

Breaking through the Barrier

Effects of Language Policy on Migration Decision-Making

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Research Question

- Language effects in migration decision-making
- What can be changed (by the government)?

✓

What We Know and Don't

Known

- Language matters
 - Socioeconomic life (Tang, Hu & Jin 2018)
 - Social identity (Safran and Liu 2005)
 - Migration outcome (Boyd and Cao 2009)

Unknown

- Language effect on decision-making
- Language manipulation by the government

Language Matters: A Theory

Communication model + culture model

Language effect

- Favoring place with lower barrier
- Better vernacular, more likely to stay

Policy effect

Better national common language (NCL),
then...

Hammer vs. Bypass

- Hammer: Crashing the barrier



- Bypass: Alternative to vernacular



Data and Methods

China Labor-Force Dynamics Survey (CLDS 2016)

- Language barrier:
 - Language closeness (Liu et al. 2015)
 - Vernacular proficiency
- Policy effect: Putonghua proficiency

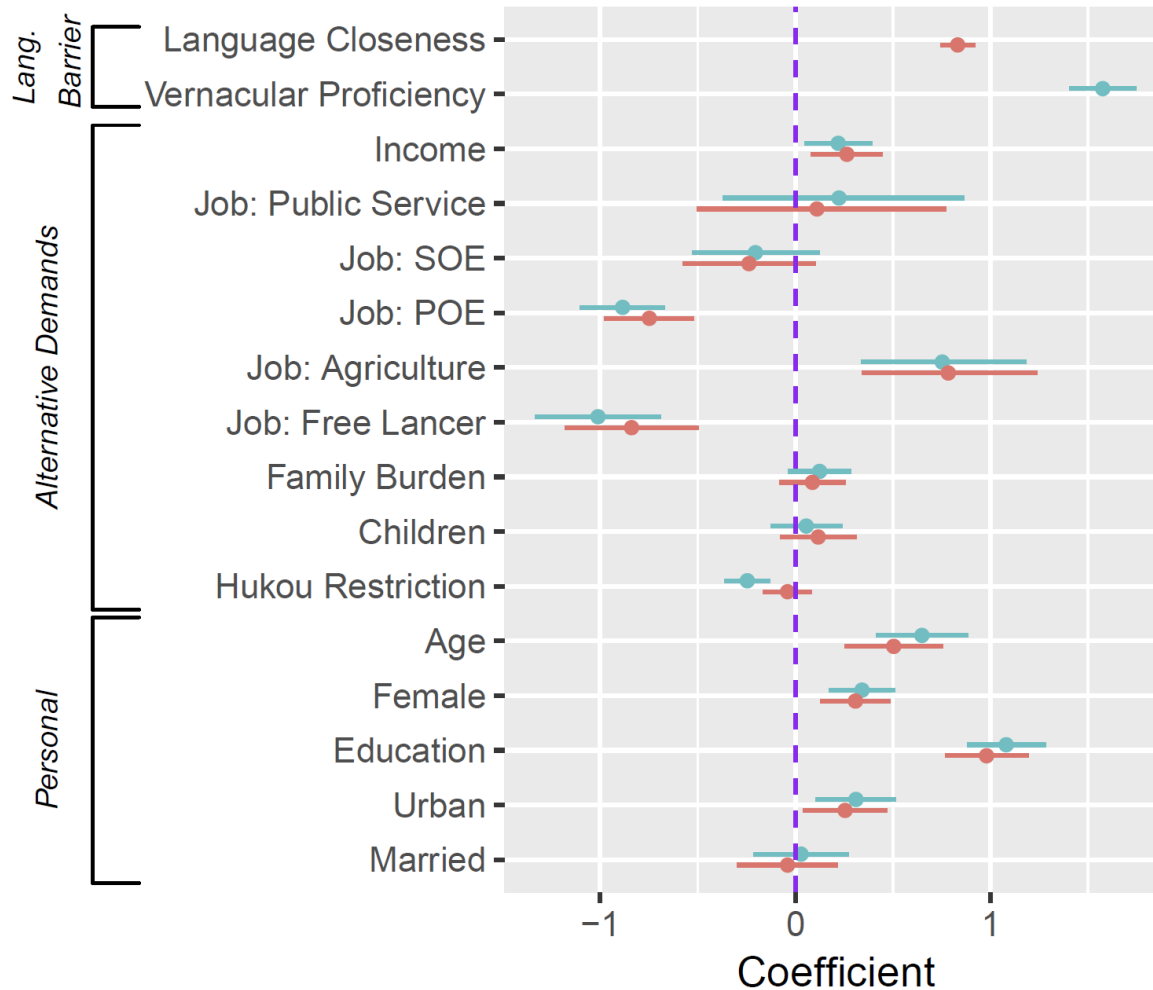
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Experiment

Assuming you have a plan to leave from the city your hukou was registered, there are two available options: City A and B. The two cities are very similar... The difference is that you are expected to earn twice as much in City A as in City B, while the average living cost in A is also about 1.5 times of the cost in B. Given these conditions, where do you prefer to move, A or B?

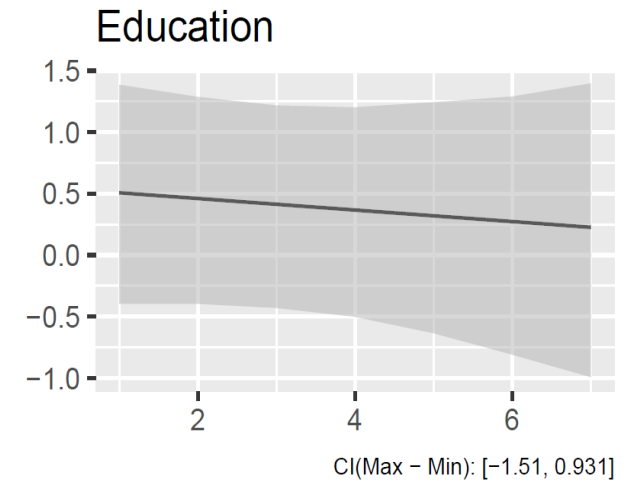
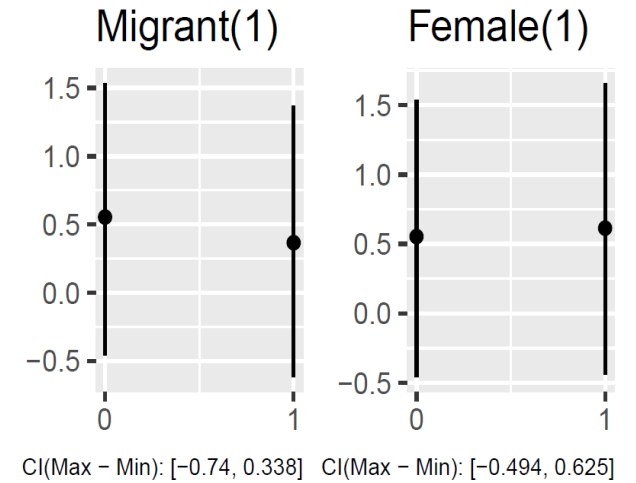
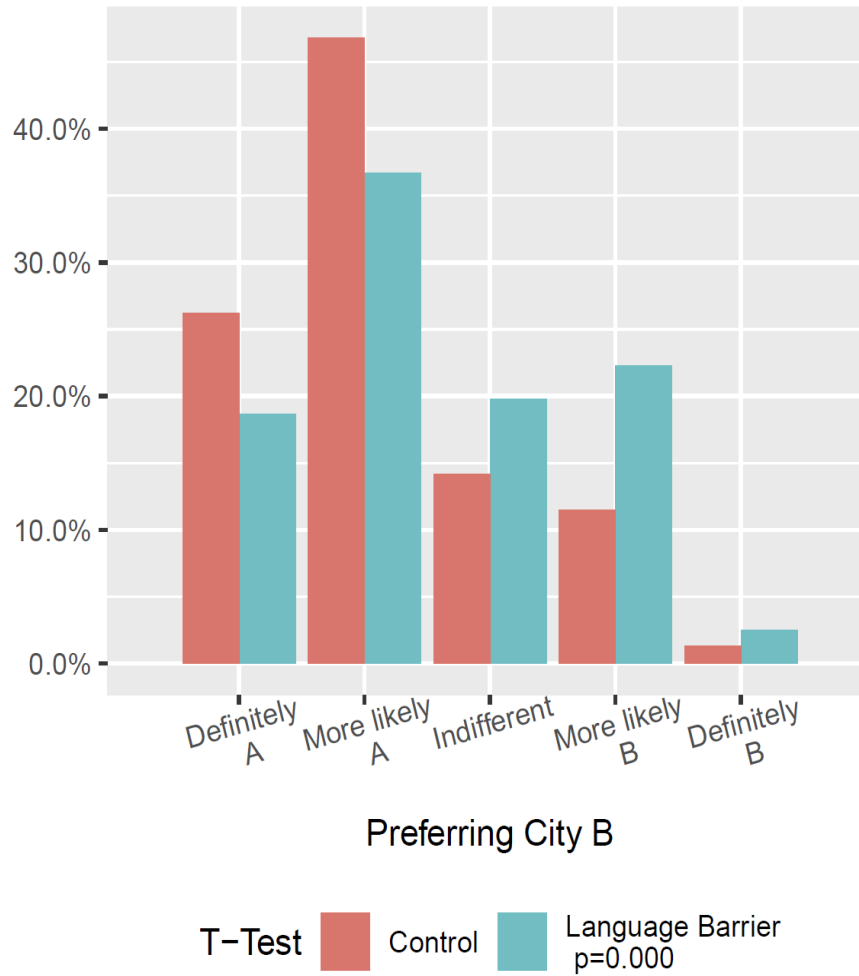
The vernacular in City B is quite similar to your mother tongue. You can make smooth communication there with no problem, while

Is There a Barrier

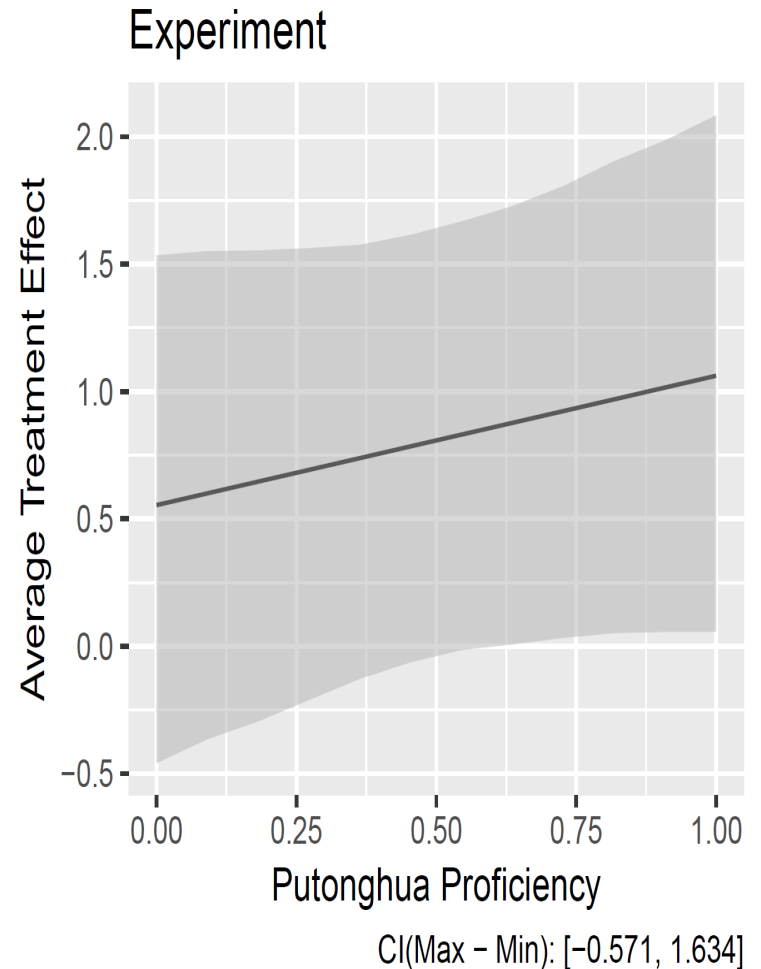
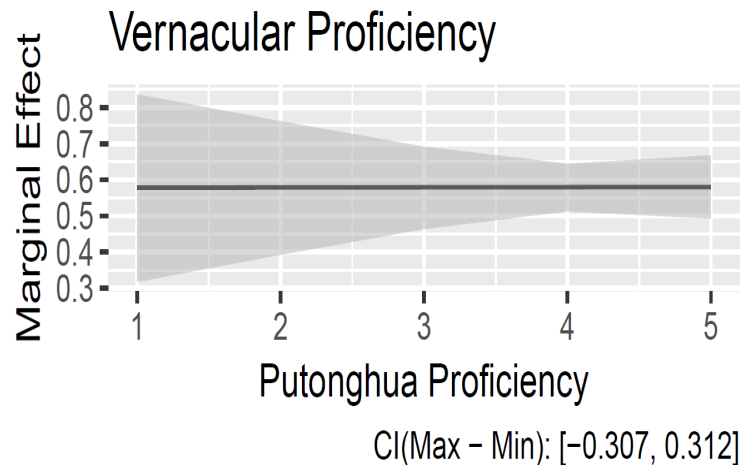
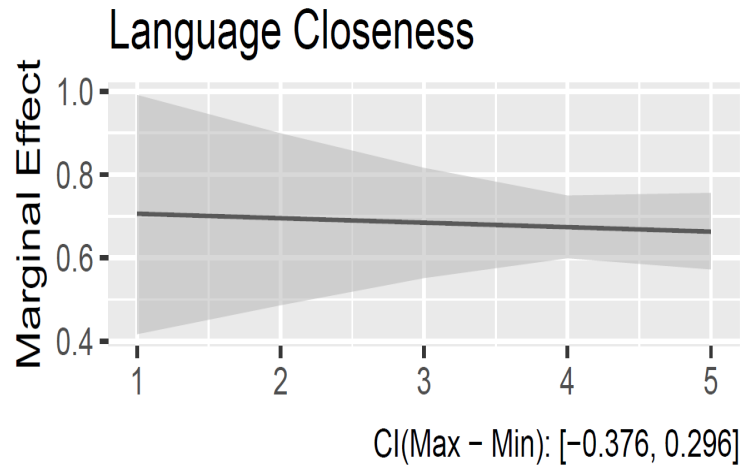


Model 1
(N:2027
Log.Lik:-2546.72
AIC:5131.43)

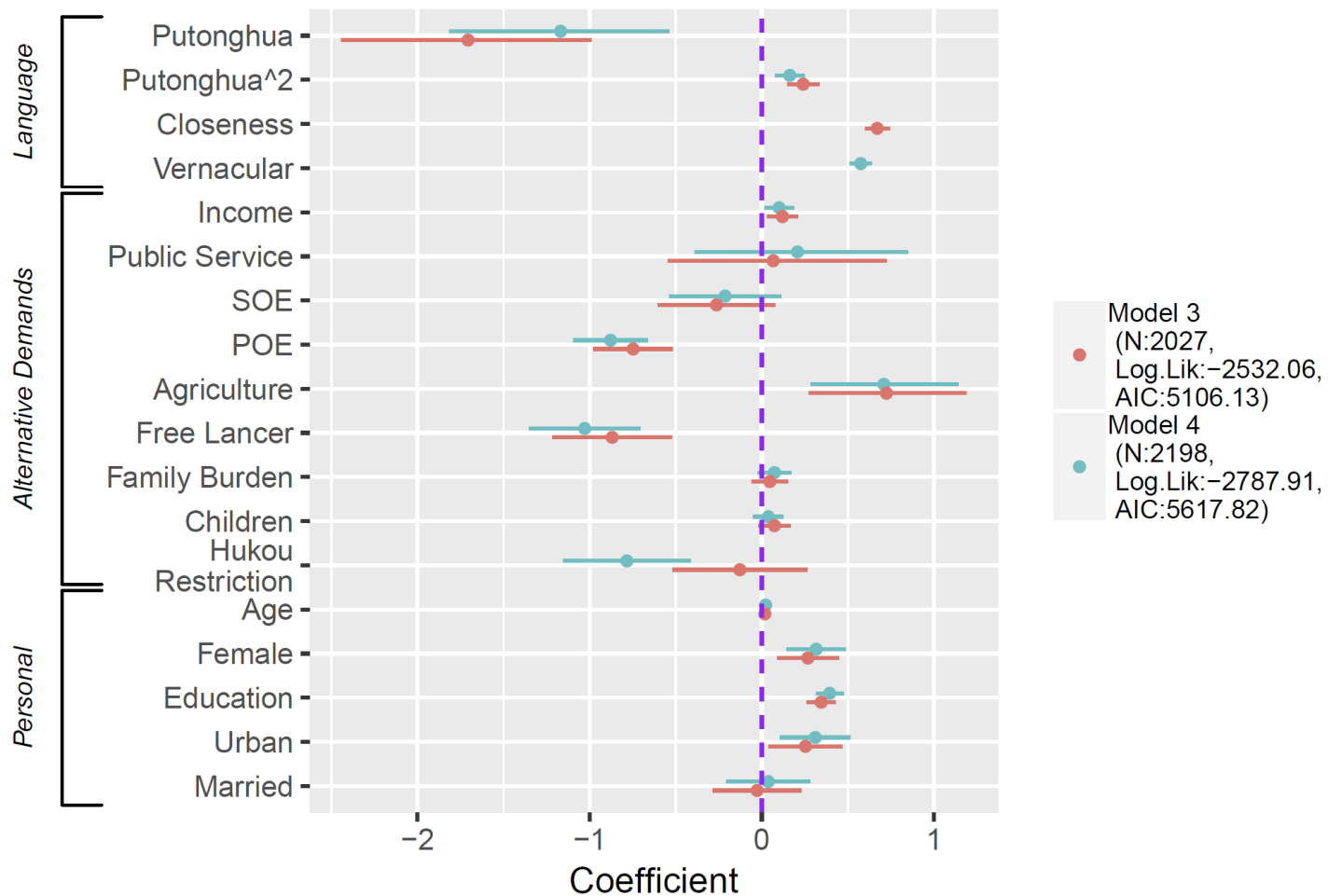
Model 2
(N:2198
Log.Lik:-2795.66
AIC:5629.32)



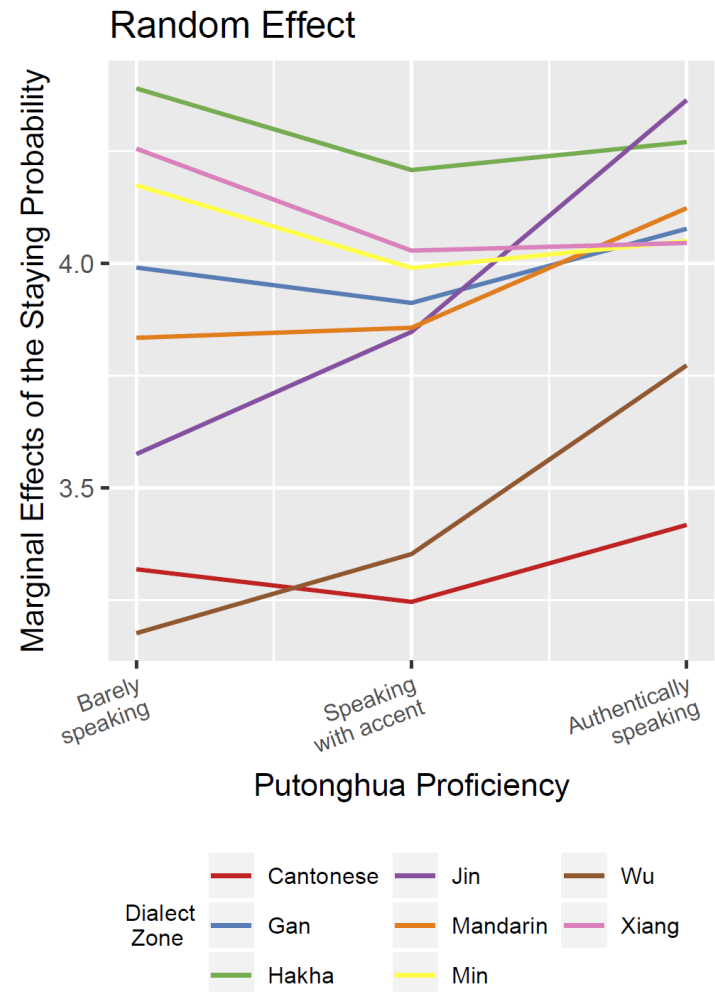
Hammer: Moderator Model



Bypass: Quadratic Model



Regional Variance and Robustness Check



Conclusion

- Language matters
- Invisible hand works (bypass)
- **Migration:** Alternative factors
- **Modernization:** More communication than culture.

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Thank you!

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 <https://sammo3182.github.io/>

 [sammo3182](https://github.com/sammo3182)