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## **TYPES OF LANGUAGE CONFLICTS IN THE COVERAGE OF CHINESE SOCIOLINGUISTICS**

*Different types of language conflicts are often found in many countries in the process of development. Over the past decades, Chinese scientists have investigated various aspects of language conflicts to analyze their types and methods of manifestation. But today, these developments were not summarized or systematized. The basis of our intelligence was scientific works (1995–2022) from the National Center for Philosophy and Social Sciences Documentation of the People's Republic of China. The current research objects of Chinese scholars in the field of language conflicts are mainly divided into four categories: conflict between different languages, conflict between dialect and standard language, conflict between written vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese, and conflict between network jargon and standardized language.*

*Modern Chinese sociolinguistic studies of language conflicts distinguish mainly four types conflicts: conflict between different languages, conflict between dialect and standard language, conflict between written vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese, and conflict between network jargon and standardized language. There are complex historical and cultural reasons behind every language conflict. In different epochs, when the social environment and socio-political conditions are changing, the interactive relations between the conflicting parties will also change, and the methods of resolving language conflicts will change accordingly. When researching the problem of language conflict, we must adhere to the principle of dynamics, understand and explain the modern value of different languages or language options according to different social environments and historical conditions.*

*Classification methods and research findings of Chinese scholars provide valuable experience in the study of language conflicts. From a global point of view, with the increase of national consciousness, development of time, change of language, popularization of the Internet, the achievements of Chinese scholars can provide some background value for solving many language problems arising in the historical development of multiethnic countries.*

**Key words:** *Chinese language, dialect, language conflict, network jargon.*

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## **ТИПИ МОВНИХ КОНФЛІКТІВ У ВИСВІТЛЕННІ КИТАЙСЬКОЇ СОЦІОЛІНГВІСТИКИ**

*Різні типи мовних конфліктів часто зустрічаються в багатьох країнах, що перебувають у процесі розвитку. Протягом останніх десятиліть китайські вчені досліджували різні аспекти мовних конфліктів з метою аналізу їх типів і способів прояву. Але до сьогодні ці напрацювання не були узагальнені та систематизовані. Основою нашої розвідки стали наукові праці (1995–2022 рр.) з Національного центру документації з філософії та суспільних наук Китайської Народної Республіки. Сучасні об'єкти дослідження китайських науковців у сфері мовних конфліктів переважно поділяються на чотири категорії: конфлікт між різними мовами, конфлікт між діалектом і стандартною мовою, конфлікт між письмовою народною китайською мовою і класичною китайською мовою та конфлікт між мережевим жаргоном і стандартизованою мовою.*

*Сучасні китайські соціолінгвістичні дослідження мовних конфліктів виділяють чотири типи конфліктів: конфлікт між різними мовами, конфлікт між діалектом і стандартною мовою, конфлікт між письмовою народною китайською мовою і класичною китайською мовою та конфлікт між мережевим жаргоном і стандартизованою мовою. За кожним мовним конфліктом стоять складні історичні та культурні причини. У різні епохи, коли змінюється соціальне середовище та соціально-політичні умови, інтерактивні відносини між конфліктуючими сторонами також будуть змінюватися, і методи вирішення мовних конфліктів будуть змінюватися від-*

повідно. Досліджуючи проблему мовного конфлікту, ми повинні дотримуватися принципу динаміки, розуміти і пояснювати сучасну цінність різних мов або мовних варіантів відповідно до різних соціальних середовищ та історичних умов.

Методи класифікації та результати досліджень китайських науковців дають цінний досвід у вивченні мовних конфліктів. З глобальної точки зору, зі зростанням національної свідомості, розвитком часу, зміною мови, популяризацією Інтернету, досягнення китайських вчених можуть мати певну фонову цінність для вирішення багатьох мовних проблем, що виникають в історичному розвитку поліетнічних країн.

**Ключові слова:** китайська мова, діалект, мовний конфлікт, мережевий жаргон.

**Statement of the problem.** Although Chinese scholars have extensively studied various aspects of language conflicts over the past decades, these research developments have not yet been summarized or systematized. Therefore, it is necessary to review and classify the main categories of language conflict research in the field of Chinese sociolinguistics.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.**

A review of existing research finds that Chinese scholars' research on language conflicts is usually focused on a specific type. The author did not find any work that attempts to comprehensively summarize and review the history and current status of language conflict research. The task of this study is to comprehensively review and summarize the research findings and author's perspectives on language conflict research in the field of Chinese sociolinguistics from 1995 to 2022.

**Outline of the main material of the study.** This study is mostly based on scientific works from the National Center for Philosophy and Social Sciences Documentation of the People's Republic of China from 1995 to 2022.

**Research analysis.** In the paper, four types of language conflicts are considered, distinguished and analyzed by Chinese linguists in research related to sociolinguistics, and the study was based on the works devoted to the study of language conflicts (1995–2022) of Chinese linguists from the largest open database of Chinese academic journals on social sciences “National Center for Philosophy and Social Sciences Documentation” (hereinafter – Center).

In Chinese academic circles, the term “language conflict” is most often used in the meaning that was reflected in the definition of He Junfang. In the paper of “On the Some Basic Theoretical Problems in Language Conflict”, He Junfang defined the concept of language conflict as follows: “language conflict is a phenomenon ranging from controversy to war caused by language problems, including verbal disputes and other disharmonious ways of communication (He Junfang, 2009: 4).

Based on He Junfang's understanding of language conflict, we will mainly discuss the results of the following four aspects of research on language conflicts stored at the Center.

**1. Conflict between different languages**

He Junfang divided the types of language conflicts into internal language conflicts (language conflicts within ethnic groups) and external language conflicts (language conflicts between ethnic groups). Internal language conflicts most often arise in the process of forming a standard language, while external language conflicts are between languages of different nations, which have a very negative impact on the political stability of multilingual countries and building harmonious relations between its citizens (He Junfang, 2009: 4).

For the concept of “external language conflicts”, we use another term “conflict between different languages”. The classification of “language conflicts within ethnic groups” and “language conflicts between ethnic groups” cannot be adapted to all language situations. Although in general, one ethnic group has a common language, including different dialects, there are also cases when different ethnic groups use the same language or several other languages as the first language in the same ethnic group. In addition to studies of language conflicts between ethnic groups, studies of language conflicts caused by the use of another language in one ethnic group are also found. For example, Xue Xianglian and Liu Jinron discussed the use of foreign languages in different ethnic groups in the paper “National Cultural Merger and National Language Conflict” (Xiao Yingchao, 2007: 15). Li Fayuan discussed the issue of the use of Russian language among Ukrainians in “On the Impact of National Language Policy-making on Domestic National Unity and Harmony-Taking Ukraine as an Example” (Li Fayuan, 2017: 5).

Despite the generality, He Junfang's reflections on the problems that can be caused by language conflicts between ethnic groups are reasonable. Conflicts between different languages are indeed the most common type of language conflict with the most serious consequences. That is why Chinese linguists have conducted numerous studies on conflicts between different languages. These works also often examine the social conflicts that erupt in different countries around the world due to language problems, and analyze the prospects for language policy in postcolonial countries, including the function of the Russian language (Russification and de-Russification) in the for-

mer Soviet Union and language problems of Chinese national minorities in China (He Junfang, 2009: 4; Li Fayuan, 2017: 5; Xiao Yingchao, 2007: 15; Yin Qiling, 2011: 18; Zhong Nan, 1995: 21). In view of the fact that the researches of Chinese linguistics is always close to the policy trend, the conclusions made by different scientists are mostly similar. Most of them concern language planning:

1) Strict language policy should not be applied in multiethnic countries (He Junfang, 2009: 4; Yin Qiling, 2011: 18; Li Fayuan, 2017: 5);

2) It is necessary to make a reasonable language plan in accordance with the actual language situation in the country (He Junfang, 2009: 4; Yan Ronggeng, 1999: 18; Liu Xuyi, 2005: 5);

3) In the process of language planning, the principles of linguistic equality and protection of languages of national minorities should be observed (Zhong Nan, 1995: 2; Li Fayuan, 2007: 5).

The proposals of Chinese linguists are limited to theoretical perspectives, and those practical, contradictory aspects of this issue is ignored: in many sovereign nation-states, in order to strengthen the country's cohesion, establishing national identity and adopting a radical language policy is a choice made for good reasons under internal and external pressures.

For nation states, the main dilemma of language policy is the conflict between the language legal framework of the country and the growing awareness of rights of different peoples. On the one hand, public policies are called on to respond to the increases in linguistic diversity and the political claims of ethnic identity groups. On the other hand, they have to promote the institutional structures of a common public sphere in the context of de-legitimising a nationalist conception of the state. (Matthias König, 2000: 8).

## **2. Conflict between dialect and standard language**

Papers discussing the contradictions between dialects and standard languages are more common in circles of Chinese language.

Chinese linguists have different attitudes to the classification of Chinese dialects. Chinese can be divided, depending on the applied criteria, into five or ten dialect groups (Wang Yude, 1962: 12). But what everyone agrees on is that regardless of the method of classification, native speakers of these “dialect groups” sometimes also cannot understand each other. There are also differences in how many people value their dialects in different dialect regions. According to the Atlas of the Chinese Language, published in 2012, Chinese dialects are divided into the following 10 groups: Mandarin, Jin, Wu, Hui, Min, Yue, Hakka (Kejia), Gan, Xiang, Ping (Zhan Bohui, 1998: 20).

These dialects are widespread over a large area, they are very different in phonetics, vocabulary and grammar. For example, Zhan Bohui and Zhang Risheng compared the proximity of vocabulary between the Beijing dialect (Mandarin) and the Yue dialect based on materials, and they collected and published under the title Pearl River Dialect Vocabulary. Scientists chose 1001 words for comparison, and only a little more than 140 of them were the same, which is 10.4% of the total (Zhan Bohui, 1998: 20).

With the development of transport and communication technologies, labor mobility in China has reached unprecedented proportions today, and it has also caused many social problems, including the conflict between the standard literary language and local dialects. On this issue, different scientists hold different views.

Yan Ronggeng, discussing the characteristics of dialects, pointed out the following points:

1) different languages are equal in political and legal aspects, but dialects and national languages are not equal: in terms of law, theory or practice, they belong to different levels;

2) the rise and fall of different languages are uncertain, but the rise of national language and the fall of dialects are natural;

3) language is an important characteristic of a stable nation, dialects, from the point of view of Yan Ronggeng, hinder the unity and development of nations (Xue Xianglian; 2019: 16).

The scientist uses the term “dialect complex” to analyze the language situation, giving it the following definition: “Dialect complex is a psychological complex in people who speak a certain dialect and instinctively believe that their dialect is higher, discriminating and hating other dialects and even the national language”. (Xue Xianglian; 2019: 16). Yan Ronggeng believes that the dialect complex and the mother tongue complex are not the same thing, and in the current situation, the problem of dialect in China will not lead to the division of the country, but it still has a great negative impact on social harmony.

According to Yan Ronggeng, in the context of the country's vigorous promotion of standard Chinese language, the widespread use of Chinese dialects is in fact with a relatively negative impact, administrative, propaganda and other means, used to accelerate the disappearance of dialects use: “Unfortunately, in many areas of mainland China, the use of dialects is widespread, and the dialect complex is growing. This situation, on the one hand, weakens the communicative function of standard Chinese language, creates many invisible obstacles in many respects, hinders the improvement of physical, intellectual, moral qual-

ities of the population and renewal of ideas in areas of dialects, leads to the formation of a closed and conservative society in the dialect zone, and hinders the development of science and technology, especially in the information field. On the other hand, it will also create a gap between different parts of our nation” (Xue Xianglian; 2019: 16).

In the paper “Changes in China'Urban Language Environment and Urban Language Conflict” Wang Ling and Liu Yanqiu took the example of the movement to protect the dialect of the people of Guangzhou (China) and suggested a more moderate view of the problem of dialects, believing that the dialect is a mother tongue that does not oppose the promotion of Standard Chinese. The promotion of Putonghua (Standard Chinese) is aimed at overcoming communication barriers between regions and promoting economic and cultural exchange, the protection of dialects is the protection of a valuable cultural resource in order to avoid its destruction. Theoretically speaking, these two strategies are not antagonistic, there is no inevitable contradiction between them. The purpose of protecting dialects is to protect the local language culture and the right of local people to use their native language, not to compete with Putonghua (the standard literary language), claiming the status of the national lingua franca (Wang Ling; Liu Yanqiu, 2013: 11).

Thus, Chinese scholars have different views on the importance of dialects, but generally support the spread of Standard Chinese. In recent years, scholars have reached a basic consensus on relationship between dialect and standard language: whether they are discussing “promoting Standard Chinese or “protecting dialect”, scholars believe that the general background of the actual social environment and the status of economic and social development should be based in order to shape language policy and plan. Scholars also believe that in the basic ecological Language environment where Standard Chinese prevails, the protection and use of dialects should not violate the basic principles of the promotion of Standard Chinese. However, in different historical periods, the question of how to determine the relationship between the spread of Standard Chinese and the protection of dialects still remains a difficult problem faced by sociolinguists.

### **3. Conflicts between written vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese**

In China, there are two main writing systems: classical Chinese (Wenyan) and written vernacular Chinese (Baihua).

Classical Chinese is a written language that originated from the spoken language in the Spring and Autumn period and the Warring States period. Chinese

intellectuals of all dynasties regarded works written in this language as the source of Culture of Han Nationality and deliberately insisted on the use of classical Chinese. Due to the fact that the Classical Chinese language has remained unchanged for centuries, and the spoken language of people in daily communication has changed rapidly, this has led to a strong mismatch between written and spoken languages. The structure of Chinese traditional feudal society was an inverted pyramid and had two poles: emperors and a handful of bureaucratic classes are at the top, and most people are at the bottom of the pyramid. The social statuses of the representatives of these two poles are fundamentally different. Accordingly, two written traditions “elegant” and “Vulgar” were formed. These statuses are manifested in the contrast between the records using the written system of written vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese (Cao Qin, 2005: 2)

During the late Qing Dynasty, China was poor and weak, and intellectuals such as Hu Shi opposed classical Chinese and campaigned to learn from the West and use a new writing style that would be conducive to mass communication, leading to a great social debate between conservatives and reformers over the standard style of the Chinese language. It follows that disputes over classical Chinese at the time, consciously or unconsciously, have always been linked to ideological disputes.

Research in this area focuses mainly on the debate between two schools, which advocated modern Chinese and classical Chinese during the New Culture Movement at the beginning of the last century, and on the historical influences of these two schools. Pointed to the causes of this kind of conflict Yin Qiling in his work: when old and new styles collide, people who prefer different styles tend to add value and emphasize the importance of the style they use to unite their cultural group and achieve dominance (Yan Rong-geng, 1999: 17).

In various spheres of Chinese society, people are generally positive about the support of modern spoken Chinese, and at the same time, most scholars also acknowledge that the goal of the New Culture Movement and its implementation does not coincide with the requirements for the continuity of the development of cultural resources in literature. Thus, the negative impact of this movement on Chinese literature is formed (Bi Geng, 2003: 1; Wen Zongli, 2008:13; Wurm Stephen Adolphe; Li Rong; Baumann Theo; Lee Mei W, 1997: 14).

There is still controversy about the usefulness of classical Chinese in the sociocultural field. For example: In his work confirming the historical achievements of the New Culture Movement, Bi Gen

advocated the revival of classical Chinese and encouraged writing in classical Chinese (Bi Geng, 2003: 1), Bi Gen's view provoked opposition from Xiao Yingchao, who believed that the meaning of expression and the scope of classical Chinese were very limited, in modern historical conditions, the revival of classical Chinese doesn't make sense (Wurm Stephen Adolphe; Li Rong; Baumann Theo; Lee Mei W., 1986: 14).

Today, Chinese people perceive the spiritual wealth of the Chinese nation through a variety of cultural monuments written in classical Chinese, and for ordinary people, modern written vernacular Chinese is a tool for free expression of emotions and information. The debate over classical Chinese and modern Chinese has not stopped in China for more than a hundred years.

The essence of the discussion in the field of Chinese Linguistics was actually a dispute over the following three issues: 1) how to relate to the choice between imitating traditional culture and the development of modern culture; 2) how to treat foreign cultural trends; 3) how to relate to the relationship between ideology and literature. Since there is no clear answer to these questions, and the social groups that can participate in the discussion are relatively broad, it is easy to provoke conflicts on these issues among people who are carriers of different ideologies.

#### **4. Conflict between network jargon and standardized language**

A search of the literature on "sociolinguistics" and "network jargon" at the Center found only 20 relevant papers. Most of them focus only on the reasons, characteristics and meaning of network jargon as a variant of language.

Since the Internet became popular, more and more people have started expressing their opinions there. With the development of information technology, the renewal of network jargon is accelerating, leading to constant communication barriers in the Chinese language community. The use of Internet language by some Internet users has caused considerable psychological resistance in others: "Really, I want to vomit when I see it"; "Ordinary people should use this contaminated vocabulary carefully. If you imagine an adult wearing children's clothes and a red scarf all day, it's ridiculous". "Modern people are becoming irreparably more vulgar" (Note: Examples from the Internet).

As early as 2005, Liu Xu and Qian Tsongwu noticed people's controversy over network jargon and standardized language, and published a paper entitled "Network Jargon: The Conflict between Modernism and Postmodernism". They saw the deep roots of this controversy in the cultural conflict between modern language and network jargon as aesthetic conflict.

They believe that the objective existence of network jargon is that it meets certain requirements of modern people – the libertarian aesthetic standard. In the Internet, everyone has the right to express their views, and everyone is a communicator and also an audience. This aesthetic standard is based on the postmodern aesthetic paradigm (Liu Xuyi; Qian Zongwu, 2005: 6).

Such a beginning of the topic like "the conflict between modern language and network jargon" as in Liu Xuyi and Qian Zhongwu's paper is rare in Chinese academic circles. Most Chinese scholars interpret "the conflict between network jargon and standardized language" as "a connotational inconsistency or opposition of meaning between two language variants". Let's take Liu Yanru's paper "The Conflict between Network Jargon and Everyday Language" as an example. In the paper, Liu Yanru compared the difference between network jargon and standardized language and noted: some words have one meaning in everyday language and another on the Internet. Because of this, one can see the difference in reference in network jargon and everyday language, which causes a conflict between these two language variants (Liu Yanru, 2010: 7).

The advantages and disadvantages of network jargon are obvious. The advantages include: the creation of new discursive structures and new words, the promotion of language development, the enrichment of the spiritual life of network users and the opportunity for the authorities to understand mass opinion in a timely manner. The disadvantages of network jargon are also obvious: network jargon affects language norms, limits people's creative abilities, leads to abuse and excessive playfulness, and some words from network jargon are too uncivilized (Zhou Hongzhaomm, 2012: 22).

Network jargon is a reflection of the culture of the Internet. The conflict between network jargon and standardized language can also be seen as a conflict between the culture of the Internet and the basic culture of reality.

**Conclusions.** Modern Chinese sociolinguistic studies of language conflicts distinguish mainly four types of conflicts: conflict between different languages, conflict between dialect and standard language, conflict between written vernacular Chinese and classical Chinese, and conflict between network jargon and standardized language. There are complex historical and cultural reasons behind every language conflict. In different epochs, when the social environment and socio-political conditions are changing, the interactive relations between the conflicting parties will also change, and the methods of resolving language conflicts will change accordingly. When researching

the problem of language conflict, we must adhere to the principle of dynamics, understand and explain the modern value of different languages or language options according to different social environments and historical conditions.

Classification methods and research findings of Chinese scholars provide valuable experience in the

study of language conflicts. From a global point of view, with the increase of national consciousness, development of time, change of language, popularization of the Internet, the achievements of Chinese scholars can provide some background value for solving many language problems arising in the historical development of multiethnic countries.

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