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**A Comparison Study of Mandarin Chinese ‘*shi...de*’ and
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ABSTRACT

A great number of studies on Mandarin Chinese ‘*shi...de*’ construction has been made in the previous literature. However, another construction in Mandarin Chinese ‘*ting...de*’ which seems to share similar structure as *shi...de* gains less attention from the linguists. The main distinction of these two constructions is that *shi...de* allows a lexical verb, stative predicate and other clausal elements as a predicate to be put in between the copula *shi* and the functional element *de*. By contrast, *ting...de* only allows a gradable adjective. In this paper, I will focus on the *shi...de* construction with a stative predicate and the *ting...de* construction with a gradable adjective. The goal of this research is to provide the explanations for the distinction between these two constructions. I show that the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction is not a cleft construction, but a headless relative clause which do not contain a contrastive focus. On the other hand, a *ting... de* sentence is actually a *ting* sentence attached by a complementizer *de*.

Keywords: syntax, Mandarin Chinese, gradable adjective, degree marker, cleft construction.

Introduction

Among those studies about ‘*shi...de*’ construction, most of them has identified *shi...de* as a cleft construction for a long tradition in syntactical scholarship. On the other hand, for ‘*ting...de*’ construction, there do not seem to have a lot of studies about this construction. Both constructions are widely used in modern Mandarin Chinese. In this section, I provide an introduction of Mandarin Chinese gradable adjectives, which are the main elements in ‘*shi...de*’ and ‘*ting...de*’ constructions. The second part of this section will be the introduction of *shi...de* construction, and the third part will be the introduction of *ting...de* construction.

Mandarin Chinese Gradable Adjectives

Since one of the major elements to be discussed in this research is gradable adjectives, it is necessary for this research to give a brief introduction of Mandarin Chinese gradable adjectives. Zhu (1980, 1982), Lu et al. (1980:11–12), Lu (1984), Liu et al. (2001), and Liu (2010) divide Mandarin Chinese adjectives into two types: gradable and non-gradable adjectives. The basic distinction between two types of adjectives is whether the adjective allows a degree marker to make a degree modification. Gradable adjectives such as *shuai* ‘handsome’, *mei* ‘beautiful’, and *haochi* ‘delicious’ can be modified by a degree marker:

- (2) a. *Zhe-ge nansheng hen shuai.*
 this-CL boy very handsome
 ‘This boy is very handsome.’
 b. *Zhe-kuai niupai feichang haochi.*
 this-CL steak very delicious
 ‘This steak is very delicious.’

On the other hand, non-gradable adjectives such as *dui* ‘correct’, *cuo* ‘wrong’, *zhen* ‘real’, and *jia* ‘fake’ are unable to be modified by a degree marker:

- (3) a. **Ta mai de baoshi hen zhen.*
 3SG sell DE gem very real
 ‘The gems he sells are very real.’
 b. **Zhe-ge xuesheng de daan feichang dui.*
 this-CL student DE answer very correct
 ‘This student’s answers are very correct.’

Except for the degree marker modifying gradable adjectives, there is another significant syntactic characteristic of Chinese gradable adjectives: the studies from Zhu (1980, 1982) and Liu et al. (2001) indicate that Chinese gradable adjectives cannot occur as a predicate without being modified by a degree marker unless they appear in complex forms:

- (4) a. *Zhe yanyuan hen shuai.*
 this actor very handsome
 ‘This actor is very handsome.’
 b. *Zhe yanyuanshi shuai de.*
 this actor be handsome DE
 ‘This actor is handsome.’
 c. **Zhe yanyuanshuai.*
 this actor handsome
 ‘This actor is handsome.’

In (4a), the gradable adjective *shuai* is modified by the degree marker *hen*, and in (4b), the same gradable adjective appears in the complex form *shi...de* construction. Only the gradable adjective (4c) is a bare gradable adjective, which is not allowed.

Shi...de construction

The *shi...de* construction has been a widely studied topic in Modern Chinese syntax. Most of the researches take the *shi...de* construction to be a focus construction, and the sentence with the *shi...de* construction a cleft sentence:

- (5) *Zhangsan shi zuotian lai-de.* (=Hole’s (1))
 Zhangsan beyesterday come-DE
 ‘It was yesterday that Zhangsan came.’

Based on this assumption, researchers have developed numerous analyses to distinguish the different sub-categories of the *shi...de* patterns.

First, Paul & Whitman (2008) argue that the *shi...de* construction can be distinguished into four basic patterns, which are a cleft focus pattern with sentence-initial bare *shi*, a cleft focus pattern which is *shi...de* proper, an association with focus pattern, and a propositional assertion pattern.

Instead of considering *shi...de* as a construction, Cheng (2008) claims that the *shi...de* construction does not exist. Moreover, *shi* is not necessary to have affinity with *de*. All the patterns of sentences with *shi...de* have different base structures.

Among these studies, one of the *shi...de* patterns seems to gain less attention: the *shi...de* construction with a stative predicate to be put in between *shi* and *de*.

- (6) *Zhangsan shi tsungmin de.*
 Zhangsan be smart DE
 ‘Zhangsan is smart.’

As mentioned above, a Chinese gradable adjectives cannot occur as a predicate without being modified by a degree marker unless it appears in a complex form. Apparently, the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction is one of the complex forms that allow the gradable adjective to be a predicate since *shi* cannot be considered as a degree marker. This phenomenon brings the research questions

of this paper: What is the syntactic structure of *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction, and why does it allow the gradable adjective to be a predicate without being modified by a degree marker?

'Ting...de' construction

In section 1.1, this paper briefly introduces the significant syntactic characteristic of Chinese gradable adjectives. They should be modified by a degree marker or appear in complex forms. According to Zhang (2002), the degree markers like *hen*, *feichang*, and *ting* 'very', etc., are called degree adverbs. Zhang (2002) divided degree adverbs into three categories:

- (a) The degree adverbs which are allowed to appear in 'X *bi* Y [] Z' construction; They include *geng* 'more', *hai* 'still', and *shaowei* 'a bit', etc.
- (b) The degree adverbs which are not allowed to appear in 'X *bi* Y [] Z' construction, but are allowed to appear in 'wh-word + [] + adj?' construction; They include *zui* 'most', and *bijiao* 'than', etc.
- (c) The degree adverbs which do not belong to the first two categories; They include *hen*, *tai*, and *ting*, etc.

The degree adverb that this research mainly discusses is *tin*. According to the analyses from Zhang (2002), *tin* belongs to category (c). Zhang (2002) assumes the semantic functions of some of the degree adverbs in this categories like *hen*, *tai*, and *feichang*, etc. get more and more bleached. Only the syntactic function remains. The main syntactic function of these degree adverbs is to modify the gradable adjectives.

The degree adverb *ting* also appears in a construction which shares a similar form with the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction. The construction is called the *ting...de* construction in this paper. It contains a degree adverb *ting*, followed by a gradable adjective to its right, and then a functional element *de*. For example:

(7) *Zhangsan tingtsungmin de.*
 Zhangsan ting smart DE
 'Zhangsan is very smart.'

Since there are very few discussions about the *ting...de* construction, this paper aims to provide the answers to two questions. First, given the fact that *ting* is considered as a degree adverb to modified the gradable adjectives. What about the function of the functional element *de*? Does it possess semantic meaning or only syntactic function? Second, are there any differences between *shi...de* and *ting...de* construction? If yes, what are the differences?

The remaining of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides the analysis of the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction. Section 3 provides the analysis of *ting...de* construction with a gradable adjective. At last, section 4 provides the conclusions of this study.

‘Shi+stative predicate+de’ construction

The *shi...de* construction is able to allow a lexical verb, adjective and other clausal elements to be put between *shi* and *de* in this construction. In this paper, the main focus would be the pattern with a stative predicate (e.g. a stative verb or an adjective) in it. First, it is crucial to indicate the properties of this pattern. In this pattern, the constituent to the right of *shi* is a stative predicate, following by *de* in the sentence final position:

(8) *Nishimiaotiao de.*
 2SG be slim DE
 ‘You are slim.’

In this section, an analysis would be proposed to provide an explanation of two questions: First, why does this pattern allow the gradable adjective to be a predicate without being modified by a degree marker since *shi* is clearly not a degree marker? Second, what are the syntactic properties and the semantic interpretations of the sentence final *de* in this pattern?

Previous Studies

Lee (2005)

Lee (2005) focuses on *de* in *shi...de* construction. She assumes the sentence final *de* can be separated into two subsets: focus *de* and non-focus *de*. The *shi...de* construction is also divided into the cleft construction with focus *de*, and the headless relative clause with non-focus *de*.

For the cleft construction of *shi...de*, three structures are included in this construction: subject-focus, adjunct-focus, and predicate-focus. Generally, *de* in the predicate-focus structure is prohibited. However, when the verb is attached with an aspectual marker such as *le*, *de* becomes acceptable in the predicate-focus structure:

- (12) Subject-focus ‘*shi...de*’ (= Lee’s (25))
shi Zhangsan zuotian qu taipei (de)
 be Zhangsan yesterday go Taipei DE
 ‘It was Zhangsan that went to Taipei yesterday.’
- (13) Adjunct-focus ‘*shi...de*’ (= Lee’s (26))
Zhangsan shi zuotian qu taipei (de)
 Zhangsan be yesterday go Taipei DE
 ‘It was yesterday that I went to Taipei.’
- (14) Predicate-focus ‘*shi...de*’ (= Lee’s (27))
 **Zhangsan zuotian shi qu taipei de*
 Zhangsan yesterday be go Taipei DE
 ‘*It was going to Taipei that Zhangsan did yesterday.’
- (15) Predicate-focus ‘*shi...de*’ with an aspectual marker (= Lee’s (28))

Zhangsan zuotian shi qu-le taibei (de)
 Zhangsan yesterday SHI go-Asp Taipei DE
 ‘It was true that Zhangsan went to Taipei yesterday.’

On the other hand, Lee (2005) assumes the *shi...de* construction with non-focus *de* to be a headless relative clause. In this construction, *de* cannot be omitted.

(16) *ta shi chi su *(de)*(= Lee’s (22))
 3SGbe eat vegetable DE
 ‘He is a vegetarian.’

However, the headless relative clause construction of *shi...de* has similar surface structure as the predicate-focus structure of the cleft construction. Both structures are constructed by [*shi* + predicate]. Therefore, it is critical to distinguish these two structures. The main difference is that predicate-focus structure contain a contrastive focus, while relative clause structure does not.

(17) a. *Zhangsan shi chuan hong yifu de*(= Lee’s (32))
 Zhangsan SHI wear red clothes DE
 ‘Zhangsan is the person who is in red.’
 b. *Zhangsan shi chuan hong yifu de, Lisi shi chuan lan yifu de*
 Zhangsan SHI wear red clothes DE, Lisi SHI wear blue clothes
 DE
 ‘Zhangsan is in RED, Lisi is in BLUE.’

Paul & Whitman (2008)

Paul and Whitman (2008) argue there are four distinct patterns of bare *shi* and the *shi...de* constructions:

(9) Patterns of bare *shi* and *shi...de* constructions

Patterns	Forms
Cleft focus pattern i	Sentence-initial bare <i>shi</i>
Cleft focus pattern ii	<i>Shi...de</i> proper
Association with focus pattern	Sentence-medial bare <i>shi</i>
Propositional assertion pattern	NP <i>shi</i> V O <i>de</i>

For Paul and Whitman (2008), the *shi...de* construction is associated with two patterns: a cleft focus pattern and a propositional assertion pattern. The main form of the cleft focus pattern of the *shi...de* construction is *shi...de* proper. This pattern is a focus cleft pattern that allows subject focus or adjunct focus. On the other hand, the basic form of propositional assertion is NP *shi* V O *de*.

However, the two structures of the *shi...de* construction are performed differently by “Northern” or “Southern” Chinese speakers. For “Northern” speakers, they distinguish the cleft focus pattern and the propositional assertion

syntactically:

- (10) a. *Ta shi gen ni kai wanxiao de.* (= Paul & Whitman's (38))
 3SG be with 2SG open joke DE
 '(It is the case that) he was joking with you.'
 b. *Ta shi gen ni kai de wanxiao.*
 3SG be with 2SG open DE joke
 'It was with you that he was joking.'

For "Southern" speakers, *de* is always in the sentence-final position, no matter which interpretation is taken:

- (11) *Ta shi gen ni kai wanxiao de.* (= Paul & Whitman's (37))
 3SG be with 2SG open joke DE
 (i) '(It is the case that) he was joking with you.'
 (ii) 'It was with you that he was joking.'

De in the two structures also possesses different positions in the syntactic structure. In the cleft focus pattern, *de* is treated as the head of Aspect Phrase. In the propositional assertion, *de* is a non-root complementizer which is treated as the head of DeP.

Shi+stative predicate+de pattern as a headless relative clause

As section 2.1.2 mentions, Lee (2005) argues there are two main approaches to assume the syntactic properties of sentence final *de* in the *shi...de* construction. The *shi...de* construction can be separated into two patterns by the syntactic properties of *de*. Therefore, a question appears: Which approach fits the *shi+stative predicate+de* pattern?

In this paper, I assume the *shi+stative predicate+de* pattern is identical to pattern with non-focus *de* from Lee (2005)'s study. However, Lee (2005) failed to indicate the element in between *shi* and *de* in this pattern is the stative predicate. We first make a comparison between the sentence of *shi...de* construction with a stative predicate and the sentence from Lee (2005):

- (18) *ta shi chi su *(de)* (=Lee's (22))
 3SG be eat vegetable DE
 'He is a vegetarian.'
 (19) *Nishimiaotiao *(de)*. (=e.g. (8))
 2SG be slim DE
 'You are slim.'

There are multiple similarities between these two sentences. First, both sentences require a predicate (verb or adjective predicate) attached to the right of *shi*. Second, the sentence final *de* cannot be omitted in both sentences. Third, the semantic and pragmatic function of both sentences is to declare the state of the

subject. They are allowed to have an alternative translation: ‘Subject is the one who is + stative predicate.’

After indicating the functions and the properties that the sentence of the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern possesses, it is reasonable to analyze this type of sentence as a headless relative clause. The sentence final *de* in this sentence type is a modifier marker. Furthermore, this *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern allows a noun to be put after the modifier marker *de* and become a complete relative clause:

- (20) *Nishimiaotiao*(de) moteer.*
 2SG be slim DE model
 ‘You are the model who is slim.’

Traditionally, the *shi...de* construction is often treated as a cleft construction. However, the analysis in this paper about the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern provides the evidence that this particular *shi...de* pattern is different from a cleft construction. In the study of Paul & Whitman (2008), sentence final *de* in *shi...de* cleft pattern is able to be omitted, and the bare *shi* pattern transforms into focus pattern. On the other hand, this paper has declared the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern to be a headless relative clause. The sentence final *de* cannot be omitted. Otherwise, it is unable to add a noun to the right of the predicate.

Moreover, Lee (2005) assumes that the function of the cleft construction is to provide a focus to the sentence. She also states the function of a relative clause does not provide focus to the sentence.

To sum up, the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern is distinguished from the cleft pattern and final particle pattern according to two pieces of evidence: (i) the prohibition of omitting *de*; (ii) the possibility to add a noun after the predicate.

***Ting...de* construction with a gradable adjective**

In section 2, the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* pattern is considered to be a headless relative clause, and *de* is a modifier marker. However, the analyses of *ting...de* construction show a very different result from *shi...de* construction. The main focus of this section is to distinguish the syntactic properties of the degree marker *ting* and the final element *de*. Therefore, it is critical to review the previous studies about defining the degree markers and the sentence final particles in Mandarin Chinese.

Previous Studies

Liu (2010)

Liu’s (2010) analyses explain the adjectival structure of Mandarin Chinese. Basically, there are two main categories of the adjectival structure: i. the form with an overt degree marker to modify the gradable adjective; ii. the complex forms with a covert positive morpheme.

The concept of the positive morpheme is mainly based on the studies of

Kennedy (2005, 2007). The function of the positive morpheme is to morphologize the positive form of gradable adjectives. Following Kennedy's (2005, 2007) studies, Liu (2010) assumes that *hen* should be treated as an overt positive morpheme. Therefore, it fulfills the condition on saturating Chinese gradable adjectives.

On the other hand, Complex forms of a gradable adjective, but not an unmarked gradable adjective cannot occur in the sentence is due to the existence of the covert positive morpheme. The degree phrase headed by the covert positive morpheme is selected by the elements in these complex forms, such as the *bu* 'not' negation, the contrastive focus, the *ma* particle, the sentence final particle *le*, etc.

Paul (2014, 2015)

Paul & Whitman (2008) posit two different positions of *de*: i. the head of AspP in *shi...de* cleft construction, and the head of DeP as a non-root complementizer in the propositional assertion pattern. They assume *de* in the propositional assertion pattern appears after many different types of predicates, such as adjectives and stative verbs. *De* in this pattern is considered to be a C in the head of CP and take a TP complement.

In Paul's (2014, 2015) studies, the analyses of *de* as a non-root complementizer provide more details and discussions. Paul (2014, 2015) posits the sentence final particles (SFPs) in Chinese are heads of a split CP. According to Rizzi (1997) and Paul (2005, 2009), the split CP possesses a three-layered hierarchy: Attitude > Force > C(low) > TP. In Paul's (2014, 2015) studies, the SFPs in Chinese are divided into three distributional classes, and the relative order of these three classes is showed below:

(21) [[[TP C1]C2]C3].

C1 class stands for low C, C2 class stands for force, and C3 stands for attitude. Paul (2014, 2015) explains that only C1 class SFPs (low C) may occur in the embedded, non-root contexts. Furthermore, the non-root complementizer *de* heads the complement embedded under the matrix verb, and the condition of the co-occurrence of the non-root C *de* with a low root *Cle* provides the order *de le*:

(22)[C_{low}P[TP *Wenti xianzai shi* [C(-root) *neng jiejie de*]] *le*]
 problem now be can solve C(-root) CLOW
 'The problem can certainly be solved now.'
 (=Paul's (2015) (109))

***Ting* as a degree marker**

In this section, I will discuss the degree marker *ting* only. As mentioned above in section 1.3, Zhang (2002) puts *hen* and *ting* in the same category and assumes they both possess the same syntactic function, which is to modify the gradable adjectives. The semantic functions of *hen* and *ting* have been bleached out.

On the other hand, Liu (2010) assumes the semantic functions of *hen* can still exist. There are two semantic functions of the degree marker *hen*: First, *hen* is treated as an intensifier marker which means ‘very’ in English. Second, *hen* is treated as an overt positive morpheme to morphologize the positive form of gradable adjectives. Following Liu (2010)’s analyses, this paper assumes *ting* modifies the gradable adjectives in syntactic structure, but it also has semantic functions like *hen*.

First, *ting* is able to be an intensifier marker to elaborate the meaning of ‘very’:

- (23) *Zhangsan tinggautiao.*
 Zhangsan very tall
 ‘Zhangsan is very tall.’

To further assure that *ting* can be an intensifier marker, I examine the negation sentences with *bu* ‘not’ which are similar to Liu’s (2010) examples but are slightly adjusted:

- (24) a. ?*Yingtao gui sui gui, haihao bu ting gui.*
 Cherry expensive though expensive still-good not very expensive
 ‘Although cherries are expensive, these are not very expensive.’
 (Adjusted version of Liu’s e.g. (115a))
 b. **Yingtao gui sui gui, haihao bu gui.*
 Cherry expensive though expensive still-good not expensive
 *‘Although cherries are expensive, these are not expensive.’
 (=Liu’s (115b))

By comparing the two sentences, it is clear that *ting* in (24a) possesses the semantic function to tell the difference between the degree of the property denoted by the gradable adjective *gui* ‘expensive.’ Therefore, *ting* can only be interpreted as an intensifier marker in (24a). On the other hand, (24b) is ungrammatical since the negation *bu gui* ‘not expensive’ contradicts with ‘cherries are expensive.’

For the semantic function of *ting* being as an overt positive morpheme, we need to illustrate the function of the positive morpheme first. Kennedy (2007) shows that the unmarked form of gradable adjectives, also called the positive form of gradable adjectives, is related to the objects to maximal or minimal degrees, and have nothing to do with vagueness. The positive form of gradable adjectives possesses the semantic characteristic below: The order of objects x and y with respect to gradable property g is denoted by the positive form, and the property $g(x)$ exceeds $g(y)$ significantly. To form a compositional semantics of the positive form of gradable adjectives, Kennedy (2007) suggests that an overt degree morpheme *pos*, or a covert degree morpheme such as *hen* or *ting* to morphologize the positive form of gradable adjectives.

$$(25)[[Deg\ pos]] = \lambda g \lambda x. g(x) > s(g)$$

However, the *pos* morpheme must head the degree projection above the adjective phrase, and the degree phrase must be selected by some specific constructions. The *pos* morpheme is in complementary distribution with its overt counterpart *hen*. Therefore, if the *pos* morpheme is applied in the positive form of gradable adjective phrase, the degree marker *hen* is not allowed to appear in the sentence. The examples of *ting* being an overt positive morpheme in this paper are also similar to Liu's (2010) examples but are adjusted:

- (26) a. *Zhangsan bu (ting)gau.*
 Zhangsan not verytall
 'Zhangsan is not (very) tall.'
 b. *Zhangsan bu *(ting) nage.*
 Zhangsan not very that
 'Zhangsan is not very so.'
 (Adjusted version of Liu's (127a) & (128a))

In (26a), the degree marker *ting* is not obligatory since the negation marker *bu* selects a degree phrase headed by the covert positive morpheme, and the degree marker *ting* is only an intensifier marker which is able to be omitted. (26b), on the other hand, replaces the gradable adjectives with a pro-form *nage* 'that'. The degree marker *ting* is not allowed to be omitted in this sentence. This shows that *ting* in (26b) is an overt positive morpheme instead of an intensifier marker.

To sum up, two sentence types with different semantic functions of *ting* are provided in this section: i. an intensifier marker to distinguish the degree of the gradable adjective property; ii. an overt positive morpheme to elaborate the positive form of gradable adjectives.

DE as a low C

After clarifying the functions of the degree marker *ting*, I turn to find the explanations for the syntactic and semantic functions of the sentence final element *de*. First, *de* is allowed to appear at the end of both *ting* sentence types that mention above. Second, *de* is not an obligatory element in both sentence types.

- (27)?*Yingtao gui sui gui, haihao bu ting gui (de).*

Cherry expensive though expensive still-good not very expensive DE

- 'Although cherries are expensive, these are not very expensive.'
 (28) *Zhangsan bu *(ting) nage (de).*
 Zhangsan not TING that DE
 'Zhangsan is not so.'

For the syntactic structure of *de*, I apply the analyses from Paul (2014, 2015) to assume that *de* in the *ting...de* construction is a non-root C instead of a modifier marker in the *shi...de* construction with stative predicate. *De* in the *ting...de*

construction resides in the head of a CP and takes a TP complement. For semantic function of *de*, it is to emphasize the speaker's certainty and positivity to the status of the adjective predicate. The relative order of the three classes of SFPs and the non-root C should be elaborate like (29):

(29) [[[TP [CP(-root)]C1]C2]C3]

To prove this assumption, this section provides the examples to clarify the hierarchy of *de* and other SFPs. First, in *ting...de* construction, since *de* heads the non-root CP, the SFPs in C1 class which head the low CP would stay at the end of the sentence after *de* in the surface structure:

(30) [lowCP [TP [CP(-root)[*ta ting nuli de*]]*le*]
 3SG very hardworking de SFP(C1)
 'He is already very hardworking.'

Paul (2014) posits that C2 and C3 SFPs reside in even higher hierarchy than C1. Therefore, the non-root C *de* should always occur at the right of the C2 SFPs *ma*, *ba* or C3 SFPs *ou*, *(y)a*:

(31) a. [CPforce [TP [CP(-root)[*ta ting nuli de*]]*ne*]
 3SG very hardworking de SFP(C2)
 'He is very hardworking!'
 b. [CPattitude [TP [CP(-root)[*ta ting nuli de*]]*a*]
 3SG very hardworking de SFP(C3)
 'He is very hardworking!'

To sum up, the *ting...de* pattern is not really a construction. Instead, the degree marker *ting* and the complementizer *de* have independent syntactic and semantic functions. *De* in this pattern is an attachment to *ting* sentence pattern. The role of *de* is similar to the Chinese sentence final particles like *le*, *ma*, and *ne*.

Conclusions

The main goal of this paper is to clarify the nature of the *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction and the *ting...de* construction with a gradable adjective. Although the surface structures of these two constructions are similar, the syntactic and semantic functions of the copula *shi* and the degree marker *ting* are very different. The sentence final element *de* in the two constructions should also be treated as different morphemes.

The *shi*+stative predicate+*de* construction is assumed to be a headless relative clause. *Shi* is the copula, and the sentence final *de* in this sentence type is a modifier marker. On the other hand, the *ting...de* construction with a gradable adjective possesses two different *ting*: an intensifier marker which means 'very', and an overt positive morpheme. For *de* in this construction, I posit it as a

complementizer heading the non-root CP.

Though the differences between *shi...de* and *ting...de* construction have been clarified, further research and survey are required to examine whether the complementizer *de* is able to interact with other degree adverbs such as *hen*, *feichang*, and *tai*, etc.

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