

ZHONGGUO YUWEN

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CONTENTS

The pre/post-head-word asymmetries in prosody and morphology

..... LU Bingfu, YING Xuefeng 387

Are all “approximate adverbs” alike? — An interaction of approximate adverbs

with negators and scale LEE, Peppina 406

The evolution of the definite demonstrative *qi* (其) LI Luxia 421

The ambiguity and co-occurrence of [tioʔ₂] (着) in the Nan'an Min dialect

..... LÜ Xiaoling 430

The types and properties of ancient *zhi* group (知组) pronounced as *duan* group

(端组) found in *Xianghua* (乡话) in Western Hunan

..... ZHUANG Chusheng, ZOU Xiaoling 434

Determining the levels of the *Yang Sheng* (阳声) rhythm in *tong* group (通摄) of

the northwest dialects in Song dynasty by observing *Jinnan* and *Guanzhong*

dialects ZHANG Huiye, YU Yinru 440

Meaning extension and semantic types of disyllabic V-O compounds referring

to human action WANG Nan 447

The vulgar reanalysis of some compound words derived from Buddhism LI Yunfu 458

Reviews on the revised edition of Great Compendium of Chinese Characters

(汉语大字典) from the knotty characters ZHENG Xianzhang 467

The origin of *zisheng* (吱声) LI Weida 476

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Abstracts of Major Papers in This Issue

LU Bingfu, YING Xuefeng, The pre/post-head-word asymmetries in prosody and morphology

Cross-linguistic data indicate that in most VPs, pre-verbal dependents are more loosely connected to the head V than post-verbal ones (pre-loose & post-close), and pre-verbal dependents need more morphological markings to show their semantic relations with the head V than post-verbal ones do (pre-more & post-less). In NPs, however, the case is just the opposite. Specifically, the attributes of the head N are of the pre-close & post-loose pattern in prosody, and the pre-less & post-more pattern in morphological marking. This phenomenon, though not absolutely universal, is clearly an overwhelming tendency. The paper thus offers illustration of the phenomenon and some preliminary explanations, mainly based on the looseness between topic/subject and predicate, and on the principle of distance-marking correspondence. The paper also analyzes some counter-examples

Key words: word order, prosodic compactness, degree of morphological marking, pan-subject-predicate relation, the principle of distance-marking correspondence

LEE, Peppina, Are all “approximate adverbs” alike? — An interaction of approximate adverbs with negators and scale

This paper compares approximate adverbs in Mandarin Chinese, English and Cantonese, with the aim to find out universal properties and parametric variations of approximate adverbs in natural language. The three languages/dialects show the common property of appealing to [almost]_p to express approximate meaning in affirmative sentences, giving the meaning of “almost/nearly VP”. However, in negative sentences, they show parametric variations at lexical, syntactic and semantic levels. Three ways are adopted to express negative approximate meanings, which are (i) the presence of an overt negator in the predicate to give a negative proposition, hence [[almost] ~p]; (ii) the use of an approximate adverb which is lexically encoded with a covert negative feature, with a positive proposition, hence [[+NEG]almost] p, or (iii) the use of an approximate adverb which is lexically encoded with a covert negative feature, with a negative proposition, hence [[+NEG]almost] ~p. While Mandarin Chinese can only appeal to (i), English adopts (i) or (ii) and Cantonese (i) or (iii). This reveals that when approximate adverbs give a negative approximate meaning, (i) represents the most basic way in natural language, hence a language-universal property, while (ii) and (iii) are language-specific properties and would demonstrate parametric variations.

Key words: approximate adverbs, negative polarity items, semantic scope, assertion, entailment & presupposition, negative orientation on scales, scalar reverse, language universals and parametric variations

LI Luxia, The evolution of the definite demonstrative *qi* (其)

In Pre-Qin Chinese, most occurrences of *qi* serve as resumptive pronoun which substitutes for a noun or a noun phrase in the context and corresponds to “NP+zhi (之)”. In “*qi*+NP” construction, when NP has been already mentioned, *qi* only refers to the definite person or thing and can be regarded as definite demonstrative. *Qi* in “*qi*+...zhe (者)” construction has the properties of both resumptive pronoun and definite demonstrative. In Han, Wei and Six Dynasties, the definite demonstrative *qi* in “*qi*+NP” becomes more and more frequent. The paper also describes the different functions and evolution paths of the definite demonstrative *qi* in “*qi*+NP” and “*qi*+...zhe”.

Key words: demonstrative, resumptive pronoun, definite demonstrative, syntactic change

ZHUANG Chusheng, ZOU Xiaoling, The types and properties of ancient *zhi* group (知组) pronounced as *duan* group (端组) found in *Xianghua* (乡话) in Western Hunan

It is generally acknowledged that the *Xianghua* (lit. countryside vernacular) in Western Hunan reserves considerable amount of features of the archaic Chinese phonology, which is less common in modern dialects, as is exemplified by the phenomenon of the ancient *zhi* group pronounced as *duan* group. This paper aims to further the elaboration of the types and properties of this phenomenon attested in *Xianghua* in Western Hunan, and concludes that level 2 and level 3 of the *zhi* group pronounce differently in the present time, and only level 3 pronounced as *duan* group remains the essential feature of this group of dialects, which differs from those of most of the Min dialects typically reserving the "lack of alveolar sounds in ancient Chinese", and meanwhile, is identical with, or relative to, the present pronouncing types of some other dialects.

Key words: Western Hunan, *Xianghua*, *zhi* group, *duan* group, "lack of alveolar sounds in ancient Chinese"

ZHANG Huiye, YU Yinru, Determining the Levels of the *Yang Sheng* (阳声) Rhythms in *Tong* Group (通摄) of the Northwest dialects in Song dynasty by observing *Jinnan* and *Guanzhong* Dialects

Three patterns of parallelism are observed between the *Yang Sheng* rhythm in *Tong* group of the Northwest dialects in Song dynasty and the characters in Tangut. Specifically, the rhythms overlap with: (1) the characters in *Shen* (深), *Zhen* (臻), and *Zeng* (曾) groups; (2) the characters in *Yu* group; and (3) the characters in *Dang* and *Guo* groups. The first pattern of parallelism has been studied adequately, whereas the latter two patterns are believed by experts to be mere exceptions or temporary replacement. Interestingly, as a correspondence, three kinds of colloquial pronunciations of characters exist in *Yang Sheng* rhythms of *Tong* group in Southern *Shanxi* (*Jinnan*) dialects and the central Shaanxi plain (*guanzhong*) dialects, i.e. the convergence of the rhythms with (1) *Shen* and *Zhen* group, (2) *Yu* (遇) group, and with (3) *Guo* (果) group. And these pronunciations coincide well with Sanskrit and Tibetan in Tangut. The paper, therefore, infers that the colloquial pronunciations of the *Yang Sheng* rhythm in *Tong* group of the Northwest dialects in Song dynasty may simultaneously have [ən], [u] and [o] at three levels.

Key words: the southern *Shanxi* (*Jinnan*) dialect, the central Shaanxi plain (*guanzhong*) dialect, the Northwest dialects in Song dynasty, the *Yang Sheng* rhythms in *Tong* group

WANG Nan, Meaning extension and semantic types of disyllabic V-O compounds referring to human action

Chinese has a considerable amount of Verb-Object compounds with verbs referring to human actions and nouns referring to human body parts or organs. These compounds vary in semantics and even syntactic behavior due to different degrees of lexicalization and modes of meaning extension, and as a result, different distributional types. Accordingly, modes of dictionary definition are expected to reflect these variations. This paper, in this regard, demonstrates the ways to definitions in The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (the 6th Edition).

Key words: human action verbs, semantic types, lexicalization, conventionalized meaning, metonymy, metaphor

LI Yunfu, The vulgar reanalysis of some compound words derived from Buddhism

After Buddhism was introduced to China, many words were created in Chinese to express Buddhism concepts. This paper examines the meaning structures of the words such as *yichenburan* (一尘不染), *niannianbuwang* (念念不忘), *dachengyipian* (打成一片), and *tihuguanding* (醍醐灌顶), etc., and finds that the words may be reanalysed according to the component morphemes' vulgar meanings and in new structures. It argues that this type of word meaning change is different from the known changes and deserves further researches.

Key words: compound words derived from Buddhism, vulgar reconstruction, lexical history

ZHENG Xianzhang, Reviews on the revised edition of Great Compendium of Chinese Characters (汉语大字典) from the knotty characters

The 1990 edition of Great Compendium of Chinese Characters is the most massive and comprehensive dictionary on the form, pronunciation and meaning of Chinese characters since 1949. While the revised edition makes many progresses, it also inherits some errors and even produces new errors. This paper reviews the revised edition based on the latest researches of knotty characters and hopes it may improve the next revision.

Key word: Great Compendium of Chinese Characters, revised edition, knotty characters