

FANG XU, *Silencing Shanghai: Language and identity in urban China*. New York: Lexington Books, 2021. Pp. 261. Hb. \$105.

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More than documenting a story about the local dialect in Shanghai, Xu's book critically engages with the globalizing process of the city and the marginalization of its native population, by taking the dialect endangerment as a typical aspect of the broader social transformations in urban China during the past decades. Xu argues that the shifts in language attitudes and choices in this global city not only show the changing demography, but also reflect how Mandarin, the state-sponsored language, excludes and silences the distinctive native voice.

Before coming into conclusion, this book consists of five analytical chapters, plus an introductory chapter which begins with a theoretical discussion in linguistic capital, right to the city and nationalism as a dominant language ideology. Xu also identifies language and social dynamics in Shanghai as the representations of 'neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics' (13), which is closely associated with both nationalism and globalization.

By tracing the history of Shanghai as a migrant city, the expansion and redevelopment of its urban landscape as well as the origin of its vernacular, Chapter 1 corresponds to the later empirical sections that figure out why and how the Shanghai dialect declines. Chapter 2 is concerned with the top-down language policy that the Chinese government imposes, through legal and administrative means, to promote a national language for a uniform national identity; the propaganda machine and the public emotions hinder the preservation of the native language. Chapter 3 provides readers with a geographical displacement story about loss and alienation: the forced outward mobility of indigenous residents destroyed the material conditions for daily interactions in the Shanghai dialect. Chapter 4 illustrates how demographic changes have severely limited the linguistic space for the local tongue. The author then argues in Chapter 5 that the bilingual capacity of Shanghai natives and the flexible resident identity of non-natives diminishes migrants' incentives to acquire the vernacular despite the language discrimination they receive.

The conclusion summarizes how the three sets of state policy in areas of language use, urban redevelopment and internal migration have negatively impacted the linguistic space and future for the vernacular. Xu points out that it is the central government that has sacrificed the linguistic heritage of Shanghai to gain the city's cosmopolitan metropolis status and to facilitate the process of globalization.

This book offers a panorama of the transformative language life and linguistic contentions, which makes the investigation meaningful for researchers interested in endangered language and identity. However, the nostalgia of Xu, who was born and raised in Shanghai, has led to over emphasis on the positioning of natives as victims. It is a complex situation when discussing migration in Shanghai. In addition to those highly educated elites owning 'flexible citizenship' (182), more attention deserves to be paid to many working-class migrants, who have to learn the Shanghai dialect for social integration.