On the positioning of Mandarin contrastive topic -ne

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Information Structure and Word Order:
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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?
Contrastive Topic and Exhaustive Focus

(1) A: What about Persephone and Antonio? What did they bring?
B: \([ Persephone ]_{CT} \ldots \text{brought} \ [ \text{the gazpacho} ]_{Exh}\).

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

- Exhaustive Focus (Exh) answers a question
- Contrastive Topic (CT) is what current question is about, implies other question(s) about different topic(s)
(1) A: What about Persephone and Antonio? What did they bring?
   B: [Persephone]_{CT} ... brought [the gazpacho]_{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 gazpacho]_{CT} ...
      H* L-                         L+H* L-H%

(3) A: What about Persephone and Antonio? Did they bring anything?
   B: [Persephone]_{CT} brought something ... 
      L+H*                         L-H%
Sentential CT

(4) (Is John home?)

a. [His \textit{lights} are on]_{CT} \ldots
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{L+H}^* \\
   & \text{L-H}\%
   \end{align*}

b. [It’s after \textit{midnight}]_{CT} \ldots
   \begin{align*}
   & \text{L+H}^* \\
   & \text{L-H}\%
   \end{align*}

- 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. \[ \left[ \text{Most of them} \right]_{CT} \ldots \text{took} \left[ \text{the early train} \right]_F. \]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
L+H^* & L-H^\% & H^* & L-L^\% \\
\end{array}
\]

b. \#\[ \left[ \text{All of them} \right]_{CT} \ldots \text{took} \left[ \text{the early train} \right]_F. \]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
L+H^* & L-H^\% & H^* & L-L^\% \\
\end{array}
\]

(6) **CT Resists Direct Resolving Answers**

a. (Is his car some crazy color?)

His car is \[ \left[ \text{orange} \right]_{CT} \ldots \text{but is that really so crazy?} \]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
L+H^* & L-H^\% \\
\end{array}
\]

b. (What color is his car?)

\#His car is \[ \left[ \text{orange} \right]_{CT} \ldots \]

\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
L+H^* & L-H^\% \\
\end{array}
\]
Features of CT (2/2)

(7) **CT Marks Contrasting Questions**

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

(Tomioka 2010a)

(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-jiā.

'Every day mom doesn’t come home until late. (Shao 1989)

(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!

'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”
  - 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 shìqing 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 shìqing (#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).’
(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”  
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 \([\textit{teaching}]_F\). (Beaver & Clark ’08)
   b. David only wears \([\textit{a bow-tie}]_F\) when teaching.

(21) David even wears \([\textit{a bow-tie}]_F\) when teaching.
• 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. -ne ... CT ... Exh ... ⇒ (CT -ne )\text{\textsubscript{IntP}} ( ... Exh ... )\text{\textsubscript{IntP}}

b. -ne ... CT ... ⇒ ( ... CT ... -ne )\text{\textsubscript{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?
them 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
References


References


Féry, Caroline. 1993. German Intonational Patterns. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag GmbH & Co KG.


References


References IV


