

## A Grammatical description of Xuwen : A colloquial dialect of Lei-zhou Peninsula (Part I)

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### Résumé

Les auteurs présentent une description synchronique de la phonologie et de la syntaxe d'un dialecte chinois parlé dans la péninsule de Lei-zhou et qui représente le résultat du mélange d'un dialecte Min et d'un dialecte Yue. Le système phonologique de ce dialecte est comparé avec le système du chinois ancien.

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charles li & sandra thompson

## A GRAMMATICAL DESCRIPTION OF XUWEN :

## A COLLOQUIAL DIALECT OF LEI-ZHOU PE-

## NINSULA<sup>(●)</sup>(part I)

### RESUME

*Les auteurs présentent une description synchronique de la phonologie et de la syntaxe d'un dialecte chinois parlé dans la péninsule de Lei-zhou et qui représente le résultat du mélange d'un dialecte Min et d'un dialecte Yue. Le système phonologique de ce dialecte est comparé avec le système du chinois ancien.*

### 0. INTRODUCTION

The data presented in this report on the dialect of Xúwén county (徐聞縣) of Lei-zhou peninsula are elicited from Mrs Deng Yongni (鄧詠霓) during the Winter of 1981 in Hong Kong. Mrs Deng left Xúwén county with her family in the 1960's and immigrated to Hong Kong where standard Cantonese is spoken. However, she continued to speak her native dialect of Xúwén county at home with her family members. The contact language in our data elicitation was standard Cantonese.

This first section of this paper, Section I, presents a synchronic description of the phonological and grammatical system of Xúwén dialect. The second section, Section II, contrasts the phonological system of Xúwén dialect with that of

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the Ancient Chinese. The third section, Section III, discusses the classification of Xúwén dialect as a member of the *Min-nan* group within the Chinese language family. A short lexicon is included in the Appendix.

## I. SYNCHRONIC DESCRIPTION

### I.1. Phonology

Since our dialect consultant is uneducated, we made no attempt to record literary readings of characters. Our data are exclusively colloquial. The following characteristics of the phonological system of Xúwén dialect are worth noting :

- (1) There is no tone sandhi phenomenon.
- (2) The three-way contrasts based on place of articulation exist for syllable-final nasals and syllable-final stops :  
[-m], [-n], [-ŋ], [-p], [-t], [-k].
- (3) The aspiration contrast is pervasive for syllable-initial stops. Aspirated affricates exist, but are rare.
- (4) There is only one voiced syllable-initial true consonant : the voiced labial-dental fricative, [v-], which varies freely with the voiced bilabial fricative [β-] and the geminate [vw-]. In our transcription the symbol /v/ is used.

#### I.1.1. Initials

	labial	alveolar	palatal	velar	glottal
stop	/p/	/t/		/k/	
	/p <sup>h</sup> /	/t <sup>h</sup> /		/k <sup>h</sup> /	
fricative	/v/	/s/	/ɸ/		/h/
affricate		/ts/	/tɸ/		
		/ts <sup>h</sup> /	/tɸ <sup>h</sup> /		
nasal	/m/	/n/		/ŋ/	
lateral		/l/			

The following examples illustrate the initials (See Section I.1.3. for tone marking conventions) :

/p/	冰	/pɛŋ/	'ice'
/p <sup>h</sup> /	蜂	/p <sup>h</sup> áŋ/	'bee'
/t/	洗	/tòɪ/	'wash'
/t <sup>h</sup> /	腿	/t <sup>h</sup> uì/	'leg'

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/k/	公	/k <sup>1</sup> oŋ/	'male (animal)'
/k <sup>h</sup> /	開	/k <sup>h</sup> ui/	'open'
/v/	煤	/vɛ̃/	'coal'
/s/	千	/sai/	'thousand'
/ɕ/	深	/ɕim/	'deep'
/h/	兄	/hia/	'elder brother'
/ts/	書	/tsu/	'book'
/ts <sup>h</sup> /	桌	/ts <sup>h</sup> ɔ/	'table'
/tɕ/	錢	/tɕi/	'money'
/tɕ <sup>h</sup> /	淺	/tɕ <sup>h</sup> iɛŋ/	'shallow'
/m/	毛	/mɔ/	'hair (of body or animal)'
/n/	人	/nāŋ/	'human'
/ŋ/	我鳥	/ŋɔ/	'goose'
/l/	涼	/liɔ/	'cold'
/ø/	伊	/i/	's/he'

I.1.2. *Finals*

/i/	/ɛ/	/æ/	/a/	/u/	/o/	/ɔ/
	/iɛ/		/ia/	/iu/		/io/
	/uɛ/		/ua/			
			/ai/	/ui/	/oi/	/ɔi/
	/ɛu/		/au/			
			/iau/			
			/uai/			
/im/			/am/			
			/iam/			
/in/	/iɛn/					
/iŋ/	/ɛŋ/		/aŋ/	/uŋ/	/oŋ/	
	/iɛŋ/		/iaŋ/		/ioŋ/	
			/uaŋ/			
/ip/			/ap/			
/it/						
/ik/	/iɛk/		/ak/		/ioŋ/	
			/iat/			

The vowel /i/, is lowered to /I/ before a consonant. When the vowel /i/ is preceded by the zero-initial, an on-glide [j] may or may not occur. For some lexical items such as 'one' /jit/, the on-glide [j] is always present. For other lexical items such as 伊 's/he' /i/, the on-glide [j] occurs very weakly if it occurs at all. The vowel /ə/ occurs only when the vowel /a/ is destressed under neutral tone. Thus /iāt/ 'one' becomes /iēt/ when destressed and under neutral tone. For some words, the velar or alveolar nasal in the final may be dropped in normal speech leaving the vowel strongly nasalized, e.g. 蒼蠅 'fly' /hèu tīŋ/ ~ /hèutĩ/, 早晨 'morning' /tsà tiēn/ ~ /tsà tiẽ/. There is, however, no systematic dropping of final nasals.

The following examples illustrate the finals :

/i/	天	/thi/	'day'
/ɛ/	皮	/pē/	'skin'
/æ/	家	/kæ/	'home, family'
/a/	三	/tā/	'three'
/u/	牛	/vū/	'cattle'
/o/	厝	/só/	'house'
/ɔ/	鵞	/ŋɔ/	'goose'
/iɛ/		/tú-iɛ/	'here'
/ia/	兄	/hiā/	'elder brother'
/iu/	幼	/iú/	'child-like'
/io/	羊	/iɔ/	'sheep'
/uɛ/	花	/huɛ/	'flower'
/ua/	歡	/huā/	'happy'
/ai/	海	/hài/	'sea'
/ui/	卵	/nùi/	'egg'
/oi/	雪	/tōi/	'snow'
/ɔi/	洗	/tòi/	'wash'
/ɛu/		/hɛu/	'rain'
/au/	狗	/kâu/	'dog'
/iau/	貓	/niāu/	'cat'
/uai/	壞	/huài/	'bad'
/im/	飲	/im/	'drink'
/am/	探	/t <sup>h</sup> am/	'visit'

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/in/	眩	/hĩn/	'dizzy'
/iŋ/	今	/kiŋ/	'today'
/ɛŋ/	冰	/pɛŋ/	'ice'
/aŋ/	蚊	/māŋ/	'mosquito'
/uŋ/	吞	/tʰuŋ/	'swallow'
/oŋ/	公	/kʰoŋ/	'male (animal)'
/iɛn/	鍊	/liɛn/	'chain'
/iam/	喊	/hiām/	'yell'
/iaŋ/	鐘	/tɕiāŋ/	'clock'
/ioŋ/	容易	/iōŋ i/	'easy'
/iɛŋ/	淺	/tɕʰiɛŋ/	'shallow'
/uaŋ/	風	/huāŋ/	'wind'
/ip/	肉	/hĩp/	'meat'
/ap/	盒	/hāp/	'box'
/it/	七	/pit/	'seven'
/ik/	直	/tĩk/	'straight'
/ak/	六	/lāk/	'six'
/iok/	音樂	/im iōk/	'music'
/iɛk/	侄	/tɕiɛk/	'nephew'
/iat/*	一	/iāt/	'one'

\* The word 'one' has two pronunciations : /iāt/ and /it/. The latter pronunciation occurs only in the context where 'one'-occurs as a final digit of a number as in 'eleven' : /tsāp it/, 'seventy one' literally 'seven-ten-one' /ɕit tsāp it/.

### I.1.3. Tones

Xuwen has five open-syllable tones and two closed syllable tones.

Open		Closed	
55	┐	24	┐
33	┐	5	┐
11	┐	42	┐
		1	┐

The low level tone has a low falling 21 variant in phrase-final position. No systematic tone sandhi was found. A few

words, however, display free variations between two tones, e.g. 中 'middle' /tsong/ ~ /tsón/ ; 香 'fragrant' /hɛáŋ/ ~ /hɛaŋ/ ; 頭 'head' /t<sup>h</sup>āu/ ~ /t<sup>h</sup>au/ ; 老 'old' /lāu/ ~ /lāu/.

The tone marking conventions used in this paper are the following :

- a. High level tones are marked with a macron high above the main vowel, e.g. 鴨 'duck' /a/.
- b. Low-level tones are marked with a macron immediately above the main vowel, e.g. 蛇 'snake' /tsuā/.
- c. Mid-level tones are indicated by a short vertical line above the main vowel, e.g. 三 'three' /tá/.
- d. Rising and falling tones are iconically marked with acute and grave accents, e.g. 好 'good' /hò/ ; 四 'four' /tí/.
- e. Neutral tone is unmarked.

#### *I.1.4. General observation of Xúwén finals and tones*

(a) Regarding nasals in the finals, we notice that

- (i) with the exception of the final /iɛŋ/, /n/ occurs only after high vowels.
- (ii) /m/ only occurs after non-back peripheral vowels, /i/ and /a/.
- (iii) /ŋ/ does not occur after low-mid front or back vowels ; i.e. the distinctions between /ɛ/ and /æ/, /o/ and /ɔ/ are neutralized before -/ŋ/ in favor of the higher vowels /ɛ/ and /o/.

(b) Most of the finals containing three segments have /a/ as their nucleus. The four finals containing three segments that do not have /a/ as their nucleus are :

/iɛŋ/	/ioŋ/
/iɛk/	/iok/

All four finals listed above have initial /i/ and a final velar consonant. The only exception is /iɛŋ/.

(c) The vowel /a/ does not occur before alveolars except the three-segment final /iat/, i.e. there is no /an/ or /at/. /a/ occurs freely before labials and velars as in /ap/, /ak/, /am/, /aŋ/.

(d) Stops do not occur after back vowels. The only exception is /iok/ of which only one morpheme was elicited.

(e) /æ/ only occurs independently as a final.

(f) For checked syllables, i.e. syllables ending in unre-

leased stops [p], [t], [k], there is only a two-way tonal contrast : high vs. low.

## I.2. Grammar

Most of the grammatical structures of Xúwén are identical with those of Mandarin. This fact does not seem to be an artifact of the elicitation situation, since Mrs Deng does not know Mandarin, and all the elicitation sessions were conducted in standard Cantonese. For instance, like Mandarin, the dialect has no case markers, inflectional morphology or concordance systems ; it is an isolating language with verb-medial word order ; it employs serial-verb constructions and parataxis as the most prevalent form of complex sentences, where the syntactic and semantic relations between predicates are unmarked and the only principle showing the relations between noun phrases and predicates is that the verb normally occurs between the subject and the object (See Li and Thompson 1978). The following two complex sentences illustrate parataxis and serial verb constructions in Xúwén.

- (1)    <sup>1</sup>                    kò và vò hò  
          3rd sg. say I not good  
          S/he said I was not good.

- (2)    và khau <sup>1</sup>                    tqia muē  
          I depend on 3rd sg. eat food  
          I depend on him/her for my livelihood.

The Xúwén extent construction is another sentence type that is structurally identical with its Mandarin counterpart.  
e.g.

- (3)    <sup>1</sup>          t<sup>h</sup>āk-tsū   t<sup>h</sup>āk   tīt hò   khué   (Xúwén)  
          3rd sg. study-book study NOM very quick  
  
          tā       dú-shū       dú       de hěn kuài   (Mandarin)  
          3rd sg. study-book study NOM very quick  
  
          S/he studies very quickly.

Xúwén, like most Southern Chinese dialects, does not have the ba- construction which is preferred in Mandarin when the patient noun phrase is definite and the verb is a resultative compound. Resultative compounds, however, do occur in Xuwen, e.g. tòi-t<sup>h</sup>æ 'wash-clean', tòi-tīt-t<sup>h</sup>æ 'wash-can-clean = can be cleaned by washing', tòi-v3-t<sup>h</sup>æ 'wash-not-clean = cannot be cleaned by washing'. As the examples show, Xúwén resultative compounds take the potential infix as their Mandarin counterparts do.

Xúwén noun phrase structures are by and large identical with those of Mandarin (see Li and Thompson, 1981). The fundamental principle is that the classifier phrase, the measure phrase,



the associative phrase and the modifying phrase precede the head noun (see Li and Thompson, 1981, Chapter 4), although there is an exception which characterizes not Xúwén per se but southern Chinese dialects in general. We begin with the classifier phrase. Like all Chinese dialects, Xúwén has its set of classifiers, e.g.

- (4) a. iāt kai nāŋ  
one classifier person  
one person
- b. iāt tsə só  
one classifier house  
one house
- c. iāt pak ɕiō  
one classifier wall  
one wall
- d. tā tiō yì  
three classifier chair  
three chairs
- e. iāt tiāu hū  
one classifier fish  
one fish
- f. iāt ki ɕiū  
one classifier tree  
one tree
- g. iāt p<sup>h</sup>au hué  
one classifier flower  
one flower
- h. iāt pə tó  
one classifier knife  
one knife
- i. iāt tuí muē  
one classifier meal  
one meal
- j. iá há puì tsū  
this/that classifier book  
this/that book

The constituent order of the classifier phrase, which always precedes the head noun, shown by the examples of (4) is the standard one in all Chinese dialects :

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Number} \\ \text{Quantifier} \\ \text{Demonstrative} + (\text{Number/Quantifier}) \end{array} \right\} + \text{Classifier}$$

The general classifier in Xúwén, equivalent to ge in Mandarin, is kai, which is used with humans, animals, head, ear, suitcase, etc.

The measure phrase has identical structure with the classifier phrase. The only difference is that there where a classifier occurs in a classifier phrase, a measure word occurs in a measure phrase, e.g.

- (5) iāt tsun tɕiù  
one bottle wine  
one bottle of wine

The Xúwén genitive particle in associative phrases is /kai/ which may be omitted in speech. Again, the constituent order of the Xúwén genitive phrase is identical with that of all Chinese dialects, e.g.

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- (6) a. í (kai) tsū  
3rd sg. GEN book  
her/his book

- b. và kái (t<sup>h</sup>au)  
I GEN head

Mrs Deng offered a genitive particle in literary usage, /tít/, which is cognate with the Mandarin genitive particle, de. But it is not used in the colloquial language.

A modifying phrase occurring before a head noun can be either a relative clause or an attributive adjective. We will discuss Xúwén relative clauses in detail in Section I.2.6. Our brief sketch here is restricted to attributive adjectives, e.g.

- (7) a. hò nāŋ  
good person  
good person  
b. huài nāng  
bad person  
bad person  
c. tsò più  
left hand  
left hand

As mentioned earlier, Xúwén shares a feature with most of the Southern Chinese dialects by placing the attributive adjective 'male'/'female' after rather than before a noun denoting an animal, e.g.

- (8) a. kàu kóng  
dog male  
male dog  
b. kàu vò  
dog female  
female dog  
c. và kóng  
horse male  
stallion  
d. và vò  
horse female  
mare

Hashimoto (1975) suggested that this reverse constituent order for male and female animals pointed to the influence of South-east Asian languages on Southern Chinese dialects. We should point out that in Xúwén, as it is in most Southern Chinese dialects, the words for 'male human' and 'female human' have the prevalent word order of modifier preceding the modified :

- (9) a. nī kōŋ nāŋ  
           maīe human  
           man  
       b. nì nāŋ  
           female human  
           woman

The pronominal system of Xúwén parallels that of Mandarin :

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person
singular	và	lù	í ~ í
plural	vànaŋ	lùnaŋ	inaŋ ~ ínaŋ

We have sketched some of the basic grammatical features of Xúwén that are similar to or identical with Mandarin and most Chinese dialects. In the following we will discuss in detail the grammatical characteristics of Xuwen that vary among Chinese dialects.

#### I.2.1. Negation

Xúwén has two negative morphemes : /vō/ and /mīŋ/. /vō/, functionally parallel to the Mandarin negative bù, is the standard negative particle used in most constructions. /mīŋ/ is used for negating the existential verb /ù/ 'have/exist' and the completion of an action. In the following examples we will provide negative sentences with different types of verb phrases to illustrate the use of /vō/ :

##### *Adjectival verb phrase*

- (10) và vō tiō  
       I NEG comfortable  
       I'm not well.

##### *Copula verb phrase*

- (11) í vō ti zōŋkōk nāŋ  
       3rd sg. NEG be China person  
       S/he is not Chinese.

##### *Transitive verb phrase*

- (12) và vō tpiā muē  
       I NEG eat food  
       I am not eating.
- (13) và vō tsóní í  
       I NEG like 3rd sg.  
       I don't like him/her.

*Ditransitive verb phrase*

- (14) và v̄ khi i iāt puì tsū  
I NEG give 3rd sg. one classifier book  
I won't give him a book.

/v̄/ also serves as the negative infix in resultative verb compounds to indicate negative potentiality :

- (15) iā tiāu tā tōi v̄ th̄æ  
this classifier cloth wash NEG clean  
This clothing, (we) cannot wash it clean.

In addition, /v̄/ is used in the imperative and the comparative construction :

- (16) v̄ th̄aŋ  
NEG move  
Don't move !
- (17) và v̄ i h̄  
I NEG 3rd sg. good  
I'm not as good as s/he is.

Finally, /v̄/ can be used to deny a past event as in (18) :

- (18) và tsamui v̄ t̄ia muē  
I yesterday NEG eat food  
I didn't eat yesterday.

The other Xuwen negative particle, /m̄/, is roughly equivalent to Mandarin *méi*. It negates the completion of an event as illustrated in (19) and it negates the verb /u/ 'exist/have' as shown in (20).

- (19) và m̄ t̄ia muē  
I NEG eat food  
I haven't eaten.
- (20) và m̄ u t̄i  
I NEG have money  
I don't have money.

*I.2.2. Indirect objects and benefactives*

If a verb denotes an action and takes both a direct object and an indirect object, the direct object generally represents what is being transferred as a result of the action, and the indirect object denotes who is being affected by the action. An important characteristic of the indirect object is that it is usually either an animate noun denoting a human being or an animal, or an institution such as a museum. When both the direct object and the indirect object follow the verb, as they

usually do in Chinese dialects (unless they are topicalized), the order in which they occur often varies from dialect to dialect. In Xúwén there are two variant orders. The first one places the indirect object before the direct object as shown by (21) :

- (21) và k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> i iāt puì tsū  
 I give 3rd sg. one classifier book  
 I gave him/her a book.

The second constituent order has the direct object before the indirect object. In this case, the indirect object is marked by the co-verb k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> which is homophonous with and derived from the verb k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> 'give'. (22) provides an illustration :

- (22) và k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> iāt puì tsū k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> i  
 I give one classifier book to 3rd sg.

The pattern illustrated by sentence (22) is preferred by our consultant. (23) is another example :

- (23) và k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub>-lò tɕī k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> i  
 I give-ASP money to 3rd sg.  
 I gave money to him/her.

One verb of giving /tán/ 'give' requires the indirect object be marked by k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> regardless of the word order as shown in (24) :

- (24) a. và tán k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> i iāt kai vū  
 I give to 3rd sg. one classifier cow  
 I gave him/her a cow.  
 b. và tán iāt kai vū k<sup>h</sup><sub>i</sub> i  
 I give one classifier cow to 3rd sg.  
 I gave a cow to him/her.

A benefactive noun phrase in a sentence typically refers to the one indirectly affected by the activity signalled by the verb of the sentence (see Li and Thompson, 1981, Chapter 10). In Xúwén the benefactive noun phrase is marked by the co-verb /kaŋ/. Like the Mandarin benefactive noun phrase, the Xúwén benefactive noun phrase precedes the verb of the sentence, e.g. :

- (25) và kaŋ lù vòì nò kai vū  
 I BENEf you buy two classifier cow  
 I bought two cows for you

### 1.2.3. Locative phrases

The locative phrase in Xúwén consists of a locative particle /tu/ preceding a noun phrase. It may either precede or follow the verb, e.g.

- (26) a.  $\overset{1}{i}$              $\overset{1}{t\dot{u}}$   $\overset{1}{i\ddot{e}}$      $t^{hi}\dot{a}u-v\dot{u}$   
           3rd sg. LOC here dance  
           S/he is dancing here.
- b.  $\overset{1}{i}$              $t^{hi}\dot{a}u-v\dot{u}$   $\overset{1}{t\dot{u}}$   $\overset{1}{i\ddot{e}}$   
           3rd sg. dance        LOC here  
           S/he is dancing here.
- (27) a.  $\overset{1}{i}$              $\overset{1}{t\dot{u}}$   $\overset{1}{i\ddot{e}}$      $k^{hi}\dot{a}$   
           3rd sg. LOC here live  
           S/he lives here.
- b.  $\overset{1}{i}$              $k^{hi}\dot{a}$   $\overset{1}{t\dot{u}}$   $\overset{1}{i\ddot{e}}$   
           3rd sg. live LOC here  
           S/he lives here.

#### I.2.4. Aspect

Xúwén has three aspect markers : /lò/ which signals both perfective and durative aspect, /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ which signals the perfective aspect, and /kué/ which signals the experiential aspect. Sentence (28) shows the use of /lò/ as a marker of perfectivity :

- (28) và k<sup>h</sup>i-lò    tɕī    k<sup>h</sup>i     $\overset{1}{i}$   
       I give-ASP money to        3rd sg.  
       I gave the money to him/her.

The other perfective aspect marker, /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ is homophonous with and probably derived from the verb /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ 'go'. In (29), /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ serves as the main verb with the meaning 'go'.

- (29)  $\overset{1}{i}$              $\overset{1}{k^{h\acute{u}}}$      $\overset{1}{li\dot{a}}$      $\overset{1}{s\ddot{a}-ku\ddot{e}}$   
       3rd sg. go take fruit  
       S/he is going (somewhere) to get fruit.

/k<sup>h</sup>ú/ and /lò/ appear to be interchangeable in our data ; if there are semantic differences between them, we have not been able to ferret them out. (30) - (33) are several examples with /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ and /lò/, the one volunteered first appears above the one volunteered second.

- (30) và k<sup>h</sup>uī-k<sup>h</sup>ú    muī    lɔ  
       I open ASP door sentence particle  
       I opened the door.

- (31) và tɕia- $\left\{ \begin{smallmatrix} l\ddot{o} \\ k^{h\acute{u}} \end{smallmatrix} \right\}$     muē    lɔ  
       I eat-ASP            food sentence particle  
       I ate

- (32) kiā-k<sup>h</sup>ú    iāt-kai            tɕiaŋt<sup>h</sup>āu  
       walk-ASP one-classifier hour  
       (I) walked an hour.

- (33) i<sup>1</sup>            tui-<sup>{k<sup>h</sup>u}</sup>lò            sú            lɔ  
 3rd sg. return-ASP house sentence particle  
 S/he returned home.

Sometimes perfectivity is not expressed by any aspect marker. The following three sentences were elicited from Mrs Deng with Cantonese sentences containing the perfective aspect marker which was clearly articulated and repeated.

- (34) i<sup>1</sup>            k<sup>h</sup>i<sup>-</sup>            và p<sup>h</sup>a<sup>-</sup>            iāt tɿŋ  
 3rd sg. passive I hit one time  
 marker  
 S/he was given a beating by me.
- (35) và tsamui<sup>1</sup>            t<sup>h</sup>ai<sup>-</sup>            p<sup>-</sup>oi            kai            k<sup>1</sup>oi  
 I yesterday kill eight classifier chicken  
 I killed eight chickens yesterday.
- (36) và v<sup>1</sup>oi            n<sup>-</sup>o            tiāu            ta<sup>1</sup>            k<sup>h</sup>i<sup>-</sup>            i<sup>1</sup>  
 I buy two classifier clothes give 3rd sg.  
 I bought him two outfits.

/kué/ marks the experiential aspect. It is equivalent to the Mandarin experiential marker guò. (37) provides an illustration of this aspect marker :

- (37) a. lù            t<sup>1</sup>ɕia-kué            p<sup>h</sup>iŋkuè            miŋ a  
 you eat-ASP apple NEG sentence particle  
 Have you ever eaten apples ?
- b. và t<sup>1</sup>ɕia-kué  
 I eat-ASP  
 I have

In the following two sentences, /kué/ was offered as a non-experiential perfective aspect marker, and /k<sup>h</sup>u/ was furthermore claimed to be equally appropriate :

- (38) và tsamui<sup>1</sup>            t<sup>1</sup>ɕia-<sup>{kué}</sup><sup>{k<sup>h</sup>u}</sup>            p<sup>h</sup>iŋkuè            lɔ  
 I yesterday eat-ASP apple sentence particle  
 I ate an apple yesterday.
- (39) và t<sup>1</sup>oi-<sup>{kué}</sup><sup>{k<sup>h</sup>u}</sup>            ta<sup>1</sup>            lɔ  
 I wash-ASP clothes sentence particle  
 I washed the clothes.

/lò/ alternating with unstressed /lɔ/ is shown functioning as a durative aspect marker in the following examples :

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(40) và hīnā t̚sia-lɔ̄ muē  
I now eat-ASP food  
I'm eating now.

(41) và t̚sia-lɔ̄ muē ɔ̄ tsū  
I eat-ASP food read book  
I read while eating.

(42) và t̚ɕi-lɔ̄ ta  
I wash-ASP clothes  
I'm washing clothes.

(42) is ambiguous because /lɔ̄/ may either serve as the perfective aspect marker or the durative aspect marker.

A literary variant of the durative aspect marker /lɔ̄/  
/lɔ̄/ is /k̚iŋ/ :

(43) và k̚hī-<sup>{k̚iŋ}</sup>lɔ̄ t̚ɕī k̚hī i  
I give-ASP money to 3rd sg.  
I'm giving money to him.

(44) và t̚hāk-<sup>{k̚iŋ}</sup>lɔ̄ tsū  
I study-ASP book  
I'm studying.

To sum up our presentation of the aspect markers, we observe that the use of aspect in Xúwén is less than perfectly consistent. Perfective aspect sometimes may be unmarked, while the experiential aspect marker may also serve to indicate perfectivity. These irregular phenomena suggest that the aspectual system in Mrs Deng's dialect is undergoing diachronic change.

#### I.2.5. Questions

Like Mandarin, Xúwén employs both a question particle and the A-not-A construction to form yes-no questions. Question-word questions have the same structure as declarative sentences, a fact shared by all Chinese dialects. Both the A-not-A question and question-word question may be marked by the sentence-final particle, /a/, which has the same effect of softening the interrogative force as the Mandarin sentence-final particle a/ya. (See Li and Thompson, 1981, Chapter 7) (45) is an example of a question-word question with the optional sentence-final particle /a/.

(45) lù k̚hú tá (a) ?  
you go where sentence particle  
Where are you going ?



The question particle in Xúwén, surprisingly, is identical with the Mandarin question particle ma, e.g.

- (46) lù tì tsoŋkək nāŋ ma ?  
 you be China person Q  
 Are you a Chinese ?

- (47) lù t<sup>h</sup>āk tsū ma ?  
 you study book Q  
 Are you studying ?

A-not-A questions in Xúwén are different from their Mandarin counterparts in that a Xúwén disyllabic verb may be split(1), with the first syllable serving as the "A" element. The splitting of disyllabic verbs in A-not-A questions is common among Southern Chinese dialects. For example, /tsoŋí/ 'like' is a disyllabic verb. In the A-not-A question, (48), this disyllabic verb is split :

- (48) lù tsoŋ-vō tsoŋí í ?  
 you like not like 3rd sg.  
 Do you like him/her ?

(49) is another example of an A-not-A question :

- (49) lù kíŋīt k<sup>h</sup>uī vō k<sup>h</sup>uī muī ?  
 you today open not open door  
 Are you opening (your shop) today ?

In A-not-A questions the behavior of the negative particle /míŋ/, which denies completion, is exactly the same as that of its Mandarin counterpart méi(you) . (See Li and Thompson, 1981, 12.4 and 18.3). We will illustrate the use of /míŋ/ in A-not-A questions with an affirmative sentence containing the perfective aspect marker /k<sup>h</sup>ú/ or /lō/ :

- (50) í k<sup>h</sup>uī- { k<sup>h</sup>ú } muī  
 3rd sg. open-ASP door  
 S/he opened the door.

The negative counterpart of (50) is one with the negative particle /míŋ/, which denies completion :

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(1) Depending of the Mandarin dialect of a speaker, splitting a disyllabic verb in an A-not-A question may or may not be acceptable. The old-fashioned Beijing speakers tend to reject the splitting of the disyllabic verb.

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- (51) i miŋ khuī muī  
3rd sg. NEG open door  
S/he didn't open the door.

Combining (50) and (51), we obtain the A-not-A question :

- (52) i khuī-<sup>{khú}</sup>lō muī miŋ (a)  
3rd sg. open-ASP door NEG (sentence particle)  
Did s/he open the door ?

I.2.6. Nominalizations and relative clauses

The nominalizing particle is /kāi/ which also occurs in the genitive phrase (see Section I.2.). It can be reduced to [ɛ] or [æ] in normal-speed speech where the particle is typically destressed. Like the Mandarin nominalizing particle *de*, /kāi/ occurs at the end of the nominalized sentence or verb phrase. (53) - (55) are some examples.

- (53) vōi kōi nui kai  
sell chicken egg NOM  
The ones who sell eggs.
- (54) và ti muikōk lāi kai  
1st sg. be America comme NOM  
I am a person from America.
- (55) và phīŋiù ti vōi kōi nui kai  
1st sg. friend (be) sell chicken egg NOM  
My friend is an egg seller.

As the case in all Chinese dialects, Xuwen nominalizations function as relative clauses when they modify a following noun phrase, e.g.

- (56) và tsoŋí vōi kōi nui kai nāŋ  
1st sg. like sell chicken egg NOM person  
I like the person who sells eggs.
- (57) và kaŋ lù vōi kai vū hò tua  
1st sg. BENEF 2nd sg. buy NOM cow very big  
The cow I bought for you is very big.

Thus the relative clause structure may be represented as :  
*nominalization + head noun*.

Unlike Mandarin, the Xuwen nominalization particle /kāi/ is omitted in a relative clause if the head noun following it is modified by a demonstrative or numeral quantifier phrase, e.g.

(58) a. hā kai vòì kòì nùi nāṅ  
that CL sell chicken egg person

b. vòì kòì nùi hā kai nāṅ  
sell chicken egg that CL person

That person who sells eggs.

(59) và kaṅ lù vòì nō kai vū  
1st sg. BENEF 2nd sg. buy two CL cows  
The two cows I bought for you.

If the head noun of a relative clause is not modified by a demonstrative or a numerical quantifier, the omission of the nominalizing particle signals indefinite plurality, e.g.

(60) và tsoŋí vòì kòì nùi nāṅ  
1st sg. like sell chicken egg person  
I like people who sell eggs.

(61) và kaṅ lù vòì vū hò tua  
1st sg. BENEF 2nd sg. buy cows very big  
The cows I bought for you are very big.

### I.2.7. Comparatives

For expressing superiority, the 'surpass' construction common among Southern Chinese dialects is used, the 'surpass' morpheme being homophonous with the experiential aspect marker, e.g.

(62) và kuāi kué i  
1st sg. tall surpass 3rd sg.  
I am taller than him/her.

(63) i pūi kué và  
3rd sg. fat surpass 1st sg.  
S/he is fatter than me.

As the examples in (62) - (63) illustrate, the comparative construction expressing superiority has the following basic pattern, which is common to most Southern Chinese dialects :

X dimension 'surpass' Y

where X is the subject or topic, Y, the item to which the subject or topic is compared, 'surpass' represents the comparison morpheme and a predicate expresses the dimension along which the comparison is made.

The comparative construction expressing inferiority uses the negative morpheme /vō/. The structure of the construction

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differs from that of the comparative construction expressing superiority :

X /v<sup>5</sup>/ Y dimension.

(64) is an illustration :

(64) v<sup>4</sup>            v<sup>5</sup> i            ku<sup>2</sup>ai  
1st sg. NEG 3rd sg. tall  
I am not as tall as s/he is.

*I.2.8. General observation of Xúwén syntax*

As the preceding discussion shows, the syntax of Xúwén does not deviate drastically from the structure of the standard language, Mandarin. In places where Xúwén differs from Mandarin, it generally follows the pattern of Southern Chinese dialects, e.g. the paucity of the bǎ-construction, the use of the first syllable of a bisyllabic verb as the A element in A-not-A questions, the placement of the modifier 'male' or 'female' after rather than before an animal. The most unusual syntactic feature of Xúwén is the omission of the nominalizing particle in relative clauses under certain conditions. However, we have noticed that free omission of the nominalizing particle in relative clauses occurs in at least one Northern Mandarin dialect we studied during our 1980 field trip in China.

(to be continued)

*Charles N. LI*

Linguistics Program  
UCSB

*Sandra A. THOMPSON*

Linguistics Department  
UCLA