

Southern Min

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Introduction

Southern Min is a major Chinese language of wider communication in many countries of Southeast Asia with a conservative estimate of seven million speakers in this region, the result of a gradual, centuries-long diaspora from China.¹ This estimate includes the three main varieties of Hokkien, Teochew and Hainanese.

Historically, the core of the Min languages is located in modern day Fujian, a coastal province in the southeast of China. It represents one of the ten branches of the Sinitic taxon within the Sino-Tibetan language family, and accounts for approximately 4%–5% of Sinitic speakers in China, that is, approximately 52 million speakers (Zhang 2012). Southern Min, is in fact, the largest and most widely distributed subgroup of dialects within the Min supergroup, as it is known, extending south into Guangdong province, and over the straits to Taiwan. There are 27 million speakers of varieties of Southern Min on the mainland and a further 15 million in Taiwan.

In Southeast Asia, sizeable communities of these three main varieties of Southern Min speakers are located principally in the countries of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Hokkien or *Fújiànhuà* 福建话 has traditionally been the main overseas Chinese language in all these countries, except for Thailand, where the Chaozhou 潮州 or Teochew speakers predominate, reportedly making up more than 80% of the Chinese community.²

In this chapter, we thus present an overview of the main features of the grammar of Hokkien, focusing on aspects of its phonology, morphology and syntax which are distinct from standard Mandarin, while highlighting features that it shares with other languages of the Southeast Asian area.

Demography of Southern Min speakers

In China, Southern Min is largely spoken in the region of Zhangzhou 漳州, Quanzhou 泉州 and Xiamen 厦门 along a coastal strip in the south of Fujian province. Over the border from the Min homeland, two important dialects of the Southern Min subgroup are found in northeastern Guangdong, these being Shantou 汕頭 (Swatow) and Chaozhou 潮州 (Teochew), communities which live in close proximity to varieties of Hakka and Cantonese.³

Large communities of Min speakers are also found as far south as the Leizhou peninsula 雷州半島 in southern Guangdong and on Hainan Island 海南島, a province thirty kilometres off the southeastern coast of China. Here they live side by side with the Li and the Yao peoples, speakers of non-Sinitic languages belonging respectively to the Kra-Dai and Hmong-Mien families. On the basis of dynastic records, the forebears of these two outlier communities closely, which form the Leiqiong subgroup, are believed to have come mainly from Putian county, in northern Fujian, beginning in the period of the late Song and early Yuan, that is, from the 13th century (Li & Yao 2008).

Across the Taiwan Strait from Fujian province, Southern Min flourishes as the first language of the majority of the population with approximately 15 million speakers (67% of the population of 22 million) (S. Huang 1993, Simons & Fennig 2017). The variety of Taiwanese Southern Min has evolved from a fusion and neutralization of the dialects spoken in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou and consequently belongs to the Quanzhang subgroup.

Migrations began in the early 17th century from these two prefectural towns in southern Fujian province to the island of Formosa, as it was first named by the Portuguese, as well as to many neighbouring countries in Southeast Asia. Consequently, the Hokkien or Quanzhang subgroup (泉漳片) of Southern Min is spoken by Chinese communities living in particularly Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei, Cambodia and the Philippines.⁴ In Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar, smaller communities of Chinese speak varieties of Mandarin and Yue.

Dialect classification

The Min group is a very diverse group of dialects whose subdivisions are generally not mutually intelligible. For example, speakers of the Fuzhou dialect in northern Fujian cannot converse easily with speakers of the Chaozhou dialect in the south, or even Putian speakers with their distant relatives in Hainan. Min is reputed to be the most highly divergent group within Sinitic. Fujian province was, in fact, one of the last to be completely colonized and settled by the Han people in the 7th century. It remained for many centuries one of the most geographically inaccessible areas of China with its high mountain ranges and few major rivers suited to the typical north-to-south migration pattern in China's history. In the view of Norman (1988), this may partially explain the heterogeneous nature of the Min dialect group.⁵

In Chinese dialectology, the traditional division of Min dialects has been into Northern and Southern types (Yuan Jiahua et al, 1960). The Fuzhou 福州 dialect was generally used as the representative dialect for Northern Min while the Xiamen 廈門 or Amoy dialect was used for Southern Min. More recently, Jerry Norman proposed a new primary division into Inland (or Western) Min and Coastal (or Eastern) Min (see Norman 1988, 1991, You 1992, Wurm et al 1987: Map B12). Inland Min comprises the three subgroups of Northwestern and Far Western on the one hand, and Central on the other, which correspond in fact to the two main routes of migration taken in the third century AD, from Jiangxi in the west and Zhejiang in the north (Bielenstein 1959, Chappell 2001a). In chronological terms, the formation of Coastal Min also neatly matches the seventh century migration down the coast from these same two provinces and incorporates Northeastern dialects such as Fuzhou and Southern dialects such as Xiamen and Teochew. To this classification, for the historical reasons adumbrated above, we need to add a separate subgroup for the Min dialects spoken on Hainan Island and the Leizhou peninsula, due to their evolution in isolation from the rest of Min. The list below includes some representative varieties for each subgroup.

(i) Inland Min

- a. *Northwestern*: Jian 健 dialects
- b. *Far Western*: Shaowu 邵武, Jingle 靜樂
- c. *Central*: Yong'an 永安

(ii) Coastal Min

- a. *Northeastern*: Fuzhou 福州, Fu'an 福安
- b. *Puxian*: Putian 莆田
- c. ***Southern***: Xiamen 廈門(Amoy), Taiwanese 台語, Zhangzhou 漳州, Quanzhou 泉州, Chaozhou (Teochew) 潮州, Shantou 汕頭 (Swatow)

(iii) Leiqiong 雷瓊

- a. Dialects of the Leizhou peninsula 雷州話
- b. Hainanese 海南話

Literary versus colloquial registers

Within Sinitic, the Min dialects stand out for the striking contrast between literary and colloquial pronunciations of words, known as *wén-bái yì-dú* 文白異讀 in Mandarin. The literary or reading pronunciation tends to be closer to that in Mandarin, reflecting earlier diglossia with the language of the imperial court as the ‘High’ language. For example, the character 行 has the literary reading /hɪŋ⁵/ and the colloquial reading /kiaⁿ⁵/, pronunciations which are realized according to function: /hɪŋ⁵/ is used in the more elevated literary lexicon for abstract words such as 行為 /hɪŋ⁵ uī⁵/ ‘behaviour’ and 行動 /hɪŋ⁵ tɔŋ⁷/ ‘deeds, action’ while /kiaⁿ⁵/ is used in its colloquial and concrete sense of ‘to walk’ (Yang 1991: 10-14; 118-134). For the contemporary language, the different pronunciations cannot in fact be explained simply as two different stylistic levels used in different contexts but reshape the entire lexicon, due to their function in distinguishing senses of the same word and in creating families of words and compounds. The historical reason for these chronological strata in the Min dialects is treated in Mei & Yang (1995), while certain of the synchronic outcomes for the lexicon are discussed in Lien (2001) in terms of the interaction between the two types of pronunciation.

This description of Southern Min uses Taiwanese as the representative variety with examples transcribed in the revised Church Romanization, in wide use in Taiwanese linguistic circles.⁶

Popular literature and historical documents concerning the Southern Min language

Documents written in Min go back to at least the sixteenth century and include many different local styles of opera including the southern style or *nányīn* 南音 opera, songs, and Taoist liturgical material. For Southern Min, an important work is the popular Ming dynasty (1368–1644) play, the *Li Jing Ji* 荔鏡記 (Romance of the Litchi and Mirror, 1566), written in a mixture of the Quanzhou and Chaozhou dialects. These make use of the specially created demotic characters for Southern Min words for which a standard Chinese character does not exist, for example, 勿會 *bue⁷* ‘cannot’; 𠵼 *in¹* 3PL ‘they’.⁷

Other pedagogical and religious materials from the same period have been traced to the Philippines, and even to Spain. These include a translation into Southern Min from Spanish of a Catholic catechism, *Doctrina Christiana en letra y lengua china* (1597–1605), two Southern Min–Spanish dictionaries, *Dictionarium Sino-Hispanicum* (Chinese–Spanish Dictionary) (c. 1604) and *Bocabulario de la lengua sangleya* (Lexicon of the Sangley Language) (c. 1617), not to mention an early grammar of the Southern Min dialect of Zhangzhou, *Arte de la lengua chiō-chiu* (Grammar of the Chiō Chiu language) (1620). These were all compiled and written by Spanish missionaries in collaboration with native speakers in Manila and Cebu where Chinese communities had been set up in the wake of established trade routes between southern Fujian and the Philippines.⁸ The term ‘Sangley’ refers in fact to these Hokkien Chinese traders in the Philippines and is likely related to the Southern Min word which means ‘commerce’: *seng¹-li²* 生理.

1. Phonology

Southern Min is an exclusively tonal language, without the use of any register differences.⁹ It exhibits a complex system of tone sandhi, based on its seven citation tones. For a Chinese language, it possesses a reasonably standard size inventory of 18 consonants, two semi-vowels, six cardinal vowels which combine to form the syllable rhymes of Southern Min including eight diphthongs and two triphthongs (see Tables 2 and 3 below). Its inventory of syllables is quite expansive with over 2,200 combinations compared with standard Mandarin, which has approximately 1,100 different syllable types (Cheng 1997: 93). As for most Sinitic

languages, Southern Min does not permit any consonant clusters in syllable-initial position, while it has a restricted set of consonants permitted in syllable-final position.

Min dialects show the main division common to the consonant inventory in most Sinitic languages of an aspirated versus unaspirated distinction for obstruents. Strikingly, however, Min dialects also possess a voiced series of stops that occur in syllable-initial position, having evolved from an earlier series of nasal phonemes. Admittedly, there is also a voiced series of initial consonants in many Wu and Xiang dialects. In the Wu dialects these have, however, a very different source in implosive consonants.

1.1. *Suprasegmental phonology: tone and register*

While phonation types are not recognized for Min dialects, in contrast to this, tone sandhi or tone change is a complex and well-known feature of the entire Min supergroup of dialects.¹⁰ Thus, in Southern Min, each syllable can be realized in its citation tone and in a sandhi (or changed) tone. The citation tone, also known as its ‘isolation’ tone refers to the pronunciation of any stressed syllable preceding a pause, such as at the end of a tone group, or in a position before a following unstressed syllable. Table 1 uses the traditional classification system for Chinese tones into four categories and two registers, upper and lower (which, however, we note, no longer function as true register differences).

The four categories of tones are known as *píngshēng* 平聲 ‘level tone’, *shǎngshēng* 上聲 ‘ascending tone’, *qùshēng* 去聲 ‘departing tone’ and *rùshēng* 入聲 ‘entering tone’. Due to tone merger, there is no lower register tone value for the Ascending Tone, that is, there is no Tone 6. Tone values are a case of relative pitch, and subject to both dialectal and individual speaker variation. The entering tone tends to be a clipped tone of short duration in most Sinitic languages, due to the fact that it occurs largely in closed syllables with the plosive codas: -p, -t, -k or -ʔ. To represent the relevant pitch values, Yuen Ren Chao’s scale from the lowest value, 1, to the highest, 5 is used in this description of Hokkien, while the transcription known as the modified Church Romanization has been adopted. The tone sandhi values are given in italic numbers to the right of the citation values, and, in general, will not be given in the transcription of examples used in the present description.¹¹

Table 1: Tone inventory of Southern Min

	Level tone 平聲	Ascending tone 上聲	Departing tone 去聲	Entering tone 入聲
Upper	Tone 1 陰平	Tone 2 陰上	Tone 3 陰去	Tone 4 陰入
Register	High level 55 33	High falling 51 55	Low falling 21 51	Low checked 2 5
Lower	Tone 5 陽平		Tone 7 陽去	Tone 8 陽入
Register	Mid rising 25 21/33		Low level 33 21	High checked 5 2

Tone sandhi rules in Southern Min have been described in terms of a tone cycle by Robert Cheng (1972). For tones in the non-checked syllables, a cyclic effect is produced whereby the High Falling Tone (陰上 51) changes to the same pitch value as High Level (陰平 55); High Level Tone (陰平 55) changes to Low Level Tone (陽去 33), the Low Level tone (陽去 33) changes to Low Falling (陰去 21) and Low Falling Tone (陰去 21) changes to High Falling (陰上 51), thereby completing the cycle. The two checked or entering tones also perform a similar kind of flip-flop: High Checked (陽入 5) becomes Low Checked (陰入 2) and vice-versa. Finally, the Mid Rising tone (陽平 25) changes to a low tone: either Low Falling (陰去 21) or Low Level (陽去 33). In Southern Min, syllables with the neutral or unstressed tone are less common compared with standard Mandarin Chinese where the phenomenon is

widespread, that is, the loss of the full tonal value on unstressed syllables in compound words, in addition to affixes and clitic-like elements.

A paradigm of tonal syllables in reading pronunciation is next presented, according to the traditional numbering:

Open syllables:

Tone 1: <i>su</i> ⁵⁵	私 ‘secret’	Tone 5: <i>su</i> ²⁵	詞 ‘an expression’
Tone 2: <i>su</i> ⁵¹	使 ‘to cause’	Tone 7: <i>su</i> ³³	事 ‘business’
Tone 3: <i>su</i> ²¹	思 ‘be anxious’		

Checked syllables:

Tone 4: <i>sut</i> ²	率 ‘to lead’
Tone 8: <i>sut</i> ⁵	述 ‘to recite’

1.2. Segmental phonemes : consonants and vowels

1.2.1. Initial and final consonant patterns

There are 18 consonants and two semi-vowels in Southern Min which are characterized by aspiration and voicing. While the nasal consonants, /m/ and /ŋ/ may act as syllables, consonant clusters in either initial or final position are not permitted, at least at the level of the syllable. While all consonants may occur in syllable-initial position, syllable-final position is restricted to the nasals /m n ŋ/, the voiceless unaspirated plosives /p t k/ and the glottal stop /ʔ/.

There are two series of obstruents comprising plosives, fricatives and affricates: (1) a voiceless series, and (2) a voiced series. In addition to this, there is a contrast in aspiration in the voiceless series: the unaspirated class (p, t, k, ʔ, ts) and the aspirated class (p^h, t^h, k^h, ts^h). Voiced series of obstruents are uncommon in Sinitic languages. Notwithstanding this, through a process of denasalization, Southern Min has acquired a voiced series (b, l, g) noting that in Southern Min, the phoneme /l/ has an apical place of articulation, close to /d/ (Zhou 1991:13-14). In some dialects, there is also free variation for the phoneme /dz/ with /l/, for example, the word for ‘day’ 日 may be pronounced as *jit*⁸ [dzit⁸] or *lit*⁸. The Xiamen or Amoy variety only has /l/, as is also the case in Quanzhou (Zhou 1991:14, Yang 1991:25).

Table 2: Consonants of Taiwanese Southern Min

		<i>Bilabial</i>	<i>Dental</i>	<i>Velar</i>	<i>Glottal</i>
<i>Plosives</i>	voiceless unaspirated	p	t	k	ʔ
	voiceless aspirated	p ^h	t ^h	k ^h	
	voiced	b		g	
<i>Affricates</i>	voiceless unaspirated		ts		
	voiceless aspirated		ts ^h		
	voiced		dz		
<i>Fricatives</i>	voiceless		s		h
<i>Nasals</i>		(m)	(n)	(ŋ)	
<i>Lateral</i>			l		

The voiced series of plosives is in partial complementary distribution with their homorganic nasals in Southern Min. Synchronically, /b/, /l/ and /g/ are realized as their nasal allophones, /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, respectively, when they occur in the initial position of syllables

with the nasalized finals $-i^n$, $-a^n$, $-ɔ^n$, $-ia^n$, $-iu^n$, ai^n , $-au^n$, $-ua^n$, ui^n etc. Some examples are (i) $/bia^{n5}/$ 名 ‘name’ which is realized phonetically as $[mia^{n5}]$, (ii) $/liu^{n5}/$ 娘 ‘woman’ which is realized phonetically as $[niu^{n5}]$ and (iii) $/gi^{n7}/$ 硬 ‘hard’ which is realized phonetically as $[ɲi^{n7}]$ (see Yang 1991: 26-27, Zhou 1991: 31 for more examples).¹ Historically, under certain conditions, the three nasal phonemes in Southern Min $/m n ŋ/$ all lost their nasality in initial position, producing $/b l g/$ (Zhou 1991: 14, 31, Baxter & Sagart 2014:92ff). Examples of words that have voiced plosives or the voiced lateral initial in combination with non-nasalized syllable rhymes are $[be^2]$ 馬 ‘horse’, $[lam^5]$ 南 ‘south’ and $[go^5]$ 鵝 ‘goose’.

1.2.2. Vowel patterns

In Southern Min, there are basically six vowels, with much dialectal variation, it should be added.¹² Vowels can be classified as either: (1) monophthongs (single vowels), or (2) diphthongs. In addition to this basic division, Southern Min also possesses two triphthongs.

Table 3: Monophthongs of Southern Min

	front	central	back
high	i		u
high-mid	e		o
mid			
low-mid			ɔ
low		a	

There are eight diphthongs possible in Southern Min, formed by combinations of the medial vowels and offglides $/i/$ and $/u/$ with 5 of the cardinal vowels. Only the open-mid back vowel $/ɔ/$ does not participate in such combinations:

Table 4: Inventory of diphthongs and triphthongs in Southern Min

Vowels Onglides	i	e	a	o	u	au	ai
i-	—	—	ia	io	iu	iau	—
u-	ui	ue	ua	—	—	—	uai

There are also two triphthongs: these are $-iau$ and $-uai$, as observable in the last two columns of Table 4. For an in-depth treatment of Southern Min phonology, see Cheng (1972), Zhou (1991) and Yang (1991).

1.3. Syllable structure :

According to traditional Chinese phonology, the structure of each syllable consists of two parts: an initial and a final. The final is composed of a medial and a rhyme, while the rhyme is further divided into a nucleus and a coda. We can represent this by the following diagram:

¹ Here an implicit reference to the literary pronunciation and the reconstructed forms is being made by Yang (1991). For more details of the development of the nasal and plosive series of initial consonants, see Baxter & Sagart (2014).

Table 5 : Syllable structure in Southern Min

INITIAL	FINAL		
	MEDIAL	RHYME	
		NUCLEUS	CODA

Except for the nucleus, there is no obligatory element in the syllable, nor is there any restriction on consonants that occupy the initial position, apart from the impossibility of voiced stops to co-occur with nasalized finals. The glottal stop is not, however, phonemically distinct in this position. Bilabial and velar nasals may be syllabic, as in /m⁷/ 怀 ‘not want’ and /ŋ⁵/ 黄 ‘yellow’ or act as finals, as in /hm⁵/ 媒 ‘matchmaker’ and /bŋ⁷/ 问 ‘to ask’. As mentioned earlier, the coda position allows the three nasals /m n ŋ/, as well as the voiceless unaspirated plosives /p t k/ and /ʔ/.

Southern Min does not possess sesquyllables in the sense of Matisoff (1991), although a small number of subsyllables can be recognized (R. Cheng 1997). Affixes and the allomorphy in which they take part are discussed in §2.1.2.

1.4. Morphophonology

Fusion of grammatical and derivational morphemes is a common process in Min dialects, evident for the plural forms of the personal pronouns (§2.1.1), many negated forms of modal verbs (§3.4), and prepositional markers when followed by generic and third person pronouns : *ka⁷ + i¹* 共伊 → *kai¹* OM-3SG ‘3rd person fused form of object marker ; ‘her, him, it, them’; *hoo⁷ + lang⁵* 與儂 → *hong⁵* PASS-GENERIC PRONOUN ‘by someone’. More examples may be found in Huang (1988).

The diminutive suffix and nominal marker $-a^2$ 仔 (< *kiaⁿ²* 囡 ‘child’) exhibits a diverse array of morphophonemic alternations which can in the main be neatly accounted for by four simple rules according to Lien (1998). Given that there is just a restricted number of possibilities for syllable codas in Southern Min, namely /p t k ʔ m n ŋ/ or else a vowel nucleus, the following processes take place. First, in a process of gemination, the coda of the first syllable, is copied onto the suffix $-a^2$ and then voiced in the case of the finals /p t k/.¹³ This copied element consequently becomes the initial consonant of the newly created suffix. Second, only in the case of voiceless codas, and by means of regressive assimilation, the original /p t k/ coda of the first syllable also takes on the voicing feature (see examples 1,2,3 in Table 6).

Third, for root syllables with nasal codas or nasalized vowel nuclei /m n ŋ Vⁿ/, after their gemination, the nominal suffix $-a^2$ is nasalized to $-\tilde{a}^2$ in a process of progressive assimilation (examples 4,5,6,7). Fourth, for open syllables and for syllables with a glottal stop final, the resultant form simply preserves the underlying or overt suprasegmental glottal feature: *V+a(ʔ) → V+aʔ* (8,9). Table 6 illustrates these processes.

Table 6: Morphophonemic alternations for the nominal suffix $-a^2$ in Southern Min (adapted from Lien 1998: 475)

	Template	(i) Gemination	(ii) Voicing	Characters	Translation
1.	Vp+a ²	ap ⁸ +ba ²	ab ⁸ +ba ²	盒仔	‘box’
2.	Vt+a ²	ts ^h at ⁸ +la ²	ts ^h al ⁸ +la ²	賊仔	‘thief’
3.	Vk+a ²	tek ⁴ +ga ²	teg ⁴ +ga ²	竹仔	‘bamboo’
4.	Vm+a ²	kam ¹ +ma ⁿ²		柑仔	‘tangerine’
5.	Vn+a ²	gin ² +na ⁿ²		囡仔	‘child’
6.	Vŋ+a ²	aŋ ¹ +ŋa ⁿ²		翁仔	‘doll’

7.	v_{n+a^2}	$i_{n^5+a^2}$		圓仔	'meat ball (in soup)'
8.	$V+a^2$	bi^2+a^2		美仔	'name'
9.	$V\gamma+a^2$	$hio\gamma^8+a^2$		箸仔	'leaf'

Furthermore, as Wang and Lien (1993) and Lien (1998:476-477) both observe, after the general rules for tone sandhi have been applied, as explained in §1.1 above, a second special set of tone sandhi for diminutive suffixation goes into action. Essentially, while the diminutive suffix remains invariant as Tone 2, that is, High Falling (51) after the first stage has taken place, a low- (21) or mid-tone (33) first syllable becomes a rising tone (25 or 35), and a high tone syllable (High Level 55, High Falling 51, High Checked 5), remains high with a 55 pitch. Note that, in the case of person's names taking the *-a* suffix, a completely different set of rules is followed for tone sandhi (Lien 1998:475).

The semantics of the diminutive suffix is discussed in §2.1.2.5.

2. Morphology

2.1. Word structure

In overall terms of its typology, Southern Min appears to behave like Sinitic languages in general, being analytic in tendency. Thus, it does not possess inflectional paradigms for case, gender, tense, number or person. Nonetheless, it also shows agglutinative features, including a substantial inventory of affixes and clitics used on nouns and verbs, a proclivity for compounding and reduplication, but also a propensity for fusion through syllable contraction.

Structurally speaking, there are many word types, starting with words constituted of a simple monomorphemic monosyllable and moving through combinations of root + affix to polysyllabic compounds and reduplicated forms. Fusional features are represented by the contraction of words, particularly the high frequency markers of grammatical function (see §1.4 above and the sections on negation, passives and object-marking) while assimilation of phonetic features at syllable edges results in complex allomorphy, as we saw in the case of the diminutive suffix *-a^2* 仔, discussed in §1.4.

2.1.1. Nominal categories: coding of case, gender, number

Inflections for case, gender or number are not marked inflectionally in Southern Min, nor in Sinitic as a whole. Apart from the use of syntactic position in the clause to indicate the role of a noun phrase referent, for example, as subject or direct object of the verb, other means to code such roles require the use of prepositions to designate case relations, for example, *hoo^7* 與 to mark oblique roles including indirect objects, but also the agent noun in passive constructions, and either *chiong^1* 將 or *ka^7* 共 to mark direct objects that precede the main predicate.

The category of gender is lexically coded for a subset of animate nouns (domestic animals, fowl) by means of the suffix *-kang^1* 公 for male of the species and suffix *-bu^2* 母 for a reproductive female of the species: *ti^1-kang^1* 豬公 'boar', *ti^1-bu^2* 豬母 'a sow that has produced a litter'. This is an interesting distinction from standard Mandarin which makes use of prefixes in this function.

Number can also be explicitly coded by means of plural classifiers such as *kua^2* in *chit^8 koa^2 lang^5* 一寡儂 one-CL_{PL}-people 'some people' or by plural adverbs such as *long^2* 攏

‘all’. The plural pronouns all end in suffix *-n* which represents a trace of *lang⁵* 儂 ‘person, people’ according to Mei Tsu-lin (1999), who observes that the evidence is found in the fact that the full form is used in other Min dialects as the plural suffix. Note that this does not occur elsewhere in the lexicon as a plural marker on common nouns. There is also an inclusive–exclusive distinction for first person plural. Compare the singular and plural forms in the Southern Min pronominal paradigm:

Table 7: Personal pronouns of Southern Min (Taiwan)

<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>	
1. <i>goa²</i>	我	<i>gun²</i> <i>lan²</i> (inclusive)	阮 咱
2. <i>li²</i>	汝	<i>lin²</i>	恁
3. <i>i¹</i>	伊	<i>in¹</i>	伊 因

The reflexive form is *ka¹ki⁷* 家己 ‘self’ while the generic pronoun ‘one’ is *lang⁵* 儂 < ‘person’.

From Table 7, it can be observed that there is no polite form for the 2nd person pronoun, as found in Mandarin which uses the opposition of *nǐ* 你 2SG versus *nín* 您 2SG:POL. Politeness is lexically expressed in Southern Min with forms coding respect. These may include kin terms involving an age hierarchy: for example, younger versus older brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles; or titles of professions as a vocative form of direct address. These forms are either politer or more culturally-appropriate than using the person’s name or a pronoun on its own. The polite classifier *ui⁷* 位 may be used instead of the general classifier *e⁵* 個 with human nouns. Along this conceptual dimension, Southern Min does not differ from other Sinitic languages.

Plural forms of the personal pronouns tend to be used in zero-marked genitive noun phrases, even where only one person is involved as the possessor. This could be viewed as an ‘sociative’ kind of pronominal marking since relations within a family are not viewed individualistically as one-to-one between parents and children but rather, shared, as part of the family.

- (1) 我想欲見阮阿公。
goa² siuⁿ² beh⁴ kiⁿ³ gun³ a²-kung¹.
 1SG think want see 1PL PREF.-grandfather
 ‘I want to see my grandfather.’ (literally: our grandfather’)

2.1.2. Derivational morphology

Derivation in Southern Min essentially involves the process of affixation whereby a prefix or a suffix is attached to the root, or more rarely, the insertion of an infix. Suffixing predominates as the main strategy in derivational morphology.

2.1.2.1. Prefixes in Southern Min

The main prefix in Southern Min is used on kin terms and given names as a hypocoristic prefix:

- (2) *a¹*- 阿 as a hypocoristic prefix on kin terms and given names:
a¹-ma² 阿媽 ‘grandma’, *a¹-i⁵* 阿姨 ‘aunty’,
a¹-khing³ 阿慶 (affixed to the syllable for the second character in a person’s given name)

2.1.2.2. *Suffixes in Southern Min*

Many of the suffixes used in Southern Min have a quite specific nominalising function to denote different kinds of persons, occupations and professions. These are the suffixes *-e* 的, *-thau*⁵ 頭 < ‘head’, *-sai*¹(*hu*) 師(傅) < ‘master’ (colloquial register) or *-su*¹ 師 < ‘master’ (literary register), *jin*⁵ 人 < ‘person’ (literary register), *lang*⁵ 儂 < ‘person’ (colloquial register), *-sien*¹ 先 < ‘sir’, *-sien*¹ < 仙 ‘immortal’ and *-kui*² 鬼 < ‘demon’. Five of these are described and illustrated below:

1. The nominalising suffix *-e* 的 in Southern Min may be attached to simple verbs, compound verbs and even clauses. It serves to convert these phrases into nominals, a feature which is widespread in Southeast Asian languages for this type of particle that typically possesses genitive, relative clause and other modifying functions as well (Matisoff 1986b).

The nominalizer *-e* 的 in combination with a verb (or a clause) could thus be translated approximately as ‘the one who + VERBS’ or ‘that which + VERBS’:

- (3) i. Simple verb + *-e* 的
*chiah*⁸-*e* 食的 ‘what is eaten’, *chhing*¹ *e* 穿的 ‘what is worn’
 ii. V-O verb compound + *-e* 的
*liah*⁸ *hi*⁵-*e* 掠魚的 ‘fisherman’ (catch-fish-suffix), *phoa*³ *pi*ⁿ⁷-*e* 破病的 ‘sick person’ (fall-sick-suffix)
 iii. Clause + *-e* 的
*thau*⁵ *mng*⁵ *tng*⁵ *e* 頭毛長的 hair-be.long-suffix ‘the long-haired one’

It may also be used as a suffix to form a respectful term of address, as *Ong*⁵-*e* 王的 ‘Mr Wang’.

2. Suffix *-thau*⁵ 頭 < ‘head’

This suffix is a pure nominal marker and, interestingly, covers a largely different set of nouns from its Mandarin cognate, *tóu* [t^hoʊ³⁵] (Cheng 1997: 92).

- (4) *jit*⁸-*thau*⁵ 日頭 ‘sun’, *chiah*⁸-*thau*⁵ 石頭 ‘stone’, *lo*⁵-*thau*⁵ 路頭 ‘journey’, *hoe*³-*thau*⁵ 歲頭 ‘age’

3. Suffixes *-sai*¹(*hu*) 師(傅) and *-su*¹ 師

Lien (2001) has argued for the complementary distribution of such pairs of suffixes arguing that colloquial register *-sai*¹(*hu*) forms agentive nouns for crafts and trades while literary register *-su*¹ forms agentive nouns for professions that require more intellectual skills: Although the cognate *shīfu* 師傅 ‘master’ exists in Mandarin, it is not used as a suffix.

- (5) *-sai*¹(*hu*) 師(傅): *thou*⁵ *chui*²-*sai*¹ 塗水師 ‘bricklayer’, *iu*⁵ *chhat*⁴-*sai*¹ *hu* 油漆師傅 ‘painter (of buildings)’, *bak*⁴-*chhiu*ⁿ⁷-*sai*¹ *hu* 木匠師傅 ‘carpenter’

*-su*¹ 師: *i*¹-*su*¹ 醫師 ‘doctor’, *ui*⁷-*su*¹ 畫師 ‘artist’, *kaw*³-*su*¹ ‘teacher’

4. Suffix *-sien*¹ 仙 < ‘immortal’, ‘adept’; suffix for professions; suffix for addicts of various vices (humorous). The lexeme *sien*¹ 仙 is similarly not used as a suffix in Mandarin.

- (6) *siao*³*kui*⁷*sien*¹ 數櫃仙 ‘book-keeper’, *kun*⁵*thau*²-*sien*¹ 拳頭仙 ‘boxer’
*sio*¹-*chiu*² *sien*¹ 燒酒仙 ‘drunkard’, *a*¹-*phien*² *sien*¹ 鴉片仙 ‘opium smoker’, *poah*⁸*kiao*²
*sien*¹ 博繳仙 ‘gambler’, *thit*⁴-*thou*⁵-*sien*¹ 口口仙 ‘an idler’

5. In Taiwanese Southern Min, the diminutive formed with the suffix *-a*² 仔 can be diachronically related to the lexeme for ‘son, child’, *kia*ⁿ² 囡, in contemporary Taiwanese and Xiamen (Amoy), albeit in a much reduced form (Yang 1991, Chappell 2000).¹⁴ From the expressive, diminutive usage, the suffix further evolves into a nominalizer and then into a simple marker of nominals. Some further examples of the broad range of usages of *-a*² in contemporary Southern Min are given below. (See also §1.4 on the morphophonemic alternations and special tone sandhi pertaining to this suffix).

There are three main functions of *-a*² 仔 as a suffix:

- (7) Non-productive use as a diminutive marker for smaller versions of objects (= fossilized invariant use): *thng*⁵-*a*² 糖仔 ‘candy’ (< *thng*⁵ 糖 ‘sugar’), *chhia*¹-*a*² 車仔 ‘sewing machine’ (< *chhia*¹ ‘vehicle’ 車); *liap*⁸-*a*² ‘ulcer’ 瘡仔 (< *liap*⁸ ‘grain’ 粒)
- (8) Nominalizer
 Deverbal nouns: *that*⁴ 塞 ‘to fill, plug (Verb)’ → *that*⁴-*a*² 塞仔 ‘stopper, cork’
 Occupations: *thai*⁵-*ti*¹-*a*² 治豬仔 slaughter-pig-suffix ‘butcher’; *poa*ⁿ¹*hi*³-*a*² 搬戲仔 act-play-suffix ‘actor’
- (9) Noun marker
*hi*⁵-*a*² 魚仔 ‘fish’, *chiao*²-*a*² 鳥仔 ‘bird’; *tiu*⁷-*a*² 稻仔 ‘rice plant, paddy’

More examples can be found in Table 6 above.

2.1.3. Compounding processes in Southern Min

Compounding is an important process in Southern Min for producing new disyllabic and polysyllabic word forms. Compounds may be created from combinations of bound and free roots which hold a variety of semantic relationships to one another, including coordination, subordination, verb-object and subject-verb relationships. In their turn, coordinate compounds may be composed of either synonyms or antonyms.

- a. Coordinate compounds : *sio*¹ *loah*⁸ 燒熱 hot+hot ‘hot’ *hoan*⁵-*lo*² 煩惱 troubled+anxious ‘anxious’ *hia*ⁿ¹*ti*⁷ 兄弟 older brother+younger brother ‘brothers’
- b. Subordinate compounds : *toa*⁷*lang*⁵ 大人 big+person ‘adult’, *kiam*⁵*lng*⁷ 鹹卵 salt+egg ‘salted egg’, *tian*⁷*hue*² 電火 electric+fire ‘lamp’
- c. Subject-verb compounds : *te*⁷*tang*⁷ 地動 (earth+move) ‘earthquake’, *cheng*⁵*goan*⁷ 情願 feeling+be:willing ‘be willing to’
- d. Verb-object compounds : *thai*⁵*thau*⁵ 治頭 cut:off head ‘behead’ ; *sng*³*bia*ⁿ³ 算命 tell-fate ‘to tell someone’s fortune’; *pi*ⁿ⁷ *kia*ⁿ² 病囡 fall:ill child ‘fall pregnant’

2.2. Psycho-collocations

Southern Min is no different from other Sinitic and Southeast Asian languages in possessing special expressions, including compounds, that have been labeled ‘psycho-collocations’ by Matisoff (1986a). These collocations, for the main part, all involve body part terms and the expression of inalienability which is subject to metaphorical extension into the realm of emotions and subjective evaluations (Clark 1996). The inalienable expressions may occur as N-V compounds in double nominative and SV sentences, or as V-N expressions in unaccusative constructions (Chappell 1996, 1999). These are each illustrated in turn below:

- Noun_{Topic} – [Noun_{Body part} – Verb]_{Comment}
- (10) 汝目孔赤(大)啊。
li² bak⁸-khang¹ chhiah⁴ (toa⁷) a.
 2SG eye :socket red (big) CRS
 ‘You’re jealous.’ (literally: ‘As for you, eye sockets red.’)
 ‘You’re proud.’ (literally: ‘As for you, eye sockets big.’)
- [Noun_{Possessor} – GEN – Noun_{Possessed body part}]_{Subject} – Verb_{Intransitive/Stative}
- (11) 我的耳孔輕。
goa² e⁵ hiⁿ⁷khang¹ khin¹
 1SG GEN ear:channel light
 ‘I’m gullible.’ (literally: ‘My auditory channel is light.’)
- Noun_{Subject} – Verb_{Intransitive/Stative} – Noun_{Body part}
- (12) 伊跛着倒脚。
l¹ pai² tioh⁸ toh⁸ kha¹.
 3SG lame ACH left leg
 ‘He has gone lame in the left leg.’

There are many compound adjectives formed on the basis of body part terms. Noteworthy is the fact that they are all based on the similar grammatical relationships of either S-V, V-O, or ADJ-NOUN.

- (13) Subject_{Body Part} -Predicate_{Stative} → Predicative adjective
sim¹-sek⁴ heart-fit 心適 ‘interesting’; *bin⁷-sek⁸* 面熟 face-ripe ‘be familiar with’;
chhui³-ta¹ 喙焦 mouth-dry ‘thirsty’; *sim¹-sng¹* 心酸, heart-sour ‘sad’; *phi⁷ sng¹*
 鼻痠 nose-aching ‘mean, stingy’
- (14) Subordinate type compounds
kek⁴-kut⁴ 激骨 provoke-bone (V-O) ‘to be contrary’; *toa⁷-chih⁸* big-tongue (ADJ-N) 大舌 ‘to lisp, stutter’ ‘someone who stutters’; *thih⁴-khi²* iron-tooth (ADJ-N) 鐵齒 ‘to be uncompromising’

This striking property of using body part terms to code emotions and inherent physical and personality characteristics, whose expression makes use of several construction types, appears to be an areal feature of Southeast Asia.

(18) Reduplication of monosyllabic adjectives : AA

*ang*⁵-*ang*⁵ 紅紅 ‘sort of red, reddish’*sui*²-*sui*² 美美 ‘rather beautiful’

(19) Triplication of monosyllabic adjectives : AAA

*ang*⁵-*ang*⁵-*ang*⁵ 紅紅紅 ‘extremely red’*sui*²-*sui*²-*sui*² 美美美 ‘very beautiful’

whereas disyllabic adjectives have, in general, just one main structure for reduplication which again contrasts with the Mandarin AABB form: ¹⁵

AB-AB ‘sort of X_{quality}’.

(20) 憨面 憨面

*gong*⁷*bin*⁷ - *gong*⁷*bin*⁷

‘kind of stupid-faced’

Finally, adjectives, but not verbs, freely allow derivation of new adverbs by means of another reduplication pattern using the suffix *-a*²仔. These express manner:

(21) *chhian*²-*chhian*²-*a*² *kong*² 淺淺仔講 shallow-shallow-ADV say ‘says very superficially (to me)’ ; *ban*⁷-*ban*⁷-*a*² 慢慢仔 ‘slowly’

Table 8: Comparison of Southern Min adjectives and verbs in reduplication processes

	ADJECTIVES	VERBS
REDUPLICATION: AA Mono- and disyllabic adjectives	YES: approximative	YES: short duration
TRIPLICATION: AAA	YES: intensification	NO
ABB pattern: intensification of quality with onomatopoeic effect	YES	NO
ADVERBIAL USE	YES: manner AA- <i>a</i> ² -VERB pattern	NO

These patterns of reduplication also serve to differentiate adjectives from verbs as two different grammatical categories in Southern Min.

3. Grammar and Syntax

3.1. Word order

Although Southern Min has the word order of (S)V(O) as one of its basic orders, as seen in example (22) below, many permutations are possible due to topicalization, particularly the kind which involves patient or direct object fronting, as in (23): OSV. OV word orders are in fact often accompanied by subject noun ellipsis as in (45) and (57) below. Furthermore, they have a purportedly very high frequency in Southern Min and are claimed to represent a syntactic characteristic which distinguishes the language clearly in terms of word order from standard Mandarin (Yang 1991: 269-276, Li Rulong 2007:13).

(22) SVO: 阿瑛咧拭卓仔。

A¹ Ing¹ leh⁴ chit⁴ toh⁴a²

A-IngPROG wipe table

‘A Ing is wiping the table.’

(23) Object topicalization: OSV

這件代誌，我考慮真久呀。

chit⁴-kiaⁿ⁷ tai⁷chi³ goa² kho²li⁷ chin¹ ku² a.

this-CL matter 1SG consider very long:time PRT

‘This matter, I thought about it for a long time.’

Sinitic languages, in general, display *head-final* characteristics for their NP structure but a *mixture of head-initial and head-final* ordering for their VPs and Southern Min is again no exception to this rule. Hence, all the constituents of the noun phrase, including relative clauses, precede the head noun (see §3.3.1. and Figure 1 below) whereas the majority of adverbs and prepositional phrases precede the main verb (for more details, see Chappell 2015).

In conformity with this tendency for dependent-head typology in Sinitic languages, for complex sentences, temporal, causal, conditional and concessive clauses typically precede the matrix clause. The comparative construction also has the comparative marker preceding the standard noun in one of its subtypes (§3.5.2).

The main parts of speech in Southern Min are nouns and pronouns, verbs, adjectives (attributive and predicative), adverbs and adverbial adjuncts, demonstratives, quantifiers, conjunctions, classifiers (nominal and verbal), localizers, aspect markers and grammatical function words, not to mention the modal or attitudinal discourse markers occurring in clause-final position.

3.2. Syntactic functions

As typical of Sinitic languages, there appears to be a certain fluidity as to which grammatical categories may fill which syntactic functions: For example, verbs may act as nouns without requiring any explicit morphological marking in Southern Min, and in a similar vein, both nouns and ‘small’ SV clauses may act as predicates. However, these possibilities are all subject to quite specific syntactic and semantic constraints: for example, once a verb is used as a noun, it may no longer be reduplicated in its new function as a deverbal noun.¹⁶

(24) Verb	>	Deverbal noun
ㄟ 因關懷母語。		ㄟ 因對母語的關懷
<i>In¹ koan¹hoai⁵ bo²gi²</i>	<i>versus</i>	<i>In¹ tui³ bo²gi² e⁵ koan¹hoai⁵</i>
3PL cherish mother.tongue		3PL to mother.tongue GEN cherish
‘They cherish _{VERB} their mother tongue’		‘the cherishing _{NOUN} of their mother tongue’

Adjectives may be used as predicates without requiring the copula but they do not form a subclass of verbs in Southern Min due to their different syntactic patterning and constraints on usage (§2.4). There is no morphological distinction for voice on verbs to signal active versus passive mood. Instead, prepositions are used to signal different case-like roles (§3.5.1) as part of special grammatical construction types including object-marking, dative and passive constructions.

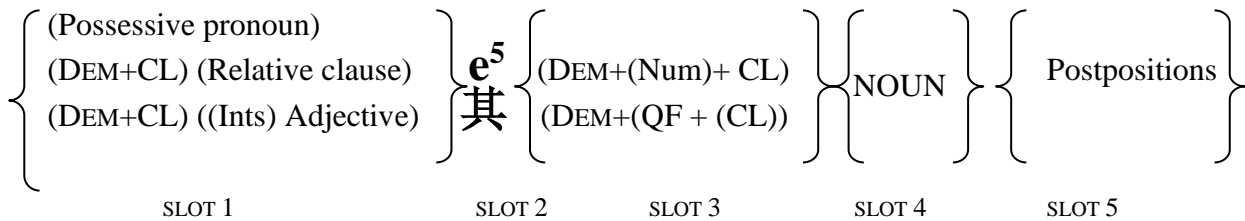
3.3. Nominal domain

3.3.1. Basic structure of the NP

The basic structure and constituents of the noun phrase in Southern Min are represented by the diagram in Figure 1.

3.3.1.1. NP Component order for Southern Min

Figure 1



The diagram in Figure 1 can be decompressed into two main types of noun phrase in Southern Min, simple and complex:

i. Basic noun phrase structure

(DEM-NUM-CL)
 (POSS. PRO- e^5) - (DEM-(CL)) - (ADJECTIVE_{CORE}) - NOUN
 (NUM-CL)
 (QF-CL)

ii. Complex noun phrase structure

(DEM-NUM-CL)
 (POSS. PRO- e^5) - (NUM-CL) - (INTENSIFIER-) ADJECTIVE - e^5 - (NOUN)
 (DEM-CL) - CLAUSE - e^5 - (NOUN)
 (QF-(CL))

[e^5 = marker of linkage and dependency; nominalizer]

The NP in Southern Min can be minimally realized as just the head noun on its own, such as the bare noun *toh*^{8-a²} 卓仔 ‘table’ in (22), or by the use of a nominalizing construction with either an *Adjective* + e^5 個 or a *Relative clause* + e^5 , as in *soe*^{3-e⁵} 細個 small-LNK ‘the one that is small’, a headless NP. Apart from this nominalizing function, the grammatical function word, e^5 , is a linker or, more technically, a marker of ligature for a variety of syntactic relationships involved in modification.¹⁷ Thus, it links modifying elements such as relative clauses and adjectives with the head noun, and also serves as the genitive marker and the general default classifier. This function word is claimed to be historically derived from the particle *qi* 其 of Archaic Chinese which had genitive, demonstrative and interrogative uses, developing additional uses as a classifier and attributive marker during the Medieval Chinese period (Li Rulong 2007: 128-130).

There is a simple bipartite distinction in Southern Min for **demonstratives**, distinguishing proximal from distal: *chit*⁸ 這 ‘this’ and *hit*⁴ 彼 ‘that’ in determiner function and *che*¹ 遮 ‘this’ and *he*¹ 遐 ‘that’ in pronoun function, mainly serving as subjects (see example 55). In simple NPs, demonstratives generally occur in Slot 3 position with a following classifier but may also be used in the position of Slot 1, where they can precede a relative clause or an

(J39)

(29) NUM – CL – ADJECTIVE – NOUN

...找一個大樹腳，

*chhoe*⁷ *chit*⁸-*e*⁵ *toa*⁷ *chhiu-kha*¹, ...

search one-CL big tree.foot

'(I) looked for a tree with a large base ...' (J695)

3.3.1.4. *Complex NPs with relative clauses*

What equates or translates from an English **relative clause** into Southern Min is not structurally different, in fact, from attributive modification, since the same particle *e*⁵ is used.

(30) 啊挾來的便當啦，

ah *chah*⁴-*lai*⁵ *e*⁵ *pian*⁷*tong*¹ *la*,PRT **bring-come** LNK **lunchbox** PRT

攞食完啊。

*long*² *chiah*⁸-*oan*⁵ *a*.all eat-finish PRT_{CNF}

'The bento (lunchbox) I'd brought along had all been eaten up.' (J697-698)

3.3.2. **Classifier system of Southern Min**

Southern Min dialects generally possess 30 or 40 true individuating classifiers, if we exclude measure words and collective nouns that occur in the same prenominal modifier slot but which do not share any salient cognitive or perceptual features with the classified noun. The main parameters in Sinitic languages for classifier systems are

Animacy: humans versus animals versus plants**Shape:** length, cylindricality, flatness, roundness

Let us highlight some distinguishing features of Southern Min classifier systems. The general classifier is *e*⁵ 個 and is used with nouns for humans, in addition to its default function: *chit*⁴-*e*⁵ *lang*⁵ this-CL-person 遮個儂 'this person'. In contrast, for prototypical animal nouns (mammals, domestic animals), and also for fowl, the classifier is *chiah*⁴ 隻, for example, oxen and pigs, nouns which normally take *tou* 'head' 頭 [t^hoo³⁵] in Mandarin. However, within the animal kingdom, an extremely interesting distinction is made between fish, reptiles and amphibians as opposed to all other creatures by means of *bue*² 尾 < 'tail': *sa*ⁿ¹-*bue*² *hi*⁵ 三尾魚 three-CL-fish 'three fish'. The classifier *tsang*⁵ < 'bush' is used for plants and trees in general while, *lui*² 蕊 'core of flower' is another special Southern Min classifier used for flowers, eyes, and mushrooms. These last three classifiers are not used as individuating classifiers in standard Mandarin. Some of the other main shape classifiers shared with other Sinitic languages are given in the following brief list. We remark on differences in usage with standard Mandarin, where relevant:

- (31) *ki*^l 枝 < 'branch' long, cylindrical objects – brushes, quills, columns, sticks
*tiau*⁵ 條 < 'strip' objects with a long, one-dimensional profile such as roads, railway lines, streets, belts (a more restricted usage than in Mandarin)
*tii*ⁿ¹ 張 < 'extend' objects with a flat, two-dimensional part such as sheets (of paper), pictures, tickets

- te*⁵ 塊 < ‘piece’ non-round objects with a chunky shape such as stones, cakes of soap, table, chair, sugar, biscuit, house (a wider in usage than in Mandarin)
- liap*⁸ 粒 < ‘grain’ is used in many Sinitic languages, including Mandarin, for small, round objects including seeds, beads and pearls. In S. Min, it has generalized in use with a large variety of round-shaped objects, regardless of size: round fruits including melons, balls, hand grenade

As mentioned earlier, classifiers are obligatory with numerals and certain quantifiers, but may be omitted under special discourse conditions with demonstratives (as in example 28 above). Unlike Cantonese and many Wu dialects, specific classifiers cannot be used as markers of the genitive construction in Southern Min which uses the invariant form *e*⁵, if not zero-marking with kin terms and other inalienable categories. Nonetheless, it can be observed that the genitive is homophonous with the general classifier *e*⁵ to which it is very likely historically related, as observed above. The **demonstrative (+ classifier)** possesses an important function in anaphora and the information structure of discourse, as exemplified by (27) and (28) above, consecutive utterances from the same text where the information status changes from new in (27) to given in (28) for *tek*⁴-*a*² 竹仔 □ ‘bamboo stick’, being coded with the help of a demonstrative on its own in the latter instance.

Unlike many Southeast Asian and other Sinitic languages including Yue, Hui, Southern Jianghuai Mandarin and Wu dialect groups, Min dialects located in Fujian province do not allow omission of the demonstrative to code **definiteness** by means of simply the CL + Noun. This takes place in the relevant dialects under the condition that the head noun represents given or ‘old’ information in the particular discourse context, specifically when occurring in a preverbal position (Wang Jian 2015). By way of contrast, the Southern Min dialects located in neighbouring Guangdong province to the south including Chaozhou (Teochew), Shantou (Swatow) and dialects of the Leizhou peninsula may do exactly this, under contact influence from the Yue dialects (Li Rulong 2007: 77, his example).

- (32) Shantou dialect of Southern Min, Guangdong province
支筆無用了。
ZHI BI WU YONGLE.
CL pen NEG use CRS
‘This pen is broken.’

3.3.2.1 Restrictions on adjectives preceding the classifier:

As shown above in §3.3.1, adjectives typically are linked to head nouns with the marker of ligature, *e*⁵. Unusually, in many Min, Yue (Cantonese) and most Wu dialects, classifiers can be used in a highly restricted way to link certain attributive adjectives to the head noun. These adjectives are, interestingly, typically confined to ‘big’ and ‘small’.

DEM – [**big/small**] – CL – (–(ADJ) – NOUN)

- (33) 有彼大粒的大石頭佇遐
*u*⁷ *hit*⁴ *toa*⁷ *liap*⁸ *e*⁵ *toa*⁷ *chiah*⁸*thau*⁵ *ti*⁷ *hia*¹. -
have that **big** CL LNK big stone LOC there
‘There were large-sized boulders there.’ (J 760)

3.4. Verbal domain

The verb in Southern Min does not undergo any inflectional changes, as is typical of SEA languages in general (Clark 1989). There is no obligatory category of tense, person or number marked on the verb. Even compared with other Sinitic languages such as Cantonese and standard Mandarin, the verbal aspect system in Southern Min is in an early developmental stage with few grammaticalized markers (Li Rulong 2007). *En revanche*, the use of a diverse number of phase markers and verbal complements of result, manner and extent in V₂ position is lexically rich.

3.4.1. Verbal categories and the predicate in Southern Min

3.4.1.1. Aspect

Southern Min possesses the grammatical category of aspect, but not of tense. This is, without a doubt, a pan-Sinitic feature and is common across Southeast Asian languages. Unlike most other major Sinitic languages (standard Mandarin, Cantonese, Shanghainese), however, its grammaticalized markers of aspect tend to occur in the preverbal position for adverbs. In fact, this reflects a strategy used in earlier stages of Chinese for which a huge corpus of written documents attest to the fact that aspectual meanings are typically coded in this position (see Chappell 1992).

The main verbal aspect markers of Southern Min are given in the table below:

BOUNDED		UNBOUNDED	
(34) <i>u</i> ⁷ 有 + Verb	Affirmative or perfect	((<i>ti</i> ⁷)-(<i>leh</i> ⁴))+ Verb ((<i>佇</i>)(<i>咧</i>))	Progressive
<i>bat</i> ⁴ 捌 + Verb	Experiential perfect	Verb + <i>leh</i>	<i>咧</i> Continuous

As can be seen from the table, Southern Min does not possess a highly grammaticalized perfective aspect marker equivalent to Mandarin *-le* 了 or Cantonese *-jo* 咗. The cognate to Mandarin *-le* 了 which is *liau*² in Southern Min is used as a phase marker, meaning ‘to finish’ (see (37) below).

The common markers are the affirmative (or perfect) *u*⁷ 有–Verb which makes use of the verb ‘to have’, in a similar fashion to many European languages for this same aspectual category: *u*⁷-*be*² 有買 ‘have bought, did buy’; the past experiential *bat*⁴ 捌–Verb (alternatively coded as a verbal suffix by the Mandarin borrowing: Verb–*koe*³ 過) and the use of the same aspect marker for both the progressive *leh*⁴ 咧–VERB and the durative, VERB–*leh* 咧. Note that these two aspectual functions are distinguished by their placement in different positions, the first preverbally and the second postverbally, not to mention also by the fact that the postverbal use is typically atonal.

For the two imperfective aspect markers, *leh*⁴ 咧–Verb (progressive) and Verb + *leh* 咧 (durative), some claim that both have their source in the highly polysemous verb *tioh*⁸ 着 whose basic meaning is ‘to adhere, to stick to’ but also ‘to be at’ as a verb (Yang 1991: 235, 258), while others claim it is related to the compound verb *ti*⁷ *leh*⁴ 佇□ ‘to be at (a place)’ formed from the combination of *ti*⁷ 佇, a locative verb ‘to be at’ and *leh*⁴, a locative preposition (Li Rulong 2007: 8; W. Chen 2011: 374–383) whereby *leh*⁴ is gradually taking over the functions of the compound form.¹⁸ In either case, Southern Min has a semantically similar, but not identical, source to Mandarin *zài* 在 ‘be at’ which has also developed into a preverbal progressive marker, equally the case in many Southeast Asian languages for verbs meaning ‘to dwell, to stay’ (Matisoff 1991). The progressive and the perfect (in its less grammaticalized affirmative use) are both illustrated in the next example:

(35) 伊彼陣仔抵好佇唱歌。我有聽着。

I¹ hit⁴ chun⁷-a² tu²ho² ti⁷ chhiuⁿ³-koa¹. – Goa² u⁷ thiaⁿ¹-tioh⁸.
 3SG that time just PROG sing-song 1SG PFT listen-ACH
 ‘She was singing then. – I did hear it.’

For the experiential aspect, the Quanzhou dialect group makes use of a postverbal marker, *tioh⁸* 着 ‘touch, be in contact with’ (Li 2007: 1-13), based on a sensory verb while the preverbal marker in Taiwanese Southern Min has developed from a cognition verb: *bat⁴* 捌 < ‘to know, to distinguish’ (see Chappell 2001c for a pan-Sinitic treatment of experiential aspect markers as evidentials).

(36) 伊捌死無去。

I¹ bat⁴ si³ bo⁵ khi³.
 3SG EXP die NEG go
 ‘He had a near-death experience.’

Reduplication of the verb is used to code the short duration of an action or event, that is, the delimitative aspect: Verb_i–Verb_i *che⁷-che⁷* sit-sit 坐坐 ‘to stay a little while’. This aspect can also be coded by means of a verbal classifier phrase: Verb *chit⁸-e⁷-a²*, as in *che⁷ chit⁸-e⁷-a²* 坐一下仔 sit-one-time_{CL}-DIMN ‘to stay a little while’.

3.4.1.2. Phase markers in V₁V₂ concatenations

In reality, the aspect system in Southern Min is complemented by a variety of verbs used directly after the main verb in V₂ position, and which are grammaticalized to varying degrees. These have evolved from historically earlier serial verb constructions and may code aspect-like meanings, if not result and direction, manner, extent and intensification (Lien 1994, 1995). Phase markers, resultative and directional verb complements are discussed in turn below.

Phase markers are less grammaticalized than the aspect markers of Southern Min and retain a generalized lexical meaning associated with the stage to which an event is implemented, for example, completion (but not perfectivity), achieving an activity, or termination of an event, including the disappearance of any objects connected with it. This set of semi-grammaticalized markers includes the cognate of standard Mandarin *-le* 了, *liau²* in Southern Min, which is still used in its original lexical sense of ‘(able to) finish’, as in: *chiah⁸-liau²* 食了 ‘to finish eating’ (and not *‘to have eaten’), *tioh⁸* 着 ‘to hit (the target)’, an achievement phase marker in *thiaⁿ¹-tioh⁸* 聽着 ‘to (successfully) hear’ (< listen-achieve) and *khi³* 去 ‘away’ (< ‘to go, depart’, a phase marker denoting completion of a process that carries the negative connotation of disappearance as in *ta¹-khi³* 焯去 ‘to dry up’ (< dry-away).

Most of these phase markers form complex predicates that require the direct object noun to be fronted into clause-initial position, particularly if it is given and referential. These include *liau²* 了 ‘to finish’, *khi³* 去 ‘away’, *ho²* 好 ‘properly, completely’ < ‘well, good’, and *oan⁵* 完 ‘finish’ as in (30) above with *chiah⁸-oan⁵* ‘finish eating’ (Yang 1991, Lien 1994).

(37) 伊工作做了就走啊。

I¹ khang¹khoe³ cho³-liau² tio⁷ chau² a⁰.
 3SG work do-finish then leave PRT_{CNF}
 ‘When he’d finished work, he left.’

Note that phase markers, in many cases, are unstressed and lose their full tonal value, which distinguishes them from the highly lexical nature of resultative and directional complements, discussed in the next section. In addition to this, their more restricted combinatorial possibilities with verb classes and retention of lexical features, albeit generalized in meaning, also act as identifying criteria.

3.4.1.3. Resultative and directional verb constructions

Resultative verb compounds (RVCs) and directional verb compounds (DVCs) are $V_1V_2(V_3)$ constructions that represent a special feature of Sinitic languages. They have the following structure:

RVC: $V_{1[\text{Action/Event}]} - V_{2[\text{State/Phase marker}]}$
 DVC: $V_{1[\text{Action/Event}]} - (V_{2[\text{Spatial orientation}]} - (V_{3[\text{來 } lai^5 \text{ 'come'/'去 } khi^3 \text{ 'go'}]})$

RVCs are productively formed by two verb constituents $V_1 V_2$ where V_1 is an action or event verb and V_2 is typically filled by adjectives and some intransitive verbs, that code the state which results after V_1 has occurred, for example, *kong³-phoa³* 敲破 hit-break ‘to break by hitting’ and similarly *hoan²-ng⁵* ‘turn yellow’ in (38) and *long⁵-phua³* ‘cause-break’ in (45) below.

(38) 所以規個腳攞反黃按呢。

sou²i² kui¹-e⁵ kha¹ long² hoan²-ng⁵ an²ni.
 therefore whole-CL foot all **turn-yellow** in.this.way
 ‘so your whole foot turned yellow like this.’ [from working in the paddy fields all day] (J71)

A second major type of verb complex involves directional verb compounds or DVCs. Unlike most RVCs, they can be composed of up to three verb constituents $V_1 (V_2)V_3$ where V_1 is a frequently a motion verb in the concrete use of these DVCs (but can also be an action or event verb in more abstract uses) and V_2 is a directional verb. V_3 is usually one of two main deictic verbs, either 來 *lai⁵* ‘come, motion towards speaker’ or 去 *khi³* ‘go, motion away from speaker’, for example, 挾來 *chah⁴-lai⁵* bring-come ‘to bring along’ in (30) above, which is a V_1V_3 combination. The trisyllabic DVCs, composed of $V_1V_2V_3$, include as V_2 six different verbs of orientation used as directional complements: *khi²* 起 ‘up’, *loh⁸* 落 ‘down’, *tng²* 轉 ‘back’, *kue³* 過 ‘over’, *jip⁸* 入 ‘in’ and *tshut⁴* 出 ‘out’ in combination with one of the two deictic verbs as V_3 . One such disyllabic directional complement is exemplified in (39) by *sin³-khi²-lai⁵* ‘pick up (towards speaker):

(39) 卡緊閣承起來按呢。

khah⁴ kin² koh⁴ sin⁵-khi²-lai⁵ an²-ni.
 more fast again **pick-up-come**_{DEIC} in.this.way
 ‘and I quickly picked them up again. [plates dropped while waiting]’ (J232)

3.4.1.4. Potential verb compounds

Both RVCs and DVCs can also form what are called ‘potential verb compounds’ by means of an infix *e⁷* 會 in its affirmative form: V_1 會 $(V_2)V_3$ or by means of the infix *bue⁷* 勿會 in the negative potential form: V_1 勿會 $(V_2)V_3$. These two variants of the potential verb compound allow for the interpretation of ‘able to V_1 so that V_2 ’ or alternatively, ‘unable to V_1 so that V_2 ’. Here are some examples:

(40) 我看會清。

goa² khoaⁿ³-e⁷-tshin⁷.
 1SG look-able-clearly
 ‘I could see clearly.’

(41) 我看勿會清。

goa² khoaⁿ³-be⁷-tshin⁷.
 1SG look-NEG.able-clearly
 ‘I couldn’t see clearly.’

Some dialects of Southern Min, such as Quanzhou even allow a doubled-up infix with $V_1 - e^7 lit^4 - (V_2)V_3$ or the negated form $V_1 bue^7 lit^4 (V_2)V_3$ where 得 lit^4 (the weakened form of tit^4) is an infix derived from a modal verb, similarly meaning ‘to be able’, which in its turn is related to a ditransitive verb meaning ‘to get, to obtain’ (see Sun 1996 for details).

(42) Double marking of ‘can’: $V_1 e^7 lit^4 V_2$

汝食會得落去勿會。
li² chiah⁸-e⁷lit⁴-loh⁸-khi bue⁷?
 2SG eat-can-down-g_{DEIC} NEG.can
 ‘Can you eat it all up?’ (e.g. a large bowl of rice)

Another potential construction in Southern Min, which is used to express a judgement as to whether an action is allowed or not (Li Rulong 2007: 133-135), reflects a conservative form in that it is attested from the Medieval Chinese period up until the 13th century when it began to decline in use in Early Mandarin, being gradually ousted by the $V_1 - de$ 得- V_2 potential form (Sun 1996: chapter 2). The construction formed by e^7 VERB lit^0 is still in use in Southern Min:

(43) Potential construction: e^7 VERB lit^0 ~ 會 VERB 得

伊會食得。
I¹ e⁷ chiah⁸-lit⁰.
 3SG can eat-able
 ‘He is allowed to eat it (i.e. it’s not forbidden to him).’

These two potential constructions exemplify another common process of semantic change in Southeast Asia from *get* > *able* (Matisoff 1991, Enfield 2003).

3.4.1.5. Modality

The irrealis and future contexts are expressed with modal verbs such as *beh⁴* 卜 ‘want’, *ai³* 愛 ‘wish, like’. By semantic extension of meaning, the latter verb can thus be used to express the future. *E⁷* 會 ‘able, can’ may serve both as a deontic modal verb expressing capability and an epistemic modal expressing possibility. The latter sense is uppermost in *e⁷ koaⁿ⁵ bue⁷?* 會寒勿會 able be:cold NEG:able ‘Is it going to be cold?’. Some verbs have undergone dramatic semantic change to evolve into modal verbs as exemplified by *tioh⁸* 着 ‘hit the mark’, ‘to be right’ which is used as a deontic modal verb of obligation ‘should, must’, so too *thang¹* 通 ‘to go through, to succeed’ which has evolved into a modal verb of permission ‘may, to be allowed’ or in its negative form *m⁷ thang¹* 怀通 ‘must not’. There is also a large number of

disyllabic or compound modal expressions, including *e⁷sai² lit⁰* 會使得 ‘may’, *tioh⁸ ai³* 着愛 ‘ought to’ and *e⁷hiau²* 會曉 ‘can’ in the sense of ‘to know how to’.

3.1.4.6. Negation

Southern Min dialects possess a well-developed set of highly semantically diversified negative markers, finely nuanced as to the type of negation. Structurally, this plethora of markers has largely arisen from fusion of the two main negators *bo⁵* ‘existential and perfective negative’ and *m⁷* ‘general negative’ with the commonly occurring modal verbs in Southern Min. Some of the main negative adverbs are presented in the following table.

Table 9: Taiwanese Southern Min negative markers

<i>bo⁵</i> 無+ V	Negation of both perfective & habitual contexts, most predicative adjectives, negative possessive verb ‘to not have’, negative existential verb ‘there is not’
<i>m⁷</i> 唔+ V	Negative marker for copular verb, modal verbs, imperfective contexts, irrealis, unwillingness to V
<i>(ia⁵) be⁷</i> (猶)未+ V	Negation of expectation or presupposition: ‘have not (yet) V-ed’
<i>boe⁷</i> 勿会+ V	Negation of ability or possibility to V: ‘unable to V’
<i>mai³</i> 莫+ V	Negative imperative: ‘Don’t V!’
<i>(m⁷)bien²</i> (唔免+ V	Negation of necessity: ‘You don’t need to V’

Southern Min, as for many non-Mandarin Sinitic languages, also possesses a negative existential verb ‘to not have, there is not’ which can be used directly before a noun phrase: *bo⁵hoat⁴ to⁷* 無發度 ‘there is no way, no method’. The negative imperative is formed by the use of *mai³* 莫, among other possibilities with compound modal forms such as *(m⁷)bien²* 唔免 ‘Don’t VERB (there is no need)’ and *boe⁷-sai* 勿会使 ‘Don’t VERB (it is not allowed)’:

(36) 汝莫受氣。

Li² mai³ siu¹khi³.
 2SG NEG.IMP get.angry
 ‘Don’t get angry!’

For a detailed discussion of both simple and fused negative adverbs in Southern Min, see Li (2007: 144-153).

3.4.2. Serial verb constructions (SVCs)

Serial verb constructions of several different types can be found in Sinitic languages which belong the core serialization type (Foley & Van Valin 1984): S V₁ (N₁) V₂ (N₂) (...). Historically, this syntactic configuration has led to the creation of the asymmetrical type of SVC, producing both preverbal or postverbal prepositional adjunct phrases from former V-N concatenations, a strong tendency for this type of SVC. These prepositional phrases in turn serve to express different case roles (see Durie 1997 and Vittrant 2006 for details on SVC types.) Hence, the first main outcome of this grammaticalization process for the type S V₁ N₁ V₂ (N₂) is the formation of major syntactic constructions in Sinitic languages – including dative, object-marking, passive, locative and instrumental types, several of which are discussed in §3.5. A second outcome is the formation of complex verbs including resultative and directional verb compounds where the second verb in a V₁V₂ series gradually grammaticalizes from a lexical verb into a resultative or directional complement, thence into a phase marker where it ultimately faces the possibility of developing into a highly bleached aspect marker (§3.4.1.1).

3.5. Clausal and sentential organization

3.5.1. Word order

As noted in §3.1, while SV(O) is one of the basic word orders in Southern Min, there are several other highly frequent patterns available, whose use depends on certain syntactic features of the clause. Alternation in the basic word order is, thus, not simply a function of pragmatics and discourse in Southern Min but is determined by the given syntactic constraints in operation. For example, certain constructions with verb complexes may obligatorily require the object noun to be fronted: OV₁X, due to the use of specific phase markers (X) which do not allow a postverbal object to follow them (Lien 1994, Li 2007). The following example is from a narrative text and shows a clear OV order with the use of an RVC and ellipsis of the subject noun, *gua*² ‘1SG’. The topic of the discourse is the narrator’s fear of dropping and smashing a tray of soup bowls that he is carrying upstairs to give to a wedding party, since superstition dictates that this would bring bad luck. The noun *oa*ⁿ² ‘bowl’ is thus both the discourse and syntactic topic in (45).

(37) 差一點彼塊碗規個弄破。

*chha*¹-*chit*⁸-*diam*² *hit*⁴-*te*⁵ *oa*ⁿ² *kui*¹-*e*⁵ *long*⁵-*phua*³.

nearly that-CL bowl whole-CL cause-break

‘(I stumbled up the stairs and) nearly broke the whole lot of bowls.’ (J221)

3.5.2. Clause types

In this section, we discuss clause types which have historically evolved from fixed sequences of serial verbs, including ditransitives, benefactives, passives, object-marking and comparative constructions in addition to some other basic types such as conditionals and questions.

3.5.2.1 Give constructions

A pan-Southeast Asian feature involves the grammaticalization of *give* verbs into dative, benefactive and causative markers. This applies equally well to Sinitic languages. In Southern Min, the **dative** marker has evolved from the verb *hoo*⁷ 與 ‘give’ and introduces the indirect object in ditransitive constructions in a postverbal position. Compare the so-called ‘double object’ construction in (46) whose main verb is a ditransitive verb of transferral, *sang*³ ‘to offer as a present’, with the dative construction which uses the same lexeme *hoo*⁷, grammaticalized as a preposition marking the indirect object. In both, the indirect object precedes the direct object but there is no prepositional marker in the double object construction. (See example (27) for the verbal use of *hoo*⁷ as a verb ‘to give’.)

(46) Double object construction in Southern Min : Subject–Verb_{Transferral} – IO – DO

我送伊一領衫。

*Goa*² *sang*³ *i*¹ *chit*⁸-*nia*ⁿ² *sa*ⁿ¹.

1SG give 3SG one-CL shirt

‘I gave him a shirt (as a present).’

(47) Ditransitive construction in Southern Min: Subject–Verb_{Transferral} – [*hoo*⁷與– IO] – DO

閣加與我一寡。

*koh*⁴ *ke*¹*hoo*⁷ *goa*² *chit*⁸-*ku*^{a2}.

again add DAT 1SG one-CL_{PL}

‘Give some more (food) to me!’

Nonetheless, the **benefactive** preposition in Southern Min is not derived from this source, unlike standard Mandarin which uses *gěi* 給 ‘for’ < ‘to give’. Rather, it has evolved from the comitative marker *ka(ng)*⁷ 共 which underwent a secondary grammaticalization into a marker of oblique case roles.

- (38) 儂攏會共咱送來。
*lang*⁵ *long*² *e*⁷ *ka*⁷ *lan*² *sang*³-*lai*.
 people all able for 1PL_{INC} deliver-come
 ‘(Usually when we run out of goods), they’ll deliver **for us**.’ (J428)

A distinctive feature of Sinitic languages which is quite rare in the SEA linguistic area is the use of a **passive** marker derived from a *give* verb, in the case of Southern Min, the same postverbal marker of the dative, *hoo*⁷ 與 ‘to give’. This is a typical feature of Southern and Central Sinitic languages while it is much less common in Northern Mandarin dialects, including the standard language (Chappell 2015). Its use is restricted to adversative events, such as *i*¹ *bo*⁷ *thang*¹ *hoo*⁷ *lang*⁵ *kong*² 伊無通與儂講 3SG-NEG.allow PASS-3GENERIC-criticize ‘She isn’t willing to be criticized by others’. This development is possible via a stage where *hoo*⁷ is used as a permissive causative verb meaning ‘to let’ (Chappell & Peyraube 2006, for Southeast Asia, see Yap & Iwasaki 2003):

- (49) Taiwanese *hoo*⁷ ambiguous between passive and causative meanings:
 啊我係與汝管。
a *goa*² *m*⁷ *hoo*⁷ *li*² *koan*⁷
 PRT 1SG NEG CAUS/PASS 2SG rule
 ‘I won’t let you rule me.’ OR: ‘I don’t want to be ruled by you.’ (JT 677)

Another important syntactic constraint is that the agent may *not* be omitted. In the case of indefinite agents, a fusion and contraction of *hoo*⁷ *lang*⁵ 與儂 ‘by someone’ to *hong*⁵ is frequent in colloquial speech to minimally fulfil this syntactic requirement for a dummy agent NP:

- (50) Taiwanese *hoo*⁷ passive with contracted agent NP:
 轉來著與依拍甲欲死。
*mg*⁵-*lai* *toh*⁸ *hong*⁵ <*F* ^ *phah*⁴ *kah* *beh*⁴ *si*³ *F*>.
 return then PASS:3INDEF hit EXT want die
 ‘[When I] returned home, I really got a terrible beating [from my parents].’ (J 142)

Other Min languages use cognates of the verb *khit*⁴ 乞 in this function, which also means ‘to give’, including the Northeastern Fuzhou dialect (see Chappell 2000, Lien 2002).

3.5.2.2 Object-marking constructions

Object-marking constructions, known as the ‘**disposal**’ or ‘**pretransitive**’ form in Chinese linguistics, employ *ka*⁷ < *kang*⁷ 共) to introduce the direct object which is placed before the main verb. This corresponds to the use of *ba*³ 把 in Mandarin. However, the source is different as the marker *ka*⁷ has grammaticalized from earlier comitative and oblique functions, one of which is illustrated in (48) above, the benefactive (Chappell 2000, 2006; Chappell, Peyraube & Wu 2011).

- (51) Taiwanese Southern Min object-marking construction with
- kā*
- :

(NP_{SUBJECT}) – [*KĀ*_{OM} + NP_{DO}] – VERB PHRASE

所以阮 攞共 褲 褪□起來。

*sou*²-*i*² *gun*² *long*² *ka*⁷ *khou*³ *t'ng*³-*khi*²-*lai*⁵therefore 1PL all OM trousers take.off-come_{DEIC}

‘So we all took our trousers off (to go swimming).’

(J 116; summertime activities of a mischievous group of boys)

Also highly frequent is a variant of the *ka*⁷ construction where the direct object is placed in clause-initial position or, if absent and thus ‘zero-marked’, is to be found in the preceding text, as in (52). In this subtype, a co-referential 3SG pronoun *i*² 伊 follows the marker *ka*⁷, which in its turn may be contracted in fast speech to *kai*⁷ or *kah*⁴.

- (52) Taiwanese Southern Min
- kā*
- with a clause-initial object and an anaphoric pronoun:

(NP_{DO(i)}) – [*KĀ*_{OM} □ + PRO_{DO(i)}] – VP

耳朵 ... 共伊封起來!

(ē_{rduo}...) *kā* *i*¹ *hong*¹-*khi*²-*lai*

(ears ...) OM 3SG seal-INCT (F101-102)

‘(Best to fill your ears with wax) and seal them up! (so as not to hear the nagging).’¹⁹

3.5.2.3 Comparative constructions

The most common way of forming the **comparative** construction in Taiwanese Southern Min is with a hybrid form composed of *pi*² 比 (<‘compare’), cognate with the Mandarin comparative marker *bi*³, and the ‘native’ comparative marker *khah*⁴ 較 ‘more’, as in the next example:

- (53) A [Comparee]
- pi*
- ²
- B [Standard]
- khah*
- ⁴
- Verb

阿輝比汝較早出生。

*A*¹ *Hui*¹ *pi*² *li*² *khah*⁴ *cha*² *chhut*⁴-*se*ⁿ.

NAME COMP 2SG more early be.born

‘A Hui was born before you.’ (literally: A Hui was born earlier than you.)’

In more conservative Southern Min dialects, such as Hui’an, the predicative adjective precedes the standard noun.

- (54) A [Comparee]
- khah*
- ⁴
- Verb B[Standard] in the Hui’an dialect (Quanzhou subgroup)

伊較大我。

*i*³³ *k'a*²⁴ *toa*⁴² *goa*⁵⁵.

3SG COMP big 1SG

‘She is older than me.’ (literally: ‘She more olds me.’)

For more details on comparatives of inequality in Hui’an Southern Min, see Chen (2015).

3.5.2.4 Conditional constructions

Conditional constructions make use of the conjunction *na*⁷ 若 ‘if’, with the condition clause preceding the consequence clause.

- (55) 暝仔載若是落雨，我久勿會來。
bin⁵-na²-chai³ na⁷si³loh⁸ hou⁷, gua² be⁷ lai⁵.
 tomorrow if be fall rain 1SG NEG.can come
 ‘If it rains tomorrow, I won’t come.’

A compound conjunction *na⁷ kong²* if.say ‘if’ is also common in conversational texts, making use of the verb ‘to say’ as one of its components (see Chappell 2008 for an analysis of the grammaticalization of *say* verbs in Sinitic).

- (56) 古早 *hon...* 若講 讀國民學校，這是卡普遍。
kou²-tsa² hon ...na⁷-kong² thak⁸... kok⁴-bin⁵ hak⁴-hau⁷
 earlier PRT if:SAYCOND study state school

che¹ si³ khah⁴ pho²-phian³ (...).
 this be more common
 ‘Earlier, if you completed elementary school education, this was more common. (...).
 (JT 246-250)

3.5.3. Ellipsis of arguments

Ellipsis of arguments is a widespread phenomenon in Sinitic languages. It can be viewed as a form of zero anaphora, in particular for 1st and 2nd person participants universally present in the context of a dialogue, and in general for the referent of any noun found in the immediately preceding context. This process takes place when there is a change of status for the referent in the specific discourse from new into given information. This can be seen in the textual material provided in the appendix and in examples (29), (30), (39), (45), (50) and (57).

3.5.4. Information Structure

In general, given information precedes the verb phrase in Southern Min while new information follows the main verb. In this, Southern Min is no different from other Sinitic languages. For example, in the object-marking construction with *ka⁷*, the preverbal direct object introduced by this preposition typically represents given information. This explains why it is often pronominalized.

3.5.4.1 Topicalization and topic markers

Topicalization of patient nouns is a common syntactic process in Southern Min whereby the noun representing the direct object of a transitive verb is ‘fronted’ into clause-initial position (see example (57) below, (45) and (52) above).

- (39) 今仔日生意勿愛做。
Kim¹-a²-jit⁸ seng¹-li² buai³ cho³.
 today business NEG.want do
 ‘Today (I) don’t want to do trading.’ (J542)

As earlier remarked, this is in fact obligatory for certain structures composed of complex predicates with phase markers (Yang 1991, Lien 1994, R. Li 2007) and distinguishes Southern Min from other Sinitic languages. Other topic markers are based on discourse markers that can occur post-nominally and mark this noun as a topic, including *ne* 呢 in Taiwanese, exemplified in (58).

(40) 彼個稻稿頭呢，有佇水的外口。

Hit⁴ e⁵ tiu⁷ko²thau² ne, u⁷ ti⁷ chui² e⁵ goa⁷-khau².
 that CL rice.stalk.head PRT_{TOP} have at water GEN outside

‘(After the harvest), as for those rice stalk heads, they were right above the water.’
 (J17-18)

It is not accurate to claim however that Southern Min is essentially a topic-prominent language, if this refers to purely its syntactic structure. Many constructions illustrated in §3.5.2 show that the grammatical subject can be identified, even in the double nominative pattern discussed in §2.2 which involves a topic and an SV comment. The topical value of nouns in terms of discourse flow and information structure is undoubtedly a question that may only be answered by means of a detailed discourse analysis of a large corpus of oral texts.

3.5.5. Questions

A special form of polar questions which require either ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ as the response was early remarked upon by Marybeth Clark (1985) as a feature of many SEA and Chinese languages, as opposed to information or ‘Wh-’ questions. She observed that there are two main patterns for polar questions, both involving positive and negative counterparts of the same verb:

(59) VERB-NEG-VERB
 VERB-NEG

In Sinitic languages, the first pattern is typical of standard Mandarin, while Cantonese and Hakka can use both types.

(60) VERB-NEG-VERB construction in standard Mandarin
Nǐ qù bu qù? 你去不去?
 2SG go NEG go
 ‘Are you going?’

In contrast to this, one of the most frequently occurring **interrogative** constructions in Southern Min is the second pattern, formed by simply attaching the main negative markers, including *bo⁵* 無 or *m⁷* 唔, to the end of a declarative statement (see also Yue-Hashimoto 1991). Hence, it is in fact, more accurate to describe the construction as CLAUSE-NEG:

(61) CLAUSE-NEG polar question in Southern Min
 伊卜來唔?
i¹ beh⁴ lai⁵ m⁷?
 3SG want come NEG
 ‘Is he going to come?’

Other strategies are the use of the paradigm of interrogative pronouns *in situ* within in the clause and disjunctive questions.

3.6. Pragmatics & discourse

3.6.1. Final particles

As for Southeast Asian and Sinitic languages in general, Southern Min uses a set of clause-final particles to code different kinds of modality including the associated subjective attitudes

of the speaker. Some of the clause-final particles in Southern Min are presented in Table 10 and given authentic discourse examples below:

Table 10: A selection of Taiwanese Southern Min clause-final particles

Clause-final particle	Character	Function
e^0	的	Assertion of a state of affairs
a^0	啊	Confirmation of a situation, slightly insistent
bo^0	無	Non-neutral polar question marker (general)
m^7	唔	Non-neutral polar question marker (intention)
bue^0	𠵼	Non-neutral polar question marker (likelihood)
$kong^1$	講	Newsworthiness, exclamations, warnings, rebuttals
$o^5 \sim o$	喔	Exclamatory value
la^1	啦	Draws hearer's attention to topic at hand; directive

This grammatical sketch of Southern Min closes with a final three examples to illustrate some of the modal values for four of the discourse markers listed in Table 10:

(6241) 我足驚的。

$Gua^2 \ chiok^8 \ kia^{n1} \ e^0$.

1SG very scared PRT_{ASST}

'I was *very* scared.' (J557) (assertion of how narrator felt on finding himself lost on a mountain at night)

(63) 嘛勿會使睏啊。

$Ma^1 \ bue^7 \ sai^2 \ khun^1 \ a^0$.

also NEG:allow sleep PRT_{CNF}

'You mustn't take a nap either (while looking after the shop).' (J538)

The use of the clause-final particle $kong^1$ 講 in Southern Min, derived from the verb 'say' $kong^2$ (which undergoes tone sandhi), has a newsworthy, exclamatory value in threats and rebuttals (see Chappell 2017), similar to old-fashioned English *I say (old chap)!* or French *Dis-donc!* 'How about that!'. The following example shows the rebuttal use of $kong^1$ 講 and relies on the context that A is on a strict diet and cannot indulge in any treats. CM's offer of chocolate therefore challenges her determination to stick to her diet.

(64) Strict diet

CM: 你慾愛 <L2 巧克力 L2> 無?

$Li^2 \ beh^4 \ ai^3 \ <M \ qiäokèlì \ M> \ bo^0$

2SG like chocolate PRT_Q <NEG>

A: 無在癡講。

$bo^5 \ teh^4 \ siao^2 \ kong^1$

NEG PROG crazy PRT_{SAY}

CM: 'Would you like some chocolate?'

A: 'I'm not going crazy!' (literally: 'I'm telling you: it's not the case that I'm crazy.')

The reader is referred to Cheng (1977), Lien (1988), Yang (1991), Chappell & Peyraube (2016) and Chappell (2017) for further details and discussion of these discourse markers.

4. Conclusion and summary

Matisoff (1991: 386) divides the larger Southeast Asian zone into two main areas: the Sinospheric and the non-Sinospheric. The Sinospheric area includes Southern Sinitic (basically Sinitic languages south of the Yangzi) and all the language families which have been in close cultural contact with China such as Hmong-Mien, Tai-Kadai, Vietnamese in the Mon-Khmer branch of Austroasiatic, and certain branches of Tibeto-Burman such as Lolo-Burmese. The non-Sinospheric languages include Austronesian languages, many Mon-Khmer languages, and Tibeto-Burman languages, for example, those found in Northeastern India and Nepal.

This division in fact meshes with the classic and fundamental division made by Mantaro Hashimoto (1976, 1986) for Sinitic languages into Northern and Southern groups, which however has been much debated in recent literature in Chinese linguistics (q.v. the discussion in Chappell, Li & Peyraube 2007). The essence of Hashimoto's hypothesis on contact-induced language change is that Chinese languages in the south have been subject to Taicization while those in the north have been subject to Altaicization. Hence, language contact influences from Tai (Kra-Dai), but also from Austroasiatic, should be theoretically observable amongst the Southern Sinitic languages, including the Min group of dialects.

This hypothesis can be tested out in a preliminary fashion by considering some of the grammatical features presented by Matisoff (1991) which he views as unifying the Southeast Asian area into a linguistic zone:

- 1) modal verbs > desiderative markers, 'be likely to'
- 2) verbs meaning 'to dwell' > progressive aspect markers
- 3) verbs meaning 'to finish' > perfective aspect markers
- 4) verbs meaning 'to get, obtain' > 'manage', 'able to', 'have to'
- 5) verbs of giving > causative and benefactive markers
- 6) verbs of saying > complementizers, topic and conditional markers
- 7) formation of resultative and directional compound verbs through verb concatenation

With respect to Sinitic, all these pathways of grammaticalization apply to both Northern and Southern Sinitic languages, albeit the use of *give* verbs as causatives is less well-developed in Northern Chinese (Chappell 2015). It also needs to be noted that little is known about the use of *say* verbs as conditional markers, apart from Southern Min (§3.5.2.4.) where the main *say* verb, *kong*² 講, shows just this development. Beijing and Taiwanese Mandarin as well as Hong Kong Cantonese also have complementizers introducing subordinate clauses which are grammaticalized from *say* verbs but along a different grammaticalization pathway from the conditional and topic marker use (Chappell 2008).

With respect to just Southern Min, all these pathways have been illustrated or discussed in this grammatical sketch while observing that two pathways are less well-developed, namely (i) *finish* > *perfective*, which is still at an early stage of grammaticalization, and (ii) *get* > *able* which has not remained the main strategy for coding potential compound verbs, nor a high frequency modal verb. In pan-Sinitic terms, however, all these pathways can be illustrated.

In conclusion, there are strong grounds for treating most of continental East Asia including the Sinitic languages, as forming a linguistic area with Southeast Asia on this basis

of broadly defined traits. A more precise identification of linguistic micro-areas will depend on further detailed research by specialists in the languages of East and Southeast Asia.

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Grammatical abbreviations used in the glossing of examples: ACH achievement phase marker; ASST assertive use of sentence-final particle; CAUS causative marker; CL classifier; COMP comparative marker; CNF confirmation use of sentence-final particle; COND conditional marker; CRS currently relevant state marker; DAT dative preposition; DEIC deictic; DIMN diminutive marker or nominalizer; EXP experiential aspect marker; EXT extent marker ‘so that’; GEN genitive marker; IMP imperative marker; INC inclusive form, INCT inchoative phase marker; INDEF indefinite reference; LOC locative preposition; LNK linker (genitive, relative clause or attributive marker); NEG negative adverb; OM object marker; PASS passive marker; PEF prefix; PRT discourse particle; PFT perfect aspect marker; PL plural; PROG progressive aspect marker; PRT discourse particle; Q question particle for polar questions; SG singular; SAY verbal source of grammaticalized marker.

Appendix 1

Table 11 : Southern Min corpus

Title	FATE (F)	JAPANESE TALES (JT)	JESSE (J)	TOTAL
Length in minutes	14:06	26:23	17:48	58:17
N° Intonation units	796	1216	831	2843
Genre	Family conversation in Taipei	Narrative by Fang Laoshi (Other interlocutors make remarks)	Narrative by Jesse Chen (A second interlocutor makes remarks)	
N° of interlocutors	6	4	2	
Content	<i>Various:</i> 1. <i>Principal subject</i> News on the latest fortune-telling results for members of the family, based on divination carried out by the youngest uncle; 2. <i>Also discussed:</i> sister and her family in Australia, stockmarket losses, changing jobs	1. <i>Japanese history:</i> Rise of General Toyotomi; 2. <i>Also discussed:</i> life in Taiwan under the Japanese occupation	<i>Reminiscences</i> 1. <i>Childhood stories:</i> summer holidays, running a family business, waitering experiences 2. <i>As an adult:</i> Lost overnight on a mountain	

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¹ This is a crude estimate based on data from Ethnologue (2017, see Simons & Fennig), the CIA World Factbook (2013) and on-line access to the relevant statistics from official government censuses. Many censuses do not or have not posed questions on language use, at home or in education, so that we have recourse only to statistics on ethnicity which evidently does not correlate perfectly with linguistic competences. In addition to this, the census data on language use is often out-of-date where particular governments have ceased asking questions about this. The estimate according to these same sources for ethnic Chinese populations in Southeast Asia comes to over 27 million.

² The latest census carried out in Thailand was in 2010. According to the National Statistical Office's report, *The 2010 Population and Housing Census*, <http://popcensus.nso.go.th/file/popcensus-10-01-56-E.pdf>, accessed on 23 August 2017, 95.9% of the population of 65.9 million in Thailand are Thai, 2.0% are Burmese² and 2.1% are classified under 'Others'. It does not provide any information on ethnicity.

³ Linguistic maps and the latest classification of the Min branch of Sinitic can be consulted in the second edition of the *Language Atlas of China* (Zhang 2012).

⁴ In the late 20th century, T'sou (1987) estimated there were 9 million Southern Min speakers in the Indo-Pacific basin, including, however, second language speakers in the latter case. However, according to the most recent statistics from both *Ethnologue* (2017, see Simons & Fennig) and the relevant government censuses for each Southeast Asian country which have supplied figures on ethnicity and/or home language, this adds up to the rough estimate of seven million, excluding Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific islands which T'sou had included in his larger survey. Note also that the Hokkien dialects are far less common in the Americas, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, where Cantonese dialects predominate among established Chinese communities (Wurm et al, 1987: Maps B16a and 16b).

⁵ Some of the main dialects of this group are listed below as a point of orientation for the reader:

Standard Mandarin (<i>pinyin</i>)	Anglicized (<i>Historical names</i>)	Min-Xiamen (<i>IPA</i>)	Characters
Fujian province	Hokkien	[Hok.kien]	福建
Fuzhou	Foochow	[Hok.tsiu]	福州
Xiamen	Amoy	[E.bng]	廈門
Quanzhou	Ch'uanchou	[Ts ^h uan.tsiu]	泉州
Zhangzhou	Changchou	[Tsiang.tsiu]	漳州
Shantou	Swatow	[Suā.t ^h au]	汕頭
Chaozhou	Teochew	[Dio.tsiu]	潮州

⁶The modifications of the Church Romanization devised by Carstairs Douglas (1873) are as follows: The symbols, *ts* and *ts^h*, are not used since they represent sounds which are no longer phonemically distinct from *ch* and *chh* respectively in modern Southern Min. Open *o* and closed *o* are represented as *oo* and *o*. Vocalic nasalization is indicated by a superscript *n*. An empty box, □, is used where the Chinese character is not known, which is not infrequent in the case of the special Southern Min lexemes. We base this chapter on Taiwanese Southern Min for the practical reason that there are no comprehensive reference grammars of Southeastern Asian varieties of Hokkien available (nor of mainland Fujian varieties for that matter), while Taiwanese has been the subject of a great deal of research.

⁷The writing system and the methods adopted for representing Southern Min in terms of characters are both discussed in more detail in Chappell and Lien (2011).

⁸The ‘Sanglely’ Chinese traders settled on the outskirts of Manila, in the Philippines, in an area known as the *parián* during the late 16th century. The Spanish missionaries of the Dominican order in Manila proselytized not only to the majority of Tagalog speakers but also to this Chinese community. For more information, see Klöter (2011) and Chappell and Peyraube (2006).

⁹See, however, Chen (2000: 74-76) on register spread in Chaozhou polysyllabic words.

¹⁰Phonation may however be a secondary feature of tone systems in Chinese languages (e.g. creaky voice) and certainly played a role in tonogenesis. Shanghainese is considered to be a phonation register language with the feature of breathy voice.

¹¹Note that the tonal values vary widely from dialect to dialect of Southern Min and also from author to author, depending on a variety of factors including, for example, the region in Taiwan and whether it is predominantly Quanzhou-based or Zhangzhou-based. I refer to Chappell & Lien (2011) for these values. Yang (1991: 34-35) gives the following values for Taiwanese Southern Min which differ somewhat from ours: Tone 1 High Level, 陰平: 44; Tone 2 陰上: 53, Tone 3 陰去: 31; Tone 4 陰入: 32 or 22; Tone 5 陽平: 13; Tone 7 陽去: 22 and Tone 8 陽入: 33.

¹²The Quanzhou dialect has two extra vowels: /ə/ and /u/ according to Yang (1991) and Weirong Chen (2011).

¹³Recall here that the voiced counterpart of /t/ in Southern Min has merged with /l/.

¹⁴Note that the stem of the word used for ‘child’ – 囡仔 *gín-á* ~ *gín-ná* in contemporary Taiwanese – cannot be the source for this diminutive on phonological grounds (see Lien 1998).

¹⁵The reader is referred to detailed studies on reduplication in Taiwanese Southern Min including S. Cheng (1981) and F. Tsao (2001). The discussion in §2.4 is based partly on these analyses. Due to contact with Mandarin, the form AABB is also possible for some disyllabic adjectives with the intensity reading (S. Cheng 1981: 62-63).

¹⁶Note that it is possible for a certain number of monosyllabic nouns to be reduplicated with the sense of ‘every’: *lang⁵ lang⁵* 儂儂 ‘every person’, ‘everyone’.

¹⁷Despite the fact that the etymology of *e⁵* is the morpheme *qi* 其 (Li Rulong 2007), the Chinese character 個 is generally used to represent the particle *e⁵* in its classifier function while the character 的 is used for its other modifying functions as a genitive and attributive marker. This is for ease of comprehension of the examples.

¹⁸Consequently, I adopt the use of the character 咧 to provisionally represent this aspect marker since the actual source has not yet been ascertained. My informant could also use the locative verb, *tí⁷* 佇, on its own as a progressive aspect marker, as seen in example (35).

¹⁹In this conversational text, the speaker begins in Mandarin and then switches back to Southern Min, which explains why the subject noun, *ěrduo* ‘ears’, is given in Mandarin.

²⁰See Chappell (2017) for source details.