
Study on the Negative Adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” in Lingling Dialect and Its Origin: A Case of Language Horizontal Transmission

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Abstract: There is a special negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” in Lingling dialect. Although there are some similarities between the “xǎ⁴⁴” and *bu* in grammatical function and syntactic distribution, the use of *bu* has less restrictions. Here the writer shows that the phenomenon of superposition of language elements from different origins appears not only in pronunciation, vocabulary system, but also in grammar system. The writer apply fieldwork, document comparison and other methods to analysis the phonetic and syntactic distribution and function of the “xǎ⁴⁴”. Comparing with those dialects and ethnic minority languages around Lingling and considering the history and relative phenomena of languages, It is suggested that the negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” evolves from the negative word [ŋ] in Mian Language. This case shows that the negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” in Lingling dialect is due to the result of “horizontal transmission”. It tells people, when explaining Chinese dialect phenomenon, it should not be restricted to the dialect itself, better answers may be found in the dialects and languages of those surrounding places.

Keywords: Lingling Dialect, Negative Adverb, Mian Language, Language Contact

1. Introduction

Historical strata of dialect refers to the phenomenon that the linguistic element which appears in different period of time or has different origin superposites synchronically in the same dialect. Language has three systems, namely phone, vocabulary and grammar, thereafter, superposition can occur in these three systems. Earlier works on superposition can be found in Wang Futang [23] and Wang Hongjun [22], while most are concerned with historical strata in phonetic level and very few discuss it from the perspective of grammar, see You Rujie [27].

Mandarin Chinese have been frequently contacting with Southern minority languages, thus superposition of language constituents from different places is commonly seen in southern minority languages, and borrowing or permeating of grammatical devices, altering of rules, changing of system and structure can also be observed. In this paper, the writer will try to present the dialect superposition phenomenon of linguistic constituents with different origins, taking negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in Lingling dialect for example.

2. The Usage of Negative Adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” (很)

Lingling is an administrative district of Yongzhou (永州) city in Hunan (湖南) Province, it sits in the upper reaches of Xiang River (湘江) and Xiao River (潇水) which is also the junction of the two rivers. Leng shui’tan (冷水滩) is in the north, Shuangpai (双牌) is in the south, Dong’an (东安) and Quanzhou (全州) of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is in the west, and Qiyang 祁阳 is in the east. Xiang Dialects and Xi’nan Mandarin are commonly used in Lingling district, and in some towns the local dialect is spoken, thus the complexity of dialects.

In Lingling dialect, adverbs for negative meanings such as *bu* (不), *mo* (莫), *mei* (没), *mei dei* (没得), *mei you* (没有) all equal to those meanings of “No”, “Not”, “Nothing”, “Not yet” in English. Besides, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) is also a negative adverb. The function of “xǎ⁴⁴” is almost the same as of *bu*, people can choose either of them to express negative meanings, while there still exists differences in terms of their syntactic context, in the following contents the usage of “xǎ⁴⁴” and *bu* will be

discussed in detail.

2.1. The Usage of “xǎ⁴⁴” in Lingling Dialect

“xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in Lingling dialect is a negative adverb, and it can appear in the following sentence forms:

A. S+ xǎ⁴⁴ (很)+be+..., In this form, the subject can be a pronoun, noun and noun phrase, and “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) preceding *shi* (是), negates the classification, features and possession of something. For example:

- (1) 他很是教书的。
He is not a teacher.
- (2) 他很是张局长。
He is not director Zhang.
- (3) 那个女的很是双眼皮。
That girl does not own double eyelids.
- (4) 那间房子很是他屋里。
That is not his home.
- (5) 今天去上街很是好事。
Nothing good will happen on the streets today.
- (6) 他那天看倒的是老王, 很是小唐。
The person you ran into last time was Mr Wang, not Mr Tang.

B. (S)+ xǎ⁴⁴(很)+V, In this structure, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) precedes the verb to negate the action of the subject, which can be omitted when it can be inferred from the context. For example,

- (7) 你出去专门很关门的。
He does not close the door when he is out.
- (8) 吃烟和吃茶都很准。
People are not allowed to smoke and drink here.
- (9) 问咖半天都很讲。
He did not answer my questions.
- (10) (我)很坐, 回屋里去了。
I am not gonna sit, cause I am going home.

C. S+xǎ⁴⁴(很)+Verb-Object phrase, In this sentence pattern, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) is to negate the action and subjective intention.

- (11) 他很想吃饭。
He does not wanna eat.
- (12) 你很找我钱啦?
Don't you want to give me my change?
- (13) 我很到他屋里去。
I will not go to his place.
- (14) 小贝很敢惹那侬崽。
Xiaobei dares not to piss that boy off.

When the verb specifies psychological condition, such as *think* and *know*, it can be succeeded by a “subject+predicate” structure. For instance,

- (15) 我很想他来。
I do not want him to come.
- (16) 他那天没在, 很晓得事情是哪么样的。
He was not there then, so he does not know what the thing is about.

D. S+xǎ⁴⁴(很)+character adjective, In this structure, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) negates the quality of the subject. For instance:

- (17) 你那女崽很差火, 蛮精明的!
Your daughter is not stupid, instead she is smart.
- (18) 那当很干净, 溲水得很。
The place is not clean but very dirty.

(19) 饭很烫, 可以吃了。

The meal is not hot and you can eat now.

(20) 那当很远, 走一下就到。

That place is not so far and just a few minutes' walk.

E. “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) and “*de*” (得) construct the “很得” to specify that something will not or may not happen.

- (21) 他很得去, 懒死咖了。
He is not going to be there, he is too lazy.
- (22) 衣裳很得干, 天天落雨。
Those clothes are not going to be dry, since it rains everyday.

(23) 我很得上街, 这个月钱用完咖了。
I will not go shopping these days, cause I've ran out of my money.

F. V+*ka* (咖)+*jiu* (就)+ xǎ⁴⁴ (很)+... In this form of sentence, the content before *jiu* (就) shows a kind of hypothesis, and the content behind show the result. For example,

- (24) 晏咖就很好了, 我们快点咖仔走!
Being late is not so good, let's hurry up!

(25) 剩咖就很好吃了, 多吃点。
It will not be as delicious as it now if you leave it over, so you'd better eat more now

G. xǎ⁴⁴(很)+Auxiliary verb+Verb+*jiu* (就)+... In this form of sentence, the content before *jiu* (就) shows a kind of hypothesis, and the content behind show the result.

- (26) 很爱去就莫去。
If you do not want to go, then don't
- (27) 很想吃就莫吃。
If you do not want to eat, then don't.

In this structure, the function of *mo* (莫) is different from that of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很), so it can not be replaced by “xǎ⁴⁴” (很).

H. “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) *shi* (就是)...*jiu shi* (就是)..., In this construction, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) designates option, and it is equivalent to the form of *bu shi* (不是)...*jiu shi* (就是)...in Chinese mandarin. For example:

- (28) 很是你就是他, 反正跟我没的关系。
If it's not you, it's him, I have nothing to do with this.
- (29) 小张很是汉族就是瑶族。
If Xiao Zhang's nationality is not Han, it must be Yao.

In Lingling dialect, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) is often employed to show negative meanings and it can also be replaced by *bu*, and the meaning of the sentence will not be changed.

2.2. Comparison of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) with *bu* (不)

Comparing with *bu*, the usage of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) is restricted to some certain syntactic contexts. According to those catalogs in dictionary [14], people can apply *bu* but not “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in the following context.

A *bu* A (A can be a verb or adjective). In Lingling dialect, people use *bu* instead of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) when there is an overlap form of *A bu A*. For example:

- (30) 你到底去不去的?
Do you want to go or not?
- (31) 锅子里头还有不有饭?
Is there any rice in the pot?
- (32) 不管明朝落不落雨, 都要去。

Whether it's going to rain or not tomorrow, I will go there anyway.

(33) 吃咖饭再去要不要得?

Is it OK that we leave after the meal?

B. *bu* can be placed between resultative verb and verb tendency compound which shows a kind of impossibility, the opposite side of the meaning of *de* (得) which shows a kind of possibility. While “xǎ44” (很) does not own this function. For example:

(34) 你莫叫, 你搞他不赢的!

Don't say aloud, you can not beat him.

(35) 这点事情你都做不好啊?

You can not do well even in this tiny little thing?

(36) 他讲什细我晓不得。

I have no idea about what he said.

(37) 个东西我提得动, 他提不动。

I can carry this, he can't.

(38) 我吃了那么多了, 吃不下去了。

I have ate so much and couldn't have more.

C. Fixed formats such as *bu* (不) A *bu* (不) B, *ban* (半) A *bu* (不) B, *bu man* (不蛮)... can only use *bu*, “xǎ44” (很) can not be employed in such format. For instance,

(39) 今天的米饭不软不硬, 刚好。

The rice today is neither soft nor hard, it is just appropriate.

(40) 她不胖不瘦, 身材蛮好。

She is neither too fat nor too thin, she has got a good shape.

(41) 你那个菜炒得半生不熟的, 哪么吃嘞?

Your dish is half cooked, how are we gonna eat?

(42) 小王今天心情不蛮好, 走咖了。

Xiao Wang has not got a good mood today, and he has just left.

D. In idioms such as *bu da bu xiangshi* (不打不相识), *bu de liao* (不得了) and *suan bu ding* (算不定) we can not use “xǎ44” (很). For example:

(43) 算不定明朝要落雨。

Maybe it will rain tomorrow.

E. *bu* can be applied in imperative sentence, while “xǎ44” (很) can be not. For example:

(44) 不要讲那些没的用的, 好好做事!

Don't say things that useless, do your own thing!

(45) 你不要管他, 最不听话!

Just ignore him, he is a no-man.

In the sentences (44) and (45), *bu yao* (不要) can be replaced by *mo*, but “xǎ44” (很) can not be used in those two sentence above.

What's more, unlike *bu* in mandarin, “xǎ44” (很) in Lingling dialect can not be used alone to answer questions, if so, there should have some other language elements followed. For instance:

(46) 你去上街吗? 不, 没什么要买的。
(Mandarin)

You wanna go shopping? No, nothing need to buy.

(47) *你去不去上街? 很, 没得什细买的。
(Lingling dialect)

Sentence (47) is wrong because something should be

added after “xǎ44”.

(48) 你去不去上街? 很去, 没得什细买的。

You wanna go shopping? I am not going, bcause I have nothing to buy.

And still, “xǎ44” (很) can not be placed at the end of a sentence like *bu* in mandarin. Here's the example:

(49) 你今天去上课不? (Mandarin)

Will you go to the class today or not?

(50) *你今朝去上课很?

*You today attend class not (xǎ44)

Sentence (50) is wrong because “xǎ44” is not appropriate here, but we can change it into:

(51) 你今朝去不去上课?

Will you go to the class today or not?

2.3. The Usage Difference Between “xǎ44” (很) and *bu*

By comparing the usage of the “xǎ44” (很) and *bu*, the writer found the sentences those can not employ “xǎ44” (很) but *bu* are all fix format or idioms from mandarin. Under the influence of mandarin, the usage of “xǎ44” completely gave way to *bu* in Lingling dialect. Although “xǎ44” (很) can appear in other syntactic environment, it has difference between the old generation and the young people. In the same sentence, old men usually use “xǎ44” (很), but the young people are likely to use *bu*. When old speaker find the listener can't understand what he/she says, the speaker will replace “xǎ44” (很) with *bu*.

Although the negative adverb “xǎ44” (很) shares the same pronunciation with the adverb of degree *hen* (很) in Lingling dialect, people will not get confused, since in Lingling dialect, people use adverb of degree *man* (蛮) to indicate a higher degree, employing *si le huo* (死了火) to indicate the highest degree rather than *hen* (很), and usually *hen* (很) appears after *de* (得) serving as a complement. Examples are as follows,

(52) 你搞得蛮好!

You've done a very good job.

(53) 他的手蛮灵巧, 画起蛮好看。

He has got a skillful hand and he paints so well.

(54) 他走起快得很。

He walks very fast.

(55) 他打牌赢咖了, 手气好得很!

He wins the card game, he has got a pretty good luck.

3. The Origin of the Negative Adverb “Xǎ44” (很) in Lingling Dialect

In southern dialects, it is quite normal to note that the morpheme meaning no pronounces as a nasal. for example, in Wenzhou (温州), Wu dialect is pronounced as [m] and [ŋ], [m], Xiamen (厦门) dialect is pronounced as [m] and [ŋ]; and Quanzhou (泉州) and Zhangping (漳平) are pronounced as [m]. In Hakka language Zengcheng (增城) Chengxiang (程乡) is written as “唔” which pronounce [m], while Changning is written as “嗯” which pronounce [ŋ]; Meixian (梅县) is written as “唔” which pronunciation is [m]; the written form of Yudu (于都) is “唔” which pronounce as [ŋ]; in the northern part of Guangdong province, Lechang (乐昌) native

dialect is written as “唔” whose pronunciation is [ŋ] or [m]; In the native dialect of southern Hunan, Ningyuan Zhangjia (宁远张家) is pronounced as [ŋ], while Lanshan Xinxu (蓝山新圩) [ŋ], Yizhang Chishi (宜章赤石) [ŋ] and Zixing Xingning (资兴兴宁) and so on. Guiyang Liuhe (桂阳六合) dialect is written as “唔”, whose pronunciation is [ŋ].

Just like the dialects above, it is presumed that the negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in Lingling dialect was pronounced as [*ŋ] or [*ŋ]. In Lingling dialect, people can not distinguish front nasal and post nasal, so the pronunciation of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) is marked as a [*ŋ]. At the same time, a syllable without an initial in literary readings should be added a initial consonant [x] in colloquial readings. There are some examples, people pronounce “网, 惘(*uang*)” as [xuǎn⁵³] in colloquial readings; “窝”[o⁴⁴] is pronounced as [xo⁴⁴]; “碍”[æ²⁴] is pronounced as [xæ²⁴], and therefore, under the control of the above phonetic rules, the negative adverb “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) whose pronunciation was [*ŋ] had been changed into [*xŋ] with a plus [x] and also [*xən] with a central vowel being added. And thus a final sound is nasalized. The phonological evolution process can be summed up as follows: *ŋ → *xŋ → *x^on → *xən → xǎ.

It is common in southern dialects that a morpheme which shows negative meanings is read as a nasalized syllable, but not in northern dialects. Shen (2015) shows that the phenomenon of nasalized syllable has something to do with Mian languages. In Mian languages, *bu* is pronounced as [ŋ] or [m], examples from *Basic Vocabularies of Hmong-Mien Languages* [15] are as follows:

不(去) 不(太)好 不然 不必 不要(走)

Mian dialect of Yao (勉瑶语) n n naŋ n tsei n tsu n loŋ

Biaomin dialect of Yao (标敏瑶语) m n taŋ n tɔi taŋ tɕie --- n nŋ

Not go not good otherwise needn't don't go

There are two words in Lakkia language which share the same function as *bu*, one is pronounced as [ŋ], and other is [hwǎi].

In terms of grammatical function, the negative adverbs “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in Lingling dialect is syntactically more restricted than the negative adverb [ŋ] in Mian language (*Da Jiangping* 大江坪). It is manifested that on the following circumstances, “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) instead of *bu* is permitted in Lingling dialect, while in Mian dialect [ŋ] is acceptable.

(56) lei⁴ ton² tsei⁵ tsei⁵ ŋ⁵ tsei⁵ sai¹ tje⁵ ?

李同志 是不是师傅?

Is comrade Li a master or not?

(57) phu : i1 ŋ⁵ tu⁷ ɕa : u⁵ ŋ⁵ tu⁷ mwo⁷ ŋ⁵ tu⁷

晒不得 洗不得 挖不得

can't be put under the sun can't be washed don't dig

(58) tɕi : m² tsɑ : ŋ⁶ sou³ tɕen³ tau² ŋ⁵ taŋ¹ ŋ⁵ ai³ ŋ⁶ ei¹ mien².

山上站着个不高不矮的人。

The man who stands on the hill is neither tall nor short.

(59) je¹ ŋ⁵ liu⁴ tsje⁷ tu⁷ nen² je¹ bwo¹ ha⁶ tsei⁴ i¹ mwo⁴ lɛ⁸.

我不仅认得他 我们还是俩兄弟呢。

I certainly know him, in fact, we are brothers.

(60) ŋ⁵ tsun³ bo⁷ mjen²!

不准打人!

Don't hit people.

From the above analysis, a conclusion can be drawn that “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) in Lingling dialect is evolved from the negative adverb [ŋ] in Mian Language through a series of phonetic changes. The differences between “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) and *bu* in Lingling dialect tell a truth: When Han people just entered Lingling area, the local minority language had a strong influence on the Chinese. At that time, the direction of the transmission is from minority languages to Chinese. The negative adverb [ŋ] in Mian language and related usage transferred to Chinese. After Lingling dialect formed, north Chinese invaded Lingling area many times, the Mandarin had a great impact on Lingling dialect, and some of the more commonly used format in the Mandarin occupied a dominant position. Some of the fixed format in the Mandarin, such as *bu A bu B* and so on, which affect the Lingling dialect in turn, so the “xǎ⁴⁴” (很) was replaced by *bu*. And therefore, the overlap of different historical strata was formed.

4. Additional Support of Superposition Phenomenon of “xǎ⁴⁴” (很)

4.1. Historical and Cultural Background

In ancient times, a great variety of minority people lived in Southern China and they were generally called *man* (蛮) and *Baiyue* (百越) [20]. *Han Shu Dilizhi* (汉书地理志) notes that different varieties of people could be found from Vietnan to Shaoxing (绍兴) Zhejiang province. It is shown from historical record that before Han People entered into those places, the agriculture of these minority peoples was well-developed and there amounted a great number of populations.

Ancient *Baiyue* Nationality once lived in Hunan (湖南) province, and some scholars have already discussed and proved this. Fu Juyou [7] believes “湖南古代的大部分地区尤其是湘南地区, 是经过越文化的一支——杨越文化, 再向楚文化发展的(Most parts of Hunan in ancient times especially its southern parts evolved from one bunch of culture—Yangyue Culture to the culture of Chu”. There is a sentence in *Biographies of Southern People in The History of the Later Han Dynasty* (后汉书南蛮列传) which is “吴起相悼王, 南并蛮越, 遂有洞庭、苍梧(A general named Wu Qi merged those southern places as a united one, and then we got places named Dongting (洞庭) and Cangwu (苍梧)). Cangwu (苍梧) is place situated in the area of Ningyuan (宁远) which not too far from Lingling. Lots of historical materials have proved that ancestors of Miao and Yao people once lived in Lingling. In ancient books which recorded the rebellion of Hunan people, Lingling ethnic groups, Guiyang (桂阳) ethnic groups, Changsha (长沙) ethnic groups and Panhu (盘瓠) ethnic groups are frequently mentioned. Although the land scope of Lingling in ancient times is much wider than it is today, the southern part of Hunan is definitely the core area. Those three minorities “Miao (苗)”, “Yao (瑶)” and “She (畲)” evolve from the minority group of Panhu (盘瓠).

As people of different language coexist and interact in the same place for a long time, the languages will

unavoidably influence and interplay each other. Based on a study of the distribution of glotal stop in Southern dialects, Chen Zhongmin [3] proposes that it is the remains of the ancient Baiyue Languages. Deng Xiaohua [5] noticed that of the 68 characteristic words in Cantonese (the Hakka dialect), about two thirds have resemblance to the Miao and Yao dialects in phonetic form. Therefore he thinks that the Cantonese is the fruit of the deep interaction among Zhuang-Dong language, Hmong-Mien Languages and Northern Mandarin Chinese, instead of the development of the southward movement of Chinese in the central China. Some important phonetic similarities can be observed after comparing phonetic systems of Wu dialect, Xiang dialect, Cantonese and Zhuang language. And obviously these similarities are absolutely not evolved in parallel, they are the result of language interactions [19].

Similarly, in the south of Hunan province, including Lingling district, as the minority live here for a long term, Mandarin Chinese is sure to be affected by the local dialects, that language strata of different origins exist in dialects is surly natural.

4.2. Evidence for Language Contacts

Language is the most important communicative tool for

	Lingling dialect 零陵话	Yao 标敏瑶语	Hmong 川滇黔苗语	Bouyei 布依语	Maonan 毛难语	Mulam 仡佬语
Frog (蛙)	ma kuai	ma kuai	qua	tu kwe	kwai	kwai

It is obvious that *frog* (蛙) in Lingling dialect sounds completely the same with that in Mian language and similar to the root of the morpheme in other languages. In Lingling dialect, words which mean places are written as *dang* (当) which pronounced as [tān], *Zhe li* (here) is pronounced as [tʃi tān] (这当), and *na li* (there) is pronounced as [na tān] (那当). And still this *dang* (当) is pronounced as [tɔːŋ] in Mian language, and [la ɬɔ] in Mian language of Biaomin. People call *fruit* [po po], for instance, mulberry is called *sang ye po po*, the fruit of the fir tree (枞树果) is called *zong shu po po*, while in Mian and Yao language, the fruit is called [pjou], [po po] and [pjou] share similar meanings and ways of pronouncing.

Lexical borrowing usually occurs at the primary stage of a language contact. When the state of bilingual lasts, these two languages would make influences on each other in a more deeper way, and thus the phenomenon of lexical borrowing would appear in pronunciation, phonetic system, syntax and morphologic elements and so on [25].

The vowel systems of Wu dialect and Xiang dialect are different from that of other major dialects but similar to Miao language, because the vowel height of these two can be divided into four levels while mandarin can be divided into three levels [20]. The vowel systems of Lingling dialect and Mian language are alike.

Hemong language (湘西腊乙坪苗语) Lingling dialect (零陵方言) Mian language (大江坪勉语) .

human being. In history, since Han People in northern China immigrated to the places where southern minority people lived, communication of peoples had been unavoidable. The Mandarin Chinese and local dialect would form into a bilingual community during the process of communication. “After the formation of the bilingual society, varieties of complex relations between language A and B appeared. If language B has authority in politics, economy and culture, then the number of people who speak language B would increase, and on the contrary, the number of people who speak language A would decrease, and language A is gradually changed and replaced by language B which has most of its own features and some of A’s features” [20].

In language contact, vocabulary is the most dynamic part in language system. Two languages, at the primary phrase of language contact, will absorb vocabulary from each other to enrich itself. In Lingling dialect, there exists some words from minority languages, for example, the *frog* (蛙) is pronounced as *ma kuai* or *kuai* in Lingling dialect or dialects around Lingling, this pronunciation is similar to that of in Hmong-mien language. Let’s compare those different pronunciations of *frog* in different minority languages (the tone is omitted):

i		ɯ,u	i,y		ɯ,u	i		u
e	ə	o	e	ə	o	e	ə	o
ɛ		ɔ	ɛ			ɛ		
a	ɑ				a			a

In Lingling dialect, there exists a phenomenon that MC initial *bang* (帮) is pronounced as zero initial and *duan* (端)、*ding* (定) are pronounced as [l] nowadays, for instance in Lingling Youtingxu (邮亭圩) dialect, 牌[uai³³], 稗[uai²⁴], 皮[uei³³], 枇[uei³³], 被[ui³³], 备[uei²⁴], 队[luei²⁴], 弟[li²⁴], 题[li³³], 代[lai²⁴], 台[lai³³]. Similar phenomenon happen in Lan Jiaosahn (岚角山) dialect with words such as 婆[vu¹¹], 排牌[va³³], 旁[vo¹¹], 刨[vo³⁵], 背诵[ve³⁵], 蛋[lo⁵³] etc. What’s more, in places not far away from Lingling such as Jiangyong (江永), Jianghua (江华) and Diaoxian (道县), the MC initial-groups of *duan* (端) are often pronounced as [l], Chen Zhongmin (1989, 1995) considers the phenomenon as the change result of the implosives and the residuum of ancient Baiyue languages

After a long and deep contact of language A and B, the phenomenon of borrowing and permeation of grammar structure between these two languages is inevitable. The grammar structure of language B keeps certain features of Language A.

Mandarin Chinese and Hmong-Mien Languages have different syntactic structure of the noun phrase. In Chinese noun phrase, the attributive noun modifier appears in front of the head-noun; while in Hmong-Mien Languages, the head

presents in front of the attribute. In Lingling dialect, influenced by Hmong-Mien Languages, “head+attribute”

	牛公	猪母	鸡公	狗母
炯奈语(Jiongnai)	ŋ ³³ kei ³³	mpei ³⁵ mai ⁴³	kai ⁴⁴ kɔŋ ³⁵	kla ⁵³ mai ⁴³
勉语(Mien Language)	ŋ ³¹ kɔŋ ³³	twə ³⁵ kau ³⁵	tɕi ³³ kɔŋ ³³	klu ³⁵ kau ³⁵
零陵话(Lingling Dialect)	niəu ²² ku ⁵³	tʃy ²² bo ⁴⁴	tʃi ⁴⁴ kɔŋ ³⁵	kəu ⁵³ bo ⁴⁴
	cattle male	pig female	chicken male	dog female
	ox	sow	cock	bitch

This structure is also reflected in some names of places around Lingling, such as 鸡婆塘 (Jipotang), 鸭婆水 (Yaposhui), 羊公滩 (Yanggongtan) and so on.

The word order typology shows that SVO structure which has an adjective and adverb which shows degrees is “adj+ D adv” and so as the structure in Hmong-Mien Languages and most of those Dong-Tai languages, While in Mandarin Chinese the degree adverb precedes the adjective and Lingling dialect generally abides by this order, but the Adj+Dadv cases can still be found. Here are some examples: instead of saying “很好”, people will say “好很” (“很好”, “很” is an adverb which shows degree, “好” is an adjective); people will say “冷很” instead of “很冷”. What’s more, adverbial modifiers which show degrees and means are placed after core verbs in Lingling dialect. For example, “你走先” is more often used than “你先走” and “我走后” is more often employed than “我后走” (“走” is a core verb which means “go”, “先” and “后” are two adverbial modifiers which show time). And things are the same in languages such as Mian language, Bunu, Laka, Dong and so on. Someone [18] considers it as a residuum of word order typology of Baiyue language.

a complement should be placed after the object in a sentence which has both object and complement after its verb. Lingling dialect is same with Mian language and Ging language, Examples are as follows:

(61) 零陵话: 我搞他不赢。

I can't win him.

In this sentence, “搞” is the verb, “他” is the object and “不赢” is the complement.

(62) Mien Language: ŋ⁴² te¹³ li¹³ mɾ⁴⁴ lɾ³³

(勉瑶语) 找他不到。

Can't find him.

In sentence (65), “找” is the verb, “他” is the object and “不到” is the complement)

(63) Gin language: viu⁵ kan² kəi¹ suəŋ⁵

(京语) 攀树枝下。

Put down the brunch.

In Lingling dialect, the word order of the double object construction is determined by the meaning of the verb: when the verb means *obtain or gain*, the direct object follows the indirect object; when the verb means *give*, the direct object precedes the indirect object, which is consistent with Mian language in most cases, with a few exceptions. For instance:

(64) 零陵话: 老娘今朝给咖五百块钱我。

My mom gave me 500 Yuan today.

pattern specifies the animal genders, observe the following examples:

(65) 勉瑶语: fun² sɛ : ŋ¹ pun¹ pwan³ sou¹ ho⁸ sɛ : ŋ¹。

老师给本书学生。

The teacher gives the student a book.

(66) 毛难语: man² ʔna : k⁷ lɛ¹ fiɛ²。

他给书我。

He gives me the book.

The above cases in Lingling dialect are similar to those in Southern minority languages while different from those in Mandarin Chinese. It is therefore concluded that Lingling dialect is greatly influenced by Southern minority languages lexically, phonetically and syntactically.

5. Conclusion

Influenced by historical comparative linguistics, it is commonly proposed by researchers of Chinese language that Chinese dialects are divisions of ancient Chinese, and the differences between dialects are caused by their different development speed. Just affected by the idea of vertical transmission, researchers tend to search for the internal causes rather than the external causes when probing into dialects phenomenon.

Some researchers pointed out that the idea of vertical transmission is not adequate and the formation of dialects is closely related to non-Mandarin Chinese [1, 17, 19]. The development of Han people involves the integration of Han people and Minority people. In this process, languages are mutually influenced. We believe that when Mandarin Chinese was introduced to different regions and then it contacted with the local dialect, gradually Chinese dialects appeared, thus the result of horizontal transmission with the formation mechanism of imperfect language transformation. Therefore, it is enlightened that comparing with focusing on the derivation of the dialect itself, it is more adequate for researchers to explain Chinese dialects from the perspective of language contact and to analyze the causes of a linguistic item in terms of the interaction between languages.

This paper demonstrates that it is undeniable that Mandarin Chinese is influenced by Southern Minority dialects. Superstition appears not only phonetically but also syntactically.

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