

Unit 9

Reading A

The Chinese Language: Past and Present 《汉语：过去与现在》

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1 Chinese is the native language of approximately a billion people distributed over vast geographical areas of the world. It is the official language of China (both mainland and Taiwan). It is one of the two official languages in Hong Kong SAR of China, where ethnic Chinese constitute more than 95 per cent of the local population. It is one of the four official languages of Singapore, where about 75 per cent of population are ethnic Chinese. It is also reasonably maintained by about 30 million Chinese scattered in other parts of the world.

中文是大约十亿人的母语，他们分布在世界广阔的地理区域。中文是中国（包括大陆和台湾地区）的官方语言。它是中国香港特别行政区的两种官方语言之一，在香港，华人占当地人口的 95% 以上。它是新加坡的四种官方语言之一，在新加坡，大约 75% 的人口是华人。它也被分散在世界其他地方的大约三千万华人合理地传承着。

2 Genealogically, Chinese belongs to the family of Sino-Tibetan. The earliest reliable records of Chinese in the form of jiaguwen “oracle bone script” date back more than 3, 000 years. Much controversy surrounds the periodization of the language since then, partly due to lack of sufficient documentary evidence on the chronological changes in the language, particularly in the pre-modern periods of its evolution, and partly due to the fact that periodization based on each of the three main components of the language, namely, phonology, grammar, and lexicon may not always be co-extensive. The periodization adopted in this book is first and foremost based upon changes in grammar, which may sometimes be co-extensive with phonological, and to a lesser extent, lexical development of the language. As elaborated in Lu (1985a, 1985b), Norman (1988), Peyraube (1988, 1996), Ohta (1991), Mei (1994), inter alia, each period is marked by some conspicuous innovations in syntax and morphology, the details of which need not concern us here. A sketch of the periodization is presented in Table 1. 1.

Table 1.1 Periodization of Chinese

Archaic Chinese	Shang Dynasty (ca. 1700–1100 BC)	Archaic Chinese 上古汉语
	Western Zhou Dynasty (ca. 1100–771 BC)	
	Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC)	
	Warring States Period (475–221 BC)	
	Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC)	
	Western Han Dynasty (206 BC–AD 25)	
Medieval Chinese	Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25–220)	Medieval Chinese 中古汉语
	Wei-Jin Period (220–420)	
	Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589)	
	Sui Dynasty (581–618)	
	Early and Middle Tang Dynasty (618–907)	
Pre-Modern Chinese	Late Tang Dynasty	Pre-Modern Chinese 近代汉语
	Five Dynasties period (907–960)	
	Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127)	
	Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279)	
	Yuan Dynasty (1206–1368)	
Modern Chinese	Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)	Modern Chinese 当代汉语
	Qing Dynasty (1616–1911)	
	Twentieth century	

从语系上来说，中文属于汉藏语系。中国最早的可靠文字记录是甲骨文，可追溯到三千多年前。从那以后，关于中文的历史分期存在很多争议，部分原因是缺乏关于该语言随时间变化的充分文献证据，特别是在其演变的前现代时期；部分原因是基于语言的三个主要组成部分（即语音、语法和词汇）进行的历史分期可能并不总是完全一致的。本书采用的历史分期首先主要基于语法的变化，这有时可能与语言的语音发展一致，在较小程度上也与词汇发展一致。正如吕叔湘（1985a, 1985b）、罗杰瑞（1988）、贝罗贝（1988, 1996）、太田辰夫（1991）、梅祖麟（1994）等人所阐述的那样，每个时期都以句法和词法上的一些显著创新为标志，其具体细节在此无需赘述。历史分期的概述如表 1.1 所示。

3 Archaic Chinese (Shanggu Hanyu) is represented by the language used in classic works of the pre-Qin Period and the Western Han Dynasty. Writings from the Eastern Han onward, while basically following the style of Archaic Chinese, displayed an increasing number of innovations in grammar and vocabulary, which are believed to be reflective of changes in the contemporary vernacular. It is referred as Medieval Chinese (Zhonggu Hanyu), which represents a transitional period. Archaic Chinese and Medieval Chinese constitute Old Chinese (Gudai Hanyu). The appearance of substantial texts in mainly vernacular style in the late Tang Dynasty marked the beginning of Pre-Modern Chinese (Jindai Hanyu). A growing number of emergent grammatical, lexical, and phonological features are attested in texts of this period and thereafter, which presumably reflect corresponding developments in the language shortly before and during the period. The next ten centuries or so constituted the formative years of Modern Chinese (Xiandai Hanyu) during which period almost all the most important characteristic features gradually took shape. By the early Qing Dynasty, all the major changes in grammar, phonology, and basic vocabulary that characterize Modern Chinese had been completed. Influences from Western languages and Japanese aside, present-day Chinese differs little in grammar, phonology, and basic vocabulary from the vernacular found in Honglou Meng, a novel written in the mid eighteenth century.

上古汉语（Shanggu Hanyu）以先秦和西汉时期经典著作中的语言为代表。东汉以后的文献虽然基本沿袭上古汉语的风格，但在语法和词汇方面显示出越来越多的创新，这些被认为反映了当时白话的变化。这一时期被称为中古汉语（Zhonggu Hanyu），它代表了一个过渡阶段。上古汉语和中古汉语共同构成了古代汉语（Gudai Hanyu）。晚唐时期大量以白话为主的文献的出现标志着近代汉语（Jindai Hanyu）的开始。在这一时期及之后的文献中可以看到越来越多新出现的语法、词汇和语音特征，这些大概反映了在这一时期前不久和期间语言的相应发展。接下来的大约十个世纪构成了现代汉语（Xiandai Hanyu）的形成时期，在此期间，几乎所有最重要的特征逐渐形成。到清朝初期，现代汉语在语法、语音和基本词汇方面的所有主要变化都已完成。除了来自西方语言和日语的影响之外，当今的汉语在语法、语音和基本词汇方面与十八世纪中叶所写的小说《红楼梦》中的白话差别不大。

4 What is known as the Chinese language comprises dozens of dialects which may be mutually unintelligible. Again, opinions differ as to their grouping. This book follows the framework in Norman (1988) and B. Xu and Zhan (1988) in classifying all the dialects into seven major groups, differentiated mainly on the basis of phonological features, and, to a lesser extent, also in terms of vocabulary and grammar. The major dialect groups are Beifanghua (Mandarin), Wu, Yue

(Cantonese), Min, Kejia (Hakka), Xiang, and Gan, of which Mandarin is by far the largest group with its native speakers accounting for the majority of the Chinese population. The non-Mandarin groups are also called the Southern dialects. Each of the major dialect groups is in turn comprised of a large number of varieties that are related to each other in terms of a hierarchy with three main levels, sub-dialect, vernacular, and accent. For example, following the traditional classification, Mandarin is composed of four major sub-dialects, namely, Northern, Northwestern, Southwestern, and Jiang Huai, all of which may be further divided into different groups of vernaculars and accents. The standard form of Modern Chinese is known by several names. It is called Putonghua "the common language" in mainland China, guoyu "the national language" in Taiwan Province of China, and huayu "Chinese language" in Singapore.

所谓的汉语包括几十种方言，这些方言可能彼此无法理解。同样，对于它们的分类也存在不同意见。本书遵循罗杰瑞（1988）以及徐通锵和詹伯慧（1988）的框架，将所有方言分为七大主要类别，主要根据语音特征进行区分，在较小程度上也依据词汇和语法进行区分。主要的方言类别有北方话（官话）、吴语、粤语、闽语、客家话、湘语和赣语，其中官话是迄今为止最大的类别，以其为母语的人占中国人口的大多数。非官话类别也被称为南方方言。每个主要方言类别又由大量的变体组成，这些变体在三个主要层次（次方言、土语和口音）的等级关系上相互关联。例如，按照传统分类，官话由四个主要次方言组成，即北方官话、西北官话、西南官话和江淮官话，所有这些次方言又可以进一步分为不同的土语和口音群体。现代汉语的标准形式有几个名称。在中国大陆被称为普通话“the common language”，在中国台湾地区被称为国语“the national language”，在新加坡被称为华语“Chinese language”。

5 This book attempts to present a historical and sociolinguistic profile of Modern Chinese. It will focus on its development and major features of structure and use from the late nineteenth century up to the 1990s, and in the context of a modernizing Chinese society. The book is composed of three parts, concentrating on the spoken form, the written form, and the writing system respectively.

本书试图呈现现代汉语的历史和社会语言学概况。它将聚焦于从 19 世纪末到 20 世纪 90 年代现代汉语的发展以及结构和使用的主要特征，并置于中国社会现代化的背景之下。本书由三个部分组成，分别集中于口语形式、书面形式和书写系统。