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A Brief Analysis of Initials and Finals of *Guangyun* 廣韻 and the *Fanqie* 反切 Formula

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Venerable Shengmiao, Miss Deng, good morning. My name is Feng Yingran and I would like to share with you the topic on the analysis of the initials and finals of *guangyun* 廣韻 and the *fanqie* 反切 formula.

The presentation will be divided into five parts.

1. Introduction

‘We usually call the sound of the Zhou and Qin Dynasties as the ancient sound’,¹ there is no rhyming dictionary in this period, it is difficult to explore the pronunciation at that time. In the period of Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties, rhyming dictionary began to form, such as *shenglei* 聲類, *yunji* 韻集 and so on. To the Sui, Tang and Song dynasties, is the heyday of rhyming dictionary, ‘there are four books in this time, *qieyun* 切韻, *tangyun* 唐韻, *guangyun* 廣韻 and *jiyun* 集韻, which are the most valuable rhyming books in this period’.² Later *qieyun* 切韻, *tangyun* 唐韻 lost, but *guangyun* 廣韻 and *jiyun* 集韻 are still preserved. *Guangyun* 廣韻 contains the sounds of ancient and modern north and south, and its classification is very detailed. It is also a very important rhyming dictionary that has been handed down until now.

¹ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology* (Taipei: Literature, History and Philosophy Publishing House, 2005), p43

² Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p44

Today, if people want to study ancient Chinese phonology, they need to follow *guangyun* 廣韻 as an important bibliography.

2. Initial consonants in *guangyun* 廣韻

In ancient China, initial consonants, finals and sound have never been very clear boundaries, so it is difficult to distinguish. After many later generations of phonologists continue to explore, gradually have a relatively clear cognition. Here we are in accordance with Huang Jigang's view, 'initial consonants and finals together are sound'.³ Therefore, if you want to know the pronunciation of words in a specific period, you need to know the classification of initial consonants and finals in that period.

2.1 Name explanation and origin

How did the 41 kinds of initial consonants in *guangyun* 廣韻 come from? First, sound is produced through the vocal organs. 'Consonantal articulations are made by closing or narrowing the vocal tract at some point between the larynx and the opening at the lips'.⁴ What sounds that are blocked in this process are called consonants. Then, 'the first sound that is uttered as a word is called the initial consonants'.⁵ 'An initial consonant is a consonant at the beginning of a word which could be distinguished'.⁶

In ancient times, characters with the same pronunciation were called

³ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology* (Taipei: Liming Culture Enterprise Company, 2019), p9

⁴ Edwin G. Pulleyblank, *Middle Chinese: A Study in Historical Phonology* (Canada: UBC Press, 1984), p27

⁵ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p47

⁶ Translated by myself, Dong Tonghe 董同龢, *Chinese Phonology* (Taipei: Literature, History and Philosophy Publishing House, 2011), p18

shuangsheng 雙聲. Take a word to represent the name of the category of sound, called *shengmu* 聲目. ‘There are five types of *zhengsheng* 正聲: throat, teeth, tongue, teeth and lips’.⁷ In English, both *ya* 牙 and *chi* 齒 can be translated by teeth, but in ancient China, *ya* 牙 and *chi* 齒 can be separated. The sounds they make also belong to different categories, so they are listed separately in *zhengsheng* 正聲. There are four types of *biansheng* 變聲, from the lingual, dental, labial subdivision, such as half tongue, half teeth and so on. Some of these subdivided sounds belong to *zhengsheng* 正聲, and some belong to *biansheng* 變聲, which is also a symbol of the continuous progress of pronunciation.

2.2 The process of changes

There is historical evidence that Sheri of Tang Dynasty created the letter 30. ‘Later, Wen Shouzu added six letters, including *niang* 孃, *chuang* 牀, *bang* 幫, *pang* 滂, *wei* 微 and *feng* 奉, totaling 36 letters’.⁸ Later literature records his 36-letter drawings. Judging from handwritten scriptures unearthed in Dunhuang, Wen Shouzu may have been a monk in the late Tang Dynasty. Maybe we can deduce that initials consonants system gradually developed in later generations can be said to be derived from Buddhist Sanskrit alphabet.

After the generation of 36 letters, the Song and later Dynasty used this view. However, when it came to the Qing Dynasty, Chen Li felt that the previous system was not precise enough, so ‘he investigated the 452 characters of *guangyun* 廣韻 *qieyu shangzi* 切語上字, and combined them to obtain the Forty sound categories

⁷ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p47

⁸ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p52

through the three regulations he summarized'.⁹ However, *ming* 明 and *wei* 微 two types have been merged without separation, but today's pronunciation differences are very obvious. Later scholars did not stick to the bondage of ancient sounds and separated them, *guangyun* 廣韻 was finally defined as 41 kinds of initial consonants.

3. Finals in *guangyun* 廣韻

‘The sound returns to the throat is called final’.¹⁰ In ancient times, the same final is called *dieyun* 疊韻. When the organs move, the shape of the mouth changes, but there is still a relatively large space, ‘what the sound generated is the air flow through the unhindered by any organ, called vowels’.¹¹ ‘Vowels are characterized by a much wider path between the tongue and the roof of the mouth’.¹² In the past, ‘Chinese character pronunciation were divided into five parts: head, neck, belly, tail and *shen* 神’.¹³ In addition to the head as initials, the rest is the rhyme. ‘Finals include vowels that follow the initial and any consonants that may follow the vowel’.¹⁴ If a word has no initials, then the whole word is a final.

Before the Han Dynasty, there was no name for the four sounds of *ping* 平, *shang* 上, *qu* 去 and *ru* 入. ‘It was not until the Qi and Liang Dynasties that the name of the four tones came into being’.¹⁵ Huang Jigang believes that the reason for the

⁹ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p59

¹⁰ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p14

¹¹ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p189

¹² Translated by myself, Bernhard Karlgren, *études sur la Phonologie Chinoise* (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2003), p155

¹³ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p145

¹⁴ Translated by myself, Dong Tonghe 董同龢, *Chinese Phonology*, p19

¹⁵ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p149

differentiation of the four tones is that ‘the length of the sound is different when the sound taking back to throat’.¹⁶ In ancient times, only have *ping* 平, *shang* 上, to the later, ‘*pingsheng* 平聲 less and short is *shangsheng* 上聲, *rusheng* 入聲 slightly slow is *qusheng* 去聲’.¹⁷ The difference between the four tones is their pitch. *Guangyun* 廣韻 consist of 57 *pingsheng* 平聲, 55 *shangsheng* 上聲, 60 *qusheng* 去聲 and 34 *rusheng* 入聲, a total of 206 rhymes.

4. Fanqie formula

Fanqie 反切 are the sounds of two words put together to make one sound. In today's view, is the *pinyin* 拼音 method. In ancient times, *Fanqie* 反切 was called *Fan* 反 before the Northern and Southern Dynasties, and it was called *qie* 切 in the Tang Dynasty. Later, ‘it was also called *fan* 翻, *niu* 紐, *tiyu* 體語, *fanyin* 反音 and so on’.¹⁸ These are with the influence of the times, constantly changing its name, but the meaning is the same.

Because it is the sound of two words combined into a word, so the first word is called *fanqie shangzi* 反切上字, the second word is called *fanqie xiazi* 反切下字. ‘The method of using *fanqie* 反切 is *fanqie shangzi* 反切上字 have the same initial consonant with the word, *fanqie xiazi* 反切下字 have the same final with the word’.¹⁹ The final of *fanqie shangzi* 反切上字 and the initial consonant of *fanqie xiazi* 反切下字 are not considered, only initial consonant of *fanqie shangzi* 反切上字 and the

¹⁶ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p150

¹⁷ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p150

¹⁸ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p568

¹⁹ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p574

final of *fanqie xiazi* 反切下字 are combined into the sound of the word. For example, We can find *fanqie* 反切 of a character in *guangyun* 廣韻. ‘Dong, *dehongqie* 東, 德紅切’. ²⁰ *De* 德 is *fanqie shangzi* 反切上字, *hong* 紅 is *fanqie xiazi* 反切下字. If we want to know the pronunciation of the word *dong* 東. Then we get initial consonant of *de* 德 and final of *hong* 紅, the final of *de* 德 and the initial consonant of *hong* 紅 are not considered.

5. conclusion

There are some differences like pure and turbid of pronunciation between five types of *zhengsheng* 正聲. The difference between pure and turbid is due to the difference in the intensity of the vocal force. ‘When making a sound, force light and gas rising is pure, when making a sound, force heavy and gas sinking is turbid’.²¹ ‘In phonetics, *zhuosheng* 濁聲 is voiced, and *qingsheng* 清聲 is voiceless’.²² The difference between the two is whether the vocal cords vibrate during the sound. As for the *yinsheng* 陰聲 and *yangsheng* 陽聲, *yangsheng* 陽聲 included nasal sound, *yinsheng* 陰聲 without nasal sound. These two groups of concepts are different, the definition method is also different, cannot be confused.

It can be divided into four tones according to the tone. ‘According to the difference of the final rhyme, the 206 finals of *guangyun* 廣韻 can be divided into three categories: *Yinshengyun* 陰聲韻, *yangshengyun* 陽聲韻 and *rushengyun* 入聲韻’.²³

²⁰ Translated by myself, Chen Pengnian 陳彭年, *Songben Guangyun* 宋本廣韻 (Taipei: Liming Culture Enterprise Company, 2015), p22

²¹ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p66

²² Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p66

²³ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p157

‘As long as the sound has no final rhyme, or the sound end is [-i] and [-u], it is *Yinshengyun* 陰聲韻’.²⁴ This category ends with a vowel sound and has 26 finals. ‘The end of the sound is nasals called *yangshengyun* 陽聲韻’.²⁵ This is also divided into three types, [-m], [-n], [-ŋ]. There are 35 finals. ‘Those that end with plosives are called *rushengyun* 入聲韻’,²⁶ which are also divided into three categories. [-p] , [-t] , [-k] , has 34 finals. In *guangyun* 廣韻, *rusheng* 入聲 is specially matched with the *yangsheng* 陽聲, so the number of classification of both should be the same. The reason there are only 34 finals of *rusheng* 入聲 now is that one of them has merged into the other finals. [-p] , [-t] , [-k] and [-m], [-n], [-ŋ] are correspond to each other.

Although we can use fanqie formula to spell a word, but this method still has some disadvantages. First, *fanqieshangzi* 反切上字 should take a word as a representative be in the same *shengniu* 聲紐, in a similar way, ‘*fanqiexiazi* 反切下字 should take a word as a representative be in the same final’.²⁷ However, in the Eastern Han Dynasty, people used different characters as *fanqieshangxiazi* 反切上下字. Now a total of more than 1500 words, that is too complex to let a person remember and use them. What is more, ‘Chinese characters are not pinyin characters, and the way of cutting two Chinese characters to spell and note the pronunciation of one Chinese character cannot achieve the effect of combining phonemes directly, so it has its natural limitations’.²⁸ ‘If the current situation can be changed so that all

²⁴ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p157

²⁵ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p158

²⁶ Translated by myself, Chen Xinxiong 陳新雄, *Phonology*, p158

²⁷ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p226

²⁸ Du Xuantu 杜玄圖, ‘The Reasons and Characteristics of the Middle Ancient *Rusheng* 入聲 Characters as *Fanqie Shangzi* 反切上字 -- Taking the *Fanqie* 反切 of *Guangyun* 廣韻 and *Jiyun* 集韻 as the Research Scope’,

fanqieshangxiazì 反切上下字 can be pronounced as one sound’,²⁹ it will greatly reduce the difficulty for people to read the ancient pronunciation.

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²⁹ Translated by myself, Lin Yin 林尹, *General Theory of Chinese Phonology*, p230

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