

6-2003

Review of: The Phonology of Standard Chinese

Edward J. Vajda

Western Washington University, edward.vajda@wwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://cedar.wwu.edu/mcl_facpubs



Part of the [Chinese Studies Commons](#), and the [Modern Languages Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vajda, Edward J., "Review of: The Phonology of Standard Chinese" (2003). *Modern & Classical Languages*. 40.
https://cedar.wwu.edu/mcl_facpubs/40

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Humanities at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Modern & Classical Languages by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

guistics' (3–19) by FREDERICK J. NEWMAYER. The first paper (23–34) in Section 2, which has lexical semantics and morphology as its focus, is contributed by MICHEL AURNAGUE and LAURE VIEU, who argue that geometrical, functional, and pragmatic aspects must be taken into consideration in adopting 'A modular approach to the semantics of space in language'. In 'Beer and semantics' (35–55), DIRK GEERAERTS presents an onomasiological account of Belgian beer names, illustrating important factors influencing the selection of a name for a particular type of beer. The next chapter (57–74), co-authored by GÁBOR GYÓRI and IRÉN HEGEDŰS, attempts to present 'a clarification of the cognitive processes that could have underlain seemingly contradictory semantic development within groups of etymologically related words' (68). In 'Categorization and analogical change: The case of athematic 1sg *-m* in the Slavic languages' (75–95), LAURA A. JANDA touches upon exaptative analogical extension, trying to show that not all defunct morphology must wither and die.

In 'Contrast and schemas: Antonymous adjectives' (97–112), ARTHUR METTINGER claims that the characterization of adjectival opposites is best performed in terms of 'image schemas'. JOHN NEWMAN's 'Figurative giving' (113–40) presents a comparison of grammatical or semigrammatical functions of GIVE morphemes. KIKI NIKIFORIDOU, in 'Nominalizations, metonymy and lexicographic practice' (141–63), tries to identify some of the factors a semantic analysis of nominalizations should not overlook. In 'Langacker semantics for three Coeur d'Alene prefixes glossed as "on"' (165–224), ROY H. OGAWA and GARY B. PALMER argue that the concept of network of schemas developed by Ronald Langacker is conducive to understanding the semantics of three morphemes of contact in Coeur d'Alene. In 'Aspects of prepositions and prepositional aspect' (225–47), SALLY A. RICE highlights the grammaticalized role of aspectual particles overlooked in catalogues of prepositional function. YOSHIKO TAGASHIRA's chapter deals with 'Some aspects of relational nouns' (249–76). The last chapter of Section 2, contributed by ADGER WILLIAMS, is entitled 'Prototype marker or reflexive marker: Russian *-sja* and categorical change' (277–95).

The four chapters in Section 3 are devoted to metaphor. ALAN CIENKI, by way of diachronic and synchronic semantic analyses of the semantic development of the roots *-lev-* 'left' and *-prav-* 'right', demonstrates the strengths and weaknesses of the left/right polarity in Russian (299–329). In '“Unnatural barriers”: Why metaphor matters (or, linguistics meets the geopolitics of law)' (331–45), DAVID DELANEY and MICHELE EMANATIAN apply 'a metaphor analysis to judicial reasoning about racial segregation and urban change' (332). JOSEPH HILFERTY's paper (347–65) shows that 'through's meta-

phorical uses signifying MEANS draw on its prototypical spatial sense' (347). OLAF JÄKEL's contribution (367–88) challenges the unidirectionality hypothesis in the cognitive theory of metaphor.

Eight chapters comprise the 'Syntax and semantics' section. KENNETH WILLIAM COOK (391–405) argues that Samoan is an active zone language. NICOLE DELBECQUE looks at 'Two transitive construction frames in Spanish: The prepositional and the non-prepositional accusative' (407–24). LENA EKBERG (425–45), discussing Swedish abstract transitional phrases, investigates an in-between phenomenon in the linguistic system. JOSÉ M. GARCÍA-MIGUEL deals with 'Grammatical relations in Spanish triactant clauses' (447–69). JOSÉ SANDERS examines 'Degrees of subjectivity in epistemic modals and perspective representation' (471–89), and VICTORIA VÁZQUES ROZAS (491–503) looks at the relationship between syntax and semantics in Spanish biactant clauses. In 'To infinitives' (505–25), MARJOLIJN VERSPOOR argues 'that both epistemic and deontic verbs may take *that* clauses, *to* infinitives and small clauses as their complement' (525). In the last chapter of this section, TUIJA VIRTANEN discusses 'Adverbial placement and iconicity' (527–46).

In the section about pragmatics, ALFONS MAES and LEONOR OVERSTEEGEN deal with 'Nominal vs. temporal interpretation in discourse' (549–66) while WILLY VAN LANGENDONCK tackles 'Markedness and prototypical speaker attributes' (567–76). In the last section, entitled 'Computational linguistics', KENNETH HOLMQVIST presents a fairly good 'Overview of the semantic composition processes and insights into the grammatical composition processes' (579–600).

As the editors note in their introduction, 'The variety of the contributions give a clear indication of the diversity and vigour to be found in the cognitive linguistic paradigm' (v). Touching upon a wide range of currently pursued issues in cognitive linguistics, from cognitive grammar to lexical semantics, from markedness and grammaticalization to metaphor and metonymy, this volume will certainly be of great value and interest to anyone interested in cognitive grammar, metaphor, language structure, or language use in general. [BINGYUN LI, *Fujian Teachers University*.]

The phonology of Standard Chinese. By SAN DUANMU. (The phonology of the world's languages.) Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xv, 300. \$80.00.

San Duanmu's eclectic, clearly written approach to the sound pattern of Standard Chinese (or *putonghua*, China's official lingua franca used by hundreds

of millions) could easily serve as an undergraduate text, yet his presentation is rich in theoretical proposals. Explanations are based on a variety of perspectives, from traditional views of the phoneme to feature geometry and optimality theory (OT), each concisely introduced so that the discussion is easy to follow, even for the novice. The result is a flowing, integrated approach that addresses—and solves—some of the thorniest perennial problems in Chinese phonology.

The twelve chapters address issues of increasing complexity. Ch. 1 (1–11), the introduction, covers basic sociolinguistic matters such as the relation between Standard Chinese (SC) and other dialects; it also summarizes the history of the study of Chinese sounds and syllables beginning with contributions made by compilers of the so-called ‘rhyming books’. Ch. 2 (12–50) identifies the number of basic phonemic contrasts in SC. D integrates phonemic analysis with syllable theory and feature geometry to demonstrate that SC contains only 19 consonant phonemes and 5 vowel phonemes. The palatals (Pinyin *j, q, x*) are interpreted as combinations of dental obstruents and the *j*-glide. Other allophonic variants are discussed in Ch. 3 (51–76) using the OT framework. Ch. 4 (77–95) covers syllable structure, arguing that there are only two syllable types, strong vs. weak, and several phonological realizations of each. One of D’s main innovations is in accounting for how the various possible consonant, glide, and vowel phoneme inputs are mapped onto the segmental timing slots of each syllable type. His analysis explains many seemingly unconnected facts such as the presence of syllabic fricatives, zero onsets, and, most important, the absence of numerous potential syllable rhymes (most are blocked by either rhyme harmony or dissimilation). This is the first study that elegantly accounts for the *missing* SC syllable types as well as for the phonetic shape of those that do occur. This provides strong support for the system D proposes.

The remaining chapters are mostly devoted to phonological aspects of SC greater than the syllable. Ch. 5 (96–124) discusses phonological aspects of the word, Ch. 6 (125–44) word stress, Ch. 7 (145–72) word length, and Ch. 8 (173–94) word order. D argues that both word length and word order are influenced by stress, which is shown to play a key role in SC phonology. Ch. 9 (195–208) deals separately with the *r*-suffix. Ch. 10 (209–36) introduces the concept of tone, hitherto mentioned only in passing. As in his previous publications, D treats SC contour tones as combinations of high and low register tones. His analysis uses both timing slots and moras, demonstrating that SC ‘counts’ both rather than only one or the other. Ch. 11 (237–54) is a concise discussion of tonal sandhi patterns involving the third (rising/falling) tone. Ch. 12 (255–67), entitled ‘Further issues’, makes a preliminary foray into higher prosodic

domains and also touches upon other major Chinese dialects, notably the spoken variety of SC prevalent in Taiwan.

A useful appendix (268–78) gives basic monosyllabic words in Pinyin with tonal number, phonemic transcription, surface phonetic transcription, Chinese character, and finally English translation. This list provides a handy reference illustrating the correlation between Pinyin and D’s underlying phonemic representation.

Because this user-friendly introduction offers innovative new solutions to old problems, it enjoys the rare distinction of succeeding both as an essential textbook of SC phonology and as an important new theoretical advance in phonological analysis. [EDWARD J. VAJDA, *Western Washington University*.]

Grammatical relations in Romani: The noun phrase. Ed. by VIKTOR ELŠÍK and YARON MATRAS. (With an introduction by FRANS PLANK.) (Current issues in linguistic theory 211.) Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2000. Pp. x, 244. \$86.00.

The introduction (1–8) treats general themes rather than discussing the individual papers in extenso, covering a wide range of noun-phrase phenomena in Romani ranging from the nature of Romani genitive constructions in crosslinguistic perspective (MARIA KOPTJEVSKAJA-TAMM, 123–49) to the possibility of whether Proto-Romani was ergative like other Indic languages (a possibility strongly suggested and well-explored by VÍT BUBENÍK, 205–28).

Four of the eight papers in the main body of the collection were given at the Fourth International Conference on Romani Linguistics in Manchester in September 1998; the others are independently-produced works. Romani is indeed a fruitful area of research for students of NPs since it possesses a number of unusual features. These include a dominant possessor-possessed genitival construction in which the relation of the possessor to its possessed is expressed adjectivally and a long-recognized two-tier noun case system in which the secondary cases consist of postpositions soldered onto oblique case-markers (even though Romani is otherwise prepositional and the two features can coexist, inasmuch as certain propositions govern secondary cases). The first feature is also found in other Indic languages whereas the second is much more unusual.

Two of the papers are by the first-named editor, the first being an outline of paradigmatic noun inflection (9–30) which serves to orient the reader to much of what follows in later chapters, and the second a discussion (drawing upon the widest range of dialects