

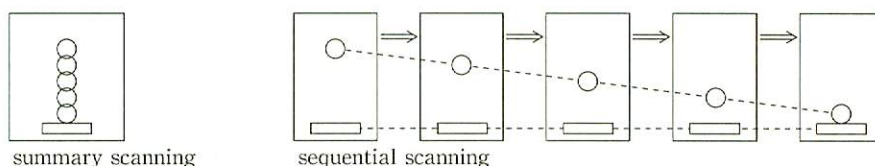
The Interpretation of Chinese Usages through the Image-Schemas

Masato YAMAZAKI

1. Introduction

Cognitive studies have recently attracted a great deal of interest among researchers in the field of not only language studies but also human behaviour. Cognitive research has brought light to many features, some of which were conventionally explained by linguistic arbitrariness. Explanations have been provided for phenomena such as numeral aspect of nouns that are different between languages: collective nouns, for example are treated differently in different languages, while several important studies have also investigated the distinction between countable nouns and uncountable nouns.¹⁾

Recent studies, based on a cognitive approach, have made it clear that these phenomena reflect the way a speaker recognizes objects. Langacker(1987: 146) gives examples of the semantic differentiation between a nominal expression and a verbal expression: *He took a fall* is regarded as an example of 'summary scanning', and Langacker, op. cit., p.145 explains, "It is basically additive, each set of events contributing something to a single configuration all facets of which are conceived as coexistent and simultaneously available", while *He fell* is considered an example of 'sequential scanning', and Langacker, ibid. describes, "For a series of distinct configurations to be perceived as a coherent evolving scene, correspondences must be established among them, and each configuration serves as standard for an act of comparison (possibly quite complex) that constitutes a recognition of disparity between it and the next". Whereas the two examples above share a similar meaning with regard to what has happened, the two utterances are based on different aspects of the speaker's viewpoint. There are well-known figures showing two modes of cognitive processing in Langacker, op. cit., p.144. See below.



From the viewpoint of the figure-ground interpretation, the most significant point is that the former has no interruption between figures, i.e. no insertion of the ground between each figure, while the latter has a successive but intermittent arrangement of figures, which gradually change the position relative to the ground.

The author calls the first mode unific, where the speaker views the object as a single entity, looking from a synthetic viewpoint, while the second mode is designed discrete, where the speaker sees the object as consisting of members, looking from an analytic viewpoint.

The present paper examines two Chinese usages through the image-schematic interpretation.²⁾

2. Progressive expressions

As Teng (1979: 1-3) explains, there are two ways to express the progressive aspect in Chinese; by using 着 (zhe) after the verb, or by using 在 (zai) before the verb. These two markers may be interchangeable, and both markers can be used in a sentence.³⁾ Often 呢 (ne) is attached at the end of the sentence to clarify the progressive meaning.

Here only occasions where 着 (zhe) and 在 (zai) form a semantic contrast will be discussed. First we see the usage of 着 (zhe), a marker meaning the motion in progress and the state as an aspectual particle. An adverbial phrase is often followed by the aspectual particle. As the following examples show, it is used when the speaker wants to focus on a mode about a constant condition in which the agent is situated. The author thinks that this usage is based on the unific image-schema, by which the speaker sees the motion as a single complete whole without referring to a temporal change.

(1) 他在路上慢慢地走着。“He is slowly walking on the street” Todo, Aihara (1989: 77)

(2) 趙永進靜靜地聽着，一聲也不響。“Zhao Yongjin was quietly listening and saying nothing”
Liu Yuehua et al. (1983: 229)

According to Sanui (1996: 30), 着 (zhe) describes the whole view⁴⁾:

- (3) 等到秋尽冬来, 天上飄着鵝毛大雪時, 母子倆呆在屋里, 烤着火, 討論着大自然各種千奇百怪的化学現象和物理現象。“When autumn has gone and winter has come, the snow comes down in large flakes, the mother and the child sit around a fire in the room and talk about the wonderful things of Nature, namely, physical and chemical phenomena”

In addition, the marker is available when the speaker describes the personality based on a habitual manner.

- (4) (陳奶奶) 耳微聾, 臉上常浮泛着歡愉的笑容。“Grandma Chen is slightly hard of hearing, but she always wears a smile”

The above example does not mean that the agent never shows facial expressions other than a smile, but that the speaker takes her smiling face to symbolize Grandma Chen's personality. In other words, her smile and her personality are so closely linked in the speaker's mind that when the speaker thinks of Grandma Chen, her smile immediately comes to the speaker's mind. This forms a long-lasting image about the agent, which is not relevant to a temporal change.⁵⁾

Meanwhile, 在 (zai) works, as a temporal adverb, to express progress by focusing on one of the different kinds of motions which are suggested in the utterance. The speaker puts special emphasis on what kind of motion is in progress and it is natural that plurality is implied on that occasion. The author thinks that this usage is based on the discrete image-schema, by which the speaker sees the progressive motion as intermittent events along the temporal scale.⁶⁾ See below.

- (5) 他在做甚麼呢? “What is he doing?”——他在打棒球。“He is playing baseball”

在 (zai) may express the state of the agent rather than the progress, depending on the meaning of verbs.

- (6) 她正在酣睡, 枕頭旁放着她的日記本。“She was just in a deep sleep, and her diary was put beside the pillow” See Sanui, op. cit., p.28.

Sanui op. cit., p.30 explains that 在(zai) describes each individual motion of the object in utterance. See the below example:

- (7) 船上的人，有的在照相，有的在唱歌，有的在跳舞，十分熱鬧。“Some people are taking pictures, others are singing and others are dancing on board a ship, so they are very lively”

The usage of 在 (zai) comes from that in the southern Chinese dialect into northern Chinese usage; the older form was 在那里 ‘over there’ plus a verbal phrase. The author thinks that reference to a particular space remains in the sense of partiality with only 在 (zai) to express the progressive aspect, as seen above. It is interesting to contrast 在 (zai) with the English *there*-construction. Yamananshi (1995: 190) explains that the existential *there*-construction derives from the expansion of the deictic *there*-construction, and therefore the former evokes mental space of existence in the speaker’s mind. Although the functions differ in the two languages, they share the process of expanding mental space; while 在 (zai) works as a verb meaning existence (e. g. 老師在圖書館里 “A teacher is in a library”), there occurs reference to a space of motion in the speaker’s mind; that space is then recognised as distinct from other mental spaces in order to express the progressive aspect.

We shall consider the comparative examples of 着 (zhe) and 在 (zai). According to Arakawa (1985: 31–33), there are five groups of Chinese verbs, depending on the grammatical acceptability with the two markers: 等 (deng) ‘to wait’⁷⁾ can be used with both 着 (zhe) and 在 (zai), while three groups of verbs, i.e. 站 (zhan) ‘to stand’⁸⁾, 穿 (chuan) ‘to wear (clothes)’⁹⁾ and 歇 (xie) ‘to rest’¹⁰⁾, are used with 着 (zhe), but not with 在 (zai). These verbs share the meaning of maintaining a state, and thus Arakawa op. cit., p.32 calls them “static verbs”. It is thought that the speaker assumes the motion which these verbs describe to be a simple complete whole on the temporal scale, that is to say, when the speaker utters these verbs, he or she conducts a cognitive activity based on the unific image-schema.

On the other hand, Arakawa ibid. explains that 幹 (gan) ‘to do’¹¹⁾ takes 在 (zai), but not 着 (zhe). The author speculates that this is because this group comprises non-static verbs compared to the other verbs.¹²⁾ In other words, these verbs generally imply that the agent causes a change to the object or the agent him- or herself changes.

If we change 在 (zai) into 着 (zhe) in (5), the sentence is no longer regarded as appropriate. See Kimura (1983: 34), Liu Yuehua et al. op. cit., p.230, Arakawa op. cit., p.30, and Sanui op. cit., p.29.

- (8) ？他做着甚麼呢？——？他打着棒球。

In addition, the above example in (7) turns to be ungrammatical if 在 (zai) is replaced with 着 (zhe).

- (9) * 船上的人，有的照相着，有的唱歌着，有的跳舞着，十分熱鬧。

According to Sanui op. cit., pp.29-30, in the examples below, it is more natural to use 在(zai) because the speaker refers to the event that he or she notices at the moment of the utterance, rather than to use 着 (zhe) to imply that the motion is still in progress at that moment.¹³⁾

- (10 a) ? 看！有輛火車過着橋呢！

- (10 b) 看！有輛火車在過橋！“Look! A train is passing over the bridge!”

There are other examples which demonstrate the difference; it is inappropriate to use 着 (zhe), like in (11 a) and (12 a) below, where the speaker refers to the intermittent events like the practice of a skill or studying history, but 在 (zai) is appropriate. Natural interpretation leads the hearer to understand that practice or studying is repeated with intervals;¹⁴⁾ in other words, the meaning of these verbs is a regular repetition of a particular motion while the agent carries out other motions. This is more evidence that 着 (zhe) stands in the unific viewpoint, while 在 (zai) does in the discrete viewpoint. See Sanui op. cit., p.31.

- (11 a) ? 小李又練着氣功了。

- (11 b) 小李又在練氣功了。“Li has again started to practice qi gong”

- (12 a) ? 他還研究着中國歷史。

- (12 b) 他還在研究中國歷史。“He still continues to study Chinese history”

The first example below means one particular speech lasts a certain period having no interruption, and therefore the author sees it as being based on the unific mode, while the second example implies sequences of individual utterance rather than a particular continuing speech, and consequently the author regards it as being based on the discrete mode. See Sanui ibid.

- (13) 他大聲喊着：「喂——！你們快來！」“He says in a loud voice, ‘Hey! You all hurry

up!”

- (14) 大家都在說：“他可是個好人” “Each and all says, ‘He is a good guy’”

Sanui *ibid.* explains that 着 (zhe) having this function can be attached to verbs meaning motions which continue for a certain period: 說 (shuo) ‘to say’, 看 (kan) ‘to see’ and 撫摸 (fumo) ‘to stroke, to rub’.

Here we shall compare the following sentence, one we have seen before, with the sentence above.

- (15) (陳奶奶) 耳微聾，臉上常浮泛着歡愉的笑容。 “Grandma Chen is slightly hard of hearing, but she always wears a smile”

Each sentence is an evaluation of an individual the speaker is talking about. The reason why 着 (zhe) is used in (15) and 在 (zai) is used in (14) is thought to depend on the way the speakers share the image about the targets, that is to say, the former sentence is produced through abstraction in the speaker’s mind, by which some scenes of Grandma Chen’s smile turn to be an impression shared by the speaker. This change is caused by abstracting the temporary factors to describe a personality; the latter sentence, on the other hand, implies the total amount of individual utterance occurring along a temporal scale, as we have just seen. If we use 在 (zai) like in the example below, it does not describe a personality, but it does mean that the agent continues smiling on one occasion, and therefore it is no longer the description of a generalized personality, nor semantically can it concur with 常 (chang) ‘always’.

- (16) ? (陳奶奶) 耳微聾，臉上常在浮泛歡愉的笑容。

Finally, it may be thought that the fact that 着 (zhe) indicates the progressive aspect and the author’s view that it is related to summary scanning which does not involve a temporary change are contradictory. However, the author thinks that 着 (zhe) of the unific image-schema has the function of abstraction. There is similarity between the function and the generic usage of the English definite article. See Yamazaki (1995).

3. Reduplicated verbs

Reduplicated verbs express briefness if the verbs share the durative meaning, while

they express a small number of repetition if the verbs share a non-durative meaning; besides, they imply a gentle or tentative voice. See Yamazoe (1996: 68). The following examples are taken from Wang Huan (1963: 23):

- (17) 布鞋穿穿就会大。 “Canvas shoes soon become large when you put on them”
 (18) 他穿了穿這件衣服，看穿得上穿不上。 “He tried to put on these clothes to see whether he could wear them or not”

Wang Huan loc. cit. explains the difference as follows:¹⁵⁾

…I think, however, that it is possible to divide the amount that reduplicated verbs show into two categories; in the first category a whole action is a unit, reduplicated verbs express multiple motions, and 了 (le) is never inserted between the verbs, while in the second category a piece of action is a unit, reduplicated verbs describe one motion and 了 (le) can be inserted between the verbs.

The next sentence is thought to be an example of the first category of Wang Huan’s classification. The verbs share the durative meaning.

- (19) 他退休了以后，平常看看書，下下棋，和老朋友聊聊天，倒也不寂寞。 “After retirement, he sometimes reads, sometimes plays Chinese chess and sometimes chats with old friends, so he does not really feel as lonely as expected” Zhu Dexi (1981: 67)

These verbs imply that such actions as reading, playing and chatting are taken as a whole and that each individual action consists of multiple motions; that is to say, these activities, compared with other activities in one day, take a relatively small amount of time, and each action does not contain interruption, but rather it is regarded as a unit. The author thinks that this usage is based on the unific image-schema without reference to the temporal scale.

Zhang Jing (1987: 185) explains as follows:

…Using a concept of slightness, the grammatical function of AA [reduplicated verbs-MY] is generalized as reference to the whole more or less, sometimes implying an indefinite (small) amount and sometimes implying briefness and decrease.

Briefness leads the speaker to share less concern, expectation or responsibility with the hearer, and consequently reduplicate verbs conveys euphemism or a more gentle voice; in this meaning also, the author thinks, the action is taken as a unit, having no interruption.

(20) 你教教我!“Please tell me”/你教我!“You tell me!” Zhu Dexi op. cit., p.67

(21) 我的鋼筆不見了, 你幫我找找。“I have lost my fountain pen, will you help me to look for it?” Liu Yuehua et al. op. cit., p.101

The next sentence is thought to be an example of the second category of Wang Huan’s classification. The verb shares the non-durative meaning.

(22) 他伸了伸舌頭說：“真危險！”“Sticking out his tongue for a moment, he said, ‘How dangerous it was!’” Cf. Zhu Dexi op. cit., p.67-68

This verbal phrase, assuming a piece of action to be a unit, means several sequences of motions in repetition. As Zhu Dexi *ibid.* explains, the reduplicated verb does not imply that the agent sticks out the tongue for a certain short period, but that the agent does the action several times intermittently, though the speaker sees the number of the action as relatively a few. The author thinks that this usage is based on the discrete image-schema with reference to the temporal scale.

Zhang Jing (1987: 187) explains as follows:

摇了摇 does not necessarily mean a single swing, but it suggests that the object probably swings several times; 轉了轉 does not necessarily imply a single turn but it could be several turns; ...

The next sentence describes the agent repeating several kinds of actions, in contrast with the relatively small amount of time taken up with each activity everyday in (19), and therefore, if the sentence stops with 教教書, it is less acceptable.

(23) 辭職以后, 他便在中国学校里教教書, 或在外国商店里臨時幫幫忙。“After resignation, he sometimes had lessons at Chinese school and sometimes took a part-time job in a foreign store” Fang Yuqing (1992: 471)

The small amount of action leads the speaker to share less expectation of success, and consequently reduplicated verbs carry out the function of trial. In this usage, differing from euphemism, a trial involves multiple times of action in itself.

(24) 男車不好上, 我上上試試。"A men's bicycle is not easy to ride, but I will try it" Zhu Dexi op. cit., p.68

The author thinks that in the following sentence probability of realization, i.e. pregnancy is so little that the first clause functions as a conditional clause. This meaning is due to the semantic expansion of trial.

(25) 叫她生生小孩兒, 她就知道做母親的甘苦了。"If she gave birth to a baby, she could know the sweetness and bitterness of being a mother" Wang Huan op. cit., p.24

4. Conclusion

The author studied English usage through the image-schemas in three previous papers:¹⁶⁾ Yamazaki (1994), Yamazaki (1995) and Yamazaki (1996). The first paper deals with the usage of the prepositions, *of/about* with some verbs meaning linguistic or cognitive activities. The second paper treats the generic usage of English article. The third paper discusses transitivity and a double-object sentence. Here the fourth example from English is the semantic difference between an infinitive and a present participle used with verbs of perception. As Comrie (1981: 140) gives an explanation, an infinitive gives a perfect meaning, i.e. the action is regarded as a complete whole, while a present participle has a progressive meaning. The former is an example of the unific image-schema, and the latter is the one of the discrete image-schema: *I saw the accused stab the victim.* and *I saw the accused stabbing the victim.* See Comrie, loc. cit.

The author thinks that it is noticeable that the same viewpoint is useful beyond the difference of linguistic structure.¹⁷⁾

NOTES

1) See Talmy (1988: 178-179), Nishimura (1989: 53-55), Ikegami (1993) and Shinohara (1993).

2) The definition of the image-schema is as follows: the generalized cognitive frames based on images, which all users of the language share in order to understand the

- representation of external reality. See Yamanashi (1995: 95-96).
- 3) The following sentences are examples of interchangeability and cooccurrence: 外頭還下着雨呢嗎? / 外頭還在下雨呢嗎? / 外頭還在下着雨呢嗎? “Is it still raining outside?”. See Sanui, *op. cit.*, p.29. There is no significant difference of meaning between a sentence where one of the markers is used and a sentence where both are used. Therefore, no image-schema is assumed in this case.
 - 4) In the following sentences the English translations do not necessarily have the progressive forms. This is a difference of the usage of the progressive aspect between the different languages.
 - 5) Wang Li (1958) claims that the usage of 着 (zhe) expressing continuance derives from 附著 (fuzhe), which means to stick. 著 (zhe) is a variant of 着 (zhe).
 - 6) As Langacker *op. cit.*, p.145 notes, a figure corresponding to 着 (zhe) is like a multiple exposure photograph and a figure corresponding to the usage of 在 (zai) is like animation.
 - 7) Other examples are 听 (ting) ‘to listen to’ and 躲 (duo) ‘to avoid’.
 - 8) Other examples are 坐 (zuo) ‘to sit’, 躺 (tang) ‘to lie’ and 挂 (gua) ‘to hang (INTRANSITIVE)’.
 - 9) Other examples are 拿 (na) ‘to hold’ and 戴 (dai) ‘to wear (a hat or glasses)’.
 - 10) Other examples are 待 (dai) ‘to treat’ and 跟 (gen) ‘to follow’.
 - 11) Other examples are 吃 (chi) ‘to eat’, 穿 (chuan) ‘to put on (clothes)’ and 挂 (gua) ‘to hang (TRANSITIVE)’.
 - 12) Teng (1979: 1-3) regards verbs with 在 (zai) as the non-stative progress.
 - 13) The same examples are treated in Chen Gang (1980: 21, 23).
 - 14) This reminds us of the Langacker’s figure to show sequential scanning; the ground comes in between the figures that are put in sequence.
 - 15) In the Langacker’s figure for summary scanning, a single configuration consists of several circles, each of which partly overlaps with adjacent ones. This model represents multiple motions while showing a whole action as a unit. In the other figure for sequential scanning, a series of configurations consist of separate circles, not touching the others. This model shows that each individual motion is completed, and that some pieces of action are repeated.
 - 16) In these papers the author used the two words, i.e. ‘wholeness’ and ‘totality’, to represent the difference between the unific image-schema and the discrete image-schema. Chinese has the equivalent words to show the difference in the schemas: 完整 (wanzheng) ‘to complete’ in 領土完整 ‘territorial integrity’, and 完全 (wanquan) ‘to sum’ in 四肢完全

“Every limb is normal”.

- 17) There are examples in Japanese: (a) *Kudamono-wo takusan kattekita. Sore-wo ichidoni tabeteshimatta* “I bought much fruit. I have eaten up all of them”. The first word of the second sentence, i.e. *sore-wo* is a singular demonstrative with an accusative postposition. The speaker sees much fruit as a single whole; (b) *Kudamono-wo takusan kattekita. Sorera-wa iro-mo katachi-mo samazama datta.* “I bought much fruit. They had various shapes and colours”. The first word of the second sentence, i.e. *sorera-wa* is a plural demonstrative with a nominative postposition. The speaker recognizes that different fruit have different shapes and colours, and thus much fruit are expressed as a mixture of plural entities in (b); (c) *Kudamono-wo takusan kattekita. Sore-wa iro-mo katachi-mo samazamanamono-no tsumeawase datta.* “I bought much fruit. They were an assortment of various shapes and colours of fruits”. Here again, a singular demonstrative, i.e. *sore* is used with a nominative postposition, *-wa*, in the first word of the second sentence. The speaker sees assorted fruit as a single whole again. See Yamanashi(1995: 125-127).

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