

## On The Term Hanyu ‘Chinese Language’

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### ABSTRACT

In the modern world, Chinese is one of the most widely spoken languages. It is not only the official language of the PRC, but also the official language of the Republic of Singapore. For historical and cultural reasons, the Chinese language has spread not only in the countries of Southeast Asia, where it is the language of communication, education of immigrants from China (Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Laos, etc.), but also in Europe and America. The study of the issue of the nomination of the Chinese language is based on a detailed analysis of the data available in the studies of both Chinese and foreign Sinologists, in particular Russians. In addition, the collected data were compared with lexicographic data. When analyzing the data, the provision was taken into account that both written and spoken language can have several historical forms with their own names.

### KEYWORDS

Chinese, wenyan, baihua, written form of language, literary language, modern, structure of word, semantics, and Chinese character.

### INTRODUCTION

As is known, Chinese has a rich history, which closely related to the China's political, economic and cultural life. In the course of its historical development, it underwent significant changes that affected not only the entire system of the language, but also

changed the names of the language. In the Chinese tradition, we find various names for the Chinese literary language. The most common names are 汉语 hànǔ, 文言 wényán, 普通话 pǔtōnghuà. Each of these language names consists of two components: 汉语

hànyǔ> 汉 hàn + 语 yǔ, 文言 wényán> 文 wén + 言 yán, 普通话 pǔtōnghuà> 普通 pǔtōng + 话 huà. In these combinations, the second component means language. This means that in Chinese linguistics, three words are used for the term language: 语 yǔ, 言 yán, 话 huà. The object of this article is the transmission of the concept of "language" in Chinese studies. The research is based on the materials of both bilingual (1) and monolingual (2) lexicographic dictionaries, which affected the entire language system. Moreover, the Chinese language received new names as a literary language. In this regard, the study of the content of the term "Chinese language" is a very important issue not only in scientific terms, but also in practice. The study of this issue will help to reveal how adequately the socio-political and cultural changes that have taken place in society are reflected in the nomination of the language, on the one site, and on the other, as far as they have affected the internal system of the language.

#### THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

The term 汉语 hànyǔ 'Chinese' is ambiguous. It expresses the general name of the Chinese language, without reflecting the forms of its manifestation. 汉语 hànyǔ structurally consists of two components 汉 hàn 'Han nationality' and 语 yǔ 'language', 汉语 hànyǔ 'language of Han nationality', 'Chinese' i.e. a language officially associated with the concept of China as a country, where the first component denotes the Han nationality, which makes up 91.59% of the total population and is spread throughout China<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Zhongguo lishi changshi. Guangzhou: Jinan daxue chubanshe, 2002. P. 150.

Historically speaking, the first term used in relation to the Chinese language was 雅言 yǎyán. This word appeared in the Zhou era (XI-VIII centuries BC). The term yǎyán has two components 雅 yǎ 'standard; normalized' and 言 yán 'speech; language' i.e. yǎyán 'standard, normalized language'. Subsequently, on the basis of this language, 文言 wényán, a court, literary language, was formed. In the Chinese literature, the term wenyan is interpreted in different ways. It is noted that this term can mean both 'literary language' and 'written language'. It also emphasizes that both of these interpretations do not reflect the specifics of the essence of the term. To convey the internal content of Wenyan, the term 'written-literary language' was proposed<sup>2</sup>. Wenyan consists of two hieroglyphs wén 'letter; literature' and yán 'speech; language' and, accordingly, the whole term is understood as a written-literary language. Later, according to the Chinese tradition, the use of another term 通语 tōngyǔ begins to designate the Chinese language. Tōngyǔ also consists of two characters, tōng 'to join; understand; common' and yǔ 'language', tōngyǔ 'common language'<sup>3</sup>, the language used as the official representatives of different dialects. At that time, the language of communication of the common people was 白话 báihuà. Báihuà also consists of two hieroglyphs bái 'clear; understandable' and huà 'speech' i.e. báihuà 'simple, everyday speech'. At present, the use of this term remains, but for another linguistic form, it means writing form of the literary language.

<sup>2</sup> Конрад Н.И. О литературном языке Китая и Японии.// Вопросы языкознания. №3, 1954. С. 25-40

<sup>3</sup> Jianming yuwen zhishi cidian. Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe. 1983, di 37 ye

In the Ming era (1368-1644), the term 官话guǎnhuà, consisting of guǎn 'state; official' and huà 'speech', i.e. guǎnhuà 'official language'. During the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) it served as the language of theatrical performances. Dramatic works in Guanhua have left a great mark on Chinese culture. Among them, special attention should be paid to dramatic works such as 《西厢记》, "Chinese Orphan", which are known not only in China, but all over the world. History has brought us information that guǎnhuà played a large role not only in China itself, but also beyond its borders. In particular, two textbooks, Piāotōngshì and Lǎo Qídà for Guanhua learners, were published in Korea in this language<sup>4</sup>. During this period, due to the intensive development of trade, economy and culture, Guanhua spread not only in the North, but also in the South of the country.

Among the above mentioned three terms used to designate the oral official language Yayan, Tongyu, Guanhua, the latter deserves special attention, since it continues to be used to designate the language, but in a different content. Currently, the term Guanhua refers to a group of northern dialects in which Peking plays an important role. Dialect group Guanhua except Beijing dialect includes eight sub-groups, such as dōngběi guǎnhuà, yǐlǚ guǎnhuà, jiāoliáo guǎnhuà, qínǚ guǎnhuà, zhōngyuán guǎnhuà, lán yín guǎnhuà, jiānghuái guǎnhuà and xīnán guǎnhuà<sup>5</sup>. This group of dialects is widespread in the provinces of Hebei, Henan, Shandong, Jiangsu, Anhui, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Gansu, in the

Ningxia Hui autonomous region, in the western part of Inner Mongolia, in the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and in the north, in the western part of Guangxi covers 2/3 of the Chinese-speaking territory<sup>6</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the process of ousting Wenyan by Baihua began. At the same time, the term 国语guóyǔ was introduced, which also consists of two components guó 'state' and yǔ 'language' i.e. guóyǔ 'state language'. It was considered a common Chinese oral literary language for speakers of all dialects. Guoyu was formed on the basis of a group of northern guanhua dialects. According to a number of researchers, Guoyu is practically identified with the Peking dialect Běijīnghuà<sup>7</sup>.

In 1955, at the All China Conference on the Reform of Writing, the term guóyǔ was officially abolished and the term 'Putonghua' pǔtōnghuà was introduced to refer to the literary Chinese language instead. The term is composed of pǔtōng 'common; simple' and huà 'speech', 'simple speech'; 'Common language' i.e. 'The national Chinese language', understood throughout China. Despite the fact that the use of the term guóyǔ in China has been officially canceled, in some places it continues to function. For example, in Taiwan, Macau and Hong Kong. This term is used to express the national literary Chinese language, i.e. Mandarin. In Malaysia, in Sigapur, where the Chinese diaspora is significant, is using the term 华语huáyǔ consisting of two huá 'China; is used to denote the popular literary Chinese language Mandarin; Chinese' and yǔ 'language' i.e. huáyǔ 'Chinese'.

<sup>4</sup> Gaoji hanyu jiaocheng. Advanced Chinese3. Beijing: Beijing yuyan xueyuan chubanshe. 1992, di 331 ye

<sup>5</sup> Cheng Ming'an, Hao Wenhua. Yingyong hanyu. Hubei: Hubei renmin chubanshe. 2005, di 3 ye

<sup>6</sup> Зарубежный Восток. М.: 1986, С. 215

<sup>7</sup> Драгунов А.А. Исследования по грамматике современного китайского языка. Москва-Ленинград, 1952. С.28

All of the above terms used to express 'Chinese literary language' are compound words. They consist of two components, formed in a syntactic way, in which, basically, five types of grammatical connections are distinguished: attributive, copulative, verb-object, verb-productive, subjective-predicative. The above terms used to convey the concept of 'Chinese' correspond to the first type, that is, attributive, since the first component determines the second in them. The second component is the terms 话huà, 语yǔ and 言yán, which say that we are talking about the language, in its written and oral varieties.

Thus, the presented material allows us to note that the term hanyu expresses the general concept of the Chinese language, i.e. the official language of China. This term does not manifest either the form of manifestation or existence of the language, nor the time of its use. To concretize the Chinese language of a certain historical period and the form of its manifestation, various names of the language are used. In some cases, hanyu can also transmit a specific Chinese language, i.e. this term can also be used in a narrow sense, for example: Nǐ huì shuō hànyǔ ma? Can you speak Chinese? In this case, the term hanyu means Mandarin. This is confirmed by the proposals of Xiāndài hànyǔ de biǎozhūn yǔ shì pǔtōnghuà. The standard language of modern Chinese is Mandarin<sup>8</sup>.

From the point of view of diachrony, the above-mentioned terms can be divided into two groups: terms that are out of use and terms that are currently used. Among the first, only two terms baihua and guanhua continue to be used at the present time, but in a

different content. The first denotes the modern written literary language, the second - the group of northern dialects. Structurally, all terms are the same; they are complex words of the attribute type.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analyzed material, we can conclude that the Chinese language hanyu covers all the terms applied to the language. It does not differentiate any specific language of a certain era and a certain form of manifestation, i.e. literary, colloquial, etc. To concretize the term 'Chinese language' in relation to a certain period and form of its manifestation, a certain term is used.

In the terms under study, the second component yǔ, huà and yán 'speech', 'language' is necessarily present. It is noticed that yǔ expresses a language in general, for example, this hieroglyph is used to convey the concept of a specific foreign language: 外语wàiyǔ 'foreign language', 英语yīngyǔ 'English', 俄语 é yǔ 'Russian', etc. Of these, 'huà' means both literary and spoken language. The use of this term is narrow in nature when applied only to Chinese linguistic realities. As for the term yán meaning 'speech', it is noticed that at the present time this term has no independent use. In the indicated meaning, it is applied to the ancient language (Ya'yan, Wenyan).

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