

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Hangzhou Dialect

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1. INTRODUCTION

Chao Yuen-Ren in his well known Studies in the Modern Wu Dialects (Chao, 1928) described the spoken Hangzhou dialect as “rather like the people of Changzhou reading Mandarin vernacular literature” an intriguing description which begs explanation. This paper is a preliminary attempt to explore the possible dimensions of this characterization by looking into available data for the features which can be found that give the Hangzhou dialect its special coloring.

Hangzhou lies at the very heart of the region in the lower Yangtze where the Wu dialects are centered, yet the dialect spoken there does not fit easily within the Wu dialect pattern in terms of its overall characteristics. Instead, it exhibits a curious mixture of Mandarin and Wu features, seeming to stand somewhere in between a typical Mandarin dialect like Beijing and a typical Wu dialect such as Suzhou. In broad outline, Hangzhou has been noted to have essentially a Wu type phonology while in grammar and lexicon it shows many Mandarin tendencies, hence Chao’s characterization. A concise view of the situation is seen if we contrast the Hangzhou dialect with the spoken languages of Beijing and Suzhou according to diagnostic criteria for dialect classification suggested by Jerry Norman, as in Table I below^①.

	Beijing	Hangzhou	Suzhou
(1) 3rd person pronoun = <u>tā</u> or cognate	+	+	—
(2) Subordinative part. = <u>de/di</u> or cognate	+	+	—
(3) Ordinary neg. = <u>bù</u> or cognate	+	+	+
(4) Gender marker is prefixed for animals...	+	+	+
(5) Tonal register only in <u>píng</u> tones	+	—	—
(6) Velars are palatalized before <u>i</u>	+	+	+
(7) <u>Zhàn</u> or cognate for ‘to stand’	+	—	—
(8) <u>Zǒu</u> or cognate for ‘to walk’	+	+	±
(9) <u>Érzi</u> or cognate for ‘son’	+	+	+
(10) <u>Fángzi</u> or cognate for ‘house’	+	+	±
(11) 3-way contrast of initial stops	—	+	+

Table I. Classificatory Criteria for Chinese Dialects

In the five areas where Suzhou clearly differs from Beijing (two phonological, (5) and (11), two lexical, (1) and (7), and one grammatical, (2)), Hangzhou differs from Beijing in three (two phonological, (5) and (11), and one lexical, (7)—‘to stand’ is [lie? 8] in Hangzhou) and differs from Suzhou in the other two (one lexical, (1), and one grammatical, (2)). Hence the set of criteria on this table provides a graphic illustration of how the Hangzhou dialect straddles the boundary between a typical Mandarin dialect and a typical Wu dialect in terms of its overall features.

Below we examine the mix of these and other features in greater detail, looking at phonological, lexical, and grammatical features of the dialect in comparison to various features of Mandarin and the Wu dialects which are typical of these groups.

2. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF HANGZHOU PHONOLOGY

The Wu dialects have often been characterized solely on the basis of phonological characteristics. As Hangzhou phonology is considered to generally reflect the Wu pattern, in the section below we will consider some typical Wu characteristics and look at the extent to which Hangzhou conforms to them, noting at the same time those aspects of the dialect that evidence more Mandarin-like trends.

2.1. A Three-way Contrast of Initial Stops and Affricates

This is perhaps the most striking feature commonly shared by Wu dialects. As opposed to the two-way contrast found for example in Mandarin dialects, a typical Wu dialect such as Suzhou shows a three-way contrast, which is understood to be a result of the retention of Middle Chinese voiced stops.

Hangzhou has the twenty-nine initials listed below in Table II. It can be seen that Hangzhou, in strong affinity to the Wu dialect pattern, has a set of eight voiced initials: [b], [d], [dz], [dʒ], [g], [v], [z] and [ɦ]; examples include 跑 [bɔ2], 弟 [di6], 住 [dzɥ6], 全 [dʒiē2], 環 [guō2], 晚 [væ3], 人 [zən2], 杭 [ɦaŋ2]②.

			labials	dental-alveolar	pre-palatal	velar	glottal	
stops and affricates	<u>qīng</u>	unasp.	p	t	ts	tɕ	k	ʔ
		asp.	p'	t'	ts'	tɕ'	k'	
	<u>zhuó</u>	unasp.	b	d	dz	dʒ	g	
nasals			m	n		ɲ	ŋ	
lateral				l				
fricatives	<u>qīng</u>		f	s		ɕ		h
	<u>zhuó</u>		v	z				ɦ
(and zero initial)								

Table II. Hangzhou Initials

The following examples illustrate that the voiced initials combine with the voiceless initials to form three-way contrasts, reflecting the Middle Chinese (MC) system:

MC Initial TypeCharactersHangzhou

In labials:

qīng

包，變，筆

[pɔl], [piẽ5], [pieʔ7]

cìqīng

拋，騙，匹

[p'ɔl], [p'iẽ5], [p'ieʔ7]

zhuó

跑，便，弼

[bɔ2], [biẽ6], [bieʔ8]

In dentals:

qīng

丁，刀，丹

[tiŋ1], [tɔl], [tã1]

cìqīng

聽，滔，灘

[t'ɪŋ1], [t'ɔl], [t'ã1]

zhuó

亭，桃，檀

[diŋ2], [dɔ2], [dã2]

In pre-palatals (which here reflect MC velars [jiàn zǔ] and dental sibilants [jīng zǔ]):qīng

津，將，京

[tɕiŋ1], [tɕiaŋ1], [tɕiŋ1]

cìqīng

親，搶，卿

[tɕ'ɪŋ1], [tɕ'iaŋ1], [tɕ'ɪŋ1]

zhuó

秦，牆，擎

[dʒiŋ2], [dʒiaŋ2], [dʒiŋ2]

In velars:

qīng

規，光

[kueil], [kuaŋ1]

cìqīng

虧，筐

[k'ueil], [k'uaŋ1]

zhuó

達，狂

[guei2], [guaŋ2]

And in dental affricates (here from MC retroflex and palatal initials [zhuāng zǔ and zhī zǔ):qīng

莊，朝，症

[tsɥaŋ1], [tsɔ1], [tsəŋ5]

cìqīng

瘡，超，秤

[ts'ɥaŋ1], [ts'ɔ1], [ts'əŋ5]

zhuó

牀，潮，勝

[dzɥaŋ2], [dzɔ2], [dzəŋ6]

2.2. A Clear Division of Yīn and Yáng Tonal RegistersThis typical Wu dialect characteristic is illustrated by the Suzhou dialect, the tones of which can be charted as in Table III below^③:

	píng	shàng	qù	rù	
<u>qīng</u>	1	3	5	7	yīn
<u>cìzhuó</u>	2		6	8	yáng
<u>zhuó</u>					

Table III. Suzhou Tones

We can see that while the lower shàng tone (yángshàng) has merged with the lower qù tone (yángqù), there have been no mergers between the upper and lower registers. This is in contrast, for example, to the Beijing standard where upper qù (yīnqù) and lower qù have merged and no longer contrast.

In Hangzhou the situation is similar to that of Suzhou, as illustrated by Table IV:

	píng	shàng	qù	rù	
qīng	1	3	5	7	yīn
cìzhuó	2		6	8	yáng
zhuó					

Table IV. Hangzhou Tones

Significantly, the difference between the situation here and that of Suzhou is in the distribution of tonal categories among the cìzhuó (sonorant) initials. As far as can be seen from the material at hand, there is a greater tendency for words with sonorant initials in Hangzhou to fall into the yīn set. In the shàng tone all words with sonorant initials remain shàng and do not merge with the qù tone words — similar to the situation in Mandarin. In the other categories one can find examples in both yīn and yáng sets for such words. This is in contrast to Suzhou where sonorant initials generally fall into the yáng set except in the shàng tone where some words with sonorant initials fall into the yīnshàng category. (A few exceptions can be found in the píng tone as well.) Compare Hangzhou and Suzhou in the examples below^④.

	Hangzhou	Suzhou
In the <u>shàng</u> tone:		
李	li3	li6
惹	ŋia3	zɔ6
屢	lei3	li3
In the <u>píng</u> tone:		
聯	liē1	li12
梅	mei2	mE2
拉	la1	lɔ1
In the <u>qù</u> tone:		
內	nuei6	nE6
類	luei6	lE6
慢	mǎe6	mE6
And in the <u>rù</u> tone:		
摸	moʔ7	moʔ8
目	moʔ8	moʔ8
辣	laʔ8	laʔ8

Note also that Hangzhou retains the *rù* tone category. But *rù* tone words end only in a final glottal stop -ʔ, without the distinction found in Middle Chinese between final -p, -t, and -k. This is typical of the Wu dialects, but is found in Southern (Jianghuai) Mandarin as well. The situation is in sharp contrast to Northern Mandarin where the *rù* distinction has generally been lost altogether. Compare the following examples (here and following, MC values are based on Karlgren):

	MC	→	Hangzhou		MC	→	Hangzhou
獵	liǎp		liǎʔ8	列	liǎt		liǎʔ8
設	siǎt		sǎʔ7	適	siǎk		sǎʔ7
食	dziǎk		zǎʔ8	十	ziǎp		zǎʔ8

2.3. Reduction of Diphthongs

The Hangzhou dialect is very similar to Suzhou and other Wu dialects in its lack of descending (low-to-high) diphthongs. While it does have the diphthong [ei]—as 杯 [peil] and 每 [mei3]—similar to the [ei] in the Southern Mandarin dialect of Yangzhou for example, the distribution of this diphthong in relation to Middle Chinese diphthongs does not match the development in Yangzhou. For instance, it does not reflect the MC diphthong in the labials from the *wēi* rhyme, where a simple [i] is found in Hangzhou^⑤:

	MC	Hangzhou	cf.	Yangzhou
飛	piwei	fi		fəil
味	miwei	vi6		uəi5

But it is seen in words from the *hóu* rhyme and some words from the *yóu* rhyme, where both Yangzhou and Suzhou have no diphthong:

	MC	Hangzhou	cf.	Yangzhou	&	Suzhou
頭	dəu	dei2		t'ɿ2		dY2
走	tsəu	tsei3		tsɿ3		tsY3
口	k'əu	k'ei3		k'ɿ3		k'Y3
手	siəu	sei3		sɿ3		sY3
抽	t'jəu	ts'ei1		ts'ɿ1		ts'Y1

Some other Wu dialects have a comparable development in these rhymes, notably those in southeastern Jiangsu such as Danyang, Changzhou and Jiangyang — the latter also reads 手 [sei3] (Fu, 1986). Most Mandarin dialects have a back diphthong like Beijing's -ou for these words (Yuan, 1983).

The absence of any other descending diphthongs means that otherwise the Hangzhou dialect generally shows the same kinds of reductions of Middle Chinese diphthongs that are typical of Wu dialects, but which, however, can also be found in Southern Mandarin dialects (for example Yangzhou) as well. In addition to the above examples from the *wēi* rhyme, note the following:

	MC	→	Hangzhou		MC	→	Hangzhou
包	pau		pɔ1	表	piäü		piɔ3
炒	tɕ'au		ts'ɔ3	叫	kieu		tɕiɔ5
油	iəu		Y2	才	dzəi		dze2
就	dziəu		dʒY6	海	xəi		he3

2.4. The Development of Middle Chinese Final Nasals

The loss of Middle Chinese final labial nasals *-n* and *-m* after low vowels is commonly seen in the Wu dialects. Suzhou provides a typical example of this situation and contrasts clearly with a Mandarin dialect such as the Beijing standard, which maintains both nasals as *-n*. As the below examples show, the Hangzhou dialect stands in between Suzhou and Beijing in this regard, having lost the final stops, yet retaining nasalization^⑥:

	MC		Suzhou		Hangzhou		Beijing
	-an/am→		-E		-ǣ		-an
衫	ɕam		sE1		sǣ1		shān
板	pan		pE3		pǣ3		bǎn
	-uân→		-ə/uo		-uō		-an or -uan
搬	puân		pə		puō1		bān
團	duân		də		duō2		tuán
貫	kuân		kuə		kuō5		guàn
	-ien/iwän→		-i1 or -ə		-iē or -uō		-ian/uan
先	sien		si11		ɕiē1		xiān
典	tien		ti13		tiē5		diǎn
全	dʒiwän		zi12		dʒiē2		quán
串	tɕ'iwän		ts'ə5		ts'uō5		chuàn

Commonly in Wu dialects the Middle Chinese final velar nasal *-ng* is also lost in certain situations (the *dàng* and *jiāng shè*, for instance) with only nasalization of the preceding vowel remaining. But in Hangzhou, the final *-ng* is retained in all cases. This sets Hangzhou out as an exception among Wu dialects (Fu, 1985). The following are examples^⑦:

	MC	→	Hangzhou		MC	→	Hangzhou
當	tāng		taŋ1	兩	liang		liang3
況	xiwāng		huanɣ3	窗	tɕ'āng		ts'uaŋ1
冰	piəng		piŋ1	生	ɕəng		səŋ1
病	bɨəng		biŋ6	星	siəng		ɕiŋ1
空	k'ung		k'oŋ1	蟲	ɕiung		dzoŋ2

In addition, Hangzhou final velar nasal *[-ŋ]* is also found in some cases where Middle Chinese had a final nasal labials *-n* or *-m* (in the *shēn* and *zhēn shè*) with a resultant loss of a distinction between original MC *-n/-m* and *-ng*:

	MC	and	MC →	Hangzhou
林	liəm		lieng	liŋ2
深	siəm		siəŋ	səŋ1
金	kiəm		kiəŋ	tɕiŋ1
陳	diən		diəŋ	dzəŋ2
根	kən		kəŋ	kəŋ1
神	dziən		dziəŋ	zəŋ2

The loss of this distinction is often seen following *i* and *ə* in the Wu dialects and is not uncommon in Jianghuai Mandarin dialects as well (Chao, 1967; Yuan, 1983).

2.5. Retention of Distinction of Rhymes *tán* 覃 and *tán* 談

Often Wu dialects retain traces of this Middle Chinese distinction. It is seen for example in Suzhou. But it is not found at all in the Hangzhou dialect, just as it is not found in Mandarin dialects such as Beijing.

Compare the following examples from the *tán* 覃 rhyme:

	MC	Suzhou	Hangzhou	Beijing
潭	dâm	t'el	dæ2	<i>tán</i>
蠶	dzâm	zə2	dzæ2	<i>cán</i>

with these from the *tán* 談 rhyme:

談	dâm	dE2	dæ2	<i>tán</i>
慚	dzâm	zE2	dzæ2	<i>cán</i>

2.6. Split Literary and Colloquial Pronunciations

A regular split in reading and spoken (or literary and colloquial) pronunciations can generally be found in the Wu dialects, in the *ɿ* initial, the *wɛi* initial and the *jiən* (or velar; Second Division *kāikǒu*) initial (Chao, 1967; Fu, 1985). Suzhou provides typical examples:

	Suzhou Literary	Suzhou Colloquial
In the <i>ɿ</i> initial:		
日	zəʔ8	ɳəʔ8
肉	zoʔ8	ɳioʔ8
人	zən2	ɳiən2
二	er6	ɳi6
	Suzhou Literary	Suzhou Colloquial
In the <i>wɛi</i> initial:		
問	vən6	mən6
萬	vE6	mE6
味	vi6	mi6

	<u>Suzhou Literary</u>	<u>Suzhou Colloquial</u>
And in the velars:		
角	tɕioʔ7	koʔ7
家	tɕiɔ1	kɔ1
恰	tɕ'iaʔ7	k'aʔ7

The Hangzhou dialect, however, has no literary and colloquial sets of split readings. Herein lies one area of strong Mandarin hues in the dialect. As can be seen in the above examples, in the *ɿ* initial group the Suzhou split readings have a [z] for the literary readings (except in *zhǐ shè*) and [ɿ] for the colloquial readings. Hangzhou has a few words in this group that also begin with [ɿ], 惹 [ɿia3] and 軟 [ɿyō3] for example. The great majority of words in this group, however, begin with [z], parallel to the Suzhou literary pronunciation:

	<u>Hangzhou</u>	<u>Suzhou Lit.</u>		<u>Hangzhou</u>	<u>Suzhou Lit.</u>
日	zəʔ8	zəʔ8	染	zuō3	zə6
肉	zoʔ8	zoʔ8	熱	zɥəʔ8	zəʔ8
人	zən2	zən2	繞	zɔ3	zæ6

For the above examples, most Mandarin dialects have a [ʐ] or a [z], as found in the Beijing dialect or the early Mandarin pronunciation reflected in the *Zhōngyuán Yīnyùn* (Xu, 1964).

With no colloquial readings and a general pronunciation of [z] for words in the *ɿ* initial group, in Hangzhou 人 [zən2] and 銀 [ɿiŋ2] are not homophones in colloquial speech. In Suzhou they are (both read [ɿiən2]), which is usually the case in the Taihu group of Wu dialects in which Suzhou and Hangzhou have been classified (Fu, 1986).

Lastly concerning the *ɿ* initial, note the following from *zhǐ shè*:

	<u>Hangzhou</u>	<u>Suzhou Lit./Coll.</u>
兒	er2	er2/ɿi2
二	ʔer5	er6/ɿi6
耳	ʔer3	er2/ɿi2

Again, the Hangzhou pronunciation of these words corresponds to the Suzhou literary pronunciation and does not have the [ɿ] initial found in the Suzhou colloquial pronunciation. In most modern Mandarin dialects these words also have no initial; and in the great majority of Mandarin dialects they are read with a retroflex [er], as in Beijing (Yuan, 1983).

The situation in words in the MC *wēi* initial group is similar to the situation in the *ɿ* initial. In the Hangzhou dialect, the *wēi* initial has usually become a [v], parallel to the Suzhou literary reading:

	<u>Hangzhou</u>	<u>Suzhou Lit.</u>		<u>Hangzhou</u>	<u>Suzhou Lit.</u>
問	vəŋ6	vən6	未	vi6	vi6
萬	væ6	vE6	薇	vi2	vi2
忘	vaŋ6	vō2	蚊	vəŋ2	vən2

The trend in most modern Mandarin dialects is for the wēi initial to become a zero initial. This is the case in Beijing, for example. Yet in some Mandarin dialects the wēi initial may have originally been a [v]. Indeed it is found as a probable [v] in the Zhōngyuán Yīnyùn (Xu, 1964), on the basis of which the above words are reconstructed as follows:

問	vən5	味	vei5
萬	van5	薇	vi2
忘	vaŋ2	蚊	vən2

Reflecting certain Middle Chinese velars (Second Division kāikǒu), in the Hangzhou dialect — similar to the situation in Beijing — we find only pre-palatals, corresponding to the literary readings of Suzhou:

	Hangzhou	Suzhou Lit.
袂	tɕiaʔ7	tɕiaʔ7
敲	tɕ'io1	tɕ'ia1
街	tɕie1	tɕio1
家	tɕia1	tɕio1
蝦	ɕia1	ɕio1

Not only is the lack of split readings for each of these initials in Hangzhou very striking, the particular way these initials have developed — especially the ɾi and wēi initials — also sets Hangzhou apart from most of the surrounding Wu dialects (Fu, 1985). The strong Mandarin character of the developments should not be overlooked.

2.7. The Development of Yi and Yǐng Initials

At the same time that the development of the MC ɾi, wēi and velar initials in Hangzhou is reminiscent of developments in Mandarin, the development of the Middle Chinese initials yí and yǐng follows the Wu pattern. The distinction between these initials is typically retained in Wu (Chao, 1967). In Hangzhou, many examples can be found where a contrast is maintained between the initials of words from these two categories:

<u>Yǐng Initial</u>	<u>Yí Initial</u>
鴉 ʔia1	牙 ia2
烏 ʔu1	吳 ɦu2
於 ʔy1	魚 y2
愛 ʔE5	礙 ɲɛ6
醫 ʔi1	疑 ɲi2
奧 ʔɔ5	傲 ɲɔ6
音 ʔiŋ1	吟 ɲiŋ2
按 ʔæ5	岸 ɦæ6
英 ʔiŋ1	迎 ɲiŋ2

This situation contrasts with Mandarin where the two initials have merged together as a zero initial (often realized, however, as a glottal stop).

3. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF HANGZHOU LEXICON

Despite the fact that the Wu dialects are considered to vary the most among themselves with regard to vocabulary, an examination of the lexicon of Hangzhou can still provide insight as to the extent to which the dialect conforms to the pattern of Wu dialects on the one hand and that of Mandarin dialects on the other. For this paper, the data we have had to work with is rather slim in the area of lexicon, but we were able to glean some information useful for comparison.

3.1. Personal Pronouns

A bewildering degree of variation is found among the Wu dialects in the personal pronouns. The Shanghai and Suzhou dialects illustrate the situation (a dot [' · '] indicates the following syllable is atonic):

Shanghai	< singular >	< plural >
1st:	ŋu2 or aʔ7 laʔ8	ŋi2, ŋu2 · ŋi or aʔ7 laʔ8
2nd:	noŋ2	na2
3rd:	i2	i2 laʔ8

(Yuan, 1983)

Suzhou	< singular >	< plural >
1st:	ŋəu6 or nəu6	ŋi6
2nd:	nE6	ŋ6 toʔ7
3rd:	li1	li1 toʔ7

(Beijing Daxue, 1964)

While, as the above set of examples shows, except for the first person singular Wu pronouns often look very different from Mandarin pronouns, the Hangzhou set of pronouns looks just like Standard Chinese, note especially the third-person pronoun in the following list:

e. 'grandmother'	奶奶	<i>nǎinai</i>	<i>ne5 · ne5</i>	好婆	<i>hæ3bu2</i>
f. 'dad'	爸爸	<i>bāba</i>	<i>pa5 · pa5</i>	爹爹	<i>tiɔ1tiɔ1</i>
g. 'mom'	媽媽	<i>māma</i>	<i>m1ma1</i>	姆媽	<i>m1mɔ1</i>
h. 'son'	兒子	<i>érzi</i>	<i>er2 · ts13</i>		<i>ɳi2ts13</i>
i. 'daughter'	女兒	<i>nǚér</i>	<i>ny3 · er2</i>	囡[?]	<i>ne2ŋ6</i>
j. 'thing'	東西	<i>dōngxi</i>	<i>toŋ1ci1</i>	*物事	<i>myʔ8z16</i>
k. 'too'	太	<i>tài</i>	<i>t'ɛ5</i>	*忒	<i>t'ɣʔ7</i>
l. 'time'	時候	<i>shíhou</i>	<i>z12ɬei6</i>	*辰光	<i>zən2kuŋ1</i>
m. 'late'	晚	<i>wǎn</i>	<i>dz12</i>	*遲/晏	<i>ɛ5</i>
n. 'what?'	什麼	<i>shénme</i>	<i>sa5</i>	*啥	<i>sɔ5</i>
o. 'fat'(of animals)	肥	<i>fēi</i>	<i>tsuaŋ5</i>	壯	<i>tsɔŋ5</i>
p. 'evening meal'	晚飯	<i>wǎnfàn</i>	<i>ʔi6 · vǎŋ6</i>	夜飯	<i>io5vɛ6</i>

4. CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES IN SYNTAX

There are features of Hangzhou syntax which are also noted to give this dialect a very Mandarin-like appearance. Though the data we have at present is quite limited in what it reveals in this area, some preliminary observations can be made.

In Wu dialects the indirect object typically precedes the direct object, the reverse of the order found in Mandarin (Chao, 1967). The one sentence we can find in our Hangzhou data with both a direct and indirect object does not show this Wu characteristic:

把我一本書。

pa3 ɳo3 ʔie ʔ7 pəŋ3 sɿ1.

'Give me a book.'

Chao (1928) noted that most Wu dialects distinguish between an existential negative ('there is not'/'do not have') and the negative used for non-perfective aspect ('not yet'). The Hangzhou dialect however, just like Mandarin, does not make this distinction. Hence we find in our data examples such as the following which use the form [meʔ8ʔY3] 沒有 for both negatives, corresponding to Mandarin *méiyǒu*:

existential:

我實在沒有書

ɳo3 dzəʔ8 dze6 məʔ8ʔY3 sɿ1.

'I really have no books.'

'not yet':

他還沒有談完嗎?

t'al uō2 məʔY3 dǎ2 uō2 ma5?

'Has he not yet finished talking?'

Many of the grammatical particles in the Hangzhou dialect are apparently cognate

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5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

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If we assume that Hangzhou is a Wu dialect that was merely strongly influenced by Mandarin during the Song period — that is if we consider the Mandarin elements to be of a superstratum, then why for example do we find virtually no remnants of the MC nasal in the *ɲ* and *wɛi* initial groups? The split readings in other Wu dialects are strong evidence of what can be called Mandarin influence. But other dialects retain colloquial readings which reflect the MC nasal. Why would Hangzhou have not similarly retained such colloquial readings? Why does Hangzhou have a full set of Mandarin pronouns and many other striking Mandarin lexical and syntactic elements? It is likely that simply attributing these phenomena to Mandarin “influence” does not reveal the true picture.

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Looked at from a historical and geographic perspective then, the striking features of the Hangzhou dialect have implications which go beyond simple linguistic curiosity. As such, the dialect deserves a full and thorough study.

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Hangzhou	< singular >	< plural >
1st:	ŋo3	ŋo3 · meŋ2
2nd:	ni3	ni3 · meŋ2
3rd:	t'al	t'al · meŋ2

3.2. The -ér Suffix

It is often noted that the -ér 兒 suffix is frequently found in the Hangzhou dialect lexicon, a feature unusual for the Wu dialects in Northern Zhejiang (Chao, 1928; Fu, 1985). Note the following examples:

老頭兒 lə3 · dei2 · er2
 凳兒 ten5 · er2
 筷兒 k'ue5 · er2

Important to note is the fact that in Hangzhou this -ér suffix forms an independent syllable and is read '[er]'. Phonologically, then, the suffix in Hangzhou is in clear contrast to the -ér suffix found in the Beijing dialect which affects the pronunciation of the final of the syllable that precedes it but does not usually form an independent syllable itself. Both the Hangzhou and Beijing forms of the -ér suffix, however, look the same when written in the traditional manner with Chinese characters.

3.3. Other Vocabulary

It has been noted that "there are a large number of lexical items in Hangzhou whose usage is the same as Putonghua" (Fu, 1985). To explore this characterization, we have compiled the following brief list of items comparing Hangzhou dialect vocabulary with that of the Beijing and Suzhou dialects. Note the five items starred under 'j', 'k', 'l', 'm' and 'n'; Chao (1967) gives these as generally widespread among the Wu dialects. Suzhou uses all five, while Hangzhou uses only one, [sa5], which is actually found in Mandarin dialects as well. Yet, while the Hangzhou vocabulary may frequently look very much like Mandarin vocabulary, items such as 'b', 'm', 'o' and 'p' on the list show that Wu type vocabulary is also found in this dialect. It is clear that much more work needs to be done before anything conclusive can be said in this regard.

		Beijing	Hangzhou		Suzhou [®]
a. 'house'	房子	fángzi	vaŋ2 · ts13		von2tsi3
b. 'room'	屋子	wūzi	vaŋ2tciēl	or: 屋 房間	uvʔ7 von2kE1
c. 'stuffed bun'	包子	bāozi	muō2 · dei2 (+ / - stuffing)	饅頭	mə2dY2 (+ stuffing)
d. 'grandfather'	祖父	zǔfù	tial · tial	爹爹 阿爹	aʔtiə1

e. 'grandmother'	奶奶	<u>nǎinai</u>	nɛ5 · nɛ5	好婆	hæ3bu2
f. 'dad'	爸爸	<u>bàba</u>	pa5 · pa5	爹爹	tiə1tiə1
g. 'mom'	媽媽	<u>māma</u>	m1ma1	姆媽	m1mə1
h. 'son'	兒子	<u>érzi</u>	er2 · ts13		ŋi2ts13
i. 'daughter'	女兒	<u>nǚér</u>	ny3 · er2	囡[?]	nə2ŋ6
j. 'thing'	東西	<u>dōngxi</u>	toŋ1ɕil	*物事	mvʔ8z16
k. 'too'	太	<u>tài</u>	t'ɛ5	*忒	t'vʔ7
l. 'time'	時候	<u>shíhou</u>	z12fi6	*辰光	zən2kuəŋ1
m. 'late'	晚	<u>wǎn</u>	dz12	*遲/晏	E5
n. 'what?'	什麼	<u>shénme</u>	sa5	*啥	sə5
o. 'fat'(of animals)	肥	<u>fēi</u>	tsuaŋ5	壯	tsəŋ5
p. 'evening meal'	晚飯	<u>wǎnfàn</u>	ʔi6 · vɛ6	夜飯	io5vɛ6

4. CONTRASTS AND SIMILARITIES IN SYNTAX

There are features of Hangzhou syntax which are also noted to give this dialect a very Mandarin-like appearance. Though the data we have at present is quite limited in what it reveals in this area, some preliminary observations can be made.

In Wu dialects the indirect object typically precedes the direct object, the reverse of the order found in Mandarin (Chao, 1967). The one sentence we can find in our Hangzhou data with both a direct and indirect object does not show this Wu characteristic:

把我一本書。

pa3 ŋə3 ʔie ʔ7 pəŋ3 sɿ1.

'Give me a book.'

Chao (1928) noted that most Wu dialects distinguish between an existential negative ('there is not'/'do not have') and the negative used for non-perfective aspect ('not yet'). The Hangzhou dialect however, just like Mandarin, does not make this distinction. Hence we find in our data examples such as the following which use the form [meʔ8ʔY3] 沒有 for both negatives, corresponding to Mandarin *méiyǒu*:

existential:

我實在沒有書

ŋə3 dzəʔ8 dze6 məʔ8ʔY3 sɿ1.

'I really have no books.'

'not yet':

他還沒有談完嗎?

t'al uə2 məʔY3 də2 uə2 ma5?

'Has he not yet finished talking?'

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with their counterparts in Mandarin, while differing clearly from those of a typical Wu dialect such as Suzhou. For instance, the subordinative particle is [tieʔ7] in Hangzhou. This corresponds to Mandarin *de* and is in contrast to the general pattern in Wu dialects where the subordinative particle typically begin with a velar or glottal ([k], [g], or [ŋ]), for example Suzhou [kəʔ7] (Fu, 1985). Although the data we have had no real examples of this, we do find the following where there is a correspondence with Mandarin *de* in the *shì* ... *de* construction:

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