

GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE BETWEEN
MANDARIN AND MODERN AMERICAN STANDARD ENGLISH

Signed: Daniel E. Leitch Date: April 18, 2011

GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE BETWEEN
MANDARIN AND MODERN AMERICAN STANDARD ENGLISH

A Seminar Paper

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirement for the Degree

Masters of Science

in

Education

by

Kang Qingyan (Edie)

May 5th, 2011

Table List

Table 1.....	5
Table 2.....	5
Table 3.....	6
Table 4.....	11
Table 5.....	13
Table 6.....	14
Table 7.....	18
Table 8.....	20
Table 9.....	22
Table 10.....	23

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratefulness to the people who gave me generous help during this writing process. Without their kindness, it would have been impossible for me to complete this work.

First, a great indebtedness goes to my supervisor, Professor Tom, who contributed his precious insight and knowledge when reading my drafts and provided instructive advice during the writing process of this thesis.

Second, I would like to convey a special appreciation to the American foreign teacher Tyler Weil for his invaluable help in collecting the relevant materials and providing me with specific suggestions.

Finally, I extend my thanks to my beloved friends and to my parents for their consideration and encouragement. This thesis is devoted to all the people who have helped me further myself in life.

Abstract

GRAMMATICAL DIFFERENCES IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE BETWEEN
MANDARIN AND MODERN AMERICAN STANDARD ENGLISH

Kang Qingyan (Edie)

Under the Supervision of Tom Loguidice and Doctor Degree

Because Mandarin-speaking people are becoming more prevalent in foreign countries and new Confucius Institutes are being established one after another around the world, studying the Mandarin language is becoming a trend and a need in the twenty-first century. This paper compares and summarizes the grammatical differences in sentence structure between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English in the declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. It is found that some sentence patterns, such as *lian dong* and *jian yu*, do not exist in English but there are certain ways through which those Chinese sentence patterns can be converted into English sentence patterns. In this paper, Mandarin learners who study Chinese as a foreign language will find out how the sentence structures in Mandarin are different from those in Modern American Standard English and how to study Mandarin more efficiently.

This paper is divided into four parts that each feature one of following four sentence structures: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory. In the declarative sentence structure, the analysis focuses on the predicate patterns such as the nominal predicate patterns, verb predicate patterns, adjectival patterns and subject-predicate as predicate patterns. In the interrogative sentence structure, comparisons are made between the basic question patterns in English and Chinese. In the imperative sentence structure, subjects and verbs of imperative patterns are analyzed between the two languages and also the methods to change the imperative

tone are compared. In the exclamatory sentence structure, the grammatical differences of sentence patterns are concluded from the labeled and unlabeled aspects.

Key Words: grammatical differences, sentence structure, Mandarin, Modern American Standard English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE.....	i
TITLE PAGE.....	ii
TABLE LIST.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Introduction	
Statement of the Problem	
Definitions of Terms	
Delimitations	
Method of Approach	
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	4
Grammatical Differences in Declarative Sentence Structure	
Grammatical Differences from Predicate Patterns	
Nominal predicate pattern.	
Verb predicate pattern.	
<i>Lian dong sentence pattern.</i>	
<i>Jian yu sentence pattern.</i>	
Adjectival predicate pattern.	
Subject-predicate as predicate pattern.	
Grammatical Differences in Interrogative Sentence Structure	
Grammatical Differences in Imperative Sentence Structure	
The Use of the Subject	
The Use of the Verb	
The Use of the Methods to Change the Imperative Tone	
Grammatical Differences in Exclamatory Sentence Structure	
CHAPTER III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	27
REFERENCES.....	28

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After the implementation of the Chinese policy, known as *Go Out*, the Mandarin language is becoming more popular on the international stage. Also, Confucius Institutes are established in over one hundred countries and Mandarin as a subject is taught in thousands of schools all over the world. Moreover, many foreigners whose first language is English are becoming more interested in studying Mandarin today. By comparison, English, the most widely used language, is thoroughly different from the Mandarin language in such areas as pronunciation and spelling. Distinguishing the grammatical similarities and differences in sentence structure between the two languages will be very helpful for Mandarin learners to develop properly, so it is significant to research common problems in this field and help increase understanding.

Although many scholars have already discussed certain aspects of the sentence patterns between Chinese and English, including comparisons of the Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure and the “There Be” sentence structure, there is still a need for a different approach. In Modern American Standard English, the ten predicate sentence patterns are grouped into four types: the “be” patterns, the linking verb patterns, the intransitive verb patterns and the transitive patterns (Kolln & Funk, 1997, p. 23-24). In contrast, some of these sentence patterns may exist or have similar sentence functions in different sentence patterns in Mandarin.

This paper includes a discussion from new angles focused on the predicate and functions of the components in a sentence to analyze the grammatical differences between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English. In addition, the paper is a summary of the results from a

review of the literature and a study by the author for an understanding of some of the grammatical differences in sentence structure between the two languages. Specifically, the grammatical differences between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English will be analyzed from four basic sentence structures: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentence structures. First, in the declarative sentence structure, the analysis of sentence structures from the predicate aspect will be made, including the nominal predicate pattern, verb predicate pattern, adjectival predicate pattern and subject-predicate as predicate. Second, regarding interrogative sentence structures, general, special, alternative and tag question structures will be analyzed between the two languages. Third, in the imperative and exclamatory sentence structures, some grammatical differences between the two languages will be analyzed from the components of a sentence and compared with the basic sentence patterns of the two languages.

Through the analysis of the grammatical differences between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English, students who study Mandarin Chinese as a foreign language will have a better idea about how sentence structures in Mandarin differ from those in Modern American Standard English. This analysis can also contribute to studying Mandarin more efficiently.

Statement of the Problem

The problem expressed as a question is “What are the grammatical differences in sentence structure between Mandarin Chinese and Modern American Standard English related to the predicate and functions of the components in the sentence?”

Definition of Terms

Mandarin. The Mandarin language was first proposed by Zhu Wenxiong in 1906. In February, 1956, Mandarin was defined by the State Council of the People's Republic of China as the language utilizing Beijing pronunciation as the standard pronunciation, Northern dialect as the basic dialect and classic modern colloquial language for grammatical norms.

Modern American Standard English. Modern American Standard English refers to the particular regional dialect spoken by native speakers of North American English as a result of historical sociopolitical factors (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999, p. 8-9).

Delimitations of Research

Research will be conducted in and through the library at South Central University for Nationalities over a period of ninety days. Primary searches will be conducted via the internet engines such as EBSCOHOST with ERIC, CNKI and Google, including Google Scholar. Primary sources will only be related to the grammatical differences in sentence structure. A review of literature as well as analysis by the thesis writer will be provided. The results of the paper are intended to benefit foreign students studying Mandarin Chinese. Key search topics include “grammatical differences between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English,” “predicate patterns in Modern American Standard English,” and “sentence structures in Mandarin.”

Method of Approach

A brief review of literature related to the grammatical differences in predicate patterns between Mandarin Chinese and Modern American Standard English will be conducted. Another review of literature on related research will be conducted. The findings will be summarized and synthesized, and recommendations made.

CHAPTER II

Generally speaking, English sentence patterns are standardized to emphasize the subject-predicate sentence pattern. In contrast, Chinese sentence structures are more flexible and the representative sentence pattern is the theme pattern (Jia & Zhang, 2008, p. 252). No matter how different one believes the sentence patterns are between the two languages, both Chinese and English sentences can be divided into the declarative sentence pattern, interrogative sentence pattern, imperative sentence pattern and exclamatory sentence pattern based on the pragmatic function (Wan, 2009, p. 72).

Grammatical Differences in the Declarative Sentence Structure

The declarative sentence in Mandarin (henceforth referred to as Chinese) is defined as a narration or statement of facts with a narrative tone and ending with a period (Qi, 2005, p. 253). In Modern American Standard English (henceforth referred to as English), the declarative sentence is defined as a statement of a fact, wish, intent, or feeling and ends with a period. Most declarative sentences take the subject-verb structure (Blau, Elbow & Kilgallon, 1998, p. 571). Although declarative sentences in both languages have similar definitions, they differ in aspects of the declarative sentence structure, such as the predicate and non-predicate patterns.

Grammatical Differences of Predicate Patterns

In a declarative sentence, the subject and predicating verbs are the main components. In English, the subject determines the form of the predicating verb which changes in tense, aspect, and voice according to the specific subject and time. In other words, the subject and the predicating verb have to remain consistent with each other. The subject in a Chinese declarative sentence, on the other hand, is the object stating or narrating the events and is modified by the predicating verbs which have no changes, no matter who the subject is or when the action occurs

(Hu, 2001, p. 317). Compared with English, predicate verbs in Chinese sentences do not have inflectional changes but do have phrases to help label the tense, aspect and voice. Some examples of these differences are presented in Table 1 and Table 2:

Table 1

Examples of English Verbs in Tense, Aspect and Voice

English								
Subject	Predicate Verbs (Be and Do Verbs)							
	Tense			Aspect		Voice		
	Past	Present	Future	Progressive Aspect	Perfective Aspect	Active Voice	Passive Voice	
First Person	was/ did	am /do	will be/do	am being/ doing	have been/ done	do	am done	
Second Person	were/ did	are/do	will be/do	are being	have been/ done	do	are done	
Third Person	Singular	was/ did	is/ does	will be/do	is being/ doing	has been/ does	does	is done
	Plural	were/ did	are/ do	will be/do	are being/ doing	have been/ done	do	are done

Table 2

Examples of Chinese Verbs in Tense, Aspect and Voice

Chinese							
Subject	Predicate Verbs (“是”, “做”)						
	Tense			Aspect		Voice	
	Past	Present	Future	Progressive Aspect	Perfective Aspect	Active Voice	Passive Voice
First Person	(曾经) 是/做	(现在) 是/做	(将来) 是/做	(正在) 是/做	(已经) 是/做 (过)	(把) ……做	(被) ……做
Second Person	(曾经)	(现在)	(将来)	(正在)	(已经) 是/做 (过)	(把)	(被)

For declarative sentence patterns, subject-predicate sentence structure is the representative. In Chinese there are predicate patterns which include nominal, verb, adjectival and “subject-predicate” predicate patterns (Qi, 2005, p. 241-246). In English, Kolln and Funk (1997) arranged it into ten basic sentence patterns which fall into four groups: the be patterns, linking verb patterns, intransitive verb patterns and transitive verb patterns (p. 23-24).

Comparisons of the basic subject-predicate patterns between English and Chinese are exhibited in Table 3.

Table 3

Comparisons of Basic Subject-Predicate Patterns between English and Chinese

Language	Subject Predicate Pattern	Basic Form (Subject + Predicate)	Examples
	Nominal Predicate Pattern	I. Noun + Noun/ Noun Phrase II. Verb/ Verb Phrase + Noun/Noun Phrase III. Subject-Predicate Phrase + Noun/Noun Phrase	1.今天星期天。 2.连续下雪一天半。 3.校长出差才一天。

Chinese	Verb Predicate Pattern	I. Noun/Noun Phrase + Transitive Verb/ Intransitive Verb II. Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb-Object Phrase III. Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb-Complement Phrase IV. Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb ₁ + (Object ₁)+Verb ₂ + (Object ₂) + ... V. Noun/Noun Phrase + Jian Yu Phrase	1. 犯人逃跑了。/门开着呢。 2. 小王喜欢到国外旅游。 3. 校长跌伤了。 4. 老师微笑着说这个故事。 5. 屋里有人轻轻地哼着小曲。
	Adjectival Predicate Pattern	Noun/Noun Phrase + Adjective/ Adjective Phrase	天晴了。
	“Subject-Predicate” as Predicate Pattern	Noun Phrase + Subject-Predicate Phrase	这件事大家都反对。
English	The be Patterns	I. Noun Phrase + Be + Adverb/ Time/Place II. Noun Phrase + Be + Adjective III. Noun Phrase ₁ + Be + Noun Phrase ₁	1. The boy is upstairs. 2. This boy is smart. 3. The boy is my son.
	The Linking Verb Patterns	I. Noun Phrase + Linking Verb + Adjective II. Noun Phrase ₁ + Linking Verb + Noun Phrase ₁	1. The boy seems smart. 2. The boy became a scientist.
	The Intransitive Verb Pattern	Noun Phrase + Intransitive Verb	The boy rested.
	The Transitive Verb Patterns	I. Noun Phrase ₁ + Transitive + Noun Phrase ₂ II. Noun Phrase ₁ + Transitive + Noun Phrase ₂ + Noun Phrase ₃ III. Noun Phrase ₁ + Transitive + Noun Phrase ₂ + Adjective IV. Noun Phrase ₁ + Transitive + Noun Phrase ₂ + Noun Phrase ₂	1. The boy finished his work. 2. The boy gave his teacher his homework. 3. The boy thinks his mother beautiful. 4. The boy considers his homework a challenge.

From Table 3, the basic sentence patterns in both languages are quite similar; however, the components of subject and predicate in some of the sentence patterns have big differences, for example, in the nominal predicate, verb predicate, adjectival predicate and the “subject-predicate” as predicate patterns.

Nominal predicate pattern

In the form *Noun + Noun/ Noun Phrase* of the nominal predicate patterns in Chinese, two nouns can be a sentence by simply adding them together. In contrast, a verb is required to make a sentence in English. For this form, it can be placed by the “be” patterns in most cases.

Sometimes an English sentence still needs conjunctions if there are two or more nouns as the predicate in Chinese. But no two random nouns can make a sentence and Qi (2005) listed some limitations for this pattern which are (p. 241-242):

1. The subject is often the “time noun” and the predicate verb should also be the time noun which presents dates, seasons, weather, et cetera. Or both subject and predicate verb to be the place nouns as in the sentence *屋前一片草地* which means *The green lawn is in front of the house*. In this pattern, *是* is optional to be added between the subject and the predicate but *不是* must to be added when it is a negative declarative sentence. For example, the Chinese sentence *今天星期天* can also be *今天是星期天* which have the same meaning: *Today is Sunday*. When changed into the negative form, it becomes *今天不是星期天*.
2. When the subject is a person’s name, the subject can also be the name, profession, nationality or name of his working unit and title such as *小李刚讲师*.
3. The predicate is the noun explanation of the subject, for example, *北京中国的首都*.
4. The predicate is the descriptive phrase of the adjective and noun. For example, *她大眼睛, 红脸蛋* which means *she has big eyes and a red face*.

5. The predicate is the measure phrase, such as 60 岁, 20 周 and 30 斤.
6. The subject and predicate are both corresponding quantifiers. For example, 两人一间房 which means *two people share one room*.
7. The predicate is the phrase with 的 like 红色的, 从中国来的.
8. The predicate is the coordinate noun or noun phrase. For example, 小李, 北京人, 32岁了 which means *Xiao Li is from Beijing and 32 years old*.

In the second form, *Verb/ Verb Phrase + Noun/ Noun Phrase* of the nominal predicate Chinese pattern, the verb is often the transitive verb with its object and the verb does not represent an action but indicates the time. In this pattern, the predicate is limited to time quantifiers such as 一天, 十节, and 五个月 (Qi, 2005, p. 242). By comparison, only the English verb changes to be the nominal form and then it can be the subject. For example, 持续下雪三个小时, in this example, the subject is the transitive verb 下 with its object 雪. If *snowing* is used as the subject, it needs another verb in order to make a sentence. So this can be represented in English as *snowing has lasted for three hours*.

The third form of the nominal predicate patterns *Subject-Predicate Phrase + Noun/Noun Phrase* mainly uses a time noun as the predicate with the adverbs such as 才 and 已经. In this form, the subject is a subject-predicate sentence like 小明做作业 as in the example 小明做作业已经3个小时了. This Chinese sentence can be translated into the English sentence *Xiao Ming has been doing his homework for 3 hours*. Because the time noun phrase *three hours*

usually cannot be the predicate verb in English, Xiao Ming became the subject of English sentence.

Verb predicate pattern

The verb predicate patterns in Chinese have the same exact sentence structure as the linking verb, intransitive verb and transitive verb patterns in English except for two forms of the Chinese verb predicate patterns: *Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb₁ + (Object₁) + Verb₂ + (Object₂) + (...)* and *Noun/Noun Phrase + Jian Yu Phrase*.

Lian Dong sentence pattern.

According to Xing et al. (2003), the Lian Dong sentence pattern in Chinese refers to a declarative sentence continuously using several verbs which share the same subject as the predicate of the sentence (p. 339). Qi (2005) presented it in the form as *Noun/Noun Phrase + Verb₁ + (Object₁) + Verb₂ + (Object₂) + (...)* (p. 296). Compared with English predicate patterns, the Lian Dong sentence pattern has no equivalent in English patterns unless there are more functional words, such as conjunctions or infinitive particles, to connect several verbs in the same sentence. For instance, *Professor Zhang went to Beijing to travel and visit his family members* and *张教授去北京探亲旅游*. In the English sentence, the three verbs *went*, *travel* and *visit* are the predicate verbs and between them the infinitive particle *to* and the conjunction *and* are used in order to connect the three verbs to form a sentence. In contrast, in the Chinese sentence, between the predicate verbs *去*, *探亲* and *旅游* there are no such connectors. Both sentences do have something in common, however; all predicate verbs share the same subject.

Jian Yu sentence pattern

Xing et al. (2003) described that the *Jian Yu* sentence refers to a sentence using the *Jian Yu* phrase as the predicate or a sentence is directly made of the *Jian Yu* phrase (p. 341). As mentioned by Qi (2005), the *Jian Yu* phrase includes a transitive-object phrase and a subject-predicate phrase and the object in the transitive-object phrase is the subject of the subject-predicate phrase (p. 301). For example, in the Chinese sentence *请教授吃饭* which has the English meaning of *invite the professor to have dinner*, the object of the transitive-object phrase is *教授* (*the professor*) who is the person having dinner.

Adjectival predicate pattern

The adjectival predicate pattern is another pattern that is entirely different from English sentence patterns because English adjectives cannot be used as the predicate verb. It can replace the predicate with the “be” verb or linking verbs in English. For instance, the Chinese adjective *谦虚* means “humble” in English, so the Chinese sentence can be *他谦虚* but the English sentence cannot be directly translated into *he humble* but *he is humble*. The majority of these adjectival predicate patterns can be converted into the “be” patterns in English. Table 4 shows some examples of these transferring differences.

Table 4

Examples of Adjectival Predicate Pattern between Chinese and English

Chinese	English	Sentences	
安静	Quiet	校园很安静。	The school is very quiet.
贵	Expensive	这沙发有点贵。	This sofa is a little expensive.
漂亮	Beautiful	那个女生好漂亮。	That girl is very beautiful.

Subject-Predicate as a predicate pattern

The subject-predicate as predicate pattern is the sentence using the subject-predicate phrase as the predicate. In order to identify the subjects and predicates, the subject and the predicate of the sentence are called “big subject” and “big predicate” while ones in the predicate of the sentence are called “small subject” and “small predicate” (Xing et al., 2003, p. 335). It is written in the form as: *Noun Phrase (Big Subject) + Subject-Predicate Phrase (Small Subject + Small Predicate) + (Big Predicate)*. For example, *这本小说情节有意思*, which means *the plot of this novel is interesting*, the big subject is *这本小说 (this novel)* and the small subject is *情节 (the plot)*. No big predicate is used, only the small predicate *有意思 (interesting)*.

According to Qi (2005), this pattern is peculiar to Chinese language. In accordance with the relationship between the big subject and the small subject, Qi outlined six situations for this sentence pattern (p. 246-247):

1. The small subject presents part of what the big subject presents or indicates the attribute of what the big subject presents. For example, *她眼睛大, 鼻子小* which is equivalent to *she has big eyes and a small nose*, the big subject in the example is *她 (she)* and the small subjects are *眼睛 (eyes)* and *鼻子 (nose)* both represented as part of the big subject. The small predicate verbs are *大 (big)* and *小 (small)*.
2. The big subject is the object of the small predicate, and the small subject is the person to perform the small predicate action. For example, *这件事情所有人都反对* which has the same meaning as *all people disagree with this case*. In the example, *所有人 (all the*

- people*) is the small subject performing the disagreeing action while the big subject *这件事情* (*this case*) is also the object of the small predicate *反对* (*disagree*).
3. The big subject has semantic components of the small predicate such as the tool, material and indirect object. In the Chinese sentence *妈妈我买了香水, 爸爸我买了皮夹* which is equal to *I bought perfume for Mom and a wallet for Dad*. The big subjects *妈妈* (*Mom*) and *爸爸* (*Dad*) are the indirect objects of the small predicate *bought*.
 4. The big predicate calculates and evaluates the big subject and both the small predicate and the subject are the quantifiers. In the example *这部电脑, 一万元一台* which means *this computer sells for 10,000 RMB each*, the predicate *卖* (*sell*) is omitted in the original Chinese sentence so only the big subject *这部电脑* (*this computer*) is left in the sentence. The small subject *一台* (*each*) and the small predicate *一万元* (*10,000 RMB*) are both quantifiers.
 5. The big subject is the person who performs the action of the small subject. The small subject is the verb or adjectival component. The small predicate is the adjective. The example *他说话很快* is converted as *he speaks fast*, the big subject *他* (*he*) performs the speaking action and the small predicate *快* (*fast*, an adverb in English) is adjectival in Chinese.

6. The big subject presents the scope, the object and related things. For example, *这件事情, 我有新的看法* which means *I have a new opinion about this matter*, the big subject *这件事情* (*this matter*) presents the object as well as the small subject *我* (*I*) and the small predicate *有新的看法* (*have a new opinion*).

Grammatical Differences in the Interrogative Sentence Structure

In English, there are four kinds of interrogative sentence structures: general question (also called a “yes-no” question), special question (also called Wh-question), alternative question and tag question (Zhang & Zhang, 2003, p. 473-475). Basic format and examples are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Basic Formats and Examples of Four Sentence Patterns in English

The Interrogative Patterns	Basic Format	Examples
General Question (yes-no question)	I. Be verb/auxiliary/modal auxiliary + subject + predicate II. Be verb/auxiliary/modal auxiliary + not + subject + predicate	I. Are you all right? –Yes, I’m fine. II. Don’t you feel great? –No, I don’t.
Special Question (Wh-question)	Who/what/how... (interrogatives) + verb/ be verb/auxiliary/modal auxiliary + subject+ predicate	Why did you arrive home so late last night?
Alternative Question	I. Be verb/auxiliary/modal auxiliary + interrogative subject or predicate with “or” II. Who/what/how... (interrogatives) + verb/ be verb/auxiliary/modal auxiliary + interrogative subject or predicate with “or”	I. Are you going to marry Henry or Andrew? II. What is this, cake or bread?
Tag Question	The declarative sentence + tag question	The bus is late, isn’t it?

Similarly, the Chinese language also has four kinds of interrogative sentence patterns in traditional grammar: the specific question, the yes-no question, the X-not-X question and the

alternative question. According to Cai (2009), these four questions are named differently based on different standards. The specific question is named after the pragmatic function of a question; the yes-no question is named according to the semantic characteristics of the answers of the question; the X-not-X question is named because of its form features of the question, and the alternative question is named for the semantic characteristics of the question (p. 33). After he sorted out 100,000 words of the oral language corpus, he deduced the traditional basic formats of the four interrogative sentence structures and the frequency of each pattern in Table 6 (p. 34).

Table 6

Basic Formats and Examples of Four Sentence Patterns in Chinese

Interrogative Patterns	Basic Format		Quantity	Proportion	Examples
Specific Question	-呢		228	72.15%	心情怎么样？
	+ 呢		72	22.78%	心情怎么样呢？
	+ 啊		2	0.63%	心情怎么样啊？
Yes-No Question	+ 吗		121	43.53%	这些钱够吗？
	+ 吧		12	4.32%	这些钱够吧？
	+ 啊		4	1.44%	这些钱够啊？
	S, 是吗		20	7.19%	你是一个学生，是吗？
	S, 是吧		12	4.32%	你是一个学生，是吧？
	S, 对吗		3	1.08%	你是一个学生，是吧？
X-not-X Question	是不是	-呢	34	25%	是不是很好吃？
		+ 呢	5	3.68%	是不是很好吃呢？
	S, 好不好		11	8.09%	她在我就走，好不好？
	S, 对不对		2	1.47%	她在我就走，对不对？
Alternative	Only Two	还是 -呢	26	54.17%	你觉得他聪明还是我聪明？
		The front choice +呢	18	37.50%	你觉得他聪明呢，还是我聪明？

Question	Choices	The back choice +呢	0		你觉得他聪明，还是我聪明呢？
		Both choices +呢	2	4.17%	你觉得他聪明呢，还是我聪明呢？
	Multiple Choices		2	4.17%	你觉得他聪明，我聪明，还是都聪明？

Comparing the interrogative patterns in Chinese and English, although selected sentence patterns have some structure in common, the differences between the two languages are also very obvious.

The specific question pattern in Chinese is quite similar to the special question in English except the one in Chinese puts the interrogatives in the middle of a question and sometimes includes modal particles such as *呢* and *啊*. Unlike English, which allows the interrogatives to lead the question instead of using the modal particles at the end of a question, English needs the auxiliary or the modal auxiliary if there is no verb or *be* verb in the sentence. Both languages have the yes-no question, but the structure is completely different.

For the yes-no question in English, the basic form is to put the *be* verb, auxiliary and modal auxiliary in front of the question, and the subject and predicate are put into the declarative sentence order. In Chinese, this pattern is combined with the declarative sentence pattern and the modal particle such as *吗*, *吧*, *啊*, *是吗*, *是吧* and *对吗*. Each modal particle represents a different tone in the question.

The tag question in English appears like the X-not-X question, but the difference is that, in English, the tag is always left at the end of the question. The front declarative sentence decides whether the tag will be affirmative or negative and which *be* verb, auxiliary or modal auxiliary

will be used in the tag, depending on the one used in the declarative sentence. In Chinese, however, the X-not-X question only has one form that can only be put in front of the question, such as *是不是*, *有没有* and *要不要* and some can be put in the end of the question like *好不好*, *行不行*, *成不成* and *对不对*.

The alternative question of both languages offers choices to the listener and this is common for this pattern. But the alternative question in English has to use the a general or special question form in front of the choices; in contrast, the question in Chinese is usually a declarative sentence before providing the choices.

Grammatical Differences in the Imperative Sentence Structure

The imperative sentences are also called commands. In English, according to Kolln and Funk (1997), they are the sentences that are used to “suppress the subject and give commands” (p. 112) and they “take the base form of the verb without auxiliaries” (p. 120). Some examples include *be quiet*, *sit down*, *tell me the truth* and *leave me alone*. It is the special sentence pattern that indicates orders, commands, requests, suggestions, persuasion, etc. Zhang and Zhang (2003) concluded that the imperative sentences in English can be divided into two categories: second-person commands and first-person and third-person commands (p. 483). On the contrary, the commands in Chinese refer to sentences that suggest a request to a listener so that he or she would put the request into action; this typically ends with an exclamation mark. Yuan’s (1993) investigation found that Chinese imperative sentences can be categorized by six sentence patterns in three total groups which are commanding and prohibiting sentences, suggesting and

persuading sentences and requiring and requesting sentences (p. 23). For example, *不许哭!*

(Don't cry!) 你别说了! (Stop talking!) 别动怒啊! (Don't get mad!)

Based on what Wan (2009) analyzed, Chinese imperative sentences do not have many syntactic changes but differ in morphological aspects. Conversely, English is simpler in morphology so English imperative sentences vary in syntactic aspects (p. 73). This is why the grammatical differences in imperative sentence structure are demonstrated primarily from three aspects: the use of the subject, the use of the verb and the use of methods to change the imperative tone.

The Use of the Subject

According to Wan (2009), because the Chinese imperative sentence means the speaker requires the listener to put the request into action, the subject is usually the first or second person, such as *咱们, 我们, 你, 您* and *你们*. Sometimes the subject can be the third person, a general term for people and names like *大家, 诸位* and *各位* (p. 73). As Zhu (1982) pointed out, the subject of a command can only be the first person (*咱们, 我们*) or the second person (*你, 您* and *你们*). The first person (*我*) and the third person (*他, 她, 他们* and *她们*) cannot be the subjects of an imperative sentence (p. 205).

In most of situations, the subjects of a command can be omitted. For example, (*你们*) *睡觉去!* (*Go to bed.*) There are two situations where the subject can be omitted in a command sentence. The first is that the subject can be omitted but it can appear when it is needed for the

expression. For instance, (您) 请坐这儿吧! [(You) please sit here.] The second situation is when there is no subject in the non-subject-predicate sentence, such as 过来! (Come over here.) (p. 73). According to Xiao (2007), there are four situations in which the subject, as a pronoun, cannot be omitted. In the first situation, the subject cannot be omitted if it includes the speaker: 咱们几个领导晚上开会! (We, the leaders, will stay to have a conference tonight.) In the second situation, the subject is the honorific or respectful form, like 您. The third situation is when the subject is the direct address as 二嫂 (the second sister-in-law) in the example 二嫂, 给点饭吃! (Second sister-in-law, give me some food.) In the last situation, the subjects are not omitted if the subjects are in a coordinate sentence. For example, 我扫地, 你擦窗! (I clean the floor while you clean the windows.) (p. 376)

Like the subject in the Chinese imperative sentence, the subject of the English imperative sentence can be *me, us, you*, the indefinite pronouns *somebody, nobody, anybody* and *everybody* or names like *Henry, Jane* and so on. The difference is that the subject can be overt and covert in English, unlike in Chinese which has junior and senior levels. For example, 您是 the honorific form for 你, but it is the same in English as *you*. When the subject is in the third person, it has the same semantic function as the second person, for it all refers to the listener. For example, in the sentence *Henry, give me a pen, will you?* The subject is in the third person, it is easy to find the real subject from the tag question which is *you*. When the imperative sentence begins with the word *let*, although the subject is assumed as the third person, the logical subject is the second

person which can be found in the tag question. For example, *let everybody enjoy the party, will you?* However, if the subject starts with the word *let's*, the subject is equal to *咱们, 我们* Chinese which includes the addresser and the listener. The tag question can make it obvious as in the sentence *let's go swimming, shall we?* (Wan, 2009, p. 73-74)

The Use of the Verb

According to what Yuan (1993) analyzed on the verb patterns of Chinese commands, not every verb can be used in an imperative sentence because of the semantic limitations. Table 7 shows what kinds of verbs can and cannot be used in command sentences (p. 24).

Table 7

Verb Patterns of the Imperative Sentence

Verb Type	Emotional coloring	Affirmative Form	Negative Form
Volitional Verb	Commendatory	✓	
	Derogatory		✓
	Neutral	✓	✓
Non-volitional Verb			✓

The non-volitional verbs like *丢, 怕, 忘记* and *心痛*, and the derogatory of the volitional verbs, *欺骗, 抱怨, 堕落* and *敲诈*, are only allowed to be used in the negative commands. For the commendatory of the volitional verbs like *帮助, 爱护, 照顾* and *赞美*, they can only be used in the affirmative sentence. For the neutral volitional verbs like *做, 点头, 告诉* and *答应*, they are allowed to be in both affirmative and negative imperative sentences. All these limitations can be applied to English. However, for the verbs that can be used in the imperative sentence in

Chinese, there are still certain rules to follow in order to form a command sentence. According to Qi (2005), there are certain rules in seven situations for certain verbs (p. 259-260).

1. Verbs like 醒, 宣传, 反映, 表示, 说明 and 观察 need to add the characters “一下” or repeat the verbs again. For example, 醒醒! or 醒一下! (*Wake up!*). Among these kinds of verbs, some can be used individually in a negative command like 别宣传! (*No advertising!*)
2. Verbs such as 站, 躺, 睡, 呆, 跪, 托, 扶, 举 and 搂 require the character 着 after the verbs. For instance, 站着! (*Stand!*) and 呆着! (*Stay!*)
3. Verbs such as 合, 闭, 开, 关, 盖, 存, 出, 住, 回 and 过 need to add a complement after them to form a command, like 关上! (*Close!*) and 盖起来! (*Cover it!*)
4. Verbs like 决定, 批准, 代理 and 承担 require that the subject be included in the sentence. For example, 你决定! (*You decide!*)
5. Verbs like 禁止, 帮助, 加入, 生产 and 利用 require that the object be included in the sentence. For example, 禁止拍照! (*No photos!*)
6. Verbs like 请教, 道歉, 赔罪, 接头 and 讲理 require an adverb phrase in the command. For example, 向姐姐道歉! (*Apologize to your sister!*)

7. Verbs like 欢迎, 出差, 旅行, 打仗 and 演戏 need to be in the *Lian Dong* structure to form an imperative sentence. For example, 去旅行吧! (*Go to travel!*)

As previously mentioned, verbs in English change in tense, aspect and voice so that the imperative sentence patterns between the two languages differ from each other. Verbs are used in different tenses, aspects and voices to indicate different meanings in the imperative sentence. Based on Wan's (2009) analysis, if the verb is in the progressive tense, the command indicates that the orders will be implemented immediately or have emotional coloring. For example, *don't be messing around when the bell rings!* If the verb is in perfect aspect, the command means that the addresser requires the listener to complete or stop what he or she addressed before a certain time. For example, *have done with your quarrelling!* If the verb in negative form is in the passive voice, it usually presents the passive meanings as in the example *don't be misled!* But sometimes the state of the passive voice can indicate the active meaning as in the example *be reassured!* (p. 74).

In contrast, the tense, aspect and voice can all be expressed through additional words in Chinese imperative sentences. For the tense, the English example can be converted into Chinese as 铃声响了就不要胡闹啦! In this example, the order will be carried out immediately, indicated through the adverb 就. For aspect, the English imperative sentence can be converted into Chinese by adding the time adverb 已经 in the sentence as 已经吵完架了! For the voice, if there is a preposition, such as 被, 让 and 叫, it will be in the passive voice. The English command *Don't be misled!* is equivalent to the Chinese 别被误导了!

The Use of the Methods to Change the Imperative Tone

Addressing the right command in the right situation helps to achieve good communication. There are different methods to address various tones in both Chinese and English. A comparison of the different methods to improve the imperative tone is shown in Table 8 (Wan, 2009, p. 74-75).

Table 8

A Comparison of the Different Methods to Change the Imperative Tone

Language	Methods	Examples
Chinese	Add modal particles	吧, 吗, 呢, 啦, 嘛, 啊, 了
	Using the polite terms	请, 麻烦, 劳驾, 有劳
	Adding X-not-X form	好不好, 行不行, 能不能
	Repeating the verb or adding the momentum terms	醒醒, 谈谈, 反映反映, 倡导倡导, 说说
	Using the interrogatives	你出来跟我商量好吗?
English	Adding the word <i>Please</i>	Sing a song, please!
	Using a tag question	Follow my directions, will you?
	Using the rising and falling tone	Give me a hand! ↗
	Adding can you, can't you, won't you and why don't you etc.	Take another bus, can't you?

Some methods are similar between the two languages, such as using polite terms in Chinese and adding the word *Please* in English. Adding the X-not-X form in Chinese is similar to adding can you, can't you, won't you and why don't you in English and using the tag question in English is equivalent to using the interrogatives in Chinese. But the other two methods of adding modal particles and repeating the verb or adding the momentum terms do not exist in English. Different kinds of commands in Chinese use modal particles differently. As Qi and Zhu (2005) found, the affirmative commands prefer the modal particles 吧 and 啦 which is the

variant of the modal particle 啊; the negative ones prefer the modal particle 啊, its variant 哇 and the variant of the modal particles of 了 and 啊; the emphatic ones prefer the modal particle 啊 and its variant 哇.

Grammatical Differences in the Exclamatory Sentence Structure

The exclamatory sentence in English is defined by Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) as the exclamations that the speaker uses to express things which impress him or her to some extent (p. 803). Kolln and Funk (1997) pointed out that the exclamatory sentence “shift[s] the object or complement before the subject for special emphasis” (p. 112). In Chinese, exclamations with the exclamatory tone are used for expressing feelings and also transferring information (Lü, 1990, p. 311). However, Li (2005) claimed that there is no complete and closed system of the Chinese exclamatory sentence structure (p. 56), so that comparing the differences of the exclamations between Chinese and English cannot be systematic.

Zhu (1994) divides Chinese exclamations into two categories: labeled and unlabeled. Labeled exclamations include three patterns. The first is the pattern in which the degree adverbs or the demonstrative pronouns are put before the adjective or verb phrase indicating that the speaker thinks the degree is high with a slightly exaggerated or emphatic tone. The second is the interjection. The third is the modal particle, including those used in the middle and at the end of a sentence. The unlabeled exclamations can be identified by the specific tone in a specific context. Zhu also said that the labeled and unlabeled exclamations can be used in a mixed way in which only the labeled exclamations mixed and the labeled and the unlabeled mixed together. She even

divided the mixed exclamations into three exclamatory levels. The strong level is the exclamations in which the labeled mixes with the labeled. The medium level is the ones in which the labeled mixes with the unlabeled and the weak level is the ones in which the unlabeled mixes with the unlabeled (p. 124-125). By comparison, in English the exclamations are usually labels. There are five basic exclamatory sentence patterns which are labeled and lead by the interjections *what* and *how*. In Chinese, the adverb 多 (么) is equivalent to *what* and *how* (Shi, 2004, p. 5). In Table 9, there are comparisons of the five basic exclamatory sentence patterns in English and the sentence patterns 多 (么) ... in Chinese.

Table 9

Exclamatory Sentence Patterns Comparisons between English and Chinese

Sentence Patterns		Examples	
English	Chinese	English	Chinese
What+ a/an+ (adjective) +singular countable noun + (subject +predicate)	多 (么) + adjective + measure word +singular countable noun + (interjection)	What a sunny day it is!	多么晴朗的一天啊!
What+ a/an+ (adj.) +plural countable noun/ uncountable noun + (subject +predicate)	多 (么) + adjective + plural countable noun/ uncountable noun + (interjection)	What melodic music it is!	多么优美的音乐啊!
How + adjective / adverb + (subject +predicate)	多 (么) + adjective / adverb + (subject + predicate) + (interjection)	How lovely!	多么可爱呀!
How + adjective + a/an+ singular countable noun + (subject +predicate)	(subject +predicate)+ 多 (么) + adjective + measure word + singular countable noun + (interjection)	How beautiful a dress this is!	这是多么漂亮的一条裙子啊!

The exclamations labeled by *what* can be converted into the Chinese exclamatory pattern labeled by 什么... but only when the English exclamation has a derogatory meaning. For

example, *what a day!* can be converted into two different exclamations in Chinese in different contexts. One can be a commendatory exclamation as *多么快乐的一天啊!* Or it can be the derogatory sentence as *什么日子啊!* (Shi, 2004, p. 5). Choosing which lead word in the Chinese exclamation depends on the meaning of the English sentence. Except for the two labeled sentence exclamatory structures, according to Wang (2002), there are more special sentence structures in Chinese exclamations, listed in Table 10 (p. 87-88).

Table 10

The Chinese Exclamatory Sentence Patterns

Exclamatory Sentence Patterns	Examples
好 (adverb) + the measure word — (个/派...) + noun phrase	好一个美丽的花园! (What a beautiful garden!)
(你) 这+ noun phrase	你这笨蛋! (What an idiot!)
多少 + noun phrase	多少个难忘的日子啊! (What unforgettable days!)
太 + verb phrase + (了)	太有意思了! (How interesting it is!)
真 + predicate phrase	真美啊! (How pretty!)
简直 + predicate phrase	简直不可思议! (How incredible!)
何等 + predicate phrase	何等骄傲! (How proud!)
好 (adverb) + predicate phrase	好酸啊! (How sour!)
真是/ 真太/是何等/是多么/是太+ noun phrase / predicate phrase	真是奇迹! (What a miracle!)

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the review of the existing literature related to the grammatical differences in sentence structure between Mandarin and Modern American Standard English, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, some sentence patterns such as *lian dong*, *jian yu* and subject-predicate as predicate sentence patterns do not exist in English but there are certain ways through which those Chinese sentence patterns can be converted into English sentence patterns. Second, some English sentence patterns can be translated directly into Chinese under certain translation rules or with certain changes in the order of the sentence components. Third, the study of certain Chinese sentence structures still needs further development in comparison with English ones.

Based on these conclusions and findings, it is recommended that native English speakers studying Chinese consider comparing and contrasting Chinese sentence structures with English sentence structures. The Chinese sentence patterns that do not exist in English should be separated from the curriculum to be studied more meticulously. Furthermore, the learning efficiency of Chinese sentence patterns can be increased after analysis and understanding of the differences between the two languages.

References

- Blau, S. D., Elbow, P., & Kilgallon, D. (1998). *The writer's craft purple level, teacher's edition*. Boston: McDougal Littell.
- Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1999). *The grammar book*. (2nd ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Cai Jianfeng. (2005). A study of the acquisition of Chinese interrogations by English Native Speakers. *Journal of Yunnan Normal University (Teaching and Research on Chinese as a Foreign Language)*, 3(6), 29-33.
- Hu Yushu, Xu Baohua, Zhang Shilu, Zhang Huizhi, Zhang Bin, Yang Qinghui et al. (Eds). (2001). *现代汉语*. [Modern Chinese]. Shanghai: Shanghai Education Press.
- Jia Shuhua, & Zhang Qi. (2008). 从“形合”与“意合”角度阐释英汉句子结构常式的不同. [Exploration of the differences sentence structure between English and Chinese from hypotaxis and parataxis angels]. *Business China*, 9, 252.
- Kolln, M., & Funk, R. (1997). *Understanding English grammar*. (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Li Tiefan. (2005). A summary commentary on the research on exclamatory sentences. *Journal of Yunan Normal University*, 3(4), 49-56.
- Lü Shuxiang. (1990). *中国文法要略*. [Chinese grammar summary]. Beijing: The Commercial Press.

- Qi Huyang. (Eds.). (2005). *对外汉语教学语法*. [A grammar to teaching Chinese as a foreign language]. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Qi Huyang, & Zhu Min. (2005). On the selectivity of modal particles in imperative sentences in modern Chinese. *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 34(2), 62-69.
- Quirk, Randolph, Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A comprehensive grammar of the English language*. London: Longman.
- Shi Yuzhi. (2004). *疑问和感叹之认知关系—汉英感叹句的共性与个性*. [Cognitive relationship of interrogative and exclamatory sentences---the similarities and specialties of exclamatory between Chinese and English]. *Foreign Languages Research*, 6, 1-8.
- Wang Guanghe. (2002). The analysis of grammatical forms of Chinese exclamatory sentences. *Journal of Guizhou University (Social Science)*, 20(5), 85-90.
- Wan Lifang. (2009). A contrastive study on imperatives in English and Chinese. *Journal of Anhui Vocational College of Metallurgy and Technology*, 12(2), 72-75.
- Xiao Yingping. (2007). *论祈使句的焦点和话题*. [Discussion of topics on imperative sentence]. *Journal of Huaiyin Teachers College (Social Sciences Edition)*, 29(3), 373-399.
- Xing Fuyi, Wang Guosheng, Chen Shumei, Feng Xuefeng, He Hongfeng, Lu Zhuoqun et al. (Eds.). (2003). *现代汉语*. [Modern Chinese]. Wuhan: Huazhong Normal University.
- Yuan Yulin. (1993). *现代汉语祈使句研究*. [The study of modern exclamatory sentence]. Beijing: Peking University Press.

Zhang Zhenbang, & Zhang Yuexiang. (Eds). (2003). *A new English grammar coursebook*.

Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

Zhu Dexi. (1982). *语法讲义*. [*Grammar lectures*]. Beijing: The Commercial Press.

Zhu Xiaoya. (1994). *现代汉语感叹句初探*. [Primary exploration of modern Chinese exclamatory sentence]. *Journal of Xuzhou Normal College*, 2, 124-127.