

Investigation on the Usage of Words in Luoyang Dialect

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ABSTRACT

With the deepening of the popularization of Mandarin and the development of society, the usage of Luoyang dialect vocabulary has also changed, and one of the prominent manifestations is the shrinking usage of a large number of dialect words. Based on the sociolinguistic perspective, the article uses questionnaires and statistical methods to describe the current usage of Luoyang dialect vocabulary, analyzing its influencing factors, and make predictions on the development trend of it. The results show that age, occupation, education level, language attitudes and the language environment are significantly correlated with the current usage of Luoyang dialect vocabulary. Combined with the existing language policies and language planning, the usage of Luoyang dialect vocabulary will further shrink.

Keywords: *Luoyang, dialect, vocabulary, sociolinguistics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of dialect vocabulary has entered a new stage, but the academic community has not yet reached a consensus on the connotation of dialect vocabulary. There are two main views: one believes that dialect vocabulary refers to all the words used in a dialect, which can be called a broad dialect vocabulary; the other believes that dialect vocabulary refers to words that are different from the Mandarin, can be called a narrow sense of dialect vocabulary (Dong, 2002) [1]. Based on the purpose of the study, the object of this paper is the dialect vocabulary in a narrow sense, i.e., words in Luoyang dialect that are different from those in Mandarin.

In general, there is a strong consistency of the dialect vocabulary in different areas within Luoyang, which ensures the feasibility of the study.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research object of the article is the current usage of Luoyang dialect words. Based on the purpose of the study, the research methods of the study are mainly shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Methods

Field work	Used to determine the Luoyang dialect words in the questionnaire
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Questionnaire method	Design and distribute questionnaires to investigate the current usage of Luoyang dialect vocabulary
Quantitative analysis method	Quantitative analysis of questionnaire data to study the factors affecting the use of Luoyang dialect words

3. SURVEY DESIGN

The key to investigating the use of dialect vocabulary is to ensure the validity of all processes of the survey, and determining the group to be surveyed, etc.

3.1. Survey methods

The study used a questionnaire survey method combining simple random sampling and stratified sampling. A total of 460 questionnaires were distributed and 439 were returned, of which 398 were valid and 41 were invalid.

3.2. Selection of dialect words

The Luoyang dialect words used for investigation in this study refer to words that are commonly used in Luoyang dialect but different from the Mandarin. The selection method is as follows:

First, based on *the Modern Chinese Dialect*

Dictionary Sub-volume - Luoyang Dialect Dictionary (Li & He, 1996)^[2], *Luoyang Dialect Research* (He, 1993)^[3] and other dialect dictionaries as the basic materials, we compiled a word list of Luoyang dialect, with a total of 3024 words; second, we conducted a field survey on the preliminary word list, combined with our own knowledge of the native language, and exclude the words that are objectionable; third, check the word list against *the Modern Chinese Dictionary (7th edition)*^[4] and eliminate the Mandarin words contained therein; after that, with the reference of *the Chinese Dialect Words Survey Entry List*(2003)^[5] and other materials, supplement the word list with the corresponding form of the Luoyang dialect word to get the complete word list. Finally, referring to the semantic meaning categories in *the Glossary of Dialect Survey* (1981)^[6], the words in Luoyang dialect were divided into 15 meaning categories, and from the different meaning categories, 162 words were randomly selected for investigation and research.

3.3. The design of survey questionnaire

The questionnaire is divided into three parts: the first part is the basic information about the respondents' age, gender, education level, occupation and location; the second part is a survey on the current usage frequency of 162 Luoyang dialect words; the third part is a survey on language ability and language attitude.

3.4. Selection of survey respondents

The survey subjects were people of all ages living in the Luoyang area for a long time. First, the survey respondents were divided into four age groups: under 20 years old, 20-40 years old, 41-60 years old, and over 60 years old; then, they were distinguished into rural, town, and city areas according to their place of residence; finally, a random sample survey method was adopted according to the grouping. The usage of dialect was related to various factors, such as age, occupation, and literacy, which were all reflected in the questionnaire.

On the whole, 356 of the valid questionnaires were native Luoyang people, accounting for about 90%, and people of all ages, different regions, and different educational and occupational backgrounds were involved.

3.5. Processing of survey data

In sociolinguistics, variables are divided into nominal level variable and ordinal level variable, and the social factors that affect the use of the Luoyang dialect words can be grouped into these two categories. Therefore, this study used SPSS22.0 to investigate the influence of different social factors on the usage in Luoyang dialect words and the interaction between them by Pearson's chi-square and likelihood ratio chi-square p-value. Specifically, a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates that there is no significant relationship between the variables,

a p-value less than 0.05 determines that there is a significant correlation between the variables, and a p-value less than 0.01 is more significant.

4. SURVEY RESULTS AND CHARACTERISTICS ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF LUOYANG DIALECT WORDS

This section converts the five-degree scale into three frequency levels: "low frequency" "medium frequency" and "high frequency", and uses age as the variable to show the usage status and changes of 162 Luoyang dialect words in 15 semantic categories. Based on this, analyzing the characteristics of the current usage of Luoyang dialect words.

4.1. Survey results

According to the usage of Luoyang dialect words by different age groups, the current dialect word can be classified into three types: those with high frequency of usage in all age groups are classified as "good survival"; those with slight changes in frequency of usage in different age groups are classified as "slow change", with the frequency of use is proportional to age; those with a low frequency of use in all age groups are classified as "gradually dying out", indicating that the word is not active in current language use.

It can be found that there are differences in the rate of change in the frequency of use of different words. Among the 162 words, there are 75 words that survive well, and the frequency of use of these words changes very little in different age groups, some of which are basically unchanged, accounting for about 46.30%; there are 51 words that change slowly in frequency of use, accounting for about 31.48%; and there are 36 words that are on the verge of extinction, accounting for about 22.22%.

On the whole, most of the Luoyang dialect words are still active in daily life, and only a small part of them is gradually dying out. This is closely related to the users' attitude toward language. From the results of the survey, 60.80% of the respondents are proficient in both Mandarin and Luoyang dialects, and 74.62% of the respondents tend to use Luoyang dialect when they can use both two languages. The higher percentage of surviving Luoyang dialect words is inextricably linked to this positive language attitude.

4.2. Semantic category features of lexical usage in Luoyang dialect

Language is a dynamic, orderly and heterogeneous symbolic system influenced by a variety of factors, which keeps pace with social development through various gradual changes under the action of certain laws, and has certain directions and characteristics despite the intricate forms of change.

From the 15 semantic categories of words surveyed, the current usage status of dialect words in different semantic categories differs greatly. The proportion of words with different frequency of use in each semantic category is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of dialect words usage frequency by semantic category

Semantic Category	Frequency of Utilization	
	Medium and High	Low
Expression of time	66.70	33.30
Agricultural	11.10	88.90
Daily life objects	75.00	25.00
Appellation	92.20	7.70
Consuetudinary	60.00	40.00
Geographical	56.25	43.75
Dietary	90.00	10.00
Habilitary	70.00	30.00
Animals and plants	75.00	25.00
Body organ	80.00	20.00
Behavioral	94.00	6.00
Adjectival	90.00	10.00
Adverbial	100	0
Pronominal	100	0
Conjunctive	0	100

Table 2 shows that although the usage of dialect words in all 15 semantic categories has changed to some extent, there are obvious differences among them.

The use of “appellation” “dietary” “body organ” “behavioral” “adjectival” “adverbial” and “pronominal” categories changes very slowly, and the number of medium and high frequency users is large in all age groups, especially in the “pronominal” and “adverbial” categories. In contrast, “conjunctive” “geographical” “agriculture”, etc. varies greatly, and they are all shrinking sharply, especially the “conjunctive” category, which is only active among the age group of 60 and above, and is gradually dying out.

The differences in the use of Luoyang dialect words in terms of semantic categories are influenced by social factors. For example, the accelerated urbanization of Luoyang in recent years has led to a sharp decline in the number of agricultural workers and a decreasing share of agricultural work in the daily life of the residents, which has led to a shrinking trend in the use of “agricultural” dialect words in general; the decrease in the use of “consuetudinary” is mainly attributed to the change of social customs. In contrast, “appellation” “dietary” “body organ” “adjectival” “adverbial” and “pronominal” words are mostly closely related to daily life and have certain regional characteristics. Although there are some changes in the frequency of use due to the influence of Mandarin, they are still very active in general.

5. SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE USE OF WORDS IN THE LUOYANG DIALECT

The development of language is influenced by both the language itself and the external environment. The changes in the use of words in Luoyang dialect are mainly influenced by the latter. Sociolinguistic studies have suggested that gender, age, class, and location are all related to language variation (Xu, 2006)^[7]. Based on the statistical analysis of SPSS22.0, this section analyzes the social factors that influence the lexical usage status of Luoyang dialect. The results showed that occupation, age, education level, places of residence and language attitude were significantly correlated with the usage of dialect, while gender was not significantly related to it.

5.1. Gender and Luoyang dialect words

Sociolinguistic research suggests that there are objective differences in language use between men and women, and that these differences are reflected in language structure, phonetic, vocabulary, grammar, and even in language ability. Some researchers have argued that women tend to be conservative in their language use, preserving more of their original forms than men, while men are relatively open (Dai, 2004)^[8]. However, it has also been argued that, on the whole, because of their unequal economic and political status, women have a stronger sense of identity, so when a more socially prestigious form of language emerges, women tend to take the initiative to move toward this new form of language in order to gain social acceptance, and only when the new form of language is not authoritative or even deviates from authority, they tend to be conservative (Chen, 1985)^[9].

The results of the Spearman’s correlation test between gender and the usage of 162 Luoyang dialect words showed that among the 162 words, only 6 were significantly correlated with gender at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for only 3.70%; 30 were significantly correlated with gender at the significance level of 0.05, accounting for about 18.52%; the remaining 126 words, accounting for 77.78%, were not correlated with gender. Further analysis of the 36 words for which there was a correlation between gender and usage revealed that all 36 words were used more frequently by men than by women.

The above shows that the use of most Luoyang dialect words is not influenced by gender, but there are a small number of words whose usage is related to gender, and in the use of these words, males use them all more frequently than females.

5.2. Education level and Luoyang dialect words

The results of Spearman’s correlation test between

education level and the use of words in Luoyang dialect showed that among 162 words, 92 were significantly correlated with education level at the significance level of 0.01, and 30 were significantly correlated at the significance level of 0.05, totaling 122 words, accounting for about 75.31%; only 40 words' usage were not correlated with the level of education. The result indicates

that education level is an important factor influencing the current use of words in the Luoyang dialect.

Based on the development of education and culture in our country in the past decades, we hypothesized that age is an important factor affecting the level of education and tested it. The results are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Table3. Age*Education Level Crosstabulation

Age		Education Level			Total
		Low	Medium	High	
Under 20	Count	27	58	16	101
	Percentage (%)	26.73	57.43	15.84	100
20-40	Count	7	33	60	100
	Percentage (%)	7.0	33.0	60.0	100
41-60	Count	17	58	23	98
	Percentage (%)	17.35	59.18	23.50	100
Over 60	Count	36	57	6	99
	Percentage (%)	36.36	57.58	6.06	100
Total	Count	87	206	105	398
	Percentage (%)	21.86	51.76	26.38	100

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	93.659a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	92.994	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.164	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	398		

a.0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5.The minimum expected count is 21.42.

From Table 3, it can be found that the proportion of people with higher education increases with decreasing age, except for the group under 20 years old who are receiving education; Table 4 shows that the Pearson and likelihood ratio chi-square p-values of the chi-square test of age and education are both 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating that there is a significant difference between people of different ages in terms of their education level. And there is a significant correlation between education level and the status of Luoyang dialect word use, which also shows the relationship between dialect word use and age from the side.

5.3. Occupation and Luoyang dialect words

People of different professions form different social groups, and each social group will form different characteristics from other due to their own group's preferences, habits and concepts, which are often reflected in the use of language. Correlation test between occupation and the usage of Luoyang dialect words showed that among 162 dialect words, 82 were significantly related to occupation at significance level 0.01 and 23 were significantly related at significance level 0.05, a total of 105 words, accounting for about 64.81%. This shows that occupation is an important factor influencing the use of words in the Luoyang dialect. The use of specific categories of dialect words is even more influenced by occupation, for example, agricultural

labor groups use agricultural dialect words more frequently.

In addition, three questions were set to examine the language ability of the respondents, namely "Are you proficient in both Luoyang dialect and Mandarin" "How well do you know and use Luoyang dialect" "How well do you know and use Mandarin". The correlation test between occupation and the responses to these three questions was conducted by SPSS22.0, and the results showed that the p-values were "0.001" "0.000" and "0.000" respectively, indicating that occupation is significantly correlated with language ability. And one of the externalized manifestations of the significant correlation between occupation and language ability is the relationship between occupation and language use status, which can also indicate that the close relationship between occupation and the usage of words in the Luoyang dialect.

Cross-tabulation analysis of occupation and linguistic abilities showed that the proportion of those who were proficient in both Luoyang dialect and Mandarin was much higher among education, administration, health care, service workers and students than among agricultural and industrial workers. The highest percentage of proficiency in the Luoyang dialect was found among agricultural workers, followed by industrial workers and commercial workers; the highest proportion of proficiency in Mandarin was found among educational

workers and students, followed by administrative workers, which is in line with the language policy requiring administrative workers to work in Mandarin and students to use Mandarin at school, indicating that these language policies have been effectively implemented.

In general, mental workers, such as teachers and students, prefer to use Mandarin; manual workers prefer to use the Luoyang dialect due to the non-compulsory requirements of their jobs for Mandarin.

5.4. Environment and Luoyang dialect words

People are products of their environment and their performance is governed by the environment in which they live, and language is no exception. In sociolinguistic studies, the places of residence is an important factor influencing language use. Although in contemporary society, the channels of interpersonal communication have been greatly expanded, the differences in social and cultural and educational conditions between urban and rural areas make local residents still show differences in language use. In addition to the regional environment, the family language environment also has an important influence on language use. The language habits of both parents and grandparents have an impact on the language acquisition and use of the next generation.

In this paper, we classify places of residence into three categories: rural, town, and city areas. The correlation between place of residence and dialect word usage was tested, and the results showed that among the 162 dialect words, 125 were significantly correlated with place of residence at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for about 77.16%; 18 were significantly correlated at the significance level of 0.05, accounting for about 11.11%; the total percentage of both was about 88%. Only the remaining 12% of dialect words were not significantly correlated with place of residence. This shows that, on the whole, the region of residence is an important factor influencing the current usage status of Luoyang dialect words.

The correlation between the respondents' dialect word usage and their parents' and grandparents' language usage was examined, and the results showed that there was a significant correlation between them. Further, the correlation test between the respondents' language use and their parents' and grandparents' place of residence showed that the Pearson chi-square and likelihood ratio chi-square p-values were both 0.000, which was less than 0.05, indicating that there was a significant correlation between them.

5.5. Language attitudes and Luoyang dialect words

The accelerated urbanization and the increasing

promotion of Mandarin have caused a certain impact on dialects. This impact has affected people's language perceptions and thus their language attitudes to some extent.

Language attitude is an important object of study in sociolinguistics and social psychology, referring to individuals' value evaluation of a language or dialect and related behavioral tendencies, which are very important potential factors affecting language use and transmission (You & Zou, 2009) ^[10]. The study of language attitudes can reveal the reasons for the existence and changes of many language phenomena and provide guidance for language planning and language policy formulation.

Language attitudes are divided into perceptual attitudes and rational attitudes. Perceptual attitudes refer to the feelings and reactions that people have when they hear or speak a language, often subconsciously, and are related to the language environment in which they grew up, the cultural influences they have received, and their personal experiences. While rational attitudes refer to the judgments that people make about a language based on specific social values (Chen, 1999) ^[11].

Language attitudes are influenced by various factors, such as a person's emotional disposition toward language, the social status of language, and the practicality of language in life.

5.5.1 Perceptual language attitudes and the usage of dialect words

The paper examines the correlation between language users' perceptual language attitudes and the usage status of Luoyang dialect words in four aspects: language identity, auditory feeling, usage habits and cultural identity, and the results show that: (1) the usage status of all 162 dialect words was significantly correlated with language identity at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for 100%, indicating that they were absolutely correlated; (2) among the 162 words, the usage of 129 was correlated with auditory feeling at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for about 79.63%; 20 were correlated at the significance level of 0.05, accounting for about 12.35%; (3) 161 words were significantly correlated with personal language habits at 0.01 level of significance, accounting for about 99.38%; (4) 108 words were significantly correlated with cultural identity at 0.01 level of significance, accounting for about 66.67%; 13 were significantly correlated at 0.05 level of significance, accounting for about 8.02%; about 75% in total, with only the remaining 25% have no significant correlation between usage status and culture.

5.5.2 Rational language attitudes and the usage of dialect words

The correlation between language users' rational

language attitudes and the use of words in the Luoyang dialect was investigated in terms of the clarity of expression and practicality, and the results showed that: (1) the use of 132 words correlated with their clarity of expression at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for about 81.48%; 10 words correlated significantly at the significance level of 0.05, accounting for about 6.17%; only the remaining about 13% of the words were not significantly correlated; (2) the usage status of 56 words correlated with their practicality at the significance level of 0.01, accounting for 34.57%; 31 words correlated significantly at the significance level of 0.05, accounting for 19.14%. This indicates that nearly half of the words' usage in Luoyang dialect did not correlate with their practicality.

This result is contrary to the conventional perception, so we further analyzed the questionnaire data and found that when answering the question "Which language do you think is more useful, Luoyang dialect or Mandarin", nearly 66% of people chose Mandarin as the more useful language. However, when answering the question "If you can use both Luoyang dialect and Mandarin, which do you prefer", nearly 75% of people chose Luoyang dialect as their first choice. Further analysis shows that the older the person is, the more obvious this preference is, and more than half of the youngest generation also hold this preference.

This indicates that although Luoyang residents rationally agree with the practical value of Mandarin, when there is a choice between two languages, they still have an overwhelming emotional preference for the local dialect, which is called "language loyalty" in sociolinguistics. "Linguistic loyalty" refers to people's attachment to their mother tongue and their refusal to easily give up the use of their mother tongue in the process of contact with other languages or dialects" (You, 2014) [12], which explains why there is a contradiction between people's perceptual and rational attitudes toward the Luoyang dialect.

In general, the promotion of Mandarin has achieved remarkable results in Luoyang area, and local residents can rationally recognize the value and role of Mandarin and support the promotion of it. However, local residents have a strong sense of identification with the local dialect, and the current influence of this perceptual attitude is greater and more closely related to the status of dialect vocabulary use, and this influence has shown a slow change with age.

6. TRENDS IN THE USE OF WORDS IN LUOYANG DIALECT

From the above, it is clear that although many dialect words are used frequently and their survival is generally good, the use of dialects still shows a clear tendency to shrink in the current social environment.

6.1. Language attitudes and dialect usage trends

The questionnaire data shows that, among the 398 people surveyed, 268 people think that fewer and fewer people use Luoyang dialect in recent years, accounting for about 67%, which is absolutely dominant. At the same time, the number of people who support the promotion of Mandarin and think they must speak it are 309 and 292 respectively, indicating that Mandarin is the strong language in Luoyang in terms of people's rational attitude toward language. It is worth noting that 292 people are in favor of taking certain measures to protect the Luoyang dialect, but the number of people in favor of their own children learning the Luoyang dialect has dropped to 249. To some extent, this reflects the contradiction between people's language attitudes and language behaviors.

From these data, we can see that most people are ideologically inclined to take certain measures to protect the Luoyang dialect and do not agree that the promotion of Mandarin can be done at the expense of the dialect, while in actual communication they prefer Mandarin. This objective reality determines that the use of the Luoyang dialect will further shrink.

6.2. Language policy, language planning and dialect usage trends

Language policy refers to the laws, regulations, and measures, etc., that are formulated by human social groups according to their positions or views on certain languages (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997) [13]. Language policy is a combination of political and economic factors that affect social development, and it plays an important practical role in guiding language users.

Language planning is the intervention, adjustment and management of social language life and language itself by the government or academic authority for specific purposes (Li, 2010) [14]. From an academic point of view, language planning belongs to the macro sociolinguistic sphere; from the government's point of view, it is mainly reflected in the policies and specific tasks of national language and writing (Li, 2001) [15].

Law of the People's Republic of China on the Standard Spoken and Written Chinese Language, which has been in effect since 2001, has established the legal status of Mandarin. In terms of specific policies, the State Education Commission of the PRC, the State Language Commission, and other agencies have jointly worked to promote the Mandarin, and have taken many effective measures. The expected goal is that by the middle of the 21st century, Mandarin will be widespread throughout the country. This gives Mandarin a potency in social life that other languages or dialects do not have.

Besides, the Language Commission and Office of Henan Province have implemented a number of policies to promote Mandarin according to the specific conditions

in the province, such as the “Notice on Further Strengthening the Popularization of Mandarin and the Standardization of Characters in Schools” issued by the Provincial Language Commission Office in July 2008. Relevant institutions and schools in Luoyang City have also taken active measures to promote Mandarin, such as the initiative of “Promoting Mandarin and Standardized Characters” at Luoyang Foreign Language School in March 2016, and the 21st Promotion of Mandarin Awareness Week series at Luoyang Normal University in September 2018.

In addition, increased financial investment and the development of multi-level standards for assessing Mandarin proficiency have further promoted the promotion of Mandarin. These measures are in line with the actual needs of the society and have made it possible to promote Mandarin in a gradual manner, but at the same time, the use of the Luoyang dialect has shrunk further.

The changes in social life and cultural concepts have also caused a large number of dialect words to lose their use value, which reflects the co-change of language and society. Overall, the further shrinkage of vocabulary use in Luoyang dialect is an inevitable trend from a number of perspectives, including language users, language policy and language planning, and changes in social development.

7. CONCLUSION

With the promotion of Mandarin and social changes, the use of the Luoyang dialect words has shrunk. The age, occupation, education level, and language attitude of language users will affect their use of Luoyang dialect. The use of Luoyang dialect vocabulary will shrink further due to the influence of language planning and social development.

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