

NOUN PHRASE IN MANDARIN CHINESE

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Abstract: *This paper aims to present syntactic study and description of the noun phrase in Mandarin Chinese language. Moreover, it shows the basic modifier of noun phrase in Mandarin Chinese. First, Mandarin is a language that classifies as head – initial S-V-O which allow to the noun to appear in both position subject and object. In addition, present all possible noun phrase conditions of the internal distribution of noun phrase in Mandarin such as common noun, classifier, Modifier phrase marked by {de}, adjective, preposition, relative clause and multiple modifier. Finally, after I examine the noun phrase, found that the main order is Noun, Classifier-Noun, Numeral-Classifier-Noun, Demonstrative-Numeral-Classifier-Noun, Proper Noun and Pronoun*

Keyword: *Mandarin Chinese, noun phrase, word order.*

2018 JGBSE

1-Introduction:

According to, Wei, H the main word order in Mandarin Chinese is SVO, it is head-initial. The example (1-a) illustrates the structure of Mandarin word order Subject - Verb - Object. The sentences (1-a) start with the subject (ta){he}, then the verb (maile){bought}, and the object (san){umbrella}. In the example (1-b) the verb, (song-le) {gave} is the ditransitive, so require three arguments. first, (ta){he} is the subject, (shu){book} is the object and the head of the sentence and (gei wo) {to me} is preposition +indirect object. In the example (1-c) the same verb in (1-b) (song-gei) {gave} is ditransitive as well. It has two objects. Therefore, the Mandarin Chinese has the same word order of English.

(1)a. ta maile ba san Wei, H. (1989)
he bought cl umbrella
“he bought an umbrella”

b. ta song-le yiben shu gei wo Wei, H. (1989)
he sent-gave a book to me
“He gave a book to me.”

c. ta song-gei wo yiben shu Wu, M. A. (1997)
he send-give me a book
“He gave me a book.”

2-Noun:

In Mandarin Chinese, the noun can occur in subject and object position, as the example (2) illustration (mao){cat} is noun in subject position and (yu){fish} is noun in object position.

(2)- Mo chi yú.

Cat eat fish

“Cats eat fish.”

Ross, C., & Ma, J. H. S. (2014).

2.1-Bare Nouns:

In Mandarin Chinese, there are nouns appear without determine syntactical in order to present semantic meaning. In fact, the noun in example (3-a) “haibao” [seal] does not have indefinite for syntactic position of subject. Moreover, in example(3-b) “Shu” [book] are without definite and classifier, but semantically could be (+, - indefinite). So, the noun “haibao” [seal] and “Shu” [book] may be singular, plural or both singular and plural. Therefore, the definite of singular and plural depend on the context. It occurs in two position subject and object.

(3) a. Subject position

haibao hen keai

Seal very cute

“Seals are very cute”

“The seal(s) is/are very cute”

There are two possible way to read it

Yang, H. S. (2005)

b. Object position

wo Shu yijing kan wan le

I book already read finish ASP

‘I have finished reading a book/books/the book/the books.’

Yang, H. S. (2005)

3-Internal distribution of noun phrase:

3.1-Common noun:

As the other languages, Mandarin Chinese has common nouns. It is divided into two types, concrete (zhǐ ‘paper,’ zhuōzi ‘table,’ shuǐ ‘water’) or abstract as (sīxiǎng ‘thought,’ yuánzé ‘principle,’ zìyóu ‘freedom’). Moreover, in Mandarin no grammatical marks are indicating to count or mass noun. However, to refer to specific number of nouns, the only way is using the classifier as examples (5) shows.

Ross, C., & Ma, J. H. S. (2014).

3.1.2- Proper nouns: Mandarin Chinese have proper name, for instances:

(4) a- Niújīn Dàxué

“Oxford University”

Ross, C., & Ma, J. H. S. (2014).

b- Lúndūn

“London”

4- Classifier:

4.1- Numeral:

In contrast, there are nouns appears at the head final when indicate to number of things. In general, the structure for numeral sentence is **Num+CL+Noun**. Moreover, as we notice in examples there are different classifiers. Each classifier describes specific noun. According to the example (5), (ge) use with thing and informal writing or speech, (ben) use with books and magazine, (zhi) use with noun has the same features, (tiao) use with noun has thin and long shape, and (liang) use with vehicles

5-Modifier phrase marked by {de}:

If we notice that noun phrase in Mandarin Chinese contain of the modifier {de}. “the {de} modifier required with pronominal modifiers in all categories: AP, VP, PP, and NPs. Moreover, the examples from possessive, adjectives and relative clause illustrated the functions of {de} and the position in subclass of nominal classifier”. **Wu, M. A. (1997)**. In the example {de} is modifier (lu){green} to be predicative to the noun (cha) {tea}. without (de) will be compound noun refer to kind of tea.

- (12)- lu de cha
green de tea
“green tea”

5.1-Possessive:

Mandarin Chinese does not have **possessive pronoun**, therefore, they add a morpheme {-de} in the sentence to express the meaning of possessive, in the example after the pronoun {wo} =[i] insert the possessive {de} before the noun { péngyou}=[friend]. In the second example (13-b) insert the morpheme {de}={possessive} to indicated to the one’s possession which have the structure **{possessr+de+possessed}** this structure usually used in spoken Mandarin Chinese . However, there is another form use in writing as the third example (13-c) illustrated: Ross, C., & Ma, J. H. S. (2014).

- (13) a- wo de péngyou
I de-poss friend
“my friend”
b- laoshi de shu
teacher de-poss book
“Teacher’s book”
c- Zhsnggo zhu shqng
The sound of-poss bells
“the sound of bells “

6-Adjective:

The main features of simple adjectives are modifying the noun directly like English [**adjective + noun**]. According to Cheung, Candice Chi-Hang (2016) There are two forms of simple adjective: Monosyllabic such as {big “dà”, small “xiǎo”, expensive “guè”} as show in example (14), other form is Disyllabic adjectives are {“gǎnjing” clean, “gujiu” well-behaved} which are consider as compound noun that describe the entity of nouns.

- (14) a- xiǎo -zixnguchē
Small-bicycle
“Small bicycle”
b- láoshi rěn
honest-person
“honest person”
c- xiǎo - fēi
small- cost
“tip”

Ross, C., & Ma, J. H. S. (2014).

6.1-multiple adjective:

can describe the noun in Mandarin by one or more adjective. As the example (15-a) the adjective precede the noun (gou){dog}.in the example (15-b) there are more than one adjective (zhang- boli){glass},and (mutou){wood} presed the noun (zhuozi){table}

(15) a- yi-tiao da (de) gou
one -CL big SUB dog
“a big dog”

Paul, W. (2005)

b- yi-zhang boli mutou (de) zhuozi
one -CL glass wood SUB table
“a glass wooden table”

c- da bai panzi
big white plate
“a big white plate”

6.1.1- Intensifier:

in Mandarin Chinese is inserting intensifier “hun”[very] before the noun “shu”[book] in the example (16-a) the sentence has the modifier {de} which indicate of specific {book} and the adjective “hao”{good} referee to the head noun [book] ,but in the example (16-b) the absence of modifier {de}the adjective not predicate.

(16) a- hun hao de shu
very good book
“very good book”

Wu, M. A. (1997).

b- hun hao shu
very good book
“very good book”

7-Prepositions:

Prepositions in Mandarin Chinese are consisting of special words that indicate the relationship of a noun phrase to a verb, for example {zài ‘at, dào ‘to, / gli ‘to/for, / tì ‘for’} , so the preposition precede the noun, as in the example the head noun(ying’er){baby} occur at the end of the sentence and the preposition (Shang){on}precede the head noun.

Xiao, R., & McEnery, T. (2004)

(17)-a chuang shang tang-zhe s hushui De ying’er
Bed on lie-Dur-fast fast-asleep GEN baby
“her baby was laying fast asleep on the bed”

b- yizi-xia de mao
chair-under GEN cat
“the cat under the chair”

Hui, A. L. Y. (2012).

8-Relative clause:

In English, when a modifier includes a verb, the modifier occurs after the head noun as a relative clause introduced by a relative pronoun (‘who,’ ‘whom,’ ‘which’) or complementize (‘that’). In contrast, Mandarin, all modifiers precede the head noun. In addition, Mandarin has one words that correspond to relative pronouns or complementizes. In the example (18) “ne”[that] is the complementize ,then “ben” classifier finally the head noun “shu”[book] occur

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