

On the positioning of Mandarin contrastive topic *-ne*

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Overview

- Looking at Mandarin discourse particle *-ne*
- Shows up in two positions:
 - Topic **-ne** Comment
 - Sentence **-ne**
- Claim: *-ne* marks Contrastive Topic (CT)
- Question: How do we account for the positioning of CT *-ne*?

Roadmap

1. What is contrastive topic?
2. Mandarin *-ne* marks CT
3. The positioning of *-ne*

What is Contrastive Topic?

CT+Exh, Exh+CT and Lone CT

(1) A: What about Persephone and Antonio?
What did *they* bring?

B: [*Persephone*]_{CT} ... brought [the *gaspacho*]_{Exh}. **CT+Exh**

L+H* L-H% H* L-L%

(2) A: What about the gazpacho and the salad?
Who brought *those*?

B: [*Persephone*]_{Exh} brought [the *gaspacho*]_{CT} ... **Exh+CT**

H* L- L+H* L-H%

(3) A: What about Persephone and Antonio?
Did *they* bring anything?

B: [*Persephone*]_{CT} brought something ... **Lone CT**

L+H* L-H%

Sentential CT

(4) (Is John home?)

a. [His *lights* are on]_{CT} ...
 L+H* L-H%

b. [It's after *midnight*]_{CT} ...
 L+H* L-H%

- Can “Lone CT” be covered under a general theory of CT?
- Yes? (Jackendoff 1972, Büring 2003, Constant in prep.)
- No? (Wagner 2012, Constant 2012a)
- Treat these examples separately as “Rise-Fall-Rise”
- Answer for today: Yes

CT Realizations

- **Prosody**

- English (Jackendoff 1972)
- German (Féry 1993)

- **Discourse Particle**

- Japanese (Tomioka 2010b)
- Korean (Lee 2003)
- Mandarin (Constant 2011)
- Paraguayan Guaraní (Tonhauser 2012)
- Russian (Lee 2003)
- Dholuo (Constant 2009)

- **Word Order**

- Hungarian (Gyuris 2002)
- Czech (Sturgeon 2006)
- Italian (Frascarelli and Hinterhölzl 2007)

Features of CT (1/2)

(5) CT Resists Maximal Elements

- a. [*Most* of them]_{CT} ... took [the *early* train]_F.
 L+H* L-H% H* L-L%
- b. # [*All* of them]_{CT} ... took [the *early* train]_F.
 L+H* L-H% H* L-L%

(6) CT Resists Direct Resolving Answers

- a. (Is his car some crazy color?)
 His car is [*orange*]_{CT} ... (but is that really so crazy?)
 L+H* L-H%
- b. (What color is his car?)
 #His car is [*orange*]_{CT} ...
 L+H* L-H%

Features of CT (2/2)

(7) CT Marks Contrasting Questions

(Tomioka 2010a)

... Zyaa *Erika-wa* doko-e itta-no?
then Erika-WA where went-Q
'..., well then, where did [Erika]_{CT} go?'

(8) Features of Contrastive Topic

- a. marks non-maximal elements (e.g. *most*)
resists maximal elements (e.g. *all*)
- b. marks partial answers
resists direct resolving answers
- c. marks contrasting sub-questions of larger issue
resists simple out-of-the-blue questions

Mandarin *-ne* marks CT

Properties of *-ne*

- Properties of *-ne*
 - written 呢
 - toneless clitic [-nə]
 - followed by a pause
 - generally optional
 - conversational (Li and Thompson 1981: 304)

Distribution of *-ne* (1/2)

(9) 妈妈 每天 晚上 很 晚 才 回家。

Māma měi-tiān wǎnshàng hěn wǎn cái huí-jīā.

mom every-day night very late only.then return-home

爸爸 呢, 干脆 就 不 回来。

Bàba **ne**, gāncuì jiù bù huí-lái.

dad CT simply just not return-come

'Every day mom doesn't come home until late.

(Shao 1989)

Dad **NE**, doesn't even come back at all.'

(10) (I think they're definitely more than just normal friends. I see them together every day.)

他们 还 手 拉着 手 呢!

Tāmen hái shǒu lā-zhe shǒu **ne**!

they even hand hold-DUR hand CT

'And they even hold hands **NE**!'

(Julie Jiang p.c.)

Distribution of *-ne* (2/2)

(11) 你 喜不喜欢 她 呢?

Nǐ xǐ-bù-xǐhuan tā **ne**?

you like-not-like her CT

'(In that case,) do you like her?'

(Li and Thompson 1981)

(12) 她 要 吃 什么 呢?

Tā yào chī shénme **ne**?

you want eat what CT

'(In that case,) what does she want to eat?'

(13) 她 会 拉 小提琴。 你 呢?

Tā huì lā xiǎotíqín. Nǐ **ne**?

She can play violin you CT

'She can play violin. What about you **NE**?'

Debate on *-ne*'s Meaning

- How many are there? What do they mean?
- Chao (1968): 7 distinct meanings
question in context, question with specific point, deliberate pause, mild warning, continuing state, assertion of equal degree, interest in additional information
- “Meaning Minimalists”
 - Alleton (1981), Hu (1981), Chu (1984, 1985b, 1998), Lin (1984), King (1986), Shao (1989), Shi and Zhang (1995), ...
 - Li and Thompson (1981): response to expectation
 - Chu (2006): looking back for contrast
- “Near-Minimalists”
 - Li (2006), Wu (2006): topic-marking vs. sentence-final (evaluative)
 - Constant (2011): contrastive topic vs. durative aspect

-ne Resists Maximal Elements

(14) a. 大部分 的 事情 呢 都 很 难办。

Dàbùfen de shìqìng **ne** dōu hěn nán-bàn.

most DE matter CT DISTR very difficult-manage

'Most of these things **NE** are hard to deal with.'

b. 所有 的 事情 (#呢) 都 很 难办。

Suǒyǒu de shìqìng (#**ne**) dōu hěn nán-bàn.

all DE matter CT DISTR very difficult-manage

'All of these things (#**NE**) are hard to deal with.'

-ne Resists Complete Answers

(15) (Is Zhangsan going to the conference?)

他 跟 我 说 要 去 呢,
Tā gēn wǒ shuō yào qù **ne**...
he with me say will go NE

但是 他 还 没 买 机票。
(dànshì tā hái méi mǎi jī-piào.)
but he still have.not buy plane-ticket

'He *told* me he's going **NE** ... (but he still hasn't bought a ticket.)'

(16) (How did you find out that Zhangsan is going to the conference?)

他 跟 我 说 要 去 (#呢)。
Tā gēn wǒ shuō yào qù (#**ne**).
he with me say will go NE

'He *told* me he's going (#**NE**).'

-ne Marks Contrasting Questions

(17) Context: A calls B on the phone out of the blue.

A: 你 想不想 今天 晚上 出去 吃 火锅 (??呢)?
 Nǐ xiǎng-bù-xiǎng jīntiān wǎnshàng chū-qù chī huǒguō (??ne)?
 you want-not-want today night out-go eat hotpot CT
 'Do you want to go out for hotpot tonight (??NE)?'

B: Not really.

A: (那) 你 想不想 吃 水煮鱼 呢?
 (Nà) nǐ xiǎng-bù-xiǎng chī shuǐ-zhǔ-yú ne?
 then you want-not-want eat water-boil-fish CT
 'Then do you want to have boiled fish NE?'

Aspectual *-ne*

(18) A: Are you at home?

B: 在 家 呢。

Zài jiā ne.

at home DUR

'Yeah, I'm at home **NE**.'

(19) A: Is the door open?

B: 开着 呢。

Kāi-zhe ne.

open-ASP DUR

'Yeah, it's open **NE**.'

- Examples failing CT diagnostics involve situations viewed as ongoing
- Sentence-final *-ne* can mark “continuing state”
(Chao 1968, Chu 1978, Marney 1980, Chan 1980)

The positioning of *-ne*

CT as a Focus Operator

- CT phrase is a focus, bound by a focus sensitive operator (Tomioka 2010b, Wagner 2012, Constant 2012b)

- $[\cdot]_F$ marks alternative-generating focus (Rooth 1985)
- Focus-sensitive operators can use alternatives to different effects

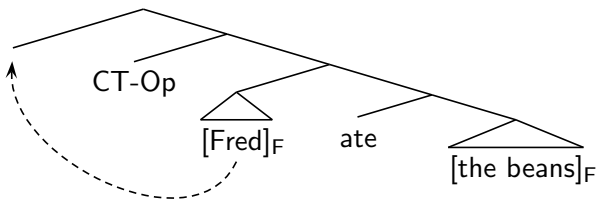
- (20) a. David only wears a bow-tie when [*teaching*]_F. (Beaver & Clark '08)
b. David only wears [*a bow-tie*]_F when teaching.

- (21) David even wears [*a bow-tie*]_F when teaching.

Contrastive Topic Abstraction

(22)

Constant 2012b



- CT phrase interpreted at CT operator position, in left periphery
- CT movement can be covert or overt
- CT operator presupposes set of questions about different topics
- See Constant 2012b for semantics

-ne as CT Operator

- CT operator in left periphery can be realized overtly
 - English: tonal morpheme L-H% Constant (2012b, in prep.)
 - Guaraní: 2nd position clitic *-katu* (Tonhauser 2012)
- Claim: Mandarin *-ne* also spells out CT operator
- But what controls the position of *-ne*?

-ne as Intonational Phrase Clitic

- -ne is always followed by a prosodic break
- Initial support from CCL corpus (300M char):
 - 12 adverbials in initial (pre-subject) position
 - without -ne: 38% comma usage
 - with -ne: 93% comma usage
- Claim: -ne is an intonational phrase enclitic
- Prediction: -ne must be spelled out at an IntP right edge
- So what determines IntP break locations?

The Prosody of Topicalization

- Topicalization serves to separate topic (CT) and focus (Exh) into separate prosodic domains (Féry 2007)

(23) a. $\underbrace{-ne \dots CT \dots}_{\uparrow} \text{ Exh } \dots \Rightarrow (CT -ne)_{IntP} (\dots \text{ Exh } \dots)_{IntP}$

b. $\underbrace{-ne \dots CT \dots}_{\uparrow} \Rightarrow (\dots CT \dots -ne)_{IntP}$

Lone CT

(24) 他 跟 我 说 要 去 呢...

Tā gēn wǒ shuō yào qù **ne**...

he with me say will go NE

'He [told]_{CT} me he's going **NE** ... (but he still hasn't bought a ticket.)'

(25) A: His family is poor, so you'd do better to stay away from him.

B: 他 家 有 三 头 牛 呢。

Tā jiā yǒu sān tóu niú **ne**.

His family have three CL cow CT

'[His family has three cows]_{CT} **NE** ... (!)'

(Isn't that proof that they're not poor?)

(Tsao 2000, Li and Thompson 1981)

CT Questions

(26) (Lisi isn't going.)

那 张三 去不去 呢?

Nà Zhāngsān qù-bu-qù **ne**?

then Zhangsan go-not-go CT

'Then is [Zhangsan]_{CT} going **NE**?'

Unraisable CT

(27) 我 还 给了 爷爷 一 个 呢。

Wǒ hái gěi-le yéyé yī gè **ne**.

I also give-PFV grandpa one CL CT

'I also gave one to grandpa **NE**.'

(28) A: What about grandpa? Did you give him one?

B: #(27)

(29) A: Who else did you give one to?

B: ✓(27) = 'I [also]_{CT} gave one to [grandpa]_{Exh} **NE**.'

Summary

- *-ne* conveys CT meaning, but sometimes at a distance from CT phrase
- *-ne* realizes CT operator in the left periphery
- *-ne* surfaces at the nearest IntP edge
- Overt topicalization serves to get CT and Exh into separate IntP's
- With lone CT or unraisable CT, sentence will be one IntP, so *-ne* is final

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