

Study on Language Harmony in China: Achievements, Deficiency and Prospect*

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Language harmony means that different languages and their dialects can coexist in harmony in the same society. It is not only a linguistic issue, but also a social phenomenon. As an independent branch of language study in China, language harmony study covers the following topics: The value of language harmony, the types of language harmony, the factors that affect language harmony, the construction path of language harmony, etc. The main research methods include: case study, a combination of synchronic and diachronic research and multidisciplinary research. Statistics results of relevant studies of language harmony in China show that, in the past fifteen years, the study of language harmony in China has grown and presents the following characteristics: The results are mainly papers (206 papers) and a few monographs (6 books); the initial stage is dominated by theoretical discussions; subsequently, the case study is in a dominant position; there are more case studies than theoretical studies in total; case study results focus on a few topics; case studies are still the current focus of study; the total number of results has shown a decreasing trend after 2008. Despite these recent findings, case studies of language harmony in China lack width and profundity, and its theoretical discussion still needs to be deepened and improved.

Keywords: language harmony, achievements, case study, theoretical discussion, China

1. Introduction

In 2004, the Chinese government put forward the strategic goal of “constructing a harmonious socialist society” and pointed out that the construction of harmonious society involves political, economic, cultural, and ecological aspects. Language is an important part of culture, and language harmony must become an important part of harmonious society. Based on this, in 2006, the Ministry of Education and the National Language Working Committee of PRC put forward the concept of “constructing a harmonious language life” and began to release the *Chinese Language Life Report* every year. China’s “Outline of the national plan for the reform and development of medium and long-term language and character undertakings (2012-2020)” clearly proposes “Constructing a harmonious language life; scientifically planning the status and function of various languages, and properly handling new situations and problems in language life to promote the comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development of the language undertaking.”

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Language harmony means that different languages and their dialects can coexist in harmony in the same society, realizing the coexistence and co-prosperity of multiple languages and dialects, and ensuring that each language and its dialects can have their own space for survival and development regardless of their size; achieving a linguistic ecology in which subjectivity and diversity are unified, uniqueness and inclusiveness coexist, standardization and development are balanced (Zhou, 2005; Jiang, 2006; Dai, 2008). Specifically, the harmony of languages in a society should be reflected in the following aspects: “In terms of legal status, all languages are equal regardless of the size of their users; in terms of language use, the languages and their dialects of various ethnic groups are keeping their positions and perform their respective duties; in terms of language attitude, people who speak different mother tongues speak different languages (or dialects) under different contexts and needs can be recognized by members of their own clan and members of other clans; in terms of language development, the languages and dialects of various ethnic groups are compatible and complementary to each other” (Zhang, 2011).

In order to keep up with the national development strategy and promote the continuous development of language studies, Chinese linguistic researchers began special studies on language harmony in 2005. After 15 years of development, the study of language harmony in China has seen fruitful results, but there are still some shortcomings.

This paper will sort out and summarize the study of language harmony in China from the aspects of research methods, research content, results and shortcomings and will subsequently put forward some recommendations for future studies on language harmony.

2. Research Methods of Language Harmony Study

Language harmony study, as an independent branch of language study, has its specific research content, which determines the methods of language harmony study. A survey of scholars' study on language harmony shows that the main methods that are used in language harmony study include the following three methods: case study, a combination of synchronic and diachronic research and multidisciplinary research.

2.1 Case Study

There are 129 languages and 54 writing systems in China (Sun, Hu, & Huang, 2007, p. 1). Each language also has different dialects. These languages as well as their dialects contain many types, and have a complex and diverse distribution. At the same time, there are very few materials and achievements about language harmony left by previous people (Dai, 2013). All of these factors require researchers to do case studies of language harmony first. Researchers need to adopt co-operation based on division of labor to make in-depth, meticulous and exhaustive case investigations based on the actual distribution of languages, in order to accumulate detailed field survey data that can lead to theoretical construction of language harmony study.

2.2 A Combination of Synchronic and Diachronic Research

The study of language harmony should first follow the research sequence of synchronic to diachronic, tracing the historical evolution of language harmony based on an understanding of the current situation of language harmony. And we also need to explore the inter-relationship of language harmony in different periods (Dai, 2013).

2.3 Multidisciplinary Research

Language harmony is not only a linguistic issue, but also a social phenomenon (Dai, 2013). Its research not only requires linguistic knowledge, but also involves anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, history, culture, statistics, etc. Therefore, in the study of language harmony, researchers must have the academic consciousness and academic ability of interdisciplinary research, drawing scientific conclusions on the basis of multidisciplinary and multiple perspectives analysis.

3. The Content of China's Language Harmony Study and Its Core Ideas

China's language harmony study covers a wide range of topics, including: The value of language harmony, the types of language harmony, the factors that affect language harmony, the construction path of language harmony, and so on. The study of these contents is not completely separate, and a research result often involves several or even all of them.

3.1 The Value of Language Harmony

Language harmony, as one of the important manifestations of language civilization, is an important part of social civilization. Harmony of language is consistent with the harmony of human society. The construction of harmonious language ecology must become an important part of the construction of harmonious society (Feng, 2006; Feng & Zhang, 2006; Dai, 2008).

Language, as the main communication tool for people and the tool for the spread and inheritance of human civilization, is an essential element for the normal operation and development of society. Language harmony helps to promote the harmonious development of society, cultivate a healthy social language ecology, and promote the formation of good interpersonal relationships, thereby forming a win-win result for the common development of language and society, and then promote the process of urbanization and internationalization of China (Li, 2005; Niu & Li, 2008).

The study of language harmony is an important aspect of the study of the national conditions of languages in China, and it is the precursor to solving the relationship between various languages in China. Doing a good study on language harmony will help the Chinese government to further understand the national conditions of languages, and thus provide a reference for the formulation of national language policies. Language harmony is also conducive to the unity of different ethnic groups in China, while language disharmony may cause conflicts between different ethnic groups, causing social unrest and hindering social progress (Dai, 2008; Jiang, 2010). Therefore, constructing a harmonious multi-ethnic language relationship is conducive to promoting the sustainable development of all ethnic groups in China and achieving long-term peace and stability of the country.

3.2 The Types of Language Harmony

In the study of the types of language harmony, scholars have divided language harmony into different types according to different categorization standards based on many case investigations. Feng (2006) divided language harmony into internal language harmony and external language harmony according to the standards of internal linguistics and external linguistics. Dai (2013) divided the types of language harmony according to time, the kind of languages and degree of harmony.

According to the diachronic and synchronic standard, language harmony can be divided into synchronic language harmony and diachronic language harmony. According to the kind of languages involved in language harmony, it can be divided into harmony between Mandarin Chinese and dialects, harmony between different Chinese dialects, harmony between Chinese and minority languages, harmony between minority languages, harmony between languages in different language branch or language family, harmony between languages at home and abroad, harmony in language applications, etc. According to the degree of language harmony, it can be divided into: high harmony type, general harmony type and disharmony type.

There are no distinctions between good and bad on the criteria for the different categorization of language harmony types. Different criteria are for serving different research perspectives and research purposes.

3.3 The Factors that Affect Language Harmony and How to Construct Language Harmony

This type of study is mainly to explore various factors affecting language harmony based on the investigation and analysis of many cases, and proposes strategies for constructing language harmony. From the research conclusions of Chinese scholars, we can conclude that the factors that affect language harmony mainly include the following: national language policy, the status of language in society, ethnic relations, people's language attitude, bilingual issues, language competition and language complementarity, the relationship between dominant language and non-dominant language, language contact and language variation, and cross-border language problems. In response to these factors, Chinese scholars have suggested that language harmony should be constructed from a few aspects, which will be explained below.

First, we must unswervingly adhere to the basic principle of "all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own languages and writing systems" as set forth in the national constitution, formulate an equal language policy, and actively implement layered and regional language planning, providing institutional guarantee for the construction of language harmony. In long-term case investigations, Dai and his team found that all regions with harmonious language ecology adhere to the state's basic policies on language and implement active language planning (Dai, 2008).

Second, people should be guided to establish a correct language attitude and provide ideological guarantee for the construction of language harmony. Language attitudes play an important role in people's language choice and language use, and it also plays an important role in the formulation of national and regional language policies (Feng, 2007). People must correctly understand the "pluralistic integration" of language distribution in China and respect the diversity of languages. People should maintain an open and inclusive language attitude, so that people who speak different mother tongues can be recognized and respected by the members of their own and other ethnic groups when they speak with different languages or dialects in different contexts and needs.

Third, language violence must be resisted so as to provide a good humane environment for language harmony. Language violence is one of the main factors causing partial disharmony of language in China (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2007). Therefore, in order to construct language harmony, language violence must be eliminated. In public discourse, we must promote the use of civilized language, and eliminate language discrimination, language indifference, language traps, etc.

Fourth, we must properly deal with the issues of language competition and language complementarity. China, as a country with complicated and diverse language distributions, language competition and language

complementarity exist objectively. To construct language harmony, we must unswervingly adhere to the principle of language equality and properly handle the relationship between dominant language and non-dominant language. The government should formulate language policies according to the specific conditions of different regions and coordinate the competition and complementarity between languages or dialects through scientific and reasonable language planning (Dai, 2006; Jiang, 2010).

Fifth, we must properly handle the relationship between national commonly-used language and ethnic languages. Because China is a multi-ethnic country, the existence of many ethnic languages is an inevitable result of historical development. When constructing language harmony, we must recognize both the importance of the mother tongue and the importance of learning and using the national commonly-used language for the development of ethnic groups. The government should adhere to the scientific concept of bilingualism and formulate and implement a scientific and reasonable bilingual policy. It not only protects the use and development of the mother tongues of ethnic groups, but also helps ethnic groups learn and use the national commonly-used language, promoting the complementary and harmonious development between the national commonly-used language and mother tongue of ethnic groups (Zhao, 2008; Dai, 2011).

4. A Quantitative Analysis of Achievements of Language Harmony Study in China

In the past 15 years since Zhou (2005) published the paper *Some humble opinions for language harmony*, the study of language harmony in China has seen great achievements. By searching the Chinese National Library website and the CNKI database with the key words “language harmony”, we retrieved 6 monographs and 206 papers on language harmony study.

In addition, the series of achievements from “the current situation and development of ethnic groups’ language use in China”, a total of 18 monographs, have involved the description and analysis of the language harmony of various ethnic languages. Their conclusion is that there is diversity and difference in the relationship between the languages of various ethnic groups in China, but “harmony” is the mainstream of the language life of all ethnic groups in China.

It can be seen from the statistical results that there are very few monographs on the study of language harmony in China. The six monographs can be divided into two categories. The first category is the case investigation and analysis of language harmony, such as: *Language harmony among ethnic groups in Yanyuan county of Sichuan province* (Dai, 2011), *Chinese acquisition and use in Tibet under the background of language harmony* (Li, 2013), *A study on the living language protection and bilingual harmonious rural construction: A case study of Dulong town in Yunnan province* (Luo & Yu, 2019), *A study of language relationships and multilingual harmony in multi-ethnic area of southwest China* (Zhou, 2013). This category of research mainly focuses on specific language harmony issues in specific language distribution areas, describing the current situation and problems of language harmony in survey sites, and summarizing good experiences in achieving language harmony through investigation and analysis. The second category is the theoretical discussion of language harmony, such as: *Discussion on language harmony* (Feng, 2007), *The art of language harmony* (Zhang, 2009). This category of monographs is mainly theoretical in its discussion of the connotation and extension of language harmony, the importance of language harmony to society and the country, the categorization of language harmony, as well as how to build language harmony.

	harmony																
	Harmony in language use			1	1	7	4	2	8	4	3	3		2	1	1	36
	Disharmony of languages			2	1			1		3	1		1	1			10
Total		1	8	21	28	15	14	14	16	19	11	16	10	13	14	6	206

According to the statistical analysis of the data (papers) of the study on “language harmony” in China from 2005 to 2019, we found that the study of language harmony in China showed a few characteristics that will be elaborated upon below.

4.1 The Initial Stage is Dominated by Theoretical Discussions

2005 to 2008 was the initial stage of the study of language harmony in China. At this stage, scholars mainly discussed some issues related to the study of language harmony from the theoretical level. There are 47 papers, accounting for 54.02% of all theoretical articles of language harmony in China. The majority of the topics discussed in these papers are as follows: The research significance and application value of language harmony, such as *Some humble opinions for language harmonious* (Zhou, 2005), *The psychological expectation and significance of language harmony* (Cui, 2007), *The long-term significance of constructing a harmonious language ecology in the context of globalization* (Niu & Li, 2008), etc.; discussing the research content and research methods of language harmony, such as *Research on language harmony* (Feng, 2007), *Thinking about constructing a harmonious language life* (Ding, 2007), *Several theoretical issues on constructing the harmony of multi-ethnic languages in China* (Dai, 2008), etc.; suggestions for constructing language harmony, such as *Suggestions for constructing harmonious language life* (Zhou & Cui, 2006), *Network language and construction of harmonious culture* (Guo, 2008), *Discussing the construction of harmonious context in contemporary Chinese society* (Shi, 2008), *Suggestions for achieving language harmony*, *The ethical principles of constructing Language harmony* (Gu, 2008). Every paper of these theoretical study results is focused on discussing a specific aspect, while also touching upon other secondary aspects.

Since 2009, the study of language harmony in China has opened the way to case study research. This change is in line with the practical needs of language harmony study in China, because many theoretical issues raised in the initial stage need demonstration and improvement from detailed case investigation data. In addition, the complete and mature theoretical construction of language harmony study and the scientific countermeasures and suggestions for constructing language harmony also need support from detailed case investigation data. A comparison of the theoretical studies and case studies of language harmony in China in different years is shown in Figure 1.

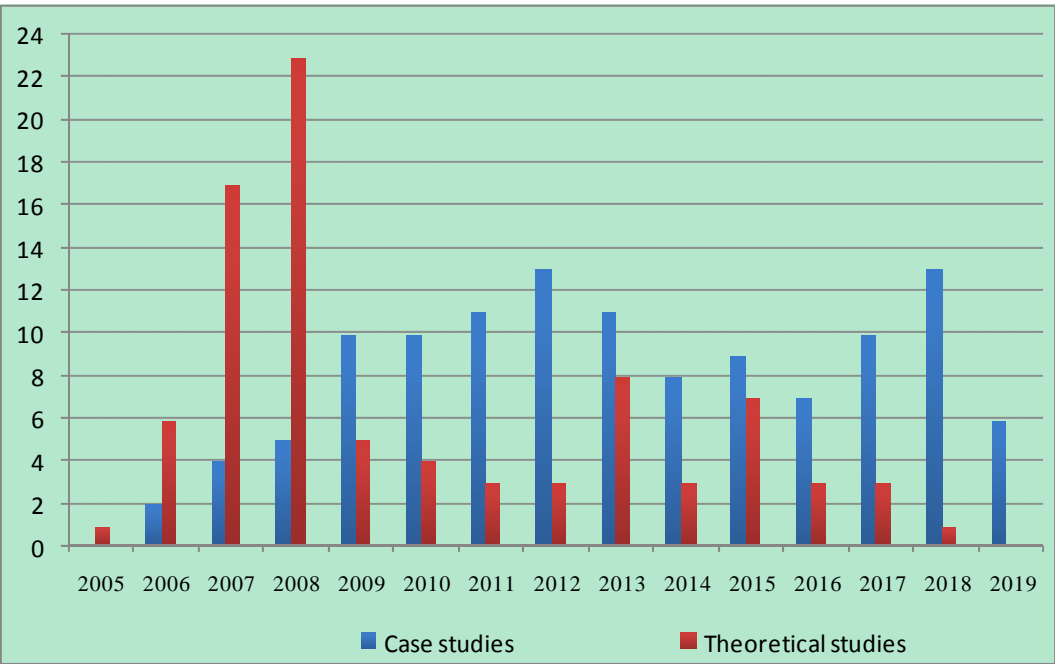


Figure 1. Comparative distribution of the results of theoretical studies and case studies of language harmony of China in different years.

4.2 More Case Studies than Theoretical Studies in Total

As can be seen from the statistics in Figure 2, the number of case studies in China’s study on “language harmony” from 2005 to 2019 is greater than the theoretical studies. Furthermore, it should also be noted that in these statistics, we found that the study results on language harmony of Dai were relatively substantial, with a total of 14 papers (10 theoretical studies and 4 case studies). He also authored a monograph entitled *Language harmony among ethnic groups in Yanyuan county of Sichuan province*. His research results provide a very good reference for other scholars to study language harmony.

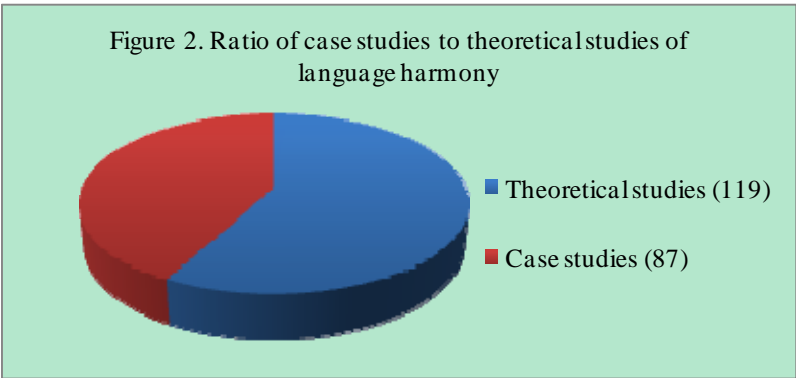


Figure 2. Ratio of case studies to theoretical studies of language harmony.

4.3 Case Study Results Focused on a Few Topics

According to the statistics in Figure 3, the number of case studies of language harmony is unevenly distributed on various topics, and related studies are mostly concentrated on a few hot topics. Among them, the topic “case study of regional multilingual harmony” has the most results, with a total of 37 papers, accounting for 31.09% of the total number of case study results; the number of results for the topic “case study of language harmony in language use” ranked second, with a total of 36 papers, accounting for 30.25% of the total number of case study results; the next topic is the “case study of language harmony between Chinese (including dialects) and ethnic languages”, with a total of 20 papers, accounting for 16.81% of the total number of case study results; the other four topics totaled 26 papers, only 21.85% of the total number of case study results.

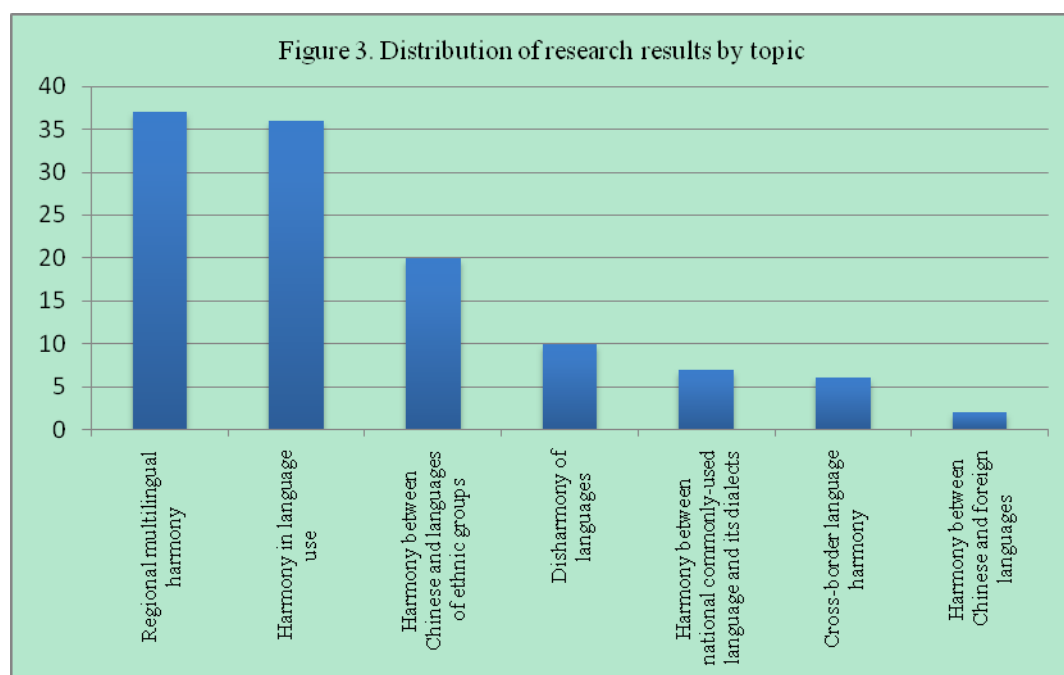


Figure 3. Distribution of research results by topic.

4.4 The Total Number of Results Has Shown a Decreasing Trend After 2008

According to Figure 4, it can be seen that during the initial stage of the study of language harmony in China, that is, from 2005 to 2008, the study results gradually increased, reaching a peak in 2008, with a total of 28 papers, accounting for 13.59% of the total results. After that, the overall study results of language harmony in China show a decreasing trend. In 2019, there were only 6 case study results. Furthermore, the theoretical study results have sharply decreased since 2008, and the number of case study results has not changed much from year to year.

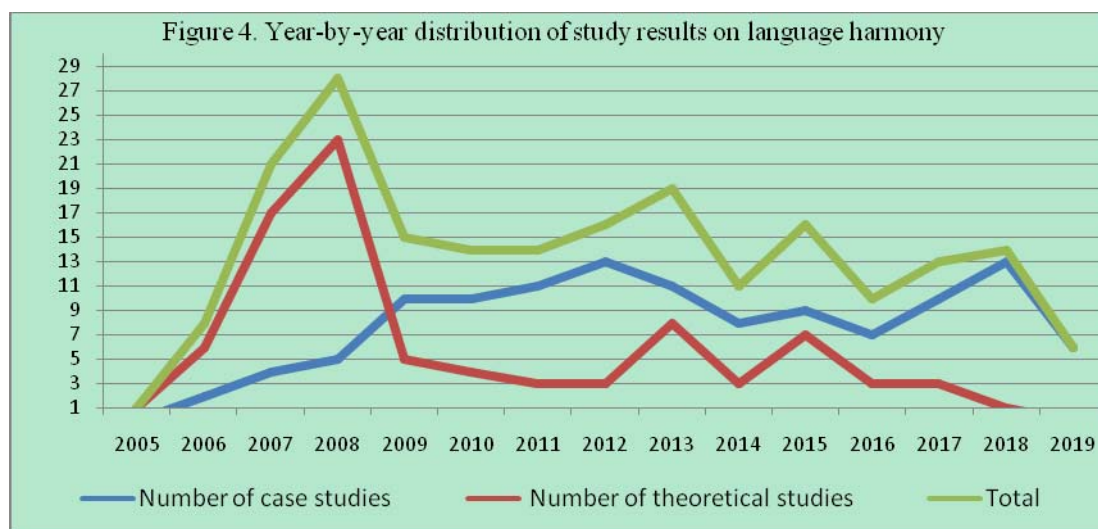


Figure 4. Year-by-year distribution of study results on language harmony.

4.5 Case Studies are Still the Focus of Study

The case study research is the foundation of the theoretical construction of language harmony study, and it is also the focus of the whole language harmony study, providing detailed data support for theoretical construction. As can be seen from Figure 5, the difference between the numbers of case study results and the number of theoretical study results has been increasing since 2008. This shows that the current study on language harmony in China is still focused on case study. Only by accumulating enough case study data can a theory be better constructed.

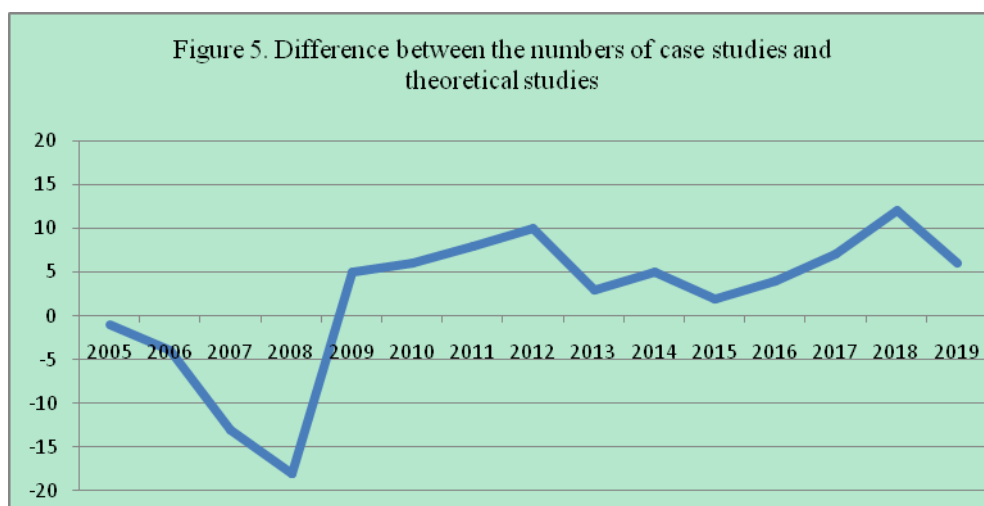


Figure 5. Difference between the numbers of case studies and theoretical studies.

5. Deficiencies of Language Harmony Study in China

Constructing a harmonious society is an important strategy in the construction of socialism in China. Language harmony is an important part of social harmony. Its study has important theoretical and application values, providing basic guidance for the formulation of national language policies. The results of language harmony study also have the following application values: Guiding the work of language management departments in ethnic areas and Chinese dialect areas, promoting the harmonious coexistence and development among national commonly-used language, Chinese dialects and various ethnic languages, promoting China's socialist modernization so as to build a harmonious society, and promoting the international spread of Chinese language and culture. After fifteen years of development, the study of language harmony in China has yielded fruitful results, but there are still many issues worthy of further discussion.

5.1 Case Studies Lack Width and Profundity

At present, although the case study of language harmony in China has become the focus of study and the study results are still increasing, there are still many problems in case studies, and the width and profundity of these case investigations are still insufficient.

5.1.1 Lacking width in the distribution of survey sites for case study of language harmony

The case survey of language harmony is an important part of the project for national language investigation in China. The current survey of language harmony in China is still partial. The survey sites are mainly distributed in ethnic areas such as Yunnan, Xinjiang, and Guangxi, etc., and case surveys of language harmony in other regions are very limited. The results of existing case studies on language harmony cannot reflect the nationwide situation of language harmony. Therefore, researchers should expand the distribution of survey sites for language harmony case studies in the future, in order to obtain a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of the national language harmony situation.

5.1.2 The case study of language harmony between Chinese and ethnic languages lacks micro-exploration and profundity

Entering a new period of modernization, the development of science and economy will inevitably lead to new changes in people's language life. For new language phenomena and language problems, we must conduct in-depth discussions. China is a multi-ethnic country, and there are many kinds of ethnic languages. The study of the harmonious relationship between ethnic languages and Chinese is a very important study topic in Chinese linguistics. The study of the harmonious relationship between ethnic languages and Chinese has important theoretical significance and implications. Related study results can provide theoretical support for the formulation and planning of national language policies. At the same time, the harmonious development of ethnic languages and Chinese can help to build a harmonious relationship between ethnic groups, which then promotes the process of China's socialist modernization.

However, in fact, the majority of the current study results on the harmonious relationship between ethnic languages and Chinese is dominated by individual studies, and it is mostly concentrated on a few areas such as Yunnan, Guangxi, Xinjiang, etc. The relevant case studies are mostly shallow macroscopic phenomenon investigations, lacking in-depth microscopic investigations. Their research content cannot keep up with the actual changes in the relationships between Chinese and ethnic languages.

In the studies conducted by Jiang & Zhu (2010), Huang & Li (2012), Gong & Yu (2017), Wang & Liao (2007), Wang (2018), Chen E (2019), etc., only the language distribution of the surveyed area and the language use of the local residents from the macro level were investigated. The specific distributions of languages in each small area of the survey site and the reasons for such distributions, however, are still left unexplored at the micro level. In a bilingual (or multilingual) area, there will definitely be regional differences in the distribution of various languages, and these regional differences will inevitably affect the harmony of languages. Most of the factors that promote language harmony in these results refer to ethnic equality policy and language policy of the government, compulsory education systems, social progress, etc. These are very macro and obvious. The studies failed to point out at a micro level how these factors promote language harmony and whether their status and role are the same or different in the process of promoting language harmony. Furthermore, most of these case studies are single-point case investigation and analysis, and there is a lack of comparative studies on multi-point case investigations.

5.1.3 Insufficient study on the harmonious relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects

“Promoting Mandarin” is an important language policy for China to adapt to modernization. But promoting Mandarin does not mean eliminating other Chinese dialects. With the deepening of the Mandarin promotion process, some people are unable to appropriately coordinate the relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, and the disharmonious phenomenon of discriminating against other Chinese dialects even appeared in some areas. Therefore, the study of the harmonious relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects should become the focus of the language harmony study in China. However, according to the statistical data of the results, the number of studies conducted on the harmonious relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects is very small (only 7 papers), which shows that the conflicts between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects have not received enough attention. The best state of language harmony should be this: while promoting Mandarin, each Chinese dialect has free development and use space, as Mandarin and other Chinese dialects have their own social functions, and complement each other. So, it is necessary to increase the study on the harmonious relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects to provide a theoretical basis for correctly handling the relationship between Mandarin and other Chinese dialects, and to better promote the construction of a harmonious language society.

5.1.4 Study on the harmonious relationship between Chinese and foreign languages has not received enough attention

Cultural strength is an important part of a country’s overall strength. In recent years, China has been continuously increasing the promotion and spread of Chinese language and culture in the world. In an increasingly competitive international environment, coordinating the relationship between Chinese and foreign languages and the depth and width of the global spread of Chinese language and culture all reflect China’s comprehensive national strength to a certain extent. This is also an important way for China to participate more in international competition and international affairs management. However, the actual situation is that, in China, the relationship between Chinese and foreign languages, such as English, has not been handled well, and the unreasonable foreign language education policy has made the emphasis on foreign languages outweigh the emphasis on one’s own Chinese language in various types of examinations. This has caused the disharmony of “emphasis on foreign language learning and neglect of Chinese learning”.

At present, the spread of Chinese in the world is still lacking depth and width. In the international language competition, Chinese still lacks a sufficient competitive edge. The current studies on the harmonious relationship between Chinese and foreign languages are still very few (only 2 papers). Therefore, scholars also need to conduct in-depth investigation and analysis to explain a series of problems and adverse consequences caused by the current foreign language policy in China. Relevant study results can help government departments to adjust and improve policy measures, further coordinate the relationship between Chinese and foreign languages, and then improve the efficiency of language resource utilization, enhance people's identity of Chinese, and construct a harmonious language relationship between Chinese and foreign languages.

5.2 The Theoretical Discussion of Language Harmony Study Needs to be Deepened and Improved

As a new branch of linguistics, language harmony study needs to establish a complete theoretical system to guide work for more specific study. According to the statistics and analysis of the current study results, we find that the study of language harmony in China is still in its initial stages, case studies occupy the majority of study results, and theoretical studies are still few. Generally speaking, the theoretical discussion about the study of language harmony has not received the attention it deserves, the theoretical construction is not deep enough or complete, and the studies that comprise it are more like fragmented pieces rather than a system.

5.2.1 Unclear definition of related concepts and their relationship

For the study of language harmony, first of all, it is necessary to define clearly "what is language harmony". Recent studies have tried to define it, but each definition involves only one or a few perspectives, lacking comprehensiveness and specific parameters. For example, the "coexistence of various languages and dialects, survival and development space, inclusiveness, etc," which is mentioned in the definitions of Zhou (2005), Jiang (2006), and Dai (2008), are too abstract and general, lacking specific parameters. For the categorization of language harmony, different scholars, such as Feng (2006) and Dai (2013), have proposed some different categorization methods from multiple perspectives. However, these categorizations lack clear category definitions and have overlap between categories. Furthermore, there is no specific index for the measure of degree of language harmony. "Language harmony" involves many linguistic phenomena, the most important of which include language competition, the relationship between dominant language and non-dominant language, and language complementarity. In the pool of existing studies of language harmony in China, the relationship between these concepts and the relationship between the linguistic phenomena in response to these concepts, as well as their impact on language harmony failed to receive the necessary attention.

5.2.2 Research methods lack specificity and clarity

As for the research methods of language harmony, the previous researchers have only conducted macro-level investigations and lacked a specific and clear discussion. For example, case investigations have left the following questions unanswered: How do we design a scientific and reasonable questionnaire for the specific investigation site? How do we choose appropriate interviewees in the interview survey? When analyzing the questionnaire and interview data, what data indicators should be the focus of analysis? In response to these questions, current studies have not been able to provide adequate answers or carry out detailed exploration and discussion. In terms of interdisciplinary research methods for language harmony study, there also remained unaddressed issues: How do we determine the specific disciplines involved in the research according to the

research needs? How do we define the status and role of these disciplines in the overall research? How do we formulate scientific and reasonable comprehensive research methods? These are all topics that are also in need of further discussion and clarification.

5.2.3 Theoretical research lacks historical depth

The study of language harmony is still an emerging topic in linguistic study in China, with only 15 years of study history. However, the issue of "language harmony" has existed since ancient times, and also has a diachronic evolutionary process. In China's thousands of years of history, the harmonious relationships of languages (as well as dialects) in different eras and different regions, as well as between different ethnic languages present different characteristics. Like other study topics, the issue of language harmony has evolved over a long period of time. Therefore, the study of language harmony must also focus on exploring its historical development and the characteristics of development, so as to provide a reference for the study of synchronic language harmony. However, the current studies focus almost solely on the current status of language harmony. There is little discussion on the historical development of language harmony. The historical process of the development and evolution of language harmony has not received enough attention, so that the discipline of language harmony lacks historical depth. With a comprehensive description and analysis of the current situation of language harmony as its foundation, researchers should further trace the history, letting the current situation and history of language harmony form an organic "evolutionary chain" to show the internal connection of language harmony of different periods.

5.2.4 The construction plan of language harmony lacks diversity and specificity

China is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country. Multiple languages correspond to multiple linguistic relations. For different linguistic relations as well as different social and historical factors, it requires the coordination of specific policies and planning to achieve language harmony. In other words, for different language relationships and different influencing factors, the construction model of language harmony should be different. The theoretical study of language harmony should provide corresponding theoretical support for various construction models. However, the construction of language harmony models proposed in existing studies is too general, considering more commonalities in situations and ignoring characteristics of specific language relations in specific regions amongst specific ethnic peoples. Future studies should pay more attention to specific ethnic relations and specific language relations in specific regions, and then put forward more targeted construction principles and models for the construction of language harmony.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

Over the past fifteen years, the study of language harmony in China has seen many results, but has also not been without its shortcomings. As an emerging linguistics field, there is still much space for development. Language harmony is closely related to social development. With the deepening of the process of constructing harmonious society, the specific language situations in Chinese society will surely have new changes and developments, as well as present new characteristics. The study of language harmony should closely follow these changes and developments, and constantly familiarize itself with new situations and new issues, providing theoretical and empirical references for national language planning and the construction and maintenance of

harmonious language ecology. In order to better conduct language harmony study in China, we believe that the following aspects should become the focus of further study.

First of all, an in-depth investigation of the social language situation should be carried out, and the breadth of case investigation sites of language harmony in China should be expanded. Dai (2008) pointed out: "The social language situation in a country mainly includes language use, functions of languages in society, characteristics of language ontology, relationships between languages, and evolutionary trends of the functions of languages." The degree of a people's understanding of a society's language use is, to a certain extent, dependent upon the depth and width of the investigation and study of the social language situation in that country. A comprehensive understanding of the social language situation in a country and expanding the breadth of case investigations of language harmony will help to better conduct language harmony study and provide scientific guidance for the adjustment of national language policies.

Second, theoretical study must be strengthened so that a complete theoretical system can be constructed. Any case study ultimately serves the construction of a theoretical system. Most of the current case studies are limited to the investigation and description of language facts, lacking theoretical summary. The result is that the current theoretical achievements of language harmony are relatively limited. Future studies should focus on generalizing and summarizing the relevant theories of language harmony study drawn from existing case studies. This will then help to establish a robust theoretical system of language harmony and provide powerful theoretical support for subsequent study on language harmony.

Third, attention must be paid to the investigation and analysis of the disharmony of languages. Language harmony is the mainstream trend of the social language situation of China, but partial disharmony still exists. The study of partial disharmony of languages will help to better deal with regional language relations and construct a more harmonious social language ecology. Strengthening the investigation of the disharmony of languages and studying the factors leading to language disharmony will provide a theoretical basis for formulating corresponding language mediation policies that can resolve the issue of language disharmony.

Finally, the implications of current studies of language harmony can be furthered. Language harmony is an important part of constructing harmonious society. The ultimate goal of the study of language harmony is to promote the construction of a harmonious society, and its study results should serve the construction of harmonious socialist society. However, there are very few achievements of the current study on language harmony that have been directly applied to the construction of harmonious society. In future studies, scholars should pay attention to the applications of study results, enabling the study results of language harmony to serve the construction of harmonious society more effectively.

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