A PHONO-MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY ON JIN HUA DIALECT

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ABSTRACT: This paper discusses the phono-morphological feature of Jin Hua dialect, a city that is located in the central region of Zhejiang Province, China. Phonologically, the dialect contains 27 consonants and 51 vowels. The consonants 'R' and 'L' are not distinguished, i.e. all words with the starting consonant 'R' are pronounced 'L'. Phonetic change occurs to nouns whose pronunciations end with /an/; /ia/; /a/; /e/. Precisely, four transition patterns have been confirmed: (I) /an/ → /a/; (II) /ia/ → /uá/, /a/; (III) /a/, /an/, /e/ → /iá/; (IV) /e/ → /á/. Furthermore, vowel nasalisation results from the weakening of nasal-coloring in Wú dialect and appears to be limited to pronouns. Syntactically, the word order of an adverbial phrase is [Adj + Adv], which in standard Chinese would be: [Adv + Adj]. This accidently resembles the Thai language, Vietnamese and French. Deictic, i.e. 来 *lái* 'come' and 去 *qù* 'go', are extensively employed as modal particles in motion as well as change-of-state constructions. Another dialectal habit comes from the focus particle 添 *tiān* 'one more time'. It is often added to the end of the sentence in order to emphasise the utterer's opinion.

KEYWORDS: Dialect, Phonology, Morphology

INTRODUCTION

In China, there are nine types of dialects, namely, Mandarin, Jìnyǔ, Wú, Huī, Gàn, Xiāng, Mǐn, Cantonese, and Hakka. Figure 1 provides a dialect map. The green parts stand for Mandarin-speaking areas; the yellow parts are Hakka-speaking areas; the blue parts are Mǐn dialect-speaking areas; the orange parts are Wú dialect-speaking areas; the brownish-red parts are the areas where the Xiāng dialect is spoken; the rose-red parts are Gàn dialect-speaking areas; the

purple parts are for Cantonese; and the brown parts are the Jin dialect-speaking areas. Each dialect group has a diversity of sub-dialect.

Figure 1. A dialect map of China[1]

A good deal of work has been devoted to Chinese dialectology. Chao's (1943) work can be viewed as laying the foundation for studies on Chinese dialects. The paper 'Languages and Dialects in China' reveals the phonological features of the southern, central, and northern Chinese dialect groups. Later on, Norman (1988) contributes two chapters in his book *Chinese,* addressing the dialect classification, historical development and dialect geography. More recently, Yuan, et al. (2001) first tackles the dialect classification and then delves into the historical backgrounds of each group. Yan (2006) provides a detailed introduction to the phonology of Chinese dialect groups.

The present study intends to focus upon a single dialect, namely, the Jin Hua dialect, exploring its phonological, morphological and syntactic feature.

Jin Hua is located in the central region of Zhejiang Province. Zhejiang is an eastern coastal province, speaking Wú dialect. It contains the following variations: i.e. the Hang Zhou, Shao Xing, Ning Bo, Wen Zhou, Tai Zhou, Jin Hua and Qu Zhou dialects. Jin Hua belongs to the Southern Wú-speaking area, including 10 counties, i.e. Wu Cheng county, Luo Dian county, Su Meng county, Qian Xi county, Zhu Ma county, Ya Fan county, Lang Ya county, Ruo Yang county, Bai Long Bridge county and Chang Shan county. The maps in Figure 2 (from left to right) shows Zhejiang's location in China, Jin Hua's location in Zhejiang Province, and the 10 counties that speak Jin Hua dialect.

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[1] This map is built by two American scholar, i.e. Parker and Hansen. They have runed a folk research project on Chinese dialect since 2009.

The current study covers above-mentioned 1o counties. Because Jin Hua is a basin city, it well retains the phonetics of Old Wú. This paper aims to provide a description of this dialect. It is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the methodology. Section 3 is devoted to the phono-morphological feature, by focusing upon the tone, consonant and vowel. Section 4 explores the syntactic feature. It particularly tackles the word order of adverbial phrase, the deictic and the focus particle. Section 5 concludes the paper.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected via tape recorders. Participants were recruited through a friend-of-a-friend method and advertisements posted on shopping malls. 80 participants were engaged (40 female and 40 male; 40 high school or lower education; 20 college and 20 higher education; all are monolingual native speakers). Pronunciation, grammatical construction, and lexicon in the speech of inhabitants were recorded.

Phono-morphological feature

Tone and Consonant

Jin Hua dialect has seven tones, i.e. yīnpíng, yángpíng, yīnshàng, and yīnqù, yángqù, yīnrù. yángrù. There are about 27 consonants, as given in Table 1.

Table 1. The consonants of Jin Hua dialect

			Bilabial	Dentilabial	Alveolar	Alveolo-palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal			m		n	ȵ		
Plosive	Voiceless	Unaspirated	p		t		k	
		Unaspirated	pʰ		tʰ		kʰ	
	Unaspirated voiced sound		b		d		g	
Affricate	Voiceless	Unaspirated			ts	tɕ		
		Unaspirated			tsʰ	tɕʰ		
	Unaspirated voiced sound				dz	dʑ		
Fricative	Voiceless			f	s	ɕ	x	
	Voiced sound			v	z	ʑ		ɦ
Lateral					l			

The most salient phonological feature of Jin Hua dialect lies in that, the inhabitants fail to make a distinction between 'R' and 'L'. All words with the starting consonant 'R' are likely to be pronounced 'L', e.g. 热 (RE) 'hot' is pronounced as 乐 (LE) 'happy'. This often leads to

misunderstanding in conversations between people from the North and the West parts of China.

Below is a sample list of lexical category pronounced in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese.

Table 2. Lexical category pronounced in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese

Lexicon		Jin Hua dialect
Standard Chinese		
Adjective:		
热 hot	*lè*	*rè*
弱 weak	*luò*	*ruò*
Noun:		
人 people	*lén*	
rén		
忍 bear	*lěn*	*rěn*
etc		

The Vowel

There are 51 vowels in Jin Hua dialect, as summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. Vowels in Jin Hua dialect

	Rhyme							Vowel Rhyme			
Opening mouth	ɿ		ɑ	o	ɤ	ɯ		ɛ	ɤa	ei	ɑu	eu
A class of syllables with *i* as the beginning	i	ia	iɑ		ie		iᴇ	iɛ			iɑu	iu
Syllables with *u* as the beginning	u		uɑ		uɤ			uɛ		ui		
Rhymes containing a rounded front vowel	y		yɑ		yɤ			yɛ				

	Nasalised rhyme		Nasal rhyme			Plosive rhyme	
Opening mouth	ɤã	ã	ɑŋ	əŋ	oŋ	əʔ	oʔ
A class of syllables with *i* as the beginning		iã	iɑŋ	iŋ	ioŋ	iəʔ	ioʔ
Syllables with *u* as the beginning		uã	uɑŋ	uəŋ		uəʔ	
Rhymes containing a rounded front vowel		yã	yɑŋ	yəŋ		yəʔ	

Essentially, in Jin Hua dialect, a number of lexicons tend to be pronounced with /a/ in the end. There can be many variations. The following four patterns appear to have the largest applicability:

(I) 'an' → 'a'

(II) 'ia' → 'uá'/'a'

(III) 'a'/'an'/'e' → 'iá'

(IV) 'e' → 'á'

Table 4 provides a comparative list of Jin Hua-dialect pronunciations and standard Chinese pronunciations.

Table 4. Lexical category pronounced in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese

Lexicon		Jin Hua dialect
Standard Chinese		

Noun:

'an' → pronounced as 'a'

咸 salt	*ǎ*	*xián*
甜 sweet	*tiǎ*	*tián*
饭 meal	*vǎ*	*fàn*
烦 annoyed	*fǎ*	*fán*
碗 bowl	w*ā*	*wǎn*
眼 eye	*ā*	*yǎn*

Noun:

'ia' → pronounced as 'uá'/'a'

指甲 nail		*zhī-g**uá***
*zhǐ-ji**ǎ***		
请假 ask for leave		*qǐng-g**uá***
*qǐng-j**iǎ***		
下 below		w*ā*
xià		

Noun:

'a'/'an'/'e' → pronounced as '*iá*'

天花板 ceiling   *tiē-huā-biá*

tiān-huā-bǎn

三百八 three hundred and eight   *sā-bā-biá*   *sān-bǎi-bā*

袜   sock   *miá*

wà

车 (car, bicycle, motorbike)   *qiā*   *chē*

Noun:

'e' → pronounced as '*á*'

爷爷 grandpa   *yā-yā*

yé-yé

Others

腋下 oxter   gē-le-w*ā*

yè-xià

火腿 ham   *huǒ-tā*   *huǒ-tuǐ*

Essentially, such transitions are limited to nouns.

In addition, the phenomenon of vowel nasalisation is worth commenting on. It results from the weakening of nasal-coloring in Wú dialect. Table 5 provides illustrations of the nasalised vowel in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese.

Table 5. The nasalised vowel in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese

Lexicon	Jin Hua dialect	
Standard Chinese		
你 you (NOM, ACC, DAT)	/noŋ/	
/nǐ /		
我 I (NOM, ACC, DAT)	/ɑ noŋ/	/nǐ men/
他们 them (NOM, ACC, DAT)	/gəʔ laŋ/	/tā men/
我们 we (NOM, ACC, DAT)	/ɑ laŋ/	/wǒ men/

It should be noted that nasal-coloring in official Wú dialect is very productive. And its function varies.

(i). It may be a suffix to an NP; but does not change the category, e.g. 牙儿 *yá ér* (kid).

(ii). It may be a suffix to an NP and change the semantic meaning of a lexicon, e.g. 粉团 *fēn tuán* (viburnum plicatum) → 粉团儿 *fēn tuán ér* (prostitute).

(iii). It may be a suffix to an NP and change the category of a lexicon, e.g. 大块 *dà kuài* (Noun: big piece) → 大块儿 *dà kuài ér* (Adjective: big)

(iv). It may be a suffix to a verb and nominalise the verb, e.g. 搞搞 *gǎo gǎo* (Verb: to play) → 搞搞儿 *gǎo gǎo ér* (Noun: fun)

The nasalised vowel in Jin Hua dialect, however, appears to be limited to pronouns.

Syntactic feature

Having drawn a picture of the phono-morphological feature of Jin Hua dialect, we are in the position to engage in the exploration of syntactic aspect. Our starting point is the word order of an

adverbial phrase. Then, we will move on to the deictic and the focus particle.

Word order of adverbial phrase

It is widely known that contemporary Chinese is SVO. The word order of an adverbial phrase is [Adv + Adj]. For insance, 很大 *hěn-dà* 'very big'. In Jin Hua dialect, the corresponding adverb to the standard Chinese 很 *hěn* 'big' is *man*. It is the adjective that comes first; adverbs appear in the end, i.e. [Adj + Adv]. For instance, *dà-man* 'big very'. Table 6 provides the illustrations.

Table 6. Adverbial phrase in Jin Hua dialect and in standard Chinese

Lexicon	Jin Hua dialect	Standard Chinese
Very big	*duǒ* 'big' + ***man*** 'very'	*hěn* 'very' + *dà* 'big'
Very difficult	*nǎ* 'difficult' + ***man*** 'very'	*hěn* 'very' + *nán* 'difficult'
Very salty	*ǎ* 'salty' + ***man*** 'very'	*hěn* 'very' + *xián* 'big'

Intriguingly, this feature comes to resemble the Thai language, Vietnamese and French, c.f. (1).

(1) a. Thai：[nám taa] :（water + eye） → 「tear」

b. Vietnamese：[to gan] : (liver + big) → 「brave」

c. French：[timbre-poste]: (stamp + post) → 「postage stamp」

The deictic

Another feature of Jin-Hua dialect is the supplement of deictic, i.e. 来 *lái* 'come' and 去 *qù* 'go'. They are extensively employed as modal particles in motion and change-of-state events.

(2) **Context:** [a host is persuading customers to eat, expressing his/her hospitality]

吃　去

chī　**qù** !

eat　deictic

'Come on, please help yourself to the food'

(3)　　我　不　来　　打　（电话）

　　　wǒ　bù　**laí**　　dǎ　（diàn huà）

　　　　I　NEG　come　　ring　(phone)

　　　　'I won't make the phone call.'

The focus particle 添

Another dialectal habit is: the focus particle 添 *tiān* 'one more time'. It is often added to the end of the sentence in order to emphasise the utterer's opinion. This particle only appears in spoken Jin Hua dialect though as many Jin-Hua inhabitant would habitually add the particle 添 *tiān* when speaking in standard Chinese. (4) is an illustration.

(4) 你　　再　　说　一　　遍　　**添** !

　　nǐ　　zài　shuō　yī　　biàn　**tiān**

　　You　again　say　one　time　FOC

　　'(You) say that again!'

(4) carries an implication that the utterer is probably angry.

CONCLUSION

This paper has discussed the phono-morphological feature of Jin Hua dialect. The findings can be summarised as follows. Phonologically, the dialect contains 27 consonants and 51 vowels. The consonants 'R' and 'L' are not distinguished, i.e. all words with the starting consonant 'R' are pronounced 'L'. Phonetic change occurs to nouns whose pronunciations end with /an/; /ia/; /a/; /e/. Precisely, four transition patterns have been confirmed: (I) /an/ → /a/; (II) /ia/ → /uá/, /a/; (III) /a/, /an/, /e/ → /iá/; (IV) /e/ → /á/. Furthermore, vowel nasalisation results from the weakening of nasal-coloring in Wú dialect and appears to be limited to pronouns. Syntactically, the word order of an adverbial phrase is [Adj + Adv], which in standard Chinese would be: [Adv + Adj]. This accidently resembles the Thai language, Vietnamese and French. Deictic, i.e. 来 *lái* 'come' and 去 *qù* 'go', are extensively employed as modal particles in motion as well as change-of-state constructions. Another dialectal habit comes from the focus particle 添 *tiān* 'one more time'. It is often added to the end of the sentence in order to emphasise the utterer's opinion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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