

LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC POLICY

Language management in the People's Republic of China

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Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, language management has been a central activity of the party and government, interrupted during the years of the Cultural Revolution. It has focused on the spread of Putonghua as a national language, the simplification of the script, and the auxiliary use of Pinyin. Associated has been a policy of modernization and terminological development. There have been studies of bilingualism and topolects (regional varieties like Cantonese and Hokkien) and some recognition and varied implementation of the needs of non-Han minority languages and dialects, including script development and modernization. Asserting the status of Chinese in a globalizing world, a major campaign of language diffusion has led to the establishment of Confucius Institutes all over the world. Within China, there have been significant efforts in foreign language education, at first stressing Russian but now covering a wide range of languages, though with a growing emphasis on English. Despite the size of the country, the complexity of its language situations, and the tension between competing goals, there has been progress with these language-management tasks. At the same time, nonlinguistic forces have shown even more substantial results. Computers are adding to the challenge of maintaining even the simplified character writing system. As even more striking evidence of the effect of politics and demography on language policy, the enormous internal rural-to-urban rate of migration promises to have more influence on weakening regional and minority varieties than campaigns to spread Putonghua. Overall, linguists and a strongly developed cadre of sociolinguists have played a useful role, but the driving force has been the Communist leadership.*

Keywords: language policy, China, language management, Chinese scripts, minorities, varieties of Chinese, politics

1. GOALS OF LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA. With its population of 1,344 million, over 90% of them Han Chinese who speak seven mainly mutually unintelligible topolects, each with many subdialects,¹ and the remainder non-Han peoples speaking nearly 300 other languages, China offers a major challenge for language management. Language policy in China has a long history. Leaving aside the several thousand years of the development of a unifying script, there were attempts to develop a common language and simplify the writing system even before the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Since 1949, language issues have been in the forefront of government and Party policy. Given the size of the country, the diversity of social and ethnic divisions, the difficulty of balancing competing goals, and the normal challenges of implementation, it is not to be wondered that the project is still far from complete. An accurate account of the situation is made more difficult by the conflicting points of view of those who study it: Chinese establishment scholars and practitioners in language policy tend to stress the ideal state prescribed in legislation and policy statements, activist supporters of regional and minority languages decry failures of implementation, and foreign scholars are handicapped by the disagreements in the published literature.

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¹ The term 'topolect' has been proposed as a translation for the Chinese term *fāngyán* to refer to the regional varieties like Cantonese and Hokkien (Mair 1991, 2013). *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al. 2013) recognizes thirteen separately coded 'member languages' of Chinese (*zho* is its ISO 639-3 coding).

Nonetheless, a number of recent studies provide a useful introduction to the state of language policy and management in China.² From these and other publications, one can learn that there has been a great deal of activity since 1949, with the obvious exception of the decade of the Cultural Revolution beginning in 1966. This article sets out to describe the general lines that emerge from these publications, asking if there are useful lessons for language management elsewhere, or whether local national political goals have dominated linguistic considerations. After reviewing the evidence, I have come to believe that the case of the PRC, like the similar situation in the Soviet Union and its former constituents, shows that linguists have turned out to have much less influence on language policy than government and politicians do.

In the foreword to the Zhou collection, Mair (2004) lists the ten goals of language planning in China as simplification and standardization of Chinese script, promotion of Putonghua as a national language,³ design and use of Pinyin, identification and mapping of regional language varieties, recognition and description of official minority varieties, creation of scripts for non-Sinitic varieties, translation of names and terms from other languages, language pedagogy and diffusion, bilingualism, and foreign language instruction. These cover the major issues of language management, which Spolsky 2009 defines as efforts to modify the language practices and beliefs of others, and provide a good framework for this review. Given the ‘enormous ethnic and linguistic diversity’ (as Mair puts it) of China and the rapid development of information technology and globalization, the topic will be of continuing concern.

2. WRITING REFORM AND THE STATUS OF PUTONGHUA. The goal of reforming the Chinese writing system has been one of the main tasks of modern Chinese language management (Rohsenow 1986, 2004). There were earlier attempts—in 1935 under the Republic, there was a proposal to simplify 624 characters, but it was defeated—but most activity took place only after the establishment of the People’s Republic of China. The PRC undertook its first simplification efforts in the 1950s. The first goal of language reform focused on solving what were considered urgent problems of illiteracy and lack of popular education.

A coalition of academics interested in Latinization was transformed on the direction of Mao Zedong and other party leaders into a research commission and merged with other groups interested in script reform, adding party members and becoming in 1954 the Commission for the Reform of the Chinese Written Language. It published in 1956 a list of 515 simplified characters; this list was expanded to 2,238 characters in 1965 and appears as the General List of Print Fonts of Chinese Characters (Zhao & Baldauf 2008:46). Though it was criticized by many outside of China, it has become the standard for all publication in Modern Written Chinese; it is now generally accepted except in Taiwan. The goal of simplification was to increase literacy and to make the achieve-

² Particularly helpful is the collection of papers written by Chinese and foreign scholars and practitioners found in Minglang Zhou 2004. There will be more information available on the topic when Y. Li 2015 appears, for Yuming Li is Party Chief of the Beijing Language and Culture University and has been active in language planning for many years: he was the director general of the language information department of the PRC Ministry of Education between 2001 and 2012. There have also been collections of articles in three issues of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*: number 59 edited by Bjørn Jernudd in 1986, number 97 edited by Hongkai Sun and Florian Coulmas in 1992, and most recently number 215, published in 2012 and edited by Minglang Zhou.

³ The terms *Guoyu* ‘national language’ and *Putonghua* ‘common speech’ were both used in the early twentieth century for the standard variety of Chinese, but in 1956, the PRC adopted *Putonghua* as the official designation for Mandarin. Beckett and Postiglione (2012) prefer *Hanyu* but accept the other terms used by contributors to their volume.

ment of government policies easier; in much the same way, Lenin accepted the use of non-Russian languages as a means of spreading socialism (Grenoble 2003:41). At the same time, the reform produced a potential barrier between China and its neighbors that is slowly being overcome.

The simplification was paralleled by moves to define and promote Putonghua (*Pūtōnghuà*) as a standard national language and to develop a method of writing it phonetically. Putonghua was based on the lexicon and grammar of Mandarin, with Beijing pronunciation. Chairman Mao had originally held that a phonetic writing system should be based on Chinese characters, but in 1956 he approved the use of a Romanized system (*Hànyǔ Pīnyīn*). This example suggests clearly that Chinese language management closely reflects the current political views of the Communist Party and the Central Government rather than the application of linguistic principles: language management in China receives constant government attention.

Although some originally argued that Pinyin should replace the traditional Chinese characters, it was soon decided that it was only to be used as an auxiliary system, in the initial teaching of literacy and as an aid in commercial product labeling. The anti-rightist activities, beginning in 1957 and continuing until the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, slowed down language reform, although Premier Zhou Enlai's support of Putonghua, simplification of characters, and use of Pinyin as an auxiliary system was expressed in a number of policy statements in 1958. In that year, however, the 'Great Leap Forward' delayed language-reform efforts until 1963, when implementation started again slowly. In the final years of the Cultural Revolution, a committee published a list of 853 simplified characters and made some other proposals. The new scheme was publicly attacked and withdrawn after six months.

In 1980, the Committee on Script Reform was reorganized and began to revive the Second Scheme. Strong political opposition emerged, however, and in 1986, at the Second National Conference on Language and Script, it was announced that the Second Scheme had been terminated and the revised list was to be withdrawn; while minor modification might still be made, there would no more attempts at large-scale simplification. Zhao and Baldauf (2008) provide a detailed analysis of the struggles leading to the abandonment of the Second Scheme. They trace the problems to the mixed nature of the membership of committees and participants in conferences, which included linguists, language-policy and informational-technology experts, and the nonspecialist party and government officials who presumably had the last word. There are, they say, no reports of the details of the internal disagreements that led to the long delay. Again, we see political rather than linguistic decision making.

In 1986, the reform committee, renamed 'State Language Commission' (its Chinese name was *Guojia Yuwen Wenzhi Gongzuo Weiyuanhui* 'The National Committee on Language and Script Work'), came under the authority of the State Educational Commission (Rohsenow 2004:30). At a conference in January, the decision was announced that Pinyin would not become an independent writing system, but would be used as a tool in the learning of Chinese. There was some disagreement, but effectively the promotion of Putonghua became the principal task of Chinese language management. Putonghua was to become the language of instruction in all schools, the working language of government, the language of media, and the common language for speakers of all topolects and dialects.

Policies to spread the use of Putonghua were implemented, and in 1996 it was proposed to institutionalize them by passing a law. The Language Law, finally adopted in 2001, reaffirmed the status of Putonghua and of simplified spelling, calling for continued promotion

of both. At the same time, influenced by those who favored diversity, the law permitted the limited use of topolects and the maintenance of selected minority languages.

Rohsenow (2004) points out the problems that emerged with the increased use of computers related to the use of characters rather than an alphabet. Zhao and Baldauf (2008) draw attention to the resulting interest of information technicians in language policy, and the way that they shared with the linguists on the reform committees an interest in simplified spelling. Educators too became concerned; while they favored Pinyin as an initial teaching medium (Yongbing 2005), a recent study (Tan et al. 2013) suggests that children learning to read with Pinyin have much lower proficiency in Chinese characters.

Saillard (2004) has detailed other problems in the promotion of Putonghua, arguing that there have been obstacles to its development as a lingua franca. By 1984, only 50% of the population was assumed to speak it. In addition, under the influence of the topolects, regional forms of Putonghua have inevitably developed. This explains, Saillard suggests, the problems noted with results of the National Putonghua Proficiency Test, accounting for common pronunciation errors caused by interference from the topolects. D. C. S. Li (2006), a linguist teaching at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, also makes clear that the work is incomplete and long term: a national conference in 1997 hoped that by 2050 there would be no more so-called 'blind spots' within the PRC where Putonghua cannot be understood.

While government language-management efforts continue to play a part, the shift to Putonghua is being accelerated in large measure by the phenomenal rate of internal rural-to-urban migration in China as a result of the new market economy: with something like three hundred million such migrants in the last decade, even a strong variety like Shanghainese (a dialect of the Wu topolect) might soon be threatened. One is reminded of how the spread of Russian in the Soviet Union was greatly facilitated by forced population shifts (Lewis 1972:139ff.). Beckett and Postiglione (2012:13), in a book that presents evidence for a recent reversion from pluralistic to assimilationist language policies, point out that the original recognition of autonomous ethnic groups followed the criteria used by Joseph Stalin. They thus echo the worry about the move from linguistic diversity to language harmony expressed by Minglang Zhou (2008) in a special issue of the journal *Chinese Education and Society* of which he was guest editor. An issue of the *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* also edited by Zhou (2012) collects a number of articles revealing the way that the promotion of Putonghua is endangering minority languages.

3. THE REGIONAL VARIETIES. When Putonghua was officially adopted as the national language in the 1950s, it was intended that it should and would replace the regional varieties (topolects). In the 1980s, however, observing the continued popularity and widespread public use of the topolects and minority varieties, Chinese linguists were at first surprised; a vigorous debate over the issue ensued (Guo 2004). Some linguists argued for the value of the simultaneous use of the national and the regional varieties, a position finally accepted by the State Language Commission in 1996. As a result, while the 2001 Language Law emphasized the continued promotion of Putonghua, it also listed appropriate occasions for allowing the public use of the regional and minority varieties. This reflected lessons learned from work on the fourth goal, the study of the regional varieties, which was associated with the growth of Chinese sociolinguistics (Chao 1976,⁴ Chen 1999, Xu 2004).

⁴ Chao learned and wrote about most Chinese topolects, regretting only that he never mastered the southern Min variety. He taught in China and the United States, becoming president of the Linguistic Society of

3.1. MINORITY VARIETIES: RECOGNITION. The topolects account for the majority of Han Chinese, but China also includes many non-Han minority groups. It was only under the PRC that fifty-five minority groups, many with more than one language, were recognized (Sun 1992). In the mid-1950s, the government set up seven working teams of linguists with a total of 700 members to identify and recognize these languages. By 1966, more than sixty had been recognized, but nearly forty years later, Sun (2004:179) claimed that there exist over 120 different languages; *Ethnologue* counts 298 living languages (Lewis et al. 2013). The official recognition of only some of these varieties, expressed in statements by political leaders and in laws and regulations, is not unlike the limited recognition of minorities and their languages under Lenin in the Soviet Union. In both Russia and China, the principal argument for recognition was not some fundamental human right or some linguistic notion like mutual intelligibility, but a pragmatic realization that providing education in the minority languages would be the fastest way to achieve national ideological goals. In the Soviet Union under Stalin, the policy lapsed and was reversed (Lewis 1972:71); in the PRC, it has continued until recently. There is continuing tension between the Putonghua movement and the associated search for national unity on the one hand and the persistent loyalty to local autonomy and languages on the other.

3.2. MINORITY VARIETIES: WRITING SYSTEMS. Once the PRC government had accepted the principle of recognition of some minority languages, the development of writing systems to facilitate and preserve their use became an important language-management task. In 1958, it was agreed to develop for those minorities that had no writing system new phonetic alphabets based on Pinyin and not on Cyrillic or other systems, after appropriate research and experimentation, and taking into account the wishes of the minority groups. The first burst of linguistic activity in the 1950s and 1960s resulted in the development and approval of fourteen scripts for eleven ethnic minorities, including the Zhuang, Bouyei, Miaou, Hani, and Yi peoples.⁵ Others developed later included Lahu and Yi. Including the preexisting systems (Mongolian, Tibetan, Uygur, Kazak, Korean, Kirghiz, and Xibe already had scripts), by 2004 there were over thirty different writing systems being used. The goals of this policy, Sun (1992, 2004) explains, have been implementing ethnic and linguistic equality, standardizing and improving the writing systems, and encouraging the learning of Putonghua by minority peoples. Major surveys have been carried out by sociolinguists on the situation of these languages. Some basic guidelines were established, the first of which was adherence to Marxist principles for the equality of minority languages. This would assist in ‘the modern socialist reconstruction of China as a whole’ (Sun 2004:183). Legislation is being developed to encourage minority language work in each region, but implementation has been delayed by the pressure for unification.

3.3. MINORITY VARIETIES: SOME CASE STUDIES. There is an obvious tension between minority language maintenance and the spread of Putonghua, associated with other problems of the situation of the minority groups. This becomes clearest by looking at some case studies published by language-policy scholars and activists.

Tibetan is an obvious first example. Maocao Zhou (2004) notes that there are three distinct vernaculars for Tibetan that share a single writing system. In some areas, espe-

America in 1945. Chao thus fits the pattern of those US linguists who saw one of their roles as contributing to public language policy.

⁵ This matched the involvement of US linguists in the ‘classic’ language-policy work (Jernudd & Nekvapil 2012) of the same period.

cially outside Tibet, Tibetans are also bilingual in Chinese, something now occurring in Tibet itself as a result of the growing Han population. While official policy recognizes Tibetan as a language of instruction in schools, there are many non-Tibetan teachers in secondary schools, and there is only limited use of Tibetan in schools outside Tibet. There are Tibetan newspapers and other media, but there have been problems in using Tibetan in government offices. Maocao Zhou (2004) complains that some government officials are not implementing the constitutional and legal support for Tibetan use, that there is a serious shortage of Tibetan teachers in schools, that the high level of illiteracy of the population is a major problem, that the gap between the Tibetan dialects has not been resolved, and that there are insufficient funds for all of the work necessary to deal with these tasks. There are complaints from Tibetan nationalist groups about the lack of support for the language, and political tension continues.

A second case is Uyghur. In an insightful analysis of the complexity of minority language policy produced by a large bureaucratic system, Blachford (2004) points out the competing interests of top political leaders, minority group leaders, and language experts and linguists, and the way they handle the tension between center and periphery. She shows the particular difficulties that have developed in policy changes in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Initially, in 1959, it was decided to replace the Perso-Arabic-based Uyghur and Kazak scripts with a Romanized alphabet, bringing them closer to Pinyin and so speeding up the spread of Putonghua. The new scripts were to be implemented in a four-year campaign beginning in schools in 1960. By 1967, they were to be spread to government, the military, and industry, and they were to be completely in effect by 1976. The plan was interrupted by the Cultural Revolution, after which the use of the traditional scripts was restored, reversing twenty years of work. But this was combined with a policy to speed up the spread of Putonghua, with the aim of using it as the medium of instruction at various levels, the process to be completed by 1990. Here, too, many complain about the failure to respect the legal recognition of the minority varieties. Ma (2012) makes clear the strong influence of school educational policy on minority languages. Minority language policy remains a major and complex issue, exacerbated by the failure of economic policy to improve the position of minorities, as shown by the continuing political unrest and reported violence in Xinjiang and Tibet (Zhu & Blachford 2012).

Blachford and Jones (2011) draw attention to additional problems for minority groups produced by the recent increasing emphasis on teaching English in the new policies,⁶ requiring them to deal with the complexity of trilingual education: speakers of minority languages have first to learn Putonghua and then to add English. They report in particular on one Naxi school in Yunnan, in a comparatively well-off farming area. The school has only one English teacher, with poor qualifications and low proficiency, and the children and their parents have little motivation to learn English. The lack of resources (the school has only nine of the twelve teachers it should have) means that students from minority language backgrounds are severely handicapped especially when efforts have moved from teaching Mandarin to adding English, and they are unlikely to meet the requirements for admission to higher education. Basically, Blachford and Jones argue that globalization, as implemented in the introduction of English as a third required language, has exacerbated educational problems for minority groups like the Naxi in Yunnan.

⁶ See for instance Rao 2013, although newspapers are starting to report resistance to this 'unprecedented' growth.

Zhuang is another significant example. The Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in the South of China is the main area populated by the Zhuang, the largest ethnic minority group with a population of about seventeen million (X. Li & Huang 2004). The Zhuang language has two major dialects that are not mutually intelligible, each with several subdialects. Because of long contact with Han, the language includes many Chinese words. It is widely used in daily life, but Chinese (usually Cantonese) is commonly used between speakers of the two major dialects, and Putonghua is required on official occasions.

In the early 1950s, linguists surveyed the language situation and trained a number of Zhuang speakers in linguistics. In 1954, it was proposed to develop two writing systems, but at a conference a year later, it was agreed to develop a single system based on the more common Northern dialect. The alphabet, based on the Roman alphabet with some additional letters that were dropped in a 1980s revision, was accepted. A number of institutions were established to develop and implement the system: these included a central committee that became the Minority Language Work Commission of the Autonomous Community, a central translation office, and various committees and schools at local levels. Foundational work was carried out in the first decade, but ceased during the Cultural Revolution.

Since 1980, these Zhuang language-management institutions have been restored and new ones added dealing with broadcasting, language teaching, and public signage. Zhuang-Mandarin bilingual education was established, with Zhuang as the language of instruction for the first three years and then becoming an auxiliary language. Increasing numbers of Zhuang teachers have been trained. Large numbers of books and other media have been translated. Terminology has been developed and standardized especially for information technology. A large-scale literacy campaign has begun. And there has been encouragement of folksongs. Having summarized what they describe as obvious accomplishments of forty years of activity, X. Li and Huang (2004) list five aspects that still need development: the importance of minority language maintenance should be enhanced among 'cadres and masses', use of Zhuang as language of instruction needs more work, new methods of language teaching are needed, the balance between Zhuang and Putonghua needs stressing, and the social status of the language needs to be raised.

Another major ethnic minority is the Yi, with a population of about seven million, found mainly in Liangshan, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and Guangxi regions. They speak at least six mutually unintelligible varieties, with monolingual speakers in compact communities and residents who are bilingual with a Chinese variety more usual in scattered communities (Pu 2004). A traditional writing system with 8,000–10,000 characters had been developed during the Middle Ages, but its use was restricted. Standardization started in the 1950s, including a proposal to use an alphabetic script, but there was opposition. However, from 1958 to the early 1970s, any use of Yi was discouraged, and Putonghua became the only language used in schools and official activities in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Region. In the 1960s, the traditional script was revived and 800 characters were selected for popular use. Language management ceased during the Cultural Revolution and was resumed afterward, with the development of the Sichuan Scheme of Standard Yi Writing. This became official in 1980, and a literacy campaign was considered successful. Bilingual education was introduced in many schools, and mass media adopted Yi, including its use for information technology. Yi was established for official use in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture in 1992, and two patterns of bilingual education (with Yi or Putonghua as the language of instruction and the other language as auxiliary or a subject) were adopted. Because there are six dialects in-

volved, standardization of Yi has been a greater problem in Yunnan Province with its four million Yi speakers. It was originally planned to use Yi characters supplemented by Roman, but, in 1987, a Yi scheme with 2,605 characters and no Roman letters was put into effect. Yi teachers were trained, and experimental bilingual education was shown to be valuable, but no consensus has emerged on its implementation. In Guizhou, traditional writing was standardized and translation and literacy programs begun. There have been experiments with bilingual education with Yi as a supplementary language, handicapped by the existence of different dialects. Pu (2004) concludes that there are three major problems with the promotion of Yi: the absence of a consensus on its use, a shortage of qualified teachers, and a lack of reading materials.

Another case is the Bai, a small group, with fewer than two million people living mainly in western Yunnan (Wang 2004). There are three main dialects, and a traditional writing system developed a thousand years ago that had restricted use. A Romanized system was created in 1958, based on the southern dialect, but it was never implemented fully. In the 1980s, the system was revised, based on the central dialect. It was tried experimentally, but found to be unsuccessful especially in the larger southern dialect area. A revision in the 1990s recognized two base dialects and two pronunciations, with consequent variation in orthography. It is being used experimentally, and may be transitional. In the circumstances, the use of Putonghua has been increasing. In spite of increasing ethnic awareness, the new writing system is not widely used (Wang 2004).

There are over five million Mongols in China, nearly 70% of the Mongol population in the world, with three fourths in Inner Mongolia and the rest scattered (Caodaobateer 2004). There are four major dialects of Mongolian spoken in China, each with several subdialects. Many Mongol communities have become Sinicized as they live close to Han migrants. The Mongols have used four different scripts, but the current standard system was based originally on Old Uyghur with twenty-nine letters. Extensive printing, starting in the 1900s, resulted in standardization. The script is now used by ten presses and in official government publications. It is taught at all levels from kindergarten to university. There are separate systems for writing the Oirat dialect. Use of Mongol is supported by activities of the Inner Mongolian government. There are also activities in other provinces. About half of China's Mongols live in agricultural or pastoral communities, where two thirds use only Mongolian and a third know a Chinese variety. Other communities are bilingual, including communities where Putonghua is the language of instruction. About 20% are reported to have shifted to a Chinese variety, especially in urban areas. In Inner Mongolia, there is educational use of Mongolian at all levels. The educational level of Mongolian youth is reported to be above the national average (Caodaobateer 2004).

From these cases we can learn that, depending on their size, location, and history, minority language communities continue to pose major language-management problems. However, the dramatic demographic changes taking place in China as a result of the introduction of the market economy and the huge migration from rural areas to cities are likely to have major sociolinguistic results, leading to the loss of language diversity and resulting in the further spread of Putonghua.

4. MODERNIZATION OF TERMINOLOGY. The next management task mentioned by Mair for Chinese was lexical development. Pasierbsky (1989) argued that because Chinese culture is a lender rather than a borrower and because of the ease of developing new characters in Chinese, most lexical development and modernization has been carried out without borrowing. There has been some borrowing from Western languages and from Japanese and other languages, but Wiebusch and Tadmor (2009:594) agree

that the rate is remarkably low. Borrowing continues, marked by the phonetic translation of foreign words like *tuōfǔ* 'TOEFL' or *kāfēi* 'coffee' (Yip 2000:333).

The earliest stages of Chinese terminology development accompanied the translation of Buddhist scriptures during the Han and Tang dynasties and of scientific work beginning in the Ming dynasty (Liu 1986). The PRC built on these precedents. In 1950, a Committee for Unifying Academic Terms was set up, reassigned to the Academia Sinica in 1956, but work ceased during the Cultural Revolution (Liu 1986). In 1996, a National Committee for Terms in Sciences and Technologies was established to replace earlier committees. It aims to develop basic terminology, offering consensus findings and proposing alternatives used in other Chinese-speaking areas but not imposing its own solution (Chen 2001:72). With this process in place, standard written Chinese is said to be able to function as the language of a modern state.

5. CHINESE LANGUAGE DIFFUSION. Another area listed by Mair, language pedagogy and language diffusion, refers to the teaching of Mandarin externally as opposed to the internal program for the establishment of Putonghua as a national language. Language diffusion is exemplified by the programs for the teaching of English through the British Council and the USIA (Phillipson 1990, 1994), of French through the Alliance Française (Kleineidam 1992), and of German through the Goethe Institute (Ammon 1992). The Chinese equivalent are the Confucius Institutes, under the authority of the Office of Chinese Language Council (*Hanban*), affiliated with the Ministry of Education and in operation in over 440 universities and secondary schools in over ninety countries and regions around the world by the end of 2013 (Hartig 2012).

The major concentrations of Confucius Institutes are in the United States, South Korea, and Japan, but there are also many in Africa and Europe (Hua & Wei 2014). The goal is to have 1,000 such institutes by 2020; their primary linguistic task is to teach Mandarin, but they also aim to spread Chinese culture, encourage trade, and improve China's image abroad. Institutes are locally controlled, funded jointly by the Chinese Language Council and the local institution and staffed partially by Chinese volunteers. Given the fact that the institutes are seen as part of the Chinese 'soft power initiative', there has been controversy about their role and policy (Sahlins & Turk 2014), with some concern that by establishing one, a university is ceding control of curriculum to an external body. Mandarin language diffusion has been particularly successful in Singapore as a result of internal government policy.

6. BILINGUALISM. Studies of another topic, bilingualism, have focused on the relation of Putonghua to the Chinese topolects; since the 1980s, especially, the issue has been considered significant and has resulted in considerable publication (Guo 2004). As mentioned earlier, there were some leaders and scholars who believed that Putonghua should replace the topolects, but others who considered bilingualism and bidialectalism to be normal and acceptable. After much research and debate, it was finally generally accepted that the promotion of Putonghua did not necessitate the abolition of the topolects, but rather allowed their appropriate use: the national language should be used in formal and public occasions (official business, education, media) alongside the regional use of the topolects for 'daily communication and for the communication of emotions' (Guo 2004: 51). As in the case of the minority languages policy, this recognition of diversity has been pragmatic, resulting from the grassroots resistance to complete imposition of Putonghua.

7. FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION. Foreign language education, another major language-management activity, has also been politically driven. From 1949 until 1956, Russian was the favored foreign language in the PRC (Mao & Min 2004). Starting in

1959, English became more important, but during the Cultural Revolution, with the suspension of regular schooling, all foreign language education was restricted. In 1978, after the arrest of the Gang of Four, a symposium urged the strengthening of foreign language teaching, calling for the development of elementary, secondary, and postsecondary programs. English was to be stressed, but other languages, including Russian, were to be maintained. By 1984, thirty-four languages were being taught, and many textbooks were being published. In that year, directives were issued to boost the teaching of foreign languages in order to support modernization in agriculture, industry, national defense, and science. Funding was increased, and new methods were developed. Efforts were made to reduce the traditional Chinese emphasis on testing by establishing a balanced curriculum. Starting in 2001, the teaching of English was added to the elementary school curriculum, bolstering the existing secondary school program. Universities also increased their teaching of English and began offering courses in English. There was a rapid expansion of private English language education (Hu & McKay 2012), and the teaching of English expanded even further before the 2008 Olympic Games.

8. LANGUAGE TESTING AS MANAGEMENT. There are at least two activities that Mair did not mention specifically but that may be derived from those that he did; the first is language testing. Shohamy (1993, 2001) in particular has drawn attention to the way that tests are often used for management, whether of educational systems or of personal decisions like immigration. There have been many studies of the Chinese Imperial Examination system, which for over two millennia dominated Chinese political life and education and which continues to influence Chinese and Asian education, controlling admission to advanced instruction as well as careers. The *Gaokao* (National College Entrance Examination), taken by over nine million high school students annually who are competing for limited university places, is regionally administered, but always includes three subjects: Chinese, Mathematics, and English (or another language). University graduation is dependent on English language proficiency (Cheng & Curtis 2010, Jin 2010). Thus language testing takes a central role in control of the educational system and in language management, setting proficiency in Putonghua and English as critical gate-keeping mechanisms.

9. FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY. Understanding of language-shift mechanisms is growing as a result of studies of language policy within the domain of the family. A number of studies have looked at families of Chinese immigrants in many different countries, for example, Curdt-Christiansen 2009, Ng & He 2004, and Wei 1994. It would be interesting to know more about the effect of the Chinese one-child policy on language: many studies have shown the differences in language shift that result from birth order, as older siblings attending school bring a new language into the home. In the one-child home, parental influence on language is presumably stronger, with children benefiting from greater exposure to adult speech, but more dependent on parental practice. With the expansion of internal migration, this could well be an important issue.

10. ASSESSING CHINESE LANGUAGE MANAGEMENT. From this brief sketch of the areas of Chinese language management in the PRC, one can see that the field is well developed and of great significance. There is, of course, evidence of strong centralized political control, with ideological and leadership changes leading to modification of goals. There has been a serious attempt to take into account the counterforces of the periphery—the strength of the topolects and the minority and regional communities. There have been difficulties in implementation, an inevitable result of bureaucratic complexity and central-

ized planning, which might well benefit from appreciation of the differences in levels and domains (Spolsky 2009). Recent studies of language management in Europe and North America by Williams (2007, 2012, 2013) have made clear that the successful implementation of language policy requires action at all levels of a society; similarly, studies by Xu (2004) stress the importance of the community level to language policy. But as a centrally controlled state that assumes it can dominate local and individual beliefs and desires, the PRC has tended to choose enforcement of central policy over allowing local choice.

Given the enormous complexity of Chinese sociolinguistic communities, even a strong central government faces enormous problems in central planning. As in economic and other planning processes, the assumption that all that is involved is implementation of centrally determined plans has been shown to be invalid. There is great variety in the language practices of the various ethnic and social groups, differences of ideology within and between groups, and resulting conflicts in management. Even without the major problems of modern Chinese history and the gaps in qualified manpower produced by the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, as well as the major problems associated with central economic planning, the enormous complexity of the task and the potential conflicts between goals would have blocked any easy success. The changes produced by globalization and information technology have exacerbated these difficulties. What has been important has been a willingness to consult (in this account we see conferences and committees rather than authorities involved in development) and an openness to experiment and reform. In an important essay, Hirschman (1967) suggested that it is common for major state and industrial schemes to meet unexpected obstacles but for human creativity to come up with new solutions that ultimately lead to success. The changes in direction then are not so much inconsistency as reactions to failures and changing conditions.

In the field of language management, it is hard to assess results, and failure is more common than success (Fishman 1993, Gold 1977, MacNamara 1971, Spolsky 2006). This is true in economics, too, as we stagger from one crisis to another, in international politics as one war succeeds another, and in most domains of life. So we cannot expect the complex tasks tackled by Chinese language management to do much better. We can note the Chinese success in increasing literacy, in maintaining a sense of national identity, in satisfying some but not all minority concerns, in spreading Mandarin outside of China, and in starting to build a cadre of people with foreign language mastery. But each of these remains an unfinished task, with problems produced by tension between contradictory goals (maintaining the traditional script while dealing with demands of the computer age, recognizing regional and heritage languages while encouraging use of Putonghua, teaching Chinese overseas while strengthening the teaching of English inside China⁷), as well as the difficulty of implementation of policies that require resources and support at all levels of a complex system. The very size of China and the multiplicity of language issues make it a fascinating case for the study of language management.

Nor should we ignore the effects of the major ongoing demographic and geographic transformation of China that have resulted from the growing market economy and the huge migration from village to city.⁸ This migration will, without a doubt, contribute sig-

⁷ Hu, Li, and Lei (2014) discuss the difficulty of implementing English-medium instruction in a Chinese university.

⁸ 'The most populous nation of the world, China experiences the most extensive internal migration today', according to a report of the International Labor Organization (<http://www.ilo.org/beijing/areas-of-work/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>).

nificantly to the loss of language diversity; there are increasing numbers of reports of the loss of traditional village cultures, and smaller local languages are being endangered. It may well be that the increasing mixed populations of the cities will have a greater effect on the spread of Putonghua than formal management activities. Just as the policy of population exchanges in the Soviet Union bolstered the status and spread of Russian (Lewis 1972), so too the population movement in China will encourage the use of Putonghua and threaten the maintenance not just of minority languages but even of the large regional topolects.⁹ If this turns out to be true, it will make clear how language management is at the mercy of many more powerful forces, whether demographic, economic, or political. In any case, it emphasizes the need for scholars of language management to look beyond language policies and consider the effect of other state areas of policy.

11. LANGUAGE AND PUBLIC POLICY IN CHINA. When in 1959 Charles Ferguson proposed establishing the Center for Applied Linguistics as a means of providing expert guidance to the planning and implementation of US public policy in the language sphere, he could have pointed to the language-management activities already underway in China, and the growing cadre of linguists involved.¹⁰ This active engagement has continued, with the gap of the Cultural Revolution, so that by now China has half a century of language management and a well-established cadre of applied linguists, as well as a bank of experience. Throughout, there has been strong central support and control, and although there is evidence that nonlinguistic influences (mass internal migration, the one-child policy, political ideology) have often been more influential than planned intervention, there is clearly much to be learned from the recruitment of Chinese linguistics to the planning and implementation of public language policy.

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⁹ Hong Kong may be an exception, for while there has been an increase in knowledge of Putonghua, it appears that migrants there are shifting to Cantonese instead (Ding 2010).

¹⁰ According to Huebner (1996:20), Ferguson was actually invited to China in 1977 and wrote about the teaching of literacy there (Ferguson 1977). Ferguson (1979) saw PRC language policy as a continuation of the Imperial policy.

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