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# Linguistic areas in China for differential object marking, passive, and comparative constructions

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## 2.1 Introduction

This article considers the relation between diversity and typology in the context of areal linguistics of the Sinitic languages of China, also called ‘Chinese dialects’. It will specifically examine the feasibility of a classification into five areas as a refinement of the traditional North-South division originally proposed by Hashimoto (1976, 1986).<sup>1</sup> The aim is to reveal the great diversity of forms in Sinitic languages that are used to express one and the same constructional meaning.

Traditional classifications of Chinese dialects have mainly been based on phonology – and the lexicon to a lesser extent. In this analysis, the illustrations will be given in terms of morphosyntax and grammaticalization pathways in order to see if these can yield a new approach to dialect classification in China. To this end, differential object marking, passive and comparative constructions are examined for the ten main Sinitic languages.

### 2.1.1 Classifications of the Sinitic branch of Sino-Tibetan and the issue of linguistic areas

The general consensus is that Sinitic or Chinese languages form a sister branch to Tibeto-Burman languages in the Sino-Tibetan language family. Broadly speaking, these languages are tonal and analytic in make-up. While SVO is a common word order in Sinitic, (S)OV is equally common in the Wu and Min dialect groups (Liu Danqing 2003). Sinitic languages exhibit both head-final and head-initial features: they tend to be almost entirely head-final for nominal structure while a mixture of both types is present in predicate syntax. All modifiers precede the head noun including relative clauses whereas at the predicate level, adverbs and most types of prepositional phrase precede the main verb, yet certain verb complements and locative adjuncts follow it.

Derivational morphology and compounding are common processes as opposed to the use of inflectional marking for categories such as tense/aspect, person, gender and number. Less well-known is the fact that fusional, portmanteau morphology is more widespread than thought, not to mention tone sandhi for coding grammatical features such as aspect, the plural form of pronouns, to distinguish types of demonstrative pronouns (Y. Chen, this volume) or even to confer a demonstrative function on a classifier (Wang Jian, this volume). As the background to the main discussion, the composition of the Sinitic branch of Sino-Tibetan is next briefly described.

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<sup>1</sup> In Chappell (2017), I also discuss smaller linguistic areas such as the Qinghai-Gansu border area of Northwestern China where Mandarin Chinese dialects have been subject to radical morphosyntactic change due to contact with Turkic and Mongolian languages. These more geographically limited ‘micro-areas’ will not fall under general discussion, however, in this introductory chapter (see also

According to the *Language Atlas of China* (Wurm and Li, 1987), the ten main Sinitic languages (or Chinese dialect groups) currently recognized are Northern Chinese (Mandarin), Xiang, Gan, Wu, Min, Kejia (or Hakka), Yue, Jin, Pinghua and Hui dialects. Note that these dialect groups have largely been established on phonological, lexical and a few morphological features, as mentioned earlier. Furthermore, a certain amount of debate exists about this classification with respect to the independent status of the last three groups, Jin, Pinghua and Hui, particularly for Pinghua, which some scholars still classify under Yue (for more details on this debate, see de Sousa, this volume). Table 2.1 presents the relevant information:

Table 2.1: Sinitic languages of China

|  | <i>Language branch</i>  | <i>Region of China</i>               | <i>Population (millions)*</i> | <i>Representative variety</i> |
|--|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| I.   | Mandarin 北方話            | North, Northeast, Southwest of China | 799m                          | Beijing, Nanjing              |
| II.  | Jin 晉                   | Shanxi, Inner Mongolia               | 63m                           | Taiyuan                       |
| III.   | Xiang 湘                 | Hunan                                | 36m                           | Changsha                      |
| IV.  | Gan 贛                   | Jiangxi                              | 48m                           | Nanchang                      |
| V.   | Hui 徽                   | Anhui                                | 3.3m                          | Jixi                          |
| VI.  | Wu 吳                    | Zhejiang, Southern Jiangsu           | 74m                           | Shanghainese                  |
| VII.   | Min 閩                   | Fujian, NE Guangdong, Taiwan         | 75m                           | Hokkien, Teochew              |
| VIII.  | Kejia 客家                | SW Fujian, NE Guangdong              | 42m                           | Meixian Hakka                 |
| IX.  | Yue 粵                   | Guangdong and Guangxi                | 59m                           | Cantonese                     |
| X.   | Pinghua 平話 and Tuhua 土話 | Guangxi, Hunan and Guangdong         | 7.8m                          | Nanning, Guilin               |
| TOTAL 1,207,100,000 (1.2 billion) <sup>2</sup> |                         |                                      |                               |                               |

These ten main groups of Sinitic languages are represented in Map 2.1 below, which includes, importantly for any study of areal linguistics, the eight main subdivisions of the large Mandarin group. These are: Northern 北方, Northwestern (Lanyin 兰银), Jilu 冀鲁, Jiaoliao 胶辽, Northeastern 东北, Central Plains (Zhongyuan) 中原, Southern Jianghuai 江淮 and Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话. There is also a part of southern Hunan province where varieties of patois or *tǔhuà* 土话 are spoken and whose affiliation is as yet unknown, so too for Xianghua 乡话 (also known as Waxiang 瓦乡) of Northwestern Hunan.

<sup>2</sup> 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 and Zhang explain that they have used the 2004 China Administrative Regions Yearbook 中国行政区划简册 for the population figures.



Map 2.1: Sinitic languages and dialects of China

### 2.1.2 Linguistic areas within China

Making use of important typo-geographical features in phonology, lexicon and syntax, Mantaro Hashimoto (1976, 1986) argued for a major north-south linguistic division in China. In his view, this was the result of many centuries of contact between Altaic and Sinitic languages in the north, and Tai languages in the south. His early works signalled the beginnings of areal typology in Chinese linguistics, subsequently further advanced by Norman (1982, 1988). Some of the tendencies he identified are listed in Table 2.2 below for the Chinese languages found in the two zones:

Table 2.2: Tendencies in Sinitic languages according to Hashimoto's North-South division

| ALTAICIZATION (North)  | TAICIZATION (South)  |
|--|--|
| stress-based and fewer tones   | larger number of tones   |
| higher proportion of polysyllabic words                                      | higher proportion of monosyllabic words                                    |
| simpler syllable structure   | more complex syllable structure  |
| smaller inventory of classifiers   | larger inventory of classifiers  |
| preponderance of MODIFIER-MODIFIED, including gender affixes on animal terms | MODIFIED-MODIFIER order possible, including gender affixes on animal terms |
| preverbal adverbs  | possibility of clause-final adverbs  |
| DOUBLE OBJECT: IO-DO word order unmarked for prepositionless ditransitives   | DOUBLE OBJECT: DO-IO word order unmarked for prepositionless ditransitives |
| COMPARATIVE : Marker-Standard-Adjective                                      | COMPARATIVE : Adjective-Marker-Standard                                    |
| PASSIVE MARKERS : based on causative speech act verbs                        | PASSIVE MARKERS based on verb 'to give'                                    |

This basic North-South division was later refined by Norman (1988) who added a third transitional zone where types intermediate between the two could be found. This included the Wu, Gan, Hui and Xiang dialects in central China.

While these sets of properties show certain important trends, they cannot be viewed as definitive. Counterexamples exist where the claimed Northern feature is possessed by a purportedly Southern Chinese language. A case in point is the basic ditransitive order in Southern Min which is IO-DO and not DO-IO as Table 2.2 above would suppose. The same ordering of IO-DO is, moreover, found even further south than Southern Min in Fujian province with respect to Nanning Pinghua, spoken in the Guangxi Autonomous Region (see de Sousa, this volume, §4.8). Similarly contradicting this prediction, certain subgroups of Mandarin use the DO-IO order, (see Peyraube this volume §6.3, Chappell and Peyraube 2007, Chappell forthcoming a, Zhang Min 2011).

A further problem is that the instances of modified-modifier constructions are largely overstated, given that they concern but a small number of place names, other types of proper nouns and a subset of compound nouns. In addition to these refinements, it will also be shown in §3 below that passive markers in Sinitic languages may derive from six different lexical sources and in §4 that there are at least six structural types for the comparative of inequality.

### 2.1.3 Linguistic areas within mainland East and Southeast Asia

Matisoff (1991: 386) further refined Hashimoto’s basic classification by dividing the larger Southeast Asian zone into two main areas: the Sinospheric and the non-Sinospheric or Indospheric area. The Sinospheric area includes Southern Sinitic (basically Sinitic languages south of the Yangtze River) and the language families which have been in close cultural contact with China such as Hmong-Mien, Tai-Kadai, Vietnamese (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.

Matisoff (1991) identified a large number of grammatical features which unify the Southeast Asian area into a linguistic zone, including the following:

Table 2.3: Some major Southeast Asian linguistic features described by Matisoff (1991)

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1) | development of modal verbs > desiderative markers, ‘be likely to’                     |
| 2) | development of verbs meaning ‘to come’ > motion towards a deictic centre              |
| 3) | development of verbs meaning ‘to place, put’ > durative and perfective aspect markers |
| 2) | development of verbs meaning ‘to dwell’ > progressive aspect markers                  |
| 3) | development of verbs meaning ‘to finish’ > perfective aspect markers                  |
| 4) | development of verbs meaning ‘to get, obtain’ > ‘manage’, ‘able to’, ‘have to’        |
| 5) | development of verbs of giving > causative and benefactive markers                    |
| 6) | development of verbs of saying > complementizers, topic and conditional markers       |
| 7) | formation of resultative and directional compound verbs through verb concatenation    |

With respect to Sinitic, all of these pathways of grammaticalization apply to Northern Chinese as well, with the exception of the limited use of ‘give’ with a causative meaning in standard Mandarin (see also Chappell 2001b). This leaves us with a list of features that are extremely useful for characterizing East and Southeast Asia as a

mega-linguistic area, and not just Southeast Asia, with the caveat that they do not, at present, allow for any finer differentiation on a smaller geographical scale.<sup>3</sup>

#### 2.1.4 Definition of a linguistic area

Before embarking on any investigation of linguistic areas for the Sinitic languages of China, the definition for a linguistic area adopted needs first of all to be given. A linguistic area is constituted when languages are grouped together for reasons of both geographic contiguity and the sharing of a significant number of structural properties. These languages should ideally include some which are unrelated, according to the accepted definitions currently in use. The key properties distinguishing them from neighbouring languages are typically considered to be the result of the diffusion of traits (Dahl 2001: 1457, Enfield 2005).

Such consensus notwithstanding, we could apply this definition quite felicitously to just the case of languages and dialects within the same language family, or within the same branch of a language family (that is, a taxon), such as Sinitic. In the case of related languages, as opposed to linguistic areas built on languages that are mainly unaffiliated, diffusion of linguistic features over time can be shown to interact with those which are directly genetically inherited. The outcome is similarly the formation of an area whose key features are distinct in some way from those of the surrounding areas, though be they linguistically related.

The case differs somewhat from the canonical situation for one and the same language family or taxon, given that there are likely to be cognates of the form in the replica language or dialect for the borrowed function that is adopted from the model language. Such forms simply continue to be used in a different function from the borrowed one, if they have not already been relegated to a special register or even to an obsolete stratum (see Lien 2001 for the outcome of contact between Southern Min and Mandarin). Sinitic languages are well-endowed with cases of this type of contact-induced grammaticalization that takes place between *related* model and replica languages (Heine and Kuteva 2005).

In the main body of this description of linguistic areas discernible for Sinitic languages, I will examine the distribution of differential object-marking in §2, passives in §3 and comparative constructions of inequality in §4, according to the morphological markers they use with the purpose of evaluating to what extent they enable us to define smaller linguistic areas of diffusion and shared traits. Areal classifications will first be set up according to each individual construction. Then, in the conclusion in §5, a synthesis for the three constructions under investigation will be made in the attempt to set up five main linguistic areas in China. This is carried out by overlaying areal maps of the variation found for these three important grammatical constructions, one upon the other. Other studies on the areal distribution of linguistic features in Sinitic are also referred to at this point.

In the section which follows, the results of a study on the diversity of object-marking constructions in Sinitic languages are presented.

## 2.2 Differential object marking constructions in Sinitic

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<sup>3</sup> Other major work on Southeast Asia as a linguistic area or with regard to shared typological features has been carried out by Marybeth Clark (1989), Walter Bisang (1996) and N.J. Enfield (2005), to mention just a few of the scholars involved in this type of research. For Sinitic languages, see also Yue-Hashimoto (1993) and Yue (2003).

By the term ‘object-marking construction’, I refer in as neutral terms as possible to non-canonical constructions where the direct object is explicitly morphologically marked and precedes the main verb:

S – Object marker – O – Verb

This is known as the *chǔzhìshì* 处置式 in Chinese linguistics, and is often translated as the ‘disposal construction’ in English, or the *bǎ* 把 construction, if referring to Standard Mandarin. It contrasts with the typical SVO order in many dialect groups of Sinitic. These disposal or object-marking constructions appear in fact to ‘prepose’ the direct object of an SVO clause, marking its new position by a preposition. Despite these synchronic facts, historically they have evolved from serial verb constructions (SVC) where the first verb, a verb meaning ‘hold’ or ‘take’, grammaticalizes into a preposition which introduces the direct object. The first example is from Standard Mandarin.<sup>4</sup>

(1) Standard Mandarin object marking construction with *bǎ* 把

(NP<sub>CAUSE/SUBJECT</sub>) – [OBJECT MARKER [*bǎ* 把] + NP<sub>DIRECT OBJECT</sub>] – VP

當然是我們下江幫把最高級的理髮店包了。

|           |     |               |           |                  |    |      |
|-----------|-----|---------------|-----------|------------------|----|------|
| Dāngrán   | shi | wǒmen         | Xià Jiāng | bāng             | bǎ | zuì  |
| of:course | be  | 1PL           | (name)    | gang             | OM | most |
| gāojí     | de  | lǐfàdiàn      | bāo       | le.              |    |      |
| classy    | MOD | hairdresser’s | occupy    | CRS <sup>5</sup> |    |      |

‘Of course, it was our Xia Jiang gang who took over the classiest hairdressing salon.’ (Zhang and Sang 1987:340)

In the basic type of object-marking construction, the preverbal direct object has a tendency to be referential and to be affected by the event coded by a highly transitive predicate, conforming to the parameters in Hopper and Thompson (1980). By ‘affect’, the causative element which codes a change of state is intended, including

<sup>4</sup> For the transcriptions of examples, I use *pinyin* romanization 汉语拼音 for Standard Mandarin and the International Phonetic Alphabet for the data from the majority of Sinitic languages, unless there is a romanization system already in widespread currency such as the Yale system for Hong Kong Cantonese. When quoting examples from published sources, the transcriptions have been faithfully reproduced. When small capitals are used for the Standard Mandarin *pinyin* romanization, this generally signifies that the original article has not provided any kind of phonetic transcription but only Chinese characters. However, I also use *pinyin* romanization in small capitals for *in-text references* to the common lexical sources of morphological markers in Sinitic languages in order to represent these at a more abstract ‘archi-morpheme’ level. This practice has been adopted in order to circumvent the problem of which phonological form to choose from an array of dialect cognates; for example, GUO for the comparative marker 過(过), regardless of the dialect.

<sup>5</sup> Grammatical abbreviations used in this chapter are as follows: ASP aspect marking; CL classifier; CM comparative marker; COMP completive aspect marker; CRS currently relevant state marker; DEG degree marker in comparatives; DIR directional complement; IMP imperative marker; MOD marker of prenominal attributive modification; NEG negative adverb; NEG:IMP negative imperative modal verb; OM differential object marker; PASS marker of the agent noun in passives; PFV perfective aspect marker; PL plural; PRT discourse particle; Q question particle; SG singular; VCL verbal classifier; VP verb phrase.

changes of location (Chappell 1992). The exact parameters will necessarily depend on the particular Sinitic language or dialect. Since the morphological marking is not obligatory, and concerns just a subset of object nouns, its use being determined by the discourse and semantic features associated with the object noun, it can be classified as differential in nature, as defined in Bossong (1985), Aissen (2003) and Lazard (1994). Lazard appears to be the first to have applied this term to the marker in the Mandarin *bǎ* construction.

In Chappell (2006, 2007a, 2013), I examined and described the crosslinguistic variation found in these object-marking constructions in over 200 Sinitic languages for both sources of these prepositional markers and constructional types. In terms of grammaticalization pathways, verbs of holding and taking such as *bǎ* 把 and *ná* 拿, which are well-described for Mandarin and for Northern Wu, do not, however, turn out to be the sole source of object markers in Chinese languages. In fact, there are four dominant lexical fields which act as sources.<sup>6</sup> Apart from *hold/take*, the second source is found in comitative prepositions, while a further two new lexical sources are found in verbs of giving and helping.<sup>7</sup>

Crosslinguistically, TAKE verbs constitute a common source for object markers, as for example, in the West African Benue-Kwa languages of the Niger-Congo family (see Lord 1993; Heine and Kuteva 2002). However, GIVE and HELP verbs are not well-attested in typological literature as a source of such markers. For example, such a use of GIVE verbs is not identified in the comprehensive study of its polysemy by Newman (1996), nor listed in Heine and Kuteva's lexicon of grammaticalization (2002). Comitatives are similarly not generally attested as sources for object markers, but rather for instruments, allatives, manner markers, and even their syntactic antonyms, agent markers (Stolz 1999).

An example of each of these four main lexical sources for object markers in Sinitic languages is presented below:

(2) OBJECT MARKER < VERB OF TAKING AND HOLDING

Shanghainese 上海 (Wu 吴语): OM *nŋ̃*<sup>3</sup> < 'take'

儂拿鈔票還拔伊。

noŋ<sup>42</sup> nŋ̃<sup>53</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ŋ̃<sup>34</sup> p<sup>h</sup>iŋ̃<sup>34</sup> ŋuŋ̃<sup>23</sup> pŋ̃ŋ̃<sup>5</sup> ŋi<sup>23</sup>.

2SG OM money return give 3SG

'You give the money back to him.' (Xu and Tao 1999)

(3) OBJECT MARKER < VERB OF HELPING

Chenxi 辰溪 (Xiang 湘语): OM *paŋ̃*<sup>44</sup> < 'help'

我幫月毛毛放咗床上,好吗?

ŋo<sup>33</sup> paŋ̃<sup>44</sup> nye<sup>213</sup> mau<sup>213</sup> mau<sup>213</sup> faŋ̃<sup>214</sup> ta<sup>31</sup> dzaŋ̃<sup>213</sup> sa<sup>31</sup>

2SG OM baby put.at be.on

xau<sup>31</sup> ma<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> In a more recent study, based on a much larger corpus of over 650 Chinese dialects, Li and Cao (= Chappell) (2013a, 2013b) found at least eight main sources for these markers, including the four discussed above, the latter accounting nonetheless for the majority of Sinitic languages in this corpus. In addition to HOLD/TAKE, GIVE, HELP and comitatives, even smaller 'micro-areas' are to be found which use speech act verbs, allative directionals, CONNECT, and GET verbs.

<sup>7</sup> Note that in Chappell (2005, 2013), verbs of giving and helping have been 'lumped' together, though they are evidently not identical semantically. This is due to their similar pathway of grammaticalization.



good Q  
‘I’ll put the baby to bed, OK ?’ (Wu 2005:204)

## (4) OBJECT MARKER &lt; VERB OF GIVING

Qimen 祁门 (Hui 徽语): OM fã<sup>11</sup> < ‘give’

尔分钱摆好,不要跌失。

n<sup>11</sup> fã<sup>11</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ĩ :ə<sup>55</sup> pa<sup>42</sup>-xɛ<sup>42</sup>, pa<sup>5</sup>iũ:ə<sup>22</sup> ti:ə<sup>35</sup>-ɛi<sup>0</sup>.  
2SG OM money place-proper NEG:IMP drop-lose  
‘Put your money away safely, and don’t lose it.’ (Hirata 1998: 306)

## (5) OBJECT MARKER &lt; COMITATIVE PREPOSITION

Xianghua 乡话, Hunan (unaffiliated Sinitic): OM kai<sup>55</sup> < Comitative

我跟橘子剥下皮。

u<sup>25</sup> kai<sup>55</sup> koŋ<sup>55</sup> tsa pau<sup>41</sup> ka<sup>33</sup> fa<sup>25</sup>.  
1SG OM orange peel COMP skin

‘I peeled the orange (of its skin).’ (Chappell, Peyraube and Wu 2011)

There is one main exception to the use of object-marking constructions: in what we will identify below as the Far Southern area,<sup>8</sup> serial verb constructions (SVC) are employed with a V<sub>1</sub> TAKE verb that has not yet fully grammaticalized into an object marker, clearly the case, since it retains all its verbal characteristics including aspect marking. This part of China largely aligns itself with the contiguous regions of mainland Southeast Asia where, similarly, the use of TAKE in object marking constructions in Khmer, Vietnamese, Thai and Hmong is not highly grammaticalized either, according to Bisang (1992). Hence, the predominance of serial verb constructions in the Far Southern Sinitic area clearly links it with the rest of the Southeast Asian *Sprachbund*. The next example shows the use of one such serial verb construction in a Pinghua dialect of the Far Southern area, for which nai<sup>51</sup> 搵 ‘take’ can be viewed as a potential or incipient object marker. Its use is evidently still verbal, since it is followed by a directional verb complex tʃ<sup>51</sup>-fu<sup>22</sup> ‘out-go (away from speaker)’:

## (6) SERIAL VERB CONSTRUCTION WITH A VERB OF TAKING

‘Take’ serial verb construction in Xing’an Gaoshang Northern Pinghua 兴安高尚桂北平话:

搵衣裳出去晾起。

nai<sup>51</sup> i<sup>35</sup>ʃioŋ<sup>21</sup> tʃ<sup>51</sup>-fu<sup>22</sup> loŋ<sup>22</sup>-khi<sup>55</sup>  
OM clothes out-go<sub>DIR</sub> dry-ASP

‘Put the clothes out in the sun to dry.’ (Literally: ‘Take the clothes and put them out in the sun to dry.’) (Lin Yi 2005: 223, 232)

<sup>8</sup> In my earlier articles on object marking constructions (Chappell 2005, 2007a, 2013), I used the term ‘Southern area’ for the Yue, Hakka and Pinghua dialects of Guangdong and Guangxi. For reasons of distinctiveness and appropriacy, I have modified this to ‘Far Southern’ in alignment with de Sousa (this volume) who coined this label.

According to the dominant patterns of use for grammaticalized object markers (OM), the following four areas can be tentatively discerned as the outcome:<sup>9</sup>

1. NORTHERN AREA: OM < HOLD and TAKE verbs  
Jin dialect group; Mandarin dialect group: Northeastern, Beijing, Northwestern or Lanyin 兰银, Jilu 冀鲁, Jiaoliao 胶辽, Northeastern 东北 and some subgroups of Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话; also Northern Wu dialects 北吴.
2. CENTRAL TRANSITIONAL AREA: OM < GIVE and HELP verbs  
Xiang 湘语, Gan, 赣 Hui 徽, Southern Wu 南吴, many non-Northern Mandarin dialects: Central Plains Zhongyuan 中原, Southern Jianghuai 江淮 and subgroups of Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话 .
3. SOUTHEASTERN AREA: OM < COMITATIVE prepositions  
Essentially a feature of Min dialects 闽语 but also of certain Hakka 客家话 and Eastern Wu dialects 东吴; Xianghua 瓦乡 and scattered dialects of Jianghuai Mandarin 江淮 and Southwestern Mandarin 西南官话).
4. FAR SOUTHERN AREA: No native morphological marker apparent  
Use of serial verb constructions with ungrammaticalized TAKE verbs as V<sub>1</sub>: Yue 粤语 and Hakka dialects 客家话 in Guangdong province, Pinghua 平话 dialects in the Guangxi Autonomous region.

Note that for the Southwestern Mandarin dialects of Hubei, Sichuan and Guizhou provinces, classified as part of the Central Transitional zone, there is a high incidence of the use of BA 把. The data available in the main do not allow us to judge at this point of time whether this morpheme BA 把 is related to the lexeme ‘give’ or the lexeme ‘take’ as such ambiguity for this verb is characteristic of the Central zone (see §3.6 below on this issue; also §5.1 in Chappell 2013). In Yunnan province, a variety of sources has been identified in dialect surveys, including BA 把 < ‘hold’/‘give’, BANG 帮 ‘help’ and AI 挨 ‘be connected to’. For the present, we shall tentatively consider these areas as being part of the Central Transitional zone.

In the Far Southern China zone, apart from TAKE serial verb constructions, the literary Chinese and standard Mandarin markers JIANG 将 < ‘hold’, and sometimes BA 把 < ‘hold’, can be found in use. These two forms have indeed been borrowed into the formal register of these languages and serve as ‘true’ object markers in this case. They are not, however, a native feature of the local vernacular languages (see Chappell 2013 for details).

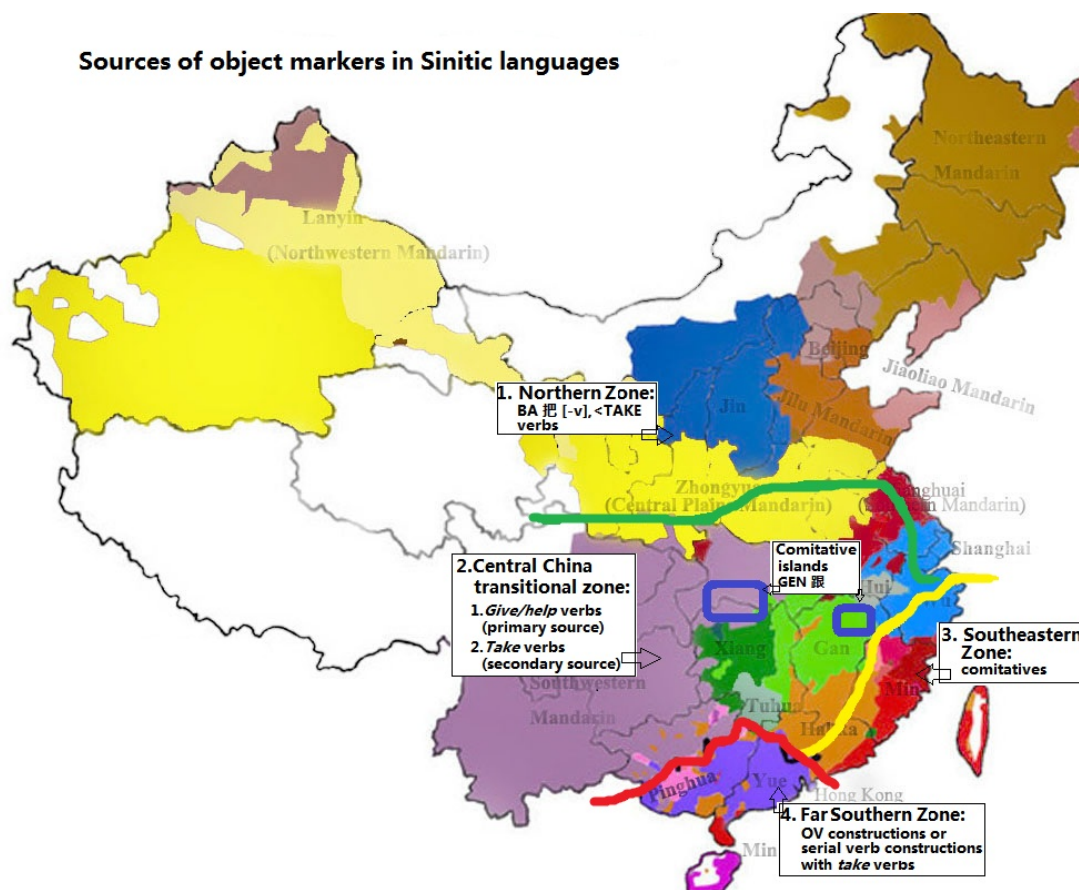
In terms of the areal nature of these features, these four linguistic areas for DOMs cross-cut dialect groupings within Sinitic. For example, Hakka dialects in close contact with Yue (Cantonese) in Guangdong province tend to behave linguistically like the Yue dialects, the dominant linguistic group, that is, they similarly make use of TAKE serial verb constructions, typical of Far Southern Sinitic.

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<sup>9</sup> Endo (2004) has also carried out extensive research on the sources and types of object marking constructions in Sinitic languages, and is one of the few scholars to have remarked upon the comitative source.

They do not behave at all like Hakka dialects further north in Hunan and Jiangxi provinces in the Central Transitional area which, in their turn, ‘copycat’ the local Xiang and Gan dialects, having developed object markers based on GIVE and HELP verbs. Further evidence reinforcing this areal trend is that Hakka dialects close to Min-speaking areas in Fujian use comitatives.<sup>10</sup>

These four areas are indicated on the following map, determined by the lexical source of the object markers in the basic *S-Marker-O-V* construction, found in all dialect groups of Sinitic, apart from the Far Southern.



Map 2.2: Sources of object markers in Sinitic languages and their distribution<sup>11</sup>

### 2.3. Sinitic passives

Passives in many Southeast and East Asian languages have been described as ‘non-canonical’ in the work of Siewierska and Bakker (2013), not to mention in earlier work by Siewierska (1984). Taking Sinitic languages as an example, this is due to the fact that, two typical constructional features which go against the ‘canon’ are the following:

- (i) Agentiveness – the presence of an obligatory agent noun phrase

<sup>10</sup> See Chappell (2006, 2007a and 2013) for more detailed studies of these object-marking constructions, and particularly Chappell, Peyraube and Wu (2011) for a study of comitatives as a source of DOMs.

<sup>11</sup> The maps in this analysis display the dominant features for each linguistic area and thus necessarily represent generalizations of the data we have to hand. The boundaries for the areas need to be consequently viewed as approximations.

- (ii) Adversity – a semantic feature coded as part of the overall constructional meaning, to the effect that the event is detrimental in some way for the patient NP.

In canonical passive constructions or in basic passives, as in the analysis of Keenan and Dryer (2007: 338-339), the agent NP should be one that is optional while the event construal should be neutral without any affective interpretations such as adversity. Clark (1974, 1989) has depicted this second parameter as a feature of Southeast Asian passives, which could again be extended to East Asia since it is found not only in Burmese, Thai, Lao, Khmer and Vietnamese, but also in Japanese, and in all ten branches of the Sinitic languages, not just Mandarin. It is possibly due to these non-canonical features that passives turn out to be textually infrequent (see Xiao et al (2006) for Standard Mandarin statistics).

The basic form of the Sinitic passive for the most common agentive type has the syntactic configuration as below, followed by an example from Standard Mandarin:

$NP_{1(\text{patient})} - [\text{Preposition}_{\text{passive}} - NP_{2(\text{agent})}] - VP_{\text{completive}}$

- (7) 曹伟 被 她 吓 了 一 跳。  
 Cáo Wěi bèi tā xià-le yī-tiào.  
 (name) PASS 3SG frighten-PFV one-VCL  
 ‘Cao Wei was startled by her.’

As the syntactic configuration given in (7) above depicts, the agent noun phrase in Sinitic passives is overtly marked morphologically, being introduced by a prepositional marker that has generally grammaticalized from a verbal source. These will be referred to as ‘agent markers of the passive’ in the following discussion.

### 2.3.1 Sources of passive markers: a crosslinguistic view

With reference to the crosslinguistic studies of passive morphology presented in Haspelmath (1990), Heine and Kuteva (2002), Keenan and Dryer (2007) and Wiemer (2011), the following list of verbs and grammatical morphemes can be compiled as frequent diachronic sources of passive markers in the languages of the world. Of eleven main sources, four are relevant for Sinitic and correspond to the boldface forms in this list:

- (8) DIACHRONIC SOURCES OF PASSIVE MARKERS – CROSSLINGUISTIC SYNTHESIS
- (i) stative and inchoative auxiliaries: be, become, have, receive, stay, sit ...
  - (ii) come, go
  - (iii) fall (down)
  - (iv) see
  - (v) **suffer, undergo**
  - (vi) **get**
  - (vii) pronominal forms: particularly 3PL, and reflexive pronouns
  - (viii) comitatives
  - (ix) **eat**
  - (x) **touch/hit**
  - (xi) causative verbs/causative morphology including *give*

### 2.3.2 Passive constructions in Sinitic languages and the sources for their agent markers

Despite the comprehensive nature of these studies, the list presented in (7) does not prove to be exhaustive of all the principal sources of agent markers found in Sinitic passives. As earlier mentioned, Hashimoto (1976, 1986) also used the parameter of passive markers to argue for the North-South linguistic division for China: verbs of giving in the South, versus causative verbs in the North. However, since his path-breaking work on typology was first published, data newly available on the grammatical description of Sinitic languages allows us to identify at least six sources and thus to refine his areal description, noting that these include the four highlighted in (7).<sup>12</sup>

- (9) Diachronic sources of passive markers for Sinitic Languages
- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| (i)   | give                                       |
| (ii)  | suffer                                     |
| (iii) | touch/hit, be in contact with, be close to |
| (iv)  | speech act verbs ‘tell’, ‘call’, ‘ask’     |
| (v)   | wait                                       |
| (vi)  | get/obtain, take                           |

First, SUFFER verbs represent a common source in Sinitic, particularly in the Mandarin group of dialects. Second, in a very secondary fashion, GET verbs are also found in Sinitic (including here broadly verbs belonging to the semantic field of TAKE and OBTAIN), while third, there are a few rarer cases of EAT, as in one or two Xiang dialects of Hunan.<sup>13</sup> The fourth source of contact verbs, including TOUCH/HIT is widespread in Southwestern Mandarin while the fifth, GIVE, is above all the major source of passive morphology in the Wu, Min, Gan, Xiang, Hui, Hakka and Yue branches of Sinitic, displaying a wide range of different forms.

Despite this large array of source semantic fields, these can in reality be reduced to three main types, as a function of the semantic change involved in their converging grammaticalization pathways as they develop into agent markers: these are (i) GIVE; (ii) SUFFER and (iii) causative verbs. The reasons are as follows:

- (a) the CONTACT class verbs develop into SUFFER-type adversative passives due to the inferred feature of affectedness. This can be construed as the result of the actions associated with TOUCH, HIT (A TARGET), MEET (a surface) etc.
- (b) the GET/OBTAIN class of verbs develop the meaning of GIVE as part of a widespread pattern of polysemy in the Central, Transitional area and so may be merged under the GIVE source (see also §3.2)

<sup>12</sup>This analysis is based on the descriptions and data from Li Lan (2006), Li Rulong and Zhang Shuangqing (1997), Wu Yunji (2005) and Cao Zhiyun et al (2008), in addition to fieldwork data of the ERC SINOTYPE team, including my own.

<sup>13</sup> See Y. Wu (2005: 192) on passive markers in Xiang dialects, chapter 6. The Xiang dialect of Longhui uses ‘eat’ as a passive marker. In older vernacular texts, such as the 13th century *Wu Deng Hui Yuan* «五灯会元», this marker is equally in evidence (Li Lan 2006). Note that in Archaic Chinese, the verb *jiàn* 見 ‘to see’ also served as a passive marker (see Peyraube 1989) but we have not so far found this source in the contemporary dialects.

- (c) the WAIT class and speech act verbs undergo the same pathway of grammaticalization as for the causative pivot verbs listed in (iv) and may consequently be combined with them, and ultimately with GIVE as well which passes through a causative stage before becoming a passive marker.

The distribution and characteristics of each of the main lexical sources is next discussed in turn:

### 2.3.3 GIVE verbs as a lexical source

A large number of Sinitic languages in Central and Southeastern China use verbs of giving as a source of markers used to introduce the agent NP in the passive. Such is the case in the Hunan Xiang dialect of Hengshan which uses tsɿ<sup>24</sup> < ‘give’:

- (10) Hengshan dialect of Xiang (湘语衡山话)

他今日会得他爷骂。

t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>33</sup> tɿŋ<sup>33</sup>ŋi<sup>24</sup> fu<sup>24</sup> tsæ<sup>24</sup> t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>33</sup> iã<sup>11</sup> ma<sup>24</sup>  
 3SG today will PASS<GIVE 3SG father rebuke

‘He will be rebuked by his father today.’ (Wu 2005: 197)

Table 2.4 provides a sample of some of the high frequency verbs belonging to the semantic field of verbs of giving. In each case, focal locations of use are indicated.

Table 2.4: GIVE verbs as the source of agent markers in Sinitic languages

| GIVE > PREPOSITION INTRODUCING THE AGENT<br>IN THE PASSIVE |  |
|--|--|
| Marker   | Dialect group  |
| pei <sup>2</sup> 界   | majority of Yue dialects, many Hui dialects  |
| khit <sup>4</sup> 乞  | most Min dialects in northern and eastern Fujian; Southern Min dialects in Guangdong, the Leizhou peninsula and Hainan, certain Southern Wu dialects |
| hou <sup>7</sup> 與   | Southern Min dialects in the Xiamen (Amoy) area; Taiwanese Southern Min  |
| pun 分  | Hakka in Guangdong province and Guangxi Autonomous Region  |
| pəʔ 拨  | Shanghainese and many Northern Wu dialects   |
| tə <sup>4</sup> 得, pa 把,<br>pa.tə <sup>4</sup> 把得          | Xiang dialects, many Gan dialects <sup>14</sup>  |
| gei <sup>3</sup> 給   | Hui dialects in Southern Anhui, Jianghuai Mandarin dialects, Jiangsu   |

<sup>14</sup> This set of verbs may also have the meaning of ‘get’ or ‘obtain’, depending on the dialect.

Map 2.3, presented below, clearly shows how GIVE verbs preponderate as a source for passive markers in Southeastern China and parts of Central China, where Mandarin is not spoken as L<sub>1</sub>, yet their distribution also significantly extends to some of the Jianghuai Mandarin dialects spoken in Jiangsu province. This source for an agent marker is unusual typologically. Chappell and Peyraube (2006) argue that the grammaticalization pathway for GIVE-passives has to pass through a causative verb stage, once the GIVE verb in question has developed a permissive LET causative sense.

To our knowledge, outside of Sinitic, GIVE has only been attested for the broader Asian region in colloquial Malay, as spoken in northern and western parts of peninsular Malaysia (*bagi* < ‘give’) (Yap and Iwasaki 2003, 2007) and in Manchu (Nedjalkov 1993) and a few other Tungusic languages, where the causative and passive verb morphology is identical. Despite this, the reanalysis of GIVE > causative is on the other hand, extremely common in Southeast Asia, for example, in Thai (Tai-Kadai), Jinghpo (Tibeto-Burman), Khmer (Austro-asiatic), Vietnamese (Austro-asiatic) and Yao (Hmong-Mien) (Jenny, forthcoming) but appears to stop at this stage.

Oddly enough, GIVE-constructions have developed into impersonal or agentless passives in certain non-standard German dialects, including Luxembourgish and Moselle Franconian (Moselfränkisch) dialects (Glaser 2006, Lenz 2008).<sup>15</sup> Note however that both the construction type and the grammaticalization pathway are quite distinct from that found in Sinitic and can be explained in terms of an initial development into a copular auxiliary use (Lenz 2008). Sinitic GIVE-passives are agentful due to their constructional origin in serial verb constructions and generally do not allow the agent noun to be omitted:

NP<sub>1(patient)</sub> – **Preposition**<sub>passive</sub>(<V<sub>1(give)</sub>) – NP<sub>2(agent)</sub> – V<sub>2</sub> – X

Finally, Wiemer (2011) observes that GIVE may form a reflexive-permissive passive in West Slavic languages, including Polish and Czech, but that these have not yet proceeded to his two final stages of modal and ‘real’ passives. This resembles more closely the Sinitic pathway for the GIVE-passive, which, has by way of contrast, reached maturity.

### 3.4 SUFFER and CONTACT verbs as a lexical source

The second main source of agent markers in Sinitic passives belongs to the field of SUFFER verbs, including verbs of contact. In fact, SUFFER-passives in Sinitic appear to be intimately related to verbs that mean ‘be close to’, ‘meet’, or ‘be in contact with’. As observed above, CONTACT class verbs extend their meaning to the adversative sense of ‘suffer’ during the course of their semantic evolution. The main marker of the passive in standard Mandarin is *bèi* 被, one of whose earliest meanings was ‘to put on the body’, ‘to cover’ (Peyraube 1989) and hence, similarly, has its source in a CONTACT verb, which came to mean ‘to suffer’ through the process of semantic extension.

<sup>15</sup> I thank Elvira Glaser and Volker Dellwo for kindly bringing this important information to my attention during a research talk which I presented at the University of Zurich on May 9, 2014 and for their data on Luxembourgish and the Trier dialect respectively.

Table 2.5: SUFFER and CONTACT verbs as the source of agent markers in Sinitic languages

| ‘SUFFER’ > PREPOSITION INTRODUCING THE AGENT IN THE PASSIVE |  |
|---|--|
| MARKER  | DIALECT GROUP  |
| 被 <i>BEI</i> ‘suffer’ < ‘cover’,<br>‘put on body’           | Standard Mandarin, formal registers of many dialects; and dialects along northern borders of Yangtze River in Jiangxi, Anhui and Jiangsu         |
| 着 <i>ZHUO</i> ‘to hit the target’,<br>‘to touch’            | Southwestern Mandarin dialects (e.g. in Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan); a handful of Jiaoliao and Jilü Mandarin dialects in Shandong |
| 挨 <i>AI</i> ‘be close to’                                   | Southwestern Mandarin and Pinghua dialects in Guangxi; Jianghuai Mandarin dialects in Jiangsu province   |
| 遭: <i>ZAO</i> ‘to suffer’, ‘to meet’                        | Ningxia Mandarin (Central Plains)<br>寧夏中原官話  |

What should be observed from comparing Table 2.5 with Map 2.3 below is that even though the BÈI passive, a prototypical example of a SUFFER or adversative passive, appears to be largely a Mandarin trademark, it is not widespread in the Northern area as the native or ‘local’ colloquial marker of the passive (see the section on causative sources below). It should be pointed out, however, that the marker BÈI is closely associated with the history of passive constructions in Chinese, and is attested in this use from the beginning of the Medieval period (3<sup>rd</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century, Peyraube 1989).

The BÈI passive also tends to have a relatively higher frequency in corpora of contemporary Standard Mandarin or *pǔtonghuà*, based mainly on written genres and particularly in its agentless form, when compared with other passive constructions (for statistics, see Xiao et al 2006; on syntactic and semantic properties, see Chappell forthcoming b).

(11) Agentless form of the bèi-passive in Standard Mandarin

NP<sub>Subject/Patient</sub> – Passive Marker – [Ø]<sub>Agent</sub> – VP<sub>Transitive</sub>

那個鬼就 被 趕出來了。

Nàge guǐ jiù bèi gǎn.chū.qu le.

that.CL ghost then PASS chase.out.go CRS

‘The ghost was chased out.’

By way of contrast, it is the Southwestern area where SUFFER verbs come to the fore as colloquial passive markers, particularly in Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Hubei and western Hunan, but also in the western parts of Guangxi Autonomous Region. This incorporates a large area where Southwestern Mandarin is spoken and ZHUO 着 is used as the marker (Li Lan 2006), although it is not the only SUFFER-verb, since in Guangxi, many Pinghua dialects make use of a marker from the same



semantic field, AI 挨 ‘to be in contact with’. An example follows for each of these CONTACT verbs:

(12) Yiyang dialect of Xiang (湘语 益阳话)

他在路上着狗咬了一口。

xa<sup>33</sup> tai<sup>11</sup> ləu<sup>11</sup> -lɔ̃<sup>11</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>o<sup>45</sup> kau<sup>41</sup> ŋa<sup>45</sup> ka i<sup>45</sup> k<sup>h</sup>au<sup>41</sup>  
 3SG at road-on PASS dog bite ASP one CL  
 ‘He was bitten by the dog along the way.’ (Cui Zhenhua 1998: 140)

(13) Yining Pinghua (义宁平话)

个蟆挨(只蛇)吃去呃。

ko<sup>33</sup> ma<sup>34</sup> ŋai<sup>31</sup> (tei<sup>?</sup> ei<sup>31</sup>) hiə<sup>?</sup> həu<sup>33</sup> e<sup>33</sup>  
 CL frog PASS CL snake eat away PFV  
 ‘The frog was eaten up (by the snake).’ (Zheng and Lin 2005:252-253)

It can be noted again that this southern area of China is contiguous with the linguistic area of Southeast Asia in which passive markers have evolved from the similar source of a CONTACT verb: these include Khmer (Austroasiatic), Thai and Lao (both Southwestern Tai), Hmong (Hmong-Mien) and also Tibeto-Burman languages such as Jingpho (Kachin). Vietnamese uses the marker *bi*, part of its extensive Sino-Vietnamese vocabulary.<sup>16</sup>

It is significant, however, that the use of 被 BÈI is found scattered across certain Mandarin-speaking regions of Central China along the north side of the Yangtze River in Hubei, Anhui and Jiangsu provinces (Map 95, Cao et al 2008). This suggests a peripheral area for its use, combined with the fact that BÈI is intermingled with GIVE-class verbs as markers in the adjacent transitional zone, as displayed in Map 2.3 below (cf. Hashimoto 1987, 1988 on passives). In contrast to this, in the case of non-Mandarin dialects, the use of 被 BÈI is typically a Mandarin borrowing, for example, in the Hunan Xiang dialects (cf. Wu 2005) or in formal registers of Hong Kong Cantonese (Matthews and Yip 2001).

### 2.3.5 Speech act causative verbs as a lexical source

The most typical source of agent markers in Northern Chinese passives is not *bèi*, however, but the coercive causative verb *jiào* 叫 ‘to make’ that has its source in a speech act verb ‘to tell’. This distribution can clearly be observed from Map 2.3 below. Secondly, the use of *ràng* 让 ‘to let’ has developed a permissive causative use from its earlier meanings of ‘to yield’, ‘to request/ask’. Its use is intermingled with that of *jiào* 叫 in the Northeast (Manchuria) and in Shanxi and Shandong provinces, but is spread over a slightly less extensive area than for *jiào* 叫 (see Map 95 in Cao Zhiyun et al (2008) for the precise areas and localities). In the northern parts of Jiangxi province, many Gan dialects use WAIT verbs as their source, which can be shown to pass through the stage of a permissive LET causative (Chappell and Liu, to appear).

<sup>16</sup> This marker quite likely represents a borrowing of the morpheme BÈI from the Medieval period, when Vietnam was under Chinese domination.

Table 2.6: Causative verbs as the source of agent markers in Sinitic languages

| CAUSATIVE VERB > MARKER INTRODUCING THE AGENT IN THE PASSIVE |  |
|--|--|
| MARKER   | DIALECT GROUP  |
| 叫 <i>JIAO</i> ‘to tell’ > ‘make’                             | Mandarin – all northern groups: Northeastern, Northern including Beijing, Jiaoliao and Jilu (Shandong), Central Plains and Northwestern; Jin dialect group |
| 让 <i>RANG</i> ‘to request/ask’ > ‘let’                       | Mandarin – Northeast, Shandong, Shanxi   |
| 等 <i>DENG</i> ‘to wait’ > ‘let’                              | Gan, Xiang, Wu and Hakka dialects  |
| 听任 <i>TĪNGRÈN</i> ‘to let it be’                             | Xiang  |
| 盡 <i>JIN</i> ‘let’   | Xiang, Mandarin  |

From original lexical meanings of ‘tell’ (*jiào* 叫), ‘request’ or ‘allow’ (*ràng* 让), these lexical verbs evolve from their use in pivot constructions of the form ‘tell/allow someone to do something’ to the constructional meaning of a causative: ‘make/have or let someone do something’. Below is an example from a Jin dialect for the use of *jiào* 叫 as an agent marker.

$NP_{\text{Subject/Patient}} - \text{Passive Marker}_{\text{Causative}} - NP_{\text{Agent}} - VP_{\text{Transitive}}$

(14) Jinyuan dialect of Jin 晋源方言

碗儿叫我打咧。

vang<sup>42</sup>æ<sup>11</sup> teiau<sup>35</sup> yr<sup>42</sup> ta<sup>42</sup> lie<sup>11</sup>

bowl PASS<TELL ISG strike PFV

‘The bowl was broken by me.’ (Wenqing Wang 2002: 194)

The less well-known causative source of WAIT verbs may, even so, be traced back to the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) for DAI 待 and to the Yuan dynasty for DENG 等 (1206-1368) (Peyraube and Liu 2013). According to textual material from these periods, the two verbs could already express the permissive ‘let’ sense, hence providing the ideal conditions for a further development into an agent marker in the passive, just as for the speech act and GIVE class verbs. Here is a contemporary example from Yichun Gan (data from XuPing Li):

(15) Yichun dialect of Gan 益春方言 (赣)

车子等人家骑走哩。

teia<sup>34</sup>tsi ten<sup>42-33</sup> nin<sup>44</sup>ka tɛ<sup>h14</sup>.tsɛu li.

bike PASS<WAIT other ride.away PFV

‘The bike was ridden away by someone.’ (data from XuPing Li)

The passive use is found in the Gan and Wu groups above all, but also in a few Hakka and Xiang dialects (see Hu and Ge 2003, Zheng Wei 2007, Chappell and Liu to appear).

## 3.6. TAKE~GIVE verbs as a lexical source

A residual class of TAKE verbs represents a semantic field less well-exploited in Sinitic for passive markers than its antonym GIVE. In fact, dialectal data need to be handled very carefully in this case, since the forms do not necessarily have the same meaning as their cognates in Standard Mandarin: for example, *ná* 拿 ‘take’, ‘hold’, *bǎ* 把 ‘hold’ and *dé* 得 ‘get’, ‘obtain’ may have ‘give’ as their primary meaning in the relevant dialects of Gan and Xiang or Hakka.

Table 2.7: TAKE ~ GIVE verbs as the source of agent markers in Sinitic languages

| ‘TAKE’ > PREPOSITION INTRODUCING THE AGENT IN THE PASSIVE |   |
|---|---|
| Marker  | Dialect group                                   |
| 拿 <i>NA</i> ‘take’, ‘hold’                                | Gan in Southern Jiangxi, certain Xiang dialects |
| 得 <i>DE</i> ‘to obtain’ ~ ‘to give’                       | certain Gan, Xiang, Hakka, Wu dialects          |
| 捞 <i>lau</i> <sup>33</sup> ‘to dredge up’                 | Xiang e.g. Changsha                             |
| 搵 <i>laq</i> <sup>7</sup> ‘give’ or ‘take’                | Gan   |

As shown on Map 2.3, the ambiguity between TAKE- and GIVE-class verbs is strikingly evident in Jiangxi and in the adjacent eastern parts of Hunan province (see example 10 above with *tsæ*<sup>24</sup> 得 ‘give’). Furthermore, the identical forms may be used as object markers in the structurally isomorphic ‘disposal’ construction in one and the same dialect (see Chappell 2007b, Wu 2013).

In Changning, which is a Gan/Hakka dialect spoken in Hunan, 得 *te*<sup>33</sup> ‘give’, acts as a marker of both the agent in the passive and the patient in the object marking construction, whence the ambiguity of the following example:

## (16) Changning dialect of Gan/Hakka (常宁话)

(a) *Object marker reading:*

NP<sub>1</sub> AGENT – [Preposition – NP<sub>2</sub> DIRECT OBJECT] – VP<sub>TELIC</sub>

爷爷得佬佬打咗一餐饱个。(常宁客家话)

ia<sup>11</sup>ia<sup>11</sup>      te<sup>33</sup>      lo<sup>44</sup> lo<sup>44</sup>      ta<sup>44</sup>      ta      i<sup>33</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ã<sup>45</sup>      po<sup>44</sup>      ke.  
 father      OM      brother      hit      ASP      one-CL      enough      PRT  
 ‘(My) father gave my younger brother a big slap.’

(b) *Passive marker reading:*

NP<sub>1</sub> PATIENT – [Preposition – NP<sub>2</sub> AGENT] – VP<sub>TELIC</sub>

爷爷得佬佬打咗一餐饱个。

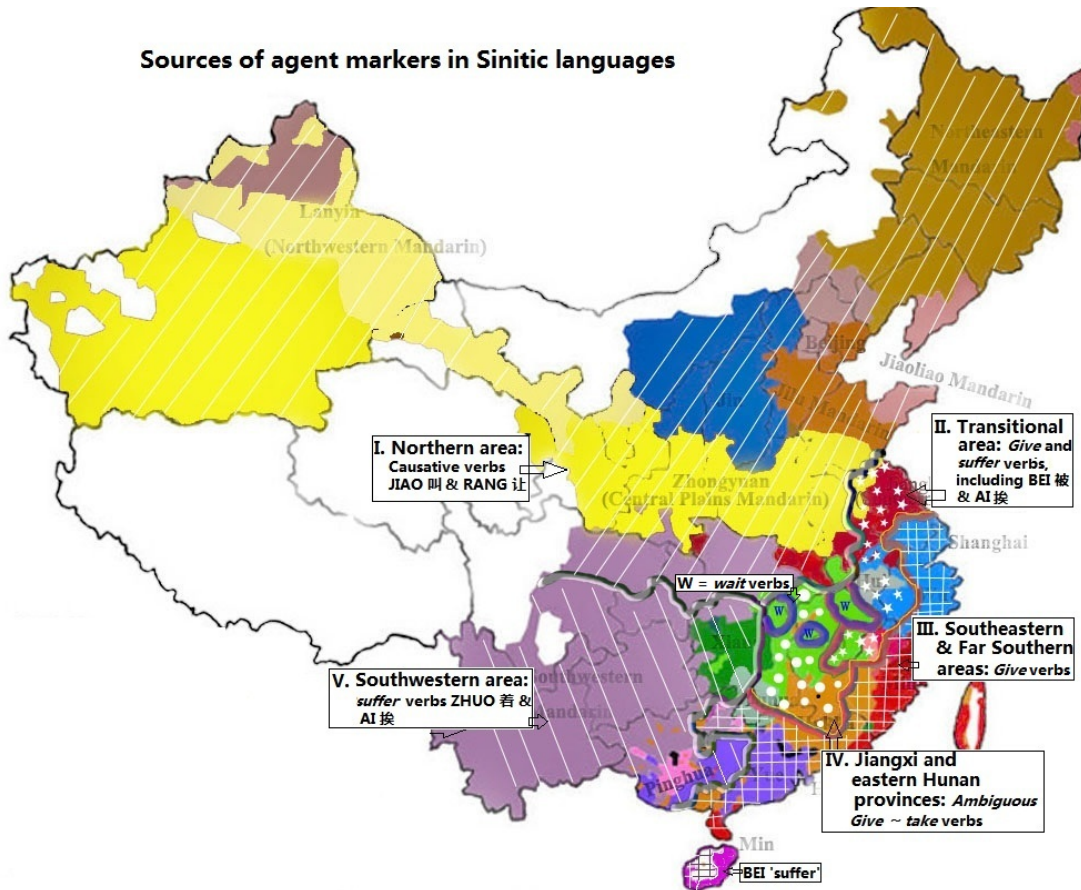
ia<sup>11</sup>ia<sup>11</sup> te<sup>33</sup>      lo<sup>44</sup> lo<sup>44</sup>      ta<sup>44</sup>      ta      i<sup>33</sup> ts<sup>h</sup>ã<sup>45</sup>      po<sup>44</sup>      ke  
 father PASS      brother      hit      ASP      one-CL      enough      PRT

‘My father was given a big slap by my younger brother.’

(data from Wu Yunji 2005: 201-202)

As an object-marking construction, the subject NP, *ia*<sup>11</sup>*ia*<sup>11</sup> ‘father’, is understood as the agent of the action who slaps his son, whereas under the interpretation of a passive construction, it is instead the father who is in the role of the patient and receives the slap from his son.

To sum up this discussion on agent markers found in Sinitic passive constructions, the five main linguistic areas are represented in Map 2.3 below. Note that zones II, III and IV could be merged together as one larger GIVE area with the internal divergences, as indicated on the map, the outcome of overlapping with SUFFER areas or causative verb areas (including WAIT) or due to the presence of a zone of GIVE~TAKE ambiguity.



Map 2.3: Sources of agent markers in Sinitic passives<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, we have set up five main areas for the lexical sources of agent markers in the Sinitic passive constructions. The Northern area of causative verbs, and the SUFFER verb, BÈI, in the standard language, is the largest geographically, encompassing all the provinces and autonomous regions from the northwest of China across to Manchuria in the northeast, and thence south to the Yangtze River. This area includes the following subgroups of Mandarin: Lanyin (Northwestern), Central Plains, Northern, Northeastern, Jiaoliao and Jilu as well as dialects belonging to Southwestern Mandarin. Notably, the Jin dialect group falls into this area as well.

The Southwestern area of CONTACT class verbs forming SUFFER-type passives covers Yunnan, Guizhou, the southern region of Sichuan, parts of Hubei and the western regions in both Hunan and the Guangxi Autonomous Region. It includes a large proportion of the Southwestern Mandarin subgroup, some Pinghua dialects in Guangxi and a few Xiang dialects. We pointed out that it is precisely this area which

<sup>17</sup> This map is based on an analysis of the data given in Cao Zhiyun et al (2008), *Linguistic Atlas of Chinese Dialects* – Map 95, in addition to the cited reference materials.

is contiguous with a large number of unrelated Southeast Asian languages that also use CONTACT verbs as a source for agent markers.

The Southeastern and Far Southern areas of GIVE verbs encompass the coastal provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong, displaying a variety of forms from this lexical field which first develop a causative use then grammaticalize into agent markers of the passive. This is a typologically unusual feature found, to date, almost exclusively in Sinitic, as far as the East and Southeast Asian linguistic area is concerned, with the exception of colloquial Malay to the south and Tungusic languages to the north.

The area for GIVE verbs is adjacent to two other smaller, highly mixed areas that also implicate the use of GIVE verbs. The first one is the transitional area in southern Jiangsu and adjacent Anhui provinces where both GIVE verbs and the SUFFER verbs, BÈI and ÁI are found intermingled. Jianghuai Mandarin and Hui dialects are well-represented in this area. The second mixed area is in eastern Hunan and Jiangxi provinces where Xiang, Gan, Hakka and Wu dialects are all to be found. In this area, ambiguous GIVE and TAKE verbs act as the source for agent markers, as well as causative verbs derived from WAIT, found principally in the Gan dialects of northern Jiangxi, but also in some of the contiguous Wu dialects and Xiang and Hakka as well. Both these two highly mixed areas might have been subsumed under a larger, more generalized GIVE area. Renouncing the potential of such an economy, we have instead chosen to distinguish them as being turbulent transitional areas, sandwiched between the Northern area of causative verbs, on the one side, and the two combined areas of Southwestern SUFFER and Southeastern GIVE on the other side.

In the final section which follows, we discuss the different structural and cognitive types of comparative constructions to be found in Sinitic languages.

#### 2.4. Sinitic comparatives

The comparative constructions of inequality fall structurally into seven main types in Sinitic languages and these seven types involve four cognitive schemas, following Heine (1997) in the main. The ones relevant for Sinitic are given in boldface script in Table 2.8 below.<sup>18</sup>

Table 2.8: Cognitive schemas for the comparative of inequality (based on Heine 1997)

| Type | Cognitive schema | Example                     |
|------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 :  | Source           | ‘from’                      |
| 2 :  | Goal             | ‘to’                        |
| 3 :  | Location         | ‘at’                        |
| 4 :  | <b>Compare</b>   | <b>‘compared to’</b>        |
| 5 :  | <b>Action</b>    | <b>‘surpass, defeat’</b>    |
| 6 :  | <b>Polarity</b>  | <b>‘X is A, Y is not A’</b> |
| 7 :  | Sequence         | e.g. Germanic ‘than’        |
| 8 :  | Similarity       | ‘as, like’                  |
| 9 :  | <b>Topic</b>     | <b>‘X and Y, Y is A’</b>    |

<sup>18</sup> Heine (1997) presents a set of eight cognitive schema to which Chappell and Peyraube (this volume) have argued for the addition of a dependent-marked ‘Compare comparative’.

I use the following notation to describe the different structural types for the comparative, as do Chappell and Peyraube (this volume):

|                 |   |  |
|-----------------|---|--|
| CM              | = | comparative marker   |
| NP <sub>A</sub> | = | noun phrase referring to the comparee  |
| NP <sub>B</sub> | = | noun phrase referring to the person or thing acting as the standard or benchmark               |
| VP              | = | verb phrase filled principally by an adjective or a verb as well as other predicative elements |
| DEGR            | = | degree marker  |

Table 2.9 presents the seven different structural types of comparatives found in Sinitic and their corresponding cognitive schema.

Table 2.9: Structural types of comparatives in Sinitic

|      | <i>Structural type</i>        | <i>Structural configuration</i>  | <i>Cognitive schema</i>           |
|------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| I.   | Prepositional                 | NP <sub>A</sub> [CM NP <sub>B</sub> ] VP   | Compare                           |
| II.  | Transitive                    | NP <sub>A</sub> VP CM NP <sub>B</sub>  | Action <sub>(i)</sub> (Surpass)   |
| III. | Zero-marked                   | NP <sub>A</sub> VP NP <sub>B</sub> (Q-CL)  | Action <sub>(ii)</sub>            |
| IV.  | Adverbial                     | NP <sub>A</sub> CM <sub>MORE</sub> Verb NP <sub>B</sub>  | Action <sub>(iii)</sub>           |
| V.   | Hybridized                    | NP <sub>A</sub> [CM NP <sub>B</sub> ] CM <sub>MORE</sub> V   | Compare + Action <sub>(iii)</sub> |
| VI.  | Topic-comment                 | NP <sub>B</sub> // <i>copula</i> NP <sub>A</sub> VP  | Topic                             |
| VII. | Contrastive conjoined clauses | NP <sub>A</sub> VP <sub>x</sub> CL <sub>PL</sub> , NP <sub>B</sub> VP <sub>~x</sub> CL <sub>PL</sub> | Polarity                          |

Next, I briefly discuss and exemplify each of these types in turn.

#### 2.4.1 Type I: Prepositional comparative: Compare schema

Similar to the case for the object-marking construction (§2), the best described comparative construction for Sinitic is the Mandarin type using the marker *bǐ* 比 ‘compared to’, in the Compare schema.

##### Type I: Preverbal Prepositional Phrase: Compare schema

(17) NP<sub>A</sub> – CM – NP<sub>B</sub> – VP (Standard Mandarin)

你比我大。

nǐ<sub>A</sub> bǐ<sub>CM</sub> wǒ<sub>B</sub> dà<sub>ADJ</sub>.  
2SG compared:to 1SG big

‘You’re older than me.’ (*Literally: you-compared:to-me-big*)

The comparative marker is part of a prepositional phrase formed with the standard NP, NP<sub>B</sub>, and as such represents a dependent-marking strategy which is at odds with the typological profile of Sinitic languages. As Li Lan (2003), Ansaldo (2010) and Chappell and Peyraube (this volume) point out, Type I is widespread in Northern China, while it is gradually being adopted elsewhere in other Sinitic language groups, in particular, for the Wu, Hui, Xiang and Gan dialect groups in the Central Transitional area where the native and the Mandarin replica form exist side-by-side. In local varieties of Taiwanese Southern Min spoken by the younger generation, the

Compare comparative is on the point of accomplishing the task of wholly replacing the native comparative (see Li and Lien 1995).

#### 2.4.2 Type II: Transitive structure: Action<sub>(i)</sub> schema with ‘surpass’ class verbs

This comparative type structurally equates to a transitive clause, in which the comparative marker acts as a complement to the verb, in V2 position. It has a transparent synchronic relation to a fully lexical verb in most dialects with a meaning such as ‘surpass’, ‘defeat’ or ‘win’. Type II exemplifies the Action cognitive schema. It has widespread usage in southern and southwestern China in particular in the Yue, Hakka and Southwestern Mandarin groups, not to mention in the Central Transitional area for many Xiang, Gan and Wu dialects. As Li Lan (2003) points out, this comparative may also be found in the Jiaoliao and Jilu Mandarin dialects of Shandong province which suggests a peripheral area of retention.

The comparative marker GUO [k<sup>w</sup>ɔ<sup>33</sup>] 过 in Hong Kong Cantonese, exemplified in (18), has the lexical verb meaning of ‘cross (over)’ and ‘surpass’ as well as serving as a directional complement verb ‘over’ in V<sub>2</sub> position.

#### (18) NP<sub>A</sub>– VERB – CM –NP<sub>B</sub> (Hong Kong Cantonese)

我 老 过 你。

ŋɔ<sup>13</sup> lou<sup>13</sup> k<sup>w</sup>ɔ<sup>33</sup> lei<sup>13</sup>

1SG old CM 2SG

‘I’m older than you.’ (*Literally: I-old-surpass-you*)

The fact that Type II Surpass comparatives are predominant in the Far Southern area of China also serves to recall the contiguity of this area with unrelated Southeast Asian languages, where this type is equally common (see §4.3 in Chappell and Peyraube, this volume). Furthermore, in terms of areality, this feature of Surpass comparatives overlaps with the one for absence of grammaticalized object-marking constructions in these two adjacent areas (discussed in §2 above).

There are at least two types of comparative constructions in Sinitic which are typologically rare in the languages of the world, according to predictions made on the basis of a new sample of languages in Haspelmath et al (2013). These correspond to Types III and IV, next discussed.

#### 2.4.3 Type III: Zero-marked structure: Action<sub>(iii)</sub> schema

A majority of Sinitic languages and dialect groups may use this third comparative type as a *secondary* strategy (Li Lan 2003). In other words, the Zero-marked comparative is not areally defined within China. Its first striking feature is that it is devoid of any morphological marking whatsoever to explicitly code the comparative. There is neither a degree nor a standard marker.

A second important feature of the Zero-marked comparative is that it is mainly used with stative or quality verbs such as ‘tall’, ‘old’, ‘fat’ and ‘rich’, that is, attributive adjectives used as predicative ones. Furthermore, a third, syntactic, feature concerns the unusual deployment of such stative verbs in a transitive clause; see (19) below. Evidently, transitive SVO syntax is not otherwise normally permitted with this class of stative verbs in Sinitic languages. It could be seen as a kind of semantic coercion of this verb class which places them in a transitive ‘straitjacket’, thus creating a new comparative structure. The Type IV Adverbial comparative, to be discussed next, shows similar syntax and constraints (§4.4).

Apart from Southern Min, the stative verbs found in Type III are typically quite semantically restricted to those which denote physical characteristics, size and age. Furthermore, a quantifier phrase may be required in clause-final position after the standard NP, the case in most branches of Sinitic. For example, Standard Mandarin requires a quantifier phrase as in (20) whereas, once again, Southern Min stands apart from other Sinitic dialect groups in not requiring it, as shown in (19). The use of transitivized stative verbs points to the Action schema once again.

- (19) Hui'an 惠安 (Southern Min 闽南)  
 NP<sub>A</sub> Verb<sub>STATIVE</sub> NP<sub>B</sub> (Q-CL)  
 伊 大 我。  
 i<sup>33</sup> tua<sup>42</sup> gua<sup>55</sup>  
 3SG old<sub><'big'</sub> 1SG  
 'S/He is older than me.' (*Literally: She-olds-me*)
- (20) Standard Mandarin 普通话  
 NP<sub>A</sub> Verb<sub>STATIVE</sub> NP<sub>B</sub> Q-CL  
 哥哥大我三岁。  
 Gēgē dà wǒ \*(sān suì).  
 brother old 1SG three year  
 'My brother is three years older than me.'

The Type III comparative appears to be a form that has reached a stage of maturity in Southern Min dialects not yet evident in many other branches of Sinitic. This is shown in its ability to take a wider range of stative predicates than is possible in most other dialects, and in the fact that it does not require a quantifier phrase (see §5 in W. Chen, this volume).<sup>19</sup>

#### 2.4.4 Type IV: Adverbial comparative: Action<sub>(ii)</sub> schema with 'more'

This fourth type of comparative similarly belongs to the Action schema. Its first interesting feature, which distinguishes it from Type III, is that it makes use of an intensifying adverb with the general meaning of 'more' as its comparative marker of degree. A second distinctive feature is that it is only found in a small area of China, in Min and in certain Hakka dialects.

Otherwise, the Adverbial comparative resembles the Zero-marked one in being used with stative or quality verbs in transitive clauses, but in this case, in conjunction with the adverbial marker 'more', as shown in (21): Adverb<sub>CM</sub> + Verb<sub>STATIVE</sub>.

<sup>19</sup> Apparently, the Zero-marked Type III and the Adverbial Type IV are neither well-attested nor well-described in the typological literature. In a recent study by the Comparative Constructions Consortium, the prediction is made that this zero-marked type is not possible on the basis of a new sample of 230 languages, complementing Stassen's sample of 167 (Haspelmath et al 2013). The Comparative Consortium has proposed Universal C1: « *No language lacks both a degree marker and a standard marker* » e.g. \*'The dog is big the pig.' (2013: 8). This exactly corresponds to the structure of our Type III.



- (21) Hui'an 惠安 (Southern Min 闽南)  
 NP<sub>A</sub> CM<sub><MORE</sub> Verb<sub>STATIVE</sub> NP<sub>B</sub>  
 伊 較 富 我。  
 i<sup>33</sup> k'aŋ<sup>4</sup> pu<sup>55</sup> gua<sup>55</sup>  
 3SG more<sub>CM</sub> rich 1SG  
 'She is richer than me.' (*Literally: she-more-riches-me*)

Type IV is highly typical of many Southern Min dialects. W. Chen (this volume, §4) suggests that Type IV might be native to the Southern Min area, given that this comparative structure is also attested in historical documents recording this language. Uncommon both in Sinitic and crosslinguistically, this type has been predicted to be rare by Haspelmath et al (2013).<sup>20</sup>

#### 2.4.5 Type V: Hybridized construction : Compare + Action schemas

Type V generally represents a blend of Types I and IV, that is, a combination of the Compare and the Adverbial comparatives which results in a new hybrid form. For languages using this hybridized comparative, Type V is in fact a borrowing of both the syntax of the Northern strategy and its morphological marker Bĭ 比 'compared to', combined with the marker of the Adverbial comparative, relevant for the given Sinitic language.<sup>21</sup> Since the markers for these two different types of comparative construction occur in different parts of the clause, in preverbal prepositional phrase in Type I, and in the predicate in Type IV respectively, the process could be seen to take place harmoniously, without loss of any constituents. Interdialectal contact thus leads to hybridization through the creation of a new form using the Type I Bĭ 比 structure, in which the native adverbial marker has been simply retained in its original place in the predicate, modifying the verb in preverbal position.

The example which follows comes from Meixian Hakka, the prestige variety spoken in northeastern Guangdong province. The two comparative markers are, as already foreshadowed, the Mandarin preposition *pi*<sup>31</sup> 'compared to' in preverbal position and the Hakka adverbial *kuo*<sup>53-55</sup> 'more' in the predicate<sup>22</sup>, derived from the 'surpass' or 'exceed' verbal meaning:

- (22) Hybridized comparative construction in Meixian Hakka (梅县客家话)  
 NP<sub>A</sub> [CM<sub>(i)</sub> NP<sub>B</sub>] CM<sub>(ii)</sub><sub>more</sub> Verb  
 這隻比那隻過好。  
 e<sup>31</sup> tsak<sup>1</sup> pi<sup>31</sup> e<sup>53-55</sup> tsak<sup>1</sup> kuo<sup>53-55</sup> hau<sup>31</sup>  
 this-CL CM that-CL ADV<sub>MORE</sub><'surpass' good  
 'This one is better than that one.'

<sup>20</sup> Haspelmath et al (2013) propose the following Universal C2: *Languages with only a degree marker are rare* (page 9), which can be upheld for Sinitic, particularly for Type IV in the Min dialects.

<sup>21</sup> Some of the dialects concerned may only possess the short variant of the Type IV Adverbial Comparative with NP<sub>A</sub>+ADV<sub>CM</sub>+ADJECTIVE, that is, an absolutive comparative such as found in Southern Min (see W. Chen, this volume). In these cases, the process of hybridization is even more straightforward, since no rearrangement of constituents is required, the standard NP not being overtly mentioned in this simpler structure.

<sup>22</sup> Li Lan (2003: 217) lists another double-marked type of comparative for which only data from Guangdong Hakka is given. In this variant, the stative adjective is marked by both the preverbal adverb JIAO 较 'more' and the postverbal GUO 过 'surpass', that is, it is a hybridization of the Type II Surpass and Type IV Adverbial comparatives. Only one example is given without transcription from Fengshun Hakka.

(Literally: *this-one-compared-to-that-one-more-good*)

Another example for the outcome of interdialectal contact is the Southern Min hybridized comparative which similarly uses the marker *pi*<sup>2</sup> 比 ‘compared to’ but a different adverb, *khah*<sup>4</sup> 較 ‘more’ (= *k’aŋ*<sup>4</sup> in (21) above):

(23) Hybridized comparative construction in Taiwanese Southern Min

NP<sub>A</sub> [CM<sub>(i)</sub> NP<sub>B</sub>] CM<sub>(ii)</sub>(more) V  
 我比伊較高。  
 gua<sup>2</sup> pi<sup>2</sup> i<sup>1</sup> khah<sup>4</sup> kuaiN<sup>5</sup>  
 1SG CM<sub>(i)</sub> 3SG CM<sub>(ii)</sub> tall  
 1SG compare 3SG more tall  
 ‘I am taller than him.’

The morpheme for the intensifying or degree adverb ‘more’ varies across dialects, for example, it may be *k’aŋ*<sup>4</sup> 較 + ADJ, as in many Southern Min dialects, *kau*<sup>4</sup> 較 + ADJ or *ko*<sup>4</sup> 過 + ADJ, as in Hakka, and even *kien*<sup>5</sup> 更 + ADJ in certain Gan dialects (see Li and Zhang 1992: 450 for Gan and Hakka dialects and W. Chen, this volume, §2, on the double-marked comparative in the Hui’an dialect of Southern Min).

2.4.6 Type VI: Topicalization

A small number of Wu and Hui dialects show a predilection for this unusual strategy in Sinitic whereby the comparee and the standard NP have their order reversed: the standard NP is placed first in topic position.

(24) Fuyang dialect of Northern Wu

NP<sub>B</sub> copula NP<sub>A</sub> VP  
 法国，还是中国大。  
 faŋ<sup>51</sup>kuoŋ<sup>51</sup> huaŋ<sup>23</sup>zɿ<sup>313</sup> teioŋ<sup>53</sup>kuoŋ<sup>51</sup> du<sup>313</sup>  
 France still.be China big  
 ‘Compared with France, China is bigger.’ (Data from XuPing Li)  
 (Literally: *France: still-be-China-big*)

Li Lan (2003) explains this type in terms of the conflation of two conjoined clauses after the comparee, ‘China’, is omitted from the putative first clause: ‘Comparing China with France: it is still the case that China is bigger.’ > As for France, China is bigger.’

2.4.7 Type VII: Polarity schema

In Xianghua, an unclassified Chinese language spoken in Northwestern Hunan, the basic comparative strategy uses a polarity schema, with conjoined clauses containing the standard NP and the comparee NP respectively: ‘X is A, Y is B’. The stative verbs in the predicates of each clause are antonyms of each other, and the plural classifier *sa*<sup>55</sup> 些 ‘a.little’ is obligatorily present:

- (25) Polarity schema:  $NP_A VP_x CL_{PL}, NP_B VP_{\sim x} CL_{PL}$   
 Xianghua  
 你肥些, 我瘦些。  
 $\eta_i^{25}$   $fi^{213}$   $sa^{55}$ ,  $wu^{25}$   $ua^{55}$   $sa^{55}$   
 2SG fat a.little 1SG thin a.little  
 ‘You’re fatter and I’m thinner,’ => ‘You’re fatter than me.’ (fieldwork data of the author)

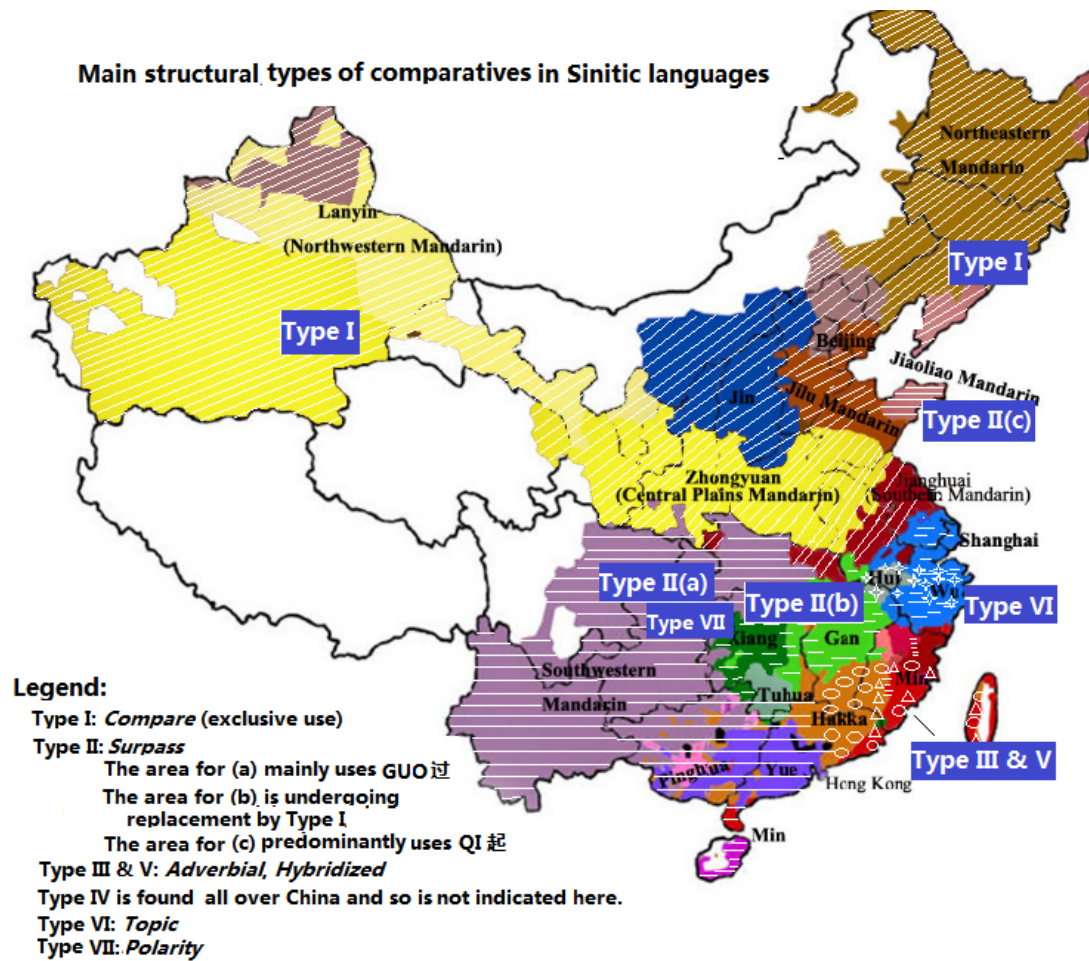
This is the regular pattern for the comparative in Xianghua, representing a type that has not yet been well studied for Sinitic. Similar monoclausal patterns of the short comparative variant (the absolute) can be observed in other dialect groups but these usually do not constitute the main comparative strategy, in such cases.

- (26) Standard Mandarin absolute construction  
 他快一点。  
*Tā kuài yīdiǎn.*  
 3SG fast a:little  
 ‘She’s a little faster.’

Apart from the ‘native’ comparative, the Mandarin Compare comparative has also been borrowed into Xianghua, just as in Southern Min and Hakka dialects. In a similar fashion to the hybridized Type V with double marking, the Mandarin comparative is combined with the only overt marker in the Xianghua polarity comparative: the postverbal plural classifier,  $sa^{55}$  些. This could be viewed as a kind of hybridization, though on a much smaller scale than for Type V.

- (27)  $NP_A pi^{25}(CM_1) NP_B VP sa^{55}(CM_2)$   
 你比我肥些。  
 $\eta_i^{25}$   $pi^{25}$   $wu^{25}$   $fi^{213}$   $sa^{55}$   
 2SG  $CM_1$  1SG fat a:little  
 ‘You’re fatter than me.’

To sum up this discussion, the distribution of the main structural types of Sinitic comparatives is indicated on Map 2.4 presented below.



Map 2.4: Comparative constructions in Sinitic languages

#### 2.4.8 Summary of comparatives

Unlike the case for the object-marking construction, most dialects will have at least two common colloquial strategies for coding the comparative meaning. In the Northern area, which is largely Mandarin territory, we find Type I, the prepositional Compare comparative, *She compared to me is tall*, co-existing with Type III, the zero-marked comparative *She tells me*.

Type II, the transitive Surpass comparative, *I tall-surpass you*, is widely used across the Far Southern area and the Southwest where Yue, Hakka, Pinghua and Southwestern Mandarin are spoken. It is similarly used alongside the Type III zero-marked comparative.

Significantly for our study, the Shandong peninsula forms a relic area of retention for Type II (*I tall-surpass you*), a dialect island within the Northern territory of Type I, in addition to parts of Northeastern Fujian, exemplified by the Fuzhou dialect. Type I is encroaching on the native Type II in the Central China transitional zone, for example, in the Gan and Xiang dialect groups, located in Jiangxi and Hunan provinces.

Historically, the Type I Compare comparative began to appear only in the late Tang period from the 10th century onwards (see Chappell and Peyraube, this volume). The prestige ascribed to the language of the imperial court – and today to Standard Mandarin – has seen this Type I or Bǐ 比 comparative move slowly into all dialect

areas, either borrowed in its entirety to replace the native structure, or used side-by-side with the native form as an alternative comparative strategy, when not hybridized with local strategies as in Southern Min, Gan, Hakka and Xianghua.

It was observed that the Type II Surpass comparatives are very common across Southeast Asia. This feature appears to dovetail once again neatly with the fact that the Surpass schema – and its transitive structure – are also found right across Southern and Southwestern China. Type III, the zero-marked comparative belonging to the Action schema, is a pan-Sinitic feature that codes in the main dimensions, age and physical features.

The remaining four types of comparative structure are more restricted in their distribution. Type IV, the adverbial comparative, is representative of Southern Min, while Type V is a hybrid form that combines the syntax of the Type I Compare comparative with the marker of the native comparative of the region. This may be a Type IV Adverbial comparative, as in the case of Hakka and Southern Min dialects, or a plural classifier that serves as the marker in a Polarity comparative, as in Xianghua. Type VI, the topicalized comparative reverses the typical comparative word order for the comparee and the standard, placing the standard NP in topic position. This construction has to date only been identified for a handful of Wu and Hui dialects in Central Eastern China (Li Lan 2003). Type VII, the Polarity comparative, is formed with two conjoined clauses whose predicates contain antonyms. The Polarity type deserves more attention in future research to pinpoint its exact extent of use in Sinitic languages, as too does the Topic comparative.

More broadly speaking, however, in terms of linguistic areas, the two main types of comparative that divide China into the North versus the Centre and the South, are the Type I Compare comparative and the Type II Surpass comparative. Contrasting to this, the area of greatest variation appears to be along the central eastern coast where the Type VI Topic comparative is found mainly in certain Wu dialects of Zhejiang province, but also in some Hui dialects in Anhui province. A little further to the south, Type IV, the Adverbial Comparative, and Type V, the Hybrid Comparative are widespread in the Min dialects of Fujian province, and secondarily, in the case of Type V, in certain Hakka and Gan dialects as well. Type IV can be seen as a characteristic feature of Min dialects.

## 2.5. Synthesis

On the basis of earlier studies on typology and typo-geographical features, and the three constructions examined in this article, I would like to propose that there are at least five linguistic areas that can be discerned for Sinitic languages in China.

These are:

- (i) the Northern
- (ii) the Central Transitional,
- (iii) the Southwestern,
- (iv) the Far Southern and
- (v) the Southeastern.

This classification is not at all incompatible with the broad divisions put forward in earlier typological studies by Hashimoto and Norman, yet better accounts for the greater diversity and variation found in the south and the southeast of China.

### 2.5.1 Northern China

Northern China is constituted by just one large area unlike the South which has splintered into three. Nonetheless, it is complex in harbouring a non-conformist enclave in the form of the Shandong peninsula and another area in the Northwest of contact with Altaic languages (Peyraube forthcoming).

### 2.5.2 Northern Area

Not surprisingly, this new areal research on grammaticalization patterns and syntactic structures confirms that there is a distinct Northern area characterized by three key features which are the native use of TAKE verbs as the source of object markers, causative verbs as the source of agent markers in the passive and the use of the dependent-marked, Type I Compare comparatives with Bǐ 比. The core languages of this area largely comprise all the Northern Mandarin subgroups (Lanyin (Northwestern), Central Plains, Northern, Northeastern) and the Jin dialect group of Shanxi and Inner Mongolia. Hence, geographically it largely coincides with the area to the north of the Yangtze River corridor.

Furthermore, this coincides with the borderline for the use of the interrogative pronoun SHÉI 誰 ‘who’, identified in a study by Wang and Chappell (2012) of over 300 Chinese languages, where it is overwhelmingly preponderant in the six dialect subgroups of Mandarin located in this northern region, as well as in the Jin group. It also roughly coincides with the use of several features that were early remarked upon by Norman (1988) and used as his criteria for identification of Mandarin dialects. These are (i) tā 他 as the third person singular pronoun (Cao et al, 2008, Map 3), (ii) the general negative bù 不 (Cao et al, 2008, Map 28), the negative adverb méi 沒 used in past perfective contexts (Cao et al, 2008, Map 29), and (iii) the diminutive suffix -ér /ə/ 兒 (Cao et al, 2008, Map 52).

This notwithstanding, there is one enclave within the Northern area consisting of two Mandarin subgroups which do not consistently behave in a ‘Northern’ fashion: these are Jiaoliao and Jilu, both located in the eastern peninsula area of Shandong province. Jilu Mandarin is also spoken in parts of Hebei province while Jiaoliao extends to the Liaoning peninsula on the northern side of the Bó Hǎi 渤海 sea, the outcome of migration (see Map 2.1). Here we find the use of Type II Surpass comparatives is common, based on Qǐ 起 ‘arise’, while so too is the SUFFER passive with ZHUÓ 着, both features being equally characteristic of Southwestern Mandarin in the ‘deep’ Southwest (the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou).

We have suggested that the Shandong peninsula is a relic zone, manifesting features that reflect earlier periods in the development of Mandarin, where these syntactic changes have not yet reached. This fits in with the *Wellentheorie* or ‘wave model’ approach in which linguistic changes gradually move out from a central dialect or variety of language, for example, one with social prestige, and in this case, the language of the imperial court in China, to the more isolated, peripheral areas. This model was adopted in fact by Hashimoto (1988) to account for the distribution of agent markers of the passive in Sinitic languages.

### 2.5.3 Southern China

The southern half of China can be divided into three main linguistic areas: Southwestern, Far Southern and Southeastern areas. They do not linguistically pattern as a unified Southern area and need to be treated separately, albeit sharing a number

of features that set them apart from the Northern area. Each is next discussed in turn in geographical order from west to east.

### 2.5.3.1 Southwestern area

This area consists of the provinces of Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan but extends to parts of Hubei and also to western Hunan. In other words, it equates to the core zone of Southwestern Mandarin dialects. In a nutshell, the Southwestern China area makes use of Type II Surpass comparatives, SUFFER-passives formed with the markers ZHUÓ 着 and ÁI 挨 and a variety of object markers, based on mainly the TAKE verb BA 把, but also GIVE and HELP, the latter aligning it with the Central Transitional area, but just for this particular feature in our study.

The Southwestern area is a zone where Sinitic languages intermingle with Tibeto-Burman, Zhuang (Tai-Kadai) and Hmong and whose borders are shared with Tibet, Burma (Myanmar), Laos and Vietnam. We saw that it also shares the characteristic use of SUFFER-passives, derived from CONTACT class verbs, with Thai, Lao and Khmer, as well as the Type II Surpass comparatives.

### 2.5.3.2 Far Southern area

Linguistically speaking, Far Southern China is represented above all by the Yue dialect group whose heartland is in southern Guangdong province, overflowing into the Guangxi Autonomous Region, but also by Hakka languages concentrated in northeastern Guangdong and scattered across Guangxi. Finally, less central than either Yue or Hakka, the Pinghua group of Guangxi may be judiciously affiliated with the Far Southern area. Pinghua is sandwiched between Yue and Southwestern Mandarin languages, its geographical location being revealed in the resultant syntactic patterning.

This area represents first of all the use of the Type II Surpass Comparative *par excellence* and secondly, the use of GIVE-passives which it shares with Southeastern (see (iv) below). Far Southern stands out from the rest of Sinitic in the reduced incidence of the object-marking construction. This is complemented by a preference for the use of serial verb constructions where TAKE class verbs act as the first verb but have not (yet) grammaticalized into an object marker. Note, however, that certain Hakka dialects, close to or located in Fujian province, pattern with another area, the Southeastern, which includes Southern Min, due to their use of a comitative preposition for object marking constructions. One example of this would be the Meixian dialect of Hakka which uses *lau*<sup>11</sup> 搵 < ‘with’.<sup>23</sup>

Pinghua acts like a linguistic pivot or revolving door between the Far Southern and Southwestern areas, patterning sometimes like Southwestern and sometimes like Far Southern (to continue the metaphor, depending on where the door stops). For example, many dialects in this group use SUFFER-passives formed with ÁI 挨, as in Southwestern, while on the other hand, they disprefer the use of grammaticalized object-marking constructions, just as in Yue. Many more of the special typological features of Southern Pinghua are discussed in de Sousa (this volume) in relation to Standard Hong Kong Cantonese and the Guangxi dialects of Yue, not to overlook, importantly, the relation to Zhuang, a Tai-Kadai (or Kra-Dai) language which is the

<sup>23</sup> All these dialects may of course use the formal marker, JIANG 将, or even BĀ 把. As remarked upon earlier, this is a borrowing from Mandarin and does not represent the colloquial register of these dialects. Regarding Hakka, the same situation applies for Hakka dialects spoken in Taiwan, doubtlessly due to the fact that the communities are in contact with Taiwanese Southern Min.

major language in Guangxi. The Yue dialects share further features with Zhuang with respect to the extreme polyfunctionality of classifiers, the use of gender suffixes, a set of postverbal adverbs and *Verb-Theme-Recipient* (that is, DO-IO) as one of the main ditransitive word orders. Again, Pinghua patterns differently in these respects, showing its more marginal status as a member of this area.

We also noted in the body of this discussion that the Far Southern area patterns in a very similar way to the Southeast Asian linguistic zone for the use of both Type II Surpass comparatives and TAKE SVCs, but not in its passive structure, since Far Southern uses GIVE, a development which is rare for GIVE verbs in Southeast Asia.

### 2.5.3.3 Southeastern area

The Southeastern area is typified by the Min dialects of coastal Fujian province and Taiwan, stretching a little further north to encompass certain Southern Wu dialects from whose ancestral language, it is claimed by some scholars, they have evolved (You Rujie 1992). Min and Southern Wu thus present two very special groups of dialects that tend to show many conservative features.

This linguistic area represents a very special source of object markers based on comitative prepositions, such as *ka<sup>7</sup>~kang<sup>7</sup>* 共 which is quite generalized in Min, derived from an earlier verb meaning ‘to accompany’ (see Chappell et al 2011), and *tse<sup>7</sup>* 着, a comitative derived from the verbal meaning ‘stick together’ in the Shaoxing dialect of Southern Wu. The use of comitatives is not as widespread in Southern Wu, however, as the GIVE~HELP verbs (Chappell 2013).

This area latches onto both Far Southern and some parts of the Central Transitional area for the use of GIVE-passives. In fact, a swathe of coastal dialects use agent markers derived from different lexical verbs of giving, encompassing the area for Jianghuai Mandarin located further north in Jiangsu province, moving down through the Wu dialects in Zhejiang, to the Min dialects of Fujian, and finally to the Hakka and Yue dialects of Guangdong. As Table 2.4 showed above, the particular GIVE-verb usually identifies the dialect group: *p<sup>7</sup>* 拨 for Wu, *khit<sup>4</sup>* 乞 for most of the Min area, *hou<sup>7</sup>* 與 for Southern Min dialects in the Xiamen area and Taiwan, *pun<sup>7</sup>* 分 for Hakka and *pei<sup>2</sup>* 畀 for Yue.

For the comparative, we find that this area is originally a Type II Surpass area. At its northern end, Type II is being replaced by the Type I Compare from Mandarin, while in Fujian, for the Min dialects, the use of the Type IV Adverbial and Type V Hybridized strategies, alongside the Surpass comparative, is endemic. From historical documentation, however, we know that in addition to Type IV, the Type II Surpass comparative was also possible in earlier stages of Southern Min. The Adverbial Comparative presents an interesting variation on the Action schema for comparatives, being transitive in structure and semantics.

Min dialects represent the core of this linguistic area, repeatedly demonstrating original syntactic behavior that is not found elsewhere in Sinitic. For example, Wang Jian (this volume) has shown that Min dialects constitute a type on their own with respect to bare classifier phrases of the form CL-N. They do not permit this structure in any position of the clause, unlike the majority of Sinitic languages which allow the postverbal use at the minimum. S. Ngai (this volume) similarly observes that the numeral for ‘one’ SOK 蜀 is an exclusive Min characteristic, not seen elsewhere in Sinitic. In a study on experiential aspect markers as evidentials, Min dialects prove, once again, to form a group on their own due to their use of BAT 別 derived from a



verb meaning ‘to know’ whereas most other Sinitic languages use GUO 過 < ‘to cross, pass (through)’ (Chappell 2001c). The use of special interrogative particles in Min has also been observed in several studies on this topic (Zhu Dexi 1985, A. Yue-Hashimoto 1991, Zhang Min 2000), not to mention distinctive interrogative pronouns for WHO (Wang and Chappell 2012) based on the composite form WHAT+PERSON or WHICH+PERSON.

#### 2.5.4 Central China

We discuss the Central China Transitional Area last of all, albeit quite evidently out of any geographical order. This is simply because its highly mixed features only make sense in the light of the other four areas found in Northern and Southern China. As it lies between the North and the South, this linguistic area shows characteristics of those found on either side, yet also ones which are not at all predictable.

##### 2.5.4.1 Central China Transitional Area

It comes as no surprise to find that the typological features of the ‘buffer zone’ between the North and the South of China necessarily fluctuate where different dialect groups have come into contact over the millennia. This is the ultimate outcome, linguistically-speaking, of the continual migrations which have taken place in the direction from north to south, particularly during the first millennia AD and up to the time of the Song dynasty (960-1279) (see You 1992, Chappell 2001a on dialect history). A typical example (and here we are considering the geographical distribution for one feature at a time) is the Northern Wu dialects which make use of the TAKE source for object markers, while simultaneously patterning with the Southeastern area, when it comes to the source of agent markers in the passive, since they use GIVE. Put differently, they do not use the typical Northern source of a causative verb, or even the SUFFER-verb BÈI for the passive. In general, they also show the native use of Type II Surpass comparatives.

A further interesting example is the Jianghuai or Southern Mandarin subgroup, spoken mainly in the part of Jiangsu province, north of the Yangtze River, and so shares a frontier with the Wu dialect group. It contrasts greatly with the Mandarin subgroups located in the North of China: for object markers, it generally patterns like the Central Transitional area with GIVE~HELP verbs as the common source, while for agent markers in the passive, it patterns with the Type III GIVE ~ SUFFER area. Type I Compare comparatives are however the norm, as in the North.

The mixed patterning of languages in this intermediate zone is particularly clear for the case of agent markers of the passive where the greatest diversity and variation is evident for Hui, Gan, Xiang and Jianghuai Mandarin (Types III and IV, where causative, SUFFER verbs including BÈI, GIVE, TAKE and WAIT verbs intermingle). Hashimoto (1976) presaged the idea of a transitional area in Central China for Xiang, Gan and Southern Wu which was later formalized in the work of Norman (1988). He remarked that both Northern and Southern types can be found in this middle area of China. For example, gender affixes on animal terms are typically prefixes in the North and suffixes in the South while in this transitional area one and the same language may show both (cf. Wu Yunji 1995 on this topic in Xianghua).

In fact, the situation is more complex than believed, given that, first, sources found neither in the North, nor in the South, turn up in this central area, such as the use of TAKE and WAIT verbs as markers of passive constructions. Second, a variety of combinations of features can be found for the markers of the three construction types examined in the present article. That is, in this transitional area, it is not a simple case

of the pairing of features for construction types, one being a Northern type and the other, the corresponding Southern type of feature.

This kind of linguistic turbulence found in the Central Transitional area, with almost a new realignment for each combination of features, is responsible for the lack of any clearly defined characteristics. However, this is only to be expected where languages with different evolutionary pathways meet geographically, if not 'physically'. The languages situated at the centre of this turbulence are those belonging to Wu, Jianghuai Mandarin, Hui, Gan, Xiang and some of the Southwestern Mandarin subgroups (in geographical order from east to west) without overlooking co-territorial Hakka communities, a language group which is scattered over the southern extremes of this central zone in China.

## 2.6. Conclusion

This analysis has shown that there are at least four main sources for object markers found in the basic form of the differential object marking construction, six different sources for agent markers in the passive, as well as seven different structural types for the comparative construction of inequality, each possessing its own specific source of markers. Compared with the relevant Standard Mandarin constructions, the markedly contrasting, and in certain areas crosslinguistically atypical, semantic sources for the markers of differential object marking, passive and comparative constructions point to the importance of exploring the grammatical diversity of Sinitic languages in a more detailed and systematic way. This would unreservedly include the non-standard Mandarin dialect groups, for which data is similarly insufficient for these key areas. The findings of such research can in turn contribute to enriching our knowledge of how linguistic areas are set up within a language group such as Sinitic as well as add to the stock of grammaticalization pathways in the world's languages, and consequently a better understanding of diachronic change, if not the extent of variation possible.

In sum, much more work is needed to gather together and match up morphosyntactic features associated with grammatical structures and grammaticalization pathways to see if they correspond to the formation of true linguistic areas within China. Certainly, the five areas proposed here will need to be much more finely drawn, as the task of searching for a consistent matching of features progresses. In spite of such caveats, a broad overlapping can nevertheless be detected at this early stage, as shown, even though the borders for each feature do not coincide with any mathematical precision. In spite of this, the correspondence and overlapping of the geographical areas for key linguistic features, approximate as it may be at present, points to the existence of the five linguistic areas within China that cross-cut the traditional boundaries made on the basis of phonological and lexical criteria for Sinitic languages. This regrouping according to geographical areas has been defined by a specific set of syntactic features based on both structural types and grammaticalization pathways.

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