A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF DISTINCTIVE FEATURES AND THEIR
CORRELATIONS IN STANDARD CHINESE

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This paper attempts to find the distinctive features of Stand-
ard Chinese according to the traditional classification in Chinese
phonology, and three DF matrices are given for the SC vowels, con-
sonants and tones. It also proposes an "N-binary" concept, ac-
cording to the dialectic relations between binary and N-ary classi-
fications, and provides a set of phonological correlation patterns
revealing in this way the quantitative changes in SC phonemes.

Subjects

As the DF must be adequate for characterizing important pho-
netic differences between languages, we adopt several extra features
from the traditional taxonomy of Chinese phonology in choosing the
features for SC, i.e., open/closed and spread/protruded for vowels;
aspirated/non-aspirated for consonants, and rising/falling, level/
concave, high/low for tones.

Since a segment in the sequence of speech cannot be repre-
sented merely by two opposite features, and since the allophones
between phonemes are varied almost continuously, we suggest here
three patterns to designate these correlations. In the pattern of
7 vowels, 4 pairs of DF are distributed in a triangular diagram
to designate such quantitative sound changes relevant to the varia-
tions of tongue positioning, jaw-opening and lip-rounding. In con-
sonants, 4 pairs of DF are used to construct a matrix, in which
24 consonants of SC are positioned, to show the quantitative and
qualitative changes. As for the tones of SC, 4 tones are sited
at each corner of a quadrangle to build up a interwoven network
of 16 combinations, in which the allotones of tone sandhi are shown.