Word Classes of Spoken Chinese

Adverb [A]

Adverbs are words that modify verbs and answer questions such as how, when, or to what degree. For example, in the sentence **Zhèige tài guì** "This is too expensive," **tài** "too" is an adverb modifying the stative verb **guì** "be expensive." Some adverbs can modify predicates that themselves begin with adverbs, e.g, **Tāmen dōu hěn lèi** "They were all very tired," where the adverb **dōu** "all" modifies the predicate **hěn lèi**, which itself begins with the adverb **hěn** "very." Besides **dōu**, **hěn**, **tài**, and **yě**, other common adverbs include **bù** "not," **cái** "not until," **cháng** "often," **gāng** "just," **gèng** "even more," **hái** "still," **jiù** "then," **xiān** "first," **yòu** "again (in the past)," **zài** "again (in the future)," **zhēn** "really," **zhǐ** "only," and **zuì** "most."

In English, adverbs may occur in various positions in the sentence (cf. "Often I go swimming," "I often go swimming," "I go swimming often"), but in Chinese, adverbs are more limited as to their position in the sentence (for the preceding English sentences, one can say only **Wǒ cháng qù yóuyǒng** "I often go swimming"). There are in Chinese two main groups of adverbs. The first group, which is called regular adverbs [A] and which includes all monosyllabic adverbs and some bisyllabic ones like **bǐjiào** "comparatively" and **yídìng** "definitely," must occur after the subject and before the verb. The second group, which is called moveable adverbs [**MA**] and all of whose members are bisyllabic, can occur either before or after the subject but, again, must always occur before the verb. Some common examples of moveable adverbs are **dàgài** "probably," **dāngrán** "of course," **píngcháng** "usually," and **yěxǔ** "perhaps." If one is not sure whether a given adverb is a regular adverb or a moveable adverb, the safest course of action is to place the adverb after the subject and immediately before the verb, since that position is always correct. In any case, monosyllabic adverbs like **dōu** and **yě** must never be used before a noun or pronoun.

There is a small number of exceptions to the rule that adverbs always occur before the verb. These include the pattern **...-de hěn** "very" as in **hǎode hěn** "very good," where **hěn** occurs at the end of a sentence; and informal Beijing dialect, where adverbs occasionally occur at the ends of sentences, e.g., **Tā wǔsuì cái** "She's only five years old" instead of the standard Mandarin **Tā cái wǔsuì**.

Attributive [AT]

Attributives are a small group of adjective-like words that modify a following noun, e.g., **gōnggòng** "public," **guójì** "international," and **Zhōng-Měi** "Sino-American." The important thing to remember about attributives is that though they can function as adjectives before nouns (as in **guójì xuéxiào** "international school"), they cannot be used as stative verbs in the predicate (one could ordinarily not say ***Zhèige xuéxiào hěn guójì** "This school is very international").

Auxiliary Verb [AV]

Chinese auxiliary verbs are similar to English so-called "helping verbs" like "can," "may," or "must." Auxiliary verbs always co-occur with a main verb, which they precede, and serve to modify the meaning of the main verb in various ways. For example, in the sentence **Nǐ yīnggāi gàosu wǒ** "You should have told me," the auxiliary **yīnggāi** "should" modifies the meaning of the main verb **gàosu** "tell" by adding the sense of obligation. Common Chinese auxiliary verbs include **ài** "love to," **děi** "must," **gāi** "should," **gǎn** "dare to," **huì** "know how to," **kěnéng** "be possible," **kéyi** "may," **néng** "be able to," **xiǎng** and **yào** "want to," **yīngdāng** and **yīnggāi** "should," and **yuànyi** "like to." There are some auxiliary verbs that occur only in the negative, such as **méi** and **méiyou** "didn't," **bié** and **búyào** "don't," and **búbì** "don't need to."

Characteristics of auxiliary verbs include:

1. In affirmative-negative questions, it is the auxiliary that is used to form the question, not the main verb of

the sentence, e.g., **Nǐ yuànyi bu yuanyi qù?** "Would you like to go?" Such questions are answered by repeating the affirmative or negative form of the auxiliary verb (not of the main verb), as in **Yuànyi!** "I would!" or **Bú yuànyi** "I wouldn't."

2. Unlike most other verbs, auxiliary verbs cannot take the verb suffixes **-le**, **-guo**, and **-zhe** (except that **-le** is possible if the main verb is omitted). Moreover, auxiliary verbs rarely take the past negative **méi**, which is itself an auxiliary (however one does occasionally hear **méi néng** "couldn't"). To say "You shouldn't have gone," say **Nǐ bù yīnggāi qù**; and to say "Two years ago I didn't yet know how to speak Chinese" say **Liǎngnián qián wǒ hái bú huì shuō Hànyǔ**.

3. Unlike most regular verbs (but like stative verbs), auxiliary verbs can be preceded by adverbs such as **hěn** or **tài** and can be followed by complements such as **-jíle**. Examples: **Tā hěn ài chī làde** "She very much likes to eat hot food," **Wǒ xǐhuanjíle!** "I like it extremely much!"

4. Auxiliary verbs typically are followed immediately by the main verb. However, sometimes other words can occur between the auxiliary and the main verb. For example, in the question **Nǐ xǐhuan zài zhèr shàng dàxué ma?** "Do you like attending college here?," the coverb phrase **zài zhèr** "here" comes between the auxiliary **xǐhuan** "like" and the main verb **shàng** "attend." Sometimes there can be two or more auxiliary verbs in succession, as in **Tā kěnéng bú huì yuànyi gēn nǐ qù** "She might not want to go with you," which contains three auxiliary verbs!

5. Many auxiliary verbs can also function alone as regular verbs, e.g., **yào** "want" in **Wǒ yào zhèige, bú yào nèige** "I want this one but not that one" or **xǐhuan** "like" in **Wǒ hěn xǐhuan nǐ** "I like you very much."

Bound Form [BF]

A bound form is a syllable that has a meaning of its own but cannot be spoken alone. Bound forms must always be attached to another syllable or word in order to be used independently. This is rather like the English prefix "anti-" in "anti-war" or "antisocial," which clearly has a meaning of its own ("against") but is ordinarily not said by itself. Examples of Chinese bound forms include **wū** "room" as in the words **wūzi** "room" and **tóngwū** "roommate"; or **cān** "meal" as in the words **cāntīng** "restaurant," **cānzhuō** "dining table," **jùcān** "get together for a meal," **wǎncān** "dinner," and **Xīcān** "Western-style food."

Conjunction [CJ]

Conjunctions are words that connect two or more words, phrases, clauses, or sentences. Examples: **búguò** "however," **dànshi** "but," and **gēn** "and." Since many conjunctions have developed from other word classes, it is sometimes difficult to distinguish conjunctions from moveable adverbs and coverbs. A key difference between conjunctions and moveable adverbs is that the former must precede the subject, while the latter may either precede the subject or come between the subject and the verb. For this reason, **dànshi** "but" is a conjunction while **kěshi**, which can also be translated as "but," is a moveable adverb.

Coverb [CV]

A coverb is a type of verb which "co"-occurs (hence the name) with the main verb of a sentence, the meaning of which it supplements by adding information about how, where, for whom, with whom, etc. the action of the verb takes place. A coverb is normally followed by a noun or pronoun object, together with which it creates a coverb phrase, much like a prepositional phrase in English. The coverb phrase always precedes the main verb of the sentence. For example, in the sentence **Wǒ měitiān zài shítáng chī wǔfàn** "I eat lunch in the dining hall every day," **zài** "in" is a coverb, which has as its object the noun **shítáng** "dining hall." The coverb phrase **zài shítáng** "in the dining hall" occurs before the main verb **chī** "eat" and provides information about where the eating takes place.

There are two groups of coverbs. Members of the first group can function only as coverbs; common members of this group are **bǎ** (moves object before the verb), **bèi** (indicates passive), **cóng** and **lí** "from," and **wàng** "toward." Members of the second group of coverbs can serve both as coverbs and as main verbs, though their meaning as coverbs often differs somewhat from their meaning as main verbs. Common members of the second group are **dào** "to; arrive," **gěi** "for; give," **yòng** "with; use"; **zài** "at, in, on; be present," and **zuò** "by (car, boat, train, airplane); sit."

Coverbs have the following characteristics:

1. In the negative forms, **bù** and **méi(you)** normally stand before the coverb rather than before the main verb of the sentence. Examples: **Wǒ yǐhòu bù gěi ta mǎi dōngxi le** "In the future I won't buy things for her" or **Wǒ méi bǎ nǐ gěi wàngle!** "I didn't forget you!"
2. In the case of affirmative-negative questions, it is normally the coverb that is used to form the question, not the main verb. For example, one would say **Nǐ gēn bu gēn wǒ lái?** "Are you coming with me?" and could not say ***Nǐ gēn wǒ lái bu lái?**
3. Coverbs usually do not take verb suffixes like **-le** or **-guo**, which are attached instead to the main verb of the sentence. However, a few coverbs can take the progressive suffix **-zhe**, as in **Qǐng nǐ gēnzhe wǒ zǒu** "Please follow me."
4. It is possible to have more than a single coverb in a sentence. For example, the following sentence has three coverbs: **Tā yào zuò chuán cóng Xiānggǎng dào Fúzhōu qù** "He's going to go from Hong Kong to Fuzhou by boat."

One important thing to remember about coverbs is that the phrase with the coverb and its object goes BEFORE the main verb rather than after it. So English "She studies in the library" would in Chinese be **Tā zài túshūguǎn xuéxí** and could NEVER be ***Tā xuéxí zài túshūguǎn**. Actually, the Chinese sequence of coverb before main verb would seem to be the more "logical" one, since one has to be in the library (**zài túshūguǎn**) before one can begin studying (**xuéxí**).

Equative Verb [EV]

An equative verb equates or connects two nouns, pronouns, or noun phrases. **Shì** "be," which when unstressed is normally pronounced without a tone as **shi**, is by far the most common equative verb. For example, in the sentence **Wǒ shi Měiguo rén** "I'm an American," the equative verb **shì** connects the pronoun **wǒ** "I" with the noun phrase **Měiguo rén** "American." Equative verbs are limited in number. Besides **shì**, there are only two other common equative verbs in spoken Chinese: **jiào** "be called or named" and **xìng** "be surnamed."

Expression [EX]

Expressions are set phrases with conventionalized meanings which Chinese speakers frequently utter on appropriate occasions. Expressions consist of two types. The first type involves set phrases from Classical Chinese, called **chéngyǔ**, which usually consist of four syllables and tend to make a pithy remark about some topic. In the Pinyin transcription in this text, each syllable of a **chéngyǔ** is separated by a hyphen so as to make the meaning and syllable division more transparent. Examples: **jiào-xué-yǒu-fāng** "have an effective method in one's teaching," **yì-yán-wéi-dìng** "be agreed with one word."

The second type of expression involves common sayings from colloquial Chinese, called **súyǔ**, which are not necessarily four syllables in length. Examples: **Bú dào Cháng Chéng fēi hǎohàn** "If you don't go to the Great Wall you're not a brave man," **Gōngjìng bù rú cóng mìng** "Showing respect is not as good as following orders."

Idiomatic Expression [IE]

Some Chinese words or phrases have meanings and usages that cannot be derived from the combined meanings of their constituents. In other words, the meaning of the whole is greater—or different—than the sum of the parts. For this reason, idiomatic expressions must be learned as wholes and are not amenable to analysis. Idiomatic expressions, which may consist of greetings, courtesy expressions, or other conventionalized sayings, are frequently said two or more times in succession. Examples: **duìbuqǐ** "excuse me," **gānbēi** "bottoms up," **jiùmìng** "help!," **méi shìr** "never mind," **nǐ hǎo** "how are you?," **zàijiàn** "goodbye."

Interjection [I]

An interjection is a word lacking a direct grammatical connection to the rest of the sentence that is used as an exclamation, hesitation sound, pause filler, or "back channel comment" (to indicate that one is listening to and following someone else's conversation). Interjections are most frequently used by themselves or at the beginnings of sentences, but sometimes they may occur in other positions. The tones of interjections are more fluid than the tones of other words, there being considerable variation from speaker to speaker, or even from one occurrence of an interjection to the next occurrence in the speech of the same person. Common interjections include **āiyà** "gosh," **e** (hesitation sound), **èi** "yeah," **hài** (indicates exasperation), **m** (indicates agreement), **ò** "oh," **wà** "wow," and **yò** "gosh."

Localizer [L]

Localizers are noun-like forms that are used in combination with other words to indicate location. Except in very limited circumstances (cf. no. 3 below), they cannot be used alone but must be attached to other elements. The most common localizers include: **běi** "north," **dōng** "east," **hòu** "back," **lǐ** "in," **nán** "south," **qián** "front," **shàng** "on," **wài** "outside," **xī** "west," **xià** "under," **yòu** "right," and **zuǒ** "left."

Localizers have the following characteristics:

1. They may be suffixed onto nouns to form place words. Examples: **guówài** "outside of the country," **shūjiàshang** "on the bookshelf," **wūzili** "in the room."
2. They can be combined with the prefix **yǐ-** or with the suffixes **-biān(r)**, **-bù**, **-miàn**, or **-tou** to form place words. Examples: **yǐxī** "to the west of," **zuǒbianr** "on the left side," **nánbù** "in the southern part of an area," **lǐmiàn** "inside," **wàitou** "outside."
3. Localizers may be used alone after the coverbs **wàng/wǎng**, **xiàng**, and **cháo**, all of which mean "to" or "toward." Examples: **wàng qián zǒu** "walk toward the front, walk ahead," **wàng lǐ jǐ** "squeeze toward the inside," **xiàng dōng zǒu** "walk toward the east."

Measure [M]

Measures, also called "classifiers" by some grammarians, are noun-like forms that are used immmediately after a specifier and/or number to quantify nouns. For example, in the phrase **zhèisānzhāng zhuōzi** "these three tables," **zhèi-** is the specifier meaning "this" or "these," **sān** is a number meaning "three," **zhāng** is the measure for tables, and **zhuōzi** is the noun meaning "table."

There are various kinds of measures. Some measures can indicate duration or frequency of occurrence, e.g., **tiān** "day" in **Tā shuìle yìtiān jiào** "She slept for one whole day" or **cì** "time" in **Wǒ qùguo liǎngcì** "I've been there twice." Others indicate weight and length, e.g., **jīn** "catty" in **liǎngjīn xiāngjiāo** "two catties of bananas" or **gōnglǐ** "kilometer" in **wǔshi gōnglǐ** "50 kilometers." Yet other measures involve time, money, or dates.

In rapid speech, the number **yī** "one" when occurring before a measure is sometimes omitted, e.g., **Wǒ mǎi (yí)ge hóngde** "I'll buy a red one." Also, if understood from the context, the noun after a measure can often

be omitted, e.g., **Wǒ yào zhèitái, bú yào nèitái** "I want this one, not that one" (referring to **diànnǎo** "computers," for which the measure is **tái**). Some measures can be reduplicated to mean "every," e.g., **tiān** "day" in **Tā tiāntiān dōu lái** "She comes every day" or **zhāng** (measure for flat things) in **Wǒ zhāngzhāng dōu yào** "I want every single one of them" (referring to **dìtú** "maps," for which the measure is **zhāng**). Since a few Chinese measures translate as English nouns (e.g., **tiān** "day" and **nián** "year"), be careful not to put measures in front of these. Say **yìtiān** "one day" and **yìnián** "one year;" NEVER say *__yíge tiān__ or *__yíge nián__.

Moveable Adverb [MA]

Like regular adverbs, moveable adverbs can occur after the subject of a sentence, and before the verb, to modify the verb. Unlike regular adverbs, moveable adverbs can also occur before the subject of the sentence. For example, **shízài** "really" is a regular adverb, so it must always occur after the subject and one can say only **Wǒ shízài yǒu diǎnr hòuhuǐ** "I really regret it a little" and never *__Shízài wǒ yǒu diǎnr hòuhuǐ__. On the other hand, **xiànzài** "now" is a moveable adverb, so one can say either **Xiànzài wǒ yǒu diǎnr hòuhuǐ** "Now I regret it a little" or **Wǒ xiànzài yǒu diǎnr hòuhuǐ** "I now regret it a little."

All moveable adverbs are bisyllabic, though not all bisyllabic adverbs are moveable. Common moveable adverbs include **běnlái** "originally," **dàgài** "probably," **dāngrán** "of course," **gānghǎo** "just," **kěshi** "but," **píngcháng** "usually," **xiànzài** "now," and **yěxǔ** "perhaps." If one is not sure whether a given adverb is a regular adverb or a moveable adverb, the safest course of action is to place the adverb after the subject and immediately before the verb, since that position is always correct. See also the entry on adverb.

Noun [N]

As in English, in Chinese a noun is a word that represents a person, animal, thing, or abstraction, e.g., **dàgē** "oldest brother," **gǒu** "dog," **fēijī** "airplane," **hépíng** "peace." Grammatically, any word that can be preceded by a number plus a measure (e.g., **yìběn shū** "a book") or that can be preceded by a pronoun plus **de** (**wǒde diànnǎo** "my computer") is a noun. Some nouns can also be identified through characteristic suffixes like **-jiā** as in **huàjiā** "painter," **-tou** as in **shítou** "stone," or **-zi** as in **háizi** "child."

A noun may stand directly before another noun to modify it, as in **mùtou zhuōzi** "wood(en) table" or **Zhōngguo zì** "Chinese character." Unlike English, Chinese nouns cannot be counted by adding numbers directly before them. For example, one can't say *__liǎng yǐzi__ for "two chairs"; instead, a measure must be inserted between the number and the noun, as in **liǎngbǎ yǐzi**. Also, with the exception of a small number of nouns referring to people that can optionally take the plural marker **-men** (e.g., **péngyoumen** "friends," **tóngxuémen** "comrades"), Chinese nouns are ordinarily not marked for number, so a noun like **bǐ** "pen" could, depending on the context, mean either "pen" or "pens."

Number [NU]

Numbers are noun-like forms that function to count, enumerate, or measure. Examples include **jiǔ** "nine," **wǔshisān** "53," **liǎngqiānwàn** "20 million." Numbers can be spoken alone only in counting, in reading off single digits (as in phone numbers or years), or in a mathematical context; otherwise, numbers are always bound to measures.

Some numbers are never used alone. For example, **-bǎi** "hundred," **-qiān** "thousand," **-wàn** "ten thousand," and **-yì** "one hundred million" must always be preceded by another number (e.g., **sānbǎi** "three hundred," **wǔqiān** "five thousand," **báwàn** "eighty thousand," **shísānyì** "one billion three hundred million"). The number **liǎng-** "two" must always be followed by a measure or number. Usually, numbers precede measures, but sometimes they follow, e.g., **yíge bàn** "one and one-half" and **jiǔkuài wǔ** "$9.50." When used in the indefinite sense of "a few, several," the question word **jǐ-** "how many" is considered a number and is usually pronounced with a neutral tone (e.g., **Wǒ yǒu jige wèntí** "I have a few questions"). Similarly, when used in the indefinite sense of "more than...," the stative verb **duō** "be much, more" may also be considered a number (e.g., **liǎngbǎiduōge** "more than two hundred").

Particle [P]

Particles, which never occur alone, are used at the ends of words, phrases, or sentences to indicate particular grammatical functions. There are two main types of particles: (1) particles that are used as word suffixes, e.g., **-de**, **-le**, **-guo**, **-zhe**; and (2) sentence-final particles, e.g., **a**, **ba**, **le**, **ma**, **ne**.

Pattern [PT]

A pattern involves two or more words in a set grammatical order that convey a specific meaning. Patterns usually constitute major or minor grammatical constructions and should be paid special attention, since they tend to be productive in the language. Examples: **chúle...** "except," **...-de shíhou** "when...," **...fēnzhī...** (for fractions), **nándào...** "don't tell me that...," **...shemmede** "...and so on," **yuè lái yuè...** "more and more...."

Phrase [PH]

For the purposes of this textbook, a phrase is considered to be a group of words which are commonly used together which are well worth learning as a unit. Grammatically, phrases can consist of two nouns, where the first describes the second, e.g., **diànyǐng míngxīng** "movie star" and **tiānqi yùbào** "weather forecast"; or a verb plus an object, e.g., **dǎ diànhuà** "make a telephone call" and **xià máomáoyǔ** "drizzle"; or combinations of words belonging to various other word classes that frequently occur together, e.g., **hěn shǎo** "seldom," **yíge rén** "alone," **yǒude shíhou** "sometimes."

Place Word [PW]

Place words are a specialized class of nouns that indicate or name places. All geographical names—such as names of towns, cities, counties, provinces, and countries—are place words, as are nouns which refer to buildings, institutions, organizations, parks, mountains, bodies of water, and other specific locations. Examples of place words: **Àodàlìyà** "Australia," **bàngōngshì** "office," **Běidà** "Beijing University," **Běifāng** "North," **Cháng Chéng** "Great Wall," **Cháng Chéng Fàndiàn** "Great Wall Hotel," **dàshǐguǎn** "embassy," **gébì** "next door," **Hépíng Dōng Lù** "Heping East Road," **jiā** "home," **Jiāzhōu** "California," **kètīng** "living room," **lǐtou** "inside," **lóushàng** "upstairs," **Shànghǎi** "Shanghai," **shàngmian** "top," **tǐyùguǎn** "gymnasium," **yòubiān** "right side," **zhèli** "here."

Place words can indicate place, location, or position without the need of a localizer or other word indicating location. All place words can precede the verb **yǒu** "there is/are" and follow the verbs **zài** "be located at" and **dào** "arrive at." They can also be inserted into the patterns **cóng...lái** "come from..." and **dào...qù** "go to...." Since they are nouns, place words can serve as the subject, topic, or object of a verb, e.g., **Zhèr tài chǎo** "It's too noisy here" (lit. "Here is too noisy") or **Tā zài Guǎngzhōu** "She's in Guangzhou." Place words can also modify or be modified by other nouns, e.g., **qiánmiànde sùshè** "the dormitory which is in front" vs. **sùshède qiánmiàn** "the front of the dormitory."

Remember especially these two things about place words: (1) since all geographical names are considered to be place words, geographical names do not take the localizer **lǐ** to express "in" (say **Tāmen dōu zài Zhōngguo** "They're all in China" but NEVER *__Tāmen dōu zài Zhōngguoli__); (2) if a noun or pronoun is preceded by **zài**, **cóng**, or **dào** and is not itself a place word, then either a localizer must be attached to it or else **zhèr** or **nàr** must follow it (say **zài zhuōzishang** "on the table" but NEVER *__zài zhuōzi__; and say **Qǐng dào tā nar qù** "Please go to him over there" but NEVER *__Qǐng dào tā qù__).

Postverb [PV]

A postverb is a type of verb that is suffixed onto the main verb to link the action of the main verb to a following object. Postverbs often imply movement toward a certain place. For example, in the sentence **Wǒmen**

bāndao Xiāng Shān le "We moved to Fragrant Hills," **bān** "move" is the main verb, **-dào** "to" is the postverb, and **Xiāng Shān** "Fragrant Hills" is the object of the postverb **-dào** . In the sentence **Qǐng nǐ bǎ míngzi xiězai zhèr** "Please write your name here," **xiě** "write" is the main verb, **-zài** is the postverb, and **zhèr** "here" is the object of the postverb **-zài**. Or again, in **Tā bǎ "shí" zì xiěcheng "qiān" zì le** "She wrote the character for 'ten' so that it looked like the character for 'thousand,'" **xiě** "write" is the main verb, **-chéng** "become, into" is the postverb, and **"qiān" zì** "the character for 'thousand'" is the object of the postverb **-chéng**. Postverbs are limited in number, the most common ones being **-chéng** "into," **-dào** "to," **-gěi** "to, for," and **-zài** "at, in, on."

Additional comments on postverbs:

1. Postverbs frequently lose their tone (i.e., become neutral tone) in their position after the main verb.
2. For a few main verb-postverb combinations, such as **zhùzai** "live in" and **shēngzai** "be born in," no movement toward a place is implied, and the meaning is the same as alternate constructions with the coverb **-zài**. So for "She lives in Shanghai," one could say either **Tā zhùzai Shànghǎi** or **Tā zài Shànghǎi zhù**; and for "He was born in Beijing," one could say either **Tā shēngzai Běijing** or **Tā zài Běijing shēngde**. However, most postverbs do not have coverb alternates, and most postverbs do indicate movement.
3. Sometimes stative verbs can combine with postverbs, e.g., **Wǒ zhēn bù zhīdào yào mángdao shémme shíhou** "I really don't know until when I'll be busy" or **Nǐ kàn nǐ lèicheng zhèige yàngzi!** "Look at how tired you've become!"
4. With the postverbs **-zài** and **-gěi**, one cannot have potential forms (that is, one CANNOT say ***xiědegei** or ***zhùbuzai**).
5. Particles normally occur after the object and are not attached to the postverb, so one says **Xiǎoháir diàozai shuǐlǐ le** "The child fell into the water" and NOT ***Xiǎoháir diàozaile shuǐlǐ**.
6. Postverbs normally attach only to monosyllabic main verbs, as in **zhùzai** "live in" or **bāndao** "move to." There are a few bisyllabic main verbs that can take postverbs, e.g., **chūshēngzai** "be born in" or **shēnghuozai** "live in," but these must be learned on a case-by-case basis. With the great majority of bisyllabic verbs, like **gōngzuò** "to work," a coverb construction would be employed, as in **Yǒu hěn duō Měiguo rén zài Běijing gōngzuò** "There are many Americans who work in Beijing"; one would NEVER say ***Yǒu hěn duō Měiguo rén gōngzuòzai Běijing**.
7. Occasionally one finds quasi-postverb constructions like **xiě xìn gěi tā** "write her a letter" or **dǎ diànhuà gěi wǒ** "call me on the phone" where **gěi** follows a main verb plus its direct object to indicate the indirect object. However, since the direct object intervenes between the main verb and **gěi**, we will not consider these as postverbs per se.

Pronoun [PR]

A pronoun is a word that is used as a substitute for a noun and refers to persons or things named or understood from the context. The largest class of pronouns in Chinese is personal pronouns, which include **wǒ** "I," **nǐ** "you (singular)," **nín** "you (polite)," **tā** "he, she, it," **wǒmen** "we," **zámmen** "we (inclusive)," **nǐmen** "you (plural)," and **tāmen** "they."

Besides the personal pronouns, there are also other pronouns referring to humans such as **biérén** "others," **dàjiā** "everybody," and the reflexive pronoun **zìjǐ** "oneself." In addition, there are the demonstrative pronouns **zhè** "this" and **nà** "that," which may occur as topics or subjects but never as objects, so one can say **Nà shi shémme?** "What is that?" but could NEVER say ***Wǒ bú yào nà** "I don't want that."

Chinese pronouns do not change depending on case as English pronouns do (cf. "I, me, my, mine"). Chinese pronouns can be used as topics, subjects, or objects of sentences. With the addition of a **-de** (which can be dropped before relatives or body parts), they can also serve as modifiers of nouns, for example, **wǒde qián** "my money," **nǐde gōngsī** "your company," **tā bàba** "her dad," and **wǒ shǒu** "my hand."

Question Word [QW]

A question word is a word or, in some cases, a bound form that is used to form a question that cannot be answered by "yes" or "no." For example, in the question **Tā shi shéi?** "Who is she?," **shéi** "who?" is a question word. Other examples of question words include **duō** "how?," **duōshǎo** "how much?," **jǐ-** "how many?," **nǎr** "where?," **nǎli** "where?," **něi-** "which?," **shémme** "what?," **wèishemme** "why?," and **zěmme** and **zěmmeyàng** "how?."

Many question words are simultaneously members of other word classes. For example, **shéi** and **shémme** are also pronouns, **jǐ-** and **něi-** are also specifiers, and **zěmme** and **zěmmeyàng** are also adverbs. Some question words can be used to form exclamations, e.g., **Duō hǎo wa!** "How wonderful!," **Nèmme dàde fángzi yào huā duōshǎo qián na!** "How much money you have to spend for such a huge house!," or **Zěmme zhèmme guì ya!** "How can it be so expensive!"

Be sure to keep in mind that if a question word is present in a Chinese sentence and the intent is to ask a question, no question particle **ma** is added at the end of the sentence. Also, remember that while English questions with "who?," "what?" etc. have a different word order from the corresponding affirmative statement, Chinese question words occupy the same position in the sentence as the word which replaces them in the answer. For example, compare the English word order in the question "What is he buying?" with the statement "He is buying a book"; in Chinese, the word order in question and statement are the same: **Tā mǎi shémme?** as opposed to **Tā mǎi shū**.

Under certain conditions, many question words become indefinites, translating as English "whoever, whatever, whichever, wherever, however"; "everybody, everything, everywhere"; "somebody, something, some place, some way"; "anyone, anybody, anyplace, anywhere, any way"; or "a few." Those conditions include:

1. When they are followed by **dōu** or **yě**, e.g., **Nǎr dōu xíng** "Anywhere is fine," **Shéi yě méi qù** "Nobody went."
2. When they are preceded by **bù** or **méi(you)**, e.g., **Bù zěmme guì** "Not particularly expensive," or **Méiyou shéi bǐ nǐ cōngming** "Nobody is smarter than you" (lit. "There isn't anybody who is smarter than you").
3. When they are unstressed in statements or in questions that are already questions because of affirmative-negative verb constructions or a final **ma**. For example: **Tā yǒu jige hǎo péngyou** "He has a few good friends," **Mǎi diǎnr shémme ma?** "Would you like to buy something?" **Nǐ yào bu yao dào nar qù hē diar shémme?** "Would you like to go somewhere and drink something?"
4. When repeated in parallel constructions in two clauses of a complex sentence, e.g., **Shéi yùnqi hǎo, shéi jiù yíng** "Whoever is lucky will win" or **Nǐ dào nǎr qù, wǒ jiù dào nǎr qù** "I'll go wherever you go."

Resultative Compound [RC]

A resultative compound is a verb compound composed of an action verb followed by a resultative ending (usually a verb or stative verb) which indicates the result of the action. For example, **zhǎngdà** "grow with the result that one becomes big, grow up" is a resultative compound composed of the action verb **zhǎng** "grow" plus the resultative ending **-dà** "big." Or again, **kàndǒng** "look at with the result that one understands" is a resultative compound composed of the action verb **kàn** "look" plus the resultative ending **-dǒng** "understand."

For most verbs, there are actual resultative forms and potential resultative forms, each of which may be either affirmative or negative. The actual forms indicate whether the result indicated by the resultative ending is or is not achieved. The potential forms, which insert the infix **-de-** or **-bu-** between the verb and the resultative ending, indicate whether the result indicated by the resultative ending can or cannot be achieved. Some verbs have only some of these forms. Examples:

Actual resultative (affirmative): tīngdǒngle "listened with the result that one understands, understood"

Actual resultative (negative): méi tīngdǒng "did not listen with the result that one understands, didn't understand"

Potential resultative (affirmative): tīngdedǒng "able to listen with the result that one understands, can/could/will be able to understand"

Potential resultative (negative): tīngbudǒng "not able to listen with the result that one understands, can't/couldn't/won't be able to understand"

Some resultative compounds are composed of verbs indicating direction or motion plus the resultative endings **-lái** "come" or **-qù** "go," e.g., **jìnlái** "come in," **chūqu** "go out." These also have actual and potential forms, for example, **jìndelái** "can come in," **chūbuqù** "can't go out." Sometimes resultative compounds composed of directional verbs can themselves function as resultative endings and be suffixed onto other action verbs. For example, the resultative ending **-jìnlái** "come in" can be suffixed onto the action verb **pǎo** "run" to create **pǎojìnlái** "run in." If there is an object, it is inserted before the **-lái** or the **-qù**, as in **pǎojìn fángzili lái** "run into the house."

Resultative Ending [RE]

A resultative ending is an ending in a resultative compound which indicates the result of the action of the first verb. For example, the resultative compound **chībǎo** "eat with the result that one becomes full," is composed of the verb **chī** "eat" plus the resultative ending **-bǎo** "full." Some resultative endings indicate direction, e.g., the resultative ending **-lái** "come" in **huílai** "come back." Most resultative endings are either stative verbs or regular verbs. While the majority of resultative endings consist of a single syllable, there are also some common resultative endings like **-qǐlai**, **-jìnlai**, and **-jìnqu** that consist of two syllables.

Examples of other resultative endings include **-bǎo** "full" (as in **chībǎo** "eat one's fill"), **-dìng** "fixed" (as in **shuōbudìng** "not be able to say for sure"), **-guàn** "be used to" (as in **chīdeguàn** "can get used to eating something"), **-hǎo** "good" (as in **náhǎo** "hold well"), **-qilai** (as in **kànqilai** "in the looking" or **xiángqilai** "think of "), **-liǎo** "be able to" (as in **shòubuliǎo** "not be able to endure"), **-míngbai** "understand" (as in **tīngbutàimíngbai** "can't understand very well"), **-sǐ** "to the point of death" (as in **xiàsǐ** "frighten to death"), **-wán** "finish" (as in **màiwán** "finish selling, sold out"), and **-zháo** (as in **shuìbuzháo** "not be able to fall asleep"). For more information on resultative endings, see the entry for Resultative Compound.

Specifier [SP]

Specifiers are adjectival expressions like **zhèi-** "this" or **nèi-** "that" that "specify" or point to a definite thing or things. The order is usually specifier + number + measure + noun, e.g., **zhèisānběn shū** "these three (volumes of) books." If the number is **yī** "one," it is usually deleted, e.g., **nèitái diànnǎo** "that computer" (instead of **nèi yìtái diànnǎo**). If the noun is understood from the context, it also is often deleted; for example, when talking about books, one could say simply **nèiběn** "that volume." Other common specifiers besides **zhèi-** and **nèi-** include **dì-** (for ordinal numbers), **gè-** "each, every," **měi-** "each, every," **shàng-** "last," and **xià-** "next." **Něi-** "which?" is both a question word and a specifier.

Stative Verb [SV]

A stative verb is a verb that describes a state, quality, or condition of the topic or subject. For example, in the sentence **Nǐ máng ma?** "Are you busy?," **máng** is a stative verb meaning "to be busy." Other examples of stative verbs include **chǎo** "be noisy," **dǎoméi** "be out of luck," **dà** "be big," **gāoxìng** "be happy," **hǎo** "be good," **hǎochī** "be good to eat," **lǜ** "be green," **yǒumíngr** "be famous," and **yǒuqián** "be rich."

In English, the great majority of Chinese stative verbs translate as "to be + adjective." Note that in Chi-

nese, the "to be" is embedded in the meaning of the stative verb, so it is important not to add a **shì** "to be" (except in cases of unusual emphasis). For example, to say "I'm busy," one would normally say **Wǒ hěn máng** and NOT ***Wǒ shi máng**.

Characteristics of stative verbs include:

1. Stative verbs can serve as a complete predicate or as the main word of the predicate, e.g., **Wǒ hěn hǎo** "I'm fine."
2. Unlike regular verbs, stative verbs can be (and frequently are) preceded by the adverb **hěn** "very," e.g., **Rìwén hěn nán** "Japanese is (very) hard." In a statement consisting of **hěn** + stative verb, the **hěn** often loses its meaning of "very" unless it is pronounced with stress. Without an adverb like **hěn**, stative verbs in statements often have a comparative sense, e.g., **Zhōngguo hǎo, Měiguo hǎo?** "Is China better, or is America better?"
3. Stative verbs almost always take **bù** for the negative and only very rarely take **méi**. (The exception to this is stative verbs that begin with **yǒu**, which always take **méi** or **méiyou** as the negative.)
4. Stative verbs can be followed by **le** to indicate change of state, e.g., **Tā èle** "She has gotten hungry." A negative adverb plus a stative verb plus a final **le** indicates that a certain state no longer exists; this can often be translated as "no longer" or "isn't... anymore," e.g., **Tā bù gāoxìngle** "She's no longer happy" or "She has become unhappy."
5. Besides serving in the predicate, stative verbs can also be used as adjectives before nouns, e.g., **hǎo háizi** "a good child," **hǎokànde huār** "pretty flowers." This capability to serve as an adjective is one of the characteristics that distinguish stative verbs from regular verbs, since what follows a regular verb would usually be considered as its object.
6. Stative verbs can be followed by **(yi)dian(r)** "(a little) more" to indicate the comparative degree, e.g., **hǎo yidian** "better," **guì dianr** "a little more expensive."
7. Stative verbs can also be followed by certain suffixes and constructions indicating extreme degree, such as **-jíle** or **...-de hěn**, e.g., **lèijíle** "extremely tired," **hǎode hěn** "very good."
8. Stative verbs frequently occur within resultative verb constructions, either as the first verb (e.g., **hǎobuliǎo** "unable to get well") or as a resultative verb ending, e.g., **nònghuàile** "messed it up."
9. Stative verbs can be reduplicated to create adverbs, e.g., **mànmàn chī** "eat slowly," **hǎohāor zuò** "do it well," **gāogaoxìngxìngde huíjiā** "return home happily."
10. Stative verbs can sometimes serve as adverbial modifiers of verbs, e.g., **hěn nǔlìde xuéxí** "study very hard."

As has been pointed out, most Chinese stative verbs correspond to English "be + adjective," but there are exceptions, so be careful. For example, English "to be sick" corresponds to the Chinese regular (not stative) verb **bìng** "to get sick," so one must say **Tā bìngle** "She got sick" or **Tā bìngde hěn lìhai** "She is very sick" and cannot say ***Tā hěn bìng**. Similarly, for "be lucky" one normally says **yùnqi hěn hǎo** "luck is good," for example, **Tā yùnqi hěn hǎo** "She is very lucky" (lit. "As for her, the luck is very good").

Surname [SN]

A Chinese surname, like an English surname, is a word that indicates the family name of a person. The majority of Chinese surnames consists of only one syllable, but there is a small number of surnames that contains two syllables. Common one-syllable surnames include **Bái**, **Chén**, **Gāo**, **Mǎ**, **Lǐ**, **Lín**, **Wáng**, and **Zhāng**. Common two-syllable surnames are **Duānmù**, **Ōuyáng**, **Sīmǎ**, and **Sītú**. Depending on the degree of formality, the two-syllable surnames can be used alone or in combination with a title, but the one-syllable surnames can not be used alone and must be used with a title. Common titles include **Lǎo** "Old" and **Xiǎo** "Little," both of which

precede the surname; and **Xiānsheng** "Mr.," **Tàitai** "Mrs.," **Xiáojie** "Miss" or "Ms.," **Tóngzhì** "Comrade," and **Lǎoshi** "Teacher," all of which follow the surname.

Time Word [TW]

Time words constitute a specialized class of nouns referring to time. They include periods of the day, days of the week, months of the year, seasons, years, and certain other adverbs of time. Examples: **shàngwǔ** "A.M.," **lǐbàisān** "Wednesday," **míngtiān** "tomorrow," **èryuè** "February," **chūntiān** "spring," **jīnnián** "this year," **dàsì** "senior year in college," **xiànzài** "now."

What distinguishes time words from regular nouns is that, in addition to functioning as subjects, objects, and noun modifiers, they can also function as moveable adverbs. Observe the different usages of the time word **xīngqīyī** "Monday" in the following:

As subject: **Xīngqīyī shi wǔyuè wǔhào.** "Monday is May 5th."

As object: **Wǒ bù xǐhuan xīngqīyī.** "I don't like Mondays."

As noun modifier: **xīngqīyī wǎnshang** "Monday evening"

As moveable adverb before the subject: **Xīngqīyī wǒ hěn máng.** "On Monday I'll be busy."

As moveable adverb after the subject: **Wǒ xīngqīyī hěn máng.** "On Monday I'll be busy."

Verb [V]

The term verb as used in this text refers to a "regular verb," as distinct from several other types of verb such as auxiliary verb, coverb, equative verb, postverb, resultative verb compound, resultative verb ending, stative verb, and verb-object compound.

In Chinese, a regular verb is a word that expresses an action, event, occurrence, or function. Chinese verbs may be transitive (e.g., **cāi** "guess," **jiǎnchá** "inspect," **kāishǐ** "begin," **mǎi** "buy," **pà** "fear") or intransitive (e.g., **bìng** "get sick," **chūshēng** "be born," **gǎnmào** "catch cold," **sǐ** "die," **tǎng** "lie down").

Grammatically, all regular verbs can take the negative **bù** or **méi** as well as the completed action suffix **-le**. Chinese verbs are not inflected in person, number or tense as in English (cf. "go, goes, went, gone, going"). There are no irregular verbs in Chinese except for the verb **yǒu** "have," the negative of which is **méiyou** rather than the expected ***bù yǒu**, which is never said.

Verb-Object Compound [VO]

Chinese verb phrases consisting of a one-syllable verb plus a one-syllable object are called verb-object compounds, e.g., **fùqián** "pay money, pay," **kāichē** "drive a car, drive." In verb-object compounds, the verb and the object are (in this textbook) written together in Pinyin, unless other words happen to intervene (cf. below). Although from the Chinese point of view all verb-object compounds are basically alike, through the prism of English we can say that there are two types.

The first type of verb-object compound involves generalized objects the translations of which would normally be dropped when translating into English. Though in English the objects are unnecessary, in Chinese the verb would sound incomplete or unclear without an object. For example, in English we can say "speak," but in Chinese one usually says **shuōhuà** "speak words"; or in English we say "eat," but in Chinese one usually says **chīfàn** "eat food." Other examples of this type of verb-object compound include **chōuyān** "smoke tobacco—to smoke," **huàhuàr** "paint paintings—to paint," **jiāoshū** "teach a book—to teach," **kànshū** "look at a book—to read," **shuìjiào** "sleep a sleep—to sleep," **xiàyǔ** "there descends rain—to rain," **xiězì** "write characters—to write," and **zǒulù** "walk a road—to walk."

In the case of the second type of verb-object compound, even from the point of view of English one can clearly see a specific object, so with these one does translate the object. Examples of this type of verb-object

compound include **chīsù** "eat vegetarian food," **dǎdī** "take a taxi," **dǎqiú** "play a ball game," **diǎncài** "order dishes of food," **pàochá** "steep tea," and **tuōxié** "take off one's shoes."

Verb-object compounds can be split by grammatical suffixes and other words. For example, **jiéhūn** "marry" is split in **tā hái jiézhe hūnde shíhou** "when she was still married," or **bìyè** "graduate" is split in **Tā kěnéng bìbuliǎo yè** "He may not be able to graduate," or **jiāoshū** "teach" is split in **Tā jiāoguo hǎojǐniánde shū** "She has taught for quite a few years."

One important thing to remember about verb-object compounds is that since their objects are already "built in," they cannot take additional objects. Therefore, if one wishes to express a specific object, the general object must first be deleted. For example, **chīfàn** means "eat," so one can say **Wǒ yào chīfàn** "I want to eat." But if one wishes to say "I want to eat fish," one cannot say ***Wǒ yào chīfàn yú**. Instead, one must first drop from **chīfàn** the general object **fàn**, and then add the specific object **yú**, giving: **Wǒ yào chī yú**.