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# **The Vernacularization of Standard Baihuawen during the Period of 1917 – 1955**

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## Abstract

This is a case study that attempts to investigate the socio-cultural dynamics that underpin a particular form of language change, namely, deliberate language change from the perspective of language planning. The case studied is the vernacularization of the linguistic standard of the Chinese language that gained national attention in 1917 and was largely consolidated in 1955.

The language reforms in China have caught the attention of students of language planning. However, most of this attention has been focused on promotion of Putonghua (Common Speech), simplification of Hanzi (the logographs) and their romanization. Somehow, the vernacularization of the linguistic standard (i.e. the replacement of the literary language (Wenyan) by the Northern Vernacular (Baihua) as the standard) has not been investigated in depth, be it overseas or in the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. In case of the latter, a probable cause of this lack of interest could be that the two protagonists of this major reform -- Hu Shi (胡適) and Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀) -- were politically sensitive figures in the respective regimes in the past.

Therefore, this investigation is a first attempt to provide a systematic, synoptic documentation of the case within a language planning framework. It is believed that this investigation provides a valuable and rare opportunity for us to have a more precise understanding of (1) how language problems are constituted and defined; (2) what triggers deliberate language change; (3) the interplay between socio-historical factors and various actors that bring forth this change and (4) the

construction, selection and elaboration of linguistic norms in the process of consolidating the changes.

The study will show how major socio-cultural shifts could undermine a stable language situation (namely a classical diglossia), how a few individuals could define the agenda for linguistic reforms and how for these sorts of reforms their consolidation ultimately requires the support of the government.

## **Dedication**

To my dearest parents

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Daniel So, for his encouragement and guidance throughout the whole writing process of this dissertation. I wish to extend my appreciation also to Dr K. H. Cheung and Mr C. C. Wong for their incisive comments and valuable assistance. Finally, I would like to thank my prayer partners, Icarus Choi and Vivian Chak. Without their continued support, I would not have been able to go through the most difficult time during the writing of this dissertation.



### **Author's Note**

In this thesis, a large number of texts from Chinese sources have been cited, and whenever appropriate their English versions are also provided to facilitate the reading of the thesis by readers not familiar with the Chinese language. These translations are given by me unless specified otherwise. Also, because the romanization of proper names in Chinese has not been standardized, very often the same proper name may have more than one form of spelling. In order to get around this problem, in general the names of personalities, places, publications, and historical incidents mentioned in this thesis are rendered in Pinyin, in addition to the traditional script unless the extend of currency of spelling of the names of personalities and places like Hu Shi and Hong Kong is such that it makes the practice redundant.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Language change, including both natural and planned changes, is a significant topic in both linguistics and sociolinguistics. It is believed that the **vernacularization of the linguistic standard**<sup>1</sup> of the Chinese language provides a useful case for us to gain a better understanding of how planned, deliberate and conscious language change takes place.

#### **Definition & Significance of the research problem**

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the government's policy on language has attracted much attention among scholars. Some of them (Barnes, 1974; DeFrancis, 1984; Norman, 1988) have worked on topics like the promotion of Putonghua (Common Speech), the simplification of the script and its romanization. However, an in-depth investigation of the replacement of Wenyanwen by a variety of the vernacular (footnote 1 refers) as the linguistic standard of the Chinese language remains largely un-explored. It might be because the two protagonists of this reform -- Hu Shi (胡適) and Chen

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the replacement of Wenyanwen (文言文) by Baihuawen (白話文) as the linguistic standard. The former is the classical variety of Chinese and the latter is derived from the vernaculars spoken by people in Northern China, especially those in the provinces of Hebei (河北), Jiangsu (江蘇) and Zhejiang (浙江).

There are many vernacular varieties of the Chinese language. The terms "Baihua" and its written variety "Baihuawen" used in this dissertation refer to the vernacular commonly spoken by people in Northern China, which was chosen to replace Wenyan(wen), unless specified otherwise. In this study, "Baihua" is used interchangeably with the terms "the vernacular," "Modern Standard Chinese" and "Standard Variety of Modern Chinese."

Duxiu (陳獨秀) -- were politically sensitive figures in the PRC and Taiwan in the past, and their close association with this significant event in the history of the language planning of China could have delayed its proper study by scholars in these two polities.

This investigation, therefore, is a pilot study which attempts to provide a synoptic study of the event. It is hoped that this study shows not only how a particular case of vernacularization of a linguistic standard took place, but also establish an empirical base for us to gain a better understanding of language change, or more specifically, deliberate language change.

Language change is a significant research topic in the field of linguistics and sociolinguistics. Many scholars (Labov, 1972 & 1994; Aitchison, 1991; McMahon, 1994; Lass, 1997) have done a lot of work on this topic. In the nineteenth century, linguists began their work on generalizing certain similarities and differences between languages. Grimm's work on the regular phonological changes in the Germanic languages marked the milestone in historical and comparative linguistics. The systematic changes identified – voiced aspirates become unaspirated, voiced stops become voiceless, voiceless stops become fricatives – are now known as “Grimm's law”. This can be regarded as a milestone of investigation in language change.

It is now fairly evident that most aspects of language are subject to changes over time. Studies of language change cover grammar, phonetics and phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and vocabulary. With regard to the mechanism and types of language change, it is believed many of the major forces at work for

unplanned, natural language change and those for deliberate language change are not the same. Therefore language change is usually divided into natural change and deliberate change. In general, natural and spontaneous language change takes place over a relatively long time whilst deliberate change may happen even overnight. Study of the former aims at accounting for accumulated changes. Deliberate change, in contrast, shows extensive changes within relatively a short time, an example of which will be provided by the present study.

### **Form of the present study**

It is believed that a case study with a synoptic approach is an appropriate form for the present study. First, this form has been adopted by many reputable students of language change, like Baugh on English and Lodge on French. Second, because the present study is among the earliest attempts to throw light on the topic, I have set myself the task of setting the scene for future students of deliberate language change who are interested in this particular case.

### **Scope**

The promotion of the Northern vernacular (hereafter refers to the vernacular) as the standard variety of Chinese was initiated by reform-minded scholars, literary figures and educators in the late nineteenth century. It gathered momentum during the New Cultural Movement and eventually emerged as the National Language Movement advocating a wide-ranging language planning agenda. The movement started through the bottom-up effort of the non-establishment elites and eventually was taken up by the establishment and became a top-to-bottom government programme. The status of Baihuawen as the linguistic standard of Chinese was largely consolidated in 1955.

This study will mainly cover the development of Baihuawen as the written linguistic standard of Chinese, especially in the area of expository writing during the period of 1917 - 1955. In the course of re-constructing this development, the mechanism that drives this change will also be examined. To a large extent, one may take this study as an external historical account of the development of Modern Standard Chinese with an examination of its driving forces from a sociolinguistic, language-planning perspective.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this dissertation are: (1) To re-construct the development of Baihuawen as the linguistic standard of the Chinese language; (2) To seek a better understanding of the motors and dynamics of deliberate linguistic change by the way of examining the actors, the events and other forces that drove this development; (3) To seek a better understanding of the production and consolidation of norms during the course of language change, and in doing so (4) To set the scene for more in-depth studies of this topic in the future.

Accordingly, this study will examine the role of individuals (actors), ideology, government and political parties in this change. Among the actors, Hu Shi played a leading role. Hu and his relevant works, therefore, will receive a larger measure of attention in this study.

Although all language change involves two sets of factors: the internal linguistic constraints of the language and the socio-cultural settings in which the change takes place. Given the objectives, emphasis will be put on the latter group of factors that underpin the deliberate changes to Standard Chinese.

The investigation will also cover the construction, selection and elaboration of linguistic norms in the process of consolidating the changes. It is believed the Chinese case provides an interesting glimpse of how such processes evolve and work.

### **Conceptual framework and organizing principles of the study**

In conducting the study, the framework of language planning (LP)<sup>2</sup> is adopted. A synoptic description of the reform will be given--starting from the constitution of the language problem which triggered the deliberate language change in China, to the language planning process and its achievements--within this framework. In addition, this thesis is organized around the following principles:

According to Kaplan and Baldauf, (1997:5), actors of language planning include governmental agencies, education agencies, quasi-governmental or non-governmental organizations, other organizations or actors. Initially, the vernacularization of the linguistic standard of China started as a bottom-up movement and eventually became a top-to-bottom government programme. What this means is that in the earlier stages of the vernacularization movement, the initiators and supporters of the movement were mainly actors and institutions outside the establishment. The activities during this period were therefore “bottom-up”.

After the Communist Party came to power in 1949, the government adopted much

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<sup>2</sup> Details of the framework of language planning (LP) will be provided in the next chapter.

of the language-planning agenda put together by the advocates of language reform (many of whom were either in or sympathetic to the Chinese Communist Party) and turned it into its language policy. As a result, the status planning process<sup>3</sup> concluded soon after the founding of the PRC and the status of Baihuawen as the linguistic standard was a matter of policy by 1955. This top-to-bottom approach adopted by the PRC regime in practice drew the status planning stage of the vernacularization of China's standard language to a conclusion.

As for the activities related to corpus planning, a similar development could be observed. Initially matters of codification and elaboration were carried out by actors driven by beliefs and ideology. After 1949, especially after 1955, these matters have been taken up by government and/or quasi-government bodies.

### **Outline of the thesis**

In Chapter 2, some relevant major cases of language change, language planning and language problem are reviewed. The concept of “diglossia” and its relevance to this study will be mentioned in brief. The dynamics of language planning are then discussed.

The genesis of the drive to replace Wenyanwen with Baihuawen as the linguistic standard is discussed in Chapter 3. In the course of the discussion, it will be shown how the stable diglossia situation that prevailed in China for thousands of years became unstable and led to the aforementioned change.

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<sup>3</sup> Elaboration of the term “status planning” and “corpus planning” will be given in Chapter Two.

In Chapter 4, the problem-identification, and status planning processes that resulted in instituting Baihuawen as the new standard will be examined in detail. The impact of actors and historical-social factors will also be discussed.

Chapter 5 will focus mainly on corpus planning, especially the process of norms construction for the new Standard.

Chapter 6 will deal with the conclusions and the limitations of this study.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE FRAMEWORK**

Language changes all the time in history. The language used today is not the same as the one in the past. Take English as an example, Old English differs from Middle English in its pronunciation, syntax or morphology, and so does Middle English from Modern English<sup>4</sup>. As Crystal mentions, “all aspects of language structure and use are subject to changes” (1997:330). That is why language change has received considerable attention<sup>5</sup>.

#### **2.1 Language change**

All living languages change with time. The branch of linguistics that deals with how language change, what kinds of changes occurs, and why they occurred is called historical and comparative linguistics. In 1786 Sir William Jones delivered a paper in which he observed that Sanskrit, Latin and Greek belonged to the same family. Then Grimm published the regular sound correspondences among Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and the Germanic languages. The regular sound change is known as “Grimm’s Law”. Grimm stated that “the sound shift is a general tendency; it is not followed in every case”. Neo-Grammarians, however, claimed that sound laws have no exception. They viewed linguistics as a natural science, and therefore believed that laws of sound change were natural laws.

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<sup>4</sup> Study of Trahern (1989), Baugh and Cable (1993) provide a wide variety of aspects of the English language development.

<sup>5</sup> Labov, 1972 & 1994; McMahon, 1994.

### 2.1.1 *Types of change*

As all aspects of language are subject to changes, the study of language change includes sound change, morphological change, syntactic change, lexical and semantic change.

#### 2.1.1(a) Sound Change

According to Lehmann (1992:183), the term “sound change” is used only for “events that result in disruption of the phonological system” that affect certain sounds or classes of sounds instead of individual words.

For example, in Chaucer’s time, the word *hūs* [hu:s] is now called house [haws].

The regular sound correspondence /u:/-/aw/ can be illustrated also by the words out ( [u:t], [awt] ) and south ( [su:θ], [sawθ] ).

Regular sound change correspondences are also found among different languages as well as among dialects of one language. In English, the words begin with f, the corresponding words in Roman languages often have p. The word *father* in English is *père* in French, *fish* in English is *poisson* in French.

Sound shift is also found over regions. In American English, the diphthong /aj/ in non-southern English will usually be pronounced with the monophthong /a/ in the South.

#### 2.1.1(b) Morphological Change

Like phonological rules, rules of morphology may be lost, added, or changed. For example, the suffix -ize, which changes nouns and adjectives into verbs meaning

“to make \_\_\_\_\_,” as in *standardize* “to make standard,” is changing to become common in American English.

#### 2.1.1(c) Syntactic Change

Compare with Old English, which was more an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language, Modern English is an SVO (Subject-Verb-Object) language. The changes in word order marked a change in syntax.

#### 2.1.1(d) Lexical Change

Changes in the lexicon also occur, including the addition of new words, changes in the meanings of words, and the loss of words. The two ways in which a new word gets absorbed into a language are by piecing together existing morphemes (derivational morphology) and borrowing from another language.

#### 2.1.1(e) Semantic Change

We have seen that a language may gain or lose lexical items. Additionally, the meaning or semantic representation of words may change, becoming broader, narrower, or shifted. An example of broadening provided by Fromkin and Rodman (1993:336) is the word *holiday* originally meant “holy day,” a day of religious significance. Today the word signifies any day on which we do not have to work.

### *2.1.2 Motors of change*

#### 2.1.2(a) Internal factors

Internal factors of language change aims at dealing with the factors within the linguistic systems. The main concerns are fallen within relations within phonetic,

phonemic, and morphological systems and the effects of sound change on the capacity of sounds to distinguish meaning.

### 2.1.2(b) External factors

External factors are many, but language contact is a notable factor. Besides, sociolinguistic factors are significant. Labov believed that the trigger and motivation for sound change are not purely linguistic but also social. His research on the variable presence of 'postvocalic [r]' in New York - a phenomenon involving dialect re-affiliation, rather primary sound. One of the low-level variables is selected as a socially significant marker of group identity. The variable becomes grammatically significant. The extension of the rule to new environments, word classes, segment classes is regarded as chain shift. The process extended to other groups and became complete regularity.

## **2.2 Deliberate language change and language problem**

The aforementioned changes are by-and-large "unplanned, or involuntary". As mentioned in the introduction there are changes to languages which are "deliberate". In general, unplanned language change takes more time, as mentioned above, and the process is usually slow and inconspicuous. Deliberate language change, in contrast, is noticeable even within months. According to Rubin and Jernudd, language planning is deliberate language change and is a function of an identification of language problems and a perceived need on the part of the government and/or the public to have them resolved:

Language planning is *deliberate* language change; that is changes in the systems of language code or speaking or both that are planned by organizations that are established for such purposes or given a mandate to fulfill purposes. As such, language planning is focused on problem-solving and is characterized by the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best (or optimal, most efficient) decision. (1971:xvi)

From the above observation, it is clear that language planning is believed to be a function of a perception of the presence of language problems. Although there is no commonly agreed definitions of language planning, language problem seems to be an important part of many of the definitions. But what is a language problem? Does it mostly refer to problems internal to a language, or does it refer to the problem of circumstances in which the language is situated?

Language planning, according to Haugen (cited in Cooper, 1989:34), “is called for wherever there are language problems.” It is true that language planning is directed to the solution of language problems. But it is important to note that the presence or absence of language problems is very often a matter of perception and construction. For example, the absence of literacy may not be a “problem”. Only when the unequal distribution of literacy within a community leads to power disjunction that it is constituted as a problem. It is also important to remember that usually language reforms are sought in order to attain non-linguistic ends. Above all, most of the language problems were underpinned by an ideological and political agenda.

Language planning tasks are different in response to different kinds of language problem. Examples of such tasks include creation of new alphabets, codification

of morphology, standardization, development of “plain language”, spelling reform, language maintenance, and elimination of gender discrimination in language (Bright ed., 1992:84).

Take language revival of Hebrew in Israel as an example, language problem arose because of the rise of Jewish nationalism and the resettlement of Jews in Palestine by the nineteenth century. As a result of the widespread persecutions of Jews and the rise of nationalism in Europe, there was a significant Jewish immigration to Palestine in the last century. The settlement developed into several communities speaking a variety of languages. Undesirable though this situation might be to the settlers, it in itself did not lead to a strong drive for establishing a lingua franca among the communities. It was only after the re-founding of the nation of Israel that the multilingual situation was considered a big problem as it was perceived to be hindering national communication and nation-building. The selection of a lingua franca became a necessity. Hebrew, the language of heritage among the Jews, was eventually selected and became the national and official language. This in turn created another problem: the use of Hebrew had been confined only to a couple of domains for thousands of years. In order to extend its use to a full range of domains necessitated by its gaining of official status, a campaign for its revival and modernization had to be launched.

The promotion of Hebrew also served to mobilize support for a new nation and language planning became one of the most significant government projects upon Israel's independence in 1948.

The case of language revival of Hebrew shows that a multilingual situation is in

itself not a problem. It becomes a problem only when it is believed to be a hindering factor in the process of nation-building. To achieve this end, a common language was needed in uniting the people. Hebrew was chosen because of its unifying value, its continuous use in written texts and its prestigious position. Restoration of Hebrew, therefore, met its success by the collective effort of different agents, like the Hebrew Language Council founded by Ben-Yehuda and the schools.

The case of the revival of Hebrew shows the close relationship between language planning and nation building. The case of language planning in Turkey, on the other hand, will show its close relationship with modernization.

Language reform in Turkey was brought about by social modernization. Language reform of Turkey also serves as another example in illustrating the nature of language problems. The problem was a product of the rise of nationalism in Turkey during the nineteenth century. The encroachment of Turkey by the West engendered among the elites a heightened sense of need for social, cultural, political changes. In order to initiate these changes, many reform-minded elites believed that the literary language (Osmanlica), which was quite removed from the vernacular, was a major hindering factor because it was perceived to be inadequate for the introduction of modern ideas and know-how from the West to Turkey. This perceived weakness of Osmanlica subsequently caught the attention of Kemal Ataturk after he came to power in 1922. He "successfully changed the writing system to a romanized one, removed many of the Persian influences in the language and borrowed terminology from European languages to make modernization possible." (Kaplan & Baldauf Jr., 1997:65)

As Clyne observes, language planning “generally denotes a deliberate response to language problems” (Bright ed., 1992:84). Depending on the nature of the problems, the goal of language planning is various. The above examples show that different problems bring about different goals, and different contents of language planning. However, the fact that language planning is a function of language problems which in turn are a function of political agendas appear to be applicable to the aforementioned and other cases.

It is believed that language planning in China is no exception. The vernacularization of Standard Chinese is evidently a case of deliberate language change. In this study, it is also seen as a response to a widespread perception among the elites of the time of the presence of language problems. Accordingly, language planning is chosen to provide a framework for this study.

Language planning falls into two broad areas: **status planning** and **corpus planning**. According to Kloss, status planning is “concerned with the standing of one language in relation to others” while corpus planning stresses on the changes of the shape of a language “by proposing new technical terms, spelling reforms, a new script, or even changes to morphology (e.g. gender endings)” (1969). These two areas of language planning are closely related. Corpus planning usually follows status planning. Sometimes, however, the two activities may overlap in time. For instance, the decision to use Hebrew as a medium of instruction required extensive elaboration of Hebrew vocabulary in order to provide terms for modern school subjects.



### 2.3 Diglossia

Students of language planning often find the concept of diglossia useful. This concept poses a relationship between language form and social function. This term was first used by Ferguson in 1959:

DIGLOSSIA is a relatively stable language situation in which, in addition to the primary dialects of the language (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety, the vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation. (Giglioli ed., 1972:244–245)

In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by speakers in different domains, for example, two varieties of a language coexist throughout a community with each having its own set of social function. Diglossia may develop from various origins and eventuate in different language situations. In Ferguson's study, the diglossic distribution of language use is expounded vis-a-vis function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon and phonology<sup>6</sup> and the diglossia situation is believed to be quite stable.

Fisherman, however, extended the use of the term diglossia to include function-based distribution of different languages as well, making his version of diglossia a common phenomena in most societies.

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<sup>6</sup> Some of these elements will be used in the following chapter to examine the diglossia situation in China. More detail information about them will be given in Chapter three.

According to Fasold (1984), Ferguson carefully uses the term “diglossia” to state the relationship between two varieties of the same language only. In Fishman’s definition, however, the notion includes cases of both closer and more distant degrees of language relatedness.

To integrate the two definitions, Fasold proposes the label “broad diglossia” which captures “the reservation of highly valued segments of a community’s linguistic repertoire (which are not the first to be learned, but are learned later and more consciously, usually through formal education), for situations perceived as more formal and guarded; and the reservation of less highly valued segments (which are learned first with little or no conscious effort), of any degree of linguistic relatedness to the higher valued segments, from stylistic differences to separate languages, for situations perceived as more informal and intimate” (1984:53). Under this label, six different types of broad diglossia are identified and Ferguson’s diglossia approximates what Ferguson calls classical diglossia. In our period of study, China approximates a case of classic diglossia.

Although there may be different types of diglossia, the concept of **function** permeates each and every one of it. And both Ferguson and Fishman opine that the complementary distribution of H and L varieties in respectively formal and informal domains is mostly a matter of function.

Language planning and the concepts mentioned in this chapter form the conceptual categories through which the vernacularization of Standard Chinese will be described and discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LANGUAGE PROBLEMS IN CHINA**

The emergence of a heightened sense of a need to engender deliberate language change among many elites of China in the last century is the result of a perception that Wenyanwen, the linguistic standard of the time, was part and parcel of the problems that China was confronted with. This situation provides us with an opportunity to see how language problem is constituted and understood.

Around the middle decades of the last century, quite a number of language problems were being identified and the need to replace Wenyanwen was only one of them. At that time, however, Wenyanwen and Baihuawen had co-existed for hundreds of years. As an H variety and the linguistic standard of China, Wenyanwen had performed its functions well until the last century. Its status was only being challenged when China was forced to open itself to the West and found itself inferior to its Western counterparts in most aspects of science and technology.

#### **3.1 Diglossia situation in China**

As mentioned, until the nineteenth century, a situation of classic diglossia persisted in China with Wenyan as the H variety and Baihua and other regional vernaculars as the L variety. Like the other diglossia observed by Ferguson, this situation had been relatively stable. The diglossia situation of China is outlined below using Ferguson's schema of function, prestige, literary heritage, acquisition, standardization, stability, grammar, lexicon, phonology; and roughly following in this order.

### 3.1.1 *Function*

One of the most important features of diglossia is the specialization of function for the H and the L. Diglossia situation had developed in China with Classical Chinese or Wenyan being the H and the written vernaculars or Baihua being the L. Wenyan was the medium of official and academic discourse; Baihua was commonly used in popular literature.

However, this functional distinction was not obvious before the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907). Initially the difference between the written form and spoken form of Archaic Chinese (Wenyan used in the times of Confucius and before) was relatively small (Norman, 1988). Gradually, as the pace of change of what was spoken was faster than that was written, the gap between spoken and written discourse increased. By the time of the imperial unification under the Qin (221-207 BC) and Han dynasties (206 BC-AD 220), a division of labor between H and L varieties emerged, a trend to a large degree encouraged by the centralization policy of the governments and the tendency towards imitation of classical models by the learned class. As Norman (1988:83) points out, when writers continued to model their prose on the early literary language, the written language began to “take on an archaic aspect as the spoken language underwent a very different and by and large independent development”. Over time, with the codification of norms of good usage and a close observation of such norms by the learned class, this literary, H variety became a language of the literati, of power and of social mobility and further and further removed from the speech of the population at large.

However, there had always been a body of literature written according to vernacular norms because it was meant for the consumption of the mass population. This vernacular-based language form has been loosely called Baihuawen in which much of the prestigious popular literary works were written. Apart from popular literature, it was also commonly used in religious (especially Buddhist) texts. The emergence of this classic diglossia took place long before the Baihuawen Movement<sup>7</sup>.

During the Song dynasty (AD 960-1279), political stability provided a suitable environment for economic and cultural development. The scientific and technological improvement in agriculture and handicraft was substantial; the invention of printing facilitated the communication and the spread of knowledge; the widespread use of currencies also reflected the prosperity of cities and commercial development. Under these circumstances, the literature scene flourished, especially in the field of popular literature.

In places of amusement, the most popular activity was storytelling, which encouraged the development of “Baihua Fiction”. Even in poetry writing, colloquial and spoken expressions were commonly used.

In writing of a more serious purpose, students of scholars of Neo-Confucianism like “Cheng zi”(程子) and “Chu zi”(朱子) put together their teachers’ lectures and published the book of “Yulu” (語錄). This book of the scholars' lectures

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<sup>7</sup> When we trace the tradition of vernacular literature, however, we will find them in fiction, drama, or even some poetry with a colloquial style which was close to the speech of the time.

provides us with a good sample of vernacular writing on serious topics during the Song dynasty.

However, the rule was that Wenyan remained the language of all works of higher culture, the language of the Confucian Classics and their studies, and the language of administration. The vast majority of Chinese literature, history, philosophy and technical writing were written in the H variety. For centuries, Baihuawen was considered by the literati fit only to be a vehicle of popular entertainment, and totally unsuited for the expression of elevated and serious thought.

### 3.1.2 *Linguistic features*

Another difference between the H variety and L variety in China's diglossia situation is their linguistic features. Similar to most linguistic standards, Wenyanwen underwent rigorous corpus planning which spanned over many centuries. This can be illustrated by the script reform during Qin Dynasty. The two or three centuries preceding the unification of the entire country under Qin Shihuang (秦始皇) saw a rapid development of writing in virtually all areas of the country. The new Qin empire, as a part of a policy of standardization of such things as weights and measures, currency and legal statutes, also put into effect a policy of script reform. The script which was adopted under the Qin dynasty existed in two different forms, a more complex standard form and a simplified demotic form. The former script is known as shuanshu (篆書) or 'seal script' from its widespread use on seals. It is believed that the Qin seal script in its essential details was already in existence before the Qin dynasty, but Qin Prime Minister Li Si (李斯) played some role in standardizing the official form of this script. The latter demotic form of writing came to be known as lishu (隸書),

‘clerical script’.

The transition from the seal script to the clerical script and the subsequent universal adoption of the clerical script in the Han dynasty probably represents the most important development in the entire history of Chinese writing.

Another important development associated with the script reform was the establishment of norms for pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary for the H variety which allowed variation only within certain limits. The stabilized form of Wenyan limited variation and so the construction of new terminology and new style was not easy. On the other hand, similar to most L varieties, Baihuawen was not settled and wide variation in vocabulary was common<sup>8</sup>. The difference in linguistic features will be borne out in the following discussion.

### 3.1.2(a) Lexicon

Lexical difference is an obvious feature between H variety and L variety. Most words in Classical Chinese were monosyllabic, as the examples below shows.

1. 廉頗者，趙之良將也。趙惠文王十六年，廉頗爲趙將，伐齊，大破之，取陽晉。拜爲上卿，以勇氣聞於諸侯。《史記·廉頗

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<sup>8</sup> Although Wenyanwen and Baihuawen have distinct linguistic features, there was no clear-cut demarcation between the low varieties. Different Baihua varieties existed. Some of these varieties closely resemble Wenyanwen and it is important to note that the H and the L in China co-existed in the form of a continuum instead of a dichotomy. According to Zhang/張 (1995) concerning Wenyan, it is stated that there is no commonly-agreed definition of Wenyan as it is closely related with the vernaculars. Some colloquial expressions can be found in certain poems in the Tang dynasty, even they are regarded as typical classical literature.

藺相如列傳》<sup>9</sup> (1. Lian Po was a good commander of the nation “Zhou”. In the sixteenth year of Emperor, Lian was the commander of “Zhou”, he invaded the nation “Qi” and won the battle, took “Yang-Jin”. He was appointed Senior Counsel and was well known among the feudal lords for his courage.)

Words such as “zhe” (者), “jiang” (將), “wei” (爲), “fa” (伐), “po” (破), “qu” (取), “bai” (拜) and “wen” (聞) are monosyllabic. As the phonological system of the Chinese language underwent simplification, the total number of phonologically distinct syllables decreased. Consequently, the pattern of the old one-word/one-syllable was weakening in speech. But the conservative use of monosyllabic lexical items is retained in Wenyanwen.

Furthermore, some words in the Classical Chinese was no longer used as the spoken language, like the word “dog” in the former is “quan” (犬) while in the latter is “gou” (狗).

As mentioned, soon after the Qin dynasty, there began an increase in the number of disyllabic words, especially in works meant for popular consumption which have a vernacular bent:

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<sup>9</sup> An example of H variety. “The Historical Record” (史記) was written by “Sima Qian” (司馬遷, 145-85BC) approximately in 91BC. It is one of the classics of Wenyan in China.



2. 這人姓王名冕，在諸暨縣鄉村裡住。七歲上死了父親，他母親做些針指，供給他到村學堂裡去讀書。《儒林外史》<sup>10</sup> (The name of this person who lived in a village was Wang Mian. His father died when he was seven, his mother earned money by needlework and sent him to the village school to study.)
3. 這舉人姓王名仁，因為上了年紀，也就絕意進取，到得鄉間，盡心教授。《官場現形記》<sup>11</sup> (The name of this “ju-ren” (gentry) was Wang Ren. As he became old, he was no longer that ambitious and so focused on the work of teaching in the countryside.)

From the above examples, words such as “fuqin” (父親), “muqin” (母親), “xuetang” (學堂), “dushu” (讀書), “juren” (舉人), “nianji” (年紀), “jueyi” (絕意), “jinqu” (進取), “jinxin” (盡心) and “jiaoshou” (教授) are disyllabic. Their presence became more and more marked in works of Baihuawen.

Although there were no clear-cut boundaries between Wenyan and Baihua, based on the criterion of word use, the two varieties could be easily distinguishable.

### 3.1.2(b) Sentences

As shown in the foregoing section, the length of a sentence in Wenyanwen is rather short, like the sentences “伐齊，大破之，取陽晉。” (refer to 1). One has to remember that in the past the tools of writing and printing were not as convenient as they are now. Each and every word had to be carved in bamboo and/or stone; or

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<sup>10</sup> An example of L variety. “The Scholars” (儒林外史) was a famous novel which was completed during 18<sup>th</sup> century in China. The writer is “Wu Jingzi” (吳敬梓, 1701-1754).

<sup>11</sup> Another example of L variety.

copied on animal skin or cloth by hand. Labor-saving measure could be one of the elements in forming the rigid style of Wenyanwen which tends to be terse and bald. Such style of economy gradually became normative and writers continued to follow the style even after technological advances were made in the mechanics of writing and printing. This tendency further contributed to making Wenyanwen more and more removed from the speech of the population at large and accentuated the divergence between itself and such speech. So in terms of sentence types, the H and the L could be distinguished at syntactical level to a large extent especially after the invention of printing.

However, because writers of popular literature were themselves members of the literati, the H and L varieties had “a long history of mutual interaction and influence” (Denton et al. 1996:115) and there were no clear-cut boundaries between them.

If one went over an array of written works of the last and preceding centuries on various topics, one will find a continuum of style variation mentioned earlier. One will find in many of these works in the middle of the continuum that there is an extensive mix of H and L elements. Even today, elements of Wenyanwen can easily be found in the Standard Baihuawen.

Notwithstanding such mix, Wenyanwen and Baihuawen remain two distinguishable varieties in general.

### *3.1.3 Acquisition*

Similar to other diglossia situations, the learning of the H was chiefly accomplished through formal education in China. The grammar of H was learned in terms of ‘rules’ and norms to be imitated.

For the population at large, all over China a wide variety of vernaculars were spoken at home. The grammatical structure of the L was learned without explicit discussion of grammatical concepts.

From the Sui dynasty (AD 581-618) to the Qing dynasty, there was an imperial civil service examination system known as “Keju” (科舉). The examinations were conducted at district, provincial, and metropolitan levels. The using of eight-legged register as the format for answers and the syllabus in these examinations had great influence on language development in China especially during the Qing dynasty because members of the literati focused entirely on the mastery of this particular register of the H variety for their social advancement.

#### 3.1.3(a) Format

In the imperial civil service examinations, the “eight-legged” (Bagu 八股) format was set as the norm for all responses to examination questions in the Ming (AD 1368-1644) and Qing dynasties (AD 1644-1911). This resultant essay form, commonly known as eight-legged essays or Baguwen, was written in Wenyan. According to official stipulations, all examination answers must comprise eight parts. The format was totally rigid and evidently had a damping effect on both intellectual and literary creativity. Subsequently, the term “eight-legged” bore the connotation of being “stale and formalistic” in Chinese usage. (Chow, 1960:320)

This formal and rigid style of writing required great examination skills. Students who studied for such examinations therefore spent years or even their whole life on mastering the eight-legged register. The eight-legged variety of Wenyan became part of lives of the literati.

However, for people more interested in creative work and/or having given up ambitions in developing a career in the civil service, they were free from such constraints and could indulge themselves in the use of Baihuawen to express themselves. It might not be an accident that the Ming and the Qing dynasties saw a vibrant growth of popular literature mostly written in Baihuawen.

### 3.1.3(b) Content

In addition to imposing a Bagu format on examinations, further restrictions were imposed on the examination syllabus in the Ming and the Qing dynasties. The syllabus of the civil service examinations was confined to the Confucian Four Books<sup>12</sup> and the Five Classics<sup>13</sup>. Hsu (1995) believes that perhaps that the most important influence of these examinations was their stress on the Confucian values and its reward on literary and humanistic accomplishments at the expense of science, technology, commerce and industry. Wenyanwen in the form of

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<sup>12</sup> The Confucian Four Books (四書) refer to “The Analects” (論語), “The Book of the Mean” (中庸), “The Book of Mencius” (孟子), and “The Great Learning” (大學). The Confucian Four Books was edited by “Zhu-zi” (朱子) and became the basic teaching materials of private schools.

<sup>13</sup> The Five Classics (五經) refer to “The Book of Odes” (詩經), “The Book of History” (尚書), “The Book of Changes” (周易), “The Book of Rites” (禮記), and “The Spring and Autumn Annals” (春秋).

Baguwen had become the purveyor of the content of a canon of a body of literature devoid of creative rigor and intellectual stimulation.

In this situation, Baihua became the medium of choice for people who wrote about topics other than those of the Confucian canon and the civil service examination syllabus. The two varieties were respectively purveyors of different contents.

### 3.1.3(c) Influence

As Hsu states, “gentry status was conferred upon one person largely as a result of one’s winning a literary degree in the civil service examinations. The ability to compose what was called the “eight legged (i.e. eight paragraphed) essay” was essential to success in the examinations” (1995:75). In other words, the “eight legged essay”, which was written in Wenyan, and its mastery became the keys to acquiring gentry membership, and as a result had great influence on members of this class.

To adapt to this situation, the education of the members and would-be members of this gentry class was centered upon the eight-legged variety of Wenyan and the mastery of the aforementioned Confucian classics. In the words of Fairbank and Liu (1980:275-6), “up to the 1890s their education was still oriented to the civil-service examination system and to the Confucian learning which formed its foundation.” For six hundred years, language education in China was about developing reading and writing skills in the eight-legged variety of Wenyan.

Learning Wenyanwen was a difficult and time-consuming task. This together with the fact that education was available only to a limited number of people contributed to a literacy rate that remained low in the entire history of Imperial China. More important, the group who had the knowledge of Wenyanwen became a special class and became members of the elite. They had no reasons to give up this status unless forced to. As Cooper observes, "... elites were sometimes unwilling to surrender those personal advantages won on the basis of their elite education..." (1989:112)

#### 3.1.4 *Literary heritage*

As mentioned, the canon of prestigious written literature is invariably written in the H variety. But much of the language used in this body of prestigious literature was no longer in widespread use among the population at large in the nineteenth Century.

As a linguistic standard, Wenyanwen and its use can be dated back to the period of the Spring and Autumn period ("Chunqiu", 春秋時期, 770-476 BC). The major prose works of this period, works like the Confucian Analects ("Lunyu" 論語), the Mencius ("Mengzi" 孟子), the "Zuozhuan" (左傳) and Sima Qian's (司馬遷) "Shiji" (史記) are by no means homogeneous in style. Nonetheless, their language is sufficiently similar in its basic grammatical and lexical structure to be viewed as a single variety for most purposes. In spite of the rigorous corpus planning mentioned earlier, like all languages, the structure and style of Wenyan did evolve, albeit not to the degree of engendering new, separate varieties.

There was much experimentation of the Wenyan in the Qing dynasty. The Tongcheng(桐城), Wenxuan(文選), and Jiangxi(江西) literary schools, which dominated the late Qing and Early Republican literary scenes, promoted the imitation of the styles of earlier writers. Tongcheng School of writing, particularly influential at that time, sought to use the simple but elegant Ancient-style prose of the Tang and Song dynasties.

Alongside the growth of the canon of prestigious literature was the rapid growth of popular literature written in Baihua. Although looked down upon by the conservative elite, many works of Baihuawen became extremely popular and the literary skills of writers of “A dream of Red Chamber” (紅樓夢) and “All men are brothers” (水滸傳)<sup>14</sup> eventually gained respect of some members of the elite. It will be shown later that such works would form the basis for the corpus planning of Standard Baihuawen.

### 3.1.5 *Prestige*

As usual in a classic diglossia, the H variety is taken to be superior to L variety in a number of respects. There is usually a belief that H is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts, and the like. In some cases, the superiority of H is connected with religion. The case in China is no different. After Confucianism was adopted as the orthodox state ideology in the Han dynasty, the Confucian classics became the basis for education and for advancement in government service. The Wenyan used in the classics was

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<sup>14</sup> “A dream of Red Chamber” (紅樓夢) was written by “Cao Xueqin” (曹雪芹) and “Gao E” (高鶚) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and “All men are brothers” (水滸傳) was written and compiled by “Shi Naian” (施耐庵) and “Luo Guanzhong” (羅貫中) during the Ming dynasty (AD 1368-1644).

regarded as superior.

Although many members of the learned class also used Baihua in their daily life, they rarely used it in formal domains. Baihuawen was taken to be the language of the un-educated mass. As Chen points out, “The low baihua was despised by the literate elite, and was confined to low-culture functions until the New Culture Movement began just before 1920” (1993).

### **3.2 De-stabilization of the diglossia conditions**

Following the Opium War in 1840 and the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, the door of China was forced open. Encountered with the technological superiority of the West, the threats of foreign aggressions and domestic rebellions, the rulers and the elites of China realized that China had to change. Ever since the 1840s, changes and debates about changes gained national attention. And soon it became obvious that language was an important factor in the agenda for changes.

The first phase of changes after the opening up of China saw the birth of the so-called Self-strengthening Movement. According to Hsu (1995:510), during the period of the Movement from 1861 to 1895, China saw superficial attempts at military modernization. The futility of these superficial measures was seen in China's humiliating defeat by Japan in 1894.

The First Sino-Japanese War of 1894 triggered the Hundred Days Reform which also ended in failure. However, the theme of this Reform had shifted from modernization of military hardware to cultural and political modernization.



The failure of the two efforts mentioned above marked the beginning of a general realization among the reform-minded elite that more fundamental changes were required in order to save China from disintegration and foreign domination.

Towards the end of the last century, China saw growing interest in western political institutions, and foreign knowledge including philosophy, political, social, economic, logic and science. Much of this information was translated into Wenyanwen initially and then in Baihuawen and was read by more and more people in China. New publications on change and on The West mushroomed in the years after 1895.

Annamalai states that “Language is a crucial factor in the modernization process. It is a social and cultural institution and, like other institutions of the society, it also is modernized in the process. Language modernization is crucial because other institutions of the society function through language and therefore it is indispensable for the modernization process as a whole. Moreover, the modernization discourse is located in the language and is mediated by it. When it performs the mediating role, it equips itself to be an adequate site for the discourse. Language is thus both a tool and an object of modernization.” There is a close fit between Annamalai’s observation and the experience of China as it was pushed into the modern era.

In China's drive towards modernization, the status of Wenyanwen was jeopardized for at least two reasons<sup>15</sup>. First was its inaccessibility to the population at large.

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<sup>15</sup> These two reasons will be explained in detail in the coming sessions, 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

Second, by virtue of its close relationship with the feudal ruling class, it would be surprising if advocates of "smashing the old China" would not seek a substitute to promote their ideas for change.

Therefore a function-reallocation of the varieties of the Chinese language became a major part of the change agenda. Initially, the reallocation was pitched at the practical rather than ideological level. As a tool more accessible to the mass, many advocates of reform simply wrote in their vernacular. For the rationale provision, we have to wait for Hu Shi to articulate the need for a reallocation in ideological form<sup>16</sup>.

### *3.2.1 Inaccessibility of Wenyanwen to the population*

As mentioned, the linguistic distance between Wenyan and people's day-to-day speech contributed to a general ignorance of Wenyan among the population at large. Whereas the proximity of Baihua to people's speech contributed to its popularity. The problem of Wenyan's inaccessibility to the mass became apparent especially when more and more foreign works were translated into China in the last century.

The influx of Western ideas began with the translation of the Bible and religious tracts in the pre-Opium War period. During the period of the Self-strengthening Movement, translations extended into works related to diplomacy, military arts, science, and technology. After the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the trend

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<sup>16</sup> The ideas of Hu Shi will be provided in Chapter 4.

shifted. The narrowness of China's modernization programme became fully apparent: men of foresight realized clearly that China must broaden its understanding of the West beyond merely military and industrial techniques to include studies of political institutions, economic systems, social structures, and scientific as well as philosophical thought. Translation of Western works in these fields became a crucial part of the efforts to reform and to renovate. "According to a recent survey (Bauer, 1964:38), of all books published in China during the period from 1910-35, a total of 17.9% or 2,790 separate volumes were translated from Western languages. Of these, 62% were translations of English or American works, 13 % from Russian, and 12% from German".

Translators, however, gradually found that Wenyan did not seem so suitable for translating Western works which were mostly written in their respective standard baihua! The Baihuawen commonly used in popular literature offered to translators the necessary room for experiment and a greater variety of options to render the originals into a version of Chinese that could be readily understood by the readership the size of which had grown beyond the traditional literati. Therefore the L variety began to be increasingly used as a purveyor of serious content and the classic diglossia that had been in existence for thousands of years in China was about to collapse.

Although a Bureau of Translation and Compilation was established in 1907, private translators contributed more to introducing foreign works to China than this official institution did. Yan Fu (嚴復) and Lin Shu (林紓) were the two most influential translators during the late Qing period when western works were first translated in significant numbers into Chinese.

The chosen medium of Yan and Lin was Wenyan. As members of the literati, they subscribed to the H status of Wenyanwen. Lin Shu believed that his translations “as a way of rejuvenating a literary style and the traditional moral and ethical values that it conveyed” (Denton, 1996:66-67). However, the consequences of his works were opposite to his intentions. Scholars like Denton and Hutters agree that the translation works of Lin Shu promoted Western fiction written in vernacular style and thus undermined the very literary style of his chosen medium. And the translations of Lin Shu contained a number of Europeanized constructions which later became a common occurrence in the incipient form of Standard Baihuawen.

Yan, on the other hand, believed that “In using the syntax and style of the pre-Han period one actually facilitates the comprehensibility of the profound principles and subtle thoughts, whereas in using the modern vernacular one finds it difficult to make things comprehensible ” (Fong 1995:583).

However Gunn observes, “Their (Yan Fu and Lin Shu) techniques of rewriting and abridging the foreign-language texts served eventually to promote the idea that the classical Chinese they employed was inadequate to the task of understanding and absorbing foreign knowledge” (1991:33).

Fong claims that “functionalism characterized the translation activities in pre-modern China” (1995:588). The need for information provided impetus and conditioned the selection and translation processes. And functionalism persisted and revealed itself in what Lu Xun called “given-me-ism” (拿來主義), that is to enrich the linguistic resources of the Chinese language by transferring foreign vocabularies, syntax and other linguistic features directly into Chinese. Therefore

the influence of translation was felt both in terms of the new information that it provided as well as the new linguistic terms and forms that it introduced into the Chinese language (Fong, 1995:589). The influence of Yan and Lin was soon overtaken by other translators who chose to be functional rather than orthodox.

### *3.2.2 Influence of the declining prestige of Wenyanwen*

Social change in China during the new era marked the declining prestige of Wenyanwen. Reform-minded people tried hard to spread their ideas and consequently their works were mostly written in a vernacular and as a result they promoted the use of vernacular varieties. Indeed around the late Qing, for people who wanted to influence the population at large, their chosen medium would mostly be in vernacular form. The following sections will provide a demonstration of this development.

#### 3.2.2(a) Education

Educational reform was one of the major instruments of change. Since 1890, restructured academies and new schools began to be set up by the gentry-literati, at first sporadically and then in increasing numbers. In addition to the establishment of new schools, there was demand for the reshaping of traditional academies through curriculum revision. The education reform indeed was on a collision course with the existing examination system. Fairbank and Liu state that “Thus in the two years from 1896 to 1898 a spate of educational reforms swept across the empire, culminating in the all-out efforts during the Hundred Days’ reform to revamp the examination system and establish an empire-widespread system” (1980).

One of the education reform at that time was establishment of new schools. Kang Youwei( 康有爲 )and Liang Qichao( 梁啓超 )called for the creation of a new kind of educational institution. Besides the traditional local academies, i.e. “Shuyuan” ( 書院 ), Kang and Liang envisioned a new network of studies focused on foreign languages and modern sciences which they called “Xuetang” ( 學堂 ). The Imperial University was also established by Empress Dowager in 1898.

Curriculum revision was also the core of educational reform. Western knowledge became a focus of learning and was considered not only as substantial studies, but also as having a place on the traditional scale of intellectual values. The new aspects of the curriculum provided an opportunity for the exploration of foreign ideas.

Another aspect of curriculum revision was the advent of children textbooks in the vernacular. The first vernacular primary textbooks was edited by Chen Rong-gun ( 陳榮袞 ). He abolished “reading the Classics” ( 讀經 ) in primary school on the one hand, used daily life as content of the textbooks on the other hand.

Although the Hundred Days reform failed and the educational reform initiated by Kang and Liang was stopped, no attempts were made to reverse the changes which had already been made. This paved the way for the educational reforms after 1900 and the abolition of the examination system in 1905. Schwarcz (1986:26) claims that “In China, the key to the emergence of the new intellectuals was their liberation from the imperially sponsored examination system.”. Therefore, the abolition of the examination system in 1905 “opened up new educational opportunities and new educational careers for the next generation of

cultural radicals” (27).

### 3.2.2(b) Study society

Study society was an important institutional media to supplement the new schools and revamped academies in spreading new thoughts. From 1895 to 1898, seventy-six study societies were reported, two-thirds of them were established by gentry-literati.

“Among them was one devoted to the religio-ideological purpose of promoting Confucianism; more than thirty aimed either to study traditional Confucian learning in the new practical spirit or to study Western sciences and to translate Western books; fifteen promoted social reforms (such as the anti-opium movement, anti-footbinding or women’s education); and twenty-three sought to arouse the patriotism and political consciousness of the gentry-literati.” (Fairbank & Liu, 1980:332-333)

Not only did these societies propagandize new ideas aiming at social reforms, they also encouraged changes on the Chinese language by attacking the dominant use of Wenyanwen and advocating the use of Baihuawen.

Therefore the emergence of new curricular and new educational institutions demand a new medium of instruction and in turn contributed to the destabilization of the classic diglossia.

### 3.2.2(c) Newspaper and magazines

The new mass media also contributed to the weakening of the H status of Wenyan and acted as a catalyst for the vernacularization of the linguistic standard.

In China, traditional periodicals contributed to the flow of communication only to a limited extent. During the nineteenth century, modern-style newspaper and magazines, which were published on a regular basis and contained news and essays, were published by missionaries and a few pioneer Chinese journalists. Missionaries at that time used the periodicals as a means of public education. Although the missionary periodicals were not widely read in China, they laid the seed for the development of some historically important varieties of Chinese. Besides, modern printing machines in large treaty ports encouraged the development of the treaty-port commercial newspapers which were concerned with mostly commercial and local news.

According to the study of Lee and Nathan in 1985, by the early 1890, around a dozen Chinese-language newspapers were being published in the major treaty ports. The crisis resulted from the First Sino-Japanese War further stimulated the rapid growth of periodicals, especially political journals which were published in order to propagandise for reform. The most popular newspaper was Liang Qichao's "Shi-wu-bao" (時務報), which achieved a circulation of twelve thousand in 1896 and "Xin-min cong-bao" (新民叢報) which had a circulation of fourteen thousand in 1906. The press as a propaganda instrument promoted many different kinds of ideas. Contrast to the treaty port press, these papers were concerned with imperial edicts on important government policies, national news and international events. They also editorialized on topics related to national affairs.

Newspapers are by definition mass-oriented and for reasons mentioned many times above, it is quite understandable that their chosen medium in most cases



was the vernacular. Qiu Ting-liang ( 裘廷梁 ) claims that, “to enlighten the mass, the starting point is to increase the number of school, if it cannot be achieved, we can first encourage newspaper reading”. He established the first Baihua newspaper “Wu-xi bai-hua-bao” ( 無錫白話報 ) .

By the coming of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a trend of publishing books and magazines on reforms by reformers like Sun Zhongshan ( 孫中山 ) , within China or even overseas. The reform-minded members of the literati recognized the advantages of using Baihuawen in spreading their reform ideas to the mass, so they established different kinds of Baihuawen magazines and books. The introduction of Baihuawen into formal domains was gathering momentum.

Fairbank and Liu believe that “the most important reason for the widespread appeal of the newspaper was that many of these reformer-journalists, unlike the journalists of the earlier treaty-port press, were themselves members of the gentry-literati. Because of their elite background, these newly emerging newspapers carried greater weight than the treaty-port press not only among the educated public in general but more particularly among the members of the gentry-literati” (1980:334).

### **3.3 Consequences of de-stabilization of the diglossia situation**

De-stabilization of the diglossia situation in China brought about early attempts on deliberate language change. These attempts really marked the important transition period in the language scene.

As aforementioned, vernacularization was only one aspect of the language problem which became well established in the minds of the modern elite in the last century. There were a few major problems identified and efforts were soon made to resolve them. For example, there was the movement of script reforms and the promotion of a single form of spoken Chinese. They are, however, more or less, correlated with each other. In order to understand better the Baihuawen movement, it is necessary to get a broader picture of language reform at that time.

### *3.3.1 Literature*

“(Literature) has been called to service in a remarkably wide variety of social and political situations - its position as the locus of the intellectual purges that constituted the proximate cause of the Cultural Revolution is only the most spectacular example” (Huters, 1988:243). Literature in China has great influence on the written style, therefore, the opinion of the literary elites in language reform was especially important during the Late Qing dynasty.

#### 3.3.1(a) Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲 1848-1905)

Around the late Qing dynasty, a few people already agitated for language reforms. For example, Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲) advocated “I write the way I speak” (我手寫我口) in 1868. He was a pioneer of literature reform and an advocate of poetry reform. In his essay “日本國志文學志” in 1887, he promoted the unification of the spoken and written language and corroborated his case by a reference to the replacement of Latin by the vernaculars in Europe. His poetry writings are marked with wide spread use of colloquialism.

### 3.3.1(b) Liang Qichao (梁啟超 1873-1929) and Xinwenti (新文體)

A study by Fairbank and Liu (275) shows that “During the 1890s, ... western ideas and values for the first time spilled over from the treaty ports on a large scale, providing a decisive impetus to the intellectual ferment that emerged among gentry-literati in the middle of the decade.” By the growing acceptance of Western knowledge and values among the gentry-literati, Western ideas gradually penetrated from the periphery to the center of the Chinese cultural tradition and also became rooted in the mind of certain reformers. One of them was Liang Qichao (梁啟超) who had much interest in Western learning, including technology and philosophy. For him, “the belief that changes in literary practice constitute the most direct challenge to the ethic of subservience became the underlying and distinctive motif of the Chinese enlightenment movement” (Schwarcz 1986:33). Therefore, the ideas of new national character and new fiction encouraged him to launch two journals, “Xinmin” (New Citizens, 新民) and “Xin Xiaoshuo” (New fiction, 新小說). In these magazines, Liang wrote in a style between Wenyan and the vernacular, which was eventually called Xinminti (新民體)<sup>17</sup>, i.e. a style for new citizens. He believed that fiction had the power “to influence and teach and thus recognizes its utility for the all-important goal of ‘renewing’ the nation” (Denton, 1996:66).

Liang Qichao and his “Xinwenti” could be seen as an inter-variety between Wenyanwen which was on the way out and standard Baihuawen which was about to dominate the literary scene. In Schwarcz words, he “stood on the edge between

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<sup>17</sup> Xinminti is also known as Xinwenti.

the moribund Confucian literati and a new generation of cultural revolutionaries” (1986:27).

The major problem during the late Qing for all writers was the use of unstructured mass of vocabulary items that were required to denote those numerous things in the modern fields of knowledge that were new to China. Therefore, “all intellectual groups sooner or later gave in to the ready-made compounds invented in Japan to translate Western-language terms during several previous decades” (Gunn 1991:33). In *Xinwenti*, a vast number of new terminology and colloquialism were used, such as “自由” (freedom) and “殖民地” (colony). This was a period of experimentation and many new inventions died out eventually. The remaining new vocabulary items, however, became the fundamental elements of the standard *Baihuawen*.

In the works of Liang, there was extensive foreign influence on his grammar. By the study of Gunn in 1991, it was found that “his journals deliberately fostered the use of Japanese vocabulary and selected grammatical innovations in the use of coverbs and conjunctions (such as “duiyu” 對於 and “guan yu” 關於)”(34).

Then many writers tried to follow the *Xinwenti* and there were many *Baihuawen* journals and fictions. The H status of *Wenyanwen* was under pressure. Although *Xinwenti* could not replace *Wenyanwen* at once, its influence in the mass media was still remarkable, especially for new terminology.

“(Re: *Xinminti*) . . . the style itself soon became merely a convention of writing, a standard for newspapers and general-interest magazines with greater circulation and less political discourse than either Republican or

reformist organs. When the Republican Revolution finally came in 1911, it remained only for official documentary prose to adjust its terminology, while the media as a whole continued stylistically on the same course set in the last decade of the Qing” (Gunn, 1991:35-36).

As Lai (1964) suggests, Liang’s work was a mixing of “the new with the old”, and his prose style was “a bridge between the classical style and the vernacular style” (349). However, the vernacular instead of Xinwenti was soon to become the linguistic standard.

### 3.3.2 *Speech Standardization & Script Reforms*

The National Language Movement which reform agenda including Script Reform and the development of a Common Language, gained national attention at the same time as the Vernacularization Movement. These two movements influenced and reinforced each other. The two movements shared their objectives in national salvation through educational reforms, modernization and westernization. They soon gained widespread support among both the elite and the population at large.

During Late Qing dynasty, the elite realized that the need for promoting a “uniform and officially sanctioned national standard language” (Norman) in order to achieve modernization. In determining a national language, the written and the spoken forms are two main foci. The reform-minded elite believed that the old literary language, Wenyanwen, was not suitable for mass education and for the introduction of Western knowledge. A replacement was needed. At the same time, they also considered that a common spoken language for all provinces in China was also needed to facilitate intra-national communication and the building of national unity.

Lu Zhuangzhang (盧懋章) claimed, “I say that the wealth and strength of a country depend on science. The growth of science depends on everyone - men and women, young and old - having a love of learning and a knowledge of theory. Their ability to have a love of learning and a knowledge of theory depends on using a phonetic system of writing; then, once the alphabet and spelling have been mastered, everything can be read by oneself without a teacher. It depends on speech and writing being the same; then what is read by the mouth will be understood by the mind. It also depends on having a simple script; then the script will be easy to learn and easy to write. This will save more than ten years’ time. If all this time is applied to the study of mathematics, the natural sciences, chemistry, and all sorts of practical studies, how can there be any fear that our country will not be rich and strong?” (DeFrancis, 1972:34).

The first attempt at phonetic transcription was made by missionaries in the sixteenth century. DeFrancis states that, however, “it was until the nineteenth century that Westerners conceived of more extended uses for the romanized script, and not until then that the influence of this form of writing on the Chinese became of real and lasting importance” (1972:17). By the Opium War some treaty ports in the coastal areas were opened for missionary activities. They tried to romanize the local dialect in these areas. In the process of romanization, they find that the dialects were easier to write in Roman characters. Latinization of the script was soon put into widespread practice by the missionaries and other members of the literati who found its use of great convenience.

The man who was the pioneer of phonetic writing was Lu Zhuangzhang. In 1892, he published his first book on the subject, known as “一目了然初階” (First Steps in Complete Understanding at a Glance). Another important figure in the reform movement was Wang Zhao (王照) who published “官話合聲字母” (Mandarin Phonetic Alphabet) in 1900.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The need for modernization in China brought a perception of language problem into being which subsequently de-stabilize the traditional classic diglossia that had been around for thousands of years.

This division of labor between Wenyanwen and Baihuawen in a multi-dialectal setting had been in practice for centuries and Wenyanwen was never perceived to be inadequate until the political and social contexts shifted in the middle of the last century. From then on within a century deliberate change to the linguistic standard was made and consolidated. So planned changes could be fast especially when the language problem upon which it was hinged was the perception of not just the people and the elite, but also those who had the power.

The classic diglossia described here and the works of Liang Qichao set the scene for the change. In the next chapter, one will see, as the process of the Vernacularization movement is outlined, why Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu's avocation for using Baihuawen met with relatively little resistance "because the actual practice of documentary and exposition prose had largely shifted to the new style introduced by Liang Qichao" (Gunn, 1991:39). The transitional period during Late Qing was the stepping-stone of the success of vernacularization.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE VERNACULARIZATION MOVEMENT FROM 1917 TO 1955

The vernacularization movement is consisted of two parts. Hu Shi initiated the bottom-up phase of the change during which most of the protagonists were working outside the establishment. The coming to power of the Chinese Communist Party started the top-down phase during which the Party was the protagonist.

In 4.1, the development of the vernacularization will be introduced chronologically. It will be followed by a brief account of the role of the various actors with special reference to their contribution to the ideology<sup>18</sup> of change in 4.2. Then in 4.3, the influences of the socio-historical factors will be examined.

#### 4.1 The Baihuawen Movement

The first phase of the Baihuawen Movement was a bottom-up process that aimed at replacing Wenyanwen with Baihuawen<sup>19</sup>.

In 1917, there was an outbreak of the so-called New Cultural movement (新文化運動). It brought about many changes and thus was sometimes called the renaissance of China. In this movement, the Literature Reform (文學革命) appears to be a turning point in the history of the development of the Chinese language because the H status enjoyed by Wenyanwen for thousands of years was

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<sup>18</sup> Their contribution to the construction and elaboration of the norms of Standard Baihuawen will fall on the next chapter.

<sup>19</sup> That is, from L language to H language.



taken over by Baihuawen. Although it was called “the Literature Reform”, the outcome of the movement indeed marked the birth of Modern Standard Chinese. The domain of literature was important for the championship of Baihuawen as an H variety because the use of a language is primarily for literary or scholarly purposes (Cooper, 1989:115). The victory of Baihuawen in literature domain was the first significant step in linguistic status planning in modern China.

The language planning process was launched in the twenties by Hu Shi and his associates. They were authoritative figures in the struggle for the use of Baihuawen as an H variety, which was meant to be a means for modernizing the nation. Specifically, the literature reform was triggered by Hu Shi (胡適) and Chen Duxiu<sup>20</sup> (陳獨秀) in 1917. Hu’s “wenxue gailiang chuyi” (文學改良芻議) and Chen’s “wenxue geming lun” (文學革命論) became the declaration of war against Wenyanwen.

The views of Hu Shi on Wenyanwen were accepted by his contemporaries very quickly. “Although Hu Shi avoided the term ‘revolution’, his article nevertheless established the date for the beginning of China’s ‘new literature’ and was followed by Chen Duxiu’s call for ‘literary revolution’ in the February 1917 issue of New Youth” (McDougall & Louie, 1997:18). Chen Duxiu’s idea “in the reform of Chinese literature the vernacular language should be the only or principal

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<sup>20</sup> Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) was the founder and first secretary-general of the Chinese Communist Party. He was the key representative of Western “liberal” value. Between 1915 and 1921, he was the editor of New Youth, dean at Beijing University, instigator of the so-called anti-Confucian movements and the vernacular revolution.

medium for literature” provided the focus for the reform. He put his views into practice by using Baihuawen in the New Youth<sup>21</sup>.

At this stage, the views of Hu Shi and of his contemporaries met with little resistance because people were ready for radical changes. As shown in the last chapter, the Xinwenti, which was introduced by Liang Qichao, had already been practiced in expository writing, including newspapers, magazines and official writing. In the view of many reform-minded elites, what was being advocated by Hu and Chen was just another step in the right direction.

In October of 1919, the National Alliance of Education Associations (全國教育會聯合會) resolved to ask the government to promote the vernacular officially. Then in January 1920, the Ministry of Education issued an ordinance providing for the substitution of Wenyan with the vernacular as the official language of the Beiyang government, especially in the domain of education. From the fall of that year, the language of instruction in the first and second grades of the primary schools should be Baihuawen instead of Wenyanwen.

In March, the Beiyang government ordered the abandonment of textbooks written in Wenyan in all grades of all primary schools. The adoption of the vernacular medium of instruction quickly spread to the middle schools and beyond. In 1920 and 1921, the vernacular was officially and popularly recognized as the “national language”. This is a significant turn in the development of Standard Baihuawen as

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<sup>21</sup> New Youth 新青年 is a magazine that was first published in 1915.



its promotion appeared to have official sanction and support. Jerry Norman observes that,

“The initiative in replacing wenyan [Wenyanwen] with baihua [Baihuawen] was mainly taken by actors associated with the May Fourth Movement and not by the government. In the early 1920s, the Ministry of Education did issue directives ordering the teaching of baihua in the first two grades of primary school, thus legalizing the position of baihua in the educational system” (225).

In education, Baihuawen would be taught within the curriculum. New intellectuals who supported Baihuawen were the main source of teacher supply. Then some quasi-governmental/non-governmental organizations took up tasks of corpus planning and produced dictionaries and grammar books.

New literary societies like the Popular Drama Society, the Unnamed Society, the Thread of Talk Society and the Contemporary Review group flourished in the 1920's. (McDougall & Louie, 1997:21)

After the eclipse of the Beiyang government and when China was largely united under the Chinese Nationalist Party in 1927, efforts to replace Wenyanwen with Baihuawen were slackened because leaders of the Party were wary of the close association of the Vernacularization movement with important elements of the Communist Party.

In the early 1930's Qu Qiubai (瞿秋白), a leader in the Chinese Communist Party led the promotion of a mass literature employing mass language. At that time questions of the linguistic standard, written style, and script type got caught up in

the fierce ideological struggle between the Chinese Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party.

As a result, Baihuawen failed to displace Wenyanwen entirely in education, civil service examinations, newspapers, private correspondence and occasional compositions of the educated. The Nationalist Party's concept of guoyu (國語) which had gradually developed into a kind of sophisticated lingua franca primarily for a the small educated minority, was attacked by left-wing intellectuals as a tool of the bourgeois conspiracy, and a promotion campaign for the so-called dazhongyu 'Language of the Masses' (大眾語) was mounted in response. The concept of dazhongyu was quite different from that of guoyu and was more radical than the ideas of vernacularization espoused by Hu Shi. Its main points were less linguistic sophistication and rejecting the Beijing dialect as the only basis of the standard.

As they found that Baihuawen was not identical to the daily speech of the poor, some members of the Communist Party encouraged anew baihua vernacular in order to increase literacy in working class. They tried to distinguish between party intellectuals and all other government and educated elite, one outlet was regional speech at grassroots levels. Such a language, however, could not be produced immediately for literature. But it in practice gave good reasons to the conservatives' renewed emphasis on Wenyanwen on the one hand and encouraged writing regional speech on the other hand.

Unlike the case of Guoyu and Hu's Baihuawen Movement, the scheme of Dazhongyu had not, however, been tested in practice, and it generated more

rhetoric than action before the beginning of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, which interrupted the organized efforts of the standardization movement for two decades.

Since 1949, activities related to language standardization have become much more organized than they had ever been before, and they have been centrally coordinated with the activities of the movement for script reform and with linguistic research in such organizations as the Zhongguo wenzi gaige weiyuanhui ‘Committee for the Chinese Script Reform’ (中國文字改革委員會), bodies sponsored by the government and having a considerable amount of decisive power.

The deliberate language change process was consolidated in 1955 with the decision of the status of making Baihuawen the written standard of the Chinese language. In October 1955, the National Script Reform Congress (“Quanguo Wenzi Gaige Huiyi” 全國文字改革會議) was held. It stated that the national language of China would officially be known as Putonghua, but Putonghua was defined as “the common language” of China, based on the northern dialects, with the phonological system of the Beijing dialect as its norm of pronunciation. It was later added that the prototypical writing in the body of prestigious Baihuawen literature was regarded as model and grammatical, stylistic standards. After 1955, the status of Standard Baihuawen has been clearly established.

Although it was the government which completed the deliberate change, it was actors like Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu who initiated the Vernacularization movement. Then the Beiyang government responded to the movement, especially in the

domain of education system. Hu and Chen also managed to create a strong response to introduce Baihuawen into the domain of serious literature and successfully challenged the prestigious status of Wenyanwen in this domain by showing to their readers that good literary works could be written in Baihua.

## **4.2 The impact of the actors**

The efforts of actors like Hu and Chen marked the bottom-up phrase of the Vernacularization movement. Not soon after the turn of the century, it was apparent that the old political system was breaking down. In this juncture of the passing of the old and the absence of an obvious candidate to fill in the void, actors like Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu showed their countrymen the way forward. They led the re-evaluation of traditional culture, and in this case, the performance of Wenyan as an H variety. To a large extent, they set the norms and direction for change.

However, it was one of the many twists in the history of China that Hu, a liberal and a democrat, would soon find that his language agenda was taken over by leading members of the Chinese Communist Party which eventually owned the issue and defined it according to its political agenda. Nonetheless, Hu lit the fire of change. His contribution was to deliver a succinct definition of the language problem, to offer an alternative and to provide a rationale for change.

### *4.2.1 Hu Shi's conception of the linguistic problem in China*

Hu Shi was a leading figure in education as well as in politics at the dawn of the Chinese republic.

#### 4.2.1(a) Introduction of Hu Shi

Hu Shi was born in 1891. His native place was Anhui (安徽省). At that time of his birth the pace of social change was already rapid; many changes to the school system were under way. New schools were established and they no longer taught their students for the Civil Service Examination.

In 1906, Hu Shi entered the “Public School of China” (中國公學) and participated in “Hardy Vocation Society” (競業學會). This society aimed at social reform, so they established a Baihua newspaper – “Hardy Vocation Newspaper (競業旬報). The society used Baihuawen as a tool to publicize their ideas of reform. Hu wrote a lot of essays for this newspaper. This not only expressed his own ideas, but also trained his writing in Baihuawen.

The study in the United States of America marked a major milestone in the life of Hu Shi. Hu was given a scholarship and went to America in 1910. He was sent to study at the University of Cornell. At first, he studied agriculture. A year later, he transferred to the field of arts. In face of the national disintegration, Hu believed that education was an important means of national salvation.

In America, he paid much attention to the language situation in China and developed his ideas on the “language problem” in China. He often argued with his friends whether Baihuawen could be used for poetry writing.

#### 4.2.1(b) Define the problem

In 1916, Hu Shi articulated the idea that a “dead language cannot create a living literature”. His “Some Modest Proposals for the reform of Literature” (“Wenxue

gailiang chuyi” 文學改良芻議, Xin qingnian 2, no. 5 (Jan.1917).), is regarded as the first clarion call of the Vernacularization Movement. In the essay, he stated that,

1. Writing should have substance
2. Do not imitate the ancients
3. Emphasize the technique of writing
4. Do not moan without an illness
5. Eliminate hackneyed and formal language
6. Do not use allusions
7. Do not use parallelism
8. Do not avoid vulgar diction

(Translated by Kirk A. Denton, Denton 1996:123-4)

In the essay, Hu Shi advocated the abandonment of Wenyanwen by attacking its rigid style. Near the end of the passage, he encouraged the use of vernacular instead. This essay as a whole tried to re-evaluate Wenyanwen in a critical sense. Hu believed that the old style of Classical Chinese was no longer suitable for present use. Several points focus on the weakness of Wenyanwen, especially its rigid style like allusions and parallelism. In contrast, the promotion of using vulgar diction indeed encouraged vernacularization. Meanwhile, the problem of “uniting spoken and written language” was raised. Gunn (1991:38) believes that young intellectuals accepted the proposal of Hu Shi as it was in fact “a rally point” in the history of Chinese prose style. Then in “A discourse on the Ideas of Literary Reform in History” (歷史的文學改良觀念論), Hu Shi announced the death of Wenyanwen, as Latin in Europe.

It is stated that “Hu Shi was not the first person who used Baihuawen as the tool of mass medium, for example, it should be Chen Duxiu’s “Baihua Newspaper of Anhui” (安徽白話報) and Wu Zhihui’s (吳稚暉) “New Century” (新世紀). But



Hu was the first one who proposed to replace Wenyan with Baihuawen as a standard variety and provided a rationale for the change. Hu's advocacy for Baihua was quickly embraced by many members of the literati and the newly educated and soon after a nation-wide campaign for Baihua's replacement of Wenyan was born, which ushered in a new era in the development of the Chinese language wherein Baihua quickly established itself as a viable linguistic standard. Herein lies the most crucial contribution of Hu to the vernacularization movement, i.e. that of the theoretician and rabble-rouser. (Tang/唐, 1981:56)

#### 4.2.1(c) Provision of an alternative and a rationale for change

In “A Positive Discourse on Literary Revolution” (建設的文學革命論), Hu Shi suggested that the most efficient way of creating a national language was to use the proposed standard in the writing of serious literature and in the course of doing so, bring the new variety into existence. He stressed that the new standard could not find its way into the real world through the works of linguists, or textbook writers and dictionary compilers. Hu also emphasized on the need of “deliberate advocacy” for using Baihuawen in serious literature because of the prestige associated with works in this domain. His “deliberate advocacy” leaves little doubt that the entire vernacularization movement is indeed a form of deliberate change.

In “Preface to a Collection of Experiments” (嘗試集自序), Hu further emphasized that the written standard is closely related to literature, so the first step of language reform goes in tandem with literature reform. He also labeled Wenyan a dead language and argued that such a language cannot create a living literature. Whereas Baihua is a living language and therefore it is the most suitable

tool in creating a living, lively literature.

In addition to promoting his ideas of language reform in the form of polemics, Hu also tried to provide an academic basis and justification for his ideas. As a professor of the Beijing University, Hu wrote and published “The History of Baihua-literature I” (白話文學史: 上冊) in 1928 and showed people the legitimacy enjoyed by Baihuawen as an alternative to Weyanwen. At the beginning of the book, he asserts that the history of Baihua-literature was indeed the history of Chinese literature.

#### 4.2.2 *Others scholars and their ideas*

Chen Duxiu was one of the earliest, and the staunchest supporters of Hu’s ideas. Chen is a crucial figure in the history of China in his own right. Many members of the literati began to involve in the modernization campaign especially from the Hundred Days Reform onwards. However, their efforts were focused mainly on the technological and social aspects. Chen was one of the first Chinese revolutionaries who believed more fundamental changes were required in order to save China from disintegration and foreign encroachment. Therefore it came as no surprise that he rendered Hu his strongest support and in fact the two of them shared similar views on this issue. In his “On Literary Revolution” (“Wenxue geming lun” 文學革命論, Xin qingnian 2, no. 6 (Feb. 1917).), he agitated for changes like:

1. Down with the ornate, sycophantic literature of the aristocracy; up with the plain, expressive literature of the people!
2. Down with stale, pompous classical literature; up with fresh, sincere realist literature!

3. Down with obscure, abstruse eremitic literature; up with comprehensible, popularized social literature!

(Translated by Timothy Wong, Kirl A. Denton 1996:141)

Supporters also includes Qian Xuanton( 錢玄同, 1887-1939 ). He was at the time a reputable professor at Beijing University specializing in Chinese phonetics, semantics and etymology. He wrote a series of letters to Chen's magazine supporting Hu's and Chen's ideas and attacking the intransigence of the traditional literary schools.

Other reform-minded members of the literati quickly rallied around Hu and Chen and supported their ideas enthusiastically. Many of those engaged in literary work began to answer Hu's call to bring to birth the new national standard by means of using Baihua for literary creation.

Among Hu's and Chen's followers were members of the future generation because as professors of the Beijing University, both of them had great influence on their students. Many of these young men also turned out to be leading figures in Modern China and some of them like Fu Sinian (傅斯年) and Luo Jialun (羅家倫) also contributed to the success of the movement.

Although actors could light the fire of and define the agenda for linguistic reforms, for its overall consolidation, the vernacularization movement in China ultimately requires the support of the government. There is much evidence indicating that without the support of the Chinese Communist Party, the movement might have dragged on indefinitely for at least many more decades.

#### 4.2.3 *The Communist Party*

Compared to the Nationalist Party, the Communist Party supported the language reform with much greater enthusiasm. This explains why the status of Baihuawen could be consolidated only a few years after the Communist Party seized power. The key role of the government in language planning is evident. As Fishman (1982) points out, “champions of vernaculars for high-culture functions are unlikely to succeed unless they, or those they represent, control the economic and political apparatus in which the community operates” (cited in Cooper 1989:115).

After the Nationalist Party more or less held the reins of power at the national level after 1927, the government had done little in the promotion of Baihuawen. The Nationalist Party paid relatively little attention to social and economic reforms as it mainly focused its attention on the resistance against Japanese aggression and on countering the expansion of the activities of the Community Party. Hsu (1995) comments that “Ironically, the Nationalist officials continued to live under shadow of the Confucian distinction between the rulers and the ruled, and looked down upon the peasants as an inert nonentity”.

Hu (1921)<sup>22</sup> apparently had lobbied hard for the support of the Nationalist government for his language agenda and on many occasions faulted the government for its half-hearted support of vernacularization which it professed to support on paper.

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<sup>22</sup> Hu Shi's “A History of the Guoyu Movement” (國語運動的歷史).

Norman (1988) observes that Wenyanwen continued to hold its own in many domains well into 1940s, and its use went beyond the 1940s in some cases such as the writing of government documents, commercial correspondence and certain types of journalese (255). To account for this situation, the policy of Nationalist Party on vernacularization was a major factor.

The leaders of Communist Party, on the contrary, strongly supported the use of Baihuawen. Beside of Qu Quibai (瞿秋白), Mao Zedong (毛澤東) was also significant in promoting the vernacularization. On his writing “Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art” (在延安文藝座談會上的講話) of May 1942, Mao states that “the purpose of our meeting today is precisely to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind” (Mao/毛, 1951). Mao believes that literature can be used to educate the mass, including fighters in the army, workers in the factories and peasants in the villages. To teach those illiterate, Baihuawen was the more suitable.

After its took power in 1949, the Communist government “continued the linguistic policies of the former regime, expressing strong support for a single normalized national language based on the Peking dialect” (Norman, 1988:255).

#### **4.3 The impact of socio-historical change**

As mentioned many times before the deliberate language change in China was underpinned by the socio-cultural dynamics of the era. The Revolution of 1911,

the May Fourth Movement and the coming of power of the Communist Party highlighted some important social and political changes. Their influence was especially important in the development of the Standard Baihuawen. As shown below, the interplay between the socio-historical factors and the various actors like Hu triggered the deliberate change.

#### *4.3.1 Cultural Changes and its influence*

At the turn of twentieth century, there was a tide of re-evaluation of traditional values of China. Chow described this period as “the creation of a new society and civilization through the re-evaluation of all Chinese traditions and the introduction of Western concepts.” (173). According to the study of Denton (1996), “writers like Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi, Wu Yu, Gao Yihan, Yi Baisha, Zhou Zuoren, and Lu Xun filled the pages of New Youth with calls for an end to oppressive social practices such as foot-binding, concubinage, filial piety, and prescribed social ritual, as well as to the Confucian ethical system that seemed to legitimize them” (114). Their works, on one hand, introduced many western ideas to China; on the other hand, they encouraged the use of Baihuawen because they wrote in a variety close to Baihua than to Wenayn, such as that of Xinminti mentioned earlier.

However, what jump-started the vernacularization movement was the May Fourth Movement in 1919. The May Fourth Movement in many ways presaged the June-Fourth Incident of 1989. It was triggered by a demonstration of several thousand students who assembled in Tiananmen Square (天安門廣場) on 4 May 1919 to protest against the treatment of China at the Peace Conference of Paris.

The May Fourth Movement gave the vernacularization movement much needed

momentum. From then on, the May-Fourth Movement and the National Language Movement provided the promotion of Baihuawen as the national language with a mass base. "The promotion of vernaculars for literary and scholarly purposes is a common feature of nationalist movements, perhaps because such development may serve to arise the national consciousness of the masses or at least of the intellectuals" (Cooper, 1989:115). And China is one of the examples.

A national language comprises its written, spoken and spelling forms. It has to be noted again that the promotion of the use of Baihuawen as a H variety went hand in hand with calls for the development of a standard pronunciation for the national language and the romanization of the Chinese scripts. All of these became hot issues during the initial phase of the reform. The objective remained to identify a candidate to be the national language for the population at large instead of for the few so as to facilitate the modernization of China.

#### *4.3.2 Preferred language of the power elite*

The educational reforms adopted by the Late Qing dynasty and the Beiyang government meant the demise of the old education and bureaucratic systems which in turn meant a major change to the structural means of social mobility. The status of the traditional literate-gentry class was gone forever. The rise of the reformers meant that their status was upgraded and so did the language of their choice. To be a national language, its popularity is at best one of the selection criteria. More important is its political status and relationship with the power group. Soon after the May-Fourth Movement, it is clear that the question about the language reforms was not whether Baihuawen would become the linguistic standard but when.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

Like the situation in Turkey, the deliberate language change in China was due to modernization. Continuous contact with the West brought a series of changes in China. A period of re-evaluation of traditional values triggered and met the May Fourth Movement in 1919. This provided an environment for the vernacularization of linguistic standard to succeed. The social forces made the government to endorse the vernacularization movement, and the planning process was largely completed when the Communist regime added the finishing touch to the movement soon after it came to power.



## CHAPTER 5

### BAIHUAWEN: FROM VERNACULAR TO LINGUISTIC STANDARD

In the history of the Chinese language of over 2,500 years, the replacement of Wenyan by a vernacular in the twentieth century is unprecedented. As an L albeit widely used variety in popular literature, it should be obvious that Baihuawen could not be used readily as a H, standard variety. Therefore, a conversion process from L to H had to be implemented.

In the course of this transition, the norms of the new standard were selected, constructed and elaborated. This chapter focuses on the construction, selection and elaboration of linguistic norms in the process of consolidating the vernacularization of the linguistic standard in China. This examination will be done with close reference to Bartsch (1987).

#### 5.1 Norms of language

Norms of a new standard language are often products of planning, be it from bottom-to-top or from top- to-bottom.

One major feature associated with standard varieties is that correct usage is a matter of great priority. And norms of good, correct usage usually have the close attention of serious writers and/or writers at the top end of the social hierarchy even though writers of backgrounds other than aforementioned may feel less compelled to be bound by such constraints. Bartsch believes that “(t)he norms are the constellations in social reality that create, delimit, and secure the notions of correctness” (70). They generate models for all formal written works to follow,

and the “hierarchy of models” (71) always reflects the social hierarchies. Besides the central models, there may be some marginal models for less formal works. Therefore, “the further away a person is socially from the central models, the more acceptable it is when he produces incorrect speech” (71).

In the vernacularization of the Chinese linguistic standard, the norms of Baihuawen changed from being “marginal models” to being the “central model” and yet its norms for good, correct usage were yet to be codified. Meanwhile, advocates for the continual use of Wenyanwen put up a strong fight against the new norms. In the study of Bartsch (1987:240), when the decision in favor of a certain language has been made, the following is going to happen:

1. The norms of this language gain validity in a broader domain of the population, competing and coming into conflict with the norms of the other languages existing there.
2. The domain of situations of use, i.e. The functions of the language, will be specified, depending on whether the language is to become a national language, an official language, or both, or one of the official regional languages.
3. Because it competes with other languages in some of the domains of use, its norms will be strengthened, i.e. The normative force will be increased by repeated acts of correction and sanctions against non-compliance, whereby these acts are justified by the validity of its norms.

In other words, “Language standardization involves a shift or change in the population domains of existence (practice), acceptance, adoption, validity, and justification of the variety of a language that is chosen ... The situational domains

of the norms of the standard variety and those of the norms of the non-standard varieties change likewise...” (Bartsch, 1987:148).

According to Bartsch, the spread of the new standard norms may start from a minor group. “Although the existence domain of these linguistic norms may be small to begin with, their justification domain, and based on this, their acceptance domain within the population, is thus fairly large. After some time the adoption of these norms by people from these broader domains will follow if assisted effectively by educational programmes” (236).

## **5.2 Norms construction and selection**

From the above framework of Bartsch, the standardization of a linguistic code usually follows a general pattern. It is believed that Bartsch ideas about the production and the function of norms provides us with a useful framework to outline the corpus planning process of Baihuawen as it transformed from being a vernacular to being a linguistic standard.

### *5.2.1 Population domain expansion*

An important part of the standardization process of Baihuawen was to gain validity in a broader domain of population. This expansion can be traced from Qing dynasty.

Before the standardization process, there were many varieties within the vernaculars. The language used in the novels of Ming and Qing dynasties was mainly the writers’ local vernaculars. It was only since the latter part of 19<sup>th</sup> century that many of the fictions were written in the northern dialects. This

enabled further development of the northern variety to the standard Baihuawen, and its expansion in population domain as well.

In the late Qing, writers like Huang Zunxian (黃遵憲) used everyday colloquialism in his poetry writings. As well Liang Qichao's *Xinwenti* came to the scene and all these added up to set the scene for the replacement of Wenyanwen by Baihuawen as the official medium for public administration and education. The works of Liang Qichao was especially important. He borrowed a great deal of Japanese lexicon in expressing Western ideas. Therefore, as Wenyan became less Wenyan in the widely read translated works and as elements of Baihua were used in the formal domains by a larger and larger measure, the standardization of Baihuawen to the population at large was felt to be less like a very big leap into the dark and more like a big step in the right direction.

By 1917, the views of the reform-minded elites became to gain greater and greater popularity among many members of the literati. The need for modernization was taken as a given by the majority of the learned class. As these reform-minded elites were also the same people who supported the vernacularization movement, Baihuawen sort of had a good ride on the back of the new elite and of public sentiments. The use of Baihua in translation and in the media gained momentum after the May-fourth Incident. The domain of literary writing was no exception. Even in the domain of poetry writing, which was taken to be the last bastion for the survival of Wenyan as a living H variety, Baihua through Hu Shi's avocation was gaining inroads. In the first couple of decades of the Twentieth Century, the supporters of Baihuawen already managed to demonstrate to the population at large that it could fulfil the role of an H variety.

Of course, there was resistance. In 1917, the famed translator Lin Shu fiercely attacked the promotion of Baihuawen and the new body of Baihua literature. He wrote three essays to oppose the use of Baihua as an H variety and two stories satirizing advocates of Baihuawen like Chen, Hu, Qian and Cai (蔡元培). Then in 1921 the magazine named “Literary Review”(學衡) established in the south was another force of opposing Baihuawen. The representatives included Mei Guangdi (梅光迪), Hu Xianxiao (胡先驕) and Wu Mi (吳宓).

In July 1925 Zhang Shichao (章士釗), the Minister of Education and Justice in Duan Qirui's (段祺瑞) new regime of the Beiyang government, established in Beijing “The Tiger Weekly”. Zhang opposed the use of Baihua fiercely, especially in his “A Critique of the New Literature Movement” (評新文學運動). He commented that Wenyan was not a dead language and argued that the colloquialism in Baihuawen hindered people's understanding. His views reminded the reformers of the strength of conservative resistance. The supporters of Baihuawen, like Hu Shi, Xu Zhimo (徐志摩), Tang Yue (唐鉞), Wu Zhihui (吳稚暉) and Cheng Fangwu (成仿吾) fought back and wrote against Zhang's ideas. The efforts of the opposition camp, however, were all to no avail. The fall of the Beiyang government in 1927 put paid to Zhang's attack on Baihuawen.

### 5.2.2 *Situational domain expansion*

What are the norms of Standard Baihuawen and where did they come from?

Of course norms for Baihuawen were in existence for many centuries. Ever since the Tang dynasty there were stories, fiction, lecture notes and religious texts written in Baihua. Some poems were also written with a vernacular style. But

these norms were not standardized nor were they codified in a rigorous manner because unlike a standard variety, normative usage was not among the first things writers of Baihuawen cared about in their creative venture. However, when Baihua was proposed to be used in formal domains, efforts had to be spent on identifying a set of norms which governed its proper usage in either literary or expository writing. A standard variety of the vernacular would have to be evolved, and quickly.

This task was taken up by only a few numbers of people in the early years of the vernacularization movement. For example, the experiment of writing poems in Baihua was mainly the preoccupation of Hu Shi and a couple of his close associates like Xu Zhimo (徐志摩), Chen Duxiu and Liu Fu. Hu wrote quite a few poems in Baihua and published them in "A Collection of Experiments" (嘗試集) in 1917.

Wenyan did not have a modern punctuation system and it is amazing to note that the introduction of punctuation to Chinese writing was the work of only six people. In 1919 "Ma Yuzao" (馬裕藻), "Zhu Xizu" (朱希祖), "Qian Xuanton" (錢玄同), "Liu Fu" (劉復), "Zhou Zuoren" (周作人), "Hu Shi" (胡適) announced a punctuation system for Chinese writing. Their scheme was adopted in the first conference of the Preparatory Committee on the Unification of the National Language (國語統一籌備會) and the scheme was promulgated by the Education Ministry of the Beiyang government in 1920.

For the most part of the history of China, government documents were written in Wenyanwen. (Masini/馬西尼, 1997:134) The introduction of Baihuawen into this

domain was much harder than that of the literary domain. Hu lobbied very hard for the use of the vernacular in this domain and wrote quite a few papers on this topic, such as "Government written communication should be written in Baihua." (公文應該改用白話) (Hu 1922). As mentioned in the last chapter, however, progress in this matter was to a large extent hampered by a suspicious Nationalist government which took a guarded attitude towards Baihuawen when the vernacularization of the linguistic standard became part of the party platform of the Chinese Communist party.

Education is another domain which is important for the spread of Baihuawen. Since the May Fourth Movement, more and more excellent literary works were written in Baihuawen. They served as valuable teaching materials and readings in and beyond the curriculum for primary and secondary students. They also served as models of what constituted good Baihuawen for the students. Works selected in the secondary school textbooks in the early period of the drive for vernacularization include: "the Native Place" 《故鄉》 of Lu Xun (魯迅); "Youth" 《青春》, "The Present Moment" 《今》 of Li Dazhao (李大釗); "Entrenchment" 《隔膜》 of Ye Shengtao (葉聖陶); "Land of Dreams" 《夢境》 of Wang Tongzhao (王統照); "Songs of the Tides" 《潮歌》 of Yu Pingbao (俞平伯). (Chen/陳, 1987)

The introduction of Baihuawen in the domain of education had its share of difficulties as well. By the study of Gu/顧 in 1995, when Baihuawen was first introduced into the schools, it was used alongside Wenyanwen. As a result, among language subjects the practice created a problem about the weighting and the integration of teaching materials. Basically, there were three different views about

the arrangement of the content of curriculum materials. One view suggested teaching Baihuawen in junior forms of secondary level and teaching Wenyanwen in senior forms. Another view recommended teaching both Wenyan and Baihua together at junior level, emphasizing Baihuawen first and then Wenyanwen, until Wenyanwen was taught as a whole in the senior levels. A third view thought that teaching these two varieties should be done in tandem in all grades.

Chen/陳 (1987:60-61) reported that before May Fourth Movement, Wenyanwen was taught from primary to secondary levels (the principal texts were “Compilation of the Classical Chinese” (古文辭類纂), “Selected Literary Masterpieces” (昭明文選) and “Manuscript copy of writers” (經史百家雜鈔) and poetry of Tang and Song dynasties.) After the promotion of Baihuawen, especially after the May Fourth Movement, many curriculum materials included texts in Baihuawen in secondary level. The language used in the curriculum materials, however, were not standardized and so Wenyanwen was still used to a certain extent.



### 5.3 Norm elaboration

In addition to punctuation reforms, Hu and his contemporaries also engaged in other corpus planning activities. For example, they created neologism such as “de” (的), the “men” (們) and “ta” (他 / 她). Some of these neologism were accepted by the educated public but many more were abandoned over time.

Elements of Classical Chinese, European languages and regional speech were used as an aid to enrich the new standard variety. In Hu’s “A Positive Discourse on Literary Revolution” (建設的文學革命論), he states that “when it is necessary, Wenyanwen can be used indeed”. However, the debate on the joint use of Wenyan and Baihua in normative written work dragged on for many decades. Today, standard Chinese in Taiwan and Hong Kong tend to have a larger share of Wenyan element when compared with its counterpart in PRC.

To validate and codify the norms of the new linguistic standard, descriptive and pedagogic grammars of Baihuawen had to be produced. Good, proper, preferred or appropriate usage had to be established. The following grammar books were written by well-known linguists like Li Jinxi, Wang Li, Lü Shuxiang and Gao Mingkai.

### Significant Works on Chinese Grammar

Year of publication	Author	Title
1924	黎錦熙 (Li Jinxi)	《新著國語文法》 “Xin zhu guo yu wen fa” (Grammar of Guoyu)
1933	黎錦熙 (Li Jinxi)	《比較文法》 “Bi jiao wen fa” (Comparative Grammar)
1936	王 力 (Wang Li)	《中國文法學初探》 “Zhong guo wen fa xue chu tan” (A Pilot Study of Chinese Grammar)
1941	呂叔湘 (Lü Shuxiang)	《中國文法要略》 “Zhong guo wen fa yao lue” (Essential Chinese Grammar)
1943	王 力 (Wang Li)	《中國現代漢語》 “Zhong guo yu fa gang yao” (Modern Chinese)
1944	王 力 (Wang Li)	《中國語法理論》 “Zhong guo yu fa li lun” (A Theory of Chinese Syntax)
1946	王 力 (Wang Li)	《中國語法綱要》 “Zhong guo yu fa gang yao” (An Outline of Chinese Syntax)
1948	高名凱 (Gao Mingkai)	《漢語語法論》 “Han yu yu fa lun” (A Thesis on Chinese Syntax)
1955	呂叔湘 (Lü Shuxiang)	《漢語語法論文集》 “Han yu yu fa lun wen ji” (Articles on Chinese Syntax)

In addition to grammar books, another important instrument of codification is the dictionary. Much effort was also spent in this area. For example, Kratochvil

observes that “Research in lexicography enabled the compilation of the first large monolingual dictionary of Modern Standard Chinese called Guoyu cidian ‘Dictionary of the National Language’ (國語詞典) (the first edition of this dictionary was completed in 1943. Its revised and abbreviated edition known as Hanyu cidian ‘Dictionary of Chinese’ (漢語詞典) has now become the most popular middle-range dictionary of Modern Standard Chinese, which represents the first step towards a normative dictionary comparable in status with such works as the Oxford Dictionary in Great Britain” (1968:166).

Much work of elaboration was also carried out as the constituent parts of the new standard came from many different sources. According to Denton, “The development of a modern vernacular literature, which was seen as crucial to the renovation of Chinese society, could not then be simply a matter of building on the vernacular tradition. A modern literature would have to borrow from many sources; it would be a kind of synthesis of spoken Chinese, the traditional vernacular, and some lexical and syntactic elements from Western languages (often through the intermediary of Japanese)” (1996:115).

1955 was an important year for the corpus planning history of the new standard. In that year, a normative base of reference was identified officially in October 1955, the National Script Reform Congress (“Quanguo Wenzi Gaige Huiyi” 全國文字改革會議). It was declared that the exemplary works in the body of modern, Baihua literature would constitute a model for standard Baihuawen. Since then, the status of Baihuawen was consolidated.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In the foregoing, it is shown that the corpus planning process for Baihuawen was largely smooth in spite of the lukewarm attitude of the Beiyang and Nationalist governments because the times were in favor of vernacularization. The period of 1917 to 1955 saw a fast production of texts written in the new standard in the domains of the media, education and literary creation although the progress in the domain of government was slow. The same period also saw the construction of norms progressing in earnest, especially after the Communist Party came to power.

As noted earlier, the corpus planning for Baihuawen in the bottom-up phase was undertaken by a very small number of people especially in view of the enormity of the size and the magnitude of the effect of the task. And many of these people were not within the establishment. It should now be evident that it is the view of this study that the construction of the language problem in modern China and the success of the vernacularization movement were taken as an interaction between the times and a few personalities. Indeed, given the number of personalities was so few, one wonders if the shape and content of the vernacularization of the linguistic standard would remain the same if people like Hu and Chen had not been around to answer the call of the times.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

As a pilot study of the vernacularization of linguistic standard in China from the perspective of language planning, a synoptic description of the development of Standard Baihuawen has been outlined in this thesis. Although there are certain limitations, it is believed that this case of the vernacularization of a linguistic standard to a very large extent provides us with a chance to get a better understanding of deliberate language change.

The study shows how major socio-cultural shifts could undermine a stable language situation (namely a classical diglossia), how a few actors could define the agenda for linguistic reforms and how the consolidation of the deliberate changes ultimately requires the support of the government. More important is that this case gives us a glimpse of the definitive features of the dynamics as well as the process of an incidence of planned language change.

The diglossia situation in China indicates that even when a H language has become many times removed from the speech of population at large, this language situation in itself alone would not constitute a language problem. Ever since the dawn of the Chinese civilization, the literary language, Wenyanwen, had been regarded as the linguistic standard and enjoyed a lot of prestige. This situation persisted for thousands of years and before the middle of the last century, no significant body of opinion advocating a replacement of Wenyan could be found. There were at times debates among the literati concerning what constituted the appropriate style for certain types of discourse, but substituting Wenyanwen with

another variety as the linguistic standard appears to be an idea that was beyond the imagination of the literati of feudal China. Although around the Tang dynasty, Baihuawen--a vernacular-based variety--began to be widely used in popular literature and religious texts, nobody ever attempted to promote it to replace Wenyanwen.

It appears, and quite clearly in the case of China, that a perception of the presence of language problem is constituted only when changes occurred in certain non-linguistic aspects. A heightened sense of national crisis among members of the literati in modern China and the resultant modernization movement brought about the language problem because Wenyanwen was deemed a major hindering factor for the movement to succeed. The reformers deemed it inadequate as a tool for implementing the modernization agenda. This challenge to the H status of Wenyan is usually dated to 1917 when Hu Shi launched his attack against Wenyanwen in the new magazine *Xin Qing-nian*. It is believed this campaign drew to a conclusion in 1955 when the position of Baihuawen was consolidated.

The key role played by Hu and his associates in the vernacularization of the linguistic standard in China provides a window for us to examine the role of actors in such reforms. The vernacularization campaign is consisted of two phases. Hu initiated the bottom-up phase of the change where most of the protagonists were working outside the establishment. The coming to power of the Chinese Communist Party started the top-down phase where the Party was the protagonist.

In examining the role of actors, Hu's conception of the linguistic problem of China was extended by his counterparts in the Chinese Communist Party which

eventually took over the issue and defined it according to their political agenda. The Communist Party was active in shaping and promoting the vernacularization campaign because they sought support from workers and peasants. For example, Lu Xun, a popular thinker and writer as well as an ally of the Chinese Communist Party, and Qu Qiubai, a leader of the Party, were among the staunchest supporters of vernacularization. Qu even led the campaign of promoting a mass language, which was in practice the vernaculars of peasants and took the vernacularization movement to levels even too radical for Hu. But Qu's efforts eventually came to no avail.

It is also noted that the vast number of new norms for Standard Baihuawen came practically from only a very small number of people many of whom were not within the government.

In the late Qing dynasty, the H variety used in written works began to change as a response to changes to society and to the traditional readership. The works of Liang Qichao, for example, borrowed a great deal of Japanese lexicon in expressing Western ideas. This transition period paved the way for the acceptance of Baihuawen as the standard and partly explains why in 1917 Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu's advocacy for vernacularization was so quickly embraced by the intelligentsia. Hu's 'new poems' and Lu's fiction marked a new era of the development of Chinese literature. From then on, many literary figures wrote in Baihuawen. Their works then became teaching materials in schools. To validate the norms, a group of linguists and educators initiated investigations on the grammar of Baihuawen. A large number of norms for proper usage therefore came from a small group of people.

In spite of its popularity, the vernacularization campaign had met with much resistance from many quarters up to 1949, i.e. during the regimes of the Beiyang and Nationalist governments. However, soon after the Communist Party came to power, the government resolved in 1955 that the exemplary works of modern Baihuawen literature shall form the normative base for Standard Chinese and the vernacularization of Standard Chinese was hence consolidated.

This experience underpins the significance of the role of the government in such reforms as this case shows how a switch from bottom-up to top-down approach to the campaign affects the pace of the reform.

Over a period of less than forty years, the linguistic standard of China has undergone a change that makes it unrecognizable to its users at the turn of the century. Given the magnitude of the change, it has given rise to many issues that require further study. Because of temporal constraints, a large number of such issues such as the Europeanization of the linguistic standard, the differentiated development in registers, the normative pluricentricity of the Chinese language etc. have not been given much treatment. It is hoped that this study will provide a useful base for students of language reform in China to pursue these matters further.



## **Appendix**

### **A Brief Account of the Development of Baihuawen during 1917-1955**

The formation of the norms for Baihuawen on the basis of the Old Baihuawen has been a process of absorbing features from three major sources: Classical Chinese, foreign languages and non-Northern Mandarin dialects.

Baihuawen has incorporated elements from classical Chinese and everyday speech, moreover, there was often considerable incorporation of classical elements into what is ostensibly a vernacular piece of writing. Some of the features of Wenyanwen have still been utilized in writing, and through writing they have also penetrated into the oral standard. Therefore, Baihuawen continued to be influenced by the classical style.

During the switch from Baihuawen to Wenyanwen, a language very fixed and conventionalized in its means of expression, to Baihuawen, a completely new written medium, the new written language was still fluid and not yet standardized. As no one was really sure how to write in this a new written medium, it was especially receptive to outside influences of all kinds” (Kubler, 1985:20).

Baihuawen grew into its present form under the impact of the foreign languages, English in particular. There was a rapid development of Europeanization in Chinese, indeed. Xie Yaoji (謝耀基) in his “Xian-dai han-yu ou-hua yu-fa gai-lun” 《現代漢語歐化語法概論》 has a detailed discussion of the cause and phenomena for the Europeanized grammar. It shows us that Western influence on new Chinese writing and Modern Standard Chinese is not limited solely to the

sphere of vocabulary, but also to the grammatical and stylistic features. Some examples are given below:

## 1. Morphology

### a. Loan words

麥克風	microphone
摩登	modern
煙土披里純	inspiration
懷娥鈴	violin

### b. Word-formation suffix

主義	社會主義	資本主義
“zhuyi”	“shehui zhuyi”	“ziben zhuyi”
-ism	socialism	capitalism
化	工業化	現代化
“hua”	“gongyehua”	“xiandaihua”
-ize	industrialize	modernize

## 2. Syntax

### a. Increase of subjects

我們所說的話，就恰是我們所想說的話。(朱光潛《無言之美》)

(The words we said was exactly what we want to say.)

### b. The passive with “bèi” 被

Extension use of bèi was a distinctive feature motivated by imitation of

passive markers in European languages.

他被大家批評。

(He was criticized by everyone.)

Beside of the influence from foreign languages and Wenyanwen, many baihua advocates came from different provinces, in their writing, unavoidably, contained certain element of their own dialects. Lu Xun (魯迅), as an example, often used regional colloquial in his writings. So naturally dialectal elements also found their way into the emergent variety.

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