

6 PRINCIPLES OF SEQUENCING AND RHETORICAL ORGANISATION: WORDS, SENTENCES AND COMPLEX CLAUSES

In this chapter we review and describe principles of rhetorical organisation in Chinese. We start at the level of phrase and sentence, moving to the ordering of complex clauses. Chapter 7 continues the discussion and considers these principles of rhetorical organisation operating at the level of discourse. During the discussion we touch on the role that Western influence played on the sequencing in Chinese. Chapter 8 will discuss this in more detail, and provide the historical context which saw the rise of Western influence.

PRINCIPLES OF RHETORICAL ORGANISATION

To date we have provided a review of historical aspects of Chinese rhetoric and persuasion, along with a number of examples and illustrations. We have argued that people engaged in bottom-up rhetoric and persuasion in a hierarchical society naturally adopted a rhetorical arrangement that followed a “because-therefore” or “frame-main” sequence, although we also stress that this was by no means exclusively so. This is the unmarked rhetorical sequence. Here we consider the principles of rhetorical organisation primarily from a linguistic standpoint, and will argue that the principles that operate at the level of the sentence also operate at the higher levels of discourse and text. In doing this, we hope to show that the preferred and unmarked rhetorical patterns exemplified earlier are themselves shaped by these principles of sequencing. Implicit in all this will be the extent to which language is shaped by social and political

realities. Later we shall consider how rhetorical organisation in Chinese has been influenced by Western contact.

THE SENTENCE: TOPIC-COMMENT AND/ OR MODIFIER-MODIFIED.

A fundamental principle of organisation in Chinese is contained in the topic-comment construction, although, subject-predicate sentences are also common. Here we argue that the topic-comment structure is also linked to the modifier-modified sequence commonly seen in Chinese.

Some sixty years ago, Hockett suggested that topic and comment constructions generally characterise the immediate constituents (ICs) of these constructions. “The speaker announces a topic and then says something about it” (201). In discussing Chinese, however, Hockett points out that many Chinese comments themselves consist of both a topic and a comment. In this way, a Chinese sentence can be built up of predications within predications. Hockett’s example of this is:

1. *Wo jintian cheng-li you shi*

I today town-in have thing

I have business in town today.

As Hockett points out, the topic *wo* can be deleted leaving the sentence *Jintian chengli you shi* where, in Hockett’s view, *jintian* now becomes the topic. Similarly, the sentence can be further reduced to *chengli you shi* where *chengli*, (in town), becomes the topic. Even *you shi*, (have business), which has no topic, can stand as a complete sentence.

Li and Thompson classify Chinese as a topic prominent language, that is, a language in which the basic structure of sentences favours a description in which the grammatical relation topic-comment plays a major role. In defining topic, Li and Thompson say that the topic of a sentence “is what the sentence is about” and that “it always comes first in a sentence and it always refers to something about which the speaker assumes the person listening to the utterance has some knowledge” (15).

They therefore use both syntactic and semantic criteria in their definition of topic. As an example of a topic-comment sentence, they give:

2. *Zhe-ke shu yezi hen da*

This-(Cl-classifier) tree leaf very big

This tree, (its) leaves are very big

Topic is here distinguished from subject by stressing that “this tree” is the topic and has no direct semantic relation with the verb. *Yezi*, however, is the subject as it is they that are very big.

TOPICS AS SENTENCE FRAMES

Although Li and Thompson say that topics are typically noun or verb phrases, they later argue (95) that sentence initial time and locative phrases should also be seen as topics. For example:

3. (a) *nei nian ta hen jinzhang*

that year he (was) very anxious

3. (b) *xinfeng-li zhuang bujin zhaxie zhaopian*

Envelope-in N enter these photos

These photos won't fit into this envelope.

Li and Thompson classify these time and locative phrases (“that year” and “in the envelope” respectively) as topics because they set the frame, they are definite, and they may be followed by a pause particle. Earlier, however, topic has been defined as “what the sentence is about” and that it “names what the sentence is all about.” Here, in contrast, topics “set the frame within which the sentence is presented.” This would appear to be defining topic in two different ways.

Chafe has noted that certain topics in Chinese do not precisely fit the characteristics that a topic is “what the sentence is about.” In his view, topics in topic prominent languages provide the “frame within which the sentence holds” and that they set “a spatial, temporal or individual framework within which the main predication holds” (50). Again topic is apparently being defined in more than one way. The Korean scholar, Her, proposes that topic should not

be defined semantically but should “strictly refer to a syntactic notion” and that the topic of a sentence, being always preverbal and before the subject, usually encodes the semantic/discoursal frame (4–5). Her then argues that the semantic relation between subject (topic) and predicate (comment) in Chinese is that of frame and comment. In other words, Chafe’s definition of topic quoted above, now becomes, in Her’s analysis, a definition of frame, with the term topic being reserved for its grammatical function. This, however, still leaves the problem of the definition of these frames, which are encoded by topics. Frame is now semantically defined as topic was defined. Again we have two distinct and different definitions for what is purported to be the same concept. The problems associated with the semantic definition of topic now surface for the semantic definition of frame.

The problem of topic definition gets even more complex. Zhao (Yuen Ren Chao) categorises all temporal, locative, and concessive, causal and conditional clauses as topics (120). Among his reasons for classifying all these clauses as subjects are that they can have a pause after them and before the principal clause; and that they occur at the beginning of sentences unless they are an afterthought. As will be shown later, however, these clauses may occur after their principal clauses for a number of reasons, of which being an afterthought is only one, so they are not as restricted to sentence initial position as suggested by Zhao. Indeed, as we shall illustrate later, Western influence is one of the major reasons for the common presence of these clauses appearing after the main clauses in contemporary Chinese. Zhao’s acknowledgement that these adverbial clauses are not the principal clauses in these sentences suggests, however, their role is more a modifying one for the principal clause rather than being topics. Thus, for our purposes, we will adopt this notion and classify these adverbial clauses as performing a modifying function, and not classify them as topics.

The distinction between topics being what the sentence is about and adverbial clauses setting the frame for the sentence will be made clearer by considering the examples below.

4. *Zhangsan wo yijing jianguo le*

Zhangsan I already see-EXP-A

Zhangsan, I’ve already seen him

5. *Zhe ke shu yezi hen da*

This-C1 tree leaf very big

This tree, (its) leaves are very big.

The topic in both these sentences can be identified without controversy. In (4) the topic is *Zhangsan* and in (5) the topic is “this tree.” It makes sense to say that these topics are what their respective sentences are about.

Two further points are of interest here. The first is that both these sentences have subjects as well as topics and that these are also easy to identify. In (4) the subject is “I” and in (5) it is the “leaves.” The second point is that both subjects have a semantic relationship with the verbs and with the topics of these sentences. But their semantic relationship with their topics is different. The relationship between “I” and “Zhangsan” is one between actor and patient, and Zhangsan looks like an example of what Foley and Van Valin call the “preposed topic construction (PTC) of topicalisation” (30). In the other example of a PTC, the relationship between “tree” and “leaf,” however, is not one of actor to patient but of whole to part, where the leaf is part of the larger whole. As we shall show below, the sequence of whole-part or big-small is another principle of rhetorical organisation in Chinese.

Now let us consider (6), which is a cause-effect complex sentence (*pianzheng fuju*).

6. *yinwei feng tai da, suoyi bisai gaiqi-le*

because wind too big, therefore competition change
time-A

Because the wind was too strong, the competition was
postponed.

This sentence is not about the strength of the wind, in the same way that (4) was about Zhangsan or (5) was about the tree. Despite its place at the beginning of the sentence and despite Zhao’s assertion that causal clauses are all topics, we argue here that, by semantic criteria, this initial adverbial clause cannot be the topic. The topic in this sentence, with topic being defined as what the sentence is about, is the competition. We suggest, therefore, that (6) is not a topic-comment sentence like (4) and (5). It is, rather, a sentence whose principal clause is preceded by a clause that sets the framework for it and it follows a modifier-modified sequence. The sentence structure of this sentence is not topic-comment, therefore, but modifier-modified or subordinate-main, as indeed is acknowledged by the Chinese term for these complex sentences *pianzheng fuju*. The *yinwei* adverbial clause is providing some information that helps explain the proposition in the main clause. It is acting in subordinate relationship to the main clause and is following a subordinate-

main sequence, and is another fundamental principle of rhetorical organisation in traditional Chinese, although this relationship was not commonly signaled by the use of connectors, as we shall show below.

Further evidence that MSC exhibits a modifying-modified sequence is provided by Tai (“Two Functions”). While arguing that the word order of locatives in Chinese can be explained in terms of their semantic function, Tai points out that both preverbal and post-verbal locatives were placed after the main verb in classical Chinese. However, prior to the word order change that affected locatives, Tai states that classical Chinese had already exhibited the feature of modifier preceding head in that relative clauses, possessives and adjectives all preceded nouns as they do in modern Chinese. The shift from post- to preverbal locatives was patterned after this modifier-head sequence. In a later article on word order in Chinese, Tai argues for the “Principle of Temporal Sequence” (PTS) which he defines as: “the relative word order between two syntactic units is determined by the temporal order of the states which they represent in the conceptual world” (“Temporal Sequence” 50). So, for example, when two Chinese sentences are conjoined by certain temporal connectives, the action described in the first sentence / clause *always* takes place before the action described in the second. This is exemplified in (7).

7. *wo chi-guo fan, ni zai da dianhua gei wo*

I eat-A food, you then phone give me

Call me after I have finished the dinner.

The constraint of temporal sequence does not operate in English, as clause order is not determined by the sequence of events. For example, (7) could be translated into English as, “After I have finished dinner, call me.” Tai also shows that PTS holds in a number of other constructions in Chinese such as action-result patterns and in serial verb constructions where no overt connectors are used. For example, the sentence

8. (a) *Zhang dao tushuguan na shu*

Zhang to library take book,

must mean that Zhang went to the library to get a book, while the sentence

8. (b) *Zhang na shu dao tushuguan*

must mean that he took a book to the library.

Tai extends PTS to include the Principle of Temporal Scope (PTSC). PTSC is, “If the conceptual state represented by a syntactic unit X falls within the temporal scope of the conceptual state represented by a syntactic unit Y, then the word order is YX” (60). He then suggests that PTSC is part of an even more general principle in Chinese which is that constituents with a larger scope precede those with a smaller scope in both time and space. As an example of this he points out that the only acceptable way to report a time in Chinese is “1980 year, December, 22nd day, morning, 10 o’clock.” This “big to small” sequence looks very much like the whole preceding part principle that operates in topic-comment constructions as in (5) above. We also see this principle operating in the way Chinese write addresses. The “English” “small-big” sequence becomes a “big-small” sequence in Chinese. For example, the “English” address,

Flat 33b, Building 4, Beijing University, Haidian District,
Beijing, China,

becomes, in Chinese ordering,

China, Beijing, Haidian District, Beijing University, Building
4, Flat 33b.

The Principle of Temporal Sequence suggests that the essential strategy of Chinese grammar is to knit together syntactic units according to some concrete conceptual principles. Chinese is iconic, in Tai’s view, and thus presents a case where word order corresponds to thought flow “in a genuinely natural way” (64). Chinese word order is, therefore, in Tai’s terms, natural rather than salient, where “Because John went walking in the freezing rain he caught cold” is in natural order because it follows the chronological sequence whereby the cause precedes the effect, but “John caught cold because he went walking in the freezing rain” is in salient order, as the effect—seen as the most salient or important part of the message—is therefore placed first and before the cause. We now turn to consider principles of the sequencing of clause order in complex sentences in more detail.

CLAUSE SEQUENCING IN COMPLEX SENTENCES (PIANZHENG FUJU)

This next section considers the sequencing of clauses and the use of connectors in sentences that are called *pianzheng fuju* and which we translate

as “complex sentences.” The term *pianzheng* is used to describe the modifier-modified relationship as in the phrase *xin sushe* (new dormitory) and has been extended to describe sentences that have a “modifying” clause followed by a “modified” clause (Ma Zhong 234).

The use of the term subordinate clause, with reference to the components of a sentence, has been questioned for English (Schleppergrel) and the very nature of Chinese often makes it difficult to distinguish between subordinate and main clauses. We discuss this further below when we consider parataxis and hypotaxis in Chinese. Nevertheless, for ease of reference and because they approximate to the terms employed by Chinese linguists, the clauses in these complex sentences will be called subordinate clause (SC) and main clause (MC).

It is widely accepted that the normal order in *pianzheng fuju* sentences is that the *pian* clause or the subordinate clause precedes the *zheng* or main clause (e.g., Lin Yuwen). For example:

9. *Yinwei feng tai da, suoyi bisai gaiqi-le*

Because wind too big, therefore competition change
time-A

Because the wind was too strong, the competition was
therefore postponed

A point worth making is that the English translation of (9) seems marked. To make the English translation mirror more accurately the meaning of the Chinese sentence, the clause order of the Chinese needs to be changed to give: “The competition was postponed because the wind was too strong.” The Chinese version follows natural, logical order. The English prefers to follow an order in which the salient or more important message is placed first. As we have pointed out earlier, this means that the clause sequence in the *unmarked* Chinese version is the same as the clause sequence in the *marked* English version. Similarly, of course, the *unmarked* English sequence of main clause to subordinate clause becomes the *marked* Chinese sequence. As we shall show, the marked Chinese sequence has become increasingly common through the influence on Chinese from Western languages.

Ni Baoyuan agrees that the normal clause order in complex sentences is subordinate clause-main clause (77). He points out, furthermore, that this is relatively rigid. He extends the analysis of marked and unmarked order to include Subject-Predicate order, Verb-Object order Modifier-Modified order.

Ni states that these sequences are the unmarked, normal orders. Conversely, therefore, *marked* order in Chinese is:

- Predicate-Subject
- Object-Verb
- Modified-Modifier
- Main Clause-Subordinate Clause.

Li and Zhang also argue that the sequences identified above by Ni are the unmarked and marked orders respectively. They suggest that the marked order is used to give emphasis or prominence. As an example of marked predicate-subject order they give (10), a sentence taken from the twentieth-century writer, Lu Xun (77):

10. *Qu ba ye cao, lian-zhe wo-de tici*

Go P wild grass, join-A I-M foreword.

Go, wild grass, together with my foreword.

The authors suggest that the moving of the predicate (*qu ba*) to the front of the subject emphasises Lu Xun's hope for the swift decay of the "wild grass," a hope he has also expressed a few lines earlier in the foreword.

In addition to providing emphasis, Li and Zhang also suggest that a marked order can be used to prevent the sentence becoming too "sluggish" (*tuota*). This is particularly the case when the modifier is very long. Then the normal unmarked sequence of modifier-modified becomes inelegant. (11) is an example of a sentence that uses the marked order of modified-modifier. The modified (the animal) is in bold and is followed by the modifying phrases.

11. *Dazhi yikan, wuzi-li haishi kong xu*

Roughly once look, room-in still empty,

*Dan ouran kandao dimian, que panxuan-zhe yi-pi xiao
xiao-de dongwu*

But by chance look to floor but circle-A one-CL small
small-M animal

Shouruo-de, bansi-de, manshen chentu-de . . .

Weak, half dead, whole body dust

With his quick first look, the room still seemed empty, but, by chance he looked at the floor, where, going round and round, was a tiny animal, thin and weak, half dead and covered with dust. . . .

Li and Zhang, therefore, suggest that this marked order of modified-modifier is used for two reasons, to emphasise the modifying phrases and to provide stylistic elegance.

Li and Zhang also consider clause ordering in complex sentences and give two reasons for using the marked main clause-subordinate clause order. The first is for emphasis, to provide prominence for the end placed subordinate clause.

12. *Zhe budan shi sha hai, jianzhi shi nuesha*

This not only be murder, simply be cruel murder,

Yinwei gunbang-de shanghen

because cudgel-M scar.

This is not just murder but murder of great cruelty
because of the scars made by the cudgel

The marked order here, as the authors point out, stresses the evidence of the scars.

The second reason Li and Zhang give for using the marked MC-SC order is that the subordinate clause is fulfilling an explanatory function. By this they mean that the marked subordinate clause provides additional information for the justification for the proposition or event in the main clause. For example:

13. *yizhing ji aishang-de shengyin cong ta-de kou-li
fachulai-le*

a very distressed-M sound from her-M mouth-in
emitted

dixi erqie duanxu

low and intermittent

du you Dao Caoren tingdechu, yinwei ta tingguan-le ye

only Dao Caoren hear-R, because he, hear
accustomed-A night-in

jian-de yiqie

everything

A very distressed sound emitted from her mouth. It was both low and intermittent and only Dao Caoren¹⁷ heard it, because he was used to listening for anything at night.

In (13) the subordinate clause beginning *yinwei* (because) explains how Dao Caoren, and no one else, was able to hear the sound.

To sum up, Chinese linguists have given three reasons for using the marked MC-SC sequence: to give the subordinate clause prominence; for the subordinate clause to provide some additional information to justify the proposition or event in the main clause (the so called explanatory function); and for stylistic reasons.

There are circumstances, however, where using the marked MC-SC sequence is not possible. This is particularly the case when there are no conjunctions or logical connectors in the sentence. Lin Yuwen gives (14) as an example of a conditional *pianzheng fuju*.

14. *shei gezi gao, shei pai diyi*

Who stature tall, who line up first

Whoever is the tallest stand at the end of the line.

The clause order here is fixed with the *pian* clause *shei gezi gao* having to come before the *zheng* clause. The reverse sequence *shei pai di yi, shei gezi gao* is impossible. The clause order is fixed because there are no logical connectors to show the reader what the logical relations between the two parts of the sentence are. The clauses must therefore follow the unmarked SC-MC order and argument for the reader to be able to interpret the sentence correctly. This reminds us of Tai's principles of temporal sequence and that unmarked Chinese follows

natural, chronological or logical order. It also explains why, when following the unmarked order, connectors are not needed to signal the relationship or argument between the clauses, as this is understood.

The classification of these clauses as subordinate and main is problematic, however, as both appear to be of equal weight. We now turn to a brief discussion of parataxis and hypotaxis.

PARATAXIS AND HYPOTAXIS

The distinction between parataxis and hypotaxis is a distinction commonly made in any discussion on clause combining. There appears to be, however, some disagreement over the meaning of these terms in English. There is, in addition, a problem over the translation of these terms into Chinese, as the Chinese understanding of parataxis (*yihēfa*) and hypotaxis (*xinghēfa*) does not precisely parallel Western definitions of these terms.

A source of disagreement over the definitions of these two terms by Western linguists stems from the importance attached to the use or non use of conjunctions as a criterion for distinguishing between parataxis and hypotaxis. On the one hand, Crystal defines parataxis as a term that refers to “constructions which are linked solely through juxtaposition and punctuation/intonation and not through the use of conjunctions. Paratactic constructions are opposed to hypotactic ones where conjunctions are used” (221). Crystal clearly distinguishes paratactic and hypotactic constructions on the grounds of conjunction use. Lehmann, on the other hand, claims that the presence or absence of conjunctions has nothing to do with the distinction between hypotaxis and parataxis. Parataxis is defined by Lehmann as the coordination of clauses. It may be syndetic or asyndetic, by which he means the coordination may be explicitly signalled by the use of conjunctions or may not be so signalled. In contrast, hypotaxis is defined as the subordination of clauses and “the presence or absence of a connective device between two clauses has nothing to do with parataxis vs hypotaxis” (210). Lehmann, then, distinguishes paratactic constructions and hypotactic ones on the grounds of coordination or subordination while Crystal sees conjunction use as the determining factor.

Halliday defines parataxis as the “linking of elements of equal status” and hypotaxis as the “binding of elements of unequal status” (198). The use of the terms “equal status” and “unequal status” shows that Halliday agrees with Lehmann’s coordinate vs. subordinate distinction. However, Halliday also uses the two different terms of “linking” and “binding” and this suggests that the way the elements of equal status are linked differs from the way the elements of unequal status are bound. In his discussion of “enhancing hypotaxis,” which

is the term he gives to those constructions that traditionally contain adverbial clauses and are thus similar to the constructions being considered in this chapter, he says that finite enhancing hypotactic clauses are introduced by a hypotactic (subordinating) conjunction, where the conjunction serves to express both the dependency and the circumstantial relationship. Indeed, the role of the conjunction is crucial here, as, according to Halliday, a finite clause is, in principle, independent, and can become dependent “only if introduced by a binding (hypotactic) conjunction” (216–17). Halliday argues, therefore, that the coordinate vs. subordinate distinction determines the difference between parataxis and hypotaxis. But he also stresses the importance of conjunctions in “enhancing hypotactic” constructions.

Curme’s *A Grammar of the English Language. Volume II: Syntax* of 1931 helps put the parataxis vs hypotaxis debate in historical perspective. Curme points out that sometimes there is no apparent formal link that binds the elements of a sentence together since the logical connection forms a sufficient tie. Yet, one of the propositions often stands in some relation to the other, such as an adverbial relation of cause, purpose, result, concession or condition. For example, sentences such as, “Let him talk (concession), it’ll do no harm,” represent an older order of things. In the earliest stages of the languages from which Indo-European languages have come there were no subordinating conjunctions. The placing of a subordinate proposition alongside a principal proposition without a formal sign of subordination, was, Curme suggested, parataxis. He goes on to say that the development of a formal way of signalling subordination, either through relative pronouns or through conjunctions—hypotaxis—is “characteristic of a later stage of language life” (170). Curme, then, argues that parataxis can be seen as the juxtaposition of a subordinate proposition against a main proposition without the use of conjunctions. In other words, therefore, Curme is suggesting that it is, in the first instance, conjunction use, and not the coordinate vs. subordinate distinction, that determines hypotactic constructions.

This is interesting as the Chinese translation of these terms—*yihēfa* (method of combination by meaning) for parataxis and *xinghēfa* (method of combination by form) for hypotaxis—seem close to Curme’s and Crystal’s definitions. Furthermore, there is evidence that the person who is credited with coining the word *yihēfa*, Wang Li, had read Curme. The *A Dictionary of Chinese Grammar and Rhetoric* defines the term *yihēfa* as follows, “a complex sentence that has no connectors between the separate clauses but whose combination is established by a meaning relation and when this relation can be understood, is paratactic” (Zhang Dihua 482).

In this discussion, therefore, we will adopt the historical or Chinese view and take parataxis to mean the juxtaposition of clauses and propositions,

both coordinate and subordinate, without the use of connectors; we will take hypotaxis to mean the subordination of one proposition to another by use of subordinating conjunctions. With this in mind, we now proceed to a discussion of parataxis and hypotaxis in MSC.

IS CHINESE PARATACTIC? THE CASE IN CLASSICAL CHINESE

Although Classical Chinese was paratactic, it was not exclusively so, and nor is it the case that the use of connectors was unknown. Compound sentences made up of coordinate clauses allowed freedom of clause movement without affecting the meaning. In *pianzheng fuju*, on the other hand, the clause order was much more rigid and followed the subordinate clause-main clause sequence. The meaning of these sentences was primarily established by the relationship between the two clauses with the clause carrying the main point coming at the end. Connectors, however, could be used. Example (15) shows the use of the therefore marker *gu* being used in the main clause of a classical cause-effect *pianzheng fuju* taken from the *Analects*.

15. *Qi yan bu rang,* *shi gu shen zhi*

This language N modest, be therefore laugh him

His language was very boastful and so I laughed at
him.

On occasion, paired connectors could be used in both clauses. This was particularly true of conditional sentences such as (16). This use of paired connectors provides stylistic balance or *qian hou huying*, literally “front-back echo” (Ma Zhong 234). This stylistic preference explains why Chinese writers tend to use both pairs of connectors in complex clauses. The connectors are underlined.

16. *Ruo fu yu,* *ze qing chu zhi*

If N bestow, then request eliminate him

If you do not mean to give it to him, allow me
eliminate him.

These examples show that, with its use of connectors, contemporary Chinese has not taken on a completely new grammatical structure. Furthermore, they show that the use of the marked MC-SC clause sequence in *pianzheng fuju* was, although rare, possible. MSC has, however, seen a substantial increase in use of these structures, primarily through influence from Western languages.

MSC AND INFLUENCE FROM THE WEST

Possibly the best known Chinese linguist of the twentieth century, Wang Li, argues that, traditionally, word order in Chinese was fixed (Chen, Shou-yi). In particular, in Chinese conditional, concessive and cause and effect sentences, the subordinate clause traditionally came before the main clause. In English, on the other hand, Wang Li points out that the so-called “if” clauses, the “because” clauses, the “though” clauses and the “when” clauses can go before or after the main clause. In Chinese, as we have seen, these clauses most frequently precede the main clause; and on occasion, must precede them.

Wang Li then argues that this comparatively rigid SC-MC clause order of Chinese means that connectors are not really necessary. In a crucially important insight into principles of rhetorical organisation in Chinese, Wang Li points out that, in Chinese, when two sentences are juxtaposed, even though there are no connectors, “we still know that the first sentence includes meanings such as ‘although,’ ‘if,’ ‘because,’ etc., because the subordinate component must come at the beginning” (97).

Wang Li also makes clear that, while it is a more paratactic language than English, Chinese has been influenced by English and other Western languages, especially since the Chinese literary revolution of the May 4th Movement in 1919. As we explain in more detail in Chapter 8, at this time enormous numbers of Western works were being translated into Chinese and published in China. Not only did this provide large numbers of influential works written in a kind of Europeanised Chinese, but their influence was also seen in the styles of contemporary Chinese writers. For example, since the May 4th movement of 1919, subordinate clauses appearing after their main clauses in the writings of Chinese authors have become frequent. Wang Li gives this example from the contemporary Chinese writer, Lao She, of a marked subordinate clause order in a conditional sentence. (372)

17. keshi wo dei sheng xie qian, wan yi mama jiao
 wo qu

But I must save some money, 10,000 one mother
tell me go

wo keyi pao jiaru wo shou-zhong you qian

I can run if I hand-in have money

But I must keep some money on the off chance that
Mum tells me to go. I can run if I have some money.

Here, the conditional clause introduced by *jiaru* (if) comes after the main clause. Note the use of the conjunction in the marked subordinate clause and the absence of one in the main clause. This use of a single conjunction in the subordinating clause in complex sentences that follow the marked MC-SC sequence, and without a “balancing” conjunction in the main clause, is representative of this “new” Westernised phenomenon of Chinese hypotactic constructions. Nevertheless, while admitting that contemporary Chinese uses more connectors than did classical Chinese, Wang Li argues that contemporary Chinese is still a far more paratactic language than English. It is his view that parataxis is abnormal or marked (*biantai*) in Western languages but normal and unmarked (*changtai*) in Chinese.

Xie Yaoji (7) agrees with Wang Li that it is Western linguistic influence, primarily the influence of the translation into Chinese of Western works, that has increased the use of the marked MC-SC clause order in modern Chinese. This, in turn, has given rise to the increased use of connectors as they are obligatory in such marked MC-SC clauses ordering, where they signal the subordinate clause. Xie gives a whole host of examples taken from Chinese writing after 1919 to demonstrate the recent use of conjunctions.

Gunn has suggested that although clause transposition (anastrophe) would have appeared strikingly new in Chinese in print in the 1920s, and although it was undoubtedly inspired by foreign language texts “the forms themselves probably existed in spoken Chinese already” (40). The point was made earlier that this structure was also possible in classical (written) Chinese.

The notion of a relatively rigid word or clause order in Chinese is further discussed by Chen Ping. He argues that, when there are no explicit conjunctions in Reason, Concession and Condition Predicates, an “adjunct preceding nucleus” (183) order is crucial for a clear indication of nucleus (main) vs. adjunct (subordinate) status of the propositions subsumed within the relational predicate. On the other hand, however, when connectives are present, the order is less rigid. In other words, then, paratactic constructions in complex

sentences in Chinese will follow the subordinate -main clause order. The use of a subordinating conjunction allows the use of the marked MC-SC clause order. The use of at least one conjunction is *obligatory* in Chinese when the marked or “illogical” order is used in complex sentences.

In the next chapter, we turn to considering rhetorical organisation at the level of discourse and the extent to which the principles of sequencing identified and illustrated in this chapter also operate at the discourse and text level.