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MANDARIN AND OTHER SINITIC LANGUAGES

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1. Introduction

China is a vast country with a population currently approaching 1.4 billion, yet not all these people speak Mandarin, nor necessarily any other form of Chinese. At least 8% of the population belong to one of the 56 recognized ethnic minorities, each of which by the standards of any European country would represent a small nation in its own right. For example, there are an estimated 14.9 million speakers of the Tai languages, known as Zhuàng 壯 in China, who are principally located in the Guangxi Autonomous Region in south China, 2.7 million speakers of Korean, and 8.4 million speakers of the Uyghur language in Xinjiang (Lewis et al. 2014).

In this description, we will concentrate on describing the Sinitic languages of China spoken by the other 91% of the population. ‘Sinitic’ is the technical term used in linguistics to refer to Chinese languages and dialects which are as different from one another as the languages of Europe are, as Romanian is from Portuguese. The Sinitic languages are historically related to the Tibeto-Burman languages, together forming the large Sino-Tibetan language family which is spread over most of East Asia in addition to many areas of Southeast Asia.

1.2 Classification of Sinitic languages

On the basis of their sound systems (phonology) and their lexicon (vocabulary), Sinitic languages have been classified into ten main branches, as in the *Language Atlas of China* (1987, second edition, 2013). This classification essentially relies upon the findings of Chinese historical phonology with respect to a set of crucial sound changes that took place from the period of Middle Chinese (6th -7th centuries) onwards and is based on the following phonological tradition: the syllable is divided into an initial consonant (*shēngmǔ* 聲母) and a rhyme (*yùnmǔ* 韻母). The rhyme carries the prosodic value of tone and segmentally consists of either a simple vowel, a diphthong (two vowel qualities) or a triphthong (three vowel qualities), which in turn may combine with a final nasal or plosive coda (ending), depending on the dialect or the period of Chinese reconstructed: cf. Mandarin *tǎ* 塔 ‘pagoda’ [t^h+ɑ²¹⁴], *miào* 廟 ‘temple’ [m+iau⁵¹], *zhōng* 钟 ‘bell’ [tʂ+ʈŋ⁵⁵]. The syllable initial may of course be an unfilled position, that is, a ‘zero’ as in *ēn* 恩 ‘grace’ [∅+ən⁵⁵]. In addition, the tones are classified into four categories: the level tone (*píngshēng* 平聲), the rising tone (*shǎngshēng* 上聲), the falling tone (*qùshēng* 去聲) and the entering tone (*rùshēng* 入聲). Below are some of the main phonological criteria that have been used by various scholars to classify Chinese dialects into their main branches, which vary from seven to ten groups:

- (i) the evolution of the Middle Chinese voiced obstruent initials (*quán zhuó* 全濁): *b-, *d-, *g-, *dz-, etc.¹
- (ii) distribution of the rhymes across across the four main tone categories in the modern Sinitic languages, as conditioned by the voicing and aspiration of the consonant initials
- (iii) evolution of the Middle Chinese *rùshēng* (entering tone)
- (iv) the loss or retention of plosive and nasal codas /-p, -t, -k, -m, -n, -ŋ/
- (v) palatalization of the Middle Chinese velars: /k-, k'-, g-/ before high front vowels

For further reading, see Ting Pang-hsin (1982), Ramsey (1987), Norman (1988), Yuan et al (1989), Wang (1996), Li Lan (2002), Yan (2006: chapter 2), Yue (2003) and Kurpaska (2010, chapter 4) *inter alia*.

The different dialect groups are not mutually intelligible in their spoken form. For example, a Min dialect such as Chaozhou (Teochew), spoken in Southern China is not directly understandable to speakers of one of the Jin dialects in the North, that is, without first having been exposed to it, and vice versa. Many special vocabulary items found in these dialect groups often prove not to have a corresponding cognate (related word) in Standard Chinese, and thus no written form, unless a special character has been devised, as is the case in Hong Kong Cantonese (§2.9) and in Taiwanese Southern Min. It is noteworthy that even in the early 21st century, the extent of this striking linguistic diversity is almost unknown to linguists and scholars outside of China. The ten main branches are listed in Table 1, presented below, which is based on the *Language Atlas of China* (Wurm & Li, 1987), hereafter referred to as ‘*Atlas*’:

¹ Obstruents include plosives (stops), affricates and fricatives.

Table 1: Sinitic Languages of China

<i>Language branch</i>	<i>Region of China</i>	<i>Population (millions)</i>	<i>Representative variety</i>
1. Mandarin 北方話	North, Northeast, Southwest of China	799m	Beijing
2. Jin 晉	Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, parts of Shaanxi	63m	Taiyuan
3. Xiang 湘	Hunan	36m	Changsha
4. Gan 贛	Jiangxi	48m	Nanchang
5. Hui 徽	Anhui	3.3m	Jixi
6. Wu 吳	Zhejiang, Southern Jiangsu	74m	Shanghainese
7. Min 閩	Fujian, Northeastern Guangdong, Taiwan	75m	Hokkien, Teochew
8. Kejia 客家 (Hakka)	Southwestern Fujian, Northeastern Guangdong, scattered over South China	42m	Meixian Hakka
9. Yue 粵	Guangdong & Guangxi	59m	Cantonese
10. Pinghua 平話 & Tuhua 土話	Guangxi, Southern Hunan & northern Guangdong	7.8m	Nanning, Guilin
TOTAL: 1,207,100,000 (1.2 billion) ²			

Mandarin itself is divided up into eight dialect subgroups and covers a very large expanse of China's territory from Manchuria in the northeast to Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan in the southwest. For the remaining non-Mandarin Chinese languages, the greatest concentration is thus to be found in the east and southeast of China.

1.3. Principal characteristics of Sinitic languages

Chinese languages are tonal: the prosodic property of pitch level and contour can be used to distinguish lexical meaning (see descriptions below). The syllable structure for Sinitic languages is $(C_1)V^T(C_2)$ where C_2 can be realised as /-p, -t, -k, -m, -n, -ŋ, -ʔ/ (depending on the dialect), V is a vowel or diphthong, and T is the tonal value.

The main sentence word order is Subject-Verb-Object (SVO), while SOV is a quite common alternative. Modifiers generally precede the item that is modified, for example, adjectives precede their head nouns. Sinitic languages are generally described as belonging to the language type known as 'isolating' or 'analytic', due to the presence of derivational morphology to form words, as opposed to inflectional morphology, which they lack. While most Sinitic languages possess an albeit rather small repertoire of affixes (prefixes, infixes and suffixes) to derive new words, such as nouns from verbs, the forms of nouns are not usually changed for case (nominative, accusative, genitive, ablative etc.) (but see §2.4), nor verbs for tense (past, present, future), voice (active, passive), mood (conditional, subjunctive etc.) or number (singular, dual,

² These figures are based on those given by Xiong Zhenghui 熊证辉 and Zhang Zhenxing 张振兴 (2008:97) for the new version of the *Language Atlas of China* and have been rounded up. Xiong & Zhang explain that they have used the 2004 *China Administrative Regions Yearbook* 中国行政区划简册 for the population figures.

plural etc.). Instead, analytic methods are employed to code these meanings: prepositions and particles may be used to indicate the role of a noun in a sentence such as *gěi* 給 for the dative ‘to, for’ and *de* 的 for the genitive in Standard Mandarin: *tā de zìxíngchē* 3SG-GEN-bicycle 她的自行車 ‘her bicycle’. The category of aspect, rather than tense, is prevalent as a modification of the predicate: aspectual particles may be used to indicate whether or not an action or event is completed, as in example (3) below, similar to the perfective in Russian.

There is an apparently high degree of correlation between the syllable and the morpheme in Chinese languages, each of which generally corresponds to a written character. Nonetheless, morphemes (the smallest linguistic units that have meaning) are not always equivalent to words, even though the written language might suggest this with its evenly spaced Chinese characters. Just as in European languages, morphemes may be bound elements found at a level below that of the grammatical word such as the root form *jiǎn-* and the suffix *-zi* in *jiǎnzi* 剪子 ‘scissors’. Neither can stand alone as nouns. Fusional or portmanteau morphology is more widespread than believed (e.g. fusion of plural suffixes on pronouns, see Table 18 below).

Another interesting feature of Sinitic languages, which they share with Southeast Asian languages, is the use of classifiers in the enumeration of nouns. This means that a classifier is an obligatory element when a noun occurs with a numeral for counting purposes. In addition to this, classifiers group together sets of objects that share a salient characteristic and thus fulfil a role of semantic categorization. For example, in Southern Min (Hokkien), nouns denoting sea creatures and reptiles are classified by *buè* 尾, a classifier that developed out of a noun meaning ‘tail’. The word order follows the principle of modifier-modified, as mentioned above:

- (1) NUM – CLF – NOUN
sì buè chuìbè 四尾水馬
 four CLF seahorse
 ‘four seahorses’

The set of nouns classified by *buè* thus includes different types of fish, crocodiles and snakes, all of which can be regarded as having a tail.

A second major feature of Sinitic language is their use of *in situ* interrogatives. This means that the interrogative pronouns for *who*, *what*, *where* etc. are simply placed in the original position of the item being questioned or asked about. This word order contrasts greatly with Germanic languages such as English, where the entire sentence needs to be re-arranged, due to a requirement for interrogative pronouns to occur in sentence-initial position.

- (2) *Nǐ wèn-guo shéi?* 你問過誰? (Standard Mandarin)
 2SG ask-PERF who
 ‘Who did you ask?’

Adversity passives are a third important feature that are widespread in Sinitic and also found in Southeast Asian languages such as Thai, Khmer, Vietnamese and as far east as Japan: an event is construed negatively as detrimental for the person or thing who undergoes it (Clark 1974, 1989).

- (3) Cantonese passive with 畀 *bei*² < ‘give’
 我畀隻狗咬咗一親。
*Ngoh*⁵ *bei*² *jek*³ *gau*² *ngaau*⁵-*joh*² *yat*¹-*chan*¹.
 ISG PASS CLF dog bite-PFV one-time
 ‘I was bitten by a dog.’

In §2, a short description of each of the ten main Sinitic branches is presented.

2.1. Mandarin dialects 官話

The Mandarin dialects form the largest branch of Sinitic, numerically speaking. Mandarin dialects constitute at least 66.5% of the population of Chinese language speakers in China, according to Xiong & Zhang’s estimation (2008) (799 million out of 1.2 billion speakers). In the most recent edition of *Ethnologue* (Lewis, 2014), this estimate is even higher at 70% or 840 million.

According to the latest revised edition of the *Language Atlas of China* (2013), eight subgroups have been identified for Mandarin. These are listed in Table 2:

Table 2: The eight dialect subgroups of Mandarin

<i>Mandarin subgroup</i>	<i>Region of China</i>	<i>Population (millions)</i>	<i>Representative variety</i>
1. Northeastern 东北官話	Manchuria	98m	Harbin, Shenyang
2. Beijing Mandarin 北京官話	Beijing Municipal City and surrounds	27m	Beijing, Chengde
3. Jilu 冀魯官話	Western Shandong, parts of Hebei	89m	Jinan, Baoding, Tianjin
4. Jiaoliao 膠遼官話	Eastern Shandong, southern Liaoning	35m	Yantai, Qingdao, Dalian
5. Zhongyuan or Central Plains 中原官話	Henan, parts of Shanxi, Shaanxi and Gansu	186m	Xi’an, Luoyang, Xuzhou, Zhengzhou
6. Lanyin or Northwestern 蘭銀官話	Gansu, Ningxia	17m	Lanzhou, Yinchuan
7. Jiang-Huai or Southern 江淮官話	Jiangsu	86m	Nanjing, Nantong, Yangzhou
8. Southwestern 西南官話	Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, parts of Hubei & Hunan	260m	Wuhan, Chengdu, Guiyang, Kunming, Changde
Total: 799m			

The most prominent member in terms of its international status and as the object of high-level linguistic research is undoubtedly Standard Chinese, or Mandarin, which belongs to the Beijing dialect subgroup. Note also that Mandarin is one of the six working languages authorized by the United Nations Organization for use in both domains of official speeches and documents. As the official language of China, it is called *pǔtōnghuà* 普通話 which literally means ‘the common language’. *Pǔtōnghuà* is not however equivalent to Pekingese or Beijing Mandarin, as it is to some extent an artificially created language, subject to influence from the local dialect of its L₂ speakers.

Consensus for the definition of ‘Standard Chinese’, or *pǔtōnghuà*, was achieved at the Symposium on the Standardization of Modern Chinese held in China in 1956. It was determined that the official language would be based on the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect, the lexicon

of the Northern dialects of Mandarin and the grammar of modern vernacular works (Chappell 1980, Chen 1999: 124). This variety of Chinese was adopted as the official language in 1958.

Mandarin is claimed to be the language with the largest number of first-language speakers in the world numbering 848 million, according to *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al., 17th edition 2014), followed at some distance by Spanish (414m.), English (335m) and Hindi (260m). Of course, this claim includes but does not take into account the differences between the eight main subgroups of Mandarin dialects, which can be considerable, being a consequence of historical and geographical factors.

Mandarin is known as *Guóyǔ* 國語 ‘the national language’ in Taiwan (Republic of China), while in the Republic of Singapore, *Huáyǔ* 華語 ‘the language of the Hua Chinese’ is one of four co-official languages, in addition to English, Tamil and Malay. The etymology of the term ‘Mandarin’ appears to involve a borrowing from Portuguese *mandarim* from the verb *mandar* ‘to command’ (OED) and refers undoubtedly to Chinese officials and their language, *Guānhuà* 官話.³

In terms of phonological criteria, the series of Middle Chinese (MC) voiced obstruent initials has been devoiced, developing into aspirated and unaspirated counterparts, while palatalization of MC velar initials preceding high front vowels is the rule, e.g. *teien*⁵¹ 見 ‘to see’ < MC**kenH*. Another shared phonological trait of the Mandarin dialects includes the loss of the reconstructed Middle Chinese consonant finals: *-p*, *-t*, *-k* and *-m*. In syllable-final position, only the nasals *-n* and *-ŋ* [*ng*] are found, although a new set of finals should be added for many of these dialects in which the retroflex suffix *-r* [ʂ] has been fused: Beijing *xìn* /*cin*/ ‘letter’ → *xìr* /*ciə*/ ‘message’ 信儿. Mandarin dialects generally possess a four-tone system, apart from the Jianghuai or Southern subgroup which has preserved the *rùshēng* or entering tone, yielding five tones. Table 3 displays the different meanings for the syllable *xian* /*ciɛn*/ for the four lexical tones of Standard Mandarin, using *pīnyīn* Romanization. The tone values use a pitch scale from the lowest, 1, to the highest, 5, a scale popularized by a linguist of great renown, Yuen-Ren Chao (1968: 25).

Table 3: Standard Mandarin tones

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	55 <i>xiān</i> 鮮 ‘fresh’			
Lower	35 <i>xián</i> 咸 ‘salty’	214 <i>xiǎn</i> 險 ‘danger’	51 <i>xiàn</i> 縣 ‘a county’	--

The Mandarin dialect groups vary considerably in their basic morphology and syntax. Taking one example of the pronominal paradigms, let us begin with Standard Mandarin as a basis for comparison:

³ Although the Portuguese were clearly not the first Europeans to set foot in China, they were the first Europeans having arrived by a sea-route with the express purpose of setting up trading posts in Canton and then in Macau from the early 16th century.

Table 4: Pronouns of Standard Mandarin

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>wǒ</i>	我	<i>wǒmen</i> <i>zánmen</i> (inclusive)	我們 咱們
2. <i>nǐ</i> <i>nín</i> (polite form)	你 您	<i>nǐmen</i>	你們
3. <i>tā</i>	他	<i>tāmen</i>	他們

Standard Mandarin has a polite form for 2nd person singular and also makes the distinction between inclusive and exclusive forms for 1st person plural. The ‘inclusive’ pronoun includes the addressee [1+2] as part of its denotation, whereas the ‘exclusive’ refers to the speaker and some other third party, thereby excluding the addressee [1+3]. Nonetheless, *wǒmen* may have a neutral use as well. The inclusive forms are widespread in Mandarin dialects and are also found in Southern Min, Jin, Gan and Southern Wu. It has been claimed that the Mandarin inclusive category was borrowed from Altaic languages. In Sinitic languages, where polite pronouns are not available, respectful titles of address, kin terms and honorifics are used in their place. Most Mandarin dialects north of the Yangtze use causative verbs as the source of passive markers, mainly *jiào* 叫 < ‘to make’ but also *ràng* 讓 < ‘to let’ in addition to the SUFFER class verb *bèi* 被. The Jilu and Jiaoliao groups in Shandong use causative *zhuó* 着 as does Southwestern Mandarin, in addition to *ái* 挨 < ‘to suffer’ (Li Lan 2006, Chappell, forthcoming). The marker of the comparative construction is generally the preposition *bǐ* 比 < ‘to compare’, marking the standard noun, apart from the Southwest and Shandong which employ a Surpass strategy, with verbs such as *guò* 過 ‘surpass’ and *qǐ* 起 ‘arise’ (Li Lan 2003, Chappell & Peyraube, forthcoming).

- (4) Comparative of inequality in Standard Mandarin:
 NOUN_A – Comparative Marker – NOUN_B – VERB
Xiǎo Wáng bǐ Xiǎo Lǐ gāo 小王比小李高。
 NP_A CM NP_B tall
 ‘Xiao Wang is taller than Xiao Li.’

The object marking or ‘disposal construction’, as it is commonly known in Chinese linguistics, predominantly makes use of the marker *bǎ* 把, derived from a verb meaning ‘hold, grasp’ whereas in the Jianghuai Mandarin, *gěi* 给 < ‘give’ is common (Li & Chappell 2013a, b).

- (5) Object marking ‘disposal’ construction in Standard Mandarin
 NOUN_{SUBJECT} - *bǎ* 把 - NOUN_{OBJECT} - VERB
 她把我寫的字擦掉了。
Tā bǎ wǒ xiě de zì cā-diào le.
 3SG BA 1SG write LIG character erase-away PFV
 ‘She erased the words I wrote.’

Table 34.5: Tone system in the Huojia dialect of Jin 获嘉方言

TONE	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper register	33 te ^h iaŋ ³³ 腔 'accent'	53 抢 te ^h iaŋ ⁵³ 'scrape, shovel'	13 呛 te ^h iaŋ ¹³ 'choke'	33ʔ 骨 ku ^ʔ ³³ 'bone'
Lower register	31 墙 te ^h iaŋ ³¹ 'wall'			

With regard to pronominal systems, Jin dialects can be divided into two types according to whether they use -MEN 們, realized as /*mɿ*/ in the Taiyuan dialect: *yə*⁵³.*mɿ* '1PL' or -JIA 家 as their plural suffix, as in the Shanyin dialect 山阴话 (Shaanxi) where 1PL is *ua*⁵¹, a contraction of 我家 '1SG+family'. Shanyin possesses two polite forms (data from Qiao 2000: 115):

Table 6: Pronoun paradigm for the Shanyin dialect of Jin (Shaanxi)

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>ue</i> ⁵¹	我	<i>ua</i> ⁵¹ <i>tsa</i> ⁵³ . <i>mɿ</i> (inclusive)	我們
2. <i>ŋi</i> ⁵¹	你	<i>ŋiəu</i> ⁵¹	你們
		<i>ŋiʌr</i> ²¹³	您儿 Polite form
3. <i>tʰa</i> ²¹³	他	<i>tʰəʔ</i> ⁵	他們
		<i>tʰʌr</i> ²¹³	他儿 Polite form

The double object construction follows the order of INDIRECT OBJECT – DIRECT OBJECT in all the Jin dialects surveyed in Hou and Wen (1993: 300):

(9) Double object construction in the Taiyuan dialect of Jin: IO-DO

给我一本书。

*kei*⁵³ *yə*⁵³ *iəʔ*² *pəŋ*⁵³ *su*¹¹
give 1SG one CL book
'Give me a book.'

2.3. XIANG DIALECTS 湘語

Xiang dialects are spoken by approximately 36 million people in Hunan province. The name is taken from the main river in this region which served as a major immigration route between north and south in the 1st millennium.

The Xiang dialects are spread over most of Hunan province, except for the northwest and some southern areas where Southwestern Mandarin has encroached upon Xiang territory. Pockets of

Xiang dialects are also found in Sichuan and in Guangdong and Guangxi. Typically divided into New and Old types, the more archaic features of Old Xiang are now better preserved in the southern dialects. Notably, some of the Old Xiang dialects have preserved the MC voiced initials. The dialect of the provincial capital Changsha is an example of New Xiang which has steadily converged towards Southwestern Mandarin (Y. Wu 2005).

The Changsha dialect of New Xiang has 6 tones, a typical number for a Xiang dialect. The Xiang dialects have lost their plosives /-p,-t,-k/ in final position of the syllable, just as in Mandarin. Data is taken from Wu Yunji (2005).

Table 7: Changsha Xiang tones

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	33 <i>si</i> ³³ ‘poem’ 詩	42	55 <i>si</i> ⁵⁵ 試 ‘try’	24
Lower	13 <i>si</i> ¹³ ‘time’ 時	<i>si</i> ⁴² 使 ‘send’	21 <i>si</i> ²¹ 事 ‘matter’	<i>si</i> ²⁴ 識 ‘know’

The pronoun system for a New Xiang dialect, such as Changsha, reminds one clearly of Standard Chinese. While there is no inclusive-exclusive distinction, a polite form can be used for both younger or older addressees, *li*⁴¹ *lau*⁴¹ *zən*¹³ *ka*³³ 你老人家 literally: 2SG-old-person. This has also developed a fused form: *lan*³³ 郎 (data from Y.Wu (2005: 114).

Table 8: Pronouns of Changsha Xiang

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>ŋo</i> ³¹	我	<i>ŋo</i> ³¹ <i>mən</i>	我們
2. <i>ŋi</i> ³¹ ~ <i>n</i> ³¹ ~ <i>li</i> ³¹ <i>li</i> ⁴¹ <i>lau</i> ⁴¹ <i>zən</i> ¹³ <i>ka</i> ³³	你 你老人家 (polite form)	<i>li</i> ³¹ <i>mən</i>	你們
3. <i>t'a</i> ³³	他	<i>t'a</i> ³³ <i>mən</i>	他們

In the Old Xiang dialects, however, including Longhui 隆回, Xinhua 新化, Chengbu 城步 and Lianyuan 涟源, we find the cognates to the Southern Sinitic form, for example, *tɛi*³ 佢 in the Chengbu dialect. In the Longhui dialect, tone sandhi (change of tone) is employed to code the plural pronouns: The singular pronouns have the tonal value of 31 while the plural forms all have 35.

Table 9: Pronominal paradigm: Longhui Xiang 隆回话

Singular	Plural
1. <i>o</i> ³¹	<i>o</i> ³⁵
2. <i>n</i> ³¹	<i>n</i> ³⁵
3. <i>tɛi</i> ³¹	<i>tɛi</i> ³⁵

The disposal construction uses verbs of giving as its source, overwhelmingly the marker BĀ 把 in 26/33 Xiang dialects surveyed in Wu (2005). Ambiguously, BĀ also turns up as a marker of

the passive. Comparatives use either GUÒ or Bǐ. The double object construction shows the Northern order of indirect object preceding the direct object:

(10) Double object construction in Changsha Xiang (Hunan) : V-IO-DO

媽媽 諱 把 我 兩塊 錢 咯
ma³³ ma ei, pa⁴¹ ŋo⁴¹ lian⁴¹ k^h uai⁴¹ tɕiẽ¹³ lo
 mother PRT give 1SG two :CLF money PRT
 ‘Mother, give me two dollars please.’

The classifier 只 *tɕa²⁴* is the most common in the Xiang dialects, being used indifferently for human beings, animals and artifacts:

- (11) *i²⁴ tɕa²⁴ ɕio²⁴ sən³³* 一只学生 ‘one student’
i²⁴ tɕa²⁴ ŋjəu¹³ 一只牛 ‘one ox’
i²⁴ tɕa²⁴ tiẽ⁴⁵ si⁴⁵ tɕi³³ 一只电视机 ‘one television’

2.4. GAN DIALECTS 贛語

The focal territory for Gan is Jiangxi province whose speakers number 48 million. Gan dialects overflow into eastern Hunan, southeastern Hubei and parts of Anhui, and, like the Xiang dialects, are similarly classified into Northern and Southern types due to different pathways of development. Nanchang, the capital of the province, is regularly chosen as the representative dialect.

Northern Gan was formed prior to the Tang dynasty in the period from third to seventh centuries AD when speakers of various northern Chinese dialects flowed into Jiangxi province along the Gan River valley, merging with the local Jiangxi dialects (You 1992). Southern Gan subsequently developed on the basis of Northern Gan in the central Jiangxi region, under the influence of the Chang’an koine, brought by migrants from this northern capital during the late Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) (You 1992, Sagart 1993).

The Gan dialects were originally grouped together with Hakka due to sharing certain major sound changes from the time of Middle Chinese, in particular, the evolution of voiceless aspirated plosives from the voiced obstruents. However, certain lexical differences, combined with exceptions to these sound rules, have led linguists more recently to treat them as separate groups, although the relationship is certainly close.

Gan dialects usually possess 6 or 7 tones; Nanchang Gan has seven. The following data are taken from Sagart (1999) and Xiong (1995) (*Nanchang Dialect Dictionary*):

Table 34.10: Tone system of Nanchang Gan

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	42 tɕ ^h ioŋ ⁴² 枪 'gun'	213 tɕ ^h ioŋ ²¹³ 呛 'choke'	45 teioŋ ⁴⁵ 将 'general (Chinese chess) ⁵	45 ² tɕ ^h ioŋ ⁴⁵ 雀 'sparrow'
Lower	24 tɕ ^h ioŋ ²⁴ 墙 'wall'		31 ~ 21 tɕ ^h ioŋ ²¹ 像 'resemble'	2 ² tɕ ^h ioŋ ² 嚼 'talk nonsense'

The pronominal paradigm in Nanchang Gan shows resemblances to Mandarin for 1st and 2nd persons but the 3rd person pronoun is classic Southern Sinitic:

Table 11: Pronouns of Nanchang Gan (Jiangxi province)

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>ŋo³</i>	我	<i>ŋo³ - ko li</i> <i>ŋo³ - min</i> <i>ŋo³ - tin</i>	我箇哩 我 們 我 等
2. <i>n³</i>	爾	<i>n³ - min</i>	爾 們
<i>n³len</i> (polite form)	你人		
3. <i>teie³</i>	佢	<i>teie³ - min</i>	佢 們

For the plural forms, the native suffix for 1st person is: - *ko li* 箇哩 (*ŋo³ koli*) or *ŋo³ - tin* 等, but a borrowing of the Mandarin suffix is commonly used: *min* 們 as in *ŋo³ min* etc. as well as for the second and third persons.

Note that neither the *Nanchang Dialect Dictionary* nor L. Sagart's data have 2PL or 3PL forms with - *ko li* 箇哩 which explains the gap in Table 11.

It has been claimed that certain Gan dialects show an incipient case system in the pronominal paradigm using distinct forms for the subject and the object. Such is the case for the Qianshan dialect, in which the singular personal pronouns take the suffix -*li* (Chen 1995):

Table 12: Singular personal pronouns in the Gan dialect of Qianshan 铅山话

Subject/Possessive	Direct object
1. <i>a³³</i>	<i>a³³ li</i>
2. <i>n³³</i>	<i>n³³ li</i>
3. <i>ku³³</i>	<i>ku³³ li</i>

In many Gan dialects, as for Xiang, the main classifier is *tsaŋ⁷* 隻 which can be used for human nouns, unlike Mandarin dialects.

⁵ We were not able to locate a complete tonal paradigm for the syllable, tɕ^hioŋ²⁴, and so have taken the liberty of including its unaspirated counterpart, teioŋ²⁴, as the closest candidate.

With respect to grammar, Gan dialects belong to the heart of an area where TAKE and HOLD verbs have ‘converted’ to GIVE verbs in the context of ditransitive constructions (Zhang Min 2011). Consequently, in many Gan dialects, verbs of giving are identical to the disposal markers. As in a majority of Xiang dialects, this verb is often *Bǎ* 把; for example, Nanchang *pa*²¹³ and Yichun *pa*⁴². Other common markers in the Gan dialects are 搵 *LAʔ*⁷, 拿 *NÁ* and 摆 *Bǎi*, all meaning ‘give’ in their basic verbal use (Liu 1999:633). Apart from similarly using GIVE verbs such as *te*⁴² 得 as a source of passive markers, Gan dialects also constitute the core area for the use of ‘wait’ *ten*²¹³ 等 in this function.

Gan comparatives typically make use of a double marking strategy which combines Northern Chinese *bǐ* 比 with an adverb of degree such as *gèng* 更 ‘more’ (see Liu 1999:749). Probably due to Mandarin-influence on the Nanchang dialect, the double object construction shows the Northern order of the indirect object preceding the direct object.

(12) Double object construction in Gan (Nanchang) (雙賓語結構) V-IO-DO

你人接了佢三隻鍋

*n*³*len* *teia*¹ *le* *teie*³ *san*¹ *tsaʔ*⁷ *wo*¹

2SG:POL lend PFV 3SG three CLF pot

‘You lent him three pots.’

By way of contrast, with respect to a majority of Gan dialects, the opposite order is more common with the direct object preceding the indirect object, as in Yichun (X. Li, forthcoming):

(13) 我得本书你。

*ŋo*³⁴ *te*⁴²⁻³³ *pun*⁴² *ɕy*³⁴ *ŋi*³⁴.

1SG give CLF book 2SG

‘I give a book to you.’

2.5. HUI 徽語

The Hui dialects are spoken by more than three million people in the southern, mountainous areas of Anhui province, but also in parts of northeastern Jiangxi and western Zhejiang. Hui comprises six main dialect subgroups and these are in the main mutually unintelligible, a consequence of the historically isolated nature of Hui communities (Hirata 1998).

Although the Hui dialects were moulded by important migrations from Northern China, some scholars have classified them as Wu, due to a identifiable basis of Old Wu features. As a result, their classification as an independent group remains somewhat controversial.

Hui dialects, like Gan and Hakka to the south, mainly show voiceless aspirated initial consonants for all the MC voiced obstruents: *p*^ʔ-, *t*^ʔ- and *k*^ʔ-. The large number of nasalized vowels points to the loss of nasal codas, which resembles Southern Wu (Yan 2006: 229): 冷 (*lɛŋ) / *nẽ / cold. The MC final plosive consonants – /-*p*, -*t*, -*k*/ – have all been merged as the glottal stop /-ʔ/: 脚 (*kɪak) > /teioʔ/ ‘foot’. The typical Hui tone system has six categories, with the level *píng* and the falling *qù* tones undergoing a register split. We choose the Jixi dialect to exemplify this group (all data are taken from Hirata 1998):

Table 13: Tone system of the Jixi 績溪 dialect of Hui (Anhui)

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	31 <i>si</i> ³¹ 西 'west'	213 <i>ku</i> ²¹³ 管 'pipe'	35 <i>tei</i> ³¹ 張 'CLF'	32 <i>ie</i> ³² 入 'enter'
Lower	44 <i>p</i> ^h <i>e</i> ⁴⁴ 婆 'woman'		22 <i>t</i> ^h <i>a</i> ²² 他 '3SG'	

The pronominal system is interesting in that it contains an emphatic form in the singular series which is used for both subjects (nominative) and to code possession (the genitive). The plural suffix *iã* has its source in the word for 'people'. In contrast to Mandarin, there are no polite or plural inclusive forms.

Table 14: Jixi pronominal paradigm (Anhui)

Singular		Singular NOM/GEN	Plural	
1. <i>ɔ</i> ²¹³	我	<i>ɔ</i> ²¹³ <i>nr</i> 我 伢	<i>ɔ</i> ²¹³ <i>iã</i>	我人
2. <i>n</i> ²¹³	尔	<i>n</i> ²¹³ <i>nr</i> 尔 伢	<i>n</i> ²¹³ <i>iã</i>	尔人
3. <i>ki</i> ⁴⁴	渠	<i>ki</i> ⁴⁴ <i>nr</i> 渠 伢	<i>ki</i> ⁴⁴ <i>iã</i>	渠人

In Jixi, /ko³²⁴/个 is the most common classifier, followed by /tse³²/只 which has a much wider application than in Mandarin. Classifiers can also be used as possessive markers: *α*⁵⁵ *pã*⁵⁵⁻⁵³ *ɕy*²¹/我本书 1SG-GEN-book 'my book(s)'. The disposal marker in Jixi is 帮 /pō²¹/ 'help' and the passive marker is the verb 'to give': /x *α*³⁵/. The comparative uses the cognate marker to Mandarin, 比 *pi*⁵⁵, and, similarly, the double object construction uses the Northern word order. These features are not surprising, given the position of Hui dialects in the central, transitional area between North and South China.

(14) Double object construction in Jixi: IO-DO

渠口我 一合桃子
*ki*⁴⁴ *xã*⁵³ *ɔ*²¹³ (*ie*³²) *xr*³² *t*^h*r*⁴⁴
 3SG give 1SG one CL peach
 S/he gives me a peach.'

2.6. WU DIALECTS 吳語

As for Gan, the Wu group is often split into Northern and Southern types by linguists. With an estimated 74 million speakers, the focal area for Wu dialects is Zhejiang province on the central eastern coast of China, with the more conservative dialects found in the south. Northern Wu dialects are spoken in the contiguous regions of Jiangsu in the area south of the Yangtze River, as well as in southeastern Anhui province. The Wu dialects are classified into 6 subgroups (Atlas 1987). Shanghainese has unquestionably the most prominent profile in this dialect group

but is not necessarily the most representative. Other important dialects are Suzhou, Ningbo, Wenzhou and Jinhua.

In general, the Wu dialects can be distinguished by their retention of the voicing distinction and thus, the three Middle Chinese series of aspirated voiceless, unaspirated voiceless and voiced initials. Consequently, they have also maintained the upper and lower register distinctions and generally possess 7 or 8 tones. Shanghainese is an exception with just 5 tones. Hence, where Mandarin has only the contrast between a series of aspirated and unaspirated voiceless plosives, such as, respectively, /p^h/ and /p/, the Wu dialects generally have an additional voiced series: /p^h/, /p/ and /b/ which is murmured or whispery in quality in Shanghainese. The following data and examples are from Zhu (2006: 16-20):

Table 15: Tone system of Shanghainese Wu

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	53 t ^h i ⁵³ 天 ‘sky’	--	34 ti ³⁴ 店 ‘shop’	ʔ44 tiʔ ⁴⁴ 滴 ‘drop’
Lower			14 di ¹⁴ 田 ‘field’	ʔ24 diʔ ⁴⁴ 笛 ‘flute’

The paradigm for personal pronouns in the Shanghai dialect contrasts greatly with that of Standard Mandarin. Apart from the first person singular pronoun which is pan-Sinitic in nature, quite distinct forms exist for the rest.

Table 16: Pronouns of Shanghainese

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>ŋu</i> ¹³	我	<i>Aʔ⁵ lA⁵³</i>	阿拉
2. <i>nuŋ</i> ¹³	侬	<i>nA</i> ¹³	伊那
3. <i>ɦi</i> ¹³	伊	<i>ɦi¹³ lA⁵³</i>	伊拉

There is no polite 2nd person form in Shanghainese, nor is there an inclusive 1st person form, although inclusive pronouns can be found in other Wu dialects.

As regards disposal markers, there are four main sources in Wu dialects: (i) TAKE verbs, (ii) GIVE, (iii) HELP verbs and (iv) comitatives (Xu & Tao 1999, their example below).

(15) Wenzhou dialect 温州话 disposal construction with *dei*¹¹ < ‘help’:

NP_{OBJECT(i)} – [*DEI*¹¹ + PRONOUN_{OBJECT(i)}] – VP

蘋果 代 渠 吃 交
beŋ³¹ ku³⁵ *dei*¹¹ *gei*³¹ *ts^ht³¹³* *ɦuɔ⁰*
 apple OM 3SG eat PRT

‘Eat up the apple!’ [more literally: apple, take it and eat]

To form the passive, GIVE verbs such as *pəʔ* 拔 are common in Northern Wu. Shanghainese shows a strong contrast between age groups in its speech registers, with a predictable convergence towards Standard Mandarin in the speech of the younger generation. This is clear in the word order for the double object construction which has the indirect object preceding the direct object, as in Mandarin, for younger speakers (data from Xu and Tang 1988):

(16) Double object construction in Shanghainese:

老派: Older generation V-DO-IO

拔	張	紙頭	我
<i>pəʔ⁵</i>	<i>tsaŋ⁵³</i>	<i>tsi³⁴dʒ¹³</i>	<i>ŋu¹³</i>
give	CL	paper	1SG

‘Give me a sheet of paper.’

新派: Younger generation V-IO-DO

拔	我	一張	紙頭
<i>pəʔ⁵</i>	<i>ŋu¹³</i>	<i>it⁵tsaŋ⁵³</i>	<i>tsi³⁴dʒ¹³</i>
give	1SG	one:CL	paper

‘Give me a sheet of paper.’

In Shanghainese, the classifier with the widest range is *tsəʔ⁵* 隻, followed by *gəʔ¹* 個 for human and abstract nouns (Zhu 2006:71).

2.7. MIN DIALECT GROUP 閩語

The Min group is a very archaic and heterogeneous group of dialects whose subdivisions are, in the main, not mutually intelligible. The diverse varieties of Min are spoken by an estimated 75 million people in China. Its speakers live principally in the southeastern coastal province of Fujian, and on the island of Taiwan. Other important Southern Min areas are located in Chaozhou and Shantou in northern Guangdong and on the Leizhou peninsula, as well as the island province of Hainan, the outcome of southward migrations along the coast from the late Song period onwards. Min dialects can be divided into Inland or Western Min which are less well-studied, and Coastal or Eastern Min, to which the better-known Southern Min and Fuzhou dialects belong, albeit in quite separate subdivisions (Pan et al. 1963, Norman 1988, 1991).

Several strata can be detected in the Min lexicon which have led to a contrast between literary and colloquial pronunciations, known as *wén-bái yì-dú* 文白異讀. For example, ‘name’, represented by the character 名, is pronounced *miaⁿ⁵* in its colloquial form but *beng⁵* in its literary pronunciation. Another example is *sai⁵⁵* (C) and *su⁵⁵* (L) for ‘teacher, master’ 師. The origins of the literary register are reading pronunciations for reciting classical texts that reflect the late Tang koine of Medieval Chinese (Norman 1991: 338-9).

Min dialects stand out from other branches of Sinitic by virtue of the absence of the change from bilabial sounds to labiodentals, that is, the change /p > f/ found in the Northern dialects. Mandarin /fei⁵⁵/ 飛 ‘to fly’ is pronounced /pue⁴⁴/ in Taiwanese. The Middle Chinese voiced obstruents have evolved into voiceless consonant initials which are in the majority unaspirated (Ting 1998: 171). There is no palatalization of velar initials such as /k-/ before high front vowels; for example, Mandarin /tɕ^hy⁵¹/ : S. Min /k^hi²¹/ 去 ‘to go’. The finals /-p, -t, -k, -ʔ, -m, -n and -ŋ/ are retained above all in the Southern Min dialects, a feature they share with Yue and Hakka and

notably one which sets them apart from Northern and Central dialect groups. Southern Min can also be typified by its denasalization of initials that occur in open syllables, producing the allophonic voiced sounds /b-, l- and g-/ from /m-, n- and ŋ-/ (Mandarin /mu⁵¹/ : S. Min /bak²/ 目 ‘eye’).

Most Min dialects have six to eight tone categories, with seven being common for Coastal Min, including Taiwanese, which is illustrated in Table 17 below. Tone sandhi, indicated in italics in the same table, is very complex – particularly for the Southern Min dialects – and takes effect when a syllable is followed by another fully tonal syllable within the same phrase. Let us take an example of the high level tone (*Yīnpíng*) in Taiwanese Southern Min in a colloquial word formed with a literary register suffix: $i^{55} + su^{55} \rightarrow i^{33} - su^{55}$ 醫師 ‘doctor’. The tone value on the first syllable changes from high 55 to mid 33 pitch when it precedes another syllable in fluent speech.

Table 17: Southern Min tone system (Taiwan)

	isolated tone		tone sandhi for context tones	
Register	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper	55 33 <i>su⁵⁵</i> 書 ‘book’	51 55 <i>su⁵¹</i> 使 ‘to cause’	21 51 <i>su²¹</i> 思 ‘be anxious’	2 5 <i>sut²</i> 率 ‘to lead’
Lower	25 21/33 <i>su²⁵</i> 詞 ‘an expression’		33 21 <i>su³³</i> 事 ‘business’	5 2 <i>sut⁵</i> 述 ‘to recite’

The personal pronouns of Southern Min dialects typically show different sources for 2nd and 3rd person to those found in the Northern Chinese dialects, while the plural forms are formed with a suffix –n, a fusion with the suffix *lang⁵* 儂 ‘people’, as Table 18 shows:

Table 18: Pronouns of Southern Min (Taiwan)

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>gua²</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

Passives are constructed with verbs of giving, predominantly *khit⁸* 乞, but with *hou⁷* 與 in the Taiwanese and Xiamen dialects (Chappell 2000). A special feature of Min dialects is the use of *ka⁷~kang⁷* 共 as the marker of the disposal construction which comes from a comitative preposition meaning ‘with, for’ (Li & Chappell 2013a, b; Chappell 2013). The classifier *ê* 箇 shows a tendency to replace more specific classifiers in Taiwanese, whereas *chiah⁸* 隻 is much more limited in use to animals, a small number of artefacts and vehicles in Quanzhou and Zhangzhou than it is in Xiang, Hakka and Wu. Finally, Southern Min dialects make use of the Northern word order with ditransitive verbs, as example (16) shows:

- (17) Double object construction in Southern Min: V-IO-DO
 伊 著 予 爾 一 支 竹仔 。 -
*i*¹ *toh*⁸ *hou*⁷ *li*² *chit*⁸ *ki*¹ *ˆtek*⁴-*a*⁴ -
 3SG then give you one CLF bamboo-stick
 ‘then he gave you a bamboo stick (to push down the rice stalks)’

2.8. KEJIA OR HAKKA 客家話

The Hakka, whose name means ‘guest people’, account for 48 million of China’s population. Northeastern Guangdong and southwestern Fujian constitute the modern heartland of this dialect group with further pockets of speakers scattered across Jiangxi, Hunan, Guangxi and as far west as Sichuan. In Taiwan, the Hakka constitute twelve per cent of the current population to where migration began in the early Qing dynasty. Sizeable communities also exist in Malaysia (Sabah), in Calcutta and French Guiana.

Some scholars claim that Hakka developed on the basis of Southern Gan by the end of the Song dynasty (13th century), and includes a substrate of non-Chinese languages, such as She and Yao (Hmong-Mien) (Sagart 1982: 148 and You 1992: 103). In contradistinction to this, Norman (1988:221-228) argues that Min and Hakka share a period of common development and that any connection with Gan is at best superficial. Dialectologists are nonetheless generally in agreement that Hakka is a full-fledged Southern Sinitic language, even if the ancestry of its speakers is northern (Norman 1988: 222). Its recent development would explain the relative uniformity of the Hakka sound system from one dialect to another (Hashimoto 1973, Sagart 1982).

Hakka shares with Gan the feature of MC voiced obstruents developing into aspirated voiceless initials in all tone categories, whereas the absence of palatalization of the velars before high front vowels is shared with Min and Yue dialects. They generally possess five to six tones, distinguishing upper and lower registers for the level and the entering categories (Ting 1998:173), as shown in Table 19 below. Final consonants typically include the same set as found in Cantonese Yue: /-p,-t,-k/ and /-m,-n,-ŋ/, apart from Western Fujian Hakka where these have merged to /ʔ/ (M. Yan 2006:185).

The following data are taken from Sagart (1982) and Chappell and Lamarre (2005) based on the same variety of Huizhou 惠州 Hakka spoken in Sung Tim Tong and in Bao’an near Hong Kong.

Table 19: Tone system of Sung Him Tong Hakka 崇謙堂 (New Territories, Hong Kong)

Register	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering tone
Upper 陰	23 <i>ʃu</i> ²³ 書 ‘book’	32	53	3 <i>lip</i> ³ 粒 ‘a grain’
Lower 陽	11 <i>ʃu</i> ¹¹ 薯 ‘tubers’	<i>ʃu</i> ³² 手 ‘hand’	<i>ʃu</i> ⁵³ 樹 ‘tree’	5 <i>lip</i> ⁵ 立 ‘to stand up’

The Hakka pronominal system is fairly uniform across the dialect group. It possesses the interesting series of portmanteau (fused) possessive pronouns for the singular series: ‘my’, ‘your’ and ‘his/hers’ in addition to the use of the analytic forms composed of the basic pronouns and *kai*⁵³, the possessive or genitive marker, for example, *ŋa*²³ *kai*⁵³ ‘my’.

Table 20: Hakka pronominal paradigm (Bao'an 寶安話, Huizhou subgroup)

Singular		Plural		Possessive
1. <i>ŋai</i> ¹¹	我	<i>ŋai</i> ¹¹ <i>teu</i> ²³	我兜	<i>ŋa</i> ²³
2. <i>ŋi</i> ¹¹	你	<i>ŋi</i> ¹¹ <i>teu</i> ²³	你兜	<i>nia</i> ²³
3. <i>ki</i> ¹¹	佢	<i>ki</i> ¹¹ <i>teu</i> ²³	佢兜	<i>kia</i> ²³

As in the Xiang and Gan dialects, the general classifier is /tʂak⁵/ 隻:

- (18) General classifier
 Kai⁵³ tʂak⁵ nyin¹¹ hau³² lau³²
 个 隻 人 好 老
 that CLF person very old
 ‘That man is very old.’

The grammatical characteristics of Hakka dialects tend to be areally-determined: for the disposal construction, Hakka dialects in Fujian tend to pattern like Min dialects and use a comitative marker *lau*¹¹ 搵 whereas in Guangdong, they tend to pattern like Yue dialects and avoid the use of the object-marking construction at all. In Hunan and Jiangxi Hakka, TAKE~GIVE verbs are used in this function. Hakka is typically Southern Sinitic in employing a GIVE verb as a marker of the passive construction, such as PUN~PIN 分. The comparative construction uses the surpass strategy with GUÒ but may also employ double marking with the addition of an adverb such as JIÀO 較 ‘more’. The direct object precedes the indirect object, thus resembling the word order in Yue and many Gan dialects:

- (19) Double object construction in Hakka: V-DO-IO
 pin²³ khwai⁴ men⁴ pau²³ ŋai¹¹
 分 塊 面包 我
 give CLF bread 1SG
 ‘Give me a piece of bread.’

2.9. YUE 粵語

Cantonese is the best-known member of the Yue dialects spoken by approximately five per cent of China's population or 60 million. The core area for Yue is Guangdong province (in the south and central areas) and the southeastern part of the Guangxi region in south China. In the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Cantonese is spoken by 90% of the population who originate mainly in neighbouring Guangdong province. Sizeable Cantonese-speaking communities are also found in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, North America and Australia.

The Yue dialects were formed in a frontier area, first annexed as Chinese territory in the Qin dynasty (221-206 BC), in contact with languages of non-Han peoples, possibly the ancestors of the Tai people, known as ‘Zhuàng’ 壯 in Chinese. In fact, a very ancient Tai substratum in the Yue is generally recognized. This is seen in the presence of a contrasting series of long and short vowels and a sizeable number of Tai loanwords (F-K Li 1977, Yue-Hashimoto 1991, Bauer 1996): [səm¹] 心 ‘heart’, [sa:m¹] 三 ‘three’.

A distinguishing feature of the Yue dialects, compared with all other Sinitic languages, is precisely the presence of vowel length, just mentioned. Like Mandarin, the MC voiced obstruents have in general been devoiced, developing into voiceless aspirated initial consonants in the *píng* level tone category and voiceless unaspirated in the other three (nonetheless, the divergent Western Yue dialects in Guangxi behave somewhat differently). Tone systems are surprisingly large with nine or ten tone categories possible, due to the division into upper and lower registers. Cantonese has six main tones, but nine counting the tone types found in the three closed syllables, conditioned by vowel length. The data are from Bauer and Benedict (1997):

Table 21: Tone system of Hong Kong Cantonese

	Level tone	Rising tone	Falling tone	Entering Tone
Upper	55/51	25	33	5 (checked ^d 3 syllables)
Lower	21	23	22	2

Table 22: Examples of Cantonese tonal syllables

NAME	EXAMPLE	NAME	EXAMPLE
1. High level	<i>yau</i> ⁵⁵ 憂 ‘to worry’	4. Mid-low falling	<i>yau</i> ²¹ 游 ‘to swim’
2. High rising	<i>yau</i> ²⁵ 油 ‘to paint’	5. Mid-low rising	<i>yau</i> ²³ 有 ‘to have’
3. Mid level	<i>yau</i> ³³ 幼 ‘juvenile’	6. Mid-low level	<i>yau</i> ²² 右 ‘right’
7. High checked		<i>jik</i> ⁵ 益 ‘benefit’	
8. Mid checked		<i>jaak</i> ³ 喫 ‘to eat’	
9. Low checked		<i>jik</i> ² 亦 ‘also’	

Other salient properties of Yue sound systems are that syllables may end in a large range of final consonants including /-p, -t, -k, -m, -n, -ŋ/, as we saw is equally possible in Min and Hakka, while velar initials have not palatalized before high, front vowels: Cantonese /kei³³/: Mandarin /tɛi⁵¹/ 記 ‘to record’.

The Siyi 四邑 dialects possess a voiceless lateral fricative /l/, an uncommon sound in most Sinitic languages, apart from Pinghua (§2.10) and the Puxian dialect of Min.

Hong Kong Cantonese is one of the few Sinitic languages, apart from the standard written form of Mandarin, with its own flourishing popular literature based on the vernacular (see Bauer 1988). Specially-created characters, evident in newspapers, comic books and novels are used for morphemes that have no cognates (related forms) in Mandarin, for example, lexical items such as *leng*³ 靚 ‘pretty’ and *tai*² 睇 ‘to look’ and *mo*⁵ 冇 ‘not have’. There are also many loanwords from English: au¹lo⁴ 歐羅 ‘euro’, so¹daa² 梳打 ‘soda’ and dik¹si^{6/2} 的士 ‘taxi’.

The Cantonese pronominal system includes the Southern Sinitic third person singular form, *k’ ɵ i⁵ (kui⁵) 佢*. It is analytic in nature, using the suffix *-tei⁶ 哋* to form the plural series:

Table 23: Cantonese pronominal paradigm (Hong Kong)

Singular		Plural	
1. $\eta\sigma^5$	我	$\eta\sigma^5 tei^6$	我哋
2. lei^5	你	$lei^5 tei^6$	你哋
3. $k' \theta i^5$	佢	$k' \theta i^5 tei^6$	佢哋

Other dialects, including Taishan 台山話, use tone change to indicate the plural. The passive marker in Yue dialects is based on the GIVE verb *bei²* 畀 (see (1) above), and in this dialect group the disposal construction is dispreferred. At best, we find the non-native marker borrowed from the literary register of Northern Chinese: *jeung¹* 將. Comparatives of inequality make use of a SURPASS verb, *gwoh³* 過 in preference to Mandarin Bǐ, 比, which has been similarly borrowed.

(20) Hong Kong Cantonese (香港粵語)

佢 高過 我。

kuŋ⁵ go¹-gwoh³ ngoŋ⁵.

3SG tall-CM 1SG

‘S/He is taller than me.’

Cantonese is often cited for its word order in the double object construction, which contrasts with Mandarin and the Northern dialects in placing the direct object before the indirect:

(21) Double object construction in Cantonese: V-DO-IO

.. 噉 然後 畀 返 個 琴 佢
 .. *gam² yin⁴ hau⁶ bei²-faan¹ goh³ kam⁴ hui⁵* .
 so after:that give-return CL_{DEF} lute 3SG

‘So after that, he returned the lute to her.’ (from *Reborn lady at the Red flowering plum*, with original romanization)

This example also shows the use of the general classifier in Cantonese, which is *goh³* 個, as in Mandarin. Here is used without a preceding numeral or demonstrative to code definiteness of the noun. Classifiers may also be used to mark possession: *ngoŋ⁵ boon² sue¹* 我本書 1SG-CLF-book ‘my book’. This is only found in the some of the Southern Sinitic languages, while is common across Southeast Asia.

2.10 Pinghua dialects 平話

The Pinghua dialects are spoken by more than two million Chinese living mainly in Guangxi whose population is, however, predominantly Zhuang [Tai-Kadai]. They are also found in adjacent areas of Hunan and Yunnan provinces. Pinghua is classified further into the Northern and Southern types, Guibei 桂北 and Guinan 桂南, which are not mutually intelligible. Furthermore, the Northern type commonly has a six-tone system while the Southern has eight to ten.

Southern Pinghua is spoken in the suburbs of Nanning, alongside Nanning Cantonese, but also in towns scattered throughout Southern Guangxi, while Northern Pinghua is spoken on the outskirts of Guilin, alongside Southwestern Mandarin, as well as in many towns of northern

Guangxi. Both dialect clusters are in close contact with speakers of Western Yue and Zhuang (Tai).

The Song dynasty appears to be the crucial formation period for the Pinghua dialects. Historical records relate that large contingents of soldiers, many from Shandong, settled in Guangxi, after being sent to suppress a Zhuang uprising. The status of this dialect group is controversial and less easy to justify than in the case of the Hui dialects. Southern Pinghua dialects show a close relationship with Yue and some scholars would classify them in this group, whereas Northern Pinghua shows more Mandarin influence and certain resemblances with the neighbouring Xiang dialects and Southern Hunan patois.

The Tingzicun dialect spoken in one of the districts of Nanning is used to exemplify Southern Pinghua. In the typical case for the Southern group, the MC obstruents have developed into voiceless unaspirated initials and fall into the lower pitch tones. The finals /-m, -n, -ng, -p, -t and -k/ have all been preserved, which resembles Yue. The unusual voiceless lateral fricative turns up in words such as 先 *lin*⁵³ ‘first’. Tingzicun has ten tones due to not only retaining register splits in all four tone categories, but also to the fact that the entering or *rù* tone has split four ways, similar to the case in neighbouring Yue dialects (*Atlas* 1988: Map B-14, Yan 2006: 233). By way of contrast, one of the Northern Pinghua dialects, Guanyang Guanyinge 灌阳观音阁, has six tones (Bai 2005: 18-19, 82):

Table 24: Tone system of the Guanyang Guanyinge 灌阳观音阁 dialect of Northern Pinghua

Register	Level tone	Rising tone	Descending tone	Entering tone
Upper	53 飞 xuei ⁵³ ‘to fly’	33 匪 xuei ³³ ‘bandit’	24 惠 xuei ²⁴ ‘favour’	35 血 xuei ³⁵ ‘blood’
Lower	22 肥 xuei ²² ‘fat’		41 会 xuei ⁴¹ ‘able’	

While the pronominal system of Southern Pinghua is highly reminiscent of Cantonese, with *ky*²¹ 佢 for ‘3SG’ and its plural suffix being *ŋo*²⁴ *ti*²³ 我 哋 for ‘1PL’, that for Guanyang Yinge is more divergent with fused pronouns in the plural series (Bai 2005: 165).

Table 25: Guanyang Guanyinge 灌阳观音阁 pronominal paradigm

Singular		Plural	
1. <i>ŋa</i> ³³	我	<i>aŋ</i> ⁵³	我們
2. <i>nuo</i> ³³	你	<i>nən</i> ⁵³	你們
3. <i>tsuo</i> ³³	他	<i>tsaŋ</i> ⁵³	他們

The disposal construction is not common in Pinghua dialects due to a preference for the regular SVO word order, as in most Yue dialects. In some cases, however, Mandarin *bǎ* has been borrowed. The main passive marker in the Guanyinge dialect of Northern Pinghua is *ŋai*²² 挨 < ‘suffer’. Similarly to Mandarin and Northern Sinitic, the main comparative construction uses

pei³³ 比 and the general classifier is kuo²⁴ 個, unlike Nanning Southern Pinghua which makes use of tʃət³ 隻.

In the Northern Pinghua dialects (Zheng & Lin 2005: 264-263, 273), the double object construction may use both word orders of IO-DO and DO-IO, as in (21) and (22).

(22) Yining dialect of Northern Pinghua:

Verb-DO-IO

分	个	梨子	你
fən ³⁴	ko ³³	lei ³¹ -tsə ⁵³	nə ⁵³
give	CL	pear	2SG

‘(I’ll) give you a pear.’

(23) Verb-IO-DO

分	我	本	书!
fən ³⁴	ŋuə ⁵³	puən ⁵³	ʂəu ³⁴ !
give	1SG	CL	book

‘Give me a book!’

In other Pinghua dialects, such as Nanning and Guanyinge, only the IO-DO word order is possible.

Conclusion

We have considered the Sinitic languages from the angle of interdialectal comparison among the ten main groups of Chinese dialects, particularly with respect to features that contrast with Standard Mandarin. Much more research is to be encouraged in order to appreciate their striking diversity.

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