

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the glosses: ACC — accusative, FPL — feminine plural, M — masculine, MID — middle, MPOSR — masculine possessor, MSG — masculine singular, NOM — nominative, PL — plural, VBLZ — verbalizer.

## References

- Bechert, J. (1993) Definiteness and article systems. *EUROTYP Working Papers* 1 (4), September 1993.
- Croft, W. (2001) *Radical construction grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dik, S. (1997) *The theory of functional grammar. Part I: The structure of the clause. Part II: Complex constructions*. Ed. by Kees Hengeveld. Berlin: Mouton.
- Heine, B. (1997) *Possession: Cognitive sources, forces, and grammaticalization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Langacker, R. (1995) Possessives and Possessive Constructions. In J.R. Taylor and R.E. MacLaury (eds.) *Language and the cognitive construal of the world*. Berlin: Mouton. 51–79.
- Payne, D. and I. Barshi (eds.) (1999) *External possession*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Seiler, H. (1983) *Possession as an operational dimension of language*. (Language Universals Series, vol. 2.) Tübingen: Narr.
- Velázquez-Castillo, M. (1996) *The grammar of possession: Inalienability, incorporation and possessor ascension in Guarani*. Amsterdam: Benjamins.



**Hillary Chappell.** *Sinitic grammar: Synchronic and diachronic perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001. xxvii + 397 pp. (ISBN 0–19–829977-X)

**Reviewed by Bao Zhiming (National University of Singapore)**

This book is a collection of papers originally presented at the *First International Symposium on Synchronic and Diachronic Perspectives on the Grammar of Sinitic Languages*, which was organized jointly by La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne in 1996. There is a companion volume of papers in Chinese presented at the same symposium (Wu 1999). The present volume is organized into five thematic parts. The first part is a single chapter, written by Chappell, that provides a general introduction to the synchrony and diachrony of Chinese. The remaining four parts consist of three chapters each. They deal with comparative dialectology (Part II) and descriptions and analyses of select grammatical features of Sinitic antiquity (Part III), of modern Yue dialects (Part IV)

and of modern Min (Part V). Presumably, the inclusion of the Yue and Min dialects, but not the other ones, is simply an accident of the contributions which were first read at the conference. Of the twelve papers, three each are on the Yue and Southern Min, one on the Xiang, two on comparative dialectology, and three on ancient Chinese. Although the term ‘diachronic’ appears in the title of the volume, the papers are more concerned with synchronic description of aspects of Chinese grammar, present or past, than with the mechanism of historical linguistics.

Chappell’s introductory chapter is a concise synopsis of the history of Chinese and of Chinese dialects, which serves as a good background for the chapters to follow. Although the book is intended for a general linguistic audience, the contributions actually assume an advanced knowledge of general linguistics and of Chinese linguistics. Chappell’s dialect classification is a familiar one, which recognizes seven major dialect families: Mandarin, Xiang (Hunan), Gan (Jiangxi), Wu (Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang), Min (Fujian), Kejia (scattered in southern provinces), and Yue (Guangdong). In addition, three more families are introduced: Jin (mainly Shanxi), Hui (mainly Anhui), and Ping (Guangxi). The status of the last three is controversial, as Chappell acknowledges. These dialects are briefly sketched in terms of historical migration patterns. For example, the peopling of Fujian, where a plethora of Min dialects are spoken, started from the third century CE, mainly by immigrants from Zhejiang, a Wu region, and from Jiangxi, the Gan area. Their languages provide the historical basis for the subdivision within the modern Min family: Coastal Min, which includes the familiar Xiamen and Taiwanese, traces its origin to the language of the Zhejiang settlers, and Inland Min to the language of the Jiangxi settlers. The chapter also includes a brief discussion of the periodization of Chinese, based on Alan Peyraube’s work, and a summary of the twelve contributions.

Chapter 2, “The development of locative markers in the Changsha Xiang dialect,” by Yunji Wu, studies four locative markers in the spoken narrative of one native speaker. The markers are derived from lexical verbs, i.e. *tsai* ‘to reside’, *tau* ‘to arrive’, *te* ‘to get’ and *ta*, which has obscure lexical meaning. The term ‘locative’, as is used by Wu, refers to a noun phrase with location or place meanings (*tsai Hunan* ‘in Hunan’ and *tau Hengyang* ‘to Hengyang’). The properties of these forms, especially the first three, do not differ much from their counterparts in Mandarin. Wu claims that *tsai*, unlike *tau*, *te* and *ta*, is a loan from Mandarin. Prima facie, this claim is plausible, given the dominance of Beijing Mandarin in present-day China, but the evidence from the narrative

is not conclusive on this. It would be difficult to provide a developmental perspective on the four locative markers based on the narrative data of the present day Changsha dialect.

Chapter 3, by Chappell, the editor, is a study of how experiential aspect is marked in seven dialects, one each from the major dialect families. This is marked by post-verbal *guo* ‘cross’ in Mandarin or its cognate in all the dialects studied, except the Min dialects, which have an additional pre-verbal *bat*, glossed as ‘know, discriminate’. Though etymologically tenuous (see Li 1959, Yuan *et al.* 1989), this gloss is crucial for Chappell’s claim that *guo* and *bat* mark the evidential in Chinese, rather than the experiential. This is not just a terminological issue: for Chappell, the evidential is not an aspectual category, but a type of epistemic modality marked by de-verbals grammaticalized from lexical sources of knowing and perceiving. To further support the claim, Chappell cites *chang* ‘taste’ as marking the evidential in the fourth century BCE text *Mencius*. This needs to be defended, since the textual evidence from the *Mencius* does not readily support the claim. An obvious alternative is to treat *chang* ‘taste’ as homophonous with the adverb that marks the purported evidential modality. (The characters are different, but that does not automatically invalidate Chappell’s claim about *chang* ‘taste’.)

The contribution by Christine Lamarre closes Part II. Like Chappell, Lamarre approaches her topic, verb complement constructions (V-C and V-de-C), from a comparative perspective. Three categories of complement, i.e. potential, manner, and extent complements, are investigated in terms of how they are marked in the dialects. There are four types: all three are marked identically (Type I) or differently (Type IV), potential is marked differently from manner/extent (Type II), or extent differently from potential/manner (Type III). Logically there ought to be a fifth type, which marks manner as distinct from potential/extent, but this type is not addressed. Interestingly, the difference in marking does not coincide with the major dialect divisions. Type II, for example, includes both Mandarin dialects (though not Beijing Mandarin, which is Type I), and Wu and Xiang dialects.

Part III includes three chapters on aspects of Chinese historical linguistics: Redouane Djamouri (Chapter 6) on modals in oracle-bone inscriptions (c. 1400 BCE); Laurent Sagart (Chapter 5) on derivational morphology in Archaic Chinese (c. 1000 BCE), and Alain Peyraube (Chapter 7) on modals in pre-Qin Chinese (c. 500 BCE). Sagart starts with the position that Archaic Chinese is an inflectional language, and argues that *k-* and *-l-*, which occur in a small number of fossilized words in modern Chinese dialects, are modern “vestiges” of

derivational affixes in Archaic Chinese. The choice of Archaic Chinese is a judicious one: since the extant historical documents all show that Chinese has been an “isolating” language all along, evidence for derivational morphology is necessarily circumstantial. The *k-* and *-l-* fossils have no identifiable meaning in modern Chinese. Although this in itself need not be the decisive argument against the affixal interpretation of *k-* and *-l-* (witness *per-* in *perceive* and *permit* in English), the mildly skeptical reader will likely remain unconvinced. Prima facie, a phonological interpretation of the facts is more plausible. Those who are interested should read Sagart (1999), which is a fuller treatment of the topic, and Ting’s (2002) critique of Sagart’s work.

Djamouri describes the use of three modals and two negative particles found in the oracle-bone inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty (1700–1100 BCE). The oracular texts are fragmentary, which makes grammatical particles hard to interpret. For example, Djamouri argues that the modal *WEI* in *mian-WEI-nü* ‘childbirth-*WEI*-girl’ is an equative asserting identity between *mian* and *nü*. This interpretation is odd: in the example in question, as well as in other equatives, *WEI* may be better interpreted as focus, drawing attention to the following expression (Zhang 2001).

When compared with the other two articles in this section, Peyraube deals with a period which has left us a large body of literary texts, such as the *Mencius*, on the basis of which subtle semantic meanings of the modals can be determined. Peyraube shows that verb-like words, such as *ke* and *de*, are used in pre-Qin texts to express either deontic and/or epistemic meanings. In terms of frequency of use, there appears to be a continuum: the deontic use is the most frequent, the strong epistemic use is the least frequent, and “weak” epistemic uses fall between the two ends. This grammaticalization pattern is consistent with similar developments in other languages.

Part IV is devoted to the grammar of Guangzhou/Hong Kong Cantonese (a representative of the Yue). The first two chapters, by Hung-Nin Samuel Cheung and Anne O. Yue, discuss aspects of historical Cantonese grammar, and the last one, by Stephen Matthews and Virginia Yip, calls into question the notion of universal Chinese grammar. The historical documents on Cantonese date from the 19th century, and they provide convincing textual evidence on the evolution of one type of disjunctive question in Cantonese, the so-called A-not-A question, over the last two hundred years. Cheung classifies the A-not-A question into six types, and draws his data from twelve textbooks on Cantonese. Although the statistical profile presented in Table 8.1 (p. 195; read the fourth type as VP *mh-V* and the fifth type as V *mh-VP*) is limited by the textbook corpus

and should be taken with care, the fact that V *mh*-VP does not appear in textbooks written before the 1920s is significant. If the absence could be corroborated from other sources, it would indicate that the form is not used frequently enough to attract the attention of the textbook writers. Cheung demonstrates that this new form of A-not-A question won wide acceptance in the 1940s and 1950s.

The extant Cantonese materials that serve Cheung so well turn out to be of limited use to Yue, who tries to establish the historical origins of verb-complement resultatives in modern Cantonese (from the 19th century onwards). She cites historical texts — from the first century CE *Shi Ji* to the 6 century CE *Shi shuo xin yü* and the writings of the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE) philosopher Zhu Xi — to show that the modern resultatives do not emerge at the same time, and are therefore assigned to different temporal strata. Sinitic-internal typological significance of this sort of stratification is, however, not easy to establish, since the pre-Song texts cited are manifestly non-Cantonese and the same stratification would presumably apply to all modern dialect families. A more serious question needs to be raised: Is the modern syntactic stratification due to normal parent-child transmission, or to dialect contact? Since Cantonese begins to form during the Qin-Han period (see Part I), we can assume that the extant Qin-Han pattern is genetic. But the pattern first attested in *Zhu Zi Yü Lei*, by the Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi, is not obviously genetic, since eleventh century Cantonese, after a millennium of dialect differentiation, should be as different from Mandarin or Min that Zhu Xi might have spoken as its modern form is from modern Mandarin or Min. As Yue acknowledges, lack of historical Cantonese data makes much of this kind of work speculative.

Matthews and Yip's chapter challenges the notion of a universal Chinese grammar, i.e. a common core large enough to render differences among dialects trivial. This is a long entrenched notion in Chinese linguistics, and leads to the neglect of grammatical diversity among Chinese dialects, or Sinitic languages. Modern Cantonese has two relative clauses, one introduced by *ge*, which corresponds to *de* in Mandarin, and one without *ge*. The common analysis of the *ge*-less relative is to postulate an underlying *ge*, which is deleted. Matthews and Yip show that the deletion analysis runs into serious problems, and that the *ge*-less relative must be recognized as a basic relative type, not a derived one. The two relatives belong to two separate strata: the *ge* relative to the formal register, and the *ge*-less relative to the vernacular register. Matthews and Yip's notion of strata differs from that of Yue, for whom stratification relates to the result of uneven historical development.

The three chapters that form Part V are all concerned with Taiwanese

Southern Min. The phenomena, however, are pan-Southern Min. Chapter 11, by Feng-fu Tsao, discusses the semantic differences in reduplication between Mandarin and Southern Min. In both dialects, a verb may reduplicate to express a range of meaning associated with tentativeness: *look-look* ‘take a look’ typically implies that the action is undertaken on a trial basis, and in short duration. It turns out that Taiwanese Mandarin verbal reduplication may also express what Tsao calls ‘rapid completion.’ Sentences cited to illustrate this usage all contain two verbs, and the event expressed by the first verb, which is reduplicated, temporally precedes the event expressed by the second verb, which is not reduplicated. Clearly the rapid completion marks perfectivity. Interestingly, adjectives also reduplicate to indicate tentativeness.

The last two chapters, by Chinfu Lien and Ying-che Li, discuss aspects of historical Southern Min grammar, the former on the *wen-bai* or literary-colloquial readings of characters and the latter on prepositions in present-day Mandarin and Southern Min. Characters with dual *wen-bai* readings are a common phenomenon in Chinese dialects, especially the Min dialects. It is commonly assumed that the two readings represent two registers: the literary register and the colloquial register. Lien shuns this view, and instead attributes the two readings to two chronological strata, a notion that is invoked in Yue’s analysis of syntactic stratification of Cantonese resultatives. The 6th century appears to be the dividing line: Lien identifies the colloquial or “native” stratum with the pre-6th century Min, and the literary or “alien” stratum with the post-6th century Min. This identification is bound to be controversial. While the data discussed in the chapter amply demonstrate the literary-colloquial distinction, they do not offer compelling evidence for a chronological interpretation that points specifically to the 6th century. For example, the lexical items for ‘big’ and ‘small’ each have two readings, literary *tai* vs. colloquial *toa* and literary *siau* vs. colloquial *soe*. (The latter two do not belong to the same etymon.) In compounds, we have *tai-siau* ‘size’, but not \**tai-soe*. Although this sort of data supports the literary-colloquial distinction, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to claim that the literary stratum dates from the 6th century infusion of Chang’an-speaking migrants. It could be the modern manifestation of dialect-Mandarin ditaxia, to use Matthews and Yip’s notion of diglossia, that exists through the history of Min.

There are many differences in the prepositions of Mandarin and of Southern Min, as Ying-che Li shows. Two of these clearly stand out. The first is the etymological source of some common prepositions, such as the one that marks the passive — in Mandarin, *bei* is grammaticalized from the verb that means

‘suffer’, and in Southern Min, *ho* is derived from the verb that means ‘give’. The second difference is the number of prepositions. Compared with Southern Min, Mandarin has nearly twice as many prepositions. Since the functions prepositions perform are the same for both dialects, we expect that Mandarin has more prepositions for a given functional category, which is indeed the case. The passive, for example, can be expressed by *bei* ‘suffer’, *jiao* ‘let’, *rang* ‘let’, *gei* ‘give’, *ai* ‘suffer’, and *zao* ‘receive’; by comparison, the Southern Min counterpart is expressed by *ho* ‘give’ only. (The form is given as *hoo* on p. 342 and as *ho* in Table 13.1. These are actually the same preposition.)

Hilary Chappell must be congratulated for producing a superb thematic grouping of the papers whose diversity in topic is more characteristic of conference proceedings than an edited thematic volume. The phenomena covered in the book are not new, and the approach is more descriptive and “empirical” than theoretical, which is entirely appropriate for a volume intended for the general linguistic audience. The contributors are excellent scholars in their own areas, and their contributions provide a good opportunity for the reader to gain some insight into current concerns in Chinese linguistics.

## References

- Li, Y.-M. (1959) *Chaozhou fangyan (The dialect of Chaozhou)*. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju.
- Sagart, L. (1999) *The roots of Old Chinese*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Ting, P.-H. (2002) Morphology in Archaic Chinese. *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 30:194–210.
- Yuan, J.-H. et al. (1989) *Hanyu fangyan gaiyao (An outline of Chinese dialects)*. Beijing: Wenzhi Gaige Chubanshe.
- Wu, Y.-J. (ed.) (1999) *Hanyu fangyan gongshi yu lish yufa yantao lunwenji (Synchronic and diachronic perspectives on the grammar of Sinitic languages)*. Guangzhou: Jinan Daxue Chubanshe.
- Zhang, Y.-J. (2001) *Jiaguwen yufaxue (A grammar of the oracle-bone inscriptions)*. Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe.



**William Croft.** *Explaining language change: An evolutionary approach*. London: Longman 2000. xv + 287 pp. (ISBN 0–582–35677–6)

**Reviewed by Umberto Ansaldo (National University of Singapore)**

The first time I read William Croft’s *Explaining Language Change*, I was most positively impressed by a flow of fresh concepts and revisiting of old ones that