

Industrialization and the Restructuring of Speech Communities in China and Europe

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Edited by

Marinus van den Berg and Daming Xu

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P U B L I S H I N G

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Edited by Marinus van den Berg and Daming Xu

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PREFACE

This book contains fourteen studies directly or indirectly related to the Chinese language situation. An introductory chapter was added to serve as background reading for those who are not familiar or not too familiar with the Chinese language situation. That chapter also introduces the various contributions. Our goal is to allow readers to better understand the impact of urbanization in China on patterns of language acquisition and language use. To help in that direction we present discussions from language planning theory, speech community theory, world language system theory, and the theory of diglossic realignment with a discussion of patterns of language shift. These theories help to place the various empirical studies in a theoretical framework which is capable of data evaluation and predicting future directions. World language system theory also places Chinese in a wider world context and shows general principles underlying all language systems, and we hope to make clear that the Chinese system is no exception. The papers chosen are all empirical studies and provide up to date examples of actual language use in several mainly southern Chinese cities, locations which we see as the centres where major changes are taking place. Three papers contain real-time studies with time intervals of twenty years and more, allowing the observation of language change, a concept which is expressed in the title of the book as the restructuring of speech communities. This restructuring has taken place in Europe almost unnoticed and we feel that the contributions in this book help to rephrase research problems and to look at the world language situation with new eyes.

Guangzhou / Nanjing
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Marinus van den Berg and Daming Xu

URBANIZATION AND THE RESTRUCTURING OF SPEECH COMMUNITIES IN CHINA

MARINUS VAN DEN BERG

Introduction

After the introduction of the Reform and Opening policy in 1978, China's rural population began its march toward the cities in search of jobs and income. When the policy started China's rural population stood at eighty-two percent. A good ten years later that figure had fallen to seventy-three percent, falling another ten percent by 2000. In 2005, when we started to plan our research, the rural population stood at fifty-seven percent (CSY 2009). Looking at these developments from a European perspective, it is as if one can look back a few hundred years, to a period before the Industrial Revolution and before the French Revolution, thereby opening a unique window for the observation of urbanization and by implication for possibilities of better understanding and reconstructing Europe's past urbanization experience. During the Industrial Revolution urbanization had passed almost unnoticed, leaving no clear or reliable record.

To give an example of an area that is well studied, but the implications of which for the understanding of speech community development remain vague and in essence are not well understood, let us take the city of Amsterdam, the major trading and financial centre in the world in the seventeenth century, which at the time had an immigrant population of seventy percent or more, greatly changing the language situation and leading to major adjustments in speech practices. Some of these, such as the influence of Jewish immigrants on the Amsterdam vocabulary are traced, but the overall picture is murky and not well understood, even when placed in a merchants and guilds dominated environment.¹

When we move forward in time toward the industrial revolution and look at the city of Rotterdam, which in the nineteenth and twentieth century was the major European port, the situation is even less clear. The harbour,

¹ See for some of the background
http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/Amsterdam_1.html

like that of Amsterdam, was in great need of labouring hands, and attracted large groups of immigrants from the nearby and farther away countryside. The language situation in Rotterdam too changed dramatically. Urban dialects developed through a process of accommodation and levelling, where accommodation means adjustment to each other, and levelling implies that the functionally most outstanding words, or most easily shared pronunciation variants, and ways of expression were selected and further developed by the next generation.²

These processes, accommodation and levelling, however were not observed during the migration process, they are reconstructed, whereas now in China, we have a chance to make observations in real time. What is needed however is a methodology to do so, and in this book various approaches to understanding China's changing language situation are presented. Later in this chapter we will introduce these studies one by one, but our task in this introduction is to make clear how and to what extent the Chinese language situation is different from developments in Europe, and how the two research environments can supplement each other.

In order to be able to do so we need to explain two aspects of the Chinese language situation in some detail: the development of the Chinese dialects, the introduction of a modern standard language, and the impact of that introduction. A dialect situation which has an unbroken history of development is unknown to the Western reader and almost by default is replaced with familiar concepts of national languages and separate writing systems. It is often forgotten that national languages do not have very long histories, that it is not very long ago that Europe's elite groups communicated in French leaving the dialects untouched. That situation started to change at the time of the French Revolution and was immediately thereafter empowered by the Industrial Revolution, two forces which in different shapes are transforming the Chinese language landscape today. We will now first introduce the opening chapters and supplement these with a general overview of major forces that shaped the Chinese language scene.

1. Urban language in China and Europe

This book is about urban language. It tries to understand the effect of the forces of modernization and industrialization on the language situation in modern Chinese cities. The comparison is with language situations in Europe and elsewhere, where similar developments have taken place. This wider view is presented in the contribution devoted to the world language system (see below). The opening chapter by Li Yuming gives the Chinese

² For details of these processes as observed in more recent time in Anglia, England, for the city of Norwich, see the work by Trudgill 1974 and 1988.

view on the changing language situation through the presentation of a language planning model developed at the Chinese Ministry of Education. It presents in great detail the planning which is needed both as the script level and the language use level in a country as large as China, not only involving various dialect areas but also a large number of minority languages and their non-Chinese writing systems. We are very happy to be able to present this original view to English language readers.³

The second chapter of the book by De Swaan introduces the way in which sociological concepts can be applied to language situations, and more importantly how change can be measured. Crucial concepts are 'prevalence', the number of speakers that uses the language from early childhood onwards, and 'centrality', the number of people who acquired the language as an additional language. The theory provides a first step towards quantification of individual language choices and their aggregate effects for the spreading and shrinking of languages in a given sociolinguistic constellation, which in turn shapes subsequent individual choices. The theory describes the dynamic effects 'centrality' encompasses, and how a language can become important without effort from the side of the government or its mother-tongue speakers. We feel that when the implications of this theory are understood, it will become a fundamental supplement to language planning efforts, by providing the theory and the quantified basis on which language related decisions are made.

An approach to urban language also requires the understanding of urban environments cross-culturally. We are particularly happy therefore to be able to present a study that compares the nature of the Chinese and the European city. The author, Rick Dolphijn, makes us sensitive to the role architecture plays in the world that surrounds us. Architects create a world which also creates new language forms, new ways of communicating. To account for the difference between European and Chinese cities, he proposes the contrasts of *axometric vision* with that of *linear perspective*, where the first represents the Chinese concept of urban space, illustrated in his paper by the map of Xi'an, one of the few cities that indeed has kept the original city wall intact.⁴ Axonometric vision, *dengjiao toushi* 'equal-angle see-through' in Chinese, as Dolphijn explains, offers us a multiplicity of

³ The translation of the Chinese papers was taken care of by Chang Liu of Jilin University with financial support from Nanjing University's Sociolinguistic Laboratory. The final version presented here of course is the responsibility of the editors.

⁴ It is interesting to remark that the earliest urban area in China, Xibo, the first Shang capital, established three thousand six hundred years ago, had a square shaped city wall. It is located in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan province, one of the oldest trading centres in China, which makes Dolphijn's contribution even more outstanding.

dynamic surfaces, is reflected in Chinese art representations, and makes surfaces to ‘unfold’ rather than to ‘fold’ as he elaborates in the paper. The western post-renaissance linear perspective, in contrast, views pictures from outside the frame and is based on three related concepts, a vanishing point, a single light source (the sun), and the eye of the beholder (the viewer). Western and oriental cities, Dolphijn argues, are organised along the same principles as observed in art. We refer to his contribution for the detailed exposition of the implications of the two contrasting perspectives.

After these three perspectives, we return to the Chinese scene, with the focus on Chinese dialects. Like archaeology, dialectology started at the beginning of the twentieth century and matured over time. Several fundamental studies of major dialect areas saw the light, but an endeavour to provide dialect data for the whole of China in one source seemed an impossible task. This task became more urgent in recent times when it was observed that “characteristic features of the dialects in every locale are swiftly disappearing” and “some of the weaker, minor dialects are fast approaching extinction.” A plan was made to create maps of the distribution of dialect characteristics for the whole of China, and at the end of 2001 the project to compile a *Linguistic Atlas of Chinese Dialects* was started. We are very happy therefore that professor Cao Zhiyun, the project director, allowed us to use the project introduction and found time to write a comment on the map for the distribution of *daozi* 稻子 ‘rice’ for this volume, which will give the reader a first introduction of dialect differences of one crucial word for the whole of China.

Having said this, another issue still remains and that is language distance and mutual intelligibility of Chinese dialects. Vincent van Heuven, the director of the phonetic laboratory at Leiden University and his then Ph.D. student Tang Chaoju made an endeavour to compare judgments of language distance and intelligibility with objective measures. They chose fifteen Chinese dialects and compared 225 dialect pairs. The objective data were based on work by Cheng Chin-chuan (1997), whose data were transformed into a *Lexical Similarity Index* and a *Phonological Correspondence Index*. The results are shown in a number of tables and hierarchical cluster trees for which we refer to the paper itself, whereas the research also shows that distance judgments and intelligibility judgments correlate strongly.

In the intelligibility study, historical relationships between dialects were left aside. This was done on purpose. We feel however that the contributions in this book will be better appreciated when the historical development of the Chinese cultural sphere and the development of the dialects and their interactions with geographical and historical forces are taken into consideration. Before introducing the urban studies, we therefore present four sections in which background is given of: 1. the origin of the Chinese

language as this can be traced through its written record, 2. the development of the southern dialects, 3. the development of the Mandarin dialects, and 4. the establishment of a modern standard language.

2. Culture and writing

Already in Neolithic times, village cultures were established in the basins of China's major rivers, the Yellow river in the north and the Yangzi River in China's middle range. As early as five thousand BC, agriculture was developed, millet and rice were grown, and silk worms were cultivated. Around four thousand BC, the first fragments of a Chinese style of writing were discovered, and around three thousand years BC early bronze culture (Longshan)⁵ established itself in the Yellow river basin. Pottery, which already existed for several thousand years, became very refined, and urban areas developed as shown by archaeological finds of rammed earth walls and moats. Rice culture and domesticated silk worm sericulture further developed. Archaeological finds also confirm the use of divination by reading the cracks in heated cattle bones, a culture trait that remained central to Chinese culture in later eras. The first of these eras is the 'Great' or Xia dynasty, which lasted from 2000 BC to 1600 BC, is documented by archaeological finds in Erlitou, and spread through the provinces of Henan, Shaanxi, and Hubei. However, we need to wait until the next bronze culture, that of the Shang and its last capital Yin in Anyang prefecture, Henan province, to find written evidence.⁶

The Yin capital was a real urban area, with palaces, temples, houses, bronze and bone workshops.⁷ These dynastic works signal strong central control for the mobilization of people as well as values of hierarchy, social discipline, and central direction, concepts which play a core role in contemporary Chinese modernization as well.⁸ The kings were the heads of ancestor- spirit cults and these spirits were consulted for special occasions, as main agricultural events, births, deaths, weather, the satisfaction of the ancestors with the performance of certain rituals, and war.⁹ And war was there in abundance. There were fights with other tribes and with the non-

⁵ Chinese culture names are names of villages where the relevant archaeological objects were found.

⁶ See: Journeys in Time documentaries of the Shang dynasty 商朝 at, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/journeysintime>.

⁷ The Duling square bronzes found in Zhengzhou 郑州, Henan 河南 province, the location of Xibo, the first capital of the Shang dynasty, had no inscriptions.

⁸ Shang China (2010). In Encyclopedia Britannica Online.

⁹ For all clarity, these views and practices remain common in Chinese folk religion until today.

agricultural peoples of the steppes. We are lucky now that the records of these spirit consultations were written on prepared turtle plastrons, and ox scapulae. The records were kept in pits, which were discovered during excavations in the 1920s and 30s.¹⁰ The oracle bones allowed the reconstruction of a series of Shang kings, which were recorded in the *Shiji* 'Records of the Grand Historian' during the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD) demonstrating not only the historical truth of the existence of the Shang Dynasty, but also greatly involved a re-appreciation of the Chinese historical tradition.

Writing then is crucial to Chinese culture, government and administration, and remained that way throughout China's pre-modern history. In the following dynasty, the Zhou (1056 – 221 BC), writing extended to other functions, to songs, ritual, poetry, history, political discourse, philosophy, and it is against this background that the centrality of writing in relation to the various dialects becomes transparent. Those who could write, and write well, had a special position in Chinese culture and that situation remained unchanged until the 20th century and the beginnings of modern China.

The story of the Zhou dynasty is too complex to report here, but it is important for understanding dialectal divergence since the Zhou was a feudal system, based on allotment of lands to vassals and other lords, while keeping the Zhou court as the ritual centre. However, in this setting keeping the peace was impossible, resulting in centuries of strife and warfare, until China's unification under the prince of Qin, known as Qin Shi-Huangdi '[Qin First-Emperor] the First Emperor of Qin'. Two things in our story are important. First, under the guidance of his first minister, advisor and strategist Li Si a new unified script was created in all conquered areas, taking away existing discrepancies which had developed over the centuries in the various states, and, secondly, in 213 BC all books not belonging to the Li Si supported legalist school of thought were burned, and reportedly four hundred-and-sixty scholars, people who could propagate different ideas, were buried alive, and among them many Confucian scholars.¹¹ For some, this hastened the fall of the dynasty. One cannot just take the intellectual core of one's reign away without consequences, is the argument. The Qin dynasty indeed was short lived, and after its fall reconstructions of the burned books were made or old copies found, and this way the Confucian

¹⁰ The existence of oracle bones was first discovered in 1899 by a Qing scholar, familiar with Chinese characters on bronze vessels, who suffered from malaria and used ground Chinese dragon-bones as medicine. It did not help him much, he died in 1900, but initiated a hunt for dragon-bones. For more details see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oracle_bone

¹¹ The story is reported in the *Shiji* 'Records of the Grand Historian'. Li Si is described in a special chapter in the 'Records'.

tradition, which tried to restore the harmony of the early Zhou dynasty through focus on ethics, humanity and ritual, was kept intact, and made central to the reign of the Han and all following dynasties.

3. Development of Chinese dialects

We have seen the establishment of Chinese culture in the Central Plain in northern China, and seen the establishment of central authority and the separation of various states denying that authority. Now, when China is unified, Qin Shi-Huangdi let his eyes rest on the rice fields in the south of China, and sent his military southward. As early as 214 BC, a military and administrative centre, Panyu, was established in what is now the old centre of the city of Guangzhou (Canton). The Guangzhou area however was not empty, and controlled by local tribes, Thai tribes among these, and it is inter-marriages and language contact that is held responsible for the relative distance of Yue or Cantonese from the other dialects in China.¹² Differences that are, apart from a Tang style pronunciation with eight or nine tones, strong also in vocabulary and grammar (Gan 2005: 31-33).¹³

Coming to the South was not an easy matter. There were tribes who resisted the intrusion, and the area housed snakes, tigers and crocodiles. It was also infested with malaria. It was not an easy road. The military and later migrants followed existing trade routes along the valleys of the Gan (Jiangxi province) and Xiang (Hunan province) rivers, which run north to south through the southern mountain ranges or mountain belt called the Ling or Nan Mountains, which cross from west to east mainly and form a divide between the north and the south (Lingnan).¹⁴ Both rivers are tributaries of the Yangzi. The Gan river originates in the mountains around Guangzhou, and flows into Poyang Lake.¹⁵ The Xiang comes from what is now the Zhuang Autonomous Region (Guangxi) and ends in Dongting lake.¹⁶ These trade routes, which became more and more important over

¹² The story of the development history of the Chinese dialects is mainly based on the fundamental study *China's March toward the Tropics*, by the Yale scholar Harold Wiens, 1954, and R.A.D Forest, *The Chinese Language*, 1965. Recent data are from Norman 1988, Yuan Jiahua 1989 (Chin.), Ge Jianxiong et al. 1993 (Chin.), and Gan Yu'en 2005 (Chin.). The latter provide detailed maps for each of the dialect areas.

¹³ In modern times many words come from English, f.i. *bo* for 'ball'. Also see the contribution by You Rujie, this volume.

¹⁴ "Nan Mountains." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.

¹⁵ "Gan River." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.

¹⁶ "Xiang River." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.

time with increase of the population, also became main migration routes under the Tang dynasty. Part of the population in Guangzhou, those who settled there before the recent urbanization movement, trace their origin to the Tang Dynasty and still identify themselves as *Tangren* ‘people from the Tang’ (cf. Gan 2005: 31-33).¹⁷

The movement to the south filled up the river valleys, and the rich soil provided the basis for an extensive rice culture as well as for the production of a variety of fruits.¹⁸ The two river valley dialects carry the name of the respective rivers, Gan and Xiang, and show characteristics from their Tang Dynasty founding time. They maintained voiced stops, fricatives, and affricates, have more tones and a richer consonant inventory for syllable endings than found in the Guanhua (Mandarin) dialects. The tonal category missing in the North is syllables with very short tones, ending in implosive stops –m, –p, –t, and –k. These tones are called *rusheng* ‘entering tones’ in Chinese phonology (cf. Gan 2005: 22-27).

For the Xiang dialects three subgroups are distinguished, the Chángyì sub-group including 32 cities and counties, which includes the capital Changsha; the Lóushào sub-group incorporating 21 cities and counties, and the Jíxù subgroup which groups 8 cities and counties.¹⁹ After the 1930s, with the opening of railway connections, traditional communication lines were broken and the northern Xiang valley developed features of the Mandarin dialects. Northern Xiang is now generally called New Xiang, preferring the term Old Xiang for the dialects in the southern part of Hunan province (cf. Gan 2005: 22-24).

The Gan area was first settled by troops sent by the Qin emperor to occupy the land of the Nanyue ‘Southern Yue tribes’. After the fall of the Han dynasty (220 AD) migrants from the north moved into the area and changed the dialect considerably during the four hundred years of non-centralised reign before the founding of the Tang dynasty (618 AD). During that reign the region was relatively stable apart from a grand turmoil during the 755-763 AD rebellion, which possibly caused as much death and

¹⁷ Confirmed via a questionnaire survey among students in a Chinese High School in Guangzhou in 2006.

¹⁸ The first population movements occurred during the period of “disorder of the eight kingdoms” which occurred as a result of the attacks and invasions from the west by the Xiongnu (Huns), resulting in a succession of short lived kingdoms. The second large migration occurred during invasions from the west and the north during the Sui and Tang dynasties, and became a strong force for southward migration of the Han people during the Jurchen occupation of northern China in the 12th century (Ge et al. 1993).

¹⁹ A listing of all cities and counties is available at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Xiang_Chinese#Dialects

destruction as the Mongol invasion, the Qing overthrow of the Ming, and the Taiping rebellion. After the fall of the Tang dynasty (10th century AD) new migrations were followed by extensions to neighbouring provinces, to eastern Hunan, eastern Hubei, southern Anhui and northwest Fujian, the area currently comprising the Gan dialect (cf. Gan 2005: 25-27).

The Yangzi river cultures, already in an early era, were in contact with the culture of the Central Plain, as we have seen. Suzhou was an important urban centre in the fifth century BC, and was part of what was known as the state of Wu. That state occupied the rich alluvial plain of the Yangzi estuary, an area of waterways, rivers, lakes and ponds, Tai Lake the most famous among these. The Wu dialects had extensive contacts with the Central Plain to the extent of invading it, but were pushed back to defend themselves as told in the story of the Three Kingdoms at the end of the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD), a period popularized in the 14th century novel ‘The Romans of the Three Kingdoms’.²⁰ By extending the territory southward, wars with local tribes, among these the Nanyue, and Miao-Yao, a dialect chain of Wu dialects was created (figure 1).²¹

Wu dialects stand out as special having maintained the three-way contrast of Middle Chinese aspirated and voiced stops /p p^h b/ and affricates /tʃ tʃ^h dʒ/ and other articulatory peculiarities, which make them sound like a foreign language to the uninitiated listener. Six groups are distinguished. The largest is the Taihu (Lake Tai) group to which Suzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Ningbo belong. The others are Taizhou (mutual intelligibility with the Taihu dialect), Oujiang/Dong’Ou (a more distant dialect as in Wenzhou in Zhejiang), Wuzhou, Chuqu, and Xuanzhou dialects (see figure 1) (cf. Gan 2005: 19-21).

The southward migration through the Gan valley left the area to the east of the valley untouched. This picture started to change in the sixth century when migrants turned eastward penetrating the mountainous areas of Fujian province. Movement along the coast by boats, a different trade route, filled up the area from the seaside. This double situation can be recognized when the map for *daozi* 稻子 ‘rice’, which comes with the introduction of the Linguistic Atlas of Chinese Dialects (this vol.), is consulted. In the more inland area of Fujian province, the etymon “*zhòu* 糲” is used for rice, whereas along the coast the shared etymon is “*hé* 禾”, suggesting different origins for these two groups as claimed by Forrest.²²

²⁰ The story is retold in the 2009 movie *Red Cliff*, based on the 208/209 Battle of Red Cliff, directed by the Hong Kong film director John Woo.

²¹ We can take this chain as representative for the other southern dialect chains mentioned. All show the results of a move southward and the sequential build-up of speech communities.

²² The character “*hé* 禾”, is a pictogram of a stalk of grain with ear, and is in

The dialects of Fujian are grouped as Min (name of local tribes and main river) and divided into five major groups, which from north to south and from east to west are: Mindong (Eastern-Min along the coast with the city of Fuzhou), Minbei (Northern Min, more inland), Pu-Xian (Putian and Xianyou counties, the most Western part of Fujian), Minnan (Southern Min, with the coastal cities and trading centres of Quanzhou and Xiamen). Min speaking communities are found further South along the coast (Chao-Shan), in Taiwan, and other south-east Asian countries including Malaysia and Singapore (cf. Gan 2005: 34-36).²³

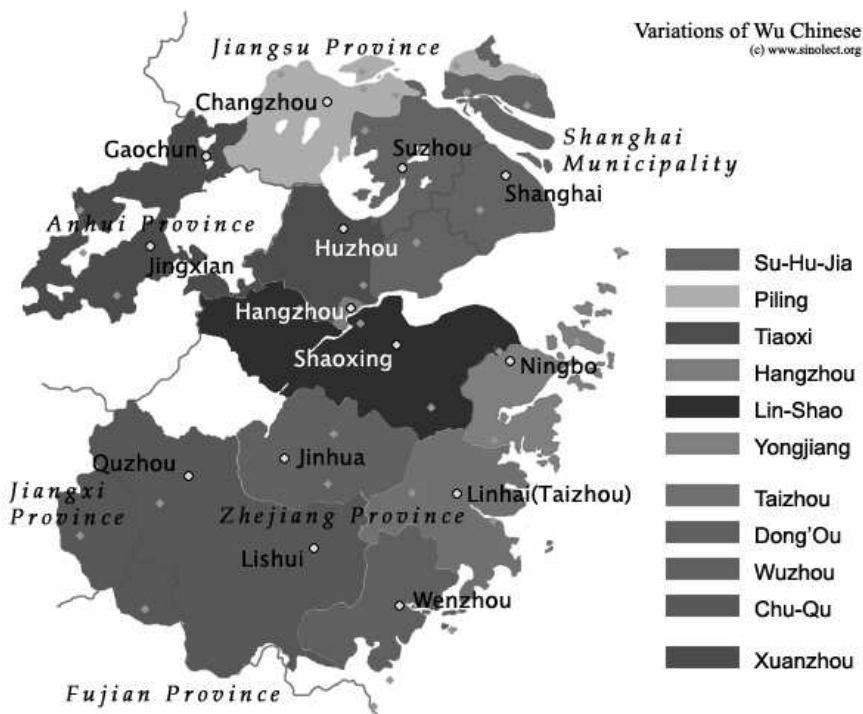


Fig. 1: Dialect chain of Wu dialects²⁴

Mandarin kept in the word 禾苗 *hémiao* 'seedling, or young crop'.

²³ For the distribution of Min in SE Asia and elsewhere see the Ethnologue website: www.ethnologue.com.

²⁴ From the article Wu Chinese in Wikipedia. The article also gives details about the number of speakers of each dialect subgroup.

The Hakka ‘Guests’ are a group of people who moved relatively late to southern China starting in the fourth and ninth centuries from Henan and Shanxi in the Yellow River valley. Natural disasters and warfare made them move south, from where they migrated further south at the end of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) into Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangdong, and Guangxi provinces, where they occupied the higher level and less fertile grounds. Their movement south was not an easy one. They had to fight themselves into already occupied areas as their name reflects. The language varieties they speak are relatively close to Mandarin, but also show the record of their southern migration, when their dialects acquired features from the Min dialect, from Yue (Cantonese), and the Gan dialect (Gan 2005: 28-30).²⁵

4. The Mandarin dialects

The history of the south-eastern dialects is fascinating and can be understood as support for speech community theory. Over time separate dialects developed in more or less isolated areas in the south of China, through a process of mutual adjustment and fine-tuning of pronunciation, and ways of expression. This way separate dialects developed in agreement with local circumstances (cf. De Swaan 2002; this vol.; Xu Daming, this vol.). Fujian province is often quoted as an example of extensive dialect differentiation. Reportedly each valley has its own dialect, which the people at the other side of the hill cannot understand. This situation would be in agreement with speech community theory when supplemented with geographical circumstances, and migration patterns.

Differentiation in the South of China stands in contrast to relative uniformity in the North (fig.2), and the question that immediately follows is: “Why are the Mandarin dialects so different and why are those dialects the majority group”? The Mandarin dialects have a relatively simple syllable structure, and don’t have the implosive stop endings of the *rusheng*, nor do they have voiced initial consonants. The most likely sociolinguistic explanations are ‘language contact’ and ‘imperfect learning’ (van Bree, this vol.), and ‘levelling’ as described by Trudgill (1974) for dialect mixing in an urban environment.²⁶ Population movement from the West, North, and South before, during and after the Tang dynasty can be cited in support of

²⁵ One Hakka group in Taoyuan, Taiwan, reportedly switched to the Min dialect on their journey south, while maintaining their cultural identity as Hakka (Chen 2004).

²⁶ The full theory should be koineization, but this is not the place to expound this line of thinking further. When applied to the Chinese countryside, we are looking at the formation of vernacular languages in rural speech communities (cf. De Swaan, 2002; this vol.)

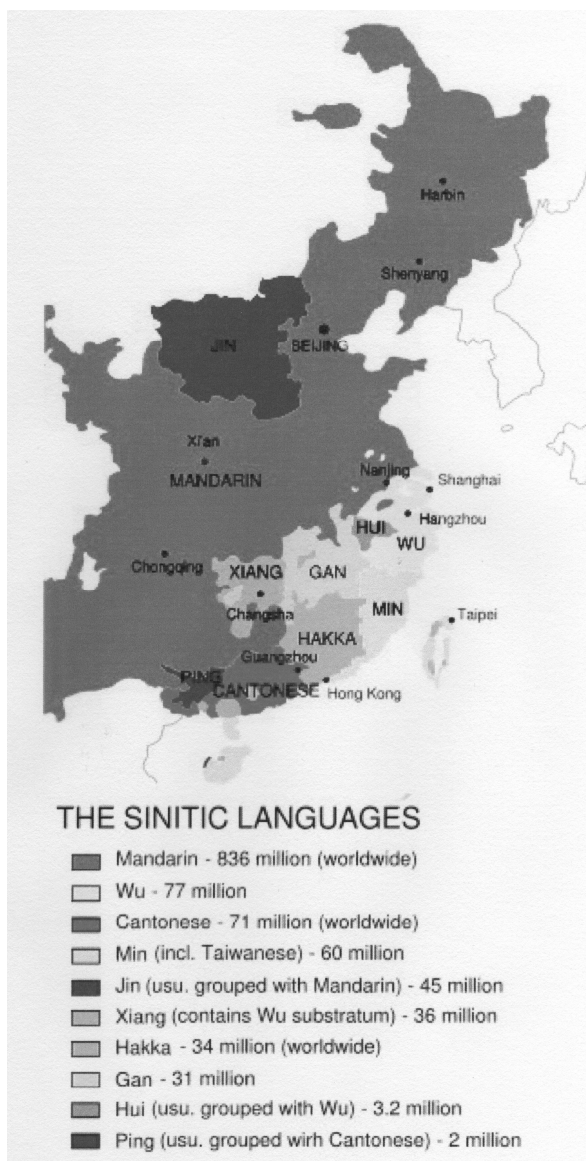


Fig. 2: Dialect atlas of China²⁷

²⁷ Map_of_sinitic_languages-en.svg from Wikimedia Commons.

this hypothesis. These movements created an environment in which, in the course of several centuries, existing differences were 'levelled-out', whereas the Central Plain in the North and existing communication channels were environmental conditions facilitating the spread of changes that occurred in central places.²⁸

The major movement of people came from the west and the northeast, whereas the Yangzi river formed the southern barrier stopping the spread of innovations until most recent times. Mongols, the founders of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), came from the west, bringing with them a non-tonal Altaic language, a language family stretching from present inner-Mongolia, through Siberia to Turkey; the Jurchen²⁹, founders of the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) as well as of the last dynasty, the Qing (1644-1911), came from the north-east (Manchuria). They too were speakers of Altaic languages, speaking varieties of the Tungusic branch.³⁰ One result of 'levelling' was a form of 'simplification', which often is the result of language contact and imperfect learning.³¹ So in the North the tonal system was simplified, the *rusheng* tones were lost, and the segmental phonology was simplified by limiting consonant oppositions to aspirated and non-aspirated sounds.

The second question, why are the Mandarin dialects the majority group, has to do with migration from the cultural and political centre to other areas, which were opened for migrants or became depopulated through warfare. This way northern speech spread to other parts of China where it got further modified. Intense migration took place in particular in China's south-west, the north-west, and the north-east (see fig. 3).

The north-east was the heart land of the Manchu, which was a forbidden area for non-Manchu residents. Due to a variety of reasons, the area lost its Manchu-only character and was opened to migration around the middle of the nineteenth century. The southern part of Manchuria, centred around the administrative city of Fengtian (current Shenyang) already was strongly sinified at the time. Many Hanren 'Chinese' were forcibly conscripted into a Chinese banner army, or attracted to the area by new opportunities, making it a different speech community. When migration to the Manchu homeland started, migrants from in majority Shandong province moved inland and

²⁸ This does not mean that the process is completely understood or can be modelled step by step, but we consider this is a workable hypothesis for further research. Cf. Hashimoto 1986; Li 1995; Wadley 1996.

²⁹ They changed their name to Manchu shortly before the take-over of the Ming Dynasty. According to some, as device to unite the various 'river' tribes (Norman 2003).

³⁰ Cf. Norman 2003.

³¹ For detailed examples and simplification as a result of language contact in Shanghai, see the contribution by Qian Nairong, this volume.

started agriculture, an occupation which was not part of the Manchu tradition (Rhoads 2000).³² The dialect situation in Manchuria as a result is rather diverse, but a supra-regional north-western Mandarin is recognised, which in recent years has become a well-known variety through TV broadcasts of comic sketches including songs (also see fig. 3).³³

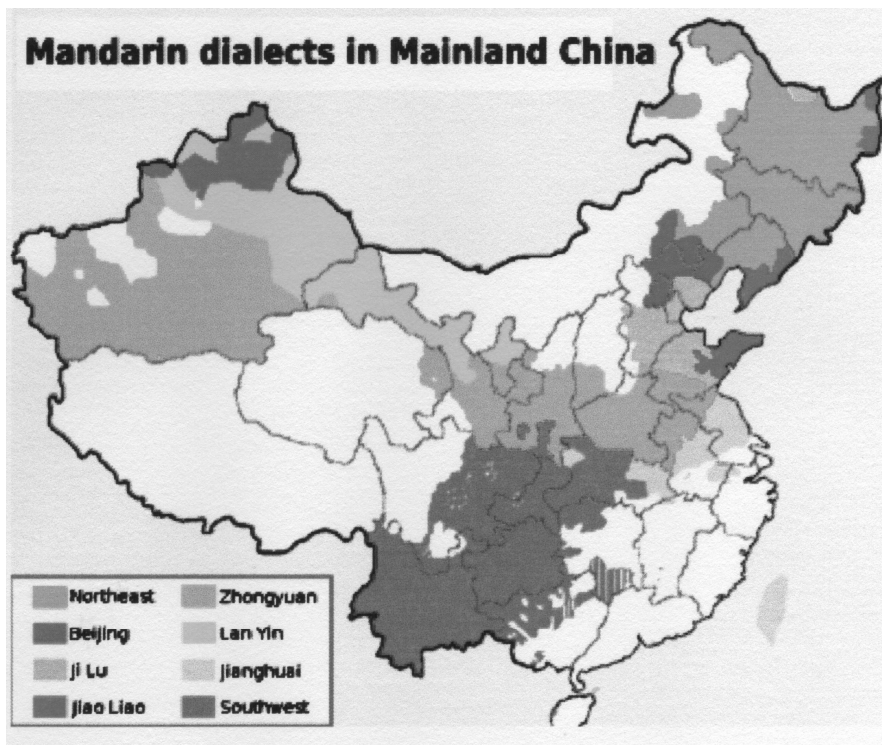


Fig 3. The eight main dialect areas of Mandarin in Mainland China.³⁴

Migration around the lower reaches of the Yangzi river created another dialect group. It is named Jiang-Huai (after the drainage basins of the Chang-Jiang ‘[long-river] Yangzi’ and Huai river). This variety spread to

³² All migration was under control of the Manchu landowners and the Manchu local leadership (Rhoads 2000).

³³ See for instance the *Errenzhuan* article in Wikipedia. For life examples see *Errenzhuan* on youtube.com.

³⁴ File from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Madarin_in_Chinese_Mainland

Nanjing and other areas south of the Yangzi as part of the great disturbances surrounding the Taiping rebellion (1850-1864). We refer to the contribution by Richard VanNess Simmons (this vol.) for a research report from this area.

Huiyu in the southern part of Anhui, shows the complexities that need to be dealt with when grouping Chinese dialects. Huiyu is considered by many a transitional dialect and shares features with neighbouring Gan and Wu dialects (Gan 2005: 39-40).³⁵

Migration also is responsible for the spread of *Jinyu* 'Jin dialect', a variety which has its centre in the north-west part of Shanxi province, and spread to surrounding parts of neighbouring provinces and Inner-Mongolia. The dialect centre is Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province. The dialect maintained the short tones of the *rusheng* which were lost in the other Mandarin areas (Gan 2005: 37-38). It reportedly has a low intelligibility for Mandarin speakers. The spread to Inner-Mongolia occurred during the Qing dynasty, when control over the Mongol border areas was re-established. Baotou (see Xu, this vol.), a hamlet until the Chinese presence, rapidly developed into a market town. It grew quickly after it was connected to Beijing by railway in 1923, and became a major trading centre for Mongolia and north-western China, whereas the link with Beijing and its harbour Tianjin opened international trade for its wool and furs and imports of locally needed foodstuff. After 1949 its role changed and it became a centre of steel production, which it still is.³⁶

5. The establishment of a standard language

China throughout most of its history had a written language, which started in the Shang dynasty and developed into a diversified standard language, Yayan, at the Zhou court as we have seen.³⁷ Given the nature of the Chinese script, which indicates rhymes as identical forms but does not detail the sounds used,³⁸ the dialect areas, until very recently, developed unhampered by the pronunciation rules of a standard language. In this section we will trace the process of establishing a national pronunciation, and follow the steps taken to impose a standard language on the various Chinese regions.

We will start with the focal point of culture and administration in North

³⁵ Hui dialect is one of the dialects listed in Fig. 2: Dialect atlas of China.

³⁶ Baotou." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopedia Britannica Online, and Xu, this vol. for further details.

³⁷ Also see the contribution by You Rujie, this volume.

³⁸ The reference here is to Bernhard Karlgren's *Grammata Serica Recensa*, 1957, in which the 'same form' series are neatly listed.

China, Beijing. Until the beginning of the 20th century Beijing was a city with a population that varied between seven hundred thousand and 1.2 million inhabitants.³⁹ During the Qing dynasty, Manchu military, concentrated in the inner-city, formed at least half of the population. Chinese residents populated the outer city. The language contact situation that created the Beijing dialect is not clear, but it surely was motivated by a variety of forces, demographic, cultural and educational.⁴⁰ After the fall of the empire, war lord activity created a flood of refugees toward the city and its population increased to two-million.⁴¹

After 1949 and especially after 1980 the city grew rapidly toward its present size of twenty-two million, of which 8 million or thirty-six percent is registered as non-permanent residents, not counting the floating population of migrant workers.⁴² The city therefore is a mixture of people speaking the Beijing dialect, those speaking a variety of other regional dialects and Mandarin dialects, and people speaking the standard language, Putonghua.

Beijing speech has a number of peculiarities in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, which make it local and make it stand-out from the other Mandarin varieties. The most striking difference with the standard language is ‘erization’, the almost perpetual presence of the –r sound at the end of syllables (also called ‘rhotacization’). Secondly, in fast speech initial consonants in non-stressed positions become less-specific, a process called ‘lenition’. For example, *bùzhīdào* ‘don’t know’ can sound like *bùrīdào*. Thirdly, the final –n, a not-strongly articulated consonant in Chinese, easily takes on the form of a nasalized sound. Add to this ‘slang type vocabulary’ and you have a speech style that clearly stands out, is often difficult to understand for outsiders, and therefore represents the social distinction ‘local’.⁴³

The language situation in other major cities is comparable. We will illustrate language use in these cities with a real time study of the development of the new Baotou speech community, and will provide ample information about the language situation and language use in southern dialect cities such as Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Sanya (Hainan

³⁹ Beijing (2010). Encyclopedia Britannica Online.

⁴⁰ Cf. Mantaro Hashimoto, 1986, and his claim of a Manchu-Chinese pidgin for Beijing in the early days, and Elliot, 2001. See also Li 1995. Rhoads (2000) makes clear that the Manchu could not trade and needed a substantial number of Chinese shopkeepers to provide goods in the inner-city.

⁴¹ Beijing (2010). Encyclopedia Britannica Online.

⁴² "Beijing's population exceeds 22 million". National Population and Family Planning Commission of China. 2 March 2010.

⁴³ See also Xu Daming's contribution this volume for the distinction.

island). In each case we see a difference between city dialects, regional dialects, village dialects, and what is called the standard language. So one question that need to concern us, is where does the Chinese spoken standard language come from, when was it established, and by who?

Endeavours to establish a 'spoken' standard started at the beginning of the Republic of China, after the fall of the Qing dynasty. The first discussions regarded the definition of the sounds of the standard language. Which language variety should represent the national language? Since, as we demonstrated, the southern dialects are less simplified than the northern speech area, there was, as a consequence, intense debate as to which pronunciation to choose as most representative for the Chinese language. That debate took place between representatives of the various Chinese provinces which had been called upon by the Republican government in 1913 to define a unified pronunciation, develop a notation system, and produce a pronunciation dictionary. And the committee did all that. However, the members of that committee did not agree as to which language variety could best represent Chinese. They defined a non-existing mixed language, *Lanqing Guanhua* 'Blue-green (not clear) Mandarin', which nobody spoke natively. After endeavours to implement this variety and noticing the complete failure of that enterprise, the language committee silently decided in 1924 to choose the language of the capital to represent Chinese and that way it became the basis for the pronunciation of *Guoyu* 'the national language'. It was a pragmatic choice based on demographic criteria, and that still is the situation today.⁴⁴

6. Old towns and new districts

China's new industrialisation attracted large groups of migrants to the cities and is continuing to do so. In some cases their number makes up 50 percent or more of the city population. The study by Xu Daming focuses on the language situation in a new industrial town, or better, in a new district of an existing town. His study, based on real time data with a twenty year interval, shows how nasalization features get constrained, and how social constraints work in shaping the new Baotou speech community. The theory presented in this contribution is fundamental for understanding the restructuring of urban life and speech styles in modern Chinese cities, and therefore the notions 'speech community' and 'restructuring' were used in the title of this volume.

Adjustment of language behaviour by people in the countryside, when it gets incorporated into metropolitan Shanghai, is presented in the

⁴⁴ See the contribution to this volume by dr. Li Yuming, the architect of China's current language policy.

contribution by Qian Nairong. His study too is based on real time data with a depth of twenty years, and shows how a variety of adjustments in vocabulary and pronunciation takes place in the speech of members of the newly incorporated district, driven by frequent interaction with modern life when workers from the area commute daily to central Shanghai. The new urban speech style is 'occupation' related, as predicted by Speech Community Theory, becomes part of the commuting generation's life style, and in a slow and not consciously noticed process creates a divide between the younger and the older generation of speakers of the regional dialect.

Shanghai itself is not a very old city. The development of the Shanghai dialect is an issue in itself and is addressed in all three of the Shanghai related studies in this volume, but particularly in the contribution by You Rujie. One of the questions he asked was the speed in which Shanghai dialect words are lost over time. His conclusion based on a real time comparison of a large vocabulary is that the Shanghai dialect maintains itself well in the modern world, losing some words in the modernization process but maintaining the core of its vocabulary.

You Rujie's study also addresses the issue of the relation between Shanghainese and standard Chinese and gives an overview of the various usage spheres in modern Shanghai. He also addresses the issue of the contribution of Shanghai vocabulary to standard Chinese and looks at various language use studies, based on questionnaire research and the matched guise approach. He also reviews the attitude of Shanghai students toward Shanghainese and concludes that local Shanghainese students still have a positive attitude toward Shanghainese but that usage among the younger generations experiences the impact of standard Chinese.

The generation shift in language use is also shown in the contribution by Xue Caide, who used questionnaire research to document language use of students and home community members. The comparison details the undeniable shift toward dominance of standard Chinese among the younger generation of Shanghai residents. The comparison is in apparent time and we must not take the results as proving that the shift is permanent. Real time studies are needed to bring out developments in various population segments, and students are not representative for the working population where different forces operate. The trend however is set by this remarkable study, which most likely also suggests developments taking place in other major cities.

Adjustment not only takes place between a dialect and the standard language, we can also imagine adjustment of a city dialect in relation to surrounding regional dialects. A situation which combines both influences is reported by Simmons VanNess in his study of the county seat of Jintan in southern Jiangsu, which historically is a Wu dialect area but underwent great changes after the Taiping rebellion and the influx of river dialect

(Jiang-Huai) Mandarin speakers, a situation reminiscent of what happened in Nanjing, the capital of the short lived Taiping kingdom. The VanNess study is exemplary of plotting the various local influences by creating a detailed map of the competing urban and countryside dialects.

Our next stop on the way South in the presentation of our papers is Guangzhou (Canton). Cantonese (Yueyu) is generally considered the strongest of the Chinese dialects, being supported both by its relatively distance from the Mandarin dialect area, as well as by support from neighbouring Hong Kong, where Cantonese is an official language, used in education and representative bodies. The author, van den Berg, did not use questionnaires. Realizing the potential shortcomings of self-report data obtained by questionnaire research, he relied on direct observation of language use. Such an approach by necessity is limited to public places, so the data are of high validity and representative of actual language use, but limited to observable speaker features such as role (salesperson/customer), speech style, gender, age, and social status.

The report compares language behaviour in two of the best known shopping areas in Guangzhou, the Beijing road area and two Tianhe district shopping malls. Language behaviour of the salespeople confirms the existence of a Cantonese speech community. Salespeople are the permanent members of the shopping areas and expressed this membership in their conversations. A comparison of language behaviour by customers and salespeople during business transactions brought out two complementary forces: customers adjust to the language repertoire of the salespeople (Yueyu and PTH), and, complementarily, the job related willingness by the salespeople to adjust to the choice(s) made by the customers. The result of these two processes is levels of Yueyu and PTH that are matching, even though the salespeople do not merely choose a matching variety, they use a language strategy that suits accommodation to customer needs. The language levels vary across stores, and allow the assignment of social class membership for customers. Proposed are four socio-economic levels: working class, upper working class, middle class, and upper middle class. We refer to the report for detailed argumentation and for support for Speech Community Theory expressed there.

The last contribution in our series of research papers studies the transient language situation in China, which results from the strong support given by governmental agencies to the acquisition and use of standard Chinese. The paper argues that a triglossic situation with supreme – high – and low languages creates a socio-cognitive burden for speakers of low languages, and that, as a consequence, Chinese society is in a process of realignment toward a less demanding diglossic setting, in which current high languages give way to the supreme language, standard Chinese. During this process of adjustment, the argument further goes, we are

observing various forms of transitional language shift, a step by step adjustment toward the supreme language.

The empirical data supporting these views come from Hainan island, and address adjustment of school-age children from the various local ethnic groups towards the modern language situation. Questionnaire survey results show that 'terminal language shift' (which will remain unchanged) in this sample occurs only in a minority of cases. Most young people show various forms of 'transient language shift'. The paper further analyses these differences and calculates a language shift index, which brings out the major differences in the sample. Domains of language use also are investigated and a comparison is made between the family domain and the public domain for those in 'transient language shift' and those who have undergone 'terminal shift'. The differences between the two groups are revealing. We refer to the paper for the details.

The Tsou et al. study sets a model for the whole of China as far as the younger generation is concerned, and enriches our understanding of the sociolinguistic environment considerably. We are looking forward to real-time studies detailing the fate of these youngsters after schooling has ended and they entered the work force. Speech Community Theory predicts that at such moments 'occupational' demands will take over and dictate speech styles, and it might very well be that a different language situation emerges. For the time being, however, the Tsou et al. study is the best prediction we have.

The final two chapters in the book bring in data from Europe. The dialect areas in that part of the world have disappeared almost completely under the influence of industrialization and propagation of national languages especially after the Second World War. What then has the European story to tell? The report on the Dutch language situation by Cor van Bree shows that in the Netherlands the standard language has taken over almost completely, and the dialects are reduced to regional accent varieties. It is this situation that seems the inevitable future for the Chinese dialects. The adjustment takes place in three steps we learn: 1. loss of function, 2. change in attitude, and 3. loss of structure, the result of which is a modernized form of the dialect. Simultaneously the standard language is coming down creating regional varieties, well known in Chinese sociolinguistics as 'difang Putonghua', localized standard Chinese.

We see these adjustments taking place in China now in all dialect areas. Loss of function is reported by You Rujie (this vol.) as is the impact of PTH vocabulary on the vocabulary of Shanghainese. Loss of function across generations as well as attitude change are reported by Xue Caide (this vol.), whereas Qian Nairong (this vol.) reports the impact of the city centre dialect on the dialect of the surrounding (incorporated) countryside. All clear examples of changes taking place and all pointing in the same direction: the