

Arrived Date
15.08.2020

Accepted Date
17.08.2020

Published Date
31.10.2020

Jinfeng Li

ABSTRACT

This paper makes a field survey in Guangzhou and Zhaoqing of Guangdong in China in 2019 to understand the intergenerational inheritance of the dialects of migrant population. It is found that: (1) The original dialect of the immigrants has not been well inherited, which is mainly due to the low value recognition of the parents. And this situation is more obvious in Guangzhou. (2) In the inherited families, many children's dialectal ability is not as good as their parents' dialect level. (3) Most of the children inherited their father's dialect. The dialect protection of migrant population is the focus of language protection in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Economic globalization makes people from different countries and regions communicate more and more frequently, so does China. With the deepening of reform and opening up, all kinds of exchanges among regions have reached the prosperity of space. As far as China's current situation is concerned, the main reason is that the labor force in underdeveloped areas flows to economically developed areas, and migrant workers are the main force of population flow. The flow of population will inevitably lead to the problem of contact and choice between different languages. For foreigners, there are often two kinds of language choices. One is to use the official language of Mandarin to meet the needs of universality, the other is to learn local dialects and integrate into the local circle.

However, there is a more noteworthy issue, that is, the language use of the children of the migrant population. Furthermore, are the dialects mastered by foreigners smoothly passed on to their children? This situation can be complex. According to experience, the decision-making power of dialect inheritance is often in the hands of parents, which is determined by parents' judgment of language and cultural values. According to the language contact theory (Thomson and Terrence, 1988; Thomson, 2001)^{[11][10]}, the long-term contact and integration between languages makes it possible for the weak parties to die out. As a result, some parents abandoned the original dialect in the family language planning, and the inheritance of the dialect in the family ended, some parents continued to inherit the dialect for some reason or need.

This paper takes the famous Cantonese dialect area in China as the research scope, selects Guangzhou and Zhaoqing as examples, and uses the field survey method to understand and compare the selection of migrant workers on the inheritance of the original dialect.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inheritance and Change of Language

Language inheritance means that people in a community collectively use one or more languages; language change means that people in this community no longer use one language but choose another language (Matiki, 1996)^[7]. There are many factors that cause language change, such as bilingual

society, language conversion between generations, population migration, economic and political factors. Many scholars have done relevant research. Many scholars have studied the intergenerational inheritance of the dialects of the floating population, and most of them take the protection of dialects as the starting point, but the inheritance results are not very ideal. Family inheritance is the most important way to inherit dialects from generation to generation, and school education is the most important way to learn Mandarin. As far as the influencing factors are concerned, language inheritance is related to education level, and it is more determined by mothers.

Family Language Planning

Family language planning reflects the language ideology of parents, to a greater extent, reflects the language attitude, ideology and parenting style of the whole society (King et al., 2008)^[6]. Family language planning, like language policy, consists of language ideology, language practice and language management (Spolsky, 2004)^[9]. The ideology of family language refers to what kind of value family members give to a certain language. Family language practice refers to the daily life communication among family members, including the long-term language use mode of mutual communication between family members, reflecting the social and cultural changes in family intergenerational communication.

Outside the family, there are four linguistic or nonverbal factors that coexist with family language planning: sociolinguistic, socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political. These factors are interrelated and interact with each other. Within the family, family language ideology, language practice and language management interact under the influence of parental background, family environment and economic factors. Social and family environment play key roles in the formation of parents' language ideology, and to a large extent determines parents' decision-making in language management (Curdt Christiansen, 2018)^[2]. But on the other hand, children's language initiative, that is, children's active choice of a language, also greatly affects the actual language use of the family.

Intergenerational Inheritance of Family Language

In families with several generations of the same family, grandparents help to take care of preschool children. Grandparents or grandparents are the most frequently contacted children before going to school. This phenomenon is very common in some ethnic groups. Chinese grandparents have a subtle influence on children's acquisition of Chinese (Curdt Christiansen, 2013)^[1]. Previous studies have shown that the first generation (born and raised in the home country) of immigrant families usually speak their mother tongue with the second generation even if they live in a foreign country. However, with the development of language change, the third generation will only speak the common language of the host country (Fishman, 1991)^[4].

Brief Review

At present, most of the relevant studies are about the language changes experienced by immigrant families when they immigrate to the United States and other English speaking countries. Will dialects experience similar language changes in China? This paper focuses on the intergenerational inheritance of the dialects of the immigrants, that is, whether the children of the immigrants can only speak Mandarin and forget the dialect? There is no quantitative conclusion on this study. Therefore, based on this, this paper takes the developed Guangdong dialect area in China as an example, selects Guangzhou City and Zhaoqing City as the comparison, the purpose is to understand the dialect inheritance of foreign population, in order to provide enlightenment for dialect protection.

DATA SOURCES

From July to August, 2019, we conducted a large number of field surveys on Cantonese dialects in Guangdong Province. Among them, in particular, we pay attention to the dialect living conditions of the immigrants in Guangzhou and Zhaoqing^①. Dialect has been understood, and the survey methods are interview and Wechat. Requirements: (1) The inheritance of dialect is only between one generation, that is, only a pair of parents are investigated. (2) At least one parent can use dialect. (3) The survey was conducted in Mandarin.

^①The research object is the families whose parents are from other places, who move to the local area due to work, marriage and other reasons, and intend to settle down in the local area.

Because of the great difference of population between the two cities, 195 and 95 samples were allocated according to the proportion of resident population in the two cities. The results showed that all the samples were effective and the effective rate was 100%. The investigators were students from a university in Guangzhou and Zhaoqing respectively.

The purpose of the survey is to understand the parents' attitude towards the inheritance of their original dialect, including the parents' recognition of the original dialect, the practical value of the original dialect, and the usage habits of the original dialect.

ANALYSIS ON THE INTERGENERATIONAL INHERITANCE OF THE DIALECTS OF THE FLOATING POPULATION

A Representative Sample

This paper chooses a representative sample to understand the family language planning problem. The basic information is as follows: the father (Z) of the investigated family is 35 years old. His native place is Hukou County, Jiangxi Province. His dialect is Hukou dialect. The common language is Mandarin. He can use English as the second language. His household registration and working place are Guangzhou. Mother (L), 31 years old, native place is Xingguo County, Jiangxi Province. Her dialect is Xingguo dialect. The common language and the second language is Mandarin and English respectively. They have a 6-year-old daughter who can speak Mandarin and speak very little Hukou dialect. And a 1-year-old son.

Question 1: Can your child use Hukou dialect for daily communication?

Z: Only a few simple sentences, but I can understand most of them. I spent some time in my hometown and learned from my grandparents.

Question 2: Do you intend to let her learn to use Hukou dialect? Or Xingguo dialect.

Z: No. In our family language planning, we are ready to give up on letting children learn Hukou dialect. Mastering Mandarin is the premise. I plan to invest more energy and money to train children to learn English. It's the same plan for the youngest son. We don't learn Xingguo dialect. We seldom learn mother's dialect.

Question 3: Why?

Z: We think that if you live in a foreign country, your own dialect is useless. Children can communicate in Mandarin and learn an important foreign language, which will be helpful for their future development. What's more, our small dialect is unheard of by others, and there is no sense of pride in speaking it.

The above survey of Z reflects the basic aspects of the family language planning. That is, parents think their dialects have no use value for their children's future, and their social identity is low, so they choose to give up inheritance.

Inheritance of Dialects

According to statistics, among the respondents in Guangzhou, there are 106 families whose dialects have not been passed on to the next generation, that is to say, the dialects of their parents have disappeared in this family. The remaining 89 families have passed on. In 37 families, their children's dialect level is obviously lower than that of their parents, and some even have the simplest communication. In the families with intergenerational inheritance, children only inherit the dialect of their parents, and 81 dialects come from their parents^①.

Among the respondents in Zhaoqing City, 31 families have no intergenerational inheritance of dialects. Among the remaining 64 families, 22 families have children whose dialect level is not comparable to their parents. Similarly, the proportion of families only inheriting the father's dialect is very high, reaching 95.31%. We organize the following data as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Basic Situation of Dialect Intergenerational Inheritance of the Investigated Families

	Guangzhou	Zhaoqing
--	------------------	-----------------

^① There are a few families whose parents have the same dialect, all of them are the father side.

Not inherited	54.38%	32.63%
Father's side	91.01%	Father's side 95.31%
Inherited	Dialect level is worse than parents 41.51%	Dialect level is worse than parents 34.38%

Table 1 shows that the results of intergenerational inheritance of the dialects of immigrants in Guangdong dialect areas are not ideal, and the situation is even worse in economically developed areas. One thing in common is that influenced by Chinese traditional culture, children basically inherit their father's dialect.

Family Language Planning of Parents

Parents' language attitude or language identity is the decisive factor for the continuation of the original dialect. Language identity is generally divided into value identity, emotional identity and social identity (Dailey-o'cain and Liebscher, 2011)^[3]. Value identity refers to whether dialects have a real effect on their children's future. If not, they should consider giving up the inheritance of dialects. For example, parents of ethnic minorities decide not to speak their children's mother tongue, not because they don't like their own language, but because they want their children to have a better future (Kaufmann, 2006)^[5]. It is a fact that most of the minority groups living in modern society will change their languages to those of powerful ethnic groups, although it does not sound so pleasant (Paulston, 1994)^[8]. Emotional identity refers to the deep feelings of dialect, very dependent, and beyond the value of practical use. Therefore, we choose to continue to inherit, but we still face the risk of losing it in the third generation. Social identity refers to the recognition that the use of the dialect has social status and is a manifestation of face. It is generally well-known dialects, such as Cantonese.

Parents make family language planning according to their language attitude. We focus on the reasons for giving up the inheritance of dialects. We think from the perspective of three language attitudes, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons for Parents to Give Up the Inheritance of Dialect

	Guangzhou	Zhaoqing
Value identification	83.19%	70.97%
Emotional identity	35.85%	38.71%
Social identity	25.47	16.23%
Other	3.77%	6.45%

In Table 2, respondents may choose multiple options at the same time. Among the 106 foreign families who gave up the inheritance of dialects in Guangzhou, 83.19% of them chose "Value identity". Correspondingly, 70.97% of 31 families in Zhaoqing chose this project. It is much higher than other options, which indicates that most parents give up the inheritance of dialect because they think that dialect is useless and will not help their children's future growth. From the above two samples, it can be seen that parents plan to learn English and other languages on the basis of maintaining that their children can use Mandarin. At the same time, some families give up inheritance because they don't like dialects and have no social status.

CONCLUSION

This paper focuses on the intergenerational inheritance of foreign population in big dialect areas, and makes a comparative analysis of Guangzhou and Zhaoqing City in China. The results show that the result of the intergenerational inheritance of the dialect of foreign population is not ideal. More than half and one-third of the dialects in the two cities did not pass on from generation to generation respectively. The situation in Guangzhou is relatively poor, which is mainly due to the low value identification of parents, followed by emotional identity and social identity. In the family language planning of parents, it is the choice of most families to require their children to master a second language, such as English, on the premise of mastering Mandarin.

In the families where dialects have been inherited, more than 90% of the children's dialects are inherited from their parents in both cities, which reflects the traditional Chinese culture. In addition, it is not satisfactory that more than one-third of the children whose dialects have been inherited from the two cities have lower dialect level than their parents.

The above survey results show that the situation of dialect inheritance of the migrant population is worrying, the foreign dialect is losing, and the dialect protection of the migrant population needs to be paid attention to.

Acknowledgement

This paper is funded by 2019 Young Innovative Talents Project of Guangdong Ordinary Colleges and Universities: "The intergenerational inheritance of dialect of foreign population: Based on the survey of Guangzhou and Zhaoqing" (2019WQNCX124)".

REFERENCES

- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2013). Implicit Learning and Imperceptible Influence: Syncretic Literacy of Multilingual Chinese Children. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 13(3), 348-370.
- Curdt-Christiansen, X. L. (2018). *Family Language Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dailey-O'Cain, J., Liebscher, G. (2011). Language Attitudes, Migrant Identities and Space. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 212, 91-133.
- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundation of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Clevedon (England) & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters.
- Kaufmann, G. (2006). *Language Maintenance and Reversing Language Shift*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- King, K. A., Folge, L., Logan-Terry A. (2008). Family Language Policy. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 2(5), 907-922.
- Matiki, A. J. I. (1996). Language Shift and Maintenance: Social Determinants of Linguistic Change among the Lomwe People. *Journal of Humanities*, 10(11), 1-25.
- Paulston, C. B. (1994). *Linguistic Minorities in Multilingual Settings: Implications for Language Policies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Spolsky, B. (2004). *Language Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thomason, G. (2001). *Language Contact: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Thomason, G., Terrence, K. (1988). *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*. Berkeley: University of California Press.