Yun Xiao and Linda Tsung (Eds.), **Current Studies in Chinese Language and Discourse: Global Context and Diverse Perspectives**, Amsterdam, The Netherlands: John Benjamin, 2019, 298 pp., $149.00 (hardcover).

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Language contains cues for what ensues in a discourse. The connections between language and discourse imply that language cannot be studied in depth without looking into discourse. Furthermore, language and discourse are fluid, causing linguists to face a constant challenge, that is, to figure out how language adapts the rules of discourse. This book, ***Current Studies in Chinese Language and Discourse: Global Context and Diverse Perspectives***, coedited by Yun Xiao and Linda Tsung, builds a bridge among the studies on Chinese language and discourse.
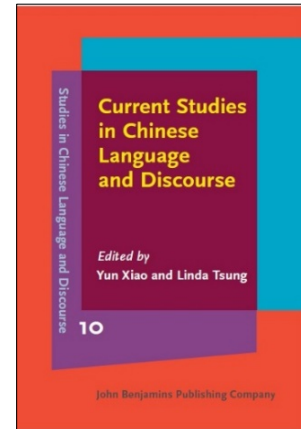
The thirteen chapters of this book together present a holistic account of the latest studies on Chinese language and discourse under the impact of external and internal factors of globalization. The 18 internationally engaged authors, many of whom are recognized figures, contribute a clear delineation of solid empirical and experimental data, lucid interpretation, and future research directions. A range of observations including new variations of language forms, interactional functions of particular linguistic features, and changing attitudes and identities have been depicted and expounded in an intelligible manner. Additionally, the copious citation of authoritative literature, rigorous alignment of updated methodologies, and easy-to-understand writing style make this book valuable to new researchers and general readers in the fields of sociolinguistics, functional linguistics, applied linguistics, and pragmatics.

With the exception of chapter 1, which gives a synopsis of each chapter's content, the ensuing 12 chapters, by their different research orientations, can be grouped into four parts. In my view, the proximity layout of similar research orientation is one strength of the book because the four parts walk readers through research focuses with a bottom-up road map. Part one, including chapters 2–4, engages readers with a critical description of three new changes of Chinese discourse structure, namely new word formations, new syntactic changes, and power-related new variations.

Chapter 2 elucidates the word length change from the conventional majority of two-morpheme words to the current majority of three- and four-morpheme words. Besides, the formation processes of four-morpheme neologisms such as blending, abbreviation, coinage, and numerical formulae have also been exemplified in detail. The phonological, prosodic, and semantic features explain the expanding or evaporating processes of new words. Particularly, the emerging three- and four-morpheme creation is instantiated with the case of "Internet-plus" (*Hulianwang-jia*, four-morpheme). It prevails with the top-down spreading route by government officials or highly-educated elites into more innovative and unconventional expressions. As a result, social changes are echoed and embodied by the new word formations.

By decoding new constructions of the frequently used rhetorical question, *Bushi . . . ma?* (Isn't it the case that…?), chapter 3 offers new evidence for the usage-based theory and promotes the importance of everyday language use in language development. Through phonological reduction and syntactic modification such as consonant lenition, phonological simplification, and phonosyntactic conspiracy, the tone sandhi phenomenon and new syntactic construction of *bu…ma?* (Isn't it the case that…?) take shape with the tone of *bu* (not) changed from the originally high rising to high falling. The grammaticalization process of the rhetorical question involves not only usage frequency but also cognitive, cultural, and social factors, so readers would get the impression that language and grammar are fostered and conditioned via human communication.

Driven by the question, "What native Chinese speakers might consider appropriate to say in hypothetical scenarios?" (p. 57), chapter 4 investigates the impact of two contextual variables: power and imposition on Chinese request-making in mitigation production. Supported by solid empirical evidence, readers will be impressed by the significant influence of the two contextual variations on the frequency of generating internal ("linguistic devices providing mitigating effects within a request head act" [p. 59]) and external modifications ("functioning to moderate the tone of the request" [p. 59]). Consequently, contextual variations result in the differentiation of the internal and external modifiers as well as the preferred sequential organization of external modifications.

Part two, comprised of chapters 5–6, unravels interactional functions of *yinwei* (because)-clause and meta-language unit "I-say-to-you" in Chinese daily conversations. Hereinto, conversation analysis approach is adopted to achieve the construal of the interactional roles of the two linguistic practices. Firstly, *yinwei*-clause is found to account for speakers' prior disagreeing or asserting actions. It also serves as parentheticals with background information in the middle of the turn constructional unit (TCU) or between two TCUs of a multi-TCU. Secondly, the Chinese variations of "I-say-to-you" are observed to be dedicated interactional resources that are only found in spoken conversations. They are used to preface "delicate" (p. 105) issues such as unpreferred following actions, disagreeing or disaffiliating turns, and possibly resistance-implicative actions for the recipient.

Part three includes chapters 7–11 and interprets linguistic practices within the cultural realm. The linguistic practices include near-synonyms, adjectival phrase (AP) state complement, collocation constraints, kinship metaphors, and time expressions. With updated approaches including logistic regression analysis, word frequency, and T-score data based on internationally accredited large-scale corpus, some heated Chinese linguistic topics like genre variation, sentence genericity, and metaphoricity are fully probed, which impart a sensitivity of pragmatic and the cultural distinction of Chinese discourse to general readers.

By testing three independent variables including word length of the object noun phrase, preverbal locative phrase, and building purpose, chapter 7 focuses on the differentiation of the three Chinese near-synonyms *jian, zao, and gai,* "to build." On one hand, word length and building purpose explain the differences among the near-synonym verbs in both written and spoken genres. On the other hand, three near-synonym verbs possess different genre properties. For this reason, chapter 7 makes a valuable contribution to the Chinese near-synonyms study from the perspective of highlighting genre variation. Chapter 8 continues to explore the Chinese near-synonyms but from the perspective of illustrating their

association with typical collocates. Readers will find five constraints on the selected synonyms collocations: semantic, grammatical, prosodic, stylistic, and pragmatic features. Clarification of the five constraints would benefit both educators and learners in understanding collocation patterns in a second/foreign language.

Chapter 9 explicates the semantic and pragmatic constraints on the generic interpretation of Chinese sentences with a state complement realized by an adjectival phrase. In these sentences, the particle *de* as the linguistic marker will be used before AP. The two conditions of "multi-situation condition" (p. 187) and "possibility condition" (p. 192) constrain the generic presence, which result in the semantic interaction of the verb or verb phrase before *de* (V/VP-*de*), the AP complement after *de* and pragmatic knowledge. Therefore, semantic and pragmatic factors both contribute to the generic interpretation of sentences.

Chapter 10 scrutinizes two metaphorically used kinship terms in modern Chinese, *fu,* "father," and *mu,* "mother." Figurative meanings expressed by *mu* often refer to "the relatively evenly distributed multiple referents," while *fu* means "some person" who "makes a primary contribution to an undertaking" (p. 208).It should also be noted that *mu* usually denotes nonhuman and nonspecific entities and therefore has higher metaphoricity than those expressed by *fu*. The metaphorical usage of constructions "A is the father/mother of B" (p. 199) can shed light on studies of culture and society in Chinese language.

Chapter 11 exemplifies the common patterns, system networks, and realizations of temporal expressions in Mandarin Chinese, one of the fundamental concepts of human cognition and communication. From the perspective of systemic functional linguistics (SFL), the temporal expression can be categorized into extent or location, definite and indefinite. Further subcategories are demonstrated as duration and frequency within extent, absolute and relative, and rest and motion within location. The above framework will enable readers access to a clarification of relationships among the complex Chinese time expressions. It also offers a new SFL to approach time expressions and provides an enlightenment on studies of other circumstantial elements in Chinese.

Part IV includes chapters 12–13 and highlights the research agenda of ethnic identity and language education. Focusing on the self-representation of a former Kam village head in Zhanlin, a remote village in Guizhou province, chapter 12 explores how Kam people's identity is represented and negotiated in spoken narratives with outside researchers. The relationship between Kam people's sense of membership and their social practices can be constructed from four dimensions of sociolinguistics, that is, the "state versus people," "ethnic groups," and "geographical groups" devices (p. 261).

Chapter 13 delves into two specialized corpora for Chinese language education in Singapore, namely, the Singapore Daily Written Chinese Corpus and the Singapore Primary School Children Spoken Chinese Corpus. The Written Corpus provides information on Chinese characters, vocabulary, and sentence structures in written materials, while the Spoken Corpus provides guidelines for attainable spoken proficiency at different academic levels. However, the written corpus still faces the limitations of "up-to-dateness" (p. 290) and lack of gender balance, which might affect the authentic distribution and usage of lexical items and grammatical structures.

In summary, this book is praiseworthy for many aspects. To begin with, the clear and logical layout of the 13 chapters, the insightful revelation with solid-data evidence, and a wide range of authentic spoken and written corpora secure this book to be a resourceful reference for language researchers and educators. Also, for readers without much previous knowledge in the study of language and discourse, the systematic theoretical and methodological framework of this book tend to be reader friendly and horizon broadening. Moreover, readers are provided with an opportunity to perceive key linguistic issues in the context of globalization. Scholars will be synchronized with significant linguistic research focus and inclination.

The book's limitations lie in its overemphasis on language forms and its insufficiency in discussing the relationship between linguistic structure modifications and their psychological, social, and cultural interpretations. The 13 articles mainly focus on the description of discourse structure changes, but interpretations or implications behind these formal changes are inadequately considered. Fortunately, these limitations do not undermine the book's contribution or value in drawing an integrated picture of the latest studies on Chinese language and discourse from a macro perspective. Undoubtedly, the book's engaging style and fascinating insight deserve readers' time.