statement (see chapter 18, section 18.4). Thus (232) *a* and *b* convey similar messages:

(232) a.

tā	hěn	hǎo	–	kàn	ba
3sg	very	good	–	look	SA

S/He is very good looking, don't you agree?

b.

tā	hěn	hǎo	–	kàn,	duì	bu	duì?
3sg	very	good	–	look	right	not	right

S/He is very good looking, isn't s/he?

It is not surprising, then, that in general *ba* cannot be added to an utterance that is already marked as a question, as shown by the unacceptability of the sentences in (233):

(233) a.

*tā	hǎo	–	kàn	bu	kàn	ba?
3sg	good	–	look	not	look	SA

b.

*shéi	hē	jiǔ	ba?
who	drink	wine	SA

c.

*nǐ	hǎo	ma	ba?
you	good	Q	SA

The reason that *ba* cannot occur with question-word questions, A-not-A questions, and *ma* questions is straightforward: since these types of questions are already marked as questions whose function is to request certain types of information, in general they cannot be converted into a sentence type that requests the hearer to agree to some statement. Chao (1968:807) gives an interesting counterexample: (234) is a question-word question with *ba*:

(234)

nǐ	dàodǐ	yào	shénme	ba?
you	ultimately	want	what	SA

Tell me, what do you want?

Let us first contrast (234) with (235). Whereas (234) is acceptable, (235) appears unacceptable:

(235)

*tā	yào	shénme	ba?
3sg	want	what	SA

The difference between (234) and (235) is, first, that the subject in (234) is *nǐ* 'you', while in (235) it is *tā* 's/he'; and, second, that the adverb *dàodǐ* 'ultimately' is present in (234) but not in (235). Both of these points have to do with the context in which this sentence might be used. The most natural context in which (234) might be used. The most natural context in which this sentence might occur is one in which two people are quarreling, and one finally says (234) in exasperation; the translation given in (236) gives an idea of the full message conveyed by (234):

(236) OK, don't you think you should let me know what in the world you want?

which clearly makes use of the function of *ba*, namely, soliciting agreement from the hearer that s/he should make his/her wishes clear. When the subject of the question is *tā* 's/he', however, as in (235), it is much more difficult to think of an analogous context in which the speaker requests the hearer to agree that *someone else* should make his/her wishes clear, as suggested in (237):

(237) OK, don't you think you should let me know what in the world s/he wants?

7.4 *ou*

The semantic function of *ou* can best be described as that of a friendly warning showing concern and caring on the part of the speaker. It signals the message 'Let me warn you or tell you in a friendly way'; we gloss it 'Friendly Warning', or *FW*. Chao (1968) correctly characterizes *ou* as a "warning reminder"; but it also has the connotation of friendliness, showing that the speaker is concerned. Thus, it is often used to soften a command, in which situation it converts the command into a concerned warning, as in sentences (238)–(240):

(238)

xiǎoxīn	ou
careful	FW

Be careful, OK?