

REVIEW ARTICLE

THE ANALYSIS OF FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HERITAGE LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE — A SURVEY ON LANGUAGE SITUATION OF STUDENTS IN BLCU

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ABSTRACT

In China, for most researchers, there is a discrepancy between promoting Mandarin and conserving heritage language. The study, by using survey scales and interview and data collected from randomly selected 40 participants, addresses the question what are the factors contributing to dialect maintenance of students on the individual, familial, school and community level. It was concluded that there is a series of factors that correlate with students' dialect use and maintenance from internal and external point of view, which considers four different levels: Individual, family, school and community. Future research will extend to the experiment to testify the opinion of this paper.

KEYWORDS

Language Maintenance, Language Shift, Heritage Language, Mandarin

1. INTRODUCTION

Language shift emerges with the immigration of the population. In recent years, with the implementation of the promotion policy of Mandarin by relevant government departments, especially in schools, and the acceleration of urbanization and population flow in China, the promotion of Mandarin has achieved remarkable results. Meanwhile, the conflict of the relationship between official language and heritage language is also highlighted. It is necessary to discuss the research background, the definition of basic concepts, rationales and analytic framework before we explore further.

1.1 Research Background

For most people, it is a common dream to move from a poor hometown to new place where new opportunities flourish and promising future waits. Especially in 21st century when global transportation has advanced a lot, immigration to a new country and migration to a new city are not rare in the world. Immigration can be observed both from the general view and from the specific one. In a global view, Indians or Chinese may immigrate into the United States, seeking for better prospects. In China, migrants coming from the north to the south may also choose to stay permanently. In general, change of living environment will cause people to speak differently. What will happen to their heritage language (HL) becomes necessary to be studied in this paper.

1.2 Definition

The definition of language shift and language maintenance will be made sense firstly. Fishman defines language shift from a societal or linguistic group perspective as the shifting from the use of the mother tongue to the use of another language in everyday use at the same time they also gave up a language or variety that they had previously used (Fishman, 1972). Language maintenance refers to a process where deliberate and elaborate efforts are made in a minority group to keep their own heritage language or dialect in the language background of a majority group.

1.3 Rationales

This part is composed of factors analyzed by other scholars and the creative theoretical framework which is synthesized about other researchers.

1.3.1 Classification of Factors Contributing to Language Maintenance

Much research was made to discover the patterns and factors of language maintenance in immigrant families. Heritage language maintenance and loss are also influenced by lots of various factors, which can be groups into two levels: individual level and group level (Kipp et al., 1995). On the individual level, a person's age, gender, place of birth, education, marriage pattern, prior knowledge of the majority language, reason for migration, length of residency in the host country and language variety should be taken into consideration. On the group level, the size and distribution of an ethnic group, the language policy of the host country and the distance of the minority language to/from the majority language are important (Kipp et al., 1995).

1.3.2 Factors Analyzed by Other Scholars

Factors which exert influences on language maintenance analyzed by other scholars will be expounded to get a comprehensive cognition of relevant studies. To begin with, internal factors will be presented.

1. From a domestic perspective, immigrants' children have their parents as their own "teacher" from whom they can acquire the HL. Often, HL is properly chosen as the language for communication at home (Nesteruk, 2010).
2. Individuals' positive attitude toward their home language is a very important internal factor (Kouritzin, 1999; Cummins, 2005).
3. Some parents' attitude for maintaining their home language is firm and they regard it as a symbol of their own ethnic identity and a bond that connects the following generation to their homeland and its culture (Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

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4. The home language is perceived to play a very important role in reinforcing family ties that contribute to family cohesion (Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).

Then, external factors will be elaborated which is composed of three parts.

1. One important external factor is the language policy at school and other issues related to school including teachers' attitude toward children's HL and possibility of the HL language use at school (Torres et al., 2006).
2. It helps to maintain the home language that families from the same minority group live close to each other and frequently communicate with each other or the share a common community where they speak their own language. For example, in the USA, Chinese dialect is more likely to be maintained for those Chinese people living in the Chinatown areas of big cities (Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009).
3. Another external factor is the extent and frequency of their contact with the homeland (Holmes, 2013). Frequent trips to "home" or regular online contact with friends and relatives from homeland could keep the need of HL alive. For instance, Samoan men in New Zealand usually come back home to shoulder some family responsibilities at the old age of their lives.

1.4 A Proposed Analytical Framework

Based on previous studies, the research conducted through a comprehensive framework as shown in the Figure below. All factors are divided into internal factors and external factors. Under internal factors, there are the personal level and the familial level. Gender, grade, prior knowledge of dialect, reason for migration and personal attitude toward home dialect are considered as the person level. While, parents' attitude, language use in family and the frequency of contact with hometown are regarded as the familial level.

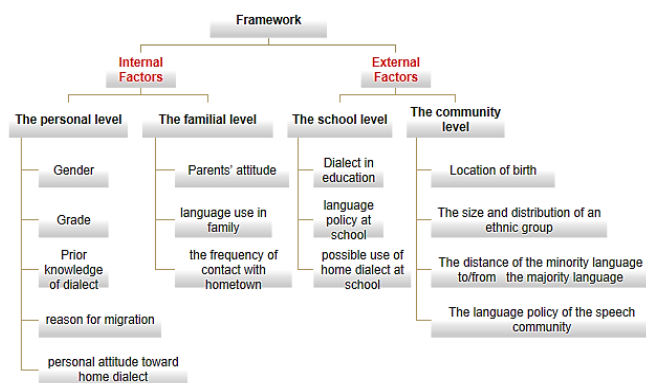


Figure 1: The analytical framework

Under external factors, there are the school level and the community level. The school level is composed of the dialect in education, language policy at school and possible use of home dialect at school. The community level consists of the location of birth, the size and distribution of ethnic group, the distance of the minority language to from the majority language and the language policy of the language community.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on factors contributing to language maintenance in many contexts, including an Iranian immigrant in the United Kingdom, Vietnamese heritage language maintenance in United Kingdom, Chinese immigrant families in the USA (Holmes), and the children of Eastern European immigrants in the USA (Nguyen, 2020; Naghmeh, 2013; Nesteruk, 2010). Some challenges and benefits were found to explain this process of language maintenance.

2.1 Sociolinguistic Perspective

In recent year, the relationship between Mandarin and dialects is prominent. Some scholars point out that at present dialects are dying out too fast and corresponding measures should be taken urgently (Cao, 2001). Some scholars believe that the position of strong dialects is still relatively consolidated. At present, there is no conflict between dialects and Mandarin, but complement each other and develop harmonically (You, 2006). From the perspective of the promotion of Mandarin, some scholars believe that there are still many problems in the current development of Putonghua, such as the slippery slope of Mandarin

promotion in primary schools, insufficient investigation and research, insufficient measures to build Mandarin, and so on (Yu, 2009).

2.2 Cognitive Perspective

The theory about the relationship between language and cognitive development comes from Whorf whose theory holds that all higher levels of thinking are dependent on language and that language structures determine or influence the thinking of a group. From the 2000s, scholars began to explore the relationship between language and cognition under the guidance of cognitive neuroscience and cognitive psychology. Cognitive neuroscience research has pointed out that different languages have different brain representations and structures and that the brain is the common neural basis of language and cognition and that language can affect the brain and thus affect cognition. In recent years, research on language and cognitive ability has mainly focused on the differences in cognitive ability between monolingual and bilingual learners. Tests the cognitive abilities of individuals with different language structures. To explore whether different language use behaviors have different effects on cognitive ability. Monolinguals performed better than bilinguals (Cantonese-Mandarin) and Trilinguals (Cantonese-Mandarin-English) (Fan and Wang, 2013). However, another study found that Bilingual children responded significantly better than ordinary monolingual children in the reference substitution task. Furthermore, the development of children's lexical consciousness will be hindered (Wu and Li, 2014).

2.3 Challenges of HL Maintenance' in Language Ideologies

Immigrants who seek to retain their original language have often met with negative attitudes in the dominant culture. Generally, in the USA, the acquisition of English has been assumed to be essential for the integration of immigrants and their children into American society.

In contrast, the value of retention of minority languages has been debated throughout US history. A study of the home languages of second and third-generation children in Chinese, Cuban and Mexican groups in the USA showed that a majority of these children spoke only English at home.

Immigrant children in the USA seem to acquire English rapidly while losing their heritage language, leading to the conclusion that, by age 18, 'second-generation bilingualism is exceptional' (Fillmore 1991; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Given the adverse societal attitudes toward minority languages, immigrants themselves also express diverse language attitudes toward their own languages.

Some parents adopt the language-as-a-problem orientation. As a result, they urge their children to shift to English as quickly as possible in order to assimilate and succeed in mainstream society. Other parents view the HL positively and seek to maintain it in the next generation. These different language ideologies directly affect second-generation children's language maintenance.

Fishman for example, emphasized the connection between language ideologies and language maintenance/shift (Fishman, 1991). He argued that reversing language shift requires reversing the resistant attitudes toward threatened languages among both dominant language speakers and minority language speakers.

2.4 Benefits For Language Maintenance

1. HL is well cherished by immigrants' families in that their language of origin will possibly lead to better academic achievement of the children. It could be a very competitive edge for their career in the future (Zhang and Slaughter-Defoe, 2009). A hypothesis states immigrant students whose HL were maintained at home and at school performed better than those whose HL was lost. And it has been validated by studies (Cummins, 2005).
2. For immigrants themselves, studies suggest that language and ethnic are related to each other (Joseph, 2004). By building an ethnic identity, HL helps shape a person's sense of self (Ichiyama et al., 1996).
3. From a familial perspective, the home language also contributes to a harmonious relationship between children and their parents. A greater generation gap might be created in family where children have lost their HL (Fillmore, 2000).

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

After acquiring a comprehensive cognition of research background and literature review, this part aims to clear how this research works which includes research questions, method, participants and instrument.

3.1 Research Questions

As we can see, much research was made to discover the patterns and factors of language maintenance in immigrant families, while few tend to investigate the potential dialect change and maintenance in the life of college students. The research question is raised as: What are the factors contributing to dialect maintenance of students on the individual, familial school and community level?

3.2 Research Method

The present study is mainly an empirical study, questionnaire is the major tool used to collect information from the participants. After collecting all the information, SPSS is used to compute the data to examine the relationships.

3.3 Research Participants

Participants were randomly recruited through the Internet based on the following criteria:

- (1) Participants are either college students or postgraduates at BLCU;
- (2) Participants age from 18 to 26 years old;
- (3) Participants are willing to join the research;
- (4) Participants are either from Cantonese dialect region or Jilu dialect region
- (5) Participants are in normal psychological and physical condition.

Finally, there are 40 participants in total including 20 postgraduates and 20 college students by using online communicative tools and online questionnaire. 40 participants from BLCU joined the survey and filled in the questionnaires. 15 of them are males, and 25 are females. In addition, 20 of them are postgraduates and 20 of them are college students.

3.4 Research Instrument

In this paper, there are two instruments used to assist with this study. The first one is questionnaire, and the second one is IBM SPSS Statistics 26. According to the theoretical framework, the questionnaire is composed of four parts, they are, personal level, familial level, school level and community level.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

In this part, factors contributing to dialect maintenance will be explained by analyzing the information we collected. The factors are divided into two categories: internal factors and external factors.

4.1 Internal Factors

The internal factors include factors on the personal level (gender, age, area of dialect, degree of ability, place of residence, personal attitude and use) and factors on the familial level (parental attitude, parental use of dialect).

4.1.1 Personal Level

Firstly, Figure 2 and Table 1 present the statistic result of gender as one of the influencing factors on the personal level. As shown in Figure 2, female participants occupy 62.5% and male take hold of 37.5% of all forty participants. From Table 1, $\text{Sig}=0.752>0.01$. Due to the limited data and participants, there is no evident significance of the dialect maintenance between males and females.

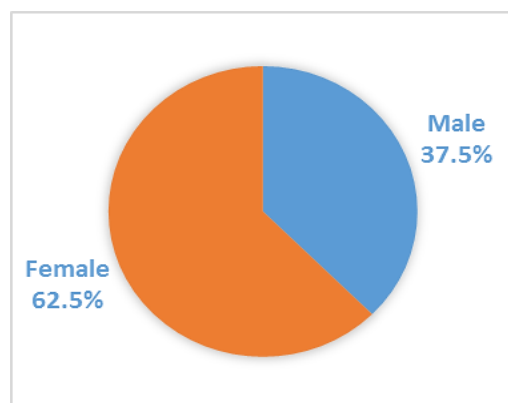


Figure 2: The Result of Gender

Table 1: Correlations Between Gender and Maintenance			
		Gender	Maintenance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.052
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.752
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	-0.025	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.752	-
	N	40	40

Secondly, according to Figure 3 and Table 2, the result of grade can be expounded. From Figure 3, it covers the first grade of undergraduate to the third grade. From Table 2, $P=-0.719$, $\text{Sig}=0.000<0.01$.

There is a negative relationship between age and maintenance, that is, students at younger age have a tendency to maintain their dialects. The main reason is that young students are immersed in the environment of original dialect for a long and lasting time and less subjected to the context of the new dialect, so they are accustomed to maintaining their dialects. On the other hand, older students are influenced by many factors such as trying to adapting to the society and get away from the original context.

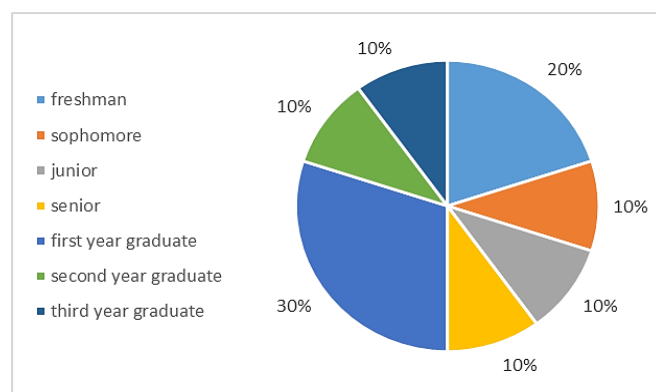


Figure 3: The Result of Grade

Table 2: Correlations Between Grade and Maintenance			
		Gender	Maintenance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.719**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	-0.719**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is signifc at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Thirdly, according to Table 3, 4 and Figure 4, the result of prior knowledge which is composed of the first learning language and place of residence of participants can be elaborated. From Figure 3, 84.62% participants acquire their heritage language firstly, while 15.38% participants acquire Mandarin firstly. In addition, 53.85% participants stay in the countryside longer than in the city. The rest of 46.15% participants stay longer in the city. From Table 3, $P=-0.706$, $\text{Sig}=0.000<0.01$, $P=-0.489$, $\text{Sig}=0.000<0.01$. Two negatives make a positive.

There is a positive relation between prior knowledge of Mandarin and dialect maintenance. Students who have a better knowledge of Mandarin will be less likely to maintain their dialects. In general, because of the interplay of the knowledge of different dialects, only one dialect can dominate an individual. So, students who are not master in Mandarin will prefer their maintenance for original dialects.

Table 3: The Result of "Which Language Did You Learn to Speak First When You Were A Child?"	
No.5: Which Language Did You Learn to Speak First When You Were A Child?	
Dialects	84.62%
Mandarin	15.38%
Learning Dialect and Mandarin Almost Simultaneously	0%

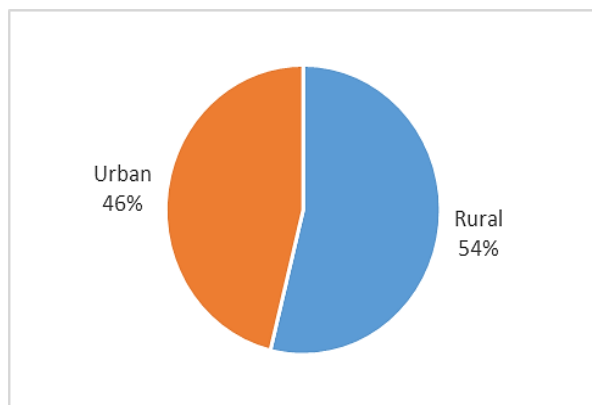


Figure 4: The Result of "As of Now, Have You Stayed in Rural Areas or in Urban Areas Longer?"

Table 4: Correlations Among Maintenance, First Learning Language and Place of Residence				
		Maintenance	First Learning	Place of Residence
Pearson Correlation	Maintenance	1.000	-0.706	-0.489
	First Learning	-0.706	1.000	0.162
	Place of Residence	-0.489	0.162	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Maintenance		0.000	0.001
	First Learning	0.000		0.159
	Place of Residence	0.001	0.159	
N	Maintenance	40	40	40
	First Learning	40	40	40
	Place of Residence	40	40	40

Thirdly, according to Figure 5 and Table 5, the result of personal attitude towards home dialect can be manifested. From Figure 5, personal attitude is composed of five question, and the final result is achieved by computing the mean of five questions. From Table 5, $P=0.884$, $Sig=0.000<0.01$.

There is a positive relationship between personal attitude and dialect maintenance, that is, students who have positive attitude have a tendency for maintaining their dialects. They reckoned that the use of dialect can form a comprehensive sense of themselves and strengthen their families.

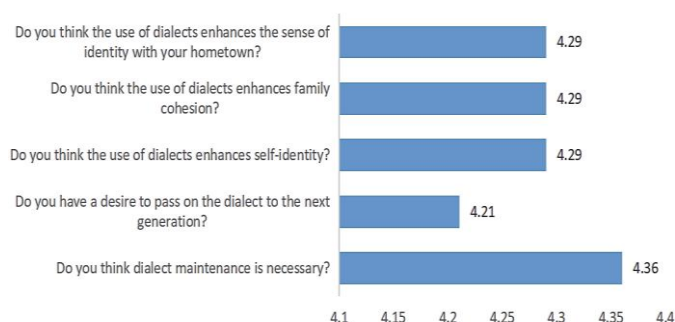


Figure 5: The result of "five questions about personal attitude"

Table 5: Correlations Between Maintenance and Personal Attitude			
		Gender	Maintenance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	0.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	0.884**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is signific at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Fourthly, the result of reasons for migration cannot be manifested. Due to the limited participants, there is no evident significance between the dialect maintenance and reasons for migration.

4.1.2 Familial Level

Firstly, according to Table 6, the result of parents' attitude can be summarized. From Table 6, $P=0.814$, $Sig=0.000<0.01$. There is a positive relationship between parental attitude and dialect maintenance. Students whose parents express optimism toward their original dialect have a tendency for maintaining their dialects. Due to the positive attitude, parents will acknowledge and adore the dialect, be likely to communicate with children in the dialect and be proud of the dialect, students prefer to maintain their dialects under the context of family.

Table 6: Correlations Between Maintenance and Parental Attitude			
		Gender	Maintenance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.814**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	-0.814**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is signific at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Secondly, according to Table 7, the result of language use in family can be expounded. From Table 7, $P=0.868$, $Sig=0.000<0.01$. There is positive relationship between dialect use at home and dialect maintenance. In some students family, the conversation with their parents is usually conducted in Mandarin especially when the parents are in jobs where Mandarin is strictly applied.

That may lead to a shift from the home dialect to Mandarin. But for others, a large number of dialect is used in their daily communication with the parents, which can help the maintenance of their dialect.

Table 7: Correlations Between Maintenance and Language Use in Family			
		Gender	Maintenance
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	0.868**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	0.868**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40

** . Correlation is signific at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

4.2 External Factors

The external factor includes factors on the school level (students' and teachers' language use in school, language policy in school) and on the community level (language use of community members).

4.2.1 School Level

Firstly, according to Table 8, the result of dialect use at students' education which includes three questions about three stages in their education can be elaborated. From Table 8, $P=0.872$, $P=0.864$, $P=-0.689$, $Sig=0.000<0.01$. Students who received education in local dialect (usually from primary school, middle school, to high school) have a tendency to more actively maintain their own dialect than those who were taught all in Mandarin. Mandarin is requested to be used in teaching nearly in every university, but language choice of teaching in primary school, middle school, and high school varies from place to place.

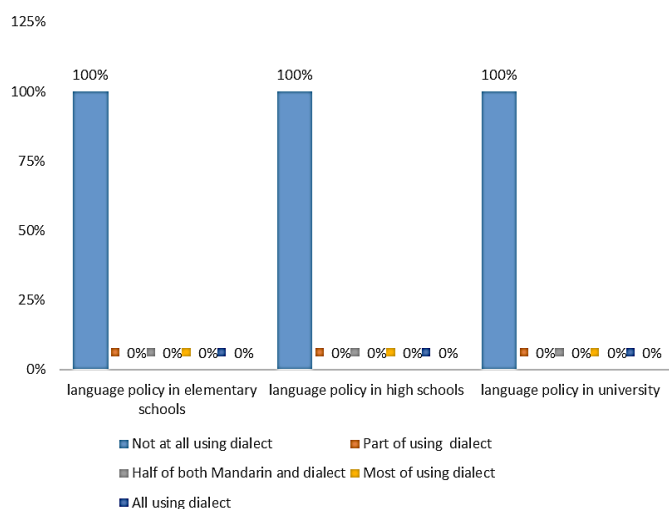
The students who were exposed to their home dialect longer in teaching are more likely to be affected by the use of the dialect of their teachers and students. Thus, dialect may spread deeply in their early life, leading to more positive feeling toward it.

Table 8: Correlations Among Maintenance and Personal Use in Elementary, Personal Use in Junior and Personal Use in College

		Maintenance	Personal use in Elementary	Personal use in Junior	Personal use in College
Pearson Correlation	Maintenance	1.000	0.872	0.864	-0.689
	Personal use in Elementary	0.872	1.000	0.890	-0.468
	Personal use in Junior	0.864	0.890	1.000	-0.498
	Personal use in college	-0.689	-0.468	-0.498	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	Maintenance		0.000	0.000	0.000
	Personal use in Elementary	0.000		0.000	0.001
	Personal use in Junior	0.000	0.000		0.001
	Personal use in college	0.000	0.001	0.001	
N	Maintenance	40	40	40	40
	Personal use in Elementary	40	40	40	40
	Personal use in Junior	40	40	40	40
	Personal use in college	40	40	40	40

Secondly, according to Figure 6 and Table 9, the result of language policy which is computed by three relevant questions in three different stages in schools at school can be expounded. From Figure 6, language policy is greatly subjected to the policy of whole country. Since 1997, Chinese government commences with the promotion of Mandarin among the whole country, especially in schools. From Table 9, Sig=0.377>0.01.

Language policy is nearly the same in participants' education but how it is implemented is quite different between rural areas and urban areas. Compared to students from urban areas, students who come from rural areas are more likely to maintain their dialect. We find that in urban areas, mandarin is spoken for teaching as a norm in most middle and high schools while these schools in rural areas usually do not strictly follow the regulation of speaking Mandarin in class.

**Figure 6: The Result of Language Policy in Schools****Table 9: Correlations Between Maintenance and Language Policy in School**

		Maintenance	Language Policy in School
Gender	Pearson Correlation	1	0.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.377
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	0.144	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.377	
	N	40	40

Thirdly, according to Table 10, the result of teachers' attitude towards the heritage dialect which includes three questions about three stages in their education can be summarized. From Table 10, $P=0.872$, $P=0.501$, $P=-0.599$, Sig=0.000<0.01. Students who were taught by the teacher who stressed the importance or held a positive toward the dialect are more likely to think high of their local dialects.

Teachers play a very important role in students' growth as well as the shaping of their values of home dialect. With positive attitudes, students may also learn the importance of their home dialects in family, community, school and society.

Table 10: Correlations Among Maintenance and The Language Teachers Use in Schools

		Maintenance	Teachers' use in Elementary	Teachers' use in Junior	Teachers' use in College
Pearson Correlation	Maintenance	1.000	0.872	0.501	-0.599
	Teachers' use in Elementary	0.872	1.000	0.593	-0.406
	Teachers' use in Junior	0.501	0.593	1.000	-0.214
	Teachers' use in college	-0.599	-0.406	-0.214	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	Maintenance		0.000	0.001	0.000
	Teachers' use in Elementary	0.000		0.000	0.005
	Teachers' use in Junior	0.001	0.000		0.003
	Teachers' use in college	0.000	0.005	0.093	
N	Maintenance	40	40	40	40
	Teachers' use in Elementary	40	40	40	40
	Teachers' use in Junior	40	40	40	40
	Teachers' use in college	40	40	40	40

4.2.2 Community Level

Firstly, according to Table 11, the result of the distance of the minority language to the majority language can be expounded. From Table 11, $P=0.424$, $\text{Sig}=0.006<0.01$. Students whose dialect area is far from Beijing tend to maintain their dialect more than those living close to the capital. That is to say, those from Cantonese dialect area are more likely to maintain their dialect than the Ji Lu dialect area. Since Ji Lu dialect actually shares a lot of similarities with Mandarin, people from the area may not consider the necessity to maintain their dialect.

We know that those who speak only Mandarin usually can't understand Cantonese. These two accents are very different. Therefore, students from Cantonese dialect area tend to make some efforts to maintain their dialect.

Table 11: Correlations Between Maintenance and The Area of Dialect			
		Area of dialect	Maintenance
Area of dialect	Pearson Correlation	1	0.424**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.006
	N	40	40
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	-0.424**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40
**. Correlation is signific at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Secondly, according to Table 12, the result of the language policy of China can be elaborated. From Table 12, $\text{Sig}=0.377>0.01$. Language policy is nearly the same in participants' education but how it is implemented is quite different between rural areas and urban areas.

Compared to students from urban areas, students who come from rural areas are more likely to maintain their dialect. We find that in urban areas, mandarin is spoken for teaching as a norm in most middle and high schools while these schools in rural areas usually do not strictly follow the regulation of speaking Mandarin in class.

Table 12: Correlations Between Maintenance and Language Policy in China			
		Maintenance	Language Policy in School
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.377
	N	40	40
Language Policy in School	Pearson Correlation	0.144	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.377	
	N	40	40

Thirdly, according to Figure 7 and Table 13, the result of the size and distribution of a certain speech community can be expounded. From Figure 7, due to all the participants are students whose largest community is their dormitory. 50 percent of participants do not have a roommate who shares the same heritage language. 21.43 percent of participants have one roommate who speaks the same dialect. 14.29 participants own two roommates who share the same heritage language. 14.29 percent of participants have three roommates who speak the same dialect. 0% participants have four or five roommates who share the same heritage language. From Table 13, $P=0.872$, $\text{Sig}=0.000<0.01$.

The speech community in BLCU can vary in size from the university to a special class and a dormitory. Public places such as classroom, assembly, canteen, etc. require the speaking of Mandarin, but their dorms, which functions as home, may be the place where they tend to speak a lot dialect. We find that students with two or more roommates speaking the same dialect are more frequently use the dialect with each other. But dorms where only two members share the same dialect or no common dialect exists tend to have little dialect speaking there. Thus, the internal structure of this speech community is one important factor in dialect use and maintenance.

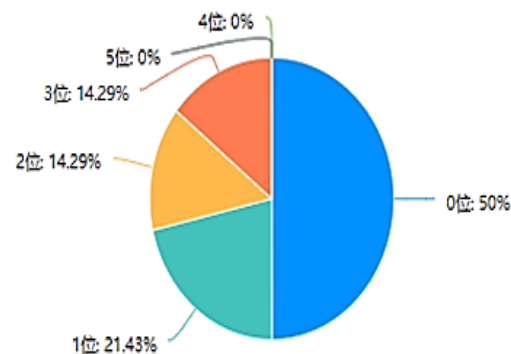


Figure 7: The result of "how many roommates in your dorm speak the same dialect as you?"

Table 13: Correlations Between Maintenance and The Number of Roommates Speaking The Same Dialect			
		Maintenance	Roommate
Maintenance	Pearson Correlation	1	0.878**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	40	40
Roommate	Pearson Correlation	-0.878**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	40	40
**. Correlation is signific at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

4.3 Summary

The results are systematically presented on the basis of the theoretical framework both from internal factors and external factors. From internal factors, there is no obvious and significant correlation between gender and dialect maintenance. Age, students and parents' affective attitude, and frequency of dialect use at home are positively correlated with dialect maintenance. From external factors, students who were exposed more to dialect in teaching tend to have a more positive feeling toward their dialect. Language policy may not be a significant factor in dialect maintenance. But students from rural areas tend to maintain their dialect more. Besides, teachers' positive attitude, the distance from students' hometown to the capital, and the size and the distribution of dialect in dormitory are also positively correlated with dialect maintenance.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

Through our research, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to answer research questions. The study focuses on potential factors contributing to dialect maintenance of students at BLCU.

We find a series of factors that correlate with students' dialect use and maintenance from internal and external point of view, which considers four different levels: Individual, family, school and community.

On the personal level, we find that age is negatively correlated with dialect maintenance. Students with a better command of Mandarin tend to care less about importance of dialect maintenance. Those who hold positive attitude toward their dialects are more likely to maintain their dialect.

On the family level, students whose parents stress importance of dialect and use it more tend to be active in dialect maintenance.

On the school level, though language policy is quite similar in all the participants' areas, a distinction is found schools between rural areas and urban areas. Students from cities tend to be less attentive to dialect maintenance in that their middle or high school teachers are more tied to Mandarin in their teaching.

On the community level, the size and distribution of community plays a key role. Dormitory is most likely to be a place where dialect maintenance can actively takes place if three or more roommates come from the same dialect area.

Besides, we also find that gender of these students may not be a significant factor, leading to an obvious distinction in dialect attitude and maintenance.

5.2 Limitations and Future of This Paper

The author contrived to represent an all-inclusive and professional scrutiny of the theoretical base and definite corpus. There are still many limitations of this paper. Firstly, the corpus is not limited. The more participants, the more detailed analysis will lead to more professional conclusions. Secondly, the research needs a more specific experiment including the target sample.

With the immigration of the population, the conflict between Mandarin and the heritage language is more and more manifest. How to balance the relationship and maintain the optimal situation is a crucial task. Hopefully this paper can attract the attention of more Chinese scholars to flag up embodied cognition theory and mobile learning. Future research will extend to the experiment to testify the opinion of this paper. Interdisciplinary research is also necessary to draw the convincing results between computer science, statistics, mathematics, and education.

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