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Review of: Chinese: A Comprehensive Grammar

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namely the possibility to relativize a vast range of argument and nonargument roles, has also been stable throughout the language's history.

Part 5 provides a short overview of the grammaticalization of the relative clause markers (i.e. particles) in Chinese. Here the facts are not always straightforward, but it becomes clear that most of the markers were derived from lexical or other morphologically more independent material. Some brief conclusions follow in Part 6.

This monograph was originally written as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Mainz under the supervision of the Southeast Asian language specialist and typologist Walter Bisang. Typos and stylistic errors are rare. The choice of the corpus material for each historical period is explained in the introduction to the respective subsections. Example sentences are given in Pinyin with morpheme glosses and German translations. The Chinese script of the example sentences is provided as an appendix, followed by a subject index and a name index. The binding is good, adding to a favorable overall impression. [HEIKO NARROG, *Tohoku University, Japan.*]

Chinese: A comprehensive grammar. By YIP PO-CHING and DON RIMMINGTON. (Routledge comprehensive grammars.) London: Routledge, 2004. Pp. xviii, 418. ISBN 0415150329. \$52.95.

This concise yet detailed treatment of Standard Mandarin Chinese focuses almost entirely upon diverse aspects of phrase and sentence construction. It is not a basic learner's grammar with a graduated presentation of material. Lacking any introduction to the phonology or writing, this book is intended for those already familiar with some form of Chinese orthography. All examples appear in Pinyin as well as in the simplified characters employed in the People's Republic of China since 1956. This makes the reference material easily accessible to native speakers as well as to general linguists or students who have already studied some Chinese.

Each of the book's twenty-seven chapters covers a specific facet of phrase or sentence structure, beginning with noun phrases and ending with an overview of stylistic considerations. Much attention is paid to describing how syntactic constructions are actually employed by contemporary speakers. The coverage of functional sentence perspective and other discourse aspects of languages contains valuable insights not found in other references to Chinese grammar. One useful feature is the book's functional division of declarative sentence patterns into four basic types: narrative (those that recount past actions in an epistemically neutral fashion), descriptive (those that portray ongoing actions), evaluative

(those that relate the speaker's judgment of a situation), and expository sentences. The last category is defined as 'factual statements that offer some sort of explanation for actual situations or experiences' (306) and includes sentences ending in the particle *le*, which marks speaker awareness of a new situation. These four categories entail formal distinctions in syntactic arrangement unique to Chinese grammar, so that their explication is essential to a basic understanding of the language's syntax.

Another valuable feature is the book's clear explanation of how prosodic factors interact with syntactic patterns. For example, because spoken Chinese tends to require a prosodic alternation of heavy vs. light emphasis on successive syllables, a Chinese sentence can end with a monosyllabic verb plus monosyllabic or disyllabic object, but not with a disyllabic verb plus monosyllabic object (385–87). This accounts for the presence in the language of numerous monosyllabic vs. disyllabic synonyms. For example, the nouns *shū* and *shūjí*, both meaning 'books', appear in different rhythmic environments: *kàn shū* or *kàn shūjí* 'read books' but only *liúlǎn shūjí* 'browse books' and not **liúlǎn shū*. The rhythmic pattern in Chinese sentence structure entails a 'phonosyntactic' layer that is completely lacking in most other languages. This important feature of the grammar is given full coverage here.

Other highlights include clear, thorough discussions of measure words, passive constructions, techniques of conveying old vs. new information and definite vs. indefinite reference, and the use of particles, coverbs, adverbials, and postpositions.

The authors' theoretical approach is refreshingly eclectic, with an almost complete lack of formalistic jargon. Grammatical terms and categories specific to Chinese are clearly explained as they arise. I would highly recommend this book to any intermediate or advanced student who hopes to master the patterns used to generate phrases and sentences in contemporary Standard Mandarin Chinese. [EDWARD J. VAJDA, *Western Washington University.*]

Areal and genetic factors in language classification and description: Africa south of the Sahara. Ed. by PETR ZIMA. Munich: LINCOM Europa, 2000. Pp. 162. ISBN 3895869384. \$85.80 (Hb).

As noted in Petr Zima's preface, this book collects a number of papers originating in lectures given by various European Africanists at Charles University in Prague from 1997 to 1998. The papers deal with individual or groups of African languages for which questions have been raised about genetic affinity, hence the title's hint at the familiar historical problem