

The Language Situation in China
Volume 3

Language Policies and Practices in China

Edited by
Li Wei (李巍)

Volume 3

The Language Situation in China

Volume 3. 2009–2010

Editor-in-Chief: Li Yuming (李宇明)

Associate Editors: Guo Xi (郭熙), Zhou Hongbo (周洪波),
Zhou Qingsheng (周庆生)

English Editor: Li Wei (李崑)

Editorial Assistants: Xu Xiaoying (许小颖),
Dai Wenying (戴文颖)

Translation Advisors: Zhao Shouhui (赵守辉),
Yao Xiaoping (姚小平), Rudolf Salzlechner (师鲁道)

DE GRUYTER
MOUTON

The Commercial Press

ISBN 978-1-5015-1110-3

e-ISBN (PDF) 978-1-5015-0314-6

e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-1-5015-0298-9

ISSN 2195-9838

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2015 Walter de Gruyter, Inc., Boston/Berlin and the Commercial Press, Beijing, China

Typesetting: RoyalStandard, Hong Kong

Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

☺ Printed on acid-free paper

Printed in Germany

www.degruyter.com

Li Yuming (李宇明)

Language issues in China's urbanization process in the context of globalization

Foreword to *The Language Situation in China: Vol. 3*

Language is one of the basic components of human society. It gives impetus to the spiritual and material civilizations and bears the results of social development, which in turn exercises influence on language change and gives rise to various problems of language. Language researchers, social administrators, and other persons interested in the relationship between language and society, being capable of comprehending a society through its language, should pay attention to the power of major social change through language in order to solve the problems of the latter and possible consequent social problems by means of scientific planning so that a healthy development of the society is guaranteed.

In contemporary China, urbanization ranks among the most prominent social changes. The urbanization rate is 48% and is expected to reach 50%, roughly parallel to the estimated 50% of the world level. This change is swift when compared with the early years of New China, which was stuck on very low rates: 11.2% in 1950 and 17.92% in 1978, with a yearly increase of approximately 0.23%. Since the 1980s, rapid advances were witnessed through the adoption of the reform and opening-up policy: 19.4% (1980), 30.42% (1998), 45.68% (2008), and 47% (2009), with an annual growth rate of over 1.3%.

The Central Economic Conference held at the end of 2009 commanded a further coordination of development between cities and towns and the relaxation of restrictions on household registers in small and medium-sized cities as well as in towns. A system of residence permits on a national scale is being considered by some departments for the convenience of gradually moving the agricultural population into towns. It is predicted that the urbanization in China will develop at full speed and exceed 70% prior to 2050, closer to that of developed countries, which started this process much earlier. Apart from its general features, urbanization in China has been happening against the background of the world's economic integration, the rapid utilization of the Internet, and China's going global; all are bound to exercise some influence on this process.

Urbanization transforms farmers into city dwellers or rural migrant workers, and villages into cities and towns; it makes big cities and city amalgamations. Against the background of globalization, it further facilitates the rural and urban

flows of population, of information and economic benefits, both at home and abroad. This in turn will bring about profound changes in the Chinese society and have a significant impact on its language life. Therefore, measures corresponding to what happened in the process of urbanization seem necessary in language planning.

To begin with, language training and instruction should be reinforced in cities. There is a big difference in language life between farmers and townspeople. When farmers become townspeople, or new townspeople, the change lies not solely in their sociocultural identity, but also in their language life. They have to learn and adapt to the principal language of the towns and/or cities they live in, learn new vocabulary, update the mode of information access, and change their oral communicative skills. Such adaptations often require special guidance and should be placed in the overall planning of urban construction. A great proportion of these new townsfolk are middle-aged or old, and slow to adapt to a new language environment. They may have a deteriorating language ability and therefore special attention concerning language use should be given to them.

Urbanization also attracts hundreds of millions of job seeking villagers into towns. These villagers work as workers and live an urban life, but are treated as a special group of farmers. Dignified work and life in towns and cities requires them to be an integral part of urban life and development and therefore it is indispensable that they receive language training and guidance. Compared with the townspeople, these migrant laborers display several new characteristics in language: (1) Their demand is urgent. The townspeople have to adapt to their new cities or towns; they grow with their towns and gradually get accustomed to the urbanizing process. The migrant laborers far away from their home villages, however, find themselves on an isolated island in cities because of a break from their old language life styles. Therefore, the pressing need of bridging two modes of life should be met through timely training in language. (2) The migrant workers have a wider range of urban language to learn and need a deeper understanding of it in order to survive in the cities, including the language for work, for daily life, for their rights and interests, and for efficient and effective communication with the communities around them. (3) They have to consider the education of their children, no matter whether they bring them along or leave them behind at home. And this will present the language professional with a number of new challenges that require in-depth investigation.

Secondly, urban language planning should be emphasized. A scientific urban construction scheme guarantees the process of urbanization and language planning as an integral component. In the present situation, the following aspects should be taken into account in the ensuing language policy: (1) the

principal language(s) of urban life, including the one(s) adopted by governments in delivering information and conducting official business, the one(s) of public media for broadcasting, and the one(s) used in the public service; (2) language instruction for both old and new city dwellers, including the forms and channels of language training and directions for the new inhabitants and migrant workers, the ways to provide directions of new language life for the old dwellers, e.g. how to adapt to the modern global language life of information, and how to treat the new inhabitants and migrant workers as far as language and the concept of language are concerned; (3) language service for special communities, including those who do not understand Putonghua, those who are mentally and/or physically handicapped, and particularly foreigners from different parts of the world, who come to China for different purposes, with different beliefs and varying language life demands; and (4) cultural features, a key issue in urban planning, reflecting the outlook of the local culture in urban construction on the basis of the local language or vernacular and various customs, folklore, legends, arts, etc., reflecting the styles of architecture of museums, centers, theaters, network stations and other cultural facilities, including the names of places, streets, and buildings. It is an important measure in urban planning to give full consideration to language and its cultural features in order to be different and provide rich local flavors.

Due to the large rural population flow into cities, the eastward population flow from China's west, and many foreigners coming to China, there is an increase of language problems in these areas, and this should be fully considered in devising an urban language policy. Statistics revealed that in the present circumstances of population migration, more effort should be made to promote Putonghua in cities since this common standard language was spoken less well in the rural areas than in the cities and the same disparity was found between China's west and east. Another factor should never be overlooked in planning, i.e. the minority national languages. The minority ethnic groups in China are mainly found in the west. With their eastward migration, especially into cities, their national languages should be added to the service list. A scientific treatment should also be given to the relationship of Chinese with the minority languages, and social workers understanding these languages should be trained with this purpose in mind. In addition, a foreign language service should be available in community administration as well: public signs of urban activities should be translated if necessary, and both channels and sites of information and entertainment should be arranged for foreign staff.

Thirdly, new strategies are called for in Putonghua promotion. It is foreseeable that Putonghua will spread to every corner of the country faster than expected because: (1) it has shown a trend of rapid expansion with the astonish-

ingly quick development of vehicular traffic, telecommunications, and mass media, the popularization of education, and the great progress of science, technology and culture; (2) Putonghua is widely appreciated, a case in point being the expectation of the residents in both minority and southern dialect areas and of migrant workers that their children learn it well. Furthermore, the world-wide wave of enthusiasm for learning Chinese has effectively improved its reputation at home; and (3) it is further boosted by the prevalent use of the Internet, mobile phones and other new media where Pinyin is the preferred input method. From this basis emerges the speeding-up of urbanization, which serves as the prime mover of language unification, targeting a unified market and industrialization. The general direction of urban languages in China is shown to be dominated by Putonghua, which is and will be learned by the new townspeople, the migrant workers from the countryside, also by a considerable proportion of old citizens who do not understand it, and by foreigners coming to China.

Putonghua promotion is witnessing a historic turning point of qualitative significance. This means that it is time corresponding strategic adjustments are made. Firstly, in cities as well as in east China where the promotion of Putonghua has been more successful, the level of achievement has to be further raised, language services should be made more widely available, and the relationship between languages and dialects must be harmonized. Particular attention should be given to speakers' feelings for their dialects, for otherwise they might be transformed into a social problem hindering Putonghua popularization. Secondly, the focus of the national effort should be turned to the countryside, the western areas, and the minority ethnic regions. Thirdly, the application of Putonghua in such important fields as official duties, education, science and technology, mass media, and public service should be emphasized; particular importance should be placed on the Putonghua teaching in compulsory education because the dream of language unification cannot be realized until students have, from the start, a mastery of Putonghua, which improves the quality of citizens' lives. Lastly, better conditions should be created for foreigners coming to China to learn Putonghua, and that language education services of different degrees are offered in various ways, for example, by using language partners, intensive programs, preparatory courses, and sinological education, etc.

Fourthly, efforts ought to be made to maintain the present linguistic atlas. With the rapid changes in the maps of towns and villages, China's linguistic atlas is bound to change greatly very soon. While this rewriting has its active social meaning, it might also result in the shrinking or even disappearance of some minority ethnic languages and Chinese dialects. The fundamental role language plays is communication. However, language does not merely serve as a tool of communication, it is also a resource, for it embodies culture imbued

with feelings. The reduction and extinction of some languages or dialects involve the loss of Chinese linguistic and cultural resources and cause anxiety in some people. Of course, languages have their own laws to follow and their destiny is not determined by human will alone. In other words, the large-scale revision of the Chinese linguistic atlas will be considered and evaluated in various ways, but it is beyond human control.

However, this does not necessarily mean that nothing can be done about it. To begin with, multimedia technology can be employed to record the linguistic forms of modern languages, to maintain the outline of today's linguistic atlas, and to construct a corpus of oral languages is another way of preventing languages from disappearing. Secondly, attention should be given to the planning for the countryside in order to preserve rural languages and to incorporate the language conservation into intangible cultural heritage. In the meantime, greater efforts should be made to protect indigenous language and culture, and attention be given to the construction of museums for languages and cultures with the aim of spreading the knowledge wrapped in these languages. Thirdly, some problems in language policy-making have to be carefully considered. Attempts should be made to strengthen the vitality of some languages and dialects by advocating "bilingualism with diglossia", and in some regions exploring education for language conservation.

Finally, to the maintenance of languages in cyberspace. The development of the Internet and urbanization are an interactive process. For this reason, the virtual language life created by the Internet cannot be neglected when language problems are discussed in the process of urbanization. Now that the concept of Smart Earth has grown prevalent, the concept of an Internet of Things (IOT) and Cloud Computing has become reality, and mobile networks are becoming more ubiquitous, it is quite obvious that the Internet is undergoing a revolutionary change. Accordingly, the virtual language life will certainly be richer, more active and more colorful, and it is bound to have a more profound and powerful influence on actual language life. There are 500 million urban netizens, and their virtual language life calls for immediate attention from the following perspectives: (1) The cyberspace of virtual language life in China should be designed to suit the habits of its people, and in particular, encourage the maximum use of the Chinese language and writing (e.g. the current convention of writing all email addresses in English is inconvenient for the Chinese). Therefore, various types of hardware, software and linguistic information technology should be designed, requiring more rights for the intellectual property of information technology and also corresponding international agreements. (2) The quality of the virtual language life of Chinese should be constantly improved. Seen from a developmental point, it ought to be the life of the majority that generally benefits

from these changes. Therefore, more people should be ushered into cyberspace to reduce the size of information-marginalized communities. Potential modes and types of virtual language life may be conceived and developed systematically. A reasonable order should be set up for virtual language life, to ensure its quality and its extension outward as a manifestation of the world. (3) Virtual language life is based on the enrichment and development of actual language life. Nowadays, both physical and virtual forms of language life should interact with each other, help each other and encourage mutual promotion.

In short, because of the rapid progress of urbanization against the background of world globalization, careful consideration should be given to such questions as how the Chinese language outlook will be influenced, what language problems will have to be settled, which special groups of people demand special language assistance, and how to guarantee the success of urbanization by means of a scientific policy and effective action of language.

In the 21st century, building a harmonious language life has become a novel concept of language work. A language life in harmony consists of the dialectical unity of subjectivity and diversity with various languages and their variants in their proper places, playing their respective roles serving different purposes, and supplementing one another. This new concept will surely contribute to overcoming various language problems created by the process of urbanization, and it is to be continually improved in practice.

Translated by Liang Xiaopeng (梁晓鹏)
Qingdao University of Science & Technology
samadhi44@126.com

Contents

Li Yuming (李宇明)

Language issues in China's urbanization process in the context of globalization

Foreword to *The Language Situation in China: Vol. 3* — v

Part I: Language Work

Cai Changhong (蔡长虹), Hao Aqing (郝阿庆), Li Xulian (李旭练),
Pei Yajun (裴亚军), Rong Hong (容宏), Wang Qi (王奇), Wei Dan (魏丹),
Yuan Wei (袁伟), Yin Jing (尹静), Zhang Yan (张艳),
Zhang Yingchuan (张映川), and Zhou Daojuan (周道娟)

1 An update on the use and management of standard spoken and written Chinese — 3

Cai Changhong (蔡长虹), Hao Aqing (郝阿庆), Li Xulian (李旭练),
Pei Yajun (裴亚军), Rong Hong (容宏), Wang Qi (王奇), Wei Dan (魏丹),
Yuan Wei (袁伟), Yin Jing (尹静), Zhang Yan (张艳),
Zhang Yingchuan (张映川), and Zhou Daojuan (周道娟)

2 Current situation of the management of spoken and written languages — 15

Li Xulian (李旭练)

3 Present situation of the work concerning ethnic languages — 21

Xie Junying (谢俊英) & Chen Zhan tai (陈章太)

4 Sixty years' work with spoken and written languages — 33

Part II: Special Research

Luo Feng (骆峰)

5 The global spread of the Chinese language — 43

Chen Hui (陈慧)

6 Development of the language information industry in China — 61

Ni Lan (倪兰)

7 The use of sign language and related issues — 73

Zhang Jun (张军)

8 The language of Chinese films and TV series — 87

Qu Yanbin (曲彦斌)

9 Folk cant and folk life — 99

Zheng Mengjuan (郑梦娟), Huang Xiaoshan (黄小珊), and Fan Henghui (凡恒慧)

10 The development of an international language environment in Beijing — 107

Dong Jie (董洁)

11 The Beijing migrant children's language and identity — 115

Sun Chunying (孙春颖) & Yang Shujun (杨书俊)

12 Language barrier and assistance during the earthquake relief operations in Yushu, Qinghai Province — 123

Bai Ping (白萍)

13 A survey of the Russian language use in Inner Mongolia's Ergun City — 137

Zhou Hongbo (周洪波) & Zhao Chunyan (赵春燕)

14 Compilation of dictionaries of the Chinese language — 145

Zheng Mengjuan (郑梦娟)

15 Chinglish at the crossroads — 157

Li Qiao (李俏)

16 The academic community on language life — 171

Part III: Language Focuses

He Rui (何瑞)

17 Chinese characters: Traditional versus simplified debate — 185

He Rui (何瑞)

18 Debate on *The General Table of Standard Chinese Characters* — 195

Liu Jingwen (刘靖文)

19 A heated discussion on the "crisis in writing Chinese characters" — 201

Qu Shaobing (屈哨兵)

- 20 Reflections on the incident of the “Preservation of Cantonese” in Guangzhou — 211**

Wang Lei (汪磊)

- 21 The phenomenon of the Martian language — 225**

Li Qiao (李俏)

- 22 Chinese Internet buzzwords and catchphrases of 2009 — 235**

Yang Erhong (杨尔弘)

- 23 Comparisons of Chinese characters, words and phrases used in the media (2005–2009) — 247**

Hou Min (侯敏) & Teng Yonglin (滕永林)

- 24 Chinese neologisms of the year (2009–2010) — 265**

Yang Erhong (杨尔弘)

- 25 A survey of annual catchwords in the media (2009–2010) — 279**

Chan Shui Duen (陈瑞端)

- 26 Changes in biliteracy and trilingualism in the Hong Kong education sector — 289**

Huang Yi (黄翊)

- 27 Survey of “Yuanxingdi” as street name in Macau — 307**

Yu Guilin (余桂林)

- 28 Language situation in Taiwan (2009–2010) — 315**

Special

Ji Chuanbo (汲传波)

- 29 Social responses spurred on by the *Report on the Language Situation in China* — 335**

Appendix

Wang Zhijuan (王志娟) & Zhao Xiaobing (赵小兵)

- 1 Newspapers in written Chinese minority languages — 353**

Mao Liqun (毛力群)

- 2 A record of major Chinese language events (2009) — 361**

Mao Liqun (毛力群) & Mao Xiaojing (毛筱静)

3 A record of major Chinese language events (2010) — 375

Contents (Chinese version 2009) — 393

Contents (Chinese version 2011) — 395

Postscript — 399

Editorial Teams of the English Edition — 401

Index — 403

I Language Work

Cai Changhong (蔡长虹), Hao Aqing (郝阿庆),
Li Xulian (李旭练), Pei Yajun (裴亚军), Rong Hong (容宏),
Wang Qi (王奇), Wei Dan (魏丹), Yuan Wei (袁伟),
Yin Jing (尹静), Zhang Yan (张艳), Zhang Yingchuan (张映川),
and Zhou Daojuan (周道娟)

1 An update on the use and management of standard spoken and written Chinese

Keywords: Putonghua Proficiency Test, State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC), print media, minority language, mainland China, Taiwan, standardization, State Language Commission, Chinese characters.

Between 2009 and 2010, China's language authorities have achieved a lot in the area of language management. *The National Medium- and Long-Term Language Work Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010–2020)* was drafted. Several projects were consequently implemented, including the Urban Language Assessment, the Putonghua Proficiency Test, a Survey on Foreign Language Use in Cities, and the Supervision of Language Use in Advertisements. New regulations were issued on the usage of foreign language words in Chinese. A joint program of dictionary making, in collaboration with Taiwanese scholars, was initiated. The National Research Center for Sign Language and Braille was founded, and the standardization work of language use on radio, television and in publications was strengthened. Ethnic minority language publication projects were funded as well.

1 *The National Medium- and Long-Term Language Work Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010–2020)*

In October 2008, *The National Medium- and Long-Term Language Work Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010–2020)* was drafted. Since then, fifteen tasks concerning language management have been conducted. Thirty-eight national symposia and one special workshop were organized while institutions of higher learning and government departments in different provinces and cities held also

other meetings. The State Language Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) plenary meeting and other conferences of language study solicited comments and suggestions extensively. A written survey was sent to 139 national and local language commissions, as well as to colleges and universities for comment and suggestions. Accordingly, *The National Medium- and Long-Term Language Work Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010–2020)* draft (hereafter referred to as the *Outline*) has been revised over fifty times before it was finalized.

The *Outline* was developed around the theme of “building a harmonious language life,” and it established the following principles: Speed up the spread of Putonghua, enhance language ability, promote Chinese culture, and serve the nation harmoniously. Moreover, it proposed the work agenda, national language reform and tasks for language development for a number of decades to come.

The *Outline* takes the Commission’s responsibilities as its basis and prioritizes the listing of many tasks including some work with ethnic minority languages, standardizing written and spoken Chinese in international Chinese education, particularly the Chinese language education in Southeast Asia. Special languages, such as the Chinese sign language and Braille, were added to the *Outline*. Above all, it advocates the statements “emphasizing dialectical unity of diversity” and “building a harmonious language life” as the guideline and principles for the language work.

2 The assessment of urban language

2.1 Urban language work in 2009

In 2009, the assessment of urban language continued and proceeded in a steady and orderly manner. By the end of 2009, 32 first-tier cities, 191 second-tier cities and 240 third-tier cities in China had formulated a set of standards, accounting for approximately 89%, 57% and 11% of each tier’s total. The urban language assessment promoted the language work further. As a result, eight urban language organizations were established and eight new administrative positions created. 1.49 million RMB were invested or added to the existing funding and the budget for the assessment was increased by 13.11 million RMB. 173 cities have made the Putonghua Proficiency Test available for their civil servants to take. In 176 cities, 219,607 people from different walks of life took the Putonghua Proficiency Test.

2.2 Urban language work in 2010

The year 2010 saw remarkable achievements in the assessment of urban language, with the first-tier cities, Xining City, Qinghai Province, 35 second-tier cities and 119 third-tier cities reaching the set standard. Tianjin City and Jiangsu Province completed the assessment in all its districts and cities and the results showed that all the assessed districts and cities passed the standard. By the end of 2010, 33 first-tier cities, 226 second-tier cities and 359 third-tier cities in China had reached the set standard, approximately accounting for 92%, 68% and 17% of the total in each tier.

The assessment further promoted the language work as a profession. Twenty-three urban language organizations were established, and twenty-three administrative posts and five public service positions were created. 2.72 million RMB was invested or added to the existing funding and the budget for the special assessment was increased by 4.22 million RMB. In more than 160 cities, 391,500 civil servants took the Putonghua Proficiency Test, while another 192,000 people took tests for specific occupations.

3 New regulations for the usage of foreign language words

In order to standardize Chinese character use in official documents of state administrative organizations and to conduct the censorship of the usage of foreign language words, the Secretariat of the General Office of the State Council (SGOSC) issued the *Notification of Strengthening the Work of Examining and Verifying the Use of Foreign Language Words in Official Documents of State Administrative Organizations* (hereafter referred to as File No. 14 [2010]) on April 16, and later the General Office of the Ministry of Education (GOMOE) issued a notification (hereafter referred to as File No. 2 [2010]) from the Ministry of Education's Languages Application Administration, to forward the Notification to the relevant departments and organizations in the nation.

File No. 14 [2010] requires: (1) state administrative organizations should raise the awareness of using **Standard Spoken and Written Chinese**, and since they are serving as national models they should adopt standard Chinese characters when issuing official documents; (2) administrative authorities at various levels must strictly implement all relevant provisions and shall not use foreign language words in official documents; if foreign language words are really necessary, they must be used along with Chinese translations in brackets when they

are first used in the text, and approval must be sought from a department under the supervision of the State Council or other relevant departments; (3) the department in charge of the usage of spoken and written languages under the State Council and other relevant departments must jointly make rules for foreign language word translation and spelling, provide a translation of emerging foreign language words in a timely manner, and their standard translations and Chinese abbreviations must be announced regularly to the public; (4) all relevant departments should strengthen the censorship of foreign language word usage in official documents. The inappropriate use of foreign language words should be corrected promptly.

File No. 2 [2010] issued by GOMOE requires: (1) File No. 14 [2010] issued by SGOSC must be forwarded to all relevant departments and offices that may take the opportunity to further promote the enforcement of language laws and regulations in China as well as raise the awareness of using the standard Chinese language in conformity with the legal provisions, and all relevant authorities and personnel should practice a cautious use of foreign language words; (2) each department and office should conduct self-examination and self-correction to establish regulations which standardize the use of foreign language words in official documents in order to meet the requirements of the document issued by SGOSC; (3) education offices and commissions at all levels should effectively fulfill their administrative responsibilities of language management when organizing any public events to strengthen the guidance, supervision and inspection of language use. Schools, the media and other public service agencies should do the same when organizing any public activities or campaigns to make sure of the appropriate use of foreign language words according to the instruction of File No. 14 [2010] issued by SGOSC.

4 Putonghua Proficiency Test

In January 2007, a computer-based system was officially adopted for the Putonghua Proficiency Test. Since then, a pilot group of nineteen provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities has administered the test. These cities and provinces are Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Hubei, Guangdong, Guangxi, Chongqing, Guizhou, Yunnan, Shaanxi and Gansu. In 2010, 1,637,000 people have taken the test by using the computer-based test system.

In the same year, 4,179,800 people participated in the national Putonghua Proficiency Test, including 178,500 civil servants, 413,600 teachers, 3,355,000

students, 4,400 staff members of radio and television stations, and 228,300 other testees.

By the end of 2010, 35,224,600 people had taken the test throughout the country in 1,462 testing centers, of which 419 were municipal testing centers, 997 college testing centers, and 46 testing centers were for various service trades. Currently, there are 1,283 test inspectors and 47,600 Putonghua Proficiency Testers, of whom 4,300 are national level testers.

5 Survey of foreign language use in cities

In recent years, complaints about the misuse of foreign languages in China have been filed continuously in the motions and bills by the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Meanwhile, people from different walks of life have called for the effective management of foreign language use. For a better understanding of foreign language use in our social life, a survey of foreign language usage was conducted between December 2008 and March 2009 by MOELAA.

The survey was conducted to investigate foreign language use in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Chongqing and sixteen other large and medium-sized cities in ten provinces as well as autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government, such as Heilongjiang, Shandong, Gansu, Zhejiang, Guangdong, and Guangxi. The survey involved nine areas including the CCP and government offices, radio and television stations, newspapers and journals, schools, urban streets, brand names and product instruction manuals, scenic spots, hotels and restaurants, and public transport facilities. The 2,700 participants were from 1,240 departments, offices, and various employers. The survey covered the following aspects: the current situation of foreign language use, the effect on the learning and use of the speakers' mother tongue, especially the impact on the future social life (after 2020), and what measures should be taken.

The results showed that: (1) by 2009, foreign languages were commonly used in various fields in Chinese social life and the average usage ratio had reached 31%; (2) factors affecting foreign language use in China vary and are complex because of its economic and social development, the society's openness, official management of foreign language usage, social attitudes, opportunities created by urban development, and emotional ties with the Chinese language; (3) English has become the dominant foreign language and is only second to Chinese, accounting for 82.77% of all foreign language use; (4) foreign languages are mainly used along with the Chinese language in social communication; (5)

without an explicit national policy of foreign language usage, many regulations made by different relevant state departments and regions diverge and even conflict with one another; (6) the national foreign language proficiency is not good enough. Therefore, an explicit state-level macro policy should be devised while the management of foreign language use is emphasized in practice.

6 Joint efforts in compiling dictionaries in mainland China and Taiwan

In 2010, the State Language Commission initiated a collaborative project of compiling Chinese reference books by scholars from both mainland China and Taiwan. The following four work groups were set up with corresponding Taiwanese counterparts: Dictionary Compilation, Information and Technology, Comparing Terms in Science and Technology in mainland China and Taiwan, and Organization and Coordination. Higher Education Press was designated as the publisher for the dictionaries in mainland China. After several rounds of talks, the following important consensuses were reached:

- (1) *The Chinese Cross-Strait Dictionary of Commonly Used Words*, a small-sized Chinese reference book, shall be compiled within a year or two, and shall be published by the end of 2011.
- (2) *The Chinese Language Dictionary*, a medium-sized Chinese reference book, shall be compiled and completed within three to five years.
- (3) *The Chinese Language Knowledge Base* is to be developed as a cloud database that includes the above-mentioned two co-compiled dictionaries and the comparative terms of all sciences and technology used in mainland China and Taiwan, serving Chinese language users worldwide. The cloud database was to have been put in use by the end of 2011;
- (4) The projects of comparing the terms of sciences and technology in mainland China and Taiwan shall continue and be extended to more disciplines. As a result, *The Chinese Dictionary of Science and Technology* and *The Chinese Cross-Strait Dictionary of Commonly Used Scientific and Technical Terms* are to be compiled and published.

The two Dictionary Compilation Groups in mainland China and Taiwan have discussed and agreed on the dictionary format and work principles. The vocabulary collection has been decided, a sample draft was provided, and sample word items were exchanged. Currently, they are working extensively on word entry collection. The Information and Technology Group has set up a website called

The Chinese Language, which is the prototype of *The Chinese Language Knowledge Database*. The group focused on studying and sorting out the problems and difficulties of cloud database development, and on providing technical support for the Dictionary Compilation Group. The Comparative Terms of Science and Technology Group has started compiling *The Chinese Dictionary of Science and Technology* and a working schedule has been agreed upon by both groups in mainland China and Taiwan. The Organization and Coordination Group has contacted and communicated with the Department of Industry and Information Technology and other departments for a favorable policy and technical support.

7 The National Research Center for Sign Language and Braille

On 16 July 2009, the National Research Center for Sign Language and Braille was co-founded by MOE, the State Language Commission and China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF). It was inaugurated at Beijing Normal University.

The use of sign language and Braille affects the well-being of thirty million blind and deaf Chinese. At the inauguration, Li Weihong (李卫红), Deputy Minister of MOE, stated that the State Language Commission and education departments at various levels must incorporate sign language and Braille into the language work to accelerate the development of sign language and Braille under different local contexts. The work should be well-planned and innovative, integrating with all other work. It is very important to show great concern and care for people with disabilities, and develop special education in an innovative way to standardize and promote sign language and Braille.

8 Task Force on Censorship of the Language in Advertisements

The Notification of Inspection of Language Use in Advertisements (hereafter referred to as the *Notification*) was issued by the State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC) in September (File No. 181 [2010]). It requires the Departments of Industry and Commerce at all levels to highlight the importance of standardizing the language used in advertisements. *The Law of the People's Republic of China for the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language* (hereinafter referred to as the *Language Law*) is going to mark its 10th anniversary, which

should be a good opportunity to change and correct inappropriate language usage in advertising.

The inspection focused on the following inappropriate use of language in advertising: (1) advertisements that only use Pinyin; (2) foreign languages are used in advertisements in violation of state language regulations; (3) miswritten Chinese characters, traditional Chinese characters that are only allowed to be used in the prescribed contexts, variant Chinese characters, simplified Chinese characters and printed fonts that have been abolished but are used in advertisements; (4) non-standard idioms used in advertisements, which may mislead the public and have a negative impact on society; (5) other non-standard use of language in advertisements.

The *Notification* also requires: (1) All appropriate departments should take language use in advertising seriously and make greater efforts in the inspection and supervision of language use according to the relevant provisions in the *Advertising Law*, *Language Law*, *Advertising Management Regulations*, *Enforcement Rules of Advertising Management Regulations*, and *Interim Advertising Language Management Regulations*. The advertisements with a non-standard usage of language must be corrected and mandated to be rectified immediately. As for illegal and problematic advertisements, they must be eliminated immediately. The responsible people should receive punishment and a penalty according to the laws and regulations. (2) When censoring the language in advertisements, the law enforcement should be integrated with law education, providing administrative guidance and supervision to the advertisers, advertising agents and publishers to make sure that they learn and understand the *Advertising Law*, *Language Law* and other laws and regulations. Awareness should be raised for using standard and appropriate language.

9 Using standard language on radio and television

9.1 Language use in film, radio and television

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) notified radio, film and television stations to standardize their language use according to the *Notification of Strengthening the Censorship of Foreign Language Words in Official Documents of State Administrative Organizations* (File No. 14 [2010]) issued by SGOSC (see *Collection of Management Provisions on Foreign Language Use at State Level and Relevant Departments* in the Appendix). The channels whose

working language is not a foreign language are not allowed to use foreign languages for broadcasting news, conduct interviews, or play captioned films and TV programs. When a foreign language is really necessary, Chinese subtitle explanations must be provided. The Notification is not confined to the Sports channel, which means that English abbreviations such as NBA (National Basketball Association), GDP (gross domestic product), WTO (the World Trade Organization), and CPI (consumer price index) should be avoided.

9.2 Four documents of language use on radio and television still valid

On 12 November 2009, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television issued the *Notification of the Valid Catalog of Regulations and Normative Documents for Radio, Film and Television Departments*, which stated that upon the request of the *Notification of Issues on Reviewing and Revising Regulations* (File No. 28 [2010] issued by SGOSC), a complete review has been made on the existing regulations and normative documents on radio, film and television. The following documents are still valid and effective: *Notification of Further Promoting the Quality of TV Talk Shows* (File No. 616 [2000] issued by SARFT), *SARFT's Notification of Strengthening the Broadcasting Management of TV Program Subtitles* (File No. 338 [2005] issued by SARFT), *SARFT's Notification of Reiterating the Use of Standard Language in TV Series* (File No. 560 [2005] issued by SARFT), and *SARFT's Notification of Strictly Limiting the Use of Dialects in TV Series* (File No. 116 [2009] issued by the General Office of SARFT).

10 Standardization of language use in publication and funding the projects of ethnic minority languages

10.1 Notification of Further Standardizing Language Use in Publication

The General Administration of Press and Publication (GAPP) issued its *Notification of Further Standardizing Language Use in Publication* on 23 November (File No. 11 [2010]). The Notification specifically requires: regulations concerning the standardization of the Chinese language must be strictly enforced. All print

media and publishers must take effective measures to ensure the implementation of Article 5 in *Regulations on the Management of Chinese Character Use in Publication*, which states, “Standard written Chinese characters must be used in mastheads (or names), titles, covers (including front and back covers), spines, etc., of newspapers, journals, books, audio-visual products and other publications as well as on the packaging decorations and in advertisements. Non-standard characters are totally prohibited. The same is applicable to publications including texts, abstracts, contents and other supplementary information like copyright records.” Other relevant provisions should be followed as well. We should promote the standardization of language usage and ensure the healthy development of the Chinese language with an appropriate language use and resist the tendency toward a cultural decline. The Notification also emphasizes the importance of standardizing the use of foreign languages. It requires that all print media and publishers should further strengthen the standardization of the use of foreign languages, and respect and follow the rules of the language structure, word formation and grammar of the Chinese languages as well as foreign languages. Chinese publications are banned from blending foreign languages with English words, abbreviations and coinages with vague meanings. Misuses of language such as arbitrary word spellings with several letters added or deleted and random word order reversals should be eliminated. If foreign languages are needed in a Chinese publication, Chinese explanations should be provided as annotations. Foreign language translations should follow the fundamental principles and practices of translation. Proper nouns like names of persons and places as well as terms for science and technology are translated into standard Chinese in accordance with the relevant regulations. Administrative departments of press and publication should, at all levels, further enhance the management and inspection of language use and quality of publications. All print media, publishers and related administrative departments should further raise awareness and promote the importance of using the standard Chinese language.

10.2 Special fund for publications in ethnic minority languages

The *Interim Measures to Manage the Ethnic Minority Script Publication Project Aided by a Special Fund* (hereinafter referred to as *Interim Measures*) was co-issued by GAPP and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) on 28 May 2009. The *Interim Measures* emphasize the standard procedure for publication projects in Ethnic Minority Scripts including proposals, applications, approvals, completions, and evaluations for the Special Fund. All projects applying for the special fund

subsidies must comply with all state laws, publication regulations, guidelines and policies for ethnic minorities made by the Communist Party of China (CPC). Publications should show the fine culture of ethnic minorities and provide ethnic minority people with advanced knowledge of science and culture. Applications for a book series or sub-project may be regarded as a package of one project. Local publishers who mainly publish and produce books, journals, audio-visual products, CPC newspapers and journals in ethnic minority scripts are eligible to apply for technical reform and equipment-renewal subsidies. Provincial administrative departments of press and publication must provide a clear description of the number of trainees, training methods, costs and training content when applying for professional training programs.¹

Translated by Zhan Ju (战菊)

Jilin University, China

jzhan@jlu.edu.cn

¹ GAPP and MOF's *Notification of Issuing 'Interim Measures to Manage the Ethnic Minority Script Publication Project Aided by a Special Fund'*, GAPP (website), <http://www.gapp.gov.cn/cms/html/21/508/201006/700310.html>, 22 June 2010.

Cai Changhong (蔡长虹), Hao Aqing (郝阿庆),
Li Xulian (李旭练), Pei Yajun (裴亚军), Rong Hong (容宏),
Wang Qi (王奇), Wei Dan (魏丹), Yuan Wei (袁伟),
Yin Jing (尹静), Zhang Yan (张艳), Zhang Yingchuan (张映川),
and Zhou Daojuan (周道娟)

2 Current situation of the management of spoken and written languages

Keywords: State Language Commission, language standard, character component, spoken language, Chinese character, China National Committee for Terms in Science and Technology, Chinese Proficiency Test.

Between 2009 and 2010, the State Language Commission in China focused mainly on the information management of spoken and written languages through issuing four documents of standards, including *The Table of Indexing Chinese Character Components*. The Commission also issued four other documents of regulations, among them *Criteria of Spoken and Written Language Assessment on Machine Translation Systems (Draft)* and the *Assessment Criteria for the Graded Chinese Syllables, Characters and Words for Application in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages*. It also revised four national standards like the *General Rules for Punctuation*, developed the Chinese Language Audio Resources Database, and drew up policies on the Chinese Proficiency Test for professional purposes. Besides, the Chinese National Evaluation Committee for Scientific and Technological Terms also completed a number of projects.

1 Four documents of codes and standards issued by the State Language Commission

Four documents concerning codes and standards were issued by the State Language Commission, namely *The Table of Indexing Chinese Character Components*, *Criteria for Identifying Components of the GB13000.1 Chinese Character Set*, *Criteria of Common Modern Chinese Character Components and Component Names*, and the *Criteria of the Indecomposable Characters Frequently Used in Modern Chinese*.

The Table of Indexing Chinese Character Components was developed on the basis of the *Table of Standard Radicals for Chinese Characters (Draft)* (referred

to as *Draft*), which was first issued in 1983 by the China Written Language Reform Committee and General Administration of Press and Publication. The *Draft* was revised with supplements relating to the identification of character components and sub-components, and the order of character components and indexing rules. *The Table of Indexing Chinese Character Components* provides a list of Chinese character components, including 201 main character components, the same as those in the *Draft*, and 100 character sub-components, together with an indexing rule. With a general consideration of the development and current practical needs of Chinese characters, *Specifications for Identifying Components of GB13000.1 Chinese Character Set* provides general principles and rules for identifying components of the GB13000.1 Chinese Character Set and lists a table of components to identify 20,902 Chinese characters.

The document of the *Criteria for Common Modern Chinese Character Components and Component Names* specifies the identification rules of common modern Chinese characters, components and their names. It also provides *The Table of Common Modern Chinese Character Components* and *The Table of Common Character Main Components*, with two appendices, *The Table of Common Chinese Character Component Character-Formation Frequency* and *The Table of Stroke Order Indexing of Common Modern Chinese Character Components*. The indecomposable characters frequently used in modern Chinese were defined in the document, which provides *The Table of the Indecomposable Characters Commonly Used in Modern Chinese*, with an index table in alphabetical order.

It is of crucial significance to release and implement the above four documents for enforcing the *Law on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language* and for promoting the standardization of spoken and written Chinese in dictionary compilation, Chinese character education and the information processing of Chinese characters.

2 Six draft documents released

Four draft documents are included in *Language Situation in China*, Volume 2. They are *Criteria of the Pronunciation of Chinese Characters in Japanese (Draft)*, *Spoken and Written Language Assessment Criteria of TTS and ASR Systems (Draft)*, *Spoken and Written Language Assessment Criteria of Machine Translation Systems (Draft)*, *Criteria of Spoken and Written Language Assessment on Corpus Systems (Draft)*, *Criteria of Metadata in the Modern Chinese Corpus (Draft)*, and *Annotation Criteria of the Conceptual Sentence Structure Corpus Based on Conceptual Hierarchies (Draft)*.

3 Documents released on teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages

Two documents were issued on 19 October 2010 that took effect on 1 February 2011, and were approved by China's Ministry of Education and the State Language Commission. They are *The Graded Chinese Syllables, Characters and Words for Application in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages*, and *Grading Standards and Testing Guidelines of Spoken Chinese Proficiency*.

In the former, Chinese syllables, characters and words are graded and tables of graded syllables, Chinese characters and vocabularies are provided. It will be widely used in teaching Chinese to speakers of other languages and for compiling textbooks, instructions, testing, compiling reference books, and creating a syllable and word corpus, as well as for the teaching of Chinese to ethnic minorities within China.

The latter sets standards and testing guidelines on daily spoken Chinese proficiency for non-native Chinese speakers and Overseas Chinese. Both documents are language standards designed to teach Chinese to speakers of other languages. Their release will help standardize the teaching of Chinese to speakers of other languages and aid non-native Chinese speakers and Overseas Chinese to learn the Chinese language, thereby having a far-reaching impact on promoting the Chinese language internationally.

4 Four national standards revised

Four national standards were revised, including *General Rules for Punctuation*, *General Rules for Numbers in Publications*, *Basic Rules for the Chinese Phonetic Alphabet Orthography* and *The Chinese Phonetic Spelling Rules for Chinese Names*. As they are extensively used, the four standards have a profound impact on the standardization of spoken and written languages in such areas as press and publication, culture and education, as well as in Chinese information processing.

5 Development of the Chinese Language Audio Resources Database

The first pilot project for the Chinese Language Audio Resources Database in Jiangsu Province was successfully completed and the second one has been

initiated. The questionnaire to survey Chinese dialects and its research design were revised and finalized. An action plan was made for developing the Chinese Language Audio Resources Database. In addition, the pilot project for the Chinese Ethnic Minority Languages Audio Resources Database was also launched.

Other related projects were completed as well, including the *Publication Catalog of Chinese Dialects*, *Criteria of the Present Publications on Chinese Dialects*, *Chinese Dialects Questionnaire and Survey Design*, *Ethnic Minority Languages Questionnaire and Survey Design*, *Regulations for Developing a Chinese Language Audio Resources Database*, and *Criteria of Phonetic Recording and Phonetic Annotation*.

6 Policies regarding the Professional Chinese Proficiency Test were formulated

The *Notification on the Release of Assessment Criteria of Occupational Proficiency Training (Trial)* (No. 11) [2007], referred to as *Criteria*, was issued by the Occupational Skill Testing Authority of China's Ministry of Labor and Social Security. It states that "seven modules for occupational language proficiency are developed by specialists to enhance the overall quality. The modules consist of training assessment criteria for interpersonal communication, digital application, information processing, team work, problem solving, self-improvement and innovative ability."

The Occupational Skill Testing Authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security developed the *Assessment Criteria of Occupational Language Proficiency Training (Trial)*. (People's Press, 2007 Edition) The *Criteria* aims to achieve an ability-oriented and employment-driven educational goal. It proposes skill requirements and training assessment instruction for achieving basic occupational proficiency, making the training and assessment of language proficiency more manageable and feasible.

The Professional Chinese Proficiency Test was first enacted nationwide in 2004, targeting job applicants and in-service employees with a senior high school diploma or above. Its purpose is to widely serve government, private enterprises, public institutions, schools and a variety of human resource development and training programs. The Test, which is administered each year, consists of two parts, namely reading comprehension and writing. Those who pass the Test will receive a *Certificate of Professional Language Proficiency*, issued by the Occupational Skill Testing Authority of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (formerly the Ministry of Labor and Social Security).

The full score of the Test is 1,000 points, ranked by elementary, intermediate and advanced levels.

7 Terms in science and technology

7.1 Improving the standardization of terms in science and technology

China's National Committee for Terms in Science and Technology either set up or re-elected ten disciplinary subcommittees, working in various fields to standardize all terms in science and technology. Fifty subject disciplines were involved in this endeavor in 2010, and books and a dictionary of terms were published, reaching a record high in both quantity and quality.

7.2 Promoting standard terms

The development of the *Regulations for the Management of Terms in Science and Technology* was supported by the Bureau of Planning and Strategy of the Chinese Academy of Science and guided by the Department of Policies and Law of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and law experts were constantly consulted. Later on the Secretariat Bureau of the General Office of the State Council announced the *Notification for Strengthening the Censorship of Foreign Language Words in Government Documents*. Meanwhile, *Guangming Daily* issued a special edition "Indigenization of Foreign Language Words in China," which included, among other articles, the article *Don't Let Foreign Language Words Spoil the Chinese Language Environment*, an interview with Sun Shoushan, Vice Minister of the General Administration of Press and Publication. Supported by the General Administration of Press and Publication, training courses continue to be offered on using standard scientific and technological terms in publications. A dictionary editorial office was set up to facilitate the project of comparing terms in science and technology used on both sides of the Taiwan Strait as well as to further promote the standardization of terms. A strategic co-operation was also initiated with Baidu Encyclopedia.

7.3 Academic research, exchanges and cooperation

China's National Committee for Terms in Science and Technology asked experts and specialists to compile and publish *Research and Exploration of Terminology (Anthology)*. The Committee also organized a symposium on Translation-oriented Terminology Research. Moreover, it collaborated with the State Language Com-

mission, the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Shanghai Dictionary Press and the Institute of Place Name Research of the Ministry of Civil Affairs in carrying out standardization efforts like *The General Table of Standardized Chinese Characters*, *The Use of Foreign Language Words*, *Regulations on Managing Spoken and Written Foreign Languages* and *Naming Places of the Moon, Polar Regions and the Seafloor*. There were also academic exchanges with the terminology communities in Russia and Austria. These ongoing academic activities enhanced the terminology research in China.

7.4 Comparing and unifying terms in science and technology in mainland China and Taiwan

China's National Committee for Terms in Science and Technology has so far devoted a lot of effort on comparing and standardizing terms in science and technology across the Taiwan Strait in nearly twenty disciplines and has organized nine meetings in its endeavor to achieve consensus. In addition, upon the request of Taiwan's Affairs Office of the State Council, it conducted several rounds of negotiations with Taiwan and geared up for the compilation of the *Dictionary of Corresponding Terms in Science and Technology across the Taiwan Strait*, thereby contributing to a further exchange in culture, technology, business and trade between both sides of the Strait, as well as to the peaceful reunification of China.

7.5 Initiatives on a database and website for terms

The China National Committee for Terms in Science and Technology has made a variety of efforts in developing a database and website. Firstly, it received national funding for a project that studies the creation of automatic retrieval software and gives supplementary definitions of new terms in science and technology, with the aim of providing a new approach to collecting new terms and serving as a disciplinary pilot program for designing a database of terms in science and technology. Secondly, to attract more readers, the Committee kept promoting its website by releasing and introducing new terms in a timely manner. It will also start an online censoring procedure for scientific and technological terms.

Translated by Zhan Ju (战菊)
Jilin University, China
jzhan@jlu.edu.cn

Li Xulian (李旭练)

3 Present situation of the work concerning ethnic languages

Keywords: The State Ethnic Affairs Commission, technical term, ethnic language, propagation, State Council, harmonious socialist society, bilingual education, digitization, standardization.

1 Provisions of policies on the development of ethnic languages issued by the State Council

On July 5, 2009, the State Council issued *Some Opinions of the State Council about the Further Promotion and Development of the Cultural Undertakings of Ethnic Minorities* (guofa No. 29, 2009), which put forward a number of suggestions and measures to be taken concerning the flourishing and development of the cultural undertakings of ethnic minorities. These measures cover five aspects: its importance, guiding ideology, basic principles and target tasks, policies and concrete measures to be taken, further improvement of the system and mechanisms, and the strengthening of the leadership in the cultural work. Many parts of the document involve pertinent policies on the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities.

1.1 Promotion and development of the news and publication industry of ethnic minorities

The support to the news and publication industry of ethnic minorities should be enhanced, the rejuvenation and reform of relevant equipment and technology stepped up, the level of digitization and the capacity of publicity propagation raised, and the coverage and scope of benefits extended. Key support should be given to major propagation and dissemination efforts concerning ethnic affairs and to important publication projects in ethnic languages. Publications such as books, newspapers, and audiovisual products should gradually be donated to the general public of ethnic minorities and grassroots institutions, so that the major political policies can get disseminated, the socialist core values better promoted and knowledge of science, culture and technology further spread. The

translation and publication of ethnic languages should be boosted, and both the quantity and quality of bidirectional translations of fine works in Chinese, foreign languages, and ethnic languages raised. Aid should be given to key news websites for ethnic minorities; support should be given to the well planned development of websites of ethnic languages and newly emerging modes of dissemination, and their administration and guidance should be strengthened. Publishing ethnic minority authors should be treated as a part of the cultural infrastructure for public welfare, therefore, the central and local financing should intensify and fund input to such ethnic publishing establishments, gradually increasing financial aid to publishing in ethnic languages. (Official website of the Central Government 2009)

1.2 Vigorous development of the radio, film and television industry for ethnic minorities

The production capacity of radio, film and television programs in ethnic languages should be enhanced, and the translation of fine works of radio, film and television boosted. The ratio of self-management of radio and television stations in ethnic regions should be raised as well. Conditions of film projections in ethnic regions, especially in remote farming and pastoral areas, have been improved, and both the content and showing time of films also got better.

1.3 Respecting, continuing, and further developing the fine traditional culture of ethnic minorities

More vigorous propagation should be carried out and more guidance be given to the creation of a social atmosphere of respect so as to carry forward the fine traditional culture of ethnic minorities. The state guarantees all ethnic groups the freedom to use and develop their spoken and written languages and it also encourages citizens of different ethnic groups to respect each other and learn each other's language. The law of the development of the languages should be respected and the standardization and digitization process of ethnic languages encouraged as well. (Official website of the Central Government 2009)

1.4 More commitment to ethnic culture promotion in border areas

More support should be given to the development of ethnic language and publications in border areas so as to increase products of public interest, especially the effective supply of products of ethnic languages and culture in border areas.

(Official website of the Central Government 2009) The State Ethnic Affairs Commission formulated and issued *Some Opinions of the State Council about the Further Promotion and Development of Ethnic Culture Programs*, aiming to improve the understanding between all cultures and put into effect the ideas of the State Council to further boost and develop ethnic cultural activities.¹

2 Work concerning ethnic language standardization and digitization

2.1 Establishment of the working committee for the standardization of technical terms of the Yi language

On November 15, 2009, the meeting to celebrate the establishment of the National Working Committee on the Standardization of Technical Terms in the Yi Language was held in the Southwest University for Nationalities. Mr. Zhang Zuoha (张作哈), deputy governor of Sichuan Province and director of the Sichuan Provincial Working Committee of the Work Concerning Ethnic Languages, pointed out at the meeting that the establishment of the new committee was a major event that would further speed up the process of comprehensive standardization, normalization and information processing in the areas inhabited by the Yi people in the provinces of Yunnan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, so as to timely propagate and implement the general and specific policies of the Party and the state to, on one hand, speed up the healthy development of the Yi language, and on the other, promote the Yi culture and push forward the social and economic well-being of these areas. Mr. Wang Tiekun (王铁琨), deputy director of the Department of Language and Information Management of the Ministry of Education, expressed his sincere hope that with the support of the relevant ethnic language departments, the National Working Committee for the Standardization of Technical Terms in the Yi Language would shoulder its duty of organization and coordination, as well as continue the tradition of cooperation between the four provinces and autonomous regions. Playing an important role in standardizing technical terms in the Yi language and the usage of the Yi script, the National Working Committee will make an important contribution to the maintenance of the Yi language and the social and economic development of the Yi areas. Mr. Shama Layi (沙马拉毅), chairman of the newly established committee, said they would do the work concerning the standardization of technical terms in the Yi language in an earnest

¹ For more information about *Guidance Reader*, see the official website of the Central Government. http://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2009-09/19/content_1421274.htm, 19 September 2009.

manner, in order to achieve the standardization of the Yi language and the development of the Yi culture in due course.

2.2 Phonetic parameter database for the languages of the Tibetan, Uyghur and Yi ethnic groups

The meeting of the appraisal of the “phonetic database of the vocabulary of the Chinese-Tibetan language family” was held and a number of other projects concerning the standardization of ethnic languages and their information processing was completed on May 13, and the conclusion of the “phonetic parameter database of the Tibetan, Uyghur and the Yi language” project took place at the same time. The project, which was completed jointly by the Institute of Ethnology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Working Committee of the Languages of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, Xinjiang University, and Southwest University for Nationalities, established the phonetic database of the vocabulary of the Tibetan, Uyghur and the Yi language. The database is very large and of a high standard and meets the advanced international level. It has established a unified platform of parameter bank and management software, and thus provides a reliable basis for the popularization of its achievement of in-depth research on phonetics. The result of this project also provides effective and supportive data for the popularization of the standard of the Tibetan, Uyghur and Yi languages. The significance of the project also manifests in a number of other domains, such as in the enhancement of the protection and development of language resources, and is of benefit to the research on the phonetic system, phonetics teaching, the research of language computerization, and the correction of pathological speech. It is an important basic information resource that furthers the country’s digitization commitments.

3 Protection of ancient classical works in ethnic languages

The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the General Administration of Radio, Film and Television, the State Administration for Religious Affairs, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, and the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine jointly issued the *Circular for Enhancing the Protection of Ancient Books in Tibet* (Wenshefa 44, 2009) on November 6, 2009. In order to carry out the implementation of the circular, the Ministry of Culture con-

vened a forum, on December 11 of the same year, on the protection of ancient books in Tibet. The work to implement *The Plan for the Protection of Ancient Books in Tibet* was also launched with the aim of comprehensively pushing forward the ministry's cultural and language objectives.

Not long after the General Office of the State Council issued *Opinions on the Further Protection of Ancient Books* (*guabanfa*, No. 6, 2007) on January 19, 2007, the *Directory of Precious Ancient Books of the Nation* and the list of key institutions for the protection of ancient books were issued. The former includes 337 ancient books in ethnic languages, which are kept in 77 institutions in the five ethnic autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia, Guangxi, Tibet, Ningxia, and Xinjiang. Among the key institutions listed for the protection of ancient books, there are six institutions that have collections of ancient books in ethnic languages, including the library of the Central Minzu University.

From 2007 to the present, the National Ancient Books Center has trained 247 persons of ethnic minority groups from 154 institutions in ethnic areas. 66 people from 36 institutions joined the 8th training course held in Xinjiang. In its three terms, the training course on the authentication and protection of ancient books in ethnic languages, run by the Center, enrolled a total of 158 people from 130 institutions.²

4 Resources of ethnic cultures and languages

Important progress has been made in rescuing and protecting ancient books in ethnic languages. The number of publications of ancient books in ethnic languages has reached over five thousand copies. The third working conference on the protection of ancient books in ethnic languages was held from the 14th to the 15th of December in Beijing. Mr. Yang Jing (杨晶), Director of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, emphasized in his speech delivered at the conference that to do a good job in the protection, study and utilization of ancient books in ethnic languages is an important part of the construction of socialist culture, and vital in all activities concerning ethnic affairs. As a strategic project, it has great contemporary significance and a profound historical significance as well. Yang Jing pointed out that from now on we must do conscientious work in the general survey of ancient books in ethnic languages for a fairly long period. We should strive to fastidiously carry out key projects like *The Précis of the General Catalog of Ancient Books in Ethnic Languages*, and seize the hour in our effort to rescue masters who have inherited and continued fine oral ancient works and

² See website of the Ministry of Culture. http://www.ccnt.gov.cn/xxfb/xwzx/whxw/200912/t20091215_75676.html, 15 December 2009.

train their successors, thus promoting the construction of a system for the protection of ancient books in ethnic languages. (Website of the State Commission for Ethnic Affairs 2010)

5 Issuing of *Opinions on the Improvement of the Administration of the Work of Ethnic Languages*

On May 4, 2010, the State Ethnic Affairs Commission issued *Opinions on the Improvement of the Administration of the Work Concerning Ethnic Languages* (minweifa No. 53, 2010). It is an important document giving guidance to the work concerning ethnic languages, and mentions the following aspects: the significance of ethnic languages, the Commission's guiding ideology, basic principles, main tasks, relevant policies and measures, and a control mechanism.

References

- Official website of the Central Government. 2009. *Some opinions of the State Council about the further promotion and development of the cultural undertakings of ethnic minorities* (国务院关于进一步繁荣发展少数民族文化事业的若干意见). http://www.gov.cn/test/2009-08/13/content_1390565.htm, 13 August 2009.
- Website of the State Commission for Ethnic Affairs. 2010. *The third meeting of work concerning ancient books in ethnic languages held in Beijing* (第三次全国少数民族古籍工作会议在北京召开). <http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/xwzx/2010-12-16/1292202119179556.htm>, 16 December 2010.

Appendix

Opinions on the Improvement of the Administration of the Work of Ethnic Languages (minweifa No. 53, 2010) issued by the State Ethnic Affairs Commission

Source: website of the State Ethnic Affairs Commission

<http://www.seac.gov.cn/gjmw/zwgk2010-06-18/1276764065074843.htm>, 14 May 2010

Departments or commissions of ethnic (religious) affairs of all provinces, autonomous regions, and Xinjiang production and construction corps, commissions (offices) of the autonomous regions of Guangxi, Tibet, Xinjiang and Yunnan Province.

In order to carry out policies, and to implement laws and regulations of the Party and the state on ethnic affairs and promote the unity of all ethnic groups, we propose the following opinions and suggestions according to existing laws and relevant regulations of the State Commission of Ethnic Affairs:

1 The importance of doing a good job in the administration of ethnic languages

- (1) Our country is a unified nation of multiple ethnic groups, and parts of the ethnic population are still using their own spoken and written languages, which are not only important tools of communication in their production activities and daily life, but also serve as carriers of ethnic cultures. They serve as emotional links between different ethnic groups and are thus valuable resources of the nation.
- (2) Ever since the founding of the People's Republic, the Party and the government have attached great importance to the administration of ethnic languages and established administration networks and formed cross-provincial and cross-regional coordination systems for ethnic languages at the national, provincial or autonomous regional, prefectural, and county levels. Laws and regulations concerning ethnic languages have been improved; bilingual education in both the Chinese language and ethnic languages are in fairly good shape; a great number of professionals have been trained, which has strengthened the contingent of workers in ethnic languages. Ethnic groups with a traditional written script have seen unprecedented development in the fields of translation, publication, education, journalism, radio, film and television, the sorting of ancient books, as well as in information processing. A lot has been achieved in raising the level of standardization and the healthy development of their languages.
- (3) With the arrival of economic globalization and the progress of reform at home, ethnic language cultivation now enters a new phase. Some new problems have emerged in the maintenance of ethnic languages, so there are new challenges as well as opportunities for the use of ethnic languages as the modern communication technologies, like new IT and the Internet, develop rapidly. This phenomenon reflects the progress made by people of ethnic origin – many of them have learned and mastered the common language of the nation. However, the number of people using ethnic languages is decreasing, and a few such languages are on the verge of extinction and need protection. Bilingual education must be strengthened. The

struggle between infiltration and non-infiltration, between the affirmation and renunciation of ethnic languages deserves our great attention.

- (4) Policies on ethnic languages are important components of China's policy concerning ethnic affairs, and ethnic language work is a vital part of it. An effective administration of the ethnic language endeavor is of great importance for ensuring equal rights for ethnic minorities. The maintenance and continuation of traditional ethnic cultures increases China's soft power and safeguards the cultural security of the nation; it also promotes the unity of all ethnic groups and the economic development of ethnic regions.

2 Guiding ideologies, basic principles, and main tasks of administrative work concerning ethnic languages

- (5) Guiding ideology: We should hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics and take Deng Xiaoping theory and the theory of the "three represents" as the guiding ideology. Furthermore, we should put into effect the scientific view of development and comprehensively implement the policies, rules and regulations issued by the Party and the state concerning ethnic languages, safeguarding the rights of ethnic people to use and develop their own languages. Accordingly, we should carry out ethnic language work in an active and reliable way, so as to serve the equality and unity of different ethnic groups and their joint development, and build a harmonious socialist society.
- (6) Basic principles: Persisting in administering and handling relevant affairs in accordance with the law; promoting the enrichment and development of the standard of the nation's common spoken and written language; protecting, using and developing ethnic languages; upholding the principle of people foremost and respecting the aspiration of the masses and ensuring the freedom of citizens of different ethnic groups to learn and use the language(s) of their choice; persisting in seeking truth in facts and giving instructions according to the actual situation to promote development in a more scientific way in the ethnic language enterprise; continuing to encourage people of different ethnic groups to learn each other's language so as to promote the harmonious development of ethnic relations.
- (7) Main tasks: Propagating the principles and policies set by the Party and the state concerning ethnic languages; expanding the legal framework concern-