

A Phonetic Study of Chaozhou Chinese

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Abstract

Chaozhou Chinese is a distinctive dialect of the southern Min variety of the Min group spoken in eastern Guangdong. This thesis is one of only a few pioneering studies using acoustic methodology to investigate the phonetic characteristics of Chaozhou Chinese that concentrates on the acoustic description of implosive variants, oral-nasal vowel contrasts, glottal stop, phonations and tones.

After examining the phonetic variation between the voiced implosive and their voiceless counterparts in six speakers, this study finds that the sources of implosives are the fortis voiceless stops. For vowels and phonations, rigorous acoustic measurements are used to investigate their phonetic properties. It is found that a nasal sound occurs at the end of the entering tone syllables. This finding is significant to explain the co-occurrence of glottal stop and nasal finals (*bihua houseyun* 鼻化喉塞韵).

In this study, the acoustic properties of eight citation tones in Chaozhou are examined, with attention to the fundamental frequency (F0), contour, duration and phonation. The tonal system of Chaozhou Chinese is redefined from the perspective of a new Multi-Register and Four-Level model with the acoustic data. Two interesting evolution paths of tonal pattern, which are triggered by four falling tones in the Chaozhou varieties, are discovered.