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Relevant Categorical Distinctions in Chinese

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0.0 This paper attempts to identify relevant grammatical categories in Chinese and to suggest a view to understand some systematic syntactic differences between English as an inflectional language and Chinese as a non-inflectional language.

0.1 For the purpose of discussion, we shall, following Lyons (1968), refer to the 'parts of speech' as primary grammatical categories, the notions such as tense, mood, gender, case, etc., as secondary grammatical categories, and the syntactic notions of 'subject', 'predicate', 'object', etc., as functional categories. As pointed out by Lyons, in traditional grammar primary grammatical categories are defined not only in notional terms such as persons, things, actions, states and qualities but also in terms of the inflexional characteristics associated with secondary grammatical categories. It is safe to state that Chinese doesn't have secondary grammatical categories except aspect. Without inflexional characteristics associated with secondary grammatical categories, primary grammatical categories in Chinese cannot be defined by means of inflexional features. One might be tempted to define the verb category in Chinese by its co-occurrence with aspect. It is, however, not feasible for two reasons. First, it would exclude the copula verb shì 'to be', the locative verb zài 'to be at' and others from membership, since they don't take any aspect marker (as shown in (1) and (2)).

- (1) ta shì (*le, *zhe, *guo) xuesheng
He is (aspect) student.
- (2) ta zài (*le, *zhe, *guo) chufang-ly
He is located (aspect) in the kitchen.

Second, it would identify some adverbial expressions as verbs. For example, in (3) yan-zhe he 'along the river' is an adverbial expression modifying the verbal expression kai-che 'to drive a car'.

- (3) ta yan-zhe he kai che
He drove along the river.

We know yan-zhe he in (3) is an adverbial expression, because (4) is incomplete, and (3) implies (5), which is a complete grammatical sentence.

- (4) *ta yan-zhe
(5) ta kai che

One might also want to use the negation as a criterion for the verb category in Chinese. However, since adverbs as well as verbs can be negated in this language, it doesn't help much. This can be illustrated in (6)-(8) sentences.

- (6) ta bu chang lai
He doesn't come often.
(6)' ta chang bu lai
He often doesn't come.
(7) tamen bu dou lai
Not all of them will come.
(7)' tamen dou bu lai
All of them will not come.
(8) ta bu keneng lai
He isn't likely to come.
(8)' ta keneng bu lai
It is likely that he will not come.

If the verb cannot be defined as a primary grammatical category in Chinese, it makes more sense to treat it as a functional category.

Similarly, the adjective category cannot be defined in Chinese as a primary grammatical category. It cannot be recognized as a morphological category. Moreover, adjectives in Chinese cannot be distinguished from verbs, since they require no copula verb in the predicative position, and since they behave no different from other stative verbs.³ In fact, it has been customary for Chinese grammarians to refer to adjectives as stative verbs.⁴

Although Chinese grammarians have recognized words like neng in (9) as auxiliary verbs, they are somehow influenced by the English translation.⁵ Regardless of the fact that they have particular distributional properties not shared by members of other verbs, they can be considered as transitive verbs which take only sentential complement with identical subjects. Thus, like verbs and adjectives, auxiliary verbs in Chinese can be negated (as in (10)) and occur in V-not-V questions (as in (11)).

- (9) ta neng lai
He can come.
(10) ta bu neng lai
He cannot come.
(11) ta neng bu neng lai
Can he come?

Therefore, it is proper to suggest that verbs, adjectives and auxiliary verbs in Chinese belong to one single functional category, that is, predicate.

It is with the notion of predicate rather than verb that we can account for the fact that Chinese nominals can serve as predicates without overt linking verbs. For example,

- (12) zhei-ben shu san kuai qian
This book (is) three dollars.
(13) zhe-ge xiao-haizi si sui
This child (is) four years old.

If verbs and adjectives belong to the same functional category 'predicate' in Chinese, then adverb in this language can also be treated as functional category. It has a function of mapping predicates into new predicates. As a functional category, an adverb in Chinese can modify a predicative nominal without a verb. For example,

- (14) zhe-ge xiao haizi yiling si sui le
This child (is) already four years old.

The category 'preposition' has been problematic for Chinese grammarians. It is not clear whether the underlined elements in sentences like (15) and (17) should be regarded as verbs or as prepositions.

- (15) ta zai chufang-li ku
He is crying in the kitchen. / He is in the kitchen crying.
(16) ta zai chufang-li
He is in the kitchen.
(17) ta yong kuaizi chi jiaozi
He eats dumplings with chopsticks. / He uses chopsticks to eat dumplings.
(18) ta yong kuaizi
He uses chopsticks.

In (16) and (18), they occur alone and are equivalent to verbs in English. In (15) and (17), they can be regarded as equivalent to prepositions in English. While some Chinese grammarians have argued that they are genuine prepositions, some Chinese grammarians have referred to them as co-verbs.⁶ Yet, as indicated in the two alternative translations, they can also be construed as main verbs. Thus, (15) and (17) may be considered to have two verbal phrases, one as the center of predication and the other as an adverbial expression modifying the center. The question as to which of the two verbal expressions is the center of predication depends on semantic focus. There is some syntactic evidence in support of this kind of analysis. For example, the negative bu can be placed either before zai or ku in (15) with different interpretations.

- (19) ta bu zai chufang-li ku
(20) ta zai chufang-li bu ku

(19) can mean either that he is crying but not in the kitchen or that it is not the case that he is crying in the kitchen. (20) is, however, not ambiguous, it can only mean that whenever he is in the kitchen, he doesn't cry. Therefore, the so-called prepositions or co-verbs in Chinese are either predicates themselves or modifiers of predicates, depending on semantic considerations.

The category of noun presents no exception to the general difficulty of using morphological features as indicators of the 'parts of speech' in Chinese. Although there exists a plural suffix -men which can be used with human nouns and pronouns, its absence is not significant except in the case of pronouns.⁸ Thus, unlike plural suffixes in English, the plural suffix -men cannot define the category noun. Examples (39)-(42) in section 0.3 suggest that noun is a functional category in Chinese, namely, 'argument'.

In sum, primary grammatical categories such as verbs, adjectives, auxiliaries, prepositions, adverbs and nouns cannot be properly defined in Chinese as formal categories either in terms of inflectional features or in terms of other pure syntactic considerations. Instead, three major functional categories can be defined in this language. The category 'predicate' includes verbs, adjectives, auxiliaries and prepositions which can serve as the center of predication. Adverbs and prepositional phrases which cannot serve as center of predication constitute another functional category modifying the 'predicate'. The category 'argument' includes all expressions which has the function of serving as subject or object to the predicate. In the following section, it will be shown that the rules of Chinese, unlike those of English, need not refer to the primary grammatical categories.

0.2 Several surface differences between Chinese and English can be attributed to the absence and presence of the category of verb respectively in these two languages. While an English sentence needs a verb to register tense and agreement in surface structure, a Chinese sentence doesn't, since this language doesn't have tense and agreement. Thus, as shown in (12)-(14) sentences, a Chinese sentence can be without a verb. Similarly, since adjective is not an inflected category in English, it cannot take tense and agreement. Therefore, when it is in the predicative position, it needs the copula verb to do the job. The predicative adjective in Chinese, however, has no such requirement (as in (21)). In addition, if we treat English past participles as adjectives, we have a way to understand the presence of the copula verb in the English passive. In contrast, the Chinese passive doesn't need the copula verb (as in (22)). Preposition is another non-inflected category in English. Therefore, when a prepositional phrase is in the predicative position, it needs the copula verb to take tense and agreement. (16) shows that this is not the case in Chinese. Other surface differences

between these two languages can be attributed to the notion of 'main verb' in English and the absence of this notion in Chinese. For example, the main verb in English is clearly distinguished from the infinitive verb. Chinese doesn't make this distinction (as in (23)). Another example can be seen in (24) and (25), where negation and question in Chinese are directly attached to the semantically relevant unit rather than the main verb. In this case, the relevant unit is the adverb 'fast'. In contrast, English negation and question are directed to the main verb, even though the main verb is not the semantic focus under consideration.

- (21) ta hen mang
He (is) very busy.
- (22) ta bei wo da-le
He (was) hit by me.
- (23) ta yao qu
He wants (to) go.
- (24) a ta pao de bu kuai
He doesn't run fast.
b? ta bu pao de kuai
- (25) a ta pao de kuai bu kuai
b? ta pao bu pao de kuai

Correlated with the absence of the verb category and the notion of main verb in Chinese is the absence of categorial distinctions among verb, adjective, auxiliary and preposition. In English, the categorial distinction between verbs and adjectives is necessary in order to account for their syntactic differences in surface structure. First, as we have just noted, when occurring in predicative position, the adjective doesn't take the verbal suffixes associated with tense, aspect and agreement. Second, when an intransitive verb is transformed to the position of modifier in a noun phrase, unlike adjective, it bears suffixing. These two most obvious formal differences between the two categories both have to do with the fact that in English while the verb is an inflected category, the adjective is not. Another syntactic difference due to the categorial distinction in question can be exemplified by (26). While the verb like can take an NP, the synonymous adjective fond can only take a PP.⁹

- (26) a John likes Mary.
b John is fond of Mary.
c*John is fond Mary.

Thus, somewhere in English grammar, structural or transformational, in category or feature representation, the categorial distinction between verbs and adjectives must be recognized because of the surface phenomena observed. In Chinese, however,

there exists no such surface restrictions. Nor are there other surface syntactic phenomena to justify a categorical distinction between verbs and adjectives.

In English, auxiliaries form a syntactic category for the operations such as inversion, negative placement and VP-deletion to refer to. However, in Chinese, there is no inversion. The negative placement makes no distinction between auxiliary verbs and non-auxiliary verbs. This can be illustrated in (27)-(30).

- (27) ta bu lai
He is not coming.
(28) ta bu neng lai
He cannot come.
(29) ta lai bu lai
Is he coming.
(30) ta neng bu neng lai
Can he come.
- Ans. lai, bu lai
Ans. yes, no
Ans. neng, bu neng
Ans. yes, no

(27) and (28) show that auxiliaries, like other verbs in Chinese, can be immediately preceded by the negative. (29) and (30) show that auxiliary verbs behave like non-auxiliary verbs in the V-not-V question and its answer. As far as the VP-deletion is concerned, (31) and (32) show that it can be accounted for by an independently motivated rule of object NP-deletion in Chinese. This account is consistent with our previous contention that auxiliaries in Chinese are two place predicates which only take sentential complement with identical subjects.

- (31) a ta kan yingwen shu, wo ye kan yingwen shu
He reads English books, and I also read English books.
b ta kan yingwen shu, wo ye kan
c* ta kan yingwen shu, wo ye
(32) a ta neng kan yingwen shu, wo ye neng kan yingwen shu
He can read English books, and I can also read English books.
b ta neng kan yingwen shu, wo ye neng kan
c ta neng kan yingwen shu, wo ye neng
d* ta neng kan yingwen shu, wo ye

English prepositions exhibit several characteristics which their Chinese equivalents, co-verbs, do not have. First, English prepositions are clearly distinguished from verbs in that while the former is not an inflected category, the latter is. Second, when an English preposition is derived from underlying predicate, it changes the morphological form and categorical membership. In contrast, Chinese co-verbs are morphologically identical to corresponding verbs. For example, while English has 'to use' and 'with' for instrumental expressions, Chinese has only one morpheme yong 'to use' for both English equivalents. Third, while an English preposition can have

different meanings carrying different constituent relations within a sentence, a Chinese co-verb cannot. Different verbal expressions are needed to translate the different meanings of one single English preposition. This can be illustrated in (33).

- (33) I ate chicken with green pepper = wo chi jiting chao
qingjiao to fry
I ate chicken with Bill = wo gen Bill yikuair chi ji
to follow together
I ate chicken with chopsticks = wo yong kuaitzi chi ji
to use
I ate chicken with joy = wo hen gaoxing de chi ji
very happy

From the point of view of generative semantics, an English preposition can be derived from different underlying sources. It shows up on the surface structure with one single form and follows the rules which govern the ordering of prepositional phrases. Fourth, while in English, prepositional phrases can be defined with regard to transformations such as preposing and others, there seems little justification in Chinese. Thus, in this language, both verbal phrases and co-verbal phrases can be topicalized (as in (34)).

- (34) a wo zai tushuguan nian shu
I am studying in the library.
b zai tushuguan wo nian shu
Whenever I am in the library, I study.
c nian shu wo zai tushuguan
Whenever I study, I do it in the library.

In addition, as shown previously in (19) and (20), the negative bu can be placed before either of two verbal phrases with different interpretations. Furthermore, consider the interesting phenomena of word order exhibited in (35)-(38).

- (35) a ta zai chufang-li ku
He is crying in the kitchen.
b*ta ku zai chufang-li
(36) a ta diao zai shui-li
He fell in the water.
b*ta zai shui-li diao
(37) xiao houzi zai mabel-shang tiao
The little monkey was jumping on the horse's back.
(38) xiao houzi tiao zai mabel-shang
The little monkey jumped on the horse.

(35)-(38) illustrates a generalization proposed by Tai (1976) that while a preverbal locative denotes the location of an event, a postverbal locative denotes the location of a participant as

the result of an event. This fact shows that a grammar of Chinese word order need not refer to the category of preposition. For if we recognize the zai as a preposition, we would have to make some ad-hoc assumptions to explain why not all of the zai phrases are ordered, as in English, uniformly according to the category of preposition irrespective of their different semantic functions.

Finally, the category of noun must be recognized in English for obvious morphological and syntactic reasons which need not be repeated here. Chinese, however, needs only the functional notion 'argument'. This difference can be illustrated in sentences (39)-(42). They show that in Chinese a name of activity can serve both as argument and predicate without changing morphological categories. Yet, English must use a verb for predicate and a noun for argument.

(39) ta tiantian chi-fan, shui-jiao
He everyday eats and sleeps.

(40) chi-fan gen shui-jiao shi liang-jian shi
Eating and sleeping are two things.

(41) wo jianyi ni lai

I suggest you come.

(42) ta tongyi wo-de jianyi
He agrees with my suggestion.

Another systematic difference between Chinese and English has to do with the overlapping between verb and noun categories in English. While substantive words such as 'fish', 'water', and many others can be used both as nouns and verbs in English, they cannot be so used in Chinese. Yet, activity words, as illustrated in (39)-(42), can function both as argument and predicate in Chinese. This shows that while in English there is a morphological mechanism available for a substantive word to be assigned into the verb category with activity meaning to function as a predicate, the same morphological mechanism is not available in Chinese. On the other hand, the difference between substantive and activity words in Chinese shows that Chinese relies on meaning to decide whether a word can function as predicate only, or as argument only, or both.

0.3 Both lexical categories and syntactic categories are defined in the \bar{X} syntax as formal categories rather than functional categories. It is therefore necessary for this paper to examine briefly the applicability of the \bar{X} convention to Chinese.

As a theory of phrase structure in universal grammar, the \bar{X} convention make three principal claims. First, a particular language chooses its repertoire of lexical categories from those provided by universal grammar. Second, each lexical category X defines a set of syntactic categories X' , X'' , ... X^n . Third, the rules of grammar are stated in terms of syntactic

features complexes and the prime notation.

It is not hard to see that lexical categories, defined as complexes of syntactic features, in \bar{X} syntax are in essence corresponding to the 'parts of speech' in traditional grammar. They are motivated to account for the surface combinatoric restrictions in English, which are sensitive to morphological categories to a great extent. We have shown that unlike English, Chinese surface combinatoric restrictions are not sensitive to morphological categories. Thus, it is not surprising that the feature t_{Subj} cannot be used to distinguish verb from adjective and preposition in Chinese. In English, adjectives and prepositions have -Subj feature, because the subject NP bears the grammatical relation of "subject-of" to the verb be.¹² In Chinese, however, adjectives and prepositions can predicate on nominals without the copula verb. Similarly, since the feature t_{Obj} in \bar{X} syntax is strictly syntactic, it cannot be justified in Chinese as in English. Thus, while afraid Bill and the enemy's destruction the city are ungrammatical in English, their equivalents in Chinese are grammatical without the preposition of. It is doubtful that lexical categories in Chinese can be defined in terms of formal syntactic features as in English.

Syntactic categories in \bar{X} syntax are projections of lexical categories in terms of the \bar{X} convention. If lexical categories in Chinese cannot be properly defined by means of formal syntactic features, syntactic categories in this language cannot be properly defined as supercategories of lexical categories in the \bar{X} convention. Supercategories of P and A cannot be defined in Chinese. The fact that a Chinese sentence can do without a verb (as in (9) and (10)) shows that V'' cannot be projected from V in Chinese.

Furthermore, in \bar{X} syntax, the head of a phrase of category X^n is defined either as the X^{n-1} that it dominates or as the lexical category at the bottom. However, we have seen in the previous discussion that in Chinese predicates with adverbial expressions of several types, the head, in its most meaning sense, does not always fall upon the verb. This fact and the absence of the notion of 'main verb' in Chinese are two sides of the same coin. They refute \bar{X} as a meaningful convention.

With regard to the explanatory value of the prime notation in Chinese grammar, it has been shown by Tai (1982) in detail that contrary to recent claims by some Chinese linguists, many significant generalities of word order in Chinese cannot be explained by merely assigning constituents to syntactic categories of different levels in the \bar{X} convention. For the present purpose, we will only refer to Claudia Ross' (1981) proposal that while a preverbal modifier in Chinese modifies \bar{V} , a postverbal modifier modifies V . Thus, following her proposal, to account for the placement of the locative phrase as exhibited in (35)-(38), we can assign the preverbal locative to be the specifier of \bar{V} , and the postverbal locative to be the complement of V . But,

this kind of description provides no principled explanation for the generalization that while a preverbal locative denotes the location of an event, a postverbal locative denotes the location of a participant as the result of an event. Particularly, the 'result' sense of the postverbal locative is so consistent that it cannot be considered as simply a conversational implicature of the verbal modification. Nor does this kind of characterization explain why the locative phrase in Chinese has the kind of word order that it does. For it cannot predict that the other possibilities of word order are ungrammatical in Chinese. In short, word orders in Chinese are governed by a set of linearization principles drastically different from those in English, and these principles cannot be meaningfully stated in terms of the prime notation.¹³

0.4 We have shown that lexical categories in Chinese cannot be defined as morphological categories corresponding to the 'parts of speech'. We have further shown that syntactic categories in Chinese are functional categories rather than formal syntactic categories based on surface morphological categories. It appears that both lexical categories and syntactic categories in Chinese can be treated in a unitary manner within the framework of categorial grammar. Following Lyons (1966), the noun will be considered as primary in constituent structure. Following Lewis (1972), the three basic categories are sentence (S), name (N) and common noun (C). Other categories are derived from these three basic categories. The category of S/N in Chinese includes intransitive verbs and predicative adjectives. The category (S/N)/N includes transitive verbs and prepositions. The category (S/N)/S includes auxiliary and transitive verbs which take sentential complements. The category (S/N)/(S/N) includes adverbs. The category C/C includes adjectives and nouns which modify common nouns. Tentatively, this category should also include numbers and measures. The category (S/(S/N))/C includes quantifiers and demonstratives. Following Lewis (1972), we can further assume that to specify a categorial grammar, we need only specify its lexicon, the phrase structure rules being implicit in the system of derived categories. Thus, except S, syntactic categories in Chinese are the projections of functional lexical categories.

The categories in a categorial grammar, like logical categories, are deep structure categories. The 'parts of speech' and other formal syntactic categories based upon them are surface categories. It has recently been pointed out by McCawley (1981) that English grammar has to refer to both logical categories in deep structure and the 'parts of speech' as morphological categories in surface structure, and that surface categories have to be created during the course of derivation. In this paper, we have observed that Chinese, however, does not need the surface categories. Thus, from the point of view of mapping from logical structures to surface structures, it can be stated that while

English needs to go via a level of reassignment in categories, Chinese doesn't. Pending further investigation on other languages, it is not unreasonable to suggest that many systematic syntactic differences between inflectional languages like English and non-inflectional languages like Chinese are primarily due to the presence of morphological categories in inflectional languages and the absence of morphological categories in non-inflectional languages.

Footnotes

1. See Lyons (1968: 274).
2. Chao (1968) has defined the verb in Chinese as any word which can be modified by the negative and which can serve as the predicate or the center of predicative expression. This definition has two conjunctive conditions. The first part is intended to be a formal condition, and the second part to be a semantic condition. What constitutes the center of predicative expression has, however, not been made clear. Judging from his definition of modification, the center of predicative expression is assumed to be no different from the notion of 'main verb' in English. See Chao (1968: 663 and 274).
3. Kratochvil (1968: 113) has used the co-occurrence with hen 'very' as the key criterion to distinguish stative verbs from functional verbs such as zou 'to walk'. This approach thus groups adjectives and transitive verbs such as xihuan 'to like' together as stative verbs.
4. For example, Tewksbury (1948), Defrancis (1963) and Chao (1968). Recently Li and Thompson (1981) have referred to them as adjectival verbs.
5. As far as I know, the only rigorous argument for the establishment of this grammatical category in Chinese was given by Li and Thompson (1981).
6. For example, Tewksbury (1948) and Defrancis (1963) have used the term 'co-verb'. Chao (1968) recognized co-verbs as prepositions. Li and Thompson (1974) have argued that co-verbs like zai are genuine prepositions. The essence of their argument is that since co-verbs like zai are not main verbs, they must be prepositions.
7. In addition, (19) can also mean that he is in the kitchen doing something other than crying. Unlike the two other readings, this reading cannot be understood by the rule of negative attachment in Chinese.
8. See Kratochvil (1968: 110) for further discussion.
9. See McCawley (1981: 14-16) for further discussion on the surface constraints involving adjective, verb and noun in English.
10. Lakoff (1968) has argued that the instrumental with can be derived from the higher predicate 'to use'. Lakoff and Peters (1968) have derived with Bill from phrasal conjunction.

11. Our discussion in this section is based on Jackendoff (1977).
12. See Jackendoff (1977: 32).
13. See Tai (1981) for a detailed discussion.

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Portuguese Pseudo Clefts: Evidence for Free Relatives*
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I. Both Portuguese and English have a similar pseudo-cleft construction. Spoken Brazilian Portuguese (SBP), however, unlike English, also has a construction identical to normal pseudo-clefts except that its head is erased.

This essay presents arguments for the following hypotheses: 1) that the subject clause of a pseudo-cleft (PC) is a free relative, 2) that the identical construction in SBP with an erased head is in fact a PC, and therefore its subject clause may be analyzed as a free relative with a missing wh phrase, and consequently, 3) that this phenomenon, when coupled with other linguistic peculiarities of SBP, will provide evidence in favor of the COMP Hypothesis of free relatives proposed in Groos and Van Riemsdijk (1979).

II. The Portuguese PC is basically of the same structure as its English counterpart. The subject is a sentential clause, and the predicate consists of a copula plus a phrasal constituent which corresponds to a fronted wh phrase in the subject clause. Sentences (1)-(4) illustrate this:

- (1)a. [O que_i me ajudou muito] foi [aquele livro sobre
 what_i helped me a lot was that book about
 a história]_{NP_i}
 hysteria
- b. [Quem_i me ajudou muito] foi [o psicólogo]_{NP_i}
 Who_i helped me a lot was the psychologist
- (2) [O que_i meu relógio está] é [adiantado]_{AP_i}
 what_i my watch is is fast
- (3) [O que_i ele fez] foi [trabalhar até morrer]_{VP_i}
 what_i he did was work himself to death
- (4) [Onde_i eu errei] foi [na pontaria]_{PP_i}
 Where_i I missed was in the aiming
 (errar na pontaria = miss your mark)

Just as in English, while the category contained in the predicate may be any one of the major phrasal categories, the phrase that it is construed with in the subject clause may only be an NP (which will construe with NP, AP, and VP), or a PP (which will construe only with PPs).

The possible set of nominal elements in the subject clause that construe with the predicate may be exhaustively stipulated as o que 'what' and quem 'who'.¹ These are also the only possible nominal elements that may appear within a PP in the same position.² The prepositional elements that will construe may also be exhaustively stipulated. Schematically speaking, the set of prepositions that will appear in the subject clause are the 'short' prepositions,