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Hakka Chinese is also known in China as Kejia dialect. The present study is based on phonetic data collected from native speakers of Hakka Chinese, male and female, aged between 18 and 22, during our field trips to Hakka-speaking Meixian County in the northeastern part of Guangdong Province in southeastern China in 2007. The speakers have lived all their life in Meijiang District of the county, speaking Meijiang variety which is considered representative of Meixian Hakka. The style of speech illustrated here is that typical of the educated younger generation and the recording is that of a 22-year-old male college student.

Consonants

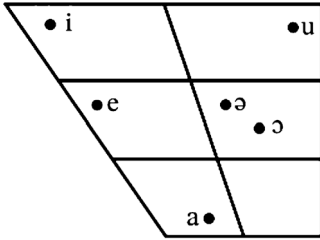
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental/ alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Labial-velar	Glottal
Plosive	p p ^h		t t ^h	c c ^h	k k ^h	k ^w k ^{wh}	
Affricate			ts ts ^h				
Nasal	m		n	ɲ	ŋ		
Fricative		f	s	ç			h
Approximant		v		j			
Lateral approximant			l				

p	pa+	‘father’	t	ta\	‘to hit’	c	cau\	‘to call’	k	ka+	‘home’
p ^h	p ^h a\	‘to crawl’	t ^h	t ^h a+	‘he/she’	c ^h	c ^h o\	‘tomato’	k ^h	k ^h a\	‘to block’
m	ma+	‘mother’	n	na+	‘to take’	ɲ	ɲau\	‘urine’	k ^w	k ^w a+	‘melon’
f	fa+	‘flower’	s	sa+	‘sand’	ç	çi+	‘to hope’	k ^{wh}	k ^{wh} a+	‘to boast’
v	va+	‘frog’	ts	t ^h sa+	‘residue’	j	ja\	‘coconut’	ŋ	ŋa\	‘tooth’
			ts ^h	ts ^h a+	‘fork’				h	ha\	‘down’
			l	la+	‘to pull’						

Syllabic consonants

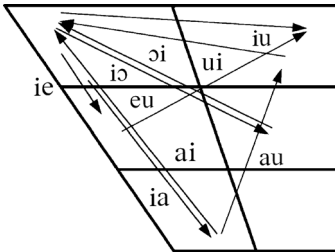
ɿ	sɿ+	‘teacher’
m̩	m̩\	‘not’
n̩	n̩\	‘fish’

Vowels



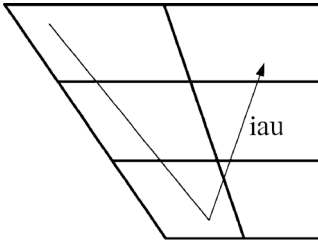
i	siɰ 'west'	simɰ 'heart'	sinɰ 'new'		sipɰ 'to collect'	sitɰ 'excuse'	
e	seɰ 'to wash'	semɰ 'forest'	senɰ 'star'		sepɰ 'garbage'	setɰ 'color'	
a	saɰ 'sand'	samɰ 'clothes'	sanɰ 'hill'	saŋɰ 'sound'	sapɰ 'to involve'	satɰ 'tongue'	sakɰ 'stone'
ɔ	sɔɰ 'shuttle'		sɔnɰ 'sour'	sɔŋɰ 'trade'		sɔtɰ 'to brush'	sɔkɰ 'rope'
u	suɰ 'book'		sunɰ 'grandson'	suŋɰ 'double'		sutɰ 'art'	sukɰ 'cooked'
ə		səmɰ '(a surname)'	sənɰ 'body'		səpɰ 'ten'	sətɰ 'to eat'	

Diphthongs



ai	saiɰ 'basking'					
ia	siaɰ 'some'	tsiamɰ 'sharp'		siaŋɰ 'fishy'	tsiapɰ 'to receive'	siakɰ 'tin'
au	sauɰ 'to burn'					
eu	seuɰ 'skinny'					
ɔi	sɔiɰ 'not nice'					
iɔ				sioŋɰ 'suitcase'		sioɰkɰ 'to whittle'
ui	suiɰ 'though'					
iu	siuɰ 'to repair'			siuŋɰ 'to worship'		siukɰ 'to lodge'
ie			sienɰ 'before'		sietɰ 'snow'	

Triphthong



iau | siau-1 'to rid'

Tones (citation form)

⌈ (high level)		it⌈ 'wing'
┆ (mid level)	i┆ 'clothes'	
↘ (high falling)	i↘ 'idea'	
↘ (mid falling)	i↘ 'rain'	it↘ 'benefit'
┆ (low level)	i┆ 'aunt'	

Conventions

Consonants, syllabic consonants, vowels, diphthongs and triphthong

Syllable-initial [t^h] are apico-laminal denti-alveolar; syllable-initial [s] is laminal alveolar; syllable-initial [ts ts^h] are laminal alveolar or laminal denti-alveolar; syllable-initial [c c^h ɲ] are lamino-anterdorsal alveolo-prepalatal or anterdorsal postalveolo-palatal; and [ç] is laminal prepalatal or anterdorsal palatal. All consonants occur in syllable-initial position, and only unreleased [p t k], i.e. [p[̚] t[̚] k[̚]], and [m n ŋ] occur in syllable-final position.

Syllabic alveolar approximant [ɹ]¹ is preceded only and obligatorily by homorganic [s ts ts^h], and syllabic nasals [m] and [ŋ] occur in isolation.

Vowels² [i a e ɔ u] occur in open and closed syllables; and [ə] occurs only in closed syllables. [a] occurs before [p t k m n ŋ]; [i e ə] only before [p t m n]; and [ɔ u] only before [t k n ŋ]. [i u] are about cardinal in open syllables; [u] before [k ŋ] is slightly mid-centralized; [e] = [ɛ]; [a] = [ä]; and [ɔ] = [ɔ̃].

Diphthongs [ai au ui ɔi eu] occur only in open syllables; [ia iu] in open and closed syllables; and [ie iɔ] only in closed syllables. In closed syllables, [ia] occurs before [p k m ŋ]; [iu iɔ] before [k ŋ]; and [ie] before [t n]. [ia] = [iä]; [ai] = [äi]; [ie] = [iɛ]; [au] = [äũ]; [eu] = [ɛu]; [ui] = [üi]; [iɔ] = [iɔ̃]; and [ɔi] = [ɔ̃i].

Triphthong [iau] occurs only in open syllables and is preceded by a large majority of the consonants, including a zero consonant. [iau] = [iäũ].

Tones

Citation tone [⌈] occurs only on checked syllables. Citation tones [↘┆] occur on open syllables and closed syllables with a nasal ending. [↘] occurs on all syllable types, and when occurring

¹ The syllabic alveolar approximant [ɹ] which is prevalent in many Chinese dialects is referred to as the apical vowel by Chinese dialectologists, and the non-IPA symbol [ɹ] (Pullum & Ladusaw 1996) in place of [ɹ] is widely used in China.

² In the recorded speech in this Illustration, there is a weak frication on vowel [i] when not preceded by a consonant.

on checked syllables, it is realized as mid to low-mid falling. On compounds, before [ɿ ʌ ʏ], [ɿ] → [ɿ̌] and [ʏ] → [ʏ̌]; and before [ɿ̌], [ʏ̌] → [ɿ̌]. Citation tones [ɿ̌ ɿ̌ ɿ̌ ɿ̌] do not undergo tone sandhi before [ɿ̌] or [ɿ̌]. [ɿ̌ ɿ̌ ɿ̌] → [ɿ̌ ɿ̌ ɿ̌] and [ʏ̌ ʏ̌ ʏ̌] → [ʏ̌ ʏ̌ ʏ̌] on compounds illustrate simultaneous tone sandhi application to tones on the non-compound-final syllables.

Transcription of recorded passage

The passage recorded and transcribed here is ‘The North Wind and the Sun’.

iuɿ iŋ paiɿ aɿ | petɿ fuŋɿ tʰuŋɿ nitɿ tʰeuɿ həkɿ ɛɿ auɿ manɿ jinɿ kʷɔŋɿ ʊɔŋɿ | auɿ lɔɿ auɿ ʧɿɿ |
 tuɿ mɔɿ makɿ eɿ catɿ kʷɔɿ || auɿ tenɿ auɿ tenɿ | luɿ hɔŋɿ iuɿ tsakɿ jinɿ haŋɿ tenɿ kʷɔŋɿ lɔɿ |
 kiɿ sənɿ hɔŋɿ tsəkɿ tenɿ itɿ chʰanɿ tʰaiŋ lauɿ || kiɿ tenɿ jinɿ tsʰiuɿ ʊaɿ |
 manɿ kʰɔɿ iɿ sienɿ ʊəkɿ kiɿ tʰɔɿ haɿ lauɿ ɛɿ lɔɿ | manɿ tsʰiuɿ kʷɔŋɿ ʊɔŋɿ ||
 petɿ fuŋɿ tsʰiuɿ tsʰinɿ mianɿ kuɿ tsʰiɿ | tuŋɿ heɿ | kiɿ iatɿ tsʰiɿ |
 eɿ tsakɿ jinɿ tsʰiuɿ tsəkɿ lauɿ eɿ emɿ tetɿ iatɿ satɿ || tauɿ miɿ haɿ | petɿ fuŋɿ mɔɿ pʰanɿ fapɿ eɿ |
 tsʰiuɿ tsʰinɿ tetɿ kiɿ eɿ || kʷɔɿ itɿ haɿ | nitɿ tʰeuɿ anɿ latɿ saiɿ haɿ ʧɿɿ |
 eɿ tsakɿ jinɿ tsʰiuɿ tsəkɿ lauɿ eɿ tʰɔɿ haɿ lɔɿ || ɛɿ haɿ | petɿ fuŋɿ tsɿɿ hauɿ sənɿ jinɿ |
 kiɿ tenɿ liɿ tsakɿ | hanɿ heɿ nitɿ tʰeuɿ kʷɔŋɿ ʊɔŋɿ ||

Simplified orthographic version (non-standard vernacular)

有一摆呀，北风同日头亮欸拗瞞人过会，拗来拗去，
 都无脉个结果。拗等拗等，路上有只人行等过来，
 佢身上着等一件大褸。佢丁人就话，
 瞞可以先握佢脱下褸欸来，瞞就过会。
 北风就尽命牯吹，董系，佢越吹，
 欸只人就作褸欸揸得越煞。到尾下，北风无办法欸，
 就尽得佢欸。过一下，日头俺辣晒下去，
 欸只人就作褸欸脱下来。欸下，北风只好承认，
 佢丁两只，还系日头过会。

Traditional orthographic version (non-standard vernacular)

有一擺呀，北風同日頭亮欸拗瞞人過會，拗來拗去，
 都無脈個結果。拗等拗等，路上有隻人行等過來，
 佢身上着等一件大褸。佢丁人就話，
 瞞可以先握佢脫下褸欸來，瞞就過會。
 北風就盡命牯吹，董係，佢越吹，
 欸隻人就作褸欸揸得越煞。到尾下，北風無辦法欸，
 就盡得佢欸。過一下，日頭俺辣晒下去，
 欸隻人就作褸欸脫下來。欸下，北風只好承認，
 佢丁兩隻，還係日頭過會。

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