9 Linguistic and Lexicographical Studies on the *Xiyang ji*

*Xiyang ji* has often been criticized for its lack of stylistic refinement, most famously of course by Lu Xun in his *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* (which is discussed in chapter 3 of this bibliography). In recent years, however, it has been recognized that the novel’s vernacular is very rich in dialectical expressions and proverbs. It offers a fascinating insight into Ming dynasty vernacular and has been a focus of linguistic and lexicographical studies, especially during the last two decades.

![Image](image1.png)  
*Fig. 17 Xiyang ji*, Chapter 92 (19.14b-15a, 2436f): “The State Teacher [Jin Bifeng] Investigates Yama’s Message.”
9.1 General Studies on the Style of *Xiyang ji*

9.1.1 Feng Hanyong. “*Xiyang ji* fawei”. See 3.2.1.

This article discusses among other things phrases borrowed from drama in *Xiyang ji*.

9.1.2 Feng Hanyong. “*Xiyang ji* yuanyu xiju”. See 3.2.2.

This article discusses the “dramatic” nature of *Xiyang ji* and the phrases it borrows from drama, especially from *Mudan ting*.


This article uses *Xiyang ji* as an example to discuss the vocabulary relating to maritime matters in Ming and Qing dynasty novels. This includes specialized vocabulary for ship types, nautical terms for localities, and the nomenclature of the naval force.

9.1.4 Zhao Jingshen. “*Sanbao taijian Xiyang ji*”. See 1.3.10.

This article includes some observances about *Xiyang ji*’s stylistic anomalies.
9.2 Specific Studies on the Linguistics of Xiyang ji

This section includes both studies on the linguistics of Xiyang ji, as well as studies on specific particles within the Chinese language, wherein Xiyang ji is mentioned among other lexicographic evidence. Studies that focus on Xiyang ji often include examples from the Qing dynasty novel Ernü yingxiong zhuan 兒女英雄傳 (1878) to describe the development from Ming vernacular to Modern Chinese. These studies are based on the assumption that the times of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century are highly interesting for the development and formation of the modal particle system of Modern Chinese. In this period the varied and complex use of modal particles of the Song and Yuan dynasties gave way to a more simplified modal particle system.

9.2.1 Li Futang 李福唐. “Sanbao taijian Xiyang ji tongsu yanyi zhong gaishu de biaoshifa yanjiu” 《三寶太監西洋記通俗演義》中概數的表示法研究. Yichun xueyuan xuebao 宜春學院學報 37.2 (2015), 83-86.

This article looks at how approximate numbers are expressed in Xiyang ji by adding words signifying approximation, using multiple numerals in a row or combining both methods.

9.2.2 Li Xi 李晰. “‘Ke’ zai gudai Hanyu zhong de yi ge changyong yi” “可” 在古代漢語中的一個常用義. Yuwen jianshe 語文建設 2009.3, 62-63.

This article studies the use of ke 可 in premodern Chinese. Among its lexicographic evidence is a quotation from chapter 9 of Xiyang ji.


Wang Feihua’s thesis explores the use of modal particles in the first half of Xiyang ji (chapters 1-50), classifying them in five groups according to their frequency of use and their development. These groups are: (1) frequently used Modern Chinese particles still in use today (me 么, ye 也, li 嘿, ba 罷, de 的 and le 了); (2) frequently used Modern Chinese particles that decreased in frequency during the Ming and Qing periods (lai 来, zhe 着 (著), ge 得 (得) / zhe 着 then and
xie 些); (3) seldom used particles that nevertheless are still in use today (a 啊 and ya 呀); archaic forms (zai 载, bu 乎, yi 矣, er 耳 and xi 兮); and (5) the small number of modal particles with two syllables: eryi 而已, bale 罷了, ye ba 也罷, leme 了麼 and le ye 了也.

9.2.4 Wang Feihua 王飛華. “Sanbao taijian Xiyang ji tongsu yanyi zhong de yuqici ‘lai’”《三寶太監西洋記通俗演義》中的語氣詞 “來”. Guangxi minzu daxue xuebao (Zhexue shehui kexue ban) 廣西民族大學學報 (哲 學社會科學版) 2006.12, 118-120.

This study examines the use of the modal particle lai 來 in Xiyang ji. The author begins by tracing the origin of the modal particle from its earliest use in Mengzi 孟子 and its development in Yuan and Ming literature. Wang Feihua then analyzes the use of the particle in Xiyang ji and further traces its development to its use in Ernü yingxiong zhuan.


Using methods similar to the study above, this article traces the origins, development, use within Xiyang ji and in Ernü yingxiong zhuan of the modal particles zhe 着, ge 個, zege 則個 and xie 些.


This article is a preliminary study on the use of the preposition ba 把 in Xiyang ji and the different functions it has. Ba is a verb that has been grammaticalized to a preposition, marking among other things direct objects.

9.2.7 Wang Ruimei 王瑞梅. “Xiyang ji ‘ba’ ziju jufa jiegou fenxi”《西洋記》“把”字句法結構分析. Hubei di’er shifan xueyuan xuebao 湖北第二師範學院學報 27.6 (2010), 29-34.

This article analyzes the syntactic structure of the ba 把 sentences in Xiyang ji. The author identifies five basic structures and analyzes them in detail, conclud-
ing that the novel was composed at decisive stage of the *ba* sentence development.


This is a semantic analysis of the *ba*把 sentences in *Xiyang ji*. Like the “preliminary study” (above) this article analyses the different semantic functions of *ba*.

9.2.9 Wang Yanfang 王艷芳 and Wang Kaisheng 王開生. “*Sanbao taijian Xiyang ji tongsu yanyi* zhong de yuqici ‘me’” 《三寶太監西洋記通俗演義》中的語氣詞 “麼”. *Qingdao keji daxue xuebao (Shehui kexue ban)* 青島科技大學學報 (社會科學版) 66 (2003), 95-98.

This article analyses the particle *me*麼 in *Xiyang ji*, where it is used similar to the modern *ba*吧 or *ma*嗎 in interrogative sentences, and similar to the modern *ma*嗎 in indicative sentences. The use in *Xiyang ji* is further compared to both *Yuan qu xuan* 元曲選 (1616) and *Ernü yingxiong zhuanyue* 倫女英雄傳 (1878).


This is a study of passive sentences in *Xiyang ji*, centered on the use of the passive marker *bei* 被. The author identifies four basic syntactic structures and analyses them in detail.


This article is an analysis of the semantic meaning of passive sentences in *Xiyang ji*.

This study analyses the use of passive sentences in *Xiyang jì*.

Fig. 18  *Xiyang jì*, Chapter 96 (20.1b-2a, 2542f):  “The Makara King Opens his Mouth Widely.”
9.3 Lexicographical Studies on Xiyang ji

These articles take words and expressions from Xiyang ji that have either not yet been included in the large scale Chinese dictionary Hanyu dacidian or the earliest citation therein is from a later work. The articles study their semantic and syntactic properties in the novel.

9.3.1 Bie Minge 別敏鴿 and Bie Yange 別艷鴿. “Cong Xiyang ji ciyu kan Hanyu dacidian de wenti” 從《西洋記》詞語看《漢語大詞典》的問。 Sichuan jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao 四川教育學院學報 21.7 (2005), 46-47.

This article seeks to augment the Hanyu dacidian with 16 words and expressions featured in Xiyang ji: guangguang zha 光光乍, haotou 號頭, mai 賣, benqian 本錢, datou 搭頭, duhua 度化, huofan 活泛, panbo 盤駁, xi tieshi 吸鐵石, yangshu 樣數, chushua 查刷, choukan 蠟看, poxun 鄧尋, kuai dang xie 快當些, lashi 蠟事 and ming da ming 明打明.


This is a lexicographical study of 11 words and expressions from Xiyang ji neither included in Hanyu dacidian nor in a range of specialized dictionaries: buzhu 不足, chenmo 沉没, gunong 骨弄, laoqi 疲氣, mao chengcheng 毛撐撐, pianran 偏然, pingguo 平過, rishang 日上, wai 四, wu...bu... 無...不... and yingshou 贏手.

9.3.3 Hei Weiqiang 黑維強. “Ming Qing baihua xiaoshuo ciyu lishi” 明清白話小說詞與例釋. Gansu gaoshi xuebao 甘肅高師學報 12.6 (2007), 7-11.

This study discusses words from Ming and Qing dynasty vernacular novels that are not included in the Hanyu dacidian and revises entries with inadequate or inaccurate paraphrases therein. Discussions that include citations from Xiyang ji are: buzui boshe 撥嘴撥舌, menquan 門圈 / chengmenquan 城門園 / menquanzi 門圈子, zhou 周, man shou 龜首 and shengsang 聲嘯.
9.3.4 Luo Guoqiang 羅國強. “Xiāng ji ci yù shílìng” 《西洋記》詞語拾零.  
*Hechi xuèyuàn xuèbào* 河池學院學報 32.6 (2012), 52-54.

This article is a lexicographical study of the use of six words from *Xiāng ji*: *bǐshǒu* 比手, *chìguān* 翅關, *guìtuī* 鬼推, *qiānshí* 扉實, *hào shuō* 好說 and *qíbāng* 齊幫.

9.3.5 Wang Zuxia 王祖霞. “Xiāng ji ci yù shílìng” 《西洋記》詞語拾零.  
*Huáběi méitān shǐfàn xuèyuàn xuèbào (Zhēnxué shèhuì kěxué bān)* 淮北煤炭師範學院學報 (哲學社會科學版) 25.2 (2004), 88-90.

This article looks at *Xiāng ji* as a source for regional dialect, Jianghuai Mandarin. Wang Zuxia introduces 13 expressions used in *Xiāng ji* that might be hard to understand or easy to misinterpret. These are *máo* 泬, *dá* 打, *liú* 溜, *hùshuǐ* 貫水, *lǎoqì* 疚氣, *guòzuò* 過作, *wènshēn* 文身, *shāngjiàn* 傷簡, *bùgèjié* 不骼節 / *bùzhījié* 不肢節, *chāng yàoyào* 長夭夭, *wài yāng’ěr* 外央兒, *yuèyue hóng* 月月紅 and *jiǎo’u’ěr* 腳擦步兒.

9.3.6 Wang Zuxia 王祖霞. “Xiāng ji fāngsu yǔcí zhājì èr zé” 《西洋記》方俗語詞札記二則.  

This article briefly introduces two dialectical expressions from *Xiāng ji*: *tōu* 透 and *chílì* 吃力.

9.3.7 Yuan Qingshu 袁慶述. “Jīndài Hányǔ xūcí cidìan cìtiáo zhùyù” 《近代漢語虛辭辭典》詞條贅語.  
*Gu Hányǔ yánjiū* 古漢語研究 12 (1991), 23-26, 32.

This article is a study of superfluous words in the *Jīndài Hányǔ xūcí cidìan*, a dictionary on grammatical elements (*xūcí* 虛辭). Yuan Qingshu uses citations from *Xiāng ji* at various points during the discussion.

9.3.8 Zeng Liang 曾良. “Míng Qīng xiǎoshuō kòuyù cì suxī kāo” 明清小說口語詞俗寫考.  

Based on the woodblock editions of Ming and Qing novels, this article makes a philological study of the “folk” versions (*suxī* 俗寫) of Chinese characters in the vernacular. *Xiāng ji* citations are among the examples.

This is a study of the special meanings the word *nongmin* (usually: farmer) takes on in *Xiyang ji*, chapter 56, and *Xingshi yinyuan zhuan* 醒世姻緣傳 (17th cent.), chapter 42.


This article traces the use of the folk saying “wujiao bagong” 烏焦巴弓 that originated from a list of four surnames in *Baijia xing* 百家姓. An example of this popular usage can be found in chapter 76 of *Xiyang ji*. 