

The Influence of Language Contact on the Usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun Dialect

Shiyin Tang

Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, Guangdong, China

Abstract—Duyun has been a multi-ethnic area since ancient times, and its grammar has been influenced by both Chinese and local minority languages. This paper is intended to compare the usages of the *hen*-family in Duyun dialect, Mandarin, and minority languages from the perspective of language contact, and to trace the origin of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect by examining the evolution of *hen* in Chinese. It is proposed that the prepositive usage of $xən^{35}$ is a historical continuation of *hen* in Chinese during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, while the postpositive usage of $xən^{35}$ is influenced by the local minority languages. The distinctive usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect are due to language contact.

Index Terms—Guizhou Duyun, $xən^{35}$, Chinese, minority languages, language contact

I. INTRODUCTION

Hen is the most frequently-used degree word not only in Mandarin but also in Guizhou dialects. In Mandarin Chinese, *hen* is pronounced as $hən^{214}$, while in Guizhou dialects, the pronunciation of the *hen*-family varies among dialects, for instance, *hen* in Guizhou Duyun dialect is pronounced as $xən^{35}$. Regardless of the pronunciation of the *hen*-family in these languages, their written forms are consistent in the relevant literature, which is written as 很 when being used as adverbials. Besides, the *hen*-family has similarities and differences in terms of distribution, as shown below:¹

- | | | |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) a. | 很 哭 | (Duyun dialect) |
| | $xən^{35}ku^{33}$ | |
| | HEN cry | |
| | ‘cry a lot’ | |
| b. | 很 喜欢 | (Mandarin Chinese) |
| | hen xihuan | |
| | HEN like | |
| | ‘like very much’ | |
| c. | 很 叫 | (Sandong Shui) |
| | $naŋ^6 khau^5$ | |
| | HEN bark | |
| | ‘bark furiously’ | |
| (2) a. | 红 (得) 很 | (Duyun dialect) |
| | $xoŋ^{53}(tæ^{42}) xən^{35}$ | |
| | red DE HEN | |
| | ‘very red’ | |
| b. | 红 *(得) 很 | (Mandarin Chinese) |
| | hong de hen | |
| | red DE HEN | |
| | ‘very red’ | |
| c. | 红 很 | (Sandong Shui) |
| | $ha:n^3 eo^3$ | |
| | red HEN | |
| | ‘very red’ | |

As illustrated above, the *hen*-family in the above languages can occur before or after predicates, varying in whether the particle DE can be omitted when *hen* occurs after predicates. The above contrast indicates that compared with the

¹ For simplicity, this paper takes the phonological notations of Duyun dialect (Zhou, 2012) as the representative of Guizhou dialects. As for the phonological notations of the *xən*-family in the minority languages of Guizhou, this paper mainly refers to *xən* in Miao language and Sandong Shui language. As for the expression of the examples, the asterisk “*” is used to denote that the sentence is ungrammatical, and the parentheses () are used to denote that the element is optional. In particular, (X) denotes that X is optional; (*X) denotes that the occurrence of X is not allowed; * (X) denotes that X is obligatory. Abbreviations used in the examples are as follows: HEN: *hen*; DE: the structural particle placed between VP/AP and *hen*; CL: classifier; NEG: negative element; SFP: sentence-final particle; DUR: durative marker; 1. SG_{MASC}: the first-person singular used by the masculine in ancient Chinese; INTERJ: interjection; PERF: perfective aspect marker.

distributions of *hen* in Mandarin and Shui, $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect has the most flexible distribution when interacting with predicates.

Interestingly, $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect can occur in the clause twice, forming the $xən$ VP $xən$ phrase. This phenomenon can be found in Shui but not in Mandarin. Consider the following examples:

- (3) a. 很 哭 很 (Duyun dialect)
 $xən^{35}ku^{33} xən^{35}$
 HEN cry HEN
 ‘cry a lot’
- b. *很 喜欢 很 (Mandarin Chinese)
 $xən xihuan xən$
 HEN like HEN
 ‘like very much’
- c. 很 有力 很 (Sandong Shui)
 $naŋ^6 liək^8 ɕo^3$
 HEN strength HEN

The above contrasts indicate that there is a close relationship between $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect and the *hen*-family in Mandarin and Shui in terms of word order. To examine the relationship, this paper is intended to examine the origin and evolution of the usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect from the perspective of linguistic contact by using Corpus Online, the *Shui Language Compendium*, and the introspection on Duyun dialect. It is proposed that the prepositive usage of $xən^{35}$ and the stranded usage of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect are archaic usages, associated with the usages of *hen* in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, whereas, the postpositive usage of $xən^{35}$ is borrowed from the usage of its counterpart in the local minority languages, and thus the usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect are the result of language contact.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 examines the origin of the usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect, followed by the evolution of $xən^{35}$ in section 3. Section 4 is the conclusion.

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE USAGES OF $xən^{35}$ IN DUYUN DIALECT

The usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun are closely related to Duyun’s history. According to Qin (2020), Duyun had a military and civil official division in the Yuan Dynasty. Since then, the official language has continued to influence the local language of Duyun throughout history, creating the present-day Duyun dialect. In Tu (1998), Duyun belongs to the Qiannan dialect, which is distinctive from other dialects in Guizhou, because the distribution of Duyun dialect is basically the same as that of the ancient Duyun Prefecture in the Ming and Qing dynasties. This indicates that the Qiannan dialect has had a certain stability from ancient times to the present. The seemingly unique vocabulary, phonology, and grammar of Duyun dialect today are likely to be archaic phenomena. Although Duyun dialect belongs to a subgroup of Southwest Mandarin, in ancient times, Duyun was mainly a place where various minority groups lived, which means that the languages spoken in ancient Duyun were mainly minority languages. Because of these complex historical reasons, phonology, vocabulary, and even grammar of Duyun dialect have been influenced to a greater or lesser extent by a combination of official and minority languages. Nowhere is this more evident than in the degree word $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect, whose counterpart is the most frequently used degree word in Mandarin and Guizhou’s minority languages as well.

As shown in the introduction, the distribution of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect has similarities and differences in Mandarin and the local minority languages. In order to find out why $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect has such distributions, the next section will trace the usages of $xən^{35}$ based on the historical development of Duyun, starting from the usages of $xən$ in the official language of the Yuan Dynasty.

A. The Degree Words 很/狠 in the Yuan Dynasty

The usage of 很 as an adverb can be found in some documents of the Yuan Dynasty. According to Ota (2003), 很 was a colloquialism used among northerners who had more contact with Mongols. Liu (2016) argues that the modern Chinese adverb 很 is derived from the adverb 很. The word 很 in the Yuan Dynasty is a period marker since its written form gradually disappeared from the literature in the later period. Before being replaced by 很 and 狠, 很 acts as an adverbial, occurring before verbs and adjectives. When 很 modifies verbs, it denotes a high frequency in (3), whereas, when 很 modifies adjectives, it denotes a high degree in (4). Consider the following examples:

- (3) 很 骚扰 百姓 有。 (《礼部六•三十三》) (verb)
 $xən sao-rao bai-xing you$. (*Libuliu-sanshisian*)
 HEN harass civilian SFP (*Rites of Passage VI – XXXIII*)
 ‘They often harass civilians.’
- (4) 如今 地广 民众, 事物 很 多 有。 (《朝纲一•典章四》) (Adjective)
 $rujin di-guang min-zhong shi-wu xən duo you$. (*Chaogangyi-dianzhangsi*)
 nowadays vast territory many people thing HEN many SFP (*Dynasty Outline I - Chapter 4*)

‘Nowadays, there is a wide range of people on the land, and there are many things as well.’

很 as an adverbial is mainly found in some conversational textbooks from the Yuan Dynasty. One of the most classic textbooks is *Laoqida*, a conversational textbook written in the then-standard Beijing dialect for Koreans who want to learn Chinese. Feng (2010) claims that in the original version of *Laoqida*, 很 is used as a degree adverb as many as 16 times, while in the later editions including *Laoqida-yanjie*, *Laoqida-xinshi*, *Chongkan-Laoqida*, 很 is replaced with 狠.

The above claim can be verified by Corpus Online since we found that only 很 and 狠 were used in the Yuan Dynasty, both of which can be used interchangeably.² As for 狠, it mainly modifies adjectives:

- (5) 我师傅 性格 温厚。 狠 用心 教 我们。(元《老乞大新释》)
 wo shi-fu xing-ge wen-hou. xēn yong-xin jiao wo-men. (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)
 my teacher character gentle HEN attentive teach us (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)
 ‘My teacher has a gentle character. He teaches us with great care.’
- (6) 人参 正 缺少 呢。 所以 价钱 狠 好。(元《老乞大新释》)
 ren-shen zheng que-shao ne. suo-yi jia-qian hen hao. (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)
 ginseng DUR lack SFP so price HEN good (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)
 ‘Ginseng is in short supply, so the price is very good.’

As shown above, 狠 can modify the adjectives *yongxin* ‘attentive’ (5) and *hao* ‘good’ (6), denoting a high degree. But we do not retrieve the usage of 狠 as a complement in the corpus. This manifests that 狠 mainly functions as an adverbial in the Yuan dynasty.

B. The Degree Words 很/狠 in the Ming Dynasty

In the Ming Dynasty, only 很 and 狠 are used interchangeably, whose grammatical functions involve both similarities and differences. As for the similarities, 很 and 狠 can function as adverbials, occurring before predicates. Specifically, 很 occurs before the adjective *mingliang* ‘bright’, denoting a high degree in (7a), while 狠 occurs before the verb *jiao* ‘caw’, denoting a high frequency in (7b). Consider the following examples:

- (7) a. 这书室 庭户 虚敞， 窗 很 明亮。(明·抱瓮老人《今古奇观》)
 zhe shu-shi ting-hu xu-chang, chuāng hen ming-liang. (Ming, *Jinguqiguan* by Baowenglaoren)
 this study courtyard spacious window HEN bright (Ming, *Ancient And Modern Wonders* by Baowenglaoren)
 ‘The study and the courtyard are spacious and the windows are very bright.’
- b. 那乌鸦 还 在那里 狠 叫。(明·凌濛初《二刻拍案惊奇》)
 na wu-ya hai zai na-li hen jiao. (Ming, *Erkepaianjingqi* by Ling Mengchu)
 that crow still ASP there HEN caw (Ming, *Amazing Tales* by Ling Mengchu)
 ‘That crow still keeps cawing there.’

Moreover, 很 and 狠 can function as a complement, following the complement marker 得, of which 很 is compatible with the adjective *yuan* ‘far’, denoting a high degree in (8a), while 狠 is compatible with the verb *kan* ‘chop’, denoting a high force in (8b). Consider the following contrast:

- (8) a. 这 家子 远 得 很 哩！(明·吴承恩《西游记》)
 zhe jia-zi yuan de hen li! (Ming, *Xiyouji* by Wu Chengen)
 this family far DE HEN SFP (Ming, *Journey to the West* by Wu Chengen)
 ‘We are still far away from the family.’
- b. 金天雷 看见 他 砍 得 狠。(明·罗懋登《三宝太监西洋记》)
 Jintianlei kan-jian ta kan de hen. (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)
 Jintianlei see him chop DE HEN (Ming, *The Three Treasures Eunuch of the West* by Luo Maodeng)
 ‘Jintianlei saw that he cut with a vicious action.’

As for the differences, 很 can be reduplicated and its resulting reduplicant can modify the verb phrase *jiaotajisheng* ‘call out a few times’ in (9a), whereas, 狠 can act as a predicate and be modified by the degree adverb *zui* ‘most’ in (9b):

- (9) a. 待 小生 很很 叫 他 几 声。(明·李清《明珠缘》)
 dai xiao-sheng henhen jiao ta ji sheng. (Ming, *Mingzhuyuan* by Li Qing)
 wait 1.SG-MASC HEN-RED call him several voice (Ming, *Mingzhuyuan* by Li Qing)
 ‘Let me call him a few times loudly.’
- b. 雷公 最 狠。(明·罗懋登《三宝太监西洋记》)
 leigong zui hen. (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)
 Thunder God most ferocious (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)
 ‘Thunder God is most powerful.’

² All the examples of ancient Chinese are retrieved from Corpus Online: <http://corpus.zhonghuayuwen.org/>.

It can be seen that both *很* and *狠* can be used interchangeably. However, the former is mainly used as an adverbial while the latter can be used as a predicate. The above contrasts indicate that the semantic functions of *很* and *狠* begin to diverge; it seems that *很* is more functional than *狠*.

C. The Degree Words *很/狠* in the Qing Dynasty

In the Qing Dynasty, the semantic functions between *很* and *狠* are still vague. *很* is mainly used as an adverbial, modifying the verb *chengzan* ‘praise’ in (10a), the adjective *zhengchang* ‘normal’ in (10b), or as a complement of adjectives in (10c). By contrast, *狠* is mainly used as a predicate; to be specific, it can form the A-not-A form in (11a) and co-occurs with the aspectual marker *le* in (11b). Consider the following examples:

- (10) a. 江西省 的 绅士, 都 很 称赞。 (清·曾国藩《曾国藩家书》)

Jiangxisheng de shenshi, dou hen cheng-zan. (Qing, *Zengguofanjiashu* by Zeng Guofan)
 Jiangxi Province DE gentleman all HEN praise (Qing, *Zengguofan’s letter home* by Zeng Guofan)
 ‘The gentlemen of Jiangxi Province praised the fame of our brother.’
- b. 九弟 的 功课 很 正常。 (清·曾国藩《曾国藩家书》)

Jiudi de gongke hen zheng-chang. (Qing, *Zengguofanjiashu* by Zeng Guofan)
 Jiudi DE homework HEN normal (Qing, *Zengguofan’s letter home* by Zeng Guofan)
 ‘Jiudi’s work is very normal.’
- c. “哇呀, 怪道—怪道 臭 得很! 臭 得很!” (清·石玉昆《七侠五义》)

“waya, guaidao—guaidao chou de hen! chou de hen!” (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)
 “INTERJ strange Taoist—strange Taoist smelly DE HEN smelly DE HEN (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)
 ‘Wow! The strange Taoist—he stinks very much! It stinks!’
- (11) a. 狠 也 不 狠? (清·佚名《五美缘》)

hen ye bu hen? (Qing, *Wumeiyuan* by anonymity)
 HEN or NEG HEN (Qing, *Wumeiyuan* by anonymity)
 ‘Severe or not?’
- b. 拘束 狠 了。 (清·吴敬梓《儒林外史》)

ju-shu hen-le. (Qing, *Rulinwaishi* by Wu Jingzi)
 restrain HEN PERF (Qing, *The Scholars* by Wu Jingzi)
 ‘Sixth-Master Fang is severely strangled by his clothes.’
- c. 此 计 也 就 毒 得 狠 呢。 (清·石玉昆《七侠五义》)

ci ji ye jiu du de hen ne. (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)
 this stratagem also then vicious DE HEN SFP (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)
 ‘This stratagem is also very vicious.’

To sum up, *很* and *狠* in Ming and Qing dynasties can be used as either adverbials or complements of predicates. When *很* and *狠* function as adverbials, they can modify both verbs and adjectives; when they act as degree complements of predicates, the complement marker *de* cannot be omitted. It can be seen that the usage of *很* is the same as that of *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect demonstrated in the introduction. This means that the usage of *xən*³⁵ is derived from the ancient counterpart in Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. However, it is not a whole story since we do not find *很* in Corpus Online can be in the form of VP/AP *xən*, much less in the form of *xən* VP *xən*. In other words, the postpositive usage of *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect has nothing to do with that of *很* in ancient Chinese. A question then arises: Where do these two usages of *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect come from?

D. The Hen in Minority Languages

As mentioned before, Duyun is a multi-ethnic area where ethnic minorities account for more than half of the Han people. Because of historical reasons, these minorities are basically distributed in mountainous areas and townships, while those who remain downtown have basically been assimilated and speak Duyun dialect. It is noteworthy that some minorities such as Miao and Shui can speak not only their mother tongues but also Duyun dialect. Based on this, it can be predicted that the vocabulary, phonology, and grammar of Duyun dialect may be influenced by the linguistic characteristics of both the official language and these minority languages. The following section will seek explanations for the two distinctive usages of *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect from minority languages.

(a). The Degree Words *εo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ in Shui

Zhang (1980) observes that the degree adverbs *εo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ in Shui are equivalent to *hen* in Chinese. The former is a vernacular word while the latter is borrowed from Chinese. As for distributions, on the one hand, *εo*³ can appear after or before predicates, of which the postpositive *εo*³ is used more frequently than the prepositive *εo*³. Consider the following examples:

- (12) a. sa:i³ εo³ (postpositive)

问 很
 ask HEN

- ‘ask too much’
 b. ha:n³ ɛo³
 红 很
 red HEN
 ‘very red’
 (13) ɛo³ maŋ⁴ (prepositive)
 很 喜欢
 HEN like
 ‘very like’

The borrowed *naŋ*⁶, on the other hand, appears only before verbs and adjectives, as exemplified below:

- (14) a. naŋ⁶ khau⁵ (prepositive)
 很 吠
 HEN bark
 ‘bark a lot’
 b. naŋ⁶ kuŋ²
 很 远
 HEN far
 ‘very far’

Interestingly, *ɛo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ can have the form of *naŋ*⁶ VP *ɛo*³, which is similar to the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect. See the following example:

- (15) maŋ¹ naŋ⁶ liək⁸ ɛo³.
 他 很 有力 很。
 he HEN powerful HEN.
 ‘He is very powerful.’

As shown above, syntactically, on the one hand, the postpositive *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect has to do with *ɛo*³ in Shui; to be specific, the vernacular *ɛo*³ in Shui is a postpositive degree adverb though there exist a few cases where *ɛo*³ influenced by Chinese *xən* can appear before predicates. On the other hand, the borrowed *naŋ*⁶ can only appear before predicates, which is the same as the prepositive *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect. Most importantly, *ɛo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ can have the form of *naŋ*⁶ VP *ɛo*³, which coincides with the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect. Semantically, when *ɛo*³ or *naŋ*⁶ co-occur with action verbs, they denote a high frequency, whereas, when *ɛo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ occur with adjectives, they denote a high degree. This corresponds to the meaning of *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect. The usages of *ɛo*³ and *naŋ*⁶ verify the claim that the AP *xən* form and the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect are influenced by the local minority languages.

(b). *The Degree Words poŋ*⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴ /*va*⁴⁴ in Miao

In addition, Wang (1985) observes that degree adverbs *poŋ*⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴ /*va*⁴⁴ in Miao can only appear after the verb *ken*⁵⁵ ‘cry’ denoting a high frequency in (16a) and the adjective *ne*³³ ‘many’ denoting a high degree in (16b), as shown below:

- (16) a. ken⁵⁵ poŋ⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴ (postpositive)
 哭 很
 cry HEN
 ‘cry a lot’
 b. teo⁵⁵ ɛ³³ ɛ³³ ne³³ ze³³ poŋ⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴
 条 河 那 多 鱼 很
 CL river that many fish HEN
 ‘There is a lot of fish in that river.’

In the above examples, *poŋ*⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴ is a postpositive degree adverb, which appears only after the predicate when modifying the predicate. Although *xən*³⁵ in Duyun dialect can also appear after predicates, it can only occur after adjectives, contributing to a high degree. If *xən*³⁵ is intended to express a high frequency of events, it can only occur before verbs. If *xən*³⁵ is enforced to occur after verbs like the VP *poŋ*⁴⁴ *va*⁴⁴ form, the attachment of another *xən*³⁵ before the verb can salvage the phrase, producing the *xən* VP *xən* form. In short, during the long-term communication between Miao and Han, the postpositive usage of *xən*³⁵ has been influenced by Miao’s word order.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF *HEN*³⁵ IN DUYUN LANGUAGE DUE TO LANGUAGE CONTACT

A. *The Evolution of Word Order of xən*³⁵

In recent years, due to the popularization and promotion of Mandarin, the young generation of Duyun people prefer to communicate in Mandarin. Thus, these young people can accept the usage of the prepositive *xən*³⁵ modifying adjectives like *hen* in Mandarin. Moreover, they use *xən*³⁵ to produce a lot of forms including *xən*³⁵ + adjectives/psychological verbs/modal verbs, which are totally unacceptable to the older generation of native speakers in

Duyun who have never been exposed to Mandarin. This can predict that the spread of education has led to a gradual dominance of Mandarin Chinese in Duyun dialect.

B. The Evolution of Meanings of $xən^{35}$

In addition to the influence of Mandarin Chinese, $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect has further developed other grammatical meanings. Specifically, when the prepositive $xən^{35}$ modifies action verbs, it can denote a high frequency of actions and a long duration of time. Moreover, in specific contexts, the co-existence of $xən^{35}$ with action verbs can derive some subjective meanings, including $ε^{h,35}xuə^{33}$ 'like/love' and nen^{35} 'able'. Meanwhile, the postpositive $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect derives some conventional meanings. Namely, when the postpositive $xən^{35}$ occurs with an adjective, regardless of the adjective's emotional colorings (positive, negative, and neutral), it denotes not only a very high degree but also a negative emotion. This suggests that, although a grammatical element has the same usage as its counterpart in other languages, the element may derive a unique usage within a community due to several factors, for instance, culture.

C. The Key to the Evolution of $xən^{35}$: Language Contact

From the perspective of language contact, $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect is influenced by not only Chinese but also minority languages. At the same time, $xən^{35}$ evolves internally. As Thomason (2001) emphasized, in the course of evolution and development, any language will come into contact with other languages to varying degrees. According to Wu (2007), the language evolution triggered by language contact will have various indirect consequences: one is the interference; the other is the creation; the latter is formed by further promotion of the internal structure of the language based on interference. $xən^{35}$ under discussion is a typical contact evolution, which refers to the cross-linguistic "transfer" of language features, i.e., the recipient language acquires some kind of linguistic interference from the source language. In this sense, the original meaning of the prepositive $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect denotes a high frequency or a long duration, which transfers from the grammatical meanings of $xən$ in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. During the long evolution of the language, $xən^{35}$ has derived some new meanings, such as $ε^{h,35}xuə^{33}$ 'like/love' and nen^{35} 'able'. Furthermore, under the interference of Mandarin, on the one hand, the usage of $xən^{35}$ among young people in Duyun is the same as that of *hen* in Mandarin, i.e., $xən^{35}$ can occur before adjectives, denoting a very high degree; on the other hand, the AP $xən^{35}$ form and the $xən^{35}$ VP $xən^{35}$ form in Duyun dialect are interfered by the postpositive modifiers in the local minority languages, thus producing a unique form that is different from Mandarin Chinese. This indicates that language contact is a key factor for the unique distribution of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect.

IV. CONCLUSION

By examining $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect diachronically and synchronically, it can be seen that in a multi-ethnic region, the influence of language contact is prevalent, which can lead to further evolution of the internal structure of the language. In Duyun dialect, the prepositive $xən^{35}$ inherits the usages of *hen* in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, denoting a high frequency or a long duration. Whereas, the postpositive $xən^{35}$ is interfered with by the usages of its counterpart in the local minority languages. Both the prepositive $xən^{35}$ and the postpositive $xən^{35}$ have undergone different degrees of internal evolution to produce new grammatical meanings. Due to the strong popularity of Mandarin, these special usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun dialect are gradually declining. As dialects are cultural living fossils, the linguistic community should take active and effective measures to protect linguistic diversities and thus cultural diversities.

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Shiyin Tang was born in Guizhou, China, in 1993. She received her M.A. degree from Tianjin Normal University in 2019 and she is a Ph.D. candidate at the center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Guangdong University of Foreign Studies.