

Hilário de Sousa
 ERC project SINOTYPE — École des hautes études en sciences sociales
 hilario@bambooradical.com; hilario.de-sousa@ehess.fr



THE SINITIC LANGUAGES

- Mandarin - 836 million (worldwide)
- Jin (usu. grouped with Mandarin) - 45 million
- Wu - 77 million
- Hui (usu. grouped with Wu) - 3.2 million
- Gan - 31 million
- Xiang - 36 million
- Min (incl. Taiwanese) - 60 million
- Hakka - 34 million (worldwide)
- Yue - 71 million (worldwide)
- Ping (usu. grouped with Yue) - 2 million

There are also other smaller Sinitic varieties which fall outside this ten-group classification:

- The patois (*tǔhuà* 土話) of Southern Húnán (*Xiāngnán Tǔhuà* 湘南土話), Northern Guǎngdōng (*Yuèběi Tǔhuà* 粵北土話) and Eastern Guǎngxī (*Guìdōng Tǔhuà* 桂東土話);
- The Dānzhōu 儋州 dialect in Northeastern Hǎinán (somewhat Yuè-like);
- The Wǎxiāng 瓦鄉 dialect in western Húnán (e.g. Wǔ and Shén 2010, Chappell forthcoming);
- The Sinitic dialect of Blue Dress Míáo people in Southwestern Húnán and neighbouring Northern Guǎngxī (Qīngyī Míáo Rénhuà 青衣苗人話; Lǐ 2004); and
- The Sinitic dialect of the Shē 畲 people (Yóu 2002) (somewhat Hakka-like).

Bái 白 (?), Càijiā 蔡家 (?)...

Huàngshuǐ Mandarin (Xīníng area)

1. 狗 肉 哈 吃了
 dog meat [OBJ] eat PFT
 ‘The dog ate the meat.’ (Dede 2007: 867)¹

Chappell (2012, in press)’s division of the Sinitic languages into four macro-areas (Chappell 2012: 5–6), with my own alterations (due to differences in linguistic criteria used) and simplifications.

- Northern zone:
 Běijīng Mandarin, Northern (Jǐlǔ) Mandarin, Peninsular (Jiāoliáo) Mandarin, Northeastern Mandarin, Northwestern (Lányín) Mandarin, Central (Zhōngyuán) Mandarin (?), and Jin.

¹ Linguistic publications in the Chinese world often have examples with only Chinese characters and no phonological transcription of the characters. In this paper I try to include examples with phonological transcription as much as possible. With no phonological transcriptions, it is not always easy to determine whether a particular Chinese character is used for a morpheme because: a) it is a reflex of the same character in older stages of Chinese; b) it is homophonous with that character but the morphemes etymologically different; or c) they have the same meaning but the morphemes are etymologically different, and they are not even homophonous.

- Transitional zone:
Central (Zhōngyuán) Mandarin (?), Southeastern (Jiānghuái) Mandarin, Southwestern Mandarin, Xiāng, Wǎxiāng, Gàn, and Western Mǐn.
- Southeastern zone:
Mǐn, Wú, Huī.
- Far-Southern zone (≈ Chappell’s “Southern Area”):
Yuè, Píngguà, Hakka, and the Mǐn exclaves in Léizhōu Peninsula and Hǎinán.

ERC Sinotype team members and their contributions:

- Hilary Chappell: Gǔzhāng Wǎxiāng (fieldnotes);
- Wěiróng Chén: Huīān Southern Mǐn (first language and field notes);
- Yùjié Chén: Zhōukǒu Central Mandarin (first language and field notes);
- Xūpíng Lǐ: Yìchūn Gàn (fieldnotes);
Fùyáng Wú (first language);
- Sing Sing Ngai: Shàowǔ Western Mǐn (fieldnotes);
Fúqīng Eastern Mǐn (heritage language);
Standard Cantonese (first language);
- Hilário de Sousa: Náníng Southern Píngguà (fieldnotes),
Standard Cantonese (first language);
- Jiàn Wáng: Jīxī Huī (fieldnotes);
Suīníng Central Mandarin (first language).

4. Word order

Northern Zhuang

SVO order

2. *de gai byaek youhcaiq gai noh*
3SG sell vegetable as:well sell meat
‘S/he sells vegetable and sells meat.’ (Wéi and Qín 2006: 198)

Head noun left of most modifiers

3. *go oij [duz vaiz gou caij laemx henz roen] haenx raek lo*
CL sugar_cane CL buffalo 1SG step fall side road that break FP
‘The sugar cane that my buffalo tremped on the side of the road snapped.’
(Wéi and Qín 2006: 251)

Standard Cantonese

SVO order

4. 佢 賣 菜 又 賣 肉
kʰəy¹³ mai²² tʃʰɔi³³ jɛu²² mai²² jɔk²
3SG sell vegetable as:well sell meat
‘S/he sells vegetable and sells meat.’

Head noun right of modifiers

5. 我 隻 牛 喺 路 邊 踩 𧨧 嗰 碌 蔗 斷 咗
[ŋɔ¹³ tsek³ ŋɛu¹¹ hei²⁵ lou²² pin⁵⁵ tsʰai²⁵ ləm³³] kɔ²⁵ lɔk⁵ tɕɛ³³ tʰyn²⁴-tsɔ²⁵
1SG CL bovine at road side step fall DEM CL cane break-PFV
‘The sugar cane that my buffalo tremped on the side of the road broke.’

This created some extraordinarily rare co-occurrence of word order in the Sinitic language. For instance, the co-occurrence of the VO order and the Relative clause–Noun order is nearly unique to the Sinitic languages (WALS feature 96A). The Sinitic languages are the only VO languages with

obliques predominantly placed in front of verb in WALS (feature 84A). Having the Adjective–Noun word order (feature 81A) for SVO languages (feature 87A) is also very rare in the region.

Area A.

The verb-medial MSEA zone to the south. The prototypical MSEA languages are SVO and more left-headed than the average SVO languages. Included in this zone are the Hmong-Mien, Kra-Dai, Mon-Khmer and Chamic languages;

Utsat (Chamic; strongly Chinese influenced)

6. *ʔa¹¹thai¹¹ se¹¹ phai³³siaŋ¹¹ ho¹¹lien¹¹ ʔa¹¹kai³³ sa³³ ta¹¹ se⁵⁵,*
 1.sister CL very feel:sorry old.man MOD one CL
kian³³ ʔa¹¹kai³³ ni³³ sa³³ ta¹¹ se⁵⁵ ten³² pa³³,
 know old.man this MOD one CL stomach hungry
 ‘The little sister was very sorry for the old man, and knew that the old man was hungry,’
 (Zhèng 1997: 238)
 (*phai³³siaŋ¹¹ ho¹¹lien¹¹* are Chinese loanwords in Chinese word order: 非常可憐.)

Green Hmong (Hmong-Mien)

7. *kuv nyam tug txivneej kws ncaws pob*
 1SG like CL man REL kick ball
hab tug txivneej kws moog rua Fresno
 and CL man REL go to Fresno
 ‘I like the man who plays soccer and the man who went to Fresno.’ (Li 1989: 120)

Area B (and Area A~B).

The verb final Tibeto-Burman zone to the west. These languages are SOV, primarily right-headed but not very strongly right-headed (e.g. Tibetan and Burmese are SOV and have N–Num and N–Adj word order). The Tibeto-Burman languages are verb final, except for the following SVO languages, which, like the Sinitic languages, exhibit interesting mix of VO and OV properties (“Area A~B): the Karen languages, Bái languages, and Mru (Peterson 2005);

Burmese

8. *thu di hsei: thau’ me*
 3 this medicine drink IRR
 ‘He’s going to take this medicine.’ (Myint Soe 1999: 132)
9. *thu. le’ nyi’=pa’ ne. nga. kou la tou. te*
 3GEN hand dirty with 1 OBJ come touch RLS
 ‘(He) touched me with his dirty hands.’ (Myint Soe 1999: 256)

Eastern Kayah Li (Karenic)

10. *phremò méthΛ phrekhū sí nā*
 woman look:see man CL two
 ‘Some women saw two men.’ (Solnit 1997: 181)
11. *ʔa khē təlwá sɔklā né sɔkhō*
 3 paddle pass boat PREP snag
 ‘He paddled the boat past the snag (fallen log).’ (Solnit 1997: 159)

Area C.

The verb final North Asia zone to the north. These languages are SOV and strongly right-headed. In and near China are the following families of SOV languages: Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic, Korean and Japanese-Ryūkyūan.

Uyghur (Turkic)

12. *sən bu kino-ni kər*
2SG this film-ACC see[IMP]
'You watch this film!' (Abulimit 2006: 239)
13. *top ojna-watqan bala bizniñ sinip-ta oqu-jdu*
ball play-CONT boy 1PL:GEN class-LOC study-3.NPAST
'The boy who is playing with a ball studies in our class.' (Abulimit 2006: 324)

4.1 Word order in noun phrases

Lao

14. *khon2 suung3*
person tall
'tall person' (Enfield 2007: 93)
15. *khaw5 niaw3*
rice sticky
'sticky rice' (Enfield 2007: 93)

Khmer

16. *civeut ti: pi: rabawh knjom*
life place two of me
'my second life' (Haiman 2011: 168)

Eastern Kayah Li

17. *?iswí nā bēlò du*
curry two bowl big
'two big bowls of curry' (Solnit 1997: 180)

Burmese

18. *thi'tha: ein a-thi' hkalei:*
wooden house new small
'small new wooden house' (Myint Soe 1999: 44)

Pre-Archaic Chinese (14th to 11th century BCE)

19. 上甲 惠 王 報 用 五 伐
shàngjiǎ huì wáng bào yòng wǔ fá
Shangjia FOC king *bao*:sacrifice use five human:victim
十 小 宰
shí xiǎo láo
ten little sacrificial:sheep
'As for (the ancestor) Shangjia, it must be the king who addresses (him) with a *bao* sacrifice by using five human victims and ten little sacrificial sheep.'
(Djamouri 2001: 162; Jiágǔwén Héjǐ 924)

Early Archaic Chinese

20. 天 不 庸 釋 于 文 王 受 命
tiān bū yóng shì yú [[wén wáng shòu] mìng]
 heaven not then relinquish to [[Wen king receive] destiny]
 ‘Then Heaven will not relinquish [the destiny which King Wen received].’
 (Aldrige, to appear; Shàngshū, Jūnshì 君奭; approx 8th century BCE)
21. 非 時 伯夷 播 刑 之 迪?
fēi [[shí bóyí bō] xíng] zhī dí?
 not.be [[then Boyi promulgate] law] GEN guide
 ‘Is it not the laws promulgated by Boyi which guide (you)?’
 (Aldrige, to appear; Shàngshū, Lǚxíng 呂刑; approx 8th century BCE)

However, there were some post-nominal modifiers in the earliest stages of Chinese. SVO languages typically have some pre-nominal and some post-nominal modifiers, and the earlier stages of Chinese had more post-nominal modifiers than the modern Sinitic languages. Numerals, in particular, were placed variously in front or after the head noun.

Pre-Archaic Chinese (14th to 11th century BCE)

22. 子 央 歲 于 丁
zǐ yāng suì yú dīng
 prince Yang immolate to Ding
 ‘The prince Yang [will] immolate something for the ancestor Ding.’
 (Djamouri 2001: 146; Jiágǔwén Héjì 3018)
23. 獲 唯 鳥 七
huò wéi niǎo qī
 capture COP bird seven
 ‘The catch is seven birds.’
 (Djamouri 2001: 151; Jīnzhāng suǒ cáng Jiágǔ Búcí 742)
 (Numerals were more often prenominal than postnominal in Pre-Archaic Chinese.)

The earliest classifier-like words more often follow rather than precede the head noun.

Pre-Medieval Chinese

24. 分 與 文君 僮 百 人
fēn yǔ wénjūn tóng bǎi rén
 distribute give Wenjun slave hundred people
 ‘(He) distributed a hundred slaves to Wenjun.’
 (Chappell and Peyraube 2007; Shǐjì, Sīmǎ Xiāngrú Lièzhuǎn 司馬相如列傳, approx 1st century BCE)

Early Medieval Chinese

25. 時 跋 跋 提 國 送 獅子兒 兩 頭 與 乾陀羅 王
shí bá bá tí guó sòng shīzi ér liǎng tóu yǔ gāntuóluó wáng
 time ? Bactria country offer lion child two CL^{HEAD} give Gandhāra king
 ‘At that time, the kingdom of Bactria offered two lion cubs to the king of Gandhāra.’
 (Chappell and Peyraube 2007; Luòyáng Qiélánjì 5 洛陽伽藍記 5; 6th century CE)

Lao

26. *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 sòòng3 too3*
1SG buy fish two CL
'I bought two fish.' (Enfield 2007: 120)

27. *kuu3 sùù4 paa3 juu1 talaat5 sòòng3 too3*
1SG buy fish be.at market two CL
'I bought fish at the market, two (of them).' (= 'I bought two fish at the market') (Enfield 2007: 120)

(“This is a perfectly normal way of saying ‘I bought two fish at the market’, and has nothing of the pragmatically marked quality shown by the first English free translation [...].” (Enfield 2007: 121))

Nánning Píng huà

28. 我 個 對 舊 皮 鞋
ŋa¹³ kə⁵⁵ tɔi⁵⁵ kəu²² pəi¹¹ hai¹¹
1SG DEM pair old leather shoe
'My pair of old leather shoes.'

e.g. Cantonese 魚生 *ɣy¹¹ saŋ⁵⁵* (fish raw) ‘raw fish’, 菜乾 *ts^hɔi³³ kən⁵⁵* (vegetable dry) ‘dried vegetable’, 人客 *jen¹¹ hak³³* (person guest) ‘guest’, 熊人 *hɔŋ¹¹ jen^{11>25}* (bear person) ‘brown bear (child’s word)’. (See also, e.g., the many left headed compounds in Wēnzhōu Wú (Zhèngzhāng 2008: 232))

Standard Mandarin (prefixes)

29. 公豬 *gōng-zhū* (male-pig) ‘boar’
30. 母豬 *mǔ-zhū* (female-pig) ‘sow’

Wǎxiāng (prefixes and suffixes)

31. 公豬 *ɕiaŋ²⁵-tiəu⁵⁵* (male-pig) ‘boar’
32. 豬娘 *tiəu⁵⁵-ŋiē⁵⁵* (pig-female) ‘sow’

Fùyáng Wú (prefixes and suffixes)

33. 雄雞 *ʰiioŋ-ʼtei* (male-fowl) ‘rooster’
34. 雞娘 *ʼtei-ʼniā* (fowl-female) ‘hen’

Shàowǔ Western Mǐn (suffixes)

35. 雞公 *kɛi²¹-kuŋ²¹* (fowl-male) ‘rooster’
36. 雞嫲 *kɛi²¹-ma²²* (fowl-female) ‘hen’

Fūqīng Eastern Mǐn (suffixes)

37. 雞公 *kiɛ³²-kuŋ⁵³* (fowl-male) ‘rooster’
38. 雞母 *kiɛ³²-mɔ⁵³* (fowl-female) ‘hen’

Cantonese (suffixes)

39. 雞公 *kɛi⁵⁵-kɔŋ⁵⁵* (fowl-male) ‘rooster’
40. 雞嫲 *kɛi⁵⁵-na²⁵* (fowl-female) ‘hen’

Nánning Pínghuà (prefixes)

41. 公雞 *kɔŋ⁵³-kɛi⁵³* (male-fowl) ‘rooster’
 42. 母雞 *mu¹³-kɛi⁵³* (female-fowl) ‘hen’

	Thai	Khmer	Vietnamese	E Kayah Li	Burmese	Hmong Njua	Mien	Cantonese	N. Pinghuà	H. S Min	F. E Min	S. W Min	Y. Gàn	F. Wú	J. Huī	G. Wǎxiāng	S. C Mandarin
N – Genitive																	
	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N – “Adjective” (e.g. chicken – big)																	
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N – Noun (e.g. egg – chicken)																	
	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N – Gender (e.g. chicken – male)																	
	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	±	±	±	-
N – Demonstrative																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N – Numeral																	
	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N – Relative clause																	
	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total:	7	7	6	4	3	5	2	1	0	1	1	1	1	½	½	½	0

Table 4 Left-headed-ness on the noun phrase level in some Sinitic and MSEA languages

4.2 *Word order in clauses*

Pre-Archaic Chinese

43. 呼 多 犬 网 鹿 于 麓
hū duō quǎn wǎng lù yú nóng
 order numerous dog.officer net deer at Nong
 ‘Call upon the many dog-officers to net deer at Nong.’
 (Djamouri, Paul, and Whitman 2007: 3; *Jiǎgǔwén Héjì* 10976 recto.)

Lao

44. *phen1 lin5 phaj4 juu1 talaat5*
 3POL play cards be.at market
 ‘She is playing cards at the market.’ (Enfield 2007: 390)

Khmer

45. *knjom tradaw: sra:j krama: pi: cangkeh*
 I struggle untie scarf from waist
 ‘I struggle to untie the scarf from my waist.’ (Haiman 2011: 204)

In contrast to Pre-Archaic Chinese, which is a relatively normal SVO language, two related tendencies developed amongst the modern Sinitic languages (e.g. Zhāng 2010, Liú 2012, Bisang 2012):

- the Sinitic languages accept postverbal constituents less readily; and
- in many Sinitic languages, the association of postverbal constituents with new information/indefiniteness became stronger.

4.2.1 Position of adverbials and adpositions

Nánning Píng huà

46. 我 大早 住 屋頭 看了 一 出 戲
ŋa¹³ tai²² tʃau³³ tʃəi²² ɔk³ təu¹¹ han²⁵ -lə³³ ət³ tʃʰət³ həi²⁵
 1SG just:now at home watch-PFV one CL film
 ‘I watched a film at home just now.’

Wǎxiāng

47. 我 朝頭 ○ 三 個 餐
u²⁵ tʃiəu⁵⁵ tɑ zɪəu¹³ so⁵⁵ kəu³³ tɛi¹³
 1SG morning eat three CL bun
 ‘I ate three buns this morning.’

Standard Mandarin

48. 我 明天 在 站台 上 等 你
wǒ míngtiān zài zhàntái shàng děng nǐ
 1SG tomorrow at platform on wait 2SG
 ‘I will wait for you at the platform tomorrow.’

Vietnamese

49. *bố cháu đã từng dạy học ở Ha-oai*
 father 1SG ANT EXP teach study in Hawaii
 ‘My dad has taught in Hawaii.’ (Nguyễn 1997: 158)

Thai

50. *sua kàw ca aw pay boricàak phrûnñi*
 clothes old will take go donate tomorrow
 ‘I’ll give away the old clothes tomorrow.’ (Smyth 2002: 117)

Cantonese

51. 我 今日 去 台北
ŋɔ²⁵ kəm⁵⁵ jət² həy³³ tʰɔi¹¹ pək⁵
 1SG today go Taipei
 ‘I am going to Taipei today.’

Fúqīng Eastern Mǐn

52. 我 今晏 去 北京
ŋua³² kiŋ⁵³ naŋ²¹ k^hyo²¹ pe^ʔkiŋ⁵³
 1SG today go Beijing
 ‘I am going to Beijing today.’

Wǎxiāng

53. 你 到 何○ 去?
ŋi²⁵ tau³³ uo¹³ŋi⁴¹ k^həu³³?
 2SG to where go
 ‘Where are you going?’ (There are also examples with only 到 *tau³³* ‘to’.)

Pínglì Central Mandarin

54. 你 到 哪兒 去 耶? 我 到 城 裏頭 去
ŋi⁴⁴ tau²³ lar⁴⁴⁵ te^hi²³ ie? ŋo⁴⁴ tau²³ tɕ^hən⁵² li⁴⁴⁵ t^hou te^hi²⁴
 2SG to where go Q 1SG to city in go
 ‘Where are you going? I am going to the city.’ (Zhōu 2009: 408)

Wēnzhōu Wú (Southern Wú)

55. 我 走 溫州 去
ŋ³⁴ tsau^{45>0} ʔjy^{33>11} te^{əu}³³ k^{hei}^{42>0}
 1SG to Wenzhou go
 ‘I am going to Wenzhou.’ (Zhèngzhāng 2008: 340)

Fùyáng Wú (Northern Wú)

56. 我 今朝 (到) 上海 去
ŋɿ 'kintsɔ ('tɔ) zɔŋhɛ te^hi
 1SG today to Shanghai go
 ‘I am going to Shanghai today.’
 (It is more common to omit 'tɔ 'to'.)

Northern Zhuang

57. *youq gwnz taiz*
 at above table
 ‘On the table’

Nánníng Pínghuà

58. 住 檯 上
tsəi²² tai¹¹ tɛŋ²²
 at table above
 ‘On the table’

Eastern Kayah Li

59. *dɿ lē kū*
 at ravine interior
 ‘in the ravine’ (Solnit 2007: 209)

60. *dɿ pjā kū*
 at bag interior
 ‘in the bag’ (Solnit 2007: 209)

61. *dʰ hi lē*
at house bottom
'Under the house' (Solnit 2007: 211)

62. *dʰ d̄ lē*
at village bottom
'Below (downhill from) the village' (Solnit 2007: 211)

Cantonese

63. 喺 圖書館
hɛi²⁵ tou¹¹sy⁵⁵kun²⁵
at library
'At the library'

Mandarin

64. 在 圖書館 (裏)
zài túshūguǎn (lǐ)
at library in
'At/in the library'

Sūzhōu Wú

65. 掛 勒 客廳 *(裏)
*ko⁵² ləʔ⁵⁵ kʰaʔ⁵⁵tʰin²³ *(li⁴⁴)*
hang at living.room in
'Hung up in the living room' (Lǐ 1998: 164)

Níngbō Wú

Preposition usually omitted for preverbal adverbials

66. 賊骨頭 (來) 廁坑間 裏 幽 該
thief (at) toilet in hide FP
'The thief hid in the toilet' (Liú 2003: 272)

67. 老師 (來該) 黑板 上 寫 字
teacher (at) black:board on write word
'The teacher wrote on the black board' (Liú 2003: 272)

Prepositions made into postpositions

68. 圖書館 裏 來該
library in at
'At the library' (Liú 2003: 272)

Níngbō Wú

69. 囡囡 幼兒班 去
baby kindergarten go
'Baby goes to kindergarten.' (M. Qián 2008: 136)

70. 我 學校 介 來
1SG school from come
'I came from the school.' (M. Qián 2008: 136)

4.2.2 Modifiers of verbs

Shanghainese (Wú)

71. geq-geq njín thaovae nenkaxeq xiangtsir liq-laq iitaq
 this-CL person beggar like appearance stand-PROG there
 ‘The man stood there like a beggar.’ (Zhu 2006a: 155)

Standard Cantonese

72. $\text{k}^{\text{høy}^{13}}$ man^{22} man^{25} haŋ^{11}
 3SG slowly walk
 ‘S/he walk slowly.’

Wǎxiāng

73. ŋi^{25} $\text{k}^{\text{h}u\text{a}^{33}}$ tsau^{25} ciəu^{25}
 2SG quick move:hand
 ‘Hurry up and get moving.’

Standard Mandarin

74. nǐ xiān chī ba duō chī yīdiǎn
 2SG first eat FP more eat a:bit
 ‘Eat first. Eat a bit more.’

(Sometimes adjectives appear after a verb, but they are part of a verbal complement, where the complement predicates the verb.)

Standard Cantonese

75. haŋ^{11} tək^5 man^{22} - $\text{t}^{\text{h}ən}^{55}$ $\text{t}^{\text{h}ən}^{55}$
 walk MANNER slow-IDEO
 ≈ ‘(Someone) walks (and the walking is) so slow.’
76. lou^{55} tou^{33} tsəŋ^{22} man^{22} - $\text{k}^{\text{w}ɔ}^{33}$ $\text{k}^{\text{w}ei}^{55}$ $\text{ts}^{\text{h}ok}^5$
 load EXTEND even slow-surpass turtle:speed
 ≈ ‘[The mobile internet] loads (to the extend of being) even slower than turtle speed.’
 (m.eprice.com.hk/mobile/talk/3149/33856/1/2/0/; 7 Nov 2012))

Fùyáng Wú

77. hãtsɿ tɔ $\text{k}^{\text{h}u\text{a}}$ diɛ
 Hángzhōu arrive soon COS
 ‘We are arriving in Hángzhōu soon.’
 (This 快 $\text{k}^{\text{h}u\text{a}}$ may be a prospective marker. 快 $\text{k}^{\text{h}u\text{a}}$ meaning ‘fast’ is placed in front of the verb.)

Yìchūn Gàn

78. (再) 去 幾 個 添
 (tsæ⁴⁴) tɛ^{hi}ɛ⁴⁴ tɛi⁵³ kɔ⁴⁴ ts^hɛu⁴⁴
 again go few CL more
 ‘Send a few more people.’

79. 食 多 發積
 tɛ^{hi}ɰ⁵ to³⁴ fa^ɰ-tɛi^ɰ
 eat more bit-DIM
 ‘Eat a bit more.’

80. 你 食 飯 先
 ŋi³⁴ tɛia^ɰ fan²¹³ sien³⁴
 2SG eat rice first
 ‘You eat your meal first.’

Hakka

81. 坐 一 下 添
 ts^ho²⁴ it² ha⁵⁵ t^hiam²⁴
 sit one CL more
 ‘Sit a bit more.’ (Lo 1988: 301–302)

82. 著 少 一 領 衫
 tsok² seu³¹ it² lian¹¹ sam¹³
 wear less one CL clothes
 ‘Wear one piece of clothing less.’ (Lo 1988: 303)

Standard Cantonese

83. 食 埋 雪糕 添 啦
 sik² mai¹¹ syt³kou⁵⁵ tim⁵⁵ la⁵⁵
 eat as_well ice:cream in_addition FP
 ‘Have ice cream too!’

84. 打 多 兩 行 字
 ta²⁵ tɔ⁵⁵ lœŋ¹³ hœŋ¹¹ tsi²²
 hit more two line word
 ‘Type two more lines.’

85. 我 行 先 啦。
 ŋɔ¹³ haŋ¹¹ sin⁵⁵ la³³
 1SG go first COS
 ‘I am going now.’

(See, e.g., Peyraube 1996, who discusses the post-verbal adverbs in Cantonese.)

MSEA languages usually have adverbials after the verb.

Northern Zhuang

86. gou bae gonq.
 1SG go first
 ‘I am going now.’

87. *gou gwn vanj haeux dem.*
 1SG eat bowl rice in addition
 ‘I eat another bowl of rice.’ (Wéi and Qín 2006: 208)
 (The word *dem* itself is perhaps a Chinese loan, c.f. Cantonese 添 *tʰim*⁵⁵ ‘add’.)

Thai

88. *raw paythiaw muaŋ thay bɔ̀y bɔ̀y.*
 1PL go:trip country Thai often
 ‘We visit Thailand often.’ (Smyth 2002: 104)

Green Hmong

89. *tuam moog rua suavteb hab*
 Tuam go to China too
 ‘Tuam went to China too.’ (Li 1989: 121)

Khmer

90. *knjom kampung raut lee:ng ja:ng...sa'ba:j*
 I engage.in run play kind happy
 ‘I was running along happily.’ (Haiman 2011: 216)
91. *knjom skoal koat chah...nah*
 I recognize 3 clear very
 ‘I recognized him very clearly.’ (Haiman 2011: 216)

4.2.3 Preverbal objects

There are three main ways in which the object is preposed to a pre-verbal position, and different Sinitic languages have different preferences for which ones they use if the object is to be placed in front of the verb:

- topicalisation; the surface order could, grammatically speaking, freely alternate between SOV and OSV;
- passivisation: {undergoer – PASS – actor – verb};
- object marking, or ‘disposal’ construction: {subject – OM – object – verb}

4.2.3.1 The object marking construction

Standard Mandarin

92. 關上 門 了
guān-shàng mén le
 close-up door PRF
 ‘(Someone) locked the door’
 (“關上門了” on Google: 1,690,000 results; 3 Nov 2012)
93. 把 門 關上 了
bǎ mén guān-shàng le.
 OM door close-up PRF
 ‘(Someone) locked the door.’
 (“把門關上了” on Google: 1,970,000 results; 3 Nov 2012)

Standard Cantonese

94. 門咗 門
san⁵⁵-tsɔ²⁵ mun¹¹
 close-PFV door
 ‘(Someone) closed the door(s).’ or ‘They (shops etc.) are closed.’
 (Google search of the string "門咗門": 11,000 results; 3 Nov 2012)
95. 門咗 [度/ 道] 門
san⁵⁵-tsɔ²⁵ [tou²²/ tou²²] mun¹¹
 close-PFV CL CL door
 ‘(Someone) closed the door.’
 (Google search of the string "門咗度門": 1,410 results; "門咗道門": 277 results; 3 Nov 2012)
96. ? 將 (度/ 道) 門 門
tsæŋ⁵⁵ (tou²²/ tou²²) mun¹¹ san⁵⁵
 OM CL CL door close
 (Google search of the string "將門門": 0 results; "將度門門": 9 results, "將道門門": 3 results; 3 Nov 2012)

Dungan (Western Central Mandarin in Central Asia)

97. ба гу кан бу жян ли,
pa²⁴ kou⁵¹ k^hæ⁴⁴+ pu²⁴+ tɕiæ⁴⁴ li
 OM dog look+ NEG+ achieve PRF
 ‘[He] could not see the dog anymore,’ (Lin 2003: 312)
98. ба та бу кэщин сы ли ма?
pa²⁴ t^ha⁵¹ pu²⁴ k^hɛ²⁴ ɕiŋ²⁴ sz⁵¹ li ma?
 OM 3SG NEG happy die PRF Q
 ‘Wouldn’t it be so unhappy?’ (Lin 2003: 313)
 (Similar structures exist in Western C. Mandarin dialects in China as well; see Bié 2005.)

Fùyáng Wú

99. 伊 ○ 我 打
hi k^həʔ ŋɿ t^hæ̃
 3SG OM 1SG hit
 ‘S/he hit me.’

Taiwanese Southern Mǐn

100. goan² kiaⁿ² ka⁷ goa² chim¹
 1SG:GEN son OM 1SG kiss
 ‘My son kissed me.’ (Lee 2009: 480)

(On the other hand, Hǎinán Mǐn, a Far-Southern Sinitic language, would use a normal SVO sentence, as the object marking construction cannot be used with animates:

Hainanese

101. i⁴⁴ soi²¹ gua²¹
 3SG kiss 1SG
 ‘He kissed me.’ (Lee 2009: 480))

White Hmong

102. *nws muab pojniam nrauj lawm*
 3SG take woman divorce PRF
 ‘He has divorced his wife.’ (Jarkey 1991: 249; quoting Heimbach 1979:174)

Medeval Chinese

103. 船者 乃 將 此 蟾 以 油 熬 之
chuánzhě nǎi jiāng cǐ chán yǐ yóu áo zhī
 boat:person then take this toad with oil fry 3SG
 ‘Then the boatman took the toad and fried it.’
 (Chappell 2006; quoting Peyraube 1988, 1996)

Lao

104. *man2 thim5 ngen2*
 3 discard money
 ‘She discarded (the) money.’
105. *man2 qau3 ngen2 thim5*
 3 take money discard
 ‘She took the money (and) discarded (it).’ (Enfield 2007: 381)

Vietnamese

106. *tôi tặng cho bạn một miếng gà rán*
 1 gift DAT friend one CL chicken fried
 ‘I gave you a piece of fried chicken.’
107. *tôi lấy một miếng gà rán tặng cho bạn*
 1 take one CL chicken fried gift DAT friend
 ‘I took a piece of fried chicken (and) gave it to you.’ (John Phan p.c.)

Nánning Píngguà

108. 佢 一 拋 個 隻 煎餅 呢
kəi¹³ ət³ p^hau⁵³ ə⁵⁵ tʃət³ tʃin⁵³ pən³³ ne⁵⁵
 3 once throw DEM CL pan:cake TOP
 就 跌落 大象 隻 煎鍋
tʃəu²² tit³+lək²³ tai²² tʃɛŋ²² tʃət³ tʃin⁵³ ku⁵³
 then fall+descend elephant CL frying:pan
 ‘He [the mouse] threw the pancake, and it fell on the elephant’s frying pan.’
109. 佢 抓 燒餅 來 一 拋
kəi¹³ ɲa⁵³ liu⁵³ pən³³ ləi¹¹ ət³ p^hau⁵³
 3 take pan:cake come once throw
 燒餅 就 跌落 地下
liu⁵³ pən³³ tʃəu²² tit³+lək²³ təi²² ja²²
 pan:cake then fall+descend ground
 ‘He [the mouse] took the pancake and threw it, and the pancake fell on the ground.’

4.2.3.2 Postverbal definite objects

Fúqīng Eastern Mǐn

110. 老板 買○ 蜀 架 車
lɔ³²peŋ⁵³ mɛ³²-lau²¹ θoɔ² ka²¹ tɛ^{hi}a⁵³
 boss buy-PFV one CL car
 ‘The boss bought a car.’
111. 許 蜀 架 車 老板 買○
hy³² θoɔ² ka²¹ tɛ^{hi}a⁵³ lɔ³²peŋ⁵³ mɛ³²-lau²¹
 that one CL car boss buy-PFV
 ‘The boss bought the car.’

Fùyáng Wú

112. 個 老板 買得 部 車子
kɿ 'lɔpɛ̃ ma-lə bu 'ts^hotsz
 CL boss buy-PFV CL car
 ‘The boss bought a (/the) car.’ (Li and Bisang 2012: 336)
113. 個 老板 部 車子 買得回來 喋
kɿ 'lɔpɛ̃ bu 'ts^hotsz ma-lə-'uɛ-lɛ diɛ
 CL boss CL car buy-PFV-return-hither COS
 ‘The boss bought the car.’
114. 我 去 放 兩 件 衣裳 得 大 衣櫃 裏
ŋɿ tɛ^{hi} fã 'niã dzi izã lə da idzy ni
 1SG go put several CL clothes to big closet inside
 ‘I put several clothes into the big closet.’
115. 我 兩 件 衣裳 去 放 放 得 大 衣櫃 裏
ŋɿ 'niã dzi izã tɛ^{hi} fã fã lə da idzy ni
 1SG several CL clothes go put put to big closet inside
 ‘I put the several clothes into the big closet.’

Wēnzhōu Wú

Tone D (7 or 8) for definiteness:

116. *ŋ⁴ ɛi³ ma⁴ paŋ³ si¹*
 I want buy CL_{volume} book
 ‘I want to buy a book.’ (Cheng and Sybesma 2005: 266)
117. *ŋ⁴ ɛi³ ma⁴ paŋ⁷ si¹*
 I want buy CL_{volume} book
 ‘I want to buy the book.’ (Cheng and Sybesma 2005: 266)
118. *ŋ⁴ ɛi³ ha⁷ y⁷/ liɛ⁷ thuɔ¹*
 I want drink CL_{volume}/CL_{PL} soup
 ‘I would like to drink a bowl of soup/ some soup.’
 or: ‘I would like to drink the soup.’ (Cheng and Sybesma 2005: 266)

Standard Mandarin

119. 把 車子 買 了
bǎ chēzi mǎi le
 OM car buy PRF
 ‘Bought the car.’
 ("把車子買了" on Google: 247,000 results; 12 Nov 2012)
 (The marked object is definite by default.)

120. 買 了 這 輛 車子
mǎi le zhè liàng chēzi
 buy PFV this CL car
 ‘Bought this car.’
 ("買了這輛車子" on Google: 278,000 results; 12 Nov 2012)

Shàowǔ Western Mìn

121. 老板 買了 蜀 架 車
lau⁵⁵ pan²¹ miɛ⁵³-ə ɛi⁵ ka³⁵ tɛ^{hia}²¹
 boss buy-PFV one CL car
 ‘The boss bought a car.’

122. 老板 買了 ○ 蜀 架 車
lau⁵⁵ pan²¹ miɛ⁵³-ə tɛioŋ⁵³ ɛi⁵ ka³⁵ tɛ^{hia}²¹
 boss buy-PFV this one CL car
 ‘The boss bought this car.’

(Very Strange:

123. ?? 老板 拿 ○ 蜀 架 車 買了
 ?? *lau⁵⁵ pan²¹ na²² tɛioŋ⁵³ ɛi⁵ ka³⁵ tɛ^{hia}²¹ miɛ⁵³-ə*
 boss OM this one CL car bought-PFV
 ‘The boss bought this car.’)

Cantonese

124. 個 老板 買咗 架 車
kɔ³³ lou¹³ pan²⁵ mai¹³-tsɔ²⁵ ka³³ ts^{hɛ}⁵⁵
 CL boss buy-PFV CL car
 ‘The boss bought the/a car.’ (Li and Bisang 2012: 336)
 ("買咗架車" on Google: 43,900 results; 13 Nov 2012)

(Very strange:

125. ?? 個 老板 將 架 車 買咗
 ?? *kɔ³³ lou¹³ pan²⁵ tsæŋ⁵⁵ ka³³ ts^{hɛ}⁵⁵ mai¹³-tsɔ²⁵*
 CL boss OM CL car buy-PFV
 ‘The boss bought the car.’
 ("將架車買" on Google: 4 results; 13 Nov 2012))²

² In both Cantonese and Western Mìn, the ‘acquiring’ meaning of ‘buy’ conflicts with the ‘disposal’ meaning of the object marking construction. Replacing these sentences with ‘sell’ would make the object marking construction more acceptable.

Green Hmong

126. *khi tug dlev ces tug miy lug*
 tie CL dog [and.then] CL cat come
 ‘Tie up the dog and subsequently the cat will come!’ (Li 1989: 122)

Ong Be

127. *lai³³ vən⁵⁵ hə³³ sai⁵⁵ tsu³³ biaŋ³³ tuaŋ⁵⁵ hu⁵⁵ uk⁵ mia⁵⁵,*
 exist day one rich:man release goat CL out come
ma¹³ hu⁵⁵ [...] huk³ tuaŋ⁵⁵ hu⁵⁵ dai¹³ vɔi³³.
 dog CL make goat CL die FP
 ‘[There was a rich man who kept a goat...] One day the rich man released the goat, the dog [...] caused the goat to die.’ (Liú 2009: 97)

4.2.3.3 Three place predicates

Lao

Noun incorporation (not ‘real’ double object construction)

128. *laaw2 thaa2 sii3 huan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FAM apply paint house CL DEM
 ‘She painted (i.e., ‘applied paint (to)’) this house.’ (Enfield 2007: 357)
129. * *laaw2 thaa2 sii3 lùam5 huan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FAM apply paint shiny house CL DEM (Enfield 2007: 357)

Topicalisation

130. *huan2 lang3 nii4 laaw2 thaa2 sii3 lùam5*
 house CL DEM 3SG.FAM apply paint shiny
 ‘This house, she applied shiny paint (to).’ (Enfield 2007: 358)
131. *sii3 lùam5 laaw2 thaa2 huan2 lang3 nii4*
 paint shiny 3SG.FAM apply house CL DEM
 ‘Shiny paint, she applied (to) this house.’ (Enfield 2007: 358)

Serial verb construction

132. *laaw2 qaw3 sii3 lùam5 thaa2 huan2 lang3 nii4*
 3SG.FAM take paint shiny apply house CL DEM
 ‘She took shiny paint (and) applied (it to) this house.’ (Enfield 2007: 358)

Oblique strategy

133. *laaw2 thaa2 huan2 lang3 nii4 duaj4 sii3 lùam5*
 3SG.FAM apply house CL DEM with paint shiny
 ‘She applied this house with shiny paint.’ (Enfield 2007: 358)

Khmer

134. * *kə̀ət ha:l khaoʔa:v thɿay*
 he expose clothes sun
135. *kə̀ət yək khaoʔa:v trù ha:l thɿay*
 he take clothes go expose sun
 ‘He put the clothes out in the sun.’ (Bisang 2012: 12)

Hui'an Southern Min

Theme topicalised

136. 伊 一 叢 筆 與 我
*i*¹ *tsit*^{8>4} *tsaŋ*^{2>4} *pet*⁷ *k^hɔ*⁵ *ua*
 3SG one CL pen give 1SG
 'S/he gave me a/one pen.'

(This is the most preferred word order; S – V – IO – DO order is also possible, but not often used. The agent is often omitted. Notice that in Hui'an Southern Min even indefinite noun phrases are often topicalised.)

Theme topicalised, plus object marking construction with a resumptive pronoun

137. 我 冊 共 伊 ○ 咧 桌 咧
*ua*³ *ts^heɿ*⁷ *ka*^{5>4} *i*¹ *hio*^{5>4} *leɿ*^{7>8} *tɔɿ*⁷ *leɿ*
 1SG book OM 3SG put at table LOC
 'I put the book on the table.'

(The additional object marking construction is optional.)

Fùyáng Wú

138. * 伊 親得 我 一 口
 * *hi* *'te^hin-lə* *ŋɿ* *iə*[?] *k^hiu*
 3SG kiss-PFV 1SG one CL_{mouth}
 (親 *'te^hin* 'kiss' is a three-place predicate in Fùyáng Wú)

Passivised

139. 我 撥 伊 親得 一 口
ŋɿ *pə*[?] *hi* *'te^hin-lə* *iə*[?] *k^hiu*
 1SG PASS 3SG kiss-PFV one CL_{mouth}
 'I was kissed by him/her once.'

Object marking construction

140. 伊 ○ 我 親得 一 口
hi *k^hə*[?] *ŋɿ* *'te^hin-lə* *iə*[?] *k^hiu*
 3SG OM 1SG kiss-PFV one CL_{mouth}
 'S/he kissed me once.'

Wáxiāng

141. ○ 跟 我 得 件 衣
*zɿ*³³ *kai*⁵⁵ *u*²⁵ *tɿ*³³ *te^hia*²⁵ *i*⁵⁵
 3SG DAT 1SG give CL clothes
 'He gave me a shirt.'
142. 就 跟 它 放 到 ○ 裏
*teiəu*²⁵ *kai*⁵⁵ *t^ha*⁵⁵ *fɿŋ*³³ *tau*³³ *pi*¹³ *la*²⁵
 then OM 3SG place to jar in
 '[...] then put it in the jar.'

Cantonese

143. 佢 錫咗 我 一 啖
*k^həy*¹³ *sək*³-*tsɔ*²⁵ *ŋɔ*¹³ *jət*⁵ *tam*²²
 3SG kiss-PFV 1SG one CL
 'S/he kissed me once.'

144. 佢 畀咗 啲 藥 我
kʰəy¹³ pei²⁵-tsɔ²⁵ ti⁵⁵ jæk³ ŋɔ¹³
 3SG give-PFV CL;MASS medicine 1SG
 ‘S/he gave me the/some medicine.’

145. 個 阿婆 收埋咗 啲 錢 喺 櫃桶 底
kɔ³³ a³³pʰɔ¹¹ sɐu⁵⁵mai¹¹-tsɔ²⁵ ti⁵⁵ tsʰin²⁵ hɛi²⁵ k^wɛi²²tʰɔŋ²⁵ tɛi²⁵
 CL o.woman hide-PFV CL;MASS money at drawer under
 ‘The old woman hid the/some money under the table.’

Nánning Píngguà

146. 佢 系了 的 藥 系 我
kəi¹³ hɛi²⁵-lə³³ tɪk⁵ jɛk²³ hɛi²⁵ ŋa¹³
 3SG give-PFV CL;MASS medicine DAT 1SG
 ‘S/he gave me the/some medicine.’

147. 你 放了 我 個 手機 住 那的?
nəi¹³ fɔŋ⁵⁵-lə³³ ŋa¹³ kə⁵⁵ ləu³³kəi⁵³ tʃəi²² na³³tɪk⁵?
 2SG put-PFV 1SG MOD mobile.phone at where
 ‘Where did you put my mobile phone?’

Hainanese (Hǎinán Mǐn)

148. 我 分 蜀 ○ 冊 (至) 伊
ɡua²¹ bun⁴⁴ dziak³³ bui²¹ seʔ⁵⁵ (ti¹¹) i⁴⁴
 1SG give one CL book to 3SG
 ‘I gave a book to him.’ (Lee 2011: 502-503)

Ong Be

149. *beu³³ jua³³ nə²¹ hiu⁵⁵ (jɔu³³) hau⁵⁵*
 deliver clothes that CL to 1SG
 ‘Pass me that shirt/ Pass that shirt to me.’ (Liú 2009: 35)

Khmer

150. *əoj cee:k cru:k muaj camnuan*
 give banana pig one amount
 ‘[G]ive the pig some bananas.’ (Haiman 2011: 207)

151. *əoj cee:k muaj camnuan dawl cru:k*
 give banana one bunch towards pig
 ‘[G]ive a bunch of bananas to the pig.’ (Haiman 2011: 207)

	Thai	Khmer	Vietnamese	E Kayah Li	Burmese	Hmong Njua	Mien	Cantonese	Náning Pínghuà	Huì'ān S Mìn	Fúqīng E Mìn	Shàowǔ W Mìn	Yíchūn Gàn	Fúyáng Wú	Jīxī Huī	Gǔzhāng Wáxiāng	Suīníng C Mandarin
VO: bought the car																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+	±
VO: bought a car																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
VO: hit me																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	±	+	+	+	-	?	+	+
VO(P)O: give me the book																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	?	-	?
VO(P)O: give me a book																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	?
VOPO(P): put the book on table																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	-
go DESTINATION																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
at inside LOCATION																	
	+	+	+	±	-	+	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±	±
VOX: play ball LOCATION																	
	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
walk slow																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
go first																	
	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	±	-	-
eat more																	
	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	-	-	-	+	±	±	-	-
Total:	12	12	12	11½	1	11	8½	9½	8½	3	5½	6½	8½	3		3½	

Table 5 Left headedness on the clause level (for the most-common construction in each category)

(± adpositions: both preposition and postposition. other ±: both order are prevalent)

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