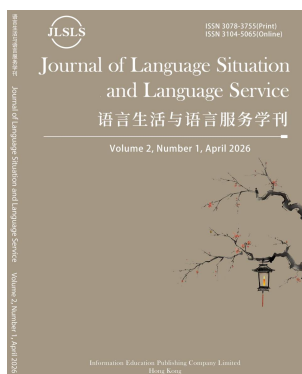




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Contributing to the Construction of an Independent Knowledge System for Language Planning in China:

——A Review of *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025*

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Abstract: *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025* takes as its object of inquiry the academic achievements of China's language planning research in 2024. Comprising four major parts—"General Overview," "Hot Topics," "Thematic Fields," and "Keywords"—the Report systematically reviews the overall status of language planning research in China, identifies hot research topics, summarizes progress across core research fields, and distills keywords reflecting the development of China's spoken and written language work and the achievements in language planning scholarship. As a significant meta-research outcome in China's language planning field, the Report not only offers a comprehensive and systematic summary of academic research in 2024 but also makes valuable explorations toward constructing an independent knowledge system for language planning in China. It contributes to the construction of such a system in multiple dimensions: upholding a China-centered standpoint, exploring a research framework grounded in Chinese practice, and refining Chinese terminology to strengthen the conceptual foundation.

Keywords: language planning; independent knowledge system; blue book research; meta-research

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标题: 助力中国语言规划自主知识体系构建——评《中国语言政策研究报告（2025）》

摘要: 《中国语言政策研究报告（2025）》以2024年度中国的语言规划学术成果为考察对象，分为总述篇、热点篇、领域篇与语词篇四大板块，系统梳理该年度中国的语言规划研究整体态势、前沿热点议题及各核心领域研究进展，并提炼了语言文字事业发展关键词和研究关键词。作为中国语言规划领域重要的元研究成果，《报告》既对2024年度学术研究情况进行全面总结与系统反思，也为中国语言规划自主知识体系建构作出有益探索。《报告》立足本土学术传统与语言生活实际、坚守中国立场，紧扣中国语言规划实践、建构特色研究框架，凝练具有本土特色的专业术语、夯实概念根基，多维度助力中国语言规划自主知识体系的构建与完善。

关键词: 语言规划；中国自主知识体系构建；皮书研究；元研究

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1. Introduction

China has witnessed a long, rich, and institutionally significant history of language planning practice. From the use of *yayan*—a refined or standard speech during the pre-Qin period—through the standardization of the written language in the Qin Dynasty to the Vernacular Chinese Movement in the early twentieth century, language planning has consistently been intertwined with state governance, cultural integration, social modernization, and educational reform (Cheng Zhangtai, 2015; Fang Xiaobing, 2025). Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the country's spoken and written language work has received extensive attention and yielded remarkable achievements, such as the popularization of the national common spoken and written language. On the basis of China's national conditions and concrete practices in language planning, research in this field has gradually developed a series of research topics, theoretical concepts, and methodological approaches with distinct Chinese characteristics.

Since China entered the new era, the sustained and deepening advancement of its spoken and written language work, together with the growing demand of national governance modernization for the allocation of language resources, the governance of language life, and the study of language policy, has driven the rapid development of China's language planning studies. Against the background of accelerating the construction of philosophy and social sciences with Chinese characteristics, the construction of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China is not only an intrinsic requirement for the high-quality development of the discipline, but also an inevitable path for scholars to better interpret China's linguistic phenomena, address China's language-related problems, and support the advancement of Chinese modernization.

The construction of such an independent knowledge system cannot proceed without scientific and

systematic reflection on the current state of language planning research in China. It requires meta-research: that is, research on research itself. Through meta-research, a discipline is able to examine its own knowledge production, evaluate its conceptual tools, identify its methodological tendencies, summarize its achievements, and diagnose its limitations. *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025* is precisely such a meta-research outcome. Since the publication of its first volume in 2016, the series has been published annually for ten consecutive years and has been praised as a “blue book” of Chinese language situation. Each volume introduces the state of language planning research in China in the preceding year.

This review introduces the framework and contents of *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025* (hereinafter referred to as the “Report”) and examines its contribution to the construction of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China. The discussion proceeds in two main steps. First, it analyzes the internal structure of the Report, showing how its four sections form a coherent progression from macro-level overview to thematic focus, from disciplinary mapping to conceptual refinement. Second, it evaluates the academic significance of the Report, especially its contribution to the consolidation of a Chinese standpoint, the exploration of a China-based research framework, and the refinement of indigenous terminology for the field.

2. Content Framework: An Editorial Logic Moving from the Broad Landscape to Core Concepts

The Report is divided into four parts: “General Overview,” “Hot Topics,” “Thematic Fields,” and “Keywords.” Its editorial arrangement embodies a clear and progressive logic. The Report begins with a broad survey of the field, then turns to hot topics of the year, proceeds to a structured presentation of research progress across thematic fields, and finally condenses the year’s academic developments into a set of keywords. In this sense, the Report moves from macro to micro, and from the overall “landscape” of research to the conceptual nodes that organize disciplinary knowledge.

2.1 General Overview: A Comprehensive Mapping of the Overall Research Situation of the Year

The part entitled “General Overview” contains four articles. These articles outline the overall profile of China’s language planning research in 2024 from four perspectives: an overview of language planning research during the year, a survey of approved linguistics research projects funded by major research foundations, the scientific work of the State Language Commission, and the application of scientific research achievements by the State Language Commission.

The article *Overview of China’s Language Policy Research in 2024* functions as the programmatic component of the entire Report. It reviews and analyzes the published papers on language planning research in China in 2024 according to eight research directions proposed in the 14th Five-Year Scientific Research Plan of the State Language Commission. It introduces the main themes and contents within each direction and summarizes the general characteristics of the field in China for the year: the deepening influence of technological drivers, the increasing integration of interdisciplinary approaches, and the growing orientation toward serving national strategies. This overview helps readers grasp not only the quantity and distribution of the literature, but also the underlying developmental tendencies of the field.

The Report also analyzes the status of linguistics projects approved by China’s three major research foundations: the National Social Science Fund of China, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research

Program of the Ministry of Education, and the Scientific Research Projects of the State Language Commission. By examining the data of approved projects, the Report reveals changes in key research directions and patterns of academic resource allocation. It thus provides scholars with a relatively objective basis for understanding research hot spots and policy tendencies. The Report finds that the three major research foundations show a stronger preference for applied research, with the proportion of applied research projects having already exceeded 70 percent. This finding indicates a clear application-oriented tendency in the current funding structure.

In addition, the Report introduces the scientific work of the State Language Commission, the core administrative body for China's spoken and written language work, by reviewing its research work in 2024 and outstanding cases of scientific achievement application in recent years. This further connects academic research with the concrete practice of the country's spoken and written language work, showing the close relationship between Chinese language planning research and the development of language work.

Thus, the "General Overview" part is more than a survey of annual research outputs. It also reveals the resource allocation, institutional environment, organizational mechanisms, and practical pathways of language planning research in China. By establishing this broader context, it lays the foundation for the subsequent discussion in Hot Topics and Thematic Fields.

2.2 Hot Topics: Identifying Focal Issues and Frontier Questions in the Context of the Times

Part II "Hot Topics" adopts the form of excerpting important scholarly viewpoints. It brings together major issues that attracted wide attention in language planning research in 2024. In selecting these topics, the Report balances three dimensions: national strategic needs, frontier changes brought about by new technologies, and foundational questions within the discipline.

First, it closely follows national strategies and the practical needs of social development. It reviews scholarly discussions on such themes as the role of language in supporting the construction of a powerful country, the creation of a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, and the development of new quality productivity. Second, it actively responds to new issues of language governance generated by technological change, including frontier topics such as language services empowered by artificial intelligence and the governance of large language models. Third, it also attends to foundational research questions within linguistics and language-related studies, like China's language policies, the disciplinary positioning of international Chinese language education, and the attributes and objectives of foreign language education.

Overall, the hot topics in China's language planning research in 2024 focus on policy practice while continuing to engage with foundational theoretical questions in key research areas. The "Hot Topics" part is marked by a clear problem orientation and a strong sense of the times. It not only offers an inventory of the year's most discussed research issues but also, to some extent, sketches the close relationship between China's language policy research and national needs, technological development, language education, and international communication. In doing so, it demonstrates the strong problem consciousness and forward-looking perspective of China's language planning research.

2.3 Thematic Fields: Presenting Developments through a Structured Disciplinary Maps

While the "Hot Topics" part centers on focal issues, the "Thematic Fields" part lays more stress on

systematic and comprehensive presentation of the discipline's major domains. This part is organized around thirteen research fields of concern to China's language policy research. These fields include: promotion and popularization of the standard spoken and written Chinese; standardization and normalization of language and characters; informatization, digitalization, and AI-powered development of language; inheritance and development of language and culture; scientific protection of language resources; language services and language industry; surveys on language use; Chinese language education; foreign language discipline development; international Chinese language education; construction of discourse system for international communication; theories and methodologies of language policy; regional and country-specific language policies.

Each article in the respective fields offers an overview of research progress in that field and provides several excerpts from representative papers, with each excerpt consisting of the bibliographic information, a paper summary, and core viewpoints of the paper. Thus, the Report displays representative research achievements and important progress in a clear and accessible manner.

This part has a distinctive value as a disciplinary map. It situates China's language planning research within a relatively stable framework of disciplinary fields, breaking away from fragmented discussions. By categorizing literature by research fields, the report enables readers to grasp the discipline's internal structure. It is worth noting that the "Thematic Fields" part covers not only traditional and foundational areas such as standardization and normalization of language and characters, but also emerging and frontier areas including AI-powered development of language, language industry, construction of discourse system for international communication. It suggests that language planning research in China now addresses not only questions of language norms and language education, but also issues related to digital governance, industrial development, international communication. This clearly reflects the widening scope and increasing complexity of China's language planning research.

2.4 Keywords: Refining Core Concepts through Key Terms

The "Keywords" part consists of two sections: *Keywords of China's Spoken and Written Language Work in 2024* and *Keywords in Language Policy Research in China (Series I)*. The former section lists seven keywords related to China's spoken and written language work, sorting out important events in the field in 2024 and interpreting their practical implications. In contrast, the latter presents ten additional keywords distilled from China's language planning research. For each keyword in the latter section, the Report also outlines relevant research status in 2024, defines the term, and recommends some literature to track its origin and evolution.

Although this section is relatively concise in length, it fulfills a distinctive function of knowledge organization and integration in the Report. Keywords are not merely isolated terms compiled for convenience. Rather, they represent a concentrated condensation of a discipline's knowledge accumulation and problem awareness at a given stage of development. China's language planning research is currently in a period of rapid growth and increasing maturity. Conceptual refinement and terminological standardization are thus fundamentally important. They can not only enhance the precision and concision of academic expression but also lay the groundwork for constructing the conceptual system of this discipline.

The "Keywords" part is grounded precisely in this value orientation. By refining concepts and

highlighting terminology that emerges from China's language life, language governance, and local scholarly traditions, it promotes the systematization and independence of knowledge expression in the field and provides important support for the construction of a discourse system for language planning research that embodies a Chinese standpoint, reflects Chinese experience, and possesses Chinese explanatory power.

3. Academic Value: Contributing to the Construction of an Independent Knowledge System for Language Planning in China

As an annual research report, the academic value of *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025* lies not only in its compilation of materials or integration of information. More importantly, it lies in its active exploration in the construction of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China. Its contribution may be understood in three interrelated respects.

3.1 Consolidating a China-centered Value Standpoint

The Report takes China's language planning research as its object of investigation. Throughout the Report, it remains grounded in China's linguistic conditions, national strategic needs, and local academic traditions, thereby upholding a distinctly Chinese standpoint in academic research.

In the "General Overview", the Report systematically reviews the annual research situation, the allocation of national-level research resources, and the practical development of research work led by the State Language Commission. In doing so, it is firmly rooted in the realities of the development of China's spoken and written language work and linguistic research. In particular, the article titled "*Overview of China's Language Policy Research in 2024*" takes the eight major research directions proposed in the 14th Five-Year Scientific Research Plan of the State Language Commission as its research scope. This reflects the Report's concern with "language planning research driven by the development needs of national spoken and written language works."

The "Hot Topics" part places language planning research within the context of national modernization. It examines the role of language in major national strategies, including the development of new quality productivity, the construction of a powerful country, and the creation of a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. At the same time, it selects topics with roots in the Chinese linguistic and educational tradition, such as the ideas on Chinese language education of Ye Shengtao, a famous Chinese educationist. In its choice of hot topics, therefore, the Report demonstrates a clear orientation toward Chinese characteristics.

The Report adheres to the principle of attending to the actual conditions of China's language life and solving problems arising in it. It refines research questions from local practice and academic tradition, strengthens the subjectivity and the sense of nativeness of language planning research, and thereby consolidates the value standpoint needed for the construction of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China.

3.2 Exploring a Research Framework Grounded in China's Practice

The Report is closely connected with the realities of language life in China and with the developmental needs of national language work. It seeks to construct a research framework for language planning that reflects Chinese characteristics. The thirteen research fields presented in the "Thematic Fields" are

especially important in this regard. These fields include not only traditional core areas that have long been central to China's language work but also rapidly developing frontier areas. This part presents, in a relatively systematic manner, the knowledge map of China's language planning research. Grounded in local language planning practices, it systematically categorizes and orderly reviews the main research domains of the discipline. It clearly reveals the comprehensive research pattern currently taking shape in China's language planning studies: from domestic governance to international communication; from traditional language norms to digital and intelligent governance; from language resources to the development of the language industry; and from language education policy to the inheritance and development of language culture.

By identifying and organizing the main domains of the field, the Report participates in the building of the discipline's internal structure. This reflects an active exploration by the Chinese language planning scholarly community in clarifying the disciplinary genealogy, improving the framework of the field, and expanding its frontier boundaries. In this sense, the Report provides a research framework for the construction of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China.

3.3 Refining Chinese Terminology to Construct the Conceptual Foundation

The formation of an independent knowledge system hinges on concept creation and terminology refinement. As a key indicator of the construction of a new knowledge system, a "terminology revolution" leads to the formation of a series of original and iconic concepts (Sun Zhengyu, 2024). Therefore, refining Chinese terminology to lay the conceptual foundation is essential.

The Report recognizes this point by devoting a special part to key terms. It reviews and publishes keywords related to China's language work and to language planning research. These keywords are derived from China's language life, language governance, and academic tradition. They function as core terms and knowledge nodes through which the field can organize its intellectual resources.

The keywords selected in the Report condense theoretical concepts, points of research consensus, and professional expressions distinctive of language planning in China. They transform dispersed academic achievements into a terminological spectrum that can be transmitted, discussed, accumulated, and further developed. This work is especially important because it helps reduce excessive dependence on Western conceptual systems. The point is not to reject international scholarship, but to ensure that China's language planning research possesses the conceptual resources necessary to explain China's realities and contribute to global academic dialogue from its own standpoint. By systematically refining China-grounded terminology and core concepts, the Report contributes to the gradual formation of an academic discourse for China's language planning. It strengthens the conceptual foundations needed for theoretical interpretation, academic innovation, and academic communication. From this perspective, the "Keywords" part represents an important attempt to promote the formation of an autonomous conceptual system in Chinese language policy and planning research.

4. Conclusion

Through annual overviews of the field, reviews and excerpts of literature in hot topics and thematic fields, and the refinement of keywords, *Study of Language Policies in China: 2025* offers a relatively comprehensive presentation of the representative achievements, core issues, and developmental trends of

China's language planning research in 2024.

Of course, the Report also has certain limitations. For example, it focuses mainly on presenting the current state of research, while offering relatively limited critical reflection on the quality, problems, and methodological assumptions of existing studies. It also concentrates primarily on research that has already been conducted, and provides comparatively little prediction, guidance, or forward-looking assessment of future research trends.

Nevertheless, the overall contribution of the Report is substantial. Through its establishment of a local standpoint, its exploration of a research framework, and its refinement of core concepts, the Report actively contributes to the formation and deepening of an independent knowledge system for language planning in China. It demonstrates the academic consciousness of China's language planning scholarly community in interpreting language phenomena and solving language problems from the standpoint of China's realities. At the same time, it reveals their scholarly aspiration and practical effort to elevate Chinese experience into Chinese theory and Chinese discourse.

In this sense, the series of *Study of Language Policies in China* is more than annual reviews of scholarly production. It is also a reflective document of disciplinary self-construction. It records the development of China's language planning research in a specific year, while also participating in the longer-term project of building a knowledge system that is rooted in Chinese practice, informed by Chinese academic traditions, and capable of contributing to international discussions on language policy and planning.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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