

THE EVOLUTION OF CHINESE GRAMMAR

The Chinese language has the longest well-documented history among all human languages, making it an invaluable resource for studying how languages develop and change through time. Based on a twenty-year research project, this pioneering book is the English version of an award-winning study originally published in Chinese. It provides an evolutionary perspective on the history of Chinese grammar, tracing its development from its thirteenth-century BC origins to the present day. It investigates all the major changes in the history of the language within contemporary linguistic frameworks, and illustrates these with a wide range of examples taken from every stage in the language's development, showing how the author's findings are relevant to contemporary descriptive, theoretical, and historical linguistics. Shedding light on the essential properties of Chinese and, ultimately, language in general, it is essential reading for academic researchers and students of Asian linguistics, historical linguistics, and syntactic theory.

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THE EVOLUTION OF CHINESE GRAMMAR

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To my Mother, Father, and Crystal, with Love

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CONVENTIONS USED IN THE EXAMPLES

- 1 []: a constituent is absent.
- 2 *: an utterance is structurally unacceptable.
- 3 The parts that are relevant to the current discussion are in bold or underlined.
- 4 Glosses and translations: each Chinese example is first given in traditional Chinese characters and then in Pinyin. In the line immediately below the Chinese example, we gloss each Chinese word with the clearest and most literal English equivalent possible. In the following line we offer a translation of the whole utterance into idiomatic English, attempting to preserve the “flavor” of the Chinese utterance as much as possible.
- 5 Pinyin: the transcription system for examples of Classical Chinese, present-day standard Mandarin and most northern dialects (despite some phonological variations) is *pīnyīn* (lit. “spell sound”), the official romanization system of the People’s Republic of China, which is also the most widely used system in the media and scholarly writings on Chinese in the West. However, examples of other dialect families are given in IPA.
- 6 When tone values are relevant to the current discussion, especially for examples of classical Chinese of other dialect families, two or three numbers at the top right corner indicate the tone values of the syllables.
- 7 The approximate dating of ancient examples is provided in parentheses on the bottom line.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

ACCU	accusative
Adj	adjective
Adv	adverb
Advl	adverbial
ANAP	anaphor
ASP	aspect
ASSOC	associative particle (<i>-de</i>)
AUX	auxiliary verb
BA	disposal marker <i>bǎ</i>
BEI	passive marker <i>bèi</i>
BEN	benefactive
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
CON	continuous
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
CP	complement
DAT	dative
DEC	declarative
DEICT	deictic marker
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determinator
DIM	diminutive
DIS	disposal marker
DUR	durative aspect (<i>-zhe, zài</i>)
EMPH	emphatic
EXP	experiential aspect (<i>-guo</i>)
FOC	focus

xx *List of Abbreviations and Symbols*

FUT	future
GEN	genitive (<i>-de</i>)
IMP	imperative
MOD	modal
NEG	negative
NOM	nominalizer (<i>de</i>)
NOMI	nominative
N	noun
NP	noun phrase
Num	number
Obj	object
O_d	direct object
O_i	indirect object
OV	object–verb word order
PART	particle
PASS	passive marker
PERF	perfective aspect
PL	plural (<i>-men, -xie</i>)
PN	personal name
POSS	possessive
PP	preposition phrase
PREP	preposition
Pro	pronoun
PROG	progressive aspect
PRT	particle
QUE	question (<i>ma</i>)
REL	relative clause
RES	resultative
SG	singular
SOV	subject–object–verb word order
Subj	subject
SVO	subject–verb–object word order
TNS	tense
TOP	topic
V	verb
V_{intr}	intransitive element
VO	verb–object word order
VP	verb phrase
VR	verb–resultative construction

V_{tr}	transitive element
wh-	interrogative pronoun
1st	first-person singular pronoun
2nd	second-person singular pronoun
3rd	third-person singular pronoun