

## The Internal Variations and Formation Reasons of Ningdu Hakka Dialect

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**Abstract:** Ningdu is a Hakka-inhabited county in Jiangxi Province. Its dialect is also viewed as an important portion of Hakka Dialect. Although the dialect used by all of the local Ningdu residents may be classified as the same category, there are internal variations within Ningdu dialect and some scholars analyzed it into three sub dialects, namely “Shangsanxiang” “Xiasanxiang” and “Suburban area”. For the purpose of better realizing the internal variations and formation of it, we conducted a comprehensive survey among dozens of towns in Ningdu once again recently. On the basis of our investigation, it shows that the internal variations of Ningdu dialect are found on not only the consonants and vowels but also the tones. These discrepancies have complete regularity except for less exceptions. As a consequence, if we could recognize the dialectal variations and the sound correspondences with the standard language, it would be an effective way to resolve the practical problems such as communication and education.

### 1. The Introduction

Ningdu County of the Ganzhou City is located in the southeast of Jiangxi Province, bordering Shicheng and Guangchang counties in the east, Ruijin and Yudu counties in the south, Xingguo and Yongfeng counties in the west, and Le'an, Yihuang and Nanfeng counties in the north, covering an area of 4053 square kilometers.[1]

Ningdu County governs Zhuzuo, Duifang, Guhou, Tianbu, Huitong, Zhantian, Anfu, Dongshao, Xiaotian, Diaofeng, Dagou, Caijiang(The places are the townships), Meijiang, Qingtang, Changsheng, Huangpi, Gucun, Laicun, Shishang, Dongshanba, Luokou, Xiaobu, Huangshi,

Tiantou (The above towns) 24 townships, In total 299 administrative villages. The resident population is about 916 thousand(2017), and the county government offices are stationed in Meijiang Town.

Ningdu is a pure Hakkas county, its dialect belongs to the Hakka. Although the local people speak the same dialect, there are some regional differences in the local pronunciation. The Records of Ningdu County and other documents divide Ningdu into three different dialect sections: "Shangsanxiang" "Xiasanxiang" and "Suburban area",[1] which also indicates the differences of the dialect in phonetic regions.

For the Ningdu dialect, the previous investigations were limited to Meijiang, Shishang, Tiantou and Zhantian, and no one had ever made a systematic and comprehensive investigation and investigated their differences. This time, based on the "Dialect Survey Character List",[2]we spent nearly four months (June to September 2021) surveying dozens of townships across the county and deep into the remote mountains in the north. The results show that there are some regional differences in Ningdu dialect, which are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

First, Initials: The differences between Jing group and Jian Xiao groups,and differences in pronunciation of Zhi Zhang groups, Rimu, Yimu and Ying group.

Second, Finals: The differences of pronunciation of the Guo Liu Xian Shen and Shan shes, and the differences of Xie Zhi shes and Zeng Geng shes whether mixed pronounce.

Third, Tones: The differences of voiceless initial tones between Pingsheng and Qusheng.

## 2. The Regional Differences in Dialect Initials

### 2.1. The Differences of the Jing Group and Jian Xiao Groups whether Mixed Pronounce

In Hakka, there are places where the sound of Jing group is read as the same Duan group, and Jing group affricate is read as the fricative,[ʃ]while Ningdu Jing group and Jian Xiao groups are much more complex.

In the Ningdu dialect,whether Jing group and Jian Xiao groups Initials are divided speaking before today's speech with a small opening. In other words, it is more complicated whether the apical lingual voices sou can be divided.This paper selects five pairs of pronunciations, namely "Jing(精)-Jing(经), Jie(节)-Jie(结), Qiu(秋)-Qiu(丘), Xiu(修)-Xiu(休), Jiu(酒)-Jiu(九)", to investigate the regional differences of Ningdu dialect pronunciation. Examining the results, there are at least two situations:

(1)The pronunciations are exactly the same. Jing[teɪŋ<sup>324</sup>]= Jing[teɪŋ<sup>324</sup>], Jie[teɪet<sup>2</sup>]= Jie[teɪet<sup>2</sup>], Qiu[te<sup>h</sup>iəu<sup>324</sup>]= Qiu[te<sup>h</sup>iəu<sup>324</sup>], Xiu[ɕiəu<sup>324</sup>]= Xiu[ɕiəu<sup>324</sup>], Jiu[teɪəu<sup>213</sup>]=Jiu[teɪəu<sup>213</sup>]. This is mainly distributed in the north of Dagu, Diaofeng, Dongshanba, Luoko, Dongshao and Xiaotian six townships, their pronunciations are consistent, regardless of the apical or lingual voice.

(2)The pronunciations are completely different. There are two situations:①Jing[teɪŋ<sup>42</sup>]≠Jing[tsaŋ<sup>42</sup>], Jie[teɪet<sup>2</sup>]≠Jie[tsat<sup>2</sup>], Qiu[te<sup>h</sup>iəu<sup>42</sup>]≠Qiu[səu<sup>42</sup>], Xiu[səu<sup>42</sup>]≠Xiu[ɕiəu<sup>42</sup>], Jiu[teɪəu<sup>213</sup>]≠Jiu[tsəu<sup>213</sup>], distributed in Meijiang, Zhuzuo, Huitong three townships; ②Jing[teɪŋ<sup>42</sup>]≠Jing[tsaŋ<sup>42</sup>], Jie[teɪet<sup>2</sup>]≠Jie[tsat<sup>2</sup>], Qiu[te<sup>h</sup>iəu<sup>42</sup>]≠Qiu[ɕəu<sup>42</sup>], Xiu[ɕiəu<sup>42</sup>]≠Xiu[ɕəu<sup>42</sup>], Jiu[teɪəu<sup>213</sup>]≠Jiu[tsəu<sup>213</sup>], Distributed in the southwest Tiantou, Huangshi, Duifang, Changsheng townships and in the north-southwest Qingtang town. The difference between the two is that the former does not have the blade-palatals, while the latter does. The pronunciations of these groups words are all different. That is to say, the Jing group and Jian, xiao groups initials today also are divided into apical and lingual voices before the speech with a small opening.

### 2.2. The Pronunciation Differences of the Zhi and Zhang Groups

In Mei country dialect, Zhi Zhuang Zhang Groups have completely merged into ts, tsh, s. By comparing Mei country dialect with Taiwan Hakka dialect,Wen Changyan found that Mei country dialect had already merged with Zhi Zhuang Zhang Groups as early as the middle of the Qing Dynasty.[4]

In the mandarin, the initials of the Zhi Zhang groups read mostly[tʂ] [tʂ<sup>h</sup>] [ʂ]. In comparison,the pronunciation of Zhi Zhang groups in Ningdu dialect is much more complicated, and its corresponding rule is [t]-[t<sup>h</sup>], [ʂ]-[ʂ<sup>h</sup>], [tʂ]-[tʂ<sup>h</sup>],which differences are greatest today.

In most townships of the county north, they read Zhi Zhang groups into the altoes of tongue tip [t][t<sup>h</sup>] before Hongyin. That is to say, there is two into one situation in both Duan and Zhi groups, which is also an example illustration of "No the sound on the tongue in ancient times", such as Xiao Tian's "Zhang[təŋ<sup>324</sup>], Chong[t<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>212</sup>]", Xiaobu's "Zhu[tu<sup>213</sup>], Che[t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>324</sup>]" ; In the places of Huangshi, Tiantou, Zhi and Zhang groups of HongYin have the blade-palatals[tʂ] [tʂ<sup>h</sup>], such as "Zhao[tʂau<sup>42</sup>], Zhu[tʂuk<sup>2</sup>], Chun[tʂ<sup>h</sup>ən<sup>42</sup>], Chang[tʂ<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>42</sup>]" ; Around places of the county town more turn into the coronals[ʂ] [ʂ<sup>h</sup>], such as the Meijiang "Zhang[təŋ<sup>42</sup>], Zhu[t<sup>h</sup>u<sup>42</sup>]",the Zhuzuo "Chong[t<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>24</sup>], Che[t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>42</sup>]" .

From the perspective of geographical distribution, the phenomenon that the Zhi and Zhang groups read the altoes of tongue tip[t][t<sup>h</sup>] is concentrated in Dongshao, Luokou, Shishang and other ten townships in the county north;Several of the townships in southwest read the blade-palatals[tʂ] [tʂ<sup>h</sup>]; The nearest two townships-Zhuzuo, Huitong in county town and the southeast Tianbu, Guhou and Gucun are no difference in pronunciation with county town,and they also read the coronals[ʂ][ʂ<sup>h</sup>]. Even so, there is no vowel finals[ɿ] to match with the coronals[ʂ][ʂ<sup>h</sup>],it is consistent with the research of the scholar that "a few dialect points no have the coronal vowel finals".[5]It can be seen that some towns in the north such as the Xiaotian, Dongshao, Luokou, Xiaobu, Dagu and other places retain more ancient sounds; In contrast, the pronunciations of the county town and some townships in the south are not as old as that of the towns in the north.

The pronunciation of the palatal affricates [tʃ][tʃʰ] is mainly the north Xiaotian, Dongshao, Luokou, Xiaobu, Dagu, Huangpi, Caijiang, Diaofeng and Dongshanba nine townships.

### 2.3. The Pronunciation Differences of the Ri mu

The modern pronunciation of the Ri mu is evolved into [z], and in Ningdu dialect mostly there are [n] [l] [ŋ], and the Ni mu, Lai mu confluence, such as "Rang[nɔŋ<sup>42</sup>], Rou[ləu<sup>35</sup>], Re (ŋiɛt<sup>5</sup>)". More special cases are the Ling initial [ø] and the lip teeth voiced fricative [v].

The geographical distribution shows that in the whole Ningdu region the word "Run" has two pronunciations: [ø][v]. Two thirds of the townships pronounce Ling initial [ø], such as Luokou "[in<sup>53</sup>]" and Meijiang "[in<sup>44</sup>]", which are distributed from the north to the south. The southwest Qingtang, Laicun, Huangshi, Tiantou, Duifang and Changsheng six townships and the northwest Caijiang and Huangpi two townships pronounce the lip-teeth voiced fricative [v], such as Tiantou for "[vin<sup>44</sup>]" and Huangpi "[vin<sup>53</sup>]".

### 2.4. The Pronunciation Differences of the Ying Group

In the Mandarin, Ying group characters are generally pronounced as the Ling initial [ø], while Ningdu region has two pronunciations: [ø] and [v]. In terms of geographical distribution, the north of the county town and the two townships of surrounding area read initial [ø], such as Xiaotian, Dongshao, Huangpi, Xiaobu, Huitong and other townships, for example "Yun[in<sup>24</sup>]" and "Yuan[iɛn<sup>24</sup>]" ; In the southern part, a few townships read [v], such as Laicun, Duifang, Gucun read "yuan[viɛn<sup>24</sup>], yuan[viɛn<sup>24</sup>]" and so on.

In Ningdu dialect, the initials of Zhi and Zhang groups have the most obvious differences, and Ri mu, Yi mu and Ying group also have some differences.

## 3. The Regional Differences in Dialect Consonants

### 3.1. The Pronunciation Differences of the Guo She

Ningdu townships commonly read the Guo she finals [O], such as "He[xo<sup>24</sup>], Huo[fo<sup>213</sup>], E[ŋo<sup>53</sup>]" . There are exceptions [a] and [ai], which are mixed reading with Xie she, such as "Na[na<sup>24</sup>], A[A<sup>42</sup>]" . From the examination of the "Wo" dialect sound, we can know whether there is a phenomenon of mixed reading both Guo she and Xie she. From the geographical distribution, the whole Ningdu area has this a situation that Guo and Xie shes mixed. The distribution of [ai] is very wide, basically such pronunciation, such as "Wo" Luokou[ŋai<sup>324</sup>], Meijiang[ŋai<sup>42</sup>]; While Xiaotian, Dongshao and Laicun read [a], such as Xiaotian's "Wo"[ŋa<sup>324</sup>] and Laicun[ŋa<sup>24</sup>], but the distribution is scattered, and not in pieces.

### 3.2. The Differences of the First-class Tan and Tan Rhymes in the Xian She whether Mixed Pronounce

In Ningdu dialect, there is no separate rhyme in the zhi er en first-class Tan and Tan rhymes of the Xian She. That is to say, the Tan and Tan rhymes are mixed reading, such as "Gan [kuən<sup>213</sup>]=Gan[kuən<sup>213</sup>]" or "Gan(感)[kəm<sup>213</sup>]=Gan(敢)[kəm<sup>213</sup>]" . But in Ningdu area, there are two pronunciations, "Gan" and "Gan" are [əm][uən] respectively. The first pronunciation "[kəm<sup>213</sup>]" is concentrated distribution in the northwest Dagu, Xiaobu areas as well as the central Zhantian township; The second pronunciation "[kuən<sup>213</sup>]" is distributed in the north Xiaotian, Dongshao and Luokou three townships, in the central Shishang and the south Huitong, Meijiang, Zhuzuo, Qingtang, Laicun, Tiantou, Huangshi, Duifang, Changsheng, Gucun, Guhou, Tianbu townships etc. In general, this phenomenon has two kinds of pronunciation in the northern region, and the distribution regularity is not very strong; While the south is a kind of pronunciation, which is piece distribution, high consistency, and regularity is also very strong .

### 3.3. The Pronunciation Differences of the uan Third-class the Qun mu Character in the Shan She

"Quan" is the uan third-class the Qun mu character in the Shan She, there are two pronunciations[iɛn][an] in the Ningdu region. The Ningdu region is divided into three pieces by the two pronunciations: The first rhyme[iɛn] is distributed in the north Caijiang, Huangpi, Diaofeng, Luokou, Dongshanba, Dagu, Xiaobu, Dongshao, Xiaotian and other townships; The second rhyme[an] is distributed in the central Anfu, Shishang, Zhantian and southwest Qingtang, Laicun, Tiantou, Huangshi, Duifang, Changsheng and other townships; The areas of southeast also are first rhyme[iɛn], such as Tianbu, Gucun, Guhou and so on.

#### **4. The Regional Differences in Dialect Voice Tones**

The Hakka dialect has a common feature, such as the pronunciation with the media[-u-],[6]the tone has formed a certain geographical distribution patterns,[7]and the flow of speech rhythms also have the characteristics of meter rhythm.[8]Nevertheless, there are some regional differences within it. Such as the tone pitches of Ningdu dialect differs greatly in regional distribution even though the tone categories are the same within the region.

There are 7 tones in Ningdu dialect, namely Yin ping, Yang ping, Shang sheng, Yin qu, Yang qu, Yin ru, Yang ru. The rules are: The ancient Ping sheng now is divided into Yin ping and Yang Ping according to the Voiceless and Voiced consonants; The ancient Voiceless Shang and Part expiratorial Voiced Shang now have turned into Shang sheng; The Shang shengs of a few expiratorial voiced and fully voiced now are Yin ping; According to Voiceless and Voiced consonants, the ancient Qu sheng now is divided into Yin qu and Yang qu and the ancient Ru sheng now is Yin ru and Yang ru. In general, there is no difference in the tone categories, but mainly in the tone pitch, the most important differences now are the Voiceless initials of ancient both Ping and Qu shengs.

##### **4.1. The Pronunciation Differences of the Ancient Ping sheng Voiceless Initials**

In Ningdu dialect, the ancient Ping sheng of Voiceless initial has changed to Yinping, and the tone type is consistent. However, the tone pitches of the whole Ningdu area are quite different. From the perspective of geographical distribution, there are two kinds of tone pitch in the area: The first is the circumlocution tone [324], which first falls and then rises, mainly distributed in the north Xiaotian, Dongshao, Luokou, Dagu, Xiaobu, Huangpi, Caijiang, Diaofeng and Dongshanba. The middle east Zhantian and the southeast Tianbu, Gucun and Guhou with flat intonation and little fluctuation; The second is falling intonation[42], mainly distributed in Huitong and Zhuzuo of around the county town and the north Anfu, Shishang as well as the southwest townships such as Qingtang, Laicun, Huangshi, Tiantou, Changsheng and Duifang. Their intonations fluctuate obviously, clean and neat.

##### **4.2. The Pronunciation Differences of the Ancient Qu sheng Voiceless Initials**

In Ningdu dialect, the ancient Qu sheng of Voiceless initial has changed to Yin qu, and the tone type is the same, but the differences in tone pitch are obvious. In the whole Ningdu region, there are two types of tone pitches in the ancient Voiceless initial characters: The first is flat tone [44], which is distributed in the north nine townships, such as Diaofeng, Luokou, Dongshao and Xiaotian; The second is falling tone [31], which was distributed in the central Anfu, Shishang, Zhantian and the county town surrounding Huitong, Zhuzuo as well as the southern townships such as Qingtang, Laicun, Tiantou, Huangshi, Duifang, Changsheng, Gucun, Guhou and Tianbu. The start of falling tone here is slightly lower, and the change of rising and falling tones also is less obvious.

#### **5. The Causes of Dialect Regional Differences**

What are the reasons for the differences of Hakka dialects in Ningdu? We think that the formation of dialect differences is restricted by the law of language development, but there are also important factors such as administrative division, terrain landform, economic transportation, culture education.

The first, the influence of administrative division. The administrative division is one of the important factors in the affecting the regional distribution of dialect, because "the regional distribution of each dialect has a very close relationship with the historical district, and the district has laid the foundation of each dialect to a certain extent." [9] "The historical administrative divisions in different times not only create the commonality of the same regional dialect, but also create the individuality of different regional dialects within they." [10] According to literature inspection, Ningdu in Ming Dynasty had administrative divisions such as township, Li, Du and Tu. In Qing Dynasty, the Ming Dynasty system was adopted, but the county was changed into the state and a village-level district was added. [1] The administrative divisions at that time were basically consistent with the dialect divisions of today. Generally speaking, the residents of the same district communicate with each other a lot and communicate frequently with the neighboring districts, therefore there is no doubt that their customs and daily terms are very consistent. As Mr. Cao Zhiyun said:

"People for their own regional culture will produce a intangible sense of belonging, which performance on language is a kind of identification of the mother tongue, and this kind of attribution tendency makes them identify with the language of the same administrative division in terms of language use, thus trying to maintain their own language habits and characteristics, hence the so-called dialect area can be maintained for a long time and tenaciously." [11]

The second, the impact of terrain landform. For example, the barrier of mountains and rivers, the change of terrain landform, especially in the case of underdeveloped transportation, terrain landform and other factors play very important role in the distribution of dialects. Generally speaking, the more remote of mountains and the more difficult of Places to go out, the less communication between people and the outside world, therefore the more ancient that dialect pronunciation is. For example, the north of Ningdu is such that it still retains many ancient voices.

The third, the impact of economic development. Whether the economy of a region is developed or not, which is undoubtedly a major factor affecting the differences of dialect. The more developed the economy, the more people interact, so the more language contact with the outside world. For example, as the political, economic and cultural center of Ningdu, Meijiang town plays a radiating role to the surrounding towns, so Meijiang dialect also is dominant; And some towns in the north, because of their remote, many mountains and inconvenient, their dialects are different from the south. Therefore, "Generally speaking, the geographical distribution characteristics of dialect are: The dispersion from a central location to surrounding areas; At the same time, the dialects of the surrounding areas converge to the central location. The effects of dispersion and centripetal create dialect areas." [12]

The fourth, the influence of culture education. The development of culture education can undoubtedly accelerate the change of dialect. Since the 1950s, due to the state promotes the Putonghua and compulsory education, dialects have been weakened to some extent. With the development of various media, television, radio, Internet and so on are playing an increasingly important role in people's life. As a result, more and more people cannot speak a native dialect. According to a survey, the more developed the culture education, the greater impact on the dialect, and the lower purity of the dialect. For example, Meijiang Town is the seat of Ningdu County, rich in educational resources, the loss of dialect is serious; However, educations in the north and the west are relatively backward, especially in some remote mountainous areas where faculties are weak, and quite a few teachers of the places even teach in the dialect, which naturally preserve a better original ecological dialects.

## 6. Conclusion

The reasons for the formation of the internal differences of a dialect are various and very complex, which not only restrict the development of language itself, but also have the interaction of many social factors. Therefore, to investigate the formation of the internal differences of the dialect, we should not only analyze the internal factors themselves, but also study the complex external

causes of the society. Only through the phenomenon of things to see the essence, any complex problem can be easily solved. As for Ningdu, although the promotion of Putonghua and the development of urbanization and other factors have a certain impact on the intergenerational inheritance of local dialect, on the whole, people still are a positive tendency in the use, choice and attitude of Hakka-speaking,[13]which shows that people's identification with their language and culture is their emotional bond. As a result, if we can find out the regional differences, and the corresponding relationship or rules with the common language, we can solve the practical problems of people's communication and even school teaching.

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