

The average Chinese language: An outline of typological profile

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The Chinese-speaking people have developed a sizable population for centuries over a vast territory. Nowadays, the Han Chinese speak a large variety of Chinese topolects, many of which have become separate languages from the point of view of linguistic science (Thurgood and LaPolla 2003). While these Chinese languages all belong to the Sinitic family, they diverge in several regards chiefly due to intensive contact with indigenous non-Chinese languages in the peripheral regions (cf. Norman 1988). In this talk, I will outline the typological profile of the average Chinese language, based on major members of the Sinitic, i.e. Mandarin, Cantonese, Southern Min, Wu and Hakka. Due to the scope of this study, other Sinitic languages cannot be included here.

The sketch of profile will contain basic elements in phonology, morphology and syntax, covering such topics as tone system, word length, parts of speech, reduplication (of the type A-BB), passive construction, resultative construction, and causative construction. Brief explanation will be provided where the average Chinese differs from the major Chinese languages mentioned above.

References

- Norman, Jerry. 1988. *Chinese*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thurgood, Graham and Randy LaPolla (eds.). 2003. *The Sino-Tibetan Languages*. London: Routledge Press.