

5 Topic and Focus

SHU-ING SHYU

1 Introduction

Topic and focus are notions related to how information is encoded in grammar. A sentence usually provides new information as the focus, either some part of it or the whole sentence; it may also contain information given in the discourse, known as the topic. This chapter concerns how topic and focus are expressed in various syntactic structures. Chinese is widely known as a topic-prominent language, which makes extensive use of topic-comment structures. Varying word order becomes the most common means to structure the discourse information. In addition, there is a range of ways to encode focus, such as via the use of certain morpheme *shi* “be,” and *lian . . . dou/ye* “including . . . all/also,” and through association with certain positions in a clause. However, it is generally not expressed via prosody. The chapter considers various approaches to the analysis of topics in Section 2, and then presents focus structures in Section 3. Objects at the clausal left-periphery and VP-periphery are presented in Section 4, followed by a summary in Section 5.

2 Topic

As one of the most extensively researched topics in Chinese grammar, the study of topics mainly concerns the following issues: (i) how a topic is defined (Li and Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1979, 1990; Shi 2000), (ii) whether a topic has its independent grammatical status and can co-exist with a subject in the same clause (Li and Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1979, 1990; Huang 1982; Li 1990; Jiang 1991; Ning 1993; Shyu 1995; Shi 2000; Huang *et al.* 2009) or whether a topic is merely a discourse notion (LaPolla 1993), and (iii) how a topic is syntactically represented

(Huang *et al.* 2009): via movement (Huang 1982) or base-generation (Xu and Langendoen 1985; C.-R. Huang 1991).

It has been widely noticed that there is an “aboutness” relationship between the topic and the comment, for example Chao (1968: 70), and Y. Huang (1994: 162), in the sense that the topics *neixie shumu* in (1a) and *Zhangsan* in (2b) are something about which the remaining clause – comment – talks. In their influential work on Chinese topic, Li and Thompson (1976; 1981) have characterized topics as a grammatical entity, possibly distinguished from the grammatical subject (vs. Chao 1968). The semantic characterization is that topics “set a framework in naming what the sentence is about, and they must be either definite [(1a), (2b)] or generic [(1b)]” (Li and Thompson 1981: 86).

- (1) a. *Neixie shumu* shushen da.
those tree trunk big
“Those trees, (their) trunks are big.”
b. *Daxiang, bi-zi hen chang*
elephant trunk very long
“Elephants, trunks are very long.”
- (2) a. *Wo yijing jian-guo Zhangsan le.*
I already see-Exp Zhangsan SFP
“I have already seen Zhangsan.”
b. *Zhangsan wo yijing jian-guo le.*
Zhangsan I already see Exp SFP
“Zhangsan, I’ve already seen (him).”

Li and Thompson’s “framework-setting” function of topics is aligned with Chafe’s (1976): a topic “sets a spatial, temporal, or individual framework within which the main predication holds” (1976: 50). This definition seems to better characterize the function of the topic since the comment part in (1a) is not **about** *neixie shumu* “those trees,” but rather their trunks (Chafe 1976).

In discourse, a topic functions to “relate the material in the sentence of which it is a part to some preceding sentence” (Li and Thompson 1981: 100). It may be a previously mentioned element as in (3b), and convey given information about which the speaker assumes the hearer has “some knowledge” (p. 15).

- (3) a. *Wo zai Xingguo xuexiao jiaoshu.*
I at Xingguo school teach
“I teach at Xingguo School.”
b. *Ou! Xingguo xuexiao, nar you yi-wei Zhang xiansheng ni*
Oh! Xingguo school there exist one-ClZhang Mr. you
renshi ma?
know Q
“Oh! Xingguo School, do you know a Mr. Zhang there?”

Syntactically, topics are optionally separated from the rest of the sentence by a pause particle, such as *a* (*ya*), *ne*, *me*, and *ba*; (Li and Thompson 1976, 1981; Tsao 1979, 1990, etc.). They usually occur in a clause-initial position and can be in other categories like time/locative phrases, or verb (phrases), Li and Thompson (ch. 4). There are three types of topics in Li and Thompson: (i) the first phrase in the so-called double-“subject” sentences as in (1), (ii) the “gapped topic” that has an associated gap in the comment as in (2b), (iii) the “gapless” or “dangling” topic that does not have an associated gap in the comment such as the first DP in (3b) and (4).

- (4) *Neichang huo*, xingkui xiaofangdui lai de kuai.
that-Cl fire, fortunately firefighter team come-DE-fast,
“As for that fire, fortunately the fire brigade came quickly.”
(Chao 1968; Li and Thompson 1981: 96)

2.1 Grammatical topic vs. dangling topic

Despite the above well-known functional characterizations, Shi (2000) notes that the pause markers mentioned above are interjection markers and they cannot be the formal topic markers, because they can also appear in other phrase boundaries. Without recourse to the vague functional definitions, he proposes the following grammatical functions of the topic.

- (5) A TOPIC is an unmarked NP (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. The clause related to the topic in such a way is the comment. (Shi 2000: 386)

He further states that a predication relation (e.g., Williams 1980, cf. Shyu’s (1995) adaptation of Kuroda’s (1992) categorical judgment Predication) is held between the topic and the comment, the latter of which is an open clause and contains a gap or a resumptive pronoun (RP) “coreferential with the topic” (Shi 2000: 388). The gap position is crucial for his grammatical definition to the extent that it is set out to distinguish “gapped” topics from the “gapless” dangling ones (DT). Against the DT analysis for the clause-initial DPs from (6) through (9), Shi treats them as the grammatical subject for the following reasons: (i) the lack of a corresponding gap position inside the comment and (ii) the comment functioning as the main predicate, syntactically predicated with the subject.

- (6) Tamen da-yu chi xiao-yu. (Shi 2000: 389)
they big-fish eat small-fish
“They act according to the law of the jungle.”

- (7) Tamen shei dou bu lai. (Teng 1974)
they who all not come
“They, none of them are coming.”

- (8) Na-zhong douzi yi-jin san-shi-kuan qian. (Li and Thompson 1976)
that-Cl bean one-catty three-ten-Cl money
“That kind of beans, one catty is thirty dollars.”

- (9) Wu-jia Niuyue zui gui. (Chen 1996)
thing-price New York most expensive
“Speaking of the price of things, New York is the most expensive.”

As for (4) and (10), which have often been grouped as gapless DTs, Shi (2000: 393) grants them the status of grammatical topics because they are related to a gap in the comment. *Neichang huo* in (4) either is related to the subject gap as in (4’), or functions as a temporal topic, *at the time of that fire*. Similarly, the DP topic in (10), as a PP with its P missing, is related to a position inside the comment.

- (4’) ... buran jiu ___ hui shao-si bu-shao ren.
otherwise really will burn-die not-few people
“... otherwise (it) would have killed many people.”

- (10) (Wei) zhejian shiqing ni bu neng guang ___ mafan yige ren.
for this-Cl matter you not can only bother one-Cl man
“For this matter, you cannot just bother one person.”

In short, as Shi’s definition of the topic crucially hinges on a gap in the comment, it is instrumental in clarifying various notions of topics and zooming in on the debates of the movement and base-generation derivations.

2.2 Movement and base-generation

The main issue regarding the syntactic properties of grammatical (gapped) topics concerns how topics are derived: by movement or base-generation. As first noted in Huang (1982), moved topics are sensitive to the complex DP island as in (11), and are constrained by the Condition on Extraction Domain (CED) including improper extraction from the possessor subject (12), and an adjunct clause (13). An empty trace in these islands results in ungrammaticality. Huang *et al.* discuss the option of a base-generation structure, illustrated by the resumption strategy that salvages movement violations in (11–13).

- (11) Lisi_i, wo renshi [henduo [*e_i/ta xihuan de] ren].
Lisi I know many he like DE person
“Lisi_i, I know many people who e_i/he_i likes.”

- (12) Zhangsan_i, wo kanjian-le [^{*}e_i/ta baba].
Zhangsan I see-Asp father
"Zhangsan_i, I saw ^{*}e_i/his_i father."
- (13) ^{*}Lisi_i, zhe-jian shi [gen ^{*}e_i/ta mei lai] mei you guanxi.
Lisi this-Cl matter with /he not come not have relation
"Lisi_i, this matter is not related to ^{*}e_i/his_i not having come."

Movement is evident in (14), in which the temporal/ PP topic is ambiguously construed either in the matrix or embedded clause. However, they cannot be interpreted as if they are inside the island of (15). The resumptive strategy is not available to PPs (Li 1990: 197).

- (14) Zuotian/Zai xuexiao, wo __ kandao yixie xuesheng __
yesterday/at school I see some students
shou-le shang.
get Asp wound
"Yesterday/At school, I know some students were wounded."
- (15) Zuotian/Zai xuexiao, wo kandao yixie [[shou-le shang de]
yesterday/at school I see some get-Asp wound DE
xuesheng].
student
"Yesterday/At school, I saw some students who were wounded."

Deriving topic structures by movement is further supported by some reconstruction effects (Huang *et al.* 2009: ch 6). The reflexive in (16a) and the R-expression topics in (16b) are interpreted in their base positions and the (un)acceptability of these sentences follows from the Binding Principles.

- (16) a. [Ziji_i-de shu]_j, Zhangsan_i bu xiang kan e_j.
Self's book Zhangsan not want read
"His_i own book, Zhangsan_i does not want to read."
b. ^{*}Zhangsan_i, ta_i shuo Lisi bu renshi e_i.
Zhangsan he say Lisi not know
"Zhangsan_i, he_i said that Lisi does not know (him_i)."

A complication arises concerning the subject-object asymmetry of the extracted domains. When the island occurs in a (pre-)subject position (11'–13'), island violations of their respective counterpart (11–13) become possible.

- (11') Lisi_i, [[e_i xihuan de] ren] hen duo.
Lisi like DE person very many
"Lisi_i, people who [he_i] likes are many."

- (12') Zhangsan_i, [e_i baba] hen you-qian.
Zhangsan father very rich
"Zhangsan_i, [his_i] father is rich."
- (13') Lisi_i, [yingwei e_i piping-le Zhangsan], ...
Lisi, because criticize-Asp Zhangsan
"(As for) Lisi_i, because [he_i] criticized Zhangsan ..."

On account of Huang's (1984) Generalized Control Rule (GCR), Huang *et al.* explain that (11'–13') actually involve an *e* (base-generated empty RP, or pro) that is co-indexed with the closest nominal, the base-generated topic in the A'-position, hence irrelevant to the island conditions.

- (17) The Generalized Control Rule (GCR):
An empty pronoun is co-indexed with the closest nominal.

Nevertheless, another problem arises as to why an object within a subject island as in (18) is also extractable, apparently in violation of GCR, with an intervening antecedent.

- (18) a. Zhe-ge xiaohai_i, [[Lisi zhaogu e_i] zui heshi.
this-Cl child Lisi care e_i most appropriate
"This child_i, that Lisi takes care of [him_i] is most appropriate."
b. Zhangsan_i, [[e_i piping e_i de ren]_j hen duo.
Zhangsan criticize DE person very many
"Zhangsan_i, people who criticize [him_i] are many."

Huang suggests that the object is first topicalized to a peripheral position within the embedded clause, leaving a trace and creating a pro; then the pro is co-indexed with the topic, subject to the GCR, as schematized in (19).

- (19) Topic_i, [Clause [Subject pro_i ... t_i] ...]

| _____ GCR _____ | | _____ Move _____ |

Huang *et al.* conclude that island conditions are relevant to topic structures, either derived by base-generation or movement. The apparent island violation cases actually involve a pro, which is identified with a topic conditioned by the GCR. However, the remaining question is: What position is a legitimate peripheral position for the pro created by movement? If a pro can be created as that in (19) to mitigate island violations, what bars the creation of a pro that would otherwise result in real island violations? I refer readers to Li's (2007) different account for some unexpected data. Despite the complication of interpreting the *e* (trace or

pro), the properties of islandhood and reconstruction are nevertheless useful for diagnosing movement not only in topicalization but also in other A'-movements discussed in Huang *et al.* (2009).

2.3 Hanging topics and left dislocated topics?

In the wake of the cartography approach of splitting Comp (Rizzi 1997, etc.), cartographic structures for Chinese topics have been proposed by Badan and del Gobbo (2010) and Paul (2005), as in (20).

(20) ForceP > TopicP* > (*lian-*) Focus > IP

The Topic field is further decomposed by Badan and del Gobbo (2010) into three hierarchical sub-layers: the Aboutness ("whole-part" or "possessive") Topic like (1), and the thematized Hanging Topic (HT) and Left Dislocation (LD) Topic.

(21) Aboutness Topic > HT > LD > *lian*-Focus > IP

Badan and del Gobbo (2010) propose that a HT in Chinese as in (22) is linked to an RP, but an LD topic in (23) is linked to a trace. An LD topic, but not an HT, can be a PP. Multiple LDs are possible, but not multiple HTs; see (24) vs. (25).

- (22) a. Zhangsan_i, wo kanjian ta_i le.
Zhangsan I saw him Perf
"Zhangsan_i, I saw him_i."
b. Zhangsan_i, wo gei nage shazi_i ji le yi fen xin.
Zhangsan I to that-Cl imbecile send Perf one Cl letter
"Zhangsan, I sent a letter to that imbecile."

- (23) a. Zhangsan_i, wo kanjian t_i le. = (2b)
b. Gei Zhangsan_i, wo *(gei ta_i/nage shazi_i) ji le
To Zhangsan I to him/that-Cl imbecile send Perf
yi fen xin.
one Cl letter
"To Zhangsan, I sent a letter."

- (24) *Zhejia yinhang_i, Zhangsan_j wo zhidao women keyi cong
This-Cl bank Zhangsan I know we can from
nali_i ti/wei ta_j jiedao hen duo qian.
there for him borrow very much Money
"This bank, Zhangsan, I think we can borrow money from it for him."

- (25) Cong zhejia yinhang_i, ti/wei Zhangsan, . . .
From this-Cl bank for Zhangsan
"From this bank, for Zhangsan, I think we can borrow money."

The issue at stake is whether Badan and del Gobbo's (2010) hierarchical distinctions for Chinese can be readily made similarly to those in Italian discussed in Benincà and Poletto (2004). Without providing semantic distinction of these two topic types, Badan and del Gobbo's (2010) observation amounts to saying that (i) a thematic DP topic, but not a thematic PP topic, can have a related RP; (ii) multiple PP-topicalization (their HT) is possible, but not multiple DP-topicalization (their LD). Point (i) is due to the lack of PP resumption; see Section 2.1. Note that Badan and del Gobbo (2010) assume that Italian Scene Setting (e.g., temporal/location) adverbs are distinguished from the HT and LD thematized topics, and are projected between them. But they treat Mandarin PPs in (25) as thematized LDs. It thus remains unclear whether the PPs are thematic arguments of the verb or Scene Setting PPs, and how they can be distinguished from the PPs as in (14), which usually are subsumed under the topic category. As for point (ii), it is suggested that the unacceptability of multiple DP-topicalization be ascribed to a general prohibition against moving multiple DP arguments, presumably for minimality or discourse reasons irrelevant to their HT labeling. Further research is needed to verify their comparison of Chinese topics with Italian counterparts.

3 Focus and focus constructions

Cross-linguistically, it has been generally observed that "Information focus" (InF) and "identificational focus" (IdF) are manifested differently in syntax (Kiss 1998). They exhibit different prosodic patterns (Bolinger 1965; Jackendoff 1972; Selkirk 1984; Büring 2003; Reinhart 2006, etc.), which may affect word order (Zubizarreta 1998). However, a fundamental question in Chinese is whether foci can be readily distinguished phonetically/phonologically. Though attempts have been made by Xu (2004) and Feng (2003),¹ the use of prosody and stress to signal focus or distinguish focus types in Mandarin Chinese is quite limited and different from languages such as English with a clear nuclear stress rule. Xu (2004) himself even acknowledges that Chinese "uses more syntax and less phonology in focus realization" (p. 277), and focus can be rendered without even requiring phonological manifestation. Shyu (2010) empirically demonstrates that contrastive stress itself does not contribute to disambiguating focus interpretations.² Consequently, it remains unclear whether word order variations are constrained by a nuclear stress rule (if any) or by the semantic/pragmatic information structure of placing new information in the S-final position preceded by old information (LaPolla 1995; Zhang and Fang 1996). Because of the lack of systematic phonetic/phonological studies, this chapter will not discuss these issues further. Instead it will concentrate on two focus constructions: *shi . . . de* "be . . . particle DE" clefts, and *lian . . . dou/ye* "including . . . all/also, even" constructions.

3.1 Shi . . . (de)

Often regarded as a cleft construction, *shi . . . de* sentences contain *shi* and a particle *de*. *Shi* is treated either as a focus/emphatic marker (Teng 1979; Huang 1982; Cheng 1983; Chiu 1993; Shi 1994; Lee 2005; Huang *et al.* 2009, etc.), a copula (Paris 1979; Paul and Whitman 2008), or a raising verb (Huang 1988). *De* can optionally co-occur with *shi*, to be discussed in the following subsections. The element immediately following *shi* generally serves as the focus, for example, subject focus in (26a) or adjunct focus in (26b).

- (26) a. *Shi* wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.
 SHI I at park-in find-arrive your dog DE
 "It was I that found your dog in the park."
 b. Wo *shi* zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao nide gou de.
 I SHI at park-in find-arrive your dog DE
 "It was in the park that I found your dog."

Other adverbial phrases can be focused: the temporal, instrumental, and manner adverbial phrases in (a–c), respectively.

- (27) a. Ta *shi* [qu-nian] lai de.³
 he SHI last-year come DE
 "It was last year that he came."
 b. Wo *shi* [yong shoudiantong] zhao-dao nide gou de.
 I SHI with flashlight find-arrive your dog DE
 "Lit: It is with the flashlight that I found your dog."
 c. Wo *shi* [zuo qiche] qu zhao nide gou de.
 I SHI take car go find your dog DE
 "It is by car that I went to find your dog."

Like most other adverbs, *shi* cannot occur post-verbally, as in (28). Rather, the object focus is expressed by (29) in Teng (1979) as a pseudo-cleft variant (Tang 1980).

- (28) *Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao *shi* nide gou de.
 I at park-in find-arrive SHI your dog DE
 "It is in the park that I found your dog."
 (29) Wo zai gongyuan-li zhao-dao de *shi* nide gou.
 I at park-in find-arrive DE SHI your dog

3.1.1 Bare *shi* sentence Traditionally *shi* sentences with and without *de* have often been treated indistinctly. However, Paul and Whitman (2008) distinguish *shi . . . de*, as the cleft proper, from *shi . . . Ø* (bare *shi*) sentences, which exhibit hybrid

properties. Subject narrow focus in bare *shi* (30) parallels that in *shi . . . de*, classified as the cleft proper.

- (30) *Shi* [Akiu] he -le hongjiu Ø.
 be Akiu drink-Asp red.wine
 "It's Akiu who drank red wine."

By contrast, in the "medial" bare *shi* sentences, *shi*, occurring between the subject and the verb or adjuncts, focuses on either the object in (31a), the verb in (31b), or the VP in (31c), exhibiting the association with focus (AwF) property (e.g., Rooth 1985, 1992). In (31d), even *shi* itself is focused to assert the proposition.

- (31) a. Ta *shi* xue [yuyanxue]_F, bu *shi* xue [fawen]_F.
 he be learn linguistics not be learn French
 "He studies linguistics, not French."
 b. Ta *shi* [xue]_F yuyanxue, bu *shi* [jiao]_F yuyanxue.
 he be learn linguistics not be teach linguistics
 "He studies, not teaches, linguistics."
 c. Ta *shi* [xue yuyanxue]_F, bu *shi* [jiao fawen]_F.
 he be learn linguistics not be teach French
 "He studies linguistics, he doesn't teach French."
 d. Juzhang [shi]_F tongyi ni qu.
 office-head be agree you go
 "The office head DOES agree with your going."

Assuming the exclusive/exhaustive interpretation required in a cleft sentence (Hungarian in Szabolcsi 1981; Kiss 1998), Paul and Whitman ascribe cleft proper to *shi . . . de* sentences and only the subject focus in bare *shi* sentences (cf. Xu 2002; and Tsai 2004), such as the exhaustive adjunct focus in (32a). On the other hand, they exclude medial bare *shi* types from the cleft proper, due to the relevance of association with focus (AwF) as in (31), and the lack of the exclusiveness in (32b), assuming AwF does not entail exclusiveness.

- (32) a. Ta *shi* zai Beijing xue zhongwen *de*, %(dan)
 I SHI at Beijing learn Chinese DE but
 ye *shi* zai Shanghai xue *de*.
 also SHI at Shanghai learn DE
 "% It's in Beijing that he studied Chinese, but also in Shanghai."
 b. Ta *shi* zai Beijing xue-guo zhongwen Ø, dan
 I SHI at Beijing learn-Exp Chinese but
 ye zai Shanghai xue-guo Ø.
 also at Shanghai learn-Exp
 "She studied Chinese in Beijing, but she also studied Chinese in Shanghai."
 (Paul and Whitman 2008: (12))

Paul and Whitman's classification does not answer the question of why AwF and exhaustiveness are mutually exclusive. Like English *only* (Jackendoff 1972; Rooth 1985, 1992), *zhi* can associate with the subject (AwF) to express exclusiveness; namely, (33a) does not entail (33b).

- (33) a. Zhi-you Zhangsan han Lisi he hongjiu
 only-have Zhangsan and Lisi drink red-wine
 "Only Zhangsan and Lisi drink red wine."
 b. Zhi-you Zhangsan he hongjiu.
 only-have Zhangsan drink red-wine
 "Only Zhangsan drinks red wine."

I thus suggest that bare *shi* sentences participate in AwF, regardless of being pre-subject or medial, and the semantic exhaustiveness criterion for characterizing cleft proper requires further scrutiny.

3.1.2 *Shi . . . de* The status of *de* in the *shi . . . de* construction is still under considerable debate. Some take it as nominalizing a clausal constituent/VP (e.g., Zhu 1961, 1978; Chao 1968; Paris 1979; Kitagawa and Ross 1982). Since it is often held that *shi . . . de* sentences assert realis eventuality, Dragunov (1958: 91) and Teng (1979) treat *de* as a past tense marker, and Shi (1994) treat it as an aspect. Integrating previous insights, Simpson and Wu (2002) propose that *de* has changed from a nominal D⁰ to a verbal T⁰ past tense morpheme.⁴ Cheng (2008) has proposed a lambda-operator *de* analysis when *shi* precedes the predicate, and *de* heading an AssertionP as an assertion operator when it has a sentential scope. Without going into the above details, in the following I will mainly center on the classifications of *shi . . . (de)*.

Paris (1979, 1998) and Lee (2005) have observed certain restrictions on the occurrence of *de*. While there is no predicate restriction when *shi* focuses on the subject (26a) or adjunct (2634b, 34a), Lee, excluding bare predicate focus from the cleft proper, notes that a bare dynamic predicate focus is ungrammatical as in (35b), but a bare stative predicate focus in (35a) is grammatical. Paris (1979, 1998) concludes that a bare predicate focus in *shi . . . de* sentences has to be stative or "predication of essence." Table 5.1 summarizes Lee's and Paul and Whitman's classifications.

- (34) a. Wo shi zuotian lai Taipei de.
 I SHI yesterday come Taipei DE
 "It was yesterday that I arrived at Taipei."
 b. *Wo zuotian shi lai Taipei de.
 I yesterday SHI come Taipei DE
 "It is true that I ARRIVED at Taipei yesterday."
 (Lee 2005: 178)
- (35) a. Zhangsan shi xihuan kan dianying (de).
 Zhangsan SHI like see movie DE
 "It is true that Zhangsan likes to see movies."

Table 5.1 Summary of Paul and Whitman's (2008) and Lee's (2005) classifications of *shi . . . (de)*.

	<i>shi . . . de</i>		Bare <i>shi</i> (<i>shi . . . ∅</i>)	
	Paul and Whitman	Lee	Paul and Whitman	Lee
Subject (focus)	cleft(26a)	cleft	cleft(30)	cleft
Medial <i>shi</i>	cleft(26b)	(i) cleft: Adjunct focus (ii) Bare predicate focus: (a) Dynamic predicate *(34b, 35b) (b) Stative predicate (35a) (predication of essence Paris 1998)	AwF	cleft (no difference in predicate types)

- b. *Zhangsan shi xihuan-shang kan dianying de.
 Zhangsan SHI like up see movie DE
 "It is true that Zhangsan began to like seeing movies."
 (Lee 2005: 203)

Table 5.1 demonstrates that while they both agree that the subject focus in bare *shi* and *shi . . . de* belongs to the "cleft" proper, they diverge in the medial bare *shi* and *shi . . . de* sentences.

In addition, Paul and Whitman identify the third type of *shi . . . de*, "propositional assertion" *kending yuqi*, termed by Zheng *et al.* (1992), which is "used to assert that a proposition is true and implicate that it is relevant to the current discourse situation" (p. 421), repeated in (36–37).

- (36) a. Wo shi chi-guo sherou de.
 I SHI eat-Exp snake-meat DE
 "(It is the case) that I have eaten snake meat."
 b. Ta shi gen ni kai wanxiao de.
 I SHI with you open joke DE
 "(It is the case) he was joking with you." (Adjunct focus reading is ignored here.)
 (Paul and Whitman 2008: (18))

They argue that propositional assertion *shi . . . de* in (37) is distinguished from the bare *shi* and *shi . . . de* sentences because the former allows counterfactuals and future-oriented conjectures, but the latter two do not (also see Lu 2003: 269).

- (37) Wo shi dao si dou hui xiang-zhe ni *(de).
 I SHI until death all will think-Dur you DE
 "(It is the case) I will think of you until I die."
 (Paul and Whitman: (24))

While previous researchers have elucidated the complex nature of *shi* . . . (*de*) sentences, questions still remain. Why is there predicate restriction on the bare predicate *shi* . . . *de* focus, as outlined in Table 5.1? It was mentioned above that attention has been paid to the realis eventualities or perfective aspect in *shi* . . . *de* such as in (38i), whereas the possibility of habitual reading as in (38ii) is largely neglected. More research on the aspectual viewpoint in relation to verb situation is called for.

- (38) Ta shi zaoshang he cha de.
 he SHI morning drink tea DE
 "(i) It is in the morning that he drank tea.
 (ii) (It is the case that) he drinks tea in the morning."

3.2 *Lian* . . . *dou/ye*

The *lian* . . . *dou/ye* literally meaning "including . . . all/also" *even*. The element immediately following *lian* is presupposed to be the least expected in the speaker's presupposition (e.g., the notion of "contra-expectation" in English *even* sentences in Karttunen and Peters (1979), or the most informative constituent ("informativeness" in Kay 1990). Hence, it is often considered as a focus (Paris 1979; Shyu 1995), vs. the topic account for *lian*-DP in Tsao (1994). The syntactic behavior of *lian* . . . *dou/ye* is distinct from that of sentences simply containing *shenzhi*, *jingrang*, *jurán* 'unexpectedly' adverbs; see Shyu (2004) for more details. As shown in the *lian*-focused subject and object sentences in (39) and (40) respectively, when *lian* occurs, *dou* or *ye* has to co-occur in the pre-verbal position invariantly.⁵ An object focus has to occur in a pre-verbal position in *lian* . . . *dou/ye* in (40), but stays in situ when it is just modified by the focus adverb as in (41).

- (39) Lian [Zhangsan] dou kan-guo zheben shu
 LIAN Zhangsan DOU read-Exp this-Cl book
 "Even Zhangsan read this book."
- (40) a. Zhangsan [lian zheben shu] dou kan-guo.
 Zhangsan LIAN this-Cl book DOU read-Exp
 b. [Lian zheben shu] Zhangsan dou kan-guo.
 LIAN this-Cl book Zhangsan DOU read-Exp
 "Zhangsan has read even this book."
- (41) Zhangsan shenzhi kan-guo naben shu.
 Zhangsan SHENZHI read-Exp that-Cl book
 "Zhangsan even has read that book."

This section concentrates on the *lian*-object occurring in a clause-medial position as in (40a), and the clause-initial counterpart will be postponed to Section 4.2. The first issue here is whether the *lian*-object is derived by movement (Tang 1977; Shyu 1995). In her pioneering work, Paris (1979) has argued against object fronting for two main reasons. First, a quantifier object (QP) in post-verbal or pre-verbal (42b) negative sentences results in different readings: (42a) negating the quantity *one*, but (42b) negating all.

- (42) a. Lisi meiyou he yi-bei cha
 Lisi not-have drink one-Cl tea
 "Lisi didn't drink a cup of tea."
 b. Lisi lian [yi-bei cha] dou mei he
 Lisi LIAN one-Cl tea DOU not-have drink
 "Lisi didn't even drink a cup of tea."

However, this should not be an argument against movement. Like a universal QP in (43) (Shyu 2004), the pre-verbal *lian*-object in (42b) is moved out of the scope of the negation, reminiscent of the isomorphism of QPs in Chinese (Huang 1982).

- (43) Lisi [mei-ge ren] dou mei jian-guo
 Lisi every-Cl person DOU not see-Exp
 "Lisi didn't know anyone."

Another argument by Paris concerns the ban on moving the object of idiomatic V-O compounds (e.g., *bi-ye* 'finish-profession, graduate' in (44)). However, Shyu (1995: section 3.1.3) shows that only frozen VO compounds (Tang 1989) are barred from object-preposing. Objects of breakable compounds are allowed, for example, *zhan-pianyi* 'stand-cheap, take advantage of' in (45).

- (44) *Ta zai 1950 nian lian [ye] dou mei bi.
 he be-at 1950 year LIAN profession DOU not finish
 (Paris 1979: (75))
 "He didn't even graduate in 1950."
- (45) Ta lian [pianyi] dou bu zhan. (Paris 1979: (77))
 he LIAN cheap DOU not stand
 "He doesn't take advantage of anybody."

In support of object-preposing (*lian*-focalization), Shyu (1995: 70–71) draws evidence from island sensitivity and A-movement properties. While *lian*-focalization can take place within a complex DP or an adjunct clause, repeated in (46b) and (47b) respectively, it cannot cross islands; see (46c) and (47c).

- (46) a. Zhangsan taoyan [[t_i kua-jiang Mali de] ren_i]
 Zhangsan dislike praise Mary Comp person
 "Zhangsan dislikes the person who praises Mary."

- b. Zhangsan taoyan [[t_i lian [Mali]_j dou kua-jiang t_j
LIAN Mary DOU praise
de] ren_i]
Comp person
"Zhangsan dislikes the person who praises even Mary."
- c. *Zhangsan lian [Mali]_j dou taoyan [[t_i kua-jiang (ta)_j
Zhangsan LIAN Mary DOU dislike praise
de] ren_i]
Comp person
"Even for Mary_j, Zhangsan dislikes the person who praises (her)_i."
- (47) a. Zhangsan [suiran mei chi fan], hai neng gongzuo
Zhangsan although not eat rice, still able work
"Although Zhangsan hasn't eaten, (he) is still able to work."
b. Zhangsan [suiran lian [fan]_i dou mei chi t_i], ...
Zhangsan although LIAN rice DOU not eat, ...
"Although Zhangsan hasn't even eaten (rice), ..."
c. *Zhangsan lian [fan]_i dou [suiran mei chi t_i], ...
Zhangsan LIAN rice DOU although not eat, ...

The A-movement properties of medial *lian*-O include clause-boundedness, and the absence of binding reconstruction. (48b) illustrates the fact that an embedded *lian*-DP cannot appear in the matrix clause.

- (48) a. Zhangsan renwei_[CP] Lisi lian Mali_i dou hen xihuan t_i
Zhangsan think Lisi LIAN Mary DOU very like
"Zhangsan thinks Lisi likes even Mary."
b. *Zhangsan [lian Mali_i] dou renwei_[CP] Lisi hen xihuan t_i
Zhangsan LIAN Mary DOU think Lisi very like
(Shyu: 80)

The absence of reconstruction effects is demonstrated by the following examples.

- (49) a. Wo bei Zhangsan_i qiang-zou le [yiben guanyu
I by Zhangsan rob-away Asp one-Cl about
taziji_i-de shu]
himself's book
"I was robbed by Zhangsan_i of a book about himself."
b. ?? Wo lian [yiben guanyu taziji_i-de shu]_j dou bei
I LIAN one-Cl about himself's book DOU by
Zhangsan_i qiang-zou le t_j.
Zhangsan rob-away Asp
"I was robbed of [even a book about himself_i] by Zhangsan_i."

- (50) a. *Wo bei ta_i qiang-zou le [yiben guanyu Zhangsan_i-de
I by he rob-away Asp one-Cl about Zhangsan's
shu]
book
"(lit.) I was robbed by him_i of a book of Zhangsan_i."
b. ?Wo lian [yiben Zhangsan_i-de shu] dou bei
I LIAN one-Cl Zhangsan's book DOU by
ta qiang-zou le.
him rob-away Asp
"(lit.) I was robbed of [even Zhangsan's_i book] by him_i."

Further complications arise when the *lian*-O appears in the clause-initial position, but they will be postponed until Section 4.2.

4 Topic, focus, and contrast

In addition to the "thematic" topics (TT) discussed in Section 2, topics may be interpreted contrastively. Although contrastive topics (CT) have been claimed to be distinguished from thematic topics by means of prosodic prominence (Lee 2007; Nakanishi 2007, etc.), syntax (Hoji 1985), and semantics such as in Japanese, Korean, and English, Chinese CTs are often subsumed under TTs (Shi 2000, fn. 6; Badan and del Gobbo 2010). As mentioned above, there is a lack of systematic prosodic distinction in Chinese focus types. Therefore, intuitive prosodic judgment is seldom employed to be the main characterization of Mandarin CTs, or to distinguish CTs from TTs, even though CTs may be pronounced and perceived with prominence.⁶ Hence, this section focuses on the interpretative properties. Left-peripheral bare objects and *lian*-objects are presented in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 respectively, and clause-medial objects in Section 4.3

4.1 Left-peripheral contrastive topic

A CT (i) can be indefinite, (ii) often occurs in a clause that (implicitly or explicitly) juxtaposes a contrastive conjunct(s) – a listed CT, (iii) does not necessarily express exclusiveness/exhaustiveness, and (iv) may be preceded by a topic of sum, a superordinate/super-category. Note that these properties are not unique to CTs; they can overlap with those of TTs, except for point (i).

Point (ii) is illustrated in (51), in which *baijiu* "white wine," a listed CT, is contrasted with *piljiu* "beer" (e.g. Benincà and Poletto, 2004; Badan and del Gobbo 2010), and is not necessarily new information (Paul 2005).

- (51) [Baijiu] Laozhang bu he, buguo [piljiu] ta hui he
white-wine old-Zhang not drink but beer he will drink
"Old Zhang does not drink white wine, but he drinks beer."

It is widely accepted that CTs can be indefinite (Tsai 1994: 138) as in (52). Note, however, that *yi-pian-lunwen* is actually treated as a “definite” quantity-denoting expression in Huang *et al.* (2009: 211), based on Li (1998).

- (52) Yi-pian lunwen, wo hai keyi yingfu. (liang-pian, na
One-Cl paper I still can handle two-Cl that
jiu tai duo le.)
then too much LE
“One paper, I can still handle. (Two papers, that’s too much.)”

A stressed topic as in (53) does not seem to render exclusiveness because one of the conjuncts can be entailed, on a par with the non-exclusiveness in TTs (Xu 2002).

- (53) BAIJIU HAN PIJIU Laozhang xihuan he.
white-wine and beer old-Zhang like drink
“Old Zhang likes to drink white wine and beer.”

CTs are often preceded by (or contextually assumed) a topic of sum to express a “lower type” (a hyponym) (Lee 2007); for example, the *haizi* ‘child’-CT *erzi* ‘son’ pair in (54). Consequently, unlike TTs, CTs do not have to be previously mentioned.

- (54) A. Ni you hai-zi ma?
you have child Q
“Do you have children?”
B. Er-zi wo you, (keshi nu-er meiyou)
son I have, but daughter not-have
“I have sons (, but don’t have daughters).”

Related to this property, a CT (*meiguihua* “rose” in (55)) bears a part-whole relation with an aboutness topic *hua* “flower.”

- (55) Hua (a), MEIGUIHUA_i, wo zui bu ai *t_i*
flower Part, rose I most not love
“Among flowers, Roses, I dislike most.”
(Paul 2005)

Currently it is not clear whether TTs and CTs occupy different syntactic positions.

4.2 Clause-initial *lian*-DP

This section considers clause-initial *lian*-DPs, based on Shyu (1995). *Lian*-DPs in this position have properties distinct from those in the clause-medial position discussed in Section 3.2.

4.2.1 *Movement and base-generation* Two types of long-distant dependency between a clause-initial *lian*-object and the embedded object position have been identified in Shyu (1995): the *dou* occurring in the embedded clause as in (56), and *dou* in the matrix clause, as in (57), as schematized in (58). Sentences (56) and (58a) exhibit movement properties (e.g., island violations (46c, 47c), and Binding-type reconstruction effects (59)), but (57) and (58b) do not.

- (56) *Lian* Mali_i Zhangsan renwei [_{CP} Lisi *dou* bu xihuan *t_i*].
LIAN Mali Zhangsan think Lisi all not like
“Even Mali, Zhangsan thinks that Lisi also doesn’t like *t_i*.”
- (57) *Lian* Mali_i Zhangsan *dou* renwei [_{CP} Lisi bu xihuan *e_i/ta_i*].
LIAN Mali Zhangsan all think Lisi not like (her)
“Lit. Even Mali, Zhangsan also thinks that Lisi doesn’t like her.”
- (58) a. *Lian*-DP_i Subj ... [_{CP} S *t_i* *dou* V *t_i*]
b. *Lian*-DP_i Subj *dou*-V ... [_{CP} S V *e_i*]
- (59) *Lian* [(guanyu taziji_{1/2} de wenzhang]₃ Zhang₁ renwei Lisi₂ *dou* piping guo *t₃*
LIAN about he-self’s article Zhang think Lisi DOU criticize Exp
“Even about his own_{1/2} article, Zhangsan₁ thinks Lisi₂ has made criticism.”

Base-generation derivation is evidenced from the resumption strategy (possible in the clause-initial (60a) but not the clause-medial position (60b)), and its remedy of island violations in (61).

- (60) a. *Lian* Mali_i Zhangsan *dou* bu song-gei *ta_i* shu,
LIAN Mali Zhangsan DOU not give she book
“lit: Even Mali, Zhangsan doesn’t give her books.”
b. *Zhangsan *lian* Mali_i *dou* bu song-gei *ta_i* shu
- (61) a. *Lian* Lisi_i Zhangsan *dou* bu kan [*ta_i/*t_i* de shu].
LIAN Lisi Zhangsan DOU not read his book
“lit: Even Lisi, Zhangsan does not read his book.”
b. *Lian* Mali_i Zhangsan *dou* taoyan
LIAN Mary Zhangsan DOU dislike
[_{NF}[_{CP} *e_i* kua-jiang *ta_i/*t_i* de] ren_i]
praise she DE person
“Even for Mali_i, Zhangsan dislikes the person who praises her_i.”

Shyu suggests that the clause-initial *lian*-DP in (58a) results from a further movement after clause-medial focalization, discussed in Section 3.2.

4.2.2 *Topic, focus, Topic Focus, or contrastive topic?* Clause-initial *lian*-DPs have often been assumed to be left-peripheral focus (e.g., Paris 1998; Paul 2005; Badan and del Gobbo 2010). However, if they are moved to check left-peripheral [+Focus] feature (e.g., Rizzi 1997, 2004), it becomes unclear why a clause-medial *lian*-focalized object needs to check [Focus] twice. As shown above, clause-initial *lian*-DPs may be derived either by movement or base-generation. Shyu (1995) thus assigns them the Topic position, on a par with the Topic structures discussed in Section 2.

Seeing the ambivalent topic-focus nature of the clause-initial *lian*-DP, Xu and Liu (2007: 86) treat the clause-initial and medial *lian*-DPs uniformly as Topic Focus. Against this view, Chu (2003) considers them as CTs or “changed topics”, stating that they are “being introduced against a background – i.e. against the presupposition that the entity represented by the NP is the least expected. . .” (p. 275); also see Tsao (1994).

The utterances of *lian . . . dou* indeed retrieve to speaker’s presupposition: the focused element being presupposed to be the most informative. However, the presupposed informative element is not always equivalent to the background information that a topic is being introduced against. A topic is some entity activated in the discourse (Lambrecht 1994), whereas presupposition held by the speaker need not have been activated. To illustrate, a *lian*-medial focus sentence can occur in an out-of-the-blue context ((62a) and (62b-i)), in which presupposition is held but background has not been activated. *Rice* has not been mentioned before, but is presupposed to be the least expected. By contrast, the clause-initial *lian-fan* in (62bii) is less natural because a *lian*-DP at the left-periphery requires activated information.

- (62) a: Zenme le?
how Asp
“What’s the matter?”
b-i: Xiaogou [lian fan] dou bu chi.
little-dog LIAN rice DOU not eat
b-ii: #[Lian fan] xiaogou dou bu chi
LIAN rice little-dog DOU not eat
“The little dog doesn’t even eat.”

When the context is shared by the interlocutors, both patterns are possible.

- (63) a: Zhege yanhui Lisi hoaxing renshi hen-duo ren
This-Cl party Lisi seem know very-many people
“It seems that Lisi knows many people in this party.”
b-i: Ta [lian fuwusheng] dou renshi.
he LIAN waiter all know
b-ii: [Lian fuwusheng] ta dou renshi
LIAN waiter he all know
“He even knows the waiters.”

It is thus suggested that a clause-initial *lian*-phrase is a CT that shares the properties of the CT discussed in Section 4.1, while the clause-medial *lian*-focus is kept intact.

4.3 VP peripheral object

In addition to the left-peripheral topic (Section 4.2), an object may appear in the immediate pre-verbal position (64). Two main approaches have been proposed: treating it as (i) a left-peripheral topic, the subject also being topicalized (Xu and Langendoen 1985; or Double Topicalization in Tang 1990 and Lin 1992), or (ii) in a clause internal (CI), VP-peripheral position. One main argument for the latter approach is that the CI objects are contrastive or emphatic in interpretation (Tsai 1994; Ernst and Wang 1995; Shyu 1995, 2001; Zhang 2001; Huang *et al.* 2009, etc.), as in (64–65). Unlike left-peripheral topics that allow resumption, the CI-object cannot, as shown in (66) (Shyu 1995).

- (64) wo [zheben shu] kan-guo ____
I this-Cl book read-Exp
“I, this book, have read.”
(65) wo yi-pian lunwen keyi yingfu, (liang-pian jiu bu xing le)
I one-Cl paper can handle 2-Cl-paper then not can Asp
“I can handle one paper (but not two).”
(66) Zhangsan_i [xiaohai]_j kanjian ta_{i/j} le.
Zhangsan kid saw him Perf
“Zhangsan_i, kids_j, saw him_{i/j}.”

Several pairs of terms have been employed to contrast CI-objects with clause-initial objects: Focus Topic/discourse topic (Ernst and Wang 1995), secondary/primary topics (Ting 1995, cf. Tsao 1979), subtopic/main topic (Xu and Liu 2007), and internal/external topics (Paul 2002, 2005). Specifically, three views of the CI-objects have been proposed: (i) Focus, (ii) (VP-peripheral) Topic, and (iii) a mixed view.

Focus approaches of the object movement (O-M) further diverge in terms of adjunction (Ernst and Wang 1995; Lu 1994; Tang 1990) and substitution (Qu 1994; Shyu 1995, 2001; and Zhang 2001). A unified mechanism for O-M substitution and *lian*-focalization is argued for in Shyu (1995, 2001); also see Gao (1994) and Zhang (2001). However, this unified focus account is challenged by the topic approach (e.g., Paul 2002, 2005; Badan 2007; P. Kuo 2009). Along the lines of the VP-peripheral cartographic structure (Belletti 2004; Benincà and Poletto 2004), the CI-object is treated as an “internal topic” in Paul (2002, 2005) and Kuo (2009), or as a CT in Badan (2007), due to the possible co-occurrence of a CI-object and a *lian*-object in (67).

- (67) Lisi ta [yingyu] [lian liushi-fen] (*yingyu) dou mei nadao
 Lisi he English LIAN 60-point (English) DOU not obtain
 "Lisi didn't even obtain 60 points in English"
 (Paul 2005: 60)

Paul (2002) further argues that the CI-object in (698) cannot be focused in *shi* . . . *de* sentences.

- (68) *Women shi gugon qu-guo de.
 we SHI imperial-palace go-Exp DE
 "We have been to the imperial palace."
 (Paul 2002: 702 (21b))

However, Hsu (2008: (10)) observes that a CI-object can be focused by *shi* in a bare *shi* sentence in contrastive contexts.

- (69) wo shi yi-pian lunwen keyi yingfu (, liang-pian jiu bu
 I SHI one-CI paper can handle two-CI then not
 xing le)
 can Asp
 "It is one paper that I can handle (, but not two)."

Hsu (fn.5) further notes that a CI-*wh*-object and answer pair is possible, as in (70), which expresses an identificational (contrastive) focus as opposed to in situ *wh*-phrases carrying an information focus.

- (70) a. ni shemo xiewan-le? (Baogao?)
 you what write Asp
 "What did you finish? (Paper?)"
 b. wo [(shi) zuoye] xiewan-le (baogao hai-mei)
 I SHI assignment write-PERF paper not-yet
 "It is the assignment that I finished (not the paper)."
 (Hsu 2008: (5))

Because a CI-focus can be preceded by a topic as in (71), Hsu (2008) argues for multiple VP-peripheral positions that accommodate (Aboutness) topic, CT, and focus, as in (72).

- (71) a. ta [shuiguo] [shemo] zui chang chi?
 he fruit what most often eat
 "Speaking of fruit, what does he eat most often?"
 b. ta [shuiguo] (shi) [pingguo] zui chang chi
 he fruit SHI apple most often eat
 "(Fruit,) he eats apples most often."
 (Hsu 2008: (13))

- (72) Subject > TopicP* > (*lian*-) Focus > VP

In short, VP-periphery may host aboutness topic, focused bare object, and *lian*-focus positions. Whether the latter two are in the same or different projections requires further scrutiny.

5 Summary

This chapter has surveyed topic and focus structures pertaining to word order variations. A topic, which occurs at the clausal left-periphery, expresses information that has been activated in the discourse. A CT is rendered when there is (an) understood contrastive alternative(s). Focus sentences with *shi* should be distinguished into *shi* . . . *de* and bare *shi* types because of predicate restrictions observed in the former and AwF involved in the latter. *Lian*-Os at the clausal left-periphery and VP-periphery are also reviewed. Although *lian*-O is often treated as a focus, the clause-initial one shares the properties of the CT. As for the SOV sentence, the object may be an aboutness topic, a CT, or a focus. Consequently, multiple VP-peripheral positions are called for, on a par with left-peripheral ones.

NOTES

- 1 Please refer to Chapter 19 on prosody in this volume.
- 2 Shyu (2010) found that Taiwanese Mandarin adult speakers were insensitive to contrastive stress in resolving ambiguity in *zhi* "only" associated arguments in triadic constructions (double object and dative alternation constructions). Rather the direct object focus was interpreted as the most prominent in both constructions, contra to the indirect object focus in the dative sentences by English-speaking adults in Gualmini *et al.* (2003), and the VP default focus predicted by Reinhart (2006). She suggests accounts of syntactic basicness or thematic prominence of the DO for the predominant DO focus associate. Further research is called for to better understand the asymmetries between Mandarin and other non-tonal languages.
- 3 We are not concerned with the headless relative reading here: *ta shi qunian lai de ren*, meaning *he is the one who came last year*; (see Chao 1968; Zhu 1978; Teng 1979; Paris 1979).
- 4 I refer readers to Li's (2012) comprehensive references of *de* in nominal phrases.
- 5 This paper will not distinguish *dou* and *ye* and simply use *dou* for all the examples.
- 6 This is unlike Japanese contrastive topics that can be prosodically and syntactically distinguished from thematic topics, as in Hoji (1985), etc.

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