

# A Typological Study of Negation in Sinitic Languages: Synchronic and Diachronic Views

Hilary Chappell<sup>i</sup> and Alain Peyraube<sup>ii</sup>

Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales<sup>i</sup>,  
National Center for Scientific Research and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en  
Sciences Sociales<sup>ii</sup>

## Abstract

This paper investigates negative markers in five Sinitic languages: Min-nan, Yue, Wu, Xiang and Northern (Mandarin) with reference to cross-linguistic studies on negation such as Dryer (1988), Dahl (1979), Givón (1978, 1979, 1984), Miestamo (2007), Payne (1985) and Yue-Hashimoto (1993).

A brief historical sketch is also made of Archaic Chinese (5<sup>th</sup> c.-2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE) and in Medieval Chinese in the attempt to trace the origin of these different negative markers. We show that a syntactic, word-order based typology is insufficient to account for these data as Sinitic languages, particularly Min and Yue, possess a large set of semantically distinct negative morphemes, used in what is generally called standard sentence negation as well as in imperatives. These include volitional, perfective, irrealis and imminent kinds of negative markers that provide evidence of the close semantic ties between aspect, modality and negation, as Yue-Hashimoto has observed (1993: 89-92). The main outcome of this analysis is to construct a semantic typology for standard clause negation and imperatives in order to explain these phenomena.

## Keywords

negation, modality, Sinitic languages, typology, diachrony

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Negation has been treated by many linguists and philosophers of language as a symmetrical and logical relation so that for most utterance types such as questions, commands and declaratives, it is understood that corresponding affirmative and negative forms will exist. The following kind of logical analysis is often provided for these: *If A means 'not B', then B means 'not A'*. This proves to be a rather controversial interpretation when applied to real language data, with many linguists reaching the conclusion that it does not and cannot account for *all* natural language phenomena (cf. Wierzbicka 1972: 203-220, Bybee 1985: 176 and particularly Givón 1979, 1984). Wierzbicka (1972: 204) proposes in fact that 'negation is not a reciprocal relation' but rather an expression of the speaker's judgement or belief about a state of affairs or an event in the real world. In other words, negation is a kind of modality.<sup>1</sup>

Palmer (1986) similarly observes certain instances of semantic skewing due to the close relation of negation with the use of the subjunctive mood in certain languages which the affirmative form does not follow; the expression of certain modalities by means of the negative form of verbs and in addition to this, the special grammatical coding for negative imperatives in many languages. Miestamo (2007) discusses this kind of divergent syntactic behavior in terms of symmetric and asymmetric negatives with respect to their affirmative counterparts.

In agreement with the view of the complex linguistic nature of negation, this analysis sets out to show that Sinitic (Chinese) languages are a case in point where the premise of a symmetrical relation will not work. To this end, it is argued that Sinitic languages are typologically significant in the languages of the world with respect to negation for three reasons:

- (i) Sinitic languages possess large sets of semantically distinct negative markers for both standard sentence negation and negative imperatives.
- (ii) The majority of Sinitic languages possess negative verbs of existence and possession, a gap in the sample considered in syntactic typologies of negation such as Dahl (1979) and Payne (1985).

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<sup>1</sup> See Chappell and Peyraube (2016) for a study of modality in Sinitic languages.

- (iii) The different semantic features of Sinitic languages provide particularly clear evidence supporting the view that negation is not only closely related to the domain of modality but also to that of aspect.

These points are argued by examining the semantics of negative adverbs in Sinitic languages, using natural data such as conversational and narrative discourse from Taiwanese Min-nan, standard Hong Kong Cantonese (Yue), the Shanghainese dialect of Wu and the Changsha dialect of New Xiang which are compared with the official language of China, Standard Mandarin or *Pǔtōnghuà* 普通話, based on the Beijing dialect of Mandarin.

In the first part of this paper, a brief sketch is given of the system of negation in Sinitic languages. Section 2 will be devoted to the evolution of the system in Ancient Chinese (Archaic, Medieval and Modern), sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 to the situation in Standard Mandarin and in other main branches of Sinitic languages (Min-nan which possesses the largest set of negatives, Yue, Xiang and Northern Wu) to give an overview of this grammatical category and its subtypes in a typological framework.

### **1. Typological features of negation in Sinitic languages: an overview**

The phenomenon of negation is significant for all Sinitic languages in that it constitutes the essential criterion for defining a verb. In effect, the term ‘verb’ is used for any word which can be modified by a negative adverb (see Zhu 1982).

One of the common word orders in Sinitic languages is S-V-O. Main clause negation in these languages is consistently preverbal, typically immediately preceding the verb in the predicate (or the AuxV in the case of AuxV+V): S-Neg-V-O. For this reason, we consider that markers of negation in Sinitic belong to the grammatical category of adverbs. The only exception here would be the negative existential and possessive verbs which directly negate a NP (§1.2).

The position of the negative adverbs is not surprising from a language universals point of view: Dahl (1979) has shown that syntactic negation tends to be preverbal, a refinement of this being discussed in Dryer (1988). The negative markers in question in Sinitic are independent morphemes, with, however, evidence of fusion having occurred for certain forms in some branches of Sinitic, such as Min.

### 1.1. Semantic typology of negation in Sinitic languages

In this section, we outline the semantic typology or classification that we propose to use in the analysis of the different categories of negative markers found in Sinitic languages. This classification will then be applied to representative languages from five branches of Sinitic.

There are three main syntactic categories of negatives in Sinitic languages:

Verbal

- (i) negative existential, copular and possessive verbs

Adverbial

- (ii) negators of declarative main clauses – known as ‘standard negation’
- (iii) negators of imperative clauses – also known as ‘prohibitives’

We next discuss each category and its members in turn.

### 1.2. Negative existential and possessive verbs ‘there is not, to not have’

Independent negative existential verbs are found in all Sinitic languages apart from standard Mandarin.<sup>2</sup> They occur in the structure: [NEG V+NOUN].

They are not only used to express non-existence ‘there is not/there are not’ as monovalent verb but can also express non-possession in a transitive syntactic framework. This class of verbs can be identified on the following basis:

- (i) Structurally they may directly precede a nominal or noun phrase.
- (ii) Syntactically they may be modified by aspect markers and adverbs.
- (iii) They do not normally co-occur in the same utterance with a positive verb of existence or possession unless this utterance is a polar ‘Yes-No’ interrogative.
- (iv) Semantically, they may also function as verbs of loss and disappearance, particularly when modified aspectually, as is the case in Min-nan and Cantonese Yue (Chappell 1992a, 1994).

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<sup>2</sup> In this study, we adopt two of Norman's terms, namely ‘volitional’ and ‘existential’ negatives (1988: 165). However, unlike Norman, we view the use of the negative existential verb, which is monovalent, as forming a separate construction from its transitive possessive use. The volitional use of simple negatives will also be subsumed under the category of ‘general negatives’.

### 1.3. Standard negation: adverbial negators used in declarative sentences

There are at least four types of negative adverbs used in standard negation in Sinitic languages:

#### 1.3.1. *Perfective negative adverbs* ‘not yet Ved’

Verbs of disappearance and loss have a natural semantic affinity with aspectually bounded contexts and thus with the perfective, an aspectual category which codes the termination of an event or state of affairs. Therefore, it is not surprising when negative existential verbs develop into adverbial negators retaining a semantic trace in the form of a restriction to coding that an event in a past time context did not take place.

Thus, in Sinitic languages, the use of these adverbial negators derived from negative existential verbs is found mainly in past and perfective contexts, that is, in the form of the negative counterpart of bounded aspect markers such as the perfective, experiential and achievement categories.

#### 1.3.2. *General and volitional negative adverbs* ‘not (want to) V’

It can be predicted that all Sinitic languages will possess the semantically very broad category of the ‘general’ negative, also known as the ‘volitional negative’ (see Norman 1988, Liu 2005). This category of negative is used to negate action verbs and modal verbs, but, in many Sinitic languages, the class of adjectives as well (except in Min). It is imperfective or unbounded in nature, combining with a large range of verb classes to express habitual or ongoing states, hypothetical and irrealis meanings including the future, and the present (which is of course imperfective, see Yue-Hashimoto 1993: ch. 6).

It secondarily expresses the feature of lack of volition on the agent’s part to carry out an action which is determined by the nature of the subject and agent of the verb as well as the verb class.

#### 1.3.3. *Imminent negative adverbs* ‘not yet Ved’

This negative category can be defined in terms of expressing that an event or action has not taken place at the reference point of time, while nonetheless being expected or anticipated to occur in the future. Possible contexts are those where the agent/subject is not ready to carry out an action at the given point of time, if not the

case of an external situation temporarily preventing the event or action from occurring. Hence, sentences containing a negative marker from this category code that the event is unrealized at the reference time while holding the presupposition that it will.

#### 1.3.4. *Irrealis negatives* ‘unlikely to V/unable to V’

This category of negative marker expresses either inability of the subject to carry out an action or the unlikelihood of an event taking place, due to some external circumstance which prevents its occurrence. It typically refers to future and hypothetical events and for this reason we have adopted the label of ‘irrealis’, particularly since the event is understood to not be possible.

### 1.4. Adverbial negators used in negative imperative clauses

Distinct from standard negation, or negation of declarative sentences, the category of negative imperatives needs to be separately described. These are also known as ‘prohibitives’ and are frequently treated as a type of mood in grammatical descriptions, opposed to declaratives and interrogatives. They do indeed reveal a different function from clause negation in expressing a variety of illocutionary forces associated with the notion of prohibiting the addressee from doing the action in question.

#### 1.4.1. *General prohibitives* ‘Don’t V!’

The basic kind of negative imperative involves a prohibition with regard to an action: ‘Don’t *Verb*’. Most Sinitic languages possess at least this primary type and in addition may use two or more other modally nuanced imperatives. In Sinitic languages, the addressee may be overt or omitted, as the syntactic configuration in (38) below reflects.

#### 1.4.2. *‘Lack of necessity’ negatives* ‘There’s no need to V’/‘You needn’t V’

This negative marker expresses the absence of any necessity to carry out an action on the agent’s part and is thus clearly linked to deontic modality. Hence, the illocutionary force belonging to this type of imperative is one where the speaker wants the addressee to know that they are not obliged or required to do the action in question.

#### 1.4.3. *Injunctive negatives* ‘It’s better not to V’/‘You shouldn’t V’

This class of negative imperatives contains an admonition or injunction on the part of the speaker that it is better for the addressee not to do the action. The speaker enjoins

the addressee not to carry out an action, implying that to do so might not result in a desirable outcome for them, and so that the action itself is to be avoided.

## 2. Ancient Chinese

Ancient Chinese (*Gǔdài Hànyǔ* 古代漢語) comprises the three stages of Archaic Chinese (*Shàngǔ Hànyǔ* 上古漢語, 11<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE), Medieval Chinese (*Zhōnggǔ Hànyǔ* 中古漢語, 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE-13<sup>th</sup> c. CE) and Modern Chinese (*Jīndài Hànyǔ* 近代漢語, 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c. CE). See Peyraube (1996) for the periodization of the Chinese language based on syntactic criteria.

As is well-known, most of the negatives of Archaic Chinese have disappeared in contemporary Standard Mandarin. One of them, however, attested since the Pre-Archaic period (in the *Jiǎgǔwén* 甲骨文 Oracle Bone Inscriptions, 14<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) is still found widely distributed throughout Sinitic languages today: this is the general negative marker *bù* 不.

The negatives used in Archaic Chinese texts (and even in Late Archaic Chinese, 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE, considered to be the period of Classical Chinese *par excellence*) present an intriguing puzzle. If the language of the Oracle Bone Inscriptions reveals only six negatives, almost twenty can be identified, from as early as the period of Early Archaic Chinese (11<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> BCE).

### 2.1. Pre-Archaic period

The six negatives used in the Oracle Bone Inscriptions (Pre-Archaic period) are: *bù* 不, *fú* 弗, *wù* 勿, *wú* 毋, *wáng* 亡 and *fēi* 非. It is quite easy to give interpretations for *wáng* and *fēi*. *Wáng* is an existential and possessive negative, ‘there is not’ or ‘have not’, and thus a verb used most of the time preceding nouns (see examples 1 and 2 below), but it also occurs sometimes before verbs or adjectives while *fēi*, more rare, is the negative form of the equivalent of the verb ‘to be’, as in (3). According to Djamouri (1987: 519), there are only 15 instances of *fēi*, out of more than 2000 examples of negative markers.

#### (1) Negative existential verb

…亡大雨。

*Wáng*    *dà*    *yǔ*.

NEG<sub>exist</sub>    big    rain

‘... there won’t be heavy rain.’ (Djamouri 1991: 57)

(2) Negative possessive verb

我使亡其貢。

*Wǒ shǐ wáng qí gōng.*

IPL envoy NEG<sub>have</sub> FUT tribute

‘Our envoy won’t have the tribute.’<sup>3</sup> (Djamouri 1987: 518)

(3) Negative copular verb

日月又食非若。

*Rì yuè yòu shí fēi ruò.*

sun moon have eclipse NEG<sub>BE</sub> approval

‘(That) the sun (and) the moon had an eclipse is not an approval.’ (Djamouri 1987: 256)

With respect to *bù* 不 and *fú* 弗 on the one hand, and *wù* 勿 and *wú* 毋 on the other, the situation proves to be much more complicated. There are a dozen different hypotheses to interpret the use of these negatives correctly. See Guan (1953), Chen (1956), Serruys (1974, 1982), Schuessler (1982), Djamouri (1987, 1991), Takashima (1988), Zhu (1990). Some make a difference between ‘simple’ negative markers and ‘deeper’ ones (by which is meant an emphatic use); others distinguish the negation of action verbs, which express objective facts, from verbs which express non-objective facts; still others make a distinction between modal verbs and non-modal verbs, or stative verbs and non-stative verbs; or even a distinction between active verbs and passive verbs.

As for *bù* and *fú*, general negatives, it is obvious that *bù* is much more common than *fú*. It also seems appropriate to propose that *fú* only negates transitive verbs (Vt), whether followed by an object or not, while *bù* can negate both Vt and Vi (intransitive verbs) or even nouns. The following figures are given in Djamouri (1987: 499): 1,223 *bù* (out of which 442 of them negate Vi and 549 negate Vt) versus 505 *fú* (all of which negate Vt). See examples (4)-(6).

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<sup>3</sup> The cited examples are taken from Djamouri (1987, 1991), Serruys (1974), Ito and Takashima (1996) with an indication of the pages.



- (4) 黄尹弗保我使。

*Huáng Yǐn fú bǎo wǒ shǐ.*

Huang Yin NEG protect 1PL envoy

‘Huang Yin (will) not protect our envoy.’ (Djamouri 1987: 466)

- (5) 王不往于田。

*Wáng bù wǎng yú tián.*

King NEG go to hunt

‘The king will not go hunting.’ (Djamouri 1987: 444)

- (6) 帝不我其受又。

*Dì bù wǒ qí shòu yòu.*

Di NEG 1PL FUT give assistance

‘Di will not give us (any) assistance.’ (Serruys 1974: 44)

Most scholars will also agree that the fusion hypothesis, first raised by Ding (1935), is completely inaccurate to account for the Pre-Archaic period. The fusion hypothesis would hold that *fú* 弗 = *bù* 不 + *zhī* 之, *zhī* being a pronoun (see below for a discussion).

It is also difficult to know exactly what the differences are between *wù* 勿 and *wú* 毋, albeit that *wù* is much more common than *wú*. Thus, it is not plausible to claim that *wù* tends to negate Vt’s while *wú* negates Vi’s (hypothesis of Serruys 1982). We have too many cases of *wú* negating Vt, even ones where they are followed by a direct object coding the patient. Furthermore, both of them can be used for expressing proscriptive, injunctive or prohibitive negation.<sup>4</sup> They are thus often used in imperative sentences, although not exclusively, and resemble the use of injunctive negatives in contemporary Sinitic languages.<sup>5</sup> Lü (1941/1984: 73-102) asserts that the only difference between these two negatives is a difference of register: *wù* expresses strong proscription (high register) whereas *wú* expresses weak proscription (low register). He might be justified in this. As for the fusion hypothesis (*wù* 勿 = *wú* 毋 (無) + *zhī* 之) suggested for later periods by Lü (1941/1984) and by Graham (1952),

<sup>4</sup> Djamouri is the only scholar rejecting a proscriptive value for *wú*.

<sup>5</sup> Shopen (1979: 170-171) has observed out that ‘the effect of an imperative sentence [request/command/order/suggestion/instruction] could be obtained by declarative sentences meaning ‘I want you to...’, ‘You should/must ...’, ‘You will ...’.’

it would also be completely inaccurate, if applied to the Pre-Archaic period. Some examples of *wù* and *wú* are:

(7) 勿告于中丁。

*wù gào yú Zhōng Dīng.*  
NEG announce to Zhong Ding

‘Don’t announce (it) to Zhong Ding.’ or:

‘It should not be announced to Zhong Ding.’ (Djamouri 1987: 510)

(8) 王勿入于商。

*Wáng wù rù yú Shāng.*  
King NEG enter at Shang

‘The king should not enter Shang.’ (Djamouri 1987: 508)

(9) 一百牛毋其至。

*Yī bǎi niú wú qí zhì.*  
one hundred ox NEG FUT bring

‘A hundred oxen will not be brought.’ (Djamouri 1987: 516)

(10) 婦媯毋其又子。

*Fù Jīng wú qí yòu zǐ.*  
Lady Jing NEG FUT have child

‘Lady Jing will not have a child.’ (Ito and Takashima 1996: 374)

## 2.2. Archaic period

In Archaic Chinese (both Early and Late Archaic), the situation is even more complicated. Following Kennedy (1952) who listed 18 different negative forms, Pulleyblank (1995: 103-113) divides the 16 negatives he recognizes into two groups, distinguished by the type of initial: (a) *p/f* or (b) *m/w*. The *p/f* negatives are *bù* 不, *fǒu* 否, *fú* 弗, *fēi* 非, *pǒ* 叵, and *hé* 盍. The *m/w* negatives are *wú* 毋 (or 無, if not 无), *wù* 勿, *wáng* 亡, *wǎng* 罔, *mò1* 莫, *wèi* 未, *wéi* 微, *mǐ* 靡, *miè* 篋, and *mò2* 末.

Some of these negatives are not common at all. For instance, *pǒ* is an uncommon contraction of *bù kě* 不可 ‘not possible’ and *wáng* and *wǎng* are mainly used in the pre-Classical language, also *miè*. Others are variants such as *wéi* which is a variant of *fēi* used to negate nouns, or *mǐ*, a variant of *wú*, or *mò2*, which is similar to *miè*, while further negatives are attested as fused words: *hé* is a contraction of *hé bù* 何不 ‘why

not?’. Finally, some negative adverbs have specific negative meanings such as *mòl*, a pronoun which has the meaning in Archaic Chinese of ‘nothing’, ‘no-one’, ‘nobody’.

In fact, most of studies on Classical Chinese identify a set of no more than seven or eight negatives that are truly common.<sup>6</sup> We will thus briefly discuss the following negatives: *bù*, *fú*, *wú*, *wù*, *wèi*, *fēi* and *fǒu*.

### 2.2.1.

*Bù* 不 is the most common negative marker, an adverb of simple verbal negation, that is, a general negative. It negates transitive verbs (with or without overt objects after the verb) as well as intransitive verbs and also adjectives. There are 580 *bù* which can be counted in the *Lún Yǔ*, and 1073 in the *Mèngzǐ*.<sup>7</sup>

(11) 名不正，則言不順。

*Míng bù zhèng, zé yán bù shùn.*

name NEG correct then language NEG in:accordance

‘If names are not correct, language is not in accordance (with the things).’ (論語：子路，between 479 and 400 BCE)

(12) 學不可以已。

*Xué bù kěyǐ yǐ.*

study NEG can stop

‘One cannot stop studying.’ (荀子：勸學，4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE)

### 2.2.2.

*Fú* 弗 also negates intransitive verbs and sometimes transitive ones, but generally without any object after the verb (there are some exceptions). In fact, it can be considered as a fusion of *bù* (general negative marker) and the object pronoun *zhī* (‘it’): ‘*fú* 弗 = *bù* 不 + *zhī* 之’. This fusion hypothesis was first raised by Ding (1935), and then praised by many Chinese linguists, but later refuted by notably Huang (1958) and

<sup>6</sup> Ma (1983: 364-369) lists seven: *bù*, *fú*, *wú*, *wù*, *wèi*, *fēi*, *fǒu*; Liu (1994: 64) also gives seven: *bù*, *fú*, *wú*, *wù*, *wèi*, *fēi*, *mòl*, while Li (2004: 196-200) lists only five: *bù*, *fú*, *wú*, *wù*, *wèi*.

<sup>7</sup> These numbers have to be compared with the number of occurrences for the other negatives. We have 131 *wú* 無, 57 *wèi*, 33 *fēi*, 17 *mòl*, and 13 *wù* in the *Lún Yǔ*, 265 *wú* 無, 147 *fēi*, 90 *wèi*, 58 *mòl* and 13 *wù* in the *Mèngzǐ*.

Dobson (1966), among others. Although it is clearly not appropriate for the Pre-Archaic period as seen above, nor for the earliest period of Early Archaic Chinese, it has nonetheless now been legitimized, even if the rule is not a strict one.<sup>8</sup> The hypothesis is entirely plausible from the point of view of syntax if not of phonology, while it is supported by many examples, including the following:

(13) 得之則生，弗得則死。

*dé zhī zé shēng, fú dé zé sǐ.*  
get it then live NEG+it get then die

‘(If he) gets them (rice and soup), he will live; (if he) does not get them, he will die.’ (孟子：告子·上, between 300 and 249 BCE)

### 2.2.3.

*Wú* 毋 (無, 无) and *wù* 勿 are respectively a prohibitive negator ‘don’t’ (example 14) or an existential-locative negator with the meaning ‘there is not’, as well as the extended possessive negative ‘have not’ (example 15):

(14) 子無敢食我也。

*Zǐ wú gǎn shí wǒ yě.*  
2SG NEG dare eat 1SG PRT

‘You (a tiger) won’t dare to eat me.’ (戰國策：楚策, between 77 and 6 BCE)

(15) 盡信《書》，則不如無《書》。

*Jìn xìn Shū, zé bù rú wú Shū.*  
entirely trust *Shu-Jing* then NEG worth NEG<sub>HAVE</sub> *Shu-Jing*

‘Entirely believing in the *Shu Jing* is not worthier than not having a *Shu Jing*.’ (孟子：盡心·下)

*Wù* 勿 has probably the same relation to the prohibitive *wú* 毋 as *fú* does to *bù*. Lü (1941, in Lü 1984: 73-102) and Graham (1952) hypothesized that *wù* 勿 is a contraction of *wú* 毋 (無) and *zhī* 之, that is: *wù* 勿 = *wú* 毋 (無) + *zhī* 之. Example:

<sup>8</sup> There are exceptions, such as *fú ruò zhī yī* 弗若之矣 [NEG be:like 3SG PRT] ‘(His results) are not like him’ (孟子：告子·上). Li (2004: 197) also cites the following well-known example in 韓非子 *Hàn Fēizǐ*: *fú zhī zhī zhě* 弗知之者 [NEG know 3SG the.one.who] ‘The ones who don’t know this’.

- (16) 百畝之田，勿奪其時。

*Bǎi mǔ zhī tián, wù duó qí shí.*  
 100 mu GEN field NEG.3PL take.away 3.GEN time

‘As for the hundred mu of fields, do not deprive them of their time (of cultivation).’ (孟子：梁惠王·上)

## 2.2.4.

*Wèi* 未 has the meaning of ‘not yet’, ‘never’. It is an aspectual negative that we have named the ‘imminent negative’, as in the following examples:

- (17) 未之有也。

*Wèi zhī yǒu yě.*  
 NEG<sub>YET</sub> this have PRT

‘(This) has never happened.’ (孟子：梁惠王·上)

- (18) 亡羊補牢，猶未為晚。

*Wáng yáng bǔ láo, yóu wèi wéi wǎn.*  
 lose sheep repair pen still NEG<sub>YET</sub> be late

‘Having lost one sheep, repairing the sheep pen is not yet (too) late.’ (戰國策：楚策)

In some cases, however, it is a simple or general negative to be interpreted from the context as only meaning ‘not’:

- (19) 見牛未見羊。

*Jiàn niú wèi jiàn yáng.*  
 see ox NEG<sub>YET</sub> see sheep

‘(You) saw the ox, (but) did not see the sheep.’ (孟子：梁惠王·上)

## 2.2.5.

*Fǒu* 否 is an independent or free morpheme, and has been described as the ‘form taken by *bù* when the verb which it negated was omitted and the particle stood on its own in phrasal final position’ (Pulleyblank 1995: 103):

(20) 曰：“否”。

*Yùè:* “*fǒu*”.

Answer no

‘(He) answered: “no”.’ (孟子：梁惠王·上)

### 2.2.6.

*Fēi* 非 is a negative copular verb used in the negation of nouns and probably an early contraction of *bù+wéi* 不唯, where *wéi* was a copula in pre-Classical times.

(21) 我非生而知之者。

*Wǒ fēi shēng ér zhī zhī zhě.*

1SG NEG<sub>BE</sub> born and know 3SG the.one.who

‘I am not (the kind of) person who knows these (things) before being born.’

(論語：述而)

*Fēi* may also have the meaning of ‘if (there is) not’, as in:

(22) 非不悅子之道，力不足也。

*Fēi bù yuè zǐ zhī dào, lì bù*

NEG<sub>BE</sub> NEG like 2SG DET.PRT doctrine strength NEG

*zú yě.*

enough PRT

‘It is not that (I) don’t like your doctrine, (it is that) my fortitude is limited.’

(論語：雍也)

### 2.2.7.

Finally, *mòl* 莫, besides being an indefinite pronoun with the meaning of ‘nobody’, ‘nothing’, is sometimes also a negative prohibitive adverb, but this use becomes more common in post-Classical times:

(23) 小子何莫學夫《詩》？

*Xiǎozǐ hé mò xué fū Shī?*

Student why NEG<sub>IMP</sub> study that Shi Jing

‘Students, why don’t you study the *Shi Jing*?’ (論語：陽貨)

### 2.3. From Archaic to Medieval and Modern Chinese

In Pre-Medieval (Han) times, 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE-2 c. CE, many examples of the various negatives found in Late Archaic Chinese have been replaced by *bù*. These are *fú*, of course, but also *wèi*, *wú* 無, *fǒu*, *wù*, and even *fēi* (see Dobson 1964: 15). These replacements are obvious when one compares the *Mèngzǐ* (dated 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) to the commentaries and translation made by Zhao Qi 趙歧 (?-201) of this book in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE. Example (13) is reproduced below (in 24) for convenience of comparison with its translation in (25):

(24) 得之則生，弗得則死。

*dé zhī zé shēng, fú dé zé sǐ.*  
get 3SG then live NEG.3SG get then die

‘(If he) gets them (rice and soup), he will live; (if he) does not get them, he will die.’ (孟子：告子·上, between 300 and 249 BCE)

(25) Zhao Qi’s 趙歧 translation is:

不得則死。

*Bù dé zé sǐ.*  
NEG get then die

‘(If he) does not get (it), he will die.’

Many *fú* are thus replaced by *bù*, as well as by *wèi* when it expresses general negation ‘not’ and not the aspectual negation ‘not yet’ of the imminence type. As for the remaining *fú* 弗, they can no longer be considered as fusions of *bù* 不 + *zhī* 之. The same applies for *wù* 勿 which is no longer conceivably a fusion of *wú* 毋 (無) + *zhī* 之.

Moreover, the word order is now *Negation+Verb+Pronoun* and no longer *Negation+Pronoun+Verb* as it was in Archaic Chinese; see Wang (1958: 368). There also seems to be a new differentiation of meaning for the two *wu* in Pre-Medieval: *wú* 毋 is an existential-locative negative, restricted to the negation of *yǒu* 有 ‘there is, to have’, while *wù* 勿 is used as a prohibitive for the negation of imperatives. Finally, *mòl*, that was mainly used as a pronoun ‘nothing, nobody’ in Archaic Chinese, now starts to become a common prohibitive negator used in imperatives and tends to replace the two negative adverbs, *wú* and *wù*.

(26) 莫如商鞅反者！

*Mò rú Shang Yang fǎn zhě!*

NEG<sub>IMP</sub> like Shang Yang revolt PRT

‘Don’t revolt like Shang Yang (did)!’ (史記：商君列傳，between 104 and 91 BCE)

So the set of negatives under the Han period can be summarized as follows: *bù*, *wèi*, *wú*, *wù*, *mòl*, and *fěi*. All the remaining negatives described above, for Early Archaic, are not commonly employed or even used in citations of former texts.

The situation is not much different for the following period (Early Medieval Chinese, 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> c.). One can find in the *Shì Shuō Xīn Yǔ* 世說新語, composed between 420 and 444: 1067 *bù*, only 2 *fú*, 15 *wù*, 6 *mòl*, 13 *fěi*, 6 *wú* 無, 166 *wèi* 未 (44 where *wèi* = *bù* ‘not’, 119 where *wèi* = ‘not yet’, three where *wèi* is found at the end of a sentence). In the *Sān Guó Zhì* 三國志, composed between 263 and 297, we also have: *bù*, *wù*, *mò*, *fěi*, *wú*, and *wèi*. *Fú* is very rare.

(27) 但賞功而不罰罪，非國典也。

*Dàn shǎng gōng ér bù fá zuì, fěi*

only reward achievement but NEG punish fault NEG<sub>BE</sub>

*guó diǎn yě.*

state law PRT

‘(If I) only reward the achievements, but do not punish the faults, (this) will not (respect) the laws of the state.’ (三國志：魏書·武帝記)

Many changes occurred in the system of negatives during the Late Medieval (7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.) and Modern (14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> c.) periods, including the appearance of new negative adverbs. Gao (1948) was probably the first scholar to date the appearance of *méi* 沒 and *xiū* 休 to the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from *méi* and *xiū*, he also listed two other negatives used in the Buddhist texts of these periods: *bù* 不 and *mòl* 莫.

*Xiū* was indeed already common at the end of the Tang (618-907) as a prohibitive negative. It was probably grammaticalized from a verb meaning ‘to forbid’ around the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century. Many examples can be found in the *Dūnhuáng Biànwén* 敦煌變文 (850-1015). Under the Yuan (1279-1368), at the end of the Late Medieval and at the



beginning of the Modern Chinese period, it was much more common than *mò*, which had been the widely used prohibitive negator under the Early Medieval period. In the *Yuán Qū Xuǎn* 元曲選 (61-80), compiled at the beginning of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), but gathering together Yuan operas, one can find only 56 *mò* but 299 *xiū* (see Jiang and Cao 2005: 132-133).<sup>9</sup>

(28) 你休要打我。

*Nǐ xiū yào dǎ wǒ.*  
 2SG NEG will beat 1SG  
 ‘Don’t beat me.’ (救風塵 . 3)

Concerning *méi*, if it can be dated at the earliest to the mid-Tang period (i.e. ca. 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> c.), it was still quite rare at that time. As pointed out by Ōta (1958/1987: 280-283), *méi* was not a common negator before the Yuan period. The origin of this marker is a verb meaning ‘bury’, ‘sink’, ‘inundate’, or more generally ‘disappear’. Through a semantic process of extension, it acquired the meaning of ‘there is not’ and then, through a mechanism of grammaticalization, it became a negative adverb, first replacing the existential negator *wú*, extending later with its variant *méi yǒu* 沒有, to an aspectual negator or a marker expressing a perfective negation; see Sun (1992: 170-171). The following example is taken from the *Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi* 朱子語類 (compiled between 1175 and 1200):

(29) 他那個物事沒理會。

*Tā nèige wùshì méi lǐhuì.*  
 3SG that.CL matter NEG understand  
 ‘He did not understand this matter.’ (朱子語類輯略 . 7)

As for *méi yǒu*, it is used for the first time under the Yuan. According to Mei (1984), there is not a single example of *méi yǒu* in the *Zhūzǐ Yǔlèi*, nor in the operas dated ca. 1320, such as *Zhāng Xié Zhuàng Yuán* 張協狀元, *Cuò lì shēn* 鏗立身 and *Xiǎo Sūn*

<sup>9</sup> In later documents of the Modern period, such as *Jīn Píng Méi Cíhuà* 金瓶梅詞話 (end of 16<sup>th</sup> century), the proportion of *xiū* is even greater: 21 *mò* and 203 *xiū* in the first 50 chapters.

*Tú* 小孫屠, where *méi* is largely attested, but not *méi yǒu*. Thus, the first appearance of *méi yǒu* can be dated between 1310 and 1350.<sup>10</sup> And indeed, we find some examples, although still rare, in the *Lǎo Qīdà* 老乞大 and the *Piáo Tōngshì* 朴通事, both dated approximately to 1350.<sup>11</sup>

(30) 沒有五六錢銀子。

*Méi yǒu wǔ liù qián yínzi.*

NEG have five six silver ounce (tael)

‘(I) do not have the five or six ounces of silver.’ (朴通事 . 90)<sup>12</sup>

(31) 如今為沒有賣的。

*Rújīn wéi méi yǒu mài de.*

today for NEG there.be sell PRT

‘Today, there is nothing to be sold for (you).’ (老乞大 . 132)

Concerning the contemporary use of prohibitive *bié* 別, if some scattered examples can be found during the Ming or even the Yuan periods, it is not common before the Qing (1644-1911). Finally, *béng* 甬 only appeared in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

(32) 別嗔着我多嘴！

*Bié chēn zhe wǒ duō zuǐ!*

NEG<sub>IMP</sub> be.angry ASP 1SG much mouth

‘Don’t be angry at me and shout!’ (紅樓夢 . 6)

To sum up, in Late Medieval and Modern Chinese, the following negatives are commonly attested: *bù*, *xiū*, *wù*, *méi*, *mò*, and *méi yǒu*.

<sup>10</sup> *Méi yǒu* has been probably created by analogy with *wú yǒu* 無有 which was already in existence during several of the previous centuries, albeit not very common.

<sup>11</sup> According to Jiang (2005: 314) there are four *méi yǒu* for 42 *méi* in the *Lǎo Qīdà* and the proportion is even greater for the *Piáo Tōngshì* of 44:2.

<sup>12</sup> The page number refers to the 1978 edition of *Piáo Tōngshì Yànjié* 朴通事諺解 and *Lǎo Qīdà Yànjié* 老乞大諺解, Taipei: Liánjīng chūbānshè.

<sup>13</sup> See Jiang and Cao (2005: 132-133) for the historical evolution of *bié*. See also Jiang and Wu (1997: 444-452) who interestingly classify the negative adverbs under the category of ‘modal adverbs’.

Yang (2005: 74-76) has collected the negatives used in the *Dūnhuáng Biànwén*, in *Zhūzi Yǔlèi* and in *Jīn Píng Méi Cihuà*, and he divides these negators into four classes:

- (i) Negators expressing a simple negation: *bù*, *xiū*, *mò*;
- (ii) Negators expressing the negation of an event that hasn't taken place at reference time of speech, but is anticipated in the case of *wèi*: *méi*, *wèi*
- (iii) Negators of the copula: *fēi*
- (iv) Prohibitive negators used in imperatives: *wù*, *xiū*, *méi*, *mò*.<sup>14</sup>

These classes correspond nicely to our categories of general and volitional negation, perfective negation, negative copular verbs and negative imperatives, in that order.

While *xiū* and *mò* have disappeared today in Standard Mandarin (Northern Mandarin), they continue to be employed in other Sinitic languages, so too *wèi* and *wù*, as we will see in the following sections, but not *fēi*. As for *bié* and *béng*, typical of Mandarin, their development occurred later, respectively in the Qing and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3. Negation system in Standard Mandarin

Standard Mandarin (*Pǔtōnghuà*) possesses two main negative markers: *bù* 不 'not' and *méi* 沒 'there is not', 'have not' or 'did not'. The first one can be characterized as a general and volitional negative, the second one is a perfective negative. There is also a negative imperative marker *bù yào* 不要 'NEG want' which undergoes fusion to become *bié* 別 in dialectal form and *bù yòng* 不用 'don't need to; shouldn't', also used in the fused form *béng* 甬 in some Mandarin dialects. As Li (1988: 152) has pointed out, Mandarin has abandoned most of the large set of negatives present in Archaic Chinese, seen in its comparatively small number of markers. One example is the cognate 'imminent' negatives retained in Cantonese and Min-nan which express 'not yet', *mei*<sup>6</sup> 未 and *be*<sup>22</sup> 未 respectively, for which Mandarin uses an analytical periphrastic form *hái méi yǒu* 還沒有 'still- NEG -have'. For more discussion, see Chao (1968: 782-783), Norman (1988: 196-197), Li and Thompson (1981: 415-441), Zhu (1982: 200-201).

<sup>14</sup> There are many other negatives in the lists of Yang, but these are disyllabic. Several of them, such as *bù céng* 不曾 'not yet' which has replaced *wèi* 未 as early as the Late Medieval period, are very common, but they are out of the scope of this study.

### 3.1. Volitional negative *bù* 不

*Bù* 不 is the most general and neutral negative adverb in Standard Mandarin, and is the one most frequently employed in this role with verbs that are not marked overtly for any particular aspect, leading to its classification as a negator of imperfective situations (Yue-Hashimoto 1993: 90). That is, it may be used in present, future, habitual, stative and irrealis contexts.

A second interpretation is also possible, depending on the context and verb class: Chao (1968: 782) has observed that ‘*Bù* usually has the effect of “would not”’. Zhu (1982: 200), in his turn, clearly states that *bù* contradicts a wish, a desire, or an aspiration (*yìyuàn* 意願); in our nomenclature, it is a ‘volitional negative’ when it has this second important function. The interpretation is particularly clear with action and activity verbs, but also with modal verbs with which *bù* is highly compatible. Nonetheless, this semantic parameter is evidently not relevant for the negation of adjectives, as the contrast between examples (33) and (34) shows: in (33), both instances of *bù* may have the volitional negative interpretation, the first with an action verb and the second with a modal, whereas example (34) contains an adjective, and the volitional interpretation of *bù* is thus absent.

(33) 所以他不買那種的，

*suǒyì tā bù mǎi nèi zhǒng de,*  
so 3SG NEG buy that kind DE<sub>ATT</sub>

而且玻璃瓶的，他也不想要。

*ěrqǐě bō li píng de, tā yě bù xiǎngyào.*  
moreover glass bottle DE<sub>ATT</sub> 3SG also NEG want

‘So he didn’t (want to) buy that kind (of plastic bottle) and he didn’t want glass bottles either.’ (School Camp 87-88)<sup>15</sup>

(34) 他的級別不夠。

*Tā de jíbìe bù gòu.*  
3SG DE<sub>GEN</sub> rank NEG enough

‘His rank isn’t sufficient (for negotiating).’ (Education 467)

<sup>15</sup> Transcriptions of two conversations in Mandarin by speakers from Beijing (‘School Camp’ and ‘Education’) in addition to the Pear Stories collected by Mary Erbaugh in Taiwan are used here for data.

Finally, note that this general negative is, not unsurprisingly, the one which occurs in the potential construction in Mandarin with the meaning of ‘unable to Verb’: Verb<sub>1</sub>–*bù* 不 –Verb<sub>2</sub> which suits its modal semantics: *jiáo-bù-dòng* 嚼不動 chew-NEG-move ‘unable to chew’.

### 3.2. Existential and perfective negative *méi (yǒu)* 沒有

A majority of Sinitic languages have a special monosyllabic, portmanteau verb that forms two distinct syntactic constructions, one negating existence of an object in a certain location that is equivalent to ‘there is not’ and the other negating possession ‘to not have’, for example, *mo*<sup>5</sup> 冇 in Hong Kong Cantonese (Chappell 1992b, 1994). These two uses with a following noun have extended to a third context and construction type, where the verb has been reanalyzed as having an auxiliary function in negating a following verb when referring to past events.

In Mandarin, these three functions are coded by the disyllabic phrase *méi(yǒu)* 沒(有) ‘there is not’ (existential-locative sense) or ‘do not have’ (possessive sense), which means ‘didn’t VERB’ or ‘haven’t VERBed’ when preceding and modifying a predicate and applied to contexts with a reference time in the past. These three uses are exemplified in turn below:

Example (35) negates the existence or location of an object in a certain place (verbal use); example (36) negates the ownership of an object (also the verbal use); while example (37) negates the presupposition that an event took place in the past (used as a perfective negative adverb), namely, that the boy might have ridden off on his bicycle. Note that it is possible to omit the existential and possessive verb *yǒu* in Mandarin in all three constructions, leaving only *méi*, and, conversely, it is possible to add it back in.

#### (35) Negative existential construction:

Location/Temporal phrase – *méi(yǒu)* 沒(有) – NP

今年就沒有這個門兒！

*Jīnnián*    *jiù*    *méi*    *yǒu*    *zhèige*    *ménr!*

this.year    then    NEG<sub>EXIST</sub>    there.be    this.CL    door (possibility)

‘There wasn’t such a possibility this year!’ (Education 99)

(36) Negative possessive construction: NP<sub>1</sub> – *méi(yǒu)* – NP<sub>2</sub>

挺…挺甜的，也沒有苦的。

*tǐng tǐng tián de, yě méi.yǒu kǔ de.*

quite quite sweet DE<sub>ASST</sub> also NEG<sub>HAVE</sub> bitter DE<sub>ASST</sub>

‘(Blackberries-They’re) quite, quite sweet and don’t have any bitterness.’

(School Camp 351)

(37) Existential negative adverb: NP<sub>1</sub> – *méi(yǒu)* VERB – NP<sub>2</sub>

他受傷了，就沒有騎了。

*Tā shòu-shāng le, jiù méi yǒu qí le.*

3SG be:wounded ASP then NEG<sub>PFV</sub> have ride CRS

‘He’d been hurt, so he didn’t ride anymore.’ (Pear I.13: 59-61)

Apart from these two main negative adverbs, Standard Mandarin also possesses several kinds of negative imperative expressions, which are next discussed in terms of prohibitives. These are adverbial phrases, some of which have developed into compound or fused forms such as *bié* 別 ‘don’t’.

3.3. General negative imperative *bù yào* ~ *bié* 不要~別

The negative *bù yào* 不要 ~ *bié* 別 is the general prohibitive negative, and is used mainly in imperatives with the interpretation of English ‘don’t’.

(38) (2SG ~ 2PL *Nǐ(men)*) – *bù yào* 不要 (~ *bié* 別) – VERB

我說：“你別老抄我的呀！”

*Wǒ shuō: “Nǐ bié lǎo chǎo wǒ de ya!”*

1SG say 2SG NEG<sub>IMP</sub> always copy 1SG GEN PRT

‘I said, “Just stop always copying mine!”’ (School Camp 333)

3.4. Lack of necessity imperative *bù yòng*~*béng* 不用~甭

This is also the case of a prohibitive. Nonetheless, it expresses that it is impossible objectively to do this or that. Beyond the sense of ‘no need’, it also has the meaning of ‘not necessary’ and is thus similar to the use of *bù bì* 不必.

(39) 你既然都知道了，我就甭說了！

*Nǐ jìrán dōu zhīdao le, wǒ jiù béng shuō le!*  
 2SG since all know ASP 1SG then NEG<sub>NEED</sub> say ASP  
 ‘Since you know everything, I don’t need to explain it!’

Against this small set of negative adverbs and adverbial expressions in Mandarin, much larger sets can be found in other contemporary Sinitic languages, the topics of the following sections.

#### 4. Negation system in Min-nan

For standard sentence negation in Sinitic languages, that is, main clause negation, we find an array of different kinds of negative markers being employed, particularly in the non-Mandarin Sinitic languages of south and central China. Li (1990) and Teng (1990), for example, have compared the sets for Taiwanese Min and Mandarin showing that Taiwanese has at least seven or eight negative particles, while Standard Mandarin has just four main forms, *bù*, *méi*, *bié* and *béng*, as described above in §3.

There appears to be general consensus on the existence of a large number of negative markers in Min-nan, although the precise set may vary according to the criteria used in defining negation (see, for example, *inter alia* Huang (1958), Li (1971), Li (2007), Li (1990), Lien (2015), Teng (1990), Yang (1991), Zhang (1983) and Zhou (1991)).<sup>16</sup> In this section, nine are described for Taiwanese Southern Min, a variety which is linguistically close to the mainland varieties spoken in Quanzhou and Zhangzhou in southern Fujian province, while being similar but not identical to the Xiamen (Amoy) dialect, the unofficial regional standard in China for Min-nan. In fact, Quanzhou and Zhangzhou are the areas from where the majority of Min-nan speakers originally emigrated to Taiwan from the time of the early Qing dynasty.

In this set of nine markers, there are three volitional negatives *m*<sup>22</sup>, *mmai*<sup>21</sup> 懷愛 and *boai*<sup>21</sup> 勿愛; an existential and perfective negative *bo*<sup>24</sup> 無, the imminent negative, *be*<sup>22</sup> 未 ‘not yet’ and the irrealis negative, *bue*<sup>22</sup> 儻 (or 袂) ‘not be able, unlikely to VERB’. In addition to these, three negative imperative forms are in use: *mai*<sup>24</sup> 勿愛 ‘don’t’, the

<sup>16</sup> The number in the set essentially depends on whether disyllabic and compound forms are included or not.

lack of necessity negative, (*m*)*bian*<sup>53</sup> ( 佷 ) 免 ‘do not need’ and the injunctive negative, *m**mo*<sup>53</sup> 毋 ‘best not to, shouldn’t’.<sup>17</sup> Two further negative imperatives *m*<sup>22</sup> *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> 佷通 ‘don’t/shouldn’t’ and *m*<sup>22</sup> *eng*<sup>22</sup> 佷用 ‘needn’t’, are also briefly mentioned.

#### 4.1. General and volitional negatives *m*<sup>22</sup> 佷, *m**mai*<sup>21</sup> 佷愛 and *boai*<sup>21</sup> 無愛

The three general and volitional negatives in Taiwanese Min-nan are *m*<sup>22</sup>, *m**mai*<sup>21</sup> and *boai*<sup>21</sup>, each with a different semantic range of use, despite the fact that the semantic feature of volition, specifically ‘not wanting to do an action’ is shared across the three adverbs in certain contexts. Two of these markers are the result of morphological fusion: these are *boai*<sup>21</sup> and *m**mai*<sup>21</sup>, as will be explained below.

To begin with, the basic negative marker *m*<sup>22</sup> 佷 is used to negate verbs, including modal verbs, according to the context and verb class, also expressing the feature of lack of volition on the agent’s part to carry out an action. This is demonstrated in the following example, where the modal nature of *m*<sup>22</sup> is sufficient to act as the negative counterpart to *be*<sup>32</sup> 卜 ‘want’:

- (40) 你卜去，我佷去。  
*Li*<sup>53</sup>    *be*<sup>32</sup>    *k’i*<sup>21</sup>,    *gua*<sup>53</sup>    *m*<sup>22</sup>    *k’i*<sup>21</sup>.  
 2SG    want    go    1SG    NEG    go  
 ‘You want to go, (but) I don’t want to.’

Teng (1990: 338) also describes *m*<sup>22</sup> as having a feature of ‘refusal to, intention not to’. It is also the negator for the verb ‘to be’, *si*<sup>21</sup> 是, and can be used in the A-NOT-A polar question type, as in (41). Li (1971) similarly analyses this marker as having the two interpretations of simple, or general, negation ‘not’ and ‘to not want’. For these reasons, we consider it to be the basic marker of the three.

<sup>17</sup> Note that the Chinese characters used to represent Southern Min may vary from author to author and from text to text. This is due to the lack of any standardization of its orthography and a choice between representing the sound by a homophone character in Standard Chinese, or by its meaning and thus its etymologically correct character, if identifiable, the latter being likely to have a different pronunciation. For example, for the general negative, we find *m*<sup>22</sup> 唔, 不 and 佷.



- (41) 你去怀去？  
*Li*<sup>53</sup>    *k'i*<sup>21</sup>    *m*<sup>22</sup>    *k'i*<sup>21</sup>?  
 2SG    go    NEG    go  
 ‘Are you going?’

Note however, that unlike Mandarin, *m*<sup>22</sup> cannot be used to negate adjectives, the exclusive preserve of *bo*<sup>24</sup>, the perfective negator.

The second negative marker *mmai*<sup>21</sup> 怀愛 is the result of fusion of *m*<sup>22</sup> 怀 with the verb *ai*<sup>21</sup> 愛 whose source meaning is ‘like, love’ from which it has extended to the modal meanings of ‘want’ and ‘have to’ in Min-nan.

- (42) 伊 [ 怀愛 ] 看册。  
*I*<sup>44</sup>    *mmai*<sup>21</sup>    *k'uã*<sup>21</sup>    *ts'eh*<sup>4</sup>.  
 3SG    NEG    read    book  
 ‘S/he doesn’t want to read.’

This volitional negative contrasts in turn with a third form, *boai*<sup>21</sup>, which, in a similar manner, results from the fusion of the existential negative *bo*<sup>24</sup> 無, discussed below, and the same verb *ai*<sup>21</sup>, according to Li (1990: 600) and Teng (1990: 336):

- (43) 伊 [ 無愛 ] 看册。  
*I*<sup>44</sup>    *boai*<sup>53</sup>    *k'uã*<sup>21</sup>    *ts'eh*<sup>4</sup>.  
 3SG    NEG    read    book  
 ‘S/he doesn’t like reading books.’

The difference in meaning appears to be that *mmai*<sup>21</sup> is episodic in referring to a specific occasion when the agent refuses to read, whereas *boai*<sup>21</sup> has a stative quality in referring to the general or habitual situation for this person.

#### 4.2. Perfective negative *bo*<sup>24</sup> 無

As a verb, this morpheme forms two constructions expressing respectively non-existence or non-possession *bo*<sup>24</sup> *to*<sup>4</sup>-*a*<sup>53</sup> 無桌仔 ‘there are no tables’ (Chappell 1994). However, it can also be used as a negative adverb preceding a verb, coding that a particular event, which one of the interlocutors presumes to have occurred, did not in

fact take place. Miestamo (2007) remarks upon the asymmetry between positive and negative clauses and the fact that negated clauses are under greater constraints in use with regard to their discourse context.

Similarly to Mandarin *méi* (*yǒu*) 沒 (有), it is typically used to negate events in a past perfective context. This applies to action verbs such as *bo*<sup>24</sup> *lai*<sup>24</sup> 無來 ‘did not come’ and *bo*<sup>24</sup> *tsia*<sup>24</sup> 無食 ‘didn’t eat’, also to modal verbs such as *bo*<sup>24</sup> *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> 無通 ‘should not have’.

It may also negate adjectives designating qualities and physical features: *bo*<sup>24</sup> *sui*<sup>53</sup> 無美 ‘not pretty’, *bo*<sup>24</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup> 無肥 ‘not fat’ and here its function is closer to the Mandarin volitional negative *bù*. This marker is equally adept at forming negative potential verb compounds (see Li 1988, Zhou 1991) which do not have equivalent structures in Mandarin. According to Li (1988: 156), such negative elements are treated like independent predicates and take the form VERB-NEG.<sup>18</sup> Examples:

- |      |                                |                         |    |  |                                |                         |    |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----|--|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----|
| (44) | <i>tsia</i> <sup>24</sup>      | <i>bo</i> <sup>24</sup> | 食無 |  | <i>k’uā</i> <sup>21</sup>      | <i>bo</i> <sup>24</sup> | 看無 |
|      | eat                            | NEG                     |    |  | see                            | NEG                     |    |
|      | ‘have not succeeded in eating’ |                         |    |  | ‘have not succeeded in seeing’ |                         |    |

Note that in this case, the negative occurs in postverbal rather than preverbal position with the interpretation of ‘to not succeed in doing something’. In Mandarin, only the general negative *bù* may be used to negate potential verb compounds: *chī-bu-dé* 吃不得 ‘unable to eat’.

The same existential negative *bo*<sup>24</sup> is used in ‘Yes-No’ polar questions, that is, A-NOT-A constructions that can be applied to stative verbs, adjectives, and action verbs in Min-nan. For an adjective as in (45), the negative marker is simply juxtaposed sentence-finally following the affirmative form of the adjective, while with action verbs, the affirmative counterpart of *bo*<sup>24</sup>, *u*<sup>22</sup> 有 ‘to have’ in its aspectual use is proposed before the main verb, as in (46) (see Chappell 1992a). In sentence-final position *bo*<sup>24</sup> is atonal (see Cheng 1977). Examples of ‘Yes-No’ polar questions:

<sup>18</sup> Examples here are taken from Zhou (1991), Huang (1958) and Wu (1958).

(45) 腹肚較好無？

*Pak<sup>32</sup> tó<sup>53</sup> k'aŋ<sup>32</sup> ho<sup>53</sup> bo?*  
 stomach somewhat good NEG<sub>Q</sub>  
 'Are you feeling better (in the stomach)?'

(46) 你有買票無？

*Li<sup>53</sup> u<sup>22</sup> bue<sup>53</sup> p'io<sup>21</sup> bo?*  
 2SG have buy ticket NEG<sub>Q</sub>  
 'Have you bought the tickets?'

#### 4.3. Imminent negative *be<sup>22</sup>* 未

This negative marker expresses that an event or action has not taken place at the reference point of time, while being expected to occur in the future.

(47) 戲未看。

*Hi<sup>21</sup> be<sup>22</sup> k'uã<sup>2</sup>.*  
 play NEG<sub>IRR</sub> see  
 '(I) haven't seen the play yet.'

(48) 伊未來。

*I<sup>44</sup> be<sup>22</sup> lai<sup>2</sup>.*  
 3SG NEG<sub>IRR</sub> come  
 'S/he hasn't arrived yet.'

Thus, in (47), the inference from the use of *be<sup>22</sup>* 未 is that the event may still occur in the future – the subject is intending to see the play, while the subject in (48) is understood to arrive soon, as a possible context.

This negative adverb has the same pronunciation as the irrealis negative adverb in certain varieties of Southern Min, which is next discussed.

#### 4.4. Irrealis negative *bue<sup>22</sup>~be<sup>22</sup>* 𪗇 (袂)

This negative marker expresses inability to carry out an action or the unlikelihood of an event taking place, due to some external circumstance which has prevented it. It is semantically opposed in Min-Xiamen to *ue<sup>22</sup>~e<sup>22</sup>* 解 'to be able, can' and corresponds to either *bù néng* 不能 or *bù huì* 不會 in Mandarin. Lien (2015: 188) observes that historically this negative may be a fusion of *m<sup>22</sup>* 怀 with *ue<sup>22</sup>~e<sup>22</sup>* 解 'can', as too Li (2007):

(49) 伊𪗇來啦。

*I*<sup>44</sup>      *bue*<sup>22</sup>      *lai*<sup>24</sup>      *la*.  
3SG      NEG<sub>IRR</sub>      come      PRT

‘S/he won’t be able to come (now).’

It can be used with action verbs such as *lai*<sup>24</sup> 來 ‘come’ in (49) above and can form a compound modal verb *bue*<sup>22</sup> *sai*<sup>53</sup> *tit*<sup>32</sup> 𪗇使得 ‘It won’t do’ as well, used in negative imperatives in contemporary Southern Min (Lien 2015).

#### 4.5. Negative imperatives

In addition to the six negative adverbs briefly described above, at least three commonly-used negative imperative markers may be identified in Southern Min, each of which possesses its own specific semantic features.

Of these three, the negative imperative with the most general meaning of ‘Don’t VERB’ is formed by the use of *mai*<sup>21</sup> [勿愛], in addition to forms such as (*m*<sup>22</sup>)*bien*<sup>53</sup> [(怀)免] ‘Don’t VERB (there is no need to)’ and (*m*<sup>22</sup>)*mo*<sup>53</sup> 𪗇 ‘Don’t VERB (you shouldn’t, it’s not good for you)’. A minimal triplet of examples is provided below:

(50) 汝勿愛受氣!

*Li*<sup>53</sup>      *mai*<sup>21</sup>      *siu*<sup>22</sup> *khi*<sup>21</sup>!  
2SG      NEG<sub>IMP</sub>      angry

‘Don’t get angry (when I tell you this)!’

(51) 汝免彼呢受氣!

*Li*<sup>53</sup>      *bien*<sup>53</sup>      *hiah*<sup>21</sup>-*ni*      *siu*<sup>22</sup> *khi*<sup>21</sup>!  
2SG      NEG<sub>IMP</sub>      so      angry

‘You needn’t be so angry!’ (There’s no point).

(52) 汝𪗇受氣。

*Li*<sup>53</sup>      *m**mo*<sup>53</sup>      *siu*<sup>22</sup> *khi*<sup>21</sup>.  
2SG      NEG<sub>IMP</sub>      angry

‘Don’t get angry.’ (It’s not good for you.)

Each negative imperative belongs respectively to the category of general negative imperative, ‘lack of necessity’ imperative and injunctive negative imperative. The ‘lack of necessity’ imperative expresses the meaning of the absence of any need to carry

out an action on the part of the addressee as in *bien*<sup>53</sup> *tsue*<sup>21</sup> *kang*<sup>44</sup> 免做工 ‘do not need to work’. It is similar in meaning to Mandarin *bù bǐ* 不必 ‘do not need to’ or ‘not necessary to’. The injunctive negative imperative enjoins the addressee not to do an action, implying that the outcome might not be beneficial for them or that the action in itself is unwise.

Li (1990: 600) and Teng (1990: 336) discuss the origin of the two markers, *mai*<sup>21</sup> [勿愛] ‘don’t’ and (*m*)*mo*<sup>53</sup> 毋 ‘best not to’ (the latter in Teng’s analysis only), observing that they may have developed from *m*<sup>22</sup>+*ai*<sup>21</sup> 怀+愛 and *m*<sup>22</sup>+*ho*<sup>53</sup> 怀+好 respectively,<sup>19</sup> that is, combinations of the general negative marker with the verbs ‘like’ and ‘be good’ in that order.<sup>20</sup> The two variants for the ‘lack of necessity’ imperative *m*<sup>22</sup> *bien*<sup>53</sup> 怀免 and *bien*<sup>53</sup> 免 code the same meaning in the view of Li (2007: 148), the second being more ‘natural’ than the first.

There is also a plethora of other negative imperatives in Min-nan which are compound in form (see the large set discussed in Li 2007: 144ff). In this description, just two will be given a cursory mention, if only for the sake of completeness. These are *m*<sup>22</sup> *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> 怀通 ‘shouldn’t’ and *m*<sup>22</sup> *eng*<sup>22</sup> 怀用 ‘needn’t’.

*M*<sup>22</sup> *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> 怀通 is composed of the general negative, as its first constituent, and a modal verb *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> ‘may, can’, as its second. That it is not a fused form can be seen in the fact that it can form a question of the A-NOT-A type: *t’ang*<sup>44</sup> *m*<sup>22</sup> *t’ang*<sup>44</sup>? 通怀通 ‘may or may not?’.

(53) 你怀通怀去!

<i>Li</i> <sup>53</sup>	<i>m</i> <sup>22</sup>	<i>t’ang</i> <sup>44</sup>	<i>m</i> <sup>22</sup>	<i>k’i</i> <sup>21</sup> !
2SG	NEG	allow	NEG	go

‘You can’t not go!’

<sup>19</sup> See Teng (1990) for an original approach in the diachronic analysis of these negative morphemes, wherein *m*<sup>22</sup> is postulated as the primitive negative.

<sup>20</sup> More recently, Lien (2015) argues against this diachronic claim for the negative imperative use of, proposing instead that its source is *m*<sup>22</sup>+*sai*<sup>21</sup> 怀使 with the onset of the second syllable being lost. We do not find this plausible for semantic reasons. Also, this compound negative imperative with the sense of ‘needn’t’ is found in other Sinitic languages, including Cantonese Yue and Meixian Hakka which distinguish this ‘lack of necessity’ category from the general negative imperative form and from the injunctive negative imperative.

A second compound negative imperative is  $m^{22} eng^{22}$  佢用 which, like  $m^{22} bien^{53}$  佢免, codes lack of necessity to do an action as in  $m^{22} eng^{22} lai^{24}$  佢用來 ‘There’s no need to come!’. This negative imperative is possibly formed from the fusion of the morpheme  $bok^4$  莫 and the verb ‘to use’,  $eng^{25}$  用 in the Xiamen (Amoy) variety of Southern Min, according to Zhou (1991: 227). It is also used in Quanzhou Southern Min, according to Li (2007: 147).<sup>21</sup>

For a detailed discussion of both simple and fused negative adverbs in Southern Min, see Cheng (1980) and Li (2007: 144-153) and Lien (2015).

## 5. Negation system in Yue

For this branch of Sinitic, we have chosen standard Hong Kong Cantonese as representative.

There are six main negative markers in Cantonese: the volitional negative  $m^4$  唔, the existential negative  $mo^5$  冇, the imminent negative  $mei^6$  未 ‘not yet’ and three negative imperatives. The latter are  $mai^5$  咪 ‘don’t’, the general negative imperative, and similarly to Min-nan, two further negative imperatives with more specialized modal meanings, the injunctive imperative,  $m^4 ho^2$  唔好 ‘better not, don’t’, and the ‘lack of necessity’ imperative,  $m^4 sai^2$  唔使 ‘needn’t’ (see also Yuan 1960/1983: 220, Cheung 1972: 98).<sup>22</sup> It is worth mentioning two literary negatives,  $pat^1$  which basically corresponds to Mandarin  $bù$  不, and  $fau^2$  to Classical Chinese  $fǒu$  否.

### 5.1. Volitional negative $m^4$ 唔

The volitional negative is used with action, stative (cognitive) and modal verbs in standard Hong Kong Cantonese, exemplified by (54), (55) and (56) respectively:

- (54) 唔單止唔喊  
 $m^4$        $daan^1 ji^2$        $m^4$        $haam^3$   
 NEG    only            NEG    cry  
 ‘Not only didn’t she cry...’ (RFP 246)<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The corresponding form in Taiwanese Southern Min is  $m^{22} eng^{22}$  and Lien (2015) similarly claims that it is derived historically from  $bok^8$  莫 +  $eng^{22}$  用.

<sup>22</sup> The transcription system used for Hong Kong Cantonese is that devised by Sidney Lau (see his dictionary, 1977).

<sup>23</sup> The source of each example is indicated by the letters: RFP = ‘The tale of the reborn lady at the red flowering plum’ and BR = ‘Balcony rendezvous’, both narratives; CG = ‘The Colour Grey’, a comic book story in Cantonese, and TM = ‘Tea-making’, an interview recorded from TVB Jade in Hong Kong.

- (55) …噉 啱 呢 就 = ,  
 ...gam<sup>2</sup> hui<sup>5</sup> le<sup>1</sup> jau<sup>6</sup> = ,  
 so 3SG P<sub>TOP</sub> then  
 …唔 知 哩 件 事 嘍 嘛。  
 ...m<sup>4</sup> ji<sup>1</sup> /li<sup>1</sup>/[lei<sup>0</sup>] gin<sup>6</sup> si<sup>6</sup> ga<sup>3</sup> ma<sup>3</sup>.  
 NEG know this:CL matter PRT  
 ‘He (Pooi Sang) didn’t know about any of this [i.e. the murder].’ (RFP 165-166)
- (56) …噉 啱 就 覺得 ,  
 ...gam<sup>2</sup> hui<sup>5</sup> jau<sup>6</sup> gok<sup>3</sup> dak<sup>1</sup>,  
 so 3SG then feel  
 …啲 唔 應該 噉樣 做 啦。  
 ..jek<sup>1</sup> m<sup>4</sup> ying<sup>1</sup> goi<sup>1</sup> gam<sup>2</sup> yeung<sup>6\*</sup> jo<sup>6</sup> la<sup>1</sup>.  
 P<sub>FAM</sub> NEG should like:this do PRT  
 ‘So he felt that it was wrong to behave in this manner.’ (RFP 167-168)

It is also used to negate the verb ‘be’, *hai<sup>6</sup>* 係 as in (57).

- (57) 啲唔係一個少女嘍嘍。  
 jek<sup>1</sup> m<sup>4</sup> hai<sup>6</sup> yat<sup>1</sup> goh<sup>3</sup> siu<sup>3</sup> lui<sup>5</sup> lei<sup>4</sup> ga<sup>3</sup> lak<sup>3</sup>.  
 P<sub>FAM</sub> NEG be one:CL young:girl PRT<sub>CRS</sub> PRT  
 ‘that is to say, I’m no longer unmarried.’ (RFP 35)

It is finally used to negate modal verbs expressing future possibility such as *wooi<sup>5</sup>* 會 ‘can, will’ and ability or permission, *hoh<sup>2</sup> yi<sup>5</sup>* 可以 ‘can, may’:

- (58) …佢 話 <Q 唔 會 嘍 , …  
 ...kui<sup>5</sup> wa<sup>6</sup> <Q m<sup>4</sup> woi<sup>5</sup> ga<sup>3</sup> , …  
 3SG say NEG FUT P<sub>CASE</sub>  
 ‘She said, “No, that won’t happen.”’ (RFP 314)
- (59) 唔 可以 女仔 ,  
 m<sup>4</sup> hoh<sup>2</sup> yi<sup>5</sup> lui<sup>5</sup> jai<sup>2</sup>,  
 NEG can girl  
 出去 出便 讀書 = 嘅 =  
 chut<sup>1</sup>-hui<sup>3</sup> chut<sup>1</sup> bin<sup>6</sup> duk<sup>6</sup>-sue<sup>1</sup> = ge<sup>3</sup> =  
 exit-GO<sub>DIR</sub> outside study GE<sub>ASST</sub>  
 ‘(In olden times,) girls could not leave home to study.’ (BR 22-23)

This negative marker cannot, however, be used to negate the verb *jau*<sup>5</sup> 有 ‘to have’ (\**m*<sup>4</sup> *jau*<sup>5</sup> 唔有) which forms a pair with *mo*<sup>5</sup> ‘to not have, didn’t’ (see section 5.2 below).

In the two narratives used for this analysis, this negative marker was also used with modal verbs such as *m*<sup>4</sup> *seung*<sup>2</sup> 唔想 ‘to not want’ (RFP 104, BR 163), with many cognition and psychological verbs such as *m*<sup>4</sup> *ying*<sup>6</sup> *wai*<sup>4</sup> 唔認為 ‘to not consider’ and *m*<sup>4</sup> *lei*<sup>5</sup> 唔理 ‘to not care’ (RFP 107, 372), and also with speech act verbs including *m*<sup>4</sup> *jaan*<sup>3</sup> *sing*<sup>4</sup> 贊成 ‘to not agree’ (RFP 177).

This general negative marker, *m*<sup>4</sup> 唔, can of course form polar Yes-No questions in Cantonese. Such a use with the modal verb *wooi*<sup>5</sup> ‘can, will’ is next exemplified.

(60) 會唔會減少佢情趣呢?

<i>Wooi</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>m</i> <sup>4</sup>	<i>wooi</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>gam</i> <sup>2</sup> <i>siu</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>kui</i> <sup>5</sup>	<i>ching</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>cheui</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>le</i> <sup>1</sup> ?
will	NEG	will	reduce	3SG	pleasure	PRT <sub>TOP</sub>

‘Will it reduce its pleasure?’ (TM273) (Context: drinking tea from a glass)

## 5.2. Perfective negative *mo*<sup>5</sup> 冇

Chao (1947: 39) claims that *mo*<sup>5</sup> 冇 is a fusion of the volitional negative *m*<sup>4</sup> 唔 with the verb *yau*<sup>5</sup> ‘to have’ 有.

In the same way as *bo*<sup>24</sup> 無 in Min-nan, *mo*<sup>5</sup> 冇 can act as an independent verb in its own right, with both existential ‘there is not’ and possessive meanings ‘to not have’, the latter exemplified by (61) where it directly precedes the noun phrase containing *kuen*<sup>4</sup> *sai*<sup>3</sup> ‘power’, and is aspectually modified.

(61) 已經	係	冇咗	哩個	嘅	--
<i>yi</i> <sup>5</sup> <i>ging</i> <sup>1</sup>	<i>hai</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>mo</i> <sup>5</sup> - <i>joh</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>lei</i> <sup>50</sup> <i>goh</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>ge</i> <sup>3</sup>	--
already	be	NEG:HAVE-PFV	this:CL	GE	

...權勢	呀	=
... <i>kuen</i> <sup>4</sup> <i>sai</i> <sup>3</sup>	<i>a</i> <sup>3</sup>	=
power	P <sub>SOFT</sub>	

‘He’d already lost his power.’ (RFP 410-411)



The relevant meaning for the present analysis is its use as a negator of past events as in (62) and (63) with the word order NEG-VERB:

- (62) 啱 唔 - 冇 喊到 啎。  
*jek<sup>1</sup> m<sup>4</sup> -mo<sup>5</sup> haam<sup>3</sup>-do<sup>3</sup> woh<sup>3</sup>.*  
 PRT<sub>FAM</sub> NEG NEG<sub>HAVE</sub> cry-reach PRT<sub>MIR</sub>  
 ‘So, she didn’t cry.’ (RFP 245)
- (63) 就 冇 死到。  
*jau<sup>6</sup> mo<sup>5</sup> sei<sup>2</sup>-do<sup>3</sup>.*  
 then NEG<sub>HAVE</sub> die-REACH  
 ‘(She) hadn’t died’. (RFP 378)

### 5.3. Imminent negative *mei<sup>6</sup>* 未

The cognate form to Min-nan *be<sup>22</sup>* 未 is found in Cantonese. In the following example from a popular folk story and opera, the scholar has asked after the situation of a village girl who is gravely ill, knowing that she will die, as his lover’s soul is to be transported into her body, enabling her to come back to life.

- (64) …噉 嘢 話 eh = ,  
 .../am<sup>2</sup>/[gam<sup>2</sup>] *hui<sup>5</sup> /wə<sup>6</sup>[wa<sup>6</sup>] eh = ,*  
 so 3SG say  
 <Q 重 未 死 = @。 Q>  
 <Q *jung<sup>6</sup> mei<sup>6</sup> sei<sup>2</sup> = @ Q*>  
 even NEG<sub>YET</sub> die  
 ‘He (the scholar) said: “She hasn’t died yet.”’ (RFP 348-349)

This negative adverb may be used to form A-NOT-A questions, as in the following example:

- (65) 喂，去得未呀？ 我得嘅嘞。  
*Wāi heui dāk mēi ā? Ngóh dāk gē lāa.*  
 Hey go able NEG<sub>YET</sub> Q 1SG can PRT<sub>ASST</sub> PRT<sub>CRS</sub>  
 ‘Hey, can we go yet?’ ‘Sure I can.’  
 (Kwok 1971:73, her transcription and translation)

#### 5.4. Negative imperatives

The three negative imperative forms in Cantonese are *mai*<sup>5</sup> 咪 ‘don’t’; the general imperative marker, *m<sup>4</sup> ho<sup>2</sup>* 唔好 ‘better not, don’t’, the injunctive imperative, and *m<sup>4</sup> sai<sup>2</sup>* 唔使 ‘needn’t’, the ‘lack of necessity’ imperative.

As mentioned above, in the imperative mood, the positive form has the structure: (2PERSON)-VERB-(PRT) as in 而家做啦! *Yi<sup>4</sup> ga<sup>1</sup> jo<sup>4</sup> la!* [now-do-PRT<sub>CRS</sub>] ‘Do it now!’, while in the negative form, the negative adverb is added and precedes the main verb, as indicated below. The three negative imperatives in Cantonese are exemplified below in turn:

(2PERSON)-NEGATIVE ADVERB-VERB-(PRT)

(66) 咪郁!

*mai*<sup>5</sup>            *yuk*<sup>1</sup>!  
NEG<sub>IMP</sub>        move  
‘Don’t move!’

(67) 你唔好咁激動添呀!

*Lei*<sup>5</sup>    *m<sup>4</sup> ho<sup>2</sup>*    *gam*<sup>2</sup>    *gik<sup>1</sup> dung<sup>4</sup>*    *tim*<sup>1</sup>    *a!*  
1SG    NEG<sub>IMP</sub>    so        agitated        PRT<sub>ICR</sub>    PRT<sub>INT</sub>  
‘You shouldn’t be so agitated either!’ (CG181)

(68) 唔使送我去醫院...

*m<sup>4</sup> sai*<sup>2</sup>    *sung*<sup>1</sup>    *ngo*<sup>5</sup>    *hui*<sup>3</sup>    *yi<sup>1</sup> yuen*<sup>5</sup> ...  
NEG<sub>IMP</sub>    send    1SG    go        hospital  
‘(You) don’t need to take me to the hospital...’ (CG13)

#### 6. Negation system in Xiang

For the representative of the Xiang branch, the Changsha dialect of New Xiang, there are five main markers of negation: the general (and volitional) negative *pu*<sup>24</sup> 不, the perfective negative *mau*<sup>21</sup> 冒, the negative imperative *mo*<sup>24</sup> 莫, the irrealis negative *pu*<sup>24</sup>*tr* 不得 and the negative existential verb *mau*<sup>21</sup>*tr* 冒得. All markers occur preverbally apart from *mau*<sup>21</sup>*tr*, which being a verb, only occurs before nominals.

Norman (1988: 208) expresses doubt as to whether any of the Xiang languages possess the category of adverbial negation ‘not yet’ (that is, what we are labelling the

‘imminent’ negative). This is certainly the case for the Changsha dialect of New Xiang which does not possess any semantic cognate of Cantonese Yue *mei*<sup>6</sup> 未 or Min-nan *be*<sup>22</sup> 未.

### 6.1. General and volitional negative *pu*<sup>24</sup> 不

The general and volitional negative in Xiang is *pu*<sup>24</sup> 不 which Norman (1988: 208) and Wu (2005: ch. 5) consider to be cognate with Mandarin *bù*. It can be used to negate equative sentences with the main verb *si*<sup>21</sup> 是 ‘to be’; action verbs such as *k’ɿ*<sup>45</sup> 去 ‘to go’; modal verbs such as *ɛian*<sup>41</sup> 想 ‘to want, like’ and stative verbs and adjectives denoting psychological states such as *sən*<sup>33</sup>*tɛ*<sup>1</sup>*i*<sup>45</sup> 生氣 ‘to be angry’ shown by (69), (70), (71) and (72) respectively (data are taken from Wu 2005 and Li 1991):

(69) 他不是學生。

*T’a*<sup>33</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup> *si*<sup>21</sup> *ɛio*<sup>24</sup>-*sən*<sup>33</sup>.

3SG NEG be student

‘S/he’s not a student.’

(70) 我不去。

*ŋo*<sup>41</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup> *k’ɿ*<sup>45</sup>.

1SG NEG go

‘I’m not going.’

(71) 我口噁，不想事做噁。

*ŋo*<sup>41</sup> *lia*<sup>24</sup> *ta*<sup>21</sup>, *pu*<sup>24</sup> *ɛian*<sup>41</sup> *si*<sup>21</sup> *tsəu*<sup>45</sup> *ta*<sup>21</sup>.

1SG be.tired ASP NEG want things do ASP

‘I am too tired to work.’

(72) 她也不生氣。

*T’a*<sup>33</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup> *sən*<sup>33</sup>*tɛ*<sup>1</sup>*i*<sup>45</sup>.

3SG NEG angry

‘S/he’s not angry (right at this moment).’

In addition, *pu*<sup>24</sup> is used to negate adjectives such as *kau*<sup>33</sup> 高 ‘tall’ in (73), in the context of a present or habitual time reference (as opposed to *mau*<sup>21</sup> 冒 for past states of affairs; §6.2).

(73) 他不嚴高。

*T'a*<sup>33</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup> *ŋan*<sup>13</sup> *kau*<sup>33</sup>.

3SG NEG very tall

‘S/he’s not very tall.’

## 6.2. Perfective negative *mau*<sup>21</sup> 冒

The perfective negative is *mau*<sup>21</sup> 冒 in the Changsha dialect. Like *méi*(*yǒu*) in Mandarin, it is used to negate presuppositions that an event has taken place. It is not only used with action verbs, but also extends to inchoative predicates with adjectives, such as (75).

(74) 她昨日子冒去上學。

*T'a*<sup>33</sup> *tso*<sup>24</sup> *zi*<sup>24</sup> *tsi* *mau*<sup>24</sup> *k'ɿ*<sup>45</sup> *ʂən*<sup>21</sup> *ɕio*<sup>24</sup>.

3SG yesterday NEG<sub>PFV</sub> go school

‘Yesterday, s/he didn’t go to school.’

(75) 花還冒紅。

*Fa*<sup>33</sup> *xai*<sup>13</sup> *mau*<sup>21</sup> *xen*<sup>13</sup>.

flower still NEG<sub>PFV</sub> red

‘The flowers have still not turned red.’

The negative marker can be used to negate most verb classes, apart from adjectives which denote an apparently invariable or inherent dimension (*\*mau*<sup>21</sup> *kau*<sup>33</sup> \*冒高 NEG tall). Incompatible verbs include two high frequency ones - the verb *si*<sup>21</sup> ‘to be’ (*\*mau*<sup>21</sup> *si*<sup>21</sup>\* 冒是 NEG be) and the verb *iəu*<sup>41</sup> 有, ‘to have’. Thus, we do not find *\*mau*<sup>21</sup> *iəu*<sup>41</sup> \*冒有 + NOUN [NEG + ‘have’ + NOUN] but rather *mau*<sup>21</sup> *tr* 冒得 + NOUN [‘to not have’ + NOUN] (see examples (81) and (83) below).

## 6.3. Irrealis negative *pu*<sup>24</sup> *tr* 不得

The negative adverb *pu*<sup>24</sup> *tr* 不得 is a compound word formed from the volitional negative *pu*<sup>24</sup> 不 combined with the verb *tr*<sup>24</sup> 得, cognate with Mandarin *dé* meaning ‘to get’. As for *mau*<sup>21</sup> *tr* 冒得 discussed below, this verb loses its tonality when acting as part of the negative marker. In terms of temporality, the use of *pu*<sup>24</sup> *tr* belongs to future and hypothetical contexts. This does not mean that its semantics can merely be explained in terms of future negation. – It is more complex than this, since the modal

meanings of inability or a low degree of possibility are interwoven once more with the primary notion of negation. For example, consider (76):

(76) 他不得是學生。

$T'a^{33}$   $pu^{24}tr$   $si^{21}$   $\epsilon io^{24}-san^{33}$ .

3SG NEG<sub>IRR</sub> be student

‘S/he won’t be a student.’ or: ‘It’s not likely that s/he’ll be a student.’

The use of this negative marker implies unlikelihood of an event, due, for example, to a person’s lack of funding or inability to pass university entrance exams. Compare these possible contexts with the use of the general negative  $pu^{24}$  in (69) in the counterpart example above which refers to a state of affairs coincident with the time of speech and carries no such modal meaning.

The irrealis negative can be used to negate most verb classes, including action, modal and psychological verbs, but not physical state verbs. Hence, it is excluded from co-occurrence with stative verbs such as  $kau^{33}$  高 ‘to be tall’. The semantic incompatibility may be attributed to the notion of the lack of necessary competence on the part of the subject and agent to do something, coded by  $pu^{24}tr$ , if not the unlikelihood of the event happening due to external circumstances. This feature is evidently not relevant for non-control adjectives of physical state that refer in the main to inherent features of size, height and appearance and cannot be understood in the normal course of events to be (easily) volitionally changed.

It thus appears that New Xiang has a tripartite distinction for its negative adverbs that affects most of its verb classes: Action verbs, modal verbs and verbs of psychological state are all able to be negated by the general and volitional negative, the perfective negative and the irrealis negative. It is largely the purely non-changeable stative adjectives which take just the one form of negation by  $pu^{24}$  as well as the verbs  $i\partial u^4$  ‘to have’ and  $si^{21}$  ‘to be’ which are subject to certain constraints, as explained above.

Compare the differences in meaning for the following two sentences which contrast three of the main negative adverbs to negate the same verbs, an action verb in the first instance,  $k'ɿ^{45}$  去 ‘go’ and a modal verb in the second,  $\epsilon ian^{41}$  想 ‘want’:

(77) 我不 (~ 冒 ~ 不得) 去。

$\eta o^{41}$   $pu^{13}$  ~  $mau^{21}$  ~  $pu^{21}t\check{x}$   $k'\check{x}^{45}$ .

1SG NEG ~ NEG<sub>PFV</sub> ~ NEG<sub>IRR</sub> go

'I'm not going.' ~ 'I didn't go.' ~ 'I won't (be able to) go.'

(78) 她不 (~ 冒 ~ 不得) 想買股票。

$T'a^{33}$   $pu^{24}$  ~  $mau^{21}$  ~  $pu^{21}t\check{x}$   $\epsilon ian^{41}$   $mai^{41}$   $ku^{41}p'iau^{45}$ .

3SG NEG ~ NEG<sub>PFV</sub> ~ NEG<sub>IRR</sub> intend buy share

'S/he doesn't want to buy any shares.' ~ 'S/he didn't want to buy any shares.'

~ 'S/he won't be able to buy any shares.'

The interpretations for these examples clearly show the different modal and aspectual meanings associated with the negative adverbs of Changsha Xiang.

#### 6.4. Negative imperative $mo^{24}$ 莫

In the Changsha dialect of Xiang, the negative imperative form is  $mo^{24}$  莫:

(79) 你莫去囉!

$Li^{41}$   $mo^{24}$   $k'\check{x}^{45}$   $lo^{41}$ !

2SG NEG<sub>IMP</sub> go PRT

'Don't go!'

(80) 爹爹呢，莫緊念得囉。

$tia^{33}tia^{33}$   $e^{41}$ ,  $mo^{24}$   $t\epsilon in^{41} - \eta i \epsilon^{21} - t\check{x}^{24}$   $lo^{41}$ .

grandfather PRT NEG<sub>IMP</sub> prattle.on PRT

'Don't prattle on, grandfather.'

In a similar syntactic structure to Mandarin, the negative imperative marker may occur clause-initially as in (80) (after the vocative, 'grandfather') or be preceded by a second person pronominal as in (79).

#### 6.5. Negative existential and possessive verb $mau^{21}t\check{x}$ 冒得

Many of the Xiang languages of Hunan are unusual in possessing a special negative existential verb which is formally distinct from the perfective negative, discussed in §6.2 above, and in detail by Wu (2005: ch. 5). In the Changsha dialect of New Xiang, the negative verb takes the form  $mau^{21}t\check{x}$  冒得 and corresponds to the

verbal use of *bo*<sup>24</sup> 無 in Min-nan and *mo*<sup>5</sup> 冇 in Cantonese Yue, and so has the meanings of ‘there is not, to not have’. Like the irrealis negative, *pu*<sup>24</sup>*tr* 不得 discussed above, it is formed through a combination of *mau*<sup>21</sup> 冒 with the verb *tr*<sup>24</sup> 得 ‘to get’, and similarly loses its tonality. This provides further cross-linguistic evidence within the Sinitic phylum to support the claim that many negative verbs and adverbs have evolved diachronically from the fusion of two morphemes, a negative adverb and a verb meaning ‘have’ or ‘get’.

- (81) 明日子 ( 昨日子 ) 冒得課。  
*Min*<sup>13</sup> *zɪ*<sup>24</sup> *tsɪ* ( *ts*'*o*<sup>24</sup> *zɪ*<sup>24</sup> *tsɪ* ) *mau*<sup>21</sup> *tr* *k*'*o*<sup>45</sup>.  
 tomorrow (yesterday) NEGV class  
 ‘Tomorrow there will be no classes.’

This marker is not restricted to any particular time context, as *ts*'*o*<sup>24</sup> *zɪ*<sup>24</sup> *tsɪ* ‘yesterday’ could be substituted unproblematically in (81) for *min*<sup>13</sup> *zɪ*<sup>24</sup> *tsɪ* ‘tomorrow’:

Structurally, this negative always directly precedes the noun it negates, clear evidence of its verbal nature, as opposed to the other four negative adverbs in Changsha Xiang which must precede the main verb. Compare (82) with (83) for this syntactic feature:

- (82) 她 不得 有 崽。  
*T*'*a*<sup>33</sup> *pu*<sup>24</sup>*tr* *iəu*<sup>41</sup> *tsai*<sup>41</sup>.  
 3SG NEG<sub>IRR</sub> have son  
 ‘She won’t be able to have any sons.’
- (83) 他冒得 (\*有) 崽。  
*T*'*a*<sup>33</sup> *mau*<sup>21</sup>*tr* (\**iəu*<sup>41</sup>) *tsai*<sup>41</sup>.  
 3SG NEGV (\*have) son  
 ‘S/he does not have any sons.’

In (82), *pu*<sup>24</sup>*tr* necessarily co-occurs with the main verb *iəu*<sup>41</sup> ‘to have’, whereas the converse applies in (83), as *mau*<sup>21</sup>*tr* may not co-occur with the verb ‘to have’, its positive counterpart.

Hence, in the Changsha dialect of New Xiang, we find the two negative markers common to most Sinitic languages - the general (or volitional) and the perfective

negative. We also have an irrealis negative that can be applied to projected future and other hypothetical contexts, a special negative imperative marker, as well as a negative existential/possessive verb ‘there is not, to not have’, formally distinct from the perfective negative. As outlined in this section, the Changsha dialect, like many other Xiang languages, does not possess an imminent negative ‘not yet’.

## 7. Negatiob system in Northern Wu

Norman (1988: 203) claims that negatives in the Wu dialect group are relatively homogeneous, most possessing the general (and volitional), perfective and imminent negatives. In this section, we describe the set of negatives found in the Shanghai dialect of Northern Wu.<sup>24</sup>

The four main negative markers in Shanghainese are thus (1) the general and volitional negative  $vəʔ^{l2}$  勿, (2) the existential negative  $ɦm^{l2}məʔ^{l2}$  嘸沒, (3) the imminent negative  $vəʔ^{l2}-zəŋ^{l3}$  勿曾 and (4) the negative imperative  $viəʔ^{l2}$  覯. These are next discussed in turn.

### 7.1. General and volitional negative $vəʔ^{l2}$ 勿

The general negative marker  $vəʔ^{l2}$  勿 corresponds historically (cf. Norman 1988: 203) to *bù* in Mandarin:

- (84) 天勿好。  
 $T'ie^{53}$   $vəʔ^{l2}$   $ɦo^{55}$ .  
 day NEG good  
 ‘The weather’s not good.’

It may be used with a range of different verb classes such as action verbs, adjectives denoting physical characteristics or a psychological state, as well as modal verbs:

<sup>24</sup> For the Shanghai dialect of Wu, data is taken from Nakajima (1983), Xu and Tang (1988), and Yu (1988) in addition to the first author’s field notes and transcriptions, including the ‘Three Many’s of Australia’ (SD).



## Action verbs

- |      |                        |                       |                      |
|------|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| (85) | 勿用                     | 勿推                    | 勿算                   |
|      | $vəʔ^{12}$ $ɦyən^{13}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ $t'e^{53}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ $sə^{34}$ |
|      | NEG use                | NEG push              | NEG calculate        |
|      | ‘to not use/need’      | ‘to not push’         | ‘to not calculate’   |

## Stative verbs

- |      |                       |                          |                      |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| (86) | 勿怕                    | 勿熟                       | 勿长                   |
|      | $vəʔ^{12}$ $p'o^{34}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ $zəʔ^{13}$    | $vəʔ^{12}$ $zã^{13}$ |
|      | NEG afraid            | NEG mature, ripe         | NEG long             |
|      | ‘to not be afraid’    | ‘to not be mature, ripe’ | ‘to not be long’     |

## Modal verbs

- (87) 所以勿要講打起來蠻便當個。
- |                      |            |           |           |                         |           |           |            |           |              |
|----------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| $su^{55}$ - $i^{53}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ | $iə^{35}$ | $kã^{55}$ | $tã^{55}$ - $tə'i^{55}$ | $le^{13}$ | $mə^{53}$ | $bie^{13}$ | $tã^{35}$ | $gəʔ^{13}$ . |
| so                   | NEG        | want      | talk      | hit-begin               |           | very      | convenient | PRT       |              |
- ‘So needless to say it was very easy to hit them (flies).’ (SD 1992:18)

This negative marker may also be used with stative verbs such as  $laʔ^{13}$  辣 ‘to be at’ and is the only negator which may be used with  $zɿ^{13}$  是 ‘to be’: It cannot, however, be used to negate  $ɦiɿ^{13}$  ‘to have’ (see section 7.2. below).

- (88) 伊拉勿辣屋里。
- |           |           |            |            |        |             |
|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|--------|-------------|
| $ɦi^{13}$ | $la^{13}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ | $laʔ^{13}$ | $oʔ^5$ | $li^{13}$ . |
| 3PL       |           | NEG        | be:at      |        | home-in     |
- ‘They are not at home.’
- (89) 伊勿是學生。
- |           |            |           |            |             |
|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-------------|
| $ɦi^{13}$ | $vəʔ^{12}$ | $zɿ^{13}$ | $həʔ^{13}$ | $sã^{53}$ . |
| 3SG       | NEG        | be        | student    |             |
- ‘S/he’s not a student.’

$Vəʔ^{12}$  is also the negative marker used to negate potential and directional verb compounds.



7.3. Imminent negative  $vəʔ^{12}$ - $zəŋ^{13}$  勿曾

The imminent negative,  $vəʔ^{12}$ - $zəŋ^{13}$  勿曾, is a compound form rather than a single monosyllabic morpheme as found in Min-nan and Yue. It is composed of the general negative  $vəʔ^{12}$  and another adverbial  $zəŋ^{13}$  which means ‘once, formerly’.<sup>25</sup> Norman (1988: 203) points out that this is historically related to an obsolete form in Mandarin *bù céng*. This marker corresponds to the periphrastic construction in contemporary Mandarin *hái méi (yǒu)* 還沒有 ‘to still have not/ have not yet’. In northern Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu, a fused form is found: *vəng* (Yan Yiming, pers. comm.) while in the Wenzhou dialect 温州話, a form corresponding to Classical Chinese *wèi* is used.

(94) 天勿曾亮。

$T'ie^{53}$   $vəʔ^{12}$ - $zəŋ^{13}$   $liā^{13}$ .  
day NEG<sub>YET</sub> bright  
‘It is not yet daylight.’

(95) 勿曾干。

$I^{53}zā^{13}$   $vəʔ^{12}$ - $zəŋ^{13}$   $kø^{53}$ .  
clothes NEG<sub>YET</sub> dry  
‘The clothes are not yet dry.’

(96) 租界還勿曾有個晨光，阿奶已經辣上海勒。

$Tsu^{53}ka^{34}$   $he^{13}$   $vəʔ^{12}$ - $zəŋ^{13}$   $hiɿ^{13}$   $gəʔ^{13}$   $zəŋ^{13}kuang^{53}$ ,  
concession still NEG<sub>YET</sub> have REL time  
 $aʔ^5na^{13}$   $hi^{53}tciŋ^{53}$   $laʔ^2$   $zā^{13}he^{55}$   $leʔ^{13}$ .  
grandma already be:at Shanghai CRS

‘Before there were any concessions, grandma was already (living) in Shanghai.’

7.4. Negative imperative  $viəʔ^{12}$  勿

The negative imperative marker is  $viəʔ^{12}$  勿 in the Shanghai dialect:

<sup>25</sup> According to Xu and Tang (1988: 452), there is free alternation in pronunciation between the initial consonants /f~v/ of this negative, although they also claim this form is mainly used by older generation speakers (*lǎo pài* 老派). Again, this was independently confirmed by our informant, a younger generation or *xīn pài* speaker of Shanghainese.

(97) 勸哭！

$vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$        $k'o\mathcal{P}^5!$

NEG<sub>IMP</sub>      cry

‘Don’t cry!’

For his analysis of Jiading county 嘉定縣 data, adjacent to the Shanghai City area, Nakajima (1983: 638) gives two uses for this marker,  $vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$  勸, as both an imperative ‘don’t’ and as a modal ‘need not’, similar to *bié* + VERB and *bù yòng* + VERB in Mandarin. In our schema, these are both negative imperative uses which correspond to the general and the ‘lack of necessity’ categories.

This second modal use is clearly also a possible interpretation in Shanghainese, shown by (98) which can alternatively be treated as an imperative form where the second person subject pronoun has been retained, a typical construction, as we have seen in other Sinitic languages, including Mandarin.

(98) 儂勸哭。

$Non\eta^{13}$      $vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$        $k'o\mathcal{P}^5$ .

2SG      NEG<sub>NEED</sub>      cry

‘You shouldn’t cry; there’s no need to cry.’

(99) 𠵼那勸動氣。

$Na^{13}$        $vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$        $don\eta^{13}te^{135}$ .

2PL      NEG<sub>IMP</sub>      angry

‘Don’t be angry.’

This marker appears to be a fused form resulting from the combination of the volitional negative  $vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$  with the verb  $i\omega^{35}$  要 ‘to want’. It is not discussed however under negative adverbs in Xu and Tang (1988). Like the existential negative, it may be used as an independent verb ‘to not want’, as in (100).

(100) 我要橘子，勸蘋果。

$\eta u^{13}$        $i\omega^{35}$        $tey\theta\mathcal{P}^5ts\eta^5$ ,       $vi\omega\mathcal{P}^{l2}$        $bi\eta^{13}ku^{55}$ .

1SG      want      orang      NEG<sub>WANT</sub>      apple

‘I want an orange, not an apple.’

In conclusion to this section on Wu-Shanghai, it should be mentioned that for the older generation of speakers - *lǎo pài* - there are four main markers of negation, while for the younger generation of speakers - *xīn pài* - there are only three, as the imminent negative *vəʔ<sup>12</sup>-zəŋ<sup>13</sup>*, ‘not yet’ is apparently rarely used by this latter group.

## 8. Conclusion

In this study of negation in Sinitic, past and present, we have analysed the systems of negative markers in Pre-Archaic, Archaic, Medieval and Modern Chinese as well as in the contemporary Sinitic languages of Standard Mandarin, Min-nan, Yue, Xiang and Northern Wu. This was done in the perspective of establishing a new semantic typology of negation for Sinitic that might be profitably applied to other language families.

The evolution of the negative system in Ancient Chinese can be characterized as follows:

- (a) The numerous markers of negation present in Archaic Chinese have practically all disappeared from contemporary Mandarin, and other Sinitic languages, excepting the most common marker, the general and neutral *bù*, also labelled ‘volitional’, which has been attested from the Pre-Archaic period (14<sup>ème</sup> siècle BCE).
- (b) Nonetheless, it is possible to trace the origin of several negatives in current use, to the Medieval period, above all in the Sinitic languages other than Standard Mandarin. This is the case, for example, of ‘imminent’ negatives cognate to *wèi* 未 which are retained in Cantonese and Hokkien and express ‘not yet’, *mei<sup>6</sup>* 未 and *be<sup>22</sup>* 未 respectively, in contrast to Mandarin which uses an analytical periphrastic form *hái méi yǒu* 還沒有 ‘still-NEG-have’. The same situation applies to the prohibitives: *xiū* 休, *wù* 勿 and *mò* 莫 which have disappeared in Standard Mandarin while they continue to be employed in other Sinitic languages.
- (c) Finally, this is also the case for the perfective negatives *méi* and *méi yǒu*, which can be respectively dated to the Tang (618-907) and to the Yuan (1279-1368) and which are the basis of the negation system in Standard Mandarin for neutrally expressing an event that has not taken place at reference time of speech.

To summarize the findings concerning the negative markers found in all four representative Sinitic languages:

- (i) Apart from Standard Mandarin, other Sinitic languages may possess either a special monosyllabic portmanteau form for the negative existential verb in Minnan and Yue, a disyllabic form, as in Xiang, or a disyllabic form undergoing fusion or attrition as in Shanghai Wu. Mandarin makes use of a periphrastic strategy with the perfective negative combined with the verb ‘to have’.
- (ii) In the standard negation of declarative sentences, the general/volitional negative and the perfective negative form a basic opposition in this system and are present in all languages in the sample. In the case of prohibitives, each language was found to possess at least the one general negative imperative.
- (iii) The semantically specific negative markers identified in some, but not all, languages in this sample are for (a) standard negation, the irrealis (Xiang, Southern Min) and the imminent negatives (Wu, Yue, Southern Min); and for (b) prohibitives, the ‘lack of necessity’ (Southern Min, Mandarin, Cantonese) and the injunctive negative (Southern Min, Yue).
- (iv) Evidence of fusion of negative morphemes with modal morphemes is widespread, showing not only the different stages of lexicalization in the various branches of Sinitic, but also their close affinity to the domain of modality. This is reinforced by aspectual constraints on their use in terms of perfective and imperfective values.

In conclusion, we hope to have shown that a mere syntactic typology of negation focussed on word order is clearly insufficient to account for the wide range of semantic specialization found in these large sets of preverbal negators in Sinitic.

### Grammatical abbreviations used in the glossing of examples

ASP = aspectual marker, ASST = assertive particle, ATT = attributive marker,  
 CASE = ‘it is the case that’, CL = classifier, CRS = currently relevant state marker,  
 DIR = directional, FAM = interjection of familiarity, FUT = future marker, GEN = genitive,  
 IMP = imperative marker, INT = interrogative, IRR = irrealis, MIR = mirative  
 NEG = negative, PFV = perfective aspect marker, PL = plural, PRT = particle, Q = question, REDUP =  
 reduplication, SG = singular, TOP = topic marker.

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Linguistic Typology, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France  
(Hilary Chappell)

Linguistics, National Center for Scientific Research and Ecole des Hautes Etudes en  
Sciences Sociales, Paris, France (Alain Peyraube)

## 共時與歷時視角下漢語族語言否定標記的類型學考察

曹茜蕾<sup>i</sup>、貝羅貝<sup>ii</sup>

法國高等社會科學研究院<sup>i</sup>、  
法國國家科研中心及法國高等社會科學研究院<sup>ii</sup>

### 提要

在否定式的跨語言研究基礎上，本文對五種漢語族語言中的否定標記進行考察，即，閩南話、粵語、吳語、湘語以及北方官話五種語言。

本文還對上古及中古漢語中的否定標記進行梳理，從而為五種漢語族語言中的否定標記找尋歷史根源。

我們發現，以句法、語序為本的否定式類型學並不足以說明漢語族語言中否定標記的實際情況。漢語族語言中存在一系列同時運用於‘標準句否定’和‘命令式否定’中的語意迥異的否定語素。不同的語意表現可概括為：意願、完成體、非現實和即行否定。由此可見，否定與情態、體之間存在著密切的語意關聯（Yue-Hashimoto 1993: 89-92）。通過對否定標記共時、歷時及跨語言的分析，本文旨在為標準句否定和命令式否定進行語意層面的分類從而為這些現象提供合理的解釋。

### 關鍵詞

否定，情態，漢語族語言，類型學，歷時分析