
Recent years have seen a growing interest in the history of Chinese. This volume is a fine contribution to the growing literature on Chinese language by offering a new interpretation of the early history of Chinese, *i.e.*, Old Chinese changed from a typologically "mixed" language into a more analytic one after Middle Chinese. The author demonstrates how syntactic changes in the early history of Chinese can be related to changes in phonology/morphology and writing. Almost all studies on Old Chinese syntax exclusively rely on historically transmitted texts. However, the present work provides a valuable perspective of the language under investigation by comparing the ways various constructions were used in different versions of the same treatises in both the historically transmitted and recently unearthed texts of the same time. The author claims (page 2) that the analyticity of Modern Chinese is, to a large extent, a consequence of the one character-one syllable development over time that systematically discourages morphological affixation.

The book is comprised of an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion, including the expected topics: word-order change, constraints on argument realization, the grammaticalization of the causative construction, the rise of resultative verb compounds, and the evolution of various negative markers over time. In addition to the regular subject index and references, there is a useful list of the sources from which examples used in the book were selected.

The two-page introduction basically lays out the plan of the book and sets it in the context of the author’s theory. Chapter 1 (3-61) deals with the Old Chinese VO and OV word-order changes, such as the word-order shift of the postpositional construction *shi-yì*
therefore,” the co-existence of prepositions such as yù 與 and postposition zhōng 中 “middle,” the emergence of preverbal prepositional phrases, etc. All of this, according to the author, is indicative of the fact that although Chinese has never been a language with a purely VO, or OV, word order, it has always been predominantly a VO language.

Chapter 2 (62-111) is an exposition of the argument realization in Old Chinese, and how diverse grammatical relationships such as passive, locative, etc. are expressed through phonological and syntactic devices as a “mixed” type language. It is claimed that the reorganization of the word order from Old Chinese to Middle Chinese was forced by the loss of phonological/morphological devices which, in turn, led to the increasingly analytic morphology.

Chapter 3 (112-145) copes with the decline of a number of hypothetical phonological/morphological markers in Old Chinese that are taken to be semantically related to the periphrastic causative constructions signalled by shí 使, ling 令, bā 把, or the passive bèi 被. Chapter 4 (146-188) discusses the rise of Chinese resultative compounds brought about by a typological shift from what Talmy (2000) called a verb-framed language into a satellite-framed language. Chapter 5 (189-238) attempts to sort out the complexity of the Chinese negative system from Old Chinese to contemporary Chinese. The author adopts Pulleyblank’s (1998) proposal assuming two series, the *p- series (bù 不, fú 弗, fēi 非 that function to deny identity in spite of various syntactic constraints) and the *m- series (wú 無, wù 毋, wù 勿, wàng 亡, wèi 未, mó 莫, etc that function to deny existence in spite of different syntactic implications). The three-page conclusion re-iterates the main theme: the grammatical relations in Old Chinese were syntactically unmarked but phonologically and morphologically marked. And the opposite is true in contemporary Chinese.

These chapters are as clear and well-illustrated a presentation of the field as one could wish for, offering interesting data and extensive analyses, especially in the parallel developments between