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Dialect Islands Formed by Chun'an Immigrants: A Case Study of Two Villages Emigrated from Linqi Town

Lingyue Jiang

WLSA Shanghai Academy, China

ABSTRACT

In the 1960s, to construct the Xin'anjiang Hydropower Station, the first large hydropower station designed by New China, nearly 300,000 inhabitants of Chun'an County in Zhejiang Province from 1,377 villages migrated to Zhejiang, Anhui, and Jiangxi Provinces, forming many "immigrant villages" and giving rise to dialect islands. Although there are many studies on the history and current situation of these immigrants, there is a gap in the analysis of the resulting dialect island phenomenon. In this study, through an offline field study combined with an online survey, we collected information from immigrants or their descendants in Chatian Town, Longquan City, Zhejiang Province, and Yantian Town, Anfu County, Jiangxi Province, who emigrated from Linqi Town, Zhejiang Province. We surveyed their language proficiency, language acquisition, language use, language attitudes, identification with their hometown in Chun'an, as well as their viewing habits and attitudes toward dialect short videos. This study found that most of the villagers in the dialect islands have the ability to speak three language variants, namely the Chun'an dialect, the dialect of their place of relocation, and Mandarin. However, Mandarin is gradually replacing the other two dialects as a standardized language with visible prestige; the promotion of dialect uses through new media, such as short videos, is particularly urgent for the inheritance of the Chun'an dialect and the propagation of the Chun'an immigrants' hometown culture.

Defining the Dialect Island of the Xin'anjiang Immigrants

Mandarin Chinese and Chinese Dialects

In February 1956, the State Council's Directive on the Promotion of Mandarin made it clear that "Mandarin ('Putonghua'), with the Beijing dialect as its standard, the northern dialect as its basic dialect, and exemplary modern vernacular writings as its grammatical norms," was the universal standardized language of China (Zhou, 1956). With the promotion and popularization of Mandarin, dialect use has been greatly reduced, entering a state of gradual decline. Regional cultures closely connected with the dialects are also facing the crisis of extinction. At present, some scholars feel a sense of crisis as they see an increasing number of "dialect-less speakers", i.e. people who can't speak their native dialects and take Mandarin as their mother tongue. More and more "dialect-less speakers" are emerging and will probably continue to emerge (Ding, 2001).

Mr. Yuan Zhongrui, Secretary General of the Society for the Modernization of Chinese Language, emphasized in his answer to a reporter from *Language Weekly* in 2009 that both Mandarin and the Chinese dialects are tools of communication, and that the fundamental purpose of promoting Mandarin is to render people "bilingual". The role of dialects in communicating emotions and promoting traditional culture is irreplaceable by the standardized Mandarin, which plays a leading role in the public sphere, while dialects continue to play a role in daily life.

Diglossic and Triglossic Phenomena in Dialect Islands

Chinese dialects are usually categorized into ten major groups: Guanhua, Jin, Wu, Hui, Min, Yue, Hakka, Gan, Xiang, and Ping. Within each dialect area, there are several sub-dialects and many kinds of local patois (*Language Atlas of China*, 2012).

As a result of migration, indigenous dialects may be dispersed or fragmented by immigrant dialects, or immigrant dialects may be encircled by indigenous dialects, resulting in the formation of dialect islands. According to Chen (1981), a dialect island is a linguistic phenomenon in which "surrounded by one language or dialect, there exists another relatively different dialect, which, although often spoken in a small area or range, has been able to preserve its basic features for a relatively long period of time without being assimilated into the surrounding language or dialect."

The linguistic landscape of a dialect island may change due to economic, political, cultural, and speaker population factors. Some dialect islands still have strong vitality, while others are gradually dying out and being submerged. In this regard, You (1990) subdivided the developmental trend of dialect islands into four types from a macro perspective: "stable development of dialect islands" (purely using the island's dialect), "bilingualism in the dialect islands", "dissolution of dialect islands" (fusion of the island's dialect with the surrounding dialects) and "disappearance of dialect islands" (pp. 164-165). The term "bilingualism on a dialect island" is further interpreted as "the ability of islanders to use two dialects, one on the island and the other off the island, and to use different dialects on different occasions". Many dialect islanders need to learn the language or dialect outside of the island in order to integrate into the local community, while maintaining strong ties with in-groups by speaking their indigenous dialect within the island (often the same community that existed prior to immigration). The phenomenon of diglossia, a concept introduced by sociolinguist Ferguson in 1959, often arises when those outside the dialect island do not speak the in-group dialect, resulting in those within the dialect using different language variants in different contexts. The conditions for diglossia in Ferguson's definition are further refined by Zhou (2018): (1) this phenomenon occurs in a stable linguistic environment; (2) it requires the joint participation of a dialect of a language (referred to as the "L" variant) and another, more advanced variant of that language (the "H" variant); (3) the "H" variant may be a language spoken at a much earlier time in the society, or a contemporaneous language that is being spoken by another linguistic group; (4) the "H" variant is largely acquired by education; (5) the "H" variant is a vehicle for written literature and is highly respected; (6) the vast majority of formal written or spoken language is accomplished through the "H" variant; and (7) the "H" variant is not used as everyday conversation by any social classes of the local group (p. 70).

In reality, however, there is also the phenomenon of "triglossia", whereby, in addition to the two dialects inside and outside of a dialect island, there may be a language variant that is more widely spoken, more standardized, and represents a stronger power (Su, 2013). Such a language could be, for example, a national standard language, a lingua franca or, a foreign language with a high international profile.

Defining the Triglossic Dialect Island Formed by the Xin'anjiang Immigrants

Located in Zhejiang is the Xin'anjiang Hydropower Station, the first large-scale hydropower station designed and built solely by the People's Republic of China. The project started in 1958, and produced the first large-scale immigrant population since the founding of PRC. Chun'an County, where the project is located, is the largest immigrant county in Zhejiang Province, with 290,000 people emigrating to other places—mostly to the provinces Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and Anhui (Cao, 1996, p. 7). At the same time, since February 1956, a vigorous campaign to promote Mandarin Chinese ("Putonghua") has been underway. As of 2020, the percentage of Chinese citizens who can speak Mandarin Chinese has reached 80.72%.

The immigrants from the Xin'anjiang River firstly retained the local customs and dialects of Chun'an, secondly learned the dialects of the places they moved into (hereafter referred to as the "surrounding dialect", and thirdly

learned Mandarin in the process of compulsory education and contact with the outside world due to the promotion of Putonghua activities, gradually forming a dialect island with triglossic features.

Research Question

The study hypothesizes that the dialect islands formed by the Xin'anjiang reservoir immigrants still maintain a relatively stable triglossic phenomenon even after 60 years from the immigration. In this study, we will take the immigrants and their descendants who moved from Jiangjia Natural Village, Linqi Town, Chun'an County, Zhejiang Province, to Chatian Town, Longquan City, Zhejiang Province, and Yantian Town, Anfu County, Jiangxi Province, as case study subjects, and try to explore how the following questions:

1. How did the Xin'anjiang immigrants and their descendants acquire the Chun'an dialect, their surrounding dialect, and Mandarin and how well do they master these language variants?
2. Which language variants are mainly used in formal and informal situations? Is the use of dialects weakening as the state vigorously promotes Mandarin?
3. What is their sense of immigrant identity and willingness to pass on the two dialects?
4. To what extent do Xin'anjiang immigrants use dialects in short video applications?

Methodological Approach and Research Design

This research is a combination of field and survey studies. Basic field visits were conducted in the two aforementioned immigrant villages to gain a basic understanding of immigrants and their descendants' living conditions and daily language use. The visits also facilitated reaching out to various respondents, as well as helping the elderly navigate the survey. The surveys are conducted on the Credamo application, with the data stored in .sav (Sparse Allele Vectors) format to be analyzed in the SPSS application.

Survey Design

The survey obtained the respondents' gender, age, highest level of education, parents' highest level of education, type of occupation, marital status, and the number of relatives within three generations who are married to locals.

The rest of the survey is divided into the following four main sections.

Use of the three language variants

The respondents assessed their own listening and speaking abilities in each respective variant, filled in the order, age, and media of acquiring them, and finally picked out the variant or variants they use in various situations, both with acquaintances (different family members, neighbors, teachers, and schoolmates) and strangers (hotel and restaurant attendants, kiosk vendors, governmental agency clerks, medical personnel, and cab drivers).

Language attitude

Respondents were asked to rate whether the three language variants each "sounds pleasant", "sounds respectable", and "is useful" using a seven-point scale. We sought the subjective evaluation of Xin'anjiang River migrants on their

sense of proximity to each variant, the social status they represent, and their usefulness. Respondents were also asked about their will to pass down the two dialects to the next generation.

Identification with Chun'an

The respondents' identification with non-linguistic aspects of Chun'an was investigated. This includes the place of which they have the most affection (Chun'an, their place of relocation, or other), the location of the people they interact with the most, their perception of the customs of their place of relocation, and finally, the number and main purpose of their visits to Chun'an.

Linguistic environment of short-video apps

The part aims to explore the possibility of promoting the dialects through new media such as short-video apps like *Douyin* or *Kuaishou* in China. The questions include the frequency of watching short videos, interest in short videos in the Chun'an and the surrounding dialects, and the language used to post short videos.

Findings of Current Immigrant Language Use

Sample Characteristics

The sample size of this study is $n = 125$. The characteristics are summarized in Table 1.

A majority of the immigrant sample comes from Chatian Town, Longquan City, Zhejiang Province (86.4%), and the rest is from Yantian Town, Anfu County, Jiangxi Province (13.6%). The sample is relatively balanced in terms of sex, with more men (56.8%) than women (43.2%). Nearly half of the respondents (46.4%) reported the highest level of education below middle school education, while only 2 have master's degrees and 2 have doctoral degrees. For more statistically significant results, some calculations were conducted by combining all respondents with at least a (vocational) high school education in one group. The marital status of the majority of the respondents is "first marriage with spouse" (66.4%) and unmarried (20.0%). The survey collected the exact age of each respondent; however, the quantitative age variable was converted into categorical age groups for most of the analyses. The age distribution of the sample centered on those 19-60 years old, while the proportion of minors and seniors over 61 years old respondents were 8.0% and 6.4% respectively. The occupations of the immigrants in this survey include farming (24.0%), students (13.6%), self-employed/private owners (12.8%), private enterprises (12.8%), and others (14.4%).

Self-Assessment of Aptitude in the Three Language Variants

All respondents can understand and basically speak Mandarin; 103 (82.4%) can understand and speak all three language variants (Mandarin, Chun'an dialect, and the surrounding dialect). This shows that most of the immigrants and their descendants retain trilingual capabilities. Only three respondents speak neither dialect because they have studied away from home for many years, lacking opportunities to acquire them in their family, and they only speak Mandarin. The fact that 91.2% of the sample can understand the Chun'an dialect and 87.2% can speak it shows that most immigrants and their descendants continue to use and pass on the dialect despite having immigrated to a different place for nearly 60 years (see table 2). 93.6% of the sample can understand the surrounding dialect, and 87.2% can speak the dialect. Both dialects are largely used and there is no difference in the proportions of the immigrants/immigrant descendants who can use either dialect.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Sample

Place of Residence	Chatian Town, Zhejiang Province	108 (86.4%)	**Age**	18 or Below	10 (8.0%)
	, Jiangxi Province	17 (13.6%)		19 ~ 35	27 (21.6%)
Sex	Male	71 (56.8%)		36 ~ 45	37 (29.6%)
	Female	54 (43.2%)		45 ~ 60	43 (34.4%)
Highest Degree	Elementary School or Lower	13 (10.4%)		61 or Above	8 (6.4%)
	Middle School	45 (36.0%)	**Employment Status or Occupation Type**	Self-employed	16 (12.8%)
	(Vocational) High School	33 (26.4%)		Civil Servant	5 (4.0%)
	Associate degree	17 (13.6%)		State-owned Enterprise	4 (3.2%)
	Bachelor's Degree	15 (12.0%)		Homemaker	7 (5.6%)
	Master's Degree	1 (0.8%)		Retired	2 (1.6%)
	Doctoral Degree	1 (0.8%)		Private Enterprise	16 (12.8%)
Marital Status	Married	83 (66.4%)		Other	18 (14.4%)
	Divorced	5 (4.0%)		Government-affiliated Institution	8 (6.4%)
	Widowed	2 (1.6%)		Foreign Enterprise	2 (1.6%)
	In Cohabitation	3 (3.5%)		Farmer	30 (24.0%)
	Single	25 (20.0%)		Student	17 (13.6%)
	Remarried	7 (5.6%)			

Table 2. Self-assessments of listening and speaking competence in the three language variants

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Mandarin		Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Mandarin
Cannot Understand	2 (1.6%)	1 (0.8%)	0	**Cannot Speak**	6 (4.8%)	4 (3.2%)	0
Understand basic expressions	9 (7.2%)	7 (5.6%)	0	**Can use basic expressions**	10 (8.0%)	12 (9.6%)	1 (0.8%)
Mostly understand	26 (20.8%)	31 (24.8%)	14 (11.2%)	**Mostly able to speak**	27 (21.6%)	42 (33.6%)	25 (20.0%)
Completely understand	88 (70.4%)	86 (68.8%)	111 (88.8%)	**Completely able to speak**	82 (65.6%)	67 (53.6%)	99 (79.2%)

Correlation with age

Each respondent's self-assessment of their listening and speaking abilities in the three language variants were quantified (i.e., integers 1 to 4 were used to represent self-ratings ranging from "not at all" to "completely"), and the correlation between age and said quantified language capability was calculated using SPSS. Age has a clear correlation (***p* < 0.01**) with all six variables, of which:

- There is a moderate positive correlation between Chun'an dialect proficiency and age (hearing $r = 0.465$, speaking $r = 0.517$).
- There is a weak positive correlation between surrounding dialect proficiency and age (hearing $r = 0.277$, speaking $r = 0.311$)
- There is a weak negative correlation between Mandarin proficiency and age (listening $r = -0.266$, speaking $r = -0.350$).

The younger the age, competence in both dialects tends to decrease, while proficiency in Mandarin tends to increase. Calculating the average dialect proficiency (using the quantified data) for each age group (summarized in figure 1), we see that the self-scored listening proficiency is generally higher than that of speaking proficiency in each variant.

The proficiency of Chun'an dialect listening decreases with age, and the average listening proficiency of the respondents under 18 ranges from "understand basic expressions" to "mostly understand", while the average speaking level is "can use basic expressions", which is significantly lower than adult respondents. Proficiency in the surrounding dialect first increases as age decreases and reaches the highest level among the respondents aged 36-60, surpassing the ratings of Chun'an dialect proficiency; it then decreases in lower age groups. Proficiency in Mandarin also increases with decreasing age, and the self-ratings are all very high: the respondents under 18 all rated themselves with perfect scores.

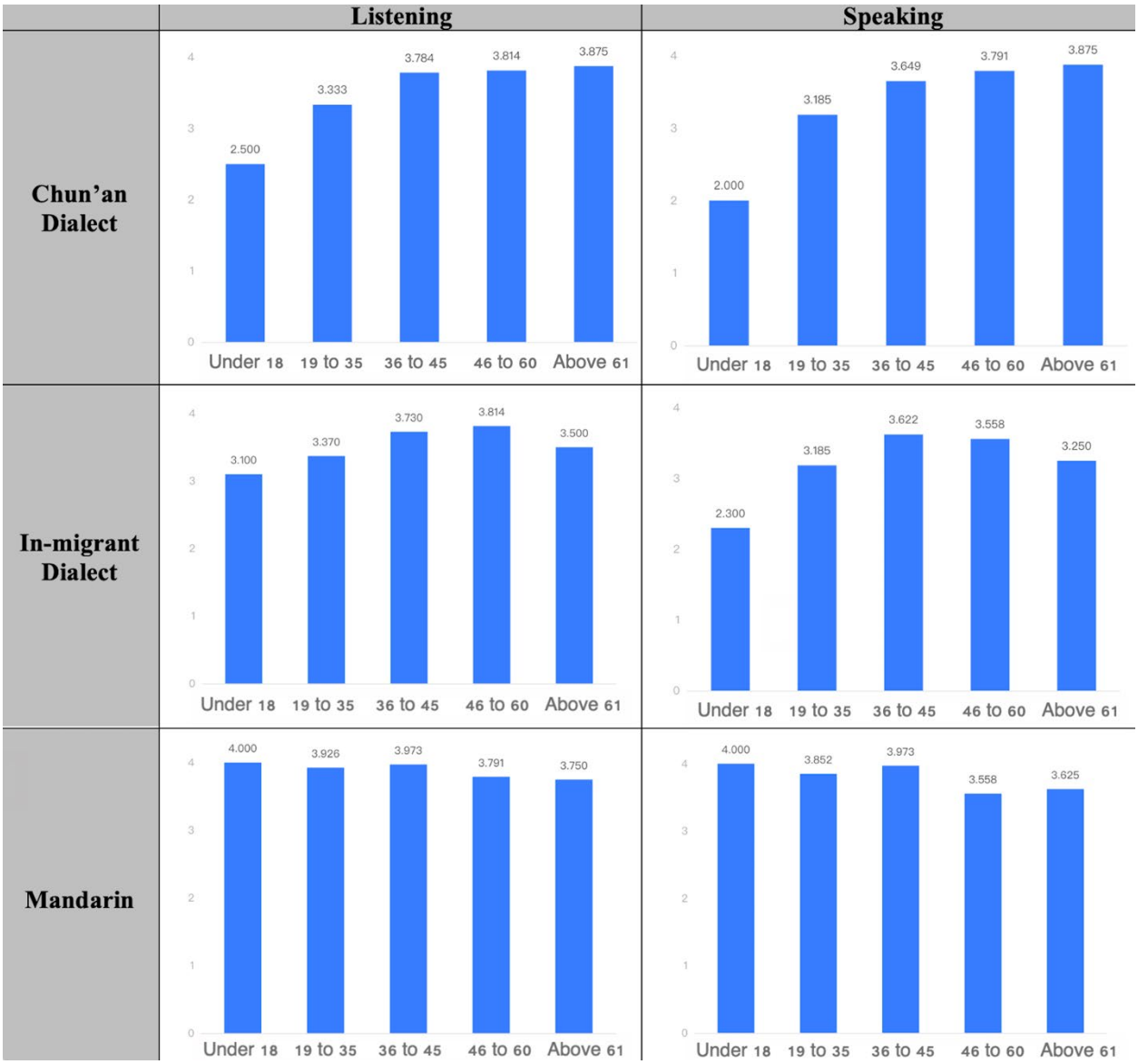

Figure 1. Distribution of proficiency level in the three variants over age groups

Correlation with highest level of education

As above, the self-assessments were quantified, while the estimated years of schooling were also used to quantify the respondent's level of education ("Elementary school or lower" corresponds to 5 years, "middle school" 9 years, "(vocational) high school" 12 years, "associate degree" 15 years, "bachelor's degree" 16 years, "master's degree" 18 years, and "doctorate degree" 20 years).

There is only a weak positive correlation between education and Mandarin proficiency (listening $r = 0.303$, $p = \mathbf{0.001} < 0.01$; speaking $r = 0.350$, $p = \mathbf{0.000} < 0.01$). We can infer that dialect proficiency is strongly correlated, if not attributed, to the linguistic environment at home. On the other hand, Mandarin is mostly acquired through school (to be confirmed in the next part).

Language Acquisition

Order of acquisition

Summarized in table 3 is the distribution of respondents first acquiring each of the language variants.

All 8 respondents over 61 years of age acquired the Chun'an dialect first. In younger generations, the proportion of respondents who acquired it first decreases as the age group decreases, with only 2 of the respondents under 18 (20.0%) having acquired the Chun'an dialect first.

The percentage of those who first acquired the surrounding dialect shows a similar trend to the self-assessment of the proficiency levels, peaking among respondents aged 36-45 (10.8%). Overall, there is a very small proportion of people who acquire the surrounding dialect first.

While no respondents over 46 years of age acquired Mandarin first. The proportion continues to rise in younger age groups, reaching 70.0% among respondents who are under 18.

Table 3. First-acquired language variant across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Mandarin
18 or Below	2 (20.0%)	1 (10.0%)	7 (70.0%)
19 ~ 35	16 (53.9%)	1 (3.7%)	10 (37.0%)
36 ~ 45	30 (81.1%)	4 (10.8%)	3 (8.1%)
45 ~ 60	42 (97.7%)	1 (2.3%)	0
61 or Above	8 (100.0%)	0	0
Total	**98 (78.4%)**	**7 (5.6%)**	**20 (16.0%)**

Relationship between the order of acquisition and parents' highest level of education

The lower the educational level of the parents, the higher the proportion of individuals who first acquired the Chun'an dialect; the higher the educational level of the parents, the higher the proportion of individuals who first learned Mandarin (see tables 4 and 5). However, since about half of the cells in each matrix have an expected value lower than 5, chi-square significance tests cannot be taken.

Table 4. Distribution of father's level of education over first-acquired variant

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Mandarin
Elementary School or Lower	5 (7.5%)	57 (85.1%)	5 (7.5%)
Middle School	0	29 (78.4%)	8 (21.6%)
High School or Higher	2 (9.5%)	12 (57.1%)	7 (33.3%)
Total	**7 (5.6%)**	**98 (78.4%)**	**20 (16.0%)**

Table 5. Distribution of mother's level of education over first-acquired dialect

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Mandarin
Elementary School or Lower	73 (84.9%)	5 (5.8%)	8 (9.3%)
Middle School	20 (60.9%)	1 (3.4%)	8 (27.6%)
High School or Higher	5 (50.0%)	1 (10.0%)	4 (40.0%)
Total	**98 (78.4%)**	**7 (5.6%)**	**20 (16.0%)**

Age of acquisition

The proportion of respondents over 36 years of age who acquired the Chun'an dialect between the ages of 3 and 6 is extremely high (95.5%). The proportion decreases as the age group decreases, reaching 20.0 % among the respondents under 18. The number of immigrants who have never acquired the Chun'an dialect increases slightly with decreasing age. 30.0% of the respondents under 18 have never acquired it.

Most of the respondents over 61 years of age acquired the surrounding dialect at the age of 6 to 18 years (75.0%). The average age of acquisition is lower for those aged between 36 and 60, with about half of them acquiring the dialect at the age of 6 to 12 years. As the age of the respondents continues to decrease, the proportion of those who acquired it an older age (12-18 years old) or never acquired it at all (4 respondents in total) increases again.

The vast majority of respondents (91.2%) acquired Mandarin before the age of 12, and the proportion of those who acquired it between the ages of 3 and 6 (equivalent to having Mandarin as their mother tongue) continues to increase (from 0 to 70.0%) as age group decreases.

Medium of acquisition

93.6% of the respondents acquired the Chun'an dialect through their families. The rest either acquired it through "friends" or never learned the dialect.

The medium of acquiring the surrounding dialect has shifted from mostly through friends (over 46 years old) to school (36-45 years old), and finally, to family (below 35 years old) (see table 6).

Table 6. Medium of acquiring the surrounding dialect across age groups

	Friends	**School**	**Family**	**News Media**	**Never Acquired**
18 or Below	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)	6 (60.0%)	1 (10.0%)	1 (10.0%)
19 ~ 35	8 (29.6%)	7 (25.9%)	11 (40.7%)	0	1 (3.7%)
36 ~ 45	13 (35.1%)	16 (43.2%)	8 (21.6%)	0	0
45 ~ 60	22 (51.2%)	19 (44.2%)	2 (4.70%)	0	0
61 or Above	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0	0	0
Total	**51 (40.8%)**	**44 (35.2%)**	**27 (21.6%)**	**1 (0.8%)**	**2 (1.6%)**

The majority of adult respondents (87.0%) acquired Mandarin through school, while the rest learned it through family or friends. For respondents under 18, acquisition through family was the case 50.0% of the time, making it the primary means of learning Mandarin gradually replacing school (40.0%).

Language Used in Different Contexts

Language variants used to communicate with relatives/neighbors

The primary language variant used by the surveyed immigrants is the Chun'an dialect when communicating with relatives or neighbors: a higher proportion use it when communicating with their grandparents (80.0% for paternal grandparents, 73.6% for maternal grandparents).

About half of the respondents only use the Chun'an dialect when communicating with parents, other relatives or neighbors. They code-switch or use other languages more. The following paragraphs will discuss the proportion of code-switching, using the surrounding dialect or Mandarin.

When respondents communicate with their parents, Mandarin takes second place after the Chun'an dialect (21.6% use only Mandarin, while 13.6% use a mix of Mandarin and dialects). Excluding the surrounding dialect, the proportion of respondents using the other two variants is over 80%.

When communicating with other relatives, the surrounding dialect has a similar level of use to Mandarin: 16.0% use a mixture of the two dialects, while 12.8% and 10.4% use Mandarin or the surrounding dialect respectively, without mixing languages.

When communicating with neighbors, the surrounding dialect takes second place after the Chun'an dialect: 19.2% use it, while 17.6% code-switch between the two dialects.

Language variants used to communicate with relatives/neighbors across age groups

Tables 7 to 9 summarize the language variant(s) the respondents typically use to communicate with their parents, and paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively. The younger the respondents, the more likely they are to use Mandarin to communicate with their parents and grandparents (Mandarin has already gained dominance in communication with parents among respondents under the age of 35; 50.0% and 60.0% of the respondents under 18 use Mandarin to communicate with their paternal and maternal grandparents, respectively). For the two dialects, similar trends to before are seen and the proportion of respondents using them solely to communicate with their parents or grandparents has almost decreased to zero. The proportion of code-switching is also low, and there is almost no code-switching when communicating with grandparents at all.

Table 7. Language variant(s) used to communicate with parents across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Mandarin	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect
18 or Below	0	7 (70.0%)	0	0	3 (30.0%)
19 ~ 35	8 (29.6%)	10 (37.0%)	3 (11.1%)	2 (7.4%)	4 (14.8%)
36 ~ 45	16 (43.2%)	6 (16.2%)	3 (8.1%)	6 (16.2%)	6 (16.2%)
45 ~ 60	28 (65.1%)	4 (9.3%)	5 (11.6%)	2 (4.7%)	4 (9.3%)
61 or Above	8 (100.0%)	0	0	0	0
Total	**60 (48.0%)**	**27 (21.6%)**	**11 (8.8%)**	**10 (8.0%)**	**17 (13.6%)**

Table 8. Language variant(s) used to communicate with paternal grandparents across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Mandarin	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect	No such situation
18 or Below	1 (10.0%)	5 (50.0%)	1 (10.0%)	2 (20.0%)	1 (10.0%)	0
19 ~ 35	21 (77.8%)	4 (14.8%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	0	0
36 ~ 45	29 (78.4%)	1 (2.7%)	3 (8.1%)	1 (2.7%)	3 (8.1%)	0
45 ~ 60	41 (95.3%)	0	1 (2.3%)	0	0	1 (2.3%)
61 or Above	8 (100.0%)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**100 (80.0%)**	**10 (8.0%)**	**6 (4.8%)**	**4 (3.2%)**	**4 (3.2%)**	**1 (0.8%)**

Table 9. Language variant(s) used to communicate with maternal grandparents across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Mandarin	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect	No such situation
18 or Below	1 (10.0%)	6 (60.0%)	0	1 (10.0%)	2 (20.0%)	0
19 ~ 35	15 (55.6%)	4 (14.8%)	5 (18.5%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)	1 (3.7%)
36 ~ 45	27 (73.0%)	2 (5.4%)	5 (13.5%)	3 (8.1%)	0	0
45 ~ 60	41 (95.3%)	0	1 (2.3%)	1 (2.3%)	0	0
61 or Above	8 (100.0%)	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**92 (73.6%)**	**12 (9.6%)**	**11 (8.8%)**	**6 (4.8%)**	**3 (2.4%)**	**1 (0.8%)**

Tables 10 and 11 summarize the language variant(s) the respondents typically use to communicate with other relatives and neighbors, respectively. Similar trends are seen as before. A larger proportion of respondents under 18 use Mandarin (60.0% for both relatives and neighbors), while adult respondents mainly use the Chun'an dialect. Aside from that, a certain percentage of respondents between the ages of 36 and 60 use the surrounding dialect. We also find that the proportion of respondents communicating with other relatives and neighbors using the Chun'an dialect is similar, around 50.0%: Based on the field visit, the reason for this can be attributed to the fact that the majority of the residents of the two surveyed dialect islands live in the same village.

Table 10. Language variant(s) used to communicate with other relatives across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Mandarin	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect
18 or Below	0	1 (10.0%)	6 (60.0%)	1 (10.0%)	2 (20.0%)
19 ~ 35	15 (55.6%)	2 (7.4%)	5 (18.5%)	2 (7.4%)	3 (11.1%)
36 ~ 45	21 (56.8%)	4 (10.8%)	4 (10.8%)	3 (8.1%)	5 (13.5%)
45 ~ 60	23 (53.5%)	11 (25.6%)	1 (2.3%)	6 (14.0%)	2 (4.7%)
61 or Above	5 (67.5%)	2 (25.0%)	0	1 (12.5%)	0
Total	**64 (51.2%)**	**20 (16.0%)**	**16 (12.8%)**	**13 (10.4%)**	**12 (9.6%)**

Table 11. Language variant(s) used to communicate with neighbors across age groups

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Mandarin	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect
18 or Below	0	2 (20.0%)	1 (10.0%)	6 (60.0%)	1 (10.0%)
19 ~ 35	14 (51.9%)	1 (3.7%)	6 (22.2%)	4 (14.8%)	2 (7.4%)
36 ~ 45	18 (48.6%)	11 (29.7%)	5 (13.5%)	2 (5.4%)	1 (2.7%)
45 ~ 60	26 (60.5%)	10 (23.3%)	6 (14.0%)	0	1 (2.3%)
61 or Above	4 (50.0%)	0	4 (50.0%)	0	0
Total	**62 (49.6%)**	**24 (19.2%)**	**22 (17.6%)**	**12 (9.6%)**	**5 (4.0%)**

Relationship between the number of relatives married to locals (within three generations) and language variants used to communicate with relatives/neighbors

The more marriages with locals (from the place of relocation) within three generations, the higher the proportion of respondents who use the surrounding dialect and Mandarin to communicate with their relatives and neighbors, and the lower the proportion of using the Chun'an dialect (see tables 12 and 13).

Calculating the mean number of marriages for each age group, the highest mean was found in the 36-to-45-years-old group (5.216), followed by the 19-to-35 group (4.630) (see figure 2). The peaks of this data are similar to the peak of the self-assessment of the level of the surrounding dialect, which is in age groups in the middle, so that age cannot be excluded as a confounding variable to some extent: it is possible that the number of marriages with locals doesn't affect the respondents' use of language with relatives or neighbors.

Table 12. Distribution of language variant(s) used to communicate with other relatives over marriages with locals

	Chun'an Dialect	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Mandarin	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect
0 to 3	41 (56.2%)	11 (15.1%)	7 (9.6%)	6 (8.2%)	8 (11.1%)
4 to 7	11 (45.8%)	4 (16.7%)	4 (16.7%)	2 (8.3%)	3 (12.5%)
8 to 11	10 (43.5%)	4 (17.4%)	4 (17.4%)	4 (17.4%)	1 (4.3%)
12 to 15	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0
Total	**64 (51.2%)**	**20 (16.0%)**	**16 (12.8%)**	**13 (10.4%)**	**12 (9.6%)**

Table 13. Distribution of language variant(s) used to communicate with neighbors over marriages with locals

	Chun'an Dialect	Surrounding Dialect	Code-switching Between Two Dialects	Mandarin	Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect
0 to 3	41 (56.2%)	9 (12.3%)	13 (17.8%)	7 (9.6%)	3 (4.1%)
4 to 7	12 (50.0%)	6 (25.0%)	3 (12.5%)	2 (8.3%)	1 (4.2%)
8 to 11	8 (34.8%)	7 (30.4%)	5 (21.7%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)
12 to 15	1 (20.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (20.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0
Total	**62 (49.6%)**	**24 (19.2%)**	**22 (17.6%)**	**12 (9.6%)**	**5 (4.0%)**

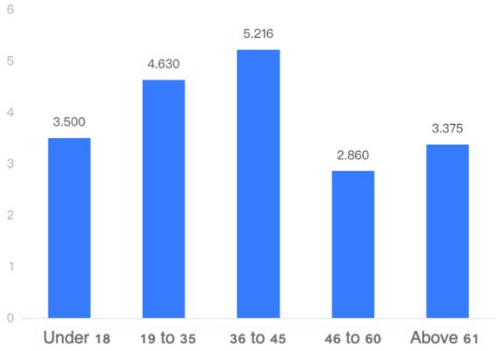

Figure 2. Distribution of average marriages with locals across age groups

Language variants used to communicate at school

In a campus environment, respondents mainly use Mandarin and the surrounding dialect to communicate with peers (86.4%). Among them, the younger the age, the higher the proportion of using Mandarin (25.0% for those 61 years old and above and 80.0% for those 18 years old and below). The proportion using the surrounding dialect is higher among those aged 46-60 and 36-45 (55.8% and 45.9% respectively). While none of the respondents under 18 use only the surrounding dialect at school, 20.0% use a mixture of dialects.

Language use in the communication with teachers shows a similar trend. The younger the respondents were, the higher the percentage of using Mandarin, increasing from 62.5% (61 years old and above) all the way to 100.0% (18 years old or below). The percentage using the surrounding dialect is highest for those 36-45 years old: 18.9%.

Language variants used to communicate with strangers

When communicating with strangers, the surveyed immigrants mainly use Mandarin, followed by the surrounding dialect, while the specific distribution depends on the perceived formality of the occasion (see table 14): the more formal the occasion is, the higher the proportion of interviewees who use Mandarin or code-switch between Mandarin and dialects, and the lower the proportion of those who use the surrounding dialect or code-switch between the two dialects. Only one or two respondents use the Chun'an dialect in each situation, which is a very low occurrence.

Table 14. Proportion of variant use or code-switching while communicating with different types of strangers

	Mandarin	**Code-switching Between Mandarin and Another Dialect**	**Surrounding Dialect**	**Code-switching Between Two Dialects**
Governmental Agency Clerks	87 (69.6%)	18 (14.4%)	12 (9.6%)	6 (4.8%)
Medical Personnel	82 (65.6%)	17 (13.6%)	17 (13.6%)	9 (7.2%)
Hotel or Restaurant Attendants	78 (62.4%)	17 (13.6%)	17 (13.6%)	10 (8.0%)
Cab Drivers	68 (54.4)	15 (12.0%)	31 (24.8%)	11 (8.8%)
Kiosk Vendors	39 (31.2%)	14 (11.2%)	58 (46.4%)	13 (10.4%)

Expectedly, the younger the respondent, the more likely they are to use Mandarin to communicate with strangers in different situations: the proportion of underage respondents choosing Mandarin for these questions ranges from 80.0% to 100.0%. Respondents who choose the surrounding dialect are mainly in the age groups 36-to-45 and 46-to-60.

Language Attitude

Evaluations of the language variants

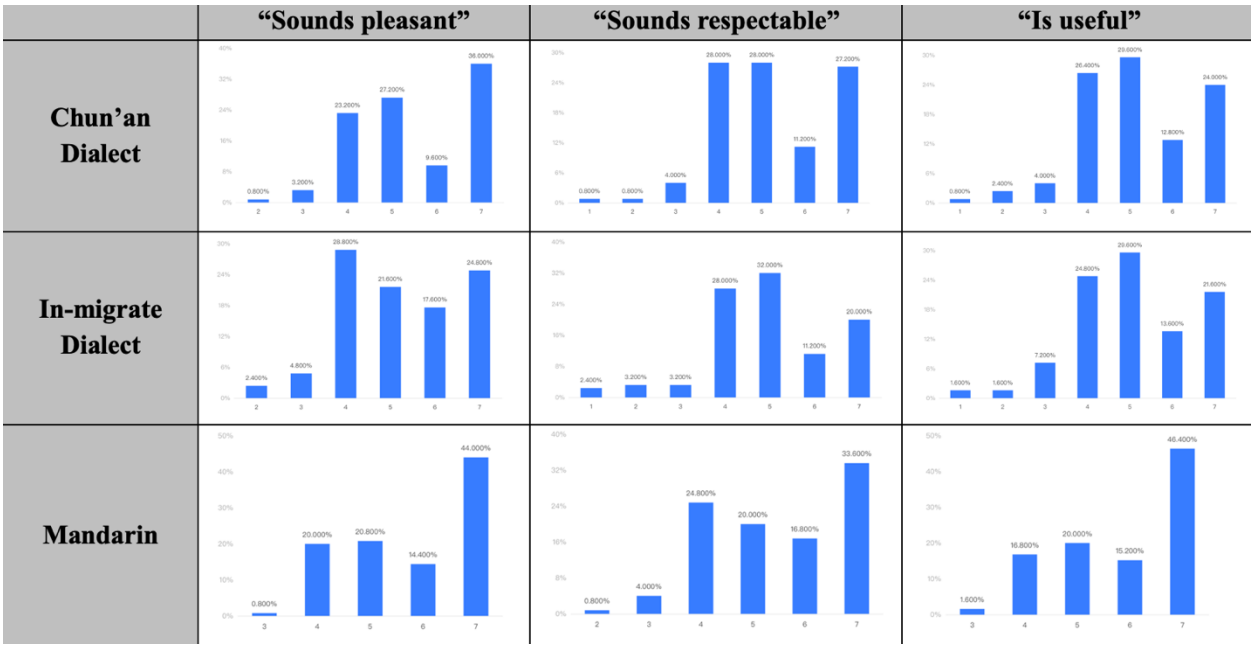

Figure 3. Distributions of 7-point scale evaluations of the language variants

The distributions of respondents' ratings of the three language variants based on the three adjectives are summarized in figure 3. All distributions are skewed to the left. The higher the rating of the variant, the more the skewness. Two-by-two comparisons of the average scores for the language variants reveal that: for each adjective, Mandarin on average has the highest score, followed by the Chun'an dialect, and finally the surrounding dialect. However, there is no significant difference in the respondents' scores for "is useful" between the two dialects (see table 15).

Table 15. Significance levels of t-tests of differences of mean evaluations of the language variants

	"Sounds pleasant"	"Sounds respectable"	"Is useful"
Chun'an Dialect > Surrounding Dialect	***p* = 0.0494 < 0.05**	***p* = 0.657 < 0.10**	*p* = 0.291
Mandarin > Chun'an Dialect	***p* = 0.0268 < 0.05**	***p* = 0.072 < 0.10**	***p* = 0.000 < 0.01**
Mandarin > Surrounding Dialect	***p* = 0.000 < 0.01**	***p* = 0.002 < 0.01**	***p* = 0.000 < 0.01**

SPSS was used to calculate the correlation between the age of each respondent and the scores given to the three adjectives of the three language variants. We observed weak correlations, and no significant correlations were found ($p > 0.10$).

By quantifying the respondent's highest education level with their corresponding estimated years of school, we find that the respondent's education level is weakly and negatively correlated with the evaluation "the Chun'an dialect is useful" ($r = -0.156$, $\mathbf{p = 0.083 < 0.10}$), weakly and negatively correlated with the evaluation of "Mandarin sounds respectable" ($r = -0.15$, $\mathbf{p = 0.095 < 0.10}$).

In addition to this, this study looks at the respondents' post-migratory connection to Chun'an to find correlations. Interestingly, the number of times the respondent visits Qiandao Lake is weakly and positively associated with their evaluations of the surrounding dialect as "respectable" and "useful" ($r = 0.162$, $\boldsymbol{p = 0.071 < 0.10}$ and $r = 0.203$, $\boldsymbol{p = 0.023 < 0.05}$, respectively).

Since only a small number of people chose "other" for the questions "Where do you feel most attached to?" and "Where do the people you interact the most with live?"—1 (0.8%) and 8 (6.4%), respectively—the correlation test between the responses to these two questions and the evaluative scores only considered the choices of the place of relocation or "Chun'an". As expected, respondents who are most attached to the area of relocation and have more interactions with the locals tend to give higher scores to "the surrounding dialect sounds pleasant" (significance $\boldsymbol{p = 0.071 < 0.10}$ and $\boldsymbol{p = 0.025 < 0.05}$, respectively); however, no other correlations were found.

Willingness to pass the dialects down

Most of the respondents indicate that they "will teach or encourage the next generation to learn" both dialects, while the remaining respondents mainly choose "no opinion" (see table 16).

Table 16. Respondents' will to pass the dialects down

	Chun'an Dialect	**Surrounding Dialect**
"Yes"	101 (80.8%)	93 (74.4%)
"No opinion"	20 (16.0%)	26 (20.8%)
"No"	4 (3.2%)	6 (4.8%)

The percentage of respondents who choose "no opinion" increases as age decreases: 50.0% of the respondents under 18 choose "no opinion" for both questions, while 40.0% of them choose "yes" for both questions.

Identification with Chun'an

The questionnaire investigated the respondents' connection and identification with Chun'an or the place of relocation through different questions: the place of strongest attachment, the location of people with whom they interact the most, attitude towards customs of the place of migration, and the number of times as well as the reasons for visiting Chun'an.

First, 100% of the respondents aged 61 and above are more emotionally attached to Chun'an, and this proportion roughly decreases as age decreases. Most of those aged 60 or below are more attached to their place relocation (see table 17).

Table 17. Location of strongest attachment across age groups

	Chun'an	**Place of Relocation**	**Other**
18 or Below	2 (20.0%)	7 (70.0%)	1 (10.0%)
19 ~ 35	2 (7.4%)	25 (92.6%)	0
36 ~ 45	7 (18.9%)	30 (81.1%)	0
45 ~ 60	17 (39.5%)	26 (60.5%)	0
61 or Above	8 (100.0%)	0	0
Total	**36 (28.8%)**	**88 (68.8%)**	**1 (0.8%)**

Related to this is the location of people with whom the respondents mainly communicate. The trend here is the same, but with a higher percentage of respondents choosing their place of relocation or other places instead of Chun'an or their dialect island. For respondents aged 61 years or older, immigrants or their descendants are still the people they mainly interact with (62.5%). For those under 60, 70-80% interacted most with people from their place or relocation; the percentage who interact the most with immigrants and locals respectively decreases and increases.

When asked about attitudes towards local wedding, funeral, and festival customs, the vast majority of respondents show tolerance (partially or completely) (87.2%, 87.2%, and 96.0% respectively). Overall, respondents are more accepting of festival customs (e.g., Chinese New Year, Mid-Autumn Festival, Dragon Boat Festival, etc.), and the younger the age group, the greater the proportion of choosing to "completely accept" each custom.

Finally, we found a weak positive correlation between respondents' age and the number of times they have been to Chun'an ($r = 0.23$, $\boldsymbol{p = 0.010 \leq 0.01}$). The main purpose of going to Chun'an also varies somewhat by age: 100.0% of respondents over 61 years old go to visit relatives; a certain percentage of respondents between 19 and 35 years old choose to "visit relatives and travel", and the percentage increases with decreasing age (37.2% of those aged 46 to 60, 37.8% of those aged 36 to 45, and 55.6% of those aged 19 to 35); half of the respondents under 18 have never been to Chun'an.

Linguistic Habits on Short Video Applications

Viewing and publishing habits

90.4% of the respondents use short video software (mostly *Douyin* or *Kuaishou*) regularly, of which 77.6% watch at least once a day, and 41.6% watch four times a day or more. 81.6% out of all respondents have watched short videos in a Chinese dialect before. About half (51.2%) of the respondents use short video software to post videos, although most use Mandarin (87.5%). Only 5 of them use either dialect to post videos.

Interest in dialect short videos

Respondents express moderate interest in short videos in both dialects (the Chun'an dialect and the surrounding dialect), although overall there is more interest in short videos in the Chun'an dialect. There is also a larger number of respondents who respond that they have watched no interest in the short videos in the surrounding dialect (see table 18).

Table 18. Distribution of the degree of interest in short videos in the two dialects

	Chun'an Dialect	**Surrounding Dialect**
"Very Interested"	44 (38.6%)	20 (16.8%)
"Slightly Interested"	27 (23.7%)	31 (26.1%)
"No Opinion"	34 (29.8%)	48 (40.3%)
"Not Interested"	9 (7.9%)	17 (14.3%)
"Completely Uninterested"	0	3 (2.5%)

Linguistic habits on short video applications across ages

The percentage of respondents who watch short videos increases slightly as the age group decreases. However due to the small size of the respondents aged 61 and above, a significance test cannot be conducted. The proportion of

respondents aged 61 and above who watch short videos regularly is the lowest, at 62.5%, while the proportion for all other age groups is above 85%.

Except for 25.0% of the respondents over 61 years old who post short videos, the proportions of all other age groups are all around 50.0%, decreasing as the age group decreases to some extent.

Most of the respondents who watch short videos express interest or neutrality in short videos in the Chun'an dialect (92.1%), with the proportion of choosing "very interested" decreasing as age decreases, and the proportion of "no opinion" or "not interested" increasing as age decreases. 55.6% of the respondents under 18 made the choice of "no opinion" (see table 19).

Table 19. Interest in short videos in the Chun'an dialect across age groups

	"Completely Uninterested"	**"Not Interested"**	**"No Opinion"**	**"Slightly Interested"**	**"Very Interested"**
18 or Below	0	1 (11.1%)	5 (55.6%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (11.1%)
19 ~ 35	0	4 (16.7%)	7 (29.2%)	7 (29.2%)	6 (25.0%)
36 ~ 45	0	1 (2.9%)	11 (31.4%)	9 (25.7%)	14 (40.0%)
45 ~ 60	0	3 (7.7%)	11 (28.2%)	7 (17.9%)	18 (46.2%)
61 or Above	0	0	0	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
Total	**0**	**9 (7.89%)**	**34 (29.8%)**	**27 (23.7%)**	**44 (38.6%)**

Most of the respondents who watch short videos indicate that they are either "slightly interested" or have "no opinion" about short videos in the surrounding dialect, with the latter predominating. Except for those under 18, the younger the age group, the more likely the respondents are to choose "very interested" or "no opinion", and the less likely they are to choose "slightly interested". Respondents under 18 mainly chose "no opinion" (60.0%) and "slightly interested" (30.0%) (see Table 20).

Table 20. Interest in short videos in the surrounding dialect across age groups

	"Completely Uninterested"	**"Not Interested"**	**"No Opinion"**	**"Slightly Interested"**	**"Very interested"**
18 or Below	0	0	6 (66.7%)	3 (33.3%)	0
19 ~ 35	1 (3.8%)	5 (19.2%)	8 (30.8%)	7 (27.0%)	5 (19.2%)
36 ~ 45	0	4 (11.1%)	16 (44.4%)	9 (25.0%)	7 (19.4%)
45 ~ 60	2 (4.9%)	6 (14.6%)	17 (41.5%)	9 (22.0%)	7 (17.1%)
61 or Above	0	2 (28.6%)	1 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	1 (14.3%)
Total	**3 (2.52%)**	**17 (14.3%)**	**48 (40.3%)**	**31 (26.1%)**	**20 (16.8%)**

The vast majority of respondents who post short videos use Mandarin. Those who use dialects are older: the five respondents who indicate that they use the Chun'an dialect to post videos are all from the 46-to-60-year-old group, while the three who use the surrounding dialect are all over 36 years old.

Discussion

Trilingual Proficiency and Acquisition

In the two dialect islands investigated in this study, the prevalence of Mandarin is high and increasing; although most immigrants speak and pass on both dialects, the respondents' ability to use both dialects and the value placed upon them by their families tend to decrease with age.

First, the proportion of respondents who can fully understand or speak Mandarin is the highest among the three language variants (around 80% or more). Aside from one outlier, all consider themselves to be at least "mostly able" to understand or use Mandarin. Standardized language is highly used and permeates into every aspect of the life of the youngest respondents. On the one hand, we learned from the field visits that the first immigrants needed to communicate with locals in their place of relocation by using Mandarin as a lingua franca; on the other hand, the popularization of the nine-year compulsory education (all respondents aged 35 and below has already been educated in at least a (vocational) high school, or are receiving nine-year compulsory education) and the increase in the use of Mandarin in schools (it replaces dialects to become the primary means of communication in schools) have also facilitated the Mandarin proficiency of immigrant descendants. In addition, the trend of an increase in the percentage of home-learned Mandarin (50.0%) reflects the importance more families place on Mandarin education: this is also related to increasing levels of education each generation of parents is receiving. It can be inferred that both the factors of family and school contribute to the gradual increase in the proportion of Chun'an immigrants who learned Mandarin before the age of 6 as their mother tongue to a high percentage of 70.0%.

As age decreases, there is a trend of increasing and then decreasing ability in the surrounding dialects. This can be attributed to the fact that most of the oldest respondents had experienced the process of migration and acquired the surrounding dialect later in their lives while being more attached to Chun'an. Therefore, they are not as proficient in the use of the surrounding dialect as their descendants born in the dialect island.

The initially increasing proficiency in the surrounding dialect that outperformed that in the Chun'an dialect (for respondents younger than 35), as well as the high proportion of respondents who have learned it in non-domestic contexts, suggest that the surrounding dialect is important for local life. However, it is still inevitably being replaced by Mandarin: a much larger proportion of young immigrants do not speak either dialect; or even if they did, they tended to acquire the surrounding dialect at an older age.

Regression tests show that the correlation between Chun'an proficiency and the age of the respondents is the highest among all three variants: speaking and listening proficiency strictly decreases in younger ages, and the gap between non-adult and adult respondents is larger than the gap between all other age groups, with an average of "can use basic expressions". This can be attributed to the limited environments of acquiring the Chun'an dialect—through family. Younger respondents with better-educated parents tend to acquire Mandarin or the surrounding dialect first. So, Chun'an immigrants are acquiring their indigenous dialect at an older age and are becoming less proficient in it.

Occasions of Use and Triglossia

The surveyed use of the three language variants continues to illustrate the aforementioned patterns. The use of the Chun'an dialect is basically limited to communication with family, relatives, and neighbors (migrants and descendants often live together in one village) and begins to diminish in younger generations while being replaced by Mandarin. Although most immigrants and their descendants have some competence in the surrounding dialect and a small percentage use it to communicate with relatives and neighbors, this percentage is highest among the middle-aged groups and is not as high as Mandarin. We also hypothesize that marriages of a family member to a local lead to increased use of the surrounding dialect and Mandarin and a decreased use of the Chun'an dialect, though we cannot ignore the effect of a confounding variable.

In communication outside the dialect island, most respondents only use the surrounding dialect or Mandarin, and the proportion of the two is related to the perceived formality of the scene; for example, most respondents use Mandarin to communicate with a teacher, while the proportion of those who use Mandarin to communicate with a vendor in a kiosk is lower. In any case, the use of Mandarin gradually increases in the younger generations while the opposite occurs in the use of the surrounding dialect. Respondents under 18 basically use Mandarin for communication outside the dialect island.

Overall, triglossia, to a certain extent, is reflected in the dialect island formed by Xin'anjiang migrants. In this case, Mandarin is the H variant ("high-level variant") and the dialects act as the L variant ("low-level variant"); between the dialects, we can designate the surrounding dialect out of the island as the H variant and Chun'an dialect as the L variant. According to the criteria for diglossia/triglossia quoted at the beginning of this paper, the H variant Mandarin satisfies, while the lower H variant (the surrounding dialect) half satisfies the following conditions:

(2) All three languages are variants of Chinese;
(3) Mandarin and the surrounding dialect are generally acquired by immigrants or their descendants later in life (mainly after the age of 6, either in school or through interaction with locals);
(4) Mandarin is the "carrier of written literature", as most written and online texts are written in Mandarin; i
(5) Mandarin is highly respected, with the highest subjective scores among all respondents;
(6) Communication outside of the dialect island must be done in the two different levels of H-variants: the more formal the situation, the more likely it is to be in Mandarin.

However, triglossia shows a tendency to diminish from one generation to the next. The younger the respondents, the more likely they are to have acquired the two H variants before education, as families integrate into the local area through marriage and social connections, etc., and view education more importantly. In the dialect island, language use is no longer limited to the L variant (the Chun'an dialect), but there is a mixture of all three variants and a shift towards Mandarin.

Language Attitude and Immigrant Identity

On a seven-point scale of whether the three language variants each “sounds pleasant”, “sounds powerful” and “ is useful”, all the ratings show a pattern of Mandarin > Chun’an dialect > Surrounding dialect. The distributions of all the ratings are left-skewed, and the degree of left-skewedness is especially large for Putonghua: a large percentage of respondents gave full scores. This shows that Mandarin has overt prestige in the perception of Chun’an immigrants, due to its status as the standard language and national lingua franca (Holmes, 2013). Chun'an, on the other hand, has covert prestige because, although it scores lower than Mandarin, it is still widely spoken on the island, is the first language variant learned by most of the respondents, and has a higher score than the surrounding dialect. Unlike the previous section, these scores do not correlate strongly with age or education but do correlate with the place where the respondent is most attached to, and where the people they interact with most belong.

Most of the respondents are willing to encourage or teach their offspring to learn the Chun’an dialect, while the majority of the respondents under 18 have “no opinion”. The proportion of respondents who are more attached to the local community (where they relocated to), who mainly communicate with locals, and who fully accept local customs all increase with age, while the number of visits to relatives in Chun'an decreases. The decline in the ability to use Chun'an dialect, the decrease in the use of the language, and the “indifferent” attitude of the youngest respondents towards the transmission of the language also reflect the gradual integration of Chun’an immigrants into their place of relocation or even places they further move to, as well as a weakening sense of identity towards Chun'an.

Short Video Habits

Most of the respondents have the habit of watching short videos at a high frequency and half of the post videos as well. However, the short videos watched and posted are mainly in Mandarin. Although the interest in dialect videos

decreases with age, the respondents mainly have “no opinion”, and there is no lack of people who are “slightly interested”.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, we investigated two dialect islands formed after immigration due to the Xin'anjiang Reservoir construction. We’ve found that the immigrants and their descendants’ ability to use the Chun'an dialect decreases with age; their ability to use the surrounding dialect tends to increase and then decrease as age decreases. Through analyses of the respondents’ ability to use the dialects, their age of acquisition, their language use across occasions, and their language attitudes, both dialects are replaced by Mandarin. The dialect island is triglossic, but the phenomenon has begun to recede as Mandarin penetrates into every aspect of these immigrants’ daily lives. As the immigrants’ interaction with original Chun'an residents decreases and their sense of identity diminishes, their willingness to pass on the dialect also decreases. Most of the respondents’ subjective attitudes and sense of identity toward the dialect show Mandarin being stronger than the Chun'an dialect and stronger than the surrounding dialect.

Summarizing the above, we can predict that the triglossic phenomenon of the dialect island caused by the Xin'anjiang Reservoir will continue for quite a long time, but as the oldest generation passes away, as the popularization of Mandarin continues, and as the younger generation has a weaker sense of identity to Chun’an, the Chun'an Dialect Island is facing the crisis of extinction.

Dialects carry the genes of regional culture. Once this cultural heritage, which has been passed down for thousands of years, dies out, Chinese culture also faces losses. Although scholars are actively researching, recording, and preserving dialects, the best result is of course that the heritage is passed down by living people. Fortunately, the rapid development of new media on the Internet has given dialects new opportunities for development (Li, 2022).

In view of the fact that more than half of the respondents in this survey expressed interest in and demand for short videos of the two dialects, and only a minority of respondents explicitly expressed disinterest, the author believes that short videos, as a major form of entertainment and social media for the general public, especially for teenagers, can be used for dialect preservation and to promote multilingualism in Mandarin and dialects. Short dialect videos can widely disseminate dialects, render dialect learning more interesting, and become an important carrier of local histories and cultures, which can help to enhance “people's sense of identity with their region and its culture”.

Of course, at the level of concrete practice, there are still some difficulties (Li, 2022):

First, the mainstream short video platforms mainly promote more familiar dialects such as Cantonese, Shanghainese, the Min’an dialects, Sichuanese, and Northeastern dialects, while less influential dialects are difficult to grab attention. There is a need to strengthen the encouragement or promotion of short videos based on more subdivided geographic regions.

Secondly, as Li points out, most short video producers are non-professional and “act on their own initiative based on hobbies and interests”, requiring professional organizations to create higher quality content to be more widely and effectively disseminated.

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