

The Second Generation of “New Shanghainese”: their language
and identity

Shihong Weng

Department of Linguistics

University of California, San Diego

November 27, 2022

Acknowledgement Page

First I would like to thank Prof. Sharon Rose for her guidance and encouragement throughout this project. Prof. Rose encouraged me to expand the sample size and recruited the second group of participants after she read the first draft, which was proven extremely helpful to my project. She has read every draft of the paper and provided much useful feedback to me. Thank you for being such a good mentor for me during the entire project!

I would also like to thank all of my participants in this project. They participated in my project in their senior year when most of them were already busy with graduate school applications and job interviews. Many of them had to put up with the time difference and stayed up late to talk to me while they were in China and I was in the US. Thank you for taking your time to participate, and thank you for all the intellectual stimulating interviews during the project!

I am also grateful to the writing tutors in the UCSD Writing Hub: Summer N, Ryan D and Amanda N for their help with the paper. They have been excellent readers to my drafts and provided valuable suggestions about my writing throughout my writing process.

Finally, thank you to all the members in the UC San Diego Linguistics Department. I have learned so much from the professors, undergraduate, and graduate students about linguistics and beyond, and my experience in the department will always be one of the best memories I had in life.

Abstract

In this study I examined the language use and language ideology of the second generation of New Shanghainese whose parents, the first generation of new Shanghainese, migrated to Shanghai in the late nineties or early twenties, and then I compared them with the language use and language attitudes of the native Shanghainese. In 11 interviews with the second generation of New Shanghainese and 9 interviews with the native Shanghainese, I asked questions about their language use and language attitudes, and also their self-identification. The result shows that the two groups have similar linguistic profiles: high fluency in PTH and English and low fluency in English. Both groups view Shanghainese as an unimportant factor for Shanghainese identification but for native Shanghainese participants Shanghainese language serves as an important factor that differentiates them from the new Shanghainese. In addition, despite their difference in family background, participants from both groups are against the idea of putting more emphasis on Shanghainese in the current education system. The result of this study shows that the current language policy in the Shanghainese education system has a strong impact on both the native and new Shanghainese community. The emphasis on PTH and English and the absence of Shanghainese in school and at work have made Shanghainese of little practical use in Shanghai and thereby discouraged the young Shanghainese to learn the language.

Introduction

Language attitudes is a sociolinguistic field that has received attention from many. Factors such as immigration and language policy have a strong impact in shaping language attitudes of individuals and communities. Although there has been much research focusing on the native languages of the migrants, or the native languages of the communities that accept immigrants, it is also important to examine the language attitudes of the second generation of migrants, who grow up in new locations with complicated language use and identities.

Migration to Shanghai and hukou system

Since the Opening and Reform Policy was implemented in China in 1978, Shanghai, one of the largest and most economically developed cities in China, has experienced rapid urbanization and expansion (Zhao et al., 2006). Millions of Chinese people from less economically developed regions migrated to Shanghai hoping for more opportunities and better lives. However, these ambitious young people faced one big obstacle: the *hukou* system, also commonly referred to as the household registration system. The hukou system was first implemented in 1951 to control the population movement in China, under which Chinese people are required to register for one place in which they reside (Liu, 2005). Thus the hukou system differentiates people based on their places of settlement. People obtained different entitlements such as housing, pension, education resources based on their hukou. As a result, people whose hukou is in an economically developed area such as Shanghai have many privileges, such as better healthcare and education, over the rest of China. For the migrants

who came to Shanghai hoping for a better life, their non-Shanghainese hukou deprives them of many privileges Shanghainese people have: the migrants are excluded from the social welfare system in Shanghai, their children are excluded from the education system in Shanghai, they are not allowed to purchase housing in Shanghai.

Despite all the difficulties caused by the hukou system, some migrants managed to obtain the Shanghai hukou through a merit-based application. Each year the government in Shanghai would confer Shanghainese hukou to some migrants based on their education background, income and so on (Shao & Gao, 2018). If these migrants were evaluated as making substantial contributions to Shanghai in their applications, they will acquire the Shanghainese hukou and thus obtain full citizenship as a local citizen of Shanghai. These migrants are referred to as “New Shanghainese”. These New Shanghainese have the same kind of rights and entitlements as local people who had hukou from birth. Their children therefore were also ascribed with Shanghainese hukou when their parents obtained hukou.

New Shanghainese

The term “New Shanghainese” is used to refer to migrants who were born outside Shanghai and acquired the Shanghainese hukou through the application mentioned above. The fact that they outcompeted other applicants and obtained the hukou suggests that they are very well-educated and have a high socio-economic background. However, despite the fact that the new Shanghainese are registered as “local residents” based on the policies in Shanghai and became the new upper-middle class of the city, they are still considered outsiders of the city and the discrimination towards them persists. Shao and Gao (2018) suggests that from the perspective of the Chinese public, the distinctions between the “local” and “non-local” populations in Shanghai lies in their ability to speak Shanghainese, instead of their residency. Thus, the community of New Shanghainese are considered as “non-local” because they do not speak Shanghainese even though their hukou enables them to be legally considered as “locals”.

Language policies in Shanghai

Putonghua (PTH), also known as Mandarin, is the most commonly used language in China. It is used by the Chinese government and mainstream media. Therefore, Shanghai as a Chinese city encourages people to learn PTH. For college graduates, PTH proficiency is expected in the job markets in Shanghai (Gilliland, 2006). In Shanghai, PTH is the dominant language used in schools and workplaces.

In addition, Shanghai has been famous for its strong emphasis on English language education. Since the economic reform in China in 1978, the promotion of English language education has become integral to Chinese economic development and modernization. As one of the most economically developed and politically liberal places in China, Shanghai was given the autonomy to design its own syllabus, textbooks and curricula of English Language Education. In 1988, Shanghai began its educational reform: English Language Education was included in primary school, secondary school, and high school. English also was given

prominence only after Chinese and Mathematics in terms of instruction time. An English exam was included in both the high school entrance examination and college entrance examination(Hu, 2005). In Shanghai, it is widely believed that an English language education is essential to the economic development of Shanghai and maintaining Shanghai's status as a cosmopolitan city that is open and welcoming to the rest of the world.

Furthermore, in recent years, there have been rising concerns about the future of Shanghainese language: the younger generation of Shanghai show declining proficiency in Shanghainese. To prevent Shanghainese from dying out as a dialect, the government has introduced the Shanghainese Heritage Project that promotes the instruction of Shanghainese in preschools in Shanghai. This new policy may help save Shanghainese, but it is possible that the policy will challenge the teaching environment where PTH is the only medium of instruction and thus will lead to discrimination towards the children from migrant families: both "New Shanghainese " families, and non-local families(Shao & Gao, 2018).

Literature Review

Bai(1994) examined the language attitudes of Shanghainese people towards Shanghainese and PTH. The study surveyed 55 Chinese students. The result showed that Shanghainese people tended to associate PTH with high social status and Shanghainese with group solidarity, which suggests that Shanghainese speakers in the study believed that speaking Shanghainese is related to loyalty to one's hometown. Thus, Bai concluded that it would be difficult to promote PTH in Shanghai where people have such a positive attitude towards Shanghainese. However, a later study(Zhou 2001) showed that spreading PTH in Shanghai may not be as difficult as Bai believed. In the research, Zhou examined the language attitudes of 42 Shanghainese students. The result reveals that Shanghainese speakers do not have a preference for either Putonghua or Shanghainese, which suggests that the younger generation of Shanghainese speakers are not as reluctant to speak PTH as the earlier research suggested. Zhou states that the tendency of the Shanghainese speakers to accept PTH may be attributed to the increased interaction between the Shanghainese-speaking community and the PTH-speaking community(Zhou, 2001).

Furthermore, Gilliland(2006) proves that there is a gradual adaptation of PTH in the young Shanghainese speaking community. By using questionnaires and a matched-guise methodology, Gilliland examined the language ideology of 34 college students who are native Shanghainese speakers. The result of the study shows that those students value PTH and English because of their popularity in the job market while they value Shanghainese for its use in interpersonal relations. In addition, Gilliland's study shows that Shanghainese students do not believe PTH is at odds with their identification as Shanghainese and they have adopted the linguistic model that one nation should use only one language. Thus, Gilliland(2006) shows that the younger generation of Shanghainese people have started to accept PTH as the dominant language in Shanghai.

The three studies mentioned above show a gradual trend for Shanghainese speakers to accept PTH as the most commonly used language in Shanghai. However, the participants of all three studies are native Shanghainese speakers. But native Shanghainese speakers do not make up the entire Shanghainese population. One important community in Shanghai is neglected: migrants who acquired Shanghainese hukou later in their life, who are also called “new Shanghainese”. Fang Xu(2021) examined the language attitudes of native Shanghainese and new immigrants of the city. While the first generation of migrants who settled down in Shanghai reported discrimination for not speaking Shanghainese, native Shanghainese blamed the immigrants who are uninterested in Shanghainese for the demise of the language. In her book Xu noted that despite the reluctance to adopt PTH as the dominant language, native Shanghainese families are hesitant to let their children learn Shanghainese, which suggests that there is a shift of language ideology in Shanghai that will pass on to the next generation.

Therefore, in this study the effect of the language shift in the younger generation of both native and new Shanghainese is examined. Two questions are investigated: whether the younger generation of the native Shanghainese are still interested in maintaining Shanghainese and whether the second generation of new immigrants would worry about their ability to speak Shanghainese as the first generation immigrants did. In addition, this study will also study how the two communities view each other and how they identify themselves with respect to Shanghai and Shanghainese.

Methods

I conducted interviews with 20 participants in total balanced for gender. Group One, named New Shanghainese, consists of 11 participants: all of them have parents who are both New Shanghainese. They were either born in Shanghai and acquired citizenship at birth or acquired citizenship through their parents when they were young and moved to Shanghai at an early age. All the participants are college seniors, and they lived in Shanghai from elementary school to college. They took both the high school entrance exam and college entrance exam in Shanghai as Shanghainese citizens. That is to say, they were all educated in the mainstream Shanghainese education system where the mainstream language policy was imposed.

Group Two, named Native Shanghainese is made up of 9 participants who are native Shanghainese. They and their parents all acquired Shanghainese Hukou at birth. They have the same education background as the New Shanghainese group.

In the interview of the New Shanghainese, I first asked the participants about their family background especially how their family moved to Shanghai and acquired the Shanghainese Hukou. Then I made a linguistic profile for each participant: what languages they speak, how they acquired their languages, when and where they used their languages. After that, I asked them about their self-identification: to what extent they identify themselves as “Shanghainese”. In the end I asked them about their opinion on the language policies in Shanghai.

In the interview with the Native Shanghainese, I asked participants the same questions except for the part about their family background as being native Shanghainese was part of the original selection process.

I conducted the interviews through video chat online and recorded them after informed consent was obtained from participants.

Results

Language Profile

The language profile of the New Shanghainese of participants is shown below. When participants were asked to rate their fluency from 1 to 5 in the languages they speak, they all reported that they are most fluent in PTH: all of them rated their PTH as 5. In addition, they all reported that they are relatively fluent in English. According to the participants, they mostly use PTH at home and school, and at work, while almost half of the participants reported that they also use English in college and at work.

Meanwhile, participants in the New Shanghainese reported low fluency in Shanghainese. Most participants reported that they only use Shanghainese when people whom they speak with do not speak any other language. For instance, P2 reported one case in which he had to use Shanghainese when he needed to update his property certificate.

Interview: When do you need to use Shanghainese?

P2: When I went to the government office to update my housing certificate. The official who worked there only spoke Shanghainese.

Also, participants reported very limited fluency in native languages their family spoke before they migrated to Shanghai. Most of them reported that their parents speak to them only in PTH and they had little access to the native languages of their family. For instance, the description of participant 5 is a typical case to observe how she acquired her parents' Nanjing hua and then lost it. She was born in Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province. Both her parents are from there and spoke Nanjing hua, the language spoken mainly in Nanjing City. They emigrated to Shanghai when she was five.

P5: I could speak Nanjing hua fluently to my parents when I was little, when my family was in Nanjing and maybe one, two years after we moved to Shanghai. And then I went to school in Shanghai where everyone spoke PTH, and my parents stopped speaking Nanjing Hua to me and switched to PTH at home. So now I only speak a little Nanjing hua.

Interviewer: Why did they do that?

P5: I think they started to use PTH more when they started working in Shanghai. They spoke PTH at work and that changed their speech, so they started speaking PTH to me.

Moreover, the report from P1 revealed some negative viewpoints from her family about speaking her native language in Shanghai. Among all 11 New Shanghainese participants, she is the only one who rated her fluency in Guangfei hua, her family's native language, as 5. She explained that her grandmother, who raised her alone, does not speak any PTH and only speaks

Guangfei hua. As a result, she is very fluent in Guangfei hua. However, despite her fluency in her family's native language, she expressed her family's lack of interest in speaking their native language in Shanghai.

P1: I speak to my parents and my grandma in Guangfei hua at home, we barely speak PTH at home. I grew up speaking Guangfei hua to my grandma both when we lived in our hometown and in Shanghai, but now she is taking care of my cousin now and living with my uncle's family. My uncle never allowed her to speak Guangfei hua to my cousin at home.

Interviewer: Why wouldn't your uncle let your grandma speak her language to your cousin?

P1: They believe that it is useless for my cousin to learn it, especially in school now that we are all in Shanghai, which made my grandma really sad.

Num ber	Gender	Age	Languages (fluency)	Emigration Story	Father's language	Mother's language
1	female	21	PTH(5) English(4) Guangfeng hua (5)	F: Shangrao City M: Shangrao City Shanghainese prior to birth: no	PTH Guangfeng hua	PTH Guangfeng hua
2	male	21	PTH(5) English(3.5) Hunan hua(2) Zhuji hua(2) Shanghainese(1)	F : Hunan Province. M: Zhejiang Province. Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH Hunan hua	PTH Zhuji hua
3	female	21	PTH(5) English(2.5) Hefei hua(1) Jiangsu hua(1) Shanghainese(1)	Father: Anhui Province. Mother:Jiangsu Province. Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH Hefei hua	PTH Jiangsu hua
4	male	22	PTH(5) English(4) Fuzhou Hua(1) Shanghainese(2)	F:Fuzhou city Mother:Jiujiang City. Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH English Fuzhou Hua	PTH English
5	female	21	PTH(5) English(4) Nanjing hua(2) Shanghainese(1)	F: Nanjing City M:Nanjing City Shanghainese prior to birth: no	PTH Nanjing hua Shanghainese	PTH Nanjing hua Shanghainese

6	male	21	PTH(5) English(4) Japanese(2) Chongqing hua(3) Shanghainese(3)	F: Chongqing City M:Chongqing City Shanghainese prior to birth: no	PTH Chongqing hua Shanghainese	PTH Chongqing hua Shanghainese
7	male	21	PTH(5) English(3) Shanghainese(2)	F: Anhui Province M:Jiangsu Province Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH English	PTH Shanghainese
8	male	21	PTH(5) English(3) Shanghainese(1)	F: Anhui Province M:Anhui Province Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH English	PTH English
9	male	22	PTH(5) English(4) Shanghainese(3)	F: Jiangsu Province M:Jiangsu Province Shanghainese prior to birth: yes	PTH Jiangsu hua	PTH Jiangsu hua Shanghainese
10	male	22	PTH(5) English(4) Nantong hua(3)	F: Nantong City M:Nantong City Shanghainese prior to birth: no	PTH Nantong hua	PTH Nantong hua
11	male	22	PTH(5) English(4) Sichuan hua(2.5) Shanghainese(2)	F:Luohe City M:Chengdu City. Shanghainese prior to birth: no	PTH Henan hua	PTH Sichuan hua(2.5)

On the other hand, the language profile of the Native Shanghainese is similar to that of the New Shanghainese in terms of high fluency in PTH and English. Similar to the New Shanghainese, they reported they use PTH and English in school and at home.

Furthermore, native Shanghainese participants have higher fluency in Shanghainese. However, they also reported they used Shanghainese on very limited occasions. Most of them reported that they only speak Shanghainese at home or to people who only speak Shanghainese. P15 is a native Shanghainese participant who is fluent in Shanghainese(he rated his fluency in Shanghainese as 5), but he reported that he used Shanghainese only on limited occasions, which is typical of participants in the second group.

Interviewer: When do you use Shanghainese?

P15: I only speak it at home to my parents.

Interviewer: So Shanghainese is the language you use at home?

P15: Well, not necessarily. When we talk about formal stuff, like school or work, we use PTH. We use Shanghainese only when we talk about less formal stuff like what we shall get for grocery.

Number	Gender	Age	Languages (fluency)	Father's language	Mother's language
12	female	21	PTH(5) English(4) Shanghainese(4.5)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese
13	female	21	PTH(5) English(3) Shanghainese(3)	PTH English Shanghainese	PTH English Shanghainese
14	male	21	PTH(5) English(4) Shanghainese(5) German(3)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese
15	male	21	PTH(5) Shanghainese(5) English(3)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese
16	male	22	PTH(5) English(3.5) Shanghainese(3.5) Cantonese(1) Japanese(1) Sichuan hua(1)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese
17	male	22	PTH(5) English(3) Shanghainese(2)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese

18	female	22	PTH(5) English(3) Shanghainese(3) Korean(2)	PTH English Shanghainese	PTH English Shanghainese
19	male	22	PTH(5) English(4) Shanghainese(4) Cantonese(2) Japanese(2)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese
20	female	22	PTH(5) English(4) Shanghainese(2.5)	PTH Shanghainese	PTH Shanghainese

Language and Identity

In the third part of the interview, I asked the participants to what extent they consider themselves “Shanghainese “. If they were confused by the question, I would ask them “are you a native Shanghainese, half Shanghainese or what?” and “compared to your parents, are you more ‘Shanghainese?’” In addition, I asked them how important the Shanghainese language is to the Shanghainese identity.

All of the participants in Group One reported that they consider themselves as “New Shanghainese " as opposed to “native Shanghainese". Also, despite being aware of the discrimination towards the non-native Shanghainese in Shanghai, most participants feel quite comfortable just being New Shanghainese and show no strong interest in becoming native Shanghainese. P4 made a typical explanation about why he was reluctant to be more “Shanghainese ". His parents were from Jiangxi Province in Southeast China and migrated to Shanghai before he was born.

Interviewer: why do you think you are a “New Shanghainese”?

P4: My ancestors are not Shanghainese. I was born and raised in Shanghai, but I do not think I am a “pure Shanghainese”. I think I still have some pride and loyalty to the culture of my hometown.

Furthermore, P1 explained why she does not want to be more “Shanghainese " and mentioned the discrimination towards her family. She and her family migrated to Shanghai from Jiangxi Province when she was five.

P1: I am “New Shanghainese,” but I definitely am not a “real Shanghainese”. And I do not want to be “real Shanghainese”.

Interviewer: Why not?

P1: I do not like them. They are always so arrogant to me.

Furthermore, New Shanghainese participants were asked to list the major difference between native Shanghainese and New Shanghainese. The most common answer I received is the history of migration and traditional costume. In contrast, only 3 participants listed speaking Shanghainese as the major difference between native and new Shanghainese. When asked how important Shanghainese language is for one to identify themselves as Shanghainese, most participants reported that it is not important. According to them, the relation between Shanghainese and Shanghainese identity is a weak one, or at least, not a strong one.

P6 provided a typical example of how the participants in group one view the relation between Shanghainese language and Shanghainese identity. His parents were both from Chongqi City in southwest China, the family migrated to Shanghai when he was 6:

Interviewer: To what extent do you identify yourself as Shanghainese?

P6: Well, I am Shanghainese, but I would like to use the word "New Shanghainese."

Interviewer: So what do you believe is the biggest difference between native Shanghainese and New Shanghainese?

P6: I think it's just that my parents are not from Shanghai, we were not in Shanghai before we moved here.

Interviewer: how about language? Is that important too?

P6: No, I do not think that matters much.

Similarly, P11 elaborated on how he views the relation between Shanghainese language and Shanghainese identity. He was born in Luohe City in northeastern China, and his family moved to Shanghai when he was one.

P11: I think I would call myself a new Shanghainese. Though I was not born in Shanghai, I grew up here and I was too young to remember anything about my hometown. All I can remember is Shanghai.

Interviewer: So you think you are a New Shanghainese. What do you think is the biggest difference between native and new Shanghainese?

P11: Compared to native Shanghainese, I am less attached to Shanghainese culture.

Interviewer: what aspect of culture do you mean? Do you mean language, the way of life or what?

P11: Mainly lifestyle, like what we eat. In the case of Shanghainese language, I do not think it is a necessary condition to identify oneself as a new Shanghainese. You do not have to speak Shanghainese to become a Shanghainese.

On the other hand, all of the Native Shanghainese participants identify themselves as native Shanghainese. Interestingly though 2 of them mentioned that they feel less "Shanghainese" because they did not speak much Shanghainese. P17 was born and raised in Shanghai and he explained that he is not as "authentic" as his parents in terms of being a native Shanghainese. His rating for his Shanghainese is 2.

P17: *I can count myself as a native Shanghainese, but I need to deduct some points. If I needed to rate my "Shanghainese" from 1 to 5, my score would be 4.*

Interviewer: *Why?*

P17: *Mainly because I am not fluent in Shanghainese.*

When participants in group two were asked what is the most important difference between native Shanghainese and New Shanghainese, most of them (7 out of 9) replied that fluency in Shanghainese language is the most important difference. P17, for instance, explained that although both New Shanghainese and native Shanghainese live in the same city, they are influenced by different cultural communities.

Interviewer: *What do you think is the biggest difference between native and new Shanghainese?*

P17: *Native Shanghainese generally live in a Shanghainese speaking community. That is what makes them different from new Shanghainese. I mean, culturally we are all shaped by our community.*

Interviewer: *What aspect of culture do you mean?*

P17: *Language is of course an important part. And I think culture also includes traditional customs and lifestyles.*

Nevertheless, when asked about the relation between Shanghainese language and Shanghainese identity, most of the Native Shanghainese participants reported that Shanghainese language and Shanghainese identity are not exclusively bound to each other and speaking Shanghainese is not a precondition for being Shanghainese. According to them, the ability to speak Shanghainese can create a sense of belonging, but it would not define whether someone is Shanghainese or not. P18, for instance, explains that Shanghainese language can help her connect with people.

P18: *If you ask me how I would decide whether this person is Shanghainese or not, I think I would feel more emotionally attached to Shanghainese speakers compared to others. But, you know, that is not absolute.*

In addition, some Native Shanghainese participants explained that for them there is no need to speak Shanghainese to identify oneself as a Shanghainese. According to P20, there is a generational change in the case of the relation between Shanghainese language and identity.

P22: *I think for the older generation, they all speak Shanghainese fluently, so they would believe that all Shanghainese people must speak the language, but for us it is not the case. In our generation many young native Shanghainese do not speak Shanghainese themselves.*

Also, P16 mentioned that communication in PTH works fine in Shanghai so Shanghainese is not important in terms of living in Shanghai.

P16: *I think that language should not matter that much. There is not any communication issue between native Shanghainese and new Shanghainese, so why bother?*

Interviewer: *So you think it is not that important for one to speak Shanghainese in order to be Shanghainese?*

P16: *No, I do not think that is important.*

Language Policy

In the last part of the interview, I asked the participants how they feel about the language policies in Shanghai: shall we introduce Shanghainese into our basic education; shall we delete English in our school; what about prioritizing Shanghainese instead of PTH.

The New Shanghainese participants are generally in consensus about their attitude towards Shanghainese language education: 10 of all 11 of them support the decision to introduce the language into schools as electives. However, they are mostly strongly against the idea of using Shanghainese to challenge the status of PTH. The reason for that is mainly that prioritizing Shanghainese would hurt students who come from migrant families. P1 raised concerns about discrimination in school after the policy is implemented.

P1: They cannot instruct in Shanghainese in school. That will lead to further discrimination. At most I can accept having the language as an elective based on interests.

In addition, many participants stated that Shanghainese is not commonly used in Shanghai so there is no need to learn it in school. P10 mentioned that Shanghainese cannot be as important as PTH because it is not widely used.

P10: There is no need to put too much emphasis on Shanghainese. We do not need to use it anyway. I need to use English to do research in the lab in college, not Shanghainese.

In terms of English language education, most of them are generally supportive of the current English language education. They reported that they often need to use English in school and use English materials to study.

Furthermore, Native Shanghainese participants showed similar opinions about the language policy in Shanghai. All of them agree that Shanghainese should not be prioritized over PTH in the education system but they can accept Shanghainese as an elective course in school. In addition, they are against the idea of lowering the status of English in the current education system. The reasons for their opinions are also similar to those of New Shanghainese. Participants in Group Two mentioned that using Shanghainese in school will negatively impact students who are not native Shanghainese, and they also believe that Shanghainese has no practical use in school and at work.

In addition, native Shanghainese participants are also against the plan of demoting the status of English in school because they believe English is essential for the careers of Shanghainese people and the economic development of Shanghai.

Discussion

Language Profile

The language profile of the participants in both New and Native Shanghainese demonstrates the influence of the language policy in the education system in Shanghai.

Participants in both groups have high fluency in PTH and English, which is very likely the result of the emphasis on the two languages in the Shanghainese education system.

Also, New Shanghainese participants show low fluency in Shanghainese, which I assume mostly is due to the lack of Shanghainese exposure at home and the absence of Shanghainese education in school. Meanwhile, unlike New Shanghainese participants, Native Shanghainese participants have access to Shanghainese at home, but their average fluency in Shanghainese is much lower than their fluency in PTH, and close to their fluency in English, a foreign language they used only in school. The relatively low fluency in Shanghainese in Group Two is most likely due to the absence of Shanghainese in the education system. The low fluency in Shanghainese in both Group One and Group Two suggests that the decline of Shanghainese is indeed an pressing issue in Shanghai: the younger generation in Shanghai, native or new Shanghainese, can no longer speak Shanghainese fluently.

Language and Identity

In terms of their identity, all New Shanghainese participants identify themselves as “New Shanghainese” instead of “Native Shanghainese” and they showed little interest in becoming native Shanghainese. When asked what makes them different from native Shanghainese, they mostly referred to their family’s history of migration. Although most of the New Shanghainese participants acknowledged that they were too young to remember anything about their lives before they moved to Shanghai, the history of migration still defines them, which makes them different from the native Shanghainese. Furthermore, they tend not to consider speaking Shanghainese as an important factor in terms of differentiating new and native Shanghainese. This is probably because they have little exposure to the language in Shanghai and they tend not to associate the language with “being Shanghainese”.

In her book *Silencing Shanghai*, Xu(2021) stated in her work that the new immigrants all faced certain discrimination from the native Shanghainese because they cannot speak Shanghainese, but among the New Shanghainese participants, only a few of them raised concerns about discrimination based on language, and most of them are very comfortable only using PTH in Shanghai. This difference between two generations of new Shanghainese suggests that the promotion of PTH in Shanghai may have created an environment with less hostility towards the new Shanghainese community. In addition, Xu mentioned that many new immigrants feel that they were outsiders in the city even though they have Shanghainese hukou, but in my study the second generation of new Shanghainese do not consider themselves as outsiders, nor do they believe they are native Shanghainese. In the interviews they often stress that they are “Shanghainese, and new Shanghainese.” from their perspective, the identity of new Shanghainese is a subtype of Shanghainese, not a euphemism for outsiders.

In contrast, from the perspective of the native Shanghainese participants, the ability to speak Shanghainese, rather than the history of migration, is an important difference between native and new Shanghainese. It is surprising that even native Shanghainese participants who

have low fluency in Shanghainese would believe that Shanghainese language differentiates them from the new Shanghainese community. The different attitudes towards Shanghainese language between native and new Shanghainese is probably because native Shanghainese are not familiar with the policies concerning migration and Shanghainese Hukou. During the interview, most native Shanghainese participants mentioned that they are aware of the existence of the new Shanghainese community and most of them have friends and classmates from that community, but they are not familiar with the process in which new Shanghainese acquired Hukou or moved to Shanghainese. Thus, the native Shanghainese tend to view the new Shanghainese community with an emphasis on language and culture instead of their Hukou application. In contrast, new Shanghainese participants are very familiar with how they and their families acquired Shanghainese Hukou, and this process contributes a lot to their self-identification.

Nevertheless, Native Shanghainese participants agree with new Shanghainese participants that speaking Shanghainese language is not an important factor for one to identify oneself as Shanghainese. Unlike the native Shanghainese in Xu's work, the native Shanghainese in Group Two do not associate Shanghainese language with Shanghainese identity, and this difference across different generations of Shanghainese is likely the result of the language shift in Shanghai.

Hence, the native Shanghainese participants expressed a complicated attitude towards Shanghainese language. On one hand, they acknowledge that speaking Shanghainese is not essential for Shanghainese identity. On the other hand, they view Shanghainese language as an important barrier that separates them from the new Shanghainese. That is to say, speaking Shanghainese is unimportant for being Shanghainese in general, but it is important for being native Shanghainese.

To summarize, New and Native Shanghainese participants have similar opinions about Shanghainese language and identity; both groups agree Shanghainese language does not contribute much to Shanghainese identity. The only difference is that native Shanghainese believe that Shanghainese language is important for identifying oneself as a native Shanghainese while the second generation of new Shanghainese do not. Thus, compared to the different perspectives from native and new Shanghainese in terms of Shanghainese language and identity, the younger generation of native and new Shanghainese have a much more similar language attitude. The reason may be that they all grow up in the same education system in Shanghai under the same language policy and the close social distance between the Shanghainese speaking and PTH speaking community as Zhou's study(2001).

Language Policy

New Shanghainese and native Shanghainese participants are generally in consensus in terms of the language policy in Shanghai. They support the current education that emphasizes

PTH and English while they are against the idea of prioritizing Shanghainese over PTH. Most of them are open to the idea of including Shanghainese as an elective course.

Their emphasis on the importance of and PTH English may be linked to the requirement in school and at work as well as their perception that Shanghai is a cosmopolitan city.

In addition, it is surprising that neither native nor new Shanghainese are interested in including Shanghainese in the current education system, not to mention using it as the language of instruction. I think their lack of interest is related to the current environment in Shanghai: Shanghainese has no practical use either in school or work, which provides little motivation for participants to use Shanghainese even though they are native Shanghainese. Before I conducted my interviews I assumed participants would be concerned with cultural heritage or linguistic rights of the minorities in terms of their attitudes towards Shanghainese, but instead the participants are surprisingly pragmatic towards languages in general. Hu stated that the English Language Education in Shanghai is based on the pragmatic consideration of economic development and modernization in Shanghai(2005). I think this pragmatic approach has affected the way participants perceive other languages such as Shanghainese.

Based on my research, I think the decline of Shanghainese is actually a vicious cycle: the education system discourages the use of Shanghainese and promotes the use of PTH and English; as a result, people grow up in the education system tend not to use Shanghainese; then Shanghainese is no longer used in workplace and job market; so people have little interest in reintroducing Shanghainese into the education system. However, on the other hand, I also believe the emphasis on PTH over Shanghainese in the education system lead to much less discrimination towards the New Shanghainese community. The absence of Shanghainese in school probably make it difficult the differentiate new Shanghainese students from their native Shanghainese peers, thus creating a more open and inclusive environment for these young immigrants, which could explain why compared to their parents, the young new Shanghainese are less concerned about discrimination towards them.

Conclusion

In this study, I examined the language use of the second generation of New Shanghainese and compared them with the native Shanghainese community. Based on the interviews, I can draw the conclusion that both native and new Shanghainese have high fluency in PTH and English and relatively low fluency in Shanghainese. Both new and native Shanghainese participants believe Shanghainese language is not important for Shanghainese identity and they are reluctant to include Shanghainese instruction in school. Shanghainese language is, however, an important distinction between new and native Shanghainese according to the native Shanghainese participants.

What is worth noticing is that from the perspective of the younger generation of New Shanghainese, the reluctance to put more emphasis on Shanghainese language is not due to the potential discrimination towards their community. Instead, they are more concerned with

the little practical use of Shanghainese in their academic and professional life. Compared to the older generation, the younger generation of new Shanghainese seem to be much less bothered by not speaking Shanghainese language and they are more open to accept their identity as New Shanghainese. I believe this is the result of the PTH-dominated environment in which they grew up. That is to say, the language policy that emphasizes PTH may serve as a protection shield for these young immigrants who do not speak the native Shanghainese language.

Furthermore, the fact that the native Shanghainese and New Shanghainese participants demonstrate rather homogenous language use and language attitudes suggests a gradual shift in the Shanghainese identity. Although the ability to speak Shanghainese still serves as the boundary between the native and the new Shanghainese communities, Shanghainese language is no longer an indispensable part of the Shanghainese identity in the broader sense. The reason behind the homogenous language attitude is probably the shared environment that emphasizes PTH over Shanghainese, which seem to have much more influence on the language attitudes of both native and New Shanghainese communities than their family background. Hence, the result of this study is a reminder that the binary framework of immigrants and native people is not permanent, and the younger immigrants do blend in quickly if the boundary between the immigrants and native people are made vague and unclear. Still, the further study of the impact of PTH-dominated language policies, there is another community that is worth studying: the child of migrant workers in Shanghai. Similar to the new Shanghainese, they grew up in Shanghai. However, their families do not have the Shanghainese Hukou and they do not have the same rights as the new Shanghainese. Examining the language attitudes of the children of migrant workers would provide more insight into the impact of language policy, citizenship on the language attitudes of different communities in Shanghai.

In addition, the language profile of participants in this study relies mostly on their self-rating, which is likely to be inconsistent with their actual language fluency. A more thorough examination of their fluency in different languages is necessary for further studies.

Reference page

Zhao, Shuqing, et al. "Ecological Consequences of Rapid Urban Expansion: Shanghai, China." *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, vol. 4, no. 7, 2006, pp. 341–346.

Bai, J. (1994). Language attitude and the spread of standard Chinese in China. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, 18(2), 128–138. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lplp.18.2.03bai>

Liu, Zhiqiang. "Institution and Inequality: The Hukou System in China." *Journal of Comparative Economics*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2005, pp. 133–157

Shao, Qing, and Xuesong (Andy) Gao. "Protecting Language or Promoting Dis-Citizenship? A Poststructural Policy Analysis of the Shanghainese Heritage Project." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 22, no. 3 (2018): 352–64.

Hu, Guangwei. "English Language Education in China: Policies, Progress, and Problems." *Language Policy* 4, no. 1 (2005): 5–24.

Zhou, Minglang. "The Spread of Putonghua and Language Attitude Changes in Shanghai and Guangzhou, China." *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2001, pp. 231–253.

Gilliland, J. (2006). *Language Attitudes and Ideologies in Shanghai, China* [Master's thesis, Ohio State University]. OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center

Silencing Shanghai: Language and Identity in Urban China Fang Xu Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021 261 pp.