

An Analysis of the Phenomenon of Morphemic Inversion Words in Wuxi Dialect

Zhengyang Li

*School of Literature and Journalism, South-Central Minzu University, Wuhan, China
3173719500@qq.com*

Abstract. Dialectal morphemic inversion words are a noteworthy lexical phenomenon in Chinese. Taking Wuxi dialect as the research object, this paper sorts out 32 groups of morphemic inversion words corresponding to Mandarin Chinese on the basis of defining the concept of morphemic inversion words, through literature collection and interviews with native speakers. It systematically analyzes these words from three dimensions: word-formation patterns, semantic relations and word order features. The morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect are dominated by coordinate isomorphic words, and their semantic differences are mainly affected by the changes of morpheme meanings; heteromorphic words involve various structural changes, reflecting the word order tendency of placing the subject component in the front and the descriptive component at the end. This study provides empirical support for the description of inversion words in Wu dialect, and lays a foundation for the cross-dialectal typological comparison and the discussion on the evolution mechanism of inversion words.

Keywords: morphemic inversion words, Wuxi dialect, structural types

1. Introduction

Morphemic inversion words are a special lexical phenomenon in Chinese. There are many morphemic inversion words within Mandarin Chinese, such as "mìfēng (honeybee)" and "fēngmì (honey)". When comparing dialects with Mandarin, this phenomenon also widely exists in dialects. Since the 1980s, the academic circle has begun to identify the phenomenon and summarize corpora, and has gained a preliminary understanding of the morphemic inversion word phenomenon in some dialects. Xiang Mengbing [1] first determined the nature of dialectal inverted words, explaining that they are an inherent and important feature of Chinese dialectal vocabulary rather than accidental occurrences. After that, scholars such as Liu Xunning [2], Zhang Chong [3], Zhang Guangming [4] and Zhang Chengcai [5] respectively listed examples of inversion words in Qingjian dialect of northern Shaanxi, Yanchuan dialect, Xinzhou dialect and Shangzhou dialect with example sentences. Early studies had a narrow scope, mostly focusing on individual dialect cases, and were mainly based on collection and enumeration with insufficient analysis. Subsequent studies gradually broke through the limitations of early listing, and the research objects further expanded from local northern dialects to the south, covering a wider range. Huang Xiaoya [6] analyzed the inverted words in Guangzhou dialect and revealed that the evolution of dialectal inverted words is influenced by the

common language. Zhang Wei [7] extended the research perspective of the evolution of dialectal inversion words to the historical level. The academic circle further carried out systematic investigation and analysis in multiple dialect areas. Fu Qiwu and Liang Xian [8] distinguished "inversion" and "inverse formation" taking Hainan Min dialect as an example; Li Zhongwei [9] analyzed the pragmatic differences of inversion words in Chongqing dialect; Wang Danting and Ding Aixia [10] combined ancient and modern literature corpora to conduct textual research on the historical evolution and semantic transformation of morphemic inversion words in Lianyun gang dialect; Tian Xiaolin and Li Fei [11] investigated the inversion words borrowed from Yue dialect in Hong Kong-style Chinese, and corrected the structural cognition of modifier-head gender morpheme postposition words; Qiang Weishan and Li Wei [12] sorted out 33 pairs of commonly used morphemic inversion words in Shanxi dialect, and clarified the definition standards and type characteristics. Wang Ying [13], Ma Junli and Zhang Yaohui [14] respectively studied typical individual cases such as "jièshào (introduce)" and "shàojiè (introduce)", "zhēngjìng (strive)" and "jìngzhēng (compete)", traced the evolution trajectory of individual inversion words from ancient times to the late ancient times, and revealed the influence of semantic orientation changes on the retention and replacement of dialectal inversion words.

At present, the research on dialectal inversion words has formed a pattern of multi-dialect coverage and integration of synchronic and diachronic perspectives, and there is a systematic understanding of the characteristics and functions of dialectal inversion words. However, there is a lack of systematic theoretical innovation in the study of their evolution laws. Zhang Wei [15] used Optimality Theory to analyze the morphemic inversion words in Guanzhong dialect, summarized 13 elimination and retention patterns, and explained the grammaticality and harmony of different inversion word forms by constructing a hierarchical sequence of constraints. In addition, there is still room for expansion in the extraction of cross-dialectal common laws and the comparative study of various dialects and ancient Chinese.

The goal of this paper is to explain what systematic laws the morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect follow by analyzing the inversion phenomenon between Wuxi dialect and Mandarin, and what are the internal motivations and restrictive conditions for the formation, retention and replacement of the inversion phenomenon. At the same time, it collects more extensive dialectal materials and conducts cross-dialectal comparative research, aiming to extract the common characteristics and regional variations of dialectal inversion words in terms of word-formation types, semantic relations and usage functions, and explore whether they reflect certain fixed tendencies of Chinese dialectal lexical word-formation methods.

2. Definition of morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect

2.1. Definition

Regarding the definition of dialectal inversion words, early scholars such as Zhang Guangming and Liu Xunning directly took Beijing dialect as a reference, defining inversion as the reverse order of word-forming morphemes in dialects compared with Beijing dialect. From a diachronic perspective, Zhang Wei believed that dialects and Mandarin respectively inherited different orders of inversion words in ancient Chinese, or dialects retained both orders. Qiang Weishan and Li Wei strictly defined the morphemic inversion words in Shanxi dialect as words with the same constituent morphemes and related semantics.

To improve the feasibility of the research and clarify the research boundary, this paper synthesizes various viewpoints and adopts a synchronic definition of morphemic inversion words

with Mandarin as the reference: the morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect referred to in this paper are disyllabic compound words that have the same constituent morphemes but reversed morpheme order compared with Mandarin, that is, there is AB order in Mandarin and BA order in Wuxi dialect. The AB-BA inversion words within the respective systems of Mandarin and dialects are not considered.

2.2. Data sources and corpus collection

This paper mainly focuses on the comparative analysis of morphemic inversion words between Wuxi dialect and Mandarin. In the collection and selection of corpora, this paper mainly adopts the literature collection method and interview method. The core vocabulary used is mainly derived from existing literature, and is screened, confirmed and supplemented through interviews with a native speaker.

The initial corpus collection is mainly based on the following two professional literatures on Wuxi dialect vocabulary research:

Literature 1: In *A Study of Vernacular Vocabulary in Wuxi Vernacular Newspaper*, Qu Yanan [16] collected and sorted out 52 pairs of two-order morphemic inversion words and 37 single-order morphemic inversion words in *Wuxi Vernacular Newspaper*. This paper directly showed these words to the native speaker and asked the native speaker to identify which of these words belong to Wuxi dialect.

Literature 2: From the "classified word list of Wuxi dialect" sorted out in the literature *A Study of Wuxi Dialect Vocabulary*, a total of 16 words with reversed morpheme order compared with Mandarin vocabulary were screened out.

After removing duplicate inversion words, a total of 29 potential Wuxi dialect inversion word corpora were obtained through the above literature.

To ensure that the selected words belong to modern Wuxi dialect and are still in use, the author then conducted a second verification by interviewing the native speaker. The author presented the initially collected word list to the native speaker of Wuxi dialect. The native speaker carefully identified and screened these words, excluding some non-Wuxi dialect words or words that are no longer commonly used. The author also asked the native speaker about the differences in the meanings of the screened inversion words compared with those in Mandarin, as well as their specific usage and context in daily conversations, providing contextual information for the subsequent semantic analysis. During the interview, the native speaker supplemented a few inversion words that were not included in the literature but are actually used into the research objects according to their introspective linguistic experience, further enriching the corpus.

Through the screening and collection of corpora, 32 pairs of morphemic inversion words were finally collected for comparative analysis, as shown in Table 1. In each pair of words, the left one is the Mandarin vocabulary (AB order) and the right one is the Wuxi dialect vocabulary (BA order). For the convenience of expression, the two words that are mutual inversion words are called a pair of inversion word pairs in this paper.

Table 1. Mandarin-Wuxi dialect morphemic inversion word list

Xīhuān— Huānxǐ	Qiānlíán— Liánqiān	Shìwù—Wùshì	Zhàngpeng— Péngzhàng	Rènao—Nàorè	Láiwǎng— Wǎnglái
Yīnggāi— Gāiyīng	Lìqí—Qílì	Zhèngqí—Qízhèng	Jìdù—Dùjì	Guāngyào— Yàoguāng	Dìdào—Dàodi

Table 1. (continued)

Yóuyán— Yányóu	Luósī—Sīluó	Shēngxiǎng— Xiǎngshēng	Zhuǎnwān— Wǎnzhuǎn	Dìngxīn—Xīndìng	Zháohuǒ— Huǒzháo
Zhúri—Rìzhú	Zuòliào— Liàozuò	Liàngguāng— Guāngliàng	Gōngrén—Réngōng	Wàichū—Chūwài	Tiānshēng— Shēngtiān
Fǔrǔ—Rǔfǔ	Yèxiāo—Xiāoyè	Yuèliàng—Liàngyuè	Yàojǐn—Jǐnyào	Lùqǔ—Qǔlù	Qiūqiān—Qiānqiū
Dāpèi—Pèidā	Bǔtiē—Tiēbǔ	Zhuǎnhuàn— Huànzhuǎn			

3. Analysis of morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect

In the analysis of morphemic inversion words, the investigation of word-formation patterns is an important link in grammatical analysis. The so-called word-formation pattern refers to the structural relationship between morphemes within a word, such as coordinate, modifier-head, verb-object, subject-predicate, complement, etc. When the same group of morphemes are combined in different orders, their internal structural relations may remain the same or change, which in turn affects the meaning and function of the word. Therefore, classifying inversion words according to whether their word-formation patterns are consistent helps to deeply observe the structural laws behind word order changes.

We can divide the 32 groups of morphemic inversion words into two categories according to whether the word-formation patterns of the two words in a pair of morphemic inversion words are consistent: those with the same word-formation pattern between the Mandarin AB order and the Wuxi dialect BA order are called "isomorphic words"; those with different word-formation patterns are called "heteromorphic words". The specific classification is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Word-formation analysis of morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect

Morphemic inversion isomorphic words	Coordinate— Coordinate	Xǐhuān—Huānxǐ, Qiānlián—Liánqiān, Shìwù—Wùshì, Zhàngpeng—Péngzhàng, Rènao—Nàorè, Láiwǎng—Wǎnglái, Yīnggāi—Gāiyīng, Lìqì—Qìlì, Zhēngqí—Qízhēng, Jìdù—Dùjì, Guāngyào—Yàoguāng, Dìdào—Dàodì, Yóuyán—Yányóu, Luósī —Sīluó, Yàojǐn—Jǐnyào, Lùqǔ—Qǔlù, Qiūqiān—Qiānqiū, Dāpèi —Pèidā, Bǔtiē—Tiēbǔ, Zhuǎnhuàn—Huànzhuǎn
	Modifier-head— Modifier-head	Gōngrén—Réngōng
Morphemic inversion heteromorphic words	Coordinate—Modifier- head	Shēngxiǎng—Xiǎngshēng
	Verb-object—Subject- predicate	Zhuǎnwān—Wǎnzhuǎn, Zháohuǒ—Huǒzháo, Zhúri—Rìzhú
	Modifier-head— Coordinate	Zuòliào—Liàozuò, Liàngguāng—Guāngliàng
	Modifier-head— Complement	Wàichū—Chūwài, Tiānshēng—Shēngtiān
	Modifier-head— Subject-predicate	Fǔrǔ—Rǔfǔ, Yèxiāo—Xiāoyè
	Subject-predicate— Modifier-head	Yuèliàng—Liàngyuè

3.1. Analysis of isomorphic words

It can be seen from Table 2 that morphemic inversion isomorphic words account for the majority, and most of them belong to the "coordinate—coordinate" category. In this category, the two morphemes A and B contained in a pair of mutual inversion words are mostly of the same morpheme type, such as verbal morphemes, adjectival morphemes or nominal morphemes. The two morphemes are not only similar in meaning to each other, but also jointly constitute the meaning of the whole word, with no obvious distinction of priority or sequence, and are close to the meaning of the whole word. For example, in "Xīhuān—Huānxǐ", the definitions given in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (7th Edition)* are as follows:

Xīhuān: ① v. have a good impression of or be interested in people or things. ② adj. happy; glad.

Huānxǐ: ① adj. happy; glad. ② v. like; love.

Xǐ: ① adj. happy; glad. ② celebratory; celebratory event. ④ be fond of. ⑤ v. (of a certain organism) be suitable for a certain environment; (of a certain thing) be suitable for matching with something.

Huān: ① happy; glad. ③ dial. adj. energetic; active.

In this case, the change in the order of morphemes A and B has little impact on the change of the meaning of the whole word. This phenomenon also exists within the same language system, such as "líng hún (soul)" and "hún líng (soul)" in Mandarin. It can be seen that the morpheme order of coordinate compound words has high reversibility when the morpheme meanings remain unchanged.

However, some inversion words among isomorphic words have differences in meaning and usage, which are mostly caused by changes in morpheme meanings. For example, in "Qiānlián—Liánqiān", the morpheme meaning of "qiān" is "involve", and the morpheme meaning of "lián" is "connect". In the Mandarin word "Qiānlián", the overall meaning focuses on the "involve" meaning of "qiān". The definition in *The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (7th Edition)* is: ① adversely affect other people or things due to the influence of a certain person or thing. ② be linked together. It often appears in more formal and serious contexts, such as "This case involved many people"; while in the Wuxi dialect word "Liánqiān", the morpheme meanings of "qiān" and "lián" have not changed much, but the overall meaning focuses on "lián", and the semantics tend to be "coherent and fluent", and the usage scenario is more colloquial, such as "He can't get this thing straight". Similarly, "Yóuyán—Yányóu" also belongs to this category, but the semantic weight of morphemes within the word is not equal, leading to the differentiation of the meaning of the whole word. In the observed coordinate inversion words with related or unrelated meanings, the morphemes with higher semantic contribution and greater information weight are mostly placed in the front position, while the morphemes with lower contribution are placed at the end, playing a role in supplementing, extending or strengthening the meaning of the front morphemes.

We can classify the degree of semantic association of inversion words:

Synonymous: having the same meaning and being basically interchangeable.

Near-synonymous: having similar meanings, or having the same meaning in some senses, with subtle differences in usage, color or scope, and being interchangeable in some cases.

Related: having associated meanings but great differences, and being interchangeable only in very few cases.

Unrelated: having no associated meaning and being non-interchangeable.

Table 3. Semantic association of morphemic inversion isomorphic words

Synonymous	Rènào—Nàorè, Lìqí—Qìlì, Zhěngqí—Qízhěng, Jìdù—Dùjì, Luósī—Sīluó
Near-synonymous	Xīhuān—Huānxǐ, Láiwǎng—Wǎnglái, Yīnggāi—Gāiyīng, Guāngyào—Yàoguāng, Zhàngpeng—Péngzhàng, Didào—Dàodi, Yàojīn—Jīnyào, Lùqǔ—Qǔlù, Qiūqiān—Qiānqiū, Dāpèi—Pèidā, Bútī—Tiēbǔ, Zhuǎnhuàn—Huànzhuan
Related	Qiānlíán—Liánqiān, Shìwù—Wùshì
Unrelated	Gōngrén—Réngōng, Yóuyán—Yányóu

3.2. Analysis of heteromorphic words

According to the above semantic association analysis of isomorphic words, we can also classify the degree of semantic association of heteromorphic words as follows:

Table 4. Classification of semantic association degree of heteromorphic words between Wuxi dialect and Mandarin

Synonymous	Shēngxiǎng—Xiǎngshēng, Zhuǎnwān—Wǎnzhuan, Zháohuǒ—Huǒzháo, Zhúrì—Rìzhú, Yuèliàng—Liàngyuè, Fǔrǔ—Rǔfǔ, Yèxiāo—Xiāoyè
Near-synonymous	Shēngxiǎng—Xiǎngshēng, Wàichū—Chūwài, Tiānshēng—Shēngtiān, Liàngguāng—Guāngliàng
Unrelated	Zuòliào—Liàozuò

Among the heteromorphic word pairs, there are more modifier-head words in Mandarin. Among the structural types of the inverted Wuxi dialect words (i.e., BA order), the structural attribution of words such as "Rǔfǔ" and "Xiāoyè" is controversial. Regarding the qualitative analysis of this structure, there are three representative theories in the academic circle: first, the "head-modifier" structure (Cen Qixiang, 1953; Xu Baohua, 1956; Hashimoto Mantaro, 1985; Wu Wei, 2010); second, the "modifier-head" structure (Zhang Hongnian, 1972; Xiang Mengbing, 1988; Mai Yun, 1991; Ding Bangxin, 2000); third, the "complement" structure [17]. Previous studies believe that this word-formation method can be traced back to the attributive postposition phenomenon in ancient Chinese, and there are also discussions about the influence of languages such as ancient Yue language and Dong-Tai languages. Its retention degree in modern dialects varies, showing a gradient change of becoming increasingly active from north to south—the further south, the higher the productivity of this structure and the wider the scope of use.

Previous studies basically only focused on how to classify the inverted modifier-head structure, but we included other structural changes in the observation, and found that the word-formation change of "verb-object—subject-predicate" is similar to the inversion process of the modifier-head structure, and there is also a determinable structural change of "modifier-head—complement", both of which reflect the phenomenon in Wuxi dialect that the "head" originally at position B in the Mandarin AB order is placed in the front, and the components originally at position A indicating state, action, result or attribute are placed at the end. In addition, Huang and Liao's *Modern Chinese* also classifies the word "Yuèliàng (moon)" as a subject-predicate structure. In summary, we tentatively conclude that in words such as "Rǔfǔ" and "Xiāoyè", the postposed modifying morphemes function as predicates, thus forming a subject-predicate structure. In the preliminary observation, we noticed that this word structure is similar to the topic-first strategy in information

structure, and in the analysis, we will use the method of expanding words into sentences to assist the explanation.

Verb-object → Subject-predicate: Zhuǎnwān—Wǎnzhuǎn, Zháohuǒ—Huǒzháo, Zhúrì—Rìzhú

Mandarin adopts the word order of "action + object": first state the action behavior, then introduce the object involved in the action.

Zhuǎnwān: perform the action of "zhuǎn (turn)" on a "curved path".

Zháohuǒ: the action of "zháo (burn)" occurs on the object "huǒ (fire)".

Zhúrì: perform the action of "zhú (pass one by one)" with the goal of "one day, a day".

Wuxi dialect adopts the word order of "subject + action or state": first put forward a thing or subject, then explain the action issued or the state presented by the subject.

Wǎnzhuǎn: for the "wān (curve)", the action object needs to perform the action of "zhuǎn (turn)". [(There is a) curve, (need to) turn.]

Huǒzháo: the subject "huǒ (fire)" presents the burning state of "zháo (burn)". [The fire, is burning.]

Rìzhú: the subject "rì (time)" naturally carries out the action of "zhú (pass)", that is, passing one by one. [Days, pass one by one.]

Modifier-head → Complement: Wàichū—Chūwài, Tiānshēng—Shēngtiān

Mandarin adopts the word order of "modifier + head": place modifying components such as manner and source in the front, and action behaviors at the end.

Wàichū: perform the action of "chū (go out)" with the direction of "wài (outward)".

Tiānshēng: have the state of "shēng (born)" originating from "tiān (nature)".

Wuxi dialect adopts the word order of "head + complement": first put forward the action behavior, then supplement the semantic components such as the direction or manner of the action. "Chūwài" means "go out to the outside", and "Shēngtiān" means "born from nature"—the action is in the front, and the supplementary explanation of the action is at the end.

Chūwài: the action is "chū (go out)", and its direction is "wài (outside)". [Go out, to the outside.]

Shēngtiān: the action is "shēng (born)", and its source is "tiān (nature)". [Born, naturally.]

Modifier-head → Subject-predicate

Mandarin adopts the word order of "modifier + head": place modifying components such as attribute, state and time in the front, and the central thing at the end.

Fǔrǔ: dairy products in the state of "fǔ (fermented)".

Yèxiǎo: snacks eaten at "yè (night)".

Wuxi dialect adopts the word order of "head + modifier": first put forward the central thing, then place the modifying components such as attribute, state and time at the end, forming a supplementary explanation of the central thing.

Rǔfǔ: "rǔ (dairy products)", in the state of "fǔ (fermented)". [Dairy products, fermented.]

Xiǎoyè: "xiǎo (night)", there will be "yè (evening)". [Snacks, eaten at night.]

Based on the above comparisons, the following word order tendency characteristics of Wuxi dialect in morphemic inversion words can be roughly summarized:

The subject component is placed in the front, and the state and attribute are placed at the end as predicates. Wuxi dialect tends to place components such as things, subjects and time in the first half of the word, and components such as actions, states and attributes in the second half. Whether it is the transformation of verb-object structure into "subject + action" or the transformation of modifier-head structure into "head + modifier", this common word order feature is reflected. At the same time, the state and attribute components (such as "fǔ", "yè") that originally served as attributives in Mandarin are often adjusted to the end of the word, acting as predicates to state or explain the front

subject. This makes the internal semantic relationship of the word present as "what thing—what it is like/what has happened to it".

On the whole, the morpheme order of word formation in Wuxi dialect vocabulary tends to be event-based statement of concepts. Wuxi dialect often organizes words that represent static things or abstract concepts in Mandarin into a "subject + statement" structure, making words that originally tend to have referential functions carry the color of describing events or scenes. For example: "Yèxiāo (a kind of food)" → "Xiāoyè (the thing of eating snacks at night)"; "Fǔrǔ (a kind of food)" → "Rǔfǔ (dairy products have been fermented)". Liu Danqing and Xu Liejiong [18] once explained that Wu dialects such as Shanghai dialect may be more typical topic-prominent languages than Mandarin. This may be an extension of the topic-prominent grammatical feature of Wuxi dialect at the word-formation level, that is, setting a topical cognitive starting point for the concept (such as time "yè", entity "rǔ", subject "xīn"), and then stating its state or action, thus completing the cognitive transformation from "definition of things" to "description of events".

The word order feature of morphemic inversion words in Wuxi dialect can be summarized as head preposition and statement component postposition. This feature is systematically reflected in the structural change types of "modifier-head—subject-predicate", "modifier-head—complement" and "verb-object—subject-predicate", forming a stable correspondence with the Mandarin word orders of "modifier preposition, head postposition" and "action preposition, object postposition". In different dialects, the degree of retention of this phenomenon is also different. This may reflect a certain specific word order selection tendency in the internal organization of words in some dialects.

The above analysis shows that the formation and evolution of dialectal morphemic inversion words involve the joint action of multiple factors. At the micro level, the degree of integration of morpheme meanings within words and the distribution of semantic weights directly affect the retention and replacement of inversion words; at the macro level, the dialectal vocabulary structure may be restricted by the deep level of the dialectal grammatical system, thus presenting a systematic selection tendency in morpheme order.

4. Conclusion and reflection

The research on dialectal inversion words still needs more dialectal vocabulary corpora. Wu dialects such as Wuxi dialect have received less attention in the research of inversion words and still have great research value. This paper systematically analyzes the 32 pairs of Wuxi inversion words collected from multiple dimensions such as word-formation types, semantic relations and word order features. The study finds that Wuxi dialect inversion words are dominated by coordinate isomorphic words, and their meanings are mainly affected by changes in morpheme meanings; in terms of morpheme order tendency, Wuxi dialect shows the feature of "subject component preposition, descriptive component postposition", which can be regarded as an extension of the topic-prominent grammatical feature of Wu dialect at the word-formation level. This study fills the gap in the systematic description of morphemic inversion words in the Taihu Lake area of Wu dialect, and provides empirical support for understanding the deep relationship between dialectal vocabulary structure and grammatical types.

In the process of historical evolution, the factors determining the morpheme order of dialectal vocabulary are diverse. In different dialect areas, each dialect will screen the inverted forms left over from history or obtained through contact according to its own grammatical system and word order preference. This screening mechanism is restricted by multiple factors. Geographical proximity may lead to mutual influence between dialects, and grammatical evolution may lead to the adjustment of word-formation methods. In this diachronic process, some inversion words are retained and some

are replaced, finally forming the regional differences in the appearance of inversion words in various dialects today. In addition, we notice that a class of poultry and livestock words represented by "jīgōng (rooster)" and "jīmǔ (hen)", which are absent in Wuxi dialect but appear in some southern dialects such as Yue dialect, have not yet reached a unified conclusion on whether their word formation belongs to "head-modifier" or "modifier-head". We need to note that semantic changes of words may also affect morpheme meanings (Su Baorong), thereby indirectly changing the word structure. Such words themselves have rich changes in semantics and pragmatics, and cannot be simply analyzed. They need to be discussed by category under different meanings and usages, which can be studied in another paper.

This study still has limitations such as limited corpus scale and lack of systematic diachronic tracing. Future research on dialectal inversion words can expand the scope of field investigation, track the current usage status combined with natural spoken corpora, and further extract the common laws and regional variation mechanisms of Chinese dialectal inversion words through cross-dialectal typological comparison.

References

- [1] Xiang, M. B. (1988). On the word order variation of compound words in Chinese dialects. *Studies in Language and Linguistics*, (2), 81-94.
- [2] Liu, X. N. (1989). Reversed words in Qingjian dialect of northern Shaanxi. *Fangyan*, (3), 224-225.
- [3] Zhang, C. (1992). Reversed words in Yanchuan dialect. *Fangyan*, (4), 307-309.
- [4] Zhang, G. M. (1994). Reversed words in Xinzhou dialect. *Linguistic Research*, (2), 62-64.
- [5] Zhang, C. C. (2003). Reversed words in Shangzhou dialect—Also on morpheme inversion word formation and usage in Chinese. *Journal of Shangluo Normal University*, (1), 5-8.
- [6] Huang, X. Y. (2001). A century-long evolution of reversed words in Cantonese. *Journal of Guangzhou University*, (7), 63-69.
- [7] Zhang, W. (2010). Diachronic investigation and optimality-theoretic analysis of reversible words in Guanzhong dialect. *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition)*, 39(3), 114-122.
- [8] Fu, Q. W., & Liang, X. (2008). Reversed words in Hainan Min dialect. *New Oriental*, (10), 51-53.
- [9] Li, Z. W. (2012). A study on morpheme reversal phenomena in Mandarin and Chongqing dialect vocabulary. *Journal of Yangtze Normal University*, 28(3), 109-111.
- [10] Wang, D. T., & Ding, A. X. (2013). Research on morpheme-reversed words in Lianyungang dialect. *Modern Chinese*, (6), 25-27.
- [11] Tian, X. L., & Li, F. (2014). A study on morpheme-reversed words in Hong Kong Chinese. *Chinese Linguistics*, (1), 61-68, 96.
- [12] Qiang, W. S., & Li, W. (2023). A preliminary study on morpheme-reversed words in Shanxi dialects. *Journal of Xinzhou Teachers University*, 39(1), 46-50.
- [13] Wang, Y. (2018). Formation and evolution of "jieshao" and "shaojie". *Journal of Changzhou Institute of Technology (Social Science Edition)*, 36(1), 90-93.
- [14] Ma, J. L., & Zhang, Y. H. (2025). Origin and discrimination of dialect reversed words "zhengjing" and "jingzheng". *Journal of Ningxia Normal University*, 46(8), 53-57.
- [15] Zhang, W. (2007). Analysis of morpheme-reversed words in dialects. *Tangdu Journal*, (3), 117-120.
- [16] Qu, Y. N. (2017). Research on vernacular vocabulary of Wuxi Vernacular Newspaper (Master's thesis). Minnan Normal University.
- [17] Qin, Y. X. (2015). A type of attributive-head structure in Chinese dialect words and related issues. *Fangyan*, (4), 295-301.
- [18] Liu, D. Q., & Xu, L. J. (1998). Copy topicalization in Mandarin and Shanghai dialect. *Language Teaching and Research*, (1), 85-104.