

One may distinguish here intra-linguistic and inter-linguistic uses of the term "word family". I should like to use the term "paronym" to indicate the linguistic (language specific) word family member, reserving Matisoffs' term "allofam" for the inter-linguistic word family member. "Paronyms" in Chinese are thus two or more words which were (or may have been) judged in a period relevant to orthography as being sufficiently close in both sound and meaning to warrant their being written with the same phonetic component. This common phonetic component (正體字 zhuxiezi) in such cases would actually also be perceived as something like a "root", semantic element to the members of its paronym class. Thus, the term paronym is used in preference to a less wieldy term such as "paronymophone".

One of the supposed paronyms in the Eastern Han word family for

Semantics: Chinese

The present study had several beginnings. It first began with a preliminary treatment of the historical development of what is commonly called the "adversative passive" marker of Chinese, 非_{OC}*/*_{bjia1@/} MC *_{bje1@/}), now pronounced bei in MSC. When this subject was resumed in more depth in a later paper, the entire word family of 非_{OC}*/*_{bja1@/} skin, to which 非_{OC} bei belonged had become the subject. From within that paper arose appreciation of not only the need for an attempt at a comparative treatment of that word family, but of the ultimate profitability of such an endeavor. Looking at lexical data from daughter languages of the ST family, the current paper begins the process of attempting to focus upon one of its members: 非_{OC}*/*_{puai1@/} (> MC *_{puad1@/}) 'wave', 2

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Making Waves in Proto-Sino-Tibetan: Ripples of PST (WAVE)

皮 */bjai⁰/ 'skin' is the noun for 'wave, ripple, surge, flood', defined in SW4 as:

*/puai⁰/ 298 波 水涌流也從水皮聲

Wave: water flows gushing. [Graph] composed of 'water' [semantic determiner], and 'skin' phonetic.

I say here "supposed" because, in his commentary for the word 諏

*/bjai⁰/ 68 諏 辯論也古文以為頤字從言皮聲
Argue, dispute, debate ...

段玉裁 DUAN Yucai (1815:91) writes something characteristic of some of his oft-seen methodological presuppositions:

此諏字正義。皮、剝取獸革也。祓、析也。

凡皮之字皆有分析之意。故諏為辯論也。

This is the 諏 word's correct meaning.

The word 皮 'skin' is 'to take a beast's skin'.

The word 祓 [means also] 'to split, separate, divide, analyse'.

Thus, all words written with a 皮 'skin' element

have this 'split, separate, divide, analyse' meaning.

And therefore 諏 has meanings 'argue, dispute, debate ...'

Although DUAN makes this broad statement here, it is nothing peculiar to this particular word or word family, or to his thinking in this particular section of his SW text.⁵ DUAN's great commentary was sprawling enough without endeavouring to present for every member of a given word family what he perceived to be the semantic justification for its membership in that word family. In fact, DUAN inconsistently offers such explanation, and does not offer it at all in the case of our 波 [po⁴⁴] 'wave' word.

the meaning of the Chinese 'word family' (諧聲字 xieshengzi), which gives us yet a third term. It is also possible for words to have distinct phonetic components, and yet still be perceived as both paronymous and paraphonous. In this case, such pairs have been termed paronomastic (cf. LI Fanggui 1945:334, cited in Cook 1995:147n1), which is to say that the "meaning" connection between the words is less overt, perhaps traditionally deprecated, or else the result of failure (local variation or redundancy) in the orthography.

⁴For etymological analysis of this morpheme we must begin, as usual, with the great Eastern Han lexicon 《說文解字》 Shuowen Jiezi (SW, presented to the emperor in 121AD), in DUAN Yucai's Qing Dynasty recension.

⁵Please see Cook 1995, Section 1, for a discussion of some of the semantic issues in such analyses.

6.##" and "##" here indicate characters in the SW text which unfortunately are not in Modern computer Kaishu encodings; these characters are in my SW jiazi for DUAN's reconstruction. Numerals after the OC reconstructions refer to JIAZHOU, whose OC tone classes I represent here with superscript. "00" indicates that given word is not attested early enough to permit an OC reconstruction (by L&Z's criteria), and I have not ventured my own based on MC.

窮極 穷也 能木皮繫一日折也

00 Spine, spinal 大鏡也一日劍如意著能金皮鑄

00 轉職車司員也從事皮藝(轉職) [track, various leather equipment for harnessing / driving draft animals; saddle, bridle, harnesses ...]

*[argue, dispute, debate ...] <bump heads (and break skin)> 跑腿
也從 14 歲起
來到 36 歲
工作場所
從事勞動

302 腹壁膨出 *[pùāi2/302] 也称先天性腹壁缺损* *[fèixiān fùbì qīkǔn]* [lack of muscle tissue in the anterior abdominal wall] (or *move in the dust, crawl, creep, cripple*) *[diàibì/68 blistered foot]* [*break skin*] (or *name, limp*)

to winnow, separate nice (grain) of its husk; winnowing fan] <break/remove skin>
[to smash to pieces, as with a rock; mashed bits, dust! <break skin>

***bjail/** 36 貝史劍取獸草著訓之貝從又爲省聲凡皮之圖皆能皮古文皮彌文皮
***puai2/*puai3/** 302/306 蘭𦵹米去繫也從𡇠史𡇠

The **皮肤病字** Word Family of 《說文解字》 Shuowenjiezi

At one point I entertained a more restricted (and yet, I fear, no more successful) idea for the entire SW 'skin' word family, which resulted in what I perceived to be four natural morpho-phonemic classes, presented in table 6.

It is in fact hard to imagine what satisfying explanation could suffice in 'wave' from a word family with underlying meaning of 'skin'. Of course, whatever tributary ideas might be needed.

The 皮 Word Family of 《說文解字》(continued)

- * /bjai²/ * /bjai³/ 55/68 袱被 寢衣長一身有半從衣皮聲
[bed cover half again as long as the body] <skin, leather, covering, cloth ...>
- * /phjai¹/ * /phjai³/ 36/68 帚被 弘農謂裙被也從巾皮聲
[an article of clothing, a cape, shawl, or skirt] <skin, cloth>
- 00 猶## 旌旗披靡也從**皮聲
[banner flag blown in the wind] <skin, cloth>
- * /phjei²/? 55 紹## 條屬從糸皮聲讀若被或讀若水波之波
[a kind of silk ribbon or braid] <skin, cloth>
- * /puai¹/ 298 潛波 水涌流也從水皮聲
[gushing / surging of water, wave] <ripple/inclination in the surface; slope>
- * /phuai¹/ 298 峙坡 阪也從土皮聲
[a slope (cp. 坡頗)]
- * /phuai¹/ 298 頇頗 頭偏也從頁皮聲
[tilting (sloping) of the head; tilted, sloped (cf. 坡陂); rather, quite, very ...]
- * /pjai¹/ 36 𩫑陂 阪也一曰汎也從阜皮聲
[uneven, sloped (cf. 頷坡); a pool, pond]
- * /phjai¹/ 36 翳披 從旁持曰披從手皮聲
[take sthg by the sides, to prevent it from inclining or toppling; funereal implements, silk cords attached to the sides of the hearse for this purpose (柩車兩旁牽挽的帛,以防傾倒)]
- 00 翳## *** 也從馬皮聲
[horse shakes its head; suddenly]
- 00 鯀## 魚名從魚皮聲
[fish name (cf. 波)]
- * /pjai²/ 55 脊彼 往有所加也從彳皮聲
["the goer has that which augments (that which is applied to) him" (i.e. that objective thing which he seeks); "a relative term" ('that' relative to 'this'), that, he]
- 00 脊## 送予也從貝皮聲
[give, pass to]

My concluding thought after all this was that, *if* (and this is a big "if") it is possible for both 'wave' and 'skin' to surface from a common underlying primitive, a primitive such as <SURFACE> might be more satisfying than <SPLIT> (though I won't split hairs here in trying to rigorously distinguish these two close concepts). Suffice it to say that a 'wave' is a surface phenomenon with regard to liquid, just as 'skin' is a surface phenomenon for animal and vegetable bodies.

I will no more delve into the depths of such vasty semantic primitives in this paper, but rather, would prefer to resume what I see as more productive discussion of the concrete natural object 'wave (in a body of water)'. This natural object, as we shall see, is not only exceedingly concrete semantically, but also very simple phonologically, both of which are attributes favorable to a lexical item's extreme longevity.