Functionalism and Chinese Grammar

功能学説
與
中文文法

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CONTENTS

Preface ................................................................. i

Introduction .......................................................... iii

1. Ye as Manifested on Three Discourse Planes: Polysemy or Abstraction?
   Yung-O Biq (San Francisco State University) ......................... 1

2. The Interplay of Syntax, Semantics, and Pragmatics in Mandarin Chinese.
   Chauncey C. Chu (University of Florida) .............................. 19

3. Time and Imagery in Chinese.
   Hsin-I Hsieh (University of Hawaii) .................................. 45

4. The Structural Meaning of Ba and Bei Constructions in Mandarin Chinese.
   Frank F.S. Hsueh (Ohio State University) ............................. 95

5. The Door is Closed on ZHE NE.
   Timothy Light (Kalamazoo College) ................................ 127

   Lu Jianming (Peking University) ...................................... 157

7. Formalism, Functionalism and Chinese Syntax.
   John H.T. Lu (Florida State University) ............................... 179

8. Toward a Cognition-Based Functional Grammar of Chinese.
   James H-Y. Tai (Ohio State University) .............................. 187

   Shou-hsin Teng (University of Massachusetts) .................... 227

10. Topics and the Lian....Dou/Ye Construction Revisited.
    Feng-fu Tsao (Tsinghua University of Taiwan) .................... 245
Ye as Manifested on Three Discourse Planes: Polysemy or Abstraction?

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A. INTRODUCTION

It has been pointed out as early as Wang (1947) that certain Mandarin lexical items that pertain to logical reasonings, such as cái (才), jiù (就), yòu (又), và (也), and dōu (都), illustrate multiple uses in diverse contexts. Each of these words can signal different meanings by functioning as different sorts of constituent in the sentence. Although most of these words can function as conjunction markers, both Wang and Chao (1968) identify them as adverbs, because these words consistently occur at the pre-verbal, post-subject/topic position in a sentence.

The most interesting aspects of these adverbs are the semantics within each case and across all cases. First, are the multiple uses of each adverb related to one another? If so, how? Are all of them contextual variants of one abstract core meaning (the 'abstraction approach'), or is it rather that one of the uses is taken as the basic meaning and other uses are derived from it (the 'polysemy approach') (cf. Sweetser (1986))? Second, since multiplicity is found in all of these adverbs, what explains this regularity? What exactly is the recurring pattern across these adverbs of diverse semantic orientations? If there is indeed systematicity, what does it tell us about semantic structure and semantic development in general?

Early studies do not explicitly distinguish the 'abstraction approach' from the 'polysemy approach' when they deal with the semantic relatedness among the uses of each adverb. Chao tackles the issue by informally subcategorizing the diverse uses under one single lexical entry for each adverb. Alleton (1972) establishes a unified taxonomy for seven adverbs by distinguishing three 'functional values' for each word. Since then, the adverbs that have been studied most extensively are cái and jiù. Tsao (1976) points out that discourse 'expectations' impose pragmatic constraints on the use of cái. In both Paris (1981) and Biq (1987), cái and jiù are thoroughly contrasted with each other both semantically and pragmatically. In Biq (1987, 1988) abstractionist analyses for cái, jiù, and yòu are implicitly proposed. It is suggested that each lexical item possesses a core meaning, from which the multiple uses are derived.
Recent literature has paid abundant attention to 呈 as well. In both Paris (1979) and Paris & Tamba-Mecz (1984) 呈 is examined as the latter part of some correlative conjunction constructions; thus the discussions in these two papers are not focused on the multiple uses of the adverb. Ma (1982), however, focuses entirely on the semantics of 呈. Ma points out that what 呈 signifies in its various uses is not merely a juxtaposition of items, but rather the similarity between the items under juxtaposition. In relation to this argument, Shen (1983) notes that the similarity between the juxtaposed items will not be significant unless there are differences in other aspects between them. Ma further distinguishes another use of 呈, i.e., the emphatic use that characterizes the tone of voice called wēiwǎn 委婉 'roundabout, tactful' in Chinese. However, the relationship between the use for 'similarity in juxtaposed items' and the use for 'roundabout, tactful tone of voice' is not addressed.

The aim of this paper is twofold: to examine the lexical structure of 呈, and to use it as a base to discuss the abstraction vs. polysemy debate. In particular, I attempt to establish a semantic connection between the less understood emphatic use of 呈, and its other uses which are understood more thoroughly. I will also discuss how the semantic connections among the diverse uses should be characterized theoretically.

In the following discussion, I will make no attempt to give an exhaustive account of the possible meanings of 呈. Only a sketch is presented here. This sketch, however, consists of a substantial subset of the meanings most often cited in dictionaries and in grammar books. Briefly, I distinguish three types of use for 呈: (1) symmetric juxtaposition, (2) scalar inclusiveness, and (3) evaluative downtoning. This triple use of 呈 applies on three discourse planes that respectively pertain to (1) the propositional content of an utterance, (2) the epistemic world from which the speaker draws his/her hypotheses, inferences, and speculations, and (3) the speech situation in which the speaker is involved. I suggest that a function of marking the similarity shared by the juxtaposed entities can be abstracted from all three uses of 呈. However, I also discuss arguments against the abstraction approach as the better approach in treating the semantics of 呈 and other Chinese adverbs of similar behavior.

B. SYMMETRIC JUXTAPOSITION

The first type of 呈 is fairly straightforward and has been discussed in all the relevant literature. 呈 points to the similarity between two or more values that are juxtaposed with one another in a sentence. These juxtaposed values
can be expressed by any constituent in the sentence (cf. Shen (1983)).
Consider examples 1 to 3.

1. (subject juxtaposed)
   大人睡觉, 小孩也睡觉。
   Dà rén shuì jiào, xiǎohái yě shuì jiào.
   big person sleep sleep, child sleep sleep
   'Adults sleep; children sleep, too.'

2. (object juxtaposed)
   他们会说中国话, 也会说英文。
   Tāmén huì shuō Zhōngguóhuà, yě huì shuō Yīngwén.
   they know-how speak Chinese, know-how speak English
   'They can speak Chinese; they can also speak English.'

3. (temporal adverb juxtaposed)
   这个人昨天来了, 今天也来了。
   Zhèi-ge rén zuótiān lái le, jīntiān yě lái le.
   this-M person yesterday come PRT today come PRT
   'This person came yesterday; he came again today.'

In each of the examples above, only members of one single syntactic category are juxtaposed with each other. However, juxtaposition can involve more than one syntactic category (or rather, semantic type). 4a. and 4b. are examples.

4. (subject and verb juxtaposed)
   a. 小孩子大了, 房屋也旧了。
      Xiǎoháizi dà le, fángwū yě jiùle.
      child big PRT house old PRT
      'The children grew up; the houses became old, too.'
   b. 雨停了, 太阳也出来了。
      Yǔ tíng le, tài yáng yě chūlai le.
      rain stop PRT sun come-out PRT
      'The rain stopped; the sun came out, too.'

Notice further that yě can be used not only with the later members of a juxtaposition, but also with the first member. This 'yě... yě...' construction is what Chao refers to as his first type of 'correlative conjunction,' with the same word repeated as correlatives.
5. 碗也洗了，桌子也擦了，还有什么没做的？

Wăn yě xǐ le, zhuōzi yě cā le, hái yǒu shěnméméi zuòde?

bowl wash PRT table wipe PRT still have what NEG do DE

'The dishes are washed; the table is wiped, too. What else is there to do?'

This points to a difference between Chinese yě and English 'also.' Since 'also' only occurs with the later members of a juxtaposition, that juxtaposition is asymmetric, with later members as a follow-up, supplementary to the first member. On the other hand, since yě is not restricted to the position immediately preceding later members of a juxtaposition, it does not necessarily render the juxtaposition asymmetric; all members of the juxtaposition are ordered as equals.

The juxtaposition of two or more values may sometimes stretch over a number of sentences or even over larger conversational or textual units such as paragraphs. Thus, the first member(s) of a juxtaposition may not immediately precede the sentence in which yě occurs, and it requires a comprehensive understanding of the text to identify the members of this kind of juxtaposition. However, the juxtaposed members are always entities from the propositional content (be it a smaller unit, such as a sentence, or a larger one, such as a paragraph). Thus, we may conclude that the first type of yě projects similarity in a symmetric juxtaposition of two (or more) values all drawn from the propositional content.

C. SCALAR INCLUSIVENESS

The second type of yě pertains to its function as a scalar particle. Like other scalar particles in Mandarin such as cái, jiù, yòu, dōu, or those in English such as 'even,' 'only,' or 'just,' yě conveys implicatures with respect to certain values designated in the sentence in terms of a scale where this value and alternate values are ordered according to extra-linguistic standards.

When ye operates as a scalar particle, it continues to mark a similarity between the members of a juxtaposition. However, since the juxtaposed members now are differently ranked values on a pragmatically ordered scale, this juxtaposition is an asymmetric one. There are two sub-groups of this type.
C.1. With Expressions Denoting Extremity

First, the scalar *yē* often occurs with adverbial expressions denoting extremity. This corresponds to Chao's second type of 'correlative conjunction,' which has different words as correlatives. The *liàn* (連)...*yē*(dōu) (也/都) construction and the concessive constructions respectively discussed in Paris (1979) and Paris & Tamba-Meca (1984) fall in this group. The capitalized expressions in 6 through 10 exemplify some of these adverbials.

6. 就算你请我坐汽车去，我也不去。
   JIÙSUÀN nǐ qíng wǒ zuò qìchē qù, wǒ yē bù qù.
   'Even if you offer me a free ride, I still won't go.'

7. 我宁可自己去，也不要让你代表我去。
   Wǒ NÍNGKE zìjǐ qù, yē bù yào ràng nǐ dàibiǎowǒ qù.
   'I'd rather go by myself than let you represent me.'

8. 甚至隔壁的老王也买了新房子。
   SHÈNZHì gébì de Lào Wáng yē màile xīn fángzi.
   'Even Old Wang from next door bought a new house.'

9. 连他的敌人也不得不佩服他。
   LIÁN tā de dírén yē bù dé bàn péǐfú tā.
   'Even his/her enemy had to admire him/her.'

10. 没有人在家，你再敲门也没用。
    Méiyǒu rén zài jiā. Nǐ ZÀI qiāo mén yē méiyǒu yòng.
    'There's nobody home. There is no use in knocking on the door.'

In each sentence the constituent (ranging from an NP to a clause) headed by these (capitalized) adverbial expressions represents an extreme value. This extreme value is juxtaposed with alternate values which, according to extra-linguistic standards, are ranked as 'less extreme,' 'more typical,' or 'expected' on the scale. *Yē* signals a similarity between them: the extreme value designated in the sentence is similar to the more typical alternate values in that both of them share the properties designated by the main predicate immediately following *yē*. In other words, before the juxtaposition, only the
more typical values form a set which has the property designated by the main predicate. Now after the juxtaposition signaled by yē, the extreme value designated in the sentence is included in this set despite its extremity, atypicality, or unexpectedness. This is the reason for the term 'scalar inclusiveness.'

Notice that in addition to the shift from symmetric to asymmetric juxtaposition, the first type of yē and the second type of yē differ in the discourse planes on which the juxtaposition can operate. The first type operates on entities drawn from the propositional content, as pointed out in section B. The scalar yē, however, can not only operate on entities drawn from the propositional content, but can also project juxtaposition in the epistemic world.

Sweetser (1982, 1986) points out that when used in speech, many types of lexicon in natural languages can operate ambiguously at three different levels: the propositional content, the epistemic world, and the speech-act situation. Modals such as 'must' in English are primary examples, but conjunctions and some 'speech-act' verbs possess the same ambiguity. Schiffirin (1987) offers similar observations, especially when she discusses the uses of English 'because' and 'so' in discourse. She characterizes the three levels as (1) ideational structure (fact-based), (2) information state (knowledge-based), and (3) action structure (action-based), respectively, and calls them the three 'discourse planes.'

Some of Sweetser's examples are repeated here to illustrate the differences:

11 a. John must be home by ten: Mother won't let him stay out later. ('root'/deontic, or propositional)
   b. John must be home already: I see his coat. (epistemic)
   c. I must say .../I must tell you that ... (speech-act)
      (Sweetser 1982)

12 a. If John goes, Mary will go. (propositional)
   b. If John went, Mary (probably) did, too. (epistemic)
   c. If you're headed for the cafeteria, there's better food at the deli. (speech-act)
      (Sweetser 1986: 530)

Scalar yē in Mandarin can operate either on the plane of the propositional content or on the plane of the epistemic world. Recall that the two juxtaposed members in this case are the extreme value and the more typical
value. The extreme value is part of the propositional content, but the more typical value is not necessarily part of the propositional content. When it is, the scalar *yē* operates on the plane of propositional content simply because both of the (asymmetrically) juxtaposed values are entities drawn from there. However, the more typical value can be an entity that exists in the non-actual, hypothetical world that is only significant in inferential reasoning. When this is the case, the (asymmetric) juxtaposition projected by *yē* operates in the epistemic world.

The epistemic type usually takes place when the *yē* sentence is used hyperbolically. Take 6 as an example. In this case the speaker refuses to go even when (s)he is offered a free ride. A juxtaposition on the propositional plane would be the case in which the interlocutor in this particular situation indeed extends an invitation to go but asks the speaker to go on his/her own. On the other hand, the juxtaposition operates on the epistemic plane when nobody (in the discourse) really extends any invitation for going and 6 is only uttered as a hyperbolic comment with respect to the place at issue. In this latter case, both the extreme value and the more typical value are juxtaposed with each other only in a hypothetical fashion in order to derive the intended expressive effect.

The second sub-type of scalar *yē*, in which it co-occurs with expressions denoting universality, has similar dual applications.

C.2. With Expressions Denoting Universality

Another group of words which often occurs with the scalar *yē* consists of several kinds of universal quantifiers. They can be NPs denoting universal negation that contain the numeral *yī* 'one' and negation. They can be *wh*-words such as *shéi* (谁) 'who,' *shénme* (什么) 'what,' *zěnme* (怎么) 'how,' *nár* (哪儿) 'where.' Finally, they can be adverbials such as *yǒngyuǎn* (永远) 'forever,' and *fānzhèng* (反正) 'in any case,' which all denote universality in one way or another. Examples of this sub-group are given in 13 through 19. (Universal quantifiers are capitalized.)

13. 他坐在那儿，一句话也不说。
   Tā zuòzài nàr , Yī-jù huà yē bù shuō.
   (s)he sit at there one-M speech NEG speak
   '(S)he sits there without saying (even) a word.'
14 a. 这种地方，谁也不要 去。
Zhèi-zhǒngdìfâng, SHÉI yě bù yào qù.
'this-M place who NEG want go
'Nobody wants to go to this kind of place.'

b. 谁也知道哥伦布发现了美洲。
SHÉLýě zhídào Gêlúnbù fâxiàn-le Měizhōu.
'Everybody knows that Columbus discovered America.'

15. 他说他什么也不要。
Tã shuō tã SHÉNME yě bù yào.
'(s)he say (s)he what NEG want
'(s)he said (s)he didn't want anything.'

16 a. 这个字我怎么写也写不好。
Zhèi-ge zì wǒ ZENME xiě yě xiě bù hǎo.
'this-M character I how write write NEG well
'I can never write this character well no matter how I write it.'

b. 你怎么找也得把他找着。
Nì ZENME zhào yě děi bā tā zhǎo-zháo.
'You have to find him/her no matter how.'

17 a. 放假的时候，我哪儿也没 去。
Fâng-jià de shíhòu, wǒ NÂR yě méi qù.
'have-holiday NOM time 1 where NEG go
'I didn't go anywhere during the holidays.'

b. 在美国哪儿也有可口可乐的广告。
Zài Měiguó, NÂR yě yǒu Kěkǒkèlè-de guǎnggào.
in America where have Coca-Cola-NOM advertisement
'In America, there are Coca-Cola ads everywhere.'

18. 我永远也不会忘记你。
Wǒ YÎNGYUĀN yě bù huì wângjīnǐ.
'I forever NEG will forget you
'I'll never forget you.'

19 a. 我反正也不走，可以慢慢的看这本书。
Wǒ FÂNZHÈNG yě bù zǒu, kěyī mànman-dekàn zhèi-bënshū.
'I anyway NEG leave, may slowly-DE read this-M book
'I am not leaving in any case, I can take my time to read this book.'
Universal quantifiers can occur in both affirmative and negative sentences. However, *yě* occurs with them more often in negative sentences than in affirmative sentences. Co-occurrence with universal quantifiers is not a problem once universality is taken as a process of scanning every value in the domain that is set up pragmatically. After comparing and contrasting these alternate values with one another, one can draw a similarity from them despite their differences. Universality can thus be regarded as a sub-type of scalar inclusiveness, provided that the values under consideration differ in scalar ranking (according to extra-linguistic standards). Moreover, just as with expressions denoting extremity, asymmetric juxtaposition with universal quantifiers operates on the plane of propositional content if the universality is taken 'literally'. Otherwise, it operates on the plane of the epistemic world if the universality is taken 'figuratively' as a hyperbole. For example, 14b is (pragmatically) ambiguous between the literal interpretation and the hyperbolic interpretation.

A more interesting issue with respect to universal quantifiers is the fact that *yě* goes with negative universality much more than with positive universality. Another logic-oriented adverb in Mandarin, *dòu*'all', can not only substitute for *yě* in 13 to 19, but can also occur with affirmative universality where *yě* would be unacceptable. Compare the (a) sentence with the (b) sentence in each of the following examples:

20. a. 他什么都吃。
    Tā SHÉNME dòu chī.
    (s)he what eat
    '(S)he eats everything.'
    b. 他什么也吃。
    Tā SHÉNME yě chī.

21. a. 我哪一天都可以。
    Wǒ NEI-yī-diān dòu kěyì.
    I which-one-day OK
    'Whichever day is fine with me.'
    b. 我哪一天也可以。
    Wǒ NEI-yī-diān yě kěyì.
22 a. 他在哪儿精神都很好。
Tā zài NĀR jīngshén dōu hěnhǎo.
(s)he at where spirit INT good
'(S)he is always in good spirits wherever (s)he goes.'

b. 他在哪儿精神也很好。
?Tā zài NĀR jīngshén yē hěnhǎo.

Earlier studies such as Su (1984) have noted this negative vs. affirmative discrepancy between the two adverbs, but have not provided any account for it. I want to leave this question aside for the time being. I will come back to it after discussing the third type of yē.

D. EVALUATIVE DOWNTONING

I call the third type of yē 'evaluative downtoning,' which in earlier literature is taxonomized under categories that are entitled 'emotional adverb' (Wang), 'evaluative adverb' (Chao), or 'modal marker' (Alleton and Paris). However, this type of use is never seriously examined in conjunction with the two former types in all of the literature, including Ma (1982).

For the third type of yē, there is still a juxtaposition and there is still a similarity drawn from this juxtaposition. This time, however, the juxtaposition is not between two entities from the propositional content, nor between two entities from the epistemic world. Rather, yē quantifies the whole sentence, taking that which is represented by the entire proposition, and juxtaposing it with that which is built up as the expectation in the discourse. This type of juxtaposition, in other words, operates on the third discourse plane, i.e., the speech-act situation.

When two entities drawn from the propositional content are considered similar, this similarity is established on the basis of some commonly held, verifiable criteria observed by the speaker. When two entities drawn from the hypothetical, epistemic world are considered similar, this similarity is established on the basis of the speaker's belief and knowledge as (s)he makes inferences on all kinds of possibility and probability. When two entities drawn from the speech-act situation are considered similar, this similarity is established on the basis of the speaker's evaluative or expressive attitude toward the subject-at-issue. The third type of yē, then, marks a similarity perceived on the part of the speaker between what (s)he him-/her-self is saying (the asserted value) and what is expected under the circumstances (the expected value).
In addition to the 'subjective' characteristic and the 'speech-act' orientation, the third type of juxtaposition is also asymmetric in the sense that, despite the acknowledged similarity between the two juxtaposed values, there is the connotation of 'downtoning' the asserted value as if it does not measure up with the expected value.

A distinction between uptoner and downtoner is suggested by studies on English scalar particles (Brugman 1984, Traugott 1986). Scalar particles that focus on the high end of a scale are uptoners, such as 'very' in 'very difficult.' On the other hand, downtoners focus on the low end of a scale, such as 'just' in 'He is just a linguist.' But 'very' can also be a downtoner, such as in 'the very thought of waiting in the line.'

The evaluative yě is a downtoner. By downtoning the co-occurring utterance, thus reducing the face value of the assertion, yě conveys the speaker's note of the discrepancy between the reality of the described situation and what was expected of it.

23 to 25 are examples of the evaluative yě that I draw from Chen Ruoxi's Er Hu 'A Tale of Two Hu's,' a story in Chinese which I was reading at the time of writing this article. In each case the English translation of the sentence in which yě occurs is underlined. The English words in parentheses represent my attempt at paraphrasing what yě conveys in the original Chinese texts.

23. "这个年纪的小孩", 他向老米建议,"不必管的太紧，美国的小孩十几岁时都无法无天，长大了也就懂事。"
‘Zhèige niánjíde xiǎohái’, tā xiàng Lào Mì jiàn yì, 'bù bǐ guǎn de tài jǐn. Měiguó de xiǎohái, shíjì suí shí dōu wú fá wú tíān, zhǎngdà le yě jiǔ dǒng shì.'
"但愿如此。"
'Dànyuàn rú cǐ.'
老米的口气明显的缺乏信心。
Lào Mì de kǒuqì míngxìmiàn de quēfá xīn xīn. (Chen: 8-9)
'With kids of this age', he suggested to Lao Mi, 'You should not be too strict. American kids are unruly in their teens, but after that they will (at least) behave themselves.'
'I hope so.' Lao Mi's voice showed an obvious lack of confidence.

24. "景先今天跑了两个坟场，找到了一块地，说是很不错，是不是?" 媳妇望着丈夫，示意的换了话题。
"我也不懂，不过坟场的人都说那块地很好。" 她丈夫老实的承认。
Jingxian went to two cemeteries today and found a plot. They said it was a good one, didn't they?' The daughter-in-law looked at her husband to suggest a change of topic. 'I don't (really) know how to choose a good plot (either), but the people at the cemetery all said it was a good plot.' Her husband admitted it honestly.

In America, bikes are used for exercise only. Here, they have the function of private cars, carrying both people and goods. Those whose riding skills are advanced weave in and out among pedestrians and cars, as if they were performing acrobatics. They take the same routes as cars, always creating dangerous scenes, but (contrary to what one would expect) this doesn't result in any accidents.

In 23 the speaker asserts that American teenagers will behave after they grow up. The expectation about American teenagers in this particular context is, however, more than that: after they grow up, American young people are expected to accomplish more than just behaving themselves. Thus, the (asserted) reality does not measure up with the expectation. However, taken from another perspective, the (asserted) reality and the expectation share one feature regarding American teenagers, i.e., they are at least not unruly when they grow up. What the speaker intends here is twofold: on the one hand, he acknowledges the discrepancy between the reality and the expectation; on the other hand, he concedes the similarity between the two. 电竞 marks this similarity, meanwhile casts a downtoning effect on the asserted proposition to signal the discrepancy.

24 illustrates a similar juxtaposition between the asserted reality and the situation idealized in people's minds. The husband in this episode was the only person who went to the cemetery, and he was responsible for choosing a
plot for burying his dead mother. He did this by consulting with the people who ran the cemetery because he didn't know how to do it by himself. Now after he has returned, he is obliged to explain how the plot was chosen but can't offer an illuminating answer. This, of course, does not measure up with what was expected of him. By using downtoning いずれ in the utterance that asserts the reality, the speaker not only acknowledges the discrepancy between the not-so-satisfactory reality (i.e., The husband didn't know much about what was going on) and the idealized expectation (i.e., He would make a sober decision and find a good plot), but also concedes the similarity between the two (i.e., The plot is chosen anyway).

In 25, what was expected under the circumstances is that the competition between bikes and cars would lead to accidents. The asserted reality (i.e., No accident happened) does not 'measure up' with this expectation. However, no matter whether accidents happen or not, it is dangerous all the same. Again, downtoning いずれ is used to highlight the discrepancy between the asserted and the expected. However, the dangerousness embedded in both cases is acknowledged as their shared feature.

E. DOWNTONING AND UNIVERSALITY

Given the downtoning function いずれ has over the (asserted) proposition, it will be much easier to go back to the question we left behind in section C.2. We wondered why いずれ goes more with negative universality than with affirmative/positive universality. The examples are from 13 to 22.

The downtoning tendency of いずれ may be the explanation. Universal negation goes hand in hand with downtoning because the latter focuses on the low/negative end of a scale. On the other hand, universal affirmation occupies the highest (positive) end of a scale, and consequently contrasts with downtoning. This is why many universal affirmations cannot co-occur with いずれ (cf. 20b., 21b., and 22b.).

For those universal affirmations where いずれ can be used, such as in 14b, 16b, 17b, and 19b, the downtoning effect operates in the same way as it does in the evaluative use in 23 to 25. いずれ reduces the face value of the whole proposition by adding a downtoning effect to it. It highlights the speaker's reserved attitude toward the 'real' situation that (s)he is describing: it could be plain truth, which is not worth repeating, or, it is less 'satisfactory' than what was expected of it. For example, 14b concerns a fact which the speaker believes that everybody knows, and thus should not have bothered to repeat.
17b. has the connotation that the speaker disapproves of the reality that Coco-Cola ads are seen everywhere in America.

F. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

The three types of uses of ye are discussed above. In each use, ye has the function of pointing to the similarity between the values under juxtaposition. The first type is a straightforward symmetric juxtaposition of two or more values. The second type of ye is a scalar particle, bringing the designated extreme, atypical, or unexpected value into the group of more typical, normative, or expected values by pointing to their shared property, which is designated by the main predicate. The scalar ye also occurs with universal negation, illustrating a tendency of asymmetric inclusion toward the negative, lower end of a scale. The downtoning effect is most explicit in the third use of ye. It discounts the face value of the proposition in the uttered sentence by implicitly contrasting it (i.e., what is being asserted) with the never-to-be-measured-up expectation or norm established in the discourse. Finally, some scalar ye cases are also found to be the evaluative downtoning ye.

From the first type to the third type, juxtapositions shift between parallel, symmetric ones and asymmetric, negative-end oriented ones. At the same time, the range of ye's operation shifts from the propositional content to the epistemic world, and finally to the speech-act situation. This shift of the planes on which ye applies its semantics forms a gradual transition from a focus on 'what is said' to a focus on 'how it is said', with an increasing involvement of the speaker's judgment and evaluation. As it highlights similarity among juxtaposed entities, ye in all three uses furnishes cohesiveness in building up the text/conversation. However, it is in implicitly bringing into play contextual norms and expectations and the speaker's evaluation of the described situation, that ye contributes to the coherence in discourse [cf. notions of cohesion and coherence in Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Tannen (1984)].

G. ABSTRACTION OR POLYSEMY?

Now that we have examined the various uses of ye and pointed out the semantic connections among them, the next question is, what is the best way to characterize these semantic connections?

If we take the abstraction approach, it is actually not difficult to identify the core meaning that underlies all three types of use. It is even possible to
capture it in semi-logical notations, as attempted in 26. The case described in 25. is used here to exemplify the variables involved therein.

26. **ye** \( v(s) \leq > v(s) \) \& \( \exists t \neq s, v(t) \) \( s, t \in S_r \)

\[ S = \{s, t, \ldots\} \]

- **S**: set of juxtaposed entities
- **\( S_r \)**: set of entities not juxtaposed to one another
- **v**: property/properties ('Competitions between bikes and cars are dangerous')
- **s**: (The asserted reality, 'No accident happens')
- **t**: (The expectation under the circumstances, 'Accidents will take place')

The notation can be read as follows: 'When **ye** is used in an utterance to accompany an entity \( s \) that possesses a property \( v \), this utterance amounts to mean that both the entity \( s \) and all the entities \( t \) that are in juxtaposition with \( s \) share the property \( v \).' The identity of entities such as \( s \) and \( t \) varies from NPs designating objects or ideas, to sentences designating propositions, and to unsaid expectations pragmatically arising from the discourse context. When \( s \) and \( t \) are semantic constituents smaller than a proposition (e.g., subject NPs), the property \( v \) is usually another semantic constituent forming the propositional content (e.g., predicate VPs). When \( s \) and \( t \) are propositions, the corresponding \( v \) is also a proposition, representing the shared feature(s) in \( s \) and \( t \) at that particular discourse context. (This latter case is exemplified in 26.)

This formal approximation presented in 26. is fashioned in accordance with an equivalent approximation for **you**, as it is attempted in Biq (1988). It is repeated here in 27.

27. **you** \( v(s) \leq > v(s) \) \& \( \exists w \neq v, w(s) \) \( v, w \in V_r \)

\[ V = \{v, w, \ldots\} \]

- **V**: set of relevant properties
- **\( V_r \)**: set of irrelevant properties
- **s**: CONVERSATIONAL TOPIC

**You** and **ye** are often paired together because they have identical syntactic behavior, similar meanings, and parallel operations on the three discourse planes. However, their semantic difference becomes apparent when 26. and 27. are contrasted with each other. As pointed out in Biq (1988), **you** signals the 'accumulation of relevant properties for the same entity (i.e., conversational topic), or for short, the 'accumulation of relevance.' It should be obvious now that **ye** marks the 'same property/properties shared by
juxtaposed entities', or for short, the 'similarity in juxtaposition'. In other words, 你 draws attention to the different (but relevant) properties in one entity, whereas 用 highlights the similarity in different (but juxtaposed) entities.

Although the abstractionist approach captures the core meanings of 用 and 你, and as a consequence seems to be able to summarize the semantic difference between the two lexical items neatly, it fails to address the issue of how the semantic connections among the diverse uses in each case have come to being (cf. Fox (1986) for discussion on the same issue with respect to discourse anaphora). Sweetser (1986) argues for a dual adoption of the abstractionist approach and the polysemous approach in dealing with lexical semantics. As she points out, while negation and conjunctions are good candidates for an abstractionist analysis, in which the differences among diverse uses can be accounted for by independent pragmatic principles, the semantic behaviors of prepositions and modals are probably best treated in a polysemous analysis, in which one of the uses of a lexical item is considered the basic meaning, and other uses are metaphoric extensions from it.

用 and 你, and other Chinese adverbs of similar behavior such as 以来, 久, and 由于, probably fall in the latter group, demanding a polysemous approach for more illuminating analyses. First, although there is a regularity in the triple application of these Chinese logic-oriented adverbs on the three discourse planes, it does not seem to be a 'universal' regularity across languages. The closest English equivalents of these adverbs are probably 'also,' 'again', 'even', 'only', 'just,' and 'all.' While they all operate on the propositional plane and the epistemic/hypothetical plane, not all of these English lexical items have developed a third use on the speech-act plane. Since the triple application is not universal, the diverse uses (especially the one on the speech-act plane) of these Chinese words are contingent rather than automatic or inevitable (given the pragmatic principles). In other words, even when pragmatic parameters are set, these diverse uses are not necessarily predictable derivations from the core meaning. Thus, the connections among these diverse uses are probably best characterized as semantic extensions motivated by the relatedness derived from metaphoric schema or cognitive prototypes.

Beyond universality/predictability, the directionality of the development of the diverse uses, both acquisitionally and historically, may constitute another argument for abandoning the abstractionist analysis. Lobov's studies of urban English dialects spoken in American cities (1972, 1984) have shown that the expressive uses of grammatical words are acquired by young speakers much later than the cognitive uses of the same words. Meanwhile, from the
perspective of historical semantic changes, Traugott (1982, 1986) has hypothesized a process which she calls 'subjectification': 'Over time, meanings tend to come to refer less to objective situations and more to subjective ones (including speaker point of view), less to the described situation and more to the discourse situation' (Traugott 1986: 540).

Thus, in addition to cross-language comparisons, investigations on the semantic development of ye and the other Chinese adverbs of similar behavior from perspectives of language acquisition, historical change, and conversation analysis may ultimately provide critical support for the polysemous analysis as an alternative, or even as the better approach.

Notes

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