

Dilemma of Haikou Dialect Promotion and Solutions in New Media Context

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Abstract. It is well-known that the variety of language is equally significant with the biodiversity. The promotion of Haikou dialect has important implications to maintaining the diversity of language in Hainan province. However, as time goes by, its promotion has gradually become problematic. This paper will summarize and discuss the current situation of Haikou dialect promotion and seek for solutions in the new media context.

The constant development of Mandarin has significantly challenged Haikou dialect. Many young locals have rarely used this dialect in daily life, which is extremely harmful to its advancement and expansion within generations. Although the development of Internet and new media platforms can bring opportunities for the spread of Haikou dialect, its current promotion in the new media platform has not been processed ideally. For example, till September 30th, 2019, the author's search for "Haikou dialect" as a key word in the WeChat emojis is fruitless, and the search for "Hainan dialect" as a key word has only nine results. However, with "Cantonese" as the keyword search, 142 items are available. This paper will attempt to collect the current situations of the spread of Haikou dialect, sort out the dilemma of Haikou dialect promotion, and tend to provide the countermeasures to promote Haikou dialect in the new media background.

Promotion Dilemma of Haikou Dialect

Lack of Promotion Texts. First of all, there are few professional references of introducing the Haikou dialect systematically. In 1998, the Association of Chinese Linguistics of Hainan Province was founded and many scholars at that time called for enhancing the development of Hainan language resources and conducting serious investigations and research of Hainan dialect. However, due to the lack of professional talents in the investigation team, the results of dialect research are still inadequate. Hainan dialect with a population of more than 60,000, is facing the same marginalization situation as Haikou dialect. This phenomenon is very common among all kinds of dialects in Hainan. As the capital city of Hainan province, the spread of Haikou dialect is even more urgent. However, with the construction of Hainan Free Trade Zone (Port), an increasing number of populations have flown in Hainan Province. The popularity of the Internet, television and radio has also turned it more and more difficult for Haikou dialect to maintain its originality.

Moreover, the author searched the keyword "Haikou dialect" in CNKI and only 21 related research results came up. Among these references, the related papers on *Haikou Dialect Pronunciation Research*, a research project by Hainan Social Sciences Federation in 2005, took half proportion of the total. Currently, *Haikou Dialect Dictionary*, edited and published by Rong Li in 1996, has specifically recorded the index of Haikou dialect semantics and the index of stroke at the beginning of the entry. Since then, there has been no updates of the index of Haikou dialect.

Impediment to Promotion within Generations. On February 6th, 1956, the State Council issued the *Indications on the Promotion of Mandarin*. Mandarin was then vigorously promoted throughout the country. Since 1998, the third week of September each year has also been set up as "Mandarin Publicity Week for the Promotion in China". Mandarin, as a national common language among all ethnic groups in China, has owned an absolutely important position in the language system of our country. According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, by September 2019, the popularization rate of Mandarin was close to 80% nationwide, and the proportion of literate people using standard Chinese characters was more than 95%. Because of the popularity of Mandarin standards, the local

young residents have generally used it widely, and Mandarin is the only official language. There are no primary and secondary schools or other educational institutions in Haikou to carry out Haikou dialect-related educational courses. Family is the most traditional place to use dialect and the strongest emotional unit of dialect. It has far-reaching significance for the preservation and inheritance of dialect. ① However, due to the acceleration of population flow and the increase of local exchanges, the coincidence level between Haikou dialect cultural locations and the geographical area is declining, and the cultural spots of Haikou dialect are shrinking. The change of regional environment and family environment will affect the dialect transmission, which will lead to the impediment of transmission within generations of the dialect.

Lack of Regional Attentions. The local government's attitude towards Haikou dialect will directly or indirectly affect Haikou dialect which is currently in a disadvantaged position. According to a study of Hainan's language policy, due to various historical and practical reasons, as an indispensable carrier of Hainan's cultural diversity, Hainan dialects have shown a constant trend of downhill. In 2009, Hainan Television Program filmed and released "A Family in Hainan" as a sitcom with Hainan local actors as the main cast and Haikou dialect as the main language. The play has reached a very high audience popularity, but unfortunately, for various reasons, the sitcom has long been suspended. For example, there are other kinds of Haikou dialect shows, such as Zhong Xie's Haikou dialect version of "Story China" in 1980s, and "Ya Nuo Da Di" in 2007, which have also been suspended. These phenomena have reflected from different aspects the defects in the protection and promotion of local languages in Hainan province, and the lack of long-term visions of cultural construction in understanding the diversity of dialects.

In order to implement the *13th Five-Year Plan for the Development of the National Language and Writing Career*, Hainan launched the "National Project for the Popularization of Common Languages and Writings" in 2018. Based on the actual situation of Hainan province, the *implementation plan of Hainan Province's Project to Promote the Popularization of National Common Languages and Characters* was published to ensure that by 2020 (the overall goal is to ensure that by 2020), the national common language and characters will be basically popularized throughout the province, with the average popularization rate of Mandarin in the province reaching more than 82%. As a dialect island, Hainan should focus on the inheritance and development of Haikou dialect while popularizing Mandarin. Now many local residents are not able to speak Haikou dialect anymore. Any culture has its own unique national and local characteristics and attracts the world's attention with its unique charm. Therefore, the saying of "political pluralism, economic integration and cultural localization" is spread. Language is one of the most important carriers of culture. As the capital city of Hainan, Haikou's cultural characteristics are mainly carried in Haikou dialect. If Haikou dialect is abandoned, it also means leaving Haikou culture behind.

Promotion Solutions of Haikou Dialect in New Media Background

Agreed Text Output. The pronunciation of Haikou dialect is slightly different between regions of Haikou. Although some scholars have published the *Haikou Dialect Dictionary*, the influence of the dictionary is not extensive enough. In the process of investigating the current situation of the Haikou dialect promotion under the new media environment, it is found that the homophonic expression of Haikou dialect in the new media platform has different ways of pronunciations according to the different subjects of promotion. For example, in the expression pack column of the WeChat platform, the same expression "have meals", some expression pack designers use "jia-mie-la", some use "jia-mi-la", and some use "jia-mo" to express. There are many different homophonic expressions of the same meaning in Haikou dialect, which will undoubtedly confuse the general audiences without a deep understanding of Haikou dialect. Therefore, it is suggested that relevant dialect scholars can involve the homonyms of Haikou dialect expressed in Chinese on the basis of *Haikou Dialect Dictionary*. Unified output of Haikou dialect texts will help other non-native language users to better understand the pronunciation and meaning of the local language.

Featured Products Specially Made for Dialects. Hainan has become a famous tourist spot inside and outside China for its breathtaking sea, beach, tropical rainforest and natural ecological environment. In 2010, the State Council issued "Some Opinions of the State Council on Promoting the Construction and Development of Hainan International Tourism

Island", which formally put the construction of Hainan International Tourism Island on track. In 2018, the State Council also approved the establishment of China (Hainan) Free Trade Pilot Zone. The future development of Hainan is beyond predictions, and Haikou is the capital city of Hainan Province, which implies its important position for Hainan Province. In this contemporary context, the integration of Haikou dialect vocabulary in tourism products with special features will play an active role in promoting Haikou dialect. For example, we can select distinctive words from Haikou dialect for graphical designs, so that Haikou dialect can be more popular to pass on to each audience. For example, at the opening ceremony of the annual meeting of the Boao Forum for Asia in 2018, Chinese President Xi quoted the lyric of the classic Hainan folk song "Long time no see, long time no meet and still want to meet" at the beginning of his speech. Overnight, the unknown Hainan dialect song burst with popularity instantly. We can therefore use the popularity of the dialect song to design the seven characters into artistic fonts through aesthetic processing and print them on the relevant tourism products for sales. At the same time, it can also be customized online by the corresponding mini programs or APPs. Tourists can choose their favorite sentences, and the designers can make dialect-based art processing with them. This can not only meet the individual needs of tourists, improve the sale of tourism products, but also help the dissemination of Haikou dialect and Haikou local culture.

Comprehensive Promotion on New Media Platforms. Under the new media environment, dialect communication has many new characteristics, cross-regional and humorous with strong personal characteristics and high emotional sympathy. These characteristics provide more convenience for the spread of Haikou dialect. In 2016, iQIYI produced the first dialectal show in China, "1.3 Billion Decibels", in which the background music is performed in the form of local dialects and songs are deducted in dialects. The program also invites many dialect experts and scholars to explain the roles and anecdotes of dialects for the public, which undoubtedly has a positive role in promoting the dialects. Another example is the Internet catchword " Lan Shou, Xiang Gu " in 2016, which originated from a short video recorded by a man in Nanning, Guangxi, after he broke up. Since the pronunciation of Zhuang language in Guangxi is not warped, there is no aspiration, so most of the Guangxi people find it difficult to produce aspiration and warped tongue. In addition, the tone of Nanning Mandarin is very gentle and soft. When speaking, it will show a fluctuation similar to "Ping Ze Ping Ze" and "Ze Ping Ping", or consistent homology. It has a sense of melody just like singing. As a result, the phrase "Nan Shou, Xiang Ku" combines the tone of Nanning Mandarin and the tone of Zhuang language and becomes "Lan Shou, Xiang Gu". With the addition of Mandarin tone and Zhuang language pronunciation tone in Nanning, the catchword borrowed from dialectal homonym has become a national popular expression.

In the new media context, there are a wide range of options of communication platform, and their communication characteristics vary slightly within different platforms. For example, WeChat, Weibo, Tik Tok, and Oasis all have different promotion characteristics. In order to better spread Haikou dialect, the author believes that the dissemination of Haikou dialect can be targeted according to the characteristics of different platforms, such as the launch of Haikou dialect emoji packages in WeChat, and the launch of dialect-like short videos in Tik Tok. However, the content disseminated on different new media platforms cannot be completely independent of each other, and it can be made more holistic through some common elements. The multi-platform system with the help of the characteristics of new media, such as convenience, rapidity and instant exchanges, will contribute to the wide promotion of Haikou dialect.

Conclusion

The communication dilemma of Haikou dialect has deteriorated with the continuous changes of the times and media technology. Through the study of the promotion dilemma of Haikou dialect in the new media background, and with the help of the characteristics of the new media platform, we can find out the solutions in accordance with the dilemma of Haikou dialect, focusing on the characteristics under the new media environment. We can also find a new perspective for the study of dialect, and provide experience and thinking patterns for the future development and the promotion of various ethnic groups and regions.

Note: ① Data source: *Report on Chinese Linguistic & Character Career Development 2018* issued by Ministry of Education and State Language Commission

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