

Abstract

Geographically, the Chongyang 崇阳 County is situated in the south of Hubei Province, and lies in the junction of Hunan 湖南, Hubei 湖北 and Jiangxi 江西 Provinces. Unlike most dialects in Hubei province, the Chongyang dialect belongs to the Datong 大通 sub-group of the Gan 赣 group. The special geographical situation brings more dialect properties with it. From my research, we can find grammar of the Chongyang dialect contains not only dialect features of the Gan 赣 group but also many other groups, such as the Wu group and Xinan Mandarin.

Existing research data for the Chongyang dialect is very limited with phonetics being the main area of focus. Due to the inadequate study on the Chongyang dialect grammar, the paper focuses on a systematic description of the Chongyang dialect grammar which covers explanations for some special language phenomena. In an attempt to enrich the dialect research materials and to reveal some relationships between the Chongyang dialect and other dialects, or between the Chongyang dialect and the ancient Chinese especially the Middle Chinese, the paper analyzes the structure, syntax, semantics, pragmatic value, and even the grammaticalization tracks or the typological significances of some grammar phenomena. However, grammar is very broad and covers a very wide range such as lexical morphology, syntax, grammatical categories and so forth. Being limited by the space of the dissertation and being deficient in my research energy and ability, I chose some basic grammar points for discussion. The main content is presented from the following aspects:

The first chapter is the introduction. This chapter briefly outlines the Chongyang County and reviews on the Chongyang dialect and the Edongnan 鄂东南 (the southeast districts of Hubei Province) dialects. The existed researches on the Chongyang dialect are from two respects: on the one hand, the earliest and the most successful focus were paid on the description of the phonetic system of the Chongyang dialect and the phonetic comparison between the Chongyang dialect and the Middle Chinese phonology; on the other hand, the grammar parts of the

Chongyang dialect were mentioned sporadically in very few paper during the 1980s basically, and some grammar phenomena were merely pointed out, without any analysis, thus, there is absolutely no detailed systematic description and research on the morphology and syntax as yet. In addition, the chapter presents the significance of the research as the third part. After demonstrated from four aspects, the chapter made a conclusion that there are two kinds of application value in this dissertation at any rate: first of all, to present and analyze the grammatical system of the Chongyang dialect is an absolute novelty breakthrough at present; besides, it can offer more detailed grammatical materials for dialectal typology or historical levels of Chinese dialects. The last part of this chapter introduces methods used in conducting the research in detailed. Full and accurate fieldwork is the first necessary step for a study on a dialect. This dissertation respects the criterion of using a genuine current corpus that has emerged through the collection of a large amount of dialect data by using the method of field investigation. For this purpose, I visited Chongyang County many times for a year and a half before starting to write, and choose eight consultants on purpose, they should be in lack of higher education, native-born citizenship, live in a pure language environment, and they distribute equally in gender. Moreover, besides these main consultants, a lot of other native Chongyang people helped to verify the example sentences of this dissertation. In one word, **all the research materials come from current oral Chongyang native speech.** After controlled the first-hand materials, research approaches are also important. structure arrangement of the dissertation is guided by the “Yuyi Yufa 语义语法 (semantic grammar) theory”, and the demonstration process will be guided by the “Liangge Sanjiao 两个三角 (two triangles) theory”. Both theories are full of Chinese characteristics. That is to say, two combinations should be presented during the Chinese dialect research. For one thing, the synchrony and diachronic combination approach will be used for analyzing some grammar phenomena in the Chongyang dialect. To describe its grammar fundamentally presupposes a synchronic approach while to explain their source or evaluated track is a kind of diachronic study. For the other thing, the combination and

comparison of the ancient Chinese (including Middle Chinese and Modern 近代 Chinese), or other related Chinese dialects or Mandarin Chinese. With the purpose of the deeper research, we should focus not only on the Chongyang dialect which is the current research object, but also on the other related language phenomena that either existed in ancient Chinese or exist in Mandarin Chinese, or even in some other Chinese dialect. The comparison may help us to find the properties of the Chongyang dialect grammar.

Before proceeding to the grammatical research, it is necessary to introduce the phonetic system of the Chongyang dialect, since the dialect researches are based on the pronunciation, and a great deal of the Chinese characters which were chosen to record dialect vocabulary originally remains unconfirmed today. Therefore, when Leipzig glossing rules is used to illustrate sentences, the International Phonetic Alphabets (I.P.A.) is an indispensable part. Beside, some grammar explanations or sources can be explored from phonetics. In view of this, it is particularly important to present the phonetic system of Chongyang dialect before the grammar demonstration. In this sense, the second chapter covers the introduction of the phonetic system in the Chongyang dialect, and makes certain of some puzzling problems through the Praat sound experiments.

The third chapter discusses the pronoun system in the Chongyang dialect according to the three pronominal categories: personal pronouns, three-type form of demonstrative pronouns and interrogative pronouns. After describing and discussing their properties, I demonstrated mainly the sources and evolutionary track of some special pronouns such as: the second personal pronoun “嗯” which is from “尔” in the Middle Ancient Chinese; the third personal pronouns “伊” retains the usage of “伊” in the Wei-Jin 魏晋 Period, without any change of gender, same as some dialects in Wu group, which is very special in Gan group; the demonstrative pronoun “箇” comes from the classifier “个” in Modern Chinese. Beside, some other properties of the pronoun system should be paid more attention. 我, 嗯 and 伊 are pronounced with the same tone, which can be explained by the principle of “人称代词读音的感

染” (infection of pronoun pronunciation) and the phenomenon of identical tones across the personal pronouns in a lot of dialects has typological significance. the plural marker in the Chongyang dialect is disyllabic “家嘞” is not common in Chinese dialects. “箇”, “伊” and “阿” have two tones when they are used for place demonstrative pronouns. In “X子嘞”, they are pronounced with the yinqu 阴去声 tone, marked as “35” tone pitch; while in “X 嘞”, the shangsheng 上声 tone is pronounced, marked as “53” tone pitch. “X子嘞” and “X 嘞” are completely identical in meaning and usage for referring to places.

The chapter four discusses the aspects in the Chongyang dialect. Taking the different states of the verbs in different situation as measures, the aspectual system of the Chongyang dialect is divided into nine parts: inchoative aspect (the marker is “起来”), progressive aspect (the marker is the preposition word “在” or postposition word “在”), durative aspect (the marker is “倒”), continuative aspect (the marker is “下去”), perfective and perfect aspect (the markers are “verbal-了” and “sentential-了” respectively), antecedent aspect (the marker is “当”), experiential aspect (the marker is “过”), short-time aspect and tentative aspect (the markers are same, “下子” or “一下子”). The detailed descriptions of each of them are illustrated one by one. Among them, the postposition “在”, “当”, “倒” and “下子” are different from Mandarin Chinese and are discussed more detailed. In the last part of this chapter, I discuss two problems: one is that I suggest to sort “起来” and “下去” into three steps which reflect their grammaticalization track well: verb → directional complement → aspectual marker, and regard them as semi-grammaticalized aspectual markers; the other is that I try to seek out the source of “当”, since we can hardly find a similar antecedent aspect auxiliary word as “当” in Chinese dialects from the existed researches except the Chongyang dialect. I assumed the antecedent aspectual marker “当” comes from the adjectival sense of “当” ‘appropriate’, rather than the word “当” ‘to be/act/serve as’ from pronunciation and semantic development evidence. Later, if some other dialects study mentions the same usage of “当”, we can get more materials to demonstrate it typologically.

The fifth chapter discusses the degree expression system. “Degree” belongs to

semantic category and so it has to be expressed by lexical and syntactic structures, besides stress method. At the lexical level, numerous vivid XA pattern adjectives/phrases and even popular sayings are used to express higher degree, especially the variant of XA pattern, “X 嘞 A”, which express higher degree than XA pattern. And almost all of the phrases with this structure are fixed and unique because the modifier components are present in terms of the semantics of the modified words, and they must be used as words. For example, the word for modifying the color “黑” is “墨叽咕嘞”, which is used only for “黑”. The same is true about many other words for colors. “夹死了” is the modifier for the deepest degree of “绿”; “雪净嘞” is for the higher degree of “白” than “雪白” and so on. This method is not economic enough, but represents language charm well. Additionally, only a small number of adjective reduplications are used in the Chongyang dialect. Although the number is very small, and the forms are very limited, only “AABB” pattern, “AXAY” pattern and “A 里 A 气” pattern, these forms still carry degree meanings. At the syntactic level, the degree adverbs, parts of modal adverbs, some degree complements and some sentence structures are discussed. In this part, I discuss a special degree adverb “点把” and “有点把” emphatically, and put them into comparison between the Chongyang dialect and Wuhan dialect to reveal their special usage in the Chongyang dialect. In the last part of this chapter, I summarize The features of the degree expressions in the Chongyang dialect. Besides the vivid forms for expressing degree, I discuss the asymmetrical property of the degree expressions as well from two aspects: most of the degree expressions are gathered into the higher degree level, same as many other dialects; the absence of corresponding negative forms in some degree expressions. E.g. in Mandarin Chinese, the high degree adverb “很” can be used in “很不+VP” and “不很+VP” structure, corresponding to the affirmative formation “很+VP”. This phenomenon is called “symmetry”. However, in the Chongyang dialect, “点把” expresses the meaning of “很”, while there is absence of negative form with “点把”, which can be understood as “asymmetry”. Instead, the negative forms of “not very” and “very not” are replaced by the negative form “不蛮+VP”, “不是+闷+VP” and

“蛮/闷+不+VP”. In addition, I provide a lot of characteristic words and comparison sentence patterns in the Chongyang dialect listed as appendixes.

The following three chapters discuss the three syntaxes: the interrogative sentences, negative sentences and passive sentences respectively. The negative expressions are discussed in chapter six. First, the usages and functions of four negative words “不”, “冇得”, “冇” and “莫” will be illustrated fully. They possess different functions to negate different components or they are used in different aspects: “不” is mainly used in future tense; “冇” is a negative adverb, same as “不” but it should be used in the experience aspect or perfect aspect; while “冇得” is a negative verb that is put in front of nouns and means have no; “莫” is used for dissuading somebody from doing something. Secondly, some special negative sentence patterns are discussed, including “NP 都有得, 还 VP?” sentence pattern, “V 不得” structure and “不好 VP 得” structure. The third part pays attention to discourse markers with negative words and their features, for instances, “不是我话”, “不是话嘎事”, “不是我话嘎事”, “不晓得几...”, “(嗯) 莫话” and “(嗯) 莫看”, “冇看倒吧” and “冇想到吧” are illustrated. Interestingly, none of them contain any negative meaning although there are negative word forms. Therefore, the distortion of the meaning and form is an obvious feature of the discourse markers in the Chongyang dialect, even in Mandarin Chinese. Some negative discourse markers expresses little or even no negative sense, then, some expressions without any negative words can express negative meanings also require attention, such as “懒得+VP”, “懒+VP+得” and “怪哦!” sentence patterns.

Chapter seven discusses the four types of interrogative sentences: yes-no interrogation, A-not-A interrogation, specific interrogation and alternative interrogation in the Chongyang dialect. And among them the yes-no interrogations and A-not-A interrogation are emphasized in the discussion. In the yes-no interrogation part, I illustrate four types (“S + 吧?” “S + 啊?” “S + 啲?” “S + ↗?”) and demonstrate that all of these methods used for yes-no interrogation have the same property, i.e. strong conjecture while questioning for relatively neutral question. Strictly speaking, in the Chongyang dialect, yes-no interrogation is undeveloped. two

undeveloped properties can be seen in the use of the yes-no interrogation. The first property is the lack of specific modal word for yes-no interrogation, and the expression of yes-no interrogative modality depends solely on the rising tone and multi-functional modal words “啊”, “哪” and “呢”. The second property is that it expresses a low degree of doubt. Almost all of them convey more or less belief or conjecture. Therefore, entirely neutral interrogations in the Chongyang dialect rely on other interrogatory forms, mainly A-not-A interrogation. For discussing the A-not-A interrogations, two types, “VP+neg” and “V+neg+V(P)” used in the Chongyang dialect are illustrated. In this part, I also demonstrate that the formation “VP+冇/不” is an A-not-A interrogative structure, and the “冇” and “不” in the “VP-neg” formation are not modal words indeed. In the Chongyang dialect, A-not-A interrogation is used flexibly and frequently. The most prominent feature is the strictly distinguished negative words “不” and “冇” used in either “VP + neg.” or in “V + neg. + V (P)” interrogative structures. Unlike the yes-no interrogation, A-not-A interrogation is a typical question that expresses doubt. As far as specific interrogation is concerned, similarly to Mandarin Chinese, specific interrogation in the Chongyang dialect focuses on the interrogative part which is occupied by an interrogative pronoun. The specific interrogations are commonly composed by interrogative pronouns and modal words. To sum up, “哪”, “么” and “几” are the basic interrogative words used, and they carry more formations and functions than other words. In addition, “啊”、“呢” and “哪” are frequently-used interrogative modal words, which can appear in almost all of the specific interrogative sentences, though the detailed modality among them are different. All the modal words in the specific interrogations can be removed, but in this case, the modality changes to be very stiff. Therefore, the specific interrogations without modal words are rarely used in the Chongyang dialect. The fourth interrogation type is alternative interrogation which is comparatively simple in the Chongyang dialect. The basic sentence structure is “是 X, 还是 Y? ”, offering two or more options to ask. If more than two options are proposed, “是 X, 是 Y, 还是 Z? ” sentence pattern is used.

In the chapter eight, the passive sentence in the Chongyang dialect will be

analyzed. “把得” is the sole passive marker in the Chongyang dialect, which is much different from the Mandarin Chinese. Thus, the evolutionary track and mechanism of “把得” are worth discussing. The “把得” passive sentence in the Chongyang dialect and the “被” passive sentence in Mandarin Chinese share certain similarities but also differ in some aspects, such as: agents must appear in the “把得” passive sentence; besides expressing passive meaning, “把得” carries “giving” meaning and “if it were sb.” meaning. The phenomenon in which the “giving” verb is grammaticalized as a passive marker and coexists is not rare to Chinese dialects and most of them are monosyllabic giving verbs. But in the Chongyang dialect, the double-syllable word “把得” rather than “把” which possesses the same “giving” meaning. This evolutionary mechanism is fairly representative. Moreover, after emerging into the “causing” meaning, “把得” in the Chongyang dialect evolved into a passive marker as well as in other dialects, but also has the meaning of “if it were X”, which is not commonly used in the present dialect records.

In the chapter nine, the modal words in the Chongyang dialect are discussed. Since they are frequently used, I listed all the modal words in the Chongyang dialect and analyzed their implicated modality one by one, and compared some similarities or differences among them in the following table:

		啊 and its varia nts	吵	吧	哈	呢	冇 / 不	咯	嘎 咯	诶 / 喂	
In the middle of sentence	pause	+	+			+					
	surprised exclamation									+	
	enumeration	+									
In the end of sentence	question	+	+	+		+	+				
	imperative	+	+					+			
	statement	+	+			+					
	excla- matio n	exclamation	+						+		
		dissatisfactory		+							
		surprised	+				+				
		to urge		+							
reminder		+		+			+	+			

As shown in the table above, the features of the modal words system in the Chongyang dialect are as follows: First, the question tone is expressed depending on the modal words to the highest degree from the lateral perspective; from the vertical perspective, “吵” and “啊” are used most frequently. In contrast, “吧”, “哈”, “么/ 啵”, “诶/ 喂” and “嘎咯” are the simplest modal words. Secondly, the inter-related phenomenon is the common feature of the modal words in many languages, including the Chongyang dialect. Sometimes, the same modality can be expressed by different modal words; but sometimes one modal word can express different kinds of modality, as shown in the diagram above. Thirdly, the complicated form for modal word in the Chongyang dialect is only one, “嘎咯”, not as many as in the Mandarin Chinese. However, what we have to explain is that the diagram reflects the main function of the modal words only. As we know, the usage of the modal words has the property of randomness to some degree, meaning, in some cases, the usage and semantic function

is not strictly fixed. For instance, “啊” and its variants are very flexible. They can be used in some situations out of the range of the diagram. “吵” is same.

A conclusion of the dissertation is the last part. In sum, the Chongyang dialect possesses main properties of Gan dialects group, but influenced by Xiang 湘 group, Xinan Mandarin 西南官话, Hakka group and even Wu 吴 group. Some suggestions and opinions about the dialect study are proposed in it. For instance: the study on dialect grammar is inseparable from phonetic study; appropriate linguistic theories should be applied for dialect research; to build dialect corpus is an urgent affair for dialect grammar research, which will greatly benefit dialect typological study; the research on dialect development has bright prospects, especially the dialects used in the junctions of different provinces. To sum up, the establishment of dialect corpus and the research on dialect development or contact should be the direction of future efforts, which is one of my feelings after studying on the Chongyang dialect.

To some extent, the grammar research on the Chongyang dialect is distinctive and original with little data referred. I attempt to summarize some points all by my own, especially when explaining some special language phenomena, given allowances for some inappropriate points.