

## Re: Origin of Chinese spoken languages

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**From:** Dylan Sung (*dylanwhs.tsksktsk\_at\_pacific.net.hk*)

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Date: Mon, 1 Nov 2004 21:20:40 -0000

"SJ" <aniso\_bipolar@yahoo.com> wrote in message  
news:Xns9594342B32F6donotsendspamnet@131.118.254.130...  
> "Dylan Sung" <dylanwhs.tsksktsk@pacific.net.hk> wrote in  
> news:2um9oiF2bb96pU1@uni-berlin.de:  
>> Show us how the inflections of Old Chinese give rise to difference in  
>> vocabulary, if there are many terms for butterfly, how do they arise?  
>> You said spoken Chinese language generated and evolved from writing  
>> systems. If dialectal terms never really got written down, since the  
>> trend was to imitate the literary language, how do spoken languages  
>> evolve new vocabulary. If the inflections are important to your  
>> demonstration, give us a word, and show how it changes to become  
>> several different distinct words in different Chinese languages.  
>  
> You can invent any word in any spoken and written languages. Different  
> people can invent different words. The unique feature of Chinese  
> languages is that the rule of inventing a new word has been limited by  
> Chinese Hanja characters, not by the sound.

New characters have always been coined. The following list of character dictionaries show the rise in numbers of characters over the centuries.

3000 (c. 210 BC) Li Si's XiaoZhuan  
5340 (5 AD) Xuan CuanPian  
9353 (121 AD) Xu Shen's Shuowen Jiezi  
12824 (circa 4th Century AD) ZiLin  
16817 (543) YuPian  
26000+ (1008 AD) Guangyun  
30000 (1037 AD) Jiyun  
33179 (1615 AD) ZiHui  
47035 (1716 AD) KangXi ZiDian  
56000 (1986) Hanyu DaZiDian

Chinese spoken language is not confined by existing characters, but can coin character when they are required, once the word in the spoken language drives the need for the invention of a written character.

>  
> Here you should tell a Chinese word from a Chinese character. Although a

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- > *character can denote a concept, usually two-character words denoting*
- > *exactly the same concept have been invented and used as you illustrated*
- > *well in butterfly. The major reason for this is to distinguish homonyms.*
- > *Thus, again confirming my theory that Chinese characters molded Chinese*
- > *spoken languages, in this case Chinese spoken words.*
- >
- >> *Bang sa is Cantonese for butterfly. Yong yap is Hakka Chinese for*
- >> *butterfly. How do these arise if the term in literary Chinese for*
- >> *butterfly is hudie/wudip/fut'iap?*
- >
- > *Synonyms in dialects are always possible.*

I shall now reveal why you have been wrong about hu in hudie. The original character lacked the six stroke radical for 'insect', that is the left side radical. The character according to Kangxi Zidian (1716 AD) says that the original character used was the characters composed of the characters resembling gu (old) and simplified radical for meat which looks like yue (moon). The character is pronounced hu, and does not mean butterfly.

&#32993;

If the character you quote &#34676; did exist in the past, it would have appeared in Shuowen Jiezi (121 AD). The fact is, it doesn't. In fact, it does not appear in Guangyun (1008AD), and Kangxi attributes its appearance in ZhengZiTong which was published in 1670. It is a recently coined character, based on the sound of the character hu &#32993;, with an appended 'insect' radical to refer its use as related to insects.

- > *Even in Korea, there can be dozens of variants for each word (dialects).*
- > *Even a poet can invent his own word. For example, the word denoting*
- > *butterfly is 'nabi' in Korean. This word is related with 'Nal-da' (na =*
- > *fly) and bi = denoting a noun. A Korean poet made a verb word 'Na-bil-le-*
- > *ra'. The nuance and meaning of na-bil-le-ra can not be fully grasped even*
- > *for foreigners who mastered Korean. Only native Koreans can feel and*
- > *understand this new word. The nuance is related with the flipping*
- > *movement of a butterfly's wings, particularly emphasizing its delicacy,*
- > *smoothness and rhythm. The poet is said to have stayed in a remote temple*
- > *for several months to invent this and other few words and to complete his*
- > *entire poetry. The original Korean version is at:*
- > *<http://myhome.naver.com/woomi9/poem/cch101.htm>*
- >
- > *And English version is at: <http://myhome.naver.com/woomi9/poem/cch301.htm>*
- >
- > *From the English version, you can not feel the delicate nuance like 'na-*
- > *bil-le-ra'. It's just translation of literal meaning, not nuance.*
- >
- >

So you agree that the character for 'today' in Chinese can possess multiple nuances, as Geoff demonstrated to you.

>>> ³ªÁ ÇÑ±¹ ½Ä'®Ä» ÄÐ°í ÄÖ½Ä Ì'Û.

>>

>> *Forgive my rendering in romanisation, but for that I get*

>>

>> *naneun hangug sinmuneul ilggo issseubnida.*

>>

>> *An explanation of the sentence words would be welcomed. Are there any*

>> *grammatical particles indicating subjects etc. (For example, would that*

>> *literally be translated as "I Korean newspaper read", and what does*

>> *issseubnida function as, and the go at the end of ilgo, how does that*

>> *change the meaning of the word. My dictionary says ilgda for read, but*

>> *it isn't conjugated.)*

>

> *'neun' in na-neun indicates it is the subject (na = I in English).*

> *'eul' in sinmun-eul indicates it is the object (sinmun = newspaper).*

> *isseubnida is a variant of 'issda' (-ing in English, the progressive*

> *form), emphasizing honorifics. Unlike Chinese or English, Korean*

> *language have a complex set of variants denoting degree of*

> *honorifics and abasement. 'ilgda' is just a neutral, standard and*

> *primary form. 'ilgo issda' = I am reading. Innumerable suffixes*

> *are used to indicate honorifics, tense, and other*

> *grammatic functions (as in 'na-bil-le-ra').*

>

> *The Subject is mostly omitted, if it is too obvious in the context*

> *as in "(You) come on" in English.*

>

> *SJ.*

Again, you've ignored the request for a hanja representation that a Korean using only hanja would write for the above sentence. The context of this current conversation arises out of the following statements

Dylan :> Would hanja would fit any spoken

Dylan :> polysyllabic language then?

SJ :>

SJ :> Excellent examples are Korean and Japanese.

Please demonstrate without the use of supporting hangeul for the particles of speech, because I want to ask you about how the subject and object would be demonstrated in the reading of those characters. If Hanzi/hanja is an excellent example of a spoken polysyllabic language fitting the writing in hanja, you ought to be able to demonstrate your idea.

Dyl.