

Language contact as bilingual contrast  
among Bái language users in Jiànchuān County, China

by

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## **Dedication**

For Susan H. Sanderson, who taught me that we only get so much energy,  
and for Sean McEnroe, who always reminds me to use it for things that matter.

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## List of Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ADVM	adverbial marker
B	Bái
BENADV	benefactive/adversive coverb
CLF	classifier
CMPRM	comparative marker
COMPM	complement marker
COP	copula
COS	change of situation marker
DIM	diminutive marker
DIR	direct case
DISC	discourse marker
E	English
EXCL	exclusive
EXP	experiential aspect marker
EXV	existential verb
F	female
FOC	focus marker
HYPY	Hànyǔ Pīnyīn ‘Chinese sound-spelling’
HZBD	<i>Hànzì Bái dú</i> ‘reading Chinese characters in a Bái way’
INCL	inclusive
INCP	incipient aspect marker
INTJ	interjection
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LC	language consultant
LOCV	locative verb
M	male
MC	Middle Chinese
NEG	negation marker
NGO	non-governmental organization
NMLZ	nominalizer
OBJM	object marker
OBL	oblique case
ORD	ordinal marker
P	participant
PL	plural

PRC	People's Republic of China
PRF	perfective aspect marker
PROG	progressive aspect marker
Q	question marker
RC	recording consultant
SC	Standard Chinese
SG	singular
SUB	subordination marker
SWM	Southwest Mandarin
TAG	tag question
TOP	topicalizer
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization
VOC	vocative marker

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation explores Bái language use in Jiànchūān<sup>1</sup> County, China. On the basis of interviews with 42 language users, transcripts of spontaneous conversation and elicited narratives, excerpts from Bái texts in an alphabetic orthography and Chinese characters, and six months of participant observation in Jīnhuá Town, I demonstrate how language users' perception of Bái and Chinese as distinct languages emerges as a result of interactional and representational strategies that alternately foreground and background bilingual contrast. I argue that these micro-level strategies exist in a dialectical relationship with macro-level academic, governmental, and lay discourses that represent the Bái and the Hàn as essentially different, ethnicity as isomorphic with language, and, consequently, diverse Bái linguistic practices as a distinct minority nationality<sup>2</sup> language.

To the extent that language users state explicitly that they speak Bái and Chinese, but differ implicitly on what counts as Bái and what counts as Chinese, this analysis has

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<sup>1</sup> In this dissertation, I use Hànyǔ Pīnyīn (HYPY) Romanization to represent Standard Chinese items in English running text. For public figures, such as Sun Yat-sen, and authors, such as Chao Yuen Ren, who are better known in English by a non-HYPY Romanization, I use the form common in English. For mentions of Standard Chinese items (including brief quotations), which are set in italics, I provide the Chinese characters after the first appearance in the text. I have chosen to use simplified rather than full-form characters (with some exceptions in chapter 7) because they are the characters with which Bái language users, as PRC residents, are most familiar. For most uses of Standard Chinese items (such as the names of public figures, places, and institutions), which are set in roman, I provide Chinese characters in appendix A. I list the Chinese-character names of cited authors, to the extent they are available, as part of the bibliographic entry in the references section.

<sup>2</sup> Although many Chinese scholars and institutions now translate *mínzú* 民族 as 'ethnic group' in English, I retain the translation 'nationality' to refer to such groups as they are constituted in PRC law and institutional practice.

implications for language description and theories of language contact. From the perspective of language description, my findings challenge the assumption that the borders of self-described communities can be relied upon to describe consensus about linguistic structure, use, or ideologies. This problematizes the selection of typical speakers since, without objective delimitation of a population, representativeness is subjective. From the perspective of language contact, my findings highlight the potential gap between linguists' and language users' judgments about the status of linguistic elements in "a language." While this does not diminish the importance of etymology for historical reconstruction, it complicates synchronic theories that rely on community consensus in order, for example, to distinguish code switching<sup>3</sup> from borrowing.

My analysis draws heavily on Agha's (2003) concept of "enregisterment," the semiotic process through which language users come to recognize moments of language use as indexical of typical language users or situations of use. I review Agha's work in detail in chapter 4; at this point, I should note that while Agha has exemplified his theories with data from registers in the more traditional sense (those that are somehow "within a language" [Agha 2003:231]), I believe that the concept is equally useful in explaining language users' apprehension that their language use constitutes "a language." In the case of Bái, I also find it useful to distinguish enregisterment from "codification," which I understand as activities aimed at regulating the content of the category that emerges through enregisterment; nevertheless I recognize that codification is itself part of the ongoing semiotic process of enregisterment.

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<sup>3</sup> Convinced by Alvarez-Cáccamo's (1998:29) argument about the creeping lexicalization of "code switching" as "code-switching" and "codeswitching," I use the spelling "code switching." I have preserved individual authors' spelling of the term in direct quotations and when discussing the definition of the term in their works.

Bái language use provides a particularly rich site to examine these theoretical issues. On the one hand, the emergence of discourses that represent the Bái and the Hàn as essentially different and enregister Bái language use as “a language” can be traced to specific institutional interventions shortly after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. On the other hand, while Bái language users have largely embraced these discourses, they have not resulted in widespread codification of Bái language use. Activities in pursuit of codification remain confined to three small, overlapping circles of government officials, non-governmental organization language workers, and non-professional language enthusiasts, who differ in their motivations and representational strategies.

In these ways, Bái differs from standardized languages like English, for which initial processes of enregisterment and codification are historically distant, as well as many newly documented languages, which are spoken by small communities in which members do not necessarily control the processes through which their languages are codified and represented. The situation of Bái is perhaps more similar to European languages that were standardized in the nineteenth century, as Gal (1995, 2001) describes for Hungarian; however, because the linguistic distinctiveness of Bái is defined largely in contrast to Standard Chinese,<sup>4</sup> it also resembles the enregisterment of pidgin and creole languages, as Romaine (1994) describes for Tok Pisin. Like some pidgin and creole languages, the main players in the debates about Bái are identifiable and accessible, and it is possible to watch their debates play out in real time.

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<sup>4</sup> In this dissertation, I use the term “Standard Chinese” to translate the Chinese terms *Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 and *Guóyǔ* 国语 which designate the standard that serves as the official language of both the PRC and the Republic of China on Táiwān. I reserve “Mandarin” for Sinitic vernaculars such as Běijīng Mandarin and Southwest Mandarin.

At the same time, the political context of Bái language use is unique. Part of what makes debates about Bái accessible is that the Chinese state guarantees members of minority nationalities the right to “use and develop” their languages, while dominating all of the institutional means through which they might exercise that right in practice. Decisions about which linguistic practices may be described as “languages” were, until quite recently, the exclusive purview of the state, and decisions about which groups can be described as “nationalities” remain so. Therefore, activities with the goal of codifying Bái reflect explicit policies that are, in principle, uniform for all officially recognized minority nationality languages; there is little room for grassroots activity on any scale.

I must emphasize that my critical examination of the enregisterment and codification of Bái in no way implies that I consider Bái less valuable than languages for which these processes have long been underway, such as English or Standard Chinese. The participants in my study valued Bái very highly, and I do too; to the extent language users wish to pursue its codification, I believe that they should have access to resources to do so. My critique is directed not at language users’ choices, but rather at the institutional arrangements that set the agenda for enregisterment and codification; in other words, it is a critique of the politics of representation.

In this light, my exploration of Bái language use in Jiànchuān has implications not only for language description and theories of language contact, but also for the larger issue of structure vs. agency in social theory. In examining how language users’ interactional and representational strategies foreground and background bilingual contrast, I challenge not only the notion of “a language” as the stable reflection of community consensus, but also the notion of “a language” as a social fact which is



binding upon individuals. For Bái language users' strategies do not merely reproduce, but also produce and transform the contrast that enregisterment and codification seek to naturalize and regulate.

I refer to participants in my study as “Bái language users” for two reasons: First, following Hymes (1967), I believe the term “language user” captures individuals' multiple relationships to a form of speech better than the more common “speaker” (Hymes 1967:32):

... the term “speakers” is usable only as a surrogate for the set of possible relationships to use of a code that permit intercommunication. As a general term, *users* may be preferable. One may find speakers, hearers, writers, readers, and all possible combinations. Which mode of use, or which set of modes of use, is pertinent in defining a communicative boundary will vary with one's problem.

Second, the term “Bái language user” is ambivalent between the reading [Bái language [user]], which describes an individual who uses of a form of speech known as “the Bái language,” and the reading [Bái [language user]], which describes a language user – that is, a human being – who identifies ethnically as Bái. This ambivalence is useful because, while not all individuals who identify as Bái speak Bái, and not all individuals who speak Bái identify as Bái, the participants in my study nevertheless experience language use and ethnicity as mutually entailing. Part of what this dissertation explores is how this came to be the case, and its implications for Bái language use and structure.

In chapter 2, I introduce Bái language use in Jiànchuān and contextualize it within broader discourses of language and ethnicity, both locally and nationally, in the past and the present. I contrast mainstream Chinese discourses that represent ethnicity as an

objectively discoverable, universal phenomenon with recent cosmopolitan<sup>5</sup> work that approaches Chinese ethnic categories, including the majority Hàn, as the product of elite discourses that date from the middle of the nineteenth century and culminated in the PRC's 1953-1958 nationalities classification project. In this connection, I introduce the work of Wu (1989, 1990, 1991, 2002), who argues provocatively that Bái ethnic consciousness, while widely and deeply felt, is the relatively recent outcome of state promotion. I then introduce my field site, Jīnhuá Town, and reflect on my research methods and positioning as a researcher.

In chapter 3, I review previous linguistic work on Bái in order to situate my own study, provide background for my subsequent analyses of Bái linguistic data, and illustrate the circulation of academic discourses that problematize the differences between Bái and Chinese. With respect to the scholarly controversy over the classification of Bái, I discover that Chinese and cosmopolitan scholars share a similar vocabulary of concepts, but deeper theoretical and methodological differences render their conclusions largely incommensurate. With respect to socially oriented research on Bái, I find that the Stalinist framework for research on minority nationality languages continues to encourage researchers to confine their studies to the areas of language planning and language in education; only two very recent studies of language use and attitudes have approached Bái from a perspective recognizable to cosmopolitan sociocultural linguistics.

In chapter 4, I step back from Bái to undertake a review of the relevant literature on multilingualism. Concerned with the theoretical assumptions and implications of present-day work on “code switching,” I trace the concept back to Jakobson's (1961)

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<sup>5</sup> I follow Harrell (2001b) in characterizing as “cosmopolitan” scholarly discourses that occur at an international level (as well as the scholars who participate in them), in contrast to discourses confined to China. The term replaces “Western” which, as a geographic descriptor, is increasingly out of date.

equation of the information-theoretical concept of “code” with the psychological aspect of Saussure’s *la langue*. I then follow “code” from Weinreich’s (1953) and Haugen’s (1956) early work on language contact, through Gumperz’s (1968) and Hymes’s (1967) socially oriented approaches, to Poplack’s (1980[1979]), Myers-Scotton’s (1993a), and Muysken’s (1995) structurally oriented work on “code switching.”

Parallel with this line of development, I find that Weinreich’s and Haugen’s initial attention to the psychological reality of *la langue/code* has been overshadowed, on the one hand, by Chomsky’s (1964[1957]) view of language as exclusively psychological, and, on the other, by Weinreich et al.’s (1968) view of language as exclusively social. As a corrective, I turn to work in linguistic anthropology on language ideologies, as well as sociolinguistic research on dialect, register, genre, and style, that have attended to language users’ reflexive understandings of language as a way to unify analysis of the psychological and social aspects of language.

In chapter 5, I return to my field site to analyze a set of 42 structured interviews with Bái language users in Jīnhuá. The interview responses reveal considerable diversity in explicit ideologies around language acquisition and use, linguistic repertoires, language mixing, authentic language use, and language maintenance and shift. My most striking finding is that language users uniformly distinguish Bái and Chinese as separate languages, but differ over which linguistic elements they assign to Bái and which to Chinese.

In chapter 6, I explore the language ideologies implicit in Bái language users’ interactional strategies. In this chapter, I discuss language users’ foregrounding and backgrounding of bilingual contrast in terms of Auer’s (1999) distinction between

“language mixing” and “code switching,” as evidenced by the degree to which language users mobilize bilingual contrast for pragmatic effect. I then introduce a local Bái discourse, known as *Hànzì Bái dú* or ‘reading Chinese characters in a Bái way,’ in which language users represent items in their lexicon as “Chinese” that demonstrate particular sound correspondences to Middle Chinese tonal categories. Taking this indigenous category as my point of departure. I examine transcripts of spontaneous conversation and elicited narrative for potential moments of bilingual contrast, first examining cases in which language users background bilingual contrast to claim *Hànzì Bái dú* items as “Bái,” then discussing cases in which language users foreground bilingual contrast to treat *Hànzì Bái dú* items as “Chinese.”

In chapter 7, I turn to language ideologies implicit in Bái language users’ representational strategies. In this chapter, I discuss language users’ foregrounding and backgrounding of bilingual contrast in terms of Fishman’s recent (2008) development of Kloss’s classic (1967) distinction between *Ausbau* and *Abstand*. In the first half of the chapter, I provide background on the development and use of the Bái alphabetic orthography, then analyze excerpts from three orthographic texts in order to draw connections between each author’s mix of representational strategies and his or her institutional commitments. In the second half, I introduce the practice of representing Bái in Chinese characters, then analyze a parallel Chinese-character representation of one of the orthographic texts in order to compare the mix of strategies in each mode of representation. I close the chapter with a discussion of academic discourses that portray the use of Chinese characters to represent Bái as the continuation of a lost “Classical Bái” writing system.

In chapter 8, I conclude by picking up once more on three of the main themes that run throughout the dissertation. First, language users do not merely reproduce linguistic contrast as a pre-existing element of social context, but also produce and transform it through their interactional and representational strategies. Second, because East Asian metaphors of “reading” cause language users to perceive their lexicons in ways that run counter to the assumptions of mainstream linguistics, they should prompt fresh thinking about the autonomy of languages. And third, the gap between Bái language users’ explicit ideologies that represent Bái and Chinese as separate languages, and implicit ideologies that represent the border between Bái and Chinese as fluid, does not necessarily entail a contradiction. Instead, it illustrates McCarthy’s (2009) paradoxical observation that Bái distinctiveness rests on being “relatively advanced” – that is, more similar to the Hàn than other minority nationalities in Yúnnán.

## Chapter 2: Exploring language in Jiànchuān

In this chapter, I contextualize my study of Bái language use in Jiànchuān. First, I provide background on the language users and the field site: In section 2.1, I critically examine historical and cotemporary approaches to ethnicity in China; in section 2.2, I introduce the Bái; and in section 2.3, I describe language use at my fieldsite in Jīnhuá. Then, I provide details on the study itself: In section 2.4, I describe the conditions of my fieldwork and in section 2.5, I describe my research methods, the theoretical justification for them, and the conduct of the study in practice.

### *2.1 Ethnicity in China*

Since the second half of the twentieth century, cosmopolitan theorists have emphasized the historically contingent nature of ethnicity as an intellectual category (Moerman 1965, 1974; Barth 1969). Recent historical studies have argued that, prior to the nineteenth century, Chinese observers did not order descent, customs, and language within any overarching category like ethnicity; instead, they distinguished between “Chinese” and “barbarians” (Dikötter 1992). (As Liu [2004] underscores, each term translates several Literary Chinese expressions, and the Western-language equivalents carry a great deal of historical baggage.) Imperial policy further divided barbarians into the “cooked” (*shú* 熟), who were culturally Sinicized and integrated into the imperial

system, and the “raw” (*shēng* 生), who existed outside of Chinese norms and constituted a potential threat (Fiskesjö 1999).

This is not to deny a long tradition in China of representing human difference; however, pre-modern and early modern Chinese observers described difference primarily in terms of customs, which they perceived as inextricable from political reliability. Descent was not unimportant: The adoption of patrilineal kinship and the keeping of detailed genealogies was itself an important sign that a barbarian group was “cooked.” By the same token, however, the fact that acculturating groups adopted Chinese-character surnames (Ebrey 1996), or even fictive genealogies asserting assent from a Chinese ancestor (Yang 2009:107-108), demonstrates that affiliation with Chinese civilization served as motivation to claim descent from Chinese people, rather than the other way around. As for language, the relevant opposition was between writing (*wénzì* 文字) and speech (*yǔyán* 语言), rather than among different vernaculars; writing in Literary Chinese was perhaps the most important indication that barbarian group had acculturated to Chinese norms: In Literary Chinese, they had ‘become literate,’ *wénhuà* 文化, which in Standard Chinese now simply means ‘culture’ (Keeler 2008:349).

To call this worldview “ethnocentric” presupposes a notion of cultural relativity that emerged only with eighteenth-century European Romanticism. This notion gained purchase among certain Chinese elites in the second half of the nineteenth century in the context of China’s encounter with Western colonial powers. In response, Chinese nationalist intellectuals such as Sun Yat-sen conceived of the Chinese as a distinct people, the *Hàn*, and blamed their military weakness on the corrupt rule of another people, the Manchu of the *Qīng* Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.); in a very real sense, then, the

first ethnic group that the Chinese discovered was their own (Dikötter 1992). At the same time, given that the Manchu had been “cooked” to some degree even before the Qīng ruling house assumed control, this logic decisively broke with pre-modern tradition by prioritizing descent over custom.

During the Republican period (1912-1949), Sun and his political heirs, including eventual President Chiang Kai-Shek, conceived of China’s people in terms of five “races” – the Hân, the Manchu, the Mongolians, the Tibetans, and the Tartars, or Turkic-speaking Muslims – and pursued an explicitly assimilationist policy (Dreyer 1976). At the same time, Chinese students who had trained in linguistics and anthropology in Europe and the U.S. returned to China to establish research institutes and university departments on Western models. This generation of Chinese scholars was frustrated with the imperial gazetteer tradition, in which authors simply listed the names of groups of people in a particular region without critical analysis; in its place, they embraced Western comparative philology as an objective way to reduce multiple and overlapping ethnic designations to a small number of basic linguistic stocks (Mullaney 2004).

Upon the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the new regime committed itself to the regional autonomy of minority ethnic groups. In order to fulfill this obligation, from 1953 to 1958 government and academic researchers conducted a large-scale project to “recognize and distinguish nationalities” (*mínzú shíbié* 民族识别), aimed at cataloging and classifying all of the groups in China. The theoretical framework for classification was Morgan’s (1985[1877]:5-6) model of social evolution and Stalin’s (1975[1935]:153-156) four-part definition of nationality: (1) a common language, (2) a common territory,



(3) a common mode of economic production, and (4) a common psychology (Zhōu 2003, Mullaney 2004).

However, these criteria fail to describe even the most established groups in China; for example, the Hàn did not have a common mode of economic production, while few Manchu used their ancestral common language. In practice, therefore, Chinese government officials and academics were selective in accepting Soviet advice, and flexible and pragmatic in applying the four criteria (Zhōu 2009:485). They also took pains to reconcile Stalin's synchronic criteria with the diachronic notions of descent that had become important in the Republican period (Wu 1990:3). For each nationality, scholars prepared a genealogy of references in pre-modern Literary Chinese sources by identifying the modern group as the descendent of one or more historical groups on the basis of geographical proximity or similarity in customs. Between 1953 and 1964, the state recognized 55 groups: the majority Hàn and 54 "minority nationalities" (*shǎoshù mínzú* 少数民族) (Zhōu 2003, Mullaney 2004).

In 1958, the Anti-Rightist Campaign cast suspicion on ethnologists trained in the West or in Western traditions of anthropology; more generally, forces in the Party who viewed regional autonomy as a means to help minority nationalities gradually develop toward socialism lost ground to "leftist" forces who favored a faster pace of assimilation. The ensuing political turmoil culminated in the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), during which academic institutions closed and self-organized Red Guards enforced ethnic assimilation as part of their attack on all aspects of traditional culture in China (Zhōu 2003).

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, these assimilationist policies were discredited, and with the adoption of the 1982 constitution, minority nationalities regained most of the protections of the 1950s. Depending on the group and the jurisdiction, these included material benefits, including preferential treatment in family planning, education, employment, taxation, and regional infrastructure development (Sautman 1998). During this period, the state also reconsidered longstanding claims of some small groups to nationality status, and in 1979 it recognized the Jīnuò nationality, bringing the total to the current 56. In 1990, in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the state began to articulate a narrative of ethnic relations in which all of China's nationalities, including the Hàn, constitute a "Chinese nationality" (*Zhōnghuá mínzú* 中华民族) (Zhōu 2003).

Early cosmopolitan work on ethnicity in China, such as Dreyer (1976) and Heberer (1989), took the officially recognized nationalities largely at face value. More recently, scholars have made the historical and political contingency of the state's ethnic categories a central theme. Gladney's (1987, 1991, 1994a, 1994b, 1998, 2004) work on the Huí and Dikötter's (1992) work on the Hàn inaugurated this deconstructive program; a similar theoretical commitment is evident in many subsequent ethnographic studies of groups in Southwest China, such as Diamond (1988, 1995) on the Miáo, Litzinger (1995, 2000) on the Yáo, McKhann (1995, 1998) and White (1998, 2002, 2010) on the Nàxī, Kaup (2000) on the Zhuàng, Blum (1994, 1997, 2001, 2002, 2004) on the Hàn, Fiskesjö (2002, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c) on the Wǎ, and Harrell (1995b, 2001a, 2001b) on the Yí. Harrell (1995a, 2001b) in particular has been influential in theorizing the tension between structure and agency in the application of the state's ethnic categories, exploring

how individuals alternately appropriate and resist categories at different scales of participation.

A distinct language is one of Stalin's four criteria for nationality recognition; although the state characterizes two nationalities, the Manchu and the Hui (Chinese Muslims) as users of Chinese along with the Hànn, the remaining 53 nationalities are presumed each to have its own national language. Bradley (2005) has estimated the number of non-Sinitic languages in China at over 200, of which he considers 85 endangered, and article 4 of the 1982 constitution guarantees minority nationalities the right to "use and develop" their languages. As a matter of policy, however, minority language users have only been able to assert this right with respect to standardized varieties of the languages of officially recognized nationalities; languages of unrecognized minority groups are officially invisible. Moreover, language planners direct most of their attention to languages that have both traditional writing systems and large number of speakers, such as Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, and Korean.

At the same time, article 19 of the constitution guarantees the primacy of Standard Chinese as the state language: Most citizens, including most members of minority nationalities, receive their entire education in Standard Chinese, and it is the main language of government administration and economic exchange throughout the country. In connection with articles 4 and 19, it bears emphasizing that nonstandard Sinitic varieties – including varieties such as Shanghainese and Cantonese, which have millions of speakers and enjoy significant social prestige – receive even less protection than standardized varieties of minority nationality languages.

## 2.2 *The Bái*

Bái people constitute the fifteenth most populous minority nationality in China: The 2000 PRC census puts the total number of Bái at 1,856,063 individuals, largely resident in the provinces of Yúnnán, Guìzhōu, and Húnán (2000 PRC census, cited in Allen 2004:1). Approximately 65 percent of Bái are concentrated in the Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture in northwest Yúnnán (1990 PRC census, cited in Allen 2004:2); most reside in the central and northern portions of the prefecture, to the west and north of the Ěrhǎi lake on the Ěryuán plain. Because these figures reflect nationality, rather than language use, and because anecdotal reports indicate that all Bái people outside of Yúnnán – and many within Dàlǐ Prefecture – have shifted to Sinitic varieties, the number of language users is certainly somewhat less than the census figure.

The area near the present site of Dàlǐ Old City was the seat of the independent kingdoms of Nánzhào (737-902 A.D.) and Dàlǐ (937-1253 A.D.). According to Literary Chinese records, members of a group called the Wū Mán (‘Black Barbarians’) founded the Nánzhào kingdom, assisted by a Sinicized clerical caste known as the Bái Mán (‘White Barbarians’); the founder of the subsequent Dàlǐ kingdom was a member of the Bái Mán (Backus 1981).

In 1253 A.D. the Mongols conquered northwest Yúnnán and incorporated the Dàlǐ region into the Yuán Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.). During the Míng (1368-1644 A.D.) and Qīng Dynasties, local gazetteers reported significant migration to Dàlǐ from other parts of China (Ford 1974:23-24). Contemporary records in Literary Chinese refer to local residents as *mínjiā* 民家. In the context of Míng settlement policy, *mínjiā* contrasts with *jūnjiā* 军家 ‘military settlement,’ which suggests that the term originally denoted the

civilian population of a newly settled region. By the nineteenth century, *mínjiā* had acquired an ethnic dimension; however, in Yúnnán it referred to members of an aboriginal group who had assimilated to Chinese norms, while in Guìzhōu it referred to Chinese settlers who had assimilated to the norms of an aboriginal group. Only in the late Qīng Dynasty did *Mínjiā* broadly come to designate a particular population in the Dàlǐ region (Wu 1990:2, 4-5).

During the first half of the twentieth century, visitors to northwest Yúnnán observed that *Mínjiā* were thoroughly Sinicized, if not actually Chinese. British Sinologist Fitzgerald (2005[1941]), who lived in Dàlǐ Old City in 1938-1939, was convinced that the *Mínjiā* were a distinct people based on differences between their language and Chinese; nevertheless, he acknowledged that the *Mínjiā* themselves perceived ethnic, linguistic, and social categories as fluid. On the one hand, *Mínjiā* defined themselves primarily in linguistic terms: Individuals who shifted from *Mínjiā* to Chinese were “Chinese,” regardless of descent. On the other, language shift was a function of social status, since education in Chinese was a condition for government employment and any sort of supra-local economic activity (Fitzgerald 2005[1941]:12-13). Indeed, Fitzgerald (1972:73, cited in Wu 1990:9) reflects that the *Mínjiā* with whom he worked in Dàlǐ may have believed their speech to be a Chinese dialect.

British-trained Chinese anthropologist Hsu (1971[1948]), who conducted fieldwork in “West Town” near Dàlǐ Old City in the 1940s, considered language irrelevant. Although he acknowledges that his participants spoke the *Mínjiā* language, he justifies representing his field site as typically “Chinese” based on the fact that his consultants claimed descent from Chinese migrants from the lower Yangtze region (Hsu

1971[1948]:16-17). Fitzgerald's and Hsu's work suggests that, during the Republican period, Mínjiā in Dàlǐ considered language a key aspect of Mínjiā identity, but descent a key aspect of Chinese identity; in theory, therefore, there was no conflict between speaking Mínjiā and being Chinese.

After the establishment of the PRC, sometime between 1949 and 1953, the Mínjiā received recognition as a minority nationality under a new ethnonym, Bái. The ethnonym is homonymous with 'white' in both Bái (*baip*)<sup>6</sup> and Standard Chinese (*bái* 白), and is written with the character for 'white' in Chinese. Fitzgerald (2005[1941]) reports that the Mínjiā in Dàlǐ Old Town referred to themselves as *sua bër ni*, 'people who speak white' (*sua baip yind* in the current orthography, which reflects the Jīnhuá variety). He considers the possibility that this usage reflects the metaphor of 'white' as 'vernacular' in Standard Chinese *Báihuà* 白话 'white speech,' which designates Standard Chinese in contrast to Literary Chinese; however, he rejects this possibility with the rather circular explanation that 'white' does not have this meaning in Mínjiā.

The fact that Bái people received recognition among the first tranche of 39 nationalities, prior to the 1953-1958 nationalities recognition survey, indicates that there was no doubt about their status as a distinct group (Zhōu 2003:11-13). According to the Yúnnán Minority Affairs Commission's 1954 report, officials considered the group's status so obvious that no further research was necessary (cited in Mullaney 2004:213). In November 1956, the state fulfilled its commitment to regional autonomy by organizing fifteen jurisdictions around Dàlǐ Old City as the Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture.

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<sup>6</sup> In this dissertation, I represent Bái items using the 1993 version of the Latin-alphabet orthography, as described in *Báizú Yǔyán Wénzì Wèntí Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì* (2008[1993]). I discuss the development and conventions of this orthography in chapter 6; however, for ease of reference I summarize the phoneme-grapheme correspondences in terms of the International Phonetic Alphabet in appendix B.

Recognition of the Bái gave impetus to historical inquiries into their ethnogenesis. Between 1956 and 1957, the official *Yúnnán Daily* newspaper published a number of essays on the topic, which are collected in Yáng (1957). As Lián (2007:5-6) summarizes, this debate had begun during the Republican period and initially focused on the ethnic affiliations of the Wū Mán rulers of Nánzhào and the Bái Mán rulers of Dàlǐ kingdom. Scholars such as Fàn (1944, 2008[1943]), Xiàng (1988[1957]), and Xú (2008[1963]) argue that the ancestors of these groups were an offshoot of the Dī-Qiāng people mentioned in early Chinese historical records, while scholars such as Fāng (1957, 2008[1983]) and Lín (1985, 1990, 2008[2005]) hold that they descended from an ancient branch of the Hàn known as the Bó, who intermarried with aboriginal peoples in Yúnnán. By contrast, some Bái scholars who came of age after the founding of the PRC, such as Zhāng (1990), argue that the present-day Bái are the descendants of an aboriginal people of the Ěrhǎi region, the Hé Mán.

Curiously, none of these scholars consider what it means to be “descended” from a particular historical group: Given widespread consensus that the ancestors of many present-day Bái people include Hàn migrants, in what sense is their Dī-Qiāng, Bó, or Hé Mán inheritance more important? Nor do these scholars question the proposition that the complex of descent, customs, and language currently described as “ethnicity” is a trans-historically applicable category: Why is it empirically more accurate or theoretically more useful to assume that genes, language, and customs are inherited as a package, rather than piecemeal? That these questions go largely unasked reflects the essentializing assumptions of Chinese ethnology, which I discuss in detail in chapter 3.

Recent work on Bái in the framework of cosmopolitan anthropology has posed these questions explicitly. Mackerras (1988), who discusses cultural similarities between the Bái and the Hàn in terms of assimilation or amalgamation of the Bái to Hàn norms, largely reproduces Chinese academic discourses. However, Wu (1990, 1991, 2002), contrasts these similarities with his participants' unshakeable conviction of their ethnic distinctiveness; provocatively, he concludes that, "their strong Bai identity is not built on a distinct cultural identity as a total way of life. It is an expression of subjective sentiment activated recently by official promotion" (Wu 1990:9).

Notar's (1999:70-71) University of Michigan Ph.D. dissertation takes Wu to task, pointing out how colonial regimes have mobilized anthropologists' "objective" judgments of non-distinctiveness to disempower indigenous peoples. However, Notar does not consider Wu's suggestion that the state might mobilize judgments of distinctiveness for the same goals. Moreover, in support of her argument for distinctiveness, Notar offers precisely the same sort of "objective" evidence she criticizes – namely, that the Bái language "has a future tense" while Chinese does not. (Both languages possess lexical means to express future tense, but neither marks it morphologically.) McCarthy's recent (2009:128-129) study of ethnic revival in Southwest China explores this tension more subtly; she concludes that Bái distinctiveness depends, paradoxically, on being "relatively advanced" – that is, more similar to the Hàn – than neighboring minority nationalities.

Nevertheless, as Wáng (2004) exemplifies, the consensus among Chinese scholars firmly supports an interpretation of distinctiveness. According to this narrative, the Bái and the Hàn are separate peoples, each with its own long history. Similarities between



them are due to the fact that the Hàn made contact with the Bái earlier than other groups; because the Hàn were relatively more “advanced,” the Bái borrowed customs, language, and material culture from them. Beginning in the Míng Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.), Hàn chauvinist imperial officials destroyed distinctive expressions of Bái culture and enforced Sinicization, including use of the ethnonym Mínjiā. Therefore, the founding of the PRC and official recognition marked the end of imperialist oppression and the rebirth of Bái national consciousness. Almost all scholarly work in China presupposes this narrative, and many ordinary Bái people consider it historical fact.

### *2.3 The field site*

Jīnhuá Town is the seat of Jiànchuān County, located in the northernmost reaches of Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture. Jīnhuá straddles national highway 214, which stretches from Yúnnán’s southern border, north through the Tibet Autonomous Region, and into Qīnghǎi Province. By truck or public bus, the town lies approximately three hours north of Dàlǐ Old Town and two hours south of Lìjiāng Municipality, which are both painstakingly restored historic towns and major international tourist destinations. However, the new highway and rail line that connect Dàlǐ with Lìjiāng bypass Jīnhuá, and the town sees little tourist traffic: The relatively few travelers who venture to Jiànchuān are usually drawn to the Nánzhào-period Buddhist grottoes at Shíbǎo Mountain, and they travel directly from Dàlǐ to Sīdēng Village, the restored market town and seat of Shāxī Township located 23 kilometers south of Jīnhuá.

Instead, highway 214 carries a steady stream of truckers freighting supplies between Yúnnán’s fertile south and the sere foothills of the Himalayas. Many of the

trucks bear logos in Tibetan script and display pictures of religious figures draped in white prayer scarves; their drivers are ethnic Tibetans from the Dêchên (Dìqìng) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Yúnnán to the northwest, or the Tibet Autonomous Region further on. Other trucks display blessings in green Arabic calligraphy; their drivers are Huí, Muslims who claim their ancestors arrived in the region when Kubilai Khan incorporated it into the Yuán Dynasty in the thirteenth century.

Jīnhuá lies at the northern edge of the Jiànchuān Basin, a round bowl surrounded by mountains. At 2195 meters above sea level, the basin lies almost six hundred meters higher than Denver, Colorado: As one travels along on highway 214, it marks the northernmost settlement in which irrigated rice agriculture is sustainable. Farmers in the basin plant rice in the spring and harvest it in the autumn; in the autumn they plant wheat and harvest it in the spring. Between plantings and harvests, rural men traditionally traveled throughout western Yúnnán to offer their services as carpenters and woodcarvers. Today their skills remain in high demand throughout the region; north of the town center, the highway is lined with carpentry workshops.

From the truckers' point of view, Jīnhuá looks like a fairly ramshackle place. Both sides of highway 214 are lined with utilitarian concrete buildings; their ground floors are dominated by the same jumble of cheap restaurants, basic hotels, and shops selling auto parts and construction materials familiar to any visitor to the Chinese countryside. However, mixed into this jumble are two department stores, located a block away from each other on opposite sides of the highway, that sell everything from chocolate bars to hot water heaters; a well-stocked branch of China's national Xīnhuá

Bookstore chain; several brightly lit boutiques touting upscale clothing; and a surprising number of mobile phone franchises.

Most of Jīnhuá lies west of the highway, and the southwest section is filled with historic courtyard houses, built in packed earth with tiled roofs and delicately carved wooden doors and windows. Although some houses are in disrepair, others are in excellent condition and boast carefully tended gardens in their courtyards. The county government has erected plaques to commemorate the most important architectural monuments, and it has restored the cobblestone streets with canals of fresh running water on each side. At the same time, new construction is going up on the northeast side of town, as members of Jīnhuá's educated class of teachers and government bureaucrats reclaim farmland to build new houses in updated versions of traditional styles.

In 2009, Jiànchuān County's population numbered 176,500 (Zhōnggòng Jiànchuān Xiànwěi Xuānchuánbù 2007a), of whom 51,089 resided in the county seat Zhōnggòng Jiànchuān Xiànwěi Xuānchuánbù 2007b). County government sources emphasize the relative homogeneity of the population: 92 percent of county population is Bái, the highest percentage of any county in China; nevertheless, Jiànchuān is also home to Hàn, Huí, Yí, Lisù, and Nàxī people (Zhōnggòng Jiànchuān Xiànwěi Xuānchuánbù 2007a). The Hàn and Huí populations include both long-settled rural communities dating back hundreds of years, as well as new arrivals from all over China who dominate the retail business of the county seat. Typically, Yí and Lisù residents live in poor mountain villages and Nàxī people are clustered on the northern border with Lijiāng Municipality, the traditional Nàxī stronghold; however, individuals from all groups find their way to the county seat for education, government jobs, and business.

As a consequence, Jīnhuá is broadly multilingual and multidialectal. People who consider Jīnhuá their hometown (*lǎojiā* 老家) and call themselves “Jīnhuá people” (*Jīnhuá rén* 金华人) largely identify as Bái. Their lexis, phonology, and pragmatics (such as use of the formal second person pronoun *yinl*) in Bái distinguishes them from rural residents even of Diànnán Township, which borders on Jīnhuá to the south. Bái visitors and migrants from elsewhere report accommodating to the Jīnhuá variety, although they believe Jīnhuá people can still identify them as outsiders based on their accents. Although the Chinese state classifies most Muslims in China as Huí and assumes they speak varieties of Chinese, established Huí residents of Jiànchuān County generally believe themselves to speak Bái as a first language; my consultants differed on whether there was anything distinctive about the way Huí people spoke Bái.

Established Hàn residents, whom people in Jīnhuá call “guest people” (*kèjiā rén* 客家人, a generic term which the Hakka, a different group often described as a sub-ethnicity of the Hàn, have adopted as an ethnonym), generally live in discrete settlements and speak Sinitic varieties as first languages. Although some communities claim that their ancestors originally migrated to Jiànchuān from outside of Yúnnán Province, their varieties do not appear to differ greatly from the Southwest Mandarin spoken elsewhere in Dàlǐ Prefecture (Hú & Duàn 2001). At present, Hàn adults from the established population appear to have at least passive competence in Bái. Hàn children hear their parents speaking Bái with neighbors from an early age, and while some Hàn villages have their own primary schools, by the middle grades children must attend larger, more geographically central schools in which Bái children and teachers predominate.

Chinese sources characterize the established Yí, Lìsù, and Nàxī populations straightforwardly as speaking Yí, Lìsù, and Nàxī. However, to my knowledge there does not exist a detailed survey of the varieties spoken in Jiànchuān County (Hú and Duàn [2001] describe varieties of Yí and Lìsù in other parts of Dàlǐ Prefecture); given that some varieties of Yí appear to be more similar to Lìsù than they are to each other (Harrell 1995b:63), this commonsense characterization may not capture the complexity of the situation. Nevertheless, like the established Hàn population, adult Yí and Lìsù appear to achieve at least a passive knowledge of Bái from their Bái neighbors and classmates.

While Bái serves as a *lingua franca* for all of the established ethnic groups in the county, varieties of Chinese also play important roles. For one thing, all residents who read and write do so in Standard Chinese. Since 1958, language planners have attempted to promote an alphabetic orthography for Bái closely modeled on the official Romanization for Standard Chinese, Hànyǔ Pīnyīn; since 1982, this orthography has designated Jīnhuá speech as the “standard pronunciation,” and virtually all language planning work for Bái has taken place in Jiànchuān County. (I discuss the language planning literature in chapter 3, and describe the orthography fully in chapter 7.) Nevertheless, few of my participants had ever seen Bái alphabetic writing, and many insisted that Bái “had no writing” (*méiyǒu wénzì* 没有文字). While residents occasionally use Chinese characters to represent Bái (a phenomenon I also discuss in chapter 7), for most Jīnhuá people literacy means literacy in Standard Chinese.

Education above middle school presupposes some knowledge of Literary Chinese, as well. Literary Chinese existed in a superstrate relationship with all of the languages of Jiànchuān County for well over a thousand years, and Jīnhuá people observe pan-Sinitic

customs that presuppose knowledge of the language. For example, they incorporate images of bats into wooden screens and paving stones because the Chinese character *fú* 蝠 ‘bat’ (*bolbozix* in Bái) is homonymous with *fú* 福 ‘happiness’; they plant pomegranate trees in their courtyard gardens because *duō zǐ* 多子 ‘many seeds’ is homophonous with the phrase ‘many sons.’ Like people throughout China, each Spring Festival Jīnhuá residents hang antithetical couplets in Literary Chinese on their doorframes, and they decorate their homes with calligraphy in Chinese characters.

Most Jīnhuá residents, whether they are literate or not, appear to have oral command of a local Sinitic variety. Hú and Duàn (2001) describe the lexis and morphosyntax of “Dàlǐ Prefecture Chinese,” and provide a phonological inventory for the variety spoken in each county. They note that Jiànchuān Mandarin, along with the varieties spoken in several other counties, preserve a distinct tonal realization of the Middle Chinese Entering category, rather than merging it with the Lower Level category, as in most Southwest Mandarin varieties, or merging it with all of the other categories based on complex phonological criteria, as in Standard Chinese. (I discuss Mandarin varieties in Dàlǐ Prefecture in detail in chapter 6.) At the same time, the authors note that, because Bái is the everyday means of communication, the local Sinitic variety is highly variable and reveals strong influence from Bái (Hú & Duàn 2001:449).

Many Jīnhuá residents also have access to other varieties of Southwest Mandarin. As I mention above, Jīnhuá men traditionally traveled outside of the county to work as carpenters, and my oldest participant, born in the 1910s, reported that her father spoke good Chinese. Today, Jīnhuá residents travel on a regular basis to the prefectural seat, Xiànguān, for education, specialist medical care, or sightseeing; participants reported that

they could not easily make themselves understood there in Bái, both because the local Bái variety is too different and because the majority of the population is Hàn. Many residents also have business interests or relatives in the provincial capital, Kūnmíng; outside of the Jīnhuá diaspora, they expect to speak Chinese there as a matter of course.

Standard Chinese is everywhere in Jīnhuá. As a written language, it has inherited the role of superstrate language from Literary Chinese, which means that when written texts are read aloud, even if language users employ the local convention for reading Chinese characters known as ‘reading Chinese characters in a Bái way’ (*Hànzì Bái dú* 汉字白读), which I describe in chapter 6, the performance preserves the lexis and morphosyntax of Standard Chinese. As an oral language, Standard Chinese is omnipresent in the media, and every household I visited had a television set. Many participants who reported that elderly women in their family could not speak a local Sinitic variety, much less Standard Chinese, acknowledged that the same women routinely watched television programs, occasionally asking questions in Bái to clarify what they did not understand. (Except for the occasional experimental program, there is no broadcasting in Bái, and broadcasting in local Sinitic varieties remains controversial in China.)

Most strikingly, many parents in Jīnhuá routinely address their children in Standard Chinese (or their best approximation of it), and elementary school<sup>7</sup> students use the language at play in the street. Adult participants stated that they chose to speak Standard Chinese with their children from birth in order to give them a head start in school; they expressed confidence that their children would eventually learn Bái from

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<sup>7</sup> Similar to the U.S., elementary school in the PRC comprises grades 1-6; middle school, grades 7-9; and high school, grades 10-12.

other friends or relatives. One participant who was the mother of a girl in middle school observed that, because Jīnhuá elementary schools served only the town, younger town children spoke to each other in Standard Chinese. However, because Jīnhuá middle schools served a larger geographic area, older town children came into regular contact with Bái-using children from surrounding rural townships. The participant's daughter confirmed that she had learned Bái principally from friends at school; her mother confided that the girl spoke it with a noticeable accent. Another middle-school-aged participant reported that he spoke with his friends in Sinitic varieties, and he claimed he could not speak Bái.

Residents refer to Sinitic varieties as *Hànhuà* 汉语 in Standard Chinese and *Hanpŋvɣzix* in Bái. When questioned, most participants articulated a difference between local varieties and Standard Chinese as ideal types; relatively few, however, could consistently perform one or the other in practice. On the one hand, I quickly learned not to ask participants to repeat an answer in Standard Chinese since that, more often than not, was what they were trying to produce. On the other, some residents who I perceived as speaking very comprehensible Standard Chinese averred modestly that they only spoke *Jiànpǔ* 剑普 – that is, *Jiànchuān Pǔtōnghuà* 剑川普通话, or Standard Chinese with a Jiànchūan accent; participants were also quick to point out nonstandard features in each others' speech.

Asked about supralocal Southwest Mandarin varieties, a participant who had attended high school in Xiàguān and university in Kūnmíng stated that he felt more comfortable speaking the Xiàguān variety of Chinese than either Bái, his first language, or Standard Chinese, in which he delivered university lectures. A participant with a



middle-school education who had spent time in Kūnmíng doing odd jobs described accommodating her speech to local norms in order to make herself understood, but never mastering the Kūnmíng variety. In general, while participants clearly distinguished Bái and Chinese as separate languages, they described Sinitic varieties in the more subjective terms of standard and non-standard. This parallels the findings of Blum's (1994) University of Michigan Ph.D. dissertation and her subsequent (1997, 2001, 2002, 2004) work with Hàn participants in Kūnmíng.

Migrants to Jīnhuá from other parts of Yúnnán or China may or may not acquire Bái. On the one hand, unlike most parts of China, in Dǎlǐ Prefecture there is a well-documented tradition of uxori-local marriage, and particularly the marriage of migrant men from other parts of China into established Bái households (Yokoyama 1995). My participants called this practice *shàngmén* 上门, literally 'going up to the door,' in Standard Chinese, and *zonx meid*, which is semantically equivalent, in Bái.<sup>8</sup> The practice came up frequently during data collection because the children of such marriages bear the surname of their mothers – that is, their maternal grandfathers – rather than their fathers. Several participants described how their Hàn fathers had learned Bái, sometimes only rudimentarily, after taking up residence in their mothers' family homes.

On the other hand, the Hàn who dominate the businesses on highway 214 come from as far away as Húnán and Guǎngdōng Provinces. Because they do not necessarily form close social ties with local people, they have little opportunity to learn Bái; because they can insist on doing business in Standard Chinese, they have little incentive, either. For the management of one Jīnhuá department store, the use of Standard Chinese was

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<sup>8</sup> The Southwest Mandarin item appears in Hú and Duàn (2001:492), who gloss it as *rù zhù* 入赘; the *ABC Chinese-English comprehensive dictionary* describes it as a localism. The Bái item appears in Zhào and Xú (1996:428).

part of its corporate image: A sign at each cash register reminded employees, “Please speak Standard Chinese, please use civilized address” (*Qǐng jiǎng Pǔtōnghuà, qǐng shǐyòng wénmíng yòngyǔ* 请讲普通话，请使用文明用语). One participant rued the fact that Bái people in Lánpíng Bái and Pǔmǐ Autonomous County, across the western prefectural border in the Nùjiāng Nù and Lisù Autonomous Prefecture, used their language to edge non-Bái out of business opportunities, while Bái people in Jīnhuá accommodated the migrants in Chinese.

Bái people predominate in the Jiànchuān government and other white-collar institutions, which reflects their absolute majority in the population. The 2001 Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy requires that the magistrate of any autonomous county should be chosen by citizens of the titular nationality; however, there is no similar requirement for the Communist Party chairman, who is the more powerful official. Furthermore, both the county magistrate and the Party chairman are appointed by higher levels of government, rather than elected, and the top officials rotate frequently. (Zhong 2003:94-99, Lai 2010:74-76). As a result, there is no guarantee that the county Party chairman will identify as Bái; as for the county governor, he or she is likely to identify as Bái, but may not speak the Jīnhuá variety. Government policies provide incentives for government officials in minority nationality areas to learn local languages; in practice, however, these policies apply only to languages with established written forms.

As a result, while Bái is used in many government interactions (cf. Duàn 2004), it is nevertheless always possible that an individual who does not speak Bái might be present, either as an official or as a citizen seeking services, requiring that participants switch to a Sinitic variety. Language issues are particularly sensitive in education, where

teachers are routinely tested on their ability in Standard Chinese. Although all participants who were teachers reported using Bái informally in the classroom, one participant reported that faculty meetings were conducted, by regulation, in Standard Chinese. Another participant, who worked in the local branch of a provincial bank, reported that the mostly Bái staff used to conduct meetings in Bái, but that they had switched to Standard Chinese after a Hàn employee from outside the region complained that it was unfair to shut her out.

Government and international voluntary language workers have problematized the multilingual and multidialectal situation of Jiànchuān County in terms of educational outcomes for Bái children. From 1989 to 1993, the United Nations Educational, Social, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) funded a pilot mother-tongue literacy program for elementary school students in Xīzhōng Village just to the south of Jīnhuá in Diànnán Township; the program ended once international funding ran out (Zhāng 2008[1992]; Kai 2008[1994]). Beginning in 2005, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) East Asia Group funded a similar pilot program in Shílóng Village, located about 30 minutes south of Jīnhuá on Shíbǎo Mountain in Shāxī Township (Summer Institute of Linguistics 2006b); this program is still operating, and is set to expand to a second site. Both programs have sought to implement international experience, summarized in UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization 2003) white paper on mother-tongue education, that children learn to read best when they learn to read in their first language.

This approach appears impeccable from the perspective of promoting social justice for users of minority languages; however, it has proven complicated to apply in

the multilingual environment of Jiànchuān County. SIL and its partners in the provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee and the county education department located their pilot program in Shílóng Village partly because it appeared to be a traditional Bái village; Jīnhuá was out of the question because so many children now speak Standard Chinese as a first language. Nevertheless, the new school in Shílóng has also attracted Yí and Lisù students, for whom Bái is also a second language. These children have been among the most successful students in the program; however, their success does not straightforwardly support SIL's advocacy on behalf of mother-tongue literacy.

More fundamentally, the assumptions of the program somewhat simplify the local language ecology. SIL's (Summer Institute of Linguistics 2006b) informational materials argue that Bái children are at a disadvantage because they arrive at school with no knowledge of Standard Chinese, and then are immersed in literacy training in a "foreign language." However, as a participant who taught a mixed class of Hàn and Bái children in a rural primary school pointed out, because rural Bái residents occupy better land at lower altitudes than the Hàn, they tend to be economically better off. As a result, Bái children have more exposure to Standard Chinese through the media, travel, and contact with relatives in Xiàguān and Kūnmíng.

Moreover, simply because Hàn children speak one Sinitic variety as their first language does not mean they have an automatic advantage in learning to read another. Lexical and phonological differences between Standard Chinese and Southwest Mandarin, on the one hand, and lexical and structural similarities between Sinitic varieties and Bái, on the other, mean that it is not obvious which group of students faces the greater challenge. By portraying Standard Chinese as representative of all Sinitic

varieties, and the Bái as a disadvantaged minority, SIL subtly reproduces national-level discourses in which minorities learn from the unitary – and uniformly “more advanced” – Hàn people.

Ultimately, SIL’s goal is the translation of the Christian Bible into all languages (Olson 2009); they hope that their interventions in Shílóng will enable readers and writers to reach consensus among geographical and social variants, resulting in a literary standard. To their credit, SIL language workers appear to recognize that literacy occurs within a social context: They have involved Bái language users at each stage of curriculum development, and have conducted adult literacy training in order to build a supportive environment for use of the orthography. However, as Anderson points out (1991[1983]), people do not create literary standards as much as literary standards create peoples. Meanwhile, government language workers in Jīnhuá have used their experience working with SIL to prepare Bái-language versions of Chinese government information. Beyond the obvious irony of a Christian organization contributing to the propaganda capacity of an officially atheist government, both goals illustrate that literacy promotion is not merely social, but also political.

#### *2.4 Fieldwork conditions*

I first became interested in Bái language use in 2005, during my appointment as a political-economic officer at the U.S. Consulate in Chéngdū, the capital of Sìchuān Province, which lies immediately north of Yúnnán. Because I was responsible for reporting on ethnic affairs throughout Southwest China, I traveled frequently to the Tibet Autonomous Region, western Sìchuān, and northwest Yúnnán. During one visit to

Dêchên Prefecture, I met a young Bái environmental activist. Although the man had long since left Dàlǐ Prefecture, he told me a bit about his experiences growing up bilingual in Bái and Sinitic varieties. Up until that point, almost all of my work had focused on Tibetans in China, some of whom have an ambivalent relationship with the Chinese state and Standard Chinese. My encounter with the Bái environmental activist gave me a glimpse of a different way of negotiating ethnicity in China – one which seemed to afford the Bái unfettered access to Chinese society and institutions, while still maintaining the privileges of an officially recognized nationality.

In the summer of 2006, when I returned to China to attend classes at the Yúnnán Nationalities University in Kūnmíng, I began to develop a dissertation project focusing on the Bái and their language. Although the provincial capital is about five hours by bus from Dàlǐ Prefecture, it turned out to be easy to find Bái in Kūnmíng; indeed, they seemed to predominate in the provincial government and academic institutions dedicated to minority nationality affairs. I became friends with two Bái researchers at the Yúnnán Nationalities Museum, and in July 2006 they invited me to accompany them on a research visit to their hometown of Jīnhuá. During a week in the field, I was able to meet both researchers' extended families, ask questions about language use, and assess the possibility of a longer stay in the future.

In June 2007, I returned to Jīnhuá for two weeks to carry out a study of attitudes and ideologies around vernacular writing of Bái in Chinese characters. This research was facilitated by a local government official who is the younger brother of one of my museum colleagues. Based on the reading I had done on Bái in the intervening year, I expected to learn more about how the Bái had managed to maintain their language

despite more than a millennium of positive contact with Chinese. However, during my interviews it gradually became clear to me just how variable Bái is, and how similar some language users' Bái is to local Sinitic varieties. This caused me to start rethinking what it means to “maintain the language”: How much convergence is possible before maintenance becomes shift? And whose language, in which situations, counts as “the language”?

In September 2008, I enrolled as a visiting research student at Yúnnán University in Kūnmíng in connection with a Fulbright fellowship. Through the assistance of a Bái linguist affiliated with the Chinese Department, I located two Bái language consultants from Jīnhuá in Kūnmíng: a philosophy instructor and a first-year M.A. student in linguistics at local universities. After I had familiarized my language consultants with the alphabetic orthography, we met weekly to gloss and translate texts. My immediate goal was to gain a working knowledge of the language; in the process, I discovered that my language consultants' Bái differed from the Bái described in the standard reference work, particularly in lexicon and structure that are marked with respect to Southwest Mandarin or Standard Chinese.

In April 2009, I relocated from Kūnmíng to Jīnhuá. I settled in the family home of an English instructor at another local university. The instructor's parents had relocated to Kūnmíng some years previously, and their modernized courtyard house was standing empty. My new home was in the old neighborhood of Jiùzhài, located in the southwest part of town several blocks from the reconstructed Míng Dynasty memorial gate and around the corner from Jīnhuá cultural figure Zhào Shímíng's family home. Living in the home of a prominent family lent me some status in the neighborhood, and the middle-

school-aged daughter of my next-door neighbors quickly sought me out for help with her English homework.

Through the instructor's assistance, I met a young Jīnhuá woman who worked full-time for the SIL mother-tongue education program. Hardworking, no-nonsense, and absolutely meticulous, she became my Bái teacher, transcription assistant, and all-around language consultant throughout my stay in Jīnhuá. In fall 2009, colleagues at SIL introduced me to a bookseller who had learned the practical orthography in an SIL-organized adult education class and was eager to improve his skills. The bookseller became another invaluable language consultant, and assisted the language worker and me with transcription during a particularly busy period of data collection.

#### *2.4.1 Regulatory supervision*

I conducted my research under the regulatory supervision of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Michigan (UM) and the Humanities Institute of Yúnnán University. The UM IRB approved and oversaw research with human subjects during my 2007 project on Bái vernacular literacy (the results of which appear chiefly in Hefright 2008, 2009, a publication to appear, and chapter 7), as well as my 2009 project on multilingual practices and ideologies (the results of which appear chiefly in chapters 4 and 5). During my 2008-2009 visit, because I was registered as a student at Yúnnán University, I was twice required to submit a research plan to the rector and the Communist Party chair of the Humanities Institute; afterwards, the university's Office of International Cooperation and Exchange cleared my proposal with relevant agencies of the Yúnnán provincial government. Although this process was time-consuming, I



ultimately received written permission to reside, conduct research, and access relevant government institutions at my field site from April to June 2009, then again from July to December 2009.

#### *2.4.2 Funding*

Funding for my dissertation research came from a number of sources. My summer 2006 enrollment at Yúnnán Nationalities University and my familiarization visit to Jīnhuá were supported by a University of Michigan Department of Linguistics summer support grant. My summer 2007 research visit to Jīnhuá was funded jointly by a University of Michigan International Institute individual grant and the Department of Linguistics. In fall 2008 and spring 2009, my enrollment at Yúnnán University and my residence in Kūnmíng and Jīnhuá was made possible by a U.S. Department of State Fulbright fellowship. For fall 2009, my enrollment and living expenses were funded through a U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship, while my research and travel expenses were covered by a University of Michigan Rackham Graduate School candidacy grant. The NSF fellowship also covered my expenses during post-fieldwork research and writing.

#### *2.5 Research methods*

Based on my research visits to Jīnhuá and my research in secondary sources, I formulated two basic research questions: (1) What kinds of variation occur among Bái language users, and how does this variation pattern with respect to language user and

situations of language use? And (2) how do Bái language users typify variation, and what social positions do their reflexive models index?

Following previous sociocultural studies of multilingualism – most immediately Chen (2008a, 2008b), which is ultimately in the tradition of Blom & Gumperz (1972[1964]) – I designed a multi-method study to compare language use with language ideologies in ethnographic context. The methods I chose to research question 1, concerning the description of variation, were recording of spontaneous conversation and recording of elicited narrative. The methods I chose to research question 2, concerning the typification of variation, were structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and collection of written texts.

Two widely used research methods were not feasible in the context of rural China. First, because I had no access to any sort of residential records, random sampling was not possible. Second, as part of the orientation for my Fulbright fellowship, I learned that foreign researchers in China were not permitted to distribute written surveys. I was never able to verify directly whether this was the case; however, because I had to submit a research plan to authorities whom I could not contact directly, I did not risk including written surveys in my research plan.

I also had more fundamental theoretical concerns about both of these methods. With respect to random sampling, I am not convinced that it is possible to define a sampling population – the “speech community” – on demographic criteria alone. For example, any random sample of Jīnhuá would likely turn up both newly arrived Hàn residents who do not speak Bái, and older Bái residents who only speak a local Sinitic variety; since these individuals rarely speak to each other, in what sense do they form a

speech community? (I critique the theoretical bases of the speech community in chapter 4). With respect to written surveys, Duàn (2004) and Zhào et al. (2009) have used the method in Bái communities to good effect; nevertheless, with respect to my own research, I was concerned that such methods might forestall ethnographic discovery by limiting language users' responses to predetermined categories.

### *2.5.1 Recording of spontaneous conversation*

Initially, I had planned to investigate variation in Bái language use exclusively on the basis of recordings of spontaneous conversation. Aware that my presence would inevitably cause language users to shift toward Standard Chinese, and cognizant of critiques of the way Labov and his students have represented the “sociolinguistic interview” as natural speech (Bell 1984; Coupland 2001), I hoped to record speech in which I was not a participant. My solution, following Chen (2008a, 2008b), was to equip two recording consultants with portable digital voice recorders. Consistent with IRB requirements, the individuals were free to turn their recorders on or off at any time, and they obtained oral consent from each interlocutor they encountered. Despite these limitations, the method yielded hours of spontaneous speech. In May 2009 one recording consultant recorded just over eleven hours; in August 2009 a second recording consultant recorded four and a half hours.

During the summer and fall of 2009, my language consultant and I reduced approximately half of the first recording consultant's recordings to writing. Listening to the recordings on an MP3 player, the language consultant produced a rough transcript of the material in the Bái alphabetic orthography. I parsed and glossed her transcription, and

then together we checked my work and produced a relatively free translation into English. When I left departed Jīnhuá, I left the second recording consultant's recordings with my language consultant in the understanding that she would continue to transcribe them on her own and supply a free Chinese translation for each line. In April 2010, the language consultant completed the transcripts and sent them to me by e-mail. I present some of these data in connection with my discussion of the foregrounding of bilingual contrast in spoken Bái in chapter 6.

### *2.5.2 Narrative elicitation*

In September 2009, after several months of transcribing spontaneous conversation, I grew concerned that heterogeneity in content and style would make it difficult to draw robust conclusions from the data. Therefore, I decided to collect an additional, more structured data set using an elicitation task. Croft (2010:7) critiques “semasiological” approaches in linguistics, in which the linguist starts with a form and investigates its meaning; he suggests that only an “onomasiological” approach, in which the linguist starts with a meaning, and investigates the forms used to express that meaning, can elicit anything close to the real range of linguistic variation.

Like Croft, I used the onomasiological approach of showing participants Chafe's classic (1980) “pear film” stimulus. From a methodological perspective, I found the stimulus attractive because it had been used successfully with participants from a number of different cultural backgrounds. From a linguistic perspective, Chafe (1980:xii-xiii) designed the film to elicit a maximum variety of structural features within a very short period of time. In addition, Erbaugh (1990) has used the film successfully in Taiwan and

China, and she has made her corpus of stories in seven Sinitic varieties publicly available; I thought it would be interesting to compare the results of my Bái study with Erbaugh's Sinitic data.

In recording spontaneous conversation, I let the recording consultants talk to whomever they chose; in other words, I relinquished control over my participant sample in order to enhance the spontaneity of the conversation. Because I recruited participants for the task, however, I was in a position to assemble a judgment/quota sample (Milroy & Gordon 2003:30). As I have noted above, I was uncomfortable assuming that Jīnhuá constituted a "speech community"; however, by recruiting all of my participants from a single social network, I could be certain that all the participants had the potential to speak to each other as an empirical matter, rather than assuming it theoretically.

During the summer of 2009 I had become interested in the phenomenon of Bái parents speaking to their children in Standard Chinese, and wondered the elicitation task would yield a picture of language shift in progress. Therefore, I decided to stratify my sample by generation. Counting my language consultant as "ego," we recruited participants in a single social network, from households ideally consisting of three generations, in which adults (over 18 years) usually spoke Bái to each other, but routinely addressed a minor child (under 18 years) in Standard Chinese. I also showed the film to a few participants in a smaller network, focused on an acquaintance in Jīnhuá who expressed interest in my project; for these participants, I followed the same procedure I outline below, except that my acquaintance took on the role of language consultant and "ego" for the smaller social network.

My language consultants visited each household in advance to explain the project and set a time for recording. On the appointed day, the language consultant and I arrived, I set up my laptop computer, and I administered the oral consent/assent procedure. Then the language consultant left the room while I showed the video. When it was over, the language consultant re-entered and invited the first participant into a separate room, in which I had set up a digital sound recorder. The language consultant elicited a narrative by inviting the participant to “Tell the story of the film in Bái.” If the participant expressed any hesitancy about speaking Bái, she continued, “You can use whichever language you wish, but please at least try to begin the story in Bái.” After the participant finished speaking, the language consultant accompanied him or her out of the room, and then repeated the procedure with the next participant.

We carefully followed Chafe’s (1980:xiv-vx) protocol, which he designed to elicit the most spontaneous sample possible in response to the prepared stimulus. The language consultant was not present during the screening of the film in order to give participants the impression that she had not seen it and that their retelling of the story was purposeful. Conversely, I was not present during the elicitation in order to forestall participants from shifting toward Standard Chinese to accommodate me. We recorded each participant quickly, one after another, in order to minimize the possibility that participants would forget the details. Following each visit, I edited each participant’s narrative into separate digital audio files, then distributed them to language consultants for transcription. Just as for the spontaneous conversation data, the language consultants produced preliminary transcriptions, I parsed and glossed them, and we checked the work to produce relatively

free English translations. I present some of these data in connection with my discussion of the foregrounding of bilingual contrast in spoken Bái in chapter 6.

### *2.5.3 Structured interviews*

Concurrent with the elicitation task, I also conducted a brief, structured interview with each participant to assess their language attitudes and ideologies. After the language consultant and I had finished eliciting a recording from each participant in a given household, I entered the room and we invited each participant to return “to answer a few questions.” With the digital recorder still running, I conducted these interviews in Standard Chinese, using instrument 1 in appendix C. The language consultant was present during each interview, and occasionally assisted by reformulating my questions in Jiànchuān Mandarin or Bái; however, all participants were able to answer in some variety of Chinese. I draw on these data anecdotally for my description of language use in the first part of this chapter, and analyze them more fully in terms of language ideologies in chapter 5.

### *2.5.4 Collection and recording of texts*

In the course of my visits to Jīnhuá, I have collected a number of Bái written texts. Some of these texts are handwritten or printed texts in which the writer represents Bái using Chinese characters; others are printed texts in which the writer uses the Bái alphabetic orthography. During my 2007 research visit, I met with a number of

individuals who had composed Chinese-character texts, and recorded them reading and explaining their texts in Bái and Chinese.

In the fall of 2008, while I was residing in Kūnmíng, I worked with my language consultants on a number of orthographic texts; we glossed and translated each text, and I recorded the language consultants reading and explaining them in Bái and Chinese. When I returned to Jīnhuá in 2009, I worked with a language consultant on both character and orthographic texts, including portions of SIL's curriculum for the Shílóng project, a Bái-language translation of a speech by President Hú Jǐntāo, and two poems commemorating the restoration of a historic bridge in Jīnhuá. The result is a small corpus of texts using both writing systems, which I analyze in terms of their strategies of representation in chapter 7.

#### *2.5.5 Semi-structured interviews and participant observation*

In addition to the structured interviews I describe above, in the course of my visits to Jīnhuá I have also conducted semi-structured interviews with language users from diverse walks of life. During my 2007 visit, I used instrument 2 in appendix C, which focuses on language use and ideologies around Chinese-character representation. During my 2009 visit, I used instrument 3 in appendix C, which yielded much longer, more in-depth interviews. In addition, I compiled daily field notes to capture more casual conversations and observations. I draw on these resources throughout this dissertation, but particularly for my discussion of language use in the first half of this chapter, and my discussion of explicit language ideologies in chapter 5.



### **Chapter 3: Previous research on Bái**

In this chapter I review the existing literature on Bái. Besides situating my study with relation to previous work, this chapter provides background for my discussion of Bái data in chapters 5, 6, and 7. In particular, I have devoted space to descriptive work on phonetics and phonology and morphosyntax in order to contextualize language users' mobilization of particular tonal realizations and word orders to foreground bilingual contrast between Bái and Chinese. Likewise, my detailed review of the scholarly controversy over the classification of Bái serves to illustrate the circulation of academic discourses that problematize similarity and difference between the languages, and to unpack their broader ethnological commitments and consequences.

Extensive reviews of the literature on Bái appear in Chinese in Yáng (2008[2004]) and Wáng (2008[2005]); Zhào (2008[2006]) is particularly exhaustive, and includes detailed summaries of many works. In section 3.1, I take a chronological approach to the small body of work on Bái from the late nineteenth century through the beginning of the Cultural Revolution; in sections 3.2-3.4, I take a topical approach to more recent scholarship. First, in section 3.2, I review the scholarly controversy surrounding the classification of Bái. Then, in section 3.3, I discuss studies in the framework of synchronic linguistic description. Finally, in section 3.4, I discuss socially oriented studies, which, in keeping with the framework implied by Stalin's (1950)

interpretation of the relationship between language and society, have occurred almost exclusively within the frameworks of language planning and language in education.

### *3.1 Studies of Bái prior to the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)*

#### *3.1.1 Prior to the founding of the PRC (1949)*

There is a long history of linguistic scholarship in China, and historical phonology, in particular, reached a high degree of sophistication in the Qīng Dynasty. However, Chinese scholars were almost exclusively concerned with Literary Chinese; work on vernacular varieties was generally limited to the lexicography of localisms in Literary Chinese texts in the tradition of Yáng’s (c. first century A.D.) *Fāngyán*. As Wilkinson (2000:713) observes, references to non-Chinese vernaculars in the pre-modern canon are notable for their rarity; for the most part, they consist of brief lists of lexical items collected among “barbarian” groups and represented phonetically in Chinese characters. Coblin (1979) analyzes the Báiláng songs in Fàn’s (c. third to fifth centuries A.D.) *Hòu Hàn shū*, a well-known case in which the author presents an entire text in this way.

In Fán’s (1961[c. ninth century A.D.]) *Mán shū*, the author presents 17 words of the language of the Bái Mán, the Sinicized clerical class who went on to found the Dǎlǐ kingdom in 937 A.D. Many Bái scholars treat this text as an early testament of the Bái vernacular (Fù & Xú 2006, 2008[2001]; Wāng & Yáng 2004; Duàn 2008, 2009); however, without a historical reconstruction of Bái at the appropriate time depth, or any

indication of how the author might have pronounced the transcription characters, it is difficult to relate these items to any modern language.

The identification of such pre-modern texts as “non-Chinese” should also be understood in historical context. As Keeler (2008) points out, Chinese linguistic scholarship did not possess a conceptual framework to distinguish between Sinitic and non-Sinitic varieties on linguistic grounds. There is no reason to suppose, for example, that pre-modern authors could recognize divergent reflexes of Sinitic etyma as “Chinese,” any more than they could exclude forms that resembled reflexes of Sinitic etyma by chance as “non-Chinese.” It seems likely, then, that authors based their description of a speech form as “Chinese” largely on their evaluation of the language users’ descent and degree of acculturation to Chinese norms.

Because pre-modern and early-modern Chinese scholars were not interested in vernaculars, and had no theoretical framework to distinguish Sinitic vernaculars from non-Sinitic vernaculars, the first authors to approach the language of the people then known as the *Mínjiā*, and only later to be known as *Bái*, as a non-Chinese minority language were Westerners. Lacouperie (1887:46) and Davies (1970[1909]:343-346) note the high proportion of Sinitic vocabulary in the lexicon, but classify the language genetically as Mon-Khmer. Shortly afterwards, Lǐ (1974[1916], cited in Zhào 2008[1982]:546) speculates in the “dialect” section of the *Dàlǐ County gazetteer* that *Mínjiā* was the outcome of contact between the language of “Lolo tribes” (*Luǒzú* 倮族) and Chinese settlers. During the same period, however, Zhào (1919-1922, reprinted and annotated as Zhào & Ōu 2008[2004]) and Zhāng (2008[1937]) analyzed forms in the *Jīnhuá* vernacular within the framework of Chinese philology to conclude that *Mínjiā*

preserved lexical items from the literary canon that had disappeared from other Chinese vernaculars.

Mullaney (2004:217-225) describes the profound influence of Davies's (1970[1909]) work on the languages of Yúnnán on Chinese ethnology during this period. Li's (1968[1937]) taxonomy of the languages of China divided the Tibeto-Burman languages into four subgroups: Loloish, Kachin, Burmese, and Tibetan. In the original version of this article, Li (1968[1937]:63) suggests that Mínjiā might belong to the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch; in a subsequent version, however, Li (1973[1937]:3) observes that Mínjiā “shows strong Chinese influence in its vocabulary and word order, and its relationship remains doubtful.”

Soon afterward, Wén (2008[1940]:417) reanalyzed Davies' (1970[1909]) Mínjiā data to demonstrate the presence of multiple Chinese loanword strata. (A contemporary review appears in Stein [1941].) Based on his comparisons of the native stratum with putative cognates in Tibeto-Burman languages, Wén concludes with Li (1968[1937]), that Mínjiā is not Mon-Khmer, but Tibeto-Burman. In the course of 1942, Luó (2000[1943]:246) conducted fieldwork on a number of varieties of Mínjiā. Like Lǐ (1974[1916]), Luó concludes that Mínjiā was the outcome of contact between Chinese and the languages of “Yí” groups.

It bears emphasizing that Luó (2000[1943]) does not use the character *Yí* 彝, which designates a present-day minority nationality, but rather *Yí* 夷, a more generic term in the Chinese literary canon for non-Chinese, particularly those believed to come from places east of China. As Liu (2004) describes, the application of this term to Europeans, and its English translation as “barbarian,” was a major political issue between

China and Western powers in the nineteenth century. In the context of Yúnnán Province, by the first half of the twentieth century Luó's (2000[1943]) term *Yí* 夷 (cf. *Yírén* 夷人 or *Yíjiā* 夷家) had become synonymous with Lǐ's (1974[1916]) term *Luǒ* 倮 (cf. *Luǒluǒ* 倮倮), and Zhào (2008[1982]:547) glosses *Luǒ* 倮 with the present-day designation *Yí* 彝. As Harrell (1995b) argues, however, anachronistic projection of this category prior to the 1953-1958 nationality identification survey is problematic; while Lǐ (1974[1916]) and Luó (2000[1943]) may have had in mind the language of a group whose descendants are now known as Yí, they could equally have been referring to any of the languages of what is now known as the Loloish branch.

Fitzgerald's (2005[1941]) ethnography of Dàlǐ Old City includes a glossary and grammatical sketch of the Mínjiā language. Fitzgerald was not a linguist, and Luó's contemporary (2000[c.1941]) review of his efforts is dismissive; indeed, it is difficult to compare Fitzgerald's linguistic data to any subsequent, more systematic description. Nevertheless, Fitzgerald provides vivid observations of language use and attitudes among the Mínjiā at the end of the Republican period.

### *3.1.2 From the founding of the PRC until the Cultural Revolution (1949-1966)*

In the early years of the PRC, Soviet advisors arrived with an orthodox Marxist approach to linguistic scholarship in the form of Stalin's (1950) *Marxism and the problems of linguistics* (Stalin 1950:14-15, my translation):

[Language] is created not by some one class, but by the whole society, by all classes of the society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations. It is created for the satisfaction of the needs not of any one class, but of the whole society, of all

classes of the society. Namely for this reason it is created as a national language which is unitary for the society and general for all its members. In view of this, the auxiliary role of language as a means for people to communicate does not consist in serving one class to the detriment of other classes, but rather in serving all of the society equally, all classes of the society.<sup>9</sup>

Stalin's work is in first order a critique of Soviet linguist N. Ia. Marr, who is best known for his paleo-linguistic speculations; however, Stalin's insistence on the homogeneity of national languages and the irrelevance of social analysis marries naïve Saussurean structuralism with what Hymes (1967:26) calls "Herderian" ideologies – the essentializing assumption that language and ethnicity are isomorphic.

Herderian ideologies from East and West reinforced each other in early-PRC linguistics. From one direction, the nationalities classification project continued Republican-era taxonomic projects: Mullaney (2004) demonstrates the influence of Davies's (1970[1909]) phylogenetic proposals on Luó and Fù's (2000[1954]) classification scheme, as well as on the 1954 report of the Yúnnán Minority Affairs Commission's classification team. From the other direction, Zhōu (2009:483-484) details how the Soviet advisors N. N. Cheboksarov and G. P. Serdiuchenko urged their Chinese counterparts to operationalize Stalinist orthodoxy in their planning for minority languages.

The recognition of the Bái as a nationality sometime between 1949 and 1953 gave impetus to publication of Xú's (1954) brief description of what he still described as the "the Mínjiā language." With respect to the lexicon, Xú provides a list of numbers and

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<sup>9</sup> Он создан не одним каким-нибудь классом, а всем обществом, всеми классами общества, усилиями сотен поколений. Он создан для удовлетворения нужд не одного какого-либо класса, а всего общества, всех классов общества. Именно поэтому он создан, как единый для общества и общий для всех членов общенародный язык. Ввиду этого служебная роль языка, как средства общения людей, состоит не в том, чтобы обслуживать один класс в ущерб другим классам, а в том, чтобы одинаково обслуживать всё общество, все классы общества.

classifiers, and emphasizes the large proportion of Sinitic material in the lexicon. With respect to morphosyntax, Xú describes the similarity between Bái and Chinese SVO word order, but contrasts Bái [noun + [number + classifier]], [verb + negative morpheme], and [modified verb + modifying stative verb] – for example, Bái *ye-xiot* ‘eat-be.good’ vs. Standard Chinese *hǎo-chī* 好吃 ‘be.good-eat’ for ‘be.delicious’ – orders. With respect to phonetics and phonology, Xú points out that Bái lacks retroflex affricates and fricatives, which occur in Standard Chinese, but that the voiced labiodental fricative /v/ is common in Bái, which does not occur as a phoneme in Standard Chinese.

Xú (1954:39-40) concludes with a section headed, “The suffering of our Mínjiā compatriots with respect to a writing system” (*Mínjiāzú tóngbāo zài wénzì shàng de tòngkǔ* 民家族同胞在文字上的痛苦). He cites the difficulty of learning Chinese characters and their unsuitability for recording the Mínjiā language, then reminds readers of the new regime’s commitment to helping minority nationalities to “use and develop” their languages. Employing the high-minded rhetoric of the period, Xú argues:

Since Liberation [i.e., the establishment of the PRC], the Mínjiā people have stood up, but in the area of culture they are still experiencing great suffering ... I believe that establishing, revising, or creating an [orthographic] scheme to raise our Mínjiā compatriots’ educational level and relieve their suffering in the area of culture, is now the urgent task of workers in the field of new writing systems.<sup>10</sup>

It was not until April-October 1957, six months after the establishment of the Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture in November 1956, that researchers from the Chinese

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<sup>10</sup> 解放后民家族人民在政治上、经济上翻了身，但在文化上仍然受着极大的痛苦 ... 我认为目前认定一种方案、修改一种方案、或者创造一种方案，来提高民家族同胞的文化水平，解除民家同胞在文化上的痛苦，是新文字工作者可不容缓的任务。

Academy of Sciences and the Central Nationalities Institute in Běijīng arrived in the region to conduct a linguistic survey of Bái (Zhào 2008[1983]:184). This means that, to the extent that linguistic distinctiveness played a role in recognition, it was based on Republican-era descriptions. The only detailed studies of Mínjiā at that time were the unpublished results of Luó's 1942 fieldwork; given the importance of Luó and Fù's (2000[1954]) taxonomy of minority nationality languages for the conduct of the 1953-1958 nationalities identification survey, Luó's research may have played a key role in recognition of the Bái.

The Bái Language Research Group's report (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]) describes three dialects: A Southern variety typified in terms of the speech of Xiànguān, a Central variety typified in terms of the speech of Jīnhuá, and a Northern variety typified in terms of the speech of the town of Bìjiāng, over the western prefectural border in the Nùjiāng Lisù and Nù Autonomous Prefecture. The Research Group (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:26) characterizes the phonetic differences among these dialects as “relatively large” (*jiào dà* 较大), lexical differences as “relatively small” (*jiào xiǎo* 较小), and grammatical features as “basically identical” (*jīběn yízhì* 基本一致). However, this assessment should be understood in the context of the Stalinist theoretical framework, which did not predict large-scale variation within the language of a single nationality. Subsequent work on Bái, such as Allen (2004), has found substantial variation even over short distances.

Consistent with the Soviet model of status planning for minority languages, the Research Group chose the Southern variety as the “base dialect” and the speech of the regional political center, Xiànguān, as the “standard pronunciation” for the creation of a



Latin-alphabet orthography. However, prominent Bái intellectuals such as Mǎ (2008[1989]:1090) objected on the grounds that Bái people's long history of literacy in Chinese made a vernacular writing system unnecessary. As a result, language planners did not submit the orthography to the State Ethnic Affairs Committee for approval.

Yáng's (1957) edited volume of essays from the *Yúnnán Daily* newspaper on the origin and formation of the Bái nationality included several essays speculating on the classification of Bái. On the one hand, Dèng (1957) finds parallels between the lexicon and syntax of present-day Bái and similar features of Literary Chinese; from this, he concludes that Bái is a particularly conservative Chinese dialect. On the other hand, Gāo (1957) argues that, because he believes the Bái are descended from the Dī-Qiāng people reported in Chinese historical records dating from the Qín (221-207 B.C.) and Hàn (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) Dynasties, similarities between Bái and Chinese must be due to contact, rather than genetic inheritance. Gāo's assumption that different ethnonyms imply different languages illustrates both the uncritical regard for Literary Chinese records and the pervasiveness of Herderian ideologies in Chinese ethnology of the period.

Shortly before the Cultural Revolution, Xú and Zhào (1964) published a journal article containing the first systematic description of Bái. Focusing on the Jīnhuá variety, the authors describe the phonetics (*yǔyīn* 语音), including a list of phonemes; grammar (*yǔfǎ* 语法), including a list of word classes, examples of function morphemes, and typical syntactic constructions; and lexicon (*cíhuì* 词汇) focusing on derivational morphology. The authors compare Bái lexical items with items from Loloish languages to argue that Bái should be classified as Loloish, as well as with items from Literary Chinese to demonstrate how Bái has maintained Chinese forms from an early period.

### 3.2 Language classification studies

Since the resumption of academic research following the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, most work Bái has focused on classification; Zhào and Yáng (2009) provide a recent review of the extensive Chinese-language literature on this topic. All linguists who have worked on Bái agree that reflexes of Sinitic etyma make up a large proportion of the lexicon. From the perspective of cosmopolitan historical linguistics, therefore, the controversy concerns (1) whether these items are inherited from a common Sinitic ancestor or borrowed from a neighboring Sinitic language; and, assuming they are borrowed, (2) with which non-Sinitic language items in the native layer should be compared.

For Chinese linguists, however, classification (*xìshǔ* 系属) may or may not be identical with genetic affiliation as cosmopolitan historical linguists understand it. First, as I detail in this chapter, many Chinese linguists see a role for synchronic typology in classification, and some assert that diachronic changes in typology should be reflected in changes in synchronic classification. Second and relatedly, many Chinese linguists classify languages based not on shared innovations, which distinguish a language from both a higher-ranked (that is, historically previous) taxon and taxa at the same rank, but on the basis of synchronic features (*tèzhēng* 特征), which are shared with the higher-ranked taxon, and only distinguish a language from taxa at the same rank.<sup>11</sup> Third, like Gāo (1957) cited above, experts on non-Chinese minority languages often seek to

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<sup>11</sup> Perhaps for this reason, Chinese linguists are more consistent than cosmopolitan historical linguists in the terms they use to distinguish ranks of taxa; in this dissertation, I translate Chinese *yǔxì* 语系 as ‘stock,’ *yǔzú* 语族 as ‘family,’ *yǔqún* 语群 as ‘group,’ and *yǔzhī* 语支 as ‘branch.’

reconcile their classifications with references to non-Chinese groups in pre-modern and early modern Literary Chinese historical sources.

In this last respect, the debate over the classification of Bái tracks with broader ethnological discourses about the relationship between the Bái nationality and other minorities, on the one hand, and the Hàn majority, on the other. Classifying Bái as “Tibeto-Burman” or a mixed language represents the Bái as a “Tibeto-Burman” people; according to this narrative, the Sinitic element in Bái can only represent the borrowings of a relatively “less advanced” people from a “more advanced” Hàn culture. More subtly, the narrative portrays all users of Sinitic languages as bearers of Chinese culture, the Chinese language as essentially unitary.

By contrast, classifying Bái as “Sinitic” imperils the narrative by suggesting that Bái language users are not a relatively “advanced” national minority, but rather a “backward” group of Hàn who acculturated to local norms. Although the assumptions of the 1950s nationalities identification project are now open to debate, the institutional framework of regional ethnic autonomy that it underwrites is not. As Wáng (2004) exemplifies, many Bái scholars frame the PRC’s recognition of the Bái as a rebirth of national consciousness after repression and Sinicization in the Míng and Qīng Dynasties. In the context of Chinese political and academic discourses that continue to insist on the isomorphy of language and ethnicity, dissenting views about language classification risk interpretation as a challenge to China’s ethnic status quo.

In a survey of the literature on classification since the 1950s, Zhào (2008[2006]:245-253) identifies eight distinct positions, which I treat as three larger groups. First, there are five variations on the mainstream view that Bái belongs to the

Sino-Tibetan stock, Tibeto-Burman family. They are, in order from most to least specific: (1) Bái belongs to Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch, by far the most common position; (2) Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, but forms a separate “Baic” branch under a Southern group; (3) Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, under which it forms an otherwise unaffiliated Baic branch; (4) Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, but its further affiliation remains unproven; or (5) Bái is an independent language of the Tibeto-Burman family.

Second, there is the position, which is quite marginal, that (6) Chinese and Bái form a Sino-Baic family under Sino-Tibetan; in other words, Bái is more closely related to Chinese than to any Tibeto-Burman language. Finally, there are two slightly different versions of the position, also marginal, that Bái is a mixed language of some type: (7) Bái is the outcome of language contact between Chinese and some aboriginal language; and (8) Bái is the outcome of contact between Chinese and Bái and forms an independent Baic branch under Tibeto-Burman.

In assessing the linguistic arguments for these positions, I orient myself by Thomason and Kaufman’s (1988:202) criteria for testing a hypothesis of genetic relationship: (1) phonological correspondences, (2) reconstruction of phonological systems, (3) grammatical correspondences, (4) reconstruction of grammatical systems, (5) a subgrouping model for the languages, and (6) a diversification model. As Thomason (1996:7) points out, in practice few cosmopolitan historical linguists require grammatical correspondences in order to be satisfied of genetic relationship, and some are satisfied with lexical similarities rather than phonological correspondences. Nevertheless, as the following sections show, the scholarly controversy around Bái is not simply a matter of

how much evidence is necessary to prove genetic relatedness, but rather what sort of evidence and, more fundamentally, whether the goal is to prove genetic relatedness or merely to find places for languages in a synchronic taxonomy. The fact that the players in this debate share a common vocabulary of concepts, but attach them to different theoretical and methodological fundamentals, renders the controversy particularly opaque.

### *3.2.1 The “Loloish” position*

Luó and Fù (2000[1954]) was one of the first authoritative statements on the classification of minority nationalities following the 1949 establishment of the PRC. According to the authors’ classification, Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch. The authors state that, “Since the genetic classification of languages is from a historical perspective, it must be established on the basis of historical-comparative linguistics”; nevertheless, they continue (Luó & Fù 2000[1954]:329):

In our country there are some minority languages that have not undergone scientific investigation and analysis, or for which there is no preliminary research, as well as insufficient material and results of scientific comparison. Therefore, this first phase of classification is not yet conclusive, but merely provisional, and awaits the additions and revisions of our comrades in linguistic scientific work.<sup>12</sup>

As a heuristic for future research, therefore, the authors classify the minority languages of China typologically according to their synchronic features.

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<sup>12</sup> 语言系属的分类既然是根据历史的观点，它必须建立在历史比较语言学的基础上。因为我国有些少数民族语言还没经过科学的调查研究，或者没有初步的研究而还没有充足的材料和科学的比较结果，所以第一节的系属分类还不是结论性的，等待着语言科学工作同志们的补充和修订。

Luó and Fù (2000[1954]:329-331) define the Sino-Tibetan stock on the basis of five features: (1) phonemic tones, (2) monosyllabic roots, (3) lack of additive morphology; (4) nominal classifiers, and (5) fixed word order. They define the Tibeto-Burman family on the basis of these five features, plus two additional features: (A) SOV order and (B) [[modifier noun or pronoun] + [modified noun or pronoun]] order.

Ironically, this taxonomy actually fails to identify Bái as Tibeto-Burman. With respect to feature A, the authors themselves note, “Because the Mínjiā language has been influenced by Chinese, in many situations it already uses ‘subject-verb-object’ order” (Luó & Fù 2000[1954]:330).<sup>13</sup> However, if SOV order is diagnostic of the taxon, why does it include Bái in the first place? With respect to feature B, they ascribe modifier-modified order to Tibeto-Burman in order to distinguish it from the Dòng-Dǎi (Tai-Kadai) and Miáo-Yáo (Hmong-Mien) taxa at the same rank. However, [modifier + modified] order is a feature of Sinitic languages, as well. This leaves the conclusion that Luó and Fù’s classification of Bái as Tibeto-Burman is based on an analysis for which they provide no evidence.

Luó and Fù’s classification continues to be widely cited in China, although without their caveat about its preliminary status. In the first detailed description of Bái, Xú and Zhào (1964:321) state simply, “The Bái language belongs to the Sino-Tibetan stock, Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch.”<sup>14</sup> Zhào (2008[1982]) provides more detailed evidence: He compares a large number of lexical items in Bái with items of the same or similar meaning in Loloish languages or Yí proper, and compares a smaller number of grammatical features and forms. He also proposes six sound correspondences

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<sup>13</sup> 民家语因受汉语影响，在多数情况下，已采用“主语—谓语—宾语”的次序。

<sup>14</sup> 白语属汉藏族语系藏缅语族彝语支。

between Bái and Loloish languages. (Gài [1982] closely parallels Zhào [2008[1982]] in his argument and conclusions; however, neither author cites the other.)

Due to the phonotactics of the languages concerned, however, the forms Zhào compares are all CV monosyllables, and each of his correspondences involves only a single consonant. Moreover, in some sets the Bái segment corresponds to a segment that is the same in all of the Loloish languages, which suggests that they are more closely related to each other than they are to Bái. While such correspondences, if pervasive, might establish that Bái and the Loloish languages both belong to the Tibeto-Burman family, they do not prove that Bái belongs to the Loloish branch.

With respect to Zhào's grammatical comparisons, because of the analytic structure of the languages involved, he is unable to mobilize morphological evidence and must rely on syntactic similarities. He compares two structures in Bái and the Yí languages – the position of the [number + classifier] phrase after the noun, and the position of the gender morpheme after the noun in names of male and female animals – which appear exotic from the perspective of Standard Chinese, but which also occur in registers and dialects of Sinitic languages.<sup>15</sup>

Zhào's most extensive set of examples involves word order in certain marked constructions that differs from Chinese; he also discusses means for expressing grammatical meaning that are similar to Loloish, despite differences in forms. The fundamental problem is that, because Zhào (2008[1982]:558) assumes that grammatical structure is more or less stable, he believes that these similarities must be inherited,

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<sup>15</sup> The order [noun + [number + classifier]] occurs in Literary Chinese (Pulleyblank 1995:59), as well as in written registers of Standard Chinese, for example in the phrase *zhāo nǚgōng sānmíng* 招女工三名, literally 'hiring female workers three-CLF,' in employment advertisements. The order [noun + gender morpheme] occurs in Cantonese *gāi-gūng/gāi-lá*, literally 'chicken-male/chicken-female,' or 'rooster/hen' (Matthews & Yip 1994:49).

rather than due to contact. Absent this assumption, his examples look similar to Gumperz and Wilson's (1971) study of language contact in Kupwar, India, in which pervasive multilingualism has led to convergence at the level of structure, but not of form.

While Zhào appears to be familiar with the vocabulary of historical linguistics, he and Xú see genetic affiliation merely as one aspect of classification (Xú & Zhào 1984:2):

... on the question of the classification of Bái, the scholarly community have held different views and have not been able to reach a more or less unified conclusion. But in view of the fact that Bái does not have nasal finals, that vowels have the phenomenon of lax vs. tense opposition, as well as the grammatical means for the expression of grammatical meaning and the specific grammatical forms, Bái has quite a few points that are the same or similar to languages of the Loloish branch. From the perspective of the lexicon, Bái and the languages of the Loloish branch have a certain degree of cognate relationship. For this reason, we believe it is appropriate to classify Bái in the Sino-Tibetan stock, Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch.<sup>16</sup>

The intuitive appeal of the typological approach lies in the fact that genetically related languages usually also share some features in common; however, according to Thomason and Kaufman's (1988:202) criteria, it is not a viable basis for subgrouping according to present standards of validity in cosmopolitan historical linguistics.

Sūn (1988) explicitly recognizes the difference between typological and genetic classification; nevertheless, he (1988:68) justifies his classification of Bái on the Loloish branch with the statement, "... The essential characteristics of Bái, whether in lexicon,

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<sup>16</sup> ... 在白语系属问题上学术界一直聚讼纷纭，没有得出比较一致的结论。但自从没有鼻音韵尾，元音又有松、紧对立的现象，以及从表达语法意义的语法方式和具体的语法形式方面来看，白语有不少和彝语支语言相同或相近的地方。从词汇方面来看，白语和彝语支语言之间也有一定程度的同源关系。因此，我们认为，把白语归入汉藏语系藏缅语族彝语支是恰当的。



phonetics, or grammar, retain the most basic things of the languages of the Yi branch.”<sup>17</sup>  
In other words, he justifies his subgrouping on the basis of shared retentions, rather than shared innovations. Naturally, which characteristics count as most “essential” or “basic” is itself an important theoretical issue that requires explicit articulation.

Recently, Wú (2008[2000], 2009) has attempted to put the mainstream classification of Bái in the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch on a purely historical footing. In Wú (2008[2000]), he clearly articulates the difference between typological and genetic classification, and observes:

In the classification of Sino-Tibetan languages, and particularly in the classification of Tibeto-Burman languages, one often sees scholars use the synchronic features of related languages as evidence for the establishment of language branches or to resolve questions of classification; apparently, these scholars do not at all understand the principles of genetic classification.<sup>18</sup>

Wú (2008[2000]) dismisses typological evidence and attempts to demonstrate affiliation between Bái and Loloish languages based on sound correspondences alone; Wú (2009) expands upon this attempt by providing Bái reconstructions based on four dialects. Nevertheless, these attempts share many of the shortcomings of Zhào’s (2008[1982]) article. Wú’s correspondences are often limited to a single consonant of a single CV syllable and he does not go beyond comparing his reconstructed forms with individual lexical items from contemporary Loloish languages; Wú (2009:111) provides only one

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<sup>17</sup> ... 白语的本质特点，无论词汇、语音或是语法，还保存着彝语支语言最基本的东西。

<sup>18</sup> 在汉藏语的分类中，尤其是藏缅语的分类中常见到一些学者把亲属语的共时特征作为建立语支和解决语言归属问题的证据，看来这些学者并不了解谱系分类的原则。

set of three items as evidence that Bái is more closely related to Loloish than other branches of Tibeto-Burman.

According to Thomason and Kaufman's (1988:202) criteria, in order to prove that Bái is a member of the Loloish branch, it would be necessary to develop a reconstruction for the branch that includes the Bái data. Failing that, Wú might compare his Bái reconstructions with existing reconstructions for the Loloish branch (such as Bradley [1979]) and other branches, then develop a subgrouping model for Tibeto-Burman to show that Bái is closer to Loloish than to any other branch. In the absence of such evidence, the position that Bái is a member of the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch remains unproven.

### 3.2.2 Other “Tibeto-Burman” positions

Position (2), that Bái constitutes a separate Baic branch under a Southern Group, appears in Dài et al. (1990). In the tradition of Luó and Fù (2000[1954]), the authors do not commit themselves to the standards of cosmopolitan historical linguistics, averring that, “... one can only establish standards for classification on the basis of the facts of the Tibeto-Burman languages, and not by mechanically applying standards that are appropriate for other language stocks and families” (Dài et al. 1990:427).<sup>19</sup> The authors suggest that typological convergence through contact can lead to a change in classification, and they offer Bái as a prime example (Dài et al. 1990:426):

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<sup>19</sup> ... 其分类标准只能建立在藏缅语语言事实的基础上，而不能机械地照搬适合其他语系、语族语言的标准。

... some basic vocabulary and some ancient phones and grammatical features in Bái have a genetic relationship with the languages of Burmese-Yí branch, but due to the fact that Bái has been constantly in contact with Chinese for two thousand years, many Chinese elements entered into it; Luó Chángpéi [2000[1943]] believed that approximately seventy percent of the linguistic elements have been Sinicized. Precisely because the structure of Bái has undergone a relatively large change, in determining its affiliation, we must reconsider its position.<sup>20</sup>

As a compromise between typological and genetic classification, therefore, Dài et al. (1990:434) move Bái up a rank from its original position under the Loloish branch to constitute a sister branch of Burmese-Loloish under a Southern group of the Tibeto-Burman family.

Several studies argue position (3), that Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, under which it forms an otherwise unaffiliated Baic branch. Zhōu (2008[1978]) argues that, on the one hand, Bái cannot be a Chinese variety based on: (a) the use of postpositional function morphemes to mark the object in optional SOV and OSV word order, which does not occur in Chinese; (b) the position of modal auxiliaries after the main verb, rather than before it as in Chinese; (c) the order [noun + [number + classifier]] instead of Chinese [[number+classifier] + noun] (but see the counterexamples above); (d) ablaut to mark case in number in personal pronouns, which does not occur in Chinese; and (e) the minority, but still large, proportion of lexical items in Bái that cannot associated with a Sinitic etymon.

On the other hand, Zhōu argues that Bái cannot be a member of the Loloish branch based on: (a) SVO word order, instead of SOV in Loloish; (b) [adjective + noun]

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<sup>20</sup> ... 白语的一些基本词汇和一些古老的语音、语法特征都与缅彝语支有发生学上的关系，但由于两千多年来白语一直与汉语接触，移入了多汉语成分，罗常培先生认为它差不多有 70% 的语言成分汉化了。正是由于白语结构已发生较大的变化，因而在确定其系属时，就应该重新估价它的地位。

word order, instead of [noun + adjective] in Loloish; (c) [verb + [numeral + classifier] order, instead of [[numeral + classifier] + verb] order in Loloish (where the numeral and classifier quantify the action of the verb); (d) the position of modal verbs of Chinese origin before the verb, instead of typical [verb + modal verb] order in Loloish; and (e) the small number of obvious cognates shared between Bái and Loloish. Hé (2008[1992]) presents a substantially identical argument to Zhōu (2008[1978]). Yáng (2008[1993]) argues along the same lines, but provides several additional morphosyntactic differences between Bái and Chinese, on the one hand, and Bái and Loloish on the other.

Like Luó and Fù (2000[1954]) and Zhào (2008[1983]), the approach of Zhōu (2008[1978]), Hé (2008[1992]), and Yáng (2008[1993]) is typological, not historical. As Thomason and Kaufman (1988:205) emphasize, except for the cases of what they consider call “non-genetic transmission,” it is only possible to prove relatedness, not unrelatedness. Zhōu, Hé, and Yáng’s classification of Bái as Tibeto-Burman is based on a vague notion of Tibeto-Burman features; in fact, as Dryer (2008:20-21) has recently shown, there is substantial diversity in word order within Tibeto-Burman, and the cross-linguistically most anomalous aspect of Bái, the co-occurrence of VO order and [relative clause + noun] order, happens to be one that it shares with Sinitic languages, not Tibeto-Burman languages. Meanwhile, the authors’ exclusion of Bái as Chinese is based on supposed retention of some of these features, while their exclusion of Bái as Loloish is based on simple (and highly subjective) dissimilarities.

Dèng and Wang (2008[2003]) present a statistical analysis of lexical similarities among twelve putatively Tibeto-Burman languages and reconstructions of Old Chinese. On the one hand, while their analysis does not support subgrouping Bái with any of the

other languages, they find that of 106 basic vocabulary items, 40 are similar in Bái and Qiāng, and 34 are similar in Bái and Yí. On the other hand, while certain items are similar in Bái and Old Chinese, these items appear to have undergone the same sound changes in other Tibeto-Burman languages as in Bái, suggesting that they are borrowed into all of the languages. Therefore, the authors conclude that Bái constitutes an independent branch of Tibeto-Burman.

Yáng (2008[2006]) also undertakes an analysis of the Bái lexicon in order to determine the affiliation of proto-Bái. Although he discovers a number of correspondences with different language families, including Tibeto-Burman, Dòng-Dǎi (Tai-Kadai), Mon-Khmer, and Miáo-Yáo (Hmong-Mien), he concludes that, “We can be certain that Tibeto-Burman is the main genetic source of Bái.”<sup>21</sup> However, Yáng’s analysis does not reach the standards even of Wú (2008[2000], 2009): He uses present-day Bái dialect forms, rather than reconstructions, and he compares them with forms from a wide variety of languages on the basis of similarity, rather than establishing sound correspondences.

Cosmopolitan historical linguists Matisoff (1991), Bradley (1997), and Sagart (Sagart & Lee 1998; Lee & Sagart 2008) have argued variants of positions (3), (4) that Bái belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, but its further affiliation remains unproven, and (5) that Bái is an independent language of the Tibeto-Burman family, or even an independent language of the Sino-Tibetan stock. Matisoff (1991:484) states, “The very large percentage of loanwords in Bái ... has led to some rather wild speculations as to the genetic status of the language, though it is now clear that it is definitely T[ibeto]

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<sup>21</sup> 我们可以确定藏缅语是白语的主要发生学源头。

B[urman]. A large-scale Bai-Chinese dictionary, containing much archaic non-Sinicized vocabulary, is now in preparation by Zhao Yansun.” Matisoff’s proposed subgrouping places Bái on an independent Baic branch (Matisoff 1991:481).

Bradley (1997:37) considers the mainstream classification of Bái on the Loloish branch incorrect; however, he concedes that, “Due to a millennium of Chinese contact, with extensive borrowings from various Han dialects at various stages in their development, it is extremely difficult to determine the exact position of Bái within T[ibeto] B[urman].” Instead, he simply lists Bái alongside Nàxī as an outlier in his Northeast group of Tibeto-Burman.

Sagart and Lee (1998) analyze Chinese loanword strata in the Jiànchuān Bái data in Huáng et al.’s (1992) Tibeto-Burman lexicon, and compare 39 items of their “native” layer with Bradley’s (1979) proto-Loloish reconstructions; they conclude, “Bai is a T[ibeto] B[urman] language (prob[ably] Loloish) having borrowed heavily from Chinese” (cited in Matisoff 2001:2; cf. Lee & Sagart 2008:378). Matisoff (2001) replicates their analysis using the Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus (STEDT) database, which compiles Bái lexical sources from five sources and nine varieties. In light of data from non-Jiànchuān dialects, Matisoff finds Sagart and Lee’s (1998) proposed correspondences with Loloish less compelling, and he stands by his (1991) conclusion that, “All in all, [it is] best to regard Bai as a separate subgroup of T[ibeto-] B[urman], though perhaps fairly close to Loloish as would be reasonable geographically” (Matisoff 2001:39).

In Lee and Sagart’s (2008) revision of their (1998) analysis, they compare their “native” layer more widely with Tibeto-Burman, rather than merely with Loloish; they

find that, in a 100-item Swadesh list, 47 are reflexes of Sinitic etyma, while only 25 are reflexes of Tibeto-Burman etyma. Nevertheless, the authors maintain that Bái is genetically Tibeto-Burman because the Tibeto-Burman etyma are semantically “more basic” than the Sinitic etyma. A key example are the numbers ‘one’ and ‘two’: Both constitute doublets in which the Sinitic reflex appears in more formal contexts, while the Tibeto-Burman reflex appears in more vernacular contexts. Lee and Sagart (2008:382) conclude that Bái disproves Starostin’s (1995a:395) claim that a language cannot borrow more than 15 percent of a one-hundred-word Swadesh list.

Lee and Sagart’s discussion raises the issue of how to determine what is most “basic” in a list of basic vocabulary, as well as how to define “formal” and “vernacular” contexts; in addition, they devote little discussion to the 28 items which they do not identify with any etymon at all. However, the authors acknowledge a larger methodological difficulty that, “Given the lack of wholly explicit systems of reconstruction for either Tibeto-Burman or Sino-Tibetan (Sagart 2006), it has not been possible to constrain our study of the T[ibeto-] B[urman] lexicon in Bai using sound correspondences between Bai and a reconstructed TB or S[ino-] T[ibetan] pronunciation” (Lee & Sagart 2008:377).

There are also a number of philological studies that examine the presence of “Old Chinese” lexical items in Bái. Hàn (2008[1991]), Yáng (2008[1994]), and Xī (2008[1998]) each attempt to provide etymologies for Bái lexical items by associating them with characters from the Literary Chinese canon. These studies are not linguistic in their orientation or methods; however, because these scholars treat reflexes of Chinese

etyma as “loanwords,” they implicitly reproduce the mainstream view that Bái is a non-Sinitic language.

### 3.2.3 “Sinitic” positions

Given the consensus that the majority of the Bái lexicon, and perhaps a majority of the basic vocabulary, is Sinitic, it is somewhat surprising that relatively few scholars have seriously pursued position (6) – that Bái is most closely related to present-day varieties of Chinese. Like Hàn, Yáng, and Xī, Yáng (2008[1989], 2008[1990]) presents a philological, rather than linguistic, analysis that focuses on identifying Sinitic etymologies for Bái lexical items. Unlike the authors cited above, however, he argues that these items reflect a shared genetic inheritance, rather than borrowing from Sinitic into a non-Sinitic language.

Benedict’s (1972, 1982, cited in Thurgood 1985:9-10) phylogenetic proposals for Sino-Tibetan suggest that proto-Bái and proto-Chinese were sister branches of Sinitic. Starostin (1995b) reaches the same conclusion: Based on his proposed sound correspondences, he argues that the ancestor of Bái split from Old Chinese between the second century B.C. and the fourth century A.D. He supports this view with a glottochronological comparison of Bái with Standard Chinese and the relatively distant Sinitic Fúzhōu (a Mǐn variety) and Hakka (Kèjiā).

Among linguists in China, Zhèngzhāng (2008[1999]) is the most prominent advocate of the Sinitic position. Like Starostin, he argues from proposed sound correspondences that the ancestor of Bái split from Old Chinese at an early period, making Bái a sister language to all present-day Sinitic varieties. However, Zhèngzhāng



goes on to claim that all of the items on a 100-item Swadesh list are reflexes of Sinitic etyma, and proposes etymologies by supplying characters from the Literary Chinese canon; indeed, he claims that he can provide characters for every item in Xú and Zhào's (1984) grammatical sketch of Bái. Zhèngzhāng counters those, such as Zhōu (2008[1978]) and Zhào (2008[1982]), who cite structural differences between Bái and Chinese in support of the Tibeto-Burman position, by proposing parallels between some of the Bái structures and structures in Old Chinese and present-day Chinese dialects. Zhèngzhāng (2009) argues his claim that the Middle Chinese *lái* 来 and *yǐ* 以 initials are reflected by a rather large range of different sounds in Bái.

Yuán (2008[2004]) has taken a somewhat different approach in support of the Sinitic position. Yuán examines “semantic deep-level correspondences” (*yǔyì shēncéng duìyìng* 语义深层对应) in Bái, Tibeto-Burman, and Chinese. He finds 18 correspondences between Bái and Chinese, and 13 between Bái and Tibeto-Burman; on this basis, he claims a closer genetic affiliation between Bái and Chinese. However, because Yuán does not define “semantic deep-level correspondences,” it is unclear how he chose the items for comparison, or what advantage they have over standard tools like the Swadesh list. Furthermore, although Yuán uses a phonologization of the categories of the Middle Chinese rhyme tables for his comparisons with Chinese, like Zhào (2008[1983]) and Yáng (2008[2006]), he compares contemporary Bái forms with Tibeto-Burman forms from a number of languages without establishing sound correspondences.

Proposals in support of the Sinitic position have not gained much support. With respect to the cosmopolitan scholarship, both Benedict and Starostin have received criticism for using idiosyncratic methods outside of the mainstream of historical

linguistics. As Thurgood (1985:13-15) details, Sino-Tibetanists have criticized Benedict for supporting exact phonetic correspondences with inexact, though close, semantic correspondences, as well as for his “teleo-reconstructions,” in which he proposes provisional reconstructions for whole linguistic stocks without first presenting reconstructions for lower-level subgroupings. With respect to Starostin, Matisoff (2000) rehearses the many problems with glottochronology in general, and its application to Sinitic and Tibeto-Burman in particular. As for Zhèngzhāng, the iconoclastic nature of his argument seems to be undercut by the ambition of his claims; also, as Wāng (2005) points out, neither Starostin nor Zhèngzhāng fully address why, if Bái is a sister language of Chinese, Chinese loanwords in Bái demonstrate the stratification which Lee and Sagart (2008) describe.

#### 3.2.4 “Mixed language” positions

Given the difficulty of clearly demonstrating the Tibeto-Burman positions (1)-(5) or the Sinitic position (6), it is not surprising that observers beginning with Lǐ (1974[1916]) have split the difference with variants of positions (7) and (8), that Bái is the outcome of language contact. The difference between these two positions is largely a function of different theoretical frameworks. Position (7) describes Luó’s (2000[1943]) argument that Bái is the outcome of contact between Chinese and an aboriginal language; Luó does not make the claim that the aboriginal language was itself “Bái,” or any claim about the genetic affiliation of the outcome of contact. By contrast, position (8) captures Lǐ’s (1992, 2002) argument that Bái is the outcome of contact between Chinese and Bái,

and that the outcome of this contact constitutes an independent branch of the Tibeto-Burman language family.

Lǐ (1992) is a largely philological attempt to identify etymologies for each of the basic numbers in Bái. He finds that similarities between the Bái and Chinese numbers ‘one’ through ‘five’ may be due to shared inheritance from Sino-Tibetan, and that ‘six’ reflects a Tibeto-Burman etymon, but that the Bái numbers ‘seven’ through ‘ten’ reflect Sinitic etyma. Based on this small, but semantically “basic” sample, Lǐ concludes that Bái is a mixed language. (By comparison, Lee and Sagart [2008] find ‘one’ and ‘two’ are Tibeto-Burman, but ‘three’ through ‘ten’ are Sinitic.) Lǐ (2002) expands upon this conclusion to catalog phonetic, lexical, and grammatical similarities between Bái and Sinitic varieties, on the one hand, and Tibeto-Burman languages, on the other; he argues that synchronic variation between these features demonstrates the mixed nature of Bái.

Chén (1992) proposes a “mixed” origin of three “tense” /44, 42, 21/ tones in Bái.<sup>22</sup> Comparing Bái lexical items with Loloish items and Chinese items, Chén finds a two-way correspondence between each Bái tone, a particular reconstructed Loloish tonal category, and a particular Middle Chinese tonal category. (I provide a brief introduction to the Middle Chinese categories in chapter 6.) In two cases, the Bái tone and Loloish category correspond to the Middle Chinese Entering category; in the third case, they correspond to the Lower Level category. Chén argues that these correspondences indicate

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<sup>22</sup> In this dissertation, I represent phonemic tone using Chao’s (2006[1930]) system, which is standard in China. The total pitch range is divided into four equal parts, with 5 as the highest pitch and 1 as the lowest; tones are represented by writing the number of the initial pitch followed by the number of the final pitch. The system accommodates more complex contours by indicating each maximum in sequence, such as /214/ the realization of the Middle Chinese Rising category as the falling-rising “third” tone of Standard Chinese. My representation of Bái tones follows Xú and Zhào (1984:12), with the innovation in Wiersma (2003) of representing the tense high level tone as /66/. While the use of six points of contrast violates Chao’s original principles, /66/ reflects the higher pitch associated with tense phonation, and allows for convenient representation of all eight tones exclusively in terms of pitch. A fuller review of phonetic research on Bái tones appears below, and a list of tones appears in appendix B.

the nativization of Sinitic material to existing Loloish tonal categories, and concludes that Bái is the outcome of contact between Loloish and Sinitic.

The corollary to Thomason and Kaufman's (1988:202) criteria for proving genetic relatedness is their position that language contact, beyond a certain degree of intensity, renders the comparative method and reconstruction misleading. Thomason and Kaufman (1988:3) use the term "nongenetic" to designate cases of language transmission that differ so much from the default assumption of historical linguistics – namely, that all subsystems of a language pass as a unit from one speaker to another – as to render the standard methods of the discipline impossible to apply.

Thomason and Kaufman's position is a quite conservative statement on the theory and methods of cosmopolitan historical linguistics. First, it is strictly historical: It avoids the mixture of genetic and typological classification prevalent in Chinese discussions of Tibeto-Burman languages since Luó and Fù (2000[1954]), and therefore excludes the possibility that the genetic classification of a language can change, as in Dài et al. (1990). Second, it limits the claims of historical linguistics to those languages that match its assumptions. Third, it theorizes the outcomes of different scenarios of non-genetic transmission, which yields relatively precise definitions for terms such as "pidgin" and "creole."

At first blush, Bái seems to be a good candidate for mixed language status: By some estimates 70 percent of the lexicon, including 47 percent of basic vocabulary, are reflexes of Sinitic etyma; meanwhile, as many as fifteen percent of basic vocabulary can be compared with Tibeto-Burman reconstructions, and certain phonological and morpho-syntactic structures, appear distinctly non-Sinitic. However, according to the procedures

set out in Thomason and Kaufman (1988:205), to prove change through language contact, it is not enough to show that a language possesses unusual features; instead, it is necessary to identify a plausible source of those features in an existing language or language family.

On the one hand, comparisons between Bái and Chinese yield robust sound correspondences for a significant portion of basic vocabulary, and interdialectal borrowing might explain the stratification detailed in Lee and Sagart (2008). As for structure, certain features of Bái appear non-Sinitic; however, as we have seen with respect to Zhao (2008[1982]), some of this evidence rests on an excessively narrow understanding of “Chinese.” On many, if not most, points Bái structures are identical to Sinitic varieties in general, and to Jiànchuān Mandarin in particular. This corresponds neither to Thomason and Kaufman’s (1988:205) “Type II” scenario, in which vocabulary matches but not structure, nor to their “Type III” scenario, in which structure matches but not vocabulary. Instead, it comes closest to their “Type I” scenario, which suggests genetic relationship.

On the other hand, none of the scholars who have argued the Tibeto-Burman positions (1-5) or the mixed language positions (7-8) compare Bái to any single Tibeto-Burman language; instead, they compare Bái lexical items, or classes of items, with items from a variety of languages. Methodologically more sophisticated work, such as Matisoff (2001) and Lee and Sagart (2008), which use reconstructed forms, has identified only a small number of possible cognates. Moreover, as Lee and Sagart (2008) point out, Tibeto-Burman has not been established on the basis of a body of shared innovations, and there are not yet convincing phonological reconstructions for the family, let alone

grammatical reconstructions; therefore, identifying the putatively “non-Chinese” structural features in Bái as “Tibeto-Burman” is, at the very least, premature.

More fundamentally, the eagerness of historical linguists in China to categorize Bái as Tibeto-Burman or as a mixed language rests on two questionable assumptions: (1) that relatively less “advanced” peoples (in Morgan’s [1985[1877]] sense) borrow lexicon exclusively from more “advanced” peoples, and (2) that structure is resistant to borrowing. Chinese scholars (for example, Xú & Zhào 1984:2) often invoke the first assumption to explain the large proportion of Sinitic lexicon in Bái; more subtly, it excludes from consideration the otherwise plausible scenario that Bái is a Sinitic variety whose users borrowed lexical items from some non-Sinitic language.

Taking the second assumption as a point of departure, scholars such as Zhào (2008[1982]), Dài et al. (1990), and Lǐ (2002) proceed as if the presence of several “non-Chinese” structural features in Bái puts a genetic relationship with Sinitic out of the question. However, as Thomason and Kaufman (1988) have shown, structural features – particularly the word-order features often mobilized to classify Bái as Tibeto-Burman – are easily borrowed in situations of intense language contact, and need not necessarily interrupt genetic transmission.

### *3.2.5 Other historical-linguistic studies*

Several studies focus on historical developments in Bái while remaining agnostic as to its ultimate genetic affiliation. Dell (1981), published in French, is the first Western monograph on Bái, and one of the first studies to appear after the Cultural Revolution. (Contemporary reviews in English appear as Davidson [1982] and Thurgood [1982].) The

author describes the synchronic phonology of the Dàlǐ variety, compares it diachronically with Middle Chinese, and provides samples of running text and an extensive word-list.

Dell's discussion of Bái morphosyntax is largely based on Xú and Zhào's (1964) work.

Thurgood, in his (1982:732) review, asserts that “D[ell] establishes beyond doubt that Bái is not simply a Chinese dialect; further, the assembled material clearly suggests not just a Tibeto-Burman but a specifically Loloish affiliation ...” However, although Dell (1981:108-109) distinguishes between “Chinese loanwords” (*emprunts chinois*) and “autochthonous forms” (*formes autochtones*), he is quite clear that he is using the terms as shorthand: The former describes forms that he is able to place in regular phonological correspondence with a Middle Chinese item of the same or similar meaning, while the latter describes forms for which he cannot establish such a correspondence. Dell (1981:109) observes that no one has yet provided any convincing argument concerning the affiliation of Bái; if in the future Bái proves to be most closely related to Sinitic, he suggests simply reading his term “oldest Chinese loanwords” (*emprunts chinois les plus anciens*) as “original Chinese base layer” (*fonds chinois originel*).

Wiersma's (1990) University of California Berkeley Ph.D. dissertation is the first English-language monograph on Bái. Wiersma largely replicates the organization of Dell's (1981) book on the basis of new data from Central varieties. She provides a synchronic description of Bái phonology, compares it diachronically with Middle Chinese, and provides samples of running text. However, Wiersma focuses more attention than Dell on the origin of marked phonation types, and explicitly compares her data with Tibeto-Burman and Loloish forms; she also provides a much more detailed analysis of Bái morphosyntax based on Xú and Zhào (1984) and her Jīnhuá data.

Like Dell (1981), Wiersma declines to take a position on the ultimate genetic affiliation of Bái, instead suggesting (Wiersma 1990:147):

The perceptual salience of phonation types associated with the tones of Jianchuan Bai, as well as their lexical frequency and distribution, their correspondences with the literary system of traditional Chinese tonal categories, and their relevance to comparisons of lexical morphemes on the Tibeto-Burman side all support speculation that the Bai phonation-type contrasts represent a clash between sound change processes that were already in progress in two contact languages at the time the Bai language became distinct from its ancestral language state or coalesced around these two source languages ...

Wiersma (1990:39-41) briefly cites Thomason and Kaufman (1988:10-11) regarding the importance of social factors for the outcomes of language contact; given the lack of information about the circumstances of early Bái-Chinese contact, however, Wiersma declines to categorize Bái as a case of either “normal” or “interrupted” genetic transmission. Instead, she proposes that a salient question is the degree to which the speech community has been historically stratified by Chinese literacy, creating longstanding contact among social varieties of Bái defined by substrate influence from non-Sinitic languages, on the one hand, and superstrate influence from Literary Chinese, on the other. Rather provocatively, Wiersma suggests that if Bái language users have not historically formed a “speech community,” identifying a genetic affiliation for Bái as “a language” is theoretically and methodologically problematic.

Although many of the Chinese scholars cited above implicitly invoke the principles of the comparative method in their taxonomic proposals, it is only since the turn of the twenty-first century that scholars have applied the principles of historical reconstruction to Bái. Yuán (2008[2002]) proposes reconstruction of proto-Bái finals on



the basis of four varieties of Bái. More ambitious is Wāng (2006), the published version of his (2004) City University of Hong Kong Ph.D. dissertation. On the basis of basic vocabulary collected in the field from nine Bái varieties, Wāng provides a full reconstruction of proto-Bái segments and tones, as well as a partial reconstruction of Bái morphosyntax. He then compares his reconstructions with Baxter's (1992) transcription of Middle Chinese and Li's (1980[1971]) reconstruction of Old Chinese.

Applying an “inexplicability principle” that related forms that cannot be explained in terms of the phonology of the donor language are unlikely to be borrowed, and thus must be inherited from a common ancestor, Wāng finds that Sino-Bái forms in the oldest layer are cognates. Applying a “rank theory” that holds that a preponderance of related forms in the least borrowable 100 of a 200-item Swadesh list suggests genetic affiliation over language contact, he confirms his finding that the forms were inherited from a common ancestor to Old Chinese and Proto-Bái. Wāng concludes that his analysis casts doubt on the mainstream assumption that the Sinitic material in Bái represents the outcome of borrowing into a non-Sinitic language.

Nevertheless, Wāng is cautious about embracing a “Sinitic” affiliation for Bái. Wāng (2006:172-174) points out that all of the competing proposals for the genetic affiliation of Bái take the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis as their point of departure; however, because Tibeto-Burman has not been established on the basis of a body of shared innovations, a primary split between Chinese and all of the other languages in the stock remains unproven. Indeed, scholars such as van Driem (1997, 2001) and Starostin (1995b) have proposed that particular languages for which a Tibeto-Burman affiliation is currently uncontroversial may be most closely related to Chinese. While Wāng

recognizes problems with these proposals as well (citing, for example, Matisoff 2000), he suggests that a definitive statement on the genetic affiliation on Bái will have to await further research on the higher-level phylogeny of Sino-Tibetan.

### *3.2.6 Evaluation*

Of the eight positions scholars have taken with respect to the classification of Bái, none is particularly well supported. The mainstream position (1) that Bái is a member of the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch derives from Lǐ (1968[1937]) and Luó and Fù's (2000[1954]) preliminary typological classifications; with the exception of Wú (2008[2000], 2009), there have been no attempts to establish the relationship on the basis of strictly historical evidence. The less specific Tibeto-Burman positions (2-5) are likewise unproven, and will remain so until Tibeto-Burman itself is established as a family under Sino-Tibetan on the basis of a body of shared innovations.

By contrast, the marginal position (6) that Bái is a Sinitic variety is supported by robust phonological correspondences in the basic vocabulary, although these correspondences demonstrate stratification and supporters' methods have come in for criticism on other grounds. Finally, positions (7, 8) that Bái is the outcome of language contact seem promising on their face, but supporters have failed clearly to identify source languages, or to consider the possibility of changes through borrowing and interference through shift/imperfect learning that nevertheless permit the demonstration of genetic affiliation.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to defend any position on the classification of Bái. Indeed, it would require a monograph-length work to marshal

compelling evidence for any of them. More fundamentally, language classification occurs within particular theoretical and methodological frameworks: The typological classifications of some Chinese linguists simply cannot be falsified using the methods of cosmopolitan historical linguistics – particularly given the assertion of scholars like Dài et al. (1990) that the criteria for classification may vary from language family to language family.

Personally, I speculate that waves of immigration from Sinitic-speaking areas to present-day Bái-speaking areas, starting from the Míng Dynasty until the present day, gave rise to a situation like that described in Thomason and Kaufman (1988:45, 115), in which borrowing and interference through shift/imperfect learning occurred simultaneously. This situation plausibly involved multiple Sinitic varieties and multiple non-Sinitic languages, some of which have disappeared. Given the number of variables involved, and the lack of historical documentation, I consider all claims about genetic affiliation premature.

### *3.3 Descriptive, typological, and formal studies*

Given the role of synchronic typology in language classification in China, the distinction between descriptive and historical work is not always clear: Many studies describe synchronic features of Bái with an eye to supporting or challenging taxonomic positions. In the following discussion, I begin by reviewing the major descriptive works on Bái since the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. I then focus on descriptive work in the areas of phonetics and phonology (which are also not always clearly distinguished), morphosyntax, semantics, pragmatics, and the lexicon.

Xú and Zhào (1984) is a monograph-length version of Xú and Zhào (1964) published after the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution. This work is the Bái edition of the “brief sketches” (*jiǎnzhì* 简) published in the 1980s for each officially recognized minority nationality language in China, and it remains the standard reference work on the language. In comparison to their (1964) article, Xú and Zhào include much more extensive exemplification, a description of the 1982 version of the Bái alphabetic orthography, and a complete glossary. Zhào and Xú (1996) is the first (and still the only) Bái-Chinese dictionary, and contains just over 14,000 entries. The authors present the dictionary, including a Bái-language introduction, in the 1982 orthography; they detail the 1993 revisions to the orthography in an appendix.

Hú and Duàn (2001) is the “dialect” (*fāngyán* 方言) volume of the Dàlǐ Prefecture gazetteer. It includes descriptions of each of the officially recognized languages spoken in the prefecture, including Chinese, Bái, Yí, and Lìsù. Like Xú and Zhào (1964, 1984), the authors provide useful descriptions of the phonology of Bái and Chinese on a county-by-county basis; their description of “Dàlǐ Prefecture Chinese” grammar and lexicon is contrastive from the point of view of Standard Chinese, while their description of Bái grammar and lexicon presents the speech of Yángcén. Wáng (2001) describes the Xīshān variety, and Dài and Zhào (2009) describe the Zhàozhuāng variety.

The most accessible English-language description of Bái is Wiersma (2003), prepared for Thurgood and LaPolla’s (2003) handbook of Sino-Tibetan languages. Wiersma closely follows Xú and Zhào’s (1964, 1984) descriptions of the Jīnhuá variety, but supplements their analysis with insights from her own (1990) fieldwork and the cosmopolitan literature on Sinitic and Tibeto-Burman languages.

Allen (2004), which appears bilingually in English and Chinese, reports the results of the Bái Dialect Survey Project, conducted in 1999-2002 by SIL's East Asia Group and the Yúnnán provincial government. Using wordlists and a recorded-text-test methodology, which quantifies the accuracy with which users of one variety answer questions about a story told in another, Allen's team surveyed mutual intelligibility among Bái language users in seven population centers. Although the survey largely confirms the Bái Language Research Group's (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]) division of Bái into three major dialects, Allen finds that mutual intelligibility between the Northern and Central/Southern dialects is nonexistent, and that mutual intelligibility between various Central and Southern dialects ranges from a high of 93 percent to a low of 25 percent. Because the variety of the seat of Ěryuán County (located north of Xiànguān and south of Jīnhuá) is intelligible to the largest number of speakers, Allen proposes it as a good candidate for standardization; however, he recognizes that previous attempts at standardization have been unsuccessful, and that the Ěryuán variety has no particular historical or social prestige.

### *3.3.1 Phonetics and phonology*

Classification studies such as Zhào (2008[1982]) have cited a phonation type contrast in Bái, often described with the phonological category “tense” and “lax,” as evidence for classification with the Loloish languages. Descriptive work such as Xú and Zhào (1964, 1984) describes six of the eight Bái tones as three lax tones /55, 33, 31/ with three tense counterparts /66, 44, 42/ (the remaining tense /21/ tone and the remaining lax

/35/ tone do not have lax or tense counterparts); the 1958 and 1982 phonemic orthographies included a grapheme corresponding to a [+Tense] feature.

Maddieson and Ladefoged's (1985) aerodynamic and acoustical study "tense" and "lax" in four minority languages of southwest China did not include Bái; however, they find that "lax" vowels in each of these languages have greater oral airflow, and that in "lax" vowels the fundamental has greater amplitude relative to the second harmonic than in "tense" vowels. Nevertheless, the authors also find that the phonetic parameters of the vowels differed among each other on a number of phonetic parameters, such as voice onset time and overall pitch. Moreover, "tense" vowels in two of the languages derive from former checked syllables, while "lax" vowels in the other two languages derive from the devoicing of previously voiced consonants; in other words, "tense" is marked in the first pair, but "lax" is marked in the second pair. Therefore, the authors urge caution in the application of the terms "tense" and "lax" as anything more than "phonological shorthand."

On the basis of spectrographic analysis, Lǐ and Edmondson (2008[1990]), Lǐ (2008[1992]), and Edmondson and Lǐ (1994) describe Bái phonemic tones as the intersection of five pitch trajectories with three "settings," or differential adjustment of three muscle groups that produce distinct voice qualities. These settings include: (1) "glottal stricture settings," which results in three types of glottal vibration: "modal voice," "breathy voice," and "harsh voice"; (2) "global settings," which describe the tensing of the entire vocal apparatus, producing "tense" and "lax" voice quality; and (3) "supralaryngeal settings," which describe the raising or lowering of the velum that result in oral or nasal voice quality. The authors describe the combinations of pitch trajectory

and voice quality settings that actually occur in the Bái lexicon, and observe that the salient features for some tones is pitch, while for other tones it is voice quality.

On the basis of laryngeoscopic imaging, Edmondson et al. (2008[2000]) and Esling and Edmondson (2002) describe the phenomenon of “tense” phonation in Tibeto-Burman languages as constriction of the supraglottal cavity involving the aryepiglottic sphinctering mechanism, formed by the epiglottis in the back, the apexes of the arytenoid cartilages in the front, and the aryepiglottic folds on the sides. In Bái, they report that the “tense” feature is principally achieved by tightening the ventricular folds within the sphincteric tube.

In the high-level (tense /66/, lax /55/) and mid-level (tense /44/, lax /33/) tones, the salient feature is pitch: Both the tense and lax tones have modal voice quality. In the mid-falling (tense /42/, lax /31/) tones, the salient feature is voice quality: the tense tone has harsh quality, while the lax tone has breathy quality consistent with a relative lack of airflow constriction. As for the low-falling tone /21/, which occurs singly and is usually described as “tense,” the pitch trajectory is too low to support a harsh vs. breathy contrast; therefore, the tone occurs singly with harsh voice quality consistent with extreme supraglottal stricture, along with trilling at the aryepiglottic border of the larynx tube which produces a distinctive “growling” quality. They describe the remaining mid-rising tone /35/, which also occurs singly and is usually described as “lax,” as having “harsh to modal” voice quality.

Edmondson, Esling, and their associates worked exclusively on Central varieties of Bái. Allen and Allen (2003) report their spectrographic study of tones among users of the Southern variety of Xīzhōu, located a few kilometers north of Dàlǐ Old City. As the

authors note, the variety is often taken to be typical of the Southern dialect area; however, the Xǐzhōu variety has never been fully described. Southern varieties differ from Central varieties in having a second lax mid-falling /32/ tone; lexical items with this tone in Southern varieties have the tense mid-falling /42/ tone in Central varieties. In Xǐzhōu, Allen and Allen were unable to find any acoustical difference between the /32/ tone and the mid-falling /31/ tone, although their consultants insisted they could perceive one. The authors also describe differences in the realization of pitch and voice quality of the /42/ tone category in Xǐzhōu compared with neighboring areas.

### *3.3.2 Morphosyntax and discourse*

As I discuss above, scholars such as Zhōu (2008[1978]), Hé (2008[1992]), and Yáng (2008[1993]) mobilize word order typology, along the lines of Greenberg (1963), to justify their classifications of Bái. Descriptive studies by Fù (2008[1987]), Xí (2008[1988]), Wáng (2008), Lǐ (2009), and Chén (2009) suffer from a similar reliance on Greenberg's (1963) syntactic categories and a narrow conception of what is typically "Chinese."

Zhào and Lǐ's (2008[2005]) discussion of word order in the Xīyáo variety is noteworthy for incorporating consideration of discourse factors; they note the presence of three "surface" word orders in Bái, but interpret SOV and OSV order as object topicalization to conclude that the basic word order in Bái is SVO. Zhào (2009) further develops this analysis to characterize Bái as a "topic-prioritizing" language. The author describes the distribution of four topic and focus particles and provides examples of their



discourse functions, which include logical and temporal subordination at the sentence level, as well as evaluative functions at higher levels of discourse organization.

Zhōu (2008[1978]) argues that Bái cannot be Sinitic based on the use of the postpositions *nox* and *ngvl* to mark objects in optional SOV and OSV word order. Fù and Xú (2008), a rare study of Bái morphosyntax published in English for a cosmopolitan audience, focuses on this phenomenon as a case of grammaticalization. Formally, the function morpheme *nox* is identical to the postposition ‘on,’ while the function morpheme *ngvl* is identical to the postposition meaning ‘near’ or ‘around.’ However, when used as object markers, they pick out different semantic roles: *nox* is used both for the theme or recipient, while *ngvl* is used for source, goal, or addressee. Fù and Xú conclude that the present distribution of the two function morphemes derives from a relative interpretation of *nox* ‘on,’ which involves physical contact, as ‘nearer/central location or participant’ and of *ngvl* ‘near,’ which does not involve physical contact, as ‘further/peripheral location or participant.’

Zhōu 2008[1978] also argues that Bái cannot be Sinitic on the grounds that nominal classifiers typically follow nouns, rather than preceding them as in Chinese. Wáng (2008[2002]a, 2008[2005]b) addresses the distribution and syntactic behavior of “measure words,” which includes nominal classifiers and measure words proper, to conclude that measure words are “late” to develop in Tibeto-Burman languages, and that measure words are relatively “developed” in Bái. Again focusing on the Xīyáo variety, Zhào (2008[2005]) describes classifiers, identical in form to nouns, which when used as classifiers describe the shape or situation of the head noun. Both Wáng and Zhào speculate on the role of measure words in marking definite and indefinite reference.

Another feature in which Bái appears to differ from Sinitic varieties is verbal ablaut morphology. Duàn (2002) reports that, in the Hèqìng variety of Bái, ablaut changes the valency of two verbs ('open' and 'shake') from intransitive to transitive, and is also used to negate 26 common verbs. There are several ablaut classes, which describe the rounding of unrounded high and front and back vowels, the replacement of high-mid and low-mid front vowels with /u/, and the infixing of /u/ between the initial and the rhyme elsewhere. Duàn notes that these verbs can also be negated using analytic structures. Allen and Allen (2008[1999]) report similar ablaut morphology in the Xìzhōu variety, but note that the phenomenon is limited to a few frequent verbs: 'to see,' 'to know,' and 'to be able.' Wáng's (2008[2006]) comparison of negation in the Northern, Central, and Southern varieties confirms the restricted role of ablaut negation compared with analytic negation strategies using negation morphemes with transparent Sinitic etymologies.

Yáng's (c. 2009) Yúnnán University M.A. thesis provides the first comprehensive discussion of sentence-final pragmatic morphemes in the Jīnhuá variety. Yáng's work is notable for utilizing a corpus of naturally occurring linguistic data; unfortunately, because she limits most of her examples to two interactional turns, it is difficult to evaluate her classification of the pragmatic effects of various morphemes.

### 3.3.3 *Lexicon*

Huì (2008[1988]) provides an overview of the Bái lexicon. Operating on the assumption that Bái and Chinese are genetically distinct, the author characterizes native Bái lexical items as polysyllabic, derived morphologically from monosyllabic roots. Due

to intense contact with Chinese, however, he asserts that there are a number of lexical items that consist of combinations of Chinese morphemes with Bái content or function morphemes. The difficulty with Hui's analysis is that he has no principled basis for distinguishing between "native" and "borrowed" items. Some items that Hui identifies as native Bái have been compared by other scholars to Sinitic etyma; for example, Hui considers *gux* 'old' a native morpheme, but Wāng (2006:209) compares it to Sinitic *jiù* 旧.

### *3.4 Socially oriented studies*

Stalin (1950) committed Soviet and Chinese linguists to an approach that, by casting Saussure's homogeneity of the speech community and Herder's equation between language and the nation in Marxist theoretical terms, made it virtually impossible to discuss language variation. In contrast to mid-twentieth-century structuralist and generative approaches in the West, however, the Stalinist framework actively endorsed scholarship in support of state language planning, as well as applied linguistic research to assist speakers of minority languages in acquiring Standard Chinese.

Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Stalinist framework has receded in importance, and Chinese linguists increasingly have access to cosmopolitan research. Nevertheless, sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology remain marginal subdisciplines in the PRC; most self-described sociolinguistic research has focused on urban varieties of Chinese on the model of Labov's (1972a, 1972b) variationist program (for example, Xú 2006), while socially oriented research on minority languages continues to occur largely within the framework of language planning and language in education. Comprehensive

overviews of Bái language planning appear in English in Wáng (2004) and in Chinese in Kai (2008[1994]), Xī (2008[1997]), and Zhāng (2001, 2008); I discuss this literature in depth in connection with my discussion of the Bái alphabetic orthography in chapter 7.

### *3.4.1 Language in education*

With respect to language in education, Zhào's (2008[1981]) contrastive analysis of the Jīnhuá variety and Standard Chinese builds upon Xú and Zhào's (1964) fieldwork to describe phonological features of Bái that might contribute to difficulties in students' acquisition of Standard Chinese. The UNESCO-funded mother tongue literacy program at Xīzhōng prompted empirical studies: Yáng (2008[1994]) emphasizes the improvement in education outcomes associated with mother-tongue literacy, while Yáng and Xī (2008[1993]:1168) articulate four lessons from the program for Bái-Chinese bilingual education: "First Bái, then Chinese; Bái, Chinese equally important; bring Chinese through Bái; understand Bái and Chinese."<sup>23</sup> Writing after the end of the program in the early 1990s, Lǐ (1999) argues that implementing bilingual education requires reforming "backward" concepts of education, as well as increased financial investment.

Lǐ (2008[2002]) examines code switching in the classroom and among Bái language users in general. While Lǐ describes societal code switching in fairly neutral terms, he notes that Chinese indexes higher social status; for this reason, he feels that code switching in the classroom puts socially less prestigious Bái at a disadvantage and promotes the further dilution of Bái with Chinese lexicon and structure. Unfortunately, Lǐ does not provide any linguistic data to support his observations. Nor does he suggest a

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<sup>23</sup> 先白后汉、汉白并重、以白带汉、白汉俱通。

clear policy prescription: If code switching is the problem, is the solution the use of Standard Chinese as the sole language in the classroom? Or is it a model of bilingual education in which teachers enforce the integrity of codes in different contexts?

Reflecting the growing importance of English language instruction in China, Yáng and Sòng (2008[2006]) focus on the difference in outcomes in English between monolingual Chinese-speaking students and students who are bilingual in Bái and Chinese. Hypothesizing that poor performance among bilingual students is due to interference from their native Bái, the authors report their pedagogical experiment carried out in 2005-2006 in Jīndūn, Hèqìng County, in which they tutored a group of middle-school students in contrastive phonology from the perspective of Bái rather than Standard Chinese. While the authors do not provide detailed statistics, they claim an approximate 70 percent decrease in serious errors among students in the experimental class as compared with those in the control class.

### *3.4.2 Language use and attitudes*

To date, there has been very little work on Bái in the framework of any tradition of cosmopolitan sociocultural linguistics. Jiāng (2008[1994]) provides a brief report on Bái language use; however, his observations appear to be drawn largely from Xú and Zhào's (1984) work. Yáng's recent (2009) essay on Bái language attitudes states that Bái people love their mother tongue, but that they are enthusiastic about the languages of others, particularly Chinese; as for writing systems, he asserts that Bái people are divided on the question of mother-tongue literacy, but united in their high esteem for Chinese writing. However, Yáng bases his conclusions largely on the written statements of Bái

cultural figures and his own intuitions, which do not stray far from conventional wisdom; he reproduces both the Herderian ideology that the Bái language is isomorphic with the Bái nationality, as well as the narrative that Chinese is a foreign element that the Bái enthusiastically adopted from their more “advanced” Hàn compatriots.

The most sophisticated attempt thus far to place Bái language use in social context is Duàn’s (2004) M.A. thesis, completed at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Duàn reports research on language attitudes among Bái language users in her native Jiànchuān County, using both qualitative ethnographic and quantitative survey methodologies.

With respect to language use, Duàn finds that Bái held absolute dominance in the family domain and dominance relative to Chinese in mixed-group domains. With respect to language attitudes, Duàn finds that most participants held positive attitudes toward Bái language and culture, other Bái speakers, and Bái language development programs. At the same time, her participants reported positive attitudes toward Chinese, and evinced little concern about the influence of Chinese on Bái. Duàn also tested common stereotypes about difference between the county seat, Jīnhuá, and rural villages. On the basis of a chi-square test, Duàn finds no statistically significant difference in parents’ use of Chinese with their children between the county seat and the villages; however, she does find that participants in the county seat report significantly higher rates of proficiency in Chinese, while participants in the villages report significantly more positive attitudes toward the Bái language, culture, and language development programs.

Duàn’s survey methodology is more rigorous than that of any other publicly available study of Bái language attitudes; she is reflexive about the intuitions that inform

her survey questions, and she complements her research survey with ethnographic observations from her own experience and from more formal participant observation. Nevertheless, consistent with her location of the study in the language attitudes research tradition, Duàn's conclusions are based on self-reported language use and explicit attitudes; she provides no examples of actual language use or implicit attitudes. More fundamentally, Duàn never questions the assumption that Bái and Chinese constitute separate codes, nor does she explore variation in either language; in particular, she leaves unexplored differences in use and attitudes between Standard Chinese and the local variety of Southwest Mandarin.

Zhào et al. (2009) largely replicate Duàn's study, but with wider geographical reach: They survey language use and attitudes in three jurisdictions selected to capture variation among relatively poor residents of rural mountain villages, better-off residents of the rice-growing villages in the mountain valleys, and well-off residents of a town. With respect to language use, Zhào et al. find that one hundred percent of their participants spoke Bái, 90 percent spoke the local variety of Southwest Mandarin, and 56 percent spoke Standard Chinese. Knowledge of Standard Chinese was greatest among teenagers and young adults, while men in general claimed greater knowledge of Chinese than women.

With respect to language attitudes, Zhào et al. (2009) find that their Bái participants value Bái, but also hold positive attitudes toward Chinese, and hold more positive attitudes toward Standard Chinese than the local variety. They also find positive attitudes toward Bái-Chinese bilingualism, and toward the oral use of Bái and Chinese in the classroom (*shuāngyǔ jiàoyù* 双语教育). However, they find overall negative attitudes

toward the use of Bái-language instructional materials (*shuāngwén jiàoyù* 双文教育).

The authors report that many respondents were not familiar with the alphabetic orthography, or had never heard of it. Among those who were familiar with the orthography, but nevertheless opposed its use in education, participants cited arguments that Chinese was sufficient for education, that it was not useful in passing school and employment examinations, and that the orthography was still in an experimental stage and not ripe for educational purposes.

In this chapter I have provided a historic overview of scholarship on the Bái language, as well as in-depth reviews of classification studies, descriptive studies, and socially oriented studies. With respect to classification, I find on the basis of my review that the mainstream position that Bái is a member of the Tibeto-Burman family, Loloish branch derives from the provisional typological classification of Luó and Fù (2000[1954]), and has never been established according to the criteria of cosmopolitan historical linguistics. Nevertheless, arguments that foreground differences between Bái and Standard Chinese serve a broader ethnological agenda that overtly represent the Bái as the “relatively advanced” beneficiaries of Hàn Chinese civilization, while covertly affirming the essential unity of the Hàn.

With respect to descriptive studies, while there exist many brief discussions of particular aspects of Bái structure, Xú and Zhào’s (1984) grammatical sketch remains the standard reference work, while Zhào and Xú (1996), which is presented in the obsolete 1982 orthography, is the only Chinese-Bái dictionary. This lack of documentation may seem paradoxical, given the prominence of Bái scholars and officials in the Yúnnán



institutions responsible for minority nationality affairs. However, it is of a piece with the relative disinterest among most Bái language users in activities aimed at codification.

Finally, with respect to socially oriented studies, I find that almost all such work on Bái has occurred in the framework of language planning or applied linguistics. For this reason, although Duàn (2004) and Zhào et al.'s (2009) studies stop short of critically interrogating the categories “Bái” and “Chinese,” they nevertheless provide valuable insights into Bái language use and attitudes.

## Chapter 4: Theoretical context

In this chapter I step back to review the theoretical literature that informs my interest in Báí language use. In section 4.1, preliminary to my examination of work on language contact, I problematize the concept of “a language,” exploring how linguists have addressed, or declined to address, this pre-theoretical notion in their theoretical work. In section 4.2, I trace the development of the concept of “a language” as a determinate set of form-meaning correspondences from Saussure’s (2001[1916]; 1931[1916]) concept of *la langue* as a social convention through Jakobson’s (1961) equation of “a language” with the information-theoretical concept of “code,” which entailed a shift in emphasis from the social/group, to the psychological/individual, aspect of language.

I examine the implications of this shift for Weinreich’s (1953) work on language contact, as well as subsequent developments in the generative and variationist research programs as they relate to multilingualism. In particular, I explore the ramifications on two elements which all structuralist approaches to language share: The model of a language as a structured system and the concept of the speech community. Drawing on Grace’s (1984) discussion of systematicity and Hymes’s (1967) discussion of the speech community, I conclude that both concepts can benefit from inclusion of language users’ reflexive beliefs about language, including those of academic linguists.

In section 4.3, I look at how the issue of reflexivity plays out with respect to the “crystallization” of pidgins and creoles and “code switching,” two major topics in the study of multilingualism. With respect to both topics, I trace a progression from approaches that acknowledge a role for subjective or psychological factors to more objective structural approaches. I argue that Le Page and Tabouret-Keller’s (1985) work on creoles and Auer’s (1988, 1995, 1998, 1999) approach to code switching, which prioritize language users’ reflexivity, possess advantages over more purely structural approaches by allowing both for intersubjective variation and for politics. Moreover, I suggest that the two approaches can be combined to integrate the micro-interactional analysis of code switching with the macro-social analysis of normativity for more unified and realistic descriptions of language.

I conclude in sections 4.4 and 4.5 by placing this review in relation to more recent work in linguistic anthropology on language ideologies, particularly Silverstein’s (1996, 2003) concept of “indexical order.” After demonstrating how this research tradition intersects with work in sociolinguistics on dialect, register, genre, and style, I review Agha’s (2003, 2005, 2007) concept of “enregisterment.” Observing that theoretical work on language ideologies remains largely at the programmatic stage, I suggest how an analysis of Bái which demands an account of the dialectic among use, structure, and ideology has the potential to contribute to a dialogue between linguistics and linguistic anthropology.

#### *4.1 “A definite language”*

Weinreich, in his (1953:7) seminal work on language contact, cites Lotz's (1950:712) statement that "A structuralist theory of communication which distinguishes between speech and language ... necessarily assumes that 'every speech event belongs to a definite language.'" However, Martinet, in his introduction to the same work, suggests that Weinreich's work should prompt reflection concerning the very concept of "a language" (Weinreich 1953:vii):

It is not enough to point out that each individual is a battle-field for conflicting linguistic types and habits, and, at the same time, a permanent source of linguistic interference. What we heedlessly and somewhat rashly call 'a language' is the aggregate of millions of such microcosms many of which evince such aberrant linguistic comportment that the question arises whether they should not be grouped into other 'languages.'

Martinet underscores that "a language" has meant different things to different practitioners in the discipline of linguistics. In order to understand what Lotz and Weinreich mean by the phrase "a definite language," it is necessary to explore its relation to a structuralist distinction between "speech" and "language," and the ramifications of this relationship for Weinreich's ideas about language contact, as well as those of subsequent scholars.

Pateman (1983:101) opens his critique of uses of "a language" in twentieth-century linguistic theory with the observation, "Problems arise when a science both trades on pretheoretical uses of a term and is committed to arguing the theoretical inadequacy of the lay vocabulary. Further and different problems arise, of course, when there is no intrascientific consensus on the sense or reference to be given within the science to a term taken over from lay terminology." Although Pateman is sympathetic to

Popper's (1979) insistence that a science cannot suspend investigation until all of its key concepts have been defined, he nevertheless believes that an ordering of linguists' definitions of "a language" is logically prior to discussions of linguists' epistemology and methodology.

Pateman (1983:102) identifies five philosophical positions that linguists have taken with respect to "a language": (1) naturalism, the position that "a language" is a natural kind; (2) Platonism, the position that "a language" is an abstract object, (3) nominalism, the position that "a language" is a name given to a set of objects; (4) sociologism, the position that "a language" is a social fact, and that that social fact is also a, or the only, linguistic fact; and (5) dualism, the position that "a language" is a social fact, but that that social fact is not a linguistic fact. Pateman (1983:105-108) rejects Platonism, which he exemplifies with the work of Katz (1981), as differing from naturalism only in a manner that is unsupportable within the Kantian epistemology Katz espouses. Pateman (1983:108-109) also dismisses nominalism, which he exemplifies with the work of Wunderlich (1979) and Hudson (1980), as reductionist, in the sense of reducing "a language" to the knowledge or behavior of a set of individuals, and positivist, in the sense of relying on the linguist's subjective criteria to define that set.

Pateman (1983:110-119) devotes more attention to sociologism, which he exemplifies with the work of Saussure. Saussure (2001[1916]:9; 1931[1916]:25) defines the proper object of linguistics as *la langue*, "both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty."<sup>24</sup> As Grace (1981a:94-95) points

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<sup>24</sup> C'est à la fois un produit social de la faculté du langage et un ensemble de conventions nécessaires, adoptées par le corps social pour permettre l'exercice de cette faculté chez les individus.

out, Saussure's choice of the French word *langage* for the phenomenon of language in general implies that he identified *la langue* with particular languages, such as French – although, as Saussure's (2001[1916]:99; 1931[1916]:141) term “idiosynchronic” (*idiosynchrone*) makes clear, he did not draw a theoretical distinction between standardized languages and nonstandard dialects. Taylor (1990:119-123) attributes Saussure's concept of *la langue* as social convention to Locke; however, he considers Saussure's (2001[1916]:14; 1931[1916]:30) view of *la langue* as an institution which is only “passively registered by the individual” (*que l'individu enregistre passivement*) largely identical to Durkheim's “social fact.”

Love (1998[1985]) sees Saussure's conception of *la langue* as a set of determinate form-meaning correspondences that constitute a social fact as a manifestation of “the fixed-code theory,” a culturally and historically contingent ethnotheory of communication (1998[1985]:56):

Communication between speakers A and B of a language is seen as being possible because A and B both have access to the fixed code of correspondences between forms and meanings which constitutes the language. To communicate with B, A encodes his meanings in the appropriate forms. To understand A, B matches up A's forms with the corresponding meanings.

Love identifies this ethnotheory as one of two mutually constituting discourses that make up what Harris (1979, 1981, 1998, 2002) has called “the language myth”: A fixed code is necessary to support a theory of “transmentation,” whereby communication is conceived as the transfer of thoughts from one mind to another; in turn, transmentation requires all language use to reflect a particular set of sound-meaning correspondences, or

a fixed code. Love (1990:53) finds a clear statement of this ethnotheory in Saussure's (2001[1916]:11-12; 1931[1916]:28) model of the "speech circuit"; however, he follows Harris (1981:9-10) in tracing its antecedents through Western thought about language back to Aristotle. From this perspective, Saussure simply introduced a widespread, but historically and culturally contingent, ethnotheory of communication into twentieth-century linguistics.

Love (1990, 1998[1985]) suggests a number of ways in which the ethnotheory fails to adequately describe linguistic reality. The most obvious is that it provides neither a plausible scenario for the emergence of a language, nor an explanation of how languages change (Love 1990:56). More subtly, although the ethnotheory presents itself as a theory of communication, in order to maintain that form-meaning correspondences are determinate, it insists that observers can objectively understand utterances divorced from their context, while ignoring or marginalizing the choices language users make in the course of communication in order to avoid and resolve ambiguity (Love 1990:54-55).

I will pick up Pateman's discussion of naturalism and dualism, and Love's discussion of the fixed-code theory, below; what is relevant here is that, in Lotz's statement that "every speech event belongs to a definite language," the phrase "a definite language" specifically reflects Saussure's view of "a language" as a Durkheimian "social fact" that underlies linguistic behavior. Discussing the importance of linguistic theory to speech analysis, Lotz continues, "Some scientists consider the analysis of only the sound aspect of speech the task of linguistics. This view is untenable, however, because a given language classifies references in a specific way, just as it classifies sounds into

phonemes” (1950:712). English and Hungarian, for example, are recognizable as different languages based on the way that “the same section of reality is classified differently” (1950:712). For Lotz, as for Saussure, “a language” refers to a determinate set of sound-meaning correspondences established by social convention.

At the same time, Saussure’s conception of *la langue* is also broad enough to include an individual, psychological aspect: Although *la langue* is “the product passively registered by the individual” (*le produit que l’individu enregistre passivement*) (Saussure 2001[1916]:14; 1931[1916]:30), nevertheless, “language is never complete in any single individual” (*la langue n’est pas complète dans aucun*) (Saussure 2001[1916]:13; 1931[1916]:30) and, “All the individuals linguistically linked in this manner will establish among themselves a kind of mean; all of them will reproduce – doubtless not exactly, but approximately – the same signs linked to the same concepts”<sup>25</sup> (Saussure 2001[1916]:13; 1931[1916]:29). In this way, he suggests that, although *la langue* as an abstraction is homogeneous, each individual’s knowledge of it may be slightly different. The individual, psychological aspect of Saussure’s *la langue* is reflected in Bloch’s (1948:7) postulate that the proper object of linguistics is the “idiolect,” or the language of the individual.

In fact, as Culler points out, the division of labor between *la langue* and *parole* has been a key point of controversy among Saussure’s subsequent interpreters (Culler 1976:86):

Saussure himself invokes various criteria in making the distinction: In separating *langue* from *parole*, one separates the essential from the contingent, the social

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<sup>25</sup> Entre tous les individus ainsi reliés par le langage, il s’établira une sorte de moyenne: tous reproduiront, – non exactement sans doute, mais approximativement – les mêmes signes unis aux mêmes concepts.



from the purely individual, and the psychological from the material. But these criteria do not divide language in the same way and they thus leave much room for dispute. By the first, *la langue* is a wholly abstract and formal system; everything relating to sound is related to *parole*, since, for example, English would still be essentially the same language even if its units were expressed in some other way. But, clearly, by the second criterion we should have to revise this view; the fact that /b/ is a voiced bilabial stop and /p/ a voiceless bilabial stop is a fact about the linguistic system, in that the individual speaker cannot choose to realize the phonemes differently if he is to continue speaking English. And by the third criterion one would have to admit other acoustic features to *la langue*, since differences between accents and pronunciations have a psychological reality for speakers of a language.

Culler identifies division of *langage* into *la langue* and *parole* according to the essential vs. contingent criterion with the work of Hjelmslev and the Copenhagen School; he identifies division according to the social vs. individual criterion with Jakobson and the Prague School.

#### 4.2 *La langue as “code”*

Lotz’s statement “every speech event belongs to a definite language” appears in the same special issue of the *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* in which Fano (1950) introduces the concept of “code” in the analysis of speech communication. Information theorists define “code” as “an agreed transformation, – usually one-to-one and reversible” (Cherry 1957:183, cited in Jakobson 1961:247); in the context of Fano’s article, “code” describes the information that two machines must share in order to encode and decode each other’s messages. As Fano notes, variation between two machines’ codes is simply uninterpretable noise; however, natural language appears to be inherently variable, at least at the inter-speaker level (Fano 1950:695-696):

Spectrographic analysis has indicated that the different speech sounds used by any one speaker have easily distinguishable frequency patterns which are essentially stationary with time. This does not seem to be true for speech sounds used by different speakers. If we consider these frequency patterns as code groups, it appears that different speakers use, in a sense, somewhat different codes. These codes are stored in the brain of the listener who uses in each case the appropriate code. New codes are continually learned whenever new people are met, particularly people belonging to different linguistic groups. This point of view is in agreement with the observation that our ability to understand and the effort required to understand depends on our familiarity with the speaker's voice. In addition, we are often conscious of "switching code" in our brain, particularly when a change of language takes place.

Unlike machines, language users each possess a unique code, and communication depends on mutual accommodation between speakers and listeners to determine in which areas their codes overlap. As Wiener (1950:697) notes, variation unavoidably entails the loss of information; nevertheless, human communication appears to be functional. The closest linguistic analogue to this concept of "code" is the idiolect, although Fano does not cite Bloch (1948:7), and he couches his argument in psychological, rather than material, terms.

Jakobson, who enthusiastically embraced the insights of information theory, was quick to adopt both the term "code" and the concept of "switching codes." Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]:11) identify Fano (1950) as the source of "switching codes" in engineering, and relate it to Fries and Pike's (1949) article on "coexistent phonemic systems" in linguistics. Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998) argues that Jakobson et al.'s use of the terms hews closely to Fano's view of codes as psychological phenomena. Citing the observation of Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]:11) that, "Two styles of the same language may have divergent codes, and be deliberately interlinked within one utterance or even

one sentence,” Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998:31) emphasizes Jakobson’s statement that styles have codes, not that they are codes. He takes this choice of words to indicate that Jakobson understood Fano’s definition of “code” as the knowledge that language users must possess for the encoding/production and decoding/interpretation of speech, rather than speech itself.

Nevertheless, Jakobson et al. do not seem to accept Fano’s identification of codes with individuals’ knowledge of language. The authors define distinctive features as “the significant discriminations utilized in the code common to the members of a speech community” (1961[1952]:v); in several places they use the term “language code” (1961[1952]:vi, 4, 45) or “linguistic code” (1961[1952]:10), and they contrast specific languages in terms of “the English code” and “the Finnish code” (1961[1952]:8-9). These uses anticipate Jakobson’s (1961:247) more explicit equation of “code” with Saussure’s *la langue*, while their uses of “message” (for example, 1961[1952]:vi) and “speech message” (for example, 1961[1952]:3) to denote the physical stream of speech anticipate his equation of Saussure’s *parole* with “message.”

However, Jakobson’s equation contains a theoretical contradiction. The account of distinctive features that Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]) present assumes a division between *la langue* and *parole* based on the social vs. individual criterion: The distinctive features of phonemes are part of the *la langue*/code – that is, they constitute a social fact – while subphonemic variation is unique to the individual’s *parole*/message. However, the strict information-theoretical sense of “code” requires a division based on the psychological vs. material criterion: Codes cannot be abstract entities that exist

collectively as a “sort of average” over sender and receiver, but rather must exist distributively within both sender and receiver.

This contradiction reflects larger difficulties Jakobson experienced integrating Saussure’s antinomies into his own work. In the published version of his 1942 lectures at the École Libre des Hautes Études in New York, Jakobson (1990[1959]:89-93) reformulates Saussure’s *la langue* vs. *parole* as “potential vs. actual” and argues that, from this perspective, *la langue* and *parole* each have both a social and an individual aspect. On the one hand, Saussure states that *parole* is individual, but his (2001[1916]:12; 1931[1916]:28) diagram of the speech circuit demonstrates that it is fundamentally dialogic. On the other, Saussure states that *la langue* is social; however (Jakobson 1990[1959]:90-91):

Each of us has, in addition to general linguistic and cultural practices that are imposed on us by the community, a number of personal habits ... Certain words have in personal usage a meaning that is constantly at variance with the collective norm ... In order for the practice of language to be possible for individuals, there must be a set of collective conventions that allow a person to understand and be understood and that reflect and maintain the unity of the given social body. But there must also be a set of personal customs that reflect and maintain the unity, that is, the continuity, of the individual identity.

Unfortunately, Jakobson provides no clear statement of how “personal customs” relate to “collective conventions.” At stake is the locus of variation: Does *la langue*/code encode only distinctive features, allowing individuals to vary in their subphonemic realizations, or does it also encode the subphonemic realizations, along with the social information that those realizations convey? Jakobson opts for the second scenario, clarifying that *la langue*/code consists of a stratified structure of “subcodes,” which,

given the commitment to a psychological point of view which Jakobson makes through his equation of *la langue* with “code,” are presumably present in each individual’s knowledge of language (Jakobson 1961:247-248):

... it is still opportune to recall that the code is not confined to what communication engineers call “the bare intelligence content of the speech,” but likewise the stylistic stratification of the lexical symbols and the allegedly “free” variation both in their constitution and in their combination rules, are “foreseen and provided for” by the code ... Language is never monolithic; its overall code includes a set of subcodes, and such questions as that of the rules of transformation of the optimal, explicit kernel code into the various degrees of elliptical subcodes and their comparison as to the amount of information requires both a linguistic and an engineering examination.

Jakobson’s discussion of “rules of transformation” parallels Bernstein’s (1962a, 1962b; 1971:8) use of “code” as “the ease or difficulty of predicting the syntactic alternatives taken up to organize meaning ... In an elaborated code, relative to a restricted code, the speakers explore more fully the resources of the grammar.” In these terms, a code provides the resources for optimal, maximally explicit communication, of which its subcodes make greater or lesser use. Yet his inclusion of “free variation” suggests not only that subcodes vary in the degree to which they draw upon the same set of elements, but also that they draw upon different sets of elements. From this perspective, natural language codes do not merely encompass the elements of their subcodes; they also encode the co-occurrence restrictions upon elements that constitute the subcodes themselves.

#### *4.2.1 Language/code in early work on language contact*

Weinreich (1953:7) cites both Fano (1950) and Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]); he displays familiarity with the term “switching code” (1953:72), and appears to accept the equation by Jakobson et al. of “code” vs. “message” with *la langue* vs. *parole* (1953:7). Nevertheless, Weinreich’s approach to language contact consistently emphasizes the social vs. individual criterion over the psychological vs. material criterion as the key distinction between *la langue/code* and *parole/message*.

Discussing “interference in speech” vs. “interference in language,” Weinreich (1953:11) states: “When a speaker of language X uses a form of foreign origin not as an on-the-spot borrowing from language Y, but because he has heard it used in X-utterances, then this borrowed element can be considered, from the descriptive viewpoint, to have become a part of LANGUAGE X.” In his discussion of the psychological aspects of bilingualism, Weinreich (1953:8-9) argues that, with respect to the bilingual’s phonology and morphosyntax, “two coexistent systems, rather than a merged single system, probably corresponds more closely to the actual experience of the bilingual,” but that, “In describing the more or less established borrowings in a LANGUAGE, a single phonemic system is often to be preferred.”

With respect to the bilingual’s lexicon, however, Weinreich (1953:9-11) observes that elements may vary as to whether (a) two signifiers refer to two (phenomenologically) independent signifieds, which suggests two coexistent lexical systems; (b) two signifiers refer to a single signified – a phenomenon Weinreich calls “interlingual identification” – which suggests a partially merged system; or (c) a signifier in one language refers to a signifier in the other, which refers to a signified, suggesting a complete merger with one system subordinated to the other (cf. Osgood

1954:140-141; Haugen 1956:80). He proposes further empirical study to determine the degree of variation in interlingual identification across bilingual individuals and groups.

Weinreich's discussion of variation in interlingual identification is consistent with his use of the social vs. individual criterion to distinguish "interference in language" and "interference in speech" insofar as he confines his discussion to bilingual individuals. Yet Weinreich's suggestion that bilingual groups may also vary in their degree of interlingual identification seems to entail that, to the extent that a bilingual group's linguistic system is merged, it constitutes a separate *langue* vis-à-vis either of the systems from which it is composed, and that if two linguistic systems are merged to different degrees, they constitute separate *langues* vis-à-vis each other.

Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998) blames subsequent scholars of multilingualism, starting with Vogt (1954) and Haugen (1956), for misreading Fano (1950) and Jakobson et al.'s (1961[1952]) use of "codes" as psychological phenomena, instead equating "code" with the physical speech stream. He attributes to this misreading the coining in Vogt's and Haugen's work of the term "code switching," distinct from Fano's "switching code," and argues that this new term encouraged a conflation of "code" with traditional notions of "language variety."

This seems to assign the blame somewhat unfairly. On the one hand, as I have observed, as early as Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]), Jakobson identifies "code" with *la langue*, and identifies both with named language varieties. If one assumes, like Saussure, the equivalence of *la langue* with a language in particular, and identifies, like Jakobson, the term "code" with *la langue*, then "code" must, by simple transitivity, describe a language in particular. On the other hand, Vogt (1954:368) recognizes that, "Code-

switching in itself is perhaps not a linguistic phenomenon, but rather a psychological one.” In his subsequent two uses of the term, Vogt (1954:369) seems to use “code-switching” as a synonym for Weinreich’s “interlingual identification,” a psychological phenomenon: “In the usual cases code-switching will give rise to interference in both directions, from A to B and from B to A, and in extreme cases erratic code-switching may even lead to cases of real mixed languages.” In his final use, Vogt (1954:372) makes “code-switching” a synonym of “interference,” citing Weinreich in a way that is ambivalent between psychological and material meanings.

Alvarez-Cáccamo seems to be on somewhat firmer ground with respect to Haugen, who critiques Weinreich’s distinction between “interference in speech” and “interference in language” on the grounds that (1956:39), “Any item that occurs in speech must be part of some language if it is to convey any meaning to the hearer, and in principle anything that is in the language can be used in speech. The real question is *whether a given stretch of speech is to be assigned to one language or another*” (emphasis original). Haugen does not concern himself with whether *la langue* is social or psychological, but rather with developing a terminology to describe the evidence in *parole* of the diffusion of elements from one *langue* to another (Haugen 1956:39-40):

We need to recognize that for certain items a linguistic overlapping is possible, such that we must assign them to more than one language at a time ... Precision would thus require us to distinguish three stages in diffusion: (1) *switching*, the alternate use of two languages, (2) *interference*, the overlapping of two languages, and (3) *integration*, the regular use of material from one language in another, so that there is no longer either switching or overlapping, except in a historical sense.



Haugen's wording "the alternate use of two languages" makes clear that "switching," for him, does not denote a purely psychological switch between *langues*, but rather the material manifestation of such a switch in language use, or *parole*. His distinction between "switching" and "interference," also recapitulates in *parole* Weinreich's distinction between coexistent and merged systems in *la langue*. However, it is not the case that Haugen equates the physical speech stream with the "code," which would indeed be an egregious misreading of Fano (1950) and Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]). In fact, Haugen uses the term "code switching" only once in his monograph (1956:40); otherwise he prefers plain "switching" or "language switching." What Haugen does is to prioritize analysis of *parole* as evidence for the nature of *la langue* – an approach that had been standard operating procedure in linguistics since Saussure.

#### 4.2.2 *Language/code in the generative program*

It is with this tradition that Chomsky's (1964[1957], 1965, etc.) generative program has sought to break. Chomsky is not agnostic on the locus of *la langue/code*, but explicitly locates it, as "competence," in the mind/brain of the individual; furthermore, he denies that *parole/message*, as "performance," can provide evidence of knowledge of language. Within this framework, Chomsky (1986, ch. 2) denies any theoretical status to particular languages. He dismisses the commonsense notion of languages such as Chinese or German as sociopolitical, rather than linguistic, concepts: "That any coherent account can be given of "language" in this sense is doubtful; surely, none has been offered or even seriously attempted" (Chomsky 1986:15). Chomsky

classifies technical idealizations of language use, conceived as the conventions of an idealized speech community without reference to the mind/brain, and pioneered by American structuralists such as Bloomfield and Harris, as instances of “externalized language (E-language)” (Chomsky 1986:19-20).

For his part, Chomsky identifies the proper object of linguistic theory as “internalized language (I-language),” or “some element of the mind of the person who knows the language, acquired by the learner, and used by the speaker-hearer” (Chomsky 1986:21-22). Chomsky is not interested in the properties of “English,” but rather the competence of an idealized speaker-hearer, the properties of which only incidentally happen to be classified as “English” according to either sociopolitical or technical, E-language criteria.

While Chomsky does not explicitly theorize the relationship between I-languages and E-languages, it is difficult to overlook the implication that variation among I-languages, in the aggregate, surface as different E-languages. For this reason, Pateman (1983:102-105) interprets Chomsky’s concept of “a language” as naturalism, or the belief that particular languages constitute natural kinds: Innate human capacities both constrain the range of possible languages and define the ways in which particular languages differ from each other. Pateman is sympathetic to this position because he finds it philosophically self-consistent; however, his analysis relies heavily on Bickerton’s (1981) assumptions about the central role of children’s language acquisition in the formation of creoles, which have been challenged on theoretical and empirical grounds (cf. Thomason & Kaufman [1988:163-165]).

Chomsky's (1965:4) antinomy of competence vs. performance follows Saussure's division of *langage* into *la langue* vs. *parole* according to the psychological vs. material criterion; however, because he places all issues of communication, as E-language, beyond the disciplinary remit of linguistics, he seems, at first glance, to sidestep the difficulties Jakobson faced in reconciling Saussure's insistence that *la langue* must be homogeneous to permit communication with Fano's observation that natural language codes appear to vary at an individual level.

As Love (1990:83-84) argues, however, these exclusions do not represent so much a break with the "fixed-code theory" as much as an accommodation to its theoretical inconsistencies. First, while Chomsky claims to be interested solely in the individual's acquisition of I-languages, the only way to determine whether he or she has actually acquired one is by comparing it to an E-language; therefore, the existence of a community language is not epiphenomenal of variation among I-languages, but a theoretical requirement of them. Second, Chomsky's postulate that exposure to E-language is insufficient for acquisition of an I-language – his argument from the "poverty of the stimulus" (Chomsky 1965:25) – is an attempt to reconcile the manifest indeterminacy of language-in-use with his *a priori* assumption that "a language" constitutes a set of determinate form-meaning correspondences.

It is as a consequence of these accommodations, Love continues, that Chomsky's tentative discussions of multilingualism appear incoherent. Chomsky (1980:28) suggests that "actual systems called 'languages'" may be "impure" to the extent that they incorporate elements derived by faculties other than the language faculty. In subsequent work, he specifies (Chomsky 1986:17):

The language of a hypothesized speech community, apart from being uniform, is taken to be a “pure” instance of UG [Universal Grammar] ... We exclude, for example, a speech community of uniform speakers, each of whom speaks a mixture of Russian and French (say, an idealized version of the nineteenth-century Russian aristocracy). The language of such a community would not be “pure” in the relevant sense, because it would not represent a single set of choices among the options permitted by UG but rather would include “contradictory” choices for certain of these options.

Chomsky’s statement appears to leave no room for Weinreich’s (1953) “interference” or Haugen’s (1956) “integration”: The bilingual’s knowledge of language consists of two discrete linguistic systems, alternation between which can only take the form of “code switching.” Love (1990:70-71) takes Chomsky’s statement to mean that “the options permitted by UG” are identical with standardized languages, like Russian and French, and that contact varieties are somehow not languages. In light of Bickerton’s (1981) work on creolization in the transformational-generative framework, a better interpretation might be that only those contact languages that have been acquired by children are “pure.”

#### *4.2.3 Language/code in the variationist program*

Weinreich returns to the problem of homogeneity and variation in Weinreich et al. (1968). This publication is best known as a programmatic statement of the variationist sociolinguistics associated with Labov, which has characteristically examined sound change in urban varieties of English. Nevertheless, the authors recapitulate Weinreich’s (1953:1-2) insistence that “For the purposes of the present study, it is immaterial

whether the two systems are “languages,” “dialects of the same language,” or “varieties of the same dialect,”” in their statement that, “In principle, there is no difference between the problems of transference between two closely related dialects and between two distantly related languages” (Weinreich et al. 1968:158).

The authors review attempts within linguistics to reconcile observed variation with assumptions about the functionality of structure for communication, and identify two main strategies. One strategy, exemplified by the work of Paul (1880), is to locate invariant structure in the individual, anticipating Bloch’s (1948:7) “idiolect”; from this perspective, variation is a function of contact among individuals with different linguistic systems. The other strategy, exemplified by Saussure (2001[1916]; 1931[1916]), is to locate invariant structure in the synchronic moment; from this perspective, variation is a function of the unfolding of *parole* in diachrony. These strategies are by no means mutually exclusive: Chomsky’s (1965:3) abstraction of the individual’s knowledge of language in a “completely homogeneous speech-community” draws on both.

Weinreich et al. reject these strategies as incompatible with a theory of language change. On the one hand, Paul’s model of change through contact among individual linguistic systems fails to motivate or constrain “borrowing” from one system to another. On the other, while Saussure locates linguistic structure at the level of the community, his insistence on its complete homogeneity provides no scenario for language change. As for Chomsky’s program, the authors (1968:100) argue, “the generative model for the description of language as a homogeneous object ... is itself needlessly unrealistic and represents a backward step from structural theories capable of accommodating the facts of orderly heterogeneity.”

Although the authors do not cite Fano (1950), Jakobson et al. (1961[1952]), or Jakobson (1961), they (1968:164) do credit Jakobson, along with his colleague Mathesius in the Prague School, and Fries and Pike in the U.S., for initiating a “multilayer conception of language”; their concept of “orderly heterogeneity” in linguistic structure strongly resembles Jakobson’s model of a hierarchical structure of “codes” and “subcodes.” Weinreich et al. (1968:125) argue that, “deviations from a homogeneous system are not all errorlike vagaries of performance, but are to a high degree coded and part of a realistic description of the competence of a member of a speech community,” and note that linguistic competence in many urban societies, “includes the ability to decipher alternate versions of the code.” Presumably, “alternate versions of the code” must have elements in common with each other, or with a code at a higher level of abstraction, in relation to which they can be recognized as alternate versions.

In adopting Jakobson’s “code,” as well as Chomsky’s “competence,” Weinreich et al. might seem to accept the psychological vs. material antinomy that those terms imply. However, it is not possible to compare the authors’ position with one that divides *langage* according to the social vs. individual criterion because, in a striking departure from Weinreich (1953), they reject the synchronic vs. diachronic antinomy on which *la langue* vs. *parole* depends *tout court*. Moreover, the authors reject the notion that the individual’s knowledge or use of language is consistent (Weinreich et al. 1968:188): “The grammars in which linguistic change occurs are grammars of the speech community. Because the variable structures contained in language are determined by social functions, idiolects do not provide the basis for self-contained or internally

consistent grammars.” Whether this is the case seems to depend on what the authors mean by the terms “orderly heterogeneity” and “speech community.”

#### 4.2.4 *System and structure*

Aarsleff (1982:361) argues that Saussure owes his concept of language as a “system” to the French philosopher Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893); according to this analysis, parallels between Saussure and Durkheim are due to their shared inheritance from Taine. Saussure used the term “system” in his (1879) doctoral dissertation many years before the (1916) publication of the *Cours de linguistique générale*; however, Benveniste (1971[1962]:80) cites the following passage from the *Cours* as the clearest statement of Saussure’s thinking on this point (2001[1916]:112; 1931[1916]:157):

... it is a great mistake to consider a sign as nothing more than the combination of a certain sound and a certain concept. To think of a sign as nothing more would be to isolate it from the system to which it belongs. It would be to suppose that a start could be made with individual signs, and a system constructed by putting them together. On the contrary, the system as a united whole is the starting point, from which it becomes possible, by a process of analysis, to identify its constituent elements.<sup>26</sup>

Saussure’s students Meillet (1925:16; 1938, vol. 2:222) and Grammont (1933:153) famously declare that “a language” (*une langue*) constitutes a system “où tout se tient,” which, by suggesting the mutual interdependence among all constituent elements, entails autonomy vis-à-vis all other systems.

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<sup>26</sup> ... c’est une grande illusion de considérer un terme simplement comme l’union d’un certain son avec un certain concept. Le définir ainsi, ce serait l’isoler du système dont il fait partie; ce serait croire qu’on peut commencer par les termes et construire le système en faisant la somme, alors qu’au contraire c’est du tout solidaire qu’il faut partir pour obtenir par analyse les éléments qu’il renferme.

Benveniste (1971[1962]:81) asserts that Saussure uses the word “structure” only in collocation with “system,” but that in mid-twentieth century linguistics “structure” narrowed in meaning to entail the principles that, (1) language is form, not substance, and (2) elements of language can only be defined by their relationships. Benveniste traces the emergence of “structure” in this sense to Jakobson et al.’s (1930) proposals for studying phonemic systems, which inaugurated the research program of the Prague School; according to this view (Benveniste 1971[1962]:82), “To envisage a language (or each part of a language, such as its phonetics, morphology, etc.) as a system organized by a structure to be revealed and described is to adopt the “structuralist” point of view.”

Martinet (1966:6) argues that American structuralists further narrowed the meaning of “structure” by principally limiting their investigations to syntagmatic relations, or the distribution of elements in the linear chain of speech (although, as Martinet points out, they were not able to dispense with the method of commutation, which entails investigation of paradigmatic relations as well). This definition seems to underlie Bloch and Trager’s (1942:5-6) definition of “a language” as “a system of arbitrary vocal symbols,” and “system” as “an orderly description of observable features of behavior.” The authors draw the analogy to a legal system, which they describe as an orderly description of the relations between crimes and their punishment. Moreover, they adopt an idealist position in which the system and its structure are a function of the observer’s description, rather than of phenomena themselves.

In an attempt at a post-hoc clarification of terms, Labov (1971:451) notes, “the terms *structure* and *system* are used in much the same way: the chief difference is that structure focuses on the elements or categories, and system upon their relations (Labov



1966:230).” He bridges differences among the structuralist schools by defining “linguistic system” as a set of relations, both syntagmatic and paradigmatic, among linguistic elements such that they form an “array,” or “a fixed configuration with one-to-one matching in two or more dimensions.”

As Grace (1984) points out, however, this is not the only possible way to define “system.” In contrast to Labov, for whom a system minimally requires three elements that correspond in two dimensions, Grace (1984:356-357) proposes that a system requires only two elements that correspond in one dimension; moreover, correspondence among elements may be such that, “(1) they interact: one acts upon the other or each acts upon the other; (2) they co-occur (go together): the presence of one implies (with greater than chance frequency) the presence of the other or there is mutual implication; (3) they are similar (partially equivalent or intersubstitutable).” From this, it follows that a system minimally takes the form not of an array, in which elements A, B, and C are all mutually dependent, but of a chain, in which elements A and B may be related in one way, and B and C in another, without entailing that A and C are related in any way at all.

Grace terms minimally two-dimensional systems along the lines of Labov (1971) “intrinsically closed”: In such systems, “the boundary is an essential feature of the process of differentiation, and the differentiation in fact *consists in* the erecting of a partition or establishment of a contrast” (emphasis original). Grace contrasts these systems with minimally one-dimensional systems, which are “intrinsically open.” Such systems may be “incidentally bounded systems,” in which “the boundary which arises is a quite incidental by-product of the process that produces the differentiation,” or “open systems,” which “do not have clear boundaries – where some things belong to the

system more clearly than do others and still others may not belong at all, although there is no (non-arbitrary) basis of saying for sure.” In other words, membership of elements in open systems may be gradient, and the observer may not be able to unambiguously assign elements to one system or another.

Grace proposes that there is no reason to assume that linguistic systems are intrinsically closed, and a great many reasons to suppose that they are intrinsically open. From a methodological perspective, while applying procedures that presume an open system to a closed system simply demonstrates that the system is closed, applying procedures that presume a closed system to an open system may result in a significant loss in explanatory power. Grace continues (1984:357):

All of what has been said suggests two conclusions about the world and our relations to it. First, there are very many systems in the world – in fact, their number is presumably limited only by the imagination of their observers ... Second, since a chain can be entered at any point, any extensive system can be viewed from any of a large number of starting points (a truly open system presumably from an infinite number) which is to say that it can be *seen and described* from a large number of different perspectives (emphasis original).

Grace suggests that not only the recognition of individual languages as distinct from each other, but also the recognition of language as a phenomenon distinct from other semiotic systems, operates through exclusions that, while not entirely arbitrary, are nevertheless constrained by the positions, including the disciplinary positions, of their observers.

In this respect, Grace recalls Goodman’s (1972) observation that similarity itself is a fundamentally subjective and positioned phenomenon. It is not sufficient to say that

two entities are similar because they have at least one property in common, Goodman argues, because any two entities have in common the property of being entities. Nor is it sufficient to say that two entities are similar because they have all of their properties in common, because any two entities differ to the extent that they are not the same entity. As a practical matter, then, observers judge similarity on the basis only of “important” properties; however, as Goodman (1972:444) concludes, “importance is a highly volatile matter, varying with every shift of context and interest ... similarity is relative and variable, as undependable as indispensable.”

#### *4.2.5 The speech community*

Irvine (2006) traces the concept of the “speech community” to the thinking of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who assumed a natural, isomorphic relationship between languages and “peoples.” Irvine (2006:690) observes that, for Saussure, the *masse parlante* is an abstraction defined by its knowledge of language; for Bloomfield, however, the speech community is an empirically real social aggregate defined by its language use. Bloomfield (1926:154-155) defines a “speech community” as a community in which “successive utterances are alike or partly alike” and the “language” of that speech community as “The totality of utterances that can be made in a speech community.”

Bloch (1948:6-7), who was concerned about Bloomfield’s use of meaning as a criterion for determining whether utterances are “alike,” defines “speech communities” as “communities of human beings who interact partly by the use of conventional auditory signs,” and “language” as “the totality of the conventional auditory signs by

which members of a speech-community interact.” Aside from the fact that this definition is circular, “community,” among other terms, remains undefined. Bloch suggests, “The meaning of these terms is guaranteed for us by the sciences of sociology and psychology.”

Gumperz (1962:31) initially defines “linguistic community” as “a social group which may be either monolingual or multilingual, held together by frequency of social interaction patterns and set off from the surrounding areas by weaknesses in the lines of communication.” Subsequently, Gumperz (1968:381) defines “speech community” as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage.” As Irvine (2006:691) observes, this concept of the speech community – “some large social unit having a definite boundary around the outside and dense, frequent interaction inside” – is virtually identical to that of earlier American structuralists, with the important exception that Gumperz specifies that the community may be multilingual. In fact, neither Bloomfield’s (1926) formulation “alike or partly alike” nor Bloch’s (1948) “totality of conventional auditory signs” strictly exclude multilingual communities, either, which illustrates the problem defining “a language” in terms of “a speech community.”

To justify his definition, Gumperz explicitly draws upon the ethnotheory of communication Love (1990) calls the “fixed-code” theory, as well as a concept of “system” very similar to Labov (1971) (Gumperz 1968:381):

Just as intelligibility presupposes underlying grammatical rules, the communication of social information presupposes the existence of regular

relationships between language usage and social structure ... Regardless of the linguistic differences among them, the speech varieties employed within a speech community form a system because they are related to a shared set of norms.

However, Gumperz's definition abandons the structuralist assumption that systematicity is necessarily characteristic either of linguistic data or the observer's "orderly description" of them; instead, he suggests that what is ultimately systematic is the relationship between speech varieties and their social meanings. In effect, Gumperz shifts the burden of homogeneity from language use to the speech community.

Weinreich et al. (1968) do not provide a definition of "speech community"; however, they list Gumperz (1964, 1967) among their references, and appear to be working with a concept that combines elements of Bloomfield (1926:154-155) with Gumperz (1968). Like Bloomfield, Weinreich et al. (1968:159) define a "differentiated language system" as that aggregate of language users for whom, for a minimum of two forms A and B, (1) A and B provide alternate ways of saying "the same thing" – that is, they are referentially equivalent. Like Gumperz, Weinreich et al. specify that (2) all adult members "understand the significance of the choice of A or B by some other speaker." Moreover, they specify that (3) A and B are "jointly available," in the sense of either active control or passive understanding, to all adult members.

Focusing on the third criterion, Irvine (2006:691) points out that this concept of "speech community" breaks with Saussure, Bloomfield, and Bloch by shifting the focus from production to interpretation: Weinreich et al. include in the "community" members who differ in their ability to produce forms in the community repertoire, provided they can interpret all of them. Nevertheless, these criteria still set empirically unrealistic

standards of homogeneity. If “forms” include not only languages, but dialects, registers, genres, and styles, any individual’s linguistic repertoire is likely to range vastly beyond “A” and “B”; the larger each individual’s repertoire, the less likely that any two individuals – let alone any significant number – share precisely the same repertoire. Like Gumperz (1968), Weinreich et al. simply shift the burden of homogeneity from language use to the speech community.

The first and second criteria are even more restrictive. The first relies on a distinction between referential and indexical functions that, while fundamental to twentieth-century linguistics, is very difficult to operationalize, while the second requires that all members agree not only on referential meanings, but on the social meaning of code choice, as well. Weinreich et al. (1968:164-165) suggest that the “matched guise” technique (Lambert 1960, 1967) shows promise in measuring the subjective evaluations of a language user’s choice of forms. In practice, however, Labov and his students have rarely made use of this method, relying instead on patterns of hypercorrection to reveal covert attitudes, and anecdotal commentary during sociolinguistic interviews and ethnographic observation for evidence of overt attitudes.

A well-known example from Gumperz’s own work demonstrates the difficulties with such definitions of “speech community.” In a study of multilingualism in Kupwar, India, Gumperz and Wilson (1971) find substantial convergence among four local varieties of what appear, at a macro level, to be four distinct languages, and conclude that the languages have converged structurally to the point of constituting a single grammatical system with four separate lexifications. What is striking about the Kupwar case is that language users appear to have innovated a single local norm for phonology,

morphosyntax, and lexical semantics, while maintaining different supralocal norms for the relationship between forms and meanings. Gumperz and Wilson's conclusion presents problems not only for Saussure, Bloomfield, and Bloch's definitions of "speech community" in terms of shared linguistic forms, but also for Gumperz (1962, 1968) and Weinreich et al.'s (1968) definition in terms of shared linguistic norms.

Hymes (1967:36), in a discussion of attempts in anthropology to reduce ethnic relationships to structural or genetic linguistic relationships, insightfully critiques the circular definition of "code" in terms of "community" and "community" in terms of "code":

From a synchronic standpoint, one must regard a language as a variable system of codes, specialized in function; not all of these codes will be intelligible to all members of a community ... What one wants is a term that can be defined as implying mutual intelligibility, communication, among those who share it in virtue of their sharing of it. Of terms available in the literature either "variety" or "code" might serve. Here I shall adopt "code." Such a term permits one to treat just those sets of linguistic habits that are specific to one or another communicative function within and across group boundaries ...

Hymes does not provide any particular source for the term "code"; however, his conception of "a language" as a "variable system of codes" suggests familiarity both with Jakobson's "multilayer conception of language" and the models of heterogeneous language use advanced in Gumperz (1968) and Weinreich et al. (1968). (Hymes does not reference Jakobson, but he does cite Gumperz [1962] and Labov [1966].) Nevertheless, Hymes departs from these previous uses of "code" by defining the term not in terms of linguistic form, but communicative function.

Moreover, Hymes's observation that "not all of these codes will be intelligible to all members of a community" runs counter to Weinreich et al.'s (1968:159) third criterion that all codes be "jointly available" to all community members. In his subsequent discussion, Hymes demonstrates not only that "communities" can be constituted on many criteria besides commonalities in language, but also that communities which are constituted through language may overlap in membership with other such communities based on the sharing of communicative codes across the borders of language. This implies that communities are not isomorphic with either languages or codes, and codes are not necessarily subordinate to a particular language; instead, they are linked in an open network through individuals' participation in communities, their use of codes, and their subjective identification of both with particular languages.

In this dissertation, I illustrate Hymes's insight with data that challenge two assumptions that underpin all previous work on Bái: (1) that all Bái language use corresponds to "a definite language," and (2) that all Bái language users constitute a "speech community." The first assumption is a direct consequence of American structuralist theory, which was introduced into China in the first half of the twentieth century by U.S.-trained Chinese linguists such as Li Fang-Kuei, Chao Yuen Ren, and Luó Chángpéi. The second is implied by structuralist theory, but follows more directly from the structuralist practice, which Hymes (1967) critiques, of identifying speech communities on ethnological grounds preliminary to, rather than as a result of, linguistic analysis. Both assumptions find strong support in Stalin's (1950) approach to language and nationality, as well as its political corollary that the most (or only) appropriate sites for study are officially recognized nationalities.



I problematize the first assumption by showing not only that elements that a linguist might classify as “Chinese” on etymological grounds occur in different dialects and registers of Bái, but also that language users disagree among themselves on whether a given element is “Chinese” or “Bái.” As an alternative, I draw upon Grace’s (1984) proposal that languages constitute presumptively open systems and Goodman’s (1972) insights on similarity to argue that the boundary between Bái and Chinese depends largely on the perspective of the observer. In this view, the selective foregrounding and backgrounding of bilingual contrast is a resource that language users alike deploy for social and political ends. This entails, in turn, that synchronic descriptions of language structure, whether in the structuralist, transformational-generativist, or variationist tradition, are doubly positioned: In first order, they reflect the positioning of the language users who provided the data, and in second order they reflect the positioning of the linguist in choosing those language users as representative.

As for the second assumption, I point out that Bái language users speak a number of mutually unintelligible varieties, rendering the notion of “community” tenuous from the start. More fundamentally, if communication does not presuppose a shared code, a speech community in Saussure, Bloomfield, or Bloch’s sense is theoretically unnecessary; if language users do not have joint access both to a shared repertoire of codes and to the social meanings of code choice, a speech community in Gumperz or Weinreich et al. sense does not exist. As an alternative, I draw upon Hymes’s model of a speech community as an open network of practice and identification that depends, in part, on language users’ gradient and variable notions of Bái and Chinese as different languages.

### *4.3 Reflexivity*

Hymes's attention to language users' subjective evaluations opens the way to what Pateman (1983:119-121) calls "dualism," the philosophical position that "a language" is a social fact, but that that social fact is not a linguistic fact. In other words, language users have knowledge of language and they have beliefs about language, but the two are not isomorphic. Pateman argues that this position is fully compatible with Chomsky's "naturalism," as Chomsky himself suggests in his (1986, ch. 2) discussion of I-language vs. E-language. Indeed, Pateman (1983:120) argues, under Chomsky's theory, language users' beliefs about language cannot be based upon knowledge of language because mentally represented grammars are not available to conscious reflection; nor, he adds, can they be based on evaluation of the output of such grammars, since beliefs about language precede concrete utterances, not the other way around.

Instead, Pateman (1983:120) suggests, following Woodfield (1982), that for language users, "a language" constitutes a "intentionally inexistent object of belief": Much as for supernatural phenomena like witches, the fact that languages users believe in languages does not mean they exist. Pateman continues: "... the underlying reality of the English language as a socio-political fact is its appearance as the intentionally inexistent object of speakers' mutual beliefs and its place in a 'package' of mutual beliefs which sustains any individual speaker's belief in his or her speakerhood." In other words, much as "only those who believe themselves to be chic are chic," language users' belief that their own and others' utterances correspond to "a language" rests on

their social evaluation of themselves and others as “speakers of a language” rather than any evaluation of the utterances themselves.

As Pateman (1983:120) notes, such beliefs about language are very common, but not universal; historical and descriptive linguists of Oceania such as Grace (1981b, 1990) and Mühlhäusler (1996) have reached similar conclusions based on experience with language users who fail or refuse to identify their linguistic practices as “languages.” In Heryanto’s (1990:41) words, “Language is not a universal category or cultural activity. Though it may sound odd, not all people have a language in the sense in which this term is currently used in English.” Milroy (2001:543-547) argues that linguistic theory largely reflects Western linguists’ pre-theoretical beliefs about languages, which are not even universal as beliefs, quite apart from whether they accurately describe the nature of language.

Nevertheless, I find Pateman’s dualist account unsatisfying because, apparently at pains to justify Chomsky’s naturalist position, he seems to exclude both the possibility that language users’ beliefs about language might license or constrain their own and others’ language use, as well as the possibility that language users might mobilize linguistic evidence to support their beliefs. Although the idea that language users’ beliefs have no effect on their knowledge or use of language is foundational to twentieth-century linguistics (cf. Boas 1911:68-71; Bloomfield 1944) and remains a mainstream view, there is a long tradition of work on standardization (cf. Havránek 1964[1932]; Kloss 1952, 1967; Jahr 1989), as well as mounting evidence of the role of deliberate choice in language change (cf. Thomason 2007). Moreover, the notion that, because grammars and their output are not available for conscious reflection, language users

cannot mobilize linguistic evidence to support their beliefs, entails either that linguists possess discernment not available to ordinary language users, or else that the practice of linguistics is, in principle, impossible.

Love (1990:85) counters Pateman to argue that an adequate theory of language must account simultaneously for (1) knowledge and use of language, and (2) particular languages, instead of simply relegating them to incommensurate domains; furthermore, it must also account for (3) language variation. In Love's (1990:85-89) view, comparative philology was a "one-factor" theory that investigated diachronic variation without any particular theory of languages while explicitly excluding the language user's role in language change. Saussurean synchronic linguistics, in turn, is also a one-factor theory that prioritizes languages (*la langue*), at the expense of variation (incompatible with *la langue*), and without any consideration of the individual's knowledge and use of language (relegated to *parole*). Meanwhile, Weinreich et al. (1968:89-90) present a one-factor theory that seeks to correct Saussure by refocusing on variation, at the expense of languages (vaguely conceived as the sum of a community's repertoire), as well as any kind of systematicity at the individual level.

Love (1990:90-93) observes that Chomsky's generative program is an attempt at a "two-factor" theory: On the one hand, it focuses on the individual's knowledge of language; on the other, by idealizing this knowledge as identical with the language of a "perfectly homogeneous speech community" it offers an account of particular languages; however, it absolutely excludes variation. Attempts to upgrade generativism to a three-factor theory, for example through integration of Weinreich et al.'s (1968:165-176) "variable rules," have foundered on the point that such rules describe statistical

probabilities; if they are to be part of the individual's knowledge of language, they are much easier to postulate as psychologically real for hearers than for speakers (cf. Romaine 1981).

Love (1990:109-113) speculates that the ethnotheory of the "fixed code" has its origin in a human cognitive predisposition to categorize entities and events as tokens of a type – in other words, to assume that some utterances are identical, primarily based on their phonological form, and repeatable, despite the fact that the context is never the same for any two occasions of language use. Bloomfield (1926:154) presupposes something similar in his postulate that "within certain communities successive utterances are alike or partly alike." Love suggests that literacy practices in some societies reinforce this predisposition by encouraging language users to conceive of spoken words as tokens of their written forms.

Love concludes that a three-factor theory is possible only if linguists jettison the ethnotheory of communication to recognize that language use and particular languages exist on two different levels of abstraction, and that variation is a function of the way in which the levels overlap and mismatch (Love 1990:101):

A language is a second-order construct arising from an idea about first-order utterances: namely, that they are repeatable. Such a construct may be institutionalized and treated as *the* language of a community ... But the ways in which the idea [that utterance are repeatable] can be implemented – that is, the abstractions that can be established by implementing it – are not fixed. Hence there arises variation ... The language user's capacity to make different decisions as to what an utterance is an utterance of is both a source of variation and a bar to determining the individual's relation (*qua* first-order language user) to an abstract system which can only be envisaged at all on the assumption that we already know what utterances are utterances of. Acknowledging this fact is one necessary step towards a satisfactory conceptualization of the relations between languages, language-users, and linguistic variation.

For Love (1990:114), this theory of language demands a more reflexive linguistics, “relocating the line between the linguistic and the metalinguistic” to recognize both that particular languages arise through language users’ linguistic reflections, and that the work of academic linguists is continuous with, rather than a radical departure from, such reflections.

#### *4.3.1 Reflexivity and contact languages*

In his discussion of coexistent vs. merged linguistic systems, Weinreich (1953:8) suggests, “Since the bilingual is ordinarily aware of the language to which his utterance “belongs,” we may characterize the utterance by the feature of “Russianness” or “Englishness,” extending over its entire length.” Nevertheless, in his discussion of interference and language shift, Weinreich (1953:69) concedes, “But such is not always the case. When Meillet ([1938[1921], vol. 1], 82) asserts: “A speaker always knows that he is using the one system or the other,” he obviously is not considering those bilinguals who, under certain conditions, CANNOT say which language they meant to use in a sentence just uttered. They may even admit that their distinction between languages undergoes, as it were, a temporary collapse” (emphasis original).

A similar concern with the proper roles of objective and subjective evidence runs through Weinreich’s discussion of pidgins and creoles. Weinreich (1953:69-70, 104-106) describes the emergence of new languages from mixing in the speech of individual bilinguals as “crystallization”; although he does not cite Saussure, Weinreich seems to be following Saussure’s (2001[1916]:13; 1931[1916]:29) description of the

conventionalization of form-meaning correspondences as “social crystallization” (*crystallisation sociale*). Weinreich proposes four criteria for crystallization: “(1) a form palpably different from either stock language; (2) a certain stability of form after initial fluctuations; (3) functions other than those of a workaday vernacular (e.g. use in the family, in formalized communication, etc.); (4) a rating among the speakers themselves as a separate language.” Weinreich considers only the first and second criteria “the province of linguistics proper,” and relegates the third and fourth to sociolinguistics. Nevertheless, he treads carefully in assigning relative importance to the two kinds of criteria, and devotes considerable space to how the outcomes of contact might achieve breadth of function and subjective status as “languages.”

Although Hymes (1971) does not cite Weinreich (1953), he addresses crystallization in his resumé of several studies of pidgins and creoles. While Hymes’s interest in individual and group linguistic repertoires makes Weinreich’s criterion of breadth of function less relevant, Hymes (1971:67) cites the cases of Jamaican and Haitian Creole to demonstrate how the subjective factor of language users’ evaluations may vary independently with objective factors of difference from source languages and stability of form. Hymes (1971:66) suggests, however, that the larger issue in pidgin and creole studies should be how norms gain and lose autonomy. In this respect, he (1971:68) contrasts “pre-pidgin continua,” forms of speech that are in the process of gaining autonomy from their source languages, with “post-creole continua,” forms of speech that are losing autonomy to their lexifier languages.

Sankoff (1980) uses the term “crystallization” in her discussion of variation in Tok Pisin. She cites Hymes (1971), not Weinreich (1953); nevertheless, her (1980:140)

definition of “pidgin” as having “(a) some degree of conventionalization, and (b) a sharp enough break with all “parent” languages as to be not mutually intelligible with any of them” simply reorders and reformulates Weinreich’s objective criteria, while dropping his subjective criteria. Sankoff’s invocation of mutual intelligibility is difficult to accept given the manifest gradience and asymmetry of intelligibility (cf. Hymes [1967]). More interesting is her account of conventionalization (Sankoff 1980:140):

For a “pidgin,” like any other means of communication, to be useful for communication, people must be able to encode and decode in it with some degree of confidence. At some point, then, participants in the contact situation enter into the Saussurean contract, recognizing that these new linguistic devices are no longer makeshift, to be negotiated each time, but have been prenegotiated, decided upon, are now shared, learned, and can be used dependably for getting on with other things.

Sankoff’s presentation is a concise statement of Pateman’s (1983) sociologism and Love’s (1990, 1998[1985]) fixed-code theory: Conventionalization is a negotiation, but one conducted solely in the interest of communicative efficiency, and which, once concluded, constitutes a social fact binding upon all participants.

Thomason and Kaufman (1988) also use the term “crystallization” extensively in their work on language contact; they (1988:169) attribute the concept to Weinreich (1953), and also cite Hymes (1971), and Sankoff (1980). While Thomason and Kaufman (1988) do not define the term, Thomason’s (2001:263) definition of “crystallization of contact languages” states:

A stage of development at which an emerging contact language has a grammar stable enough to have been learned as such. Before crystallization, the creators of



a contact-language-to-be produce highly variable ad-hoc utterances, without community-wide grammatical norms that have to be learned by would-be speakers. Calling the speech form a “language” is justified only after crystallization.

In their discussion, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:168-170) rely on Sankoff’s criteria of conventionalization and mutual unintelligibility with the source languages (although they [1988:353, note 1] recognize the difficulties in defining intelligibility); they add the criterion that a pidgin cannot be the native language of a sizable group of speakers (which distinguishes pidgins from creoles). However, Thomason and Kaufman do not appeal to a “Saussurean contract,” remaining agnostic on the motivations for crystallization. Instead, they return to Hymes’s (1971:68) concept of pre-pidgin continua to argue that, after crystallization occurs, “A pidgin language must be learned (Hymes 1971:79); it cannot be produced by a speaker of any other language simply as an *ad hoc* simplification of his or her own language (with or without lexical substitutions), any more than any other language could be produced in such a way” (Thomason & Kaufman 1988:169).

While each of these authors uses “crystallization” to distinguish what is “a language” from what is not “a language,” none defines “a language” in positive terms; indeed, they seem to differ in their basic theoretical positions. Weinreich (1953) and Sankoff (1980) espouse the Saussurean model of *la langue* vs. *parole*; in this view, crystallization marks the moment at which invariant *langue* emerges from variant *parole*; indeed, the very metaphor of crystallization describes the emergence of static structure from dynamic fluidity. However, this raises the question of how individuals communicated before the emergence of *la langue*. Hymes (1971) and Thomason and

Kaufman (1988) recognize that communication can occur along pre-pidgin continua prior to crystallization. However, this entails either that individuals' negotiation strategies constitute a special register of the source languages, or else that some speech events can occur in the absence of what Lotz (1950) calls "a definite language."

The authors split differently on whether to consider language users' subjective evaluations that their pidgin constitutes "a language": Weinreich (1953) and Hymes (1971) explicitly address the role of evaluation, while Sankoff (1980) and Thomason and Kaufman (1988) omit subjective factors. Nevertheless, the former strategy of distinguishing subjective factors from objective factors, as well as the latter strategy of bracketing subjective factors entirely, both serve to define "a language" exclusively in terms of the linguist's objective description. This is difficult to reconcile with the authors' methodological reliance on normativity; for example, Thomason and Kaufman's (1988:256-263) argument that Chinook Jargon constituted a crystallized pidgin mobilizes evidence that language users expressed opinions on "right" and "wrong" ways to speak it. This seems to suggest an understanding of "norm" substantially identical to Saussure's concept of *la langue* as a social fact: objective, homogeneous, and static.

By contrast, Le Page and Tabouret Keller (1985; Le Page 1992) present a concept of norms that are subjective, variable, and dynamic. In the course of their fieldwork among users of English, Spanish, Mayan languages, and English-lexified creoles in Belize, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller find, on the one hand, that their consultants' linguistic practices are too diverse and variable to characterize as "stable" or "conventionalized"; on the other, the authors describe a dialectic between language

users' objective linguistic practices and their subjective opinion of whether those practices constitute "a language."

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985:181-182; Le Page 1992:78-79) propose a cinematic metaphor in which language users deploy their individual linguistic systems to "project" their view of the world onto others. Through such "acts of identity," they may associate with others by becoming more like them in their linguistic behavior, rendering language use more "focused"; this situation describes the norms of highly standardized languages such as English and French. Alternatively, they may dissociate from others, making language use more "diffuse"; this situation describes many vernaculars, including virtually all pidgins and creoles.

Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's model is attractive for several reasons. First, instead of treating pidginization and creolization as anomalies to be explained, it unites them with analysis of standardization in highly focused languages. Second, their account of normativity accommodates both individual agency and politics: While focusing is ultimately a function of the individual, language users are constrained both by the linguistic resources that are available to them and by the focusing decisions of more powerful social actors and institutions. Although Le Page and Tabouret-Keller do not cite Bourdieu, their perspective resembles his, both in terms of his (1982) metaphor of language as symbolic capital, and more generally in terms of his (1977[1972]) account of how social "habitus" constrains, but does not determine, individual practices. Most importantly, Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's model suggests a path toward what Love (1990:85) calls a "three-factor" linguistic theory – one that can simultaneously address knowledge/use of language, particular languages, and language variation.

#### 4.3.2 Reflexivity and early work on code switching

A similar progression of views is apparent in work on “code switching.” As I have described, Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998:32) gives credit to Vogt (1954) for adapting the term from Fano’s (1950) “switching code,” but blames Haugen (1956) for applying the term to the use of elements of different varieties in speech, in a manner that has contributed to the conflation of “code” with “language variety.” However, Alvarez-Cáccamo overlooks the extent to which Haugen remains concerned with the psychological reality of codes for the language user. Expanding on his observation that “The real question is *whether a given stretch of speech is to be assigned to one language or the other*,” Haugen (1956:39-40) continues:

If this cannot be settled by the purely linguistic criteria of phonology and morphology, the only resort is to appeal to the speaker, or to several of them. Pragmatic experience has shown that speakers are themselves uncertain at times concerning the proper assignment of given items (Haugen 1953a, 49, 68-69). We need to recognize that for certain items a linguistic overlapping is possible, such that we must assign them to more than one language at a time.

Like Weinreich, Haugen takes Lotz’s (1950) statement that “every speech event belongs to a definite language” as axiomatic, and prioritizes “purely linguistic” criteria in assigning them. At the same time, he recognizes that a “definite language” may be as narrow as an individual bilingual’s merged system, and that language users’ subjective evaluations may provide the only evidence that this is the case.

An early and influential use of the term “code switching” is in the title of Blom and Gumperz (1972[1964]) study of language use in Hemnes, Norway. The authors (1972[1964]:424-426) find that users of a local Norwegian variety, Ranamål, and a form of standard Norwegian, Bokmål, engage in two types of code switching: “situational code-switching,” in which they switch in response to a change in external situation, and “metaphorical code-switching,” in which the switch itself defines a new situation. Blom and Gumperz’s recognition of metaphorical code switching as the flouting of prevailing norms on the co-occurrence of linguistic forms is notable for highlighting individual speaker agency vis-à-vis social structure, and foreshadows subsequent social constructivist approaches to identity.

As Mæhlum (1990) points out, however, Blom and Gumperz’s model of code switching relies on the empirically questionable assumption that Ranamål and Bokmål constitute separate codes. Blom and Gumperz (1972[1964]:414-418) take particular pains over this point: On the one hand, they argue that mutually exclusive co-occurrence restrictions constitute the two varieties as distinct. On the other, they insist that the two varieties constitute a single linguistic system, along the lines of Labov’s (1966) description of New York English. These arguments reflect a theoretical commitment to Weinreich et al.’s (1968) model of *la langue/code-as-community-repertoire*, and particularly to Gumperz’s (1968) model of the multilingual speech community.

Mæhlum counters that all descriptions of Norwegian dialects are linguistic abstractions, and that empirical studies of Norwegian dialects-in-use have revealed the presence of standard features in all domains, rendering the “situational switching” Blom and Gumperz identify illusory (Mæhlum 1990:342). Moreover, because Bokmål is a

written standard, not an oral standard, Blom and Gumperz's identification of Bokmål phonological features is incoherent (Mæhlum 1990:344). (Blom and Gumperz's transcriptions suggest that they are using "Bokmål" as shorthand for the East Norwegian pronunciation of Bokmål that dominates Norwegian broadcasting; however, Mæhlum's critique remains that non-East Norwegian speakers do not generally imitate this pronunciation even when they use standard lexis and morphology.) She concludes that Blom and Gumperz err in giving empirical status to a model of linguistic interaction that Gumperz had developed through earlier work in a very different social milieu (Mæhlum 1990:353).

Mæhlum finds her own critique ironic given the subsequent direction of Gumperz's work. Gumperz (1982:59) defines "conversational code switching" as "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems." In effect, the formulation "same speech exchange" reclassifies what he and Blom had previously called "situational code-switching," as a form of Ferguson's (1972[1959]) "diglossia." Gumperz also distances himself from Labov's model of *la langue*/code-as-community-repertoire articulated in Weinreich et al. (1968) (Gumperz 1982:70), and approaches Hymes's definition of "code" in terms of communicative effect (Gumperz 1982:72): He emphasizes the diversity of norms within macro-socially defined groups, and analyzes code switching in terms of partial violations of local co-occurrence expectations. Gumperz (1982:97-98) concludes:

Theoretical linguists tend to see *langue* as a highly abstract set of rules, while other more socially oriented scholars see it in Durkheimian terms as the aggregate

or perhaps vector sum of the processes of change in a statistically significant sample of speakers (Labov 1973) ... The study of code switching exchanges leads to the conclusion that members have their own socially defined notions of code or grammatical system. Although such notions are often substantially different from those derived through linguistic analysis or taught in standard grammars, it is nevertheless clear that in situations such as we have discussed, effective speaking presupposes sociolinguistically based inferences about where systemic boundaries lie.

As Mæhlum (1990:351) underscores, this view represents a considerable theoretical advance over Blom and Gumperz (1972[1964]), and comes close to integrating the study of code switching into Gumperz's larger theoretical concern with "contextualization cues" or "conventions" (Gumperz 1982:92).

During this same period, however, Poplack and Sankoff (Poplack 1980[1979], 1981, 1987; Sankoff & Poplack 1981; Poplack & Sankoff 1984) inaugurated a research agenda that places structural analysis of code switching on an equal footing with social analysis. In her classic study of Puerto Rican Spanish-English bilinguals in New York, Poplack (1980[1979]:583) defines "code-switching" as "the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent." Although Poplack does not cite Haugen (1956:39-40), she deploys his terms "switching" and "integration": She counts any element that is phonologically, morphologically, and syntactically integrated into what she calls, following Hasselmo (1970), the "base language" of each utterance as "integrated"; any element that does not meet all three criteria is a "code-switch."

Poplack and Sankoff's (1984) study of loanword integration in the same community uses the same strategy, but limits the criterion for "integration" to morphological and syntactic evidence.

What is missing is Weinreich's and Haugen's term "interference." Poplack and Sankoff (1984), who do cite Haugen (1956), find Haugen's three-way distinction among "switching," "interference," and "integration" unworkable on the grounds that (Poplack & Sankoff 1984:103):

Haugen suggested that the phonological and morphological shape of the borrowed form were the determining factors. However, it is rather the bilingual ability of the speaker which determines the pronunciation of the second language, so that this criterion will misidentify code-switches as loanwords and vice-versa.

While Haugen (1956:40) somewhat confusingly uses the term "integration" to denote both the psychological integration of a new element into an individual's lexicon and the social integration of a loanword into a language, Haugen's (1956:50, 69, 80) discussions of Weinreich (1953) make clear that he views code switching as an individual phenomenon and loanword propagation as a social phenomenon. From this perspective, Poplack and Sankoff's concern about misidentifying "loanwords" in the speech of an individual is misplaced, if not incoherent; Haugen suggests only that phonological and morphological criteria can demonstrate that an item is integrated into the individual's own lexicon.

Poplack and Sankoff's misreading of Haugen appears to be a function, on the one hand, of their adoption of Labov's view of *la langue*/code-as-community repertoire as presented in Weinreich et al. (1968). This view underlies Poplack and Sankoff's assumption that community norms are uniform and can be discovered in statistical regularities in the speech of a sample of language users. By excluding a psychological locus for *la langue*, it discourages them from considering the extent to which norms may



differ from individual to individual; by failing to theorize “community,” it also discourages them from problematizing the nature of the population their sample purports to represent. On the other hand, their misreading is also a function of their perceived need to establish intersubjectively valid coding procedures. While Poplack and Sankoff (1984:103-104) rely on participants’ acceptability judgments as a form of evidence, the larger effect of both moves is to discount language users’ subjective judgments of the boundaries between their two “codes” in favor of the linguists’ objective analysis.

#### *4.3.3 Reflexivity and contemporary work on code switching*

Studies of code switching since the early 1980s can be distinguished according to whether, like Poplack and Sankoff, they take the linguist’s perspective on the delineation of codes, or, like Gumperz (1982), they take the language user’s perspective as their point of departure.

The first position by no means excludes social analysis. Hill and Hill, in their (1986) study of multilingual practices in Malinche, Mexico, find that some users of Mexicano (Nahuatl) orient toward a relatively Hispanicized “power code,” while others orient toward a less-Hispanicized “purist code.” Unable to analyze language users’ behavior in terms of proposed structural constraints on code switching (Shaffer 1978, Poplack 1981, Gumperz 1982), Hill and Hill (1986:57) follow Kuryłowicz (1964:40) to coin the term “syncretic language,” drawing on Bakhtin’s (1981[1935]) “translinguistic” literary analysis in which multilingual practices are seen as a dialogue, or struggle, between ideologically positioned voices. Nevertheless, the authors’ identification of language mixing relies on comparison with descriptions of standard Mexican Spanish

and Literary Nahuatl, and their reading of its social meaning depends on macro-social, rather than micro-interactional, ethnographic analysis.

Myers-Scotton's (1993b, 2006) influential model of code switching accounts for the social meaning of code switching in terms of a "markedness model," in which, following Grice (1975), each code may invoke a separate "rights and obligation set" to the extent that code switching is a marked choice, but which also foresees the possibility of "codeswitching as an unmarked norm" (Myers-Scotton 1993b:113-149). This model, in turn, underpins Myers-Scotton's (1993a, 1995, 2003) structural analysis, in which she formulates lexical constraints on code switching based on the concept of a socio- and psycholinguistically unmarked "matrix language" (Myers-Scotton 1995:237).

Nevertheless, Myers-Scotton's insistence (2003:1, 16, 23, 44, 253, 270) that her constraints operate according to universal cognitive principles that are largely unavailable to conscious reflection places the codes themselves beyond the limits of speaker agency. Moreover, as Auer (1998:8-13) points out, Myers-Scotton's analysis is grounded in a consensual model of social life in which the social meaning of each code, and of code switching itself, is widely shared and discoverable through macro-level ethnographic analysis; this assumption licenses Myers-Scotton to "read" her participants' intentions directly from their language choices. In both her social and structural analysis, therefore, Myers-Scotton adopts a Durkheimian model of codes as "social facts" much like Weinreich et al.'s (1968) *la langue/code-as-community-repertoire*.

Muysken's (1995, 2000, 2006) influential work on code switching reveals a similar orientation. While Muysken is interested in the correlation of what he calls "code

mixing” with demographic social factors (Muysken 2006:155-156), he argues for focusing his attention on structural constraints because (Muysken 1995:178):

The sociolinguistic study of code-switching cannot proceed without a solid, theoretically based ‘structural’ analysis. To understand which cases are of the same type, and which are different, to see which patterns are exceptional or marked and which are not, to be able to do quantitative research, for all this we need to know what the structural features of the patterns are.

Like Myers-Scotton, Muysken’s approach presupposes that while language users may choose between codes, the codes themselves are beyond the reach of conscious reflection. As Muysken (2006:153) admits, however, this approach reaches its limits in cases where the linguist cannot objectively identify material with one linguistic variety or another, such as the code mixing among genetically closely related varieties that Muysken (2000) calls “congruent lexicalization.” Muysken notes that such mixing has received little attention in the literature because it cannot be systematically distinguished from Labov’s (1972a) variation.

Indeed, Labov (1971:461-462) suggests that it is impossible to characterize the speech of African Americans as code switching since it would require identifying switches within word boundaries, as well as switches that involve the lexis of one code with the phonology of another. Labov takes this as evidence that African American English and Standard English form a single linguistic system governed by variable rules. However, if “code switching” only applies to switching between separate linguistic systems, and not linguistic subsystems, then the term “code” becomes nothing more than

an artifact of description: Codes are those systems whose features contrast to the point that they cannot be united in a set of variable rules.

Landmark work in the structural analysis of code switching, such as that of Poplack, Sankoff, and Myers-Scotton, has generally sidestepped such problems by analyzing switching between what Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) call “focused” languages – languages that also have large numbers of monolingual speakers and literary or standard languages. Gardner-Chloros (1995:68) observes that theorizing code switching in this way presents a paradox: On the one hand, it overtly valorizes multilingual individuals and communities by representing their behavior as “systematic”; on the other, the analysis itself serves to focus the languages between which contact is assumed to occur, thereby representing code switching as marginal with respect to “normal” monolingual practice. As Gardner-Chloros (1995:73) demonstrates with respect to French-Alsatian conversational data, however, having a focused variety against which to compare code-switched data provides no guarantee that the linguist will be able to unambiguously identify switching independent of language users’ subjective judgments.

Above, I have questioned Alvarez-Cáccamo’s (1998:32) argument that Vogt’s (1954) coinage of “code-switching” bears the blame for the subsequent conflation of “code” and “language variety”; nevertheless, I agree that Jakobson et al.’s (1961[1952]) equation of “code” with *la langue* in terms of the psychological vs. material criterion preserves Fano’s (1950) original concept of “code” as a psychological phenomenon, while noting that it also jettisons Fano’s corollary that linguistic “codes” must be intersubjectively variable.

Alvarez-Cáccamo's (1998; cf. Auer 1998) critique of structural explanations of code switching turns on his definition of "codes" as interpretive schemata, which he represents as the authentic continuation of Jakobson's work. He argues that the subsequent conflation of "code" with "language variety" is problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, it presumes the switches that the linguist can identify are equally meaningful to participants, excluding the possibility that conventionalized code switching can constitute a code of its own. On the other, it excludes from the scope of code switching subtle types of recontextualizations that language users accomplish through more or less novel juxtaposition of linguistic elements, without necessarily implying the full set of co-occurrence restrictions to which the term "code" usually refers. Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998:32) reads Gumperz (1982, 1992) to imply that any two linguistic elements, or even a single element, can function in this way as "contextualization cues."

Alvarez-Cáccamo's (1998) approach, which is closely aligned with Auer's (1988, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000) pragmatic or conversation-analytic analysis of code switching, is attractive for several reasons. First, by integrating the study of code switching into the larger issue of contextualization, the authors achieve greater theoretical breadth and avoid the difficulty Muysken (2006:153) encounters applying models developed on the basis of distinct, focused languages to switching among closely related varieties. Second, in recognizing (with Fano [1950]) the indeterminacy of all communication, Alvarez-Cáccamo and Auer avoid privileging either the language user or the linguist's perspective: While the use of contextualization cues, including code switching, is a function of the speaker's intentions, the authors focus on pragmatic

evidence of listeners' interpretations – including, ideally in an explicit way, those of the linguist.

Most importantly, Alvarez-Cáccamo and Auer's pragmatic approach to code switching on the micro-interactional level lends itself to integration with Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's (1985) concept of "focusing" on the macro-social level: Language users' use of linguistic resources to foreground and background contrast among those resources is what constructs language varieties as relatively focused or diffuse; in turn, language users' perceptions of varieties as focused or diffuse is a resource upon which language users can draw in order to accomplish their interactional goals. As Mukařovský (1964[1932]:18) observes in his discussion of poetic language, "The more the norm of the standard is stabilized in a given language, the more varied can be its violation." However, this integration requires the abandonment of the concept of "code" as an abstract set of co-occurrence restrictions that describe determinate form-meaning correspondences, and an embrace of Fano's (1950) original insight into the diversity of individuals' knowledge of language and the fundamental indeterminacy of communication.

In this dissertation, I take reflexivity to be a methodological and theoretical prerequisite for the analysis of Bái language use. Methodologically, I have found it impossible to locate my study in any way that does not acknowledge language users' reflexive notions of what constitutes "the Bái language." For example, as I describe in chapter 5, my language consultant preferred to introduce me to potential participants who identified ethnically as Bái, even though some of them preferred to speak Chinese; after the study concluded, I learned that my language consultant had discouraged

individuals of other ethnicities from participating. Rather than see this as an obstacle to “objective” analysis, I take it as an important clue about how language users construct language and ethnicity in mutually constituting, if contradictory, discourses.

More fundamentally, I find theoretically incoherent approaches, such as Sankoff and Poplack’s, which allow that language users deploy contrast among languages in the negotiation of social identity, but ignore (or deny) that contrast among languages is itself a matter for negotiation. In my study, I have found that different language users, have different views about the content of the categories “Bái” and “Chinese,” and that these differences ramify in their language use. To ignore language user reflexivity, then, is not to adopt an “objective” position, but rather to implicitly elevate the use and description of one language user or group of users over that of another; moreover, ignoring language users reflexivity mystifies, for example, the way that institutional motivations shape language use and description.

#### *4.4 Language ideologies and work on dialect, register, genre, and style*

Linguistic anthropologists have foregrounded the dialectic among language users’ beliefs about language, languages structure, and language use in the study of “language ideologies.” Silverstein (1979:193) defines “language ideologies” as “sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived structure and use.” As Woolard (1998:5-9) points out, there is no definition of “ideology” upon which the broad range of social theorists who have used the term might agree. In this dissertation, I use “ideology” in its “neutral,” semiotic sense, which Eagleton (1991:18) describes as “a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to

constitute human beings as social subjects, and produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in society.” This should not be taken to imply that ideologies necessarily form coherent systems of meanings; rather, I assume that ideologies may be piecemeal and internally contradictory (cf. Woolard 1998:5).

Silverstein’s (1976, 1979, 1981, 1993) influential approach to language ideologies is based on the semiotician Peirce’s (1955[c. 1902] (also introduced in Jakobson [1990:388-389]) three-way division of the sign into the relatively motivated “icon,” the relatively unmotivated “symbol” (Saussure’s “arbitrary sign”), and the “index,” a signifier-signified relationship motivated by contextual juxtaposition. Silverstein and subsequent scholars (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994; Schieffelin et al. 1998; Kroskrity 2000) have used the term “indexical” to describe the social-semiotic processes through which linguistic forms come to “point to” what language users perceive as typical language users or situations of use. In later work, Silverstein (1996, 2003) elaborates this concept into a model of “indexical order”: Once language users come to recognize a sign as indexical, it becomes available for iterative rounds of metapragmatic elaboration.

Work on language ideologies is closely allied with sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological work on forms of speech that are commonly seen as variants of some individual language: “dialects,” “registers,” and “genres.” Ferguson (1994:18-23) defines these terms in a traditional way: In terms of language use, dialects correlate with social groups, registers correlate with communication situations, and genres correlate with message situations.



Gumperz (1968) organizes the terms and concepts slightly differently. He explicitly contrasts varieties defined formally by linguistic difference or “dialects,” with varieties defined by communicative function. He then contrasts “dialectal varieties,” or varieties that correlate with groups of users, with “superposed varieties,” or varieties that correlate with situations of use. Gumperz’s term “superposed variety” conflates the traditional terms “register” and “genre” in order to capture that both correlate with situations of language use; his term “dialectal variety” distinguishes traditional senses of the term “dialect” that denote objective differences in linguistic structure from those that denote varieties that correlate with groups of language users. However, Blom and Gumperz’s (1972[1964]) finding that that the two Norwegian varieties in Hemnes can function relative to each other both as dialectal and superposed varieties reveals problems with contrasting language varieties in terms of users and uses.

Agha (1998) explores this weakness in an article that re-conceptualizes register within Silverstein’s Peircean framework. Discussing honorific language in Lhasa Tibetan, Agha finds that language user’s stereotypes about typical use of the register are inextricably bound up with their stereotypes about typical language users. Moreover, language users’ accounts of the forms that make up the register are highly idealized; the full set of forms rarely co-occurs in anyone’s actual language use. In other words, Agha argues, registers are not sets of linguistic forms that objectively correlate with speech situations, but rather interpretive schemata that subjectively index both typical language users and typical uses of language. Registers need not be fully instantiated in language use in order to serve as a site for social meaning.

Irvine and Gal (2000) identify register as a key site for the operation of processes of linguistic differentiation. The authors describe three “semiotic processes”: “fractal recursivity,” “iconization,” and “erasure”; Gal (2005) replaces the term “iconization” with “rhematization.” Fractal recursivity is the projection of an ideological opposition salient at one level of relationship to another. Iconization/rhematization involves the understanding of linguistic features indexical of social groups or activities as iconic of them. And erasure describes the simplification of the semiotic field by rendering some social groups or activities “invisible,” or beneath notice.

The authors present case studies from Southern Africa, West Africa, and Southeastern Europe in the nineteenth century. In a case of language contact in Southern Africa, the existence of a respect register in Zulu was the structural condition for the borrowing of phonologically marked loanwords from Khoisan languages, which then “leaked” into other situations of use. In cases of colonial language description in West Africa and Southeastern Europe, scholarly representation of indigenous languages involved “register-stripping,” the selective erasure of registers of the language that might, by foregrounding contact features, compromise scholars’ and colonial officials’ preferred representation of languages as autonomous.

As Ferguson (1994:21-23) details, traditionally work on genre has been taxonomic and the province of literary critics. More recently, anthropologists such as Briggs and Bauman (1992) have re-conceptualized genres as interpretive schemata by which language users make sense of variation. According to this understanding, genres index typical discourse types parallel to the way that registers index typical situations of language use. Bauman and Briggs describe the process through which language users

construe instance of discourse as tokens of a particular discourse type as “generic intertextuality.” Because the token-type relationship necessarily entails an “intertextual gap,” language users may choose strategies that either background the gap or foreground it as a means of creative expression. The authors conclude that because authoritative reproduction of genres is a form of social control, such choices are fundamentally political.

As Ferguson (1994:25) emphasizes, the same interpretive schema can index a variety of contextual factors. As Barrett (1997:196) illustrates in his study of “bar queen” speech, the ritual insult genre “reading” indexes discourse type. Because it occurs primarily in gay settings, however, it is also a register that indexes typical situations of language use; because it occurs primarily among gay men, it is simultaneously a dialect that indexes typical language users. Irvine (2001:28) likewise suggests that the analytical distinction between language as it relates to users and language as it relates to uses is not as useful as has been traditionally assumed: Language that indexes uses also indexes typical persons in those situations of use; conversely, language that indexes users inevitably indexes the situations in which those persons typically find themselves. Irvine proposes subsuming both terms under a more general theory of “style.”

Sociolinguists have traditionally operated with a more limited concept of style. Labov (1972b:112) famously defines style as “attention paid to speech.” Theoretically, he views style as a set of independent variables, along with social variables such as sex and class, which correlate with linguistic variation. Methodologically, he has designed procedures to elicit linguistic data in “interview,” “reading,” and “word-list” styles, which he presumes correlate with gradiently greater attention to speech. In practice, the

difference between such styles can equally be understood to be one of register (interviews and reading aloud are communication situations) or genre (texts and word lists are message situations).

Bell's (1984) influential model of "style shifting" proposes that style is not as much about the pre-existing contrast among speech situations or message types as shifts that speakers make in order to render their speech more or less similar to members of their audience. This implies a more general claim that intra-speaker variation derives from inter-speaker variation. Bell posits that this model for style shifting in monolingual populations can equally account for code switching in multilingual populations – that is, that switching among different languages in an individual's repertoire reflects the linguistic diversity in the individual's community.

Bell (1984) contrasts "audience design," in which speakers passively shift styles in response to changes in their audience, and "referee design," in which speakers actively initiate changes to redefine the message situation. Bell (2001) reiterates this distinction in a way that emphasizes the importance of referee design. Speakers frequently initiate shifts that render their speech less like addressees and more like absent reference groups; for example, a bilingual speaker may switch from the usual home language to the language of the wider society in order to clinch an argument. Flouting of the norms of what constitutes appropriate speech for appropriate audiences recalls Blom and Gumperz's (1972[1964]) metaphorical code switching, in which the switch defines the context of its own interpretation.

Schilling-Estes (1998) argues that not just referee design, but also audience design should be understood as internally motivated in the sense that speakers choose to effect

style shifts that correspond to shifts in the external situation. From this perspective, she argues, style shifting and code switching are equally strategies by which language users to maintain multiple social roles. Schilling-Estes relates this understanding of shifting to Bakhtin's (1981[1935]) translingual theory, in which the speaker's melding of different registers or genres evoke different ideologically positioned voices in the larger society.

Coupland (2001) expands upon this point, paralleling Gumperz's distinction between "dialectal varieties," or language with respect to users, and "superposed varieties," or language with respect to uses. He terms the former "dialect style" and the latter "ways of speaking." Coupland defines dialect styles as semiotic variants that do not distinguish referential meanings, in contrast to ways of speaking, which are patterns of ideational selection. Nevertheless, "[d]ialect style variants may be alternate ways of achieving the same reference, but it does not follow that they are alternate ways of "saying" or "meaning" the same thing." Introducing the concept of style as "persona management," Coupland (2001:198) concludes, with Irvine, that, "we no longer have to contrast the "social" with the "situational" as independent dimensions of sociolinguistic variation. Dialect style as persona management captures how individuals, within and across speaking situations, manipulate the conventionalized social meanings of dialect varieties – the individual through the social."

#### *4.5 Enregisterment and the dialectic among ideology, use, and structure*

Recently, Agha (2003, 2007) has developed Silverstein's Peircean model in a similar direction: He has broadened the traditional term "register" to cover patterns of linguistic form at the same level of generality as Irvine and Coupland's "style," but

shares their concern with the dynamic processes through which language users come to recognize these patterns and perceive them as indexical of typical users and uses. Agha describes these processes as “enregisterment,” or “processes through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms” (Agha 2003:231). Describing the enregisterment of the “Received Pronunciation” of British English, Agha (2003) draws on the work of the semanticists Kripke (1972) and Putnam (1975) on the reference of proper names. He argues that the association between a pattern of linguistic forms and social evaluation of those forms become known to language through “speech chains,” series of communicative events along which users transmit, and alter, the association. To understand synchronic evaluation, Agha argues, linguists must understand its diachronic genealogy.

Agha’s (2007) monograph develops this model in detail, systematizing Silverstein’s work on “orders of indexicality” into a general theory of enregisterment, defined here as the emergence of a “reflexive model of discursive behavior.” Agha (2007:80) describes enregisterment in terms of semiotic processes that differentiate the register’s forms from the rest of the language, evaluate the forms as having specific pragmatic values, and make the forms and values known to a population of users. Agha points out that such models are necessarily typifications of linguistic practice. To the extent, however, that they become the routine or normative versions of what they typify, they may also influence practice; simultaneously, they become available for “troping,” equivalent to Silverstein’s metapragmatic elaboration. Agha describes the “dialectic of norm and trope” as a key way in which reflexive models are transformed during their transmission from language user to language user.

Approaches such as Agha's that treat dialect, register, and genre or, in Irvine and Coupland's terms, style, as interpretive schemata recall Hymes's (1967:36-37) use of "code" to denote regularities in communication independent of language variety. Playing off of the term "Sprachbund," which in historical linguistics denotes commonalities in linguistic structure that transcend the borders of languages, Hymes (1967:33) coins the term "Sprechbund" to describe regularities in communicative practice that transcend the borders of languages varieties. Writing about the emerging focus in linguistics on local linguistic communities and language endangerment, Silverstein (1998:407) re-defines "speech community" in terms of the same regularities: "perduring, presupposable regularities of discursive interaction in a group or population," recognizable through "implicit normativity to such indexical semiosis as informs and underlies communicative acts of identity or groupness." Silverstein contrasts speech communities with "language communities," groups recognizable through allegiance to a denotational code.

Silverstein argues that evaluation of the norms of denotational codes with relation to specific speech events is culturally specific; he faults Western linguists, in concert with missionaries and colonial administrators, for unreflexively applying the norms of European regimes of standardization and ignoring local regimes of evaluation. Silverstein observes, with Hymes, that speech communities are frequently plurilingual; therefore, members of a single speech community may belong to multiple language communities. Structural approaches to code switching theorize language use in such speech communities in a way that foregrounds the contrast among denotational codes in particular contexts; indeed, by representing data gathered in a single context as representative of language use in general, such approaches frequently bracket context

entirely. As Silverstein (1998:407) points out, however, "... in normatively plurilingual communities, denotational codes ("languages") frequently take on the characteristics of register-alternates, and hence begin to serve as indexically pregnant modes of performing ("voicing") identities (Myers-Scotton 1993b)."

This observation is at the core of both Silverstein and Auer's (1998, 1999) critique of structural approaches to code switching. It is clear that, in plurilingual speech communities, individual languages may index typical speakers, situations, and text types. This situation describes Fishman's (1967) extension of Ferguson's (1972[1959]) more limited concept of "diglossia." However, to the extent that such patterns become indexical of the group as such – perhaps through the process Silverstein (1996, 2003) describes as "second-order" indexicality – the contrast between individual languages within the group may become less salient for language users than the contrast between practices inside the group and outside of it. Silverstein (1998:407) hypothesizes that just such a semiotic process underlies the "crystallization" of "mixed languages" like Michif, which combines noun phrases from French and verb phrases from Cree. At a higher order of generality, Auer (1998:20) argues that the suspension of contrast among any set of codes – whether conceived as dialects, registers, genres, or Silverstein's denotational codes – may result in the emergence of a "mixed code."

In this dissertation, I draw upon scholars of language ideologies – in particular, Irvine and Gal's (2000; Gal 2005) iconization/rhematization, erasure, and fractal recursivity, Silverstein's (1996, 2003) indexical order, and Agha's (2003, 2007) enregisterment – because they have been among the first to study the role of reflexivity in language use in ways that accommodate both ideological diversity and politics. However,



while linguistic anthropologists have pledged themselves to the study of the dialectic among language ideology, use, and structure, much of the theoretical work in this tradition, particularly Silverstein and Agha's, remains at the programmatic stage; meanwhile, most empirical studies focus on language ideologies and use, while taking language structure largely as given (for example, Kuipers 1990; Kulick 1992; Duranti 1994; Inoue 2006; Eisenlohr 2007).

Such a division is not possible in the case of Bái: Any description of language structure demands an account of how language ideologies license descriptors to abstract from language use, while any exploration of language ideologies requires consideration of how language users mobilize instances of language use as evidence of structure.

Nevertheless, rather than serving as a marginal case that describes the limits of traditional approaches, I believe that the case of Bái should prompt a reappraisal of their fundamental assumptions. As a wide range of authors (including Le Page and Tabouret-Keller [1985], Grace [1981a], Mühlhäusler [1996], and Milroy [2001]) have suggested, good fits between linguists' idealizations of abstract linguistic structure and observations of language use may reflect historically contingent processes of focusing (in Le Page and Tabouret-Keller's [1985] terms) or standardization (in Milroy's [2001] terms), rather than anything inherent in language itself. In such cases, language users' ideologies are not absent, but merely implicit. Cases like Bái, in which ideologies are explicit, serve as a reminder that the dialectic among language ideologies, use, and structure is relevant not only for small communities of bilingual speakers, but for seemingly monolithic languages like English and Standard Chinese, as well.

## **Chapter 5: Explicit language ideologies**

In this chapter, I return to the field site to present a qualitative analysis of structured interviews with 42 Bái language users on their perceptions of language use, attitudes, and ideologies. This discussion shows that language users uniformly distinguish Bái and Chinese as separate languages, but differ over whether they distinguish Standard Chinese and local Sinitic vernaculars as different varieties; this suggests that language users conceive of Bái and Chinese as languages of different orders. At the same time, language users' descriptions of a local practice of language mixing reveal that they also differ over which elements they assign to Bái and which to Chinese. This demonstrates that the borders of a self-described community cannot be relied upon to describe a uniform set of language ideologies any more than it describes uniform language use or structure.

I begin with a reflection on the process of data collection in section 5.1, followed by a sketch of the sample in section 5.2. Then, in sections 5.3-5.7, I analyze the major and minor themes in the interviews, focusing on language acquisition and use, linguistic repertoires, code switching, authentic language use, and language maintenance and shift. In section 5.8, I conclude by offering an analysis of the interview data that theorizes the relationship between national and local discourses about language and ethnicity in terms of Irvine and Gal's (2000) concept of "fractal recursivity." (This section closely follows the analysis that appears in Hefright [to appear].)

### *5.1 Reflections on data collection*

As I describe in chapter 2, the participants whose interviews I analyze in this section constitute one larger network of eight households and one smaller network of two households; the sample is evenly split by sex with 21 females and 21 males; and there are eight participants of the “grandparent” generation (G1), 22 participants of the “parent” generation (G2), and twelve participants of the “child” generation (G3). I conducted each interview under semi-private conditions in the participant’s own home or the home of a close family member or friend. Typically, my language consultant and I sat with the participant in a quiet bedroom or in a corner of the courtyard away from other family members. Nevertheless, other participants could overhear the interviews if they wished, and felt free to come in, listen, and occasionally contribute their opinions. In accordance with my research plan as approved by the University of Michigan IRB, I interviewed children in the presence of their parents or another trusted adult relative; in several cases my language consultant herself filled that role.

I conducted the interviews in Standard Chinese. It would also have been possible to conduct the interviews in Bái with my language consultant acting as an interpreter, which might have yielded somewhat different results. However, a dialogic interview with a foreign researcher was a novel situation for all of the participants, and there was no precedent that might have made an interview in Bái more familiar than one in Standard Chinese. At the same time, since all of the participants were proficient in Sinitic varieties to some degree, and several were more comfortable using Standard Chinese than Bái, it would have been equally unnatural to insist that every participant speak Bái through an

interpreter. For the few participants who encountered difficulties expressing themselves in a Sinitic variety, my language consultant was present to reformulate my questions in Bái. For my part, I relied on the language consultant less to translate from Bái than to clarify responses in Jiànchuān Mandarin.

The interviews were “structured” in the sense that I used a written interview script, reproduced at appendix C, instrument 1, and asked most participants the same questions in the same order. Aside from the fact that the IRB required a script, structuring the interviews allowed me to conduct them efficiently and to build a relatively homogeneous corpus. My analysis is inspired by the principles of “grounded theory” (Charmaz 2000, 2004) in the sense that I have tried to allow my categories of analysis to emerge from the interview material rather than imposing them in advance; however, I depart from grounded theory both in the sense that IRB requirements did not permit me to revise my script as the interviews progressed, and because I fully reviewed the interview data only once I had returned from the field.

The 42 interviews average a little less than eight minutes each, for a total of approximately five hours and thirty minutes of recordings. The shortest is two minutes long, and the longest, twenty. I did not transcribe the interviews in full. Instead, I listened and took notes on each recording, then coded my notes for themes and subthemes, which I then organized into a coding protocol. I reviewed each interview to double-check my initial coding and to fill in gaps. Finally, I identified and transcribed the illustrative excerpts that I present in this chapter.

My qualitative results are only indirectly comparable to Duàn (2004) and Zhào et al.’s (2009) studies of Bái language use and attitudes, which I review in chapter 3. Both

studies used large-scale survey methodologies, in which investigators administered detailed written questionnaires. The open-ended design of my questions meant that different participants focused on different themes, and in accordance with my IRB-approved informed consent procedure, participants were free to refuse to answer any question or to end the interview at any time.

However, my methods also revealed several phenomena that may be opaque to large-scale survey methodologies. First, participants differed widely in the criteria by which they assessed their own language ability. Several participants claimed to have “learned Chinese” only in adulthood, despite the fact that they had become literate in Chinese characters during elementary school, and many participants claimed to speak only “a little” Standard Chinese, although I found their Standard Chinese very comprehensible. Survey questions that ask applicants simply to rate their ability in Bái and Chinese ignore differences between varieties of Chinese, as well as the difference between passive and active knowledge; such questions reproduce, rather than interrogate, language users’ notions of Bái and Chinese as distinct languages.

Second, a number of participants’ characterizations of their own and others’ language use were internally inconsistent, indicating that they were either struggling to describe regularities where none existed, or else were genuinely unaware of which language they used on a given occasion. For example, in excerpt 5-1, a G3 participant describes Bái as the language of instruction instead of Standard Chinese.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> In this and the following excerpts, “P” designates the participant, “LC” designates the language consultant, and “BEH” designates me. Other voices in the recording are designated in terms of their relationship to the participant. The transcription in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn follows orthographic norms that represent Standard Chinese, and does not attempt to reproduce language users’ actual pronunciation. I have set items in Bái (to the extent that I perceived them as such) in italics; they appear in the original in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn and Chinese-character transcriptions, but in English in the translation.

**EXCERPT 5-1: Participant 200918 (female, G3, born 2000), recording 217, 1:16-1:57**

BEH	那，你跟小朋友的，小朋友玩儿的时候呢，你们喜欢用哪种语言呢？	Nà, nǐ gēn xiǎo péngyǒu de, xiǎo péngyǒu wánr de shíhou ne, nǐmen xǐhuān yòng nǎzhǒng yǔyán ne?	So, when you play with your friends, what language do you like to use?
P	白族话。	Báizúhuà.	Bái.
BEH	白族话吗？阿。那，为什么喜欢用白族话呢？	Báizúhuà ma? A. Nà, wèi shénme xǐhuān yòng Báizúhuà ne?	Bái? Oh. Well, why do you like to use Bái?
P	因为我们是白族人。	Yīnwèi wǒmen shì Báizúrén.	Because we're Bái.
BEH	阿。	A.	Okay.
P	我们学校规定交流之间用白族话。	Wǒmen xuéxiào guīdìng jiāoliú zhījiān yòng Báizúhuà.	Our school has a regulation that when we communicate we use Bái.
BEH	是这样吗？是，是学校规定要用白族话吗？	Shì zhèyàng ma? Shì, shì xuéxiào guīdìng yào yòng Báizúhuà ma?	Is that so? Is it the case that the school has a regulation that you have to use Bái?
LC	白族话还是汉话？	Báizúhuà háishi Hànhuà?	Bái or Chinese?
Mother	普通话。	Pǔtōnghuà.	Standard Chinese.
P	普通话！	Pǔtōnghuà!	Standard Chinese!
BEH	[laughs]	[laughs]	[laughs]

Many participants also expressed clear opinions, but were unable to exemplify their statements. Therefore, survey questions that ask for a definitive statement of language choice for a particular domain or addressee may capture as a static generalization the participant's momentary perception of a particular moment of language use.

Third, participants frequently changed or clarified their answers in the course of their conversations with me, my language consultant, and friends and family members who participated in the interview. For example, in excerpt 5-2, another G3 participant

responds to a question from my language consultant by suggesting that he learned Chinese from his grandmother. In fact, the adults in the conversation knew that his grandmother spoke more Bái than Chinese, and that he learned Chinese principally from his parents. Furthermore, his grandfather is eager for him to distinguish between non-Standard Sinitic varieties and Standard Chinese, and to place Standard Chinese in its appropriate institutional context of the school.

**EXCERPT 5-2: Participant 2009-11 (male, G3, born 2001), recording 210, 1:53-2:49**

LC	你的汉语是什么， 是奶奶学过来呢？	Nǐ de Hànhuà shì shénme, shì nǎinǎi xuéguòlái ne?	How did you, did you learn Chinese from your grandmother?
P	奶奶啊。	Nǎinǎi a.	Right, my grandmother.
Grandfather	从你奶奶啊？	Cóng nǐ nǎinǎi a?	From your grandmother?
P	啊。	A.	Right.
LC	是谁教你的，你的 汉语？	Shì shéi jiāo nǐ de, nǐ de Hànyǔ?	Who taught you, your Chinese?
Grandfather	汉语。	Hànyǔ.	Chinese.
P	那个是，我听我奶 奶，我跟他讲，我 们天天讲那个汉 语，我听她，听奶 奶讲，就知道了。	Nèige shì, wǒ tīng wǒ nǎinǎi, wǒ gēn tā jiǎng, wǒmen tiāntiān jiǎng nèige Hànyǔ, wǒ tīng tā, tīng nǎinǎi jiǎng, jiù zhīdao le.	That's, I listened to my grandmother, I talked to her, we spoke Chinese every day, I listened to her, listened to her talk, and then I just knew it.
BEH	就知道了吗？	Jiù zhīdaole ma?	You just knew it?
Grandfather	这是一个。	Zhè shì yí gè.	That's one way.
P	啊。	A.	Right.
Grandfather	那，你奶奶以外...	Nà, nǐ nǎinǎi yǐwài ...	So, aside from your grandmother ...
LC	还有谁教你？	Hái yǒu shéi jiāo nǐ?	Who else taught you?
Grandfather	还有谁教你的，说 汉语，说普通话？	Hái yǒu shéi jiāo nǐ de, shuō Hànhuà, shuō Pǔtōnghuà?	Who else taught you to speak Chinese, to speak Standard Chinese?

LC	有其他人教你吗?	Yǒu qítā rén jiāo nǐ ma?	Was there someone else who taught you?
Grandfather	说普通话。	Shuō Pǔtōnghuà.	To speak Standard Chinese?
P	还有爹。	Hái yǒu diē.	There was also my dad.
Grandfather	再想。你爹也是，你妈也是。更主要的是谁？进了学校里，谁教你？	Zài xiǎng. Nǐ diē yě shì, nǐ mā yě shì. Gèng zhǔyào de shì shéi? Jìnle xuéxiào lǐ, shéi jiāo nǐ?	Think some more. There was your father, and there was your mother. Who is even more important? Once you started school, who taught you?
P	你。	Nǐ.	You.
BEH	你! [laughs]	Nǐ! [laughs]	You! [laughs]
Grandfather	我没教过你吧。学校，到学校，谁教你？说普通话？	Wǒ méi jiāoguo nǐ ba. Xuéxiào, dào xuéxiào, shéi jiāo nǐ? Shuō Pǔtōnghuà?	I didn't teach you. In school, once you got to school, who taught you? To speak Standard Chinese?
P	老师，老师，老师。	Lǎoshī, lǎoshī, lǎoshī.	Teacher, teacher, teacher.
BEH	老师。	Lǎoshī.	Your teacher.
Grandfather	对了，老师。	Duìle, lǎoshī.	Right, your teacher.

This example illustrates the previous two observations about phenomena that are potentially opaque to survey methodologies. By placing the researcher's choice of questions causally prior to the study, they represent knowledge as monologic, rather than dialogic, and by limiting the participant to a single response, they represent knowledge as a state, rather than a process. Social science researchers justify survey methodologies in terms of their potential to yield large amounts of quantifiable data; however, in the context of Bái language use, one of the things I am interested in interrogating is how studies that presuppose that individuals speak definite languages in predictable ways serve larger regimes of ethnological knowledge.



## *5.2 Sketch of the sample*

Despite the fact that the participants belonged to only two social networks, they were fairly evenly distributed in terms of education level: Eleven participants were still in school, four attended only elementary school, 13 finished middle school, six graduated from high school, and six went on to some form of post-secondary education. (Two participants did not discuss their educational level.) The elementary-educated participants were all members of the G1 generation; participants in subsequent generations all completed at least middle school, which reflects the spread of nine-year compulsory education following the 1949 establishment of the PRC.

All of the participants were born in Jiànchuān County; of these, 28 were born in Jīnhuá, while 14 moved to Jīnhuá from other jurisdictions for education, work, or marriage. In some cases, individuals moved from rural jurisdictions immediately adjacent to Jīnhuá. Nevertheless, place of origin was salient because those born in Jīnhuá could distinguish migrants by their distinctive accents in Bái, and migrants frequently mentioned accommodating to Jīnhuá norms. Among the 42 participants, 16 mentioned living or traveling frequently outside of Jiànchuān County. They had all studied or worked in Xiàguān or Kūnmíng; no participant had spent more than a few weeks outside of Yúnnán.

The sample was perfectly homogeneous with respect to nationality: All participants identified as Bái. This is not surprising, because my language consultant, who served as the “ego” for the larger network, felt strongly that only ethnic Bái were properly representative of Bái language use. What is more surprising is that, out of 42

participants, only one reported having a non-Bái parent: One participant's father was Hàn and was born over the eastern county border in Hèqìng County. By contrast, two participants with whom I conducted longer background interviews had Hàn fathers who had migrated to Jīnhuá and married into their mothers' families. My sample may be somewhat atypical in this respect.

With respect to whether participants counted non-Bái language users among their friends, the sample is more evenly divided: Out of 42 participants, 21 stated that they spoke Sinitic varieties with friends; this included all eleven G3 participants. Out of the 21 participants who said that they did not use Sinitic varieties with friends, two G2 participants qualified that they had done so when they were younger, but had lost touch with their non-Bái language-user friends. Two participants stated explicitly that they had little to do with Hàn people. However, others pointed out that their friends were all “local people” (*běndìrén* 本地人), and that local Hàn and Huí could also speak Bái. Therefore, the fact that half of the participants perceived themselves as participating exclusively in Bái-language social networks does not necessarily mean that their networks were homogeneous with respect to nationality.

### *5.3 Language acquisition and use*

Although not all G1 and G2 participants discussed their own language acquisition, 23 out of 30 participants in these generations described acquiring Bái from their parents as a first language, then learning a Sinitic variety in elementary school in conjunction with becoming literate in Chinese characters. These participants described teachers in the early grades speaking both Bái and Sinitic varieties; for example, they would read the

text of a lesson in a Sinitic variety, then paraphrase it in Bái. Even older G1 participants, who had attended elementary school before the founding of the PRC, described acquiring Sinitic varieties in this way.

At the same time, seven G1 and G2 participants stated that they did not acquire Sinitic varieties until somewhat later in life. Three were older female G1 participants who maintained that they had learned Sinitic varieties by speaking with their grandchildren. One was a G2 participant who stated that she had spoken very little Chinese in school, and acquired Sinitic varieties while shopping and doing everyday chores. And a further three G2 participants indicated that they had become literate in Chinese characters without being able to speak a Sinitic variety. These statements appear to reflect different standards for self-assessment as much as actual variation in language ability. Each of the older female G1 participants had graduated from middle school; speaking with their grandchildren may have reactivated passive knowledge. As for the G2 participants, their statements may also reflect differences in the degree to which individual schools and teachers in Jiànchuān County required them to speak Sinitic varieties in class.

By contrast, among the twelve G3 participants, only the oldest participant (born in 1986) described acquiring Sinitic varieties in elementary school. The remaining ten participants had acquired Sinitic varieties from their parents starting at birth. Whether, and how, they had acquired Bái was difficult to answer, both because the children were, on the whole, not particularly metalinguistically aware, and because they provided confusing or contradictory answers in the course of the interviews. More fundamentally, it was clear that all of the children had some passive knowledge of Bái (*huì tīng* 会听, literally ‘can hear’), but varied in the extent and circumstances under which they could

produce it. Nevertheless, three of the slightly older G3 participants (born 1995, 1996, and 2001) were metalinguistically aware enough to describe learning Bái from classmates in order to make friends or to make certain that they knew what people were saying about them.

From the perspective of parents observing their children's language acquisition, all 30 G1 and G2 participants described their language choices with their children. Out of eight G1 participants, all but one reported speaking with their own children (the G2 participants) exclusively in Bái. The exception was a middle-aged woman (born in 1955) who recalled a Hà teacher from Sichuān Province who exercised a strong influence on her in elementary school; as a result, she spoke Sinitic varieties with her grown children, in addition to her grandchildren. The remaining seven participants said that they spoke only Bái with their own children. Of these, however, five stated that they spoke with their grandchildren (the G3 participants) in Sinitic varieties, and one stated that she used both Bái and Sinitic varieties. Only one G1 participant reported speaking exclusively in Bái with both her adult children and her grandchildren.

Out of the 22 G2 participants, twelve reported speaking Sinitic varieties with their children (the G3 participants): Three participants did not elaborate on their reasons, but the remaining nine stated that they did so in order to give their children an advantage in school and wider society. The G2 participant in excerpt 5-3 was the principal of a middle school, and he was particularly articulate in describing his reasons for choosing to speak to his son in Sinitic varieties from birth.

**EXCERPT 5-3: Participant 2009-24 (male, G2, born 1966), recording 223, 3:44-4:51**

BEH	那，你好像跟你的儿子说的是汉语嘛。	Nà, nǐ hǎoxiàng gēn nǐ de érzi shuō de shì Hànyǔ ma.	So, you seem to speak to your son in Chinese.
P	跟儿子说的是汉语。	Gēn érzi shuō de shì Hànyǔ.	I speak to my son in Chinese.
BEH	从小就是这样吗？	Cóng xiǎo jiù shì zhèiyàng ma?	Has it been that way ever since he was little?
P	从小都是这样。	Cóng xiǎo dōu shì zhèiyàng.	It's been that way since he was little.
BEH	你们是因为什么这样决定的？你们能不能记起来吗？	Nǐmen shì wèi shénme zhèiyàng juéding de? Nǐmen néng bù néng jìqǐlái ma?	Why did you decide to do it that way? Can you remember?
P	这个，一个是，我感觉，语言这个东西，估计学杂一点，以后可能对思维的发展可能不利。所以，我儿子，我一开始，我又跟他说汉语，然后你去读书的话，有基础，都是汉语，都是，思考问题都不需再翻译两遍。我们学白族话的人都是，说白族话的人，他考虑问题，大脑都需要把它翻译成白语，然后进去思维，在这儿翻译出来，它就增加了一道。所以一开始又跟儿子说这个汉话 ...	Zhèige, yíge shì, wǒ gǎnjué, yǔyán zhèige dōngxi, gūji xué zá yìdiǎn, yǐhòu kěnéng duì sīwéi de fāzhǎn kěnéng bú lì. Suǒyǐ, wǒ érzi, wǒ yī kāishǐ, wǒ yòu gēn tā shuō Hànhuà, ránhòu nǐ qù dú shū de huà, yǒu jīchū, dōu shì Hànyǔ, dōu shì, sīkǎo wèntí dōu, jiù bù xū zài fānyì liǎngbiàn. Wǒmen xué Báizúhuà de rén dōu shì, shuō Báizúhuà de rén, tā kǎolǜ wèntí, dànnǎo dōu xūyào bǎ tā fānyì chéng Báiyǔ, ránhòu jìnqù sīwéi, zài zhèr fānyìchūlái, tā jiù zēngjiāle yí dào. Suǒyǐ, yī kāishǐ yòu gēn érzi shuō zhèige Hànhuà ...	Well, for one, I think that language, I think if you learn it badly, later on it may be bad for the development of your thinking. So, my son, right from the beginning, I spoke Chinese to him, and then if you go to school, you have a base, all in Chinese, it's all, problems in thinking are all, you don't have to translate twice. Those of us who learn Bái are all, the person who speaks Bái, when he considers a problem, his brain has to translate it into Bái, and then start thinking, and then translate it back again, that adds a step. So, right from the beginning, I spoke with my son

Three participants stated that they spoke Bái with their children, and four participants stated that they spoke both Bái and Sinitic varieties. Three participants described speaking Sinitic varieties to one child and Bai to the other: Two were a married couple who spoke to their first child in order to give him an advantage in school, but were dismayed when he failed to acquire Bái, and adopted a bilingual strategy with their second child; one spoke to both children in Sinitic varieties from birth, but switched to Bái with the older child once he entered school. In addition, four participants described asymmetrical language use in which elders spoke Bái with their children, and children responded in Sinitic varieties. In short, while the responses revealed wide variation in specific multilingual strategies, all but three G2 participants used Sinitic varieties with their children at least part of the time.

The picture of language acquisition that emerges from these interviews is of rapid change, within a single generation, from a situation of relatively uniform intergenerational transmission of Bái to a much more complex situation in which adult family members are adopting multiple transmission strategies of Bái and Sinitic varieties, both serially and in parallel. On the whole, these strategies are aimed at ensuring that children start school with a strong command of Sinitic varieties, which adults believe will help them attain literacy in Chinese characters. By contrast, only two female participants in the G2 generation mentioned that they felt that speaking Bái conferred advantages, for example in terms of access to local networks; only two male G3 participants stated that they felt that it was important to know Bái.

Nevertheless, some adults have adopted bilingual strategies with an eye to making sure that their children acquire Bái. A theme that six G2 participants touched upon was dismay that their children's Bái was disfluent, accented, or simply “awkward” (*bièniu* 别扭), and regret at having failed to help them acquire Bái along with Sinitic varieties.

#### 5.4 Linguistic repertoires

Up to this point, I have contrasted Bái with Sinitic varieties in general, rather than with specific varieties such as Standard Chinese or Jiànchuān Mandarin. On the one hand, this reflects that participants were nearly unanimous in distinguishing Bái from Sinitic varieties; on the other, it illustrates that participants varied widely, both within and among responses, in the degree to which they distinguished among Sinitic varieties and how they defined them.

All 42 participants responded to the question, “How many languages do you speak?” Of these, 31 answered “two” and specified the languages as “Bái” (*Báizúhuà* 白族话, *Báizúyǔ* 白族语, or *Báiyǔ* 白语) and “Chinese” (*Hànhuà* 汉话, *Hànyǔ* 汉语, or *Zhōngwén* 中文). The use of language names with *-huà* 话 ‘speech’ themselves suggest orientation to spoken language; in the broader Chinese context, such names usually denote regional vernaculars, such as *Shànghǎihuà* 上海话 ‘Shanghai dialect’ or *Guǎngdōnghuà* 广东话 ‘Cantonese’ in contrast to *Pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 ‘Standard Chinese.’ *Hànhuà* 汉话 ‘the speech of the Hàn’ is a Yúnnán regionalism which does not appear in standard dictionaries (cf. Blum 1994:80).

By contrast, the language names with *-yǔ* 语 ‘language’ suggest an orientation to written language, particularly the term *Báiyǔ*. When I told an acquaintance in Jīnhuá that I was studying *Báiyǔ*, she countered that the term implied that Bái had a written language like *Hànyǔ*, and that what I was studying was *Báizúhuà*. From an etymological perspective this is incorrect: As I point out in chapter 2, the salient contrast in Literary Chinese was between *wénzì* 文字 ‘written language’ and 语言 *yǔyán* ‘spoken language’ (Keeler 2008:349); consequently, the term *Zhōngwén* refers to the written language while *Hànyǔ* refers to the spoken language. Nevertheless, from the perspective of language use, my acquaintance was perfectly on the mark, both in the sense that many language users in the Chinese context use *Hànyǔ* to refer to Standard Chinese in both its written and spoken forms, and in the sense that many language users in the Jiànchuān context perceive Bái to be a different order of language from Standard Chinese. (Likewise, *Zhōngwén* also denotes spoken varieties, including regional varieties such as Cantonese, particularly outside of the PRC.)

After receiving the initial response to the question, “How many languages (*yǔyán* 语言) do you speak?” I encouraged participants to specify their knowledge and use of “Chinese” in terms of varieties such as Standard Chinese and regional vernaculars. All of the participants were familiar with Standard Chinese, but I encountered difficulty finding a convenient term for Jiànchuān Mandarin. Chinese dialectologists classify the Sinitic varieties in Yúnnán under the umbrella term Southwest Mandarin (*Xīnán Guānhuà* 西南官话); however, very few participants could make sense of this technical linguistic term. As for the usual strategy of suffixing the name of a locality with the morpheme *-huà* 话 ‘speech,’ *Yúnnánhuà* 云南话 ‘Yúnnán dialect’ and *Dàlǐhuà* 大理话 ‘Dàlǐ dialect’ were



too broad to refer to the local variety, but language users understood *Jiànchuānhuà* 剑川话 ‘Jiànchuān dialect’ to refer to Bái, rather than Jiànchuan Mandarin.

In the end, I resorted to the circumlocution *dāngdì de Hànyǔ fāngyán* 当地的汉语方言 ‘the local Chinese dialect.’ The participants, for their part, often expressed the contrast in terms of Standard Chinese and *tǔ Hànyǔ* 土汉语, in which the morpheme *tǔ* 土 ‘soil, earth’ recalls the technical linguistic term *tǔyǔ* 土语 ‘patois, rural dialect, vernacular,’ but also evokes the meaning ‘uncouth, crude, unsophisticated.’ Among these participants I include the man who answered the question “how many languages do you speak?” with “three,” but specified the languages as *Báizuhuà*, *Hànhuà*, and *tǔ Hànhuà*. The joke was that, even under the best of circumstances, his mastery of Sinitic varieties did not rise to the level of Standard Chinese. (Nevertheless, I found the participant’s speech extremely easy to understand.)

Two participants answered the question, “How many languages do you speak?” with “two,” and specified the languages as Bái (*Báizúhuà* or *Báiyǔ*) and Standard Chinese (*Pǔtōnghuà*). Both were young boys (born 2000 and 2001) of the G3 generation, who were initially focused on the language they spoke at school. To these I can add one further male G3 participant (born 1997) who answered the question “two,” but specified the languages as *Zhōngguóhuà* and English. In the subsequent discussion, he clarified that, by *Zhōngguóhuà*, he meant the language you speak in school – that is, Standard Chinese – and that he also spoke Bái.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> A number of participants mentioned that they spoke English, which is now compulsory in all schools, and one older participant mentioned that he had learned some Russian during the period of Sino-Soviet cooperation in the 1950s. I do not consider these responses in this analysis.

The remaining eight participants answered the question, “How many languages do you speak?” with “three” and specified the languages as Bái (*Báizúhuà* or *Báiyǔ*), Standard Chinese (*Pǔtōnghuà*), and *Hànhuà*, which in these cases referred not to all Sinitic varieties, but exclusively to non-Standard varieties. Of these, six were members of the G3 generation, who were immersed in a school setting in which the differences between Standard Chinese and non-standard varieties were particularly salient. Nevertheless, the other six G3 participants responded that they spoke two languages, like most of the G1 and G2 participants.

In the course of asking participants about “who speaks what with whom,” six participants described their language choice straightforwardly in terms of addressee: They spoke Bái with people who spoke Bái and Chinese with people who spoke Chinese. One participant volunteered that he could usually tell who could speak Bái based on their clothes and demeanor; however, it was more often the case that he “mistakenly” spoke Sinitic varieties to a Bái language user who dressed and acted like an outsider than the other way around. Several of these participants voiced a trope I heard repeatedly in Jīnhuá to the effect that, whenever and wherever two Bái people meet, they always spoke Bái. Naturally, this trope overlooks the extensive use of Sinitic varieties within the family.

It also contradicts reports by language users who chose to describe their language choice in terms of situation, rather than addressee. Two participants described using Sinitic varieties when shopping; given the preponderance of Hàn migrants in retail stores in Jīnhuá, this practice must be more prevalent than the responses in my sample suggest. Another two language users described using Sinitic varieties in the office; again, given the role of Standard Chinese as the superstrate literary language and its privileged role as

the oral language in education, it is surprising that fewer participants did not attend to the role of Sinitic varieties in the workplace.

The picture that emerges from the responses to this question is one in which participants clearly distinguish Bái from Sinitic varieties, but are less absolute about the distinction between Sinitic varieties. Of course, the wording of the question, “How many languages do you speak?” makes it possible that some participants did, in fact, perceive Standard Chinese and Jiànchuān Mandarin to be distinct varieties, but felt that their knowledge of Standard Chinese did amount to “speaking” it. However, participants who gave “two-language” responses came from all three generations and a wide range of educational backgrounds, including schoolchildren whose everyday language is very close to the standard

Instead, I suggest, most participants simply perceived the differences between Bái and Sinitic varieties, on the one hand, and between Standard Chinese and non-standard Sinitic varieties, on the other, as contrasts of different orders. In this sense, Bái language users are very much in the mainstream of the broader discourses of language and ethnicity in China that I discuss in chapters 2 and 3. According to these discourses, languages are isomorphic with nationalities, which are essentially different; however, varieties of a nationality’s language are essentially similar, which enables the standard variety to “stand in” for all non-standard varieties.

### *5.5 Code switching*

As I discuss in chapter 4 with respect to the work of Myers-Scotton (1993a), Poplack and Sankoff (1984), and Muysken (1995), linguists’ perceptions of the

boundaries between codes based on monolingual or standard varieties may or may not align with language users' perceptions in concrete situations of language use.

Language users' use of code switching as a contextualization cue depends on the perception that their linguistic repertoire consists of at least two separate linguistic codes; speakers' successful use of code switching depends not only on listeners' shared perception that there are two codes, but also on their shared perception of the boundary between those codes.

Given that all of the participants perceived a clear distinction between Bái and Chinese, it is not surprising that they also had a local term to describe switching between them. In my interview script, I had formulated a question along these lines using the term *yǔmǎ zhuǎnhuàn* 语码转换, a technical linguistic term for 'code switching.' After I realized that few participants could make sense of the term, I switched to asking whether they ever "mixed Bái and Chinese" (*Báiyǔ, Hànyǔ hùnhé shǐyòng* 白语、汉语混合使用). Nevertheless, this formulation was still a bit literary for some participants to parse, and sensitive to the problem, my language consultant frequently volunteered the Bái phrase *Hanp cainl cainl, Baip kv kv*, literally 'Hàn phrase phrase, Bái song song.' Zhao and Xú (1996:164) gloss this phrase as *yǔyán fēi Hàn fēi Bái* 语言非汉非白 'neither Hàn nor Bái in language.'

It is not the case that every participant agreed that this description characterized his or her own speech. Of the 36 participants who responded to the question, "Do you ever mix Bái and Chinese?" five stated that they never mixed languages. Among the remaining 31 participants, 14 stated that they did mix languages, but did not elaborate further. However, the 17 participants who elaborated characterized their mixing in a

variety of ways. Two participants indicated that they were more likely to mix in certain situations, such as being outside the home or when shopping in the market. One participant stated that she mixed by saying the same phrase in Bái then in a Sinitic variety. Another participant characterized her mixing as a function of the time she spent working in Xiànguān, where she habitually used Sinitic varieties.

The remaining participants characterized their mixing in terms of three related issues: Eight participants indicated that there were certain topics that it was not possible to discuss using only Bái; five participants observed that Bái included many loanwords from Sinitic varieties, borrowed to express “modern” concepts which Bái lacked; and one G3 participant stated that if he was unable to express himself in Bái, he switched to Chinese. Each group of responses reveals a perception that Bái contains lexical gaps that can be overcome only through recourse to Sinitic varieties.

The G2 participant in excerpt 5-4 voices a common trope which equates Bái, on the one hand, with pre-industrial times – indeed, given the reference to Hǎiménkǒu, an archeological site in the Jīnhuá basin, primordial times – and Chinese with modernization in the form of capitalist industrial production. Interestingly, the participant imagines language contact as beginning quite recently, in the Republican period:

**EXCERPT 5-4: Participant 2009-30 (male, G2, born 1969), recording 229, 10:45-11:38**

BEH	那，你会不会发现，你们说白族话的时候，偶尔就会把汉语和白族话混在一块儿呢？	Nà, nǐ huì bú huì fāxiàn, nǐmen shuō Báizúhuà de shíhou, ǒu'ěr jiù huì bǎ Hànyǔ hé Báizúhuà hùn zài yíkuàir ne?	So, do you find, when you all speak Bái, that you sometimes mix Chinese and Bái together?
P	就是这个问题呢，我	Jiù shì zhèige wèntí ne, wǒ	I think you ask a

	<p>觉得你提地很好，就是因为白语，这个母语呢，它有几千年的历史，海门口一直到现在，应该说，“吃饭”啊，“睡觉”，最基本的就有了，但是汉语，很难说，就是民国开始最早的资本主义的经济来说，新型的工业品，它没有白族话了。象类似现在 VCD，白族话也叫 <i>VCD jia</i>，电视机，白族话也叫 <i>dianbsibjix jia</i>，汽车也叫 <i>qibcaix jia</i>，<i>jiaobcaix jia</i>，轿车嘛，它已经没有那个白语了，这个东西。所以，象这一些呢，我们在表达这一些物品东西的时候，我们都会用这个汉语，但是用，基本用我们土语的音，白语的音，在描述。</p>	<p>good question, because Bái, this mother tongue, has several thousand years of history, from [the archeological finds at] Hǎiménkǒu until now, I should say, we had “eat,” “sleep,” the most basic things, but as for Chinese, it’s hard to say, it must have been when the earliest capitalist economy started in the Republican period, the new types of industrial goods, there’s no Bái for them. Like the VCD [video compact disc] now, in Bái it’s just called <i>VCD jia</i>, television, in Bái it’s just called <i>dianbsibjix jia</i>, a car is just called <i>qibcaix jia</i>, <i>jiaobcaix jia</i>, a car, there’s no Bái for it, this thing. So, like these things, when we express these material goods, we all use Chinese, but use, basically use our vernacular pronunciation, Bái pronunciation, when we describe them.</p>
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Mainstream work on code switching, such as that of Myer-Scotton (1993a), Poplack and Sankoff (1984), and Muysken (1995), distinguishes code switching from borrowing based on the degree to which an item from one language is conventionalized in another. In other words, in order to determine whether a particular item with a Sinitic etymology is a code switch or a borrowing, one would have to determine the degree to which language users agreed that the word was Bái. However, five participants maintain that they never mix languages, while 14 insist that it is impossible to speak Bái without mixing. Either they disagree on what constitutes Bái itself, or they disagree on what constitutes a Chinese element in Bái.

This situation may challenge mainstream work on code switching to the point of methodological unworkability. It is difficult enough to operationalize the concept if, as Auer (1998, 1999) and his students maintain, a linguist can only identify code switching to the degree it is meaningful to the participants in a linguistic interaction. It may be impossible to operationalize if speakers and listeners in the interaction disagree on what constitutes a code switch because they disagree on what constitutes a code, particularly if their perceptions change in the course of the interaction. Certain features of Bái – in particular the fact that most speakers are bilingual and occasionally represent the language in Chinese characters – throw these issues into unusual relief. However, it bears considering just how much the consensus on what elements constitute languages like English is inherent in language itself, and how much is the real or perceived outcome of social processes of standardization or “focusing.”

### *5.6 Authentic language use*

Despite the ambiguity in language users' perceptions of what constitutes Bái, some participants nevertheless held firm views that some kinds of Bái were more Bái than others. Interested in exploring language users' perceptions of authentic language use, I formulated a question in my original instrument in which I translated "authentic" as *zhēnzhèng* 真正, a term that combines the characters for 'true' and 'correct'; it can be used, for example, to distinguish an original document from a copy.

However, when I piloted the instrument with one of my language consultants, he felt that participants would not be able to make sense of the term in relation to language, and instead proposed the term *chúnzhèng* 纯正 'pure, unadulterated.' I felt uncomfortable with this term because I did not want to discourage participants from talking about forms of Bái language use that were "impure," yet still authentic – for example, community-wide norms for code switching. Eventually, we settled on the term *dìdào* 地道 'pure, authentic, typical,' which carries a strong connotation of association with a specific place; regional foods are often described in this way. During interviews, my language consultant was sensitive to the problem, and frequently reformulated my question about *dìdào de Báizúhuà* 地道的白族话 'authentic Bái' in Standard Chinese as *cynpzenb nox Baipngvpxix*, 'pure Bái,' in Bái.

Upon reflection, I realize that my negotiation with my language consultants and participants over the translation of "authentic" was an example of what Liu (1995) has called "translingual practice." Liu points out that the assumption, shared by ordinary language users and linguists alike, that anything that can be said in one language can be said in any other dehistoricizes the contact between specific languages that establishes conventions of translation equivalence. My assumption that there must be a way to



express the difference between “authenticity” and “purity” was based on my own positioning within in academic discourses that valorize hybridity, as well as in broader U.S. discourses that denigrate imitation and derivativeness. In challenging local ways of valorizing language, I unwittingly attempted to substitute my own.

Out of 42 participants, 21 responded to the questions, “Who speaks the most authentic Bái?” and “Who speaks the least authentic Bái?” In general, these responses focused on two factors: geography and age. Nine participants identified the area of Dōngshān, a rural area at high elevation near the eastern county border with Hèqìng County, as the area in which people spoke the most authentic Bái. Their assessments of authenticity focused on their perception that some individuals in this region – children, for example – were monolingual in Bái, and that they used Bái, rather than Chinese, words for “modern” concepts. Conversely, in response to the question, “Who speaks the least authentic Bái,” twelve participants named Jīnhuá. Their assessments of inauthenticity focused on the use of Sinitic lexical items and the widespread phenomenon of adults addressing their children in Sinitic varieties.

I also encountered the stereotype that located the most authentic language use in Dōngshān during semi-structured interviews and conversations with Bái acquaintances. When I departed Jīnhuá in December 2009, the SIL Bái mother-tongue literacy project was set to open a second school in Dōngshān in order to pilot their materials with what they believed to be a more ethnically and linguistically homogeneous population. It echoes a narrative to the effect that Dōngshān residents are descendants of the “original” Bái who were displaced to higher elevations when the ancestors of the current residents of Jīnhuá arrived from the lower Yangtze valley during the Míng Dynasty.

With respect to age, nine participants described older speakers as most authentic, while seven described younger speakers as least authentic. As with geography, participants' assessments of authenticity focused on older language users' ability to speak Bái without mixing it with Chinese.

The factors of age and geography were by no means mutually exclusive: Several speakers mobilized geography to identify Dōngshān speakers as most authentic, but age to identify younger speakers as least authentic. Several participants identified themselves among the Jīnhuá residents or younger speakers whose Bái was least authentic; by the same token, several participants who had moved to Jīnhuá for marriage identified the speech of their home locality as most authentic in relation to Jīnhuá. The G2 participant in excerpt 5-5 demonstrates how the factors of geography and age dovetailed in some responses, as well as how code switching – perceived as the filling of lexical gaps in Bái – is constructed as the inauthentic strategy of younger speakers.

**EXCERPT 5-5: Participant 2009-25 (male, G2, born 1984), recording 224, 5:40-7:51**

BEH	那，你认为最地道的白族话，是谁，是由谁说呢？	Nà, nǐ rènwei zuì didào de Báizúhuà, shì shéi, shì yóu shéi shuō ne?	So, who do you think speaks the most authentic Bái?
LC	<i>Not julde alna hox mal Baipngvpxix dient cvnpzenb?</i>	<i>Not julde alna hox mal Baipngvpxix dient cvnpzenb?</i>	<i>Who do you think speaks the purest Bái?</i>
BEH	<i>Dient</i> , 最纯正？	<i>Dient</i> , zuì chúnzhèng?	<i>Very</i> , most pure.
P	最纯正 ...	Zuì chúnzhèng ...	Most pure ...
LC	<i>Alna hox cvnpzenb jiai?</i>	<i>Alna hox cvnpzenb jiai?</i>	<i>Who is more pure?</i>
P	我觉得象剑川和鹤庆，这两个县中间叫 [inaud.] 乡，还是属于剑川那些，那些白族嘛，说的白族话纯正一点。	Wǒ juéde xiàng Jiànchuān hé Hèqìng, zhè liǎngge xiàn zhōngjiān jiào [inaud.] Xiāng, háishì shǔyú Jiànchuān nàxiē, nàxiē Báizú ma, shuō de	I think, like Jiànchuān and Hèqìng, between those two counties, it's called [inaud.] Township, it's still

		Báizúhuà chúnzhèng yidiǎn.	part of Jiànchuān, the Bái of those Bái people is a little purer.
BEH	啊，纯正一点。	A, chúnzhèng yidiǎn.	Oh, a little purer.
P	还有沙溪 ...	Háiyǒu Shāxī ...	There's also Shāxī ...
LC	那是东山 ...	Nà shì Dōngshān ...	That's Dōngshān ...
P	还有沙溪的 [inaud.] 乡。	Háiyǒu Shāxī de [inaud.] Xiāng.	There's also [inaud.] Township in Shāxī.
LC	因为剑川和鹤庆的话是 ...	Yīnwèi Jiànchuān hé Hèqìng de huà shì ...	Because if it's Jiànchuān and Hèqìng ...
P	那是东边。我们看过去东边这座山上，象山顶上那些海拔比较高啊，那些地方都住有人啊，那些地方，然后那些人讲的白族话跟我们一小部分有点区别，就是发音的区别嘛啊，象我们原来的地方方言，地方汉语嘛，纯正的普通话有一小点的发音区别，是不是，就是那个意思。	Nà shì dōngbiān. Wǒmen kànguòqù dōngbiān zhèzuo shān shàng, xiàng shāndǐng shàng nàxiē hǎibá bǐjiào gāo a, nèixiē difang dōu zhù yǒu rén a, nàxiē difang, ránhòu nàxiē rén jiǎng de Báizúhuà gēn wǒmen yì xiǎo bùfen yǒu diǎn qūbié, jiù shì fāyīn de qūbié ma a, xiàng wǒmen yuánlái de difāng fāngyán, difāng Hànhuà ma, chúnzhèng de Pǔtōnghuà yǒu yìxiǎodiǎn de fāyīn qūbié, shì bú shì, jiù shì nèige yìsi.	That's in the east. If we look past that mountain in the east, like those people who live on the mountaintop, those relatively high altitude, there are people who live in all those places, those places, and then the Bái that those people speak is a little different from ours, it's a difference in pronunciation, like the regional dialect we were talking about, local Chinese, pure Standard Chinese has a little difference in pronunciation, right, that's what I mean.
BEH	就是这样吗？那，被汉语的白族话你发现在哪边最普遍呢？	Jiù shì zhèiyàng ma? Nà, bèi Hànhuà de Báizúhuà nǐ fāxiàn zài nǎbiān zuì	Is that how it is? Well, as for Sinicized Bái,

		pǔbiān ne?	where do you find it's most common?
P	就是在我们这些地方啊。	Jiù shì zài wǒmen zhèxiē difang a.	Right around here.
BEH	这些地方吗?	Zhèxiē difang ma?	Around here?
P	在我们这些地方。	Zài wǒmen zhèxiē difang.	In this place of ours around here.
BEH	在金华这边吗?	Zài Jīnhuá zhèibiān ma?	Here in Jīnhuá?
P	啊。	A.	Right.
BEH	你有没有 ...	Nǐ yǒu méi yǒu ...	Have you ...
P	啊。特别是，我在想，这边年级大一点都会说白族话，象我们这些人，就是，什么，就刚才我给你说，象“随便”，那两个字，这个词嘛，就象我们这种人说不来嘛，就“随便，随便”，是不是，就象，“你吃什么？”我说“随便”，是不是，就是。	A. Tèbié shì, wǒ zài xiǎng, zhèbiān niánjí dà yìdiǎn dōu bǐjiào huì shuō Báizúhuà, xiàng wǒmen zhèxiē rénmen, jiù shì, shénme, jiù gāngcái wǒ gěi nǐ shuō, xiàng “suíbiàn,” nèi liǎngge zì, zhèige cí ma, jiù xiàng wǒmen zhèzhǒng rén shuōbùlái ma, jiù “suíbiàn, suíbiàn,” shì bú shì, jiù xiàng, “nǐ chī shénme?” wǒ shuō “suíbiàn,” shí bù shí, jiù shì.	Right. Especially, I think, older people here speak pretty good Bái, but people like us, that is, what, like I just told you, like “as you like,” those two characters, that word, just like people like us, we can't say it, [we just say] “as you like, as you like,” right, just like, “what will you have to eat?” I say, “as you like,” right, that's right.
BEH	那，你担心过白族话会消失吗？考虑过这个问题吗？	Nà, nǐ dānxīnguo Báizúhuà huì xiāoshī ma? Kǎolùguo zhèige wèntí ma?	Well, have you ever worried that Bái might disappear? Have you ever considered this question?
P	我都没考虑过这个问题。因为现在我的孩子啊，我教她，就是，汉语几句，白族话几句，就是这种教。我也不知道 ...	Wǒ dōu méi kǎolùguo zhèige wèntí. Yīnwèi, xiànzài wǒ de háiizi a, wǒ jiāo tā, jiù shì, Hànyǔ jǐjù, Báizúhuà jǐjù, jiù shì zhèzhǒng jiāo. Wǒ yě bù zhīdao ...	I've never considered this question. Because my daughter, I teache her, it's just, a few phrases in Chinese, a few phrases in Bái, that's just how I

			teach. I don't know either ...
BEH	你不 ...	Nǐ bù ...	You don't ...
P	可能，在我，现在我那个女儿在她小几代人可能，就是，白族话会更少，我觉得有这么一点啊。象我爷爷，比我爷爷大的那种，象所有的，讲中文字他可以用白族话说出来。可以做到这一点，是不是。但是象我们八零后，九零后，是不是，这种人几乎都带，一点汉字。	Kěnéng, zài wǒ, xiànzài wǒ nèige nǚ'ér zài tā xiǎo jǐdài a, xiǎo jǐdài rén kěnéng, jiù shì, Báizúhuà huì gèng shǎo, wǒ juéde yǒu zhème yìdiǎn a. Xiàng wǒ yéye, bǐ wǒ yéye dà de nèizhǒng, xiàng suǒyǒu de jiǎng Zhōngwén zì tā kěyǐ yòng Báizúhuà shuōchūlái. Kěyǐ zuòdào zhè yìdiǎn, shìbúshì. Dànshì xiàng wǒmen bā-líng hòu, jiǔ-líng hòu, shì bú shì, zhè zhǒng rén jīhū dōu dài, yìdiǎn Hànzì.	Maybe, when my, when people a few generations younger than my daughter, maybe, it's just, there will be less Bái, I think there's that. Like my grandfather, people older than my grandfather, like all, pronouncing Chinese characters, he can pronounce them in Bái. He can do that, right. But like those of use born after 1980, 1990, right, people like us all have a little, Chinese characters.

Particularly interesting was this participant's conceptualization of his grandfather's competence in terms of the ability to use Bái to pronounce Chinese characters. It is not clear whether the participant imagined older speakers providing Bái alternatives for Standard Chinese readings, or reading them according to the Bái conventions I introduce in chapter 6. In either case, the comment suggests that, for this participant, notions of skill in Bái are connected with mastery of the Chinese literary tradition.

### 5.7 Language maintenance and shift

The fact that nine participants identified older language users as most authentic, while seven identified younger language users as least authentic appears to describe language change in apparent time; five language users specifically stated their opinion that Bái was in the process of changing. Nevertheless, of the 35 participants who responded to the question, “Do you think Bái might disappear someday?” 25 stated that Bái would not disappear, almost always with the confident dismissal “it won’t” (*bú huì* 不会). Of these, three participants specifically stated that it did not matter how much Chinese people used; the G1 participant in excerpt 5-6 suggested that even if Bái is “one-third Chinese,” it will still be Bái.

**EXCERPT 5-6: Participant 2009-35 (male, G1, born 1951), recording 234, 5:05-6:00**

BEH	那，你有没有担心过，你看你们孙子说普通话，说汉话，有没有担心过白族话什么时候消失呢？	Nà, nǐ yǒu méi yǒu dānxīnguo, nǐ kàn nǐmen sūnzi shuō Pǔtōnghuà, shuō Hànhuà, yǒu méi yǒu dānxīnguo Báizúhuà shénme shíhòu xiāoshī ne?	So, have you every worried, you see your grandson speak Standard Chinese, speak Chinese, have you ever worried that Bái might someday disappear?
P	大概是，我孙子是，他那个白族话也会说一点点的，他也是在，他白族话说一点点，那个白族话不会消失的。但是它以后要变，就是变成什么呀，三分之一的汉话在里边的，对不对 [laughs].	Dàgài shì, wǒ sūnzi shì, tā nèige Báizúhuà yě huì shuō yìdiǎndiǎn de, tā yě shì zài, tā Báizúhuà shuō yìdiǎndiǎn, nèige Báizúhuà bú huì xiāoshī de. Dànshì tā yǐhòu yào biàn, jù shì biàn chéng, shénme ya, sānfēnzhīyī de Hànhuà zài lǐbiān de, duì bú duì [laughs].	It’s like this, my grandson, he can speak a little Bái, he is also, he speaks a little Bái, Bái won’t disappear. But later on it will change, it will change, to have, what one-third Chinese in it, right? [laughs].
BEH	你对这个变化有什么看法呢？什么感觉？	Nǐ duì zhèige biànhuà yǒu shénmé kànfǎ ne? Shénme gǎnjué?	What’s your opinion of this change? What’s your feeling?

P	啊，好啊。	A, hǎo a.	Oh, good.
BEH	好吗？	Hǎo ma?	Good?
P	好，好啊。	Hǎo, hǎo a.	Good, good.
BEH	所以白族话变，变它的样子没什么问题吗？	Suǒyǐ Báizúhuà biàn, biàn tā de yàngzi méi shénme wèntí ma?	So, if Bái changes, changes its form, there's no problem?
P	没问题。	Méi wèntí.	No problem.
BEH	还好吗？	Hái hǎo ma?	It's okay?
P	好啊。	Hǎo a.	It's okay.

Many participants added that it was inconceivable that Bái could disappear because everyone spoke it. When I pointed out that some children in Jīnhuá were speaking to each other in Chinese on the street, three participants described children's acquisition of Bái as a “natural” process, which would happen without any formal instruction; two participants described Bái as their “mother tongue,” and one said, “once you learn it, you can never forget it” (*wàng yě wàngbúdiào* 忘也忘不掉). Two participants described Bái acquaintances who had lived in Kūnmíng for long periods of time, but had never shifted to Chinese. By contrast, only five participants expressed concerns that Bái might disappear.

### 5.8 Fractal recursivity

In chapter 4, I review Irvine and Gal's (2000; Gal 2005) influential articles on language ideology and linguistic differentiation. The authors describe three semiotic processes through which language ideology, use, and structure may be mutually constitutive: fractal recursivity, iconization/rhematization, and erasure. In particular, fractal recursivity describes the projection of an ideological opposition salient at one level of relationship to another.

My interviews with Bái language users, and particularly their responses to the question, “How many languages do you speak?” revealed an asymmetry in which most participants perceived the differences between Bái and Sinitic varieties, on the one hand, and between Standard Chinese and non-standard Sinitic varieties, on the other, as contrasts of different orders. I propose that this asymmetry can be understood in terms of asymmetric projection of two components of a national standard ideology around Standard Chinese from the national to the local level.

Ferguson (1972[1959]:246-247) characterizes language use in China in the twentieth century as shifting from diglossia proper to a standard-with-dialects. Under diglossia the salient opposition was between “high” Literary Chinese and “low” vernaculars: Traditional Chinese philology did not attend to vernaculars, and did not possess a theoretical framework to distinguish between Sinitic and non-Sinitic varieties. In the first half of the twentieth century, vernacularization rendered the traditional opposition irrelevant. In its place, comparative philology recognized and prioritized an opposition between non-Sinitic varieties and Sinitic varieties, while standardization promoted an opposition between all Sinitic varieties and the newly codified standard, *Guóyǔ*, the predecessor of Standard Chinese (cf. DeFrancis 1984:224-225).

Given conditions in China during the Republican era, this ideological reorganization must have penetrated slowly to the local level. The Sinitic vs. non-Sinitic opposition was certainly salient in the ruling party’s nationalist rhetoric (Stone-Banks 2004:54-55), but because the state did not recognize the smaller ethnic groups of Southwest China, it had no special relevance for Mínjiā people. Fitzgerald’s (2005[1941]:11) report that the Mínjiā identified themselves in linguistic terms is not



qualitatively different from the way many users of Sinitic vernaculars continue to identify with their own local varieties today.

After the founding of the PRC, the nationalities identification project and the establishment of regional autonomy made the Sinitic vs. non-Sinitic opposition particularly salient in areas populated by ethnic minorities; expanded public education and the promotion of Standard Chinese increased the saliency of the Standard vs. non-Standard opposition for speakers of non-Standard varieties. In the 1950s, government language workers projected the Standard vs. non-Standard opposition from Chinese to minority languages on the model of Standard Chinese.

The Sinitic vs. non-Sinitic opposition privileges language as the key aspect of ethnicity; projected as a Bái vs. non-Bái opposition, it constructs all Bái language users as members of a single nationality distinct from the Hàn and other groups. Present-day accounts, such as Wáng (2004:280-281, 286), characterize the official recognition of the Bái in the 1950s as liberation from centuries of Hàn chauvinism leading to a renaissance of Bái national consciousness. Yet Fitzgerald and Hsu's reports that many Mínjiā identified as Chinese in the 1940s suggest that recognition did not go entirely uncontested at the time.

The Standard vs. non-Standard opposition for Chinese represents Standard Chinese as the synecdochic variety: It represents all other Sinitic varieties as imperfectly representative of the Chinese language. Because Bái language users have accepted this opposition with respect to Chinese, but rejected its projection to Bái, they are highly aware of the contrast between Standard Chinese and Jiànchuān Mandarin, but tolerant of variation in Bái. Meanwhile, the Sinitic vs. non-Sinitic opposition represents Chinese as

the key aspect of ethnicity for Hàn people. Because Bái language users have accepted this opposition with respect to Chinese, as well as its projection as a Bái vs. non-Bái opposition, they accept even highly variant language use by an authentically Bái person as authentically Bái.

## Chapter 6: Language ideologies implicit in spoken interaction

In this chapter, I turn to transcripts of Bái spontaneous conversation and elicited narratives to examine language ideologies implicit in spoken interaction. As a methodological and interpretive framework, I adopt Auer's (1999) distinction between "code switching" and "language mixing" based on the relative saliency of bilingual contrast from the perspectives of the interactants, as distinct from the perspective of the linguist. At the same time, I expand upon Auer's model in light of Silverstein's (1993) distinction between "indexically presupposing" and "indexically entailing" metapragmatic strategies to argue that bilingual contrast is not merely a macro-level resource which language users foreground or background in micro-level interaction, but is actually produced and reproduced through language users' interactional choices. In other words, Bái and Chinese are separate languages because – but only to the extent – that language users treat them as such.

In section 6.1, I provide a theoretical orientation to Auer and Silverstein's models, and contextualize bilingual contrast in Bái interaction in terms of an East Asian metaphor of "reading" and its local instantiation as *Hànzi Bái dú* 汉字白读 'reading Chinese characters in a Bái way.' Then, in section 6.2, I present excerpts from recorded Bái conversations and narratives to illustrate the foregrounding and backgrounding of bilingual contrast in interaction. Although I use Auer's distinction between "language mixing" and "code switching" as an organizational device, my discussion emphasizes the

relative nature of these categories, as well as the indeterminacy of language users' metapragmatic strategies.

### *6.1 Theoretical orientation*

In chapter 4, I review contemporary research on code switching, and contrast the structurally oriented work of Poplack and Sankoff (1984), Myers-Scotton (1993a), and Muysken (1995) with the interactionally oriented work of Auer (1988, 1995, 1998, 1999) and subsequent scholars, particularly Alvarez-Cáccamo (1998). I discuss how this latter program attends to language users' subjective perceptions of the structure of their linguistic repertoires, rather than relying on linguists' identification of particular elements with distinct linguistic codes, and integrates code switching into the larger theoretical issue of how language users accomplish contextualization in interaction.

Auer (1999) develops this approach into a dynamic typology of multilingual language use. This typology builds on a distinction between "insertional" and "alternational" code switching: In insertional switching, switches are limited to brief stretches of linguistic material, often foregrounded by pauses or extra emphasis, after which the interactants resume the original variety of interaction; in alternational switching, the interactants switch from the original variety to a new variety. In each case, the contrast between varieties is highly salient, and language users perceive themselves as using one variety at a time.

Auer's conception of code switching does not require that contrasting linguistic material actually be etymologically distinct from the language of interaction. Instead, he identifies switching based on its pragmatic effects on listeners and the subsequent course

of the interaction. For example, insertional switching may accommodate an asymmetry in participants' repertoires, while alternational switching may serve to change an interaction's "footing" (Goffman 1979), or contextual frame. By focusing on the salience of bilingual contrast to language users, Auer's model avoids a weak point in structurally oriented models: the problem of distinguishing code switching from borrowing.

Language users may perceive recent or idiosyncratic loanwords as part of the language of interaction, yet mobilize established items with long pedigrees as insertional switches.

To cite an example from my own experience, the first citation of the word *target* in the Oxford English Dictionary dates from the fifteenth century. It combines Old French and Middle English *targe* 'shield,' which was borrowed into both Old French and Old English from Old Norse *targa*, with a French diminutive suffix *-et*; the current pronunciation with /g/ prevailed over pronunciations with /ʒ/ or /dʒ/ in the sixteenth century (Oxford English Dictionary 2010[1989]). Nevertheless, some users of American English today occasionally pronounce the name of the retail chain Target as /tɑː ˈtʃeɪ/. This pronunciation has nothing to do with the item's Old French etymology; instead, by directly indexing modern French, the pronunciation indirectly indexes characteristics associated with French stores and products, such as style and quality.

From the perspective of structurally oriented models of code switching, *target* is too well integrated into English to qualify as a code switch. In Auer's model, however, these particular uses of the word are insertional switches because they foreground contrast between English and French for pragmatic effect. They also illustrate Auer's (1999:312) observation that language users can foreground bilingual contrast without much knowledge of the variety that their switching indexes.

Auer (1999:314) contrasts code switching with “language mixing.” In code switching, the contrast between language varieties is salient and insertions and alternations are highly marked; in language mixing, bilingual contrast is suspended, and language users perceive their linguistic practices not as the mixed use of two languages, but as a style or variety in its own right. Auer (1999:314) credits Poplack (1980[1979]) and Myers-Scotton (1988) for foreseeing, in their respective discussions of “frequent codeswitching” and “overall switching as an unmarked choice,” the possibility that bilingual contrast might be suspended. Under language mixing, insertions involve longer stretches of linguistic material, while alternations are less effective in definitively shifting the language of interaction; as a result, insertions begin to look like alternations and alternations begin to look like insertions. Auer (1999:315) observes that this breakdown of the contrast between insertion and alternation is part and parcel of the suspension of contrast between languages, which reduces the pragmatic effectiveness of both practices.

Auer (1999:319) suggests that the “cline” from code switching to language mixing is not merely analytic, but historical. He observes that communities tend to move from code switching to language mixing as individuals’ bilingual competence increases; he speculates that they do so either in order either to distinguish themselves from monolinguals in either language, or to assert a stance of neutrality with respect to both languages in their repertoires. Moreover, Auer hypothesizes that while code switching can give rise to language mixing, the reverse is not possible; once language users perceive their practice as a single style or variety, they cannot re-establish contrast among etymologically distinct elements. (Naturally, this presumes a degree of community consensus in language ideologies that this dissertation does not support.)

Auer (1999:310) cites Silverstein (1993) to observe that, because code switching foregrounds a contextual contrast between language varieties for pragmatic ends, it constitutes a “metapragmatic” comment. In Silverstein’s (1993:33) words, “Signs functioning metapragmatically have pragmatic phenomena – indexical sign phenomena – as their semiotic objects; they thus have an inherently “framing,” or “regimenting,” or “stipulative” character with respect to indexical phenomena.”

However, Auer does not further explore Silverstein’s (1993:36) distinction between indexically presupposing and indexically entailing metapragmatic strategies. In Silverstein’s terms, Auer’s model defines code switching not simply as a metapragmatic strategy, but specifically as an indexically presupposing metapragmatic strategy that foregrounds contrast between varieties as a pre-existing aspect of the broader social context. From this perspective, individual language users merely reproduce bilingual contrast until the aggregate effect of code switching “dulls” the contrast to the point where language mixing ensues.

I propose that it is equally possible to conceive code switching as an indexically entailing strategy in which language users’ mobilization of elements of their linguistic repertoire for pragmatic ends itself brings bilingual contrast into being. From this perspective, individuals not only reproduce, but also produce macro-level contrast between varieties in the course of micro-level interaction. In other words, language varieties exist because language users act as if they matter. Moreover, as Silverstein (2003:196) suggests, language users tend to present indexically creative strategies as if they were indexically presupposing, and to do so implicitly, rather than explicitly,

because implicit, presupposing strategies tend to be more successful than explicit, entailing strategies in achieving interactional goals.

Auer does not further argue his hypothesis that code switching can give rise to language mixing, but not vice-versa; in fact, he (1999:319, note 16) suggests that politically motivated language purism movements may pose a counterexample. In terms of indexically entailing metapragmatic strategies, the success of a purism movement relies on individual language users' identifying certain elements of their linguistic repertoire as "impure," and foregrounding the contrast between "impure" and "pure" elements through pragmatic strategies that surface as code switching in interaction. For example, language users may mark "impure" elements as such by the slight pauses or extra emphasis characteristic of insertional code switching, or avoid them entirely to establish "pure" languages of interaction, as in alternational code switching.

In light of Auer's own counterexample, his assertion that code switching can give rise to language mixing, but not vice versa, is puzzling. It recalls the assumption in historical phonology that mergers of phonemes are irreversible: All things being equal, synchronic language users have no way of recovering a diachronic contrast. However, this position idealizes away from situations in which speakers of a variety with the merger may be in contact with a variety that preserves the contrast, and orthographies established before the merger may provide literate language users with information about prior phonological states. Similarly, in Auer's examples, language users who engage in language mixing continue to have access to monolingual, standard, and literary varieties; he suggests no reason why language users cannot recognize, or even re-establish, contrast through comparison with these varieties.



In this chapter, I argue that Bái language use poses just such a counterexample to Auer's hypothesis. As Dell (1981) and Lee and Sagart's (2008) analyses of loanword strata demonstrate, regardless of whether the most basic layer in Bái is Sinitic, Tibeto-Burman, or something else, language users in the Dàlǐ region have been integrating Sinitic material from different periods and geographic varieties into their speech for millennia. Fitzgerald's (2005[1941]) Republican-era report that language users perceived this mix as distinct way of speaking, *sua bĕr* 'speaking white' (*sua baip* in the current, Jīnhuá-oriented orthography) bears a strong resemblance to Auer's "language mixing." Nevertheless, as Fitzgerald (1972:73, cited in Wu 1990:9) reflects, and Zhào's (Zhào & Ōu 2008[2004]) essay confirms, many simultaneously perceived this mix to be a vernacular of Chinese.

Since the 1949 founding of the PRC, the state policies I describe in chapter 2 have explicitly encouraged Bái language users to consider their mixed way of speaking as a distinct ethnic language. This is quite different from language purism in Auer's sense: Under the Stalinist model of language planning, state agencies have actively encouraged language users to use lexical items from the national language. Instead, recognition of Bái people as an official nationality has facilitated the circulation of academic linguistic discourses that problematize some – although only some – Sinitic elements in Bái as loanwords, while the replacement of Literary Chinese with Modern Standard Chinese as the superstrate variety has made salient the phonological contrast between local varieties of Chinese and the standard. The former development provides Bái language users with an incentive to foreground a bilingual contrast between Bái and Chinese; the latter

provides them a point of comparison against which to produce and reproduce the contrast.

### 6.1.1 *The metaphor of “reading”*

In chapter 5, I discuss participants’ responses to my interview question, “Do you ever mix Bái and Chinese?” While several participants stated that they never mixed languages, many indicated that they did mix, and some described their speech as *Hanp cainl cainl, Baip kv kv*, literally ‘Hàn phrase phrase, Bái song song.’ Among participants who admitted to mixing, some reported using Chinese words for “modern” objects that the Bái did not “originally” have, like ‘televisions’ and ‘airplanes’; others cited everyday objects like ‘apples’ and ‘pears’ based on phonetic similarity to their Chinese equivalents. In chapter 5, I argue that this range of opinion challenges the notion that ideas about language, any more than language use, are a matter of consensus.

Of course, most ordinary language users do not have access to theories of language contact that might allow them to draw a principled distinction between cognates and borrowings. As I discuss in chapter 3, a prerequisite to such a theory is a detailed subgrouping model of Sino-Tibetan, which continues to elude academic historical linguists. Nevertheless, language users do have access to lay versions of academic theories, which provide them with concepts like lexical borrowing, as well as comparison among items in their own linguistic repertoire, from which they may draw conclusions about which items are “original” to Bái (*gùyǒuci* 固有词) and which items are “loanwords” (*jiècí* 借此 or *wàiláicí* 外来词).

A better-articulated version of this discourse surfaced during my semi-structured interviews with government and NGO language workers. These participants described Bái lexical items that demonstrated particular patterns of correspondences to traditional Middle Chinese tonal categories as *Hànzì Bái dú* 汉字白读, or ‘reading Chinese characters in a Bái way.’ This formulation builds upon a broader Chinese metalinguistic discourse that assumes written characters precede spoken words both logically and historically – that is, that characters exist abstractly, independent of their phonological realizations, and that they represent etyma from which present-day phonological realizations are derived.

This discourse can be characterized as “graphocentric.” Recent debates in Western philosophy and cultural studies have contrasted graphocentrism with “phonocentrism,” the position that speech logically and historically precedes writing. Derrida (1976[1967]) deconstructs Saussure’s frankly phonocentric work as part of a Western “logocentric” tradition; however, as Searle (1983) counters, Western philosophy also includes strong “graphocentric” tendencies, beginning with Aristotelian logic. Popular Western discourses of standardization are predominantly graphocentric, not phonocentric. Similarly in China, a phonocentric discourse of academic linguists coexists with the popular graphocentric discourse in which spoken morphemes instantiate written characters, rather than written characters representing spoken morphemes.

One element of this discourse is a metaphor by which spoken language is a kind of “reading” of characters. Ordinary language users treat the term *dúyīn* 读音 ‘reading pronunciation’ as synonymous with *fāyīn* 发音 ‘pronunciation,’ and lay discussions about geographical variation in China revolve around the question of how a certain character is

“read” (*dú* 读 ‘read’ or *niàn* 念 ‘read aloud’). From a phonocentric position, such as that of mainstream cosmopolitan linguistics, because characters represent both sound and meaning, the question has the potential to elicit either the phonological reflex of the character-as-etymon or the semantic equivalent of the character-as-abstraction. By contrast, the graphocentric position assumes that the two are the same.

In a more literal sense, the metaphor of reading reflects the traditional diglossic relationship between Literary Chinese and vernaculars. Literary Chinese was characteristically a written medium and vernaculars were exclusively spoken, but many situations required that written texts be performed aloud, most obviously explicit literacy education. When the literary pronunciation of a character differs from the vernacular reflex of the Sinitic etymon it is supposed to represent, the situation is known as *wén bái yì dú* 文白异读 ‘literary and vernacular are read differently.’ In Japan, where characters are used to represent a non-Sinitic language with distinct phonotactics, the metaphor of reading is articulated slightly differently: All characters have one or more “sound” (*on* 音) readings, which approximate Sinitic phonological forms, and many have a “meaning” (*kun* 訓) reading, which assigns a Japanese phonological form to the character on semantic grounds.

It is clear that the metaphor of reading stands on its head Saussure’s (2001[1916]) view that spoken language is fundamental and written language merely represents it. Less obvious are the consequences of this discourse for theories of language contact. It is not the case in Japanese that “sound” readings are limited to metalinguistic commentary on written texts; they also describe long-established Sinitic loanwords in the spoken language for which there are no non-Sinitic equivalents (Hannas 1997:26-47, 215-218).

In Poplack and Sankoff (1984) or Myers-Scotton's (1993a) terms, the difference between "code-switching" and "borrowing" lies in the degree to which a particular item is integrated into the community lexicon as a matter of social consensus. However, the metaphor of reading allows Japanese language users to recognize a large portion of their lexicon as "foreign" while eliding the distinction between what cosmopolitan linguists might recognize as idiosyncratic code-switching and established loanwords. Because the metaphor of reading structures language users' perception of the lexicon in ways that run counter to the assumptions of cosmopolitan linguistics, I suggest that for such language users a more apt metaphor than either "switching" or "borrowing" might be Woolard's (1999) "bivalency," in which bilingual language users represent formally ambiguous elements either simultaneously or alternately as part of both of their languages.

### 6.1.2 *Hànzì Bái dú*

*Hànzì Bái dú* is a local Bái practice that instantiates the broader East Asian metaphor of reading. As I note in chapter 2, Fitzgerald (2005[1941]:12, note 1) takes pains to assure his readers that, when the Míngjiā used the vernacular reflex *běr* (*baip* in the current, Jīnhuá-oriented orthography) of the Sinitic etymon *bái* 白 'white' to describe their speech, it had nothing to do with the Literary Chinese use of 'white' to mean 'vernacular' in formulations such as *wén bái yì dú*. However, the fact that Míngjiā language users in the 1930s no longer perceived *bái* to mean 'vernacular' does not exclude the possibility the item had specified semantically from 'vernacular in general' to 'the vernacular we speak' at some earlier time. Today, while Bái people primarily understand the phrase *Hànzì Bái dú* to mean "reading characters in Bái," this reading

depends on the local salience of the contrast between *Hàn* and *Bái* as ethnic categories. For most users of Chinese, who may be only vaguely aware that there is a nationality called “Bái,” the pan-Sinitic meaning ‘white’ and its metaphorical extension ‘vernacular’ – active in phrases like *Báihuà* 白话 ‘vernacular Mandarin’ – are probably more salient.

According to Xú and Zhào (1984:12), who use the slightly longer formulation *Báizú dú Hànyīn* 白族读汉音 ‘Bái nationality reading Hàn sounds,’ the conventions specify the realization of traditional Middle Chinese tonal categories. In the indigenous tradition of phonological analysis exemplified in *Qièyùn* (Lù 601 A.D.), scholars assigned syllables of the Literary Chinese canon to one of four categories: Level (*píng* 平), Rising (*shǎng* 上), Departing (*qù* 去) or Entering (*rù* 入). These are phonological categories; because the Literary Chinese descriptions of their phonetic realizations are difficult to interpret, and their present-day reflexes vary widely, the names merely are conventional and do not describe pitch trajectories. Based on present-day reflexes in some Sinitic varieties and Sinoxenic languages, however, it is clear that the Entering category described checked syllables ending in /-p/, /-t/, or /-k/, or perhaps /mʔ/, /nʔ/, and /ŋʔ/ in some varieties (Baxter 1992:32-41).

During the Middle Chinese period, each of the four categories underwent a phonologically conditioned split into Upper and Lower registers, resulting in eight categories. Subsequently, some Sinitic varieties re-merged the Rising, Departing, and Entering categories, with the complication that Rising category syllables with voiced obstruent initials merged to the Departing category. In southern Mandarin varieties, this yielded a five-tone system: Upper Level, Lower Level, Rising, Departing, and Entering. All of these northern varieties also lost the consonant finals in Entering category

syllables, and many merged them with other categories. This yielded a four-tone system: Upper Level, Lower Level, Rising, and Departing. Běijīng Mandarin, which forms the basis of Standard Chinese, merged different members of the Entering category into each of the four other categories based on complex phonological criteria; most Southwest Mandarin varieties, like those spoken in Yúnnán, largely merged the Entering category into the Lower Level category. In either case, speakers of present-day four-tone varieties theoretically have no basis to distinguish diachronically Entering category syllables from the synchronic tones with which they have merged.<sup>29</sup>

Hú and Duàn’s (2001:425-453) dialect survey of Dàlǐ Prefecture indicates that this merger affects the Southwest Mandarin varieties spoken by some Bái language users, but not others. Most varieties in Dàlǐ Prefecture are four-tone varieties. However, three counties (Yúnlóng, Ěryuán, and Jiànchuān) have five-tone varieties, and four additional jurisdictions (Bīnchuān, Mídù, and Xiángyún Counties, plus Dàlǐ Municipality) have both four-tone and five-tone varieties.<sup>30</sup> Table 6-1 compares the realizations of the Middle Chinese categories in the four-tone variety of Xiàguān, Dàlǐ Municipality with realizations in five-tone varieties at the seven sites for which they are reported.

**TABLE 6-1:** Middle Chinese categories in Dàlǐ Prefecture Mandarin varieties

	<b>Upper Level</b>	<b>Lower Level</b>	<b>Rising</b>	<b>Departing</b>	<b>Entering</b>
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<sup>29</sup> In the discussion that follows, I refer to the phonological categories of *Qièyùn* as “Middle Chinese”; however, my analysis assumes the merger of Rising category syllables with voiced obstruent initials to the Departing category which is characteristic of Mandarin varieties. Because this merger applies both to Standard Chinese and all local varieties in Dàlǐ Prefecture, it is not salient to a discussion of *Hànzì Bái dú*. Nevertheless, Lee and Sagart’s (2008) analysis of loanword stratification shows that other Sinitic items in Bái reflect a source in which the merger either did not take place, or had not yet taken place.

<sup>30</sup> Hú and Duàn (2001:425) actually list Bīnchuān County as having a four-tone variety and Yángbì County as having both kinds of varieties; however, their (2001:445) phonetic chart for Bīnchuān (Píngchuān) reports an Entering realization, and they provide no charts for Yángbì.

<i>Four-tone variety</i>					
Dàlǐ (Xiànguān)	/44/	/31/ = Entering	/42/	/213/	/31/ = Lower Level
<i>Eastern five-tone varieties</i>					
Xiángyún (Mǐdiàn)	/55/	/52/	/31/	/24/	/21/
Mídù (Déjū)	/55/	/52/	/31/	/24/	/22/
<i>Northwestern five-tone varieties</i>					
Dàlǐ (Shàngguān)	/55/	/52/	/31/	/45/	/21/
Bīnchuān (Píngchuān)	/55/	/52/	/31/	/35/	/21/
Ěryuán	/55/	/52/	/31/	/35/	/21/
Yúnlóng	/55/	/52/	/31/	/45/	1939: /13/ 1985: /21/ 2001: /13/
Jiànchuān	/55/	/42/	/31/	/45/	1939: /213/, /13/ 1985: /21/ 2001: /212/

Yúnlóng, Ěryuán, and Jiànchuān Counties are clustered in the northwest corner of the prefecture, and Bīnchuān County and Dàlǐ Municipality border on them to the south; Mídù and Xiángyún Counties are clustered separately in the eastern part of the prefecture. This geographic divide seems to be reflected only in a slightly higher realization of the Departing category in the Eastern five-tone varieties vis-à-vis the Northwestern varieties. In general, however, pitch trajectories are identical across the five-tone varieties, with only one difference in the realization of the Lower Level category (/42/ in Jiànchuān vs. /52/ elsewhere) and several small differences in realizations of the Departing category (/24/ in the Eastern varieties, /35/ in Bīnchuān [Píngchuān] and Ěryuán, and /45/ in Dàlǐ [Shàngguān] and Jiànchuān.)



As Gui (1990:110) points out in his survey of dialectological work in Yúnnán, there is a discrepancy between the dialect survey conducted by researchers from Academia Sinica's Institute of History and Philology in 1939 (Yáng 1969:1117) and Wú and his colleagues' more recent surveys published in the 1980s (Wú et al. [1985], cited in Gui [1990:110]; Wú et al. [1989:118], cited in Lee & Sagart [2008:361]) with respect to the realization of the Entering category in Yúnlóng and Jiànchuān Counties. While the 1939 survey reports the rising realization /13/, the 1985 survey reports the falling realization /21/. In light of the nearly fifty-year gap between the surveys, Gui concludes that this discrepancy represents a phonetic change in need in further investigation.

However, Gui appears to overlook a note in the 1939 Jiànchuān survey (Yáng 1969:1118) that describes the realization as /213/, but specifies a “broad transcription” of /13/ (*kuānshì xiàn yīlǜ yòng dī-shēng diào hào* 宽式现一律用低升调号 ‘the realization in broad transcription consistently uses the low-rising tone mark’) without any further information about phonetic or lexical conditioning. This note appears to be connected with Chao's original (2006[1930]) proposal for the use of numbers to represent contour tones, in which he specifies (2006[1930]:98), “In order not to make distinctions too fine, points 2 and 4 are used either alone or with each other, but not in combination with 1, 3, or 5.” Consequently, neither /213/ nor /21/ appear among his original list of “tone letters.” Given that /13/ appears to be a notational convention for a more complex /213/ tone, the /21/ tone reported in the 1985 survey may simply represent the first half of the same tone. If this interpretation also holds for the realizations in Yúnlóng, then Jiànchuān and Yúnlóng differ from other five-tone varieties merely in having Entering realizations with a slight rise after the initial fall.

In table 6-2, I compare the realizations of the Middle Chinese categories in Jiànchuān Mandarin with their realizations according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú* (Xú & Zhào 1984:12; Wiersma 1990:108 ).

**TABLE 6-2:** Middle Chinese categories in Jiànchuān Mandarin and *Hànzì Bái dú*

<b>Middle Chinese Category</b>	<b>Jiànchuān Mandarin</b>	<b><i>Hànzì Bái dú</i></b>
Upper Level ( <i>yīnpíng</i> 阴平)	/55/	/33/
Lower Level ( <i>yángpíng</i> 阳平)	/42/	/42/
Rising ( <i>shǎng</i> 上)	/31/	/31/
Departing ( <i>qù</i> 去)	/45/	/66/
Entering ( <i>rù</i> 入)	1939: /213/, /13/ 1985: /21/ 2001: /212/	/35/

Most realizations match in pitch trajectory: The realizations of the Lower Level, Rising, and Departing categories are almost identical; the realizations of the Upper Level category differ in pitch but agree in contour. However, the various descriptions of the Entering Tone realization in Jiànchuān Mandarin, which Hú and Duàn (2001) describe as /212/, are phonetically quite different from the high rising value of /35/ in *Hànzì Bái dú*.

Previous historical linguistic work on Bái has discussed correspondence with Middle Chinese categories in terms of lexical borrowing. Dell (1981:108) characterizes items that demonstrate these correspondences as the “modern” layer of loanwords in Bái; Lee and Sagart (2008:362), conclude that, “The ‘Cultural Revolution’ vocabulary of Jianchuan Bai in Xu & Zhao (1984) is also clearly B1 [the authors’ most recent “local Mandarin” layer]. Thus Jianchuan [Mandarin] is probably the source of B1 loans, and the period of borrowing extends at least from mid or late Qing to the 1960s.” However, the authors provide no explanation for the difference between the phonetic realization of the

Entering category in the putative source language as /212/ and the realization as /35/ in Bái.

While Lee and Sagart confine themselves to Jiànchuān, where the local varieties of both Mandarin and Bái have a distinct phonetic realization of the Entering category, Dell focuses on Dàlǐ, where the local variety of Mandarin is a four-tone system, but the local variety of Bái also realizes Entering category syllables as /35/. Under the traditional assumption that phonemes cannot be unmerged, this suggests either that language users borrowed loanwords with the contrast into Bái before the merger, or that they borrowed them from a Sinitic variety that maintains the Entering category. However, the merger is described as early as the 1939 dialect survey for Dàlǐ Mandarin (Yáng 1969:1001), while the many political coinages of the post-1949 PRC era continue to reflect the Entering category in Bái. The alternate explanation that present-day Dàlǐ residents reproduce the tonal contrasts of a different variety of Chinese when speaking Bái seems farfetched.

Wiersma (1990:128-129) suggests that Bái language users' ability to distinguish the Entering category reflects the convergence of the linguistic fact that these tones are distinguished in some Sinitic varieties with the social fact that the Entering category is a metalinguistically salient aspect of the Chinese literary tradition. Up into the early twentieth century, traditional literacy education trained students to recognize Entering category syllables in order to appreciate Literary Chinese poetry, regardless of whether they maintained the contrast in their own variety. In 1912-1913, the Conference on the Unification of Pronunciation convened immediately after the fall of the Qīng Dynasty mandated a distinct realization for Entering tone syllables in an artificial standard known as “blue-green Mandarin”; however, because the standard was otherwise based on

Běijīng Mandarin, and users of that variety could not reliably produce the contrast, in 1932 this standard yielded to a four-tone standard based on vernacular Běijīng speech (DeFrancis 1950:66-76).

Wiersma positions her discussion of *Hànzì Bái dú* around an analysis of an oral performance of a Chinese-character text; in other words, it takes the metaphor of “reading” at face value. However, as I demonstrate in this chapter, lexical items that demonstrate *Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences are frequent in spontaneous conversation, as well; some of these items appear to be well established, while others appear to be idiosyncratic to particular language users. In the latter case, it seems likely that language users achieve the Entering tone correspondence based on the distinct realization in Jiànchuān Mandarin; however, I have no explanation for why they realize these syllables as /35/; I also leave open the larger question of how language users in Dàlǐ recognize Entering category syllables in the first place.

Many language users perceive the *Hànzì Bái dú* conventions to index “Chinese.” In a report on the implementation of Bái mother-tongue education in Xīzhōng, Yáng laments (2008[1994]:1198):

In truth, the influence of Chinese writing on Bái culture is quite deep, and it is also reflected in language. The proportion of Chinese loanwords in Bái is relatively large, and sometimes Bái and Chinese are used in alternation. Therefore, in writing that is used to record the Bái language, there has appeared a great deal of writing that uses Chinese characters to record Bái sounds. However, the problem now is that there is great arbitrariness in the adoption of Chinese sound-translation morphemes (*Hànzì Bái dú*). At first, there were morphemes original to Bái, but in creating Bái writing, people have often simply operated according to the methods of *Hànzì Bái dú* ... The author feels that, as with these morphemes original to Bái, one should not simply operate according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, but should write according to the reading pronunciation original to Bái, adhering to

the derivational morphology original to Bái, so that Bái writing preserves its original characteristics.<sup>31</sup>

I pick up on Yáng's rhetoric of purism, which affects different circles of Bái language planners to different degrees, in chapter 7. For the purposes of the present discussion, Yáng's comment is interesting in the way he struggles with the metaphor of "reading": On the one hand, he portrays items that demonstrate *Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences as illegitimate impositions from the Chinese written language; on the other, he urges language workers to reproduce the "reading pronunciation" of Bái morphemes that have no previous tradition of representation in writing.

The role of the *Hànzì Bái dú* in defining lexical items as Chinese is particularly obvious in the words for numbers 'three' and higher. As Lee and Sagart (2008:380) note, following Xú and Zhào (1984:24), Bái has two sets of words for 'one' and 'two': One set, *at* and *gonx*, have no clear Sinitic etymology and occur in the most vernacular contexts; the other set, *yi/yif* and *nei/aib*, are clearly Sinitic, and occur in "modern" contexts. In fact, Bái users regularly use two sets of words for the numbers from 'three' to 'ten,' as well. Both sets are Sinitic; however, the tones of one set correspond to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*, and language users refer to them as "Chinese." I have summarized these correspondences in Table 6-3.

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<sup>31</sup> 诚然，白族文化受汉文影响较深，反映在语言方面也是如此，现代白语中汉语借词的成分比较大，有时候是白汉交替使用，所以，作为记录白语的白文中，也出现了许多汉字注白音的白文。但是，现在的问题是，白文中采用汉语音译词（汉字白读）的状况有很大的随意性，本来白语中已有固有的词，但形成白文时也往往是简单地按汉字白读的方法来处理... 笔者认为，像这样白语中已有的词，就不应该简单地按汉字白读处理，而应该按白语固有的读音，遵循白语固有的构词方法来记录，以使白文保持其固有的特点。

**TABLE 6-3: “Bái” and “Chinese” (*Hànzì Bái dú*) numbers**

Number	“Bái”	“Chinese”	Tone of “Chinese”	Corresponds to	cf. Standard Chinese
one	at	yi, yif	/44/, /35/	Entering	yī 一
two	gonx, nei	aib	/66/	Departing	èr 二
three	sanl	sanx	/33/	Upper Level	sān 三
four	xi	sib	/66/	Departing	sì 四
five	ngvx	wut	/31/	Rising	wǔ 五
six	fv	luf	/35/	Entering	liù 六
seven	qi	qif	/35/	Entering	qī 七
eight	bia	baf	/35/	Entering	bā 八
nine	jiex	jiut	/31/	Rising	jiǔ 九
ten	zaip	sif	/35/	Entering	shí 十

Some numbers differ in terms of segmental phonology; others differ only in tone.

However, my language consultant carefully distinguished between the two, insisting, for example, that Chinese numbers should be used with Chinese classifiers or in Chinese collocations.

Although some language users understand *Hànzì Bái dú* primarily in terms of tonal correspondences, others define it in broader and vaguer terms. An entry in the *Jiànchuān County ethnic and religious gazetteer* (Lù 2002:130) describes *Hànzì Bái dú* as follows:

The Bái accepted Hàn culture relatively early, and there are many words that are used both in Bái and Chinese, including Chinese lexicon from the Old Chinese and Middle Chinese periods. Even so, after this originally Chinese lexicon entered Bái, there occurred clear changes in initials, rhymes, and tones. Bái has its own complete set of initials, rhymes, and tones. When Bái people speak Chinese they have a clear Bái accent; when Bái people read Chinese characters they also have the initials, rhymes, and tones of their national language. Moreover, this is not confined to one or two characters, but constitutes a systematic relationship with a

certain pattern. We call this pattern of Bái initials, rhymes, and tones *Hànzì Bái dú*.<sup>32</sup>

Lù describes *Hànzì Bái dú* in terms of systematic correspondences in segmental, as well as suprasegmental, phonology; in fact, he accesses lay versions of academic linguistic discourses to argue that systematic correspondences, as well as the general systematicity of Bái phonology, constitute Bái as a language distinct from Chinese. He also reproduces discourses that idealize lexical borrowing from Chinese into Bái as a single historical instant, in connection with the broader ethnological discourse according to which Bái people “accepted” Hàn culture.

Lù’s (2002:130-133) examples, however, reveal little familiarity with the actual theory and methods of historical linguistics. Instead, he lists superficial correspondences between the initials, finals, and tones (the standard categories of analysis in traditional Chinese phonology) in the present-day Standard Chinese and Bái pronunciations of particular characters. Most of the segmental correspondences hold as much for Southwest Mandarin as for Bái, such as the characteristic merger of retroflex fricatives and affricates /ʂ, ʐ, tʂ, tʂʰ/ to the alveolar place of articulation as /s, z, ts, tsʰ/. With respect to tonal correspondences, Lù (2002:132) observes that “after entering Bái” (*jìnrù Báiyǔ hòu* 进入白语后), Entering category syllables “are mostly read as” (*duō dú wéi* 多读为) the Bái tense mid falling tone /42/ or the tense mid level tone /44/, which “preserves the tense forced phonetic characteristic of the Entering tone” (*bǎochí rùshēng jǐnjí pòcù de yǔyīn*

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<sup>32</sup> 白族较早地接受汉文化，白语和汉语共用词非常多，包括上古、中古时期之汉语词汇。然而，这些原汉语词汇进入白语以后，声、韵、调产生了明显的变化。白语有自己一套完整的声、韵、调，白语人讲汉话，带着明显的“白族腔”，白族人读汉字也带着本民族语之声、韵、调，而且不是一字两字，构成一个有一定规律的系统关系，我们称这种白声、白韵、白调为“汉字白读”。

*tèdiǎn* 保持入声紧急迫促的语音特点). This description overlooks several other realizations of Entering category syllables, in particular the lax /35/ realization which Xú and Zhào (1984:12) ascribe to *Hànzì Bái dú*.

My purpose is not to judge Lù's analysis by the standards of cosmopolitan linguistics, but rather to show how it combines elements of phonocentric academic linguistic discourses with graphocentric popular discourses about language. The idealization in which Chinese lexical items enter Bái in a single historical instant is incompatible with the metaphor in which Bái use of Chinese lexical items is a kind of perpetual "reading." Likewise, comparison of Bái lexicon directly with Standard Chinese, rather than Southwest Mandarin, reduces diachronic processes of contact to synchronic practice. Although Lù draws upon the vocabulary of academic linguistics, both of these moves subtly reproduce the popular discourse in which Chinese characters constitute a timeless, unitary system that logically and historically predates their momentary, individual realization in Bái.

This tension between graphocentric and phonocentric perspectives arose during my own data collection. When I first shared the recordings with my language consultant to produce our transcriptions, I assumed that she would perceive items with relatively transparent Sinitic etymologies as loanwords, but that she would perceive less established items as code switching; therefore, I suggested that if she heard a Chinese item that she did not know how to represent in the orthography, she should just write the equivalent character, and we would review the item to agree on a transcription. The language consultant told me not to worry, because the Bái orthography could accommodate anything in Chinese. In other words, she drew no distinction between established and



idiosyncratic uses of Chinese items. For my language consultant, as for Japanese and other East Asian language users, the metaphor of “reading” is bound up in an ethnotheory of language contact that elides the distinction between code switching and borrowing to portray a large portion of the lexicon as bivalent – both timelessly Chinese and essentially Bái.

### *6.2 Bilingual contrast in Bái interaction*

As I argue above, Auer’s model of code switching and language mixing has advantages over structurally oriented models of bilingualism because it insists on examining bilingual contrast among language varieties from the point of view of the participants, as determined by its pragmatic effect on the subsequent course of the interaction. Inherent in this approach is a recognition that perceptions of bilingual contrast may differ not only from language user to language user, as I demonstrate with different articulations of *Hànzì Bái dú*, but also from speech event to speech event, as I exemplify with the “French” pronunciation of *Target*.

From these points it follows that, within the same speech event, speakers and listeners may also differ in their perception of bilingual contrast. As I review in chapter 3, “integrationist” linguists in the tradition of Harris (1981) have challenged the assumption of determinism in the denotational function of language; there is no reason to suppose that the indexical function is any more determinate. It is easy to imagine a situation in which a speaker intends to pronounce *Target* in a way that indexes French, but listeners perceive the pronunciation to be within the normal range of variation in English – or, indeed, that some listeners perceive the item as French, and others as English.

While Auer's theoretical insights are potentially powerful, they vastly complicate the task of recognizing and describing bilingual speech. By the same token, however, they deprioritize this task by recognizing that linguists' judgments are as contingent and positioned as those of any other listener. Naturally, linguists bring special kinds of explicit knowledge to their observations, such as awareness of established etymologies, and they apply highly articulated and internally consistent theoretical models. Nevertheless, these advantages do not necessarily give linguists the edge in determining whether bilingual contrast is meaningful to other listeners – let alone what it might mean.

In theory, Auer proposes using the methods of conversation analysis (Sacks et al. 1974) to locate sites in which language users achieve contextualization, then examining the linguistic forms they use in order to determine whether they foreground bilingual contrast in order to do so. His own work, however, focuses on the speech of Sicilian migrants to Germany; German and Sicilian are both well described varieties that are etymologically and typologically distinct enough that the linguist's and language users' perceptions of bilingual contrast usually coincide in practice.

Instead, Auer (1999:310, note 2) credits his theoretical insights to Alvarez-Cáccamo's (1997) work on contact between Galician and Castilian. The case of Báí and Chinese is much more similar to Galician and Castilian than to Sicilian and German. Like Galician and Castilian, Báí and Chinese are similar enough (whether through genetic inheritance or contact) that it can be difficult to source linguistic elements to one or the other; like Galician, Báí is a mainly oral vernacular in contact with an extensively codified, politically dominant language in which most language users are bilingual, and in which all language users who can read and write are literate. Under these

circumstances, one problem is how, in the absence of codification of the subordinate language, to isolate moments of formal contrast that may be significant to participants. Another problem is how, in light of codification of the superordinate language, to avoid assuming that language users assign all linguistic elements that differ from the codified standard to the subordinate language, rather than a non-standard variety of the superordinate language.

For the purposes of this analysis, I adopt the phonological correspondences of *Hànzì Bái dú* as described in Xú and Zhào (1984:12) as a formal starting point to examine the mobilization of bilingual contrast in interaction. I do so recognizing that *Hànzì Bái dú* is not meaningful to all language users, and that for some, such as the author of the description in Lù (2002:130), the term has both broader and vaguer meanings. Nevertheless, explicit commentary such as Yáng (2008[1994]:1198), as well as assumptions implicit in the distinction between Bái and Chinese numbers, demonstrate that the *Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences define bilingual contrast for many language users in many situations. Adopting these language users' perspective as a starting point for my analysis is a methodological convenience; however, it is a more reflexive alternative to the uncritical reliance on artifacts of codification, such as grammars and dictionaries, in most structurally oriented approaches to multilingual language use.

### 6.2.1 Auer's "language mixing"

In my corpus of Bái spontaneous conversation, most interactions are more similar to Auer's description of "language mixing" than "code switching": While items that demonstrate *Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences are extremely frequent, language users only

mobilize a subset for pragmatic effect. First, certain classes of lexical items appear to reflect *Hànzi Bái dú* correspondences as a matter of convention, which makes the correspondences unavailable for pragmatic effect. For example, the exchanges in excerpts 6-1 and 6-2 bear out my language consultant’s metalinguistic observation that “Chinese” numbers should be paired with “Chinese” measure words in all references to clock times and calendar dates.<sup>33</sup>

**EXCERPT 6-1: Female participant, recording 111, lines 192-194**

192	B	Ngal zil beinx zux ye, 1PL.EXCL TOP dinner early eat
	E	We eat dinner early
193	B	<i>sib-diaint gub</i> [四点过] jiai, four-o’clock past a.bit
	E	a little <i>past four o’clock</i>
194	B	<i>wut-diaint</i> [五点] zil ye beinx lap. five-o’clock TOP eat dinner COS
	E	or at <i>five o’clock</i> , we eat dinner

**EXCERPT 6-2: Female participant (P) and recording consultant (RC), recording 115, lines 104-105**

104	P	B	Laf, nal alna gaf-xiai ngaid Taibguf [泰国]? DISC 2PL which several-day go Thailand?
		E	So, when in the next few days are you (pl.) going to Thailand?
105	RC	B	<i>Wut-yuf aib-sif-yif-hab</i> [五月二十一号]. Five-month two-ten-one-number
		E	<i>May 21st.</i>

<sup>33</sup> In the excerpts that appear in this chapter and chapter 7, “RC” designates the recording consultant, “B” designates Bái, “E” designates English, and “SC” designates Standard Chinese. I set elements to which I wish to draw the reader’s attention in **bold**. Among these elements, I set items in *italics* that correspond according to *Hànzi Bái dú*, and underline items that do not correspond. In the excerpts in this chapter, I provide Chinese characters directly in the excerpt. In the excerpts in chapter 7, in which *Hànzi Bái dú* items are very frequent, I provide Chinese characters either in a complete Standard Chinese translation, or else discuss the items in the text.

This is not the case for more general references to time, in which “Bái” numbers with “Bái” measure words predominate. However, this relationship appeared to be less conventionalized: In excerpt 6-3, the participant uses a “Bái” expression for ‘one year’ in line 26, but a “Chinese” expression for ‘two years’ in line 29.

**EXCERPT 6-3: Older male participant (P) and recording consultant (RC), recording 115, lines 26-28**

26	P	B	Hhep-cel <b>at-sua</b> neid yax. read-PRF one-year only PRGM
		E	You’ve only studied for <b>a year</b> .
27	RC	B	Ent. right
		E	Right.
28	P	B	Kail let-benl zil <b>yif-nip</b> [一年], DISC this-time TOP one-year
		E	So, <b>one year</b> so far,
29	P	B	<b>gonx-sua</b> zil gainl huainthep [缓和] jiai lil suinx. two-year TOP suppose easier a.bit also know\NEG
		E	After <b>two years</b> , it might be a little easier [to find work]

*6.2.1.1 Personal names*

Another class of lexical items for which the *Hànzi Bái dú* correspondences are conventionalized is personal names: In excerpt 6-4, the participant mentions Wēn Jiābǎo, premier and party secretary of the PRC State Council, who returned early from a summit due to political unrest in Bangkok in the spring of 2009.

**EXCERPT 6-4: Male participant, recording 115, lines 115-116**

115		B	Mal kaix-huib [开会] lil kaix- [开] zaind-duap, 3PL hold-meeting also hold-complete-can\NEG
		E	They couldn’t even hold the meeting,

116	B	<i>Wenx.Jiaxbat</i> [温家宝] pia melda lil ya'-danp-gel. Wēn.Jiābǎo arrive there also return-back-return
	E	As soon as <i>Wēn Jiābǎo</i> got there, he came right back.

There are many examples of personal names in my corpus. Because they are all names of participants, or friends and relatives of participants, assurances of confidentiality prevent me from reproducing them here; however, the written texts I examine in chapter 7 also represent them according to *Hànzì Bái dú*.

This convention is a particularly clear manifestation of the East Asian metaphor of reading. Bái people bear the kind of names common throughout China: A one-character (or, occasionally, two-character) family name precedes a one or two-character personal name. Although there are no family names exclusive to Bái people, the frequency of particular family names in China varies by region; for example, in Jīnhuá I met many people named Yáng 杨. Because of the relatively high rate of uxrilocal marriage (see chapter 2), my participants did not consider it unusual for people to bear their mother's – that is, their maternal grandfather's – family name. And as is the case elsewhere in China, Bái parents may consult with an older relative or a religious specialist in order to give their child a personal name that “balances” the graphical elements of the written characters in light of the child's horoscope.

Consequently, perhaps even more than for other lexical items, users of Chinese characters treat the written version of personal names as logically and historically prior to its spoken realization. As a consequence, language users find it natural that the pronunciation of names should vary from variety to variety and language to language. Chinese language users know that the “same” family name surname may sound quite

different in Cantonese or Fujianese than in Standard Chinese, and they pronounce Chinese-character Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese names according to the reading conventions of whatever variety they happen to be using. Likewise, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese language users pronounce Chinese names according to local reading conventions, rather than replicating the pronunciation of any Chinese variety.

As the local instantiation of the East Asian metaphor of reading, it is not surprising that *Hànzì Bái dú* is especially relevant to the pronunciation of names. When I asked my language consultant how I should introduce myself when speaking Bái, she immediately volunteered the form *Hait Bofsup*, the *Hànzì Bái dú* pronunciation of my Chinese-character name *Hǎi Bórú* 海博儒.<sup>34</sup> At the same time, the management of the local department store which hung signs encouraging staff to speak Standard Chinese (see chapter 2), also paged employees over the loudspeaker using the Standard Chinese pronunciation of their names; students and teachers, who are required to speak Standard Chinese in the classroom, also use Standard Chinese pronunciations of their names as a matter of course. Because the pronunciation of Chinese-character personal names is keyed to the code of interaction, it also constitutes a poor site for the mobilization of bilingual contrast.

#### 6.2.1.2 Place names

The situation is somewhat different with respect to place names. In my corpus, many place names demonstrate the correspondences of *Hànzì Bái dú*, such as *Xiabguainx*

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<sup>34</sup> Note that she instantly identified the Entering category syllable *bó* 博, pronounced with a /212/ tone in Jiànchuān Mandarin, and realized it with a /35/ tone in *bof*.

for *Xiàguān* 下关 (the prefectural capital), *Hefqienb* for *Hèqìng* 鹤庆 (the neighboring county to the east), *Nappienp* for *Lánpíng* 兰坪 (the neighboring county over the prefectural border to the west), *Sixmap* for *Sīmáo* 思茅 (the seat of Pǔ'ěr Prefecture 普洱州, in southwest Yúnnán), *Yuinpnap-Sent* for *Yúnnán Shěng* ('Province') 云南省, *Sainxxix* for *Shānxī* 山西 (a province in northeast China), and *Baifjienx* for *Běijīng* 北京. However, others demonstrate non-*Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences, such as *Lixjial* for *Lìjiāng* 丽江 (the neighboring municipality to the north), *Zonldin* for *Zhōngdiàn* 中甸 (the former name of Shangri-La County, further north), and *Kuinlmie* for *Kūnmíng* 昆明.

This variation also holds for place names within Jiànchuān County. On the one hand, participants produced *Jienxhuap* for *Jīnhuá* 金华, *Dinbnap* for *Diànnán* 甸南 (the neighboring township to the south), *Sifnopsib* for *Shilóngsi* 石龙寺 (a temple in Diànnán Township), and *Sifbatsainx* for *Shíbǎoshān* 石宝山 (the mountain between Diànnán and Shāxī Townships), which all correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. On the other, participants also produced local place names such as *Jiaiddel*, *Wapqionl*, and *Xuixcuai*, which do not; *Xuixcuai* is a morpheme-by-morpheme translation of the Chinese-character name *Shuǐzhài* 水寨, literally 'water stockade.' The only place name that occurred in multiple forms was *Jiànchuān County* itself: My recording consultant produced this item as *Jinbcuainx Xinb*, which corresponds with *Jiànchuān Xiàn* 剑川县 according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, and well as *Jinpcuinl* and *Jinpcuainl*, which do not.

Samuels (2001) has discussed the "symbiosis" between English and indigenous names on the San Carlos Apache reservation on southeastern Arizona in theorizing place names as a site for co-optation and resistance under colonization. Bái participants also



mobilized place names in their narratives of the history of the region. Several participants understood local names ending in the characters *tún* 屯 ‘station/quarter (troops); village’ and *yíng* 营 ‘camp, barracks’ to refer to the military garrisons of imperial troops who settled in the Dàlǐ region during the Míng Dynasty. At the same time, one participant understood the character *dēng* 登 in place names such as *Sìdēng* 寺登, the seat of Shāxī Township, as a Chinese-character transcription of the Bái morpheme *denl*, which Zhào and Xú (1996:85) gloss as *cūn* 村 ‘village’ or *diàn* 甸 ‘pasture, suburb.’ Standard Chinese dictionaries list *dēng* 登 as a verb with a range of meanings, such as ‘ascend, publish, harvest, pedal, step on, wear,’ not as a noun with a meaning along the lines of ‘village.’

By the same token, the Bái narratives also reflect a fundamental ambivalence about who was colonized and who were the colonizers. The narrative of the Míng occupation also supports the belief, held by some of my Jīnhuá participants, that their ancestors arrived from the Lower Yangtze region under the protection of the imperial garrisons. Meanwhile, the narrative that portrays non-standard use of Chinese characters as representing oral Bái overlooks the possibility that the morpheme *denl* is itself a local reflex of the Sinitic etymon represented by the character *diàn* 甸, which is common in place names both within the county, such as *Dinbnap/Diànnán* 甸南, and further afield in Yúnnán, such as *Zonldin/Zhōngdiàn* 中甸.

With respect to the other place names in my corpus, the fact that most names occur in only one form suggests a degree of conventionalization that makes place names a relatively poor site for the mobilization of bilingual contrast. Nevertheless, my recording consultant’s use of the *Hànzì Bái dú* pronunciation *Jinbcuainx* in collocation

with the administrative designation *xinb* ‘county,’ but non-*Hànzì Bái dú* pronunciations *Jinpcuinl* and *Jinpcuainl* elsewhere, suggests that some listeners associate more formal contexts with reading conventions oriented toward the written language. Conversely, during transcription of the passage in which the name *Sifbatsainx/Shibǎoshān* 石宝山 appears, my language remarked that she preferred the “Bái” name *Zodboxseinl*. Like other participants in SIL’s mother tongue education program (see chapter 2), she mobilized non-*Hànzì Bái dú* place names as a way of claiming the local landscape as Bái.

More fundamentally, the coexistence of different tonal correspondences for a single semantic class problematizes the metaphor of “borrowing,” and demonstrates that the *Hànzì Bái dú* correspondences describe something more than loanword strata. One might expect local place names to be pronounced according to vernacular norms, but non-local place names to be pronounced according to conventions oriented toward the written language. This is the case for names outside of Yúnnán Province, such as *Baifjienx/Běijīng*, as well as all foreign countries, but it does not hold for *Kuinmiel/Kūnmíng*. Names like *Jienxhuap/Jīnhuá* and *Dinbnap/Diànnán*, which correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, are no more “recent loanwords” than names like *Lixjial/Lìjiāng* and *Zonldin/Zhōngdiàn*, which do not. For literate, bilingual Bái language users, *Hànzì Bái dú* is a renewable semiotic resource that allows them to orient selectively toward pronunciations that evoke the written language.

### 6.2.1.3 Money

References to money are extremely frequent in the corpus. My participants had several discussions about the price of goods – for example, the price of the portable

digital recorder my recording consultant was using – and one section of the recordings took place at a kiosk where my recording consultant’s father was selling bowls of noodles. Most references to money use “Chinese” numbers in collocation with *kuait*, which does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, but is a transparent match for Standard Chinese *kuài* 块 (literally ‘piece,’ a colloquial expression throughout China for ‘Chinese *yuán*’), and *juf* which corresponds with Standard Chinese *jiǎo* 角 ‘dime; one-tenth of one Chinese *yuán*.’

In all, there are fifty-three references that use these elements, often extended with the *Hànzì Bái dú* item *jit* for *jǐ* 几 ‘several,’ as in *yìqiānx lufbaif jit* for *yìqiān liùbǎi jǐ* 一千六百几 ‘one-thousand six hundred and some tens.’ By contrast, there are only two cases in which participants referred to money using a “Bái” number: In separate conversations, a male and a female participant used the phrase *zaip kol* ‘ten *yuán*.’ In fact, during participant observation, a number of acquaintances mentioned expressions with “Bái” numbers and the measure word *kol* as an authentically Bái way of speaking that was in danger of disappearing. When I shopped in the market or paid for lunch I would often cite prices in this way, and participants never failed to laugh and smile at the incongruity of a foreigner using an increasingly old-fashioned turn of phrase. While the participants in my corpus do not seem to mobilize the two instances of *kol* for any particular pragmatic effect, for me it served as key resource to foreground bilingual contrast in my otherwise very limited repertoire.

#### 6.2.1.4 Kinship terms

Because my recording consultant made the recordings in family settings, kinship terms are also very frequent in the corpus; like people throughout China, Bái people address all senior kin, including older siblings, as well as many non-related elders with kinship terms rather than by name. I have reproduced the kinship terms that occur in the corpus in table 6-4.

**TABLE 6-4: “Bái” and “Chinese” (*Hànzì Bái dú*) kinship terms**

Relationship	“Bái”	cf. SC	“Chinese”	cf. SC
father	bapbap	bàba 爸爸	dix	diē 爹
mother	malmal	māma 妈妈	mox	mā 妈
son	zixyind			
brothers and sisters	zittix			
elder brother			(dab)gox	(dà)gē 大哥
(second) younger brother			(aib)dib	(èr)dì 二弟
elder sister			dab	dà(jiě) 大姐
younger sister	yvnxtix, meipmeif	mèimei 妹妹		
father’s father			aibyip	(èr)yé 二爷
father’s mother	nei	nǎinai 奶奶		
father’s (third) elder brother	daldal		(sanx)buf	(sān)bó 三伯
father’s elder sister	gulnei	gūnǎinai 姑奶奶		
father’s sister’s husband	gulme			
mother’s elder sister	(ngvx)six/sil			

The terms in the list cover approximately the same semantic range as kinship terms elsewhere in China: They (very partially) describe a “Sudanese” kinship system that distinguishes generation, lineage, relative age, and gender. Vocative terms are often prefixed by the morpheme *at-*, comparable to the Standard Chinese prefix *ā* 阿. Several of the most senior kin terms also occur as respectful forms of address for non-relative

elders, such as *daldal*, literally ‘father’s elder brother,’ for an older man, comparable semantically to Standard Chinese *bóbó* 伯伯. The terms *aibyip*, ‘grandfather’ and *dix* ‘father’ occur with an honorific prefix as *daid-aibyip* and *daid-dix*, which indicates that the addressee is not actually related to the speaker. It bears emphasizing that these terms are not necessarily representative of all Bái language use; for example, my language consultant found the term *(ngvx)sil/six* ‘mother’s elder sister’ idiosyncratic to this particular network of language users.

Of the fourteen kinship positions that occur in the corpus, ten have only one term: four terms correspond according to *Hànzi Bái dú* (elder brother, elder sister, younger brother, and father’s father) and six do not (son, brothers and sisters, father’s mother, father’s elder sister, father’s sister’s husband, and mother’s elder sister)<sup>35</sup>; an eleventh position, younger sister, has two terms, neither of which corresponds according to *Hànzi Bái dú*. The remaining three positions (father, mother, father’s elder brother) have two terms each, one of which corresponds according to *Hànzi Bái dú*, and one of which does not.

For the positions ‘mother’ and ‘father,’ as well as ‘younger sister,’ *Hànzi Bái dú* does not correlate with perceptions that a particular item is “Chinese.” The terms *dix* and *mox* correspond with Standard Chinese *diē* 爹 ‘father’ and *mā* 妈 ‘mother,’ while *bapbap* and *malmal* do not correspond with *bàba* 爸爸 and *māma* 妈妈; nevertheless, my language consultant perceived the first set as “Bái” and the second set as “Chinese.” This may be because the first pair of monosyllables generally occurs with the prefix *at-* while the

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<sup>35</sup> The morpheme *aib-*, comparable to Standard Chinese *èr* 二 ‘two,’ is semantically transparent in the item *aibdib* ‘second younger brother,’ but is opaque in the term *aibyip* ‘father’s father’: Zhao and Xú [1996:2] gloss the term simply as *zǔfù* 祖父, *yéye* 爷爷 ‘grandfather.’

second demonstrate a pattern of reduplication that indexes northern, rather than southern, Chinese varieties; moreover, the term *diē* occurs throughout China, but it is distinctly dialectal vis-à-vis Standard Chinese *bàba*.

An intriguing possibility is that *bapbap* and *malmal* directly reproduce the phonetic contours of the Standard Chinese tones, rather than the *Hànzì Bái dú* realizations of the Middle Chinese categories. The /55/ tone in Bái *mal* is a perfect match for the /55/ tone in Standard Chinese *mā*. The /42/ tone in Bái *bap* is a good match for the /51/ tone in Standard Chinese *bà*; although the Bái tone is tense, and phonation type is not contrastive in Standard Chinese, the *Hànzì Bái dú* realization of the Departing category as a tense /66/ tone suggests that language users perceive this tone to have a phonetically tense quality. If these items directly reflect the phonetic values of Standard Chinese, then it stands to reason that language users perceive them as “Chinese” relative to their *Hànzì Bái dú* alternatives, which by comparison then count as “Bái.”

As for ‘younger sister,’ neither *yvnxix* nor *meipmeif* correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*; nevertheless, *meipmeif* demonstrates the same reduplication pattern as *bàba* and *māma*, and it is otherwise a good match for Standard Chinese *mèimei* 妹妹. As with *bapbap*, the /42/ tone in Bái *meip* may directly reflect the /51/ tone in Chinese *mèi*. However, the /35/ tone in the second syllable *meif* does not correspond to the “light tone” of the second syllable of Standard Chinese, which is realized according to tone sandhi rules as a low pitch following at /51/ tone; because the syllable does not belong historically to the Entering category, it does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, either.

The fact that some Bái language users may reproduce standard pronunciations of the words for ‘father’ and ‘mother’ – which traditional assumptions of historical linguistics assume to be among the most basic of basic vocabulary, and therefore most resistant to borrowing – is suggestive of the degree to which Bái language users are orienting to national, rather than local, varieties of Chinese. Nevertheless, language users do not seem to mobilize these variants for the purposes of bilingual contrast in interaction. In excerpt 6-5, my recording consultant describes a conversation with her younger sister at university. (I have omitted the interaction in lines 302-310 to focus on the kinship terms.)

**EXCERPT 6-5: Recording consultant, recording 115, lines 299-301, 311**

299	B	Mot-xiai ngel <b>meipmeif</b> , that-day 1SG\OBL younger.sister
	E	That day my <b>younger sister</b> ,
300	B	ngal gonx-yind 1PL.EXCL two-person
	E	the two of us,
301	B	gvp ngal xultanl het ye canl-beix ... LOCV 1PL.EXCL school in eat lunch-dinner
	E	were eating a meal at our school ...
311	B	Enx, nel <b>yvnxtix</b> zaidgai gaxaib [高二] zop gaxsanx [高三]? right 2SG\OBL younger.sister now freshman or sophomore
	E	Right, is your <b>younger sister</b> now a freshman or sophomore?

By contrast, one male participant appears to mobilize terms for ‘father’s elder brother’ to foreground bilingual contrast; however, he does not mobilize contrast between *Hànzi Bái dú* and non-*Hànzi Bái dú* terms for the same kinship position, but rather terms for different positions as forms of address. The term *sanxbuf* ‘father’s third elder brother’ occurs only once in the corpus, where it refers to a specific individual; however, the term

*daldal* occurs twice in excerpt 6-6 in connection with a story a male participant tells about an incident that happened at the middle school where he works. A boy asked the participant to open the gate, then charged in and attacked a student, and the participant intervened to stop the fight. The participant recounts his exchange with the boy after the incident.

**EXCERPT 6-6: Male participant, recording 113, lines 207-218**

207	B	mot sua, “ <i>Dabgox</i> [大哥], 3SG\DIR say elder.brother
	E	he said, “ <i>Elder Brother</i> ,
208	B	not ga ngot [我] za<bix>ha.” 2SG\DIR BENADV 1SG\DIR hit<INTJ>die
	E	you hit me really hard.”
209	B	Ngot [我] sua, “Mot zaidgai zil 1SG\DIR say that time TOP
	E	I said, “At that time
210	B	ngot [我] lil cuf qitopsanb, 1SG\DIR also angry in.a.fit.of.anger
	E	I was in a fit of anger,
211	B	hent xiant [很想] very.much want
	E	I really want
212	B	xianb [向] not sua duibbufqit [对不起] lap. toward 2SG\DIR say sorry COS
	E	to say “I’m sorry” to you.
213	B	Yainx not lil bufduib [不对]. but 2SG\DIR also wrong
	E	But you were in the wrong, too.
214	B	Not zaib zil, 3SG\DIR how TOP
	E	How could you,
215	B	<b>At-daldal</b> keil meid zil VOCM-father’s.elder.brother open gate TOP
	E	when <b>Uncle</b> comes to open the gate,
216	B	con-yinx dain mot, barge-in hit 3SG\DIR
	E	you barge in and hit him [the student],
217	B	zil zaind zil,



		DISC become DISC
	E	that's how it happened,
218	B	<b>At-daldal</b> keil-sit not meid dain mot, VOCM-father's.elder.brother open-give 2SG\DIR door hit 3SG\DIR
	E	<b>Uncle</b> opened the gate for you, and you hit him [the student].

In line 207, the participant voices the boy addressing him as *dabgox* ‘big brother,’ which corresponds according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. In lines 215 and 218, however, the participant reports referring to himself in the third person as *atdaldal* ‘father’s elder brother.’ Along with the explicit admonition about the fight, the participant implicitly corrects the boy’s disrespectful use of a “Chinese” term, which assumes that addressee is of the same generation as the speaker, and can be used practically with any man in China; in its place, he uses the vocative marker to model use of the more respectful “Bái” term, which assumes that the addressee is senior to the speaker’s father, and is only appropriate within the in-group of Bái language users.

#### 6.2.1.5 Discourse markers

Bái language users in Jīnhuá make use of a particularly rich set of discourse markers; Yáng (c. 2009) describes the subset of phrase-final markers that she calls “sentence-final particles.” Because Bái discourse markers are phonetically minimal, they are not good candidates for robust tonal correspondences along the lines of *Hànzì Bái dú*. Nevertheless, one very frequent discourse marker, *def*, is comparable to Standard Chinese *dé* 得, which usually occurs in collocation with the change of situation marker *le* 了. (The Bái /35/ tone corresponds to the historical Entering category; the present-day phonetic

similarity may be coincidental.) The *Standard dictionary of modern Chinese* defines *dé le* as follows (Xiàndài Hànyǔ Guīfàn Cídiǎn 2004):

*Dé le* 得了. 1) verb. Expresses agreement or demands [the addressee] to cease, similar to *xíng le* 行了. > *Dé le*, we'll do it as you say | *Dé le*, we won't go. 2) verb. Expresses an affirmative tone. > You rest easy, *dé le*, I'm here now.<sup>36</sup>

The dictionary classifies this item as a verb because *dé* is also a verb meaning ‘get’; nevertheless, the definition and examples make clear both that the item is relatively syntactically independent, and that its primary function is to relate the stretch of discourse to the broader context, including the speaker’s attitude toward the discourse and the addressee.

The Bái equivalent, *def* is quite frequent in the corpus; there are sixteen occurrences, and in two instances, *def* is repeated multiple times. In excerpt 6-7, a female participant is selling noodles with a male participant. The female participant was admonishing the male participant for putting too many noodles in a customer’s bowl. (The verb *gaip* that I have glossed here as ‘grab’ refers specifically to picking up a mass of food with chopsticks; Bái people often encourage guests at meals to eat by repeating the phrase *gaip ye* ‘pick up [and] eat.’)

**EXCERPT 6-7: Female (F) and male (M) participants, recording 113, lines 708-710**

708	F	B	... zaf gaip-zix zil jil dont. whole grab-NMLZ TOP be.many DISC
E			if you give him the whole bunch [of noodles], it will be too much.

<sup>36</sup> 得了。1) [动] 表示同意或要求停止，相当于“行了”。> ~，听你的 | 得了，别去了。2) [动] 表示肯定语气。> 你放心~，这里有我呢！

709	M	B	Zil gaip-danp-qi mot gaf-zet wal. DISC grab-back-out 3SG\DIR several-noodles DISC
		E	Then I'll pick a few noodles out for him and put them back.
710	F	B	<b>Def, def, def</b> , [得得得] gaip-yinx nel juixgail het zef. DISC DISC DISC grab-in 2SG\OBL mouth in DISC
		E	<b>Okay, okay, okay</b> , just put them in your mouth.

In this excerpt, the female participant uses *def* in precisely the same way as the dictionary definition of Standard Chinese *dé le*: Her repetition of *def, def, def* expresses both her desire to change the topic and her irritation with the male participant. Nevertheless, while the similarities between Bái *def* and Standard Chinese *dé le* are striking, there is no indication in my corpus that participants mobilize it to foreground bilingual contrast; regardless of its etymology, language users treat it just another linguistic resource in their repertoires.

The situation is somewhat different with respect to the tag question marker *sibma*, the first syllable of which corresponds according to *Hànzì Bái dú* with the Standard Chinese tag question marker *shì ma* 是吗. (As I note with respect with *meipmeif* ‘younger sister,’ it is difficult to establish correspondences with the Standard Chinese ‘light tone’ in the second syllable, which surfaces as a low tone according to tone sandhi rules.) In the standard language, the item is a semantically transparent collocation of the copula *shì* 是 with the interrogative marker *ma* 吗. Neither of these morphemes occurs independently in the corpus. In Bái, the copula is usually *zex* and the most frequent interrogative marker is *mox*; however, there are several different tag questions, such as *zitzop?* ‘correct?’ and *hol mox?* ‘is that correct?’

There are eight occurrences of *sibma* in the corpus, of which the recording consultant herself produces five. During transcription, my language consultant remarked

several times on the participants' use of *sibma*: She considered the marker clearly “Chinese,” but added that it sounded “gentler” than any “Bái” equivalent. In excerpt 6-8, the recording consultant shows a female participant the portable digital recording, but warns her not to push any of the buttons:

**EXCERPT 6-8: Recording consultant, recording 110, line 28**

28	B	Mei nox mia nga-zop, <i>sibma</i> [是吗]? 3SG\OBL on do.not push-on TAG
	E	Don't push (anything) on it, <b>OK?</b>

This discourse marker has specialized as a resource for the speaker to elicit listeners' endorsement of a particular stretch of discourse, rather than simply to query the truth conditions of a proposition. In excerpt 6-9, a female participant uses it to express her admiration for her grandfather's advanced age; the tag question is a cue not for the grandfather, the ostensible addressee, to respond – it would be bad manners for him to acknowledge praise – but for the recording consultant to jump in and second the compliment.

**EXCERPT 6-9: Female participant (P) and recording consultant (RC), recording 115, lines 79-80**

79	P	B	Aibyip not lil zenxqut [争取], baf-sif-jit, <i>sibma</i> [八十几, 是吗]? grandfather 2SG\DIR also strive eight-ten-several TAG
		E	Grandfather, you strove, to reach eighty-some years, <b><i>isn't that right?</i></b>
80	RC	B	Zaib at-duap, daid-aibyip zex. how NEG-can\NEG HON-grandfather COP
			How could he not, grandfather.

And in excerpt 6-10, a female participant encourages the recording consultant to eat tomato soup by reassuring her that it is not sour.

**EXCERPT 6-10: Female participant, recording 115, lines 352-353**

352	B	not enx mel-nox fainqip-hainl hul wal, 2SG\DIR drink 3SG\OBL-on tomato-soup CLF DISC
	E	drink a little more tomato soup,
353	B	mot hhaf-suanl, <i>sibma</i> [是吗]. 3SG\DIR NEG-sour TAG
	E	it's not sour, <i>you see</i> .

Although my language consultant interpreted the item *sibma* as “Chinese,” it remains ambiguous whether the participants themselves mobilized it with the intention of foregrounding bilingual contrast. Nevertheless, the fact that it has specialized as a discourse marker suggest the item’s potential as a site of metapragmatic commentary.

*6.2.1.6 Other lexical variation*

Beside the members of the particular lexical classes that I have discussed in this chapter, many, many additional items in the corpus correspond with Standard Chinese items according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. Few of these items co-vary with a non-*Hànzì Bái dú* equivalent. For example, in the conversation leading up to excerpt 6-3, the male participant uses the term *jiexsonp weixjix*, comparable to Standard Chinese *jīnróng wēijī* 金融危机 ‘financial crisis’ to refer to the 2008 world financial crisis. Because he does not mobilize this item to foreground bilingual contrast, it is not a “code-switch” in Auer’s sense. At the same time, it is not a “loanword” in the sense of structural approaches to language contact because it is not established within a “speech community”; only

bilingual, literate Bái speakers with access to national media can interpret it. As I have suggested, such items are best understood as bivalent between Chinese and Bái.

Nevertheless, there are several places in the corpus where a *Hànzi Bái dú* item covaries with a non-*Hànzi Bái dú* semantic equivalent among the same language users in the same stretch of discourse. In excerpt 6-11, a female participant describes a pair of silver bracelets she is wearing. (I have omitted a discussion of the size of various bracelets in lines 85-97 to focus on the lexical alternation.)

**EXCERPT 6-11: Female participant (P), recording 112, lines 82-84, 98-100**

82	B	Zei bit [比] nal-yap mop jiai-zix nox gonx-po-zix, still CMPRM that-PL narrow a.bit-NMLZ SUB two-CLF-NMLZ
	E	A pair of [bracelets] that are still a bit narrower than those.
83	B	lap-zil mel nox <i>daib huax</i> [帶花]. COS-DISC 3SG\DIR on carry flower
	E	And they <i>have flowers</i> on them, too.
84	B	Not lil maip mot svnl. 2SG\DIR also buy 3SG\DIR pair
	E	You go buy a pair of them, too ...
98	B	Zei bit let-neid cul at-jiai-zix, still CMPRM this-CLF thick one-a.bit-NMLZ
	E	It's a bit thicker than this,
99	B	mel nox <i>hol</i> yap 3SG\OBL on flower PL
	E	The <i>flowers</i> on it
100	B	lil cux l-iap-sex-sex <i>hol</i> lap. also just this-PL-kind-kind flower COS
	E	are just these kinds of <i>flowers</i> .

In line 83, the participant describes the flower pattern on the bracelet as *huax*, which corresponds to Standard Chinese *huā* 花 ‘flower’ according to *Hànzi Bái dú*; later in the same discourse, in line 99, she describes the same patterns as *hol*, which does not correspond according to *Hànzi Bái dú*. In this case, participant’s use of the first variant

appears to be locally conditioned by her use of the verb *daib*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *dài* 带 ‘carry,’ in the expression *daib huax* ‘have flowers.’

In other cases, however, participants mobilize lexical variants in order to index broader context. In excerpt 6-12, the female participant and the recording consultant pick up their discussion of the bracelets, focusing on the source of the silver:

**EXCERPT 6-12: Two female participants (P1, P2) and recording consultant (RC), recording 112, lines 127-140**

127	P1	B	Dabsainx Caxsib [大山超市] het ged nail. Dàshān Supermarket in sell DISC
		E	[They] sell [the bracelets] in Dàshān supermarket.
128	P2	B	Zil not lait zaibgaid seinx mot zainl zop jiat [假]? DISC 2SG\DIR then how know 3SG\DIR genuine or fake
		E	How do you know whether they’re genuine or fake [silver]?
129	P1	B	Mal nal-hox zex Kuinlmiel lil mal kail dex, 3PL that-PL(human) LOCV Kūnmíng also 3PL run SUB
		E	Those people, it’s also them who run [that shop] in Kūnmíng,
130	P1	B	Xiabguainx [下关] lil mal kail dex, Xiàguān also 3PL run SUB
		E	it’s also them who run [that shop] in Xiàguān,
131	P1	B	mal jiaxcuf [家族] zex quinp bub [全部] zex jienx- <i>yenp</i> [金银]. 3PL family FOC completely COP gold-silver
		E	their whole family is [involved with] gold and <i>silver</i> .
132	RC	B	Mel miail el alsaint, 2SG\OBL name call what
		E	What’s it called?
133	RC	B	mal <b>yind</b> yap mel miail el alsaint wal? 3PL silver PL 3SG\OBL name call what DISC
		E	Their <b>silver</b> , what’s it called?
134	P1	B	Mal hhep zex Tonxhait <i>Yenp</i> [通海银] xianlnot, 3PL near COP Tōnghǎi silver DISC
		E	Theirs is [called] Tōnghǎi <i>Silver</i> ,
135	P1	B	mal jiaxcuf [家族] zex Kuinlmiel lil kail de, 3PL family FOC Kūnmíng also run PRF
		E	their family also run [that store in] Kūnmíng
136	P1	B	Xiabguainx [下关] lil kail dex lax. Xiàguān also run SUB DISC
		E	and run [that store in] Xiàguān, too.

137	P1	B	Jienl zex mal yindgainl hox kail. all FOC 3PL people PL(human) run
		E	It's all their people who run [the stores].
138	RC	B	Mal <b>yind</b> nal-yap zex saf na nei-hhef? 3PL silver that-PL FOC from where hold-come
		E	Where do they bring the <b>silver</b> from?
139	P1	B	Hhaf-seinx. NEG-know.
		E	I don't know.
140	RC	B	Nal-yap zex Hefqienb [鹤庆] mal <b>yind</b> mot-yap, zopbiox? that-PL COP Hèqìng 3PL silver 3SG\DIR-PL TAG
		E	That's Hèqìng <b>silver</b> , isn't it?

In line 131, the participant uses the morpheme *yenp*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *yín* 银 ‘silver’ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, as part of the item *yenp-jienx*, comparable to Standard Chinese *yín-jīn* 银金 ‘gold [and] silver,’ as well as in the name *Tonxhait Yenp*, comparable to Standard Chinese *Tōnghǎi Yín* 通海银 ‘Tōnghǎi Silver.’ In these context, the *Hànzì Bái dú* item supports the participant’s argument that the silver must be genuine because the bracelet comes from an established company with supra-local connections. By contrast, the recording consultant, who is less sanguine about the source of the silver, uses the non-*Hànzì Bái dú* variant *yind* ‘silver’ as an unmarked alternative.

In excerpt 6-13, the recording consultant and a male participant discuss the political protests in 2009 Bangkok protests, in which supporters of Thaksin Shinawatra wore red shirts and opponents wore yellow shirts. The recording consultant was preparing to leave in several days for a teaching assignment in Thailand. (I have omitted a discussion of the protests in lines 127-129 to focus on the lexical alternation.)



**EXCERPT 6-13: Male participant (P) and recording consultant (RC), recording 115, lines 120-126, 130-134**

120	P	B	Lail mal yonp mal lentdatssenp babmiait- [领导人罢免] cel. DISC 3PL use 3PL leader recall-PRF
		E	So they recalled their leader,
121	P	B	At-hox zex yonxhub [拥护] mot, one-PL(human) FOC support 3SG\DIR
		E	Some people support him,
122	P	B	at-hox zex mel nox hhaf-yonxhub [拥护]. one-PL(human) FOC 3SG\OBL OBJM NEG-support
		E	others don't support him.
123	RC	B	Mal <i>honp-huap</i> [红黄] met-neid, 3PL red-yellow that-CLF
		E	That <i>red and yellow</i> of theirs,
124	RC	B	cux zex lel gonx-neid, zotbiox? just COP these two-CLF TAG
		E	it's just these two, right?
125	RC	B	<i>Honpsainxjuinx</i> [红衫军] zop atsaint met-neid. red.shirt.army or what that-CLF
		E	The <i>Red</i> Shirt Army or whatever it is.
126	P	B	Einf ... right
		E	Right ...
130	C	B	Ngal xultanl het nox 1SG.EXCL school in SUB
		E	In our school
131	C	B	Taibguof [泰国] nox xulsenl hox Thailand SUB student PL(human)
		E	the Thai students
132	C	B	sua ngel ngvl, say 1SG\OBL OBJM
		E	said to me,
133	C	B	“Not ngaid-pia zil 2SG\DIR go-arrive TOP
		E	“When you arrive,
134	C	B	<i>cai</i> yil gol <i>ngvd</i> yil at-mia yip.” red clothing and yellow clothing NEG-do.not wear
		E	don't wear red or yellow clothing.”

In line 125, the recording consultant uses the morpheme *honp*, which corresponds to Standard Chinese *hóng* 红 ‘red’ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, as part of the set expression

*Honpsainxjuin*, comparable to Standard Chinese *Hóngshānjūn* 红衫军 ‘Red Shirt Army,’ which the Chinese-language media coined to describe Thaksin’s supporters. The recording consultant also uses the morpheme in line 123 as part of the expression *honp-huap*, comparable to Standard Chinese *hóng-huáng* 红黄 ‘red and yellow’; however, in line 134 she uses the color terms *cai* ‘red’ and *ngvd* ‘yellow’ which do not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*.

Interestingly, the recording consultant uses these variants in a direct quotation (signaled by her use of the second person singular pronoun *not* in reference to herself) of the Thai exchange students, an exchange that almost certainly took place in Standard Chinese, not Bái. I return to such “mismatches” later in this chapter; for the purposes of this discussion, the recording consultant appears to use the *Hànzì Bái dú* items in line 123 specifically to index discussions of the demonstrations in the Chinese media; by line 134, however, she shifts to the unmarked non-*Hànzì Bái dú* items as she focuses on her upcoming travel to Thailand. In each of these excerpts, *Hànzì Bái dú* serves as a resource for language users to directly index written Standard Chinese, and to indirectly index discourses that occur in the variety; nevertheless, this indexing is not determinate, and can only be evaluated from the perspective of particular participants in specific interactions.

#### 6.2.1.7 Lexically motivated morphosyntactic variation

As I review in chapter 4, Muysken (2000) has described the difficulty of analyzing bilingual contrast between typologically very similar languages in terms of “congruent lexicalization.” Auer (1999:329) observes that obvious morphosyntactic

diagnostics of language contact such as double marking of case are most likely when one language uses a prefixing or prepositional strategy, and the other uses a suffixing or postpositional strategy. Whether due to contact or genetic inheritance, Bái and Standard Chinese have very few points of structural contrast, and since both are highly analytic, contrast is largely limited to word order.

To complicate matters, as I discuss in chapter 3, in some structural respects Bái contrasts with Standard Chinese, but coincides with non-Standard Chinese varieties, particularly the varieties of Dàlǐ Prefecture Mandarin with which it is in contact. Because Bái has no close relatives that are not in contact with these varieties, and because Sinitic varieties also vary among themselves in morphosyntax, it is impossible to determine whether these similarities are due to the influence of local Mandarin varieties on Bái, or of Bái on local Mandarin varieties.

As I discuss in chapter 3, one area that scholars such as Xú (1954), Zhōu (2008[1978]), and Zhào (2008[1982]) cite as a point of morphosyntactic contrast between Bái and Sinitic varieties is relative ordering of constituents in the noun phrase: They describe the order [noun [number + classifier]] as typical of Bái, but [[number + classifier] noun] as typical of Sinitic varieties. (As I point out, however, the order [noun [number + classifier]] also occurs in literary registers of Chinese.) In excerpt 6-14, in connection with the story about the fight in excerpt 6-6, my recording consultant's father describes how he might deal with a naughty student. In excerpt 6-15, my recording consultant discusses the teachers who will accompany her on her upcoming trip to Thailand.

**EXCERPT 6-14: Male participant, recording 113, lines 189-191**

189	B	ngot cux zua-kex mel nox,
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		1SG\DIR just catch-PRF 3SG\OBL OBJM
	E	I'd catch him,
190	B	ngot <b>sex at-po</b> zua-kex mel nox 1SG\DIR hand one-CLF catch-PRF 3SG\OBL OBJM
	E	I'd catch him with <b>one hand</b> ,
191	B	do mot do, shake 3SG\DIR shake
	E	I'd shake him.

**EXCERPT 6-15: Recording consultant, recording 113, lines 156-157**

156	B	Mel het <b>laotsil at-yind</b> 3SG\OBL in teacher one-CLF
	E	Among them <b>one teacher</b>
157	B	gvp melda danl zutsenb [主任], lilzox? LOCV there act.as director TAG
	E	is acting as director there, right?

In excerpt 6-14, line 190, the participant uses this “typical” constituent order for ‘one hand’; in excerpt 6-15, line 156, the recording consultant uses the same order for ‘one teacher.’

Surprisingly, these are the only two examples of the [noun [number + classifier]] construction in the spontaneous conversation corpus. (The construction is somewhat more frequent in the narrative corpus.) The construction [noun + classifier] without a number, described in Wáng (2008[2005]b) and Zhào (2008[2005]), is very frequent. However, the vast majority of [number + classifier] phrases occur subsequent to, and independently from, the nouns they quantify; in these cases, classifiers become difficult to distinguish from measure words. For example, in excerpt 6-16, my recording consultant asks one female participant to give another participant some dumplings.

**EXCERPT 6-16: Recording consultant, recording 110, lines 94-95**

94	B	<b>Yuinpxiax</b> conplaip [从来] lil ye-hhaf-gop, dumpling never also eat-NEG-EXP
	E	[She] has never eaten <b>dumplings</b> ,
95	B	sit mot ye <b>xi-kox</b> yal. give 3SG\DIR eat four-CFL DISC
	E	give her <b>four of them</b> to eat.

In line 94, my recording consultant topicalizes the noun *yuinpxiax* ‘dumpling,’ then in line 95, she refers to it with the classifier *kox*, which refers to small, round objects.<sup>37</sup>

While the phrase like *yuinpxiax xi-kox* ‘four dumplings’ appears possible on the basis of excerpts 6-14 and 6-15, such constructions turn out to be rare in spontaneous conversation.

By contrast, there are seven examples of the construction [[number + classifier] noun]. In excerpt 6-17, a female participant describes the advantages of buying a magazine from the newsstand instead of subscribing to it. In excerpt 6-18, a male participant argues that some people who lack formal education are nonetheless skilled conversationalists.

**EXCERPT 6-17: Female participant, recording 115, line 239-241**

239	B	Sanl-cuai, aipqit zuib zutyab [而且最主要] nox three-issue moreover most important SUB
	E	three issues, moreover, the most important
240	B	<b>yif-geb yuinpyinx</b> [一个原因] zex one-CLF reason COP
	E	<b>[one] reason</b> is,
241	B	mot maip zil tit wut- [五] kuait neid. 3SG\DIR buy TOP only five- <i>yuán</i> only
	E	it’s only five <i>yuán</i> .

<sup>37</sup> The classifier *kox* corresponds with Standard Chinese *kē* 颗 according to *Hànzì Bái dú*; however, it is used to classify an overlapping, but somewhat different set of nouns. It is ambiguous, therefore, whether language users perceive this item as “Bái” or “Chinese.”

**EXCERPT 6-18: Male participant, recording 113, lines 179-180**

178	B	yainx piatkufzit zil mot tiainxnap.dibbaif [天南地北], but shoot.the.breeze TOP 3SG\DIR rambling.and.discursive
	E	but when shooting the breeze, he's rambling and discursive,
179	B	baitlonp.mepzenb [摆龙门阵] sit yindgainl qiainl mot, gossip give people listen 3SG\DIR
	E	he gossips so that people can listen,
180	B	let-neid lil zex <i>yif-zont neplif</i> [一种能力], hol mox? this-CLF also COP one-kind ability TAG
	E	this is also <i>a kind of ability</i> , right?

In excerpt 6-17, line 240, the female participant combines the item *yuinpyinx*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *yuányīn* 原因 ‘reason’ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, with the “Chinese” number *yif* ‘one’ and the classifier *geb*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *gè* 个, the default classifier used with abstract nouns. In excerpt 6-18, line 180, the male participant uses the item *neplif*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *nénglì* 能力 ‘ability,’ with *yif* and the classifier (or measure word) *zont*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *zhǒng* 种 ‘kind.’

Like excerpts 6-17 and 6-18, all seven instances of the [[number + classifier] noun] construction involve numbers, classifiers, and nouns that correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. There are no counterexamples of a [noun [number + classifier]] construction that includes such items, or a [[number + classifier] noun] construction that includes non-*Hànzì Bái dú* items. Language users’ perception that lexical items like *yuinpyinx*/*yuányīn* and *neplif*/*nénglì* are “Chinese” appears to prompt the use of “Chinese” numbers with matching “Chinese” classifiers. By contrast, although in excerpt 6-15 the noun *laotsil* seems to be a transparent match for Standard Chinese *lǎoshī* 老师 ‘teacher,’ the second

syllable does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, and my recording consultant chooses a [noun [number + classifier]] construction with the non-*Hànzì Bái dú* classifier *yind*.

### 6.2.2 Auer's "code switching"

In the moments of linguistic interaction I have discussed up until this point, it is often ambiguous whether language users mobilize the items that correspond to *Hànzì Bái dú* in ways that are pragmatically salient; indeed, the use of some of these items appears to be conventionalized to such a degree that they constitute poor resources for the foregrounding of bilingual contrast. In other words, these moments correspond to Auer's "language mixing": Regardless of the items' etymological origins, language users treat them as elements of a single linguistic repertoire they call "Bái." In the following section, however, I turn my attention to moments of interaction in which, because of their reflexive character, language users are more likely to foreground language use in general, and bilingual contrast in particular. These moments exemplify Auer's "code switching": Language users identify specific elements in their repertoire as "Chinese," and mobilize them to foreground bilingual contrast for pragmatic effect.

#### 6.2.2.1 Quotation

As Dorian (1997) demonstrates with respect to users of Scottish Gaelic, it is rarely the case that bilingual language users faithfully reproduce the language of one interaction when quoting it in another. Instead, language choice depends on the interplay of more

general interactional norms, such as using the in-group language with in-group interlocutors, as well as subtle factors local to the interaction. Therefore, the “mismatch” that I describe above in excerpt 6-13 above between the Thai exchange students’ utterance in Standard Chinese and my recording consultant’s quotation of it in Bái is not particularly noteworthy. In excerpt 6-19, I reproduce my recording consultant’s quote of her conversation with me, which I know for a fact took place in Standard Chinese.

**EXCERPT 6-19: Recording consultant (RC) and female participant (P), recording 115, lines 370-376**

370	RC	B	Jidyinx waibguf [外国] nox met-yind, yesterday foreign SUB that-person
		E	Yesterday that foreigner
371	RC	B	laotsil mot-yind lil cux jiant [讲], teacher that-CLF also just talk
		E	that teacher also said
372	RC	B	Jinpcuinl nox qibhob [气候] dib qionl, Jiànchuān SUB climate very good
		E	Jiànchuān’s climate was very good,
373	RC	B	yainx <i>yotsiphob</i> [有时候] zil but sometimes TOP
		E	but <i>sometimes</i>
374	RC	B	<i>huib</i> [会] vx-hhop <b>gait-gait</b> . may rain-fall a.while-a.while
		E	it <i>may</i> rain <b>occasionally</b> .
375	P	B	Mel-jiap mot zei sua alsaint? 3SG\OBL-other 3SG\DIR still say what
		E	What else did he say?
376	RC	B	<i>Faintzenb</i> [反正] mot cux sua qibhob [气候] qionl. anyway 3SG\DIR just say climate good
		E	<i>Anyway</i> , he said that the climate was good.

In this excerpt, the recording consultant cites my casual comment about the weather to bolster her case that people generally consider Jiànchuān to have a good climate. Because Bái, like Standard Chinese, lacks an explicit [-WH] complementizer



corresponding to ‘that,’ and because the quoted material contains no deictics, it is difficult to classify the passage as a direct or an indirect quotation; assuming it is direct, my recording consultant represents me as speaking in Bái. Most of the *Hànzì Bái dú* items she uses, such as *waibguf* for Standard Chinese *wàiguó* 外国 ‘foreign’ and *qibhob* for Standard Chinese *qìhòu* 气候 ‘climate’ appear to be straightforward instances of insertional mixing; the item *jiant* for Standard Chinese *jiǎng* 讲 ‘say’ is ubiquitous in the corpus, while the discourse marker *faintzenb* for Standard Chinese *fǎnzhèng* 反正 ‘anyway’ is hard to evaluate because it occurs only in this passage.

Nevertheless, other subtle word choices suggest that the recording consultant is subtly signaling that the exchange occurred in Standard Chinese. In lines 373-374, she uses the item *yotsibhob*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *yǒushíhòu* 有时候 ‘sometimes’ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, in construction with the modal verb *huib*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese *huì* 会 ‘may,’ and follows it up with the non-*Hànzì Bái dú* complement *gait-gait*, a measure word for a length of time which, when reduplicated, reinforces the occasional and intermittent nature of the rain. This construction may constitute an insertional switch that evokes the original Standard Chinese of the quotation without violating the larger interactional norm of speaking in Bái.

More straightforward is the exchange in excerpt 6-20. A female participant describes an interaction she had with a friend on a computer instant messaging program.

**EXCERPT 6-20: Female participant, recording 115, lines 283-287**

283	B	Mot-xiai ngot sanbwant [我上网] geinp-dex mot
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		that-day 1SG\DIR go.online see-PRF 3SG\DIR
	E	I saw him that day online
284	B	zil mot hhaf-lit ngot [理我]. DISC 3SG\DIR NEG-pay.attention 1SG\DIR
	E	but he didn't pay any attention to me.
285	B	Faf- [发] bil mot, “ <i>Nit sib-buf-sib dabmapsseb</i> [你是不是大忙人], send-give 3SG\DIR 2SG COP-NEG-COP busy.bee
	E	I sent him a note, “ <i>Are you such a busy bee,</i>
286	B	<i>sifjiainx hent batguip</i> [时间很宝贵]?” time very precious
	E	<i>that your time is so precious?</i>
287	B	Mot sua, “ <i>Litjiait wanbsuib</i> [理解万岁].” 3SG\DIR say understanding ten.thousand.years
	E	He said, “ <i>Mutual understanding is the most valuable thing.</i> ”

In line 285, the participant reports writing to her friend, *Nit sibbufsib dabmapssenb, sifjiainx hent batguip*; this phrase largely corresponds with the Standard Chinese phrase *Nǐ shìbúshì dà máng rén, shíjiān hěn bǎoguì?* 你是不是大忙人，时间很宝贵？ ‘Are you such a busy bee, that your time is so precious?’ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*.<sup>38</sup> The friend’s response, *Litjiait wanbsuib* corresponds according to *Hànzì Bái dú* with the Standard Chinese phrase *Lǐjiě wànsuì* 理解万岁 ‘Mutual understanding is the most valuable thing.’<sup>39</sup>

This is the longest uninterrupted stretch of *Hànzì Bái dú* items in the corpus, and it includes the only occurrence of *nit*, which corresponds with Standard Chinese second-person singular pronoun *nǐ* 你; elsewhere, the second-person singular pronoun is *not*. It

<sup>38</sup> The Lower Level category syllables *rén* 人 ‘person’ and *shí* 时 ‘time’ would normally be realized with the Bái /42/ tone as *ssenp* and *sip*, and the Departing category syllable *guì* 贵 ‘precious,’ would normally be realized with the Bái /66/ tone as *guib*. I have no explanation for the first anomaly; the second and third may involve phonetic representation of the Standard Chinese /35/ and /51/ tones with Bái /35/ and /42/ tones, similar to *bapbap* and *malmal* for Standard Chinese *bàba* 爸爸 and *māma* 妈妈, discussed above.

<sup>39</sup> This expression is established enough to appear in standard dictionaries. In a 2008 *Guǎngmíng Daily* article, People’s Liberation Army official Liú Yǒng claims he coined it during a 1984 meeting with students in Běijīng (Liú 2008). According to his account, “understanding” refers to civilians’ understanding of the sacrifices of the military; it is impossible to say whether the participant’s friend was aware of, or intended to evoke, this broader context.

seems clear that the participant intends it to faithfully reproduce the language of the original interaction. The main difference between this quotation and the quotations in excerpts 6-13 and 6-19, which either elide the language of the original interaction entirely or allude to it through subtle lexical choices, is that the participant is referring to a written interaction. Pragmatically, her use of *Hànzi Bái dú* items sets off the quoted material from the rest of the interaction; metapragmatically, it reproduces the broader East Asian graphocentric metaphor according to which pronunciation of the written characters is a kind of “reading” even when removed from the actual interaction in space and time.

#### 6.2.2.2 *Explicit metalinguistic commentary*

A much more explicit metapragmatic strategy to foreground bilingual contrast is the use of metalinguistic commentary. Explicit references to the language of interaction occur at several points in the corpus. In excerpt 6-21, two female participants and the recording consultant discuss the meaning of the lexical item *jiap-yind*, literally ‘other-person.’ Zhào and Xú (1996:192) gloss the item as *qínglǚ* 情侶, *qíng rén* 情人 ‘sweetheart, lover’; however, my language consultant explained that some rural language users use the term to mean ‘spouse.’

#### **EXCERPT 6-21: Female participants (P1 and P2) and recording consultant (RC), recording 115, line 433-441**

433	P1	B	Mot ga mel <b>jiap-yind</b> lil yol-tel. 3SG\DIR BENADV 3SG\OBL other-person also invite-PRF
		E	she also invited her <b>sweetheart</b> to come.
434	RC	B	Lap-zil gol mot ngaid guainx [观]? COS-DISC with 3SG\DIR go look.around
		E	You mean, to go and look around with her?

435	P2	B	Baip-ngvp-zix zil Bai-language-NMLZ TOP
		E	In Bái,
436	P2	B	jiant “mel <b>xianlhot jiap-yind.</b> ” say 3SG\OBL very.good friend.
		E	we say her “ <b>very good friend.</b> ”
437	RC	B	“Mel <b>jiap-yind</b> ” lal? 3SG\OBL other-person DISC
		E	[You mean] “her <b>jiapyind</b> ”?
438	P2	B	“ <b>Jiap-yind</b> ” at-biox, other-person NEG-NEG.COP
		E	It’s not [just plain] “ <b>jiapyind,</b> ”
439	P2	B	“ <b>jiap-yind</b> ” zil zit [指] mot yitjienl <i>jifhuainx</i> [结婚], other-person TOP mean 3SG\DIR already married
		E	[just plain] “ <b>jiapyind</b> ” means she’s already <i>married</i> ,
440	P2	B	Hanbyuit “ <i>qienpssenp</i> ” [汉语情人] lap, Chinese sweetheart COS
		E	for “ <i>sweetheart</i> ” in Chinese,
441	P2	B	pienpcanp [平常] zil jiant [讲] “ <b>xianlhot jiap-yind.</b> ” usually TOP say very.good other-person
		E	we usually say “ <b>very good friend.</b> ”

In line 433, the first participant refers to a friend’s sweetheart as *jiapyind*. In line 435, the second participant asserts that the first participant should use *xianlhot jiapyind* to mean ‘sweetheart.’ In line 437, the recording consultant attempts to clarify what the second participant said, but repeats the item *jiapyind* on its own, and in line 438, the second participant corrects her, as well. Finally, in line 439, the second participant states explicitly that, on its own, *jiapyind* implies that an individual is married; in line 440, she defines *xianlhot jiapyind* explicitly in terms of “Chinese” *qingren* 情人 ‘sweetheart, lover.’ At one level, this exchange confirms the language ideologies I document in chapter 5 that clearly distinguish Bái and Chinese as separate languages. At another, however, it demonstrates how widespread multilingualism and literacy in Sinitic varieties

render *Hànzi Bái dú* items a literal metalanguage to articulate lexical and semantic variation in Bái.

Similarly, in excerpt 6-22, my recording consultant and a female participant discuss the meanings of Bái four-syllable fixed expressions, which the recording consultant was collecting as part of her own linguistic research. (I have omitted some discussion of the item *qialzaind-gvxbiox* in lines 20-23 to focus on alternational switching.)<sup>40</sup>

**EXCERPT 6-22: Female participant (P) and recording consultant (RC), recording 116, lines 15-19; 24-25**

15	RC	B	“Qialzaind-gvxbiox” zil hhaf-mox, “qialzaind-gvxbiox” DISC NEG-NEG.EXV
		E	I don’t have “qialzaind-gvxbiox,”
16	RC	B	“qialzaind-gvxbiox” gol nel hhep nal-yap “qialzaind-gvxbiox” and 2SG/OBL near that-PL
		E	how is “qialzaind-gvxbiox” different
17	RC	B	zex alsaint quixbif [区别]? EXV what difference
		E	from those ones you have there?
18	P	B	“Qialzaind-gvxbiox” “qialzaind-gvxbiox”
		E	“Qialzaind-gvxbiox”
19	P	B	zex <i>xienbssonp ssenp meif jiabyant</i> [形容人没教养] xiantnat ... FOC describe person NEG.EXV good.upbringing DISC
		E	<i>describes a person who hasn’t been brought up well ...</i>
24	RC	B	“Kolneid-dainfvx” alsaint yipsib? “Kolneid-dainfvx” what meaning
		E	What does “kolneid-dainfvx” mean?
25	P	B	Yindgainl yind jiant [讲] dond <i>bufzuf biainxjib</i> [不足边际]. person CLF talk speech NEG.be.enough limit
		E	A person who, when speaking, <i>doesn’t respect limits</i> .

<sup>40</sup> It is worth noting that my recording consultant and her academic advisor’s interest in four-syllable expressions in Bái parallels extensive documentation of four-syllable expressions in Sinitic varieties; a subset of these expressions which contain historical and literary allusions, known as *chéngyǔ* 成语, are a feature of literary registers of Standard Chinese.

In line 19, and again in line 25, the participant defines a Bái four-syllable fixed expression in terms of a *Hànzì Bái dú* equivalent. In the case of line 19, she does so using an entire clause of such items, including the only occurrence of *meif*, which corresponds with the Standard Chinese negative existential verb *méi* 没 according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. At one level, this conversation reproduces an expert discourse of language endangerment: My recording consultant was collecting four-syllable phrases no longer current in vernacular Bái that were in danger of disappearing. Like excerpt 6-21, however it also demonstrates how Bái language users deploy *Hànzì Bái dú* as a default metalanguage with which to fix the meanings of lexical items.

#### 6.2.2.3 Language self-repair

Auer (1999:312) suggests self- and other language repair as a particularly rich site to examine the strategies language users deploy to foreground bilingual contrast. In my corpus of Bái spontaneous conversation, there are no unambiguous examples of language repair. However, in the narratives I elicited on the basis of Chafe's (1980) "Pear Story" film (see chapter 2) there are several instances in which participants begin to use a *Hànzì Bái dú* item, then repair to a non-*Hànzì Bái dú* item. In excerpt 6-23, a female participant describes a scene in the film in which a farmer comes down out of a tree where he was picking pears, and discovers that someone has stolen a basket of pears. In excerpt 24, a male participant describes a later scene in which the boy who stole the pears has fallen off of his bicycle, and three children come to help him up.

**EXCERPT 6-23: Participant 2009-05 (female, G2, born 1969) lines 36-39**

36	B	Lap-zil kua xuillil yind COS-DISC harvest pear person
	E	After that, the person picking the pears
37	B	saf mel xuillil zet nox hhef-tel zil from 3SG\OBL pear tree on come-down DISC
	E	came down from his pear tree,
38	B	fafxinb [发现] mel xuillil yitjienl at-lul discover 3SG\OBL pear already NEG-enough
	E	and discovered that he was missing some pears,
39	B	<b>yif-geb</b> [一个], <b>at-danpgex</b> lap. one-CL one-basket COS
	E	<b>one, one basket.</b>

**EXCERPT 6-24: Participant 2009-09 (male, G2, born 1965), lines 37-41**

37	B	Mel hhex hhef-gop-de svlzixyvnx sanl-yind, 3SG\OBL behind come-cross-PRF child three-CLF
	E	Three kids came along behind him,
38	B	lap geinp-de mot zuai'-tel. DISC see-PRF 3SG\DIR fall-down,
	E	and saw him fall down.
39	B	Laf <b>dap</b> mel hhep, DISC help 3SG\OBL OBJM
	E	So they <b>helped</b> him
40	B	xiot-xiot nox <b>banx</b> [帮], good-good ADV M help
	E	<b>helped</b> him like good kids,
41	B	<b>dap</b> mel hhep, zaip-kex, dap mel hhep. help 3SG\OBL OBJM pick.up-up help 3SG\OBL OBJM
	E	<b>helped</b> him, picked him up, helped him.

In excerpt 6-23, line 39, the female participant starts to say *yifgeb*, which corresponds according to *Hànzì Bái dù* with Standard Chinese *yíge* 一个, literally ‘one-CLF’; however, *ge* 个 is the “default” classifier in Standard Chinese, and the phrase often marks indefinite reference. As I discuss above, its presence at the beginning of the clause means that it would occur prior to any noun it might quantify, such as the noun *kuāngzi* 框子 ‘small basket.’ As I discuss above, previous descriptive work on Bái has described

this order as atypical, and in my corpus of spontaneous conversation such constructions do not contain non-*Hànzi Bái dú* items. The participant, apparently recalling that she is supposed to be speaking “Bái,” quickly repairs to *at-danpgex*, a non-*Hànzi Bái dú* variant for ‘basket’ which, as a measure word, can occur directly after the number *at* ‘one.’

Similarly, in excerpt 6-24, line 39, the male participant uses the non-*Hànzi Bái dú* verb *dap* ‘help,’ which subcategorizes for an object marked by object marker *hhep*. In line 40, he begins by describing the same proposition with the *Hànzi Bái dú* verb *banx*, perhaps because he modifies the verb with the phrase *xiot-xiot nox*, which is structurally parallel to the Standard Chinese expression *hǎohǎo de* 好好地 ‘well, thoroughly.’ However, in line 41 he repairs back to the non-*Hànzi Bái dú* verb *dap*.

The absence of language self-repair in the spontaneous conversation corpus, but its presence in the elicited narrative, is consistent with Auer’s association of language repair with foregrounding of bilingual contrast. Merely by asking participants to “tell the story of the film in Bái,” my language consultant rendered bilingual contrast much more salient for participants than it is in everyday conversation. This is not to say that either (or, indeed, any) of the participants avoided *Hànzi Bái dú* items entirely in their elicited narratives: The female participant from excerpt 6-23 uses the phrase *bufyip-aipfei*, which largely corresponds with the Standard Chinese four-character phrase *bú yì ér fēi* 不翼而飞, (literally ‘fly without wings,’ figuratively ‘vanish all of the sudden’) to describe the farmer’s surprise at the loss of his pears (2009-05, line 50). The male participant from excerpt 6-24 uses the phrase *suinbsot-qiainxyan*, which largely corresponds with the Standard Chinese four-character phrase *suishǒu qiānyáng* 随手牵羊 (literally ‘steal a sheep in passing,’ figuratively ‘steal something on the spur of the moment’) to describe



the boy’s theft of the pears (2009-09, line 25). Instead, these repairs indicate that, at certain moments, the narrative production rendered bilingual contrast salient for the participants, and they responded by repairing items they perceived, at that moment, to be “Bái” with items they perceived as “Chinese.”

#### 6.2.2.4 Language other-repair

Despite the presence of such repairs, all but three of the participants in the narrative elicitation task were able to produce concise, coherent narratives which my language consultant was satisfied were “Bái.” Only three participants had difficulty with the task: One adult participant simply could not understand it, and one middle-school participant flatly refused to speak Bái. The third participant, an elementary-school-aged boy who was the son of a close family friend of my language consultant, chose to produce a concise, coherent narrative in Standard Chinese. Afterward, because my language consultant knew the boy well and usually spoke to him in Bái, she encouraged him to repeat his narrative in Bái. Excerpt 6-25 reproduces the final moments of their exchange.

**EXCERPT 6-25: Participant 2009-19 (male, G3, born 2001) (P) and language consultant (LC), lines 127-143**

127	LC	SC/B	Ent, right
		E	Okay,
128	LC	SC/B	Baip-ngvp-zix nox “ <b>zet zet</b> ” ... “ <i>shù</i> ” [树], Bai-language-NMLZ SUB tree CLF, tree
		E	In Bái “ <b>tree</b> ” [B] ... “ <i>tree</i> ” [SC],
129	LC	SC/B	yanl el alsaint, hainf? 1PL.INCL call what DISC

		E	what do we call it?
130	P	SC/B	“Zet zet.” tree CLF
		E	“Tree” [B].
131	LC	SC/B	Zil “lí” [梨] el alhainp? DISC pear call what
		E	Then what do we call “pear” [SC]?
132	P	SC/B	“Xuillil.” pear
		E	“Pear” [B].
133	LC	SC/B	Zil “yáng” [羊] nil? DISC goat DISC
		E	Then how about “goat” [SC]?
134	P	SC/B	“Yáng” [羊]. goat
		E	“Goat” [SC].
135	LC	SC/B	“Shānyáng” [山羊] nox el alhainp? mountain.goat OBJM call what
		E	What do we call a “mountain goat” [SC]?
136	LC	SC/B	Zil “rén” [人] el alhainp? DISC person call what
		E	Then what do we call a “person” [SC]?
137	P	SC/B	“Yindgainl.” person
		E	“Person” [B].
138	LC	SC/B	Zil not cux l-iap-sex jiant [讲] zil dap lap? DISC 2SG\DIR just this-PL-way talk TOP can COS
		E	So, just talk like this, okay?
139	LC	SC/B	Zil “lǎorén” [老人] nox el alhainp? DISC old.person OBJM call what
		E	So, what do you call an “old person” [SC]?
140	P	SC/B	“Yinl.” 2SG.FRML
		E	“You” [B].
141	LC	SC/B	“lǎorén, lǎotóu” [老人, 老头], old.person old.guy
		E	“old person, old guy” [SC]
142	LC	SC/B	Baip-ngvp-zix nox yanl el alhainp? Bai-language-NMLZ SUB 1SG.INCL call what
		E	What do we call them in Bái?
143	P	SC/B	“lǎotóu” [老头] old.guy
		E	“Old guy” [SC]

My language consultant's strategy was to remind the participant that he knew Bái equivalents for most of the individual words he had just used to narrate the episode in Standard Chinese. (This approach instantiates a common ethnotheory of language that identifies languages with particular lexical items, rather than any level of linguistic structure; cf. Silverstein [1981]). During transcription, however, the language consultant reflected that in the midst of the exchange she found it difficult to remember which words were "Bái" and which were "Chinese."

In line 28, the language consultant elicits the Bái word for 'tree' *zet* using the Bái word itself, then quickly repairs to the Standard Chinese item *shù* 树. She continues consistently using Standard Chinese items; however, in 133 she fails to consider that Bái people often use the *Hànzì Bái dú* equivalent of Standard Chinese *yáng* 羊 for 'sheep' in general, and that the non-*Hànzì Bái dú* item *yond* has specialized to mean 'mountain goat'; when she tries to elicit the items in Standard Chinese the participant simply repeats the item, bewildered. She quickly moves on to nouns for the human characters. In line 136, she elicits Bái *yindgainl* 'person,' apparently hoping, in line 139, that the first morpheme will trigger Bái *gux nox yind* 'old person.' However, the participant takes her use of 'old person' as reference rather than mention: He interprets the question 'what do you call an old person?' to mean 'what form of address do you use when speaking to an old person,' and provides the second person formal pronoun *yinl*. There was no indication that the participant was joking; afterwards the language consultant reflected that his response reflected the most natural interpretation of her question: Bái parents rarely quiz children on lexical items, but they often instruct children to use *yinl* with their elders.

Like excerpts 6-23 and 6-24, this excerpt confirms that many Bái people – and perhaps especially Bái people who, like my language consultants, are engaged in language preservation activities – clearly distinguish Bái and Chinese as separate languages. At the same time, the details of the exchange demonstrate that the contrast is not necessarily salient in the same way for all language users, or even for the same language user throughout a single interaction. It also points to the role of explicit metalinguistic commentary not only in reproducing, but also in producing bilingual contrast one interaction at a time.

## Chapter 7: Language ideologies implicit in written representation

In this chapter, I explore language users' representation of this variation in Bái written texts. Linguists since Saussure have considered the study of written language beyond the disciplinary purview of linguistics; however, as Jaffe (2000:497) points out, orthographic choices “shed light on people’s attitudes towards both specific language varieties and social identities and on the relationship between linguistic form and the social world in general.”

From this perspective Bái texts are particularly interesting, both because written representation remain quite marginal and confined to several circles of language users with overlapping, but distinct, motivations, and because writing in a relatively recent alphabetic orthography co-exists with older traditions of representation in Chinese characters. In this chapter, I describe each of these practices with particular emphasis on language users' strategies for representing items perceived to be “Chinese” in order to draw to the interactional strategies I analyze in chapter 6. In each case, I also draw connections from these strategies to the motivations and social positions of each circle of language users, as well as to broader discourses of language and ethnicity in China.

In section 7.1, I provide a brief theoretical orientation to Kloss' (1967) distinction between *Ausbau* and *Abstand* and Bourdieu's (1979[1972]) concept of “strategy.” I begin section 7.2 with a detailed historical description of the Bái alphabetic orthography; I then undertake a close reading of orthographic texts produced in three distinct circles of

language users: government language workers, participants in SIL's mother-tongue literacy program, and language enthusiasts. Finally, in section 7.3, I describe parallel practices of representing Bái in Chinese characters: First, I analyze the character transcription of a Bái song, then discuss Bái scholars' analysis of these modern-day practices as continuous with pre-modern traditions of vernacular writing in the Dàlǐ region.

### 7.1 *Abstand and Ausbau*

Kloss (1967) articulates his well-known distinction between *Abstand* languages and *Ausbau* languages: *Abstand* describes differences between two languages due to linguistic "distance," while *Ausbau* denotes differences due to social "development." In the examples Kloss describes, such as Czech and Slovak, *Ausbau* involves the development of written standards that foreground differences between two varieties that, on the basis of *Abstand*, might be considered a single language. As Kloss (1967:30) recognizes, however, the distinction between *Abstand* and *Ausbau* is an idealization that assumes linguists are in a position objectively to determine the intrinsic distance between languages; Hymes (1967:27-29) describes the practical and theoretical difficulties with attempts to do so on the basis of criteria such as lexical similarity and mutual intelligibility.

Writing about the creation of orthographies for unstandardized vernaculars, Sebba (2007) argues that *Abstand*, too, should be understood as social practice (Sebba 2007:114):

... *abstand* can be constructed symbolically, by giving importance to certain markers of difference while overlooking more numerous points of similarity. Thus certain features of the language may be treated as the ones which 'set it apart' from others; they become *iconic* of the difference between it and the rest.

Jaffe (2000), for her part, points out that orthographic practices involve the selective foregrounding not only of difference, but also of similarity (Jaffe 2000:505):

The play of "sameness" is an inevitable dimension of "new" and non-standard orthographic choice, because all "new" codes must choose from a finite number of orthographic conventions and thus, establish relationships with the languages these conventions have been used to codify.

For Sebba and Jaffe, therefore, both *Ausbau* and *Abstand* describe choices that involve the selective foregrounding of both linguistic similarity and difference. Recently, Fishman (2008) has reformulated Kloss's distinction among similar lines. He retains Kloss's definition of *Abstand* as absolute linguistic distance, but decomposes *Ausbau* into poles of *Ausbau* and *Einbau*. Fishman narrows *Ausbau* to denote strategies that emphasize difference; he coins *Einbau* to denote strategies that foreground similarity.

In describing language users' choices as "strategies," I follow Bourdieu (1977[1972]:3-9). Bourdieu's work is a corrective to the structuralist tradition in anthropology that, by describing social practice in terms of static rules, leaves little room to explain individual agency. Instead, he suggests that the apprehension of practice at the level of society constitutes a "habitus," or a set of structuring dispositions. The habitus licenses and constrains individuals' strategies, and it makes individuals' conformity or deviance interpretable as such. An orthography is a habitus that asserts particularly total

claims over practice. While social actors may defend various orthographies on traditional, etymological, scientific, or utilitarian grounds, an orthography exists only by virtue of its claim to set the standard for language users' practices.

Since 1958, government and international language workers have promoted a Latin-alphabet orthography for Bái. Alphabetic representation uses classic *Ausbau* strategies, similar to the examples in Kloss (1967), which foreground the phonological differences between Bái and Standard Chinese and background their etymological commonalities. At the same time, Bái language users have long used characters to represent Bái; character representation uses *Einbau* strategies, in Fishman's (2008) terms, which foreground the etymological commonalities between Bái and Standard Chinese and background their phonological differences.

Nevertheless, neither medium of representation is total in its strategies. On the one hand, the Latin-alphabet orthography for Bái was designed to look similar to Hànyǔ Pīnyīn and to facilitate the representation of lexical items common to Bái and Standard Chinese according to their standard pronunciation. This affords language users a choice between the *Ausbau* strategy of representing such items according to their standard pronunciation, and the *Einbau* strategy of representing them according to their vernacular pronunciation. On the other hand, characters require writers to make a positive etymological claim about each character that they write. This affords language users with a choice between the *Einbau* strategy of writing items common to Bái and Standard Chinese with etymologically appropriate characters that match in both form and meaning, and the *Ausbau* strategy of choosing etymologically inappropriate characters that match in form, but not meaning.



Given the potential for variation inherent in each orthography, in the discussion that follows I read Bái language users' representational strategies as agentive stances both toward the broader indexical meanings of each medium of representation, as well as toward the totalizing claims of orthography itself.

## *7.2 Representation in the Bái alphabetic orthography*

### *7.2.1 Before the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)*

As I describe in chapters 1 and 2, the Bái Language Research Group's (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]) original proposal for an alphabetic orthography was not included in the published version of their report due to opposition from Bái intellectuals. Nevertheless, a comparison of Wáng's (2004:282) description of the proposal with a subsequent published version indicates that the original orthography was in the mainstream of planning for minority nationality languages in China at the time.

In the early 1950s, under the influence of Soviet advisor G. P. Serdiuchenko, Chinese language planners conducted surveys with the explicit goal of standardization: They identified a "base dialect," which would provide lexis and structure of a future standard, as well as a "standard pronunciation," which would define its phonological system (Zhōu 2003:177). According to Soviet theory, the standard pronunciation should be that of the nationality's main political, economic, and cultural center; for this reason, the Bái Language Research Group identified the variety of Xiàguān, the prefectural

capital of the Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture, as the standard pronunciation, and the Southern dialect as the base dialect (Wáng 2004:281; Zhāng 2008:12).<sup>41</sup>

At the same time, Soviet theory held that planning for minority languages was only a stage on the path to the convergence of all languages under Communism. The first step was borrowing of lexical items from the national language into minority languages, at first according to the phonological system of the minority language, then, as bilingualism increased, according to the phonological system of the national language. Therefore, language planners sought to facilitate the representation of loanwords by making new orthographies for minority languages as similar as possible to the orthography for the national language (Zhōu 2003:196).

In the early 1950s, anticipating an analogous process within the Communist world, Serdiuchenko proposed that China adopt the Cyrillic alphabet as the basis for an alphabetic orthography to replace characters. However, by the mid-1950s relations with the Soviet Union began to cool. In 1956-1958, when China introduced Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, a Latin-alphabet system with earlier roots, as the official alphabetization for Standard Chinese, language planners billed it as a sound-spelling system (*pīnyīn*, literally ‘piecing together sounds’) aimed primarily at helping users achieve literacy in characters, rather than as replacement for them. Subsequent orthographic reform for Standard Chinese focused on the simplification of characters.

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<sup>41</sup> Wiersma (2003:653-654) states that the 1958 orthography took the Central dialect as the base dialect and the Jīnhuá variety as the standard pronunciation; Wáng (2004:281) and Zhāng (2008:12) both indicate that the 1958 orthography was based on the Southern dialect and the Xiàguān variety, and that the main effect of the 1982 revision was to change the base dialect and standard pronunciation. Zhāng and Wáng’s accounts are more detailed than Wiersma’s; in addition, Zhāng’s position as a language worker in the Yúnnán Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee in Kūnmíng and Wáng’s position as a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Běijīng give them direct access to eyewitnesses and original documents. For this reason, I take Zhāng and Wáng’s account as authoritative.

For minority nationality languages with existing traditions of literacy, such as Tibetan and Korean, language planners limited themselves in principle to assessing and “improving” the traditional writing systems. (In practice, decisions about which systems were sufficiently traditional, or needed improvement, were highly subjective and reflected broader political trends; cf. Zhōu [2003], chapter 6). With respect to languages without a tradition of literacy, however, in 1957 the State Council established the principle that new writing systems should be modeled on Hànyǔ Pīnyīn: Graphemes were to be drawn from the Latin alphabet, and sounds that were the same or similar in the Hànyǔ Pīnyīn and the minority language were to be written using the same grapheme (Zhōu 2003:205).

Wáng’s (2004:282) description indicates that the 1958 orthography for Bái closely followed this policy: It was a Latin-alphabet system which matched Hànyǔ Pīnyīn in most of its phoneme-grapheme correspondences. However, in their (2008[1958]) report the Research Group carefully omitted any description of their concrete proposal, instead limiting themselves to assessing support for a hypothetical orthography.

On the one hand, the authors describe proponents of an orthography as “the overwhelming majority of rural cadres, peasant comrades, elementary and middle-school teachers, folk artists, and cultural work cadres”<sup>42</sup> (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:34). Arguments for the orthography included: (1) the difficulty of conducting literacy work in Standard Chinese when 60 percent of the population did “not know Chinese” (*bú huì Hànyǔ* 不会汉语); (2) the difficulty of understanding government propaganda in Standard Chinese; (3) the potential usefulness of the orthography for preserving local

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<sup>42</sup> ... 绝大部分农村干部、农民同志、中小学教师、民间艺人和文化工作干部 ...

folklore and creating new ethnic literature; and (4) the importance of recording routine business and meetings of the local government, the majority of which were conducted in Bái.

On the other hand, the authors describe opponents of the orthography as a portion of “intellectuals, especially Bái university students, elementary and middle school teachers, and administrative cadres”<sup>43</sup> (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:34). Arguments against the orthography included: (1) doubt that an orthography could actually be created; (2) concern that intellectuals who had mastered Literary Chinese and Standard Chinese would become “illiterate”; (3) the fact that Bái students would need to master Standard Chinese to enter middle school, high school, and university, and concern that the extra burden of learning the Bái orthography would put them at a disadvantage with respect to Hàn students; (4) the limited potential scope of the orthography, and the difficulty of standardizing the various dialects; (5) the expense involved with government promulgation and regulation of the orthography; and (6) the important role of characters in Bái education in the past, and the likelihood that Bái orthography could never be used for serious literature or to translate the works of Marx and Lenin.

The report’s authors conclude that, because the Bái had “an independent language, and one which is internally homogeneous”<sup>44</sup> (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:35), and because up to 60 percent of the population did “not know Chinese” and used Bái as the language of political, economic and cultural life, conditions existed for the creation of a Bái orthography. The authors state that, of the large number of individuals surveyed – 500 individual contacts, as well as 21 meetings with 423

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<sup>43</sup> ... 在白族知识分子、特别是在白族的大学生、中小学教师和机关干部中有一部分人 ...

<sup>44</sup> ... 白族有独立语言，而且内部一致 ...

representatives – the “overwhelming majority” (*juédà bùfen* 绝大部分) were in favor of an orthography; opposition was limited to “intellectuals” (*zhīshi fēnzǐ* 知识分子), and while intellectuals made up a larger proportion of the Bái population than that of other minority nationalities in Yúnnán, they were nevertheless in the minority (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:35).

The Research Group’s report reflects broader political currents in China in the 1950s. Although the authors couch their findings in neutral, social-scientific language, they leave little doubt that the welfare of the majority, and particularly of “peasant comrades” (*nóngmín tóngzhì* 农民同志) outweighed the objections of intellectuals, a group that came under particular pressure in 1958 in connection with the Anti-Rightist Campaign. At the same time, the authors assess these interests exclusively through technocratic consultation, rather than electoral democracy, and they conclude that further study is needed to determine whether creation of a Bái orthography is in the ultimate interest of “our country’s socialist construction” (*wǒguó de shèhuìzhǔyì jiànshè* 我国的社会主义建设) rather than Bái people per se (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:36).

In particular, the authors frame their support for the orthography in terms of combating illiteracy (*sǎo máng* 扫盲, literally ‘sweeping [away] [writing-] blindness’) (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:34), a national priority that also served as the justification for the reform of characters. However, as Bái intellectuals pointed out at the time – and continue to point out today – merely teaching Bái people to read and write in their native language still leaves them illiterate with respect to the larger society in which they live. Since any realistic plan to expand educational opportunities involves expanding

literacy in Standard Chinese, mother-tongue education also places an additional burden on Bái children with respect to their Hàn peers.

In response to these objections, the report's authors insist that there is no contradiction between learning one's own nationality's orthography and learning Standard Chinese. Alluding to the State Council's 1957 guidance, they point out that any Bái orthography would be based on Hànyǔ Pīnyīn; because many sounds are similar in Bái and Standard Chinese, learning to read in Bái would actually help children to acquire Standard Chinese. Nevertheless, the authors concede that their survey was merely preliminary, and that most Bái people had not even considered the issue of a Bái orthography. Therefore, they recommend that Yúnnán Province or Dàlǐ Prefecture convene a "representative meeting" to discuss and resolve the issue (Báizúyǔ Diàocházǔ 2008[1958]:36).

### *7.2.2 After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)*

It was not after the close of the Cultural Revolution that language planners revisited the issue of an orthography for Bái. As Wáng (2004:283) details, in 1982 a group of experts from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Central University for Nationalities, the Yunnan Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee, and the Yunnan Nationalities Institute met and recommended revising the 1958 orthography to shift the base dialect and standard pronunciation from the Southern variety as spoken in the prefectural capital Xiànguān to the Central variety as spoken in Jīnhuá. Language planners recognized that, although Xiànguān was the political and economic center for Dàlǐ Prefecture, it was a city in which most people used Sinitic varieties and the local Bái

variety had little cachet. By contrast, Jīnhuá was home to a relatively concentrated Bái community, and Bái was the inter-ethnic *lingua franca* and the working language of the Jiànchuān county government. Language planners hoped that because the Bái spoken in Jīnhuá was relatively “pure” – that is, less influenced by Sinitic varieties – it would enjoy prestige among users of other Bái varieties.

Phonological differences between the Xiàguān and Jīnhuá varieties necessitated several revisions to the 1958 orthography: According to Wáng (2004:283), the committee increased the grapheme inventory to accommodate an additional tonal contrast, as well as a nasal vowel contrast which occurs in Jīnhuá but not in Xiàguān. They also added four graphemes to represent retroflex fricatives and affricates that only occur in morphemes that are bivalent between Bái and Standard Chinese.

The resulting 1982 orthography is described in Xú and Zhào (1984:133-136). In accordance with the State Council’s 1957 guidance, the phoneme-grapheme correspondences are closely modeled on Hànyǔ Pīnyīn. With respect to initial segments, pairs of graphemes such as <b> and <p>, <d> and <t>, and <g> and <k> represent a contrast in aspiration, rather than voicing. Likewise, the graphemes <z> and <c> represent unaspirated and aspirated alveolar affricates /tʂ/ and /tʂʰ/, <x> represents the alveolo-palatal fricative /ç/, and <j> and <q> represent the unaspirated and aspirated alveolo-palatal affricates /tɕ/ and /tɕʰ/.

The four graphemes introduced to write items common to Bái and Standard Chinese include <sh> for the retroflex fricative /ʂ/, <zh> and <ch> for the unaspirated and aspirated retroflex affricates /tʂ/ and /tʂʰ/, and <r> for the voiced retroflex fricative /ʐ/. The grapheme <ng>, which occurs only as a final in Standard Chinese, represents the

velar nasal initial /ŋ/ in Bái. With respect to vowels, just as in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, the <i> represents a high front vowel /i/ after most initials, but the so-called “apical” vowel /ɿ/ after alveolar fricatives and affricates, and its rhoticized counterpart /ʅ/ after retroflex fricatives and affricates.

The orthography represents phonological features that differ from Standard Chinese using principles common to orthographies for other minority nationality languages in China. Because pairs of graphemes like <p> and <b> represent an aspiration contrast, the orthography represents voicing by doubling the grapheme for the unaspirated phoneme. In this way, <hh> represents the voiced counterpart /ɣ/ of the voiceless velar fricative /x/, represented as <h>, and <ss> represents the voiced counterpart /z/ of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/, represented as <s>.

With respect to vowels, Bái has a height contrast in the mid-front vowels that Standard Chinese does not; accordingly, the orthography redistributes the grapheme <e> exclusively to denote a high back unrounded vowel /ɯ/ (similar to one of its uses in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn to represent the Standard Chinese high-mid back unrounded vowel /ɤ/), and introduces the digraphs <ei> to represent the high-mid front vowel /e/, and <ai> to represent the low-mid front vowel /ɛ/. Because the high back vowel /u/ and the high front rounded vowel /y/ contrast after alveolo-palatal fricatives and affricates in Bái, but not in Standard Chinese, the digraph <ui> represents the high front rounded vowel /y/ in this environment, but in other environments represents a contraction of <uei>, as in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn.

The orthography departs from Hànyǔ Pīnyīn in its representation of suprasegmental features. Hànyǔ Pīnyīn represents the four tones of Standard Chinese



optionally through the use of diacritics. Because the phonotactics of Bái, like those of many languages of Southwest China, limit possible syllable shapes to [(C)V + tone, ([±Rhotic]), ([±Nasal])], language planners have used the right margin of the syllable to represent tone through a set of “tone letters,” which represent segments in initial position, but tone in final position. Pitch trajectory is analyzed separately from the so-called tense vs. lax opposition, and the grapheme <r> is inserted directly before the tone letter to represent [+Tense]. In order to accommodate the nasalization contrast in the Jīnhuá variety, the 1982 revisions introduced the grapheme <n>, inserted directly after the vowel to represent [+Nasal].

In 1986, elementary school teachers in Xīzhōng Village near Jīnhuá used the 1982 orthography to prepare materials for a UNESCO-sponsored pilot mother-tongue literacy program (Zhāng 2008[1992]:1174). In an assessment of this program, one of the intellectuals who had opposed the phonemic orthography in the 1950s, Mǎ (2008[1989]), came out in support of mother-tongue literacy. Nevertheless, Mǎ criticized the choice of the Jīnhuá variety as the standard pronunciation, predicting that the variety would never gain the support of language users in Dàlǐ Municipality and elsewhere. Instead, Mǎ (2008[1989]:1090) proposed the variety of Yòusuǒ in his native Ěryuán County as geographically and linguistically more central.

In response to these kinds of complaints, in 1990 experts from the Yúnnán Provincial Minority Languages Guidance Work Committee, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Nationalities Research Institute, the Central Nationalities Institute, and the Dàlǐ prefectural government revised the orthography once again in order to accommodate representation of both the Central variety spoken in Jīnhuá, and of the

Southern variety spoken in Xǐzhōu Town, a traditional Bái stronghold north of Xiànguān (Yáng & Zhāng 2008[2003]:125-126). As Zhōu (2003:214, 271-273) points out, in the early 1950s Soviet advisors had strenuously objected to multidialectal standards, which called into question the isomorphy between language and nationality; therefore, the Bái 1993 orthography represents a step away from the Stalinist tradition in language planning. In June 1993, the Scientific Conference on Bái Language and Writing in Kūnmíng officially adopted the orthography for submission to the central government (Báizú Yǔyán Wénzì Wéntí Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì 2008[1993]).

Accommodation of the Xǐzhōu variety necessitated an overhaul of tonal representation. In the 1958 and 1982 orthographies, pitch trajectory and the [±Tense] feature were analyzed separately, and the [±Tense] feature was represented by the grapheme <r>. However, a particularly salient feature of Southern varieties is contrastive vowel rhoticization. Accordingly, the 1993 revision reassigns <r> to represent this feature in Xǐzhōu, and provides additional tone letters to represent each phonemic tone contrast individually as a complex of pitch trajectory and voice quality features. By this count, both the Jīnhuá and Xǐzhōu varieties have eight tones, but they are not the same eight: Jīnhuá merges the Xǐzhōu /32/ tone with the common /42/ tone, while Departing category syllables that Jīnhuá reflects with its /66/ tone are reflected in Xǐzhōu with the common /55/ tone. Therefore, the orthography provides eight tone letters, of which each variety uses only seven; lack of a tone letter indicates the /44/ tone in both varieties.

Wiersma (2003), who participated in the 1993 conference shortly after completing her (1990) Berkeley Ph.D. dissertation on Bái, notes with some exasperation (Wiersma 2003:654):

The current situation is that the significant body of primary materials which had appeared based on the 1984 draft orthography (most recently Zhao and Xu 1996 [which remains the only Bái-Chinese dictionary]) cannot be interfiled with any locally produced orthographic materials based on the 1993 symposium, because alphabetically salient modifications were then introduced to the system of tone marking by final consonants, thereby licensing widely divergent spellings for the same words.<sup>45</sup>

Japanese researcher Kai (2008[1994]:1165-1166), for his part, reports that some participants at the conference continued to object to the orthography on principle, arguing that Bái people had long managed to attain high levels of achievement in Literary Chinese and Standard Chinese without one. He details the interventions of Yúnnán Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee member Yáng Yìngxīn, who proposed designating the Xīzhōu variety as the sole standard pronunciation, downgrading the orthography to a sound-spelling scheme along the lines of Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, and using characters along with Latin letters, much as in Japanese or Korean mixed writing.

### *7.2.3 Representation of Standard Chinese elements*

A subtle, but important, difference between the 1982 and 1993 orthography concerns the representation of the initial segments of certain lexical items common to Bái and Standard Chinese. As I describe above, the 1982 revision introduced the four graphemes <sh>, <r>, <zh>, and <ch> to represent retroflex fricatives and affricates that occur in Standard Chinese but not in Bái; in their description of the 1982 orthography, Xú

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<sup>45</sup> Wiersma's reference to the "1984 draft orthography" appears to cite Xú and Zhào's (1984) *Báiyǔ jiǎnzhì* as the first description to include the revision. Wáng (2004:282) and Zhāng (2008:12) both indicate that the revision took place in 1982.

and Zhào (1984:135) state that these symbols, “are used to spell loanwords from Chinese Pǔtōnghuà or dialects and subdialects of Bái that have retroflex sounds.”<sup>46</sup> However, the 1993 revision of the orthography states (Báizú Yǔyán Wénzì Wèntí Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì 2008[1993]:1156):

In order to spell other dialects and sub-dialects and loanwords from Chinese *Pǔtōnghuà*, there have further been established the four initials <zh> [tʂ], <ch> [tʂʰ], <sh> [ʂ], and <r> [ʐ]. Because retroflex initials in loanwords from Chinese *Pǔtōnghuà* have been borrowed into Bái, and particularly after being borrowed into the Southern and Central dialects, the retroflex initials have all changed to the corresponding alveolar initial. Even when they have been borrowed into other dialects and subdialects, the retroflex initials have often been changed to alveolar initials. Therefore, in summing up and codifying the 23 Bái initials, we have not included these four initials. Generally speaking, these four initials are used very rarely.<sup>47</sup>

In a narrow sense, this guidance takes another step away from the Stalinist tradition in language planning: While the guidance does not entirely do away with the retroflex graphemes, it acknowledges that Bái language users normally assimilate the retroflex sounds of Standard Chinese to the alveolar place of articulation, and implicitly advocates spelling words that contain them according to the vernacular, rather than standard, pronunciation. In fact, in my corpus of written texts produced in the orthography after 1993, items common to Standard Chinese and Bái that have retroflex fricative or affricate initials in Standard Chinese are uniformly spelled with the grapheme for the corresponding alveolar phoneme in Bái.

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<sup>46</sup> ... 用来拼写汉语普通话借词或有舌尖后音的白语方言土语。

<sup>47</sup> 为拼写其他方言土语及汉语普通话借词，另设 zh [tʂ]、ch [tʂʰ]、sh [ʂ]、r [ʐ] 4 个声母。因为现代汉语普通话借词中卷舌音声母被借入白语，尤其是在被借入南、中二方言后，卷舌音声母均变成相应的平舌音声母。即使在被借入其他方言土语时，卷舌音声母也常常变为平舌音声母。所以，归纳及制定 23 个白文声母时，没有把这 4 个声母列入。一般来说，这 4 个声母很少使用。

In a wider sense, however, the guidance affirms the Stalinist isomorphy of language and nationality by portraying items that contain retroflex sounds as “loanwords” that have been nativized to the Bái phonological system. What remains unstated is that the same merger occurs not only in Bái, but in most Southwest Mandarin varieties as well. Calling such items “loanwords from Chinese *Pǔtōnghuà*” simplifies a complicated situation in which Bái language users employ Sinitic vernacular items, or Standard Chinese items pronounced according to vernacular phonological norms, when speaking both Bái and Sinitic varieties. By eliding the mediating role of Jiànchuān Chinese, and portraying language contact as occurring directly between Standard Chinese and Bái, the guidance constructs Standard Chinese as representative of all Sinitic varieties. This, in turn, heightens the contrast between Chinese and Bái, and constructs Bái as an independent language with a distinct phonological system.

While the 1982 and 1993 orthographies specifically problematize the representation of Standard Chinese retroflex segments, neither provides any guidance on the representation of Standard Chinese tones. The omission is curious, since for non-native speakers the acquisition of tones poses the same difficulties as the acquisition of retroflex initials, and imperfections on either count are salient features of nonstandard speech. Theoretically, it would have been possible to add tone letters to represent Standard Chinese tones that have no phonetic counterpart in Bái, and mandate that users spell items common to Bái and Standard Chinese according to their standard pronunciation. In practice, however, users of the orthography represent the tones of such items not according to their standard, but according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*.

In chapter 6, I describe how Jiànchuān language users, whose Sinitic variety preserves the Middle Chinese Entering category, realize the category as /212/ in Jiànchuān Mandarin, but /35/ according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, while Dàlǐ language users, whose Sinitic variety has merged the Entering category with the Lower Level category, nevertheless also recognize and realize Entering category syllables as /35/.

The reading passage that accompanies the description of the 1993 orthography (Báizú Yǔyán Wénzì Wèntí Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì 2008[1993]:1159) reproduces the same text in both standard pronunciations. Standard Chinese *wénhuà sùzhì* 文化素质 ‘education level’ appears as *venphuab subzif* in the Central version, but *vephual sulzif* in the Southern version. Consistent with *Hànzì Bái dú*, the Lower Level category syllable *wén* 文 is represented with <-p> for the /42/ tone common to both varieties; the Departing category syllables *huà* 化 and *sù* 素 are represented with <-b> for the /66/ tone in the Central variety, but with <-l> for the /55/ tone in the Southern variety, which does not have the /66/ tone. Nevertheless, the Entering category syllable *zhì* 质 is represented in both varieties with <-f> for the /35/ tone.

#### 7.2.4 Users of the orthography

Given the tenacity of objections to the phonemic orthography from the 1950s to the 1990s, as well as the repeated and major revisions during the same period, it is perhaps not surprising that efforts to promote the orthography have not amounted to much. Duàn (2004) and Zhào et al.’s (2009) surveys of language use both report, and my own experience confirms, that many language users have either never heard of the

orthography or have never encountered it in practice. Nevertheless, there are three small, intersecting circles of Bái language users for whom the orthography figures in their literacy practices: Government language workers, participants in SIL's mother-tongue literacy project, and non-professional language enthusiasts.

From the 1950s up until the present, the Bái orthography has been conceived, regulated, and promoted by a small group of professional language workers in provincial, prefectural, and county government agencies, assisted by academics affiliated with national, provincial, and prefectural universities and research institutes. It is difficult to find an analogue to this circle outside of the context of China: On the one hand, few states are so generous as to constitutionally guarantee so many different minorities the right to “use and develop” their languages; on the other, few states are as optimistic as China about the ability of state agencies to guide social change.

This degree of top-down management may be inevitable because all institutions through which language users might “use and develop” their languages are dominated by the state. Almost all education in China is public, and all educational institutions must follow centralized state curricula; therefore, the use of minority nationality languages in education is a matter of public policy. Publishing and broadcasting are likewise under tight state control; in order to regulate minority language publications, state agencies must retain experts in those languages. At the same time, the market for such publications is very limited, and if they did not appear under the imprint of state-owned publishers, such as the national-level Nationalities Publishing House (Mínzú Chūbǎnshè) and its provincial affiliate, the Yúnnán Nationalities Publishing House (Yúnnán Mínzú Chūbǎnshè) they might not appear at all.

Bái cadres in the Yúnnán Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee and the Yúnnán Nationalities Publishing House oversee the use of the Bái orthography in publishing and education. Zhāng 2008[1997]) explains that, because few language users can read the orthography, the committee principally produces bilingual editions in Bái and Standard Chinese. Zhāng (2004a) provides a list of 26 books published in the Bái orthography between 1983 in 2003; these include educational and reference works on the orthography itself, but also folkloric, popular scientific, and political titles, including a translation of the constitution of the PRC. Recently, the committee prepared the first three grade levels of a nationally approved language arts textbook in a Bái-Chinese bilingual edition (Xī 2001, 2002); however, as of late 2009 this publication had not been used in the classroom.

It is in these roles that the circle of government language workers intersects with the circle of participants in SIL's mother tongue literacy project. SIL's use of a minority language in education requires the oversight of the Yúnnán Minority Languages Committee, and their intervention in the schools would not be possible without the cooperation of the Jiànchuān County education department. SIL language workers have adopted the current version of the phonemic orthography, and they participate in periodic meetings organized by the committee to establish more detailed orthographic conventions. At the same time, SIL is institutionally committed to a bottom-up, participatory approach to language development. In Jīnhuá, international volunteers have trained a small group of Bái language users in the orthography, and these workers produce age-appropriate stories and illustrations for SIL's curriculum. To be sure, Bái



cadres from the Yúnnán Minority Languages Commission review every word of the curriculum prior to its use in the classroom.

The circle of participants in the SIL program also intersects with an informal circle of language enthusiasts. To provide a supportive environment for their education program, SIL language workers have organized literacy training for adults in Jīnhuá and Shílóng, and they have produced video programs of children performing Bái songs, accompanied by subtitles in the orthography. In Shílóng, SIL underwrites the production of a brief, monthly village newsletter in the orthography to support adults' newly acquired literacy skills. It must be stressed that these activities have reached only a small number of language users; nevertheless, language enthusiasts have a presence on the Internet (for example the bulletin board on the Bái language on [www.indali.net](http://www.indali.net)), where they both discuss the orthography and use it, mostly to illustrate particular lexical items, but also occasionally for longer posts.

The circles of government language workers, participants in the SIL mother tongue literacy project, and language enthusiasts overlap in their membership, their activities, and their funding; however, they differ in their motivations. Government language workers are motivated by their professional responsibility to ensure (or at least be perceived as ensuring) the Bái nationality's right to "develop and use" their language. SIL language workers are motivated by short-term goal of improving reading outcomes for Bái children, and their long-term goal of fostering a literary standard that will permit the translation of the Christian Bible into Bái. As for language enthusiasts, their goals are more diffuse: While my Jīnhuá language consultants – who had both learned the orthography through SIL-sponsored activities – spoke vaguely in terms of language

preservation, most participants simply expressed interest in learning more about the language.

In the following three sections, I analyze representational strategies in Bái alphabetic texts produced within each of these circles. At one level, I illustrate the interplay of *Ausbau* and *Einbau* strategies in each text, and discuss the author's choice of strategies in terms of his or her position and motivation. At another level, I compare the texts in order to demonstrate how different strategies yield somewhat different representations of the Bái language. This problematizes the selection of representative language users and undoes the positionality of all linguistic description; in particular, it demonstrates ideological diversity within the self-described community of Bái language users around activities aimed at the codification of Bái.

#### *7.2.5 Government language workers' translation of the PRC constitution*

In this section, I present an analysis of Zhāng Xiá's (2004b) Bái-language translation of the 1982 PRC constitution. Zhāng is an employee of the Yúnnán Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee; in an earlier essay on the translation of popular scientific reading material into Bái, she considers the qualities that make a good translator (Zhāng 2008[1997]:1219):

First ... Only translators who are quite proficient, grasp the orthography's phonetic, grammatical, and lexical features, know the scheme well, and have a certain degree of proficiency in Chinese can unite the two texts on the basis of the Chinese original and ensure the quality of the translation. Second, they must have a deep feeling for their own nationality and cherish the cause of the Bái language and script. Translators must care about and support Bái language and script work, and serve the Bái masses with their whole hearts and minds; only in this way can

they stand in the position of the masses, share the masses' hopes and dreams, and translate Bái popular scientific reading material out of a high sense of responsibility and mission, and to the best of their professional ability.<sup>48</sup>

As Sebba (2007:59) points out, the introduction of a writing system for a previously unwritten language always involves a class of literate bilinguals; Zhāng stresses the need for translators to be proficient in Standard Chinese, so that they can reflect the original accurately. At the same time, the dominance of state institutions in language planning in China means that many of the literate bilinguals working on Bái are government employees, and they frame their motivations in terms of the prevailing political discourse. On the one hand, this discourse emphasizes a high-minded commitment to public service; on the other, it entails a technocratic objectification of “the masses.” Zhāng’s model Bái translator is not only a competent professional, but also an idealist who supports government policy for minority nationality languages.

When I told Zhāng that I was interested in critiquing her translation of the PRC constitution, she stressed that she had had to turn the assignment around quickly, and hoped modestly that I would not dwell on her “mistakes.” I reassured Zhāng that I was not interested in whether the translation was accurate, but rather in how she and her colleagues were creating a written register for Bái where none had existed. The fact that they do so based largely on translations from Standard Chinese, that they choose and execute those translations with explicit political goals, and that they act within a

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<sup>48</sup> 第一 ... 只有对白语相当熟练，掌握它的语音、语法、词汇特点，深谙白文方案，并有一定汉语文基础的译者，才能把握汉文原稿的基础上，使两者很好地统一起来，保证译文的质量。第二，对本民族有深厚的感情，钟爱白语文事业。译者要关心支持白语文工作，全心全意为白族群众服务，若此，才能站在群众的立场上，急群众之急，想群众之想，以高度的责任感与使命感尽职尽责地翻译好白文科普读物。

particular institutional framework that sometimes imposes short deadlines is not exterior to the process of register formation, but an inextricable part of it.

In each numbered line, I provide the original text in characters, a transcription in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, and an English gloss, then the Bái text in the alphabetic orthography and an English gloss. Because constituent order in Standard Chinese and Bái is quite different from English, I have provided a free English translation every few phrases, rather than for each line.

**EXCERPT 7-1: Zhāng (2004b:10-11)**

1	SC	第四条。 <b>dì-sì-tiáo.</b> ORD-four-article
	B	<b>Dit-xi'-tiol.</b> ORD-four-article
E <b>Article 4.</b>		
2	SC	中华人民共和国各民族一律平等。 <b>Zhōnghuá.Rénmín.Gònghéguó gè mínzú yí lǜ píngděng.</b> People's.Republic.of.China each nationality without.exception be.equal
	B	<b>Zonxhuap.ssenpmiep.gonbhupguaif</b> nox <b>miepcuf</b> hox jienl-zex at-yap nox. People's.Republic.of.China SUB nationality PL(human) all-COP one-PL SUB
E All <i>nationalities</i> in the <i>People's Republic of China</i> are equal.		
3	SC	国家保障各少数民族的 <b>Guójiā bǎozhàng gè shǎoshù mínzú de</b> state protect each minority nationality SUB
	B	<b>Guaifjiax baotzanb saotsub miepcuf</b> hox mal state protect minority nationality PL(human) 3PL
4	SC	合法的权利和利益, <b>héfǎ de quánlì hé lìyì,</b> lawful SUB right and interest
	B	<b>huffaf</b> nox <b>quainplib</b> gol <b>libyif,</b> lawful SUB right and interest
E The <i>state protects</i> the <i>lawful rights</i> and <i>interests</i> of the <i>minority nationalities</i>		
5	SC	维护和发展各民族的 <b>wéihù hé fāzhǎn gè mínzú de</b>

	B	uphold and develop each nationality SUB <i>veiphub</i> gol <i>fafzaint miepcuf</i> hox gail-nox uphold and develop nationality PL(human) among-SUB
6	SC	平等、团结、互助关系。 <i>píngděng, tuánjié, hùzhù guānxi.</i> equality, unity, mutual.assistance relation
	B	<i>pienpdent, tuainpjif, hubzub</i> nox <i>guainxxib.</i> equality, unity, mutual.assistance SUB relation
	E	and <i>upholds</i> and <i>develops</i> the <i>relationship</i> of <i>equality, unity and mutual assistance</i> among all of China's <i>nationalities</i> .
7	SC	禁止对任何民族的歧视和压迫, Jinzhi dui renhe minzu de qishi he yapo, forbid toward any nationality SUB discriminate and oppress,
	B	Alsainp <i>miepcuf</i> lil buf-zuint <i>yafpaif</i> gol <i>qipsib</i> mal, what nationality also NEG-permit oppress and discriminate 3PL
8	SC	禁止破坏民族团结 jinzhi pohuai minzu tuanjie forbid destroy nationality unity
	B	buf-zuint zex <i>pubhuaib miepcuf tuainpjif</i> NEG-permit FOC destroy nationality unity
9	SC	和制造民族分裂的行为。 he zhizao minzu fenlie de xingwei. and instigate nationality secession SUB action
	B	gol <i>zibzaob miepcuf fenxlif</i> nox <i>xienpweip.</i> and instigate nationality secession SUB action
	E	<i>Discrimination</i> against and <i>oppression</i> of any <i>nationality</i> are prohibited; any <i>acts</i> that <i>undermine the unity of the nationalities</i> or <i>instigate their secession</i> are prohibited.
10	SC	国家根据各少数民族的特点和需要, Guojia genju ge shaoshu minzu de tiedian he xuyao, state according.to each minority nationality SUB particularity and need
	B	<i>Guaifjiax genxjuib saotsub miepcuf</i> hox mal <i>taifdiaint</i> gol <i>xuixyaob,</i> state according.to minority nationality PL(human) 3PL particularity and need
11	SC	帮助各少数民族地区 bangzhu ge shaoshu minzu diqu help each minority nationality area
	B	ga <i>saotsub miepcuf</i> hox gvp-cvt BENADV minority nationality PL(human) live-place
12	SC	加速经济和文化的发展。 jiasu jingji he wenhua de fazhan. speed.up economic and culture SUB development
	B	lai-jiai <i>fafzaint jienxjib</i> gol <i>venphuab.</i> fast-a.bit develop economy and culture
	E	The <i>state</i> helps the <i>areas</i> inhabited by <i>minority nationalities</i> speed up

		their <i>economic</i> and <i>cultural development in accordance with the peculiarities and needs</i> of the different <i>minority nationalities</i> .
13	SC	各少数民族聚居的地方 Gè <i>shǎoshù mínzú</i> jù-jū <b>difang</b> each minority nationality concentrate-reside place
	B	<i>Saotsub miepcuf</i> jil <b>cvt</b> zil minority nationality be.many place TOP
14	SC	实行区域自治，设立自治机关， <i>shíxíng qūyù zìzhì, shèlì zìzhì jīguān,</i> implement regional autonomy establish autonomous institution
	B	<i>yonx sifxienp quixyuf zilzil, seflif zilzil jixguainx,</i> want/must implement regional autonomy establish autonomous institution
15	SC	行使自治权。 <i>xíngshǐ zìzhì-quán.</i> exercise autonomy-right
	B	<i>xienpsit zilzil-quainp.</i> exercise autonomy-right
E		<i>Regional autonomy is practiced in areas</i> where people of <i>minority nationalities</i> live in compact communities; in these areas <i>organs of self-government are established for the exercise of the right of autonomy</i> .
16	SC	各民族自治地方 Gè <i>mínzú zìzhì difang</i> each nationality autonomy place
	B	<i>Miepcuf zilzil cvt</i> nationality autonomy place
17	SC	都是中华人民共和国 dōu shì <i>Zhōnghuá.Rénmín.Gònghéguó</i> all COP People's.Republic.of.China
	B	jienl-zex <i>Zonxhuap.ssenpmiep.gonbhupguaif</i> all-COP People's.Republic.of.China
18	SC	不可分离的部分。 bù kě fēnlí de bùfen. NEG can separate SUB part
	B	sai lil sai <b>keil</b> cel duap nox jitfv1. separate also separate away PRF can\NEG SUB place
E		All the <i>national autonomous areas</i> are inalienable parts of the <i>People's Republic of China</i> .
19	SC	各民族 Gè <i>mínzú</i> each nationality
	B	<i>Guf miepcuf</i> each nationality
20	SC	都有使用和发展自己的语言文字的自由， dōu yǒu shǐyòng hé <i>fāzhǎn zìjǐ</i> de yǔyán wénzì de <i>zìyóu</i> . all have use and develop self SUB language script SUB freedom

	B	jienl-zex <b>yonp</b> gol <i>fafzaint ziji</i> mel dondsonl gol <b>svl</b> yap nox <i>zibyop</i> , all-EXV use and develop own 3SG\OBL language and script PL SUB freedom
21	SC	都有保持或者改革自己的风俗习惯的自由。 dōu yǒu <i>bǎochí</i> hùozhě <i>gǎigé zìjǐ</i> de <i>fēngsú.xíguàn zìyóu</i> . all have preserve or reform self SUB ways.and.customs freedom
	B	jienl-zex <i>baotcip</i> hafmoxzex <i>gaitgef ziji</i> mel <i>fonxsuf.xifguainb</i> nox <i>zibyop</i> . all-EXV preserve or reform self 3SG\OBL ways.and.customs SUB freedom.
	E	The people of <i>all nationalities</i> have the <i>freedom</i> to <b>use</b> and <i>develop</i> their <b>own</b> spoken and <b>written languages</b> , and to <i>preserve</i> or <i>reform</i> their <b>own ways and customs</b> .

This Bái text of the passage is composed of 123 tokens of 71 unique orthographic items. 40 items represent a semantically equivalent expression in the Standard Chinese text according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. Of these, 38 items are content words, such as *miepcuf* (lines 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, and 19) for Standard Chinese *mínzú* 民族 ‘nationality’ or *baotzanb* (line 3) for Standard Chinese *bǎozhàng* 保障 ‘protect.’ Only two items are function words: the preposition *genxjuib* (line 10) for Standard Chinese *gēnjù* 根据 ‘according to,’ and the quantifier *guf* (line 19) for Standard Chinese *gè* 各 ‘each.’

In table 7-1, I illustrate the *Hànzì Bái dú* conventions in the item *Zonxhuap ssenpmiep gonbhupguaif* (lines 1 and 17), which represents Standard Chinese *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó* 中华人民共和国, ‘People’s Republic of China’

**TABLE 7-1: Hànzì Bái dú correspondences in excerpt 7-1, line 2**

<b>Character</b>	中	华	人	民	共	和	国
<b>HYPY</b>	zhōng	huá	rén	mín	gòng	hé	guó
<b>MC</b>	Upper	Lower	Lower	Lower	Departing	Lower	Entering

<b>Category</b>	Level	Level	Level	Level		Level	
<b>Bái</b>	zonx	huap	ssenp	miep	gonb	hup	guaif
<b>Realization</b>	/33/	/42/	/42/	/42/	/66/	/42/	/35/

The tone correspondences are perfectly regular: The translator represents the Upper Level syllable *zhōng* 中 with <-x> for the Bái /33/ tone, the Lower Level syllables *huá* 华, *rén* 人, *mín* 民, and *hé* 和 with <-p> for the Bái /42/ tone, the Departing syllable *gòng* 共 with <-b> for the Bái /66/ tone, and the Entering syllable *guó* 国 with <-f> for the Bái /35/ tone.

These correspondences are regular throughout the passage. Of the 40 *Hànzì Bái dú* items, only *zilzil* (line 14) for Standard Chinese *zìzhì* 自治 ‘autonomy’ and *zilzilquainp* (line 15) for Standard Chinese *zìzhìquán* 自治权 are slightly anomalous.

According to *Hànzì Bái dú*, the Departing category syllables *zì* 自 and *zhì* 治 should be represented with <-b> for the Bái /66/ tone. Instead, the translator has represented them with <-l> for the Bái /55/ tone. In fact, the 1993 orthography mandates the spelling with <-l> as part of *zilzilzou* for Standard Chinese *zìzhìzhōu* 自治州 ‘autonomous region’ on the following grounds (Báizú Yǔyán Wénzì Wèntí Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì 2008[1993]:1158):

In order to benefit the formation of a common language, with respect to the several proper nouns or high-frequency word forms below there is a need to carry out preliminary standardization. There is a slight difference in the reading of the tones in the Southern and Central dialects, but it is possible to maintain unity in the writing of their word forms.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> 为了有利于形成共同语，对以下几个专有名词或出现频率极高的词形，有必要进行初步规范。南、中两大方言在调的读法上稍有差异，但词形书写可以保持一致。



The form *zilzil* is therefore a compromise spelling that represents the pronunciation according to phonology of Southern dialect as spoken in Xīzhōu, rather than the Central dialect as spoken in Jīnhuá. The mandated spellings for proper nouns, such as *Baifcuf* for Standard Chinese *Báizú* 白族 ‘Bái nationality’ and *Dallit* for Standard Chinese *Dàlǐ* 大理 occur elsewhere in my corpus; however, the mandated spellings for function words, such as *ho* for the human plural classifier, *mux* for one of the negative morphemes, and *zi* for a nominalizer, routinely appear as *hox*, *mox*, and *zix*.

The translator also alters the segments of each item according to the phonological conventions of Bái and Jiànchuān Chinese. She represents the retroflex fricatives and affricates in *zhōng* 中 and *rén* 人 with the corresponding alveolar sounds, and represents the nasal finals in *zhōng* 中, *rén* 人, *mín* 民, and *gòng* 共 with nasalized vowels.<sup>50</sup> The translator represents *mín* 民 as *miep* to capture the diphthong in the local pronunciation, and *hé* 和 as *hup* to capture the rounded vowel. As for *guó* 国, she chooses to represent the vowel according to its stereotypical Jiànchuān Chinese pronunciation as [ɛ]; my language consultant preferred to represent the same item as *guf*, with a vowel closer to the Standard Chinese diphthong [uɔ]. To these can be added one item that does not directly represent anything in original text, but rather a synonymous Standard Chinese item according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. The first is *bufzuint* (lines 7 and 8), comparable to Standard Chinese *bù-zhǔn* 不准 ‘not-permit,’ to represent Standard Chinese *jìnzhǐ* 禁止 ‘forbid.’

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<sup>50</sup> In the case of *mín* 民, an orthographic convention omits the <n> after vowels that are already nasalized due to coarticulation with the nasal initial.

Seven items represent an equivalent expression in the Standard Chinese text using forms that may be genetically related (either through shared inheritance or borrowing), but which do not follow the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. They include: *cvt* (lines 11, 13, and 16), comparable to Standard Chinese *chù* 处 ‘place’; *ditxi’tiol* (line 1), comparable to Standard Chinese *dìsìtiáo* 第四条 ‘fourth article’; *yonx* (line 14), comparable to Standard Chinese *yào* 要 ‘want, must’; *keil* (line 18) comparable to Standard Chinese *kāi* 开 ‘open, drive, away’; *yonp* (line 20) comparable to Standard Chinese *yòng* 用 ‘use’; *svl* (line 20), comparable to Standard Chinese *shū* 书 ‘book, writing,’ to represent Standard Chinese *wénzì* 文字 ‘characters, script, writing; written language’; and *zijit* (lines 20 and 21), comparable to Standard Chinese *zìjǐ* 自己 ‘self.’

In fact, when I discussed terms like *ditxi’tiol* with the translator, she acknowledged that both *dit* and *dib*, the *Hànzì Bái dú* reading of the Standard Chinese ordinal prefix *dì* 第, occur in Bái texts; however, she opined that the *dit* reading was Bái and the *dib* reading was Chinese. The items differ only in tone. As similar situation holds for the number ‘three,’ which is *sān* 三 in Standard Chinese. My language consultant considered the reading *sanl* Bái, but the reading *sanx*, which corresponds according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, Chinese. Both the translator and my language consultant felt that it was most appropriate to combine the Bái ordinal prefix with Bái numbers and the Chinese ordinal prefix with Chinese numbers; by this logic, *ditsanl* is Bái, but *dibsanx* is Chinese.

A further 13 items are high-frequency function morphemes or members of closed lexical classes. These include: the subordinator *nox* (nine tokens); the coordinating conjunction *gol* (eight tokens); the animate plural classifier *hox* (five tokens); the

essential and existential copula *zex*, in all but one case bound to the adverb *jienl*- ‘all’ (five tokens); the third person plural pronoun *mal* (three tokens); the third person singular oblique pronoun *mel* (two tokens); and the coordinating conjunction and adverb *lil* ‘and, also’ (two tokens). This category also includes single tokens of the perfective suffix *cel*; the benefactive/adversive coverb *ga*; the postposition *gail* ‘between, among’ (bound, possibly by typographical error, to a token of *nox*); the coordinating conjunction *hhafmoxzex* ‘otherwise, or’; and the plural classifier *yap*.

While these items do not match the original in form, they regularly correspond to a specific item in the original. The coordinating conjunction *gol* regularly translates the Standard Chinese conjunction *hé* 和, and the subordinator *nox* has the same distribution as the nominal subordinator *de* 的 in Standard Chinese. However, for human noun phrases, the translator prefers to indicate possession using the third singular oblique pronouns *mel* and *mal* in the construction [NP + 3SG\OBL]: In line 3, she substitutes *de* 的 in the Standard Chinese phrase *Guójiā bǎozhàng gè shǎoshù mínzú de* 国家保障各少数民族的, literally ‘state protect each minority nationality SUB,’ with *mal* ‘their’ in the Bái translation *Guafijiax baotzanb saotsub miepcuf hox mal*, literally ‘state protect minority nationality PL(human) their.’

The remaining ten items do not correspond closely to the Standard Chinese original. In line 2, the translator uses *at-yap*, ‘one-PL; the same’ to translate Standard Chinese *píngděng* 平等 ‘equal’; however, in line 6 she represents the same item as *pienpdent*. In line 7, the translator uses *alsainp*, ‘what,’ in the construction [*alsainp* ‘what’ + N + *lil* ‘also’ + NEG + V], in which it translates Standard Chinese *rènhe* 任何 ‘any.’ This construction matches the Standard Chinese construction [*shénme* 什么 ‘what’

+ N + *yě* 也 ‘also’ + NEG + V]. In line 11, the translator uses *gvpcvt*, literally ‘living-place,’ to translate Standard Chinese *dìqū* 地区 ‘area.’

In line 12, she uses *laijiai*, the comparative adverb ‘faster,’ literally *lai-jiai* ‘fast-a.bit,’ to translate the Standard Chinese verb *jiāsù* 加速 ‘quicken’; in the Standard Chinese text the noun *fāzhǎn* 发展 ‘development’ is the object of the verb *jiāsù* 加速 ‘quicken,’ while in the Bái text, the adverb *laijiai* ‘faster’ modifies the verb *fāzǎnt* ‘develop.’ In line 13, the translator uses *jil cvt*, in which the stative verb *jil* ‘be.many’ modifies the noun *cvt* ‘place’ to translate the Standard Chinese *jùjū de dìfang* 聚居的地方 ‘places of concentrated residence’; the Bái construction *saotsub miepcuf jil cvt* literally means ‘minority nationality be.many place,’ or ‘places where minority nationalities predominate.’ In line 20, the translator uses *dondsonl* to translate Standard Chinese *yǔyán* 语言 ‘language.’

Three particularly interesting deviations from the Standard Chinese involve “mismatches” in register. In line 8, *buf-zuint zex pubhuaib miepcuf tuainpjif* includes the explicit focus marker *zex*, which, just like in Standard Chinese, is identical to the essential copula; this construction yields the reading, ‘What is prohibited is to undermine the unity of the nationalities.’ In line 13-14, the Bái phrase *saotsub miepcuf jil cvt zil yonx sifxiemp quixyuf zilzil* consists of the topic *saotsub miepcuf jil cvt* ‘As for places where minority nationalities predominate,’ marked by the topicalizer *zil*, and the comment *yonx sifxiemp quixyuf zilzil* ‘[there] will/must be established regional autonomy,’ which is introduced by the modal verb *yonx* ‘will/must.’ The Standard Chinese equivalent also consists of a topic *gè shǎoshù mínzú jùjū de dìfang* 各少数民族聚居的地方 ‘every area

where people of minority nationalities live in compact communities,’ followed by a comment *shíxíng qūyù zìzhì* 实行区域自治 ‘[there] is implemented regional autonomy’; however, there is no explicit topicalizer or modal auxiliary. In Standard Chinese, an explicit focus marker, such as *shì* 是, an explicit topicalizer, such as *de huà* 的话, and the modal verb *yào* 要 would all be grammatical in these contexts, but they are not appropriate to the formal written register.

Another interesting difference is the translator’s use, in line 18, of the phrase *sai lil sai keil cel duap nox jitfvl* to translate the Standard Chinese *bù kě fēnlí de bùfen* 不可分离的部分 ‘inalienable parts.’ Zhào and Xú (1996:302) gloss the verb *saikeil* as Standard Chinese *fēnlí* 分离 ‘separate, sever,’ and the verb phrase *saikeilduap* as Standard Chinese *líbùkāi* 离不开 ‘be unable to separate from.’ As I observe in chapter 3, the Bái modal verbs *dap* ‘be able to’ and *duap* ‘be unable to’ have been mobilized as evidence of the difference between Bái and Standard Chinese, both because they occur after both the verb and its complements, whereas the Standard Chinese negative word *bù* 不 occurs before the verb or the complement, and because the negative form *duap* appears to be derived from the positive form *dap* by ablaut or infixing, for which there is no parallel in Standard Chinese.

However, the verb *saikeil* itself is a verb-complement phrase in which the directional complement *keil* is a match for the Standard Chinese complement *kāi* 开, ‘away.’ The phrase *saikeildap* is therefore parallel to Standard Chinese *lídekāi* 离得开, and the phrase *saikeilduap* is parallel to Standard Chinese *líbùkāi* 离不开. The construction *sai lil sai keil cel duap*, literally ‘separate also separate away PRF

can/NEG,’ or ‘cannot separate/be separated’ is parallel to Standard Chinese *lí yě líbùkāi* 离也开不开 literally ‘separate also separate NEG away,’ or ‘cannot separate/be separated’ in which the verb is followed by the adverb ‘also,’ then repeated, in order to emphasize the negation. The Standard Chinese phrases *libùkāi* and *bù kě fēnlí* match in meaning; however, the formulation *bù kě fēnlí* is more appropriate to the formal written register.

The translator’s use of the Bái orthography is an *Ausbau* strategy that, simply by virtue of being an alphabetic script, establishes Bái as a language distinct from Sinitic varieties. At the same time, her use of lexical items that correspond directly to the Standard Chinese original is an *Einbau* strategy that maintains congruence between the two texts.

The translator is able to do so, and still represent the text as “Bái,” through the use of two subtle *Ausbau* strategies. First, the author’s use of the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú* is an *Ausbau* strategy that projects the phonological contrast between Standard Chinese and Jiànchuān Chinese as a code contrast between Chinese and Bái. By representing Standard Chinese items as “borrowed,” rather than “code-switched,” this strategy elides the mediating role of Southwest Mandarin to construct Standard Chinese as representative of all Sinitic varieties and Bái as a distinct language. Second, the translator’s use of a topic marker, a focus marker, and an auxiliary verb in the Bái text where they do not appear in the Standard Chinese text is an *Ausbau* strategy that projects the contrast in discourse marking strategies between written and oral Sinitic varieties as a code contrast between Chinese and Bái.

Both strategies vividly recall Fitzgerald's (2004[1941]:12, note 1) speculation about the relationship between the ethnonym *Bái* and the Literary Chinese use of *bái* 'white' to mean 'vernacular.' By transforming a contrast between registers (forms of speech that index situations of use) into a contrast between languages associated with specific nationalities (forms of speech that index language users), the translator recapitulates the larger transformation, shortly after the founding of the PRC, of a fluid social contrast between the *Mínjiā* and the Chinese into an essential ethnic contrast between the *Bái* and the *Hàn*.

The audience for a *Bái* translation of the PRC constitution is limited to an almost absurd extent. The overt motivation for this translation is to provide monolingual *Bái* language users access to a fundamental civic document on the same basis as every other nationality. However, the number of individuals who can read the *Bái* orthography is small. The number of individuals who can read the *Bái* orthography, but who are not literate in Standard Chinese, is vanishingly small – probably limited to the youngest children and the oldest adult participants in SIL's mother tongue literacy project. And the number of individuals who can read the *Bái* orthography, and who are not literate in Standard Chinese, yet nevertheless can parse complicated passages full of Standard Chinese lexis is probably zero.

This suggests that the covert motivation for this translation is performative: Government agencies translate such documents not to convey information, but to demonstrate their commitment to minority nationality languages, and to the equality of nationalities. More subtly, they assert the leading role of state in the exercise of nationalities' constitutional right to "use and develop" their languages. The fact that

government agencies specialize in translations of Standard Chinese materials, rather than fostering original works in Bái, is inseparable from the role of institutions in regulating and standardizing practice, rendering it legible to the state.

### 7.2.6 Non-governmental language workers' mother-tongue literacy curriculum

By contrast, most materials produced by participants in SIL's mother-tongue literacy project are not translations, but texts composed originally in Bái. In excerpt 7-2, I present an excerpt from SIL's (Summer Institute of Linguistics 2006a, vol.1:15-26) preschool curriculum, composed by my language consultant. In each numbered line, I provide the original text in the Bái orthography and an English gloss; a free English translation appears after each full sentence.

#### EXCERPT 7-2: Summer Institute of Linguistics (2006a, vol. 1:15-26)

1	B	<i>Ngot</i> seit baidgai, 1SG\DIR small when,
2	B	ngel <b>dixmox</b> hox gainl <i>ngot zijit</i> ngaid-qi zil 1SG\OBL father-mother PL(human) fear 1SG self go-out TOP
3	B	cv <b>sait'vx</b> lex. occur matter COS
	E	When <i>I</i> was small, my <b>parents</b> were afraid that if I went out <b>by myself</b> , <b>something</b> would happen.
4	B	Ngel nox hhaf-sit ngaid-qi. 1SG\OBL OBJM NEG-let go-out.
	E	They didn't let me go out.
5	B	<i>Ngot</i> tet <b>zijit</b> gvp hotdvnl wapseinp. 1SG\DIR always self be.located home play.
	E	<i>I</i> always played <b>by myself</b> at home.
6	B	<i>Ngot</i> ngaid hhep <b>xiaotbainx</b> zaidgai, 1SG\DIR go attend first.year.of.kindergarten when,
7	B	<i>ngot dient xithuanl</i> . 1SG\DIR very happy.
	E	When <i>I</i> went to attend <b>the first year of kindergarten</b> , <i>I</i> was <b>very happy</b> .



8	B	<b>Laotsil</b> hox zex ganl <b>ngot</b> hhep <b>svl</b> . teacher PL(human) FOC teach 1SG\DIR read book
	E	The <b>teachers</b> taught <b>me</b> to <b>read</b> .
9	B	Ngel jiap nox seit. <b>penlyot</b> hox lil <b>dient xithuanl</b> 1SG\OBL other SUB small.friend PL(human) also very like
10	B	gol <b>ngot</b> dathot wapseinp. with 1SG\DIR together play
	E	The other <b>children</b> also <b>liked</b> to play with <b>me a lot</b> .
11	B	<b>Ngot julde xultanl</b> het <b>dient</b> xiot. 1SG\DIR think school in very good.
	E	<b>I thought</b> that <b>school</b> was <b>very</b> good.
12	B	<b>Fan-jia</b> lap, take.vacation COS,
13	B	<b>ngot dient</b> mix ngaid hhep- <b>svl</b> duap. 1SG\DIR very miss go read-book can\NEG
	E	When vacation came, I very much missed going to school.
14	B	<b>Ngot julde sipjainx dient</b> gop nad, 1SG\DIR think time very pass difficult
15	B	hatzix-xiai biai ngel <b>dix-mox</b> hox: every-day ask 1SG\OBL father-mother PL(human)
16	B	“Ngal hhep- <b>svl</b> kax lap maf?” 1PL\EXCL read-book PRG COS yet
	E	<b>I thought</b> the <b>time</b> passed <b>very</b> slowly, and every day I asked my <b>parents</b> , “Is it time for us to <b>go back to school</b> yet?”
17	B	Pia ngal hhep- <b>svl</b> mot-xiai, Arrive 3PL\EXCL read-book that-day,
18	B	<b>ngot dient galxien</b> . 1SG\DIR very happy.
	E	When the day arrived to start school, <b>I was very happy</b> .
19	B	<b>Ngot zuxzuxlex</b> cux fainx-kex, 1SG\DIR early-early-ADVM just wake-up,
20	B	ngaid <b>xultanl</b> het hhep- <b>svl</b> . go school in read-book.
	E	<b>I</b> woke up early to go to <b>school</b> and <b>study</b> .
21	B	<b>Ngot dient xithuanl</b> ngaid <b>xultanl</b> het hhep- <b>svl</b> . 1 SG\DIR very happy go school in read-book.
	E	<b>I was very happy</b> to go to <b>school</b> and <b>study</b> .
22	B	Gvp <b>xultanl</b> het, <b>ngot ketyit</b> hhep-de hhaf-seinx nox, be.located school in, 1SG\DIR can learn-COMPL NEG-know SUB,
23	B	<b>ngot zei ketyit</b> gol ngel jiap nox seit. <b>penlyot</b> hox wapseinp. 1SG\DIR still can with 1SG\OBL other SUB small.friend PL(human) play.
	E	In <b>school</b> , <b>I could</b> learn things I didn’t know, and <b>I could</b> play with the other <b>children</b> .

This Bái text of the passage is composed of 123 tokens of 62 unique orthographic items. Because this text is an original, rather than a translation, it is more difficult to say for certain whether the author intends to represent a particular Standard Chinese form. Nevertheless, it is striking that only four items correspond with any Standard Chinese expression according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. These items are: *xiaotbainx* (line 6), comparable to Standard Chinese *xiǎobān* 小班 ‘small class; first year of kindergarten’; *sipjiainx* (line 14), comparable to Standard Chinese *shíjiān* 时间 ‘time’; *ketyit* (lines 22 and 23), comparable to Standard Chinese *kěyǐ* 可以 ‘can’ (lines 22 and 23), and *ngot* (all lines except 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20), comparable to Standard Chinese *wǒ* 我, the first person singular pronoun. (The Bái item is the direct case pronoun; it alternates in the text with its oblique case counterpart *ngel*, which does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*.)<sup>51</sup>

By contrast, the author uses nine items that have transparent Sinitic etymologies, but do not correspond to Standard Chinese expressions according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. They include *zijit* (lines 2 and 5), comparable to Standard Chinese *zìjǐ* 自己 ‘self’; *sait’vx* (line 3), comparable to Standard Chinese *shìwu* 事务 ‘matter’; *xithuanl* (lines 7, 9, and 21), comparable to Standard Chinese *xǐhuān* 喜欢 ‘like, be happy’; *laotsil* (line 8) comparable to Standard Chinese *lǎoshī* 老师 ‘teacher’; *svl* (lines 8, 13, 16, 17, 20, and 21) comparable to Standard Chinese *shū* 书 ‘book, writing’; *penlyot* (lines 9 and 23),

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<sup>51</sup> In light of the traditional view that personal pronouns form a closed class of basic vocabulary that is particularly resistant to borrowing, it might seem unusual to include the first person singular pronoun *ngot* with the other items in this list. I do so on the principle that the Bái /31/ tone corresponds with the Middle Chinese Rising category syllable *wǒ* 我 according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, regardless of the item’s etymology. As it happens, the author of excerpt 7-4B below also recognizes the correspondence, and represents *ngot* with the character *wǒ* 我.

comparable to Standard Chinese *péngyǒu* 朋友 ‘friend’; *julde* (lines 11 and 14), comparable to Standard Chinese *juéde* 觉得 ‘think’; *xultanl* (line 11, 20, 21, and 22), comparable to Standard Chinese *xué táng* 学堂 ‘school’; *fanjia* (line 12), comparable to Standard Chinese *fàngjià* 放假 ‘take vacation’; *galxien* (line 18), comparable to Standard Chinese *gāoxìng* 高兴 ‘happy.’ While the first syllable of *seit penlyot* (lines 9 and 23) does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, it is semantically equivalent to the Standard Chinese phrase *xiǎo péngyǒu* 小朋友, literally ‘small friend,’ a colloquial and familiar term for ‘child.’

To these can be added two items that correspond to Standard Chinese forms according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, but which are marginal or dialectal in the standard: *dixmox* (line 2) comparable to Standard Chinese *diē* 爹 ‘father’ and *mā* 妈 ‘mother’; and *dient* (lines 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, and 21) comparable to Standard Chinese *dǐng* 顶 ‘very, most, extremely.’ In addition, although the item *hhepsvl* (lines 8, 13, 16, 17, 20, and 21) does not correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, it has the same semantic range as Standard Chinese *dú shū* 读书, literally ‘read book’: It covers both the specific action of reading books and the more general actions of attending school or studying.

As in excerpt 7-1, the author uses the topicalizer *zil* (line 2) and the focuser *zex* (line 8); however, in this text she also uses sentence-final pragmatic markers, such as *lex* (line 3) and *lap* (lines 12 and 16), which indicate change of situation, comparable to Standard Chinese *le* 了, and *kax* (line 16), which indicates expectation of earlier temporal reference, comparable to the Standard Chinese adverb *jiù* 就. From one perspective, the occurrence of these markers is a function of the content of the text: The change-of-

situation and temporal expectation markers are present because the text is a temporally organized narrative; indeed, *kax* and *lap* occur in the same quotation. From another perspective, by incorporating elements characteristic of spoken language, the markers bring the text closer to the vernacular.

As in excerpt 7-1, the author's use of the Bái alphabetic orthography in excerpt 7-2 is an *Ausbau* strategy that makes the Bái text look very different from Standard Chinese, while her use of several lexical items that correspond to items in Standard Chinese is an *Einbau* strategy that establishes congruence between the two languages. However, her representation of Standard Chinese items according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú* is an *Ausbau* strategy that projects the phonological contrast between Standard Chinese and Jiànchuān Chinese as a code contrast between Chinese and Bái, and her inclusion of discourse and pragmatic markers is an *Ausbau* strategy that projects the contrast in discourse marking strategies between formal and informal registers of Standard Chinese as a code contrast between Chinese and Bái.

At the same time, the translator of excerpt 7-1 and the translator of excerpt 7-2 differ in their relative emphasis on *Ausbau* and *Einbau* strategies. In comparison with excerpt 7-1, the author of excerpt 7-2 uses very few items that correspond to lexical items in Standard Chinese, and consequently makes very little use of the *Hànzì Bái dú* conventions. Instead, she emphasizes the *Ausbau* strategy of including elements of the informal register, such as discourse and pragmatic markers.

These differences are not surprising in consideration the producers of the text and the conditions of its production. When I visited SIL's offices in Jiànchuān, an international volunteer explained to me that the Bái participants, who were proficient in

the orthography, generated stories from Bái oral tradition or everyday life. They then prepared a Standard Chinese translation so that the SIL's educational experts, who did not necessarily read Bái, could review the story for inclusion in educational materials. One consideration was that vocabulary in each text should build on previous texts in the curriculum, so that students need only learn a few new vocabulary items per lesson. Another consideration was that it must be possible to illustrate the text: SIL's reading curriculum features an illustration facing each page of text.

As with excerpt 7-1, the producers of excerpt 7-2 direct their text at an imagined audience of Bái language users. The translator of the PRC constitution assumes either that the Bái lexicon of her readers includes many abstract lexical items borrowed from Standard Chinese, or that her readers are actually be bilingual and literate in Standard Chinese. However, the producers of the children's story assume that their readers are monolingual users of Bái. When I discussed with my language consultant the inclusion of *Hànzì Bái dú* items in the SIL curriculum, she acknowledged that authors and editors explicitly considered both whether children were likely to know such items, and whether there was not a more authentically Bái way to express the same idea.

In a quite straightforward sense, these sorts of deliberations unite SIL's short-term goal of improving literacy outcomes for Bái children with its long-term goal of fostering a literary standard that will enable Bible translation. More subtly, however, they embody very specific assumptions about language users and language use. On the one hand, individuals are assumed to have only one mother tongue, once known in the SIL literature as their "heart-language," which provides unique access to the individual's emotional life (Cowan 1979, cited in Handman 2009:637); this notion underlies SIL's

entire Bible-translation mission. For this reason, Bái children are assumed to be monolingual in Bái, and only *Hànzì Bái dú* items that are “borrowed,” rather than “code-switched,” are acceptable in the literacy curriculum. This notion of the mother tongue leaves no room for the possibility that Bái children are equally authentic users of Sinitic varieties.

On the other, individuals are assumed to belong to “people-groups” which correspond directly to individual languages (Dayton & Fraser 1990:28, cited in Dobrin & Good 2009:625). In this sense, SIL continues Herderian ideologies that were also prevalent in cosmopolitan linguistics and anthropology through the 1960s (cf. Hymes 1967), and which dovetail neatly with the Herderian ideologies that underlie the PRC’s nationality classification. Consequently, SIL’s activities are aimed at fostering a literary standard that is at once practical, to the extent of being based on Bái vernacular speech, and uniquely Bái, in the sense of being maximally distinct from Standard Chinese. Such Herderian ideologies exclude the possibility that Bái language users’ practice of drawing on their multilingual and multidialectal repertoire is what makes Bái identifiable to language users as Bái.

### *7.2.7 Language enthusiasts’ transcription of a Bái song in the orthography*

Among language enthusiasts, who make up the third circle of users of the alphabetic orthography, motivations and ideologies are rarely articulated as exclusively as they are among the institutional actors. In excerpt 7-3, I present an excerpt from a song in the *Baip kv* genre (Standard Chinese: *Bái qǔ* 白曲), composed by Xīng and Xiǎo (2007:35) to commemorate the 2007 restoration of a covered bridge in Jīnhuá. The

transcription was prepared by Zhāng Wénbó, a retired county vice governor who has been a staunch supporter of the alphabetic orthography, and particularly of its use in education. In each numbered line, I provide the original text in the Bái orthography and an English gloss; a free English translation appears after each full sentence.

**EXCERPT 7-3: Xīng and Xiǎo (2007:35)**

1	B	<b>Jinpcuinl ba</b> het gud let jiop, Jiānchuán basin in bridge this CLF
	E	This bridge in the <b>Jiānchuán basin</b> ,
2	B	Mel <b>miail</b> el- <b>zop</b> Qienlngvl gud, 3SG\OBL name call-do Jīnlóng Bridge
	E	Its <b>name is</b> Jīnlóng Bridge,
3	B	<b>Cap-mat-gut-dab fenx-yuit qiaop</b> , tea-horse-old-road wind-rain bridge
	E	<b>A covered bridge on the old Tea-Horse Road</b> ,
4	B	<b>Miailmop zafsib</b> dop. reputation very big
	E	Its <b>reputation is really</b> great.
5	B	Gailzil gud-jiop yanl <b>comp-xiox</b> , this.year bridge-CLF 1PL.INCL again-repair
	E	This year we <b>restored</b> the bridge,
6	B	<b>Xinb-weit zenlfvt dient</b> zopdox, county-committee government very attend.to
	E	<b>The county [Party] committee</b> and the <b>government</b> gave it their <b>full</b> attention,
7	B	<b>Copbeib zut</b> hhef <b>zaind</b> mel ded, planning group come become 3SG\OBL front
	E	The <b>planning committee led</b> the way,
8	B	<b>Xianxqienx</b> hox congo. villagers PL(human) support
	E	<b>Villagers</b> provided support.
9	B	<b>Not</b> do-zeid lait <b>ngot cv</b> -hhep, 2SG\DIR give.out-money and 1SG\DIR give.out-effort
	E	<b>You</b> contributed funds, <b>I contributed</b> labor,
10	B	<b>Miep-bainb gonx-zub zvtvi hux</b> , private-do public-help idea good
	E	The <b>idea</b> of <b>private organization with public assistance</b> was <b>good</b> ,
11	B	At-yind <b>mad-pint zaind</b> zo'-ded, one-person feather-CLF become bird-CLF
	E	Everyone contributed to the success, [literally: Each person's <b>feather</b> together <b>made</b> a bird]

12	B	<b>Zul-zaind</b> heinl- <b>hol-dox</b> . do-become heaven-flower-CLF
	E	It has <b>turned out</b> like a heavenly <b>flower</b> .
13	B	Gud-jiop <b>yuinpmaid xiol cenponx</b> , Bridge-CLF satisfactory repair successful
	E	The bridge has been <b>repaired satisfactorily</b> and <b>successfully</b> ,
14	B	Geilyin gop-gud yanl <b>qienb-gonx</b> , Today cross-bridge 1PL.INCL celebrate-success
	E	Today we cross the bridge to <b>celebrate our success</b> ,
15	B	Gux-yind- <b>seit-yind huanl-jienl-duap</b> , Old-person-young-person happy-use.up-can\NEG
	E	The people, old and <b>young</b> , could not be <b>happier</b> ,
16	B	<b>Huanl</b> mel hhex <b>cvt</b> mox. Happy 3SG\OBL after place NEG.EXV
	E	<b>Happy</b> as if there were nothing after this [ <b>place</b> ].
17	B	Geilyin yanl hhef <b>gop xinl-gud</b> , Today 1PL.INCL come cross new-bridge
	E	Today we come to <b>cross</b> the <b>new</b> bridge,
18	B	<b>Guanl</b> yinl <b>bai'xiainp xinl</b> at-kox, official and ordinary.people heart one-CLF
	E	The <b>officials</b> and <b>ordinary people</b> have the same <b>feeling</b> ,
19	B	<b>Zainl-xinl-zaip-yi</b> zonl <b>gonlde</b> , true-heart-real-mind donate charitable.act
	E	They <b>sincerely</b> do this <b>charitable act</b> ,
20	B	Hhef ga gud- <b>saind</b> gox. come BENADV bridge-spirit worship
	E	They come to give thanks to the bridge <b>spirits</b> .
21	B	Gei'xiai <b>gop-gud lap-hhex zil</b> , today cross-bridge COS-after TOP
	E	Today after we cross the bridge,
22	B	Qienlngvl gud- <b>saind</b> hhef <b>batyo</b> , Jinlong bridge-spirit come bless.and.protect
	E	The <b>spirits</b> of Jinlong Bridge will come to <b>bless and protect it</b> ,
23	B	Hainsai-hhep-dop lel <b>xi-zet</b> , healthy-strength-big these four-characters
	E	The <b>four characters</b> [that mean] 'Good health, great strength,'
24	B	<b>Suipsip</b> con yanl go. at.all.times support 1SG.INCL support.
	E	Will support us <b>at all times</b> .
25	B	Gud- <b>saind batyo</b> gud nox hox, bridge-spirit bless.and.protect bridge on people,
	E	The <b>spirits</b> of the bridge will <b>bless and protect</b> people on the bridge,
26	B	<b>Fvf-sob suanx-quinp</b> nal mip nox, happy-long.life both-complete 2PL reach SUB,
	E	<b>Happiness and longevity</b> will come to you,



27	B	Gud- <b>saind batyo gonxzuf</b> hox, bridge-spirit bless.and.protect work PL(human)
	E	The <b>spirits</b> of the bridge will <b>bless and protect civil servants</b> ,
28	B	<b>Guanl</b> -neid <b>senl</b> -zonx donx. official-position rise-go.up top
	E	They will <b>rise</b> in <b>official</b> position.
29	B	<b>Kail-cail cvf-xienp</b> hox <b>dab-jif</b> , drive-car go.out-travel PL(human) big-luck,
	E	People who <b>go out driving in cars</b> will have <b>great good fortune</b> ,
30	B	<b>Zul senlyi</b> hox <b>senlyi</b> hux, do business PL(human) business good
	E	<b>Business</b> people will be fortunate in <b>business</b> ,
31	B	<b>Zul sotyi</b> hox tul de zeid, do handiwork PL(human) earn PRF money,
	E	<b>Craftspeople</b> will earn money,
32	B	<b>Gop</b> nox <b>dient yolyo</b> . pass COMPM very pleasant
	E	They will <b>have</b> a <b>very pleasant</b> life.
33	B	Gud- <b>saind batyo nopmiep</b> hox, bridge-spirit bless.and.protect peasant PL(human)
	E	The bridge <b>spirits</b> will <b>bless and protect the peasants</b> ,
34	B	Hatzix- <b>sua</b> zix <b>qienb fenx-sox</b> , every-year NMLZ celebrate bumper.harvest
	E	Every <b>year</b> they will <b>celebrate abundant harvests</b> ,
35	B	<b>Xienx nopcuainx</b> zex <b>jinbsaif</b> qionl, New.Rural.Village FOC construct well
	E	<b>The New Rural Village</b> has been <b>built up</b> well,
36	B	Yin <sup>2</sup> -xiai <b>gop al-lo</b> . day-day pass peaceful-happy.
	E	They will lead peaceful and happy lives.
37	B	Gud- <b>saind batyo hhep-svl</b> hox, bridge-spirit bless.and.protect read-book PL(human)
	E	The bridge <b>spirits</b> will <b>bless and protect the students</b> ,
38	B	<b>Svl</b> lil hhep-qionl <b>pient</b> lil <b>yox</b> , book also read-well rank also excellent
	E	They will excel in their <b>studies</b> and <b>rank high</b> in their examinations,
39	B	<b>Venpxinb-miep-banx</b> nox <b>zenbxienx</b> , documents-name-group SUB promotion
	E	The <b>promotion</b> of the spirit of “ <b>the famous group of literary scholars</b> ,”
40	B	Yonx <b>ka'tol</b> nal nox. will depend.on 2PL OBJM
	E	Will <b>depend</b> on you.

This text of this song is composed of 165 tokens of 122 unique orthographic items. Of these, 30 correspond to an item in Standard Chinese according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. Three items clearly belong to the Standard Chinese literary register: *fvfsob* and *suanxquinp* (line 26), comparable to the Standard Chinese four-character expression *fúshòu shuāngquán* 福寿双全, ‘may you have both good fortune and longevity,’ and *venpxinb-miepbax*, (line 39) comparable to Standard Chinese *wénxiàn míngbāng* 文献名帮 ‘famous group of literary scholars,’ a quotation from a monument in Dàlǐ Old City which refers to four local figures in the Literary Chinese tradition.

Seven items refer to state institutions, such as *xinbweit* (line 6), comparable to Standard Chinese *xiànwěi* 县委 ‘county [Party] committee,’ or to phenomena associated with the state, such as *miepbainb* and *gonxzub* (line 10), comparable to Standard Chinese *mínbàn-gōngzhù* 民办公助, literally ‘civil carry out, public assist,’ which describes civil initiatives with state assistance; *xienx* and *nopcuainx* (line 35), comparable to Standard Chinese *xīn nóngcūn* 新农村 ‘new rural village,’ a rural development campaign; and the collocated verb *jinbsaif* (line 35), comparable to Standard Chinese *jiànshè* 建设 ‘establish.’ The item *capmat-gutdab* (line 3), comparable to Standard Chinese *chámǎ-gǔdào* 茶马古道, ‘Old Tea-Horse Road,’ is a name academics and government officials have given to a historical trade route through western Yúnnán, which has recently become the focus both of historical scholarship and tourism promotion efforts.

Four items have more general reference, but are somewhat literary in flavor. Some have very specialized referents, such as *fenxyuit* and *qiaop* (line 3), comparable to

Standard Chinese *fēngyǔqiáo* 风雨桥, ‘covered bridge,’ as well as *copbeib* and *zut* (line 7), comparable to Standard Chinese *chóubèizǔ* ‘planning group.’

Eight others demonstrate the morpheme contraction characteristic of written Standard Chinese, such as *conpxiox* (line 5), comparable to Standard Chinese *chóngxiū* 重修 ‘repair’; *yuinpmait* (line 13), comparable to Standard Chinese *yuánmǎn* 圆满 ‘satisfactory’; *qienbgonx* (line 14), comparable to Standard Chinese *qìng gōng* 庆功 ‘celebrate success’; *suipsip* (line 24), comparable to Standard Chinese *suíshí* 随时 ‘at any time’; *cyfxienp* (line 29), comparable to Standard Chinese *chūxíng* 出行 ‘go out driving’; *dabjif* (line 29), comparable to Standard Chinese *dàjí* 大吉 ‘great fortune’; *qienb fenxsox* (line 34), comparable to Standard Chinese *qìng fēngshōu* 庆丰收 ‘celebrate bumper harvests’; and *zenbxienx* (line 39), comparable to Standard Chinese *zhènxīng* 振兴 ‘promotion.’

To these can be added two single-morpheme abbreviations of longer, more specific expressions, such as *pien* (line 38), comparable to Standard Chinese *pǐn* 品 ‘grade, class, rank, rate,’ as in the expression *shàngpǐn* 上品 ‘highest grade,’ as well as *yox* (line 38), comparable to Standard Chinese *yōu* ‘excellent, superior,’ as in the expression *yōuxiù* 优秀 ‘outstanding, excellent.’

The remaining six items are elements of both written and spoken Standard Chinese, such as *xianxqienx* (line 8), comparable to Standard Chinese *xiāngqīn* 乡亲 ‘villagers’; *cenpgonx* (line 13), comparable to Standard Chinese *chénggōng* 成功 ‘successful’; *gonxzuf* (line 27), comparable to Standard Chinese *gōngzuò* 工作 ‘work’; *nopmiep* (line 33), comparable to Standard Chinese *nóngmín* 农民 ‘peasant’; and *qienb*

(line 34), comparable to Standard Chinese *qìng* 庆 ‘celebrate.’ The item *dient* (lines 6, 32), comparable to Standard Chinese 顶 ‘very,’ also appears in this excerpt.

Although a further 14 items have relatively transparent Sinitic etymologies, the author does not represent them according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. They include the proper noun *Jinpcuinl ba* (line 1), comparable to Standard Chinese *Jiànchuān bà* 剑川坝 ‘Jiànchuān basin’; *miailmop* (line 4), comparable to Standard Chinese *míngmù* ‘reputation’; *zenlfvt* (line 6), comparable to Standard Chinese *zhèngfǔ* 政府 ‘government’; *zvtvi* (line 10), comparable to Standard Chinese *zhǔyì* 主义 ‘idea’; *madpint* (line 11) comparable to Standard Chinese *máopiān* 毛片 ‘piece of hair or feather’ (this also happens to mean ‘pornographic film’ in contemporary Standard Chinese slang); *bai'xiainp* (line 18), comparable to Standard Chinese *bǎixìng* 百姓 ‘ordinary people’; *gonlde* (line 19), comparable to Standard Chinese *gōngdé* 功德 ‘charitable deed’; *batyo* (lines 22, 25, 27, 33, and 37), comparable to Standard Chinese *bǎoyòu* 保佑 ‘bless and protect’; *kailcail* (line 29), comparable to Standard Chinese *kāi chē* 开车 ‘drive a car’; *senlyi* (line 30), comparable to Standard Chinese *shēngyì* 生意 ‘business’; *sotvi* (line 31), comparable to Standard Chinese *shǒuyì* 手艺 ‘handiwork’; *yolyo* (line 32), comparable to Standard Chinese *yōuyóu* 优游 or *yōuyōu* 优悠 ‘leisurely and carefree’; *allo* (line 36), comparable to Standard Chinese *ānlè* 安乐 ‘peaceful and happy’; and *ka'tol* (line 40), comparable to Standard Chinese *kàotou* 靠头 ‘backing, support.’ The item *svl* (line 38), comparable to Standard Chinese *shū* 书 ‘book, writing,’ also appears in this excerpt.

To these can be added two items that constitute doublets with items represented according to *Hànzì Báidú*: *miail* (line 2), comparable to Standard Chinese *míng* 名 ‘name,’ which is represented as *miep* in *venpxinb-miepbanx* (line 39), and *xioi* (line 13), comparable to Standard Chinese *xiū* 修 ‘repair,’ which is represented as *xiox* in *conpxiox* (line 5).

Six items combine morphemes that have relative transparent Sinitic etymologies with morphemes in which the etymology is less apparent: the second syllable of *elzop* ‘be called’ (line 2) is comparable to Standard Chinese *zuò* 作 ‘make, do,’ which also introduces the nominal complement of the verb ‘be called’; the first syllable of *zulzaind* (line 12) is also comparable to Standard Chinese *zuò* 作 or *zuò* 做, ‘make, do’; the item *guanl* (line 18) and the first syllable of *guanlneid* (line 28) are comparable to Standard Chinese *guān* 官 ‘official’; the first, second, and fourth syllables of the expression *zainlxinl-zaipyi* (line 19) are comparable to Standard Chinese *zhēn* 真 ‘true,’ *xīn* 心 ‘heart,’ and *yì* 意 ‘mind’; and the first syllable of *senlzonx* (line 28) is comparable to Standard Chinese *shēng* 升 ‘rise, be promoted.’

One item merits special attention. The item *zafsib* ‘really, very’ (line 4) is not comparable to any item in Standard Chinese. However, in a short description of Yúnnán Chinese prepared at the beginning of the twentieth century, Davies (1970[1909]:350) lists the item *cha<sup>2</sup> shih<sup>5</sup>* ‘very’ among local words in common use. Transposed from Wade-Giles transcription to Hànyǔ Pīnyīn, this item can be transcribed as *zhashi*. Assuming the merger of retroflex fricatives and affricates to the alveolar place of articulation, the form *zasi* is a match for the Bái form.

As for the tones, Davies' numbers refer to a traditional five-tone Mandarin system; therefore, the first syllable is in the Lower Level category and the second syllable is the Entering category. In his (1970[1909]:349) description of the realizations of these categories in Yúnnán Chinese, Davies describes a four-tone system, in which Upper Level is a "high even tone," Lower Level is a "short jerked tone," Rising is similar to the "fourth tone in Pekingese" today described as /51/, Departing is similar to the "third tone in Pekingese" today described as /314/, and Entering is merged with Lower Level. Therefore, in Davies' transcription, both syllables are realized with the same "short jerked tone."

In a list of localisms in Dàlǐ Prefecture Mandarin, Hú and Duàn (2001:522) list the item [tʂA<sup>31</sup> ʂɿ<sup>44</sup>], glossed as *fēicháng* 非常 'extraordinarily.' While it is not clear where the authors collected the item, they describe Xiàguān and Dàlǐ Old City Mandarin as four-tone systems in which /31/ is the realization of the Lower Level and Entering categories and /44/ is the realization of the Upper Level category. Meanwhile, Zhào and Xú's (1996:402) Bái-Chinese dictionary lists the item *zaf sil*; the entry proper glosses the item as *méi ménr* 没门儿 'have no way to,' but translates the items in many example sentences as *hěn* 很 'very' or *fēicháng* 非常 'extraordinarily' (Zhào & Xú 1996:177, 207, 245, 352, 353, 387).

Comparing Davies' transcription with the later works, it appears possible that Davies simply mistook Entering for Lower Level due to the merger, and that the first syllable reflects the Entering category. This would explain Xiǎo and Xīng's transcription of the first syllable as *zaf* with the /35/ realization that corresponds to the Entering category according to *Hànzì Bái dú*. As for the second syllable, Xiǎo and Xīng's

transcription as *sib* with the /66/ realization suggests correspondence to the Departing category. This is at odds both with Davies' transcription as Entering, Hú and Duàn's transcription as /44/ corresponding to Upper Level, and Zhào and Xú's transcription as *sil* with a /55/ realization that does not figure in *Hànzì Bái dú*. Nevertheless, all three of the later transcriptions agree in describing a relatively high, level realization.

In terms of the transcriber's representational strategies, this song contrasts both with the translation of the PRC constitution and the children's story. As in the previous two excerpts, use of the alphabetic orthography is itself an *Ausbau* strategy that makes the text look very different from Standard Chinese. In terms of the *Einbau* strategy of using items from Standard Chinese that correspond according to *Hànzì Bái dú*, the transcriber of the song is more similar to the translator of the PRC constitution than the author of the children's story: Beyond establishing congruence with the Standard Chinese political vocabulary, the author makes explicit references to the written register of Standard Chinese through the use of four-character set phrases. Even in the case of *hainlsai-hhepdop* 'good health, great strength' an expression that does not have a transparent Sinitic etymology, the author refers to it metalinguistically as *lel xizet*, 'these four characters,' or "words."

However, in terms of the *Ausbau* strategy of representing such items according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*, the transcriber plots a middle course between the translator of the PRC constitution, who represents most items with Sinitic etymologies according to the convention, and the author of the children's story, who represents very few items in this way. In terms of the *Ausbau* strategy of incorporating elements of the spoken language into written texts, the transcriber of the song uses fewer such items even

than the translator of the PRC constitution: He uses only a single token of the topicalizer *zil* in the phrase *gei 'xiai gopgud laphhex zil*, ‘today after we have crossed the bridge’ (line 21), and not a single sentence-final pragmatic marker.

This mix of strategies does not intuitively follow from the conditions under which the text was produced. Musicians in Jiànchūān compose new songs in the *Baip kv* genre to commemorate all sorts of events; indeed, when I interviewed residents about their literacy practices in 2007, two different local musicians spontaneously composed songs to celebrate my visit. Given the importance and the local character of the restoration of the Jīnlóng Bridge, it is not at all unusual that organizers of the opening ceremony would ask prominent local artists to contribute a song. From what I observed, musicians normally do so orally and in Bái. The transcriber prepared the text in the alphabetic orthography solely for the purpose of including it in a commemorative booklet about the restoration of the bridge. Nevertheless, the authors are obviously not only users of local Sinitic varieties, if not Standard Chinese, but also literate in Standard Chinese and familiar with its literary register.

As I argue above, for institutional actors such as government employees and SIL language workers, strategies of representation align quite clearly with institutional motivations. However, language enthusiasts such as the transcriber of the song have a less obvious interest in representing Bái in any particular way. Since the text is in a traditional genre, was composed for a local event, and makes extensive references to local religious beliefs, one might expect that the writers and transcribers to emphasize the most vernacular aspects of Bái by favoring *Ausbau* strategies over *Einbau* strategies. In fact, the authors and transcriber also use *Einbau* strategies that demonstrate their mastery



of Sinitic varieties. This vividly illustrates McCarthy's (2009:128-129) observation that Bái distinctiveness emerges less in contrast to the Hàn than in contrast to the other, "less advanced" minority nationalities in Yúnnán.

### *7.3 Representation in Chinese characters*

As I observe above, writing in the alphabetic orthography is a relatively marginal phenomenon for most Bái people; many language users have either never heard of the orthography or have never encountered it in practice. However, there is also a parallel, somewhat more widespread practice of representing Bái in Chinese characters. Editors of published collections of folkloric texts occasionally use this method to represent the Bái original alongside a translation in Standard Chinese, and performing artists, ritual practitioners, and other public speakers also use the method to prepare for performances in Bái (cf. Yáng 2003).

#### *7.3.1 Language enthusiasts' transcription of a Bái song in characters*

In fact, the second author of the commemorative song in excerpt 3 prepared a version of the text in characters before the transcriber prepared the version in the alphabetic orthography, and the commemorative booklet presents the two versions side by side. This makes the text unusual, since most written Bái texts only use one form of representation or the other, and valuable, since it provides an opportunity to compare two writers' representation of the same text.

In excerpt 7-4A, I reproduce the first four lines of the text in order to illustrate the strategies the authors use to represent it in characters:

**EXCERPT 7-4A: Xīng and Xiǎo (2007:35)**

1	剑	川	坝	很	古	冷	久，
SC	jiàn	chuān	bà	hěn	gǔ	lěng	jiǔ
E	Jiànchuān		basin	very	ancient	cold	long
B	Jinp-	cuinl	ba	het	gud	let	jiop,
E	Jiànchuān		basin	in	bridge	this	CLF
This bridge in the Jiànchuān basin,							
2	门	名	叫	走	庆	务	古。
SC	mén	míng	jiào	zǒu	qìng	wù	gǔ
E	door	name	call	walk	celebrate	matter	ancient
B	Mel	miail	el-	zop	Qienl	ngyl	gud,
E	3SG\OBL	name	call	do	Jīnlóng		bridge
Its name is Jīnlóng Bridge,							
3	茶	马	古	道	风	雨	桥，
SC	chá	mǎ	gǔ	dào	fēng	yǔ	qiáo
E	tea	horse	ancient	road	wind	rain	bridge
B	Cap-	mat-	gut-	dab	fēnx-	yuit	qiaop,
E	tea	horse	old	road	wind	rain	bridge
A covered bridge on the old Tea-Horse Road,							
4	名	目	杂	丝	大。		
SC	míng	mù	zá	sī	dà		
E	reputation		various	silk	big		
B	Miail-	mop	zaf	sib	dop.		
E	reputation		very		big		
Its reputation is really great.							

The transcription of the Bái text in characters appears in the first line. The second line, marked “C,” provides the reading of the character in Standard Chinese. The third line, marked “E,” provides an English gloss of the character. The fourth line, marked “B,” provides the Bái item that the character represents. And the fifth line, again marked “E,” provides an English gloss of the Bái item.

This format facilitates comparison of the phonetic resemblance between the Standard Chinese and Bái pronunciations, on the one hand, and of the semantic resemblance between the Standard Chinese and Bái interpretations, on the other. In each case, I have shaded the comparable elements in light gray. The shading graphically illustrates three different patterns in the excerpt. First, all four lines are shaded gray: This indicates that the character resembles its Bái counterpart in both in sound and meaning. Second, lines C and B are shaded gray, and lines E and E remain unshaded: This indicates that the character resembles its Bái counterpart in sound, but not in meaning. And third, lines E and E are shaded gray, and lines C and B remain unshaded: This indicates that the character resembles its Bái counterpart in meaning, but not in sound.

In a discussion of character representation of Bái, Xú (2002:275-278) describes the first pattern as *zhíjiē yòng Hànzì* 直接用汉字 ‘using characters directly’; I call it *phono-semantic representation*. In phono-semantic representation, the writer represents lexical items common to Bái and Standard Chinese with etymologically appropriate characters that represent both pronunciation and meaning. In line 3, every morpheme is represented in this way, rendering the Bái version identical to its Standard Chinese “translation.” Other examples are *Jiànchuān bà* 剑川坝 for *Jinpcuinl ba* ‘Jiànchuān Basin’ (line 1), *míng* 名 for *miail* ‘name’ (line 2), and *míngmù* 明目 for *miailmop* ‘reputation’ and *dà* 大 for *dop* ‘great’ (line 4). Phono-semantic representation is the default strategy for Sinitic varieties, and it is comparable to Japanese *on* reading.

Xú refers to the second pattern as *yīndú Hànzì* 音读汉字 ‘reading characters for sound’; I call it *phonetic representation*. In phonetic representation, the writer represents lexical items with no obvious Sinitic etymology using characters solely for their

pronunciation, ignoring their meaning. Examples include: *hěn* 很 ‘very’ for *het* ‘in,’ *lěng* 冷 ‘cold’ for *let* ‘this,’ and *jiǔ* 久 ‘long time’ for *jiop*, a noun classifier (line 1); *mén* 门 ‘door’ for *mel*, the oblique case form of the third person singular pronoun; *qìng* 庆 ‘celebrate’ and *wù* 务 ‘affair, business’ for the local name *Qienlngvl* (line 2), as well as *gǔ* 古 ‘ancient’ for *gud* ‘bridge’ (lines 1 and 2). Phonetic representation is the usual strategy for the transcription of foreign words in Standard Chinese.

Xú describes the third pattern as *xùndú Hànzì* 训读汉字 ‘reading characters by meaning’; I call it *semantic representation*. In semantic representation, the writer represents lexical items with no transparent Sinitic etymology using characters solely for their meaning, leaving the reader to supply the correct reading. Without knowledge of the writer’s intentions, this strategy is impossible to recover from the character text: Some readers might interpret the writer’s semantic representation as phono-semantic representation. However, because the publisher has also supplied this text with an orthographic transcription, an example of semantic representation is apparent in line 2, where the transcriber has supplied *el* ‘call’ for 叫 ‘call,’ read *jiào* in Standard Chinese. Semantic representation is a common strategy for vernacular Sinitic varieties like Cantonese, and it is comparable to Japanese *kun* reading.

Xú (2002:277-278) also discusses a fourth strategy, *zìzào xīnzì* 自造新字 ‘creating new characters,’ or the use of vernacular characters that do not appear in the canonical sets of Literary Chinese or Standard Chinese; however, I have not encountered vernacular characters in this or any other recent published text. I speculate that this is partly because writers are more familiar with which characters are canonical than they

were in the past – signs in educational institutions urge students to use “regulation characters” (*guīfàn zì* 规范字) – and partly because such characters are difficult to produce using modern word-processing software and difficult to typeset.

In excerpt 7-4B, I reproduce the rest of the text in order to compare the author’s character representation with the transcriber’s orthographic representation.<sup>52</sup>

**EXCERPT 7-4B: Xīng and Xiǎo (2007:35)**

5	该	之	古	久	央	重	修，
SC	gāi	zhī	gǔ	jiǔ	yāng	chóng	xiū
E	should	it	ancient	long	center	again	repair
B	Gail-	zil	gud-	jiop	yanl	conp-	xiox,
E	this.year		bridge	CLF	1PL. INCL	again	repair
This year we restored the bridge,							
6	县	委	政	府	顶	走	豆。
SC	xiàn	wěi	zhèng	fǔ	dǐng	zǒu	dòu
E	county	committee	government		very	walk	bean
B	Xinb-	weit	zenl-	fvt	dient	zop-	dox,
E	county	committee	government		very	be.attentive	
The county [Party] committee and the government gave it their full attention,							
7	筹	备	组	后	展	门	得，
SC	chóu	bèi	zǔ	hòu	zhǎn	mén	dé
E	planning		group	after	extend	door	get
B	Cop-	beib	zut	hhef	zaind	mel	ded,
E	planning		group	come	become	3SG\OBL	front
The planning committee led the way,							
8	乡	亲	后	冲	够。		
SC	xiāng	qīn	hòu	chō/òng	gòu		
E	villagers		after	soar	enough		
B	Xianx-	qienx	hox	con-	go.		
E	villagers		PL (human)	support			
Villagers provided support.							
9	奴	斗	钱	来	我	出	力，
SC	nú	dòu	qián	lái	wǒ	chū	lì

<sup>52</sup> Because a number of characters have multiple canonical readings, and it is not clear which reading the transcriber had in mind, I have represented various possible readings by separating with slashes the grapheme for the vowel nucleus with various tone diacritics.

E	slave	peck	money	come	1SG	go.out	power
B	Not	do-	zeid	lait	ngot	cv-	hhep,
E	2SG\DIR	give.out	money	and	1SG\DIR	give.out	effort
You contributed funds, I contributed labor,							
10	民	办	公	助	主	意	乎。
SC	mín	bàn	gōng	zhù	zhǔ	yì	hū
E	private	do	public	help	idea		Q
B	Miep-	bainb	gonx-	zub	zvt-	yi	hux,
E	private	do	public	help	idea		good
The idea of private organization with public assistance was good,							
11	阿	银	毛	片	展	咒	得，
SC	ā	yín	máo	piā/àn	zhǎn	zhòu	dé
E	PHON	silver	feather	piece	extend	curse	get
B	At-	yind	mad-	pint	zaind	zo'-	ded,
E	one	person	feather	CLF	become	bird	CLF
Everyone contributed to the success, [literally: Each person's feather together made a bird]							
12	做	成	天	花	朵。		
SC	zuò	chéng	tiān	huā	duǒ		
E	do	become	heaven	flower	CLF		
B	Zul-	zaind	heinl-	hol-	dox.		
E	do	become	heaven	flower	CLF		
It has turned out like a heavenly flower.							
13	古	久	园	满	修	成	功，
SC	gǔ	jiǔ	yuán	mǎn	xiū	chéng	gōng
E	ancient	long.time	satisfactory		repair	successful	
B	Gud-	jiop	yuinp-	mait	xiol	cenp-	gonx,
E	bridge	CLF	satisfactory		repair	successful	
The bridge has been repaired satisfactorily and successfully,							
14	今	彦	勾	古	央	庆	功。
SC	jīn	yàn	gōu	gǔ	yāng	qìng	gōng
E	today	elegant	hook	ancient	center	celebrate	success
B	Geinl-	yin	gop-	gud	yanl	qienb-	gonx,
E	today		cross	bridge	1PL. INCL	celebrate	success
Today we cross the bridge to celebrate our success,							
15	古	眼	小	眼	欢	尽	朵，
SC	gǔ	yǎn	xiǎo	yǎn	huān	jìn	duǒ
E	ancient	eye	small	eye	happy	use.up	CLF
B	Gux-	yind-	seit-	yind	huanl-	jienl-	duap,
E	old	person	young	person	happy	use.up	can\NEG
The people, old and young, could not be happier,							
16	欢	闷	后	处	母。		
SC	huān	mē/èn	hòu	chǔ/ù	mǔ		
E	happy	gloomy	after	place	mother		

B	Huanl	mel	hhex	cvt	mox.		
E	happy	3SG\OBL	after	place	NEG.		
					EXV		
Happy as if there were nothing after this.							
17	今	天	央	额	勾	新	古,
SC	jīn	tiān	yāng	é	gō/òu	xīn	gǔ
E	today		center	forehead	hook	new	ancient
B	Geil-	yin	yanl	hhef	gop	xinl-	gud
E	today		1PL.	come	cross	new	bridge
			INCL				
Today we come to cross the new bridge,							
18	官	利	百	姓	心	阿	口。
SC	guān	li	bǎi	xìng	xīn	ā	kǒu
E	official	profit	ordinary.people	heart	PHON	mouth	
B	Guanl	yinl	bai'-	xiainp	xinl	at-	kox,
E	official	and	ordinary.people	heart	one	CLF	
The officials and ordinary people have the same feeling,							
19	真	心	实	意	中	功	德,
SC	zhēn	xīn	shí	yì	zhōng	gōng	dé
E	true	heart	real	mind	center	charitable.act	
B	Zainl-	xinl-	zaip-	yi	zonl	gonl-	de,
E	true	heart	real	mind	donate	charitable.act	
They sincerely do this charitable act,							
20	额	告	桥	神	勾。		
SC	é	gào	qiáo	shén	gō/òu		
E	forehead	tell	bridge	spirit	hook		
B	Hhef	ga	gud-	saind	gox.		
E	come	BENADV	bridge	spirit	worship		
They come to give thanks to the bridge spirits.							
21	今	天	古	过	陈	劳	后,
SC	jīn	tiān	gǔ	guò	chén	láo	hòu
E	today		ancient	cross	NAME	toil	after
B	Gei'-	xiai	gop-	gud	lap-	hhex	zil,
E	Today		bridge	cross	COS	after	TOP
Today after we cross the bridge,							
22	庆	务	古	神	额	保	佑。
SC	qìng	wù	gǔ	shén	é	bǎo	yòu
E	celebrate	affair	ancient	spirit	forehead	bles.and.protect	
B	Qienl-	ngvl	gud-	saind	hhef	bat-	yo,
E	Jīnlóng		bridge	spirit	come	bles.and.protect	
The spirits of Jīnlóng Bridge will come to bless and protect it,							
23	亥	舍	厄	斗	冷	四	字,
SC	hài	shè	è	dòu	lěng	sì	zì
E	twelfth	dwelling	distress	peck	cold	four	character
B	Hainl-	sai-	hhep-	dop	lel	xi-	zet,

E	healthy	strength	big	these	four	character	
The four characters [that mean] ‘Good health, great strength’							
24	随	时	冲	央	勾。		
SC	suí	shí	chō/òng	yāng	gō/òu		
E	at.all.times		soar	center	hook		
B	Suip-	sip	con	yanl	go.		
E	at.all.times		support	1PL. INCL	support		
Will support us at all times.							
25	桥	神	保	佑	古	笼	吼，
SC	qiáo	shén	bǎo	yòu	gǔ	lóng	hǒu
E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect		ancient	basket	roar
B	Gud-	saind	bat-	yo	gud	nox	hox,
E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect		bridge	on	PL(hum)
The spirits of the bridge will bless and protect people on the bridge,							
26	福	寿	双	全	那	面	努。
SC	fú	shòu	shuāng	quán	nà	miàn	nǚ
E	happy	long.life	both	complete	that	face	strive
B	Fvf-	sob	suanx-	quinp	nal	mip	nox,
E	happy	long.life	both	complete	2PL	reach	SUB
Happiness and longevity will come to you,							
27	桥	神	保	佑	工	作	后，
SC	qiáo	shén	bǎo	yòu	gōng	zuò	hòu
E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect		work		after
B	Gud-	saind	bat-	yo	gonx-	zuf	hox,
E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect		work		PL (human)
The spirits of the bridge will bless and protect civil servants							
28	官	乃	升	中	东。		
SC	guān	nǎi	shēng	zhōng	dōng		
E	official	then	rise	center	east		
B	Guanl-	neid	senl-	zonx	donx.		
E	official	position	rise	go.up	top		
They will rise in official position.							
29	开	车	出	行	哄	大	吉，
SC	kāi	chē	chū	xíng	hōng	dà	jí
E	drive	car	go.out	travel	coax	big	lucky
B	Kail-	cail	cvf-	xienp	hox	dab-	jif,
E	drive	car	go.out	travel	PL (human)	big	luck
People who go out driving in cars will have great good fortune,							
30	做	生	意	后	生	意	乎。
SC	zuò	shēng	yì	hòu	shēng	yì	hū
E	do	business		after	business		INT
B	Zul	senl-	yi	hox	senl-	yi	hux,



E	do	business	PL (human)	business	good		
Business people will be fortunate in business,							
31	做	手	艺	后	拖	得	钱,
SC	zuò	shǒu	yì	hòu	tuō	dé	qián
E	do	handiwork		after	drag	get	money
B	Zul	sot-	yi	hox	tul	de	zeid,
E	do	handiwork		PL (human)	earn	PRF	money
Craftspeople will earn money							
32	过	龙	顶	优	由。		
SC	guò	lóng	dǐng	yōu	yóu		
E	pass	dragon	very	excellent	cause		
B	Gop	nox	dient	yol-	yo.		
E	pass	COMPM	very	pleasant			
They will have a very pleasant life.							
33	古	神	保	佑	农	民	后,
SC	gǔ	shén	bǎo	yòu	nóng	mín	hòu
E	ancient	spirit	bless.and.protect		peasant		after
B	Gud-	saind	bat-	yo	nop-	miep	hox,
E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect		peasant		PL (human)
The bridge spirits will bless and protect the peasants,							
34	好	子	岁	子	庆	丰	收。
SC	hǎo	zǐ	sui	zǐ	qìng	fēng	shōu
E	good	child	year	child	celebrate	bumper.harvest	
B	Hat-	zix-	sua	zix	qienb	fex-	sox,
E	every		year	NMLZR	celebrate	bumper.harvest	
Every year they will celebrate bumper harvests,							
35	新	农	村	子	建	设	秋,
SC	xīn	nóng-	cūn	zǐ	jiàn-	shè	qiū
E	New.Rural.Village			child	construct		autumn
B	Xienx	nop	cuainx	zex	jinb	saif	qionl,
E	New.Rural.Village			FOC	construct		well
The New Rural Village has been built up well,							
36	彦	仙	过	安	乐。		
SC	yàn	xiān	guò	ān	lè		
E	elegant	immortal	pass	peaceful	happy		
B	Yin'-	xiai	gop	al-	lo.		
E	day	day	pass	peaceful	happy		
They will lead peaceful and happy lives.							
37	古	神	保	佑	读	书	后,
SC	gǔ	shén	bǎo	yòu	dú	shū	hòu
E	ancient	spirit	bless.and.protect		read	book	after
B	Gud-	saind	bat-	yo	hhep-	svl	hox,

E	bridge	spirit	bless.and.protect	read	book	PL (human)	
The bridge spirits will bless and protect the students,							
38	书	利	学	秋	品	利	优。
SC	shū	lì	xué	qiū	pǐn	lì	yōu
E	book	profit	learn	autumn	grade	profit	excellent
B	Svl	lil	hhep-	qionl	pien	lil	yox,
E	book	also	learn	well	grade	also	excellent
They will excel in their studies and rank high in their examinations,							
39	文	献	名	帮	龙	振	兴，
SC	wén	xiàn	míng	bāng	lóng	zhèn	xīng
E	document		famous.group		dragon	promote	
B	Venp-	xinb-	miep-	banx	nox	zenb-	xienx,
E	document		famous.group		SUB	promotion	
The promotion of the spirit of “the famous group of literary scholars,”							
40	用	靠	头	那	龙。		
SC	yòng	kào	tóu	nà	lóng		
E	use	depend.on		that	dragon		
B	Yonx	ka’-	tol	nal	nox.		
E	will	depend.on		2PL	OBJM		
Will depend on you.							

An important point to make at the outset is that the author’s representation is not systematic in the sense of regular or predictable correspondences between form and meaning. In several cases, the author represents the same morpheme with different characters, such as the use of *ló/ōng* 笼 ‘cage’ (line 25), *nǚ* 努 (line 26) ‘make effort,’ and *lóng* 龙 ‘dragon’ (lines 32, 39 and 40) to represent the subordinator *nox*. (The alveolar nasal [n] and alveolar lateral [l] are allophones of the same phoneme for many users of Southwest Mandarin varieties.) In another case, he uses the same character, *lěng* 冷 ‘cold,’ to represent different forms of the same morpheme: *let* ‘this’ and *lel* ‘these.’

Nor is the author systematic in terms of his strategies of representation. At times, he mixes phono-semantic, phonetic, and semantic representation within the same phrase, such as his representation of *gudsaind* ‘bridge spirit’ with *gǔ* 古 ‘ancient’ and *shén* 神

‘spirit’ in a mix of phonetic and phono-semantic representation (lines 22, 33 and 37), and he switches the mix of strategies for different tokens of the same phrase, such as representing *gudsaind* ‘bridge spirit’ with *qiáo* 桥 ‘bridge’ and *shén* 神 ‘spirit’ in a mix of semantic and phono-semantic representation (lines 20, 25, and 27). A similar example is the author’s representation of *geilyin* ‘today’ with *jīn* 今 ‘today’ and *yàn* 彦 ‘elegant’ in line 14 (mix of semantic and phonetic representation), but as *jīntiān* 今天 ‘today’ in line 17 (semantic representation), as well as his representation of the synonym *geilxiai* ‘today’ as *jīntiān* 今天 ‘today’ (also semantic representation) in line 21.

Nevertheless, comparison of Xiǎo’s character version with Zhāng’s orthographic transcription reveals one striking regularity: Xiǎo uses the phono-semantic strategy to represent all of those items that Zhāng represents according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. Examples include representing *capmat-gutdab* as *chámǎ-gǔdào* 茶马古道 ‘Old Tea-Horse Road’ (line 3), *fenxyuit qiaop* as *fēngyǔqiáo* 风雨桥 ‘covered bridge’ (line 3), *conpxiox* as *chóngxiū* 重修 (line 5), *dient* as *dǐng* 顶 ‘very’ (lines 6 and 32), *xinbweit* as *xiànwěi* 县委 ‘county [Party] committee’ (line 6), *copbeib zut* as *chóubèizǔ* 筹备组 ‘preparation group’ (line 7), *xianxqienx* as *xiāngqīn* 乡亲 (line 8), and a further 23 examples.

The converse is not true: Xiǎo uses the phono-semantic strategy to represent many additional items that Zhāng does not represent according to the conventions of *Hànzì Bái dú*. Many of these items have relatively transparent Sinitic etymologies, such as *miailmop* for *míngmù* 明目 ‘reputation’ (line 4), *zenlfvt* for *zhèngfǔ* 政府 ‘government’ (line 6), *zvtvi* for *zhǔyì* ‘idea’ (line 10), *bai’xiainp* for *báixìng* 百姓 ‘ordinary people’ (line 18),

*gonlde* for *gōngdé* 功德 ‘charitable deed’ (line 19), *batyo* for *bǎoyòu* 保佑 ‘pless and protect’ (lines 22, 25, 27, 33, and 37), *kailcail* for *kāi chē* 开车 ‘drive car’ (line 29), *senlyi* for *shēngyì* 生意 ‘business’ (line 30), *sotyi* for *shǒuyì* 手艺 ‘handicraft’ (line 31), and *ka'tol* for *kàotou* 靠头 ‘fall back on’ (line 40).

This comparison suggests that writers have a more generous notion of what counts as Chinese when representing Bái in characters than when representing Bái in the alphabetic orthography. This follows from my overall characterization of character representation as an *Einbau* strategy that foregrounds etymological commonalities between Bái and Sinitic varieties, and orthographic representation as an *Ausbau* strategy that foregrounds phonological differences between them.

Descriptions of character representation like Xú (2002) implicitly presuppose that determining what is Chinese in Bái is a matter of objective fact, rather than subjective discernment. On the one hand, with respect to semantic representation, what one language user perceives as the use of a character to represent the semantic value of a Bái morpheme, another language user may perceive as the etymologically appropriate use of a character to represent the reflex of the Sinitic etymon the character is assumed to represent. In other words, the line between semantic and phono-semantic representation is fuzzy.

Taking, for example, the author’s representation of *zeid* as *qián* 钱 ‘money’ (lines 9 and 31), *zaind* as *chéng* 成 ‘become’ (line 12), and *zaip* as *shí* ‘实 real’ (line 19), and *hhep* as *xué* 学 ‘learn’ (line 38), language users who believe the phonological distance between the Bái form and Sinitic forms makes a genetic relationship unlikely might classify them as examples semantic representation; however, in each case a historical

phonologist might be able to establish phonetic correspondences to argue that the Bái form is the reflex of the Sinitic etymon the character represents. Indeed, Wāng (2006:210) makes just such a case that *hhep* is the reflex of *xué* 学.

On the other hand, with respect to phonetic representation, what one language users perceives as the use of a character to represent the phonetic value of a Bái morpheme, another language user may perceive as the “mistaken,” or etymologically inappropriate, use of a character. In other words, the line between phonetic and phonosemantic representation is also fuzzy.

For example, the local reflex of the Sinitic etymon *de* 的 has a nasal initial, and the Bái subordinator *nox* has the same distribution as the Standard Chinese nominal subordinator *de* 的. Language users who believe that the phonological distance between the forms renders a genetic relationship unlikely might classify the use of *ló/ǒng* 笼 ‘cage’ (line 25), *nǚ* 努 (line 26) ‘make effort,’ and *lóng* 龙 ‘dragon’ (lines 32, 39 and 40) to represent *nox* as phonetic representation. However, a more philologically engaged observer might consider it a misrecognition of the item’s true etymology. This is essentially Zhèngzhāng’s (2008[1999]) rhetorical strategy in arguing that Bái is a sister to Chinese in a Sinitic language family.

These examples involve degrees of phonological distance that might reasonably be assumed to obscure etymological identity for all language users except those with specialized training in Chinese philology and historical linguistics. However, the fact that the author switches between strategies of representation for different tokens of the same morpheme in a single text indicates that language users’ awareness or judgment of

etymological identity are not constant, even in cases of linguistic production as well-planned as a published written text.

For example, the author represents *gop* ‘cross, pass’ phonetically as *gō/òu* 勾 ‘hook’ in lines 14 and 17, but phono-semantically as *guò* 过 ‘cross, pass’ in lines 21, 32, and 36. For the most part, the author represents the item *zul* phono-semantically as *zuò* 做 ‘do.’ However, in line 2, the Bái construction *elzop* is comparable to the Standard Chinese construction *jiàozuò* 叫做, in which *zuò* 做 introduces the nominal complement of the verb *jiào* 叫 ‘call, be called.’ The author represents *zop* not phono-semantically, as *zuò* 做, but phonetically with the character *zǒu* 走 ‘walk, go.’ It is tempting to hypothesize that the author prefers to represent uses of these morphemes as content words phono-semantically and uses as function words phonetically; however, this text contains no further illustrative examples.

Similar issues arise in multimorphemic phrases where a Sinitic etymology might seem relatively transparent. For example, the author’s representation of *yolyo* as *yōuyóu* 优由 instead of *yōuyóu* 优游 or *yōuyōu* 优悠 ‘pleasant’ (line 32) is a case of phonetic representation only if one assumes that the word is Bái rather than Chinese – that is, that it is a case of “borrowing” rather than “code-switching.”

Even more interesting are the author’s representation of *zopdox* as *zǒudòu* 走豆, literally ‘walk’ and ‘bean,’ instead of the etymologically appropriate *zhōudào* 周到 ‘attend to’ (line 6), and his representation of *zafsib* (the Southwest Mandarin localism for ‘very, extraordinarily’ which I discuss above) as *zāsī* 杂丝, literally ‘miscellaneous’ and ‘silk,’ instead of the form *zháshi* 扎实 ‘sturdy,’ which the author provides in the Standard

Chinese translation that accompanies the text (line 4). In representing *zhōu* 周 as *zǒu* 走 and *zhá* 扎 as *zá* 杂, the author represents a Southwest Mandarin pronunciation in which retroflex affricates are merged to the alveolar place of articulation; however, this contrast is only meaningful from the perspective of a Standard Chinese reading of the characters.

Overall, I have characterized character representation as an *Einbau* strategy that foregrounds etymological commonalities between Bái and Sinitic varieties and backgrounds phonological differences between them. However, these examples illustrate that language users are not uniform in their awareness or judgment of etymological commonalities. This is true at the inter-user level, where specialized training may render some users more philologically engaged; it is also true at the intra-user level, where the author's lack of systematicity in both representation and strategies of representation suggest shifts in attention to phonetic and etymological factors.

At the same time, the author's use of etymologically inappropriate characters to represent multimorphemic phrases with relatively transparent Sinitic etymologies suggests a degree of conscious agency. The fact that characters require language users to make a positive etymological claim about each morpheme they write presents users with the potential *Ausbau* strategy of choosing etymologically inappropriate characters to foreground phonetic differences.

In the absence of any obvious phonetic motivation, the author's choices resemble what has been called “eye-dialect” with respect to non-standard writing in alphabetic orthographies: The variant spelling indexes non-standardness rather than representing phonological variation directly. Furthermore, when the author chooses characters that represent the merger of retroflex affricates to the alveolar place of articulation from the

perspective of a standard reading of the characters, he allows Standard Chinese to stand in for Sinitic varieties, while simultaneously opening up discursive space to appropriate items with the merged pronunciation as Bái.

### 7.3.2 *Ethnopragmatic elaboration of character representation*

The use of characters to represent vernacular languages has been described for a number of groups in Southwest China (perhaps most extensively for the Zhuàng [cf. Holm 2008]), and the same set of historical factors shaped present-day writing in Japanese and traditional “mixed” writing in Korean and Vietnamese (Hannas 1997). Wáng (2003) provides a comprehensive overview of what he calls *Hànzìxì wénzì* 汉字系文字 ‘character-system writing systems/orthographies’; however, he covers only those systems used to represent what he assumes are non-Sinitic vernaculars; representation of any Sinitic variety is simply *Hànwén* 汉文, or ‘Hàn writing.’

As I argue in chapter 2, however, distinguishing historic metalinguistic practices in terms of Sinitic and non-Sinitic varieties anachronistically imposes categories that are only meaningful with reference to the theory and methods of present-day historical linguistics. Prior to the early twentieth century, users of characters had no basis to determine whether forms in their vernacular were Sinitic or non-Sinitic, but only to evaluate whether the forms were more or less similar to what they considered the canonical pronunciation of particular characters. Works such as Wáng (2003) that treat the vernacular writing of non-Sinitic varieties outside of the context of larger traditions of vernacular writing in China overtly celebrate the distinctiveness of minority nationalities, while covertly constructing the Hàn as a single people with a single language.



They do so partly through an ambiguous use of the term *wénzì* 文字 itself, which can be variously translated as ‘characters,’ ‘script,’ ‘writing,’ ‘written language,’ or ‘writing style/phraseology.’ Strictly speaking, there is a difference between a “writing system,” the set of symbols used to represent elements of speech, and an “orthography,” the conventions that govern such representations. This distinction is important because many writing systems, such as the Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, the Arabic abjad, or the Devanagari abugida, are used for multiple orthographies, including alternate orthographies for the same language.

Characters constitute a writing system that is used for orthographies both for Standard Chinese and Japanese, as well as Korean and Vietnamese in traditional contexts. However, calling vernacular writing in characters an “orthography” contains an inherent contradiction. As I suggest at the outset of this chapter, an orthography exists only by virtue of its claim to set the standard for language users’ practices. If vernacular writing is not conventionalized, it does not constitute an orthography; however, once writing undergoes conventionalization, in what sense is it still vernacular? In other words, the process of standardization that gives rise to orthographies is the same process that converts vernacular writing practices into literary languages.

Wáng (2008[2000], 2008[2002]b, 2008[2004], 2004, 2008[2005]a) has been at the forefront among scholars who argue that the present-day use of characters to represent Bái continues practices from the Nánzhào and Dàlǐ kingdoms. According to this interpretation, although the standard written language of Nánzhào was Literary Chinese, the vernacular was an earlier form of Bái, and texts from the period ostensibly written in Literary Chinese include anomalous characters that represent morphemes of the Bái

vernacular. While the practice of representing Bái in characters was widespread, its conventionalization was thwarted by the Hàn chauvinist policies of the Míng Dynasty.

This narrative includes several unsupported assumptions. First, because evidence of vernaculars in the Dàlǐ region prior to the late nineteenth century is limited to a few brief word lists recorded in characters, and it is not clear how the authors would have pronounced them at the time, there is no direct evidence that any of the languages mentioned in pre-modern records are ancestral to present-day Bái. This assumption relies heavily on an essentialist conception of ethnicity, and Herderian ideologies about the isomorphy between language and ethnicity; it implicitly constructs the Bái as the aboriginal residents of the Dàlǐ region.

Second, the narrative assumes that anomalies in pre-modern texts ostensibly composed in Literary Chinese reflect the author's conscious decision to represent the vernacular, rather than unconscious transfer from it. This assumption anachronistically projects a Bái ethnic consciousness based on the recognition of Bái as a minority nationality language distinct from Chinese, which appears to date from the middle of the twentieth century, more than a millennium into the past; it implicitly naturalizes present-day language planning as the restoration of ancient traditions of representation.

Third, there is no evidence that language use in Nánzhào was characterized by a standard vs. vernacular dichotomy. This assumption reflects a trope in Chinese historiography that extrapolates from the codification of characters during the Qín Dynasty to assume that language standardization is on the agenda of all centralizing political regimes; it implicitly naturalizes the present-day promotion of Standard Chinese.

In fact, Ferguson (1972[1959]:246-247) cites pre-modern China as a classic case of diglossia, and suggests that language use in China became a standard-with-dialects only at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is equally conceivable that educated people in Nánzhào wrote in Literary Chinese not because of explicit government regulation, but because it was the most (or only) prestigious literary language with which they were familiar. Under circumstances of diglossia, there is no evidence to determine whether people in Nánzhào had a single *lingua franca*, or that they were multilingual and multidialectal as was the case more generally in China.

### 7.3.3 Analysis of a pre-modern character text as Bái

Given these assumptions, it follows that the empirical research on character anomalies in pre-modern documents Literary Chinese documents is somewhat problematic. One of the best-studied examples of pre-modern character representation is the Mountain Flower stele (*Shānhuā bēi* 山花碑), composed by Míng Dynasty poet Yáng Fúzuàn and carved in 1450. In excerpt 7-5, I have reproduced Xú and Zhào's (2008[1980]:991) analysis of the first stanza of the text. (I have preserved the mix of simplified and traditional characters from the original; the rhotic syllables in the Bái transcription indicate a Southern dialect reading.)

#### EXCERPT 7-5: Xú and Zhào (2008[1980]:991)

1	中+倉	洱	境	鏘	翫	不	饱
SC	cāng	ěr	jìng	qiāng	wán	bù	bǎo
E	Cāng Mts.	Ěr Lake	territory	ONOM	play	NEG	full
B	ts <sup>h</sup> a <sup>55</sup>	ɛɿ <sup>31</sup>	tɕw <sup>33</sup>	tɕ <sup>h</sup> o <sup>55</sup>	kuɛɿ <sup>33</sup>	pu <sup>31</sup>	pu <sup>33</sup>
E	Cāng Mts.	Ěr Lake	territory	good	look.at	NEG	full

SC 苍洱景致观不尽，							
E You cannot stop looking at the scenery of the Cāng Mountains and Ěr Lake,							
2	造	化	工	迹	在	阿	物
SC	zào	huà	gōng	jì	zài	ā	wù
E	Heaven		work	trace	be.at	PHON	thing
B	ts <sup>h</sup> o <sup>55</sup>	xua <sup>55</sup>	ku <sup>33</sup>	tɕi <sup>35</sup>	tsu <sup>33</sup>	a <sup>31</sup>	v <sup>33</sup>
E	Heaven		work	trace	be.at	one	many
SC 造化工迹万千处，							
E The traces of Heaven's work are everywhere,							
3	南	北	金	锁	把	天	关
SC	nán	běi	jīn	suǒ	bǎ	tiān	guān
E	south	north	gold	lock	CL	heaven	barrier
SC	na <sup>21</sup>	pu <sup>44</sup>	tɕi <sup>35</sup>	sou <sup>33</sup>	pɛi <sup>33</sup>	xe <sup>55</sup>	kuɛi <sup>35</sup>
E	south	north	gold	lock	CL	heaven	barrier
SC 南北金销据天险，							
E Golden locks in the north and the south [form] natural barriers,							
4	镇	青	龙	白	虎		
SC	zhèn	qīng	lóng	bái	hǔ		
E	guard	blue/green	dragon	white	tiger		
SC	tsu <sup>42</sup>	tɕ <sup>h</sup> ɛi <sup>55</sup>	nv <sup>21</sup>	pɛi <sup>42</sup>	xu <sup>33</sup>		
E	guard	blue/green	dragon	white	tiger		
SC 镇青龙白虎。							
E The green dragon and white tiger stand guard.							

Following the same conventions as for excerpt 7-4, I have shaded comparable elements light gray. What this format makes immediately obvious is that, of the 26 characters in this text, all but four involve phono-semantic representation. With respect to the remaining characters, in line 1, the authors make a case that *qiāng* 锵 ‘onomatopoeic for a clanking sound’ phonetically represents the Bái morpheme /tɕ<sup>h</sup>o<sup>55</sup>/ ‘good.’ (The authors transcribe the item as /ts<sup>h</sup>o<sup>55</sup>/ in the text, but as /tɕ<sup>h</sup>o<sup>55</sup>/ in their notes, which is a better match for the character. Incidentally, this item is comparable to the Jīnhuá form *qionl* ‘good, well.’) In line 2, they argue that *ā wù* 阿物, a phonetic character for /a/ plus ‘thing,’ phonetically represent the Bái phrase /a<sup>31</sup> v<sup>33</sup>/, literally ‘one’ and ‘many,’ or ‘a lot.’

However, in line 1, the authors' reading of *wán* 翫 'play' as /kuɛŋ<sup>33</sup>/ 'look at' (comparable to Standard Chinese *guān* 观 'look at') ignores an equally plausible semantic reading of the character as 'play; amuse oneself,' which would yield the translation, "You cannot have your fill of amusement in the scenery of Cāng Mountains and Ěr Lake."

The authors cite the use of *zài* 在 'be at' for *zèx* 'be at' (line 2) as a case of semantic representation; however, they have no way of knowing how the item was pronounced when the text was composed, and do not consider whether the Bái item is a reflex of the Sinitic etymon the character represents. Similarly, their reading of *tiān* 天 as /xɛ<sup>55</sup>/ and *lóng* 龙 as /nv<sup>21</sup>/ assumes that the poet would have read these characters in a manner maximally distinct from their canonical pronunciation based on the hypothesis that the text represents spoken Bái.

On the other hand, the authors cite the use of *bù bǎo* 不饱 'not full' for /pɯ<sup>31</sup> pɯ<sup>33</sup>/ in the sense of 'be unable to stop' (line 1) as an example of phonetic representation; however, they overlook the simpler explanation that the item is simply a metaphorical or dialectal application of the phrase the character represents. This parallels the move by the translator of the PRC constitution in excerpt 1 to represent dialectal and oral Sinitic forms as Bái.

Finally, unlike excerpt 7-4AB, this text includes Xú's (2002) fourth strategy, the use of vernacular characters. The character in line 1 that I have represented as [中+倉] is composed of the first character, *zhōng* 中 'center' on top of the second character, *cāng* 倉 'storehouse.' However, this character is simply a variant of the now-standard *cāng*

苍’blue-green’; if it represents a uniquely Bái morpheme, the authors do not suggest an alternate reading.

This is not to say that it is not useful to read pre-modern documents in the Dàlǐ region in light of the present-day local vernacular. Xú and Zhào (2008[1980]) may be correct that three anomalous characters in this text represent morphemes that are also preserved in present-day Bái. Rather, my goal is to explicate the ideologies that assume that these anomalies render the entire text “Bái,” and that unconventionalized practices of vernacular representation constitute a writing system which Wáng (2003, 2004) has called “Classical Bái” (*Gǔ Bái wén* 古白文). Besides constructing the Bái as the aboriginal residents of the Dàlǐ region and anachronistically projecting a Bái ethnolinguistic consciousness backward in time, these ideologies also implicitly overstates the homogeneity of Literary Chinese, portraying it as an unvariegated “Hàn writing” (*Hàn wén* 汉文) continuous with Standard Chinese.

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

In the course of my exploration of language use in Jiànchuān County, I have triangulated several kinds of evidence in order juxtapose Bái language users' explicit language ideologies with ideologies implicit in their interactions and representation. On the level of explicit ideologies, language users broadly agreed that Bái and Chinese were different languages. In this way, Bái language users produced and reproduced national-level discourses that represent language and ethnicity as isomorphic. Upon examination of implicit ideologies, however, I discovered considerable ideological diversity, both within and across language users and situations of use, about which linguistic elements were “Chinese,” and which were “Bái.”

With respect to interactional strategies, this was evident in the way that language users mobilized *Hànzì Bái dú* items as “Chinese” to foreground bilingual contrast in contexts where language use was salient (such as quotation, metalinguistic commentary, and self- and other-repair), but treated such items as “Bái” in contexts where language use was less salient. With respect to representational strategies, ideological diversity was apparent both in the gap between governmental language workers' embrace of *Hànzì Bái dú* items as “Bái” and NGO language workers' avoidance of them as “Chinese,” as well as the way the transcriber of the Chinese-character text shifted among different strategies to represent the same morphemes, sometimes with etymologically appropriate characters, and sometimes with etymologically inappropriate characters as a kind of “eye dialect.”

Structural approaches to code-switching assume that determinate linguistic codes are necessary for communication, and that they must therefore pre-exist language use as an expression of community consensus; while individual language users may switch among codes in order to index their macro-level social meanings, they are powerless to change them. By contrast, my analysis of Bái language use and ideologies pursues the possibility that linguistic codes exist as nothing more (or less) than metalinguistic discourses which language users reproduce, produce, and transform in the course of their interactions and representation.

I have discussed the emergence of such discourses in terms of Agha's (2003) "enregisterment," the process through which language users come to recognize moments of language use as indexical of typical language users or situations of use. The enregisterment of language use as "a language" is simply enregisterment at the highest level of generality: Language users come to recognize moments of language use as indexical of typical users called "speakers of the language" and typical situations of use called "speaking the language." However, because registers are interpretive schemata, rather than sets of linguistic forms, it is possible for language users to agree that a language exists without agreeing on what it is.

Indeed, in the case of Bái, enregisterment has not (yet) prompted much interest on the part of language users in activities, such as the promotion of an alphabetic script, that might formally regulate the content of the category that emerges through enregisterment. In other words, while codification is an aspect of enregisterment, enregisterment does not necessarily entail codification. In chapter 5, I discuss the difference between Bái language users lack of interest in codification with respect to Bái, but engagement with



discourses of standardization with respect to Sinitic varieties, in terms of Irvine and Gal's "fractal recursivity."

Ideological diversity also figured into my discussion of an East Asian metaphor of "reading," and its local Bái instantiation as *Hànzì Bái dú*, as an ethnotheory of language contact. On the local level, I found the native category *Hànzì Bái dú* an essential "way in" to language users' perspectives on the structure of their lexicons; nevertheless, I discovered that, no less than for Bái itself, not all language users understood *Hànzì Bái dú* in the same way. Meanwhile, on a more global level, I have suggested that metaphors of "reading," which are fundamentally graphocentric, cause language users to perceive their lexicons in ways that run counter to the assumptions of phonocentric mainstream linguistics. In the case of Bái, it means distinctions between "borrowing" and "code switching," which presuppose the autonomy of linguistic codes, may be unworkable; instead, I suggest a more appropriate metaphor in Woolard's (1999) "bivalency."

Throughout this dissertation, I have resisted generalizing about Bái people. This has something to do with my critical stance toward essentializing discourses around language and ethnicity in China, and something to do with my conviction that all language users have interesting insights to offer, quite apart from their ethnic affiliation. Nevertheless, a recurrent theme in this dissertation has been the historically contingent aspect of Bái ethnic consciousness. In this respect, I have found invaluable McCarthy's (2009) observation that Bái distinctiveness emerges against a two-way contrast: On the one hand, Bái people represent themselves as different from the Hàn; on the other, they consider themselves "relatively advanced," or more similar to the Hàn than other minority nationalities in Yúnnán. This tension was evident throughout my study, but

came out most clearly with respect to written representations of Bái, in which language users deployed *Ausbau* and *Einbau* strategies to steer a course between too much similarity with Chinese and too much difference from it.

When I first became interested in researching Bái language use, I thought that it would make for an interesting case study in language maintenance. Almost all of the literature on the language states that Bái is a genetically distinct language that has converged toward Chinese due to a long and positive history of contact. However, during my fieldwork in Jīnhuá, it gradually occurred to me that the degree to which language users perceive their language to be changing, and thus endangered, is related to the degree to which they believe it to have fixed norms. Because Bái is enregistered but not codified, the language indexes Bái language users without implicating particular norms of use. Instead, language users seem to judge the authenticity of Bái language use primarily in terms of the authenticity of the speaker. Under these circumstances, they appear prepared to tolerate a great deal of variation and change in language use without feeling they have lost their language.

This insight suggests several directions for future research. First, in order to explore my hypothesis that perceptions of ethnolinguistic vitality are inversely correlated with the codification of norms, it is necessary to learn more about how Bái language users perceive other people's language use. While the present study was largely inspired by Chen (2008a, 2008b), I did not have the opportunity to use her innovation on the "matched-guise" test using naturally occurring stimuli and open-ended instruments (cf. Lambert 1960). A listener-focused task might reveal clearer patterns of normative evaluation than came up in my largely production-focused study.

Second, while this dissertation has presented a qualitative analysis of language ideologies, the corpus I have assembled is equally suitable for a quantitative study of variation. It would be useful to look in more detail at variants that are perceived as “Bái” or “Chinese,” such as the order of constituents within the noun phrase. I am also interested in exploring Bái discourse organization, including the use of noun classifiers to mark definite and indefinite reference, the functions of Bái pragmatic and discourse markers, and discourse factors in the distribution of object markers like *nox* and *ngvl*.

Finally, although Bái does not fit the profile of an endangered language, and few language users believe Bái will ever disappear, the clear preference for Standard Chinese among the youngest generation raises the possibility of language shift. The fact that many children are continuing to acquire Bái from other relatives or classmates suggests shift may still be some way off; the extent to which changes in the patterns of transmission effect language use and structure is itself a question I would like to pursue. Given that China’s language ecology is likely to be in flux for some time to come, I hope the data I have collected for this study will provide the baseline for a longer-term, longitudinal study of Bái language use.

## Appendix A: Chinese-character names

Bái Mán	白蛮
Bái nationality	白族
Báiláng	白狼
Bīnchuān County	宾川县
Bó	僂
Cantonese (variety)	广东话
Chéngdū Municipality	成都市
Chiang Kai-Shek [Jiāng Jièshí]	蒋介石
Chinese Sound-Spelling [Hànyǔ Pīnyīn]	汉语拼音
Common Speech [Pǔtōnghuà]	普通话
Cultural Revolution (1966-1976 A.D.)	文化大革命
Dàlǐ (kingdom) (937-1253 A.D.)	大理国
Dàlǐ Bái Autonomous Prefecture	大理白族自治州
Dàlǐ Old City	大理古城
Dêchên [Díqìng] Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture	迪庆藏族自治州
Déjū, Mídù County	弥渡县 (德苴)
Dī-Qiāng (people)	氏羌人
Diànnán Township	甸南乡
Dōngshān	东山
Dòng-Dǎi (language family)	侗傣
Ěrhǎi (lake)	洱海
Ěryuán (plain)	洱源
Ěryuán County	洱源县
Guǎngdōng Province	广东省
Guìzhōu Province	贵州省
Hakka [Kèjiā]	客家
Hàn nationality	汉族
Hé Mán	河蛮
Hèqìng County	鹤庆县
Huí nationality	回族
Húnán Province	湖南省
Jiànchuān basin	剑川坝子
Jiànchuān County	剑川县
Jīndūn Village	金墩村

Jīnhuá Town	金华镇
Jīnuò nationality	基诺族
Jiùzhài	旧寨
Korean [Cháoxiǎn] nationality	朝鲜族
Kūnmíng Municipality	昆明市
Lánpíng Bái and Pǔmǐ Autonomous County	兰坪白族普米族自治县
Lìjiāng Municipality	丽江市
Lìsù nationality	傈僳族
Manchu [Mǎn] nationality	满族
Miáo nationality	苗族
Miáo-Yáo (language family)	苗瑶
Mǐdiàn, Xiángyún County	祥云县 (米甸)
Mǐn (variety)	闽
Míng Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.)	明朝
Mínjiā	民家
Mongolian [Měnggǔ] nationality	蒙古族
Nánzhào (kingdom) (737-902 A.D.)	南诏
National Language [Guóyǔ]	国语
Nationalities Publishing House [Mínzú Chūbǎnshè]	民族出版社
Nàxī nationality	纳西族
Nùjiāng Nù and Lisù Autonomous Prefecture	怒江怒族傈僳族自治州
Píngchuān, Bīnchuān County	宾川县 (平川)
Qín Dynasty (221-207 B.C.)	秦朝
Qīng Dynasty (1644-1912 A.D.)	清朝
Republican period (1912-1949 A.D.)	中华民国
Shàngguān, Dàlǐ Municipality	大理市 (上关)
Shanghainese (variety)	上海话
Shāxī Township	沙溪乡
Shíbǎo Mountain	石宝山
Shílóng Village	石龙村
Sìchuān Province	四川省
Sìdēng Village	寺登村
Sun Yat-sen [Sūn Yìxiān]	孙逸仙
Táng Dynasty (618-907 A.D.)	唐朝
Tibet [Xīzàng] Autonomous Region	西藏自治区
Tibetan [Zàng] nationality	藏族
Uyghur [Wéiwú'ěr] nationality	维吾尔族
Wǎ nationality	佯族
Wū Mán	乌蛮

Xiàguān City	下关城
Xīnhuá Bookstore	新华书店
Xīshān District	西山区
Xīyáo Village	西窑村
Xīzhōng Village	西中村
Xǐzhōu Town	喜洲镇
Yáng Fúzuàn	杨黼撰
Yáng Yìngxīn	杨应新
Yángbì County	漾濞县
Yángcén Township	羊岑乡
Yáo nationality	瑶族
Yí nationality	彝族
Yòusuǒ	右所
Yuán Dynasty (1271-1368 A.D.)	元朝
Yúnlóng County	云龙县
<i>Yúnnán Daily</i> (newspaper)	云南日报
Yúnnán Nationalities Publishing House [Yúnnán Mínzú Chūbǎnshè]	云南民族出版社
Yúnnán Nationalities University	云南民族大学
Yúnnán Province	云南省
Yúnnán Provincial Ethnic Affairs Commission	云南省民族事务委员会
Yúnnán Provincial Minority Language Guidance Committee	云南省少数民族语文指导工作委员会
Yúnnán University	云南大学
Yúnnán University Humanities Institute	云南大学人文学院
Yúnnán University Office of International Cooperation and Exchange	云南大学国际合作与交流处
Zhào Shimíng	赵试铭
Zhàozhuāng Village	赵庄村
Zhuàng nationality	壮族

## Appendix B: Summary of the 1993 Bái Latin-alphabet orthography

Adapted from Xú & Zhào (1984), Báizú Yǔyán Wénzi Kēxué Tǎolùnhuì 2008[1993], and Wiersma (2003)

### Consonants

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Palatal	Velar
<b>Plosive</b>	<b> /p/ <p> /p <sup>h</sup> /		<d> /t/ <t> /t <sup>h</sup> /			<g> /k/ <k> /k <sup>h</sup> /
<b>Fricative</b>		<f> /f/ <v> /v/	<s> /s/ <ss> /z/	<x> /ɕ/		<h> /x/ <hh> /ɣ/
<b>Affricate</b>			<z> /tʂ/ <c> /tʂ <sup>h</sup> /	<j> /tɕ/ <q> /tɕ <sup>h</sup> /		
<b>Nasal</b>	<m> /m/		<n> /n/	<ni> /n̩/		<ng> /ŋ/
<b>Approximant</b>	<w> /w/				<y> /j/	
<b>Lateral approximant</b>			<l> /l/			

### Vowels

	Front	Back
<b>High</b>	<i> /i/ <ui> /y/, /ue/	<e> /ɯ/ <u> /u/
<b>High mid</b>	<ei> /e/	<o> /o/
<b>Low mid</b>	<ai> /ɛ/	
<b>Low</b>		<a> /a/

- [+Nasal] in Central varieties is represented by <n> after the vowel.
- [+Rhotic] in Southern varieties is represented by <r> after the vowel.
- The grapheme <ui> represents /y/ following <x, j, q> and /ue/ elsewhere.
- The phoneme /i/ has the value [ɿ] following /s, z, tʂ, tʂ<sup>h</sup>/ and [i] elsewhere.

### Tones

Contour	Phonation	Tone Letter
/33/	lax	<x>
/42/	tense	<p>
/31/	lax	<t>
/66/	tense	<b> (only Central varieties)

/35/	lax	<f>
/44/	tense	<∅ >
/21/	tense	<d>
/55/	lax	<l>
/32/	lax	<z> (only Southern varieties)

- Tone letters appear on the right margin of the syllable, after the vowel and any nasal or rhotic markers.
- The apostrophe <'> is used to disambiguate syllables in which a single consonant might otherwise be read either as the tone letter of the first syllable or the initial of the second syllable.



## Appendix C: Interview instruments

### *Instrument 1: Brief, structured interviews*

1. Where and when were you born, where did you grow up, have you ever lived outside of Jīnhuá?
2. How many languages do you speak? When/how did you learn them?
3. What do you speak with your children/parents/friends of the same age? Why do you speak to your child in Chinese? Do you have any friends who can't speak Bái?
4. Do you ever mix languages? Can you give an example?
5. Who do you think speaks the most authentic Bái? Who speaks the least authentic Bái?
6. Have you ever been concerned that Bái might disappear?

### *Instrument 2: Interviews on Chinese-character representation of Bái*

1. Why did you use the specific characters that you used in your text? You chose this character for its phonetic value – what is its phonetic value in Jiànchuān Chinese? You read this character using a Bái word – why did you not use a character for its phonetic value? Are they all standard characters, or have you used vernacular characters? Did you learn these vernacular characters from another person, or did you make them up?
2. How did you learn to write Chinese in Bai characters, and to read Chinese characters as Bai? When did you learn? Where did you learn? Did you learn on your own, or did someone teach you?
3. When do you normally ‘read Chinese characters in a Bai way’? In which situations is it most appropriate? For which kinds of audiences?
4. Can you read texts that other people write in Bai using characters? Where can you find these texts? Do people use characters to write letters in Bai?
5. What do you know about the Romanized orthography for Bai? What advantages does ‘reading Chinese characters in a Bai way’ and what advantages does the Romanized orthography have?
6. Do you know other people who know how to ‘read Chinese characters in a Bai way’ that might be interested in participating in my research? Can you introduce me to them?

### *Instrument 3: Longer, semi-structured interviews*

*Demographic information*

1. What year were you born?
2. Where were you born?
3. Where is your ancestral home? If Jiànchuān, do you think your ancestors might have come from somewhere else?
4. Where did you mostly grow up?
5. Growing up, did you live or attend school anywhere else? If yes, where?
6. Have you worked anywhere else? If yes, where?

*Language repertoire*

7. What languages do you speak: Bái/SWM/Standard Chinese, others?
8. When you speak Bái, what names do you use for Bái/SWM/Standard Chinese?
9. When you use Chinese, what names do you use for Bái/SWM/Standard Chinese?
10. When/how did you learn Bái/SWM/Standard Chinese?
11. What languages do/did your parents/grandparents speak? When/how did they learn them?
12. What is your highest level of education?
13. If you can remember, what languages did you use with your teachers/classmates/close friends in:
  - 13a. primary school
  - 13b. middle school
  - 13c. high school
  - 13c. higher education
14. What languages do your children/grandchildren/other young relatives speak? How did they learn them?
15. What language do you speak most often? Second-most? Third-most?
16. What language do you most prefer to speak? Second-most? Third-most?

*Language Use*

17. Can all of your friends in Jiànchuān speak Bái? Do they include Muslims or members of other minority ethnic groups?
18. What languages do you use with strangers in Jiànchuān? How do you decide? What if they don't understand?
19. What languages do you use with strangers in Xiàguān? How do you decide? What if they don't understand?

*Code-mixing*

20. Do you ever mix languages? Can you describe how?
  - 20a. Chinese into Bái?
  - 20b. Bái into Chinese?
  - 20c. Compare mixing of Standard Chinese and SWM.
21. Are there circumstances when you mix languages more or less?
22. Do other people in Jiànchuān mix languages in this way or differently?
23. Has anyone told you that you should not mix languages? If yes, who and why? What do you think of this advice?
24. Have you told anyone else that he/she should not mix languages? If yes, who and

why?

*Language change*

25. Have you always spoken the way you speak now? If no, what differences do you notice?
26. What do you think of how people in Jiànchuān speak today? Do you think they speak better or worse than before?
27. Which people speak the most “authentic” Bái? What makes it sound that way?
28. Which people speak the most “Chinese-sounding” Bái? What makes it sound that way?
29. Do you think you sound more like one group than the other? Would you like to?

*Language shift and planning*

30. Have you noticed parents/grandparents speaking only Chinese to their children? What do you think about this?
31. Have you noticed children in Jīnhuá speaking only Chinese? What do you think about this?
32. Some parents say speaking Chinese to children helps them to learn better Standard Chinese or even English. What do you think?
33. Are you ever concerned that Bái might disappear? Do you think people should do something about it?
34. Have you ever read or written Bái using:
  - 34a. Chinese characters?
  - 34b. the Bái phonemic orthography?
35. What do you think about mother tongue education in the Bái phonemic orthography?

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