

# Investigation Analysis of “Dialect Mingled by Mandarin” Phenomenon: Evidence from Hukou Dialect in China

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**Abstract**—This paper investigates the phenomenon of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” and its part of speech (POS) features and group distributions in Hukou County, Jiangxi Province, China in 2018. First, some examples are given from the noun and other dimensions and found that the phenomenon is widespread in different POS; second, a descriptive statistical analysis is conducted and demonstrates that the females, the elder, students, the higher the education level and per capita disposable income of the family has, the more obvious their “dialect mingled by Mandarin” is. This survey reveals that dialect degeneration, the popularization of Mandarin and the integration of the two are inevitable. Hence, it’s urgent to protect dialects and construct harmonious relations between Mandarin and dialects.

**Keywords**—*dialect mingled by Mandarin; Hukou dialect; heterogenous word*

## I. INTRODUCTION

With the popularization of Mandarin and the development of Chinese economy and education, there has been fierce competition between Mandarin and Chinese dialects, and two linguistic phenomena have been formed: one is “Mandarin mingled by dialect”, and the other is “dialect mingled by Mandarin”. These two phenomena belong to “Diglossia”, that is, two variants in a language (Hartmann & Stork, 1972: 277-302). Diglossia is ubiquitous in dialect areas.

“Dialect mingled by Mandarin” refers to the non-authentic dialect mixed with Mandarin, including phonetic, lexical and grammatical elements of Mandarin when using Hukou<sup>1</sup> dialect. It is the phenomenon of language contact and language transfer (Thomason, et al. 1988; Thomason, 2001). The characteristics of language contact differ in different dialects. Residents in Hukou take their own dialect as the main communicative tool, language contact almost occurs between Hukou dialect and Mandarin. Language

transfer may occur when their structural elements affect each other in speakers’ brain after language contact (Lado, 1957; Odlin, 1989). “Dialect mingled by Mandarin” is produced when speakers are influenced by the negative transfer of structural elements of Mandarin when using dialect although the overall characteristics are dialect.

This paper made a field investigation on the phenomenon of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” in vernacular layer, and described it from two aspects: one is to analyze the lexical characteristics of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” by examples, and the other is to explore the distribution characteristics of this phenomenon from gender, age, occupation, education level, and family economic conditions. It aims to discuss the distribution of the individual characteristics of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” and provide a basic observation perspective on dialect protection.

## II. DATA AND VARIABLES

### A. Data Sources

In this paper, questionnaires and interviews were conducted from July 7th to August 20th, 2018 to track the survey in 2016. The main subjects were the permanent residents of towns and villages in Hukou County, Jiangxi Province. The interview team consisted of 15 people, including 14 locals who were highly educated. Face-to-face communications with respondents were carried out were by making full use of local social network relationships. In the investigation of the phenomenon of “dialect mingled by Mandarin”, respondents were required to use Hukou dialect. A total of 339 residents were interviewed, and 306 valid samples were obtained with an effective rate of 90.27%.

The length of communication time with respondents was not limited, and basic information were obtained, including respondents’ gender, age, occupation, education level, and per capita disposable income of household (PCDI). After obtaining the consent of the interviewee, the transcript of the interview was recorded, and 10-minute recording were adopted randomly to carry out the statistics of heterogeneous words. In the process of statistics, a number of locals were invited to help identify the attributes of heterogeneous words.

<sup>1</sup> Hukou County, located in the northern part of Jiangxi Province, in the jurisdiction of Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province, was named for the intersection of the Yangtze River and Poyang Lake, a total area of 669 square kilometers, the household registration population of 300,000 (late 2017).

## B. Variables Selection

1) *Heterogeneous words*: All elements of language can affect each other, and vocabularies are the most susceptible to be influenced in language competition. In order to quantify the phenomenon of “dialect mingled by Mandarin”, this paper mainly selects heterogeneous words to reflect its degree. Heterogeneous words refer to the number of phonetics and vocabularies approaching to Mandarin. The rate of heterogeneous word refers to the rate of the number of heterogeneous words accounted for the total number of words in respondents’ speech.

2) *Information variables*: Respondents’ basic information includes gender, age, occupation, education level and PCDI. In the descriptive statistics below, the dimension of age was divided into 7 equal parts from 11 to 70. Besides, the degree of education was divided into 3 levels, and PCDI was divided into 3 intervals according to the level of economic development in Jiangxi Province.

## III. ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

### A. Analysis of Examples

“Dialect mingled by Mandarin” reflecting in phonetics is embodied in the sound, rhyme, tune approaching to the phonetic system of Mandarin, and the unvoiced sound are basically converted to voiced one. “Dialect mingled by Mandarin” reflecting in vocabularies is expressed as the use of Mandarin vocabularies when dialect communication is blocked because dialect vocabularies have not been inherited. Here are some examples from the respondents’ words from the perspective of lexical classification.

1) *Nouns*: For example, the common term “技术 (jìshù) [tɕi<sup>51</sup> ʂu<sup>51</sup>] (technology)”, it is expressed as [dʒi<sup>45</sup> ɛvɛ<sup>12</sup>] in Hukou dialect, but it is pronounced as [tɕi<sup>45</sup> ʂu<sup>12</sup>] in “dialect mingled by Mandarin”. Also as the time noun “现在 (xiànzài) [xiɛn<sup>51</sup> tsai<sup>51</sup>] (at the moment)”, it is expressed as [ɲ<sup>32</sup> zi<sup>11</sup>] in Hukou dialect, but the unauthentic pronunciation is [ɛien<sup>34</sup> zai<sup>45</sup>].

2) *Verbs*: For example, “浪费 (làngfěi) [lɑŋ<sup>51</sup> fei<sup>51</sup>] (waste)”, it’s expressed as [mie<sup>212</sup> tsi<sup>354</sup> gue<sup>12</sup>] in Hukou dialect, but many people cannot speak dialect then direct use the Mandarin vocabulary [lɑŋ<sup>45</sup> fei<sup>12</sup>]. Again, for example “知道 (zhīdào) [tɕi<sup>55</sup> tau<sup>51</sup>]” (know), residents almost used [ɛiau<sup>35</sup> tɔ] previously, but now it’s replaced by the fashion

[tɕi<sup>33</sup> tau<sup>35</sup>]. In the same way, “想 (xiǎng) [ɛiaŋ<sup>214</sup>] (miss)”, people now use [siaŋ<sup>35</sup>] or [ɛiaŋ<sup>35</sup>] to replace the standard dialect [teien<sup>31</sup>].

3) *Pronouns*: As the personal pronoun “你 (nǐ) [ni<sup>214</sup>] (you)”, Hukou dialect uses [ŋ<sup>34</sup>], but now some young people express it directly as [ni<sup>34</sup>]. Also like the azimuth pronoun “那里 (nǎlǐ) [nA<sup>51</sup> li<sup>214</sup>] (there)”, the authentic Hukou dialect pronounced [ən<sup>34</sup> li], and now more and more people express as [nA<sup>34</sup> li].

4) *Adverbs*: The degree adverb “这么 (zhème) [tɕə<sup>51</sup> mə] (so)”, such as “这么好 (zhème hǎo) [tɕə<sup>51</sup> mə ʂau<sup>214</sup>] (so good)” and “这么傻 (zhème shǎ) [tɕə<sup>51</sup> mə ʂA<sup>214</sup>]” (so silly), the traditional pronunciation is “[i<sup>33</sup> kə<sup>21</sup> ʂau<sup>35</sup>], [i<sup>33</sup> kə<sup>21</sup> ʂa<sup>33</sup>],” and in recent years some young people use the Mandarin pronunciation [tɕə<sup>23</sup> mə].

5) *Others*: For example, the quantifier “个 (gè) [kə<sup>51</sup>] (a/an)”, in Hukou dialect it pronounced [tɕʌ<sup>35</sup>], but many people directly express it [kə<sup>35</sup>], the numerals “七 [tɕi<sup>55</sup>] (qī) (seven)”, the standard pronunciation belongs to the sharp and turbid tone, while more and more people lose the sharp tone, and pronounced as normal [dʒi<sup>21</sup>]. Again, the adjective “坏 (huài) [xuai<sup>51</sup>] (bad)”, [xuai<sup>23</sup>] replaces the former pronunciation [suo<sup>31</sup>]. The conjunctions, “并且 [piŋ<sup>51</sup> teie<sup>214</sup>] (bìngqiě) (and)”, Hukou pronunciation [biŋ<sup>34</sup> dʒiɛ<sup>35</sup>] is somewhat similar to Mandarin, but the pronunciation of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” is different, [piŋ<sup>34</sup> dʒhie<sup>35</sup>] is closer to Mandarin.

There are countless examples like this. The degree to which different “dialect mingled by Mandarin” phenomena are accepted varies widely, such as the proper noun: “鲁迅 (LuXun) [lu<sup>214</sup> ɛyn<sup>51</sup>],” the standard dialect is [lu<sup>34</sup> sin<sup>35</sup>], but now we use [lu<sup>34</sup> ɛyn<sup>35</sup>] largely and without distinction. Some phenomena are difficult to accept by the majority due to some reasons, such as the “技术” mentioned above.

### B. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The five variables in “Table I” are taken as respondents’ individual characteristic variable, in order to understand the distribution of individual characteristic of “dialect mingled by Mandarin”.

1) *Gender*: Of the respondents, there are 135 men and 171 women. The number of people appearing “dialect mingled by Mandarin” is 186.

TABLE I. GENDER DIFFERENCES

Man		Woman	
Rate (%)	Rate of heterogeneous words (%)	Rate (%)	Rate of heterogeneous words (%)
39.26	4.23	60.23	5.87

<sup>a</sup> Note: the “rate” refers to the rate of the “dialect mingled by Mandarin” phenomenon among the respondents, and the “rate of heterogeneous words” refers to the rate of heterogeneous words in “dialect mingled by Mandarin” account for the rate of total vocabularies. The following Table is the same.

As shown in “Table I”, the rate of men appearing in the phenomenon of “dialect mingled by Mandarin” and the rate of heterogeneous words are lower than that of women. This proves that rural women are more affected by Mandarin when using dialects.

2) *Age*: In order to ensure that the speaker has no language use disorder, the interviewee age is limited to 11-70 years old, and it is divided into 6 equal age groups, the

numbers of respondents are 34, 53, 58, 65, 49, 47 respectively.

TABLE II. AGE DISTRIBUTION

11-20			21-30			31-40		
Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate
85.29	6.92	81.13	5.50	67.24	4.01			
41-50		51-60		61-70				
Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate
49.23	2.06	18.37	2.27	10.64	1.33			

"Table II" indicates that with the increase of the age, the rate of the number of people appearing in the phenomenon of "dialect mingled by Mandarin" and the rate of heterogeneous words decrease on the whole. This means that the older rural residents, the less influence they are on Mandarin when they use dialects, and vice versa, the greater the impact.

3) *Occupation*: In this paper, the occupations of the respondents are divided into three types, namely, students, state public officials and other occupations, the number of which is 89, 104 and 113, respectively.

TABLE III. OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION

Students			State public officials			Others		
Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate
91.01	5.97	57.69	3.35	51.33	2.43			

"Table III" demonstrates that students have the deepest degree of "dialect mingled by Mandarin" because students are relatively young, have more opportunities to receive Mandarin education, and do not study dialects firmly enough. The state public officials basically work in the county and use Mandarin more frequently, the phenomenon of "dialect mingled by Mandarin" is also relatively more.

4) *Education level*: The education of the interviewees is divided into three grades: primary and below, middle/secondary /technical school, junior colleges and above, with 205, 79 and 22 respectively.

TABLE IV. EDUCATION DISTRIBUTION

Primary and below			Middle/secondary /technical school			Junior colleges and above		
Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate
37.56	3.64	60.76	3.75	68.18	5.01			

"Table IV" shows that with the improvement of educational level, the phenomenon of "dialect mingled by Mandarin" and its degree are on the rise, except that when the residents of "primary and below" use dialects, they are obviously less affected by Mandarin.

5) *Economic situation of the family*: According to the PCDI data of 2018 years of residents in Jiangxi Province, as well as the level of economic development of Hukou County, the PCDI is divided into three levels: < 10,000 yuan, 10,000-12,000 yuan, > 20,000 yuan, the number of people is 146, 125, 35, respectively.

TABLE V. PCDI DISTRIBUTION

< 10,000 yuan			10,000-12,000 yuan			> 20,000 yuan		
Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate	Rate of heterogeneous words	Rate
37.67	3.01	56.80	3.27	62.86	3.63			

From "Table V", the degree of "dialect mingled by Mandarin" increases with the increase of PCDI, except that

the rate of residents with a income level of less than 10,000 yuan and the rate of heterogeneous words are significantly

lower than the group of more than 10,000 yuan. It illustrates that respondents with a better level of family economy are more likely to use Mandarin and are relatively unfamiliar with dialect.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

To sum up, there is a competitive relationship between Mandarin and dialect, specifically: first, Chinese dialect is being invaded by Mandarin. The co-existence of Mandarin and dialects has become the mainstream of language life; the phenomenon that dialects at county level are assimilated by Mandarin should arouse attention. Second, in the process of competition between dialect and Mandarin, with the development of economy, the improvement of education level and the growth of the younger generation, “dialect mingled by Mandarin” develop in the direction of strengthening, that is, the living space of Mandarin continues to develop and grow, and many features of dialects fade away gradually. Therefore, how to correctly handle the relationship between Mandarin and dialects is very important, neither to promote Mandarin strongly to accelerate the demise of dialects, nor to cling to dialects to block the natural advancement of Mandarin. Maintaining the diversity of Chinese and building a harmonious language ecosystem is a natural choice for the development of Chinese.

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