reckoning since the early *minzu* classification project in the 1950s, it was not until the 1980s that they became particularly combative over this issue vis-à-vis state authorities.

The Ge have pressed their case for separate *minzu* status in conventional, and sometimes innovative, ways. Their intellectuals cite earlier debates from the 1950s that support Ge distinctiveness from the Miao groups, and locally through the use of large-scale public ritual displays, the Ge virtually have advertised their identity to the assembled public and, more significantly, to invited guests from the upper echelons of Guizhou provincial officialdom. Tourism and variously affiliated media have provided other avenues for the Ge to make their case; they contest every misrepresentation of themselves in the media and, via Ge elites, carry their grievances to Beijing-level bureaucracies. Sentiment for an independent *minzu* status is so strong among the Ge that in 1986 they withheld their grain taxes in protest against a central government document calling them "Miao."

While the Ge wrangle over their *minzu* status is a clear-cut instance of negotiation, papers in this volume allude to more oblique dynamics between locality and state that may be read as negotiation, with the proviso that the idea is not explicit in the framework of China's language policy or its implementation. Several papers, in addition to Blachford's cited above, mention the impact of the Cultural Revolution era (1966–1976) on script reform and the promotion of Chinese language in minority areas (see Caodaobaateer, Pu, and Sun, this volume). It is apparent from their remarks that in the absence of pressures from the center to comply with its reform programs, many minorities toward the end of this period reinstituted familiar languages and scripts. The *fait accompli* of rejection of earlier reform agendas by minority populations put pressure on the central government to

accept the reality of local preference and linguistic practice as the Cultural Revolution wound down and the Dengist era of modernization loomed on the horizon. Without doubt, the range of factors underlying this policy shift toward more language autonomy for minority populations was complex, but at the very least, the Cultural Revolution and its official repudiation provided a window for the exertion of local and regional minority strength.

Minglang Zhou's perceptive overview of the PRC's minority language policy in this volume argues that a degree of local autonomy, by which he means at administrative levels below the center, can be seen in many aspects of China's language policy. He notes, for example, that legislation for standardizing languages typically originates at the local, rather than national level, although the evidence from our contributors on the 1950s era is somewhat ambiguous on this point. Zhou, along with several other contributors, also recognizes considerable latitude given to the provincial authorities and those on down in how and to what extent they implement policies emanating from the national level. Whether or not the opportunities for local decision-making in some areas of implementation of China's minority language policy constitute bases of local autonomy from which minority cadres negotiate with higher authorities, or are simply spaces in the system left vacant by state authorities who choose to invest their scarce resources elsewhere, is not clear. What is clear is that systematic, long-term language programs of proven educational effectiveness are currently under-funded in many minority areas where poverty rates tend to exceed national and provincial averages (e.g. Hansen, 1999, 156–157; Heberer, 1999, pp. 220–225). That under-funding is especially acute in bilingual education programs is attested to in several of this volume's chapters (see Pu and M.C. Zhou, this volume).

However, as Sun Hongkai notes, serious attention to bilingual education did not develop in China until the 1980s, a fact which may account for the seemingly experimental nature of most of the programs described in this volume. In his view, bilingual education can increase the effectiveness of minority education, at the same time functioning as an effective tool for the spread of the Chinese language. Not surprisingly, he favors building on this local experience to formulate more consistent, presumably, nation-wide bilingual programs.

Sun does not comment on how bilingualism or minority language work, generally, will be impacted by the push for the promotion of Putonghua, a recent policy change that many contributors comment on. Guo, for example, assures us that the new Common Language Law of the PRC for the promotion of Putonghua does not mean the abolition of Chinese dialects. On the contrary, the new law passed in 2000, says Guo, reflects scholarly discussions and conferences of the 1990s in China that recognize the inevitable coexistence of a unitary state-sanctioned language, Putonghua, with local and regional linguistic diversity. Other contributors to this volume, in particular Rohsenow and Zhou Minglang, make clear that at a minimum the new language law reiterates language rights for minorities.

How this law will translate into practice on the ground in minority areas remains to be seen. There is abundant evidence in this volume that in recent history local cadres often refused to learn minority languages and deflected support for local language programs for reasons of contempt, mistrust and sheer ignorance. The

Common Language Law, with its explicit provisions for use of Putonghua in contexts ranging from public facilities to popular media, seems to provide even greater encouragement to Han cadres whose own self-interest lies in exclusive use of Putonghua. How can minority language rights be protected under new mandates in the Common Language Law which broadly empower officials to impose Putonghua? Under such broad mandates, will it be even more difficult for minorities to exercise and protect their constitutional rights in a state system that provides no means for redress in the face of authoritarian officials?

In this volume, some of the contributors discuss the implications of linguistic research and policies for minority education in PRC schools. As Sun has pointed out, for example, bilingual education programs undertaken at the local level indeed show great vitality and testify to the direct relevance of the discipline of linguistics to practical problems. As one who is acutely aware of illiteracy in the Liangshan Yi (Nuosu) area, however, I was somewhat disappointed that contributors to this volume had little to say about persistent, gendered illiteracy in minority areas. In Liangshan in the early 1990s only ten percent of the elementary school students were Yi girls. And this percentage is virtually miniscule by the time of graduation from primary schools, let alone secondary schools (Wu Mingxian, 1993). Predictably, there has been admirable work done demonstrating the efficacy of bilingual education in Liangshan, with success assessed in terms of longitudinal studies of drop-out rates, graduation rates and rates for transition to secondary and university education (Qumu Tiexi, 2000). But policies and research that would benefit Yi girls and girls from other minorities by increasing their enrollment and success in regular schools, rather than reaching them through literacy campaigns of doubtful lasting impact, are sorely needed.

Language matters have figured critically into the history of relations between Han and *shao shu minzu* (minority), and state and nationality in modern Chinese history (see, for example, Bulag, 2002, pp. 232–33). Even in U.S. history, where language disputes have been relatively muted, there are critical moments when particular language conflicts between majority and minority become politicized, as happened when California did away with Spanish-English bilingual education three years ago, and new configurations of minority-majority relations are laid bare. Globally, language rights are emerging as diagnostic indices of minority rights more generally. This volume is the first China-situated discussion of this important emergent perspective on minority languages, research that brings to bear international and cross-cultural models on recent developments in Chinese policy. Thus, this volume continues, in a new register, a longstanding scholarly conversation about the multiethnic Chinese state and its necessary accommodation to strategically significant minority voices.

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