

Beijing Forum 2019

Language, Culture and Identity in Inter-Civilization Interaction (III)

On the morning of Nov. 3rd, the third session of sub-forum “Language, Culture and Identity in Inter-Civilization Interaction” was held in the School of Foreign Languages, Peking University. David Adger, professor of Queen Mary University of London, served as the panel moderator for this division. Ning Qi from Peking University, Cho Sook-Ja from Arizona State University, Alexander Lomanov from IMEMO, Hu Xuhui from Peking University and Tinatin Bolkvadze from Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University were the contributors who delivered speeches during the session.

Professor Ning Qi, as the first speaker, delivered her speech, titled “Reflections on Multilingual Education and the Belt and Road Initiative”. She proposed that, currently, the Belt and Road Initiative makes language resources a national resource in urgent need, making it an important issue for Chinese colleges and universities to design the language construction plan from the macro level, develop sustainable language resources construction, carry out productive multilingual education, and cultivate real language talents with the ability of intercultural communication and understanding. Peking University develops language resource construction and multilingual education, and constantly explores the mode of talent cultivation, making its own contributions to international cultural exchanges and the inheritance of human civilization.

Professor Cho Sook-Ja shared her thesis, titled “Transplanted Loyalty and the Birth of Heroes in East Asian Wartime Communities”, in which she explored the complex dynamics of the literary and cultural relationship between premodern China and Korea by examining the Korean appropriation of Chinese historical heroes. She noticed that Chinese hero tales were recalled and retold by Koreans for various purposes, including affirming the values and virtues upheld in Korean culture. At times of transition and turmoil, these characters were summoned forth and revitalized to boost Koreans’ morale and help them to move forward, easing conflict and tension within society. She suggested that wartime hero narratives in Korea are a rich source of context for our discussion of the cultural exchanges between China and Korea. A further inquiry into the heroes and heroic imaginations of the two countries would nourish our understanding of the shared cultural and

literary space of premodern China and Korea.

Professor Alexander Lomanov's discussion on "Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis" of the mid-1930s and its contemporary significance focused on the "Manifesto of Cultural Construction on a Chinese Basis". Professor Lomanov stressed that it is impossible to "restore antiquity", yet it is also impossible to copy fully industrialized England and America because China is between an agrarian feudal society and an industrial society. He further explored the debates among famous Chinese scholars at the time, such as Hu Shi, Tao Xisheng, and ten other professors. The importance of this study, he claimed, is that it raises similar questions as what China faces now in the progress toward modernization in the context of globalization, rapid economic development and cross-cultural interactions.

Professor Hu Xuhui gave a report on "Dialect Preservation—Perspectives from Theoretical Linguistics", in which he aimed to explain why dialects are important from the (new) perspective of theoretical linguistics. Having explained the function of Core Human Language Faculty, professor Hu introduced his research with Perry on how syntax and phonology interact in Yixing dialect (宜兴话). Yixing provides a window into the internal mechanism of brain regarding the faculty of language, when theoretical linguistics delineates the underlying picture of its syntax/semantics/phonology.

Finally, professor Tinatin Bolkvadze gave the speech entitled "Eastern Christian Linguistic Tradition and the Georgian Alphabet". Abstract: There are several theories concerning the origins of the Georgian alphabet. Some of them are based on the data of "Kartlis Tskhovreba", which was the principal compendium of medieval Georgian historical texts, and essentially the official corpus of the history of the Kingdom of Georgia. Professor Tinatin Bolkvadze's study deals with the problem of the relation of Eastern Christian Tradition to the creation of the Georgian alphabet, and also the stages of transformation of Georgian alphabet, the paradigm and syntagmatic of the Georgian graphemes in alphabet and different kind of old Georgian manuscripts and epigraphic sources which shows the development of Georgian alphabet in different periods of history.

The whole session successfully came to an end with animated discussions among scholars and listeners, bringing up insightful thoughts for future studies.