

## Dialect Trends Among Different Age Groups

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**Abstract:** Dialect is a living fossil of regional history and culture, and also an important material for us to study language variation and change. Regional dialect is a microcosm of regional culture. The change of dialect can help us understand the change of cultural factors. China's unique linguistic conditions and geographical features provide a broad space for dialect research. As a focus of sociolinguistics, the contact between regional dialects and mandarin has attracted the attention of Chinese scholars. The origin and development of the study of language variation are of profound significance to sociolinguistics and the study of Chinese dialects. Through the "ongoing changes" to investigate the evolution of dialect changes. The study of this paper shows that in the process of contact with mandarin, dialects in different regions have changed at three levels: on the phonetic level, the frequency of using initials and finals of dialects in different ages decreases with age, and the degree of borrowing mandarin pronunciation decreases with age. On the vocabulary level, the recognition rate and frequency of dialect words decrease with age, and the borrowing of words from mandarin is more obvious with age. On the grammatical level, the use of dialect characteristic grammatical structure decreases with age.

### 1. Introduction

Languages in different regions are constantly developing, and dialects in different regions are naturally in the midst of this development wave [1]. In more than half a century, especially in the last two decades, with the great prosperity and development of China's economy and society, the popularity and increasing influence of modern media such as TV and Internet, dialects are showing a more rapid momentum of development and change [2]. At the same time, such changes may take on their own characteristics due to the time and place being out of sync, but the commonality is also obvious, that is, they are catching up with the common language -- mandarin. In this context of dialect development, it is necessary to study the trend of language development and change by studying the way, speed and characteristics of different age groups approaching mandarin [3].

In previous studies, for example, in the 1940s, some domestic scholars conducted several systematic surveys on dialects in kunming region [4]. It is pointed out that after 70 years of development, the dialect in kunming area has experienced more or less changes along with the development of kunming's social economy. At the same time, this scholar also pointed out that the language of all provincial cities lacks a commonality that is easy to find. Therefore, the larger the city is, the less pure the local language is [5]. As the provincial capital of a metropolis is the central network of cultural, economic, political and transportation resources of several regions, it is the convergence of people in various regions to seek the adaptation of expressing their feelings in communication, so naturally there are places for mutual accommodation [6-7]. And scholars pointed out that the change of the dialect and history may be expressed by the age difference between language users, it is in this sense, so to speak, for a particular dialect, old man using dialects condition can reflect the history, the status of the young people use the dialect can reflect the status quo, the differences reflect what was happening and had [8].

In terms of research methods, this paper attempts to combine sociolinguistics with dialectology, so as to further reveal the changes of dialects in groups of different ages, and analyze the effects and factors of social factors and internal language factors on the change trend of dialects [9-10]. In order to verify the differences in dialect use among different age groups, this paper selected survey objects from 20 to 80 years old and other age stages for comparison. The reason why the difference

in the selection of survey objects is 60 years old is that the big difference in age is conducive to the conclusion of the real change trend and the ongoing change. When sorting out the survey results, this paper selected verbs, nouns and adjectives for variation study according to the survey manual of Chinese dialect vocabulary. SPSS 8.5 software was used for quantitative analysis of these variables, and the characteristics and changing trends of dialect use in different age groups were obtained.

## **2.Method**

### **2.1 Theoretical Basis**

#### **2.1.1 Language Contact Theory**

Language contact refers to the phenomenon that different ethnic groups and social groups change with the interaction of the languages they use due to the communication and contact in social and economic life. China is a country where the common language of Chinese coexists with various languages. The study of language contact plays an important role in contemporary sociolinguistics. Understanding language contact can help us fully understand the causes of language variation and change and deepen our understanding of the process of language variation and change.

#### **2.1.2 Dialect Variation Theory**

William Labov, an outstanding American linguist, is generally regarded as the founder of dialect variation theory and change research. Since the 1960s, with the rise and development of sociolinguistics, a new sociolinguistic theory -- dialect variation and change theory has gradually taken shape. This theory regards the language system as an ordered heterogeneous body. It holds that the heterogeneous dialects are not chaotic but regular. Among them, variability is one of its basic characteristics. Specific language variation is a language variable. If a language unit has some different representations, then this abstract language unit is a language variable. And those different concrete representations are language variants. Sociolinguists have found that the diachronic variation of language is generated and reflected in the synchronic variation of dialects through the study of language variation. For this reason, the academic community has carried out a large number of studies on the "ongoing language changes", so that we can more directly see the process of language changes, and better understand the trend of dialect changes. Therefore, based on this theory, this paper will investigate the variability and the changing trend of dialect pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar in different age groups.

## **2.2 Research Methods**

In this study, the author used the method of field survey and stratified sampling to divide the respondents into eight age groups: below 20 years old, 20-30 years old, 30-40 years old, 40-50 years old, 50-60 years old, 60-70 years old, 70-80 years old and over 80 years old. Simple sampling was carried out on the basis of stratified sampling. SPSS 8.5 software was used to conduct quantitative analysis on the survey subjects of different ages according to the appropriate sample size. In the improbability sampling section, we selected judgment sampling and snowball sampling. Judgment sampling, also known as intentional sampling, is a method by which researchers select and determine research objects according to research objectives and their own subjective analysis.

In the process of research, we learned that around the dialect has a "folk four cavity 18", in view of this, this article in the process of the research area of study on regional division, as represented by Lv Cheng words the first disc area, represented by river Yang words the second section, the third area represented by henan dialect, represented by southern min in the fourth section, etc. Due to the huge difference in regional characteristics between regions, this paper starts with a few people in the whole population, and then carries out a survey on the trend of dialect changes, and then extends the survey objects to the relatives and friends of these people through the survey results of this part, so as to obtain a more objective trend of dialect changes.

### 3.Experiment

#### 3.1 Experimental Equipment

The necessary equipment to carry out the investigation in this paper includes recording pen and laptop, so the experimental equipment in this study is sony-ms612 recording pen and thinkpad-e445 laptop.

#### 3.2 Experimental Subjects

Objective selection of experimental objects is an important prerequisite for objective and accurate experimental results. For this reason, this paper sticks to the research topic and takes the age level of the experimental subjects as the basic index, and ensures that the subjects at each age stage have clear logical thinking and strong expression ability. Specifically, the number of respondents in this paper is 15 in each age stage, and they come from different sample areas.

#### 3.3 Experimental Environment

Foreign linguists have pointed out that in different language testing environments, the objectivity and impartiality of test results will be affected due to the different degree of attention of the tested objects. The more formal the test environment, the more focused and verbal the subjects were. In pursuit of the fairness of the research results, this study designed the context of sample test collection, namely, the context of reading the short passage, the context of reading the list, the context of formal conversation and the context of informal conversation. Among them, the informal conversation context is formed by the random conversation between the testee and the testee before the test.

### 4. Discuss

#### 4.1 Analysis of Experimental Results

Will seven dialect variables associated with age, the use of mathematical statistical methods and the subjects of all age groups in the percentage of dialect with putonghua reflects a basic rule: the people of different age groups in the percentage of the dialect to mandarin have obvious difference, the smaller the age group, the higher the percentage, the less deviation dialect, the age, the lower the percentage, the greater the distance between the closer mandarin. The percentage of people of different age groups in the seven square sound characteristics close to mandarin is shown in table 1 below. As can be seen from the table, in the context of vocabulary test and reading short passages, a high percentage of dialects is close to the pronunciation of mandarin, which indicates that people in different regions generally use more mandarin pronunciation in formal occasions than dialects. On the informal occasions, more dialects are used, while mandarin is less.

Table 1. The Percentage of Groups of Different Age Groups with 7 Square Sound Characteristics Close to Mandarin

	Under 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	More than 80
Sound of the initial r	55	55	60	20	15	10	5	5
U dielectric falls off	85	80	85	65	50	35	20	15
Initial sound of zh	35	25	25	10	20	20	20	20
Initial sound of ch	25	20	25	25	20	5	5	5
Initial sound of sh	50	40	35	30	25	20	20	10
Pronunciation of the final o	15	10	15	15	10	10	5	5
Tone of a flat voice	85	70	60	45	40	25	20	5

\*Data in the table is derived from the author's survey data

## 4.2 Overall Trend of Dialect Changes

According to the data of SPSS 8.5 statistical results and the characteristics of the actual changes in regional dialects, on this basis we compiled the questionnaire, the questionnaire includes three parts: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, including vocabulary, 282, in order to comparing the usage of dialect words in each age stage, which will be under the age of 20, 20-30 as youth, will be 30 to 40, 40-50, 50 to 60 years old as middle-aged, will be over 60 induction for the elderly, the questionnaire survey results can be divided into 5 kinds of circumstances, The combing statistics of the results are shown in figure 1 below (where A= youth, B= middle age, C= old age). First, in terms of the choice of words to use, the present situation of youth, middle age and old age is exactly the same. Second, youth, middle age, the use of the status quo is completely different, such as: the elderly said pancreatic powder, middle-aged said soap powder, young people said laundry powder; Third, old people are the same as middle-aged people, but different from young people; Fourth, middle age is the same as youth, but different from old people; Fifthly, old age is the same as youth, but different from middle age. Therefore, it can be seen that in the gap between youth and old age in recent decades, about one-third of the old words are dying out or even dying out, which is another manifestation of the trend that regional dialects are rapidly becoming closer to mandarin.

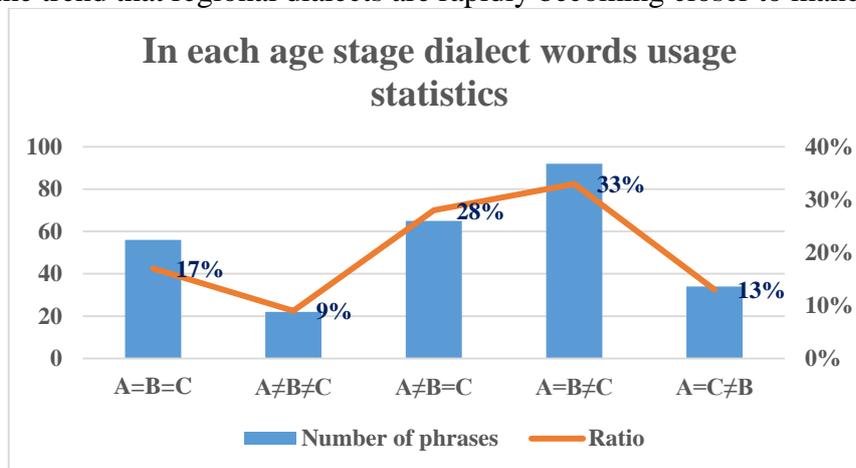


Figure 1. Statistics on the Use of Dialect Words in Different Age Groups

## 5. Conclusion

Based on a systematic survey of dialect usage among different age groups, the results show that, at the lexical level, the recognition rate and usage frequency of dialect words decrease with age. On the grammatical level, the use of dialect characteristic grammatical structure decreases with age. The result is a mixed picture. On the one hand, it shows that the utilization rate of mandarin has increased significantly among the new generation of Chinese youth. On the other hand, it also indicates that dialects in different regions are gradually losing their unique charm which has existed for several years.

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