Mandarin Chinese notes

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 The language and the speakers

Mandarin Chinese is a predominant language in the world, belonging to the Sinitic family. Indeed,

1.2 Previous studies and theoretical orientation of this work

1.2.1 Structuralist generative grammars

There are already sufficient works concerning the grammar of Mandarin Chinese. The tradition used in colleges (and occasionally high schools) is largely structuralist à la Bloomfield: A clause is divided into a topic and a comment, and the comment is divided into a subject and a predicate, and the predicate is divided into a predicator and an object, etc. Examples of works in this tradition usually have names like 现代汉语 'Modern Chinese' (王理嘉 et al. 2004). This tradition is still seen in many contemporary grammars, like Huddleston and Pullum (2002). This tradition is largely coherent with the generative tradition, and indeed there are books which are generative in essence but organized in the traditional and structuralist framework (邓思颖 2010).

1.2.2 Teaching materials

Teaching materials of Mandarin Chinese are also largely influenced by the structuralist tradition. TODO

1.2.3 Mandarin in the functional-typological tradition

Mandarin also gains much attention in the functional-typological tradition. Li and Thompson (1989) is a "functional" reference grammar of Mandarin, TODO The reason for Mandarin's popularity seems to be the fact that it breaks many previous typological generalizations about isolating languages and constituent orders (Paul 2014, chap. 8).

1.2.4 Theoretical commitment of this work

This notes attempts to reconcile the several approaches in previous researches. It's my belief that the differences between the generative tradition, the traditional structuralist school and a large part of the so-called functionalist (or "Basic Linguistic Theory" (Dixon 2009)) are mainly notational from a practical perspective. Below, by the capitalized Generativism, I mean a mixture of Minimalism, Distributed Morphology and Cartography (but with less flavor of Antisymmetry), which I mean are instructive on grammar description. This leaves out Lexicalist traditions, due to the limit of space. Indeed, what I want to do here is to incorporate the new perspectives in generative syntax, such as Paul (2014) and Paul (2008), into the structuralist tradition in an accessible and typology-informed way.

Since modern generative syntax contains lots of hidden functional heads, the notion of, say, a DP which is the specifier of T, is to be replaced by an NP filling a subject position in a surface-oriented structuralist constituency analysis. Both "NP" and "subject" should be labeled on a sub-syntactic tree in the structuralist tradition, while in generative syntax, the label "subject" is a secondary concept: it's an abbreviation of SpecTP (or in an even more fine-grained way, SpecSubjP or SpecNomP). So functional heads can be replaced by syntactic function labels. On the other hand, in Distributed Morphology we

have roots, which reside at the center of an extended verbal or nominal projection (NP-NumP-DP, or vP-TP-CP), and they are recognized as *heads* in traditional structuralism. This unifies the notation of Huddleston and Pullum (2002), Chao (1965), 朱德熙 (2009) in the traditional structuralist perspective and Generativism.

The Basic Linguistic Theory approach, or the functional-typological grammar writing approach, is based on *dependency relations* on the other hand. It's also possible to formulate generative grammar in terms of dependency relations, so it can be expected that the BLT approach is still largely equivalent with the grammatical complexity of generative grammar. BLT only recognizes two types of constituents: NPs and clauses, which are essentially *domains* or *fields* in generative syntax: The former is the DP domain while the latter is the vP-TP-CP domain. The complicated binary constituency tree is replaced by a flat tree with lots of dependency relations labeled inside, containing the same amount of information. (We may also say the Basic Linguistic Theory's standard of constituency is "being a relatively independent construction". Then the equivalence between this version of mild constructivism and minimalism is clear (Trotzke 2020).) Note that the Basic Linguistic Theory approach still (although quite implicitly) admits that there is a rank of "closeness" or "height" among dependency relations: the A argument seems to be somehow higher than the O argument, etc., and this information is conveyed by the fine-grained constituency relations in Generativism.

A further difference between the Basic Linguistic Theory and Generativism (as well as the structuralist tradition) is the former is claimed to be semantic-based. But first, of course it's possible to have a meaning-first version of generative syntax, and second, there seems to be a "gluing" layer between pure semantics and the phonetic realization and can't be equated with either of the two: the semantics of complement-taking verbs may be coded as a complement clause construction, a relative clause construction (compare *I see a man running* and *I see a running man*), and superficially similar utterances may have different "structures". This is recognized by Dixon, who distinguishes the "prototypical" coding strategy of a semantic concept and other strategies. So there is also no substantial disagreement here.

The Generativism I take here doesn't emphasize on wordhood as a universal concept, and indeed this is what I want here: A word is simply a mini phrase (in the BLT sense), either the realization of a mini constituency tree, or the realization of a span of functional heads and possibly the lexical head or in other words the root. The controversy about what is a word in Mandarin has been around for decades, which I believe is due to the desire to find *the* word as a universal unit, without thinking of the tenet of Generativism that phonetic realization doesn't always transparently reflect in the syntax proper, and that what is universal is likely to be prototypes of functional heads and how they are arranged together; this means we may have categorizer phrases like nP or vP, which can be recognized as minimal words, but whether things like compound words are recognized as words or phrases depends more on grammatical traditions and external factors like prosody.

1.3   Plan of the book

1.3.1   Origin of data and how to represent them

I will use less structuralist constituency trees compared with structuralist grammars. That's to say, for example, the "serial verb construction" is not divided into two verb phrases following rigidly the structuralist tenets, but is analyzed with a flat-tree structure instead, following BLT. But I will also do lots of in-depth morphosyntactic tests, instead of just staring at the surface realization, as many typologists may do.

1.4   Remarkable features of Mandarin

1.4.1   Lack of morphology?

Despite of lack of inflection and lack of contextual alternation of morphemes, Chinese does have some local and syntactically unmotivated operations which are just like morphophonological rules, although they don't necessarily operate on phrases.

An example of this is the verb copying phenomenon, as in 看了一会书 (compare 看书了一会); 看书 'to read' (intransitive; lit. 'to read books') is a fossilized verb-object structure and this verb-object structure may still have synchronic effects. More radical examples however also exist, like %体了一

堂操, which is likely to be linked to [[体操]$_{\text{noun-as-verb}}$ 了[一堂]$_{\text{time object}}$]$_{\text{VP}}$. In casual speech, verbs borrowed from other languages may also be split and the two fragments of the verb then surround the semi-object (1).

(1)　我 [debug]$_{\text{topic:VP}}$ [de不出来]$_{\text{predicate:VP}}$ [啊]$_{\text{SFP}}$

This phenomenon – the verb being split and the time semi-object getting embedded into the verb – looks just like infixing, although here this infixing operation targets a VP instead of a smaller unit. This justifies the assumption taken at the end of § 1.2.4 that there is no clear boundary between words and phrases and therefore syntax and morphology: It's possible for a phrase to undergo rearrangement without clear syntax motivation that usually happens within a word.

1.4.2　The overwhelming influence of prosody

One distinct feature of Mandarin is its morphosyntax relies strongly on *prosody* (冯胜利 2000). Other components in phonology, strikingly, doesn't have much influence on Chinese morphosyntax, and it will be largely skipped in this note.

Chapter 2

Grammatical overview

2.1 Parts of speech

2.2 The noun phrase

2.3 Clause structure

2.3.1 Alignment

2.3.2 TAME categories

Mandarin lacks the category of tense – all tense information is expressed by time adverbs. Modality is marked similarly be adverbs or complement clause constructions. Yet there is a system marking the aspect (§ 6.4). (1) is an example.

(1)   a. 我 去 过 上海 了
           1   go GUO Shanghai SFP

            'I have been in Shanghai.'

     b. 我 去 了 上海 了
           1   go LE Shanghai SFP

            'I have gone to Shanghai.'

2.3.3 Negation

2.3.4 The topic-comment structure

2.4 Clause combining

Mandarin Chinese has usual clause linker devices (chap. 12), as well as complement clauses (§ 11) and relative clauses (TODO: ref). TODO: what else?

It's often said Mandarin is a serializing (i.e. with serial verb constructions) language. A closer look, however, reveals this is not the case: These constructions are either adverbial clause constructions or complement clause constructions, or maybe certain kind of light verb constructions (§ 9.2.1). The internal heterogeneity renders the term *serial verb construction* useless.

Chapter 3

Phonology and the writing system

Chapter 4

Parts of speech

4.1 Overview of classification criteria

4.1.1 Word class labels: noun, verb, adjectives, etc.

4.1.1.1 The nominal-verbal division

Lexical words in Chinese can be roughly divided into nominal ones and verbal ones, or in the Chinese terms, 体词 and 谓词. The prototypical role of nominal words is to fill predicate slots (or to be more precise, to head a phrase that fills an argument slot). Nominal words rarely appear in the verbal complex, though for stylistic purposes, they sometimes do. Verbal words prototypically appear in the verbal complex (chap. 6), but many of them – and clauses without any morphological marking – can regularly appear in argument slots (朱德熙 2009, § 3.5).

The fact that verbal categories can fill argument slots or in colloquial words "be used as nouns" urges some to put the verbal categories under the nominal categories, so thus there is only one mega lexical category in Chinese: the nominal category or the Noun. The analysis adopted here does not aim to organize lexical categories in a binary branching classification tree, so the ordinary nominal-verbal distinction is maintained: verbs being able to fill argument slots is not typologically rare, actually, and this shared feature itself does not bring nouns and verbs close enough for them to be merged together.

4.1.1.2 Two adjectival classes

Whether Chinese has a separate adjective category has been debated for decades. Based on a line of reasoning similar to the above verb-as-noun analysis, some linguists argue that the so-called adjectives should be put under the verb category, since they can fill the predicator slot without any morphological marking (Li and Thompson 1989). Since verbs and most alleged adjectives show different morphological behaviors in reduplication, the verb-adjective distinction is kept, and the two are placed under the verbal category.

There still exist a (much smaller) number of alleged adjectives that shows different morphosyntactic properties with the adjectives in the verbal category (Paul 2014, chap. 5). They can be marginally used as heads of NPs, while they do not have reduplication variants. These "adjectives" are thus placed under the nominal category. Thus we have two types of adjectives. In 朱德熙 (2009), nominal adjectives are called 区别词 'distinction word', while verbal adjectives are called 形容词 'adjective'.

4.1.1.3 Other nominal categories

There are more nominal categories than the ordinary noun category and the nominal adjective category. Numerals, for examples, are in another nominal category. Chinese has a rich classifier system, and most classifiers still have strong nominal properties and thus they constitute yet another nominal category. 朱德熙 (2009) calls them 量词 'measure word', because many classifiers have the meaning of "unit". There is also a locative particle class, including 里 in 在房子里, which is sometimes said to be the postposition class because they sometimes have adposition-like properties (TODO: ref: topicalization, and what else?).

4.1.2 Open and close classes; the lexical-functional distinction

The distinction between lexical and functional classes is sometimes subtle. (朱德熙 2009, § 3.6) classifies certain categories like locative particles into the nominal class and hence the lexical one, while the locative particle class can definitely be enumerated (朱德熙 2009, § 4.4). On the other hand, the author claims that lexical classes are always open and function classes are always closed 朱德熙 (2009, § 3.4). A conflict thus occurs.

The problem here is we have a gradient hierarchy from the prototypical lexical classes to the prototypical function classes. The most lexical class is open to new members, not a part of the grammar, and its members are able to be lexical heads[1] of, say, an NP or a verbal complex. A less open class is not so open to new members (just like Japanese verbs and adjectives), but is still not a part of the grammar and its members are able to be lexical heads. A even more closed class is not open to new members, and is a part of the grammar, but its members are still able to be lexical heads. Pronouns are in this type. A prototypical function class, then, is not open to new members, hardwired in the grammar, and its members are never lexical heads. Derivational suffixes are in this type.

It's of course not easy to tell a newly discovered part of speech (or *form class*, which may be a word class or an affix class) What's the status of an orientation preverb, which may be found in Japhug (Jacques 2021)? It's a part of the grammar, but does it carry a real part-of-speech label (like "directional adverb")? And speaking of adverbs, what's the status of the English *allegedly*? An adverb filling a peripheral argument position, or an evidentiality marker? We really need to know a lot about language to fix the position of a form class. A common practice is just to shun the details and just say whether a class is lexical or functional, drawing a hard line between the two. So 朱德熙 (2009) mainly uses the criterion of whether there is a real part-of-speech label, and then directive particles are classified into the nominal class and they are in turn considered lexical. But he mistakenly confuses the notion of lexical classes with the notion of open classes, and then we get the asserts in 朱德熙 (2009, § 3.4).

4.1.3 From morphemes to clauses: levels of units in Mandarin morphosyntax

4.2 Prepositions

Though all Mandarin prepositions have verb origins and therefore may be classified as a subclass of verbs by some, it's necessary to distinguish a separate preposition class. Criteria of prepositions include TODO: ref

> **Box 4.1: The term *coverb***
>
> In

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[1]Not functional heads à la modern generative syntax: realizations of functional heads are function words or suffixes, not lexical items. We may also say a lexical head has a "real part-of-speech label" like "noun" or "verb", which, in the language of Distributed Morphology, means that such a lexical head appears at the core of a functional project as the root, and at somewhere a categorizer has to be merged into the derivation. A functional head in Distributed Morphology, on the other hand, doesn't bring any real part-of-speech label to its realization. We still classify functional items in the grammar into classes, but these classes are somehow less "real".

Chapter 5

The structure of noun phrase

No morphological case, number, and gender categories are attested in Mandarin. There is a word class system or in other words classifier system, however. In most cases when a numeral appears in an NP, a classifier follows immediately after the numeral. Attributives – both adjectives and relative clauses – follow the classifier. The demonstrative, if any, appears before the numeral, and even when there is no numeral, there is frequently also a classifier.

The template of NPs, therefore, belongs to the Dem-Num-A-N type, with the classifier residing between Num and A.

Chapter 6

The verbal complex

6.1 Introduction

Mandarin is generally regarded as a prototypical analytic language, without traditionally acknowledged verb inflections. Indeed it will be weird to posit something like a paradigm in Mandarin, but it doesn't mean there is no such thing as verbal affixation that are active in the morphosyntax (instead of not fully productive and arguably historical derivations). Some items involved here however may have partial mobility. Consider (1): In the first sentence, 了 is an aspectual suffix (§ 6.4), while 走 is a verb which never appear without an argument in uncontroversial phrasal grammar. So we conclude 了 and 走 are suffixes, and by structural comparison, we conclude 过来 in (1b) is also a suffix, with the same status as 走. But there comes (1c), in which 过来 moves to the end of the sentence.

(1) a. 他 带   走   了 他的   文件
         3sg carry go.away PERF 3sg-POSS file

         'He carried his files away.'

     b. 他 带   [过来] 了 三   瓶   汽水
         3sg carry come PERF three bottle.CL soda

         'He carried here three bottles of soda.'

     c. 他带了三瓶汽水[过来]

To avoid the useless quarrelling about what is a word and whether a grammar point is morphology (which isn't that important in non-lexicalist generative theories, anyway), I use the term *verbal complex* to cover the main verb and the "suffixes" in (1). There are roughly three systems in the verbal complex. The first is the uncontroversial derivation system, like 化 '-ize'. The second is the verbal complement system, which includes three subsystems: the resultative complements, the directional complements, and the potential complements (§ 6.3). The third is the aspectual system (§ 6.4).

> **Box 6.1: On the notion of *complements***
>
> The Chinese term 补语 corresponding to my *verbal complement* is frequently translated into the English term *complement*. This creates some confusion, because the term *complement* can also denote clausal dependents that are arguments of the main verb, as in Huddleston and Pullum (2002). The term *non-argument complement* may be used to avoid this confusion. There are, however, further confusions: Should we regard a clausal dependent that records the quantity or amount of an action as a non-argument complement? This construction can also be seen in Latin, like the Latin accusative expression of time (Greenough and Allen 2013, § 423). Thus, I use the term *verbal complement* to refer to things like 完 as in 做完了.

(2) is an example in which all the three systems appear. In real world speeches, such combinations have relatively lower distributions, possibly because of the prosodic constraint that verb shouldn't be too heavy unless it appears at the end of a clause (TDOO: ref).

(2)   …并且企业 [数字 [化]derivation [完]complement [了]aspectual]V 之后还不一定赚钱 …

Besides the systems shown in (2), the separation of a verb further complicates the behavior of the verbal complex (§ 6.5).

You may note the so-called serial verb constructions aren't mentioned here. Paul (2008) and 邓思颖 (2010, § 9.4) summarizes several constructions that are frequently referred to as serial verb constructions, and points out after deeper investigation, they can all be described in terms of the usual complement clause constructions, purpose clause constructions, etc. that are well attested cross-linguistically (§ 9.2.1).

6.2 Verbal derivations

6.3 Verbal complements

6.4 The aspectual system

6.5 Separable verbs

It's sometimes possible to split a verb and inject some clausal dependents into it. The interaction between this separation operation and the structure of the verbal complex is of some interest.

Chapter 7

Verb and arguments

Chapter 8

Valency changing

There are two ways of valency changing in Mandarin. The first is via a coverb construction, as in the disposal constructions (§ 8.1), TODO The second is *doing nothing* to the verb and relying on the unusual semantic roles of clausal complements to inform the listener about the valency changing, as in TODO: ref. Since there is no morphological marking, constructions of this type are often recognized as topic-comment structures, in which the "topic" – which is the subject under closer investigation – is said to be freely occupied by any semantic (and not necessarily syntactic) argument in the clause, though this claim can be falsified by detailed syntactic tests (§ 9.5.3).

8.1   The disposal constructions

8.2   The passive constructions

(1)   我被他打了一拳

8.3   The causative

8.4   The affected construction

8.5   Instrumental object

(2)   我们今天准备吃食堂

Chapter 9

Simple clauses

9.1 Overall remarks about the clause structure

A sentence can be divided into several clauses linked by clause linking constructions (chap. 12). This chapter is denoted to the simple clause, postponing details in subordination and clause linking to the next several chapters. Mandarin has rich topicalization phenomena, and thus a clause can be divided into one or more topics (if any) and a comment, the latter being the nucleus clause plus possible sentence-final particles. The comment – the nucleus clause – may further be divided into a subject (if any), a series of adverbials, the verbal complex, and post-verbal constituents, the most important types including object(s), the second part of a separable verb, certain directional complements, and purpose clauses.

> **Box 9.1: The term *clause***
>
> Some people, like 邓思颖 (2010, pp. 140) as well as Dixon (2009), use the term *clause* for subject-predict constructions that don't receive complete marking of speech forces. (In generative terms, *clause* is for lower level CPs or even TPs.) So in this way, sentence-final particles shouldn't be discussed in this chapter because they are of course dependents in the sentence level. They may be discussed together with other sentence-level constructions like chap. 12. But this notion of clause certainly goes against the tradition in descriptive grammars. So the approach of this note is to acknowledge everything larger than TP as a clause, which may or may not be a sentence, and discuss its structure in this chapter, while "adjunctions" – or in other words, optional dependents – are discussed in, say, chap. 12, for the sake of convenience. The narrative order of this note is not the ideal "small unit – large unit" scheme, but the "simple large unit – complicated large unit" scheme. Needless to say, when it comes to clause combining, the problem of what the clause really is – with or without SFPs, for example – is still relevant, but it is not answered by saying "the construction takes a clause, not a sentence".

As is implied by my using the term *subject*, Mandarin is an typical accusative language. Clausal dependents are recognizable from the rather rigid constituent order: Mandarin is usually classified as having a SVO clausal constituent order, and the subject and the object(s) can be told from the positions in the clause (1, 2). Certain "SOV" orders can be obtained by invoking the disposal construction (§ 8.1), as in (3).

(1) 我 生病　了
    1　get.sick SFP

    'I got sick.'

(2) [我]subject 今天 去 看　　[电影]object 了
    1　　　today to watch movie　　SFP

    'I went to watch a movie today.'

(3) [我]subject 今天 把 [一 个 碗　]object 摔　碎　了
    1　　　today BA　one CL bowl　　break crack SFP

    'I broke one bowl today.'

The normal tests of syntactic accusative alignment can be run on Mandarin (4).

(4)　陈　　　　　经理　昨天　　没有 和　他的　　客户 聊 过 。 他 生病　　了 。
Chen (surname) manager yesterday NEG with 3sg-POSS client talk SFP 3sg get.sick SFP
'Manager Chen didn't talk with his client yesterday. He (Chen, not his client) got sick.'

9.2 Types of nucleus clauses

9.2.1 There is no serial-verb construction or complex predicate

9.3 Negation

Like the case in standard English, there is no negative concord in Mandarin Chinese. There is, however, no uniform negation operator like the English *not*. Several negation operators and strategies are used frequently (§ 9.3). Verbs can be negated by 不 while nouns generally cannot, and this is a criterion to tell verbs from nouns. There is another negation operator 没, which has subtle differences in its meaning and syntactic properties compared with 不 (5, 6). On the other hand, the negative potential complement construction, i.e. the V不了 construction, isn't obtained by inserting a negator in the clause (7).

(5)　a.　我 不　喜欢 吃 芹菜
　　　1　NEG like　eat celery
　　　'I don't like eating celery.'

　　b.　* 我没喜欢吃芹菜

(6)　a.　我 不　吃 早饭
　　　1　NEG eat breakfast
　　　'I don't eat breakfast. (I usually don't, I don't want any today, etc.)'
　　b.　我 没　吃 早饭
　　　1　NEG eat breakfast
　　　'I didn't eat breakfast. (I may usually do, but somehow I didn't today.)'

(7)　a.　我 做 [不　了　　]potential complement, negative 这　件 事
　　　1　do　NEG finish　　　　　　　　　　　　this CL affair
　　　'I'm not able to do this.'
　　b.　* 我 没有/并非/不 做 [得 了　　]potential complement, positive 这　件 事
　　　1　NEG　　　　　do　DE finish　　　　　　　　this CL affair

9.4 Sentence final particles

9.5 The topic-comment structure

I follow Shi (2000)'s approach and define a topic as an unmarked NP that has certain relations with a position in the clause after it and is indeed the topic in the information structure (i.e. some (probably already known) object to which new information is added). Constructions like 连…都…are not discussed in this section – they are to be found in TODO: ref.

9.5.1 Topicalization of possessor

(8a) and (8a) are a pair of sentences with and without topicalization of the possessor in the subject.

(8) a. [他]_topic [[个子]_subject 高高 的]_comment
   3sg   stature   tall~TODO DE
   'As for him, the stature is tall.'

  b. [他 的 个子]_subject 高高 的
   3sg POSS stature   tall~TODO DE
   'His stature is tall.'

9.5.2 Topicalization of preposition objects

(9) 这件事你不能就麻烦他一个人

(10) 你不能[为了这件事]_adverbial:PP 就麻烦他一个人

This is also a demonstration of the preposition status of 在 in this sentence (§ 4.2), because if it's a verb or an auxiliary verb, it will be hard to have its object topicalized and have it deleted at the same time, but deletion of the preposition in topicalization is well-attested cross-linguistically.

9.5.3 Rejecting the notion of dangling topics

Some people, like 朱德熙 (2009, § 7.1), equate *subject* with *topic* in Mandarin grammar. Some (especially those from the functional-typological tradition) go further and assert that "the notion of the subject (as the position of the most agentive argument) isn't grammaticalized in Mandarin Chinese", and therefore the topic is just an NP which the comment is "about", and this base-generated and syntactically unconstrained topic is called a "dangling topic". This view is rejected in this note, because such accounts usually end up in severe overgeneration. Here I briefly summarize Shi (2000)'s argumentation.

9.5.3.1 Type 1: Idiomatic phrasal predicate looking like a comment

In the first type of "dangling topic", it's impossible for any NP in the comment to be syntactically related to the topic. Such cases are however rather unproductive. In (11) and (12), the orders of the constituents can never be changed. Nor is it possible to change a word or two in the bracketed "comments". A reasonable assumption is these bracketed "comments" are actually idioms, which are to be regarded as a single verbal element that can't be further analyzed. Thus, in (11) and (12), the so-called topic is an ordinary subject, and the so-called comment is a predicate.

(11) 他们[大鱼吃小鱼]（，厮杀成一片）

(12) 他们[你看看我我看看你]

9.5.3.2 Type 2: Quantificational adverbial looking like the inner subject

The second type of "dangling topic" is like (13). A topic-comment analysis of (13)

(13) 他们 谁 都 不 怕
   3pl who even NEG fear
   'They don't fear anyone.'

9.5.3.3 Type 3: Ellipsis leaving a subject and one predicate

Some people accept (14). Here the NP 那所房子 definitely doesn't come from the words following it, and is therefore recognized as a topic by some (TODO: ref). Note, however, that 幸亏 serves as a clause linker outside (14): (15) is a demonstration of the 幸亏······不然······ linking construction, and we also have its topicalized version (16). (TODO: whether this is parenthesis) We also know in a clause linking construction, often one clause can be omitted in the utterance because it's content can be easily inferred (TODO: ref). So now the origin of (14) is clear: We can get it by omitting the second clause in the comment part of (16). Indeed, if we replace 幸亏 by anything that is adverbial but not a clause linker, the resulting sentence – which now contains a real dangling topic – is not grammatical.

(14) % 那 所 房子 幸亏　　没 下雪
　　　 that CL house fortunate NEG snow

'For that house, fortunately it didn't snow (or otherwise something bad would happen).'

(15) [幸亏]　 去年　　 没 下雪 ，　[不然]　 那 所 房子 早就　　塌　　 了
　　　 fortunate last.year NEG snow　　 otherwise that CL house already collapse SFP

'Fortunately it didn't snow last year, or otherwise that house has already collapsed.'

(16) [那 所 房子]₍topic₎ [幸亏　　 去年　　 没 下雪 ，　不然　　 早就　塌　　 了]₍comment₎
　　　 that CL house　　　　 fortunate last.year NEG snow　　 otherwise already collapse SFP

9.5.3.4　Type 4: Extraction from prepositional adverbials

(9) in § 9.5.2 is sometimes regarded as an instance of the dangling topic construction. However, as is shown in § 9.5.2, it may just be from topicalization of an NP in an adverbial, with the preposition (and/or the locative particle) removed.

9.5.3.5　Type 5: Nominal predicate

(17)　这种青菜一斤三十块钱

9.5.3.6　Type 6: Locational adverbial mistaken for the subject

(18) % 物价 纽约　　 最　　贵
　　　 price New.York most expensive

'The price in New York is the most expensive.'

9.5.3.7　Tentative conclusion

The conclusion is all topics in Chinese are closely linked to a position in the comment, be it a core argument position or a peripheral one. So the notion of dangling topics is to be rejected in Mandarin grammar, and we can always recover the "canonical" i.e. non-topic-comment clause from a topic-comment structure. After this, if the canonical clause can be divided into an NP or a complement clause and a verbal constituent following it, we can uncontroversially say the first is the subject while the second is the predicate. (TODO: predicate def) So equating the subject with the topic is also wrong.

It's possible to find the semantic role of the subject isn't agentive; in this case I assert there is a valency changing mechanism here.

> **Box 9.3: What to expect when people talk about the subject or the topic**
>
> Unfortunately, despite the syntactic tests presented above, there are still many people – even many native speakers – promoting the idea that the Mandarin topic has nothing different with the subject. Here is a list of TODO: ref

Chapter 10

Relative clause constructions

Due to

Chapter 11

Complement clause constructions

> **Box 11.1: Non-existence of finite-nonfinite distinction in Mandarin**
>
> Cross-linguistically, we find a finite-nonfinite distinction in subordination. This distinction is arguably absent in Mandarin, even after detailed syntactic tests (Hu et al. 2001).

Chapter 12

Clause linking

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