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AREAL TYPOLOGY OF SINITIC IN THE TEMPERATE ZONE: FOCUSING ON ADJUSTABLE QUANTIFICATION AND NEGATION ASYMMETRY

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigates language contact of Sinitic and their neighbouring languages currently spoken in the ecology of temperate zone, extending from Russian Far East through China into Central Asia. The dataset of 130 linguistic varieties consists of Sinitic, Tibetic, Iranian, and languages of the Altaic typological complex (Koreanic, Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic). Their typological profiles are analysed by the Neighbor-Net algorithm, revealing a significant deviation of several Mandarin varieties spoken towards the western end of the dialect continuum. The discussion also extends to changes and convergence observed within two specific domains of grammar: 1. adjustable quantification of entities and events, and 2. asymmetry in negation systems across morphosyntactic contexts. The results indicate several

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genealogically biased patterns as well as contact-induced changes in specific microareas, which are responsible for divergence of cognate languages inside and outside the contact areas. For instance, inventories for adjustable quantification remain robust as a system in Sinitic and their neighbouring languages towards the east, while nominal classifiers have been reduced in Sinitic towards the west where verbal classifiers in turn are better retained. The role of Sinitic in the microareas is also highlighted from the Altaic perspective, as Sinitic have either introduced or reinforced a classifier system on the one hand and an alignment pattern of negation asymmetry on the other.

KEYWORDS
Areal typology **L**anguage contact **C**lassifier **N**egation **W**ord order

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Areal Linguistics of Sinitic

Sinitic together with Tibeto-Burman form the second largest language family by number of speakers in the entire globe, Sino-Tibetan (a.k.a. Trans-Himalayan), falling behind only the Indo-European language family (see Eberhard et al. 2024). Sinitic languages originated among communities around the central river basins of present-day China. From the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) onward, Sinitic populations expanded southward. Concurrently, northern tribes migrated into Sinitic-speaking areas beginning in the mid-1st millennium CE. Despite these expansions, Sinitic languages have undergone shifts due to the influence of other language families: in the south, Mainland Southeast Asian (MSEA) languages (notably Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, and Austroasiatic), and in the north, languages of the Altaic typological complex (particularly Mongolic and Tungusic). These language shifts have shaped regional Sinitic varieties through substrate effects, a key factor in the divergence and variation found within modern Sinitic (Chappell 2001; Szeto 2019; Szeto and Yurayong 2021).

Previous studies have discussed the impact of language shift in the structure of Sinitic, challenging the idea of “universal Chinese grammar” posited by Chao (1968: 13). Genealogical connections notwithstanding,

温带地区汉语的区域类型：可调整量化和否定不对称现象

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摘要
本文探讨目前在温带生态区（从俄罗斯远东地区经中国到中亚地区）的汉语方言及其邻近语言的语言接触情况。数据库包括 130 种语言，涵盖了汉语、藏语、伊朗语以及“阿尔泰”类型的语言（韩语、通古斯语、蒙古语、突厥语）。我们通过 Neighbor-Net 算法分析其类型学特征，揭示了在方言连续体西端的几种官话方言的显著偏离现象。本文还讨论了两个特定语法领域中观察到的变化和趋同现象：1.实体和事件的可调整量化；2.不同形态句法语境下的否定系统的不对称性。研究结果表明，几个谱系偏向的模式以及特定微区域的接触诱导变化，是造成同源语言在接触区内外分歧的原因。例如，可调整量化系统在东部汉语及其邻近语言中保持稳定，而在西部汉语中，名量词有所减少，而动词量词则得到更好的保留。从“阿尔泰”语言的角度来看，汉语在微区域起到重要作用，分别引入或强化了量词系统，以及否定不对称性的排列模式。

关键词
区域类型学　**语**言接触　**量**词　**否**定　**语**序