

ON TOPIC STRUCTURES AND TOPIC MARKERS IN CHINESE

A CASE STUDY ON THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS

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Acknowledgements

This master dissertation is an addition to my previous five-year long education of becoming a true Sinologist. I have always loved to study linguistics, to know how a language works and how it developed through the course of time. My love for linguistics brought me to write my first master dissertation on Chinese coverbs Medieval Chinese texts in 2017-2019. I was thrilled with the results I achieved which made me think about applying for a doctorate. My professors, Prof. Dr; Christoph Anderl and Prof. Dr. Ann Heirman, supported my eagerness and they recommended me to follow a second Master degree in Comparative Linguistics to broaden my linguistic knowledge.

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Corona Preamble

During the second semester of my Master education, the novel Corona virus started to appear in the beginning of 2020 leading to a crisis situation all over the world. As the situation became more severe and serious, Belgium went into lockdown as of March 18, 2020, resulting in the closure of Ghent University and its libraries as well. At this time, I was in the middle of writing the literary study of my thesis. Fortunately, the lockdown had not much consequences regarding my process. The only disadvantage I had, was the more limited access to sources since the most important books were not available online but only in the faculty library of Arts and Philosophy. Consequently, it took me more time to gather the needed information but after digging quite some time, I was able to find the information in other sources.

As for my case study, Covid-19 did not have any influence since it did not involve talking to other people. The case study was conducted through a digital source, the Thesaurus Linguae Sericae website, which was accessible from home. Communication with my supervisor was done via email before and did not change during the lockdown period.

For safety measures, the libraries of Ghent University closed their doors longer than the required quarantine period, but when the situation was settled enough, the libraries opened again on July 6, 2020. Through online services, you could make a reservation on the desired books and they were collected for you so you could just pick them up at the reception. This way, I was still able to check my initial sources and see if there was any information I could still add to my thesis.

Abstract (English version)

This thesis will discuss the notion ‘topic’ in Chinese (chapter one) along with the different topic types and structures which will be applied to the text of Confucius’ Analects. ‘Topic’ in this paper will be discussed as a syntactic notion within the generative framework. There are three different topic types to be distinguished in Chinese: left dislocation, hanging topics and aboutness topics. The difference between them is whether they are coindexed with an element in the comment, and if yes, which element. The topic structures will be discussed profoundly in chapter four and will show that prepositional phrases and relative clauses, among others, can be placed in topic position. This is the first part of the paper. As for part two, everything discussed above will be applied on the Analects of Confucius, but before that, an outline of the topic markers in the Analects will be given, along with how some characters developed the topic marker use. Finally, we can make an analysis of the Analects’ topic structures according to their structural elements, the distribution of topic markers with similar functions, predicate features of topics marked by *yě* 也 and the distribution of the topic types.

Abstract (Nederlandse versie)

Deze masterproef behandelt het begrip ‘topic’ in de Chinese taal (hoofdstuk een) alsook de verschillende topic types en structuren, die zullen toegepast worden op de Analecten van Confucius. Het begrip ‘topic’ zal besproken worden als een syntactisch begrip in het kader van de generatieve grammatica. In totaal zijn er drie verschillende soorten topics te onderscheiden in het Chinees: ‘left dislocation’, ‘hanging topics’ en ‘aboutness topics’. Het verschil tussen deze drie soorten is of ze ge-co-indexeerd zijn met een element in de ‘comment’ (rhema), en zo ja, met welk element. De topic structuren komen uitgebreid aan bod in hoofdstuk vier van de masterproef en zal aantonen dat onder andere voorzetselzinnen en relatieve bijzinnen in topic positie geplaatst kunnen worden. Dit vormt het eerste deel van de paper. Wat betreft deel twee, alles wat voordien werd besproken, zal worden toegepast op de Analecten van Confucius, maar eerst zal een overzicht van de verschillende topic markers in de Analecten worden gegeven. Bij sommige karakters komt ook de ontwikkeling tot hun functie als topic marker aan bod. Ten slotte komen we tot het maken van de analyse van de topic structuren van de Analecten. Dit wordt gedaan op basis van de structurele elementen van de topics, alsook de distributie van topic markers met vergelijkbare functies, de predicaat-kenmerken van topics met *yě* 也 en de verdeling van de drie soorten topics.

List of Abbreviations

A	argument
A'	non-argument
ADV	adverb
ASP	<i>le</i> 了 as aspectual marker
AT	aboutness topic or Chinese style topic
AUX	auxiliary
CL	classifier
COMP	complementizer
CONJ	conjunction
COV	coverb
CTP	Chinese Text Project
DEM	demonstrative
DP	determiner phrase
EC	empty category
EXP	experiential aspect marker
FP	<i>le</i> 了 in sentence-final position
GB	government and binding theory
HT	hanging topic or dangling topic
IP	inflectional phrase
IS	information structure
LD	left dislocation
LFG	lexical-functional grammar
MOD	modifier (particle)
NEG	negation

NP	noun/nominal phrase
PART	modal particle
POSS	possessive particle
PostP	postpositional phrase
PrepP	prepositional phrase
Q	question particle/marker
REFL	reflexive
REL	relative clause marker
RES.PRON.	resumptive pronoun
S / S' / S''	phrase, clause, sentence
TLS	Thesaurus Linguae Sericae
TOP	topic (position)
VP	verb/verbal phrase
X	topic or any major category

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Introduction

The real object of the scientific study of the language is the spoken word, not taken in its dictionary or traditional orthographic form, but taken as a linguistic unity, and considered in its combination with other words, in order to build up a sentence.¹

Paul L.-M. Serruys

Topic in Chinese is a much discussed and profoundly researched notion in Chinese. It is a notion that belongs to the so-called left periphery, which is everything that precedes the canonical position of the subject in a sentence. Usually, the left periphery does not codify any argumental position, meaning that the elements which occupy it do not receive any additional specific thematic role or special case. If you look at the example below, you can see that *zhè běn shū* 這本書 ‘this book’, the direct object of the verb *mǎi* 買 ‘buy’, precedes the subject instead of standing in its original position behind the verb. Nevertheless, *zhè běn shū* still maintains its thematic value as the patient and object complement of the verb (Badan 2016).

這 本 書， 李四 已經 看 了。
zhè běn shū Lǐsì yǐjīng kàn le

¹ Serruys 1946: 198.

this CL book NAME already read ASP

‘As for this book, Lisi has already read it.’

Badan 2016: 1 (modified)

Topic is a notion which is frequently found in information structure (IS), this is the area that relates the structure of the sentence with its use in the context of utterance to which the left periphery is dedicated. Generally, IS concerns how information is formally packaged within a sentence in all languages:

Information structure is the packaging of information that meets the immediate communication needs of interlocutors, i.e. the techniques that optimize the form of the message with the goal that it be well understood by the addressee in the current attentional state.

Féry and Krifka 2008: 1

Therefore, IS codifies either the highlighting of new information, called focus, or the identification of old or known information, called topic. These distinctions in focus and topic are marked by means of different syntactic strategies depending on the language. They always seem to have a connection with prosody: focus tends to be prosodically prominent, whereas topics tend to form a separate prosodic phrase in relation to the rest of the clause (Badan 2016: 2). Focus and topic are often related to certain sentence positions. For example, topics are usually placed at the beginning of the sentence before the subject, if present, which is the case in the example above. The left periphery is thus the area at the beginning of the sentence which codifies and provides the pragmatic relevance of information within the sentence.

This paper is divided into two parts, the first part containing a broad introduction on the topic ‘topic’, including what topic is (chapter one), the different topic types in Chinese (chapter two), the questions whether Chinese topics are base-generated, the result of movement, or both (chapter three), and how do Chinese topic structures look like (chapter four). Everything is situated in the generative framework.

The second part is a limited case study on the topic structures and topic markers in the Analects of Confucius or *Lúnyǔ* 論語. First the methodology is explained along with the sources

that have been used to collect the data and why the Analects were chosen as research object (chapter five). Then, in chapter six, all the encountered topic markers in the Analects are discussed, together with their subcategories and how these characters developed the topic marker use, there are ten different topic markers in total. And finally, the analysis of the collected data is done in chapter seven, and several aspects are focussed on, for example, the structure of all the topics with *yě* since it is the most used and most varied topic marker, as well as the predicate features of topics with *yě*.

Part I

An introduction to the topic ‘topic’ in Mandarin Chinese

1

What is ‘topic’?

In the literature, there is a wide range of articles describing what ‘topic’ is, and what its characteristics are. Many linguists have attempted to define this term and as a result, multiple definitions came into existence. When looking closer at these definitions, it becomes clear that the authors have different views on what ‘topic’ is and they do not always agree with one another. However, before starting to give some examples of definitions, it is important for this study to define the term ‘topic’ in reference to topic-comment structures and distinguish it from other uses of the term which are related to aspects of the larger communicative event. For example, topic as relevant shared information (Chafe 1976; Copeland and Davis 1983; Lambrecht 1988), as a broad, discourse-based concept (Schiffrin 1992) and as background knowledge for successful communication (Tomlin 1985) find their origin in the larger communicative event. In this research, however, ‘topic’ is understood as being at the sentence or utterance level (Han, Arppe and Newman 2013: 5-6).

Topic-comment structures can be found in a wide range of languages (Comrie 1981) and have received a lot of attention by linguists. In Chinese linguistics, the interest was mainly sparked when Chao made his well-known suggestion that “the grammatical meaning of subject and predicate in a Chinese sentence is topic and comment, rather than actor and action” (1968: 69). During the 1990s, three major views have emerged in the much-discussed debate on the relationship between topic and subject in languages like Chinese. The first view was formulated by the tradition of Ma (1898/1983) but was slightly modified over the years. This view maintains that subject-predicate is the fundamental relationship between the preverbal NP(s) and VP, and if there are two or more NPs, then the NP closest to VP will form a unit which is called *zhǔwèi duǎnyǔ wèiyǔ* 主谓短语谓语 in Chinese, ‘a predicate which is itself a subject-predicate phrase’, which can take another NP as subject (Lü 1986). This means that Chao

suggests that a Chinese sentence can have as many subjects as the number of preverbal NPs and that topics do not exist in Chinese. (Shi 2000: 383)

The second view is about the dichotomy between topic-prominent and subject-prominent languages put forth by Li and Thompson (1976) and is pushed to its limits by arguing that syntactic notions like topic and subject are not grammaticalized in Chinese. This view finds its origin in information structure rather than syntactic structure and argues that Chinese uses the former to transfer information. Moreover, this view also claims that the only grammaticalized notions in Chinese are topic and focus (LaPolla 1990, 1993). There can be more than one topic in a sentence if there are two or more preverbal NPs. (Shi 2000: 383)

The third view is the one supported by the majority of Chinese linguists and claims that both topic and subject exist as separate grammatical notions in Chinese, and moreover, can exist in the same sentence (Li and Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1979, 1990; Huang 1982; Li 1990; Jiang 1991; Tan 1991; Xue 1991; Ning 1993; Qu 1994; Shyu 1995). This is also the view that will be followed throughout this research.

1.1 The definition of topic

Although the majority of Chinese linguists follow the third opinion that both notions of topic and subject coexist, there is no consensus on the status and definition of the concepts. Instead of giving a definition, there is a common practice to list the properties and distribution of the notions ‘topic’ and ‘subject’ and then to use these features as criteria for determining whether a given preverbal NP is a topic or subject. Linguists like Li and Thompson (1976) and Tsao (1979, 1990) have this practice of listing the properties and distributions of both topic and subject. Li and Thompson (1976) have found seven general characteristics of the notion ‘topic’ which are presented below in (1).¹

¹ Three years later, Tsao has adjusted their analysis and reduced the total number of properties of Chinese topics to six: (1) Topic invariably occupies the S-initial position of the first clause in a topic chain; (2) Topic can optionally be separated from the rest of the sentence in which it occurs overtly by one of the four particles *a* (*ya*), *ne*, *me* and *ba*; (3) Topic is always definite; (4) Topic is a discourse notion; it may, and often does, extend its semantic domain to more than one clause; (5) Topic is in control of the pronominalization or deletion of all the coreferential NPs in a topic chain; and (6) Topic, except in clauses in which it is also subject, plays no role in such

- (1) a. Topic is definite in the sense of Chafe (1976).²
 b. Topic need not have any selectional relation with any verb in a sentence.
 c. Topic is not determined by the verb.
 d. The functional role of a topic is setting the framework within which the predication holds, and this role is constant across sentences.
 e. Topic does not control verb agreement.
 f. Topic occupies the sentence-initial position.
 g. Topic does not play a role in grammatical processes such as reflexivization, passivization, Equi-NP deletion, verb serialization and imperativization.

Li and Thompson 1976 (cited from Li 2004: 222)

Important to note here is that Li and Thompson argue that these ‘topic properties’ are valid cross-linguistically.

However, when these properties of Li and Thompson (1976) are applied to Chinese, one can conclude that they are too rigid and as a result fail to identify the topics in most Chinese sentences which do have a topic-comment structure. Looking at sentences (2-6), only the initial NPs of sentences (2) and (3) qualify as topics. The initial NPs in (4-6) are determined by the verb, and thus have a selectional relation with the verb (contra property (1b) of a topic) and may play a role in one or more grammatical processes (contra property (1g)). As a result, the NPs in sentences (5-7) do not qualify as topics, although intuitively they are all topics. Important to note here is that constructions like (4-6), and especially (5-6) display typical and common topic-comment structures of Chinese. Even sentences (2-3) are productive in Chinese.

- (2) 那 场 火, 消防队 来 得 很 及时。
nà chǎng huǒ xiāofángduì lái de hěn jíshí
 that CL fire fire.brigade come DE very in.time

processes as true reflexivization, Equi-NP deletion, and imperativization. (Tsao 1979, 1990; cited from Shi 2000: 384)

² According to Chafe (1976: 39), “a definite noun phrase is one for which the speaker assumes that the hearer not only already knows but also can identify its particular referent that the speaker has in mind” (cited from Li 2004: 222).

‘That fire, the fire brigade came in time.’

- (3) 那 本 书, 封皮 破 了。
nà běn shū fēngpí pò le
that CL book cover damaged PART
‘That book, (its) cover is damaged.’

- (4) 那 棵 树, 我 昨天 种上 了。
nà kē shù wǒ zuótiān zhǒngshàng le
that CL tree I yesterday plant PART
‘That tree, I planted yesterday.’

- (5) 我 有 一 个 朋友。 他 非常 喜欢 游泳。
wǒ yǒu yī ge péngyǒu tā fēicháng xǐhuān yóuyóǒng
I have one CL friend he very.much like swimming
‘(I have a friend.) He likes swimming very much.’

- (6) 那 朵 花 凋谢 了。
nà duǒ huā diāoxiè le
that CL flower fade PART
‘That flower faded.’

Li 2004: 223

Because they are too rigid and fail to identify all topics in Chinese, Li and Thompson (1981: 86) revised and improved their claim and now identify a topic in terms of its formal properties and semantic features (see below (7)).

- (7) a. Two semantic characteristics of topics: “[T]hey set a framework in naming what the sentence is about, and they must be either definite or generic.”
b. Two formal properties of topics: The topic “always occurs in sentence-initial position (unless it is preceded by a connector that links it to the preceding sentence)” and it “can be separated from the rest of the sentence (called the *comment*) by a pause or by one of the *pause particles*---*a* (or its phonetic variant *ya*), *me*, *ne* or *ba*.”

Their revision, in which semantic properties also play a role, can indeed identify topics in Chinese. When looking back at the five examples (2-6), the initial NPs can successfully be identified as topics because each of them occurs in the initial position, is definite, and defines what the sentence in which it occurs is about (Li and Thompson 1981, cited from Li 2004: 223).

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that even if the notion ‘topic’ may have some formal characteristics such as bearing an (optional) marker and occupying the sentence-initial position, it is essentially a pragmatic notion, which Reinhart (1981) describes as a “pragmatic aboutness”. Besides, one should be aware that topic and subject are notions that exist on different levels. Topic is a pragmatic notion, whereas subject is a grammatical notion. Given this, Li (2004) argues that the discussion whether a language is topic-prominent, subject-prominent, both or neither also exists on different levels. We can still discuss in which degree a language is topic- or subject-prominent, but he claims that these two properties are not two ends of the same continuum as Li and Thompson (1976) have assumed. Furthermore, Li (2004) claims that Li and Thompson (1976) inadequately regard topic-comment and subject-predicate as grammatical relations. Rather, Li prefers to constitute two distinct continua and claims that topic and comment are concerned with the distribution of information units, whereas subject and predicate are concerned with grammatical relations (Li 2004: 224-225).

This issue indicates that one has to be very careful when talking about and discussing the notion topic since this notion exists at three different levels. At the pragmatic level, a topic is commonly recognized as “what the sentence is about and it refers to something about which the speaker assumes the person listening to the utterance has some knowledge” (Li and Thompson 1981: 15, cited from Linda Badan 2016: 3). Syntactically speaking, as seen in examples (2-6), a topic in Chinese is everything that comes before the canonical subject position in a sentence. The initial position of the topic is a *marked* position since it is in contrast with the standard or canonical SVO word order. At the syntactic level, a topic structure configuration consists of two parts: the topicalized element, that consistently occurs before the subject, and the comment which is a clause that follows the topic and says something about it. Prosodically, a topic can

be followed by a pause that separates it from the remainder of the sentence³, or it can be set apart from the clause by a particle such as *a* 啊, *ya* 呀, *ma* 嘛, *ne* 呢 and *ba* 吧 (Shyu 1995, Gasde 1999, Paul 2005, Li 2006). (Badan 2016: 3)

However, turning back to the properties listed in (1), even if it is generally agreed that Chinese topics tend to have all these properties (A. Li 1990; Jiang 1991; Qu 1994), Shi (2000: 384-385) argues that it is not really appropriate and desirable to use these loosely assembled properties to describe what a topic is. He further says that in order to establish a definition of a linguistic entity, it is preferable to list only a restricted number of properties that are unique to the entity, rather than to list all its features. Looking back at the properties listed in (1), one can notice that some of these properties are so general that they can be found in other elements of a Chinese sentence, too. The problem, which Tsao mentions (1987a, 1987b), is that if all these properties are used as criteria to determine whether a linguistic entity is a topic, then there is a high possibility that confusion arises, especially when some of these features are seen as optional.

As a result, a lot of definitions can be found in the literature in the context of topic-comment structures. Linguists like Han, Arppe and Newman (2013); Han (2010); and Xu and Langendoen (1985) simply define this type of structure by dividing it into two parts: the topic is the initial structural element of a sentence or utterance which specifies *what the sentence is about*, and the comment which is the remaining structural element which, as the term suggests, provides the comment on the topic (Han, Arppe and Newman 2013: 5). In the case of Chinese, following Han's (2010: 42) formulation on topic-comment structures, the topic structure and comment structure refer to the two basic parts of a sentence. The topic structure consists of a topic, which is the head of the structure and can be introduced (as is the case in English) or followed by a topic marker⁴ (as in the cases of Shanghainese and Classical Chinese) (Han, Arppe and Newman 2013: 5). However, in Mandarin, the topic is more than often left unmarked since a topic can be recognised because of its position. Within the theory of Systemic Functional

³ For more information on prosody of topic constructions in Mandarin Chinese, see the studies of for instance Shen (1988), Wang and Xu (2006), among others.

⁴ In the formal analysis of Gasde and Paul (1996: 268), the topic marker is viewed as the head of a topic structure, arguing that "optional pause particles like *a*, *ne*, *me*, etc., can be plausibly analysed as topic markers (Li and Thompson 1981: 87, 634), which accordingly occupy the head position Topic° in our framework". Here, Topic° refers to topic as a functional category. However, Han (2010) does not agree with their analysis and proposes that the head of a topic structure is not the topic marker, but rather the topicalized content (Han, Arppe and Newman 2013: 5).

Grammar the topic-comment structure corresponds to what Halliday (1985: 39) refers to as ‘theme’, the topic structure, and ‘rheme’, the comment structure).

However, for many linguists (Haiman 1978; Han, Arppe and Newman 2013; Chafe 1976; Gasde and Paul 1996; etc.), the definition’s part “what the sentence is about” is too vague to qualify as an adequate definition of the notion ‘topic’. However, despite the fact that the previous mentioned part of the definition is too vague, the term ‘aboutness’ has found its way into the literature, even though the term is equally vague. This term is used as a practical means to capture the essential characteristics of a topic (e.g., Reinhart 1981 and Gundel 1985).

Thus, according to Chafe (1976: 50), “topics are not necessarily what the sentence is about” but, “the topic sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework [...] which limits the applicability of the main predication to a certain restricted domain” (cited from Gasde and Paul 1996: 266). This explanation indicates a process in which the topic binds and specifies the referential argument of the verb, because the topic (occupying the specifier position) provides the frame of reference for the comment. Haiman (1978: 585-586) further noted that a topic serves as a presupposition of its sentence:

Topics [...] are presuppositions of their sentences. But superficially at least, presupposition means different things in the case of NP's and complete sentences. For an NP, it is the EXISTENCE of its referent which is presupposed [...]. For an S, however, it is the TRUTH of the proposition of the sentence which is presupposed. [...] The validity or truth of a proposition, however, is no more than the existence of the state of affairs [in one of possible worlds, G/P] which it describes. Thus presuppositions, whether of NP's or sentences, are reducible to presuppositions of existence.

Haiman 1978: 585-586 (cited from Gasde and Paul 1996)

Since Haiman considers topics as presuppositions of their sentences, it allows him to analyse clauses, and in particular conditional clauses, as topics too, with NP topics and clausal topics being “givens which constitute the frame of reference with respect to which the main clause is either true (if a proposition) or felicitous (if not)” (Haiman 1978: 564). This approach will be of importance in chapter 2 of this research where it is discussed that conditional adjunct clauses in Chinese can occupy the position of topic just as nominal topics do (Gasde and Paul 1996: 267).

Another alternative is to implore structural descriptions as the definition. This is a strategy often adopted by people working with generative grammar in which a particular structural position is frequently assigned to topic (J. Huang 1982; Jiang 1991; Ning 1993; Shyu 1995). A structural description has the advantage of being very precise, however, a structural position alone is not always sufficient to unequivocally identify the topic of a sentence. The reason why is that the topic is usually considered a derived element with no independent thematic role and its relationship with the verb from case to case. Xu and Langendoen (1985: 20) have provided a structural and relational definition of topic in their work on Chinese topic structures, formulated as follows: “[s' X [s ... Y ...]], where X is a major category and Y, possibly empty, is related to X.” This topic-comment structure will be thoroughly examined in chapter two.

Nevertheless, Shi (2000: 386) argues that these kinds of structural and syntactic definitions, like the one from Xu and Langendoen (1985), fail to represent the semantic and discourse properties that are incorporated in definitions like (1). Therefore, Shi suggests the following definition with the focus on the Chinese topic-comment structure being a grammatical device used to fulfil certain discourse functions which is derived from basic sentence structures through syntactic operations.

A TOPIC is an unmarked NP⁵ (or its equivalent) that precedes a clause and is related to a position inside the clause; a topic represents an entity that has been mentioned in the previous discourse and is being discussed again in the current sentence, namely, topic is what the current sentence is set up to add new information to.⁶ The clause related to the topic in such a way is the comment.

Shi 2000: 386

This definition is not only focused on the topic's structural position or its relationship with the verb, but also mentions discourse function. Other properties are considered derived and

⁵ The sentence-initial NP overtly marked with phrases like 連 *lián* ... 都 *dōu* ‘even . . . all’ will not be of concern here. See Lee 1986 and Huang 1996 for discussion (Shi 2000: 386).

⁶ The definition can be extended to partially cover the so-called contrastive topics (Tang 1992). To a certain extent, it should also be applicable to topics that are accessible from extratextual knowledge, namely, the so-called new topic (Chafe 1976, Halliday 1985, Petöfi 1988, Tao 1996). These two issues will be discussed in another paper (Shi 2000: 386).

secondary. With this definition, the definiteness condition of a topic is now seen as a consequence of the requirement that the topic represents an entity that has already been mentioned in the previous discourse.

There is an advantage to integrating the discourse factor into the definition of topic. It has been observed that Chinese speakers use topic-comment structures frequently because they tend to first introduce the main thing of their discourse and then organize their thoughts around this matter to elaborate on the issue (issue (J. Chen 1982; Lü 1986; Chao 1968). However, syntactically, not every single thing a person wants to talk about can appear in topic position, even if it is the main thing. An example to quickly illustrate this:

- (8) *一件 事 我 想 告訴 媽媽。
yí jiàn shì wǒ xiǎng gàosù māma
 one CL matter I want tell mother
 ‘This thing, I want to tell mother.’

Shi 2000: 387 (modified)

In some cases, as is the case illustrated in (8), the entity or the event in question can only be topicalized if the NP representing it has been discussed in the previous discourse. Only then the NP can function as topic (9):

- (9) 弟弟 今天 逃學。 這 件 事 我
dìdì jīntiān táo-xué zhè jiàn shì wǒ
 younger.brother today skip-school this CL matter I
 想 告訴 媽媽。
xiǎng gàosù māma
 want tell mother
 ‘My younger brother skipped school today. I want to tell mother about this.’

Shi 2000: 387 (modified)

However, there is a way to bypass the above constraint by introducing the NP representing a new event with a minimal sentence (Shi 2000: 387). This is illustrated in example (10) which

has a null subject and a simple predicate 有 *yǒu* ‘have, there be’ as the main verb. Even if this kind of sentence provides little information about the matter, it is now a grammatical sentence that introduces a new entity in the discourse which can be elaborated on in the following sentence.

- (10) 有 一 件 事 我 想 告 訴 媽 媽。
yǒu yí jiàn shì wǒ xiǎng gàosù māma
have one CL matter I want tell mother
‘There is something (and) I want to tell mother (about it).’

Shi 2000: 388 (modified)

1.2 The topic-prominent and subject-prominent continuum

In their research on subject and topic, Li and Thompson (1976) claim that all languages can be typologized according to whether they are topic-prominent, subject-prominent, neither, or both. A language is typologized as topic-prominent if its basic sentence structure “favors a description in which the grammatical relation *topic-comment* plays a major role”; whereas the basic sentence structure of a subject-prominent language “favors a description in which the grammatical relation *subject-predicate* plays a major role” (Li and Thompson 1976: 459, emphasis original). Taking English and Chinese as examples, English belongs to the subject-prominent end of the continuum, whereas Chinese is placed at the topic-prominent end. Moreover, Li and Thompson claim that Mandarin Chinese has no NP that displays the ‘subject properties’ proposed by Keenan (1976)⁷.

⁷ Keenan (1976: 312-323) presents in his ‘Subject Properties List’ four major categories of basic subjects, each divided in subcategories: autonomy properties, case marking properties, semantic role, and immediate dominance.

1.2.1 Criteria to identify a topic-prominent language

In his research on the ‘double nominative’ construction and subject importance in Chinese, Li (2004) uses a reversed working method to come to the criteria used for identifying a language as topic-prominent. He starts with a comparison of Chinese and English topic-comment structures and claims that the topic-prominence of Chinese demonstrates itself in two ways. First, the Chinese language allows a construction in which the sentence’s topic and subject are two NPs which are used consecutively, the so-called ‘double nominative’ construction. Special about this construction is that the topic is not coreferential with a complete argument and the comment is a clause which has its subject. This is shown in example (11).

- (11) 這 件 事情, 你 不 能 光 麻 煩 一 個 人。
zhè jiàn shìqíng, nǐ bù néng guāng máfan yī gè rén
this CL matter you NEG can only bother one CL person
Literally: ‘This matter, you can’t just bother one person.’
‘Concerning (or As for) this matter, you can’t just bother one person.’

Li and Thompson 1976: 479

These ‘double nominative’ sentences as shown in example (11) are quite acceptable and productive in Chinese, both in planned and unplanned discourse. When looking at the English corresponding sentences in (11) however, the initial NP, or topic, cannot be introduced without a preposition and is thus necessary.⁸ Nevertheless, in planned English discourses, the literal translation sounds odd, if not completely ungrammatical (Li 2004: 225).

Second, the Chinese language has the so-called ‘topic-chain’ construction. This construction is displayed when the Chinese sentence is translated to English. The English translation often involves more than one sentence, whereas the Chinese ‘original’ construction is itself only one sentence. Tsao (1990: xi) defines a topic chain as “a stretch of discourse headed by one or more

⁸ Li (2004: 225) argues this is at least so in the written language. He argues that there is a clear difference in acceptability “with respect to whether the literal translation of (11) occurs in unplanned colloquial English or in planned English.” As a matter of fact, sentences like (11) are allowed in unplanned colloquial English. Bland (1981) gives two examples he attested in unplanned colloquial English: (i) The paper I’m working on, I can’t believe the detail that’s needed. (ii) The course, we went too fast.

topics, which are followed by one or more comment clauses” and as “a discourse unit equivalent to the English surface sentence.” Example (12) shows a topic chain construction, found in the Chinese newspaper *Zhōnghuá Dúshūbào* 中华读书报. The sentence is a topic chain in Chinese, but in English the translation needs at least two sentences to avoid awkwardness (Li 2004: 225-226).

- (12) 愛因斯坦 是 一個 比較 任性 的 人, 不
Àiyīnsītǎn shì yī-gè bǐjiào rènxìng de rén, bù
 Einstein to.be one-CL comparatively willful MOD person NEG

像 他 的 好 朋友 格羅斯曼 那樣 四平八穩,
xiàng tā de hǎo péngyǒu géluósīmàn nàyang sìpíngbāwěn
 as he POSS good friend Grossman like.that well-organized

門門 功課 都 好, 他 對 喜歡 的 課程
mén-mén gōngkè dōu hǎo, tā duì xǐhuān de kèchéng
 CL-CL course all good he to like MOD course

可以 自己 鑽研 到 讓 大人 吃驚 的
kěyǐ zìjǐ zuānyán dào ràng dàrén chījīng de
 may self study.intensively to make adult surprise MOD

深度, 但 對於 不 喜歡 的 課程 就 根本
shēndù, dàn duìyú bù xǐhuān de kèchéng jiù gēnběn
 depth but as.to NEG like MOD course then at.all

不 理睬, 成績 不 好 也 不 在意。
bù lǐcǎi chéngjī bù hǎo yě bù zàiyì.
 NEG pay.attention.to grade NEG good also NEG care

‘Einstein was a wilful person. Unlike his good friend Grossman, who was well- organized and did well with every subject, he could study intensively the courses he liked to such a depth that adults would get surprised. However, as for the courses (he) did not like, (he) paid no attention to them at all and did not care about the bad grades.’

These two elements Li (2004: 225-226) discussed are predominantly concerned with topic-comment structures. In Chinese, these topic-comment structures are all well-formed, natural and productive, whereas in English they are neither natural nor productive. Li concludes that this clearly shows that Chinese is a topic-prominent language and is more topic-prominent than English.

Then the question arises whether the two above discussed elements are both necessary conditions for a language to be topic-prominent and of what are the criteria for classifying a language as topic-prominent. Li (2004: 226) notes that it is important that this last question is different from what the characteristics of topic-prominent languages are. He argues that topic-prominent languages may happen to share some characteristics which are not directly related to topic-comment structures.⁹ Thus, the criteria should be directly concerned with the topic-comment structure.

Based on his comparison of the topic-prominence of Chinese and English, Li (2004) found two elements which are exclusively concerned with the topic-comment structure. These are both prominent aspects of Chinese in comparison with English, and thus he proposes that they are both necessary and sufficient conditions for a language to be considered topic-prominent (see (13)).

- (13) Necessary and sufficient conditions for a language to be topic-prominent
- a. The “double nominative” construction is natural and productive both in planned and unplanned discourses in the language.
 - b. The topic-chain construction is a basic discourse unit in the language.

Li 2004: 227

⁹ Li (2004: 227) explains that some of the characteristics of topic-comment languages described by Li and Thompson (1976) are of this nature. Li and Thompson (1976: 467) notice that ‘dummy’ or ‘empty’ subjects, such as the French ‘il’, the English ‘it’ and ‘there’ and the German ‘es’, may be found in subject-prominent but not in topic-prominent languages. Another example is that they observed topic-prominent languages to be verb-final. These observations may be valid, but Li (2004: 227) argues that these features are by no means necessary conditions for a language to be topic-prominent.

Extremely important here is that Li's proposal (2004: 227) exclusively relied on the comparison between Chinese and English. He comments that more topic-prominent languages (e.g., Korean, Japanese, Lahu, Lisu; claimed by Li and Thompson (1976)) should be carefully studied and compared to see whether his proposal stands.

1.2.2 Double nominative constructions in Chinese

As argued in the previous section, Chinese with its 'double nominative' constructions constitutes a more topic-prominent language than English. This type of construction clearly shows the typical topic-comment structures in which the initial NP is the topic and the remainder of the sentence is the comment. Chafe (1976: 50-51) refers to the topic of such double nominative construction sentences as "Chinese style topic" because the topics in these sentences "are not so much 'what the sentence is about' as 'the frame within which the sentence holds'." In a later article, Xu and Langendoen (1985) regard the double nominative construction as a structure in which the comment does not contain an element which is anaphorically related to the element in the topic. This type of 'Chinese style topic' structure looks as follows:

- (14) 那 場 火, 幸虧 消防隊 來 得 很 快。
nà chǎng huǒ xìngkuī xiāofángduì lái de hěn kuài
 that CL fire fortunately fire.brigade come DE very fast
 '(As for) that fire, fortunately the fire brigade came fast.'

Li and Thompson 1981: 34

This label of Chinese style topic is used when an element appearing at the beginning of the sentence, the topic, has no direct relationship with the main verb. In example (14), the initial constituent *nà chǎng huǒ* 那场火 'that fire', is indeed not linked to the verb by any thematic relation, but it is the topic of what the comment is about. This type of structure is also the reason why Li and Thompson claimed Chinese to be a topic-prominent language because this structure seems to be unique to the Chinese language. Li and Thompson came to use topic as a typological feature in terms of which different languages can be compared. Thus, in Chinese the notion

subject seemed to be less significant, while the concept of topic appeared to be quite crucial in explaining how Mandarin Chinese sentences function. (Badan 2016: 4)

However, not everyone agrees with the above view. Shi (2000) for example, argues that a topic is always syntactically related to a position inside the comment, without exception. More precisely, Shi claims that the comment is “an open clause that has a gap, namely, a position filled by an empty category or a resumptive pronoun, which is coreferential with the topic” (Shi 2000: 388). He further argues that this also counts for the double nominative constructions. According to Li (2004: 228), Shi’s view is not viable. Li clarifies that Shi uses the term ‘dangling topic’ in his argumentation to refer to topics that are “not subcategorized by the verb in the comment and are therefore not related to any position inside the comment” (Shi 2000: 389). In fact, Shi’s notion of dangling topic is in essence a topic in the double nominative construction.¹⁰

1.2.3 Criticism on the topic-prominent and subject-prominent continuum

The topic-prominent and subject-prominent continuum of Li and Thompson (1981) has received some criticism. Her (1991: 4), for example, argues that Li and Thompson’s statement does not hold. When Li and Thompson (1981: 15) declare that Mandarin Chinese is a topic-prominent language that is typologically different from subject-prominent languages such as English, Her argues that it is unclear whether they consider ‘topic’ as a semantic or syntactic notion. Li and Thompson further state that “in addition to the grammatical relations of ‘subject’ and ‘direct object’, the description of Mandarin must also include the element ‘topic’” (1981: 15). Her argues that this statement indicates that topic is a syntactic notion parallel to that of subject and object. Yet, they continue by characterizing topic in semantic terms as if it were a semantic notion. Now the problem here is that if Li and Thompson consider topic as a semantic notion, while considering ‘subject’ as a syntactic notion, then the dichotomy of ‘topic-prominent’ languages versus ‘subject-prominent’ languages would not hold and would be meaningless. Topic and subject are regarded as notions belonging to two different domains, the former to semantics, the latter to syntax. In order for this dichotomy to be significant, both topic

¹⁰ For a complete analysis and argumentation of why Shi’s notion of ‘dangling topic’ is actually the topic of a double nominative construction, see Li’s article of 2004.

and subject would have to be parallel notions belonging to the same level of linguistic description. Her further declares that, since subject is established as a syntactic notion, it follows that topic should be reckoned to be a syntactic notion as well (cf. *infra*).

After Her has drawn attention to this issue and stated explicit definitions of topic, subject and object as syntactic notions in a lexicalist framework, more linguists started to discuss it too. Li (1988) explicitly recognized topic as a semantic notion and subject as a syntactic one, thus following Li and Thompson; while Huang (1989) explicitly expresses that both topic and subject are to be understood as syntactic notions, thus following the lexical-functional grammar (LFG) framework. A third approach is made by Tsao (1987) who treats topic as a discourse notion beyond the scope of sentences.

1.3 Topic and subject are two different notions in Mandarin Chinese

Before discussing in the next section whether topic is a syntactic or semantic notion, it is important to point out that in Mandarin Chinese, topic and subject are two different notions. Hendrik (2000: 372) argues that the topic position is always different from the subject position. One of the differences is that in contrast to subjects, topics do not necessarily have a syntactic or, in Chinese, a semantic relationship with the verb, meaning that the topic is not necessarily the one that performs the action or exists in the state of the verb (Li and Thompson 1981; Lambrecht 1994). Following Li and Thompson's (1981) explanation, each verb requires its subject to possess specific semantic properties. Hendriks (2000) further illustrates this with an example. He explains that the verb 'breathe' requires an animate entity as its subject, whereas the verb 'happen' requires an abstract entity as its subject. However, while examining topics, one finds that they are not governed by the semantics of the verb in such a way (Hendriks 2000: 372). Consider example (15):

- (15) 上海, 呼吸 很 困難。
Shànghǎi hūxī hěn kùnnán
Shanghai breathe very difficult
'As for Shanghai, breathing is very difficult.'

Here, in this example, it is completely impossible to predict what the topic (*Shànghǎi*) of the sentence/utterance would be when the verb is known. Moreover, note that one can also correctly understand the utterance as ‘In Shanghai breathing is very difficult.’ In this understanding *Shànghǎi* is then interpreted as a location, but as one can see, it is not marked by a preposition in Chinese. This given is another (syntactic) feature of topics in Mandarin Chinese: topics are not case marked. Another example of a topic structure is given below from French, which clearly shows the lack of case marking too. However, this is a rather weak integration of the topic into the sentence: topic-marking structures in French provide a clitic pronoun to mark case in the body or comment of the sentence. The reason why French has this clitic pronoun is because French belongs to a group of languages that tends towards the subject-prominent side of the continuum (the other side being topic-prominence). See example (16):

- (16) La prison, y-a pas à se plaindre!
 the prison there-is not to REFL complain
 ‘As for the prison, there is nothing to complain about!’

Lambrecht 1981: 55

Syntactically, in order to show more explicitly that the topic of a sentence or utterance must be distinguished from the syntactic subject, I will use the example of Han et al.:

- (17) As for the wedding guests, the bride and bridegroom should be consulted.

Han et al. 2013: 5-6

This sentence can be divided into the topic structure ‘as for the wedding guests’ and the comment structure ‘the bride and bridegroom should be consulted’. In this example, the topic structure also has a topic marker ‘as for’. Note that this is not the case for every language, e.g., in Chinese there is no need for a topic marker as seen above in example (15). Thus ‘wedding

guests’ is the main substantive element or head of the topic. In addition, the sentence also contains the subject phrase ‘bride and bridegroom’.

Even if topics and syntactic subjects must be distinguished, they nevertheless share some features, e.g., subjects often introduce what the sentence or utterance is ‘about’ just as topics do, and in some languages, subjects occur at the beginning of a sentence/utterance just as topics do. However, there are some properties that are typical for topics and cannot be assigned to syntactic subjects: “Topics do not typically function as an argument to the predicate in the comment and topics do not typically enter into morphosyntactic agreement with the predicate in the comment” (Han et al. 2013: 5-6). Undoubtedly, topic and subject are related in some ways, but they are nevertheless distinguishable (note the title ‘Subject and Topic’ of Li’s 1976 volume). Due to this distinction between subject and topic, Li and Thompson (1976) came up with the terms subject-prominence and topic-prominence (cf. *supra*), which have been very helpful to other linguists to locate languages in this continuum in terms of the basic structure of sentences. The Chinese language and all members of the Chinese language family can certainly be described as topic-prominent languages (Han et al. 2013: 5-6).

This naturally brings us to the next section which will try to resolve the question whether topic should be considered a syntactic or semantic notion.

1.4 ‘Topic’ as a syntactic notion

In an attempt to part with the SO word order in Mandarin Chinese, Her (1985-1986) has pointed out in previous discussions that there exists a confusion of syntax and semantics in the use of ‘subject’ and ‘object’. Her says that “often an agent or actor is taken to be the subject, and patient or theme the object (1991: 2, punctuation added).” In other words, subject and object are regarded as syntactic notions but are not defined in syntactic terms. Generally, a similar problem occurs with the use of the term ‘topic’, which has already been slightly discussed above.

The major problem about the notion ‘topic’ is that authors use the term in their works without clarifying or defining if they are using ‘topic’ as a semantic or syntactic notion. Moreover, judging from the context in which authors use ‘topic’, it is often found that it is intended as both. This inconsistency easily leads to vague generalizations which make it difficult to

compare different claims. A beautiful example of such vague generalizations is the work of Cheng (1983). In his work on syntactic devices, he does not explicitly state whether ‘topic’ is a syntactic or semantic notion. He argues that *shì* 是 ‘to be’-predication serves as a device to distinguish a topic from a subject, which suggests that topic is a syntactic notion parallel to subject. Claims like “the topic is the slot for unfocused elements” (1983: 97) also imply that he regards topic as a syntactic device encoding unfocused information. However, the sentences he gives as examples of topicalization imply something different, that ‘topic’ is also used as semantic notion. The characters between square brackets is what Cheng regards as topic:

- (18) a. [我 度 了 假 的 地方] 是 毛伊。
 wǒ dù le jià de dìfang shì Máoyī
 I spend.a.holiday MOD place be Maui
 ‘The place where I spent the holidays was Maui.’
- b. [昨天 傷害 他 的 人] 是 老王。
 zuótiān shānghài tā de rén shì Lǎowáng
 yesterday harm he MOD person be NAME
 ‘The person that harmed him yesterday was Laowang.’

Cheng 1983 (cited from Her 1991: 2-3)

In the above two sentences, *shì* is recognized to be the main verb in both. If topic is a syntactic notion here, and the preverbal NP is regarded as topic, then it cannot be the subject at the same time (for the same reason as the subject cannot be the object at the same time). Her (1991: 3) reasons that if Cheng recognizes the constituents enclosed in brackets to be subjects of *shì*, then he must be using ‘topic’ as a semantic notion here.

Even if there might be some correlation between certain semantic characteristics and the selection of grammatical relations (e.g. Dowty 1987, Bresna and Kanerva 1989), a syntactic category and its semantic function should never be confused. The first to voice his concern about this erroneous confusion was Chu (1984: 137).

When talking about subject and object, one has to make sure what subject and object are. While it may be easy to define “semantic subject” and “semantic object”, it is rather difficult to define “syntactic subject” and “syntactic object”!

Chu 1984: 137 (cited from Her 1991: 3)

Nevertheless, Her (1991: 3) opposes Chu’s use of the terms ‘semantic subject’ and ‘semantic object’. Yet again, it is a common misconception that an agent-like or actor-like NP is the subject, and a theme-like or patient-like NP is the object. This is clearly illustrated in the passive equivalent (19b) of active sentences (19a). In the active sentence, the agent ‘the dog’ is the subject of the sentence, while the patient ‘the man’ is the object of the sentence. However, when another grammatical structure is used, the passive tense, the meaning stays the same, but the syntactic structure is different. ‘The dog’ remains the agent, but has now become the object of the sentence, and ‘the man’ is still the patient, but has now become the subject.

- (19) a. The dog bites the man.
b. The man is bitten by the dog.

In general, the most important question that is overlooked and unresolved by those who do not treat topic as a syntactic notion (e.g. Chao 1968, Li and Thompson 1981, Tsao 1987 and Li 1988) is what topic, as a semantic or discourse notion, corresponds to in terms of grammatical relations in syntax. Let us have a look at the famous example of Li and Thompson (1976). The topic is enclosed in square brackets.

- (20) [那 場 火] 幸虧 消防隊 來 得 快。
neì chǎng huǒ xìngkuī xiāofángduì lái de kuài
 that CL fire fortunate fire-brigade come DE quick
 ‘That fire, fortunately the fire-brigade came quickly.’

Li and Thompson 1976: 470

Thus, the unresolved question is what the syntactic, grammatical function of 那场火 *nei chǎng huǒ* ‘that fire’, the initial NP, is. It is clearly not the subject or object of the sentence. Following Her (1985-86) and Huang (1989), Her (1990) proposes that the notion ‘topic’ strictly refers to a syntactic relation. This is also the point of view of the LFG theory in which ‘topic’ is taken to be a grammatical function. Her furthermore proposes to use the term ‘frame’ to denote the semantic or discourse function of topic, following an earlier work of himself (1989) where he presents the following generalizations on ‘subject’, ‘topic’, ‘frame’ and ‘focus’ while incorporating some observations made by Cheng (1983).

- a. Frame is a semantic/discoursal notion which denotes old or background information.
- b. Focus is a semantic/discoursal notion which denotes new or foreground information.
- c. The unmarked order in Mandarin is old/background information before new/foreground, and general (/whole/universe) preceding specific (/part/scope).
- d. Topic is a syntactic notion. The topic of a sentence, being always preverbal and before the subject, usually encodes the semantic/discoursal frame; however, when a topic encodes contrast, which is a semantic notion subsumed by focus, it does not encode frame, for instance,

英文 我 會， 可是 法文 我 不 會。
yīngwén wǒ huì kěshì fǎwén wǒ bù huì
 English I know but French I NEG know
 ‘English I know, but French I don’t.’

- e. Subject is always preverbal; therefore, according to (c) above, if there is no topic, its unmarked function is likely to be frame encoding background information, unless there are discoursal principles or phonological principles dictating otherwise.
- f. The most prominent position in a Chinese sentence is its predicate, whose unmarked semantic function is thus the focus.

Her 1989: unknown (modified)

Therefore, according to these generalizations, *neì chǎng huǒ* in Li and Thompson's example (20) above is syntactically the topic which encodes the semantic function of frame.

Following the above generalizations from Her (1989), one of the functions Li and Thompson (1981, cited from Hendriks 2000: 374) attributed topic can now be refuted, namely that topics can be used to contrast two items. They argue that in the case of contrast, the two items will both be placed in topic position as the matters to be contrasted, see example (21).

- (21) 衣服 新 的 好; 朋友 旧 的 好。
yīfu xīn de hǎo péngyou jiù de hǎo
 clothes new NOM good friend old NOM good
 'As for clothes, new ones are good; as for friends, old ones are good.'

Li and Thompson 1981: 101

However, according to Her (1989) the above example (21) from Li and Thompson (1981) would not be an example of 'topic' but rather of 'focus'. Her argues that contrast is a semantic notion that is incorporated by focus, it does not encode frame in that case. Earlier, Kiss (1977: 219) too, wrote an article on topic and focus in which she mentions that the contextually bound-unbound opposition not always holds. A contextually bound element can also become focus if it gets contrastive stress.

Now, with the notion of 'frame', we have the possibility to extend Chao's (1968: 69) famous statement "Subject and Predicate as Topic and Comment" (in which the terms 'topic' and 'comment' are explained to be semantic terms): the semantic relation between topic *or* subject and predicate in Chinese is that of frame and comment. Chafe (1976: 50) characterizes the semantic function of the topic that of setting "a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds". What Her (1990) has done is naming the semantic function of topic 'frame' and reserving the term 'topic' for its grammatical function, a syntactic notion. Consequently, both subject and topic are now two parallel notions on an identic level: a subject cannot be a topic and vice versa. Yet, while a topic may encode frame as its semantic function, so may the subject. When there is no topic present in a sentence, the subject may be interpreted as a semantic or discoursal notion, which confirms Chao's (1968) observation.

The notion of 'frame' also nicely accommodates with the topic chain construction (cf. *supra*) in which a series of pre-subject elements (topics) collectively function as the interpretive

framework of the main predication (Her 1990: 6). Again, in Chinese this is truly a topic chain construction, whereas in English the equivalent is expressed in two or more sentences. Her illustrates the topic chain construction as follows:

- (22) 這 棵 樹， 花， 顏色 很 好。
zhè kē shù huā yánsè hěn hǎo
 this CL tree flower colour very good
 ‘The flowers of this tree have very nice colours.’

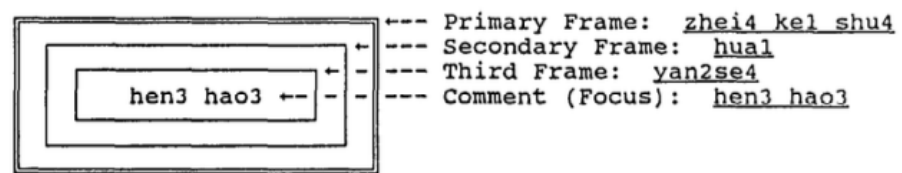


Figure 1 – The different frames in a topic chain construction (Her 1990: 6)

Her 1990: 6 (modified)

2

The different topic types in Chinese

2.1 Left dislocation and hanging topics

Left dislocation (LD) and hanging topics (HT) or “dangling topics” as some call it (Shi 2000; Huang and Ting 2006), are topics that are linked to a gap or resumptive pronoun in the sentence. In the Chinese language it is possible to divide topics into these two different groups. The differences between the two types are explained in this section.

LDs can either be a prepositional phrase (PrepP) or a determiner phrase (DP), whereas HTs can only possess a DP in topic position. Thus, the difference can be determined by whether a PrepP appears in topic position; when there is a PrepP, we can be sure we are facing LD and not HT and when we encounter a bare DP, we are facing a HT in Chinese (Badan 2007: 29-32). The following properties can be distinguished.

In topic constructions, HTs cannot be a PrepP, whereas LDs can and thus, HTs are resumed by an epithet or a tonic/prepositional pronoun, while LDs cannot but leave a gap instead. For example:

HP + EPITHET

- (23) 張三_i, 我 給 [那 個 傻子]_i 寄 了 一 封 信!
Zhāngsān wǒ gěi nà ge shǎzi jì le yī fēng xìn
NAME I to that CL imbecile send PERF one CL letter
‘Zhangsan, I sent a letter to that imbecile!’

*LD + EPITHET

- (24) *給 張三_i, 我 給 [那 個 傻子]_i 寄 了 一 封 信!

gěi Zhāngsān wǒ gěi nà ge shǎzi jì le yī fēng xìn
 to NAME I to that CL imbecile send PERF one CL letter
 ‘To Zhangsan, I sent a letter to that imbecile!’

Badan 2007: 32 (modified)

The following property has to do with case, but obviously, Chinese does not know morphological case since it is an isolating language. However, Badan will use here the presence vs. absence of the preposition as an indicator for the differences in case. Thus, HT does not need to agree in case with the resumptive pronoun. When an HT, consisting of a bare DP, corresponds to an internal (i.e., within the inflectional phrase (IP)) PP, then it does not maintain the preposition (Badan 2007: 32). For example:

HT + RES.PRON

- (25) 張三_i, 我 給 他_i 去 買 東西。
Zhāngsān wǒ gěi tā qù mǎi dōngxī
 NAME I to him go buy thing
 ‘Zhangsan, I go buy things for him.’

*HT WITHOUT RES.PRON.

- (26) ??/*張三, 我 去 買 東西。
Zhāngsān wǒ qù mǎi dōngxī
 NAME I go buy thing

Badan 2007: 33 (modified)

But on the contrary, LDs can either be a PrepP or a DP. So, when the LD contains a PrepP, then it maintains the preposition of the internal element to which it corresponds. The opposite situation from the HT occurs: when a PrepP is in LD topic position, then the topic cannot be resumed by a resumptive pronoun in the comment; but when an HT, being a bare DP, corresponds with an internal PP, then the HT must be resumed by a resumptive pronoun. To illustrate:

*LD + RES.PRON.

- (27) ?*給 張三, 我 給 他 寄 了 一 封 信。
gěi Zhāngsān wǒ gěi tā jì le yī fēng xìn
to NAME I to him send PERF one CL letter

LD WITHOUT RES.PRON.

- (28) 給 張三, 我 寄 了 一 封 信。
gěi Zhāngsān wǒ jì le yī fēng xìn
to NAME I send PERF one CL letter
'To Zhangsan, I sent a letter.'

Badan 2007. 33 (modified)

Only multiple LDs can appear in topic position whereas multiple HTs are impossible:

LD + LD

- (29) 從 這 家 銀行_i 為 張三_j
cóng zhè jiā yínháng wéi Zhāngsān
COV.from this CL bank COV.for NAME
我 知道 我們 可以 借到 很多 錢。
wǒ zhīdào wǒmen kěyǐ jièdào hěnduō qián
I know we can borrow many money
'From this bank, for Zhangsan, I know we can borrow a lot of money.'

*HT + HT

- (30) *這 家 銀行_i 張三_j 我 知道 我們 可以
zhè jiā yínháng Zhāngsān wǒ zhīdào wǒmen kěyǐ
this CL bank NAME I know we can
從 那里 為 他 借到 很多 錢。
cóng nàlǐ wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián
COV.from there COV.for him borrow many money

Badan 2007: 33 (modified)

Nevertheless, even though HT + HT is impossible, HT and LD can occur together and then their relative order is HT > LD:

HT > LD

- (31) [張三]_i, [從 這 家 銀行]_j, 我 知道
Zhāngsān cóng zhè jiā yínháng wǒ zhīdào
 NAME COV.from this CL bank I know
 我們 可以 為 他_i 借到 很多 錢。
wǒmen kěyǐ wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián
 we can COV.for him borrow many money
 Lit.: ‘Zhangsan, from that bank, I know we can borrow a lot of money for him.’

*LD > HT

- (32) *從 這 家 銀行, 張三, 我 知道
cóng zhè jiā yínháng Zhāngsān wǒ zhīdào
 COV.from this CL bank NAME I know
 我們 可以 為 他 借到 很多 錢。
wǒmen kěyǐ wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián
 we can COV.for him borrow many money

Badan 2007: 34 (modified)

In Chinese, topics can be embedded, which has already been observed by Huang (1982). This means that an underlying topic can be embedded in a deeper level of the sentence. Both LD and HT are allowed in embedded contexts, this is illustrated in the following examples:

LD

- (33) 我 認為 跟 那 個 女孩子 張三 從來 沒 說話。
wǒ rènwéi gēn nà ge nǚháizi Zhāngsān cónglái méi shuōhuà
 I think COV.with that CL girl NAME never NEG talk
 ‘I think that to that girl Zhangsan has never talked.’

HT

- (34) 我 認為 那 個 女孩子_i
wǒ rènwéi nà ge nǚháizi
I think that CL girl
張三 從來 沒 有 跟 她_i 說話。
Zhāngsān cónglái méi yǒu gēn tā shuōhuà
NAME never NEG have COV.with her talk
'I think that girl, Zhangsan has never talked to her.'

Badan 2007: 34 (modified)

Another situation that distinguishes LDs from HT is when a complementiser (COMP) is present. LDs will follow the COMP whereas HTs will precede it (Cinque 1977; Benincà 2001; Badan 2007). Consider the following examples:

COMP + LD

- (35) 因為 跟 張三 你 不 要 說話,
yīnwei gēn Zhāngsān nǐ bù yào shuōhuà
CONJ.because COV.with NAME you NEG want talk
我 只好 請 了 李四 幫忙。
wǒ zhǐhǎo qǐng le Lǐsì bāngmáng
I be.obliged ask PERF NAME help
'Because to Zhangsan, you didn't want to talk, I had to ask Lisi to help.'

*LD + COMP

- (36) *跟 張三, 因為 你 不 要 說話,
gēn Zhāngsān yīnwei nǐ bù yào shuōhuà
COV.with NAME CONJ.because you NEG want talk
我 只好 請 了 李四 幫忙。
wǒ zhǐhǎo qǐng le Lǐsì bāngmáng
I to.obliged ask PREF NAME help

*COMP + HT

- (37) *自從 那 個 女孩子 你 跟 她 結婚 了 ,
zìcóng nà ge nǚháizi nǐ gēn tā jiéhūn le
 PREP.since that CL girl you COV.with her marry PERF
 這 個 家 就 沒 有 一 刻 安寧。
zhè ge jiā jiù méi yǒu yī kè ānníng
 this CL house then NEG have one moment quietness

HT + COMP

- (38) 那 個 女孩子 自從 你 跟 她 結婚 了 ,
nà ge nǚháizi zìcóng nǐ gēn tā jiéhūn le
 that CL girl PREP.since you COV.with her marry PERF
 這 個 家 就 沒 有 一 刻 安寧。
zhè ge jiā jiù méi yǒu yī kè ānníng
 this CL house then NEG have one moment quietness
 ‘That girl, ever since you married, this house hasn’t had a quiet moment.’

Badan 2007: 35-36 (modified)

When looking at the examples illustrated above, one can see that LD and HT are contrasted to each other.

The next situation we will look into are the relative clauses. In Chinese, only LD can occur in relatives, while HT cannot. In the following examples, (a) will illustrate the relative clauses, the base sentence, and (b) shows the dative PrepP which is topicalised inside the relative clause. Since it is a PP, it has to be an LD which is exactly the reason why LDs are allowed in relatives and HTs not.

LD WITHIN RELATIVE

- (39) a. 一 個 張三 不 會 給 李四 買 的 東西...
yī ge Zhāngsān bù huì gěi Lǐsì mǎi de dōngxi
 oneCL NAME NEG will COV.to NAME buy REL thing
 ‘One thing Zhangsan won’t buy for Lisi...’
 b. 一 個 給 李四 張三 不 會 買 的 東西...
yī ge gěi Lǐsì Zhāngsān bù huì mǎi de dōngxi

one CL COV.to NAME NAME NEG will buy REL thing

*HT WITHIN RELATIVE

- (40) a. 一 個 張三 不 會 給 李四 買 的 東西...
yī ge Zhāngsān bù huì gěi Lǐsì mǎi de dōngxī
 one CL NAME NEG will COV.to NAME buy REL thing
 ‘One thing Zhangsan won’t buy for Lisi...’
- b. *一 個 李四 張三 不 會 給 他 買 的 東西...
yī ge Lǐsì Zhāngsān bù huì gěi tā mǎi de dōngxī
 one CL NAME NAME NEG will COV.to him buy REL thing

Badan 2007: 38-39

Example (40b) shows that the topicalised element here is bare, but is linked to the PrepP in the sentence, thus it has to be an HT. However, the sentence is ungrammatical because HTs are not allowed inside relative clauses.

2.2 Aboutness topic or Chinese style topic

Earlier, it has been mentioned that Chinese is a topic-prominent language (Li and Thompson 1974) because it allows topics without any grammatical connection to the comment, meaning that there is no element in the comment to which the topic can be directly linked. These are the aboutness topics (AT) or the so-called ‘Chinese style’ topics (Li & Thompson 1976; Chafe 1976) (Badan 2007: 38). An example:

- (41) 花 我 最 不 喜歡 玫瑰花。
huā wǒ zuì bù xǐhuan méiguīhuā
 flower I most NEG like rose
 ‘Among flowers, I dislike roses the most.’

Badan 2007: 38 (modified)

In this example, the topic *huā* 花 ‘flower’ is not related to any position in the following sentence, there is no gap or pronoun linked to it and moreover, it is not even subcategorised by the verb. Although at first sight this example sentence with an AT looks very similar to HTs, it is not the case. ATs do not qualify as HTs since they do not share all of their properties, but only some. Moreover, ATs can cooccur with both LDs and HTs, indicating that they should be treated as a separate topic type.

Additionally, there are two types of ATs to be distinguished: ‘whole-part’ ATs (42) and possessive ATs (43). The ‘whole-part’ ATs obviously establish a whole-part relation between the topic and the resumptive element in the comment, while the possessive ATs establish a possessive relation:

- (42) 十 個 李 五 個 爛 了。
shí ge lí wǔ ge làn le
 ten CL pear five CL spoil ASP
 ‘Of the ten pears, five have spoiled.’

- (43) 這 個 人 我 覺得 記性 特別 好。
zhè ge rén wǒ juéde jìxìng tèbié hǎo
 this CL man I feel memory exceptionally good
 ‘As for this man, I feel his memory is exceptionally good.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 75 (modified)

The reason why HTs and ATs look so similar is because they both require a resumptive pronoun; in the case of HTs the resumptive pronoun is either an epithet or a tonic pronoun (cf. supra). As for ATs, it is a more specific DP in the topic connected to a more general one in the comment, as illustrated in the examples above. Besides, while LDs and HTs have a co-reference between the element in the left periphery and a dummy in the sentence, the two connected elements of ATs only share the theta role. But just like HTs, ATs do not agree in case with the coreferential resumptive element inside the predicate (IP) (Badan 2007: 40).

Regarding the other properties, ATs behave differently from HTs. For example, ATs can be a prepositional phrase, while HTs can only be bare DPs:

- (44) 關於 那 棵 樹 嘛，葉子 大。

guānyú nà kè shù ma yèzi dà

as.for that CL tree TOP leaf big

‘As for that tree, leaves are big.’

- (45) 關於 這 個 人 嘛，我 覺得 記性 特別 好。

guānyú zhè ge rén ma wǒ juéde jìxìng tèbié hǎo

as.for this CL man TOP I think memory exceptionally good

‘As for this man, I feel his memory is exceptionally good.’

Badan 2007: 40 (modified)

While multiple HTs are ungrammatical, see example (30), multiple ATs are no problem and are grammatical:

- (46) 我 的 家人，我 的 父母，母親 已經 退休 了。

wǒ de jiārén wǒ de fùmǔ mǔqīn yǐjīng tuìxiū le

I MOD family I MOD parents mother already retire PERF

‘As for my family, as for my parents, my mother already retired.’

- (47) 水果， 蘋果， 我 吃 了 兩 個。

shuǐguǒ píngguǒ wǒ chī le liǎng ge

fruit apple I eat PERF two CL

‘As for fruits, as for apples, I ate two.’

Badan 2007: 40 (modified)

All of the above proves that ATs do not show all features of HTs and thus are not identical. And the fact that ATs can cooccur with HTs (as well as with LDs) provides even more evidence for this statement. Note that they cannot occur in all combinations, there are some restrictions because ATs always have to precede LDs and HTs. And when the three occur together, which

is possible and grammatical, their order is AT > HT > LD, see example (52). Consider the following examples:

AT > LD

- (48) 我 所有 的 朋友, 對 張三, 我 已經 說話。
wǒ suǒyǒu de péngyou duì Zhāngsān wǒ yǐjīng shuōhuà
 I all MOD friend COV.to NAME I already talk
 ‘Among all my friends, to Zhangsan, I already spoke.’

*LD > AT

- (49) 爸爸_i, 我 的 家人, 我 昨天 看見 *e_i* 了,
bàba wǒ de jiārén wǒ zuótiān kànjiàn le
 father I MOD family I yesterday see FP
 媽媽_j, 我 還 沒 看見 *e_j* 了。
māma wǒ hái méi kànjiàn le
 mother I yet NEG see FP

AT > HT

- (50) 我 的 家人, 爸爸_i, 我 昨天 看見 他_i 了,
wǒ de jiārén bàba wǒ zuótiān kànjiàn tā le
 I MOD family father I yesterday see him FP
 媽媽_{ii} 我 還 沒 看見 她_{ii} 了。
māma wǒ hái méi kànjiàn tā le
 mother I yet NEG see her FP
 ‘As for my family, as for my father, I saw him yesterday, as for my mother,
 I didn’t see her.’

*HT > AT

- (51) 爸爸_i, 我 的 家人, 我 昨天 看見 他_i 了,
bàba wǒ de jiārén wǒ zuótiān kànjiàn tā le
 father I MOD family I yesterday see him FP
 媽媽_j, 我 還 沒 看見 她_j 了。
māma wǒ hái méi kànjiàn tā le
 mother I yet NEG see her FP

AT > HT > LD

- (52) 我 的 家人, 爸爸_i, 從 那 家 銀行,
wǒ de jiārén bàba cóng nà jiā yínháng
 I MOD family father COV.from that CL bank
 我 已經 為 他_i 借到 很多 錢 了。
wǒ yǐjīng wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián le
 I already COV.for him borrow many money FP
 ‘As for my family, my father, from that bank, I already borrowed a lot of money for him.’

*HT > AT > LD

- (53) *爸爸_i, 我 的 家人, 從 那 家 銀行,
bàba wǒ de jiārén cóng nà jiā yínháng
 father I MOD family COV.from that CL bank
 我 已經 為 他_i 借到 很多 錢 了。
wǒ yǐjīng wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián le
 I already COV.for him borrow many money FP

*HT + LD + AT

- (54) *爸爸_i, 從 那 家 銀行, 我 的 家人,
bàba cóng nà jiā yínháng wǒ de jiārén
 father COV.from that CL bank I MOD family
 我 已經 為 他_i 借到 很多 錢 了。
wǒ yǐjīng wéi tā jièdào hěnduō qián le
 I already COV.for him borrow many money FP

Badan 2007: 41-42 (modified)

Now we can say that aboutness topics occupy a higher position than both left dislocation and hanging topics. Paul (cited from Badan 2007: 43) argues that one of the reasons of the ungrammaticality of examples (53) and (54) is due to a semantic restriction. She explains that in Chinese it is not possible to put a nominal that refers to a group of elements cannot dominate (placed to the right of) a nominal that refers to a subset of elements of that group, i.e. hyperonym > hyponym is the only possible order. ATs and HTs cannot be considered the same since they show several differences.

3

Base-generation or movement?

Whether topics structures are derived by movement has been a long discussion, and as far as topics are concerned, there are two derivations being proposed for the Chinese language: base-generation (Xu and Langendoen 1985; Xu 1986 among others) and movement (Huang 1982; Qu 1994; Shi 1992a; Shyu,1995; Li 2000). This discussion has received a lot of attention because Chinese does not have many overt movement structures. In this section it will be argued that HT is base-generated, whereas LD is the result of movement. The moved topic is a [-Q] operator (Rizzi 1997) that strands in its original position a pronominal element, which in Chinese remains covert as an A-bar bound *pro*.

Base-generation basically means that topic structures with resumptive pronouns, and thus HTs, do not undergo any kind of movement. The given argument is why is it necessary to adopt a movement for structures if there is an empty pronoun which can be interpreted in the same way as an overt pronoun and is as coreferential with the topic? Consider the following two examples:

- (55) a. 張三_i [[*e*_i 看 的] 書] 很多。
Zhāngsān kàn de shū hěnduō
NAME read MOD book many
'Zhangsan, the books he has read are many.'
- b. 張三_i [[他_i 看 的] 書] 很多。
Zhāngsān tā kàn de shū hěnduō
NAME he read MOD book many
'Zhangsan, the books he has read are many.'

If sentence (55b) with the overt pronoun is possible, then there needs to be an option that a topic may be base-generated and a pronoun in the comment clause is coindexed with the topic. So, if this option is available and an empty pronoun behaves just like an overt pronoun, then why is there a need to adopt a movement approach to topic structures (Li 2000: 2)?

The answer to the question can be found in the problem of incorporating (55a) to (55b) because there are numerous restrictions on when and where an empty pronoun can appear. Thus, arguments for the need of a movement derivation for topic structures are found in illustrating the cases of when and where empty pronouns occur, or sometimes rather when and where they cannot occur. First, we will look at the distribution of prepositional phrases (PrepPs). Saito (1985) has found evidence that a *pro* cannot be a PrepP and therefore, a displaced PrepP must be the result of a movement rather than coindexing with a base-generated *pro*. As seen in chapter 2, the Chinese language allows topic structures to be a PrepP (LD). If a PrepP cannot be base-generated because it lacks a PrepP *pro*, i.e. leaving a gap, then the topic PrepP must be the result of movement (Li 2000: 3).

- (56) 對 張三， 我 知道 他 不 怎麼 關心。
duì Zhāngsān wǒ zhīdào tā bù zěnmē guānxīn
 COV.to NAME I know he NEG how care
 ‘To Zhangsan, I know he does not quite care for.’

- (57) 從 這 家 銀行，
cóng zhè jiā yínháng
 COV.from this CL bank
 我 知道 我們 可以 借到 很多 錢。
wǒ zhīdào wǒmen kěyǐ jièdào hěnduō qián
 I know we can borrow many money
 ‘From this bank, I know we can borrow a lot of money.’

- (58) 跟 這 種 老師， 我 知道 我 一定 學 不 好。
gēn zhè zhǒng lǎoshī wǒ zhīdào wǒ yīdìng xué bù hǎo
 COV.with this CL teacher I know I certainly study NEG good
 ‘With this kind of teacher, I know I certainly will not learn well.’

The second piece of evidence for the need of movement approach to topic structures is found in the distribution of idiomatic expressions with the structure [V + O]. The object from this idiom can occur in topic position, which indicates a movement. Consider the following examples:

- (59) a. 默, 他 幽 的 好 嗎?
 mò tā yōu de hǎo ma
 humour he humour MOD good Q
 ‘Does he humour well?’
- b. 默, 他 是 會 幽,
 mò tā shì huì yōu
 humour he be can humour
 可是 常常 幽 的 不 好。
 kěshì chángcháng yōu de bù hǎo
 CONJ often humour MOD NEG good
 ‘He can humour but not quite well.’

Now, it is widely recognised that the displacement of chunks of idioms are evidence for the movement approach on topic structures because the parts of an idiom need to be a unit at some level of the derivation (Li 2000: 4).

When we encounter movement, this cannot happen at random, movement is limited by several constraints like the island constraints of John Ross (1967). The topics in sentences (56) to (59) cannot be coindexed with an empty category (EC) inside an island. Example (60a) illustrates that long distance is definitely possible, but it should never cross island boundaries because then the result is ungrammatical (60b). The same counts for the PrepP in (59), the displaced PrepPs cannot come from within an island (Li 2000: 4).

- (60) a. 默_i, 我 知道 他 是 會 幽 _{e_i},
mò wǒ zhīdào tā shì huì yōu
 humour I know he be can humour
 可是 常常 幽 _{e_i} 的 不 好。
kěshì chángcháng yōu de bù hǎo
 CONJ often humour MOD NEG good
 ‘Humour, I know that he can make but often cannot make well.’
- b. ??¹²默_i, 張三 認識 那 個 幽 過 _{e_i},
mò Zhāngsān rènshi nà ge yōu guò
 humour NAME know that CL humour EXP
 可是 幽 _{e_i} 的 不 好 的 人。
kěshì yōu de bù hǎo de rén
 CONJ humour MOD NEG good MOD man
 ‘Humour, Zhangsan knows the person who can humour but not quite well.’

Li 2000: 4 (modified)

This can already give an idea why LDs are derived from movement and why HTs and ATs are base-generated. The former is because LDs can have a PrepP as topic, which do leave a gap in the comment, meaning that they are displaced to sentence-initial position. The latter are base-generated because they do not leave a gap but are coindexed with an empty category or resumptive pronoun in the comment, so there is no need for a movement.¹³

¹² The question marks indicate that the Chinese sentence in this case is doubtful to be grammatical, but not truly ungrammatical.

¹³ For a more detailed explanation on the reconstruction of LD elements, see Li 2000; Badan 2007.

4

Chinese topic structures

In this chapter, I will focus on the syntactic structure of the left periphery, which situates us in the cartographic approach (Cinque 1999 and subsequent work), the aim of which is to study how the topic-prominence property of Chinese is realized in terms of syntactic structure. According to the cartographic approach, the left periphery is conceived as a portion of the sentence which connects the clause to the discourse domain (Rizzi 1997). This is the field where topic and focus are syntactically realized on the basis of fixed word order and undergoing syntactic constrictions.

For this chapter, I will mainly follow Xu and Langendoen's (1985) analysis on topic structures. Their view on topic structures is that topics are only base-generated, while this is not the case. Consider the following statement of them:

Clearly, at least some topic structures in Chinese are generated without movement, namely those whose source structures would be ungrammatical no matter where the topics originate within the comment clauses (e.g. those in 75). As for the others, a movement analysis, while impossible to rule out for certain, would be otiose. Even if the comment contains an empty category, and hence a 'slot' for the topic, that category is interpreted as it would be in a canonical sentence – namely as a simple pro-form, possibly coreferential with the topic, and not as a variable bound by the topic.

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 27

While not explicitly saying that the movement approach does not exist, they do say that this approach would be unnecessary, and therefore they believe only in the base-generation

approach. In this chapter I will follow the view of Li (2000) and Badan (2007), among others, that hanging topics are base-generated, while left dislocation is the result of movement.

So, when looking into topic structures in general, it is important to mention and take into account the ‘island constraints’ from Ross (1967), which was further developed by Chomsky et al. who included this in his government and binding (GB) framework. An island is a term in syntactic theory referring to “a clause or structure from which a word cannot be moved” (Lin and Meng 2018: 146). With the notion ‘island constraints’, Ross refers to restraints of movement rules by which certain words, constructions or structures cannot be moved out from their islands (Lin and Meng 2018: 147). One of these constraints applies to the relation between the topic and the empty element in the comment.¹⁴ This is shortly illustrated with some English examples below:

(61) John, I know.

(62) John, I know him.

(63) John, I know the guy.

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 1

The topic of all above three sentences is associated with an empty element in the comment in example (61), with a pronoun in example (62) and with a full NP in example (63). The island constraints only apply to example sentence (61), because here there is a relation between a topic and an *empty* element in the comment. As for examples (62) and (63) the island constraints do not apply since there is a lexically-filled bound element present (‘him’ and ‘the guy’ respectively). Chomsky (1977: 91) accounts for the difference between sentence (61) and sentences (62) and (63) by proposing the following base rules:

(64) a. $S'' \rightarrow \text{TOP } S'$

b. $S' \rightarrow \text{COMP } S'$

¹⁴ In total there are seven types of island constraints: (1) Complex NP Constraint; (2) Sentential Subject clause Constraint; (3) Coordinate Structure Constraint; (4) WH-Island Constraint; (5) Left Branch Condition; (6) Adjunct Constraints; and (7) Non-bridge-verb Constraints (Lin and Meng 2018: 146).

Xu and Langendoen explain that if S does not contain a WH-phrase, but rather a pronominal or a NP co-indexed with the topic, then there is no movement of constituents, and thus the relation between the topic and the co-indexed phrase is unrestrained. However, if S' in base rule (64b) contains a WH-phrase, then this phrase moves into COMP and is deleted as it is subject to the island constraints. This process is what Chomsky calls 'topicalization' (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 1-2).

However, for the Chinese counterparts to the English sentences above, the relationship between topic and comment is not subject to island constraints. This is illustrated in examples (65) to (67).

- (65) 吳 先生 我 認識。
Wú xiāngsheng wǒ rènshi
 NAME mister I know
 'Mr. Wu, I know.'
- (66) 吳 先生 我 認識 他。
Wú xiāngsheng wǒ rènshi tā
 NAME mister I know he
 'Mr. Wu, I know him.'
- (67) 吳 先生 我 認識 這 個 人。
Wú xiāngsheng wǒ rènshi zhè ge rén
 NAME mister I know this CL person
 'Mr. Wu, I know the guy.'

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 2 (modified)

Moreover, Chinese has no rules like the type (64a-b), but has a different one:

- (68) S' → TOP S

Xu and Langendoen (1985: 3) clarify that “by postulating no COMP constituent, we disallow the possibility of COMP-to-COMP movement (WH-movement) in the derivation of topic structures in Chinese – contrary to Huang 1982 – though we leave open the possibility that material may move directly into the TOP constituent from the comment clause.”

Assuming that the comments in sentences (65) to (67) are to be analysed as containing elements, either empty or lexicalized, that are co-indexed with the elements in the topic; Xu and Langendoen argue that the relation of co-indexing is a binding relationship and therefore can say that the topic binds the co-indexed element in the comment. Even more so, if this binding element appears to be non-empty, they claim that the binding relation then is a simple and ordinary antecedent-pronoun relationship that normally is not subject to island constraints.

The topic structure underlying sentences (65) to (67) is in fact very simple and can be represented as follows:

- (69) [s' X [s ... Y ...]], where Y is an empty NP, pronoun, or full NP co-indexed with X, and Y is not contained in a larger constituent other than VP.

4.1 Y in the VP of the comment clause

Considering examples (70) to (72) below, we can see that element Y in the topic structure [s' X [s ... Y ...]] can freely occur in argument position (A-position) in the comment. This can be as a subject, direct object or indirect object. In the remaining part of this chapter, the empty category will be presented with an ‘e’, which is the element with which the topic is coindexed.

- (70) a. 吴 先生 認識 我。
 Wú *xiānshēng* *rènshi* *wǒ*
 NAME mister know I
 ‘Mr. Wu knows me.’

- b. [吴 先生]_i 他_i 認識 我。
Wú xiānshēng tā rènshi wǒ
 NAME mister he know I
 ‘Mr. Wu, he knows me.’
- c. [吴 先生]_i [這 個 人]_i 認識 我。
Wú xiānshēng zhè ge rén rènshi wǒ
 NAME mister this CL person know I
 ‘Mr. Wu, the guy knows me.’

- (71) a. [吴 先生]_i 我 認識 **e_i**。
Wú xiānshēng wǒ rènshi
 NAME mister I know
 ‘Mr. Wu, I know.’
- b. [吴 先生]_i 我 認識 他_i。
Wú x iānshēng wǒ rènshi tā
 NAME mister I know he
 ‘Mr. Wu, I know him.’
- c. [吴 先生]_i 我 認識 [這 個 人]_i。
Wú xiānshēng wǒ rènshi zhè ge rén
 NAME mister I know this CL person
 ‘Mr. Wu, I know the guy.’

- (72) a. [吴 先生]_i 我 給 了 **e_i** 兩 本 書。
Wú xiānshēng wǒ gěi le liǎng běn shū
 NAME mister I give ASP two CL book
 ‘Mr. Wu, I gave two books.’
- b. [吴 先生]_i 我 給 了 他_i 兩 本 書。
Wú xiānshēng wǒ gěi le tā liǎng běn shū
 NAME mister I give ASP he two CL book
 ‘Mr. Wu, I gave him two books.’
- c. [吴 先生]_i 我 給 了 [這 個 人]_i 兩 本 書。
Wú xiānshēng wǒ gěi le zhè ge rén liǎng běn shū
 NAME mister I give ASP this CL person two CL book
 ‘Mr. Wu, I gave the guy two books.’

Important to take into account here are the proforms/resumptive pronouns and null proforms/empty categories. Null proforms can be used deictically as well, in direct reference to object types which are assumed by the speaker to be known by the one spoken to. A strong hypothesis with respect to the content of ECs is that these internal properties of gaps are in fact a subset of the set of properties of lexical NPs. This subset includes the minimal properties required for an NP to be an argument, meaning that the properties necessary and sufficient for an NP to be an argument would be the properties of an NP gap (Xu 1986: 76; Bouchard 1983: 13-14).

In example (70), there is no occurrence of an EC, while in examples (71) and (72) there are, in (71a) and (72a) to be precise. For (71a), the EC (represented with *e*) refers to the object *Wú xiāngshēng* 吴先生 ‘Mister Wu’, which is moved to the topic position which created the gap in the first place. As for (72a), the EC is a gap left by moving the indirect object *Wú xiāngshēng* 吴先生 ‘Mister Wu’ to topic position. In these cases, we can speak of left dislocation. As for the remaining sentences in examples (70) to (72), the bound constituent is a proform instead of an EC and are thus instances of hanging topics (Li 2000; Badan 2007).

In addition to the occurrence of Y in the argument, it can also occur as a complement of a copula, i.e. predicate complement, or as an adverbial. When the predicate complement is empty, then the grammaticality completely depends on the interpretation of the topic just as in English. In the first example (73), only when the topic is understood as a general class or type, it can bind an empty predicate complement in the comment clause. However, when the topic is understood as an individual (74a), the sentence is ungrammatical. However, when the bound element is lexicalized, instead of being an EC as in sentences (74b-c), the result is grammatical.

- (73) 他 是 個 小偷， 搶到 他 還 不 是。
tā shì ge xiǎotōu qiángdào tā hái bù shì
 he be CL thief robber he still NEG be
 ‘He is a thief, but a robber he isn’t.’

- (74) a. *[李 沁于]_i 我 指 的 就 是 *e*_i。
Lǐ Qìnyú wǒ zhǐ de jiù shì
 NAME NAME I refer MOD precisely be
 *‘Li Qinyu, the one I refer to is precisely.’

- b. *[李 沁于]_i 我 指 的 就 是 他_i。
Lǐ Qìnyú wǒ zhǐ de jiù shì tā
 NAME NAME I refer MOD precisely be he
 ‘Li Qinyu, the one I refer to is precisely he.’
- c. *[李 沁于]_i 我 指 的 就 是 [這 個 人]_i。
Lǐ Qìnyú wǒ zhǐ de jiù shì zhè ge rén
 NAME NAME I refer MOD precisely be this CL man
 ‘Li Qinyu, the one I refer to is precisely this man.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 4 (modified)

It seems that here, LD (74) is not possible when the topic is understood to be a general class or type, only HT can occur in this situation.

But when Y occurs as an element in adverbial or non-argument (A’) position, then there are no constraints. This is because adverbial fronting is considered a special case of topicalization in Chinese.

- (75) a. [1968 年 8 月 22 日]_i 我 _{e_i} 正好 21 歲。
nián yuè rì wǒ zhènghǎo suì
 year month day I exactly year
 ‘(On) August 22, 1968, I was exactly 21 years old.’
- b. [1968 年 8 月 22 日]_i 我 [那 天]_i 正好 21 歲。
nián yuè rì wǒ nà tiān zhènghǎo suì
 year month day I that day exactly year
 ‘(On) August 22, 1968, I was exactly 21 years old that day.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 4 (modified)

4.1.1 Other categories appearing in topic position

In addition to what we have discussed in the previous section, that NPs in both the argument and non-argument positions can be topicalized, it will now be discussed that other categories can appear in topic position as well. Xu and Langendoen (1985) present six major categories, used in Chinese syntax, that can appear in the topic position: NP (including quantifier phrases as a special case), S, S', VP, PrepP (prepositional phrase) and PostP (postpositional phrase). The following examples illustrate this:

- (76) [這些 話]_i 我 不 相信 **e_i**。 NP
zhèxiē huà wǒ bù xiāngxìn
 these words I NEG believe
 'These words, I don't believe.'
- (77) [他 會 說 這些 話]_i 我 不 相信 **e_i**。 S
tā huì shuō zhèxiē huà wǒ bù xiāngxìn
 he can say these words I NEG believe
 'That he could have said these words, I don't believe.'
- (78) [這些 話 他 會 說] 我 不 相信 **e_i**。 S'
zhèxiē huà tā huì shuō wǒ bù xiāngxìn
 these words he can say I NEG believe
 'That these words he could have said, I don't believe.'
- (79) [說 這些 話]_i 我 不 贊成 **e_i**。 VP
shuō zhèxiē huà wǒ bù zàchéng
 say these words I NEG approve.of
 'Saying these words, I don't approve of.'
- (80) [在 桌子 上]_i 他 放 了 幾 本 書。 PrepP
zài zhuōzi shàng tā fàng le jǐ běn shū
 PREP table on he put ASP some CL book
 'On the table, he put some books.'

- (81) [桌子 上]_i 有 書; 床 上 不 會 有 書。 PostP
zhuōzi shàng yǒu shū chuáng shàng bù huì yǒu shū
 table on have book bed on NEG can have book
 ‘On the table there are some books; on the bed there cannot be any books.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 5 (modified)

Here we encounter the first proof against Xu and Langendoen’s (1985) view that movement does not exist. Examples (78) to (83) are all cases of left dislocation because they are coindexed with an empty pronoun in the comment. This proves the base-generated approach. However, when examples (82) to (83) are analysed; they differ from sentences (78) to (83) because the latter can be coindexed with a resumptive pronoun and thus can be HTs too. However, (82) to (83) cannot since PrepPs (82) and PostPs (83) can only coindex with an EC in the comment (cf. *supra*, Badan 2007).

As for VPs in topic position, they cannot bind non-argument positions because the results are ungrammatical. However, they can appear in topic position when they are coindexed with a lexicalised element, a lexical pro-VP, in the comment; the comment cannot contain an EC.¹⁵

In this part, Xu and Langendoen conclude that any of the six major categories of Chinese stated before can occur in the topic position, and therefore can revise the representation of the topic structure:

- (82) [s’ X [s ... Y ...]], where Y is any major category co-indexed with X, and Y is not contained in a larger constituent other than VP.

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 7

Moreover, in this part we have found evidence that topic structures in Chinese are both base-generated (hanging topics) and the result of movement (left dislocation), thereby opposing Xu and Langendoen’s view that Chinese topic structures are only base-generated. The evidence is

¹⁵ For a thorough explanation on this part, see Xu and Langendoen 1985: 6-7.

the fact that PrepPs and PostPs are instances of LD, and therefore imply movement; whereas NPs, S, S' and VPs are instances of HT and are thus base-generated (cf. *supra*, Badan 2007).

4.2 Y in categories other than the VP of the comment clause

Section 4.1 was about the relation of X in the topic to Y in the comment, with Y contained in the VP of the comment clause. Now this section will focus on the relation of X to Y, when Y is contained in a major category Z other than the VP of the comment. The representation looks as follows:

$$(83) \quad [s' \ X \ [s \ \dots \ [z \ \dots \ Y \ \dots] \ \dots] \]]$$

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 7

There are three cases discussed by Xu and Langendoen (1985): (1) $Z = NP$, (2) $Z = PrepP$ or $PostP$, and (3) $Z = S$ or S' . While discussing these three cases, they will be limited to structures in which Y is not contained within a clause that is subordinate to Z.

The first case where $Z = NP$ is involved with Chomsky's (1973) subadjacency condition of his Government and Binding (GB) theory. He defined it as "A cyclic rule cannot move a phrase from position Y to position X (or conversely) in $\dots X \dots [\alpha \dots [\beta \dots Y \dots] \dots] \dots X \dots$, where α and β are cyclic nodes. Cyclic nodes are S and NP" (Chomsky 1977: 73). Here S refers to a clause or sentence. This principle basically says that an element can never move over more than one bounding node at a time. The issue in this part revolved around whether S and NP are indeed bounding nodes in Chinese. If this would be the case, but it is not, then all topic structures of the type $Z = NP$ would be ungrammatical. The conclusion is that the subadjacency condition is irrelevant to topic structures in Chinese, and that both S and NP are not bounding nodes (cf. *infra*).

For the second group, $Z = PrepP$ or $PostP$, it is impossible to topicalize only one of the elements of a $PrepP$ or $PostP$, since the preposition or postposition cannot be stranded. However, topicalization of the complete $PrepP$ or $PostP$ is possible, which results in left dislocation. This is slightly different to what Xu and Langendoen state, they argue that

topicalization is impossible, whereas left dislocation is permitted. While these words may be true, their given examples (1985: 10) are not true instances of left dislocation, but rather of HT. They still use a resumptive pronoun in their examples while it is perfectly possible to completely move the PrepP or PostP in topic position, resulting in true LD.

Finally, as for $Z = S$ or S' , they are cases of embedded topic structures, meaning that subordinate clauses can contain an element in its own topic position. Moreover, the element in the main clause topic position can bind a position in a subordinate clause in the comment. Even topic structures with an interrogative in the comment are possible in Chinese, which is something very typical because topicalization is not affected by the WH-island condition (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 12). WH-words do not undergo the WH-movement into COMP. Important to note here is that X in topic position can be related to a position Y in the comment clause to any degree of sentential embedding. As a result, the element in a low topic position can move into higher topic positions by means of successive cyclic applications of topic-to-topic movement (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 13).

Now, to see whether Chinese topic structures are subject to the subjacency condition, Xu and Langendoen take a look at the relative clauses. It is possible in Mandarin Chinese for a topic structure to appear as a relative clause modifying a noun. Typical for this type of topic structure is that the comment does not contain a lexical pro-form coreferential with the head (thus being cases of LD). Consider a phrase in the topic position of the relative clause, if Chinese topic structures are subject to the subjacency condition, and if NP and either S or S' are bounding nodes, then it should be impossible for this topic in the relative clause to move to the topic position of the matrix sentence. However, we do see that this is possible in Chinese, meaning that N and S or S' are not bounding nodes when it comes to topic structures.

As a result, from the above considerations, it can be concluded that the subjacency condition is irrelevant to the binding of empty categories in relative clauses to elements in the topic position of the main clause; and that the binding relation in this case is not variable binding, but rather an ordinary pronoun binding by an antecedent (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 16).

4.3 ‘Chinese style’ topic structures

The structures and framework described so far in chapter four do not cover every type of topic structure in Mandarin Chinese. The framework so far says that the comment must contain a pro-form, either empty or lexicalized, which is anaphorically related to the element in topic position. However, there is a class of topic structures in Chinese that does not completely belong in this framework, but which has already been mentioned before with the following sentence:

- (84) 劇本 我 喜歡 曹禺 的。
jùběn wǒ xǐhuan Cáo Yú de
 play I like NAME MOD
 ‘As for plays, I like Cao Yu’s.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 18 (modified)

Assuming that the phrase *Cáo Yú de* 曹禺的 ‘Cao Yu’s’ is not analysable as a modifier of an empty or displaced head-noun, but instead is construed as a full-fledged NP in its own right, then it seems that the comment clause does not contain an element which is anaphorically related to the element in the topic (cf. *supra*). Rather, it appears that the relation between the topic and the comment in this example is much looser. The topic in this situation is what Chafe (1976: 55) calls a “spatial, temporal or personal frame or domain” for the following comment. Chafe differentiates two types of topic structures in which the comment clause does or does not contain an element which is anaphorically related to the element in the topic: ‘English style’ and ‘Chinese style’ topic structures respectively. This is the type of structure Badan (2007) refers to as the aboutness topic (AT) (cf. *supra*).

More examples of ‘Chinese style’ topic structures are:

- (85) a. 十 個 李 五 個 爛 了。
shí ge lí wǔ ge làn le
 ten CL pear five CL spoil ASP
 ‘Of the ten pears, five have spoiled.’

- b. 水果 他 最 喜歡 蘋果。
shuǐguǒ tā zuì xǐhuan píngguǒ
 fruit he most like apple
 ‘As for fruit, he likes apples most.’
- c. 張 家 我 給 了 每 個 孩子 一 件 玩具。
zhāng jiā wǒ gěi le měi ge háizi yí jiàn wánjù
 NAME family I give ASP every CL child one CL toy
 ‘In the Zhang family, I gave every child a toy.’
- d. 這 所 大學 最 出名 的 是 物理 系。
zhè suǒ dàxué zuì chūmíng de shí wùlǐ xì
 this CL college most well-known MOD be physics department
 ‘In this college, best-known is the physics department.’
- e. 昨天 他 12 點鐘 睡覺。
zuótiān tā diǎnzhōng shuìjiào
 yesterday he 12 o’clock sleep
 ‘Last night, he went to bed at 12 o’clock.’
- f. 看 戲 他 只 看 喜劇。
kàn xì tā zhǐ kàn xǐjù
 watch play he only watch comedy
 ‘As for plays, he only watches comedies.’
- g. 文學 作品 他 除了 小說 都 不 讀。
wénxué zuòpǐn tā chúle xiǎoshuō dōu bù dú
 literary work he except novel all NEG read
 ‘Of literary works, he reads nothing but novels.’
- h. 這 個 人 我 覺得 記性 特別 好。
zhè ge rén wǒ juéde jìxíng tèbié hǎo
 this CL man I feel memory exceptionally good
 ‘As for this man, I feel his memory is exceptionally good.’
- i. 這 所 大學 學 法律 的 學生 不 多。

zhè suǒ dàxué xué fǎlǜ de xuéshēng bù duō
 this CL college study law MOD student NEG many
 ‘In this college, there aren’t many students who study law.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 19 (modified)

In all the sentences from example (85), both the topic and a particular phrase in the comment are underlined. Even though there is no anaphoric binding relation between these elements, there is nevertheless some relation. For example, in (85a), the five objects mentioned in the comment are drawn from among the ten pears specified in the topic. In (85c) the children mentioned in the comment are the children from the Zhang family which is in topic position. And again, in (85i), the students mentioned in the comment are students from the university specified in the topic. In all these examples from (85), the topic X seems to specify a frame of reference for the following comment (cf. Chafe 1976), and in particular for some constituent Y in it (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 19-20).

Nevertheless, syntactically, these ‘Chinese style’ topic structures and the topic structures discussed in the previous sections have much in common. X occurs invariably in initial position. Y can be an NP appearing in the A position (subject, direct object, indirect object or complement of a copula), examples (85a) to (85d), or in the A’ position (adverbial), example (85e). Y can also occur in categories other than NP, such as VP in example (85f). And finally, Y can be an NP within a larger constituent (prepositional phrase, embedded complement or relative clause), as in (85g) to (85i) respectively (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 20).

Thus far, following Xu and Langendoen’s (1985) research on Chinese topic structures, their analysis has failed to classify ‘Chinese style’ topic structures as true topic structures because it does not fulfill the requirement of having an element in the comment which is co-indexed with the element in topic position. However, they argue that if they drop this requirement, then the structures in (85) can all be accommodated. Moreover, if this requirement is rejected, then it strengthens their explanation why topic structures in Chinese in general are not subject to Chomsky’s subadjacency condition or Ross’s island constraints (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 20).

As a result, the representation of Chinese topic structures can be reformulated:

- (86) [s’ X [s ... Y ...]], where X is a major category and Y, possibly empty, is related to X.

However, there have been four instances of (86) in which the result was ungrammatical: (i) X is understood as an individual, and Y is an empty predicate complement (cf. section 4.1); (ii) X = VP and Y is an empty non-argument (cf. section 4.1.1); (iii) X is a modifier phrase and Y is its head (cf. section 4.2.1); and (iv) Y is an empty complement of a preposition or a postposition (including the particle *de* 的, cf. section 4.2.1 and 4.2.2). But, of these four restrictions, only (iii) must be specifically imposed on topic structures in Chinese, and this merely because the categories appearing in topic position are distinct from the category of modifier constituents. The other restrictions follow directly from the requirement that the comment clause must itself be a well-formed and independent sentence.

4.4 An antecedent-pronoun binding relation

As already concluded before, the binding relation of an empty category in the comment to an element X in the topic is considered to be an antecedent-pronoun relation, rather than a variable binding relation. The empty category may be interpreted as a simple pronoun that is co-indexed with an antecedent which is the topic in this case. It is because of this reason that topic structures in Chinese are not subject to the island constraints. Then the question arises that given that an empty category in a comment clause behaves as a pronoun, can it behave as a free pronoun as well? The answer to this question is yes:

- (87) [那 個 花園]_i 我們 已經 種上 **e_j** 了。(i ≠ j)
nà ge huāyuán wǒmen yǐjīng zhòngshang le
 that CL garden we already raise ASP
 ‘That garden, we already raised them (e.g. flowers) in.’ (lit. *‘That garden, we already raised.’)

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 22 (modified)

In this example (87), the non-coindexing of the topic and the empty category in the comment is the most natural interpretation of that sentence. If we would construe the empty category as co-indexed with the topic, then it would result in a rather unnatural interpretation in which we raised the garden itself and not the flowers in it.

Examples like (87) provide a natural ‘bridge’ between sentences that are clearly ‘English style’ topic structures (88) and sentences that clearly are ‘Chinese style’ topic structures (129).

- (88) 吴 先生 我 認識。
Wú xiāngsheng wǒ rènshi
 NAME mister I know
 ‘Mr. Wu, I know.’

Xu and Langendoen 1985: 2 (modified)

In the ‘English style topic’ structures (88), an empty pronoun appears in the comment clause which is anaphorically related to an element in the topic. Contrastingly, in clearly ‘Chinese style’ topic structures, there is no empty element in the comment clause, rather, there is a lexical constituent that is related to an element in the topic, but there is no anaphorical relation. So, in examples like (88), which form a bridge between the two ends, an empty pronoun occurs in the comment clause (as in ‘English style’ topic structures), but that pronoun is non-anaphorically related to the element in the topic (just as ‘Chinese style’ topic structures) (Xu and Langendoen 1985: 23).

However, not everyone agrees with Xu and Langendoen’s view. Huang (1984) opposes that in Chinese, the empty category or pronoun that occupies the object position of complement clauses cannot be treated as an antecedent-pronoun binding relation. Moreover, he argues that there is an asymmetry between the interpretation of this particular empty category in Chinese and overt pronouns in English (Huang 1985; Modesto 2008). Consider the following sentences in Chinese (89) and English (90):

- (89) a. e 来 了。
lái le
 come ASP

‘[He] came.’

b. 李四 很 喜歡 e。

Lǐsì hěn xǐhuan

NAME very like

‘Lisi likes [him] very much.’

c. 張三_i 說 [e_i 不 認識 李四]。 (i = i)

Zhāngsān shuō bù rènshi Lǐsì

NAME say NEG know NAME

‘Zhangsan said that [he] did not know Lisi.’

d. 張三_i 說 [李四 不 認識 e_j]。 (i ≠ j)

Zhāngsān shuō Lǐsì bù rènshi

NAME say NAME NEG know

‘Zhangsan said that Lisi did not know [him].’

- (90) a. He came.
b. Bill saw him.
c. John said that he knew Bill.
d. John said that Bill knew him.

Huang 1984: 537-538 (modified)

Comparing these Chinese and English sentences, it is striking how many similarities there are in the distribution and reference possibilities between the empty categories in Chinese, or how Huang (1984) calls it ‘zero pronoun’, and the overt pronouns in English. However, when we come to the last examples (89d) and (90d), then we see an important difference emerging. When you look at the English sentence (90d) and pay attention to the indices as well, the pronoun ‘him’ is free to refer to the matrix subject ‘John’ or to someone else outside the sentence. On the other hand, in the Chinese sentence (89d), the empty category object may only refer to someone whose reference is fixed outside the entire sentence according to Huang (1984: 538). Either way, the empty category object cannot refer to the matrix subject Zhangsan. Thus, in order to construct a Chinese sentence with a reference to the matrix subject, the empty category must be replaced by an overt pronoun (91):

- (91) 張三 說 李四 不 認識 他。
Zhāngsān shuō Lǐsì bù rènshi tā
 NAME say NAME NEG know he
 ‘Zhangsan said that Lisi didn’t know him.’

Huang 1984: 538 (modified)

Huang (1984) concludes that this difference exists due to the fact that the empty category in sentence (89d) is a variable binding by a (null) discourse topic.

Nevertheless, Xu and Langendoen argue (1985) that even if Huang (1984) would be correct in saying that an empty category object cannot refer to the matrix subject, but to a reference outside the proper sentence, empty direct object pronouns in embedded clauses are not obligatory non-coreferential with the matrix subject. They claim that it would be completely possible to interpret the empty direct object as being the matrix subject. First of all, it would be difficult to accept Huang’s analysis in general because it would require both the claim that bound empty elements are interpreted as variables, which is not the case, and the claim that empty categories can occur in topic position (no independent evidence for this). The first claim can already be rejected following Xu and Langendoen’s (1985) analysis.

Part II

A case study on topics and topic markers in Confucius' *Lúnyǔ* 論語 'Analects'

5

Methodology

5.1 An introduction to the Analects of Confucius

The *Lúnyǔ* 論語 ‘Analects’ or ‘Analects of Confucius’ is an ancient Chinese work composed of a large collection of ideas and sayings attributed to Confucius and his contemporary disciples. It is traditionally believed to be written by Confucius’ followers during the fourth century BCE which is during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE). The *Lúnyǔ* contains the replies made by Confucius to his disciples and contemporaries, and the conversations between the disciples or the words they heard from their master. At that time, each disciple had its individually preserved record, which were put together into one work, the *Lúnyǔ*, after Confucius’ death (Pan Ku : 1717). The *Lúnyǔ* would thus appear to be ‘a compilation of the words’ of Confucius (traditional dates 551-479 BCE). Unique to this works and what differentiates it from other classical works, is its rather vivid and colourful character due to the work’s composition of short pieces of dialogue, most frequently conducted between Confucius and his disciples. Consequently, the main value of the *Lúnyǔ* would be providing an insight into the daily life and behaviour of Confucius and his disciples. Through the dialogues, we learn and get a general idea of Confucius’ personality and his teachings which are mainly concerned with individual and social ethics (Anne Cheng 1993: 313).

When the collecting and editing of the remains of the Analects and the other Classics was undertaken by the scholars of the Han dynasty, it appeared that there existed two different copies of the Analects. One was from Lu, the native state of Confucius, called the 魯論 *Lǔ Lún* ‘Lun Analects’, and the other was from Qi, an adjoining state of Lu called 齊論 *Qí Lún* ‘Qi Analects’, they resulted from two different lines of transmission. There are some differences between the two versions of which the most significant one is the total number of ‘Books’ or chapters of the Analects. The former consisted of twenty Books, the same as those now included

in the Classics, while the latter had a total of 22 Books, two Books in addition. In the twenty Books they had in common, the chapters and sentences from the Qi version are somewhat more numerous than the one from Lu (Legge 1861: 12; Cheng 1993: 315).

However, there was supposedly a third version discovered of the Analects, the *Gǔwén Lúnyǔ* 古文論語, during the reign of *Jǐng dì* 景帝 (157-141 BCE), when the current king of Lu decided to pull down the family estate where Confucius lived to make more place to enlarge his palace. While doing so, there were several copies found in the wall, of which one was a copy of the Analects. The books had supposedly been hidden in the wall when the edict for the burning of the Books was issued. The copies were all written in the most ancient form of the Chinese characters, which had fallen in disuse, so the king returned them to the Kong family. The head of the family then gave himself to the study of the copies, and finally, because of an imperial order, he published a work called the *Lúnyǔ* with explanations of the characters and a demonstration of the meaning. The recovery of this version of the Analects will be seen as one of the most important circumstances in the history of the text of the Analects. This version, which is referred to as the 古論 *Gǔ Lún* ‘Old Analects’ by Chinese writers, is in accordance with the version of Lu, both containing twenty Books with only a small difference in the last Book (Legge 1861: 13; Cheng 1993: 315).

The work consists of a large number of brief passages, some only a sentence or two in length, and are arranged into twenty sections or Books. Traditionally, each Book is split into two halves of which each is divided into several sections. Logic to the arrangement of the material or a logical order of the Books seems to be lacking which makes it rather difficult to understand the work. As for the titles of each Book, they do not represent a dominant theme, they are merely named after the first character(s) occurring at the beginning of each Book (Cheng 1993: 314). Other elements making understanding it difficult is that the work is among the earliest prose works in Chinese and one that makes an attempt to represent the conversational style of the period. The conversational style of the text is also represented in the use of a variety of particles. It also makes frequent use of parallelisms, a balanced style typical of ancient Chinese and uses rhymed sayings or lines of poetry to emphasize a point (Watson 2007: 5-6; Waley 2005: 21).

5.2 Why the Analects of Confucius?

The Analects of Confucius are supposed to reflect the conversational style of the period, which is mostly represented in the use of a variety of particles. A lot of dialogues are integrated between Confucius, his disciples and other contemporary persons, and as such containing more colloquial features in comparison with other texts of that time.

In addition, it is important that one keeps in mind that although the Analects represents ‘spoken’ language by means of dialogues, these dialogues were still written down and writing is not solely a transcription of speech. Not all aspects of spoken discourse can be covered by transcribing it, no indirect discourse is speech transcribed. This feature of language is important with respect to Classical Chinese and especially to the Confucian teachings because of the ubiquity of the phrase *zǐ yuē* 子曰 ‘The Master said’ in the Analects. The high occurrence frequency of this phrase is due to the fact that the teachings of Confucius were originally transmitted orally. However, a lot of which was actually said has never been transcribed but was instead written down later using the Chinese graphs in ‘sentences’ which were closely related to but not equal to the spoken language (Rosemont 2013: 13-14).

Nevertheless, despite the fact that the transcription of the spoken language is not identical to what was literally said, it still reflects the vernacular language somewhat better than other texts of that time, which are strictly literary.

5.3 Thesaurus Linguae Sericae

Thesaurus Linguae Sericae (TLS)¹⁶, in Chinese *Xīnbiān Hànwén diǎn* 新編漢文典, is an international collaborative project which serves as an historical and comparative encyclopaedia of Chinese conceptual schemes. The project was initiated in 1988 by Christoph Harbsmeier, the chief editor, and receives now a lot of input by a large number of academic contributors all over the world.

¹⁶ Website: <http://tls.uni-hd.de>

TLS was designed to meet two aims: first, TLS is designed to make classical Chinese evidence precisely comparable to that of other cultures; second, to make “possible meaningful analytic primary-evidence-based disagreement among non-sinologists on classical Chinese concepts and words”. The database is compiled hoping that philosophical reflection on Chinese texts might help broadening the empirical basis for philosophical theories and generalisations on conceptual schemes by assist in philosophical reflection on Chinese texts. Through broadening the scope of literally translated and analysed texts from widely (but never radically) different intellectual cultures, the contributors aim to enhance the clarity and bite of statements of difference between conceptual schemes. They further aim to make precise translation criteria for classical Chinese, primarily through a thorough explanation in English of systematic, recurring semantic relations between Chinese characters, especially distinctive semantic features (Harbsmeier TLS).

The reason why I used TLS as my source for the *Analects*, is because first, it provides a digital version of the text, and second, because every character is provided with a record that specifies the meaning, syntactic category and semantic category, among others. TLS is the first dictionary of Chinese that incorporates detailed syntactic analysis of a character’s syntactic usage (of which there are 600 distinct kinds). This enables users like me to make a systematic study of basic phenomena like the natural history of abstract nouns in China, or in my case Chinese topic markers (Harbsmeier TLS).

5.4 The Chinese Text Project

The Chinese Text Project (CTP) is an online open-access digital library with the aim to make pre-modern Chinese texts available to both readers and researchers worldwide. The library provides more than thirty thousand titles and more than five billion characters, which makes it the largest database of pre-modern Chinese texts in existence.

The goal of this website is to present both accessible and accurate copies of ancient Chinese texts, in particular the ones from pre-Qin times and the Han dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE). The ancient texts form the heart of the database containing the full text of various Chinese texts of philosophical, linguistic or historical interest from the pre-Qin era through the Han dynasty and beyond. The texts are stored in a database format to allow browsing and searching in an easy

way. Each Classical Chinese text is provided with an English and Modern Chinese translation, which is translated paragraph by paragraph, as well as several functions such as dictionary entries, parallels between the current passage and other passages, Chinese commentaries corresponding to the current passage, etc.

The difference with TLS is that CTP only provides the translation and commentaries of the text, as well as a dictionary; whereas TLS offers conceptual schemes of the texts and more syntax related information.

5.5 The process

The first round of collecting data was rather easy since TLS uses a tag named ‘topic marker’ to refer to one of the synonym groups¹⁷. So, in the advanced search machine I could enter the text ID and the specific synonym group tag ‘topic marker’. This search provided me the instances Harbsmeier himself thought are topic markers. Afterwards, I looked through the text myself to manually pick out the topic markers. In the final round, I looked for topic markers using the search engine again, but now I just entered all possible topic markers to check I did not forget any instance of a topic marker. As a result, I included way more cases of topic markers in my results than Harbsmeier had done.

Unfortunately, at one point (July 15, 2020), the website of TLS was shut down for maintenance and I did not have access anymore. Instead, I started to use the Chinese Text Project (CTP)¹⁸, which provides the text and a translation (James Legge’s translation of 1861) of the Analects as well. The only disadvantage now, was that I had no more access to more syntactic information like the synonym groups marking a character as a topic marker.

As for analysing the topic structures and dividing them into several categories, I used an Excel spreadsheet. I could easily use colour tags to indicate, for example, whether a topic was

¹⁷ TLS is primarily focused on distinctive semantic nuances and mainly serves as a synonym dictionary of classical Chinese. These synonym groups are groups of words which have more or less the same meaning or refer to the same concept. “In exploring the system of ‘synonym groups’ and distinctions within synonym groups TLS aims to describe and systematically analyse the explicit and implicit conceptual schemes or cognitive systems of the language as revealed in the sources analysed. The members of each synonym group are taken to constitute the explicit conceptual repertoire of the language in this area” (Harbsmeier TLS: editor’s introduction).

¹⁸ Website: <https://ctext.org>

functioning as the syntactic subject in a sentence or to make the different categories. For each topic, I provided the sentence ID and reference, the sentence in which the topic occurs, the topic marker in question, its subcategory (more or less according to semantics), is the topic the syntactic subject at the same time, the topic type (according to structure) and the translation of the sentence.

6

The topic markers of the Analects

6.1 Results of the research

First, I will present the results of the field research on topic markers in the Analects. The following table shows the total number of each topic marker and its subcategories.

TOPIC MARKER		TOTAL
SUBCATEGORIES	也	107
	after personal name	45
	after personal name referring to speaker	9
	after personal name referring to listener	5
	after other than personal name	29
	temporal	15
	conditional	7
	sentential	1
	nominalising	1
SUBCATGO- RIES	者	15
	nominalising + topic is subject at the same time	8
	topic marker with narrative predicate	1
	temporal	4
	generic with large scope	2
	也者	3
	夫	9
	(之) 於 ... 也	5

則	1
若	2
如	4
而	1
至於	1
TOTAL TOPIC MARKERS	148

Table 1 – Results of the case study on topic markers in the Analects

Note that the total amount of topic markers is not just the sum of the totals of each topic marker and its subcategories, because some topic markers have double functions and indicate a temporal topic and a topic containing personal names at the same time (cf. *infra*).

6.2 *Yě* 也

The original function of *yě* cannot be recovered from its etymology since it is unknown. It is one of the few function words which is not derived from a known full lexical word, and moreover, its historical development is also somewhat problematic. Character *yě* is unattested in the Book of Documents and is also completely absent from the epigraphic sources, the oracle bone and bronze inscriptions, whereas it is present in the Book of Odes. However, its syntactic behaviour is only stabilised in the Analects of Confucius and later texts (Caboara 2010: 1).

In traditional grammar, *yě* 也 is mainly described to have two functions. The first one is as a particle marking noun predication, which is called *pànduàn zhùcí* 判斷助詞 ‘determinative particle’ in Chinese, which is in essence a particle at the end of a nominal predicate without a copula. The second function is as *yǔqìcí* 語氣詞 ‘modal marker’. It also includes the use of *yě* within or at the end of the sentence, but traditional grammar does not include or describe the use of *yě* as topic marker which is kind of odd since the function as topic marker is widely recognized. For example, Wang Li (1989: 296-301), who distinguishes seven types of grammatical functions of pre-Qin *yě*, does not make an explicit reference of *yě* functioning as topic marker. However, there are two usages, the sixth and seventh of Wang’s list, that are

related and closest to the topic marker use: “(6) between the two clauses of a complex sentence, it indicates a pause” and “(7) between the subject and the predicate, it indicates a small pause” (Wang 1989: 300-301, own translation). He also mentions that in a single sentence, if the head is a part-of-speech composed of *zhī* 之, *qí* 其, etc., then *yě* is often used to indicate a pause behind this phrase. For example:

- (92) 子產 之 從 政 也, 擇 能 而 使 之。
Zǐ Chǎn zhī cóng zhèng yě zé néng ér shǐ zhī
 NAME NOM engage government PART select ability and employ DEM
 ‘In carrying out affairs of government, Zi Chan selected men of ability and employed them.’ (《左傳·襄公三十一年》)

Translation from TLS

Nevertheless, when we take a look at the first modern studies with Gabelentz in the West and Ma Jianzhong in China as the founding fathers, we can see that they describe *yě* mainly as a particle marking noun predication, but they also devote considerable space to its other two functions as nominal focus and verbal focus (Gabelentz 1881: 314, 316-318, 438-441; Ma 1998: 538-562). Now there are no longer implicit references to the topic marker use of *yě* and the description of the environments in which these usages occur is very detailed, especially the one of Ma.

Additionally, Pulleyblank (1995: 73) argues that *yě* is usually found in sentences in which the topic phrase is a nominalized verbal phrase. Consider the following two examples:

- (93) 君子 之 於 禽獸 也,
jūnzi zhī yú qínshòu yě
 gentleman NOM PREP birds.and.animals TOP
 見 其 生 不 忍 見 其 死。
jiàn qí shēng bù rěn jiàn qí sǐ
 see DEM live NEG bear see DEM die
 ‘A gentleman’s attitude to birds and animals as that if he sees them alive, he cannot bear to see them die.’ (*Mèng* 1A/7)

- (94) 丈夫 之 冠 也， 父 命 之，
zhàngfū zhī guān yě fù mìng zhī
 man NOM cap TOP father order DEM
 女子 之 嫁 也， 母 命 之。
nǚzǐ zhī jià yě mǔ mìng zhī
 daughter NOM marry TOP mother order DEM
 ‘The father orders the capping of a young man, the mother orders the marriage of a daughter.’ (*Mèng* 3B/2)

Pulleyblank 1995: 73 (modified)

Comparing these two examples, sentence (93) is an example of a sentence in which both the subject and a postverbal element are topicalized in a locative phrase with *yú* 於 nominalized by *zhī* 之; whereas sentence (94) shows the use of *yě* 也 after nominalized phrases that are objects of a verb (Pulleyblank 1995: 73). The nominalized phrase is referred to by *zhī*. Thus, the above uses imply the topic use but do not explicitly call *yě* a topic marker.

However, Pulleyblank (1995) assigns a topic marker use to *yě* which matches with Wang’s description cited earlier. He mentions that *yě* is often found with proper names as well, just as Wang (1989) does, which is particularly the case in the *Lúnyǔ* (Pulleyblank 1995: 73). Some examples:

- (95) 鯉 也 死， 有 棺 而 無 槨。
lǐ yě sǐ yǒu guān ér wú guǒ
 NAME TOP die have coffin but NEG outer.coffin
 ‘When Li died, he had a coffin but no coffin case.’ (LY 11.8.0.0.1.0 論語·
 先進第十一·8/1)

- (96) 柴 也 愚， 參 也 魯，
Chái yě yú Cān yě lǔ
 NAME TOP stupid NAME TOP besotted
 師 也 辟， 由 也 嘒。
Shī yě pì Yóu yě yàn
 NAME TOP villain NAME TOP boor

‘That man Chai is stupid, that man Shen is besotted, that man Shi is a villain,
that man You is a boor.’ (LY 11.18.0.0.1.0 論語·先進第十一·18/1)

Translation from TLS

Note that next to *yě*, *jīn yě* 今也 ‘now’ has a usage similar to topicalization and is placed at the head of the sentence to indicate contrast. For example:

- (97) 今也，南蠻 馱舌 之 人
jīnyě nán mán jué shé zhī rén
 now south barbarian shrike tongue MOD man
 非 先 王 之 道
fēi xiān wáng zhī dào
 NEG former king MOD doctrine
 ‘Now the shrike-tongued southern barbarian denies the doctrines of the
 former kings.’ (*Mèng* 3A/4)

Pulleyblank 1995: 106 (modified)

Similar to the three functions Gabelentz and Ma described, is the work of Bisang (1998), in which he explicitly assigns the topic marker use to *yě* as well, saying that *yě* at the end of a sentence is a focus marker and *yě* after the head of a sentence is a topic marker. To illustrate, following Bisang’s analysis, *yě* in the following sentence from the Analects “求也為季氏宰” is used to introduce a new topic.

Now, probably one of the clearest analyses given of *yě* is the structural approach from Zhou Fagao (1961). In his work, Zhou divides the Classical Chinese sentences in two types, *pànduàn jù* 判斷句 ‘determinative sentences’ and *shuōmíng jù* 說明句 ‘narrative sentences’, which is based on the model of Bloomfield (1933). The division of the two types are based on a semantic criterion, the relationship between the subject and the predicate. Zhou defines the *pànduàn jù* as sentences in which the subject and the predicate are in an equational relationship ($A = B$) and they can be analysed as ‘A//B 也’, where A is the subject and B is the nominal predicate (Zhou 1961: 10-11). An example:

- (98) 女 // 器 也。
rǔ qì yě
 you tool NOM
 ‘You are a utensil.’ (LY 5.4.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·4/1)

Translation from TLS

Zhou only uses the term copula to designate linking terms that occur between subject and nominal predicate and treats *yě* as a marker of determinative sentences. He further notes that the subject might be present or absent, particularly absent when the predicate is negated by *fēi* 非, the negator for nouns and noun phrases (Zhou 1961: 10-11).

As for the narrative sentences, he defines them by contrasting them to the first type of sentences as ‘non-equational’ or ‘non-determinative’. This type of sentence is analysable as A//B, with A being the actor and B the action. Every sentence without a nominal predicate can be analysed as A//B. Some examples:

- (99) 孟子 // 見 梁 惠 王。(Mencius 1.2)
Mèngzǐ jiàn Liáng Huì wáng
 NAME see NAME NAME king
 ‘Mencius saw king Hui of Liang.’

- (100) 王 // 立 於 沼 上。(Mencius 1.2)
wáng lì yú zhǎo shàng
 king stand PREP pond on
 ‘The king stood by a pond.’

Zhou 1961: 11, translation from Legge 1861

However, while all Zhou’s examples for this sentence type consist of a verbal predicate, it must be noted that he does not define narrative sentences on the basis of the word class of their predicates, nor on the basis of the presence versus absence of a copula (like Bloomfield does).

Instead, Zhou defines this type on the basis of the relationship between subject and predicate, which is the actor-action type in this case instead of the equational type. This definition allows Zhou to treat sentences with verbal predicates followed by *yě* also as determinative (Zhou 1961: 11).

6.2.1 Characteristics and features of *yě*

In pre-Qin Chinese, the primary function of *yě* was to act as a final particle of the *pànduàn jù* 判斷句 ‘sentences with verbless noun predication’ or ‘determinative sentence’, which is a type of sentence with a nominal predicate with final particle *yě*, but without the presence of a copula. Later on, *yě* was also used in a position within the sentence, mainly after the noun component of the sentence. At this time, when the latter was used more commonly, *yě* started to lose its determinative tone. Nevertheless, the topicality of *yě* in its preceding functions was already obviously present (Liu 2016: 4).

Liu (2016: 4) argues that a *yě* not at the end of a sentence is a topic marker except in a few cases. The pre-Qin Chinese sentences with verbless noun predication do not use a copula as mentioned before, and the noun then immediately serves as a (noun) predicate. Therefore, ‘NP + *yě*’ situated not at the end of the whole sentence is part of the predicate of the previous sentence component, or the nominal predicate of the previous ‘turn’.¹⁹ This type of *yě* occurs only at the end of the clause, so other clauses can appear behind it and there is no requirement of punctuation. This type of *yě* is not topic marker *yě*, but a marker of the determinative sentence and is the first exception to the rule. For example:

- (101) 他人之賢者，丘陵也，猶可逾
tārén zhī xián zhě qiū líng yě yóu kě yú
 another NOM virtuous TOP hillock mound NOM as.if can cross.over
 也；仲尼，日月也，无得而逾焉。
yě Zhòng Ní rìyuè yě wú dé ér yú yān

¹⁹ ‘Turn’ here, or *huàlún* 話輪 in Chinese, is a theoretical concept introduced by Sacks et al. (1974/1978) in their paper on turn-taking. Edmonson W. (1981) uses this term to indicate the meaning of two aspects: one meaning refers to the chance to become the speaker at a certain point in the conversation; the second refers to what a person has said as speaker (cited from Liu 2016: 4).

PART NAME sun.and.moon NOM NEG obtainCONJ cross.over DEM
 ‘The talents and virtue of other men are hillocks and mounds which may be stepped over. Zhong Ni is the sun or moon, which it is not possible to step over.’ (LY 19.24.0.0.2.0 論語·子張第十九·24/2)

Translation from Legge 1861

In example (101), *qiū líng yě* 丘陵也 ‘are hillocks and mounds’ is the predicate of the subject *tā rén zhī xián zhě* 他人之賢者 ‘the talents and virtue of other men’ and *rì yuè yě* 日月也 ‘the sun and moon’ is the predicate of the subject *Zhòng Ní* 仲尼 ‘Zhong Ni’, which expresses new information. After these two *pànduàn jù* there are two zero-subject clauses, which, together with the predicate of the previous sentence refer to the same. Therefore, a comma is needed as punctuation, which also makes the predicate of the previous look like the subject of the latter clause (Liu 2016: 4-5).

The second situation where mid-sentence *yě* is not a topic marker, is when *yě* is used after a salutation. Liu (2016: 5) argues that a salutation is classified as an independent component and thus cannot be a topic. He gives the following example from the Analects:

- (102) 子 曰：“ 由 也， 女 聞 六 言 六 蔽 矣 乎？”
zǐ yuē yóu yě nǚ wén liù yán liù bì yǐ hū
 master say NAME PART woman hear six word six cover PART Q
 ‘The Master said: “Yóu, have you learnt about the six statements and the six kinds of obfuscation?”’ (LY 17.8.0.0.1.0 論語·陽貨第十七·8/1)

Translation from TLS

However, there is some ambiguity concerning this particular sentence. Liu (2016: 5) regards *Yóu* 由 ‘You’ as a salutation and adds an exclamation mark after *yě*, whereas Harbsmeier (TLS) regards *yě* in this sentence as a topic marker after a personal name. The issue with Classical Chinese texts and any Chinese text originally written before the 20th century, is that they are written without any punctuation marks (Huang, Sun and Chen 2010: introduction). The texts

were later rewritten to add the punctuation marks; thus, Liu cannot be sure *yě* indicates a salutation here and thus it can be a topic marker after all.

Liu (2016: 5) continues that except for the above two cases, all other *yě*'s after a noun phrase in the middle of a sentence are cases of *yě* as topic marker. Consider the following examples from the Analects:

- (103) 退 而 省 其 私， 亦 足 以 發，
tuì ér xǐng qí sī yì zú yǐ fā
 retreat CONJ examine DEM personal also be.sufficient use develop
 回 也 不 愚。
huí yě bù yú
 NAME TOP NEG be.stupid
 ‘But after he leaves, he examines his personal life, and then he surely is in a position to deploy his skills. Hui is not stupid.’ (LY 2.9.0.0.1.0 論語·為政第二·9/1)

- (104) 由 也 好 勇 過 我， 無 所 取 材。
Yóu yě hào yǒng guò wǒ wú suǒ qǔ cái
 NAME TOP prone.to brave cross I NEG place get timber
 “‘That man Yóu is more prone to bravery than I. But we cannot find the necessary timber (for that raft) anywhere!’” (LY 5.7.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·7/1)

Translation from TLS

- (105) 不 幸 短 命 死 矣， 今 也 則 亡，
bù xìng duǎn mìng sǐ yǐ jīn yě zé wáng
 NEG lucky short life die PART now TOP CONJ die
 未 聞 好 學 者 也。』
wèi wén hào xué zhě yě
 not.yet hear eager.to.study NOM PART
 ‘Unfortunately, his appointed time was short, and he died; and now there is not such another. I have not yet heard of anyone who loves to learn as he did.’” (LY 6.3.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·3/1)

Now, when we look back at Wang’s quote discussing the two usages of *yě* being the closest to the use of *yě* as topic marker, the latter category, “(7) between the subject and the predicate, it indicates a small pause,” is also considered to include adverbs like *jīn* 今 ‘now’, *gǔ* 古 ‘old’, *xiàng* 向 ‘all along’ and *bì* 必 ‘must’ together with *yě*. The question raised then is whether *yě* after these adverbs is a topic marker (Liu 2016: 6).

In terms of semantics, the adverbs *jīn*, *gǔ* and *xiàng* are all temporal nouns and thus are all suitable to serve as temporal topics and they naturally appear before the predicate. Adverb *bì* is a category on its own because in this case it is not adverb-like, but rather predicate-like (Liu 2016: 6; cf. *infra*). Consider the following examples:

- (106) 子 曰：「君子 無 所 爭， 必 也 射 乎！
zǐ yuē jūnzǐ wú suǒ zhēng bì yě shè hū
 master say gentleman NEG PART strive must TOP shoot Q
 ‘The Master said: “The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery?” (LY 3.7.0.0.1.0 論語·八佾第三·7/1)

- (107) 子 曰：「聽訟， 吾 猶 人 也，
zǐ yuē yīnsòng wú yóu rén yě
 master say hear.litigation I like man PART
 必 也 使 無 訟 乎！」
bì yě shǐ wú sòng hū
 must TOP cause NEG litigation PART
 ‘The Master said: “In hearing litigations, I am like any other body. What is necessary, however, is to cause the people to have no litigations.”’ (LY 12.13.0.0.1.0 論語·顏淵第十二·13/1)

- (108) 子路 曰：「衛 君 待 子²⁰ 而 為 政，
Zǐ Lù yuē wèi jūn dāi zǐ ér wèi zhèng
 NAME say NAME ruler wait you CONJ do politics
 子 將 奚 先？」子 曰：「必 也 正 名 乎！」
zǐ jiāng xī xiān zǐ yuē bì yě zhèng míng hū
 master will what first master say must TOP rectify name PART
 ‘Zi Lu said: “The ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order with you to
 administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done?”
 The Master replied: “What is necessary is to rectify names.”’

Translation from Legge 1861

A specific property of *yě* as topic marker and topic markers like ‘as for’ do not have in English, is that in addition to being used to mark the main topic of the main sentence, *yě* can also be used as a topic marker indicating an underlying topic embedded in a deeper level of the sentence. This suggests that this topic marker of pre-Qin Chinese has a rather high degree of syntacticisation, which is the process by which pragmatic principles turn into grammatical or syntactic structures. In contrast, the English ‘as for’ marker can only be used to indicate the main topic at the beginning of the main sentence, which is a pragmatic operation. In (109) *yě* is used after the subject of the non-nuclear relative clause “...者” and the topic has been moved to the deeply embedded modifier position (Liu 2016: 6):

- (109) 有 子 曰：「其 為人 也 孝 弟，
Yǒu zǐ yuē qí wéirén yě xiào dì
 NAME master say DEM self.conduct TOP filial.pietty fraternal.love
 而 好 犯上 者， 鮮 矣。
ér hào fànshàng zhě xiǎn yǐ
 CONJ fond.of offend.one’s.superiors PART few PART

²⁰ Character *zǐ* 子 is also used as a respectful term for a man next to its common translation as ‘son/daughter’.

‘The philosopher You said: “They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors.” (LY 1.2.0.0.1.0 論語·學而第一·2/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

6.2.2 Topics with *yě* and its subcategories in the Analects

Topic markers are grammatical markers with often strong spoken characteristics. Topic markers in Modern Chinese mainly appear in spoken language and the same situation counts for pre-Qin Chinese as well. According to Liu’s (2016) analysis, *yě* is a commonly used grammatical marker in particular as topic marker. The reason why the Analects has such a high degree of *yě* appearing as a topic marker is because the Analects of Confucius originally is a quotation body which is mainly based on collated oral dialogues transferred into a written medium.

Although there are many types of usages for topics with *yě*, their referential properties and information motivations meet the typical requirements of topic components: they are definite and they are known or shared information of both parties.²¹ Liu further argues that there are no topics with *yě* that do not fit these properties. Very interesting about his research is that he uses different tags to classify topic marker *yě* in all his example sentences. He differentiates reference, information properties, some semantic relations and structural properties. Among the information properties are ‘known activation’ (the topic has the function of pointing back), direct pointing or reference (the object involved is on the spot) and comparative topic (marking one or several items). And of course, there are also some semantic relations including time, condition, cause, acceptance or rejection, etc. Some of the classifications are intersecting which results in many topics having multiple properties (Liu 2016: 7). Some examples:

²¹ Liu (2016: 7) also argues that all topics with *yě* are kind-denoting or bare NPs, but this is not the case for the Analects. Topics with *yě* consist of various structures like complex NPs, complex nominalised NPs and verbal clauses (cf. *infra*). Nevertheless, the kind-denoting NP is one of the four structures appearing in topics with *yě*.

- (110) 子 曰:「吾 與 回 言 終日, 不 違 如 愚。
zǐ yuē wú yǔ Huí yán zhōngrì bù wéi rú yú
 master say I CONJ NAME words all.day NEG disobey if stupid
 退 而 省 其 私, 亦 足以 發。
tuì ér xǐng qí sī yǐ zúyǐ fā
 retire CONJ examine DEM private also sufficient.to show
 回 也 不 愚。」
Huí yě bù yú
 NAME TOP NEG stupid

‘The Master said: “I have talked with Hui for a whole day, and he has not made any objection to anything I said - as if he were stupid. He has retired, and I have examined his conduct when away from me and found him able to illustrate my teachings. Hui, he is not stupid.”’ (LY 2.9.0.0.1.0 論語·為正第二·9/1)

PROPERTIES: proper name, ‘known activation’

- (111) 子 謂 子貢 曰:「女 與 回 也 孰 愈?」
zǐ wèi Zǐ Gōng yuē rǔ yǔ Huí yě shú yù
 master say NAME say you CONJ NAME TOP who better

‘The Master said to Zi Gong: “Which do you consider superior, yourself or Hui?”’ (LY 5.9.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·9/1)

PROPERTIES: person and proper name are juxtaposed

- (112) 子貢 問 曰:「賜 也 何如?」
Zǐ Gōng wèn yuē cì yě hérú
 NAME ask say I TOP what

子 曰:「女 器 也。」
zǐ yuē rǔ qì yě
 master say you utensil PART

‘Zi Gong asked: “What do you say of me, Ci!” The Master said: “You are a utensil.”’ (LY 5.4.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·4/1)

PROPERTIES: proper name and person – the proper name is used in the first person

6.2.2.1 Topics with personal names or pronouns

Very outstanding is that the cases of *yě* in the nominal component are most in line with the topical characteristics mentioned earlier. Among the proper nouns, there are some referring to the speaker and the listener, which are equivalent to the first person and second person singular pronouns respectively. This is the norm in pre-Qin Chinese (Liu 2016: 8). As for topics with *yě* containing proper nouns or personal names, I have differentiated three subcategories: (i) personal names, (ii) personal names or pronouns referring to the speaker, ‘I’ and (iii) personal names or pronouns referring to the listener, ‘you’. The number of occurrences is presented in the table below.

SUBCATEGORY	TOTAL
Personal name	45
Referring to speaker, ‘I’	9
Referring to listener, ‘you’	5

Table 2 – Total occurrences of each subcategory containing a personal name or proper noun

Here are some examples of each category:

(113) After personal names

或 曰：「雍 也 仁 而 不 佞。」
huò yuē Yōng yě rén ér bù nìng
 someone say NAME TOP humane but NEG articulate
 ‘Someone said: “That man Yong is Good, but he is inarticulate.”’ (LY
 5.5.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·5/1)

子 曰：「由 也 好 勇 過 我，
Zǐ yuē Yóu yě hào yǒng guò wǒ
 Master say NAME TOP fond.of brave cross I
 無 所 取 材。」
wú suǒ qǔ cái
 NEG NOM get timber

‘The Master said: “That man You is more prone to bravery than I. He does not exercise his judgment upon matters.”’ (LY 5.7.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·7/1)

(114) **After personal names referring to the speaker, ‘I’**

子 曰：「丘 也 幸， 苟 有 過，
zǐ yuē qiū yě xìng gǒu yǒu guò
master say I TOP lucky if have fault
人 必 知 之。」
rén bì zhī zhī
man must know DEM

‘The Master said: “Lucky old me! If I really have a fault, somebody else is sure to find out.”’ (LY 7.31.0.0.3.0 論語·述而第七·31/3)

(115) **After personal names referring to the listener, ‘you’**

曰：「賜 也 亦 有 惡 乎？」
yuē cì yě yì yǒu wù hū
say you TOP also have hate Q

‘The Master said: “You, our friend Zigong, do you also have your hatreds?”’
(LY 17.24.0.0.2.0 論語·陽貨第十七·24/2)

Translation from TLS (modified)

Very interesting about these three subcategories is that in a lot of cases the topic is the agentive subject of the sentence at the same time, which is something very typical for the Chinese language in comparison with other languages (cf. *infra*).

6.2.2.2 Topics containing other than personal names and pronouns

Next to topics containing personal names or pronouns, there are also topics with *yě* that do not belong to the previous category and will not belong to one of the categories below. This group is called ‘topics containing other than personal names and pronouns’. Nevertheless, this group can be further subdivided according to their structure, as all topics with *yě*. This will be done in the next chapter.

For now, I will provide some examples. This subcategory is the second biggest of topics followed by *yě*, consisting of 29 cases.

- (116) 子 曰：「君子 謀 道 不 謀食； 耕 也，
zǐ yuē jūnzi móu dào bù móushì gēng yě
 master say gentleman plan Way NEG make.a.living plow TOP
 餒 在 其中 矣； 學 也， 祿 在 其中 矣。
něi zài qízhōng yǐ xué yě lù zài qízhōng yǐ
 hungry PREP among PART study TOP reward PREP among PART
 ‘The Master said: “The gentleman is strategically concerned with the Way, he is not strategically concerned with living standard. As for agriculture, there is the prospect of famine in it; as for study, there is its own reward in it.’ (LY 15.32.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·32/1)

Translation from TLS

- (117) 夫子 之 求 之 也，
fūzǐ zhī qiú zhī yě
 master MOD ask NOM TOP
 其 諸 異 乎 人 之 求 之 與？」
qí zhū yì hū rén zhī qiú zhī yǔ
 DEM all different Q man MOD ask NOM Q
 ‘The master's mode of asking information! - is it not different from that of other men?’ (LY 1.10.0.0.1.0 論語·學而第一·10/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

6.2.2.3 Temporal topics

Another occurring use of *yě* is to indicate temporal topics, which are also definite components. Temporal topics include for example *jīn yě* 今也 ‘now’, *xiǎo yě* 小也 ‘in childhood’, *xiāng yě* 鄉也 ‘in the past’, etc. These temporal clauses may provide the time background of the main sentence event and realize the time positioning. Its function is parallel to the individual

positioning of the named words which is very suitable for topics. Moreover, pre-Qin Chinese temporal clauses often describe known events or inferred past events. The information properties of this type of subordinate clause are more similar to the definite words (Liu 2016: 8). This also counts for the temporal topics with *zhě* (cf. *infra*). For example:

- (118) 孔子 時 其 亡 也, 而 往 拜
Kǒngzǐ shí qí wáng yě ér wǎng bài
 NAME time DEM be.gone TOP CONJ go to.pay.respect
 之。 遇 諸 途。
zhī yù zhū tú
 DEM meet DEM smear
 ‘Confucius having chosen a time when Huo was not at home, went to pay his respects for the gift. He met him, however, on the way.’ (LY 17.1.0.0.1.0 論語·陽貨第十七·1/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

There are also some temporal clauses that indicate habitual events which are close to the kind-denoting topic type. The sentence below (119) illustrates this. Although *shì bāng* 是邦 ‘that state’ uses a demonstrative word, it refers to the Confucius’ usual behaviour, that is, when Confucius reaches any state, he will care about this state’s political affairs. Temporal clauses inherently possess the property of register topic (Liu 2016: 8). While defining Chinese style topics, Chafe (1976) said that this type of topic defines the framework of time, space or individual aspects of the discourse under its jurisdiction. It is thus obviously natural for temporal clauses to carry a topic marker.

- (119) 子禽 問 於 子貢 曰:
Zǐ Qín wèn yú Zǐ Gòng yuē
 NAME ask PREP NAME say
 「夫子 至 于 是 邦 也,
fūzǐ zhì yú shì bāng yě
 master arrive go DEM state TOP

必 聞 其 政， 求 之 與？
bì wén qí zhèng qiú zhī yǔ
 must learn DEM politics ask DEM AUX
 ‘Zi Qin asked Zi Gong, saying: “When our master comes to any country, he
 does not fail to learn all about its government. Does he ask his information?”
 (LY 1.10.0.0.1.0 論語·學而第一·10/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

The following table (Table 3) shows the different temporal topics encountered in the Analects.

TEMPORAL TOPIC	TOTAL
今也	4
少也	1
乡也	1
Other	9

Table 3 – Total occurrences of each temporal topic in the Analects

The most re-occurring combination is *jīn yě* 今也 ‘now’.

- (120) 今 也 純 儉， 吾 從 眾。
jīn yě chún jiǎn wú cóng zhòng
 today TOP pure economical I follow crowd
 ‘Nowadays pure silk has become cheaper than before. I follow the majority
 (in using silk).’ (LY 9.3.0.0.1.0 論語·子罕第九·3/1)

Translation from TLS

The sentences categorized under ‘other’ are sentences like the one presented in example (119), which denote habitual events, or other sentences denoting a moment in time at which something is happening (121).

- (121) 子 言 衛 靈 公 之 無 道 也， 康 子 曰：
zǐ yán wèi líng gōng zhī wú dào yě kāng zǐ yuē
 master speak NAME NAME duke MOD NEG wayTOP NAME master say
 ‘The Master was speaking about the unprincipled course of the duke Ling of
 Wei, when Qi Kang said:’ (LY 14.19.0.0.1.0 論語·憲問第十四·19/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

The temporal topics categorised under ‘other’ also include topics with *yě* consisting of a temporal setting and a personal name or pronoun, and because of this combination the character indicating time and topic marker *yě* are separated from each other:

- (122) 今 由 與 求 也， 相 夫子，
jīn Yóu yǔ Qiú yě xiāng fūzǐ
 today NAME CONJ NAME TOP assist master
 ‘Now You and Qiu, they are helpers to Our Master (the Big Boss from the Ji
 clan),’ (LY 16.1.0.0.7.0 論語·季氏第十六·1/7)

Translation from TLS

6.2.2.4 Conditional topics

Herforth (1994: 285) noted that it is rare for the Chinese language to explicitly mark conditional sentences, either on the if-clause (marked by *rú* 如, *ruò* 若 or *gǒu* 苟) or the then-clause (marked by *zé* 则 or *sī* 斯). Moreover, the marking on the if-clause is rarer than the marking on the then-clause.

In the Analects, there are seven instances of ‘unmarked’ conditional topics, meaning they do not possess one of the abovementioned particles, consisting of *bì yě* 必也 (123); and one case of an explicit conditional topic marked by *rú* at the beginning of the clause and *yě* at the end, see example (124).

(123) 子 曰：「君子 無 所 爭， 必 也 射 乎！
zǐ yuē jūnzǐ wú suǒ zhēng bì yě shè hū
 master say gentleman NEG NOM conflict must TOP shoot Q
 ‘The Master said: “The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery?” (LY 3.7.0.0.1.0 論語·八佾第三·7/1)

(124) 如 知 為 君 之 難 也，
rú zhī wéi jūn zhī nán yě
 CONJ know be lord MOD difficulty TOP
 不 幾 乎 一 言 而 興 邦 乎？」
bù jī hū yīyán ér xīng bāng hū
 NEG how.many Q one.sentence CONJ flourish country Q
 ‘If a ruler knows this – the difficulty of being a prince – may there not be expected from this one sentence the prosperity of his country?’” (LY 13.15.0.0.1.0 論語·子路十三·15/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

As for *bì yě*, Zhang Xiaofeng (2008) has quoted Li Yunfu’s (source unknown) analysis on the *bì yě* 必也 sentence being “*bì yě* is a necessary hypothetical affirmation of the negative semantics of the previous phrase/sentence/text”, meaning “if there must be something to say”. Applying this on example (123) this sentence means that a gentleman has no disputes, and if you must say something, it is ‘the time to compare arrows’. On these grounds, Zhang believes that *bì yě* as a hypothetical clause is in fact a topic. This hypothetical clause is a conditional sentence and according to Liu (2016: 6) conditionals have topicality. This is not the first time it has been claimed that conditionals have topicality or are topics; it was already profoundly discussed in an article by Haiman (1978). Haiman (1978: 564) states that “Conditionals, like topics, are givens which constitute the frame of reference with respect to which the main clause is either true (if a proposition), or felicitous (if not).”²²

²² For more information on the topic of conditionals are topics, see Haiman 1978.

6.2.2.5 Nominalising

There is only one instance which is classified under the subcategory of nominalising topic. The example is given below. Harbsmeier (TLS) explains that the topic should be translated as ‘that which is V’, the verb here being *kě* 可 ‘can’. *Yě* functions here as a nominaliser and topic marker at the same time.

- (125) 子 曰：「可 也 簡。」
zǐ yuē kě yě jiǎn
master say can NOM simple
‘The Master said: “He is acceptable, because he is straightforward.”’ (LY
6.2.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·2/1)

Translation from TLS

6.2.2.6 Post-sentential topic marker

Finally, *yě* can also indicate a post-sentential topic or a marker of sentence topics, of which there is again only one case in the Analects:

- (126) 吾 聞 諸 夫子：『人 未 有 自 致 者 也
wú wén zhū fūzǐ rén wèi yǒu zì zhì zhě yě
I hear DEM master man NEG have self succeed NOM PART
必 也，親 喪 乎！』
bì yě qīn sāng hū
must TOP parents funeral PART
“‘I have heard it from our Master: ‘By necessity man never succeeds all by himself, - or if at all on the occasion of funeral arrangements for his parents (when he is bereaved of his natural support).’” (LY 19.17.0.0.1.0 論語·子張第十九·17/1)

Translation from TLS

6.2.2.7 The results

The total number of each subcategory with topic marker *yě* is illustrated in the following table:

a. after personal names	45
b. after personal names referring to the speaker, ‘I’	9
c. after personal names referring to listener, ‘you’	5
d. after topics other than personal names	29
e. temporal topic	15
f. conditional topic	7
h. nominalizing, that which is V	1
i. post-sentential topic marker, marker of sentence topics	1
TOTAL	109

Table 4 – Total amount of topics with *yě* and its subcategories

Note that among the cases of *yě* as topic marker, there are four instances that are counted twice since the topic belongs to two subcategories. There are three cases where the topic consists of a combination between a temporal topic and personal names (two cases, example (127)) or other than personal names (one case, example (128)). The other case is a combination, or rather juxtaposition, between a pronoun referring to the listener and a personal name (129). They are listed below:

- (127) 「始 吾 於 人 也，聽 其 言 而 信 其 行；
shǐ wú yú rén yě tīng qí yán ér xìn qí xíng
 begin I PREP man TOP listen DEM words CONJ promise DEM behaviour
 今 吾 於 人 也，聽 其 言 而 觀 其 行。
jīn wú yú rén yě tīng qí yán ér guān qí xíng
 now I PREP man TOP listen DEM words CONJ observe DEM behaviour
 “‘In the beginning, in relation to others, I listened to their promises and had faith in their performance; now, in relation to others, I listen to their pronouncements and observe their performance.’ (LY 5.10.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·10/1)

(128) 今 由 與 求 也, 相 夫子,
jīn Yóu yǔ Qiú yě xiāng fūzǐ
 now NAME CONJ NAME TOP help master
 ‘Now You and Qiu, they are helpers to Our Master (the Big Boss from the Ji clan).’ (LY 16.1.0.0.7.0 論語·季氏第十六·1/7)

(129) 「女 與 回 也, 孰 愈?」
rǔ yǔ Huí yě shú yù
 thou CONJ NAME TOP who be.better
 “‘Between you and Hui, who is superior?’” (LY 5.9.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·9/1)

Translation from TLS

6.3 Zhě 者

Zhě 者 is a character that has two main functions, the most frequent and well-known function is as a character or particle indicating nominalization, and the second function is connected with definite reference, which represents an overlap with the function of *yě*. In general, four nominalization types can be distinguished:

- (i) Action/state nominalization, deriving from adjectives and stative verbs, e.g. English ‘create/creation’ and ‘quiet/quietness’.
- (ii) Agentive nominalization, action verbs can be made into nouns meaning ‘one which verb’, such as sing/singer and hear/hearer.
- (iii) Locative nominalization, whereby action verbs can be made into nouns meaning ‘a place where verb happens’, like the Hungarian *mulat* ‘to have fun’/*mulato* ‘place for having fun = bar’.

- (iv) Objective nominalization, whereby action verbs can be made into nouns designating the result or the typical or cognate object of an action, such as the Sundanese (East Java) inum ‘to drink’/inuman ‘drink/alcohol’.

Caboara 2010: 91-92

In pre-Qin Chinese, *zhě* was used for action/state nominalization like *lǎo zhě* 老者 ‘the old man’ and agentive nominalization like *wén zhě* 闻者 ‘the one who smells, the one smelling’ (Liu 2016: 4; Caboara 2010: 91-92).

Additionally, *zhě* can also cooperate with *suǒ* 所 to refer to the recipient of an action such as *suǒ shā zhě* 所杀者 ‘the one slaughtered (by)’. With its function as topic marker, *zhě* occurs after nouns situated in an exposed position as a marker of contrastive emphasis. It can also be used after a proper noun which is not in an exposed position within its own clause, but is in fact the exposed subject of the following clause (Liu 2016: 4):

- (130) 孔子 對 曰：「有 顏回 者 好 學，
Kǒngzǐ duì yuē yǒu Yán Huí zhě hào xué
 Confucius reply say have NAME TOP eager study
 ‘Confucius replied politely: “We have someone like Yán Huí who is the most eager to study.”’ (LY 6.3.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·3/1)

Translation from TLS

In addition to its role as nominalisation, *zhě* is also used for marking definite reference. Pulleyblank (1995: 74) noticed that in addition to its function as a nominalising particle, *zhě* also occurs after proper names in topic position. For example:

- (131) 孔子 對 曰：「有 顏回 者 好學，
Kǒngzǐ duì yuē yǒu Yán Huí zhě hàoxué
 NAME answer say have NAME TOP eager.to.study
 ‘Confucius replied politely: “We have someone like Yan Hui who is the most eager to study.”’ (LY 6.3.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·3/1)

While *zhě* in this case might be interpreted as a pause marker, Harbsmeier (2008: 301) does not interpret it as a mere ‘pause marker’ or ‘empty word’. Instead he suggests that post-nominal *zhě* as an ‘empty’ element, is not truly empty, but carries in fact great philosophical depth and significance. This post-nominal *zhě* appearing after topics is closely related to what Harbsmeier calls “quotation-者”, which is a postposed quotation marker placed after the term to be defined, the definiendum, in definitions of words. In the example “徹者徹也。” from Mencius (3A/3), he first *mentions* the word *chè* 徹 ‘tax, tithe’ and then goes to *use* it. Harbsmeier argues that when a word is mentioned rather than used, post-nominal *zhě* is used as marker. In translating this example to English, one has to use quotation marks in an attempt to match the intended meaning in Chinese. Quotation *zhě* marks the occasions where ancient Chinese authors were problematising language itself, discussing not the objective things of this world that is linked to the word, but rather the concepts we use to try to understand them.

Pulleyblank interprets this usage of *zhě* as marking contrastive exposure and/or emphasis, which is a role he also assigns to *yě* in clause initial position as *yě* is also found after proper nouns. This function of marking proper names in topic position is not the only function both *zhě* and *yě* share. They also mark time words in sentence initial position, such as the common time expressions *jīn yě* 今也 and *jīn zhě* 今者 ‘nowadays’ and *xī yě* 昔也 and *xī zhě* 昔者 ‘in the past’ (Pulleyblank 1995: 119; Caboara 2010: 94). There are four occurrences of *zhě* marking a temporal topic, for example:

- (132) 子游 對 曰：「昔 者，偃 也 聞 諸 夫子 曰：
- Zǐ Yóu duì yuē xī zhě yǎn yě wén zhū fūzǐ yuē*
- NAME answer say past TOP I TOP hear all master say
- ‘Zi You commented politely: “Earlier, I learnt from our Master:’ (LY 17.4.0.0.1.0 論語·陽貨第十七·4/1)

- (133) 子 曰：「古 者 民 有 三 疾，
- zǐ yuē gǔ zhě mín yǒu sān jí*
- master say old TOP people have three sickness
- 今 也 或 是 之 亡 也。

jīn yě huò shì zhī wáng yě
 today TOP perhaps DEM MOD lose PART
 ‘The Master said: In ancient times the people had three kinds of acute problems. These days they probably lack these.’ (LY 17.16.0.0.1.0 論語·陽貨第十七·16/1)

Translation from TLS

Sometimes it occurs that temporal topics with *zhě* have the kind-denoting property without the cooccurrence of *yě*, for example *mò chūn zhě* 莫春者 ‘late spring’. He prefers to not classify it under the kind-denoting topics since it is more of a temporal one, which I also prefer (Liu 2016: 8).

Very interesting is that phrase final *zhě* is also used in the sense of ‘if’ in Classical Chinese, as such confirming the relation between conditionals and topicalization (Haiman 1978).

A last function of *zhě* as topic marker is to indicate topics which are generic or having a large scope. There are two instances of this function in the Analects:

- (134) 丘 也 聞 有 國 有 家 者,
Qiū yě wén yǒu guó yǒu jiā zhě
 NAME TOP hear have state have family TOP
 不 患 寡 而 患 不 均,
bù huàn guǎ ér huàn bù jūn
 NEG worry alone CONJ worry NEG even
 不 患 貧 而 患 不 安。
bù huàn pín ér huàn bù ān
 NEG worry poor CONJ worry NEG peace
 ‘I, for my part, have learnt that those who run a state or who run a clan are not seriously concerned about there being little, but about what there is not being evenly distributed; they are not seriously concerned about being poor, but about people not being at ease.’ (LY 16.1.0.0.6.0 論語·季氏第十六·1/5)

- (135) 『親 於 其 身 為 不 善 者,
qīn yú qí shēn wéi bù shàn zhě
 own COV.in DEM personal act NEG good TOP

君子 不 入 也』。

jūnzǐ bù rù yě

gentleman NEG enter PART

“As for someone who in his personal conduct commits acts of wickedness,
the gentleman will not enter into the house of.” (LY 17.7.0.0.1.0 論語·陽貨
第十七·7/1)

Translation from TLS

The results and total of each subcategory of topics with *zhě* is presented in the table below:

SUBCATEGORY	TOTAL
nominalising + topic is subject at the same time	8
topic marker with narrative predicate	1
temporal	4
generic with large scope	2

Table 5 – Total amount of topics with *zhě* and its subcategories

6.4 *Yě zhě* 也者

In the Analects of Confucius, there are three examples where the topic is followed by the combination of *yě* and *zhě*, 也者. While their similar function of marking NPs in topic position and the hints of a wider similarity of functions in their original usage might explain why a combination of *yě* and *zhě* can function as a topic marker, it does not explain that they only cooccur in a very specific environment, after bare nouns or kind-denoting NPs in topic position, where *yě* does not appear otherwise. This is because bare or kind-denoting NPs do not cooccur with *yě* without the presence of a deictic or the marker of definite reference *zhě* (Caboara 2010: 98-99).

Sentences expounding the generality argument which possess a topic will always use the combination *yě zhě* as topic marker (Liu 2016: 8). Caboara (2010: 33) explains that an NP

containing a bare noun can never occur as a topic marked by *yě* only. Bare nouns can be followed by *yě* only if they are followed by the marker of definite reference *zhě* as well, which then results in the combination *yě zhě*. These are the three examples found in the Analects:

- (136) 孝 弟 也者，其 為 仁 之 本 與！
xiào dì yězhě qí wéi rén zhī běn yǔ
 filial.pietty fraternal.love TOP DEM as humane MOD basis AUX
 “‘As for filial piety and fraternal love (in general), these must count as the basis for Goodness, mustn't they?’” (LY 1.2.0.0.2.0 論語·學而第一·2/2)

- (137) 夫 達 也者，質 直 而 好 義，
fū dá yězhě zhì zhí ér hào yì
 TOP attain TOP substance straight CONJ fond.of justice
 察 言 而 觀 色，慮 以 下 人。
chá yán ér guān sè lǜ yǐ xià rén
 observe words CONJ observe look worry believe other man
 ‘Now when it comes to winning through as such, one's basic substance is straightened out, and one is fond of rectitude, one pays careful attention to statements of opinion and observes carefully facial expressions, one is thoughtful in meeting others on their own terms.’ (LY 12.20.0.0.2.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/2)

- (138) 夫 聞 也者，色 取 仁 而 行 違，
fū wén yězhě sè qǔ rén ér xíng wéi
 TOP reputation TOP appearance choose humane CONJ go disobey
 居 之 不 疑。
jū zhī bù yí
 reside MOD NEG doubt
 ‘As for reputation as such, if while in appearance he opts for Goodness but in action goes against it, he persists in this behaviour and shows no diffidence.’
 (LY 12.20.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/3)

Translation from TLS

6.5 *Fú* 夫

The graph *fū* or *fú* 夫 in Classical Chinese represents four different words; when in the first tone of the modern pronunciation, *fū* (MC pju < OC *p(r)a), it is a noun meaning ‘man, husband’ and in the second tone *fú* is either an initial, a demonstrative pronoun (both MC bju < OC *[b]a) or a final particle meaning ‘isn’t it?’ (MC bju < OC *ba). The function as demonstrative pronoun which is perhaps the most difficult one to give a usable grammatical description of all the common pronouns (Graham 1972: 86; Wagner 2015: 37).

One of the most informative and detailed accounts on the graph *fú* is in the work of Zhou (1959) on Ancient Chinese grammar, in which he explains that *fú* at the head of a phrase sometimes incorporates the function of an initial particle, thereby weakening the demonstrative meaning. Dawson (1968/1984) too says something similar: “*fú* preceding a noun places a slight emphasis on it, and is very often used when a piece of new subject matter is introduced” (1968, cited from Graham 1972: 86) and “*fú* is a demonstrative which serves to stress a particular topic, either to introduce it or to single it out for special attention or to contrast it with other topics” (1984: 50).

Pulleyblank (1995: 74) also states that *fú* can be a demonstrative pronoun, but he argues that its more common use is as an introductory particle announcing a topic. Graham (1972) argues that when *fú* functions as an initial particle, it is generally followed by a nominal unit, and moreover, it is much more common to appear before the subject than before the object. He questions why this is the case and why *fú* does precede the exposed element when a unit is exposed before the subject. He explains that since the grammatical subject is often the topic of the sentence at the same time, and since the specific function of exposure is to topicalize, *fú* can be regarded as some kind of topic marker (Graham 1972: 87, 99-100).

In the Analects of Confucius, there are nine cases of *fú* functioning as a topic marker in sentence-initial position. Sometimes the topic is introduced by *fú* alone (examples (139) and (140)), sometimes it is introduced by *fú* and followed by *yě zhě* (example (141)). The latter are two of the three instances of kind-denoting topics. Some of the topics introduced by *fú* (four cases) contain an NP nominalised by *zhě* 者, see example (142).

- (139) 夫 顓臾， 昔 者 先 王 以 為 東 蒙 主，
fú Zhuān Yú xī zhě xiān wáng yǐ wéi Dōngméng zhǔ

TOP NAME past TOP first king CONJ make NAME ruler
 且 在 邦 域 之中 矣;
qiě zài bāng yù zhīzhōng yǐ
 CONJ PREP country territory inside PART
 ‘Now as for Zhuanyu, in ancient times the former kings established Zhuanyu
 in charge of (the sacrifices at) Dongmeng, and moreover, the place is within
 the territory of our land.’ (LY 16.1.0.0.1.0 論語·季氏第十六·1/1)

- (140) 夫 三 年 之 喪,
fú sān nián zhī sāng
 TOP three years MOD mourning
 天下 之 通 喪 也;
tiānxià zhī tōng sāng yě
 whole.world MOD common mourning PART
 ‘Now as for the three year mourning period, that is the current mourning
 period throughout the world.’ (Y 17.21.0.0.4.0 論語·陽貨第十七·21/4)

- (141) 夫 聞 也者，色 取 仁 而 行 違，
fú wén yě zhě sè qǔ rén ér xíng wéi
 TOP reputation TOP appearance choose humane CONJ go disobey
 居 之 不 疑。
jū zhī bù yí
 reside MOD NEG doubt
 ‘As for reputation as such, if while in appearance he opts for Goodness but
 in action goes against it, he persists in this behaviour and shows no diffidence.’
 (LY 12.20.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/3)

- (142) 夫 仁 者，己 欲 立 而 立 人，
fú rén zhě yǐ yù lì ér lì rén
 TOP humane NOM self wish establish CONJ establish people
 己 欲 達 而 達 人。
yǐ yù dá ér dá rén
 self wish reach CONJ reach people

‘As for a person who is Good, when he himself wishes to be solidly established he establishes others, when he himself wishes to succeed he makes others succeed.’ (LY 6.30.0.0.2.0 論語·雍也第六·30/2)

Translation from TLS

Only in two of the nine cases, the two instances where there is a combination of topic markers *fú* and *yě zhě*, the topic is not the subject of the sentence. For the other seven, it precedes the subject of the sentence, which is most common.

6.6 *Zhī yú* 之於

Character *yú* 於 normally functions as a coverb or preposition of place, meaning ‘in, at, to, from, than, etc.’. Through the process of grammaticalization, *yú* evolved from its primary verbal meaning ‘to be in, at’ into a coverb/preposition. The verbal character of the verb is clearly shown by the fact that *yú* can take a subject and can be nominalized by the insertion of *zhī* 之. This combination of *zhī yú* is commonly used to introduce a topic, with the structure X 之於 Y. The combination can thus be analysed as a locative phrase with *yú* nominalized by *zhī* (Pulleyblank 1995: 53-54, 56, 73). There are three instances of *zhī yú* in the Analects. Remarkable is that they are all followed by topic marker *yě* as well:

- (143) 知 其 說 者 之 於 天 下 也,
zhī qí shuō zhě zhī yú tiānxià yě
 know DEM say NOM NOM PREP all.under.Heaven TOP
 其 如 示 諸 斯 乎!」
qí rú shì zhū sī hū
 DEM as.if show all this Q
 ‘He who knew its meaning would find it as easy to govern the kingdom as to look on this’ (LY 3.11.0.0.1.0 論語·八佾第三·11/1)

- (144) 子 曰：「君子 之 於 天 下 也，

zǐ yuē jūnzǐ zhī yú tiānxià yě
 master say gentleman NOM PREP all.under.Heaven TOP
 無 適 也， 無 莫 也， 義 之 與 比。」
wú shì yě wú mò yě yì zhī yǔ bǐ
 NEG proper PART NEG NEG PART right NOM follow approve
 ‘The Master said: “The superior man, in the world, does not set his mind
 either for anything, or against anything; what is right he will follow.”’ (LY
 4.10.0.0.1.0 論語·里仁第四·10/1)

- (145) 子 曰：「吾 之 於 人 也， 誰 毀 誰 譽？
zǐ yuē wú zhī yú rén yě shéi huǐ shéi yù
 master say I NOM PREP man TOP who slander who praise
 ‘The Master said: “In my dealings with men, whose evil do I blame?”’ (LY
 15.25.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·25/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

However, there are two cases in which *zhī* is deleted, because *X* is a personal pronoun used in the genitive and then it is normal the pronoun is followed directly by *yú* without *zhī*, see example (146). This is the case when the pronouns occur before nouns or as the subjects of nominalised sentences (Pulleyblank 1995: 56). In example (145), *wú* 吾 ‘I’ is not a genitive pronoun and is therefore followed by both *zhī* and *yú*.

- (146) 始 吾 於 人 也， 聽 其 言 而 信 其 行；
shǐ wú yú rén yě tīng qí yán ér xìn qí xíng
 begin I PREP man TOP listen DEM words CONJ trust DEM behaviour
 今 吾 於 人 也， 聽 其 言 而 觀 其 行。
jīn wú yú rén yě tīng qí yán ér guān qí xíng
 today I PREP man TOP listen DEM words CONJ observe DEM behaviour
 ‘In the beginning, in relation to others, I listened to their promises and had
 faith in their performance; now, in relation to others, I listen to their
 pronouncements and observe their performance.’ (LY 5.10.0.0.1.0 論語·公
 冶長第五·10/1)

6.7 *Zé* 則

Besides its common function as a particle meaning ‘then’ introducing the main clause in a conditional sentence, *zé* 則 is used to mark an exposed noun phrase as contrastive. Pulleyblank (1995: 72) argues that *zé* is deictic in origin and is related to the demonstrative stem in *zī* 茲 ‘this, here’, *cǐ* 此 ‘this’, etc. Most commonly, but not exclusively, the exposed element *zé* marks is the subject. There is only one example present in the *Lúnyǔ* which has the subject as its exposed element with *zé*:

- (147) 躬行 君子， 則 吾 未 之 有 得。』
gōngxíng jūnzǐ zé wú wèi zhī yǒu dé
 personally.undertake gentleman TOP I NEG DEM have obtain
 ‘But when it comes to personally acting as a superior man, then I have not
 got to that point.’” (LY 7.33.0.0.1.0 論語·述而第七·33/1)

Translation from TLS

6.8 *Rú* 如

Rú 如 is a graph again with multiple functions, but which original meaning is ‘like, resemble’ as a full verb. As a verb, it can appear in a double object construction in which the second object is the interrogative pronoun *hé* 何 ‘what’. This results in the structure ‘*rú* X *hé*’, roughly meaning ‘what is one to do about X?’ X can also be replaced by the pronoun *zhī* 之, in which

case the NP to which it refers is either placed after the whole phrase or understood from the context. They have to be interpreted causatively (Pulleyblank 1995: 34).

Next, *rú* can also be used as a second person pronoun meaning ‘you, your’, and can be used interchangeably with *ruò* and *ér* 而, although sometimes it is a matter of regional use. Sometimes, texts have a preference for one of the three pronouns (Pulleyblank 1995: 77-78, 150).

A third function of *rú* is as a particle in the conditional if-clause. As a conditional marker, *rú* governs the if-clause as object and is impersonal, meaning that they have no subject. Therefore, the particle should precede the subject of the if-clause. Nevertheless, it is also possible that the subject precedes *rú* as if *rú* was an adverb.

Character *rú* can also function as a topic marker. This is because of its function as a particle in the conditional if-clause. As mentioned earlier, Haiman (1978), among others, argues that conditionals or conditional sentences are in fact topics at the same time. He demonstrates this by saying that the virtual identity of conditionals and topics is reflected in their superficial similarity and this in a number of unrelated languages. One or more of the following will always be true in these languages:

- (a) The characteristic mark of the conditional and that of the topic will be identical.
- (b) Both will be identical with a third category, the interrogative.
- (c) The characteristic marks of the conditional and the topic will be distinct, but one will be paraphrasable by the other.

Haiman 1978: 565

I have found four cases of *rú* as topic marker in the Analects. Some examples:

- (148) 子 曰：「如 有 周 公 之 才 之 美，
 zǐ yuē rú yǒu Zhōu gōng zhī cái zhī měi
 master say TOP have NAME duke MOD skill MOD beautiful
 使 驕 且 吝，其餘不 足 觀 也 已。」
 shǐ jiāo qiě lìn qíyú bù zú guān yě yǐ
 if proud CONJ stingy others NEG enough look.at PART PART

‘The Master said: “Though a man has abilities as admirable as those of the duke of Zhou, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are really not worth being looked at.”’ (LY 8.11.0.0.1.0 論語·泰伯第八·11/1)

- (149) 季康子 問 政 於 孔子 曰：「如 殺 無 道，
Jì Kāngzǐ wèn zhèng yú Kǒngzǐ yuē rú shā wú dào
 NAME ask politics PREP NAME say TOP kill NEG Way
 以 就 有 道， 何如？」
yǐ jiù yǒu dào hérú
 for just have Way how.about
 ‘Ji Kang asked Confucius about government, saying: ‘What do you say to killing the unprincipled for the good of the principled?’’ (LY 12.19.0.0.1.0 論語·顏淵第十二·19/1)

Translation from Legge 1861 (modified)

6.9 Ruò 若

Ruò 若 is a character that has multiple functions. It can function as a verb meaning ‘like, resemble’; as a second person pronoun ‘you, your’; or as a particle of the if-clause in conditional clauses (Pulleyblank 1995: 77-78, 150). The last two usages are the same as *rú* (cf. *supra*), i.e. as a pronoun and as a particle in the conditional if-clause. According to Schuessler (2007: 447), this is because *ruò* is etymologically derived from *rú* with the distributive suffix **-k*. In the Analects, it functions as a full verb, conditional clause marker ‘if’, demonstrative ‘this’ and topic marker of which there are only two cases:

- (150) 子 曰：「若 聖 與 仁， 則 吾 豈 敢？
zǐ yuē ruò shèng yǔ rén zé wú qǐ gǎn
 master say TOP sage CONJ humane CONJ I how dare

‘The Master said: “The sage and the man of perfect virtue – how dare I rank myself with them?” (LY 7.34.0.0.1.0 論語·述而第七·34/1)

Translation from TLS

- (151) 子 曰：「若 臧武仲 之 知， 公綽 之
zǐ yuē ruò Zāng Wǔ Zhòng zhī zhī Gōng Chuò zhī
 master say TOP NAME MOD knowledge NAME MOD
 不 欲， 卞 莊子 之 勇， 冉求 之 藝，
bù yù biàn Zhuāngzǐ zhī yǒng Rǎn Qiú zhī yì
 NEG desire NAME MOD brave NAME MOD skill
 文 之 以 禮樂， 亦 可以為 成 人 矣。」
wèn zhī yǐ lǐyuè yì kěyǐ wéi chéng rén yǐ
 adorn MOD use rites.and.music also can call complete man PART
 ‘The Master said: “Suppose a man with the knowledge of Zang Wu Zhong,
 the freedom from covetousness of Gong Chuo, the bravery of Zhuang of Bian,
 and the varied talents of Ran Qiu; add to these the accomplishments of the
 rules of propriety and music - such a one might be reckoned a complete man.”’
 (LY.14.12.0.0.1.0 論語·憲問第十四·12/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

6.10 *Ér* 而

The usual and most common function of *ér* 而 ‘and, then, but’ is as a conjunction when two or more verb phrases occur in series when they form a logical or narrative sentence. An example:

- (152) 騰 文 公 為 世子， 將 之 楚，
Téng Wén gōng wéi shìzǐ jiāng zhī Chǔ
 NAME NAME duke be crown.prince go MOD NAME

過 宋， 而 見 孟子。
guō Sòng ér jiàn Mèngzǐ
 pass.through NAME CONJ see NAME

‘When Duke Wen of Teng was crown prince, he passed through Song on his way to Chu and saw Mencius. (Meng 3A/1)

Pulleyblank 1995: 45

These kinds of constructions differ from true coordinate constructions since the order cannot be changed, otherwise it would change the meaning of the sentence. This is true both for English and Chinese. Saying ‘I opened the door and walked in’ is not the same as saying ‘I walked in and opened the door.’ There is a sense or implication of temporal sequence corresponding the order of the verbs in the two sentences. It is often the case that *ér* is only used before the last verb in a series, but this is not obligatory and *ér* can be easily omitted (Pulleyblank 1995: 45).

Besides its use in the serial verb construction, *ér* is also used as a conjunction after concessive clauses and between sentences in the sense of ‘but’ (also a conjunction). The graph is used to write two homophonous words as well, as a variant form of *rú* 如 ‘if’ and as the second person pronoun *ér* ‘you, your’. As the variant form of *rú* (this is due to the fact they are etymologically related), *ér* is occasionally found in the sense of ‘if’ in the Analects, as well as in other Lu texts and the *Zuǒzhuàn* 左傳 ‘the Commentary of Zuo’. In this case, it invariably follows the subject of the clause, if present (Pulleyblank 1995: 46, 77-78).

However, as for its function as topic marker, I would say it is a rather rare function of *ér*. According to Harbsmeier, *ér* in the following example is an adnominal particle marking a topic; there is only one case in the Analects:

- (153) 而 今 而後 吾 知 免 夫， 小子！」
ér jīn érhòu wú zhī miǎn fū xiǎozǐ
 TOP today after.that I know escape PART young.fellow
 ‘Only from now on do I know that I have been spared, don't I, my little ones!’” (LY 8.3.0.0.1.0 論語·泰伯第八·3/1)

Translation from TLS

One of the reasons why *ér* functions as a topic marker here, is because *ér* might be a variation of the graph *rú* in this function. *Ér* and *rú* are related to each other and *ér* might have been originated as an unstressed variant of *rú*. *Ér* and are also phonetically similar, and etymologically seen, particle *ér* is possibly shared with Written Tibetan *ni*, which is an emphatic marker for nouns and nominal phrases (Schuessler 2007: 224-225).

Unfortunately, I have found no further evidence or explanation on the topic marker use of *ér*.

6.11 *Zhì yú* 至於

Zhì 至 as a full verb means ‘to arrive, arrive at, reach’, but when it is used impersonally in a temporal sense with a nominalised clause object, marked as embedded with *yě*, then *zhì* together used with *yú* 於, becomes a coverb *zhì yú* 至於 meaning ‘arrive at, coming to, when’. It is not just a coverb, but a coverb as a subordinating conjunction, which seems to function as a topic marker as well (Pulleyblank 1995: 57). Nevertheless, Pulleyblank does not explicitly assign the topic marker use to *zhì yú*.

However, in a recent article, Chang (2019) states that *zhì yú* is used as a topic-shifter in Modern Chinese, with the function to switch from a topic or topics mentioned preciously in the discourse to a new one. He argues that the topic-shifter function of *zhì yú* was already in use as early as the Warring States period and this use increased significantly in Middle Chinese (first century BCE – mid thirteenth century CE). The topic-shifter usage originated from Old Chinese *zhì*, which was a verb of movement, plus *yú*, which was a function word indicating the destination or the end point of a movement or a spatial goal marker (Chang 2019: 227-229).²³

When you look at example (154) below, it is obvious that *zhì yú* functions as a topic marker or topic-shifter. First Confucius is talking about supporting one’s parents in the context of filial piety (the previous mentioned topic), and then he switches to dogs and horses (the new topic), but still in the context of supporting others. Both the parents, dogs and horses belong to a same cognitive frame in that they all belong to supporting or raising others.

²³ For more information on the origin and lexicalization of topic-shifter *zhì yú*, see the article of Chang 2019.

- (154) 子 曰：「今 之 孝 者， 是 謂 能 養。
zǐ yuē jīn zhī xiào zhě shì wèi néng yǎng
 master say today MOD filial.pietty TOP DEM meaning can bring.up
 至於 犬 馬， 皆 能 有 養；
zhì yú quǎn mǎ jiē néng yǒu yǎng
 TOP dog horse all can have raise
 ‘The Master said. “The filial piety nowadays means the support of one's
 parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of
 support.’ (LY 2.7.0.0.1.0 論語·為正第二·7/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

6.12 Topics without topic markers

In Modern Chinese, topics are usually unmarked and are only recognisable from their head initial position in the sentence. Not so common in Ancient Chinese texts, like the Analects, it happens that topics are also left unmarked. There is a good number of unmarked topics in the Analects, but these numbers are not included in the results since focus in this case study is on the topic markers. Nevertheless, I will present some examples of unmarked topics found in the Analects.

- (155) 「夏 禮， 吾 能 言 之， 杞 不 足 徵 也；
Xià lǐ wú néng yán zhī qǐ bùzú zhēng yě
 NAME ritual I can speak DEM NAME insufficient evidence PART
 “As for the ritual of the Xia, I can speak up on it. But Qi does not provide
 sufficient evidence.’ (LY 3.9.0.0.1.0 論語·八佾第三·9/1)

- (156) 「十 室 之 邑， 必 有 忠 信 如 丘 者 焉，
shí shì zhī yì bì yǒu zhōng xìn rú qiū zhě yān

ten family MOD village must have loyal sincere like me NOM DEM
不 如 丘 之 好 學 也。」

bù rú qiū zhī hào xué yě
NEG like me NOM like study PART

“‘In a settlement of ten households, there is bound to be a person as devoted and as trusty as I, but there is going to be no one who loves as much to learn as I.’” (LY 5.28.0.0.1.0 論語・公冶長第五・28/1)

(157) 子 曰：「善 人，吾 不 得 而 見 之 矣；

zǐ yuē shàn rén wú bù dé ér jiàn zhī yǐ
master say excellent man I NEG able CONJ see DEM PART

‘The Master said: “An (overall) excellent person, I have not been able to lay my eyes on.’ (LY 7.26.0.0.1.0 論語・述而第七・26/1)

(158) 「克、伐、怨、欲，不行焉，

kè fá yuàn yù bù xíng yān
overcome pride hatred desire NEG practise DEM

可以 為 仁 矣？」

kěyǐ wéi rén yǐ
can consider.as humane PART

“‘When, as for aggressiveness, braggardry, resentment and lust, someone does not practise these, should one then consider him as Good?’” (LY 14.1.0.0.2.0 論語・憲問第十四・1/2)

Translation from TLS

7

An analysis of the topics and topic structures in the Analects

7.1 Topicalization and exposure

As stated before, topicalization is when an element in a sentence may be given special prominence by taking it out of its standard position and placed in the initial position of the sentence. This normally happens when an element, which is not grammatically the subject, is announced as ‘topic’. However, after analysing the results of the research, it was very remarkable that there are a lot of cases where the agentive subject is the topic of the sentence as well. This is what Pulleyblank (1995) refers to as ‘exposure’, which is slightly different from topicalization. Exposure occurs when an element, like the object of the verb, is given contrastive emphasis without being the topic and appearing in sentence initial position. Nevertheless, the subject, which normally occupies a position at the head of the sentence, can also be exposed to give it contrastive emphasis or to announce it as not only the grammatical subject of the sentence, but also as the topic of discourse. Thus, when the grammatical subject is the element that receives special emphasis or contrast, it is not displaced but it stays in the normal sentence initial position in front of the verb. Nevertheless, it can be marked as exposed.

7.1.1 Subject and non-subject topics

After analysing all topics and topic sentences from the Analects, it is very obvious that many of the topics marked with *yě* are the grammatical subject of the sentence at the same time. The results show that the rate of exposure versus topicalization is rather high. Out of all the topics

with *yě*, there are 74 cases where the topic is also the grammatical subject of the sentence, meaning that they are cases of exposure. The other 37 topics with *yě* are true topics which give special prominence to an element by taking it out of its normal position and place it at the head of the sentence. The results are presented in the following table:

	EXPOSURE	TOPICALIZATION
Total cases of <i>yě</i> as	74	37
Ratio	66.67%	33.33%

Table 6 – The ratio of *yě* as exposure and topic marker

If you look at the ratio between exposure and topicalization, it is obvious that the rate of exposure is considerably higher than the rate of topicalization. There are twice as many cases of exposure than of topicalization.

7.2 Contrastive topics

Another function of *yě* is that it can indicate contrast, which is a common function of topics. However, contrastive topics may not be confused with contrastive focus; contrastive topics must emerge as important information from the contrast between the predicate and comment part. In contrastive focus sentences (including subject as contrasting focus), the components outside the focus are preset information and can be deleted (Xu and Liu 1998: 99-102). The topic sentence with *yě* has a part possessing the contrastive function (in a broad sense, which can highlight the difference or commonality) and this contrasting function of topic markers will strengthen the discourse correlation between clauses. In some cases, *yě* will only be added to the item of the contrastive topic, the front item or the back item. Considering examples (159) and (160), the speakers tend to add topic markers after the emphasized main item to highlight them, whereas contrasting items used as references do not add topic markers (Liu 2016: 9).

Contrastive topics is not something I have analysed in detail, but there are nevertheless some instances in the *Analects*:

- (159) 「回 也，其 心 三 月 不 違 仁，
Huí yě qí xīn sān yuè bù wéi rén
 NAME TOP DEM mind three month NEG offend humane
 其 餘 則 日 月 至 焉 而 已 矣。」
qí yú zé rì yuè zhì yān ér yǐ yǐ
 DEM rest CONJ day month arrive DEM CONJ then PART
 “‘That fellow Hui, his mind would not offend against Goodness for three months in a row. As for the rest, they may reach this stage for a day or a month, that is all.’” (LY 6.7.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·7/1)

- (160) 人 不 堪 其 忧，回 也 不 改 其 乐。
rén bù kān qí yōu Huí yě bù gǎi qí lè
 man NEG endure DEM worry NAME TOP NEG change DEM happy
 ‘Others would not have been able to bear his troubles, but our friend Hui did not try to change his inner joy (for anything supposedly better).’ (LY 6.11.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·11/1)

Translation from TLS

7.3 Types of elements marked by *yě*

There are four types of elements distinguished that can be marked by topic marker *yě*: (i) complex NPs; (ii) complex nominalised NPs; (iii) bare nouns followed by *yě zhě*; and (iv) verbal clauses. The first three types are all nominal elements possessing deictic characteristics which Caboara (2010: 74) describes as [+specific], meaning that they are precisely identifiable. The results are presented in the following table:

TYPES OF ELEMENTS MARKED BY <i>yě</i>	TOTAL
complex NP	19
complex nominalised NP	10
bare NP	70

verbal clause	15
---------------	----

Table 7 – Total amount of each type of element marked by *yě*

7.3.1 Complex NPs

Complex NPs are topics with *yě* that consist of more than just a bare noun and amount to a total of nineteen cases. I have distinguished three different kinds of which the results are illustrated in the table below:

COMPLEX NP	TOTAL
[PRON + N] _{NP} (其 or 吾)	8
[N 之 N] _{NP}	7
[DEM + N] _{NP} (斯 or 是)	4

Table 8 – Total amount of the different subcategories of complex NPs

The first kind consists of the third person pronoun *qí* 其 ‘his’ with the structure [PRON + N]_{NP}, of which there are seven occurrences in the Analects. These are noun phrases modified by means of the genitive pronoun *qí*. Some examples:

- (161) 曰：「其 言 也 訥，
yuē qí yán yě rèn
 say his words TOP slow.in.speech
 斯 謂 之 仁 已 乎？」
sī wèi zhī rén yǐ hū
 DEM meaning MOD humane then Q
 ‘Niu replied: “Cautious and slow in his speech! Is this what is meant by perfect virtue?”’ (LY 12.3.0.0.1.0 論語·顏淵第十二·3/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

- (162) 斯 民 也，三 代 之 所 以 直 道 而 行 也。』
sī mín yě sān dài zhī suǒyǐ zhídào'èrxíng yě
 DEM people TOP three dynasty MOD therefore go.straight PART
 ‘These common people (who are that touchstone) are that by which the three
 dynasties have proceeded by a straight path.’” (LY 15.25.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈
 公第十五·25/1)

Translation from TLS

There are seven occurrences of the second subtype with the structure [N 之 N]_{NP}, which is an NP consisting of a noun modifying another noun by means of the attributive marker *zhī* 之. Consider the following examples:

- (163) 子 曰：「吾 之 於 人 也，誰 毀 誰 譽？」
zǐ yuē wú zhī yú rén yě shéi huǐ shéi yù
 master say I NOM PREP man TOP who slander who praise
 ‘The Master said: “In my dealings with men, whose evil do I blame?” (LY
 15.25.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·25/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

- (164) 『孟莊子 之 孝 也，其他 可能 也，
Mèng Zhuāngzǐ zhī xiào yě qítā kěnéng yě
 NAME MOD filial.pietty TOP other possible PART
 其 不 改 父 之 臣 與 父 之 政，
qí bù gǎi fù zhī chén yǔ fù zhī zhèng
 his NEG change father MOD minister CONJ father MOD politics
 是 難 能 也。』』
shì nán néng yě
 DEM difficult can PART
 ‘‘As for the filial piety of Meng Zhuangzi, the other parts are possibly things
 that can be competently mastered but his not changing his father’s ministers
 or his administration, such behaviour is indeed difficult to master
 competently.’’’ (LY 19.18.0.0.1.0 論語·子張第十九·18/1)

- (165) 子貢 曰：「君子 之 過 也，
Zǐ Gòng yuē jūnzǐ zhī guò yě
 NAME say gentleman MOD mistake TOP
 如 日月 之 食 焉：
rú rìyuè zhī shí yān
 like sun.and.moon MOD eclipse DEM
 ‘Zi Gong said: “The faults of the superior man are like the eclipses of the sun and moon.’ (LY 19.21.0.0.1.0 論語·子張第十九·18/1)

Translation from TLS

Next, there are three cases (one sentence is repeated twice, so actually there are two different sentences) with the demonstrative *sī* 斯 ‘this’ followed by a noun, resulting in the structure [DEM + N]_{NP}. Here *sī* functions as an adnominal to the NP:

- (166) 斯 人 也 而 有 斯 疾 也！ (twice)
sī rén yě ér yǒu sī jí yě
 DEM man TOP CONJ have such sickness PART
 ‘That such a man should have such a sickness!’ (LY 6.10.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·10/1)
- (167) 斯 民 也，三 代 之 所 以 直 道 而 行 也。」
sī mín yě sān dài zhī suǒyǐ zhídào'érxíng yě
 DEM people TOP three dynasty MOD therefore go.straight PART
 ‘These common people (who are that touchstone) are that by which the three dynasties have proceeded by a straight path.’ (LY 15.25.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·25/1)

Translation from TLS

The fourth type of which there is only one occurrence in the Analects is *shì* 是 as a demonstrative giving the structure [DEM + N]_{NP} as well.

- (168) 子 曰：「是 道 也， 何 足以 臧？」
zǐ yuē shì dào yě hé zúyǐ zāng
 master say DEM Way TOP how sufficient.to right
 ‘The Master said: “As for such a Way, how could it deserve approval?”’ (LY 9.27.0.0.1.0 論語·子罕第九·27/1)

Translation from TLS

Last but not least, there is one occurrence of a topic with *yě* consisting of a complex NP that does not belong to one of the four mentioned subtypes, but it is kind of similar to *qí* because *wú* 吾 ‘my’ is also a genitive pronoun but a first person pronoun, and thus has the structure [PRON + N]_{NP} as well.

- (169) 子游 曰：「吾 友 張 也， 為難 能 也；
Zǐ Yóu yuē wú yǒu Zhāng yě wéinán néng yě
 NAME say my friend NAME TOP make.things.hard can PART
 ‘Zi You said: “As for my friend Zhang, does things that are hard to do (i.e. is someone whose level is hard to achieve).’ (LY 19.15.0.0.1.0 論語·子張第十九·15/1)

Translation from TLS

7.3.2 Complex nominalised NPs

Complex nominalised NPs resemble the elements discussed in section 7.3.1, but their internal structure is different since their head is verbal with the deictic elements *zhī* 之 or *qí* 其. It might not always be easy to differentiate between complex nominalised NPs and complex NPs containing *zhī* or *qí*, but it is important to take this structural difference into account. There are ten occurrences of complex nominalised NPs which can be subdivided into two patterns (Table 9).

COMPLEX NOMINALISED NP	TOTAL
[S + 之 + VP] _{NP}	2
[其 + VP] _{NP}	8

Table 9 – Total amount of the different subcategories of complex nominalised NPs

The first pattern is [S + 之 + VP]_{NP}, which is a topic consisting of a subject followed by the attributive marker *zhī* and a VP. There are two occurrences of this pattern:

- (170) 夫子 之 求 之 也,
fūzǐ zhī qiú zhī yě
 master MOD ask NOM TOP
 其 諸 異 乎 人 之 求 之 與? 」
qí zhū yì hū rén zhī qiú zhī yǔ
 DEM all different Q man MOD ask NOM Q
 ‘The master’s mode of asking information! - is it not different from that of other men?’ (LY 1.10.0.0.1.0 論語·學而第一·10/1)

- (171) 如 知 為 君 之 難 也,
rú zhī wéi jūn zhī nán yě
 CONJ know be lord MOD difficulty TOP
 不 幾 乎 一 言 而 興 邦 乎? 」
bù jī hū yīyán ér xīng bāng hū
 NEG how.many Q one.sentence CONJ flourish country Q
 ‘If a ruler knows this – the difficulty of being a prince – may there not be expected from this one sentence the prosperity of his country?’ (LY 13.15.0.0.1.0 論語·子路十三·15/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

The second pattern is [其 + VP]_{NP}, which is a topic consisting of the genitive pronoun *qí* followed by a VP. There are eight instances. Some examples:

- (172) 「有 君子 之 道 四 焉：其 行 己 也 恭，
yǒu jūnzǐ zhī dào sì yān qí xíng yǐ yě gōng
 have gentleman MOD Way four DEM DEM behaviour self TOP respectful
 其事上也敬，其養民也惠，
qí shì shàng yě jìng qí yǎng mín yě huì
 DEM serve superior TOP respect DEM raise people TOP benevolent
 其使民也義。」
qí shǐ mín yě yì
 DEM deploy people TOP righteousness
 “‘He possessed the proper way of the gentleman on four points: in
 comporting himself he is polite; in serving his superiors he is respectful; in
 looking after the people he is generous; in deploying the people he shows
 rectitude.’” (LY 5.16.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·16/1)

Translation from TLS

- (173) 及 其 使 人 也，求 備 焉。」
jí qí shǐ rén yě qiú bèi yān
 CONJ DEM employ man TOP seek prepare DEM
 ‘But in his employment of men, he wishes them to be equal to everything.’”
 (LY 13.25.0.0.2.0 論語·子路十三·25/2)

Translation from Legge 1861

7.3.3 Bare nouns

Bare nouns are nouns used without a surface determiner or quantifier. Since Chinese is a non-inflectional language, common nouns appear in their bare forms very frequently, without a determiner or quantifier. The semantics of these NPs are rather unclear due to the fact that they have various interpretations depending in which linguistic context they appear – generic or kind-denoting in some cases, definite or indefinite in others (Yang 1998: 247). The results are shown in the table below:

BARE NP	TOTAL
personal name or pronoun	59
kind-denoting	3
temporal	6
other than personal name	2

Table 10 – Total amount of the different subcategories of bare NPs

Some illustrating examples:

- (174) a. 狗 是 哺乳动物。 generic / kind-denoting
gǒu shì bǔrǔ dòngwù
dog be mammal
‘Dogs are mammals.’
- b. 我 喜欢 狗。 generic
wǒ xǐhuan gǒu
I like dog
‘I like dogs.’
- c. 狗 在 咬。
gǒu zài yǎo
dog ADV bark
i. ‘The/A dog is barking.’ definite / indefinite
ii. ‘Dogs are barking.’ indefinite
- d. 我 喂 狗 去 了。 indefinite
wǒ wèi gǒu qù le
I feed dog go ASP
‘I went to feed some dogs.’

Yang 1998: 247 (modified)

In the Analects, there are three cases of generic or kind-denoting NPs, and special about these three cases in topic position is that they are followed by the combination of *yězhě* 也者. Caboara (2010: 80) argues that it is not unexpected for these bare nouns to be followed by the

definite reference marker *zhě* as well. He does find it remarkable that the generic/kind-denoting nouns followed by *yě* are always followed by *zhě* too.

- (175) 孝 弟 也者，其 為 仁 之 本 與！
xiào dì yězhě qí wéi rén zhī běn yǔ
 filial.pietty fraternal.love TOP DEM as humane MOD basis AUX
 ‘As for filial piety and fraternal love (in general), these must count as the basis for Goodness, mustn't they?’ (LY 1.2.0.0.2.0 論語·學而第一·2/2)

- (176) 夫 達 也者，質 直 而 好 義，
fū dá yězhě zhì zhí ér hào yì
 PART reach TOP material straight CONJ fond.of justice
 察 言 而 觀 色， 慮 以 下 人。
chá yán ér guān sè lǜ yǐ xià rén
 observe words CONJ observe appearance consider COV down man
 ‘Now when it comes to winning through as such, one's basic substance is straightened out, and one is fond of rectitude, one pays careful attention to statements of opinion and observes carefully facial expressions, one is thoughtful in meeting others on their own terms.’ (LY 12.20.0.0.2.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/2)

- (177) 夫 聞 也者，色 取 仁 而
fū wén yězhě sè qǔ rén ér
 PART reputation TOP appearance choose humane CONJ
 行 違， 居 之 不 疑。
xíng wéi jū zhī bù yí
 go disobey be MOD NEG doubt
 ‘As for reputation as such, if while in appearance he opts for Goodness but in action goes against it, he persists in this behaviour and shows no diffidence.’
 (LY 12.20.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/3)

Translation from TLS

However, there are two generic nouns that are only followed by *yě* and not *zhě* and they occur in the same sentence. They are classified under the subcategory of topics followed by *yě* other than personal names:

- (178) 子 曰：「君子 謀 道 不 謀 食；耕 也，
zǐ yuē jūnzǐ móu dào bù móu shí gēng yě
 master say gentleman plan Way NEG plan food agriculture TOP
 餒 在 其中 矣；學 也，祿 在 其中 矣。
něi zài qízhōng yǐ xué yě lù zài qízhōng yǐ
 hungry PREP among PART study TOP salary PREP among PART
 ‘The Master said: “The gentleman is strategically concerned with the Way,
 he is not strategically concerned with living standard. As for agriculture, there
 is the prospect of famine in it; as for study, there is its own reward in it.’ (LY
 15.32.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·32/1)

Translation from TLS

Another type of bare NP in the Analects, with 59 occurrences, is the group including the personal names (45 occurrences), personal names referring to the speaker (nine occurrences) and personal names referring to the listener (five occurrences), all followed by *yě*. The personal names can be considered as a kind of vocative.

- (179) **After personal name**
 退 而 省 其 私， 亦 足以 發，
tuì ér xǐng qí sī yì zúyǐ fā
 leave CONJ examine DEM personal also sufficient.to show
 回 也 不 愚。」
Huí yě bù yú
 NAME TOP NEG be.stupid
 ‘But after he leaves, he examines his personal life, and then he surely is in a
 position to deploy his skills. Hui is not stupid.’ (LY 2.9.0.0.1.0 論語·為正第
 二·9/1)

(180) **After personal name referring to speaker**

子貢 問 曰：「賜 也 何如？」

Zǐ Gòng wén yuē cì yě hérú

NAME ask say I TOP how.about

‘Zi Gong asked: “As for me, what am I like?”’ (LY 5.4.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·4/1)

(181) **After personal name referring to listener**

子 曰：「賜 也，非 爾 所 及 也！」

zǐ yuē cì yě fēi ěr suǒ jí yě

master say you TOP NEG you PART reach NOM

‘The Master said: “My friend, this is not what you live up to.”’ (LY 5.12.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·12/1)

Additionally, there are also six temporal topics consisting of a bare noun, being *jīn yě* 今也 ‘now’ (five occurrences (182)) and *xiāng yě* 鄉也 ‘formerly’ (one occurrence (183)). One of the instances with *jīn* is in fact a topic belonging to two subcategories (example (184)), namely temporal topic and topics containing personal names. Here there are two personal names juxtaposed.

(182) 今 也 純 儉， 吾 從 眾。

jīn yě chún jiǎn wú cóng zhòng

today TOP pure economical I follow crowd

‘Nowadays pure silk has become cheaper than before. I follow the majority (in using silk).’ (LY 9.3.0.0.1.0 論語·子罕第九·3/1)

Translation from TLS

(183) 曰：「鄉 也 吾 見 於 夫子 而 問 知，

yuē xiāng yě wú jiàn yú fūzǐ ér wèn zhī

say country TOP I see PREP master CONJ ask knowledge

‘He said to him: “A Little while ago, I had an interview with our Master, and asked him about knowledge.”’ (LY 12.22.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·22/1)

- (184) 今 由 與 求 也, 相 夫子,
jīn Yóu yǔ Qiú yě xiàng fūzǐ
 today NAME CONJ NAME TOP help master
 遠 人 不 服 而 不 能 來 也;
yuǎn rén bù fú ér bù néng lái yě
 remote man NEG refuse.to.obey CONJ NEG can come PART
 ‘Now, here are you, You and Qiu, assisting your chief. Remoter people are not submissive, and, with your help, he cannot attract them to him.’ (LY 16.1.0.0.7.0 論語·季氏第十六·1/7)

Translation from Legge 1861

7.3.4 Verbal clauses in topic position

There are fifteen occurrences of verbal clauses marked by *yě*, of which the following are an example:

- (185) 子貢 曰:「我 不 欲 人 之 加 諸 我 也,
Zǐ Gòng yuē wǒ bù yù rén zhī jiā zhū wǒ yě
 NAME say I NEG wish man MOD apply all I TOP
 吾 亦 欲 無 加 諸 人。」
wú yì yù wú jiā zhū rén
 I also wish NEG apply all man
 ‘Zi Gong said: “What one does not want others to do to oneself, this one does not want to do to others either.”’ (LY 5.12.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·12/1)

- (186) 子 曰:「可 也 簡。」
zǐ yuē kě yě jiǎn
 master say can TOP simple
 ‘The Master said: “He is acceptable, because he is straightforward.”’ (LY 6.2.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·2/1)

- (187) 子 曰：「中庸 之 為 德 也，
zǐ yuē zhōngyōng zhī wéi dé yě
 master say golden.mean MOD by virtue TOP
 其 至 矣 乎！
qí zhì yǐ hū
 DEM most PART PART
 ‘The Master said: “The virtue constituted by the ‘Golden Mean’ must be of
 the greatest importance!’ (LY 6.29.0.0.1.0 論語·雍也第六·29/1)

Translation from TLS

However, six of these verbal clauses consist of *bì yě* 必也, which are conditional or hypothetical clauses (cf. supra). Since *bì* is a verb meaning ‘must’, I categorized here under the verbal clauses. Some examples:

- (188) 子 曰：「君子 無 所 爭， 必 也 射 乎！
zǐ yuē jūnzǐ wú suǒ zhēng bì yě shè hū
 master say gentleman I NOM dispute must TOP shoot PART
 ‘The Master said: “The student of virtue has no contentions. If it be said he
 cannot avoid them, shall this be in archery?’ ()
- (189) 必 也 臨 事 而 懼，
bì yě lín shì ér jù
 must TOP face matter CONJ fear
 好 謀 而 成 者 也。」
hào móu ér chéng zhě yě
 fond.of plan CONJ succeed NOM PART
 ‘My associate must be the man who proceeds to action full of solicitude, who
 is fond of adjusting his plans, and then carries them into execution.’” (LY
 7.11.0.0.1.0 論語·述而第七·11/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

Finally, there is one occurrence of a temporal clause consisting of the adjective *shǎo* 少 ‘few’ followed by topic marker *yě*.

- (190) 吾 少 也 賤， 故 多 能 鄙 事。
wú shǎo yě jiàn gù duō néng bǐ shì
 I few TOP low therefore many can mean matter
 ‘When I was young, my condition was low, and therefore I acquired my
 ability in many things, but they were mean matters.’ (LY 9.6.0.0.1.0 論語·子
 罕第九·6/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

7.4 The distribution of *yě*, *zhě* and *yě zhě*

The distribution of *yě*, *zhě* and *yě zhě* in topic position is presented in the table below (Table 11).

TYPES OF TOPIC	<i>yě</i> 也	<i>zhě</i> 者	<i>yě zhě</i> 也者
其 + NP	+	-	-
NP 之 NP	+	+	-
斯 + NP	+	-	-
是 + NP	+	-	-
S 之 VP	+	-	-
其 + VP	+	-	-
Bare NP	+	+	+
Verbal clause	+	+	-

Table 11 – Complementary distribution of *yě*, *zhě* and *yě zhě* in topic position

It seems that we can speak of a partly complementary distribution here, especially for topics with the structure ‘其 + NP’, ‘斯 + NP’, ‘是 + NP’, ‘S 之 VP’ and 其 + VP. For these structures, only topic marker *yě* is used. Topic marker *yě zhě* would be impossible in this situation since it can only follow a bare NP. However, for bare NPs, all three topic markers are possible.

Remarkable is that it seems that topic marker *yě* is used for all types of topic in the Analects. However, suppose there is a topic with the structure ‘所 + VP’, then the only possible topic marker would be *zhě*, *yě* would be impossible here. The results might be a bit misleading and do not provide sufficient evidence to apply this on all pre-Qin Chinese texts. What we can say with certainty, however, is that topic marker *yě* is the most frequently used one in the Analects since it appears in all the established structures.

7.5 Predicate features of topic sentences with *yě*

This part will focus more on what comes after the topic, the comment or predicate of the sentence, rather than the component before *yě*. This part will follow Liu (2016) who argues that the topic of the sentence will impose restrictions on the predicate type of the comment, especially when the topic is the grammatical subject of the sentence at the same time. Analysis of the distribution of *yě* in the Analects shows that the main boundary or distinction is between the *shǔxìng wèiyǔ* 属性谓语 ‘individual-level predicate’ and the typical *shìjiàn wèiyǔ* 事件谓语 ‘stage-level predicate’. The so-called ‘individual-level predicate’, the individual being a person or thing, is a predicate that explains or describes the individual’s properties/attributes which is biased towards having a permanent character. The so-called ‘stage-level predicate’, literally meaning the ‘event predicate’, is a predicate describing the state of the subject at a given moment, thus pointing at a specific event. I will use the term ‘attribute predicate’ to refer to the ‘stage-level predicate’ and ‘event predicate’ to refer to the ‘stage-level predicate’.

A typical event predicate refers to a realis-mood predicate rather than an irrealis predicate, the latter including acts bound by modal words, future tense or conditional sentences. Since it cannot be determined whether these events occur, they cannot be situated at the event level and therefore, they are not typical event predicates. Liu (2016: 10) argues that in the use of topic markers in pre-Qin Chinese, the behaviour of irrealis predicates is close to the attribute predicate (Liu 2016: 10).

Attribute predicates and event predicates have a certain relationship with the syntactic types of predicates, but they are not simply one-to-one correspondences. In general, adjectives and noun predicate NP are inclined to express attribute predicates, whereas verb predicates VP tend to express event predicates. However, if the adjective refers to a phased or periodic situation, then it can also be an event predicate, for example ‘I’m hungry’. The VP often turns into an attribute predicate once it is dominated by a modal word or verb. For example, *hé jiǔ* 喝酒 ‘drink’ and *diào yú* 钓鱼 ‘fish’ both express an event, but *néng hé jiǔ* 能喝酒 ‘can drink’ and *huì diào yú* 会钓鱼 ‘be able to fish’ are attributive predicates expressing permanent abilities and not specific events because a modal auxiliary verb is added. Many stative verbs or verb phrases themselves express an attributive nature, including existential verbs, many psychocognitive verbs, etc. Habitual acts as well mainly reflect the individual inherent attributive character, rather than event predicates related to specific stages (Liu 2016: 10).

Now, with this classification, we can establish and see how *yě* as topic marker was used in pre-Qin Chinese. Simply put, the subject argument with topic marker *yě* can only be connected with the attribute predicates and atypical event predicates, but not with the typical event predicates, so *yě* as topic marker cannot be used after the agent of the typical event. This rule has no exceptions in all cases with *yě* as topic marker in the Analects and all these cases are linked to the attribute predicate only where the subject argument is the topic.

Now we will take a look into the predicates that seem to be event predicates but are not. The most common type of predicate cooccurring with the subject-topic followed by topic marker *yě* is a *xìngzhì xíngróngcí* 性质形容词 ‘character adjective’. However, not all adjectives are suitable for cooccurrence with topic marker *yě*. During the pre-Qin days, there was an abundance of stative adjectives (Yang 1979). One of the semantic differences between stative and character adjectives is that the former mainly expresses the immediate state and is descriptive, whereas the latter mainly expresses permanent attributes or characteristics. Therefore, a part of the stative adjectives carries some characteristics of an event predicate. In the Analects, there are no instances of the subject argument of the stative adjective predicate sentence with *yě* (Liu 2016: 10-11). Consider the following example:

- (191) 闵 子 侍 侧， 闾 闾 如 也； 子路 (* 也)，
mǐn zǐ shì zhāi yínyín rú yě Zǐlù yě
 NAME disciple serve side respectful as.if NOM NAME *TOP
 行行 如 也； 冉有、 子贡 (* 也)，

‘The moon is so bright, and the beauty is so beautiful. The body is slender and light, making me miss and worry. The moon is so pure and white, and the beauty is so beautiful. The posture is slender and soothing, which makes me miss and worry.’

Liu 2016: 11 (modified)

Sentences with verbless noun predication, or determinative sentences, no matter if they are affirmative or negative, if they have a definite or kind-denoting subject, then they can carry topic marker *yě*. The subject of a noun predicate sentence often carries topic marker *zhě* as well.

When verbal expressions are used as a predicate and if they carry a modal auxiliary verb like *néng* 能 ‘can’, etc., then the predicate becomes an attribute predicate (cf. supra). Regardless of whether the verb itself is an event verb, the subject argument followed by *yě* is natural. The same counts for *kě* 可 ‘can’, because it simultaneously expresses the passive voice in pre-Qin Chinese. The subject is no longer a true agent and to use *yě* as a topic marker is no longer a problem. Additionally, the irrealis predicate is an atypical event predicate and thus can possess *yě* as topic marker as well (Liu 2016: 11).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that topic marker *yě* cannot not be used in typical event predicates at all, it just cannot be used after the subject argument (mainly the agentive subject) of the event predicate sentence. For example, when peripheral themes such as time and space are used as topics, *yě* can be used, even if it is followed by an event predicate. When a peripheral theme is the topic, the comment is not just the predicate part of the clause, but it is the entire subject-predicate clause (note that the subject might be omitted sometimes). The topic and comment no longer form a relationship between the subject argument and the predicate core, so the limitation on the choice of predicate type has become invalid (Liu 2016: 13). Consider the following example:

(192) 鄉 也 吾 見 於 夫子 而 問 知，

xiāng yě wú jiàn yú fūzǐ ér wèn zhī

early TOP I see go Master CONJ ask know

‘He said to him: “A Little while ago, I had an interview with our Master, and asked him about knowledge.’ (LY 12.22.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·22/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

In this example (192), the comment of the temporal topic *xiāng yě* 鄉也 ‘formerly’ is *wú jiàn yú fūzǐ ér wèn zhī zǐ yuē* 吾見於夫子而問知, which is the entire subject-predicate clause with *wú* 吾 as the subject argument of the event predicate. Thus, *yě* as topic marker can stay here because it is not followed by an event predicate, but by a combination of the subject argument (agent) and the event predicate.

7.6 The distribution of left dislocation, hanging topics and aboutness topics in the Analects

In this section we will take a look into the topic structures of the Analects and divide them according to the topic types Li (2000) and Badan (2007) have distinguished: left dislocation (LD), hanging topic (HT) and aboutness topic (AT). The results are presented in the table below:

TOPIC TYPE	TOTAL
LD	107
HT	24
AT	18

Table 12 – The total amount of occurrences of each topic type in the Analects

As far as the results show us, left dislocation is the most frequently occurring topic type in the Analects. This is due to the fact that a lot of the topics are the grammatical subject of the sentence at the same time and therefore do not need a resumptive pronoun to be coindexed with. This is certainly possible, but rather unnecessary since the topic-subject stays in its original position and is already exposed by the topic marker.

Since HTs are coindexed with a resumptive pronoun, they can be subdivided into the following categories (Table13):

SUBCATEGORY	TOTAL
HT + 其	14
HT + 皆	2
HT + 女	2
HT + 爾	2
HT + 其中	2
HT + 己	1
HT + NP	1

Table 13 – The total amount of occurrences of HTs subcategories

Some examples of each category. The topic and the resumptive pronoun are indicated between square brackets and indexed with i or j []_i.

HT + 其

(193) [夫子 之 求 之 也]_i,

fūzǐ zhī qiú zhī yě
master MOD ask NOM TOP

其_i 諸 異 乎 人 之 求 之 與? 」

qí zhū yì hū rén zhī qiú zhī yǔ
DEM all different Q man MOD ask NOM Q

‘The master’s mode of asking information! - is it not different from that of other men?’” (LY 1.10.0.0.1.0 論語·學而第一·10/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

(194) 子曰：「[由 也]_i，千 乘 之 國，

zǐ yuē Yóu yě qiān sheng zhī guó
master say NAME TOP thousand chariot MOD state

可 使 治 其 賦 也，不 知 其_i 仁 也。」

kě shǐ zhì qí fù yě bù zhī qí rén yě
can make rule DEM taxation TOP NEG know DEM humane PART

“As for that man You, in a state of one thousand chariots he can be made to administer the military taxes. But I do not know whether he is Good.” (LY 5.8.0.0.1.0 論語·公冶長第五·8/1)

Translation from TLS

HT + 皆

- (195) [至於 犬 馬]_i, 皆_i 能 有 養;
zhì yú quǎn mǎ jiē néng yǒu yǎng
TOP dog horse all can have raise
‘But when it comes to dogs and horses, they are all able to have those they take proper care of and nourish.’ (LY 2.7.0.0.1.0 論語·為政第二·7/1)

Translation from TLS

HT + 女

- (196) 子 曰: 「[賜 也]_i, 女_i 以 予 為 多 學
zǐ yuē cì yě rǔ yǐ yǔ wéi duō xué
master say you TOP thou think me as much study
而 識 之 者 與? 」
ér shí zhī zhě yǔ
CONJ.and know NOM PART AUX
‘The Master said: “Zi Gong, our friend, do you consider me as having studied much and as the sort of person who remembers things?”’ (LY 15.3.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·3/1)

Translation from TLS

HT + 爾

- (197) 子 曰: 「[賜 也]_i! 爾_i 愛 其 羊, 我 愛 其 禮。」
Zǐ yuē cì yě ěr ài qí yáng wǒ ài qí lǐ
Master say NAME TOP you like DEM goat I like DEM propriety
‘The Master said: “My dear friend Zi Gong, you prefer your goat, I prefer my ritual propriety.”’ (LY 3.17.0.0.1.0 論語·八佾第三·17/1)

HT + 其中

- (198) 子 曰：「君子 謀 道 不 謀 食； [耕 也] _i，
zǐ yuē jūnzǐ móu dào bù móu shí gēng yě
 master say gentleman plan Way NEG plan food agriculture TOP
 餒 在 其中 _i 矣； [學 也] _j， 祿 在 其中 _j 矣。
něi zài qízhōng yǐ xué yě lù zài qízhōng yǐ
 hungry PREP among PART study TOP salary PREP among PART
 ‘The Master said: “The gentleman is strategically concerned with the Way,
 he is not strategically concerned with living standard. As for agriculture, there
 is the prospect of famine in it; as for study, there is its own reward in it.’ (LY
 15.32.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·32/1)

HT + 己

- (199) [夫 仁 者] _i， 己 _i 欲 立 而 立 人，
fú rén zhě yǐ yù lì ér lì rén
 TOP humane NOM self wish establish CONJ establish people
 己 欲 達 而 達 人。
yǐ yù dá ér dá rén
 self wish reach CONJ reach people
 ‘As for a person who is Good, when he himself wishes to be solidly
 established he establishes others, when he himself wishes to succeed he
 makes others succeed.’ (LY 6.30.0.0.2.0 論語·雍也第六·30/2)

HT + NP

- (200) [如 知 為 君 之 難 也] _i，
rú zhī wéi jūn zhī nán yě
 CONJ know be lord MOD difficulty TOP
 不 幾 乎 [一言] _i 而 興 邦 乎？」
bù jī hū yīyán ér xīng bāng hū

NEG how.many Q one.sentence CONJ flourish country Q
 ‘If a ruler knows this – the difficulty of being a prince – may there not be expected from this one sentence the prosperity of his country?’” (LY 13.15.0.0.1.0 論語·子路十三·15/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

As for the aboutness topics, which are topics without any grammatical connection to the comment, meaning that there is no element in the comment to which the topic can be directly linked. In the Analects, there are eighteen instances of this topic type, a few examples:

- (201) 子 曰：「如 有 周 公 之 才 之 美，
zǐ yuē rú yǒu Zhōu gōng zhī cái zhī měi
 master say TOP have NAME duke MOD skill MOD beautiful
 使 驕 且 吝，其 餘 不 足 觀 也 已。」
shǐ jiāo qiě lìn qíyú bù zú guān yě yǐ
 if proud CONJ stingy others NEG enough look.at PART PART
 ‘The Master said: “Though a man has abilities as admirable as those of the duke of Zhou, yet if he be proud and niggardly, those other things are really not worth being looked at.”’ (LY 8.11.0.0.1.0 論語·泰伯第八·11/1)

Translation from Legge 1861

- (202) 夫 達 也者，質 直 而 好 義，
fū dá yězhě zhì zhí ér hào yì
 PART reach TOP material straight CONJ fond.of justice
 察 言 而 觀 色， 慮 以 下 人。
chá yán ér guān sè lǜ yǐ xià rén
 observe words CONJ observe appearance consider COV down man
 ‘Now when it comes to winning through as such, one's basic substance is straightened out, and one is fond of rectitude, one pays careful attention to statements of opinion and observes carefully facial expressions, one is thoughtful in meeting others on their own terms.’ (LY 12.20.0.0.2.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/2)

- (203) 夫 聞 也者，色 取 仁 而
fú wén yězhě sè qǔ rén ér
 PART reputation TOP appearance choose humane CONJ
 行 違， 居 之 不 疑。
xíng wéi jū zhī bù yí
 go disobey be MOD NEG doubt
 ‘As for reputation as such, if while in appearance he opts for Goodness but
 in action goes against it, he persists in this behaviour and shows no diffidence.’
 (LY 12.20.0.0.3.0 論語·顏淵第十二·20/3)

Translation from TLS

- (204) 子 曰：「吾 之 於 人 也， 誰 毀 誰 譽？」
zǐ yuē wú zhī yú rén yě shéi huǐ shéi yù
 master say I NOM PREP man TOP who slander who praise
 ‘The Master said: “In my dealings with men, who do I slander and who do I
 praise?” (LY 15.25.0.0.1.0 論語·衛靈公第十五·25/1)

Own translation

Sentence (244) is a perfect example of an aboutness topic, of a ‘whole-part’ AT, since it establishes a whole-part relation between the topic *wú zhī yú rén yě* 吾之於人也 ‘in my dealings with men’ and the resumptive element in the comment *shéi huǐ shéi yù* 誰毀誰譽 ‘who do I slander, who do I praise’. From the whole group of men the person is dealing with, there is a part that deserves to be slandered and a part that deserves to be praised.

Conclusion

Since the earliest description of Chinese topic-comment structures, there has been done a lot of research on both the left and right peripheries of Chinese. In this paper, we have discussed what topic exactly is, and it has been decided that this paper will discuss ‘topic’ as a syntactic notion, and not as a part of discourse. This paper supports the view that in Chinese there are different topic types: left dislocation, which leaves an empty category or gap in the comment with which it is coindexed; hanging or dangling topics which are coindexed with a resumptive pronoun in the comment; and aboutness topics or Chinese style topics which are topics without any grammatical connection to the comment. HTs can only consist of determiner phrases, while LD can contain both determiner and prepositional phrases.

The answer to the debate whether Chinese topics are the result of movement or base-generated has also been answered. Both approaches are found in Chinese topics; left dislocation is the result of movement since it leaves an empty category in the comment and hanging topics are base-generated since they are linked to a resumptive pronoun in the comment (Li 2000; Badan 2007). This way I have rejected the view of Xu and Langendoen (1985) who believe that movement is unnecessary and that everything is base-generated because the binding relation between the LD topic and the empty category is an antecedent-pronoun binding relation rather than a variable binding relation.

These findings were applied in the case study on topic markers and topic structures in the Analects of Confucius. The most used topic marker in the Analects is *yě* 也 with 109 instances, followed by *zhě* 者 with only a total of fourteen occurrences as topic marker. The results can be found in Table 1. The first analysis concerned whether *yě* was used most to indicate exposure or topicalization. The results showed that two-thirds of the cases were instances of exposure and only a third were instances of true topicalization.

Next, we took a look into the structure of topics marked by *yě* since it is the vastest group. They were divided into four different categories: complex NPs (19 cases), complex nominalised NPs (10 cases), bare NPs (67 cases) and verbal clauses (15 cases). This division showed us that bare NPs are the most occurring structural element with *yě*. This is because there are 59 topics containing a personal name or a pronoun referring to the speaker or listener which occur as bare NPs. The remaining results can be found in Table 7.

Since topic markers *yě*, *zhě* and *yě zhě* seem to have a similar function, I analysed the distribution of the three topic markers (Table 11) according to their structure and the results show that *yě zhě* can only be used with bare NPs. This is because *yě zhě* is only used to, indicate kind-denoting or generic topics, which are bare NPs. Another remarkable fact the result show us is that *yě* is used for all the occurring topic structures in the Analects. As for *zhě*, it cannot be found with demonstratives or pronouns in its structure, only bare NPs, ‘N 之 N’ and verbal clauses.

Finally, and most important of all is the distribution of left dislocation, hanging topics and aboutness topics in the Analects.

TOPIC TYPE	TOTAL
LD	107
HT	24
AT	18

Table 13 – The total amount of occurrences of each topic type in the Analects

The most reoccurring topic type is left dislocation since a lot of the topics are the grammatical subject of the sentence at the same time (exposure) and therefore do not need a resumptive pronoun to be coindexed with.

Although most of the time topics are marked by topic markers, it occurs that topics are left unmarked as well. Unmarked topics occur very frequently in Modern Chinese but are less frequently observed in texts like the Analects of Confucius.

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