

NegPar: Guidelines for Negation Annotation in Chinese v1

1 Cue

Negation cues are characters or words inherently expressing negation. There are a total of 45 negation cues in Chinese, most of which are adverbs. Amongst these we can identify 10 *core* negation cues, which are one-character words (except for 没有“did/have not”) that can be combined with other words to form compound cues (see § 1.3). For instance, the cue 没有 in (1.i) can be compounded with the character 并 to reinforce its negative meaning as shown in (1.ii) (in the examples throughout this document the cue is marked in **bold**, the scope is underlined once and the event inside a box).

- (1) i 遗憾的 是 咱们 **没有** 遇到 他
pity DE be we did not meet him
It is a pity we did not meet him
- ii 我原 以为 我 摆弄手杖的 事 **并没有** 叫 他 发觉 呢。
I originally think I play cane DE thing never let him realize NE.
‘Originally I thought he would never find out I was playing with the cane’

Certain cues can also function as morphemes and be affixed to adjectives; for instance, the most common cue in Chinese, the adverb 不 (roughly equivalent to the English ‘not’) can be used both as a stand-alone word and as affixal negation (不贵, literally ‘inexpensive’).

1.1 Core negation cues in Chinese

1.1.1 不

不 is the most common cue in Chinese and has similar distributional properties to the English ‘not’, except the it cannot negate existentiality. As shown in (2), 不 is often used to mark verbal negation in the present.

- (2) 我 **不** 知道 应该 相信 什么。
I not know should believe what.
“I don’t know what I should believe.”

1.1.2 没(有) and 未

没(有) is a negated auxiliary verb that indicates non-completion in the past. Unlike 不 it cannot be used with habitual events or events in the present. Sometimes the character 有 can be omitted. An example is shown in (3).

- (3) 我 **没(有)** 看见 他
I did-not see he
“I did not see him.”

未 is the classical form of 没(有) and has the same meaning of “have not/did not” as shown in (4).

- (4) 一件 尚未 得到 解释 的 事实
a CL yet have-not get explanation DE fact
“A fact that has not been explained yet.”

1.1.3 没and 无

The cue 没 is used to negate both existentiality (‘there is/are’) and possession (‘have’), which in Chinese are expressed by the same verb, 有. Although homographs, this is different from the cue 没(有) marking negation on a past event, where the character 有 does not bear either the meaning of ‘there is’ or ‘have’. An example of 没 as negating possession is shown in (5).

- (5) 我 没 (有) 理由
I not have reason
“I have no reasons.” [11.69]

无 is the literary form of the existential 没有, ‘there is not/have not’. In modern Chinese, 无 is also used as a negation prefix equivalent to English “-less”. e.g. 无线(“no wire=wireless”).

1.1.4 别, 勿and 莫

Unlike English, where mood is encoded in verbs and auxiliaries only, Chinese can place mood information on the cue itself. This is the case of the imperative which has a dedicated cue 别, along with its classical forms 勿 and 莫. (6) exemplifies its use.

- (6) 别 这样 , 华生
not.IMP this , Watson
“Don’t be like this, Watson” [4.180]

1.1.5 非

非 is the literary form of 不是, “is not”. 非 is commonly used with the adverb 并, as a compound cue 并非, as shown in (7).

- (7) 死亡 并非 由于 自然 原因
death not due to natural causes
His death was not due to natural causes

1.1.6 否

否 is used as negation prefix in front of verbs, like in 否认(“not-acknowledge = deny”).

1.2 Affixal negation in Chinese

Affixal negation is problematic to define in Chinese, as it is difficult to define what a morpheme is and if Chinese even exhibits morphology. For instance, whereas in ‘inexpensive’ the negation morpheme ‘in-’ in English is bound to the word and cannot exist independently, in Chinese its translation ‘不贵’ can be decomposed into 不, ‘not’ and 贵, ‘expensive’.

Whichever status we assign to such forms in Chinese, they should be annotated in Chinese alongside their scope because unlike in English they create contradictions and not contraries. For instance where in English ‘It is neither expensive nor inexpensive’ is a valid statement where the object in question is somewhat expensive, constructions where an adjective and its negation are false at the same time are not allowed in Chinese.

Just for convenience and to contrast these construction against the core negation cues used in isolation, we will use the term ‘affixal negation’.

Except 别 and 勿, all the other core negation cues can function as a prefix in a compound such as 没用(无用– “useless”). Some of them are modern prefixes that were created through translation, e.g. 无线(“no wire=wireless”), 非物质(“not physical=non-physical”), 不道德(“not moral=immoral”).

Unlike English, the cue 不 in Chinese can be infixal. This is the case of resultative and potential constructions that are realized by a verb + cue + complement, where the latter can indicate direction or result. This is exemplified in (8), where in the verb compound 听到, literally “to hear-arrive”, the second character marks the result of the main verb “to hear”. In these constructions, the negative cue placed in between signifying that the result cannot be achieved. (As a matter of fact, a more intuitive interpretation of infixal negation in Chinese is that the result introduced in the complement is ‘unachievable’).

- (8) 我 听不到
I hear-not-arrive
“I could not hear”

1.3 Compound cues

Chinese also exhibits constructions where the cue marker is preceded by an adverb expressing a degree of emphasis. This involves, amongst others, the compounds 并不(“not”), 绝不(“absolutely not”), 决不(“absolutely not”) and 绝无(“absolutely no”), where 并, 绝, 决不 are all bound morphemes with 并不 only occurring alongside negation. Given that none of the previous morphemes can stand independently, we annotate them as part of the cue. (9) exemplifies this decision:

- (9) 他 决不 是 我 在 这里 所 见到 过 的 人
He not be I in here all seen ASP DE man
‘He is no one whom I have seen down here’

1.4 Discontinuous cue

Some constructions allows for the same cue to be discontinuous. This is the case of the Chinese construction 既不...也不, equivalent to English cue “neither...nor”, exemplified in (10).

- (10) 对 他 既不 应该 可怜 , 也不 应该 原谅
towards him not should pity , not should excuse
[...] for whom there was neither pity nor excuse

It is worth mentioning that in such constructions, the adverbs 既 and 也 can be omitted as in the case of the expression 不骄不躁(既不骄也不躁, “neither proud nor upset”).

Exceptions in Chinese are flagged by the discontinuous cue 除了...之外, equivalent to the English “save for”, “except”.

- (11) 他 除了 时常 彻夜 不 眠 之外 ,
 早晨 总是 起 得 很晚 的
 he except often all night not sleep except ,
 morning always wake up ADV.PRT very late DE
 [...] was usually very late in the morning, save upon those not infrequent occasions
 when he was up all night.

1.5 False negation cues

Both in English and Chinese, some negative affixes do not introduce negative polarity and should not be annotated as cue. For instance, the word “disgrace” in English does not mean “a lack of grace” and the negative meaning carried by “dis”, as well as its status as morpheme, only exists etymologically. Although this is less of a problem in Chinese, where most compounds containing affixal negation are semantically transparent, we still abide by the following three criteria to determine the presence of a false negation affix.

Compositionality. When the meaning of a compound can be derived from its parts, we mark the cue as such. For example, 无聊(“boring”) in Chinese is not equivalent to the meaning of its parts, “no chatting”, hence we do not annotate 无 as a cue. In the same way, we do not annotate the 不 in 不见(“to have disappeared”) where the meaning of the two characters “not” and “appear” combined do not yield the meaning of the whole word.

Obsolescence. When the meaning of the morpheme modified by the negative affix is obsolete, the affix should not be annotated as the negation cue. For example, 然 in 不然(“otherwise”) and 则 in 否则(“otherwise”) have the meaning of “like this” in classical Chinese, but not in Modern Chinese.

Non-negative meaning. If the compound has a positive meaning, the cue should not be annotated. This is the case of words that introduce emphatic degree modification such as 无比(lit. “not compare” - “very”), 不已(lit. “not stopped” - “very much”) which all introduce false negative affixes.

For the same reason, besides cases of false affixal negation, we also do not annotate cues in rhetorical questions, where the speaker uses negation to confirm rather than to deny a statement. This includes constructions such as 你不觉得...? (‘Don’t you think...?’), as shown in (12), or 这不正是? (‘Isn’t it exactly...’).

- (12) 你 不 觉 得 很 有 趣 味 吗 ？
 you not think very have interest INT. ?
 Don’t you find it interesting?

Also, we exclude negation cues used in yes-no questions which often take the form of ‘modal + cue + modal’. Some of these, as in (13), are roughly equivalent to the English ‘shall we...?’

- (13) 咱们 要 不 要 向 后 退 ？
 we want not want towards back retreat ?
 ‘Shall we move further back?’

There are also several expressions such as 毫无疑问(“without a doubt”), 无疑(“no doubt”) where the speaker expresses his certainty regarding a statement or a fact using a negative construction. In cases like (14) we do not annotate the cue.

- (14) [...] 无疑 地 早 就 会 拨 转 马 头 回 去 了
 no-doubt ADV early then can turn horse-head return ASP
 [...] would have been right glad to have turned his horse’s head

Similarly there are cases of discontinuous false negation cues. For example, 不(“not”)是(“is”)... 就(“then”)是(“is”) is always translated as “either...or”. Another similar construction is 不是别人(“not others”) ... 正是(“is exactly”) which can be translated into the English “none other than...”. An example of these constructions is shown in (15).

- (15) 不是他就 是我总 有 一个得 穿上捆疯子用的 紧身衣 的
not be he then be I always there-is one CL must wear insane use DE straitjacket DE
'Either I or him ought to be in a straitjacket'

Negation cues in fixed pragmatic expressions are also not annotated as such since the overall meaning is not negative. This concerns in particular expressions such as 对不起(“not able to treat you well - sorry”) and 没关系(“not a matter - It’s all right. “).

Similar to English, we do not annotate negation in the expressions 不能不and 不得不, “cannot help but”, both having a reinforced positive meaning of “must, have to”. Same goes for the discontinuous cue 非得...不可. (16) exemplifies this.

- (16) 我不得不 放弃 这 种 方法
I must abandon this CL method
I am compelled to abandon this method.

We do not annotate the negation cue in idioms if these have positive meanings. This is the case of (17), where the idiom 无往(而)不利 contains an instance of double negation yielding an overall positive meaning (“there are no places where victory is not achieved = always successful”).

- (17) 你 应该 就 把 这 事 也 记下来 , 作为我 无往而不利 的 反证 吧
you should then BA this thing also record , do I always-successful DE disproof ASP
[...] if you are an honest man you will record this also and set it against my successes!

Finally, we do not annotate the cue in the expression 说不定(lit. ‘not able to say definitely’ – ‘maybe’) which express possibility as shown in (18).

- (18) 他们 说不定 信任 我们
They maybe trust us
'They maybe trust us'

2 Scope

We define negation scope as the sentence span affected by the presence of the negation cue. We consider here a semantic notion of negation scope: in general, if negation directly affects an event, the scope should also include its argument and modifiers as shown in 19.

- (19) 咱们 没有 遇到 他
we have-not meet him
'We haven't met him'

The scope can also be discontinuous. This includes cases of long-range dependencies where material is omitted from the negated clause but can be retrieved from other spans of the sentence; as shown in (20), this is often the case of coordinated clauses where the object is only referenced in the first clause.

- (20) 我把他弃 而 不 顾 了
 I BA he abandon and not care ASP
 I abandoned and not cared about him.

In English, to determine whether a sentence span is in the scope of negation, the “it is not the case that” test is often used. This involves paraphrasing the negated sentence as positive preceded by the expression “it is not the case that” and checking whether they have the same meaning (e.g. ‘I don’t eat pizza’ and its paraphrase ‘It is not the case that I eat pizza’). In Chinese, one can use the correspondent Chinese phrase ‘并不是...’ to test for negation scope, as shown in (21):

- (21) 我 不 吃 比 萨
 I not eat pizza
 I don’t eat pizza
 并不是 我 吃 比 萨
 not-be I eat pizza
 It is not the case that I eat pizza

2.1 Coordinate clauses

In coordinate clauses, negation scope spans only the clause containing the cue. (20) exemplifies this, where only the verb 顾, ‘to care’, is negated whereas ‘弃’, ‘to abandon’ is not. If any argument is omitted but can be retrieved from other spans of the sentence, this is also included in the scope, as in the case of the subject 我, ‘I’ and 把他, ‘him’ in (20).

2.2 Subordinate clauses

If negation appears in a subordinate clause, we include the subordinate and not the matrix clause in the scope of negation. This is exemplified in (22).

- (22) 我 本 想 找 借 口 不 听 他 说
 I originally think find excuse not listen he say
 ‘I was originally thinking of finding excuses not to listen to him.’

Here the cue ‘不’ denies the event in the infinitival, ‘听他说’ (‘listening to him’), which is included in the scopes, but not the event in the matrix clause, ‘找借口’ (‘finding excuses’) which is excluded from it.

On the other hand, if negation appears in the matrix clause, we exclude the subordinate from its scope, as shown in (23).

- (23) 在 我 对 此 事 作 出 决 定 之 前 , 什 么 也 不 告 诉 他
 in I towards this thing do decision before , anything EMP not tell he
 ‘And then you will not say anything to him until I make up my mind on that matter’

The only exception to this are conditional statements, such the one introduced by ‘要是’ and ‘如果’ where both the matrix and the subordinate are in the scope of negation when negation appears in the former. This is shown in (24).

- (24) 如 果 能 对 你 有 帮 助 的 话 , 我 就 不 出 去 了
 if can towards you have help DE speak , I then not go out ASP
 ‘If I can receive any help with you, I won’t go out’

2.3 Sentence final particles

In Chinese, there are a number of Sentence-final modal particles such as 吗, 呢, 呀, 哇 whose purpose is to express the speaker's attitude towards an utterance. We do not annotate these particles in the scope of negation. Our decision is also supported by previous work that defines these sentence-final particles complementisers out of IP (?). For example in (25), the sentence-final particle 呀 expresses emphasis towards a statement but doesn't contribute to the overall meaning of the sentence.

- (25) 不 要 等 他 过 了 山 呀!
not need wait he pass ASP mountain MOOD
'There is no need to wait until he has passed the mountain!'

Notice that some of these particles are multifunctional. For instance, sentence-final 的 can function both as a marker for the genitive, as in (26), as well as to reinforce the meaning of a sentence as in (27).

- (26) 这 是 我 的 钱 包 , 不 是 你 的
this is I DE wallet, not is you DE
'This is my wallet, not yours.'

- (27) 我 是 不 肯 帮 那 些 坏 蛋 的
I be not surely help those rascal EMP.
'I refused to help those rascals!'

In (26) the particle 的 is used as a marker for genitive, indicating possession; similar to English, Chinese allows the possessed item, 'wallet', to be omitted if already mentioned in the preceding clause. In (27) instead 的 is used to strengthen the meaning of the sentence, with a usage roughly corresponding to an exclamation mark in English. Scope is annotated only in cases like (26) but not in ones like (27).

Finally, we always annotate the sentence-final aspectual particle 了 as part of the scope, since it specifies the aspect of the negated event as in (28).

- (28) 我 问 不 出 什 么 东 西 了
I ask not out any thing ASP
'I cannot ask anything (from her) any more.'

2.4 Non-sentential negation on subject

Chinese does not allow constructions where negation is directly expressed on an indefinite pronoun such as the case of "nothing", "nobody" and "nowhere" in English. Instead, these are rendered in Chinese with the negated existential 没有('do not exist'). As shown in (29) when the subject is negated the entire clause falls under the scope of negation.

- (29) 没 有 人 注 意 到 它 们
not exist person notice them
'No one noticed them.'

2.5 Negated adjectives

The scope of a negated attributive adjective is the adjective itself and does not include the noun it specifies. It is to be noted that the negation does not scope over coordinate adjectives in the same noun phrase. When more than one adjective specifies a noun, as in (30), the negation annotation does not scope over the coordinate adjective 废弃 as it is not affected by the negation cue.

- (30) 那 人 住 在 这 些 废 弃 不 用 的 小 房 中
That person lives in these deserted not-used DE little.house inside
“That person lives in these deserted and unused little houses.”

2.6 Negated adverbs

When it is an adverb to be directly negated, the scope of should span only the adverb itself and not the event it modifies. This is exemplified in (31).

- (31) 心 里 感 到 不 安 地 驾 车
heart in feel insecure ADV.MOD drove
“Drove while feeling insecure.”

In Chinese entire clauses can also function as adverbial modifiers on the main verb. As shown in (32), these constructions usually take the form of verb+得+adverbial clause. Again, if negation is in the adverbial clause only this is included in the scope of negation.

- (32) 那 牧 人 当 时 被 吓 得 简 直 都 说 不 出 话 来 了
that CL man at that time PASS fear ADV.PART simply all speak feel not go out speak come * ASP
“and the man, was so crazed with fear that he could barely speak.”

2.7 Relative Clauses

If a cue negated an event inside a relative clause, we consider this as its scope. Unlike English, in Chinese relative clauses precede the noun they modify, with the marker 的 usually placed in between. This is shown in (33).

- (33) 他 是 个 不 爱 出 风 头 的 人 。
he is CL not like show-off DE person .
“He is not a person who likes to show off.”

Chinese also allows the noun to be omitted in cases where it has been mentioned in a preceding part of the sentence, with negation scope still scoping on the relative clause only. This is exemplified in (34) where the noun 人, “man”, becomes the subject of the sentence.

- (34) 那 个 人 是 不 爱 出 风 头 的
that CL man is not like show-off DE
“He is not a person who likes to show off.”

2.8 Exceptions

Certain cues in Chinese introduce exceptions. This is the case of the discontinuous cue “除了...之外”; its use is exemplified in (35).

- (35) 他 除了 时常 彻夜 不 眠 之外 ,
 早晨 总是 起 得 很晚 的
 he **except** often all night not sleep **except** ,
 morning always wake up ADV.PRT very late DE
 [...] was usually very late in the morning, save upon those not infrequent occasions
 when he was up all night.

Here the exception isolates those instances where the event of “waking up very late” does not apply and is therefore negated. We define these cases as the “exception to positive” and annotate the span of text in between the cue “除了...之外” as part of the cue.

The case in (35) contrasts with the “exception to nothing” where the cue is used to exclude a set of instances for which negation does not apply. This is shown in (36)

- (36) 除了 帮助 他 之外 , 没有 其他 目的
 Except help he except , there are no other purposes
 “He doesn’t have any purposes other than helping him.”

In this case, the material in between the discontinuous cue specifies those instances that are positive, i.e. for which the subject had a purpose. In cases like this we do not annotate the construction “除了...之外” as a cue, and as a consequence we do not annotate a scope either.

2.9 Comparative constructions

In Chinese, comparison is expressed in most cases through the co-verb ‘比’, which takes as subject and object the two things compared, followed by the dimension they are compared along. This is the case in (37), where the subject and the object are compared for their age; in cases like this, we annotate as scope the entire clause.

- (37) 约翰森 先生 年纪 不 比 你 大
 Johnson Mr. age not compare you old
 ‘Mr. Johnson is not older than you.’

However, negation can also exclude this dimension as shown in (??). We distinguish this from (37), by excluding from the scope in the object of the comparison; this roughly corresponds to the English ‘Compared to usual, my sleep hasn’t been deep’, where the phrase ‘compared to usual’ is excluded from the scope.

2.10 Lexical items marking universal quantification

Lexical items marking universal quantification excluded from the scope of negation when they scope over it. In Chinese, this concerns mostly the adverb 都 and the adjectives 全部 and 所有 (all corresponding to the English “all”), as shown in (38).

- (38) 我 不 把 我 知道 的 全部 事情 都 说出来
 I **not** BA I know DE all thing all speak
 I do not speak about things I do not know about

In Chinese cases where negation scopes over universal quantification (similar to the English “not every”) are realized by negation preceding the adjective 所有. In this case the lexical items expressing quantification is included in the scope, as shown below.

- (39) 不是 所有 的 人 都 来 参加 我的 晚会
 Not all DE people DOU come participate I DE party
 "Not everyone will come to my party"

2.11 Neg raising

In cases of neg raising – the phenomenon by which certain negated predicates (e.g. "think", "believe", "expect") can give rise to a reading where the negation seems to take scope from an embedded clause, we annotate the embedded clause only but not the main clause in the scope of negation. This is shown in (40).

- (40) 我 不 认为 你 会 离开
 I not think you will leave
 I do not think that you will leave.
- (41) 我 真 想不到 会 看见 这样 长长 的 头颅
 I very did not think of could see this king very long DE
 It never occurred to me that I could see such a long skull

In the example above, despite negation marking directly the event 认为, "to think", it is the object of the thought to be negated and scope is therefore interpreted on the subordinate only.

Notice however, some verbs in Chinese may translate similarly as neg-raising verbs in English, but do not license neg-raising in Chinese. 41 examples a case where 想不到 is equivalent to 'it occurred to me' in English and the negated verb 想不到 (it did not occur to me) indicating the thought did not occur does not have the same meaning if we move the negation to the embedded clause where then the content of the thought will be negated.

2.12 Modality

We use the Chinese counterpart of the "It is not the case..." test, "并不是...", to identify whether a modal scopes inside negation or viceversa.

Most modals signaling epistemic modality are annotated inside the scope of negation. This includes modals such as 应该 ("would"), 会, 能, 可以 ("can/could"), etc. The example below shows an example annotation.

- (42) 这样 的 一 个 人 就 不 会 迁往 乡村 去 了
 this kind DE one CL person then not drift country go ASP
 "such a person would not drift into the country."

Both in English and in Chinese the example above can be paraphrased into "it is not the case that (such as person would drift into the country)", with the modal "would" inside the scope of negation.

On the other hand, some deontic modals are excluded from the scope of negation. These include most imperative constructions that in Chinese can be realized by the modal 要 following the negation cue 不, as shown in (43).

- (43) 不 要 动
 not must move
 "Don't move"

Considering that a literal translation of the example in (43) is "You must not move", this is not equal to "It is not the case you must move", since the original sentence does not allow for a meaning where "you don't have to move".

Notice that, depending on the surrounding context, certain instances of 要 have the meaning of "have to"; in these we annotate it in the scope of negation. This is shown in (44), where the Chinese sentence can be translated literally into "You don't have to move", which has the same meaning of "It is not the case that you have to move".

- (44) 你 不 要 动 ; 你 可 以 站 在 这 里
you not have to move ; you can stand still here
"You don't have to move; you can stand still here"

Another example is 应该 as in 45

- (45) 你 不 应 该 犯 错
you not should make mistakes
"You shouldn't make mistakes"

2.13 Interrogative pronouns

Finally, if a negated clause includes any interrogative pronouns we include these in the scope of negation. This is exemplified by the pronoun 为什么 ("why") in (46):

- (46) 为 什 么 不 到 房 子 里 面 呢
why not go to house inside Q.PRT?
"Why did you not go into the house?"

2.14 adverbs

Finally, degree adverbs that scope over the negation instance shall not be considered inside the negation scope. Typical examples include 总是 (always) as in 48

- (47) 我 总 是 不 开 心
I always not happy
"I am always unhappy."

Adverbs that introduce relevant time reference such as 已经 (already) and 还是 (still) and the superlative modifier 最 (most) should also be excluded from the scope for the same reason that they introduce a different meaning of the sentence when they are introduced inside the negation scope. For an example, the two sentences in ref zui are not equal.

- (48) 我 最 不 开 心
I most not happy
"I am the most unhappy."
并不是 我 最 开 心
not-be I most happy
"I am always unhappy."

Another case worth mentioning is adverbs as 都 and 也 which can be used as emphasis in negation constructions. They too shall not be annotated as scope as shown in 49

- (49) 我 甚 至 连 帽 子 都 没 有 戴
I even even hat DOU not wear
"I couldn't even wear a hat"

3 Event

We annotate an event as negated if it is factual and if presented as an event that did not happen; the term ‘eventuality’ includes here both events and states. What the annotation considers as an event is a minimal unit in a negated phrase, usually corresponding to its head. An example of annotation of a verbal predicate negated event is shown in (50), where the event is presented inside a 吃 (we omit the scope just for presentational purposes). Although one could consider 吃羊肉, ‘eat mutton’, as the entire event, the event is just its minimal unit, that is, the head verb 吃 ‘to eat’

- (50) 我 不 吃 羊肉
I not eat mutton
‘I do not eat mutton.’

The event of a negated verb phrase should be the main verb. Therefore we do not annotate any aspectual markers as part of the event. For example, in the following example, the durative aspect marker 在 is excluded from the annotation of the event that only spans on the verb 动, “to move”.

- (51) 没 有 人 在 动
Not exist one DUR move
“Nobody is moving”

Notice that sometimes the aspectual marker occurs within a verb phrase. For example in (52), the experiential marker 过 marker should be excluded from the annotation of the event 结婚, “to get married”.

- (52) 他 还 没 有 结过婚 啊
He still not married-EXP-married MOD-P
“He is still not a married man.”

3.1 Copular constructions

In the case of copular constructions we annotate as event the head of the NP in the predicate. For example in (53), only the head of the negated predicate, 朋友 (“friend”), is marked as the event.

- (53) 他 的 朋 友 也 不 是 我 的 朋 友
he DE friend also not be I DE friends
“His friends are not also mine.”

3.2 Adjectival predicates

Unlike English, where adjectives can appear in the main predicate only following a copula, in Chinese adjective form predicates without a copula. The following example contrasts the one in (53) where the adjective marked as an event is not preceded by the copula 是.

- (54) 这 样 不 公 平
this way not fair
“This is not fair.”

3.3 Existential constructions

We do not annotate as an event the existential verb 有(“there is/are”) when negated. Instead, we mark the head of the following noun phrase as the event. This is shown in (55).

- (55) 没有 希望
there is not hope
'There is no hope'

When existentiality is marked on the subject (with a meaning similar to the determiner “no” in English), we mark the verb head in the predicate as the event. This is the case of 住, “lived”, in (??).

- (56) 没有 人 住 过 这
there are no person line EXP here .
“No one lived here.”

3.4 Identifying Non-Factuality

We do not mark as events those appearing in the following non-factual constructions.

Imperatives. We have already mentioned how in Chinese imperatives are often introduced by deontic modals which are excluded from the negation scope.

For those negated imperatives marked by the cue 别, we do not annotate the event because orders and requests are not factual, as shown below.

- (57) 别 动
not move
“Don’t move”

Non-factual interrogatives. Most non-rhetorical yes-no questions are non-factual. In (58) for instance, the speakers asks for confirmation about a negative statement that was uttered previously; however, the event of “being present” has not been confirmed and it is therefore considered non-factual.

- (58) 那 位 女 士 不 在 吗 ？
that CL lady not present Q-P ?
“The lady is not there?”

On the other hand, we assume that questions introduced by interrogative pronouns are factual. For example in (59), the event of “not going to the house” is factual because it happened. Therefore, 到(“go to”) is marked as the event.

- (59) 为什么 不 到 房 子 里 面 去 拜 访 呢 ？
why not arrive house inside go visit Q-P ?
“Why did (you) not go into the house to visit (him)?”

Conditional constructions. Given that we do not annotate hypothetical events, we also do not mark events in both a conditional clause and the main clause containing a conditional subordinate.

Modality. Modality is typically related to non-factuality as it mostly expresses possibility and necessity. Therefore we usually do not annotate events in clauses introduced by modal verbs or verbs that express modality.

However, modal verbs expressing participant internal ability are annotated as events. The Chinese equivalent of “can”, 能, is also multifunctional and can introduce either ability or possibility. We should mark 能 as an event when it means “able to” as in (60). This also applies to other modal verbs that can express participant-internal ability such as 能够, 会, 可以 and 可.

- (60) 我 不 能 早一点到 那里去
I not can earlier arrive there go.
“I can’t go there earlier.”

Supposition and presumption. To make a judgment on the factuality, one should also examine the semantics of the verb that introduces the scope. If this suggests the speaker’s certainty about the content of the following clause (e.g. 确信 (“to be sure”), 确定 (“to be certain”), 知道 (“to know”)), we should treat the embedded event as factual. If, however, the verb suggests that the following statement is part of the speaker’s supposition or presumption as in the case of 相信 (“to believe”), 认为 (“to believe”), 觉得 (“to think”), 想 (“to think”), 害怕 (“to fear”) etc., the negated event in the statement should not be marked as shown in (61).

- (61) 我 相信 您 决不 愿意 做 一个 妨碍 别人 的 人 。
I believe you not want do one CL hinder others DE person .
“I believe that you do not wish to be a spoil-sport.”

Future tense. As a language with no morphological tense marker, Chinese employs various linguistic devices to indicate future tense. This is the case of temporal expressions such as 明天 (“tomorrow”), connectives such as 以后 (“later on”) or adverbs such as 将 (“going to”). Given that the event has not happened yet and is therefore not factual, we do not annotate it as such. This is exemplified in (62).

- (62) 我 以后 再 也 不 提 这 件 事 了 。
I later on again EMP not mention this CL thing ASP .
“I will not mention this matter again.”

3.5 Verb-complement compounds

Chinese allows for complex verbal structures where a main verb is followed by a complement indicating result or potentiality, as described in the case of infixal cues in § 1.2.

When annotating the event we distinguish two cases: if the meaning of the whole construction can not be derived compositionally, we annotate the entire construction as the event. For example, the following verb-complement compounds will be annotated as a whole when being negated: 看见 (“see-appear: see”), 听到 (“hear-arrive: hear”), 看出来 (“see-out: see”), 弄明白 (“make clear: understand”). Otherwise, the event is just the main verb as in 说不清楚 (“speak-not-clearly: cannot speak clearly”).

3.6 Idioms as negated event

Idiomatic phrases in Chinese are generally made up of four characters. When negated, these expressions as a whole are treated as an event. An example is shown in (63), where the idiom 引以为耻 is the main predicate of the sentence.

- (63) 我 并不 把 和 他 妹妹 的 感情 引以为耻 。
- I not BA with he sister DE feelings ashamed .
- “I am not ashamed of my feelings towards his sister.”

Notice however, if the negation cue is found within the set phrase and if the idiom is semantically transparent – i.e. its overall meaning can be composed by the meaning of the single characters, we will identify a specific element in the phrase as the event. For example, the negated event in the idiom, 无可估量 (“not able to estimate”), should be 可 (“can”) alone.