

China Perspectives

PRACTICAL GRAMMAR OF MODERN CHINESE IV

**SIMPLE SENTENCE, COMPOUND SENTENCE,
AND DISCOURSE**

Liu Yuehua, Pan Wenyu, and Gu Wei



Practical Grammar of Modern Chinese IV

Chinese grammar is characterized by its simple structure, lack of inflections, and wide use of monosyllabic morphemes. With the increased popularity of learning Chinese as a second language, there is a demand for a guide to Chinese grammar that's targeted at second language learners.

This four-volume set is one of the earliest and most influential works of Chinese grammar, with a special focus on teaching and learning Chinese as a second language. Drawing on rich teaching experience, the authors analyze a myriad of real-world examples to describe Chinese grammatical phenomena and rules while introducing the general grammar system of Chinese. This volume introduces several simple sentence and compound sentence structures of modern Chinese grammar. In addition, the authors examine discourse and other larger units of sentences in use.

Since the first edition came out in 1983, this set has been revised twice and has remained one of the best sellers in the field. Practitioners and scholars of teaching Chinese as a second language, as well as students with a basic knowledge of Chinese, will find it to be a handy reference.

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1 Subject-predicate sentences

According to how a sentence is structured, there are subject-predicate sentences and non-subject-predicate sentences in Chinese. Non-subject-predicate sentences include single-word sentences and sentences with no subject.

As its name implies, a subject-predicate sentence consists of a subject and a predicate, and based on the properties of the predicate, a subject-predicate sentence can be divided into four types:

- 1 The sentence with verb as predicate
- 2 The sentence with adjective as predicate
- 3 The sentence with subject-predicate as predicate
- 4 The sentence with noun as predicate

Section one: sentences with verbs as predicate

The sentence with a verb as a predicate mainly narrates action or psychological activity of a person or development of a thing. This is the majority of Chinese sentences.

Example 1 他们下午游泳，我们钓鱼。[tā men xià wǔ yóu yǒng, wǒ men diào yú.]

(They went swimming in the afternoon and we went fishing.) (action)

Example 2 我很后悔。[wǒ hěn hòu huǐ.]

(I was very regretful.) (psychological activity)

Example 3 他的手艺提高了。[tā de shǒu yì tí gāo le.]

(His skill has been improved.) (development)

Based on how its structured, the sentence with a verb as the predicate can be divided into the following types.

I. *The sentence with a single intransitive verb as predicate*

Example 4 妹妹来了。[mèi mèi lái le.]

(The younger sister came.)

2 Subject-predicate sentences

Example 5 小明休息了，小刚工作，两个人倒着干。[Xiǎo Míng xiū xi le, Xiǎo Gāng gōng zuò, liǎng gè rén dào zhe gàn.]
(Xiao Ming and Xiao Gang work in turns; one takes a rest when the other one works.)

Example 6 一声枪响，小鸟全飞了。[yī shēng qiāng xiǎng, xiǎo niǎo quán fēi le.]
(The birds were frightened by a shot and flew away.)

Example 7 我们两个人的看法相似。[wǒ men liǎng gè rén de kàn fǎ xiāng sì.]
(We two have similar opinions.)

Example 8 汽车拐弯，大家留神。[qì chē guǎi wān, dà jiā liú shén.]
(Everybody should watch out when the car turns.)

II. The sentence whose predicate verb takes a single object

1 The predicate is required to take an object.

(1) The predicate verbs take nominal objects and such verbs are as follows: “姓 [xìng] (surname),” “叫 [jiào] (name),” “等于 [děng yú] (equal to),” “属于 [shǔ yú] (belong),” “不如 [bú rú] (not equal to).”

Example 9 这位老师姓王，叫王华。[zhè wèi lǎo shī xìng Wáng, jiào Wáng Huá.]
(The teacher is surnamed Wang and his full name is Wang Hua.)

Example 10 好人不等于老好人。[hǎo rén bù děng yú lǎo hǎo rén.]
(A kind person doesn't mean a goody-goody.)

Example 11 他的预言已经成为现实了。[tā de yù yán yǐ jīng chéng wéi xiàn shí le.]
(His prediction has become true.)

Example 12 那些事情都属于过去了，不要再提它了。[nà xiē shì qing dōu shǔ yú guò qù le, bú yào zài tí tā le.]
(The past is past. Don't mention it again.)

The predicate verbs take predicative objects and such verbs are as follows: “给予 [gěi yǔ] (give),” “予以 [yǔ yǐ] (give),” “给以 [gěi yǐ] (give),” “装作 [zhuāng zuò] (pretend),” “从事 [cóng shì] (work on),” “进行 [jìn xíng] (proceed).” The predicative object is required but sometimes the nominal object is also permitted.

Example 13 对有突出贡献的人应给予表扬和奖励。[duì yǒu tū chū gòng xiàn de rén yīng gěi yǔ biǎo yáng hé jiǎng lì.]
(Praise and awards should be granted to those who have made extraordinary contributions.)

Example 14 对不遵守纪律的人应给以批评。[duì bù zūn shǒu jì lǜ de rén yīng gěi yǐ pī píng.]
(Those who don't observe discipline should be criticized.)

Example 15 请求您，对我们的要求予以考虑。[qǐng qiú nín, duì wǒ men de yāo qiú yǐ yǐ kǎo lǜ.]

(We beg your consideration of our request.)

Example 16 实验测得的数据要加以分析 [shí yàn cè dé de shù jù yào jiā yǐ fēn xī.]

(The experimental data should be analyzed.)

Example 17 别人的胡言乱语，你就装作没听见 [bié rén de hú yán luàn yǔ, nǐ jiù zhuāng zuò méi tīng jiàn.]

(You have to pretend not to hear others' nonsense.)

2 The predicate verb takes an object but not always.

Example 18 我买了两本汉语书。[wǒ mǎi le liǎng běn hàn yǔ shū.]

(I bought two Chinese books.)

Example 19 你收集了这么多民间工艺品。[nǐ shōu jí le zhè me duō mín jiān gōng yì pǐn.]

(You have collected so many folk arts and crafts items.)

Example 20 老大爷从来不抽香烟，他抽旱烟袋。[lǎo dà yé cóng lái bù chōu xiāng yān, tā chōu hàn yān dài.]

(The old man never smokes cigarettes but tobacco.)

Example 21 他去西藏，我去云南少数民族地区。[tā qù xī zāng, wǒ qù yún nán shǎo shù mín zú dì qū.]

(He went to Tibet and I went to the minority areas of Yunnan Province.)

Example 22 我已经知道这个孩子惹了大祸了。[wǒ yǐ jīng zhī dào zhè gè hái zǐ rě le dà huò le.]

(I've already known that this child has caused big troubles.)

III. The predicate verb takes two objects, the former of which is indirect and the latter of which is direct

Example 23 张老师教我们汉语。[Zhāng lǎo shī jiào wǒ men hàn yǔ.]

(Prof. Zhang teaches us Chinese.)

Example 24 昨天我借了你十块钱。[zuó tiān wǒ jiè le nǐ shí kuài qián.]

(I lent you ten yuan yesterday.)

Example 25 班长通知大家明天开全校运动会。[bān zhǎng tōng zhī dà jiā míng tiān kāi quán xiào yùn dòng huì.]

(The monitor informed us that the school sports meeting would be held tomorrow.)

Example 26 你告诉我你的电话号码。[nǐ gào sù wǒ nǐ de diàn huà hào mǎ.]

(Please tell me your phone number.)

Example 27 经理交给咱们了个任务。[jīng lǐ jiāo gěi zán men le gè rèn wù.]

(The manager left a task to us.)

4 Subject-predicate sentences

IV. The adverbial is included in the predicate part

Example 28 他弟弟明年就大学毕业了。[tā dì dì míng nián jiù dà xué bì yè le.]

(His younger brother will graduate from college next year.)

Example 29 小明每天都认真地做课外练习。[Xiǎo Míng měi tiān dōu hěn rèn zhēn dì zuò kè wài liànxí.]

(Xiao Ming does the extracurricular exercises seriously every day.)

Example 30 妹妹很高兴地答应了他的要求。[mèi mèi hěn gāo xìng dì dā yìng le tā de yāo qiú.]

(The younger sister agreed to his request happily.)

Example 31 你再仔细看看。[nǐ zài zǐ xì kàn kàn.]

(Take another look again, please.)

Example 32 关于分配的问题，你们先不必考虑。[guān yú fēn pèi de wèn tí, nǐ men xiān bù bì kǎo lǜ.]

(As for the issue of distribution, you don't have to think about it at first.)

V. The complement is included in the predicate part

Example 33 小红的病治好了。[Xiǎo Hóng de bìng zhì hǎo le.]

(Xiao Hong has been cured.)

Example 34 李老师从国外回来了。[Lǐ lǎo shī cóng guó wài huí lái le.]

(Prof. Li has come back from abroad.)

Example 35 这么多东西我怎么吃得下？[zhè me duō dōng xī wǒ zěn me chī de xià?]

(How can I finish all this food?)

Example 36 方明笑得腰都直不起来了。[Fāng Míng xiào de yāo dōu zhí bù qǐ lái le.]

(Fang Ming doubled over with laughter.)

Example 37 你来一下！[nǐ lái yī xià!]

(Come here!)

The sentence with a verb as the predicate is characterized by its various types and complex structures, some of which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Section two: sentences with adjectives as predicate

Adjectives in Chinese can function as predicates directly, without “是 [shì]” or other verbs in front. It mainly describes characteristics of a person, properties, or development of a thing. It is usually regarded as a descriptive sentence.

Example 1 我们学校的学习条件很好。[wǒ men xué xiào de xué xí tiáo jiàn hěn hǎo.]

(The learning conditions in our school are very nice.)

Example 2 这儿的风景非常美丽。[zhè ér de fēng jǐng fēi cháng měi lì.]
(The scenery here is very beautiful.)

Example 3 他家里干干净净的。[tā jiā lǐ gān gān jìng jìng de.]
(His house is clean and clear.)

Example 4 天渐渐冷了，院子里冷清清的，没有什么人了。[tiān jiàn jiàn lěng le, yuàn zi lǐ lěng qīng qīng de, méi yǒu shén me rén le.]
(It was getting cold. The yard became deserted with nobody in it.)

Example 5 你的手怎么冰凉冰凉的，你冷吗？[nǐ de shǒu zěn me bīng liáng bīng liáng de, nǐ lěng ma?]
(Why are your hands so cold? Do you feel cold?)

I. Functions of sentences with adjectives as predicate

1 Descriptive sentence with adjective as predicate

The adjective as predicate is much restricted in functioning alone and it is mainly used in the comparative sentence.

Example 6 我的行李多，他的行李少。[wǒ de xíng lǐ duō, tā de xíng lǐ shǎo.]
(I have more luggage than he does.)

Example 7

A: 这本书好，还是那本书好？[zhè běn shū hǎo, hái shì nà běn shū hǎo?]
(Which book is good? This one or that one?)

B: 这本书好。[zhè běn shū hǎo.]
(This one.)

If the sentence doesn't indicate comparison, the adverb indicating a certain degree is often required before the adjective.

Example 8 这个孩子很可爱。[zhè gè hái zi hěn kě ài.]
(This kid is pretty cute.)

Example 9 那天空格外晴朗。[nà tiān tiān kōng gé wài qíng lǎng.]
(The sky was extraordinarily clear that day.)

Example 10 公园里的人非常多。[gōng yuán lǐ de rén fēi cháng duō.]
(There are a lot of people in the park.)

“的 [de]” usually follows the overlapped adjective.

Example 11 小草悄悄地从土里钻出来，嫩嫩的、绿绿的。[xiǎo cǎo qiāo qiāo de cóng tǔ lǐ zuàn chū lái, nèn nèn de, lǜ lǜ de.]
(The grass, tender and green, quietly came out from the ground.)

Example 12 一天傍晚，天阴沉沉的，北风越刮越紧。[yī tiān bàng wǎn, tiān yīn chén chén de, běi fēng yuè guā yuè jǐn.]
(One evening, it was overcast and the north wind was blowing hard.)

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Example 13 田野里的庄稼绿油油绿的。[tián yě lǐ de zhuāng jià yóu lǜ yóu lǜ de.]

(The crops in the field are fresh and green.)

As an answer to a question, the adjective can function alone as the predicate without any sense of comparison.

Example 14

A: 今天冷不冷? [jīn tiān lěng bù lěng?]

(Is it cold today?)

B: 冷。[lěng.]

(Yes, it is.)

Coordinative adjectives as predicate neither take the adverb for degree nor indicate any comparison. Such use happens frequently in the written language.

Example 15 房间里干净、整齐。[fáng jiān lǐ gān jìng, zhěng qí.]

(The room is clean and tidy.)

Example 16 老妈妈和蔼慈祥。[lǎo mā mā hé āi cí xiáng.]

(The old lady is kind and merciful.)

2 The sentence with adjective as predicate that indicates change or development

Some adjectives can take the dynamic auxiliary word “了 [le]” or complements to indicate change or development.

Example 17 风暖了，树青了，清明到了。[fēng nuǎn le, shù qīng le, qīng míng dào le.]

(Qingming is coming, along with the mild wind and the green trees.)

Example 18 怎么，你的头发全白了? [ěn me, nǐ de tóu fā quán bái le.]

(How come all your hair turned gray?)

Example 19 突然，天空暗了下来。[tū rán, tiān kōng àn le xià lái.]

(All of a sudden, the sky darkened.)

Example 20 自打修了这条铁路后，我们山里人的日子一天比一天好起来了。[zì dǎ xiū le zhè tiáo tiě lù hòu, wǒ men shān lǐ rén de rì zi yī tiān bǐ yī tiān hǎo qǐ lái le.]

(Since the railway was built, our mountain people's life has become better and better day by day.)

Example 21 跟他谈完话后，我心里才平静下来。[gēn tā tán wán huà hòu, wǒ xīn lǐ cái píng jìng xià lái.]

(After talking to him, my heart calmed down.)

II. Structural features of sentences with adjectives as predicate

Adjectives as predicate often take adverbs for degree. Or they can follow “比 [bǐ],” “跟 [gēn],” “像 [xiàng]” to form prepositional phrases and introduce objects to be compared with. For instance, “这种纸比那种纸厚。 [zhè zhǒng zhǐ bǐ nà zhǒng zhǐ hòu.] (This kind of paper is thicker than that kind.)” “她跟她妈妈一样高了。 [tā gēn tā mā mā yī yàng gāo le.] (She is as tall as her mother.)” or “谁像你这么幸运啊! [shuí xiàng nǐ zhè me xìng yùn ā!] (Who is so lucky like you!).”

- 1 Adjectives as predicate only take the adverbials for degree, time, location, tone of speaking. A few of them indicate manner and are mainly functioned by adverbs.

Example 22 我们的校园很大。 [wǒ men de xiào yuán hěn dà.]
(Our campus is very large.)

Example 23 今天非常暖和。 [jīn tiān fēi cháng nuǎn hé.]
(It is very warm today.)

Example 24 售货员对我们很热情。 [shòu huò yuán duì wǒ men hěn rè qíng.]
(The shop assistant is very warm to us.)

Example 25 小刚在家里调皮，在外面很老实。 [Xiǎo Gāng zài jiā lǐ tiáo pí, zài wài miàn hěn lǎo shí.]
(Xiao Gang is naughty at home but shy outside.)

- 2 Adjectives as predicate can take prepositional phrases or complements of many types, such as quantitative complements, directional complements for extending meaning, modal complements, degree complements, time complements, and complements of possibility.

Example 26 这个箱子比那个重二十五公斤。 [zhè gè xiāng zi bǐ nà gè zhòng èr shí wǔ gōng jīn.]
(This box is twenty-five kilograms heavier than that one.)

Example 27 南屋的窗户比北屋的宽半米。 [nán wū de chuāng hù bǐ běi wū de kuān bàn mǐ.]
(The window of the south room is half a meter wider than that of the north room.)

Example 28 我家的日子一天天好起来了。 [wǒ jiā de rì zi yī tiān tiān hǎo qǐ lái le.]
(My family life is getting better and better day after day.)

Example 29 昨天那场足球赛精彩极了。 [zuó tiān nà chǎng zú qiú sài jīng cǎi jí le.]
(The football match yesterday was wonderful.)

8 *Subject-predicate sentences*

Example 30 妈妈累了一天了，该休息了。[mā mā lèi le yī tiān le, gāi xiū xi le.]

(Mother has worked all day and she should have a rest.)

- 3 “不 [bù/bú] (not)” is often used to negate the sentence with adjective as predicate and “没 [méi] (no)” is used to indicate changes.

Example 31 咱们的收入不多，处处要精打细算。[zán men de shōu rù bù duō, chù chù yào jīng dǎ xì suàn.]

(We have a small income so we need to be shrewd in money matters.)

Example 32 坐车不方便，还是骑自行车方便。[zuò chē bù fāng biàn, hái shì qí zì xíng chē fāng biàn.]

(It's more convenient to ride a bike than to take a car.)

Example 33 树叶还没红，不好看。[shù yè hái méi hóng, bù hǎo kàn.]

(The leaves haven't turned red yet, so they are not good looking.)

Example 34 他都七十多岁，头发还没全白。[tā dōu qī shí duō suì, tóu fà hái méi quán bái.]

(He is already over seventy but his hair is not quite white.)

Section three: sentences with nouns as predicate

This refers to the sentence that takes different nominals as the predicate, including nouns, noun phrases, pronouns, numerals, numeral-quantifier phrases, and “的 [de]” phrases. “是 [shì]” is not permitted to appear between the subject and the predicate.

Example 1 今天除夕。[jīn tiān chú xī.]

(Today is New Year's Eve.) (noun as the predicate)

Example 2

A: 你们都十几了？[nǐ men dōu shí jǐ le?]

(Are you all in your teens?) (numeral as the predicate)

B: 哥哥十八，我十二。[gē gē shí bā, wǒ shí èr.]

(My elder brother is eighteen and I am twelve.) (numeral as the predicate)

Example 3 喂，您哪儿？[wèi/wéi, nín nǎ er?]

(Hello. Who is that?) (pronoun as the predicate)

I. *Types of sentences with nouns as predicate*

- 1 With a noun as predicate

Example 4 今天星期二。[jīn tiān xīng qī èr.]

(Today is Tuesday.)

Example 5 明天中秋节。[míng tiān zhōng qiū jié.]

(Tomorrow is the Mid-Autumn Festival.)

Example 6 刚才还晴天呢，现在又阴天了。[gāng cái hái qíng tiān ne, xiàn zài yòu yīn tiān le.]

(It was just sunny but now it is cloudy.)

This sentence type doesn't occur very frequently in the daily use of Chinese.

- 2 With noun phrases, numeral-quantifier phrases, or “的 [de]” phrases as predicate

Example 7 这本书五十块钱。[zhè běn shū wǔ shí kuài qián.]

(This book costs fifty yuan.)

Example 8 张老师上海人。[Zhāng lǎo shī shàng hǎi rén.]

(Prof. Zhang is Shanghainese.)

Example 9 这个小伙子高个子、方脸庞、粗眉毛、大眼睛。[zhè gè xiǎo huǒ zǐ gāo gè zǐ, fāng liǎn pang, cū méi máo, dà yǎn jīng.]

(This young man is tall, with a square face, thick eyebrows, and big eyes.)

Example 10 我两个孩子，一个儿子，一个女儿。[wǒ liǎng gè hái zǐ, yī gè ér zǐ, yī gè nǚ ér.]

(I have two children. One is a son and the other is a daughter.)

Example 11 一年三百六十五天。[yī nián sān bǎi liù shí wǔ tiān.]

(There are three hundred and sixty-five days in a year.)

II. Features of sentences with nouns as predicate

- 1 Most predicates are functioned by “noun+noun,” “noun+adjective,” or other noun phrases, instead of a single noun.
- 2 “不是 [bú shì] (is not)” is used to indicate negation and makes the sentence become a “是 [shì]” sentence.

Example 12

A: 今天星期二吗? [jīn tiān xīng qī èr ma?]

(Is it Tuesday today?)

B: 今天不是星期二。[jīn tiān bú shì xīng qī èr.]

(Today is not Tuesday.)

Example 13

A: 这本书五十块钱吗? [zhè běn shū wǔ shí kuài qián ma?]

(Does this book cost fifty yuan?)

B: 这本书不是五十块钱。[zhè běn shū bú shì wǔ shí kuài qián.]

(It doesn't cost fifty yuan.)

Example 14

A: 老张新调来的吗? [Lǎo Zhāng xīn diào lái de ma?]

(Is Lao Zhang the newcomer?)

B: 老张不是新调来的。[Lǎo Zhāng bú shì xīn diào lái de.]

(Lao Zhang isn't new here.)

10 *Subject-predicate sentences*

Thus it can be seen obviously that the negative sentence with a noun as the predicate is similar to “是 [shì]” sentences with a verb as the predicate in the negative form, both of which are only for negation or disapproval. Therefore, it is accepted that the sentence with a noun as the predicate is a “是 [shì]” sentence with “是 [shì]” omitted and it is very popular in the daily use of Chinese.

Example 15

他北京人。[tā běi jīng rén.]

(He is from Beijing.)

他是北京人。[tā shì běi jīng rén.]

(He is a Beijinger.)

Example 16

一年十二个月。[yī nián shí èr gè yuè.]

(There are twelve months in a year.)

一年是十二个月。[yī nián shì shí èr gè yuè.]

(There are twelve months in a year.)

Example 17

这种半导体收音机八个管，两个波段。[zhè zhǒng bàn dǎo tǐ shōu yīn jī bā gè guǎn, liǎng gè bō duàn.]

(This transistor radio has eight tubes and two bands.)

这种半导体收音机是八个管，两个波段。[zhè zhǒng bàn dǎo tǐ shōu yīn jī shì bā gè guǎn, liǎng gè bō duàn.]

(This transistor radio has eight tubes and two bands.)

Comparatively speaking, the sentence with “是 [shì] (is)” sounds too formal in the spoken language.

Example 18

这个小伙子高个子，方脸庞。[zhè gè xiǎo huǒ zi gāo gè zi, fāng liǎn páng.]

(This young man is tall with a square face.)

这个小伙子是高个子，方脸庞。[zhè gè xiǎo huǒ zi shì gāo gè zi, fāng liǎn páng.]

(This young man is tall with a square face.)

Example 19

哥哥十岁，弟弟八岁。[gē gē shí suì, dì dì bā suì.]

(The elder brother is ten and the young brother is eight.)

哥哥是十岁，弟弟是八岁。[gē gē shì shí suì, dì dì shì bā suì.]

(The elder brother is ten and the young brother is eight.)

- 3 Due to its simple structure, the sentence with noun as predicate doesn't take any complement nor object. Sometimes it can take the adverbial for time, scope, or tone of speaking.

Example 20 今天已经十二月六号了。[jīn tiān yǐ jīng shí èr yuè liù hào le.]

(Today is already December 6.)

Example 21 三斤苹果一共一块零五分。[sān jīn píng guǒ yī gòng yī kuài líng wǔ fēn.]

(Three fin of apples cost one yuan and five fen.)

Example 22 地上净水，别滑倒了。[dì shàng jìng shuǐ, bié huá dào le.]

(The ground is wet so be careful.)

Example 23 刚解放的时候她才十几岁，现在她已经是满头白发了。[gāng jiě fàng de shí hòu tā cái shí jǐ suì, xiàn zài tā yǐ jīng shì mǎn tóu bái fà le.]

(She was a teenager when China was liberated, and now her hair was already quite white.)

Example 24 你究竟哪里人？[nǐ jiū jìng nǎ lǐ rén?]

(Where are you from?)

III. Purposes of sentences with nouns as predicate

- 1 The sentence with noun as predicate shows time, date, weather, or native place. Most of the predicates are functioned by nouns, noun phrases, or some pronouns. The subject and the predicate are of identical properties.

Example 25 现在十二点。[xiàn zài shí èr diǎn.]

(It is twelve o'clock now.)

Example 26

A: 今天什么日子？[jīn tiān shén me rì zǐ?]

(What is the date today?)

B: 今天“五四”青年节。[jīn tiān “wǔ sì” qīng nián jié.]

(It's Youth Day on May 4th.)

Example 27 刚才还晴天呢，现在又阴天了。[gāng cái hái qíng tiān ne, xiàn zài yòu yīn tiān le.]

(It was sunny just now, but it is cloudy now.)

Example 28 他英国人，我加拿大人。[tā yīng guó rén, wǒ jiā ná dà rén.]

(He's British; I'm Canadian.)

Example 29 他东北口音，可能是东北人。[tā dōng běi kǒu yīn, kě néng shì dōng běi rén.]

(He has a northeast accent and he maybe comes from there.)

- 2 The sentence with noun as predicate shows quantitative features of the subject, such as age, length, weight, price, measurement, or possession. Most of the predicates are functioned by numerals, numeral-quantifier phrases, or noun phrases consisting of numeral-quantifier phrases.

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Example 30 红梅十一岁，玉荣九岁。[Hóng Méi shí yī suì, Yù Róng jiǔ suì.]

(Hong Mei is eleven years old and Yu Rong is nine.)

Example 31 身高一米七五，体重八十多公斤。[shēn gāo yī mǐ qī wǔ, tǐ zhòng bā shí duō gōng jīn.]

(He is 1.75 meters high and weighs more than 80 kilograms.)

Example 32 长城东边从山海关起，西边到嘉峪关，一共一万三千多里。[cháng chéng dōng biān cóng shān hǎi guān qǐ, xī biān dào jiā yù guān, yī gòng yī wàn sān qiān duō lǐ.]

(The Great Wall stretches from Shanhai Pass in the east to Jiayu Pass in the west, with a distance of more than 13,000 li.)

Example 33 这件毛衣二十多块钱。[zhè jiàn máo yī èr shí duō kuài qián.]

(This sweater is over twenty yuan.)

Example 34 这个书箱十六公斤，那个旅行袋四公斤。[zhè gè shū xiāng shí liù gōng jīn, nà gè lǚ xíng dài sì gōng jīn.]

(This book case weighs 16 kilos and that travel bag weighs 4 kilos.)

- 3 The sentence with noun as predicate shows an equivalence relation with numeral-quantifier phrases as the subject and the object at the same time. Therefore, their positions can be changed by each other.

Example 35 一套明信片四毛五。/四毛五一套明信片。[yī tào míng xìn piàn sì máo wǔ./sì máo wǔ yī tào míng xìn piàn.]

(A set of postcards costs 4.5 jiao.)

Example 36 两张五毛钱。/五毛钱两张。[liǎng zhāng wǔ máo qián./wǔ máo qián liǎng zhāng.]

(Two pieces cost five jiao.)

Sometimes, when both the subject and the object are functioned by numeral-quantifier phrases, the sentence indicates conversion relation.

Example 37 一天二十四小时。[yī tiān èr shí sì xiǎo shí.]

(One day has twenty-four hours.)

Example 38 一米三(市)尺。[yī mǐ sān (shì) chǐ.]

(One meter equals three feet.)

Example 39 现在一斤十两了，不是十六两了。[xiàn zài yī jīn shí liǎng le, bú shì shí liù liǎng le.]

(Now one jin equals to ten liang rather than sixteen liang.)

Example 40 一吨两千斤。[yī dūn liǎng qiān jīn.]

(A ton is equal to two thousand jin.)

Such use often occurs in the spoken language. As for the formal situation or in the written language, “是 [shì] (is)” or some verbs, such as “有 [yǒu] (have),”

“等于 [děng yú] (equal to),” “折合 [zhé hé] (convert into)” are often required between the subject and the predicate.

Sometimes, the sentence with a noun as predicate indicates a complex relation rather than an equivalence.

Example 41 一年十块钱，三年满期，四年头上就挣师傅钱了。[yī nián shí kuài qián. sān nián mǎn qī, sì nián tóu shàng jiù zhèng shī fu qián le.]
(In the first three years of apprenticeship, you earn ten silver dollars each year. From the fourth year, you will earn as much as a master worker does.)

Example 42 一人一套茶具，一套十五件。[yī rén yī tào chá jù, yī tào shí wǔ jiàn.]

(One set of tea ware for each person. One set contains fifteen pieces.)

Example 43 十五个人一班。[shí wǔ gè rén yī bān.]

(There are fifteen persons in a class.)

Example 44 一班十五个人。[yī bān shí wǔ gè rén.]

(There are fifteen people in a class.)

Example 45 一袋化肥一百斤。[yī dài huà fèi yī bǎi jīn.]

(One bag of fertilizer weighs 100 jin.)

These examples imply possession or existence, which is frequently expressed by “有 [yǒu] (have)” or “是 [shì] (is).”

- 4 The sentence with a noun as predicate describes the state, feature, or property of the subject. Most predicates are mainly functioned by noun phrases consisting of adjectives or numeral-quantifier phrases.

Example 46 这个十九岁的姑娘，高高的个子，一双大眼睛，显得很机灵。[zhè gè shí jiǔ suì de gū niáng, gāo gāo de gè zi, yī shuāng dà yǎn jīng, xiǎn dé hěn jī líng.]

(This girl of nineteen years is tall and looks very clever with two big eyes.)
(appearance)

Example 47 张大哥急性子，张大嫂慢性子。[Zhāng dà gē jí xìng zi, zhāng dà sǎo màn xìng zi.]

(The elder brother Zhang is impatient while his wife is slow.) (characteristic)

Example 48 桌前两三把小沙发和一个矮茶几儿。[zhuō qián liǎng sān bǎ xiǎo shā fā hé yī gè ǎi chá jī er.]

(In front of the table are placed two or three small sofas and a short tea table.) (decoration)

Example 49 日头将没没的时候，水面一片红光，耀眼睛！[rì tóu jiāng mò bú mò de shí hòu, shuǐ miàn yī piàn hóng guāng, yào yǎn jīng!]

(The surface of the river is red and dazzling at sunset!) (scenery)

Example 50 我们这个检查站就我自己一个人。[wǒ men zhè gè jiǎn chá zhàn jiù wǒ zì jǐ yī gè rén.]

(I'm the only one at our checkpoint.) (situation)

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- 5 The sentence with noun as predicate explains the type of subject by taking “的 [de]” phrase.

Example 51 您哪个单位的? [nín nǎ gè dān wèi de?]
(Which department do you come from?)

Example 52

A: 那位同志哪儿的? [nà wèi tóng zhì nǎ er de?]
(Where does that comrade come from?)

B: 他文化部的, 搞创作的。[tā wén huà bù de, gǎo chuàng zuò de.]
(He works in Ministry of Culture, and is engaged in literary creation.)

Example 53 我们的电视十九寸的。[wǒ men de diàn shì shí jiǔ cùn de.]
(Our TV is 19 inches.)

In short, the sentence with noun as predicate is very popular in the spoken language due to its simple structure. It seldom occurs in a formal situation or in the written language.

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2 Specific types of sentences with verbs as predicate

Section one: “是 [shì]” sentence

“是 [shì]” is a relational verb to indicate affirmation and judgment.

I. Grammatical features of “是 [shì]”

1 “是 [shì]” possesses grammatical features of common verbs.

(1) “是 [shì]” can be modified by adverbs.

Example 1 这些都是新杂志。[zhè xiē dōu shì xīn zá zhì.]

(They are all new magazines.)

Example 2 他现在已经是大学生了。[tā xiàn zài yǐ jīng shì dà xué shēng le.]

(He has already been a college student.)

Example 3 这辆汽车不是我的，是我父亲的。[zhè liàng qì chē bú shì wǒ de, shì wǒ fù qīn de.]

(This car isn't mine. It is my father's.)

Example 4 你刚说的也是一种办法，可以考虑。[nǐ gāng shuō de yě shì yī zhǒng bàn fǎ, kě yǐ kǎo lǜ.]

(What you just said is also a practical method. We can take it into consideration.)

Example 5 他指的就是那一套“契诃夫小说集”。[tā zhǐ de jiù shì nà yī tào “qì hē fū xiǎo shuō jí.”]

(What he referred to is the set of *The Collected Short Stories of Chekhov*.)

(2) “是 [shì]” can be put after volitive verbs.

Example 6 这应该是一对的，怎么只有一个了？[zhè yīng gāi shì yī duì de, zěn me zhǐ yǒu yī gè le?]

(This should be a pair. How come only one is left?)

Example 7 这次考察的地区可以是西北，也可以是西南。[zhè cì kǎo chá de dì qū kě yǐ shì xī běi, yě kě yǐ shì xī nán.]

(Either the northwest area or the southwest area would be investigated.)

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Example 8 将来他会是你一个很好的帮手。[jiāng lái tā huì shì nǐ yī gè hěn hǎo de bāng shǒu.]

(He will be a good helper for you in the future.)

Example 9 这种事情能是他干出来的吗？您不能听信坏人的话。[zhè zhǒng shì qǐng néng shì tā gàn chū lái de ma? nín bù néng tīng xìn huài rén de huà.]

(How could he do such a thing? You shouldn't be confused by what the bad people said.)

- (3) “是 [shì]” can be used in both the affirmative and negative form to pose a question.

Example 10 这是不是新来的杂志？[zhè shì bú shì xīn lái de zá zhì?]

(Is this the new magazine?)

Example 11 那位老先生是不是王院长？[nà wèi lǎo xiān shēng shì bú shì Wáng yuàn zhǎng?]

(Is that old man the dean Wang?)

- (4) “是 [shì]” can function alone as predicate to answer a question.

Example 12

A: 请问这里是张大伯家吗？[qǐng wèn zhè lǐ shì Zhāng dà bó jiā ma?]
(Excuse me. Does Mr. Zhang live here?)

B: 是。[shì.]

(Yes.)

Example 13

A: 这是你翻译的文章吗？[zhè shì nǐ fān yì de wén zhāng ma?]
(Is this the passage you translated?)

B: 是。[shì.]

(Yes.)

- (5) “是 [shì]” can connect the following words to form a verb-object phrase to function as the predicate of the entire sentence.

Example 14 “阿 Q 正传”是鲁迅先生写的一部小说。[“Ā Q zhèng zhuàn” shì Lǔ Xùn xiān shēng xiě de yī bù xiǎo shuō.]

(*The Story of A Q* is a novel written by Mr. Lu Xun.)

Example 15 维纳斯是罗马神话中爱与美的女神。[Wéi nà sī shì luó mǎ shén huà zhōng ài yǔ měi de nǚ shén.]

(Venus is a goddess representing love and beauty in Roman mythology.)

Example 16 领导上的要求是节约，少花钱，多办事。[lǐng dǎo shàng de yāo qiú shì jié yuē, shǎo huā qián, duō bàn shì.]

(What the leaders expect is to spend less but do more.)

Example 17 你是干什么的? 小伙子, 看得出, 你不是干这一行的。[nǐ shì gàn shén me de? xiǎo huǒ zi, kàn de chū, nǐ bú shì gàn zhè yī háng de.] (What do you do? Young man, I can see that you are not in this business.)

- 2 “是 [shì] (is)” differs from common verbs.
 - (1) “是 [shì] (is)” cannot take complements nor dynamic auxiliary words, such as “了 [le],” “着 [zhe],” “过 [guò]” because it doesn’t indicate action. Sometimes “了 [le]” can appear at the end of sentence when it indicates occurrence of a new situation or condition. For instance, “从今天起, 我就是北京大学的学生了。[cóng jīn tiān qǐ, wǒ jiù shì běi jīng dà xué de xué shēng le.] (From now on, I am a student of Peking University.)”
 - (2) “是 [shì] (is)” is usually negated by “不 [bù/bú] (not);” in other words, “不是 [bú shì] (is not)” is its negative form.
 - (3) “是 [shì] (is)” cannot be repeatedly used. “是是 [shì shì]” is a succession of “是 [shì] (is)” as a reply, which is different from verbs in the overlapped form.
 - (4) Although “是 [shì] (is)” is a predicative verb, the sentence focuses on the object rather than “是 [shì] (is).”

In short, “是 [shì] (is)” is a frequently used verb in Chinese.

II. Structural features of “是 [shì]” sentences

Compared to other common verbs, “是 [shì] (is)” can take a wide range of words as its subject and object. In other words, almost all notional words and phrases are acceptable.

1 Noun and noun phrase

Example 18 约翰是男生, 玛丽是女生。[Yuē hàn shì nán shēng, Mǎ lì shì nǚ shēng.]

(John is a boy and Mary is a girl.)

Example 19 李四光是一位著名的地质学家。[Lǐ Sì guāng shì yī wèi zhù míng de dì zhì xué jiā.]

(Li Siguang is a well-known geologist.)

Example 20 导电性最好的金属材料是铜。[dǎo diàn xìng zuì hǎo de jīn shǔ cái liào shì tóng.]

(The best conductive metal is copper.)

2 Pronoun

Example 21 你不是我, 怎么知道我想什么? [nǐ bú shì wǒ, zěn me zhī dào wǒ xiǎng shén me?]

(You are not me. How come you know what I am thinking about?)

18 Sentences with verbs as predicate

Example 22 唐太宗李世民可不是这样，自己下得一手好围棋，还很爱护人才。[táng tài zōng Lǐ Shì mín kě bú shì zhè yàng, zì jǐ xià dé yī shǒu hǎo wéi qí, hái hěn ài hù rén cái.]

(Li Shimin, the emperor of the Tang Dynasty wasn't like that. He was good at playing chess and also cherished people's talents)

Example 23 父亲一向是那样，他说一句就是一句的。[fù qīn yī xiàng shì nà yàng, tā shuō yī jù jiù shì yī jù de.]

(Father is always like that. He means what he says.)

Example 24

A: 您是哪儿? [nín shì nǎ er?]

(Who is that speaking?)

B: 我是北京饭店。[wǒ shì běi jīng fàn diàn.]

(This is Beijing Hotel.)

3 Numerals and numeral-quantifier phrase

Example 25 十五是三的倍数，也是五的倍数。[shí wǔ shì sān de bèi shù, yě shì wǔ de bèi shù.]

(Fifteen is the multiple of three as well as of five.)

Example 26 二加二是四。[èr jiā èr shì sì.]

(Two plus two is four.)

Example 27 一千克是一公斤。[yī qiān kè shì yī gōng jīn.]

(One kilogram is equal to 1,000 grams.)

Example 28 这是第一次，也是最后一次。[zhè shì dì yī cì, yě shì zuì hòu yī cì.]

(This is the first time and also the last time.)

Example 29 二楼二门六号是张力的家。[èr lóu èr mén liù hào shì Zhāng Lì de jiā.]

(Zhang Li lives at No. 6 in Unit 2 of Building 2.)

4 Verb and verb phrase

Example 30 变化是必然的。[biàn huà shì bì rán de.]

(Change is inevitable.)

Example 31 现在，活下去是他唯一的要求。[xiàn zài, huó xià qù shì tā wéi yī de yāo qiú.]

(Now, he only wants to survive.)

Example 32 他刚说的话是故意为难我。[tā gāng shuō de huà shì gù yì wéi nán wǒ]

(He embarrassed me on purpose by saying that.)

Example 33 我们的口号是勤奋、务实、勇于创新。[wǒ men de kǒu hào shì qín fèn, wù shí, yǒng yú chuàng xīn.]

(Our slogan is diligence, practicability, and innovation.)

5 Adjective and adjective phrase

Example 34 谦虚是一种美德。[qiān xū shì yī zhǒng měi dé.]
(Modesty is regarded as a virtue.)

Example 35 进步的大敌是骄傲自满。[jìn bù de dà dí shì jiāo ào zì mǎn.]
(Complacency is the big obstacle to progress.)

6 Locational word

Example 36 后面是一个足球场。[hòu miàn shì yī gè zú qiú chǎng.]
(Behind is a football field.)

Example 37 前头是街心花园，马路南边就是火车站。[qián tóu shì jiē xīn huā yuán, mǎ lù nán biān jiù shì huǒ chē zhàn.]
(Ahead is the center garden and the railway station is at the south of the street.)

7 Time word

Example 38 1996年2月19日是春节。[yī jiǔ jiǔ liù nián èr yuè shí jiǔ rì shì chūn jié.]
(February 19 in 1996 was the Spring Festival.)

Example 39 昨天的昨天是前天。[zuó tiān de zuó tiān shì qián tiān.]
(Yesterday's yesterday is the day before yesterday.)

Example 40 二月二十六号是我的生日。[èr yuè èr shí liù hào shì wǒ de shēng rì.]
(My birthday is on February 26.)

Example 41 去年第一学期开学的日期是9月1日。[qù nián dì yī xué qī kāi xué de rì qī shì jiǔ yuè yī rì.]
(The first term of last year started on September 1.)

8 Subject-predicate phrase

Example 42 他那样做是为了快点儿完成任务。[tā nà yàng zuò shì wéi le kuài diǎn ér wán chéng rèn wù.]
(The reason he did it that way was to finish the task quickly.)

Example 43 他来晚的原因是家里来了客人。[tā lái wǎn de yuán yīn shì jiā lǐ lái le kè rén.]
(The reason why he was late was that he had a visitor at home.)

Example 44 你不发表意见是不是因为你不同意这个方案？[nǐ bù fā biào yì jiàn shì bú shì yīn wéi nǐ bù tóng yì zhè gè fāng àn?]
(Was it because of your disagreement to this plan that made you make no comments?)

Example 45 这件事不是我不管，是我管不了。[zhè jiàn shì bú shì wǒ bù guǎn, shì wǒ guǎn bù liǎo.]
(It is not because of my indifference to it, but is actually beyond my ability to do it.)

9 “的 [de]” phrase

Example 46 这件衬衫是真丝的。[zhè jiàn chèn shān shì zhēn sī de.]
(This shirt is made of pure silk.)

Example 47 这座圆形的小塔是铜的。[zhè zuò yuán xíng de xiǎo tǎ shì tóng de.]
(This little round tower is made of copper.)

Example 48 红色的运动服是我的，蓝色的是她的。[hóng sè de yùn dòng fú shì wǒ de, lán sè de shì tā de.]
(The red gym suit is mine and the blue one is hers.)

Example 49 我女儿是学医的。[wǒ nǚ ér shì xué yī de.]
(My daughter majors in medicine.)

Example 50 她丈夫是外交部的。[tā zhàng fu shì wài jiāo bù de.]
(Her husband works in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.)

III. Types and usage of “是 [shì]” sentences

According to the relation between the subject and the object, “是 [shì]” sentences can be divided into the following types.

- 1 “是 [shì]” sentences indicates equality or classification. Most subjects and objects are functioned by nouns, pronouns, numeral-quantifier phrases, or “的 [de]” phrase, based on a relation of equality or relevance. “是 [shì]” sentences can be subdivided into the following two types.
 - (1) “是 [shì]” sentences shows equality; that is to say, the subject and the object can be replaced by each other without changing the sentence’s meaning.

Example 51 一年的四个季节是春季、夏季、秋季、冬季。[yī nián de sì gè jì jié shì chūn jì, xià jì, qiū jì, dōng jì.]
(The four seasons in a year are spring, summer, autumn, and winter.)

Example 52 这篇文章的作者是王中。[zhè piān wén zhāng de zuò zhě shì Wáng Zhōng.]
(The author of this article is Wang Zhong.)

Example 53 山东省的别称是鲁。[shān dōng shěng de bié chēng shì lǔ.]
(Lu is another name for Shandong province.)

Example 54 这次唱歌比赛的第一名是王英。[zhè cì chàng gē bǐ sài de dì yī míng shì Wáng Yīng.]
(The first prize winner of the singing contest is Wang Ying.)

Example 55 一分钟是60秒，一个小时是3600秒。[yī fēn zhōng shì liù shí miǎo, yī gè xiǎo shí shì sān qiān liù bǎi miǎo.]
(A minute has 60 seconds. An hour has 3600 seconds.)

In these examples, the subjects and the objects can be replaced by each other in the definite context. That is to say, “春季、夏季、秋季、冬季是一年的四个季节。[chūn jì, xià jì, qiū jì, dōng jì shì yī nián de sì gè jì jié.] (The four seasons in a year are spring, summer, autumn, and winter.)” is acceptable; “王中是这篇文章的作者。[wáng zhōng shì zhè piān wén zhāng de zuò zhě.] (The author of this article is Wang Zhong.)” is appropriate as well. As for which one is better as the subject, it depends.

- (2) “是 [shì]” sentences show classification in which the object indicates a category and the subject as one included in it. In other words, what is indicated by the subject is included in what is indicated by the object.

Example 56 这棵树是桃树。[zhè kē shù shì táo shù.]

(This is a peach tree.)

Example 57 橘子、苹果、香蕉、菠萝等都是水果。[jú zi, píng guǒ, xiāng jiāo, bō luó dēng dōu shì shuǐ guǒ.]

(Oranges, apples, bananas, and pineapples are all fruits.)

Example 58 居里夫人是世界著名科学家。[Jū lǐ fū rén shì shì jiè zhù míng kē xué jiā.]

(Madam Curie is a world-famous scientist.)

In these examples, the subjects and the objects cannot be replaced by each other; otherwise, the meanings of the original sentences will be changed.

Besides, a “的 [de]” phrase can function as the object of a “是 [shì]” sentence, which also indicates classification but with noun omission.

Example 59 李老师是教语法的。[Lǐ lǎo shī shì jiāo yǔ fǎ de.]

(Prof. Li teaches French.)

Example 60 这台机器是绣花用的。[zhè tái jī qì shì xiù huā yòng de.]

(This machine is used for embroidery.)

Example 61 这座圆形的小塔是铜的。[zhè zuò yuán xíng de xiǎo tǎ shì tóng de.]

(This little round tower is made of copper.)

- 2 The object further explains the subject but they aren't relevant to each other. It is a specific sentence pattern in Chinese and its practical use is as follows.

- (1) To describe the character or feature of a person

Example 62 老王是个慢性子，你可得常催着他点儿。[Lǎo Wáng shì gè màn xìng zi, nǐ kě dé cháng cuī zhe tā diǎn er.]

(Lao Wang is slow so you have to hurry him up.)

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Example 63 小李是瘦高个儿。[Xiǎo Lǐ shì shòu gāo gè ér.]
(Xiao Li is thin and tall.)

Example 64 你们是知识分子的语言，他们是人民大众的语言。[nǐ men shì zhī shí fèn zǐ de yǔ yán, tā men shì rén mín dà zhòng de yǔ yán.]
(You are representatives of the intellectuals; they are from the masses.)

(2) To show time

Example 65 他们回国的日期都定了，老张是明天，老李是后天。[tā men huí guó de rì qī dōu dìng le, Lǎo Zhāng shì míng tiān, Lǎo Lǐ shì hòu tiān.]

(The dates of their return have been scheduled. Lao Zhang will come back tomorrow and Lao Li the day after tomorrow.)

Example 66 明天从学校出发是上午6:30。[míng tiān cóng xué xiào chū fā shì shàng wǔ liù diǎn sān shí.]

(The time to set off is half past six tomorrow morning.)

(3) To indicate location

Example 67 我们都住在黄河边上，他是上游，我是下游。[wǒ men dōu zhù zài huáng hé biān shàng, tā shì shàng yóu, wǒ shì xià yóu.]

(We all live by Yellow River. He lives upstream and I live downstream.)

Example 68 这次生产实习分两个地方，一班是上海，二班是杭州。[zhè cì shēng chǎn shí xí fēn liǎng gè dì fāng, yī bān shì shàng hǎi, èr bān shì háng zhōu.]

(There are two places for production internships. Class One is in Shanghai and Class Two is in Hangzhou.)

(4) To explain the role

Example 69 这次排练，罗拉是东郭先生，丁力是狼。[zhè cì pái liàn, Luó lǎ shì Dōng Guō xiān shēng, Dīng lì shì láng.]

(In this rehearsal, Laura acts as Mr. Dong Guo and Ding Li as the wolf.)

Example 70 入场式开始了，仪仗队里，男生是旗手，女生是军乐队。[rù chǎng shì kāi shǐ le, yí zhàng duì lǐ, nán shēng shì qí shǒu, nǚ shēng shì jūn yuè duì.]

(The march-in ceremony begins. Boys are standard-bearers and girls are the players in the military band.)

Example 71 他们夫妻俩都在饭店工作，儿子是厨师，儿媳妇是前台。[tā men fū qī liǎ dōu zài fàn diàn gōng zuò, ér zi shì chú shī, ér xí fù shì qián tái.]

(The couples are both working in the hotel. The son is a chef and the daughter-in-law is a receptionist.)

(5) To show belonging

Example 72 我们俩买的书不一样，他是英文课本，我是科技常识。[wǒ men liǎ mǎi de shū bù yī yàng, tā shì yīng wén kè běn, wǒ shì kē jì cháng shí.]
(We bought different books. His was English and mine was about the common sense of science and technology.)

Example 73 我们的电视机不一样，他是黑白12寸，我是彩色14寸。[wǒ men de diàn shì jī bù yī yàng, tā shì hēi bái shí èr cùn, wǒ shì cǎi sè shí sì cùn.]
(Our TVs are different. His is a 12-inch black and white one; mine is a 14-inch color one.)

(6) To indicate clothing

Example 74 解放前，他夏天总是一件破布衫。[jiě fàng qián, tā xià tiān zǒng shì yī jiàn pò bù shān.]
(Before liberation, he always wore in rags in the summer.)

Example 75 别人都是T恤牛仔，就他是西装革履。[bié rén dōu shì T xù niú zǎi, jiù tā shì xī zhuāng gé lǚ.]
(Everyone wears T-shirts and jeans, except he wears suits.)

(7) To indicate tools or means

Example 76 我们是小米加步枪，敌人是飞机加大炮。[wǒ men shì xiǎo mǐ jiā bù qiāng, dí rén shì fēi jī jiā dà pào.]
(Our soldiers only ate millet and were armed with rifles; the enemies were equipped with aircraft and cannons.)

Example 77 俺们两个村儿只隔一条河，可人家是拖拉机，俺们村还是小锄头。[ǎn men liǎng gè cūn er zhǐ gé yī tiáo hé, kě rén jiā shì tuō lā jī, ǎn men cūn hái shì xiǎo chú tóu.]
(A river divides our two villages. They have tractors but we still use hoes for farming.)

Example 78 他总是这么一辆破车。[tā zǒng shì zhè me yī liàng pò chē.]
(He always drives an old-fashioned car.)

(8) To show situation or condition

Example 79 看来，张女士是既事业有成，又家庭美满。[kàn lái, Zhāng nǚ shì shì jì shì yè yǒu chéng, yòu jiā tíng měi mǎn.]
(It seems that Ms. Zhang has both a successful career and a happy family.)

Example 80 他是到了黄河也不死心。[tā shì dào le huáng hé yě bù sǐ xīn.]
(He will never give it up.)

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Based on a certain context, some words can be added to make the subject and the object relevant to each other.

Example 81 老王是个慢性子的人。[lǎo wáng shì gè màn xìng zǐ de rén.]
(Lao Wang is a slow-paced man.)

Example 82 小李是个瘦高个儿的人。[Xiǎo Lǐ shì gè shòu gāo gè er de rén.]
(Xiao Li is a tall and thin person.)

But such an addition tends to lose the simplicity of the original sentence and makes it sound verbose.

Sometimes, “是 [shì]” can express a metaphor.

Example 83 青年们努力吧！你们是祖国的未来，祖国的希望。[qīng nián men nǔ lì ba! nǐ men shì zǔ guó de wèi lái, zǔ guó de xī wàng.]
(Work hard, young people! You are the future of the motherland.)

Example 84 时间就是生命。[shí jiān jiù shì shēng mìng.]
(Time is life.)

Example 85 王大爷您真是雪中送炭啊！该怎么谢谢您呢？[Wáng dà yé nín zhēn shì xuě zhōng sòng tàn ā! gāi zěn me xiè xiè nín ne?]
(Uncle Wang, you are really a timely helper! How can I thank you?)

Example 86 俗语说：人是铁，饭是钢。[sú yǔ shuō: rén shì tiě, fàn shì gāng.]
(As the saying goes: bread is the staff of life.)

Example 87 他的脸现在是多云转晴。[tā de liǎn xiàn zài shì duō yún zhuǎn qíng.]
(His facial expression says that he is happier now.)

To sum up, a “是 [shì]” sentence embodies economy and conciseness of Chinese because it makes good use of “是 [shì]” to make the subject and the object closely relevant. For instance, “他是足球，我是乒乓球。[tā shì zú qiú, wǒ shì pīng pāng qiú.] (He plays football; I play table tennis.)” can briefly answer the question of “你们俩喜欢什么运动？[nǐ men liǎ xǐ huān shén me yùn dòng?] (What sports do you like?).” Seemingly, such a sentence is not logical in syntactic structure but it is popular in the daily use of Chinese.

3 “是 [shì]” sentence explains a reason or explanation. The object of “是 [shì]” is mainly functioned by a verb (phrase), adjective (phrase), or prepositional phrase.

(1) To explain a reason

Example 88 我来中国学习汉语，不是旅游。[wǒ lái zhōng guó xué xí hàn yǔ, bú shì lǚ yóu.]
(I come to China to learn Chinese, not for travel.)

Example 89 你不去旅行是身体顶不下来吧? [nǐ bú qù lǚ xíng shì shēn tǐ dǐng bú xià lái ba.]

(Is it because of your health condition that you gave up traveling?)

Example 90 人家是不知道, 问问你, 没有别的意思。[rén jiā shì bù zhī dào, wèn wèn nǐ, méi yǒu bié de yì sī.]

(They asked because they didn't know it. It doesn't mean anything else.)

Example 91 他学习好是由于他有明确的学习目的。[tā xué xí hǎo shì yóu yú tā yǒu míng què de xué xí mù dì.]

(He studies well because he has a clear purpose.)

Example 92 群众敬佩她是因为她是一个踏踏实实的实干家。[qún zhòng jìng pèi tā shì yīn wéi tā shì yī gè tā tā shí shí de shí gàn jiā.]

(People admire her because she is a down-to-earth doer.)

(2) To explain a situation or condition

Example 93 白大嫂子低下头来, 这回不是生气, 而是不好意思。[Bái dà sǎo zǐ dī xià tóu lái, zhè huí bú shì shēng qì, ér shì bù hǎo yì sī.]

(Ms. White lowered her head, in embarrassment instead of annoyance this time.)

Example 94 我们对同学的要求就是刻苦钻研, 掌握好本领, 将来为祖国的四化建设贡献力量。[wǒ men duì tóng xué de yāo qiú jiù shì kè kǔ zuān yán, zhǎng wò hǎo běn lǐng, jiāng lái wèi zǔ guó de sì huà jiàn shè gòng xiàn lì liàng.]

(We require students to study assiduously, master skills well, and contribute to the country's Four Modernizations in the future.)

Example 95 他们最后一次集会是在北大。[tā men zuì hòu yī cì jí huì shì zài běi dà.]

(Their last gathering was in Peking University.)

Example 96 你这样做是根据什么? [nǐ zhè yàng zuò shì gēn jù shén me?] (What is your reason for doing so?)

(3) To explain oneself

Usually “是 [shì]” sentences consist of two clauses led by “是 [shì].”

Example 97 他的做法是进, 不是退。[tā de zuò fǎ shì jìn, bú shì tuì.] (His approach is to advance, not to retreat.)

Example 98 这种办法是快, 不是慢。[zhè zhǒng bàn fǎ shì kuài, bú shì màn.]

(This method is fast, not slow.)

Example 99 周瑜说: 这是他自己找死, 并不是我逼他。[Zhōu Yú shuō: zhè shì tā zì jǐ zhǎo sǐ, bìng bú shì wǒ bī tā.]

(Zhou Yu said: it was his courting death, not being forced by me.)

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Example 100 她不是买不起, 是不想买。[tā bú shì mǎi bù qǐ, shì bù xiǎng mǎi.]

(It is not because she cannot afford it; it is because she doesn't want to buy it.)

Example 101 不是他不努力, 是他没有能力。[bú shì tā bù nǔ lì, shì tā méi yǒu néng lì.]

(It is not because he doesn't work hard but because of his incompetence.)

In the last examples, the speaker explains himself by using “是 [shì]” clauses for affirmation and a “不是 [bú shì]” clause for negation.

(4) To explain the sentence with no subject

In the sentence with no subject, “是 [shì]” takes no subject in front and is closely followed by a nominal as object which sometimes functions as the subject of the next verb.

Example 102 是风把门吹开了。[shì fēng bǎ mén chuī kāi le.]

(It was the wind that blew the door open.)

Example 103 是乡亲们救了我们。[shì xiāng qīn men jiù le wǒ men.]

(It was the fellow villagers who saved us.)

Example 104 在我困难的时候, 是我的老师帮助了我。[zài wǒ kùn nán de shí hòu, shì wǒ de lǎo shī bāng zhù le wǒ.]

(When I was in trouble, it was my teacher who helped me out.)

Example 105 是我没说清楚, 不是你没听清楚。[shì wǒ méi shuō qīng chǔ, bú shì nǐ méi tīng qīng chǔ.]

(It is because I didn't make myself clear, not because you didn't hear me clearly.)

Example 106 是我的一句话, 惹出了麻烦。[shì wǒ de yī jù huà, rě chū le má fan.]

(It was my words that caused trouble.)

4 A “是 [shì]” sentence indicates existence with a locative or locational word as the subject. “是 [shì]” carries a meaning of existence.

Example 107 桌子上是书, 没有别的东西。[zhuō zi shàng shì shū, méi yǒu bié de dōng xī.]

(There are only books, not other stuff on the table.)

Example 108 宿舍前是一个网球场。[sù shě qián shì yī gè wǎng qiú chǎng.]

(A tennis court is in front of the dormitory.)

Example 109 山上全是枫树, 秋天是一片红。[shān shàng quán shì fēng shù, qiū tiān shì yī piàn hóng.]

(The mountain is covered with red maple trees in autumn.)

Example 110 你怎么脸上、身上都是泥? [nǐ zěn me liǎn shàng, shēn shàng dōu shì ní?]

(Why did you get mud all over your body and face?)

Example 111 早上起来,我打开窗户向外一看,树上、地上、屋顶上都是雪,好看极了。[zǎo shàng qǐ lái, wǒ dǎ kāi chuāng hù xiàng wài yī kàn, shù shàng, dì shàng, wū dǐng shàng dōu shì xuě, hǎo kàn jí le.]
(After getting up in the morning, I opened the window and saw beautiful scenery: the trees, the ground, and the roofs were covered with snow.)

Both “是 [shì]” and “有 [yǒu]” indicate existence. Differently, “是 [shì]” shows that only one thing exists in a certain space; “有 [yǒu]” means a fact that a thing or things exist in a certain space.

Example 112

A: 桌子上是什么? [zhuō zi shàng shì shén me?]

(What is on the desk?)

B: 桌子上是书。[zhuō zi shàng shì shū.]

(Books.)

Example 113

A: 桌子上有什么东西吗? [zhuō zi shàng yǒu shén me dōng xi ma?]

(Is there something on the desk?)

B: 桌子上有书,还有笔。[zhuō zi shàng yǒu shū, hái yǒu bǐ.]

(Books and pens.)

In the previous example, “是 [shì]” asks for further confirmation about what is on the desk so the answer is conducted by a “是 [shì]” sentence; “有 [yǒu]” inquires whether there is something on the desk so the answer may be conducted by “有 [yǒu]” for something or “没有 [méi yǒu]” for nothing on the table.

5 A “是 [shì]” sentence indicates description.

- (1) Pronounced slightly (with the light tone 轻声 [qīng shēng]), “是 [shì]” is put before the verb (phrase) or adjective (phrase) to indicate description of higher degree.

Example 114 小林对人是那么热情,谁都会喜欢她。[Xiǎo Lín duì rén shì nà me rè qíng, shuí dōu huì xǐ huān tā.]

(Xiao Lin is so warm to people that everyone likes her.)

Example 115 孩子们是又唱又跳,高兴得不得了。[hái zi men shì yòu chàng yòu tiào, gāo xìng dé bù dé liǎo.]

(Kids are singing and dancing with great joy.)

Example 116 他大吼了一声,声音是那么可怕,吓得旁边的孩子哭了起来。[tā dà hǒu le yī shēng, shēng yīn shì nà me kě pà, xià dé páng biān de hái zǐ kū le qǐ lái.]

(He shouted loudly. It sounded so terrifying that it frightened the kid beside him to tears.)

28 *Sentences with verbs as predicate*

Example 117 他的态度是那么诚恳，以至于本来不想买东西的人，都纷纷掏出钱来。[tā de tài dù shì nà me chéng kěn, yǐ zhì yú běn lái bù xiǎng mǎi dōng xi de rén, dōu fēn fēn tāo chū qián lái.]

(His manner was so sincere that the people who did not want to buy took out their money willingly.)

Example 118 这对她是多大的安慰呀！[zhè duì tā shì duō dà de ān wèi ya!]
(What a relief it was to her!)

- (2) “是 [shì] (is)” is pronounced with stress to affirm what has been mentioned as the known information.

Example 119

小林这个人很热情啊。[Xiǎo Lín zhè gè rén hěn rè qíng ā.]

(Xiao Lin is very warm to people.)

小林这个人是很热情。[Xiǎo Lín zhè gè rén shì hěn rè qíng.]

(Xiao Lin is indeed warm to people.)

Example 120

A: 你昨天是不是不高兴了？[nǐ zuó tiān shì bú shì bù gāo xìng le?]

(Did you feel unhappy yesterday?)

B: 昨天我是很高兴了，你怎么能当着那么多人的面说我呢？[zuó tiān wǒ shì bù gāo xìng le, nǐ zěn me néng dāng zhe nà me duō rén de miàn shuō wǒ ne?]

(Yes, I did. How could you say that about me in front of so many people?)

Example 121

A: 那个电影怎么样？不错吧？[nà gè diàn yǐng zěn me yàng? bú cuò ba?]
(How was that movie? Was it nice?)

B: 是不错。[shì bú cuò.]

(Yes, it was nice.)

- (3) “是 [shì] (is)” is used to affirm what has been said in the conversation.

Example 122

A: 发生这件事不是偶然的，是我们平时不重视思想教育的结果。[fā shēng zhè jiàn shì bú shì ǒu rán de, shì wǒ men píng shí bú zhòng shì xiǎng jiào yù de jié guǒ.]

(What happened this time wasn't a coincidence but the consequence of our ignorance of ideological education in daily life.)

B: 是，是，是这样。[shì, shì, shì zhè yàng.]

(Yes, you are quite right.)

Example 123

A: “梅表妹要结婚？”觉新惊疑地问道。[“Méi biǎo mèi yào jié hūn?” Jué Xīn jīng yí dì wèn dào.]

(“Is your cousin Mei going to get married?” Jue Xin asked wonderingly.)

B: 是。日期还没有定, 不过也很快。[shì. rì qī hái méi yǒu dìng, bú guò yě hěn kuài.]

(Yes. The exact date hasn't been scheduled but it will be very soon.)

“是啊 [shì ā] (yes)” or “是的 [shì de] (yes)” is often put at the beginning of conversation to indicate agreement or affirmation from the speaker.

Example 124 是啊! 人们是多么需要相互理解啊! 理解万岁。[shì ā! rén men shì duō me xū yào xiāng hù lǐ jiě ā! lǐ jiě wàn suì.]

(Yes, indeed! How very important it is to have mutual understanding! Long live the understanding!)

6 When the same word is repeated before and after “是 [shì] (is),” a “是 [shì]” sentence indicates the following meanings.

(1) To affirm a fact that what is indicated by the subject is included in what is indicated by the object.

Example 125 事实总是事实。[shì shí zǒng shì shì shí.]

(Facts are always facts.)

Example 126 青年就是青年, 不然, 何必要搞青年团呢? [qīng nián jiù shì qīng nián, bù rán, hé bì yào gǎo qīng nián tuán ne?]

(Youth are youth. Otherwise, why should we set up the youth league?)

Example 127 优秀生毕竟是优秀生, 在哪儿都表现得出色。[yōu xiù shēng bì jìng shì yōu xiù shēng, zài nǎ er dōu biǎo xiàn de chū sè.]

(After all, excellent students are indeed excellent. They are always outstanding wherever they are.)

Example 128 对就是对, 不对就是不对, 一定要实事求是。[duì jiù shì duì, bú duì jiù shì bú duì, yī dìng yào shí shì qiú shì.]

(Right is right; wrong is wrong. We must be practical and realistic.)

Example 129 其实, 该好就是好, 该坏就是坏, 您说, 是不是这个理? [qí shí, gāi hǎo jiù shì hǎo, gāi huài jiù shì huài, nín shuō, shì bú shì zhè gè lǐ?]

(In fact, the final result is the final result, no matter if it is good or bad. Don't you think so?)

In these examples, the subjects and the objects are simple words. To strengthen affirmation, some common adverbs often appear before “是 [shì] (is),” such as “就 [jiù] (indeed),” “总 [zǒng] (always),” “毕竟 [bì jìng] (after all),” “终归 [zhōng guī] (after all).” They are required to be pronounced with stress and cannot be omitted.

Sometimes, “是 [shì] (is)” can take the same verb or verb phrase as its subject and object at the same time.

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Example 130 懂就是懂，不懂就是不懂，不懂不要装懂。[dǒng jiù shì dǒng, bù dǒng jiù shì bù dǒng, bù dǒng bú yào zhuāng dǒng.]
(When you understand, say yes; otherwise, say no. Never do it the opposite way.)

Example 131 孩子，别怕，捡柴火就是捡柴火，什么消息不消息的。[hái zi, bié pà, jiǎn chái huǒ jiù shì jiǎn chái huǒ, shén me xiāo xī bú xiāo xī de.]
(Don't be frightened, kids. You just collected firewood and didn't know anything else.)

(2) To indicate a clear and definite plan or process

Usually, such a meaning is conveyed by the sentence consisting of two or more than two “是 [shì]” to imply established practice.

Example 132 王大嫂总是这么干净利索，头是头，脚是脚。[Wáng dà sǎo zǒng shì zhè me gān jìng lì suǒ, tóu shì tóu, jiǎo shì jiǎo.]
(Ms. Wang always does something quickly and logically.)

Example 133 这个青年人办事，丁是丁，卯是卯，不含糊。[zhè gè qīng nián rén bàn shì, dīng shì dīng, mǎo shì mǎo, bù hán hú.]
(This young man always follows established practice to direct his behaviors.)

Example 134 小张平时话语不多，可是话一说出来，一句是一句，总是说到点子上。[Xiǎo Zhāng píng shí huà yǔ bù duō, kě shì huà yī shuō chū lái, yī jù shì yī jù, zǒng shì shuō dào diǎn zǐ shàng.]
(Xiao Zhang usually says less but once he speaks, his words always make sense.)

Example 135 小明写的字真不错，一笔是一笔，横是横，竖是竖。[Xiǎo Míng xiě de zì zhēn bú cuò, yī bǐ shì yī bǐ, héng shì héng, shù shì shù.]
(Xiao Ming's handwriting is really good with well-disciplined spelling.)

Example 136 咱们应该公是公，私是私，清清楚楚。[zán men yīng gāi gōng shì gōng, sī shì sī, qīng qīng chǔ chǔ.]
(We should behave in the well-disciplined way.)

(3) To indicate concessions in an oral and euphemistic way

Before and after “是 [shì] (is)” the same verb phrase, adjective phrase, or noun phrase simultaneously appear, and then as a whole it indicates a concessive meaning; the following clause, as the main clause, indicates a transitional meaning.

Example 137 这孩子聪明是聪明，就是不知道用功。[zhè hái zi cōng míng shì cōng míng, jiù shì bù zhī dào yòng gōng.]
(Although this kid is intelligent, he doesn't work hard.)

Example 138 这个东西我有是有，可是忘了放在什么地方了。[zhè gè dōng xī wǒ yǒu shì yǒu, kě shì wàng le fàng zài shén me dì fāng le.]
(I do have it but forget where I've put it.)

In the previous two examples, a weaker tone of affirmation is obviously reflected. Moreover, the adverb “倒 [dào] (indeed)” added before “是 [shì] (is)” would make the speaking tone much softer.

Example 139 这孩子聪明倒是聪明，就是不知道用功。[zhè hái zi cōng míng dào shì cōng míng, jiù shì bù zhī dào yòng gōng.]
(This kid is indeed intelligent but he doesn't work hard.)

Sometimes, the words before and after “是 [shì] (is)” may differ a little bit in form.

Example 140 这种笔的样子好看是挺好看，就是笔尖太粗。[zhè zhǒng bǐ de yàng zi hǎo kàn shì tǐng hǎo kàn, jiù shì bǐ jiān tài cū.]
(Good-looking as this pen is, its tip is too thick.)

Example 141 这种汽车跑得快是快点儿，可是费油。[zhè zhǒng qì chē pǎo dé kuài shì kuài diǎn ér, kě shì fèi yóu.]
(Fast as this car runs, it costs a lot in gas.)

- 7 A “是 [shì]” sentence shows no exception “for everything” with a stress on “是 [shì] (is)” in pronunciation.

Example 142 这点事是个人都会做。[zhè diǎn shì shì gè rén dōu huì zuò.]
(Anyone of such minor importance can do it.)

This example implies that “it is easy to do it.”

Example 143 他这个人，是节目就想看。[tā zhè gè rén, shì jié mù jiù xiǎng kàn.]
(He is not picky about any TV programs.)

This implies that “he likes watching any TV programs.”

- 8 A “是 [shì]” sentence is used as a response of the listener to the speaker, conveying the listener's agreement and obedience.

Example 144 她快活地应了一声“是”，便迈着轻快的脚步走到外面去了。[tā kuài huó de yīng le yī shēng “shì” biàn mài zhe qīng kuài de jiǎo bù zǒu dào wài miàn qù le.]
(She replied “yes” cheerily, and then went out with a light step.)

Example 145

A: 你快去吧！[nǐ kuài qù ba!]

(Hurry up!)

B: 是，是。[shì, shì.]

(O.K.)

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Example 146

A: 你给我滚出去! [nǐ gěi wǒ gǔn chū qù!]

(You get the hell out of here!)

B: 是。[shì.]

(O.K.)

In the aforementioned examples, “是 [shì] (is)” means obedience, which seldom occurs in daily life but often happens in the special situations, such as in the army or the prison.

- 9 “是 [shì] (is)” appears before “时候 [shí hòu] (time)” or “地方 [dì fāng] (place)” to indicate “合适 [hé shì] (proper)” or “正好 [zhèng hǎo] (proper).”

Example 147 你来得是时候, 我们正想给你打电话, 叫你开会呢。[nǐ lái dé shì shí hòu, wǒ men zhèng xiǎng gěi nǐ dǎ diàn huà, jiào nǐ kāi huì ne.]

(You came just in time. We are going to call you to attend the meeting.)

Example 148 这个花盆摆得不是地方, 一不小心就会被踢翻。[zhè gè huā pén bǎi dé bú shì dì fāng, yī bù xiǎo xīn jiù huì bèi tī fān.]

(This flowerpot is misplaced and it can be kicked over easily by accident.)

Example 149 你的汽车停得不是地方, 叫交警拖走了。[nǐ de qì chē tíng de bú shì dì fāng, jiào jiāo jǐng tuō zǒu le.]

(You parked the car in the wrong area so it was moved away by the traffic police.)

Example 150 你的话说得不是时候, 人家正在发愁, 这不等于火上浇油嘛! [nǐ de huà shuō de bú shì shí hòu, rén jiā zhèng zài fā chóu, zhè bù děng yú huǒ shàng jiāo yóu ma!]

(You said the wrong words at the wrong time, which would stimulate him to be more worried than before!)

Example 151 这场台风来得很是时候, 我留你多住一天, 你说一定要走, 现在好了, 大风把你留下来了。[zhè chǎng tái fēng lái dé hěn shì shí hòu, wǒ liú nǐ duō zhù yī tiān, nǐ shuō yī dìng yào zǒu, xiàn zài hǎo le, dà fēng bǎ nǐ liú xià lái le.]

(The typhoon happened at the right time. It would keep you for another day here, just as what I expected.)

IV. The interrogative form of “是 [shì]” sentences

- 1 The interrogative auxiliary word “吗 [ma]” is added at the end of “是 [shì]” sentences.

Example 152 你是留学生吗? [nǐ shì liú xué shēng ma?]

(Are you an international student?)

Example 153 对不起, 请问, 您是张先生吗? [duì bù qǐ, qǐng wèn, nín shì Zhāng xiān shēng ma?]
(Excuse me, are you Mr. Zhang?)

- 2 The combination of “是 [shì]” and “不是 [bú shì]” is used to indicate interrogation.

Example 154 你是不是留学生? [nǐ shì bú shì liú xué shēng?]
(Are you an international student or not?)

Example 155 对不起, 请问, 您是不是张先生? [duì bù qǐ, qǐng wèn, nín shì bú shì Zhāng xiān shēng?]
(Excuse me, are you Mr. Zhang or not?)

Sometimes, “不是 [bú shì] (not)” can be moved to the end of “是 [shì]” sentence.

Example 156 你是留学生不是? [nǐ shì liú xué shēng bú shì?]
(Are you an international student?)

Example 157 对不起, 请问, 您是张先生不是? [duì bù qǐ, qǐng wèn, nín shì Zhāng xiān shēng bú shì?]
(Excuse me, are you Mr. Zhang or not?)

- 3 “是不是 [shì bú shì]” is fixed as an interrogative format and can be put at the head or the end of the sentence. Or it may appear before the predicate.

Example 158 是不是我们明天开始放假? [shì bú shì wǒ men míng tiān kāi shǐ fàng jià?]
(Shall a vacation start tomorrow?)

Example 159 我们是不是明天开始放假? [wǒ men shì bú shì míng tiān kāi shǐ fàng jià?]
(Does our vacation start tomorrow?)

Example 160 我们明天开始放假, 是不是? [wǒ men míng tiān kāi shǐ fàng jià, shì bú shì?]
(Our vacation starts tomorrow, doesn't it?)

Example 161 毕业后你要搞翻译工作, 是不是? [bì yè hòu nǐ yào gǎo fān yì gōng zuò, shì bú shì?]
(You are going to engage in translation after graduation, aren't you?)

Example 162 咱们企业的信誉才值十万元, 是不是太便宜了? [zán men qǐ yè de xìn yù cái zhí shí wàn yuán, shì bú shì tài pián yí le?]
(Is the credit of our enterprise just worth 100,000 yuan? Isn't it too cheap?)

Example 163 他最近身体不好, 是不是? [tā zuì jìn shēn tǐ bù hǎo, shì bú shì?]
(He hasn't been well lately, has he?)

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Example 164 这种生产方式是不是有点儿落后? [zhè zhǒng shēng chǎn fāng shì shì bú shì yǒu diǎn ér luò hòu?]
(Is this mode of production a little bit backward?)

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Section two: “有 [yǒu]” sentences

As a non-action verb, “有 [yǒu]” basically means existence or occupation rather than an action or behavior. The sentence that takes “有 [yǒu]” as the predicate verb is called a “有 [yǒu]” sentence.

I. Grammatical features of “有 [yǒu]”

1 The interrogative form of “有 [yǒu]”

“有 [yǒu]” cannot be modified by the interrogative adverb “不 [bù/bú] (not),” such as “*我不有书。” “没 [méi] (no)” can be put before “有 [yǒu]” to indicate interrogation, such as “我没有这本书。[wǒ méi yǒu zhè běn shū.]” in which “有 [yǒu]” can be absent sometimes. When “没有 [méi yǒu] (no)” doesn’t take any object in the sentence, “有 [yǒu]” cannot be omitted.

Example 1

A: 你有这本书吗? [nǐ yǒu zhè běn shū ma?]

(Have you got this book?)

B: 我没有。[wǒ méi yǒu.]

(No, I haven’t.)

“无 [wú]” is an alternative for the interrogative form of “有 [yǒu],” such as “无源之水, 无本之木 [wú yuán zhī shuǐ, wú běn zhī mù] (water without a source

like a tree without roots),” “无的放矢 [wú dì fàng shǐ] (shoot at random),” which often occur in idioms or the written language.

- 2 “有 [yǒu]” can come after volitive verbs directly if they can match each other in meaning.

Example 2 能有这样的事吗? [néng yǒu zhè yàng de shì ma?]
(Can it be possible for such a thing?)

Example 3 农民可以有自留地。[nóng mín kě yǐ yǒu zì liú dì.]
(Farmers can have private plots.)

Example 4 你会有好运气的。[nǐ huì yǒu hǎo yùn qì de.]
(You will have good luck.)

- 3 Generally speaking, “有 [yǒu]” cannot be used repeatedly.
- 4 “有 [yǒu]” cannot be followed by any complement.
- 5 “有 [yǒu]” cannot be modified alone by the degree adverb, such as “*他很有 [tā hěn yǒu].” But the structure “有 [yǒu]+attribute+object” can accept “很 [hěn]” in front.

Example 5 这几年我很有些处事为人的经验了。[zhè jǐ nián wǒ hěn yǒu xiē chù shì wéi rén de jīng yàn le.]
(I've gained some experience on how to deal with people over the years.)

Example 6 这个工厂很有几个敢想敢干的人。[zhè gè gōng chǎng hěn yǒu jǐ gè gǎn xiǎng gǎn gàn de rén.]
(There are quite a few people in this factory who have the courage to think and act.)

II. Meanings and usage of “有 [yǒu]”

- 1 “有 [yǒu]” indicates “existence” or “possession.”

A “有 [yǒu]” sentence indicates “领有 [lǐng yǒu] (possess)” or “具有 [jù yǒu] (possess),” both the subject and the object of which are the nouns for general things. And what they exactly mean varies by the relationship between them.

- (1) The object of “有 [yǒu]” indicates a part of what the subject means in the sentence.

Example 7 人人都有两只手。[rén rén dōu yǒu liǎng zhī shǒu.]
(Everyone has two hands.)

Example 8 这座桥有两层。[zhè zuò qiáo yǒu liǎng céng.]
(The bridge has two floors.)

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Example 9 植物有根、茎、叶几部分。[zhí wù yǒu gēn, jīng, yè jǐ bù fēn.]
(Plants have roots, stems, and leaves.)

- (2) A sense of possession exists between the subject and the object.

Example 10 我有一辆摩托车。[wǒ yǒu yī liàng mó tuō chē.]
(I have a motorbike.)

Example 11 张老师有很多书。[Zhāng lǎo shī yǒu hěn duō shū.]
(Prof. Zhang has many books.)

Example 12 我有两个孩子。[wǒ yǒu liǎng gè hái zǐ.]
(I have two children.)

Example 13 阿里有一台计算机。[Ā Lǐ yǒu yī tái jì suàn jī.]
(A Li has a computer.)

In these examples, “有 [yǒu]” cannot be modified by degree adverbs, such as “很 [hěn] (very)” and “非常 [fēi cháng] (very).” For instance, “*您很有孩子。[nín hěn yǒu hái zǐ.]” “*他非常有房子。[tā fēi cháng yǒu fáng zǐ.]”

- (3) The object shows a certain property of the subject and the object is mainly served by an abstract noun.

Example 14 教书这个工作很有意义。[jiāo shū zhè gè gōng zuò hěn yǒu yì yì.]
(Teaching is a meaningful job.)

Example 15 想不到吸烟会有这么大的危害。[xiǎng bú dào xī yān huì yǒu zhè me dà de wēi hài.]
(I have never thought that smoking would be so harmful.)

Example 16 干这种事要有决心和勇气啊。[gàn zhè zhǒng shì yào yǒu jué xīn hé yǒng qì ā.]
(It takes determination and courage to do such the thing.)

Example 17 对做好这个工作你有信心吗? [duì zuò hǎo zhè gè gōng zuò nǐ yǒu xìn xīn ma?]
(Do you have confidence in doing the job well?)

Example 18 这些年轻人都很有干劲，也有实事求是的精神。[zhè xiē nián qīng rén dōu hěn yǒu gàn jìn, yě yǒu shí shì qiú shì de jīng shén.]
(These young people have the strong motivation and the spirit of seeking truth from facts.)

“有 [yǒu]” can connect certain nouns to form special grammaticalized phrases whose function is similar to an adjective, such as “多 [duō] (many/much),” “大 [dà] (big),” or “远 [yuǎn] (far).” Such phrases imply affirmative or positive meanings.

Example 19 这个人很有前途。[zhè gè rén hěn yǒu qián tú.]

(This man has a bright future.)

Example 20 小马这个青年有头脑，有眼光。[Xiǎo Mǎ zhè gè qīng nián yǒu tóu nǎo, yǒu yǎn guāng.]

(Xiao Ma is a smart young man with a good taste.)

Example 21 老王师傅很有经验，工作上很有办法。[Lǎo Wáng shī fù hěn yǒu jīng yàn, gōng zuò shàng hěn yǒu bàn fǎ.]

(Mr. Wang is a very experienced worker master who can solve problems effectively.)

- (4) What the object represents is connected with what the subject shows by a certain relation.

Example 22 我从来没有个亲人，真想永远和你在一起。[wǒ cóng lái méi yǒu gè qīn rén, zhēn xiǎng yǒng yuǎn hé nǐ zài yī qǐ.]

(I have no family relations so I really wish I could be with you forever!)

Example 23 老教授一共有四位助手，他们正在研究一个新课题。[lǎo jiào shòu yī gòng yǒu sì wèi zhù shǒu, tā men zhèng zài yán jiū yī gè xīn kè tí.]

(The senior professor has four assistants, and they are carrying out research on a new task.)

Example 24 太阳有九大行星。[tài yáng yǒu jiǔ dà xíng xīng.]

(The sun has nine planets.)

Example 25 我们有了这样的好领导，工作一定会有起色。[wǒ men yǒu le zhè yàng de hǎo lǐng dǎo, gōng zuò yī dìng huì yǒu qǐ sè.]

(With such a good leader, our work is bound to improve.)

The following sentences are excerpted from “Qie Shuo Wu Li” written by Lao She (1899–1966), a famous Chinese writer, in which “有 [yǒu]” differently implies a general meaning of possession.

Example 26 . . . 他有钱、有汽车、有儿女、有姨太太，有古玩，有可作摆设用的书籍。 . . . [tā yǒu qián, yǒu qì chē, yǒu ér nǚ, yǒu yí tài tai, yǒu gǔ wán, yǒu kě zuò bǎi shè yòng dē shū jí . . .]

(. . . he has money, cars, children, concubines, antiques, and books for display . . .)

Example 27 . . . 有名望，有身份，有一串可以印在名片上与讣闻上的官衔， . . . [yǒu míng wàng, yǒu shēn fèn, yǒu yī chuàn kě yǐ yìn zài míng piàn shàng yǔ bù wén shàng de guān xián, . . .]

(. . . he has got reputation and status, as well as the various titles that can be printed on business cards and in obituaries, . . .)

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2 “有 [yǒu]” indicates “existence.”

The word at the head of the “有 [yǒu]” sentence is usually a locational word or time word, referring to an existential thing. “有 [yǒu]” sentences of such kind indicate a certain person in a certain location, or a thing existing in a certain period of time.

Example 28 屋里有人。[wū lǐ yǒu rén.]

(Someone is in the house.)

Example 29 蓝蓝的天空没有一点云彩。[lán lán de tiān kōng méi yǒu yī diǎn yún cǎi.]

(Not a cloud can be seen in the blue sky.)

Example 30 唐代有个诗人，名叫贾岛。[táng dài yǒu gè shī rén, míng jiào Jiǎ Dǎo.]

(A poet named Jia Dao lived in the Tang Dynasty.)

Example 31 现在离上课还有一刻钟。[xiàn zài lí shàng kè hái yǒu yī kè zhōng.]

(The class will begin in a quarter of an hour.)

Sometimes, the adverbial of a “有 [yǒu]” sentence is functioned by a prepositional phrase, consisting of a locational word and a preposition in front which indicates a location.

Example 32 在墙角有一个大铁桶。[zài qiǎng jiǎo yǒu yī gè dà tiě tǒng.]

(A big iron pail stands at the corner.)

Example 33 靠窗户有一把竹椅子。[kào chuāng hù yǒu yī bǎ zhú yǐ zǐ.]

(There is a bamboo chair by the window.)

In a definite context, the subject of “有 [yǒu]” can be absent.

Example 34 “有情况!” 他猛地站起来向门外奔去。[“yǒu qíng kuàng!” tā měng dì zhàn qǐ lái xiàng mén wài bēn qù.]

(Something happened! He sprang to his feet and ran out of the door.)

Example 35 玉宝喊了声：“有贼!” 伙计们拿着木棍都跑出去了。[Yù Bǎo hǎn le shēng: “yǒu zéi!” huǒ jì men ná zhe mù gùn dōu pǎo chū qù le.]

(Yu Bao shouted: “Thief!”, and then the fellow workers ran out with wooden sticks.)

Example 36 记住，小燕，没有克服不了的困难，也没有解决不了的问题。[jì zhù, Xiǎo Yàn, méi yǒu kè fú bù liǎo de kùn nán, yě méi yǒu jiě jué bù liǎo de wèn tí.]

(Xiao Yan, you have to remember that there is nothing too difficult to be overcome, or the problems too hard to be solved.)

Sometimes, “有 [yǒu]+noun” can replace the subject that cannot be spoken or is unnecessarily mentioned.

Example 37 有风，你看蜡烛总在跳动！[yǒu fēng, nǐ kàn là zhú zǒng zài tiào dòng!]

(Look. The candlelight is swaying in the wind.)

Example 38 有你的电话。[yǒu nǐ de diàn huà.]

(You are wanted on the phone.)

Example 39 有电！危险。[yǒu diàn! wēi xiǎn.]

(Be careful of electricity!)

The noun for an existential thing can also be put before “有 [yǒu]” as the subject.

Example 40 我们日里到海边捡贝壳去，红的绿的都有，鬼见怕也有，观音手也有。[wǒ men rì lǐ dào hǎi biān jiǎn bèi ké qù, hóng de lǜ de dōu yǒu, guǐ jiàn pà yě yǒu, guān yīn shǒu yě yǒu.]

(In the daytime we went to the seaside to pick up seashells. They are in different colors such as red and green, and of different shapes, including Gui Jian Pa and Guan Yin Shou, small seashells in a special shape.)

Example 41 这是菜单，中餐、西餐都有。[zhè shì cài dān, zhōng cān, xī cān dōu yǒu.]

(This is the menu for both Chinese and Western food.)

Example 42 这些花布花样虽然一样，但颜色不同：红的、蓝的、绿的都有。[zhè xiē huā bù huā yàng suī rán yī yàng, dàn yán sè bù tóng: hóng de, lán de, lǜ de dōu yǒu.]

(Although the patterns of these clothes are the same, they have different colors such as red, blue, and green.)

Example 43 这种事永远都会有。[zhè zhǒng shì yǒng yuǎn dōu huì yǒu.]

(Such a thing often happens.)

Example 44 她哥哥姐姐都有，她是老三。[tā gē gē jiě jiě dōu yǒu, tā shì lǎo sān.]

(She has a brother and a sister. She is the third child.)

In this case, the subject is often served by coordinate nouns (phrases) or “的 [de]” phrases; the adverb, such as “都 [dōu] (all)” or “也 [yě] (also),” is usually required in front of “有 [yǒu]” but no object is allowed to follow it. Such a sentence emphasizes the existential things mentioned.

3 “有 [yǒu]” indicates “occurrence and appearance.”

Usually, the disyllabic verb functions as the object of “有 [yǒu]” to indicate change or development.

Example 45 在工农业发展的基础上，人民的生活水平有了很大提高。[zài gōng nóng yè fā zhǎn de jī chǔ shàng, rén mín de shēng huó shuǐ píng yǒu le hěn dà tí gāo.]

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(The people's living standard has improved greatly with the development of industry and agriculture.)

Example 46 近年来, 中小学教育也有了很大发展。[jìn nián lái, zhōng xiǎo xué jiào yù yě yǒu le hěn dà fā zhǎn.]

(Primary and secondary school education has made great progress in recent years.)

Example 47 经过同志们的批评帮助, 他的思想有了一些转变。[jīng guò tóng zhì men de pī píng bāng zhù, tā de sī xiǎng yǒu le yī xiē zhuǎn biàn.]

(Thanks to the advice and help from the comrades, his thoughts have somewhat changed.)

Example 48 几年没见, 你跟以前一样, 没有什么变化。[jǐ nián méi jiàn, nǐ gēn yǐ qián yī yàng, méi yǒu shén me biàn huà.]

(I haven't seen you for years. You are as the same as before with nothing changed.)

Example 49 小明经过一段时间的勤学苦练, 学习上有了明显的进步。

[Xiǎo Míng jīng guò yī duàn shí jiān de qín xué kǔ liàn, xué xí shàng yǒu le míng xiǎn de jìn bù.]

(After a period of working hard, Xiao Ming has made remarkable progress in his study.)

4 “有 [yǒu]” indicates “include.”

There are three situations for this.

- (1) What is indicated by the object belongs to the category or type of what is shown by the subject. Usually, “有 [yǒu]” takes more than one object for enumeration with a total number as a conclusion.

Example 50 人造纤维有粘胶纤维、铜氨纤维和醋酸纤维等。[rén zào xiān wéi yǒu zhān jiāo xiān wéi, tóng ān xiān wéi hé cù suān xiān wéi děng.]

(The synthetic fiber includes viscose fiber, copper ammonia fiber, acetic acid fiber, and so on.)

Example 51 云的种类很多, 有卷云、积云、层云等。[yún de zhǒng lèi hěn duō, yǒu juǎn yún, jī yún, céng yún děng.]

(There are various kinds of clouds, such as cirrus, cumulus, stratus, and so on.)

Example 52 这位植物学家收集了60000号植物标本, 大约有5000多种。[zhè wèi zhí wù xué jiā shōu jí le liù wàn hào zhí wù biāo běn, dà yǒu yǒu wǔ qiān duō zhǒng.]

(The botanist has a collection of 60,000 herbariums of more than 5,000 species.)

Example 53 今天参加座谈会的有工人、学生、干部、教师等各方面的代表二十多人。[jīn tiān cān jiā zuò tán huì de yǒu gōng rén, xué shēng, gàn bù, jiào shī děng gè fāng miàn de dài biǎo èr shí duō rén.]

(Today, more than 20 representatives of workers, students, cadres, and teachers attended the symposium.)

Example 54 “人民画报”有英文版的、法文版的、日文版的等好几十种。[“rén mín huà bào” yǒu yīng wén bǎn de, fǎ wén bǎn de, rì wén bǎn de děng hǎo jǐ shí zhǒng.]

(“China Pictorial” has dozens of translation versions, including English, French, Japanese, and so on.)

(2) Two or more than two “有 [yǒu]” are used for enumeration.

Example 55 人们在社会实践中从事各项斗争，有了丰富的经验，有成功的，有失败的。[rén men zài shè huì shí jiàn zhōng cóng shì gè xiàng dòu zhēng, yǒu le fēng fù de jīng yàn, yǒu chéng gōng de, yǒu shī bài de.]

(People have gained the rich experience of success or the lack of success from various activities of social practice.)

Example 56 来客也不少，有送行李的，有拿东西的，有送行兼拿东西的。[lái kè yě bù shǎo, yǒu sòng xíng lí de, yǒu ná dōng xī de, yǒu sòng xíng jiān ná dōng xī de.]

(There are many visitors, some sending luggage, some fetching stuff, some seeing others off as well as fetching stuff.)

Example 57 他的书包总是装得鼓鼓的，有书，有本儿，有杂志，还有一卷报纸。[tā de shū bāo zǒng shì zhuāng de gǔ gǔ de, yǒu shū, yǒu běn er, yǒu zá zhì, hái yǒu yī juǎn bào zhǐ.]

(His schoolbag is always full of books, exercise books, magazines, and a roll of newspaper.)

Example 58 每天早上，操场上锻炼的人多极了，有跑的，有跳的，有打球的，还有练太极拳的。[měi tiān zǎo shàng, cāo chǎng shàng duàn liàn de rén duō jí le, yǒu pǎo de, yǒu tiào de, yǒu dǎ qiú de, hái yǒu liàn tài jí quán de.]

(Every morning, many people are doing various exercises on the playground, such as running, jumping, playing ball games, or practicing taijiquan.)

Usually, the former part of such a “有 [yǒu]” sentence narrates and the latter part enumerates.

(3) The object of “有 [yǒu]” is functioned by a numeral-quantifier phrase or noun phrase consisting of a numeral-quantifier phrase to indicate a total number mentioned by the subject. Thus, the numbers of things represented by both are equal.

Example 59 一年有十二个月。[yī nián yǒu shí èr gè yuè.]

(There are twelve months in a year.)

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Example 60 一个星期有七天。[yī gè xīng qī yǒu qī tiān.]
(There are seven days in a week.)

Example 61 这本书有三百多页。[zhè běn shū yǒu sān bǎi duō yè.]
(This book has more than three hundred pages.)

Example 62 “人”字有两划，一撇一捺。[“rén” zì yǒu liǎng huà, yī piě yī nà.]
(The Chinese character “人 [rén] (human)” has two strokes, with one stroke to the left and the other to the right.)

5 “有 [yǒu]” indicates “reach to.”

It often refers to estimation or comparison.

(1) For estimation

The numeral-quantifier phrase, plus the adjective for the property of what is estimated, functions as the object of “有 [yǒu]” to indicate estimation.

Example 63 (我看)他大约有三十多岁。[(wǒ kàn) tā dà yuē yǒu sān shí duō suì.]
(I guess he is about in his thirties.)

Example 64 有的石头一块就有两千多斤(重)呢! [yǒu de shí tóu yī kuài jiù yǒu liǎng qiān duō jīn (zhòng) ne!]
(Each of these stones weighs more than two thousand jin!)

Example 65 那条河有五百米(宽)。[nà tiáo hé yǒu wǔ bǎi mǐ(kuān).]
(The river covers 500 meters in width.)

Example 66 那段路有三十米宽，四百米长，两边都是树。[nà duàn lù yǒu sān shí mǐ kuān, sì bǎi mǐ cháng, liǎng biān dōu shì shù.]
(That road is 30 meters wide and 400 meters long with trees on both sides.)

Example 67 我学习汉语有六个月了。[wǒ xué xí hàn yǔ yǒu liù gè yuè le.]
(I have learnt Chinese for six months.)

In these examples, “有 [yǒu]” is the predicate verb. The adjective cannot function alone as its object without being followed by a numeral-quantifier phrase such as “*有高 [yǒu gāo].” Generally, the positive adjectives are appropriate, such as “长 [cháng] (long),” “宽 [kuān] (wide),” “高 [gāo] (high),” “粗 [cū] (thick),” “大 [dà] (big),” “重 [zhòng] (heavy),” “深 [shēn] (deep);” the passive ones are inappropriate, including “短 [duǎn] (short),” “窄 [zhǎi] (narrow),” “矮 [ǎi] (short),” “细 [xì] (thin),” “小 [xiǎo] (small),” “轻 [qīng] (light),” “浅 [qiǎn] (shallow).” The negative form is “没(有) [méi (yǒu)] (no),” indicating “fail to reach to a certain measurement.”

Example 68 这块布没有两米长，最多不过1.70米。[zhè kuài bù méi yǒu liǎng mǐ cháng, zuì duō bú guò yī diǎn qī mǐ.]
(This piece of cloth doesn’t have two meters in length but 1.7 meters at most.)

Example 69 从北京到天津没有500里。[cóng běi jīng dào tiān jīn méi yǒu wǔ bǎi lǐ.]

(The distance between Beijing and Tianjin is no more than 500 li.)

Example 70 我学习汉语还没三个月呢。[wǒ xué xí hàn yǔ hái méi sān gè yuè ne.]

(I have been learning Chinese for no more than three months.)

In these examples, “不到 [bú dào] (don't reach to)” is another alternative of “没有 [méi yǒu] (no)” for negation.

(2) For comparison

The word plus an adjective functions as the object of “有 [yǒu]” to represent a certain comparison standard. “有 [yǒu]” means that the standard is reached; “没有 [méi yǒu] (no)” means the opposite.

Example 71 那个教室有这个教室大吗? [nà gè jiào shì yǒu zhè gè jiào shì dà ma?]

(Is that classroom as big as this one?)

Example 72 那个教室没有这个教室这么大。[nà gè jiào shì méi yǒu zhè gè jiào shì zhè me dà.]

(That classroom is not as big as this one.)

Example 73 我的小女儿有桌子高了。[wǒ de xiǎo nǚ ér yǒu zhuō zi gāo le.]

(My little daughter is as tall as a desk.)

Example 74 这个游泳池的水没有一人深。[zhè gè yóu yǒng chí de shuǐ méi yǒu yī rén shēn.]

(This swimming pool is not beyond a man's height in depth.)

Example 75 弟弟没有妹妹那么爱学习。[dì dì méi yǒu mèi mèi nà me ài xué xí.]

(The younger brother doesn't study as hard as his younger sister.)

“有 [yǒu]” can form the sentence with serial verbs or the sentence with bi-constituents.

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Section three: sentences with serial verbs

I. What are sentences with serial verbs?

It refers to the sentence that takes the predicate consisting of two or more than two successive verbs. With no pause nor conjunction among them, they share one subject.

Example 1 我去问。[wǒ qù wèn.]
(I'll go to ask.)

Example 2 他们结了账搬走了。[tā men jié le zhàng bān zǒu le.]
(They settled their accounts and moved away.)

Example 3 鲁班含着眼泪告别了师傅。[Lǚ Bān hán zhe yǎn lèi gào bié le shī fù.]
(With tears in his eyes, Lu Ban said goodbye to his master worker.)

Example 4 中国人用筷子吃饭。[zhōng guó rén yòng kuài zi chī fàn.]
(Chinese eat with chopsticks.)

Example 5 对于这件事，他始终保持沉默不说话。[duì yú zhè jiàn shì, tā shǐ zhōng bǎo chí chén mò bù shuō huà.]
(He remained silent about the matter.)

Or, the predicate is constructed by a succession of verbs and adjectives or in the opposite order.

Example 6 大家听了这个消息都非常高兴。[dà jiā tīng le zhè gè xiāo xī dōu fēi cháng gāo xìng.]
(Everyone was extremely delighted at the news.)

Example 7 他急着说：“你别走！”[tā jí zhe shuō: “nǐ bié zǒu!”]
(“Don't go,” he said urgently.)

The succession of two verbal phrases is semantically characterized by the logic sequence rather than coordination, subject-predicate, verb-object, and adverbial-verb.

Example 8 他站起来走过去开门。[tā zhàn qǐ lái zǒu guò qù kāi mén.]
(He stood up to open the door.)

In this example, the successive actions conveyed by verbal phrases are “站起来 [zhàn qǐ lái] (stand up),” “走过去 [zǒu guò qù] (go),” and “开门 [kāi mén] (open the door).”

Example 9 老伴去世后，常大爷每天自己买菜做饭吃。[lǎo bàn qù shì hòu, Cháng dà yé měi tiān zì jǐ mǎi cài zuò fàn chī.]
(Mr. Chang, an old man, has to cook for himself everyday after his wife passed away.)

In the previous example, “买菜 [mǎi cài] (buy vegetables)” is the precondition of “做饭 [zuò fàn] (cook)” and “做饭 [zuò fàn] (cook)” is the precondition of “吃[chī] (eat),” which are connected by a logic sequence.

II. Types of sentences with serial verbs

According to the semantic meaning between two successive verbs (phrases), the sentence with serial verbs can be divided into the following types.

- 1 When the second action or situation happens, the first one has been finished.

Example 10 孩子们听完故事哈哈大笑起来。[hái zǐ men tīng wán gù shì hā hā dà xiào qǐ lái.]

(The children burst into laughter after hearing the story.)

Example 11 他们吃过晚饭散步去了。[tā men chī guò wǎn fàn sàn bù qù le.]

(They went for a walk after supper.)

Example 12 无数辆汽车通过宽阔的公路桥开往四面八方。[wú shù liàng qì chē tōng guò kuān kuò de gōng lù qiáo kāi wǎng sì miàn bā fāng.]

(Countless cars ran across the broad bridge and headed all directions.)

Example 13 王师傅接过小模型看了一会说：“行啊!” [Wáng shī fu jiē guò xiǎo mó xíng kàn le yī huì shuō: “xíng ā!”]

(The master worker Wang took over the small model and looked at it for a while, and then he said, “Well done!”)

Example 14 我们从广播里听了这一噩耗难过极了。[wǒ men cóng guǎng bō lǐ tīng le zhè yī è hào nán guò jí le.]

(We were very sorry to hear this grievous news on the radio.)

Usually the result complement follows the first verb to indicate a result. Or it is followed by “了 [le]” or “过 [guò]” to indicate what has been experienced or finished.

- 2 The action conveyed by the second verb (phrase) is the purpose of the action indicated by the first verb (phrase).

Example 15

A: 你来干什么? [nǐ lái gàn shén me?]

(What are you doing here?)

B: 我来缴电费和房租。[wǒ lái jiǎo diàn fèi hé fáng zū.]

(I came here to pay the electricity bill and the rent.)

In this example, “干什么 [gàn shén me] (what to do)” and “缴电费和房租 [jiǎo diàn fèi hé fáng zū] (pay the electricity bill and the rent)” are the purpose of “来 [lái] (come here).”

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Example 16 我们去商店买东西。[wǒ men qù shāng diàn mǎi dōng xī.]
(We went shopping.)

Example 17 他去小酒店喝了点儿酒。[tā qù xiǎo jiǔ diàn hē le diǎn er jiǔ.]
(He went to the pub for a drink.)

Example 18 文清，你又把那灯点起来干什么？[Wén Qīng, nǐ yòu bǎ nà dēng diǎn qǐ lái gàn shén me?]
(Wen Qing, why did you light the lamp again?)

Example 19 阿里要到机场去接代表团。[Ā Lǐ yào dào jī chǎng qù jiē dài biǎo tuán.]
(A Li is going to meet the delegation at the airport.)

Example 20 暑假，我们一定回来看望您。[shǔ jià, wǒ men yī dìng huí lái kàn wàng nín.]
(We promise to come back and visit you during the summer vacation.)

It can be seen from the last examples that the first verbal phrase often includes “来 [lái] (come)” or “去 [qù] (go).”

Sometimes, “来 [lái]” doesn’t actually indicate what it literally means. In fact, it is a way of showing a wish and softening the tone of speaking.

Example 21 我们开个联欢会来欢迎新同学。[wǒ men kāi gè lián huān huì lái huān yíng xīn tóng xué.]
(We want to hold a get-together party to welcome new students.)

Example 22 我来谈谈。[wǒ lái tán tán.]
(Let me talk about it.)

Example 23 我们的报纸也要靠大家来办，而不能只靠少数人关起门来办。[wǒ men de bào zhǐ yě yào kào dà jiā lái bàn, ér bù néng zhǐ kào shǎo shù rén guān qǐ mén lái bàn.]
(We need everyone rather than a few to develop a newspaper career.)

3 The first verb (phrase) indicates the manner, means, or tool that is adopted by the action conveyed by the second verb (phrase).

Example 24 阿里用左手写字。[ā lǐ yòng zuǒ shǒu xiě zì.]
(A Li writes with his left hand.)

Example 25 中国人都用筷子吃饭。[zhōng guó rén dōu yòng kuài zi chī fàn.]
(Chinese people have meals with chopsticks.)

Example 26 明天我们坐飞机去上海。[míng tiān wǒ men zuò fēi jī qù shàng hǎi.]
(We will go to Shanghai by plane tomorrow.)

Example 27 那位空姐笑着对我说：“没关系。”[nà wèi kōng jiě xiào zhe duì wǒ shuō: “méi guān xi.”]
(The airline stewardess smiled and said to me, “It doesn’t matter.”)

Example 28 妈妈骑自行车走了。[mā mā qí zì xíng chē zǒu le.]
(My mother left by bicycle.)

- 4 The first verb (phrase) expresses affirmation and the second one negation. Actually, both of them indicate the same fact from the opposite sides.

Example 29 走不了，爷爷的手抓着门板不放。[zǒu bù liǎo, yé yé de shǒu zhuā zhe mén bǎn bú fàng.]
(Grandpa's hand clung to the door firmly to stop our leaving.)

In this example, “抓住门板 [zhuā zhù mén bǎn] (cling to the door)” and “不放 [bú fàng] (stop)” refer to the same fact. More similar examples are as follows.

Example 30 张素素却板起脸不笑。[Zhāng Sù sù què bǎn qǐ liǎn bú xiào.]
(However, Zhang Susu kept a straight face.)

Example 31 我看他总是坐在那里不动，原来他在练气功。[wǒ kàn tā zǒng shì zuò zài nà lǐ bú dòng, yuán lái tā zài liàn qì gōng.]
(I saw him sitting there motionless. In fact, he was practicing qigong.)

Example 32 她说出最后一句话，自己觉得失言，就闭嘴不说意了。[tā shuō chū zuì hòu yī jù huà, zì jǐ jiào dé shī yán, jiù bì zuǐ bù shuō yì le.]
(She thought she had a slip of tongue just now, so she shut up so she wouldn't say anything else.)

- 5 There are two types of sentences with serial verbs whose first verb is “有 [yǒu]” or “没有 [méi yǒu] (no).”

- (1) The object of “有 [yǒu]” is the recipient of the second verb.

Example 33 现在我们都有宽敞的房子住了。[xiàn zài wǒ men dōu yǒu kuān chǎng de fáng zi zhù le.]
(Now we live in the spacious houses.)

Example 34 我有一个问题请教您。[wǒ yǒu yī gè wèn tí qǐng jiào nín.]
(I have a question to ask you.)

Example 35 在事实面前他没有话说了。[zài shì shí miàn qián tā méi yǒu huà shuō le.]
(He was speechless in the face of the fact.)

- (2) The object of “有 [yǒu]” is an abstract noun with the second verbal phrase as its attribute. The entire sentence implies a sense of “should be.”

Example 36 每位教职工都有权利选举自己的代表。[měi wèi jiào zhī gōng dōu yǒu quán lì xuǎn jǔ zì jǐ de dài biǎo.]
(Every faculty member has the right to choose their own representatives.)

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Example 37 你有什么理由不让我走? [nǐ yǒu shén me lí yóu bú ràng wǒ zǒu?]
(What makes you stop my leaving?)

Example 38 我有责任帮助你们解决困难。[wǒ yǒu zé rèn bāng zhù nǐ men jiě jué kùn nán.]
(It is my duty to help you out.)

Example 39 小刘没有资格参加这次活动。[Xiǎo Liú méi yǒu zī gé cān jiā zhè cì huó dòng.]
(Xiao Liu is not eligible to take part in this activity)

Example 40 现在你有没有时间再打一份文件? [xiàn zài nǐ yǒu méi yǒu shí jiān zài dǎ yī fèn wén jiàn?]
(Do you have time to make another document copy?)

Other abstract nouns include “力量 [lì liàng] (strength),” “办法 [bàn fǎ] (method),” “本事 [běn shì] (ability),” “把握 [bǎ wò] (seize),” “信心 [xìn xīn] (confidence),” “机会 [jī huì] (opportunity),” “条件 [tiáo jiàn] (condition),” “钱 qián (money),” “时间 [shí jiān] (time).”

III. Structural features of sentences with serial verbs

Unlike the coordinate phrases, the successive verbs (phrases) cannot change their positions with each other; otherwise, their meanings would be changed. For instance, “他天天读报、念书、看电视。[tā tiān tiān dú bào, niàn shū, kàn diàn shì.] (He reads newspaper, books and watches TV everyday.)” can be reordered into “他天天看电视、读报、念书。[tā tiān tiān kàn diàn shì, dú bào, niàn shū.] (He watches TV, reads the newspaper and books everyday.);” however, “他站起来走过去开门。[tā zhàn qǐ lái zǒu guò qù kāi mén.] (He stood up to open the door.)” cannot be done in that way.

- 1 Usually, the subject of the sentence with serial verbs is the doer of action but sometimes it could be the recipient or both.

Example 41 大夫抽出自己的血救活了那个孩子。[dài fū chōu chū zì jǐ de xuè jiù huó le nà gè hái zi.]
(The doctor saved that child with his own blood.)

Example 42 书放在宿舍没带来。[shū fàng zài sù shè méi dài lái.]
(The book was left in the dormitory.)

Example 43 毕业后, 我和几个同学被分配到航标站工作。[bì yè hòu, wǒ hé jǐ gè tóng xué bèi fēn pèi dào háng biāo zhàn gōng zuò.]
(Several classmates and I were assigned to the beacon station after graduation.)

Example 44 张老师调到中文系教古汉语去了。[Zhāng lǎo shī diào dào zhōng wén xì jiāo gǔ hàn yǔ qù le.]
(Mr. Zhang has been transferred to the Chinese Department to teach ancient Chinese.)

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Section four: bi-constituent sentences

I. What are bi-constituent sentences?

As its name implies, the bi-constituent sentence takes the predicate that consists of a verb-object phrase and a subject-predicate phrase; the object of the former phrase functions as the subject of the latter phrase simultaneously. For instance, “你 [nǐ] (you)” is the subject of the entire sentence “你请他来。[nǐ qǐng tā lái.] (You invite him to come.)” in which “他 [tā] (he)” as the object of the former phrase “请他 [qǐng tā] (invite him)” serves as the subject of the latter phrase “他来[tā lái] (he comes).” “他 [tā] (he)” is the bi-constituent. The second verb in the bi-constituent sentence doesn’t share the same subject with the predicate of the entire sentence. Usually, the predicate of the subject-predicate phrase is mainly functioned by verb, objective, noun, or the subject-predicate phrase sometimes.

Example 1 这个消息使我很高兴。[zhè gè xiāo xī shǐ wǒ hěn gāo xìng.]
(The news made me happy.)

In this example, “我 [wǒ] (I)” is the bi-constituent and its predicate is the adjective “高兴 [gāo xìng] (happy).”

Example 2 昨天的事使他情绪有些波动。[zuó tiān de shì shǐ tā qíng xù yǒu xiē bō dòng.]
(His mood was a little bit influenced by what happened yesterday.)

In the previous example, “他 [tā] (he)” is the bi-constituent and its predicate is the subject-predicate phrase “情绪有些波动。[qíng xù yǒu xiē bō dòng.] (his mood was a little bit influenced.)”

Example 3 祝你学习好、身体好、工作好。[zhù nǐ xué xí hǎo, shēn tǐ hǎo, gōng zuò hǎo.]
(May you study well, keep fit, and work hard.)

In the previous, “你 [nǐ] (you)” is the bi-constituent and its predicate is “学习好、身体好、工作好 [xué xí hǎo, shēn tǐ hǎo, gōng zuò hǎo] (study well, keep fit, and work hard)” as three coordinate subject-predicate phrases.)

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Example 4 他买了一支圆珠笔三个笔芯。[tā mǎi le yī zhī yuán zhū bǐ sān gè bǐ xīn.]
(He bought a ballpoint pen and three refills.)

In the last example, “一支圆珠笔 [yī zhī yuán zhū bǐ] (a ballpoint pen)” is the bi-constituent and its predicate is the noun phrase “三个笔芯 [sān gè bǐ xīn] (three refills).”

II. Types of bi-constituent sentences

According to what the second verb indicates, the bi-constituent sentence can be divided into the following types.

1 To indicate “to make somebody do something”

The first verb indicates “to make somebody do something,” such as “使 [shǐ] (make),” “让 [ràng] (let),” “叫 [jiào] (ask),” “请 [qǐng] (please),” “派 [pài] (send),” “强迫 [qiáng pò] (force).” The action or state after the bi-constituent is conveyed by the first verb.

Example 大家请她跳舞。[dà jiā qǐng tā tiào wǔ.]
(Everyone asks her for a dance.)

Example 5 这个小姑娘真惹人喜爱。[zhè gè xiǎo gū niáng zhēn rě rén xǐ ài.]
(This little girl was quite endearing.)

Example 6 我叫我的小孙子从家乡带来一点特产。[wǒ jiào wǒ de xiǎo sūn zǐ cóng jiā xiāng dài lái yī diǎn tè chǎn.]
(I asked my little grandson to bring some specialities from the hometown.)

Example 7 领队派他去南方了。[lǐng duì pài tā qù nán fāng le.]
(The team leader sent him to the south.)

Example 8 改选以前，咱们先让大伙儿提提意见。[gǎi xuǎn yǐ qián, zán men xiān ràng dà huǒ er tí tí yì jiàn.]
(Before re-election, let's investigate everyone's opinion.)

Example 9 他不准人家发表相反的意见。[tā bù zhǔn rén jiā fā biǎo xiāng fǎn de yì jiàn.]
(He forbade opposing opinions.)

The following verbs are often used to indicate “to make somebody do something”:

吩咐 fēn fù (instruct), 打发 [dǎ fā] (send), 促使 [cù shǐ] (urge), 使得 [shǐ de] (make), 要求 [yāo qiú] (require), 迫使 [pò shǐ] (force), 催 [cuī] (urge), 催促 [cuī cù] (urge), 要 [yào] (demand), 委托 [wěi tuō] (entrust), 请求 [qǐng qiú] (request), 鼓励 [gǔ lì] (encourage), 引导 [yǐn dǎo] (lead), 启发 [qǐ fā]

(enlighten), 答应 [dā yìng] (promise), 指示 [zhǐ shì] (instruct), 指定 [zhǐ dìng] (appoint), 劝 [quàn] (persuade), 劝说 [quàn shuō] (persuade), 召集 [zhào jí] (summon), 领导 [lǐng dǎo] (lead), 组织 [zǔ zhī] (organize).

Some verbs that indicate permission or prohibition can be used in the bi-constituent sentence, such as “容许 [róng xǔ] (permit),” “许 [xǔ] (allow),” “禁止 [jìn zhǐ] (forbid),” “准许 [zhǔn xǔ] (authorize),” “允许 [yǔn xǔ] (permit).”

2 To indicate title or affirmation

The first verb indicates title or affirmation, such as “称 [chēng] (name),” “叫 [jiào] (name),” “骂 [mà] (curse),” “选 [xuǎn] (choose),” “选举 [xuǎn jǔ] (vote),” “推选 [tuī xuǎn] (elect),” “认 [rèn] (admit),” or “认为 [rèn wéi] (think),” the verbs after the bi-constituent mainly include “做 [zuò] (do),” “为 [wéi] (for),” “当 [dāng] (regard),” “是 [shì] (is),” and so on.

Example 10 我给他起了个小名叫南南。[wǒ gěi tā qǐ le gè xiǎo míng jiào Nán Nán.]

(I nicknamed him Nan Nan.)

Example 11 由于各国经常打仗，历史上称这一时期为战国。[yóu yú gè guó jīng cháng dǎ zhàng, lì shǐ shàng chēng zhè yī shí qī wéi zhàn guó.]

(This period is named as the Warring States because of the frequent wars among states.)

Example 12 我认您做我的师傅吧！[wǒ rèn nín zuò wǒ de shī fu ba!]

(Please let me take you as my master worker.)

Example 13 你们选谁当代表？[nǐ men xuǎn shuí dāng dài biǎo?]

(Whom do you choose to be the representative?)

Example 14 我们应该选择名家名篇作教材。[wǒ men yīng gāi xuǎn zé míng jiā míng piān zuò jiào cái.]

(We should choose the famous masterpieces as teaching materials.)

3 To indicate love or hate

The first verbs indicate love, praise, congratulation, hate, or punishment, including “喜欢 [xǐ huān] (like),” “讨厌 [tǎo yàn] (dislike),” “爱 [ài] (love),” “恨 [hèn] (hate),” “嫌 [xián] (dislike),” “佩服 [pèi fú] (admire),” “钦佩 [qīn pèi] (esteem),” “羡慕 [xiàn mù] (envy),” “称赞 [chēng zàn] (praise),” “夸 [kuā] (praise),” “欣赏 [xīn shǎng] (appreciate),” “赞扬 [zàn yáng] (praise),” “原谅 [yuán liàng] (forgive),” “笑话 [xiào huà] (laugh at),” “责备 [zé bèi] (blame),” “怪 [guài] (blame),” “[fán] (bother),” “骂 [mà] (curse).”

The bi-constituent and its following predicate indicate the reason.

Example 15 大家埋怨他来晚了。[dà jiā mái yuàn tā lái wǎn le.]

(He was blamed for coming late.)

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In this example, “他来晚 [tā lái wǎn] (he came late)” is the reason for “埋怨他 [mái yuàn tā] (be blamed).” More examples are as follows.

Example 16 我们原谅他年纪小，没经验。[wǒ men yuán liàng tā nián jì xiǎo, méi jīng yàn.]

(We forgive him for his youth and inexperience.)

Example 17 群众喜欢他办事公道。[qún zhòng xǐ huān tā bàn shì gōng dào.]

(The masses like him for his acting fairly.)

Example 18 我爱他朴实、浑厚。[wǒ ài tā pǔ shí, hún hòu.]

(I love him for his simplicity and honesty.)

Example 19 领导上批评她老爱说大话。[lǐng dǎo shàng pī píng tā lǎo ài shuō dà huà.]

(In terms of leadership, she was often criticized for boasting.)

- 4 The predicate of the bi-constituent describes or explains the bi-constituent itself.

Example 20 我最近改编了一个剧本约二十万字。[wǒ zuì jìn gǎi biān le yī gè jù běn yuē èr shí wàn zì.]

(Recently, I adapted a play of about 200,000 words.)

In the last example, “约二十万字 [yuē èr shí wàn zì] (about 200,000 words)” explains “剧本 [jù běn] (play).”

More examples are as follows.

Example 21 她家里摆着一个小圆桌三条腿。[tā jiā lǐ bǎi zhe yī gè xiǎo yuán zhuō sān tiáo tuǐ.]

(A little round table with three legs was displayed in her house.)

Example 22 他们新编了一部词典带插图。[tā men xīn biān le yī bù cí diǎn dài chā tú.]

(They compiled an illustrated dictionary.)

- 5 The first verb is “有/没有 [yǒu/méi yǒu].”

The object of “有 [yǒu]” as the bi-constituent indicates a person or thing that is described or explained by the predicate of the bi-constituent.

Example 23 古代有个诗人叫贾岛。[gǔ dài yǒu gè shī rén jiào Jiǎ Dǎo.]

(In ancient times, there was a poet named Jia Dao.)

Example 24 桌子上有一本新杂志是谁的？[zhuō zǐ shàng yǒu yī běn xīn zá zhì shì shuí de?]

(Whose new magazine is it on the table?)

Example 25 第三生产队有一只羊病了。[dì sān shēng chǎn duì yǒu yī zhī yáng bing le.]

(One sheep of the third production team was sick.)

Example 26 后面有几个人哭起来了。[hòu miàn yǒu jǐ gè rén kū qǐ lái le.]

(Several people in the back began to cry.)

The subject of such the bi-constituent sentence is often absent. In other words, there is no subject before “有 [yǒu].” The object of “有 [yǒu]” as the bi-constituent can take some attributes to indicate new information, such as “一个 [yī gè] (a),” “几个 [jǐ gè] (several),” “很多 [hěn duō] (many/much),” “一些 [yī xiē] (some),” “多少 [duō shǎo] (some),” “这个 [zhè gè] (this),” and “那个 [nà gè] (that)” are excluded.

Example 27 有只狼跑过来了，你看见没有？[yǒu zhī láng pǎo guò lái le, nǐ kàn jiàn méi yǒu.]

(Did you see a wolf running towards here?)

Example 28 此后又有近处的本家和亲戚来访问我。[cǐ hòu yòu yǒu jìn chù de běn jiā hé qīn qī lái fǎng wèn wǒ.]

(Afterwards, some close relatives and distant ones came to visit me.)

Example 29 有个人心眼儿特别好。[yǒu gè rén xīn yǎn ér tè bié hǎo.]

(There is a person who is pretty kind-hearted.)

Example 30 有一种自行车两个车座子，三个轱辘。[yǒu yī zhǒng zì xíng chē liǎng gè chē zuò zi, sān gè gū lù.]

(There is a bicycle with two seats and three wheels.)

6 The first verb is “是 [shì]” that indicates affirmation.

Without the subject in front, “是 [shì]” takes the noun phrase or pronoun as the object which at the same time functions as the subject of its following verb (phrase) to form a subject-predicate phrase. “是 [shì]” affirms its object (the bi-constituent) that should be pronounced with a stress.

Example 31 姑老爷叫我？[shì gū lǎo yé jiào wǒ?]

(Did my son-in-law call me?)

Example 32 是我把她气哭了。[shì wǒ bǎ tā qì kū le.]

(It was me who made her cry.)

Example 33 是风把门吹开了。[shì fēng bǎ mén chuī kāi le.]

(It was the wind that blew the door open.)

Example 34 是白求恩大夫救活了那个战士。[shì Bái Qiú ēn dài fū jiù huó le nà gè zhàn shì.]

(It was Doctor Bethune who saved that soldier.)

Example 35 是这篇文章启发了我，使我改变了主意。[shì zhè piān wén zhāng qǐ fā le wǒ, shǐ wǒ gǎi biàn le zhǔ yì.]

(It was this article that inspired me to change my mind.)

III. Grammatical features of bi-constituent sentences

- 1 A phonetic pause can appear after the bi-constituent rather than the first verb. For instance, “你请他|来。[nǐ qǐng tā |lái] (You invite him to come.)” is appropriate but “*你请|他来。[nǐ qǐng|tā lái.]” is not.
- 2 Usually, the first verb doesn't take “了 [le],” “着 [zhe],” “过 [guò],” except for the verbs, such as “让 [ràng] (make),” “叫 [jiào] (ask),” “使 [shǐ] (make).” Sometimes, “了 [le]” can follow the verb that indicates “to make somebody do something” or affirmation in the following situations.

- (1) The reason or result has been mentioned in the context.

Example 36 愚公一家人搬山的事感动了上帝，他就派了两个神仙把两座山搬走了。[Yú Gōng yī jiā rén bān shān de shì gǎn dòng le Shàng Dì, tā jiù pài le liǎng gè shén xiān bǎ liǎng zuò shān bān zǒu le.]

(Touched by the deeds of Yu Gong's family, the Jade Emperor assigned two immortals to help them move away two mountains.)

Example 37 我们选了小王当代表，明天他就要开会去了。[wǒ men xuǎn le Xiǎo Wáng dāng dài biǎo, míng tiān tā jiù yào kāi huì qù le.]

(We elected Xiao Wang as our representative so he would attend the meeting tomorrow.)

- (2) A certain new situation is mentioned at the end of the sentence.

Example 38 那件事托了老王去办了。[nà jiàn shì tuō le Lǎo Wáng qù bàn le.]

(Lao Wang was entrusted with the task.)

- 3 The bi-constituent is mainly functioned by a noun, pronoun, or numeral-quantifier phrase in a certain context.

Example 39 从前线回来的人说到白求恩，没有一个不佩服，没有一个不为他的精神所感动。[cóng qián xiàn huí lái de rén shuō dào Bái Qiú ēn, méi yǒu yī gè bú pèi fú, méi yǒu yī gè bù wéi tā de jīng shén suǒ gǎn dòng.]

(Speaking of Bethune, no one from the front line did not admire him or was not touched by his spirit.)

IV. Special bi-constituent sentences

- 1 The indirect object functions as the bi-constituent in the sequence: subject+verb+indirect object+direct object+verb.

Example 40 你给他一本小人书看，他很高兴，不哭了。[nǐ gěi tā yī běn xiǎo rén shū kàn, tā hěn gāo xìng, bú kū le.]

(You gave him a comic book to read, which made him happy and stopped his crying.)

In this example, the indirect object of the verb “给 [gěi] (give)” is “他 [tā] (he)” and the direct object is “一本小人书 [yī běn xiǎo rén shū] (a comic book)” that is also the object of the verb “看 [kàn] (read).”

Example 41 你借我车用用，可以吗？ [nǐ jiè wǒ chē yòng yòng, kě yǐ ma?]
(Could you lend me the car?)

In this example, the verb “借 [jiè] (lend)” takes two objects, in which “车 [chē] (car)” functions as the direct object of “借 [jiè] (lend)” and the object of the verb “用 [yòng] (use).”

Example 42 劳驾，递我那张说明书看一下儿。 [láo jià, dì wǒ nà zhāng shuō míng shū kàn yī xià er.]
(Excuse me. Could you please pass me that specification?)

Here, “那张说明书 [nà zhāng shuō míng shū] (that specification)” functions as the direct object of “递 [dì] (pass)” as well as the object of “看 [kàn] (read).”

2 The object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” or “给 [gěi] (give)” functions as the bi-constituent.

Example 43 他们给伤员做了碗鸡蛋汤喝。 [tā men gěi shāng yuán zuò le wǎn jī dàn tāng hē.]
(They cooked the egg soup for the wounded.)
 (“伤员 [shāng yuán] (the wounded)” as the object of the preposition “给 [gěi] (give)” and the subject of the verb “喝 [hē] (drink).”)

Example 44 我要给他们干个样儿瞧瞧。 [wǒ yào gěi tā men gàn gè yàng er qiáo qiáo.]
(I'll show them my ability.)
 (“他们 [tā men] (they)” as the object of the preposition “给 [gěi] (give)” and the subject of the verb “瞧瞧 [qiáo qiáo] (show).”)

Example 45 我把他介绍到学校里当教员。 [wǒ bǎ tā jiè shào dào xué xiào lǐ dāng jiào yuán]
(I introduced him to school to teach.)
 (“他 [tā] (he)” as the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” and the subject of the verb “当 [dāng] (to be).”)

V. *Mixture of bi-constituent sentences and sentences with serial verbs*

Both types of sentences are characterized by their simple structures and obvious features. The mixture of two can be used to express the complex meaning, by embedding one into the other.

- 1 The sentence with serial verbs is embedded into the bi-constituent sentence.

Example 46 卓玛身体好了以后，领导上{让(V1)[她到(V2)中央民族学院学习(V3)]}。[Zhuó Mǎ shēn tǐ hǎo le yǐ hòu, líng dǎo shàng ràng tā dào zhōng yāng mín zú xué yuàn xué xí.]

(After Zhuo Ma recovered, the leader assigned her to study in the Central Academy of National Minorities.)

Example 47 老师{要求(V1)[我们用(V2)中文写(V3)一篇日记]}。[lǎo shī yāo qiú wǒ men yòng zhōng wén xiě yī piān rì jì.]

(The teacher requested us to keep a diary in Chinese.)

Example 48 老师{让(V1)[我去(V2)图书馆借(V3)一本书]}。[lǎo shī ràng wǒ qù tú shū guǎn jiè yī běn shū.]

(The teacher asked me to borrow a book from the library.)

Example 49 老师{要求(V1)[我们明天带(V2)着字典来上(V3)课]}。[lǎo shī yāo qiú wǒ men míng tiān dài zhe zì diǎn lái shàng kè.]

(The teacher asked us to bring the dictionary to class.)

In these examples, the parts in “[]” are the sentences with serial verbs; the parts in “{ }” are the bi-constituent sentences.

- 2 The bi-constituent sentence is embedded into the sentence with serial verbs.

Usually, there are three or more than three verbs (phrases) in the order: subject+verb1+object+verb2+object (bi-constituent)+verb3 (+object).

Verb1 and verb2 refer to what the subject indicates and the object of verb2 is the subject of verb3.

Example 50 我[写(V1)了一封信{让(V2)妹妹也来(V3)中国}]。[wǒ xiě le yī fēng xìn ràng mèi mèi yě lái zhōng guó.]

(I wrote a letter to ask my sister to come to China, too.)

Example 51 那时候爸爸没有钱让我读书。[nà shí hòu bà bà méi yǒu qián ràng wǒ dú shū.]

(At that time my father had no money to send me to school.)

In these last two examples, the parts in “{ }” are the sentences with serial verbs; the parts in “[]” are the bi-constituent sentences.

Sometimes, two or more than two sentences of two types are mixed up together.

Example 52 我丈夫有一个抄本，我[要他[借你看看]]。[wǒ zhàng fū yǒu yī gè chāo běn, wǒ yào tā jiè nǐ kàn kàn.]

(My husband has a manuscript. I can ask him to lend it to you.)

In the example, two bi-constituent sentences in “[]” are mixed up together.

Example 53 今天晚上, 我{{乘飞机去}上海[请张医生{来北京会诊}}}。
[jīn tiān wǎn shàng, wǒ chéng fēi jī qù shàng hǎi qǐng zhāng yī shēng lái běi jīng huì zhěn.]

(I will fly to Shanghai to invite the doctor Zhang to Beijing for a consultation tonight.)

In this example, three sentences with serial verbs in “{}” and one bi-constituent sentence in “[]” are mixed up together.

VI. Differences among bi-constituent sentences, double-object sentences, and the sentences with subject-predicate phrases as the object

1 Differences between the bi-constituent sentence and the double-object sentence with a subject-object phrase as the direct object

(1) Different ways of posing a question

In the bi-constituent sentence, “what to do” is used to pose a question to the part after the bi-constituent; in the double-object sentence, “what” is used to pose a question to the direct object.

Example 54 他刚才告诉我今天下午开会。[tā gāng cái gào sù wǒ jīn tiān xià wǔ kāi huì.]

(He just told me that there would be a meeting this afternoon.) (the double-object sentence)

Example 55 他叫我今天下午去开会。[tā jiào wǒ jīn tiān xià wǔ qù kāi huì.]

(He asked me to attend the meeting this afternoon.) (the bi-constituent sentence)

(2) The direct object can be moved to the head of sentence with double objects.

Example 56 他告诉我明天去上海。[tā gào sù wǒ míng tiān qù shàng hǎi.] 明天去上海, 他告诉我。[míng tiān qù shàng hǎi, tā gào sù wǒ.]

(He told me that he would go to Shanghai tomorrow.) (the double-object sentence)

Example 57 他让我明天去吃饭。[tā ràng wǒ míng tiān qù chī fàn.]

(He invites me to have a meal tomorrow.) (the bi-constituent sentence)

*明天去吃饭, 他让我。[míng tiān qù chī fàn, tā ràng wǒ.]

2 Differences between the bi-constituent sentence and the sentence with a subject-predicate phrase as the object

Seemingly, one is very close to the other in appearance but they differ from each other.

58 *Sentences with verbs as predicate*

(1) The first predicate verb of each sentence is different in property.

As its name implies, the sentence with a subject-predicate phrase as the object takes “noun+verb” phrase as its object. For instance, in the sentence “我知道他住在哪儿。[wǒ zhī dào tā zhù zài nǎ er.] (I know where he lives.)”, “他住在哪儿 [tā zhù zài nǎ er] (where he lives)” is the object of “知道 [zhī dào] (know).” However, the object of the bi-constituent only refers to the noun followed.

The verb in the subject-predicate phrase as the object is required to narrate or explain a thing and such verbs include:

a To indicate perception

知道 [zhī dào] (know), 听说 [tīng shuō] (hear about), 看见 [kàn jiàn] (see), 看到 [kàn dào] (see), 觉得 [jué dé] (think), 以为 [yǐ wéi] (believe), 懂得 [dǒng dé] (understand), 明白 [míng bái] (understand).

b To indicate psychological activities

希望 [xī wàng] (wish), 盼望 [pàn wàng] (look forward to), 相信 [xiāng xìn] (believe), 想 [xiǎng] (think), 怀疑 [huái yí] (suspect), 记得 [jì dé] (remember), 说 [shuō] (speak), 反对 [fǎn duì] (disapprove), 赞成 [zàn chéng] (approve of), 同意 [tóng yì] (agree).

(2) The phonetic pause stops at the different positions.

No pause is permitted between the bi-constituent and the verb in front, due to their close connection; a brief pause can appear between the predicate verb and the object functioned by the subject-predicate phrase.

Example 58 *我叫|小王来。[wǒ jiào Xiǎo Wáng lái.]
(I asked Xiao Wang to come.) (the bi-constituent sentence)

Example 59 我希望|小王来。[wǒ xī wàng |Xiǎo Wáng lái.]
(I wish Xiao Wang would come.) (the double-object sentence)

(3) Other words after the first predicate verb

Other words as adverbials can be added after the predicate verb in the sentence with a subject-predicate phrase as the object; however it is not permitted to do so after the first verb in the bi-constituent sentence.

Example 60 *我让明天你们|都来。[wǒ ràng míng tiān nǐ men dōu lái.] (the bi-constituent sentence)

Example 61 我希望明天你们|都来。[wǒ xī wàng míng tiān nǐ men dōu lái.]
(I wish you all would come tomorrow.) (the double-object sentence)

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Section five: existential sentences

The existential sentence is of a typical structure in Chinese and it is well known for its special features in structure, requirements for verb and expressive functions, which are irreplaceable by other sentences.

Semantically speaking, it refers to the existence, presence, or disappearance of something in a certain location. In structure, it takes the word (phrase) indicating location as the head and the noun after the predicate verb for a person or thing that exists, appears, or disappears.

There are two types of the existential sentence. One is to indicate the person or thing that exists and the other refers to the person or thing that appears or disappears.

1. Existential sentences referring to existence

1 Expressive functions

In Chinese, “word (phrase) for location+verb+the noun for existence” is often used to explain or show an existing person or thing, such as the condition in a location or the furniture in a room.

Example 1 桌子上有一本书。[zhuō zi shàng yǒu yī běn shū.]
(There is a book on the desk.)

Example 2 桌子上是一本书。[zhuō zi shàng shì yī běn shū.]
(A book is on the desk.)

Example 3 桌子上放着一本书。[zhuō zi shàng fàng zhe yī běn shū.]
(On the desk lies a book.)

It can be seen from this that the word (phrase) for location always appears at the head of sentence without “在 [zài] (at)” or “从 [cóng] (from);” the noun for the existing thing or person is put after the predicate verb.

The existential sentence referring to existence is descriptive rather than narrative because its principle function is to describe something, such as the natural environment, clothes, or postures.

Example 4 屋子里很干净。墙上挂着几幅油画。靠墙摆着一个小衣柜，柜子上放着一台电视机和一台录音机。旁边是一套沙发... [wū zǐ lǐ hěn gān jìng. qiáng shàng guà zhe jǐ fú yóu huà, kào qiáng bǎi zhe yī gè xiǎo yī guì, guì zǐ shàng fàng zhe yī tái diàn shì jī hé yī tái lù yīn jī. páng biān shì yī tào shā fā . . .]

(The room is very clean. On the wall are several oil paintings and against the wall is a small closet. A TV set and a radio are on the cabinet, and beside it is a set of sofas.)

Example 5 小院子里非常安静，茅草屋的小窗子上亮着灯光，浮动着人影。[xiǎo yuàn zǐ lǐ fēi cháng ān jìng, máo cǎo wū de xiǎo chuāng zǐ shàng liàng zhe dēng guāng, fú dòng zhe rén yǐng.]

(The yard is very quiet. A clear shadow figure is being reflected on the little window of the thatched cottage by the inside light.)

Example 6 他脸上堆着笑，眼里闪动着狡黠的光。[tā liǎn shàng duī zhe xiào, yǎn lǐ shǎn dòng zhe jiǎo xiá de guāng.]

(He smiled by twinkling his sly eyes.)

The verbs in these three examples describe the existing environments or the state of a person rather than narrating what is going on. They are possibly regarded as being in “dynamic sentences for existence” but in fact what they express is too weak to be considered as dynamic actions. They are descriptive and popular in literature works usually with disyllabic verbs, such as “荡漾 [dàng yàng] (ripple),” “闪动 [shǎn dòng] (flicker),” “飞舞 [fēi wǔ] (flutter),” “闪烁 [shǎn shuò] (twinkle),” “翱翔 [áo xiáng] (soar),” “飘浮 [piāo fú] (float).” The object of the sentence of this type mainly refers to the doer of action.

Besides in works of literature, the existential sentence referring to existence is also frequently used in daily life.

“有 [yǒu]” sentences and “是 [shì]” sentences that refer to existence have been discussed in Section One and Two of this chapter. The discussion in this section only focuses on the existential sentences that don’t take “有 [yǒu]” and “是 [shì]” as their predicate verbs.

2 Grammatical features

An existential sentence referring to existence consists of three parts.

- (1) Words (phrases) for location at the head of the existential sentence referring to existence

Words (phrases) for location are indispensable because they refer to the object to be described. It mainly consists of nouns for location, “noun+locative,” locational word, or locative.

a Noun+locative

Example 7 葫芦架下摆着一张矮腿的小桌。[hú lú jià xià bǎi zhe yī zhāng āi tuǐ de xiǎo zhuō.]

(A short-legged table stood under the gourd shelf.)

Example 8 桌子上放着一本书。[zhuō zǐ shàng fàng zhe yī běn shū.]

(On the table lies a book.)

Example 9 叶公喜欢龙，他的屋子里门上、墙上都画满了龙。[Yè Gōng xǐ huān lóng, tā de wū zǐ lǐ mén shàng, qiáng shàng dōu huà mǎn le lóng.]

(Ye Gong was fond of dragons. He had dragons painted on the doors and the walls of his room.)

b Noun for location

Example 10 秋天，东高地长满了金色的庄稼。[qiū tiān, dōng gāo dì zhǎng mǎn le jīn sè de zhuāng jià.]

(In autumn, the eastern highlands were covered with golden crops.)

Example 11 洞口挂着一盏煤油灯。[dòng kǒu guà zhe yī zhǎn méi yóu dēng.]

(A kerosene lamp is hung at the entrance of the cave.)

c Locative

Example 12 衣服的前面绣着一条龙，后面写着两个字。[yī fú de qián miàn xiù zhe yī tiáo lóng, hòu miàn xiě zhe liǎng gè zì.]

(There was a dragon embroidered on the front of the clothes with two Chinese characters on the back.)

Example 13 上有天堂，下有苏杭。[shàng yǒu tiān táng, xià yǒu sū hang.]

(Compared with other cities, Suzhou and Hangzhou are particularly characterized by their beautiful sceneries.)

d Verbal phrase or prepositional phrase

Example 14 靠墙摆着装满书籍的柜子。[kào qiáng bǎi zhe zhuāng mǎn shū jí de guì zi.]

(A shelf full of books stood against the wall.)

Example 15 沿街两旁摆着很多地摊，吸引了很多游客。[yán jiē liǎng páng bǎi zhe hěn duō dì tān, xī yǐn le hěn duō yóu kè.]

(On both sides of the streets spread a lot of stalls, attracting many tourists.)

Example 16 迎门挂着一架大水晶吊灯，非常气派。[yíng mén guà zhe yī jià dà shuǐ jīng diào dēng, fēi cháng qì pài.]

(A large crystal chandelier is hung in magnificent style at the entrance of the gate.)

e Pronoun for location

Example 17 原来这里住着二百多口人。[yuán lái zhè lǐ zhù zhe èr bǎi duō kǒu rén.]

(More than two hundred people used to live here.)

Example 18 那边放着一架钢琴，是谁的？[nà biān fàng zhe yī jià gāng qín, shì shuí de?]

(Whose piano is it over there?)

Example 19 你说哪儿藏着一个人？[nǐ shuō nǎ er cáng zhe yī gè rén?]

(Where did you say that man was hidden?)

(2) Verbs in the existential sentence referring to existence

There are two types of verbs, one of which refers to changes or developments of actions for persons or things, such as “坐 [zuò] (sit),” “站 [zhàn] (stand),” “蹲 [dūn] (squat),” “躺 [tǎng] (lie down),” “跪 [guì] (kneel),” “挤 [jǐ] (crush),” “围 [wéi] (surround).” The other kind refers to how the person places or deals with things, such as “放 [fàng] (place),” “挂 [guà] (hang),” “插 [chā] (insert),” “摆 [bǎi] (display),” “存 [cún] (deposit),” “晾 [liàng] (air),” “贴 [tiē] (attach),” “煮 [zhǔ] (boil),” “蒸 [zhēng] (steam),” “刻 [kè] (carve),” “绣 [xiù] (embroider),” “画 [huà] (draw).”

The dynamic auxiliary word “着 [zhe]” often appears after the verb to indicate how the person or thing exists.

Example 20 他的眼里闪烁着泪花。[tā de yǎn lǐ shǎn dòng zhe lèi huā.]

(His eyes sparkled with tears.)

Example 21 墙上挂着小明的照片。[qiáng shàng guà zhe Xiǎo Míng de zhào piàn.]

(Xiao Ming's photo is hanging on the wall.)

Example 22 屋两端的角落里和门口，挤着一些热心的群众。[wū liǎng duān de jiǎo luò lǐ hé mén kǒu, jǐ zhe yī xiē rè xīn de qún zhòng.]

(Some warm-hearted masses are crowding at the room corners and the doorway.)

Sometimes, “满 [mǎn]” follows the verb plus the dynamic auxiliary word “了 [le],” to indicate “everywhere” or “all of.”

Example 23 天空上缀满了小星星。[tiān kōng shàng zhuì mǎn le xiǎo xīng.]

(The little stars spread across the sky.)

Example 24 这时他的办公桌上摆满了文件、电报，电话不断地响起来。[zhè shí tā de bàn gōng zhuō shàng bǎi mǎn le wén jiàn, diàn bào, diàn huà bú duàn de xiǎng qǐ lái.]

(Now his desk was covered with documents and telegrams, while the telephone kept ringing.)

Sometimes, “了 [le]” can singly indicate how a person or thing exists.

Example 25 河边上围了两三千人。[hé biān shàng wéi le liǎng sān qiān rén.]

(There were two or three thousand people around the river.)

Example 26 左边放着一个白底蓝花仿明瓷的大口瓷缸，里面斜插了十几轴画。[zuǒ biān fàng zhe yī gè bái dǐ lán huā fǎng míng cí de dà kǒu cí gāng, lǐ miàn xié chā le shí jǐ zhóu huà.]

(On the left was a large blue-and-white porcelain jar in the style of the Ming Dynasty, in which were dozens of scroll paintings.)

In these examples, “了 [le]” can be replaced by “着[zhe].” However, such a replacement is not allowed in the existential sentence for dynamic actions.

In the written language, dynamic auxiliary words or complements can be absent after predicate verbs.

Example 27 条案前立一张红木方桌。[tiáo àn qián lì yī zhāng hóng mù fāng zhuō.]

(A rosewood square table stood in front of a long narrow table.)

Sometimes, the predicate part can be functioned by a noun phrase instead of a verb, to describe something.

Example 28 外面一片漆黑，真是伸手不见五指。[wài miàn yī piàn qī hēi, zhēn shì shēn shǒu bú jiàn wǔ zhǐ.]

(It's so dark outside that you couldn't see anything.)

Example 29 这里一派欣欣向荣的景象，而那边满眼疮痍，这样鲜明的对比，令他十分感慨。[zhè lǐ yī pài xīn xīn xiàng róng de jǐng xiàng, ér nà biān mǎn yǎn chuāng yí, zhè yàng xiān míng de duì bǐ, lìng tā shí fēn gǎn kǎi.]

(He was shocked by the striking contrast between the scene of prosperity here and the devastation over there.)

But other phrases are necessarily needed when only one noun functions as the predicate.

Example 30 他进屋一看，满地烟头，满屋烟尘，桌上杯盘狼藉，心中便十分不快。[tā jìn wū yī kàn, mǎn dì yān tóu, mǎn wū yān chén, zhuō shàng bēi pán láng jí, xīn zhōng biàn shí fēn bú kuài.]

(He was rather annoyed at what he saw when entering the room: cigarette butts and smoke dust on the ground, cups and trays scattered on the table.)

(3) Objects in the existential sentence referring to existence

When the object indicates the unknown information or news, a numeral-quantifier phrase or attribute is required to appear before it.

64 *Sentences with verbs as predicate*

Example 31 蓬乱的头发上插着一根草棍儿。[péng luàn de tóu fà shàng chā zhe yī gēn cǎo gùn er.]

(A straw stick is stuck in his untidy hair.)

Example 32 墙上挂着一幅条屏，那上面的字写得曲里拐弯。[qiáng shàng guà zhe yī fú tiáo píng, nà shàng miàn de zì xiě dé qū lǐ guǎi wān.]
(A long scroll is hung on the wall with crooked words on it.)

Example 33 橱窗里摆着五光十色的货物。[chú chuāng lǐ bǎi zhe wǔ guāng shí sè de huò wù.]

(A variety of goods were displayed in the showcase.)

Example 34 碑身东西两侧上部，刻着由红星、松柏和旗帜组成的光辉永照的装饰花纹。[bēi shēn dōng xī liǎng cè shàng bù, kè zhe yóu hóng xīng, sōng bǎi hé qí zhì zǔ chéng de guāng huī yǒng zhào de zhuāng shì huā wén.]
(On the two upper sides of the stone tablet have been carved a red star, a cypress, and a flag as symbols of eternal glory.)

Example 35 驴背上驮着一条口袋，口袋里装着很多书。[lú bèi shàng tuó zhe yī tiáo kǒu dài, kǒu dài lǐ zhuāng zhe hěn duō shū.]

(The donkey carried a sack filled with many books.)

When the object is a proper noun, it also requires a numeral-quantifier phrase in front, such as “(一)个 [(yī) gè] (a).”

Example 36 两千年前的中国历史上有个秦始皇... [liǎng qiān nián qián de zhōng guó lì shǐ shàng yǒu gè Qín Shǐ Huáng.]

(There was a First Emperor of Qin in Chinese history two thousand years ago.)

Example 37 天安门广场上耸立着一座人民英雄纪念碑。[tiān ān mén guǎng chǎng shàng sǒng lì zhe yī zuò rén mín yīng xióng jì niàn bēi.]

(The Monument to the People's Heroes stands on Tiananmen Square.)

In comparison, the attribute before the object can be absent.

Example 38 山上长着树，山下种着庄稼。[shān shàng zhǎng zhe shù, shān xià zhòng zhe zhuāng jià.]

(Trees are on the mountain and crops are at its foot.)

The object can be absent when it is a coordinate structure, or the whole existential sentence just functions as a clause in the compound sentence.

Example 39 桌子上摆着酒、饼干、白糖、酱油等。[zhuō zi shàng bǎi zhe jiǔ, bǐng gān, bái táng, jiàng yóu děng.]

(On the table are wine, biscuits, sugar, soy sauce, and so on.)

Example 40 他进屋一看，桌子上摆着菜，却不见一个人。[tā jìn wū yī kàn, zhuō zi shàng bǎi zhe cài, què bú jiàn yī gè rén.]

(He entered the room to see dishes on the table but no one was there.)

II. Existential sentences referring to appearance or disappearance

Comparatively speaking, “appearance” is more frequently used.

1 Expressive function

“The word for location or time+verb+noun for appearance or disappearance” is often used to express where or when a person or thing appears or disappears.

Example 41 前面来了一个人。[qián miàn lái le yī gè rén.]
(In front comes someone.)

Example 42 昨天发生了一件大事。[zuó tiān fā shēng le yī jiàn dà shì.]
(An important event happened yesterday.)

Example 43 邻居家死了一只猫。[lín jū jiā sǐ le yī zhī māo.]
(A neighbor’s cat died.)

The word for time or location often appears at the beginning of a sentence for appearance or disappearance but it doesn’t usually appear at the same place in the sentence for existence.

Similarly, sentences of both types don’t take prepositions at the very beginning, such as “在 [zài] (at)” or “从 [cóng] (from).”

2 Structural features

(1) The words for location at the head of the sentence

The words for location include nouns for location or locatives, which are similar to those in the sentence for existence.

Example 44 这时前面开过来一辆面包车，我急忙躲开了。[zhè shí qián miàn kāi guò lái yī liàng miàn bāo chē, wǒ jí máng duǒ kāi le.]
(A minibus came up from ahead and I moved aside in a hurry.)

Example 45 身后出现了一位挺英俊的军官。[shēn hòu chū xiàn le yī wèi tǐng yīng jùn de jūn guān.]
(A handsome military officer appeared from behind.)

Example 46 我们家来了几个客人。[wǒ men jiā lái le jǐ gè kè rén.]
(Several guests visited our family.)

Example 47 迎面跑过来一个人。[yíng miàn pǎo guò lái yī gè rén.]
(A man is running towards us.)

Example 48 荒漠的低洼地区又出现了稀稀落落的村庄。[huāng mò de dī wā dì qū yòu chū xiàn le xī xī luò luò de cūn zhuāng.]
(The low-lying areas in the desert are scattered with a few villages.)

(2) Verbs in the sentence

They are mainly intransitive verbs. Some of them express movement of persons or things and they are as follows:

走 [zǒu] (walk), 来 [lái] (come), 跑 [pǎo] (run), 钻 [zuàn] (drill), 掉 [diào] (drop), 开车 [kāi chē] (drive), 死 [sǐ] (die), 飘 [piāo] (flutter), 冒 [mào] (risk), 浮现 [fú xiàn] (emerge), 涌 [yǒng] (surge), 响 [xiǎng] (ring), 刮 [guā] (blow), 弥漫 [mí màn] (suffuse).

Example 49 传说一年冬天, 某村附近来了一只大老虎。[chuán shuō yī nián dōng tiān, mǒu cūn fù jìn lái le yī zhī dà lǎo hǔ.]

(It is said that one winter a tiger came to a village.)

Example 50 张家昨天死了一个人。[Zhāng jiā zuó tiān sǐ le yī gè rén.]

(A person died yesterday in Zhang's family.)

Example 51 公元前209年, 中国历史上爆发了第一次农民大起义, 这就是有名的陈胜吴广起义。[gōng yuán qián èr líng jiǔ nián, zhōng guó lì shǐ shàng bào fā le dì yī cì nóng mǐn dà qǐ yì, zhè jiù shì yǒu míng de chén shèng wú guǎng qǐ yì.]

(The first peasant uprising, known as Chen Sheng and Wu Guang uprising in Chinese history, broke out in 209 BC.)

(3) The verbs followed by directional complements, resultant complements or the dynamic auxiliary word “了 [le].”

Example 52 一天晚上, 已经快七点钟了, 新华旅馆门口开来了一辆摩托车。[yī tiān wǎn shàng, yǐ jīng kuài qī diǎn zhōng le, xīn huá lǚ guǎn mén kǒu kāi lái le yī liàng mó tuō chē.]

(One evening, it was nearly seven o'clock when a motorcycle arrived at the entrance of Xin Hua Hotel.)

Example 53 地里走出几个累得摇摇晃晃的人, 这是给周家干活的伙计们。[dì lǐ zǒu chū jǐ gè lèi dé yáo yáo huǎng huǎng de rén, zhè shì gěi zhōu jiā gàn huó de huǒ jì men.]

(Several people stepped tiredly out of the field. They were the men working for the Chou family.)

Example 54 休息的时候, 天空飞过一群大雁。[xiū xi de shí hòu, tiān kōng fēi guò yī qún dà yàn.]

(During the break, a flock of wild geese were seen flying across the sky.)

Example 55 河边柳丛里, 忽然站起一个人。[hé biān liǔ cóng lǐ, hū rán zhàn qǐ yī gè rén.]

(Behind the willows by the river, a man suddenly stood up.)

Example 56 昨天, 我们班来了一个新同学。[zuó tiān, wǒ men bān lái le yī gè xīn tóng xué.]

(Yesterday, a new classmate came to our class.)

(4) Objects in the sentence

The object indicates unknown information or news of an appearance or disappearance for a person or thing. It usually takes a numeral-quantifier phrase in front.

Example 57 后边挤过一个解放军战士，把她抱起，一同上去了。[hòu biān jǐ guò yī gè jiě fàng jūn zhàn shì, bǎ tā bào qi, yī tóng shàng qù le.] (A soldier from behind pushed his way through the crowd, and then held her by the arm and they got on the bus together.)

Example 58 那个漫着烟雾的土屋门口，钻出一个五十多岁的老头。[nà gè mǎn zhe yān wù de tǔ wū mén kǒu, zuàn chū yī gè wǔ shí duō suì de lǎo tóu.] (An old man in his fifties rushed out of the mud house that was suffused with smoke.)

Example 59 这时破屋里走出来一位衣服破旧的老大娘。[zhè shí pò wū lǐ zǒu chū lái yī wèi yī fú pò jiù de lǎo dà niáng.] (An old woman in shabby clothes came out of the hut.)

When the object is a proper word, “(一)个 [(yī) gè] (a)” requires “了 [le]” in front.

Example 60 明朝末年，陕西出了个李自成。[míng cháo mò nián, shǎn xī chū le gè lǐ zì chéng.] (Li Zicheng was born in Shannxi at the end of the Ming Dynasty.)

Sometimes, there is no numeral-quantifier phrase in front of the object and “了 [le]” is required at the end of the sentence.

Example 61 来客人了。[lái kè rén le.] (The guest came.)

Example 62 张家死了人了。[Zhāng jiā sǐ le rén le.] (Someone in Zhang's family died.)

Example 63 刘胡兰想：“不好，出了叛徒了。”[Liú Hú lán xiǎng: “bù hǎo, chū le pàn tú le.”] (Liu Hulan said to herself: “It was too bad that a traitor was hiding in the army.”)

III. Words for location and time in existential sentences

1 Positions of the words for location

Their function as the subjects in the sentence.

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- (1) Comparison between “是 [shì]” sentences for existence and “有 [yǒu]” sentences for existence

The words for location at the heads of these sentences can be regarded as the subjects. Besides, they are also treated as the topics to be described.

Example 64

桌子上有一本书。[zhuō zi shàng yǒu yī běn shū.]

(A book is on the desk.)

桌子上是一本书。[zhuō zi shàng bú yī běn shū.]

(A book is on the desk.)

桌子上放着一本书。[zhuō zi shàng fàng zhe yī běn shū.]

(A book lies on the table.)

Example 65

墙上有一个小窗户。[qiáng shàng yǒu yī gè xiǎo chuāng hù.]

(There is a small window in the wall.)

沿墙是一列书籍。[yán qiáng shì yī liè shū jí.]

(A row of books are placed along the wall.)

门旁边摆着一张桌子。[mén páng biān bǎi zhe yī zhāng zhuō zi.]

(Beside the door places a desk.)

- (2) “是 [shì]” sentences for existence or “有 [yǒu]” sentences for existence combined with sentences with adjectives as predicate

The words for location at the heads of these sentences can be regarded as the subjects as well.

Example 66 炕上有一张桌子，还铺着一领破席。[kàng shàng yǒu yī zhāng zhuō zi, hái pù zhe yī lǐng pò xí.]

(A table was on the heatable brick bed covered with a worn-out mat.)

Example 67 桌子上放着几个茶杯，桌子下边是一个暖水瓶。[zhuō zi shàng fàng zhe jǐ gè chá bēi, zhuō zi xià biān shì yī gè nuǎn shuǐ píng.]

(On the table are some tea cups, and under it is a thermos bottle.)

Example 68 屋子里满满当当的，堂屋、窗外都挤着人。[wū zǐ lǐ mǎn mǎn dāng dāng de, táng wū, chuāng wài dōu jǐ zhe rén.]

(The house is packed with people who are crowded in the central room and outside the window.)

Example 69 道上响起各种音调，热闹非常。[jiē dào shàng xiǎng qǐ gè zhǒng yīn diào, rè nào fēi cháng.]

(The street was pretty boisterous with a variety of sounds.)

- (3) Locational words in existential sentences and sentences with verbs as predicate

As what has been mentioned, the word for location doesn't take any preposition in front in the existential sentence because it is regarded as the object to be described. Differently, the word for location often functions as an adverbial to indicate a location. Therefore, these two types of sentences should be distinguished clearly in Chinese.

Example 70 桌子上放着一本书。[zhuō zi shàng fàng zhe yī běn shū.]
(On the desk lies a book.)

Example 71

小明在桌子上写作业。[Xiǎo Míng zài zhuō zi shàng xiě zuò yè.]
(Xiao Ming was doing homework at the desk.)

*桌子上小明写作业。[zhuō zi shàng Xiǎo Míng xiě zuò yè.]

*小明桌子上写作业。[Xiǎo Míng zhuō zi shàng xiě zuò yè.]

Sometimes, the preposition before the adverbial for location can be absent.

Example 72 院子里，孩子们你追我赶地玩着。[yuàn zi lǐ, hái zi men nǐ zhuī wǒ gǎn de wán zhe.]
(The children were chasing after each other for fun in the yard.)

Example 73 大树下，老人们在乘凉。[dà shù xià, lǎo rén men zài chéng liáng.]
(The aged were enjoying the cool under the big tree.)

Of course, such usage is only permitted to appear before the subject which cannot be absent. Therefore, the following example is not correct.

Example 74 *院子里，你追我赶地玩着。[yuàn zi lǐ, nǐ zhuī wǒ gǎn de wán zhe.]

2 Positions of the words for time in the existential sentence

It functions as the adverbial in the existential sentence.

- (1) As mentioned before, the word for location is necessary due to its role as the object to be described; the word for time doesn't play the same role nor is necessarily required in the sentence sometimes.

Example 75 院子里堆着很多东西。[yuàn zi lǐ duī zhe hěn duō dōng xī.]
(A lot of stuff piled up in the yard.)

Example 76 教室里排列着整齐的桌椅。[jiào shì lǐ pái liè zhe zhěng qí de zhuō yǐ.]
(The classroom is lined up with desks and chairs.)

These examples describe “the yard” and “the classroom,” so the word for time is not necessary.

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Example 77 昨天来了几个客人。[zuó tiān lái le jǐ gè kè rén.]
(Several guests came yesterday.)

Example 78 刚才沉下去一只小船。[gāng cái chén xià qù yī zhī xiǎo chuán.]
(A small boat just sank.)

In the these examples, the words for time are necessary when the sentences indicate appearance or disappearance. Here, the words for location are omitted.

- (2) Similar to the existential sentence, the sentence with verb as predicate doesn't take any preposition before the word for time, except for highlighting it on purpose.

Example 79 昨天我接到一封信。[zuó tiān wǒ jiē dào yī fēng xìn.]
(I received a letter yesterday.)

Example 80 昨天来了一位客人。[zuó tiān lái le yī wèi kè rén.]
(A guest came yesterday.)

Example 81 刚才他看了场电影。[gāng cái tā kàn le chǎng diàn yǐng.]
(He watched a movie just now.)

Example 82 刚才发生了一件事。[gāng cái fā shēng le yī jiàn shì.]
(Something just happened.)

Thus it can be seen that the words for time in the two types of sentences have similar functions. Generally speaking, the existential sentence often takes the word for time as well the word for location as the object to be described. The word for time in the sentence with subject-predicate as predicate is rarely parsed as the subject for the sake of simplicity in Chinese teaching and learning.

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Section six: “把 [bǎ]” sentences

I. What is a “把 [bǎ]” sentence?

It refers to the sentence whose predicate part consists of a prepositional phrase of “把 [bǎ]” as the adverbial and a predicate verb. Usually, the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” is also the object of the predicate verb of the entire sentence.

Example 1 他从自己的座位上把挎包拿起来。[tā cóng zì jǐ de zuò wèi shàng bǎ kuà bāo ná qǐ lái.]

(He picked up the satchel from his seat.)

Example 2 终于把钻机卸了下来。[zhōng yú bǎ zuàn jī xiè le xià lái.]

(The drill was eventually uploaded.)

Example 3 这个人，我把他恨死了。[zhè gè rén, wǒ bǎ tā hèn sǐ le.]

(It's him whom I will hate forever.)

Example 4 昨天他把自行车丢了。[zuó tiān tā bǎ zì xíng chē diū le.]

(He lost his bike yesterday.)

Example 5 我不小心把杯子打了。[wǒ bù xiǎo xīn bǎ bēi zi dǎ le.]

(I accidentally broke the glass.)

The object of “把 [bǎ]” can be a locational word which possesses a verb-object relation to the predicate verb.

Example 6 下午要来客人，一清早妈妈就把房间打扫得干干净净。[xià wǔ yào lái kè rén, yī qīng zǎo mā mā jiù bǎ fáng jiān dǎ sǎo de gān gān jìng jìng.]

(Guests will come this afternoon, so my mother has been cleaning up the house since the early morning.)

Although such a relationship doesn't exist sometimes, the predicate verb with its complement can help realize it.

Example 7 姑娘们把肠子都要笑断了。[gū niáng men bǎ cháng zi dōu yào xiào duàn le.]

(The girls doubled over with laughter.)

Some verbs in “把 [bǎ]” sentences don't possess such a relationship to the object of “把 [bǎ].”

Some objects refer to the location or scope of an action. If so, the relationship doesn't exist.

Example 8 他把王府井跑遍了，也没找到那家书店。[tā bǎ wáng fǔ jǐng pǎo biàn le, yě méi zhǎo dào nà jiā shū diàn.]

(He didn't find that bookstore even after searching Wang Fuming thoroughly.)

Example 9 你把抽屉再找一遍，看看那张票子是不是夹在什么东西里边了。[nǐ bǎ chōu tì zài zhǎo yī biàn, kàn kàn nà zhāng piào zi shì bú shì jiā zài shén me dōng xī lǐ biān le.]

(Search the drawer again to find that note which might have been put somewhere inside.)

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Sometimes, the object of “把 [bǎ]” is the doer of action, mainly carrying a sense of “causing” or “making” an unsatisfactory situation, but not always.

Example 10 她真不幸，跟丈夫离婚不久，又把个孩子死了。[tā zhēn bú xìng, gēn zhàng fū lí hūn bú jiǔ, yòu bǎ gè hái zǐ sǐ le.]

(She was really having bad luck: her husband divorced her and her child died.)

Example 11 怎么把特务跑了？[zěn me bǎ tè wù pǎo le?]

(How come the spy escaped?)

The predicate can contain a modal complement with “得 [de].” If so, the object of “把 [bǎ]” is to be described by the predicate verb and complement together.

Example 12 接到公司录用的通知以后，把他高兴得一夜没睡着觉。[jiē dào gōng sī lù yòng de tōng zhī yǐ hòu, bǎ tā gāo xìng de yī yè méi shuì zhe jiào.]

(He was too overjoyed to go to sleep the whole night, after receiving the offer from the company.)

Sometimes, the constituent after “得 [de]” can be absent.

Example 13 看你累得(的)，快歇歇。[kàn bǎ nǐ lèi de(de), kuài xiē xiē.]

(You are so tired. Come and have a rest.)

Sometimes, the object of “把 [bǎ]” is the doer of the complement.

Example 14 搬家把我搬怕了，再也不想搬了。[bān jiā bǎ wǒ bān pà le, zài yě bù xiǎng bān le.]

(I am sick of moving around and don't want to do it anymore.)

Example 15 你看这事新鲜不，他吃龙虾竟把肚子吃坏了。[nǐ kàn zhè shì xīn xiān bù, tā chī lóng xiā jìng bǎ dù zi chī huài le.]

(Doesn't it sound ridiculous that he had a stomachache because of eating lobster?)

Example 16 有人说睡觉时把头朝南边比较好。[yǒu rén shuō shuì jiào shí bǎ tóu cháo nán biān bǐ jiào hǎo.]

(It is said that it's much better to sleep with the head to the south.)

Therefore, “把 [bǎ]” sentences are very complex in structure and use. The following discussion goes over two aspects.

II. Structure of “把 [bǎ]” sentences

A “把 [bǎ]” sentence has a kind of special structure in Chinese and it is basically structured in the order: (subject)+“把 [bǎ]”+object of “把 [bǎ]”+predicate verb+other constituents.

In other words, besides its object and predicate verb, “把 [bǎ]” also requires other constituents to follow, such as complement. Here are the special requirements for its following constituents.

1 The object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]”

The object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” is very important because it is the pre-condition of forming the “把 [bǎ]” sentence. Usually, it is functioned by a nominal constituent and sometimes by a verb or verb phrase.

Example 17 今年夏天，他把游泳学会了。[jīn nián xià tiān, tā bǎ yóu yǒng xué huì le.]
(He learnt how to swim this summer.)

Example 18 我们把在本世纪末实现的四个现代化作为奋斗目标。[wǒ men bǎ zài běn shì jì mò shí xiàn de sì gè xiàn dài huà zuò wéi fēn dòu mù biāo.]
(The realization of the Four Modernizations at the end of this century is our goal.)

Since the semantic relationship between the object of “把 [bǎ]” and the predicate verb of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence has been discussed, the following focuses on the analysis on the properties of the object of “把 [bǎ].”

First, the object of “把 [bǎ]” refers to the known information for the listener or what has been mentioned in the context. That is to say, the listener can understand what the speaker says or indicates. Therefore, the object of “把 [bǎ]” is closely related to the predicate and is even regarded as a topic, sometimes.

Example 19 学校明天不上课，我已经把这个消息告诉同学们了。[xué xiào míng tiān bú shàng kè, wǒ yǐ jīng bǎ zhè gè xiāo xī gào sù tóng xué men le.]
(I have told the classmates that there won't be any class tomorrow at school.)

Example 20 牧民们赶来，抱起这两个孩子，马上把她们送进了医院。[mù mín men gǎn lái, bào qi zhè liǎng gè hái zǐ, mǎ shàng bǎ tā men sòng jìn le yī yuàn.]
(The herders rushed here and took two kids to the hospital.)

Example 21 他们决心把自己的家乡建设成现代化的新农村。[tā men jué xīn bǎ zì jǐ de jiā xiāng jiàn shè chéng xiàn dài huà de xīn nóng cūn.]
(They are determined to build their hometown into a new modern rural area.)

If the object of “把 [bǎ]” refers to something unmentioned in the context or unknown for the listener, it always requires a modifier to make itself understood clearly.

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Example 22 老栓把一个碧绿的包，一个红红白白的破灯笼，一同塞进灶里。[Lǎo Shuān bǎ yī gè bì lǜ de bāo, yī gè hóng hóng bái bái de pò dēng lóng, yī tóng sāi jìn zào lǐ.]

(Lao Shuan put a green bag and a red-and-white broken lantern into the stove.)

Example 23 请你把我房间桌子左边抽屉里的存折给我送来好吗？我马上要用钱。[qǐng nǐ bǎ wǒ fáng jiān zhuō zi zuǒ biān chōu tì lǐ de cún shé gěi wǒ sòng lái hǎo ma? wǒ mǎ shàng yào yòng qián.]

(Would you please send me the passbook in the left drawer of the desk in my room? I need money right now.)

Example 24 这时我看见老张把刚刚从信箱里拿出来的报纸交给了老李。[zhè shí wǒ kàn jiàn Lǎo Zhāng bǎ gāng gāng cóng xìn xiāng lǐ ná chū lái de bào zhǐ jiāo gěi le Lǎo Lǐ.]

(Then I saw Lao Zhang pass Lao Li the newspaper which he took out from the mailbox just now.)

Sometimes, the object includes a numeral-quantifier phrase “一个 [yī gè] (a)” as the unknown information but the listener can understand what it refers to.

Example 25 刚才我把一个孩子碰倒了。[gāng cái wǒ bǎ yī gè hái zǐ pèng dào le.]

(I knocked a child over just now.)

In this example, the listener understands a fact that it is a child rather than an old man or a young man that was knocked over, although “a child” is indefinite. The same is true for the next example.

Example 26 老马从你的书架上把一本书拿走了，我没看书名。[Lǎo Mǎ cóng nǐ de shū jià shàng bǎ yī běn shū ná zǒu le, wǒ méi kàn shū míng.]

(Lao Ma took a book away from your bookshelf, but I didn't know which one.)

Sometimes, the object of “把 [bǎ]” refers to an abstract thing or things of the same category, which also can be understood by the listener.

Example 27 这是个自动售报机，只要你把钱放进这个眼里，报纸就从另一边出来了。[zhè shì gè zì dòng shòu bào jī, zhǐ yào nǐ bǎ qián fàng jìn zhè gè yǎn lǐ, bào zhǐ jiù cóng lìng yī biān chū lái le.]

(This is an automatic newspaper vending machine. As long as you insert the cash into it, the newspaper will come out by itself from the other side.)

Example 28 他中文很好，都能把中文诗翻成英文了。[tā zhōng wén hěn hǎo, dōu néng bǎ zhōng wén shī fān chéng yīng wén le.]

(He is so good at Chinese that he can translate Chinese poems into English.)

Example 29 他挥了一下手，似乎要把一切烦恼统统赶走。[tā huī le yī xià shǒu, sì hū yào bǎ yī qiè fán nǎo tǒng tǒng gǎn zǒu.]

(He waved his hand as if to drive all the troubles away.)

In the previous examples, “money,” “Chinese poems,” and “troubles” are all definite for the listeners because they can be understood clearly according to the contexts.

In short, the object of “把 [bǎ]” should refer to definite information and can be understood by the listener. Otherwise, it cannot function as the object of “把 [bǎ],”

2 The predicate of “把 [bǎ]” sentences

In a “把 [bǎ]” sentence, the object is often described or narrated by a verb, which consequently decides the complexity of the predicate. That is to say, the predicate of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence doesn’t simply consist of a verb but also requires other constituents in the front or in the rear. They are as follows.

(1) Complement

The predicate verb of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence often requires the complement in the rear.

Example 30 你今年一定要把毕业论文写完! [nǐ jīn nián yī dìng yào bǎ bì yè lùn wén xiě wán!]

(You must finish the graduation thesis this year.)

Example 31 把门关上! [bǎ mén guān shàng!]

(Shut the door!)

Example 32 我把书拿起来, 放到书架上。[wǒ bǎ shū ná qǐ lái, fàng dào shū jià shàng.]

(I picked up the book to put it on the shelf.)

Example 33 他把药放在桌子上了。[tā bǎ yào fàng zài zhuō zi shàng le.]

(He put the medicine on the table.)

Example 34 她把小明送给她的戒指拿起来看了一下就放在一边了。[tā bǎ Xiǎo Míng sòng gěi tā de jiè zhi ná qǐ lái kàn le yī xià jiù fàng zài yī biān le.]

(She picked up the ring given by Xiao Min and put it aside.)

Sometimes, “了 [le]” is also required after the complement when the action conveyed by the predicate verb is finished but without any obvious hints, such as time words or successive clauses. Details about complements will be discussed later.

(2) The dynamic auxiliaries “了 [le]” and “着 [zhe]”

Here are some examples of them.

Example 35 吃完晚饭, 伙计们准备好了木棍, 把灯熄了。[chī wán wǎn fàn, huǒ jì men zhǔn bèi hǎo le mù gùn, bǎ dēng xī le.]

(After supper, the guys got wooden sticks ready and turned off the light.)

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Example 36 把杯子里的酒喝了! [bǎ bēi zi lǐ de jiǔ hē le!]

(Drink the wine in the glass!)

Example 37 他把这个月的工资丢了。[tā bǎ zhè gè yuè de gōng zī diū le.]

(He lost the salary for this month.)

Example 38 功课做了再看电视。[gōng kè zuò le zài kàn diàn shì.]

(To watch TV after finishing the homework.)

Example 39 下个月我一定把托福考了。[xià gè yuè wǒ yī dìng bǎ tuō fú kǎo le.]

(I must pass TOEFL next month.)

Example 40 你不要再逼我了，我把知道的都说了。[nǐ bú yào zài bī wǒ le, wǒ bǎ zhī dào de dōu shuō le.]

(Don't force me anymore. I have told you what I know.)

Example 41

A: 我叫小王给老师写一封道歉的信，他怎么还没写？我去催催他。[wǒ jiào Xiǎo Wáng gěi lǎo shī xiě yī fēng dào qiàn de xìn, tā zěn me hái méi xiě? wǒ qù cuī cuī tā.]

(I asked Xiao Wang to write an apology letter to his teacher. How come he didn't do that? I'll hurry him up.)

B: 他已经把那封信写了，你别催他了。[tā yǐ jīng bǎ nà fēng xìn xiě le, nǐ bié cuī tā le.]

(He has finished it. Don't push him again.)

“了 [le]” only follows the verb that indicates a result. For instance, “喝 [hē] (drink)” indicates the decrease of “wine” or “water;” “丢 [diū] (lose)” implies a loss of belongs. Such verbs are as follows:

吃 [chī] (eat), 喝 [hē] (drink), 吞 [tūn] (swallow), 丢 [diū] (lose), 赔 [péi] (compensate), 掉 [diào] (drop), 扔 [rēng] (throw), 砍 [kǎn] (hack), 割 [gē] (cut), 劈 [pī] (chop), 剪 [jiǎn] (trim), 刮 [guā] (shave), 铲 [chǎn] (shovel), 撕 [sī] (tear), 拔 [bá] (pull out), 抹 [mò] (cancel), 摔 [shuāi] (throw), 掀 [xiān] (lift up), 揭 [jiē] (uncover), 炸 [zhà] (blast), 除 [chú] (eliminate), 剔 [tī] (scrape), 剃 [tì] (shave), 删 [shān] (delete), 剥 [bāo] (peel), 熄 [xī] (extinguish), 灭 [miè] (extinguish), 停 [tíng] (stop), 关 [guān] (close), 闭 [bì] (shut), 吐 [tǔ] (spit), 改 [gǎi] (change), 缴 [jiǎo] (hand over), 休 [xiū] (divorce), 甩 [shuǎi] (throw), 蹬 [dēng] (discard), 倒 [dào] (fall), 洒 [sǎ] (spill), 卖 [mài] (sell), 寄 [jì] (send), 输 [shū] (lose), 当 [dāng] (while), 花 [huā] (spend), 打 [dǎ] (break), 砸 [zá] (smash), 洗 [xǐ] (wash), 拆 [chāi] (disassemble), 摘 [zhāi] (pick), 卸 [xiè] (upload), 脱 [tuō] (take off), 撤 [chè] (withdraw), 废 [fèi] (abandon), 嫁 [jià] (marry), 毁 [huǐ] (destroy), 忘 [wàng] (forget), 误 [wù] (waste), 撕 [sī] (tear), 烫 [tàn] (burn), 湿 [shī] (wet), 退 [tuì] (retreat), 辞 [cí] (resign), 戒 [jiè] (give up), 毙 [bì] (shoot), 宰 [zǎi] (kill), 杀 [shā] (slaughter), 排除 [pái chú] (exclude), 取消 [qǔ xiāo] (cancel), 解除 [jiě chú] (relieve), 处理 [chǔ lǐ] (dispose), 解决 [jiě jué] (solve), 消灭 [xiāo miè] (eliminate).

Sometimes, other complements can be added in front of “了 [le]” when both sides understand what is going to happen. For instance, “完 [wán]” can be added in Example 38; “掉 [diào]” in Example 39; “出来 [chū lái]” in Example 40 and “完 [wán]” in Example 41.

“了 [le]” can be used alone when a “把 [bǎ]” sentence indicates dissatisfaction, such as the aforementioned Example 10 and Example 11.

Besides, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence also shows a certain result whose cause is not easy to be clarified. For instance, “孩子死了。[hái zi sǐ le.] (The child died.)” might be caused by a disease or hunger.

“着 [zhe]” can be used alone after the verb in a “把 [bǎ]” sentence to indicate an imperative sense.

Example 42 别走，你把这本书拿着！[bié zǒu, nǐ bǎ zhè běn shū ná zhe!]
(Wait a minute. Take this book with you!)

Example 43 别忘了把机票带。[bié wàng le bǎ jī piào dài.]
(Don't forget to take the air ticket.)

In Chinese, the verbs involved in the use mentioned previously are limited in number, including “带 [dài] (carry),” “背 [bèi] (carry on the back),” “扛 [káng] (carry on the shoulder),” “放 [fàng] (put),” “摆 [bǎi] (display),” “搁 [gē] (put),” “挂 [guà] (hang),” “拿 [ná] (take),” “举 [jǔ] (hands up),” “开 [kāi] (open).”

The dynamic auxiliary word “过 [guò]” is rarely used after the predicate verb of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence because it only indicates experience not result. Therefore it is not right to say “*我把北京去过两次。[wǒ bǎ běi jīng qù guò liǎng cì.]”

However, “过 [guò]” can follow the resultant complement after the predicate verb.

Example 44

A: 她不会做家务事，昨天就把米饭做生了。[tā bú huì zuò jiā wù shì, zuó tiān jiù bǎ mǐ fàn zuò shēng le.]

(She was not good at housework and failed to cook the rice well yesterday.)

B: 你净瞎说，我从来没把米饭做生过。[nǐ jìng xiǎ shuō, wǒ cóng lái méi bǎ mǐ fàn zuò shēng guò.]

(It was not a truth. I have never failed to cook it.)

Example 45 他很马虎，把自己的名字都写错过。[tā hěn mǎ hǔ, bǎ zì jǐ de míng zì dōu xiě cuò guò.]

(He was so careless that he even wrote his own name by mistake.)

(3) The verbs in the overlapped form

Example 46 他把伤口包了包，骑上车就走了。[tā bǎ shāng kǒu bāo le bāo, qí shàng chē jiù zǒu le.]

(He wrapped up the wound and rode away.)

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Example 47 现在我把我的意见说说，大家看看是否可行。[xiàn zài wǒ bǎ wǒ de yì jiàn shuō shuō, dà jiā kàn kàn shì fǒu kě xíng.]
(Now I am going to speak out my suggestions and let's discuss whether it works.)

(4) The indirect object after the predicate verb

Example 48 不如把这件事告诉刘叔叔他们，大家想个办法来治他。[bù rú bǎ zhè jiàn shì gào sù Liú shū shū tā men, dà jiā xiǎng gè bàn fǎ lái zhì tā.]
(It's better to tell it to Uncle Liu and then find a way to punish him.)

Example 49 售货员把应该找的零钱给了我。[shòu huò yuán bǎ yīng gāi zhǎo de líng qián gěi le wǒ.]
(The salesclerk gave me my change.)

Here, the verbs only include those that can be followed by the double objects, such as “告诉 [gào sù] (tell),” “送 [sòng] (give),” “给 [gěi] (give),” “交 [jiāo] (hand in).” As for other verbs, they require complements, dynamic auxiliary words, or other constituents to follow.

(5) The adverbial before the predicate verb

Example 50 民兵们把门一关，放进去的毒气又从原来的洞口出来了。[mín bīng men bǎ mén yī guān, fàng jìn qù de dú qì yòu cóng yuán lái de dòng kǒu chū lái le.]
(As soon as the militias closed the door, the poisonous gas was forced back from the cave entrance.)

Example 51 我把他向外拉，但拉不动。[wǒ bǎ tā xiàng wài lā, dàn lā bú dòng.]
(I tried to pull him out but I failed to move him.)

Example 52 别把纸满地乱扔。[bié bǎ zhǐ mǎn dì luàn rēng.]
(Don't litter paper.)

In these examples, the adverbials imply results or accomplishment. The adverbials without such implications cannot function properly in a “把 [bǎ]” sentence. Therefore, it is not right to say “*我努力把 他拉 [wǒ mǔ lì bǎ tā lā].”

Some verbs can function alone as the predicate of “把 [bǎ]” sentences because they can denote a sense of result or accomplishment by themselves.

Example 53 不把敌人消灭，我们就不得安宁！[bù bǎ dí rén xiāo miè, wǒ men jiù bù dé ān níng!]
(We shall have no peace unless the enemy has been wiped out!)

Example 54 马上把队伍解散！[mǎ shàng bǎ duì wǔ jiě sǎn!]
(Dissolve the troops immediately!)

Such use only occurs in the imperative sentence or the conditional sentence.

In short, the predicate of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is complex and it can be divided into two types. One refers to the verb that indicates a result by itself or by other following constituents with the same indication, such as complements and “了 [le].” This type is the majority in Chinese. The other refers to the verb that is limited in number and also with many restrictions in use.

3 The complements of “把 [bǎ]” sentences

The complement is the most frequently used constituent in “把 [bǎ]” sentences because the result or change of the object is often indicated by it. The complements of “把 [bǎ]” sentences include the following.

(1) The resultant complement

Example 55 我把钢笔用坏了。[wǒ bǎ gāng bǐ yòng huài le.]

(I've worn out my pen.)

Example 56 你把作业写完了再去玩。[nǐ bǎ zuò yè xiě wán le zài qù wán.]

(Finish your homework before you play.)

Example 57 突然眼前如彩虹升起，一幅幅五光十色的织锦把我给吸引住了。[tū rán yǎn qián rú cǎi hóng shēng qǐ, yī fú fú wǔ guāng shí sè de zhī jǐn bǎ wǒ gěi xī yǐn zhù le.]

(I was attracted by the colorful tapestries which looked like a rainbow rising in front of me suddenly.)

(2) The directional complement

Example 58 你把苹果给他送两筐去。[nǐ bǎ píng guǒ gěi tā sòng liǎng kuāng qù.]

(Send him two baskets of apples.)

Example 59 主席亲自动手和我把它搭了起来。[zhǔ xí qīn zì dòng shǒu hé wǒ bǎ tā dā le qǐ lái.]

(The Chairman himself built it with me.)

Example 60 他把洗好的衣服收了起来。[tā bǎ xǐ hǎo de yī fú shōu le qǐ lái.]

(He put away the clean clothes.)

(3) The modal complement

Example 61 他把斧子举得跟头一样高。[tā bǎ fǔ zi jǔ de gēn tóu yī yàng gāo.]

(He raised the ax almost above his head.)

Example 62 汽车轮子把泥浆溅得老高。[qì chē lún zi bǎ ní jiāng jiàn de lǎo gāo.]

(The car wheels splashed the mud everywhere.)

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Example 63 我们要把这个小屋子布置得漂漂亮亮的。[wǒ men yào bǎ zhè gè xiǎo wū zi bù zhì de piào piào liàng liàng de.]
(We will have nice decorations on the little house.)

Some degree adverbs cannot be used as the complements of “把 [bǎ]” sentences, such as “极 [jí] (extremely)” and “很 [hěn] (very).” However, some are acceptable in the spoken language, such as “把他气得不得了。[bǎ tā qì dé bù dé liáo.] (He is pretty angry.)” and “我把他恨死了。[wǒ bǎ tā hèn sǐ le.] (I hate him very much.)” Besides, those modal complements for the doers in the position of subjects cannot be used in “把 [bǎ]” sentences, either. For instance, we cannot say “*我把汉语学得很差。[wǒ bǎ hàn yǔ xué de hěn chà.]” or “*他把床起得很早。[tā bǎ chuáng qǐ de hěn zǎo.]” Usually, the modal complements for action don’t occur in “把 [bǎ]” sentences but there are some exceptions.

Example 64 老师把作业看得很仔细，连一个标点符号都不放过。[lǎo shī bǎ zuò yè kàn dé hěn zǎi xì, lián yī gè biāo diǎn fú hào dōu bú fàng guò.]
(The teacher read his homework so carefully that a punctuation mark wouldn’t be missed.)

(4) The numeral-quantifier complement

The numeral-quantifier complement for action and time can occur in “把 [bǎ]” sentences.

Example 65 他把老人的话在心里重复了一遍。[tā bǎ lǎo rén de huà zài xīn lǐ piào fù le yī biàn.]
(He repeated the old man’s words in his mind.)

Example 66 妹妹把我的衣襟拉了一下。[mèi mèi bǎ wǒ de yī jīn lā le yī xià.]
(My younger sister gave a tug on my clothes.)

Example 67 我不得不把出发的时间推迟一小时。[wǒ bù dé bù bǎ chū fā de shí jiān tuī chí yī xiǎo shí.]
(I have to postpone the departure an hour further.)

Example 68 敌人把他在监狱里关了三个月。[dí rén bǎ tā zài jiān yù lǐ guān le sān gè yuè.]
(He was imprisoned by the enemy for three months.)

However, the numeral-quantifier complement for time is much restricted in “把 [bǎ]” sentences; in other words, only those predicate verbs for duration can be followed by these complements, such as “关 [guān] (close),” “开 [kāi] (open),” “捂 [wǔ] (cover),” “押 [yā] (detain),” “增加 [zēng jiā] (increase),” “减少 [jiǎn shǎo] (decrease),” “延长 [yán cháng] (prolong),” “推迟 [tuī chí] (postpone).”

Differently from other complements, the numeral-quantifier complement just indicates the accomplishment of action rather than its development or result.

(5) The complement of prepositional phrases

Only those prepositional phrases consisting of “向 [xiàng]” or “于 [yú]” can function as the complement in “把 [bǎ]” sentences.

Example 69 把革命事业继续推向前进。[bǎ gé mìng shì yè jì xù tuī xiàng qián jìn.]

(To push forward the revolutionary cause.)

Example 70 他把生死置于脑后。[tā bǎ shēng sǐ zhì yú nǎo hòu.]

(He is brave and puts any thoughts of death out of his mind.)

The complement of possibility cannot be used in “把 [bǎ]” sentences because it only indicates the possibility or tendency rather than the result of action itself. In other words, it implies a certain ability or a subjective/objective condition. Therefore, it is not correct to say “*我把这件事办不好。[wǒ bǎ zhè jiàn shì bàn bù hǎo.]” or “*我把这碗饭吃不下。[wǒ bǎ zhè wǎn fàn chī bú xià.]”

4 The object of the predicate verb in “把 [bǎ]” sentences

Generally speaking, the object of the predicate verb cannot be the doer nor the recipient of an action because the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” often indicates the recipient and the subject of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence mainly functions as the doer. The objects of the predicate verbs in “把 [bǎ]” sentences mainly include the following types.

(1) The object of the predicate verb usually refers to the indirect object (the receiver of the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]”).

Example 71 上午，我把家庭作业本交给老师了。[shàng wǔ, wǒ bǎ jiā tíng zuò yè běn jiāo gěi lǎo shī le.]

(I handed in my homework to the teacher this morning.)

Example 72 小苏，把皮包给我。[Xiǎo Sū, bǎ pí bāo gěi wǒ.]

(Xiao Su, pass the leather bag to me.)

Example 73 那年，帝国主义国家在一次分赃会议上，决定把德国在山东的权利，划归日本。[nà nián, dì guó zhǔ yì guó jiā zài yī cì fēn zāng huì yì shàng, jué dìng bǎ dé guó zài shān dōng de quán lì, huà guī rì běn.]

(That year at a meeting for dividing the spoils, the imperialist countries decided to transfer Germany's rights in Shandong to Japan.)

(2) The object of the predicate verb confirms the development of the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ],” usually being followed by the complements that consist of “作 [zuò],” “成 [chéng],” and “为[wéi].”

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Example 74 他家这几年生活有了很大的改善，已经把土房改建成砖房了。[tā jiā zhè jǐ nián shēng huó yǒu le hěn dà de gǎi shàn, yǐ jīng bǎ tǔ fāng gǎi jiàn chéng zhuān fāng le.]

(The living standard of his family has improved greatly with the earthen house changed into a brick one.)

Example 75 他要把自己锻炼成为一个有用的人。[tā yào bǎ zì jǐ duàn liàn chéng wéi yī gè yǒu yòng de rén.]

(He wants to be useful by self-training.)

Example 76 人们亲切地把他叫做“咱们的孩子”。[rén men qīn qiè de bǎ tā jiào zuò “zán men de hái zi.”]

(People call him “our kid” intimately.)

- (3) The object of the predicate verb indicates the location for the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ],” usually with a resultant complement in the middle.

Example 77 反动派把他关入监牢。[fǎn dòng pài bǎ tā guān rù jiān láo.]

(The reactionaries put him in prison.)

Example 78 接着他又把那张画放回原处。[jiē zhe tā yòu bǎ nà zhāng huà fàng huí yuán chù.]

(Then he put the picture back.)

Example 79 我马上和海员们带着断指，把彼得送到了医院。[wǒ mǎ shàng hé hǎi yuán men dài zhe duàn zhǐ, bǎ Bǐ dé sòng dào le yī yuàn.]

(The sailors and I took Peter and his amputated finger to the hospital at once.)

Example 80 不过到了抗日时期，我们就把这个方法建立在更加自觉的基础之上了。[bú guò dào le kàng rì shí qī, wǒ men jiù bǎ zhè gè fāng fǎ jiàn lì zài gèng jiā zì jué de jī chǔ zhī shàng le.]

(But during the War of Resistance against Japan, we adopted this method more practically.)

- (4) The object of the predicate verb indicates the resultant object of the preposition “把 [bǎ].”

Example 81 那树根跳了几下，把地面砸了个大坑。[nà shù gēn tiào le jǐ xià, bǎ dì miàn zá le gè dà kēng.]

(As a result of the tree falling over, the tree root made a big pit in the ground.)

Example 82 他把墙挖了一个洞。[tā bǎ qiáng wā le yī gè dòng.]

(He dug a hole in the wall.)

Example 83 他用力推了小明一下，把小明摔了个屁股墩儿。[tā yòng lì tuī le Xiǎo Míng yī xià, bǎ xiǎo míng shuāi le gè pì gǔ dūn er.]

(With strength, he pushed Xiao Ming to the ground.)

- (5) The object of the predicate verb indicates the tool to be used for the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ].”

Example 84 把粮食过了一遍筛子。[bǎ liáng shí guò le yī biàn shāi zi.]
(The grain has been sieved.)

Example 85 把菜过过秤。[bǎ cài guò guò chèng.]
(To weigh the vegetables.)

- (6) The object of the predicate verb is a part of the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ],” or is closely related to it.

Example 86 他把眼睛闭上了一只。[tā bǎ yǎn jīng bì shàng le yī zhī.]
(He closed one of his eyes.)

Example 87 他打老婆打得很厉害，有一次把她的头发揪下来一大把。
[tā dǎ lǎo pó dǎ dé hěn lì hài, yǒu yī cì bǎ tā de tóu fà jiū xià lái yī dà bǎ.]

(He beat his wife so badly that he once tore off a fistful of her hair.)

Example 88 把大门上了闩。[bǎ dà mén shàng le shuān.]
(To bolt the gate.)

Example 89 把他免了职。[bǎ tā miǎn le zhí.]
(He was deposed.)

- (7) The object of the predicate verb indicates the recipient of action with the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” as the location.

Example 90 把信贴上信封。[bǎ xìn tiē shàng xìn fēng.]
(To seal the envelope.)

Example 91 把炉子生上火。[bǎ lú zi shēng shàng huǒ.]
(To light the stove.)

Example 92 把暖壶灌满水。[bǎ nuǎn hú guàn mǎn shuǐ.]
(To fill the thermos with water.)

In these examples, the locations such as “信封 [xìn fēng] (envelope),” “炉子 [lú zi] (stove),” and “暖壶 [nuǎn hú] (thermos),” are the topics being discussed, so they function as the objects of the preposition “把 [bǎ].” Otherwise, such use is not acceptable.

- (8) The object of the predicate verb is the reference to the object of the preposition “把 [bǎ],” which often happens in the spoken language.

Example 93 把这碗参汤喝了它。[bǎ zhè wǎn cān tāng hē le tā.]
(Drink up this ginseng soup.)

5 The sequence of other adverbials in “把 [bǎ]” sentences

The combination of the preposition “把 [bǎ]” and its object functions as the adverbial of the “把 [bǎ]” sentence. The sequence of other adverbials in a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is similar to that in general sentences. Further discussions follows.

- (1) The adverbs functioning as correlative words to indicate negation or repetition should come before “把 [bǎ],” such as “便 [biàn],” “就 [jiù],” “才 [cái],” “再 [zài] (again),” “又 [yòu] (again),” “终于 [zhōng yú] (finally).”

Example 94 老师傅说完便把鲁班领到西屋里去。[lǎo shī fù shuō wán biàn bǎ Lǔ Bān lǐng dào xī wū lǐ qù.]

(After he finished his words, the master worker led Lu Ban to the west room.)

Example 95 我刚会跑的时候，她就把我往海里赶。[wǒ gāng huì pǎo de shí hòu, tā jiù bǎ wǒ wǎng hǎi lǐ gǎn.]

(As soon as I could run, she required me to swim in the sea.)

Example 96 他们把砖绑在羊身上，再把羊赶上山。[tā men bǎ zhuān bǎng zài yáng shēn shàng, zài bǎ yáng gǎn shàng shān.]

(They tied the bricks onto the sheep and drove them to the mountain.)

“不 [bù] (not)” and “没 [méi] (no)” as the negative adverbs often come before “把 [bǎ].”

Example 97 他没把收音机拿来。[tā méi bǎ shōu yīn jī ná lái.]

(He didn't bring the radio.)

Example 98 这样的支书能没人敬着？能没人拥护？能不把农业社搞出花来呀？[zhè yàng de zhī shū néng méi rén jìng zhe? néng méi rén yōng hù? néng bú bǎ nóng yè shè gǎo chū huā lái ya?]

(There can be no doubt that such a respected league branch secretary should be supported for his outstanding performance in the team of agricultural cooperation.)

In some idiomatic phrases, these negative adverbs can be put after the object of “把 [bǎ].”

Example 99 真是太把人不放在眼里了。[zhēn shì tài bǎ rén bú fàng zài yǎn lǐ le.]

(What disparaging behavior.)

For those adverbs indicating repetition, such as “再 [zài] (again),” “又 [yòu] (again),” they are accepted before “把 [bǎ]” or after the object of “把 [bǎ].”

Example 100

你把他又叫回来干什么？[nǐ bǎ tā yòu jiào huí lái gàn shén me?]

(Why did you call him back again?)

你又把他叫回来干什么？[nǐ yòu bǎ tā jiào huí lái gàn shén me?]
(Why did you call him back again?)

Example 101

他拼死拼活地干，想把地再买回来。[tā pīn sǐ pīn huó dì gàn, xiǎng bǎ dì zài mǎi huí lái.]

(He worked very hard in the hope of buying the land back.)

他拼死拼活地干，想再把地买回来。[tā pīn sǐ pīn huó dì gàn, xiǎng zài bǎ dì mǎi huí lái.]

(He worked very hard in the hope of buying the land back.)

(2) The descriptive adverbs

The adverbs describing the state or the mind of the subject should come before “把 [bǎ].”

Example 102 龙梅和玉荣急忙顶着风把羊往回赶。[Lóng Méi hé Yù Róng jí máng dǐng zhe fēng bǎ yáng wǎng huí gǎn.]

(In a hurry, Long Mei and Yu Rong drove the sheep back against the wind.)

Example 103 这个年轻人不辞辛苦地亲自把菜籽送上门来。[zhè gè nián qīng rén bù cí xīn kǔ dì qīn zì bǎ cài zǐ sòng shàng mén lái.]

(This young man took the trouble to bring the rapeseed by himself.)

For those describing predicate verbs, they are accepted before “把 [bǎ]” or after the object of “把 [bǎ].”

Example 104

他们把决口的地方仔细观察了一番。[tā men bǎ jué kǒu de dì fang zǐ xì guān chá le yī fān.]

(They made a close observation of the breach.)

他们仔细地把决口的地方观察了一番。[tā men zǐ xì de bǎ jué kǒu de dì fang guān chá le yī fān.]

(They made a close observation of the breach.)

Example 105

咱们依靠群众，把这个大难题初步解决了。[zán men yī kào qún zhòng, bǎ zhè gè dà nán tí chū bù jiě jué le.]

(Together with the masses, we have preliminarily solved the tough problem.)

咱们依靠群众，初步把这个大难题解决了。[zán men yī kào qún zhòng, chū bù bǎ zhè gè dà nán tí jiě jué le.]

(Together with the masses, we have preliminarily solved the tough problem.)

Example 106

他把我猛然往前一推 . . . [tā bǎ wǒ měng rán wǎng qián yī tuī . . .]

(He fiercely pushed me forward.)

86 *Sentences with verbs as predicate*

他猛然把我往前一推 . . . [tā měng rán bǎ wǒ wǎng qián yī tuī . . .]
(He fiercely pushed me forward.)

The adverbs describing the object of “把 [bǎ]” are often put after it.

Example 107 妈妈把相片端端正正地挂在墙上。[mā mā bǎ xiàng piàn duān duān zhèng zhèng de guà zài qiáng shàng.]
(Mother hung the photo upright on the wall.)

Example 108 他把东西大包小包地都藏了起来。[tā bǎ dōng xī dà bāo xiǎo bāo dì dōu cáng le qǐ lái.]
(He has hidden the parcels of different sizes.)

Example 109 他把书一本一本地把摆在书架上。[tā bǎ shū yī běn yī běn de bǎi zài shū jià shàng.]
(He placed the books on the bookshelf one by one.)

In order to express description, these descriptive adverbs are also permitted to come before the preposition “把 [bǎ].”

(3) The prepositional phrases

They usually come after the object of “把 [bǎ]” as the adverbials to indicate its moving direction, mainly consisting of prepositions such as “向 [xiàng] (to),” “往 [wǎng] (to),” “朝 [cháo] (to).”

Example 110 老虎扑来了，他把头往旁边一闪。[lǎo hǔ pū lái le, tā bǎ tóu wǎng páng biān yī shǎn.]
(He turned his head aside when the tiger pounced on him.)

Example 111 阿Q将手向头上遮，不自觉地逃出门来。[Ā Q jiāng shǒu xiàng tóu shàng zhē, bú zì jiào de táo chū mén lái.]
(Ah Q covered his head with his hands and fled unconsciously.)

Example 112 你把地图朝左边挪挪。[nǐ bǎ dì tú cháo zuǒ biān nuó nuó.]
(Move the map a bit to the left, please.)

The prepositional phrases can also be put before or after “把 [bǎ]” when they show where the object of “把 [bǎ]” comes from the preposition “从 [cóng].”

Example 113
他把挎包从自己的座位上拿起来。[tā bǎ kuà bāo cóng zì jǐ de zuò wèi shàng ná qǐ lái.]
(He took the satchel from his seat.)
他从自己的座位上把挎包拿起来。[tā cóng zì jǐ de zuò wèi shàng bǎ kuà bāo ná qǐ lái.]
(He took the satchel from his seat.)

Example 114

龙梅从雪沟里把羊拉了出来。[Lóng Méi cóng xuě gōu lǐ bǎ yáng lā le chū lái.]

(Long Mei pulled the sheep out of the snow ditch.)

龙梅把羊从雪沟里拉了出来。[Lóng Méi bǎ yáng cóng xuě gōu lǐ lā le chū lái.]

(Long Mei pulled the sheep out of the snow ditch.)

In this case, the positions of the prepositional phrases depend on two situations. One is that they should come before “把 [bǎ]” when the subject happens to be in the same location.

Example 115 你们要领导青年，在农村把农业搞好，在城市把工业搞好。[nǐ men yào lǐng dǎo qīng nián, zài nóng cūn bǎ nóng yè gǎo hǎo, zài chéng shì bǎ gōng yè gǎo hǎo.]

(You must lead the youth to work hard for the agriculture development in the countryside and the industrial development in the city.)

Example 116 我在教室里就把作业做完了。[wǒ zài jiào shì lǐ jiù bǎ zuò yè zuò wán le.]

(I have finished my homework in the classroom.)

The other is that they are usually put after the object of “把 [bǎ],” when the object of “把 [bǎ]” happens to be in the same location.

Example 117 他把刀在磨石上磨了磨。[tā bǎ dāo zài mó shí shàng mó le mó.]

(He sharpened his knife on the grindstone.)

Example 118 我把手在盆里洗了洗。[wǒ bǎ shǒu zài pén lǐ xǐ le xǐ.]

(I washed my hands in the basin.)

Those phrases consisting of “向 [xiàng],” “给 [gěi],” “替 [tì]” are usually put after the object of “把 [bǎ]” to indicate what has been accepted.

Example 119 小刘回到部队，把这件事向领导作了汇报。[Xiǎo Liú huí dào bù duì, bǎ zhè jiàn shì xiàng lǐng dǎo zuò le huì bào.]

(After returning to the army, Xiao Liu reported this matter to the leader.)

Example 120 我把信给他寄去了。[wǒ bǎ xìn gěi tā jì qù le.]

(I sent him a letter.)

6 The verbs unable to function as the predicate verbs in “把 [bǎ]” sentences

- (1) The verbs for judgment, existence, or possession, such as “是 [shì] (is),” “像 [xiàng] (like),” “有 [yǒu] (there be),” “姓 [xìng] (surname),” “属于 [shǔ yú] (belong to),” “存在 [cún zài] (exist).”
- (2) The volitive verbs

- (3) The verbs for uncontrollable activities of mind or feelings, such as “赞成 [zàn chéng] (in favor of),” “知道 [zhī dào] (know),” “同意 [tóng yì] (agree),” “觉得 [jué de] (feel),” “相信 [xiāng xìn] (believe),” “希望 [xī wàng] (hope),” “主张 [zhǔ zhāng] (advocate),” “要求 [yāo qiú] (require),” “看见 [kàn jiàn] (see),” “听见 [tīng jiàn] (hear),” “闻见 [wén jiàn] (smell).”
- (4) Some directional verbs with location as objects, such as “上 [shàng] (above),” “下 [xià] (down),” “进 [jìn] (enter),” “出 [chū] (go out),” “回 [huí] (return),” “过 [guò] (pass),” “起 [qǐ] (rise),” “到 [dào] (arrive).”

III. How to use “把 [bǎ]” sentences?

1 In the aspect of expression

Usually, “subject-verb” or “subject-verb-object” is often used to narrate or inquire about what is going on about the subject.

Example 121

A: 小王做什么呢? [Xiǎo Wáng zuò shén me ne?]

(What is Xiao Wang doing now?)

B: 他复习功课呢。[tā fù xí gōng kè ne.]

(He is reviewing lessons.)

Example 122

A: 小李到哪儿去了? [Xiǎo Lǐ dào nǎ ér qù le?]

(Where is Xiao Li now?)

B: 看电影去了。[kàn diàn yǐng qù le.]

(He is in the cinema.)

Nevertheless, when the narration or inquiry focuses on what has been done for the subject, there are three alternatives. They are “topic-explanation,” “把 [bǎ]’ sentence,” and “被 [bèi]’ sentence.”

Example 123

那个碗打破了。[nà gè wǎn dǎ pò le.]

(That bowl was broken.)

妹妹把那个碗打破了。[mèi mèi bǎ nà gè wǎn dǎ pò le.]

(Younger sister broke that bowl.)

那个碗叫/被妹妹打破了。[nà gè wǎn jiào/bèi mèi mèi dǎ pò le.]

(That bowl was broken by the younger sister.)

In these alternatives, the first one aims at “bowl” as the topic; the second one directs “bowl” as the object of “把 [bǎ],” similar to the topic; the third one also focuses on “bowl” as the recipient of action. In a “把 [bǎ]” sentence, another doer who is closely related to the predicate verb cannot be ignored

because it is this doer that causes the change or result of the action, such as the doer “the younger sister” who broke the bowl. Therefore, in a broad sense, the subject of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence can be regarded as the causer¹ responsible for the change or result of the action. More similar examples are as follows.

Example 124 你怎么把这么重要的会都忘了。[nǐ zěnmē bǎ zhè me zhòng yào de huì dōu wàng le.]

(How could you forget such an important meeting?)

Example 125

A: 谁把花瓶打破了? [shuí bǎ huā píng dǎ pò le?]

(Who broke the vase?)

B: 是小猫碰倒了以后打破的。[shì xiǎo māo pèng dǎo le yǐ hòu dǎ pò de.]

(The cat knocked it off.)

Example 126 我把早点买回来了, 快吃吧。[wǒ bǎ zǎo diǎn mǎi huí lái le, kuài chī ba.]

(I bought the breakfast. Take it!)

Example 127 请你把窗户关上。[qǐng nǐ bǎ chuāng hù guān shàng.]

(Can you close the windows, please?)

Example 128

A: 你好像有点不舒服。[nǐ hǎo xiàng yǒu diǎn bù shū fú.]

(You seemed to feel a bit sick.)

B: 昨天吃了好多龙虾, 把肚子吃坏了。[zuó tiān chī le hǎo duō lóng xiā, bǎ dù zi chī huài le.]

(I ate too many lobsters yesterday and have a stomach ache now.)

In short, neither the object of “把 [bǎ]” nor the subject of a “把 [bǎ]” sentence are indispensable because the entire sentence narrates or discusses how the subject causes the change or result of the object of “把 [bǎ].” Thus, it differs from “topic-explanation.”

To compare the following two sentences:

Example 129

A: 哎呀, 你看, 花瓶打破了。[āi ya, nǐ kàn, huā píng dǎ pò le.]

(Oh, look. The vase is broken.)

B: 妹妹真不小心, 把花瓶打破了。[mèi mèi zhēn bú xiǎo xīn, bǎ huā píng dǎ pò le.]

(Younger sister was so careless that she broke the vase.)

Thus it can be seen that a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is the only choice to demand, narrate, or explain what has been done about the object or who causes the change or result of the action. The comparison among these three alternatives will be discussed in Chapter 11, Section three, Part III.

2 Aspects of sentence structure

Sometimes, the sentence structure also restricts the choice of “把 [bǎ]” sentences. In the following situations where the subject functions as the doer, “把 [bǎ]” sentences are necessarily required.

- (1) The predicate verb possesses two objects, one of which is a noun for things and the other of which is a noun for location.

In this situation, “把 [bǎ]+the noun for things+the predicate verb+the resultant complement or directional complement+the noun for location” is required.

Example 130 他们把鸡蛋放在桌子上就走了。[tā men bǎ jī dàn fàng zài zhuō zi shàng jiù zǒu le.]

(They put eggs on the table and left.)

Example 131 他把照片递到我面前叫我看。[tā bǎ zhào piàn dì dào wǒ miàn qián jiào wǒ kàn.]

(He handed me the photo for a look.)

Example 132 西门豹又叫人把三老扔进了河里。[Xī Mén bào yòu jiào rén bǎ sān lǎo rēng jìn le hé li.]

(Xi Menbao had these three old men thrown into the river.)

Example 133 敌人没有办法，只好把他关进了监狱。[dí rén méi yǒu bàn fǎ, zhǐ hǎo bǎ tā guān jìn le jiān yù.]

(The enemy had no choice but to put him in prison.)

Example 134 工人们费了很大的力气才把机器运上了高山。[gōng rén men fèi le hěn dà de lì qì cái bǎ jī qì yùn shàng le gāo shān.]

(The workers took great effort to transport the machine to the mountains.)

- (2) Besides possessing two objects, the predicate verbs include “成 [chéng] (become),” “为 [wéi/wèi] (for),” “作 [zuò] (as),” “做 [zuò] (do)” or function as resultant complements.

In this situation, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is required.

Example 135 他们决心把家乡建成现代化的新农村，要把自己锻炼成为对祖国对人民有用的一代新人。[tā men jué xīn bǎ jiā xiāng jiàn chéng xiàn dài huà de xīn nóng cūn, yào bǎ zì jǐ duàn liàn chéng wéi duì zǔ guó duì rén mín yǒu yòng de yī dài xīn rén.]

(They made up their minds to build their hometown into a modern new countryside and train themselves to become a new generation useful to the nation and the people.)

Example 136 人们亲切地把这头小象叫做“版纳”。[rén men qīn qiè de bǎ zhè tóu xiǎo xiàng jiào zuò “Bǎn Nà.”]

(People intimately call this baby elephant “Ban Na”.)

Example 137 年轻的赵永进把老主任和乡亲们当成老师。[nián qīng de Zhào Yǒng jìn bǎ lǎo zhǔ rèn hé xiāng qīn men dāng chéng lǎo shī.]

(The young Zhao Yongjin took the elder director and fellow villagers as his teachers.)

Example 138 那个女孩把头发染成了蓝色，很奇怪。[nà gè nǚ hái bǎ tóu fà rǎn chéng le lán sè, hěn qí guài.]

(The girl dyed her hair blue, which made her look weird.)

Example 136 can be changed into the sentence with serial verbs, like “人们亲切地叫这头小象为“版纳”。”[rén men qīn qiè de jiào zhè tóu xiǎo xiàng wéi “Bǎn Nà.”] (People intimately call this baby elephant “Ban Na”).” However, if the complement is not “为 [wéi] (as)” or a longer attribute appears before the object, the sentence with serial verbs is not a good choice. In addition, if one of two objects possessed by the predicate verb functions as the resultant object, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is also necessarily required.

Example 139

突然一块石头飞过来，把地砸了一个坑。[tū rán yī kuài shí tóu fēi guò lái, bǎ dì zá le yī gè kēng.]

(Suddenly a stone came from somewhere and made a pit in the ground.)

*突然一块石头飞过来，砸了地一个坑。[tū rán yī kuài shí tóu fēi guò lái, zá le dì yī gè kēng.]

- (3) The predicate verb takes the prepositional phrase as the complement plus a recipient as the object.

In this situation, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is required.

Example 140 大国不应该把自己的意志强加于小国。[dà guó bù yīng gāi bǎ zì jǐ de yì zhì qiáng jiā yú xiǎo guó.]

(Great powers shouldn't impose their will on small ones.)

Example 141 要把群众的革命热情引向正确的轨道。[yào bǎ qún zhòng de gé mìng rè qíng yǐn xiàng zhèng què de guǐ dào.]

(We must direct the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses to the right direction.)

In the aforementioned situations, “把 [bǎ]” sentences are necessarily required due to the fact that except for the double-objects, the verb or “verb+complement” only takes one nominal constituent in Chinese. Consequently, in the first situation, two nouns related to the predicate verb (one for things and the other for location) have to be put after and before the verb separately; in the second situation, the recipient of the action is put after “把 [bǎ]” because the sentence with serial verbs is inappropriate; and the third situation is similar to the first one.

- (4) When “加以 [jiā yǐ] (become),” “~化 [~huà] (become),” or the fixed verbal phrase functions as the predicate verb, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is required.

Example 142 文艺把其中的矛盾和斗争典型化。[wén yì bǎ qí zhōng de máo dùn hé dòu zhēng diǎn xíng huà.]

(The contradictions and struggles are typified in works of literature and art.)

Example 143 方志敏同志在信里说，他已经抱定牺牲的决心，把生死置之度外。[Fāng Zhì mǐn tóng zhì zài xìn lǐ shuō, tā yǐ jīng bào dìng xī shēng de jué xīn, bǎ shēng sǐ zhì zhī dù wài.]

(In the letter, the comrade Fang Zhimin wrote he was determined to make a sacrifice for the revolution.)

Example 144 他把会上的意见加以归纳，提出以下几点。[tā bǎ huì shàng de yì jiàn jiā yǐ guī nà, tí chū yǐ xià jǐ diǎn.]

(He summarized opinions put forward during the meeting and proposed the following points.)

In the last examples, “~化 [~huà] (become)” cannot take the object; with the object of the verb, “加以 [jiā yǐ] (become)” cannot take another noun as the object anymore.

When the adverbs “都 [dōu] (all)” and “全 [quán] (all)” appear before the predicate to sum up the scope of the recipient object, a “把 [bǎ]” sentence is required. The reason for the requirement is that these adverbs are usually expected to appear after the noun and before the verb at the same time.

Example 145 他立刻跑到银行把几年来存下的几百元钱全都取了出来。[tā lì kè pǎo dào yín háng bǎ jǐ nián lái cún xià de jǐ bǎi yuán qián quán dōu qǔ le chū lái.]

(He ran to the bank at once to withdraw all the money, about several hundred yuan, he saved for years.)

Example 146 我一定要把我全部的手艺都传给你。[wǒ yī dìng yào bǎ wǒ quán bù de shǒu yì dōu chuán gěi nǐ.]

(I must teach you all my skills.)

When the predicate verb takes the complex double-objects, “把 [bǎ]+the direct object+the predicate verb+the indirect object” is required. The reason for the requirement is that the constituent after the predicate verb is usually expected to be short and simple in Chinese, except for the complement consisting of “得 [de].” Differently, the adverbial in Chinese can be very long or complicated.

Example 147 玉宝就把周扒皮学鸡叫的事告诉了大家。[Yù Bǎo jiù bǎ Zhōu Bā pí xué jī jiào de shì gào sù le dà jiā.]

(Yu Bao told everybody about Zhou Bapi’s real purpose of imitating the rooster’s call.)

Example 148 结果，我便把这封最后通牒式的信退还了他们。[jié guǒ, wǒ biàn bǎ zhè fēng zuì hòu tōng dié shì de xìn tuì hái le tā men.]

(Consequently, I returned the letter as an ultimatum to them.)

A “把 [bǎ]” sentence is required when the predicate verb takes the object as well as the modal complement functioned by the adjective (phrase) or the verb (phrase). In this situation, the predicate verb and the complement are not related by cause and effect.

Example 149 他把这个家搞得富富足足，和和美美。[tā bǎ zhè gè jiā gǎo dé fù fù zú zú, hé hé měi měi.]

(He made a good life for his family.)

Example 150 你要把他看得比自己的生命还要宝贵啊。[nǐ yào bǎ tā kàn de bǐ zì jǐ de shēng mìng hái yào bǎo guì ā.]

(You must treasure him more than your own life.)

Example 151 领导同志看我回答得这么轻松，就说：“你刚来不久，没送过信，可不要把这件工作看得太简单了。[lǐng dǎo tóng zhì kàn wǒ huí dá dé zhè me qīng sōng, jiù shuō: “nǐ gāng lái bù jiǔ, méi sòng guò xìn, kě bú yào bǎ zhè jiàn gōng zuò kàn dé tài jiǎn dān le.”]

(After my relaxing reply, the leader said: “Never consider this job too simple because you have had no experience in it.”)

When the modal complement describes the object and the predicate verb simultaneously, the repetition of the verb could be adopted to replace a “把 [bǎ]” sentence, sometimes. However, the effects of two approaches are different.

Example 152

他把猪养得很好。[tā bǎ zhū yǎng de hěn hǎo.]

(He raises pigs well.) (“pig” as the definite information)

他养猪养得很好。[tā yǎng zhū yǎng de hěn hǎo.]

(He is good at raising pigs.) (“pig” as general information)

Example 153

他把话说得很清楚。[tā bǎ huà shuō de hěn qīng chǔ.]

(He expressed himself clearly.) (specific)

他说话说得很清楚。[tā shuō huà shuō de hěn qīng chǔ.]

(He spoke clearly.) (general)

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Section seven: “被 [bèi]” sentences

I. What are “被 [bèi]” sentences?

It refers to the sentence in which the predicate verb takes the preposition “被 [bèi]” or the prepositional phrase consisting of “被 [bèi]” as the adverbial to

indicate a passive meaning. In a “被 [bèi]” sentence, the subject often functions as the recipient of the predicate verb and the object of “被 [bèi]” as the doer of an action. Besides “被 [bèi],” other prepositions with the similar passive meanings include “叫 [jiào],” “让 [ràng],” and “给 [gěi].” Sentences with them also belong to “被 [bèi]” sentences.

Example 1 小宝被坏人打了一顿。[Xiǎo Bǎo bèi huài rén dǎ le yī dùn.]
(Xiao Bao was beaten by the bad guys.)

Example 2 他被大家选作小组长。[tā bèi dà jiā xuǎn zuò xiǎo zǔ zhǎng.]
(He was elected as the team leader.)

Example 3 我的车叫小李开走了。[wǒ de chē jiào Xiǎo Lǐ kāi zǒu le.]
(My car was driven away by Xiao Li.)

Example 4 弟弟昨天放学后让老师留下了，因为他没有交作业。[dì dì zuó tiān fàng xué hòu ràng lǎo shī liú xià le, yīn wéi tā méi yǒu jiāo zuò yè.]
(Younger brother was asked to stay after school by the teacher because he didn't hand in the homework.)

Example 5 小明被那帮人打怕了。[Xiǎo Míng bèi nà bāng rén dǎ pà le.]
(Xiao Ming was really frightened by those people who often beat him.)

II. In what situations can “被 [bèi]” sentences be used?

Definitively, a “被 [bèi]” sentence aims at the recipient of the action conveyed by the predicate verb, which is an undoubted precondition.

In Chinese, the topic in the “topic-explanation” structure can refer to the recipient that is required to appear at the head of sentence by context. In this situation, the passive meaning can still be shown clearly without “被 [bèi],” “叫 [jiào],” or “让 [ràng].” In fact, with them, the following sentences would sound awkward.

Example 6 任务完成了。[rèn wù wán chéng le.]
(The mission has been accomplished.)

Example 7 粮食产量提高了一倍。[liáng shí chǎn liàng tí gāo le yī bèi.]
(The output of the grain has been doubled.)

Example 8 信写好了。[xìn xiě hǎo le.]
(The letter is finished.)

Example 9 胜利的消息传遍了大江南北。[shèng lì de xiāo xī chuán biàn le dà jiāng nán běi.]
(The news of victory has spread all over the country.)

A “被 [bèi]” sentence mainly indicates the recipient that is unpleasant or unsatisfactory caused by the action conveyed by the predicate verb.

Example 10 忽然，门被撞开了。[hū rán, mén bèi zhuàng kāi le.]
(Suddenly the door was forced open.)

Example 11 敌人被赶走了。[dí rén bèi gǎn zǒu le.]

(The enemy was driven away.)

Example 12 经过几个月的努力，这头野象基本上被驯服了。[jīng guò jǐ gè yuè de nǚ lì, zhè tóu yě xiàng jī běn shàng bèi xùn fú le.]

(The wild elephant has been almost tamed after several months' effort.)

Example 13 突然他头上的帽子叫一阵大风吹跑了。[tū rán tā tóu shàng de mào zi jiào yī zhèn dà fēng chuī pǎo le.]

(Suddenly the hat on his head was blown away by a gust of wind.)

Example 14 他们刚才说的话不小心叫老板听见了，心里很害怕。[tā men gāng cái shuō de huà bù xiǎo xīn jiào lǎo bǎn tīng jiàn le, xīn lǐ hěn hài pà.]

(They were scared after knowing their boss overheard what they had just said.)

It can be seen from these examples, the recipients have experienced displeasure or dissatisfaction.

In addition, “被 [bèi]” is necessarily required when the recipient-doer relationship is not clearly shown in context.

Example 15 他被派到外地去了。[tā bèi pài dào wài dì qù le.]

(He was assigned to another place.)

Example 16 你既然已经被大家选作组长，就应该负起责任来。[nǐ jì rán yǐ jīng bèi dà jiā xuǎn zuò zǔ zhǎng, jiù yīng gāi fù qǐ zé rèn lái.]

(You should take responsibility since you have been elected as the team leader.)

Example 17 小王被送到学校去学习了。[Xiǎo Wáng bèi sòng dào xué xiào qù xué xí le.]

(Xiao Wang was sent to learn at school.)

Example 18 三年以后他才被追认为烈士。[sān nián yǐ hòu tā cái bèi zhuī rèn wéi liè shì.]

(It was after three years that he was declared to be a martyr.)

Besides “被 [bèi],” other predicate verbs can be used in this situation, such as “选 [xuǎn] (elect),” “派 [pài] (send),” “送 [sòng] (send),” “说 [shuō] (say),” and are usually followed by “作 [zuò] (as),” “成 [chéng] (to be),” “为 [wéi/wèi] (for),” or “到 [dào] (at)” as the complement.

Sometimes in literature works or in the formal written language, a “被 [bèi]” sentence is adopted even though “被 [bèi]” itself implies neither displeasure, dissatisfaction, nor the change of the recipient.

Example 19 他觉得自己好像正在被一股强大的力量推向前方。[tā jué de zì jǐ hǎo xiàng zhèng zài bèi yī gǔ qiáng dà de lì liàng tuī xiàng qián fāng.]

(He felt as if he were being pushed forward by a powerful force.)

Example 20 我妹妹最近被省里授予先进工作者的光荣称号。[wǒ mèi mèi zuì jìn bèi shěng lǐ shòu yǔ xiān jìn gōng zuò zhě de guāng róng chēng hào.]
(My young sister was recently awarded with the honorable title of Advanced Worker by the provincial government.)

Example 21 他曾经被人尊敬过，羡慕过，但是那已经是遥远的过去了。[tā céng jīng bèi rén zūn jìng guò, xiàn mù guò, dàn shì nà yǐ jīng shì yáo yuǎn de guò qù le.]
(He was once respected and admired, but it was a story a long time ago.)

Example 22 这本书已经被翻译成英文、法文、德文、日文和韩文。[zhè běn shū yǐ jīng bèi fān yì chéng yīng wén, fǎ wén, dé wén, rì wén hé hán wén.]
(This book has been translated into English, French, German, Japanese, and Korean.)

Example 23 太美了！这就是被称为世界屋脊的地方吗？[tài měi le! zhè jiù shì bèi chēng wéi shì jiè wū jǐ de dì fāng ma?]
(How beautiful it is! Is this the well-known roof of the world?)

Sometimes, the subject of a “被 [bèi]” sentence is a vague recipient.

Example 24 他很可怜，被自己的亲生儿子活活给饿死了。[tā hěn kě lián, bèi zì jǐ de qīn shēng ér zǐ huó huó gěi è sǐ le.]
(How pitiable he was! He was even starved to death by his own son.)

Example 25 他被工作的事愁得吃不下饭，睡不着觉。[tā bèi gōng zuò de shì chóu dé chī bú xià fàn, shuì bú zháo jiào.]
(He was so worried about work that he couldn't eat or sleep well.)

Also, these examples convey a sense of “resulting in.”

Example 26 他很可怜，自己的亲生儿子使他活活饿死了。[tā hěn kě lián, zì jǐ de qīn shēng ér zǐ shǐ tā huó huó è sǐ le.]
(How pitiable he was! He was even starved to death by his own son.)

Example 27 工作的事使他愁得吃不下饭，睡不着觉。[gōng zuò de shì shǐ tā chóu dé chī bú xià fàn, shuì bú zháo jiào.]
(The work made him so worried that he couldn't eat or sleep well.)

III. *Several formats of “被 [bèi]” sentences*

1 “被 [bèi]’+the object”

In this format, “被 [bèi]” introduces the doer.

Example 28 敌人进了地道，没走几步，就被民兵消灭了。[dí rén jìn le dì dào, méi zǒu jǐ bù, jiù bèi mǐn bīng xiāo miè le.]
(After entering the tunnel a few minutes ago, the enemy was wiped out by the militias.)

Example 29 卓玛被医生救活了。[Zhuó Mǎ bèi yī shēng jiù huó le.]
(Zhuo Ma was saved by the doctor.)

The object of “被 [bèi]” can indicate people in a general sense. In other words, it is not necessary or impossible to mention the doer.

Example 30 这个秘密后来被人发现了。[zhè gè mì mì hòu lái bèi rén fā xiàn le.]
(The secret was discovered by someone later.)

Example 31 他逐渐被人忘记了。[tā zhú jiàn bèi rén wàng jì le.]
(He was gradually forgotten by people.)

2 “被 [bèi]’ without the object”

In this format, “被 [bèi]” follows the predicate verb closely to simply express the passive meaning.

Example 32 突然，办公室的门“哐当”一声被撞开了。[tū rán, bàn gōng shì de mén “kuāng dāng” yī shēng bèi zhuàng kāi le.]
(Suddenly, the office door was heavily forced open.)

Example 33 吴广被杀害，革命力量受到很大损失。[Wú Guǎng bèi shā hài, gé mìng lì liàng shòu dào hěn dà sǔn shī.]
(The revolutionary forces suffered a great loss after Wu Guang was killed.)

Example 34 行李很快地被装上了卡车。[xíng lǐ hěn kuài de bèi zhuāng shàng le kǎ chē.]
(The luggage was soon loaded on the truck.)

3 “被 [bèi]’ . . . 所 . . . [bèi . . . suǒ . . .]”

It originated from “为 . . . 所 . . . [wéi . . . suǒ . . .]” in ancient Chinese and often occurs in the written language. The format only requires the object of “被 [bèi]” and the disyllabic predicate verb without other constituents following. Besides, it emphasizes the object of “被 [bèi]” as the doer.

Example 35 我被这情景所激动，也和大家一起引吭高歌。[wǒ bèi zhè qíng jǐng suǒ jī dòng, yě hé dà jiā yī qǐ yǐn kēng gāo gē.]
(I was so excited by the scene that I joined in the chorus.)

Example 36 我们确信，一切困难都将被全国人民的英勇奋斗所战胜。[wǒ men què xìn, yī qiè kùn nán dōu jiāng bèi quán guó rén mín de yīng yǒng fèn dòu suǒ zhàn shèng.]
(We are confident that all difficulties will be conquered by the heroic struggles of the people over the country.)

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Example 37 我深深地被赵大叔的话所感动，他的话说得多深刻啊！[wǒ shēn shēn de bèi Zhào dà shū de huà suǒ gǎn dòng, tā de huà shuō de duō shēn kè ā!]

(I was deeply moved by uncle Zhao's words. How profound they were!)

Example 38 解放前，他为生活所迫，不得不南下。[jiě fàng qián, tā wèi shēng huó suǒ pò, bù dé bù xià nán yáng.]

(Before liberation, he was forced to go to South Asia for a living.)

Example 39 他不为金钱所动。[tā bú wéi jīn qián suǒ dòng.]

(He wouldn't be seduced by money.)

4 “被...给... [bèi...gěi...]”

Here, “给 [gěi]” is a structural auxiliary word and is optional due to its meaninglessness. But it strengthens the oral effect in speaking.

Example 40 孩子被你给惯得越来越不听话了。[hái zi bèi nǐ gěi guàn de yuè lái yuè bú tīng huà le.]

(The child was so spoiled by you that he was becoming more and more disobedient.)

Example 41 他被这件事给吓坏了，晚上再也不敢一个人出去了。[tā bèi zhè jiàn shì gěi xià huài le, wǎn shàng zài yě bù gǎn yī gè rén chū qù le.]

(He was so frightened by it that he dared not go out alone anymore at night.)

In addition, “被 [bèi]” can connect “把 [bǎ]” to form ““被 [bèi]+the object+‘把 [bǎ]+the object.” Here, the object of “被 [bèi]” is the word that takes the subject of the entire sentence as its reference, or functions as the subject by itself.

Example 42 那个孩子叫人把他打了一顿。[nà gè hái zǐ jiào rén bǎ tā dǎ le yī dùn.]

(That child was beaten by someone.)

Example 43 他叫人把眼睛给蒙上了。[tā jiào rén bǎ yǎn jīng gěi méng shàng le.]

(He was blindfolded by someone.)

These examples only appear in the spoken language, so “叫 [jiào]” or “让 [ràng]” is better than “被 [bèi]” in use.

IV. Structural features of “被 [bèi]” sentences

1 The predicate of “被 [bèi]” sentences

Since a “被 [bèi]” sentence aims at the recipient who has been influenced by a certain action, a simple verb cannot fully function as the predicate. In fact, other

constituents are required to follow it so as to express the result or accomplishment of the action.

(1) “verb+“了 [le]” as the dynamic auxiliary word

Example 44 董大贵被小燕真挚诚恳的态度感动了。[Dǒng Dà guì bèi Xiǎo Yàn zhēn zhì chéng kěn de tài dù gǎn dòng le.]
(Dong Dagui was touched by Xiao Yan's honesty and sincerity.)

Example 45 他被大家说服了。[tā bèi dà jiā shuō fú le.]
(He was persuaded by others.)

(2) verb+resultant/directional/degree/verb-quantifier/time/prepositional phrase complement

Example 46 但是，战士们没有被困难吓倒，他们振作起精神，继续前进。[dàn shì, zhàn shì men méi yǒu bèi kùn nán xià dǎo, tā men zhèn zuò qǐ jīng shén, jì xù qián jìn.]
(However, soldiers were not daunted by difficulties. They pulled themselves together and proceeded.)

Example 47 他的钱包被小偷偷去了。[tā de qián bāo bèi xiǎo tōu tōu qù le.]
(His wallet was stolen by the thief.)

Example 48 周扒皮已经被打得半死，躺在地上再也爬不起来了。[Zhōu Bā pí yǐ jīng bèi dǎ de bàn sǐ, tǎng zài dì shàng zài yě pá bú qǐ lái le.]
(Zhou Pepi has been beaten almost to death, lying on the ground still.)

Example 49 敌人被这突然袭击吓坏了。[dí rén bèi zhè tū rán xí jī xià huài le.]
(The enemy was frightened by the sudden attack.)

Example 50 那个工人被老板训斥了一顿。[nà gè gōng rén bèi lǎo bǎn xùn chì le yī dùn.]
(The worker was scolded by the boss.)

(3) “verb+complement+object”

Here, the object includes the following types.

a The object refers to the change or result of the subject conveyed by verb.

Example 51 我的衣服被钉子挂了一个大口子。[wǒ de yī fu bèi dīng zi guà le yī gè dà kǒu zi.]
(A big hole was torn into my clothes by a nail.)

Example 52 他的头被撞了一个包。[tā de tóu bèi zhuàng le yī gè bāo.]
(His head was bumped by being knocked.)

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Example 53 后来, 她又被选作全国“三八”红旗手。[hòu lái, tā yòu bèi xuǎn zuò quán guó “sān bā” hóng qí shǒu.]

(Afterwards, she was elected as a national advanced individual on the Day of March 8 again.)

Example 54 鲁迅的小说被翻译成许多国家的文字。[Lǚ Xùn de xiǎo shuō bèi fān yì chéng xǔ duō guó jiā de wén zì.]

(Lu Xun's novels have been translated into many languages.)

- b The object refers to what the subject receives or accepts.

Example 55 九岁的妹妹被别人领养了。[jiǔ suì de mèi mèi bèi bié rén líng yǎng le.]

(My younger sister of nine years old was adopted by others.)

- c The object belongs to the subject or functions as its part.

Example 56 演完了这个杂技, 夏菊花的头发被拔掉了一大把。[yǎn wán le zhè gè zá jì, Xià Jú huā de tóu fà bèi bá diào le yī dà bǎ.]

(A handful of Xia Juhua's hair was pulled out after she performed the acrobatics.)

Example 57 结果, 敌人死的死, 伤的伤, 不多一会儿, 就被消灭了一半儿。[jié guǒ, dí rén sǐ de sǐ, shāng de shāng, bú duō yī huì er, jiù bèi xiāo miè le yī bàn er.]

(As a result, some of the enemies died and some were wounded. In a short time, half of them were wiped out.)

- d The object refers to the location where the subject has been dealt with.

Example 58 她被送进医院, 医生给她治好了病。[tā bèi sòng jìn yī yuàn, yī shēng gěi tā zhì hǎo le bìng.]

(She was taken to the hospital and cured by the doctor.)

Example 59 他又被一直抓出衙门外去了。[tā yòu bèi yī zhí zhuā chū yá mén wài qù le.]

(He was pulled out of the administrative building again.)

- e The object connects the verb to form a fixed phrase.

Example 60 他被撤了职。[tā bèi chè le zhí.]

(He was dismissed from the post.)

Example 61 这项规定被他打了折扣。[zhè xiàng guī dìng bèi tā dǎ le zhé kòu.]

(He watered down the rule.)

- f The object refers to the recipient and the subject indicates the location where the recipient is dealt with.

Example 62 天安门城楼被朝霞涂上了一层红色。[tiān ān mén chéng lóu bèi zhāo xiá tú shàng le yī céng hóng sè.]

(Tiananmen Gate tower was decorated by the morning glow.)

Example 63 货物的背面被标上了船的名字。[huò wù de bèi miàn bèi biào shàng le chuán de míng zì.]

(The name of the ship is marked on the back of the cargo.)

(4) “adverbial+(‘被 [bèi]’+the object)+the predicate verb”

Example 64 你这句话很容易被人误解。[nǐ zhè jù huà hěn róng yì bèi rén wù jiě.]

(What you said was easy to be misunderstood.)

Example 65 他的建议已被大家接受。[tā de jiàn yì yǐ bèi dà jiā jiē shòu.]

(His advice has been accepted.)

Example 66 这种意见很可能被群众拒绝。[zhè zhǒng yì jiàn hěn kě néng bèi qún zhòng jù jué.]

(The masses will probably reject such an opinion.)

In this case, the predicate verb cannot be monosyllabic. For instance, it is not correct to say “*他忽然被敌人捕。[tā hū rán bèi dí rén bǔ].”

If “被 [bèi]” doesn’t take the object, the predicate verb could be monosyllabic sometimes, but it requires the adverbial in front or other constituents in the rear.

Example 67 昨天老张忽然被捕。[zuó tiān Lǎo Zhāng hū rán bèi bǔ.]

(Lao Zhang was suddenly arrested yesterday.)

Example 68 某月某日，美国总统肯尼迪被刺。[mǒu yuè mǒu rì, měi guó zǒng tǒng Kěn ní dí bèi cì.]

(American President Kennedy was assassinated on . . .)

2 The sequence of other adverbials in “被 [bèi]” sentences

Adverbials of many types usually appear before “被 [bèi],” such as adverbials for time, descriptive adverbials for the recipient’s state, negative adverbs, and correlative adverbs.

Example 69 敌人已经被我们消灭了。[dí rén yǐ jīng bèi wǒ men xiāo miè le.]

(The enemy has been wiped out by us.)

Example 70 阿Q糊里糊涂地被杀了头。[Ā Q hú lǐ hú tú de bèi shā le tóu.]

(Ah Q was beheaded without a clear reason.)

Example 71 由于乡亲们的掩护，他才没被敌人抓去。[yóu yú xiāng qīn men de yǎn hù, tā cái méi bèi dí rén zhuā qù.]

(Thanks to the villagers’ cover, he has not been caught by the enemy.)

Example 72 他刚回来就被爸爸叫去了。[tā gāng huí lái jiù bèi bà bà jiào qù le.]
(No sooner had he come back than he was asked to see his father.)

Example 73 敌人一定被我们的队伍打退了。[dí rén yī dìng bèi wǒ men de duì wǔ dǎ tuì le.]
(The enemy must have been defeated by our army.)

Except for those mentioned earlier, other adverbials usually come after the object of “被 [bèi].”

Example 74 那个包袱被敌人连抢带夺地拿走了。[nà gè bāo fú bèi dí rén lián qiǎng dài duó dì ná zǒu le.]
(That parcel was snatched away by the enemy.)

Example 75 那条狗被人狠狠揍了一顿。[nà tiáo gǒu bèi rén hěn hěn zòu le yī dùn.]
(That dog has been badly beaten.)

Example 76 小明被妈妈一把拉住。[Xiǎo Míng bèi mā mā yī bǎ lā zhù.]
(Xiao Ming was grasped by his mom.)

Example 77 这个建议被我们断然拒绝了。[zhè gè jiàn yì bèi wǒ men duàn rán jù jué le.]
(This proposal was flatly rejected by us.)

Example 78 我突然被人一推，后退了好几步。[wǒ tū rán bèi rén yī tuī, hòu tuì le hǎo jǐ bù.]
(I was suddenly pushed back several steps.)

3 The verbs that cannot function as the predicate verbs in “被 [bèi]” sentences

The verbs unable to function as the predicates in “被 [bèi]” sentences are fewer than those in “把 [bǎ]” sentences, mainly including “是 [shì] (is),” “有 [yǒu] (have),” “在 [zài] (at),” “当 [dāng] (become),” “像 [xiàng] (like),” “属于 [shǔ yú] (belong to),” “得 [děi] (have to).” “起 [qǐ] (rise),” “接近 [jiē jìn] (approach),” “离开 [lí kāi] (leave),” “依靠 [yī kào] (depend on),” “产生 [chǎn shēng] (produce).” In general, those appropriate for “把 [bǎ]” sentences can be accepted in “被 [bèi]” sentences; those inappropriate in “被 [bèi]” sentences are absolutely unacceptable in “把 [bǎ]” sentences.

V. Sentences consisting of “叫 [jiào] (ask),” “让 [ràng] (let),” or “给 [gěi] (give)”

In the spoken language, “让 [ràng] (let)” and “叫 [jiào] (ask)” are more frequently used than in “被 [bèi]” to express the passive meaning, like displeasure or dissatisfaction. Different from “被 [bèi]” sentences, the objects of “让 [ràng] (let)” and “叫 [jiào] (ask)” are necessarily required in the sentence.

Example 79 卓玛家有八口人，除了她以外，全叫农奴主打死了。[Zhuó Mǎ jiā yǒu bā kǒu rén, chú le tā yǐ wài, quán jiào nóng nú zhǔ dǎ sǐ le.]

(There were eight people in the family of Zhuo Ma. Except for her, other members were beaten to death by the serf owner.)

Example 80 歪风邪气，全让她给挡住了。[wāi fēng xié qì, quán ràng tā gěi dǎng zhù le.]

(She refused all evil influences.)

Example 81 那张地图没叫人借走，你拿去用吧。[nà zhāng dì tú méi jiào rén jiè zǒu, nǐ ná qù yòng ba.]

(That map hasn't been borrowed by anyone, so you could take it.)

Example 82 “西游记”叫小张借走了。[“xī yóu jì” jiào Xiǎo Zhāng jiè zǒu le.]

(*Journey to the West* was borrowed by Xiao Zhang.)

Example 83 敌人叫我们打得狼狈逃窜。[dí rén jiào wǒ men dǎ de láng bèi táo cuàn.]

(We made the enemy flee helter-skelter.)

In the spoken language, the preposition “给 [gěi]” is often used to express the passive meaning in the south of China. Nevertheless, the object of “给 [gěi]” is optional.

Example 84 大兰和小兰都给他说了。[dà Lán hé xiǎo Lán dōu gěi tā shuō xiào le.]

(Both the elder Lan and the younger Lan were amused by him.)

Example 85 我可是这回一点没有得到好处，连剥下来的衣服都给管牢

的红眼睛阿义拿去了。[wǒ kě shì zhè huí yī diǎn méi yǒu dé dào hǎo chù, lián bāo xià lái de yī fu dōu gěi guǎn lǎo de hóng yǎn jīng Ā Yì ná qù le.]

(But this time I did not get any benefit. Even my clothes were taken by A Yi, a prison guard with red eyes.)

Example 86 我的杯子昨天给打破了。[wǒ de bēi zi zuó tiān gěi dǎ pò le.]

(My cup was broken yesterday.)

Example 87 孩子给吓坏了。[hái zi gěi xià huài le.]

(The child was frightened.)

But “给 [gěi]” as the preposition cannot connect another “给 [gěi]” as the structural auxiliary word.

Notes

1 Proposed by the late Professor Gao Gongyi of Stanford University in 1985.

2 “连抢带夺 [lián qiǎng dài duó] (snatch)” describes the doer “敌人 [dí rén] (enemy)” as the object of “被 [bèi].”

References

Wang Huan. 1983. Comparative Study on Passive Sentences in English and Chinese. *Studies of the Chinese Language*, 6th Issue.

3 “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences

In Chinese, there are two sentence formats consisting of “是...的 [shì... de],” namely “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) and “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II). The following discussion is on their structures and functions.

Section one: “是...的 [shì... de]” (I)

I. The structural features of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I)

The “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) belongs to the sentence with verb as predicate. “是 [shì]” often comes before the predicate or the subject; “的 [de]” often appears at the end of the sentence, or between the predicate verb and the object. In the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” are adverbial-verb phrases, subject-predicate phrases, or verbs.

Example 1 他是两点半出去的。[tā shì liǎng diǎn bàn chū qù de.]
(He went out at half past two.)

Example 2 我是在网上买的票。[wǒ shì zài wǎng shàng mǎi de piào.]
(I bought the ticket online.)

Example 3 是小王告诉我的。[shì Xiǎo Wáng gào sù wǒ de.]
(It was Xiao Wang who told me.)

Example 4 今天中午我们是吃的饺子。[jīn tiān zhōng wǔ wǒ men shì chī de jiǎo zi.]
(We ate dumplings this noon.)

II. The functional features of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I)

The “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) aims at what is related to the action rather than the action itself, such as time, location, manner, doer, recipient, and so on. Therefore, the action as the known information for the speaker and the listener is supposed to have been finished or have happened. In “是...的 [shì... de],” “是 [shì]” is followed by the focus of the entire sentence; “的 [de]” indicates the finished action conveyed by the predicate verb.¹

The corresponding questions for Example 1 to Example 4 are as follows.

Example 5

他是什么时候出去的? [tā shì shén me shí hòu chū qù de?]

(When did he leave?)

他是两点半出去的。[tā shì liǎng diǎn bàn chū qù de.]

(He went out at half past two.)

Example 6

你是在哪儿买的票? [nǐ shì zài nǎ er mǎi de piào?]

(Where did you buy the ticket?)

我是在网上买的票。[wǒ shì zài wǎng shàng mǎi de piào.]

(I bought the ticket online.)

Example 7

是谁告诉你的? [shì shuí gào sù nǐ de?]

(Who told you this?)

是小王告诉我的。[shì Xiǎo Wǎng gào sù wǒ de.]

(Xiao Wang told me.)

Example 8

今天中午你们是吃的什么?

[jīn tiān zhōng wǔ nǐ men shì chī de shén me?]

(What did you eat at lunch?)

今天中午我们是吃的饺子。[jīn tiān zhōng wǔ wǒ men shì chī de jiǎo zi.]

(We ate dumplings at lunch.)

In the these examples, “leave,” “buy the ticket,” “tell,” and “eat” are the finished facts known by both the speaker and the listener. What the speaker wants to know is “when,” “where,” “who,” and “what” about the facts; thus “half past two,” “online,” “Xiao Wang,” and “dumplings” as unknown information should be pronounced with stress consequently.

III. The types of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I)

According to what is focused on in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I), it can be divided into the following types.

- 1 The focus refers to time, location, manner, condition, purpose, object, or tool as the adverbial of the sentence.

Based on the finished action, a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) highlights these adverbials in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” with stress in pronunciation.

Example 9 我是从农村来的。[wǒ shì cóng nóng cūn lái de.]

(I come from the rural area.) (location)

Example 10 那本教材是1958年编写的。[nà běn jiào cái shì yī jiù wǔ bā nián biān xiě de.]

(That textbook was compiled in 1958.) (time)

Example 11 我对新事，是一点一点明白的。[wǒ duì xīn shì, shì yī diǎn yī diǎn míng bái de.]

(I understand the unknown information step by step.)

Example 12 老赵刚才那段话，好像就是对我说的。[Lǎo Zhào gāng cái nà duàn huà, hǎo xiàng jiù shì duì wǒ shuō de.]

(What Lao Zhao said just now seemed to be for me.) (object)

Example 13 这项工程是在领导的关怀和群众的支持下完成的。[zhè xiàng gōng chéng shì zài lǐng dǎo de guān huái hé qún zhòng de zhī chí xià wán chéng de.]

(This project was finished under the care of the leaders and the support from the masses.) (condition)

Example 14 他就是为这个目的去的。[tā jiù shì wèi zhè gè mù dì qù de.]

(It was for this aim that he went there.) (purpose)

Sometimes, when a structure with serial verbs appears in the middle of“是...的 [shì...de],” its first verb refers to the tool or manner.

Example 15 李老师是用红笔改的。[Lǐ lǎo shī shì yòng hóng bǐ gǎi de.]

(Prof. Li corrected it with a red pen.) (tool)

Example 16 我们是坐公交车去的。[wǒ men shì zuò gōng jiāo chē qù de.]

(We went there by bus.) (manner)

Among the examples, “I,” “he,” “Prof. Li,” and “we” are the doers of action to show the positive meanings; “that textbook,” “Lao Zhao,” and “this project” are the recipients of action to indicate the passive meanings.

If the verb in the middle of “是...的 [shì...de]” takes the object, the object may closely come before or after “的 [de].” Comparatively speaking, the latter is more popular in the spoken language; the former is more appropriate when the object is a pronoun.

Example 17 我是在第一外国语大学学的英语。[wǒ shì zài dì yī wài guó yǔ dà xué xué de yīng yǔ.]

(It was in Beijing Foreign Studies University that I learned English.)

Example 18 她是昨天通知我的。[tā shì zuó tiān tōng zhī wǒ de.]

(She informed me yesterday.)

If the verb takes a locational object and directional complement simultaneously, they are required to stand before “的 [de].” If it takes the object in a general sense, it has the optional position for “的 [de].” However, if the object comes after “的 [de],” the directional complement is required to be put before “的 [de],” closely following the verb.

Example 19 我们是五点半回学校来的。[wǒ men shì wǔ diǎn bàn huí xué xiào lái de.]

(We went back to school at half past five.)

Example 20 我是跟孩子们一起爬上山顶去的。[wǒ shì gēn hái zǐ men yì qǐ pá shàng shān dǐng qù de.]

(I reached to the top of the mountain with the kids.)

Example 21 阿里是昨天打电话来的。[Ā Lǐ shì zuó tiān dǎ diàn huà lái de.]

(It was yesterday that A Li called.)

Example 22 阿里是昨天打来的电话。[Ā Lǐ shì zuó tiān dǎ lái de diàn huà.]

(It was yesterday that A Li called.)

2 The focus refers to the doer.

Based on the finished action, “是...的 [shì... de]” highlights the doer. In the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” is the subject-predicate phrase, in which the predicate seldom takes the object due to the noun (phrase) as a topic as well as the recipient at the head of the sentence. Therefore, the subject of the subject-predicate phrase is stressed in pronunciation as the focus of the entire sentence.

Example 23 你快告诉我，这劈山、拦河、造地的主意是谁出的。[nǐ kuài gào sù wǒ, zhè pī shān, lán hé, zào dì de zhǔ yì shì shuí chū de.]

(Please, tell me who came up with the idea of leveling the hilltops and blocking the rivers to create the fields.)

Example 24 我的一切都是祖国和人民给的，光荣应该归于祖国和人民。[wǒ de yī qiè dōu shì zǔ guó hé rén mín gěi de, guāng róng yīng gāi guī yú zǔ guó hé rén mín.]

(The glory should be attributed to the motherland and the people from which I get everything.)

Example 25 他的断指再植手术，一定是张大夫做的。[tā de duàn zhǐ zài zhí shǒu shù, yī dìng shì Zhāng dà fū zuò de.]

(His replantation surgery of severed fingers must have been done by Dr. Zhang.)

3 The focus refers to the subject of the entire sentence

“是 [shì]” stands at the head of the sentence. The predicate verb in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” can take the object usually put after “的 [de].” In this type, the object is very simple in structure, or sometimes it is just a single word without any attribute in front.

Example 26 是谁把信寄走的? [shì shuí bǎ xìn jì zǒu de?]

(Who posted the letter?)

Example 27 (是)谁给你取的名字，这么好听! [(shì) shuí gěi nǐ qǔ de míng zì, zhè me hǎo tīng!]

(Who made the name for you? How nice it sounds!)

Example 28 是你准的假。[shì nǐ zhǔn de jià.]

(It was you who permitted the leave.)

Example 29 (是)姐姐让我进的屋。[(shì) jiě jiě ràng wǒ jìn de wū.]

(It was my elder sister who allowed me to enter the room.)

The object may be put before “的 [de]” sometimes. For instance, Example 29 can be changed into “是姐姐让我进屋的。[shì jiě jiě ràng wǒ jìn wū de.] (It was my elder sister who allowed me to enter the room.)” with the stress on the subject “elder sister.”

Sometimes, the second type can be changed into the third type when the recipient at the head of the sentence is moved after “的 [de].” The comparison between these two types is as follows:

Example 30

你快告诉我，这劈山、拦河、造地的主意是谁出的。[nǐ kuài gào sù wǒ, zhè pī shān, lán hé, zào dì de zhǔ yì shì shuí chū de.]

(Please tell me the idea of leveling the hilltops and blocking the rivers to create the fields was proposed by whom.) (the second type)

你快告诉我，是谁出的这劈山、拦河、造地的主意。[nǐ kuài gào sù wǒ, shì shuí chū de zhè pī shān, lán hé, zào dì de zhǔ yì.]

(Please tell me who came up with the idea of leveling the hilltops and blocking the rivers to create the fields.) (the third type)

4 The focus refers to the recipient.

“是...的 [shì... de]” highlights the recipient of action. In the middle of “是...的 [shì... de],” the recipient object is put after “的 [de]” as the focus of the entire sentence with its pronunciation stressed.

Example 31 昨天晚饭我是吃的馒头，不是吃的米饭。[zuó tiān wǎn fàn wǒ shì chī de mán tóu, bú shì chī de mǐ fàn.]

(I ate steamed buns but not rice last night.)

Example 32 老大是学的历史，老二是学的水利，他们俩毕业时的成绩都不错。[lǎo dà shì xué de lì shǐ, lǎo èr shì xué de shuǐ lì, tā men liǎ bi yè shí de chéng jì dōu bú cuò.]

(The first son studied history and the second son studied hydraulic engineering. They both graduated with good academic achievements.)

Example 33 每个同学都给墙报投了稿，有人是作的诗，有人是写的散文，还有人是画的漫画。[měi gè tóng xué dōu gěi qiáng bào tóu le gǎo, yǒu rén shì zuò de shī, yǒu rén shì xiě de sǎn wén, hái yǒu rén shì huà de màn huà.]

(Every student has contributed to the wall poster. Some composed verses, some wrote essays, and some drew cartoons.)

5 The focus refers to a behavior or situation as the cause for a result.

In the middle of “是...的 [shì... de],” a verb may appear as the focus of the entire sentence with the pronunciation stress on itself. This verb can take the object but it should be repeated once again after the object. Sometimes, a subject-predicate phrase may appear in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de],” with the stress on its subject or predicate. Generally speaking, the focus of the entire sentence is the constituent in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de],” so it is highlighted as the cause for a result. In fact, the subject of the entire sentence is the result of this cause, thus it is often functioned by a subject-predicate phrase or a verbal phrase, indicating a phenomenon or a fact.

Example 34 她脸红恐怕是海风吹的。[tā liǎn hóng kǒng pà shì hǎi fēng chuī de.]

(Probably her flush resulted from the sea breeze.)

Example 35 秦发愤说：“睡不着，神经衰弱了。”油娃钻出脑袋：“牛似的，还衰弱呢！你呀，你是盼开钻盼的！”赵春生嘟囔着说：“他那是冻的！”[Qín Fā fèn shuō: “shuì bù zháo, shén jīng shuāi ruò le.” Yóu Wá zuàn chū nǎo dai: “niú shì de, hái shuāi ruò ne! nǐ ya, nǐ shì pàn kāi zuàn pàn de!” Zhào Chūn shēng dū nāng zhe shuō: “tā nà shì dòng de!”]

(Qin Fafen said: “I had neurasthenia and couldn’t fall asleep.” You Wa turned around his head and said: “You are as strong as an ox. How is it possible for you to have neurasthenia? You are actually looking forward to drilling.” Zhao Chunsheng mumbled: “He must be too cold to sleep.”)

In these examples, “her blush” is the result of “sea breeze;” “sea breeze” causes “her blush.” Sometimes, the word indicating the result has been previously mentioned in the context, so it can be replaced by a pronoun or a doer, like “那 [nà] (that)” for “couldn’t fall asleep.”

IV. Points for attention in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I)

1 The negative form of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I)

Its negative form is “不是...的 [bú shì... de].” What is negated is what is related to the action rather than the action itself.

Example 36 她不是昨天来的，是前天来的。[tā bú shì zuó tiān lái de, shì qián tiān lái de.]

(She didn’t come yesterday but the day before yesterday.)

Example 37 他们不是骑车去的颐和园，是走着去的。[tā men bú shì qí chē qù de yí hé yuán, shì zǒu zhe qù de.]

(They went to the Summer Palace by foot not by bike.)

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Example 38 他的阑尾炎手术，不是张大夫做的，是王大夫做的。[tā de lán wěi yán shǒu shù, bú shì Zhāng dà fū zuò de, shì Wáng dà fū zuò de.]
(It was Dr. Wang, not Dr. Zhang, who did the appendectomy for him.)

Example 39 不是我锁的门，是老王锁的。[bú shì wǒ suǒ de mén, shì Lǎo Wáng suǒ de.]
(It was not me but Lao Wang who locked the door.)

Example 40 上午我不是借的小说，我是借的杂志。[shàng wǔ wǒ bú shì jiè de xiǎo shuō, wǒ shì jiè de zá zhì.]
(It was a magazine not a novel that I borrowed in the morning.)

2 The positions of the pronunciation stress and “是 [shì]”

“是 [shì]” labels its rear constituents as the contrastive focuses. In the spoken language, the pronunciation stress helps figure out which of the focuses is the real one.

Example 41

他是'上星期跟小张骑车去的书城。[tā shì shàng xīng qī gēn Xiǎo Zhāng qí chē qù de shū chéng.]
(It was last week that he went to the book mall with Xiao Zhang by bike.)

他是上星期跟'小张骑车去的书城。[tā shì shàng xīng qī gēn Xiǎo Zhāng qí chē qù de shū chéng.]
(It was with Xiao Zhang that went to the book mall by bike last week.)

他是上星期跟小张骑'车去的书城。[tā shì shàng xīng qī gēn Xiǎo Zhāng qí chē qù de shū chéng.]
(It was by bike that he and Xiao Zhang went to the book mall last week.)

Besides, the rest of the constituents can be moved forward as the adverbials before “是 [shì].”

Example 42 他上星期是跟'小张骑车去的书城。[tā shàng xīng qī shì gēn Xiǎo Zhāng qí chē qù de shū chéng.]
(It was with Xiao Zhang that he went to the book mall by bike last week.)

Example 43 他上星期跟小张是骑'车去的书城。[tā shàng xīng qī gēn Xiǎo Zhāng shì qí chē qù de shū chéng.]
(It was by bike that he and Xiao Zhang went to the book mall last week.)

3 The omission of “是 [shì]” in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I)

“是 [shì]” in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) can be omitted.

Example 44 他(是)上星期去的，我(是)这星期去的。[tā (shì) shàng xīng qī qù de, wǒ (shì) zhè xīng qī qù de.]
(He went there last week and I this week.)

Example 45 (是)谁打的酒, (是)谁买的肉, 你也不问一问, 就知道坐下来吃! [(shì) shuí dǎ de jiǔ, (shì) shuí mǎi de ròu, nǐ yě bú wèn yī wèn, jiù zhī dào zuò xià lái chī!]

(You just eat without asking who prepared the wine and meat.)

“是 [shì]” in the fourth type of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) is often omitted.

Example 46

A: 昨天你们俩都去看京剧了吗? [zuó tiān nǐ men liǎ dōu qù kàn jīng jù le ma?] (Did you two see the Peking Opera yesterday?)

B: 没有, 他(是)看的京剧, 我(是)看的电影。[méi yǒu, tā (shì) kàn de jīng jù, wǒ (shì) kàn de diàn yǐng?]

(No, he saw the Peking Opera and I saw a movie.)

Example 47

A: 你们来, (是)坐的几路车? [nǐ men lái, (shì) zuò de jǐ lù chē ?] (Which bus did you take to come here?)

B: 我们(是)坐的十六路。[wǒ men (shì) zuò de shí liù lù.]

(We took the No. 16 bus.)

However, “是 [shì]” cannot be omitted in the following situations.

- (1) The subject served by “这 [zhè] (this)” or “那 [nà] (that).”

Example 48 这是今天上午送来的, 不是昨天送来的。[zhè shì jīn tiān shàng wǔ sòng lái de, bú shì zuó tiān sòng lái de.]

(This was delivered this morning but not yesterday.)

- (2) “是 [shì]” in the fifth type of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I)

Example 49 祥子头上留了块疤, 是小时候驴啃的。[xiáng zǐ tóu shàng liú le kuài bā, shì xiǎo shí hòu lú kěn de.]

(Xiang Zi had a scar on his head from being bitten by a donkey when he was a child.)

- (3) “是 [shì]” in the negative form of a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I)

- 4 The positions of some adverbs in a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I)

Some adverbs should be put before “是 [shì]” to modify the whole predicate, such as “都 [dōu] (all)” and “也 [yě] (also)” for scope and “就 [jiù] (really),” “一定 [yī ding] (must),” “却 [què] (but)” for mood. Besides, some can also be put before the subject, like “原来 [yuán lái] (in fact),” “难道 [nán dào] (could it be said that)” for mood and “大概 [dà gài] (probably),” “恐怕 [kǒng pà] (afraid)” for estimation. The examples in No. 12, 14, 24, and 34 are in the same case.

5 The interrogative form of a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I)

There are four interrogative forms of a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I).

(1) Yes-no question

Example 50 他是从资料室借的图片吗? [tā shì cóng zī liào shì jiè de tú piàn ma?]

(Did he borrow the pictures from the reference room?)

Example 51 安娜是跟代表团一起来的吗? [Ān nà shì gēn dài biǎo tuán yī qǐ lái de ma?]

(Did Anna come here with the delegation?)

(2) The question for the contrastive focus

Example 52 她是哪天来的? [tā shì nǎ tiān lái de?]

(On which day did she come?)

Example 53 他的阑尾炎手术是谁做的? [tā de lán wěi yán shǒu shù shì shuí zuò de?]

(Who performed his appendectomy?)

Example 54 老太太过生日你(是)送的什么? [lǎo tài tài guò shēng rì nǐ (shì) sòng de shén me?]

(What gift did you give for the old lady's birthday?)

Example 55

A: 她那两只眼睛是怎么红的? 是哭的吗? [tā nà liǎng zhī yǎn jīng shì zěn me hóng de? shì kū de ma?]

(Why did she get red eyes? Did she just cry?)

B: 不, 是熬夜熬的。[bù, shì áo yè áo de.]

(No, it's because she stayed up late.)

(3) “是不是...的 [shì bú shì... de]?”

Example 56 你是不是给我买的词典? [nǐ shì bú shì gěi wǒ mǎi de cí diǎn?]

(Did you buy the dictionary for me?)

Example 57 衣服褪了颜色, 是不是晒的? [yī fú tuì le yán sè, shì bú shì shài de?]

(Was it because the sunshine made the clothes fade?)

(4) “是..., 还是... [shì..., hái shì...]?”

Example 58 你是投的赞成票, 还是投的反对票? [nǐ shì tóu de zàn chéng piào, hái shì tóu de fǎn duì piào?]

(Did you vote Yes or No?)

Example 59 是公司派你去的，还是你自己要去的？ [shì gōng sī pài nǐ qù de, hái shì nǐ zì jǐ yào qù de?]

(Did the company send you there or did you offer to go there?)

- 6 Differences between a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) and a sentence with a verb as predicate plus the dynamic auxiliary word “了 [le]”

For the latter, the speaker is unaware of occurrence of action; for the former, the speaker wants to know what is involved in the finished action known for both of the speaker and listener, such as the time, location, manner, doer or recipient of the action.

Example 60 他昨天来了。 [tā zuó tiān lái le.]

(He came yesterday.) (occurrence)

Example 61 他是昨天来的。 [tā shì zuó tiān lái de.]

(It was yesterday that he came.) (time)

Therefore, “了 [le]” helps label the occurrence of action as the known fact, based on which the “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence is adopted to highlight its time, location, manner, and so on. Just because of the same reason, a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) cannot be the first sentence to start a paragraph but just as one of the follow-up sentences.

Example 62 三妹已经到家了，是昨天晚上九点多到的，路上也都顺利。 [sān mèi yǐ jīng dào jiā le, shì zuó tiān wǎn shàng jiǔ diǎn duō dào de, lù shàng yě dōu shùn lì.]

(It was around nine o'clock last night that the third younger sister arrived home; anyway, her trip was smooth.)

Example 63 同学们都上了车，罗琪和周英是最后上的，车上已经没有座位。 [tóng xué men dōu shàng le chē, Luó Qí hé Zhōu Yīng shì zuì hòu shàng de, chē shàng yǐ jīng méi yǒu zuò wèi.]

(Students all got on the bus. Luo Qi and Zhou Ying were the last two and no more seats were left.)

Example 64

A: 你姐姐结婚了吗？ [nǐ jiě jiě jié hūn le ma?]

(Did your elder sister marry?)

B: 结了。 [jié le.]

(Yes, she did.)

A: (是)什么时候结的(婚)？ [(shì)shén me shí hòu jié de (hūn)?]

(When did she get married?)

B: 前年结的，都有小孩儿了。 [qián nián jié de, dōu yǒu xiǎo hái er le.]

(The year before last. Now, she has a child.)

A: (是)什么时候生的小孩儿？ [(shì)shén me shí hòu shēng de xiǎo hái er?]

(When did she give birth to the child?)

B: (是)去年生的(小孩儿)。 [(shì)qù nián shēng de (xiǎo hái er).]

(Last year.)

Section two: “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (II)

I. Functional features of “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (II)

Taking “是...的 [shì...de]” as a label, a “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (II) belongs to the sentence with a verb as predicate or the sentence with an adjective as predicate. It is mainly used to express the speaker's evaluation, narration, or description about the subject, in which both of “是 [shì]” and “的 [de]” indicate the listener's affirmative mood in accepting the explanation or elaboration from the speaker.

Example 1 我是历来主张军队要艰苦奋斗，要成为模范的。[wǒ shì lì lái zhǔ zhāng jūn duì yào jiǎn kǔ fèn dòu, yào chéng wéi mó fàn de.]

(I have always advocated that the army should be thrifty and persevere to be the role model in society.)

Example 2 在现实生活中，这种现象是确实存在的。[zài xiàn shí shēng huó zhōng, zhè zhǒng xiàn xiàng shì què shí cún zài de.]

(This phenomenon does exist in real life.)

Example 3 张思德同志是为人民的利益而死的，他的死是比泰山还要重的。[Zhāng Sī dé tóng zhì shì wèi rén mín de lì yì ér sǐ de, tā de sǐ shì bǐ tài shān hái yào zhòng de.]

(Comrade Zhang Side died for the benefit of the people. His death is of great significance.)

II. Structural features of “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (II)

“是 [shì]” in a “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence usually comes before the predicate as a modal adverb; “的 [de]” stands at the end of the sentence as a modal particle. In the middle of “是...的 [shì...de]” is the verb predicate or the adjective predicate. The common verb predicates are in the forms of “volitive verb+verb” and “verb+complement of possibility.”

Example 4 经过三年修整以后，这里园林的面貌是会有变化的。[jīng guò sān nián xiū zhěng yǐ hòu, zhè lǐ yuán lín de miàn mào shì huì yǒu biàn huà de.]

(The gardens here will have changed after three years of being repaired and maintained.)

Example 5 善意、恶意，不是猜想的，是可以看得出来的。[shàn yì, è yì, bú shì cāi xiǎng de, shì kě yǐ kàn de chū lái de.]

(Goodwill and malice can be reflected in reality rather than in the imagination.)

The adjective predicates mainly include adjective phrases.

Example 6 猴子是很聪明的。[hóu zi shì hěn cōng míng de.]

(Monkeys are very clever.)

Example 7 他们的文化生活是相当丰富的。[tā men de wén huà shēng huó shì xiāng dāng fēng fù de.]
(Their cultural life is quite rich.)

Besides, some fixed phrases of the grammatical functions similar to those of adjectives are also appropriate in the “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II).

Example 8 他的要求，我认为是很合情合理的，你为什么这么反感。[tā de yāo qiú, wǒ rèn wéi shì hěn hé qíng hé lǐ de, nǐ wèi shén me zhè me fǎn gǎn?]
(From my point of view, his demand is very reasonable. Why do you have such a strong aversion to it?)

Example 9 他对你是诚心诚意的，你可别冤枉他。[tā duì nǐ shì chéng xīn chéng yì de, nǐ kě bié yuān wǎng tā.]
(He is sincere to you. Don't get him wrong.)

Example 10 你就是有三头六臂也是插翅难飞的。[nǐ jiù shì yǒu sān tóu liù bì yě shì chā chì nán fēi de.]
(You can't escape even with superman powers.)

A “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) also accepts the verbs describing psychological activities or feelings of people. They can be modified by degree adverbials and their recipients often function as topics at the head of the sentence.

Example 11 这些道理，广大人民群众是懂得的。[zhè xiē dào lǐ, guǎng dà rén mín qún zhòng shì dǒng dé de.]
(The masses do understand these principles.)

Example 12 这个问题，我们也是很注意的。[zhè gè wèn tí, wǒ men yě shì hěn zhù yì de.]
(We also pay close attention to this issue.)

Example 13 十三四岁的少年便要当家管事，我父亲的实际家的手腕，我是很敬仰的。[shí sān sì suì de shào nián biàn yào dāng jiā guǎn shì, wǒ fù qīn de shí jì jiā de shǒu wàn, wǒ shì hěn qīn yǎng de.]
(I quite admire my father's way to keep house and be in charge, when he was only a kid of 13 or 14 years old.)

Of course, these topics can also be put after the verb standing in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de].” For instance, Example 11 can be changed into “广大人民群众是懂得这些道理的。[guǎng dà rén mín qún zhòng shì dǒng dé zhè xiē dào lǐ de.] (The masses do understand these principles.)” The same is true for Example 12 and Example 13.

Sometimes, a single adjective, verb, or volitive verb is acceptable in a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II).

Example 14 他心里是透亮的。[tā xīn lǐ shì tòu liàng de.]
(He is clear-headed.)

Example 15 我们面前的困难是有的，而且是很多的，但是我们确信：一切困难都将被全国人民的英勇奋斗所战胜。[wǒ men miàn qián de kùn nán shì yǒu de, ér qiě shì hěn duō de, dàn shì wǒ men què xìn: yī qiè kùn nán dōu jiāng bèi quán guó rén mín de yīng yǒng fèn dòu suǒ zhàn shèng.]

(We are definitely faced with many difficulties, but we are confident of the heroic people all over the nation conquering them.)

Example 16 十年树木是不对的，在南方要廿五年，在北方要更多的时间。十年树人倒是可以的。[shí nián shù mù shì bú duì de, zài nán fāng yào niàn wǔ nián, zài běi fāng yào gèng duō de shí jiān. shí nián shù rén dào shì kě yǐ de.]

(It is impossible for a tree to grow up into a big one in ten years. It may need twenty-five years in the South and even longer in the North. In fact, ten-year training may be enough for a person.)

III. Points for attention in “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (II)

1 Affirmative mood

Due to the affirmative mood conveyed by the “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (II), there is no “不是...的 [bú shì...de].” Even though the word in the negative form can appear in the middle of “是...的 [shì...de],” the entire sentence still keeps its original mood.

Example 17 我看要是自称全智全能，像上帝一样，那种思想是不妥当的。[wǒ kàn yào shì zì chēng quán zhì quán néng, xiàng shàng dì yī yàng, nà zhǒng sī xiǎng shì bù tuǒ dāng de.]

(From my point of view, it is inappropriate to hold the opinion that people can be as omniscient and omnipotent as God is.)

Example 18 总是先进的意见克服落后的意见，要使“舆论一律”是不可能的，也是不应该的。[zǒng shì xiān jìn de yì jiàn kè fú luò hòu de yì jiàn, yào shǐ “yú lùn yī lǚ” shì bú kě néng de, yě shì bù yīng gāi de.]

(The advanced opinions always overcome the backward ones. It is not possible nor right for the masses to hold onto identical public opinions.)

Example 19 走路的人口渴了，摘一个瓜吃，我们这里是不算偷的。[zǒu lù de rén kǒu kě le, zhāi yī gè guā chī, wǒ men zhè lǐ shì bú suàn tōu de.]

(We take it as an acceptable behavior for those who are thirsty to eat the melons in our field without permission.)

Example 20 蕃瓜弄的劳动人民和他们的后代是绝对不会忘记过去的。[fān guā nòng de láo dòng rén mín hé tā men de hòu dài shì jué duì bú huì wàng jì guò qù de.]

(The working people and their descendants in Fan Gua lane will never forget the past.)

In these examples, the negative adverb “不 [bù] (not)” cannot be put before “是 [shì]” to indicate negation. For instance, “*我看要是自称全智全能，像上帝一样，那种思想不是妥当的。[wǒ kàn yào shì zì chēng quán zhì quán néng, xiàng shàng dì yī yàng, nà zhǒng sī xiǎng bú shì tuǒ dāng de.]”

2 Double negation

Double negation can be adopted to strengthen an affirmative fact. That is to say, in this case “不 [bù] (not)” can be added in front of “是 [shì]” to create another negation.

Example 21 问题不是不能解决的。[wèn tí bú shì bú néng jiě jué de.]
(The problem isn't unsolvable.)

Example 22 那件事我们并不是办不到的。[nà jiàn shì wǒ men bìng bú shì bàn bú dào de.]
(We aren't out of question about that.)

3 Omission of “是 [shì]” and “的 [de]”

Except for the situations for the double negation or the subject functioned by “这 [zhè] (this)” or “那 [nà] (that),” both “是 [shì]” and “的 [de],” or only “是 [shì]” can be omitted. Although such an omission doesn't change the meaning, it converts a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) into a common sentence with a verb or adjective as predicate. The former sounds affirmative and euphemistic in the tone of speaking, conveying a sense of persuasion; the latter sounds brief and direct with a stronger tone.

Example 23

我看要是自称全智全能，像上帝一样，那种思想是不妥当的。[wǒ kàn yào shì zì chēng quán zhì quán néng, xiàng shàng dì yī yàng, nà zhǒng sī xiǎng shì bù tuǒ dāng de.]

(From my point of view, it is inappropriate to hold the opinion that people can be as omniscient and omnipotent as God is.)

我看要是自称全智全能，像上帝一样，那种思想是不妥当。[wǒ kàn yào shì zì chēng quán zhì quán néng, xiàng shàng dì yī yàng, nà zhǒng sī xiǎng shì bù tuǒ dāng.]

(From my point of view, it is inappropriate to hold the opinion that people can be as omniscient and omnipotent as God is.)

Example 24

走路的人口渴了，摘一个瓜吃，我们这里是不算偷的。[zǒu lù de rén kǒu kě le, zhāi yī gè guā chī, wǒ men zhè lǐ shì bú suàn tōu de.]

(We take it as acceptable behavior for those who are thirsty to eat the melons in our field without permission.)

走路的人口渴了，摘一个瓜吃，我们这里是不算偷。[zǒu lù de rén kǒu kě le, zhāi yī gè guā chī, wǒ men zhè lǐ shì bú suàn tōu.]

(We take it as acceptable behavior for those who are thirsty to eat the melons in our field without permission.)

Example 25 猴子是很聪明的。[hóu zi shì hěn cōng míng de.]

(Monkeys are very clever.)

猴子很聪明。[hóu zi hěn cōng míng.]

(Monkeys are very clever.)

4 Positions of some adverbs in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (II)

The positions of some adverbs indicating object, tone, or time mainly depend on what they are to modify in the sentence. When they come before “是 [shì],” they modify the entire “是...的 [shì... de]”; when they modify certain constituents in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de],” they often stand between “是 [shì]” and constituents they are to modify.

Example 26

A: 这是群众创造的一种新形式，跟我们党历史上采取的形式有区别的。[zhè shì qún zhòng chuàng zào de yī zhǒng xīn xíng shì, gēn wǒ men dǎng lì shǐ shàng cǎi qǔ de xíng shì yǒu qū bié de.]

(This is a new form created by the masses, which is distinctive from those adopted in the history of our Party.)

B: 这件事所以做得这样迅速和顺利，是跟我们把工人阶级同民族资产阶级之间的矛盾当作人民内部矛盾来处理，密切相关的。[zhè jiàn shì suǒ yǐ zuò de zhè yàng xùn sù hé shùn lì, shì gēn wǒ men bǎ gōng rén jiē jí tóng mín zú zī chǎn jiē jí zhī jiān de máo dùn dāng zuò rén mín nèi bù máo dùn lái chǔ lǐ, mì qiè xiāng guān de.]

(The reason why the problem could have been successfully solved was that we took it as the related contradiction among the people between the working class and the national bourgeoisie.)

Example 27

A: 我们相信，各地这种典型的好人好事是一定不少的。[wǒ men xiāng xìn, gè dì zhè zhǒng diǎn xíng de hǎo rén hǎo shì shì yī dìng bù shǎo de.]

(We believe there are many such good people and good deeds in various regions.)

B: 那时候，在这么高的山上，修这么大的工程，一定是很不容易的。[nà shí hòu, zài zhè me gāo de shān shàng, xiū zhè me dà de gōng chéng, yī dìng shì hěn bù róng yì de.]

(It was not easy to build such a large project on such a high mountain at that time.)

Example 28

A: 羊皮筏子，过去是听说过的。[yáng pí fā zǐ, guò qù shì tīng shuō guò de.]

(I heard about the sheepskin raft before.)

B: 必须优先发展生产资料的生产, 这是过去已经定了的。[bì xū yōu xiān fā zhǎn shēng chǎn zī liào de shēng chǎn, zhè shì guò qù yǐ jīng dìng le de.]

(Priority must be given to development of the production means, which was already settled in the past.)

5 Interrogative form

Due to its essential implication in the tone of speaking, the “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) seldom occurs in the interrogative form unless a question is posed, such as “他心里是透亮的吗? [tā xīn lǐ shì tòu liàng de ma?] (Is he clear-headed?).” Or the speaker raises his or her opinion in advance before inquiring the listener’s, such as “问题不是不能解决的, 对不对? [wèn tí bú shì bú néng jiě jué de, duì bú duì?] (The problem can be solved, can it?).”

Section three: how to distinguish “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences

I. How to distinguish “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (I) and “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences (II)

They can be distinguished by the following aspects.

1 A “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) highlights what is involved in the finished action, such as time, location, manner, doer, or recipient. In the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” often appears a verb. The common structures of a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) are as follows.

(1) 是 [shì]+adverbial+verb+的 [de]+(object)

Example 1 那套教材是1981年编写的。[nà tào jiào cái shì yī jiǔ bā yī nián biān xiě de.]

(That set of teaching material was compiled in 1981.)

Example 2 王老师他们是1981年编的新教材。[Wáng lǎo shī tā men shì yī jiǔ bā yī nián biān de xīn jiào cái.]

(Prof. Wang and other colleagues compiled the new textbook in 1981.)

(2) 是 [shì]+subject-predicate (verbal) phrase+的 [de]

Example 3 新教材是王老师他们编写的。[xīn jiào cái shì wáng lǎo shī tā men biān xiě de.]

(The new textbook was compiled by Prof. Wang and other colleagues.)

Example 4 这个主意是谁出的? [zhè gè zhǔ yì shì shuí chū de?]

(Who proposed this idea?)

120 “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences

(3) 是 [shì]+subject+verb+的 [de]+(object)

Example 5 是谁检查出来的? [shì shuí jiǎn chá chū lái de?]
(Who checked it out?)

Example 6 昨天是我锁的门。[zuó tiān shì wǒ suǒ de mén.]
(It was me who locked the door yesterday.)

(4) 是 [shì]+verb+的 [de]+object

Example 7 新教材是写的校园生活。[xīn jiào cái shì xiě de xiào yuán shēng huó.]
(The new textbook is about the campus life.)

As the predicate of a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II), “是...的 [shì... de]” evaluates or describes the subject in the affirmative mood. Its common structures are as follows.

a 是 [shì]+volitive verb+verb+的 [de]

Example 8 新教材是能够编好的, 因为参加编写的人都很有信心。[xīn jiào cái shì néng gòu biān hǎo de, yīn wéi cān jiā biān xiě de rén dōu hěn yǒu xìn xīn.]
(The new textbook will be well compiled because all the participants have faith in it.)

b 是 [shì]+verb/adjective+complement of possibility+的 [de]

Example 9 新教材是一定编不好的, 因为参加编写的人都没有信心。[xīn jiào cái shì yī dìng biān bù hǎo de, yīn wéi cān jiā biān xiě de rén dōu méi yǒu xìn xīn.]
(The new textbook will definitely not be well compiled because all the participants are not confident about it.)

c 是 [shì]+adverbial+adjective+的 [de]

Example 10 新教材是很不错的。[xīn jiào cái shì hěn bú cuò de.]
(The new text book is pretty nice.)

2 The position of “的 [de]” can decide which type the sentence is, when the verb in “是...的 [shì... de]” takes its object.

Example 11 在昨天的会上, 他是同意的这种意见, 并不是那种意见, 他说他觉得这种意见有道理。[zài zuó tiān de huì shàng, tā shì tóng yì de zhè zhǒng yì jiàn, bìng bú shì nà zhǒng yì jiàn, tā shuō tā jué de zhè zhǒng yì jiàn yǒu dào lǐ.]

(It was this opinion but not that one that he agreed with in the meeting yesterday. He thought this opinion made sense.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

Example 12 在昨天的会上,他是同意这种意见,不知道为什么今天又不同意了。[zài zuó tiān de huì shàng, tā shì tóng yì zhè zhǒng yì jiàn, bù zhī dào wèi shén me jīn tiān yòu bù tóng yì le.]

(He did agree with the opinion in the meeting yesterday. I have no idea why he doesn't agree with it today.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II))

In Example 11, “的 [de]” before “这种意见 [zhè zhǒng yì jiàn] (this opinion)” cannot be moved to the end of the sentence; in Example 12, “的 [de]” cannot be put before “这种意见 [zhè zhǒng yì jiàn] (this opinion),” either. “这种 [zhè zhǒng] (this)” in Example 11 is pronounced with stress and “同意 [tóng yì] (agree)” in Example 12 is stressed.

- 3 The position of the adverbial in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de]” can decide which type it belongs to.

Example 13 这件事,我昨天是知道的,只是想晚一点儿告诉你们。[zhè jiàn shì, wǒ zuó tiān shì zhī dào de, zhǐ shì xiǎng wǎn yī diǎn er gào sù nǐ men.]

(I knew this yesterday. I just wanted to tell it to you later.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II))

Example 14 这件事,我是昨天知道的,别人都比我知道得早。[zhè jiàn shì, wǒ shì zuó tiān zhī dào de, bié rén dōu bǐ wǒ zhī dào de zǎo.]

(I knew it yesterday but others knew it earlier than I did.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

In “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II), the time adverbial often appears before “是 [shì]” or the subject; in a “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I), the time adverbial as the only contrastive focus should be put after “是 [shì].”

- 4 Different negative forms help in distinguishing “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) from “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II).

The negative form of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I) is “不是...的 [bú shì... de]”; the negative form of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) depends on the negative form of the constituent in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de].”

Example 15 我不是同意的这种意见。[wǒ bú shì tóng yì de zhè zhǒng yì jiàn.]

(I don't agree with this opinion.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

Example 16 我是不同意这种意见的。[wǒ shì bù tóng yì zhè zhǒng yì jiàn de.]

(I don't agree with this opinion.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II))

5 Whether “的 [de]” can be omitted can also help.

Both “是 [shì]” and “的 [de]” can be omitted in “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (II); only “是 [shì]” but not “的 [de]” can be omitted in a “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I).

Example 17 我(是)同意的这种意见, 你(是)同意的哪种意见? [wǒ (shì) tóng yì de zhè zhǒng yì jiàn, nǐ (shì) tóng yì de nǎ zhǒng yì jiàn?] (I agreed with this opinion. Which opinion did you agree with?) (“是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I))

Example 18 我(是)同意这种意见, 到现在我的态度也没改变。[wǒ (shì) tóng yì zhè zhǒng yì jiàn, dào xiàn zài wǒ de tài dù yě méi gǎi biàn.] (I agreed with this opinion and now I still hold on the same opinion.) (“是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (II))

II. How to distinguish “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (I) from “是 [shì]” sentences that take “是 [shì]+‘的 [de]’ phrase” as the predicate

1 The fifth type of “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I) looks like “是 [shì]” sentence that takes “是 [shì]+‘的 [de]’ phrase” as the predicate. In the former, the subject is often served by a subject-predicate phrase, indicating a situation. Besides, “是...的 [shì...de]” as the predicate of the entire sentence explains how the situation is caused. In the latter, the predicate consisting of “是 [shì]+‘的 [de]’” phrase mainly indicates classification rather than the cause.

Example 19 他也有了将军肚儿, 我说: “这是喝啤酒喝的。”他开玩笑说: “这不是(喝啤酒)喝的, 这是(老婆)气的。” [tā yě yǒu le jiāng jūn dù er, wǒ shuō: “zhè shì hē pí jiǔ hē de.” tā kāi wán xiào shuō: “zhè bú shì (hē pí jiǔ) hē de, zhè shì (lǎo pó) qì de.”] (He had a beer belly too. I said: “This resulted from beer-drinking.” He explained jokingly, “It isn’t for that reason but resulted from my wife who always made me annoyed.”) (“是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I))

Example 20 我烧了些水, 那不是喝的, 是洗碗用(的)。[wǒ shāo le xiē shuǐ. nà bú shì hē de, shì xǐ wǎn yòng (de).] (I boiled some water. It’s not for drinking but for washing dishes.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

Here, the first example explains the cause; the second example indicates the classification.

2 The position of “的 [de]” can help.

“的 [de]” in the fourth type of “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I) only appears before the object; if it is required to come after the object of a single verb-object phrase, the sentence should belong to a “是 [shì]” sentence.

Example 21 人们常说：靠山吃山，靠水吃水。我们村里人这几年生活水平的提高，全是靠的水，不是靠的山。[rén men cháng shuō: kào shān chī shān, kào shuǐ chī shuǐ. wǒ men cūn lǐ rén zhè jǐ nián shēng huó shuǐ píng de tí gāo, quán shì kào de shuǐ, bú shì kào de shān.]

(It is said that one must make a living in one's given circumstances. The improvement of our village's living standards in the recent years has proved it.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

Example 22 园中建筑十之八九全是靠水的。[yuán zhōng jiàn zhù shí zhī bā jiǔ quán shì kào shuǐ de.]

(Almost all architecture in the gardens depends on water.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

“全是靠的水² [quán kào de shì shuǐ] (depend on water)” and “全是靠水的 [quán shì kào shuǐ de] (depend on water)” cannot be replaced with each other; “的 [de]” can be absent in the sentence but cannot be in the second one. Here are more similar examples.

Example 23 那两位顾客是买的帽子，不是买的衣服，所以那天他们只去了二楼鞋帽部，没去三楼服装部。[nà liǎng wèi gù kè shì mǎi de mào zi, bú shì mǎi de yī fu, suǒ yǐ nà tiān tā men zhǐ qù le èr lóu xié mào bù, méi qù sān lóu fú zhuāng bù.]

(It was the hat not the clothes that those two customers bought. So they only went to the footwear and hat department on the second floor, but not the garment department on the third floor.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

Example 24 那两位顾客是买帽子的，不是买衣服的，所以这会儿他们要去二楼鞋帽部，不去三楼服装部。[nà liǎng wèi gù kè shì mǎi mào zi de, bú shì mǎi yī fu de, suǒ yǐ zhè huì er tā men yào qù èr lóu xié mào bù, bú qù sān lóu fú zhuāng bù.]

(It is the hat not the clothes that those two customers want to buy. So now they will go to the footwear and hat department on the second floor, not the garment department on the third floor.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

“买 [mǎi] (buy)” is a finished action in Example 23 and an unfinished one in Example 24; therefore the position of “的 [de]” in both cannot be moved freely. Likewise, “是 [shì]” in Example 23 can be absent but cannot be in Example 24.

- 3 To judge whether the subject is identical with the object helps distinguish them in the same structure.

Example 25

这只小母鸡是四月份孵的鸡，现在又要孵鸡了。[zhè zhī xiǎo mǔ jī shì sì yuè fèn fū de jī, xiàn zài yòu yào fū jī le.]

(It was in April that this little hen hatched chicks, and now she is going to hatch chicks again.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (I))

这只小母鸡是四月份孵的鸡，现在长得个儿已经不小了。[zhè zhī xiǎo mǔ jī shì sì yuè fèn fū de jī, xiàn zài zhǎng de gè er yǐ jīng bù xiǎo le.]

(This little hen was hatched in April and now she is quite big.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

Example 26

他是从中医医院请的大夫，是自己开车把大夫接回来的。[tā shì cóng zhōng yī yī yuàn qǐng de dà fū, shì zì jǐ kāi chē bǎ dà fū jiē huí lái de.]

(He was the doctor from the traditional Chinese medicine hospital and I picked up him in person by car.) (“是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (I))

他是从中医医院请的大夫，医术是很高明的。[tā shì cóng zhōng yī yī yuàn qǐng de dà fū, yī shù shì hěn gāo míng de.]

(He invited the doctor from the traditional Chinese medicine hospital, who was famous for his outstanding medical skills.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

In Example 25, “四月份孵的鸡 [sì yuè fū de jī]” differs in meaning. The former one doesn't refer to “that little hen” itself; the latter one refers to “that little hen” itself. Likewise in Example 26, “他是从中医医院请的大夫 [tā shì cóng zhōng yī yī yuàn qǐng de dà fū]” differs in meaning. The former one refers to “he” himself; the latter one doesn't refer to “he” himself. In addition, “是 [shì]” in “是...的 [shì...de]” sentence can be omitted but it cannot be in the “是 [shì]” sentence.

III. How to distinguish “是...的 [shì...de]” sentences (II) from “是 [shì]” sentences that take “是 [shì]”+“的 [de]” phrase as the predicate

Although both of them take “的 [de]” at the end of the sentence, they can be distinguished by the following aspects.

1 Whether a headword identical with the subject can be added after “的 [de].”

Example 27 他是有子女的(人)跟你们这些单身汉不同，要多一份负担，多一份责任。[tā shì yǒu zǐ nǚ de (rén) gēn nǐ men zhè xiē dān shēn hàn bú tóng, yào duō yī fèn fù dān, duō yī fèn zé rèn.]

(Unlike the bachelors you are, he has children to raise so he has to take on more burden and responsibilities.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

Example 28 他是有子女的，只是都不在身边，一个在海南，一个在国外。[tā shì yǒu zǐ nǚ de, zhǐ shì dōu bú zài shēn biān, yī gè zài hǎi nán, yī gè zài guó wài.]

(He has children but they don't stay with him. One child is in Hainan and the other abroad.) (“是...的 [shì...de]” sentence (II))

In Example 27, a headword “人 [rén] (person)” can be added after “有子女的 [yǒu zǐ nǚ de] (have children)” to form “有子女的人 [yǒu zǐ nǚ de rén] (a person who has children)” as the subject of the second clause but it is omitted. “人 [rén] (a person)” cannot be added after “的 [de]” in Example 28 because “的 [de]” is a modal particle rather than a structural auxiliary word. “他是有子女的 [tā shì yǒu zǐ nǚ de] (he has children)” means “他有子女 [tā yǒu zǐ nǚ] (he has

children).” The omitted subject of the second clause is “子女 [zǐ nǚ] (children).” “子女 [zǐ nǚ] (children)” in Example 27 should be pronounced stressed and “有 [yǒu] (have)” in Example 28 should be stressed in pronunciation. Here are more similar examples.

Example 29 老张是看报的(人), 我是借书的; 他去报刊室, 我去书库。[Lǎo Zhāng shì kàn bào de (rén), wǒ shì jiè shū de; tā qù bào kān shì, wǒ qù shū kù.]

(Lao Zhang is going to read newspaper and I will borrow some books. So he goes to the room for newspapers and periodicals, and I go to the room for books.) (“是 [shì]” sentence)

Example 30 老张是看报的, 只是看得不够仔细。[Lǎo Zhāng shì kàn bào de, zhǐ shì kàn de bú gòu zǐ xì.]

(Lao Zhang is reading the newspaper but he is not reading carefully enough.) (“是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II))

The verb in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) can be moved to the head of the sentence or put before “是 [shì]” without changing the sentence’s meaning. Nevertheless, it is impossible to do so in the “是 [shì]” sentence.

2 Whether “是 [shì]” and “的 [de]” can be omitted.

They can be omitted in “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) but cannot be in a “是 [shì]” sentence.

3 To judge according to their negative forms

The negative form of a “是 [shì]” sentence is “不是...的 [bú shì... de];” the negation of “是...的 [shì... de]” sentence (II) depends on the constituent in the negative form in the middle of “是...的 [shì... de].”

Notes

- 1 In some books, “是 [shì]” is considered as a modal adverb and “的 [de]” as a dynamic auxiliary word for the perfect tense; some think that “的 [de]” expresses a certain mood and highlights the focus of the entire sentence, which is considered as a flexible usage of the modal particle.
- 2 “靠 [kào] (depend on)” in two examples belongs to different semantic items, which doesn’t influence their functions in the examples.

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4 Interrogative sentences, rhetorical questions, and echo questions

Section one: interrogative sentences

An interrogative sentence is used to pose a question and it can be divided into several types according to its question form.

I. Yes-no questions

1 The yes-no question with “吗 [ma]” as the modal particle

As its name implies, the yes-no question with “吗 [ma]” is formed by adding “吗 [ma]” at the end of a declarative sentence, whose predicate can be either affirmative or negative. In fact, the affirmative form is comparatively common.

Example 1 他是东北人吗? [tā shì dōng běi rén ma?]

(Is he from the northeast?)

Example 2 这个月三十一天吗? [zhè gè yuè sān shí yī tiān ma?]

(Are there thirty-one days this month?)

Example 3 你的表准吗? [nǐ de biǎo zhǔn ma?]

(Does your watch keep good time?)

Example 4 王老师会来吗? [Wáng lǎo shī huì lái ma?]

(Will Prof. Wang come?)

Example 5 他身体好吗 [tā shēn tǐ hǎo ma?]

(Is he in good health?)

Sometimes, other particles can be added before “吗 [ma],” such as “的 [de],” “呢 [ne],” or “了 [le].”

Example 6 他是昨天来的吗? [tā shì zuó tiān lái de ma?]

(Did he come yesterday?)

Example 7 他们正在开会呢吗? [tā men zhèng zài kāi huì ne ma?]

(Are they having a meeting now?)

Example 8 柳树绿了吗? [liǔ shù lǜ le ma?]
(Has the willow turned green?)

Generally speaking, such a question implies the speaker's confidence about what is asked. Sometimes, the confidence is not so strong.

The affirmative responses to the yes-no question with “吗 [ma]” include “是的 [shì de] (yes),” “对 [duì] (yes),” “对了 [duì le] (yes),” “嗯 [èn] (yes)” and the negative ones are “不 [bù] (not)” and “没有 [méi yǒu] (no).” There is one point for attention: the affirmative responses depend on the agreement to what is expressed (asked) and the negative ones rely on the disagreement, regardless of whether the yes-no question is in the affirmative or negative form.

Example 9

A: 王老师会来吗? [Wáng lǎo shī huì lái ma?]
(Will Prof. Wang come?)

B: 嗯, 王老师会来(的)。[èn, Wáng lǎo shī huì lái (de).]
(Yes, he will.)

B: 王老师不会来(的)。[Wáng lǎo shī bú huì lái (de).]
(No, he will not come.)

Example 10

A: 柳树绿了吗? [liǔ shù lǜ le ma?]
(Has the willow turned green?)

B: 是的, 柳树绿了。[shì de, liǔ shù lǜ le.]
(Yes, it has.)

B: 没有, 柳树还没绿呢。[méi yǒu, liǔ shù hái méi lǜ ne.]
(No, it hasn't.)

Example 11

A: 小李不去划船吗? [Xiǎo Lǐ bú qù běi hǎi huá chuán ma?]
(Won't Xiao Li go boating in Beihai Park?)

B: 嗯, 他不去北海划船。[èn, tā bú qù běi hǎi huá chuán.]
(No, he won't.)

B: 不, 他去北海划船。[bù, tā qù běi hǎi huá chuán.]
(Yes, he will.)

Example 12

A: 安娜没给家里打电话吗? [Ān nà méi gěi jiā lǐ dǎ diàn huà ma?]
(Didn't Anna call home?)

B: 对了, 她没给家里打电话。[duì le, tā méi gěi jiā lǐ dǎ diàn huà.]
(No, she didn't.)

B: 不, 她给家里打电话了。[bù, tā gěi jiā lǐ dǎ diàn huà le.]
(Yes, she did.)

From these examples, it can be seen that “是的 [shì de]” or “不 [bù]” accords with the semantic meaning of the yes-no question rather than its reply form.

In addition, the responses could be simplified into the main constituents of the predicate by omitting the subject or the object.

Example 13

A: 他是东北人吗? [tā shì dōng běi rén ma?]

(Is he from the northeast?)

B: 不是东北人。[bú shì dōng běi rén.]

(No, he isn't.)

B: 他不是。[tā bú shì.]

(No, he isn't.)

B: 不是。[bú shì.]

(No.)

Example 14

A: 这个月三十一天吗? [zhè gè yuè sān shí yī tiān ma?]

(Are there thirty-one days this month?)

B: 不, 三十天。[bú, sān shí tiān.]

(No, it has thirty days.)

Example 15

A: 安娜没给家里打电话吗? [Ān nà méi gěi jiā lǐ dǎ diàn huà ma?]

(Didn't Anna call home?)

B: 不, 打了。[bú, dǎ le.]

(Yes, she did.)

- 2 The yes-no question with “好吗 [hǎo ma],” “对吗 [duì ma],” “行/成吗 [xíng/chéng ma],” or “可以吗 [kě yǐ ma].”

Such a question occurs when the speaker offers his or her own opinion, estimation, or request in advance before inquiring about the others.⁷

Example 16 我们明天一起去长城, 好吗? [wǒ men míng tiān yī qǐ qù cháng chéng, hǎo ma?]

(Shall we shall go to the Great Wall tomorrow?)

Example 17 你是日本人, 对吗? [nǐ shì rì běn rén, duì ma?]

(You are Japanese, aren't you?)

Example 18 借我词典用用, 行(成)吗? [jiè wǒ cí diǎn yòng yòng, xíng (chéng) ma?]

(Could you lend me the dictionary?)

Example 19 我们从东门进去, 可以吗? [wǒ men cóng dōng mén jìn qù, kě yǐ ma?]

(Shall we enter from the east gate?)

Generally, the affirmative responses include “好/好吧 [hǎo/hǎo ba],” “对 [duì],” “行/成 [xíng/chéng],” “可以 [kě yǐ],” the negative ones are “不 [bú/bú],”

“不对 [bú duì],” “不行/不成 [bú xíng/bú chéng].” The response to “可以吗 [kě yǐ ma]” could be “不行/不成 [bú xíng/bú chéng]” but could rarely be “不可以 [bú kě yǐ].”

3 The yes-no question conveyed by the interrogative mood

It is formed by adding the interrogative mood in a rising tone at the end of a declarative sentence.

Example 20 这么大的风雪，丢下羊群回家去？不能！ [zhè me dà de fēng xuě, diū xià yáng qún huí jiā qù? bú néng!]

(Can we abandon the flock of sheep in such heavy wind and snow, but go home alone? No, we can't.)

Example 21 这时，一位大嫂走过来着急地问：“同志，听说老白的伤很厉害？” [zhè shí, yī wèi dà sǎo zǒu guò lái zhāo jí de wèn: “tóng zhì, tīng shuō lǎo bái de shāng hěn lì hài?”]

(Then an old lady came and asked anxiously: “Comrade, I heard Lao Bai was severely wounded, wasn't he?”)

Example 22 今天晚上你不去图书馆了？ [jīn tiān wǎn shàng nǐ bú qù tú shū guǎn le?]

(Aren't you going to the library tonight?)

Example 23 小张没来？ [Xiǎo Zhāng méi lái?]

(Didn't Xiao Zhang come?)

Such a question depends on the context very much. In the previous examples, the first question springs from the possible idea of others about abandoning the sheep; the second question comes from Lao Bai's situation overheard from others; the third one is caused by a possibility of not going to the library; the last one may be based on the fact that Xiao Zhang didn't come. Moreover, such a question usually carries a sense of surprise or doubt.

Such a question shares the similarities of the yes-no question with “吗 [ma]” about how to respond and what to omit in response.

4 The yes-no question with “吧 [ba]” as the mood particle

Such a question helps when the speaker is not very sure about his or her evaluation or estimation for a fact or situation. It often implies a sense of guessing or inquiry, and its forms of affirmation and negation are very common in Chinese.

Example 24 这是你女儿吧？ [zhè shì nǐ nǚ ér ba?]

(Is this your daughter?)

Example 25 现在快十二点了吧？ [xiàn zài kuài shí èr diǎn le ba?]

(Is it almost twelve o'clock now?)

Example 26 老张不来了吧？ [Lǎo Zhāng bù lái le ba?]

(Is Lao Zhang not coming?)

II. Wh-questions

1 The general wh-question

It is formed by using an interrogative word in the forms of “wh-” such as who, which, where, or how, to specify the information required. It is the same as the declarative sentence in word order. Differently, the interrogative word itself functions as the constituent to be asked in the sentence.

Example 27 谁是你的体育老师? [shuí shì nǐ men de tǐ yù lǎo shī?]
(Who is your P.E. teacher?)

Example 28 他的病怎么样了? [tā de bìng zěnmeyàng le?]
(How is he now?)

Example 29 他在哪儿? [tā zài nǎ er?]
(Where is he?)

Example 30 玛丽是哪个班的学生? [Mǎ lì shì nǎ gè bān de xué shēng?]
(Which class is Mary in?)

Example 31 他什么时候回国? [tā shén me shí hòu huí guó?]
(When will he return home?)

Example 32 这个句子怎么分析? [zhè gè jù zǐ zěnmeyàng fēn xī?]
(How to analyze this sentence?)

Example 33 她学得怎么样? [tā xué de zěnmeyàng?]
(How about her learning?)

Example 34 他们工厂有多少工人? [tā men gōng chǎng yǒu duō shǎo gōng rén?]
(How many workers are there in their factory?)

Example 35 考试以前, 你们准备复习几天? [kǎo shì yǐ qián, nǐ men zhǔn bèi fù xí jǐ tiān?]
(How many days do you plan to spend on the review for the exam?)

Example 36 那条公路有多长? [nà tiáo gōng lù yǒu duō cháng?]
(How long is that road?)

To pose the wh-question by using “多 [duō],” the positive adjectives are often required to follow, such as “多长 [duō cháng] (how long)” for length, “多大 [duō dà] (how big)” for area, “多高 [uō gāo] (how tall)” for height, “多厚 [duō hòu] (how thick)” for thickness, and “多宽 [duō kuān] (how wide)” for width. The numeral-quantifier information is required in the response and it is not necessary to repeat the adjective once again.

Example 37

A: 那条街有多长? [nà tiáo jiē yǒu duō cháng?]
(How long is that street?)

B: 有两公里(长)。[yǒu liǎng gōng lǐ (cháng).]
(It is two kilometers.)

Example 38

A: 那个房间有多大? [nà gè fáng jiān yǒu duō dà?]

(How big is that room?)

B: 那个房间有十八平方米。[nà gè fáng jiān yǒu shí bā píng fāng mǐ.]

(It covers eighteen square meters.)

Example 39

A: 他多高? [tā duō gāo?]

(How tall is he?)

B: 他一米七五。[tā yī mǐ qī wǔ.]

(He is 1.75 meters.)

Example 40

A: 昨天下的雪有多厚? [zuó tiān xià de xuě yǒu duō hòu?]

(How thick was the snow yesterday?)

B: 有五厘米(厚)。[yǒu wǔ lí mǐ (hòu).]

(It's about 5 centimeters.)

“多大 [duō dà] (how old)” is often used to inquire the age of a child or young person by the eldership; sometimes, it is also acceptable among young people of similar age.

Example 41

A: 他的孩子多大了? [tā de hái zi duō dà le?]

(How old is his child?)

B: 五岁。[wǔ suì.]

(Five years old.)

Example 42

A: 小伙子, 你多大了? 有二十五没有? [xiǎo huǒ zi, nǐ duō dà le? yǒu èr shí wǔ méi yǒu?]

(How old are you, young man? Are you 25 years old?)

B: 老大爷, 您猜得差不多儿, 我二十四了。[lǎo dà yé, nín cāi de chà bù lí er, wǒ èr shí sì le.]

(You almost got it, sir. I'm 24 years old.)

Example 43

A: 喂, 小张, 你多大了? [wèi, Xiǎo Zhāng, nǐ duō dà le?]

(Hi, Xiao Zhang, how old are you?)

B: 我十九。你呢? 我看, 你也就十七。[wǒ shí jiǔ. nǐ ne? wǒ kàn, nǐ yě jiù shí qī.]

(I am 19. How about you? I guess, you are 17 at most.)

Usually, “多大年纪 [duō dà nián jì] (how old)” is for the aged; “多大岁数 [duō dà suì shù] (how old)” for the aged or an adult. “几岁 [jǐ suì] (how old)” is just for a child about 10 or under 10 years old in the north of China.

“有 [yǒu]+多 [duō]+adjective” functions as the predicate, in which “有 [yǒu]” indicates “reach to,” such as Example 37, Example 38, and Example 40.

If “多 [duō]+adjective” doesn’t function as the predicate, “有 [yǒu]” cannot appear in front of it. For instance, “你喜欢住多大的房子? [nǐ xǐ huān zhù duō dà de fáng zi?] (How big is the room you would like to stay in?)” or “做西装要多宽的面料? [zuò xī zhuāng yào duō kuān de miàn liào?] (How much cloth do you need to make a business suit?)”

2 The wh-question with “呢 [ne]” as the modal particle

It can be formed by adding “呢 [ne]” after a word, phrase, or sentence.

If it serves as a beginning sentence, “呢 [ne]” after noun, pronoun, or noun phrase is used to ask about a location, such as “在哪儿 [zài nǎ er] (where).”

Example 44 玉荣，你的靴子呢? [Yù Róng, nǐ de xuē zi ne?]
(Yu Rong, where are your boots?)

Example 45 阿里呢? [Ā Lǐ ne?]
(Where is A Li?)

If the context is definite, the location can be affirmed.

Example 46 窗户已经擦干净了，地板呢? [chuāng hù yǐ jīng cā gān jìng le, dì bǎn ne?]
(The windows have been cleaned. What about the floor?)

Example 47 他的衬衫已经洗了，你的呢? [tā de chèn shān yǐ jīng xǐ le, nǐ de ne?]
(His shirt has been washed. How about yours?)

If “呢 [ne]” is added after a declarative sentence, the entire sentence means “What if”

Example 48 他不同意呢。[tā bù tóng yì ne?]
(What if he doesn’t agree it?)

Example 49 学完了第一册呢? [xué wán le dì yī cè ne?]
(What if we finish learning volume one?)

III. A-not-A questions

1 The general A-not-A question

It is formed by contrasting the positive and negative forms of a premise side by side, in order to offer two opposite possibilities for the answer. The questioner doesn’t imply any tendentious answer.

Example 50 这个牌子的手机好不好? [zhè gè pái zi de shǒu jī hǎo bù hǎo?]
(How is the mobile phone of this brand?)

Example 51 你母亲工作不工作? [nǐ mǔ qīn gōng zuò bú gōng zuò?]
(Doesn't your mother work?)

Example 52 他是不是教外国学生的汉语教师? [tā shì bú shì jiāo wài guó xué shēng de hàn yǔ jiào shī?]
(Is he the Chinese teacher who teaches international students?)

Example 53 你有没有“现代汉语词典”? [nǐ yǒu méi yǒu xiàn dài hàn yǔ cí diǎn?]
(Have you got the Modern Chinese Dictionary?)

There are three forms of the general A-not-A question if the verb takes its object in the sentence with verb as predicate. The first one is “(affirmative form+negative form)+the object;” the second one is “(affirmative form+the object)+negative form;” the third one is “(affirmative form+the object)+(negative form+the object).”

Example 54 你看不看京剧? [nǐ kàn bú kàn jīng jù?]
(Do you watch Peking Opera?)

Example 55 你看京剧不看? [nǐ kàn jīng jù bú kàn?]
(Do you watch Peking Opera or not?)

Example 56 你看京剧不看京剧? [nǐ kàn jīng jù bú kàn jīng jù?]
(Do you watch Peking Opera or not?)

The third type is not frequently used unless the object in it is comparatively simple in structure.

When “了 [le]” follows the verb or the adjective, the negative form of the question should be “没有 [méi yǒu].” Besides, if the verb takes the object, “了 [le]” should come after the object.

Example 57 同学们去了没有? [tóng xué men qù le méi yǒu?]
(Did the students go there?)

Example 58 水热了没有? [shuǐ rè le méi yǒu?]
(Has the water been heated?)

Example 59 她听到这个消息了没有? [tā tīng dào zhè ge xiāo xī le méi yǒu?]
(Did she hear the news?)

The A-not-A question of the sentence with subject-predicate phrase as predicate takes its short and close structure of the predicate as the premise for query.

Example 60 那个图书馆书多不多? [nà ge tú shū guǎn shū duō bù duō?]
(Are there many books in that library?)

Example 61 她最近身体好不好? [tā zuì jìn shēn tǐ hǎo bù hǎo?]
(How has she been recently?)

Example 62 病人腰疼不腰疼? [bìng rén yāo téng bù yāo téng?]

(Does the patient feel aching in his back?)

Example 63 比比人家，看看自己，你脸红不脸红? [bǐ bǐ rén jiā, kàn kàn zì jǐ, nǐ liǎn hóng bù liǎn hóng?]

(Do you blush for your incompetence when compared with others?)

2 The A-not-A question with “是不是 [shì bú shì]”

The A-not-A question with “是不是 [shì bú shì]” helps when the questioner wants to further confirm his or her guess or estimation for a fact or situation, although the questioner is rather sure about it. “是不是 [shì bú shì]” may come before the predicate, or stand at the head or the end of the sentence.

Example 64 你们是不是明天动身? [nǐ men shì bú shì míng tiān dòng shēn?]

(Are you going to set off tomorrow?)

Example 65 你们明天是不是去颐和园? [nǐ men míng tiān shì bú shì qù yí hé yuán?]

(Are you going to the Summer Palace tomorrow?)

Example 66 是不是你们不打算出去旅行了? [shì bú shì nǐ men bù dǎ suàn chū qù lǚ xíng le?]

(Aren't you going to travel?)

Example 67 你家住在北京的郊区，是不是? [nǐ jiā zhù zài běi jīng de jiāo qū, shì bú shì?]

(Do you live in the suburb of Beijing?)

Sometimes, “是不是 [shì bú shì]” also implies an inquiry about others' opinions, carrying a sense of consultation, like “. . . 好吗 [. . . hǎo ma].” In this situation, “是不是 [shì bú shì]” usually comes before the predicate or the subject sometimes, but it cannot stand at the end of the sentence.

Example 68 我们是不是找她谈一谈? [wǒ men shì bú shì zhǎo tā tán yī tán?]

(Shall we talk to her?)

Example 69 是不是我去帮助他一下? [shì bú shì wǒ qù bāng zhù tā yī xià?]

(Shall I go to help him?)

3 The A-not-A question with “好不好 [hǎo bú hǎo]” or “成不成 [chéng bú chéng]”

Likewise, “好不好 [hǎo bú hǎo],” “成不成 [chéng bú chéng],” “行不行 [xíng bú xíng],” “对不对 [duì bú duì]” can be added after a declarative sentence to form an A-not-A question. There is one point for attention: they are only permitted to appear at the end of a sentence but not before the predicate nor at the head of a sentence.

Example 70 把你的工具箱借给我用用，成不成？[bǎ nǐ de gōng jù xiāng jiè gěi wǒ yòng yòng, chéng bú chéng?]
(Would you lend me your toolbox?)

Example 71 我们改到后天动身，行不行？[wǒ men gǎi dào hòu tiān dòng shēn, xíng bú xíng?]
(Shall we change the departure time to the day after tomorrow?)

Example 72 你家住在北京的郊区，对不对？[nǐ jiā zhù zài běi jīng de jiāo qū, duì bú duì?]
(You are living in the suburb of Beijing, aren't you?)

Sometimes, the position of “好不好 [hǎo bù hǎo]” is flexible.

Example 73
我们一块儿去打网球，好不好？[wǒ men yī kuài er qù dǎ wǎng qiú, hǎo bù hǎo?]
(Shall we go to play tennis together?)
我们好不好一块儿去打网球？[wǒ men hǎo bù hǎo yī kuài er qù dǎ wǎng qiú?]
(Shall we go to play tennis together?)
好不好我们一块儿去打网球？[hǎo bù hǎo wǒ men yī kuài er qù dǎ wǎng qiú?]
(Shall we go to play tennis together?)

IV. *Alternative questions*

It offers a number of alternative answers in the forms of “... (是) ... 还是 ... [... (shì) ... hái shì ...]” and “... (是) ... 还是 ... 还是 ... [... (shì) ... hái shì ... hái shì ...]”, and demands the answerer to choose one of them.

Example 74 你是去，还是不去？[nǐ shì qù, hái shì bú qù?]
(Will you go or not?)

Example 75 是你去，还是他去？[shì nǐ qù, hái shì tā qù?]
(Are you going or is he going there?)

Example 76 你是去北海，还是去中山公园？[nǐ shì qù běi hǎi, hái shì qù zhōng shān gōng yuán?]
(Are you going to Beihai Park or Zhongshan Park?)

Example 77 你是去北海，还是去天坛，还是去中山公园？[nǐ shì qù běi hǎi, hái shì qù tiān tán, hái shì qù zhōng shān gōng yuán?]
(Are you going to Beihai Park, the Temple of Heaven, or Zhongshan Park?)

Example 78 你是喝汽水，还是吃冰激凌？[nǐ shì hē qì shuǐ, hái shì chī bīng jī líng?]
(Would you like to drink soda water or eat ice-cream?)

In these examples, some make queries for the predicate, such as Example 74 and Example 78; some raise questions for the object, such as Example 76 and

Example 77. Example 75 is for the subject. Besides, it can be seen that “是 [shì]” and “还是 [hái shì]” are required to be put before the predicate, or to come before two clauses, when the queries are made for the subject, such as Example 78.

All the questions need finishing with a question mark. For the alternative question with “... (是) ... 还是 ... 还是 ... [... (shì) ... hái shì ... hái shì],” it needs one question mark at the end and commas between its clauses.

Sometimes, a declarative sentence may consist of a constituent in an interrogative form but keep its declarative nature. That is to say, it is still a declarative statement so it is ended by a full stop instead of a question mark.

Example 79 我不知道他赞成不赞成。[wǒ bù zhī dào tā zàn chéng bú zàn chéng.]

(I have no idea whether he is in favor of it or not.) (object)

Example 80 小组长已经通知他们几点开始了。[xiǎo zǔ zhǎng yǐ jīng tōng zhī tā men jǐ diǎn kāi shǐ le.]

(The team leader has informed them when to start.) (direct object)

Example 81 需要多少人参加试验的问题还没有决定。[xū yào duō shǎo rén cān jiā shì yàn de wèn tí hái méi yǒu jué dìng.]

(How many participants are needed in the experiment has not been settled.) (attribute)

Example 82 怎么样办好我厂幼儿园是一个亟待解决的问题。[zěn me yàng bàn hǎo wǒ chǎng yòu ér yuán shì yī gè jí dài jiě jué de wèn tí.]

(It is an issue to be solved on how to manage the kindergarten affiliated with our factory.) (subject)

Section two: rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions can be formed by appending the rhetorical mood to a declarative sentence or questions of different types. It functions as an assertion to an obvious fact or reason by the rhetorical mood. For a better rhetorical effect, it usually takes the negative form for the affirmation and the affirmative form for the negation.

It can be ended by a question mark or an exclamation mark. Differently, the question mark highlights the rhetorical mood and the exclamation mark is mainly for the exclamatory effect.

Rhetorical questions can be divided into the following types.

I. Rhetorical questions in the form of yes-no questions

1 The general yes-no question with the rhetorical mood

Example 1 这是哪儿和哪儿的事呀？挨得着吗？你真能胡思乱想！[zhè shì nǎ er hé nǎ er de shì ya? āi de zháo ma? nǐ zhēn néng hú sī luàn xiǎng!]

(They are not related to each other at all. You are really confused by these unrelated thoughts.)

Example 2 还想进去看电影? 你有票吗? [hái xiǎng jìn qù kàn diàn yǐng? nǐ yǒu piào ma?]
(You want to see a movie? Have you got a ticket?)

2 “不是...吗 [bú shì... ma]”

“不是...吗 [bú shì... ma]” functions as an affirmative assertion to an obvious fact, conveying a sense of surprise or dissatisfaction.

Example 3 你不是去过那个地方吗? 那就给我们带带路吧! [nǐ bú shì qù guò nà gè dì fang ma? nà jiù gěi wǒ men dài dài lù ba!]
(You've been to that place before, haven't you? Then show us the way.)

Example 4 不是早就跟你说过了吗? 这就是赶上个寸劲儿。[bú shì zǎo jiù gēn nǐ shuō guò le ma? zhè jiù shì gǎn shàng gè cùn jìn er.]
(Haven't I told you it earlier? We must seize this opportunity.)

Example 5 他不是已经辞职了吗? 怎么又来上班了? [tā bú shì yǐ jīng cí zhí le ma? zěn me yòu lái shàng bān le?]
(Hasn't he resigned already? How come you return to work again?)

“不...吗 [bú/bù... ma]” can be used in “是 [shì]” sentences and “是...的 [shì... de]” sentences.

Example 6 现在辩论的是什么问题呢? 不就是经验交流的问题吗? [xiàn zài biàn lùn de shì shén me wèn tí ne? bú jiù shì jīng yàn jiāo liú de wèn tí ma?]
(What topic is being debated now? About the issue of exchanging experience?)

Example 7 啊! 你不是张大中吗? 要不是你招呼我, 我都认不出来了。[ā! nǐ bú shì Zhāng Dà zhōng ma? yào bú shì nǐ zhāo hū wǒ, wǒ dōu rèn bù chū lái le.]
(Oh, aren't you Zhang Dazhong? I wouldn't have recognized you if you didn't greet me.)

3 “没...吗 [méi... ma]”

It functions as an affirmative assertion to a known fact, implying a sense of blame or dissatisfaction.

Example 8 我没告诉你吗? 那个地方不能去! [wǒ méi gào sù nǐ ma? nà gè dì fang bù néng qù!]
(Haven't I told you that you are forbidden to go to that place?)

Example 9 你没听见他说吗? 天气预报今天有七级大风。[nǐ méi tīng jiàn tā shuō ma? tiān qì yù bào jīn tiān yǒu qī jí dà fēng.]
(Didn't you hear what he said? It was forecasted there would be a level seven gale today.)

Example 10 你没看出来吗？他对这事儿有点意见哩！[nǐ méi kàn chū lái ma? tā duì zhè shì er yǒu diǎn yì jiàn lǐ!]
(Haven't you noticed that he has a different opinion of it!)

- 4 “难道 [nán dào] (surely it doesn't mean that . . .),” “. . . 不成 [. . . bù chéng] (surely it doesn't mean that . . .),” or “难道 . . . 不成 [nán dào . . . bù chéng] (surely it doesn't mean that . . .).”

Sometimes, “吗 [ma]” can be added after these phrases plus the adverb “还 [hái]” or other volitive verbs in the sentence, such as “能 [néng] (can),” “会 [huì] (will),” “得 [děi] (have to),” to imply “不会 [bú huì] (won't),” “不应该 [bù yīng gāi] (shouldn't),” “不可能 [bú kě néng] (impossible),” “不一定 [bú yī dìng] (may not be).” Usually, a sense of “irrefutable” is reflected.

Example 11 我已经在他桌上留了个条子，难道他没看见？[wǒ yǐ jīng zài tā zhuō shàng liú le gè tiáo zi, nán dào tā méi kàn jiàn?]
(I left a message on his desk. Did he see it?)

Example 12 我还能飞到天上去不成？[wǒ hái néng fēi dào tiān shàng qù bù chéng?]
(Surely it doesn't mean that I am omnipotent.)

Example 13 难道非得同意他的做法不成？[nán dào fēi dé tóng yì tā de zuò fǎ bù chéng?]
(Do we have to agree with his approach?)

Example 14 我们死都不怕，难道还怕困难吗？[wǒ men sǐ dōu bú pà, nán dào hái pà kùn nán ma?]
(We are not afraid of death, let alone difficulties?)

5 The adverb “还 [hái]”

The adverb “还 [hái]” helps stress the rhetorical mood, indicating “不应该 [bù yīng gāi] (shouldn't).”

Example 15 这么好的条件，你还不满意！[zhè me hǎo de tiáo jiàn, nǐ hái bù mǎn yì!]
(Aren't you satisfied with such good conditions?)

Example 16 这孩子！已经给了你了，你还哭！[zhè hái zi! yǐ jīng gěi le nǐ le, nǐ hái kū!]
(Hi, kid, why are you still crying? I have given you what you wanted.)

Sometimes, “吗 [ma]” may appear at the end of such a question.

Example 17 狼说：“这样的人还不该吃吗？”[láng shuō: “zhè yàng de rén hái bù gāi chī ma?”]
(The wolf said: “Shouldn't a person like this be eaten?”)

6 The general declarative sentence with the rhetorical mood

Example 18 这是你的？你能叫得它答应你么？[zhè shì nǐ de? nǐ néng jiào de tā dā ying nǐ me?]

(Do you think it belongs to you? That's definitely impossible!)

Example 19 他不是人？他也是人，也得吃饭。[tā bú shì rén? tā yě shì rén, yě děi chī fàn.]

(Isn't he a human? He is indeed human, and must eat in order to live.)

“吗 [ma]” can appear at the end to form a yes-no question with the modal particle “吗 [ma].”

Example 20 这是你的吗？你看看上边写着他的名字哪！[zhè shì nǐ de ma? nǐ kàn kàn shàng biān xiě zhe tā de míng zì nǎ!]

(Look at the name written on it. It's his name. How can it be yours?)

II. Rhetorical question in the form of wh-questions

1 The general wh-question with the rhetorical mood

The interrogative words keep their original meanings in the sentence to convey the rhetorical effect rather than raise queries.

Example 21 自己既然事先看到了问题，为什么要闷在肚子里？[zì jǐ jì rán shì xiān kàn dào le wèn tí, wèi shén me yào mèn zài dù zǐ lǐ?]

(Since you have noticed the problem, why don't you speak out?)

Example 22 这样的好事为什么不做？[zhè yàng de hǎo shì wèi shén me bú zuò?]

(Why not do such a good thing?)

Example 23 怎么不认得？我爸爸，我哥哥，还有我妈妈。[zěn me bú rèn dé? wǒ bà bà, wǒ gē gē, hái yǒu wǒ mā ma.]

(How couldn't I recognize my father, elder brother, and mother?)

Example 24 山上的石头又搬到哪儿去呢？[shān shàng de shí tóu yòu bān dào nǎ er qù ne?]

(Where should we move the stones from the mountain?)

Example 25 这件事，我什么时候告诉他了？[zhè jiàn shì, wǒ shén me shí hòu gào sù tā le?]

(When did I tell him this story?)

2 The predicate consisting of “哪儿 [nǎ er] (where),” “哪里 [nǎ lǐ] (where),” or “怎么 [zěn me] (how)”

They indicate the rhetorical mood rather than location, manner, or reason. They stand before the verb “是 [shì]” or the adjective, often being followed by some volitive verbs, such as “能 [néng] (can),” “会 [huì] (can),” “敢 [gǎn] (dare).”

Example 26 狼说：“他刚才捆住我的腿，把我装在口袋里，上面还压了很多书，哪里是救我，明明是想闷死我！” [láng shuō: “tā gāng cái kǔn zhù wǒ de tuǐ, bǎ wǒ zhuāng zài kǒu dài lǐ, shàng miàn hái yā le hěn duō shū, nǎ lǐ shì jiù wǒ, míng míng shì xiǎng mēn sǐ wǒ!”]

(The wolf said: “He just tied my legs and put me in his pocket with a lot of books in it. What he did was not to save me, but to suffocate me!”)

Example 27 这篇文章哪儿难啊！我看一年级的学生都能看懂。 [zhè piān wén zhāng nǎ er nán ā! wǒ kàn yī nián jí de xué shēng dōu néng kàn dòng.] (It is not difficult to understand this article, even for the students in Grade One!)

Example 28 我想，我眼见你慢慢倒地，怎么会摔坏呢？ [wǒ xiǎng, wǒ yǎn jiàn nǐ màn màn dào de, zěn me huì shuāi huài ne?]

(How could it be possible that you hurt yourself? I saw you fall down slowly.)

Example 29 听了这话，她怎么能不把心伤透？ [tīng le zhè huà, tā zěn me néng bù bǎ xīn shāng tòu?]

(How couldn't her heart be broken when she heard this?)

Example 30 大家见他有了困难，哪里会不帮他呢？ [dà jiā jiàn tā yǒu le kùn nán, nǎ lǐ huì bù bāng tā ne?]

(How could we stand by alone, when he was faced with difficulties?)

When a negative adverb appears in the question, it often comes after the volitive verb, such as Example 29 and Example 30.

- 3 “不 [bù] (not)+the predicate” in the preceding clause+“the wh-question” in the following clause

The form in this example highlights affirmation of the preceding clause, implying “应该 [yīng gāi] (should),” “必须 [bì xū] (must),” “只能 [zhǐ néng] (only),” “当然 [dāng rán] (of course),” or sometimes “就 [jiù].”

Example 31 他不管我，谁管我呢？ [tā bù guǎn wǒ, shuí guǎn wǒ ne?]

(Who else should take care of me, except for him?)

Example 32 我不这么办，怎么办？ [wǒ bú zhè me bàn, zěn me bàn?]

(What else should I do, except for doing that?)

When two clauses share the same subject, a compressed form is also acceptable.

Example 33 我们不问你问谁呀？ [wǒ men bú wèn nǐ wèn shuí ya?]

(Who else should we ask for advice?)

Example 34 我不干这个干什么？ [wǒ bú gàn zhè gè gàn shén me?]

(What can I do but this?)

Example 35 这不是封锁是什么？ [zhè bú shì fēng suǒ shì shén me?]

(What would it be if it were not a blockade?)

The three types of rhetorical questions mentioned earlier can take “啊 [ā]” or “呢 [ne]” at the end, the former of which slightly shows exclamation and the latter of which indicates a slight euphemism.

4 The rhetorical question with “什么 [shén me] (what)”

There are two situations about it.

- (1) “什么 [shén me] (what)” comes after adjectives or verbs for activities of the mind to negate a judgment or feature, conveying a sense of disagreement or refutation. “什么 [shén me] (what)” should be pronounced with stress.

Example 36 这个句子难什么？一点儿也不难。[zhè gè jù zi nán shén me? yī diǎn er yě bù nán.]

(Is it difficult to understand this sentence? No, it is not at all.)

Example 37 那件衬衫好什么？样子太旧，颜色也不好。[nà jiàn chèn shān hǎo shén me? yàng zi tài jiù, yán sè yě bù hǎo.]

(You think that shirt is nice? In fact, it is out of style as well as an unpleasant color.)

Example 38 这间教室大什么？只坐得下十几个人。[zhè jiān jiào shì dà shén me? zhǐ zuò de xià shí jǐ gè rén.]

(How can you say this classroom is large? It can only hold a dozen people.)

Example 39

A: 你一定很喜欢你的小孙子。[nǐ yī dìng hěn xǐ huān nǐ de xiǎo sūn zi.]
(You must be fond of your little grandson very much.)

B: 喜欢什么？他太淘气。[xǐ huān shén me? tā tài táo qì.]
(No. He is too naughty.)

- (2) “什么 [shén me] (what)” comes after common verbs to indicate “not necessary,” “shouldn’t,” “impossible,” implying a sense of dissatisfaction, disagreement, or blame. If the verb takes its object, “什么 [shén me] (what)” should be put before the object. In this case, the verb or the object should be stressed in pronunciation and “什么 [shén me] (what)” be slightly pronounced.

Example 40 哭什么？这么大了还哭！[kū shén me? zhè me dà le hái kū!]
(Why are you crying? You shouldn’t cry like this because you are no longer a child.)

Example 41 外边不下雨了，还穿什么雨衣！[wài biān bú xià yǔ le, hái chuān shén me yǔ yī!]
(Why are you still wearing the raincoat? The rain stopped.)

Example 42 已经下起雨来了，还去什么公园！[yǐ jīng xià qǐ yǔ lái le, hái qù shén me gōng yuán!]
(Why do you still go to the park since it started to rain?)

Example 43 钱都丢了，还买什么衣服啊！[qián dōu diū le, hái mǎi shén me yī fu ā!]

(Why do you still want to buy the clothes? You lost your money!)

Example 44 衣服那么多了，还买什么衣服啊！[yī fu nà me duō le, hái mǎi shén me yī fu ā!]

(Why do you want more since you've bought a lot of clothes?)

- 5 “有什么 [yǒu shén me]+the adjective predicate/“很 [hěn]+the verbal phrase”

It adopts the affirmative form to assert the negation and vice versa.

Example 45 织女说：“人们都说天上好，其实天上有什么好呢？我在那儿一点儿自由都没有。”[Zhī Nǚ shuō: “rén men dōu shuō tiān shàng hǎo, qí shí tiān shàng yǒu shén me hǎo ne? wǒ zài nà ér yī diǎn ér zì yóu dōu méi yǒu.”]

(Zhi Nü said: “It is said it is good to be in Heaven. Actually it is not what is thought because I have no freedom there at all.”)

Example 46 这件事有什么难办？很简单嘛！[zhè jiàn shì yǒu shén me nán bàn? hěn jiǎn dān ma!]

(Why do you think it is difficult to do it? It's pretty easy!)

Example 47 他说的这句话有什么不公平道呢？[tā shuō de zhè jù huà yǒu shén me bú gōng dào ne?]

(What is the unfairness of his words?)

If an adjective phrase consisting of “有 [yǒu]+the object” functions as the predicate, “什么/啥 [shén me/shá] (what)” can be added before the object to form a rhetorical question.

Example 48 老纪暗想：卧虎岭是个有名的后进队，有啥学头？[Lǎo Jì àn xiǎng: wò hǔ lǐng shì gè yǒu míng de hòu jìn duì, yǒu shá xué tóu?]

(Lao Ji pondered: what can I get from Wo Hu Ling, which is famous for its backwardness?)

Example 49 如果人民不觉悟，就是有了健康的身体，对国家又有什么用呢？[rú guǒ rén mín bú jué wù, jiù shì yǒu le jiàn kāng de shēn tǐ, duì guó jiā yòu yǒu shén me yòng ne?]

(What can we contribute to our motherland if we just keep fit in health but without political consciousness?)

Example 50 牛郎想只要把老牛分给他，离开家不离开家又有什么关系呢？[Niú Láng xiǎng zhǐ yào bǎ lǎo niú fēn gěi tā, lí kāi jiā bù lí kāi jiā yòu yǒu shén me guān xi ne?]

(Niu Lang didn't care much about staying or leaving as long as he was given an old ox.)

Such a question is strong and assertive in the rhetorical mood. If it is changed into a declarative statement, “有什么 [yǒu shén me]” should be replaced with “没 [méi] (no).”

“有什么 [yǒu shén me]” can function alone as the predicate.

Example 51 这有什么? 平日没事, 我还不是把这屋的门槛都踩平了!
[zhè yǒu shén me? píng rì méi shì, wǒ hái bú shì bǎ zhè wū de mén kǎn dōu cǎi píng le!]

(What a big deal of your coming. I am a frequent visitor here.)

Here, “有什么 [yǒu shén me]” cannot be replaced with “没什么 [méi shén me].”¹

- 6 The rhetorical question with “干什么 [gàn shén me],” “干吗 [gàn ma],” or “做什么 [zuò shén me]”

They come before the predicate or after the entire sentence with verb as predicate, implying “not necessary” or “shouldn’t.”

Example 52 有些同志问他: “雷锋, 你就一个人, 也没有家, 存那么多钱干什么? [yǒu xiē tóng zhì wèn tā: “Léi Fēng, nǐ jiù yī gè rén, yě méi yǒu jiā, cún nà me duō qián gàn shén me?”]

(Some comrades asked: “Lei Feng, why do you save so much money? We know you have no family.)

Example 53 您干吗给他买这么讲究的衣服? 买一件普通的就行了。[nín gàn ma gěi tā mǎi zhè me jiǎng jiū de yī fú? mǎi yī jiàn pǔ tōng de jiù háng le.]
(Why did you buy him such exquisite clothes? Ordinary ones will be O.K.)

Example 54 她没记下的诗还多着呢, 偏要记下这首来做什么? 由它自生自灭好了。[tā méi jì xià de shī hái duō zhe ne, piān yào jì xià zhè shǒu lái zuò shén me? yóu tā zì shēng zì miè hǎo le.]

(Since many poems are still left to recite by her, is it a big deal to leave this one? Let it be.)

Example 55 送礼干什么? 这样反而生分了。[sòng lǐ gàn shí me? zhè yàng fǎn ér shēng fēn le.]

(Why do you give gifts? They actually make our relation distant.)

Usually, “干什么 [gàn shén me] (what to do)” or “做什么 [zuò shén me] (what to do)” negates what is expressed by the predicate or the entire sentence. Sometimes, the object is negated, like Example 54; or the attribute is negated, like Example 53.

- 7 “谁说 [shuí shuō] (who says)” or “谁说的 [shuí shuō de] (who says)” at the head of the rhetorical question

It indicates negation to the judgment, implying a refutatory sense.

Example 56 谁说我们干不成? 我们就要干成给他们看看。[shuí shuō wǒ men gàn bú chéng? wǒ men jiù yào gàn chéng gěi tā men kàn kàn.]
(Who says we can't do this? Let's show them how well we can do it.)

Example 57 谁说的今天有雨? 你看准是个大晴天。[shuí shuō de jīn tiān yǒu yǔ? nǐ kàn zhǔn shì gè dà qíng tiān.]
(Who said it would rain today? I bet it will be a sunny day.)

8 The rhetorical question with the adverbs of the rhetorical mood

They include “何必 [hé bì] (why),” “何况 [hé kuàng] (let alone),” “何尝 [hé cháng] (never),” “何妨 [hé fāng] (why not),” “何不 [hé bú] (why not),” “何苦 [hé kǔ] (why bother),” “何至于 [hé zhì yú] (how),” “岂 [qǐ] (how).”

Example 58 读诗, 有什么感受, 就按照自己的心去感受好了, 何必看那些注释呢? [dú shī, yǒu shén me gǎn shòu, jiù àn zhào zì jǐ de xīn qù gǎn shòu hǎo le, hé bì kàn nà xiē zhù shì ne?]
(Just enjoy yourself reading poems. Why get bothered by those poem notes?)

Example 59 一年级的学生都读得懂, 何况二年级的呢? [yī nián jí de xué shēng dōu dú de dǒng, hé kuàng èr nián jí de ne?]
(Even the students of Grade One can understand it, let alone those of Grade Two.)

Example 60 你就去问一问他又何妨呢? [nǐ jiù qù wèn yī wèn tā yòu hé fāng ne?]
(Why not go and ask him?)

Example 61 天气这样晴朗, 何不去湖边散散步? [tiān qì zhè yàng qíng lǎng, hé bú qù hú biān sàn sàn bù?]
(Why not go out for a walk along the riverside on such a sunny day?)

Example 62 这个方法我何尝没有试验过, 只是都没有成功。[zhè gè fāng fǎ wǒ hé cháng méi yǒu shì yàn guò, zhǐ shì dōu méi yǒu chéng gōng.]
(How could I miss this method? But it didn't work.)

III. Rhetorical questions in the form of A-not-A questions

- 1 It indicates affirmation to what is expressed with “看 [kàn] (see),” “你看 [nǐ kàn] (you see),” “你说 [nǐ shuō] (you say),” or “你想 [nǐ xiǎng] (you think)” at the head of the sentence, conveying a sense of persuasion or expectation.

Example 63 你看看这个人厉害不厉害? [nǐ kàn kàn zhè gè rén lì hài bú lì hài?]
(You see, how competent this person is!)

Example 64 你这么做丢人不丢人? [nǐ zhè me zuò diū rén bù diū rén?]
(Aren't you ashamed of yourself by doing this?)

Example 65 他得了便宜还卖乖，你说可气不可气？[tā dé le pián yi hái mài guāi, nǐ shuō kě qì bù kě qì?]

(It is really annoying that he pretended to get fewer advantages than others.)

Example 66 我只学了两个月汉语就当翻译，你想想，我的困难大不大？[wǒ zhǐ xué le liǎng gè yuè hàn yǔ jiù dāng fān yì, nǐ xiǎng xiǎng, wǒ de kùn nán dà bú dà?]

(You can imagine how many difficulties I am faced with when serving as an interpreter after learning Chinese for two months.)

2 It highlights negation with “还 [hái].”

Example 67 要是让那个流氓知道了，你还想活不想活？[yào shì ràng nà gè liú máng zhī dào le, nǐ hái xiǎng huó bù xiǎng huó?]

(How could it be possible for you to keep a peaceful life, if that gangster knew about it?)

Example 68 他这样无理纠缠，还让不让人工作了？[tā zhè yàng wú lǐ jiū chán, hái ràng bú ràng rén gōng zuò le?]

(How could it be possible for me to work normally because of his unreasonable entanglement?)

3 It stresses affirmation with “是不是 [shì bú shì]” to imply an expected fact. Nevertheless, “是不是 [shì bú shì]” seldom appears in the middle of sentence.

Example 69 我就知道，你准得赶来，是不是？[wǒ jiù zhī dào, nǐ zhǔn de gǎn lái, shì bú shì?]

(I knew it that you would come here, didn't you?)

Example 70 是不是？我没猜错吧。他一去问题就解决了。[shì bú shì? wǒ méi cāi cuò ba. tā yī qù wèn tí jiù jiě jué le.]

(You see? My words have been well proved. The problem was solved quickly by his coming.)

Example 71 是不是？他一定会来这一手儿！[shì bú shì? tā yī dìng huì lái zhè yī shǒu er!]

(You see? I knew he would do this.)

IV. *Rhetorical questions in the form of alternative questions*

1 The rhetorical mood negates all the choices presented in the form of alternative questions, so as to highlight the speaker's opinion.

Example 72 越说越奇！他要上房，还是要放火来着？[yuè shuō yuè qí! tā yào shàng fáng, hái shì yào fàng huǒ lái zhe?]

(It sounds weird more and more. Does he want to get on the roof, or set fire to it?) (to highlight his naughty behavior)

Example 73 你给的钱是够买粮的，还是够买菜的？ [nǐ gěi de qián shì gòu mǎi liáng de, hái shì gòu mǎi cài de?]

(The money you gave me is neither enough for grain nor for vegetables.)
(to highlight the insufficient money)

Example 74 我跟你是亲戚，是老朋友，还是我欠你的？ [wǒ gēn nǐ shì qīn qī, shì lǎo péng yǒu, hái shì wǒ qiàn nǐ de?]

(I am not your relative or an old friend, let alone that I owe you.) (to highlight no responsibility)

- 2 The preceding clause offers an affirmative expectation and the following clause expresses a negative fact in the tone of dissatisfaction, blame, or query.

Example 75 你们是念书来了，还是来玩儿来了？ [nǐ men shì niàn shū lái le, hái shì lái wán er lái le?]

(Why did you come? To learn here, or just for fun?) (blame and query)

Example 76 他是想解决问题呀，还是想打架呀？ [tā shì xiǎng jiě jué wèn tí ya, hái shì xiǎng dǎ jià ya?]

(What is your real purpose? To solve the problem, or to sharpen it more?)
(dissatisfaction and query)

In short, a rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a question. It is more expressive than a declarative statement. Therefore, to learn how to use it properly can help much in Chinese expression.

Section three: echo questions

An echo question refers to a question that is posed by the speaker and is simply echoed by the listener in the same way. The first question from the speaker is named the leading question and the second one echoed by the listener is an echo question.

An echo question basically retains the same structure of the leading question but is often followed at the end by some modal particles, such as “吗 [ma],” “啊 [ā],” or “吧 [ba].” Sometimes, “你说 [nǐ shuō] (you say)” or “你问 [nǐ wèn] (you ask)” can be added at the beginning.

In a conversation, an echo question conveys disagreement, disbelief, or unawareness of the listener of what has been said by the speaker, often implying a sense of surprise, doubt, or dissatisfaction.

Example 1

A: 小张到哪儿去了？ [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ er qù le?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang?)

B: 你问小张到哪儿去了吗？ [nǐ wèn Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ er qù le ma?]

(Do you ask me where Xiao Zhang is?) (unclear about the question)

Example 2

A: 小张到哪儿去了? [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang?)

B: 小张到哪儿去了? 他不会走吧? [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le? tā bú huì zǒu ba?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang? Did he leave?) (unbelief)

Example 3

A: 小张到哪儿去了? [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang?)

B: 小张到哪儿去了? 他不在实验室里吗? [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le? tā bú zài shí yàn shì lǐ ma?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang? Isn't he in the laboratory?) (unbelief)

Example 4

A: 小张到哪儿去了? [Xiǎo Zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang?)

B: 小张到哪儿去了? 你问我, 我问谁去呀? [xiǎo zhāng dào nǎ ér qù le? nǐ wèn wǒ, wǒ wèn shuí qù ya?]

(Where is Xiao Zhang? You ask me? Who am I going to ask?) (dissatisfaction)

Example 5

A: 你为什么没把小张找回来? [nǐ wèi shén me méi bǎ Xiǎo Zhāng zhǎo huí lái?]

(Why didn't you get Xiao Zhang back?)

B: 你说, 我为什么没把小张找回来? 我为什么要把小张找回来? [nǐ shuō, wǒ wèi shén me méi bǎ Xiǎo Zhāng zhǎo huí lái? wǒ wèi shén me yào bǎ Xiǎo Zhāng zhǎo huí lái?]

(Why didn't I get Xiao Zhang back? You tell me, why should I get him back?) (dissatisfaction)

Thus it can be seen from these examples that the listener can further offer his or her unbelief or dissatisfaction to clarify an opinion with an echo question.

Note

- 1 “没什么 [méi shén me]” sounds mild and gentle. For instance, “没什么好 [méi shén me hǎo] (no good)” means “不怎么好 [bù zěn me hǎo] (not good enough)” or “不太好 [bù tài hǎo] (not good enough)”; “没什么用 [méi shén me yòng] (not useful)” means “用处不大 [yòng chù bú dà] (not useful enough).”

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5 Imperative sentences

Imperative sentences indicate commands or requests, including ordering or advising someone (sometimes oneself) to do (not to do) something.

Section one: imperative sentences in the affirmative and negative forms

An affirmative form orders or requests someone to do something and a negative form not to do something. Due to their differences in structure, they need discussing separately. Here are examples of affirmative imperative sentences.

Example 1 走! [zǒu!]
(Go!)

Example 2 拿着! [ná zhe!]
(Hold on it!)

Example 3 把药喝了! [bǎ yào hē le!]
(Take the medicine!)

Example 4 快跑! [kuài pǎo!]
(Run fast!)

Example 5 钥匙! [yào shí!]
(The key!)

Example 6 票 [piào!]
(Ticket!)

Example 7 赶紧! [gǎn jǐn!]
(Hurry!)

The negative imperative sentence is formed by “别 [bié] (not),” “不要 [bú yào] (don't),” “不必 [bú bì] (not have to),” “不用 [bú yòng] (need not),” “甭 [béng] (don't)+other predicate constituents.”

Example 8 别走! [bié zǒu!]
(Don't leave!)

Example 9 不要相信他! [bú yào xiāng xìn tā!]
(Don't believe him!)

Example 10 手别松开! [shǒu bié sōng kāi!]
(Don't let it go!)

Example 11 作业别都做完了, 留一点明天做! [zuò yè bié dōu zuò wán le, liú yī diǎn míng tiān zuò!]
(Don't finish all the homework—leave some for tomorrow!)

Example 别光坐着! 找点事儿做! [bié guāng zuò zhe! zhǎo diǎn shì er zuò!]
(Don't just sit here! Find something to do!)

Thus it can be seen from the previous examples that an imperative sentence can be formed by a verb (phrase), adjective phrase, noun, or adverb. The next section will further discuss verbs and adjectives in the imperative sentence.

The affirmative imperative sentence formed by a noun usually asks for something clearly known by the listener, such as “the key” in Example 5 and “the ticket” in Example 6.

The imperative sentence formed by an adverb doesn't occur frequently. In Example 7, the listener is aware of what he should do quickly. Actually, what he should do, conveyed by a verb, is omitted.

Section two: structural features of imperative sentences

Due to its function for commands and requests, it differs from the declarative sentence and the interrogative sentence in the aspects of form and structure.

I. *Verbs in imperative sentences*

No matter for the affirmative or the negative form, verbs in the imperative sentence should be action verbs for people. Generally speaking, the more concrete meaning the verb indicates, the more easily it can be used in the imperative sentence. But it doesn't mean all action verbs are appropriate to use here.

1 Some verbs are appropriate under certain circumstances and they are as follows.

(1) In repetition or with a verb-quantifier word “一下 [yī xià]”

Example 1
醒醒! [xǐng xǐng!]
(Wake up!)
醒一下! [xǐng yī xià!]
(Wake up!)
*醒 [xǐng!]

Example 2 宣传一下! [xuān chuán yī xià!]

(Publicize it!)

*宣传 [xuān chuán!]

These types of verbs include: 醒 [xǐng] (wake up), 叙 [xù] (narrate), 逛 [guàng] (stroll), 宣传 [xuān chuán] (publicize), 反映 [fǎn yǐng] (reflect), 表示 [biào shì] (express), 说明 [shuō míng] (instruct), 活动 [huó dòng] (act), 观察 [guān chá] (observe), 吓唬 [xià hǔ] (scare), 打听 [dǎ tīng] (inquire), 打扮 [dǎ bàn] (dress up). “歇 [xiē] (rest)” and “躺 [tǎng] (lie)” need repeating or appending—“一下 [yī xià] (for a while),” “一会儿 [yī huì er] (for a while)”—or complementing, to form the imperative sentence.

“别 [bié] (don't)” helps the verbs of such type to form the negative imperative sentence, such as “别宣传 [bié xuān chuán] (don't publicize),” “别反映 [bié fǎn yǐng] (don't reflect),” “别活动 [bié huó dòng] (don't do activity),” “别打听 [bié dǎ tīng] (don't inquire),” “别打扮 [bié dǎ bàn] (don't dress up).”

Sometimes, with/without the repetition of verb decides the meaning of an imperative sentence.

Example 3

A: 对方的代表来了, 你们谈谈/一下吧。[duì fāng de dài biǎo lái le, nǐ men tán tán/yī xià ba.]

(The representative of the other side arrived and both sides could begin the negotiation.)

B: 你们谈吧, 我走了。[nǐ men tán ba, wǒ zǒu le.]

(You just continue your talking and I am going to leave.)

Example 4

A: 你们收拾收拾吧, 我们不吃了。[nǐ men shōu shí shōu shí ba, wǒ men bù chī le.]

(You clean up the dishes on the table and we don't want to take more.)

B: 你们收拾吧, 我走了。[nǐ men shōu shí ba, wǒ zǒu le.]

(You continue to clean up the dishes on the table and I am going to leave.)

In these examples, those marked “A” indicate the actions going to happen; those with “B” imply two possibilities. One is to indicate the actions that are going to happen and the other to show the actions that have continued for a while.

(2) With “着 [zhe]” after the verb

Example 5

跪着! [guì zhe!]

(Kneel!)

跪下! [guì xià!]

(Kneel!)

*跪! [guì!]

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Example 6

扶着! [fú zhe!]

(Support it!)

*扶! [fú!]

Likewise, these verbs can also be used to show states or postures of people and they are as follows:

仰 [yǎng] (face upward), 站 [zhàn] (stand), 躺 [tǎng] (lie), 跪 [guì] (kneel), 伸 [shēn] (stretch), 趴 [pā] (bend), 待 [dài] (stay), 搁 [gē] (put), 托 [tuō] (support), 扶 [fú] (hold), 举 [jǔ] (lift), 捧 [pěng] (hold in both hands), 搂 [lōu] (hug), 披 [pī] (drape over one's shoulders), 记 [jì] (remember).

They seldom occur in the negative form alone, except for “跪 [guì] (kneel)” and “扶 [fú] (support),” such as “别跪 [bié guì] (don't kneel)” or “别扶 [bié fú] (don't support it).”

(3) With complement

Example 7

藏起来! [cáng qǐ lái!]

(Hide!)

*藏! [cáng!]

Example 8

站出来! [zhàn chū lái!]

(Stand out!)

站起来! [zhàn qǐ lái!]

(Stand up!)

站着! [zhàn zhe!]

(Stand!)

*站! [zhàn!]

The verbs in this situation are mainly monosyllabic, which require or cause logical results. For instance, “close the door” produces “the door is closed.” When directional verbs function as predicate, their destination should be clearly clarified by directional complements, such as “出来! [chū lái!] (come out)” or “回去! [huí qù] (go back!).” The similar verbs are as follows:

合 [hé] (combine), 闭 [bì] (close), 关 [guān] (close), 塞 [sāi] (stuff), 盖 [gài] (cover), 存 [cún] (deposit), 藏 [cáng] (hide), 避 [bì] (avoid), 躲 [duǒ] (hide), 住 [zhù] (live), 渡 [dù] (cross), 骑 [qí] (ride), 出 [chū] (exit), 回 [huí] (return), 过 [guò] (pass), 起 [qǐ] (rise).

Such verbs can function alone in the negative imperative sentence, such as “别关 [bié guān] (don't close),” “别盖 [bié gài] (don't cover),” “别存 [bié cún]

(don't deposit),” “别藏 [bié cáng] (don't hide),” “别躲 [bié duǒ] (don't hide),” “别住 [bié zhù] (don't live),” “别骑 [bié qí] (don't ride).”

(4) With subject

It is necessary for the subject to appear as the doer of the action conveyed by the abstract verb.

Example 9 你负责! [nǐ fù zé!]

(You should be responsible for it!)

*负责! [fù zé!]

Example 10 你批准吧! [nǐ pī zhǔn ba!]

(You should approve it!)

*批准! [pī zhǔn!]

The similar verbs include: 决定 [Juéding] (decide), 领导 [lǐng dǎo] (lead), 批准 [pī zhǔn] (approve), 负责 [fù zé] (in charge of), 代理 [dài lǐ] (act as) 代表 [dài biǎo] (represent), 承担 [chéng dān] (undertake), 担任 [dān rèn] (act as), 防守 [fáng shǒu] (defend), 驾驶 [jià shǐ] (drive), 解决 [jiě jué] (resolve), 发行 [fā xíng] (distribute).

(5) With object

It is necessary for the object of the action conveyed by verb to appear, otherwise ambiguity would happen.

Example 11 帮助你弟弟! [bāng zhù nǐ dì dì!]

(Help your brother!)

*帮助! [bāng zhù!]

Example 12 救人! [jiù rén!]

(Save people!)

*救! [jiù]

The similar verbs include: 禁止 [jìn zhǐ] (prohibit), 利用 [lì yòng] (use), 逼 [bī] (force), 处罚 [chù fá] (punish), 救 [jiù] (save), 帮助 [bāng zhù] (help), 替 [tì] (substitute), 养活 [yǎng huó] (feed), 请教 [qǐng jiào] (consult), 加入 [jiā rù] (join), 生产 [shēng chǎn] (produce).

In a certain context, some of them can function alone in the negative imperative sentence, such as “别禁止 [bié jìn zhǐ] (don't forbid),” “别处罚 [bié chù fá] (don't punish),” “不要救 [bú yào jiù] (don't save),” “别生产 [bié shēng chǎn] (don't produce).”

(6) With adverbial

If the action involves more than one participant in the affirmative imperative sentence, they are usually introduced by prepositions such as “跟 [gēn] (with),” “对 [duì] (to),” “向 [xiàng] (to).”

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Example 13 向他赔罪! [xiàng tā péi zuì!]

(Apologize to him!)

*赔罪! [péi zuì!]

Example 14 跟他讲道理! [gēn tā jiǎng dào lǐ!]

(Show reasons and facts to him!)

*讲道理! [jiǎng dào lǐ!]

Similar verbs include: 请教 [qǐng jiào] (consult), 讲理 [jiǎng lǐ] (reason), 道歉 [dào qiàn] (apologize), 赔罪 [péi zuì] (make amends), 吵 [chǎo] (quarrel), 要求 [yāo qiú] (require), 请求 [qǐng qiú] (demand), 要求 [yāo qiú] (request), 接头 [jiē tóu] (contact), 接洽 [jiē qià] (contact).

Some of them can function alone in the negative form, such as “别道歉 [bié dào qiàn] (don't apologize),” “不要赔罪 [bú yào péi zuì] (don't apologize),” “别吵 [bié chǎo] (don't apologize),” “别要求 [bié yāo qiú] (don't request),” “别要 [bié yào] (don't ask for).”

(7) “去 [qù] (go)+verb”

“去 [qù] (go)” helps in forming the imperative sentence in which the actions have to be realized somewhere else.

Example 15 去旅行吧! [qù lǚ xíng ba!]

(Go on a trip!)

*旅行吧! [lǚ xíng ba!]

Example 16

A: 那封信我怎么才能拿到? [nà fēng xìn wǒ zěn me cái néng ná dào?]

(How can I get that letter?)

B: 来取! [lái qǔ!]

(Come and take it!)

*取! [qǔ!]

The similar verbs include: 打仗 [dǎ zhàng] (fight), 战斗 [zhàn dòu] (combat), 旅行 [lǚ xíng] (travel), 出差 [chū chà] (be on a business trip), 演戏 [yǎn xì] (act in a play), 迎接 [yíng jiē] (greet), 欢迎 [huān yíng] (welcome).

(8) With the volitive verb “要 [yào] (should)”

Example 17 要节约, 不要浪费! [yào jié yuē, bú yào làng fèi!]

(To save and don't waste!)

*节约! [jié yuē!]

Example 18 对他, 你要支持! [duì tā, nǐ yào zhī chí!]

(To him, you should support!)

*对他, 你支持! [duì tā, nǐ zhī chí!]

Example 19 要同情他! [yào tóng qíng tā!]

(Show sympathy with him!)

*同情他! [tóng qíng tā!]

(9) Some verbs with “请 [qǐng] (please)”

Some verbs cannot function alone unless they are added to “请 [qǐng] (please).”

Example 20 请帮忙! [qǐng bāng máng!]

(Please help!)

Example 21 请指教! [qǐng zhǐ jiào!]

(Please advise!)

In the aforementioned forms of the imperative sentence, most of the verbs are only appropriate for one of them. Several verbs can appear in several imperative sentence forms, such as “打听 [dǎ tīng] (inquire about),” “总结 [zǒng jié] (summarize),” and “讲理 [jiǎng lǐ] (reason).” For instance, “打听打听 [dǎ tīng dǎ tīng] (inquire about),” “打听一下 [dǎ tīng yī xià] (inquire about),” “打听清楚 [dǎ tīng qīng chǔ] (inquire about),” “跟小张打听 [gēn Xiǎo Zhāng dǎ tīng] (inquire with Xiao Zhang),” “去打听 [qù dǎ tīng] (to inquire about),” “总结一下 [zǒng jié yī xià] (summarize),” “总结总结 [zǒng jié zǒng jié] (summarize),” “你总结 [nǐ zǒng jié] (you sum up),” “跟他讲理 [gēn tā jiǎng lǐ] (reason with him),” “要讲理 [yào jiǎng lǐ] (should be reasonable).”

“蹲! [dūn!] (squat!)” and “起! [qǐ!] (rise!)” are appropriate for commands.

In short, there are more restrictions to the affirmative form than to the negative form in the imperative sentence.

In Chinese, an exclamatory sentence is special for its structure; an interrogative sentence is not very complex in structure, especially for its simple responses; an imperative sentence is simpler than a declarative sentence in structure; the structure of a declarative sentence is more complex. Therefore, if a verb cannot form an imperative sentence alone, it cannot do so in a declarative sentence, neither.

2 Inappropriate verbs in the imperative sentence

(1) Non-action verbs and action verbs not for people

They include copulas like “是 [shì] (yes),” “成 [chéng] (become),” “像 [xiàng] (like),” “有 [yǒu] (have),” “在 [zài] (in)” and state verbs like “知道 [zhī dào] (know),” “懂 [dǒng] (understand),” “失意 [shī yì] (frustrate),” “相似 [xiāng sì] (resemble),” “缺乏 [quē fá] (lack),” “消亡 [xiāo wáng] (disappear),” “涌现 [yǒng xiàn] (emerge),” “痊愈 [quán yù] (heal).” Volitive verbs cannot form the imperative sentence alone.

(2) Action verbs of non-volitional conducts

They cannot form the affirmative imperative sentence but some of them are appropriate in the negative form. Since the commands or requests in the imperative sentence should be controllable for people, those action verbs of non-volitional conducts cannot help in the affirmative form. For instance, it is not correct to say: “*打呵欠! [dǎ hā qiàn!],” “*呕吐! [ǒu tǔ!],” “*颤抖! [chàn dǒu!],” “*流汗! [liú hàn!],” “*生气! [shēng qì!],” “*丢东西! [diū dōng xī!],” “*做梦! [zuò mèng!].”

Although “笑 [xiào] (laugh),” “哭 [kū] (cry),” and “咳嗽 [ké sòu] (cough)” belong to the action verbs of non-volitional conducts, they can be changed for the volitional conducts in some special situations, such as in dramas or when being asked to do or hinting. For instance, “笑一笑 [xiào yī xiào] (smile)” when being pictured or “咳嗽一下 [ké sòu yī xià] (cough)” to spit out something stuck in the throat.

Some action verbs of non-volitional conduct are also appropriate in the negative form.

Example 22 别坐错了车! [bié zuò cuò le chē!]

(Don't take the wrong bus!)

Example 23 这件事很重要, 千万别忘了! [zhè jiàn shì hěn zhòng yào, qiān wàn bié wàng le!]

(It is very important, don't forget it!)

Example 24 别把钱丢了! [bié bǎ qián diū le!]

(Don't lose your money!)

Example 25 别误会! [bié wù huì!]

(Don't get me wrong!)

Example 26 小心别病了。[xiǎo xīn bié bìng le.]

(Take care of yourself.)

Example 27 别着急! [bié zhāo jí!]

(Don't worry!)

These examples remind or advise the listener not to do something or to control his or her own moods or feelings, although all the verbs here are for non-volitional conduct.

(3) Derogatory verbs and commendatory verbs

The former cannot form the affirmative form and the latter cannot form the negative form. Their semantic implications play an important role in the imperative sentence, so those verbs with neutral meanings don't reflect any special implications.

The reason for the inappropriateness of derogatory verbs in the affirmative form results from common sense. That is to say, people are expected to do something good rather than to do something bad, unless for special purposes in the affirmative form. These derogatory verbs include the following words:

惹 [rě] (offend), 剥削 [bō xuè] (exploit), 侵略 [qīn lüè] (invade), 隐瞒 [yīn mán] (conceal), 骗 [piàn] (deceive), 欺骗 [qī piàn] (cheat), 哄 [hōng] (fool), 欺骗 [qī piàn] (deceive), 捣乱 [dǎo luàn] (make trouble), 敲诈 [qiāo zhà] (extort), 撒谎 [sā huǎng] (lie), 欺负 [qī fù] (bully), 侮辱 [wǔ rǔ] (insult), 糟蹋 [zāo tà] (ruin), 辩解 [biàn jiě] (justify), 残害 [cán hài] (slaughter), 吹嘘 [chuī xū] (boast), 篡改 [cuàn gǎi] (tamper), 谋杀 [móu shā] (murder).

The negative form of the imperative sentence can accept the verbs of derogatory or neutral meaning but not those of commendatory meaning. The commendatory verbs include: 赡养 [shàn yǎng] (support), 赞美 [zàn měi] (praise), 发扬 [fā yáng] (carry forward), 改善 [gǎi shàn] (improve), 增进 [zēng jìn] (enhance), 团结 [tuán jié] (unite), 爱惜 [ài xī] (cherish), 珍惜 [zhēn xī] (cherish).

II. Adjectives in imperative sentences

Generally speaking, the adjectives in a imperative sentence express two types of meaning which, in turn, decide the choice of adjectives.

1 To indicate the requirement for a certain action

Example 28 明天去爬山, 早点儿! [míng tiān qù pá shān, zǎo diǎn er!] (Start early for tomorrow's climbing!)

Example 29 明天检查卫生, 房间整齐点儿! [míng tiān jiǎn chá wèi shēng, fáng jiān zhěng qí diǎn er!] (Clean up the room for tomorrow's check!)

Example 30 这篇文章你再校对一遍, 仔细点儿! [zhè piān wén zhāng nǐ zài jiào duì yī biàn, zǐ xì diǎn er!] (Proofread this article again carefully!)

The requirement could aim at an action going to happen or an ongoing one.

Example 31 左边高一点儿! [zuǒ biān gāo yī diǎn er!] (A little higher on the left!)

Example 32 这朵花颜色太浅了, 深一点儿! [zhè duǒ huā yán sè tài qiǎn le, shēn yī diǎn er!] (This flower is too light. Darken it a bit!)

Example 33 声音再大一点儿! [shēng yīn zài dà yī diǎn er!] (Louder!)

In fact, the verbs among these examples are omitted according to the context, such as “hang (a picture),” “color (a flower),” and “speak (louder).”

The adjectives of this type include: 大 [dà] (big), 小 [xiǎo] (small), 长 [cháng] (long), 短 [duǎn] (short), 远 [yuǎn] (far), 近 [jìn] (near), 干 [gān] (dry), 湿 [shī]

(wet), 直 [zhí] (straight), 弯 [wān] (bend), 便宜 [pián yí] (cheap), 彻底 [chè dǐ] (thorough), 干净 [gān jìng] (clean), 清楚 [qīng chǔ] (clear), 明确 [míng què] (clear), 具体 [jù tǐ] (specific), 简单 [jiǎn dān] (simple).

Usually, they are commendatory and require to be followed by “(一)点儿 [(yī) diǎn er] (a bit)” or “一些 [yī xiē] (a little),” except for “快 [kuài] (quick),” “安静 [ān jìng] (quiet),” or “慢 [màn] (slow),” sometimes.

Compared with the affirmative form, the negative form “别 [bié]+那么 [nà me] (so)+adjective” is less used.

Example 34 别那么快! [bié nà me kuài!]
(Don't be so fast!)

Example 35 别那么弯! [bié nà me wān!]
(Don't get so bent!)

- 2 To indicate requirements for the behaviors of interacting with others, the attitudes of working and living, and sometimes implying a sense of dissatisfaction.

Example 36 严肃点儿, 不许笑! [yán sù diǎn er, bù xǔ xiào!]
(Be serious. Don't laugh!)

Example 37 别马马虎虎的, 认真点儿! [bié mǎ mǎ hū hū de, rèn zhēn diǎn er!]
(Don't be careless. Be serious!)

Sometimes, it just functions as a reminder.

Example 38 路滑, 小心点儿! [lù huá, xiǎo xīn diǎn er!]
(The ground is wet. Be careful!)

Example 39 看问题实际点儿! [kàn wèn tí shí shí jì diǎn er!]
(Be realistic about this issue!)

Example 40 坚决点儿! [jiǎn jué diǎn er!]
(Be determined!)

Example 别难过! [bié nán guò!]
(Don't be sad!)

Example 41 别这么骄傲 [bié zhè me jiāo ào!]
(Don't be so proud!)

The adjectives of type include: 实际 [shí jì] (actual), 成熟 [chéng shú] (mature), 聪明 [cōng míng] (smart), 老实 [lǎo shí] (honest), 随便 [suí biàn] (casual), 勇敢 [yǒng gǎn] (brave), 冷静 [lěng jìng] (calm), 大方 [dà fāng] (generous), 大胆 [dà dǎn] (daring), 热情 [rè qíng] (enthusiastic), 朴实 [pǔ shí] (simple), 朴素 [pǔ sù] (simple), 严 [yán] (strict), 狠 [hěn] (cruel), 干脆 [gān cuì] (straightforward), 谦虚 [qiān xū] (modest), 活泼 [huó pō] (lively), 勤快 [qín kuài] (diligent), 高兴 [gāo xìng] (happy),

主动 [zhǔ dòng] (active), 积极 [jī jí] (positive), 自觉 [zì jué] (consciously), 耐心 [nài xīn] (patient), 规矩 [guī jǔ] (well-behaved), 客气 [kè qì] (polite).

Usually, they are commendatory. Sometimes, some derogatory ones could be pleasurably accepted. For instance, “马虎点儿 [mǎ hǔ diǎn er]” means “don’t be so serious”; “保守点儿 [bǎo shǒu diǎn er]” means “be conservative a bit.”

Likewise, it is proper to use the derogatory adjectives in the negative form. They include: 麻烦 [má fan] (trouble), 忙 [máng] (busy), 骄傲 [jiāo ào] (pride), 自满 [zì mǎn] (self-satisfied), 冒失 [mào shī] (risk), 大意 [dà yì] (careless), 麻痹 [má bì] (indifferent), 急躁 [jí zào] (impatient), 性急 [xìng jí] (impatient), 小气 [xiǎo qì] (stingy), 胆小 [dǎn xiǎo] (timid), 顽固 [wán gù] (stubborn), 自私 [zì sī] (selfish), 懒 [lǎn] (lazy), 勉强 [miǎn qiáng] (reluctant), 难过 [nán guò] (sorry), 消极 [xiāo jí] (negative), 悲观 [bēi guān] (pessimistic). Sometimes, “这么 [zhè me] (so)” or “那么 [nà me] (so)” can be added before adjectives in the negative form to confirm the fact.

In short, similar to the verbs in the imperative sentence, the adjectives are also semantically related to the formation of the imperative sentence. In other words, what is expressed by adjectives should be controllable by people; their derogatory or commendatory meanings play an important role in the formation of the imperative sentence.

III. *Dynamic auxiliary words and complements in imperative sentences*

1 Dynamic auxiliary words in the imperative sentence

The affirmative imperative sentence mainly expresses an action that is going to happen; those dynamic auxiliary words for finished actions are not acceptable here, such as “了 [le].” The following examples are not correct.

Example 42 *穿了这件衣服! [chuān le zhè jiàn yī fu!]

Example 43 *高了! [gāo le!]

But “了 [le]” for a result is acceptable in the affirmative form.

Example 44 把手里的脏东西扔了! [bǎ shǒu lǐ de zāng dōng xī rēng le.]
(Throw that dirty stuff to keep your hands clean!)

Example 45 喝了这杯酒! [hē le zhè bēi jiǔ!]
(Drink this glass of wine!)

When the affirmative form contains two actions going to happen, “了 [le]” can appear after the first verb to introduce the concrete time.

Example 46 见了老师要行礼! 记住了吗? [jiàn le lǎo shī yào xíng lǐ! Jì zhù le mā?]
(Remember! Salute the teacher when you see him!)

In this example, “见了 [jiàn le] (see)” introduces the time to “salute.”

When there is no time word in the imperative sentence, “了 [le]” as a modal particle indicates the “present.”

Example 47 开饭了! [kāi fàn le!]
(Dinner time!)

Example 48 走了, 走了! [zǒu le, zǒu le!]
(Move!)

Example 49 上车了, 上车了! [shàng chē le, shàng chē le!]
(Get in the car!)

The negative form of the imperative sentence accepts “了 [le]” no matter if it indicates a result or is just a modal particle.

Example 50 别说了, 打发它们走吧! [bié shuō le, dǎ fā tā men zǒu ba!]
(Stop talking and send them away!)

Example 51 你不必提了。[nǐ bú bì tí le.]
(You don't have to mention it.)

The dynamic auxiliary word “着 [zhe]” is acceptable in the imperative sentence.

Example 52 跪着! 别站起来! [guì zhe! bié zhàn qǐ lái!]
(Kneel! Don't stand up!)

Example 53 跪着, 不能蹲着! [guì zhe, bú néng dūn zhe!]
(Kneel! Don't squat!)

Example 54 别站着说, 坐下! [bié zhàn zhe shuō, zuò xià!]
(Don't speak on your feet. Sit down!)

Example 55 这些东西放着吧, 以后会有用的。[zhè xiē dōng xi fàng zhe ba, yǐ hòu huì yǒu yòng de.]
(Keep these things, and they'll come in handy later.)

Example 56 背着! 别提着, 太重。[bèi zhe! bié tí zhe, tài zhòng.]
(Carry it on your back, not with your hand! It's too heavy.)

But “过 [guò]” for what is finished or experienced or “在 [zài]” and “呢 [ne]” for what is going on are excluded here.

2 Verb-complement phrase

“Verb+resultant complement” is semantically restricted in the imperative sentence. For instance, those phrases referring to non-volitional conducts or of derogatory meanings are not acceptable in the affirmative form.

Example 57 *看见那个人! [kàn jiàn nà gè rén!]

Example 58 *要听懂我说的话! [yào tīng dǒng wǒ shuō de huà!]

Example 59 *你得马上睡着! [nǐ děi mǎ shàng shuì zháo!]

Example 60 *诈光他的财产! [zhà guāng tā de cái chǎn!]

The meaning of a directional complement decides whether “verb+directional complement” can form an imperative sentence or not. Generally speaking, the directional complement referring to a directional tendency or result is appropriate here.

Example 61 爬出来! [pá chū lái!]

(Climb out!)

Example 62 别下来! [bié xià lái!]

(Don't come down!)

Example 63 关上门! [guān shàng mén!]

(Close the door!)

Example 64 别把他捆起来, 放他走吧! [bié bǎ tā kǔn qǐ lái, fàng tā zǒu ba!]

(Don't tie him up. Let him go!)

Example 65 大家散开! [dà jiā sàn kāi!]

(Everyone spread out!)

If the result conveyed by the directional complement results from the non-volitional conduct, it should be excluded.

Example 66 *这是谁的声音, 你听出来! [zhè shì shuí de shēng yīn, nǐ tīng chū lái!]

Example 67 *他们的阴谋诡计你看出来! [tā men de yīn móu guǐ jì nǐ kàn chū lái!]

In these examples, “听出来 [tīng chū lái] (hear)” and “看出来 [kàn chū lái] (see)” are involved in one's competence which is uncontrollable.

Those directional complements describing non-volitional conducts from the static state to the dynamic state or vice versa cannot form the imperative sentence, such as “起来 [qǐ lái] (stand up),” “上 [shàng] (get on),” “开 [kāi] (open),” “下来 [xià lái] (get off).”

Example 68 *他们已唱得很好, 你们也唱上! [tā men yǐ chàng de hěn hǎo, nǐ men yě chàng shàng!]

Example 69 *时间已经到了, 你们比开吧! [shí jiān yǐ jīng dào le, nǐ men bǐ kāi ba!]

Example 70 *现在你们考起试来吧! [xiàn zài nǐ men kǎo qǐ shì lái ba!]

Example 71 *上课了, 同学们静下来! [shàng kè le, tóng xué men jìng xià lái!]

Example 72 *让茶快一点凉下来! [ràng chá kuài yī diǎn liáng xià lái!]

“下去 [xià qù]” for “continue” is appropriate here.

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Example 73 说下去! [shuō xià qù!]

(Go ahead with your words!)

Example 74 念下去! [niàn xià qù!]

(Go ahead with your reading!)

Example 75 别闹下去了, 没有什么好处! [bié nào xià qù le, méi yǒu shén me hǎo chù!]

(Stop making troubles. This is no good!)

More restrictions to directional complements in syntactic structure have been discussed in Chapter 5, Section two, vol. 3.

The modal complement is descriptive so it rarely occurs in the imperative sentence.

Example 76 *明天起得早! [míng tiān qǐ de zǎo!]

Example 77 *你说得太快了, 说得慢! [nǐ shuō de tài kuài le, shuō de màn!]

However, it can be acceptable if “点儿 [diǎn er] (a bit)” is appended at the end.

Example 78 明天起得早点儿! [míng tiān qǐ de zǎo diǎn er!]

(Get up a bit early tomorrow!)

Example 79 你说得太快了, 说得慢点儿! [nǐ shuō de tài kuài le, shuō de màn diǎn er!]

(You talk too fast. Speak a bit slowly!)

In these examples, “得 [de]” can be omitted.

Example 80 明天起早点儿! [míng tiān qǐ zǎo diǎn er!]

(Get up a bit early tomorrow!)

Example 81 你说得太快了, 说慢点儿! [nǐ shuō de tài kuài le, shuō màn diǎn er!]

(You talk too fast. Speak a bit slowly!)

Those describing doers are not acceptable in the imperative sentence.

Example 82 *你工作得很忙! [nǐ gōng zuò de hěn máng!]

Example 83 *你高兴得跳起来! [nǐ gāo xìng dé tiào qǐ lái!]

But, sometimes, they are appropriate in the negative form.

Example 84 别喝得醉醺醺的! [bié hē de zuì xūn xūn de!]

(Don't get too drunk!)

Those describing action recipients are not acceptable here, either.

Example 85 *把衣服洗得干干净净的! [bǎ yī fu xǐ de gān gān jìng jìng de!]

Example 86 *把字写得整整齐齐的! [bǎ zì xiě de zhěng zhěng qí qí de!]

But “要 [yào]” makes these examples acceptable again if it is added in front.

Example 87 要把衣服洗得干干净净的! [yào bǎ yī fu xǐ de gān gān jìng jìng de!]

(Wash the clothes clean!)

Example 88 把字写得整整齐齐的! [bǎ zì xiě de zhěng zhěng qí qí de!]

(Write the words neatly!)

The complement of possibility cannot form the imperative sentence.

Comparatively speaking, verb-quantifier complements and time-quantifier complements are more free in the formation of an imperative sentence.

Example 89 推他一下! [tuī tā yī xià!]

(Push him!)

Example 90 看一会儿书! [kàn yī huì er shū!]

(Read the book for a while!)

IV. Restrictions to other sentence patterns

There are no special restrictions to the sentence with a serial verb and a “把 [bǎ]” sentence. The existential sentence cannot form the imperative sentence; “被 [bèi]” sentence cannot form its affirmative form.

The subject of a “被 [bèi]” sentence is the action recipient so its predicate verb cannot indicate a volitional conduct.

Example 91 *你被派到北京去! [nǐ bèi pài dào běi jīng qù!]

Example 92 *被选为主席! [bèi xuǎn wéi zhǔ xí!]

But it can form the negative form.

Example 93 注意，别叫人看见! [zhù yì, bié jiào rén kàn jiàn!]

(Be careful! Don't let others see you!)

The existential sentence is descriptive and is inappropriate in the imperative sentence.

V. Subjects in imperative sentences

The appearance of the subject in an imperative sentence is optional.

Under the following situations, its appearance is necessary.

- 1 The subject cannot be absent if the predicate verb requires it.

- 2 If there is more than one participant in conversation, its appearance can avoid ambiguity.
- 3 The appearance of “您 [nín] (you)” and other addressing titles for elders can produce a more polite tone of speaking.

Example 94 不要走! [bú yào zǒu!]
(Don't leave!)

Example 95 你不要走! [nǐ bú yào zǒu!]
(You don't leave!)

Example 96 妈不要走! [mā bú yào zǒu!]
(Mom, don't leave!)

Example 97 您不要走! [nín bú yào zǒu!]
(Don't leave, please!)

The polite tone in these examples increase gradually.

VI. Intonations of imperative sentences

The stressed syllable at the end of the imperative sentence is usually pronounced with a falling tone. To be exact, how much it sounds euphemistic depends on its intonation. The lower it falls in tone, the stronger it sounds and vice versa.

VII. The form marks of imperative sentences

Without a certain context, it is not easy to judge whether a sentence is an imperative one or a declarative statement because they are not very much different in structure or in form.

Example 98

A: 爹, 我到爷爷屋里去了。[diē, wǒ dào yé yé wū lǐ qù le.]
(Father, I am about to go to the grandfather's house.)

B: 去吧! [qù ba!]
(Go ahead!)

“去吧 [qù ba] (go ahead)” doesn't sound imperative, although it looks the same as an imperative sentence.

Some words only used in the imperative sentence are regarded as its marks.

- 1 “请 [qǐng] (please)” as a term of respect

Example 99 请坐! [qǐng zuò!]
(Please have a seat!)

Example 100 现在我们都是上年纪的人了，这些话请也不必说了。
[xiàn zài wǒ men dōu shì shàng nián jì de rén le, zhè xiē huà qǐng nǐ yě bù bǐ shuō le.]

(Now we are all the aged, so please don't say such words.)

It differs from “请 [qǐng] (please)” as a verb due to its lack of lexical meaning.

2 “放 [fàng]” as a verb

It is used before an adjective in the imperative sentence that indicates the requirements to behaviors of interacting with others or to attitudes of working and living.

Example 101 放老实点儿! [fàng lǎo shí diǎn er!]

(Be honest!)

Example 102 你放尊重些! [nǐ fàng zūn zhòng xiē!]

(Be respectful!)

Example 103 眼光放远点儿! [yǎn guāng fàng yuǎn diǎn er!]

(Take the long view!)

Example 104 心放宽点儿! [xīn fàng kuān diǎn er!]

(Relax!)

Spoken only from the eldership to the younger generation rather than the opposite way, “放 [fàng]” can strengthen a tone of rebuke in an impolite way, like Example 101 and 102; likewise, it can indicate consolation with a sincere tone of speaking, like Example 103 and 104.

3 “可 [kě],” “千万 [qiān wàn],” “少 [shǎo],” “给我 [gěi wǒ]”

“可 [kě]” indicates a tone of telling someone to do or not to do something.

Example 105 这个文件很重要，你可别丢了! [zhè gè wén jiàn hěn zhòng yào, nǐ kě bié diū le!]

(This file is very important; don't lose it!)

Example 106 到了美国，你可别忘了马上打个电话! [dào le měi guó, nǐ kě bié wàng le mǎ shàng dǎ gè diàn huà!]

(Don't forget to call me when you arrive in the U.S.!)

The same is true for “千万 [qiān wàn].”

Example 107 千万别丢了钥匙! [qiān wàn bié diū le yào shi!]

(Don't lose the key!)

Example 108 千万保重! [qiān wàn bǎo zhòng!]
(Take care of yourself!)

“少 [shǎo]” is used before a verb to stop an action that is going to happen with an impolite tone of speaking.

Example 109 少管闲事! [shǎo guǎn xián shì!]
(Mind your own business!)

Example 110 少废话, 快给钱! [shǎo fèi huà, kuài gěi qián!]
(Stop the nonsense! Give me the money quickly!)

Example 111 少在这儿指手画脚! [shǎo zài zhè er zhǐ shǒu huà jiǎo!]
(Don't make indiscreet remarks here!)

Also, “给我 [gěi wǒ]” sounds impolite in the imperative sentence, indicating an unreal meaning.

Example 112 给我滚! [gěi wǒ gǔn!]
(Go away!)

Example 113 你给我闭嘴! [nǐ gěi wǒ bì zuǐ!]
(Shut up!)

Example 114 你今天一定要把衣服给我洗干净, 否则我决不答应! [nǐ jīn tiān yī dìng yào bǎ yī fú gěi wǒ xǐ gān jìng, fǒu zé wǒ jué bù dā yìng!]
(You must wash the clothes clean today; otherwise you will be punished!)

4 “别 [bié]”

“别 [bié]” is only used in the negative form of the imperative sentence.

However, it is admitted that the imperative sentence marked by the aforementioned words occurs rarely.

Section three: intonation of imperative sentences and its expressive ways

Imperative sentences of different types vary greatly in intonation.

I. Imperative sentences in affirmative forms

- 1 It only consists of the verb (phrase), adjective (phrase), adverb, or noun, indicating an obligatory order or urge in a direct intonation.

Example 1 快走! [kuài zǒu!]
(Go immediately!)

Example 2 收据! [shōu jù!]
(Receipt!)

Example 3 赶紧! [gǎn jǐn!]

(Hurry!)

Example 4 亮一点儿! [liàng yī diǎn er!]

(Brighten it a bit!)

- 2 Some words can lessen or smooth the tone of speaking in the affirmative imperative sentence.

- (1) The overlapped verb, the verb-quantifier word, or the noun-quantifier word for a short period of time or a small quantity

Example 5 你快去打听打听! [nǐ kuài qù dǎ tīng dǎ tīng!]

(Go and ask about it!)

Example 6 那儿情况怎么样, 你说说。[nà er qíng kuàng zěnmeyàng, nǐ shuō shuō.]

(Tell me about the situation there.)

Example 7 你来看一下, 这样做行不行? [nǐ lái kàn yī xià, zhè yàng zuò xíng bù xíng?]

(Take a look, please. Is that O.K.?)

Example 8 快回去睡一会儿! [kuài huí qù shuì yī huì er!]

(Go back to sleep for a while!)

Example 9 让开点儿! [ràng kāi diǎn er!]

(Get out of the way!)

- (2) The modal particles, such as “吧 [ba]” and “啊 [ā]”

Example 10 快来呀! [kuài lái ya!]

(Come on!)

Example 11 吃啊! [chī ā!]

(Eat!)

Example 12 你慢慢看吧。[nǐ màn màn kàn ba.]

(Take your time in watching.)

Example 13 回来吧。[huí lái ba.]

(Come back.)

- (3) The words indicating politeness and respect, such as “您 [nín] (you),” “你老 [nǐ lǎo] (you),” “请 [qǐng] (please)”

Example 14 您慢走! [nín màn zǒu!]

(Take your way!)

Example 15 你老多包涵! [nǐ lǎo duō bāo hán!]

(Forgive me, please!)

Example 16 请坐! [qǐng zuò!]

(Please take a seat!)

3 Some ways can be adopted to strengthen the tone of speaking

(1) The words indicating disrespect or insult

Example 17 滚蛋! [gǔn dàn!]
(Get away!)

Example 18 住口! [zhù kǒu!]
(Shut up!)

Example 19 快塞/吃饭吧! [kuài sāi/chī fàn ba!]
(Be quick to eat it!)

(2) Adding “放 [fàng]” or “给我 [gěi wǒ]”

Example 20 放规矩点儿! [fàng guī jǔ diǎn er!]
(Behave yourself!)

Example 21 你们给我出去! [nǐ men gěi wǒ chū qù!]
(Get out of here!)

II. Imperative sentences in negative forms

Some words are often used in the negative imperative sentence, such as “别 [bié] (don't),” “不要 [bú yào] (don't),” “不许 [bù xǔ] (don't),” “不能 [bù néng] (don't).”

“别 [bié] (don't)” and “不要 [bú yào] (don't)” are similar in persuading someone not to do something. Differently, “别 [bié] (don't)” sounds more oral than “不要 [bú yào] (don't),” that is to say, “别 [bié] (don't)” can be used in an informal situation but “不要 [bú yào] (don't)” in a formal one. Besides, “不要 [bú yào] (don't)” is only used from the eldership to the younger generation.

Different from “别 [bié] (don't),” “不必 [bù bì] (need not),” “不用 [bù yòng] (need not),” and “甭 [béng] (don't)” are used to stop someone from doing something, among which “甭 [béng] (don't)” sounds very oral.

Example 22 那本书已经找到了，你不必找了。[nà běn shū yǐ jīng zhǎo dào le, nǐ bù bì zhǎo le.]
(That book has been found. You don't have to find it anymore.)

Example 23 明天我叫车了，你甭来送我! [míng tiān wǒ jiào chē le, nǐ béng lái sòng wǒ!]
(You don't need to see me off by car. I have booked a taxi tomorrow!)

Example 24 这么点小事，甭放在心上。[zhè me diǎn xiǎo shì, béng fàng zài xīn shàng.]
(Forget such a small favor.)

“不许 [bù xǔ] (must not)” is used to prohibit doing something with a tough tone of speaking.

Example 25 上课不许随便说话! [shàng kè bù xǔ suí biàn shuō huà!]
(Don't talk in class!)

Example 26 不许随地吐痰! [bù xǔ suí dì tǔ tán!]
(No spitting!)

Likewise, “不能 [bù néng]” means prohibition or dissuasion.

Example 27 屋里正在开重要的会议, 你不能进去! [wū lǐ zhèng zài kāi zhòng yào de huì yì, nǐ bù néng jìn qù!]
(You are prohibited to enter the room because a meeting is going on.)

Example 28 她身体很虚弱, 现在你不能见她! [tā shēn tǐ hěn xū ruò, xiàn zài nǐ bù néng jiàn tā!]
(You are not permitted to visit her because she is too weak!)

Section four: imperative sentences in special forms

I. Imperative sentences in interrogative forms or forms of rhetorical questions

Example 1 四爷, 您不宽宽大衣? [Sì Yé, nín bù kuān kuān dà yī?]
(Si Ye, would you like to take off your coat?)

Example 2 小姐, 可以给我一个杯子吗? [xiǎo jiě, kě yǐ gěi wǒ yī gè bēi zi ma?]
(Excuse me, miss. Can you give me a cup?)

Example 3 糊涂东西, 还不快跑! [hú tú dōng xī, hái bú kuài pǎo!]
(Stupid guy! To run quickly!)

Example 4 看什么, 还不快点吃! [kàn shén me, hái bú kuài diǎn chī!]
(Don't look around! Eat it quickly!)

II. Others

1 To stop one's talking by calling his or her name

Example 5
周冲: 你这个人真有点不懂人情。 [Zhōu Chōng: nǐ zhè gè rén zhēn yǒu diǎn bú dǒng rén qíng.]
(Zhou Chong: You really don't know it better.)

鲁大海: 对了, 我不懂人情, 我不懂你们这种虚伪, 这种假慈悲, 我不懂。 [Lǔ Dà hǎi: duì le, wǒ bú dǒng rén qíng, wǒ bú dǒng nǐ men zhè zhǒng xū wěi, zhè zhǒng jiǎ cí bēi, wǒ bú dǒng.]
(Lu Dahai: No, I don't. To be frank, I don't understand your hypocrisy or so-called compassion.)

鲁四风: 哥哥! [Lǔ Sì fēng: gē gē!]
(Lu Sifeng: Brother (Lu Da hai)!)
(Lu Sifeng: Brother (Lu Da hai)!)

- 2 To stop someone's speech or behavior by “得了 [dé liǎo] (forget it)” or “得了，得了 [dé liǎo, dé liǎo] (forget it).”

Example 6 陈白露: 小东西，快谢谢潘经理。[Chén Bái lù: xiǎo dōng xī, kuài xiè xiè pān jīng lǐ.]

(Chen Bailu: Little guy, be quick to say thanks to Manager Pan.)

潘月亭: 得了，得了。[Pān Yuè tíng: dé liǎo, dé liǎo.]

(Pan Yueting: Forget it, forget it.)

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6 Comparisons

There are many ways for comparison in Chinese. Generally speaking, they can be divided into two big groups. One is to compare similarities and differences among things or traits; the other is to compare differences or levels in property or degree.

Section one: similarities and differences among things and traits

The forms of comparison in the first group are as follows:

I. A 跟 B 一样 [A gēn B yī yàng] (A is the same as B)

In “A 跟 B 一样 [A gēn B yī yàng] (A is as same as B),” A and B stand for two things or traits to be compared. “一样 [yī yàng] (same),” as the result of comparison, functions as the main constituent of the predicate and is modified by “跟 B [gēn B] (with B)” as the adverbial. Sometimes, when there are adjectives, verbs for psychological activities, or some verbal phrases after “一样 [yī yàng] (same),” “跟 B 一样 [gēn B yī yàng] (as same as B)” will become an adverbial as a whole to modify this adjective or verb. Then “A 跟 B 一样 [A gēn B yī yàng] (A is as same as B)+adjective/verb” means that A is the same as B in a certain aspect.

Example 1 这个字的声调跟那个字的声调一样。[zhè gè zì de shēng diào gēn nà gè zì de shēng diào yī yàng.]

(The tone of this word is the same as the tone of that word.)

Example 2 这间屋子跟那间屋子一样大。[zhè jiān wū zi gēn nà jiān wū zi yī yàng dà.]

(This room is as big as that room.)

Example 3 她跟我一样喜欢孩子。[tā gēn wǒ yī yàng xǐ huān hái zǐ.]

(She likes children just as I do.)

In these examples, “一样 [yī yàng] (same)” refers to the result of comparison.

Besides, adjectives in “A 跟 B 一样 [A gēn B yī yàng] (A is as same as B)+adjective/verb” are mainly positive ones, such as “高 [gāo] (high),”

“长 [cháng] (long),” “宽 [kuān] (wide),” “厚 [hòu] (thick),” “大 [dà] (big),” “多 [duō] (many/much).” They refer to height, length, width, thickness, volume, area, or quantity respectively. Sometimes, the negative adjectives are acceptable if necessary, such as “矮 [ǎi] (short),” “短 [duǎn] (short),” “窄 [zhǎi] (narrow),” “薄 [báo] (thin),” “小 [xiǎo] (small),” “少 [shǎo] (less/few).”

Example 4 这本书跟那本书一样厚，大概都是三百多页。[zhè běn shū gēn nà běn shū yī yàng hòu, dà gài dōu shì sān bǎi duō yè.]
(This book is as thick as that book, more than three hundred pages.)

Example 5 这块布跟那块布一样薄，看起来都不太结实。[zhè kuài bù gēn nà kuài bù yī yàng báo, kàn qǐ lái dōu bù tài jié shí.]
(This piece of cloth is as thin as that piece. They seem not to be durable.)

“跟...一样 [gēn... yī yàng] (as same as)” can take “地 [dì]” in the rear when it functions as an adverbial, especially to modify a phrase.

Example 6 他会跟我们一样地想念祖国。[tā huì gēn wǒ men yī yàng de xiǎng niàn zǔ guó.]
(He misses the motherland as much as we do.)

“跟...一样 [gēn... yī yàng] (as same as)” can also function as the attribute.

Example 7 还有跟这本一样的字典吗？[hái yǒu gēn zhè běn yī yàng de zì diǎn ma?]
(Is there any other dictionary like this one?)

Example 8 这里将要盖一幢跟那幢一样的楼房。[zhè lǐ jiāng yào gài yī chuáng gēn nà chuáng yī yàng de lóu fáng.]
(A building like that one is going to be built here.)

Besides a noun or pronoun, A and B can be replaced by a verb (phrase) or adjective (phrase).

Example 9 读跟写一样需要下功夫。[dú gēn xiě yī yàng xū yào xià gōng fū.]
(It takes effort in reading as well as in writing.)

Example 10 长跟短怎么能一样呢？[cháng gēn duǎn zěn me néng yī yàng ne?]
(How could it be possible that “long” is the same as “short”?)

Example 11 没关系，用钢笔写和用毛笔写都一样。[méi guān xi, yòng gāng bǐ xiě hé yòng máo bǐ xiě dōu yī yàng.]
(It makes no difference to write by pen or by pencil.)

Example 12 相当难跟有点儿难能一样吗？[xiāng dāng nán gēn yǒu diǎn er nán néng yī yàng ma?]
(“Pretty difficult” cannot be the same as “a little difficult.”)

Example 13 你来跟他来一样，谁来都能解决问题。[nǐ lái gēn tā lái yī yàng, shuí lái dōu néng jiě jué wèn tí.]

(It makes no difference if the problem is solved by you or by him.)

The negative form of “A跟 B一样 [A gēn B yī yàng] (A is as same as B)” is “A跟B不一样 [A gēn B bú yī yàng] (A is not as same as B).”

Example 14 他的意见跟我的意见不一样。[tā de yì jiàn gēn wǒ de yì jiàn bù yī yàng.]

(His opinion is different from mine.)

Example 15 七班的节目跟别的班的都不一样，他们跳了一个民族舞。[qī bān de jié mù gēn bié de bān de dōu bú yī yàng, tā men tiào le yī gè mín zú wǔ.]

(The performance of Class 7 was different from that of other classes; they presented a folk dance.)

Sometimes, “不跟 . . . 一样 [bù gēn . . . yī yàng] (not as same as)” is acceptable but it negates “跟 . . . [gēn . . . yī yàng]” rather than “一样 [yī yàng] (same).”

Example 16 她不跟我一样高，跟我妹妹一样高。[tā bù gēn wǒ yī yàng gāo, gēn wǒ mèi mèi yī yàng gāo.]

(She is not as tall as me; she is as tall as my sister.)

The yes-no question of this form is “一样不一样 [yī yàng bù yī yàng] (same or not same).”

Example 17 他的意见跟你的意见一样不一样？[tā de yì jiàn gēn nǐ de yì jiàn yī yàng bù yī yàng?]

(Is his opinion the same as yours?)

Example 18 他跟你一样高不一样高？[tā gēn nǐ yī yàng gāo bù yī yàng gāo?]

(Is he as tall as you?)

There is one point for attention: “一样高不一样高 [yī yàng gāo bù yī yàng gāo]” cannot be replaced by “一样高不高 [yī yàng gāo bù gāo]” because the former aims at “as tall as”; the latter “tall or not tall.”

“跟 . . . 相同 [gēn . . . xiāng tóng] (as same as)” is an alternative to “跟 . . . 一样 [gēn . . . yī yàng] (as same as)” and its negative form is “跟 . . . 不同 [gēn . . . bù tóng] (not as same as).”

Example 19 这个零件跟那个零件的形状相同。[zhè gè líng jiàn gēn nà gè líng jiàn de xíng zhuàng xiāng tóng.]

(This part has the same shape as that part.)

Example 20 他的看法跟我们的看法不同。[tā de kàn fǎ gēn wǒ men de kàn fǎ bù tóng.]
(His view is different from ours.)

But neither “跟 . . . 相同 [gēn . . . xiāng tóng] (as same as)” nor “跟 . . . 不同 [gēn . . . bù tóng] (not as same as)” functions as adverbial. Thus it is not correct to say “*我跟他相同高。[wǒ gēn tā xiàng tóng gāo.]” or “*我跟他不同高。[wǒ gēn tā bù tóng gāo.]”

Other options include “跟 . . . 相似/近似/类似 [gēn . . . xiāng sì/jìn sì/lèi sì] (similar to)” or “跟 . . . 差不多 [gēn . . . chà bú duō] (almost).”

Example 21 这个故事的情节跟那个故事相似。[zhè gè gù shì de qíng jié gēn nà gè gù shì xiāng sì.]
(The plot of this story is similar to that one.)

Example 22 小张的个子跟他差不多。[Xiǎo Zhāng de gè zǐ gēn tā jì bú duō.]
(Xiao Zhang is almost as tall as him.)

In these examples, “跟 [gēn] (with)” can be replaced by other prepositions, such as “与 [yǔ] (with),” “和 [hé] (with),” “同 [tóng] (with).”

Example 23 他的样子没有多大的变化，但是服装却与我们初次见面时明显地不同了。[tā de yàng zǐ méi yǒu duō dà de biàn huà, dàn shì fú zhuāng què yǔ wǒ men chū cì jiàn miàn shí míng xiǎn de bù tóng le.]
(His appearance hasn't changed much, but he dressed much differently from our first meeting.)

Example 24 今天才晓得他们的眼光，全同外面的那伙人一样。[jīn tiān cái xiǎo de tā men de yǎn guāng, quán tóng wài miàn de nà huǒ rén yī yang.]
(Today I came to know they had the same opinion with those outside.)

Example 25 小贩不论肩挑叫卖，其需要一个变更现状的革命，也和贫农相同。[xiǎo fàn bù lùn jiān tiāo jiào mài, qí xū yào yī gè biàn gèng xiàn zhuàng de gé mìng, yě hé pín nóng xiāng tóng.]
(No matter what peddlers sell, what they need, just like poor peasants, is a revolution that can change the present situation.)

Example 26 他们除双手外，别无长物，其经济地位和产业工人相似，惟不及产业工人的集中和在生产上的重要。[tā men chú shuāng shǒu wài, bié wú cháng wù, qí jīng jì dì wèi hé chǎn yè gōng rén xiāng sì, wéi bú jí chǎn yè gōng rén de jí zhōng hé zài shēng chǎn shàng de zhòng yào.]
(They have no skills. Their economic status is similar to that of industrial workers, but not as united as them, nor as important as them in production.)

Example 27 根据地也有学生，但这些学生和旧式学生也不相同，他们不是过去的干部，就是未来的干部。[gēn jù dì yě yǒu xué shēng, dàn zhè xiē xué shēng hé jiù shì xué shēng yě bú xiāng tóng, tā men bú shì guò qù de gàn bù, jiù shì wèi lái de gàn bù.]
(The young students could also be found in the base areas, but they were different from those in the past. Some of them were already the cadres and some would be in the future.)

Sometimes, the words represented by A and B in the form of “A跟B [A gēn B] (A and B)” can be omitted.

II. A有 [yǒu] B 那么/这么 [nà me/zhè me] (so) . . .

“A有 [yǒu] B 那么/这么 [nà me/zhè me] (like that/this) . . .” means that A is up to the standard of B, in which “有 [yǒu]” indicates “up to the standard” and “那么/这么 [nà me/zhè me] (like that/this)” refers to a certain degree or trait. “那么 [nà me] (like that)” is for the distant reference and “这么 [zhè me] (like this)” the near reference.

Example 28 那棵小树有那座房子那么高了。 [nà kē xiǎo shù yǒu nà zuò fáng zi nà me gāo le.]

(That small tree is as tall as that house.)

Example 29 他弟弟快有我这么高了。 [tā dì dì kuài yǒu wǒ zhè me gāo le.]

(His brother is almost as tall as me.)

This form is frequently used in interrogative sentences or the rhetorical questions.

Example 30 这座楼有那座楼那么高吗? [zhè zuò lóu yǒu nà zuò lóu nà me gāo ma?]

(Is this building as high as that one?)

Example 31 她哪儿有你这么会说话呀! [tā nǎ er yǒu nǐ zhè me huì shuō huà ya!]

(She is not as glib as you!)

Its negative form is “A没有 B 那么/这么 [A méi yǒu B nà me/zhè me],” indicating “A不及B [A bú jí B]” which means that A is not up to the standard of B.

Section two: differences and levels in property and degree

The forms of comparison in property and degree are as follows.

I. “比 [bǐ]” sentences

1 Types of “比 [bǐ]” sentences

(1) A (subject)+比 [bǐ] B (adverbial)+predicate

Here, the predicate can be served by an adjective, verb, adjective phrase, verbal phrase, or subject-predicate phrase.

Example 1 这座山比那座山高。 [zhè zuò shān bǐ nà zuò shān gāo.]

(This mountain is higher than that one.)

Example 2 刘继武激动地说：“爷爷，你比我更懂得枪的用处，你比我更喜欢这支枪。” [Liú Jì wǔ jī dòng de shuō: “yé yé, nǐ bǐ wǒ gèng dòng dé qiāng de yòng chù, nǐ bǐ wǒ gèng xǐ huān zhè zhī qiāng.”]

(Liu Jiwu said excitedly: “Grandpa, you know more about the guns than I do; also you like this gun more than I do.”)

Example 3 我父亲比我母亲身体好。 [wǒ fù qīn bǐ wǒ mǔ qīn shēn tǐ hǎo.]
(My father is healthier than my mother.)

Sometimes, complements or objects for concrete degrees or quantities can follow the predicate to show differences. Here are the details about the predicate.

a The predicate is served by adjectives.

Some phrases can follow adjectives to function as complements, including “一点儿 [yī diǎn ér] (a little),” “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit),” “多了 [duō le] (more than),” “得多 [de duō] (more than)” or other numeral-quantifier phrases.

Example 4 这座山比那座山高一些。 [zhè zuò shān bǐ nà zuò shān gāo yī xiē.]
(This mountain is a bit higher than that one.)

Example 5 这棵树比那棵树粗了点儿。 [zhè kē shù bǐ nà kē shù cū le diǎn er.]
(This tree is a little stronger than that one.)

Example 6 虽然他比我只大一岁，可是什么事情我都听他的。 [suī rán tā bǐ wǒ zhǐ dà yī suì, kě shì shén me shì qíng wǒ dōu tīng tā de.]
(Although he is only one year older than me, I listen to him about everything.)

Example 7 往后的日子比这好一百倍。 [wǎng hòu de rì zi bǐ zhè hǎo yī bǎi bèi.]
(The days ahead are much better than nowadays.)

Example 8 我比他大得多，自然头发也比他白得多。 [wǒ bǐ tā dà de duō, zì rán tóu fà yě bǐ tā bái de duō.]
(I am much older than him. Of course I have more white hairs than he does.)

b The predicate is served by “有 [yǒu]+abstract noun.”

It is used to describe the subject, similarly functioning as an adjective. Likewise, it can take “多了 [duō le] (more than)” or “得多 [de duō] (more than)” in the rear, except for numeral-quantifier phrases for degree.

Example 9 那位老中医比我们有经验得多，而且下药十分谨慎。 [nà wèi lǎo zhōng yī bǐ wǒ men yǒu jīng yàn de duō, ér qiě xià yào shí fèn jǐn shèn.]

(The old doctor of traditional Chinese medicine is more experienced than us, and he is very careful with his prescription.)

Example 10 小王比他师傅有办法多了，办事也很灵活。[Xiǎo Wáng bǐ tā shī fù yǒu bàn fǎ duō le, bàn shì yě hěn líng huó.]

(Xiao Wang has more practical and clever methods than his master worker does in dealing with affairs.)

Usually, “一点儿 [yī diǎn ér] (a little)” or “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit)” comes before the abstract noun to function as an attribute.

Example 11 老张的看法比他的有一些道理。[Lǎo Zhāng de kàn fǎ bǐ tā de yǒu yī xiē dào lǐ.]

(Lao Zhang's opinion is more reasonable than his.)

Example 12 他比他哥哥有点儿眼光，看得出办这类公司的前景。[tā bǐ tā gē gē yǒu diǎn er yǎn guāng, kàn de chū bàn zhè lèi gōng sī de qián jǐng.]

(He is more discerning than his brother about the prospects of such a business.)

c The predicate is served by verbs indicating psychological activities.

Sometimes, some words can follow the predicate to function as complements, such as “一点儿 [yī diǎn er] (a little),” “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit),” “得多 [de duō] (more than).”

Example 13 他对这儿的情况比我了解得多。[tā duì zhè er de qíng kuàng bǐ wǒ liǎo jiě de duō.]

(He knows much more about the situation here than I do.)

Example 14 姐妹两个都喜欢跳舞，姐姐比妹妹更喜欢一些。[jiě mèi liǎng gè dōu xǐ huān tiào wǔ, jiě jiě bǐ mèi mèi gèng xǐ huān yī xiē.]

(Both sisters like dancing. The elder sister likes dancing more than the younger does.)

d The predicate is served by the common verb.

It can take some words in front as adverbials, such as “早 [zǎo] (early),” “晚 [wǎn] (late),” “先 [xiān] (before),” “后 [hòu] (after),” “难 [nán] (hard),” “好/易 [hǎo/yì] (good/easy),” “多 [duō] (many/much),” “少 [shǎo] (few/little).” Also, the predicate verb can take the recipient object.

Example 15 显然老纪已比我先认出了对方，他紧抿着的嘴角有些颤动。[xiǎn rán Lǎo Jì yǐ bǐ wǒ xiān rèn chū le duì fāng, tā jǐn mǐn zhe de zuǐ jiǎo yǒu xiē chàn dòng.]

(Obviously Lao Ji recognized that person earlier than I did; the corners of his tight lips trembled a bit.)

Example 16 我，老栓，我家什么也没有，就我老杆一个，再苦也比你们好对付。[wǒ, Lǎo Shuān, wǒ jiā shén me rén yě méi yǒu, jiù wǒ lǎo gān yī gè, zài kǔ yě bǐ nǐ men hǎo duì fù.]

(I, Lao Shuan, am the only one in the family. Obviously, to survive as one person is much easier than to survive as a whole family, when facing the hardships of life.)

In this situation, the predicate verb can also take “一点儿 [yī diǎn er] (a little),” “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit),” “多了 [duō le] (more than),” “得多 [de duō] (more than)” in the rear, or the word for a concrete quantity or degree as its complement or object.

Example 17 他比我们少看了一遍。[tā bǐ wǒ men shǎo kàn le yī biàn.]
(He watched it one time less than we did.)

Example 18 她今天比我早来十分钟。[tā jīn tiān bǐ wǒ zǎo lái shí fēn zhōng.]
(She came here ten minutes earlier than I did today.)

Example 19 小刘比我们多吃了很多南瓜粥。[Xiǎo Liú bǐ wǒ men duō chī le hěn duō nán guā zhōu.]
(Xiao Liu ate more pumpkin porridge than we did.)

Example 20 我们只比他们多打了四环。[wǒ men zhǐ bǐ tā men duō dǎ le sì huán.]
(We only won the shooting contest with four points more than they did.)

Example 21 我比他少做了一道题。[wǒ bǐ tā shǎo zuò le yī dào tí.]
(I finished one less question than he did.)

In these examples, the predicate verbs taking “多 [duō] (more)” or “少 [shǎo] (fewer/less)” in front are often followed by nouns (phrases) or numeral-quantifier phrases as the objects, like Example 19, Example 20, and Example 21; or followed by “numeral+verb quantifier/time quantifier” as the complements of the verb quantifier or time quantifier, like Example 17 and Example 18.

e The predicate is served by a common verb and followed by an adjective as the modal complement.

Usually, the adjective can be followed by “一点儿 [yī diǎn er] (a little),” “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit),” “多了 [duō le] (more than),” or “得多 [de duō] (more than)” at the same time.

Example 22 她比我睡得晚一点儿。[tā bǐ wǒ shuì de wǎn yī diǎn er.]
(She went to bed a little later than I did.)

Example 23 她睡得比我晚得多。[tā shuì de bǐ wǒ wǎn de duō.]
(She went to bed much later than I did.)

Example 24 弟弟看书比我看得快多了。[dì dì kàn shū bǐ wǒ kàn de kuài duō le.]

(My brother reads much faster than I do.)

In these examples, the position of “比 . . . [bǐ] . . .” is very flexible. It can come before the verb, like Example 22, before the complement, like Example 23, or before the repeated verb that takes its object, like Example 24.

In addition, the adjective functioning as the modal complement cannot take the numeral-quantifier phrase to indicate concrete differences. Thus, it is not correct to say “*她比我睡得晚半个小时 [tā bǐ wǒ shuì de wǎn bàn gè xiǎo shí].”

f The predicate is served by “volitive verb+verb”

“Volitive verb+verb” is descriptive and “会 [huì] (can)” and “能 [néng] (can)” are frequently used as the volitive verbs inside. “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit)” or “多了 [duō le] (more than)” can function as the complement after the verb at the same time, if the meaning of the entire sentence makes sense.

Example 25 妹妹比姐姐能吃苦。[mèi mèi bǐ jiě jiě néng chī kǔ.]

(The elder sister is more hard-working than the younger sister is.)

Example 26 她比我会说话多了。[tā bǐ wǒ huì shuō huà duō le.]

(She is much better communicating than I am.)

Example 27 我们俩都不大会写诗，老张比我们能写一些。[wǒ men liǎ dōu bù dà huì xiě shī, Lǎo Zhāng bǐ wǒ men néng xiě yī xiē.]

(Neither of us is good at writing poems; Lao Zhang is better than us.)

“Volitive verb+verb” is rather stable in structure. In other words, the volitive verb cannot be moved nor can any other constituent be inserted in the middle.

Sometimes, “比 [bǐ]” is permitted to come after the volitive verb, such as “她能比你来得早吗? [tā néng bǐ nǐ lái de zǎo ma?] (Can she come here earlier than you?).” The reason is that “能 [néng] (can)” limits “比你来得早 [bǐ nǐ lái de zǎo] (come here earlier than you)” as a whole.

“Volitive verb+比 [bǐ]+volitive verb+verb” can be included here.

Example 28 妹妹会比姐姐能吃苦的。[mèi mèi huì bǐ jiě jiě néng chī kǔ de.]

(The younger sister can work much harder than the elder sister.)

Example 29 她应该比我会说话。[tā yīng gāi bǐ wǒ huì shuō huà.]

(She should be better communicating than I am.)

“会 [huì] (can)” or “应该 [yīng gāi] (should)” functions similarly as “能 [néng] (can)” does.

- g The predicate is served by the verb that indicates increase/decrease or improvement/reduction.

The numeral-quantifier phrase or the noun phrase after the predicate verb should be considered as its object.

Example 30 今年这个村粮食亩产比几年前增加了二百多公斤。[jīn nián zhè gè cūn liáng shí mǔ chǎn bǐ jǐ nián qián zēng jiā le èr bǎi duō gōng jīn.]
(This year the grain yield of this village has increased by more than 200 kilograms per mu, compared with that a few years ago.)

Example 31 我的体重比上个月减轻了，而且减轻了很多。[wǒ de tǐ zhòng bǐ shàng gè yuè jiǎn qīng le, ér qiě jiǎn qīng le hěn duō.]
(I've lost a lot of weight compared with last month.)

“很多 [hěn duō] (a lot)” should be considered as a nominal phrase to indicate a quantity, like “a lot of weight.”

(2) Subject+A 比 [bǐ] B (adverbial)+predicate

“Subject+A 比 [bǐ] B (adverbial)+predicate” means changes of the same thing in different locations or at different periods of time.

Example 32 他现在比以前进步多了。[tā xiàn zài bǐ yǐ qián jìn bù duō le.]
(He is much better now than before.)

Example 33 这孩子在幼儿园比在家表现好。[zhè hái zǐ zài yòu ér yuán bǐ zài jiā biǎo xiàn hǎo.]
(The child behaved better in kindergarten than at home.)

Example 34 你的发言这次比上次好多了。[nǐ de fā yán zhè cì bǐ shàng cì hǎo duō le.]
(Your speech is much better this time than last time.)

Also, “一年比一年 [yī nián bǐ yī nián] (year by year)” and “一天比一天 [yī tiān bǐ yī tiān] (day by day)” frequently appear in this form and function as adverbials to indicate different degrees.

Example 35 他身体一天比一天好了。[tā shēn tǐ yī tiān bǐ yī tiān hǎo le.]
(He is getting better day by day.)

Example 36 发行数量一年比一年增加。[fā xíng shù liàng yī nián bǐ yī nián zēng jiā.]
(The number of publications has increased year by year.)

Example 37 又听喊声，越发大起来，“杜奎你敢出来 . . .” 一声比一声高 [yòu tīng hǎn shēng, yuè fā dà qǐ lái, “Dù Kuí nǐ gǎn chū lái . . .” yī shēng bǐ yī shēng gāo.]
(“Du Kui, dare to come out . . .” The shouting got louder and louder.)

Example 38 他考试的成绩一次比一次好。[tā kǎo shì de chéng jì yī cì bǐ yī cì hǎo.]

(His grades on the exams got better and better each time.)

2 Omission of some constituents in “比 [bǐ]” sentences

Generally speaking, the constituents (A and B) before or after “比 [bǐ]” are the same in property as well as in structure. For the sake of brevity in expression, the identical parts can be absent, especially for those after “比 [bǐ].” Of course, the original meaning of the sentence cannot be changed, which should be the precondition of any omission. Omissions of different constituents are as follows.

(1) To omit the headword

When both A and B are formed by “attribute of noun/pronoun+的 [de]+noun headword,” the noun headwords can be omitted, especially for that of B. The other attributes and “的 [de]” still remain.

Example 39 小英的布娃娃比她的(布娃娃)好看。[Xiǎo Yīng de bù wá wá bǐ tā de (bù wá wá) hǎo kàn.]

(Xiao Ying’s doll looks better than hers.)

Example 40 老虎的爪子比耗子的(爪子)大。[lǎo hǔ de zhǎo zi bǐ hào zi de (zhuǎ zi) dà.]

(The tiger’s paw is larger than the mouse’s.)

Example 41 真丝的衬衫比的确良的(衬衫)贵。[zhēn sī de chèn shān bǐ dí què liáng de (chèn shān) guì.]

(Silk shirts are more expensive than dacron shirts.)

If “的 [de]” is omitted in these examples, the original meanings of the sentences will be changed.

Example 42 小英的布娃娃比她好看。[Xiǎo Yīng de bù wá wá bǐ tā hǎo kàn.]

(Xiao Ying’s doll is prettier than her.)

Example 43 老虎的爪子比耗子大。[lǎo hǔ de zhǎo zi bǐ hào zi dà.]

(Tiger’s paw is bigger than a mouse.)

Example 44 真丝的衬衫比的确良贵。[zhēn sī de chèn shān bǐ dí què liáng guì.]

(Silk shirts are more expensive than dacron cloth.)

Indeed, these sentences make sense because the comparisons they present are all reasonable in reality. Unfortunately, their original meanings are completely changed.

When the attribute and the headword are connected by kinship, it is better to avoid any omission in the sentence.¹

Example 45 这些孩子的父母都比你们的父母年轻。[zhè xiē hái zi de fù mǔ dōu bǐ nǐ men de fù mǔ nián qīng.]

(The parents of these children are younger than your parents.)

Example 46 他的弟弟比我的弟弟淘气。[tā de dì dì bǐ wǒ de dì dì táo qì.]

(His brother is naughtier than my brother.)

Example 47 他们的领导比我们的领导能体谅下情。[tā men de lǐng dǎo bǐ wǒ men de lǐng dǎo néng tǐ liàng xià qíng.]

(Their leadership is more considerate than ours.)

(2) To omit the headword and the structural auxiliary word “的 [de]”

There are two situations for such an omission. The first one is as follows.

Generally speaking, when what is to be compared is only appropriate to what A and B refer to, rather than to the attribute of B, the omission of the headword and “的 [de]” is acceptable without any ambiguity in understanding the original meaning.

Example 48 他的字比我(的)(字)潦草。[tā de zì bǐ wǒ (de) (zì) liáo cǎo.]

(His handwriting is worse than mine.)

Example 49 王先生的行李比你(的)(行李)多。[Wáng xiān shēng de háng lǐ bǐ nǐ (de) (xíng lǐ) duō.]

(Mr. Wang has more luggage than you do.)

Example 50 我觉得猫的眼睛比狗(的)(眼睛)亮。[wǒ jué de māo de yǎn jīng bǐ gǒu (de) (yǎn jīng) liàng.]

(I think the cat's eyes are brighter than the dog's.)

In these examples, “潦草 [liáo cǎo] (worse),” “多 [duō] (more),” and “亮 [liàng] (brighter)” won't confuse what is compared when the omissions occur.

Here is the second situation. What is to be compared conveyed by A and B are only limited to time or location, and the headword and “的 [de]” can be absent, except for the attribute served by a time word or locational word.

Example 51 今年的收成比去年(的)(收成)好多了。[jīn nián de shōu chéng bǐ qù nián (de) (shōu chéng) hǎo duō le.]

(This year's harvest is much better than last year's.)

Example 52 老李这个月的收入比上个月(的)(收入)少。[Lǎo Lǐ zhè gè yuè de shōu rù bǐ shàng gè yuè (de) (shōu rù) shǎo.]

(Lao Li's income this month is less than that of last month.)

Example 53 我们家北京的亲戚比天津(的)(亲戚)多。[wǒ men jiā běi jīng de qīn qī bǐ tiān jīn (de) (qīn qī) duō.]

(We have more relatives in Beijing than in Tianjin.)

When the headwords of A and B refer to the same person or thing, it is better to omit the headword and “的 [de]” at the same time.

Example 54 南方的夏天比北方(的夏天)热。[nán fāng de xià tiān bǐ běi fāng (de xià tiān) rè.]

(The summer of the south is hotter than that of the north.)

Example 55 十年前的我要比现在(的我)更糊涂。[shí nián qián de wǒ yào bǐ xiàn zài (de wǒ) gèng hú tú.]

(I was more confused ten years ago than I am now.)

Example 56 今天的南湖疗养中心比 1990 年前(的南湖疗养中心)扩大了一倍。[jīn tiān de nán hú liáo yǎng zhōng xīn bǐ yī jiǔ jiǔ líng nián qián (de nán hú liáo yǎng zhōng xīn) kuò dà le yī bèi.]

(Now Nan Hu sanatorium is twice as large as it was before 1990.)

(3) To omit the attribute

If the attributes of A and B that are served by noun phrases are the same but with different headwords, the attribute of B can be omitted.

Example 57 我看他的法语说得比英语流利。[wǒ kàn tā de fǎ yǔ shuō de bǐ yīng yǔ liú lì.]

(I think he speaks French more fluently than English.)

Example 58 他的小说比诗歌写得好。[tā de xiǎo shuō bǐ shī gē xiě de hǎo.]

(His novel is better than his poetry.)

Example 59 老王的腿比手勤快。[Lǎo Wáng de tuǐ bǐ shǒu qín kuài.]

(Lao Wang keeps himself busy with running around all the time.)

Example 60 他家的老二比老大爱学习。[tā jiā de lǎo èr bǐ lǎo dà ài xué xí.]

(The second child in his family likes learning more than the first one does.)

Here, the omitted attribute mainly indicates a possessive relationship.

(4) To omit the identical parts of the attribute and the headword

If some parts of the attribute and the headword are identical, they can be absent.

Example 61 你的口头表达能力比(你的)笔头(表达能力)好。[nǐ de kǒutóu biǎodá nénglì bǐ (nǐ de) bǐtóu (biǎo dá néng lì) hǎo.]

(Your verbal skills are better than your written ones.)

Example 62 我们学英语的时间比(我们)学法语(的时间)长。[wǒ men xué yīng yǔ de shí jiān bǐ (wǒ men) xué fǎ yǔ (de shí jiān) chǎng.]

(The time we have spent on English is more than that on French.)

Example 63 他们(前进的脚步)比我们前进的脚步快。[tā men (qián jìn de jiǎo bù) bǐ wǒ men qián jìn de jiǎo bù kuài.]

(They have made more progress than we have.)

(5) To omit the predicate or the subject of the subject-predicate phrase

When A and B are served by subject-predicate phrases and their predicates are the same, either of them can be omitted; if their subjects are identical, only the predicate of B can be absent. Of course, when nothing is alike in A and B, no omission will happen.

Example 64 他睡觉比我(睡觉)早。[tā shuì jiào bǐ wǒ (shuì jiào) zǎo.]
(He went to bed earlier than I did.)

Example 65 我(吃饭)比他吃饭香。[wǒ (chī fàn) bǐ tā chī fàn xiāng.]
(I enjoyed foods more than he did.)

Example 66 你的年龄比他大，斗争经历比他长一些，你受国家的培养也比他(受国家的培养)多些，应该多帮助他。[nǐ de nián líng bǐ tā dà, dòu zhēng jīng lì bǐ tā chǎng yī xiē, nǐ shòu guó jiā de péi yǎng yě bǐ tā (shòu guó jiā de péi yǎng) duō xiē, yīng gāi duō bāng zhù tā.]
(You are older than him in age; you are more experienced than him in struggling; you have been trained by the state more than he has. Therefore, you should help him more.)

Example 67 我学汉语比(我)学日语快。[wǒ xué hàn yǔ bǐ (wǒ) xué rì yǔ kuài.]
(I learn Chinese faster than I learn Japanese.)

Example 68 我住在北京比(我)住在广州好。[wǒ zhù zài běi jīng bǐ (wǒ) zhù zài guǎng zhōu hǎo.]
(I like living in Beijing more than in Guang zhou.)

Example 67 cannot be changed into “*学汉语比我学日语快 [xué hàn yǔ bǐ wǒ xué rì yǔ kuài];” Example 68 cannot be changed into “*住在北京比我住在广州好 [zhù zài běi jīng bǐ wǒ zhù zài guǎng zhōu hǎo].” The reason is that when nothing is the same in A and B, no omission will happen.

(6) To omit A of “A 比 [bǐ] B” that functions as the adverbial

The sentence consisting of “A 比 [bǐ] B” as the adverbial indicates the changes of two identical things at different periods of time or in different locations. If A refers to “现在 [xiàn zài] (now),” “当时 [dāng shí] (then),” “在这里 [zài zhè lǐ] (here),” or “这一次 [zhè yī cì] (this time),” A can be omitted.

Example 69 微风起来，吹动他的短发，确乎比去年白得多了。[wēi fēng qǐ lái, chuī dòng tā de duǎn fà, què hū bǐ qù nián bái de duō le.]
(A breeze stirred his short hair, which was indeed much whiter than it had been last year.) (now)

Example 70 我的身体比以前好多了。[wǒ de shēn tǐ bǐ yǐ qián hǎo duō le.]
(My health is much better than before.) (now)

Example 71 这几个孩子都比在家里听话。[zhè jǐ gè hái zǐ dōu bǐ zài jiā lǐ tīng huà.]

(These children are more obedient here than at home.) (here)

Example 72 今天我们比第一次谈得好。[jīn tiān wǒ men bǐ dì yī cì tán de hǎo.]

(We talked much better today than we did the first time.) (this time)

(7) No omission

When both of A and B are served by verbal phrases or adjective phrases, the omission of any identical constituents seldom occurs.

Example 73 长一点比短一点好。[cháng yī diǎn bǐ duǎn yī diǎn hǎo.]

(A little longer is better than a little shorter.)

Example 74 有文化比没有文化好。[yǒu wén huà bǐ méi yǒu wén huà hǎo.]

(Well educated is better than poorly educated.)

Example 75 阿爸也说：“这条路是陈占鳌逼我们走的，拼死总比饿死好。”
[ā bà yě shuō: “zhè tiáo lù shì chén zhàn áo bī wǒ men zǒu de, pīn sǐ zǒng bǐ è sǐ hǎo.”]

(Dad also said: “Chen Zhan Ao forced us to go this way; anyway, to struggle to death is better than to starve to death.”)

Sometimes, according to the context, A can be absent.

Example 76 焦振茂今天比哪天说话都多,比干一天木匠活还要累。[jiāo zhèn mào jīn tiān bǐ nǎ tiān shuō huà dōu duō, bǐ gàn yī tiān mù jiàng huó hái yào lèi.]

(Jiao Zhenmao talked more today than any other day, which made him very tired as if he had labored a whole day in carpentry.)

3 “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” in “比 [bǐ]” sentences

In “比 [bǐ]” sentences, “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” can be added before the predicate to indicate a further development of A in degree, compared with B’s. Here, the adverb “很 [hěn] (very)” should be excluded in this situation.

Example 77 听说西安城东坝桥镇啥地方,修起一座纱厂,比国棉一、二厂两个合起来还大。[tīng shuō xī ān chéng dōng bà qiáo zhèn shá dì fang, xiū qǐ yī zuò shā chǎng, bǐ guó mián yī, èr chǎng liǎng gè hé qǐ lái hái dà.]

(It was said that near Dong Ba Qiao in the east of Xi’an was built a cotton mill, bigger than the total areas of First National Cotton Mill and Second National Cotton Mill.)

Example 78 那里的情况他比我更了解一些。[nà lǐ de qíng kuàng tā bǐ wǒ gèng le jiě yī xiē.]

(He knew more about it than I did.)

Example 79 你汗也流尽了，你手也软了，你会觉得世界末日也不会比这再坏。[nǐ hàn yě liú jìn le, nǐ shǒu yě ruǎn le, nǐ huì jué de shì jiè mò rì yě bú huì bǐ zhè zài huài.]

(You were so exhausted that you felt that the end of the world would not be worse than now.)

Example 80 他的话比你的更有说服力。[tā de huà bǐ nǐ de gèng yǒu shuō fú lì.]

(His words are more persuasive than yours.)

Example 81 他比你更会安排时间。[tā bǐ nǐ gèng huì ān pái shí jiān.]

(He is better than you in scheduling time.)

Example 82 你还可以写得比这再精练一点儿。[nǐ hái kě yǐ xiě de bǐ zhè zài jīng liàn yī diǎn er.]

(You can make what you wrote more concise.)

From the previous examples, it can be seen that “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” can also be added before a single adjective/verb or verbal phrases including “有+object,” “volitive verb+verb;” likewise, they can be put before the verb-complement phrase or the adjective-complement phrase, such as “一点儿 [yī diǎn er] (a little)” or “一些 [yī xiē] (a bit).”

If an adjective or verb takes a numeral-quantifier complement, object, or “多了 [duō le] (more),” “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” or “再 [zài] (more),” it rarely appears in front, except for “还 [hái]” or “再 [zài],” indicating repetition or the tone of speaking.

Example 83 我们的物质基础也比过去雄厚多了，增产节约的潜力很大。[wǒ men de wù zhì jī chǔ yě bǐ guò qù xióng hòu duō le, zēng chǎn jié yuē de qián lì hěn dà.]

(Our material basis is much stronger than that in the past, and we have great potential to increase production and save money.)

Example 84 今年来华留学生的数目比前年增加了一倍多。[jīn nián lái huá liú xué shēng de shù mù bǐ qián nián zēng jiā le yī bèi duō.]

(The number of overseas students in China this year is two times than that of the previous year.)

Example 85 一个小时他比我多看了两页书。[yī gè xiǎo shí tā bǐ wǒ duō kàn le liǎng yè shū.]

(He read two more pages per hour than I did.)

Next are the differences between “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” in “比 [bǐ]” sentences.

“A 比 [bǐ] B 更 [gèng] . . .” means that A develops further in degree, compared with B's. But the entire sentence doesn't reflect any special implication in emotion.

“A 比 [bǐ] B 还 [hái] . . .” means that A develops further in degree, although B has already reached a satisfactory or unsatisfactory situation. It highlights “degree.”

“A 比 [bǐ] B 再 [zài] . . .” is often used in the sentences for hypothesis, interrogation, or negation.

Example 86 这种帽子好，那种帽子比这种更好。[zhè zhǒng mào zi hǎo, nà zhǒng mào zi bǐ zhè zhǒng gèng hǎo.]

(This hat is good; that hat is better than this one.) (to indicate degree)

Example 87 我觉得这种帽子已经够好了，可是那种帽子比这种还好。[wǒ jué de zhè zhǒng mào zi yǐ jīng gòu hǎo le, kě shì nà zhǒng mào zi bǐ zhè zhǒng hái hǎo.]

(I think this hat is good enough, but that hat is better than this one.) (to highlight degree)

Example 88 那种帽子比这种帽子再好，我也不买。[nà zhǒng mào zi bǐ zhè zhǒng mào zi zài hǎo, wǒ yě bù mǎi.]

(Even if that hat is much better than this one, I won't buy it.) (hypothesis)

Example 89 那种帽子不会比这种再好了。[nà zhǒng mào zi bú huì bǐ zhè zhǒng zài hǎo le.]

(That hat couldn't be better than this one.) (guess)

Example 90 还有比这种帽子再好的吗？[hái yǒu bǐ zhè zhǒng mào zi zài hǎo de ma?]

(Is there a hat better than this one?) (interrogation)

Example 91 没有比这种再好的了。[méi yǒu bǐ zhè zhǒng zài hǎo de le.]

(No hat is better than this one.) (negation)

Usually speaking, “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” come before the predicate for comparison; occasionally, “更 [gèng] (more)” and “再 [zài] (more)” may come before “比 [bǐ].”

Example 92 去年的收成就不错，今年更比去年强。[qù nián de shōu chéng jiù bú cuò, jīn nián gèng bǐ qù nián qiáng.]

(The harvest of last year was good, and this year's is better than last year's.)

Example 93 再比它大的没有了。[zài bǐ tā dà de méi yǒu le.]

(There's nothing bigger than that.)

II. “不比 [bú bǐ]” sentences

“不比 [bú bǐ]” refers to the form of “A 不比 [bú bǐ] B” It seems like the negative form of a “比 [bǐ]” sentence. Actually, “A 没有 [méi yǒu] B” is the right negative form of a “比 [bǐ]” sentence. A “不比 [bú bǐ]” sentence is similar to “A 跟 B 差不多 [A gēn B chà bù duō]” and implies two possibilities, one of which is that both are better or worse, and the other of which is that A is almost as same as B.

Example 94

A: 小李比你高吧? [Xiǎo Lǐ bǐ nǐ gāo ba?]

(Is Xiao Li taller than you?)

B1: 他不比我高。我一米七，他也一米七。[tā bú bǐ wǒ gāo. wǒ yī mǐ qī, tā yě yī mǐ qī.]

(He is not taller than me. I am 1.70 meters and he is 1.70 meters, too.)

B2: 他不比我高，可能还比我矮一点。[tā bú bǐ wǒ gāo, kě néng hái bǐ wǒ wǎi yī diǎn.]

(He is not taller than I am, and perhaps a little shorter.)

In this conversation, two possible answers to the question are “Xiao Li is not as tall as you” and “Xiao Li is as tall as you.” The same is true for the next example.

Example 95

A: 我觉得小王比你矮。[wǒ jué de Xiǎo Wáng bǐ nǐ ǎi.]

(I think Xiao Wang is shorter than you.)

B1: 他不比我矮，他跟我一样高，只是我显高。[tā bù bǐ wǒ ǎi, tā gēn wǒ yī yàng gāo, zhǐ shì wǒ xiǎn gāo.]

(He's no shorter than me. He's as tall as me, but I look taller.)

B2: 他不比我矮，可能还略高一点。[tā bù bǐ wǒ ǎi, kě néng hái lüè gāo yī diǎn.]

(He is no shorter than I am, perhaps a little taller.)

A “不比 [bù bǐ]” sentence cannot start a conversation unless a special context helps. That is to say, it corrects or refutes a certain result based on the context. Thus it can be said that the context helps understand a “不比 [bù bǐ]” sentence better. Besides, the additional meaning or emotional implication also helps.

Example 96 他订了五份杂志，我也订了五份。他也不比我订的多，我也不比他订的少。[tā dīng le wǔ fèn zá zhì, wǒ yě dīng le wǔ fèn. tā yě bú bǐ wǒ dīng de duō, wǒ yě bú bǐ tā dīng de shǎo.]

(He subscribed to five magazines, and I subscribed to five too. He didn't subscribe more than I did nor did I subscribe more than he did.)

This example means “we subscribed to the same number of magazines,” which may result from an overheard context that he subscribed to more magazines than I did. Thus, this “不比 [bù bǐ]” sentence refutes this context.

Example 97 小李的工作能力一点也不比老张差，我觉得新的工作还是让小李负责比较合适。[Xiǎo Lǐ de gōng zuò néng lì yī diǎn yě bú bǐ Lǎo Zhāng chà, wǒ jué de xīn de gōng zuò hái shì ràng Xiǎo Lǐ fù zé bǐ jiào hé shì.]

(Xiao Li's working ability is not worse than that of Lao Zhang's. I think it is better to let Xiao Zhang take this new job.)

This sentence may result from an overheard context that Xiao Li is not as capable as Lao Zhao in working. With “一点也不 . . . [yī diǎn yě bú/bù . . .],” the speaker emphasizes his assertion that Xiao Li is as capable as or even more capable than Lao Zhang in working.

Example 98 都说外边的世界好，可是在外面这么多年，跑了好多地方，觉得哪儿也不比家乡好。[dōu shuō wài biān de shì jiè hǎo, kě shì wǒ zài wài miàn zhè me duō nián, pǎo le hǎo duō dì fāng, jué de nǎ er yě bù bǐ jiā xiāng hǎo.]

(It is said that the outside world is good. I have been a lot of places for many years; I think nowhere is better than one's hometown.)

In this sentence, “不比 [bù bǐ]” refutes “都说外边的世界好 [dōu shuō wài biān de shì jiè hǎo] (the outside world is good).”

Example 99 这个房间不比那个房间大多少，而且采光也不好，还是住那个房间吧。[zhè gè fáng jiān bù bǐ nà gè fáng jiān dà duō shǎo, ér qiě cǎi guāng yě bú hǎo, hái shì zhù nà gè fáng jiān ba.]

(This room is not much larger than that room, nor bright enough. It is better to choose that room.)

Here, “不比 [bù bǐ]” corrects a possible fact that “这个房间略大。[zhè gè fáng jiān lüè dà.] (this room is a little bigger).”

In addition, if “不比 [bù bǐ]” is followed by the positive adjective, a “不比 [bù bǐ]” sentence means “A is not better than B,” like Example 98; if followed by the negative adjective, it means “A is better than B,” like Example 97 which implies a positive sense.

Here are more similar examples.

Example 100

A: 他的发音不比你好。[tā de fā yīn bù bǐ nǐ hǎo.]

(His pronunciation is not better than yours.) (same or worse)

B: 他的发音不比你差。[tā de fā yīn bù bǐ nǐ chà.]

(His pronunciation is not worse than yours.) (same or better)

Example 101

A: 他的个子不比我高。[tā de gè zǐ bù bǐ wǒ gāo.]

(He is not taller than me.) (same or shorter)

B: 他的个子不比我矮。[tā de gè zǐ bù bǐ wǒ ǎi.]

(He is not shorter than me.) (same or taller)

Example 102

A: 我得的奖状不比他多。[wǒ dé de jiǎng zhuàng bù bǐ tā duō.]

(My awards are not more than his.) (same or fewer)

B: 我得的奖状不比他少。[wǒ dé de jiǎng zhuàng bù bǐ tā shǎo.]
(My awards are not fewer than his.) (same or more)

III. “没有 [méi yǒu]” sentences

As its name implies, a “没有 [méi yǒu]” sentence is marked by “没有 [méi yǒu]” to make a comparison. The form of a “没有 [méi yǒu]” sentence is “A (subject)+没有 [méi yǒu]+B (adverbial)+predicate,” carrying a meaning that A is not up to the standard of B. “A 没有 B . . . [A méi yǒu B . . .]” is similar to “B 比 A . . . [B bǐ A . . .].” In other words, “A is not better than B” is equal to “B is better than A.” Thus, “A 没有 B . . . [A méi yǒu B . . .]” can be semantically regarded as the negative form of “A 比 B . . . [A bǐ B . . .].”

The structural features of “没有 [méi yǒu]” sentences are as follows.

- 1 “那么/那样 [nà me/nà yàng] (like that)” or “这么/这样 [zhè me/zhè yàng] (like this)” is often put before the predicate for comparison, to indicate a certain degree.

Comparatively speaking, “那么 [nà me] (like that)” is more frequently used, while “这么 [zhè me] (like this)” is required when B is served by “我 [wǒ] (I),” “你 [nǐ] (you),” “我们 [wǒ men] (we),” “你们 [nǐ men] (you),” “这里 [zhè lǐ] (here),” “这儿 [zhè er] (here),” or when such pronouns appear in the attribute to represent the near reference.

Example 103 这座楼没有那座楼高。[zhè zuò lóu méi yǒu nà zuò lóu gāo.]
(This building is not as tall as that one.)

Example 104 谁也没有俺这么清楚俺爹。[shuí yě méi yǒu ǎn zhè me qīng chǔ ǎn diē.]

(No one knows my father better than me.)

Example 105 她眼光没有先前那样精神了。[tā yǎn guāng méi yǒu xiān qián nà yàng jīng shén le.]

(Her eyes are not as sharp as before.)

Example 106 他们那里没有这儿这么冷。[tā men nà lǐ méi yǒu zhè er zhè me lěng.]

(The weather there is not as cold as here.)

Example 107 他们班同学没有我们班同学这么活跃。[tā men bān tóng xué méi yǒu wǒ men bān tóng xué zhè me huó yuè.]

(Their classmates are not as active as our classmates.)

- 2 The predicate for comparison can be the following forms.

- (1) Adjective or “有/没有 [yǒu/méi yǒu]+object”
- (2) The verbs for psychological activities
- (3) The common verbs followed by modal complements
- (4) Volitive verb+verb

Example 108 他唱歌没有小李唱歌好。[tā chàng gē méi yǒu Xiǎo Lǐ chàng gē hǎo.]

(He doesn't sing better than Xiao Li.)

Example 109 这篇小说没有那篇那么有吸引力。[zhè piān xiǎo shuō méi yǒu nà piān nà me yǒu xī yǐn lì.]

(This novel is less attractive than that one.)

Example 110 姐姐没有弟弟那么爱打球。[jiě jiě méi yǒu dì dì nà me ài dǎ qiú.]

(The elder sister doesn't play the ball game as much as the younger brother does.)

Example 111 我没有他来得那么早! [wǒ méi yǒu tā lái de nà me zǎo!]

(I didn't come as early as he did!)

Example 112 她没有你这么会造句。[tā méi yǒu nǐ zhè me huì zào jù.]

(She's not as good as you at making sentences.)

There are some points for attention:

- a The verbs indicating increase/decrease are not appropriate to these forms, nor are the verbs standing after “早 [zǎo] (early),” “晚 [wǎn] (late),” “先 [xiān] (before),” “后 [hòu] (after),” “多 [duō] (more),” “少 [shǎo] (few).”
- b The words for concrete differences cannot follow the predicate for comparison, such as “一点儿 [yī diǎn er] (a little),” “得多 [de duō] (more).”
- c “更 [gèng] (more),” “还 [hái] (more),” and “再 [zài] (more)” cannot appear before the main constituents of the predicate.
- d The omission rules of “A 没有 B . . . [A méi yǒu B . . .]” are as same as those of a “比 [bǐ]” sentence.

IV. “不如 [bù rú]” sentences

As its name implies, a “不如 [bù rú]” sentence is marked by “A(subject)+不如 B . . . [A (subject)+bù rú B . . .]” to make a comparison, in which “不如 [bù rú]” is a verb to function as the predicate. Thus, “A 不如 B [A bù rú B]” is qualified as a complete sentence, similar to “A is not better than B.” If neither “good” nor “bad” is involved in comparison, what is to be compared is required to be clearly mentioned after B.

Example 113 可是她们比我们组织起来的晚, 能有这样的成绩是不简单的, 这说明我们的工作不如他们。[kě shì tā men bǐ wǒ men zǔ zhī qǐ lái de wǎn, néng yǒu zhè yàng de chéng jì shì bù jiǎn dān de, zhè shuō míng wǒ men de gōng zuò bù rú tā men.]

(They started their work later than ours; it was not easy for them to have such an achievement, which also proved that they did better than us.)

Example 114 晚去不如早去好。[wǎn qù bù rú zǎo qù hǎo.]
(Better early than late.)

Example 115 他不如前几年身体好了。[tā bù rú qián jǐ nián shēn tǐ hǎo le.]
(His health is not as good as that a few years ago.)

Example 116 我不如他念得流利。[wǒ bù rú tā niàn de liú lì.]
(I don't read as fluently as he does.)

In “不如 [bù rú]” sentences, the adjectives for comparison are mainly positive rather than negative, including “高 [gāo] (tall),” “大 [dà] (big),” “好 [hǎo] (good),” “干净 [gān jìng] (clean),” “亮 [liàng] (bright),” “宽 [kuān] (wide),” “长 [cháng] (long),” “美 [měi] (beautiful),” “积极 [jī jí] (active),” “勤快 [qín kuài] (diligent).” Sometimes, negative adjectives are acceptable for a special purpose or from a positive perspective. For instance, “这间屋子不如那间暗, 还是让他到那间屋子去吧。[zhè jiān wū zi bù rú nà jiān àn, hái shì ràng tā dào nà jiān wū zi qù ba.] (That room is a little darker than this room, so let him choose that one.)” is appropriate for the situation when a person wants to take a nap.

Generally speaking, the structural features of “不如 [bù rú]” sentences are almost similar to those of “A 没有 B . . . [A méi yǒu B . . .],” except “不如 [bù rú]” can function as the predicate but “没有 [méi yǒu]” cannot.

Note

1 It is said in some books that any omission in this situation seems to be impolite or disrespectful.

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7 Non-subject-predicate sentences

A subject-predicate sentence consists of a subject part and a predicate part; non-subject-predicate sentences consist of neither subject nor predicate. There are two types of non-subject-predicate sentences, one of which is without the subject and the other of which consists of a word or phrase. The former is called a sentence with no subject; the latter is called a single word/phrase sentence. For the latter, neither the subject nor the predicate can be functioned by this word or phrase.

Section one: sentences with no subjects

I. *Differences between sentences with no subjects and sentences with omitted subjects or hidden subjects*

As its name implies, the sentence with no subject doesn't have any subject, mainly describing actions, behaviors, or changes, rather than narrating "who" or "what" related to them. It differs from the sentence with an omitted subject or with a hidden one.

Example 1 刮风了! [guā fēng le!]
(It's windy!)

Example 2 上课了! [shàng kè le!]
(The class begins!)

Example 3

A: 昨天你看电影了吗? [zuó tiān nǐ kàn diàn yǐng le ma?]
(Did you see a movie yesterday?)

B: 看了。[kàn le.]
(Yes.)

Example 4 小张是上海人, (他)在北京大学学习。[Xiǎo Zhāng shì shàng hǎi rén, (tā) zài běi jīng dà xué xué xí.]
(Xiao Zhang is from Shanghai. He is learning at Peking University.)

In these examples, the first two are the sentences with no subject; the last two are the sentences with the omitted subjects. These two types of sentences differ in the following ways.

- 1 The subject in the sentence with an omitted subject or with a hidden one can show up. The sentence with no subject doesn't have a subject at all. To be more exact, no definite subject exists here. For instance, “我们/咱们 [wǒ men/zán men] (we)” or “你/你们 [nǐ/nǐ men] (you)” may be temporarily used as the subject of Example 2; there is no temporary subject at all in Example 1. “我 [wǒ]” is the omitted subject of Example 3; the hidden subject of Example 4 is “Xiao Zhang.”
- 2 Without a certain context, the sentence with the omitted subject cannot be understood clearly. For instance, “看了 [kàn le]” sounds confusing if there is no context. The sentence with no subject doesn't rely on the context, or sometimes it exists in certain special occasions. For instance, “小心烟火 [xiǎo xīn yān huǒ] (Fire off!)” is for flammable and explosive stuff; “下雨了 [xià yǔ le] (It's raining)” is for the weather.

II. Structural analysis on sentences with no subjects

Although the sentence with no subject looks like the predicate part in the sentence with a subject-predicate as predicate, it is a complete sentence. Thus it is inappropriate to parse it just like parsing a predicate part. Usually, the sentence with no subject generally consists of a verb, based on which its adverbial and object can be parsed further.

Example 5 刮(V)风(O)了! [guā fēng le!]
(It's windy!) (V+O)

Example 6 不许(V)乱扔果皮纸屑(O)! [bù xǔ luàn rēng guǒ pí zhǐ xiè!]
(No littering!) (V+O)

III. Types of sentences with no subjects

According to its specific occasions or situations, the sentence with no subject can be divided into the following types.

- 1 To indicate a weather phenomenon or a new situation

Example 7 下雨了! [xià yǔ le!]
(It's raining!)

Example 8 要出太阳了! [yào chū tài yáng le!]
(The sun is rising!)

Example 9 到站了! [dào zhàn le!]
(Arrived!)

Example 10 开会了! [kāi huì le.]
(It's time for the meeting!)

Example 11 起床了! [qǐ chuáng le!]
(Get up!)

This type of sentence usually consists of verb-object phrases with a modal particle “了 [le]” at the end to indicate certain changes.

2 To express an imperative tone or prohibition

Example 12 随手关门。[suí shǒu guān mén.]
(Close the door after you.)

Example 13 请按顺序上车! [qǐng àn shùn xù shàng chē!]
(Please get on the bus in order!)

Example 14 请勿吸烟! [qǐng wù xī yān!]
(No smoking!)

Likewise, the sentences of such type are generally formed by verb-object phrases.

3 To be a proverb or motto

Example 15 留得青山在，不愁没柴烧。[liú dé qīng shān zài, bù chóu méi chái shāo.]
(Where there is life, there is hope.)

Example 16 吃一堑，长一智。[chī yī qiàn, zhǎng yī zhì.]
(A fall into the pit, a gain in your wit.)

Example 17 活到老，学到老。[huó dào lǎo, xué dào lǎo.]
(Never too old to learn.)

4 To show best wishes

Example 18 为我们两国人民的友谊干杯! [wéi wǒ men liǎng guó rén mín de yǒu yì gān bēi!]
(To toast to the friendship between our two peoples!)

Example 19 祝你健康! [zhù nǐ jiàn kāng!]
(To your health!)

Example 20 愿这五兄妹更加健康地成长，去迎接更加美好的未来。[yuàn zhè wǔ xiōng mèi gèng jiā jiàn kāng dì chéng zhǎng, qù yíng jiē gèng jiā měi hǎo de wèi lái.]
(May the five siblings grow up healthily for a better future.)

Example 21 纪念伟大的革命先行者孙中山先生! [jì niàn wěi dà de gé mìng xiān xíng zhě Sūn Zhōng shān xiān shēng!]
(To the great revolutionary forerunner, Mr. Sun Yat-sen!)

5 To consist of “是 [shì]”

6 To consist of “有 [yǒu]”

Section two: single word/phrase sentences

I. *What are single word/phrase sentences?*

It refers to a sentence that consists of a word or a phrase.

Example 1 火! [huǒ!]

(Fire!)

Example 2 注意! [zhù yì!]

(Attention!)

Example 3 多么壮观的景色! [duō me zhuàng guān de jǐng sè!]

(What a magnificent view!)

A single word/phrase sentence is also a complete one. It omits neither a subject nor a predicate. It can express an independent or definite meaning without depending on the context or the language environment.

II. *Types of single word/phrase sentences*

1 According to its structure

(1) It consists of a noun and a noun phrase.

Example 4 好大的雪啊! [hǎo dà de xuě ā!]

(What a heavy snow!)

Example 5 多好的孩子! [duō hǎo de hái zi!]

(What a good kid!)

Example 6 蛇! [shé!]

(Snake!)

(2) It consists of an adjective.

Example 7 好热! [hǎo rè!]

(So hot!)

Example 8 真棒! [zhēn bàng!]

(That's great!)

(3) It consists of an interjection.

Example 9 啊! [ā!]

(Ah!)

Example 10 唉! [āi!]

(Alas!)

2 According to its meaning

According to what it expresses in certain specific occasions or situations, it can be subdivided into two. One is to explain something by a noun or noun phrase.

(1) To exclaim properties of things

Example 11 好香的干菜! [hǎo xiāng de gān cài!]

(What delicious dried vegetables!)

Example 12 多么可爱的孩子! [duō me kě ài de hái zi!]

(What a lovely child!)

Example 13 这样的婆婆! [zhè yàng de pó pó!]

(Such a mother-in-law!)

Example 14 这个该死的东西! [zhè gè gāi sǐ de dōng xī!]

(Damn guy!)

(2) To discover or remind of a new situation

Example 15 啊, 火! [ā, huǒ!]

(Ah! Fire!)

Example 16 水! 水! [shuǐ! shuǐ!]

(Water! Water!)

Example 17 火车! [huǒ chē!]

(A train!)

(3) To express an imperative tone

Example 18 信! [xìn!]

(Letter!)

Example 19 票! [piào!]

(Ticket!)

(4) To explain when or where something happened, especially in a novel or play

Example 20 早晨, 总经理的办公室。[zǎo chén, zǒng jīng lǐ de bàn gōng shì.]

(One morning in the general manager's office . . .)

Example 21 秋天。[qiū tiān.]

(Autumn)

The other is to express other aspects with nouns, adjectives, interrogative pronouns, adverbs, interjections, or some idioms.

(5) Vocatives or ways of addressing

Example 22 玉荣! 玉荣! [Yù Róng! Yù Róng!]

(Yu Rong! Yu Rong!)

Example 23 祥林嫂! [Xiáng Lín sǎo!]

(Xiang Lin Sao!)

Example 24 喂! [wèi/wéi!]

(Hello!)

(6) Responses to agreement, disagreement, doubt, or rhetorical questions

Example 25 是。 [shì.]

(Yes.)

Example 26 好。 [hǎo.]

(O.K.)

Example 27 当然! [dāng rán!]

(Of course!)

Example 28 怎么? [zěn me?]

(Why?)

Example 29 什么? [shén me?]

(What?)

(7) Interjection

Example 30 啊, 长城真雄伟! [ā, cháng chéng zhēn xióng wěi!]

(Oh! What a magnificent Great Wall!)

Example 31 天哪! [tiān nǎ!]

(Oh, my God!)

Example 32 唉! [āi!]

(Alas!)

(8) Honorifics

Example 33 谢谢! [xiè xiè!]

(Thank you!)

Example 34 劳驾, 十楼在哪儿? [láo jià, shí lóu zài nǎ er?]

(Excuse me. Where is the tenth floor?)

Example 35 对不起, 对不起! [duì bù qǐ, duì bù qǐ!]

(Sorry, sorry!)

Example 36 不敢当, 不敢当。 [bù gǎn dāng, bù gǎn dāng.]

(You flatter me.)

Example 37 辛苦了, 辛苦了。 [xīn kǔ le, xīn kǔ le.]

(Thanks for your hard work.)

8 Types of compound sentences

A compound sentence consists of two or more than two related simple sentences of complete meanings. The simple sentence is called an independent clause.

The following is about the features of a compound sentence.

- 1 Each clause should be related to the other ones and expresses a complete meaning.

Example 1 北京不但是中国的政治、经济中心，而且也是文化中心。[běi jīng bú dàn shì zhōng guó de zhèng zhì, jīng jì zhōng xīn, ér qiě yě shì wén huà zhōng xīn.]

(Beijing is not only the political and economic center of China, but also the cultural center.)

Example 2 总工会还成立了科技协会，组织工程技术人员结合本厂实际开展专题学术讨论。[zǒng gōng huì hái chéng lì le kē jì xié huì, zǔ zhī gōng chéng jì shù rén yuán jié hé běn chǎng shí jì kāi zhǎn zhuān tí xué shù tāo lùn.]

(The Federation of Trade unions has also set up a science and technology association to carry out thematic academic discussions among engineers and technicians, according to the actual situation of the factory.)

Example 3 我妹妹学英文，我弟弟也学英文，他们的成绩都很好。[wǒ mèi mèi xué yīng wén, wǒ dì dì yě xué yīng wén, tā men de chéng jì dōu hěn hǎo.]

(My younger sister learns English, and my brother also does. Both of them do very well in learning.)

- 2 There should be a short pause marked by a comma or semicolon in the written language; differently, a pause between each simple sentence would be longer, marked by a full stop, a question mark, or an exclamation mark.
- 3 Each clause should be independent from other ones.

Example 4 培养儿童具有健康的体魄，是我们的一个重要目标。[péi yǎng er tóng jù yǒu jiàn kāng de tǐ pò, shì wǒ men de yí gè zhòng yào mù biāo.]

(It is an important goal for us to train children to have a healthy physique.)

This example is not a compound sentence but a simple one because “培养儿童具有健康的体魄。[péi yǎng ér tóng jù yǒu jiàn kāng de tǐ pò.] (to train children to have a healthy physique.)” functions as its subject.

Example 5 我们谁都知道，他工作积极，学习努力。[wǒ men shuí dōu zhī dào, tā gōng zuò jī jí, xué xí nǚ lì.]
(We all know that he works actively and studies hard.)

This example is not a compound sentence, either. Here, “他工作积极，学习努力。[tā gōng zuò jī jí, xué xí nǚ lì.] (He works actively and studies hard.)” functions as the object of the predicate verb “知道 [zhī dào] (know).”

In Chinese, the differences between a compound sentence and a sentence fragment are not as clear as those in English, due to its Chinese users' freedom in punctuation. The same is true of the differences of other syntactic structures in Chinese, such as those between words and phrases, or those between compound sentences and compressed sentences. Even so, this fact doesn't influence teaching Chinese as a second language very much.

According to how their clauses are grammatically related, compound sentences can be divided into two categories. One is a compound sentence of an associate relationship and the other is a compound sentence of a subordinate relationship. According to how they are composed, compound sentences can be subdivided into simple compound sentences and multiple compound sentences.

Section one: compound sentences of associated relationship

According to how every clause is equally associated to one another, the compound sentences of associated relationship can be divided into the following types.

I. Coordinate compound sentences

According to the complex relations among their clauses, the coordinate compound sentence can be subdivided into several types.

1 Coordinate relation

In a coordinate compound sentence, the clauses respectively narrate several related things, different situations or describe a thing from different aspects, without being joined by coordinate conjunctions or adverbs for correlation.

Example 1 我们每天复习生词，写汉字，做练习。[wǒ men měi tiān fù xí shēng cí, xiě hàn zì, zuò liàn xí.]
(We review new words, practice Chinese characters, and do exercises every day.)

Example 2 历史在斗争中发展，世界在动摇中前进，这是任何人也不能阻止的)。[lì shǐ zài dòu zhēng zhōng fā zhǎn, shì jiè zài dòng yáo zhōng qián jìn, zhè shì rèn hé rén yě bù néng zǔ zhǐ de.]

(History develops in struggle and the world moves forward in unsteadiness, which no one can stop.)

Example 3 大年初一的早晨，妹妹忙着数得到的压岁钱，妈妈在厨房煮饺子，爸爸打电话给亲友拜年，我坐在电视机前看歌舞。[dà nián chū yī de zǎo chén, mèi mèi máng zhe shǔ dé dào de yā suì qián, mā mā zài chú fáng zhǔ jiǎo zi, bà bà dǎ diàn huà gěi qīn yǒu bài nián, wǒ zuò zài diàn shì jī qián kàn gē wǔ.]

(On the morning of lunar New Year's Day, the younger sister was busy counting lucky money; the mother was boiling dumplings in the kitchen; the father was making New Year calls to the relatives and friends, and I was sitting in front of the television and watching the entertainment programs.)

Sometimes, some coordinate conjunctions or adverbs for correlation can be adopted, such as “也 [yě] (and),” “又 [yòu] (and as well),” “同时 [tóng shí] (meanwhile),” “又 . . . , 又 . . . [yòu . . . , yòu . . .] (and . . . and . . .),” “一面 . . . , 一面 . . . [yī miàn . . . , yī miàn . . .] (on one side . . . on the other side),” “一边 . . . , 一边 . . . [yī biān . . . , yī biān . . .] (at the same time).”

Example 4 这是新书，那也是新书。[zhè shì xīn shū, nà yě shì xīn shū.]
(This is a new book, and that's also a new book.)

Example 5 他又会汉语，又会英语。[tā yòu huì hàn yǔ, yòu huì yīng yǔ.]
(He can speak Chinese as well as English.)

Example 6 欢迎的群众一边唱歌，一边跳舞。[huān yíng de qún zhòng yì biān chàng gē, yì biān tiào wǔ.]
(The crowd expressed their welcome by singing and dancing.)

2 Contrastive relation

A coordinate compound sentence usually consists of two clauses that semantically compare each other. No other conjunctions but “而 [ér] (while)” can be used at the beginning of the second clause.

Example 7 我们的人越来越多，山上的石头越搬越少。[wǒ men de rén yuè lái yuè duō, shān shàng de shí tóu yuè bān yuè shǎo.]
(More and more people come to help and the stones on the mountain became fewer and fewer.)

Example 8 张老师教三班，李老师教四班。[Zhāng lǎo shī jiāo sān bān, Lǐ lǎo shī jiāo sì bān.]
(Prof. Zhang teaches Class Three, and Prof. Li teaches Class Four.)

Example 9 这时他们想到的不是自己，而是正在进行的施工不能停。
[zhè shí tā men xiǎng dào de bú shì zì jǐ, ér shì zhèng zài jìn xíng de shī
gōng bù néng tíng.]

(By now, they are not thinking about themselves but the ongoing construction, which cannot be stopped.)

Example 10 在修建南昆铁路的日日夜夜里，困难一个接着一个出现，而胜利的喜悦也一个接着一个传来。
[zài xiū jiàn nán kūn tiě lù de rì rì yè yè lǐ, kùn nán yī gè jiē zhe yī gè chū xiàn, ér shèng lì de xǐ yuè yě yī gè jiē zhe yī gè chuán lái.]

(In the days of building the Nankun railway, difficulties arise one by one, but the joy of victory comes one after another as well.)

3 Narration-summary relation

No matter which one goes first, the clause for narration or the clause for summary, both of them coordinately exist.

Example 11 来客也不少，有送行的，有拿东西的，有送行兼拿东西的。
[lái kè yě bù shǎo, yǒu sòng xíng de, yǒu ná dōng xī de, yǒu sòng xíng jiān ná dōng xī de.]

(There are many visitors. Some see others off; some fetch things, and some do both.)

Example 12 两头都要抓紧，学习工作要抓紧，睡眠休息娱乐也要抓紧。
[liǎng tóu dōu yào zhuā jǐn, xué xí gōng zuò yào zhuā jǐn, shuì mián xiū xiǎn yě yào zhuā jǐn.]

(Neither of them can be neglected: to work or study hard as well as to relax well.)

Example 13 ... 或者把老虎打死，或者被老虎吃掉，二者必居其一。
[... huò zhě bǎ lǎo hǔ dǎ sǐ, huò zhě bèi lǎo hǔ chī diào, liǎng zhě bì jū qí yī.]

(... to kill the tiger or to be eaten by the tiger. It must be one way or the other.)

Example 14 中央要注意发挥省市的积极性，省市也要注意发挥地、县、区、乡的积极性，都不能框得太死。
[zhōng yāng yào zhù yì fā huī shěng shì de jī jí xìng, shěng shì yě yào zhù yì fā huī dì, xiàn, qū, xiāng de jī jí xìng, dōu bù néng kuàng de tài sǐ.]

(Without too many restrictions, the central government should give full play to the initiatives of provinces and cities, and provinces and cities should also do the same for the initiatives of localities, counties, districts, and townships.)

In the first two examples, the summary goes first; in the last two examples, the summary is after the narration.

II. *Successive compound sentences*

As its name implies, the clauses of this type of sentence successively narrate several actions or things in an unchangeable sequence, without being joined by a coordinate conjunction.

Example 15 他低声一说，大家听了都哈哈大笑起来。[tā dī shēng yì shuō, dà jiā tīng le dōu hā hā dà xiào qǐ lái.]

(He whispered, and then everyone laughed at him.)

Example 16 走着走着，他停住了。[zǒu zhe zǒu zhe, tā tíng zhù le.]

(He walked, and then stopped.)

Sometimes “(首先) . . . , 然后 . . . [(shǒu xiān) . . . , rán hòu . . .]” can be used.

Example 17 XX大使首先讲了话，然后中国外交部长也讲了话。[XX dà shǐ shǒu xiān jiǎng le huà, rán hòu zhōng guó wài jiāo bù zhǎng yě jiǎng le huà.]

(Ambassador XX first spoke, and then the Chinese Foreign Minister did so.)

Example 18 你先到后勤组去领工作服和防护用品，然后我领你到阿华师傅那儿去。[nǐ xiān dào hòu qín zǔ qù lǐng gōng zuò fú hé fáng hù yòng pǐn, rán hòu wǒ lǐng nǐ dào Ā Huá shī fu nà er qù.]

(You go to the logistics first to take a union suit and protective equipment, and then I'll take you to A Hua, a master worker.)

Or, some conjunctive words can be used before the second clause, such as “便 [biàn] (then),” “就 [jiù] (then),” “又 [yòu] (and),” “也 [yě] (also),” “于是 [yú shì] (as a result).”

Example 19 我和母亲也有些惘然，于是又提起闰土来。[wǒ hé mǔ qīn yě yǒu xiē wǎng rán, yú shì yòu tí qǐ rùn tǔ lái.]

(My mother and I felt a bit frustrated, so we mentioned Run Tu again.)

Example 20 欧阳海看了看停在旁边的火车，又看了看火车上下来的人，微笑了一下，就闭上了眼睛。[Ōu yáng Hǎi kàn le kàn tíng zài páng biān de huǒ chē, yòu kàn le kàn huǒ chē shàng xià lái de rén, wēi xiào le yí xià, jiù bì shàng le yǎn jīng.]

(Ouyang Hai looked at the train stopped next to him, and then at the people who got off the train. Then he smiled and closed his eyes.)

Example 21 王进喜听了，二话没说，转身就出了门，一口气走了两个多小时，来到了马家窑。[Wáng Jin xǐ tīng le, èr huà méi shuō, zhuǎn shēn jiù chū le mén, yì kǒu qì zǒu le liǎng gè duō xiǎo shí, lái dào le mǎ jiā yáo.]

(After hearing it, Wang Jinxi turned around to step out of the house without any hesitation. He walked for two hours at a stretch and then arrived at Ma Jia Yao.)

III. Progressive compound sentences

In this type of compound sentence, the following clause develops further in meaning than the preceding one does. “不但 [bú dàn] (not only)” and “不仅 [bù jǐn] (not only)” are commonly used before the preceding clause; before the following one, some conjunctive words are frequently used, such as “而且 [ér qiě] (and),”

“并(且) [bìng (qiě)] (and),” “也 [yě] (also),” “还 [hái] (also),” “更 [gèng] (even more),” “甚至 [shèn zhì] (even).”

Sometimes, both clauses take the conjunctive words at the same time.

Example 22 他不但会说英文, 而且说得很流利。[tā bú dàn huì shuō yīng wén, ér qiě shuō de hěn liú lì.]

(Not only can he speak English, but he also speaks it fluently.)

Example 23 劳动人民的生活不但有了保障, 而且生活水平一天比一天高。[láo dòng rén mín de shēng huó bú dàn yǒu le bǎo zhàng, ér qiě shēng huó shuǐ píng yì tiān bǐ yì tiān gāo.]

(The life of the working people has not only been guaranteed, but also been improved day by day.)

Example 24 现在针灸技术不但得到普遍采用, 而且早有了新的发展和创造。[xiàn zài zhēn jiǔ jì shù bú dàn dé dào pǔ biàn cǎi yòng, ér qiě zǎo yǒu le xīn de fā zhǎn hé chuàng zào.]

(Acupuncture and moxibustion technology has not only been widely used, it has also been further improved and developed.)

Or, only the second clause takes the conjunctive word.

Example 25 他一定得来, 而且一定得早到。[tā yí dìng děi lái, ér qiě yí dìng děi zǎo dào.]

(He must come, and be early.)

Example 26 我珍惜这件礼物, 更珍惜彼得对中国人民的友情。[wǒ zhēn xī zhè jiàn lǐ wù, gèng zhēn xī bǐ dé duì zhōng guó rén mín de yǒu qíng.]

(I cherish this gift and Peter's friendship with the Chinese people even more.)

Example 27 现在有些人不愿意提, 甚至不敢提这个口号。[xiàn zài yǒu xiē rén bú yuàn yì tí, shèn zhì bù gǎn tí zhè gè kǒu hào.]

(Now some people don't want to mention it, or even dare not to mention this slogan.)

Besides, there will be minor differences when “不但 [bú dàn] (not only)” or “不仅 [bù jǐn] (not only)” is used or not used before the preceding clause.

Example 28 他会说英语, 而且还会说法语。[tā huì shuō yīng yǔ, ér qiě hái huì shuō fǎ yǔ.]

(He can speak English as well as French.)

Example 29 他不但会说英语, 而且还会说法语。[tā bú dàn huì shuō yīng yǔ, ér qiě hái huì shuō fǎ yǔ.]

(He speaks not only English but also French.)

Without “不但 [bú dàn] (not only)” or “不仅 [bù jǐn] (not only),” the speaker stresses more what the second clause conveys, besides clarifying what is expressed

by both; with “不但 [bú dàn] (not only)” or “不仅 [bù jǐn] (not only),” the speaker highlights specifically what is conveyed by the second clause, taking what is expressed by the first one as a known fact for the speaker as well as the listener.

However, only the first clause takes “不但 [bú dàn] (not only)” or “不仅 [bù jǐn] (not only)” but the second one takes nothing. Therefore, it is not correct to say “*他不但会说英语，会说法语。[tā bú dàn huì shuō yīng yǔ, huì shuō fǎ yǔ.]”

Sometimes, such a progression can be doubled.

Example 30 他不但会说英语，而且会说法语，甚至还会说阿拉伯语。
[tā bú dàn huì shuō yīng yǔ, ér qiě huì shuō fǎ yǔ, shèn zhì hái huì shuō ā lā bó yǔ.]

(Not only does he speak English, but also French and even Arabic.)

The negative form for such a double progression can be “不但(没有) . . . , 反而(倒) . . . [bú dàn bù/bú (méi yǒu) . . . , fǎn ér (dào) . . .].”

Example 31 困难不但不会把他们吓倒，反而会把他们锻炼得更坚强。
[kùn nán bú dàn bú huì bǎ tā men xià dào, fǎn ér huì bǎ tā men duàn liàn de gèng jiān qiáng.]

(Instead of scaring them, difficulties will make them stronger.)

Example 32 你这样说不但不能解决问题，反而会影响团结。[nǐ zhè yàng shuō bú dàn bù néng jiě jué wèn tí, fǎn ér huì yǐng xiǎng tuán jié.]

(In this way, the problem cannot be solved, nor benefit the unity.)

IV. Selective compound sentences

In a selective compound sentence, several choices are conveyed by the clauses (two or more than two). It can be subdivided into two.

1 To decide one from two or more than two choices

It indicates “this or that” by “或者/或是/或 . . . , 或者/或是/或 . . . [huò zhě/huò shì/huò . . . , huò zhě/huò shì/huò . . .] (or . . . , or . . .)” or “要么 . . . , 要么 . . . [yào me . . . , yào me . . .] (or . . . , or . . .)” in the declarative sentence and “(是) . . . , 还是 . . . [(shì) . . . , hái shì . . .] (or . . . , or . . .)” in the interrogative sentence.

Example 33 去北海，或者去颐和园，他都没兴趣。[qù běi hǎi, huò zhě qù yí hé yuán, tā dōu méi xìng qù.]

(He was not interested in going to Beihai or to the Summer Palace.)

Example 34 或者你去，或者我去，我看都可以。[huò zhě nǐ qù, huò zhě wǒ qù, wǒ kàn dōu kě yǐ.]

(Either you go or I go. It doesn't matter to me.)

Example 35 路那么远，我们要么坐车去，要么骑车去，步行去就太累了。[lù nà me yuǎn, wǒ men yàng yàng zuò chē qù, yàng yàng qí chē qù, bù xíng qù jiù tài lèi le.]

(The journey is too long to go on foot. We can go there by bus or by bike.)

Example 36 你们坐飞机去，还是坐火车去？[nǐ men zuò fēi jī qù, hái shì zuò huǒ chē qù?]

(Will you go by plane or by train?)

Example 37 教你们体育的是张老师，还是王老师？[jiāo nǐ men tǐ yù de shì Zhāng lǎo shī, hái shì Wáng lǎo shī?]

(Is it Mr. Zhang or Mr. Wang that teaches your P.E. class?)

2 To make only one choice

It indicates “either this or that” by “不是 . . . , 就是/便是 . . . [bú shì . . . , jiù shì/biàn shì . . .] (either . . . , or . . .).”

Example 38 这孩子每天不是打球，就是游泳。[zhè hái zi měi tiān bú shì dǎ qiú, jiù shì yóu yǒng.]

(This child either plays ball or swims every day.)

Example 39 今天没来上课的，不是生病了，就是有事。[jīn tiān méi lái shàng kè de, bú shì shēng bìng le, jiù shì yǒu shì.]

(Those who did not come to class today are either sick or engaged in other things.)

Example 40 我们班的同学，不是欧洲人，就是亚洲人，没一个其他洲的。[wǒ men bān de tóng xué, bú shì ōu zhōu rén, jiù shì yà zhōu rén, méi yí gè qí tā zhōu de.]

(Our classmates are either Europeans or Asians. None of them are from other continents.)

Section two: subordinate compound sentences

In a subordinate compound sentence, the meanings conveyed by the clauses are not equally important. The clause conveying the main information is called the main clause, and the clause expressing the secondary information is called the subordinate clause. According to how their clauses are semantically related, a subordinate compound sentence can be divided into the following types.

I. *Compound sentences of causal relationships*

The subordinate clause shows the cause and the main clause indicates the effect. Based on the causal relationship, it can be subdivided into two.

1 To explain the result

The subordinate clause indicates the cause and the main clause explains what is caused. The commonly used conjunctive words include “因为 . . . , 所以 . . . [yīn wéi . . . , suǒ yǐ . . .] (because),” “由于 [yóu yú] (because of),” “因而 [yīn ér] (thus),” “因此 [yīn cǐ] (therefore),” “以至于 [yǐ zhì yú] (so that),” and so on. Here, conjunctive words can be added to both of the clauses, or to either of them or to neither of them.

Example 1 因为天气不好, 所以我们没去颐和园。[yīn wéi tiān qì bù hǎo, suǒ yǐ wǒ men méi qù yí hé yuán.]

(We didn't go to the Summer Palace because of the bad weather.)

Example 2 由于路太远, 病人在半路不幸死去了。[yóu yú lù tài yuǎn, bìng rén zài bàn lù bù xìng sǐ qù le.]

(The journey was too long and the patient died halfway unfortunately.)

Example 3 这些人不了解诸种革命情况的区别, 因而也不了解应当用不同的方法去解决不同的矛盾。[zhè xiē rén bù liǎo jiě zhū zhǒng gé mìng qíng kuàng de qū bié, yīn ér yě bù liǎo jiě yīng dāng yòng bù tóng de fāng fǎ qù jiě jué bù tóng de máo dùn.]

(These people do not understand various revolutionary situations, and as a result, they do not understand that different contradictions should be solved in different ways.)

Example 4 由于他优柔寡断, 以致铸成大错。[yóu yú tā yōu róu guǎ duàn, yǐ zhì zhù chéng dà cuò.]

(Because of his indecisiveness, he made a big mistake.)

Example 5 吴广被杀害后, 革命力量受到很大损失。[Wú Guǎng bèi shā hài hòu, gé mìng lì liàng shòu dào hěn dà sǔn shī.]

(After the death of Wu Guang, the revolutionary forces suffered a great loss.)

“因为 . . . , 所以 . . . [yīn wéi . . . , suǒ yǐ . . .] (because)” often appears in pairs; “由于 [yóu yú] (because of)” is frequently used alone; and “以致 [yǐ zhì] (so that)” is mainly for bad consequences.

2 To infer the result

The subordinate clause indicates the cause and the main clause infers a conclusion based on the cause by an addition of “既然 [jì rán] . . . 就 [jiù] . . . (now that).”

Example 6 好吧, 既然问题你都回答上来了, 我就把你收下吧。[hǎo ba, jì rán wèn tí nǐ dōu huí dá shàng lái le, wǒ jiù bǎ nǐ shōu xià ba.]

(Well, since you've answered all the questions, you are accepted.)

Example 7 田大爷, 你说我是记者, 那我就向你采访一下吧。[Tián dà yé, nǐ shuō wǒ shì jì zhě, nà wǒ jiù xiàng nǐ cǎi fǎng yí xià ba.]

(Mr. Tian, since you thought I was a reporter, let me interview you.)

Example 8 既然帝国主义垄断资本可以勾结在一起，... 那么发展中国家又为什么不可以团结起来，冲破帝国主义的垄断，维护自己的经济权益呢？[jì rán dì guó zhǔ yì lǒng duàn zī běn kě yǐ gōu jié zài yì qǐ, ... nà me fā zhǎn zhōng guó jiā yòu wèi shén me bù kě yǐ tuán jié qǐ lái, chōng pò dì guó zhǔ yì de lǒng duàn, wéi hù zì jǐ de jīng jì quán yì ne?]

(Since imperialist monopoly capital can be colluded with ... why can't the developing countries unite to break through imperialist monopolies and safeguard their own economic rights?)

Example 9 但他既然错了，为什么大家又仿佛格外尊敬他呢。[dàn tā jì rán cuò le, wèi shén me dà jiā yòu fǎng fú gé wài zūn jìng tā ne.]

(But since he was wrong, why did everyone seem to respect him so much?)

Sometimes, the main clause can be present in the interrogative form to stress the tone of speaking, such as the last two examples.

The differences between “to explain the result” and “to infer the result” are as follows.

- (1) “To explain the result” is to explain a known fact; “to infer the result” is to infer an unknown fact.

Example 10

A: 小刚为什么没去打球。[Xiǎo Gāng wèi shén me méi qù dǎ qiú.]
(Why didn't Xiao Gang play a ball game?)

B: 因为外边下雨，所以小刚没有去打球。[yīn wéi wài biān xià yǔ, suǒ yǐ Xiǎo Gāng méi yǒu qù dǎ qiú.]

(It rained outside, and that was why Xiao Gang didn't go to play a ball game.)

Example 11

A: 现在外面在下雨，小刚还会去打球吗。[xiàn zài wài miàn zài xià yǔ, Xiǎo Gāng hái huì qù dǎ qiú ma.]

(It's raining outside now. Will Xiao Gang still go out to play ball?)

B: 既然外边下雨了，小刚就不会去打球了。[jì rán wài biān xià yǔ le, Xiǎo Gāng jiù bú huì qù dǎ qiú le.]

(Since it rains outside, Xiao Gang won't go to play a ball game.)

- (2) In the compound sentence to infer the result, the clause introduced by “既然 [jì rán] (now that)” conveys the known information for both the speaker and the listener; in the compound sentence to explain the result, the clause introduced by “因为 [yīn wéi] (because)” expresses the unknown information for the listener.

Example 12

老师我头疼。[lǎo shī wǒ tóu téng.]

(Prof., I have a headache.)

既然你头疼，就不要上课了，回家去吧。[jì rán nǐ tóu téng, jiù bú yào shàng kè le, huí jiā qù ba.]

(Since you have a headache, you don't have to go to class and can just go home.)

Example 13

你昨天为什么没来上课。[nǐ zuó tiān wèi shén me méi lái shàng kè.]

(Why didn't you come to class yesterday?)

因为我昨天头疼得很厉害，所以没来上课。[yīn wéi wǒ zuó tiān tóu téng de hěn lì hài, suǒ yǐ méi lái shàng kè.]

(I didn't come to class yesterday because I had a terrible headache.)

Example 14 既然玛丽告诉你她不喜欢你了，你就不要再去找她了。[jì rán Mǎ lì gào sù nǐ tā bù xǐ huān nǐ le, nǐ jiù bú yào zài qù zhǎo tā le.]

(Don't go after Mary anymore since she tells you that she doesn't like you.)

Example 15

A: 你为什么最近不去找玛丽了。[nǐ wèi shén me zuì jìn bú qù zhǎo Mǎ lì le.]
(Why haven't you gone after Mary lately?)

B: 因为玛丽告诉我她不喜欢我了。[yīn wéi Mǎ lì gào sù wǒ tā bù xǐ huān wǒ le.]

(Because Mary told me she didn't like me anymore.)

II. Adversative compound sentences

In an adversative compound sentence, the main clause infers a contrary fact rather than an expected one. It can be subdivided into two.

1 Completely adversative

What is conveyed by two clauses can be completely adversative by an addition of “虽然 . . . , 但是/可是 . . . [suī rán . . . , dàn shì/kě shì . . .] (although),” “否则 [fǒu zé] (otherwise),” or “不然 [bù rán] (otherwise).”

Example 16 她虽然不是他的妈妈，可是比妈妈对他还好。[tā suī rán bú shì tā de mā mā, kě shì bǐ mā mā duì tā hái hǎo.]

(She is nicer to him than his mother, though she is not his mother.)

Example 17 孩子们虽然失去了父母，但是更多的父母、叔叔、阿姨在关心着他们。[hái zi men suī rán shī qù le fù mǔ, dàn shì gèng duō de fù mǔ, shū shū, ā yí zài guān xīn zhe tā men.]

(Although the children have lost their parents, they have more concern from other parents, uncles, and aunts.)

Example 18 应当承认，每个民族都有它的长处，不然它为什么能存在。[yīng dāng chéng rèn, měi gè mín zú dōu yǒu tā de cháng chù, bù rán tā wèi shén me néng cún zài.]

(It should be admitted that every nation has its own advantages. Otherwise, why does it exist?)

Sometimes, the tone of speaking would sound milder if only the main clause took the conjunctive words, such as “但是 [dàn shì] (but),” “但 [dàn] (but),” “可是 [kě shì] (but),” or “然而 [rán ér] (but).”

Example 19 人们都在灯下匆忙，但窗外很寂静。[rén men dōu zài dēng xià cōng máng, dàn chuāng wài hěn jì jìng.]
(People were busy under the lights; it was pretty quiet outside the window.)

Example 20 岸上看的人怎能不提心吊胆呢？然而，羊皮筏子上的人却从容地在谈笑 . . . [àn shàng kàn de rén zěn néng bù tí xīn diào dǎn ne? rán ér, yáng pí fá zi shàng de rén què cóng róng de zài tán xiào . . .]
(How couldn't those who were watching on shore be nervous? However, the people on the sheepskin raft were talking and laughing calmly.)

2 Slightly adversative

The conjunctions commonly used include “不过 [bú guò] (just),” “却 [què] (but),” “只是 [zhǐ shì] (only),” “就是 [jiù shì] (exactly).”

Example 21 对，在说话，不过这只有海员才懂。[duì, zài shuō huà, bú guò zhè zhǐ yǒu hǎi yuán cái dǒng.]
(Yes, they're talking, but what they say can only be understood by sailors.)

Example 22 叔叔，我爸爸妈妈常讲到你呀，就是不知道你在什么地方。[shū shū, wǒ bà bà mā mā cháng jiǎng dào nǐ ya, jiù shì bù zhī dào nǐ zài shén me dì fāng.]
(Uncle, my parents often talk about you, but I don't know where you come from.)

Example 23 每个中国人对于这三项都有选择的自由，不过时局将强迫你迅速地选择罢了。[měi gè zhōng guó rén duì yú zhè sān xiàng dōu yǒu xuǎn zé de zì yóu, bú guò shí jú jiāng qiǎng pò nǐ xùn sù de xuǎn zé bà le.]
(Every Chinese has the freedom to choose from all three, but the current situation forces us to make our choice quickly.)

III. *Conditional compound sentences*

The subordinate clause shows the condition and the main clause expresses the result. It can be subdivided into two types.

1 Specific conditional compound sentences

The main clause indicates the result caused by or realized under the condition conveyed by the subordinate clause. “只要 [zhǐ yào] (so long as)” refers to the sufficient condition and often corresponds to “就 [jiù]” in front of the main clause.

Example 24 只要你肯努力，就一定能学好。[zhǐ yào nǐ kěn nǔ lì, jiù yí dīng néng xué hǎo.]

(As long as you are willing to work hard, you will be able to learn it well.)

Example 25 只要你给他写一封信，他就会帮助你。[zhǐ yào nǐ gěi tā xiě yì fēng xìn, tā jiù huì bāng zhù nǐ.]

(So long as you write to him, he will help you.)

When “除非 [chú fēi] (unless)” or “只有 [zhǐ yǒu] (only)” refers to the only condition for the accomplishment or result, “才 [cái]” is usually required in the main clause.

Example 26 只有你开车来接我，我才跟你去。[zhǐ yǒu nǐ kāi chē lái jiē wǒ, wǒ cái gēn nǐ qù.]

(I won't go with you unless you pick me up.)

Example 27 只有掌握了汉语，才能很好地研究中国文学。[zhǐ yǒu zhǎng wò le hàn yǔ, cái néng hěn hǎo de yán jiū zhōng guó wén xué.]

(Only with a grasp of Chinese can we study Chinese literature well.)

Example 28 除非他是个聋子，才会听不见这么大的声音。[chú fēi tā shì gè lóng zi, cái huì tīng bú jiàn zhè me dà de shēng yīn.]

(He couldn't miss such a loud voice, unless he was deaf.)

If “除非 [chú fēi] (unless)” introduces the subordinate clause, “就 [jiù]” can be used in front of the main clause to indicate double negation.

Example 29 除非你也去，不然我就不去。[chú fēi nǐ yě qù, bù rán wǒ jiù bú qù.]

(I won't go unless you go too.)

2 Non-conditional compound sentences

This sentence means that the result conveyed by the main clause can be caused by any conditions. “不管/不论/无论 . . . , 却/也/总/还 . . . [bù guǎn/bú lùn/wú lùn . . . , què/yě/zǒng/hái . . .] (despite)” is often used in this type of sentence.

Example 30 不管有多大困难，我也要干下去。[bù guǎn yǒu duō dà kùn nán, wǒ yě yào gàn xià qù.]

(No matter how difficult it is, I will go on with it.)

Example 31 我们不论有什么事，都愿意找他谈。[wǒ men bú lùn yǒu shén me shì, dōu yuàn yì zhǎo tā tán.]

(We'd like to ask him for advice no matter what happens.)

Example 32 无论谁参加我们组，我都欢迎。[wú lùn shuí cān jiā wǒ men zǔ, wǒ dōu huān yíng.]

(Whoever joins our group is welcome.)

IV. Hypothetical compound sentences

The subordinate clause proposes a hypothesis, based on which the main clause shows a result. In the spoken language, the conjunctions commonly used include “要(是) . . . , (就) [yào(shì) . . . , (jiù)] (if),” “如果 . . . , (就) . . . [rú guǒ . . . , (jiù . . .) (if)”; in the written language, “假如 [jiǎ rú] (if),” “倘若 [tǎng ruò] (if),” “如 [rú] (if),” “倘使 [tǎng shǐ] (if),” “设若 [shè ruò] (if)” often appear before the subordinate clause and “就 [jiù],” “便 [biàn],” “那么 [nà me]” before the main clause.

Example 33 如果我父母还活着, 他们一定不会拒绝一个儿子的钱 . . . [rú guǒ wǒ fù mǔ hái huó zhe, tā men yí dìng bú huì jù jué yí gè ér zǐ de qián . . .]

(If my parents were still alive, they wouldn't have refused the money from me . . .)

Example 34 你要不关心群众的痛痒, 群众一辈子也不会亲近你。[nǐ yào bù guān xīn qún zhòng de tòng yǎng, qún zhòng yí bèi zi yě bú huì qīn jìn nǐ.]

(If you don't care about the masses, they will never get close to you.)

Example 35 要是找到了鸡, 也就能找到鸡蛋的主人了。[yào shì zhǎo dào le jī, yě jiù néng zhǎo dào jī dàn de zhǔ rén le.]

(If you find the hen, you can find the owner of the eggs.)

Example 36 你若被敌人反对, 那就证明我们同敌人划清界限了。[nǐ ruò bèi dí rén fǎn duì, nà jiù zhèng míng wǒ men tóng dí rén huà qīng jiè xiàn le.]

(If we are opposed by the enemy, it means that we have drawn a clear distinction from them.)

Example 37 倘若你们背叛了主人, 他是会无情地惩罚你们的。[tǎng ruò nǐ men bèi pàn le zhǔ rén, tā shì huì wú qíng de chéng fá nǐ men de.]

(If you betrayed your master, he would punish you severely.)

Sometimes, only the main clause takes a conjunction.

Example 38 你早说, 我今天就不来了。[nǐ zǎo shuō, wǒ jīn tiān jiù bù lái le.]

(If you told me earlier, I wouldn't have come today.)

Example 39 你不来, 我就给你送去。[nǐ bù lái, wǒ jiù gěi nǐ sòng qù.]

(If you don't come, I'll send it to you.)

Or, neither of the two clauses takes a conjunction.

Example 40 有什么困难, 我们一定帮您解决。[yǒu shén me kùn nán, wǒ men yí dìng bāng nín jiě jué.]

(No matter what difficulty you encounter, we'll help you to solve it.)

In the compound sentence of this type, the result conveyed by the main clause could be a known fact or could not be realized. The latter takes up a majority of these types of sentences.

Example 41 如果你早来两天, 就看见老李了。[rú guǒ nǐ zǎo lái liǎng tiān, jiù kàn jiàn Lǎo Lǐ le.]

(If you had come two days in advance, you would have seen Lao Li.)

Example 42 你要是早来, 还能看见老李。[nǐ yào shì zǎo diǎn lái, hái néng kàn jiàn Lǎo Lǐ.]

(If you had come here earlier, you would have seen Lao Li.)

In the first example, the hypothesis cannot be realized due to the finished result; in the second one, the hypothesis can be realized due to an unfinished fact.

In addition, there is another type of hypothetical compound sentence, in which what is expressed by two clauses is correlated. In other words, the truth of the fact conveyed by the preceding clause decides the truth of the fact conveyed by the following one.

Example 43

正如周恩来同志所说, 如果说党的第七次代表大会同它以前一个时期全党的思想、政治上的整风, 奠定了我们党统一思想的基础, 在这个基础上取得了反对帝国主义、封建主义和官僚资本主义这种民主革命的胜利, 那么, 这一次会议就会使我们取得社会主义的胜利。[zhèng rú Zhōu Ēn lái tóng zhì suǒ shuō, rú guǒ shuō dǎng de dì qī cì dài biǎo dà huì tóng tā yǐ qián yí gè shí qī quán dǎng de sī xiǎng, zhèng zhì shàng de zhèng fēng, diàn dìng le wǒ men dǎng tǒng yī sī xiǎng de jī chǔ, zài zhè gè jī chǔ shàng qǔ dé le fǎn duì dì guó zhǔ yì, fēng jiàn zhǔ yì hé guān liáo zī běn zhǔ yì zhè zhǒng mǐn zhǔ gé míng de shèng lì, nà me, zhè yí cì huì yì jiù huì shǐ wǒ men qǔ dé shè huì zhǔ yì de shèng lì.]

(As Comrade Zhou Enlai said, the Seventh Congress of the Party, together with the ideological and political rectification of an incorrect working style among the whole Party in the previous period, had laid the foundation for our Party's united thought. On this basis, the victory of the democratic revolution against imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucrat-capitalism had been achieved, and now this congress has achieved another victory in socialism.)

There exist similarities between the hypothetical compound sentence and the conditional compound sentence because the subordinate clause in either of them connotes the meaning of the other one; differently, one focuses on the hypothesis and the other on the condition.

V. *Concessive compound sentences*

The subordinate clause shows a concession to a situation that contrasts with the one described in the main clause. The subordinate clause often takes conjunctions,

such as “尽管 [jìn guǎn] (in spite of),” “纵然 [zòng rán] (even if),” “固然 [gù rán] (even if),” “即使 [jí shǐ] (even if),” “哪怕 [nǎ pà] (even if),” “就是 [jiù shì] (even if);” the main clause is frequently joined by “也 [yě] (also)” or “都 [dōu] (all).” A concessive compound sentence can be subdivided into two.

1 Concession to the finished fact

Example 44 尽管有了昨日的经验，仍然出乎意料。[jǐn guǎn yǒu le zuó rì de jīng yàn, réng rán chū hū yì liào.]

(Despite yesterday's experience, it was still unexpected.)

Example 45 他固然不对，可是你的态度也不好啊。[tā gù rán bú duì, kě shì nǐ de tài dù yě bù hǎo ā.]

(He's not right, but your attitude is not right, either.)

Sometimes, only the main clause takes a conjunction.

Example 46 你是很聪明，可是因为不努力，学习成绩一直不好。[nǐ shì hěn cōng míng, kě shì yīn wéi bù nǔ lì, xué xí chéng jì yì zhí bù hǎo.]

(You're smart. But because you don't study hard, you always get poor grades.)

2 Concession to the hypothetical fact

Example 47 即使这些意见暂时通不过，他也不会放弃它，而是耐心地做工作，直至最后胜利。[jí shǐ zhè xiē yì jiàn zàn shí tōng bú guò, tā yě bú huì fàng qì tā, ér shì nài xīn de zuò gōng zuò, zhí zhì zuì hòu shèng lì.]

(Even if these ideas could not be accepted for the time being, he would not give up, but worked patiently until he finally won.)

Example 48 就是有天大的困难，我们也要把这种新产品试制成功。[jiù shì yǒu tiān dà de kùn nán, wǒ men yě yào bǎ zhè zhǒng xīn chǎn pǐn shì zhì chéng gōng.]

(We have to trial this new product until we reach success, even if we are bound to meet great difficulties.)

Example 49 哪怕就剩下我一个人，也要坚持下去。[nǎ pà jiù shèng xià wǒ yí gè rén, yě yào jiān chí xià qù.]

(Even if I'm left alone, I'll stick to it.)

VI. *Alternative compound sentences*

Faced with the choices conveyed by two clauses, the speaker has to accept one and reject the other by an addition of “与其 . . . , 不如 . . . [yǔ qí . . . , bú rú . . .] (rather than)” or “宁可 . . . , 也(决)不 . . . [níng kě . . . , yě (jué) bú . . .] (would rather).” The former means what is accepted goes after what is rejected; the latter is in the opposite sequence.

Example 50 与其等死，不如起义反抗。[yǔ qí děng sǐ, bù rú qǐ yì fǎn kàng.]

(It is better to revolt than to wait for death.)

Example 51 你与其找他谈，还不如先到群众中去了解一下情况。[nǐ yǔ qí zhǎo tā tán, hái bù rú xiān dào qún zhòng zhōng qù liǎo jiě yí xià qíng kuàng.]

(Instead of talking to him directly, you could talk with the masses first, to know the situation better.)

Example 52 一个伙计说：“宁可回家饿死，也不做这么缺德的事。”[yī gè huǒ jì shuō: “níng kě huí jiā è sǐ, yě bú zuò zhè me quē dé de shì.”]

(One man said, “It’s better to go home and starve to death than to do such an immoral thing.”)

Example 53 他们宁可饿死，决不动摇。[tā men níng kě è sǐ, jué bú dòng yáo.]

(They’d rather starve to death than waver.)

“宁可 . . . , 也 [níng kě . . . yě] (would rather . . . than)” means that both of choices are accepted.

Example 54 我宁可一夜不睡觉，也要把这篇文章写完。[wǒ níng kě yí yè bú shuì jiào, yě yào bǎ zhè piān wén zhāng xiě wán.]

(I would rather stay up all night to finish the article.)

Different from a selective compound sentence, an alternative compound sentence indicates a decision that has been made after a comparison.

VII. Compound sentences indicating a purpose

The subordinate clause indicates a purpose and the main clause shows the action for this purpose by an addition of “为 [wèi] (in order to)” or “为了 [wèi le] (in order to)” in front of the subordinate clause.

Example 55 为了使教师无后顾之忧，政府不仅给他们提高工资，还努力改善他们的居住条件。[wèi le shǐ jiào shī wú hòu gù zhī yōu, zhèng fǔ bù jǐn gěi tā men tí gāo gōng zī, hái nǚ lì gǎi shàn tā men de jū zhù tiáo jiàn.]

(In order to keep teachers away from the worries about their future, the government not only raises their wages, but also tries to improve their living conditions.)

Example 56 为了搞好设计，技术人员不怕危险，吊在悬崖上进行工作。[wèi le gǎo hǎo shè jì, jì shù rén yuán bú pà wēi xiǎn, diào zài xuán yá shàng jìn xíng gōng zuò.]

(In order to do well in the design, the technicians would like to work on the cliff, regardless of any danger.)

Or, “免得 [miǎn dé] (so as not to, lest),” “以免 [yǐ miǎn] (so as not to),” “以便 [yǐ biàn] (so as to)” can be put before the second clause to indicate a certain purpose.

Example 57 我坚持着不让自己发出一点声音, 免得惊醒正在睡觉的老人。[wǒ jiān chí zhe bú ràng zì jǐ fā chū yì diǎn shēng yīn, miǎn dé jǐng xǐng zhèng zài shuì jiào de lǎo rén.]

(I tried to avoid making any sound so as not to wake up the old man sleeping in the room.)

Example 58 他近来减少了社会活动, 以免影响学习。[tā jìn lái jiǎn shǎo le shè huì huó dòng, yǐ miǎn yǐng xiǎng xué xí.]

(Recently, he has reduced his participation in social activities so as not to influence his learning.)

Example 59 老师用了三天的时间给我们复习, 以便巩固前一阶段的学习成果。[lǎo shī yòng le sān tiān de shí jiān gěi wǒ men fù xí, yǐ biàn gǒng gù qián yì jiē duàn de xué xí chéng guǒ.]

(The teacher spent three days helping us review so as to consolidate what we had learned in the previous stage.)

VIII. *Compound sentences indicating time*

The subordinate clause indicates time and the main clause describes what happened during this time period. Usually, no conjunction is required.

Example 60 从病人家里回来, 已经是深夜了。[cóng bìng rén jiā lǐ huí lái, yǐ jīng shì shēn yè le.]

(It was late at night when I came back from the patient's house.)

Example 61 我刚走进教室, 上课铃响了。[wǒ gāng zǒu jìn jiào shì, shàng kè líng xiǎng le.]

(I had just entered the classroom when the bell rang.)

Example 62 当地群众发现山上有象群出现, 立即报告了当地政府。[dāng dì qún zhòng fā xiàn shān shàng yǒu xiàng qún chū xiàn, lì jí bào gào le dāng dì zhèng fǔ.]

(The local people immediately reported to the local government that they found a herd of elephants on the mountain.)

But sometimes, some conjunctive words can be put before the second clause, such as “就 [jiù],” “还 [hái],” “才 [cái].”

Example 63 走了没有二十里地, 天气就变了。[zǒu le méi yǒu èr shí lǐ dì, tiān qì jiù biàn le.]

(The weather changed when no more than twenty miles had been covered.)

Example 64 到山上干了半天活, 天还不亮。[dào shān shàng gàn le bàn tiān huó, tiān hái bú liàng.]

(It was still dark when half of the work had been finished.)

Example 65 华大妈候他喘气平静，才轻轻地给他盖上了满幅补丁的夹被。[Huà dà mā hòu tā chuǎn qì píng jìng, cái qīng qīng de gěi tā gài shàng le mǎn fú bǔ dīng de jiā bèi.]

(Grandma Hua waited until he began to breathe quietly, and then she covered him gently with a patched quilt.)

Example 66 太阳出来一人高了，伙计们睡得正香。[tài yáng chū lái yī rén gāo le, huǒ jì men shuì de zhèng xiāng.]

(The sun has already risen, but those guys were still fast asleep.)

Example 67 我说了半截话，抬头看见老洪笑呵呵地从外面走进来。[wǒ shuō le bàn jié huà, tái tóu kàn jiàn Lǎo Hōng xiào hē hē de cóng wài miàn zǒu jìn lái.]

(Just after I finished my words halfway, I looked up and saw Lao Hong coming in from the outside with a smile.)

IX. Compound sentences consisting of the repeated words

Both clauses are closely joined by the repeated words, such as “越 . . . , 越 . . . [yuè . . . , yuè . . .] (more . . . more)” or interrogative pronouns.

Example 68 谁为人民服务，我就向谁学习。[shuí wèi rén mín fú wù, wǒ jiù xiàng shuí xué xí.]

(I learn from whoever serves the people.)

Example 69 哪里有困难，他就出现在哪里。[nǎ lǐ yǒu kùn nán, tā jiù chū xiàn zài nǎ lǐ.]

(He shows up wherever there is trouble.)

Example 70 我怎么说，你怎么做。[wǒ zěn me shuō, nǐ zěn me zuò.]

(You do as I say.)

Example 71 时间越长，效果越显著。[shí jiān yuè cháng, xiào guǒ yuè xiǎn zhù.]

(The longer the time, the more significant the effect will be.)

Usually speaking, the subordinate clause comes before the main clause. Nevertheless, some are in the opposite sequence, mainly for adversative relation, causality, condition, hypothesis, or concession. If so, the conjunctive word is required before the subordinate clause, carrying a sense of additional explanation or emphasis.

Example 72 他的性格，在我的眼里和心里是伟大的，虽然他的姓名并不为许多人所知道。[tā de xìng gé, zài wǒ de yǎn lǐ hé xīn lǐ shì wéi dà de, suī rán tā de xìng míng bìng bù wéi xǔ duō rén suǒ zhī dào.]

(I am impressed by his great character, although his name is still not known to many people.)

Example 73 科学的东西，随便什么时候都是不怕人家批评的，因为科学是真理，决不怕人家驳。[kē xué de dōng xī, suí biàn shén me shí hòu]

dōu shì bú pà rén jiā pī píng de, yīn wéi kē xué shì zhēn lǐ, jué bú pà rén jiā bó.]

(Science is not afraid of criticism at any time, because it is truth which is never afraid of refutation.)

Example 74 这个月也可以提前完成任务，只要大家再加一把劲。[zhè gè yuè yě kě yǐ tí qián wán chéng rèn wù, zhǐ yào dà jiā zài jiā yì bǎ jìn.]

(It is also possible for us to complete the task ahead of schedule this month, as long as we work harder.)

Example 75 所以我们决不可拒绝继承和借鉴古人和外国人，哪怕是封建阶级和资产阶级的东西。[suǒ yǐ wǒ men jué bù kě jù jué jì chéng hé jiè jiàn gǔ rén hé wài guó rén, nǎ pà shì fēng jiàn jiē jí hé zī chǎn jiē jí de dōng xī.]

(Therefore, we certainly cannot refuse to inherit and learn from the ancients and foreigners, even from the feudal class and the bourgeoisie.)

Example 76 我一定要坚守岗位，继续战斗，即使最后只剩下我一个人。[wǒ yī dìng yào jiān shǒu gǎng wèi, jì xù zhàn dòu, jí shǐ zuì hòu zhǐ shèng xià wǒ yī gè rén.]

(I must stick to my post and fight on, even if I am left alone.)

Section three: multiple-compound sentences

It refers to a compound sentence whose clause consists of another compound sentence.

In parsing a multiple-compound sentence, the first step is to divide the entire sentence into clauses (two or more than two) with “|” according to their relations and then to subdivide each clause with “||” based on their relations again.

Example 1 我们要和一切资本主义国家的无产阶级联合起来(1)，要和日本的、英国的、德国的、意大利的以及一切资本主义国家的无产阶级联合起来(2)，才能打倒帝国主义(3)，解放我们的人民(4)，解放世界的民族和人民(5)。[wǒ men yào hé yī qiè zī běn zhǔ yì guó jiā de wú chǎn jiē jí lián hé qǐ lái (1), yào hé rì běn de, yīng guó de, dé guó de, yì dà lì de yī jí yī qiè zī běn zhǔ yì guó jiā de wú chǎn jiē jí lián hé qǐ lái (2), cái néng dǎ dǎo dì guó zhǔ yì (3), jiě fàng wǒ men de rén mín (4), jiě fàng shì jiè de mín zú hé rén mín (5).]

(We will join with the proletariat from all the capitalist countries (1), such as those of Japan, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and other capitalist countries (2), in order to overthrow imperialism (3), liberate our people (4), and liberate the nations and people of the world (5).)

In this example, the relation between (1) and (2) is parallel and the relation among (3), (4), and (5) is parallel as well. The former and the latter are connected by the conditional relation. Consequently, it is a conditional compound sentence which consists of five clauses marked from (1) to (5).

Example 2 为了搭起滑道(1), 他们翻越了多少陡峭的悬岩绝壁(2); 为了寻找水路(3), 他们踏遍了多少曲折的幽谷荒滩(4)。[wèi le dā qǐ huá dào (1), tā men fān yuè le duō shǎo dǒu qiào de xuán yán jué bì (2); wèi le xún zhǎo shuǐ lù (3), tā men tà biàn le duō shǎo qū zhé de yōu gǔ huāng tān (4).] (In order to set up the slide (1), they don't know how many steep overhanging cliffs they have climbed up (2). In order to find the waterway (3), they don't know how many tortuous valleys and barren beaches they have to trek through (4).)

In this example, (1) and (2) are related by purpose and the same is true for (3) and (4). And then, they are joined by the coordinate relation. Thus, it is a coordinate compound sentence.

Example 3 虽然我们耕地减少了(1), 但是因为我们引进了新技术(2), 因为兴修水利(3), 加上发展化肥农药生产(4), 所以改革开放以后粮食产量还是大大增加了(5)。[suī rán wǒ men gēng dì jiǎn shǎo le (1), dàn shì yīn wéi wǒ men yǐn jìn le xīn jì shù (2), yīn wéi xīng xiū shuǐ lì (3), jiā shàng fā zhǎn huà féi nóng yào shēng chǎn (4), suǒ yǐ gǎi gé kāi fàng yǐ hòu liáng shí chǎn liàng hái shì dà dà zēng jiā le (5).] (Although our cultivated land has been reduced (1), the grain output has been greatly increased after the reform and opening up (5) because of the introduced new technologies (2), the construction of water conservancy (3), and the development of chemical fertilizer and pesticide production (4).)

This is an adversative compound sentence that can be primarily parsed between (1) and the rest of clauses from (2) to (5). The clauses from (2) to (4) are connected with (5) by causality. The clauses from (2) to (4) are coordinate.

Example 4 今后, 我们的队伍里, 不管死了谁(1), 不管是炊事员(2), 是战士(3), 只要他是做过一些有益的工作的(4), 我们都要给他送葬(5), 开追悼会(6)。[jīn hòu, wǒ men de duì wǔ lǐ, bù guǎn sǐ le shuí (1), bù guǎn shì chuī shì yuán (2), shì zhàn shì (3), zhǐ yào tā shì zuò guò yì xiē yǒu yì de gōng zuò de (4), wǒ men dōu yào gěi tā sòng zàng (5), kāi zhuī dào huì (6).] (From now, whoever is dead, a cook (2) or a soldier (3), so long as he has done some useful work (4), we will bury him (5) and hold a memorial service for him (6).)

This example is a conditional compound sentence that can be primarily parsed between the clauses from (1) to (4) and the clauses from (5) to (6). Among the former, the clauses from (1) to (3) are connected with (4) by the coordinate relation; the same is true for the relation between (1) and the clauses from (2) to (3). Differently, the relation between (2) and (3) is selective and the relation between (5) and (6) is the coordinate.

Example 1 and Example 2 are double compound sentences; Example 3 is a triple compound sentence; Example 4 is a quadruple compound sentence. The rest can be done in the same manner.

Thus it can be seen that the first parsing is the most important and then the rest of the steps in parsing. Likewise, to identify various relations among each clause by conjunctive words (or no conjunction) is also very crucial in parsing. Nevertheless, there is one point for attention: do not mistake a long compound sentence for a multiple-compound sentence.

Example 5 发展中国家掌握和保护自己的资源，不仅对于巩固政治独立、发展民族经济是必要的，而且对于反对超级大国扩军备战、制止它们发动侵略战争，也是必要的。[fā zhǎn zhōng guó jiā zhǎng wò hé bǎo hù zì jǐ de zī yuán, bù jǐn duì yú gǒng gù zhèng zhì dú lì, fā zhǎn mín zú jīng jì shì bì yào de, ér qiě duì yú fǎn duì chāo jí dà guó kuò jūn bèi zhàn, zhì zhǐ tā men fā dòng qīn luè zhàn zhēng, yě shì bì yào de.]

(Developing countries should control and protect their own resources because it is necessary for the consolidation of political independence, development of the national economy, opposition to the expansion of arms and the war of aggression by the super-powers.)

This example is a long progressive compound sentence with an addition of “不仅 . . . , 而且 . . . [bù jǐn . . . , ér qiě . . .] (not only . . . , but also . . .).” The subject in the first clause is “发展中国家掌握和保护自己的资源 [fā zhǎn zhōng guó jiā zhǎng wò hé bǎo hù zì jǐ de zī yuán] (developing countries should control and protect their own resources)” with “对于巩固政治独立、发展民族经济是必要的 [duì yú gǒng gù zhèng zhì dú lì, fā zhǎn mín zú jīng jì shì bì yào de] (it is necessary for the consolidation of political independence, development of the national economy)” as the predicate; the subject in the second clause is the same as in the first one with “对于反对超级大国扩军备战、制止它们发动侵略战争也是必要的 [duì yú fǎn duì chāo jí dà guó kuò jūn bèi zhàn, zhì zhǐ tā men fā dòng qīn luè zhàn zhēng yě shì bì yào de] (opposition to the expansion of arms and the war of aggression by the super-powers)” as the predicate.

9 Subjects of compound sentences and conjunctive words

Section one: differences and invisibility of subjects in compound sentences

Generally speaking, a compound sentence consists of several clauses whose subjects may be the same, different, visible, or invisible. Next is the discussion about them.

1. The same subjects and their invisibility

If the subjects of the clauses in a compound sentence are the same, only one subject usually appears and the rest are hidden, except for a certain rhetorical effect. This phenomenon is called invisibility of the subject, which results from the syntactic connection among clauses. Otherwise, every clause would become an independent sentence, due to which a compound sentence could not exist.

The subject can appear in front of the first clause.

Example 1

在这欢乐的时刻，驱逐舰上分队长李新民悄悄跑回住舱，（李新民）拿来一颗晶莹的玻璃珠，（李新民）把它投入太平洋。[zài zhè huān lè de shí kè, qū zhú jiàn shàng fēn duì zhǎng Lǐ Xīn mǐn qiāo qiāo pǎo huí zhù cāng, (Lǐ Xīn mǐn) ná lái yì kē jīng yíng de bō lí zhū, (Lǐ Xīn mǐn) bǎ tā tóu rù tài píng yáng.]

(At this happy moment, Li Xinmin, the junior captain of the destroyer, quietly ran back to the cabin. He fetched a crystal glass bead and threw it into the Pacific Ocean.)

Example 2 人才问题是百年大计，（人才问题）是四化建设的紧迫问题。[rén cái wèn tí shì bǎi nián dà jì, (rén cái wèn tí) shì sì huà jiàn shè de jǐn pò wèn tí.]

(Talent resource is a hundred-year plan as well as an urgent issue of the construction of the four modernizations.)

In these examples, their predicates are served by a verb.

Example 3 山洞里湿得很，（山洞里）没有木板，（山洞里）就连稻草也找不到。[shān dòng lǐ shī de hěn, (shān dòng lǐ) méi yǒu mù bǎn, (shān dòng lǐ) jiù lián dào cǎo yě zhǎo bú dào.]

(Inside the cave is very wet, and neither planks nor straw can be found here.)

Example 4 车夫听了这老女人的话，（车夫）却毫不踌躇，（车夫）仍然搀扶着伊的臂膊，便一步一步的（地）向前走。[chē fū tīng le zhè lǎo nǚ rén de huà, (chē fū) què háo bù chóu chú, (chē fū) réng rán chān fú zhe yī de bì bó, biàn yí bù yí bù de (de) xiàng qián zǒu.]

(Even hearing what the old woman said, the driver of the rickshaw, without any hesitation, still supported her with a hand to move her forward step by step.)

The predicates in these examples are of different types.

The subject can appear in front of the last clause.

Example 5 （他）做熟了饭，他到处找儿子。[(tā) zuò shú le fàn, tā dào chù zhǎo ér zi.]

(After the meal was cooked, he looked for his son everywhere.)

Example 6 （我）不管遇到什么事，我也要坚持着活下去。[(wǒ) bù guǎn yù dào shén me shì, wǒ yě yào jiān chí zhe huó xià qù.]

(No matter what happens, I will persist in living.)

Example 7 （我们）绕过场地，（我们）穿过灯器室，我们来到材料间。[(wǒ men) rào guò chǎng dì, (wǒ men) chuān guò dēng qì shì, wǒ men lái dào cái liào jiān.]

(After bypassing the field, we passed through the light equipment room and arrived at the material room.)

The subject can appear in front of the middle clause.

Example 8 （他）为了报答大伙的好意，他要尽心竭力给大家做活，努力把工做好。[(tā) wèi le bào dá dà huǒ de hǎo yì, tā yào jìn xīn jié lì gěi dà jiā zuò huó, nǚ lì bǎ gōng zuò zuò hǎo.]

(In order to repay the kindness of the people, he would like to try his best to work hard for everyone.)

Sometimes, all the subjects can be hidden if they are clear enough in a certain context, such as in writing a letter or in a conversation.

Example 9 因为（我）刚到学校，（我）比较忙，所以（我）没有马上给你写信。[yīn wéi (wǒ) gāng dào xué xiào, (wǒ) bǐ jiào máng, suǒ yǐ (wǒ) méi yǒu mǎ shàng gěi nǐ xiě xìn.]

(Since I just arrived at school, I was too busy to write to you at once.)

Example 10 既然（你）信不过我，（你）又何必让我承担这个任务。[jì rán (nǐ) xìn bú guò wǒ, (nǐ) yòu hé bì ràng wǒ chéng dān zhè gè rèn wù.] (Since you don't trust me, why do you ask me to take this task?)

Sometimes, the appearance of all the subjects can highlight themselves for a certain rhetorical effect.

Example 11 他们不懂得党的民主集中制，他们不知道共产党不但要民主，尤其要集中。[tā men bù dǒng dé dǎng de mǐn zhǔ jí zhōng zhì, tā men bù zhī dào gòng chǎn dǎng bú dàn yào mǐn zhǔ, yóu qí yào jí zhōng.] (They don't understand the democratic centralism nor the fact that the Communist Party should not only be democratic, but also be centralized.)

Example 12 你要知道原子的组织同性质，你就得进行物理学和化学的实验，变革原子的情况。[nǐ yào zhī dào yuán zǐ de zǔ zhī tóng xìng zhì, nǐ jiù děi jìn xíng wù lǐ xué hé huà xué de shí yàn, biàn gé yuán zǐ de qíng kuàng.] (If you want to know the structure and properties of atoms, you have to carry out physical and chemical experiments to see their changes.)

II. The different subjects and their invisibility

If the subjects of the clauses in a compound sentence are different, they are required to be showed respectively.

Example 13 夜空漆黑，风在怒吼，浪在咆哮。[yè kōng qī hēi, fēng zài nù hǒu, làng zài páo xiào.] (It is dark at night, with roars of the wind and the waves.)

Example 14 我于是日日盼望新年，新年到，闰土也就到了。[wǒ yú shì rì rì pàn wàng xīn nián, xīn nián dào, rùn tǔ yě jiù dào le.] (Then, I looked forward to the New Year. When the New Year comes, Run Tu will come, too.)

Example 15 他赢而又赢，铜钱变成角洋，角洋变成大洋，大洋又成了叠。[tā yíng ér yòu yíng, tóng qián biàn chéng jiǎo yáng, jiǎo yáng biàn chéng dà yáng, dà yáng yòu chéng le dié.] (He always wins, copper coins turn into small silver coins, then into silver dollars, and finally into a big stack of money.)

Sometimes, the subject of a clause can be hidden if it functions as a constituent of another clause. For instance, if the object of the preceding clause functions as the subject of the next clause, it can be hidden.

Example 16 当时中国分成了许多诸侯国，（诸侯国）主要有齐、楚、燕、赵、韩、魏、秦七国。[dāng shí zhōng guó fēn chéng le xǔ duō zhū hóu guó, (zhū hóu guó) zhǔ yào yǒu qí, chǔ, yān, zhào, hán, wèi, qín qī guó.] (At that time, China was divided into many vassal states, mainly including Qi, Chu, Yan, Zhao, Han, Wei, and Qin.)

Example 17 那船里便突然跳出两个男人来，（这两个男人）像是山里人，一个抱住她，一个帮着，拖进船里去了。[nà chuán lǐ biàn tū rán tiào chū liǎng gè nán rén lái, (zhè liǎng gè nán rén) xiàng shì shān lǐ rén, yí gè bào zhù tā, yí gè bāng zhe, tuō jìn chuán lǐ qù le.]

(Suddenly two men like mountain villagers jumped out of the boat. One grasped her, and with the other's help, they dragged her into the boat.)

Or, if the attribute of the subject in the preceding clause functions as the subject of the next clause, the subject can be hidden.

Example 18 大爷的党龄比我的年龄都大，（大爷）为革命几十年如一日，村子里谁不尊敬大爷，这还用说吗。[dà yé de dǎng líng bǐ wǒ de nián líng dōu dà, (dà yé) wèi gé míng jǐ shí nián rú yī rì, cūn zi lǐ shuí bù zūn jìng dà yé, zhè hái yòng shuō ma.]

(The age of grandpa's Party standing is much older than my age. Beyond doubt, no one in this village doesn't respect him for his 10-year-dedication to the revolution.)

Example 19 他的精神，现在只在一个包上，（他）仿佛抱着一个十世单传的婴儿，别的事情，都已置之度外了。[tā de jīng shén, xiàn zài zhǐ zài yí gè bāo shàng, (tā) fǎng fú bào zhe yí gè shí shì dān chuán de yīng ér, bié de shì qíng, dōu yǐ zhì zhī dù wài le.]

(Now his attention was only concentrated on this bag that he held in his arms. It was like a single child born in the tenth generation, which made him take nothing else into consideration.)

Or, the subject of the preceding clause can be hidden due to its appearance as the subject of the next clause.

Example 20 （她）想着想着，她的决心大了起来。[(tā) xiǎng zhe xiǎng zhe, tā de jué xīn dà le qǐ lái.]

(As she was thinking, she became more determined.)

Sometimes, among the subjects of the clauses in a compound sentence, some are the same and some are different, due to which they need distinguishing carefully, especially for those hidden subjects.

Example 21 他是我的本家，（他）比我长一辈，（我）应该称之为“四叔”，（他）是一个讲理学的老监生。[tā shì wǒ de běn jiā, (tā) bǐ wǒ zhǎng yí bèi, (wǒ) yīng gāi chēng zhī yuē "Sì Shū," (tā) shì yí gè jiǎng lǐ xué de lǎo jiān shēng.]

(He was one of my distant relatives from the same family. One generation older than me, I should call him "Si Shu (the fourth uncle)." He graduated

from the directorate of the imperial Academy in feudal China and taught neo-Confucianism.)

Example 22 母亲问他, (母亲) 知道他的家里事务忙, (他) 明天便得回去, (他) 又没有吃过午饭, (母亲) 便叫他自己到厨下炒饭吃去。[mǔ qīn wèn tā, (mǔ qīn) zhī dào tā de jiā lǐ shì wù máng, (tā) míng tiān biàn deǐ huí qù, (tā) yòu méi yǒu chī guò wǔ fàn, (mǔ qīn) biàn jiào tā zì jǐ dào chú xià chǎo fàn chī qù.]

(After inquiring about his plan, the mother knew that he was occupied by his family affairs and would go back tomorrow. In addition, he had not had lunch yet, so she asked him to cook the rice for himself in the kitchen.)

Also, it can be seen from this example that those hidden subjects should be clearly enough in the context; otherwise they are required to show up.

Section two: conjunctive words in compound sentences

Conjunctive words include conjunctions and some adverbs that help connect the clauses in a compound sentence. Conjunctions can appear in front of the main clause as well as the subordinate clause; the adverbs for correlation are simply appropriate for the main clause.

I. Positions of conjunctive words

1 Positions of conjunctions

There are two positions for conjunctions, one of which is before the subject of the clause and the other of which is after it. When the subjects of two clauses are same, the conjunction often appears after the subject of the first clause. In this case, the subject also functions as the topic to connect the next clause.

Example 1 先生既然救我, 就应该救到底。[xiān shēng jì rán jiù wǒ, jiù yīng gāi jiù dào dǐ.]

(Sir, since you have saved me, you should save me thoroughly.)

Example 2 贫农最革命, 所以他们取得了农会的领导权。[pín nóng zuì gé mìng, suǒ yǐ tā men qǔ dé le nóng huì de lǐng dǎo quán.]

(Poor peasants are the most revolutionary, so they gained the leadership of the peasant association.)

Example 3 他不但参加了革命的实际运动, 而且进行了革命的理论创造。[tā bú dàn cān jiā le gé mìng de shí jì yùn dòng, ér qiě jìn xíng le gé mìng de lǐ lùn chuàng zào.]

(He not only took part in the practical movement of the revolution, but also carried out the theoretical innovation of the revolution.)

But, if it is the conjunction rather than the subject that helps connect two clauses, the conjunction should appear before the subject.

Example 4

A: 你为什么看得那么清楚。[nǐ wèi shén me kàn de nà me qīng chǔ.]
(Why did you see it so clearly?)

B: 因为我坐在前边, 所以看得非常清楚。[yīn wéi wǒ zuò zài qián biān, suǒ yǐ kàn de fēi cháng qīng chǔ.]
(I was sitting in front, and that explained it.)

On the contrary, if the subject helps connect, it should be placed before the conjunction.

Example 5

A: 昨天你们去开会, 主席台上的人谁看得最清楚? [zuó tiān nǐ men qù kāi huì, zhǔ xí tái shàng de rén shuí kàn de zuì qīng chǔ?]
(Whom could you see best on the rostrum when you had the meeting yesterday?)

B: 我因为坐在最前边, 所以看得最清楚。[wǒ yīn wéi zuò zài zuì qián biān, suǒ yǐ kàn de zuì qīng chǔ.]
(I can see everyone very clearly because I'm sitting in the front.)

When the subjects of two clauses are different, the conjunction of the first clause should appear before the subject.

Example 6 虽然座谈会的时间比较长, 但大家都不觉得累。[suī rán zuò tán huì de shí jiān bǐ jiào cháng, dàn dà jiā dōu bù jué de lèi.]
(Although the colloquium lasted very long, nobody got tired.)

Example 7 只要你说得对, 我们就改正。[zhǐ yào nǐ shuō de duì, wǒ men jiù gǎi zhèng.]
(So long as you are right, we will correct it.)

Example 8 即使他已睡到床上, 你也要把他拖起来。[jí shǐ tā yǐ shuì dào chuáng shàng, nǐ yě yào bǎ tā tuō qǐ lái.]
(Even if he is already in bed, you must drag him up.)

But, if it is the subject rather than the conjunction that helps connect two clauses, the conjunction should be put after the subject. Otherwise, two clauses cannot be connected logically.

Example 9

A: 喂, 老李, 我来了, 时间也到了, 咱们走吧。[wèi, Lǎo Lǐ, wǒ lái le, shí jiān yě dào le, zán men zǒu ba.]
(Hello, Lao Li, I'm here and time is up also. Let's go now.)

B: 你虽然来了, 可是别的人还没来, 等一会吧。[nǐ suī rán lái le, kě shì bié de rén hái méi lái, děng yì huì ba.]
(Although you're here, the others haven't come yet. Just wait a moment.)

As for the conjunction of the second clause, its position is fixed before the subject of the second clause.

Example 10 虽然并不相识, 然而他读过鲁迅先生的文章, 深知鲁迅先生对革命的忠诚。[suī rán bìng bù xiāng shí, rán ér tā dú guò Lǔ Xùn xiān shēng de wén zhāng, shēn zhī lǔ xùn xiān shēng duì gé mìng de zhōng chéng.]
(Though he didn't know Mr. Lu Xun, he once read his article and knew his loyalty to the revolution.)

Example 11 我认为, 那个国家, 不是领导人互相打起来, 就是人民起来革命, 而且时间一定不会过太久。[wǒ rèn wéi, nà gè guó jiā, bú shì lǐng dǎo rén hù xiāng dǎ qǐ lái, jiù shì rén mín qǐ lái gé mìng, ér qiě shí jiān yí dìng bú huì guò tài jiǔ.]
(In my opinion, either an infighting occurs among the leaders of that country or a revolution broke out among the people. No matter which one, it will happen soon.)

Example 12 因为累了, 所以我没去。[yīn wéi lèi le, suǒ yǐ wǒ méi qù.]
(I'm tired, so I'm not going there.)

Example 13 因为他还是个不懂事的孩子, 所以说的话没有引起大家的注意。[yīn wéi tā hái shì gè bù dǒng shì de hái zi, suǒ yǐ shuō de huà méi yǒu yǐn qǐ dà jiā de zhù yì.]
(He was still an innocent child, so what he said attracted no attention.)

Example 14 他们家不但他很聪明, 而且他的妹妹也很聪明。[tā men jiā bú dàn tā hěn cōng míng, ér qiě tā de mèi mèi yě hěn cōng míng.]
(Not only he but also his sister is very clever in the family.)

2 Positions of the adverbs for correlation

They are limited in number, mainly including “就 [jiù] (then),” “还 [hái] (and),” “也 [yě] (also),” “都 [dōu] (all),” “才 [cái] (just),” “却 [què] (but),” “越 [yuè] (more).” Except for “越 [yuè] (more),” others are only permitted to appear after the subject of the main clause (the second clause).

Example 15 外面北风呼啸, 屋里却温暖如春。[wài miàn běi fēng hū xiào, wū lǐ què wēn nuǎn rú chūn.]
(Outside the north wind howled; inside it was as warm as spring.)

Example 16 如果明天不下雨, 我就去北海公园。[rú guǒ míng tiān bù xià yǔ, wǒ jiù qù běi hǎi gōng yuán.]
(If it doesn't rain tomorrow, I'll go to Beihai Park.)

Example 17 他越说, 我越生气。[tā yuè shuō, wǒ yuè shēng qì.]
(The more he says, the more angry I am.)

II. Use of conjunctive words

Some conjunctive words can be used in pairs, some can be combined together in use, or some are only permitted to be used alone. How they are used is shown in Appendix Five.

Appendix five

Use of conjunctive words

		<i>Conjunctive words</i>		
		<i>Subordinate clause</i>	<i>Main clause</i>	
Association	Coordination	① ...		
		② ...,	也[yě] ...。	
		③ ...,	还[hái]] ...。	
		④ 又[yòu] ...,	又[yòu] ...。	
		⑤ 既[jì] ...,	又[yòu] ...。	
		⑥ 一边[yī biān] ...,	一边[yī biān] ...。	
		⑦ 一面[yī miàn] ...,	一面[yī miàn] ...。	
	Continuity	① ...		
		② ...,		于是[yú shì] ...。
		③ (首先[shǒu xiān] ...),		然后[rán hòu] ...。
		④ ...,		就[jiù] ...。
		⑤ ...,		便[biàn] ...。
	Progression	① (不但/不仅 [bù dàn/bù jǐn] ...),		而且/并且 [ér qiè/bìng qiě] ...。
		② (或是[huò shì] ...),		或是[huò shì] ...。
		③ ...,		更[gèng] ...。
		④ ...,		还[hái]] ...。
		⑤ ...,		甚至[shèn zhì] ...。
	Choice	① (或者[huò zhě] ...),		或者[huò zhě] ...。
		② (或是[huò shì] ...),		或是[huò shì] ...。
		③ ...,		或[huò] ...。
		④ (是[shì] ...),		还是[hái shì] ...。
⑤ 要么[yào me] ...,			要么[yào me] ...。	
⑥ 不是[bù shì] ...,			就是[jiù shì] ...。	
Relation of modifying and being modified	Cause of causation	① ...		
		② (因为[yīn wèi] ...),	所以[suǒ yǐ] ...。	
		③ 由于[yóu yú] ...,	(所以[suǒ yǐ] ...)	
		④ ...,	因而[yīn ér] ...。	
	Result of causation	① ...,		因此[yīn cǐ] ...。
		② (因为[yīn wèi] ...),		以至于[yǐ zhì yú] ...。
		③ (既然[jì rán] ...),		(那)就[(nà)jiù] ...。
		④ ...,		可见[kě jiàn] ...。

Transition	① (虽然/虽[suī rán/suī] . . . ,)	但是/可是 [dàn shì/kě shì] . . .
	② (虽然[suī rán] . . . ,)	却[què] . . .
	③ . . . ,	然而[rán ér] . . .
	④ . . . ,	否则[fǒu zé] . . .
	⑤ . . . ,	不然[bù rán] . . .
	⑥ . . . ,	不过[bù guò] . . .
	⑦ . . . ,	就是[jiù shì] . . .
	⑧ 尽管[jǐn guǎn] . . . ,	然而/但是/却[rán ér/dàn shì/què] . . .
Special condition	① 只要[zhi yào] . . . ,	就[jiù] . . .
	② 只有[zhi yǒu] . . . ,	才[cái] . . .
	③ 除非[chú fēi] . . . ,	才[cái] . . .
Non-condition	① 无(不)论[wú (bù) lùn] . . . ,	也/都[yě/dōu] . . .
	② 不管[bù guǎn] . . . ,	也/都[yě/dōu] . . .
Hypothesis	① . . .	
	② 如果[rú guǒ] . . . ,	就[jiù] . . .
	③ 要是/若是[yào shì/ruò shì] . . . ,	就[jiù] . . .
	④ 倘若/假若[tǎng ruò/jiǎ ruò] . . . ,	就[jiù] . . .
	⑤ . . . ,	就[jiù] . . .
Concession	① 即使[jí shǐ] . . . ,	也[yě] . . .
	② 固然[gù rán] . . . ,	但是/可是/却/也 [dàn shì/kě shì/què/yě] . . .
	③ 就是[jiù shì] . . . ,	也[yě] . . .
	④ 纵然[zòng rán] . . . ,	也[yě] . . .
Choice	① 与其[yǔ qí] . . . ,	不如[bù rú] . . .
	② 宁可[nìng kě] . . . ,	也不[yěbù] . . .
Purpose	① 为了/为[wèi le/wèi] . . . ,	. . .
	② . . . ,	以便[yǐ biàn] . . .
	③ . . . ,	以免[yǐ miǎn] . . .
	④ . . . ,	免得[miǎn de] . . .
Time	① . . .	
	② . . . ,	就/还/才[jiù/hái/cái] . . .
Chain reaction	① 越[yuè] . . . ,	越[yuè] . . .
	② 疑问代词[yí wèn dài cí] . . . ,	疑问代词[yí wèn dài cí] . . .

Note: “. . .” refers to no conjunctive word, such as “① . . .”

10 Compressed sentences

Section one: features of compressed sentences

I. What are compressed sentences?

A compressed sentence is characterized by its “form of a simple sentence” and its “content of a compound sentence.” “Form of a simple sentence” means that a compound sentence is compressed into a simple sentence in appearance; in other words, “content of a compound sentence” means that two predicates express different contents that are connected by a certain relation, such as succession, concession, condition, causality, and so on. Besides, neither of the two predicates modifies or contains the other one.

With no speech pause in the middle, two predicates in a compressed sentence are often compressed into one by the adverb appearing in a pair or alone, rather not to be related by a conjunction, such as “虽然 [suī rán] (although),” “但是 [dàn shì] (but),” “因为 [yīn wéi] (because),” “所以 [suǒ yǐ] (therefore).” Besides, no comma appears in the middle of them, either, so they look like the predicate part of a simple sentence in form.

Example 1 站住，不站住就开枪了。[zhàn zhù, bú zhàn zhù jiù kāi qiāng le.]
(Stop! Otherwise, I will shoot you.)

Example 2 看得清楚才能对得准。[kàn de qīng chǔ cái néng duì de zhǔn.]
(Only when we see it clearly can we aim it correctly.)

In the first example, the second clause is a compressed sentence in which “就 [jiù]” joins “不站住 [bú zhàn zhù] (don’t stop)” and “开枪 [kāi qiāng] (shoot)” together with no conjunction, speech pause, or comma in the middle. The entire sentence is a hypothetical compound sentence, indicating “站住！你要是不站住，我就开枪了。[zhàn zhù! nǐ yào shì bú zhàn zhù, wǒ jiù kāi qiāng le.] (Stop! If you don’t stop, I will shoot you.)” Likewise, in the second example “才 [cái] (only)” connects “看得清楚 [kàn de qīng chǔ] (see clearly)” and “能对得准 [néng duì de zhǔn] (aim correctly)” together with no conjunction, speech pause, or comma in the middle. The entire sentence is a conditional compound sentence, indicating “我们只有看得清楚，（我们）才能对得准。[wǒ men zhǐ yǒu kàn de qīng chǔ, (wǒ men) cái néng duì de zhǔn.] (Only when we see it clearly, can we aim correctly.)”

Most compressed sentences can be re-extended into compound sentences by certain grammatical relations, except for a few of them. For instance, “我们的人越多越好。[wǒ men de rén yuè duō yuè hǎo.] (The more people we have, the better.)” cannot be re-extended into “*我们的人越多，我们越好。[wǒ men de rén yuè duō, wǒ men yuè hǎo.]” because it sounds inappropriate in Chinese.

In general, compressed sentences are characterized by expressing complex meanings in a concise way, due to which their forms are limited in number and have been fixed gradually over a long term. Thus they cannot be invented at will.

II. Differences between compressed sentences and sentences with serial verbs as well as bi-constituent sentences

The conjunctive words for correlation help distinguish most compressed sentences from the other two types of sentences because their predicates are often compressed by these words.

Example 3 他披上衣服走出门去。[tā pī shàng yī fú zǒu chū mén qù.] (He put on his clothes and went out of the door.) (the sentence with serial verbs)

Example 4 他披上皮袄还冷。[tā pī shàng pí ǎo hái lěng.] (He was still cold, even in his leather jacket.) (compressed sentence)

Example 5 小明哭着说：“我要永远记住这个教训。” [Xiǎo Míng kū zhe shuō: “wǒ yào yǒng yuǎn jì zhù zhè gè jiào xùn.”] (Xiao Ming cried and said, “I will remember the lesson forever.”) (the sentence with serial verbs)

Example 6 小明哭着也能吃得下两碗饭。[Xiǎo Míng kū zhe yě néng chī de xià liǎng wǎn fàn.] (Xiao Ming can take another two bowls of rice, even if he is crying.) (compressed sentence)

But, those adverbs that don't help connect two verbs or verbal phrases in a sentence cannot be depended on.

Example 7 你有事明天再说。[nǐ yǒu shì míng tiān zài shuō.] (If you have something to say, say it tomorrow.) (compressed sentence)

Example 8 走吧！理他呢！到食堂里再拿一套回去。[zǒu ba! lǐ tā ne! dào shí táng lǐ zài ná yí tào huí qù.] (Let's go! Leave him alone! Go to the cafeteria and fetch another set.) (non-compressed sentence with “再 [zài] (again)” to indicate repetition)

Example 9 过去！过去想也不敢想啊。[guò qù! guò qù xiǎng yě bù gǎn xiǎng ā.] (In the past! I even didn't dare to think about it in the past.) (compressed sentence with “也 [yě] (also)” to indicate concession)

Example 10 桐桐想了想也没回答出来。[Tóng Tóng xiǎng le xiǎng yě méi huí dá chū lái.]

(Tong Tong thought for a while but he failed to answer it.) (non-compressed sentence with “也 [yě] (also)” to indicate “same”)

Example 11 “我一定要 . . .” 我想说“保护你”，可是话到嘴边又咽回去了。[“wǒ yí dìng yào . . .” wǒ xiǎng shuō: “bǎo hù nǐ,” kě shì huà dào zuǐ biān yòu yàn huí qù le.]

(“I must . . .” I intended to say “protect you,” but the words didn’t form in my mouth.) (compressed sentence with “又 [yòu] (but)” to indicate adversative relation)

Example 12 “怕什么? . . .” 老胡想了想又找补了一句，. . .。[“pà shén me? . . .” lǎo hú xiǎng le xiǎng yòu zhǎo bǔ le yí jù, . . .]

(Lao Hu thought for a while and then added: “What are you afraid of? . . .”) (non-compressed sentence with “又 [yòu] (and)” to indicate “more”)

In these examples, the adverbs in the compressed sentences should be pronounced lightly; the rest can be pronounced with stress.

The semantic relations between two predicates also help in distinguishing sentences. In other words, two predicates in a compressed sentence should be connected by a certain relation, such as hypothesis, condition, concession, or causality, no matter if the conjunctive word appears in the middle or not.

Example 13 您年老体弱干不了这一行了。[nín nián lǎo tǐ ruò gàn bù liǎo zhè yì háng le.]

(You are too old and weak to do this job.)

Example 14 明天参观，不下雨去，下雨不去。[míng tiān cān guān, bú xià yǔ qù, xià yǔ bú qù.]

(If it doesn’t rain tomorrow, we’ll go for a visit; and if it does, we’ll not go.)

Example 15 有缺点不怕，只怕不知道缺点在什么地方，或是知道了不改。[yǒu quē diǎn bú pà, zhǐ pà bù zhī dào quē diǎn zài shén me dì fang, huò shì zhī dào le bù gǎi.]

(Don’t be ashamed of your shortcomings, but be ashamed of your ignorance of what they are and your refusal of how to correct them.)

Example 16 大西瓜喽，不甜不要钱。[dà xī guā lou, bù tián bú yào qián.]

(Big watermelons! Very sweet!)

III. *Multiple-compressed sentences*

Similar to the multiple-compound sentence, a compressed sentence containing multiple relations is called a multiple-compressed sentence.

Example 17 你爱信不信。[nǐ ài xìn bú xìn.]

(You believe it or not.)

Example 18 霆儿，你记着再穷也别学你姑丈，有本事饿死也别吃丈人家的饭。[Tíng Ér, nǐ jì zhe zài qióng yě bié xué nǐ gū zhàng, yǒu běn shì è sǐ yě bié chī zhàng rén jiā de fàn.]

(Ting Er, remember not to follow your uncle's example. No matter how poor you are, you must not beg for a living from your father-in-law.)

In these examples, the first one is a compressed sentence with no conjunctive word, indicating two hypotheses. One is “如果你爱相信，你就相信。[rú guǒ nǐ ài xiāng xìn, nǐ jiù xiāng xìn.] (If you would like to believe it, it is your choice.)” and the other is “如果你不相信，就算了。[rú guǒ nǐ bù xiāng xìn, jiù suàn le.] (If you don't believe it, just forget it.)” In the second example, the second clause contains the relations of causality and concession, indicating “如果你有本事，就是饿死也别吃丈人家的饭。[rú guǒ nǐ yǒu běn shì, jiù shì è sǐ yě bié chī zhàng rén jiā de fàn.] (Don't beg for a living from your father-in-law, even at the cost of starving to death.)”

IV. Subjects in compressed sentences

Usually, only one subject is shown at the beginning of a compressed sentence, no matter whether two predicates have the same subjects or not.

Example 19 人困得多厉害啊，那么大的露水，湿了他们的衣服都不知道。[rén kùn de duō lì hài ā, nà me dà de lù shuǐ, shī le tā men de yī fu dōu bù zhī dào.]

(How sleepy they were. They even had no awareness of their wet clothes caused by the heavy dew.)

Example 20 邓海对春梅说：“你来热烈欢迎，别人来概不接待。”[Dèng Hǎi duì Chūn Méi shuō: “nǐ lái rè liè huān yíng, bié rén lái gài bù jiē dài.”] (Deng Hai said to Chun Mei: “You're very welcome here, but not others.”)

In the first example, “湿了他们的衣服都不知道 [shī le tā men de yī fu dōu bù zhī dào] (they even had no awareness of their wet clothes)” is a compressed sentence, in which “湿 [shī] (wet)” and “不知道 [bù zhī dào] (no awareness of)” are two predicates. “露水 [lù shuǐ] (dew)” is the subject of “湿 [shī] (wet);” “他们 [tā men] (they)” which is hidden, is the subject of “不知道 [bù zhī dào] (no awareness of).” There are two compressed sentences in the second example, one of which is “你来热烈欢迎。[nǐ lái rè liè huān yíng.] (You're very welcome here.)” and the other of which is “别人来概不接待[bié rén lái gài bù jiē dài] (but not others).” The former takes one subject “你 [nǐ] (you)” and hides the other one “别人 [bié rén] (others);” the latter presents one subject “我们 [wǒ men] (we)” and conceal the same one “我们 [wǒ men] (we)” as well. Of course, when two predicates have the same subjects, there is no doubt one subject should be at the head of sentence and the other one hidden.

Example 21 你干就得干得像样子。[nǐ gàn jiù děi gàn de xiàng gè yàng zi.]
(If you decide to do it, do it well.)

Example 22 咱们穷死也不受这窝囊气。[zán men qióng sǐ yě bú shòu zhè wō náng qì.]
(We cannot suffer from injustice, even if we would die of poverty.)

Section two: common types of compressed sentences

The common types of compressed sentences are as follows.

I. *Compressed sentences consisting of conjunctive words in a pair*

The common conjunctive words in a pair are listed in the following.

1 “越 . . . 越 . . . [yuè . . . yuè . . .] (more . . . more . . .)”

Connected by “越 . . . 越 . . . [yuè . . . yuè . . .] (more . . . more . . .),” two predicates of a compressed sentence can be two verbs (phrases), two adjective (phrases), or one adverb and one adjective.

Example 1 这一老一少真是越干越有劲儿。[zhè yì lǎo yì shǎo zhēn shì yuè gàn yuè yǒu jìn er.]
(Both the old man and the young man are working more and more energetically.)

Example 2 小魏越看越觉得心慌。[Xiǎo Wèi yuè kàn yuè jué de xīn huāng.]
(The more Xiao Wei examined it, the more panicked he felt.)

Example 3 雨越下越猛，像瓢泼一样。[yǔ yuè xià yuè měng, xiàng piáo pō yí yàng.]
(The rain was pouring down like a torrent.)

Example 4 越忙越应该巧安排。[yuè máng yuè yīng gāi qiǎo ān pái.]
(The more you are engaged, the more effective schedule you should make.)

Example 5 身体越不好越要加强锻炼。[shēn tǐ yuè bù hǎo yuè yào jiā qiáng duàn liàn.]
(The worse your health is less, the more physical exercises you need.)

In this type of compressed sentence, the action conveyed by the second predicate changes along with what is conveyed by the first predicate, similar to a chain reaction.

2 “不 . . . 不 . . . [bú . . . bù . . .] (not . . . not . . .)”

Similar to “越 . . . 越 . . . [yuè . . . yuè . . .] (more . . . more . . .),” “不 . . . 不 . . . [bú . . . bù . . .] (not . . . not . . .)” connects two verbs (phrases), two adjectives (phrases), or one verb and one adjective.

Example 6 这种果子不晒不红。[zhè zhǒng guǒ zǐ bú shài bù hóng.]
(The fruit will not turn red if it is not exposed in the sunlight.)

Example 7 棉衣不厚不暖和。[mián yī bú hòu bù nuǎn huo.]
(The thicker the cotton-padded clothes are, the warmer they will be.)

Example 8 东西不好不要。[dōng xī bù hǎo bú yào.]
(Don't take it if it is not good enough.)

Example 9 咱们不见不散啊! [zán men bú jiàn bú sǎn ā!]
(See you soon!)

Example 10 灯不拨不亮, 您这一席话使我豁然开朗。[dēng bù bō bú liàng, nín zhè yī xí huà shǐ wǒ huō rán kāi lǎng.]
(Your words make me suddenly enlightened.)

Differently, “不 . . . 不 . . . [bú . . . bù . . .] (not . . . not . . .)” indicates a hypothetical relation, like “要是不 . . . 就不 . . . [yào shì bú . . . jiù bù . . .] (if . . . not . . .).” It differs from a sentence with a coordinate structure as predicate.

Example 11 咱们在校门口见, 不见不散。[zán men zài xiào mén kǒu jiàn, bú jiàn bú sǎn.]
(Let's meet at the school gate.) (compressed sentence)

Example 12 祥子站在那儿, 不吭不动。[Xiáng Zi zhàn zài nà er, bù kēng bú dòng.]
(Xiang Zi stood there, silent and motionless.) (a sentence with a coordinate structure as predicate)

3 “再 . . . 也 . . . [zài . . . yě . . .] (no matter . . . have to . . .)”

Connected by “再 . . . 也 . . . [zài . . . yě . . .],” the first predicate is mainly functioned by an adjective (phrase) and the second predicate by a verb (phrase). Or, both of them are verbs (phrases). “再 . . . 也 . . . [zài . . . yě . . .] (even if . . . have to . . .)” shows a concessive relation, like “即使/就是 . . . 也 . . . [jí shǐ/jiù shì . . . yě . . .] (even if . . . have to . . .).”

Example 13 “行了, 行了! 再难也得叫孩子上学!”爸爸说。[“xíng le, xíng le! zài nán yě děi jiào hái zi shàng xué!” bà bà shuō.]
(“All right! No matter how hard it is, we must send children to school!” said dad.)

Example 14 我管保比他们水性好, 水再深点也不怕。[wǒ guǎn bǎo bǐ tā men shuǐ xìng hǎo, shuǐ zài shēn diǎn yě bú pà.]
(I promise I can swim better than they do, and no matter how deep the water is, I'm not afraid.)

Example 15 如果有了正确的理论, 只是把它空谈一阵, 束之高阁, 并不实行, 那么, 这种理论再好也是没有意义的。[rú guǒ yǒu le zhèng què

de lǐ lùn, zhǐ shì bǎ tā kōng tán yí zhèn, shù zhī gāo gé, bìng bù shí xíng,
nà me, zhè zhǒng lǐ lùn zài hǎo yě shì méi yǒu yì yì de.]

(Even if the theory is right, it doesn't make any sense when it is to be treated as empty talk.)

Example 16 狐狸再狡猾也斗不过好猎手哇! [hú lí zài jiǎo huá yě dòu bú guò hǎo liè shǒu wa!]

(No matter how cunning the fox is, it can't beat a good hunter.)

The adverb “再 [zài]” in “再...也... [zài...yě...]” implies further development about the subject in degree rather than the repetition in action, such as “再难也得叫孩子上学。[zài nán yě děi jiào hái zi shàng xué] (no matter how hard it is, we must send children to school.)”

4 “(不)...也... [(bú/bù)...yě...] (not... have to...)”

Connected by “(不)...也... [(bú/ù)...yě...] (not... have to...),” both of the predicates can be verbs (phrases) or one adjective (phrase) and one verb (phrase).

Example 17 我十辈子不见他也不想他。[wǒ shí bèi zi bú jiàn tā yě bù xiǎng tā.]

(He is the last person I want to see, even in ten generations.)

Example 18 这份礼物，你要也得要，不要也得要，这是专为你买的。[zhè fèn lǐ wù, nǐ yào yě děi yào, bú yào yě děi yào, zhè shì zhuān wèi nǐ mǎi de.]

(This gift is specially bought for you, so you have to keep it whether you want it or not.)

Example 19 为了糊口，你想不也得行啊。[wéi le hú kǒu, nǐ xiǎng bù yě děi xíng ā.]

(In order to make a living, you have no choice but do it.)

Example 20 你的想法不成熟也可以提出来。[nǐ de xiǎng fǎ bù chéng shú yě kě yǐ tí chū lái.]

(You can put forward your idea, even if it is not well considered.)

Example 21 人家不喜欢看也没办法。[rén jiā bù xǐ huān kàn yě méi bàn fǎ.]

(We can do nothing if they don't like to see it.)

“(不)...也... [(bú/bù)...yě...] (not... have to...)” is similar to “就是...，也... [jiù shì...yě...] (if... have to...)” or “如果...，也... [rú guǒ...yě...] (if... have to...),” conveying certain relations, such as causality, hypothesis, or concession. For instance, the examples from 19 to 20 can be related by hypothesis or concession.

5 “一 . . . 就 . . . [yī . . . jiù . . .] (if . . .)”

Example 22 母亲一知道就糟糕了, 她会发病的。[mǔ qīn yì zhī dào jiù zāo gāo le, tā huì fā bìng de.]

(It would be terrible if the mother knew it; she would have an attack of illness.)

Example 23 这把刀的钢特别好, 稍微一磨就很快。[zhè bǎ dāo de gāng tè bié hǎo, shāo wēi yì mó jiù hěn kuài.]

(The steel of this knife is very good; it can be sharpened easily.)

Example 24 可不能糊涂, 多好的心, 一不清醒就会办坏了事。[kě bù néng hú tu, duō hǎo de xīn, yī bù qīng xǐng jiù huì bàn huài le shì.]

(Even with good intention, one tends to get confused with worries.)

Example 25 奶奶年纪大了, 一着急就糊涂。[nǎi nǎi nián jì dà le, yì zhāo jí jiù hú tu.]

(The grandma is pretty aged so she tends to get confused if she is worried.)

Connected by “一 . . . 就 . . . [yī . . . jiù . . .] (if . . .),” two predicates can be served by verbs (phrases), adjectives (phrases), or one verb (phrase) and one adjective (phrase). “一 . . . 就 . . . [yī . . . jiù . . .] (if . . .)” indicates the relations of hypothesis and condition. Example 22 shows a hypothetical or conditional relation, expressing “要是母亲知道了, 就糟糕了。[yào shì mǔ qīn zhī dào le, jiù zāo gāo le.] (If mother knew, it would be terrible).” Example 23 shows a conditional relation, indicating “这把刀只要一磨, 就会很快。[zhè bǎ dāo zhǐ yào yì mó, jiù huì hěn kuài.] (Once sharpened, this knife will be sharper).” Example 24 and Example 25 are also related by condition.

6 “非 . . . 不 . . . [fēi . . . bú . . .] (must . . .)”

Connected by “非 . . . 不 . . . [fēi . . . bú/bù . . .] (must . . .),” the first predicate is mainly served by a verb (phrase) or noun/pronoun, sometimes; the second predicate is mainly served by “可/行/成 [kě/xíng/chéng],” or by a verbal phrase, sometimes. Similar to “一定 [yī dìng] (must)” or “必须 [bì xū] (must),” “非 [fēi] (must)” expresses affirmation in the negative form, especially highlighting the word after “非 [fēi] (must).”

Example 26 你非来不可/行/成, 我们都在等着你。[nǐ fēi lái bù kě/xíng/chéng, wǒ men dōu zài děng zhe nǐ.]

(You must come. We’re all waiting for you.) (to emphasize “come”)

Example 27 当领导的非精通业务不可。[dāng lǐng dǎo de fēi jīng tōng yè wù bù kě.]

(Leaders must be proficient in business.) (to emphasize “proficient in business”)

Example 28 要解决这个问题，非你不可。[yào jiě jué zhè gè wèn tí, fēi nǐ bù kě.]

(This problem must be solved by you, not others.) (to emphasize “you”)

Example 29 脚跟不稳，非摔跟头不可。[jiǎo gēn bù wěn, fēi shuāi gēn tóu bù kě.]

(Be careful; otherwise you will suffer a setback.) (to emphasize “suffer a setback”)

Example 30 告诉你，我还非坐花轿不出这个大门。[gào sù nǐ, wǒ hái fēi zuò huā jiào bù chū zhè gè dà mén.]

(I tell you, I won’t leave this house unless by being invited.) (to emphasize “by being invited”)

II. *Compressed sentences consisting of one conjunctive word*

The common conjunctive words stand in the middle of two predicates, including “就 [jiù],” “也 [yě],” “再 [zài],” “又 [yòu],” “都 [dōu],” “倒 [dào],” “却 [què].”

1 “就(便) [jiù (biàn)]”

- (1) Connected by “就(便) [jiù (biàn)],” two predicates can be verbs (phrases), adjectives (phrases), or one verb (phrase) and one adjective (phrase), showing a hypothetical relation, like “如果 . . . 就 . . . [rú guǒ . . . jiù . . .] (if . . .).”

Example 31 你有什么问题就直接谈吧。[nǐ yǒu shén me wèn tí jiù zhí jiē tán ba.]

(Just speak out your question directly.)

Example 32 没有困难就不来求你了。[méi yǒu kùn nán jiù bù lái qiú nǐ le.]

(I won’t ask you for a favor if I have no difficulty.)

Example 33 不重要就不这样急了呀。[bú zhòng yào jiù bù zhè yàng jí le ya.]

(It’s really urgent, otherwise I wouldn’t be in such a hurry.)

Example 34 他愿意来就叫他来。[tā yuàn yì lái jiù jiào tā lái.]

(If he is willing to come, then let him come.)

Example 35 要学什么就要努力学习。[yào xué shén me jiù yào nǔ lì xué xí.]

(If you are determined to learn something, you should study hard.)

“就 [jiù]” can also join identical parts together.

Example 36 玩就玩个痛快。[wán jiù wán gè tòng kuài.]

(If you want to have a good time, do it as much as you can.)

Example 37 干就大干一场。[gàn jiù dà gàn yì chǎng.]

(If you want to do it, do it as much as you can.)

Example 38 搞就把它搞得像个样子。[gǎo jiù bǎ tā gǎo de xiàng gè yàng zi.]
(If you do, try to do it well.)

Example 39 这篇文章好就好在实事求是。[zhè piān wén zhāng hǎo jiù hǎo zài shí shì qiú shì.]
(The advantage of this article is that it is realistic.)

- (2) “就(便) [jiù (biàn)]” can connect two verbs (phrases) to show a concessive relation, like “既然 . . . , 就 . . . [jì rán . . . , jiù . . .] (now that . . .).”

Example 40 说了就得算。[shuō le jiù děi suàn.]
(What is said must be done.)

Example 41 欠账就得还钱。[qiàn zhàng jiù děi huán qián.]
(You must pay what you owe.)

Example 42 好, 那就算了吧! 脾气做成就改不了啦。[hǎo, nà jiù suàn le ba! pí qì zuò chéng jiù gǎi bù liǎo la.]
(Well, forget it! Your temper cannot be changed anymore.)

- (3) “就(便) [jiù (biàn)]” can show a conditional relation, similar to “只要 . . . , 就 . . . [zhǐ yào . . . , jiù . . .] (so long as . . .).”

Example 43 试工期内, 她整天地做, 似乎闲着就无聊。[shì gōng qī nèi, tā zhěng tiān de zuò, sì hū xián zhe jiù wú liáo.]
(During the trial period, she worked all day as if she would be bored if there was nothing to do.)

Example 44 你以为关上电门就解决问题啦。[nǐ yǐ wéi guān shàng diàn mén jiù jiě jué wèn tí la.]
(You think you can solve the problem just by turning off the switch?)

Example 45 这件衣服你做得好坏没关系, 能做上就行了。[zhè jiàn yī fu nǐ zuò de hǎo huài méi guān xi, néng zuò shàng jiù xíng le.]
(It doesn't matter whether you make this dress well or not, just do it.)

Example 46 你把箱子打开看看就知道装什么东西了。[nǐ bǎ xiāng zi dǎ kāi kàn kàn jiù zhī dào zhuāng shén me dōng xī le.]
(You will know what is inside after opening the box.)

Example 47 阿凤见人就问: “你见到我家小花猫了吗?” [Ā Fèng jiàn rén jiù wèn: “nǐ jiàn dào wǒ jiā xiǎo huā māo le ma?”]
(So long as A Feng met someone, she would ask: “have you ever seen my little cat?”)

- (4) “就(便) [jiù (biàn)]” can show a relation of causality, implying “因为 . . . , 就 . . . [yīn wéi . . . , jiù . . .] (because . . .).”

Example 48 他看你不在家就回去了。[tā kàn nǐ bú zài jiā jiù huí qù le.]
(He came to see but you were not at home, so he left.)

Example 49 我让石头碰一下儿就软下来，那还能干什么大事呀。[wǒ ràng shí tóu pèng yí xià er jiù ruǎn xià lái, nà hái néng gàn shén me dà shì ya.]

(How could it be possible that I was knocked over by such a stone; I was not so useless.)

- (5) “就(便) [jiù (biàn)]” expresses an adversative relation.

Example 50 那部电影写得公式化了，刚看一半就知道结局了。[nà bù diàn yǐng xiě de gōng shì huà le, gāng kàn yí bàn jiù zhī dào jié jú le.]
(The film was so stereotypical that I could guess its end halfway through.)

Example 51 这几年气候异常，还没到伏天就这么热了。[zhè jǐ nián qì hòu yì cháng, hái méi dào fú tiān jiù zhè me rè le.]

(In recent years, the climate has been abnormally hot before the dog days.)

2 “也 [yě]”

- (1) “也 [yě]” shows a concessive relation, indicating “即使 . . . , 也 . . . [jí shǐ . . . , yě . . .] (even if . . .).”

Example 52 你有意见也少说，能说的说，不能说的少说。[nǐ yǒu yì jiàn yě shǎo shuō, néng shuō de shuō, bù néng shuō de shǎo shuō.]

(Watch your complaints. Be aware of what should be said and what should not be.)

Example 53 你不赞成也得表个态啊。[nǐ bú zàn chéng yě děi biǎo gè tài ā.]
(Even if you don't agree with it, you have to speak out at least.)

Example 54 我死了也忘不了蒙受的这些玷辱。[wǒ sǐ le yě wàng bù liǎo méng shòu de zhè xiē diàn rǔ.]

(Even if I died, I wouldn't forget the humiliation I suffered.)

Example 55 你跑遍北京城也买不到减肥灵。[nǐ pǎo biàn běi jīng chéng yě mǎi bú dào jiǎn fēi líng.]

(Even searching the whole Beijing city, you cannot buy medicine for immediate weight loss.)

Example 56 别理他，这样的人没理也要强占几分。[bié lǐ tā, zhè yàng de rén méi lǐ yě yào qiáng zhàn jǐ fēn.]

(Stay away from such a man who is good at using lame arguments and perverted logic.)

- (2) “也 [yě]” shows a hypothetical relation, implying “如果 . . . 也 . . . [rú guǒ . . . yě . . .].”

Example 57 咱们俩干的不是一行，想也想不到一块儿，说也说不到一块儿。[zán men liǎ gàn de bú shì yì háng, xiǎng yě xiǎng bù dào yí kuài er, shuō yě shuō bù dào yí kuài er.]

(We are not in the same boat. Therefore, we differ from each other in thinking and talking.)

Example 58 忘了也得唱，不能停，记住了吗。[wàng le yě děi chàng, bù néng tíng, jì zhù le ma.]

(Even if you forget, you have to keep singing. Get it?)

Example 59 我们没有事也不会到这儿来打搅。[wǒ men méi yǒu shì yě bú huì dào zhè ér lái dǎ jiǎo.]

(We won't come here to disturb you if we have no troubles.)

Example 60 我自己会看病也不来求医了。[wǒ zì jǐ huì kàn bìng yě bù lái qiú yī le.]

(I'm not going to see a doctor if I can cure myself.)

- (3) “也 [yě]” shows a conditional relation, expressing “无论 . . . 也 . . . [wú lùn . . . yě . . .] (no matter what . . .).”

Example 61 你说什么也得去。[nǐ shuō shén me yě děi qù.]

(No matter how reluctant you are, you must go there.)

Example 62 风多大也要出海。[fēng duō dà yě yào chū hǎi.]

(No matter how windy it is, you have to go to sea.)

Example 63 妈妈怎么劝也听不进去。[mā mā zěn me quàn yě tīng bú jìn qù.]

(He turned a deaf ear to his mother, no matter how she tried to persuade him.)

Example 64 机器出问题了，怎么修也不转了。[jī qì chū wèn tí le, zěn me xiū yě bú zhuǎn le.]

(There's a problem with the machine. And no matter how it is repaired, it won't work normally.)

- (4) “也 [yě]” shows an adversative or concessive relation, similar to “虽然 . . . , 但是 . . . [suī rán . . . , dàn shì . . .] (although . . .)” or “就是/即使 . . . , 也 . . . [jiù shì/jí shǐ . . . , yě . . .] (even though . . .).”

Example 65 你经验多也不能粗心大意。[nǐ jīng yàn duō yě bù néng cū xīn dà yì.]

(You can't be careless, though you are experienced.)

Example 66 她身体不好也没耽误了工作。[tā shēn tǐ bù hǎo yě méi dān wù le gōng zuò.]

(Although she was in poor health, she didn't delay her work.)

Example 67 法官来了也解决不了你我之间的矛盾。[fǎ guān lái le yě jiě jué bù liǎo nǐ wǒ zhī jiān de máo dùn.]

(Even the judge can't solve the conflict between you and me.)

Example 68 去过也可以再去一趟看看，这么多年总会有变化。[qù guò yě kě yǐ zài qù yī tàng kàn kàn, zhè me duō nián zǒng huì yǒu biàn huà.]

(You might want to have another visit to that place where many changes must have happened in these years.)

Example 69 这件事与我们没关系也应该关心关心。[zhè jiàn shì yǔ wǒ men méi guān xi yě yīng gāi guān xīn guān xīn.]
(Even if it has nothing to do with us, we should at least show our concern for it.)

3 “又 [yòu]”

- (1) “又 [yòu]” shows an adversative relation, indicating “虽然 . . . 但是 . . . [suī rán . . . , dàn shì . . .] (although . . .).”

Example 70 他心碎了，怕看又不能不看。[tā xīn suì le, pà kàn yòu bù néng bú kàn.]

(His heart was broken. He was afraid to see it, but he had to.)

Example 71 刚才我话到舌尖又咽回去了。[gāng cái wǒ huà dào shé jiān yòu yàn huí qù le.]

(What I wanted to say just now came back in my mouth.)

Example 72 老钟看见王林，想说什么又忍住了。[Lǎo Zhōng kàn jiàn Wáng Lín, xiǎng shuō shén me yòu rěn zhù le.]

(When Lao Zhong saw Wang Lin, he was about to speak, but said nothing at last.)

Example 73 当时瑞娟好像要说不去又没说出来。[dāng shí Ruì Juān hǎo xiàng yào shuō bú qù yòu méi shuō chū lái.]

(At that time, Rui Juan intended to speak out her unwillingness to go, but she failed to do so at last.)

Example 74 方立想要又不好意思开口。[Fāng Lì xiǎng yào yòu bù hǎo yì sī kāi kǒu.]

(Fang Li wanted it, but he was too embarrassed to speak out.)

- (2) “又 [yòu]” shows a hypothetical relation, expressing “如果(说) . . . [rú guǒ (shuō) . . .] (if . . .).”

Example 75 大刘跑又跑得快，跳又跳得高，为什么不参加运动会。[Dà Liú pǎo yòu pǎo de kuài, tiào yòu tiào dé gāo, wèi shén me bù cān jiā yùn dòng huì.]

(Da Liu is good at running and jumping. So why doesn't he take part in the sports meeting?)

Example 76 这些事在信里写又写不清楚，还是面谈吧。[zhè xiē shì zài xìn lǐ xiě yòu xiě bù qīng chǔ, hái shì miàn tán ba.]

(These things can't be explained clearly by letter, so let's have a face-to-face talk.)

Example 77 这么远的路，骑车又不会骑，走路又走不动，还是不去的好。[zhè me yuǎn de lù, qí chē yòu bú huì qí, zǒu lù yòu zǒu bú dòng, hái shì bú qù de hǎo.]

(It's better not to go for such a long journey if you are unable to ride a bike, or not are ready to walk a long time.)

Example 78 我家小胖胖吃又能吃，睡又能睡，没有什么病。[wǒ jiā xiǎo Pàng pàng chī yòu néng chī, shuì yòu néng shuì, méi yǒu shén me bing.]

(Our little Pangpang eats well and sleeps well. He is fit.)

Example 79 这种旅行袋背又好背，提又好提，买一个吧。[zhè zhǒng lǚ xíng dài bēi yòu hǎo bēi, tí yòu hǎo tí, mǎi yí gè ba.]

(This kind of travel bag is easy to carry on the shoulder or with the hand. So just buy one.)

- (3) “又 [yòu]” shows a concessive relation, implying “即使 . . . [jí shǐ . . .] (even though . . .).”

Example 80 我就不说又能把我怎么样。[wǒ jiù bù shuō yòu néng bǎ wǒ zěn me yàng.]

(What if I don't tell.)

Example 81 你比别人都能干又有什么了不起的。[nǐ bǐ bié rén dōu néng gàn yòu yǒu shén me liǎo bù qǐ de.]

(What a big deal even if you can do better than anyone else.)

Example 82 隔壁有人又怎么样。[gé bì yǒu rén yòu zěn me yàng.]

(What if someone is next door?)

Example 83 这群歹徒！烧了房子又能吓住谁？[zhè qún dǎi tú! shāo le fǎng zi yòu néng xià zhù shuí?]

(Such gangsters! They cannot scare anyone, even if they burned the house!)

4 “还 [hái]”

- (1) “又 [yòu]” shows an adversative relation, indicating “虽然 . . . , 但是还 . . . [suī rán . . . , dàn shì hái . . .] (although . . .).”

Example 84 他们失败了还要干。[tā men shī bài le hái yào gàn.]

(Even if they fail, they'll do it continuously.)

Example 85 这孩子饱了还想吃。[zhè hái zi bǎo le hái xiǎng chī.]

(The child still wants to take more, even if he is full.)

Example 86 祥子冻得穿着棉袄还不住地搓着手。[Xiáng Zǐ dòng de chuān zhe mián ǎo hái bú zhù de cuō zhe shǒu.]

(Even in his padded jacket, Xiang Zi was so cold that he couldn't help rubbing his hands.)

Example 87 老伯伯头发都白了还练基本功呢。[lǎo bó bó tóu fā dōu bái le hái liàn jī běn gōng ne.]

(The old uncle is still practicing basic skills, regardless of his age.)

- (2) “又 [yòu]” shows a concessive relation, expressing “即使 . . . [jí shǐ . . .] (even though . . .)” or “就是 . . . [jiù shì . . .] (even if . . .).”

Example 88 您真抠门，买个小孩玩意儿还得块八毛呢！给这么几个钱 . . . 。 [nín zhēn kōu mén, mǎi gè xiǎo hái wán yì er hái děi kuài bā máo ne! gěi zhè me jǐ gè qián . . .]

(You are really mean! Such little money is not enough for a cheap toy, let alone for me . . .)

Example 89 你别小看这个工作，你想干还不让你干呢。 [nǐ bié xiǎo kàn zhè gè gōng zuò, nǐ xiǎng gàn hái bú ràng nǐ gàn ne.]

(Don't look down upon this job. You may not be allowed to do it, even if you want to.)

Example 90 嗯，你不让我去，下次请我去还不去了。 [èn, nǐ bú ràng wǒ qù, xià cì qǐng wǒ qù hái bú qù le.]

(Well, if you don't let me go now, I won't go next time, even if I'm invited.)

Example 91 你这个人真是！打狗还得看主人呢！ [nǐ zhè gè rén zhēn shì! dǎ gǒu hái děi kàn zhǔ rén ne!]

(How could you be like that! You know, to beat a dog depends on its master.)

- (3) “又 [yòu]” shows a hypothetical relation, implying “如果 . . . [rú guǒ . . .] (if . . .).”

Example 92 我不信任你还告诉你这事。 [wǒ bú xìn rèn nǐ hái gào sù nǐ zhè shì.]

(If I don't trust you, I won't tell you about it.)

Example 93 我懂还来问你。 [wǒ dǒng hái lái wèn nǐ.]

(I won't ask for your suggestion if I can understand it.)

Example 94 有意见还不提？用得着你来问。 [yǒu yì jiàn hái bù tí? yòng de zháo nǐ lái wèn.]

(Why don't you speak out your opinion? What do you wait for?)

Example 95 我们要不开车厂子，你们想拉车还没地儿拉呢。 [wǒ men yào bù kāi chē chǎng zi, nǐ men xiǎng lā chē hái méi dì ér lā ne.]

(If we didn't run a rickshaw factory, you would have had no chance to be a driver of a rickshaw.)

5 “再 [zài]”

“再 [zài]” shows a hypothetical relation, indicating “如果 . . . [rú guǒ . . .].”

Example 96 有意见以后再提，现在不是时候。 [yǒu yì jiàn yǐ hòu zài tí, xiàn zài bú shì shí hòu.]

(Speak out your opinion later, but not now.)

Example 97 我看就这么办吧，出了问题再研究。[wǒ kàn jiù zhè me bàn ba, chū le wèn tí zài yán jiū.]

(I think we can do it in this way. If something goes wrong, we will try to solve it.)

Example 98 计划就这样吧，他不同意再改。[jì huá jiù zhè yàng ba, tā bù tóng yì zài gǎi.]

(That's the plan for a moment. We can improve it further if he doesn't agree.)

6 “才 [cái]”

“才 [cái]” shows a conditional relation, expressing “只有 . . . , 才 . . . [zhǐ yǒu . . . , cái . . .] (only . . .).”

Example 99 坚持到底才能胜利。[jiān chí dào dǐ cái néng shèng lì.]
(Only by sticking to the end can we win.)

Example 100 果子熟了才能摘。[guǒ zi shú le cái néng zhāi.]
(The fruit will not be picked until it is ripe.)

Example 101 站得高才能看得远。[zhàn de gāo cái néng kàn de yuǎn.]
(You have to stand high in order to see far.)

7 “都 [dōu]”

- (1) “都 [dōu]” shows a concessive relation, indicating “就是 . . . [jiù shì . . .] (even if . . .)” or “即使 . . . [jí shǐ . . .] (even if . . .).”

Example 102 你走都走不稳，还想跑。[nǐ zǒu dōu zǒu bù wěn, hái xiǎng pǎo.]
(If you can't walk steadily, don't try to run in vain.)

Example 103 老人生气了，看都没看一眼，接过去就撕了。[lǎo rén shēng qì le, kàn dōu méi kàn yì yǎn, jiē guò qù jiù sī le.]
(Being angry, the old man took it and tore it without a look at it.)

Example 104 那天，他来我家，坐都没坐一会儿就匆忙地走了。[nà tiān, tā lái wǒ jiā, zuò dōu méi zuò yì huì er jiù cōng máng de zǒu le.]
(That day, he came to my house and then left in a hurry without staying for a while.)

Example 105 王欢喝口水都长肉，他胖得发愁。[Wáng Huān hē kǒu shuǐ dōu zhǎng ròu, tā pàng de fā chóu.]
(Wang Huan worries about his increasing weight, for him it is so easy to gain weight.)

- (2) “都 [dōu]” shows a conditional relation, expressing “无论 . . . 都 . . . [wú lùn . . . dōu . . .] (no matter what . . .).”

Example 106 谁看见她都喜欢得不得了。[shuí kàn jiàn tā dōu xǐ huān de bù dé liǎo.]

(No one could see her without loving her.)

Example 107 走吧，走吧，跟他说啥都白搭唾沫。[zǒu ba, zǒu ba, gēn tā shuō shá dōu bái dā tuò mò.]

(Let's go, come on. It's no use talking to him.)

Example 108 那天来参加婚礼的人，谁看见新郎新娘都多看两眼。[nà tiān lái cān jiā hūn lǐ de rén, shuí kàn jiàn xīn láng xīn niáng dōu duō kàn liǎng yǎn.]

(Whoever came to the wedding couldn't help looking at the bride and groom.)

Example 109 前门我已经开开了，什么时候想跑都可以跑掉。[qián mén wǒ yǐ jīng kāi kāi le, shén me shí hòu xiǎng pǎo dōu kě yǐ pǎo diào.]

(I've already left the front door open, and you can run away from there any minute.)

8 “却 [què]”

“却 [què]” shows an adversative relation, implying “虽然...，但是... [suī rán... , dàn shì...] (although...).”

Example 110 三姑娘有才却不外露。[Sān Gū niáng yǒu cái què bú wài lù.]
(San Guniang has talent, but she doesn't show it off.)

Example 111 这个戏情节简单却引人深思。[zhè gè xì qíng jié jiǎn dān què yǐn rén shēn sī.]

(The plot of the play is simple but thought-provoking.)

Example 112 喜旺看见了却只装没看见。[Xǐ Wàng kàn jiàn le què zhǐ zhuāng méi kàn jiàn.]

(Xi Wang saw it, but pretended not to have seen it.)

III. *Compressed sentences with no conjunctive words*

There are many compressed sentences that don't take any conjunctive words.

Example 113 干吧！出了问题找我。[gàn ba! chū le wèn tí zhǎo wǒ.]
(Go ahead! Come to me if there's a problem.)

Example 114 你身子骨又弱，工作又累，病倒了怎么办。[nǐ shēn zi gǔ yòu ruò, gōng zuò yòu lèi, bìng dào le zěn me bàn.]
(You are not healthy. What could I do if you fell ill because of such laborious work?)

Example 115 猜错了可挨罚。[cāi cuò le kě āi fá.]
(If you guess wrong, you will be punished.)

Example 116 不同意别勉强。[bù tóng yì bié miǎn qiáng.]
(Don't be forced to agree reluctantly, if you disagree.)

Example 117 老师教的单词我学几个忘几个。[lǎo shī jiāo de dān cí wǒ xué jǐ gè wàng jǐ gè.]
(I always forget what I have been taught by my teacher.)

IV. Compressed sentences consisting of conjunctions

To be exact, this is a kind of incompletely compressed sentence in which two predicates are closely connected by a conjunction that, in turn, clearly reflects the relation between them.

Example 118 要是他不同意怎么办。[yào shì tā bù tóng yì zěn me bàn.]
(What if he doesn't agree?)

Example 119 我因为等你才没去。[wǒ yīn wéi děng nǐ cái méi qù.]
(I didn't go because I was waiting for you.)

Thus it can be seen that a compressed sentence depends on the context more than sentences of other types, since each conjunctive word may show several relations.

Besides, it is widely used in the spoken language because it expresses rich meanings in a concise form.

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11 Discourses

Usually, when we talk, we speak more than one word or one sentence; in other words, we speak out a serial of sentences which are called the flow of speech. A sentence is the smallest unit possessing a complete meaning in the flow of speech. Compared with a sentence, a sentence group and a discourse are bigger units.

A sentence group consists of more than one sentence, which are successively connected to aim at a certain topic.

A discourse is composed of sentence groups to show an approach to communication, such as a conversation, an article, a poem, an advertisement, or an instruction.

In the flow of speech, discourse can decide how a sentence is structured and how sentences are arranged. Many grammatical phenomena cannot be interpreted fully unless in a sentence group or discourse, such as a “把 [bǎ]” sentence, “被 [bèi]” sentence, topic-exposition sentence, or “了 [le]” as a dynamic auxiliary word. Considering discourse research as an independent field in linguistics, this chapter is to introduce some relevant issues about discourse in teaching Chinese as a second language.

Section one: information, topic, and focus

We communicate in language and communication is informative. In other words, the sentence in communication is supposed to be informative as well as qualified with syntactic rules.

I. Known information and new information

The information transmitted successively between the speaker and the listener can be divided into known information and new information. Usually, new information comes before known information in a Chinese sentence.

To the listener, the information, no matter known or new, is often assumed by the speaker. New information is also called unknown information; known information can be called old information.

Known information refers to that previously mentioned in the context; that is to say, the information once appeared in the context would become the known information when it is mentioned again.

Example 1

A: 我上个月去了一趟雅鲁藏布大峡谷。[wǒ shàng gè yuè qù le yí tàng yǎ lǔ zàng bù dà xiá gǔ.]
(I went to the Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon last month.)

B: 那个地方我也去过，非常雄伟壮观。[nà gè dì fāng wǒ yě qù guò, fēi cháng xióng wěi zhuàng guān.]
(I've been there before. It's very magnificent.)

“雅鲁藏布大峡谷 [yǎ lǔ zàng bù dà xiá gǔ] (Yarlung Zangbo Grand Canyon)” appears in the preceding sentence, and as the known information, it is replaced by “那个地方 [nà gè dì fāng] (there)” and put at the beginning of the second sentence.

Example 2 昨天我买了一本刚刚出版的新书。那本书很有意思，回来以后我一口气把它看完了。[zuó tiān wǒ mǎi le yì běn gāng gāng chū bǎn de xīn shū. nà běn shū hěn yǒu yì sī, huí lái yǐ hòu wǒ yì kǒu qì bǎ tā kàn wán le.]

(Yesterday I bought a new book just published. That book was so interesting that I finished it in one sitting after I came back.)

“一本书 [yì běn shū] (a book)” is mentioned in the first sentence. As the known information, it is replaced by “它 [tā] (it)” and should be put after “把 [bǎ]” rather than “看完 [kàn wán] (finish)” in the last clause.

Contextual situation also helps in distinguishing known information.

Example 3 这件衣服你喜欢吗。[zhè jiàn yī fu nǐ xǐ huān ma.]

(Do you like this dress?) (“this dress” as the known information)

Example 4 请你把桌子上那本词典递给我。[qǐng nǐ bǎ zhuō zi shàng nà běn cí diǎn dì gěi wǒ.]

(Please pass me the dictionary on the table.) (“the dictionary on the table” as the known information)

Usually, common sense is included into the known information, such as daily meals, transportation in traveling, or school life of students and faculties.

The shared background between the speaker and the listener belongs to the known information as well. For instance, if “小白 [Xiǎo Bái] (Xiao Bai)” as the name of a dog is shared by both sides, the question “小白怎么样? [Xiǎo Bái zěnmeyàng?] (How about Xiao Bai?)” can be posed directly without any further interpretation.

Besides, information familiar or well-known to people can be included in the known information, such as religions, social behavior patterns, social cultures, the knowledge about nature, public transportation, famous churches or universities, social news, and so on.

II. *Topic and exposition*

1 Topic

A topic is to be explained; in turn, commentary explains the topic. In a sentence, the topic is usually regarded as known information conveyed by a nominal constituent at the head of a sentence and the comment is new information. Both of them are also called theme and comment by some people.

Example 5 姐姐上个月从美国回来了。[jiě jiě shàng gè yuè cóng měi guó huí lái le.]

(My sister came back from America last month.) (“my sister” as the theme)

Example 6 这个地方只能摆一张床，想再放一个柜子，根本不可能。[zhè gè dì fāng zhǐ néng bǎi yì zhāng chuáng, xiǎng zài fàng yí gè guì zi, gēn běn bù kě néng.]

(Only one bed can be put in this place and it is impossible to put another cupboard here at all.) (“this place” as the topic)

Example 7 这本书虽然写完了，可是我还没有做索引呢，你不能拿走。[zhè běn shū suī rán xiě wán le, kě shì wǒ hái méi yǒu zuò suǒ yǐn ne, nǐ bù néng ná zǒu.]

(This book has been finished, but you can't take it away because I haven't indexed it yet.) (“this book” as the topic)

Example 8 婚姻的事，应该让孩子自己做主，都什么年代了。[hūn yīn de shì, yīng gāi ràng hái zǐ zì jǐ zuò zhǔ, dōu shén me nián dài le.]

(Marriage should be decided by children themselves, especially in this era.) (“marriage” as the topic)

Example 9 小高学习努力，工作积极。[Xiǎo Gāo xué xí nǚ lì, gōng zuò jī jí.]

(Xiao Gao studies hard and works actively.) (“Xiao Gao” as the topic)

As it can be seen from these examples, a topic can refer to a doer, a recipient, a location, a tool, or a thing involved. Therefore, a topic can be semantically connected with the verb in a sentence. For instance, when the topic refers to a recipient, it can be put after or before the verb, like “写完了这本书/这本书写完了 [xiě wán le zhè běn shū/zhè běn shū xiě wán le] (finished the book).” If such a semantic relation doesn't exist in structure, the topic cannot be moved freely. For example, “婚姻的事 [hūn yīn de shì] (marriage)” in “婚姻的事应该由孩子自己作主 [hūn yīn de shì yīng gāi yóu hái zǐ zì jǐ zuò zhǔ] (Marriage should be decided by children themselves)” cannot be put after “应该由孩子自己作主 [yīng gāi yóu hái zǐ zì jǐ zuò zhǔ] (be decided by children themselves).”

If the constituents as the known information appear simultaneously in a sentence, such as a doer, a thing involved, a location, a tool, or a recipient, comparatively speaking a doer has less possibility to be a topic than other constituents.

2 Topic and subject

A subject is involved in a sentence structure; a topic is connected with a discourse in a certain context. The features about them are as follows.

(1) Features of a subject

- a Semantically, a subject is closely related to the predicate verb. For instance, the subject can be the doer of an action conveyed by the predicate verb in a sentence; or it refers to something to be judged by the relation verb functioning as the predicate. In a “被 [bèi]” sentence, the subject can be the recipient of an action.
- b No preposition is permitted to appear before subject.

(2) Features of a topic

- a Mainly served by a nominal constituent, the topic often appears at the head of sentence, along with a speech pause or an addition of modal particle, such as “啊 [ā],” “吧 [ba],” “吗 [ma],” or “呢 [ne].”
- b A topic is usually regarded as the known information.
- c Compared with a subject, a topic is less related to the predicate verb. Besides being the recipient of an action, it can possibly be a tool or a location, like what has been mentioned previously.

Example 10 “巴札”是维吾尔语，汉语是“集市”的意思。[“bā zhá” shì wéi yǔ, hàn yǔ shì “jí shì” de yì sī.]
 (“Bazar” is Uyghur and it means “market” in Chinese.)

“巴札 [bā zhá] (Bazar)” is the topic, which is less related to the second clause in semantic aspect. Here are other similar examples.¹

Example 11 看书写文章，他都在晚上。[kàn shū xiě wén zhāng, tā dōu zài wǎn shàng.]
 (He reads and writes in the evening.)

Example 12 吃饭，我喜欢西餐。[chī fàn, wǒ xǐ huān xī cān.]
 (As for eating, I like Western food.)

- d Semantically, a topic can be connected with several sentences in a sentence group.

Example 13 这本书我看过了，没有意思，你不要买。[zhè běn shū wǒ kàn guò le, méi yǒu yì sī, nǐ bú yào mǎi.]
 (I’ve read this book. It’s not interesting so don’t buy it.)

In this example, “这本书 [zhè běn shū] (this book)” is the topic that is semantically related to the next two sentences. “我 [wǒ] (I)” is the subject of the first sentence and “你 [nǐ] (you)” is the subject of the second sentence.

Sometimes, the topic and subject can be identical when the known information doesn't exist, nor is offered by the context or is simply served by the doer of an action.

Example 14 教师是人类灵魂的工程师。[jiào shī shì rén lèi líng hún de gōng chéng shī.]

(Teachers are the engineers of the human soul.)

Example 15 我每天早上八点起床，八点半上班。[wǒ měi tiān zǎo shàng bā diǎn qǐ chuáng, bā diǎn bàn shàng bān.]

(I get up at eight every morning and go to work at half-past eight.)

Example 16 一个穿红衣服的女孩突然站起来向台上走去，引起了全场的人的注意。[yí gè chuān hóng yī fú de nǚ hái tū rán zhàn qǐ lái xiàng tái shàng zǒu qù, yīn qǐ le quán chǎng de rén de zhù yì.]

(A girl in red suddenly stood up and walked to the stage, which attracted the attention of the whole audience.)

III. *Focus*

In a sentence, focus refers to the core of new information as well as the semantic highlight. That is to say, it is what the speaker most wants to transmit to the listener. It can be divided into three categories: ordinary focus, comparative focus, focus of comparative topic.

1 Ordinary focus

As previously mentioned, the known information goes first and then the new information follows. As the core of new information, an ordinary focus is usually put at the end of a sentence, mainly served by the notional word with a speech stress.

Example 17 把书放在桌子上。[bǎ shū fàng zài zhuō zi shàng.]² (Put the book on the table.)

Example 18 他今天早上睡到十点。[tā jīn tiān zǎo shàng shuì dào shí diǎn.] (He slept until ten this morning.)

Example 19 姐姐刚才买了三件衣服。[jiě jiě gāng cái mǎi le sān jiàn yī fu.] (My sister just bought three items of clothing.)

Example 20 他轻轻地把书放下了。[tā qīng qīng de bǎ shū fàng xià le.] (He put the book down gently.)

Example 21 我明天要去上海。[wǒ míng tiān yào qù shàng hǎi.]
(I am going to Shanghai tomorrow.)

In Chinese grammar, modifiers are easier to be accepted as ordinary focuses, like “三件 [sān jiàn] (three)” and “轻轻地 [qīng qīng de] (gently)” in the examples.

A focus can be used to answer the question that is posed for the focus itself.

Example 22 把书放在哪儿?[bǎ shū fàng zài nǎ er?]
(Where should I put the book?)
桌子上。[zhuō zi shàng.]
(On the table.)

Example 23 他今天早上睡到什么时候。[tā jīn tiān zǎo shàng shuì dào shén me shí hòu.]
(When did he wake up this morning?)
十点。[shí diǎn.]
(Ten o'clock.)

Example 24 姐姐刚才买了几件衣服。[jiě jiě gāng cái mǎi le jǐ jiàn yī fu.]
(How many clothes did sister just buy?)
三件 (衣服)。[sān jiàn (yī fu).]
(Three items of (clothing).)

Example 25 他把书放下了吗? [tā bǎ shū fàng xià le ma.]
(Did he put the book down?)
放下了。[fàng xià le.]
(Yes, he did.)

Example 26 你明天要去哪儿? [nǐ míng tiān yào qù nǎ ér?]
(Where are you going tomorrow?)
上海。[shàng hǎi.]
(Shanghai.)

2 Comparative focus

As its name implies, it is the focus to be compared, well-known by the listener or both the listener and the speaker. It is highlighted by the speaker with a speech stress. Nevertheless, it cannot co-exist with the ordinary focus; that is to say, its appearance is often accompanied with the disappearance of ordinary focus.

Example 27

A: 小李明天去上海, 是不是?[Xiǎo Lǐ míng tiān qù shàng hǎi, shì bú shì?]
(Xiao Li will go to Shanghai tomorrow, won't he?)

B: 不, 他后天去 (上海)。[bù, tā hòu tiān qù (shàng hǎi).]
(No, he will go to (Shanghai) the day after tomorrow.)

Except for function words, any other constituent can be the comparative focus.

Example 28

‘我们班昨天来了一位男老师。[wǒ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī.]

(A male teacher came to our class yesterday.) (to compare with “other classes”)

我们班’昨天来了一位男老师。[wǒ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī.]

(A male teacher came to our class yesterday.) (to highlight “yesterday”)

我们班昨天’来了一位男老师。[wǒ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī.]

(A male teacher came to our class yesterday.) (based on a fact that “one teacher left.”)

我们班昨天来了’一位男老师。[wǒ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī.]

(A male teacher came to our class yesterday.) (to highlight “one”)

我们班昨天来了一位’男老师。[wǒ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī.]

(A male teacher came to our class yesterday.) (to highlight “male”)

Besides the speech stress, non-stressed “是 [shì]” is its other mark.

Example 29

我是’救你，不是’害你。[wǒ shì jiù nǐ, bú shì hài nǐ.]

(I’m trying to save you, not hurt you.)

是’我救了你，不是’他。[shì wǒ jiù le nǐ, bú shì tā.]

(It is I not he that saved you.)

他是’明天来，不是’今天。[tā shì míng tiān lái, bú shì jīn tiān.]

(He will come tomorrow, but not today.)

The third mark is “是... [shì...]” in a “是... 的 [shì... de]” sentence. Inside, the predicate verb conveys the known information; the comparative focus appears after “是 [shì]” which can be omitted, sometimes. It is usually stressed in speech.

Example 30

A: 你是’什么时候来的。[nǐ shì shén me shí hòu lái de.]

(When did you get here?)

B: 我是’昨天来的。[wǒ shì zuó tiān lái de.]

(I came here yesterday.)

Example 31

A: 你是’跟谁一起来的。[nǐ shì gēn shuí yì qǐ lái de.]

(Whom did you come with?)

B: 我是跟朋友一起来的。[wǒ shì gēn péng yǒu yì qǐ lái de.]
(I came with my friends.)

Example 32 这双鞋我是'在欧洲买的。[zhè shuāng xié wǒ shì zài ōu zhōu mǎi de.]
(I bought this pair of shoes in Europe.)

Likewise, the comparative focus can be used to answer the question that is posed for the focus itself.

Example 33

A: 你是'怎么来的。[nǐ shì zěn me lái de.]
(How did you get here?)

B: 坐飞机。[zuò fēi jī.]
(By plane.)

Example 34

A: 你们班昨天来了一位男老师，是吗。[nǐ men bān zuó tiān lái le yí wèi nán lǎo shī, shì ma.]
(A male teacher came to your class yesterday, didn't he?)

B: 不，是'今天。[bù, shì jīn tiān.]
(No, he came to our class today.)

Example 35

A: 听说你哥哥昨天给你寄来很多钱。[tīng shuō nǐ gē gē zuó tiān gěi nǐ jì lái hěn duō qián.]
(I heard that your brother sent you a lot of money yesterday.)

B: 不，是我'姐姐寄了一些钱。[bù, shì wǒ jiě jiě jì le yì xiē qián.]
(No, my sister did.)

Example 36

A: 是'谁救了她? [shì shuí jiù le tā?]
(Who saved her?)

B: 她男朋友。[tā nán péng yǒu.]
(Her boyfriend.)

Example 37

A: 你是'什么时候来的? [nǐ shì shén me shí hòu lái de?]
(When did you arrive here?)

B: 昨天。[zuó tiān.]
(Yesterday.)

Since the last two examples don't have comparative focuses in the questions, “是 [shì]” is used to reveal the focus in the answer, along with a repetition of another constituent sometimes, such as “是今天 [shì jīn tiān] (today)” or “是我姐姐 [shì wǒ jiě jiě] (my sister).”

3 Comparative topic as the focus

Usually, a topic as the known information cannot be a focus unless it appears in the sentence pattern indicating a comparison.

(1) “subject+recipient constituent+ . . . , recipient constituent+ . . .”

Generally speaking, if the recipient is new information, it should be put after the verb; if it is the known information, it should appear at the head of sentence to function as the topic.

Example 38

我认识老李。[wǒ rèn shí Lǎo Lǐ.]

(I know Lao Li.)

老李我认识。[Lǎo Lǐ wǒ rèn shí.]

(I know Lao Li.)

This example cannot be changed into “*我老李认识。[wǒ Lǎo Lǐ rèn shí.]” unless it is in a comparative sentence.

Example 39 我老李认识，老张不认识。[wǒ Lǎo Lǐ rèn shí, Lǎo Zhāng bú rèn shí.]

(I know Lao Li, but I don't know Lao Zhang.)

In this example, “老李 [Lǎo Lǐ] (Lao Li as the recipient)” is put after “我 [wǒ] (I as doer/topic/subject)” that is semantically related to the next two clauses. “老李 [Lǎo Lǐ] (Lao Li)” is the comparative topic (the second topic). Similar examples are as follows.

Example 40 我鸡不吃了，拿走吧，鱼还吃。[wǒ jī bù chī le, ná zǒu ba, yú hái chī.]

(I don't eat chicken. You can take it away and leave the fish here.)

Example 41 玛丽北京去过，上海没去过。[Mǎ lì běi jīng qù guò, shàng hǎi méi qù guò.]

(Mary has been to Beijing but not to Shanghai.)

In these examples, “鸡 [jī] (chicken)” and “北京 [běi jīng] (Beijing)” are comparative focuses.

(2) “连 . . . 也/都 . . . [lián . . . yě/dōu . . .] (even . . .)”

The comparative topic is after “连 [lián] (even)” with a speech stress.

Example 42

A: 你去过很多国家吧。[nǐ qù guò hěn duō guó jiā ba.]

(Have you been to a lot of countries?)

B: 哪里, 我连北京城都没出去过。[nǎ lǐ, wǒ lián běi jīng chéng dōu méi chū qù guò.]

(No, actually I haven't even been out of Beijing.)

Example 43

A: 约翰的中文怎么样。[Yuē hàn de zhōng wén zěn me yàng.]

(How about John's Chinese?)

B: 相当好, 他连“红楼梦”都能看了。[xiāng dāng hǎo, tā lián “hóng lóu mèng” dōu néng kàn le.]

(Pretty good. He can even read *A Dream of Red Mansions*.)

Example 44

A: 我今天请客, 老张敢吃生鱼片吗。[wǒ jīn tiān qǐng kè, Lǎo Zhāng gǎn chī shēng yú piàn ma.]

(It's on me today. Can Lao Zhang eat sashimi?)

B: 他呀, 连生老鼠都敢吃。[tā ya, lián shēng lǎo shǔ dōu gǎn chī.]

(Oh, yes. He even dares to eat raw mice.)

Example 45 这么容易的字一年级小学生都认识, 你这个大学教授怎么会不认识呢? [zhè me róng yì de zì yī nián jí xiǎo xué shēng dōu rèn shí, nǐ zhè gè dà xué jiào shòu zěn me huì bú rèn shí ne?]

(It's a piece of cake for a first-year-grade primary school to recognize this word. And you, as a university professor, how can you not even know it?)

In these examples, the nouns after “连 [lián] (even)” indicate the extreme situations (the best or the worst), thus “连 . . . 也/都 . . . [lián . . . yě/dōu . . .] (even . . .)” implies that the extreme situation happens, let alone the common one. For instance, “连北京城都没出去过 [lián běi jīng chéng dōu méi chū qù guò] (haven't been out of Beijing)” and “连‘红楼梦’都能看了 [lián‘hóng lóu mèng’ dōu néng kàn le] (even read *A Dream of Red Mansions*)” represent the extreme situations in these examples.

“连 . . . [lián . . .] (even . . .)” can be put before the head of sentence.

Example 46

A: 你去过很多国家吧。[nǐ qù guò hěn duō guó jiā ba.]

(Have you been to a lot of countries?)

B: 哪里, 连‘北京城’我都没出去过。[nǎ lǐ, lián běi jīng chéng wǒ dōu méi chū qù guò.]

(No, actually I haven't even been out of Beijing.)

Example 47

A: 约翰的中文怎么样。[Yuē hàn de zhōng wén zěn me yàng.]

(How about John's Chinese?)

B: 相当好, 连“红楼梦”他都能看了。[xiāng dāng hǎo, lián “hóng lóu mèng” tā dōu néng kàn le.]

(Pretty good. He can even understand *A Dream of Red Mansions*.)

Example 48

A: 我今天请客, 老张敢吃生鱼片吗。[wǒ jīn tiān qǐng kè, Lǎo Zhāng gǎn chī shēng yú piàn ma.]

(It's on me today. Can Lao Zhang eat sashimi?)

B: 没问题, 连生老鼠他都敢吃。[méi wèn tí, lián shēng lǎo shǔ tā dōu gǎn chī.]

(No problem, and he even dares to eat raw mice.)

Sometimes, the comparative topic can be served by a verbal constituent in “连...也/都... [lián... yě/dōu...] (even...).”

Example 49 她的男朋友给她买了一本书, 她连看都没看就扔到一边去了。[tā de nán péng yǒu gěi tā mǎi le yī běn shū, tā lián kàn dōu méi kàn jiù rēng dào yī biān qù le.]

(Her boyfriend bought her a book, but she put it aside without even reading it.)

Example 50 他把一件穿过好长时间的衣服, 从脏衣服堆里翻出来, 连洗都没洗, 就穿上作客去了。[tā bǎ yī jiàn chuān guò hǎo cháng shí jiān de yī fu, cóng zāng yī fu duī lǐ fān chū lái, lián xǐ dōu méi xǐ, jiù chuān shàng zuò kè qù le.]

(He picked one out of a pile of dirty clothes unwashed for a long time, and put it on to visit people.)

Example 51 客人进来以后, 他连头也不抬, 只是努努嘴, 示意叫他坐下。[kè rén jìn lái yǐ hòu, tā lián tóu yě bú tái, zhǐ shì nǔ nǔ zuǐ, shì yì jiào tā zuò xià.]

(When the guest came in, he did not even raise his head but pouted his lips at the guest, hinting for him to sit down.)

In the last examples, “连...也/都... [lián... yě/dōu...] (even...)” implies the thing that is not accomplished as expected. For instance, Example 50 implies that he should at least have worn the clean cloth for a visit.

Sometimes, “连 [lián] (even)” can be absent in “连...也/都... [lián... yě/dōu...] (even...)” without changing the speech stress on the comparative topic after it.

Example 52

A: 你去过很多国家吧。[nǐ qù guò hěn duō guó jiā ba.]

(Have you been to a lot of countries?)

B: 哪里, 我北京城都没出去过。[nǎ lǐ, wǒ běi jīng chéng dōu méi chū qù guò.]

(No, actually I haven't even been out of Beijing.)

Example 53

A: 约翰的中文怎么样。[Yuē hàn de zhōng wén zěn me yàng.]

(How about John's Chinese?)

B: 相当好,“红楼梦”都能看了。[xiāng dāng hǎo,“hóng lóu mèng”dōu néng kàn le.]

(Pretty good. He can even understand *A Dream of Red Mansions*.)

Example 54 她的男朋友给她买了一本书,她看都没看就扔到一边去了。[tā de nán péng yǒu gěi tā mǎi le yī běn shū, tā kàn dōu méi kàn jiù rēng dào yī biān qù le.]

(Her boyfriend bought her a book, but she put it aside without even reading it.)

Example 55 这么容易的字一年级小学生都认识,你这个‘大学教授怎么会不认识呢? [zhè me róng yì de zì yī nián jí xiǎo xué shēng dōu rèn shí, nǐ zhè gè dà xué jiào shòu zěn me huì bú rèn shí ne?]

(It’s a piece of cake for a first-year-grade primary school to recognize this word. And you, as a university professor, how can you not even know it?)

(3) Interrogative pronouns

Some interrogative pronouns can function as comparative topics due to their arbitrary reference, such as “谁 [shuí] (who),” “什么 [shén me] (what),” or “哪儿 [nǎ er] (where).”

Example 56 这儿的人,我谁都不认识。[zhè er de rén, wǒ shuí dōu bú rèn shí.]

(I know nobody here.)

Example 57 他这个人见多识广,哪儿都去过。[tā zhè gè rén jiàn duō shí guǎng, nǎ er dōu qù guò.]

(He’s a well-informed man who has been everywhere.)

Example 58 我现在还不饿,什么都不想吃。[wǒ xiàn zài hái bú è, shén me dōu bù xiǎng chī.]

(I’m not hungry now, so I don’t want to take anything.)

The interrogative pronouns in these examples can be put after the doers.

Example 59 这儿的人,谁我都不认识。[zhè er de rén, shuí wǒ dōu bú rèn shí.]

(I don’t know anyone here.)

Example 60 这个人见多识广,哪儿他都去过。[zhè gè rén jiàn duō shí guǎng, nǎ er tā dōu qù guò.]

(This man is a well-informed man and he’s been everywhere.)

Example 61 现在还不饿,什么我都不想吃。[jiàn zài hái bú è, shén me wǒ dōu bù xiǎng chī.]

(I’m not hungry now, so I don’t want to take anything.)

However, the interrogative pronouns cannot be put after the verbs.

(4) “一 . . . 也/都不 [yī . . . yě/dōu bú]”

Example 62 这些书他一本都不喜欢。[zhè xiē shū tā yì běn dōu bù xǐ huān.]
(He doesn't like any of these books.)

Example 63 那儿一户人家都没有，不太安全。[nà ér yì hù rén jiā dōu méi yǒu, bú tài ān quán.]
(Nobody lives here, so it is not safe to stay here.)

Example 64 这件事跟你一点关系也没有，你着什么急。[zhè jiàn shì gēn nǐ yì diǎn guān xì yě méi yǒu, nǐ zhāo shén me jí.]
(It has nothing to do with you. Why are you nervous about it?)

Example 65 你不必担心，我们一点困难都没有。[nǐ bú bì dān xīn, wǒ men yì diǎn kùn nán dōu méi yǒu.]
(You don't have to worry because we have no difficulty at all.)

In these examples, “一 [yī]” cannot be put after the verbs, either.

If the comparative topic is inquired in the question, the predicate needs repeating in the answer to this question.

Example 66

A: 你连这么简单的问题都不会回答吗。[nǐ lián zhè me jiǎn dān de wèn tí dōu bú huì huí dá ma.]
(Can't you even answer such a simple question?)

B: 对，不会回答。[duì, bú huì huí dá.]
(B: No, I can't.)

Example 67

A: 你飞机票和旅行用的箱子都买好了吗。[nǐ fēi jī piào hé lǚ xíng yòng de xiāng zi dōu mǎi hǎo le ma.]
(Did you buy the air ticket and the suitcase for the trip?)

B: 我飞机票买了，箱子还没买。[wǒ fēi jī piào mǎi le, xiāng zi hái méi mǎi.]
(I bought the air ticket, but I haven't bought the suitcase yet.)

Example 68

A: 这件事跟你有关系吗。[zhè jiàn shì gēn nǐ yǒu guān xì ma.]
(Do you have anything to do with this?)

B: 一点关系也没有。[yì diǎn guān xì yě méi yǒu.]
(Not at all.)

Example 69

A: 你都去过哪些国家？[nǐ dōu qù guò nǎ xiē guó jiā?]
(Which countries have you been to?)

B: 哪个国家我也没去过，我就没出过北京城。[nǎ gè guó jiā wǒ yě méi qù guò, wǒ jiù méi chū guò běi jīng chéng.]
(I haven't been to any countries, even out of Beijing.)

Section two: coherence in discourse

In the flow of speech, every sentence should be coherent to one and the other. There are some means to realize coherence among them, which are to be discussed in the following.

I. *Substitution (anaphora) and ellipsis (zero anaphora)*

Generally speaking, it is not necessary to repeat the same subject or topic in a sentence, except for a rhetorical effect.

Since the subject or topic appears in the first sentence, it can be substituted or omitted in the second sentence. If it is substituted by a pronoun, this phenomenon is called pronoun anaphora; if it is completely omitted, such use is called zero anaphora or invisibility.

Example 1 潘文石先生在中科院动物所的研究成果发表后不久就公开发表反对意见，他希望预防一种负面情况的出现：如果公众因此对熊猫保护产生误解，漠视熊猫野外生存环境的保护，那将是对熊猫最大的威胁。[Pān Wén shí xiān shēng zài zhōng kē yuàn dòng wù suǒ de yán jiū chéng guǒ fā biǎo hòu bù jiǔ jiù gōng kāi fā biǎo fǎn duì yì jiàn, tā xī wàng yù fáng yì zhǒng fù miàn qíng kuàng de chū xiàn: rú guǒ gōng zhòng yīn cǐ duì xióng māo bǎo hù chǎn shēng wù jiě, mò shì xióng māo yě wài shēng cún huán jìng de bǎo hù, nà jiāng shì duì xióng māo zuì dà de wēi xié.] (Pan Wenshi, who spoke out against the research result by the Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Science, announced recently that he wanted to prevent a negative situation resulting from this research: if the public misunderstood panda conservation and ignored wild environment protection, it would be the biggest threat to pandas.)

In this example, “潘文石先生 [pān wén shí xiān shēng] (Mr. Pan Wenshi)” as the subject of the first clause is substituted by “他 [tā] (him)” in the second clause. Otherwise, the repetition of “潘文石先生 [Pān Wén shí xiān shēng] (Mr. Pan Wenshi)” would separate two clauses into two independent sentences.

Example 2 白如信得意非凡，（白如信）兴致勃勃地赶回结构车间。他没有回办公室，（白如信）直接来到了现场。焊接已经结束，但焊工们一个个都有点垂头丧气，连平时闲话最多的刘民也躲到一边，（刘民）像被人割去了舌头。白如信觉得情况不妙，他奔到焊好的大轴跟前。[Bái Rú xìn de yì fēi fán, (bái rú xìn) xìng zhì bó bó de gǎn huí jié gōu chē jiān. tā méi yǒu huí bàn gōng shì, (bái rú xìn) zhí jiē lái dào le xiǎn chǎng. hàn jiē yǐ jīng jié shù, dàn hàn gōng men yí gè gè dōu yǒu diǎn chuī tóu sàng qì, lián píng shí xián huà zuì duō de liú mǐn yě duǒ dào yì biān, (liú mǐn) xiàng bèi rén gē qù le shé tóu. bái rú xìn jué dé qíng kuàng bú miào, tā bēn dào hàn hǎo de dà zhóu gēn qián.]

(In complacency, Bai Ruxin came back to the structure workshop directly, instead of returning to the office. The welding was over, but the welders were all depressed. Especially for talkative Liu Min, he was in a speechless mood, too. Realizing something was wrong, Bai Ruxin ran to the welded large shaft immediately.)

This example consists of four sentences separated by full stop. In the first sentence, “白如信 [bái rú xìn] (Bai Ruxin)” is the subject of the first clause and its zero anaphor plays the same role in the second clause. Similarly in the second sentence, a pronoun anaphora is used to indicate “白如信 [bái rú xìn] (Bai Ruxin)” as the subject of the first clause and the zero anaphor functions the same in the second clause. With the appearance of “刘民 [liú mǐn] (Liu Ming)” in the third sentence, “白如信 [bái rú xìn] (Bai Ruxin)” is repeated again in the first clause of the fourth sentence in order to avoid ambiguity and its pronoun anaphora in the second clause can be omitted. It would be more appropriate and coherent in structure if “就 [jiù]” or “赶紧 [gǎn jǐn] (hurriedly)” is added at the head of “奔到焊好的大轴跟前 [jiù bēn dào hàn hǎo de dà zhóu gēn qián] (ran to the welded large shaft immediately).”

Thus it can be seen that zero anaphora is suitable for the shortest distance between two identical subjects or topics; pronoun anaphora is appropriate for the farther distance; repetition is a best choice for the longest distance for the sake of clarity in understanding.

II. *Other means*

There are some other means to connect sentences in a discourse and they are often put at the beginning of sentence.

1 Topic

A topic helps connect the preceding sentence with the next one.

Example 3 编辑部到了。这是一座北方城市常见的旧四合院，（编辑部）据说当年是一位绸缎资本家的偏房的住宅。[biān jí bù dào le. zhè shì yí zuò běi fāng chéng shì cháng jiàn de jiù sì hé yuàn, (biān jí bù) jù shuō dāng nián shì yí wèi chóu duàn zī běn jiā de piān fáng de zhù zhái.] (Here is the editorial office, in the style of common old quadrangles in northern cities. It is said that it used to be a house of a concubine of a capitalist who ran a silk business.)

In this example, “编辑部 [biān jí bù] (editorial office)” as the topic connects the first sentence with the second one; the same is true for “这 [zhè] (this).”

Example 4

A: 明明，妈妈新买的花瓶呢。[míng míng, mā mā xīn mǎi de huā píng ne.] (Ming Ming, where is the vase that mom just bought?)

B: 花瓶被猫咪打破了。[huā píng bèi māo mī dǎ pò le.]
(It was broken by the cat.)

Here, “花瓶 [huā píng] (vase)” is a topic as well as the subject of the “被 [bèi]” sentence. It connects the question and the answer in the conversation.

Example 5

A: 谁把花瓶打破了。[shuí bǎ huā píng dǎ pò le.]
(Who broke the vase?)

B: 猫咪把花瓶打破了。[māo mī bǎ huā píng dǎ pò le.]
(The cat.)

In the example, “猫咪 [māo mī] (cat)” helps in connection.

2 Time word, locational word, and adverb

An adverb can appear before or after the subject in a sentence. To be exact, it is supposed to appear after the subject of a single sentence, or it may stand before the topic (or the subject) in a successive flow of speech.

Time words and locational words also help connect sentences in the narrative because the occurrence of an action or event usually depends on time and location. Besides, the adverbs for time and mood help too.

Example 6 那天夜里他终于听见了隔壁母亲发出的鼾声，但他却失眠了。他靠在床上吸了好几支烟，出神地倾听着那低柔的呼吸的声响。后来他悄悄取过纸笔，在黑暗中嚓嚓写了起来。[nà tiān yè lǐ tā zhōng yú tīng jiàn le gé bì mǔ qīn fā chū de hān shēng, dàn tā què shī mián le. tā kào zài chuáng shàng xī le hǎo jǐ zhī yān, chū shén de qīng tīng zhe nà dī róu de hū xī de shēng xiǎng. hòu lái tā qiāo qiāo qǔ guò zhǐ bǐ, zài hēi àn zhōng chā chā xiě le qǐ lái.]

(That night, he finally heard his mother snoring next door, but he lost sleep. Indulging in his low and soft breathing, he leaned back on the bed and smoked several cigarettes. Then he quietly took out pen and paper, and started to write in the dark.)

Example 7 复印技术的发明，难以找到一个确切的时间。本世纪初，文件图纸的复印主要是通过两种方法来实现：一种是蓝图法，一种是重氮法，二者都是在复印纸表面涂上某种化合物，经过曝光后获得图像。[fù yìn jì shù de fā míng, nán yǐ zhǎo dào yí gè què qiè de shí jiān. běn shì jì chū, wén jiàn tú zhǐ de fù yìn zhǔ yào shì tōng guò liǎng zhǒng fāng fǎ lái shí xiàn: yì zhǒng shì lán tú fǎ, yì zhǒng shì zhòng dàn fǎ, èr zhě dōu shì zài fù yìn zhǐ biǎo miàn tú shàng mǒu zhǒng huà hé wù, jīng guò pù guāng hòu huò dé tú xiàng.]

(It is difficult to say when photocopying technology was actually invented. At the beginning of this century, photocopying documents and drawings

was mainly realized by two methods: one was the blueprint method, the other was the diazo method. In both, the photocopier paper was coated with a certain compound and then was exposed to obtain an image.)

之后, 复印机几经改良, 又出现了可复印彩色文件的复印机等家庭新成员。复印的精度也逐步提高, 甚至复印钞票时竟会“以假乱真”, 以至有时候不得不对复印机的使用加以限制。[zhī hòu, fù yìn jī jǐ jīng gǎi liáng, yòu chū xiàn le kě fù yìn cǎi sè wén jiàn de fù yìn jī děng jiā tíng xīn chéng yuán. fù yìn de jīng dù yě zhú bù tí gāo, shèn zhì fù yìn chāo piào shí jìng huì “yǐ jiǎ luàn zhēn,” yǐ zhī yǒu shí hòu bù dé bú duì fù yìn jī de shǐ yòng jiā yǐ xiàn zhì.] (After that, the photocopier has been improved several times, and developed to photocopy color documents. Besides, its technology has also gradually become so accurate that it can make a photocopy of money seem pretty real. Therefore, sometimes it has to be restricted in use.)

Example 7 is a piece of expository writing, explaining the technological development of the photocopier, in which two paragraphs are connected by the time word “之后 [zhī hòu] (after that).”

Example 8 他先是在急诊室里, 后来又在病房里守着母亲, 整整守了四天四夜。[tā xiān shì zài jí zhěn shì lǐ, hòu lái yòu zài bìng fáng lǐ shǒu zhe mǔ qīn, zhěng zhěng shǒu le sì tiān sì yè.]

(He spent four days and nights, first in the emergency room and then in the ward, taking care of his mother.)

这四天里, 他没有做日语习题, 也没有温习地理讲义 . . . 。[zhè sì tiān lǐ, tā méi yǒu zuò rì yǔ xí tí, yě méi yǒu wēn xí dì lǐ jiǎng yì . . .]

(In these four days, he didn't do any exercises about Japanese, nor did he review his geography lectures . . .)

In this example, “他 [tā] (he)” is the subject (topic) of the first paragraph, and “四天四夜 [sì tiān sì yè] (four days and nights)” doesn't help in connection. But the time phrase “这四天里 [zhè sì tiān lǐ] (in these four days)” connects the second paragraph with the first one.

Example 9 他们进了工厂区。两侧高耸的烟囱吐着团团浓云, 路上拥挤着穿工作服的人群。[tā men jìn le gōng chǎng qū. liǎng cè gāo sǒng de yān cōng tǔ zhe tuán tuán nóng yún, lù shàng yōng jǐ zhe chuān gōng zuò fú de rén qún.]

(Stepping into the factory, they saw the heavy smoke from the roadside tall chimneys and many workers in overalls on the road.)

In this example, “两侧 [liǎng cè] (both sides)” and the locational word “路上 [lù shàng] (on the road)” connect two sentences together.

Example 10 大学毕业十五年以后, 有一天, 我来到了母校。在那里, 我看望了曾经教过我的老师, 留校任教的同学, 还去凭吊园中的古

塔、假山，仿佛又回到了那难忘的岁月。[dà xué bì yè shí wǔ nián yǐ hòu, yǒu yī tiān, wǒ lái dào le mǔ xiào. zài nà lǐ, wǒ kàn wàng le céng jīng jiāo guò wǒ de lǎo shī, liú xiào rèn jiào de tóng xué, hái qù píng diào yuán zhōng de gǔ tǎ, jiǎ shān, fǎng fú yòu huí dào le nà nán wàng de suì yuè.] (Fifteen years after graduating from college, I came to my alma mater one day. I visited the teachers who had taught me, the school friends who stayed in school to teach, and also the ancient pagoda and rockery in the garden. The unforgettable years came back to me again.)

In this example, “大学毕业十五年后，有一天 [dà xué bì yè shí wǔ nián hòu, yǒu yī tiān]” (“fifteen years after graduating from college” and “one day”) and “在那里 [zài nà lǐ] (there)” connect sentences successively.

Example 11 好像后来妈妈吃的时候落泪了，他回忆着，当然我现在不会落泪。[hǎo xiàng hòu lái mā ma chī de shí hòu luò lèi le, tā huí yì zhe, dāng rán wǒ xiàn zài bú huì luò lèi.] (Later, my mother seemed to shed tears when she ate, he recalled. Of course, “I won’t cry now,” he added.)

In this example, “当然 [dāng rán] (of course)” helps in connection.

Example 12 永定河没有屈服，它不像你，原来，你完全配不上这些北方的河。[yǒng dìng hé méi yǒu qū fú, tā bú xiàng nǐ, yuán lái, nǐ wán quán pèi bú shàng zhè xiē běi fāng de hé.] (Yongding River never yielded, unlike you. So you didn’t deserve the spirit of these northern rivers.)

Example 13 幸亏那三套鸭帮了忙，当它被拆开以后，人们便顾不上说话了，因为嘴巴的两种功能是不便于同时使用的。[xìng kuī nà sān tào yā bāng le máng, dāng tā bèi chāi kāi yǐ hòu, rén men biàn gù bú shàng shuō huà le, yīn wéi zuǐ bā de liǎng zhǒng gōng néng shì bú biàn yú tóng shí shǐ yòng de.] (Thanks to the local dish of Three Type of Ducks, when it was served, everyone began to eat, having no interest in talking anymore. After all, eating and talking cannot keep balance in one mouth at the same time.)

Example 14 你们为什么不让我们去？难道男同志能做到的事，我们女同志做不到吗。[nǐ men wèi shén me bú ràng wǒ men qù? nán dào nán tóng zhì néng zuò dào de shì, wǒ men nǚ tóng zhì zuò bú dào ma.] (Why don’t you let us go? Could it be said that we women comrades cannot do what men comrades do?)

In these examples, “原来 [yuán lái] (in fact),” “幸亏 [xìng kuī] (thanks to),” and “难道 [nán dào] (could it be said)” are modal adverbs, which help in connection.

If time words, locational words, or modal adverbs don’t help in connection, they are required to be put after the topic or the subject of a sentence.

Example 15

A: 你怎么看起来很累。[nǐ zěn me kàn qǐ lái hěn pí láo.]

(Why do you look so tired?)

B: 我昨天晚上没睡好觉，不知为什么，昨天我同屋打鼾的声音特别大。[wǒ zuó tiān wǎn shàng méi shuì hǎo jiào, bù zhī wèi shén me, zuó tiān wǒ tóng wū dǎ hān de shēng yīn tè bié dà.]

(I didn't sleep well last night. I don't know why my roommate snored so loudly yesterday.)

Example 16

A: 你昨天丢的钱找到了吗。[nǐ zuó tiān diū de qián zhǎo dào le ma.]

(Have you found the money you lost yesterday?)

B: 我柜子、抽屉、提包、衣服兜都翻遍了，哪儿也没有。[wǒ guì zi, chōu tì, tí bāo, yī fu dōu dōu fān biàn le, nǎ er yě méi yǒu.]

(No, I didn't, even after searching everywhere, including the cupboard, the drawer, the bag, and my coat pocket.)

Example 17 你原来躲在这儿！难怪我到处找你找不到。[nǐ yuán lái duǒ zài zhè er! nán guài wǒ dào chù zhǎo nǐ zhǎo bú dào.]

(Oh, you were here! No wonder I couldn't find you anywhere.)

3 Constituents indicating logical relation

Many constituents indicate logical relation; many conjunctions in the compound sentence can connect sentences into a sentence group. (See Chapter 2, Section three, vol. 2 and Chapter 9, Section two.) Also, some constituents can connect sentence groups into a discourse. They are grouped as follows:

- (1) To show a sequence of reasons or situations, such as “一 [yī] (one), 二 [èr] (two), 三 [sān] (three) . . .”; “第一 [dì yī] (the first), 第二 [dì èr] (the second), 第三 [dì sān] (the third) . . .”; “首先 [shǒu xiān] (first), 其次 [qí cì] (then), 再次 [zài cì] (next), 最后 [zuì hòu] (finally).” . . .
- (2) To show several coordinate conditions or situations, such as “与此同时 [yǔ cǐ tóng shí] (meanwhile),” “一方面 . . . (另) 一方面 [yì fāng miàn . . . (lìng) yī fāng miàn] (on one hand, on the other hand),” “与此相应地 [yǔ cǐ xiāng yīng de] (accordingly),” “无独有偶 [wú dú yǒu ǒu] (not come singly but in pairs)” . . .
- (3) To show a further explanation, such as “推而广之 [tuī ér guǎng zhī] (give extended application),” “更有甚者 [gèng yǒu shèn zhě] (what's more)” . . .
- (4) To show an additional explanation, such as “此外 [cǐ wài] (in addition),” “(再) 补充一句 [(zài) bǔ chōng yí jù] (one more sentence),” “除此之外 [chú cǐ zhī wài] (in addition)”
- (5) To show an example, such as “例如 [lì rú] (for example),” “比如 [bǐ rú] (for example),” “比方说 [bǐ fāng shuō] (for instance),” “拿 . . . 来说 [ná . . . lái shuō] (take something for example),” “以 . . . 为例 [yǐ . . . wéi lì]

- (take something for example),” “就说 [jiù shuō] (take something for example)” . . .
- (6) To show a summary, such as “总之 [zǒng zhī] (in short),” “总的来说 [zǒng de lái shuō] (in short),” “总的来看 [zǒng de lái kàn] (in brief),” “总而言之 [zǒng ér yán zhī] (all in all),” “概括起来说 [gài kuò qǐ lái shuō] (in general),” “一句话 [yí jù huà] (in a word),” “一言以蔽之 [yī yán yǐ bì zhī] (all in all)” . . .
- (7) To show an opposite situation, such as “与此相反 [yǔ cǐ xiāng fǎn] (conversely),” “反过来(说) [fǎn guò lái (shuō)] (on the contrary),” “反之 [fǎn zhī] (on the contrary)” . . .
- (8) To show a contrast/comparison, such as “相比之下 [xiāng bǐ xià] (by comparison),” “比较起来 [bǐ jiào qǐ lái] (by comparison),” “相形之下 [xiāng xíng zhī xià] (by comparison)” . . .
- (9) To show an attached explanation, such as “顺便说一下 [shùn biàn shuō yí xià] (by the way),” “附带说一句 [fù dài shuō yí jù] (by the way)” . . .
- (10) To show affirmation, such as “是的 [shì de] (yes),” “是啊 [shì ā] (right),” “真的 [zhēn de] (really),” “的确 [dí què] (indeed),” “确实 [què shí] (sure),” “不错 [bú cuò] (not bad)” . . .
- (11) To show a conclusion, such as “由此(看来) [yóu cǐ (kàn lái)] (obviously),” “(由此)可见 [(yóu cǐ) kě jiàn] (apparently),” “显然 [xiǎn rán] (obviously),” “显而易见 [xiǎn ér yì jiàn] (it can be seen easily . . .),” “毫无疑问 [háo wú yí wèn] (There is no doubt that . . .),” “毋庸置疑言 [wú yōng huì yán] (There is no doubt that . . .)” . . .
- (12) To show a surprise or unexpectedness, such as “岂料 [qǐ liào] (who knows),” “谁知 [shuí zhī] (little does one think),” “没想到 [méi xiǎng dào] (little does one think)” . . .
- (13) Others, such as “换言之 [huàn yán zhī] (in other words),” “换句话说 [huàn jù huà shuō] (in other words),” “也就是说 [yě jiù shì shuō] (in other words),” “具体地说 [jù tǐ de shuō] (to be specific)” . . .
- 4 The verbs whose objects can be functioned by several sentences or several sentence groups

The predicate verbs that can take several sentences or sentences groups as their objects are called “the language constituents beyond clause”³ or “governing scope in discourse” in some grammar books.⁴ These verbs actually connect sentences in discourse.

(1) Volitive verbs

Example 18 你老人家是想当陪房丫头一块儿嫁过去，好成天给人家端砚拿纸啊，还是给人家铺床叠被到了晚上当姨老爷啊。[nǐ lǎo rén jiā shì xiǎng dāng péi fáng yā tóu yí kuài ér jià guò qù, hǎo chéng tiān gěi rén jiā duān yàn ná zhǐ ā, hái shì gěi rén jiā pū chuáng dié bèi dào le wǎn shàng dāng yí lǎo yé ā.]

(You want her to marry him as a servant-girl (accompanied as the bride to her husband's house)? To serve him in his study in the daytime, and to make the beds for him at night, just like what she usually does when accompanying her old uncle?)

(2) The verbs for feelings, consciousness, psychological activities, or will

They mainly include “看见 [kàn jiàn] (see), 听到 [tīng dào] (hear), 感到 [gǎn dào] (feel), 觉得 [jué de] (feel), 喜欢 [xǐ huān] (like), 讨厌 [tǎo yàn] (hate), 抱怨 [bào yuàn] (complain), 埋怨 [mán yuàn] (complain), 害怕 [hài pà] (fear), 怕 [pà] (fear), 着急 [zhāo jí] (worry), 知道 [zhī dào] (know), 晓得 [xiǎo de] (know), 懂得 [dǒng dé] (understand), 了解 [liǎo jiě] (understand), 明白 [míng bái] (realize), 认为 [rèn wéi] (think), 相信 [xiāng xìn] (believe), 注意(到) [zhù yì (dào)] (notice), 舍不得 [shě bù de] (be reluctant to give up), 担心 [dān xīn] (worry), 考虑 [kǎo lù] (consider), 同意 [tóng yì] (agree), 忘(了) [wàng (le)] (forget), 怀疑 [huái yí] (doubt), 猜 [cāi] (guess), 打算 [dǎ suàn] (plan), 希望 [xī wàng] (hope), 盼望 [pàn wàng] (wish).”

Example 19 我明白，一个女人岁数一天天的大了，高不成，低不就，人到了三十岁了，父母不在，也没有人做主，孤孤单单，没有一个自己人，真的有一天，老了，没有人管了，没有孩子，没有亲戚，老，老，老得像 . . . 。 [wǒ míng bái, yí gè nǚ rén suì shù yì tiān tiān de dà le, gāo bù chéng, dī bú jiù, rén dào le sān shí suì le, fù mǔ bú zài, yě méi yǒu rén zuò zhǔ, gū gū dān dān, méi yǒu yí gè tǐ jǐ de rén, zhēn de yǒu yì tiān, lǎo le, méi yǒu rén guǎn le, méi yǒu hái zi, méi yǒu qīn qī, lǎo, lǎo de xiàng . . .]

(I understand her situation well. She, as a woman unmarried and about thirty years old, is too choosy to succeed; she is alone with no parents, no husband, and then no kids, no relatives; when getting older and older, she will be like . . .)

(3) The verbs taking direct objects or indirect objects

They mainly include “听说 [tīng shuō] (hear about), 说 [shuō] (say), 讲 [jiǎng] (speak), 告诉 [gào sù] (tell), 打听 [dǎ tīng] (inquire), 交代 [jiāo dài] (inform), 叫 [jiào] (call), 喊 [hǎn] (shout), 嚷 [rǎng] (shout), 骂 [mà] (scold), 劝 [quàn] (persuade), 问 [wèn] (ask), 答应 [dā ying] (answer), 回答 [huí dá] (response), 约定 [yuē dìng] (appoint), 介绍 [jiè shào] (introduce), 要求 [yāo qiú] (require), 嘱咐 [zhǔ fù] (enjoin), 允许 [yǔn xǔ] (allow), 称赞 [chēng zàn] (praise), 夸 [kuā] (praise), 鼓励 [gǔ lì] (encourage), 号召 [hào zhào] (call), 声明 [shēng míng] (announce), 说明 [shuō míng] (explain), 解释 [jiě shì] (account for), 反映 [fǎn yìng] (reflect), 决定 [jué dìng] (decide), 赞成 [zàn chéng] (agree), 商量 [shāng liang] (discuss), 批准 [pī zhǔn] (give permission), 启发 [qǐ fā] (inspire), 说服 [shuō fú] (persuade), 批评 [pī píng] (criticize), 承认 [chéng rèn] (admit), 提出 [tí chū] (put forward), 指出 [zhǐ chū] (points out that), 坦白 [tǎn bái] (frankly

speaking), 表示 [biǎo shì] (show), 请示 [qǐng shì] (ask for instructions), 保证 [bǎo zhèng] (guarantee), 请求 [qǐng qiú] (request), 通知 [tōng zhī] (notice), 广播 [guǎng bō] (broadcast), 证明 [zhèng míng] (prove), 命令 [mìng lìng] (command).”

Example 20 我声明, 不要把我算在里面, 你们房子买不买, 我从来没有想过。[wǒ shēng míng, bú yào bǎ wǒ suàn zài lǐ miàn, nǐ men fáng zi mǎi bù mǎi, wǒ cóng lái méi yǒu xiǎng guò.]

(I declare that I have never thought about your final decision about buying the house or not.)

(4) Some relation verbs

They are “好像 [hǎo xiàng] (as if), 算 [suan] (be equal to), 等于 [děng yú] (be equal to), 是 [shì] (be).”

Example 21 我好像突然发现我喜欢周围的人, 觉得活着还是好的, 觉得死有一点可怕了。[wǒ hǎo xiàng tū rán fā xiàn wǒ xǐ huān zhōu wéi de rén, jué de huó zhe hái shì hǎo de, jué de sǐ yǒu yī diǎn kě pà le.]

(Suddenly I realized that I seemed to accept the people around me; and I began to understand that it was better to be alive than dead.)

(5) Others

There are some other words with a similar function, including “使得 [shǐ de] (make), 免得 [miǎn dé] (avoid), 用不着 [yòng bù zháo] (unnecessary), 支持 [zhī chí] (support), 争取 [zhēng qǔ] (strive for), 预备 [yù bèi] (prepare), 准备 [zhǔn bèi] (prepare), 强迫 [qiáng pò] (force), 发现 [fā xiàn] (discover), 值得 [zhí de] (worth), 开始 [kāi shǐ] (start), 继续 [jì xù] (continue).”

Also, the words for the same topic help connect sentences in a discourse. Besides, the sequence of occurrences, the rank order in degree, or the physical distance also helps in connection.

Section three: “Subject-verb-object” sentences, “topic-exposition” sentences, “把 [bǎ]” sentences, and “被 [bèi]” sentences

Observe the following examples:

Example 1 妈妈, 妹妹打破了一个杯子。[mā mā, mèi mèi dǎ pò le yí gè bēi zi.]

(Mom, my younger sister broke a glass.) (SVO)

Example 2 妈妈, 妹妹把您刚买的杯子打破了。[mā mā, mèi mèi bǎ nín gāng mǎi de bēi zi dǎ pò le.]

(Mom, my younger sister broke the cup you just bought.) (“把 [bǎ]” sentence)

Example 3

A: 怎么不用妈妈新买的杯子。[zěn me bú yòng mā mā xīn mǎi de bēi zi.]
(Why don't you use the cup that mother just bought?)

B: 那个杯子打破了。[nà gè bēi zi dǎ pò le.]
(The cup was broken.) (topic-exposition sentence)

Example 4 妈妈新买的那个杯子叫妹妹打破了。[mā mā xīn mǎi de nà gè bēi zi jiào mèi mèi dǎ pò le.]

(The new cup my mother bought was broken by my sister.) (“被 [bèi]” sentence)

These examples explain the fact that the younger sister broke the glass in four sentence patterns, according to different situations or contexts. Therefore they cannot be replaced by one another. Further discussion on these four patterns follows.

I. “Subject-verb-object” sentences

A “subject-verb-object” sentence belongs to a declarative sentence, narrating an occurrence from the beginning to the end.

Example 5 天青和菊豆相对跪坐，中间隔着铺好的天青的被与枕。菊豆穿着当年出嫁的那身衣裳，蒙了红盖头。天青也穿得干干净净，新剃的头皮光亮如月。俩人像拜天地的新郎新娘。[Tiān Qīng hé Jú Dòu xiāng duì guì zuò, zhōng jiān gé zhe pū hǎo de Tiān Qīng de bèi yǔ zhěn. Jú Dòu chuān zhe dāng nián chū jià de nà shēn yī shang, méng le hóng gài tóu. tiān qīng yě chuān de gān gān jìng jìng, xīn tì de tóu pí guāng liàng rú yuè. liǎ rén xiàng bài tiān dì de xīn láng xīn niáng.]

(Tian Qing and Ju Dou sit on their heels face to face, with a quilt and an azure pillow in the middle. Ju Dou was in her bridal clothes of those years, with a red veil over her head. Tian Qing was also dressed up, with his shiny scalp newly shaved. They were like a bride and groom.)

Example 6 市面繁华，到处是年货棚和购物的人流。李慧泉慢悠悠地骑着那辆没有车板的旧三轮，车把吊的网兜里装满了食物和酒瓶。他把车停在路边，盯住了书摊上悬着的广告画。[shì miàn fán huá, dào chù shì nián huò péng hé gòu wù de rén liú. Lǐ Huì quán màn yōu yōu de qí zhe nà liàng méi yǒu chē bǎn de jiù sān lún, chē bǎ diào de wǎng dōu lǐ zhuāng mǎn le shí wù hé jiǔ píng. tā bǎ chē tíng zài lù biān, dīng zhù le shū tān shàng xuán zhe de guǎng gào huà.]

(The market was very prosperous due to the upcoming Spring Festival, with goods sheds and shopping crowds everywhere. Among them, Li Huiquan slowly rode a simply equipped old tricycle with food and wine bottles in a net pocket at one of its handlebars. And then he was attracted by an advertisement hung over the bookstand, so he parked his tricycle by the side of the road to stare at it.)

Example 7 吃完饭后，妹妹洗碗，不小心打破了一个杯子。[chī wán fàn hòu, mèi mèi xǐ wǎn, bù xiǎo xīn dǎ pò le yí gè bēi zi.]
(After dinner, my sister washed the dishes but broke a cup by accident.)

It can be seen that a “subject-verb-object” sentence doesn’t depend on the context nor the known information. It is frequently used in various types of writing, such as narration, description, exposition, and argumentation.

II. “Topic-exposition” sentences

“Topic” in “topic-exposition” sentence refers to the recipient or tool rather than the doer of action. It should be the known information and the new information is shown in “exposition.”

Example 8

唐德源: 回去跟这几位东家说, 今天是福聚德算大账的日子, 我脱不开身, 明儿一早二掌柜带着钱到各柜上去, 一笔了清。常贵, 包两只大鸭子, 叫福顺先送钱师爷回去。[Táng Dé yuán: huí qù gēn zhè jǐ wèi dōng jiā shuō, jīn tiān shì fú jù dé suàn dà zhàng de rì zǐ, wǒ tuō bù kāi shēn, míng er yì zǎo èr zhǎng guì dài zhe qián dào gè guì shàng qù, yì bǐ liǎo qīng. Cháng Guì, bāo liǎng zhī dà yā zi, jiào Fú Shùn xiān sòng Qián shī yé huí qù.]

(Tang Deyuan: Mr. Qian, go and tell the other bosses that I am engaged in settling accounts today. I will send the second restaurant owner to clear accounts respectively. Chang Gui (the hall manager), take two big roast ducks to Mr. Qian, and let Fu Shun (an apprentice) send Mr. Qian home.)
钱师爷: 我谢谢您, 鸭子我不带了, 拿张鸭票就得了。[Qián shī yé: wǒ xiè xiè nín, yā zi wǒ bú dài le, ná zhāng yā piào zi jiù dé liǎo.]
(Mr. Qian: Thank you. Roast ducks are not for this time, but a duck voucher is O.K.)

Since “常贵, 包两只大鸭子, 叫福顺先送钱师爷回去。[Cháng Guì, bāo liǎng zhī dà yā zi, jiào Fú Shùn xiān sòng Qián shī yé huí qù] (Chang Gui, take two big roast ducks to Mr. Qian, and let Fu Shun send Mr. Qian home.)” has been previously mentioned by Tang Deyuan, “鸭子 [yā zi] (duck)” is treated as the topic (the known information) and put before “我 [wǒ] (I).”

Example 9 罗大头: 全这样! 这是贪便宜进的病鸭子。掌柜的, 这鸭子我不能烤。[Luó Dà tóu: quán zhè yàng! zhè shì tān piàn yì jìn de bìng yā zi. zhǎng guì de, zhè yā zi wǒ bú néng kǎo.]

(Luo Datou: They (the ducks) are all like this unhealthy one! It was cheap because of unhealthiness! Sir (the restaurant boss), I cannot roast it.)

In this example, “这鸭子 [zhè yā zi] (this one)” has been mentioned in the preceding sentence; it is changed into the topic in the next sentence. Here are two similar examples.

Example 10

A: 我的汽车呢。[wǒ de qì chē ne.]
(Where's my car?)

B: 你妹妹开走了。[nǐ mèi mèi kāi zǒu le.]
(Your sister drove it away.)

Example 11

A: 你这鞋怎么卖呀。[nǐ zhè xié zěnmē mǎi ya.]
(How much are these shoes?)

B: 这鞋你拿去穿吧。[zhè xié nǐ ná qù chuān ba.]
(Take them away for free.)

Generally speaking, the topic is expressed by the expository sentence so it doesn't occur in narration. Sometimes, it may occasionally appear in the imperative sentence, such as in Example 11.

III. “把[bǎ]” sentences

The object of “把[bǎ]” usually refers to the known information in a discourse; a “把[bǎ]” sentence highlights the doer of an action. Thus the noun at the head of a “把[bǎ]” sentence cannot be omitted.

Example 12 刘宝铁: 把屋里和厨房拾掇拾掇, 过日子得有个过日子的样儿么, 对不对? 你说我说的对不对。[Liú Bǎo tiě: bǎ wū lǐ hé chú fāng shí duō shí duō, guò rì zi děi yǒu gè guò rì zi de yàng ér me, duì bú duì? nǐ shuō wǒ shuō de duì bú duì.]

(Liu Baotie: Clean up the room and the kitchen. Live a normal life, shouldn't we? Don't you think so?)

In this example, “屋里[wū lǐ] (room)” and “厨房[chú fāng] (kitchen)” are, as the common sense, regarded as the known information; the “把[bǎ]” sentence mainly implies the blame for the owner's untidiness.

Example 13 (李慧泉) 用舌头舔邮票贴好, 又从饭锅里挑出一根面条儿, 粘信封。披衣来到街上, . . . 他在胡同口把信件扔进了邮筒。[(Lǐ Huì quán) yòng shé tóu tiǎn yóu piào tiē hǎo, yòu cóng fàn guō lǐ tiāo chū yì gēn miàn tiáo ér, zhān xìn fēng. pī yī lái dào jiē shàng, . . . tā zài hú tóng kǒu bǎ xìn jiàn rēng jìn le yóu tǒng.]

((Li Huiquan) licked the stamp and stuck it on the envelope with a noodle from a cooking pot. After that, he put on a dress and came to the street. He threw the letter into the mailbox standing at the lane entrance.)

Here, “信[xìn] (letter)” is the known information and the entire sentence narrates what “他[tā] (he)” has done, due to which “他[tā]” cannot be omitted.

Example 14 市面繁华，到处是年货棚和购物的人流。李慧泉慢悠悠地骑着那辆没有车板的旧三轮，车把吊的网兜里装满了食物和酒瓶。他把车停在路边，盯住了书摊上悬着的广告画。[shì miàn fán huá, dào chù shì nián huò péng hé gòu wù de rén liú. Lǐ Huì quán màn yōu yōu de qí zhe nà liàng méi yǒu chē bǎn de jiù sān lún, chē bǎ diào de wǎng dōu lǐ zhuāng mǎn le shí wù hé jiǔ píng. tā bǎ chē tíng zài lù biān, dīng zhù le shū tān shàng xuán zhe de guǎng gào huà.]

(The market was very prosperous due to the upcoming Spring Festival, with goods sheds and shopping crowds everywhere. Among them, Li Huiquan slowly rode a simply equipped old tricycle, food and wine bottles in a net pocket at one of its handlebars. And then he was attracted by an advertisement so he parked his tricycle by the side of the road to stare at it.)

In this example, the speaker has to use a “把 [bǎ]” sentence because the relevant information has been mentioned in the preceding sentences, such as “车 [chē] (bicycle)” as the object of “把 [bǎ],” “他 [tā] (he)” as the doer, and “在路边 [zài lù biān] (by the side of the road)” as the locational word.

Example 15

A: 你怎么了? 不舒服。[nǐ zěn me le? bù shū fu.]

(What's wrong with you? Aren't you feeling well?)

B: 嗯，龙虾把肚子吃坏了。[èn, lóng xiā bǎ dù zi chī huài le.]

(Hum, I have a stomachache because I ate lobsters.)

In this example, “龙虾 [lóng xiā] (lobster)” is a factor resulting in a stomachache so it should be put at the beginning of the sentence.

A “把 [bǎ]” sentence is mainly used to narrate or convey an imperative sense, due to its emphasis on the doer of an action.

IV. “被 [bèi]” sentences

In a discourse, the recipient before “被 [bèi]” is the subject as well as the topic as the known information. “被 [bèi]” is frequently used to describe a certain unpleasant situation about the person involved.

Example 16 金山用一只好手揪住女人的脑袋往地上撞，女人咬牙不叫。撞了几下，剧烈的疼痛终于挑醒了女人的斗志，女人开始反扑。翻滚蹬踹，瘫了的金山到底不是女人的对手。金山被重重地捺躺到板柜角下。[Jīn Shān yòng yì zhī hǎo shǒu jiū zhù nǚ rén de nǎo dai wǎng dì shàng zhuàng, nǚ rén yǎo yá bú jiào. zhuàng le jǐ xià, jù liè de téng tòng zhōng yú tiǎo xǐng le nǚ rén de dòu zhì, nǚ rén kāi shǐ fǎn pū. fān gǔn dēng chuài, tān le de Jīn Shān dào dǐ bú shì nǚ rén de duì shǒu. jīn shān bèi zhòng zhòng de sāng tāng dào bǎn guì jiǎo xià.]

(With a strong hand, Jin Shan grabbed the woman's head and struck it on the ground. At first, the woman gritted her teeth and didn't yell. Several

times later, the intense pain finally stimulated the woman's resistance, and she began to fight back with fists and kicks. Jin Shan, a paralyzed man, was definitely not a well-matched opponent in the end. Finally, he was heavily pushed over to the ground and lay beside the corner of the cabinet.)

“金山 [Jīn Shān] (Jin Shan)” becomes the topic of the last sentence because it continues what has been described in the preceding sentence “瘫了的金山到底不是女人的对手。[tān le de Jīn Shān dào dǐ bú shì nǚ rén de duì shǒu.] (Jin Shan, a paralyzed man, was definitely not a well-matched opponent in the end.)” Obviously, “被 [bèi]” introduces the unpleasant situation “重重地搥躺到板柜角下 [zhòng zhòng dì sāng tāng dào bǎn guì jiǎo xià] (. . . was heavily pushed over to the ground and lay beside the corner of the cabinet).”

Example 17 妈妈刚刚买的一个花瓶叫弟弟打破了。[mā mā gāng gāng mǎi de yī gè huā píng jiào dì dì dǎ pò le.]

(A vase that the mother just bought was broken by my younger brother.)

In a “topic-exposition” sentence, the topic often refers to the recipient.

Example 18

A: 妈妈刚刚买的一个花瓶呢。[mā mā gāng gāng mǎi de yī gè huā píng ne.]

(Where's the vase the mother just bought?)

B: 打破了。[dǎ pò le.]

(It was broken.)

A “topic-exposition” sentence doesn't emphasize the doer of an action too much, compared with a “被 [bèi]” sentence that consists of “被 [bèi],” “叫 [jiào],” or “让 [ràng].” “被 [bèi]” can be used to narrate but cannot occur in the imperative sentence, which differs from a “topic-exposition” sentence.

The subject of a “被 [bèi]” sentence is the topic as well as the known information, which helps connect sentences in a discourse to mainly express a certain unpleasant situation. For this, it differs from a “把 [bǎ]” sentence.

Section four: adjectives as predicates and attributes

The following examples come from the overseas students who are learning Chinese in China.

Example 1 我觉得美国孩子有太多的钱和太多的时间，所以他们想做什么就做什么。[wǒ jué de měi guó hái zi yǒu tài duō de qián hé tài duō de shí jiān, suǒ yǐ tā men xiǎng zuò shén me jiù zuò shén me.]

(I think American children have too much money and too much time, so they can do whatever they want.) (from an American student)

Example 2 从这个电影来看，中国人偏向大儿子，父母给他最多的东西。[cóng zhè gè diàn yǐng lái kàn, zhōng guó rén piān xiàng dà ér zi, fù mǔ gěi tā zuì duō de dōng xī.]

(It can be seen from this film that the Chinese prefer the eldest son, who benefits the most from his parents.) (from an American student)

Example 3 老师问不难的问题，我们都会回答。[lǎo shī wèn bù nán de wèn tí, wǒ men dōu huì huí dá.]

(When the teacher asks an easy question, we all can answer it.) (from a Japanese student)

Example 4 她穿了一件漂亮衣服，我也想买一件。[tā chuān le yí jiàn piào liàng yī fu, wǒ yě xiǎng mǎi yí jiàn.]

(She is in a beautiful dress. I want to buy the same one, too.) (from a Japanese student)

Example 5 这个节目介绍了五个人，都住在一起，可是每个人有不同的想法。[zhè gè jié mù jiè shào le wǔ gè rén, dōu zhù zài yì qǐ, kě shì měi gè rén yǒu bù tóng de xiǎng fǎ.]

(It's a story about five people living together, but with different ideas of their own.) (from an American student)

Although these examples can be understood without any problem, they sound inappropriate in Chinese. They can be improved into the following ones.

Example 6 我觉得美国孩子的钱和时间太多了，所以他们想做什么就做什么。[wǒ jué de měi guó hái zi de qián hé shí jiān tài duō le, suǒ yǐ tā men xiǎng zuò shén me jiù zuò shén me.]

(I think American children have too much money and time, so they can do whatever they want.)

Example 7 从这个电影来看，中国人偏向大儿子，父母给他的东西最多。[cóng zhè gè diàn yǐng lái kàn, zhōng guó rén piān xiàng dà ér zi, fù mǔ gěi tā de dōng xī zuì duō.]

(It can be seen from this film that the Chinese prefer the eldest son, who benefits the most from his parents.)

Example 8 老师问的问题不难，我们都会回答。[lǎo shī wèn de wèn tí bù nán, wǒ men dōu huì huí dá.]

(When the teacher asks an easy question, we all can answer it.)

Example 9 她穿的衣服很漂亮，我也想买一件。[tā chuān de yī fu hěn piào liàng, wǒ yě xiǎng mǎi yí jiàn.]

(She is in a beautiful dress. I want to buy the same one, too.)

Example 10 这个节目介绍了五个人，都住在一起，可是每个人的想法不同。[zhè gè jié mù jiè shào le wǔ gè rén, dōu zhù zài yì qǐ, kě shì měi gè rén de xiǎng fǎ bù tóng.]

(It's a story about five people living together, but with different ideas of their own.)

Comparatively speaking, the adjectives such as “太多的 [tài duō de] (too much),” “最多的 [zuì duō de] (the most),” “不难的 [bù nán de] (easy),” “漂亮 [piào liàng] (beautiful)” in the original sentences function as the attributes; they are changed into the predicates in the improved ones. What explains this improvement?

1. The position and the function of the adjective as the attribute in Chinese sentences

In Chinese, many adjectives before nouns are descriptive, mainly describing property or the state of a headword, such as “很多 [hěn duō] (too much)” or “漂亮 [piào liàng] (beautiful).” As attributes, they can be put before subjects and objects. When they modify subjects, the known information is mainly conveyed by subjects.

Example 11 这只旧衣柜，又拿来了。[zhè zhī jiù yī guì, yòu ná lái le.]
(The old wardrobe was moved back again.)

Example 12 昨天来的那位漂亮姑娘是谁。[zuó tiān lái de nà wèi piào liàng gū niang shì shuí.]
(Who was the pretty girl who came here yesterday?)

Example 13 午饭后，天气更阴沉，更热。低沉潮湿的空气，使人异常烦躁。[wǔ fàn hòu, tiān qì gèng yīn chén, gèng rè. dī chén chén cháo shī de kōng qì, shǐ rén yì cháng fán zào.]
(After lunch, it was darker and hotter. The warm and moist air irritated people very much.)

When they modify objects, the new information is mainly expressed by objects.

Example 14 我当时小猫般好奇的心里，只是想到了一个幼稚的问题。[wǒ dāng shí xiǎo māo bān hào qí de xīn lǐ, zhǐ shì xiǎng dào le yí gè yòu zhì de wèn tí.]
(I was as curious as a kitten at that time, only thinking of a childish question.)

Example 15 触目的是一张旧照片。[chù mù de shì yì zhāng jiù zhào piàn.]
(What caught my eyes by shock was an old photograph.)

Example 16 我不愿意喝这种苦东西。[wǒ bú yuàn yì hē zhè zhǒng kǔ dōng xī.]
(I don't want to drink this bitter thing.)

Consequently, the objects modified by these adjectives will definitely become the semantic focuses in the sentence.

II. *The function of the adjective as the predicate in Chinese sentences*

In Chinese, adjectives can function as predicates directly and even more freely than functioning as attributes in the sentence.

Example 17 她的衣服朴素，洁净。[tā de yī fu pǔ sù, jié jìng.]
(Her clothes are simple and clean.)

Example 18 室内陈设华丽。[shì nèi chén shè huá lì.]
(The interior of the room is decorated gorgeously.)

Example 19 大灯笼的颜色很蓝也很光洁，伸手就可以摸到。[dà dēng lóng de yán sè hěn lán yě hěn guāng jié, shēn shǒu jiù kě yǐ mō dào.]
(The color of the big lantern is brightly blue and seemingly touchable.)

Example 20 这个女孩很可爱。[zhè gè nǚ hái hěn kě ài.]
(This girl is very cute.)

Example 21 春天到了，柳树绿了，河水解冻了。[chūn tiān dào le, liǔ shù lǜ le, hé shuǐ jiě dòng le.]
(Spring is coming, with willows greening and the river ice melting.)

When adjectives function as predicates, subjects may refer to the known information, like the examples from 17 to 20, or the new information, like Example 21. When the predicate (the adjective) describes the subject, the new information conveyed by it is often regarded as the semantic focus of a sentence.

III. *The choice of a predicate or attribute in Chinese sentences*

What are the differences when an adjective functions as a predicate or an attribute in a Chinese sentence? Let's compare the following examples.

Example 22
我想到了一个很幼稚的问题。[wǒ xiǎng dào le yí gè hěn yòu zhì de wèn tí.]
(I thought of a very childish question.)

我想到的问题很幼稚。[wǒ xiǎng dào de wèn tí hěn yòu zhì.]
(The question that occurred in my mind was childish.)

Example 23
触目的是一张旧照片。[chù mù de shì yì zhāng jiù zhào piàn.]
(What caught my eyes by shock was an old photograph.)

这张照片很旧。[zhè zhāng zhào piàn hěn jiù.]
(This photograph is very old.)

Example 24
她的衣服朴素，洁净。[tā de yī fu pǔ sù, jié jìng.]
(Her clothes are simple and clean.)

她穿着朴素、洁净的衣服。[tā chuān zhe pǔ sù, jié jìng de yī fu.]
(She was in simple and clean clothes.)

Example 25

这个女孩很可爱。[zhè gè nǚ hái hěn kě ài.]

(This girl is very cute.)

我看见了一个很可爱的女孩。[wǒ kàn jiàn le yí gè hěn kě ài de nǚ hái.]

(I saw a lovely girl.)

Thus it can be seen from these examples that when an adjective functions as an attribute, the noun modified by it conveys the new information; when it functions as a predicate, it conveys the new information and the noun described by it indicates the known information. Thus, the comparative result can further explain why the examples from those overseas students have to improved.

The inappropriate use of adjectives is very common among those Chinese learners, so it is necessary for them to fully understand their different uses in a discourse.

Notes

- 1 They are selected from *Issues on Analysis of Chinese Grammars* by Lu Shuxiang.
- 2 Comparatively speaking, the descriptive adverbial would be stressed more than other constituents except for the predicate verb in general as the focus of the sentence.
- 3 It comes from the first series of *Language Constituents beyond Clause* written by Liu Yuehua, published by Nan Kai University in 1986.
- 4 It comes from *Governing Scope in Discourse [J]* written by Liao Qiuzhong, published in *Studies of the Chinese Language*, Vol. 4, 1987.

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