From the Northwest China Sprachbund: Xúnhuà Chinese dialect data

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Abstract

This paper presents fresh data from a variety of Northwestern Chinese spoken in Xúnhuà county of Qinghai province. Xúnhuà Chinese is typical of Northwestern Chinese with its massive interference from substrate languages (Amdo Tibetan, Turkic, and Mongolic), as well as superstrate interference from Standard Mandarin. Salient phonological, morphosyntactic, and lexical features of these data are introduced to support this claim.

The original purpose of this small corpus, collected from a Huí (sinophone Muslim) Chinese man, was to compare Xúnhuà Huí-Chinese features with those of neighboring languages and with those of other Northwestern Chinese dialects.

In the presentation of these data, I address the following questions:

- Do these data contain features considered typical of Huí Chinese speakers, as distinct from Hán? I suggest not: in the case of Xúnhuà, at least, the differences between Huí and Hán Chinese vernaculars are few.
- Does Xúnhuà Chinese syntax and phonology in fact reflect that of the Línxià dialect, or is Xúnhuà better considered a transitional vernacular between the Xíning and Línxià dialects?
- What non-Chinese features can be identified in Xúnhuà Chinese?

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I. Northwestern Mandarin Chinese

Northwestern Chinese is a beguiling mix of archaisms, Altaicisms, and a good dose of Tibetan. If investigated from the point of view of Chinese dialectology alone, it possesses a number of puzzling features. Yet when Northwest China is viewed as a linguistic and cultural region, one discovers that most of these features repeat throughout the area’s languages.

Chinese archaisms aside, the idiosyncratic features of Northwest Chinese consist of a combination of contact-induced borrowings and language-convergence features. The extended contact of Tibetan, Chinese, Turkic, and Mongolic languages over the centuries encouraged the gradual development of similar forms in these languages; hence, the term Sprachbund or ‘language association’.¹

Much remains to be done on the Chinese spoken in this vast region. Until recently, only the Chinese spoken in major cities was surveyed; in the last ten years the phonology and word order of some of the less-populated areas has been surveyed.

Contrary to the traditional notion of dominant languages being nearly immutable, Northwestern Mandarin² has acquired features typical of local Central Asian languages (i.e., Tibetan, Turkic, and Mongolic): spirantized voiceless stops, an SOV word order, and even case marking.

In phonology, most Northwestern dialects have only three tones; a neutralization of the apical/velar nasal n/ŋ distinction in coda position; the preservation of the Middle Chinese velar nasal onset ŋ; a diachronic palatalization of dental stops before high front vowels; and a paucity of high front rounded vowels.

In morphology, most Northwestern dialects have developed a limited pronominal case-marking system from cliticized postpositions, e.g. Gānsù Labrang Chinese [ŋa] ‘I (nom.)’, [ŋa] ‘I (dat.)’ (Nakajima: 275). Also, the number of noun classifiers has been greatly reduced, often to a single [ka] 個, e.g. Linxià [zi₂₄ ka₂₄ ŕu₃₁] 一一個書 ‘one book’, cf. Standard Mandarin [jiss ｐən₂₁₃ ｓù₅₅] 一本書.

In syntax, the most notable feature is the verb-final word order; and the concomitant absence of V-O type prepositional clause structures, such as the bā 把 construction. Serial verbs are

¹The term was apparently coined by Trubetzkoy in 1928 (Bynon: 245).
²Here Northwestern Mandarin refers to the varieties of Chinese spoken principally in Gānsù, Qīnghǎi, Níngxiā, and Xinjiāng, and also in Shānxī, Shānxī, and parts of western Inner Mongolia.
³Transcriptions here follow the conventions of the International Phonetic Association. In addition, the symbols 1 and ɿ are used to represent apical and retroflex variants of /l/, respectively. Tones are represented numerically, with 55 being a high level tone, 11 a low tone, and 51 a falling tone. A single or absent numeral (e.g. [ʂã] or [ʂã]) indicates a reduced tone. Tone sandhi is indicated by a slash between two tones, e.g. 13/55

Etyma of uncertain origin are represented in Chinese as □. However, for the reader’s convenience in the text the conventional transcription-kanji for these unknown etyma (used in Chinese linguistic literature) are surrounded by quotation marks here; e.g. [zi₂₄gua₄₂] “一挂” ‘totally; all’.
linked with [dʐə] (Xúnhuà [zęu53 dʐə tʰii55] 走着去‘walk (there)’); the number of resultative complements is more limited than in Standard Mandarin.

The lexicons of the Northwestern Chinese dialects have been enriched by a number of Tibetan and Turkic loans. For example:

Labrang: atcia ‘father’; ama ‘mother’ cf. Wr. Tibetan a-rgya, a-ma ‘id.’ (Nakajima: 274)
Urumchi: pei2skɔars2 ‘in vain, useless’ < Uyghur [biŋɔ] < Persian bikar ‘unemployed, idle’
Urumchi: pʰi2siəsts1 ‘onion’< Uyghur [pʰižɔ] < Persian piaz ‘id.’ (Liú: 163,169)

II. The Xúnhuà vernacular as an example of Northwestern Chinese

An integral part of the vast Northwest Chinese region is the northern edge of the Amdo plateau. Historically, the area was inhabited largely by semi-pastoralist Tibetans (or Qiāng羌) and later Mongolic groups. However, at a relatively low altitude and with littoral areas large enough to support subsistence agriculture, the region has also become populated with a variety of sedentary lowlanders, predominantly Hàn Chinese, sinophone Muslims, and the Turkic Salars.

Xúnhuà county 循化縣 is located in the heart of the Amdo region, in what is today southeastern Qīnghǎi province 青海省. It is on the south bank of the Yellow River at a midpoint between Xīnìng 西寧 and Línxià 临夏 (historically Hézhōu 河州). At a mere 1840 meters elevation and as one of the most climatically hospitable places in Qīnghǎi, the Yellow River littoral areas including Xúnhuà are whirlpools of linguistic and cultural contact. Xúnhuà Salar Autonomous County 循化撒拉族自治縣 today is primarily Salar and Tibetan, with only 20% of the population being Chinese-speaking.

Xúnhuà Chinese is generally considered a variant of the Línxià (Hézhōu 河州) dialect. I collected the data for this paper during February 1993. This particular data set is based on a series of interviews with a 78-year old Huí 回 (sinophone Muslim) in Jīshízhēn 積石鎮, the Xúnhuà county seat. My aim was to collect a modest sample of Xúnhuà Huí syntax. The corpus consists of 124 utterances from each of the major syntactic forms, based loosely on the dialectal syntax questionnaire of Yue-Hashimoto 1993.

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4 Xúnhuà is affectionately known as “the Xīshuāngbānnà (i.e., tropics) of Qīnghǎi” 青海的西雙板納. This author experienced such a tropical clime in the form of snow and pneumonia while collecting the data for this paper.

5 Broad comparative surveys mentioning Xúnhuà Chinese include Zhāng 1984, Wáng 1984, Chéng 1980, Wáng and Wú 1981, and Yín 1985. The scholar Dù Xīngzhōu 都興宙 has recently surveyed several Qīnghǎi Chinese dialects in the region, but I have not seen his materials.

6 My language informant, Mr. Cháng Míngdào 常明道, is a third-generation Xúnhuà resident whose ancestors were from Lóngxiàn 龍縣 in western Shānxī 陕西. He was extremely gracious to receive me, particularly during Ramadan.
1. Code-switching and language interference

Xúnhuà, a sparsely-populated county with a total population of only 85,000, boasts not one but three Education Bureau chiefs. It is a stunning tribute both to bureaucracy and to the trilingual and tricultural status of the county. The Education Bureau is jointly headed by a Salar, a Tibetan, and a Hán. This approximates the county’s population, which is about 58% Salar, 25% Tibetan, and 16% Huí and Hán. Although Qīnghǎi Chinese is the official lingua franca, Salar, Chinese, and Tibetan are used with equal frequency in public venues. The majority of the county’s population is bilingual, and a sizable number of Salar and Tibetan men are trilingual.

For multilingual speakers, code-switching is especially common. Switching languages mid-sentence is apparently known in Qīnghǎi as 豐攪雪 “wind stirring up the snow” (Zhāng:188).

While extensive bilingualism in sinophone Xúnhuà residents is much rarer, (they are after all speakers of the dominant language), passive exposure to Tibetan and Salar has been extensive and significant. As in Hézhōu and Xīnǐng, prolonged language contact has resulted in head-final structures.

2. Xúnhuà Phonology

The Qīnghǎi dialects have been classed into three groups on phonological grounds: Xīnǐng, Lèdu乐都, and Xúnhuà (Zhāng: 189). The Xúnhuà group encompasses Southeastern Qīnghǎi province south of the Yellow River, i.e. Xúnhuà, Tóngrén同仁 and Guìdé贵德 counties. Distinctions between Xúnhuà Chinese and the Chinese spoken just across the river to the north in Huàlóng county化隆縣 (part of the Xīnǐng group) include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>feature examples</th>
<th>Xúnhuà</th>
<th>Huàlóng</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>number of tones</td>
<td>3 (平上去)</td>
<td>4 (陰平陽平上上去)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apical: retroflex initial opp.</td>
<td>總:總</td>
<td>舊:舊</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apical: palatal initial opp.</td>
<td>呆:呆</td>
<td>师:師</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʃ/ &gt; [f]</td>
<td>書:書</td>
<td>ʃ : f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʃ : 0</td>
<td>如:如</td>
<td>ʃ : ʃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C. ɲ &gt; ŋ-</td>
<td>我</td>
<td>ɲ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.C. ɲ: m-</td>
<td>女:女</td>
<td>ɲ ɲ3 : [m3i]33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t &gt; ts/ʃi</td>
<td>低:低</td>
<td>ts13 : ts13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʅ/ following palatals</td>
<td>基欺希</td>
<td>[tsi] ts13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʅ/ following apicals</td>
<td>[ʃi] [ʃi] [ʃi]</td>
<td>[ʃi] [ʃi] [ʃi]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(M.C. = Middle Chinese; based on Zhāng 1984)

1982 Census Bureau figures, from Xūnhuà sālāzī zhīxìàn gǎikuàng: 15.

Bilingualism implies competence in Qīnghǎi Chinese and some other language. Note there is no officially-sponsored education available in the Salar language.

The Middle Chinese (i.e., Guāngyùn 广韵) transcriptions in this paper are based on Guō 1986.

Zhāng uses the symbols j and w to represent the highly spirantized unrounded and rounded vowels, respectively, found in Amdo Chinese. For example, for the type I have labelled '/i/ /y/ following apicals' he has: Xūnhuā [ji 1 lw] : Huàlóng [j 1 lw]. Actually, these “buzzy” vowels are simply the result of the spreading of
These distinctions between Huàlóng and Xúnhuà Chinese reflect the significance of geography in linguistic isoglosses. While the Yellow River to the north was a formidable barrier until recent times (a bridge was constructed in the 1950’s), south of Xúnhuà the mountain pass to Hézhōu (now Línxià) was easily crossed.

This relative accessibility, coupled with socio-economic migrations, resulted in a migration of from Hézhōu to Xúnhuà. Even today, much of the Chinese-speaking population of Xúnhuà are descendants of Hézhōu sinophone Muslims (Huí-huí 回回)\(^\text{11}\). Xúnhuà county was administered by Hézhōu until the late eighteenth century\(^\text{12}\).

It is often said that Xúnhuà Chinese is a kind of Hézhōu Chinese (Yǐn, Wáng, Wǔ: 50, Mǎ 1988: 75). While there are some minor phonological differences, syntactically the language of the two regions is virtually identical.

### Diachronic phonology

**Palatalization** \(t > ts^h/\text{i}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Chinese</th>
<th>Xúnhuà</th>
<th>Std. Mandarin</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(nα\text{₃})</td>
<td>(ŋə\text{₅₅})</td>
<td>(ξ\text{₅₁})</td>
<td>餓 ‘to be hungry’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nən\text{₃}‘\text{₃})</td>
<td>(ŋə\text{₅₃}(t\text{ę₁₃}))</td>
<td>(ξn\text{₂₁₃}(t\text{ę₁₃})\text{₅₅})</td>
<td>睛 (睛) ‘eye’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(nən\text{₃})</td>
<td>(ŋi\text{₅₅})</td>
<td>(jı\text{₅₁})</td>
<td>硬 ‘hard, stiff’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\text{Diachronic phonology}\)

Preservation of velar onsets

One characteristic of Xúnhuà Chinese is the preservation of the Middle Chinese velar nasal onset \(ŋ\) (the Yí onset 疑母). In Xúnhuà it surfaces as \(ŋ\) in back-vocalic words, and as \(ɲ\) in front-vocalic words:

11 Sinophone Muslims from Hézhōu travelled to Xúnhuà as traders of wool, tea, and horses. From the 16th through 18th centuries the charismatic leaders Mǎ Lāichí 馬來遲 and Mǎ Míngxīn 馬明新 of Hézhōu successfully introduced two new Naqshbandi Muslim teachings to the Xúnhuà area, the Khufiyya and the Jahriyya, respectively. These two factors, trade and religion, resulted in a steady influx of Hézhōu Hui settlers to the Xúnhuà area. This large Hézhōu population in Xúnhuà was to have lasting consequences for the Xúnhuà Chinese vernacular.

12 According to the Qing dynasty Gazetteer of Xúnhuà 循化志, during the Ming dynasty Xúnhuà was part of the Hézhōu garrison 河州衛. It continued to be administered by Hézhōu until 1762 (the 27th year of the Qianlóng emperor), when Xúnhuà became part of Xíng Prefecture (Mǎ: 98,102).
There are, of course, exceptions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Chinese</th>
<th>Xúnhuà</th>
<th>Std. Mandarin</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ŋưo₁b</td>
<td>y₁³</td>
<td>jy₂₄a</td>
<td>鱼 ‘fish’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, most of one set of historically zero-onset lexemes (of the Ying onset 影母) surface in modern Xúnhuà Chinese as velar nasals, yet there are zero-ons sets exceptions in this group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Chinese</th>
<th>Xúnhuà</th>
<th>Std. Mandarin</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ǣi₃a</td>
<td>ȵej₅₅a</td>
<td>ai₅₁a</td>
<td>爱 ‘love, like’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>an₁a</td>
<td>ȵã₁₃a</td>
<td>an₅₅a</td>
<td>安 ‘peace’; Qīnhāi toponym 保安</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to velar nasals, a few consonant onsets maintain velarity (e.g. the Middle Chinese Xiá onset 匣母):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle Chinese</th>
<th>Xúnhuà</th>
<th>Std. Mandarin</th>
<th>gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dzaj₁b</td>
<td>xej₁₃a</td>
<td>ɕiɛ₂₄a</td>
<td>鞋 ‘shoes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya₃</td>
<td>xa₅₅a</td>
<td>ɕia₅₁a</td>
<td>下 ‘to descend; underneath; bottom’; result complement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of these ‘fossilized’ Middle Chinese velar forms co-occur with the palatalized reflexes for the same Chinese characters. The latter are usually later borrowings from Standard Mandarin. As such they represent upper-register (“literary” 文) Mandarin, as opposed to “colloquial” 白話 Mandarin. An example is ‘street’ 街 (M.C. kai₁a, Std. Mand. [ɕiɛ₅₅a])

[kei₁z₁] 街子 Gāizǐ (toponym, area of Xúnhuà county)
[ke₁ʒăn] 街上 town, marketplace (lit., “on the street”)
[ke₁ʒo₄a] 街道 village lane

but:
[tsiɛ₁ʒeisyei₁ʒuxuəs₅] 街委員會 Neighborhood Committee (cf. Std.Ch. [tsiɛ₅₅a wei₂₁ʒ jyan₂₄ xuis₅])

As expected, most of this type of palatalized form are modern political and cultural terms.

A few of the velar/palatal alternation pairs reflect functional (syntactic) distinctions in addition to register distinctions. The result complement and independent verb [xa₅₅a] 下 is an example; when used as the adjective ‘next’, it is pronounced [ɕia₅₁a]:

...
Many of these functional category distinctions may ultimately be traced to superstrate influence, however. Verb phrases, for example, borrowed from Standard Mandarin may maintain Standard phonological forms since the syntactic typology of the VPs is of the superstrate type, i.e., V-O.\textsuperscript{13}

As the influence of Standard Mandarin becomes more pervasive, there is a marked generational split, with older people using the velar form and younger people the palatalized Standard Mandarin form, e.g. in the tentative aspect:

看下一 下  'take a look'  elder generation:  \[k^h\text{æ}53 \text{ʒi}13\text{xa}\]  look a moment  younger generation:  \[k^h\text{æ}53 \text{ʒi}13\text{gia}\]

As a means of determining which types of structures are particularly resistant or susceptible to superstratum interference, it would be fruitful to investigate such pairs in further field work. As the \[\text{xa}13 / \text{cia}13\] example demonstrates, these pairs reflect grammatical and sociolinguistic distinctions.

**Synchronic Phonology**

**Consonant inventory**

Xúnhuà Chinese (and other varieties of Qīnhǎi Chinese) has a standard Northern Chinese-type phonemic inventory:

\[
\begin{align*}
p & \quad p^h & \quad \text{t} & \quad \text{t}^h & \quad \text{k} & \quad \text{f} & \quad \text{s} & \quad \text{ts}^h & \quad \text{\text{t}s} & \quad \text{\text{c}} & \quad \text{\text{t}s}^h & \quad \text{m} & \quad \text{n} & \quad \text{l} & \quad (j) & \quad (w)
\end{align*}
\]

However, the realization of these phonemes reflects the phonetic implementation rules of Tibetan and the other languages of Northwest China. Voiceless initial stops are generally spirantized:

/t/ \rightarrow [t\text{χ}^h],  \ p \rightarrow [p\Phi^h],  \ and \ more \ rarely \ /k/ \rightarrow [k\text{χ}^h] \ or \ [k\Phi^h].

\[t\text{χ}^h\text{a}13\] 糖 'sugar'  \[p\Phi^h\text{i}55\] 票 'ticket'  \[k\Phi^h\text{u}13\] 哭 'cry'  \[k\text{χ}^h\text{e}i55\] 開 'to open'

This is represented sporadically in the data.

\textsuperscript{13}Zhāng 1988 analyzed this \[\text{xa}13/\text{cia}13\] split in Lánzhōu Chinese as primarily syntactic. He claims that only the Standard ("literary") \[\text{cia}13\] reading is used when the morpheme is functioning as an independent, usually transitive ("causative") verb (such as 下蛋 descend-egg 'lay an egg'. 下雨 descend-rain 'It rains'). The "colloquial" velar form is used when the morpheme functions as a purely directional verb (下来 descend-come 'come down') or as a locative (下来 'below, bottom').

Curiously, most of the verb forms with the Standard Mandarin readings that Zhāng cites have a V-O word order, which is highly marked in Northwestern Chinese. I suspect that Lanzhou speakers associate this V-O structure with Standard Mandarin and hence employ the Standard \[\text{cia}13\] pronunciation with these forms.
Xúnhuà Chinese, like Hézhōu Chinese to the south, does not have retroflex initials becoming labiodentals before back rounded vowels (tʂu tʂʰu an ʂui > pfu pfʰu an fei). This feature is found in many Northwestern dialects, including Huálóng county across the river, as well as in Xīān 西安, Gānsù Zhāngyè 甘肅張掖 Chinese, and Xīnjiāng Huí Chinese. Again, the Yellow River appears to delineate a significant linguistic isogloss.

**Obstruent voicing**

In this data set, many voiceless unaspirates surface as voiced. This reflects synchronic voicing assimilation at the very least, and may also reflect contact-induced language change.

Simple voicing assimilation commonly occurs across morpheme boundaries in Xúnhuà Chinese, unlike in Standard Mandarin. Even sentence-initial “voiceless” obstruents often sound voiced, and I have recorded them as such. In terms of this voicing, there is great variation among speakers and even within an individual’s idiolect.

The diachronic picture is less clear. Middle Chinese obstruents were distinguished on the basis of voicing, but in Mandarin these developed into voiceless aspirates (in the Píng 平 tone category) and voiceless unaspirates (in the other 仄 categories). This included the Chinese dialects of the Amdo area.

Xúnhuà Chinese, as a Qīnghǎi dialect, is located just at the juncture between aspiration-distinction languages and voicing-distinction languages. To the east and south, the initial stop consonants of the Sinitic and Tibetan languages are largely distinguished on the basis of aspiration. To the north and west, most Turkic and Mongolic languages have voicing distinctions. Thus southeastern Qīnghǎi represents a transition zone between the two language types. In such a position, we would expect initial obstruents of the languages of the region to be somewhat volatile.14

**Palatal glide j-spirantization**

The initial glide /j/ is also sporadically realized as ʒ- before high front vowels, depending on the speaker’s idiolect. This Huí Chinese speaker was quite consistent in this spirantization, e.g.:

[maɔ3ʅ3] 蟲蟻 ‘ant’ cf. Std. Ch. [ma2ʂji213]
[ʒu14] 雨 ‘rain’ cf. Std. Ch. [jy213]

14Salar 撒拉語, the Turkic language spoken in the Xúnhuà area, appears to have flirted with both aspiration-distinction and voicing-distinction status. As a Central Asian Turkic language, it is in origin an obstruent voicing-distinction language; yet since the Salar’s arrival in the Amdo region, the Salar language has borrowed Chinese/Tibetan phonetic implementation rules of surface aspiration distinction.

Given that at other levels of language - morphology, syntax - this contact-induced interference has been fully bi-directional, one would expect the same would be true for phonology. It is thus plausible that Turkic and Mongolic have interfered Xúnhuà Chinese obstruent distinctions as well. Of course, these obstruents were originally voiced in Middle Chinese.
Liquids and nasals

- **Loss of Apical/velar nasal distinction word-finally**

Apical and velar nasals in coda position may surface word-medially, but are realized word-finally only as nasalization on the previous vowel:

- **Palatalized nasals**

/n/ → [ŋ]/ __ high front vowels [ni53] 你 ‘you (sg.)’  [nie13] 捏 ‘pinch, squeeze’

- **Amdo-esque spirantized lateral**

Under Amdo Tibetan\(^\text{15}\) influence, /l/ is realized as a spirant [ɭ] before high vowels:

- **Free variation of initial l and n**

[lɔŋ55diŋ] 弄掉 ‘get rid of’  Std. Mandarin [noŋ51tiao51]

Since initial /l/ and /n/ are in free variation, and syllable-final nasals are not distinguished, if a speaker says, “I’m going to [l+i55ɕia55] next week”, he may be referring to either one of two quite distinct destinations in the region: Línxià (city), or Níngxià (Huí Autonomous Region).

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\(^{15}\) The Amdo Tibetan language complex is composed of many (often mutually unintelligible) dialects. Linguistic references here to *Amdo Tibetan* refer principally to the nearby Labrang (Xiāhé) dialect, although many of these features such as /lh/ are shared by other Amdo dialects.
There is some evidence that Northwestern Chinese is moving towards a six-vowel system, with front high round vowels being systematically de-rounded, e.g.:

\[ \text{[jw̃s]} ~ \text{[ʒw̃s]} \] 雨 ‘rain’ cf. Std. Mandarin \[ \text{[jỹ]} \]
\[ \text{[tʃi̯s]} \] 去 ‘go’ cf. Std. Mandarin \[ \text{[tʃ̯i]} \]

The high front unrounded vowels, including \[ \text{[ǿaiaȕaȏ]} \] have a particularly buzzy quality following spirants (see footnote 8). In other words, obstruent features are spreading to the following vowel. If the tone is reduced, the vowel may even be devoiced:

\[ \text{[ɬɔsi₅₅]} \] 樓梯 ‘stairs’

High front rounded vowels do occur in some non-colloquial lexemes, likely re-borrowed from Standard Mandarin into Xúnhuà Chinese, e.g.:

\[ \text{[tʃ̯i̯e̯s]} \] 勸 ‘to urge’ cf. Std. Mandarin \[ \text{[tʃ̯i]} \]

This re-borrowing also accounts for the occasional occurrence of the Standard Mandarin pronunciation \[ \text{[lɔ]} \] for the perfective marker instead of the expected Northwestern Chinese \[ \text{[lǐ]} \].

Vowel clusters are simplified in Northwestern Chinese. Comparing Xúnhuà (XH) with Standard Mandarin:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Std.Mand. -ao} & : & \text{XH} & \rightarrow & \text{dɔs} & \text{to arrive} & \text{ji} & \text{to want} \\
\text{Std.Mand. -uo} & : & \text{XH} & \rightarrow & \text{zɔs} & \text{to sit} \\
\text{Std.Mand. -iao} & : & \text{XH} & \rightarrow & \text{iɔs} & \text{li}s & \text{perfective particle}
\end{align*}
\]

There are of course a few exceptions, e.g. the triphthong -uai:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Std.Mand. -ua} & : & \text{XH} & \rightarrow & \text{uai} & \text{kua} & \text{to hang}
\end{align*}
\]

**Tones**

Xúnhuà Chinese has three tones: 13 (平), 53 (上), and 55 (去) (Zhāng 1984). In this data set, tones are sporadically indicated. This is due in part to the large number of toneless and tone-reduced syllables present in the dialect. The second syllable of disyllabic nouns is usually reduced (e.g. \[ \text{[zuo̯gã]} \] 昨個 ‘yesterday’), as are sentence-final particles. While most Northwestern Chinese dialects have three tones; some, heavily influenced by surrounding non-tonal languages, have entirely lost phonemic tones (e.g. Gānsù Wǔtún 五屯 Chinese, see Chén 1986.)
3. Xúnhuà Morphosyntactic Characteristics

As in other Northwestern Chinese dialects, Xúnhuà Chinese has developed an O-V word order; the limited use of postpositions/enclitics, even developing a case-marking system.

- **Instrumental/Comitative postposition** [lia] 倘

One example of this limited case system is the Instrumental/Comitative postposition [lia]~[lia] 倘 ‘with’. We have one example of its use as a comitative in the data:

我 他 倘 不 去

I he COMIT NEG go

I won’t go with him.

Compare the above O-V (postpositional) type A B-liá ‘A (together) with B’ to the Standard Mandarin V-O (prepositional) type: A kán B:

我 不 跟 他 去。

I NEG together he go

I didn’t go with him.

[lia] also functions as an instrumental, and is likely derived from the Mongolic languages.16

- **Highlighter/focus particle** [xa] “哈”

Another postposition, [xa] “哈”, has generated a lot of discussion. It is a postpositional particle of unclear origin which is not found in Standard Chinese. Ha is often referred to as an object marker; yet it actually marks subject noun phrases as well.

他 下 飯 没 吃 上 他没把飯吃完。

he HA food NEGimp eat up

He didn’t finish his food.

Since ha is in fact optional after object noun phrases, some have considered it a pause marker (Wáng and Wú: 52). But ha serves highlighting function as well. For this reason, we treat it here as a focus particle.

Other major morphosyntactic features of Xúnhuà Chinese include the following serial verb adjuncts derived from independent verbs. They have been treated extensively in the literature (gěi in particular has spawned a minor cottage industry among Chinese linguists), but they deserve further investigation. (See Wáng and Wú 1990, Liú 1989, Chéng 1980, Zhāng and Zhū 1987.)

16For a detailed analysis of [lia] and comparison with regional languages, see Dwyer 1992.
• **Verb serializer dze [dzə] “著”**

This is used most often in the progressive: V dze lie ‘is V-ing’, but is also used in manner and directional complements, e.g.

(89) pʰo₅³ dزة tˢʰi₅⁵ 跑著去 run-dze go ‘go (by) running’

or (94) tʰai₁₄dزة tˢʰa₄⁴ şå₄¹ 抬著車上 lift up-dze car-on ‘lift [these] up onto the car’

In a V₁V₂ verb series, V₂ verbs are generally interpreted as result complements (see Section IV below, (96)-(99)), unless dze intervenes. Dze is of unknown origin, but it has been proposed that it is derived from archaic Chinese, or Mongolic.

• **Serial verb ‘give’ [kei₅³] 給**

Perhaps it is merely the small size of the corpus, but there is a stunning lack of typically serial constructions with ‘give’. In most other regional dialects, ‘give’ functions as a dative and causative marker, in addition to as a full verb. For example, despite Northwest Chinese being an O-V language, in Urumchi ‘give’ can function as a dative preposition:

我 給 他 給 的 藥 給他的藥

\[vɘ₅₂ kei₅₂ tʰa₂₁ kei₅₂ tli₂¹ yɘ₂¹ \]  ‘the medicine I gave to him’

\[ 1 \]  
\[ 2 \]

*Give*₁ is a dative preposition, while *give*₂ is an independent verb (Liú: 167).

And as a causative:

他 吃 藥 讓他吃

he eat give ‘let him eat’ (Línxià, Xīnìng)

One would expect to find examples of this type in Xúnhuà as well with further data.

• **Serial verb ‘say’ [ȘuǤ₁₃] 說 as an indirect quotative:**

This serial verb permits the creation of embedded quotative sentences to convey reported information:

他 今個 没 有 功夫 說 他說他今天沒時間。

\[tɘ₁₃ ʃëi₁₃ șe mɘ₁₃ jø₅³ k ø₅₅fu șuǤ \] He says he doesn’t have time today.

\[he \] \[today \] \[NEG \] \[have \] \[time \] \[say \]
4. Characteristics of the Xúnhuà Lexicon

The overwhelming majority of idiosyncratic lexemes in Xúnhuà Chinese are also found in other Northwestern dialects. Some examples are the following:

Adverbs

[ua'j3] an emphatic adverb, meaning ‘only, merely, just’


Urumchi Huí [tsi21 χs52]–[kɑ12 χs52] 剛好 ‘just right’

Jimsar Ch. [tʃiaŋ44m̩ɔ] ‘just’

[p355] ‘don’t’ Urumchi Huí [px24]–[pu21 jɔ44], Jimsar [px213], Xīnǐng

[pɔ213] 不要 ‘don’t’

[zi14da44] “一搭” ‘together’

cf. Urumchi Huí [ji21ta24n̩i21] ‘together’, Jimsar Ch. [i213ta51/13n̩i]

[zi14kua44] “一掛” ‘all; totally’

Adjectives


[ga] affectionate diminutive; ‘small, tiny’

There is a functional split between ga53 and gi53 小, the Standard Mandarin morpheme that is also used in Xúnhuà. The latter is a neutral term for ‘small’, whereas ga conveys affection; compare the following expression, in which both morphemes are used: [ga53 cy343dzs]尕小子 ‘young lad’. For more discussion of this term, see Dwyer 1992.

Pronouns

Amdo Chinese has a highly-developed and surprisingly uniform system of pronouns. They are of mixed linguistic origin, generally composed of one Chinese morpheme and one Turkic or Tibetan morpheme.

• Deictic pronouns:

Proximate pronouns are composed of the Chinese locative /tsa/ 這裡 ‘this’; distant pronouns, Turkic /u/ ‘that’; the second element in the spatial deictics (‘this’, ‘that’) is simply the Chinese general classifier /ku/ 回, while in the locative deictics (‘here’, ‘there’), the second element is likely the Turkic locative suffix -DA (-da/də/ta/tä).
Indefinite and Interrogative pronouns:

Interrogative pronouns have the prefix a-. There is apparently an interrogative prefix a- in Amdo Tibetan as well (Māl1988: 75).

[ǝzi₂₄aŋ]-[ǝji₂₄aŋ] “啊一個” ‘someone’; ‘who, which’ < Tb. interr. a- + ‘one-CL’

大門啊一個鎖下了大門被人上了鎖.

ta mē ǝzi₂₄aŋ suɔ xa liɔ

The front gate was locked by someone.

[a₁₃dr] “啊達兒” ‘where?’

Likely < a- + Turkic locative/ablative -DA + - Chinese noun suffix -ǝr 兒


你甚麼個買了你買了甚麼?

nɪ53 ǝɔ₁₃ma₁₃ka  маɪ53 liɔ

What did you buy?

[a₁₃mē₂₄] “啊門” ‘whatever’ < interrog. a- + [mē] (cf. (122))

[a₁₃men₂₄dзе] “啊門著” ‘why?’ < a- + [mē] + dze (cf. (119))

[sa₁₃] “啥” ‘what(ever)’ < conflation of [ǝɔ₁₃ma₁₃] 甚麼

我笨頭笨腦的啥都做不下

ŋǝ bęns tuh eu₁₃ bęns sa25 dɔ₄₄ zɔ pu xa

I stupid head stupid brain POSS what all do NEG R.C.

I’m really a klutz, I can’t do anything well.

The pronoun systems of Xúnhuà and Hézhōu are virtually identical, with variation only in phonetic implementation. Hézhōu does appear to have a greater variety of morphemes, but further research on Xúnhuà Chinese might well reveal similar alternate forms.
### Hézhōu and Xúnhuà pronoun systems compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deictic</th>
<th>Interrogative</th>
<th>Indefinite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>locale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hézhōu /tʂə-/</td>
<td>Xúnhuà /tʂə-/</td>
<td>Hézhōu /u-/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person/thing /-kə/</td>
<td>tʂəkə 'this'</td>
<td>tʂəkə 'this'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time /-xeu/ 後</td>
<td>tʂəlxu 'now'</td>
<td>ə- xu 'then'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>place /-li/ /-ta/ /-tɕie/</td>
<td>tʂəli 这裡 'here'</td>
<td>əli 那裡 'there'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manner /-mu/ (tʂə)/</td>
<td>tʂəmu 這麽 'such, so'</td>
<td>əmu emuʦə</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table and Hézhōu data adapted from Mǎ1988)

### 5. Huí characteristics of Xúnhuà Chinese

Much has been made of the linguistic differences between sinophone Huís and Hàns living in a given area of the Northwest. Lexical differences are often cited, especially the Arabic and Persian loanwords Huí Chinese (e.g Hè 1990). Yet these are largely limited to religious vocabulary, they constitute a miniscule part of the total lexicon. (Urumchi Huí Chinese, for example, is noted to have 48 Arabic and Persian loanwords (Liú: 170-173). By and large, the lexicons of Huí Chinese and Hàn Chinese are the same.

In particular, Huí Chinese morphology is partial to the use of the nominal prefix a-阿 (as in ā-bà 阿爸 ‘father’阿媽 ā-mā ‘mother’) over the reduplicated forms (bàbà 爸爸 māmā 媽媽) used by Hàn speakers; similarly, Huí speakers from Línxià (Hézhōu) to Urumchi employ the nominal suffix -zɿ (as opposed to -ér in Standard Mandarin), etc. (Liú 1989).

In this data set, these features include:

**The personal prefix a-阿**

[ a44ʨiɛ55] 阿姐 ‘sister-in-law; elder sister’  
[a2nai13] 阿奶 ‘grandma’  
[a44da13] 阿大 ‘father’ (ref.)  
(Xīnǐng Huí [a44/24pə213]; Xīnǐng Hàn [pə213/31pə213])

**The classifier ge [kəs5]個：**

- [kəs5] has become almost the sole noun classifier, e.g.:  
  [tʂəs5 kəs pus5]這個布 ‘this cloth’  cf. Std. Mand. [tʂəs1 kʰuai51 pus1] 這塊布

- [kəs5] has become lexicalized in numerous expressions:
Syntactically, beyond its use as a classifier, [kə5s] serves as a kind of emphatic marker:

他 最 怕 了 个 你 他最怕的你。

You’re the one he fears most.

The sentential particle [sa]~[ʂa] “啥” “煞”

[sa]~[ʂa] is a sentence-final particle which functions like an English tag-question, in this case demanding the listener’s agreement. It is extremely colloquial, and quite similar to the English tag question “..., or what?” (Was that cool, or what?)

The particle is almost certainly derived from the interrogative ‘what?’ Qǐnhǎi Standard Chinese (青普話) [ʂə13mə] 甚麼 > Qǐnhǎi colloquial interrogative [ʂə13]~[ʂə13] “啥” > colloquial tag question [ʂə53]~[ʂə53] “煞”. Note that the tag question usually has an emphatic-stress-type falling ‘tone’ despite the word’s original low rising tone:

我們 派 上 啊一個 辦 這 個 事情 是 好 sa


Usage of yātóu 丫头 vs. guñiáng 姑娘 ‘girl’

There may be an inclusive/exclusive distinction for ‘girl’ in the Huí Chinese of at least four Qǐnhǎi regions (Xúnhuá, Huálóng, Xíníng, Dàtōng 大通). That is, in these regions, it appears that yātóu is only used to describe and address a person’s own girl (i.e., daughter); guñiáng is a semantically broader term used to describe and address any girl (non-family members). Thus, a father could call out to his daughter: “Yātóu!”, but a teacher would address a female student as: “Guñiáng!”.

Weij 丫头 ‘girl’ (incl.) cf. Xíníng [ʂə53tə | tʂia443/31 tʂə ia44tʰu24/44]

我們家的丫头
Xúnhuà:

他□们只□一个□丫頭□，□他们□只□个□女兒.

They only have one daughter.

Note that Xīnínɡ also has [nǜ3-twà13 kvà44 ni524/44] 我□的□姑娘 ‘my daughter’, likely indicating Standard dialect mixing.

**Noun suffixes -tɕia “家”**, -waṭɕia “娃家”, -tɕi 子

This suffix is fairly productive and is informal and slightly affectionate, e.g.:


Compare Xīnínɡ and Urumchī’s highly productive but deprecatory suffix -tɕi 子:

Urumchī [tɕi521 tɕi521 tɕi521] 子子子 ‘rascal, scoundrel’

This kind of reduplication, along with personal nouns suffixed with [-waṭɕi] and [-waŋja] as above are supposedly typical features of Hui Chinese (Liú: 190).

The latter suffixes, as well as many of these features, are present in the speech of most sinophones of the Northwest. Huí or Hàn. One such feature is the secondary spirantization of initial stops. Liú (1990) has suggested that these are a distinctively Hui feature. Yet board a bus in Urumchī, Lánzhōu, or Xīnínɡ, and the ticket-selling comrade, be she Hán, Uyghur, Qazaq, or Huí, will inevitably shout:

[mai ɸʰjo a mai ɸʰjo] 买票啊买票！ “Get yer tickets here, get yer tickets!”

Evidently this phonological characteristic is not merely a matter of minzu status (i.e., quasi-ethnicity).

Impressionistically, I would suggest that many of these differences are not determined by ethnoreligious background, but rather by native-speaker status and education in Standard Mandarin. If an individual is a second-generation Northwest resident and has a limited education in Standard Mandarin, it is likely that she or he will employ these “Huí” structures.

**IV. The Data**

The data set is presented in its entirety below. It is organized according to syntactic structure. Please note that the data have not been “sanitized” at all: no adjustments have been made for the speaker inconsistencies, tone sandhi, etc.

Each Xúnhuà Chinese utterance is to the left, an English and Chinese equivalent to the right. It is important to note that the Chinese “gloss” on the right is the verbatim prompt I gave my informant. At times he gave an utterance with a slightly different meaning; these are glossed in English directly below the Xúnhuà utterance. (See (4) below.)
Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Classifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMI</td>
<td>Comitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Complementizer /de/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Copula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUR</td>
<td>Durative (progressive or stative) /dze/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPH</td>
<td>Emphatic particle (from -è?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXT</td>
<td>Extent marker /de/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOC</td>
<td>Postpositional focus particle /xa/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>Imperfective sentential particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x / y</td>
<td>Both forms (interpretations) x and y are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>Locative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGexist</td>
<td>Existential Negative ‘have not’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOM</td>
<td>Nominalizer /de/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASTexpe</td>
<td>Experiential Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERF</td>
<td>Perfective particle /liao/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNindef</td>
<td>Indefinite Pronoun ‘who, which’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C.</td>
<td>Resultative Complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SER</td>
<td>Verb serializer V₁ dze V₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>Imperfective sentential particle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>–</td>
<td>Pause marker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basic Word Order: Existential and Locative Sentences

(1) □ 這種人各處有咧到處都有這種人．

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>这种人各处有咧</td>
<td>dzā₃₃ tšə₅₅ kx₅₅ tēh₁₃ jeus₅₃ liə</td>
<td>This kind of person is everywhere.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) 他們□只一個丫頭他們只有一個女兒．

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>他們只有一個女兒</td>
<td>tx⁹a₁₃mē dzáːː₅₅ dzl₅₃ zi₂₄g₄₁ ja₅₅tx⁹ew</td>
<td>They only have one daughter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) 家裡客來了．

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>客來了</td>
<td>tēi₅₅l₁₃l₅₃ kʰe₁₅₅ lei₁₃ liɔ₂₂</td>
<td>Guests are arriving.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) 無常了两个人死了兩個人．

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Characters</th>
<th>Pinyin</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>无常了两个人死了</td>
<td>vɔ₁₃tēh₅₄₄ li₅₃ lija₁₃ gə₅₃ zę₁₃</td>
<td>Two people passed away.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(5)
下雨了
"xiass jw33 li41 (*jw33 xas55 li3) 下雨了.
descend rain PERF

(6)
這 個 小 子 地上 畫 著 了
dza55 g35 g35 jw34 dzs – dz155s213 xas55 dz3 li3
this CNTR small lad ground-on draw DUR IMP
Younger brother was drawing (something) on the ground. 弟弟在地上畫畫兒.

(7)
他 病 下 躺 著 砌 上 病人躺在砌上.
tx13a13 b55 xas2 – th3a13 dz3 kha55s3a The patient lay in bed.
he ill R.C. lie DUR brick.bed-on
He got sick and lay/is lying in bed.

Aspect

The etymon /liao/ 了 has developed into: Perfective [liɔ], Imperfective [liɔ]/uni0259 咧, and Particle [liɔ]/uni0259 咧.

Perfective: V [liɔ] 了

(8)
他 還到 那兒 去 了 他已經到了那兒了.
th3a13 a22 dzan35 dms55 oth3a35 ts3h35 li3 He has already arrived there.
he already arrive there go PERF

(9)
石頭 滾 下來 了 石頭滾下坡來了.
si3t3eu kuan35 xas41 lei13 li3 The rock rolled down the hill.
rock roll down come PERF
The rock rolled down.

(10)
這 幾 天 他 瘦 了 他這些日子瘦了.
t35s55 t3j313 th3a13 sesh35 li3 He’s become thin in recent days.
this few day he thin PERF
(11)
你什麼個買了你買了甚麼?
你 what-CL buy PERF What did you buy?

(12a)
他的阿大來了末他爸爸來了沒有?
he POSS father come PERF NEGimpf

(12b)
來了來了.
來 PERF Yes, he has.

(12c)
末來沒來.
末來 NEGimpf come No, he hasn’t.

(13)
阿奶奶藤了幾天了奶奶病了幾天啦.
阿奶奶 hurt PERF several day PERF Grandma has been sick for several days.

Progressive: V [dzə liə] 著咧

(14)
我已經吃飯dzə咧我吃飯呢/我在吃飯.
我 already eat food PROG IMP

(15)
外面風刮dzə咧雨下dzə咧外面風刮,下著雨.
外面 wind scrape PROG IMP rain descend PROG IMP

Durative/Stative: V dzə (liə)

(16)
大門開dzə咧大門開著.
大門开 open DUR IMPF

(17)
牆上掛著個鐘牆上掛了一個鐘.
wall on hang DUR CL clock A clock is hanging/is hung on the wall.
Experiential: V [ku.cent~kə.cent] 過

As in Standard Mandarin, the result complement [ku.cent] expresses an indefinite past experience.

(18)
他 到 處 去 過
tʰa₁₃ tac₄₁tɕʰì tɕʰi₄₁ ku.cent
He's been many places.

Inchoative: V [liɔ] 了 ~ [xa] 下

(19)
娃 孵 哭 了 娃 孵 哭 下
ɡa.s₃wa  kʰu₁₃ liɔ₃ ～ ɡa.s₃wa  kʰu₁₃ xa₅₃
The baby started crying.

(20)
他 說 話 • de 很 最 少 是 帶 半 天
tʰa₁₃ ʂɯ₂₃ xua₄₄ʑa₅₃  dzv₃ xɑn₅₃ ~  zui₅₃ sɔs₃  ɕi₃ dais₅b₅₃ tʰjɛ₁ₕ₅₅
He’s a glib talker - he’ll keep at it for at least a half a day.

Instantive: [ʡi₂₄]…[ʨiu/os₅₅] 一… 就

(21)
他 一 害 怕 就 逃 汗
tʰa₁₃ ʡi₂₄ xeis₅pʰa  tɕiu/os₅₅ tʰa₁₃ xa₅₅
He breaks out in a sweat as soon as he gets scared.

Partitive

This structure is not especially colloquial.

(22)
五 個 果子 (裡頭) 我 吃 了 兩 個
vu₃₄ kəs₅₅ kuCENTdz1 (fisstʰeu) nəs₃ tɕʰi₅₅ liɔ₅₃  ljaŋ₅₃ɡəs₅₅
five CL fruit (within) I eat PERF two-CL

五個水果裡頭我吃俄兩個.
I ate two of the five fruits.
Habitual, Incessant: [جا٤٥٥٤٢] 老是 V

(23) 他 老是 戴 著 眼鏡 子 他一直都戴眼鏡.
tʰa₁₃ lao⁵³ja₅⁵tʃjə³³ nj₃⁴tsʰiŋ₃⁴jəjy₅₃ He always wears glasses.
he always wear DUR eyeglasses

(24) 他 心裡 老是 跳  他心不停地再跳.
tʰa₁₃ zin₁³li los⁴³ʃ  tʰiš₅₁ His heart keeps on/kept on pounding
he heart-in always jump

Tentative aspect: V [ژی٤٤۷] 一下

(25) 這 個 布 你 看 一 下 你來看看這塊布.
dz⁵⁵ kʰa₄³ pu₅₃ jn₃⁵ lʃ₅₅ ʒi₁₄xa₄₁ Come take a look at this fabric.
this CL cloth you look one-moment

Negation

As in other Mandarin dialects, the Xúnhuà vernacular has an invariant general verbal negative particle /pu̯/  不; the existential negative [می٣] (cf. Std.Mand. [می٢] 没) doubles as a verbal negative in the sense of ‘not yet’. Both usually directly precede the verb.

Imperfective Negation [پو]  不 V

(26) 他 煙 不 抽 酒 不 喝 他不抽烟 不喝酒.
tʰa₁₃ jen²₄ bu₄₂ tʃou₁₃⁴ - tʃiu₃⁵ bu₄₂ xy³⁴ He doesn’t smoke or drink.
he cigarettes NEG suck liquor NEG drink

(27) 下 個 禮 拜 我 不 回 去 了 下星期我不回家.
cj₃⁵ gə li₃⁵beis⁵⁵ - ŋa₃⁵ bu₄₂ xu₃⁵tʃiŋ₃⁵ lić Next week I won’t go home.
below CL week I NEG return go PERF

Negated adverbials: as in Standard Mandarin, the relative scope of adverbs may be distinguished by adverbial fronting. Note that the speaker gave an emphatic nominalized alternate with the ژی...د.wav construction, suggesting it is a marked construction:

(28) 他 不 經 常 來  他不常常来.
tʰa₁₃ pu₄₂ dzʃŋ₃⁴tʃaŋ₃⁴ lei₁⁴ He often doesn’t come.
he NEG usually come
(29)
他（是）經常不來（的）他常常不來。

He doesn’t come often.

(30)
我一個人末心去我不怎麼敢一個人去。

I don’t feel much like going alone.

(31)
時候太大了他還不來他到現在還沒來。

Even by now he hasn’t come.

In the following example, the first alternate given is typical Standard Mandarin structure, and reflects the potential pitfalls of interviewing in that language. It is the second alternate that reflects colloquial Xůnhuà usage; note the negator directly preceding the verb, and the comitative clitic -li（‘with’）:

(32)
我不跟他去我不跟他去我不跟他去。

I won’t go with him.

Perfective Negation

Past affirmative [מכ] “沒”/末

(33)
我他末說過我沒告訴他。

I didn’t tell him.

(34)
他□飯末吃上他沒把飯吃完。

He didn’t finish his food.

(35)
他三天末吃下咧他三天沒吃飯。

He didn’t eat for three days.
Negation appears to be avoided in comparative and extent-complement constructions; compare the elicited sentence on the right with the response on the left:

(36)  
我 比 他 ? 直 你不比他高。  
ηʃaʃ3 bzi3 t'øa13 dø14  You’re not taller than him.  
I COMP he ? straight  
I’m taller than him.

(37)  
他 （身材） □ 得 很 他不髙。  
tʰa₁₃ (ʃanse₂₅) g₃s₆ dʒ xè  He’s not tall.  
He （stature） short EXT very  
He’s really short.

(38)  
他 跑 de 慢 de 很 他跑得不快。  
tʰa₁₃ pʰao₃s₃ dʒ ma₅nd₃ xè₃₃  He doesn’t run quickly.  
He run EXT slow EXT very  
He runs really slowly.

(39)  
你 注意 拿 定 別三心二意的!  
ni₃₃ dzu₂₄ʒi₅₅ na₁₄ djë₅₄  Don’t be so indecisive!  
you decision take set  
Make up your mind!

Potential Negation

(40)  
我 笨 頭 笨 腦 的 所 都 做 不 下  
ηʃaʃ3 bën₃₃ t'ου₁₃ bën₃₃ nǎo dθ - sa₂₅ dø₄₄ z₃₅₅ pu xa₅₃  I stupid head stupid brain POSS anything all do NEG R.C.  
I’m really a klutz, I can’t do anything well.

(41)  
這些 東西 提 包 裝 不 下 這些東西裝不下口袋裡。  
dʒa₅s qia duan₁₃si tʰi₃ₙ₅₉ si₃₃ dʒ pu xa₅₂  this few thing handbag in fit-in NEG R.C.  
I can’t stuff these things into this bag.

(42)  
這個 事 他 最後 還是 不知道  
dʒa₅s ga₃₁₅ t'øa zuis₅ xe₅s x₃₁₃ ʃa₅₃ pu₅₅ dʒ₁₃dø₅₃  this-CL matter he most later still COP NEG know  
he以後不會知道這件事。  
Later he won’t know about this matter.
(43) 他 明 天 來 de 不 要 他明天不必來。
th'ā13 miŋ13t'ā3 le13 dz1 bu24 j352 He needn’t come tomorrow.

Aspect Negation

(44) 他 這 裡 末 來 過 他沒來過這兒。
th'ā dzɔ55li mɔ25 lei35 guu42 He’s never come here before.

(45) 她 不 是 打 毛 衣 de 她沒在打毛衣。
th'ā13 pu24 ŝ155 da53 māo13j1 dz4 She isn’t knitting.

Negative Change of state

(46) 她 已 經 不 是 學 生 她已經不是學生了。
th'ā13 azan pu ŝ155 cyē13ʂəŋ52 She is no longer a student.

Negative Imperative

(47) 我 不 要 看 也 是 孩 家 別把我當小孩兒!
ŋə53 pu24 jɔ55 k'ān je ŝl xān25 wadžia53 Don’t treat me like a kid!

(48) 他 不 要 我 傷 心 他叫我不必難過。
th'ā13 bu jɔ nə53 sā44 ʂ4 He doesn’t want me to be sad.

The quasi-negative imperative 別是... (‘May...not happen’) is not used in Xúnhuà; instead we have [xei53pʰa] 害怕 (‘I’m afraid that...’):
I can’t hear my husband’s voice. I’m afraid something bad will happen.

別是出了事吧!

I hope nothing bad has happened!

The following is difficult to parse unless [baɔ] is interpreted as a conflated double negative (compare the double negative of the Mandarin elicitation):

要不是你沒來，他不會那麼生氣的。

If you had come(hadn’t not come) he wouldn’t have worried.

“Double-Object” Construction

I’ll give you half.

He borrowed ten dollars from me.

He lost two games [of chess] to me.

He introduced me to a few friends.
Passive and Causative

Passive

Indicated by syntactic means; thus word order is crucial: Topic-Patient \{Agent\} V

(55)  
魚 猫 吃 上 了  魚讓貓給吃了.
\{\text{魚}₁₄ \text{貓} \text{吃} \text{了} \text{魚讓貓給吃了}}\text{。}
fish cat eat R.C. PERF

(56)  
我們 講 的 話 他 知道 咧 了 不得 了
\{\text{我們} \text{講} \text{的話} \text{他} \text{知道} \text{了} \text{不得} \text{了}}\text{。}
I-pl. speak POSS talk he know IMPF awful PERF

這些話叫他聽見就糟了。It'd be bad if these words were overheard by him.

(57)  
白 菜 的 水 □□ 捏 出 上 了
\{\text{白菜的} \text{水} \text{捏出} \text{上}}\text{了。}
cabbage POSS water totally squeeze R.C. R.C. PERF

白菜的水全給擠來了.
The water from the cabbage was all squeezed out.

(58)  
他 給 我 嚇 的 咧 □□ 他給我嚇了一跳.
\{\text{他} \text{給} \text{我} \text{嚇} \text{了一跳}}\text{。}
he give I fright NOM PERF totally

(59)  
大 門 啊 一個 鎖 下 了  大門被人上了鎖.
\{\text{大門} \text{人} \text{上了}}\text{鎖。}
big-gate R.C. lock R.C. PERF

(60)  
他 說 我 門 都 同 意 他的建議被我門同意了.
\{\text{他} \text{說} \text{我門} \text{都} \text{同意} \text{他的建議被我門同意了}}\text{。}
he say NOM we all agree

(61)  
鍾子 打 破 了  鍾給打破了.
\{\text{鍾子} \text{打} \text{了}}\text{。}
clock hit-break PERF
He was surrounded.

Now you may let him in.

Don’t let the ants climb into the plate.

I let him hit me. / I was hit by him.

I didn’t let him hit me./ I wasn’t hit by him.

Go open the door! (it’s stuffy)

He broke a bowl. (* ba)
他把什麼都吃光了。
He ate everything up.

It so angered him that he was speechless.

He kicked me on purpose.

He's more honest than the other one.

He's a year younger than I am.

He eats as slowly as I do.
When the predicate is an adjective, the equative takes the form:

A B [ʒi14ban55] 一般 (“the same”) Adj

(75)
我 現在 量 他 了 一 般 □ 我好像他一樣健壯.
ŋǝ53 ģjǝsǝzǝ53 ljǝn53 tʰa13 le ʒi14ban55 xǝn53
I now measure he PERF same strong

To express ‘as much as’: A [ɡǝn13san] 跟上 (‘reach’) B

(76)
尕 王 的 力氣 能夠 跟 上 杂 黃
gǝ53 warǝ13 di tʰǝ55tǝ ‘i nǝn13geu55 ɡǝn13san55 ga53 xǝn53
little Wang POSS strength able follow RC little Huang

Xiao Wang’s strength can match Xiao Huang’s.

Superlative: [zui55] 最 Pred.

(77)
我 最 見 不 de 編 謊 de 人 我恨撒謊的人.
ŋǝ53 zui55 tǝjǝ53 pu53 de bia13xuan53 da ʒǝ13
I most see NEG EXT invent lie POSS person

I hate liars the most.

Negative comparisons: A B [bu55 dǝ55] 不到 (NEG reach)

(78)
他 我 de 杂 娃 不 到 他沒我兒子那麼能幹.
tʰǝ13 ŋǝ53 de ɡa53wa bu13 dǝ55
he I POSS kid NEG reach

He isn’t as capable as my son.

He’s no match for my son.

Extent Complements: DE


Xúnhuà Chinese displays the widespread, highly productive V DE xǝn53 得很 (“reeaaally V”) pattern so well-known in Northwestern Chinese.

(79)
他 跑 de □ □ 快
thǝ13 pʰǝ53 de xuː25du kʰue55
he run EXT really fast

He runs quickly.
他骂我骂得够多的了！

He sure scolds me enough!

The floor hasn’t been swept clean.

I want to walk slowly.

The door is shut tightly.

I ran until I was exhausted.

He’s very good-natured.

It’s not so late, we can still go.

He can’t get the drawer open.

This is heavy, can you carry it or not?
Directional and Resultative verb complements

These are Northern Chinese serial verb constructions in which a directional or aspectual result complement immediately follows the matrix verb. In Amdo Chinese, including Xúnhuà, directional complements generally require an intervening serializer dze (i.e. V₁dzeV₂), whereas result complements do not.

Directional complements

(89)
(qúa₅₅₅₅ quick quick EXT run DUR go)
跑 dze 去 快跑回去吧!
(kʰua₁₃mё₅₅ he-pl. still COP climb R.C. come PERF)
他門□ 是 爬 上 來 了 他門終於爬上來了.
(dʑɘga₁₄dṳœngi₁₄ this-CL thing where fall down come DE)
(91)
(92)
(nx₄₄₋₄₄₋₄₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄₋₄-_
Result complements

In Northern Chinese, the so-called resultative complements are perfective aspect complements which emphasizing the result of an action. Xúnhuà result complements are virtually identical to those in Standard Mandarin.

(96)

他 燈 點 下 了 他把燈點著了.

He lit the lamp.

(97)

你 座 下 了 吃 你座著吃.

Sit down to eat.

(98)

你 這 個 拿 上 你拿著!

Take this.

(99)

(你)買 上 三 本 書 當 來 你 這個 書 人家 給 de

Buy (and bring back) those three books.

Other Structures marked with DE-1 and DE-2

(100)

親 阿姐 經 搖 頭 dze 咧 嫂嫂不住地搖頭. Elder brother’s

wife shook her head incessantly.

(101)

我 □ ( ~ 你 □ ) 好 好 de 想 dze 個 讓我好好(地) 想一下.

Let me think this through.

(102)

啊 你 端 端 de 座 下 好好兒(地)座下.

Sit properly.
(103)
我 总是肚子响 de 喊.
I EXCL totally belly sound DE IMPF
I was so hungry my stomach growled.

(104)
大锅里的水咕噜咕噜 de 滚了 大锅的水咕噜咕噜地冒白气.
big.pot-in POSS water rolling EXT boil PERF
The water in the pot came to a rolling boil.

(105)
这 个 孩子 大 嘴 大 嘴 de 吃 dze 喂
this CL kid big mouth big mouth EXT eat DUR IMPF
The child ate in gulps.

(106)
一个一个的弄掉啊 这个弄掉的话 一个話
one CL one CL DE make rid EXCL this-CL make rid COND one CL talk
Get rid of them one by one.

(107)
你 切 dze 一片一片 de 切 下 一 塊 一 塊 地 切.
you cut DUR one slice one slice EXT cut RC
Cut them in pieces.

(108)
一天 坐 dze 没 住 dze 我们一天到晚不停地做.
one CL seat DUR one stay EXCL one CL make rid COND one CL talk
We worked incessantly the whole day.

(109)
刚 下雨 外头朝得很朝得湿湿的
just descend rain outside very wet EXT wet EXT damp damp NOM
It just rained and it’s all wet outside.

(110)
萝 萝 凝得硬 邦 邦 的 萝 萝 凝到硬邦邦的.
turnip freeze EXT hard club club NOM
The turnip was frozen stiff.
Nominalized and Attributive Structures

(111)
我 要 買 定 好 的 剛 新 式 貨 我要買最新式的。
ŋǩ₄₁aajə₂₄maį₂₄di xeus₃₅di liə₂₄–giə₅₃ŋi₁₃xu₅₃ I want buy set good EXT IMP new form goods

(112)
後 頭 的 人 要 門 鎖 上 後走的鎖門。
xeus₄₅⁴heu də zən₁₄jao₅₃– mə₂₄gu₄₄sə₃ The last out lock the door.

(113)
他 最 害 怕 了 個 你 他最怕的是你。
ta₁₃zui₅₅xei₅₅⁴⁴liə₅₃gəni₃₅ You’re the one he fears most.

(114)
這個 事 件 是 啊 一 個 的 這些東西是誰的?
dz₅₅⁴gəduən₁₃⁴₁ sə₃₅₄₂₄–za₅₃⁰xe₅₅⁴dəx₅₅¹ You’re the one he fears most.

(115)
他 覺 dze 覺得 昨個 的 得好 他覺得昨天的好。
t₅₄a₁₃ţye₅₅⁴dʒə₅₅⁴₁duz₅₃⁴₁⁴xe₅₅⁴dəx₅₅¹ He felt yesterday’s was better.

(116)
老王 他 最 最 喜歡 這個 畜牲 畜牲 啊 貓 啊
t₅₄a₁₃tna zue₄₁⁴zue₄₁⁴səu₅₃₄ dzəg₄₄–”tʂ₅₄⁴⁴ȵi₄₃⁴₃ “tʂ₅₄⁴⁴ȵi₄₃⁴₃ a a Old Wang he most most like this-CL dom.animal dom.animal EXCL cat EXCL

狗 啊 de 這 就 啊 畜牲 了 畜牲 愛 de 很
g₅₁₄a dz₅₄dʒə sə₄₁ a “tʂ₅₄⁴⁴ȵi₄₃⁴₃ “tʂ₅₄⁴⁴ȵi₄₃⁴₃ ηe₂₄ di xe  --
dog EXCL DE this so EXCL animal PERF animal love EXT very

這個 畜牲 貓 了 狗 了 兔 了 一 口 有
dz₅₅⁴gə “tʂ₅₄⁴⁴ȵi₄₃⁴₃ – μci₅₄li₃₄₂₄₄ gə₅₄li₅₄₁li₅₄₁ – t₄₁⁴⁴dʒə₅₅₄₁₃g₅₁₄ să₄₃₄₁₄je₅₁₄ this CL animal cat PERF dog PERF rabbit PERF all have

老王很喜歡動物，茂哇狗哇兔的，都有。
Old Wang really likes animals: he has cats, dogs, and rabbits.

(117)
我 買 了 個 大 的 我買了個大的。
ŋǩ₅₃mais₃₄liəgəta₅₅dʒi₄₁ I bought a big one.

I  buy  PERF  CL  big  NOM
快把外頭晾的衣服收回來。
Quick, bring in the clothes drying outside.

平正順直的一塊木頭, 你怎劈些燒了?
Such a nice straight piece of wood, why did you split it for firewood?

You go ask him to tell Lao Wang about that. 你去請他告訴老王那件事.
Note the elided object in the following sentence: \[a:\mathrm{ʒi}^{14}\mathrm{gɤ}^0\] ‘which (person)’. Also note the sentential particle [sa] “啥” used as a tag question (“..., or what?”) to elicit a listener response:

(123)

Whom should we send to take care of this? 派誰辦這件事這呢?

IV. Concluding Remarks

In presenting these data, I have included only an outline of the major features of Xúnhuà Chinese. Many elements await detailed examination; a particularly useful avenue of inquiry would be a comparison of Xúnhuà syntactic structures with those of Amdo Tibetan and other Amdo Chinese dialects. As for the Xúnhuà pronominal system, it would be extremely fruitful to include data from more of the region’s Chinese dialects. My aim here has been primarily to get these data out, and secondarily to introduce to a wider audience one of the most linguistically exciting regions the world.

Based on its location midway between Xīnīng and Línxià, one might assume that Xúnhuà Chinese is a transitional vernacular, a mixture of Xīnīng and Línxià (Hézhōu) Chinese. Yet the Yellow River defines a major isogloss between the Xúnhuà vernacular and Chinese varieties to the north, including Huàlóng and Xīnīng. In essence, Xúnhuà Chinese morphosyntax is nearly identical to the Línxià dialect. Xúnhuà phonology is similar to that of Línxià, but also possesses features, such as sentence intonation, differing from both Línxià and Xīnīng.

As for the \textit{Huí}-ness (Chinese Muslim-ness) of this corpus: We have identified a few features that allegedly are rare or absent in the speech of Hàn Chinese speakers: some noun affixes and a set of lexical items related to Islam. But I have suggested that (except for Islamic vocabulary) these differences are tied to education and native-speaker status rather than ethnoreligious background. Ultimately, the differences between Huí and Hàn Chinese vernaculars are few indeed.
References


