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**Research Article**

# A Review of Language Planning Research in China Based on the Content Analysis Method

Chu Yan[1] and Chen Xiangling[2]

[1]Associate Professor in School of Foreign Language, North China Electric Power University, No, 689, North District, Baoding, Hebei, China

[2]Graduate Student in School of Foreign Language, North China Electric Power University, No, 689, North District, Baoding, Hebei, China

**Abstract:** With the deepening of people's understanding of the functions and essence of language, language research is also advancing, especially the study of language planning related to the national economy and people's livelihood, which has gradually become the focus of the academic community, and has attracted the attention of the state and all levels of society. In this paper, content analysis method is used to analyze the journal articles published in CSSCI with the title of language planning as the key words. The quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis is carried out from the following aspects: the trend of the amount of articles published, the hot spots of research, the distribution of disciplines, the fund projects, etc. This paper reviews the current research situation of language planning, explores the existing problems in the research of language planning in China, and hopes to provide reference for the application and development of language planning research.
**Keywords:** language planning, content analysis method, quantitative and qualitative analysis.

## INTRODUCTION

Language planning was first proposed by the famous American linguist Uriel Weinreich. In 1959, Haugen introduced the term Language Planning, and defined it as an activity of preparing standard grammar, dictionary and orthography to guide writers and speakers in the heterogeneous speech community (Haugen, E. 1959)." Haugen became the first person to officially introduce the term. With the increase of language planning research, the term is gradually determined in the academic community. In the 60 years from 1959 to 2019, the development of language planning has become more and more mature. Language planning has also been called language engineering, language management, language planning, language policy and so on.

At the end of the 1970s and 1980s, language planning began to develop as an independent research field in China. With the introduction and development of Applied Linguistics and sociolinguistics in China, language planning theory was also introduced and developed. Language planning research attracted more and more scholars' attention and research. In related books, for example 《Language Planning Research》, in which Chen zhangtai discusses the principles of language planning, bilingualism , the methods of language life investigation and other related problems (Chen Zhangtai); Yao Yaping explores the relationship between language planning and language groups in 《Contemporary Chinese language planning》. she believes that the key to language planning lies in dealing with the relationship between language groups (Yao Yaping); In the book 《Theory and Practice of Chinese Contemporary Language Planning》, Guo Longsheng discusses the theoretical structure of Chinese contemporary language planning, and puts forward his own opinions on the process, method, principle and implementation of planning (Guo Longsheng). In recent years, a considerable number of scientific research achievements in introducing and analyzing language planning have appeared in the core journals of foreign languages in China, such as, Zhang Hongjun used language management theory in 《the Study of Language Landscape of Small and Medium-sized Towns in China -- from the Perspective of Language Planning》, he selected 11 small and medium-sized towns in China to conduct empirical research on language landscape, and gave suggestions from the perspective of language planning (Zhang

Hongjun, & Lv Mingchen）；Yao Zhihua discusses the new changes of Chinese language practice and language consciousness in 《 *Thinking About the Current Situation of Chinese Language and Language Planning* 》, and puts forward some new suggestions for Chinese language planning (Zhihua, Y. 2018)；In Shen Xiao's 《*on Language Conflict and Language Planning*》, the necessity of language planning is discussed in detail from the perspective of language conflict (Xiao, S. 2017)。

As an objective quantitative description method, content analysis method has been widely used in the analysis of research literature (Peng Lijuan, M.Z. 2013). The steps of content analysis method includes: firstly, put forward research questions and determine the source of overall research objectives. Secondly, the research samples are selected, and then the samples are coded, counted and processed. Finally, the statistical data are systematically interpreted and analyzed, and the research results are obtained. According to this step, this paper will make statistics and analysis on the basis of quantitative data, and carry out qualitative analysis on the content of literature (Zou Fei, Q.J. 2004).

# RESEARCH DESIGN
## Research Questions
The purpose of this study is to answer the following questions: 1)How is the basic status of language planning research? 2)What are the hot spots of language planning research? 3）What is the national and local attitude towards language planning research？ 4) What are the new developments in language planning?

# RESEARCH METHOD
## Data Sources
The Chinese Social Science Citation Index (CSSCI) database was developed by Nanjing University. It covers a wide range of research fields. It uses a combination of quantification and qualitative methods to select normative and strong academic journals as the source journals, it's the most important and the most common source database in social science research, it's also the important choice of the social science researchers of literature search. Therefore, the data source of this paper is CSSCI to ensure the quality of study samples.

## Data collection and processing
Firstly, with "language planning" as the key word of the paper, the journal source was set as CSSCI, and 100 relevant papers were retrieved on June 25, 2019. After the data source is determined, query and download the title, abstract, keyword, publication date, journal name, author and other information of 100 related papers, and save this information to Note Express. Then, according to the search results, quantitative visualization analysis was carried out to obtain the trend graph of published articles, keyword distribution, subject distribution and other information. Finally, carry out the corresponding statistics and analysis.

## Code
The 100 articles were coded according to seven aspects in table 1. The coding work was jointly completed by two authors, and they all reached an agreement in four aspects.

**Table1.** Variable and Classification

| Variable | Classification |
|---|---|
| Published papers of LP | 1. Language |
| Keywords distribution | 2. Culture |
| Disciplines distribution | |

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
## Statistics on the publication of Language planning
As shown in Figure 1, although the amount of papers on discourse power in the past eleven years has fluctuated slightly in a short period of time, it showed an overall upward trend and reached a peak of in 2018. In the past 20 years, 100 papers related to language planning have been published on CSSCI. It can be seen that the research on language planning has gradually become a hot topic and focus of academic research at this stage.

On December 23, 1997, the second National Conference on language and character work built a more scientific and reasonable language planning theory, which laid the foundation for the small peak. In 2015, the Institute of language planning and policy research was established, which has further promoted the development of language planning research in recent years.
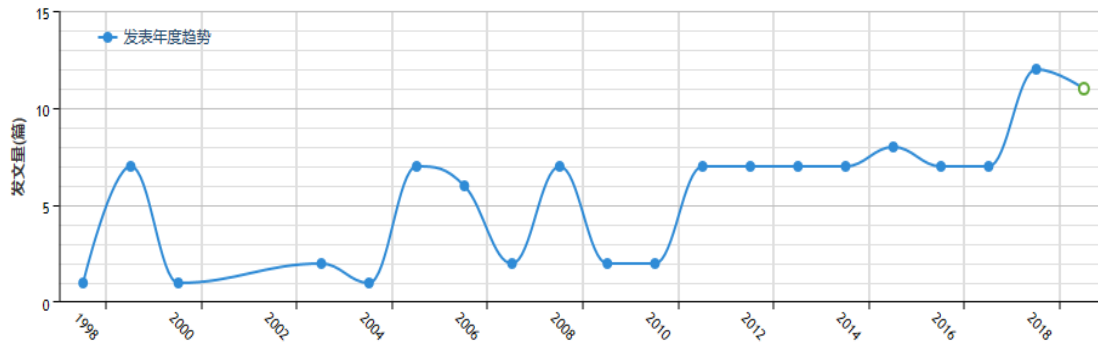
**Figure1.**1998—2018 Posting trend of language planning research

**Keywords co-occurrence**

As shown in figure 2, "language planning" is the most frequently used keyword in the literature, appearing 60 times, which is closely related to the literary theoretical background of language planning research. Secondly, "language policy", "Family language planning" and "ethnic minority" appeared 6 times, 5 times and 4 times respectively. To analyze the reasons, the research on the differences and relations between language planning and language policy has always been a controversial issue in the academic circles, and there is no clear authoritative definition of the two terms up to now.
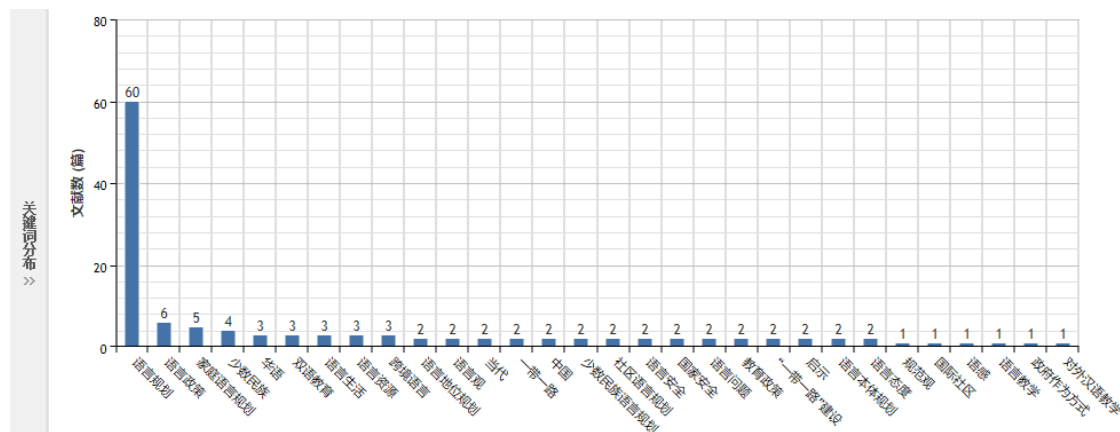


**Figure 2.** Keywords distribution of language planning research

It is worth noting that "Ideological and Political Education", "Ideological Discourse power", "Soft Power", and "New Media" appear 29 times, 25 times, 16 times, and 16 times respectively, indicating that discourse power research scholars actively refer to other theoretical methods in their research, thus, it forms the characteristics of the intersection and integration of discourse power and other subject areas. On the one hand, it broadens the scope of discourse power research, and on the other hand, it is undoubtedly a major innovation in discourse power application research. What about the theoretical research on discourse power? Therefore, the author makes a statistical analysis on the theoretical and applied research of discourse power. Secondly, due to the rapid development of urbanization in China, the urban population and floating population have increased significantly. As a micro field of language planning, family language planning is also attracting the attention of the academic community. In addition, the problems

of endangered languages, bilingual education, language rights and the information processing of minority languages and characters have become the focus of academic and government attention. It is worth noting that "Chinese" and "cross-border language" have appeared 3 times respectively. Analyzing the reasons, because of the international dissemination, only from the perspective of Chinese language planning can not meet the actual needs. Chinese language planning is bound to move from Chinese perspective to the international perspective.

**Disciplines distribution**

It can be seen from picture 3 that the subjects distribution of language planning research is mainly concentrated in Language. The total number of papers in the distribution of this disciplines is 85, accounting for 85%, reflecting on the reason s, Language planning belongs to the study of language and characters, which is naturally based on language discipline. Other

disciplines that have introduced language planning research include history, education, science and technology management, news communication, politics, etc. This shows that language planning scholars actively draw on the background and knowledge of other fields in their research, thus forming the characteristics of integration with other disciplines. On the one hand, it broadens the horizon of language planning research and shows the trend of the gradual integration of language planning research and other disciplines. On the other hand, it is undoubtedly a major innovation in language planning application research.
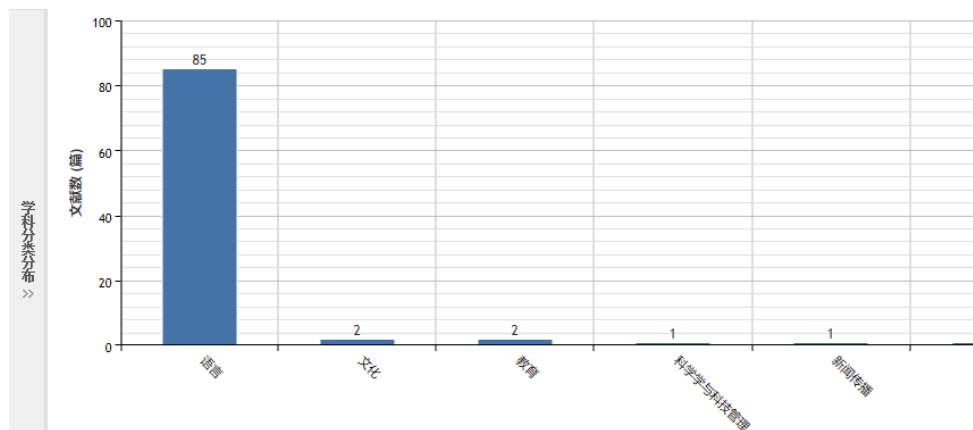


**Figure 3.** The disciplines distribution of language planning research

**Distribution of Funds**

As shown in Figure 4Through analyzing the 100 articles, 15 of which are supported by fund projects are classified. It can be seen from the figure that the most influential NSFC funded projects in the humanities and social sciences research in China account for more than half (60%) of all funded projects. The proportion of national education science planning fund and National Natural Science Fund accounts for 6,67% respectively. 73.34% of the projects are funded by national projects. China's postdoctoral science fund accounts for 6.67%. It can be seen from the figure that there are relatively very few funded projects in various provinces and cities, Such as the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Fund of Jiangsu Provincial Department of education, Shuguang plan of Shanghai Municipal School Committee and Shandong soft science research plan account for 6.67% respectively. Only 20.01% of the provincial source fund projects are related to language planning research. Therefore, obviously the national fund project has given high financial support and attention to the research of language planning, and has issued relevant policies to favor the research of language planning, but the local response and support are not strong enough.
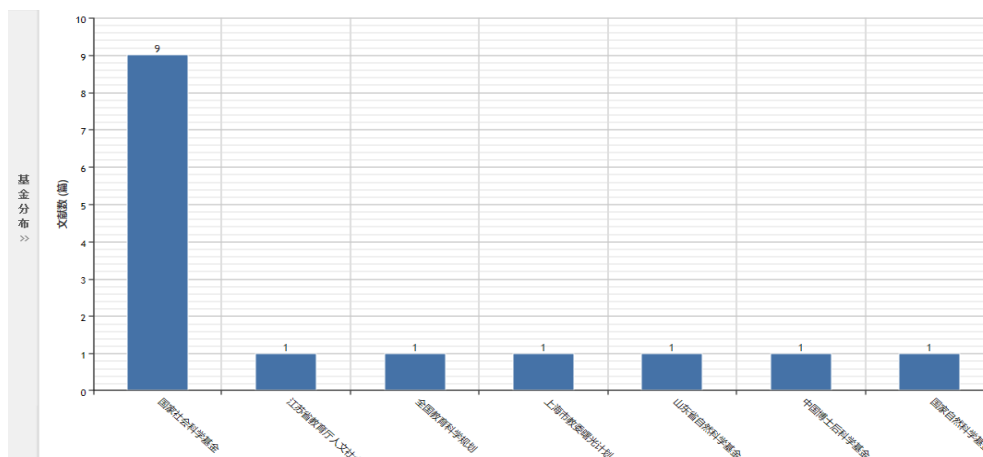


**Figure 4.** Distribution of funds of language planning

# CONCLUSION

Based on the above research questions, the author makes the following answers：1）The overall development of language planning in China is on the rise, which has attracted the attention of scholars and governments from all walks of life；2）At present, language planning research mainly focuses on language planning, language policy,, family language planning, ethnic minorities, Chinese, cross-border languages, etc

；3）The government attaches great importance to the study of language policy；4）The interdisciplinary research trends of language planning and culture, education, science and technology management, and Journalism and communication are considerable.

As one of the research issues concerned by scholars and governments, language planning has a long history of research, and its achievements are commendable. In the process of research, we found that there are some deficiencies to be further studied. The author mainly from the following two levels to explore and summarize.

### Achievements

At present, academic achievements in language planning research are mainly reflected in academic research results and contents. In terms of academic research achievements, up to June 24, 2019, 2424 results were searched in CNKI under the theme of "language planning". In terms of academic content, there is no unified definition of the concept of language planning, but it has been discussed from the nature, classification, principle, subject and other aspects, which is conducive to the determination of language planning. At the same time, it keeps pace with the times in terms of research perspective, grasp the hot spot of the times and the main position of language planning, and conduct a profound analysis of language planning from various small angles and fields. It has a new exploration and clear cognition of the relevant theories, feasibility paths, and incomplete language planning.

### Deficiencies

There are many controversies on the definition of language planning due to the lack of a unified overview. Scholars from all walks of life interpret language planning from different perspectives based on their own academic backgrounds and interests. However, due to the lack of unified standards, various interpretations are difficult to judge, which is not conducive to the development of language planning. Therefore, the theory of language planning needs systematic and theoretical exploration, and there is still a lot of research space in this area. Secondly, the study of language planning theory is still a relatively weak part. In China, the study of language planning is more of a supplementary and extended type. Most of the existing language planning theories are based on the development of foreign countries.

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