

A Review of Research on Vocal Tones in Hebei Dialects

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Abstract

Since the 1980s, the research on Hebei dialects has made great achievements, and the study on Hebei dialects tone has been gradually deepened. Before 1990, the study on tones of Hebei dialects mostly focused on citation tones, and was mostly limited to the synchronic description of citation tones of specific dialect spots. After the 1990s, the study turned from citation tones to the analysis of the diachronic evolution of tones. At the same time, increasing attention has been paid to the ancient tone forms contained in the tone sandhi and the synchronic and diachronic relationship between citation tone and tone sandhi.

Keywords

Hebei Dialect, Citation Tone, Tone Sandhi, Literature Review

1. Introduction

Dialects are regional branches of common language. The Hebei dialect is distributed in most parts of Hebei Province, including two dialects, Mandarin and Jin dial, and is spoken by about 90 million people. Among the Mandarin dialects, Ji-Lu Mandarin is the most widely used, Beijing Mandarin is mainly used in the northeast of Hebei, and Zhongyuan Mandarin is only used in Wei County and Daming County in the southwest corner of Hebei Province. The Jin dialect is mainly used in some counties and cities of Zhangjiakou, Shijiazhuang, Xingtai and Handan adjacent to Shanxi.

Tone is an important part of dialect phonology and one of the most distinctive features among dialects, so it has always been a hot topic in dialect research. In recent years, with the gradual development and deepening on the study of Hebei dialects, the results of Hebei dialect tone research have gradually increased. This

paper follows the timeline of the research results of Hebei dialects to review the research status of Hebei dialect tones.

2. Researches on the Tones of Hebei Dialects before the 1980s

Before the 1980s, the research on dialects mainly focused on the zoning and common characteristics of major dialects. During this period, few people would make research of Hebei dialects, let alone that of dialect tones. After summarizing the research results in this period, it is found that most researches discussed the synchronic description of citation tones, and concluded that among the citation tones of Hebei dialects, yin and yang rhymes are not used in even tones but in falling tones. The two books *Overview of Hebei Dialects* and *A Survey of the Changli Dialect* were the representative research results of this period. *Overview of Hebei Dialects* (Hebei-Beijing Normal College, Institute of Chinese Studies, Hebei Branch, Chinese Academy of Sciences, 1961) is the first book to summarize and describe the tone categories and tone pitch of dialect spots in 145 counties and cities in Hebei. It shows that the vast majority of Hebei dialects have four tone categories, others have three at least and five at most. There are two main cases of dialects with three tone categories, one is the dialects with even tone, falling-rising tone and falling tone, which is mainly used in Fengnan District, Luan County, and Xingtang County; the other is the dialects with level tone, rising tone falling-rising tone (merging of the rising tone and the falling-rising tone), and falling tone, which is mainly used in Cang County, Huanghua City, Yanshan County, and Meng Village. Dialects with four tone categories are also divided into two cases: one is dialects with even tone, falling-rising tone, falling tone and entering tone, mainly used in some dialect spots of Jin dialect, such as Zhangjiakou City, Zhangbei County, Guyuan County, Shangyi County and Yangyuan County in Zhangjiakou Region, Pingshan County and Lingshou County in Shijiazhuang, as well as Ci County in Handan. The other is dialects with level tone, rising tone, falling-rising tone and falling tone, used in most of the Hebei dialect spots. Dialects with five categories, namely level tone, rising tone, falling-rising tone, falling tone, and entering tone, are mainly used in Zhuolu County and Huailai County in Zhangjiakou, Handan City and its Jize County and Quzhou County. *A Survey of the Changli Dialect* (Hebei Changli County Chronicle Compilation Committee, Institute of Linguistics, CASS, 1984) points out for the first time that yin and yang rhymes exist in the falling tone of Changli dialect, and describes the separation and merging of the two falling tones from the aspects of citation tone and tone sandhi.

3. Researches on the Tones of Hebei Dialects in the 1980s and 1990s

In this period, the research on tones of Hebei dialects mainly centered on the investigation, collation and description of citation tones, and some scholars be-

gan to study tone sandhi but only with a few results gained.

The mid-to-late 1980s witnessed a number of important results, mainly on the synchronic description of citation tones. The following articles conducted detailed and in-depth investigations and descriptions of the tones of Hebei dialects: *Dialect Zoning in the Adjacent Areas of Hebei, Shandong and Henan Provinces* and *Dialect Zoning in Hebei Province, Beijing and Tianjin* by He Wei, *Overview of Dialects of Thirty-nine Counties and Cities in the Southeast of Hebei Province* by Qian Zengyi, *Main Phonetic Characteristics of the Dialects of Baoding in Hebei* by Chen Shujing, and *Analysis of Changli Dialect Tones* by Shi Degui.

Since the 1990s, on the basis of synchronic descriptions, the diachronic evolution of Hebei dialect tones has gradually attracted people's attention. Some articles began to study the evolution of Hebei dialect tones from the diachronic perspective, which focused on the corresponding evolution of Hebei dialects and medieval tone categories from the perspective of phonology history, such as, *Evolution of Ancient Four Tones in Hebei Dialects* by Chen Shujing, *Tonal Performance of Total Voiced Initials with Falling-rising Tone and Falling Tone and Some Semi-voiced Initials with Falling Tone of Chiehyunn System in Hebei Ninghe Dialect* by Li Sijing, *Several Phenomena Related to the Entering Tone in the Dialect of Wei County* by Wu Jizhang, and *Research on Dialect Spoken Phonetic of Medieval Entering Tone Characters in Hebei Province* by Liu Shuxue.

In the *Evolution of Ancient Four Tones in Hebei Dialects*, Chen Shujing mainly discusses the separation and merging evolution of the four tones in Middle Chinese and the citation tones of Hebei Mandarin dialect and Jin dialect, and points out that in some dialect spots with their even tones not having yin and yang rhymes and with rising tone falling-rising tone, the even tone and rising-falling-rising tone of citation tones can distinguish the level tone with rising tone, and rising tone with falling-rising tone in tone sandhi. Among them, it was found that in Shenze County and Wuji County, some falling tone of citation tones have yin and yang rhymes, and there was a tendency for yang-falling tone to mix into yin-falling tone. Li Sijing (1995) reported for the first time that in citation tones of Ninghe dialect, falling tone has yin and yang rhymes, and at the same time, it also showed a trend that the yang-falling tone was gradually merging into yin-falling tone. Liu Shuxue (2000) made an in-depth and meticulous investigation and analysis of the modern tuning of medieval abrupt tone characters in the dialects of the counties and cities in Hebei, and the current reading and changing of vowels, finding that the proportion of voiceless-initial entering tone changing into falling-rising tone in the dialects used in Shunping County, Tang County and other dialect spots was more than 70%, which indicates that the voiceless-initial entering tone into falling-rising tone in these dialects were consistent with the changes of entering tones recorded in *The Tones and Rhymes in North-Central China*, retaining some characteristics of modern Chinese.

Since the 1980s, under the background of the increasingly active discussion of tone sandhi in Chinese dialects, the tone sandhi in Hebei dialects and related topics have gradually attracted the attention of researchers, and a growing num-

ber of researches began to focus on the ancient tone forms contained in the tone sandhi and the synchronic and diachronic relationship between citation tone and tone sandhi. The results in this period mainly come from researches on yin and yang rhymes of falling tone in tone sandhi, but no related research was conducted on the yin and yang rhymes of even tone and the rising-falling-rising tone consisting of rising tone and falling-rising tone in tone sandhi. Although *A Survey of the Changli Dialect* and *Overview of Hebei Dialects* both pay attention to the fact that the falling tone before light tone has yin and yang rhymes, on the whole, only a few of research results was obtained in this period, especially those of in-depth research turning from synchronic description to diachronic description.

4. Researches on the Tone of Hebei Dialect in the 21st Century

After entering the 21st century, the number of treatises on the tones in Hebei dialect has gradually increased, with the content enriched. The tones are not only involved in the comprehensive research of phonetics, but also studied as an independent topic. Meanwhile, new progress has also been made in the research on the yin and yang rhymes existing in falling tones and even tones and separation of rising-falling-rising tones in the tone sandhi.

In the comprehensive research of phonetics, the main results that discuss tones include *Phonology of the Dialects in the Middle and South of Hebei Province* by Li Xu, *Comparison and Study of Langfang-Beijing Mandarin Dialects District Pronunciation* by Chen Na, *Research on Pronunciation of Beijing Mandarin* by Zhang Shifang, *A Study on the Phonetic Characteristics of Ninghe Dialect* by Yang Bin, *Phonological Study of Long Yao Dialect* by Wu Qingguo, *Phonological Study of Handan Dialect* by Zhang Beibei, *Phonological Study of Linzhang Dialect* by Tian Jing, and *Phonological Study of Hebei Dialect in Ming and Qing Dynasty* by Han Xiaoyun. Zhang Shifang analyzed the phenomena that in Luan County dialect, Luannan dialect and other dialect with three tones (all belong to Hebei Ji-Lu Mandarin dialects), even tone doesn't have yin and yang rhymes, and that in Qinglong (Xiaomaping) dialect with two tones, level tone merges with falling-rising tone and rising tone merges with falling tone, and their causes.

The thematic researches on tones mainly include *A Phonetic Study of the Pingshan Dialect* by Gai Linhai, *The Tone of Hengshui Dialect* by Liu Ruzheng, *Research on the Sound of Medieval 'Rusheng' Characters in Handan Dialect* by Wang Xili, *Study on the Flow-related Phonetic Changes of Tang County Dialect in Hebei* by Tian Jing, *Investigation and Research on the Tone of Wu'an Dialect* by Wang Zhiyong, *Separation of Sonant and Aphonic Tone in Bao-Tang Dialect and Its Importance in History of Phonetics* by Li Qiaolan, *Research on the Tone of Tang County Dialect* by Liu Kelong, *Research on Tone of One Level Tone Dialect in Hebei Province* by Fan Ruizhan, *Investigation and Research on the Tone of Nanpi Dialect* by Bai Yuanyuan, *Research on the Tone System of Dialects in the Middle and South of Hebei Province* by Zheng Li, *Evolution of Modern Hebei Dialect Tone* by Zheng Li, *The Entering Tone of Jingxing Dialect and Related*

Phonological Problems by Li Lan, etc. Bai Yuanyuan conducted in-depth investigation and research on the citation tone and tone sandhi of the Nanpi dialect from synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and proposed that the disyllabic words of Nanpi area's dialect have three patterns: stress-stress pattern, stress-moderate pattern and stress-light pattern, and there are historical continuity between the impaired syllables in stress-moderate pattern and those in stress-light pattern.

Since the 1990s, new discoveries have been made in the research on the phenomenon of dividing falling tone and even tone respectively into yin and yang rhymes, and separating tones in rising-falling-rising tone of Hebei dialects at the level tone sandhi, and the results were mainly obtained from the investigation, description, as well as diachronic and interpretive research of these three phenomena in citation tone and tone sandhi.

In the early research of the phenomenon of dividing falling tone into yin and yang rhymes in Hebei dialect, the phenomenon of dividing falling tone into yin and yang rhymes before light tone was mainly discussed, such as in *A Survey of the Changli Dialect*, and the papers by Chen Shujing, Sun Yan and Li Qiaolan. In *Separation of Sonant and Aphonic Tone in Bao-Tang Dialect and Its Importance in History of Phonetics*, Li Qiaolan carefully sorted out the phenomenon of dividing the sandhi tone into yin and yang rhymes before light tone in Bao-Tang dialect, and emphasized the research value of language history of such dialect phenomenon. In *Study on the Flow-related phonetic changes of Tang County Dialect in Hebei*, Tian Jing made a comprehensive, thorough and in-depth investigation and description of the law of dividing the falling tone into yin and yang rhymes in the tone sandhi impaired syllables of stress pattern, before light tone and in rhotic accent in citation tone of Tangxian county dialect, which revised the conclusion of Chen Shujing and others that in Bao-Tang dialect, the falling tone was divided into yin and yang rhymes only before light tone. Liu Kelong (2010) made further investigation and analysis of the phenomenon of dividing the falling tone into yin and yang rhymes in Tang County dialect, and found that in Gaochang dialect of Tang County, the falling tone can be divided into yin and yang rhymes in both citation tone and tone sandhi, but yang-falling tone can be independently used in tone sandhi, and merged with the falling-rising tone in citation tone. It can be seen from the papers by Tian and Liu that the tonal performance of Yin and Yang-falling tones in Tang County dialect is similar to that in Changli and Ninghe dialects.

The division of even tone into yin and yang rhymes is one of the important characteristics of Mandarin dialects and even the entire Chinese dialect, but the dialect investigation report shows that the phenomenon of citation tone in Hebei dialect without dividing even tone into yin and yang rhymes is used in such cities as Tangshan, Shijiazhuang, and Zhangjiakou. Zhang Shifang, Zheng Li, Fan Ruizhan, Wang Yanan, Liu Baoyun, and Zhang Shan have discussed the citation tone even tone without distinguishing level tone and rising tone in Hebei dialect.

Several research results were achieved in whether even tone is divided into yin

and yang rhymes in tone sandhi in Hebei dialect, and the existing studies mostly focused on the synchronic description of the phenomenon of dividing even tone into level tone and rising tone in specific dialect spots, and only few analyzed the diachronic evolution of this phenomenon. According to the existing research results, in Hebei dialects with no division between level tone and rising tone in citation tone, the two tones can be presented to varying degrees tone sandhi. [Zheng & Fan \(2014\)](#) both concluded that in Hebei dialects, most of the citation tones that have no distinction between level tone and rising tone can present the two tones when used in tone sandhi. [Wang Yanan \(2008\)](#) made a detailed investigation of the changes of the even tone in tone sandhi in Yuanshi dialect, and pointed out that in Yuanshi dialect, the level tone and rising tone were not distinguished in citation tone but can be presented before light tone.

The merging of rising tone with falling-rising tone in citation tone appears in a relatively small and concentrated area in Hebei Province. According to the current research results, the dialects with no tone separation in rising tone falling-rising tone generally have rising tone and falling-rising tone in tone sandhi. Zhu Xiaolin, Wang Shengnan, Fan Ruizhan, and Zheng Li all described this phenomenon to varying degrees in terms of citation tone and tone sandhi. The merger of rising tone and falling-rising tone in citation tone is generally considered to be a late tonal evolution phenomenon. [Zhang Ansheng \(2015\)](#) pointed out that this evolution should have occurred after the modern Chinese language represented by *The Tones and Rhymes in North-Central China*, in which the even tone has yin and yang rhymes. Although the separation of rising-falling-rising tone in tone sandhi has been studied by some scholars, the diachronic research on that in Hebei dialect has received little attention, and no valuable research results have been made so far.

In summary, Hebei is located in the hinterland of the Mandarin dialect. Due to deep influence of the common language, there is a trend that the number of places and people using the dialects in which falling tone has yin and yang rhymes, even tone doesn't have yin and yang rhymes, and no separation is found in rising-falling-rising tone is decreasing. So it is particularly urgent to carry out in-depth investigation and research on Hebei dialect tones.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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